

Navy breaks record in Okinawa rescue

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

The Navy has recovered a Seahawk helicopter lying 3.6 miles below waters off the coast of Okinawa, breaking its depth record for recovery of sunken aircraft.

The twin-engine Sikorsky MH-60S had crashed into the Philippine Sea on Jan. 25, 2020, while operating from the amphibious command ship USS Blue Ridge.

The air crew escaped with only minor injuries.

The Naval Sea Systems Command's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving was tasked with salvaging the submerged helicopter

resting 19,075 feet below the surface of the water, the Navy said in a news release issued Tuesday.

The Navy located and documented the wreckage last spring using side-scan sonar and photographs of the helicopter, the Navy said.

Earlier this month, personnel from the Supervisor of Salvage and Diving returned to the crash site with a deep-water, remote-controlled vehicle called CURV 21, which can dive to maximum depths of 20,000 feet.

A salvage ship with a deep-lift reel contracted from Guam arrived at the site March 17, and the helicopter was pulled to

the surface the next day.

The chopper was transported to the Navy base at Yokosuka, Japan, from where it will be shipped back to the United States, the Navy said.

"As a whole, this operation was fast-paced and entirely successful," Bryan Blake, deep ocean program manager for the Supervisor of Salvage and Diving, said in the news release. "Our efforts validated the Navy's deep ocean search and recovery requirements. The capability to recover the airframe and make it available to determine the cause of the accident is a huge plus helping to ensure naval aviation safety."

USAF may exempt civilian pilots, use new ROTC plan

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — The Air Force is developing a program to exempt civilian pilots from some military training to become officers and fly aircraft for the service more quickly, said Maj. Gen. Craig Wills, the 19th Air Force commander.

It's an attempt by the Air Force to find ways to fill its pilot shortage and create a more diverse workforce, he said.

"The most important thing on that program is you still have to be willing to fight and kill and potentially die for your country to serve as an Air Force officer. And that's a pretty big lift," Wills said Tuesday during a call about efforts to overhaul the Air Force's pilot training to increase pools of candidates, speed up training time and redesign curriculum to match the technology-driven 21st century.

Air Education and Training Command, known as AETC, is tasked with sending 1,500 pilots a year into the Air Force, said Wills, who leads the command's unit that trains pilots, as well as aircrews, air battle managers, weapons directors, survival and escape specialists and many others.

Last year, 19th Air Force produced 1,263 pilots, which was down from 1,279 in 2019, in part because of the pandemic, which cost the service about 120 pilots, he said.

To keep the standard the same for civilian-trained pilots, Wills and his team developed an assessment methodology that includes an oral exam, a written exam and a series of flight checks in a simulator. Based on those scores, service officials determine how much Air Force training the pilots need.

"Somebody who is exceptional and extremely well-qualified might be able to bypass undergraduate pilot training altogether. We would put those folks through an Air Force fundamentals course ... to bring them up to speed on Air Force differences, teach them how we fly, teach them the things that they need to know to make a difference," Wills said.

One challenge to launching the program is finding space in Officer Training School.

"We're really not hiring pilots, we're hiring officers who are trained as pilots. That's really the difference," he said.

In a similar vein, the Air Force also is working on an initiative to offer ROTC scholarships at colleges and universities that have undergraduate aviation programs and are willing to work with the service on specific syllabus material. This could allow those students to graduate and then bypass a portion of Air Force pilot training using a similar methodology used for assessing prospective civilian pilots.

"Potentially, we could have an opportunity where we have added to the number of pilots at a relatively low-cost point," Wills said. "Obviously, the number one thing is the quality of the training and the standard of these officers. That's non-negotiable."

Other initiatives within AETC and 19th Air Force are targeting how to redesign pilot training so it better relates to a new generation of pilots who were raised on technology. This includes incorporating virtual reality, different types of simulators, and remote learning and teaching platforms.

"They have different expectations, and yet, our learning systems, generally speaking in our training pipelines, have failed to adapt thus far," Wills said.

Many of the redesign concepts for undergraduate pilot training build off lessons learned from Pilot Training Next, a new, technology-heavy form of pilot training that began two years ago. Students get about 100 extra hours on immersive training devices such as virtual-reality simulators. A new, more reliable common immersive training device is in development with a contractor to provide to all students, Wills said. It should reduce the maintenance that is needed on the devices used now.

Through all these initiatives, Wills sees a path toward meeting the goal of 1,500 new Air Force pilots each year by 2024.

New York legalizes recreational weed

Associated Press

Lawmakers reached an agreement late Saturday to legalize recreational marijuana sales in New York.

At least 14 other states already allow residents to buy marijuana for recreational and not just medical use, and New York's past efforts to pass marijuana have failed in recent years. Democrats who now wield a veto-proof majority in the state Legislature have made passing it a priority this year, and Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration has estimated legalization could eventually bring the state about \$350 million annually.

