

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy hospital ship arrives to assist NYC

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A Navy hospital ship with 1,000 beds arrived Monday in New York City as officials pressed for more federal help. Mayor Bill de Blasio said President Donald Trump's suggestion that thousands of medical masks are disappearing from New York City hospitals is "insulting" to front-line medical workers.

The USNS Comfort arrived Monday morning in New York City to help relieve the coronavirus crisis gripping the city's hospitals.

The Comfort, which was sent to New York City after 9/11, will be used to treat non-coronavirus patients while hospitals treat people with COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said that the hospital ship will relieve stress on city hospitals as the massive vessel pulled into a cruise ship terminal off Manhattan. In addition

to the 1,000 beds, the Comfort has 12 operating rooms that could be up and running within 24 hours.

The ship's arrival comes as New York state's death toll from the coronavirus outbreak climbed Sunday above 1,000, less than a month after the first known infection in the state.

Most of those deaths have occurred in just the past few days.

New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak, reported Sunday that its toll had risen to 776.

The total number of statewide deaths isn't expected to be released until Monday, but with at least 250 additional deaths recorded outside the city as of Sunday morning, the state's total fatalities was at least 1,026.

De Blasio and others criticized Trump for suggesting, with no clear evidence, that thousands of medical masks are disappear-

ing from New York City hospitals.

At a Sunday briefing, the president told reporters that they should be asking, "Where are the masks going? Are they going out the back door?"

Those remarks are "insulting" to hospital workers on the front lines of the city's coronavirus crisis, de Blasio said Monday.

"It's incredibly insensitive to people right now who are giving their all," he said. "I don't know what the president is talking about."

Hospitals had warned staff early on during the outbreak not to take masks home with them, but no evidence has emerged of large-scale looting of supplies.

Kenneth Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association, said in a statement that the workers "deserve better than their president suggesting that protective equipment is 'going out the back door' of New York hospitals."

Report: 2 sailors aboard Reagan tested positive

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A major U.S. news broadcaster reported over the weekend that two sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan tested positive for the coronavirus.

It was unclear Monday whether those cases, which were reported by Fox News on Saturday citing unnamed U.S. officials, are among three Yokosuka sailors confirmed positive Thursday and Friday.

When asked Thursday whether the first sailor to test positive was assigned to the Ronald Reagan, U.S. Forces Japan officials declined to comment.

The Navy — which previously identified some installations and ships that experienced coronavirus cases — pivoted on Friday to revealing service-

wide case numbers only. The change follows a policy "not to disclose specific operational or readiness details of units," according to emails Friday from Lt. Cmdr. David Levy of Naval Forces Japan and Lt. j.g. Rachel McMarr of Pacific Fleet.

The Navy will no longer provide details that include "specific positive cases, numbers of Sailors in quarantine or how many Sailors have been tested onboard specific installations," Levy wrote.

Instead, the Navy is totaling up the numbers of sailors, dependents and contractors testing positive worldwide, and publishing them daily on its website. As of Sunday, the service reported that 134 sailors, 31 civilians, 23 dependents and 12 contractors had tested positive.

Despite the policy, Yokosuka officials announced two of its three positive cases Friday eve-

ning, though they declined to name the ships or units to which the patients are assigned.

The Yokosuka base entered a third day of lockdown Monday to mitigate the spread of the virus following the three positive test results announced last week. Base commander Capt. Rich Jarrett instructed nonessential personnel to stay home and instructed residents to shelter in place "until further notice."

One of those cases originated in the U.S., where that sailor is believed to have contracted the virus before returning to Japan on March 15. The sailor then started the 14 days of restricted movement required for all service members returning from overseas during the pandemic, but developed symptoms around day 10, USFJ officials told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

At Yokosuka, some sailors underwent that observation period

in their homes. But for those who live aboard the Ronald Reagan, those 14 days were served in "a designated observation berthing" on the carrier, according to a March 14 internal notice obtained by Stars and Stripes.

"Medical personnel will conduct daily medical screenings in person for personnel executing their observation period on board the Reagan," Capt. Pat Hannifin, the carrier's commander, wrote in the notice.

The goal was to "preserve our personnel readiness," according to the notice.

"Our focus remains putting to sea on time, with no degradations to warfighting readiness or redundancy," Hannifin wrote. "Your health and personnel readiness is a crucial component to Reagan's ability to sail any waters and meet any challenge at sea."

Special pay issued for some isolated troops

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Service members could receive extra money for hardships caused by coronavirus quarantines, self-isolation or restricted movement, under new Defense Department pay guidance.

The guidance, which was issued last week, also clarifies benefits for troops and families affected by a Pentagon stop-movement order that halted temporary duty and permanent change of station travel.

Commanders have “broad authority to exercise sound judgment in all cases,” the guidance states, but it strongly encourages them to consider authorizing telework. If traditional remote work isn’t possible, it says, commanders still may assign troops to their homes or temporary lodging as alternate duty locations.

