

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Report: Taliban bounties led to troop deaths

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Russian bounties offered to Taliban-linked militants to kill coalition forces in Afghanistan are believed to have resulted in the deaths of several U.S. service members, according to intelligence gleaned from U.S. military interrogations of captured militants in recent months.

Several people familiar with the matter said it was unclear exactly how many Americans or coalition troops from other countries may have been killed or targeted under the program. U.S. forces in Afghanistan suffered a total of 10 deaths from hostile gunfire or improvised bombs in 2018, and 16 in 2019. Two have been killed this year. In each of those years, several service members were

also killed by what are known as “green on blue” hostile incidents by Afghan security forces, who are sometimes believed to have been infiltrated by the Taliban.

Officials and others with knowledge of the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity told The Associated Press that the intelligence community has been investigating an April 2019 attack on an American convoy that killed three U.S. Marines after a car rigged with explosives detonated near their armored vehicles as they traveled back to Bagram Airfield, the largest U.S. military installation in Afghanistan.

Three other U.S. service members were wounded in the attack, along with an Af-

ghan contractor. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on Twitter. The officials the AP spoke to also said they were looking closely at green-on-blue incidents — from 2019 to determine if they are also linked to Russian bounties.

In early 2020, members of the elite Naval Special Warfare Development Group, known to the public as SEAL Team 6, raided a Taliban outpost and recovered roughly \$500,000. The recovered funds further solidified the suspicions of the American intelligence community that the Russians had offered money to Taliban militants and linked associations.

The intelligence was passed up from the U.S. special operations forces based in Afghanistan and led to a restricted

high-level White House meeting in late March, the people said.

President Donald Trump said late Sunday that he was not told of intelligence that a Russian military spy unit offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants to attack coalition forces in Afghanistan, including U.S. troops, because U.S. intelligence officials did not find it credible.

“Intel just reported to me that they did not find this info credible, and therefore did not report it to me or @VP,” Trump said in a tweet, referring to Vice President Mike Pence.

Russia and the Taliban have denied the existence of the program.

Dual-carrier exercise 2nd in week in Pacific

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — For the second time in a week, the U.S. Navy paired aircraft carrier strike groups for training in the Philippine Sea as global competitor China prepares for its own carrier exercise in the same area.

The USS Ronald Reagan joined the USS Nimitz on Sunday for “integrated exercises and operations” that undergird U.S. defense commitments in the Indo-Pacific region, according to a Navy statement. A Navy video from the exercise Sunday shows the carriers launching aircraft and sailing in formation.

The Nimitz and the USS Theodore Roosevelt teamed up for flight drills in the Philippine Sea on June 21. The Roos-

velt steamed out of Guam in early June two months after a coronavirus outbreak onboard sidelined the carrier and contributed to a temporary gap in U.S. carrier presence of the Western Pacific.

Since then, the Navy has flexed its muscle, with three carrier strike groups present in the region simultaneously.

“We aggressively seek out every opportunity to advance and strengthen our capabilities and proficiency at conducting all-domain warfighting operations,” Reagan Strike Group commander Rear Adm. George Wikoff said, according to the Navy statement Sunday. “The U.S. Navy remains mission ready and globally deployed.”

Dual-carrier drills are relatively rare. Sunday marked the seventh time such operations happened in the Indo-

Pacific since 2001, according to 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley.

In that time, no back-to-back dual-carrier operations took place until this month, although the Roosevelt, Reagan and Nimitz exercised together east of the Korean Peninsula in 2017.

Before the June 21 exercise, the last time two carriers trained together in the Western Pacific was in November 2018 when the Reagan and USS John C. Stennis rendezvoused in the Philippine Sea.

“Dual carrier operations demonstrate our commitment to regional allies, our ability to rapidly mass combat power in the Indo-Pacific and our readiness to confront all those who challenge international norms that support regional stability,” Wikoff said in the statement.

The drills come as China plans its own carrier operations this summer in the region, the South China Morning Post reported May 24. Beijing in December commissioned its second aircraft carrier, the Shandong, which left its shipyard for sea trials and training drills on May 29, according to the nation’s defense ministry.

Still, Nimitz Strike Group commander Rear Adm. James Kirk said, “only the U.S. Navy can integrate a carrier strike force on this scale and consistently project power to protect freedom of the seas,” according to the statement.

“With more than 10,000 U.S. Navy Sailors from across the world working together as one cohesive team, these operations are what keep us ready to respond to any contingency,” he said.

Iran issues arrest warrant for Trump

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran has issued an arrest warrant and asked Interpol for help in detaining President Donald Trump and dozens of others it believes carried out the drone strike that killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad, a local prosecutor reportedly said Monday.

