

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, June 15, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## News on Poland troop increase coming soon

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — An agreement on a United States troop increase in Poland will be announced shortly and could be larger than originally planned, the top U.S. diplomat in the country said.

The development comes as the U.S. is reportedly considering reducing its troop presence in Germany.

An announcement on the plan is “coming soon,” U.S. Ambassador to Poland Georgette Mosbacher said on Twitter.

President Donald Trump and Polish President Andrzej Duda’s “vision for increased U.S. presence in Poland will

be even greater than originally outlined,” Mosbacher said in a post Thursday.

Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak, in a Twitter post Friday, said that the two sides are “now arranging the final details.”

Last week, Reuters news agency said that talks between Washington and Warsaw had collapsed over disagreements about how to fund the deployments and where to station incoming forces. Mosbacher dismissed the Reuters report in another Twitter post.

In 2019, the two countries negotiated a modest troop increase in Poland that called for 1,000 additional troops to rotate

through the country. The plan, which is yet to be finalized, fell far short of the “Fort Trump” idea originally envisioned by Duda.

But a reported White House directive to pull 9,500 troops out of Germany in the months ahead has added a new twist. Earlier this month, reports emerged that the White House officially signed off on the reduction and that at least some of those forces could be shifted to Poland.

The Pentagon has not yet publicly addressed the issue.

Poland has long sought the deployment of a permanent U.S. military force on its territory. Army tank units have been on

top of Warsaw’s wish list.

The U.S. military has up to 4,500 nonpermanent troops in Poland, where various units have been rotating for several years. The mission is focused on deterring Russian aggression along NATO’s eastern flank, which has been a focal point for the Pentagon in Europe since Russia’s occupation of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

U.S. soldiers and airmen are based at numerous sites, including a small Army headquarters in Poznan, a logistics hub in Powidz and drone, missile defense and special operations facilities in other parts of the country.

## F-15 pilot found dead after crash off British coast

By BRIAN FERGUSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The body of the pilot of a U.S. Air Force F-15 jet that crashed into the North Sea was found Monday after an hourslong search off the coast of northeast England, officials said.

“It is with a very heavy heart that I confirm the pilot of the downed F-15C Eagle has been located and confirmed deceased,” Col. Will Marshall, commander of the 48th Fighter Wing, based at RAF Lakenheath in England, said in a video message.

The F-15 crashed Monday at around 9:30 a.m. during a routine training flight, Marshall said in an earlier video message.

The pilot’s identity will not be released until all next of kin have been notified, Marshall said.

“This is a tragic loss for the 48th Fighter Wing community,

**‘This is a tragic loss for the 48th Fighter Wing community.’**

**Col. Will Marshall**

Commander of the 48th Fighter Wing

and our deepest condolences go out to the pilot’s family and the 493rd Fighter Squadron,” he said.

The pilot’s body was located several hours after the British coast guard found wreckage from the plane off the English coast.

Emergency communications were heard on a “frequency used throughout NATO” just before the crash, The Aviationist website reported.

Several British and American military planes, and British coast guard helicopters, helped search for the pilot, media reports said.

There were also two British lifeboats that were dispatched to the site where the crash occurred, Jim Rice, a spokesman for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, told Stars and Stripes.

The crash was the third notable incident involving an F-15 in two years.

An F-15C from the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing skidded to a stop at Joint Base Andrews, Md., last month after the pilot declared an in-flight emergency. No injuries were reported.

On June 10, 2018, an F-15C from the 44th Fighter Squad-

ron at Kadena Air Base, Japan, crashed into the ocean south of Okinawa. The pilot ejected and was recovered by Japanese rescue forces.

The Air Force operates roughly 249 F-15 Eagles, which were developed in the 1970s by McDonnell Douglas.

Plans to upgrade the aging fleet that were approved by Congress last year allowed for the purchase of two new Boeing F-15EX fighters with an option for six more, and for new computers, cockpits and electronic warfare systems for the F-15C and D models.

The 48th Fighter Wing is the only Air Force F-15 wing in Europe, and consists of more than 4,500 active-duty military members. RAF Lakenheath is the largest U.S. Air Force-operated base in England, according to its website.

# BLM banner removed at embassy in Seoul

*Bloomberg*

A large “Black Lives Matter” banner draped on the front of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, was removed on Monday after it was brought to the attention of President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, according to people familiar with the matter.

Pompeo and Trump were both displeased by the banner, the people said. A large, multicolored “pride” banner recognizing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people was also removed on Monday. They were replaced with a banner commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean War.

The embassy unfurled the “Black Lives Matter” banner on its mission building on Saturday to support worldwide anti-racism protests that have followed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody last month.

The embassy unfurled the “Black Lives Matter” banner on its mission building on Saturday to support worldwide anti-racism protests that have followed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody last month.

