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Shanahan defends Middle East buildup

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Tuesday defended the Pentagon's decision to deploy more ships and bombers to the Middle East in response to threats from Iran, saying those actions might have convinced the Iranians to "put on hold" potential attacks on Americans.

Shanahan's comments at the Pentagon came just hours before he was set to brief members of Congress behind closed doors on classified intelligence that President Donald Trump's administration claims to have about potential Iranian threats. Top U.S. officials have not publicly described in detail those

threats but have described them as credible.

Standing in front of the Pentagon, Shanahan wanted to "underscore the credibility of the intelligence" that the U.S. has about Iran.

"We talked about those threats and there were attacks," he said, without providing specifics about the attacks.

Earlier this month, four oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates reportedly were sabotaged. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday during an appearance on the Hugh Hewitt conservative radio program that it was "quite possible" that Iran was behind the sabotage of the tankers and attacks on Saudi Arabian pipelines.

The Department of Defense "was extremely responsive" and took prudent steps, he said, that "we've put on hold the potential for attacks on Americans. And that's what's extremely important."

Shanahan gave no further information about what these potential attacks on Americans were or where they would have taken place.

The USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and a bomber task group was recently deployed to the Middle East early "in response to indications of heightened Iranian readiness to conduct offensive operations against U.S. forces and our interests," according to the Pentagon statement about the deployment.

"We're in a period where the threat remains high and our job is to make sure that there is no miscalculation by the Iranians," Shanahan said. "That is the most important thing we can do as the department is avoid miscalculation and then control escalation."

While the threat remains, Shanahan said: "Our prudent response, I think, has given the Iranians time to recalculate."

Later Tuesday afternoon, Shanahan, alongside Pompeo and Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was to brief the full House and then the full Senate on details about Iran in a closed session.

US plans to build new anti-terrorism training centers

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. plans to build new anti-terrorism training centers in Southeast Asia and East Africa, according to information provided by the State Department.

"RTCs (Regional Training Centers) are under negotiation or development at locations in East Africa and Southeast Asia, but are not yet operational," a State Department official said in an email Tuesday.

One of the new facilities, in the Philippines, would train elite counterterrorism units from across the region, including Malaysia and Indonesia, The Wall Street Journal reported May 6.

The State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program already operates training centers in Jordan and Senegal

where local first responders can, for example, train as a quick-reaction force, learn to use special weapons and tactics and respond to bombs.

Southeast Asia has been plagued by terrorism for decades. From 2002 to 2015, hundreds of U.S. special operations troops assisted the Philippine armed forces with training and surveillance through the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines.

At its high-water mark, in 2010, the task force included about 600 special operators working out of Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City on the island of Mindanao.

In 2017, just two years after the task force ended its mission, hundreds of militants occupied the southern city of Marawi, forcing Philippine government forces, assisted by the U.S. military, to fight a

bloody, five-month battle to liberate the city.

The State Department didn't list potential locations for the new Southeast Asian training site. However, U.S. forces can operate facilities on Philippine bases under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, and U.S. personnel often visit military bases in places such as Zamboanga, Sulu and Palawan, according to Patricio Abinales, a Philippines expert at the University of Hawaii.

"I'm sure they are not just there for some light training," he said.

The State Department didn't specify the training that might go on at the new facilities but listed some of the courses offered in Jordan and Senegal.

In Jordan, the training is conducted at the Jordanian International Police Training Center and at the Gendarmerie

Training Center. The Senegalese training facility is in Theis, outside of Dakar, the State Department official said.

The centers offer various tactical courses and classroom-based training, the official said. Recent training courses delivered at the centers included: "Quick Reaction Force; Crisis Response Team/SWAT; Tactical Emergency Medical; Explosives Incident Countermeasure/Bomb Squad; Post-Blast Investigations; Tactical Methods of Entry, and; Protection of National Leadership," the official said.

Since 1983 the anti-terrorism assistance program has delivered counterterrorism training to more than 150,000 law enforcement officials and first responders from more than 150 countries, according to information on the State Department's website.

New leader joins Amphibious Force 7th Fleet

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Rear Adm. Fred Kacher assumed command of Task Force 76 from Rear Adm. Brad Cooper during a ceremony Friday aboard the USS Wasp at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan.

Kacher joins Amphibious Force 7th Fleet after serving as executive officer to the commander, U.S. European Command.

Cooper leaves Sasebo for Washington, where he will assume duties as the chief of legislative affairs for the secretary of the Navy.

The sailors of the Navy's only

forward-deployed amphibious force have been some of the busiest in the service. As recently as March, eight of nine ships assigned to the task force were at sea.

The Wasp Amphibious Readiness Group embarked the Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter last year for its first operational deployment. That deployment included a successful test of the up-gunned expeditionary strike group concept, which paired an Aegis guided-missile destroyer with a traditional amphibious readiness group with embarked Marines.

Sailors and Marines from

the group provided humanitarian support in fall 2018 to the Northern Mariana Islands following Super Typhoon Mangkhut and also enforced international sanctions against North Korea in the East China Sea.