While Trump faces no danger of arrest, the charges underscore the heightened tensions between Iran and the United States since Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr said

Trump and more than 30 others whom Iran accuses of involvement in the Jan. 3 strike that killed Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad face “murder and terrorism charges,” the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

Alqasimehr did not identify anyone else sought other than Trump but stressed that Iran would continue to pursue his prosecution even after his presidency ends.

Alqasimehr also was quoted as saying that Iran requested a “red notice” be put out for Trump and the others, which represents the highest level arrest request issued by Interpol. Local authorities end up

making the arrests on behalf of the country that requests it. The notices cannot force countries to arrest or extradite suspects but can put government leaders on the spot and limit suspects' travel.

After receiving a request, Interpol meets by committee and discusses whether to share the information with its member states. Interpol has no requirement for making any of the notices public, though some do get published on its website.

It is unlikely Interpol would grant Iran's request as its guideline for notices forbids it from “undertaking any intervention or activities of a political” nature.

US, allied subs, warships launch drills off Iceland

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. and allied submarine hunters launched a major drill Monday off the coast of Iceland, a region where allies warn that Russia is getting more aggressive.

Six allied states are testing underwater warfare skills and the ability of crews to evade detection in NATO's Dynamic Mongoose exercise, the alliance said.

“Each surface ship will have the opportunity to conduct a variety of submarine warfare operations. The submarines will take turns hunting and being hunted, closely coordinating their efforts with the air and surface participants,” NATO Maritime Command said in a statement. Maritime patrol aircraft will also take part.

The drill comes as NATO gives increased attention to the Arctic and North Atlantic, where Russia has been building up a presence, and where melting sea ice will make it easier for commercial and military vessels to operate in the future, allies have said. Moscow has “taken an aggressive approach to the Arctic,” reoccupying

old Soviet bases and deploying air defense systems, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, Adm. James Foggo, said last week.

“We're seeing a new area of maritime competition in the Arctic. Strong navies are needed to protect common interests and ensure the timely flow of trade,” Foggo said during a virtual speech Thursday for the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The U.S. is also concerned that Russian forces could damage undersea cables that transmit most of the electronic data between the U.S. and Europe.

While commanders involved in Dynamic Mongoose did not address such concerns Monday, officials said the exercises are about preparing for a “high-end” fight.

“Exercises today seize opportunities for NATO and Allied nations to sharpen warfighting skills by focusing on high-end capabilities including Anti-Submarine Warfare,” said Vice Adm. Keith Blount, head of NATO's Allied Maritime Command, in a statement.

The U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom are taking part in the drills, which end July 10.

Goal of taser-like round is to give Marines more range

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

An electroshock weapon that would stun targets a football field away is being developed for the Marine Corps, as the service looks to add a new “less lethal” option.

Colorado-based Harkind Dynamics expects to complete the first phase of development of a 12-gauge projectile, effective at a range of more than 100 yards, by July.

The new round, which is being developed for the Defense Department's Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office, headed by the Marine Corps, would give troops far greater range than weapons like the Taser X26, Harkind said in the proposal that won the contract last year.

The handgun-like Taser, which fires cartridges with a range of about 25 feet, doesn't give troops enough time or space to safely “neutralize the threat,” the proposal said. Harkind hopes to start work this summer on a prototype of its projectile, which could be fired from a pump-action shotgun, the company's website says. The company recently demonstrated the ability of the wireless round to incapacitate a

target around 330 feet away, the website says.

To reduce the risk of blunt force injury to anyone hit by the projectile, it deploys a tiny parachute right before hitting its target, cutting its speed in half.

A “deformable nose” further reduces the blunt force, the company said in its proposal. When the round gets within a meter of its target, it shoots out three electrode darts that can penetrate clothing and stick in the skin.

The 12-gauge munition offers greater stability in the air, a flatter trajectory and more accuracy than larger rounds, such as a 40 mm grenade round, it said. Higher muzzle velocities increase its potential range.

The long-range round has been dubbed the Small arms Pulsed Electronic Tetanization at Extended Range, or SPECTER, said London-based New Scientist magazine, which first reported on the weapon last week.

Its development followed reports of protesters and others wounded this month by less lethal weapons used by law enforcement in the U.S. during civil unrest in response to police killings.

Drug maker Gilead criticized for \$2,340 remdesivir price

Associated Press

The maker of a drug shown to shorten recovery time for severely ill COVID-19 patients says it will charge \$2,340 for a typical treatment course for people covered by government health programs in the United States and other developed countries.

Gilead Sciences announced the price Monday for remdesivir, and said the price would be \$3,120 for patients with private insurance. The amount that patients pay out of pocket depends on insurance, income and other factors.

"We're in uncharted territory with pricing a new medicine, a novel medicine, in a pandemic," Gilead's chief executive, Dan O'Day, told The Associated Press.

"We believe that we had to really deviate from the normal circumstances" and price the drug to ensure wide access rather than based solely on value to patients, he said.

