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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy addresses huge moving backlog

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON— Facing a backlog of moves for more than 40,000 sailors, the Navy has released guidelines on how they will prioritize moving personnel and their families as travel restrictions ease throughout the country that were put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Navy leaders on Thursday discussed the new conditions-based, phased approach to travel for sailors that included prioritized situations for military moves, unrestricted travel locations and safety precautions due to the pandemic.

The Navy issued two administrative messages June 12 that broadly detailed how the service planned to address travel and the backlog of about 42,000 sailors who were scheduled to move between March and July, representing about 53% of Navy moves for the year, according to the service.

The Navy is prioritizing moves based on its readiness needs over the expected moving dates of personnel. Sailors who have higher priority jobs or assignments, such as recruit training or operational sea-duty commands, will be moved first including some earlier than expected, according to a service document on the restarting military moves.

In terms of where sailors can move safely, the Navy is following Defense Secretary Mark Esper's May 22 memorandum that laid out the conditions needed for locations to be labeled "green," or a place where service members are allowed to travel to and from. This followed a March stop-movement order that halted all official travel without a waiver. The green locations must show a decrease in coronavirus cases and opening of essential services such as child care, among others factors.

As of Tuesday, only 18 Navy bases out of 71 are listed as

green for unrestricted travel to and from, according to a document provided by Naval Personnel Command. The Pentagon lists 46 states, six host nations and two U.S. territories as being green for travel as of June 19.

The moving backlog could last into January or February of next year, Vice Adm. John Nowell, the chief of naval personnel, told reporters Thursday.

The number of sailors who can move at any given time will be contingent upon local health conditions, government policies and the limits to logistical and capacity demands in the Defense Department, according to a Navy document about the moving guidance.

"We built these plans to be agile enough to be able to respond to changing conditions. What we know is that what we're looking at today may not be what we're looking at tomorrow," Nowell said. "We think that we've got a process that's

agile enough to be able to ratchet up and ratchet down in a safe manner."

Whether sailors will have to be quarantined during any part of their move will depend on a case-by-case basis, such as their mode of travel or if they are going to a country such as Italy that requires it, Nowell said. The quarantine also could be written into a sailor's move orders or commanders can look at possibly requiring it to keep personnel safe, he said.

If sailors and their families must move to their follow-on assignment due to hardships or if the sailor's job is critical, the Navy is still providing waivers to travel, Capt. Derek Trinquie, the assistant commander at navy personnel command, said.

If sailors have questions about the new travel guidance and how it will impact their move, they can call My Navy Career Center at 833-330-6622 or email askmncc@navy.mil.

Russia subtly boosting forces in Mediterranean

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A Russian buildup is turning the eastern Mediterranean Sea into one of the world's most militarized zones, the U.S. Navy's top admiral in Europe has said, warning that Moscow could cement its dominance in the region if it's allowed to gain a foothold in Libya.

"The eastern Mediterranean is becoming one of the most kinetic areas in the world," Adm. James Foggo, head of U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, said

Thursday in a virtual seminar hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"The Russians are deploying quiet, modern diesel submarines capable of launching Kalibr cruise missiles. A Kilo-class submarine can go anywhere in European waters and strike any European or North African capital from under the waves," he said from Naples, Italy, where NAVEUR has its headquarters. "This highlights the need to maintain a vigilant, highly capable naval presence throughout European

waterways."

Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, and a base in the coastal Syrian city of Tartus, have become air defense and maritime hubs for Russia, Foggo said. Libya could be next, he warned.

Last month, U.S. Africa Command called out Russia for sending mercenaries and more than a dozen fighter planes into the north African country. The presence of the aircraft, which have since become operational, could be a prelude to a larger Russian presence, U.S. mili-

tary officials have said.

U.S. forces in the region have had several close encounters with the Russian military, including incidents where Russian fighter planes buzzed Navy reconnaissance aircraft on three occasions in April and May, in maneuvers the Navy condemned as unsafe.

Foggo said allies must develop a maritime strategy that accounts for new threats, such as the resurgence of Russia's submarine force and increased Chinese activity in Europe.

Pakistani PM: US ‘martyred’ bin Laden

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan’s prime minister said Thursday the United States “martyred” the al-Qaida leader and mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, a term that reflected a subtle jab at Washington as it’s mainly used for honorable figures slain in battle.

Imran Khan delivered the jab in a parliament budget speech, attacking his predecessors’ foreign policies and saying that Pakistan’s partnership with the United States in the war on terrorism was a mistake.

Khan also said Washington used abusive language against Pakistan, blaming Islamabad for its failures in neighboring Afghanistan. Most of all, the U.S. refused to tell Islamabad of its operation against bin Laden in 2011 before carrying out the Navy SEALs’ nighttime raid. The special operations forces swooped into Pakistan’s military garrison town of Abbottabad in the middle of the night on May 2, 2011, killing bin Laden and several of his operatives.

