

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Expected spike in US virus deaths has begun

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A long-expected upturn in U.S. coronavirus deaths has begun, driven by fatalities in states in the South and West, according to data on the pandemic.

The number of deaths per day from the virus had been falling for months, and even remained down as states like Florida and Texas saw explosions in cases and hospitalizations — and reported daily U.S. infections broke records several times in recent days.

Scientists warned it wouldn't last. A coronavirus death, when it occurs, typically comes several weeks after a person is first infected. And experts predicted states that saw increases in cases and hospitalizations would, at some point, see deaths rise too. Now that's happening.

"It's consistently picking up

And it's picking up at the time you'd expect it to," said William Hanage, a Harvard University infectious diseases researcher.

According to an Associated Press analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University, the seven-day rolling average for daily reported deaths in the U.S. has increased from 578 two weeks ago to 664 on July 10 — still well below the heights hit in April. Daily reported deaths increased in 27 states over that time period, but the majority of those states are averaging under 15 new deaths per day. A smaller group of states has been driving the nationwide increase in deaths.

California is averaging 91 reported deaths per day while Texas is close behind with 66, but Florida, Arizona, Illinois, New Jersey and South Carolina also saw sizable rises. New Jersey's recent jump is thought to

be partially attributable to its less frequent reporting of probable deaths.

The impact has already been felt by families who lost kin — and by the health care workers who tried to save them.

Rublas Ruiz, a Miami intensive care unit nurse, recently broke down in tears during a birthday dinner with his wife and daughter. He said he was overcome by the number of patients who have died in his care.

"I counted like 10 patients in less than four days in our ICU, and then I stopped doing that because there were so many," said the 41-year-old nurse at Kendall Regional Medical Center who lost another patient Monday.

The virus has killed more than 130,000 people in the U.S. and more than a half-million worldwide, according to Johns

Hopkins University, though the true numbers are believed to be higher.

Researchers now expect deaths to rise for at least some weeks, but some think the count will probably not go up as dramatically as it did in the spring — for several reasons.

First, testing was extremely limited early in the pandemic, and it's become clear that unrecognized infections were spreading on subways, in nursing homes and in other public places before anyone knew exactly what was going on. Testing is now more widespread, and the magnitude of outbreaks is becoming better understood.

Second, many people's health behaviors have changed, with mask-wearing becoming more common in some places. Although there is no vaccine yet, hospitals are also getting better at treating patients.

## Okinawa Marines go on lockdown after cases spike

BY DAVE ORNAUER  
AND AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

URUMA, Okinawa — Marine bases on Okinawa went on lockdown over the weekend in response to "clusters" of coronavirus infections there, according to Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

After months with no confirmed cases on the island, "this week the Marine Corps experienced two localized clusters of individuals who tested positive for the virus," the command announced on its Facebook page Saturday evening.

Personnel at Camp Hansen and Marine Corps Air Station Futenma were placed on "soft shelter-in-place" orders, according to the post. Only essential personnel are allowed to come and go from those facilities while authorities work to mitigate the virus's spread.

"All personnel who tested positive for COVID-19 are in isolation," the statement

said, using the term for the respiratory disease caused by the virus. Cleaning teams and contact tracers were also deployed.

Lockdowns were initially enforced at MCAS Futenma on Tuesday evening and at Camp Hansen overnight Wednesday and Thursday after an undisclosed number of U.S. personnel tested positive there.

Prefectural officials said they could say only that a "few dozen" cases had been found recently because the U.S. military asked that the exact number not be released, according to The Associated Press.

The AP reported Sunday that Okinawan officials reported 61 cases — 38 of them at Futenma, and another 23 at Camp Hansen — since July 7.

The disclosure of the exact figures came only after Okinawa's repeated requests to the U.S. military, the AP reported.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki, speaking to reporters on Saturday evening, used the term "several dozen."

"It is very regrettable that many new

cases happened," he said during the news conference. "I cannot stop wondering whether the U.S. military's prevention measures for the coronavirus were effective."

Marine Forces Japan on Friday heightened its health protection condition from a moderate to a substantial risk of the virus's spread. In military terms, the level moved from Bravo to Charlie.

Meanwhile, U.S. Forces Japan extended a public health emergency through Aug. 13 that had been slated to expire after the weekend.

Late Saturday, Marine Forces Japan issued updated anti-coronavirus restrictions that require O-5 approval for most off-base activities, including doctor visits. Only travel to and from an off-base residence and an installation is allowed. The rules apply to all Marine personnel, including dependents, civilians and contractors, on the island.

## US president confirms 2018 cyberattack on Russia

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has acknowledged in an interview with a Washington Post columnist that he ordered a clandestine military cyberstrike against Russian trolls in 2018 to disrupt their Internet access during the midterm elections.

Asked by columnist Marc Thiessen whether he had authorized the operation, Trump said “Correct,” according to a piece posted Friday.

