

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Trump addresses virus' economic impact

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ahead of an expected surge in coronavirus cases, President Donald Trump on Tuesday moved to blunt the impact of the pandemic on the U.S. economy, fundamentally altered by a push for a nation to stay home.

As the global markets fluctuated amid fears of a recession, the president conferred with tourism executives as well as restaurant leaders, retailers and suppliers. His administration is expected to propose a roughly \$850 billion emergency economic stimulus to address the free-fall while considering checks to American workers trying to make their way in an economy deeply unsettled by the outbreak.

U.S. businesses large and small are reeling from shutdowns, cancellations and public fear about the virus as the number of cases rises nationwide. Stocks moved higher on Wall Street on Tuesday, a day after plunging to their worst loss in more than three decades.

And the president again urged Ameri-

cans to follow sweeping guidelines that for the next 14 days will temporarily rewrite the norms of society, including for older residents to stay home while all people should avoid gatherings of more than 10 at their local restaurants and bars.

"By making shared sacrifices, we can protect the health of our people and our economy and I think our economy will come back very rapidly," Trump said. "If we do this right our country and the world frankly, but our country can be rolling again ... very quickly. We can protect the health of our people and we can protect our economy."

Trump, maintaining his newly somber tone about the crisis enveloping the globe, urged Americans to work from home and urged the nation's cities and states to issue restrictions to promote distancing in line with new federal guidelines.

He promised a dramatic increase in access to coronavirus tests, ventilators, hospital beds and access to telehealth services. His administration said it would coordi-

nate responses with the states, would push for construction workers to give masks to health care workers and, if needed, use the Army Corps of Engineers to build more hospital space.

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, the administration's lead negotiator with Congress, said tax filings could be delayed and vowed that the stock markets would remain open but their hours could be shortened. Officials said assistance could be offered to the airlines, cruise ships and airplane manufacturers. The president vowed to maintain the safety of elections while voters in three states went to the polls Tuesday even as Ohio postponed its primary.

Trump vowed that the virus, an outbreak like the nation has not seen in more than a century, would be defeated.

"One day we're going to stand up here and say 'We won,'" Trump told the White House briefing where reporters sat in alternating seats to maintain a safe distance. "As sure as you're sitting there we're going to say that."

Governments issue historic restrictions amid outbreak

Associated Press

The United States implemented dramatic new restrictions on Americans going out in public, and 7 million people in the San Francisco area were put on a near-total lockdown to control the coronavirus emergency that has walloped the global economy.

Not everyone was adhering to the clamp-downs, however.

On the same day that the Trump administration called on Americans to not gather in groups of more than 10 people and urged older people to stay home, Arizona, Florida and Illinois went ahead with plans to hold presidential primaries Tuesday. Ohio called off its primary just hours before polls were to open.

At the iconic "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign, there was still a line of 20 or 30 people Monday afternoon waiting to pose for a picture. And beaches on Florida's Gulf coast near Tampa stayed open, including one that was flooded with spring breakers. Gov. Ron Desantis said that he would leave it up to communities whether to restrict ac-

cess to beaches.

"It's probably not advisable to have spring break gatherings," but that people in small groups at the beach is probably OK, he said. "I think the communities can work that out."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, praised the federal government's response as he took only limited action amid the outbreak. Unlike other governors of heavily populated states, Abbott has not made explicit calls for limiting mass gatherings.

"This is not a time to panic," he said. "It's not as if we have never been through this before. We've been through this many, many times."

The comments came on the same day that the number of infections in the U.S. climbed to nearly 4,500, with at least 81 deaths, two-thirds of them in hard-hit Washington state. Worldwide, more than 7,100 have died.

With the U.S. economy shuddering to a near-halt, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted nearly 3,000 points, or 13%, its biggest one-day percentage loss

since the Black Monday crash of 1987.

The rapid work stoppage had Americans fretting about their jobs and their savings, threatened to overwhelm unemployment benefit programs and heightened fears that the country could plunge into a recession.

Elections officials in Arizona, Florida and Illinois said that they were taking precautions to make sure voters could safely cast their ballots, despite widening calls for people to avoid going in public. A handful of other states already postponed their elections.

Growing public unease over the virus spread was causing disruptions to polling places in some states before they even opened.

In Pasco County, Fla., the number of poll workers dropping out surged from 20 last week to more than 150 by Monday after a case was confirmed in the county.

"It's a skeleton crew at a lot of locations," said Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections Paul Lux. "We are at the honest end of the rope in terms of who I can grab and who I can get trained and get deployed."

Military faces limits in responding to virus

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is already helping combat the coronavirus outbreak in the United States and is considering ways to do more.

But the military faces limits. Its health care system is geared more toward handling combat casualties than infectious diseases. And there are logistical and legal concerns about expanding the military's role in civilian affairs, such as tasking it with enforcing quarantines. Defense officials also want to be careful not to do anything to weaken its ability to defend the nation.

A look at the military's role in the crisis:

■ What the military is doing.

