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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Virus changes Parris Island Marine training

Associated Press

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. — The booming shouts of the rain-soaked Marine recruits echo across Leatherneck Square training field, barely muffled by their masks. And as they jog by, belting out responses to drill instructors in a rhythmic cadence, the white fabric across their faces is the only telltale sign of the coronavirus's effects on their quest to become Marines.

But in ways big and small, the virus is impacting training at the Marine Corps' Parris Island Recruit Depot and across the military. And defense leaders have said that some of the adjustments are proving beneficial and could become permanent.

Maj. Gen. James Glynn, commander of Parris Island, said that requiring recruits to spend two weeks in quarantine before their training has had unexpected benefits.

"They are singularly focused on two weeks of mental and emotional prep for what you guys are seeing today," he said during a visit Wednesday by Defense Secretary Mark Esper. "I think it's pretty evident it's making a difference. They're mentally focused and have reconciled why they're here."

Until this week, recruits spent the two-week quarantine in a complex of large white tents and bathroom and shower trailers that was quickly built on the base to allow health monitoring and keep them isolated. But now, recruits are spending the two weeks in dorms at The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, in Charleston, about a two-hour drive north.

Esper, who toured the tent area with Glynn, said that the new precautions — including masks, social distancing and

the quarantine — have greatly lowered the amount of other respiratory illnesses recruits traditionally get.

"They've seen a much lower sick call right across the board when it comes to infection, so they're going to keep that. And we're going to keep some other practices," said Esper, adding that by breaking the recruits into smaller groups, "they've seen a higher level of unity and esprit. And they bonded much more quickly."

As Esper walked around the soggy field, recruits were going through what Marines call the "confidence course." They were clambering over large log obstacles, climbing towers, shimmying across rope lines strung over a net and swinging over streams of water. In other sections, recruits were paired off to battle with pugil sticks, which replicates rifle and bayonet combat.

Staff Sgt. Katheryn Hunter, a drill instructor for three years at Parris Island, said the main difference she sees due to the virus is that the number of female recruits she has in 4th Battalion, Oscar Company, has dropped to 70. And she has 35 recruits in squad bays that usually hold up to 64.

During the initial portion of training, women, who have their own battalion, are largely separated from men. Marine Corps leaders staunchly defend the segregation, saying that it helps build confidence, but some members of Congress have demanded change.

On the confidence course, female recruits were together on the various obstacles, while the male recruits were doing other tests.

The course, Hunter said, is critical.

"We have a lot of recruits that

are scared of heights, recruits that are scared of water or are scared of different obstacles," she said, adding that the course "actually tests recruits' fears, also builds their confidence that they can accomplish stuff as long as they set their minds to it."

In the larger formations, the recruits wore masks, but during some physical tests — even those where teamwork was required and social distancing impossible — the masks came off. Most of the drill instructors wore theirs at all times, as did Esper and his entourage.

Commanders noted that the recruits had finished their two-week quarantine and were on day 14 of their actual training — so they had been largely isolated for about a month. Marine recruits go to either Parris Island or to Camp Pendleton in southern California, for 13 weeks of training.

Another change, Esper said, is that military recruits often get to go home for two weeks after graduation. That leave has been suspended because of the virus. Instead, the Marines are getting three or four days of little or no duty before reporting to their next schooling or station.

"They're showing up at the next phase of training in much better shape," said Esper, noting that they haven't been able to go out drinking and partying. He said that Marine leaders are "seeing a better product entering the next phase of training, so they're starting to think maybe we won't go back to the 10 days off."

Glynn said that the plan to use the Citadel for quarantine was inspired by his mother-in-law, who sent him an article about how colleges and the military worked together during

the Spanish flu pandemic. But while the college, with its two-person rooms, is working out well, Glynn said that he'll need another solution when classes resume. He said that they are reviewing several options, including some nearer Parris Island, but have not made a decision.

The Army has made similar changes in its recruit training, which is a longer, 22-week course for infantry and armor soldiers. But instead of separating the incoming recruits at a distant location for the two-week quarantine, Army leaders changed the course schedule.

The new plan shifted classroom learning to the first two weeks, with many classes done virtually or outside, with little physical interaction, spaced chairs and social distancing. The recruits then move into what Army officials described as a training bubble, where they begin their more traditional physical and combat instruction.

Both the Marine Corps and the Army screen recruits for the virus when they arrive at processing stations, and again when they get to the training base. Army recruits go to one of the four training centers at Fort Benning, Ga., Fort Jackson, S.C., Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and Fort Sill, Okla.

Defense leaders said that they have been intrigued to see some good come from the virus precautions.

"I mean, it's funny," said Esper, as he flew home from Parris Island, "Even once the coronavirus fades or we have a vaccine, you may come out with a boot camp that produces a better product because of things learned."

