

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Military lawyers admit to racial disparities

By COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Black and other minority service members are more likely to face punishment than their white comrades in all of the military services, top uniformed lawyers admitted Tuesday, telling lawmakers that they had yet to determine reasons behind such disparities.

But the services have begun taking steps to understand and address racial disparities within the military's justice system, the most senior military lawyers for the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps said during a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee's personnel subpanel. Committee members implored the lawyers to take the issue seriously and incorporate experts from outside the military in their search for solutions amid growing national cries for racial equality.

"This is a very grave problem that, if left unchecked, could undermine the [combat] readiness of our armed forces," said Rep. Trent Kelly, the subcommittee's top Republican and a brigadier general in the Mississippi Army National Guard. "If you want to stamp out the problem, you've got to figure out what that problem is, what the root cause is. I think right now we are failing horribly at that."

Data presented by an outside watchdog group showed black service members in the Air Force faced the highest likelihood of facing either nonjudicial or criminal prosecution. Black airmen were 71% more likely than white airmen to be punished, according to the data collected and published last month by the Alexandria, Va.-based group, Protect Our Defenders. In the Army, black soldiers were 61% more likely to face punishment. In the Navy, black sailors were 40% more

likely to be punished, and in the Marines, black troops were 32% more likely to be punished than white troops.

Retired Col. Don Christensen, a former chief prosecutor for the Air Force who now leads Protect Our Defenders, told lawmakers Tuesday that he believed white service members simply were given the benefit of the doubt more often than minority troops. Likely, he added, they were offered alternative corrections to their actions from punishment by commanders who are highly likely to be white too.

He pointed to his own former service as an example. The Air Force, he said, has the smallest percentage among the Pentagon's services of minority officers, an issue that he blames largely on a lack of minorities in the fighter pilot community. Across the U.S. military's fighter and bomber community, less than 2% are black.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif.,

said she was "shocked" by the data uncovered by Protect Our Defenders.

"We will not solve this problem by hiding it or denying it," said Speier, the subcommittee's chairwoman.

The Army has recently begun an investigation within its Judge Advocate General corps and its law enforcement organizations aimed at understanding why commanders more often open investigations of black soldiers than white soldiers, said Lt. Gen. Charles Pede, the Army's top uniformed lawyer.

Marine Maj. Gen. Daniel Lecce, the staff judge advocate to the commandant of the Marine Corps, said his service is taking a similar look at the issue. But he said cultural changes must be driven by the Corps' top leaders.

"Although we have come a long way, we recognize that much must be done," he said.

## McConnell 'OK' with removing Confederate names from bases

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell said Tuesday he's "OK" with renaming military bases such as Fort Bragg that are named after Confederate Army officers, declining to side with President Donald Trump and other Republicans opposed to the move.

The Kentucky senator said he'll live with whatever lawmakers decide as they debate an annual defense policy bill for the military in the coming weeks.

Trump has blasted the calls to rename the military bases. "Hopefully our great Republican Senators won't fall for this!" he said in a tweet last week.

A GOP-controlled Senate panel voted last week to require bases such as Fort Bragg, N.C., and Fort Hood, Texas, to be renamed within three years. McConnell, himself the descendant of a Confederate

veteran, didn't endorse the idea but said he wouldn't oppose it.

Similarly, top House Republican Kevin McCarthy, of California, said last week — after repeated prodding — that he doesn't oppose the idea.

"I can only speak for myself on this issue. If it's appropriate to take another look at these names I'm OK with that," McConnell said.

"Whatever is ultimately decided I don't have a problem with."

The debate over the Confederate flag and other symbols of slavery and black oppression has burst open in the wake of widespread protests over police abuse of African Americans and specifically the choking death of George Floyd. Public opinion has shifted dramatically since Floyd's killing.

The Democratic-controlled House is sure to include legislation to rename bases

and it's plain that Republicans in the Senate who are opposed to the idea, such as Josh Hawley, of Missouri, don't have the votes to remove it during floor debate.

The Senate's requirement for the bases to be renamed within three years was approved by a voice vote as a piece of the annual Pentagon policy bill. A commission would be set up to oversee the process.

But McConnell came out forcefully against a proposal by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to remove statues of Confederates such as Jefferson Davis from display in the Capitol, calling it "nonsense" and saying it would "airbrush the Capitol."

McConnell is sticking with the Washington tradition — and current law — of having states choose their own statues for display in the Capitol complex, saying it's preferable for states like Mississippi, home to Confederate President Davis, to remove them on their own.

# N. Korean threats send message to Trump

By KIM GAMEL  
AND YOO KYONG CHANG  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's demolition of a liaison office and threats to redeploy troops to front-line areas signaled a move to unravel a 2018 military pact that had been a high point in efforts to improve relations with the South.

**ANALYSIS** While the principal target of the North's ire was South Korean President Moon Jae-in, experts said it also sent a message to the United States that the regime is prepared to raise the ante with more provocations amid frustration over the lack of progress in nuclear talks.

