

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Admiral: Warship 'survivable' after fire

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

SAN DIEGO — The amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard is “survivable,” an admiral said after an intense blaze was extinguished after a four-day struggle.

Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 3, said during a news conference Thursday the ship is salvageable.

“The survivability of the ship is there — it’s survivable,” he said. “It’s in stable condition all the way through.”

What remains unknown about one of the worst non-combat Naval fires is its cause, the extent of the damage and whether and when the ship will be repaired. An investigation is expected to take weeks.

Crews must inspect the ship

thoroughly to put down all hot spots, Sobeck said.

“The flames are out, but the heat is still there,” he said. “We’re going space by space as I speak to every compartment checking for hot spots.”

Once this is done, Sobeck said, the fire will be officially out.

In an emailed statement Thursday, Sobeck said the cause of the fire will remain unknown until an investigation is finished.

He has said a spark from an unknown source could have ignited heavy-duty cardboard boxes, rags and other maintenance supplies stored in the lower vehicle storage area. The fire then traveled upward to the well deck — a wide hangar-like area — and took off from there.

“We did not know the origin of the fire,” Sobeck said in the statement.

“We do not know the extent of the damage. Our fire teams are investigating every space to verify the absence of fire. Until every space is checked and there are no active fires we will not be able to commence any official investigations.

“What we do know is that brave Sailors from commands all across San Diego worked tirelessly alongside Federal Firefighters to get this fire extinguished and I want to thank them for their efforts.”

According to Sobeck, 40 sailors and 23 civilians were treated for minor injuries such as smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion during the roughly 100-hourlong firefight.

Temperatures topped 1,200

degrees Fahrenheit at the height of the inferno, Sobeck said Thursday — a temperature that had water from fire hoses turning to steam as soon as fire teams tried to engage.

The fire on the 844-foot ship began around 8:30 a.m. Sunday and sent acrid plumes of smoke into the San Diego skies for two days. By Tuesday morning, the plume was noticeably smaller, although the smell of the fire stayed in neighborhoods nearest the base through Thursday.

The Bonhomme Richard cost \$761 million, according to estimates by the Federation of American Scientists, and was at the end of a two-year, \$250 million upgrade to accommodate the F-35B fighter. It is one of a handful of similarly equipped amphibious assault ships.

## DOD bans Rebel flag; memo doesn't use word 'Confederate'

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Friday unveiled a new military-wide policy that limits what flags can be displayed by American troops on U.S. military installations, buildings and vehicles, which effectively bars Confederate flags without actually mentioning the controversial banners.

The new policy comes after weeks of rigorous debate within the Pentagon’s highest levels about the Confederate battle flag’s place on America’s military posts as calls for its prohibition grew amid a renewed national conversation on racism after the killing of a handcuffed Black man by Minneapolis police on Memorial Day. The Marine Corps first moved to ban the flag in April and issued offi-

cial guidance doing so in June. Other U.S. military entities, including top commands in South Korea and Japan, followed suit in recent weeks.

Esper’s policy labels nearly all flags outside those representing the United States, its states and territories, official U.S. military flags, the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag, and those representing allied nations and military organizations as unauthorized for public display by U.S. troops on Defense Department property. He wrote the flags displayed by service members should focus on U.S. military tenets such as “good order and discipline, treating all our people with dignity and respect, and rejecting divisive symbols.”

“What has always united us remains clear — our common mission, our oath to support

and defend the Constitution, and our American flag,” Esper wrote in the memorandum dated Thursday. “With this change in policy, we will further improve the morale, cohesion, and readiness of the force in defense of our great nation.”

The military services had all been considering branch-wide bans on displays of the Confederate flag in recent months but paused in issuing such guidance when Esper’s office took the lead on the issue early this month. Pentagon officials said it was intended, in part, for the Defense Department to issue a singular policy across its entire force. But the policy was also meant to avoid President Donald Trump’s wrath, one official said Friday.

Trump has defended the Confederate battle flag in recent weeks, especially after

NASCAR moved to ban its display at its races. Trump has also vowed the names of 10 southern Army posts named for Confederate generals from the Civil War would not be changed during his administration.

In an April letter to the Marine Corps, Gen. David Berger, the corps commandant, wrote the Confederate battle flag could raise a sense of pride for some southerners, but others view it as a symbol for racism and hate.

“This symbol has shown it has the power to inflame feelings of division,” he wrote. “I cannot have that division inside our corps.”

Esper’s policy released Friday does not ban “unauthorized flags” from display in museums, at gravesites, on historical or educational displays, works of art or monuments.

# Ukraine becomes issue again, now in defense spending bill

*CQ-Roll Call*

WASHINGTON — A House spending bill's proposal to wrest from the White House control over aid money for Ukraine could jeopardize the annual defense spending bill, a senior GOP lawmaker said this week.

If it does, it would once again move the funding of far-off armies in Ukraine close to the center of politics in Washington.