US cities clean up, brace for more unrest

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A country convulsed by violent protests picked up the pieces Monday morning and braced for more trouble amid a coast-to-coast outpouring of rage over police killings of black people. President Donald Trump demanded the nation's governors crack down harder on the violence, telling them: "Most of you are weak."

After six straight days of unrest, a new routine was developing: residents waking up to neighborhoods in shambles, shopkeepers sweeping up broken glass and taking stock of ransacked stores, and police and political leaders weighing how to address the anger.

In New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio said he was considering imposing a curfew on the nation's biggest city after a night in which groups of people broke into Chanel, Prada and Rolex boutiques and electronics stores.

At the same time, the mayor said the trouble in the city of 8.6 million people was being "fomented by a very small number of violent protesters. That is not what everyday community people are doing. I want to

be very clear about that."

While many of the demonstrations around the country have been peaceful protests by racially diverse crowds, others have descended into violence, despite curfews in many cities across the U.S. and the deployment of thousands of National Guard soldiers over the past week.

In some cities, thieves smashed their way into stores and ran off with as much as they could carry.

Police officers and National Guard soldiers enforcing a curfew in Louisville, Ky., killed a man early Monday when they returned fire after someone in a large group shot at them first, police said. In Indianapolis, two people were reported dead in bursts of downtown violence over the weekend, adding to deaths recorded in Detroit and Minneapolis.

The demonstrations were sparked by the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for several minutes.

Racial tensions were also running high after two white men were arrested in May

in the February shooting death of black jogger Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, and after Louisville, Ky., police shot Breonna Taylor to death in her home in March.

Even as police in some places tried to calm tensions by kneeling or marching in solidarity with protesters, officers elsewhere were accused of the very type of harsh treatment at the heart of the unrest.

In New York, the police commissioner said about six incidents were being investigated by the department's internal affairs bureau, including a weekend confrontation in Brooklyn in which two police vehicles appeared to plow through a group of protesters.

In Fort Lauderdale, Fla., an officer was suspended for pushing a kneeling woman to the ground during a protest.

In Atlanta, two officers were fired after bashing in the window of a car and using a stun gun on its two occupants.

In Los Angeles over the weekend, a police SUV accelerated into several protesters in a street, knocking two people to the ground.

VA HQ vandalized with graffiti, windows broken

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Department of Veterans Affairs offices in downtown Washington were vandalized as peaceful weekend protests over George Floyd's death devolved into clashes with police and destruction. In the aftermath, Mayor Muriel Bowser said Monday that the city would enforce a 7 p.m. curfew Monday and Tuesday.

"We applaud the American spirit of protest," Bowser said. "However, we do not — and we will not — allow the continued destruction of our town."

VA press secretary Christina Noel said VA headquarters, along with other buildings in downtown Washington that house VA offices, were spray-painted with graffiti. There was some broken glass, she said.

VA headquarters, at 810 Vermont Ave., is on the other side

of Lafayette Square from the White House. The area was a gathering spot for protests Friday, Saturday and Sunday and became the site of destruction after nightfall.

Demonstrators came together in multiple U.S. cities to protest the death of Floyd, an unarmed black man in Minneapolis who was pinned down by police Monday. Officer Derek Chauvin was arrested Friday and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter. The death ignited outrage across the country.

DC memorials were also vandalized over the weekend. At the National World War II Memorial, someone spray-painted the question, "Do black vets count?" The official Twitter account of the World War II Memorial posted a photo of the graffiti. It was cleaned off the memorial Sunday.

Trump took shelter in bunker amid rallies

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secret Service agents rushed President Donald Trump to a White House bunker Friday night as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the executive mansion, some of them throwing rocks and tugging at police barricades.

Trump spent nearly an hour in the bunker, which was designed for use in emergencies like terrorist attacks, according to a Republican close to the White House who was not authorized to publicly discuss private matters and spoke on the condition of anonymity. The account was confirmed by an administration official who also spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The abrupt decision by the agents underscored the rattled mood inside the White House, where the chants from protesters in Lafayette Park could be

heard all weekend and Secret Service agents and law enforcement officers struggled to contain the crowds.

The demonstrations in Washington turned violent and appeared to catch officers by surprise. They sparked one of the highest alerts on the White House complex since the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001.

The president's move to the bunker was first reported by The New York Times.

The president and his family have been shaken by the size and venom of the crowds, according to the Republican. It was not immediately clear if first lady Melania Trump and the couple's 14-year-old son, Barron, joined the president in the bunker.

Demonstrators returned Sunday afternoon, facing off against police at Lafayette Park.

Afghan who killed 2 troops is out of jail

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — An infiltrator who killed two U.S. officers in one of the Afghan War's highest-profile insider attacks has walked free from a Parwan province prison, Afghan officials said Monday.

Abdul Saboor, who killed Air Force Lt. Col. John Darin Loftis and Army Maj. Robert Marchanti II in 2012, had been sentenced to 20 years in prison but was set free Friday after four years of time served, officials said.

