

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Roosevelt restarts patrol after outbreak

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

*Stars and Stripes*

The USS Theodore Roosevelt redeployed Thursday after a coronavirus outbreak on board that had sidelined the aircraft carrier at Naval Base Guam since March.

Sailors manned the rails “as a gesture of respect and admiration for the people of Guam for their support and hospitality over the last two months” as the ship left the island, the carrier’s commander, Capt. Carlos Sardiello, said in a Facebook post Thursday afternoon.

“We owe them all a debt of gratitude that words cannot express,” he said.

The carrier was patrolling the Western Pacific when it diverted to Guam on March 26 after several of its sailors tested positive for the coronavirus. Over the following weeks, more than 1,150 of the Roosevelt’s 4,800 crewmembers became infected, according to the Navy.

One Roosevelt sailor died from the virus, according to the Navy.

The aircrew returned to sea two weeks ago for carrier flight qualifications before the ship went back to Guam this week to retrieve the remaining sailors who were medically cleared to re-embark, Sardiello wrote in the post.

“To this date, since returning TR to sea two weeks ago, we continue to sail and operate with no return of the virus onboard,” he said. “The Rough Riders and our families’ tenacity and resiliency in the face of uncertainty has been put to the test and met the challenge.”

Sailors still battling the coronavirus were left behind, where “they will continue to be cared for ashore until all are recovered, while we remain on mission,” Sardiello said.

“Now it is time to continue to protect our ability to do our mission and protect our sailors’ health,” he added. “We have returned Theodore Roosevelt to sea as a symbol of hope and inspiration, and an instrument of national power.”

Sardiello took over for Capt. Brett Crozier, the carrier’s former commander, when then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly removed Crozier from command in April.

The removal came after a letter Crozier had written to Navy higher-ups pleading for help for his crew was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle and picked up by worldwide media.

“The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating,” Crozier wrote March 30. “We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die.”

Modly received backlash from sailors and lawmakers for removing Crozier. Video of thousands of Roosevelt sailors chanting Crozier’s name as he walked off the carrier for the last time flooded social media.

Modly resigned about a week after removing Crozier when a recording of his speech to the Roosevelt’s crew criticizing the former skipper and calling him “stupid” was leaked to the public.

## Mattis blasts Trump for military threat against protests

By WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

Former U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis excoriated President Donald Trump in an open letter Wednesday for worsening divisiveness in the country and considering the use of active-duty troops in the wake of nationwide protests.

“Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try,” Mattis wrote. “Instead he tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership.”

Mattis resigned as defense secretary in December 2018 over Trump’s decision to with-

draw American troops from Syria. The retired Marine Corps general has kept largely silent about his former boss since, saying at one point he believed it inappropriate for a former general and Cabinet member to publicly criticize the president and administration he once served.

That reluctance ended Wednesday as Trump seemed poised to deploy active-duty troops to quell protests and riots that began in Minneapolis on May 26 in response to a police officer killing George Floyd, an African American.

“I have watched this week’s unfolding events, angry and appalled,” Mattis said, adding that the protesters are “rightly demanding equal justice under the law.”

“It is a wholesome and unifying demand — one that all of

us should be able to get behind. We must not be distracted by a small number of lawbreakers. The protests are defined by tens of thousands of people of conscience who are insisting that we live up to our values — our values as people and our values as a nation.”

In response to the Mattis letter, Trump took to Twitter on Wednesday evening, calling his former secretary “the world’s most overrated General.”

“His primary strength was not military, but rather personal public relations,” Trump tweeted. “I gave him a new life, things to do, and battles to win, but he seldom ‘brought home the bacon.’ I didn’t like his ‘leadership’ style or much else about him, and many others agree. Glad he is gone!”

White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany tweeted

that Mattis’ comments were “little more than a self-promotional stunt to appease the DC elite.”

Mattis also criticized the administration for using force Monday to clear away peaceful protesters near the White House for Trump and top officials, including current Defense Secretary Mark Esper, to walk to a nearby church for a brief photo op.

Citing the oath he took to uphold the U.S. Constitution when he joined the military a half-century ago, Mattis said he never imagined that American troops would be called on to violate the rights of citizens “to provide a bizarre photo op for the elected commander-in-chief, with military leadership standing alongside.”

# USAF leaders urge conversation on race

BY JOSEPH DITZLER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Thousands turned to Facebook Wednesday to hear two top leaders in the Air Force talking openly about racism in the ranks and curbing its influence.

A black enlisted man, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright, and a white officer, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein, answered questions from their audience for close to two hours while streaming live online.

Among the first questions pitched to Wright and Goldfein: How do I find the right thing to say?

