

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy hit particularly hard by virus crisis

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Navy, the military service hit hardest by the coronavirus, scrambled to contain its first at-sea outbreak, with at least two dozen infected aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, one of 11 active aircraft carriers whose mission is central to the Pentagon's strategy for deterring war with China and Iran.

The Roosevelt and its contingent of warplanes may be sidelined for days, sitting pier side in Guam as the entire crew — more than 5,000 — is tested. Navy leaders say the carrier could return to duty at any time if required, but the sudden setback is seen as a harbinger of more trouble to come.

"The Navy is headed into choppy waters in terms of readiness in the months ahead," says retired Adm. James Stavridis,

a former ship commander who rose to become NATO's top commander in Europe.

In Asia, a carrier presence is central to what the Pentagon has identified as a fundamental shift from fighting insurgent and extremist conflicts in the Middle East to a return to "great power competition." That means, principally, a bigger focus on China, including its militarization of disputed areas of the South China Sea.

The carrier, like other Navy ships, is vulnerable to infectious disease spread given its close quarters. The massive ship is more than 1,000 feet long; sailors are spread out across a labyrinth of decks linked by steep ladder-like stairs and narrow corridors. Enlisted sailors and officers have separate living quarters, but they routinely grab their food from crowded

buffet lines and eat at tables joined end-to-end.

Stavridis fears that berthing compartments, or sleeping quarters where a dozen sailors are often packed into spaces not much larger than an average kitchen, will become "birthing compartments" for the virus.

Although the Navy is much smaller than the Army, it accounts for at least one-third of all reported COVID-19 cases in the military. None have been reported among Navy submarine crews, which are widely deployed and include subs armed with long-range nuclear missiles on constant patrol.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, Adm. John Aquilino, said in an Associated Press interview late Thursday that it's not clear how long the Roosevelt will be kept in Guam and that its schedule will be

adjusted "as needed." He said no infected sailor is a "critical health risk" but some have been hospitalized.

"We're clearly interested in ensuring that the ship and the crew are healthy" said Aquilino, speaking from his Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, base. "But let there be no doubt the ship's ready to respond if needed." He said worried family members at home should know everything possible is being done for crew safety.

Family members of Roosevelt sailors have been reaching out to each other on social media. Expressing shock and anxiety, they worried about their family members on the ship and their children at home, sprinkling their posts with questions about local virus testing and memes about toilet paper shortages and pandemic fears.

Trump order to bring ex-troops back to active duty

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump issued an order Friday night that permits the Pentagon to bring former U.S. troops and members of the National Guard and Reserve back to active duty to augment forces already involved in the U.S. military's response to the coronavirus pandemic, senior U.S. officials said.

Trump signed an executive order that allows Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper to order units and individual members "and certain Individual Ready Reserve" members, Chief Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman said in a statement released just after midnight on Saturday morning. The Individual Ready Reserve comprises former active-duty and reserve service members, who are commonly considered out of the military and rarely recalled.

Hoffman, who could not be reached for comment early Saturday, said that decisions about which people may be activated

are still being reviewed. The statement did not address whether anyone will be involuntarily recalled.

"Generally, these members will be persons in Headquarters units and persons with high demand medical capabilities whose call-up would not adversely affect their civilian communities," Hoffman's statement said.

Before relying on any National Guard Reserve forces, Esper and the Department of Health and Human Services will consult with state officials, Hoffman added. Governors have control of their own National Guard forces in most cases.

"As this is a dynamic situation, we do not currently have a projected number of expected activations, but the Department is now fully authorized to make activations as needed," Hoffman said. "We will provide updates as they become available."

The executive order, released by the White House, states that anyone recalled

can remain on active duty for up to 24 months straight.

The Pentagon already has dispatched its two Navy hospital ships, the USNS Comfort and USNS Mercy, to New York and Los Angeles, respectively, and deployed Army hospital units to other locations. The hospital ships are heavily staffed with military reservists.

Earlier this week, the Army sent a message to some veterans who served in medical fields to ask whether they would be interested in serving in the coronavirus response.

Service officials were interested in people who previously served in eight jobs: critical care officer, anesthesiologist, nurse anesthetist, critical care nurse, nurse practitioner, emergency-room nurse, respiratory specialist and medic.

"When the Nation called—you answered, and now, that call may come again," wrote Lt. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands.

Report: DOD housing oversight is lacking

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department needs more home inspections on bases and stronger communication with military families to make certain chronic complaints about issues such as water leaks, mold and rodents are addressed, according to a federal watchdog report.

The Government Accountability Office report was requested by Congress to review ongoing military housing issues with mold and pest infestations that plagued some military families living in on-base housing across the country.

Military housing was privatized in 1996. Fourteen private companies manage 99% of housing on military bases in the United States, amounting to about 200,000 homes. The companies are responsible for 79 privatized military housing projects — 34 for the Army, 32 for the Air Force and 13 for the Navy and the Marine Corps, according to the report. Each

project has its own contract and business agreement that guides its operations, property management and the management of funds.