Saboor's attack on two U.S. advisers in a government building in one of the most heavily fortified areas of Kabul led to significant restrictions on how the U.S. worked with Afghan partners, an adviser from that time said.

"We had to rewrite all of the rules for engagement for (us) as advisers," retired Navy Capt.

James Muir, an American adviser who oversaw the advisers killed in the attack, said in a phone interview.

"After that, people were more conservative about advising ... it took the wind out of the sails of a lot of people," said Muir, who helmed the Kabul office of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program, which consisted of U.S. military advisers trained in local languages.

The slayings prompted the United States and several coalition countries to remove hundreds of advisers who worked in government ministries in Afghanistan's capital.

Further changes that year included increased vetting for Afghan security forces and the requirement that an armed soldier, called a "guardian angel," accompany U.S. advisers when meeting with Afghans.

Saboor, while working for the Afghan government, shot Marchanti, a member of the

Maryland National Guard, in the head. He then shot Loftis, an AfPak Hand advising the Afghan police, in the back.

Saboor did not fit the profile of a typical insider threat; he had served in the military and was an Afghan Tajik, one of the ethnic groups most opposed to the Taliban, according to "Directorate S," a book on America's war in Afghanistan by Steve Coll, who writes about defense and intelligence issues.

But unbeknownst to the U.S. military, Saboor had left Afghanistan to study at a Pakistani madrassa prior to the attack, Coll wrote, citing Army investigators and witness testimony.

Saboor said in a 2016 BBC interview that he killed the service members after hearing that U.S. forces had desecrated Qurans.

The book-burning incident, in which about 500 Qurans

from a detention center library were burned, led to protests and reprisals that left dozens of Afghans and foreign troops dead or wounded. U.S. generals apologized for the burnings and six soldiers were punished, a 2012 Washington Post report said.

After the killings, Saboor escaped for four years and was arrested in 2016 at his home in Parwan province.

The attack at the time was claimed by the Taliban, but another militant group, Hezb-e-Islami, said Monday that Saboor killed the service members for them.

His release Friday was not part of prisoner exchanges due to February's peace deal between the U.S. and the Taliban, but rather from a 2016 reconciliation deal between Kabul and Hezb-e-Islami, said Farhad Bayani, spokesman for the Afghan prison administration.

2 airmen shot and killed at Grand Forks AFB

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two airmen were killed Monday in an early morning shooting in a dormitory on Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota, Air Force officials said.

Grand Forks AFB officials said they are investigating the shooting, which happened at about 4:30 a.m., and believe it was an isolated incident. Officials "believe there is currently no risk to other personnel" at the base, according to a base statement.

The base did not identify the deceased airmen by name, but said they were active-duty members assigned to the 319th Reconnaissance Wing. Air Force Staff Sgt. Elijah Tiggs, a spokesman for that unit, said the airmen would be named 24 hours after their families were notified of the deaths, per Pen-

tagon policy.

The shooting occurred in a dorm facility on the base that primarily hosts single, enlisted airmen early in their military careers, Tiggs said. Officials were making mental health care specialists available for anyone affected by the shooting, he added.

He said he could provide "no further releasable information" on Monday.

Grand Forks AFB is located in eastern North Dakota, about 80 miles south of the U.S.-Canada border. It houses the 319th Reconnaissance Wing, an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance unit, which primarily operates RQ-4 Global Hawk drones for commanders around the world, according to the Air Force. It also supports U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers who fly unarmed MQ-9 Predator drones from Grand Forks AFB.

Sasebo sailors toast each other at new beer garden

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Sailors at Sasebo Naval Base toasted each other in a make-shift, outdoor beer garden Friday and Saturday, marking a return to social drinking for troops in Japan after months of coronavirus restrictions.

Off-base bars and clubs in Japan have been off-limits and base watering holes have been closed since mid-April, when U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider declared a public health emergency for all U.S. military installations there.

On Friday, however, Sasebo sailors were able to make merry in a beer garden next to the base's shuttered enlisted Galaxies Club.

One of the first sailors to imbibe Friday night was Petty Officer 1st Class Leonexon Rodriguez, 38, of Brooklyn, N.Y., a

logistics specialist on the amphibious transport dock ship USS Green Bay.

"The last time I went to the pub was before we went underway," he said by phone from the beer garden. "We left at the beginning of January and got back in April."

Since then, with bars and restaurants closed or off-limits, Rodriguez has stuck to a routine of going between his home and workplace, he said.

The sailors enjoyed the chance to drink beer in a social setting, he said.

The Sasebo beer garden, in a parking lot, included tables that allow sailors to spread out with beer on tap and "DJ Yoshi" playing requests from the crowd, he said.

The sailors could fill up on brisket burgers and Italian sausage sandwiches while they drank from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Poluhowich said.