“For airmen who might be feeling some kind of way about this and who need to express how they feel, just be honest. Say what’s on your mind; say what you feel,” Wright said as

the session opened.

To leaders, Wright said: “You have to create the environment where they feel they can do it.”

Goldfein seconded Wright: “Part of creating a safe space, I think, is sharing a little bit of vulnerability as a leader.”

To Wright, he said: “You and I grew up with different life experiences. Almost every room I’ve ever walked into has been full of ‘me,’ people that look like me, people that sound like me.

“Most of the systems in our Air Force have been designed by people like me, for people like me. So, therefore, I got blinders that are going to keep me from seeing what others in a different life experience and background are going to see immediately.”

The town hall session followed statements published by Wright and Goldfein on social media decrying violence as ri-

oters looted and rampaged in cities from New York to Los Angeles.

Wright expressed a visceral connection to African American men killed by police and related his own fear at seeing a police cruiser’s flashing lights in his rearview mirror. Goldfein, among the first heads of a U.S. military branch to do so, on Tuesday released his own statement, circulated internally the day before, expressing his outrage at Floyd’s killing.

Goldfein and Wright promised a long fight against discrimination while pouring out advice, suggestions and recommended reading. They also counseled patience.

“These discussions we need to have are going to be most effective at the smallest unit. This is flight-team work, this is command-team work to make sure we create the spaces for

this discussion and really be aggressive listeners,” Goldfein said. “It’s absolutely OK to walk into a conversation and not have the answers.”

Air Force leaders, Goldfein said, should exhibit open-mindedness, patience and be “aggressive listeners.” Take time to learn about their airmen by asking about their background, experience and motivation when the opportunity allows, he said.

Wright pitched in: “Don’t look past the source, don’t look past if you work with minority airmen. Ask them. Ask them how they see the world, ask them how they feel, ask them what happens when they go outside the gate, ask them how they get treated when they go in stores, ask them if they feel like they’re part of the organization if they’ve dealt with racism or exclusion.”

## Floyd to be eulogized in Minneapolis memorial

*Associated Press*

MINNEAPOLIS — Mourners converged in Minneapolis on Thursday for the first in a series of a memorials to George Floyd, whose death at the hands of police has sparked turbulent protests around the world against racial injustice.

The afternoon event was set for North Central University, where civil rights leader the Rev. Al Sharpton was scheduled to be among those eulogizing the 46-year-old Floyd.

“The real duty of one with this type of assignment is to underscore the value of the human life that was taken, which gives the reason the movement was occurring,” Sharpton said ahead of the gathering.

Inside the sanctuary, a golden casket was flanked by white and purple flowers, and an image was projected above the pulpit of a mural painted at the

street corner where Floyd was pinned to the ground by police. The sanctuary normally seats 1,000, but because of the coronavirus outbreak, capacity was reduced to about 500.

Memorials are set to take place in three cities over six days. After Minneapolis, Floyd’s body will go to Raeford, N.C., where he was born, for a public viewing and private family service on Saturday.

Next, a public viewing will be held Monday in Houston, where he was raised and lived most of his life. Then a 500-person service will take place Tuesday at the Fountain of Praise church.

Relative quiet in the U.S. continued for a second straight night Wednesday following a decision by prosecutors to charge the three other Minneapolis officers at the scene of Floyd’s death with aiding and abetting a murder.

## Pentagon changed call to send DC troops home

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars And Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon ordered active-duty soldiers deployed outside Washington, D.C., for riot control to remain in the region after hours earlier deciding that some of those troops should return to their home bases, a defense official said late Wednesday.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy received orders Wednesday morning from Defense Secretary Mark Esper to send some 200 infantrymen from the 82nd Airborne Division’s Immediate Response Force back to Fort Bragg, N.C., a defense official said. Later Wednesday, after Esper attended a meeting at the White House, McCarthy was notified that Esper had changed his mind, the official said.

The roughly 1,600 soldiers

deployed this week from Fort Bragg and Fort Drum, N.Y., to undisclosed military installations in the national capital region remained “on alert” Wednesday afternoon, two other defense officials said. Top Pentagon officials, including Esper, have said that they were reticent to move those troops — the vast majority of whom are military police — onto Washington’s streets.

Top Pentagon officials ultimately delayed their final decision on removing any troops from the Washington region, according to one of the defense officials, who was not authorized to comment on the issue and spoke on condition of anonymity. It was not clear Wednesday afternoon when a decision to send troops back to their home bases would be made.



# Navy vet freed by Iran, on way home

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Navy veteran detained in Iran for nearly two years has been released and started making his way home, with the first leg on a Swiss government aircraft, U.S. officials said Thursday. “The nightmare is over,” his mother said.

The U.S. special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, flew to Zurich with a doctor to meet freed detainee Michael White and will accompany White to the United States aboard an American plane, the officials said.