The 82-page GAO report — titled “Military Housing: DOD Needs to Strengthen Oversight and Clarify Its Role in the Management of Privatized Housing” — highlights 12 steps that the defense and service secretaries should take to improve oversight while also accounting for the changes they’ve made since housing issues came to light nearly two years ago. The recommendations focus on stronger accountability and better communication from the military to residents and Congress.

Recommendations call for more physical inspections, improved performance evaluations so they better reflect the condition of homes, standardized and validated work orders, the collection of data regarding resident satisfaction, better understanding of the differ-

ence between housing offices and management companies, and a review of the financial viability of the management agreements.

Some of the information and recommendations of the report were released in December and March through congressional testimony by the report’s author, Elizabeth A. Field, GAO’s director of defense capabilities and management.

In December, Field testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on portions of the report that show data collected to determine the satisfaction of residents living in privatized military housing and the living conditions of the homes available to them was unreliable and potentially misleading.

That included data collected from satisfaction surveys sent to residents as well as data from maintenance request work orders obtained from the private companies — much of which was used to report housing sat-

isfaction rates to Congress.

In May 2019, the Pentagon officials told Congress that privatized military housing scored an 87% satisfaction rate from residents based on a 2017 annual survey. But the GAO’s research found this statistic was calculated with “errors and inaccuracies,” such as it was missing surveys from four Army bases that account for about 18% of its housing inventory.

For those families who do experience problems with their home and then face problems getting resolution from the private management company, the military housing offices did not effectively communicate their role as a resource for service members, according to the report. Some offices housed military personnel with employees of the private companies, leaving residents confused about which group they were actually speaking to when they went to the office for help.

US ponders response to Iraq attacks

The Washington Post

Iran-backed militias are becoming more audacious in attacking U.S. personnel in Iraq, with rocket strikes against military bases occurring more frequently and, for the first time, in broad daylight.

U.S. officials say they are receiving near-daily reports of “imminent” attacks planned against U.S.-linked military or diplomatic facilities.

But the question of how to deter further militia strikes without putting troops at greater risk highlights how much American security and influence have evaporated in Iraq. In the two weeks since the U.S. carried out bombing raids outside Baghdad to avenge a rocket attack north of the capital that

killed a Briton and two Americans, the Trump administration has been wrestling with what additional steps to take to confront the militias without sparking costly retaliation.

Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker told reporters last week that the U.S. would “take what steps that we see necessary” to retaliate for militia violence. But the administration remains divided over how, or even when, to strike back.

“This may ultimately come down to how much risk the president is willing to accept in Iraq before our presence there becomes too much of a burden,” said a U.S. official.

Meanwhile in Iraq, where more than 5,000 U.S. troops are potentially in the cross-

hairs of Iran-backed militants, American requests that Iraqi authorities track down and prosecute those responsible for rocket attacks have made little headway.

The fatal rocket attacks earlier this month on Camp Taji, a military base north of Baghdad, were blamed by U.S. officials on Kataeb Hezbollah, one of the main Iran-backed militias. The U.S. strikes carried out in response were condemned by the Iraqi army, which called it “treacherous,” and an Iran-backed militia group threatened retaliation involving “an eye for an eye.”

Since then, there have been at least four rocket attacks around U.S. military and diplomatic installations, and U.S. officials say they believe it is only

a matter of time before more troops are killed or wounded.

Amid what one defense official described as “a lot of chatter about” further militia attacks, the Trump administration is struggling to calibrate its potential response.

Describing Trump’s dilemma, Kirsten Fontenrose, director of the Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council and a former senior official on President Trump’s National Security Council, said that U.S. domestic concerns would play an important role.

The U.S. response to future militia attacks could also depend on whether American personnel are wounded or killed, and on the size and nature of the assault.

\$2.2T stimulus signed into law

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed an unprecedented \$2.2 trillion economic rescue package into law after swift and near-unanimous action by Congress to support businesses, rush resources to overburdened health care providers and help struggling families during the deepening coronavirus epidemic.

Acting with unity and resolve unseen since the 9/11 attacks, Washington moved urgently to stem an economic free fall caused by widespread restrictions meant to slow the spread of the virus that have shuttered schools, closed businesses and brought American life in many places to a virtual standstill.

“This will deliver urgently needed relief,” Trump said as he signed the bill Friday in the Oval Office, flanked only by Republican lawmakers. He thanked members of both parties for putting Americans “first.”

Earlier Friday, the House gave near-unanimous approval by voice vote after an impassioned session conducted along the social distancing guidelines imposed by the crisis. Many lawmakers sped to Washington to participate — their numbers swollen after a maverick Republican signaled he’d try to force a roll call vote — though dozens of others remained safely in their home districts.

The Senate passed the bill unanimously late Wednesday.

