

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Aircraft carrier name draws criticism

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — As a Mississippi senator, John C. Stennis signed the infamous “Southern Manifesto” decrying integration. He fought Black equality in the Navy and, as a prosecutor, sought the execution of three Black men who had been tortured into confessing to a slaying.

For several decades, his name has graced an aircraft carrier currently based in Norfolk — the only senator to have that honor.

Now, amid a national reckoning over America’s racist roots, some are pushing for that to change.

“Today’s sailors, Marines and officers should not have to make the psychologically damaging choice of speaking up or serving in silence in a vessel named for an ardent segregationist and white supremacist,

who condoned beating the skin off black people until they either confessed or died,” retired Lt. Cmdr. Reuben Keith Green wrote in a recent piece for the U.S. Naval Institute. “It is incompatible with American values and the recent directives from the Navy to expect for them to have to do so.”

In the piece, titled “The Case for Renaming the USS John C. Stennis,” Green outlines the former Democratic senator’s history as a white supremacist and urges the Navy to rename the ship. He suggested former sailor William S. Norman, a minority affairs assistant to the naval operations chief in the early 1970s who pushed for improvements to racial equality, as one possible replacement. Norman grew up in Norfolk and attended Booker T. Washington High School.

A similar effort launched last week aims to get Stennis’

name off a NASA space center in Mississippi.

Pentagon officials have said they would look into changing the monikers of military installations named for Confederate leaders — including North Carolina’s Fort Bragg — though President Donald Trump has said he won’t allow that to happen. A Navy spokesman declined to comment about the Stennis.

Michael Clemons, a political science and African American studies professor at Old Dominion University, said he thinks renaming the ship “makes a whole lot of sense.”

“The Navy is too diverse at this point in time, too inclusionary to be honoring certain individuals,” said Clemons, who’s also the founding editor of *The Journal of Race and Policy*. “To keep his name on an aircraft carrier of that magnitude, I think it potentially undermines

the safety and cohesiveness of those men and women who put their life on the line for this country.”

In Congress, Stennis was part of a coalition of southern Democrats known as “Dixiecrats” who vehemently opposed civil rights and desegregation.

“Stennis was the heart, soul, and brains of the white supremacist caucus in the 1948 Congress,” Green wrote.

He signed the “Southern Manifesto” opposing school integration and voted against the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

“I often have thought about what it must be like for a minority sailor to receive orders to and serve” on the Stennis, Green wrote. “Most sailors — and Navy leaders — have little idea of his background, but the Navy, as an institution, has a moral obligation to know.”

DOD chides China for South China Sea drills

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

Chinese military exercises being held this week around disputed islands in the South China Sea “further destabilize” relations among nations staking claims in the waters, the Pentagon warned last week.

China state media announced late last month that it would conduct military training exercises in waters off the Paracel Islands Monday through Friday.

The announcement included descriptions of boundary lines that “no vessel shall be allowed to navigate within” during those days of operation. The number and types of vessels participating in the exercise

were not disclosed.

“The designated area where the exercises are due to take place encompass contested waters and territory,” the Pentagon said in a statement. “Conducting military exercises over disputed territory in the South China Sea is counterproductive to efforts at easing tensions and maintaining stability.”

Both China and Vietnam have claimed sovereignty over the Paracel archipelago, which China calls Xisha.

The United States, among many other countries, regards much of the sea as international waters and thus open to free passage.

In what it calls freedom-

of-navigation operations, U.S. Navy ships routinely transit near reefs and small islets that lie in the sea’s international waters but are subjects of disputed claims of sovereignty by China, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Mustin conducted operations “in support of security and stability” in waters near the Paracel Islands in late May, according to the U.S. Navy.

The littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords was conducting routine operations in the South China Sea on Monday as the Chinese exercise kicked off. The Giffords operated near the Chinese survey

ship Hai Yang Di Zhi 4 Hao, which over the past few months has ventured into the exclusive economic zones belonging to Malaysia and Vietnam.

The Pentagon statement said the exercise violates China’s commitments under the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which calls for all parties to avoid activities that would “complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability.”

China’s actions also “further destabilize the situation in the South China Sea” and conflict with China’s “pledge to not militarize the South China Sea,” the Pentagon said.

Harvard professor researches nanofiber material body armor

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

Seven years of Harvard University research into bulletproof armor began with a simple question of how to protect soldiers' private parts from blast wounds.

The problem inspired Harvard professor Kit Parker, a veteran of four tours in Afghanistan, to begin research that led to the development of a lightweight nanofiber material that can stop both bullets and burns.

"I try to do one science project for each thing that pissed me off in the war," said Parker, whose research on a new nanofiber material was published in the scientific journal *Matter* last week.

The bioengineering and applied physics professor and Army Reserve lieutenant colonel has done work on traumatic brain injuries, lab-made meat and a robotic stingray that was

part of a quest to build an artificial heart.