"To the sailors in our strike group, I extend my personal thanks," Cooper said in a statement posted to the Amphibious Force 7th Fleet website Friday. "My most treasured memory from this tour stems from the great accomplishments of the sailors and Marines that we have the privilege to serve alongside. They make us all so proud each and every day."

Kacher assumes command of nine vessels, which include the five amphibious ships of Amphibious Squadron 11, and four mine sweepers of Mine Counter Measures Squadron 7.

"Know that I will do my level best to work with each of you to build on the friendship and operational excellence established by (Rear) Adm. Cooper," Kacher said in the statement. "For the sailors and Marines of Expeditionary Strike Group 7, I'm ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as we deliver lethal combat capability and integrated American sea power in support of our nation and our neighbors in the Indo-Pacific."

Sikorsky gets \$1.1B Navy contract

The Hartford (Conn.) Courant

Sikorsky Aircraft has announced it will build 12 heavy-lift helicopters as part of a \$1.1 billion U.S. Navy contract and among 200 aircraft for the Marine Corps.

Sikorsky, the Stratford, Conn.-based unit of defense contractor Lockheed Martin Corp., said Friday it will begin deliveries of the 12 CH-53K King Stallion helicopters in 2022 and also provide spare parts and logistical support.

The CH-53K is the only sea-based, long-range, heavy-lift helicopter in production and will provide three times the lift capability of its predecessor, Sikorsky said. It will conduct expeditionary heavy-lift transport of armored vehicles, equipment and personnel to support operations inland from a sea-based center of operations.

Design deficiencies delayed testing, and those helicopters may not be delivered to the Marine Corps until at least 2021, according to a Defense Department report.

Sikorsky program director Bill Falk said the contract

demonstrates the U.S. Marine Corps' "confidence in Sikorsky to expand production of this technologically advanced heavy lift helicopter."

Members of Connecticut's congressional delegation said they will "fight for additional funding" that makes possible high-skilled manufacturing jobs in Connecticut.

Bloomberg reported earlier this month that the Pentagon is assessing whether Boeing Co.'s heavy-lift helicopter for the Army, the CH-47 Chinook, could replace the King Stallion helicopter for some or all Marine Corps missions, according to officials.

Falk told Bloomberg he was aware of the review and was confident his company's helicopter remains the Navy's best choice.

The Pentagon assessment was begun after an April 4 request from Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman James Inhofe, R-Okla., who cited continuing technical problems and delays with the \$31 billion King Stallion program, Bloomberg reported.

Lockheed Martin, Sikorsky and suppliers have made

"significant investments" in facilities, machinery, tooling and workforce training to boost production for the CH-53K program, Sikorsky said. The helicopter manufacturer says it's installed more than eight new titanium machining centers; designed and implemented a new final assembly test facility; installed 10-ton cranes; and now has 3D work instructions on the factory floor.

"We have transformed our factory for the future and implemented a model for all future helicopter programs," Falk said.

The CH-53K, which can lift nearly 14 tons, has flown more than 1,400 test-hours and has met all the outer reaches of testing, Sikorsky said.

In 2016, then-Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and the state's General Assembly approved a \$220 million aid package for Sikorsky to keep the manufacturer where it started more than 85 years ago. The deal included a commitment by Sikorsky to build the CH-53K in Stratford.

AV-8B Harrier crashes; pilot safely ejects

Stars and Stripes

An AV-8B Harrier from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point crashed Monday near Havelock, N.C., according to a statement from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The pilot ejected safely and was taken to Carolina East Medical Center in New Bern for further evaluation, the statement said. There were no reports of civilian casualties or property damage.

Emergency crews were called to the scene at 6:15 p.m., according to ABC News affiliate WCTI. A fire from the crash was extinguished, the report said.

"Personnel from 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing responded to the scene and assisted the Havelock [Police] Department, which initially responded to the accident location," the Marine Corps statement said.

The cause of the crash is under investigation, the service said.

High court won't hear Feres Doctrine case

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear a Navy lieutenant's wrongful death case that looked to overturn a rule that bars servicemembers from suing the government for medical malpractice.

The case was on behalf of Rebekah "Moani" Daniel, 33, who bled to death after giving birth to a baby girl, Victoria. The so-called Feres Doctrine bars the Daniels and other servicemembers from seeking such legal recourse.

Though the court declined to let Daniel's petition move forward, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg indicated she would have granted a hearing, and Justice Clarence Thomas issued a strongly worded dissent to the court's decision. Thomas wrote that members of the military will continue to face obstacles to seek government compensa-

tion if they are injured while they serve.

"Such unfortunate repercussions — denial of relief to military personnel and distortions of other areas of law to compensate — will continue to ripple through our jurisprudence as long as the court refuses to consider Feres," Thomas wrote in his dissent released Monday.

Coast Guard veteran Walter Daniel filed the petition to overturn the Feres Doctrine after his wife's death at Naval Hospital Bremerton, Wash., in 2014. She was a labor and delivery nurse at the same hospital where she died.

Monday's decision comes on the heels of an emotional congressional hearing last month that saw several servicemembers and their families recount medical horrors through the military health care system with no legal recourse.