Kay Granger, of Texas, the top Republican on the House Appropriations Committee, said during Tuesday's markup of the nearly \$695 billion draft defense money bill that she is concerned the Ukraine issue, in addition to three other hot-but-

ton topics, would draw a veto threat from President Donald Trump.

Accordingly, Granger and all other Republicans on the panel voted against approving the bill, which passed only on the strength of the Democratic majority's votes.

"We'll have to drop or modify any controversial language that could jeopardize this bill's chance of being signed into law," Granger said.

The bill would add Ukraine security assistance to the shortlist of federal programs that are exempt from control by the White House Office of Management and Budget. The aid is executed by the Pentagon in coordination with the State Department.

The House's defense spending bill would provide \$275 million for Ukraine security assistance, \$25 million more than the president requested. The measure specifies that \$50 million of that money would have to be spent on lethal weaponry.

The Ukraine provision in the House's defense spending bill also says those funds "shall be exempt from apportionment." That is a reference to the process by which most federal appropriations must be allocated by OMB before departments and agencies can spend the money. The idea is, in essence, to ensure that agencies do not spend their funds too quickly. But OMB cannot hold money for prolonged periods — at least without notifying Congress.

# Taliban put new change into effect before talks

*Associated Press*

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban have put the son of the movement's feared founder in charge of their military wing and added several powerful figures to their negotiating team, Taliban officials said. The shake-up, one of the most significant in years, comes ahead of expected talks with Kabul aimed at ending decades of war in Afghanistan.

As head of a newly united military wing, Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, 30, brings his father's fiercely uncompromising reputation to the battlefield.

Equally significant is the addition of four members of the insurgent group's leadership council to the 20-member negotiating team, Taliban officials told The Associated Press.

The shuffle, overseen by Taliban leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhunzada, is meant to tighten his control over the movement's military and political arms, the officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the inner workings of the Taliban.

Analysts say the shake-up could be good news for negotiations with the Afghan political leadership, and a sign of how seriously the Taliban are taking this second — and perhaps most critical — step in a deal Washington signed with the insurgents in February.

"I'd say it appears to be a positive development because the Taliban are creating a delegation that seems more senior and more broad-based than they've used to date, or than might be strictly necessary for the opening stages of talks," said Andrew Wilder, vice president of the Asia Program at the Washington-based U.S. Institute of Peace.

# Officials: Couple stole millions from Army

*Associated Press*

DALLAS — Federal agents have seized more than 20 vehicles and the money from 10 bank accounts belonging to married U.S. Army veterans in Texas, saying the pair used personal information stolen from soldiers to defraud the military out of as much as \$11 million.

Army investigators obtained warrants last month to confiscate the funds and property and to collect evidence of the alleged fraud during their search of the home of the retired sergeants, according to recently unsealed federal court records.

In an affidavit seeking to search Kevin Pelayo and Cristine Fredericks' home in Killeen, a city near Fort Hood about 150 miles southwest of Dallas, investigators described how the couple allegedly used a transportation reimbursement program for federal employees to swindle the Army out of \$2.3 million to \$11.3 million.

Investigators told the court there was probable cause to believe the couple committed crimes including wire fraud, identity theft and money laundering. But there is no record that either of them has been criminally charged.

After arriving at Fort Hood in 2010, Pelayo set up a van company to give employees rides to and from the base under a federal program that sub-

sidizes government workers using mass transit in an effort to reduce traffic and pollution.

As a platoon sergeant, Pelayo had access to the personnel records of soldiers under his command, and Fredericks had worked for Army human resources, according to the affidavit. Investigators said Pelayo used this access to sign soldiers up for the mass transportation subsidy without their knowledge and then routed the payments to his business' bank accounts.

Several enrolled soldiers said they had never ridden in the van pool and investigators found that many were not even at Fort Hood.

This scheme allegedly continued for years, even while Pelayo was stationed in South Korea before his retirement last August. In some months, the affidavit states, the subsidies gave the couple an income of more than \$200,000.

Pelayo and Fredericks moved the money into an array of bank accounts, investigators wrote in the court filing,

During the search of the couple's Killeen home, investigators seized documents, computer hard drives, cellphones and more than 100 designer items such as purses, jewelry and clothing, mostly from Chanel, according to a handwritten list of what was collected. It also lists 23 cars, trucks, SUVs and other vehicles, and a box containing 64 license plates from "various states."

# Army, New York give Houston a helping hand

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Teams of doctors and nurses from New York and the U.S. Army have descended on Houston after the nation's fourth-largest city sought help to deal with a surge of coronavirus cases and hospitalizations.

An 86-person Army team of doctors, nurses, and support staff on Thursday worked to take over a wing of United Memorial Medical Center, a small north Houston hospital, to help it treat COVID-19 patients.

The military personnel were expected to pair up with hospital staff and treat up to about 40 patients at a time in the coming days. As the pandemic has progressed, the hospital has been rapidly dedicating more and more space to virus care.

Some of the soldiers wore their duty uniforms Thursday. Others wore scrubs affixed with strips of surgical tape that bore their ranks, names and medical titles.