“We sided with the U.S. in the War on Terror but they came here and killed him, martyred him and ... used abusive language against us (and) did not inform us (of the raid), despite the fact that we lost 70,000 people in the war on terror,” Khan told Parliament.

Washington has repeatedly accused Pakistan of harboring the Afghan Taliban and giving safe haven to the feared Haqqani network, a Taliban affiliate that has been blamed for some major attacks in Afghanistan.

Pakistan denied the accusations, saying Washington was blaming Pakistan for the failure of the U.S.-led coalition’s 150,000 soldiers to defeat the Taliban.

Lawmakers seek to oversee withdrawal in Afghanistan

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers has introduced a bill that would require Congress to oversee the drawdown of American troops from Afghanistan, amid concerns that too rapid a withdrawal would threaten U.S. and global security.

The bill, introduced Thursday by two Republican and two Democratic lawmakers, including former Army Ranger Jason Crow, D-Colo., and former Green Beret Michael Waltz, R-Fla., comes after a recent New York Times report said the White House and Pentagon were considering options for the withdrawal, including having troops out of the country before November’s presidential election.

The Afghanistan Partnership and Transparency Act, introduced by Crow; Liz Cheney, R-Wyo.; Susan Davis, D-Calif.; and Waltz, would require the Trump administration to submit reports, compiled with the Pentagon, State Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence before troop numbers are reduced to below 8,000 and 5,000.

The reports would assess how a drawdown could affect U.S. national security, along with its potential effect on allies and partners, and

the impact on Afghans, the lawmakers said in a statement. The bill includes provisions to prevent the reports from being retroactively classified.

The reports would also be required to assess the “relationship between the Taliban and al Qaeda,” and the “influence of malign state actors on Afghan sovereignty,” the statement said.

“The war in Afghanistan must end, but we must do so in a way that ensures lasting peace,” Crow said in the statement. “This bill is transformative in its ability to ensure that we keep our promise — to the women and children of Afghanistan, to our partners and allies in peacekeeping, and to a safer, and more secure world order.”

The U.S. and Taliban agreed in a deal signed Feb. 29 that all American troops would leave Afghanistan by next summer, but only if the Taliban had met certain conditions, including severing ties with al-Qaida and other extremist groups and preventing them from using Afghanistan as a springboard for attacks on the U.S. and its allies.

But some members of Congress, including Cheney, who’ve seen classified sections of the February deal, have said it does not include ways to measure Taliban compliance.

DOD chief seeks to reassure NATO about consultation on moving troops

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Friday sought to reassure allies at NATO that Washington will consult them on any future troop movements after President Donald Trump surprised partners at the military alliance by announcing the withdrawal of thousands of personnel from Germany.

At a time when videoconferencing has become the norm due to the coronavirus, Esper paid a short in-person visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels, a week after several allied defense ministers expressed concern about the unpredictability of U.S. troop plans in Europe and amid a drawdown in Afghanistan.

“I welcome that the U.S. is consulting with allies while making clear that the U.S. commitment to European security remains strong,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said

in a joint video statement before holding talks with Esper.

Last week, Trump said that he is ordering a major reduction in troop strength in Germany, from around 34,500 personnel down to 25,000.

Trump said this week that the troops could be moved to Poland.

Germany wasn’t notified of the move, which came after Trump branded its NATO ally “delinquent” for failing to pay enough for its own defense, by not meeting a goal set in 2014 for members to halt budget cuts and move toward spending at least 2% of gross national product on defense by 2024.

Esper reaffirmed that message, saying that “I continue to urge all of our allies to meet their target goal of 2% of GDP. We’ve moved a good distance here in the last few years but there’s much, much more we need to do to ensure our collective security.”

CYBERCOM sees rise in hacking activity

Associated Press

Foreign hackers are taking advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to undermine institutions and threaten critical infrastructure, a top U.S. military cyber official said Thursday.

The comments from Coast Guard Rear Adm. John Mauger of U.S. Cyber Command came a day after Defense Department officials briefed reporters on virtual war games that digital combatants from U.S. and allied militaries have been holding to sharpen their abilities to counter online threats with real-world impact.

"We've seen increased adversary activity" since the pandemic began, Mauger said on

a conference call, declining to discuss the threat in more specific detail. "We're one part of the whole of government effort to defend our democracy in this complex cyber environment."

On Wednesday, Cybercom offered reporters a window into what it described as its largest virtual training exercise to date — in this case, a simulated attack on an airfield's control systems and fuel depots. Attackers tried to plant malware and gain access through phishing while defenders hunted for the intruders and their tools.

The Defense Department has hosted similar training exercises in previous years for its own fighters, as well as those from allies and other U.S. agen-

cies. Partner agencies include the Coast Guard, Energy Department and Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the nation's dams.