The U.S. Embassy “stands in solidarity with fellow Americans grieving and peacefully protesting to demand positive change,” the embassy said Saturday on Twitter, posting a picture of the banner. “Our #BlackLivesMatter banner shows our support for the fight against racial injustice and police brutality as we strive to be a more inclusive & just society.”

But on Monday, after the banners were removed, the embassy said that U.S. Ambas-

sador to South Korea Harry Harris did not intend “to support or encourage donations to any specific organization. To avoid the misperception that American taxpayer dollars were spent to benefit such organizations, he directed that the banner be removed.” Harris was nominated for his post by Trump in 2018 after a Navy career in which he was the first Asian American to hold a four-star rank and the first to head U.S. Pacific Command.

## US Air Force community on Okinawa holds vigil for Floyd

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Air Force Tech Sgt. Louis Evan Knox stood stoically underneath a coniferous tree in the early morning heat Saturday outside Chapel 1 at Kadena Air Base, his three children at his side, in a multicolored sea of faces.

Knox, 36, of the 18th Medical Group, was among more than 400 who attended a vigil hosted by the 18th Wing Chaplain Corps to grieve the death of George Floyd. They also stood in solidarity against racial injustice and inequality, in the U.S. and also in the Air Force.

“It was important for my kids to see this,” said Knox, a Philadelphia native. “I lived through a lot of these challenges that they’re protesting [in the United States] today. So, I wanted to show my kids that even though we’re in the military, we can still go out and support the cause.”

The vigil featured speeches, prayer and 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence — the length of time a white police officer in Minneapolis knelt on Floyd’s neck, despite his cries for help, May 25. The 46-year-old black man died.

The killing, which was caught on cellphone video and replayed over and over on the internet and nightly news broadcasts,

led to protests in cities around the world.

Knox said the protests have resulted in a more open dialogue about racism and police brutality, giving hope that perhaps steps will be taken to change the system. The importance of Saturday’s vigil wasn’t lost on his children.

“It’s open and it’s good that people are talking now because I think [the violence against black people] should stop,” said Katalina Petitguillen Knox, 12.

The event came about after a member of the base mental health team emailed the chapel June 8 and asked if it had anything planned, said Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) Adam Rhoads. Rhoads routed the request up to 18th Wing commander Air Force Brig. Gen. Joel Carey, who signed off.

Organizers on Friday moved the event to a larger venue after social media generated greater interest in it.

“It means a lot to the community to be able to see such unity,” Rhoads said Saturday. “When we look at the news and the media back home, we just see so much division there, and so to have something like this, you just see a united people. It’s powerful and it speaks volumes to the community here and even just people being able to drive by and see it.”

## Display of Confederate flag banned in USFK public areas

BY KIM GAMEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. Forces Korea banned the display of the Confederate flag in public on bases Monday in the latest move to prevent unrest over racial injustice in the United States from spilling into the ranks in South Korea.

The order comes as Confederate symbols have become a frequent target for protesters following the May 25 death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of Minneapolis police.

USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams said the flag, which generally has a red or blue field with two blue or red diagonal lines and white stars, may not be displayed in workplaces, common-access areas and public areas, including clothing and bumper stickers, on its installations.

“The Confederate Battle Flag does not represent the values of U.S. Forces assigned to serve” in South Korea, Abrams said in a memo dated Monday. “While I acknowledge some might view it as a symbol of regional pride, many others in our force see it as a painful reminder of hate, bigotry, treason and devaluation of humanity.”

“Regardless of perspective,

one thing is clear: it has the power to inflame feelings of racial division. We cannot have that division among us,” he added.

He also directed all commanders “to identify and ensure the removal of all display of the Confederate Battle Flag or its depiction” in the common areas.

The command was not aware of any flags being displayed publicly but wanted to make it clear that they are not welcome, spokesman Col. Lee Peters said separately in response to a question.

The areas affected by the ban include office buildings, aircraft, hangars, conference rooms, individual offices, gyms, latrines, common areas of housing units and other places in plain view, including clothing and bumper stickers.

The order does not apply to private areas such as barracks rooms, Peters said.

The order also specified that the ban does not apply to areas where the flag is depicted but not the main focus of display, such as artistic, educational or historical displays about the Civil War. “It also does not include state flags which incorporate the Confederate Battle Flag,” according to the policy.

# Reapers deployed to Estonia for 1st time

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. unmanned aircraft are operating for the first time out of Estonia, where they will be temporarily based in support of allied intelligence gathering missions, U.S. Air Forces in Europe said Monday.

MQ-9 Reaper aircraft were moved from Miroslawiec Air Base in northwestern Poland

while a runway there is under construction, USAFE said in a statement.

The move, while temporary, could give NATO a surveillance boost around the upper Baltics, where Russia's military is active.

USAFE did not say how many aircraft and airmen were repositioned to Estonia's Amari Air Base, citing operational security. The troops belong to the Air Force's 52nd Expedition-

ary Operations Group Detachment 2.