The soldiers have come from around the country, overseen by U.S. Army North in San Antonio. Around 580 Army and Navy personnel have been assigned to help fight COVID-19 in Texas.

"This facility, working with the United

States military, is something that we asked for," said U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Houston Democrat, standing near the soldiers as they moved through the hospital wing. "We have exhausted medical personnel that we're so grateful to, but we didn't have enough."

The Army medical team's arrival came as Texas has struggled to contain one of the biggest recent coronavirus surges in the U.S.

Teams of military doctors and nurses were also heading to eight California hospitals.

The Air Force, at California's request, assigned 160 people to increase the capacity in intensive care units. Some teams arrived this week, including 20 people each to the Adventist Health Lodi Memorial Hospital in San Joaquin County on Wednesday and to the Eisenhower Health Hospital in Southern California's Riverside County on Thursday.

Both hospitals had beds available for extra patients, but they did not have the staff to care for them — highlighting a growing problem across the state as coronavirus hospitalizations reach record levels.

"I think people erroneously think of hospital capacity as all about beds and space," said Carmela Coyle, president and CEO of the California Hospital Association. "It's far more than a mattress and a pillow. The most important resource are the people who are taking care of patients."

On Thursday California reported its largest two-day total of confirmed cases, nearly 20,000, along with 258 deaths in the last 48 hours. There are more than 8,000 people in hospitals who have either tested positive for the coronavirus or are suspected to have it.

Coyle said some models suggest hospitals should prepare for four times as many coronavirus patients as they have now, raising questions about the future of health care staffing "in what may be a new era of virus and pandemic."

Texas again set a single-day record for new deaths with 129. Nearly a third of the state's 3,561 deaths since the pandemic began have been reported in July. Texas reported 10,291 confirmed new cases on Thursday, slightly down from Wednesday's state record high of 10,791. The state reported 10,457 people were hospitalized for COVID-19.

## India hits 1M cases; nations battle virus flare-ups

Associated Press

MITO, Japan — A return of stringent coronavirus restrictions in Israel, another daily record of reported cases in Japan's capital and outbreaks in remote areas such as China's Xinjiang region underscored Friday the ongoing battle to quash COVID-19 flare-ups as the world's latest hot spots pushed the confirmed global case tally toward 14 million.

India said the country's total confirmed cases surpassed 1 million, the third-highest number behind the United States and Brazil, and its death toll reached more than 25,000. That followed Brazil's announcement Thursday evening that its confirmed cases exceeded 2 million, including 76,000 deaths.

Governments are frantically trying to prevent and put down fresh outbreaks and keep their economies running as the pandemic accelerates in some parts of the world and threatens to come roaring back in others. Worldwide, confirmed cases numbered more than 13.8 million Friday and COVID-19 deaths totaled more than 590,000.

Japan's capital recorded a single-day record number of new coronavirus cases for a second straight day on Friday with 293. Tokyo was taken off a list of places around

the country where discounts are offered under a government scheme to encourage domestic tourism.

Like elsewhere around the world, the recent infections have triggered concerns that the government moved to ramp up the Japanese economy too quickly. Many governments — national, regional and local — have been rolling back reopenings and tightening restrictions to try to stave off more waves of new cases.

Spain, which earlier in the pandemic was one of the world's hardest hit countries, was grappling with more than 150 active outbreaks, most of them in the northern Aragon and Catalonia regions. Health authorities on Friday asked the 5.5 million residents of Barcelona, the regional capital of Catalonia, to stay at home as much as possible to stem the virus' spread.

They also announced a local ban on social gatherings over 10 people, and nightclub and gym closures. Spain reported 580 new cases Thursday, the highest daily number since May 10.

Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, on Friday announced increased pandemic restrictions after detecting eight new COVID-19 cases in a cluster that began in a Sydney pub and was traced to a visitor from Melbourne.

Around 42 cases have since been linked to that cluster.

Authorities were hoping that fresh controls might bring the infection count to a plateau, as Melbourne reported a record 428 new COVID-19 cases on Friday.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson charted a different course, announcing that the government was no longer asking people to avoid public transit and that as of Aug. 1 would stop advising workers in England to work from home.

Keen to reinvigorate the economy, Johnson wants to see struggling businesses that rely on office workers to rebound. He also announced that beauticians, casinos, bowling alleys and skating rinks would be allowed to reopen next month as long as infection rates don't start climbing again.

The prime minister's decision to give employers more leeway to ask their staffs to return to regular work locations appeared to conflict with the views of his chief scientific adviser, who said Thursday that there was "absolutely no reason" to change the work-from-home advice.

The U.K.'s official pandemic death toll, which stood at more than 45,000 as of Friday, has for several weeks been the highest in Europe and the third-highest in the world behind the United States and Brazil.

# Calif. salons stress over new closures

Associated Press

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — At the start of the year, Luis Lopez moved his barber-shop to a bigger location with three more chairs and more than twice the rent. Then, when the coronavirus pandemic hit, he had to close, plunk down more cash for upgrades to health safety standards and wait for officials to allow salons to reopen.