“Today we’ve all acknowledged our nation faces an economic and health emergency of historic proportions,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. She said Americans deserve a full-on government response “to address these threats to their lives and their livelihood and they need it now.”

The \$2.2 trillion legislation

will speed government payments of \$1,200 to most Americans and increase jobless benefits for millions of people thrown out of work. Businesses big and small will get loans, grants and tax breaks. It will send unprecedented billions to states and local governments, and the nation’s all but overwhelmed health care system.

“This is not a time for cynicism or invective or second-guessing,” said GOP Whip Liz Cheney of Wyoming. “This is a time to remember that we are citizens of the greatest nation on Earth, that we have overcome every challenge we have faced, and we will overcome this one.”

Despite reservations, arch-conservatives joined with progressives like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., to back the bill, which moved quickly through a Congress that’s been battered by partisanship and is itself not immune to the suffering the virus has caused. Reps. Joe Cunningham, D-S.C., and Mike Kelly, R-Pa., announced Friday that they’d tested positive, bringing the number of infected lawmakers to five.

Many lawmakers summoned the bipartisan spirit of 9/11 and efforts to fight terrorism. Others praised the roles low-income workers play in keeping the country going and the heroism of health care workers. Some, like Iowa Democrat Abby Finkenauer, who had just learned of two additional coronavirus-related deaths in her district, came close to tears.

Others couldn’t restrain their partisan impulses. Republicans chided Democratic leaders for delays and provisions they see as extraneous, such as funding for public broadcasting and the arts; Democrats said too many elements are a bailout for corporations that may not need it.

Virus infections top 600K globally

Associated Press

BERLIN — The number of confirmed coronavirus infections worldwide topped 600,000 on Saturday as new cases stacked up quickly in Europe and the United States and officials dug in for a long fight against the pandemic.

The latest landmark came only two days after the world passed half a million infections, according to a tally by John Hopkins University, showing that much work remains to be done to slow the spread of the virus. It showed more than 607,000 cases and over 28,000 deaths.

While the U.S. now leads the world in reported infections — with more than 104,000 cases — five countries exceed its roughly 1,700 deaths: Italy, Spain, China, Iran and France.

“We cannot completely prevent infections at this stage, but we can and must in the immediate future achieve fewer new infections per day, a slower spread,” German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is in quarantine at home after her doctor tested positive for the virus, told her compatriots in an audio message. “That will decide whether our health system can stand up to the virus.”

The virus already has put health systems in Italy, Spain and France under extreme strain. Lockdowns of varying severity have been introduced across Europe, nearly emptying streets in normally bustling cities, including Paris where drone photos showed the city’s landmarks eerily deserted.

Merkel’s chief of staff, Helge Braun, said Germany — where authorities closed nonessential shops and banned gatherings of more than two in public — won’t relax its restrictions before April 20.

Spain, where stay-at-home restrictions have been in place for nearly two weeks, reported 832 more deaths Saturday, its highest daily count yet, bringing its total to 5,690. Another 8,000 confirmed infections pushed

that count above 72,000.

Doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers in its worst-hit regions are working nonstop and falling ill at an alarming rate. More than 9,000 health workers in the country have been infected.

“We are completely overwhelmed,” said paramedic Pablo Rojo at Barcelona’s Dos de Maig hospital. “Seven or eight (patients transported today) and all with COVID-19. ... And the average age is decreasing. They’re not 80 years old anymore, they are now 30 and 40 years old.”

Spain has struggled to get coronavirus tests and protective gear for health workers. The government has started flights to transport the supplies directly from China to reduce waiting times.

As the epicenter has shifted westward, the situation has calmed in China, where some restrictions have been lifted. Six subway lines restored limited service in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged in December after the city had its official coronavirus risk evaluation downgraded from high to medium on Friday. Five districts of the city of 11 million people had other travel restrictions loosened after their risk factor was downgraded to low.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, the virus can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and lead to death.

More than 130,000 people have recovered, according to Johns Hopkins.

The effects of the outbreak have been felt by the powerful and the poor alike.

On Friday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson became the first leader of a major country to test positive for the virus. He said he would continue to work from self-quarantine.

GOP embraces relief bill as if 'at war'

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Republicans who have spent the past decade howling about the danger of ballooning deficits embraced the mammoth coronavirus rescue package approved by Congress this week, shrugging off past concerns about the nation's spending in the face of a public health crisis.

In many cases, the conservatives who backed the \$2 trillion bill — the largest economic relief bill in U.S. history — were the very same who raged against the nearly \$800 billion economic stimulus package backed by the Obama administration.

But facing the unprecedented threat of a global pandemic

— and working under a Republican president who has largely brushed off concerns about debt and deficits — the GOP has been willing to overlook an unprecedented flood of taxpayer spending. Leading budget hawk Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., who insisted in 2009 that government cannot spend its way out of a recession, this week joined a unanimous Senate majority that approved what he described as “the biggest government intervention in the economy in the history of the world.”