A new category of special pay, known as Hardship Duty Pay-Restriction of Movement, or HDP-ROM, would provide service members \$100 a day for up to 15 days each month if they are ordered to self-isolate at their permanent duty station, but can’t do so at their own homes or in government-provided quarters such as barracks or contracted hotels.

It’s meant to alleviate the hardship for troops who incur out-of-pocket expenses for the temporary lodging, which wouldn’t otherwise be reim-

bursed or defrayed. Troops returning to their home station after a deployment, but who are ordered to self-isolate away from government-funded housing or lodging, could also be eligible.

The benefit is taxable and a service member would be allowed to keep any excess if the pay exceeds their actual expenses. But they would not be reimbursed for the difference if the lodging cost exceeds the \$1,500 a month maximum.

Service members receiving Basic Allowance for Housing or Overseas Housing Allowance, but who are ordered into self-isolation in government-funded lodging elsewhere will continue to receive housing allowance benefits at their normal rates, the guidance states.

Under the guidance, troops who are separated from their families during a military move may receive Family Separation Housing Allowance, authorizing two payments to cover the cost of housing at two locations. Troops may also qualify for a monthly \$250 Family Separation Allowance in such cases, or in circumstances where the travel suspensions keep them apart. If service members and families are required to self-isolate or quarantine after arriving at a new duty station, a special category of per diem, or a combination of per diem and temporary lodging pay, may be authorized, depending on the circumstances.

In Germany, Army says DOD will give EUCOM’s virus data

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Pentagon on Sunday ordered the home of U.S. European Command to stop reporting the number of coronavirus infections within its military community in a move that could reverberate across all U.S. forces.

The Army in Stuttgart said it can no longer release the number of coronavirus cases based on a Defense Department directive that cited operational security concerns.

“DOD will release numbers through their official platforms,” the Army in Stuttgart said in a statement.

The decision comes amid a spike in infections within the military and concerns that the combat readiness of the force could be put at risk by the fast-moving virus.

Such concerns came into focus last week when the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier was forced to pull into port in Guam because of a coronavirus outbreak among its sailors.

In Stuttgart, home to EUCOM and U.S. Africa Command

headquarters, 80 infections were reported as of Sunday morning, by far the most of any American military base overseas. In all, there are at least 125 coronavirus infections within the military in Germany alone, based on a Stars and Stripes tally of infections.

Meanwhile, the military in Japan also has begun to record coronavirus infections. After about a half dozen cases emerged since Thursday, commanders ordered troops on the island to shelter in place.

In South Korea, similar measures have been taken. The situation was serious enough that Gen. Robert Abrams, the top commander on the divided Korean Peninsula, said he was willing to impose strict new health measures that could jeopardize military readiness.

“This morning we went to bare-bones minimum, watch teams only in the headquarters, everybody basically shelter in place, only go out for the essentials,” Abrams said Friday.

Col. Jason Condrey, garrison commander in Stuttgart, advised his military community of 28,000 Americans that he no longer would be providing updates on infection numbers.

Navy to send nearly 450 medical personnel to Texas, La.

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — About 450 Navy medical personnel are heading to Texas and Louisiana to assist with state efforts to combat the coronavirus outbreak, U.S. Northern Command announced Monday.

The sailors are from a medical unit out of Jacksonville, Fla.,

and are heading to the Dallas-Fort Worth area and New Orleans, said Air Force Maj. Mark Lazane, a spokesman for NORTHCOM. They have been put on “prepare to deploy” orders and are expected to leave in a few days, according to a NORTHCOM statement.

The personnel could move to other places as needed, Lazane said.

New Orleans has 1,350 confirmed cases of the coronavirus and 73 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. Dallas has 488 confirmed cases and 10 deaths from the virus and Tarrant County, which includes Fort Worth, has 139 cases and one death.

On Monday, the Navy’s USNS Comfort hospital ship arrived in New York Harbor to help

local hospitals overwhelmed by the worst coronavirus outbreak in the country. The Navy medical staff aboard will be caring for non-coronavirus patients who are referred to the ship by local hospitals. The other Navy hospital ship, the USNS Mercy, arrived in Los Angeles on Friday and has started to accept patients.

Trump defends pushing guidelines to April 30

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Siding with public health experts' dire projections, President Donald Trump on Monday defended his decision to extend restrictive social distancing guidelines through the end of April, while bracing the nation for a coronavirus death toll that could grow higher than 100,000 people.

"The worst that could happen is you do it too early and all of a sudden it comes back," Trump said during a nearly hourlong call-in interview with "Fox & Friends" as members of his coronavirus task force fanned out across other media outlets to warn that the virus' spread was only just beginning.

The comments came a day after Trump made a dramatic course reversal and announced that he would not be moving to ease the guidelines and get the economy back up and running by Easter, as he said last week he had hoped to do.

In the face of stark projections from his team and searing images of overwhelmed hospitals in his native New York City, Trump instead extended the social distancing guidelines to April 30, as they had been set to expire Monday. Many states and local governments already have stiffer controls in place on mobility and gatherings.

