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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Iranian navy friendly fire incident kills 19

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — A missile fired during an Iranian training exercise mistakenly struck a naval vessel instead of its intended target in waters near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, killing 19 sailors and wounding 15 others, Iranian authorities said Monday.

The bungled training exercises took place on Sunday and raised new questions about the readiness of the Islamic Republic's armed forces amid heightened tensions with the U.S., just months after they accidentally shot down a Ukrainian jetliner near Tehran, killing 176 passengers.

It also comes soon after a tense naval encounter between Iranian and U.S. forces in the nearby Persian Gulf.

President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers two years ago, launching a maximum pressure campaign against Iran that has pushed the

archivals to the verge of conflict repeatedly.

Analysts have warned regional tensions likely will increase again. This week also marks the one-year anniversary of attacks on oil tankers near the strait that the U.S. blamed on Iran.

Sunday's friendly fire incident struck the Iranian navy vessel Konarak near the port of Jask, some 790 miles southeast of Tehran in the Gulf of Oman, the Iranian army said in a statement. Iran's regular navy typically patrols those waters, while vessels from the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard usually patrol the Persian Gulf.

The Konarak, a Hendijan-class support ship taking part in the exercise, came too close to a target and the missile struck it, state TV said. Authorities did not identify the ship that fired the missile, though semiofficial media in Iran identified it as the Iranian destroyer Jamaran.

The Konarak had been putting targets out for other ships to target, state TV said.

Initially, officials said only one sailor had been killed. That number quickly changed to 19. A local hospital admitted 12 sailors and treated another three with slight wounds, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

Iranian vessels towed the Konarak into a nearby naval base after the strike. A photograph released by the Iranian army showed burn marks and some damage to the vessel, though the military did not immediately offer detailed photographs of the site of the missile's impact.

Iranian king Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi had purchased the Dutch-made, 155-foot vessel just before being toppled by the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Konarak entered service in 1988 and was overhauled some 30 years later, making it able to launch sea and anti-ship missiles. Iran still relies on weaponry purchased under the shah due to international sanctions.

The boat typically carried a

crew of 20 and authorities did not explain why it had 34 people on board at the time of the missile strike. The army identified those slain as both officers and enlisted men, including a combat diver.

Iran regularly holds exercises in the Gulf of Oman, which is close to the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of the world's oil trade passes.

The U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, which monitors the region, did not respond to a request for comment.

Tensions had been expected to rise, however, after Iran's government overcame the initial chaos that engulfed its response to the coronavirus pandemic. In April, the U.S. accused Iran of conducting "dangerous and harassing" maneuvers near American warships in the northern Persian Gulf. Iran also had been suspected of briefly seizing a Hong Kong-flagged oil tanker just before that.

Navy leader self-quarantines after family member tests positive

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy's top military leader is in self-quarantine after coming into contact with a family member who has tested positive for the coronavirus, according to the Pentagon.

Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations, was absent from a White House meeting Saturday that included members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, and other national security leaders. A Pentagon spokesman confirmed Monday that Gilday is self-quarantining this week even though he has tested negative for the virus.

Gilday is working from home and that will not affect his ability to do his job, said Cmdr. Nathan Christensen, the spokesman

for the chief of naval operations.

The White House last week confirmed positive cases among its staff members, including the military valet for President Donald Trump, and Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary, Katie Miller, who is married to Stephen Miller, a senior adviser to Trump.

Also absent from Saturday's White House meeting was Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, who is overseeing the more than 46,700 Guard troops deployed across the United States to fight coronavirus. On Saturday, Lengyel tested positive for the virus, but tested negative later that same day, according to a Pentagon spokesman.

"He will undergo a third test on Monday morning to confirm his negative status," according to the spokesman. The results of

that test have not yet been made public.

The news comes as a string of U.S. officials on the White House's coronavirus task force entered quarantine "because of exposure to a person at the White House who tested positive," according to a Sunday report by The Associated Press. These people include Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Stephen Hahn, commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration.

The Navy has been the most impacted military service from the virus, with 2,162 cases and two warships that had outbreaks at sea: the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and the destroyer USS Kidd.

Countries reopen amid fears of 2nd wave

Associated Press

PARIS — Plastic spacing barriers and millions of masks appeared on the streets of Europe's newly reopened cities Monday, as France and Belgium emerged from lockdowns, the Netherlands sent children back to school and Spain let people eat outdoors.

All faced the delicate balance of trying to restart battered economies without causing a second wave of coronavirus infections. Fears of infection spikes in countries that eased their restrictions have been borne out over the past few days in Germany, where new clusters were linked to three slaughterhouses; in Wuhan, the

Chinese city where the virus is believed to have started; and in South Korea, where one nightclub customer was linked to 85 new cases.

Health officials in the U.S. will be watching closely in the coming days for any resurgence of the virus two weeks after states began gradually reopening.