Until now, neither the White House nor the Pentagon had publicly confirmed the operation, which had been classified.

Trump sought to frame his action as an example of being more aggressive than his predecessor in countering the Kremlin. President Barack Obama, he said, “knew before the [2016] election that Russia was playing around. Or he was told. Whether or not it was so or not, who knows? And he said nothing.”

In fact, the Obama administration publicly called out Moscow in October 2016 for its hacking of Democratic computers, and Obama directly raised the matter with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In December of that year, Obama imposed sanctions on Russia over its interference in the presidential election.

Still, the admission is a rare instance of Trump acknowledging that Russia had malign intent with respect to American democracy. He even seemed to brag about his role in deterring such efforts.

“Look, we stopped it,” the president told Thiessen.

The admission comes as U.S. intelligence officials have warned that Russia will seek to disrupt this year’s presidential election.

# Texas cavalry unit deploying to Europe for Defender drills

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — A Texas-based unit will deploy on short notice for drills in Germany and Poland, marking the final phase of the Army’s Defender-Europe 20 exercises, the service said Friday.

About 550 soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division’s 1st Armored Brigade, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment at Fort Hood will mobilize in an emergency deployment readiness exercise, U.S. Army Europe said in a statement.

The monthlong effort begins Tuesday and involves troops drawing 55 Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles from a storage site in Germany. The vehicles and gear will be moved to Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, where soldiers will test a system designed to protect against

anti-tank guided missiles and rocket-propelled grenades.

The Trophy Active Protection System, developed by Israel, protects armored vehicles using “soft kill” measures, such as electronic jamming or smoke grenades to confuse an incoming missile, and pairs it with “hard kill” counterfire options to destroy threats.

“The fielding of Trophy systems provides the U.S. Army’s logistics teams with the opportunity to assess and experience the dynamics of moving and installing the system in a field environment,” USAREUR said.

The 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters (Forward) out of Poznan, Poland, will serve as mission command for the exercise while the 7th Army Training Command out of Grafenwoehr, Germany, will provide exercise control.

The exercise is part of the scaled-down version of De-

fender-Europe 20, a series of events that was intended to be among the largest Army training efforts on the Continent since the Cold War. However, as the coronavirus took hold in Europe in the spring, many of the activities connected to Defender were canceled because of health concerns.

In June, USAREUR was able to resume some large-scale Defender exercises, including one in Poland that involved 6,000 troops. The point of the Defender series was to demonstrate the military’s ability to move large numbers of forces and gear from the U.S. to Europe.

Such capabilities have become a priority for the military since reinforcements from the U.S. would be needed in the event of a conflict with Russia.

USAREUR said coronavirus prevention and mitigation measures will be taken during the upcoming drills.

## USAF revises appearance requirements

BY WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Air Force on Friday announced revisions to its personal appearance requirements in an effort to create a more inclusive and racially sensitive culture for airmen.

The changes to the Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel instructions include “the removal of subjective language and other rules that may have been creating unintentional or unfair barriers for Air and Space Force uniformed members,” the service said in a statement.

“As we listened to Airmen and Space Professionals, we reviewed our policies and identified language in our dress and appearance instruction that was problematic for certain groups,” Lisa Truesdale, Air Force deputy director of military force management policy, said in the statement. “Ensuring inclusive language in our policies is one of the first steps in creating a more inclusive culture where all uniformed members can thrive and maximize their fullest potential.”

The revisions, effective immediately, are:

- The term “faddish,” in references to “complexion and associated subjectivity,” has been removed from the guidelines. Some airmen had complained that the word “faddish” had “resulted in particular demographics being disproportionately caught up by the enforcement of those rules that included the term,” the statement said.

- Name tapes/tags can include diacritical accent and hyphens to provide more accurate pronunciation of a name — for example, in surnames such as Peña, Lewis-Miles, Müller or Calderón.

- Male airmen are authorized to have “one straight line part (cut, clipped, or shaved) on either side of their head.”

- The restriction on height of combat boots has been removed, “acknowledging that some career fields require more flexibility.”

- Airmen granted a shaving waiver are given more leeway in cutting or trimming facial hair, which “allows them to more readily present a neat, clean, and professional image,” the statement said.

# US arrivals boost case numbers at some Europe bases

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Coronavirus case numbers have risen slightly at the Army garrison in Stuttgart and elsewhere in Europe because of personnel arriving from the United States, where new cases have skyrocketed in recent weeks.

There were some new cases over the past two weeks, said garrison commander Col. Jason Condrey, whose comments were in line with a Pentagon policy that prevents local commands from reporting precise totals, but allows leaders to speak in general terms.

“With only one exception, the common trend among all of them is travel to the U.S. and back or from the United States,” Condrey said during a Thursday virtual town hall meeting.

“That trend has also been the same as I talk to my peers across other garrisons throughout Europe,” he added.