Trump's impulse to reopen the country, driven by pleas from business leaders, met a sober reality check from health experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, who on Sunday said that the U.S. could experience between 100,000-200,000 deaths and millions of infections from the pandemic.

That warning hardened a recognition in Washington that the struggle against the coronavirus will not be resolved quickly, even as Trump expressed a longing for normalcy.

"It would not have been a good idea to pull back at a time when you really need

to be pressing your foot on the pedal as opposed to on the brakes," Fauci said on CNN on Monday, describing how he and Dr. Deborah Birx, the coronavirus task force coordinator, had convinced Trump to reconsider.

Americans are now being asked to prepare for at least another 30 days of severe economic and social disruption, with schools and businesses closed and public life upended.

On Monday, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan issued a new stay-at-home directive that said Marylanders may only leave their homes for essential work, to get food or prescriptions or for other "absolutely necessary" reasons.

"We are no longer asking," Hogan said.

The order took effect at 8 p.m. Monday. The governor said that the ban includes restrictions on traveling outside of the state and riding public transportation.

Hundreds at Louisiana church flout COVID-19 gatherings ban

Associated Press

CENTRAL, La. — Hundreds of worshippers attended services at a Louisiana church Sunday, flouting a ban on large gatherings, angering neighbors and seemingly turning a deaf ear to their governor, who once again warned that hospitals could soon be overwhelmed with new cases of the coronavirus.

An estimated 500 people of all ages filed inside the mustard-yellow and beige Life Tabernacle church in Central, a city of nearly 29,000 outside Baton Rouge.

Assistant ministers and worshippers who stood outside the front doors and in the parking lot of Life Tabernacle told news reporters to leave, saying that cameras would not be allowed on the property and they had been told not to talk to the news media. They went inside without further comment.

Across the street, Paul Quinn and other neighbors took pains to stay 6 feet apart from each other as they stood in a drive-

way and commented on their opposition to the services being held.

"Other congregations are using the internet, Skype and other safe ways to congregate. Why can't they? What makes them so special?" Quinn asked. "I wish state police would come out and do something. ... If they get out of church and go to the grocery store, it's a serious health hazard. They don't know how many people they're affecting, and they don't seem to care. That's a problem."

Briefly commenting Sunday in the church's parking lot, Timothy Spell, father of Pastor Tony Spell, said that Life Tabernacle has a right to assembly, is not forcing anyone to attend services, is not breaking any laws and will continue to hold services at the church.

More than 3,500 Louisiana residents have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, and more than 150 of them have died, according to state figures released Sunday. Deaths included that of the first federal prison

inmate, a man with "serious preexisting conditions" who was being held in Oakdale, La., the U.S. Bureau of Prisons said Saturday.

People who violate the ban are being selfish and "grossly irresponsible," Gov. John Bel Edwards said Sunday in New Orleans. They "take the time and attention of first responders and make it much more likely that this disease will continue to spread," he said.

In New Orleans, police broke up a "funeral repast" of about 100 people Saturday afternoon, issuing a warrant for a 28-year-old man who refused to shut it down and giving the band leader a summons, a news release said. Several complaints about that event were among more than 300 received in the past week about violations of a ban on gatherings of more than 10 people, Superintendent Shaun Ferguson said in a statement.

More than 1,300 of the COVID-19 diagnoses and 73 of the deaths have been in New Orleans.

Japan cases spike after Games delay

Associated Press

TOKYO — Before the Olympics were postponed, Japan looked like it had coronavirus infections contained, even as they spread in neighboring countries. Now that the games have been pushed to next year, Tokyo's cases are spiking, and the city's governor is requesting that people stay home, even hinting at a possible lockdown.

The sudden rise in the number of Tokyo cases and the government's strong actions right after the Olympic postponement has raised questions about whether Japan understated the extent of the outbreak.

Many are voicing suspicion that the numbers are rising because Japan suddenly has no reason to hide them.

"In order to make an impression that the city was taking control of the coronavirus, Tokyo avoided making strict requests and made the number of patients look smaller," former Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama tweeted.

Spain has most cases; Moscow on lockdown

Associated Press

MADRID — Bells tolled in Madrid's deserted central square and flags were lowered in a day of mourning Monday as Spain raced to build field hospitals to treat an onslaught of coronavirus patients. In the U.S., the government's top infectious-disease expert warned that smaller cities are about to see cases "take off" the way they have in New York City.

Moscow locked down its 12 million people as Russia braced

for sweeping nationwide restrictions. And in Britain, there was some good news: Prince Charles, the heir to the throne who tested positive for the coronavirus, has ended his period of isolation and is in good health, his office said.

Three-quarters of a million people around the world have become infected and over 35,000 have died, according to a running count kept by Johns Hopkins University. The U.S. reported over 140,000 infections and more than 2,500

deaths, with New York City the worst hot spot.

Spain overtook China in reported coronavirus infections as the outbreak stretched scores of Spanish hospitals to their breaking point.