In 2013, knowing that mines and roadside bombs have left hundreds of troops with penis and testicle injuries, he began work to develop body armor so light it could fit in a soldier's underwear.

Modern body armor is bulky, with multiple materials layered together, due to the difficulty of making a material that can protect against both projectiles and intense heat at the same time, Parker said in a phone call on Monday.

Typical bullet-stopping materials like Kevlar are made with grid-like molecular structures, while those that block intense heat, like Nomex, are fluffy with molecules more spread out.

But the Harvard researchers aimed to cut weight by creating a single material that could do both jobs at once. They used microscopic strands of Kevlar

fibers, gathered like tiny bundles of spaghetti and arranged in a loose, unwoven network.

"It's mostly air with a scaffolding," Parker said.

The "long" fibers can stretch to stop the force of a bullet in its tracks, while air in the fabric's pores absorbs intense heat — 20 times more than traditional materials, researchers said.

To test it, West Point cadets placed a blowtorch with a heater attachment beside a small gelatin astronaut figure.

The figure melted in minutes without any protection, and another body armor material, Twaron, protected him for 17 minutes, but the new nanofiber kept him cool and unmelted after 30 minutes.

Army researchers in Natick, Mass., who shot BB-like projectiles at the new lightweight material found that it stops projectiles about equally as well as heavier stuff used in traditional body armor.

Search for US Marine in Japan continues

BY JAMES BOLINGER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The Marine Corps said Sunday that "search efforts are still ongoing" for a Marine who went missing at sea days earlier during a recreational trip to a beach in Shimane prefecture.

The Japan Coast Guard office in Hamada received a call at approximately 11 a.m. Thursday about a person drowning near the Iwami Kahin campground at Hamada Beach, an agency spokesman told *Stars and Stripes* by phone Saturday morning.

An earlier report in the *Chugoku* newspaper described the person as a 24-year-old Marine assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in neighboring Yamaguchi prefecture.

"About 20 people affiliated with the base were visiting the beach," the report said. "The man went missing after he went to rescue two men in the group, who were swept out off shore."

The coast guard came up empty after searching Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the spokesman said Sunday.

It's customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

However, the Marine Corps said its operation continues.

"The search efforts are still ongoing and there has not yet been a change in the Marine's status," Capt. Marco Valenzuela, a spokesman for Marine Aircraft Group 12 at MCAS Iwakuni, said in an email to *Stars and Stripes* on Sunday.

The beach has not yet opened for the season, the coast guard spokesman said.

US general shows off RQ-4 Global Hawk as Japan prepares to bring in own fleet

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The top U.S. general in Japan showed off an RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance drone to one of his Japanese counterparts Thursday as the country prepares to field its own fleet of the unmanned aircraft.

U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider, Air Defense Command chief Lt. Gen. Shunji Izutsu and about 20 U.S. and Japanese military leaders visited a detachment from the 319th Operations Group that operates the drones at Yokota, according to an Air Force statement released after the visit.

The Global Hawks support U.S. intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions for joint combatant forces in peacetime, contingency and crisis operations, the statement said.

Japan's Defense Ministry, in its 2020 budget request, revealed that it planned to create a unit

of Global Hawks, which are expected to deploy to Misawa Air Base by March 2022.

Guam-based Global Hawks have operated out of U.S. bases in Japan during typhoon season each year since 2014. This summer, several of the high-tech drones are flying out of Yokota.

The generals' visit was intended to familiarize the Japanese with how the Air Force conducts Global Hawk air and ground operations, the statement said.

"The United States continues to forward position some of its most advanced capabilities as a part of our commitment to the defense of Japan and to the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region," Schneider said in the statement.

During the tour, airmen showed their Japanese counterparts maintenance processes and equipment, simulated aircraft takeoff and command and control capabilities. They also explained how the Air Force organizes, trains and equips its reconnaissance forces.

US, S. Korea officials honor 70 years since Battle of Osan

BY MATTHEW KEELER
AND KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

OSAN, South Korea — It was raining 70 years ago when American soldiers engaged in their first ground battle against North Korean forces, just over a week after the Korean War began.

That meant the Air Force couldn't provide cover as the 540 members of Task Force Smith fought more than 5,000 North Koreans armed with Soviet-made tanks.

More than 150 Americans were killed or went missing in the fighting on July 5, 1950, known as the Battle of Osan. But the unit accomplished its mission to help delay the North Korean advance while U.S. reinforcements arrived on the divided peninsula.

U.S. and South Korean officials gathered Sunday in Osan, about 30 miles south of Seoul, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the battle, saying it also marked the beginning of the longstanding alliance between the two countries.

"Task Force Smith's actions signaled that the free world would not stand by idly and watch communist aggres-

sion towards the Republic of Korea," Gen. Robert Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said during the ceremony, using the formal name for South Korea.

Osan city also inaugurated the Jukmiryeong Peace Park and an expanded museum in memory of the battle, with dancers and a flyover by the Black Eagles, a South Korean military aerobatic team.

