

EPA fines Navy for skipping meeting

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has fined the Navy and Defense Logistics Agency \$5,000 for failing to attend a community meeting last month regarding the Red Hill fuel spill crisis as required by a consent order.

Under the order, representatives from the two entities were required to attend the Dec. 12 meeting of the Red Hill Community Representation Initia-

tive group.

The group consists of 10 members from the Hawaiian community who work directly with the Navy, Defense Logistics Agency and the EPA on matters related to the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, including its defueling, permanent closure and drinking water safety.

The EPA said it was “disappointed” in the Navy’s absence in a Dec. 18 letter to Rear Adm. Marc Williams, deputy com-

mander of the Navy Closure Task Force-Red Hill, and David Kless, deputy commander of the Defense Logistics Agency.

“[Navy Closure Task Force-Red Hill] is aware of the \$5,000 stipulated penalty for not attending the CRI meeting December 12, 2024, and we are working through the Consent Order’s dispute resolution provisions to resolve the matter,” the task force said.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in March 2022 ordered

the World War II-era facility closed after a jet fuel spill contaminated drinking water used by more than 90,000 people living in military communities on or near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Thousands of residents were temporarily relocated to area hotels as the Navy flushed the system.

Many residents believed that the Navy’s response to the contamination was slow and half-hearted.

Biden awards military heroes and first responders

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On Feb. 15, 1951, Army Pvt. Bruno R. Orig was returning from a mission when he found his fellow soldiers under attack in what’s now known as the Battle of Chipyeong-ni.

The infantryman provided first aid to his comrades wounded in the Korean War attack and began helping move those men to safety. He then took over a machine-gun post and allowed a friendly platoon to pull back without a casualty. When the ground was recaptured later that day, Orig was found dead beside the machine gun, surrounded by enemy combatants he had killed.

Orig was among the Medal of Honor recipients recognized Friday by President Joe Biden in one of his last opportunities to officially acknowledge acts of selflessness and personal bravery in times of war. Biden bestowed the medal posthumously to six men and one living recipient at a White House ceremony. In a separate Oval Office ceremony closed to the news media, he

awarded the Medal of Valor to eight first responders who put their own lives at risk to save others.

“These are heroes of different ranks, different positions and even different generations,” Biden said at the Medal of Honor ceremony Friday. “They are heroes who all went above and beyond the call of duty.”

During the Korean War, Pfc. Wataru Nakamura destroyed an enemy machine-gun nest and recaptured several bunkers. He exhausted his ammunition but resumed his attack after being rearmed, and he was ultimately killed by an enemy grenade and buried in Los Angeles.

Army Cpl. Fred B. McGee is being recognized for his gallantry and intrepidity near Tang-Wan-Ni, Korea, on June 16, 1952, when he assumed command of his squad, neutralized an enemy machine gun and then sent his squad back while he helped rescue the wounded. The Ohio native died in 2020, according to news reports.

Army Pfc. Charles R. Johnson,

from Millbrook, N.Y., was killed on June 12, 1953, after holding off Chinese forces during the Korean War. His actions saved the lives of as many as 10 soldiers.

After multiple raids on an entrenched enemy in the area of Sagimak during the Korean War, Army 1st Lt. Richard E. Cavazos stayed behind alone to evacuate five battle casualties to safety. Cavazos served more than three decades in the service, eventually attaining the rank of four-star general. The Texan died in 2018 at age 88. Fort Hood was renamed in honor of him on May 9, 2023.

After an armed helicopter crashed during the Vietnam War on June 5, 1966, Army Capt. Hugh R. Nelson Jr. from Rocky Mount, N.C., pulled two specialists from the aircraft, shielding one of them from enemy gunfire at the loss of his own life.

While fighting in Vietnam on May 7, 1970, then-Army Pfc. Kenneth J. David drew enemy fire away from injured comrades and onto himself, becoming wounded by a satchel charge. But David

kept fighting and pulled fire away from landing Medevac helicopters, getting evacuated himself after the last helicopter landed. The Ohioan is still living.

On Friday, Biden also awarded eight people the Medal of Valor, which goes to those who have shown exceptional courage in attempting to save lives.

The recipients included the law enforcement officials who responded to a shooter who killed six people on March 27, 2023, at The Covenant School in Nashville, Tenn.

Biden also recognized Sgt. Tu Tran of the Lincoln, Neb., Police Department. On Feb. 22, 2023, Tran swam 30 feet into a frigid pond to rescue a woman from a submerging vehicle.

Lt. John Vanderstar, a New York City firefighter, received the Medal of Valor for rescuing a mother and child from a burning apartment on Oct. 23, 2022. Separately, New York City firefighter Brendan Gaffney was honored for braving a fire to save an unconscious child and a pregnant woman.

Cybertruck driver had mental health issues

The Washington Post

The active-duty Green Beret who blew up a Tesla Cybertruck outside the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas was likely suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and had written a note found on his charred phone stating that he hoped his actions would serve as a “wake-up call” to the American people, investigators revealed Friday.

Screenshots shared by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department show Matthew Livelsberger had written several messages on his phone’s Notes app. In one, the decorated U.S. soldier said Americans would pay attention only to “spectacles and violence.” In another, Livelsberger said he needed to “relieve myself of the burden of the lives I took.”