Now, Lopez owes \$10,000 in monthly rent for the coveted space in Southern California's downtown Huntington Beach and says he can only keep paying it if he can cut hair at his Orange County Barbers Parlor. But Gov. Gavin Newsom said that isn't allowed under new closures this week to curb soaring numbers of infections.

"With all due respect, I can't close my doors. I just really can't," Lopez said. "I am going to have to shut my business if that is the case."

"People say work from home or do house calls, but people are still getting fined to do that, so what's the difference?" he added. "If they come in and shut us down, then that's what is going to have to happen."

## Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Officials on the Navajo Nation are urging residents to refrain from traveling off the reservation ahead of a weekend lockdown meant to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

"Think of your parents and grandparents, chances are they are more susceptible to getting the virus, so let's keep our guard up," tribal President Jonathan Nez said Thursday.

The tribe reported 79 new cases of the coronavirus Thursday, the highest daily total in more than two weeks. Nez attributed it to the July 4 weekend and said it's concerning.

The total number of people who have been infected is 8,486, the tribe said. More than 6,200 recovered. An additional two deaths reported Thursday brought the toll to 407.

## Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — An Arkansas woman was arrested Thursday after she was indicted on charges that she defrauded the federal small-business coronavirus relief program out of almost \$2 million.

The federal indictment charged Ganell Tubbs, 41, on two bank fraud counts, two of lying on a loan application and one of a monetary transaction from proceeds of unlawful activity.

The indictment alleges that the Little Rock woman obtained Paycheck Protection Program loans for two sham businesses and used the proceeds for such expenditures as online shopping and a student loan payment.

## Georgia

ATLANTA — Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp is suing Atlanta's mayor and city council to block the city from enforcing its mandate to wear a mask in public and other rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kemp and Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr, in a suit filed in state court late Thursday in Atlanta, argue that Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has overstepped her authority and must obey Kemp's executive orders under state law.

Kemp on Wednesday clarified his executive orders to expressly block Atlanta and at least 14 other local governments across the state from requiring people to wear face coverings.

## Michigan

LANSING — Michigan liquor regulators on Thursday ordered an East Lansing bar to answer questions about a coronavirus outbreak that infected 186 people and was a factor in Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's decision to halt indoor service at establishments that chiefly sell alcohol.

A hearing, scheduled for July 23, could result in a license sus-

pension or revocation for Harper's Restaurant and Brewpub, which currently is closed. But the purpose primarily is fact-finding, said Jeannie Vogel, spokeswoman for the state Liquor Control Commission.

## Nevada

LAS VEGAS — At least 123 visitors to Nevada tested positive for the coronavirus while visiting the state in recent weeks or shortly after returning home, according to state health data.

The cases jumped in the weeks after Nevada's casinos reopened on June 4 after being shuttered for nearly three months. Gov. Steve Sisolak said the state was ready to welcome people from across the country, saying "We're encouraging visitors to come and enjoy themselves and have a good time."

Last week, Sisolak re-imposed restrictions on bars and restaurants to address a spike in cases, including closing bars in counties deemed hot spots. When asked if he'd close casinos again, the governor said he would wait for additional information before deciding whether to implement new restrictions on them.

## New Jersey

TRENTON — New Jersey Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation Thursday authorizing nearly \$10 billion in debt to plug budget holes that stem from the coronavirus pandemic, and Republicans sued him, arguing the bill runs afoul of the state constitution.

Murphy signed the bill shortly after the Democrat-led Assembly and Senate passed the measure, mostly on party lines.

The borrowing is needed to support public workers, first-responders, education aid and other state services, Murphy has said, but exactly how the money would be spent is yet to be determined.

The first-term governor has also said the state faces a \$10 billion budget gap through June 2021.

## Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf followed through on his threat to yank COVID-19 funding from a county that defied his shutdown orders, while his administration targeted bars, restaurants and large gatherings statewide Thursday in an effort to prevent a wider resurgence of the virus that officials say could jeopardize students' return to school.

The state's largest teachers union, meanwhile, asked Wolf to order schools to plan for online-only instruction, citing mounting concern among educators and parents about the "significant health risks" posed by sending kids back to the classroom.

Wolf withheld nearly \$13 million in funding from Lebanon County, where local Republican leaders voted in mid-May to lift pandemic restrictions in defiance of the Democratic governor. Wolf's decision left Lebanon as the only Pennsylvania county to have been cut off from a \$625 million pot of federal coronavirus relief money distributed by the state.

## Washington

OLYMPIA — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Thursday announced revised coronavirus restrictions, limiting indoor and outdoor social gatherings for counties in the third phase of a four-stage reopening plan to 10, down from 50.

And he warned that additional rollbacks could occur, even a potential return to a stay-at-home order, if current trends continue.

COVID-19 activity has recently spiked in the state, which saw the first reported case in the United States in January, as well as the nation's first deadly cluster in a nursing home east of Seattle that began in late February.

The restriction on gatherings for the 17 counties in Phase 3 — which takes effect Monday — does not apply to spiritual services, weddings and funerals at this time.