"My goal in carrying this legislation has always been to end the racially disparate enforcement of marijuana prohibition that has taken such a toll on communities of color across our state, and to use the economic windfall of legalization to help heal and repair those same communities," Sen. Liz Krueger, Senate sponsor of the bill and chair of the Senate's finance committee, said.

The legislation would allow recreational marijuana sales to adults over the age of 21 and set up a licensing process for the delivery of cannabis products to customers. Indi-

vidual New Yorkers could grow up to three mature and three immature plants for personal consumption, and local governments could opt out of retail sales.

The legislation would take effect immediately if passed, though sales wouldn't start immediately as New York sets up rules and a proposed cannabis board. Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes estimated Friday it could take 18 months to two years for sales to start.

Adam Goers, a vice president of Columbia Care, a New York medical marijuana provider that's interested in getting into the recreational market, said New York's proposed system would "ensure newcomers have a crack at the marketplace" alongside the state's existing medical marijuana providers.

"There's a big pie in which a lot of different folks are going to be able to be a part of it," Goers said.

New York would set a 9% sales tax on cannabis, plus an additional 4% tax split between the county and local government. It would also impose an additional tax based on the level of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, ranging from 0.5 cents per milligram for flower to 3 cents per milligram

for edibles.

New York would eliminate penalties for possession of fewer than three ounces of cannabis, and automatically expunge records of people with past convictions for marijuana-related offenses that would no longer be criminalized. That's a step beyond a 2019 law that expunged many past convictions for marijuana possession and reduced the penalty for possessing small amounts.

And New York would provide loans, grants and incubator programs to encourage participation in the cannabis industry by people from minority communities, as well as small farmers, women and disabled veterans.

Proponents have said the move could create thousands of jobs and begin to address the racial injustice of a decadeslong drug war that disproportionately targeted minority and poor communities.

"Police, prosecutors, child services and ICE have used criminalization as a weapon against them, and the impact this bill will have on the lives of our oversurveilled clients cannot be overstated," Alice Fontier, managing director of Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, said in a statement Saturday.

Delay in census data scrambles redistricting plans

Associated Press

Stymied by delayed census data needed for redistricting, some states are considering postponing their 2022 primaries or turning to other population estimates to start the once-a-decade task of redrawing voting districts used for U.S. House and state legislative elections.

The U.S. Census Bureau was supposed to provide redistricting data to the states by March 31, but after setbacks from the pandemic, it won't be ready until mid- to late August and might not be available in an easy-to-use format until Sept. 30. That's later than the legal deadlines to complete redistricting in some states and could mean less time

for court challenges, candidate filing and ballot creation.

The delay has sent states scrambling to adapt. Some face the decision to sidestep their constitutional deadlines or draw stopgap maps that might not fully reflect population shifts in the past decade.

"States that have done the exact same thing for decades in a row now have to look for alternatives," said Wendy Underhill, director of elections and redistricting at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In many states, redistricting is done by lawmakers subject to a gubernatorial veto. A growing number will use independent or bipartisan commissions, but

Republicans will have ultimate control over redistricting in more than twice as many states as Democrats. Political control allows officials to draw districts that make it easier for their candidates to win future elections — something Republicans did more effectively than Democrats after the 2010 census.

Although the census is typically used for redistricting, only about half the states have laws or constitutional provisions explicitly requiring them to use census data, according to the NCSL.

In Oregon, the state constitution requires lawmakers to draw legislative districts "according to population" by July 1.

If they fail to do so, then the secretary of state is to complete maps by Aug. 15.

Democratic legislative leaders cited "constitutional turmoil" caused by late census data in asking the state Supreme Court to extend redistricting deadlines until three months after the figures are received. But Secretary of State Shemia Fagan, a Democrat, contends that could trigger a chain reaction that could delay the state's May 2022 primaries.

"The resulting cost, confusion, and instability to Oregon's electoral process could be staggering," Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum argued in a court filing on Fagan's behalf.

2 charged with hate crimes in Seattle, San Francisco

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Prosecutors in Seattle and San Francisco have charged men with hate crimes in separate incidents that authorities say targeted people of Asian descent amid a wave of high-profile and sometimes deadly violence against Asian Americans since the pandemic began.

On Friday, prosecutors in King County, Wash., charged Christopher Hamner, 51, with three counts of malicious harassment after police say he screamed profanities and threw things at cars in two incidents last week targeting women and children of Asian heritage, The Seattle Times reported Saturday.

In San Francisco, Victor Humberto Brown, 53, made a

first court appearance after authorities say he repeatedly punched an Asian American man at a bus stop while shouting an anti-Asian slur.

Brown was initially booked on misdemeanor counts, but prosecutors recently elevated the case to a felony, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. He said in court that he has a post-traumatic stress disorder.

In Seattle, according to court documents, Hamner yelled profanities and threw things at a woman stopped at a red light with her two children, ages 5 and 10, on March 16. Three days later, authorities say Hamner cut off another car driven by an Asian woman, yelled profanity and the word “Asian” at her and then threw a water bottle at her car after charging at her when

she pulled into a parking spot.