White’s release was part of an agreement involving an Iranian-American doctor prosecuted by the Justice Department, and followed months of

quiet negotiations over prisoners. The two countries are at bitter odds over U.S. penalties imposed after President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal and over the killing by American forces of a top Iranian general in Iraq at the beginning of this year.

“I am blessed to announce that the nightmare is over, and my son is safely in American custody and on his way home,” White’s mother, Joanne White, said in a statement. She thanked the State Department and Bill Richardson, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and onetime New Mexico governor, for raising her son’s case with the Iranians.

Richardson, who met with Iran’s foreign minister and ambassador to the U.N. about the case, said in a statement that the “release should have and could have been done earlier, but I am glad and relieved that Mike is on his way home to get treated.” White had been diagnosed with coronavirus, but has been recovering.

White, of Imperial Beach, Calif., was detained by Iranian authorities in July 2018 while visiting a woman he had met online and fallen in love with. He was convicted of insulting Iran’s supreme leader and posting private information online, and was sentenced to a decade in prison.

“Simply put, the ‘charges’

against Michael were pretexts for a state-sponsored kidnap-for-ransom scheme,” family spokesman Jon Franks said in a statement. “The tragedy of this case is Michael’s only crime was falling in love with Iran and its people for whom he cares deeply.”

In March, White was released from prison on a medical furlough as Iran struggled to cope with the coronavirus outbreak. White was turned over to the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, which represents U.S. interests in Iran. He was among tens of thousands of prisoners granted medical furloughs by Iran, which was one of the first countries to be hit hard by the pandemic.

## Army general in Germany suspended amid probe

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The one-star general who commands the Army’s reserve headquarters in Europe was suspended this week, pending the outcome of an internal probe, U.S. Army Europe said.

Brig. Gen. Michael Harvey, who leads the 7th Mission Sup-

port Command and also serves as deputy commanding general of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, is under investigation for a matter that “does not involve criminal activity or safety,” USAREUR said in a statement Wednesday.

Harvey was removed from his position Tuesday. Col. Douglas A. LeVien, a 21st TSC deputy commanding officer,

was named acting commander of the 7th MSC.

“No further information will be released until the investigation is complete,” USAREUR said.

The 21st TSC manages logistics for the Army in Europe and plays a key role in getting supplies to forces operating at relatively austere outposts in places like Poland. It also sup-

ports U.S. Africa Command.

Harvey, a native of Piney Flats, Tenn., assumed command of the 7th MSC in June 2019.

LeVien takes over with extensive logistics experience. Before arriving at the 21st TSC, he commanded the 406th Army Field Support Brigade out of Fort Bragg, N.C.

## S. Korea vows to stop border protests after North’s threat

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea said Thursday it planned to push new laws to ban activists from flying anti-Pyongyang leaflets over the border after North Korea threatened to end an inter-Korean military agreement reached in 2018 to reduce tensions if Seoul fails to prevent the protests.

The South’s desperate attempt to keep alive a faltering diplomacy will almost certainly trigger debates over freedom of speech in one of Asia’s most vibrant democracies.

Sending balloons across the

border has been a common activist tactic for years, but North Korea considers it an attack on its government. Defectors and other activists in recent weeks have used balloons to fly leaflets criticizing the North’s authoritarian leader Kim Jong Un over his nuclear ambitions and dismal human rights record.

While Seoul has sometimes sent police officers to block such activities during sensitive times, it had resisted the North’s calls to fully ban them, saying the activists were exercising their freedoms.

The shift followed remarks earlier in the morning from

Kim’s powerful sister, who threatened to end the military agreement and said the North could permanently shut liaison office and an inter-Korean factory park that have been major symbols of reconciliation.

In her statement released through state media, Kim Yo Jong called the defectors involved in the balloon launches “human scum” and “mongrel dogs” who betrayed their homeland and said it was “time to bring their owners to account,” referring to the government in Seoul.

Yoh Sang-key, spokesman of South Korea’s Unification

Ministry, said the balloon campaigns were threatening the safety of residents living in the border area and that his government will push for legal changes to “fundamentally resolve tension-creating activities.”

When asked whether the ministry would specifically express regret over the North’s threat to abandon inter-Korean agreements, Yoh said: “we will substitute our evaluation (of the North Korean) statement with the announcement of the government position (on the issue).”

# Nearly 1.9M jobless claims as layoffs slow

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nearly 1.9 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, the ninth straight decline since applications spiked in mid-March, a sign that the gradual reopening of businesses has slowed the loss of jobs.

The diminishing pace suggests that the job market meltdown triggered by the coronavirus may have bottomed out as more companies call at least some of their former employees back to work.