With a population of 47 million people to China's 1.4 billion, Spain saw its official tally of infections climb past 85,000. It also reported over 800 new deaths, for an overall toll of more than 7,300.

Experts say those figures — and those in every other coun-

try — are much lower than the true numbers, because of limited testing, counting irregularities and mild cases that have been missed. Many coronavirus deaths in Spain and Italy that happen at home or at nursing homes are not even counted.

Italy has by far the most reported virus deaths, at nearly 11,000.

Locked-down Moscow accounted for more than 1,200 of the country's 1,800 or so coronavirus cases.

Trump claims GM not working fast, uses wartime act

Associated Press

DETROIT — Eleven days ago, General Motors put hundreds of workers on an urgent project to build breathing machines as hospitals and governors pleaded for more in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

But on Friday, President Donald Trump, claiming that the company wasn't moving fast enough, invoked the Defense Production Act, which gives the government broad authority to direct companies to meet national defense needs.

Experts on managing factory production said that GM is already making an extraordinary effort for a company that normally isn't in the business of producing ventilators.

"That is lightning-fast speed to secure suppliers, learn how the products work and make space in their manufacturing plant," said Kaitlin Wowak, a professor at the University of Notre Dame who focuses on industrial supply chains. "You can't get much faster than that."

GM expects to produce ventilators at a rate of 10,000 per month starting in mid-April. The company is working with Ventec Life Systems, a small Seattle-area ventilator maker, and both said that the Act doesn't change what they're doing because they're already moving as fast as they can, fronting millions in capital with an uncertain return.

"I don't think anybody could have done it faster," said Gerald Johnson, GM's global

manufacturing chief.

Peter Navarro, Trump's assistant for manufacturing policy, said Saturday that invoking the act was needed because GM "dragged its heels for days" in committing to the investments to start making ventilators at an automotive electronics plant in Kokomo, Ind.

Critics have urged Trump to invoke the Defense Production Act broadly to control the production, supply and distribution of ventilators and protective gear for hospital workers who are running short. That's what the act was meant to do, and it was not for use against a single company, Erik Gordon, a University of Michigan law and business professor, said.

Prisoners riot in Iran; Israel's Netanyahu to self-quarantine

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Prisoners in southern Iran broke cameras and caused other damage during a riot, state media reported Monday, the latest in a series of violent prison disturbances in the country, which is battling the most severe coronavirus outbreak in the Middle East.

Israel meanwhile announced that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will enter self-quarantine after an aide tested positive for the virus. His office says the 70-year-old leader has undergone a test and will remain in quarantine until he receives results or is cleared

by the Health Ministry and his personal doctor. His close advisers are also isolating.

More than 4,300 Israelis have been infected with the new virus and 15 have died.

Iran had temporarily released around 100,000 prisoners as part of measures taken to contain the pandemic, leaving an estimated 50,000 people behind bars, including violent offenders and so-called "security cases," often dual nationals and others with Western ties. Families of detainees and Western nations say Iran is holding those prisoners for political reasons or to use them as bar-

gaining chips in negotiations.

Iran has reported more than 40,000 infections and 2,757 deaths from COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus, including 117 fatalities in the last 24 hours. The Health Ministry said more than 3,500 people are in critical condition, while around 14,000 have recovered.

Elsewhere Monday, Jordan began releasing thousands of travelers who were quarantined for the last two weeks at five-star hotels on the Dead Sea in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

Jordan has reported 259 in-

fections and four deaths from the virus. At least 18 people have recovered.

Jordan halted all flights and closed its borders on March 17. It later imposed an indefinite round-the-clock curfew before providing limited times for people to shop for basic goods on foot.

In Egypt, the government extended the closure of museums and archaeological sites, including the Pyramids and the Sphinx at Giza, until at least April 15.

Egypt has reported more than 600 infections and 40 deaths from the virus.

Sanders says he's staying in, most Dems fear 2016 repeat

The Washington Post

Behind the growing fear among many Democrats that Sen. Bernie Sanders' continued presence in the presidential race could spell doom in November is the belief that they've seen it happen before — in the last campaign.

The 2016 Democratic convention was just about to get started when Sanders, I-Vt., addressed his delegates. It was time to support her, he told his backers. They disagreed, booing loudly. Some stuck their thumbs down as TV cameras captured the show of dissent, which would continue on the convention floor.

To some Democrats in that campaign, it was a lesson learned the hard way about the limitations of Sanders' promises of support and the ferocity of his unbridled backers. Four years later, with the senator from Vermont still running against former vice president Joe Biden despite almost impossible odds of victory, some

party leaders are increasingly worried about a reprise of the bitter divisions that many Democrats blame for Hillary Clinton's loss.

"It's the equivalent of a World War II kamikaze pilot," said Philippe Reines, a longtime adviser to Clinton. "They have no better option than to plow into USS Biden."

The judgment Sanders makes about his fate and the direction taken by his supporters could be among the most consequential decisions of the race, determining whether Democrats speak with one voice against a president who is already aimed at November, or squabble for months more.