The writings and new details about his time in the military and his actions in the days leading to the explosion paint a picture of a man haunted by his experiences overseas and closer

to home. Investigators said they do not think he held any grievances against President-elect Donald Trump, and instead pointed to his deteriorating mental state to explain the explosion.

Las Vegas police said Livelsberger shot himself in the head. The Cybertruck he’d rented then exploded, leaving seven bystanders with minor injuries.

“He likely suffered from PTSD, and we are also aware that there were potential other family issues,” said Spencer L. Evans, special agent in charge of the FBI’s Las Vegas field office. “It ultimately appears to be a tragic case of suicide.”

The explosion came hours after an Army veteran from Texas drove a truck with an Islamic State flag into a crowd of New Year’s revelers in New Orleans, killing 14 people. The two incidents sparked alarm and fears of an orchestrated attack, but investigators said they have not found anything to suggest a con-

nection.

In the days before the explosion, Livelsberger had corresponded with a social media account popular with military veterans in an apparent attempt to raise concerns about military drone technology, incidents he observed in Afghanistan, and his certainty he was being followed by law enforcement as he drove the Cybertruck from Denver to Las Vegas.

Separately, an ex-girlfriend told *The Washington Post* that Livelsberger once confided to her that he’d suffered a traumatic brain injury while deployed overseas.

Alicia Arritt, a 39-year-old nurse who has cared for wounded military veterans, told *The Post* in an interview Friday that she’d dated Livelsberger on and off from 2018 to 2021.

During that time, she said, Livelsberger — who was on approved leave from his Special Forces unit in Germany at the time of his death — told her that

he had struggled with a cloudy memory, poor concentration, difficulty maintaining relationships and intense guilt over his actions on the battlefield.

Arritt recognized those symptoms as consistent with what can follow a blow to the head or massive jolt to the body. Such injuries, she knew, could fuel a gradual, heartbreaking deterioration of someone’s mental state. Several of her veteran friends and former patients, she said, have died by suicide.

“He wanted to get more help,” she recalled of their conversations. “I think it was even harder for him, being on active duty — the shame and the stigma.”

Military officials have not said whether Livelsberger sought treatment for a brain injury or mental illness, citing privacy concerns. The Defense Department has turned over Livelsberger’s medical records to law enforcement, a Pentagon spokesperson said.

Suspected bomb materials found at attacker’s home

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The man who rammed a pickup truck into a crowd of New Year’s revelers in New Orleans had bomb-making materials at his home and reserved the vehicle used in the deadly attack more than six weeks earlier, law enforcement officials said Friday.

Federal authorities searching the home of Shamsud-Din Jabbar in Houston found a workbench in the garage and hazardous materials believed to have been used to make explosive devices, according to law enforcement officials familiar with the search. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The FBI investigation also revealed that Jabbar purchased a

cooler in Vidor, Texas, hours before the attack and gun oil from a store in Sulphur, La., the officials said. Authorities also determined Jabbar booked his rental of the pickup truck on Nov. 14, suggesting he may have been plotting the attack for more than six weeks.

Authorities say 14 people were killed and about 30 injured in the attack early Wednesday by Jabbar, a former Army soldier. He had posted several videos on his Facebook hours before the attack previewing the violence he would unleash and proclaiming his support for the Islamic State militant group. The coroner’s office listed the cause of death for all 14 victims as “blunt force injuries.”

Jabbar, 42, was fatally shot in a

firefight with police at the scene of the crash on Bourbon Street, famous worldwide for its festive vibes in New Orleans’ historic French Quarter.

Authorities found crude bombs that had been planted in the neighborhood in an apparent attempt to cause more carnage. Two improvised explosive devices left in coolers several blocks apart were rendered safe at the scene, officials said. Other devices were determined to be nonfunctional.

Investigators recovered from Jabbar’s rental truck a transmitter intended to trigger the two bombs, the FBI said in a statement Friday. It also said authorities found bomb-making materials at the New Orleans home Jab-

bar rented prior to the attack. Jabbar tried to burn the house down by setting a small fire in a hallway and placing accelerants to help spread it, the FBI said. The flames burned out before firefighters arrived.

Authorities on Friday were still investigating Jabbar’s motives and how he carried out the attack. They say he exited the crashed truck wearing a ballistic vest and helmet and fired at police, wounding at least two officers before he was fatally shot by officers returning fire.

New Orleans police declined to say Friday how many shots were fired by Jabbar and police, and whether any bystanders may have been hit, citing the active investigation.

Lawmakers torn on vowed Jan. 6 pardons

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The fourth anniversary of the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol has a new focus as lawmakers brace for the prospect that President-elect Donald Trump may soon pardon many of the more than 1,500 people charged with crimes for their actions related to the riot.

Trump said he would issue pardons to rioters on “Day 1” of his presidency, which begins Jan. 20. “Most likely, I’ll do it very quickly,” he said recently on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” He added that “those people have suffered long and hard. And there may be some exceptions to it. I have to look. But, you

know, if somebody was radical, crazy.”

His promise is shadowing events Monday as lawmakers gather to certify a presidential election for the first time since 2021, when Trump’s supporters breached the Capitol and temporarily halted the certification of an election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., said she has spoken at length with Trump and is lobbying him to pardon everyone who participated in the siege. Few Republicans are going that far, but many believe it’s appropriate for Trump to look at pardons on a case-by-case basis.