"The operations aim to promote stability and security within the region and strengthen relationships with NATO allies and other European partners," USAFE said of the mission.

Since 2018, MQ-9 Reapers have been operating out of Poland. In the past, the unit also has carried out temporary missions in Romania while runway

work was done at the Polish base.

Miroslawiec Air Base could eventually factor into plans for a larger U.S. presence in Poland. A 2019 deal between Warsaw and Washington called for the establishment of a drone squadron in the country.

Negotiations connected to basing more U.S. troops in Poland are ongoing, with officials from both sides last week saying that a deal is imminent.

## 2 Navy pilots killed in Ala. crash were in civilian plane

*Associated Press*

SELMA, Ala. — The Navy has identified two of its pilots who were killed in a civilian plane crash last week in Alabama.

Capt. Vincent Segars and Cmdr. Joshua Fuller were flying to Pensacola, Fla., from Jasper, Ala., aboard a civilian plane. The single-engine plane went down near Selma on Wednesday afternoon, killing both. They were the only people on board.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the crash.

Segars was commanding officer of the Naval Aviation Schools Command at Naval Air Station Pensacola, and Fuller was an integration officer for the command's naval introductory flight evaluation program, said Cmdr. James Stockman, public affairs officer for Naval Education and Training Command at NAS Pensacola.

The Pensacola News Journal reported Segars was from South Carolina and was commissioned into the Navy on Sept. 6, 1990, through the NROTC Program at Georgia Institute of Technology. He later

attended the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama and was first assigned as the commander of NAS Pensacola's Naval Aviation Schools Command on April 29, 2009.

Fuller, a Florida native, was commissioned into the Navy on June 23, 2000, and became part of the Naval Aviation Schools Command staff on Nov. 15, 2019. Before moving to the Gulf Coast, he was assigned to multiple electronic attack squadrons in Whidbey Island, Wash.

## Yokota has 1st coronavirus case in military community

By SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo reported its first coronavirus case Monday, three days after the military relaxed its health protection condition in the country.

"A member of the Yokota community who returned from the US to Japan on 12 June has tested positive for COVID-19," Yokota officials said in a Facebook post.

The person was placed in quarantine when they arrived, officials said.

"While the member does not exhibit any symptoms, the individual has now been placed in isolation on base in accordance with strict Center for Disease

**'Persons who had any close interaction ... have been identified and quarantined to ensure the safety of our airmen, families and local community.'**

**Yokota officials' Facebook post**

Control guidelines," said officials at the base, which is home to some 12,000 personnel. "Persons who had any close interaction with the individual have been identified and quarantined to ensure the safety of our airmen, families and the local community. There are no indications of additional risk to Team Yokota."

On Friday, USFJ commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider announced that U.S. forces would

lower their health protection condition from Charlie to Bravo, but extend a public health emergency declared April 6 through July 14. Under Bravo condition, the Defense Department advises personnel to continue to practice social distancing and avoid unnecessary travel.

New coronavirus cases in Japan dropped sharply from the start of the month and have remained low.

However, Tokyo reported 47

new cases Sunday, the most since May 5.

The latest case at Yokota is the first among local base personnel, but an undisclosed number of Navy sailors tested positive for coronavirus in late April, after being sequestered at the installation before boarding USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group vessels for an upcoming patrol.

Last month, the Air Force revealed that an undisclosed number of support staff accompanying the sequestered sailors had also tested positive.

On Facebook, Air Force officials assured the base community that Yokota would remain one of the most effective locations to safely and securely house personnel as airmen and their families arrive in Japan.

# Atlanta sobriety test quickly turned deadly

Associated Press

ATLANTA — An autopsy found that the black man killed in a scuffle with Atlanta police outside a fast-food drive-thru was shot twice in the back, the medical examiner's office said.

The killing of Rayshard Brooks, 27, as he tried to flee after wrestling with officers and grabbing a Taser has rekindled protests in Atlanta that erupted in the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis. The Wendy's restaurant where Brooks was shot was burned down over the weekend.

The NAACP planned a demonstration Monday outside the Georgia Capitol in Atlanta, where Republican leaders returning to work in the legislature after a prolonged coronavirus shutdown pushed back against swift consideration of a slate of changes Democrats

want in policing and criminal justice.

An autopsy Sunday concluded that Brooks died from blood loss and damage to internal organs after being shot twice in the back, the Fulton County medical examiner's office said in a news release.

Officer Garrett Rolfe, who fired the fatal shots, has been fired, and the other officer at the scene, Devin Brosnan, has been placed on administrative duty. Atlanta Police Chief Erika Shield resigned a day after the shooting.

Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard said he hopes to decide by midweek whether to charge either of the officers. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation was placed in charge of the investigation.

Brooks was shot late Friday after police were called amid complaints that a car was

blocking the drive-thru lane. An officer found Brooks asleep in the car, had him move it to a parking space and began a sobriety check.