“This is a response to an invasion,” he told reporters. “This is the kind of thing you’d have to do if we were at war.”

Like other conservatives, he noted that much of the nation's

current economic distress was caused by the government's social distancing orders, while the Obama stimulus was in response to a crisis created by the private sector.

Failing to take dramatic action now, Toomey said, “would be a wildly imprudent thing, and it would probably result in such a severe recession — it might very well be a depression — and it could take decades to come out of this.”

Even before the health crisis struck, the Republican-aligned fiscal conservative movement had dramatically diminished under Trump, who has pushed the nation's budget deficit to heights not seen in nearly a decade. That's prompted arguments that the GOP is

hypocritical when it comes to government spending.

Mick Mulvaney, Trump's outgoing chief of staff and a former Republican congressman aligned with the tea party, told a private audience last month that the GOP only worries about deficits “when there is a Democrat in the White House,” according to a report in *The Washington Post*.

For the first time in the modern era, Republicans are on record supporting direct cash payments to tens of millions of Americans — a government-backed measure more likely to be found in socialist countries. The legislation offers Americans grants of up to \$1,200 each with an additional \$500 for each child.

Fire kills subway driver in NYC, several injured

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A New York City subway driver was killed and several other people were injured early Friday in a fire on a train that is being investigated as a crime, officials said.

Fires were reported at three other stations nearby at the same time, police said.

“We are investigating it as a criminal matter,” Deputy Chief Brian McGee said, adding that no arrests have been made.

The fire killed a motorman who was helping passengers to safety, officials said, and came the day after two of his fellow New York City Transit employees fell victim to the coronavirus.

“As all of you know, this has already been a devastating week for New York City Transit,” said Sarah Feinberg, interim president of the agency that runs the city's buses and subways. “And this is another horrific moment for our family.”

A train had just pulled into the 110th Street station in Harlem, near Central Park, around 3 a.m. when a transit worker saw smoke and fire in one of the cars, said McGee, who joined Feinberg at a news conference at the scene.

The motorman and another transit employee successfully evacuated passengers from the train, Feinberg said. The motorman's body was found on the tracks, McGee said.

The 36-year-old motorman was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital and pronounced dead, police said. His name was not immediately released.

Fires were also reported at around the same time at three nearby stations — 86th Street, 96th Street and 116th Street, McGee said.

“The most important thing that I need is for witnesses to come forward,” he said, urging New Yorkers to call a police tip line.

Nine other people were injured, a lower number than some earlier reports had indicated, Feinberg said. “Early numbers are wrong, and we'll have to see how it plays out,” she said.

Hacker posts porn during candidate's rally in Utah

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The Utah Attorney General's Office is investigating the hacking of a video call hosted by a gubernatorial candidate who saw the call hijacked by pornographic images and racial slurs on Thursday.

Republican Aimee Winder Newton was about five minutes

into the virtual event on the Zoom platform when the trouble began as all 130 state delegates on the call were unmuted, said Caroline Bena, a spokeswoman for the campaign.

The call was hosted on a Utah GOP account, but the hacker disabled administrative control, so the moderators were unable to stop the images when they began flashing on the

screen, Bena said in an email message.

Winder Newton and running mate John Dougall ended the call and switched to Facebook Live, where she completed the event.

Two investigators have been assigned to figuring out what happened and stopping it from happening again, said Rich Piatt, a spokesman for the Utah

Attorney General's office.

Like many schools, businesses and political campaigns, Winder Newton was using Zoom to connect with party delegates remotely since large gatherings have been prohibited in hopes of stopping the spread of the new coronavirus.

The company and state party did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

NY hospitals struggle to avoid being overwhelmed

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York's battle to keep its hospitals from being overwhelmed by the coronavirus outbreak is entering a critical phase, as officials race to get hospitals built and supplies in place before medical centers become completely overwhelmed. Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered schools closed statewide for at least two more weeks. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said he'd consider fining people who ignore social distancing rules. Meanwhile, the outbreak is taking its toll on the state's civil servants.

Speaking Friday at a convention center being converted into a field hospital, Cuomo said he'd seek federal help to build at least four more such temporary hospitals across New York City in the weeks ahead, each with 1,000 beds.

Every one of them will be needed, he said, to handle a crush of coronavirus patients that may require the state to nearly triple its current number of hospital beds.

More temporary hospitals are planned in the suburbs and a Navy hospital ship is due to arrive Monday in New York City.

There are already more than 6,000 hospitalized COVID-19 patients in New York, with almost 1,600 in intensive care. The state has logged a nation-high of 519 deaths and has more than 44,000 confirmed cases.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey on Friday said the state was ordering the closure of certain businesses, such as some retail stores, gyms and entertainment venues, as the state confronts the new coronavirus.

"I cannot stress to you enough the fact that we must be serious about eliminating the spread of this deadly virus. Folks this is real. It is very real," Ivey said.