“Here we are nearly four

years later. Many of these people have been in prison since 2021. Even the ones that fought Capitol Police, caused damage to the Capitol, I think they’ve served their time and I think they should all be pardoned and released from prison,” Greene said. “Some of these people have been given prison sentences: 10 years, 18 years and more. I think it’s an injustice.”

More than 1,250 have pleaded guilty or been convicted after trials in connection with Jan. 6, with more than 650 receiving prison time ranging from a few days to 22 years.

House Democrats, who led the drive to impeach Trump over Jan. 6 and conducted a

wide-ranging investigation into the attack, warned that the pardons could have far-reaching consequences, both for the rule of law and the security of the country.

“Those 140-odd law enforcement people who got hurt defending this institution, I think anyone who loves peace and security would be offended that you would pardon people who attacked those individuals for doing their jobs,” said Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss.

Thompson led the House committee that investigated the events surrounding Jan. 6, concluding with a report that said Trump “lit the fire” for the insurrection.

Clinton, Soros, Washington receive Medal of Freedom

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Saturday bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 19 of the most famous names in politics, sports, entertainment, civil rights, LGBTQ+ advocacy and science.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton aroused a standing ovation from the crowd as she received her medal. Clinton was accompanied to the event by her husband former President Bill Clinton, daughter Chelsea Clinton and grandchildren. Democratic philanthropist George Soros and actor-director Denzel Washington were also awarded the nation’s highest civilian honor in a White House ceremony.

Four medals were awarded posthumously. They went to George W. Romney, who served as both a Michigan governor and secretary of housing and urban development; former Attorney General and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy; Ash Carter, a former secretary of defense; and Fannie Lou Hamer, who founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

and laid the groundwork for the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Philanthropists receiving the award include Spanish American chef José Andrés, whose World Central Kitchen charity has become one of the world’s most recognized food relief organizations, and U2 front man and social justice activist Bono.

Sports and entertainment stars recognized include professional soccer player Lionel Messi; retired Los Angeles Lakers basketball legend and businessman Earvin “Magic” Johnson; actor Michael J. Fox, who is an outspoken advocate for Parkinson’s disease research and development; and William Sanford Nye, known to generations of students as “Bill Nye the Science Guy.”

Other awardees include conservationist Jane Goodall; longtime Vogue Magazine editor-in-chief Anna Wintour; American fashion designer Ralph Lauren; American Film Institute founder George Stevens Jr.; entrepreneur and LGBTQ+ activist Tim Gill; and David Rubenstein, co-founder of The Carlyle Group.

Carter’s funeral begins in rural Georgia hometown

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Jimmy Carter’s extended public farewell began Saturday in Georgia, with the 39th U.S. president’s flag-draped casket tracing his long arc from the Depression-era South and family farming business to the pinnacle of American political power and decades as a global humanitarian.

Those chapters shone throughout the opening stanza of a six-day state funeral intended to blend personalized memorials with the ceremonial pomp afforded to former presidents. The longest-lived U.S. executive, Carter died on Dec. 29 at age 100.

“He was an amazing man. He was held up and propped up and soothed by an amazing woman,” son James Earl “Chip” Carter III, told mourners at The Carter Center late Saturday afternoon, referring also to his mother, former first lady Rosalynn Carter, who died in 2023. “The two of them together changed the world. And it was an amazing thing to watch so close.”

Grandson Jason Carter, who

now chairs the center’s governing board, said, “It’s amazing what you can cram into a hundred years.”

Carter’s children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren accompanied their patriarch as his hearse rode first Saturday through his hometown of Plains, which at about 700 residents is not much bigger than when Carter was born there Oct. 1, 1924. The motorcade continued to Atlanta, stopping in front of the Georgia Capitol where Carter served as a state senator and reformist governor. Finally, he arrived for his last visit to the Carter Presidential Center, which houses his presidential library and The Carter Center where he based his post-White House advocacy for public health, democracy and human rights.

Pallbearers on Saturday came from the Secret Service that protected the Carters for almost a half-century and a military honor guard that included Navy servicemembers for the only U.S. Naval Academy graduate to reach the Oval Office.

S. Koreans demand Yoon's ouster, arrest

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Hundreds of South Koreans, bundled up against freezing temperatures and snow, rallied overnight into Sunday near the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, calling for his ouster and arrest, as authorities prepared to renew their efforts to detain him over his short-lived martial law decree.

Dozens of anti-corruption agency investigators and police attempted to execute a detainment warrant against Yoon on Friday but retreated from his

residence in Seoul after a tense standoff with the presidential security service that lasted more than five hours.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials is weighing charges of rebellion after the conservative president, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by a legislature dominated by the liberal opposition, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly.

The Assembly overturned the declaration within hours in

a unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events.

Last Tuesday, a Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence after the embattled president defied authorities by refusing to appear for questioning. But enforcing them is complicated as long as Yoon remains in his official residence.

The one-week warrant for his detention is valid through Monday.

Staff from the presidential security service were seen installing barbed wire near the gate and hills leading up to Yoon's residence over the weekend, possibly in preparation for another detention attempt.

If the anti-corruption agency manages to detain Yoon, it will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, Yoon will be released after 48 hours.