In San Francisco, Ron Tuason, an Army veteran of Filipino, Chinese and Spanish descent, told the Chronicle he was at a bus stop in the city’s Ingleside neighborhood on March 13 when Brown approached him, yelling “Get out of my country” before using a racial slur meant to denigrate Asian people. Tuason said Brown also said, “It’s because of you there’s a problem here.”

Tuason, 56, said he believes Brown was referring to the coronavirus. Brown punched him multiple times, he said, knocking him to the ground. He suffered a black eye and a swollen cheek as a result of the attack and said he’s also experiencing memory loss.

Police found Brown shortly after Tuason called 911.

NY, NJ again top infection rate state list

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — A year after becoming a global epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic, New York and New Jersey are back atop the list of U.S. states with the highest rates of infection.

Even as the vaccination campaign has ramped up, the number of new infections in New Jersey has crept up by 37% in a little more than a month, to about 23,600 every seven days. About 50,000 people per week in New York are testing positive for the virus, a number that hasn’t much changed since mid-February.

The two states now rank No. 1 and 2 in new infections per capita among U.S. states. New Jersey has been reporting about 647 new cases for every 100,000 residents over the past 14 days. New York has averaged 548.

The situation in New York and New Jersey mirrors a national trend that has seen case numbers inch up in recent days. The United States is averaging nearly 62,000 cases a day, up from 54,000 two weeks ago.

Neither state is experiencing anything like what they saw last spring, when hospitals — and morgues — were overflowing. And like the rest of the country, both are in a much better place than in January, at the peak of the pandemic’s winter spike.

But the lack of improvement or even backsliding in recent weeks has raised concerns that the states are opening too quickly and people are letting down their guard too much, just as potentially more contagious variants of the virus are circulating more widely.

“When we’re seeing leveling off of cases or increase, that’s when it’s a time to rethink policies,” said Roy Gulick, chief of the infectious diseases division at Weill Cornell Medical College and New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Myanmar protests continue after police, soldiers kill more than 100

Associated Press

YANGON, Myanmar — Protesters in Myanmar returned to the streets Sunday to press their demands for a return to democracy, just a day after security forces killed more than 100 people on the bloodiest day since last month’s military coup.

Protests were held in Yangon and Mandalay, the country’s two biggest cities, among other locations. Some of the demonstrations were again met with police force.

At least 114 people were killed Saturday as security forces cracked down on protests against the Feb. 1 coup that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi’s elected government, according to the online news service Myanmar Now. The reported fatalities in-

cluded several children under 16 years old.

Similar tallies of the death toll were issued by other Myanmar media and researchers, far exceeding the previous highest death toll on March 14. The number of killings since the coup is now more than 420, according to multiple counts.

The coup reversed years of progress toward democracy after five decades of military rule and has again made Myanmar the focus of international scrutiny.

The Saturday killings by police and soldiers took place throughout the country as Myanmar’s military celebrated the annual Armed Forces Day holiday with a parade in the country’s capital, Naypyitaw.

The bloodshed quickly drew international condemnation, both from diplomatic missions within Myanmar and from abroad.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was shocked by the killings of civilians, including children.

“The continuing military crackdown is unacceptable and demands a firm, unified & resolute international response,” he wrote on Twitter.

The military chiefs of 12 nations issued a joint statement condemning the use of force against unarmed people.

“A professional military follows international standards for conduct and is responsible for protecting — not harming — the people it serves,” it said.

Calif. vaccinating age 50-64 before expansion

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Before California throws open its coronavirus vaccine program to all adults on April 15, there will be a two-week window when millions of people between the ages of 50 and 64 can get their shot.

The rollout for this age group, who become eligible Thursday, has prompted an uptick in appointment requests and has raised concerns about whether two weeks is enough to get to everybody when there is uncertainty about supply levels as well as lingering questions about accessibility.

The California Department of Finance, which monitors population data, projects that there are 7.2 million people in the state between the ages of 50 and 64. Currently, only about 23% of Californians in that age group have received at least one dose of a vaccine, according to the state, compared to 37% of people 18 to 49, likely due to their occupation or because they have qualifying health conditions.

Dr. Paul Simon, chief science officer for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, estimated that somewhere between 800,000 and 1 million additional people in the county would become eligible as of April 1.

California, which was initially slow to roll out the vaccines but has ramped up inoculations in recent weeks, expects to receive 2.5 million doses a week in the first half of the month and more than 3 million a week in the second, a big jump from the roughly 1.8 million doses a week currently.

The surge of supply will help accommodate the huge swell of people, but Simon said it will take time for the county to work through its already lengthy vaccination queue and accommodate those who will soon become eligible.

Rafi Nazarians, associate state director at AARP, said

many people over 50 face issues with mobility, language barriers and technology that may keep them from getting an appointment and getting to a vaccination clinic. He said he will urge state officials to make sure they reach older adults, particularly people who aren't online or are homebound.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Alabama's top health official said Friday that a study showed about 30% of adults in the state are hesitant to take the COVID-19 vaccine, a reluctance that concerns medical officials as they try to keep state case numbers on the decline.