The explosion that destroyed the inter-Korean liaison office in the North Korean village of Kaesong on Tuesday was largely symbolic since the South Korean staff had pulled out in January due to coronavirus concerns. But it was a major blow to Moon as the facility had been a centerpiece of his hopes for peace.

The North ratcheted up tensions on Wednesday, warning that it was developing a plan to send regiments and "necessary firepower sub-units" to the tourist area at Mount Kumgang and the Kaesong industrial zone, areas that had been demilitarized as part of the 2018 agreement, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

"Civil police posts that had been withdrawn from the Demilitarized Zone under the north-south agreement in the military field will be set up again to strengthen the guard over the front line," KCNA said, quoting a spokesman for the army's general staff.

He also threatened to "resume all kinds of regular exercises" near the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, as well as naval boundaries.

Pyongyang also revealed that Moon's administration had asked on Monday to send

special envoys to discuss the current crisis, but said that Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un, had rejected "the tactless and sinister proposal."

That prompted an unusually angry response from South Korea, which called the criticism of Moon "a senseless act" and "very rude."

"We won't tolerate North Korea's indiscreet rhetoric and actions," presidential spokesman Yoon Do-han told reporters on Wednesday, warning that the North will be held responsible for the consequences.

Yoon also expressed "strong regret" that the North had unilaterally disclosed the South's offer to dispatch a special envoy in a bid to restore calm.

The dramatic escalation in tensions followed months of North Korean saber rattling that has raised fears of a return to the type of hostilities that pushed the divided peninsula to the brink of conflict before diplomatic efforts gained momentum in 2018.

The North has stopped short of actions that would likely provoke a response from President Donald Trump, who is preoccupied with his re-election campaign and civil unrest over racial injustice.

Instead the Kim regime appeared to be reverting to its playbook of raising pressure on the South in a bid to wring more concessions including the lifting of U.S.-led sanctions that have stymied inter-Korean economic initiatives, experts said.

It also may be testing the longtime alliance between Seoul and Washington, which has been hit by a defense cost-sharing dispute.

"The Kim regime takes these extreme measures in order to increase tensions on the peninsula and raise the stakes for future negotiations," said Jessica Lee, senior research fellow on East Asia for the Washington, D.C.-based Quincy Institute. "But it is also a very dangerous and reckless gam-

ble that can easily backfire.

"The longer the deadlock persists, the more likely the volatile situation on the Korean Peninsula is to spiral out of control," she said in an emailed commentary. "Inter-Korean relations will not improve unless tools of financial warfare such as economic sanctions are deployed strategically."

South Korea has been caught in the middle as talks between Pyongyang and Washington deadlocked last year in disagreement over the extent of sanctions relief in exchange for steps toward disarmament.

Trump, who went from calling Kim "rocket man" to saying the two leaders had "fallen in love," has insisted that he prevented another war by becoming the first-ever American president to meet with a North Korean leader during their 2018 summit in Singapore.

But relations between the two leaders have soured as the North expressed increasing frustration with the U.S. refusal to offer rewards and resumed short-range missile tests last year after a yearlong hiatus.

"The destruction of the liaison office reveals North Korea's frustration with the status quo and the lack of sanctions relief," Frank Aum, a specialist on North Korea at the U.S. Institute of Peace, said in an email. "To disrupt the status quo, North Korea will continue to use lower-level provocations and inflammatory remarks to increase pressure on Washington and Seoul in the areas that hurt the most."

"Since Washington and Seoul are unlikely to significantly amend their approaches to North Korea, they should focus on the things they can control, such as increasing financial costs on the regime, maintaining military deterrence and readiness," he added.

Aum also said the United States should resolve the cost-sharing dispute with the South and improve relations with Japan and China to gain their support in the standoff.

## House bill would increase military housing oversight

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

To continue to increase oversight on military housing, Rep. Kendra Horn, D-Okla., led a bipartisan coalition that introduced legislation to provide stronger protections for families renting on-base residences

from private contractors.

The Military Housing Oversight, Maintenance and Enhancement for Servicemembers Act, or Military HOMES Act, creates uniform basic housing standards and inspection requirements for all government-owned and controlled military housing, while also

providing reimbursement for families who lost property due to mold damage, transparency in performance incentive fees for contractors and a dedicated housing liaison to assist families navigating on-base housing problems.

Horn, whose district includes Tinker Air Force Base, said in a

statement that the bill is part of an ongoing fight to secure safe housing for military families across the country.

Original cosponsors include Reps. Michael Waltz, R-Fla.; Andy Kim, D-N.J.; and Michael Turner, R-Ohio.



# First F-35 pilots graduate from TOPGUN

BY CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

The coronavirus pandemic may have set back the sequel to the movie “Top Gun,” but it hasn’t kept the real-life Navy training course from graduating pilots in its newest fighter aircraft for the first time.

The service’s 13-week Navy Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor course, popularly known as TOPGUN, recently graduated its first two pilots flying the carrier variant of the stealthy Joint Strike Fighter.