Although Sanders has long pledged to do all he can to help the eventual nominee defeat President Donald Trump, Democrats are still haunted by the last grueling battle, which didn't end after it became clear that Clinton would be the nominee, and instead stretched into the summer convention and

beyond. Then, as now, an impassioned band of Sanders supporters voiced their displeasure loudly and widely, sometimes echoing the harshest attacks of Trump and his allies with little reproach from Sanders.

Moved by an urgency to come together against Trump as the coronavirus pandemic has upended the presidential race, some party leaders feel that Sanders should end his campaign and help the Democratic Party position itself for the November general election.

"I just think it's a terrible decision for him to make because he looks very selfish," said former Democratic senator Barbara Boxer of California, who backs Biden.

But Sanders has given no indication that he is preparing to do that.

Some Democrats, including veterans of the 2016 contest, said they see signs of hope that the party can avoid the intra-party viciousness that marked that race.

New startup seeks to use drones to aid in virus fight

Bloomberg

In early March, a hospital in Rwanda needed blood urgently for a patient with a leg injury. The patient's blood type was not in stock and the nearest supplies were at least a half day's drive away. So the hospital called upon a drone operated by Zipline Inc., which dropped the blood by parachute within an hour.

Zipline, a California startup founded in 2014, makes hundreds of deliveries per week to hospitals and clinics in Rwanda and Ghana. Its drones launch from catapults at six distribution centers, carrying blood, medicine, and other supplies, a few pounds at a time. The fixed-wing, battery-powered planes cruise at 60 mph, navigate by GPS and can fly up to 100 miles round trip. Wires snag them from the sky upon return. Each distribution hub has a fleet of about 30 and can supply an area of 8,000 square miles, delivering up to two tons of freight over the course of a week. Since it began service in 2016, Zipline has flown over a million miles and made more than 60,000 drops.

The company already was planning to launch a service in the United States before the coronavirus outbreak began. It's on schedule to open a distribution center in North Carolina later this year to help Novant Health, which operates a network of clinics, health centers and hospitals, deliver medicine and supplies to rural and suburban clinics. But as the pandemic begins to strain the U.S. medical supply chain, Zipline is looking into ways to deploy sooner and at a wider scale.

"If ever there were an urgent need for medical drone delivery, that time is now," said Justin Hamilton, global head of communications at Zipline. He's among the tens of millions of people currently housebound in France due to the COVID-19 outbreak there.

Philippines grounds company's aircraft after deadly fire kills 8 people on board

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine aviation officials on Monday grounded all aircraft belonging to a company that owns a plane that caught fire while taking off from Manila's airport, killing all eight people on board.

All of Lionair Inc.'s aircraft will remain grounded during the investigation of the burning of its Westwind 24 plane late Sunday, they said. The plane had been used earlier to transport medical supplies for the coronavirus outbreak.

Lionair, a Philippine-based charter company, is not related to Lion Air, an Indonesian low-cost airline.

The twin-engine aircraft was on a medical evacuation mission when it caught fire. The two passengers — from the U.S. and Canada — and six Filipino flight crew and medical personnel died when the Tokyo-bound plane burst into flames on the main runway, airport general

manager Ed Monreal said.

The fire prompted the closure of the airport's main runway and caused one international flight to be diverted.

The aircraft's cockpit voice recorder has been recovered by investigators, officials said.

Lionair has not issued any statement about the accident. It leases executive jets, helicopters and turbo-propeller planes for domestic and foreign travel, including medical emergency flights. It was not immediately clear how many aircraft the company operates.

The Department of Health said Monday that Lionair has helped transport medical supplies, including ones used to fight the coronavirus outbreak, from Manila to central and southern provinces. The pilot and crew of the plane that caught fire at the airport had transported medical supplies to four provinces before they perished, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

'Googley-Eyed Jesus' mural reappears

ME SOUTH PORTLAND — A pine tree that partially obstructed the view of a Maine church mural referred to as "Googley-Eyed Jesus," was removed.

The section of the mural on Holy Cross Church in South Portland that was obstructed depicted Christ looking toward the heavens with his eyes rolled back during the crucifixion, Bangor Daily News reported.

The mural became controversial 20 years later when some locals and parishioners said it was "creepy" and asked for it to be removed. Others disagreed and John Laberge, who created the mural in 1980, refused to change the mural and said he would fight attempts to have it removed. The tree appeared sometime after.

Men rob woman while taking care of baby

FL KISSIMMEE — Two men were taking care of a baby when they robbed a woman who was using an ATM at a Florida convenience store, authorities said.

Jefferson Feliciano, 19, and Kevin Serrano, 18, were arrested earlier this month and charged with robbery without a weapon, child neglect and petit theft, according to an Osceola County Sheriff's Office news release.

Deputies were flagged down at a Kissimmee Wawa, where a woman told them she had been getting money from an ATM inside the store when a young man grabbed the cash and threw her to the ground. Deputies determined the man had fled on foot and hopped into a black Toyota Scion.