Abrams paid homage to retired Maj. Gen. Yoon Seung-kook, who as a young captain was the only South Korean assigned to the unit. USFK also recently renamed an access gate at Camp Humphreys in honor of Yoon, now 95.

The U.S. came to the aid of South Korea shortly after the war began on June 25, 1950, but it initially relied mainly on air and naval support.

The Korean War saw many deadlier battles, but Osan was significant because it marked the start of broader international engagement.

"It showed this is no longer just a Korean conflict. Now you've got American forces with, as the saying goes, with skin in the game," said Cord Scott, an Osan-based history professor with the University of

Maryland Global Campus. "It exemplifies the expansion of the war under the U.N. guise."

Task Force Smith was a hastily assembled and understrength battalion sent from the 24th Infantry Division in U.S.-occupied Japan after the United Nations Security Council authorized military action by member states.

The outnumbered soldiers were ill-prepared against the better-equipped North Koreans but held the ground for more than six hours before commander Lt. Col. Charles Smith ordered a retreat.

"Because it's raining, the U.S. can't provide air cover and if you don't have air cover, especially back in the 1940s and 50s, you really can't take on a tank with a recoilless gun or an artillery piece," he said.

In all, 22 nations contributed combat forces or medical support under U.N. auspices to the fight against the North Koreans, who were later joined by Chinese forces.

The U.S. maintains at least 28,500 service members in South Korea after the war ended on July 27, 1953, with an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Rocket fired toward Green Zone in Iraq

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi military said Sunday that a rocket aimed at Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, home of the U.S. Embassy, struck a residential house and injured a child.

Iraqi officials said the embassy's recently installed C-RAM air defense system may have attempted to intercept the rocket as the system was operational late Saturday. A recent spate of rocket attacks have struck close to the U.S. Embassy and targeted American troops in Iraqi bases. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The rocket was launched from the Ali Al-Saleh area of Baghdad and landed next to a house close to a local TV channel late Saturday, the military statement said. A child suffered head injuries and the house was damaged.

Iraqi security forces say they also thwarted another attack in the Umm al-Azam area aiming to hit Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, a training base used by U.S.-led coalition forces.

In March, two Americans and one British soldier were killed following a barrage of rockets on Camp Taji.

The latest uptick in attacks comes shortly before Iraq embarks on strategic talks with the U.S. in which the presence of American forces in the country is expected to top the agenda.

The U.S. has criticized the federal government for being unable to reign in Iran-backed militia groups it believes are orchestrating the attacks. Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has pledged to protect American installations from attacks, U.S. officials said.

Iraqi security forces last week raided the headquarters of the powerful Iran-backed paramilitary Kataib Hezbollah and detained 14 men suspected of being responsible for rocket attacks targeting the Green Zone. Thirteen detainees were later released and one remains in custody.

Rollover in Afghanistan kills one

Stars and Stripes

A vehicle rollover accident has claimed the life of a soldier supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said Saturday.

Spc. Vincent Sebastian Ibarria, 21, of San Antonio, died Friday as a result of the incident, which is under investigation, a statement said. The accident happened in the capital of Farah province in the country's southwest.

Ibarria was assigned to the

2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment. The Fort Drum, N.Y.-based unit, part of the 1st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, deployed to Afghanistan with the brigade in the spring.

"The entire Warrior Team mourns the loss of Vincent," the brigade said on its social media pages. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Vincent's Family, Friends, and fellow Soldiers."

No other details, including the type of vehicle that rolled

over, were released.

Ibarria's death brings the number of Americans killed in Afghanistan this year to nine.

In online tributes, friends remembered Ibarria as loyal, kind and positive.

"I'm lost for words right now I can't believe you are gone," said Trey Davis, who described Ibarria as his best friend, in a Facebook post on Saturday. "You will never be forgotten bro I love and miss you so much bro. I hope you're looking down and smiling at the boys."

Holiday fuels worries about virus cases

Associated Press

ST. PETE BEACH, Fla. — The United States has dipped under 50,000 new daily infections for the first time in four days, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University, but experts fear celebrations for the July 4th weekend will act like rocket fuel for the nation's surging coronavirus outbreak.

Johns Hopkins on Sunday counted 45,300 new coronavirus infections reported Saturday in the U.S. after three days in which the daily count reached as high as 54,500 new cases. The lower figure does not mean the situation in the U.S. is improving, it could be due to reduced reporting on a national holiday.

The United States has the most infections and virus-related deaths in the world, with 2.8 million cases and nearly 130,000 dead,

according to the university. Experts say the true toll of the pandemic is significantly higher, due to people who died before they were tested and missed mild cases.

Worldwide, nearly 11.3 million people have been infected and over 531,000 have died, with outbreaks surging in India, South Africa, Pakistan, Brazil and several other Latin American countries. In a first, South Africa on Sunday reported more than 10,000 new confirmed cases in a single day.