Video from the two officers' body cameras and dash-mounted cameras on their cruisers showed Brooks cooperating for more than 40 minutes, telling them he had had a couple of drinks while celebrating his daughter's birthday and consenting to a breath test.

The video shows Brooks' alcohol level at 0.108% — higher than the legal limit in Georgia. When one of the officers takes Brooks' left wrist and moves to handcuff him, Brooks tries to run and the officers take him to the ground.

As Brooks fights to stand, Brosnan presses a Taser to his leg and threatens to stun him. Brooks grabs the Taser and pulls it away. He struggles to

his feet, the Taser in his hand, and starts running.

Rolfe fires his Taser, and a yelp can be heard above the weapon's electric crackle. Rolfe runs after Brooks, and seconds later three gunshots are heard.

Both officers' body cameras were knocked to the ground in the struggle, and none of the four police cameras captured the shooting. Footage released from a Wendy's security camera showed Brooks turn and point an object at one of the officers, who was steps behind him. The officer draws his gun and fires.

The Brooks family's lawyer noted on NBC's "Today" show on Monday that Brooks was shot from a distance, carrying what the officers knew to be a non-lethal weapon, and couldn't have gotten away, since they had his driver's license.

## Police tear gas Richmond protesters in long standoff

The Washington Post

RICHMOND — Police fired tear gas at protesters in Virginia's state capital early Monday after an hourslong standoff sparked by an incident in which a city police vehicle struck several demonstrators Saturday night.

At least one person was thought to have been taken into custody during the standoff.

The confrontation began Sunday, shortly before 10 p.m., outside Richmond police headquarters on Grace Street. A crowd of some 300 protesters, many dressed in black with black head and face coverings, converged in a parking lot across the street from the building.

They confronted several dozen officers in riot gear, standing in a line along the block and holding clear shields. An armored vehicle was behind the police in the entrance to the building's parking garage. Sev-

eral officers looked down from the roof. City dump trucks had been stationed at either end of the block to seal it off to traffic.

The protesters chanted "Black Lives Matter" and "no justice, no peace," while several stood close to the officers yelling profanities and shining lights in their faces.

They were from both city and state police, joined later by Henrico County police.

After the pepper spray was deployed, the crowd backed up a little. But protesters surged forward again, yelling taunts.

Police deployed spray a second time after a protester seemed to lunge at an officer, who pushed the man back with his shield.

Around 10:50 p.m., some protesters began telling others in the crowd to leave or back off. A young woman who had been helping lead the protest had been taken into custody early in the confrontation.

## Europe reopens country, Beijing cases addressed

Associated Press

BERLIN — European countries reopened their borders Monday after a three-month coronavirus shutdown, although international visitors are still being kept away and there was uncertainty over whether many Europeans will quickly embrace travel outside their home countries.

The virus is still far from being wiped out, and the need for constant vigilance came into sharp focus again as China, where COVID-19 first emerged last year, rushed to contain an outbreak in the capital of Beijing.

Germany and France dropped border checks nearly two weeks after Italy opened its frontiers. Greece welcomed visitors Monday with passengers on flights from other European countries not having to undergo compulsory coronavirus tests.

The European Union's 27 na-

tions and a number of other European states aren't expected to start reopening to visitors from outside the Continent until at least the beginning of July and possibly later.

Spain put its tourism industry to the test Monday by allowing thousands of Germans to fly to its Balearic Islands without a 14-day quarantine. Officials said the pilot program will help authorities gauge what's needed to guard against possible virus flare-ups.

In Beijing, where an outbreak was traced to a wholesale market that supplies much of the city's meat and vegetables, people lined up at hospitals and other facilities as authorities rushed to administer thousands of tests. Authorities confirmed 79 cases over four days in what looks to be the largest outbreak since China largely stopped its spread at home more than two months ago.

# S. Korea leader calls on North to return to talks

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's president called on North Korea to stop raising animosities and return to talks, saying Monday that the rivals must not reverse the peace deals which he and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reached during 2018 summits.

President Moon Jae-in's efforts to defuse rising animosities came after North Korea threatened Friday to destroy an inter-Korean liaison office located in North Korea and take unspecified military steps against South Korea.

If North Korea were to take such actions, it would be a serious setback to Moon's efforts toward Korean reconciliation and finding a negotiated solution to the ongoing North Korean nuclear issue.

"North Korea must not sever communications and create tensions to turn back the clock to a past confrontational period," Moon said during a meeting with top presidential advisers, according to his office. "We must not push back the pledges of peace that Chairman Kim Jong Un and I made."

Moon, a liberal who met Kim three times in 2018, was a driving force behind now-dormant diplomatic efforts between Pyongyang and Washington, including the summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in Singapore in 2018.