The Alabama Department of Public Health released the results of the survey done to gauge vaccine hesitancy as well as figure out how to craft messaging to reach reluctant groups.

He said the hesitancy cuts across racial lines. He said the reasons vary from people who are staunchly against vaccinations to people who just have questions.

Alabama on March 22 expanded eligibility for COVID-19 vaccinations to include more front-line workers, those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people 55 and older and residents age 16 to 64 with certain high-risk medical conditions.

Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — The Navajo Nation has extended and loosened a health order intended to help curb spread of the coronavirus.

Under the latest "safer at home" order issued Friday, the daily curfew hours are 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. MDT and businesses can remain open until 9 p.m. MDT daily, tribal officials said Saturday.

The order also includes provisions allowing outdoor "drive-in" gatherings in which people remain in their vehicles, park at

least six feet from other vehicles and wear masks, officials said.

The tribe on Saturday reported 12 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases and one more death, increasing its pandemic totals to 30,052 cases and 1,246 deaths.

Connecticut

HARTFORD — Workers will go door to door in 10 Connecticut cities starting this spring, urging residents to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

Hartford-based Grossman Solutions will oversee the \$2.9 million outreach effort under an agreement with Gov. Ned Lamont's administration.

The program will also promote mobile and pop-up clinics and "work to assist residents in hosting virtual house parties with their friends and neighbors to help ensure residents have the facts about the COVID-19 vaccine and can share their experiences," the governor's office said.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health also announced a \$5.3 million plan to expand call center services for the state's Vaccine Appointment Assist Line. Access Health CT, a quasi-public state agency, will amend a contract with Faneuil, Inc. to target communities high on the social vulnerability index or SVI.

New York

NEW YORK — State officials have launched a digital pass New Yorkers can download to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.

The Excelsior Pass will be accepted at major entertainment venues like Madison Square Garden and Albany's Times Union Center.

The app is similar to a mobile airline boarding pass and uses a secure QR code that can be stored in a smartphone or printed out. Officials said the technology doesn't store or track private health data within the

app.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Saturday that more than 8.5 million total vaccine doses have been administered across the state, including more than 1 million doses over the past week.

Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma's epidemiologist is defending the state health department's change from daily to weekly reporting of coronavirus information.

The daily reports did not provide a true picture of the virus, epidemiologist Jared Taylor said Friday.

"Just quite simply, that does not tell the true story of what's happening in a community, what's happening in the state, how we need to be perceiving things and how we need to be responding to things," Taylor said.

Weekly reports that began March 17 levels out one day changes, Taylor said.

Public health officials have criticized the change, including Tulsa Health Director Bruce Dart, who has said his agency used the daily data in making virus response decisions.

Texas

AUSTIN — More than 10 million coronavirus vaccinations have been administered in Texas, and more than 1 million more doses are expected in the state next week, the state's health department said Saturday.

More than 3.5 million people in the state are fully vaccinated according to the federal Centers for Disease Control.

The Texas Department of State Health Services said 818,410 doses will be sent next week to 779 state health providers, and more than 200,000 doses are expected to be made available to pharmacies and federally-qualified health centers directly from the federal government.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Construction workers find 2 living in cave

CA VALLEJO — Construction workers rebuilding a bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area unexpectedly found two people living in a cave dug into an embankment, authorities said.

Crews were excavating at the site of the old bridge in Vallejo when they heard voices, Tom Walker, the project manager for the city, told the San Francisco Chronicle.

They discovered a cave about 20 feet long and 3 feet high in the side of the embankment.

Man stabs 8 people during hookah bar fight

MA DETROIT — A man stabbed eight people during a fight at a Detroit hookah lounge, leaving three people in critical condition, authorities said.

The fight started inside the Tiaga Hookah Lounge before spilling out into the parking lot, police Officer Dan Donakowski said in a news release.

A 34-year-old man who allegedly stabbed the eight people was taken into custody, police said.

The eight people who were stabbed were taken to hospitals, where three were in critical condition and the other five were treated for wounds that weren't considered life-threatening, Donakowski said.

2 kids rescued after swept mile off coast

FL MELBOURNE — Two children were rescued off Florida's Atlantic

Coast after being swept more than a mile out to sea, officials said.

The swimmers were spotted clinging to a paddleboard about 1.2 miles from the coast of Brevard County, according to a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission news release. Strong winds were pushing the kids further out to sea as they fought three-to-five-foot waves.

A helicopter from nearby Kennedy Space Center responded to the scene as an FWC boat crew pulled the young swimmers from the water, officials said.

Tank full of anhydrous ammonia found in river

MO CLAYSVILLE — A 1,500-gallon tank full of anhydrous ammonia was pulled from the Missouri River as it floated downstream near Jefferson City, the Environmental Protection Agency said.