However, the price was

swiftly criticized; a consumer group called it "an outrage" because of the amount taxpayers invested toward the drug's development.

The treatment courses that the company has donated to the U.S. and other countries will run out in about a week, and the prices will apply to the drug after that, O'Day said.

In the U.S., federal health officials have allocated the limited supply to states, but that agreement with Gilead will end after September. They said Monday that the government has secured more than 500,000 additional courses that Gilead will produce starting in July to supply to hospitals through September, and stressed that that does not mean the government actually was acquiring that much, just ensuring the availability.

In 127 poor or middle-income countries, Gilead is allowing generic makers to supply the drug; two countries are doing that for around \$600 per treatment course.

Remdesivir's price has been highly anticipated since it became the first medicine to show benefit in the pandemic, which has killed more than half a million people globally in six months.

The drug interferes with the coronavirus' ability to copy its genetic material. In a U.S. government-led study, remdesivir shortened recovery time by 31% — 11 days on average versus 15 days for those given just usual care. It had not improved survival according to preliminary results after two weeks of followup; results after four weeks are expected soon.

The Institute for Clinical and Economic Review, a non-profit group that analyzes drug prices, said remdesivir would be cost-effective in a range of \$4,580 to \$5,080 if it saved lives. But recent news that a cheap steroid called dexamethasone improves survival means remdesivir should be priced between \$2,520 and \$2,800, the group said.

USFK sees 3 more virus cases from US arrivals

By KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Two newly assigned service members and a dependent tested positive for the coronavirus after traveling to South Korea from the United States on a government-chartered flight, the military said Monday.

The announcement raised to 39 the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases affiliated with U.S. Forces Korea since late February.

More than a third of those were detected as part of a mandatory testing and quarantine process required for all USFK personnel arriving from abroad. The last local infection was reported on April 27.

One service member and his dependent initially tested negative at Camp Humphreys, where they were bused after landing at Osan Air Base aboard the Patriot Express on June 15, USFK said in a press release.

However, they received a positive result on a second test required to exit the two-week quarantine, it said.

Another service member tested positive after landing at Osan Air Base on Thursday. He received the results while in the quarantine barracks at Camp Humphreys, according to USFK.

"Since testing positive, all three individuals have been moved to Camp Humphreys' isolation barracks designated for confirmed COVID-19 cases," USFK said, referring to the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

Military health professionals determined that limited contact tracing was warranted since all passengers aboard the Patriot Express were tested and quarantined. The patients' quarantine rooms were thoroughly cleaned.

1,700 troops, aircraft to mark July Fourth

By STEVE BEYNON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Defense will provide 1,700 troops and aircraft for flyovers for Independence Day celebrations across the country.

The Pentagon said troops will provide support to the Department of the Interior with "Salute to America" celebrations in Washington, D.C., Mount Rushmore, S.D., and cities critical to victory in the American Revolution: Baltimore, Boston, New York City and Philadelphia.

"The highlight of this year's celebration will be our salute to the great cities of the American Revolution. DOD will provide aerial, musical and ceremonial support to this year's celebration in Washington, D.C.," Lt. Col. Chris Mitchell, a Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement. "The flyovers will begin in Boston and proceed to New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. From there, they will join other Department of

Defense and heritage aircraft in the Salute to America over our nation's capital."

The Pentagon did not announce what aircraft would be used, but Mitchell noted the flyovers would not be an added burden on the taxpayer, saying the pilots and crews would be using the time to train regardless.

At Trump's celebration last year in Washington, the flyovers included Air Force B-2 Stealth Bombers, Air Force One, F-22 Raptors, F35 Lightning IIs, Navy F/A 18 Hornet Blue Angels, Marine Corps MV22 Osprey helicopters, Marine One, Army AH-64 Apache helicopters, CH-47 Chinook helicopters, Coast Guard H-65 Dolphin helicopters, H-60 Jayhawk helicopters, and HC-144 medium-range surveillance aircraft.

The annual Fourth of July parade in Washington has been canceled due to coronavirus concerns, but there will still be a fireworks display over the National Mall. Trump will give remarks from the South Lawn of the White House.

As cases surge, many governments are backtracking

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Governments are stepping up testing and reimposing restrictions as newly confirmed coronavirus infections surge in many countries. India reported 20,000 on Monday, while the caseload in the U.S. is growing by about 40,000 a day.

The United States on Monday reported 38,800 newly confirmed infections, with the total surpassing 2.5 million, or about a quarter of the more than 10 million cases worldwide, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Experts say the actual numbers, both in the U.S. and globally, are probably far higher, in part because of testing limitations and the large number of people without symptoms.

Beaches are closing and beer is going untapped as Florida, Texas and other states backpedal on their reopenings, ordering mandatory wearing of masks in public and closing down restaurants and bars.

India's 20,000 new infections were another record. Several Indian states reimposed partial or full lockdowns after the total number of cases jumped by nearly 100,000 in one week to about 548,000.