The June 15-26 exercise is unique because the pandemic forced it entirely online, in nine different time zones, bringing together 17 different "blue teams" to defend against one "red team" of attackers — more than 500 participants in all.

"We realized that the opportunity to bring that many people together in a single facility was not possible," Mauger said. "It was not possible because of travel and it was not possible because of the need to stay physically distant from each other." It's the 10th year such

exercises have been held.

Britain, Canada and New Zealand participated. Australia, the other partner in the so-called Five Eyes alliance, was not able to participate but plans to join exercises set for later this year, officials said.

Cybercom accelerated development of the virtual training environment to better analyze ways to protect threats to critical infrastructure, including in energy and transportation systems. Officials said the virtual environment can also be used to test cyber soldiers' abilities to identify new strains of malware. After being discovered in the real world, they could be introduced into a war game scenario.

4,000 troops to remain at Mexico border through 2021

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Up to 4,000 troops will remain at the U.S. border with Mexico until at least Sept. 30, 2021, continuing the more than two-year-old mission that has cost the Pentagon nearly \$745 million.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper approved the request for assistance from the Department of Homeland Security that puts National Guard and active-duty service members in a support role to U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents at the southern border, Lt. Col. Chris Mitchell, a Pentagon spokesman, said Thursday. This new authorization, which is down 1,500 troops from the previous fiscal year, will take effect in October. Troops will come primarily from the National Guard operating in a federal status known as Title 10, Mitchell said.

"[Defense Department] and DHS constantly review the situation along the border, adjusting requirements as necessary to maintain the safety and security of the American people,"

Mitchell said in a statement.

As troops have during the last two years, military personnel will provide detection and monitoring, logistics and transportation support, he said.

"Military personnel will not directly participate in civilian law enforcement activities," Mitchell said.

President Donald Trump first ordered National Guard troops to the southern border in April 2018 and added active-duty personnel to mission about six months later. Since then, numbers have remained at or near the same level.

About 2,600 active-duty personnel and about 2,450 National Guard members are now deployed to the southern border, Mitchell said. An additional 600 active-duty troops also are deployed "to help address [coronavirus] health protection measures," he said.

The number of apprehensions has continued to decline with a sharp drop from March to April, when about 16,000 people were detained. That drop coincided with the coronavirus pandemic taking hold in America.

Russian aircraft intercepted off Alaska coast for 5th time

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. F-22 Raptor stealth fighter aircraft were scrambled to intercept two Russian military planes off Alaska's coast late Wednesday in the fifth such incident U.S. military officials have reported this month.

The F-22s intercepted two Russian IL-38 Dolphin maritime patrol aircraft, which flew within about 50 miles of Unimak Island, according to a statement Thursday from the North American Aerospace Defense Command, which guards U.S. and Canadian airspace. The island is one of Alaska's Aleutian Islands, which form the large archipelago off the southwestern part of the state into the Bering Sea.

NORAD said the Russian aircraft, turbo-prop planes used for surveillance and anti-submarine warfare, never entered U.S. airspace, which extends 12 nautical miles from American shores. The aircraft remained in the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone for about four hours. The zone is a stretch

of mostly international airspace some 200 nautical miles off the Alaskan coast where American officials expect aircraft to identify themselves in the interest of national security.

The intercept marked the ninth such incident in 2020 and the fifth in June, according to NORAD.

Air Force Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, who commands NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, has warned since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic that Russian aircraft would likely test the ability of the United States to defend its airspace.

"The mission-assurance measures we are taking to protect our people ensure we are meeting the challenges and operating through the [coronavirus] environment to defend our nations, just as NORAD forces have for more than 60 years," O'Shaughnessy said in a statement.

U.S. officials have not reported any unsafe actions by Russian pilots during any of the recent intercepts, and all of the Russian aircraft remained in international airspace.

Some states halt reopening as cases surge

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — When Texas began lifting coronavirus restrictions, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott didn't wear a mask. He wouldn't let mayors enact extra precautions during one of America's swiftest efforts to reopen. He pointed out that the White House backed his plan and gave assurances there were safe ways to go out again.

Two months later, a sharp reversal is unfolding as infections surge.

The backpedaling is not just in Texas, where Abbott abruptly halted the push to loosen more restrictions and is now urgently telling people to stay home. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, also a Republican, did the same, declaring the state "on pause" as hospitals accel-

erate toward capacity.

As an alarming coronavirus resurgence sets records for confirmed cases and hospitalizations across the U.S. South and West, governors are retreating to measures they once resisted and striking a more urgent tone.

"I think they're going to have to," said Dr. Mark McClellan, former head of the Food and Drug Administration. "It doesn't take most people in a community getting sick to overwhelm health care systems."