Detectives located the vehicle several hours later and found it to be occupied by Feliciano,

Serrano and a 1-year-old child. Investigators said both teens admitted their involvement in the robbery and acknowledged that the child was in the vehicle during the theft.

Blaze engulfs historic church, topples steeple

MD BALTIMORE — Baltimore firefighters battled a four-alarm blaze that sent flames shooting through the steeple of a church that traces its origins back more than 150 years.

Photos of the fire posted by the Baltimore City Fire Department on Twitter showed orange flames coming from the top of the steeple of the Urban Bible Fellowship Church. Firefighters used ladder trucks to spray water at the blaze, but flames eventually caused the top of the steeple to tumble down. A school next door also was damaged.

The Fire Department said no injuries were reported.

College to close after 174 years, low influx

IL JACKSONVILLE — A central Illinois college will close its doors after 174 years due to declining enrollment and other financial challenges.

The State Journal-Register reported the chairman of the MacMurray College board of trustees said the four-year liberal arts college in Jacksonville will close at the end of the spring semester. Charles O'Connell said there was no viable path forward, and cited rising costs and an insufficient endowment as factors.

"The board spent more than a year exploring potential new sources for capital, but we were unable to solve the serious financial difficulties facing us," O'Connell said.

Court: Law protecting vets applies to custodian

MI DETROIT — Wayne State University is not immune to a Michigan law that grants job protections to veterans, a federal appeals court said.

The court affirmed a decision that requires Wayne State to rehire Charles Rudolph, a custodian who was accused of missing assignments and fired in 2015.

Rudolph, a U.S. Army veteran, sued the university, saying he was entitled to a hearing under a law that gives protections to veterans who work for public employers. An arbitrator agreed that Rudolph's rights were violated and said he should be reinstated.

Near crash with trooper leads to drug bust

DE GEORGETOWN — Authorities in Delaware said that a driver who sped through a yield sign and nearly caused a crash with a state trooper was then arrested on drug charges.

The Delaware State Police said in a news release that the arrest happened in the Georgetown area.

Authorities said a trooper was approaching an intersection and heading eastbound when a car was coming north at a high rate of speed. The news release said the driver passed through a yield sign and drove into the path of the trooper, who avoided a collision by hitting the brakes.

The trooper then pulled over the driver and noticed the smell of marijuana. In the vehicle, troopers said they found 39 grams of cocaine along with marijuana, anti-anxiety pills and drug paraphernalia.

Police said Keon D. Hopkins, 29, of Millsboro, was driv-

ing and Megan L. Bedo, 40, of Millsboro, was the passenger.

Missing 4-year-old girl found in woods with dog

AL AUBURN — Rescuers found a 4-year-old girl, who had been missing for two days in woods in a rural area of east Alabama. The girl was found in good condition with a dog at her side.

Lee County Sheriff Jay Jones said searchers found Vadie Sides after two days of searching in rural Lee County. Authorities said Sides had disappeared from her babysitter's sight while they were walking in the backyard with a hound dog.

A member of the search team that found the girl told WRBL-TV that they were searching the woods when they heard a dog bark, and then the girl "popped her head up" and they saw her bright red hair. He said the girl drank some Gatorade and was talking "like it was no big deal" what she had been through.

Old military target washes up on beach

NC KILL DEVIL HILLS — A device that looks like an old mine washed up on North Carolina's Outer Banks. But police said it's nothing to worry about.

Police in Kill Devil Hills said in a statement that it appears to be some kind of "anti-submarine" target and not an explosive device.

The spherical object is covered in barnacles and was painted with the words "inert" and "target." Police said it's filled with concrete.

Kill Devil Hills police said the U.S. Navy would be coming to retrieve it.

From wire reports

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Tokyo Games now set to start July 2021

Associated Press

TOKYO — The Tokyo Olympics will open next year in the same time slot scheduled for this year's Games.

Tokyo organizers said Monday the opening ceremony will take place on July 23, 2021 — almost exactly one year after the Games were due to start this year.

"The schedule for the Games is key to preparing for the Games," Tokyo organizing committee president Yoshiro Mori said. "This will only accelerate our progress."

Last week, the IOC and Japanese organizers postponed the Olympics until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

This year's games were scheduled to open on July 24 and close on Aug. 9. But the near exact one-year delay will see the rescheduled closing ceremony on Aug. 8.

There had been talk of switching the Olympics to spring, a move that would coincide with the blooming of Japan's famous cherry blossoms. But it would also clash with European soccer and North American sports leagues.

Mori said a spring Olympics was considered but holding the Games later gives more space to complete the many qualifying events that have been postponed by the virus outbreak.

"We wanted to have more room for the athletes to qualify," Mori said.

After holding out for weeks, local organizers and the IOC last week postponed the Tokyo Games under pressure from athletes, national Olympic bodies and sports federations. It's the first postponement in

Olympic history, though there were several cancellations during wartime.

The Paralympics were rescheduled to Aug. 24-Sept. 5.

