

Navy's new subs hobbled by parts woes

Bloomberg

The U.S. Navy has swapped more than 1,600 parts among its new Virginia-class submarines since 2013 to ease maintenance bottlenecks as components that are supposed to last 33 years wear out decades sooner.

Parts are being shuttled regularly among the nuclear-powered fast-attack submarines so that vessels in the \$166 billion class built by General Dynamics and Huntington Ingalls Industries can return to operations, according to data from the Naval Sea Systems Command and the Congressional Budget Office.

The 48-ship Virginia class is the pillar of the Navy's undersea strategy into the second half of the 21st century to counter China's growing surface fleet, with increasing firepower in each succeeding model, or "block." The subs can stalk undersea adversaries with torpedoes, strike surface vessels or attack land targets with Tomahawk cruise missiles while staying on patrol for months.

The parts problem is a readiness issue "that goes with the overall concern that the Navy is not investing enough in maintenance, supply chains and shipyard infrastructure," said Bryan Clark, a former special assistant to the chief of naval operations. Clark, who's now a naval analyst with the Hudson Institute, said "the Navy may have been too slow to act on indications that some components were wearing out

faster."

Congress has continually pushed the Navy to increase construction rates for the Virginia class from two vessels a year to three.

If a part isn't available for a sub that's finishing refurbishment, shipyard maintenance workers may be forced to borrow, or "cannibalize," one from a submarine entering maintenance in order to reduce delays. Most cannibalized parts are for non-propulsion electronic systems, but the Navy declined to specify which ones are affected, citing operational security.

The number of swapped parts for the submarines, which began entering service in 2004, increased from 100 in 2013 to 171 in 2016, 201 in 2018 and 452 in 2019 before declining to 318 last year. The Navy projects the number will drop to 82 between this year and next.

The big disadvantage of cannibalizing parts from one submarine to another is the extra workload involved, according to the Congressional Budget Office, as well as the risk that a part might be damaged during the extra steps.

The parts-swapping problem is in addition to delays in delivery of the submarine's newest model, the Government Accountability Office said in an assessment this month. The potential 12-vessel "Block V" version of the submarine "is already costing more than expected," the GAO said.

The Defense Department's fiscal 2022 request would fund the 35th and 36th vessels.

The latest models will have an enlarged capacity for 65 torpedo-sized weapons, up from 37 today. By fiscal 2028, the Navy wants to deploy hypersonic weapons on the Virginia class.

Although some components expected to last for the life of a sub "have failed sooner than expected, the Virginia Class submarine design changes were revolutionary and forward-thinking" and the acquisition strategy offers "the ability to make reliability improvements in later blocks," the Naval Sea Systems Command said in a statement.

Some parts identified to last 33 years based on engineering analysis and testing "were subject to degradation" such as "corrosion caused by complex galvanic interactions," or when two dissimilar metals or electrical parts come in contact for an extended period of time, "that had not been predicted in some operating environments," the Navy said.

The Navy's submarine leaders are "not satisfied with any material cannibalization that limits our submarine fleet's ability to respond to national tasking and is taking all steps necessary to avoid these scenarios," the command said. It said it is ordering parts earlier to "reduce material work stoppages and maintenance delays awaiting components."

According to the Navy, 70% of the part swaps were between Block I subs that first entered service in 2004 and Block II vessels initially delivered in 2008.

Navy releases video of blast that measured as quake

Orlando Sentinel

There's wasn't an earthquake off Florida's east coast on Friday, but the United States Geological Survey measured something that hit 3.9 on the Richter scale. Turns out it was the Navy setting off explosions next to its new aircraft carrier.

The USS Gerald R. Ford was parked about 100 miles east-northeast from Ponce Inlet when the boom from a 40,000

pound explosive shook the cameras filming the event, the first of several planned Full Ship Shock Trials took place.

It's a new aircraft carrier that's going through the final steps needed before the Navy can sign off on it to be deployed.

"The first-in-class aircraft carrier was designed using advanced computer modeling methods, testing and analysis

to ensure the ship is hardened to withstand battle conditions, and these shock trials provide data used in validating the shock hardness of the ship," reads a release from the Navy about the trials.

The Navy has not performed a test like this on an aircraft carrier since 1987, but has performed them on other smaller ships, but not since 2016.

"Ford's shock trials are being

conducted off the East Coast of the United States, within a narrow schedule that complies with environmental mitigation requirements, respecting known migration patterns of marine life in the test area," the Navy said.

The Navy did not say how many more trials it will perform, but just that they will be off the U.S. East Coast and end later this summer.

B-52s traverse Arctic in 27-hour mission

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Air Force B-52H bombers returned to the United States from a European deployment by way of a 12,000-mile mission through the Arctic and Pacific late last week, the Air Force said in a news release Monday.

Four Stratofortress aircraft had been operating out of Morón Air Base, Spain, since May 17 as part of the bomber task force deployment.