Observers reported the tank and its wheeled chassis floating on the river near Clayville, when the river was at flood stage, the EPA said in a news release.

Because anhydrous ammonia is a toxic and potentially deadly chemical, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources called in the EPA.

Infamous mansion, built with stolen money, sold

MT BILLINGS — A 26,000-square-foot mansion built with stolen money on the west side of Billings was sold for \$7.5 million to the former owners of a mobile home park, a real estate compa-

ny said.

The sale of the 10-bedroom, 19-bathroom residence to Jock and Cathy Clause closed, according to Engel & Voelkers Western Frontier, the real estate agency managing the sale.

The mansion was built six years ago by Larry Price Jr., a former Signal Peak mine executive who is serving five years in prison after admitting to stealing \$40 million through various schemes.

Man leads officers on chase through 4 counties

IA CAMBRIDGE — A Des Moines man allegedly driving a stolen Maserati led officers on a two-hour chase through four counties, with speeds sometimes reaching 150 mph, the Iowa Highway Patrol said.

The pursuit began when a patrol trooper spotted the car going 97 mph and tried to stop it, Lt. Nathan Ludwig said.

Ludwig said the driver, John Burgoyne, 43, of Des Moines, rented the vehicle and failed to return it, WHO-TV reported.

Officers from several agencies pursued Burgoyne through Polk, Marshall, Jasper, and Story counties but lost sight of the vehicle.

The car was spotted parked behind a building on an abandoned farm northeast of Cambridge, Ludwig said.

Woman killed when dog pulls her into road

RI CRANSTON — A Rhode Island woman out walking her dog was killed when the dog apparently pulled her into the path of a vehicle, po-

lice said.

Rhonda Lobocono, 58, was struck, Cranston chief Col. Michael Winkquist said in a statement.

A partially obstructed doorbell video showed a pickup truck stopping at a stop sign, then the woman, whose large pitbull-type dog may have been tugging on the leash, stepping into the truck's path as it moved forward again, he said.

The driver is cooperating with investigators.

No one has been charged.

The dog survived and was taken to an animal hospital.

FAA investigating pilot's recorded cursing rant

TX DALLAS — Federal safety officials are investigating a Southwest Airlines pilot who was recorded making a cuss-filled rant about Northern California liberals as his plane readied for takeoff in San Jose, Calif.

Southwest said it was handling the matter internally.

The incident, previously reported by onemileatatime.com and SFGate.com, happened at Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport and was captured by the Live ATC website.

"F— this place, Goddamn liberal f—," the unidentified pilot said on the recording. "F— weirdos, probably driving around in f— Hyundai ... go slow as f—."

A few seconds later, he can be heard telling air traffic controllers, "Southwest 531 is ready to go." The plane was cleared for takeoff.

— From The Associated Press

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Oregon State among Elite

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

Picked to finish dead last in the Pac-12, Oregon State instead might be the last one standing.

Led by unflappable guard Ethan Thompson, whose 20 points included a pair of clinching foul shots with 35 seconds left, the No. 12 seed Beavers and their brilliant defense shut down eighth-seeded Loyola Chicago in a 65-58 victory on Saturday that sent their long-suffering program into the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament.

It's Oregon State's first regional final since 1982 — one that was later vacated by the NCAA — and sets up a showdown with second-seeded Houston on Monday night for a spot in its first Final Four since 1963.

"They just want to keep riding the wave," said Beavers coach Wayne Tinkle, whose hungry bunch of underdogs have matched Missouri in 2002 as the lowest-seeded teams to advance past the Sweet 16.

"We did use the fact we were picked 12th in the Pac-12 this year," Tinkle added, "but we

haven't made a big deal about the 12th seed. I don't want to throw too much at them. They'll see it. We just have to keep our feet on the ground."

That's getting harder to do with each passing day.

Not even the fervent prayers of Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt could help Loyola deal with the Beavers (20-12) and the constantly changing defenses that Tinkle rolled out. The Ramblers (26-5), who played with such poise and perfection in toppling top-seeded Illinois, wound up shooting 33% from the field and 5-for-23 from beyond the arc.

All-America forward Cameron Krutwig led Loyola with 14 points. Lucas Williamson and Braden Norris added 10 apiece, though both of them missed three-pointers in the closing minutes as the Ramblers tried to mount a comeback.

"Very hard scene in our locker room," said Loyola coach Porter Moser, whose name has surfaced in connection with several major conference jobs. "Kids cared so much, invested so much. Very tough when it comes to an end."

It was the second meeting between the teams and first since Dec. 31, 1927, when the Ramblers won 31-19 in Chicago — and Sister Jean, the team's beloved 101-year-old chaplain, was still just a schoolgirl.

And for most of Saturday, it looked as if 31 points would be plenty.

Oregon State turned it over twice before getting off a shot, went nearly 6½ minutes before making its first field goal and at one point was 1-for-8 with four turnovers.

