

## USMC recruiting surges as others struggle

*Associated Press*

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. — Not long ago, Marine Col. Jennifer Nash, a combat engineer with war deployments under her belt, made a vow to fellow officers as they headed to a dinner in Atlanta: She would get two new recruiting contacts by the end of the evening.

She admits recruiting is not the job that she or other Marines had in mind when they enlisted. But after stints as a recruiter and senior officer at the Eastern recruiting command, she has become emblematic of the Corps' tradition of putting its best, battle-tested Marines on enlistment duty. They get results.

Marine leaders say they will make their recruiting goal this year, while the active-duty Army, Navy and Air Force all expect to fall short. The services have struggled in the tight job market to compete with higher-paying businesses for the dwindling number of young people who can meet the military's physical, mental and moral standards.

On that night, Nash achieved her own goal. She had gotten the valet at the hotel and the hostess at the restaurant to provide their phone numbers and to consider a Ma-

rine career.

Nash's boss, Brig. Gen. Walker Field, who head the Eastern recruiting region, says the Corps has historically put an emphasis on selecting top-performing Marines to fill recruiting jobs. He says that has been a key to the Marines' recruiting success, along with efforts to increase the number of recruiters, extend those who do well and speed their return to high schools, where in-person recruiting stopped during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said his recruiters — who cover the territory between Canada and Puerto Rico and as far west as Mississippi — will meet their mission and expect to have 30% of their 2024 goal when they start the next fiscal year, Oct. 1. More broadly, Marine officials say they expect the Corps to achieve its recruiting target of more than 33,000.

Last year, the Navy, Air Force and Marines had to eat into their pools of delayed entry applicants in order to make their goals. The Marines will avoid that this year.

"That would be a great ending," said Field, speaking to The Associated Press on a recent steamy day at South Carolina's Parris Island, along the Atlantic Coast. "I'm bearish for not only concluding FY23 on a

strong footing, but also how we set the conditions for FY24."

The Marine Corps may get some help from its small size. The Army, for example, has a recruiting goal of 65,000 this year, which is nearly double the Corps', and expects to fall substantially short of that. Air Force and Navy officials say they will also miss their goals, although the Space Force, which is the smallest service and does its recruiting within Air Force stations, is expected to meet its goal of about 500 recruits.

Sitting in the shadow of Parris Island's replica of the Iwo Jima monument, Field said his biggest challenge is that a number of Marine hopefuls cannot pass the military's academic test. That is a widespread problem, but the Army recently set up a program that targets recruits who score below 30 on the test and provides schooling for several weeks to help them pass. Already more than 8,800 recruits have successfully gone through the classes, raised their scores and moved on to basic training.

Marine leaders do not take those lowest scoring recruits, and so far have no plans for any type of formal improvement program such as the Army's.

## Australian helicopter crashes during Talisman Sabre

**By SETH ROBSON**

*Stars and Stripes*

ROCKHAMPTON, Australia — Search-and-rescue efforts continue for four aviators missing since their Australian army helicopter crashed late Friday during the multinational Talisman Sabre exercise.

Capt. Danniell Lyon, Lt. Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class 2 Joseph Laycock and Cpl. Alexander Naggs were aboard an MRH-90 Taipan that ditched in waters near Hamilton Island around 10:30 p.m., said Australian army Lt. Gen. Simon Stuart.

All are members of the army's 6th Aviation Regiment, he

announced during a televised press conference on Sunday at Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney.

"There is now a major international effort engaged in the search-and-rescue of the crew, which is involving hundreds of Defence Force personnel," Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said at a separate press conference that afternoon in Townsville.

Talisman Sabre activities, which were paused immediately after the crash, resumed late Saturday afternoon on a limited basis.

While some wreckage from

the aircraft has been found, the main part of the airframe is still missing, Marles said.

"There are specialist assets which are on task right now which are doing that job," he said. "Our thoughts are with the aircrew. Our thoughts are with their families and with their teammates who we've met today, and who will be experiencing an enormous degree of anxiety in this moment."

Ships involved in search-and-rescue efforts, underway since late Friday, include two Australian navy vessels — the landing helicopter dock ship HMAS Adelaide and the guided-mis-

sile destroyer HMAS Brisbane — and a U.S. Navy expeditionary mobile base, the USS Miguel Keith, according to Lt. Gen. Greg Bilton, the Australian Defence Force's chief of joint operations.

U.S. and Australian warships, including the Miguel Keith and the minehunter HMAS Huon, paused their Talisman Sabre training near the Queensland port of Gladstone to join the search, Australian navy Cmdr. Paul Doble told Stars and Stripes during an interview at an army depot near the port on Sunday.

# Germany bans tax seizure of US troop pay

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The German government has issued a new directive that bans all its tax offices from seizing the military pay of U.S. personnel stationed in the country, ending a yearslong dispute that has wreaked financial havoc on scores of Americans.