The Air Force did not specify how many B52s flew in the final 27-hour-long mission over June 17-18, which concluded when the bombers reached their home station of Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

During the extended mission, the bombers integrated with Norwegian joint terminal attack controller personnel in the

Nordic region, then through the Arctic Circle and into the northern Pacific to support U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the Air Force said.

The lengthy mission required far-reaching aerial refueling, with flying tankers from three major commands linking up with the bombers.

Refueling tankers came from the 100th Air Refueling Wing, RAF Mildenhall, England; the 92nd Air Refueling Wing, Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash.; the 36th Wing, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam; the Hawaii Air National Guard's 154th Wing, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; and the 60th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

The Arctic and the Western Pacific are regions of growing importance in the competition among the U.S., Russia and China.

Pentagon strategy in recent years has begun shifting focus away from the Middle East and toward the Pacific, where China's military is steadily emerging.

Meanwhile, melting Arctic ice due to global climate change is reconfiguring the region and spurring competition among some nations for natural resources.

Bomber task force missions aim to assure allies and partners that the Air Force is ready to quickly respond to any contingency, the service said.

"Our unparalleled global strike capability is the backbone of our combat-credible force," Gen. Jeff Harrigian, commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa, said in the news release. "That force is the foundation of our extended deterrence strategy that safeguards both U.S. security and that of our allies and partners."

Police: Yokosuka-based naval officer fell asleep at wheel before fatal crash

BY HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

NUMAZU, Japan — A U.S. naval officer has been formally charged with negligent driving resulting in death and injury following a May 29 accident that killed two people in Shizuoka prefecture.

Lt. Ridge Hanneman Alkonis, 33, a weapons officer aboard the destroyer USS Benfold, had fallen asleep at the wheel before crashing his car into parked vehicles and pedestrians at a soba restaurant's parking lot, according to an indictment from the Shizuoka District Public Prosecutors office in Numazu.

The incident happened at about 1 p.m. in the Yamamiya district of Fujinomiya, a city that's about two hours from Yokosuka Naval Base.

Alkonis, who police say was not hurt in the crash, continued to drive after he felt sleepy and "could have gotten in a situation that could make it difficult to gaze ahead," according to the indictment.

The sailor's car crashed into an

empty vehicle at about 25 mph, causing a chain-reaction accident involving five cars, according to the indictment and police statements.

One of the vehicles struck and pinned an 85-year-old woman who died that afternoon at a nearby hospital, the document said. A 54-year-old man, who was pinned while getting behind the wheel of his car, was hospitalized and died on June 11.

A 53-year-old woman suffered bruises to her knees and left elbow that took about a week to heal, according to the indictment.

A court date for Alkonis had not been scheduled as of Monday, said a spokesman for the Shizuoka District Court in Numazu. Japanese officials typically speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

Japanese police are leading the investigation into the crash, Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo said in an email Tuesday.

"The Navy takes all incidents involving our personnel very seriously," she said.

Taliban take key district, augmenting recent gains

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Taliban fighters took control of a key district in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province Monday and encircled the provincial capital, police said, as the insurgent group added to its recent battlefield victories while peace talks have stalled.

The Taliban's gains came as the Pentagon reaffirmed the U.S. troop withdrawal was on pace to conclude by early September.

Fighting around Imam Sahib district began late Sunday and by midday Monday the Taliban had overrun the district headquarters and were in control of police headquarters, provincial police spokesman Inamuddin Rahmani said.

Taliban militants were roughly a half-mile outside Kunduz, the provincial capital, but had not entered into the city, he said, although there were reports of small bands of Taliban near the outskirts and residents trying to leave for Kabul.

Dozens of districts have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when U.S. and NATO troops began their final departure from Afghanistan. Like Imam Sahib district in northern

Kunduz, their significance often lies in their proximity to roads and major cities.

Imam Sahib is strategically located near Afghanistan's northern border with Tajikistan, a key supply route from Central Asia.

Rahmani said police and Afghan National Army soldiers had jointly tried to defend the district. He said it still wasn't clear how many casualties the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces suffered in the protracted battle or how many Taliban were killed or wounded.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed confirmed Imam Sahib district was in Taliban hands.

Taliban gains and the steady withdrawal of the remaining 2,500-3,500 U.S. troops and 7,000 NATO forces have lent an urgency to efforts to find a negotiated end to Afghanistan's protracted conflict.

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby on Monday said Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has regularly reviewed the U.S. withdrawal, which he said is "on pace" and will be finished by early September. "It is a dynamic situation, and we've said that from the very beginning," Kirby said.

Judge tosses claims on clearing protesters

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge dismissed most claims filed by activists and civil liberties groups who accused the Trump administration of violating the civil rights of protesters who were forcefully removed by police before then-President Donald Trump walked to a church near the White House for a photo op.

U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich said Monday that the claims in the suit, which alleged that Trump and then-Attorney General William Barr had conspired to violate the rights of protesters last June, were speculative and it was premature for the court to conclude whether the actions of law enforcement officers were justified.