# Officers use tear gas on Ore. protest

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Federal officers deployed tear gas and fired less-lethal rounds into a crowd of protesters in Oregon, hours after the head of the Department of Homeland Security visited Portland and called the demonstrators “violent anarchists.”

Video showed many protesters leaving the area near the federal courthouse late Thursday as smoke filled the air. Protests have taken place for nearly two months in Portland, since the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25.

During a visit to Portland earlier Thursday, Homeland Security Acting Secretary Chad Wolf said state and city authorities are to blame for not putting an end to the protests, angering local officials.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and other local officials have said they didn’t ask for help from federal law enforcement and have asked them to leave.

A few hundred people had gathered near the federal courthouse Thursday night, news outlets reported. Police told protesters to leave after announcing they heard some chanting about burning down the building, according to The Oregonian.

A short time later, federal officers fired rounds and deployed tear gas to break up the crowd. Some protesters remained in the area early Friday and were detained, but it was unclear whether any arrests were made, the newspaper reported.

Homeland Security acting Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli said Friday morning on “Fox & Friends” that the federal

government has a responsibility to protect buildings such as the courthouse.

“What we’ve seen around the country is where responsible policing is advanced, violence recedes,” Cuccinelli said. “And Portland hasn’t gotten that memo. Nor have a lot of other cities. And the president is determined to do what we can, within our jurisdiction, to help restore peace to these beleaguered cities.”

President Donald Trump recently sent the federal officers to the city. Tensions have escalated in the past two weeks, particularly after an officer with the U.S. Marshals Service fired a less-lethal round at a protester’s head on July 11, critically injuring him.

## Burger King changes cattle feed to reduce bovine gas emissions

Associated Press

Burger King is staging an intervention with its cows.

The chain has rebalanced the diet of some of the cows by adding lemon grass in a bid to limit bovine contributions to climate change. By tweaking their diet, Burger King said Tuesday that it believes it can reduce a cow’s daily methane emissions by about 33%.

Cows emit methane as a by-product of their digestion, and that has become a potential public relations hurdle for major burger chains.

Greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector made up 9.9% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Of that amount, methane emissions from livestock (called enteric fermentation) comprised more than a quarter of the emissions from the agriculture sector.

With an over-the-top social media campaign that teeters between vulgarity and science, Burger King is banking on a heightened awareness of

climate change and its responsibility to limit its own role. According to a recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, about 2 out of 3 Americans say corporations have a responsibility to combat climate change.

Potential customers are also cutting down on the amount of meat they consume, citing both environmental and dietary concerns. Burger King and rival McDonald’s have added meat alternatives to their menus.

Two years ago McDonald’s also said it was taking steps to cut the greenhouse gases it emits. It tweaked the manner in which the beef in its Big Macs and Quarter Pounders was produced.

Burger King worked with scientists to test and develop its new formula. Preliminary tests indicate that the lemon grass leaves help the cows release less methane as they digest their food. On Tuesday, the chain introduced its Reduced Methane Emissions Beef Whopper in select restaurants in Miami; New York; Austin, Texas; Portland, Ore.; and Los Angeles.

## Mich.’s Amash officially not seeking to keep House seat

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Rep. Justin Amash, of Michigan, who left the Republican Party last year after accusing President Donald Trump of impeachable acts and flirted with a Libertarian presidential bid, confirmed Thursday he is not seeking reelection.

“I love representing our community in Congress. I always will. This is my choice, but I’m still going to miss it,” Amash said in a tweet. “Thank you for your trust.”

Earlier Thursday, Amash tweeted a Detroit News story that quoted a top aide as saying that “he hasn’t been campaigning for any office and doesn’t plan to seek the nomination for any office.” The aide indicated that Amash did not intend to seek the Libertarian Party nomination for his congressional seat when the state party holds its convention this weekend.

Amash, who was elected in the tea party wave of 2010, relayed his rationale for leaving the Republican Party in a July 2019 Washington Post op-ed. He described himself as a lifelong Republican who

had grown disenchanted with party politics and frightened by a two-party system that has “evolved into an existential threat to American principles and institutions.”

His departure from the GOP came weeks after he posted tweets arguing that then-special counsel Robert Mueller documented “impeachable conduct” in his report on Trump’s campaign and Russian interference in the 2016 election. In subsequent public statements, Amash challenged colleagues from both parties to act.

In May, Amash announced the end of a bid for the 2020 Libertarian Party presidential nomination, just weeks after announcing his interest.

In tweets, Amash said the path to victory was narrower than he thought, citing hurdles such as a media “dominated by voices strongly averse to the political risks posed by a viable third candidate” and a public “understandably more interested in what life will look like tomorrow than they are in broader policy debates.”

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Surgeon is accused in opioid scheme

**NE** LINCOLN — Law enforcement officials in Lincoln have arrested a local orthopedic surgeon, accusing him of a ruse to feed his opioid addiction.

Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner said Dr. Keith Hughes, 55, carried out a scheme to write fraudulent oxycodone prescriptions to a patient, which he then bought from the man.