Authorities have warned that the scourge could come back with a vengeance without widespread testing and tracing of infected people's contacts, and efforts to assemble contact-tracing teams are underway in Europe and the U.S.

While some countries such as Germany have established

robust tracing abilities, other countries are far behind. Britain abandoned an initial effort in mid-March when the virus's rapid spread made it impossible. Now it is recruiting 18,000 people to do the legwork of tracking contacts.

Britain and other countries are also developing contact-tracing cellphone apps that can show whether someone has crossed paths with an infected person.

In loosening up the country's lockdown, German authorities have spelled out a specific level of infection that could lead to the reimposition of restrictions in local areas. Other countries — and U.S. states — have

been vague about what would be enough to trigger another clampdown.

With Monday's partial reopening in France, crowds formed at some Paris metro stations, but the city's notorious traffic jams were absent. Only half the stores on the Champs-Élysées were open.

In South Korea, the government clamped down again, halting school reopenings planned for this week and reimposing restrictions on nightclubs and bars.

In China, Shanghai Disneyland reopened but with limited visitors who had to wear face masks and have their temperatures checked.

S. Korea-based soldier feels lucky amid virus recovery

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Army Pfc. Victoria Tolley considers herself fortunate even though she has been largely isolated in a barracks room for six weeks after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Tolley, 23, who works on the computer help desk at Eighth Army headquarters on Camp Humphreys, was the second soldier to contract the virus on the divided peninsula.

But the Sitka, Alaska, native is more worried about friends at home as the U.S. economy has been hit hard by the pandemic.

"Everyone keeps asking me if I'm OK

and if I'm angry at the person who passed this on to me. I really don't have it bad, though," Tolley told Stars and Stripes in an exclusive interview on Thursday.

"One of my best friends called me in tears because she had been laid off from her job because of this whole COVID thing," Tolley said. "It kind of gave me a new perspective."

Tolley was confirmed to have the virus on March 26, two days after an American contractor who worked in the same building tested positive. Another contractor at Eighth Army headquarters tested positive on March 27.

Military officials have said she probably got the virus from one of the other cases

because of the timing and the fact that she had not been off base due to anti-coronavirus restrictions that include a ban on dining at local restaurants and bars.

"I pretty much never get sick so maybe I had this false belief that I was sort of invincible to it," she said. "I'm still kind of in shock even though it's been six weeks."

The staff frequently checks her vitals, and she's tested for the coronavirus every 72 hours.

"The nurses here have been pretty amazing," she said. "I'm grateful for the people that are putting themselves at risk of exposure every day to care for me and the other patients."

Chinese ships chase Japanese boat in disputed water

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

Chinese coast guard vessels lingered near the disputed Senkaku Islands over the weekend and chased a Japanese fishing boat, during China's longest incursion into those waters since 2016.

In all, four Chinese ships

were reported near the East China Sea island chain for nearly two hours starting at 4 p.m. Friday. Two of the ships pursued the fishing boat before Japanese patrol boats warned them away, according to the Japan Coast Guard website.

China also lays claim to the Senkakus, a small group of uninhabited rocky outcroppings

between Taiwan and Okinawa that it calls the Diaoyu.

None of the ships were damaged and none of the three Japanese fishermen were hurt Friday, a spokesman for Japan's 11th Regional Coast Guard in Naha told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

"Regardless of the coronavirus, we continue our mission to

protect the Senkaku Islands," the spokesman said. Some Japanese government officials speak on a customary condition of anonymity.

China's coast guard stated on its official Weibo social media account Friday that a fleet of its vessels "patrolled the territorial waters around the Diaoyu Islands."

Doctors keep uncovering virus symptoms

The Washington Post

Deborah Coughlin was neither short of breath nor coughing. In those first days after she contracted the coronavirus, her fever never spiked above 100 degrees. It was vomiting and diarrhea that brought her to a Hartford, Conn., emergency room on May 1.

"You would have thought it was a stomach virus," said her daughter Catherina Coleman. "She was talking and walking and completely coherent."

But even as Coughlin, 67, chatted with her daughters on her cellphone, the oxygen level in her blood dropped so low that most patients would be near death. She is on a ventilator and in critical condition at St. Francis Hospital, one more patient with an increasingly diverse constellation of symptoms physicians are racing to recognize, explain and treat.

"At the beginning, we didn't know what we were dealing with," said Valentin Fuster, chief physician at Mount Sinai

Hospital in New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak. "We were seeing patients dying in front of us. It was all of a sudden, you're in a different ballgame, and you don't know why."

Today, there is widespread recognition the coronavirus is far more unpredictable than a simple respiratory virus, one with the potential to attack from the brain to the toes. Many doctors are focused on treating the inflammatory reactions it triggers and its capacity to cause blood clots as they struggle to help their patients breathe.