The new Olympic dates would conflict with the scheduled world championships in track and swimming, but those events are now expected to also be pushed back.

"The IOC has had close discussions with the relevant international federations," organizing committee CEO Toshiro Muto said. "I believe the IFs have accepted the games being held in the summer."

Muto said the decision was made Monday and the IOC said it was supported by all the international sports federations and was based on three main considerations: to protect the health of athletes, to safeguard the interests of the athletes and Olympic sport, and the international sports calendar.

"These new dates give the health authorities and all involved in the organization of the Games the maximum time to deal with the constantly changing landscape and the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," the IOC said. "The new dates ... also have the added benefit that any disruption that the postponement will cause to the international sports calendar can be kept to a minimum, in the interests of the athletes and the IFs."

Mori and Muto have said the cost of re-scheduling the Olympics will be massive — local reports estimate billions of dollars — with most of the expenses borne by Japanese taxpayers.

Muto promised transparency in calculating the costs, and testing times deciding how they are divided up.

"Since it (the Olympics) were scheduled for this summer, all the venues had given up hosting any other events during this time, so how do we approach that?" Muto asked. "In addition, there will need to be guarantees when we book the new dates, and there is a possibility this will incur rent payments. So there will be costs incurred and we will need to consider them one by one. I think that will be the tougher process."

Katsuhiko Miyamoto, an emeritus professor of sports economics at Kansai University, puts the costs as high as \$4 billion. That would cover the price of maintaining stadiums, refitting them, paying rentals, penalties and other expenses.

Japan is officially spending \$12.6 billion to organize the Olympics. However, an audit bureau of the Japanese government says the costs are twice that much. All of the spending is public money except \$5.6 billion from a privately funded operating budget.

The Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee is contributing \$1.3 billion, according to organizing committee documents. The IOC's contribution goes into the operating budget.

IOC President Thomas Bach has repeatedly called the Tokyo Olympics the best prepared in history. However, Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso also termed them "cursed."

Bellator: Wait and see for May fights

Associated Press

Bellator President Scott Coker spent time during the coronavirus pandemic like so many others, binging on Netflix and catching up on "Tiger King."

"That's a crazy show," Coker said.

Coker would love for mixed martial arts fans to catch up on his style of cage fighting in the promotion he runs through Bellator's app or its YouTube channel. But live fights, right now in this climate?

Hard pass.

Bellator has postponed all fights until the Bellator 242 card on May 9 that features

Ryan Bader defending the light heavyweight championship against Vadim Nemkov in San Jose, Calif. Even that event could be in jeopardy after President Donald Trump extended federal guidelines recommending people stay home for another 30 days, until the end of April, to prevent the spread of the virus. Bellator's next big card could go down for the count.

"I feel like the right thing to do is wait," Coker said. "When the state of California says, 'You're good to go,' when we get a call from (the California State Athletic Commission) that says you're good to go, then we'll go. I think we're waiting

for the green light from the government."

Coker had considered running its March 16 card with a Patricio "Pitbull" Freire-Pedro Carvalho Bellator 241 main event at Mohegan Sun Arena in Connecticut without fans until he decided to postpone the card. It has not yet been rescheduled.

"We'll make up these fights," Coker said. "If we miss any other fights while we're waiting, we'll make them up."

With 241 in doubt, Bellator went ahead and paid all fighters, officials, judges, crew and any essential personnel connected to the card.

"It was quite expensive, well

into the seven figures," Coker said. "Revenue you can make up, and that's what we're going to do. I think there will be an impact, even if we make up these events."

Bellator, owned by Viacom, also has a card scheduled for May 16 in London.

"I feel like there's a possibility everything will be fine by the end of April," Coker said. "If it's not, then we'll have to push the fights back."

UFC has since held a card in Brazil and company president Dana White has been adamant the company will still hold its next pay-per-view event in an undetermined locale on April 18.

Underdog stories make magic in March

Associated Press

If not for those magical eight days seven years ago, Florida Gulf Coast might still be that upstart school trying to create an identity in the Sunshine State, never mind nationally.

Dunk City changed everything.

The high-flying Eagles and their showstopping offense earned their place in NCAA Tournament lore when, as a No. 15 seed in the South Region, they upset Georgetown and San Diego State in Philadelphia to reach the 2013 Sweet 16. Their run ended when, emotionally drained, they lost their regional semifinal to Florida.

No team seeded so low has gone so far. They remain the biggest party crashers in tournament history, not just because of their seeding but also because they were in only their second season of Division I eligibility.

"It helped everybody's career with what they wanted to do next in life," said Brett Comer, the point guard who fed lobbs to guys like Chase Fieler and Eric McKnight for an array of electrifying dunks that introduced the team and then-16-year-old school in Fort Myers to an enraptured audience coast to coast.

Three days after the last of Dunk City's 148 dunks that season, coach Andy Enfield was hired at Southern California and his salary went from \$157,000 a year to well over \$1 million.