Zelenskyy will ask allies to boost air defenses

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he will again call on allies to boost his country's air defenses at a meeting this week in Germany, as President-elect Donald Trump takes over later this month with a vow to end the almost three-year war quickly.

Zelenskyy said dozens of partner countries will participate in the meeting of the Ramstein group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany on Thursday, "including those

who can help boost our capabilities not only to defend against missiles, but also against guided bombs and Russian aviation."

"We will discuss this with them and continue to persuade them," Zelenskyy said in his nightly address on Saturday. "The task remains unchanged: strengthening our air defense."

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will attend the meeting, which had originally been due to take place in October and to be attended by President Joe Biden. It was postponed

because of the response to Hurricane Milton that battered the United States.

In its last few weeks in office, the Biden administration has been pressing to send as much military aid as possible to Ukraine before Trump is sworn in Jan. 20.

Trump claimed during his election campaign that he could end the war in one day, and his comments have put a question mark over whether the U.S. will continue to be Ukraine's biggest — and most important — military backer.

Heaviest snowfall in a decade possible in parts of US

Associated Press

A blast of snow, ice, wind and plunging temperatures stirred up dangerous travel conditions in parts of the central United States on Sunday, as a disruptive winter storm brought the possibility of the "heaviest snowfall in a decade" to some areas.

Snowfall and ice blanketed major roadways in parts of Kansas and Indiana, where the state's National Guard was activated to help any motorists getting stuck.

At least 8 inches of snow were expected, particularly north of Interstate 70 as the National Weather Service issued winter storm warnings from Kansas and Missouri — where blizzard

conditions were reported — to New Jersey into Monday.

"For locations in this region that receive the highest snow totals, it may be the heaviest snowfall in at least a decade," the weather service said early Sunday.

About 63 million people in the U.S. were under some kind of winter weather advisory, watch or warning Sunday, according to Bob Oravec with the National Weather Service.

The polar vortex of ultra-cold air usually stays penned up around the North Pole, spinning like a top. But sometimes it escapes or stretches down to the U.S., Europe or Asia — and that's when large numbers of

people experience intense doses of cold.

In Indiana, snow fully covered portions of Interstate 64, Interstate 69 and U.S. Route 41 and Indiana State Police pleaded with motorists to stay off the roads as plows worked to keep up with the pace of the precipitation.

"It's snowing so hard, the snow plows go through and then within a half hour the roadways are completely covered again," Sgt. Todd Ringle said.

Part of I-70 was closed in central Kansas by Saturday afternoon. Roughly 10 inches of snow had fallen in parts of Kansas with totals of snow and sleep for parts of Kansas and northern

Missouri predicted to be as high as 14 inches.

The storm was forecast to then move into the Ohio Valley, with severe travel disruptions expected. It will reach the Mid-Atlantic states Sunday into Monday, with a hard freeze even expected as far south as Florida.

Severe thunderstorms, with the possibility of tornadoes and hail, were also possible ahead of the storm system's cold front as it crosses the Lower Mississippi Valley, the National Weather Service warned.

Parts of upstate New York saw 3 feet or more of snow from a lake-effect storm that was expected to last until late Sunday afternoon.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Christmas ornament stolen from mayor

NY NEW YORK — A 20-year-old was arrested after breaking into Gracie Mansion, the official residence of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, and stealing a Christmas ornament in the early morning hours of New Year's Day, authorities said.

Shortly before 4:30 a.m. Wednesday, the suspect jumped a fence to the property, a stately residence inside a park on Manhattan's Upper East Side, police said. He then made his way to the second floor, where he was found inside a bathroom minutes after entering the residence.

During an interview at a local police precinct, the suspect showed detectives a video of him removing a Christmas ornament from a drawer in the house, according to a criminal complaint. The man turned over the ornament and several other items, which were not specified in the complaint.

Man pleads guilty after bodies found in storage

MN ST. PAUL — A Minnesota man pleaded guilty Thursday to killing and dismembering two women whose bodies were found in different storage units.

Under his plea deal, Joseph Steven Jorgenson, 41, is to be sentenced Feb. 28 to two 40-year terms for the deaths of Manijeh Starren in 2023 and Fanta Xayavong in 2021, prosecutors said.

Authorities began investigating after getting a missing person report from Starren's father

in April 2023. Evidence from her apartment, surveillance video, and her social media and financial accounts led police to regard Jorgenson as the primary suspect.

Prosecutors said keys recovered from Jorgenson's apartment led investigators to a storage facility in Woodbury where they located Starren's dismembered remains in two separate coolers as well as a large bag.

During that investigation, authorities uncovered evidence of a second victim, Xayavong, with whom Jorgenson had a relationship in 2021. Investigators found her remains in a separate storage locker in Coon Rapids.

2 dead, 19 injured as plane crashes into factory

CA FULLERTON — Two people died and 19 were injured Thursday when a small plane crashed through the roof of a sprawling furniture manufacturing building in Southern California where at least 200 people were working, police said.

The people who died were believed to have been on the plane, while those injured were inside the building, the Fullerton Police Department said in a statement.

Eleven people were taken to hospitals, while eight were treated and released at the scene, police said. The injuries ranged from minor to very serious, said Michael Meacham, Fullerton deputy chief of fire operations.