Daniel and his lawyers expressed disappointment with Monday's news.

"Sadly, the justice system

remains closed to our family, our colleagues and the families who commit their lives to military service," the former lieutenant commander said in a statement. "Victoria and I won't have the opportunity to learn what led to Moani's death and to ensure others don't experience the same tragedy."

The Feres Doctrine can be traced back to 1950 when the Supreme Court issued a ruling in *Feres vs. the United States*. Four years earlier, Congress had enacted the Federal Tort Claims Act allowing for citizens to sue the government for damaging acts of negligence. However, the court in 1950 — combining three cases of harmed servicemembers — determined the act was not applicable for military members "in the course of activity incident to service."

Since then, the court has interpreted the Feres Doctrine to mean no active-duty servicemember can sue the federal government regardless of the

circumstances.

"In our country, we rightfully revere servicemembers for their bravery and sacrifice," Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said during an April 30 hearing on the doctrine. "It is disrespectful and shameful that for 69 years, Congress has refused to give them the same rights as everyone else."

Daniel's Supreme Court petition was filed in October after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a district court dismissal of the case. The 9th Circuit's opinion appeared to all but call for a Supreme Court review.

"Lieutenant Daniel served honorably and well, ironically professionally trained to render the same type of care that led to her death," Judge Michael Daly Hawkins wrote. "If ever there were a case to carve out an exception to the Feres Doctrine, this is it. But only the Supreme Court has the tools to do so."

Army reverses course on fitness test options

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

The Army is developing alternative aerobic events for soldiers whose injuries prevent them from fully participating in its new combat fitness test, the service said in a statement on Monday.

By the fall of 2020, the Army Combat Fitness Test will be required Army-wide and will include six standard events: deadlift, standing power throw, hand-release pushups, "sprint-drag-carry," leg tucks and a 2-mile run. Initially, no alternatives were planned, but the new proposal could cut the test to half as many events for injured troops, giving them a choice to row, bike or swim instead.

The Center for Initial Military Training, which has been developing and tinkering with the new gender- and age-neutral ACFT, is expected to soon begin evaluating the three

alternate events at the 63 battalions that have been field-testing the new standards since last fall, the statement said.

If the modifications are approved, injured soldiers would still have to complete as many standard events as possible, but at a minimum, would have to do the three-repetition maximum deadlift, the sprint-drag-carry and one of three substitute events — a 5,000-meter row, a 15,000-meter stationary bike or a 1,200-meter swim, any of which is to be completed in 25 minutes or less — the statement said.

"The alternate events measure minimum attributes soldiers need to fight, render aid to others and decrease risk to themselves in a combat environment," it said.

The new events will be open only to certain soldiers on "permanent profile," or those injuries or medical conditions that significantly limit their

activities or their job, as approved by a physician and a second opinion, officials said.

Some soldiers have found the new test much more challenging than the current three-event physical fitness test introduced in 1980, but the service believes the six-event ACFT is a better gauge of how soldiers will perform in combat. It spent six years developing the new test and joins the Marines, Navy and Air Force in adopting new fitness standards.

Last summer, officials said alternative events had not been planned because soldiers with injuries that kept them on a long-term medical profile were likely to be subject to then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' "deploy-or-be-removed" policy, which called for troops who were nondeployable for more than 12 months to be processed for administrative separation.

Miss. 6-week abortion ban in federal court

JACKSON, Miss. — A federal judge who struck down Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban last year is hearing arguments about a new law that puts the ban even earlier.

The law would prohibit most abortions once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, at about six weeks, when many women may not know they're pregnant.

Republican Gov. Phil Bryant signed it in March, and the state's only abortion clinic, Jackson Women's Health Organization, sued the state.

U.S. District Judge Carlton Reeves heard arguments Tuesday on the clinic's request that he block the law from taking effect July 1. It was unclear whether Reeves would issue an immediate decision.

Kentucky, Ohio and Georgia have bans on abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected. Alabama has made abortion a felony in nearly all cases.

From the Associated Press

No-show McGahn faces contempt vote

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler gavelled open a Trump-Russia hearing Tuesday with a stern warning that former White House Counsel Don McGahn will be held in contempt for defying a congressional subpoena and failing to appear.

“Our subpoenas are not optional,” Nadler said. “This committee will have no choice but to enforce the subpoena against him.”

Democrats are facing yet another attempt by President Donald Trump to stonewall their investigations. This time, they’re blocked from hearing from McGahn — a chief eyewitness to the president’s handling of the Russia investigation — on orders from the White House.

Rep. Doug Collins, the ranking Repub-

lican on the Judiciary Committee, spoke scornfully of Nadler’s position, saying the chairman preferred a public “fight over fact-finding.”

The committee voted to adjourn the hearing immediately after Collins’ remarks.

A lawyer for McGahn said he would follow the president’s directive and skip Tuesday’s hearing, leaving the Democrats without yet another witness — and a growing debate within the party about how to respond.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, backed by Nadler, is taking a step-by-step approach to the confrontations with Trump. Nadler said the committee would vote to hold McGahn in contempt and take the issue to court.