In another worrying sign, the World Health Organization said member states reported more than 212,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 around the world on Saturday, the highest single-day increase since the start of the pandemic. The Geneva-based organization said more than 60% of the confirmed cases reports it received were in the Americas, which includes the

United States and Brazil.

Faced with rising infections, many U.S. communities canceled parades and fireworks and cautioned people against hosting large gatherings.

Texas, which reported a record daily increase of 8,258 confirmed coronavirus cases Saturday, is retreating from what had been one of the country's swiftest reopenings. Much of the state began mandating face coverings Friday, with a \$250 fine for scofflaws.

In Florida, which reported 11,445 confirmed infections on Saturday, bars statewide are shut down and some regional attractions, such as Zoo Miami and Jungle Island, have closed. Officials in South Florida — including in Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys — also closed beaches through the weekend.

Trump Jr.'s girlfriend tests positive days after fundraiser

Associated Press

BOZEMAN, Mont. — The wife and the running mate of Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Gianforte, as well as several other top GOP officials, were possibly exposed to the coronavirus after attending an event with the girlfriend of President Donald Trump's oldest son, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle reported.

Gianforte's wife, Susan, lieutenant governor candidate Kristen Juras, as well as Republican congressional candidate and state auditor Matt

Rosendale and state auditor candidate Troy Downing, were at a Trump fundraising event July 1 in Gallatin County with Kimberly Guilfoyle, the girlfriend of Donald Trump Jr., the newspaper reported.

Guilfoyle was diagnosed with the coronavirus on July 3.

Greg Gianforte, Montana's representative in the U.S. House, did not attend the event because Congress was in session, the Daily Chronicle reported.

On July 1, Juras posted a photo on her campaign Facebook page posing less than 6

feet away and without masks with Susan Gianforte, Donald Trump Jr. and Guilfoyle. In the photo's caption, Juras wrote that the photo was taken the night before, on June 30, the newspaper reported.

"Since learning of their potential exposure, Greg, Susan, and Kristen have adhered to recommended guidelines. Out of an abundance of caution and for the health and safety of others, they will self-quarantine, be tested for COVID-19, and suspend in-person campaign events pending test results," a Gianforte campaign spokesper-

son said.

Downing's campaign manager Sam Loveridge confirmed Downing attended the event. Loveridge said in an email that neither Downing nor his staff were ever in "close proximity" with Guilfoyle.

"Out of an abundance of caution, Troy Downing will be tested as soon as possible and will avoid personal contact and all public functions until a negative test result can be confirmed," Loveridge told the newspaper in an email.

Iran orders masks as public shrugs off resurgence

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran on Sunday instituted mandatory mask-wearing as fears mount over newly spiking reported deaths from the coronavirus, even as its public increasingly shrugs off the danger of the COVID-19 illness it causes.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei publicized an image of himself in a mask in recent days, urging both public officials and the Islamic Repub-

lic's 80 million people to wear them to stop the virus's spread.

But public opinion polling and a walk through any of the streets of Tehran show the widespread apathy felt over a pandemic that saw Iran in February among the first countries struck after China.

The new rules mark a turning point for Iran, which has struggled in trying to balance provincial lockdowns to stop the virus's spread with the fears of stalling out an economy

already struggling under U.S. sanctions after America's unilateral withdrawal in 2018 from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Religious considerations also played a role in this Shiite theocracy as authorities declined for weeks to close shrines where the faithful touch or kiss the tombs' protective bars.

For a moment, it appeared the restrictions and public fear had worked, as reported new cases and deaths from the virus

dropped to their lowest levels in May.

But new cases soon rose again, with officials initially saying better testing causes the numbers to spike even as they lifted restrictions to boost economic activity.

By mid-June, daily death tolls once again routinely rose to triple digits. On June 30, Iran saw its highest single-day reported death toll of the pandemic with 162 killed.

2 dead, 8 hurt in SC nightclub shooting

Associated Press

GREENVILLE, S.C. — A shooting at a nightclub early Sunday left two people dead and eight wounded in South Carolina, a sheriff's official said.

Two Greenville County sheriff's deputies noticed a disturbance at Lavish Lounge just before 2 a.m. and saw a large crowd running out of the building, Sheriff Hobart Lewis said at a press conference. There was "active gunfire from inside the building," Lt. Jimmy Bolt said in an initial statement, and Lewis said all the shots were fired inside.

Both Lewis and Bolt initially

said 12 people had been wounded — with at least four in critical condition, Lewis said — but Bolt told The Associated Press that two victims were likely counted twice in the confusion at the hospital.

No one was immediately taken into custody. Bolt told the AP that the sheriff's office was looking for two suspects, but couldn't provide names or descriptions.

"We don't really have a person of interest that we can name," Lewis said at the press conference, later adding that authorities weren't sure what led to the gunfire.