The total number of people who are now receiving jobless aid rose only slightly to 21.5 million, suggesting that rehiring is offsetting some of the ongoing layoffs.

Though applications for benefits are slowing, the latest weekly number is still more than double the record high that prevailed before the viral outbreak. It shows that there are limits to how much a partial reopening of the economy can restore a depressed job market mired in a recession.

With all states in the process of gradually reopening for business, more consumers are starting to return to restaurants, stores and hair salons. That trend has boosted consumer spending from exceedingly low levels and has likely encouraged some companies to hire again.

In addition to the laid-off employees who applied for benefits last week, 623,000 others sought jobless aid under a new program

for self-employed and gig workers, who now qualify for unemployment benefits for the first time. These figures aren't adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn't include them in the overall data.

The figures come one day before the government's jobs report for May is expected to show that employers slashed 8 million jobs last month, and that the unemployment rate jumped from 14.7% to 19.8%. If those forecasts prove accurate, it would mean that nearly 30 million people have lost jobs since the viral outbreak intensified in March, and that joblessness has reached its highest point since the Great Depression.

## UK hosts vaccine summit amid calls for free vaccine

Associated Press

LONDON — The British government hosted a vaccine summit Thursday, hoping to raise billions of dollars to immunize children in developing countries and to discuss how any potential vaccine against the new coronavirus might be distributed globally — and fairly.

The United Nations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have urged that “a people's vaccine” be developed for COVID-19 that would be freely available to everyone, calling it a “moral imperative.”

Thursday's event was a pledging conference for the vaccines alliance GAVI, which says the funds will be used to vaccinate about 300 million children in dozens

of countries against diseases like malaria, pneumonia and HPV.

GAVI was also expected to start a new “advance market commitment” mechanism that it hopes will enable developing countries to get any effective COVID-19 vaccine when available.

But experts pointed out that the unprecedented pandemic — where arguably every country will be clamoring for a vaccine — may make such discussions extremely messy.

And the worldwide scramble for masks and ventilators that erupted in the early stages of the pandemic — where countries like France requisitioned the country's entire supply of masks and the U.S. apparently paid off the shippers of loads already on airplanes to obtain ventilators — are not

encouraging signs that there will be much global cooperation if and when a coronavirus vaccine is available.

“Rich countries will most likely try to push their way to the front of the queue, leaving poorer countries at the back, and that's a problem,” said Jimmy Whitworth, a professor of international public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

“I can't imagine any country saying, ‘Africa's need is greater than ours, so they can get the vaccine first and we'll remain vulnerable.’”

The urgency of finding a way to stem outbreaks was evident as India on Thursday reported yet another record number of new infections — 9,304, with 260 deaths, in the previous 24 hours.

## Protests eclipse virus, but White House fears resurgence

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For weeks, President Donald Trump has been eager to publicly turn the page on the coronavirus pandemic.

Now fears are growing within the White House that the very thing that finally shoved the virus from center stage — mass protests over the death of George Floyd — may bring about its resurgence.

Trump this week has eagerly pronounced himself the “president of law and order” in response to the racial unrest that has swept across the nation, overshadowing the pandemic that has claimed the lives of more than 105,000 Americans and imperiled his reelection prospects. But political dangers

for the president remain.

Thousands of Americans — many without protective face masks — have jammed the nation's streets over the past week in defiance of social distancing guidelines from governors and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The White House coronavirus task force, which has dramatically scaled back its operations as states reopen their economies, is scrambling to track the potential impact on infection rates.

Any uptick in cases in the weeks ahead could slow the economic rebirth that Trump's advisers believe he needs before he faces voters again in five months.

“A second wave, whether now or in September, would obviously be a setback to the

economic recovery and Trump's reelection hopes,” said Republican strategist Alex Conant. “What Trump needs more than anything is a resurgence of consumer and business confidence. A second wave or prolonged civil unrest will undermine that.”

It could take weeks to judge the impact of the nationwide protests on the spread of COVID-19, which had been dramatically ebbing across most of the country before the killing of Floyd, a black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee on Floyd's neck for several minutes even after he stopped moving and pleading for air.

Those infected with the virus sometimes take several days to display symptoms, creating a lag in the data.



# Rosenstein: Would not OK FBI warrant now

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein told lawmakers Wednesday that he would not have approved an FBI surveillance application for a former Trump campaign aide during the Russia investigation had he known at the time about the problems that have since been revealed.

Rosenstein's comments amounted to a striking concession that law enforcement officials made mistakes as they scrutinized ties between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. But even as he acknowledged the legitimacy of anger from Trump and his allies, he defended his appointment of special counsel Robert Mueller to lead the probe and affirmed his support for the conclusion that Russia

interfered in the election but did not criminally conspire with associates of the Trump campaign.