F-35C Lightning II pilots Maj. Derek Heinz and Lt. William Goodwin III recently completed the program, developed “from the ground up” to integrate the fifth-generation fighter jet into operations with the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, E/A-18G Growler and E-2C/D Hawkeye, the services said in a statement Tuesday.

The “powerful combination of fourth-

and fifth-generation fighters, with advanced electronic attack and command and control, is a force-multiplier against advanced threats,” said Cmdr. Timothy Myers, TOPGUN department head at the Naval Air Station Fallon, Nev.-based Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center.

The base, about 70 miles east of Reno, began implementing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 about three months ago, but base commander Capt. Evan L. Morrison said in an April Facebook video that mission essential functions such as aviation weapons and tactics instruction were continuing.

The tactics instructor course, popularized by the Cold War-era action movie, was originally based at Naval Air Station Miramar near San Diego and began in 1969 with the aim of training Navy F-4 Phantom air crews to take on Soviet fighter aircraft in the skies over Vietnam.

Today’s graduates help the Navy “accelerate learning by feeding TOPGUN training back to the Fleet,” Myers said in the statement.

All F-35C tactics instructors have previously completed TOPGUN, the Navy said, but Heinz and Goodwin are the first to graduate while flying the aircraft.

Heinz is with the Strike Fighter Squadron 125 “Rough Raiders,” which trains Navy and Marine pilots on the airframe, and Goodwin is with the Strike Fighter Squadron 147 “Argonauts,” expected to be the first F-35 squadron to deploy on a carrier in 2021. Both are out of Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif.

Since completing TOPGUN last month, Heinz and Goodwin have returned to instruct and train others in preparation for the jet’s first operational deployment with the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson’s air wing, the Navy said.

## Esper, allies meet amid questions about troop cuts

BY JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — President Donald Trump’s surprise directive to pull thousands of U.S. troops from Germany was expected to figure prominently at a two-day NATO defense ministerial meeting that began Wednesday.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper discussed Trump’s plan to pull 9,500 troops from Germany over a dispute with Berlin on its military spending levels Wednesday even though it was not on the official agenda, the

top NATO official said.

“No final decision has been made on how and when to implement (the reduction),” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told a news conference, offering few details.

During the meeting, Esper also stated “very strongly” that the U.S. remains committed to European security, Stoltenberg said.

Trump’s plan has taken allies by surprise and questions remain about how and when the cutback will be implemented.

Esper, who has not spoken publicly about the troop

cut issue, was expected to face tough questions from allies during the virtual meeting. Ahead of talks, Esper in a statement said he intended to discuss the pandemic, defense spending and deterring Russian aggression.

“I will encourage Allies to ensure a health crisis does not become a security crisis,” Esper said in a Twitter posting, making no mention of Trump’s directive.

To prepare for a possible second wave of the pandemic, Stoltenberg said ahead of the meeting that NATO members

will adopt a new operational plan and stockpile medical equipment to provide immediate assistance to allies. A special fund to acquire critical medical supplies also will be set up, he told reporters Tuesday.

Defense ministers also will agree on a “substantial and balanced package” of political and military measures in response to Russia’s expanding arsenal of nuclear-capable missiles, Stoltenberg said.

“This includes strengthening NATO’s air and missile defenses,” he said.

## B-52 bombers return to Alaska after 3-year hiatus

BY WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

B-52 bombers returned to Alaska for the first time in three years Sunday as the Air Force continues to display its capability to send strategic assets on unpredictable missions around the world.

The three Stratofortress bombers from the 96th Bomb

Squadron, 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., arrived Sunday at Eielson Air Force Base, near Fairbanks, to train with allies, partners and other U.S. services, an Air Force statement said Monday. It did not mention how long the B-52s would remain in Alaska.

The bombers were last deployed to Eielson from July

through August 2017 in support of the Red Flag-Alaska exercise.

Strategic bomber task force missions are unique in that they can depart from either overseas or continental U.S. bases and reach anywhere in the world, the statement said.

During an initial mission Sunday, one B-52 joined U.S.

F-22 fighter jets and Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18 Hornets for intercept training over the Beaufort Sea in the Arctic Ocean, the statement said.

It was done in support of the North American Aerospace Defense Command’s mission to safeguard American and Canadian airspace, the statement said.

# Marines loosen restrictions at Camp Fuji

By SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — The Marine Corps just gave service members at its training center in the shadow of Mount Fuji a little more freedom than most U.S. military personnel in Japan as coronavirus restrictions continue to ease.

Marines and sailors who live on a spartan facility at Combined Arms Training Center Camp Fuji are now free on their own time to roam nearly anywhere in Shizuoka and Yamanashi prefectures, according to a base Facebook post on Wednesday. They're also allowed to visit U.S. bases in Tokyo and Kanagawa prefectures.

U.S. military authorities are slowly relaxing restrictions imposed on service

members in the spring to combat the virus's spread. Most troops, however, are still limited in their movements and activities.

At noon Wednesday, Camp Fuji in Shizuoka prefecture, west of Tokyo, lowered its health protection condition from "substantial" to "moderate," according to its Facebook post.