"The harassment is over," said Landstuhl attorney Patrick Rietz, whose victory in a lower German tax court on behalf of a U.S. military couple sparked the turnaround.

The decision by the German Federal Finance Ministry on Wednesday came after a state tax ministry dropped its appeal of the lower court decision.

The federal ruling states U.S. military and civilian personnel who arrived under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement can't have their pay taxed by Germany, regardless of their "will to return" to the United States.

For years, local tax offices have garnished anything from thousands of dollars to six-figure sums in tax penalties from

service members and Defense Department workers, even after they left Germany in some cases.

The federal ministry's directive was in line with the November 2022 court decision in Rietz's favor by the Rheinland-Pfalz Finance Court, which ruled that attempts to tax U.S. military pay violate the NATO troop treaty.

"The new interpretation of the law is to be applied in all open cases," the Rheinland-Pfalz Finance Ministry said in a statement to Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

Going forward, salaries for service members, Defense Department civilians and contractors with appropriate SOFA status will be "tax-exempt regardless of their intention to return, provided that the other requirements of NATO troop status or the supplementary agreement are met," it added.

German tax offices — especially in the greater Kaiserslautern area, which is home to tens of thousands of U.S. troops and civilians — long argued that

personnel must be able to prove they intend to return to the U.S. if they want to avoid paying German taxes on salaries already taxed by the U.S. government.

Being married to a German, sending a child to a German school or extending overseas tours were all factors that tax offices used to build cases against Americans.

Even when Americans went back to the U.S., the ultimate proof of a "will to return," the German version of the IRS continued its pursuits.

The reversal comes three years after the U.S. lodged a formal complaint over the matter, after Stars and Stripes put a spotlight on the difficulties facing military families.

But a diplomatic solution remained elusive, leaving individual service members and civilians to fight it on their own.

The situation sparked a grassroots effort by members of the military community either affected or outraged by how German authorities were able to go after American military

pay virtually unchallenged.

"It's truly insane (German tax offices) were able to get this far," said Mouna Litz, a spouse who has been part of the grassroots campaign. "It took people getting together because numbers mean power." Families "were intimidated into paying because they were made to believe they had done something so incredibly wrong."

Mike Goff, a military retiree who lived in Germany for years before moving to Florida in 2022, spearheaded a letter-writing campaign directed at everyone from senior U.S. military officials to Germany's top elected politicians.

He also gave counsel and moral support to friends who found themselves the targets of German tax collectors.

"Lots of NATO-SOFA-protected Americans lost marriages, thousands of dollars and sleep because of (tax office) hatred of Americans," he said. "This is the end of the battle waged only by Americans, with little to no help from Washington, D.C."

## China: US aid won't deter will to 'solve the Taiwan problem'

*Associated Press*

TAIPEI, Taiwan — China accused the United States of turning Taiwan into an "ammunition depot" after the White House announced a \$345 million military aid package for Taipei, and the self-ruled island said Sunday that it tracked six Chinese navy ships in waters off its shores.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office issued a statement late Saturday opposing the military aid to Taiwan, which China has claimed as its own territory.

"No matter how much of the ordinary people's taxpayer money the ... Taiwanese separatist forces spend, no matter how many U.S. weapons, it will not shake our resolve to solve the Taiwan problem. Or shake our firm will to

realize the reunification of our motherland," said Chen Binhua, a Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson.

"Their actions are turning Taiwan into a powder keg and ammunition depot, aggravating the threat of war in the Taiwan Strait," the statement said.

China's People's Liberation Army has increased its military maneuvers in recent years aimed at Taiwan, sending fighter jets and warships to circle the island.

On Sunday, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said it tracked six Chinese navy ships near the island.

Taiwan's ruling administration, led by the Democratic Progressive Party, has stepped up its weapons purchases from the U.S. as part of a deterrence

strategy against a Chinese invasion.

China and Taiwan split amid civil war in 1949, and Taiwan has never been governed by China's ruling Communist Party.

Unlike previous military purchases, the latest batch of aid is part of a presidential authority approved by the U.S. Congress last year to draw weapons from current U.S. military stockpiles — so Taiwan will not have to wait for military production and sales.

While Taiwan has purchased \$19 billion worth of weaponry, much of it has yet to be delivered. Washington will send man-portable air defense systems, intelligence and surveillance capabilities, firearms and missiles to Taiwan.

# Charges tie Trump closer to cover-up effort

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's a stunning new allegation in an already serious case: Former President Donald Trump sought to delete Mar-a-Lago surveillance footage to obstruct the Justice Department's investigation into his handling of classified documents.

The latest criminal charges unsealed Thursday deepen Trump's legal jeopardy, alleging a more central role for the former president than previously known in a cover-up that prosecutors say was meant to prevent them from recovering top-secret documents he took with him after he left the White House. Coming as Trump, who is seeking the Republican nomination for the presidency again in the 2024 election, braces for possible additional indictments related to efforts to overturn the 2020 election, the new allegations strengthen special

counsel Jack Smith's already powerful case against Trump while undercutting potential defenses floated by the former president, experts say.