Friedrich dismissed the claims against Barr and other federal officials, including the acting U.S. Park Police chief, Gregory Monahan, finding there wasn't sufficient evidence to prove there was any agreement or plan to violate the rights of the protesters. The judge also said the law gives them immunity in civil litigation.

In a 51-page decision, the judge did allow the claims against the Metropolitan Police Department and the Arlington, Va., Police Department — their officers were involved in clearing the park — to proceed.

The lawsuit stemmed from one of the most high-profile moments of the Trump presidency, when federal and local law enforcement officials aggressive-

ly forced a group of largely peaceful protesters back from Lafayette Square outside of the White House, firing smoke bombs and pepper balls into the crowd to disperse the group. Officers were seen shoving protesters and journalists as they pushed the crowd back.

Barr has said he met with other law enforcement officials earlier that day to review a plan to extend the security perimeter around the White House to protect federal agents after days of unrest in Washington following the death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the group Black Lives Matter D.C. and individual protesters who were present by the

ACLU of DC, Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the law firm of Arnold & Porter.

In a statement, Arthur Ago, the director of the criminal justice project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said the ruling set an "extremely dangerous precedent" and that former officials like Barr were "getting off scot-free."

"We will always stand up for the rights of those peacefully demonstrating for racial justice, and this ruling sends the wrong message for police accountability efforts at a time when it is needed the most," Ago said.

GOP set to block election bill in Senate showdown

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Democrats' expansive elections and voting bill is all but certain to be rejected in a key test vote in the Senate, providing a dramatic example of Republicans' use of the filibuster to block legislation and forcing hard questions for Democrats over next steps.

The far-reaching proposal, at nearly 900 pages, is viewed by backers as the civil rights issue of the era, legislation that is suddenly of the highest priority after the 2020 election as states impose restrictive new laws that could make it more difficult to vote. In the evenly split Senate, Republicans are united in opposition, seeing the bill as federal overreach and denying Democrats the 60 votes that would be needed to overcome the filibuster and begin debate.

"Are you afraid to debate?" Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Monday ahead of the vote. "We're about to find out."

Months in the making, Tuesday's showdown over the For the People Act, as it is called, is hardly the end of the road but the start of long campaign ahead. President Joe Biden has vowed what the White House calls the "fight of his presidency" over ensuring Americans' access to the polls. At stake is not only election rules that make it easier to vote, but also Democrats' own ability to confront the limits of bipartisanship and decide whether the filibuster rules should change.

Republican leader Mitch McConnell blasted the legislation ahead of the debate as a "disastrous proposal" that will get "no quarter" in the Senate.

The party that controls D.C. has been preparing for this moment for months, even as lawmakers faced their own internal divisions over the sprawling bill, which would remove hurdles to voting erected in the name of election security, curtail the influence of big money in politics and reduce partisan influence over the drawing of congressional districts.

US hits promising milestones on virus deaths and vaccines

Associated Press

COVID-19 deaths in the United States have dipped below 300 a day for the first time since the early days of the disaster in March 2020, while the drive to put shots in arms hit another encouraging milestone Monday: 150 million Americans fully vaccinated.

The coronavirus was the third leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2020, behind heart disease and cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But now, as the outbreak loosens its grip, it has fallen down the list of the biggest killers.

CDC data suggests that more Americans are dying every day from accidents, chronic lower respiratory diseases, strokes or Alzheimer's disease than from COVID-19.

The U.S. death toll stands at more than 600,000, while the worldwide count is close to 3.9 million, though the real figures in both cases are believed to be markedly higher.

About 45% of the U.S. popula-

tion has been fully vaccinated, according to the CDC. Over 53% of Americans have received at least one dose of vaccine. But U.S. demand for shots has slumped, to the disappointment of public health experts.

Dr. Ana Diez Roux, dean of Drexel University's school of public health, said the dropping rates of infections and deaths are cause for celebration. But she cautioned that the virus still has a chance to spread and mutate given the low vaccination rates in some states, including Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Wyoming and Idaho.

"So far, it looks like the vaccines we have are effective against the variants that are circulating," Diez Roux said. "But the more time the virus is jumping from person to person, the more time there is for variants to develop, and some of those could be more dangerous."

New cases are also running at about 11,400 a day on average, down from over a quarter-million per day in early January.

Kim's sister dismisses chance for US talks

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed prospects for an early resumption of diplomacy with the United States, saying Tuesday that U.S. expectations of talks would “plunge them into a greater disappointment.”

Kim Yo Jong's blunt statement indicates that the diplomatic impasse over North Korea's nuclear program is likely to continue unless the North suffers greater pandemic-related economic difficulties and needs urgent outside assistance, some experts said.

Hope for a restart of nuclear talks flared briefly after Kim Jong Un said last week that his country must be ready for both dialogue and confrontation, though more for confrontation. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan called Kim's comments an “interesting signal.”

On Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong de-

ridged Sullivan's response.

“It seems that the U.S. may interpret the situation in such a way as to seek a comfort for itself,” the official Korean Central News Agency quoted her as saying. “The expectation, which they chose to harbor the wrong way, would plunge them into a greater disappointment.”