Learning about a new disease on the fly, with more than 78,000 U.S. deaths attributed to the pandemic, they have little solid research to guide them, though the World Health Organization's database already lists more than 14,600 papers on COVID-19, the disease the coronavirus causes. Even the world's premier public health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, have constantly altered their advice to keep pace with new developments.

"We don't know why there are so many disease presentations," said Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at the Center for Infection and Immunity at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. "Bottom line, this is just so new that there's a lot we don't know."

More than four months of clinical experience across Asia, Europe and North America has shown that the pathogen does much more than invade the lungs. It attacks the heart, weakening its muscles and disrupting its critical rhythm. It savages kidneys. It crawls along the nervous system, destroying taste and smell and occasionally reaching the brain. It creates blood clots that can kill with sudden efficiency and inflames blood vessels throughout the body.

It harms men more than women, but there are also signs that it complicates

pregnancies.

Symptoms of COVID-19 appear to include:

- Strokes from blood clots, neurological issues;
- Pinkeye;
- Loss of smell and taste (anosmia);
- Unexpected blood clotting; damage to the lining of blood vessels;
- Vomiting and diarrhea in some people;
- Clogged and inflames alveoli (air sacs), hampering breathing; pulmonary embolism from breakaway blood clots, and microclots;
- Weakened heart muscle; dangerous arrhythmias and heart attacks due to small clots;
- Damage to structures that filter waste from blood;
- "COVID toes," or fingers, a purple rash from the attack on blood vessels;
- Widespread immune-system impact, including overactive immune response that attacks healthy tissue.

Poll: Majority disapprove of pro-reopening protests

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A majority of Americans disapprove of protests against restrictions aimed at preventing the spread the coronavirus, according to a new poll that also finds the still-expansive support for such limits — including restaurant closures and stay-at-home orders — has dipped in recent weeks.

The new survey from the University of Chicago Divinity School and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds 55% of Americans disapprove of the protests that have popped up in some states as some Americans begin chafing at public health measures that have decimated the global economy; 31% approve of the demonstrations.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to disapprove

of such protests, 67% to 51%. Thirty-two percent of Republicans and 25% of Democrats say they approve. Only 8% said public protests, marches and rallies should be unrestricted during the outbreak, while 41% think they should be allowed with restrictions and 50% think they should not be allowed.

Dee Miner, 71, of Fremont, Calif., said she disapproves of the protests, but also feels people have the right to express themselves.

"We have to have the right to protest, but I have to tell you, seeing those people with those weapons at the statehouse in Michigan was pretty disturbing," said Miner, a Democrat and retired dental office manager. "I felt sorry for the legislators having to work with that angry mob in the lobby. It seemed like it was just pure intimidation."

W-shaped recovery feared if curbs lifted too quickly

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When the coronavirus erupted in the U.S., it triggered quarantines, travel curbs and business shutdowns. Many economists predicted a V-shaped journey for the economy: a sharp drop, then a quick bounce-back as the virus faded and the economy regained health. Others envisioned a slower, U-shaped course.

Now, as President Donald Trump and many Republicans press to reopen the economy, some experts see a risk: that a too-hasty relaxation of social distancing could ignite a resurgence of COVID-19 cases by fall, sending the economy back into lockdown. The result: a W-shaped disaster in which a tentative recovery would sink back into a "double-dip" recession before rebounding eventually.

"The push to reopen the

economy is making a W-shaped recovery very much more likely," said Jeffrey Frankel, professor of capital formation and growth at the Harvard Kennedy School. In Frankel's view, any widespread reopening should wait for a sustained drop in death rates and the broad availability of tests.

"A W-shaped recovery is a distinct possibility," said Yongseok Shin, an economist at Washington University in St. Louis and a research fellow at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. "Unless the reopening is carefully managed with extensive testing and voluntary social distancing, infections will rapidly rise in many localities."

"People will then hunker down for fear of infection, and local governments will re-impose lockdowns, quashing any economic recovery we will have had to that point."

Georgia seeks federal probe in handling of fatal shooting

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia's attorney general on Sunday asked the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the handling of the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a black man who authorities said died at the hands of two white men as he ran through a neighborhood.

Arbery was shot and killed Feb. 23. No arrests were made until this month after national outrage over the case swelled when video surfaced that appeared to show the shooting.

"We are committed to a complete and transparent review of how the Ahmaud Arbery case was handled from the outset," Attorney General Chris Carr said in a statement. "The family, the community and the state of Georgia deserve answers, and we will work with others in law enforcement at the state

and federal level to find those answers."

Attorneys for Arbery's mother and father applauded Carr for reaching out to federal officials.

"We have requested the involvement of the DOJ since we first took this case," attorneys S. Lee Merritt, Benjamin Crump and L. Chris Stewart said in a statement. "There are far too many questions about how this case was handled and why it took 74 days for two of the killers to be arrested and charged in Mr. Arbery's death."

Shortly after the video's leak, Gregory McMichael, 64, and his son, Travis McMichael, 34, were arrested and charged with murder and aggravated assault.

Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper Jones, has said she thinks her 25-year-old son, a former high school football player, was

just jogging in the neighborhood before he was killed.

On Saturday, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation confirmed that it has obtained other photos of video that might shed light on the case. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published footage from a surveillance camera at a Brunswick home near where Arbery was shot that shows someone who appears to be Arbery walking into a home under construction. Arbery then came back out and ran down the street. Someone else comes out across the street from the construction site, and then a vehicle drives off farther down the street, near where Travis McMichael lives.

Lawyers for Arbery's family said the video bolsters their position that Arbery did nothing wrong, and shows he did not commit a felony.

Hong Kong cops arrest over 200 protesters

Associated Press

HONG KONG — More than 200 people were arrested during anti-government protests in Hong Kong on Sunday night, police said, as authorities seek to prevent a revival of last year's massive demonstrations, including through the application of anti-social gathering regulations intended to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Around 230 people between the ages of 12 and 65 were arrested on a range of charges, including unlawful assembly, "possessing anything with intent to destroy or damage property" and failure to produce proof of identity, police said in a statement.

Another 19 people were ticketed for having violated the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation, which prohibits gatherings of more than eight people in any public space, the statement said. At one point, police used pepper rounds to disperse people who had surrounded officers, it said.

"Police condemn protesters for disregarding the Government's disease prevention and control measures, and participating in or organizing prohibited group gatherings," the statement said.

Protesters later chanted slogans and built barriers to block roads in Hong Kong's Mongkok district, and set fires on some streets, according to police.

The nighttime street action followed multiple protests at shopping malls earlier Sunday attended by hundreds, after permission for a Mother's Day protest march was denied. Protesters organized mainly through social media are demanding full democracy in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory and an investigation into alleged police brutality in suppressing the demonstrations.

High court hears Catholic schools case

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A case about the appropriate separation between church and state is taking center stage at the Supreme Court, which is hearing arguments by telephone for a second week because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The case involving two ex-Catholic school teachers and their former employers was one of two the court is tackling Monday. The three days of arguments last week might be considered something of a warm-up, a test of how telephone arguments would work and of making audio of arguments live for the first time.

The stakes are higher later this week when the cases include high-profile fights over President Donald Trump's financial records and whether presidential electors have to cast their Electoral College ballots for the candidate who wins the popular vote in their state. Those cases will be heard Tuesday and Wednesday.

On Monday, the court was hearing a case involving Kristen Biel and Agnes Morrissey-Berru, both former fifth grade teachers at Catholic schools in California. Biel taught at St. James Catholic School in Torrance and Morrissey-Berru at Our Lady of Guadalupe in near-

by Hermosa Beach. Morrissey-Berru's teaching contract wasn't renewed in 2015, when she was in her 60s, after she'd taught more than 15 years at the school. And Biel's contract wasn't renewed after she disclosed she had breast cancer and would need time off.

Both sued their former employers, with Morrissey-Berru alleging age discrimination and Biel alleging disability discrimination. A lower court said that both lawsuits could go forward, but the schools have appealed and have the support of the Trump administration.

The question for the justices is whether the schools are exempt from being sued as a result of a unanimous 2012 Supreme Court decision that said the Constitution prevents ministers from suing their churches for employment discrimination.

The so-called ministerial exception "ensures that control over religious functions lies with the church, not the state, to the great benefit of both," the schools have told the court. The schools have argued that both women count as ministers, in part because they taught religion among other subjects. Lawyers for Morrissey-Berru and Biel disagree.

California looks to reopen public spaces

Associated Press

SEAL BEACH, Calif. — A beach bordering between two Southern California counties was to reopen Monday with some restrictions, as parts of California take baby steps toward reopening public spaces and businesses amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Seal Beach in northern Orange County allowed running, walking and surfing as of sunrise Monday. But next door, the sand in Long Beach will remain off-limits like the rest of the beaches along Los Angeles County.

They could reopen as early as Wednesday with restrictions designed to keep people from thronging the shore and possibly spreading COVID-19.

Los Angeles County permitted the reopening of some hiking spots and golf courses over the weekend, but with rules that people must stay 6 feet apart. The city of Los Angeles reopened some of its popular destinations, including sprawling Griffith Park, which includes popular paths to the Hollywood sign.

Alaska

JUNEAU — An Alaska company is developing personal protective equipment with clear face shields to benefit people with hearing disabilities during the coronavirus pandemic.

Rapid Response PPE of Juneau developed masks with clear plastic areas so that people who are hard of hearing and rely on facial cues or lip reading can communicate effectively, The Juneau Empire reported.

The company produced a standard mask with a clear shield over the wearer's mouth, and another model with a clear shield over the whole face, Rapid Response founder Hal Daugherty said.

Rapid Response began focusing on masks for the hearing impaired after being contacted by Northland Audiology and Hearing Service in Juneau, which works with cli-

ents on hearing disorders and remedies.