In China, nearly 8.3 million out of about 21 million have undergone testing in recent weeks in Beijing after an outbreak centered on a wholesale market. The country reported just 12 new cases Monday, including seven in Beijing.

South Korean authorities reported 47 new cases as they struggled to curb outbreaks that have spread from Seoul to other regions.

Health authorities are using what they describe as the world's first saliva test for the coronavirus in Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne, in the state of Victoria, where the disease is spreading at an alarming rate.

Victorian Health Minister Jenny Mikakos said Monday that 75 people had tested positive in the state in the latest 24 hours, bringing the total to about 2,100.

The European Union is preparing a list of 15 countries whose citizens will be allowed to visit the bloc beginning Wednesday, Spain's foreign minister, Arancha Gonzalez Laya, told the Cadena SER radio network. Because of the resurgence in the U.S., America may not be on that list.

Tracking cases proves difficult amid new surge

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Health departments around the U.S. that are using contact tracers to contain coronavirus outbreaks are scrambling to bolster their ranks amid a surge of cases and resistance to cooperation from those infected or exposed.

With too few trained contact tracers to handle soaring caseloads, one hard-hit Arizona county is relying on National Guard members to pitch in. In Louisiana, people who have tested positive typically wait more than two days to respond to health officials — giving the disease crucial time to spread. Many tracers are finding it hard to break through suspicion and apathy to convince people that compliance is crucial.

Contact tracing — tracking people who test positive and anyone they've come in contact with — was challenging even when stay-at-home orders were in place. Tracers say it's exponentially more difficult now that many restaurants, bars and gyms are full, and people are gathering with family and friends.

"People are probably letting their guard down a little ... they think there is no longer a threat," said Grand Traverse County, Mich., Health Officer Wendy Hirschenberger, who was alerted by health officials in another part of the state that infected tourists had visited vineyards and bars in her area.

Her health department was then able to urge local residents who had visited those business-

es to self-quarantine.

Hirschenberger was lucky she received that information — only made possible because the tourists had cooperated with contact tracers. But that's often not the case.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said Friday that contact tracing simply isn't working in the U.S.

Some who test positive don't cooperate because they don't feel sick. Others refuse testing even after being exposed. Some never call back contact tracers. And still others simply object to sharing any information.

Some states were caught off guard by the surge and are trying to quickly bolster the number of contact tracers.

"Right now we have an insufficient capacity to do the job we need to," Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson said recently.

In addition to needing more staff to handle rising case numbers, contact-tracing teams also must build trust with people who might be uneasy or scared, said Dr. Umair Shah, executive director for Harris County Public Health in Houston, where an outbreak threatens to overwhelm hospitals.

That's difficult to do if infected people don't return calls. In Louisiana, only 59% of those who have tested positive since mid-May have responded to phone calls from contact tracers, according to the latest data from the state health department.

High court refuses to block upcoming federal executions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday refused to block the execution of four federal prison inmates who are scheduled to be put to death in July and August.

The executions would mark the first use of the death penalty on the federal level since 2003.

The justices rejected an appeal from

four inmates who were convicted of killing children. Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor noted that they would have blocked the executions from going forward.

The court's action leaves no obstacles standing in the way of the executions, the first of which is scheduled for July 13.

The inmates are separately asking a federal judge in Washington to impose a new delay on their executions over other legal

issues that have yet to be resolved.

The activity at the high court came after Attorney General William Barr directed the federal Bureau of Prisons to schedule the executions. Three of the men had been scheduled to be put to death when Barr first announced the federal government would resume executions last year, ending an informal moratorium on federal capital punishment as the issue receded from the public domain.

Attack kills 3 at stock exchange in Pakistan

Associated Press

KARACHI, Pakistan — Militants attacked the stock exchange in the Pakistani city of Karachi on Monday, killing at least three people — two guards and a policeman — according to police. Special police forces deployed to the scene of the attack and in a swift operation secured the building, killing all four gunmen.

A third security guard was reported to be in critical condition following the assault.

There were no reports of any wounded among the brokers and employees inside the exchange and a separatist militant group from a neighboring province later claimed responsibility for the attack.

The attackers were armed with grenades and automatic rifles, police said. They launched the attack by opening fire at the entrance gate of the Pakistan Stock Exchange in the southern port city, the country's financial center.

Heavily armed special forces quickly surrounded the building located in the heart of Karachi's financial district, where the Pakistan State Bank is located, as well as the headquarters of several national and international financial institutions.

Rizwan Ahmend, a police official at the scene, said that after opening fire, the gunmen entered the stock exchange grounds. He said that after the attack was over, food supplies were found on the bodies of the gunmen, indicating they may have planned a long siege, which police quickly thwarted.