Lewis said a "very large crowd" was at the nightclub for

"some type of concert."

A post on Lavish Lounge's Facebook page advertised a July 4 performance by trap rapper Foogiano.

McMaster reminded South Carolinians last week that he hadn't lifted restrictions on large crowds, and that those operating nightclubs illegally or holding concerts against his orders don't have to be caught in the act to face criminal charges, but instead could be charged weeks later if COVID-19 cases are traced back.

Lewis said at the press conference that he didn't know whether the club had sought an exemption to the governor's order or secured a permit for

Saturday night's event, but said it was clear that the club's patrons weren't 6 feet apart.

A phone call and an Instagram direct message from the AP to Lavish Lounge weren't immediately returned, but the club posted on Facebook just before 6 a.m. that events "have been postponed until further notice."

Lewis said the victims, whose names were not immediately released, were taken to the Prisma Health hospital in Greenville, some via private vehicle.

Bolt said that of the eight wounded, some had non-life-threatening injuries and others were in critical condition.

Facebook groups shift attacks to Black Lives Matter movement

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A loose network of Facebook groups that took root across the country in April to organize protests over coronavirus stay-at-home orders has become a hub of misinformation and conspiracy theories that have pivoted to a variety of new targets. Their latest: Black Lives Matter and the nationwide protests of racial injustice.

These groups, which now boast a collective audience of more than 1 million members, are still thriving after most states started lifting virus restrictions.

And many have expanded their focus.

One group transformed itself last month from "Reopen California" to "California Patriots Pro Law & Order," with recent posts mocking Black Lives Matter or changing the slogan to "White Lives Matter." Members have used profane slurs to refer to Black people and protesters, calling them "animals," "racist" and "thugs"—a direct violation of Facebook's hate speech standards.

Others have become gathering grounds for promoting conspiracy theories about the protests, suggesting protesters were paid to go to demonstrations and that even the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man who died in the custody of Minneapolis police, was staged.

An Associated Press review of the most recent posts in 40 of these Facebook groups — most of which were launched by

conservative groups or pro-gun activists — found the conversations largely shifted last month to attacking the nationwide protests over the killing of Black men and women after Floyd's death.

"Unless Facebook is actively looking for disinformation in those spaces, they will go unnoticed for a long time and they will grow," said Joan Donovan, the research director at the Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy.

Facebook said it is aware of the collection of reopen groups, and is using technology as well as relying on users to identify problematic posts. The company has vowed in the past to look for material that violates its rules in private groups as well as in public places on its site. But the platform has not always been able to deliver on that promise.

Some groups in New Jersey, Texas and Ohio have labeled systemic racism a hoax. A member of the California Facebook group posted a widely debunked flyer that says "White men, women and children, you are the enemy," which was falsely attributed to Black Lives Matter. Another falsely claimed that a Black man was brandishing a gun outside the St. Louis mansion where a white couple with firearms confronted protesters. Dozens of users in several of the groups have pushed an unsubstantiated theory that liberal billionaire George Soros is paying crowds to attend racial justice protests.

Thousands rally in Australia to back Black Lives Matter

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Several thousand people rallied in Black Lives Matter protests all across Australia over the weekend to call for racial equality and highlight the deaths of Indigenous people while in police custody.

About 500 people protested Sunday in Newcastle, north of Sydney, after the New South Wales state Supreme Court approved the rally following an attempt by police to have it banned.

A rally in Sydney on Sunday began with a ceremony at which people mourned the Indigenous Australians who have died in police custody.

There have been more than 400 Indigenous deaths in custody since a royal commission into the issue ended in 1991. No convictions have been recorded in any of the deaths.

On Saturday, Australians took part in Black Lives Matter rallies in the cities of Brisbane, Darwin, Perth and Adelaide. Many of the protesters wore masks and attempted to maintain social distancing due to coronavirus concerns.

Australia's Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged ethnic minority in the country. They have higher-than-average rates of infant mortality and poor health, as well as shorter life expectancy and lower levels of education and employment than other Australians.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman finds rattlesnake under wheelchair seat

KY MURRAY — A woman traveling in a motorized wheelchair near a Kentucky Walmart discovered a rattlesnake under her seat, the Murray Ledger & Times reported.

Murray Police Department officers killed the snake after they helped the woman out of her wheelchair and got the rattler on the ground.

John Hewlett, a Murray State University graduate researcher, told the paper the snake was probably not local to the area.

“The chance of there being a population of timber rattlesnakes within 15 miles of Murray is exceedingly low,” Hewlett said.

Absentee ballots set state record for primary

ME AUGUSTA — Maine voters are taking advantage of absentee ballots at an unprecedented rate in advance of the July 14 primary.

The Bangor Daily News reported that 163,000 Mainers have requested the ballots. Voting on the day of the primary is likely to be complicated by the coronavirus pandemic, and that has led local and state officials to encourage absentee voting.