Hawaii

HILO — Hawaii has significantly reduced its inmate population in response to the coronavirus pandemic. But officials were not immediately available to provide a list of inmates who were released under the state Supreme Court order.

As of last week, the statewide jail and prison population was down 832 inmates from March 2, The Hawaii Tribune-Herald reported Sunday.

The Hawaii Supreme Court ordered all jails and prisons within the state to reduce inmate populations to the facilities' design capacity.

The Hawaii Community Correctional Center in Hilo reduced its population by 165 inmates from the 395 who were incarcerated March 2, but the population was still 28 more than its design capacity of 206 inmates.

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE — With his stay-at-home order set to expire at the end of the week, Gov. John Bel Edwards was expected to announce Monday if he'll lift restrictions designed to slow the spread of the coronavirus, and if so, which ones — a decision watched closely by businesses and employees across the state.

The current statewide stay-at-home order expires May 15. The governor has said that he's "hopeful" he will be able to announce that Louisiana will move into the first phase of reopenings as envisioned under the White House guidelines on May 16.

On Friday, he detailed steps that the state was taking to increase testing and the number of contact tracers — workers who contact people infected with the virus and track down people with whom they have been in close contact. Both are considered key factors to reopening.

Massachusetts

BOSTON — New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft donated one of his six Super Bowl championship rings to an auction that raises money to provide meals for those in need during the coronavirus pandemic.

Kraft said in a video that he has been inspired by medical workers caring for patients with the virus.

All of the money raised during the auction will go directly to Feeding America, Meals On Wheels, World Central Kitchen and No Kid Hungry.

The top bid for the ring as of Monday morning was \$330,000. Bids will be accepted for another 10 days.

North Dakota

BISMARCK — The North Dakota State Fair is the latest casualty of the continuing coronavirus outbreak.

Fair officials announced Monday that they're calling off the event because of uncertainty over the pandemic. The July gathering is the largest annual event in the state, typically attracting around 300,000 people each year to the fairgrounds in Minot.

Fair officials said that the decision was "in the best interest for all involved" due to concerns over health and safety.

Tickets had been on sale since March. People who purchased with a credit card will get a refund to their account.

New Mexico

GALLUP — A 105-year-old New Mexico woman who beat back the 1918 flu that killed millions, including her mother and infant sister, is battling COVID-19.

The Gallup Independent reported that Lubica "Luby" Grenko, who will turn 106 in August, has been fighting the coronavirus since being diagnosed April 29 at the Little Sisters of the Poor in Gallup, N.M.

The Gallup-born Grenko was born when World War I began,

then she survived the 1918 flu before enduring the Great Depression and World War II.

New York

NEW YORK — New York is poised to launch its training plan for the huge corps of disease detectives it plans to deploy to track people who might have been exposed to the coronavirus.

The effort, seen as a key to keeping the outbreak from flaring again once it is under control, is likely to involve hiring several thousand people who have no background in public health.

And since getting huge groups of people together in one place for a contact-tracing boot camp is impossible, the training will be done through a 5- to 6-hour online course launched Monday.

When someone becomes newly infected with the virus, the tracers will be tasked with figuring out everyone who might have had contact with that person, reaching out to them, and advising them how to quarantine themselves until they know for certain they aren't sick, too.

Wisconsin

MILWAUKEE — Two free testing sites for the coronavirus opened Monday on the north and south sides of Milwaukee where National Guard troops are hoping to process as many as 500 people a day.

Guard members dressed in protective gear will be performing nasal swabs to those that walk or drive up.

The testing sites are at United Migrant Opportunity Services on the south and Midtown Center to the north.

The Journal Sentinel reported that a total of 175 Wisconsin National Guard members will be staffing the sites.

Test samples will be sent each day to Exact Sciences Laboratories in Madison. Individuals can call a phone bank center for test results three days later.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dog walker finds nails in hot dogs on lawns

RI NEWPORT — A dog walker found nails in cut-up pieces of hot dogs scattered across some lawns in Rhode Island, police said.

The dog walker found the bits of hot dogs on several lawns along one street in Newport, police said.

The Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is offering a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible.

“Having investigated many cases like this in the past, I know offering a reward can often encourage someone to come forward with helpful information,” Rhode Island SPCA President Joe Warzycha said in a news release.

City to shut 20 miles of streets to most vehicles

WA SEATTLE — Almost 20 miles of Seattle streets will permanently close to most vehicles by the end of May, Mayor Jenny Durkan said.

The streets had been closed temporarily to provide more space for people to walk and bike at a safe distance during the coronavirus pandemic, The Seattle Times reported.

2 arrested after chase reached 125 mph

NE AURORA — Two Lincoln men were arrested after a chase that reached 125 mph on Interstate 80, the Nebraska Highway Patrol said.