Critics bristle that the actions are too little, or worse, possibly too late as patients fill up intensive-care beds and the U.S. closes in on hitting all-time highs for daily confirmed cases.

And governors are not entirely bending in their resolve: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who

until recently had rarely worn a face covering, has said he won't impose statewide mask orders or delay reopening. And Abbott says shutting down the Texas economy again is a last resort.

The escalating crisis is testing governors — many of them Republicans who aggressively reopened before most of the U.S. — as pressure mounts from their biggest cities, health experts and even friendly business groups.

Any move backward could land them at odds with President Donald Trump, who has sought to move on from the virus and return to the campaign stage, all while refusing to wear a mask in public.

A June survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research says many Americans never fully embraced the reopening effort

now underway in many states. A majority of Americans still have concerns about contracting COVID-19, and significant shares still support the kinds of public health restrictions that states have rolled back.

The most widespread about-face in GOP states is a sudden openness to letting local authorities mandate masks — a concession that cities including Phoenix and Little Rock, Ark., quickly put into action but is increasingly criticized as insufficient as the outbreaks rage.

In Florida, which has reported over 5,000 new cases in each of the past two days, DeSantis has resisted calls to mandate masks, leaving that decision to local leaders.

The Republican contends that areas not as severely affected should not have to bear the same burdens.

Watchdog says \$1.4B in relief paid to dead people

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nearly 1.1 million coronavirus relief payments totaling some \$1.4 billion went to dead people, a government watchdog reported Thursday. Legal and political issues hang over the misdirected taxpayer funds, the latest example of errors in massive aid being dispensed at crisis speed.

As of May 31, about 160 million so-called economic impact payments totaling \$269 billion were sent to taxpayers as part of the \$2.4 trillion coronavirus relief package enacted in March. The Government

Accountability Office, Congress' auditing arm, cited the number of erroneous payments to deceased taxpayers in its report on the government programs.

While the government has asked survivors to return the money, it's not clear they have to.

It also may be a politically sensitive gambit for the Treasury Department to aggressively seek to claw back the money, especially because some recipients may have died in the early months of this year from COVID-19.

When billions in aid are rushed out the

door in a crisis, "these are the kinds of things that happen," said Lisa Gilbert, executive vice president of advocacy group Public Citizen.

Gilbert acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue. But, she added, "it's a big number, particularly at this moment when our economy is in free-fall. It's a large amount of taxpayer money that's not doing what it was intended to do."

The errors occurred mainly because of a lag in reporting data on who is deceased. It's a lapse that tax experts say is almost inevitable.

Infections rising daily in India, other populated countries

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — While China moved closer to containing a fresh outbreak in Beijing, the coronavirus took a stronger hold elsewhere.

Another record daily increase in India on Friday pushed the country's caseload toward half a million, and other countries with big populations like Indonesia, Pakistan and Mexico grappled with large caseloads and strained health care systems.

South Africa, which accounts for about half of the infections on the African conti-

nent with 118,375, reported a record 6,579 new cases, as transmissions increase after it loosened what had been one of the world's strictest lockdowns earlier this month.

Mexico reported some of its highest 24-hour counts so far with 6,104 new cases and 736 additional deaths, as its treasury secretary began isolating at home after a positive test.

In China, where the pandemic originated in December, authorities have mobilized resources for mass testing and locked down parts of Beijing this month due to an outbreak that has infected 260 people. The

11 new cases reported in the capital Friday continued a downward trend that suggests transmissions have been largely brought under control.

The United States, which counts the most infections in the world, is seeing daily jumps in COVID-19 cases, nearing the peak reached in late April.

The United States reported 34,500 COVID-19 cases Wednesday, slightly fewer than the day before but still near the high of 36,400 reached April 24, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Police reform bill passes in House but not in Senate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House has approved a far-reaching police overhaul from Democrats in a vote heavy with emotion and symbolism as a divided Congress struggles to address the global outcry over the deaths of George Floyd and other Black Americans.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gathered with members of the Congressional Black Caucus on the Capitol steps, challenging opponents not to allow the deaths to have been in vain or the outpouring of public support for changes to go unmatched. But the collapse of a Senate Republican bill leaves final legislation in doubt.

"Exactly one month ago, George Floyd spoke his final words — 'I can't breathe' — and changed the course of history," Pelosi said.

She said the Senate faces a choice "to honor George Floyd's life or to do nothing."

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is perhaps the most ambitious set of proposed changes to police procedures and accountability in decades. Backed by the nation's leading civil rights groups, it aims to match the moment of demonstrations that filled streets across the nation. It has almost

zero chance of becoming law.

On the eve of the Thursday vote, President Donald Trump's administration said he would veto the bill. And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has also said it would not pass the Republican-held chamber.

After the GOP policing bill stalled this week, blocked by Democrats, Trump shrugged.