Then the Ramblers, who failed to take advantage of their defense, proceeded to miss 11 consecutive shots as Oregon State flip-flopped between man-to-man and zone defenses.

"We kind of let them slow us down a little bit," Krutwig said. "Honestly, we got a lot of good looks."

Up next

The Beavers play the Cougars for a spot in the Final Four. Oregon State beat Houston in the 1966 West Region semifinal and again in the 2009 CBI Tournament.

No. 1 Baylor grinds past Villanova

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — That ice that seemed to be forming across the three-point arc was hardly enough to throw Baylor off course.

Some rugged defense and a newly discovered love for points in the paint helped the top-seeded Bears find the formula for a 62-51 victory over Villanova on Saturday and a trip to the Elite Eight.

Adam Flagler was the surprise leading scorer, with 16 points, and Baylor (25-2), which came in as the nation's leading three-point shooting team at 41.5%, won despite making only three of 19 against Wildcats' ever-shifting 2-3, man-to-man combo on D.

The Bears, who started the season 18-0 and won their first-ever Big 12 regular-season title, are one win from the Final Four for the first time since 2012. They will play Arkansas in the South regional final on Monday.

Davion Mitchell, a 46% shooter from three this season, went 0-for-3 from long range on a 14-point day. The team's other two high-powered guards didn't fare better. Jared Butler scored nine points on 1-for-9 shooting from three, and MaCio Teague had five points without a three.

"When we are 2-for-12 at half, we figured we've got to get inside," coach Scott Drew said of the team's three-point shooting. "We got good looks but not great looks. The guards did a great job of not settling and probing more."

Because of that, Baylor shot 53% in the second half, even though it made only one three.

"Coach said we're not going to win if we keep shooting the off-dribble three," Mitchell said. "He told us to trust the defense and get in the paint."

Coach Jay Wright's Wildcats scored just 10 points in the final 11 minutes.

Houston locks down Syracuse

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Houston contested every three-pointer, took away clean looks and forced "Buddy Buckets" to work for any sliver of space he could find.

Defense has been the Cougars' strength all season. Now it has taken coach Kelvin Sampson's team somewhere new: the program's deepest NCAA Tournament run since the days of Olajuwon, Drexler and the famed "Phi Slama Jama."

Quentin Grimes scored 14 points and Houston's defense locked down on surging Buddy Boeheim, helping the Cougars beat Syracuse 62-46 on Saturday night in the Sweet 16 while hold-

ing the Orange to their lowest point total in an NCAA Tournament game.

That sent the second-seeded Cougars through to their first regional final in 37 years, earning a matchup with No. 12 seed Oregon State for the Midwest Region title and a spot in the Final Four.

"Obviously, we know the excitement we're bringing to the city of Houston and to the university," said DeJon Jarreau, who flirted with a triple-double while leading the defensive effort on Boeheim. "We're very happy for that, but we have a mission to accomplish."

The Cougars hadn't reached a

regional final since a run of three straight Final Fours with their high-flying style under coach Guy Lewis in the 1980s. Future NBA greats Clyde Drexler and Hakeem Olajuwon were teammates on the 1983 team that reached the title game before losing on a shocking last-play dunk to North Carolina State's "Cardiac Pack" coached by Jim Valvano.

The next year, Olajuwon led Houston back to the 1984 final before losing to Patrick Ewing and Georgetown.

And now Sampson's bunch has the once-proud program back within a win of the Final Four.

Davis sends Arkansas past Oral Roberts

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The chants of Arkansas' fans echoed from the concourse long after the players had cleared the floor.

"Wooooo, Pig! Sooiie!"

It's not quite "40 Minutes of Hell," but the Razorbacks are back.

Davonte Davis hit a short jumper with 2.9 seconds left, and Arkansas advanced to the Elite Eight for the first time in 26 years with a 72-70 win over Oral Roberts in the South Region semifinals Saturday night.

"It's amazing just being able to be in this position right now as an individual and as an Arkansas player," said Davis, who had 16 points.

The Muss Bus grinded its gears through the first half into the second, bad shots and even worse defense putting the team in a 12-point hole.

Eric Musselman's Razorbacks (25-6) got their Pig Sooiie swagger back, turning defen-

sive stops into early offense opportunities and offensive rebounds into points.

It came down to one final shot and Davis made it, sending Arkansas to the Elite Eight for the first time since the Nolan Richardson "40 Minutes of Hell" days.

Next up for the Razorbacks is top-seeded Baylor in what should be a fast-paced South Region final on Monday.

"It's an incredible feeling to be in an Elite Eight in our second year," said Musselman, who took over the program in 2019. "I really can't describe it."

The let-it-fly Golden Eagles (18-11) let history slip through their grasp.

Within reach of becoming the first No. 15 seed to reach the Elite Eight, Oral Roberts stumbled with a series of turnovers and missed shots.

Max Abmas did his best to put the Golden Eagles in the Elite Eight for the first time in 47 years, scoring 25 points. His three-pointer at the buzzer

bounced off the front of the rim.