Overseas military bases in the Pacific theater also have seen increased case numbers. Nine stateside arrivals recently tested positive, U.S. Forces Korea said Friday.

The summer is peak travel

time for the U.S. military as troops and Defense Department civilians move to new assignments. While the European Union has banned Americans from travel to member states, military personnel and family members, essential workers and long-term residents are among those exempt from the restrictions.

In Stuttgart, home to U.S. European and Africa Commands, the military has seen a sharp reduction in cases since the initial outbreak in the spring, which resulted in 103 coronavirus cases within the garrison by early April. At the time, no other overseas military community had reported more cases than Stuttgart.

In response, the garrison imposed strict social distancing rules, increased testing and mandated masks be worn in public places.

The result was a dramatic reduction in reported cases, which led Stuttgart on June 4 to ease its health threat level to condition Bravo, signaling a moderate risk of transmission and the return of garrison services. Stuttgart was the first Army garrison in Europe to relax its threat level.

# Marine assigned to Darwin rotation tests positive in Australia

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. Marine has tested positive for the coronavirus in Darwin, Australia, the service announced in a statement Friday.

The Marine was in a third wave of troops arriving Down Under as part of the annual rotational force, which includes only half as many Marines as originally planned for a summer training mission cut short by the coronavirus.

The Marine arrived in Darwin on Wednesday and received the test result two days later, the statement said.

Officials are waiting to confirm the Marine’s positive result along with results for other Marines in the most recent wave, the Marines said.

The Marine who tested positive followed Northern Territory and federal health guidelines and has been in mandatory quarantine since arrival, the statement said.

“The Marine is currently under strict isolation at Royal Darwin Hospital and the [Northern Territory] government remains informed and is providing support,” it said.

Those who had contact with the Marine have been quarantined and will receive additional testing, the statement said.

“Medical specialists will continue to monitor the health

and safety of all Marines,” the Marines said.

Any Marine whose condition becomes serious will be taken to Royal Darwin Hospital for observation, testing and treatment, the statement said.

The rotation had been scheduled to begin in March but was delayed following an order that month from Defense Secretary Mark Esper barring nearly all official movement overseas for Defense Department personnel.

The modified rotation involves around 1,200 Marines training exclusively in the Northern Territory until September, Australian officials said in May.

Marines deploying to Darwin are screened and tested upon arrival before being quarantined for 14 days at specially prepared defense facilities. Each Marine is re-tested at the conclusion of the quarantine period, the Marines said in a statement in May.

The Northern Territory Government’s website Friday listed only two active coronavirus cases.

However, in the southern state of Victoria, where residents have been locked down inside their homes, a surge of 288 new cases was recorded overnight, Australia’s news.com.au website reported Friday.

# Service member tests positive after arriving in Guam

*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. service member who arrived Saturday at Andersen Air Force Base via a government-contracted flight is infected with the coronavirus, according to a statement from the Guam governor’s office.

Neither the service member nor the service branch involved was identified; the person was tested days before leaving Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Wash., and displayed no symptoms, according to

the statement.

“Officials at Andersen AFB were notified of the positive test result while the flight was en route to Guam,” the statement said.

After arriving at Andersen, the service member was isolated and all other military and civilian passengers aboard the flight were quarantined in Defense Department facilities, according to the statement.

Guam government and Defense Department rules call for the passengers to be

quarantined a minimum 14 days.

“Military public health investigators are currently conducting contact tracing to determine where this member may have contracted the virus,” the statement said.

As of Saturday, Guam had recorded 312 confirmed coronavirus cases, with five deaths, according to the Guam governor’s office.

Of those cases, 266 are classified as civilians and 46 are military service members, according to the statement.

# Florida cases surge; new single-day record

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Florida shattered the national record Sunday for the largest single-day increase in positive coronavirus cases in any state since the beginning of the pandemic, adding more than 15,000 cases as its daily average death toll continued to also rise.

According to state Department of Health statistics, 15,299 people tested positive, for a total of 269,811 cases, and 45 deaths were recorded.

California had the previous record of daily positive cases — 11,694, set on Wednesday. New York had 11,571 on April 15.

The numbers come at the end of a grim, record-breaking week as Florida reported 514 fatalities — an average of 73

per day. Three weeks ago, the state was averaging 30 deaths per day. Since the pandemic began in March, 4,346 people have died in Florida of COVID-19, the state says.

Testing has doubled over the last month, going from about 25,000 tests per day to almost 50,000, but the percentage of people testing positive has risen even more dramatically. A month ago, fewer than 5% of tests came up positive on a daily average. Over the past week, the daily average exceeded 19%.

About 10.7% of Saturday's 143,000 tests came up positive. "I still think we need to increase our testing a little bit more," said University of Florida epidemiologist Dr. Cindy Prins, adding that the state

and local health departments should ramp up their contact tracing.