The pursuit began when a trooper stopped a speeding eastbound vehicle near Aurora. The car sped off when the trooper approached and the car reached 125 mph as it headed

east, patrol spokesman Cody Thomas said.

A second trooper deployed stop strips near York and the car eventually stopped after hitting construction cones, a guard rail and the back of a semi-trailer truck, The Lincoln Journal-Star reported.

Thomas said troopers found 22 pounds of marijuana and more than \$4,000 in the car.

Shop manager recorded people in the bathroom

LA PLAQUEMINE — The operator of a Louisiana sno-ball stand was accused of recording people while they used the stand’s bathroom for the past two years, authorities said.

Clinton Brocksmith, 31, was arrested and charged with 537 counts of video voyeurism, news outlets reported. Brocksmith is the operator of Zeke’s Snowballs & Soft Serve Ice Cream shop.

Iberville Parish Sheriff Brett Stassi said a stand employee found the videos and photos on an iPad used to process credit card payments. Stassi said Brocksmith placed a pin camera in the bathroom, which was reserved for employees but also used by customers. Stassi said some of the images were also from private bathrooms.

Postal worker stole prescription drugs

NJ TRENTON — A letter carrier stole mail containing prescription drugs that had been sent out by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, according to federal prosecutors.

Christopher Donohue, 60, of Middletown Township, was arrested following an investigation that began after several packages containing various medications went missing from

the Belford Post Office in Middletown, where Donohue worked.

Donohue tried to steal a package that had been packed with inert pills inside a prescription bottle by agents investigating the thefts, prosecutors said.

Worker pepper-sprayed by armed robber

KS WICHITA — An employee of a payday loan business in Wichita is recovering after an armed robber doused the man with pepper spray.

Police said the crime happened at a Check N’ Go business. The robber, wearing a scarf over his face, demanded that the 49-year-old worker open the cash drawer. During the crime, police said, the employee suffered minor injuries after being doused in pepper spray. The robber got away with an undisclosed amount of cash and fled in a car.

Man uses upcycled tires to create unique art

IL CARY — A native of Cary is taking used tires and other discarded objects to create unconventional sculptures.

Tani Ojeda, who works full time as a chemical operator for Huntsman in Ringwood, said he came up with the idea about a year ago and has since been commissioned to make animal creations that include frogs, swans, a duck and an oversize crocodile.

“I feel like I’m helping the environment, because everyone is trying to find a way to get rid of these tires,” Ojeda, 44, told the Daily Herald. “I feel like I’m helping the community, and I’m helping make somebody else’s yard unique and different.”

Despite people in Illinois

being forced to quarantine because of the coronavirus pandemic, Ojeda noted that his tire art is still in demand.

Face mask rebel breaks window, steals panties

CT BROOKLYN — A man who had been kicked out of a McDonald’s restaurant for having no face mask threw a rock through the window, stole some underwear from a Walmart and surrendered when police threatened to set a dog on him, authorities said.

Jason Daddario, 37, was charged with criminal mischief and breach of peace, according to a police report.

Daddario was asked to leave the McDonald’s in Brooklyn, for failing to comply with a statewide order to wear masks in businesses, the Hartford Courant reported.

Daddario threw the rock and then stole several pairs of “ladies underwear” from a nearby Walmart, according to the police report.

Rattlesnake bites up as weather heats up

AZ PHOENIX — More people in Arizona are being bit by rattlesnakes as the weather heats up, and researchers are warning not just hikers but anyone who spends time outdoors to be on the lookout.

According to the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center in Tucson and the Banner Poison and Drug Information Center in Phoenix, there have been 56 rattlesnake bites this year. Most of those happened in April, which saw a huge spike in bites from the previous month. The Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center said roughly 25% of rattlesnake bites happen to people gardening or doing yard work.

From wire reports

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Army's Hurtubise has big-league dreams

Associated Press

Army outfielder Jacob Hurtubise chose West Point primarily for its academics, and playing professional baseball wasn't on his radar after struggling through an injury-plagued freshman season.

It is now, even though the coronavirus pandemic has cut short a chance to improve his chances. Hurtubise is hopeful of taking advantage of a new regulation that allows cadet-athletes at Army, Navy and Air Force to delay their military obligation upon graduation to pursue pro sports careers.

"I think that having the opportunity and the option to be able to go and play professional athletics immediately upon graduation is huge," Hurtubise said.

Next step: batting helmet or battle helmet?

Hurtubise, whose postgraduate service will be in air defense artillery, already is in select company at West Point. He's just the 14th player in academy history to be picked in the MLB draft, selected in the 39th round last year by the Seattle Mariners.

Pitcher Chris Rowley is the only Army player to reach the major leagues, making his debut in 2017 for the Toronto Blue Jays.

"You want every player to have that dream of playing as long as they possibly can," Army baseball coach Jim Foster said. "Guys come here for a lot of different reasons. There's a bigger picture. They want to have a great option A and a great option B. I think this place provides that. Jacob shows that it can be done."