Elliott Simpson, a National Transportation Safety Board aviation accident investigator, said the pilot asked for an immediate return to the airport at about 900 feet and the tower

confirmed it could immediately land. The pilot did not say why he needed to return.

The plane crashed less than two minutes after taking off from the Fullerton Municipal Airport in Orange County.

Remains of man missing since 2018 festival found

MI ROTHBURY — The disappearance of a Detroit-area man from a 2018 music festival has been solved with the discovery of human remains in northern Michigan, authorities said Thursday.

Remains found by hunters last week near the site of the annual Electric Forest Festival have been identified as Kevin Graves, state police said. The cause of death was not known, but there were no indications of foul play.

"At least the family has some closure on where he is and now hopefully the next steps can determine what happened," Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said.

Graves, 28, was last seen at Electric Forest in 2018. After some tension with a girlfriend, he said he was returning to his tent, but was never seen again.

Wolf died from gunshot, spurring federal probe

CO DENVER — A gray wolf in Colorado was illegally shot and later died of the injury, federal authorities said Thursday in the latest flashpoint of Colorado's controversial, voter-driven initiative to reintroduce the predators to the state.

Colorado residents largely in cities voted to reintroduce the animals in 2020, clashing with those in rural areas who feared

attacks on their livestock. The first 10 wolves were released a year ago, and since then there have been over two dozen claims of depredations — when wolves kill livestock or working dogs.

The wolf was part of the Copper Creek Pack that was captured in late August after the pack repeatedly killed local livestock in Grand County, just northwest of Denver, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The wolf died in early September and the investigation is ongoing.

FBI agents search home of top NYPD official

NY NEW YORK — Federal agents on Thursday searched the home of a former top New York City police official who resigned late last month after he was accused of demanding sex from a subordinate in exchange for opportunities to earn extra pay.

Law enforcement officials executed warrants on multiple locations, including the home of Jeffrey Maddrey, the highest-ranking uniformed officer in the NYPD, as part of a investigation, Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said in a statement.

Maddrey was accused last month of engaging in a "quid pro quo sexual harassment" with a subordinate and coercing her to "perform unwanted sexual favors in exchange for overtime opportunities."

His accuser, Quathisha Epps, was the NYPD's top earner in fiscal year 2024, pulling in more than \$400,000 while holding an administrative position in Maddrey's office.

— From wire reports

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Ravens rout Browns to clinch AFC North

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The road to a division title was bumpy for the Baltimore Ravens, who started 0-2, faced a schedule packed with playoff teams and had to rally from a two-game deficit with four to play.

Having overcome all that, Lamar Jackson is looking ahead to the most important challenges of all — in the postseason.

“I’m focused on the wild-card game, I’m not going to lie to you,” Jackson said. “I’m cool with what’s going on today. I’m cool, don’t get me wrong, but my mind’s on something else.”

Jackson threw two touchdown passes, and the Ravens won the AFC North for the second straight season, clinching the division with a 35-10 victory over the Cleveland Browns on Saturday.

Now Baltimore (12-5) will try to reach the Super Bowl for the first time with Jackson. They open the playoffs at home against either the Los Angeles Chargers or Pittsburgh Steelers. The Ravens were two games behind the Steelers in the division before closing with four consecutive victories.

Cleveland (3-14) ended a dreadful season with six straight losses. Both Bailey Zappe and Dorian Thompson-Robinson took snaps at quarterback in the finale. Neither could move the ball much, and Zappe had an interception returned 26 yards for a touchdown by rookie Nate Wiggins for the game’s first points.

The biggest concern coming out of this game for Baltimore was the health of Pro Bowl receiver Zay Flowers, who left in the second quarter with a right knee injury.

Jackson threw TD passes to Mark Andrews in the second quarter and Rashod Bateman in the third, finishing a spectacular statistical season that might be good enough to earn him a third MVP award. Jackson finished the season with 4,172 yards passing, 41 touchdown passes and four interceptions. He became the first quarterback to reach 4,000 yards passing with 40 TD passes and four or fewer interceptions.

Jackson also finished the season with 915 yards rushing, becoming the first player to throw for 4,000 yards and rush for at least 800. His passer rating of 119.6 wasn’t quite high enough to break the single-season record of 122.5 set by Aaron Rodgers in 2011.

Zappe threw for 170 yards with two interceptions. His 16-yard scoring pass to Jordan Akins

made it 21-10 in the fourth, but the Ravens answered with 70-yard drive that ended with a 2-yard touchdown run by Derrick Henry.

Henry, who turned 31 on Saturday, added a 43-yard scoring run late in the fourth. He finished the season with 1,921 yards rushing and a franchise-record 16 touchdowns on the ground.

The Browns have now gone 28 consecutive games without allowing a 300-yard passer. Jackson finished 16-for-32 for 217 yards.

“I respect this game, these players do. It’s a privilege to play, it’s a privilege to coach,” said Cleveland coach Kevin Stefanski, whose team was a 20-point underdog shortly before kickoff according to BetMGM. “If they’re keeping score, we’re going to compete to the end.”

Bengals top Steelers to keep slim playoff hopes alive

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Joe Burrow went to Cincinnati’s training facility Sunday. He lifted weights. He might have watched some video. And then he joined the rest of his teammates and hoped.