No promotion for officer in charge during Niger attack

Stars and Stripes

The promotion of a Special Forces colonel who approved a 2017 mission in Niger in which four U.S. troops died has been canceled, according to a news report.

Col. Bradley D. Moses was in charge of the Third Special Forces Group in October 2017 when his troops were ambushed while on an operation in a remote part of Niger.

Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy was notifying the Senate Armed Services Committee that Moses' nomination for brigadier general was being withdrawn, *The New York Times*, citing unnamed defense officials, reported Friday.

An Army spokeswoman declined to confirm the report and said the service does not comment on nominations being considered by the Senate.

The ambush in Niger killed Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black, Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright, Sgt. La David T. Johnson and Sgt. 1st Class Jeremiah W. Johnson. The firefight was the subject of a lengthy military investigation, which found that the small unit was ill-equipped when it came under attack from a much larger force of Islamic militants.

Several U.S. officers were reprimanded for their roles in the planning and approval of the mission as well as oversight of forces in the region. Among them was the two-star general in charge of Special Operations Command Africa at the time.

Moses was nominated earlier in the year to become a one-star general, but in March his name was temporarily removed at the request of some lawmakers, *The Times* reported. The removal became permanent after the Army's action, the newspaper reported.

Civil unrest across US could influence Biden's VP search

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden's search for a running mate could be reshaped by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the unrest it has ignited across the country, raising questions about contenders with law-and-order backgrounds and intensifying pressure on the presumptive Democratic nominee to select a black woman.

Biden, who has already pledged to pick a woman, has cast a wide net in his search. Some of the women on his list have drawn national praise amid the protests over Floyd's death, including Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, who delivered an impassioned appeal for calm in her city on Friday night. But the outcry over police brutality against minorities has complicated the prospects of Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who had a controversial record addressing police violence as a prosecutor in the city

where Floyd died.

Biden's choice of a running mate will be among the most consequential decisions he makes in the campaign, particularly given that the 77-year-old is already talking about himself as a "transition" candidate to a new generation of Democratic leaders. His pick will also be viewed as a signal both of his values and who he believes should have representation at the highest level of the American government.

Even before the outcry over Floyd's death, some Biden allies were already urging him to put a black woman on the ticket given the critical role African Americans played in his path to the Democratic nomination. Those calls have gotten louder in recent days.

"The more we see this level of hatred, the more I think it's important to confront it with symbolic acts, including potentially the selection of an African American woman as vice

president," said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers and one of the labor leaders who's been asked for input by Biden's team on the selection process.

Bottoms is one of several black women under consideration by Biden's campaign. Others Biden is believed to be considering include California Sen. Kamala Harris, Florida Rep. Val Demings and Stacey Abrams, the Georgia Democrat and voting rights activist.

Politicians with law-and-order backgrounds have been viewed skeptically by some in the Democratic Party given the high-profile instances of police brutality against minorities and other inequities in the criminal justice system. In an interview Sunday, Demings defended herself and other potential contenders with such backgrounds, declaring "you're either gonna be part of the problem or part of the solution."

Hong Kong bans vigil for Tiananmen

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong police rejected an application Monday for an annual candlelight vigil marking the anniversary this week of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, as residents rushed to apply for passports that could allow them to move to the United Kingdom.

Thronges of people lined up at DHL courier outlets across the city, many to send documents to the U.K. to apply for or renew what is known as a British National (Overseas) passport.

"My BNO passport expired in 2004, but at the time I didn't renew it because I trusted China," said Peter Chan, 40, who works in asset management and waited in line for more than two hours.

Chan said he was worried about political and security issues in Hong Kong stemming from an upcoming national security law as well as a push by the semi-autonomous territory's legislature to enact a bill that would make it illegal to insult the Chinese national anthem.

Even though there is rising anti-immigrant

and anti-Asian sentiment in the U.K., "it's still better than Hong Kong," he said.

"In Hong Kong, you never know what will happen tomorrow," Chan said.

It would be the first time in 30 years the candlelight vigil, which draws a huge crowd to an outdoor space, is not held in Hong Kong. The vigil marks the deadly military crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

The police, in a letter to organizers, said it would violate coronavirus social distancing rules that ban gatherings of more than eight people.

Organizer Lee Cheuk-yan, chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, expressed disappointment and urged people to light candles individually and observe a moment of silence.

The rush to apply for passports came after Britain said last week that it might allow holders of the document to stay in the country for a year or more. The proposal came after China's legislature decided it would enact a national security law for Hong Kong.

Fla. Keys checkpoints coming down after 2 months

Associated Press

KEY WEST, Fla. — Checkpoints leading into the Florida Keys are coming down two months after being set up to stop the spread of the new coronavirus.

The checkpoints that were being removed early Monday were put into place in March to keep tourists from entering the chain of islands in an effort to blunt the outbreak.

More than 18,750 cars coming from the mainland were turned away because drivers did not present the proper paperwork that showed they either worked or lived in the Florida Keys, said Kristen Livengood, a county spokeswoman.