Hurtubise got off to a rocky start at West Point. He broke his hand as a freshman

and played the entire year with the injury, batting just .238 in 49 games.

"He didn't really hit much, but he showed the kind of toughness you just don't see, played every day, played great defense," Foster said. "Year two he really took off. He got more confidence and got more aggressive and then his junior season he got even better."

Did he ever.

The speedy, 6-foot, 190-pound, lefty-hitting Hurtubise batted .375 in 2019 as Army's leadoff hitter and set academy single-season records for runs (71), walks (69, third in the nation) and steals (45), and was second in Division I in on-base percentage (.541). He also earned defensive player of the year honors in the Patriot League and led the Black Knights to their second straight league tournament title.

In the championship game last May against archrival Navy, Hurtubise reached base five times, going 2-for-2 with three walks, stole a base and scored twice in a 4-3 win. He was named tournament MVP after batting .522 and scoring eight runs in six games.

"The ways that he impacts the game are incredible," Navy coach Paul Kostacopoulos said. "He's as explosive of a runner as you're going to see in college baseball, and he can make some plays in the outfield. In my opinion, those two tools match up very well on the next level."

That season and playing for the United States Military Academy got the attention of the Mariners.

"The caliber of person that he is — Jacob is a pretty remarkable kid — and what he's gone through being at a military institution is pretty incredible," Mariners scout Dave

Pepe said. "Those things being considered were really impressive resume points for him."

Hurtubise added another nugget to his resume last summer. He played in the Cape Cod League, one of the premier summer college circuits in the nation, and hit .319 (23-for-72) in a league where the overall batting average was .250.

He did that, too, after completing three weeks of military training.

"Before my first game, I had just come out of the woods," Hurtubise said with a laugh. "But I had a pretty good summer."

The 22-year-old Hurtubise was named 2020 Patriot League preseason player of the year. Then he pulled a hamstring prior to the opener and started only five times before the pandemic ended the season.

"It was crazy how everything went down. I was just starting to get back," said Hurtubise, who finished his Army career with a .301 average and is the all-time leader — at Army and in the Patriot League — in stolen bases (105 with 22 caught stealing) and walks (142).

The date of the MLB draft and its format remain undecided as Hurtubise tries to stay in shape back at home in Zionsville, Ind., before he graduates in June.

"My goal and my dream is to get drafted again," Hurtubise said. "I'm still getting contact from scouts just checking up on my health and whether baseball is my career path."

"All the scouts are obviously aware of the unique circumstances that I'm in. They want to make sure baseball is what I want to do. That is what I want to do, but it's kind of out of my control at this point," he said.

Few MLB employees test positive for virus antibodies

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Just 0.7% of Major League Baseball employees tested positive for antibodies to COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus.

The small number of positive tests, announced Sunday, was positive news for a sport pushing ahead with plans to start its delayed season.

Researchers received 6,237 completed surveys from employees of 26 clubs. That led to 5,754 samples obtained in the U.S. on April 14 and 15 and

5,603 records that were used. The survey kit had a 0.5% false positive rate.

Dr. Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford, one of the study's leaders, said the prevalence of the antibodies among MLB employees was lower than for the general population during testing in New York, Los Angeles, the San Francisco area and Miami.

"I was expecting a little bit of a higher number," Bhattacharya said. "The set of people in the MLB employee population that we tested in some sense have been less affected by the

COVID epidemic than their surrounding communities."

Data for players was not separated in the study, and some MLB family members were included.

Spring training was stopped March 12 and opening day was pushed back from March 26 because of the pandemic. MLB intends to give the players' association a presentation this week for a possible start to the season, and has said frequent testing would be necessary.

Antibodies are produced by a person's immune system if they

have been infected by a virus. These tests are different than the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests used to detect active infection.

"By using two different technologies, both PCR to diminish the active virus, as well as the antibody, the serology tests, that will give you better information and may even be able to alleviate some of the concerns with false positives," said Daniel Eichner of the Sports Medicine Research and Testing Laboratory in Salt Lake City, one of the study leaders.

Suit pushes Zion to admit improper benefits

The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer

The legal battle between Zion Williamson and his former agent in a Florida court includes allegations he received impermissible benefits prior to his one season playing basketball at Duke.

According to court documents filed Wednesday in Miami, Gina Ford of Prime Sports Marketing claims, without presenting evidence, that Williamson and his parents “demanded and received gifts, money and/or other benefits from persons on behalf of Duke University (directly and/or indirectly) to influence you to attend Duke University to play basketball.”

Ford’s claims are included in several requests for admission, a discovery tool in civil cases used to establish facts under oath. Williamson has 30 days to respond.

Ford’s request also includes allegations that the Williamsons were paid by Nike and Adidas before he enrolled at Duke, and that, between Jan. 1, 2014 and April 14, 2019, he, his family or someone representing him received benefits from an agent in violation of NCAA rules.