The list does not include such businesses as manufacturing facilities, grocery stores and restaurants that offer take-out. Day care centers can stay open

if they don't have more than 12 children in one room. The Alabama Department of Public Health put a document on its website to try to answer questions about the order.

The new state order also prohibits gatherings of 10 people or more that are not work-related where people can't stay at least 6 feet apart.

The move is the state's most aggressive action to date to try to curb the spread but falls short of a "stay at home" directive that some states have ordered.

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas' governor signed legislation early Saturday creating a \$173 million fund he can use to respond to the coronavirus outbreak and to avoid cutting some agencies' budgets because of the pandemic's economic fallout.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson's signature moves the state's surplus into a new "COVID-19 Rainy Day Fund" that he can access with the approval of legislative leaders. Hutchinson signed identical bills creating the fund shortly after they were unanimously approved by the House and Senate in a midnight session.

California

LOS ANGELES — The surge of coronavirus cases in California that health officials have warned was coming has arrived and will worsen, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Friday, while the mayor of Los Angeles warned that by early next week his city could see the kind of crush that has crippled New York.

"We are now seeing the spike that we were anticipating," Newsom declared while standing in front of the 1,000-bed Navy hospital ship Mercy that arrived in the Port of Los Angeles. It will take non-virus patients to free up rooms at hospitals for infection cases.

Newsom said California's cases grew 26% in one day even with the results of 65,000 tests still pending. Johns Hopkins

University tallied more than 4,700 California cases Friday, with at least 97 deaths.

In Los Angeles County there were 678 new cases in the past two days for a total of nearly 1,500. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said if the trend continues, the city's cases could double every two days.

Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Friday ordered anyone arriving from Louisiana to self-quarantine like those from New York in a bid to blunt the coronavirus pandemic.

DeSantis said he is expanding his quarantine order to include Louisiana after officials in the lightly hit Panhandle worried people will flee New Orleans as the number of positive tests there climb. It is about a three-hour drive from New Orleans to Pensacola and DeSantis said the Florida Highway Patrol and sheriff's deputies will set up checkpoints to screen cars from Louisiana.

The order requires anyone coming from Louisiana to isolate themselves for two weeks under threat of a 60-day jail sentence. Earlier this week he issued identical restrictions on visitors from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Massachusetts

BOSTON — All visitors arriving in Massachusetts are being asked to self-quarantine for 14 days as the state tightens its efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus, Gov. Charlie Baker said Friday.

The Republican governor said travelers coming into Massachusetts through the state's airports and by train will be given flyers instructing them about the quarantine.

Instructions will also be placed at highway rest stops and on electronic highway message boards.

The number of people in Massachusetts who have died from COVID-19 jumped by 10 in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 35 since the start of

the outbreak.

Two of the new deaths were men in their 60s. The remaining were men and women in their 80s and 90s.

Public health officials said the number of residents who have so far tested positive for the disease increased to more than 3,200.

Michigan

LANSING — The U.S. surgeon general said Friday that the situation in Detroit, a national "hot spot" for cases, will worsen next week — as Michigan reported the highest daily spikes yet: 801 new cases statewide and 32 additional deaths.

Three counties in the Detroit area — Wayne, Oakland and Macomb — account for 83% of the more than 3,600 people in Michigan confirmed to have COVID-19. At least 92 have died, mostly from the three-county region.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration previously began implementing a plan in which hospitals outside southeast Michigan are being asked to serve as "relief" hospitals during the pandemic. They will offer 10% of their usual bed capacity to accept patients from hospitals overwhelmed with virus patients.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf put another 2.5 million Pennsylvania residents under an order that restricts people from leaving home Friday, as his administration confirmed more coronavirus cases and deaths and major facilities were enlisted to help with hospital overflows.

Wolf, in a statement, added nine counties to 10 already covered by the order, for a total of 19 counties and three-fourths of the state's 12.8 million residents.

The stay-at-home order starts at 8 p.m. Friday for Berks, Butler, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Luzerne, Pike, Wayne, Westmoreland and York counties, and will last until at least April 6.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man impersonating cop made fake curfew stop

GA GAINESVILLE — A man pretending to be a police officer made a traffic stop for violating a non-existent curfew related to the coronavirus pandemic, authorities in Georgia said.

It happened when an unknown man pulled over a driver in Gainesville, 54 miles north-east of Atlanta, police said in a post on facebook.

Police are looking for the suspect, who they said had a blue light flashing from inside his car when making the stop.

There is currently no curfew policy in Gainesville.

Pedestrian bridge falls onto freeway

MI DETROIT — A portion of a pedestrian bridge fell onto a Detroit freeway, blocking traffic, police said.

No one was injured in the collapse onto westbound Interstate 94, Lt. Mike Shaw, a Michigan State Police spokesman, said in an email.

State police reported on Twitter that the agency was notified that part of the Townsend Pedestrian Bridge near Van Dyke Avenue had fallen.