The move tracks those of a number of other U.S. bases following U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider's decision Friday to lower the health protection condition for all U.S. forces in Japan.

Like troops at other bases in and around the Japanese capital, those at Camp Fuji are barred from going to central Tokyo and visiting off-base bars, nightclubs, lounges, massage parlors, karaoke boxes, fitness

centers and pachinko spots.

But they are allowed to visit tattoo parlors and natural hot springs, which are ubiquitous in Japan but off-limits to most other American personnel due to the risk of spreading the virus.

Camp Fuji troops can also ride public transport such as buses and trains that are forbidden for those at many other bases, other than to get to and from work.

And they may visit a number of U.S. installations in nearby prefectures, including Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Yokosuka Naval Base, Camp Zama, Yokota Air Base and Tama Hills Recreation Area.

For other personnel, travel between bases is generally prohibited other than for official duty and essential services such as medical appointments.

## New Beijing outbreak raises fears for rest of world

*Associated Press*

BEIJING — China raised its emergency warning to its second-highest level and canceled more than 60% of flights to Beijing on Wednesday amid a new coronavirus outbreak in the capital. It was a sharp pullback for the nation that declared victory over COVID-19 in March and a message to the rest of the world about how tenacious the virus really is.

New infections spiked in India, Iran and U.S. states including Florida, Texas and Arizona as authorities struggled to balance restarting economic activity without accelerating the pandemic.

European nations, which embarked on a wide-scale reopening this week, looked on with trepidation as the Americas struggled to contain the first wave of the pandemic and Asian nations like China and South Korea reported new outbreaks.

Chinese officials described the situation in Beijing as "extremely grave."

"This has truly rung an alarm bell for us," Party Secretary Cai Qi told a meeting of Beijing's Communist Party Standing Committee.

After a push that began June 14, the city expects to have tested 700,000 people by the end of the day, said Zhang Qiang, a Beijing party official.

About half of them were workers from the city's food markets, nearby residents and close contacts.

The party's Global Times said 1,255 flights to and from the capital's two major airports were scrapped by Wednesday morning, about two-thirds of those scheduled.

Since the virus emerged in China late last year and spread worldwide, there have been more than 8.1 million confirmed cases and at least 443,000 deaths, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University. Experts have said the true toll is much higher, due to the many who died without being tested and other factors.

The United States has the most infections and deaths in the world, with a toll that neared 117,000 on Wednesday, surpassing the number of Americans who died in World War I.

Arizona reported a daily high of nearly 2,400 new infections for a total of more than 39,000, while in Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott insisted the state's health care system could handle the fast-rising number of new cases and hospitalizations.

Tuesday marked the eighth time in nine days that Texas set a new high for COVID-19 hospitalizations at 2,518. State health officials reported 2,622 new cases.

"It does raise concerns, but there is no reason right now to be alarmed," Abbott said.

Texas began aggressively reopening its economy May 1. Abbott noted that Texans may have become lax in wearing masks or practicing social distancing and urged people to stay home as much as possible.

Canada and the U.S. extended a deal to keep their border closed to nonessential travel to July 21, with many Canadians fearing cases arriving from the U.S.

As the U.S. struggles with the first wave of the virus, other countries where it was widely thought to be under control faced disturbing developments.

In South Korea, authorities reported 43 new cases amid increased public activity. Authorities said 25 of them came from around Seoul, where hundreds of infections have been linked to nightclubs, church gatherings, e-commerce workers and door-to-door salespeople. Twelve of the new cases came from international arrivals.

Not long after declaring itself virus-free, New Zealand saw a reemergence of the virus. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern assigned a top military leader to oversee border quarantines after what she described as an "unacceptable failure" by health officials.

Two New Zealand citizens who had returned from London to see a dying relative were allowed to leave quarantine before being tested. After the women tested positive, New Zealand began tracing their potential contacts to ensure the virus is contained.

Their cases raised the specter that international air travel could ignite a new surge of the virus just as countries seek to boost devastated tourism industries.

China also limited other travel around the capital, keying in on hot spots. Beijing had essentially eradicated local transmissions until recent days, with 137 new cases since last week.

On Wednesday, the city of 20 million raised its threat level from 3 to 2, canceling classes, suspending reopenings and strengthening requirements for social distancing. China had relaxed many lockdown controls after the Communist Party declared victory over the virus in March.



# Senate GOP to propose policing changes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans are proposing changes to police procedures and accountability with an enhanced use-of-force database, restrictions on chokeholds and new commissions to study law enforcement and race, according to a draft obtained by The Associated Press.

The “Justice Act” is the most ambitious GOP policing proposal in years, a direct response to the massive public protests over the killing of George Floyd and other black Americans.

The package is set to be introduced Wednesday by Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, the GOP’s lone black Republican, and a task force of GOP senators assembled by Republican leadership.

The 106-page bill is not as sweeping as a Democratic proposal, which is set for a House vote next week, but it shows how swiftly the national debate

has been transformed as Republicans embrace a new priority in an election year.