At the request of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Pentagon has made housing available at four military bases for some passengers taken from the Grand Princess cruise ship, which was hit with a cluster of coronavirus cases. It also has made available housing at other bases for people entering the U.S. at certain civilian airports and needing monitoring.

At those bases, the people being given housing are cared for by civilian agencies, not the military.

Also, Army scientists are researching and testing vaccines for the coronavirus, in coordination with civilian agencies.

The most extensive role for the military thus far is by the National Guard, which is being called up by governors in several states to provide a range of support. More than 1,600 National Guard members have been called up so far. Some are helping at state emergency operations centers; others are providing transportation for civilian health care providers; and some are collecting and delivering test samples.

President Donald Trump has not federalized the National Guard as was done after the 9/11 attacks.

■ What the military is considering.

There are many ways the military could assist in the COVID-19 crisis, but few decisions have been made. Air Force Brig Gen. Paul Friedrichs, the top doctor for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Monday that defense officials are trying to identify "what's within the realm of the possible," while also spelling out what the trade-offs for that would be.

For example, Friedrichs said, if large numbers of National Guard members were

mobilized for medical assistance, they would be taken away from their civilian jobs, which in some cases are in health services already engaged in fighting COVID-19.

The Pentagon also has two hospital ships, the USNS Comfort and the USNS Mercy. They can be equipped to perform surgeries and provide other medical services, but the medical professionals who would be called on to staff the ships are currently performing those roles at domestic military hospitals and clinics or at private medical facilities.

■ What the military could do in an extreme emergency.

The Defense Department has a detailed pandemic response plan that lays out the myriad things the military can do if requested, including a last-resort role in helping to impose quarantines and border restrictions.

Officials, however, say that there is a broad assumption that local law enforcement, border control officers and the National Guard under the governors' command would be the first line of defense to stem the spread of any virus through travel restrictions at the borders and along state lines or outbreak areas.

Pentagon's top 2 civilians separated amid outbreak

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon on Monday said at least 37 members of the Defense Department community worldwide have tested positive for the coronavirus as the department takes steps to mitigate the impact of the fast-spreading illness, including keeping its top two officials separated from each other.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist on Monday began limiting the number of people with access to their offices, screening people who enter them, and communicating with each other exclusively via teleconference, according to Jonathan Hoffman, the Pentagon's chief spokesman.

"We are attempting to put,

for lack of a better term, a bubble around the two of them," Hoffman told reporters at the Pentagon.

As of Monday, no person who works in the Pentagon has tested positive for the virus, he said. But officials determined they needed to take serious measures to protect Esper, Norquist and others considered essential to national security.

Members of the military community who tested positive for coronavirus as of Monday morning included 18 service members, 13 military dependents, three Defense Department civilians and three defense contractors, Hoffman said. U.S. military cases have been reported in South Korea, Germany, Italy and in several U.S. states, including Washington, California, Georgia and Virginia.

DOD rejects calls to stop training recruits

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has rejected proposals from senior U.S. military officials to temporarily halt sending new recruits to training amid the coronavirus pandemic, deciding that the process must continue to avoid harming the military, according to a planning document and three defense officials.

The plans would have paused the training of thousands of new recruits who join the military each month and marked a major widening in the Defense Department's attempt to stop infection. On Friday night, the Pentagon cut virtually all domestic travel for the next eight weeks but said that new recruit training would continue.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper met with the service secretaries and top officers Mon-

day to talk about training, said the Pentagon's chief spokesman, Jonathan Hoffman.

"A decision was made to continue with training missions while taking precautionary measures to limit any possible spread," Hoffman said. "This will be continuously evaluated to ensure mission-critical requirements are met and our people are kept safe."

Army officials considered a 30-day freeze on sending additional recruits to basic training. Navy officials, citing the Army's idea, suggested the idea of a "hybrid" plan, in which new recruits would stop reporting but recruits who already had begun training would finish, according to the planning document, which was drafted within the Navy and obtained by The Washington Post.

Marine officer, NCO fired; unit lost rifles

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The commander and the sergeant major of a Marine battalion at Camp Lejeune, N.C., have been fired nearly three months after two rifles went missing from the unit, the Marine Corps announced.

Lt. Col. Clinton Kappel and Sgt. Maj. Elson Aviles of the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment were relieved Thursday by Maj. Gen. David Furness, the commander of the 2nd Marine Division, “due to a loss of

trust and confidence,” according to a division statement.

In December, two rifles from the battalion went missing during a training exercise, according to news reports. The rifles are still missing and the investigation is ongoing, Naval Criminal Investigative Service spokesman Jeff Houston said Tuesday.

Firing the battalion’s leadership is “taken seriously and with the intent of ensuring a given unit’s continued success in future operations,” according to the division statement.

Kappel took command of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment on Sept. 20. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1996 and commissioned in 2001. He had previously deployed twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan, according to his official biography.

Aviles enlisted as a combat engineer in the Marine Corps in 1997 and has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, according to his official biography.

Lt. Col. Ryan Gordinier has taken command of the battalion, but nobody has been cho-

sen to fill the sergeant major position, according to the division statement.