The volume of absentee ballots is a record for a primary. It would, however, take a big final push to equal the state record of 244,000 set during the 2008 general election.

Father who sued son attacked by second son

IA KNOXVILLE — An Iowa man who successfully sued one of his sons for the shooting death of his wife was assaulted by his other son,

police said.

Billy Dean Carter, 55, was arrested and charged with assaulting his father, Bill Carter, 74, the Des Moines Register reported. Police said the younger Carter knocked his father to the ground and kicked him twice on a road near his father’s home following an argument.

In 2017, a jury ordered another of Bill Carter’s sons, Jason Carter, to pay \$10 million to the estate of his mother, Shirley, 68, who died in 2015 from two gunshot wounds fired by a rifle. Bill Carter had claimed in the lawsuit that Jason killed his mother to gain access to his parents’ assets.

In 2019, Jason Carter was acquitted of murder in his mother’s death, but the jury verdict in the civil case was allowed to stand.

Former junkyard now a pollinator habitat

IN DRESSER — Butterflies, bees, birds, bats and small mammals have found a home in a former auto junkyard along the Wabash River in western Indiana.

A pollinator habitat has sprung up at the site of the Wabashiki Fish and Wildlife Area due to a \$20,000 grant from Duke Energy and the efforts of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department, the (Terre Haute) Tribune-Star reported.

County parks Superintendent Adam Grossman noted that the old junkyard gives Monarch butterflies a place to visit during their annual journey from Canada to Mexico. About 20 plant species are growing in a raised bed at the site.

Rick Burger, district manager for Duke Energy, said the project is an exciting environmental development that cleaned up a junkyard and benefits the community.

University investigates racist sticker sightings

AZ TUCSON — The University of Arizona is investigating the appearance of racist stickers around campus that advocate white supremacy.

Campus police said the stickers with hate messages have been spotted on utility poles, buildings and other exteriors.

Issaiah Johnson, a member of the football team who is Black, posted a picture of one of the stickers on his Twitter account. The sticker states “#whitelivesmatter” and to “kill a black on sight.”

Potato chip heiress wins back control of estate

AL MONTGOMERY — The heiress to the Golden Flake potato chip empire is, for now, back in control of her fortune after a ruling by the Alabama Supreme Court.

The court voided a 2019 probate order granting an emergency conservator that came after two employees claimed that Joann Bashinsky, 88, has dementia and is mentally unfit to handle her vast estate.

Justices said Bashinsky’s basic due-process rights were egregiously violated when the probate court made the emergency decision without giving her time to obtain counsel after her lawyers were disqualified. The permanent petition remains pending before the court.

Family warned of penalties for chalk art

WA SELAH — A family in Washington state could face up to year in jail or be fined no more than \$5,000 if they continue to draw chalk on their street in support of Black

Lives Matter, a city attorney said.

Selah City Attorney Rob Case warned Laura Perez, her family and her attorney, Joseph Cutler, in a letter that using chalk to draw on a public street constitutes third-degree malicious mischief, the Yakima Herald-Republic reported.

Erasing chalk art promoting Black Lives Matter while allowing other chalk drawings to remain untouched is a violation of the artists’ First Amendment rights, Cutler argued, adding that the city’s graffiti ordinance does not cover chalk art, as water-soluble chalk is not listed as a graffiti implement.

Lawsuit claims racial bias at Frito-Lay

KS TOPEKA — Black employees at the Frito-Lay plant in Topeka were subjected to ongoing racial harassment and discrimination, including hearing racial slurs and being threatened with lynching by white employees, according to a federal lawsuit.

Plant managers tolerated the discrimination and did not discipline white employees who were involved, according to the lawsuit filed on behalf of two former employees and one current employee.

The employees also allege in the suit that Black workers were disciplined for offenses that white employees were not and that white employees were promoted ahead of Black employees, The Kansas City Star reported.

“Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated within Frito-Lay or its parent company, PepsiCo,” the company said in a statement.

The men are suing the company for violation of the Civil Rights Act.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Bucks, Lakers hold top two playoff seeds

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Bucks and Los Angeles Lakers have all but guaranteed themselves the top two playoff seeds and face a balancing act when the NBA returns to action.

While other teams will be fighting for a postseason berth or playoff seedings when they play the final eight regular season games in Florida, the Lakers and Bucks will be looking to shake off the rust after a 4½-month hiatus while also staying healthy.

“At least from a player’s aspect, you can expect us to go out there and play as best as we can and as hard as we can during this situation,” Bucks forward Khris Middleton said. “That’s the only thing we can control, really.”

With the league playing the remainder of the regular season and the entire playoffs at Walt Disney World as a safety precaution amid the coronavirus pandemic, owning a No. 1 seed may not matter as much as usual. But the Bucks and Lakers are virtually assured of having the top seeds in their respective conferences regardless.

Milwaukee owned the NBA’s best record at 53-12 and the Lakers were next at 49-14 when the pandemic caused a suspension of play in mid-March.