"I do not consider the investigation to be corrupt, Senator, but I certainly understand the president's frustration given the outcome, which was in fact that there was no evidence of conspiracy between Trump campaign advisers and Russians," Rosenstein said at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

His appearance before the committee was the first in a series of hearings scrutinizing the FBI's Russia investigation and the law enforcement officials involved. With subpoena authority expected to be approved this week, the hearing marked the opening salvo of the GOP's election-year congressional investigation into what

they say are damaging findings about the Russia probe from a Justice Department inspector general review.

The president's allies have taken fresh aim at the Russia investigation over the last year, pointing to newly declassified information to allege that Trump and his associates were unfairly pursued. They have claimed vindication from the Justice Department's decision to dismiss the case against ex-national security adviser Michael Flynn while at times advancing unsupported theories against Obama administration officials.

"We're going to look backward so we can move forward," committee chairman Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said in explaining the purpose of the hearing. "If you don't like Trump, fine, but this is not

about liking Trump or not liking Trump. This is about us as a nation."

Graham also questioned whether Mueller should have been appointed at all. Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller in May 2017, said that he believed there had been a sufficient basis for the investigation and for the naming of a special counsel. But when Graham asked if he would agree with the general statement that by August 2017, there was "no there there" when it came to a criminal conspiracy between Russia and Trump, Rosenstein said yes.

Democrats lamented the hearing's politically charged and retrospective nature, saying that Republicans were attempting to refocus attention away from more urgent problems.

## Ousted State IG confirms prior probe into Pompeo

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ousted State Department Inspector General Steve Linick on Wednesday told members of three congressional committees that before he was abruptly fired, he was investigating Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's use of government resources as well as the secretary's decision to approve a multibillion-dollar arms sale to Saudi Arabia.

Democrats are investigating President Donald Trump's firing of Linick — one of several inspectors general he has recently ousted — and whether it was a retaliatory move. Pompeo has said that he recommended the inspector general be terminated, but insisted it wasn't retribution. Linick was an Obama administration appointee whose office had been critical of what it saw as political bias in the State Department's current management, but had also taken issue with Democratic appointees.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., House Oversight and Reform Committee Chairman Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., and New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a joint statement with other lawmakers that they still have many unanswered questions about the firing.

Their statement said that Linick confirmed there was an ongoing investigation into "allegations of misuse of government resources by Secretary Pompeo and his wife." Linick said that he had informed officials close to Pompeo of the investigation, including by requesting documents from his executive secretary, the Democrats said.

Republicans questioned Linick on whether he had leaked information about sensitive investigations, which the administration has suggested played a part in his dismissal.

## Many defy ban on vigil for Tiananmen in Hong Kong

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Thousands of people in Hong Kong defied a police ban Thursday evening, breaking through barricades to hold a candlelight vigil on the 31st anniversary of China's crushing of a democracy movement centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

With democracy snuffed out in the mainland, the focus has shifted increasingly to semi-autonomous Hong Kong, where authorities for the first time banned the annual vigil that remembers victims of the 1989 crackdown.

Despite the police ban, crowds poured into Victoria Park to light candles and observe a minute of silence at 8:09 p.m.. Many chanted "Democracy now" and "Stand for freedom, stand with Hong Kong."

While police played recordings warning people not to participate in the unauthorized gathering, they did little to stop people from entering the park.

Authorities had cited the need for social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic in barricading the sprawling park, but activists saw the outbreak as a convenient excuse.

"If we don't come out today, we don't even know if we can still come out next year," said participant Serena Cheung.

Police said that they made arrests in the city's Mongkok district, where large crowds also rallied. When several protesters tried to block a road, officers rushed to detain them, using pepper spray and raising a blue flag to warn them to disperse or they would use force on the unauthorized gathering. On Twitter, they urged people not to gather in groups because of the coronavirus.

After the vigil ended in Victoria Park, groups of protesters dressed in black carried flags that said, "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of our times" as well as "Hong Kong Independence."

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## WWII flag stolen from City Hall is returned

**NV** RENO — A flag from a World War II battleship stolen from its display Saturday after people broke into Reno City Hall amid protests over the death of George Floyd was anonymously returned Tuesday.

City spokesman Jon Humbert confirmed the glass display case that held the USS Reno flag was smashed during demonstrations protesting the death of Floyd, a black man who died in Minneapolis after a white officer pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for several minutes.

KRNV reported that the flag was inside a package anonymously delivered to the station Tuesday and addressed to journalist Kenzie Margiott with a note in Sharpie that read: "Needed protecting. Looters were flag burning. R.I.P George Floyd."

The flag was donated to the city in 1946. The men of the USS Reno were credited with shooting down five enemy airplanes and assisted in the downing of at least two more at Iwo Jima.

