

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy hub Singapore sees surge in cases

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

More than 24,000 coronavirus cases in Singapore threaten a key Pacific logistics hub for the U.S. Navy, according to a local defense expert.

Outbreaks in dormitories for migrant workers there have catapulted the island from a nation with fewer than 600 cases through the beginning of April to the epicenter of the outbreak in Southeast Asia. Singapore's Ministry of Health announced 884 new cases Tuesday, taking the island's count to 24,671, The Straits Times newspaper reported that day.

The outbreak could affect 1,000 service members, civilians and their families in Singapore serving with Task Force 73 and Command Logistics Group Western Pacific — teams that arm, fuel, feed and support 7th Fleet operations in the region and support U.S. littoral combat ships stationed there since 2013.

Of concern are cases among Singapore's 1 million migrant workers, including 300,000 who live in congested dormitories that have been flagged as disease hot spots, said Ian Chong, an assistant professor in

the National University of Singapore's political science department.

"Migrant workers are employed in shipbuilding and repair facilities used by the U.S. Navy," he said.

The Sembawang district, home to several shipyards as well as the Task Force 73 headquarters, is frequented by many migrant workers, Chong said.

"Some Navy ships go to Changi [Naval Base] but those that need work go to Sembawang. Asymptomatic workers could bring the disease aboard ships," he said but noted that the Navy's littoral combat ships berth at Changi and likely wouldn't be impacted.

Singaporean authorities have isolated sick workers in their dormitories and moved others to barracks on military bases to relieve congested living conditions, Chong said.

"They are actively trying to keep these barracks separate from everyone else," he said.

The outbreak among migrant workers could mean U.S. warships visiting Singapore — a transit point for warships challenging Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea — might not get cer-

tain kinds of work done or work might be slowed, Chong said.

"If the U.S. wants to continue with deployments it will have to think about it because there are maintenance and other needs," he said.

Singaporeans have monitored news about the outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, which caused that aircraft carrier to divert to Guam on March 26. About a month later, more than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors had tested positive for the virus and many were moved off the ship and isolated in local hotels.

"The situation with the Roosevelt shows there is some difficulty in maintaining a ship and what to do when there is an outbreak onboard," he said.

Chong questioned what would happen if a ship arrived in Singapore carrying infected sailors.

"There would definitely be a lot of concern," he said. "We are trying to fight to prevent our medical system becoming overwhelmed. We are just managing to keep things together. If you had a carrier with 5,000 people that came it could be very messy diplomatically as well as medically."

Marines outline 3 tiers of prioritized PCS schedule

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON

Stars and Stripes

Marines whose moves are now in limbo, along with others planning to move this year, will be grouped into three different scheduling tiers as the U.S. Transportation Command battles a permanent change of station backlog throughout the military.

The service outlined its prioritized PCS scheduling in a memo Tuesday, based on an expected June 30 expiration date for the Defense Department's "stop move," which had been ordered to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The adjusted plan is designed to help TRANSCOM and the Distribution Management Office grapple with a four-month delay in household goods shipments.

The first tier, slated to move in July and August, includes Marines heading to or

returning from unaccompanied overseas tours, command teams inbound to field grade commands or above, and those on joint billets in the Office of the Secretary of Defense or Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Also in that tier are Marines going to or returning from assignments at formal schools, whether as students, staff or instructors, and not already authorized to PCS under exceptions to policy.

In the second wave, which is scheduled for August and September, are those going to or from accompanied overseas tours and Marines heading to Inspector-Instructor duty, to squadrons supporting the F-35 aircraft stand-up, on individual mobilization orders or to certain other units.

Some Marines in this tier have already had their orders modified once to accommodate stints left on their service contracts that may now be too short to ordinarily

allow for their moves, said Sgt. Jorge RiberaPedraza, a career planner for Marine Aircraft Group 49.

It's still unclear how the new memo and timelines will affect those Marines, he said.

The third tier of moves, expected to begin in September and be complete by the end of November, include others moving to or from assignments in the continental United States and Hawaii.