Shin Beomchul, an analyst with the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said North Korea has been communicating the same message for months — that it has no intention to return to talks unless the U.S. offers meaningful concessions, likely in the form of eased economic sanctions. The Biden administration, for its part, doesn't want to budge either, he said.

“Both parties are locked in a waiting game — North Korea wants the United States to make concessions first, and the United States has no intentions to match

a level of action the North is demanding,” Shin said.

On Monday, during a visit to Seoul, Sung Kim, the top U.S. envoy on North Korea affairs, said Washington is willing to meet the North “anywhere, anytime without preconditions.” But he stressed that the Biden administration would continue to pressure North Korea with sanctions over its nuclear and missile ambitions.

Just before Kim Yo Jong's statement was released Tuesday, Sung Kim met South Korean Unification Minister Lee In-young and said Washington and Seoul remain committed to seeking the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy. Lee said he hoped North Korea would return to the negotiating table at an early date and called the current situation “a very good chance” to resume talks.

Sung Kim later met South Korean President Moon Jae-in, and

the two said they would strive to resume U.S.-North Korea talks, Moon's office said. The South Korean government didn't immediately comment on Kim Yo Jong's statement.

As a precondition for the talks' resumption, North Korea has repeatedly called on the U.S. to lift its “hostile policy” toward it, an apparent reference to the U.S.-led sanctions and regular military drills with South Korea. But experts say the Biden administration won't ease sanctions or make other major concessions before North Korea takes concrete steps toward denuclearization.

U.S. officials have suggested Biden will take the middle ground between former President Donald Trump's direct dealings with Kim and ex-President Barack Obama's policy of “strategic patience.” Details of Biden's North Korea policy haven't been publicly released.

Duterte threatens to arrest Filipinos who refuse vaccine

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine president has threatened to order the arrest of Filipinos who refuse COVID-19 vaccinations and told them to leave the country if they would not cooperate with efforts to end a public health emergency.

President Rodrigo Duterte, who is known for his public outbursts and brash rhetoric, said in televised remarks Monday night that he has become exasperated with people who refuse to get immunized amid a health crisis then help spread the coronavirus.

“Don't get me wrong. There is a crisis being faced in this country. There is a national emergency. If you don't want to get vaccinated, I'll have you arrested and I'll inject the vaccine in your butt,” Duterte

said.

“If you will not agree to be vaccinated, leave the Philippines. Go to India if you want or somewhere, to America,” he said, adding he would order village leaders to compile a list of defiant residents.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra acknowledged Tuesday that there was no Philippine law criminalizing refusal to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

“I believe that the president merely used strong words to drive home the need for us to get vaccinated and reach herd immunity as soon as possible,” Guevarra said.

A human rights lawyer, Edre Olalia, raised concerns over Duterte's threat, saying the president could not order the arrest of anybody who has not clearly committed any crime.

NASA sends squid into space for health research

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Dozens of baby squids from Hawaii are in space for study.

The baby Hawaiian bobtail squids were raised at the University of Hawaii's Kewalo Marine Laboratory and were blasted into space earlier this month on a SpaceX resupply mission to the International Space Station.

Researcher Jamie Foster, who completed her doctorate at the University of Hawaii, is studying how spaceflight affects the squids in hopes of bolstering human health during long space missions, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Monday.

The squids have a symbiotic relationship with natural bacteria that help regulate their bioluminescence.

When astronauts are in low gravity, their body's relationship

with microbes changes, said University of Hawaii professor Margaret McFall-Ngai, who Foster studied under in the 1990s.

“We have found that the symbiosis of humans with their microbes is perturbed in microgravity, and Jamie has shown that is true in squid,” said McFall-Ngai. “And, because it's a simple system, she can get to the bottom of what's going wrong.”

Foster is now a Florida professor and principal investigator for a NASA program that studies how microgravity affects interactions between animals and microbes.

“As astronauts spend more and more time in space, their immune systems become what's called dysregulated. It doesn't function as well,” Foster said. “Their immune systems don't recognize bacteria as easily. They sometimes get sick.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Vacationing kids cited for catching gator with noose

FL PORT ST. JOHN — Three California children got in trouble after catching an alligator by its neck and dragging it to shore while vacationing near a Florida lake.

Authorities said the children hooked a noose around the gator at Fay Lake Wilderness Park in Port St. John and dragged it to shore. A 16-year-old was issued a citation for feeding, enticing or molesting alligators, said Florida Wildlife Commission spokesperson Chad Weber.

The other two children are 6 and 8 years old and were not given any citations. Authorities said the vacationers were not familiar with local gator laws.

The gator had already returned to the water with the noose still around its neck when officials arrived. Florida Today reported a trapper was called out to remove the rope.

Beach party shut down after thousands gather

NJ LONG BRANCH — Authorities said a beach party that drew thousands to a New Jersey shore city prompted officials to shut down the event and resulted in four arrests.