"If nothing happens with it, it's one of those things," Trump said. "We have different philosophies."

Congress is at a familiar impasse despite protests outside their door and polling that shows Americans overwhelmingly want changes after the deaths of Floyd and others in interactions with law enforcement. The two parties are instead appealing to voters ahead of the fall election.

"We hear you. We see you. We are you," said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., during the debate.

Republican lawmakers countered the bill goes too far and failed to include GOP input.

"All lives matter," said Rep. Debbie Lesko, R-Ariz.

New York Rep. Pete King said it's time to stand with law enforcement, the "men and women in blue." House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy decried the "mob" of demonstrators.

White House seeks end to 'Obamacare' as pandemic surges

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As coronavirus cases rise in more than half of the states, the Trump administration is urging the Supreme Court to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

The administration's high court filing Thursday came the same day the government reported that close to half a million people who lost their health insurance amid the economic shutdown to slow the spread of COVID-19 have gotten coverage through HealthCare.gov. The administration's legal brief makes no mention of the virus.

More than 20 million Americans could lose their health coverage and protections for people with preexisting health conditions also would be put at risk if the court agrees with the administration in a case that won't be heard before the fall.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi blasted the administration's latest move in a partisan battle over "Obamacare" that has

stretched on for a full decade since the law's passage in 2010. Pelosi is planning a floor vote early next week on her own bill to expand the ACA.

Just as the nation seemed to be getting better control over the virus outbreak, states including Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Nevada and Texas are reporting a surge in cases. And more than half the states are seeing case increases.

In the case before the Supreme Court, Texas and other conservative-led states argue that the ACA was essentially rendered unconstitutional after Congress passed tax legislation in 2017 that eliminated the law's fines for not having health insurance but left in place its requirement that virtually all Americans have coverage. If the health insurance requirement is invalidated, "then it necessarily follows that the rest of the ACA must also fall," Solicitor General Noel Francisco wrote Thursday.

Calls intensify for removal of 2 Emancipation memorials

Associated Press

Calls are intensifying for the removal of twin Emancipation memorials in Washington, D.C., and Boston that depict a freed slave kneeling at Abraham Lincoln's feet — optics that jar and offend many in a nation confronting racial injustice through a fresh lens.

The Emancipation Memorial, also known as the Emancipation Group and the Freedman's Memorial, was erected in Washington's Lincoln Park in 1876. Three years later, a copy was installed in Boston, home to the statue's white creator, Thomas Ball.

Protesters gathered earlier

this week to demand the removal of the original in Washington, where the Army activated about 400 unarmed National Guard personnel ahead of calls circulating on social media to tear it down Thursday evening.

And in Boston, where a petition is circulating for the copy to be taken down, the city's arts commission already held one public hearing Thursday and will hold an additional one Tuesday to discuss its fate.

What originally was intended in 1876 to celebrate liberation, critics contend, looks more like subservience and supremacy in 2020.

"I've been watching this man on his knees since I was a

kid," said Tory Bullock, a Black actor and activist leading the campaign to get the Boston memorial removed.

"It's supposed to represent freedom but instead represents us still beneath someone else. I would always ask myself, 'If he's free, why is he still on his knees?'" Bullock said.

The memorial has been on Boston's radar at least since 2018, when it launched a comprehensive review of whether public sculptures, monuments and other artworks reflected the city's diversity and didn't offend communities of color. The Boston Art Commission said it was paying extra attention to works with "problematic

histories."

Black donors paid for the original in Washington; white politician and circus showman Moses Kimball financed the copy on a downtown square a block away from Boston Common. The inscription on both reads: "A race set free and the country at peace. Lincoln rests from his labors."

But Blacks weren't part of the design process, and the memorial's central visual takeaway — a Black man with broken shackles kneeling before his white savior, with a whipping post and chains in the background — has had people cringing for years.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Swimmer caught on video grabbing shark

DE LEWES — A swimmer in Delaware was caught on camera prying a shark's mouth open with his hands this weekend in an effort to free it from a fishing hook.

The video shows the man grabbing onto the shark at a beach in Cape Henlopen State Park. He went into the water to unhook it after another person caught it, the Daily Times of Salisbury reported Tuesday.

"Everyone started yelling, 'Shark, shark, get out of the water!'" said Delaware native Rachael Foster, who shared her video on social media. "It was so crazy, like a movie. Like Jaws."

State law prohibits people from keeping sand tiger and sandbar sharks if caught. People must release them immediately.

The newspaper reported park rangers were on site Sunday to assist and monitor the situation.

Wife allegedly stabbed man nearly 200 times

OH DAYTON — A woman accused of stabbing her 82-year-old husband 192 times earlier this month has been indicted on murder charges, authorities said.