It wasn't immediately known what caused the bridge to fall.

Man charged after kitchen knife attack

ID BURLEY — A southern Idaho man was charged with attempted murder after a detective said he cut a woman with a kitchen knife.

Joseph A. Price, 43, of Burley, is also charged with mayhem, battery and other charges, The Times-News reported.

Cassia County Sheriff Detec-

tive Lieutenant Kevin Horak said deputies responded to a Burley home and found a woman who was severely bleeding, with injuries to her head, face and hands.

"Two of her fingers were severely cut," Horak said, "and there's a possibility that she'll lose those fingers."

Two children witnessed the violence, police said.

Woman accused of trying to burn business

AZ GLENDALE — A woman was arrested in an arson attempt at her Glendale business, according to authorities.

Police said Claudia Ramirez, 44, was taken into custody on suspicion of arson of an occupied structure.

A Molotov cocktail was thrown through the window of the business, but police said the glass bottle remained intact and was half full of what investigators believe was gasoline.

Two days later, employees at the business next door reported an overwhelming smell of gasoline through the shared wall.

Phoenix TV station ABC15 reported investigators said Ramirez took out a \$100,000 insurance policy that covered merchandise at her business.

Man tried to burn house to scare mom

AL MONTGOMERY — An Alabama man was arrested and accused of attempting to burn down his mother's home because he wanted to frighten her, authorities said.

Robert Missildine, 25, was charged with second-degree attempted arson, The Montgomery Advertiser reported.

Charging documents said Missildine was angry with his mother for not allowing him to

come inside and shower. Documents said he tried to kick the door in, then used a brick to break a window and enter the house.

Once he was inside, Missildine poured gasoline and told his mother he was going to burn the house down, documents said.

Man shot ex-girlfriend with bow and arrow

WA KELSO — Authorities arrested a Kelso man accused of shooting his ex-girlfriend in the head with a bow and arrow.

A woman reported to deputies that when she went to Issac Gabbard's trailer to get her dog, Gabbard threw a bottle of bleach at her vehicle, breaking the windshield, The Daily News reported.

As she got into the car and began backing out of the driveway, Gabbard approached with a compound bow and fired at her, according to the Cowlitz County sheriff's office. The arrow struck the woman in the head.

She is expected to survive, Cowlitz County Sheriff's chief criminal deputy Troy Brightbill said.

Drunk woman survives being hit by train

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A drunk Florida woman survived being hit by a slow-moving train after she partially fell asleep on the tracks, authorities said.

The woman was hospitalized after she was found by firefighters near the train tracks, The Palm Beach Post reported. She did not have life-threatening injuries, officials said.

The woman was hit by a slow-moving train in Lake Worth Beach, a city in Palm Beach County, fire officials said.

Judge who made rude remark removed

NJ TRENTON — A high-ranking New Jersey judge was censured over his behavior in court that included comments to a woman that she should send nude pictures of herself to Playboy magazine founder Hugh Hefner.

State Superior Court Judge Alberto Rivas agreed to step down from his position as Middlesex County's assignment judge, the top position in the office, the state Supreme Court said. He will continue to serve on the bench in civil cases.

A state advisory committee on judicial conduct found Rivas "demonstrated a lack of self-control" during a January 2019 dispute involving the girlfriend of a married man and the man's wife. The girlfriend was seeking to have the wife return explicit photos of herself that she feared would be shared on social media.

Man sentenced for trying to bomb bank

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma man was sentenced to 25 years in prison after being convicted of trying to blow up an Oklahoma City bank with a massive vehicle bomb, according to federal prosecutors.

Jerry Drake Varnell, 26, of Sayre, was sentenced in federal court in Oklahoma City.

Varnell was arrested in August 2017 after he tried to detonate what authorities said he believed was a half-ton bomb outside BancFirst in downtown Oklahoma City. The FBI had learned of Varnell's plan and an undercover agent posed as someone who could help construct the bomb, but instead provided inert materials.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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MLB season could stretch into winter

Associated Press

NEW YORK — If the final pitch of the 2020 baseball season comes closer to Christmas than Halloween, that's fine with the players.

Major League Baseball owners ratified a 17-page agreement with the union on Friday in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, with players willing to extend the season as long as needed to cover as close to a full schedule as possible.

Even if it involves neutral sites in warm-weather cities and domes. Even if it involves playing in empty ballparks. Even if it involves lots of day-night doubleheaders.

And if it means expanding the playoffs from 10 teams, fine.

"Players want to play. That's what we do," said union head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman. "Being able to get back on the field and being able to play, even if that means their fans are watching at home, but being able to play for their fans is something they've all expressed a desire and an interest to do, and to do so as soon as possible."

The deal provides for \$170 million in advances from salaries that total more than \$4 billion and guarantees service time to players even if no games are played this year. That means Mookie Betts, George Springer, Marcus Stroman, Trevor Bauer and J.T. Realmuto remain on track for free agency next offseason.