"Before these new charges, you could maybe try some sort of defense that 'this was all a mistake, it was my staff' or confusion about what documents he actually had," said former federal prosecutor Randall Eliason, a George Washington University law professor.

"But especially now, when you're trying to destroy video footage," he added, "that's kind of the final nail in the coffin. I don't see much in the way of a defense, not a real defense. All he can do is claim he's being persecuted and hope for a holdout juror or something."

Trump resorted to that familiar playbook on Friday, writing in a post on his Truth Social platform that "this is textbook Third World

intimidation by rabid, lawless prosecutors." He insisted during an interview with radio host John Fredericks that he did nothing wrong and accused prosecutors of trying to intimidate his staff into making up lies about him.

Later Friday, Trump posted on Truth Social that Mar-a-Lago security tapes were voluntarily handed over to prosecutors. Trump said he was told they were not "deleted in any way, shape or form."

The new Florida charges came as a surprise given that Trump and his legal team have been focused on the prospect of an additional indictment in Washington — possibly within days — related to his efforts to cling to power after he lost to President Joe Biden. Trump received a letter this month informing him that he's a target in that probe, and his lawyers met Thursday with special

counsel Jack Smith's office.

Hours after that meeting, Smith revealed the new classified documents case charges on top of a 38-count indictment issued last month against Trump and his valet, Walt Nauta. The updated indictment includes a detailed chronology of phone conversations and other interactions between Trump, Nauta and Mar-a-Lago property manager Carlos De Oliveira in the days after the Justice Department last June drafted a subpoena for security camera footage at Mar-a-Lago.

Video from the home would ultimately become vital to the government's case because, prosecutors said, it shows Nauta moving boxes in and out of a storage room — an act alleged to have been done at Trump's direction and in an effort to hide records not only from investigators but Trump's own lawyers.

## Medal of Honor recipient sees christening of namesake ship

Associated Press

BATH, Maine — Marine 1st Lt. Harvey "Barney" Barnum jumped to the ground when he came under fire during an ambush in Vietnam on Dec. 18, 1965, that killed his radio operator and commander.

Collecting himself, Barnum realized he was now the highest-ranking officer of a rifle company he'd just joined. He called in artillery and, amid gunfire, dragged the commander to safety, where he died in Barnum's arms. Then he proceeded to mount a counterattack, oversee evacuation of the wounded and lead the unit's eventual break out to rejoin the battalion.

The Medal of Honor recipient, now 83, watched Saturday as his wife smashed a bottle of sparkling wine against the bow to christen the future U.S. Navy destroyer that'll bear the name Harvey C. Barnum Jr.

He said he was speechless

when he learned that a warship would bear his name. "As anybody that knows Barney Barnum knows, I've never been speechless," he joked before the event.

The ceremony on Saturday at Navy shipbuilder Bath Iron Works was a tribute to the Vietnam War hero who during his first firefight was foisted into leadership of Marines who didn't yet know his name because he'd just joined them a couple of days earlier. Dignitaries included Maine's governor and senators, as well as Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, who praised Barnum's humility and generosity, in addition to being a war hero who inspired fellow Marines.

Gen. Eric Smith, the acting Marine Corps commandant whose nomination to lead the Marine Corps is being blocked by a Republican senator, called Barnum "an icon, a legend, a Marine."

## Monsoon rains expected to cool hot US Southwest

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A historic heat wave that has gripped the U.S. Southwest throughout July, blasting residents and baking surfaces like brick, is beginning to abate with the late arrival of monsoon rains.

Forecasters expect that by Monday, people in metro Phoenix will begin to see high temperatures fall under 110 degrees Fahrenheit for the first time in a month.

But not on Saturday. The high temperature in the desert city with more than 1.6 million residents climbed past 110 F for the 30th straight day, the National Weather Service said. The previous record stretch of 110 F or above was for 18 days in 1974.

There were increased chances on Sunday of cooling monsoon thunderstorms. Though wet weather can also bring damaging winds, blowing dust and the

chance of flash flooding, the weather service warned.

Sudden rains running off hard-baked surfaces can quickly fill normally dry washes.

The overnight low at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport fell under 90 F for the first time in 16 days, finally giving residents some respite from the stifling heat once the sun goes down.

Temperatures also were expected to ease in Las Vegas, Albuquerque and even in Death Valley, Calif., where the weather service said the expected high of 122 F on Saturday is forecast to lower to 113 F by Tuesday — along with a slight chance of rain.

In California's Riverside County, more than 1,300 people were ordered to evacuate their homes as crews battled a wildfire that charred 3.2 square miles in the community of Aguanga, about 60 miles northeast of San Diego, authorities said Saturday.



# French Embassy in Niger attacked

*Associated Press*

NIAMEY, Niger — Security in Niger took a turn for the worse Sunday, as protesters marched through the capital in support of the recent military coup, the French embassy was attacked, and a regional economic bloc raised the possibility of military intervention if the president was not reinstated within a week.