With four deaths attributed to COVID-19, the Florida Keys has had about 110 coronavirus cases, and more than 20 of those are from a nursing home on Plantation Key, according to the Miami Herald.

"It's been very effective in keeping the community safe, but the time has come," Monroe County Sheriff Rick Ramsey said.

By contrast, neighboring Miami-Dade County to the north has had almost 18,000 coronavirus cases and nearly 700 deaths.

Alaska

ANCHORAGE — Alaska on Sunday reported 27 new coronavirus cases, the largest one-day increase reported since the start of the pandemic.

Cases have spiked since Gov. Mike Dunleavy, a Republican, loosened restrictions put into place to guard against the virus' spread. The state on April 24 began easing restrictions on businesses. Most restrictions on businesses were lifted May 22, though some local governments opened later. Dunleavy said at the time that he expected case numbers would rise and that the state would respond to any spikes or clusters.

Sunday's count was the most single-day cases since 22 were reported April 6.

Illinois

CHICAGO — Public health

officials on Sunday announced 1,343 new cases of COVID-19 and 60 additional deaths in Illinois.

Overall, there have been 120,260 cases, including 5,390 deaths, in Illinois. More than 21,000 tests have been administered in the past 24 hours, according to the state's Department of Public Health.

State officials say the average seven-day rate of positive tests is 7%, down from a high of 23% in late April.

Illinois has been gradually reopening businesses in phases after Gov. J.B. Pritzker first issued a stay-at-home order in March.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — More Kentucky parks are set to reopen in June.

Four Kentucky State Park lodges that were previously designated as part of the state's coronavirus emergency response will reopen on June 8, Gov. Andy Beshear announced. They include Lake Cumberland State Resort Park, Lake Barkley State Resort Park, Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park and Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park.

A decline in cases of the virus means the lodging is no longer necessary for response efforts, officials said.

Officials also plan to reopen the Kentucky Horse Park on June 11.

Maine

FREEMPORT — L.L. Bean reopened its shuttered 24-hour flagship store that had closed since mid-March on Monday, part of a new wave of openings of stores and 10 coastal state parks and portions of Acadia National Park.

Public gatherings that were limited to 10 or fewer people were increased to up to 50 people effective Monday as part of Gov. Janet Mills' second phase of reopening Maine's economy.

Hotels, campgrounds and RV parks opened to out-of-state visitors, but a 14-day quarantine for people traveling to the state was still in effect.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — The New Hampshire Division of Motor Vehicles is resuming road tests after suspending them during the coronavirus pandemic.

Applicants who have completed all licensing requirements, including passing a written test, could take the road test starting Monday. Other DMV services are available by appointment, online or via drop box service.

As of Sunday, 4,651 people had tested positive for the virus in New Hampshire, an increase of 106 from the previous day. Three new deaths were announced, bringing the total to 245.

New York

ALBANY — With coronavirus deaths continuing to decline in New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo expressed hope Sunday that the state is approaching a level where fatalities are perhaps not eliminated but are very few.

There were 56 COVID-19 deaths in New York on Saturday, "which in this absurd reality we live in is very, very good news," Cuomo said. While noting a slight uptick in the three-day average of new coronavirus hospital admissions, Cuomo said the number is declining overall.

Officials say nearly 24,000 people in the state have been killed by the virus, but that the true count is likely higher. The state's figure doesn't include another 5,800 deaths that New York City officials are attributing to the virus in that city.

Cuomo said that dentists statewide can reopen Monday.

The governor said that dentists' offices will be subject to state guidance on best practices for safety and social distancing.

South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS — South Dakota is nearing 5,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus, according to the South Dakota Department of Health.

State health officials on Sunday reported 33 new COVID-19

cases, bringing the state's total to 4,993. The number of active cases grew by one, to 1,094. The number of deaths reported in South Dakota since the start of the pandemic remains at 62.

The Department of Health reports 86 people are currently hospitalized, a drop of seven since Saturday.

Texas

AUSTIN — The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Texas rose by nearly 2,000 Sunday and there were another 24 deaths tied to the disease caused by the new coronavirus, according to health officials.

There were at least 64,287 cases and 1,949 deaths, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported Sunday, an increase from 62,338 cases and 1,648 deaths reported Saturday. The true numbers are likely higher, however, because many people have not been tested and studies suggest people can be infected and not feel sick.

The department also estimated there were 20,192 active cases and that 42,423 people have recovered.

Wisconsin

MADISON — Wisconsin health officials reported 173 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus on Sunday, raising the state's total to 18,403.

Four new deaths from COVID-19 were reported in the state Sunday, bringing Wisconsin's death toll to 592 since the pandemic began. The new deaths are significantly fewer than the number announced in any of the past few days. A total of 71 deaths were reported between Wednesday and Saturday.