The Lakers will arrive at Disney World with a magic number of three in the race for the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference. That number could get trimmed to

one on re-opening night if they beat the Los Angeles Clippers in the second game of the July 30 doubleheader.

Milwaukee’s magic number for the East’s No. 1 seed is two. The Bucks can’t drop below the No. 2 spot in the East, no matter what happens, and they could lock up the top spot on their half of the bracket as early as Aug. 2.

The race for the NBA’s best overall record still could be in doubt at that point. But with no home-court advantage to play for in these playoffs, the only thing left to decide would be which team is assured of wearing white uniforms for Game 1 of the NBA Finals if the title series is a Bucks-Lakers matchup.

“Like we always would if this were the regular season or if these were the last eight games of the regular season, we would compete to win,” Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. “That’s how your habits are built the best. Every time we take the floor, we’re going to go out there and try to win a game.”

When teams are locked into a particular playoff seed, they often spend the final few games of the regular season resting key players to avoid the risk of injury. That won’t necessarily be the case this season after such a long hiatus.

Middleton said Friday he was “probably not able to touch a basketball for maybe two or three months” during the pandemic. Bucks guard Donte DiVincenzo said his

inability to use the Bucks’ training facility for much of the hiatus caused him to focus on conditioning and said that “it kind of took me back to being a little kid again, dribbling the ball inside, doing those little moves on the sidewalk and stuff like that.”

That means even the teams without much at stake may need to spend these last eight regular-season games trying to regain the momentum that was lost these last few months.

“I don’t expect the first game or second game or third game, guys are going to be at 100%,” Bucks forward and reigning MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo said. “Guys are going to be rusty. We’ll see a lot of balls, people throwing the ball through the stands, turnovers. ... But I think as we move forward and guys get more comfortable, the level of basketball is going to get better each game.”

An early top-seed clinching also could see Lakers forward LeBron James breaking his routine. Typically, once James’ team is locked into a playoff seed, he shuts it down and begins preparing for the postseason. But because of the layoff, it could be argued that James might want to get a bit more game action.

“Does that mean you want to play certain guys 47 minutes? Obviously, no,” Vogel said. “We’ll be intelligent with the whole process.”

AP Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds in Miami contributed to this report.

Auto racing roundup

Dixon breaks through at Indianapolis with win

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — It took Scott Dixon 12 years to make a second trip to victory lane at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

He’s already plotting a third trip next month.

The 2008 Indianapolis 500 winner ended what had been a frustrating quest for a second win at the Brickyard, beating Graham Rahal to the checkered flag by 19.9469 seconds Saturday and claiming his first IndyCar Grand Prix title.

“It’s really nice to get another win at Indianapolis even though it’s not the big one,” Dixon said. “It is significant, man, to win at

this place.”

The atmosphere at Indy was subdued. Dixon donned a face mask as he raised his arms and pumped his fist inside the recently redone winner’s circle. The stands were empty and the usual celebratory noise was almost nonexistent.

But after three consecutive runner-up finishes in this race and a résumé full of near-misses and bad luck on Indy’s 2.5-mile oval, Dixon appeared to savor one of the rare spoils of victory — giving the starting command for NASCAR’s inaugural Xfinity Series race on the road course.

Briscoe completes dream Indy weekend

INDIANAPOLIS — Chase Briscoe parked the No. 98 car on the front straightaway at Indianapolis, climbed out and scaled the catch fence with some crew members. He even kissed the bricks.

It was the kind of celebration that made team owner Tony Stewart proud.

The 25-year-old who grew up dreaming of racing at the Brickyard, just like Stewart, made a late pit stop for tires pay off by retaking the lead, holding off AJ Allmendinger and

Austin Cindric for the frantic few final laps and becoming the first Xfinity Series driver to win on Indy’s road course.

Justin Haley finished second, 1.1717 seconds behind Briscoe.

“I just can’t believe I won at Indianapolis,” Briscoe said. “It’s still not as prestigious as winning on the oval, but to be the first to do something here, it’s still special — especially when you grow up less than an hour away from here.”

Noah Gragson wound up third while Allmendinger and Cindric faded to fourth and fifth as they battled and bumped around the 14-turn, 2.439-mile course over the final two laps.

MLB reopening not going off without a hitch

Associated Press

Freddie Freeman tests positive for COVID-19. Masahiro Tanaka gets hit in the head by a line drive. David Price announces he won't play this season.

On this Fourth of July, even the return of baseball didn't offer much cause for celebration.

As teams prepared to start their pandemic-shortened season, sobering examples of the game's potential danger took place at camps across the country.

Major League Baseball is getting ready for a 60-game season that won't include Price, a former Cy Young Award winner who was traded from the Boston Red Sox to the Los Angeles Dodgers in February.

"After considerable thought and discussion with my family and the Dodgers, I have decided it is in the best interest of my health and my family's health for me to not play this season," the five-time All-Star tweeted Saturday.