The tiers do not apply to moves within 50 miles or changes of assignment at the same duty station — which the service plans to use as much as possible — nor do they affect full do-it-yourself moves, also known as "DITY moves," which must be approved by Marine chains of command. Other exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, the memo said.

Warship spills 4,000 gallons of fuel in river

YORKTOWN, Va. — A large warship spilled 4,000 gallons of fuel into a Virginia river late last week, the U.S. Navy has confirmed.

The USS Philippine Sea, a guided-missile cruiser, spilled the diesel fuel into the York River on Thursday morning, news outlets reported.

The ship was at a pier at the Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown at the time, according to Ted Brown, a U.S. Fleet Forces Command Environmental Public Affairs Officer. A Navy oil recovery team and the U.S. Coast Guard responded, and most of the fuel was contained, officials said. Cleanup efforts began immediately using a fuel vacuum truck and fuel-absorbing materials, Brown added.

From The Associated Press

After attacks, Afghan forces resume anti-Taliban effort

By J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan security forces resumed operations against the Taliban on Wednesday, a day after attacks against a hospital in Kabul and a funeral in Nangarhar province claimed the lives of at least 40 people, officials said.

“Our offensive operations started today all over Afghanistan, based on President [Ashraf] Ghani’s order,” Afghan Defense Ministry deputy spokesman Fawad Aman said.

Ghani ordered the military to resume operations against the Taliban in a televised speech Tuesday night, citing increased levels of violence by the insurgent group.

NATO’s Resolute Support command said Wednesday that international forces would continue “defensive strikes” against the Taliban if they attack Afghan forces, but will not shift to an offensive posture.

Ghani’s order came the same day Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called for the Afghan government and Taliban to work together to find the per-

petrators of the two attacks.

At least 24 people were killed, including two newborns, in an attack on a maternity clinic run by Doctors Without Borders at a hospital in Kabul, the Afghan public health ministry said, revising the death toll upward. No one has claimed responsibility for that attack.

A separate attack on the funeral of a police commander in eastern Nangarhar province, which killed at least 25 people and wounded at least 68, has been claimed by Islamic State.

The Taliban have denied involvement in both attacks.

Vet pilots see 1st survey data on how many have cancer

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Last fall, the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association asked its 3,400 members, all current or former military pilots, to respond to a survey about whether they had been diagnosed with cancer. The response was “astonishing,” a leader of the group said.

A total of 894 association members, known as “River Rats,” responded to the seven-question survey that asked, “Have you ever been diagnosed with cancer?” The results of the survey were shared exclusively with McClatchy.

“500 of them, 56% of them, said, ‘Yes, I am disclosing a personal cancer.’ That was astonishing. I was not prepared for that,” said retired Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle pilot Col. Vince “Aztec” Alcazar, in an interview with McClatchy. Alcazar, who does not have cancer, serves on the association’s medical issues committee.

Of the 500 respondents who disclosed at least one cancer, “13% of them disclosed multiple cancers,” Alcazar said.

The most commonly reported cancer was melanoma, or skin

cancer, and the second-most common was prostate cancer, Alcazar said.

The survey’s limitations included that it only captured the number of cancers among living members and does not reflect how many of its former members had died of cancer.

It also didn’t track what type of aircraft the pilot flew or age at diagnosis. Alcazar said that the association kept the questions limited in order to get the most responses possible, and avoid any privacy concerns.

The association plans to approach Congress with this initial data to seek legislation for a more exhaustive scientific study conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to review the medical records of all pilots, living and deceased, for the last several decades to determine how many have had cancer.

“Now I’ve got a narrative to take to lawmakers on Capitol Hill,” Alcazar said. “It’s just not four or five or 10 or 20 or 100 emails” of personal stories of pilot cancers, he said. “It’s a large organization that took the

time to do a well-thought-out survey. And the results say, ‘It’s worth a look, folks.’”

The association would like to see a congressionally mandated study of all military pilots and air crews for all types of military aircraft. The Air Force is conducting such a study of all its former aviators going back to 1970. Several lawmakers, including Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., have introduced legislation to look at aspects of military pilot cancers.