The 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment is an infantry unit with about 900 Marines and sailors, said 1st Lt. Dan Linfante, a spokesman for the 2nd Marine Division.

Camp Lejeune is the largest amphibious base on the East Coast. It is home to 37,000 active-duty Marines and sailors, the largest concentration of Marines in the country, according to Camp Lejeune spokesman Nat Fahy.

Hundreds of troops in Iraq to reposition from bases

The Washington Post

LONDON — The U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State said Monday it will move hundreds of troops out of bases in Iraq, with most redeployed to other locations in the country, as threats from the militants wane and risks to foreign troops elsewhere in Iraq increase.

The coalition said troops would be leaving the al-Qaim base in western Iraq within days and that they would soon move out of the northern K1 and Key West bases too, with most heading to larger bases in Iraq and others to Syria or Kuwait.

The move, officials said, has been planned for months and is not the result of a wave of attacks by Iran-backed militia groups, which have killed and wounded almost two dozen coalition troops in recent weeks.

“As a result of the success of Iraqi Security Forces in their fight against ISIS, the Coalition is repositioning troops from a few smaller bases,” Col. Myles Caggins, a spokesman for the anti-ISIS mission. “These bases remain under Iraqi control and we will continue our advising partnership for the permanent defeat of Daesh from other Iraqi military bases,” he said, using an Arabic nickname for the militants.

Another U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity,

Iraq’s military: 2 rockets strike training base

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two rockets struck a training base south of Baghdad where U.S.-led coalition troops and NATO trainers are present, Iraq’s military said Tuesday, the third such attack in the span of a week.

The rockets hit the Basmaya base near the Iraqi capital Monday evening, the army statement said. The projectiles landed in an area that includes agricultural land and a factory, according to the statement. No more details were provided.

A Spanish contingent of the coalition and NATO trainers are present at the Basmaya site. There was no immediate confirmation of

the attack from the coalition and no militant group claimed responsibility for the assault.

Last Wednesday, a barrage of over two dozen rockets struck Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, killing three coalition servicemen, including two Americans. A British serviceman was also killed. It was the deadliest to target U.S. troops in Iraq since a late December rocket attack on an Iraqi base, which killed a U.S. contractor and set in motion a series of attacks that brought Iraq to the brink of war.

Wednesday’s barrage was followed by another attack, on Saturday at the same site, which wounded five soldiers — three coalition members and two Iraqi soldiers.

said that planning for the move began in the fall, after military officials judged that the threat from ISIS had diminished across swaths of Iraq.

But as danger from the militants had waned, tensions with Iran had escalated, and the more than 5,000 U.S. troops serving in Iraq as part of the anti-ISIS coalition are now in the crosshairs of Iraqi militia groups backed by Tehran. Militia rocket strikes on bases hosting coalition troops have become a regular occurrence and already brought the U.S. and Iran to the brink of war once this year.

Last week in Iraq, the U.S. launched its second wave of

airstrikes targeting the Iran-backed Kataeb Hezbollah group in the space of three months, after two American and one British servicemen were killed in suspected militia rocket attacks on Camp Taji, an Iraqi military base north of Baghdad.

The U.S. Defense Department said that airstrikes had targeted five weapons storage facilities linked to Kataeb Hezbollah, to “degrade” its ability to launch future strikes. But a day later, Camp Taji was hit by another salvo of rockets, wounding two Iraqi and three U.S. servicemen.

A newly announced group

calling itself Usbat al-Thairen, or the League of Revolutionaries, on Sunday claimed responsibility for the strike. “We rejoice in the fear that we have struck in the chests of the occupying enemy as a result of our quality operations,” the group said in a video statement.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo discussed the attacks with Iraq’s Prime Minister, Adel Abdul-Mahdi during a phone call Sunday, according to a statement. “Secretary Pompeo underscored that the groups responsible for these attacks must be held accountable,” it said.

Navy taking applications for eSports team

Stars and Stripes

A new Navy recruiting effort is getting underway just in time to reach prospective recruits at an appropriate social distance — through online streaming video games and competitions.

The Navy is following the Army's lead in launching a video gaming team. As of Sunday, any petty officer looking to add a Navy eSports jersey to their sea bag can apply.

Members of the team, dubbed Goats&Glory, will practice, stream and compete from a facility in Tennessee "specifically designed" for their mission,

the Navy said in an administrative message last month.

"Centennials are moving into digital spaces for most of their content consumption and social interactions, and the eSports domain is one of the most popular and vibrant online arenas to date," the message said. It also said that the Navy's official gamers will "develop a routine streaming cadence, encouraging followers and viewers to interact with the members and recruiting content."

The effort will help the service "improve relatability" with potential recruits and

"better share sea stories about Navy life," said Navy Recruiting Command boss Rear Adm. Brendan McLane in a statement earlier this month.

The Army has credited its competitive eSports team, fielded in 2019, for being among the reasons the service met its recruiting goal last year.

Aspiring Navy team members will be screened for "team fit" as well as for recruiting duty, and upon selection will receive three-year orders to Millington, Tenn., with additional training as recruiters in Pensacola, Fla.