Deputies arrested Hughes on Tuesday following a monthslong investigation, the Lincoln Journal Star reported. Wagner said Hughes, a doctor at Nebraska Foot and Ankle, has written 63 prescriptions for 4,300 pills over the last two years to Colby Digilio, 32, of Lincoln. Hughes would either pay cash for the pills or swap services or items, such as food, sports memorabilia and clothing, for them, Wagner said.

Hughes and Digilio were arrested Tuesday after deputies watched Digilio pick up a prescription, then drive to meet up with Hughes in south Lincoln, Wagner said.

## Cops capture kangaroo loose in neighborhood

**FL** FORT LAUDERDALE — Police officers captured an unlikely suspect bouncing through a Fort Lauderdale neighborhood on Thursday morning.

After receiving a call about a kangaroo running loose, officers managed to capture it and place it in a squad car. The agency posted a picture of the kangaroo on Twitter.

So far, police have few clues as to the origins of this misplaced marsupial. No one was injured in its capture. The kangaroo was turned over to the South Florida Wildlife Center.

## Water leak in tunnel unnerves commuters

**NJ** WEEHAWKEN — No, that wasn't the Hudson River leaking into the Lincoln Tunnel as anxious commuters sat in their cars fearing the worst.

Video taken Wednesday and posted online showed water flowing along a walkway and onto the roadway in the tunnel that connects New Jersey and New York City. The images prompted numerous people to tweet about their fears of being stuck in the tunnel if it flooded.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the tunnel, said a water main ruptured in a facility room in the tunnel's center tube. After the break was repaired, the water was pumped out.

The mile-and-a-half-long tunnel is more than 80 years old and accommodates roughly 1.5 million vehicles into New York in an average month.

## Rebuild of damaged bridge nearly finished

**IL** LONG GROVE — Work is nearing completion on a \$1 million project to rebuild a covered bridge in northern Illinois that was severely damaged two years ago by a delivery truck.

Long Grove village President Bill Jacob said work on the steel-reinforced reconstruction of the community's iconic covered bridge is in the "homestretch" and crews are installing the roof rafters this week.

The bridge, which dates back to 1906, had been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in June 2018. Sixteen days later, a box truck plowed into it, severely damaging the structure, the Lake County News-Sun reported.

## Backyard chicken proposal advances

**SD** RAPID CITY — A proposal to allow residential chickens is advancing in Rapid City. A city council committee has directed city staff to develop a plan for how many chickens would be allowed, size restrictions on a chicken coop, licensing and other details.

The council has considered allowing backyard chickens six years ago, but rejected the idea. Council member Darla Drew brought the matter back to the Legal and Finance Committee Wednesday.

"There appears to be an increased push for allowing domestic hens in the city and some of the push is coming from young people and those concerned about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Drew.

Brita Craven, an administrator of a Facebook group called Rapid City Hens, said fresh eggs are a component of food security, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"If all hell breaks loose and we aren't able to get out for a couple of weeks, an egg a day gives us some confidence," Craven said.

## Man accused of robbing elderly man at cemetery

**NJ** CLIFTON — A New York City man accused of attacking and robbing an elderly man while the victim was visiting a grave at a northern New Jersey cemetery is also suspected in several similar attacks, authorities said Thursday.

Todd Scott Allen, 57, of Brooklyn, faces counts of robbery with bodily injury, burglary and credit card theft that stem from the June 12 attack in Clifton. Clifton police say the 77-year-old victim was at-

tacked at the East Ridgelawn Cemetery. They say the assailant threatened the man and pushed him to the ground, then entered his vehicle and took his wallet and cellphone before fleeing on foot.

## Biltmore Estate plans to cut nearly 400 jobs

**NC** ASHEVILLE — North Carolina's Biltmore Estate will cut 400 jobs because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Asheville Citizen-Times reported Wednesday that the massive mansion-turned tourist destination had reopened on a limited basis on May 9.

But the lingering pandemic will lead to the elimination of about 15% of its positions. They'll come through a combination of permanent layoffs and early retirements. The 8,000-acre estate is anchored by a 250-room French chateau built by George Vanderbilt.

## Man who vandalized Jewish temples sought

**FL** SARASOTA — Authorities in Florida are looking for the man who spray-painted swastikas on two Jewish temples.

The vandalism occurred early Wednesday morning, according to a Sarasota County Sheriff's Office news release.

Surveillance video shows a man with his face covered walk onto the grounds of Temple Emanu-El shortly after 2 a.m., investigators said. A short time later, he visited Temple Sinai several miles away. At both locations, officials said the man drew multiple swastikas and other graffiti causing thousands of dollars in damage.

A similar incident occurred in April at Temple Emanu-El, authorities said.

From wire reports

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## Briefly

### Harden, cleared to play, practices

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — NBA scoring leader James Harden of the Houston Rockets practiced with his team for the first time in more than four months Thursday, saying his arrival at the league's restart bubble at Walt Disney World was delayed by family issues.

Harden came to Disney earlier this week, satisfied his league-mandated quarantine requirements and got cleared to participate.