Ford signed Williamson to a marketing deal on April 20, 2019, after he had declared for the NBA Draft. He was selected No. 1 overall by the New Orleans Pelicans two months later.

When Williamson backed out of the agreement with Prime Sports in May to

sign with Creative Artists Agency (CAA), Ford claimed he owed her \$100 million for breaking the contract. The court documents show her claims that she had lined up marketing deals with PUMA, General Mills (Wheaties), Beats by Dre and Chase Bank, among other companies.

Williamson sued Ford in federal court in Greensboro, N.C., claiming the contract was void because Ford violated North Carolina’s Uniform Athlete Agent Act numerous ways, mainly because she is not a registered agent in the state.

Ford countersued Williamson and CAA in a Florida court.

Duke issued a statement in response to the situation.

“As soon as Duke was made aware of any allegation that might have affected Zion Williamson’s eligibility, we conducted a thorough and objective investigation which was directed by individuals outside the athletics department,” Michael Schoenfeld, Duke University Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations/Chief Communications Officer, said in the statement. “We found no evidence to support any allegation. Zion thrived as both a student and an athlete at Duke, and always conducted himself with integrity and purpose.”

In that same Florida court, in a separate lawsuit, a Louisiana man who claims he’s

close to Williamson and his family seeks payment from Ford and Prime Sports because he helped broker the deal to land Williamson during his time at Duke.

Cedriqueze Johnson of Ouachita Parish, La., says Prime Sports owes him 5% of the proceeds it receives for its deals with Williamson.

In his lawsuit, Johnson claims to be a former college basketball player with “significant contacts in the basketball industry who established a friendship with Williamson and his family” when Williamson was a high school junior at Spartanburg Day School in South Carolina.

Johnson said he attended Williamson’s high school and summer-league games as well as games during his Duke career.

He said he met Ford in November 2018, the same month Williamson’s regular-season Duke career began. They discussed how to facilitate a relationship with Williamson and his family while adhering to NCAA rules.

Ford initially agreed to pay Johnson 8% commission before the two sides settled on 5% in January 2019.

That’s the same month, Johnson said in the court documents, Ford and Johnson met with Williamson’s mother, Sharonda Sampson, and his step-father, Lee Anderson, about possibly representing Williamson once he turned professional.

Steelers’ rookies learning playbook, ropes from afar

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — This isn’t quite the way Anthony McFarland expected his NFL career to begin. Then again, the rookie running back knows he’s not the only one whose first taste of the pros is coming via conference calls with members of the coaching staff followed by self-administered tests in a nearby park to see how quickly he’s absorbing the playbook.

Pittsburgh’s fourth-round draft pick is doing what he can to keep up during the first — and the NFL hopes only — “virtual” offseason amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Sure, he’d rather be at the Steelers’ practice facility with the rest of the newcomers. That’s not possible right now with much of the country under some sort of restriction or social-distancing

guidelines. So McFarland is on his own, mimicking the intricacies of Pittsburgh’s running game against phantoms in an open field.

“It’s all up to you if you’re behind,” McFarland said. “At the end of the day, we’re doing installs. Being in the NFL, they’re going to expect you to come in and know the plays, know where you’re lining up.”

It’s the most McFarland can do. And in a way, the least, too. The league — and everyone else for that matter — is in uncharted territory when it comes to finding ways to make it work. While coach Mike Tomlin and the Steelers are doing what they can to make sure their young players are getting everything they need to hit the ground running whenever they return to training as a team, they’re also not going to babysit

the newbies either.

“Coach Tomlin kept preaching we’re not going to hold your hand through this,” said wide receiver Chase Claypool, the team’s second-round pick.

Leaving it up to the players to figure it out for themselves, an “honor system” as defensive tackle Carlos Davis put it. At least Davis can work out with twin brother Khalil. The two were taken one round apart in the draft, Khalil in the sixth round to Tampa Bay, Carlos in the seventh to Pittsburgh. They’ve given each other a wide berth with their laptops during the day, Khalil typically in the kitchen, Carlos elsewhere. Carlos spent five hours in various meetings on Friday, and then prepared for training that relied heavily on rope work.

Carlos Davis is aware it’s an uphill climb for most sev-

enth-round choices to make the final roster, a task that could be made more difficult because he has no idea when he’ll be able to get in front of Tomlin to show him what he can do.

“There’s a little uncertainty there because this is just a different draft class because we’re not (allowed) to be there,” Davis said. “But I’m really just focused on learning the playbook and when we do get to be there, just going to work.”

Tomlin isn’t overly concerned about the rookies facing a particularly steep learning curve.

“There’s very little evaluation per se in these circumstances and that would be the same even if we were working together,” Tomlin said. “The only thing we’re evaluating is how they learn ... it’s done to effectively teach them and use all the tools at our disposal.”