## Lionfish Challenge to run through Labor Day

**FL** MIAMI — Florida's Lionfish Challenge is open and will run through the summer.

The annual contest began May 22 and will end on Labor Day, according to a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission news release. Winners will be announced a week later at the Lionfish Removal and Awareness Festival in Destin.

The most common methods of harvesting lionfish are spearing and using a hand-held net. Lionfish are invasive to

Florida and harm native fish that are important to maintaining healthy reefs.

## Man charged after pickle hits road worker

**VT** POWNAL — A Massachusetts man is facing an assault charge after he allegedly threw a large pickle from a moving vehicle that hit a Vermont highway worker, police said.

The incident occurred just before 6 p.m. Monday on U.S. Route 7 in Pownal near the border crossing into Massachusetts. A passenger in a southbound vehicle threw an object "later determined to be a large pickle" that hit the highway worker and "caused him pain," police said.

Agency of Transportation officials provided a description of the vehicle to police, which led officers to the suspect with the help of the Williamstown, Mass., police department.

Christoph Herrmannsdoerfer, 34, of Williamstown, was cited to appear in court in Bennington next month to answer to a charge of simple assault.

## Statue of divisive mayor is removed, stored

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — A crane lifted a long-polarizing statue of former Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo from its home outside a public building in the wee hours of Wednesday, whisking it away after recent protests against police brutality hastened its removal.

As National Guard troops deployed for the protests watched, the crane lifted the 10-foot bronze statue and workers shook it from its stand outside the Municipal Services Building, across from City Hall. It was loaded onto a truck and was put in storage until a per-

manent plan for its fate can be determined, officials said.

Rizzo, who died in 1991, was police commissioner from 1968-71 and served as mayor from 1972-80. His reputation for being tough on crime was coupled with complaints of racial discrimination.

## Confederate flag taken down due to protests

**FL** BRANDON — A huge Confederate battle flag has been lowered from its towering pole near Interstates 4 and 75 outside Tampa after threats appeared on social media to set it on fire during protests of the killings of black people by white authorities.

David R. McCallister, who leads the local chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, wants people to know that removing the 30-foot by 60-foot battle flag wasn't a decision made in fear.

"The decision was we would temp take down the flag in the best interests of preserving the park overall," he told the Tampa Bay Times. "We don't want the flag to be an excuse for anyone to do illegal acts."

The group typically only removes it when hurricanes threaten the area.

## First US gold coin set for private sale

**CA** LOS ANGELES — One of the world's most coveted coins is coming to the market.

The Brasher Doubloon, the first gold coin struck in the U.S., is being offered privately at a \$15 million asking price, according to numismatic adviser Jeff Sherid. His firm, Los Angeles-based PCAG, is marketing the coin on behalf of a collector he would only identify as a former Wall Street executive.

The doubloon is dated 1787 — five years before the federal mint opened in Philadelphia. Metalsmith Ephraim Brasher, George Washington's next-door neighbor on New York's Cherry Street, privately minted a small batch of the coins and punched this unique version with his hallmark "EB" on the eagle's breast. The soon-to-be president almost certainly handled it, according to numismatist John Albanese, founder of Certified Acceptance, a coin-grade verification service.

## Pipeline worker mauled by black bear

**AK** JUNEAU — A contract worker for the trans-Alaska pipeline system was mauled by a bear and seriously injured while running on a public road near a pump station, a spokesperson for the pipeline operator said Tuesday.

The incident occurred Friday evening on a route used for recreation by employees based at the remote Interior Pump Station 5, which is on the south side of the Brooks Range, said Katie Pesznecker with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

She said security personnel went to look for the worker, identified by Alaska State Troopers as Michael Becwar, 53, of Wasilla, when they noticed he had been gone for about 80 minutes. They found Becwar on the side of the road with serious injuries, she said. He was taken to a hospital in Fairbanks, she said. Pesznecker said he's expected to recover.

Troopers, in an online dispatch, said a necropsy performed by the Department of Fish and Game confirmed an adult male black bear killed by pipeline security personnel Sunday was "very likely" the animal involved in the mauling.

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# NHL team chemistry may be challenge

Associated Press

Claude Giroux's Philadelphia Flyers were the hottest team in the NHL back when hockey was still being played.

That was more than two months ago and their next game could be two more months away. He can't predict how things might go if the season resumes.

"I don't know," Giroux said. "Right now, everything's unknown."

Among the unknowns about the NHL returning amid the coronavirus pandemic is what the on-ice product might look like. In a team sport that demands rhythm and chemistry, players will have to quickly adapt after so much time apart to recapture what it takes to jump right into the playoffs and compete for the Stanley Cup.