“You face serious consequences if you do not appear,” Nadler warned McGahn in a letter on the eve of the hearing. Democrats

are encouraged by an early success on that route as a federal judge ruled against Trump on Monday in a financial records dispute with Congress.

But that hasn’t been swift enough for some members of the Judiciary panel who feel that Pelosi should be more aggressive and launch impeachment hearings that would make it easier to get information from the administration. Such hearings would give Democrats more standing in court and could stop short of a vote to remove the president.

The issue was raised in a meeting among top Democrats Monday evening, where some members confronted Pelosi about opening up the impeachment hearings, according to three people familiar with the private conversation who requested anonymity to discuss it.

Judge rules against Trump in records dispute

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge ruled against President Donald Trump on Monday in a financial records dispute with Congress and said lawmakers should get the documents they have subpoenaed. Trump called it a “crazy” decision that his lawyers would appeal.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta comes amid a widespread effort by the White House and Trump’s attorneys to refuse to cooperate with congressional requests for information and records.

In ruling that Trump cannot block the financial records subpoena, Mehta said the Democratic-led House Oversight and Reform Committee had “valid legisla-

tive purposes” for its request and that it was not for him “to question whether the committee’s actions are truly motivated by political considerations.” The committee has said the records will help it consider whether to strengthen ethics and disclosure laws, among other things, said Mehta, who was nominated to the bench by President Barack Obama.

Trump pointed to his Democratic predecessor when he told reporters before leaving the White House for a Monday night rally in Pennsylvania that “we think it’s totally the wrong decision by, obviously, an Obama-appointed judge.” To the committee chairman, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., the judge’s decision was a “resounding victory for the rule of law and our constitu-

tional system of checks and balances.”

Trump’s lawyers, in cases from Washington and New York challenging the Democrats’ demands, argued that congressional investigations are legitimate only if there is legislation that might result from them. “There is no possible legislation at the end of this tunnel,” his legal team said.

The White House made the same argument Friday when Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he would not comply with a congressional subpoena for six years of Trump’s tax returns.

In the New York case, Trump, his business and family want to prevent Deutsche Bank and Capital One from complying with House subpoenas for banking and financial records.

Bill would raise the legal age to buy tobacco to 21

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, whose home state of Kentucky was long one of the nation’s leading tobacco producers, introduced bipartisan legislation Monday to raise the minimum age for buying any tobacco products from 18 to 21.

The chamber’s top Republican, who said he was making enactment of the bill “one of my highest priorities,” issued his proposal at a time when the use of e-cigarettes is growing and underage vaping has soared, raising concerns by health experts. The measure would apply to all tobacco

products, e-cigarettes and vapor products and was co-sponsored by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., whose state has also been a major tobacco producer.

“Kentucky farmers don’t want their children to get hooked on tobacco products while they’re in middle school or high school any more than any parents anywhere want that to happen,” McConnell said on the Senate floor.

Fourteen states, including Arkansas, California and Virginia, have enacted laws raising the minimum age for tobacco sales to 21, according to the anti-smoking Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. So have 470

municipalities, including New York City, Chicago, Boston and Minneapolis.

Even so, the use of e-cigarettes and vaping has surged, with much of the increase among teenagers. The CDC says most e-cigarettes contain highly addictive nicotine, which can harm the development of young people’s brains and may make them likelier to smoke cigarettes later in life.

“Youth vaping is a public health crisis,” McConnell said. “It’s our responsibility as parents and public servants to do everything we can to keep these harmful products out of high schools and out of youth culture.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police arrest man in naked home break-ins

MO COLUMBIA — Police in central Missouri said they have arrested a suspect after reports that a naked man broke into two homes.

Interim Columbia Police Chief Geoff Jones said the man got into homes about a half-mile apart early Saturday. He said police believe he tried to enter other homes.

In both cases residents woke up and found the man, who fled. In one case the man was under the bed and in the other he was next to the bed. No one was injured.

Columbia police said in a news release Monday that Victor Hugo Mendoza, 35, had been arrested.

Both homes the man entered were unlocked. There were no signs of property damage or theft.

Cops: Man urinated on cancer victim memorial

NJ HAMILTON — A video showing a man urinating on a park memorial marker that honors a 9-year-old boy who died of brain cancer has led to charges against him and another man who allegedly made the recording.

Hamilton police said a friend of Christian Clopp's family saw the video posted on social media and notified them. The family said they didn't know either man.

Police say Bryan Bellace, of Egg Harbor, urinated on the memorial while his friend, Daniel Flippen, of Hammononton, created the video. Bellace is charged with lewdness and criminal mischief. Flippen was cited with having an open beer at the park.

Christian Clopp died in 2012.

Volunteers disinfected the memorial.

Man sues wife's lover over alleged affair

SD CANTON — A South Dakota man is suing his wife's lover, alleging that he stole her affection and destroyed his marriage.

Todd Larson says in his lawsuit filed in Lincoln County that Anthony Olson alienated his wife's affections "maliciously and with a wanton disregard of his feelings and with the intent to injure," the Argus Leader reported. He says he and his wife were married in July 2005 and that Olson acquired an "improper and undue influence" over his wife last summer.