Thousands of junta supporters surged through the streets of Niamey, the capital, waving Russian flags, chanting the name of the Russian president and forcefully denouncing former colonial power France.

The protesters marched through the city to the French Embassy, where a door was lit on fire, according to someone who was at the embassy when it happened and videos seen by The AP. Black smoke could be seen rising from across the city. The Nigerien army broke up the crowd.

Russian mercenary group Wagner is already operating in neighboring Mali, and Russian President Vladimir Putin would like to expand his country's influence in the region. However, it is unclear yet whether the new junta leaders will move toward Moscow or stick with Niger's Western partners.

On Sunday at an emergency meeting in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, the West African ECOWAS bloc said it was suspending

relations with Niger and authorized the use of force if the president was not reinstated within a week.

"In the event the authorities' demands are not met within one week, (we will) take all measures necessary to restore constitutional order in the Republic of Niger. Such measures may include the use of force. To this effect, the chiefs of defense staff of ECOWAS are to meet immediately," Omar Alieu Touray, president of the ECOWAS commission, said after the meeting.

It was not immediately clear how the bloc would use force in Niger. In December, it proposed creating a regional force that would intervene in case of necessity to help restore peace and constitutional order in member countries. However, that proposal has not yet come to fruition.

On Sunday, the bloc said it continued to recognize Bazoum as Niger's president and would reject any form of his resignation. It demanded for his immediate release and reinstatement, saying that the junta had him in a "hostage situation."

If the bloc uses force, this would be catastrophic for civilians, said Rida Lyammouri, senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South, a Moroccan-based think tank. "Economic sanctions are the ones to be imposed but (I) don't see a military intervention happening because of the violence that

could trigger not only between Niger and ECOWAS forces, but also civilians from the both sides," he said.

Days after the coup, uncertainty is mounting about Niger's future, with some calling out the junta's reasons for seizing control.

President Mohamed Bazoum was democratically elected two years ago in Niger's first peaceful transfer of power since independence from France in 1960.

The mutineers said they overthrew him because he wasn't able to secure the nation against growing jihadi violence.

But some analysts and Nigeriens say that's just a pretext for a takeover that is more about internal power struggles than securing the nation.

"We couldn't expect a coup in Niger because there's no social, political or security situation that would justify that the military take the power," Prof. Amad Hassane Boubacar, who teaches at the University of Niamey, told The Associated Press.

He said Bazoum wanted to replace the head of the presidential guard, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, who is now in charge of the country. Tchiani, who also goes by Omar, was loyal to Bazoum's predecessor and that sparked the problems, Boubacar said. The AP cannot independently verify his assessment.

## Winds stall efforts to tow ship off Dutch coast

*Associated Press*

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — High winds blowing across the North Sea are delaying efforts to tow a burning cargo ship loaded with thousands of new cars to safety off the Dutch coast, the government said Sunday.

The Fremantle Highway was unlikely to be moved Sunday because of the southwesterly wind, according to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

"The wind will continue to blow from the southwest for the next few days. The towing of the Fremantle Highway to the new temporary location may therefore still take several days to start," the ministry said in an update Saturday night.

Salvage crews on Saturday attached a second towing cable to the ship, which is transporting 3,783 new vehicles, including 498 electric vehicles, from the German port of Bremerhaven to Singapore.

The salvage teams ultimately want to tow the stricken ship to a port but it is not yet clear where or when that will happen.

The ship has been burning since Tuesday. Firefighters decided not to douse the flames with water for fear of making the nearly 219-yard ship unstable.

One crew member died and others were injured after the fire broke out. The crew was evacuated early Wednesday. The cause of the fire has not been determined.

## Bomb kills at least 40 at Pakistan political rally

*Associated Press*

KHAR, Pakistan — A powerful bomb ripped through a political rally by supporters of a hard-line cleric and political leader on Sunday in the coun-

try's northwestern Bajur district, police and health officials said. At least 40 people were killed and nearly 200 wounded, including children, in one of the worst attacks in recent years.

Senior police officer Nazir Khan said the workers' convention of Maulana Fazlur Rahman's Jamiat Ulema Islam party was taking place on the outskirts of Khar, the capital of Ba-

jur district, when the explosion took place.

Bajur is the former stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Woman freed after year in jail for killing father

**MI** PONTIAC — A teenager convicted of killing her father by burning him with chemical drain cleaner was given a light sentence and released after more than a year in jail.

Megan Imirowicz, 19, of Groveland Township, was found guilty of use of harmful devices/irritants causing death during a four-day trial in June.

Oakland County Judge Victoria Valentine sentenced Imirowicz to a year in jail last week in addition to five years of probation and other conditions. She was quickly released because the length of her custody before and after the trial — 506 days — had already exceeded the sentence, The Oakland Press reported.

Imirowicz was arrested after throwing lye, a chemical drain cleaner, on Konrad Imirowicz, 64, while he was sleeping in 2021. He survived for five months before dying in March 2022.