"I will miss my teammates and will be cheering for them throughout the season and on to a World Series victory. I'm sorry I won't be playing for you this year, but look forward to representing you next year," Price said.

The 34-year-old Price said he was opting out about five hours after Atlanta manager Brian Snitker announced Freeman had tested positive along with Braves pitchers Will Smith and Touki Toussaint as well as infielder Pete Kozma. Snitker said Smith and Toussaint were asymptomatic and noted Kozma had a fever.

Freeman is "not feeling great," Snitker

said.

"It will be a while before we can get him back," he said of the four-time All-Star first baseman.

It was uncertain whether Freeman would be ready for the start of the season, scheduled for July 23.

The New York Yankees said All-Star infielder DJ LeMahieu and pitcher Luis Cessa tested positive for COVID-19 before traveling to New York and were self-isolating at home. Manager Aaron Boone said LeMahieu was asymptomatic and Cessa had mild symptoms.

Kansas City catcher Salvador Perez and Twins first baseman Miguel Sano also tested positive.

Due to concerns about medical privacy laws, MLB isn't making a practice of disclosing which players test positive. For example, Baltimore Orioles manager Brandon Hyde said the team doesn't intend to reveal to the general public if anyone has tested positive. The Pittsburgh Pirates acknowledged there were positive tests within the organization but didn't get into specifics.

In the Braves' case, the four players who tested positive permitted Snitker to reveal their names. It's a move he applauded.

"For me, I think it's good in the industry and society, to know that this is a real deal," Snitker said. "This virus is real. It's nothing to mess with."

Snitker said Braves first base coach Eric Young Sr. already has opted out due to COVID-19 concerns.

Houston's Dusty Baker, who at 71 is the

oldest MLB manager, added that "I admire Freddie Freeman and his group for coming out saying what the problem is. And hopefully this can get through to other people, other young people."

Indeed, the news surrounding Freeman offered a reminder to players across the league that anyone is potentially susceptible. Freeman joins Colorado Rockies outfielder Charlie Blackmon as four-time All-Stars who have tested positive.

"It doesn't matter — age, race, ethnicity, religion," Milwaukee Brewers star Ryan Braun said. "Nobody is immune from this thing. I think there are constant reminders when you see the amount of athletes who have tested positive, the amount of big-name athletes who have tested positive and you hear some of their stories."

San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey says he hasn't ruled out the possibility of sitting out this season, assuming the games are actually played. The six-time All-Star isn't yet convinced there will even be a season.

"The way I would project it is I wouldn't be surprised by anything at this point," Posey said. "I wouldn't be surprised if we played 60 games with no hiccup and I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't play a game at all and I wouldn't be surprised if we played half the games. That's just the variability of this to me."

"I just really think there's no way we can give a hard line answer one way or another to what this is going to look like a week from now much less two months from now," he said.

Wolff shoots 64, takes 3-shot lead in Detroit

Associated Press

DETROIT — Matthew Wolff has been working on his mindset, trying to have a good time regardless of results to help him perform closer to his potential.

An ice cream truck outside the Detroit Golf Club seemed to help.

Wolff had a roller-coaster round that went well enough Saturday to give him a three-shot lead in the Rocket Mortgage Classic. He shot his second straight 8-under 64 to move into position for his second PGA Tour victory.

"I have to give credit to the ice cream truck that was cir-

cling the property," said Wolff, who was 19-under 197 after three rounds. "I'm not joking, actually."

Wolff made a 35-foot putt on the 138-yard No. 5 for birdie, his second of nine birdies.

"I heard the ice cream truck and I'm like, 'I have a good feeling about this,'" Wolff recalled. "Just had that little like ice cream truck song in my head. I think that helped me just not think about the speed or the line or anything, just keep my head free."

Ryan Armour and Bryson DeChambeau were tied for second after 67s.

DeChambeau had a testy ex-

change with a TV cameraman after a bogey on the sixth hole.

DeChambeau birdied four of the last six holes and pumped his right fist after making a 12-foot birdie putt at 18.

Wolff made a 14-foot eagle putt at the 559-yard, par-5 14th to pull into a tie with Armour at 17 under, and added birdies on the par-3 15th and par-5 17th. He finished with the eagle, nine birdies, five pars and three bogeys.

If the 21-year-old Wolff can hold on Sunday, it will be his first victory since the 3M Open last year in Minnesota.

"Just going to go out there, have fun and hopefully I hear

the ice cream truck a little bit," he said.

Last year, he made a 26-foot putt from the fringe for eagle on the final hole for a one-stroke win at the 3M Open in his third tournament as a professional. Wolff joined Tiger Woods and Ben Crenshaw as winners of a PGA Tour event and the individual NCAA title in the same year.

The former Oklahoma State star, though, has struggled enough this season that he was 108th in the world going into the week. He missed the cut at the previous two tournaments and was 54th at the PGA Tour's first event after its restart.