Larson says Olson's actions destroyed his family life, dishonored his family and made his home "desolate and ruined." He is seeking a jury trial and punitive damages.

Olson has denied the allegations and asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit.

South Dakota is one of a handful of states that have an alienation of affection law, which allows a spouse to sue their spouse's lover over an affair that ruined a relationship.

Man given Coast Guard medal for 1998 rescue

AK ANCHORAGE — An Alaska man has received the U.S. Coast Guard's second-highest civilian honor for saving a girl from drowning when they were both children more than 20 years ago.

The Anchorage Daily News reported Saturday that George Lambert received a silver life-saving medal in Anchorage on Saturday for rescuing Pamela Smith. Officials say Lambert

and Smith were among a group swimming at a sandbar near Kotzebue in northwest Alaska in 1998 when he was 10 and she was 12. Smith was pulled into the current, and Lambert swam out 100 feet to tow Smith to safety.

Mom graduates decades after starting degree

IA DUBUQUE — Nearly 35 years after she started, one Iowa mom is receiving her college degree from Loras College this weekend.

Karen Leisen told the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald she always focused on her goal of finishing college as she was raising her nine children. Leisen mostly took one class per semester and finished her school work at the dining room table after her kids were asleep.

College officials said Leisen, 76, is likely the oldest graduate in the school's history. Leisen said she got to meet some real nice young students along the way as she took classes.

National park's historic inn open after revamp

WA MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK — The 79-room annex at Mount Rainier National Park's Paradise Inn has reopened after a \$25 million renovation.

The annex reopened Friday after a 19-month closure, The News Tribune reported. The renovations brought the building up to seismic code, fixed where the foundation had sunk, installed new fire safety systems and included electrical and plumbing upgrades.

The main inn was built in 1916 and closed for a remodel in 2006-07. Its annex opened in 1921. Together the buildings are a national historic landmark.

Homes could go where bodies were found

IN WESTFIELD — A businessman wants to sell three lots for new homes at a former horse farm where victims of an Indiana serial killer were buried in the 1990s.

Noah Herron owns eight of the 18 acres in Westfield, north of Indianapolis. In 1996, police recovered more than 5,000 human bone fragments buried at the property. Investigators believed Herb Baumeister strangled more than a dozen teen boys and men. He killed himself in Canada after the discovery of the remains.

The Indianapolis Star reported that Herron recently presented his project to the City Council.

Injured officer sues bar that driver damaged

MO RIVERVIEW — A suburban St. Louis officer who was hurt when a car crashed into the bar where he was eating alleges in a lawsuit that the bar had served the motorist too many drinks.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Keith Messmer, 38, filed the suit Thursday. Messmer and two others were hurt in March when the motorist drove into Poor Richard's Restaurant in Eureka. Messmer was off duty at the time.

The driver, Christopher Zotta, 26, of Pacific, was arrested several miles away. He was charged with drunken driving and another felony.

Messmer has said he would lose his job with the Riverview police force because of his injuries. The suit names Zotta, as well as the bar's owner and Messmer's insurance company.

From wire reports

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Warriors get lengthy break before finals

Associated Press

And now, they wait. Again.

The Golden State Warriors have gotten used to going to the NBA Finals, and their win in Portland on Monday night clinched their fifth consecutive trip. They've also gotten used to waiting for those finals to begin, with long layoffs after the Western Conference finals having become their norm.

By the time Game 1 of the NBA Finals arrives in either Milwaukee or Toronto on May 30, it'll be a 10-day gap — nine full off days — between games for the Warriors. That matches the length of the break that the Warriors handled in 2017, and this marks the third time in this five-year run of Finals trips that they've had at least a week off.

"Happy to get a little rest before we have to play again," coach Steve Kerr said.

It is much-needed rest, too.

The Warriors clinched the series in Portland without Kevin Durant, DeMarcus Cousins and Andre Iguodala — all sidelined by injuries. There's no way of knowing yet if Durant and Cousins will be back in time for the Finals, either. Plenty of

other Warriors are dealing with bumps and bruises as well.

Accruing rust is always a major concern during these days without games, but the Warriors surely feel the obvious advantage — rest — outweighs any drawbacks right now — especially after they were stretched to seven games by Houston last year in the West finals and only had two days off before the NBA Finals.

"We definitely want to get our guys healthy," Warriors forward Draymond Green said. "We need to get Andre back healthy, DeMarcus and Kevin. We need those guys going into the Finals. That's our hope, that we can get all three of those guys back moving forward."

Down by 17 with less than two minutes to play in the third quarter, the easiest thing for the Warriors would have been to let off the gas and try to clinch the series at Oracle Arena on Wednesday night.

That wouldn't be their style.

They turned a 95-78 deficit into a 119-117 overtime win — outscoring the Blazers 41-22 in the final 19 minutes of the game.

"We could have said Game 5 was our game," Warriors star Stephen Curry said. "But we

saw how long that break was going to be and we wanted to take advantage of it."