It’s not much. But it was the only thing left for Burrow and a Bengals team that looks playoff-worthy everywhere but the standings after a 19-17 victory at Pittsburgh late Saturday night kept Cincinnati’s slim postseason hopes flickering into the season’s final day.

“It’s not ideal,” Burrow said after throwing for 277 yards and a touchdown. “But we put ourselves in this position.”

In multiple ways. The Bengals were floundering at 4-8 a month ago, with seven of the losses coming by eight points or less. They responded by ripping off five straight to wrap up the regular season, including a win over the reeling Steelers.

For Cincinnati to grab the final playoff spot in the AFC, they needed Patrick Mahomes-less Kansas City to beat Denver and the New York Jets to summon the energy at the end of a chaotic season to topple Miami.

Rooting for the Chiefs was unexpected, but it beats having nothing to root for at all, which is certainly where the Bengals seemed headed a month ago.

“I don’t know how many guys will be playing for (Kansas City),” Burrow said with a small laugh. “Hopefully some.”

While Burrow threw an interception and had his NFL-record streak of consecutive games with at least 250 yards passing and three touchdowns come to an end, he did enough to send Pittsburgh (10-7) reeling into the playoffs with a four-game losing streak.

The Steelers will be the fifth seed and travel to AFC South champion Houston if the Los Angeles Chargers lost at Las Vegas. If the Chargers won, Pittsburgh would be the sixth seed and visit AFC North rival Baltimore next weekend.

“We’re in a single-elimination tournament now, so we better turn our attention toward playing good football and better than we have particularly in recent weeks,” Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said.

If Tomlin wants a lesson on how to get it together under challenging circumstances, Cincinnati’s play over the last month has provided it.

The Bengals’ late run began after a 44-38 loss to Pittsburgh on Dec. 1 dropped them to 4-8. They haven’t lost since, with Burrow playing at an MVP level and their once porous defense playing its best football of the season.

Burrow completed 37 of 46 passes, including a 12-yard touchdown to Ja’Marr Chase on Cincinnati’s first possession that gave the Bengals a lead they never gave up. Chase finished with 10 receptions for 96 yards to put the NFL’s “Triple Crown” for receivers (catches, yards and touchdowns) within reach.

Cincinnati held the reeling Steelers (10-7) to 193 yards — more than 300 less than the 520 Pittsburgh rolled up in the first meeting — and turned aside a late rally. Trey Hendrickson sacked Russell Wilson 3½ times to boost his season total to an NFL-leading 17½ on a night the Bengals never let the playoff-bound Steelers get on track.

“Obviously, our season hasn’t gone the way we wanted, but we like how we closed out to get over .500 and give ourselves a chance,” Cincinnati cornerback Mike Hilton said.

Whether Burrow and his teammates head to work Monday to prepare for a trip to Buffalo or to clean out their lockers and turn their attention to what could be an eventful offseason is uncertain.

“I know that if we get in, we can make some noise with the players and coaches that we have in this building,” he said. “We’ve just got to hope for some help tomorrow and sit back and watch it.”

Ovechkin, Caps top struggling Rangers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Alex Ovechkin scored his 872nd career goal to move 23 away from breaking Wayne Gretzky's NHL record, and the Washington Capitals beat the struggling New York Rangers 7-4 Saturday.

Ovechkin has four goals in five games since returning from missing the previous 16 because of a broken left leg. The 39-year-old has 19 goals this season and is on pace to pass Gretzky's mark of 894 this spring.

Dylan Strome, Lars Eller, Andrew Mangiapane, Connor McMichael and Aliaksei Protas also scored against Jonathan Quick, who remains stuck on 399 career wins. Tom Wilson sealed it with an empty-netter with 37.5 seconds left, and Logan Thompson made 28 saves to compensate for giving the puck away to Chris Kreider for his goal into a wide-open net.

Sam Carrick also got a goal off a turnover by Ovechkin and Filip Chytil and Mika Zibanejad scored in the third period to make things interesting. Quick allowed six goals on 27 shots as the Rangers lost for a 16th time in 21 games to sink from solidly in a playoff spot to tied for last place.

After showing life Thursday by beating Boston to end a four-game skid, they were back to their sloppy, inconsistent play.

Sharks 3, Devils 2: Cody Ceci scored with 24 seconds left in the third period, and host San Jose beat New Jersey.

With the game tied 2-2, Ceci's slap shot from the point beat Devils goaltender Jacob Markstrom.

Yaroslav Askarov stopped 28 shots for the Sharks, and Markstrom made 21 saves for New Jersey.

Macklin Celebrini gave San Jose a 2-1 lead with a hard wrist shot on his first shift of the third period, but Paul Cotter answered for the Devils.

Red Wings 4, Jets 2: Dylan Larkin and Lucas Raymond each scored power-play goals to help lead visiting Detroit to a victory over Winnipeg that extended its winning streak to a season-high four games.

Larkin added an empty-net goal and Alex DeBrincat also scored for the Red Wings. Raymond and Patrick Kane contributed a pair of assists and Moritz Seider had three assists.

Alex Lyon made 21 saves for Detroit.

Josh Morrissey and Nikolaj Ehlers scored for the Jets.

Wild 4, Hurricanes 0: Filip Gustavsson made 20 saves for his third shutout this season, Marco Rossi had four assists and visiting Minnesota beat Carolina.