Later, the Baluchistan Liberation Army, claimed responsibility for the attack. The group has been waging an insurgency for years, demanding independence for Pakistan's gas-rich southwestern Baluchistan province, which borders the southern Sindh province, where Karachi is the provincial capital.

Miss. surrenders Confederate symbol, set to design new flag

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi will retire the last state flag in the U.S. with the Confederate battle emblem, more than a century after white supremacist legislators adopted the design a generation after the South lost the Civil War.

A broad coalition of lawmakers — Black and white, Democrat and Republican — voted Sunday for change as the state faced increasing pressure amid nationwide protests against racial injustice.

Mississippi has a 38% Black population, and critics have said for generations that it's wrong to have a flag that prominently features an emblem many condemn as racist.

Democratic Sen. David Jordan told his colleagues just before the vote that Mississippi needs a flag that unifies rather than divides.

"Let's do this because it's the right thing to do," Jordan said.

The Senate voted 37-14 to retire the flag, hours after the House voted 91-23.

Cheers rang out in the state Capitol after the Senate vote. Some spectators wept. Legislators embraced each other, many hugging colleagues who were on the opposing side of an issue that has long divided the tradition-bound state.

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves is expected to sign the bill into law in the next few days.

Democratic Rep. Robert

Johnson of Natchez choked back tears as he told reporters that he has seen white colleagues develop more empathy about how the Confederate symbol is painful to him and other African Americans.

"They began to understand and feel the same thing that I've been feeling for 61 years of my life," Johnson said.

A commission will design a new flag that cannot include the Confederate symbol and that must have the words "In God We Trust." Voters will be asked to approve the new design in the Nov. 3 election. If they reject it, the commission will set a different design using the same guidelines, and that would be sent to voters later.

Couple aims guns at group that went to home of St. Louis mayor to seek her resignation

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — A white couple pointed guns at protesters in St. Louis as a group marched toward the mayor's home to demand her resignation after she read the names and addresses of several residents who supported defunding the police department during an online briefing.

A social media video showed the armed couple standing outside of their large home Sunday evening in the upscale Central West End neighborhood of the Missouri city.

In the video, the unidentified couple shouted at protesters, while people in the march moved the crowd forward, urging participants to ignore them. People in the crowd included Black and white protesters.

It wasn't immediately clear whether St. Louis police were aware of the incident. An email and phone call from The Associated Press to police weren't

immediately answered.

The group of at least 500 people was heading toward Mayor Lyda Krewson's home, chanting, "Resign Lyda, take the cops with you," news outlets reported.

Resignation demands come after a Facebook Live briefing on Friday where Krewson read the names and addresses of several residents who wrote letters to the mayor suggesting she defund the police department.

The video was removed from Facebook and Krewson apologized Friday, stating she didn't "intend to cause distress."

The names and letters are considered public records, but Krewson's actions received heavy backlash.

Protesters nationwide have been pushing to "defund the police" following the death of George Floyd and other Black people killed by law enforcement. Floyd, who was in handcuffs, died May 25 when a white Minneapolis police offi-

cer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes.

Krewson, a white longtime alderwoman, was elected as St. Louis' first female mayor in April 2017 by pledging to work to reduce crime and improve impoverished neighborhoods. She and her two young children were in the car in front of their home in 1995 when her husband, Jeff, was slain during a random carjacking attempt.

Homicides have spiked in recent years in St. Louis, which annually ranks among the most violent cities in the nation based on FBI statistics. An online petition calling for Krewson's resignation had more than 43,000 signatures as of early Monday.

"As a leader, you don't do stuff like that ... it's only right that we visit her at her home," said state Rep. Rasheen Aldridge, D-St. Louis, speaking into a megaphone at the protest Sunday.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman accused of burning house, papers

TX FORT WORTH — A woman burned down her \$1.6 million suburban Fort Worth mansion while trying to destroy documents from her husband's health care clinic as authorities were investigating the couple for fraud, prosecutors allege.

A seven-count federal indictment charges Mark and Melissa Kuper with conspiracy to commit health care fraud and health care fraud aiding and abetting. They both have pleaded not guilty to allegations that they submitted more than 100,000 claims to federal health care programs for "sham" physical therapy, psychotherapy and pain management services from 2014 to 2017, according to court records.

Travis Couey, a physical therapist who worked for Mark Kuper, was also arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit health fraud for allegedly preparing false medical records.

The trio allegedly submitted \$10 million of false claims to Medicare, Medicare or Tricare for services they didn't perform, the indictment said.

Woman arrested for theft of rent payments

LA SLIDELL — A Louisiana woman faces charges after she allegedly stole nearly \$87,000 in rent payments from an apartment complex.

Terri Smith was arrested on a single count of theft over \$25,000, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

Smith, 48, of Pearl River, had been the acting manager of the complex and was in charge of overseeing and depositing rent payments, The Times-Pica-

yune/The New Orleans Advocate reported.