During two of the three inter-Korean summits, Moon and Kim agreed to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and take other steps to boost exchanges and dial down military tensions. Those summits initially helped to improve their countries' ties

significantly before their relations became strained again after the breakdown of a second Kim-Trump summit in Vietnam in early 2019.

North Korea has recently unleashed a slew of harsh rhetoric against South Korea, accusing it of failing to prevent activists from launching propaganda leaflets across their border. In an apparent bid to soothe North Korea, Moon's government vowed to ban civilian leafleting campaigns. North Korea has said that the South Korean response lacks sincerity.

Some observers have said that North Korea has grown increasingly frustrated because Seoul has failed to break away from Washington and revive stalled joint economic projects held back by United States-led sanctions. They have also speculated that North Korea initially thought Moon would help it win badly-needed sanctions relief, but got upset after Kim returned home empty-handed from the 2019 summit with Trump.

Moon said that the two Koreas must take the initiative in finding a breakthrough, calling the nations "the masters of the destiny for the Korean Peninsula." He said that his government will keep striving to promote dialogue with North Korea.

The Koreas remain split along the world's most heavily fortified border since they were divided into a U.S.-backed South Korea and a Soviet-controlled North Korea at the end of the World War II in 1945.

## Coast Guard rescues 2 people, 1 cat in N.C.

Stars and Stripes

Coast Guard helicopter and boat crews combined to rescue two people and their cat from a sinking 50-foot houseboat in North Carolina over the weekend.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and a 29-foot boat launched from Elizabeth City, N.C., on Saturday, after authorities received a 911 call saying that the houseboat was taking on water on the Scuppernon River in Albemarle Sound, the service said in a statement. Elizabeth City is about 50 miles south of Norfolk, Va.

The two people were hoisted to the helicopter and brought to the Northeastern Regional Airport, while the boat crew took the cat aboard, Coast Guard District 5 said. There were no injuries, officials said.

It was the first operational hoist rescue for Lt. Karisa Kealy, one of the chopper pilots, and the first rescue for

Petty Officer 2nd Class Martin Andrada, the flight mechanic.

"We're fortunate that we train for these types of scenarios all of the time," Kealy said. "Even though it may be different when you are responding to an actual emergency, you have a solid foundation from your training to always fall back on."

A Coast Guard video showed the two people hoisted separately into the helicopter from the nearly submerged boat. It also captured the moment when rescue boat crew member Petty Officer 3rd Class Victoria Cloin returned the cat to its owner.

"Oh, look at that, he's got his own little jacket," the unnamed owner says as Cloin helps the feline into a carrier. "Thank you so much."

The houseboat's owner is coordinating with the Coast Guard to salvage the craft, the service said.

## Fla. marks Trump's birthday with parades

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Trump supporters in Florida celebrated the president's birthday Sunday with caravans, flotillas and parades throughout his adopted homestate.

In Palm Beach County—home of President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort — separate caravans of trucks, motorcycles and boats were riding along highways and the intercoastal waterway at various times in the morning. The organizers were part of the president's Florida re-election effort.

The Palm Beach Post reports that an anti-Trump caravan also was riding through the county Sunday to protest racism and call for police reforms.

Pro-Trump flotillas also were planned for Fort Lauder-

dale, Miami, the Florida Keys, Tampa, Pensacola and Jacksonville — where Trump is slated to be renominated for a second term at the end of August.

In The Villages, a massive Republican-friendly retirement community northwest of Orlando where golf carts are the vehicles of choice for many residents, Trump supporters were holding a golf-cart parade in honor of the president, who turned 74.

Speaking to West Point graduates on Saturday, Trump said his birthday coincided with the 245th anniversary of the U.S. Army's founding.

"Unrelated, going to be my birthday also," Trump said. "I don't know if that happened by accident. ... But it's a great day because of that Army birthday."

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Cicadas make great snack for zoo animals

**IL** BROOKFIELD — The early emergence of cicadas in Illinois provided animals at the Brookfield Zoo a rare treat.

Officials at the zoo west of Chicago said the red-eyed cicadas make for a nutritious snack that's high in protein and low in fat.

Animal care staff provided cicadas to white-throated monitor lizards, meerkats, golden-lion tamarins and the owl-like tawny frogmouth. Sloth bears also got a share, frozen in ice.

## Train derails, spilling hazardous chemical

**OK** WYNNEWOOD — Dozens of residents of a small Oklahoma city were temporarily evacuated after a train derailed and spilled a hazardous chemical, officials said.

The train went off the tracks in Wynnewood, about 65 miles south of Oklahoma City, according to BNSF Railway spokeswoman Amy Casas. No one was hurt, she said.

Two of the 11 derailed cars began leaking sodium hydro-sulfide onto railway property, leading the local fire department to order nearby residents to evacuate, Casas said. The chemical compound is toxic, flammable and potentially combustible.

Casas said the derailment wasn't near any waterways, but she didn't know how much of the chemical had spilled.