Megan Imirowicz was upset with her father because he was drunk and unable to drive her to a hair appointment before an 18th birthday party, prosecutors said.

### Car theft leads to charge of kidnapping, cops say

**ME** SCARBOROUGH — A Maine man who stole a car with a sleeping woman inside was charged with kidnapping, police said.

The woman said she was sleeping in her vehicle early last Thursday when a man hopped

in and began driving, ignoring her pleas to let her out, Scarborough police said. The woman, whom police did not identify, dialed 911 from the moving vehicle.

Damion Joyce eventually stopped after being convinced by a dispatcher, who addressed him by speaker phone during the 911 call, police said. Joyce was charged with kidnapping, criminal restraint and theft, police said.

### Congress urged to debate self-driving vehicles

**DC** WASHINGTON — Advocates for the self-driving vehicle industry on Wednesday warned that years of regulatory inaction is putting American manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage and urged Congress to expand their ability to test and eventually sell autonomous cars and trucks.

While most Republicans, and some Democrats, on the House Energy and Commerce Committee seemed enthusiastic about speeding up the pace of AV research and testing in America, others warned about going too fast without addressing long-standing issues of safety and liability.

Currently AV manufacturers can deploy a maximum of 2,500 self-driving vehicles for testing, provided they have permission from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. AV advocates have complained that the limits represent a bottleneck that is holding back the growth of the industry at a crucial time. Currently the NHTSA has spent more than a year considering a petition from General Motors to deploy 2,500 vehicles

from its Cruise AV unit for street testing and a ride-hailing service.

### Activists, groups must pay \$50M after lawsuit

**ID** BOISE — Far-right activist Ammon Bundy, who led the takeover of a federal wildlife refuge in Oregon, an associate and three of their groups must pay over \$50 million in damages for accusing a hospital of child trafficking and harassing medical staff, a jury has decided.

The lawsuit brought by St. Luke's Regional Health accused Bundy and Diego Rodriguez of making defamatory statements against the hospital and its employees after Rodriguez's infant grandson was removed from his family for several days and taken to St. Luke's amid concerns for his health.

The emergency room physician, Dr. Rachel Thomas, testified that the 10-month-old baby's stomach was distended, his eyes were hollow and he was unable to sit up, reminding her of severely malnourished babies she had treated in Haiti, according to the Idaho Statesman newspaper. Police said at the time that medical personnel determined the child was malnourished and had lost weight.

### Smuggled people found at illegal pot plant

**CA** MERCED — Dozens of people who apparently were smuggled into the United States were found working and living in "horrible" conditions at an illegal marijuana plant in California's Central

Valley, authorities said Thursday.

Deputies served a search warrant Wednesday afternoon at a site on unincorporated land near the city of Merced and discovered the operation. Images posted online by the Merced County Sheriff's Office showed trays, bags and boxes stuffed with what looked to be marijuana in a run-down interior space.

"We literally have thousands of pounds of finished marijuana from an illegal grow and illegal source," Sheriff Vern Warnke said.

Deputies found 60 people working there including men and women who were offered various unspecified resources, plus one juvenile, who was seen by child welfare authorities and released to a parent, the Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

### Suspensions of licenses lifted for 100,000 drivers

**NM** SANTA FE — New Mexico's motor vehicle division has lifted the suspension of driver's licenses for more than 100,000 residents under new anti-poverty legislation, officials announced last week.

Bipartisan legislation signed by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in March called for an end to the widespread practice of suspending driver's licenses for failure to pay a fine or failure to appear in court.

At least 23 other states have taken similar steps to end debt-based suspensions of driver's licenses that can make it harder for individuals to pay off debts and care for their families.

— From wire reports

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# US faces Portugal with knockout berth on line

Associated Press

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — The United States heads into its final group match at the Women's World Cup with questions swirling about the team's tactics.

U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski started the same lineup against the Netherlands on Thursday that he rolled out for the opening match against Vietnam. While it was enough for the U.S. to beat the Vietnamese 3-0, it was less successful against the stronger Dutch, and the Americans settled for a 1-1 draw.

That lineup had never played together before the World Cup.

The tie meant the U.S. will likely need a more decisive outcome on Tuesday against Portugal to finish atop Group E and secure a favorable path in the knockout round. Going into the game, advancing out of the group wasn't a given for the two-time defending World Cup champions.

In addition to the same starters, Andonovski made only one substitution in the game against the Dutch, bringing on

midfielder Rose Lavelle to start the second half. But no fresh legs were subbed in even after players showed fatigue. Forwards Lynn Williams and Megan Rapinoe remained on the sidelines.

He was asked about the strategy afterward.

"I just didn't want to disrupt the rhythm at that point because sometimes a substitute comes in and it might take a minute or two to get into a rhythm," he said. "We just didn't want to jeopardize anything because I thought all three of our forwards were very good, dangerous, created opportunities and were a handful."