"We want to see great hockey played," Toronto captain John Tavares said. "It's not an exact science. It's something we've never dealt with before, and we want to make the best and most conscious decision we possibly can to obviously make sure not only guys stay safe, but that the quality of hockey is extremely

high."

Unlike basketball, where one player can dominate a game and carry a team, hockey is predicated on players being in sync, knowing where teammates are — and will be going next — for tape-to-tape passes. Timing as a unit is an essential ingredient to success, and it's that timing that could be missing early because of so much time off the ice.

With the exception of a handful of players who were rehabbing injuries, living in Sweden or somehow able to find an open rink, most haven't skated since the season was halted in mid-March. Recapturing that skating stride and building back up to avoid injuries will be a big part of voluntary workouts before the anticipated start of training camps in July.

Some players have expressed concerns about their individual game skills, like Winnipeg winger Patrik Laine expecting himself to be "terrible" after so much time off. Many goaltenders don't even have their gear with them, and getting back into a groove will take some time.

Pittsburgh's Kris Letang thinks informal workouts limited to six players on the ice at a given time should be about all that and building up conditioning levels. He sees training camp as the time for coaches and players to do some team rebuilding.

"The skating and everything comes back pretty quick," Columbus captain Nick Foligno said. "It's the team mindset, the system play again, where you need to be — that feel. That's the only stuff you can really get when you're doing the reps over and over and over again."

Knowing full well he won't have a month to work with players before games resume, Edmonton coach Dave Tippett dug up his notes from the abbreviated training camp he oversaw with the Coyotes going into the 2013 lockout-shortened season.

"It's different because you know the players already," Tippett said. "It'll be a little bit like the start of a season where you've got to get up and going pretty quick."

Absent the usual drills to practice rushes, the power play

or penalty kill for months, players will have no choice but to acclimate to each other quickly. Washington general manager Brian MacLellan said he isn't worried.

"I think players adapt," MacLellan said. "Timing and speed and systems play usually takes a few weeks. It's no different than a training camp coming in, except it'll be ramped up — the intensity part — quicker. I think players will adapt to it. I think it might be scrambly at first, but it'll be accelerated because of the seriousness and what's at stake if you're playing for a championship."

Even though teams are expected to play a couple of exhibitions before games that count, rediscovering chemistry quickly could make all the difference, especially for those in best-of-five qualifying round series to get to the final 16.

"We're going to have to find a way to feel good but also get to our team game, get the fundamentals down that way again," said Foligno, whose Blue Jackets would play Tavares' Maple Leafs. "The team that can get to their game quickest is going to have success."

## Brees' comments about anthem draw backlash

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Drew Brees was sharply criticized by fellow high-profile athletes, including some of his own teammates, on Wednesday after the Saints quarterback reiterated his opposition to kneeling during the national anthem.

In an interview with Yahoo, Brees was asked to revisit former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick's 2016 protest of police brutality against minorities, in which Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem before games.

"I will never agree with anybody disrespecting the flag of the United States," Brees began, adding that the national anthem reminds him of his

grandfathers, who served in the armed forces during World War II. "In many cases, it brings me to tears thinking about all that has been sacrificed, and not just in the military, but for that matter, those throughout the civil rights movements of the '60s, and all that has been endured by so many people up until this point."

Critical responses to Brees' statements appeared on social media from a couple of major professional athletes, including the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James and Saints safety Malcolm Jenkins.

Jenkins was Brees' teammate when the Saints won the Super Bowl in the 2009 season, but spent the past six seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles

before returning to New Orleans this offseason.

Brees has said he supports those protesting police brutality but that he does not see the national anthem as the proper forum for that. In 2017, Brees participated with teammates who knelt before the national anthem, but then stood in unison when the anthem was played.

### Seahawks' Wilson won't talk football

RENTON, Wash. — Speaking to the media for the first time since the end of last season, Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson didn't care to talk about the game that's helped make him famous.

"To be honest with you, I don't even want to talk about football right now," Wilson said during a video conference Wednesday. "You know, that's a thing that I don't even know what that looks like down the road or anything else. I think that none of that matters. I can't compare football to life and what the black community is going through right now."

Wilson's 35-minute session was as emotional as he's been in any formal media setting during his eight previous seasons in Seattle. He relayed stories from his youth in Richmond, Va., and about raising two kids now with a third on the way.

"A guy was murdered last week. There needs to be a change," Wilson said.

# MLB rejects players' 114-game proposal

Associated Press

NEW YORK — If Major League Baseball and its players take the field for a coronavirus-delayed 2020 season, it will be after acrimonious negotiations that resemble their labor war of a generation ago.