Applications are open through May 1 to "skilled gamers" in pay grades E-4 and above who have met body composition standards and passed the last three years of regularly scheduled physical fitness tests, the Navy said this month.

The team will initially focus on the game "Counter-Strike: Global Offensive," but sailors with talents in other titles are welcome to apply.

The application process and more detailed requirements are outlined at www.cnrc.navy.mil/ESPORTS/index-esports.htm.

Gunship joins Navy drill in Persian Gulf

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

A special operations gunship directly supported maritime operations in the Persian Gulf for the first time during a joint exercise with Navy ships and a patrol aircraft last week, the U.S. military said.

The live-fire exercise came days before coalition deaths in Iraq renewed concerns about Iranian threats in the region.

The AC-130 Stinger II from Special Operations Command Central operated with Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships and P-8A Poseidon aircraft from the Navy's 5th Fleet in a bid to improve U.S. capabilities to respond to surface threats.

Incorporating the gunship "significantly enhances our ability to detect, track, engage and defeat surface threats in order to control water space in the Arabian Gulf," said Capt. Peter Mirisola, commander of Destroyer Squadron 50 and Combined Task Force 55 based out of Manama, Bahrain.

A series of attacks on tankers in the Persian Gulf last summer raised concerns of a renewed tanker war, as the Trump administration imposed sanc-

tions on Iran after withdrawing from the nuclear deal negotiated under the Obama administration and Iran threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz.

Since last summer, the U.S. and its allies have stepped up maritime patrols and the Pentagon has deployed more troops, aircraft and air defense capabilities to the region. The U.S. has also accused Tehran or its proxies of attacking Saudi Arabian oil facilities, smuggling arms to Houthi rebels in Yemen and striking Iraqi installations housing U.S. and coalition forces.

Following last week's fatal rocket attack and U.S. response, Defense Secretary Mark Esper authorized U.S. Central Command's request to keep two aircraft carrier strike groups in the region's waters to bolster security and deter Iranian aggression, CENTCOM boss Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie told Pentagon reporters Friday.

"U.S. Central Command is well-postured to defend our forces around the region and respond to any further aggression against our forces," he said. "We have the flexibility, the capability and the will to respond to any threat."

Democratic primary in flux after Ohio scraps vote

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Democratic presidential primary is consumed with uncertainty after leaders in Ohio called off Tuesday's election just before polls opened, citing the need to combat the new coronavirus. Officials in Florida, Arizona and Illinois said that they would move forward with the vote.

Not since New York City postponed its mayoral primary on the day of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks has an election been pushed off in such a high-profile, far-reaching way. Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine initially asked a court to delay the vote, and when a judge refused to do so, the state's health director declared a health emergency that would prevent the polls from opening.

The decision was a reminder that the most elemental act of American democracy — voting — will be severely tested Tuesday as several states hold presidential primaries while also confronting a global pandemic. The contests are playing out as the virus' impact is becoming more tangible with restaurants and bars shuttering across the country, schools closing and workers staying home.

The rapidly shifting developments amounted to a kind of

chaos rarely seen in an election season. And it may not end soon, as some states that have presidential contests in the coming weeks have already moved to postpone them, with others pressed to follow.

Campaigns spent Monday sifting through data and talking to contacts on the ground to assess the impact of the coronavirus on turnout in places that will hold elections Tuesday. Former Vice President Joe Biden is moving closer to securing the Democratic presidential nomination, but could face a setback if the older voters who tend to support him don't show up. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, meanwhile, can't afford to lose support from young voters who have been his most loyal supporters.

The tumult has left the campaign in a state of suspended animation. In-person rallies have been replaced with sometimes awkward virtual events.

Sanders, the last Democrat standing between Biden and the nomination, isn't planning to drop out. His campaign looked to have nowhere to go after a big loss last week in Michigan, and another blow landed Monday night when Biden was declared the winner of the primary in Washington state.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Robber doused store clerk with burning liquid

MD OXON HILL — Police in Maryland arrested a man accused of dousing a convenience store worker with a burning liquid and stealing cigarettes.

Raymond Williams, 25, of Washington, walked to the convenience store counter early Saturday morning with a cup in his hand, Prince George's County police said in a news release.

The cup contained a liquid that smelled of gasoline, police said. Williams is accused of asking the clerk for cigarettes, starting a fire in the cup while the clerk had his back turned and then dousing the clerk with the burning liquid when he turned back around. Williams then jumped over the counter, stole about 20 packs of cigarettes and ran, police said. A witness called 911.

The clerk was taken to a hospital to be treated for critical burns, the release stated.

At least 4 arrested over illegal turkey hunts

MS JACKSON — At least four people were arrested following an 11-month investigation that determined nearly 100 turkeys had been poached, according to wildlife officials in Mississippi.

The group was believed to have trespassed on 15 properties in Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson and Lincoln counties, according to a news release from the state Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.

Of the four people arrested and named in the news release, Kenneth Ray Britt, 39, had been charged with the most violations — 142.

The investigation determined that the illegal hunt during the

2019 season wasn't constrained to Mississippi.