## Crews clear snow drift in Glacier National Park

**MT** KALISPELL — Glacier National Park plow crews reached Logan Pass and have started clearing

the Big Drift, an area in northern Montana where massive amounts of winter snow blanket a scenic highway, officials said.

The seasonal drift is one of the biggest plowing challenges for crews as it buries a stretch of Going-to-the-Sun Road under up to 80 feet of snow blocking access, the Daily Inter Lake reported.

Hikers and bikers can go as far up the road as they would like on weekends, and after road crews leave for the day, but officials have warned of falling rock and avalanche danger.

## Police: Man accused of bogus robbery report

**ND** WEST FARGO — Authorities arrested a 29-year-old Fargo man after police determined that a reported armed robbery at a West Fargo sandwich shop never happened.

Cameron Starr was charged with conspiracy to commit theft at Jimmy John's. Charges have not been filed against the person who reported the crime.

West Fargo police were told a man with a handgun demanded money and got away with cash from the safe. Authorities have not said whether either person worked at the shop.

Starr is also charged with driving under suspension.

## Man sentenced for impersonating marshal

**NM** LAS CRUCES — A Las Cruces man was sentenced to over eight months in prison for impersonating a deputy U.S. marshal.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for New Mexico said Aaron Tyler Stroud's sentence includes credit for time already served and also requires a two-year period of supervised release after he's out of prison.

According to the office,

Stroud, 39, claimed to be a U.S. Marshals Service officer when he approached a Las Cruces police officer who was responding to a Sept. 29 report of domestic violence. Stroud wore a shirt with "U.S. Marshal" printed on it, carried a radio, a false badge and a holstered gun and said he routinely patrolled the area, the office said.

## Most wanted suspect arrested year later

**MS** PASCAGOULA — One of Tennessee's most wanted suspects was arrested in Mississippi after nearly a year on the run in a murder case.

Delarrious Dewayne Crawford was taken into custody by the U.S. Marshals Gulf Coast Regional Task Force, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said on Facebook. He was arrested in Moss Point in connection with the June 2019 shooting of Daicori Sanders, 25, news outlets reported.

Crawford, 29, has been booked into Jackson County Adult Detention Center pending extradition to Tennessee on a murder charge.

## Workers hurt when scaffolding gives way

**IL** WHEELING — Two workers were critically injured when scaffolding they were on gave way inside a water tower in suburban Chicago.

Crews were sandblasting and painting the inside of the water tower in Wheeling when the scaffolding fell, according to the Daily Herald.

One of the victims fell 60 to 80 feet, Wheeling Fire Chief Mike McGreal said.

Ropes and harnesses were used to help remove both victims. Both were taken to a hospital.

"It's a very tricky operation

because the tank is empty of water," McGreal said. "There are a series of manhole-size openings, so they actually had to lift the patients up to lower the patients (to the ground) so it was a pretty technical rescue."

## Alligator dies after being caught in trap

**KS** MANHATTAN — An alligator that was recently spotted near a Kansas creek has died after being caught in trap.

The 5-foot alligator is believed to be one of two stolen from Manhattan Reptile World in Manhattan earlier this month. The store said the alligator drowned after getting caught in the trap that was set out for the animal.

The second alligator has yet to be found. Authorities have said they don't know whether the other alligator stolen on June 5 is also on the loose.

## Cops, EMT, fishermen rescue man from car

**NJ** ATLANTIC CITY — Police said an unconscious driver trapped in a burning car after a crash in New Jersey was rescued by two fishermen, two officers and an emergency medical technician.

Atlantic City police said officers responded to the two-car crash on Route 30. Police said two officers arrived to find one vehicle engulfed in flames and a 29-year-old Atlantic City man unconscious in the driver's seat. Two fishermen who tried to rescue him were prevented from doing so by the flames. But they did cut his seat belt, which police said "was instrumental to the driver's rescue." The two officers and the EMT removed the man from the car and pulled him to safety.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news  
updated 24/7 from bases  
around the world.  
Now online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# TV gives NFL an edge if fans can't come

Associated Press

Timing favored the NFL over other major pro sports leagues in trying to figure out how to keep the coronavirus pandemic from wrecking the 2020 season.

America's most popular sport has another big advantage if the games are played: TV money.

While NFL owners could lose billions collectively with limited capacities in stadiums or no fans at all, the league is well-positioned financially because of lucrative media contracts approaching \$10 billion in a full 2020 season.

And so far, the NFL is on pace to play games this fall.

"The NFL takes its position as America's sport, the nation's sport, very seriously," said Marc Ganis, co-founder of the Chicago-based consulting group SportsCorp and close observer of the pro sports business scene. "They will move heaven and earth, make whatever adjustments are necessary. As long as players and coaches are healthy, they will get the games on."

Ganis says there are plenty of options within that premise: no fans, some fans, perhaps full stadiums by season's end, or teams playing somewhere other than their regular venues because of pandemic-related restrictions.