"We gave him a pass option, we gave him a dribble option," Oral Roberts coach Paul Mills said. "He's super bright and picks up things really quickly and understood and had great court awareness and had great selection on the shot. Unfortunately, it didn't go in."

The Golden Eagles had history on their minds. Florida Gulf Coast was the only other No. 15 seed to get this far in 2013 and lost at the regional semifinal round.

Oral Roberts knew it had a chance to top it against the Razorbacks after playing them earlier in the season. The Golden Eagles led by 10 at halftime in Fayetteville on Dec. 20 before Arkansas bullied Oral Roberts in the second half for an 87-76 win.

The Golden Eagles went chest-to-chest with the Razorbacks from the start of their first Sweet 16 game since 1974, contesting shots at the rim and chasing out to the arc to prevent

open looks. Arkansas helped them out, going 1-for-7 from three in the first half.

The Razorbacks tried to make it difficult on Abmas, trapping him in most pick-and-roll situations. The nation's leading scorer still found a way to get his points, with 12 in the first half. Carlos Jurgens, who averages 5.7 points per game, took advantage of repeatedly being left open, scoring 11 to help Oral Roberts lead 35-28 at halftime.

The Golden Eagles continued making shots in the second half as the Razorbacks kept taking bad ones, stretching the lead to 46-34.

Arkansas snapped out of it, playing better defense and getting to the rim instead of throwing up contested shots.

"The job wasn't just to get to the Sweet 16," Abmas said. "The job was to get to the national championship and win it. We came up short, but all the stuff we accomplished this season is something we'll celebrate and remember the rest of our lives."

Ngannou stops Miocic for MMA heavyweight belt

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Francis Ngannou has been the next big thing in the UFC heavyweight division for several years. Just about everyone believed greatness was within the powerful Cameroonian challenger's reach if he could ever put his prodigious talents together.

All that potential was realized in six sensational minutes Saturday night when Ngannou took the belt away from the most accomplished fighter in the division's history.

Ngannou stopped Stipe Miocic with ferocious punches early in the second round to claim the heavyweight title at UFC 260.

Ngannou (11-2) avenged his blowout loss to Miocic in 2018 by demonstrating everything he has learned in the ensuing three years. The first UFC heavyweight champion from Africa flattened Miocic (21-3) twice early in the second, finally buckling

the champ's knees and ending the bout 52 seconds into the round.

"Man, it's amazing," Ngannou said. "The feeling of it is just great. Imagine something you've been waiting for your entire life, and struggling to have it. Sometimes I felt like I was drowning and I had to struggle back, but now we're here."

Ngannou won a fairly quiet first round with superior striking and ground work, but there was nothing quiet about the finish.

Ngannou knocked down Miocic 22 seconds into the second round with a crisp left hand to Miocic's face, but the champion ate several punches to get up. Miocic backedpedaled away and even landed a right hand that stung Ngannou, but the challenger loaded up a picture-perfect left hook that bent Miocic's legs at a gruesome angle and put him on the canvas again, where Ngannou landed one finishing hammer fist.

"When the journey is longer, the reward is always more appreciated," Ngannou said.

"I'm sure I would have been happy three years ago, but I think now, I have a different perspective about it, being happy about my improvement."

The violence was exactly what Ngannou's fans and coaches expected when the long-anticipated changing of the guard atop the heavyweight division finally happened in this rematch of two highly likable fighters.

Ngannou tried to call his mother in Cameroon immediately after the fight, but said he couldn't get through to her.

"I can't talk to anybody in Cameroon right now," he said. "It's a good craziness, for a good reason."

The 34-year-old Ngannou is a former aspiring boxer who discovered mixed martial arts after he left Cameroon for France in his mid-20s. He rose rapidly through his new sport with his fearsome power and growing all-around skill, but Miocic interrupted his ascent by winning every round of their first bout in Boston.

Kings beat Cavs on Barnes' three

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Harrison Barnes hit a three-pointer at the buzzer after catching an inbounds pass from the opposite end of the court and the Sacramento Kings beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 100-98 on Saturday night.

Barnes finished with 16 points and 11 rebounds. De'Aaron Fox scored 20 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter to go with six assists, and Richaun Holmes added 10 points and 14 rebounds.

"Big-time catch-and-shoot by Harrison," Kings coach Luke Walton said. "He kept his composure. He had enough time on the clock. He was nice, calm and relaxed and made the shot."

Sacramento has won four straight, matching its longest streak of the season.

Knicks 102, Bucks 96: Alec Burks and RJ Barrett each scored 21 points and New York beat host Milwaukee, with the Bucks playing without Giannis Antetokounmpo and three other injured starters.

The victory was costly for the Knicks, who lost starting center Mitchell Robinson to a broken right foot in the first quarter. He will be re-evaluated when the Knicks return to New York on Sunday.

Antetokounmpo has a sprained left knee.