Prins said that she's still concerned about large crowds, gyms and some restaurants as being places of mass transmission. Reports of illegal clubs and raves in South Florida is also a worry, she said.

"I really do think we could control this, and it's the human element that is so critical. It should be an effort of our country. We should be pulling together when we're in a crisis, and we're definitely not doing it," she said. "I know people want to live their lives. There have been a lot of other times, people have made those sacrifices in order to benefit our society. It's almost like a war effort. That's what we need

right now."

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez told CNN on Sunday that his county's hospitals will soon reach capacity but he said more beds can be added, including for intensive care.

Throughout May and into June, the state reopened much of its economy with some restrictions — and the number of positive cases began rising, but it wasn't until the last week that the daily death total began rising, too.

Because of the increase in cases and the positivity rate, doctors have predicted a rise in deaths, saying the mortality rate usually increases two to four weeks later as some of those infected get sicker and eventually die.

## Surge in Eastern Europe leads to new restrictions

Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Countries in Eastern Europe are facing rising waves of coronavirus infections, leading to riots in Serbia, mandatory face masks in Croatia and travel bans or quarantines imposed by Hungary.

The new restrictions come as the World Health Organization reports that daily global infections hit more than 228,000 last week, and the U.S. confirmed more than 66,600 new cases on Friday, another record, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Virus deaths are rising in the U.S., especially in the South and West, with the seven-day rolling daily average increasing from 578 two weeks ago to 664 on Friday — still well below the heights hit in April — according to an Associated Press analysis of data from Johns Hopkins. Daily infection records were hit in at least six states.

"It's consistently picking up. And it's picking up at the time

you'd expect it to," said William Hanage, a Harvard University infectious diseases researcher.

Hungarian authorities said Sunday they have sorted countries into three categories — red, yellow and green — based on their rates of new coronavirus infections — and will impose restrictions, including entry bans and mandatory quarantines, depending on which country people are arriving from.

"We see worrisome signs about an increase in the number of cases in the neighboring countries, Europe and the whole world," said Gergely Gulyas, Prime Minister Viktor Orban's chief of staff. "Now, we have to protect our own security and prevent the virus from being brought in from abroad."

Serbia reported 287 new infections Sunday, although there have been increasing doubts about the accuracy of the figures. Officially, the country has more than 18,000 confirmed infections and 382 deaths since March.

## Trump wears mask in public for 1st time during pandemic

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump wore a mask during a visit to a military hospital on Saturday, the first time the president has been seen in public with the type of facial covering recommended by health officials as a precaution against spreading or becoming infected by the novel coronavirus.

Trump flew by helicopter to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in suburban Washington to meet wounded service members and health care providers caring for COVID-19 patients. As he left the White House, he told reporters: "When you're in a hospital, especially ... I think it's a great thing to wear a mask."

Trump was wearing a mask in Walter Reed's hallway as he began his visit. He was not wearing one when he stepped off the helicopter at the facility.

The president was a latecomer to wearing a mask during the pandemic, which has raged across the U.S. since March and infected more than 3.2 million

and killed at least 134,000. Most prominent Republicans, including Vice President Mike Pence, endorsed wearing masks as the coronavirus gained ground this summer. Republican governors have been moving toward requiring or encouraging the use of masks as the pandemic has grown more serious in some states in the South and West.

Trump, however, has declined to wear a mask at news conferences, coronavirus task force updates, rallies and other public events. People close to him have told The Associated Press that the president feared a mask would make him look weak and was concerned that it shifted focus to the public health crisis rather than the economic recovery. They spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private matters.

The wearing of masks became another political dividing line, with Republicans more resistant to wearing them than Democrats. Few masks were seen at recent Trump campaign events in Tulsa, Okla. Phoenix and South Dakota's Mount Rushmore.

# Mueller defends Russian investigation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former special counsel Robert Mueller sharply defended his investigation into ties between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, writing in a newspaper opinion piece Sunday that the probe was of "paramount importance" and asserting that a Trump ally, Roger Stone, "remains a convicted felon, and rightly so" despite the president's decision to commute his prison sentence.

The op-ed in *The Washington Post* marked Mueller's first public statement on his investigation since his congressional appearance last July. It represented his firmest defense of the two-year probe whose results have come under attack and even been partially undone by the Trump administration, including the president's

extraordinary move Friday evening to grant clemency to Stone just days before he was due to report to prison.

Mueller wrote that though he had intended for his team's work to speak for itself, he felt compelled to "respond both to broad claims that our investigation was illegitimate and our motives were improper, and to specific claims that Roger Stone was a victim of our office."

"The Russia investigation was of paramount importance. Stone was prosecuted and convicted because he committed federal crimes," Mueller wrote.

Mueller did not specify who was making the claims, but it appeared to be an obvious reference to Trump, who as recently as Saturday derided the investigation as this "whole political witch hunt and the Mueller scam."