Sherwood Brown — the team's leading scorer and Atlantic Sun player of the year — was invited to seven NBA tryouts before beginning his pro career overseas. Without Dunk City, NBA teams probably wouldn't have taken notice of the player who showed up at FGCU as a walk-on.

Fellow starters Fieler and Bernard Thompson continue to make nice livings overseas, and McKnight also has played professionally.

Comer was in the NBA G League before a knee injury

DID YOU KNOW?

Sherwood Brown — Florida Gulf Coast leading scorer and 2013 Atlantic Sun player of the year — was invited to seven NBA tryouts before beginning his pro career overseas. Without Dunk City, NBA teams probably never would have taken notice of the player who showed up at FGCU as an unheralded walk-on.

SOURCE: Associated Press

ended his career. He's now director of player development at Dayton after two years as a graduate assistant. He said he's convinced name recognition helped him get hired by Flyers coach Anthony Grant.

Michael Fly, who just finished his second season as head coach after succeeding Joe Dooley, was one of Enfield's assistants in 2013. He and current assistant Joey Cantens are the last links to the original Dunk City. Since 2014, the Eagles have won or shared six Atlantic Sun regular-season or tournament championships and made two NCAA appearances.

"I'm not a head coach and we don't win as many championships as we have here without that (2013) team," Fly said. "It's changed a lot of our lives for the positive."

The Dunk City Effect, as it's called, accounted for a 35% increase in freshman applications following the NCAA run and boosted enrollment to about 15,000.

The surprise NCAA run opened with the Eagles taking down Georgetown 78-68, a game highlighted by a Comer-to-Fieler lob dunk that took the steam out of the Hoyas' comeback bid in the last 2 minutes and inspired a rap song.

FGCU then beat seventh-seeded San Diego State 81-71, and reporters and network morning shows began invading the Fort Myers campus to see what Dunk City was all about. It was a major distraction for the upstart Eagles in the days before their Sweet 16 game against Florida.

"I think we ran out of gas," Comer said. "We weren't used to the amount of media coverage we had. We were going to

do as much media stuff as we could to promote the school, promote the brand, which is good for everybody. When it got to the game, it wore us down."

The Eagles got out to a double-digit lead against the third-seeded Gators. But Florida made adjustments and won 62-50.

Seven years later, Dunk City branding is all over campus.

"It's made the follow-up acts extremely difficult and pressure-filled," Fly said. "We had years when Coach Dooley was here where we would have 20-plus wins and lose in the conference championship game. Casual fans in Fort Myers would say to me, 'We hope you can get back to where you were before.'"

1986 Cleveland State: Coach Kevin Mackey and his band of unknowns made it to the Sweet 16 as a No. 14 seed, beating Bobby Knight-coached and Steve Alford-led Indiana and then St. Joseph's.

Next up was Navy and David Robinson, the 7-foot star who was that year's No. 1 pick in the NBA Draft. Robinson banked in a shot with 5 seconds left to give the Midshipmen a 71-70 win. The Vikings didn't return to the tournament until 2009.

1997 Chattanooga: Coach Mack McCarthy liked to talk barbecue as much as basketball, maybe more, and the moment never seemed too big for a loose and confident team that was a 14 seed and started two walk-ons.

The Mocs started with a flurry, taking control early in a first-round win over Georgia. They beat Illinois by double digits after getting the vibe the Illini were taking them lightly. The fun ended in the

Sweet 16 with a 71-65 loss to Providence.

2002 Missouri: The Tigers were ranked as high as No. 2, but a midseason slump left them in sixth place in the Big 12 at the end of the regular season. They went to the tournament as a No. 12 seed.

Mizzou opened with double-digit wins over Miami and Ohio State, and Kareem Rush's three-pointer started a second-half comeback that carried the Tigers past UCLA. They finally lost in the Elite Eight, 81-75 to Oklahoma.

2006 George Mason: No one saw a Final Four run coming after George Mason lost in the Colonial Athletic Association semifinals. In fact, when the 22-win Patriots were announced as No. 11 seed, college basketball analyst Billy Packer declared Jim Larranaga's team didn't even belong in the tournament.

George Mason beat Michigan State, North Carolina and Wichita State before taking down No. 1 seed Connecticut and its roster full of NBA talent 86-84 in overtime. They lost 73-58 to eventual national champion Florida in the semifinals.

2018 Loyola-Chicago: One of the lasting memories of the tournament was the Ramblers' telegenic and now-100-year-old team chaplain, Sister Jean Dolores-Schmidt. What they did on the court was pretty memorable, too.

Their run to the Final Four as an 11 seed never seemed short of drama. There was Donte Ingram making a three-pointer with three-tenths of a second left to beat Miami. They got past Tennessee thanks to Clayton Custer's jumper with 3.6 seconds to play. Marques Townes' three with 7 seconds left held off Nevada's comeback bid in the regional semifinals. All that made a 16-point win over Kansas State in the Elite Eight look easy.

The Ramblers' 14-game win streak finally ended when Michigan erased a 10-point deficit in the second half to beat them 69-57.