Tugboat crashes into bridge, 2 barges sink

LA LULING — A tugboat leading a train of barges of grain crashed into a Louisiana bridge, causing two of the barges to sink in the Mississippi River.

The tugboat, identified as Cooperative Spirit, collided with the Luling Bridge early Sunday morning, news outlets reported.

Two of the 29 barges being pulled by the tugboat sank. The Coast Guard was working to recover the rest of the barges. No injuries were reported, Coast Guard spokesman John Michelli said.

A portion of the river near the bridge was closed after the crash.

Man waves gun at drive-thru for hot sauce

AZ YUMA — An Arizona man is facing charges after police said that he waved a gun at a fast-food drive-thru window and demanded hot sauce.

Abel Lerma is facing multiple charges after the incident in June. The Yuma Sun reported Lerma was arrested earlier this month on aggravated drunken driving charges.

Police said video surveillance cameras captured Lerma pulling a gun on an employee at a Filiberto's Mexican Food restaurant and demanding hot sauce, which is given for free with every food purchase.

Lerma and the driver of the car were later arrested.

Lerma, who was out of custody after posting a \$50,000 bond and under the supervision of pretrial services, was arrested March 3 and has been charged with aggravated DUI for hav-

ing a child under the age of 15 in the car and endangerment.

'Princess' needs help managing large estate

HI HONOLULU — A judge ruled Friday that a 93-year-old Native Hawaiian heiress needs someone to handle her estate. The so-called princess testified last Monday that she didn't need a conservator because she's still alive.

"Ms. [Abigail] Kawanakoa is a charming and gracious lady, in the best sense of the word," said state Judge James Ashford. "Nevertheless, the Court finds ... that for reasons other than age, Ms. Kawanakoa is unable to manage her property and business affairs effectively ..."

Kawanakoa's \$215 million trust has been tied up in a court case since she had a stroke in 2017. Kawanakoa said that she's fine.

After the stroke, she married her partner of 20 years, Veronica Gail Worth. Board members of her foundation and ex-employees said that the wife is manipulating Kawanakoa. Lawyers for the couple dispute that.

Kawanakoa inherited her wealth as the great-granddaughter of James Campbell, an Irish businessman who made his fortune as a sugar plantation owner and one of Hawaii's largest landowners. Native Hawaiians consider her a princess because she's a descendant of the family that ruled the islands before the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom in 1893.

State: 1 flushes drugs, 1 jumps out window

VT BRATTLEBORO — Two men who sold cocaine to a confidential informant tried to evade arrest by jumping out a window and

flushing their stash down the toilet, prosecutors in Vermont said.

Matthew Sinclair, 24, and Jorge Delapaz, 51, were charged with federal drug violations in January and February in a Brattleboro apartment, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Vermont.

Authorities searched the apartment Thursday. Delapaz jumped out of a second-story window in an attempt to flee, officials said. He had a suspected cocaine base and heroin at the time of his arrest, the statement said.

Sinclair is accused of attempting to flush about 37 grams of cocaine base down the toilet.

Pier scraps plans for cruise ship business

MI GREILICKVILLE — A waterfront project along Lake Michigan is scrapping plans to pursue the cruise ship business.

Discovery Center & Pier previously announced plans to transform a coal dock at Greilickville near Traverse City into a site that ships could use to land passengers. But CEO Matt McDonough said Tuesday that cruise ships weren't aligned enough with the pier's mission, the Traverse City Record-Eagle reported. The organization said that its focus is on local partnerships to make changes that will make the pier better suited for multiple uses.

None of the cruise lines that had expressed interest in docking there had ships small enough to tie up to the pier.

They would instead need to anchor in Grand Traverse Bay and use smaller boats to carry passengers to shore.

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Brady leaving Patriots after 20 years

Associated Press

For two decades, Tom Brady was the face of the Patriots, and even of the NFL. When he turns 43 in August, his home address no longer will be in New England.

The six-time Super Bowl champion plans to keep playing. But the centerpiece of the Patriots' dynasty, the most successful quarterback in league history, says he is leaving the only pro team he has ever known.

Brady posted Tuesday on social media "my football journey will take place elsewhere."

The comments were the first to indicate the Patriots icon would leave New England. Statements later by team owner Robert Kraft and coach Bill Belichick made it clear that Brady's remarkable stint there is over.

In a two-part message, Brady thanked the Patriots and the fans and said "FOREVER A PATRIOT."

"I don't know what my football future holds, but it is time for me to open a new stage for my life and my career," he wrote. "Although my football

journey will take place elsewhere, I appreciate everything that we have achieved and am grateful for our incredible TEAM experiences."

The one-year contract Brady signed before last season expires Wednesday afternoon, and his agent could negotiate a deal with another team on Tuesday, though it can't be official yet. He will count \$13.5 million toward New England's salary cap due to the signing bonus money he received in 2019.

Kraft said of Brady: "I had hoped this day would never come, but rather that Tom would end his remarkable career in a Patriots uniform after yet another Super Bowl championship. Unfortunately, the two sides were unable to reach an agreement to allow that dream to become a reality. While sad today, the overwhelming feeling I have is appreciation for his countless contributions to our team and community."