The Sheriff's Office began an investigation after the company learned through a forensic audit that \$86,968 in cash was missing.

Banner plane goes into sea, pilot rescued

NJ SURF CITY — Authorities in New Jersey said a banner plane went into the sea off the coast of Surf City, but the pilot was pulled to shore.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the Cessna 150 landed in the ocean off the 13th Street beach in the Long Beach Island municipality.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Edward Wargo told NJ Advance Media that lifeguards were able to pull the pilot from the water, but his condition wasn't clear. WHYY-TV reported that he was evaluated at the scene for injuries, which didn't appear to be serious, and then transported to a local hospital.

Wargo said the plane hasn't been recovered and remains in about 17 feet of water.

The FAA said it would investigate and the National Transportation Safety Board would work to determine the probable cause.

Man confesses to church arson

MD TANEYTOWN — A Maryland man faces multiple arson-related charges after police said he confessed to setting fires at a church where investigators found a Molotov cocktail in a vestibule.

David Francis Creager, 47, was detained and admitted to setting fire to the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, police told The Daily Times of Salisbury.

Creager, who lives in Carroll

County, faces charges including second-degree arson, possession of incendiary materials with intent to create a destructive device, defacing religious property, and malicious destruction of property, according to police.

Police: Suspects pile out of truck, assault 3

DE NEWARK — Police in Delaware are investigating after as many as 12 suspects climbed out of a truck and assaulted three victims for reasons that were not immediately clear.

The attack happened in Newark, the city's police department said in a news release. A dark-colored Ford F-350 pickup truck pulled up near three victims, who were walking along a street, and began assaulting them.

Two male victims suffered facial and other injuries and one was knocked unconscious at the scene, police said. Both were taken to a hospital with injuries not considered life-threatening. A female victim was also struck in the face but refused medical treatment, according to police.

The suspects were described as at least six, and possibly up to 12, males in their late teens or early 20s, according to police, who said there is no known motive for the incident.

17 guns stolen from shop, reward offered

AL MONTGOMERY — A search is underway for suspects in the burglary of an Alabama pawn shop where more than a dozen weapons were stolen.

The break-in happened June 2 at Quick Pawn in Montgomery. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, 17 firearms

were taken in the robbery.

The ATF, Montgomery Police Department and the National Shooting Sports Foundation is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to those responsible, al.com reported. The NSSF is the trade association for the firearms industry.

14 arrested in illegal fireworks crackdown

RI PROVIDENCE — Police in Providence have so far arrested 14 people since the city formed a task force to crack down on illegal fireworks that have bedeviled cities across the country this summer.

The department tweeted that six people were arrested Thursday and eight more on Friday as officials prepared to enforce the state's ban on fireworks again.

Grizzly bear attacks federal biologist

MT MISSOULA — A grizzly bear has attacked a federal biologist during a surprise encounter at a research site in Montana's Centennial Valley.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokesperson Joseph Szuszwalak said the biologist, who was not named, was treated for serious bite wounds before being released from a hospital in Rexburg, Idaho, the Missoulian reported.

The biologist heard a noise in the brush while monitoring a sage grouse research project and saw two grizzly bears less than 100 yards away, Szuszwalak said. One bear stood up while the other charged.

The biologist used bear spray until the animals ran off. Other Fish and Wildlife Service staff nearby helped escort the biologist to safety.

From wire reports

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Reporting
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and Military News

Racing roundup

Hamlin picks up 4th win of year at Pocono

Associated Press

LONG POND, Pa. — Round 2 at Pocono went to Denny Hamlin. Hamlin seized the spotlight, specifically in victory lane when Pocono had to set up lights after the race ended in the dark.

Hamlin topped Kevin Harvick on Sunday night to win the second Cup race of the weekend at Pocono Raceway and flip the result of the opener. The 1-2 finish out of each driver is a clear sign two of the best drivers in the game are poised again to make a championship push.

Hamlin has four wins this season for Joe Gibbs Racing and Harvick has three for Stewart-Haas Racing as they start to separate themselves from the rest of the field.

The Daytona 500 champion's victory capped the first NASCAR tripleheader at one track. The race was delayed by lightning and rain, as much a part of Pocono as a JGR driver taking the checkered flag. Gibbs' roster has six of the last seven winners at Pocono.

Briscoe tops Chastain for Xfinity Series win

LONG POND, Pa. — Chase Briscoe held off Ross Chastain in overtime to win the crash-filled Xfinity Series at Pocono Raceway, the second of three NASCAR races at the track on Sunday.

Chastain hit the jackpot with his runner-up finish. He won the \$100,000 Dash 4 Cash prize awarded to the highest finisher among four eligible drivers.

Jones dodges wrecks, wins first Truck race

LONG POND, Pa. — Brandon Jones took home a trophy and sent a car to the scrap heap in about an hour at Pocono.

Jones won a two-lap sprint to the finish to win.