Vivian Lanette Mims, 63, of Dayton, was also charged with felonious assault with repeat violent offender specifications in the indictment handed up Wednesday. The latter count apparently stemmed from an incident seven years ago in which she also stabbed and seriously injured Bobby Mims.

Bobby Mims was found dead in a parked car on June 16 after a man told Dayton police his mother had admitted killing

his father and was trying to harm herself, authorities said. Responding officers said Vivian Mims was trying to ingest bleach.

She was previously accused of stabbing her husband with a knife in Englewood in January 2013, The Dayton Daily News reported. She initially pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity in that case but eventually pleaded guilty to felonious assault, and her probation term was ended in May 2016.

Police: Man in 'Joker' makeup menaced teens

NJ HADDON — A man who had raised concerns by walking around a southern New Jersey town dressed as "The Joker" while clad in the movie character's makeup is now accused of "menacingly waving" a pocketknife at some teenagers as he drove past the rous, authorities said.

Assoumou Diby, 25, of Haddon Township, was arrested on a weapons charge shortly after the incident occurred Tuesday.

Camden County prosecutors said several people had contacted Haddon police about the man, but authorities said he was not breaking any laws just by being dressed as the character.

Schools offering online option next year

SC CHARLESTON — All students in the Charleston County School District can choose an online option next school year even if in-person classes resume, school officials said.

Superintendent Dr. Gerita Postlewait announced the moves Wednesday during a school board meeting, WCSC-TV reported.

"We will use the infection rates in our community and the advice of medical experts to determine how, when, and under what guidelines our schools reopen," she said. "We want to try our best to serve students in person when it's safe to do that, and if their parents want us to serve them in-person."

The goal was initially to reopen schools one week earlier than previously planned, but on Wednesday, Postlewait asked the board not to vote on that based on the infection rates. That item was removed from the agenda.

She also said thousands of details still have to be worked out for the online option, and a committee tasked with doing just that is working to put a plan together by next month.

Wildfire burns near Mount Rushmore

SD CUSTER — South Dakota is bringing in more resources to fight a wildfire that burned Thursday near Mount Rushmore ahead of next week's visit to the monument by President Donald Trump for Independence Day celebrations.

The fire that started in Custer State Park on Wednesday has burned an estimated 150 acres about 6 miles south of the 79-year-old stone monument.

Gov. Kristi Noem's spokesman, Ian Fury, said South Dakota Wildland Fire Division is leading a multi-state, multi-agency effort to fight the forest fire, the Rapid City Journal reported.

The Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center tweeted Wednesday evening that eight aircraft were deployed to fight the wildfire and that hotshot crews, or highly trained firefighters, from Wyoming and Colorado were mobilized.

Trump is planning to attend

a fireworks display at the monument July 3, but some wildfire experts have raised concerns the pyrotechnics could spark fires, especially because the region has seen dry weather this year.

Contest to name new fire-prevention mascot

AK JUNEAU — Alaska needs help putting a name to the face of the state's newest celebrity moose.

The state Division of Forestry is holding a contest to name a cartoon moose that will represent the agency's statewide fire-prevention campaign, The Juneau Empire reported Tuesday.

The forestry division asked Alaska residents to submit names for the moose that will be featured in the logo of the campaign titled, "Take Time to Learn Before You Burn."

"The division is hoping for a unique name capturing the spirit of Alaska, the moose and the campaign," the forestry division said in a statement.

The winner is scheduled to be announced Oct. 1.

Mountain lion found underneath home

CA MONROVIA — A mountain lion was tranquilized and pulled out from beneath a home in a Southern California suburb on Thursday.

Monrovia residents watched as the big cat was loaded into a cage aboard a state Fish and Wildlife truck, Fox 11 reported from a helicopter over the scene.

Police warned residents this week that an adult mountain lion had been seen since Saturday in the foothill city east of Los Angeles.

From wire reports

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and Military News

NFL training camps remain on schedule

Associated Press

The NFL still plans to hold training camps on time beginning in late July, though contingency plans are in place.

Hours after the league canceled the Hall of Fame game that kicks off the preseason, the 32 team owners on Thursday were updated on a variety of issues, many dealing with working through the coronavirus pandemic. Most notably, according to NFL general counsel Jeff Pash, the owners were told about plans to fully reopen team facilities for training camp next month.

"The clubs have been advised that training camps are expected to open on the normal schedule," Pash said. "The dates set forth in the collective bargaining agreement, for most clubs that would be July 28. Obviously they can bring in rookies and certain other players before that."

"The preseason number of games, we're in active discus-

sions with the players association on those issues, and will continue at that and expect to have some resolution relatively soon and will advise the clubs at that time."

Earlier Thursday, the league and the Pro Football Hall of Fame canceled the opening preseason game between Dallas and Pittsburgh set for Aug. 6. The hall's induction ceremonies set for Aug. 8, and for mid-September for a special centennial class, have been moved to August 2021, when the Cowboys and Steelers will play in the game.