This season was to start Thursday and Game 7 of the World Series was on track to be Oct. 28. With opening day postponed until mid-May at the earliest, the final pitch could come as Frosty the Snowman starts popping up. The sides discussed a regular season extending into October and a postseason in November.

"We would play as long as we possibly could. Obviously, the weather becomes a challenge the later you get in the calen-

dar year," Clark said. "But we would do our best to play as many games as possible regardless of when we start."

A bigger playoff field will be considered.

"Is this a year where trying different things could be of benefit, and that is one of the things that in a one-year trial could be a benefit," Clark said.

When the season can start is beyond the control of MLB and the union. If games are missed, players will receive prorated shares of their salaries.

"Each of the parties shall work in good faith to as soon as is practicable commence, play, and complete the fullest 2020 championship season and post-season that is economically feasible," the agreement says. There must be no legal restrictions on mass gathering and travel, and a determination play "does not pose an unreasonable health and safety risk to players, staff or spectators."

MLB agreed with the union to use "best efforts to play as many games as possible, while taking into account player safety and health, rescheduling needs, competitive considerations, stadium availability, and the economic feasibility of various alternatives."

Players would consider waiving the rule against playing no more than 20 days in a row. It remains unclear what the minimum number of games needed for a season would be.

"We haven't discussed an exact number," Clark said.

Players ratified the deal Thursday night. They would keep their salary advances if no games are played in 2020 and waived their claim to additional salaries if the season is scrapped.

It remains unclear whether the All-Star Game at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles will be played on July 14.

"Obviously, the calendar is going to dictate a lot of what can and can't be done," Clark said.

US Olympic sports facing funding crisis

Associated Press

DENVER — The postponement of the Tokyo Games has catapulted the sports organizations that make up the backbone of the U.S. Olympic team into crisis.

At least one has already started layoffs and others are desperate to stay solvent. Some are expecting a major downturn in membership dues, while others are reeling from event cancellations totaling more than 8,000 across all sports.

A database analyzed by The Associated Press shows combined projected losses of more than \$121 million in revenue between February and June for 43 of the 50 national governing bodies that responded to a survey from the NGB Council in the wake of the coronavirus crisis.

As much or more as the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, which serves as an umbrella regulator of the country's Olympic sports, it's the NGBs that provide funding and other support for athletes to pursue their dreams at the Olympic and other elite levels. About 80% of the typical NGB's budget goes toward supporting athletes.

Not including the U.S. Tennis Association — an outlier because of the massive revenue it generates from the U.S. Open — the NGBs have a combined annual revenue of about \$685 million. By comparison, the NFL and NBA each reportedly brought in about \$8 billion during the latest completed season. Half the NGBs are little more than ma-and-pop operations, working with small staffs and on revenue not more than \$5 million a year.

The USOPC, which sent cash grants to the individual NGBs to the tune of around \$65 million in 2018, is also in uncharted territory. The postponement of the Olympics forces the federation to make up for a shortfall nearing \$200 million without the NBC payout that comes during Olympic years.

The USOPC broke with re-

cent practice by not taking out insurance against that possible loss, instead deciding to self-insure. Some of the shortfall is expected to come from an endowment fund created out of a surplus from the 1984 L.A. Olympics.

The USOPC says the losses across American sports could range from \$600 million to \$800 million. A good portion of these losses can be recouped if the games go forward, as expected, in 2021. But staying financially healthy until that time is not a given for some of the more vulnerable NGBs.

"I haven't heard anyone say their NGB itself was going to go out of business," said Max Cobb, the president of U.S. Biathlon, who doubles as leader of the USOPC's NGB Council. "But there's very little buffer to absorb any revenue loss for an NGB. They all run on a very tight revenue and expense model, and very few have much in the way of savings."

Already, USA Cycling, a mid-sized NGB with an approximate annual revenue of \$15 million, laid off eight of its 70-person staff. And USA Rugby, which existed on about \$14 million in revenue through 2017, was already teetering and could be nearing closer to bankruptcy with the added uncertainty the Olympic postponement has brought.

Many NGBs, such as cycling, are event driven — reliant on cash brought when people sign up for local and national competitions that they sanction. Others, such as USA Swimming, get their lion's share of funding from membership dues, which are taking a hit as facilities around the nation close on the order of state and local governments.

"We, as an NGB, will feel it next fall when memberships start rolling in. That shortfall could have a profound effect," said USA Swimming's Tim Hinchey. "We can overcome a lot of these things, I think, if all comes back to normal. But we have to wait and see like everyone else."

Answers to NFL scheduling questions

Associated Press

Besides the draft, the other big event on April's NFL calendar is the release of the regular-season schedule. Teams have known their opponents since late December, but Howard Katz and his scheduling department continue to parse through over 50,000 scenarios pumped out by nearly 1,500 computers across the world.