It was the first time the U.S. had made just one or fewer substitutions in a World Cup game since 2007.

Known in 2019 for jumping on World Cup opponents early, the Americans did not score against the Dutch until the second half when they were already down 1-0.

Lavelle is one of the team's top midfielders and made an immediate impact in the game

— boosting the energy and feeding the attack — and the U.S. looked like that 2019 championship team again. She served up a corner kick to Lindsey Horan, angry about getting knocked down by a Dutch player moments before, for the game-tying goal in the 62nd minute.

Lavelle had a knee injury going into the World Cup and hadn't played since April. She's been on a minutes restriction and Andonovski has been starting Savannah DeMelo, one of the teams' 14 players making their first-ever appearance in the World Cup.

DeMelo hadn't played in a match with the national team until the send-off game against Wales in San Jose, the day the team departed for the World Cup.

"I think we weren't in sync," midfielder Andi Sullivan said. "That happens, and we were able to adjust and respond. Hopefully we can do that earlier in the future. And I think that's also a great strength of this team — we have lots of different ways we can do that to-

gether."

Portugal fell 1-0 in its opening match against the Dutch, then defeated Vietnam 2-0 on Thursday in Hamilton. The victory knocked Vietnam out of the next round.

The U.S. sits atop Group E, even on points — four — with the Netherlands but edging the Dutch on goal differential. Portugal, third in the group with three points, could leap in front of the U.S. with a win at Auckland's Eden Park.

Telma Encarnacao and Kika Nazareth each scored in the match against Vietnam, which made history as Portugal's first win in its first World Cup appearance.

"We are aware of what awaits us, but we are focused on ourselves, which is very important," Nazareth told reporters at training on Saturday. "We will enter the field respecting the opponent, with humility, but always with character and personality. The work will be there, the talent is there. And I think you also always need a little bit of luck. It's believing."

## Vanegas, Colombia stun Germany with upset victory

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Manuela Vanegas scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time as Colombia upset Germany 2-1 at the Women's World Cup on Sunday.

The defender headed in the ball to settle a thrilling game and put her country on the brink of advancing to the knockout stage.

Alexandra Popp had scored on an 89th-minute penalty kick and seemed to have earned two-time champion Germany a 1-1 draw after 18-year-old Linda Caicedo had struck a stunning opener for Colombia.

But Vanegas came up with a late twist to huge celebrations from Colombia fans who dominated the Sydney Football Stadium crowd.

The Germans thought they'd secured a point after Colombia goalkeeper Catalina Perez was penalized for bringing down Lena Oberdorf in the box.

Popp, who scored twice in her country's 6-0 rout of Morocco in its opening game of the tournament, fired straight down the middle to level the game.

That had disappointed the crowd, which passionately cheered Colombia on throughout and erupted after Caicedo's goal in the 52nd.

The Real Madrid teenager had suffered a health scare earlier in the week, but produced a moment of magic to score her second of the tournament.

It was all the more special coming after she'd dropped to the ground holding her chest in training during the week.

Caicedo scored from distance in the 2-0 win against South Korea on Tuesday. But while that goal involved an error from goalkeeper Yoon Young-geul, on this occasion it was all about individual brilliance.

Collecting the ball from just inside the area after a corner, she worked her way into space by bewildering two German defenders in a fast-stepping move before lashing a shot into the top corner.

Caicedo, followed by her teammates, charged toward the corner to get closer to the crowd as it went wild.

Germany has never failed to advance from the group stage of the World Cup. It is still expected to beat South Korea in its last game of Group H, but will likely have to settle for second place.

The runners up at last year's Euros should have been ahead in the first half when Popp was guilty of missing the target with a volley from close range shortly before the break.

Lina Magull had the chance to test Perez from close range earlier, but she missed the kick and the opportunity was wasted.



# Crawford unifies welterweight division

*Associated Press*

LAS VEGAS—The fight itself didn't match the hype, but Terence Crawford's performance exceeded it.

He knocked down Errol Spence Jr. three times Saturday night before finally ending the fight at 2:32 of the ninth round on a technical knockout to cement himself as one of the greatest welterweights in history.

The fight, the most-anticipated boxing match in several years, made Crawford the first undisputed champion in the 147-pound division in the four-belt era that began in 2004.

Crawford (40-0, 31 knockouts) already owned the WBO belt, and took the WBC, WBA and IBF titles from Spence (28-1). Crawford also ran his KO streak to 11 matches, the second-longest active stretch.

Crawford, 35, has won titles at super lightweight and lightweight in addition to welterweight, capturing the latter after moving up in 2018. The Omaha, Neb., fighter became the first

male boxer to become the undisputed champion in two divisions in the four-belt era.

"I only dreamed of being a world champion," Crawford said. "I'm an over-achiever. Nobody believed in me when I was coming up, but I made everybody a believer. I want to thank Spence and his team, because without him none of this would have been possible."