Regardless, the financial health of the NFL isn't among the questions for now, while other leagues grapple with issues over fan-related dollars that more profoundly affect their ability to operate.

Fitch Ratings recently affirmed its "A-plus" credit mark for the NFL and its properties while noting that the league had approved raising the borrowing limit for each club to \$500 million from \$350 million. While Fitch analyst Chad Lewis said the debt limit had more to do with larger capital spending, such as stadiums and practice

facilities, the company attributes part of its strong rating to the television deals. Fitch says the NFL estimates each team's media revenue at \$250 million per season. The number gets bigger later in the contract, and each deal is set to expire in the next two years.

So it's safe to say more than half of the league's \$15 billion in annual revenue comes from the TV deals shared equally among all 32 teams — unlike Major League Baseball, the NBA and NHL.

"If you just look at the number of eyeballs that the NFL gets on an average regular-season game," Lewis said, "there's just a very strong foundation there. That's just really a testament to the strength of the league and how it looks for the league long term."

Ganis estimates each team's average of stadium-related revenue — tickets, parking, concessions, sponsorships and merchandise among other things — at \$130 million annually. The midway point in Forbes magazine's most recent analysis of stadium incomes for all 32 teams was about \$150 million.

Those figures put leaguewide stadium revenue in the range of \$4 billion to \$5 billion annually, or about 30% of the overall bottom line. That's not far from former Packers executive Andrew Brandt's belief that roughly 60% of the NFL's money comes from media contracts, also known as national revenue.

Brandt says local revenues were a much larger portion of the formula when he joined the Packers 20 years ago. In Green Bay's most recent financial report covering the 2018 season, the NFL's only publicly traded franchise reported \$204 million in local revenue compared to \$275 million in national revenue.

Brandt, director of Villanova's Moorad Center of Sports Law, estimated ticket sales

could make up about 25% of a team's total revenue depending on several factors, but he also wondered about the impact outside a stadium.

"There is nothing like game-day weekend in Green Bay," Brandt said. "The way the hotels are sold out months in advance and they have these houses by Lambeau that are just rented for each weekend. The effect on local economies is huge."

MLB's attempts to get the baseball season started are being held up in part by a disagreement over how to compensate players in the likelihood that owners will have no fan-related revenue. NFL owners and players recently reached a 10-year labor agreement. And while player compensation has been overshadowed by talk of access to team facilities and how to conduct training camps safely, Brandt believes it's a potential sticking point if the league decides to play without fans or limited capacities.

For one thing, next year's salary cap might shrink because of lower local revenues after expanding repeatedly for years. If attendance is restricted, owners and players might have to work on solutions for the cap.

"Difficult, not because of negativity between the two sides necessarily," Brandt said. "It's difficult because of the subject. It's just how bad do the owners want to extract a pound of flesh."

Former television executive Neal Pilson wonders if the virus-battered economy might lead some corporations to question spending on advertising in the fall. But Ganis believes the appetite for live televised sports will make the ratings behemoth known as the NFL as popular as ever.

"Everything else, all other entertainment broadcasting, is in doubt except sports," Ganis said. "And they need sports more than ever to advertise."

## Athletes want input on USOPC protest ideas

Associated Press

DENVER — The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee is open to challenging IOC rules restricting protests at the Olympics.

At the same time, some of the very athletes the federation is trying to help are angered that they have been kept out of the loop in key decisions.

The federation, in response

to the protests following George Floyd's killing, said it "stands with those who demand equality." After that, CEO Sarah Hirshland announced the formation of an athletes' working group that will, among other things, look into changing the IOC's longstanding rule banning political protests on Olympic medals stands.

But Hirshland's first show of support for the athletes was

panned by Gwen Berry, the African American hammer thrower who drew a 12-month probation from the USOPC after she raised her fist on the medals stand last summer at the Pan American Games.

And Hirshland's second move was criticized because of frayed communications between the federation and its own athletes' advisory council. The AAC is supposed to repre-

sent all U.S. Olympic athletes and has long struggled for an equal spot in the decision-making process.

"I don't think these are bad ideas," said U.S. Track and Field CEO Max Siegel, who, as leader of the sport that places the majority of African Americans on the U.S. Olympic team, has been facilitating discussions between athletes and the USOPC.

# Berger wins playoff in PGA's return

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Daniel Berger dreamed of moments like this, a putt on the final hole with everything riding on it, and he pulled it off to perfection Sunday at Colonial.

What he never imagined is how quiet it would be.

No cheers when his 10-foot birdie on the final hole gave him a share of the lead. No groans when Collin Morikawa missed a 6-foot birdie putt for the win. And more silence on the first playoff hole that Berger won with a par.

"It was a little different for sure, but in the end, I was holding the trophy," Berger said. "And that's all that matters to me."