The GOP legislation would beef up requirements for law enforcement to compile use of force reports under a new George Floyd and Walter Scott Notification Act, named for the Minnesota father whose May 25 death sparked worldwide protests over police violence, and Scott, the South Carolina man shot by police after a traffic stop in 2015, no relation to the senator.

It would also establish the Breonna Taylor Notification Act to track “no-knock” warrants. Such warrants used to be rare, but the 26-year-old was killed after police in Kentucky used one to enter her Louisville home.

To focus on ending chokeholds, it encourages agencies to do away with the practice or risk losing federal funds. Many big city departments have long stopped their use. It also pro-

vides funding for training to “de-escalate” situations and establish a “duty to intervene” protocol to prevent excessive force.

“We wanted to make sure that we listened to everyone because there is the false dichotomy, this binary choice between law enforcement and communities of color, and that’s just a false choice,” Scott said Wednesday on “Fox & Friends.” “You can actually serve America and bring the two groups together.”

As the contours of the package emerged in recent days, Democrats panned it as insufficient, as their own bill takes a more direct approach to changing federal misconduct laws and holding individual officers legally responsible for incidents.

But the GOP effort seeks to reach across the aisle to Democrats in several ways. It includes one long-sought bill to make lynching a federal hate crime and another to launch

a study of the social status of black men and boys that has been touted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The Republican package — dubbed the “Just and Unifying Solutions To Invigorate Communities Everywhere Act of 2020” — also includes a bipartisan proposal to establish a National Criminal Justice Commission Act and extends funding streams for various federal law enforcement programs, including the COPS program important to states.

The package includes a mix of other proposals, including tapping the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture to create law enforcement training curriculum on “the history of racism in the United States.” Another closes a loophole to prohibit federal law enforcement officers from engaging in sexual acts with those being arrested or in custody.

## Protesters tear down third Confederate statue

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Demonstrators in Richmond tore down another Confederate statue in the city Tuesday night, news outlets reported.

The Howitzers Monument located near Virginia Commonwealth University’s Monroe Park campus was toppled after protesters who spent the night marching in the rain used a rope to pull it down from its pedestal.

The paint-splattered statue was seen face down on the ground as the rain continued overnight in Virginia’s capital city, according to a video from the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

It’s the third Confederate statue, and the fourth monument, to be torn down by demonstrators in Virginia since international protests erupted following the killing of George Floyd, a black man who died

when he was pinned to the pavement by a white Minneapolis officer who pressed his knee into Floyd’s neck.

Statues of Confederate president Jefferson Davis and Confederate Gen. Williams Carter Wickham as well as of Christopher Columbus were toppled by demonstrators in recent weeks.

Protesters in Richmond started their march Tuesday night advocating for the removal of all Confederate statues, establishing a civilian review board over police actions and defunding the police, among other things, the Richmond Times-Dispatch reported.

Before its toppling, the Howitzers Monument showed a Confederate artilleryman standing in front of a gun. It was erected in 1892 to memorialize the city’s Civil War artillery unit, according to the Encyclopedia of Virginia.

## Chief: Seattle protest area is not a police-free zone

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Police will return to an area of a Seattle neighborhood being occupied by protesters if there are threats to public safety, the chief of police said after a business owner complained that officers didn’t respond when he called 911 to report a break-in and vandalism.

“There is no cop-free zone in the city of Seattle,” Chief Carmen Best said Monday. “I think that the picture has been painted in many areas that shows the city is under siege. That is not the case.”

Police pulled back from several blocks of the city’s Capitol Hill neighborhood near the East Precinct after clashes with people protesting the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Now called the “Capitol Hill Occupied Protest,” participants

have painted a Black Lives Matter mural on the street, planted a community garden and handed out food in an atmosphere that has been largely peaceful and festive at times.

John McDermott, the owner of a Capitol Hill auto shop, told KIRO-TV he phoned authorities multiple times Sunday night about a break-in and vandalism.

Best said police had received a 911 call about someone breaking windows with a hammer and the caller reported that his business was on fire.

“The officers responded to the call and they observed the location from a distance. They did not see any signs of smoke or fire or anything else, and they did not see a disturbance,” Best said.

Best said multiple crime reports in the area have been written over the past two days.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police: Homemade gun explodes, kills man

**IN** SCOTTSBURG — A southern Indiana man died after his homemade gun exploded while he fired it, Indiana State Police said.

Scott M. Powers, 39, of Clarksville was pronounced dead at a Louisville, Ky., hospital after the incident, police said.

Powers was with a friend in a wooded area in Scottsburg when he fired the weapon sometimes referred to as a “slam-fire” and containing a 12-gauge shotgun, police said. The barrel exploded, injuring Powers in the neck.

His friend rushed him to a local hospital before he was airlifted to the Louisville hospital.

## ‘Offensive’ weather vane coming down at school

**NH** HANOVER — A copper weather vane that depicts “an offensive image” of a Native American will be removed from the top of the main library at Dartmouth College, President Philip Hanlon said.

The 600-pound weather vane, designed in 1928, shows a Native American man wearing feathers and smoking a long pipe seated on the ground in front of the college’s founder, Eleazar Wheelock.