The public safety director's office of Long Branch said in a Facebook post that a social media post started the gathering along the beachfront around Pier Village and attracted "what turned out to be thousands of young people."

Authorities said that "drinking and unruly behavior began" and people were asked to leave the beach. The crowd was eventually dispersed and four people

were arrested for disorderly persons offenses, police said.

Sheriff's stolen vehicle found, weapon missing

OH CINCINNATI — A vehicle stolen from the driveway of an Ohio sheriff was later recovered but her duty weapon remains missing, authorities said.

The Hamilton County sheriff's office said the county vehicle assigned to Sheriff Charmaine McGuffey was reported stolen. Officials said the vehicle was locked at the time it was taken.

The sheriff's office said the vehicle was recovered, but her weapon, which was secured inside, was not found in the vehicle and remains missing.

Buddy the beefalo, famed escapee, adjusting to life

FL GAINESVILLE — A bison hybrid who roamed the woods in Connecticut for months after escaping on the way to the slaughterhouse has adjusted to life in a Florida animal sanctuary.

Buddy the beefalo "has fully integrated into the herd" and has not tried to escape since the second day after he arrived at Critter Creek Farm Sanctuary in Gainesville, the facility posted on Facebook.

"There must be something about being surrounded by happy, stress-free animals that put him at ease," Critter Creek officials posted. "We are so thrilled Buddy's story has had such a happy ending."

The 800- to 900-pound beefalo, a cross between a bison and domestic cattle, bolted on Aug. 3, 2020, while being loaded off a

truck at a meat processing plant in Plymouth, Conn.

Confederate submarine attraction fully reopens

SC NORTH CHARLESTON — The doors to a Confederate submarine on display in South Carolina fully reopened Saturday after it was shut down amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The grand opening of the Hunley, the first submarine in history to sink an enemy warship, will be marked with the launch of a new visitor experience that uses "cutting edge digital animation, live footage and a light show" to tell the submarine's story, officials said in a news release.

The Hunley and her 7,500 square feet of associated exhibits are in a working conservation laboratory.

The Hunley sank a Union blockade ship in November 1864 by ramming it with a torpedo attached to a spar. A half-century would pass before another sub sank a ship in the World War I era.

The Hunley itself sank to the bottom of the ocean during its attack, killing all eight men on board.

2 people hurt in bomb explosion at residence

WA PORT HADLOCK — A bomb detonated at a residence on the Olympic Peninsula in Port Hadlock, causing the suspected bomb maker's arm to be amputated and injuring his 6-year-old granddaughter.

The unidentified 46-year-old Port Hadlock man's left arm was amputated in the explosion

in an outbuilding on the property, the Peninsula Daily News reported.

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Brett Anglin said the man also suffered chest injuries, and his granddaughter sustained burns to her face.

The man was flown to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. Anglin said the man was in critical condition there.

The girl was treated and discharged from a hospital in Port Townsend, Anglin said.

Camper shoots family dog, mistaking it for wolf

ID BOISE — A family dog is recovering after she was shot twice last weekend by a camper in Idaho who mistook the pet for a wolf, a family said. She is actually an Alaskan malamute.

Rob Kolb and his 16-year-old daughter, Piper, started their backpacking trip in the Boulder Mountains in central Idaho with their 6-year-old dog named Suki, the Idaho Statesman reported. They set up camp that night.

The next morning, Rob Kolb woke up to use the bathroom, leaving Suki outside the tent, where she wandered to a nearby campsite. He told the Idaho Statesman that he woke up again an hour later by a gunshot that was "crazy close" and then heard two more shots.

The man who shot Suki — whom the Kolbs denied to identify publicly — said he thought the dog was a wolf before he noticed she had a collar on, Kolb said. The man took immediate responsibility and paid for her vet bills, he said.

— From wire reports

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Raiders DE Nassib comes out as gay

Associated Press

Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Carl Nassib on Monday became the first active NFL player to come out as gay.

Nassib, who is entering his sixth NFL season and second with the Raiders, announced the news on Instagram, saying he wasn't doing it for the attention but because he felt representation and visibility were important.

"I just wanted to take a quick moment to say that I'm gay," Nassib said in his video message from his home in West Chester, Pa. "I've been meaning to do this for a while now, but I finally feel comfortable enough to get it off my chest.

"I really have the best life. I got the best family, friends and job a guy can ask for. I'm a pretty private person, so I hope you guys know that I'm really not doing this for attention. I just think that representation and visibility are so important."

Nassib added in a written message that followed the video that he "agonized over this mo-

ment for the last 15 years" and only recently decided to go public with his sexuality after receiving the support of family and friends.

"I am also incredibly thankful for the NFL, my coaches and fellow players for their support," Nassib wrote. "I would not have been able to do this without them. From the jump, I was greeted with the utmost respect and acceptance."

Nassib, whose announcement came during Pride Month, added that he was donating \$100,000 to the Trevor Project, a nonprofit that seeks to prevent suicides among LGBTQ youth.