The op-ed chronicled the basis for the

Stone prosecution, with Mueller recounting how Stone had not only tampered with a witness, but also lied repeatedly about his efforts to gain inside information about Democratic emails that Russian intelligence operatives stole and provided to WikiLeaks, which published them in the run-up to the election.

Stone was particularly central to the investigation, Mueller wrote, because he claimed to have inside knowledge about WikiLeaks' release of the emails and because he communicated during the campaign with people known to be Russian intelligence officers. He also updated members of the Trump campaign about the timing of the WikiLeaks releases, something that he denied.

He was one of six former Trump associates or advisers to be convicted in the Russia investigation.

## Fire destroys much of historic Calif. church

Associated Press

SAN GABRIEL, Calif. — A fire early Saturday destroyed the rooftop and most of the interior of a Catholic church in California that was undergoing renovations to mark its upcoming 250th anniversary celebration.

Fire alarms at the San Gabriel Mission rang around 4 a.m., and when firefighters arrived, they saw smoke rising from the wooden rooftop in one corner of the historic structure, San Gabriel Fire Capt. Paul Negrete said.

He said firefighters entered the church and tried to beat back the flames, but they had to retreat when roofing and other structural materials began to fall.

After evacuating the church, the crew was joined by up to 50 firefighters who tried to douse water on the 50-foot-high structure from ladder trucks, he said.

"The roof is completely gone," the captain said. "The fire traversed the wood rapidly, the interior is pretty much destroyed up into the altar area."

The cause of the fire was under investigation, Negrete said. He said the recent toppling of monuments to Junipero Serra, the founder of the California mission system who has long been a symbol of oppression among Indigenous activists, will be a factor in the investigation.

"This will be another box that they're going to check off," he said.

Robert Barron, the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, tweeted that he was "deeply troubled" by the fire as he awaits further information about its cause.

The church was the fourth of a string of missions established across California by Serra during the era of Spanish colonization. The Franciscan priest has long been praised by the church for bringing Roman Catholicism to what is now the western United States, but critics highlight a darker side to his legacy. In converting Native Americans to Catholicism, they said he forced them to abandon their culture or face brutal punishment.

## Iran: Miscommunication to blame for downed jet

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — A misaligned missile battery, miscommunication between troops and their commanders and a decision to fire without authorization all led to Iran's Revolutionary Guard shooting down a Ukrainian jetliner in January, killing all 176 people on board, a new report said.

The report released late Saturday by Iran's Civil Aviation Organization comes months after the Jan. 8 crash near Tehran. Authorities had initially denied responsibility for the crash, only changing course days later after Western nations presented extensive evidence that Iran had shot down the plane.

The report may signal a new phase in the investigation into the crash, as the aircraft's black box flight recorder is due to be sent to Paris, where international investigators will finally be able to examine it.

The shutdown happened the same night Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting U.S. soldiers in Iraq, its response to the American drone

strike that killed Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad on Jan. 3.

At the time, Iranian troops were bracing for a U.S. counterstrike and appear to have mistaken the plane for a missile. The civil aviation report does not acknowledge that, only saying a change in the "alertness level of Iran's air defense" allowed previously scheduled air traffic to resume.

The report detailed a series of moments where the shoot-down of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 could have been avoided.

The report said the surface-to-air missile battery that targeted the Boeing 737-800 had been relocated and was not properly reoriented.

Those manning the missile battery could not communicate with their command center, they misidentified the civilian flight as a threat and opened fire twice without getting approval from ranking officials, the report said.

"If each had not arisen, the aircraft would not have been targeted," the report said.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Ailing eastern black rhino euthanized at zoo

**IL** CHICAGO — An ailing eastern black rhino named Maku was euthanized at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo after staff determined it was suffering from severe discomfort and reduced mobility, the zoo said.

Maku, 34, was thought to be the second oldest eastern black rhino male in North America, Chicago radio station WBBM reported.

The curator of mammals at the zoo, Mike Murray, said in a statement that staff will miss the rhino's "laid-back personality."

Maku, who arrived at the zoo in 2003, lived longer than most other eastern black rhinos. Median life expectancy for them is 19 years.

## Park officials kill bear suspected in break-in

**CO** ASPEN — Wildlife officials in Colorado killed a bear believed to have been involved in a home break-in and attack that injured the homeowner.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife said a team with tracking dogs located the bear on the backside of Aspen Mountain before tracking it to a mine shaft and killing it, The Aspen Times reported. DNA from the bear was sent to a lab to verify it was the same bear involved in the break-in.

The homeowner is undergoing surgery after a bear broke into his home through the front door and swiped a paw at the man, department officials said.

"The injuries are pretty significant lacerations to his face, neck and head," department spokesman Randy Hampton said. "We're worried about his eye and his ear."

## Kitten adopted after storm drain rescue

**NY** TERRYVILLE — Only eight lives left for this New York cat.

Police on Long Island rescued a black kitten that fell into a storm drain in Terryville.