It's a long break, for certain. But it's not a record-setting one.

The longest gap between the conference finals and NBA Finals came in 1982, when the Los Angeles Lakers sat around for 12 days before beginning their series against Philadelphia.

"The players are bored and just want to play," then-Lakers coach Pat Riley said on the eve of that series. "It's been so long since we played, I just hope we remember how."

They did remember: The Lakers won Game 1, and ultimately prevailed in six games.

The Warriors' layoff this season marks the 26th time that a team will have at least a week before the end of the conference finals and the start of the NBA Finals — and if Milwaukee wins the next two games of the East title matchup, the Bucks would get added to the list as well.

The earliest that the Bucks could oust Toronto and win the East is Thursday; the finals start the following Thursday.

Teams with at least a one-week gap before Game 1 of the NBA Finals are 14-11 in the

series.

"The NBA Finals have an experience with it — it's such an emotional roller-coaster," Warriors guard Klay Thompson said. "It's nice to get away from the game a little bit before it starts, because emotions run high and it takes a lot out of you."

The long break between games may not be ideal for Golden State, but it beats the alternative — no days off at all.

In 1960 and 1961, the St. Louis Hawks earned their trip to the NBA Finals with home wins in Game 7 of what was then called the Western Division finals. The Hawks would play the Boston Celtics in both of those title series — and got zero days rest before the finals. They'd win Game 7 at home, get on a plane and get to Boston to start the NBA Finals the very next day.

Both times, they got blown out in Game 1.

Both times, they would lose the series as well.

"Tiredness was St. Louis' 'out' in this one," Celtics coach Red Auerbach said after the Game 1 win in 1961.

For the Warriors, at least that won't be an issue this year.

Golden State completes sweep of Portland

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Experience bred confidence for the Golden State Warriors, even when challenged by the upstart Portland Trail Blazers.

No matter how far they were down, they've been through too much to ever think they're out.

"We just really understand what we're capable of on both sides of the basketball," Draymond Green said. "We're never out of the fight. That's just always our mindset."

The Warriors swept their way to a fifth straight NBA Finals, getting triple-doubles from Stephen Curry and Green in a 119-117 overtime victory on Monday night.

The two-time defending champions overcame a double-digit deficit for the third straight game against the Blazers, back in the conference finals for the first time since 2000.

Green had 18 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists, and made a key three-pointer in overtime. Curry added 37 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists. They became the first teammates to have triple-doubles in the same playoff game.

The Warriors will face the winner of the Eastern Conference finals between Toronto and Milwaukee. The Bucks lead that series 2-1 with Game 4 on Tuesday night in Canada.

The Warriors came back from 17 down after erasing an

18-point deficit in Game 3 and a 17-point hole in Game 2.

"We've been here before. We've seen everything, every experience you can imagine. So we relied on that," Curry said.

Playing without Kevin Durant, Andre Iguodala and DeMarcus Cousins, the Warriors became the first team to reach five straight finals since the Boston Celtics went to 10 in a row from 1957-66.

Damian Lillard, playing with separated ribs, had 28 points and 12 assists for Portland. He missed a three-point attempt as time ran out in the extra period. Meyers Leonard added a career-high 30 points along with 12 rebounds.

The Warriors were up 114-

113 in the extra period after Green missed the first of a pair of free throws. CJ McCollum's jumper from out front briefly gave Portland the lead but Alfonzo McKinnie's basket put Golden State back ahead and Green made a three-pointer to push it to 119-115 with 39 seconds left.

Lillard made a layup and Curry missed a jumper to give Portland back the ball. Facing stifling defense from both Green and Klay Thompson, Lillard couldn't get off a shot but the ball went out of bounds in the scramble. The Blazers got it back with 3.3 seconds left but Lillard's final shot didn't fall.

NHL players forget duties during playoffs

Associated Press

Two minutes after wrapping up a conversation with his wife, Lars Eller couldn't remember anything.

"She would be, like a half-hour later, 'Remember what we just talked about?'" Eller recalled. "I'm like: 'No, I'm sorry. I completely forgot.'"

A lot of things were forgotten during the Washington Capitals' 2018 Stanley Cup run that culminated with Eller's clinching goal. This is the time of year when hockey crowds virtually everything else out for players who go on deep playoff runs. Travel, hotel rooms, practices, sleep, playoff beards and, above all, the next game are front and center. Things like cutting the grass and paying the bills fall by the wayside. They can wait, right?

"The whole world is put on hold," said Mike Rupp, who won the Cup with New Jersey in 2003. "When I was playing in the playoffs, I wouldn't pay bills back before I had automatic bill pays. Playoffs, if you go on a decent run, I have all these late payments because you just forget about everything. Nothing matters. You're just so entrenched in it."

Automatic bill payments have become Jordan Staal's friend growing up from a 20-year-old on Pittsburgh's 2009 championship team to a husband and

father a decade later with Carolina. As younger teammates like Teuvo Teravainen have no problem going all in on playoff hockey mode, Staal leans on loved ones to get him through the daily needs off the ice.