"The NFL family is proud of Carl for courageously sharing his truth today," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. "Representation matters. We share his hope that someday soon statements like his will no longer be newsworthy as we march toward full equality for the LGBTQ+ community. We wish Carl the best of luck this coming season."

Nassib's announcement also was greeted by Brian Burke,

president of the NHL's Pittsburgh Penguins. Burke has been a major proponent of LGBTQ rights for more than a decade since his late son Brendan came out as gay.

"Proud to support Carl and his decision to come out as the first active gay player in the NFL," Burke said. "I hope other sports executives will join me in publicly expressing their support as well."

The Raiders showed their support, writing, "Proud of you, Carl," on their repost of Nassib's message on Twitter and adding a black heart emoji.

DeMaurice Smith, executive director of the NFL Players Association, tweeted: "Our union supports Carl and his work with the Trevor Project is proof that he — like our membership — is about making his community and this world a better place not for themselves, but for others."

Penn State coach James Franklin said he and his wife Fumi were inspired by Nassib's announcement to donate \$10,000 to the Trevor Project.

"I am very proud of Carl for his courage and voice," Franklin said. "This announcement doesn't surprise me because if you know Carl, you know his strength. Carl's story continues to add chapters which will have an impact well beyond the field of play."

Nassib led the nation with 15½ sacks in 2015, Franklin's second season in State College, and he was a cornerstone of the program's path back to contention.

"Carl's brave announcement will forge a path for others to be true to their authentic self," Franklin added. "I was proud of Carl when he led the nation in sacks, but I'm even more proud of him now."

Former All-Pro linebacker Shawne Merriman commended Nassib and suggested teammates and opponents won't have a problem with his announcement.

"Congrats to Carl Nassib on coming out that's a big step, I think that most players are concerned if you can play or not," Merriman tweeted.

Stamkos, Vasilevskiy lead Lightning's rout of Islanders

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — There was no panic in the Tampa Bay Lightning — just another determined performance against the New York Islanders.

Steven Stamkos had two goals and an assist and Andrei Vasilevskiy notched his fourth career playoff shutout, helping the defending Stanley Cup champions rout the Islanders 8-0 in Game 5 of their semifinal playoff series on Monday night.

"I like to think we play determined all the time, not just tonight," coach Jon Cooper said after his team moved within one victory of a return to the Stanley Cup Final.

"It's certainly a response and a mindset and it starts with our goalie," Stamkos said.

"Vasy just has an amazing ability to bounce back whether he plays great or he doesn't play great. But when we lose, he takes that personally," the Lightning captain added. "He was outstanding, made some big

saves early, settles us down, we get some goals and get some confidence."

Tampa Bay improved to 13-0 in games following a postseason loss since launching its 2020 title run and will take a 3-2 series lead over New York into Game 6 of their best-of-seven matchup Wednesday night in Uniondale, N.Y.

Game 7, if necessary, would be back in Florida on Friday.

"We're going to have to have our best game, the best effort from every player on our team. And if we do that, we'll be back here for Game 7," Islanders coach Barry Trotz said.

"This result, how we played, if that doesn't motivate us then I'm not too sure what will," Trotz added. "We put ourselves in a tough bind."

Stamkos ignited a three-goal opening period — the first against New York all season — by scoring just 45 seconds into the game.

His power-play goal at 5:42 of the second began another three-goal period that made it 6-0.

Alex Killorn finished with two goals, Brayden Point delivered his 13th of the playoffs, and postseason scoring leader Nikita Kucherov extended his career-best playoff points streak to eight games with three assists for the Lightning, who have not lost consecutive playoff games since being swept by Columbus in the first round in 2019.

Point has scored a goal in eight straight games, the second-longest stretch within a single postseason in NHL history.

"It's playoff time. It's not about personal stats. Wins are what matter," said Point, whose power-play goal made it 7-0.

Vasilevskiy, meanwhile, stopped all 21 shots he faced for his third playoff shutout this year. The Vezina Trophy finalist also blanked Florida and Carolina in series-clinchers in the first two rounds.

Mets' deGrom lowers ERA to 0.50

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jacob deGrom pitched one-hit ball over five scoreless innings as the Mets beat the Atlanta Braves 4-2 on Monday in a double-header opener.

Ian Anderson (5-3) allowed three hits in 5½ innings as the Braves won the nightcap 1-0, and he became the first native New Yorker to beat the Mets and Yankees in New York in the same season.

In the seven-inning opener, deGrom (7-2) didn't allow a hit until Mets outfielders misplayed a fifth-inning fly ball into a ground-rule double.

Jeff McNeil came off the injured list and singled as a pinch-hitter for deGrom during the fifth, then scored on Dominic Smith's three-run double.

Seth Lugo and Edwin Díaz finished the two-hitter, with Díaz getting his 15th save.

Kyle Muller (0-1) pitched one-hit ball over four innings in his first big league start.

In the second game, Ronald Acuña Jr. hit his 20th homer. Braves closer Will Smith loaded the bases in the seventh, but escaped for his 14th save.