Harden has been working out, but said Thursday was his first time playing actual 5-on-5, contact-laden basketball in more than a month.

In other NBA news:

■ Zion Williamson left the New Orleans Pelicans on Thursday to attend to what the club described as an "urgent family medical matter."

Williamson, the NBA's top overall draft choice last summer, intends to rejoin the team in the Orlando, Fla., area for the resumption of the season, the Pelicans said, but the club did not specify when he would be able to return or whether he'll miss any of the club's eight remaining regular-season games.

### Top college coaches avoided salary cuts

Most of the highest-paid college football coaches have avoided the voluntary salary reductions that have swept Power Five programs, according to an ESPN survey.

ESPN surveyed the 65 Power Five conference schools along with 10 other prominent basketball programs. At 33 of the 75 schools, at least one of either the football and basketball coach had agreed to have his pay cut to deal with the pandemic-induced financial crisis.

But eight of the 10 football coaches with the largest salaries during the 2019-20 academic year have not had their salaries reduced, and among basketball coaches half of the 10 highest paid have not taken cuts.

— Associated Press

# NCAA lays out plan for playing, but warns of surging pandemic

Associated Press

The NCAA handed down its latest guidelines for playing through a pandemic while also sounding an alarm: The prospect of having a fall semester with football and other sports is looking grim.

If the games can go on, the NCAA says college athletes should be tested for COVID-19 no more than 72 hours before they play, players with high-risk exposures to the coronavirus should be quarantined for 14 days and everybody on the sideline should wear a mask.

The nation's largest governing body for college sports released an updated guidance Thursday to help member schools navigate competition, but it comes as the pandemic rages on. Around the country, the number of COVID-19 cases are on the rise and many states have slowed reopenings or reinstated social-distancing restrictions on some businesses.

"This document lays out the advice of health care professionals as to how to resume college sports if we can achieve an environment where COVID-19 rates are manageable," NCAA Presi-

dent Mark Emmert said in a statement. "Today, sadly, the data point in the wrong direction. If there is to be college sports in the fall, we need to get a much better handle on the pandemic."

At this point, hopes of being able to conduct a college football season in the fall are dimming. Plans are already being made to modify it.

The Big Ten and Pac-12 announced last week that they would play only conference games in football and other sports to help minimize potential disruptions caused by COVID-19.

The Big East joined those leagues Thursday by going conference-only for the fall season, which for the basketball-focused league includes men's and women's soccer, men's and women's cross-country, volleyball and field hockey.

Other FBS conferences have not decided yet on scheduling formats for the coming football season, instead waiting until late July. The regular season is scheduled to begin around Labor Day weekend, with dozens of games slated for Sept. 3-7.

"Right now we'd like to buy as much time as possible," AAC Commissioner Mike Aresco told Sports Talk 790 in Houston.

## Accusations suggest culture of harassment in Washington

The Washington Post

A few months after Emily Applegate started working for the Washington Redskins in 2014, she settled into a daily routine: She would meet a female coworker in the bathroom during their lunch breaks, she said, to commiserate and cry about the frequent sexual harassment and verbal abuse they endured.

They cried about the former chief operating officer's expletive-laced tirades, Applegate said, recalling him calling her "f-----g stupid" and then requesting she wear a tight dress for a meeting with clients, "so the men in the room have something to look at." They cried about a wealthy suiteholder who grabbed her friend's backside during a game, Applegate said, and the indifference the team's top sales executive displayed when she complained.

But most of all, Applegate said, they cried about the realization their dream job of working in the NFL came with what they characterized as relentless sexual harassment and verbal abuse that was ignored — and in some cases, condoned — by top team executives.

Applegate is one of 15 former female Redskins employees who told The Washington Post they were sexually harassed during their time at the club. The other 14 women spoke on the condition of anonymity citing a fear of litigation, as some signed nondisclosure agreements with the team that threaten legal retribution if they speak negatively about the club. The team declined a request from The Post to release former female employees from these agreements so they could speak on the record without

fear of legal reprisal. This story involved interviews with more than 40 current and former employees and a review of text messages and internal company documents.

Team owner Daniel Snyder declined several requests for an interview. Over the past week, as The Post presented detailed allegations and findings to the club, three team employees accused of improper behavior abruptly departed, including Larry Michael, the club's longtime radio voice, and Alex Santos, director of pro personnel.

In a statement, the team said it had hired District of Columbia attorney Beth Wilkinson and her firm, Wilkinson Walsh, "to conduct a thorough independent review of this entire matter and help the team set new employee standards for the future."

# Optimism abounds as MLB season nears

Associated Press

With the start of Major League Baseball's shortened season a week away, games in empty stadiums and strange extra-inning rules are on the verge of becoming reality.

Now that players have gotten used to COVID-19 tests, social distancing and wearing masks in the clubhouse, it's just about time to see if 30 teams can handle a 60-game schedule amid a pandemic.

"Obviously, it's going to feel a little different the way things are going with no fans and what-not," Brewers infielder Eric Sogard said, "but we're all excited to get going and get back out there."