"There's that small realm of what you're focused on, and paying the bills may not be one of them," Staal said. "That's when you've got a good family around you and good friends to kind of just take that stuff off your hands and let you focus on what you've got to do."

Hurricanes captain Justin Williams loses track of what day it is: It's either a game day or not a game day, though doing a daily newspaper crossword puzzle reminds him that it's actually, say, Saturday. But after winning the Cup in 2006, 2012 and 2014 at different stages of his life and going on several other long runs, the grizzled veteran has it all figured out by now.

"It's easy to do," Williams said. "You just deflect as much as you can and use the excuse of 'I've got to focus on hockey' for everything. When you're home, it's dad time. When you're at the rink, it's hockey."

While Eller said his one-track hockey mind is always thinking about the last game or the next game during the playoffs, some players try to fight that instinct. Carl Hagelin, who won the Cup with the Penguins in 2016 and

2017, tries to forget about hockey when he's not at the rink.

Easier said than done.

"Obviously you go into your own bubble," Hagelin said. "You've got to spend time with your family and do all that stuff. I guess stuff that doesn't concern your family isn't as important."

This phenomenon isn't limited to players, and NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman's family knows all about how the playoffs take over. Bettman said his wife, Shelli, knows she can't make any plans during the postseason unless it's a place he can watch games on a TV or his iPad.

Bettman said he typically talks to director of hockey operations Colin Campbell multiple times on any given game day, well past midnight. But he loves every bit of it.

"This is the best time of year. This is just awesome," Bettman said. "As (Shelli) says, going out to dinner with my iPad and watching a game has become an excuse for our social life."

"But, yeah, everything's on hold for two months because I never know where I have to be, what I have to do."

Players and Bettman agree the thrill of the playoffs makes everything worth it. Rupp, now an NHL Network analyst, said "you're eating, sleeping and breathing this."

Yes, about that: Players do

have to remember to eat properly and get enough sleep.

"You've got to focus, prepare, eat, sleep and do whatever you can to be the best on the ice," said Teravainen, who won the Cup in 2015 with Chicago. "The playoffs, it's all about hockey and you just prepare yourself for the game."

Eller said he focuses on what matters most. And much like Staal, he knows his wife will keep his head straight.

"If you live with someone long enough, they know your tendencies and know you're maybe not always quite there and at the end of the day it's always things that can wait," Eller said. "But it can be a challenge sometimes because you give 100 percent of yourself to it and it means everything, right? You just live a little bit in your own world."

Canes players have offseason surgeries

RALEIGH, N.C. — Carolina Hurricanes forward Jordan Martinook and defenseman Calvin de Haan have had offseason surgeries.

General manager Don Waddell said Tuesday that Martinook had a procedure on a core muscle while de Haan's surgery was on his right shoulder.

Martinook is expected to recover in 4-6 weeks while de Haan will be out 4-6 months.

Bruins' Chara says he's on track for Stanley Cup Final

Associated Press

BOSTON — Bruins defenseman Zdeno Chara returned to practice and worked out with the full squad Monday, his first such workout since sitting out Boston's Eastern Conference-clinching victory over Carolina with an undisclosed injury.

Chara had skated prior to practices over the weekend but didn't participate in any full sessions. He said he felt good after the Bruins' 45-minute workout on Monday and is on

track to play in Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final on May 27.

Chara was the first player on the ice Monday. Forward David Krejci also returned to practice. Coach Bruce Cassidy said Krejci was given a "maintenance day" on Sunday.

Being a spectator for a series-clinching victory was difficult for the 42-year-old Chara. He was a member of the Bruins teams that defeated Vancouver to win the Stanley Cup in 2011 and lost to Chicago in the Cup

Final in 2013.

"It was, I'm not gonna lie," Chara said. "Watching games are not fun. You want to play them, you want to be involved in them. It was that feeling of an anxiousness to play. But the guys did a great job."

But Chara was easy to spot following the Game 4 win over the Hurricanes, when he suited up to shake hands with Carolina and celebrate on the ice with his teammates.

He has one goal and two

assists in 16 games this postseason.

Patrice Bergeron said having Chara paired back up with Charlie McAvoy provides a major boost to the blue line.

"I think they complement each other really well," Bergeron said. "Obviously the experience that 'Z' has is something that he shares. And Chuck is the type of young guy that wants to learn and listen to everything that 'Z' has to share."

Realmuto, Phils top Cubs in 10 innings

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The memories came flooding back to Jake Arrieta as the fans showered him with cheers when he stepped to the plate for the first time.

His 4½ seasons in Chicago included an NL Cy Young Award in 2015, a drought-busting World Series championship in 2016, two no-hitters and an All-Star selection. There were plenty of ovations, just none quite like this.

Arrieta allowed one run over six innings in his return to Wrigley Field, J.T. Realmuto hit a solo homer in the 10th and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Chicago Cubs 5-4 on Monday.

Realmuto connected with two outs against Kyle Ryan (0-1), driving a 1-2 fastball a few rows into the left-field seats to decide the opener of a four-game series between the NL East and Central leaders. But

the night belonged to Arrieta.