The Green Bay Press-Gazette reported the new cases reported Sunday by the state Department of Human Services are the lowest in almost two weeks. The percentage of positive tests dropped sharply from previous days, down to its lowest point ever at 2.3%. But the number of people hospitalized in Wisconsin for the virus remains high. As of Sunday, 414 people were hospitalized, with 133 of those patients in intensive care.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Confederate monument vandalized; 1 arrested

MS OXFORD — A Confederate monument on the campus of the University of Mississippi was vandalized.

The words “spiritual genocide” were painted on each side of the monument, along with red handprints, The Oxford Eagle reported.

University police officers arrested one unidentified person at the scene, according to the newspaper.

The vandalism occurred as demonstrators across the country protested the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on his neck.

Theft suspect on the run since 2018 found

SC COLUMBIA—A Kentucky man accused of stealing around \$25,000 from a nonprofit to pay off social media scammers was found in South Carolina, after being on the run since November 2018, authorities said.

David Boggs Jr. was arrested, more than 570 days after his disappearance, news outlets reported. The former executive director of Paducah’s annual Barbecue on the River festival was charged with theft by unlawful taking of more than \$10,000.

Paducah Police Chief Brian Laird said Boggs, 50, sent an inappropriate image to someone and was later led to believe the person was underage.

Boggs sent the scammers thousands of dollars of his own money and then began using funds from the barbecue organization, stealing around \$25,000, Laird said.

Nurse stole painkillers from local VA clinic

LA ALEXANDRIA — A nurse has pleaded guilty to stealing painkillers from the VA clinic where she worked.

Jolie King, 40, of Alexandria, pleaded guilty to taking the drugs from the Department of Veterans Affairs urgent care clinic in Pineville, saying she took them for her own use, U.S. Attorney David Joseph said in a news release.

King said she would log into the narcotics supply cabinet with a randomly chosen patient’s name and once refilled two vials with saline solution and put them back in an attempt to avoid detection.

From September 2017 to October 2018, she took about 31 vials of hydromorphone and two of morphine.

Alamo Cenotaph vandalized with graffiti

TX SAN ANTONIO — San Antonio police are investigating after the Alamo Cenotaph was vandalized with red spray-painted graffiti.

Officers found the graffiti and arrested a suspect in relation to other graffiti nearby. Police have not released information about the suspect nor specifically linked that person to the Alamo vandalism.

The Cenotaph memorializes the 200 Defenders of the Alamo killed by the Mexican Army in an 1836 assault during the war for Texas independence.

The north base of the Cenotaph was marked in red spray paint with the words “white supremacy,” “profit over people” and “the ALAMO.” Each line of wording is preceded by a downward facing arrow.

3 charged in SUV fire at sheriff’s impound lot

FL PENSACOLA — Two more people have been charged in a vehicle fire at a Florida sheriff’s office impound lot.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Pensacola announced federal arson conspiracy charges against Tony M. Streeter, 46, and Betty J. Jackson, 50, both of Fort Walton Beach. A third man, William W. Sims, 23, previously pleaded guilty to arson and was awaiting sentencing.

Streeter sold methamphetamine on multiple occasions, according to an indictment. An SUV registered to Streeter was seized by Drug Enforcement Administration agents during an investigation and stored at the Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office impound lot.

Sims sneaked into the lot and found the SUV, according to a complaint. After retrieving something concealed in the seized vehicle, Sims used an accelerant to set the SUV ablaze.

County may drop MLK, confederate holidays

SC LEXINGTON — A county in South Carolina has proposed dropping five holidays, including Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Confederate Memorial Day, to allow county offices to be open to the public on those days.

There was no comment for or against the proposal during a virtual public hearing for Lexington County’s budget, County spokesman Harrison Cahill told The State. Other holidays that could be removed are Veterans Day, Presidents Day and the day after Christmas, the county’s proposed budget said.

County employees who work during the holidays will have

five additional paid leave days, Cahill said.

Fast-moving wildfire destroys historic church

PA CHESTER — A Pennsylvania church that had recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places was destroyed when a fast-moving fire roared through the building, authorities said.

Dozens of firefighters responded to the former Third Presbyterian Church in Chester, a city 17 miles southwest of Philadelphia on the Delaware River. They encountered heavy flames and thick smoke upon arrival, then battled the blaze for several hours before it was brought under control.

No injuries were reported in the fire, but some nearby homes were briefly evacuated as a precaution.

Sinkhole, abandoned mine displaced residents

SD BLACK HAWK — Dozens of Black Hawk residents are dealing with the emotional and financial fallout after a sinkhole exposed an abandoned mine underneath their neighborhood in April.

Fifteen families have been forced from homes, and it’s unclear if they’ll ever be able to reside in them.

The evacuees are waiting to see if they will be given a FEMA grant that would cover 75% of their home value before the sinkhole emerged.