The PGA Tour made a healthy and muted return from the COVID-19 pandemic at the Charles Schwab Challenge, except for Morikawa and Xander Schauffele having reason to feel sick to their stomachs.

One hole after a chance to win in regulation, Morikawa hit a superb pitch on the 17th hole in the playoff to 3 feet. Berger converted his simple up-and-down for par from behind the green, and Morikawa's short par putt to extend the playoff hit the right side of the cup and spun out.

"Just hit a better putt," Morikawa said.

Schauffele, whose moxie is easy to miss behind his California cool, made three straight clutch putts — for par, bogey and birdie — that kept him tied for the lead only to learn new meaning of "Horrible Horseshoe" at Colonial. His 3-foot par putt on the

17th in regulation dipped in the hole on the right side and came out on the left.

His 25-foot birdie putt on the 18th to force a playoff was right on line and came up short.

"If there are fans and everything with the 'oohs' and 'aahs,' I'd probably be a little more (ticked) off," Schauffele said. "Maybe that's a good thing for me right now. But it was definitely weird. It was sort of an internal battle, which it always is for me, but more so internal this week just with no fans."

Berger, whose birdie on the 18th gave him a 4-under 66, won for the third time on the PGA Tour, all three titles coming on this week in the calendar.

The other two in 2016 and 2017 were at the St. Jude Classic when it preceded the U.S. Open.

This felt different because Colonial was devoid of fans — just like the next four weeks will be on the PGA Tour — and because of the routine he followed. Berger went from the golf course to his rented house, his uncle serving as the chef. He had a saliva test in Florida and a nasal test when he arrived for the new coronavirus, both negative.

He was excited when he arrived — Berger has shot par or better every round since Oct. 11 — because golf was back to business.

And he was thrilled when he left, a winner again after missing nearly five months at the end of 2018 because of a wrist injury. The win moved him from outside the top

100 to No. 31 in the world.

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan, on the first tee when golf returned Thursday, was back in Florida watching a final round unfold with eight players taking turns at the top, and a half-dozen still in the mix over the final hour.

The scorecard this week included 487 tests for COVID-19 at Colonial, all returned negative. The leaders brought star power, Colonial brought heritage, and it was the first live PGA Tour event since March 12 because of the pandemic.

"This has been a phenomenal start to our return," Monahan said.

It almost was a tremendous return for Morikawa, who is so steady that he already has won and has made every cut as a pro dating to his graduation from Cal a year ago. No newcomer has had a streak that long since Tiger Woods.

Morikawa took a share of the lead with a 50-foot putt on the 14th hole. It was the short ones that hurt.

"We gave ourselves our chance, and that's what you want at the end," Morikawa said. "Yeah, it's going to sting for a little bit, but we'll make it out and we'll go on to next week."

Bryson DeChambeau (66), Justin Rose (66) and Jason Kokrak (64) all had birdie chances on the 18th. Berger was the only who who delivered, and this time the playoff worked out in his favor.

## Hamlin holds off Elliott for 3rd Homestead win

Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — Denny Hamlin found the magic at Homestead-Miami Speedway, once again.

Hamlin went to the lead for the final time with 30 laps left and held off Chase Elliott for his record-tying third NASCAR Cup Series victory at Homestead.

Former drivers Tony Stewart and Greg Biffle are the other three-time winners. Hamlin is in the club now, after battling Elliott most of the night.

"This one was real special," Hamlin said.

Hamlin raced to his third victory of the season and 40th

overall. He opened the season with a victory in the Daytona 500 and won at Darlington last month. And when the night was over, Hamlin — who wears the Michael Jordan "Jumpman" logo on his race suit — made no secret that he's racing with some extra energy these days.

"I'm motivated. I'm motivated more than ever," Hamlin said.

He led 137 of 267 laps on the 1½-mile track in Joe Gibbs Racing's No. 11 Toyota, finishing 0.895 ahead of Elliott.

"I just need to get through lap traffic better," Elliott said.

Ryan Blaney was third in a race oft-delayed by rain and

lightning. Tyler Reddick finished fourth.

"I just needed to execute a little bit better," Reddick said. "It was tough. We were just a little bit off there in the last two runs."

Fittingly, a very long day was the caper to a very long week for NASCAR — three Cup Series races in eight days, all of them bringing drivers into hot and steamy conditions that left many of them exhausted, all wrapped around the ongoing national outcry surrounding the battle for racial equality.

Bubba Wallace, the only black driver in the Cup Series, has become the sport's most prominent activist after he suc-

cessfully called last week on NASCAR to ban Confederate flags at its events; the series quickly did just that.

So, while fans — 1,000 of them, mostly invited military members who could each bring a guest — were back at a NASCAR race for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic started, there were none of the banned flags in sight.

Most of those fans were gone when Hamlin drove under the checkered flag at 10:46 p.m.

"I knew if I was just patient, ran the pace I wanted and the pace I was comfortable with, we were going to be hard to beat in the long run," Hamlin said.