Padres 6, Dodgers 2: Yu Darvish struck out 11 in six innings to become the fastest big leaguer to reach 1,500 for his career, Manny Machado and Jake Cronenworth homered and host San Diego beat Los Angeles.

Darvish (7-2) reached 1,500 strikeouts on the nose in 197 starts. He held the Dodgers to two hits, including Mookie Betts' solo homer, and walked just one.

Diamondbacks 5, Brewers 1: Merrill Kelly pitched seven effective innings, Ketel Marte had two hits and host Arizona snapped a 17-game losing streak by beating Milwaukee.

The win was a long time coming for the Diamondbacks, who earned their first win since beating the Mets 6-5 in 10 innings on June 1. The 17-game skid was two shy of the longest during the wild-card era by the Kansas City Royals in 2005.

Rangers 8, Athletics 3: Andy Ibañez and Jose Trevino hit three-run homers, Kyle Gibson (5-0) allowed two runs and five hits over 5½ innings and host Texas ended a six-game losing streak.

Oakland shortstop Elvis Andrus went 0-for-4 in his return to Texas, which traded him to the Athletics just before spring training.

Indians 4, Cubs 0: Bobby Bradley and Josh Naylor homered, helping visiting Cleveland overcome the loss of Aaron Civale, who exited with two outs in the fifth because of a right middle finger injury.

The right-hander leads the major leagues with 10 wins.

Bryan Shaw (2-2) got four outs as the Indians moved within two games of the idle White Sox for the top spot in the AL Central.

Astros 10, Orioles 2: Jake Odorizzi and the Houston bullpen took a bid for a combined no-hitter into the eighth inning, eventually settling for a win at Baltimore that extended their winning streak to eight games.

Maikel Franco hit a two-run homer with one out in the eighth off Brandon Bielak, breaking up the no-hitter. Odorizzi and reliever Cristian Javier held the Orioles without a hit through seven.

Twins 7, Reds 5 (12): Miguel Sanó hit a two-run homer in the 12th inning to lift host Minnesota past Cincinnati.

It was the fifth straight victory for the Twins and fifth loss in a row for the Reds.

Hot-hitting Stanford sends Arizona home

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Brock Jones homered, doubled and drove in five runs to lead one of Stanford's most productive offensive performances of the season in a 14-5 victory over Arizona in a College World Series elimination game Monday.

The Cardinal got their bats cranked up again after losing 10-4 to North Carolina State in their CWS opener Saturday. They also got payback for the 20-2 beatdown they took from their Pac-12 rival May 8.

Stanford led 10-0 in the fourth inning and, after Arizona cut the lead in half, tacked on four more runs in the seventh to assure itself of extending its first CWS appearance since 2008 by at least two more days.

"We played like a team that didn't want to end their season, didn't want to go home, and wants to get some momentum and keep playing in the World Series here," Stanford coach David Esquer said.

The Cardinal (39-16) entered the NCAA Tournament averaging 6.7 runs per game and have upped their scoring rate to 9.6 over the last eight games, including double-digit runs in four of them. Their batting average has gone from .276 in the regular season to .326 in tournament games.

Arizona (45-18), the No. 5 national seed, lost 7-6 to Vanderbilt in 12 innings Saturday and went two games and out at the CWS for the first time in five appearances since 1985.

Tatum HR tops Leiter's 15 Ks, Wolfpack edge Vandy

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — North Carolina State's postseason just keeps getting better.

The Wolfpack beat SEC pitcher of the year Kevin Kopps of Arkansas to win their regional, beat the Pac-12 pitcher of the year Brendan Beck of Stanford in their College World Series opener and Monday night they beat projected top-five draft pick Jack Leiter.

Terrell Tatum's fifth-inning home run spoiled a dominant performance by the national strikeout leader, and now NC State is in control of its CWS bracket after its 1-0 win over Vanderbilt.

"We've slayed a lot of giants," said Sam Highfill, who dueled with Leiter most of the unseasonably cool evening at TD Ameri-

trade Park.

The Wolfpack (37-18) have won 33 of 42 since starting 4-9 overall and 1-8 in ACC play.

"For the last two, three months we haven't said much at all to these guys because they know what they want and they know how hard it is to get, and they know how committed they are to one another," coach Elliott Avent said. "I don't think they let any moment become too big for them."

Leiter went eight innings and struck out 15, the same number of Ks by Mississippi State's Will Bodnar against Texas on Sunday in what was the most by a pitcher in a nine-inning CWS game in 25 years.

Highfill (9-2) limited the No. 4 national seed Commodores (46-16) to two hits through 7½ innings.

Dressel, Ledecky lead US swim effort

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — With Michael Phelps five years into retirement, the stage is set in Tokyo for Caeleb Dressel. Katie Ledecky is ready to extend her dominance, competing in four individual events plus relays at the pandemic-delayed Olympics.