Those who remain in the Hideaway Hills neighborhood are fearful their homes could collapse as they wait to see if the state or Meade County will pay for an engineer to study the safety of the area.

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MLS players agree to pay reductions, tournament

Associated Press

The Major League Soccer Players Association voted to approve economic concessions for this season, including across-the-board salary cuts, while also agreeing to play in a proposed summer tournament in Orlando, Fla.

The proposal, made public by the union Sunday, will now be sent to back to the league for approval by team owners.

“While a difficult vote in incredibly challenging times, it was taken collectively to ensure that players can return to competition as soon as they are safely able to do so,” the MLSPA said in a statement.

The MLS season was suspended March 12 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Teams had played just two games of the season.

Major League Soccer gave its teams the go-ahead Thursday to begin small voluntary group training sessions outdoors. Teams must follow a strict protocol, as well as local public health and government restrictions. Not all of the league’s teams have returned to training.

Details of the Orlando tournament were still under consideration, but the league’s 26 teams and limited staff would be sheltered at hotels with games played without fans at ESPN’s Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney World.

In addition to salary cuts, the union’s proposal includes reduced team and individual bonuses, as well as concessions to the existing and future terms of the collective bargaining agreement. Details were not immediately available.

MLS did not immediately comment on the proposal.

MLS first announced last month it was exploring possible “changes to player compensation” because of the financial hit the league and teams were facing with the extended suspension in play.

Keselowski inherits another win

Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Brad Keselowski has a new crew and is fighting for a new contract at Team Penske. His confidence is still intact and he’s convinced he can compete for a championship this year.

Being in the right place at the right time is helping.

Keselowski inherited his second win in a week when the leaders crashed in front of him with a lap remaining Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway. He won the Coca-Cola 600 seven nights ago at Charlotte Motor Speedway when a caution with two laps remaining helped him get to victory lane.

“I felt like I was in Las Vegas,” Keselowski said about the Bristol win. “I went from having a bad hand to a full house real quick.”

The victory dropped into Keselowski’s lap when Chase Elliott and Joey Logano collided as they raced for the win. Keselowski was third with a lap and a turn remaining when opportunity opened. Logano cleared Elliott for the lead with three to go, but Elliott stalked him while seeking his second win in three days.

They made contact in the fourth turn and drifted into the wall as Keselowski slid past. He had just one trip around the 0.533-mile concrete bullring to close the victory.

“We were in position and able to strike when it counted,” Keselowski said. “Joey and Chase got together there. I don’t know what all caused it, but we were just in position to strike and here we are in victory lane.”

Keselowski, hoping to get an extension with Team Penske, won the 600 when a caution with two to go snatched the win from Elliott. Keselowski inherited the lead when Elliott pitted.

Keselowski held on for that victory at Elliott’s expense and now is the first driver to win multiple races in the five Cup events since NASCAR resumed May 17.

“There’s so much going on in the world, I am just thankful I get to be a race car driver and do this,” Keselowski said after giving Ford its third win in five races.

Logano finished 21st and Elliott was 22nd.

Clint Bowyer was second for his best finish in a year and a 1-2 finish for Ford and lamented how quiet it was after NASCAR’s fifth event without fans. The track is built like an arena, referred to as “The Last Great Colosseum” and can hold about 140,000 spectators.

“It’s starting to bother me,” Bowyer said. “We are seeing other racing going on with fans in the stands and a place like Bristol, it’s the first time I really felt like ‘Man, it’s empty.’ You can feel the vibe.”

Seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson was third in a Chevrolet and once again showed he’s close to snapping his 104-race losing streak. Johnson led several laps in NASCAR’s first race back after a 10-week shutdown from the coronavirus pandemic and was second in the Coca-Cola 600 before his finish was disqualified for failing inspection.

Kyle Busch and Erik Jones rounded out the top-five in a pair of Toyota’s for Joe Gibbs Racing.

MLB players’ counteroffer: 114-game season and no additional salary cuts

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball players ignored claims by clubs that they need to take additional pay cuts, instead proposing they receive a far higher percentage of salaries and a commitment to a longer schedule as part of a counteroffer to start the pandemic-delayed season.

Players proposed a 114-game regular season Sunday, up from 82 in management’s offer, a person familiar with the plan said. Done that way, the World Series could extend past Thanksgiving.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no details were announced.

Opening day would be June

30 and the regular season would end Oct. 31, nearly five weeks after the Sept. 27 conclusion that MLB’s proposal stuck to from the season’s original schedule. The union offered scheduling flexibility to include more doubleheaders as baseball crams the games into 123 days, leaving little room for days off.

MLB’s proposal Tuesday would lower 2020 salaries from about \$4 billion to approximately \$1.2 billion. The union’s offer would have salaries total about \$2.8 billion.

The plan was given to MLB during an 80-minute digital meeting among Commissioner Rob Manfred, deputy commissioner Dan Halem, union head Tony Clark and union chief

negotiator Bruce Meyer. The meeting was contentious, a person familiar with it said.