Students and alumni have been asking for the weather vane to be replaced, calling it racist and demeaning.

Hanlon said the images do not reflect Dartmouth’s values.

## Stolen motorcycle leads police to pot stash

**CA** VENTURA — Police in California arrested three people after a stolen motorcycle led authorities to marijuana with an estimated street value of more than \$500,000.

The Ventura County Sheriff’s Office detective discovered 40 pounds of marijuana in an Oxnard hotel, The Ventura County Star reported. Police arrested Wendy Gibson-Mills, 53; John Wells, 31, and Joshua Posey, 39, all of West Virginia.

A patrol car with a license plate reader identified a stolen motorcycle, which sheriff’s office detectives saw in the rear of a pickup. Police pulled over the truck carrying Wells, Gibson-Mills and Posey and found a loaded handgun.

Their hotel room contained the marijuana, additional signs of drug sales and air mail packaging, police said.

## Man leads police on chase, hits trooper

**ME** CHINA — A Caribou man faces numerous charges after leading police on a car chase that ended when he struck a state trooper and then crashed, Maine State Police said.

Both men were treated for injuries at the Augusta hospital, state police said.

The chase started after another trooper had pulled over the car driven by Robert Belmain, 53, following reports of the vehicle with no license plates driving erratically, police said.

After being pulled over, Belmain sped off, reaching speeds of 100 mph, police said.

Trooper Mickael Nunez was outside of his cruiser setting up spike strips to deflate Belmain’s tires when he was hit by the car as he sought to retreat to a safe location, police said. Belmain is facing charges of operating under the influence, driving to endanger, criminal speeding, eluding a police officer, failing to submit to arrest/detention, destruction of evidence, possession of a scheduled drug, operating with a suspended driver’s license and other charges.

## Man throws beer can at woman, faces charges

**NM** ARTESIA — A New Mexico man faces a battery charge after police say he threw a beer can at a woman.

The Carlsbad Current-Argus reported Ernesto Erives was arraigned on a charge of battery against a household member following his arrest in Artesia.

According to a criminal complaint, Erives, 30, picked up a beer can out of a cooler and threw it at a woman.

Eyewitnesses told police Erives threw the beer can overhanded and hit the woman in the face.

## US Senate candidate reports guns stolen

**KS** WICHITA — Senate candidate and former Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach reported that he had four guns stolen from his pickup parked at a Wichita hotel.

Officers responded to a call from Kobach at a hotel parking garage, Wichita police said. Investigators believe someone broke into Kobach’s pickup overnight and stole a rifle, two shotguns and a handgun.

A spokeswoman for Kobach’s campaign said he was in Wichita for a campaign event and had the long guns with him for a scheduled shooting event.

## Bourbon Festival postponed 1 month

**KY** BARDSTOWN — A festival that shows off one of Kentucky’s iconic products is being postponed this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Kentucky Bourbon Festival was pushed forward a month and is now scheduled for

Oct. 15 to 18 in Bardstown, officials said in a news release.

Last September’s 28th annual festival drew 50,000 visitors from 40 states and more than 20 countries for its activities and concerts, the festival’s website said.

The pandemic, business operations guidelines and time lost during spring planning time led to the decision, festival President and COO Randy Prasse said.

## Pipeline leaks nearly 34K gallons of brine

**ND** NEW TOWN — A pipeline leak caused nearly 34,000 gallons of brine to spill near New Town, the North Dakota Oil and Gas Division said.

Officials said about half of the liquid was recovered on the BNN North Dakota, LLC tank battery. Brine is a byproduct of oil production.

A state inspector has been sent to the location and will monitor cleanup.

## Large warehouse in works for Walmart

**IN** MOUNT COMFORT — A 2.2 million-square-foot warehouse with space for 146 truck docks is being planned just outside Indianapolis.

The project for Walmart would be built on about 204 acres just north of the Indianapolis Regional Airport near the Hancock County community of Mount Comfort, the Indianapolis Business Journal reported.

A representative of Tennessee-based Carlson Consulting Engineers Inc. told the board that the company could not yet provide a date for when construction would begin, as some details are still being finalized.

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# NBA lays out plan for finishing season

Associated Press

Here's some of what awaits NBA players going to Disney next month: game rooms, golf course access, cabanas with misters to combat the heat, fishing areas, bowling, backstage tours and salon services.

It only sounds like vacation.

The NBA described very specific plans to players and teams for the restart on Tuesday, doing so in a memo and handbook both obtained by The Associated Press. With safety being of the foremost importance during the coronavirus pandemic, players were told they will be tested regularly — but not with the deep nasal swabs — and must adhere to strict physical distancing and mask-wearing policies.

The league and the National Basketball Players Association have been working on the terms of how the restart will work for weeks, all while constantly seeking advice from medical experts including Dr. Anthony Fauci, perhaps the best-known physician in the country when it comes to the battle against COVID-19.