Brother Thanasis Antetokounmpo had 23 points and Jordan Nwora 21 for the Bucks. They lost their second straight after eight consecutive victories.

Jazz 126, Grizzlies 110: Donovan Mitchell had 35 points and seven assists and NBA-leading Utah beat Memphis for its 19th straight home victory.

Jordan Clarkson added 28 points, and Rudy Gobert had 16 points and 14 rebounds to help the Jazz improve to 34-11.

Jonas Valanciunas had 13 points and 11 rebounds for Memphis. Kyle Anderson was the top scorer with 16 points. Dillon Brooks added 13 and Ja Morant chipped in 12.

Clippers 122, 76ers 112: Kawhi Leonard scored 28 points, Terance Mann added a season-high 23 and Los Angeles beat visiting Philadelphia in its first game against former coach Doc Rivers.

Rivers led the Clippers for seven seasons and directed them to six playoff appearances. He took the 76ers job less than a week after being fired by Los Angeles.

Paul George added 24 points for Los Angeles. They have won five straight and six of seven.

Pelicans 112, Mavericks 103: Zion Williamson scored 38 points, including 10 during New Orleans' 18-8 run in the final 3:42,

and Nickiel Alexander-Walker added 20 to lift the host Pelicans over short-handed Dallas.

Williamson, who had 39 points in a close loss to Denver on Friday night, recorded his 23rd consecutive game of at least 20 points.

Wizards 106, Pistons 92: Russell Westbrook had 19 points, 19 rebounds and 10 assists and host Washington beat Detroit in All-Star guard Bradley Beal's injury-shortened outing.

Beal had 17 points in 21 minutes before the NBA scoring leader departed early in the third quarter, having started the game with a sore right foot.

Celtics 111, Thunder 94: Jayson Tatum scored 20 of his 27 points in the second half and Boston rallied in the fourth quarter to win at Oklahoma City.

Jaylen Brown added 25 points to help the Celtics even their season record.

Rockets 129, Timberwolves 107: Kevin Porter Jr. scored 25 points in his return to Houston's lineup, John Wall had 13 points and 12 assists and Rockets rebounded to win at Minnesota.

Spurs 120, Bulls 104: Jakob Poeltl scored 20 points, DeMar DeRozan had 17 and host San Antonio spoiled Nikola Vucevic's Chicago debut.

Knights squeak past Avalanche in West showdown

Associated Press

DENVER — Max Pacioretty scored at 1:56 of overtime to give the Vegas Golden Knights a 3-2 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Saturday.

Vegas rebounded from a 5-1 loss in the series opener Thursday night to move a point ahead of Colorado atop the West Division.

Pacioretty also had an assist, Alex Martinez and William Carrier scored, and Marc-Andre Fleury made 22 saves.

Joonas Donskoi and Devon Toews scored for the Avalanche and Philipp Grubauer made 31 saves. Colorado had won eight straight at home.

Penguins 6, Islanders 3: Bryan Rust had his fourth career hat trick, Sidney Crosby

added a goal and an assist and short-handed Pittsburgh beat visiting New York.

Evan Rodrigues and Frederick Gaudreau also scored, and Tristan Jarry stopped 29 shots to help the Penguins pull within two points of the Islanders and Washington for the East Division lead.

Bruins 3, Sabres 2: Buffalo lost its 17th consecutive game, twice blowing one-goal leads before Craig Smith scored with 3:50 left to give Boston a home win.

The Sabres have not won since Feb. 23, tying the 18th longest NHL losing streak.

Coyotes 4, Sharks 0: Phil Kessel had his seventh career hat trick, Adin Hill made 34 saves and host Arizona beat San Jose for its third straight victory.

Clayton Keller had a goal and two assists for the Coyotes. They tied St. Louis for fourth place in the West Division with 37 points.

Flyers 2, Rangers 1: Sam Morin scored his first NHL goal with 4:27 left to help host Philadelphia beat New York. Nolan Patrick also scored for the Flyers, who badly needed to win a close one against the Rangers. New York beat Philadelphia 9-0 last week and again 8-3 on Thursday night, scoring 15 straight goals over the two games.

Maple Leafs 4, Oilers 3 (OT): Auston Matthews scored 54 seconds into overtime to give host Toronto past Edmonton for its third straight victory.

Predators 3, Blackhawks 1: Mikael Granlund, Rocco Gri-

maldi and Ryan Johansen scored and Nashville won at Chicago for its fourth consecutive win.

Panthers 4, Stars 3 (OT): Aaron Ekblad scored with 9.3 seconds left in overtime after his apparent winner moments earlier was wiped out by a replay review, and Florida won at Dallas.

Red Wings 3, Blue Jackets 1: Adam Erne and Robby Fabbri scored 29 seconds apart in the first period and Calvin Pickard made 21 saves in his first start of the season, helping host Detroit beat Columbus.

Flames 4, Jets 2: Johnny Gaudreau responded to a barb from his coach with a pair of assists in Calgary's victory over visiting Winnipeg.