A 911 caller spotted the animal, and Officer Michael Viruet of the Suffolk County Police Department climbed into the drain and brought the kitten to safety. The kitten's reversal in fortune continued when it was adopted by a local resident, police said.

## Yogurt store patron protests mask with gun

**AZ** YUMA — A Yuma man who was ejected from a frozen yogurt shop for not wearing a mask faces charges for pulling out a gun in response.

Yuma County Sheriff's officials said the incident happened when Steven Covington, 64, entered Tiki Hut Frozen Yogurt.

According to the staff, Covington was agitated when told to wear a face covering and gloves provided by the store. Covington then started dispensing frozen yogurt into his bare hands.

A worker escorted him out of the shop. Authorities said that's when Covington got a handgun from his car and followed the employee. The store was locked down but Covington allegedly pointed the gun at the employee and tried to get inside the store and a neighboring business.

## City ends penalties for marijuana possession

**MO** KANSAS CITY— Kansas City will no longer punish people for mari-

juana possession, effectively decriminalizing it throughout much of the city.

City council members voted 9-4 to strip the crime from the city code, The Kansas City Star reported.

The change does not legalize its recreational use or change Missouri law. Users can still be charged for possession by county prosecutors who decide to pursue those cases.

Kansas City residents had already voted in 2017 to eliminate jail time for possession of fewer than 35 grams of marijuana, limiting penalties to an ordinance violation and \$25 fine.

## Man jailed for threats to kill partygoers, kids

**FL** YULEE — A Florida man was arrested after calling a 911 dispatcher and threatening to kill people at a house party in his neighborhood, sheriff's officials said.

Anthony Ninham Schuler, 57, was charged with making threats to kill and with misuse of the 911 system, Nassau County Sheriff's officials said.

Schuler threatened to shoot up the party and "kill a bunch of children," The Florida Times-Union reported.

Deputies who went to the home found a large party of children and adults going on in the neighborhood. They later learned that the woman who had answered the door was the 911 caller's daughter.

They found Schuler in a bedroom upstairs. He was described as "very intoxicated."

## Woman, child seriously injured by fireworks

**IL** CHICAGO — A woman and a child were seriously injured by exploding fireworks in Chicago amid a sharp rise in complaints about the py-

rotechnic devices, according to fire department officials.

WLS-TV reported the woman, 26, and the child, 6, were taken to a nearby hospital and were listed in serious condition.

In a previous report, the TV station cited Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications as saying there have been around 7,000 calls complaining about fireworks in the city from Jan. 1 to the end of June. During the same period last year, there were only around 850 such complaints.

Some Illinois residents travel across the border to buy fireworks in neighboring states where they are legal.

## Advocate for deaf on leave for frat affiliation

**MA** BOSTON — Massachusetts' chief advocate for the deaf was placed on leave after acknowledging he was a member of a now-suspended college fraternity known for wearing robes resembling those of the Ku Klux Klan and making Nazi-like salutes.

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker's administration said that Steven Florio, the commissioner of the state's Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, will remain on paid leave from his \$120,000 a year job pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

Florio recently acknowledged to staff members he was a member of Kappa Gamma Fraternity, which was suspended last month by Gallaudet University, a college in Washington, D.C., for the deaf and hard of hearing, the Boston Globe reported. Florio told staff in an email that he disavows his past affiliation with the fraternity.

From wire reports

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# Usman, Volkanovski, Yan take home titles

Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Kamaru Usman retained his welterweight title with a smothering victory over short-notice challenger Jorge Masvidal at UFC 251 on Sunday.

Alexander Volkanovski retained his featherweight title with a narrow split decision over Max Holloway, and Petr Yan won the vacant UFC bantamweight championship with a fifth-round stoppage victory over Jose Aldo on Yas Island, the UAE tourist destination turned into a secure bubble by the UFC during the coronavirus pandemic.

Former strawweight champion Rose Namajunas avenged her loss to Jessica Andrade with a split-decision win in their rematch on the UFC's so-called "Fight Island." The mixed martial arts promotion will host four shows this month at the arena, with more expected in the upcoming months.

Usman (17-1) earned his 16th straight MMA victory and defended his belt for the second time with a cerebral, technical performance against the 35-year-old Masvidal (35-14), who accepted his first UFC title shot on six days' notice when Gilbert Burns tested positive for the coronavirus.

"(Masvidal) is the biggest, baddest dude out there right now," Usman said. "I had

to switch gears and prepare for him on six days' notice. I know a lot was made of him taking the fight on short notice, but all these guys are preparing for one guy, and that's me at the top of the mountain. I had to make a mental shift. I had a completely different game plan."

Masvidal was eager for a knockout, and the former backyard brawler came out swinging in an exciting first round. But while Masvidal's wind faded, Usman coolly took charge with wrestling takedowns, foot stomps and judicious strikes mixed with superior conditioning.