Source: Pats sign QB Newton

Associated Press

BOSTON — The New England Patriots have reached an agreement with free-agent quarterback Cam Newton, bringing in the 2015 NFL Most Valuable Player to help the team move on from three-time MVP Tom Brady, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press.

The one-year deal is worth up to \$7.5 million with incentives, the person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss it publicly. A Patriots spokesman said the team had nothing to announce Sunday night. The signing was first reported by ESPN.

"I'm as excited as I don't know what right now!!" Newton posted on Instagram. "All praise to God!! Dropping content tomorrow!! I hope you're ready!! Let's go Pats."

The Patriots had been heading to training camp with 2019 fourth-round draft choice Jarrett Stidham as the heir apparent to Brady, who led the

team to six Super Bowl championships since 2001. Stidham appeared in three games last season.

The only other experienced quarterback on the defending AFC East champions' roster was 34-year-old Brian Hoyer, who has started 38 games in an 11-year career with seven NFL teams.

A three-time Pro Bowl selection who was the league's top player in 2015, Newton remains the NFL's all-time leader in touchdowns rushing by a quarterback. He had one year remaining on a five-year, \$103.8 million contract, but the Panthers saved \$19.1 million under the salary cap by releasing him on March 24.

The 31-year-old Newton was the No. 1 overall pick in the 2011 draft after leading Auburn to a national championship and winning the Heisman Trophy. He helped the Panthers reach the playoffs four times, including the Super Bowl in 2015.

The Panthers finished 15-1 that season and Newton won

league MVP honors after throwing for 3,837 and 35 touchdowns and rushing for 636 yards and 10 TDs. But he was criticized after Carolina's 24-10 loss to Denver in the Super Bowl for not jumping on a loose ball late in the game and cutting his postgame news conference short.

After missing the postseason in 2016, the Panthers returned after going 11-5 the next year, losing to the New Orleans Saints in the wild-card round. More problematic, a shoulder injury severely hampered his throwing in 2018; after starting 6-2, the Panthers lost their next seven games.

Newton had surgery to repair a torn rotator cuff before the 2019 season. But he injured his foot in a brief appearance in the third preseason game against New England; he played only two games last season before being placed on injured reserve with a broken bone in his foot.

Newton has been rehabbing ever since.

New England fined \$1.1M, lose pick

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New England Patriots have been fined \$1.1 million by the NFL for inappropriately filming the Cincinnati Bengals' sideline during a game last season.

On Sunday, the league also took away a third-round pick in the 2021 draft.

Also, the team's production crew will not be allowed to shoot any games in the 2020 season.

ESPN first reported the penalties. NFL spokesman Michael Signora confirmed the discipline to The Associated Press.

The filming occurred at the Bengals game at Cleveland on Dec. 8 of last season. The Bengals hosted the Patriots the following week and lost 34-13.

When the taping became known last season, the team said at the time a three-person

crew producing a web series titled "Do Your Job" "inappropriately filmed the field from the press box" as part of a feature on the scouting department.

The filming took place "without specific knowledge of league rules," the statement said.

Also, the team's statement last season said that while they were granted credentials for the crew from the Browns, "our failure to inform the Bengals and the league was an unintended oversight."

When confronted, the team said the crew "immediately turned over all footage to the league and cooperated fully."

At the time, Patriots coach Bill Belichick says neither he nor his coaching staff had watched any of the video footage.

"I personally have never viewed any video footage at all,

anything that those production people have done, other than what's shown on public television or something like that," Belichick said in December.

Previously, New England was fined \$250,000 and lost a first-round draft pick in 2007 for violating NFL rules against using video to steal signals in a scandal dubbed "Spygate." Belichick was also fined \$500,000. Spygate fueled a distrust of the Patriots that persisted when the team was accused of illegally deflating the footballs used in the 2015 AFC championship.

The punishment by the NFL in that case was also severe. Quarterback Tom Brady was suspended four games, and the team was fined \$1 million and docked another first-round draft pick.

Johnson wins Travelers, extends streak

Associated Press

CROMWELL, Conn. — Dustin Johnson won the Travelers Championship on Sunday to end a long drought and extend his streak of seasons with a victory to 13.

Johnson closed with a 3-under 67 for a one-stroke victory over Kevin Streelman at fan-free TPC River Highlands. Johnson last won in Mexico City in March 2019.

“I’m definitely proud of myself for continuing the streak and I want to keep it going,” Johnson said. “It was a long time between wins, though, and, so, hopefully it won’t be that long for the next one.”

Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus each won in 17 consecutive years. Johnson failed to win in 2014, but is given credit for winning in the 2013-14 season from his victory in the fall of 2013 in Shanghai. The tour changed to a wraparound season in 2013.

Johnson tapped in for par on the par-4 18th, raised his ball to acknowledge the smattering of applause from course workers, officials and reporters, the only in-person witnesses allowed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

He finished at 19-under 261 for his 21st PGA Tour title.