A four-time Super Bowl Most Valuable Player and three-time league MVP, Brady has been the enduring face of the Patriots during a run that added another layer to Boston's al-

ready rich sports history. Only Bill Russell, who won 11 NBA championship rings in the 1950s and '60s with the Celtics, has won more titles as a member of one of New England's four major professional sports teams.

Brady would be the oldest starting quarterback in the league at 43 at the beginning of next season. The Colts, Buccaneers, Chargers and Dolphins are among the teams expected to be in a Brady derby.

"TB12," as he has been dubbed, a nod to his 2017 book detailing his diet and exercise approach, arguably is coming off his worst non-injury season. He threw for 4,057 yards and 24 touchdowns in 2019, with eight interceptions. But he completed fewer than 56% of his passes six times in the final eight games of the year, including a season-ending loss to Miami that cost the Patriots a first-round playoff bye.

They lost at home to the Titans in the wild-card round, Brady's earliest postseason exit in a decade — and likely his last game in a Patriots uniform.

Brady had a one-year contract for 2019 that paid him

\$23 million, placing him 10th among starting quarterbacks. It was the latest renegotiation by Brady to help give the Patriots salary cap flexibility to fill out the roster.

The chief decision-maker in player personnel decisions, Belichick hasn't been shy about moving on from players he felt were past their prime or seeking contracts that exceeded value in relation to their age. Belichick has severed ties with players much younger than Brady during his time in New England.

"Nothing about the end of Tom's Patriots career changes how unfathomably spectacular it was," said Belichick, whose current quarterback is untested second-year player Jarrett Stidham. "With his relentless competitiveness and longevity, he earned everyone's adoration and will be celebrated forever. It has been a privilege to coach Tom Brady for 20 years."

After franchising offensive lineman Joe Thuney and coming to terms on new deals with Matt Slater and Devin McCourty, the Patriots have only about \$18 million in salary cap space.

MLB, other leagues push restarts to May at least

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball pushed back opening day until mid-May at the earliest on Monday because of the new coronavirus after the federal government recommended restricting events of more than 50 people for the next eight weeks.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred made the announcement following a conference call with executives of the 30 teams.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended Sunday that gatherings of 50 people or more be canceled or postponed across the country for the next eight weeks.

"The opening of the 2020 regular season will be pushed back in accordance with that guidance," Manfred said.

The NHL and NASCAR announced they also will follow the same guidance.

The French tennis federation announced Tuesday that the French Open is postponed, shifting from May to September.

Main-draw matches for the clay-court tournament at Roland Garros in Paris were scheduled to begin on May 24.

The NHL and the players association told players Monday they can go home — even outside of North America — and must self-isolate through March 27 while the season is on hold. But the NHL also cautioned

that it will not be able to even provide guidance on the potential reopening of team practices for another 45 days, which could push any potential return to play into May.

"I think in light of the CDC recommendations, it's hard to foresee that we're looking at much happening here in March or even April, in my opinion," NHL player agent Jay Grossman said.

NASCAR's decision came after at least two Monday conference calls between the sanctioning body and its team owners. It affects seven total races — Atlanta and Homestead had already been postponed.

There's no telling at this point when baseball games will start. The All-Star Game at Dodger

Stadium in Los Angeles on July 14 could be in jeopardy.

"We're not going to announce an alternate opening day at this point. We're going to have to see how things develop," Manfred told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch at Cardinals camp in Jupiter, Fla. He didn't want to speculate about the possibility of playing in empty stadiums, saying part of that decision would depend on timing.

MLB called off the rest of the spring training schedule on Thursday and said opening day, which had been scheduled for March 26, was postponed for at least two weeks. Teams and players agree that two to four weeks of additional spring training will be needed before the season begins.

NFL free agency

League bars player and personnel travel

Associated Press

The NFL has barred in-person interviews with free agents and is requiring local physical examinations for them rather than team-conducted exams.

In a memo sent to the 32 franchises on Monday, the league also banned travel by team personnel to meet with free agents as well as those players traveling to team facilities. The league's business year begins Wednesday, and the period in which players' representatives could negotiate with clubs began Monday — though no deals could be finalized.

All offseason activities such as meetings, practices and minicamps have been delayed indefinitely as a safeguard against the new coronavirus. No players can enter a club facility through March 31, with the exception of those receiving medical treatment.

The restrictions were first reported by ESPN.

The first day that players' representatives could talk with teams wound up being more about trades than free agents — with one of the NFL's biggest stars, DeAndre Hopkins, headed to Arizona.

In a stunner that overshadowed several other deals, the Texans sent their three-time All-Pro receiver to the Cardinals for running back David Johnson, a second-round draft pick this year and a fourth-rounder in 2021.

In a flurry of activity Monday night, the Dallas Cowboys and top receiver Amari Cooper agreed on a \$100 million, five-year contract. That came after the Cowboys placed their exclusive franchise tag on Dak Prescott, securing the rights to their star quarterback for an estimated \$31.5 million while the sides continue working on a long-term deal.