The season begins next Thursday night with the defending World Series champion Washington Nationals hosting the New York Yankees, and the Los Angeles Dodgers welcoming the rival San Francisco Giants. The rest of the league joins the fray Friday, the common thread being that all games will be played without fans in the stands, each team will have a designated hitter and that a runner will be placed on second base during extra innings.

When summer camp began earlier this month following an extended layoff due to the coronavirus outbreak, there was plenty of doubt whether the quest to salvage the season would ever get this far.

Several stars chose not to participate from the start, and rarely a day goes by without a positive COVID-19 test in one camp or another. But here we are, mere days from launching a season that's unique in almost every way.

"I've been keeping my fingers crossed every day. So far, we're doing fairly well," said Orioles manager Brandon Hyde, whose team opens in Boston next Friday night. "We still have a ways to go before the 24th, and I'm nervous as anybody that we're going to be healthy."

While there's reason for optimism, the stark truth is that COVID-19 is not going away.

Tampa Bay outfielder Austin Meadows was placed on the injured list Thursday night after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Meadows was a first-time All-Star last season, batting .291 with 33 homers and 89 RBIs. He had not been seen

at Tropicana Field by reporters since working out with the Rays on July 3, the first day of summer camp.

The 25-year-old is the second Tampa Bay player known to have tested positive for the coronavirus. Right-hander Tyler Glasnow joined the team Tuesday after missing 11 days of summer camp.

Star third baseman Yoan Moncada rejoined the Chicago White Sox after missing the start of their summer camp because he tested positive for COVID-19. He said he didn't experience any major symptoms but it was a difficult time for him and a little scary.

White Sox manager Rick Renteria also is back with the team after leaving camp last week to go home to California for a family funeral.

Texas Rangers reliever Brett Martin was placed on the injured list because of his positive coronavirus test before the start of summer camp.

Martin, already at higher risk because he has Type 1 diabetes, had a positive reading during intake screening two weeks ago. He experienced mild symptoms of COVID-

19, including congestion and fatigue.

Because Martin is on the injured list due to coronavirus, he doesn't count toward the team's 40-man roster limit while on the IL. The 25-year-old lefty was 2-3 with a 4.76 ERA as a rookie last season.

In Miami, outfielders Matt Joyce and Lewis Brinson were put on the 10-day injured list by the Marlins. No reasons were given, but both have been sidelined since coronavirus testing began at the start of camp.

They still have a chance to play this season, manager Don Mattingly said.

The Braves are awaiting the return of four players who tested positive: four-time All-Star Freddie Freeman, setup reliever Will Smith, right-hander Touki Toussaint and infielder Pete Kozma.

The Pirates have been very quiet in general in terms of potential health issues related to COVID-19 or otherwise.

"There's things that happen that we don't discuss," first-year manager Derek Shelton said. "We just have to adapt and adjust, and that's what we're doing every day."

## Finau shoots 66 in Memorial; quiet return for Tiger

Associated Press

DUBLIN, Ohio — Tiger Woods was back on the PGA Tour for the first time in five months Thursday and saw Muirfield Village like never before.

It was practically empty.

Woods opened with a 10-foot birdie and there was silence. He finished with a 15-foot birdie for a 1-under 71, leaving him five shots behind Tony Finau in the Memorial, and he walked to the side of the green and stood with Rory McIlroy, chatting briefly before they nudged their elbows toward one another without touching.

It's a different world, Woods keeps saying.

It was a reasonable return.

"Got off to almost an ideal start and got a feel for the round early," Woods said. "I just didn't make anything today. I had looks at birdies, but I really didn't make much."

He left that to Finau, who seemed to make everything. Finau finished with seven birdies over his last 10 holes on a Muirfield Village course that was faster and tougher than last week in the Workday Charity Open. That gave him a one-shot lead over Ryan Palmer.

The greens are being replaced after the Memorial, so there's no concern about them dying out. They were 2 feet faster on the Stimpmeter, the wind was strong and often

changed direction without notice. That showed in the scoring. Only seven players broke 70, compared with 35 rounds in the 60s for the first round last week.

This is the first time in 63 years the PGA Tour has played consecutive weeks on the same course.

Muirfield Village only looked like the same course.

"It's night and day," Palmer said. "The greens, they're 2, 3 feet faster for sure. So I knew it wasn't a course you had to just go out and light up."

It wasn't a course to overpower, either.

Bryson DeChambeau hit one drive 423 yards with the wind at his back, leaving him 46 yards

to the pin on No. 1, a hole where he recalls hitting 5-iron in the past. That was a rare birdie. With wedges in his hand, he still managed only a 73.

Collin Morikawa won at Muirfield Village last week at 19-under 269, beating Justin Thomas in a playoff. Morikawa opened with a 76. Thomas, who didn't make a bogey until his 55th hole last week, had two bogeys after two holes. He shot 74.

Dustin Johnson shot 80, his highest score on the PGA Tour in more than four years. Rickie Fowler shot 81.

By now, players are used to seeing open spaces with minimal distraction. That wasn't the case for Woods.