They lead a powerful U.S. swimming team that is expected to top the medals standings once again. No world records were set at the eight-day trials that ended Sunday, but the Americans figure to flash their speed with gold on the line.

Dressel's gold hunt

Dressel made the team in the 50 and 100 freestyles and the 100 butterfly. He could swim in at least three relays in Tokyo, including the new mixed 4x100 medley featuring men and women.

He closed his trials by tying his American record of 21.04 seconds in the 50 free, fastest in the world this year.

"There is plenty we can do to get better and move forward from this," he said. "This was a really fun meet. I got better with each event. I'm ready to get back in the water with a plan."

Five years ago in Rio, Dressel won two gold medals as part of relays. Since then, he won 13 gold medals and two silvers at the

world championships in 2017 and 2019.

Tabbed as the potential successor to Phelps, Dressel will be under intense pressure and scrutiny in Tokyo.

Ledecky's defense

Ledecky will swim the 200, 400, 800 and 1,500 freestyles in Tokyo. She'll be the favorite to defend her 800 title and win the longest race for women — a new event at next month's games — in which she owns the world record.

But she won't be favored in the 200 or 400, where Ledecky faces a potential showdown with Ariarne Titmus of Australia. Ledecky surprised herself with times that were not as fast as she had expected in Omaha.

Simone's bounceback

Simone Manuel fought back after missing the team in the 100 freestyle, winning the 50 free on the last night of trials.

Days after revealing she had been diagnosed with overtraining syndrome in March, Manuel gathered enough speed to hold off Abbey Weitzeil by one-hundredth of a second, winning in 24.29.

Manuel won't defend her historic gold in the 100 free from Rio, where she was the first Black woman to win an Olympic swim-

ming medal. She'll be joined in Tokyo by Natalie Hinds, a Black swimmer who made her first Olympic team at 27.

By way of Alaska

Lydia Jacoby is the first swimmer from Alaska to make a U.S. Olympic team.

The 17-year-old from Seward qualified in the 100 breaststroke. This fall she plans to return to high school for her senior year after being home-schooled during the pandemic. She has verbally committed to swim at Texas. When she's not in the pool, Jacoby plays double bass, guitar, piano and sings.

Most persistent

Jake Mitchell made the most of his do-over.

He went too slow in the 400 free to meet the Olympic qualifying standard, finishing second behind winner Kieran Smith in a time of 3 minutes, 48.17 seconds. Usually second is good enough to earn a spot on the Olympic team, but not this time. Mitchell got a second chance, though.

He swam a time trial in the temporary 50-meter pool all by himself. He went over 2 seconds faster than his previous time, touching in 3:45.86 to punch his ticket to Tokyo. That was good enough to meet the qualifying standard of 3:46.78.

Favorites Brazier, Simpson melt on hot day at trials

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — The rooms in Tokyo practically had their names on them.

Instead, others will be taking the spots that seemed all but reserved for two American track champions, Jenny Simpson and Donovan Brazier.

The cold realities of the U.S. Olympic qualifying reared their ugly head on a scorcher of a day at track and field trials Monday. In a format where records and résumés mean nothing, and only the top three finishers in each event earn a spot, Simpson and Brazier fell short.

"There are things that champions overcome. I couldn't overcome them," said Brazier, the world champion at 800 meters, after finishing last in that race,

more than 4 seconds behind winner Clayton Murphy.

"It's hard to believe," said Simpson, a former world champion whose 10th-place finish in the 1,500 meters, well behind winner Elle Purrier St. Pierre, had stunned the crowd only moments before.

They were not quite superstars, and no massive ad campaigns had been built around them, a la Dan O'Brien, whose flop in the decathlon at trials back in 1992 stands as maybe the most stunning "sure thing" to not happen at the U.S. trials.

Still, they were favorites in their events — if not to win, then at least to finish in the top three and head to Tokyo next month.

Simpson, who took bronze in Rio to become the first American woman to win an Olympic medal

in the 1,500, was done almost before she started. There was heavy jostling at the start that knocked five or six runners off stride.

"No one went down," she said. "Maybe they should have called the race back. That was extreme."

Brazier has prided himself on entering the 800 without a concrete game plan and improvising on the fly. This time, it backfired. The pace was pushed. Brazier tried to keep up and he didn't have his customary kick at the finish. He knew with about 200 meters left that it wasn't his day. Instead, it belonged to Murphy, who will get a chance to add to the bronze he won five years ago in Rio.

"I've been able to win from the front. I've been able to win from the back. I don't know if it was

just overconfidence going into the race thinking I could do whatever the hell I want and come out successful," Brazier said. "Maybe lack of race plan is what got me."

On other days, Chris Nilsen's upset of two-time world champion Sam Kendrick in the pole vault might have made headlines. Kendrick is heading to Tokyo, however, thanks to a second-place finish that wasn't exactly what he planned. But still good enough.

Two-time Olympic silver medalist Will Claye did the expected, winning the triple jump, while the women's 5,000 was mostly a no-fuss affair, taken by Elise Cranny in 15 minutes, 27.81 seconds.