A big fight night on the Strip still brings out the stars, with recording artist André 3000 of Outkast, NBA star Damian Lillard and Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones at T-Mobile Arena. They were among the celebrities that also included former boxing champions such as Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao.

Eminem introduced Crawford and his song "Lose Yourself" played as he walked into the ring before a sellout crowd of 19,990 at T-Mobile Arena.

Spence was the aggressor early on, but Crawford sent him

to the floor with a right hand with 20 seconds left in the second round. Then Crawford went after Spence, but time ran out before he could finish him off.

Crawford, a minus-154 favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, then took control of the fight, landing several major blows, often on counters. But Crawford also picked his spots to go after Spence, his punching power taking a heavy toll.

"He was just better tonight," Spence said. "I make no excuses. He was throwing a harder jab. He was timing with his jab, and he had his timing down on point."

In the seventh round, Crawford knocked down Spence twice—with a short right at 1:02 and with another right with just a second left.

The fight was essentially over at that point, though Crawford backed off in the eighth round. He came roaring back in the ninth to end it for sure.

Crawford didn't waste the chance to gloat afterward, di-

rectly responding to his critics.

"They said I wasn't good enough and I couldn't beat these welterweights," Crawford said. "I just kept my head to the sky and kept praying to God that I would get the opportunity to show the world how great Terence Crawford is. Tonight, I believe I showed how great I am."

Spence, however, said he would be up for a rematch, but wants to move up to the 154-pound division.

"We've got to do it again," Spence said. "I would be a lot better."

Crawford said he would have no problem moving up a weight class.

"I'm in the hurt business," Crawford said. "Forty-seven is kind of hard for me, too. I was already talking about moving up in weight and challenging (champion Jermell) Charlo."

The 33-year-old Spence won the IBF title in 2017, claimed the WBC championship in 2019 and took the WBA championship last year.

## Gaethje uses head kick to win UFC 291 lightweight bout

*Associated Press*

SALT LAKE CITY — Justin Gaethje knocked out Dustin Poirier with a head kick one minute into the second round to win the main event lightweight bout at UFC 291 on Saturday night.

The third-ranked Gaethje (26-4) celebrated his victory by climbing to the top of the Octagon fence and doing a backflip off it. His perfectly timed headshot helped him avenge a loss to Poirier in 2018 when he suffered a fourth-round technical knockout via strikes.

"This chance at redemption was amazing," Gaethje said. "It drove me to work harder to be ready."

It was Gaethje's 20th win by knockout or TKO and his seventh victory in his last nine fights. He also scored his first knockout win since UFC 249 in 2020.

"I was surprised by myself and how good I fought," Gaethje said.

Second-ranked Poirier (29-8) entered the

rematch between the two former interim lightweight champions as a minus-152 favorite according to FanDuel. He matched Gaethje blow for blow in the first round—earning a 10-9 advantage on two of three scorcards—before being quickly dispatched in the second.

The decisive high kick from one former champ caught the other by surprise because it wasn't a move he expected to see from Gaethje.

"I thought I had four more rounds," Poirier said. "I didn't know I had two more minutes."

With the victory, Gaethje earned a BMF belt—the second UFC fighter to be awarded that belt.

Beating Poirier opens the door for Gaethje to have a potential title bout against the winner of Islam Makhachev and Charles Oliveira, who are set to square off at UFC 294 in October.

Gaethje's BMF win over Poirier head-

lined five main card bouts.

Alex Pereira defeated Jan Blachowicz by split decision in a light heavyweight bout billed as the co-main event for his eighth win in his last nine fights.

Pereira (8-2), ranked second as a middleweight, made his debut in the light heavyweight division at UFC 291 after losing the middleweight title belt via knockout to Israel Adesanya at UFC 287 in April. Blachowicz (29-10-1) did not make the transition in weight class a smooth one for the former champion.

He weathered early takedowns in the first two rounds and rallied in the third round.

Derrick Lewis earned a record 14th knockout win over Marcos Rogerio de Lima just 33 seconds into the first round of the heavyweight bout. The No. 10-ranked Lewis (27-11) scored an immediate takedown with a flying knee and pummeled 15th-ranked Rogerio de Lima (21-10-1) with repeated punches to score the early finish.

# Source: Mets sending Scherzer to Texas

Associated Press

The Texas Rangers agreed to acquire three-time Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer in a blockbuster trade with the New York Mets on Saturday night, an all-in move for the surprise leaders in the AL West, a person with knowledge of the deal said.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal hasn't been announced.

The Rangers will be adding the 39-year-old Scherzer with another former Mets pitcher with Cy Young credentials, two-time winner Jacob deGrom, sidelined by Tommy John elbow surgery, possibly all the way through the end of next season.

According to multiple reports, the deal nets New York one of the top Texas prospects in infielder Luisangel Acuña, the younger brother of Atlanta star Ronald Acuña Jr.

As part of the deal, Scherzer agreed to opt in on the final year of his contract in 2024 at \$43 million, according to reports which also said the Mets were paying about \$35 million of the remaining \$58 million on the right-hander's contract.