"My confidence, it didn't exist at the beginning of this virus because I was so frightened by it," union executive director Michele Roberts told AP. "Now having

lived, and breathed, and suffered through the hours and hours of understanding the virus, and listening to our experts, and comparing different alternative protocols, I can't even think of anything else we could do short of hermetically seal the players that would keep them safe."

Later Tuesday, the NBA released its medical protocols to teams, a 108-page file. Among the highlights: players must shower in their individual hotel rooms instead of the game or practice arenas, be part of a contact tracing program, and that it is "recommended that coaches wear face coverings pre- or post-game where feasible."

"The occurrence of a small or otherwise expected number of COVID-19 cases will not require a decision to suspend or cancel the resumption of the 2019-20 season," the NBA wrote.

Most teams will arrive in Florida on July 7, 8 or 9. A person with knowledge of the situation said the reigning champion Toronto Raptors, the lone NBA team based outside of the U.S., will be permitted to gather for some pre-camp workouts — under strict guidelines that other teams will follow in their own cities — before that arrival date. The Raptors are likely to train somewhere

in Florida, said the person who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity because no deal has yet been signed.

For the Raptors, it's been an area of concern largely because of current Canadian government regulations that call for a 14-day quarantine for people returning to Canada. Some Raptors players are in Toronto right now; some are in the U.S.

Nobody on the NBA's Disney campus, which has been loosely described as a bubble, will be allowed in anyone else's sleeping room. The NBA also told players and teams that it will work with one or more outside health care companies to provide a medical clinic with X-ray and MRI capability on the campus — critical, since in theory the league would not want players and team staff leaving and potentially facing coronavirus exposure by going outside of the Disney property for such exams.

The league's plan also spells out how training rooms and meeting rooms will be utilized, the procedures for practice-court usage — three-hour blocks per team, all scheduled, with one open hour in between sessions for cleaning and sanitizing — and even how team and player laundry will be handled.

## Tiz the Law favored for Belmont, Triple Crown

Associated Press

While there won't be school buses of fans hoping to see a New York-bred horse make Belmont history, there is a busload of Triple Crown expectations heading into Saturday's race.

Seventeen years ago, Jack Knowlton and the other owners of Funny Cide packed into school buses and headed to Belmont Park in New York, hoping to see the horse capture the home-track victory they had dreamed of. It didn't happen. Now, however, Tiz the Law looks every bit like the best 3-year-old in the world and could deliver his owners and trainer Barclay Tagg the elusive crown.

It'll take something spectacular Saturday from a watered-down field to prevent the Triple Crown favorite from becoming the first New York bred to win the Belmont in more than

130 years and taking a powerful stride toward the Kentucky Derby.

"Barclay doesn't get the kind of horses like Funny Cide and Tiz the Law very often, but when he does get an opportunity, he makes the most of it," Knowlton said. "Fortunately, Tiz the Law is the kind of horse that seems to take everything in stride and he's very easy to work with. ... From all indications, he's doing as well as he's been doing all year, and hopefully that'll carry over into the Belmont."

Tiz the Law won his two starts this year by a combined 7¼ lengths, including the Grade 1 Florida Derby on March 28. He's the class of the Belmont after injuries to Bob Baffert-trained Nadal and Charlatan and other defections in a year the coronavirus pandemic pushed the Kentucky Derby back to Sept. 5 and the Preakness to Oct. 3.

"Tiz the Law has been the best 3-year-old since January basically and he remains that," retired jockey-turned-NBC Sports analyst Jerry Bailey said Tuesday. "He would've been favored in whatever Triple Crown race we ran first, so we have a superstar that we're going to see on Saturday."

It's an unconventional schedule with the three Triple Crown races being held out of their normal order. The Belmont is being run at 1 1/8 miles instead of a mile and a half and the traditional third jewel is leading off the series for the first time.

But Tagg, 82, has Tiz the Law primed for this moment.

"Barclay Tagg is a very experienced, skilled horse trainer, and I think once he knew kind of what the schedule was, he's been focused on this," said rival trainer Todd Pletcher, who is expected to challenge Tiz the Law with Dr Post and Farmington Road. "It looks to

me like the horse is training sensationally. He looks great on the race track. I think it's not been an ideal scenario for anyone, but I think there's no doubt in my mind that Barclay will have his horse ready to go."

Tagg got Funny Cide ready in 2003 when he won the Derby and Preakness before finishing third in the Belmont. He also learned a lesson from Funny Cide's blazing — probably too fast — final pre-Belmont workout. So over the weekend, Tagg restrained Tiz the Law.

Perhaps that's also a product of the two horses' differences in personality. Tagg said: "Tiz' is more malleable. Funny Cide was all run. You couldn't hold him."

Knowlton recalls Tagg's assistant trainer, Robin Smullen, being the only one who could handle the stubborn Funny Cide. Now, jockey Manny Franco can maneuver Tiz the Law all over the track with ease.

# Earnhardt headlines NASCAR Hall class

Associated Press

All Dale Earnhardt Jr. needed was a chance to prove he could win in stock cars.

Turns out, he was a natural — on and off the track.