He got a warm welcome on a chilly evening during the pregame introductions and was greeted with a standing ovation when he came to the plate in the third inning. He responded by tipping his helmet toward the crowd while Yu Darvish stepped away from the mound.

“It felt great,” Arrieta said. “Kind of something that I experienced pretty much from Day 1 here with the fan base. Cubs fans all across the country, all across the world, they really respect and appreciate what guys are able to do here for them. It means a lot. It really does. I’ll never forget this city, the fan base, the organization and everything that they did for me. It was 4½ incredible years of my career.”

It was a fitting reception for a pitcher who played such a huge role in turning those “Lovable

Losers” into drought-busting champions. Arrieta left to sign with Philadelphia before the 2018 season. But the mark he left in Chicago won’t fade anytime soon.

“I loved it,” Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. “I absolutely loved it. Very happy that our fans — which you would expect from our fans — would acknowledge him like that. ... Jake deserved it. Absolutely.”

Arrieta gave up eight hits in his first appearance at Wrigley Field since beating the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 4 of the 2017 NL Championship Series.

“It brings back a lot of memories of what we were able to do as a team, from beginning in ’13 all the way through ’17,” Arrieta said.

Hector Neris (1-1) worked a scoreless ninth. Adam Morgan struck out Jason Heyward leading off the 10th, and Juan

Nicasio earned his first save since June 28 when he got Daniel Descalso to ground into a double play after giving up a single to Albert Almora Jr.

Philadelphia scored three runs with two outs in the sixth against Darvish for a 3-1 lead. Realmuto hit an RBI single, and Cesar Hernandez followed with a two-run triple to right that ricocheted off the side wall and bounced over Heyward’s head.

The Cubs scored three in the eighth against Seranthony Dominguez. Descalso drove in two with a triple to left-center, then was rewarded home when the relay from shortstop Jean Segura ricocheted off his right foot and into Chicago’s dugout.

Philadelphia tied the game in the ninth against Brad Brach when Maikel Franco doubled and came home on a two-out bloop single to right by Segura.

MLB roundup

Yankees rally from five runs down to beat Orioles

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Gary Sanchez hit a three-run homer in the ninth inning to cap a New York rally fueled by Baltimore gaffes, and the Yankees pulled out a 10-7 victory Monday night.

Gleyber Torres homered twice for the Yankees, who trailed 6-1 after four innings and 7-3 after six.

At that point, the Orioles fulfilled their stature as the team with the worst record in the AL. They threw to the wrong base, missed popups and were outscored 7-0 over the final three innings.

New York scored in the seventh on an overthrow by left fielder Dwight Smith Jr., who fell for a fake tag-up on third base. In the ninth, right fielder Joey Rickard threw to the wrong base on a single, Smith heaved the ball past the plate on Aaron Hicks’ tying sacri-

fice fly, catcher Pedro Severino misjudged a foul pop that preceded a two-out walk to Luke Voit and Sanchez connected off Mychal Givens (0-1).

Zach Britton (2-0) worked the eighth and Aroldis Chapman got three outs for his 12th save.

Hanser Alberto and Renato Nunez homered for the Orioles.

Yankees starter J.A. Happ allowed six runs and a pair of solo homers in 3⅔ innings, but New York’s comeback got him a no-decision.

Astros 3, White Sox 0: Jake Marisnick and Tyler White homered and Brad Peacock (5-2) struck out nine in his third straight win to lead host Houston over Chicago.

Playing without George Springer, who leads the American League with 17 homers, the Astros got pop from the bottom of the lineup to give them at least one homer in 17

straight games. They’ve won 11 of 12 overall and eight in a row against the White Sox.

Mets 5, Nationals 3: Amed Rosario and Pete Alonso homered in the first inning as host New York, after learning embattled manager Mickey Callaway is staying around, broke out of its offensive funk a bit to beat Washington.

Carlos Gomez cracked an RBI double off the wall for his first Mets hit in 12 years, and slumping Todd Frazier had a run-scoring single to help New York (21-25) stop a five-game losing streak. After the Mets built a 4-0 lead in the third, fill-in starter Wilmer Font and five relievers held off the rival Nationals.

Braves 4, Giants 1: Mike Soroka (5-1) carried a perfect game into the sixth inning, Ronald Acuna Jr. homered twice and visiting Atlanta topped San Francisco.

Athletics 6, Indians 4: Brett Anderson (5-3) left in the sixth inning with a cervical strain, and visiting Oakland hung on to beat Cleveland.

Padres 2, Diamondbacks 1: Franmil Reyes hit a two-run home run in the sixth inning to lift rookie Chris Paddack (4-2) and host San Diego past Arizona.

Red Sox 12, Blue Jays 2: David Price (2-2) did not allow any earned runs over five innings in his return from the injured list, and visiting Boston hit four home runs in a rout of Toronto.

Rangers 10, Mariners 9: Asdrubal Cabrera hit two of the five Texas homers and Mike Minor (5-3) struck out 11 over six innings in a win over visiting Seattle.

Twins 3, Angels 1: Miguel Sano’s two-run homer in the eighth inning lifted visiting Minnesota over Los Angeles.