Streelman also shot 67.

Streelman, who made seven straight birdies to win at TPC River Highlands in 2014, had a 37-foot birdie try on 18 that ended up just short and right.

He was two strokes behind Johnson on the 17th fairway when the weather horn blew for an hour-long storm delay.

Johnson came out of the delay and hit his tee shot on 16 into a greenside bunker. His second shot went well past the hole and made bogey to cut his lead to a stroke.

“I’ve had a few missed cuts, so to come back and finish a solo second is nice, but to be

that close and perform and be right there, I’m just a little disappointed right now,” Streelman said.

Johnson was at 19 under when his tee shot on the par-4 15th went left and came inches from going into the signature lake that surrounds the finishing holes. His first pitch didn’t make it to the green, and he hit the second to 4 feet to save par.

“It was lucky, but a still had to made a good up-and-down to make par,” he said.

Mackenzie Hughes, who shot a first-round 60, had a 67 to tie for third with 23-year-old Will Gordon at 17 under. Hughes made 48-foot birdie putt on 17, which he started well left of the hole and watched as turned right to the flag. He finished the round with a much straighter 43-foot birdie putt on 18.

Gordon, who had no status on either the PGA Tour or the Korn Ferry Tour, had seven birdies in a 64. The finish was

just enough to give him a special temporary card and unlimited exemptions for the rest of the season.

His lone bogey came on 17, and briefly dropped him to fourth place.

“I knew the higher the better, so I was watching the leaderboard coming in,” he said.

Johnson started the day two strokes behind Brendon Todd, and took the lead after three straight birdies put him at 20 under after 10 holes.

Todd shot a 75 to tie for 11th at 13 under. He made a 7 on the par-4 12th.

Bryson DeChambeau shot a 68 to tie for sixth at 15 under.

Top-ranked Rory McIlroy tied for 11th at 13 under after a 67.

Phil Mickelson, playing his first tournament since turning 50, followed up his opening rounds of 64 and 63 with two 71s to finish at 11 under.

For MLB fans in the know, good views still possible

Associated Press

BOSTON — Tucked under the center field seats at Fenway Park, down some stairs from Lansdowne Street in an area previously used as the visiting team’s batting cage, is a sports bar that is preparing to reopen from the coronavirus shutdown.

Largely windowless and decorated with sepia photographs hung on dark wooden walls, the main source of light is the sunshine streaming in through a thick metal screen that reveals the true treasure of the location: a view of the Boston Red Sox field, from Green Monster to Pesky Pole, that could make the Bleacher Bar one of the few spots to watch a major league game in person this season.

“It’s one of a kind. It really is,” said Joe Hicks, who runs the restaurant and three others in the area. “Kids and families, they get excited when they walk in here and they see how cool this is. People, they walk in and they’re just naturally happy.”

“Being able to see inside the park, it doesn’t get much better than that.”

Major League Baseball suspended spring training on March 12, and the season that was scheduled to open on March 26 never

did. Last week, players and owners reached an agreement to play an abbreviated, 60-game season that would start July 23 or 24 in teams’ home ballparks.

But they’re not yet ready to crowd the seats with tens of thousands of fans.

Instead, those hoping to see a game in person may have to settle for places like the Bleacher Bar, the Rogers Centre hotel or the Wrigley rooftops, pressing their face up to the windows or squinting through fences like the Knothole Gangs of yore.

The Roberto Clemente Bridge provides a look into PNC Park and a hotel in Baltimore might offer rooms with a view of the field at Camden Yards.

“There is some irony in the fact that the kind of social areas that we’ve created in baseball parks may end up being the key to the social distancing that may be required when we do see the sport again,” baseball architect Janet Marie Smith said. “I think there’s some, yeah, some sort of cruel irony in that.”

Smith, who helped build the paradigm-shifting Camden Yards and worked on renovations for Dodger Stadium and Fenway, said ballpark designers have tried to find new ways to connect with their urban

surroundings after moving back from the suburbs in the 1990s.

The result: a picnic area in San Diego, a waterfront promenade in San Francisco, a street plaza in Baltimore, a nightclub in Miami.

And now those new knotholes could be a foot in the door for fans if teams and government officials deem them safe to open before the actual seating bowls.

“We’re seeing that the mixture of uses bode well for a lot of situations,” Smith said. “We weren’t looking for this one, for sure. But it does allow one to tiptoe back in and have a lighter touch than the traditional way of thinking of a stadium or ballpark with all fixed seating.”

Most teams contacted by The Associated Press last week said they were following guidance from local officials on whether fans would be allowed to watch games from these areas. In many states, a key distinction is whether they are designed for ticketed fans or outside the turnstiles; in Massachusetts, for example, the Bleacher Bar can reopen as a restaurant even while Fenway and other large arenas remain closed.