Now that most of the significant free agency moves have taken place, here are some AP projections (suggestions?) on how we see some of the significant scheduling questions being answered:

Kicking it off: The easiest choice to oppose Kansas City during the Sept. 10 kickoff game would be New England because it would be the Patriots' first game without Tom Brady since early in 2001. But three of the last seven opening games have been playoff rematches. If that trend contin-

ues it could be Houston.

New stadiums usually get the Sunday night treatment in Week 2, but with two facilities opening this season, does Los Angeles' SoFi Stadium get its debut on opening weekend? Or does it go to Las Vegas?

With the new coronavirus pandemic possibly leading to delays in LA and Las Vegas, the league could play it safe and show off both in Week 2. If that is the case, Tom Brady's Tampa Bay debut at home against Drew Brees and New Orleans would be prime-time gold for the opening Sunday.

If the Rams are at home on Sept. 13, don't be surprised if they are facing Dallas as a thank you gift to Stan Kroenke,

The "Monday Night Football" doubleheader on opening weekend has always been the most difficult, especially the early game. If the Rams are at home on Sunday night, ESPN could then get Brady's debut. The early MNF game has been

an interconference matchup three of the last four seasons. Because the Chiefs are instantly ruled out, that leaves the Chargers at Tampa. The late game usually trends toward an AFC West matchup, but it should go NFC West this year with conference champion San Francisco facing Arizona.

Viva Las Vegas: The Raiders' new home in Las Vegas should get a prime-time debut in Week 2 either on Sunday or Monday night. The intriguing opponents would be Denver (division game), Tampa Bay (if the Bucs don't get a prime-time slot in Week 1), or Indianapolis, featuring longtime Raiders foe Philip Rivers, who signed with the Colts after 16 seasons with the Chargers.

Prime-time Bucs: Brady's arrival all of a sudden boosts Tampa Bay's stock as a prime-time commodity. The Bucs' last Sunday night appearance was in 2016, when their game against Dallas was flexed.

They haven't had Sunday and Monday night games in the same season since 2008. But this could be the first time in 17 years Tampa Bay gets four prime-time games.

The Bucs' schedule is a dream slate of quarterback matchups with the Saints (Brees), Packers (Aaron Rodgers) and Chiefs (Patrick Mahomes), as well as games against the Vikings, Rams and Raiders.

Stock up: Buffalo. The Bills have not hosted a Sunday night game since 2007, but that is likely to change this year. Besides the Patriots, the Bills also have intriguing home matchups against the Rams, Steelers, Chiefs and Seahawks.

Stock down: New England. It is hard to see the Patriots making more than three appearances without Brady and with a lot of uncertainty. Other than division matchups, the Patriots host the Broncos and 49ers, along with road games against the Chiefs and Seahawks.

Athletic trainers contribute to fight against pandemic

Associated Press

Athletic trainers across the country are changing their routines and joining the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

The National Athletic Trainers Association put together an app aimed at helping trainers assist understaffed hospitals. The app was intended to give health care providers a database to look for help nationwide. More than 950 athletic trainers have signed up over the last week.

Christina Eyers generally oversees about 40 trainers in her role as a director of athletic training in Detroit's Henry Ford Health System. Most of her trainers are assisting medical staffs in and around Detroit, recently cited as a potential trouble spot in the pandemic.

"My staff has been very eager," Eyers said.

The trainers do not provide

critical medical care. Instead, Eyers said her organization's trainers have been screening patients, which typically means checking for symptoms and taking their temperatures. Some have helped in shipping prescriptions.

The assistance has come in handy.

"With the surge of patients we're seeing, we're taking an all-hands-on-deck approach," said Robert Albers, a senior sports medicine physician at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital who often works with trainers. "I don't think it matters what avenue you're normally in. You have to be ready to help out and step up. I really admire everything our athletic trainers have done."

Tory Lindley, the president of the NATA, said athletic trainers are accustomed to working with urgency amid chaotic environments. Eyers added they

are calm under pressure from their experience dealing with athletes who suffer sudden acute injuries.

"With the skill set that athletic trainers have, the types of needs that our communities have now and the types of needs that hospital systems and pop-up clinics have, the athletic trainer skill set is perfectly suited for," said Lindley, who also is Northwestern University's senior associate athletic director for health, safety and performance.

Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sports-related illnesses. Eyers noted they are licensed health care providers in their individual states and have received national certification as well.

Not all trainers work with athletes. Others work in a va-

riety of different fields that include public safety, the performing arts, rehabilitation centers, corporations and the military.

Lindley said "about half" his organization's members work in an athletics environment.

"That's also the portion of our membership which find themselves separated from their patient population right now," Lindley said, "so some are looking for things and opportunities like this, where the skill sets match up."

Albers said athletic trainers helping out in the Detroit area have taken swabs at drive-through testing centers and have transported patients in and out of hospitals and assisted with screenings.

Many trainers haven't stopped working with their athletes, though they must find different ways to do it.