Two judges scored it 50-45 for Usman, and a third had it 49-46.

UFC 251 began well before dawn Sunday morning in Abu Dhabi to meet the time demands of the lucrative North American pay-per-view audience, and the sun rose as the card progressed.

Volkanovski (22-1) earned his 19th consecutive MMA victory since 2013 by a razor-thin margin, winning 48-47 on two of the three cards when his leg kicks and takedowns earned the decision over Holloway's overall striking game.

"It was a tough fight," Volkanovski said. "He stood there and didn't really take a backward step. I couldn't use the kicks as much as I liked. I knew I had to win that last round. It's tough. He's a gamer. We're both

hard workers, but I got the job done."

The Australian champion won his belt last December against Holloway (21-6), who had reigned atop the division for the previous three years.

In the rematch, Holloway showed off another level of his superb striking skills while weathering dozens more leg kicks from Volkanovski, who relied largely on that strike to win the first bout. Holloway largely controlled the first two rounds, but Volkanovski increased his output starting in the third round and added a few takedowns to bolster his case with the judges.

Three title belts were on the line on the same card for only the sixth time in UFC history, and Yan (15-1) claimed the first one by persevering for a beating of Aldo (28-7), the former featherweight champion dethroned by Conor McGregor in 2015.

Yan weathered an inspired start by Aldo, and eventually established his dominance with superior striking. After Yan battered a bloody Aldo into a turtled position on the canvas in the fifth round, referee Leon Roberts allowed the fight to continue for an alarming amount of time before stopping it with 1:36 left.

"I expected it to be a hard fight," Yan said through an interpreter. "That was our plan, to get him tired early on, and then in the third round, start attacking."

## Popovich, James practice, set for restart in bubble

Associated Press

Gregg Popovich fondly remembers his freshman year at the United States Air Force Academy, even though as a first-year cadet he was extremely limited in where he could go and what activities were allowed.

Lockdown at Walt Disney World, he said, reminded him of those days.

"But two days, anybody can do that," the San Antonio coach said Saturday.

He made it through that freshman year with ease, made it through the two days of in-room Disney quarantine as well, and now the longest-tenured and oldest active coach in the league is free to roam within the NBA bubble in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. That doesn't mean he didn't have reservations about being part of the NBA restart, given the ongoing issues of ra-

cial strife, social inequality and the coronavirus pandemic.

"If you're a thinking person, you're going to look at all sides of a situation," Popovich said. "And, especially being 71 years old, I thought, 'Is this where I want to spend a lot of my time, doing this, under these circumstances?'"

The answer was yes, and Popovich was running his first practice in more than four months Saturday as the Spurs began getting ready for a playoff push. When the season resumes July 30, San Antonio will be 12th in the Western Conference — only a half-game from ninth, where the Spurs would have to be and within four games of the No. 8 spot to force their way into a play-in series.

"I honestly do believe — it's not just being a loyal soldier of the NBA, I've done my share of criticizing here and there

when I thought it was necessary — I don't know where else you would be as safe as we are right now," Popovich said.

LeBron James completely agrees with that sentiment.

Like the Spurs, the Los Angeles Lakers — the West leaders, with James leading the way back into title contention after six consecutive years of not even making the playoffs — took to the Disney practice courts for the first time Saturday. And James said the notion of not being part of the restart "never crossed my mind."

And on the health standpoint, James, like Popovich, raved about what NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and many others teamed together to make happen at Disney.

"They took all precautionary reasons, measures to make sure that we as a league are as safe as we can be," James said.

"Obviously, in anything that you do, there can be things that could happen, but we will cross that line if it happens."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says people 65 and over can be more vulnerable to the virus. The NBA has three head coaches who have celebrated that birthday; New Orleans' Alvin Gentry, 65; Houston's Mike D'Antoni, 69, and Popovich. Pelicans assistant Jeff Bzdelik, 67, and Los Angeles Lakers' assistant Lionel Hollins, 66, are not at Disney for the restart.

Popovich points to rising virus numbers in Texas as proof that on the NBA campus, where players and coaches will be tested daily and the outside world basically cut off, his health shouldn't be more at risk.

"If this bubble works, I'm safer here than I would be in Texas," Popovich said.

## Stars' Polak, Oilers' Green among NHL players sitting out

Associated Press

Roman Polak of the Stars and Mike Green of the Oilers are opting out of playing, and Lightning captain Steven Stamkos will try to play after recovering from injury.

In the aftermath of a deal being struck to resume the NHL season on Aug. 1, Green, Polak and three other players joined Calgary defenseman Travis Hamonic in choosing not to participate in the expanded 24-team playoffs.

"Due to the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19 and after much consideration, I've decided for deeply personal family health reasons not to participate in the return to play," Green said in a statement. After a trade from Detroit, the defenseman played two games for Edmonton before injuring his right knee.