The Wild improved to 16-5-2 when scoring first this season as Mats Zuccarello beat Pyotr Kochetkov on a slap shot for a 1-0 lead with 6:57 left in the first period.

Zuccarello, who also assisted on Joel Eriksson Ek's tip-in goal on the power play in the second period, added an empty net goal with 3:46 remaining. Matt Boldy also scored in the third.

Blue Jackets 6, Blues 4: Dmitri Voronkov scored two goals and host Columbus beat St. Louis.

Kirill Marchenko, Adam Fantilli, Mathieu Oliver and Mikael Pyhtia also scored for the Blue Jackets, who are 5-2-1 in their last eight.

Brayden Schenn, Jordan Kyrou and Cam Fowler each had a goal and an assist for the Blues, and Colton Parayko also scored.

Columbus twice led by three goals in a wild third period which had eight goals, including five in a 3:40 span. Voronkov capped the flurry at 7:24 to make it 5-2.

Canadiens 2, Avalanche 1 (SO): Kirby Dach and Cole Caufield scored in the shootout, Jakub Dobes had 22 saves in regulation and visiting Montreal

beat Colorado.

Caufield had the regulation goal for the Canadiens, which wrapped up its road trip with a 4-2 mark.

Mackenzie Blackwood made 23 saves but could only stop one of three Montreal players in the shootout. The Avalanche had its season-high six-game winning streak snapped.

Maple Leafs 6, Bruins 4: Matthew Knies had three goals and two assists, Mitch Marner had a goal and four assists, and host Toronto beat Boston.

Auston Matthews had a goal and two assists in his return after missing six games with an undisclosed upper-body injury, and Jake McCabe had a goal and an assist for the Maple Leafs, who have won three straight and four of five. Joseph Woll had 26 saves to win his fourth straight start.

David Pastrnak had two goals, and Morgan Geekie and Trent Frederic also scored as the Bruins lost their third straight and fourth in their last five games. Jeremy Swayman finished with 23 saves.

Stars 3, Utah 2 (OT): Defenseman Thomas Harley scored on a rebound at 3:01 of overtime and host Dallas beat Utah.

Jamie Benn and Oskar Bäck also scored for the Stars, who have won four straight for the first time since opening the season with four wins.

Matias Maccelli scored twice and Karel Vejmelka stopped 26 shots as Utah lost for the sixth time in seven games (1-4-2).

In overtime, Harley lifted the puck into the net after Vejmelka stopped a shot by Matt Duchene at the crease. It was Harley's 21st career goal — fourth in overtime — 155 games.

Kings 2, Lightning 1: Adrian Kempe broke a tie with 5:48 to play and host Los Angeles beat Tampa Bay for its fourth consecutive victory.

Mikey Anderson scored in the first period and Darcy Kuem-

per made 34 saves for the Kings, who shut out the Lightning over the final 58½ minutes. Los Angeles has won 12 of 16.

Captain Victor Hedman scored and Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 19 shots for Tampa Bay, which has lost three straight games for the first time in two months.

Golden Knights 3, Sabres 1: Tanner Laczynski scored his first goal of the season, Adin Hill stopped 23 shots and host Vegas beat Buffalo.

The Golden Knights have totaled a league-high 33 points while going 16-3-1 since Nov. 21 to take over the No. 1 spot in the NHL with 57 points — leapfrogging Winnipeg, which lost to Detroit.

Mark Stone and Jack Eichel also scored for Vegas, while Tanner Pearson added two assists.

Oilers 4, Kraken 2: Vasily Podkolzin and Jeff Skinner scored in the first 5½ minutes and visiting Edmonton beat Seattle for its third straight victory.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Leon Draisaitl also scored, with Draisaitl wrapping it up with an empty-netter with 1:58 left — just six seconds after the Kraken pulled goalie Philipp Grubauer for an extra attacker.

Calvin Pickard made 15 saves to help the Oilers improve to 24-12-3.

Chandler Stephenson and Jaden Schwartz scored for Seattle. Grubauer made 28 saves.

Predators 4, Flames 1: Ryan O'Reilly had his fifth NHL hat trick to help visiting Nashville beat Calgary for its second victory in two nights.

Rookie center Fedor Svechikov also scored and had an assist for his first career multi-point game. Filip Forsberg had two assists.

Mikael Backlund scored for the Flames, who lost consecutive games for the first time since November.

Jokic scores 46 as Nuggets top Spurs

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO—Nikola Jokic had 46 points and 10 rebounds and the Denver Nuggets spoiled Victor Wembanyama's 21st birthday on Saturday, beating the San Antonio Spurs 122-111 in overtime.

Wembanyama finished with 20 points and 23 rebounds for San Antonio, but was scoreless and without a rebound in OT. Wembanyama has 57 double-doubles in 101 career games.

The teams split the home-and-home series on consecutive nights. The Spurs won Friday's game 113-110 when Wembanyama stole the ball from Jokic with four seconds remaining and Devin Vassell scored on a fastbreak layup.

Jokic made sure there were no such heroics Saturday, scoring nine points in the extra period.

Michael Porter Jr. added 28 points and 10 rebounds for Denver.

Vassell missed a contested layup, but tipped in the rebound to tie the game at 108 with 14 seconds remaining in regulation. Jokic missed a 19-footer over Wembanyama with two seconds remaining to close regulation.