Buffalo agreed to acquire big-play receiver Stefon Diggs and a seventh-round draft pick from Minnesota in exchange for four draft picks, includ-

ing No. 22 overall this year. The Vikings also agreed with quarterback Kirk Cousins on a \$66 million, two-year contract extension.

Miami sealed deals with four likely starters and made Byron Jones the NFL's highest-paid cornerback at more than \$76.5 million over five years, surpassing new teammate Xavien Howard. The Dolphins upgraded their pass rush by landing linebacker Kyle Van Noy (\$51 million, four years), defensive end Shaq Lawson (\$30 million, three years), and defensive end Emmanuel Ogbah (\$15 million, two-years).

They also swung a deal with offensive lineman Ereck Flowers (\$30 million, three years).

Free agent quarterback Marcus Mariota agreed to join the Las Vegas Raiders, giving them an experienced backup who could also challenge Derek Carr for the starting role. Mariota, the No. 2 pick in the 2015 draft, lost his starting job in Tennessee last season to Ryan Tannehill.

The NFC champion 49ers got into the bartering, too. They dealt top defensive tackle DeForest Buckner to Indianapolis for the No. 13 pick in this year's draft, which, incidentally, won't have any public events next month in Las Vegas — if it is even held there as originally planned.

A person familiar with the deal said Buckner will receive a new contract worth \$21 million a year from the Colts. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal and contract can't be finalized until the start of the league year Wednesday.

The trade came just after San Francisco opted to keep another standout lineman, Arik Armstead, who got a five-year deal worth \$85 million.

And later, the 49ers agreed with safety Jimmie Ward on a three-year deal.

The NFL's business year is just beginning, as planned, despite the spread of the new

coronavirus. For now, all moves are being done remotely with basically a ban on travel within the league.

Also traded was Baltimore tight end Hayden Hurst to Atlanta, which is losing tight end Austin Hooper to Cleveland in free agency (four years, \$44 million). The Ravens received second- and fifth-round picks in this year's draft, and the Falcons got a fourth-rounder.

Fourteen franchise tags were handed out, the most since 2012, with only one to a quarterback in Prescott. The other big names among those franchised were Titans running back Derrick Henry; Bengals receiver A.J. Green; Chiefs defensive tackle Chris Jones; and Buccaneers linebacker Shaq Barrett, the league leader in sacks in 2019. The move by Tampa Bay with Barrett almost assures that quarterback Jameis Winston is headed elsewhere.

Running back Kenyan Drake got a transition tag from Arizona, but with Johnson traded to Houston, he has an open path to the starting job.

In other pending deals or moves:

■ A person familiar with the situation says the Saints and record-setting quarterback Drew Brees have agreed on a two-year, \$50 million contract.

Brees has said repeatedly that he is taking career decision one year at a time. His new contract gives the 41-year-old, 19-year veteran the leverage to decide after this season whether he wants to continue playing.

■ The Panthers are moving on from quarterback Cam Newton.

The team announced they have given the 2015 league MVP permission to seek a trade — although Newton responded by saying he never requested one.

■ Former Patriots linebacker Jamie Collins has agreed to a new three-year deal with the Detroit Lions. Collins' agent, David Canter, confirmed the

pact on Twitter.

■ Free agent tackle Jack Conklin agreed to a three-year, \$42 million contract with the Browns. A 2016 All-Pro as a rookie, he will get \$30 million guaranteed and earn \$20 million in his first year. Cleveland also released veteran safety Morgan Burnett.

■ Denver agreed to a \$44 million, four-year contract with free-agent guard Graham Glasgow that includes \$26 million in guarantees.

■ Defensive tackle Jarran Reed agreed on a two-year contract that keeps him in Seattle with a deal reportedly worth \$23 million.

■ The New York Jets and former Seattle Seahawks offensive tackle George Fant agreed on a three-year contract worth \$30 million.

■ Starting defensive tackle David Onyemata will re-sign with New Orleans.

■ Minnesota reached an agreement with punter Britton Colquitt on a three-year, \$9 million contract in which he will get \$5 million in guaranteed money.

■ Washington agreed to re-sign inside linebacker Jon Bostic to a \$6.6 million, two-year deal. The Redskins are also set to sign guard Wes Schweitzer, who spent his first three seasons with Atlanta.

■ The Raiders agreed to a three-year deal with linebacker Nick Kwiatkoski.

■ Two veterans retired: Ben Watson and Ramon Foster.

Watson, a 39-year-old Patriots tight end, is concluding a 15-year NFL career that included two stints in New England, as well as stops in Cleveland, New Orleans and Baltimore. Watson retires with 547 catches for 6,058 yards and 44 touchdowns. And a Super Bowl ring.

Foster, 34, is an 11-year veteran who made the Steelers as an undrafted rookie free agent out of Tennessee in 2009. He became a steadying force on a unit that evolved into one of the league's best.

Kentucky Derby moved to September

Associated Press

The Kentucky Derby was postponed until September on Tuesday, the latest rite of spring in sports to be struck by the new coronavirus along with the Masters, March Madness and baseball season.