Boston's Steven Kampfer, Montreal's Karl Alzner and Vancouver's Sven Baertschi also decided to opt out. Kampfer, who played 10 games with the Bruins this season, said his wife and son have a congenital defect that could cause complications with the virus and called it "one of the hardest decisions" he has had to make.

Polak is a pending free agent who last month agreed to a deal in his native Czech Republic next season and told reporters there he wasn't planning on returning to the NHL if play resumed. Baertschi, who spent most of this season in the minors, is under contract through 2020-21.

The Lightning won't have Stamkos at 100% for the opening of camp because of a lower-body injury, but they're optimistic he'll be ready when games get under way in early August. GM Julien BriseBois said Stamkos fully recovered from core muscle surgery in early March but was injured again during voluntary workouts.

"We don't have a specific timeline for when he will be a full participant in camp, but we expect he will be ready in time for games," BriseBois said.

## MLB roundup

# Yankees' Chapman has virus

Associated Press

HOUSTON — New York Yankees closer Arldis Chapman became the latest high-profile player to test positive for the coronavirus, his diagnosis announced Saturday hours after the Houston Astros canceled another practice due to virus concerns.

In New York, manager Aaron Boone said Chapman wouldn't "be here for the foreseeable future." Boone said the left-handed reliever "overall was doing well" despite experiencing mild symptoms.

The Yankees are scheduled to start the virus-delayed season on July 23 at the World Series champion Washington Nationals. The AL East champs already were missing star infielder DJ LeMahieu and right-hander Luis Cessa, who both tested positive last week and are still isolating at home.

Boone wouldn't say whether Chapman had been at Yankee Stadium since throwing a bullpen session on Tuesday. He said the team had gone through contact tracing protocols, and no other players or personnel would be forced to isolate because of Chapman's positive test.

In Houston, the Astros canceled their workout after learning that a staff member could have been exposed to a person outside the organization with the coronavirus.

It's the second time this week the Astros have

wiped out a practice session because of concerns about the pandemic. Houston also scrapped its Monday workout because of delays with testing results due to the holiday weekend, as did some other teams around the majors.

The cancellation came after All-Star third baseman Alex Bregman was held out of practice on Wednesday because of delays in receiving his test results.

Also testing positive was Kansas City backup catcher Cam Gallagher. Gallagher, who said he's asymptomatic, participated in an intrasquad game Friday before receiving his results Saturday.

**Gallo doesn't know:** A day after joining his team for workouts, Rangers outfielder Joey Gallo said that despite two positive tests, he isn't sure if he had the coronavirus.

His confusion stemmed from the fact that he didn't experience symptoms and also had multiple negative tests. Gallo said he planned to have a more extensive antibody test to be sure after a finger-prick test didn't indicate that he had COVID-19.

"It was a strange process to go through. There wasn't much anybody could have done because the test came up positive," Gallo said. "As of right now I am coming up negative and that's how I am hoping to stay the rest of the season."

## Fans cheer Dixon to 3rd straight IndyCar win

Associated Press

ELKHART LAKE, Wis. — Winning an IndyCar race is nothing new for Scott Dixon, particularly this year.

But getting to celebrate as fans cheered him on for the first time all year made his victory Saturday at Road America particularly sweet.

"To see fans and hear fans cheering again was definitely a lot of fun," the 39-year-old New Zealander said after winning the opening race of a weekend doubleheader.

This marked the third IndyCar event of this pandemic-delayed season — Dixon has won all three of them — and the first to admit fans. Spectators hadn't been permitted for Dixon's previous victories in Fort Worth and Indianapolis.

Those fans got the opportu-

nity to watch Dixon's most improbable triumph of the year.

Dixon was a season-low ninth in qualifying and well off the lead pack for the first half of the race, but he took the lead for good shortly after a caution flag and beat Will Power by 2.5386 seconds. They were followed in order by Alex Palou, Ryan Hunter-Reay and Colton Herta.

"It was very unexpected," said Dixon, a five-time season champion for Chip Ganassi Racing.

Dixon is the first IndyCar driver to start a season with at least three consecutive victories since Sebastien Bourdais reeled off four straight to start the 2006 campaign. The only other drivers to open an IndyCar season with at least three straight victories are A.J. Foyt (seven in 1964) and Al Unser

(three in 1971). Dixon is the first driver to win three straight races at any point in the season since Simon Pagenaud in 2016.

Saturday's race took drivers 55 laps around a course that's just over 4 miles long with 14 turns.

For much of the day, it looked as though Josef Newgarden would win at Road America for the second time in three years.

Newgarden eared the pole position earlier Saturday and was in command for the first half of this race until he stalled coming out of his second pit stop and fell back in the pack. He ended up 14th.

"Our day went from a great to pretty bad pretty quickly," Newgarden said. "But hey, that's racing. We just didn't take advantage of our opportunities today."