Now the longtime fan favorite and two-time Daytona 500 winner will join his famous, late father in NASCAR's Hall of Fame after being selected as one of three members of the 2021 class. The other inductees are Red Farmer and the late Mike Stefanik. Ralph Sea-graves was chosen as the Landmark Award winner.

Earnhardt Jr. received 76% of the votes in his first appearance on the ballot.

"My wife was here, my family, my sister, so surrounded by a lot of close folks," he said on NBCSN's announcement show. "It was great to see my face pop up on the screen."

Being an Earnhardt certainly provides some advantages.

His grandfather, Ralph, was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 1997 and was selected as one of

the 50 greatest drivers in NASCAR history in 1998.

Junior's father also made that list. The Intimidator reached victory lane 76 times, winning a record-tying seven Cup championships and hordes of fans with his fearless style. And when Dale Earnhardt was killed in a crash on the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500, many of his fans started rooting for his engaging son.

Earnhardt Jr. also got his first big break in 1998 when he raced full time in the Busch Series — for his dad. He took full advantage by winning back-to-back series titles in 1998 and 1999 before posting his first two Cup wins as a rookie in 2000.

But even without a Cup title on his résumé, Junior carved out his own niche in the series.

He won 26 races, including the Daytona 500 in 2004 and 2014. He won the Pepsi 400 in July 2001, the first race at Daytona following his father's fatal crash. He also won four straight races at Talladega from 2001-03.

And when he finally walked away from full-time Cup driving after the 2017 season, he earned his 15th consecutive most popular driver award.

Junior also spoke his mind and became a social media favorite and now will be part of the father-son driver tandem enshrined in Charlotte, N.C.

While Earnhardt will be the feature attraction at the induction ceremony, he will be honored with some other former stars.

Stefanik won seven titles in NASCAR's modified series and two more in the Busch North series, giving him nine total victories, tied for second in series history with Richie Evans. In 2003, Stefanik was named the second greatest driver in modified history and just missed the cut last year.

The 61-year-old Stefanik died from injuries sustained in a plane crash in Connecticut last September and received 49% of the 65 votes.

Stefanik will be enshrined with Earnhardt in the smallest Hall of Fame class in NASCAR

history.

"Phenomenal when you think about what he did. Nine championships," Kyle Petty said during NBCSN's announcement show. "Phenomenal record, phenomenal amount of wins."

Ricky Rudd finished third in balloting.

Farmer, one of the three original "Alabama Gang" members with brother Bobby and Donnie Allison, beat out Hershel McGriff by earning 71% of the vote on the pioneer ballot.

The news comes just days before the series races at Talladega. The 87-year-old Farmer has won an estimated 700 to 900 races in various series, though none at the Cup level, and he still competes routinely on the dirt track across from Alabama's super speedway.

He won four Late Model Sportsmen series season titles, was named one of NASCAR's 50 greatest drivers in 1998 and was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2004.

## Fauci says MLB should finish season before October

Los Angeles Times

How long should baseball's short season extend?

The players say November. The owners say October.

But, if the sole factor is minimizing risk for the coronavirus, Dr. Anthony Fauci said the major leagues would be wise to wrap up the postseason in September.

"If the question is time, I would try to keep it in the core summer months and end it not with the way we play the World Series, until the end of October when it's cold," Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said in a telephone interview with the Los Angeles Times on Tuesday. "I would avoid that."

Owners have expressed concern about an increase in coronavirus cases, notably in the home states of nine of the 10

teams that would be grouped in the Western region. Those outbreaks have "increased the risks associated with commencing spring training in the next few weeks," MLB Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem wrote to players union negotiator Bruce Meyer on Monday.

Nonetheless, Fauci said, playing in July likely would be less risky than playing in October.

"Even in warm weather, like in Arizona and California, we're starting to see resurgences as we open up," Fauci said. "But I think the chances of there being less of an issue in the end of July and all of August and September are much, much better than if you go into October."

Fauci said he understood that minimizing risk is one factor for baseball, but not the only one. In a letter to Meyer last

week, Halem said the owners' desire to complete the playoffs before November was based primarily on the recommendation from the league's medical adviser. Halem also noted that MLB's television partners do not wish to shift the postseason from October. The league has told the union that postseason television revenue is worth \$787 million.

In the United States, deaths from the coronavirus are projected to rise steadily in July and August, then sharply through September, according to projections Monday from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. The best he can do, Fauci said, is to say that October baseball is probably not the best of ideas this year.

"I'd have to underscore probably," he said. "This virus is one that keeps fooling us.

Under most circumstances — but we don't know for sure here — viruses do better when the weather starts to get colder and people start spending more time inside, as opposed to outside. The community has a greater chance of getting infected."

In his correspondence with the league, Meyer suggested the league's refusal to extend the postseason into November is a cost-containing mechanism wrapped in what he called a "pretext" of player health. In the event of outbreaks in certain areas, Meyer said the union is willing to let the league relocate games to neutral sites.

In response, Halem asked Meyer whether the players would consider the quarantine or "bubble" scenario with which the NBA and NHL plan to return but to which MLB players previously have objected.