The Derby, America's longest continuously held sports event, had been scheduled for May 2. It will now be run on Sept. 5, kicking off Labor Day weekend.

"We'll roll with the punches, and feel very, very good that September is the right date," Bill Carstanjen, CEO of Churchill Downs Inc., said on a conference call.

It's the first time the Derby won't be held on its traditional first Saturday in May since 1945, when it was run on June 9. The federal government suspended horse racing nationwide for most of the first half of the year before World War II ended in early May, but not in time to get the Derby in that month.

The date change still must be approved by the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission at its meeting Thursday.

Carstanjen said the date was chosen after talks with NBC

Sports, which televises the Triple Crown races, based on the limited number of sports events that weekend and hotel availability in Louisville.

The status of the other Triple Crown races remains unclear. As of Tuesday morning, the Preakness had not responded to the Derby's announcement. The New York Racing Association said Tuesday it still intends to run the Belmont Stakes this year but that the date could change.

The Preakness is scheduled for May 16 at Pimlico in Baltimore, and the Belmont is set for June 6 in New York. Carstanjen said Churchill Downs alerted the other two tracks as it neared a new date with NBC.

"They were receptive and had their own questions," he said. There is time in the calendar that NBC can make available," he said. "They just have to work it out together and I hope they do."

Churchill Downs clearly wasn't interested in running the 146th Derby without fans in the stands, which is what other tracks have been doing, including Santa Anita in California, Oaklawn in Arkansas and the Fair Grounds in Louisiana.

"We feel confident we are going to run the Kentucky Derby and run it with a crowd," Carstanjen said. "It's a participatory event."

The race itself lasts just two minutes, but the partying and socializing goes on throughout Derby week, with celebrity-stuffed charity galas and private house parties. Last year's race drew 150,729 fans.

The tradition of sipping mint juleps, donning fancy hats and dress clothes, and the crowd singalong to "My Old Kentucky Home" as the horses step onto the track has always made the Derby more than just a sporting event. People who pay little attention to horse racing the rest of the year typically watch the Derby and wager on it either formally or in pools set up at parties.

The Derby was first run in 1875 and has gone uninterrupted, even through the Great Depression and World Wars I and II.

In 1943, there were travel restrictions imposed by World War II and no out-of-town tickets were sold. Still, the Derby went on, with Count Fleet winning in front of 65,000. The colt won the Triple Crown that

year.

The Kentucky Oaks, the race for fillies held on Derby eve, is also hugely popular, especially among Louisville locals. It first began in 1875. It will be run Sept. 4.

Horses have been training and racing to earn points that translate into berths in the 20-horse Derby field even as the rest of the sports world has mostly shut down because of the virus pandemic. Horses have only one chance in their lives to compete in the Derby, Preakness and Belmont stakes, which comprise the Triple Crown for 3-year-olds.

Carstanjen said points already earned by horses would be maintained, while existing races at tracks across the country would be added to the Road to the Kentucky Derby qualifying process.

"This will be fun and give fans more time to learn about this year's crop of 3-year-olds," he said.

The Derby, the first leg of the Triple Crown, draws strong TV ratings. By moving it to Sept. 5, the race wouldn't conflict with Notre Dame football, satisfying NBC Sports, which televises both.

New US soccer chief disavows argument vs. women

Associated Press

As a different set of lawyers took over for the U.S. Soccer Federation, new USSF President Cindy Parlow Cone disavowed papers submitted by the previous attorneys who argued women's national team players had lesser skills and responsibilities than their male counterparts.

Parlow Cone took over as head of American soccer's governing body last week when Carlos Cordeiro abruptly resigned because of the backlash over the documents, submitted by the USSF as it defended a gender discrimination lawsuit filed by women's national team players.

Seyfarth Shaw had represented the federation since the suit was filed in March 2019. Latham & Watkins replaced it in Monday's night's filing, made simultaneously with a statement by Parlow Cone, a

former World Cup and Olympic champion for the U.S.

"Last week's legal filing was an error," Cone said. "It resulted from a fundamental breakdown in our internal process that led to offensive assertions made by the federation that do not represent our core values."

Both sides have moved for summary judgments, asking U.S. District Judge R. Gary Klausner to decide in their favor without a trial, scheduled for May 5. They filed final documents associated with those requests late Monday night.

Cone, who had been the federation's vice president since last year, became the first woman president in the USSF's 107-year history. She struck a conciliatory tone.

"The WNT is the most successful soccer team in the world. As it relates to the lawsuit filed by the women, I offer the per-

spective of a former player. I know how important it is for both the federation and the players to move beyond this and keep working together on what unites us," she said. "We only have one federation and one senior women's national team. We have to work together."

Players claim they have not been paid equally to the men's national team and asked for more than \$66 million in damages under the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The federation's claims in court documents that the women's team didn't have the physical abilities or the same responsibilities as the men's team drew criticism from sponsors, including The Coca-Cola Co. and The Proctor & Gamble Co., as well as MLS Commissioner Don Garber, a USSF board member.