Team facilities were closed in late March due to the pandemic and have been reopened to limited personnel. No players other than those rehabilitating injuries are allowed at those facilities.

Dr. Allen Sills, the NFL's chief medical officer, stressed that what the general public should be doing during the pandemic is exactly what the

league and its players should be doing.

"We remain in very active discussion with the players association on the protocols dealing with testing and screening and treatment, response and travel," Sills said. "And so we updated the ownership about where we stand with those issues and our approach to that."

"We certainly emphasized through that that testing alone is not going to be sufficient to keep everyone healthy. It's still vitally important that everyone respect physical distancing, the use of masks when possible and overall good health habits of reporting symptoms and limiting contact with individuals that may be sick not only at the team facility, but away from the team facility."

In response to Tom Brady and other NFL players holding private workouts even after Thom Mayer, the union's medical officer, advised against it, Sills said:

"This is, again, a place where the NFLPA and the NFL are in the same exact place, which is we want whatever makes it the safest possible environment for all of our constituents. ... Again, this is all about risk reduction and trying to mitigate risk. We know that we can't eliminate risk. And so we will work very much hand in hand with the players association because, again, this is where everyone in that team environment is going to share the same risk. But they'll also share the same responsibility to each other."

Sills also noted that the league and union are looking into the use of personal protective equipment by players. That includes modifications to the helmet that may provide additional risk reduction.

"Obviously we have to think about any potential unintended consequences of that modification. So a lot of work is still being done on that," he said.

Players, coaches must use caution as MLB moves forward

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Baseball's bubble-free environment is an anomaly as sports attempt to come back amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Instead of bringing a group of teams to Disney World (like the NBA and MLS) or concentrating on a few hub cities (like the current NHL plan), Major League Baseball has 30 teams spread all over the United States and potentially Canada, with players, coaches and team personnel trying to stay healthy while cases are still spreading.

Needless to say, it won't be easy.

Arizona Diamondbacks GM Mike Hazen said he'll be constantly reminding everyone in his organization about the delicacy of the current situation. It's especially important in Phoenix, where COVID-19 cases have increased substantially over the past few weeks.

"High-risk behavior is going

to impact you and the person standing next to you and the person standing next to them," Hazen said. "We're going to be extremely mindful of it."

"The protocols are going to answer some of those things for us, but away from the field, I believe we are going to have to make sure everyone understands exactly what we mean by high-risk behavior."

"Things are going to have to change temporarily in our lives to be able to do this."

That means altering the way baseball players behave on and off the field.

The on-field portion is largely addressed in a hefty manual that covers everything from hotels to showers to spitting. It will be awkward and sometimes not particularly practical, but teams are vowing to do their best.

"You're putting a lot of people in a small, confined space, which is the one thing the med-

ical experts are telling us not to do," Oakland A's GM David Forst said. "So we'll have to limit clubhouse time as much as possible, guys will have to wear masks as much as possible."

Then there's the considerable amount of time players will spend away from the field.

Texas coach Chris Woodward said health issues will be critical throughout the season and the usual carefree life of a ballplayer will be a bit more tame. While health is obviously the most important issue, there's also the on-field realization that losing players for several days to COVID-19 might also be the difference between wins and losses.

"The younger guys that are single that, you know, tend to be a little bit more social," Woodward said. "Those are going to be the challenging ones because they're not going to want to sit in your hotel room on road trips. But I think it's their

responsibility that they have to the ballclub and the organization and their teammates, honestly."

Added Minnesota Twins closer Taylor Rogers: "A lot of it's going to be on you, on the honor system. Don't be the one person that's going to mess it up for everybody else. When you want to go do something, or something like that, you need to remember it's about your team, not just yourself."

The first step toward a successful season is getting all the players to their home cities. Most shouldn't have much of a problem but there are plenty of logistics involved with domestic and international travel. The challenges are real but so is the payoff. For MLB, a strange 60-game season is a better alternative than no season at all.

"It's a little bit of a challenge," Chicago White Sox GM Rick Hahn said. "It's not impossible."

Hughes cards 60, takes 3-stroke lead

Associated Press

CROMWELL, Conn. — Mackenzie Hughes shot a career-low 60 Thursday to take the first-round at the Travelers Championship as the PGA Tour tried to switch its focus back to golf amid growing concerns about the coronavirus.

Hughes, a 29-year-old Canadian, had a chance to shoot the 12th sub-60 round in PGA Tour history, but his 40-foot birdie attempt on his final hole came up short. Jim Furyk shot a 12-under 58 on the same TPC River Highlands course four years ago, the lowest score in a tour event.

"I kind of joked walking off there that 59 wasn't even the record because of Jim's 58," Hughes said. "It's probably not even that special around here. But as a personal milestone it would have been neat."