76ers 123, Nets 94: Joel Embiid had 28 points and 12 rebounds, and visiting Philadelphia beat Brooklyn.

Tyrese Maxey added 18 points and Paul George and Caleb Martin each had 17 for the 76ers, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Ziaire Williams had 19 points and Keon Johnson chipped in 15 for the short-handed Nets, who have lost 12 out of their last 16 games.

Brooklyn was playing without starters Cam Thomas (left strained ankle), Cam Johnson (right sprained ankle) and Ben Simmons (sore left calf).

Pacers 126, Suns 108: Tyrese Haliburton scored 27 points and Myles Turner added 20 points, six rebounds and

three blocks, leading host Indiana past Phoenix.

Haliburton also had eight assists and, for the second straight game, did not commit a turnover. The Pacers have won three of their last four to even their overall record at 18-18. Indiana also swept the two-game season series from the Suns.

Kevin Durant led Phoenix with 25 points, seven rebounds and seven assists, while Devin Booker had 20 points in the same venue he scored an arena-record 62 in his last trip to Gainbridge Fieldhouse in January 2024. Booker also had nine rebounds and nine assists.

The Pacers swung the game by breaking a 56-all halftime tie with the first five points of the second half, and used a pivotal 40-point third quarter — their third-best quarter all season — to seize control. Indiana never trailed in the second half.

Pistons 119, Timberwolves 105: Cade Cunningham scored a season-high 40 points and host Detroit overcame Anthony Edwards' career-high 53 points to beat Minnesota.

Cunningham, who also had nine assists, set his previous season high of 35 points against Milwaukee on Nov. 13.

Edwards' previous career high was 51 points against Washington on April 9 last season. His 3-pointer with 9:25 remaining tied his career best, but he didn't score again until 22 seconds remained.

Malik Beasley had 23 points as the Pistons won their third straight and sixth in their last seven games. Tobias Harris contributed 16 points and 11 rebounds and Ausar Thompson added 10 points, 10 rebounds and a career-best six steals.

Trail Blazers 105, Bucks 102: Anfernee Simons scored 28 points and Deni Avdija 19 as visiting Portland beat Milwaukee.

Giannis Antetokounmpo hit two free throws to give the

Bucks a 102-100 lead. Simons was fouled on a scoring drive and completed the three-point play, giving the Trail Blazers a 103-102 lead with 23.5 seconds remaining.

Milwaukee turned it over on its next possession without getting a shot, giving Portland possession with 8.4 seconds remaining.

Simons hit two more free throws with 5.4 seconds left, giving the Blazers a 105-102 lead. Damian Lillard missed a 3-point try from the left side on the Bucks' final possession.

Bulls 139, Knicks 126: Coby White made a career-high nine 3-pointers and scored 33 points, Zach LaVine also had 33 and host Chicago beat New York after honoring former MVP Derrick Rose on Saturday night.

White hit 9 of 11 from beyond the arc. LaVine delivered his third 30-point outing in the past four games.

Nikola Vucevic added 22 points and 12 rebounds. Josh Giddey had 15 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists, helping the Bulls cap off a feel-good day on a winning note.

The team honored Rose, the Chicago product, at halftime after announcing that he will join Michael Jordan (23), Scottie Pippen (33), Jerry Sloan (4) and Bob Love (10) as the only players whose numbers have been retired by the franchise sometime next season.

Jazz 136, Heat 100: Brice Sensabaugh scored a career-high 34 points, John Collins finished with 24, and visiting Utah snapped a five-game losing streak with a rout of Miami.

Walker Kessler had 14 points and 16 rebounds while Jazz starters Collin Sexton (17 points) Lauri Markkanen (15) and Keyonte George (11) all finished in double figures.

Nikola Jovic scored 17 points and Duncan Robinson finished with 16 for the Heat, who played without suspended star forward

Jimmy Butler. Butler was suspended for seven games Friday over what the club calls conduct detrimental to the team after saying "probably not" when asked if he thought he could find on-court joy again in Miami.

Warriors 121, Grizzlies 113: Andrew Wiggins scored 24 points, Dennis Schroder added 17 and undermanned Golden State held off visiting Memphis in the latest testy matchup between the rivals.

Lindy Waters III scored 16 with four 3-pointers off the bench on a night the Warriors missed Stephen Curry along with fellow guards Brandin Podziemski and Gary Payton II.

Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 23 points and Desmond Bane had 22 points and 10 assists as the Grizzlies wrapped up a five-game road trip.

Physical play is always the norm with these teams, and it became heated 36 seconds into the fourth quarter. Draymond Green was issued a flagrant 1 foul against Zach Edey, then Green received his ninth technical of the season at the 10:51 mark.

Clippers 131, Hawks 105: Norman Powell scored 20 points, Kawhi Leonard added 12 in his first game of the season and host Los Angeles rolled to a victory over Atlanta.

Leonard, who missed the Clippers' first 34 games with what the team described as right knee injury recovery, played 19 minutes. He was 4-for-11 from the floor, including three 3-pointers, along with three rebounds and one assist.

Ivica Zubac had 18 points and 18 rebounds as Los Angeles snapped a two-game losing streak. Amir Coffey had 17 points.

Trae Young led the Hawks with 20 points and 14 assists. De'Andre Hunter had 18 points for Atlanta, which has dropped its last three after winning four straight.