MLB rejected the players' proposal for a 114-game regular season with no additional salary cuts, and will turn its attention to a shortened slate of perhaps 50 games or fewer. Owners last week proposed an 82-game schedule starting in early July.

"We do not have any reason to believe that a negotiated solution for an 82-game season is possible," Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem wrote in a letter Wednesday to chief union negotiator Bruce Meyer that was obtained by The Associated Press.

MLB's plan included a sliding scale of pay decreases that would leave players at the \$563,500 minimum with 47% of their original salaries and top stars Mike Trout and Gerrit Cole at less than 22% of the \$36 million they had been set

to earn.

Players insisted they receive the prorated salaries agreed to in a March 26 deal, which would give them 70% pay at 114 games. That agreement called for the sides to "discuss in good faith the economic feasibility of playing games in the absence of spectators." The union has said no additional cuts are acceptable.

There has not been a schedule averaging fewer than 82 games per team since 1879.

"Despite what it sounds like with some of the Twitter bickering back and forth and some of the posturing back and forth, I am optimistic that we are going to play baseball this year," Milwaukee president of baseball operations David Stearns said. "I'm optimistic that both sides genuinely want to play baseball this year, that there's a path to doing so, even if it's a shorter season, even if it's 50 games."

Ballparks without fans appear certain due to the pandemic. MLB claims large losses due to the virus, which the union disputes, and teams want additional salary reduc-

tions. Halem said 27 of the 30 teams would lose money with each additional game.

A 50-game schedule would result in players receiving about 30% of their full salaries under the March 26 deal.

"You confirmed for us on Sunday that players are unified in their view that they will not accept less than 100% of their prorated salaries, and we have no choice but to accept that representation," Halem wrote.

"Nonetheless, the commissioner is committed to playing baseball in 2020," Halem added. "He has started discussions with ownership about staging a shorter season without fans."

Halem ended his letter by telling Meyer "we stand ready to discuss any ideas you may have that might lead to an agreement on resuming play without regular fan access in our stadiums."

MLB wants to start the season in early July, and Halem wrote an agreement would have had to be reached by June 1 in order to reopen training camps by June 10. That would leave three to four weeks of

preparation, which Halem said is the "wide consensus."

"We are opposed to rushing to begin the season and then subjecting players to a grueling schedule," he said.

Players made their proposal Sunday, five days after management's initial economic plan. 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.

MLB does not want to play past October because it fears a second wave of the coronavirus could disrupt the postseason and jeopardize \$787 million in broadcast revenue. Halem cited MLB's infectious disease consultant, Dr. Ali Khan, Dean of the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska.

"It is not in the collective interest of clubs or players to begin a 2020 season and subsequently be forced to suspend or cancel it before the completion of the postseason," Halem wrote.

## 2 more Oklahoma State football players test positive

Associated Press

STILLWATER, Okla. — Two more Oklahoma State football players have tested positive for COVID-19 since returning to campus for voluntary workouts, bringing the total to three.

Senior associate athletic director Kevin Klintworth wrote on his Twitter account Wednesday that of the 150 staff, administrators and athletes tested, three athletes had asymptomatic positives.

Linebacker Amen Ogbongbemiga announced Tuesday he tested positive after he attended a protest in Tulsa, Okla. The other two players were not identified.

"Positives were expected and the plan for that scenario has been activated," Klintworth

wrote. "We will be as forthcoming as possible on the covid issues."

OSU spokesman Gavin Lang said there would be no additional comment.

Marshall University in West Virginia announced Monday two of its football players and one staff member tested positive. Iowa State said Wednesday a student worker in its athletic department tested positive and that four athletes were showing symptoms and awaiting test results.

The three positives at Oklahoma State come two months after Cowboys coach Mike Gundy was criticized for being insensitive in comments about the nation's response to the pandemic. He referenced the

financial impact of football while suggesting players should return to campus as early as May 1.

"They're in good shape, they're all 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 years old, they're healthy," Gundy said April 7. "A lot of them can fight it off with their natural body, the antibodies and build that they have. There's some people that are asymptomatic."

"If that's true, then yeah, we sequester them. And people say, 'That's crazy.' No, it's not crazy, because we need to continue to budget and run money through the state of Oklahoma."

Gundy apologized four days later, saying he understood his comments offended some people and that his first priority is the well-being of student-athletes.

The Big 12 is allowing schools to bring football players to campus for voluntary workouts beginning June 15.

Oklahoma State this week announced a phased approach for the return of its players.

Under the plan, players who test positive are quarantined in separate housing and treated by medical staff. Contact tracing is done, and all that have been in contact will be instructed to quarantine and have symptoms monitored for a period determined by health and medical officials.

After the determined quarantine time, if the traced contact group is not showing symptoms, the affected player will be retested for COVID-19 prior to resuming activities.