The Mets, one of baseball's biggest disappointments, unloaded Scherzer two days after sending closer David Robertson to Miami for two minor leaguers.

New York began the season with the highest payroll in baseball at \$353 million but started the day 17 games behind Atlanta in the NL East and 6½ games back in the wild-card race.

The next question is what the Mets will do with Justin Verlander, another three-time Cy Young winner signed through next season. There should be plenty of suitors for the 40-year-old right-hander.

Texas has emerged from six consecutive losing seasons to lead the AL West all but

one day in three-time World Series champion Bruce Bochy's first season as manager.

The Rangers made the first notable move of this trading season by getting once-dominant closer Aroldis Chapman from Kansas City in June. Chapman has stayed in a setup role with Will Smith handling most of the closing duties.

Now Texas has bolstered the rotation knowing deGrom might be out until Scherzer's contract expires at the end of next season.

The trade for Scherzer came on the same day the Rangers said they were again bumping back the next start for All-Star right-hander Nathan Eovaldi. Bochy said Eovaldi had a sore elbow, but the club doesn't think it's serious.

The Rangers added deGrom in the offseason on a \$185 million, five-year contract, knowing there was risk in signing the oft-injured right-hander.

## Judge homers, singles twice as Yankees top Orioles

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Aaron Judge is giving the New York Yankees an immediate boost — at a time when their front office has some tough decisions to make.

Judge homered and singled twice in his second game back from the injured list and the Yankees beat the Baltimore Orioles 8-3 on Saturday night. Giancarlo Stanton and Kyle Higashioka went deep as well for New York, which is still 3½ games behind Toronto and Houston for the last two wild-card spots in the American League.

That's a tricky spot with Tuesday's trade deadline approaching.

"We've had years where we stick with who we got. We've had years where we get some bullpen arms, starters, a big bat," Judge said. "It comes down to us doing our job on the field and then letting them take care of the rest. We'll see what happens."

The Yankees knocked out struggling Orioles starter Tyler

Wells (7-6) in the third inning. In the sixth, Isiah Kiner-Falefa capped a 10-pitch at-bat with a three-run double to make it 8-3.

Judge has three walks and three hits in nine plate appearances since returning Friday from the toe injury that kept him out since early June.

Ryan Mountcastle homered for the Orioles, but Clarke Schmidt (7-6) made it through five tough innings and the New York bullpen took it from there.

The Orioles remained 1½ games ahead of Tampa Bay atop the AL East.

**Braves 11, Brewers 5:** Ronald Acuña hit his 24th home run and stole his 50th base and host Atlanta used a six-run first inning to beat Milwaukee.

**Blue Jays 6, Angels 1:** Alejandro Kirk hit two home runs, Santiago Espinal added a two-run homer and host Toronto beat Los Angeles.

**Giants 3, Red Sox 2:** J.D. Davis homered on the first pitch from Kenley Jansen in the ninth inning to lift host San Francisco past Boston.

**Padres 4, Rangers 0:** Slump-

ing Texas lost to Yu Darvish and host San Diego, its sixth loss in eight games, cutting its AL West lead to one game over Houston.

**Astros 17, Rays 4:** Jeremy Peña had a career-high four RBIs, Yainer Díaz and José Abreu added three apiece and host Houston routed Tampa Bay with its highest-scoring game of the season.

**Dodgers 3, Reds 2:** Max Muncy hit a pair of two-out homers, including a go-ahead shot in the sixth inning, and host Los Angeles rallied to beat Cincinnati.

**Diamondbacks 4, Mariners 3:** Corbin Carroll started an eighth-inning rally with some distracting base running, Dominic Canzone brought his fellow rookie home with a single for the go-ahead run and host Arizona beat Seattle.

**Nationals 11, Mets 6:** Visiting Washington led 4-0 in the first inning after an announced crowd of 30,858 sat through an 80-minute rain delay before the first pitch en route to a win over New York.

**White Sox 7, Guardians 2:** Tim Anderson homered for the first time in more than a year on a three-hit night, Mike Clevinger tossed five shutout innings in his return from the injured list and host Chicago beat Cleveland.

**Athletics 11, Rockies 3:** Zack Gelof and Brent Rooker each homered in a five-run second inning, and major league-worst Oakland handed host Colorado its fourth straight loss and fifth in six games.

**Pirates 7, Phillies 6:** Endy Rodríguez hit a go-ahead, bases-loaded triple and drove in four runs, fellow rookie Liover Peguero had a home run among his three hits and host Pittsburgh beat Philadelphia.

**Cubs 5, Cardinals 1:** Yan Gomes and Ian Happ homered, and visiting Chicago beat St. Louis for its eighth straight victory.

**Royals 10, Twins 7:** Bobby Witt Jr. went 4-for-5 with three RBIs, a home run and a triple, and Kyle Isbel was also 4-for-5 to help host Kansas City beat Minnesota.