Like MLB, the union would increase postseason teams from 10 to 14. But unlike MLB, the players’ proposal would extend the postseason about a month past its usual end. MLB has said it is worried about a second wave of the coronavirus in the autumn.

All players would have the right to opt out of the season under the union plan.

Those who meet qualifications for high risk or reside with a person who qualifies as high risk would receive salary and major league service. Others who opt out would receive service time but no salary.

Protests damage College Football Hall

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The College Football Hall of Fame is boarded up and assessing damage from a destructive night of protests in downtown Atlanta.

The facility's most valuable trophies and artifacts were moved to a secure facility in case additional trouble breaks out amid nationwide unrest over the death in Minneapolis of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded to police that he could not breathe.

Kimberly Beaudin, the hall's chief executive officer, said the extensive glass facade of the nearly 95,000-square-foot building was shattered Friday night. Rioters also broke into the street-level gift shop, stole merchandise and left it "pretty trashed," she added.

But, other than some broken glass that fell into a large exhibition area shaped like a football field, the interior of the hall was not breached by the protesters.

"All of it can be repaired. All of it can be recovered. All of the merchandise can be replaced," Beaudin told The Associated Press in an interview Sunday. "We're very thankful."

Previously located in South Bend, Ind., the Hall of Fame opened a new \$68.5 million facility in Atlanta in 2014, taking a prime spot adjacent to the Georgia World Congress Center and right across the street from Centennial Olympic Park.

It is part of a hub of downtown tourist attractions that also includes the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, CNN Center, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and a giant Ferris wheel.

That area became the epicenter of Atlanta's protests over Floyd's death. Thousands of people jammed the streets, clashing with police and damaging businesses.

The Hall of Fame had been making plans to reopen after shutting down in mid-March because of the coronavirus pandemic. Beaudin said those plans likely will be pushed back because of the time needed to make repairs.

"We had been working through scenario

Commentary

Floyd was athlete long before untimely death

Our entire lives, most of us have been told it's a small world.

Until this week, I didn't realize just how small.

Journalists' careers often take us on an interesting journey. If we're lucky, our careers take us to exotic places that leave indelible memories imprinted on our minds.

Sports writers have it even better. We see incredible moments that millions of Americans cheer.

My journey began in Texas and carried me all the way to Washington, D.C., as a sports copy editor at Stars and Stripes.

But along the way, I was fortunate to experience some special moments.

One such moment occurred nearly 30 years ago, when I was a sports writer for the Temple Daily Telegram, a small newspaper in Central Texas. As the beat writer for Temple High School, my job was to write about everything that related to Temple High School athletics.

In 1992, I covered a Temple football team that compiled a 15-1 season and capped it off with a Class 5A Division II state championship.

On Friday, an old friend and colleague from Texas got in touch to inform me that one of the running backs from that championship team, Delarrius Wilson, had passed away the night before. My thoughts immediately carried me back to that magical season when Temple had run roughshod over the best teams

in Texas. Wilson, small in stature and fleet of foot, had squirted through holes opened by Temple's gigantic offensive line, often running 5 or 6 yards before even being touched.

But it wasn't just Wilson's death that hit home with me.

In Minneapolis, an African American man named George Floyd had just been killed after a police officer knelt on his neck for nine minutes, possibly leading to his death.

I noticed a photo of George Floyd from his high school years in Houston, where he grew up. He was pictured in his high school football uniform. Plastered across the front of his jersey was the name "Yates."

George Floyd was 46 when he was killed, and I'm 55. I remembered I was a mere 27 years old when I covered Temple that season.

So I began to dig, and with just a few internet searches, I was able to determine that Floyd was a senior in high school that same season.

And his obituary told me "At 6 feet, 6 inches, Floyd emerged as a star tight end for Jack Yates High School and played in the 1992 state championship game."

He caught 2 passes for 18 yards in Yates' 38-20 loss to Delarrius Wilson and Temple.

— Rich Killmon, Stars and Stripes

A and scenario B," she said. "Now, we have scenario C."

More protests were staged Saturday in Atlanta, but no additional damage was reported to the Hall of Fame or other busi-

nesses around Centennial Olympic Park. The city was under a curfew and a heavy presence of police and National Guard soldiers curtailed a repeat of Friday night's carnage.

NHL plans to test players daily should games resume

Associated Press

The NHL, as the first major North American professional sports league to announce a format for its potential return to competition, also has a com-

prehensive testing strategy.

There are screening protocols in place for voluntary workouts and training camp in the hands of individual teams. Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly also said the NHL plans to

test all players every day when games start happening.

"We will have a rigorous daily testing protocol where players are tested every evening and those results are obtained before they would leave their

hotel rooms the next morning, so we'll know if we have a positive test and whether the player has to self-quarantine himself as a result," Daly said. "It's expensive, but we think it's really a foundational element of what