It was good enough for a three-shot lead over Rory McIlroy, Xander Schauffele and

Viktor Hovland, who each shot 63 on a day of low scoring.

Phil Mickelson, paired with McIlroy in his first competitive round since turning 50, was one of six players to shoot 64. Bryson DeChambeau's 65 was the worst score in the marquee threesome.

There were 106 players who broke par. The record for a day at TPC River Highlands was in 2011, when 111 players were 1-under or better in the second round.

Hughes' bogey-free round included a 30-foot birdie putt on his second-to-last hole, the par-3 eighth. Patrick Cantlay was the last to shoot 60 at TPC River Highlands as an amateur in 2011.

McIlroy, who also started on the back nine, eagled the par-5 13th and followed that up with two straight birdies. He made four more birdies on the front nine for a 31.

"It's just been nice to get back into some competitive

golf again," McIlroy said. "You know, it doesn't feel the same because you're not having thousands of people reacting to your birdies and getting that going. I felt the weekends have been a little flat for me just because that's when you're in contention and that's where you sort of start to feel it. Thursdays and Fridays don't feel that different to be honest, but into the weekends they do."

Mickelson learned earlier Thursday that he was granted an exemption into this year's U.S. Open for being in the top 70 in the world on March 15, when golf was shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"That worked out great, to be able to know that I have a chance to go back to Winged Foot and give it another shot," said Mickelson, who finished second at Winged Foot in 2006 after a double bogey on the 72nd hole. "But I've had 30 U.S. Opens. I've had plenty of opportunities, and so if I don't

qualify, I want somebody else who deserves a spot, too, to play. As long as I'm playing well enough to compete to earn my way into the field, then I want to play and keep trying to win that tournament."

Schauffele and Hovland were the best among the afternoon wave. Schauffele was 8 under through 16 holes but missed a 7-footer for par on the 17th.

"The greens firmed up a little bit," he said. "The wind, just a little bit of wind can make any course hard, so in terms of hitting it really tight, it got a little trickier late in the day."

Hovland made a sloppy bogey on 17 but rebounded with a wedge to 4 feet on the par-4 18th for birdie.

Abraham Ancer, the runner-up at last week's RBC Heritage, aced the 155-yard 16th. His 8-iron landed just over the pond guarding the green and rolled 6 feet into the hole.

Australia, New Zealand to co-host '23 Women's World Cup

Associated Press

GENEVA — Australia and New Zealand will co-host the Women's World Cup in 2023, with the following edition possibly set to take place just two years later.

The joint bid beat Colombia 22-13 in a vote Thursday by FIFA's ruling council, which judged them as having the best commercial prospects for women's soccer.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino was one of the members who voted for Australia and New Zealand to stage the first 32-team Women's World Cup, then revived a suggestion aired at last year's tournament in France to stage it every two years instead of every four years.

"We need to boost women's football," Infantino told reporters from FIFA's headquarters in Zurich. "If you have to wait four years all the time, maybe

it's a bit long."

FIFA's decision means South America is still waiting to host its first Women's World Cup, a tournament that was first played in 1991.

The 2023 tournament will be the first time a World Cup for men or women will be shared across two countries from different FIFA confederations. Australia is a member of Asia's soccer body and New Zealand is in the Oceania group. It is also the first co-hosted women's edition.

Both Australia, the No. 7-ranked team in women's soccer, and No. 23 New Zealand will qualify automatically for the tournament.

The voter preferences were quickly published by FIFA and split along continental lines. Colombia had all nine delegates from European soccer body UEFA joining four eligible voters from South America's CONMEBOL.

Former U.S. Soccer Federation President Sunil Gulati voted for Australia and New Zealand.

Infantino acknowledged that he was "surprised" by the alliance of soccer's traditional continental powers, who have been critical of his plans in the past — including a 24-team Club World Cup in China that is on hold due to the pandemic.

For New Zealand, the tournament is being billed as the largest sporting event the country has hosted. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern worked the phones this week to urge support for the bid, and her government has already set aside NZ\$25 million to help preparations for the tournament.

"It will be an historic tournament of firsts that will create a profound and enduring legacy for women's football in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond," Ardern said. "We are

looking forward to delivering the best ever FIFA Women's World Cup in both nations, one that will elevate the women's game and inspire women and girls around the world."

Lydia Williams, goalkeeper for Australia's women's team, said the nerves were intense as the players waited through the early morning hours awaiting the decision.

"I've never sweated so much in non-training situations, ever," Williams said. "It's about time there were some really good news. Especially in Australia, with football, and everything that's happening."

"It's so heartwarming to see this amazing news, at 2 a.m., being shown all over the country and the world."

The Australia-New Zealand bid had far outscored Colombia in an evaluation published by FIFA inspectors this month.