An investigation by McClatchy last fall found that the rate of treatment at VA health care facilities for various types of cancers across the services had skyrocketed over the last two decades. For example, prostate cancer treatment rates among Air Force veterans rose 44% from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2018.

Alcazar said that the River Rats have shared their initial survey findings with Air Force leadership.

Even though the association’s 3,400-aviator membership is large, it is a small sliver of the total number of retired Air Force and Navy aviators who

have served as pilots or crew on fighter, surveillance, ground attack, transport or other aircraft. For example, between 800 and 1,000 Navy pilots or aircrew members left the military each year between fiscal year 1999 and fiscal year 2018, according to data provided to McClatchy by the Navy.

The Air Force did not immediately provide the numbers of how many of the approximately 19,000 currently serving aviators leave military service each year.

Getting actual numbers on the likelihood of cancer among pilots could help the military medical community save lives, Alcazar said.

“You walk into a VA hospital for the first time. They go, ‘Oh, you flew F-18s in the Marine Corps.’ Or, ‘You flew F-16s in the United States Air Force.’ There’s a whole bunch of certain kinds of cancers that have been found to be a little bit more common in these groups of pilots than they are in the mainstream population,” he said. “So we’re going to start looking at indicators. We’re going to start screening for those.”

Summer travel debated amid new clusters

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — New coronavirus clusters have popped up as nations struggle to balance reopening economies with preventing a second wave of infections and deaths, while in Europe, a debate erupted Wednesday over the summer travel season.

Authorities in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the pandemic first began late last year, were reportedly pressing ahead Wednesday to test all 11 million residents within 10 days after a handful of new infections were found.

In Lebanon, authorities reinstated a nationwide lockdown for four days beginning Wednesday night after a spike in reported infections and complaints from officials that social distancing rules were being ignored.

Despite the risks that loosening restrictions could lead to infection spikes, European nations have been seeking to restart cross-border travel, particularly as the summer holiday season looms for countries whose economies rely on tourism.

The European Union unveiled a plan to help citizens across its 27 nations salvage

their summer vacations and resurrect Europe's badly battered tourism industry after months of virus lockdowns. The pandemic has prompted border closures across Europe and shut down its lifeline of cheap local flights.

The EU's executive arm, the European Commission, laid out its advice for lifting ID checks on hastily closed borders, helping to get airlines, ferries and buses running while ensuring the safety of passengers and crew, and preparing health measures for hotels to reassure clients.

It's not clear whether EU nations will follow that advice, since they, not Brussels, have the final say over health and security matters.

Some European countries have sought bilateral agreements with their neighbors.

Austria said that its border with Germany would reopen fully June 15, and border checks would be reduced starting Friday. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said that Austria was aiming for similar agreements with Switzerland, Liechtenstein and its eastern neighbors "as long as the infection figures allow."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that his coun-

try will lift a blanket warning against foreign travel to European destinations before other places, such as Asia or North America, but didn't specify when. Germany's warning against all nonessential travel abroad runs until June 14.

"It will certainly be possible to lift the travel warning earlier for Europe than for other destinations — so long as the current positive trend in many countries solidifies," Maas said. "Freedom to travel is part of the foundation of the European project, but in times of corona, Europe must ensure more: the freedom to travel safely."

The border shutdowns have hit the European travel industry hard. The Germany-based tour and hotel operator TUI said Wednesday that it expects to cut thousands of jobs due to the pandemic.

TUI said that it was "prepared for a resumption," and that its first hotels on the German coast would reopen in the coming days. It also envisioned offering holidays in Spain's Balearic islands and in Greece starting in July, the German news agency dpa reported.

As long as new infections remain relatively low, there is "no reason why one shouldn't be able to travel there," TUI CEO

Fritz Jousen said — but local companies and hotels need to be open.

Norway said Wednesday that it was opening its borders to EU citizens who have a residence there or have family they want to visit, seasonal workers and people from the U.K., Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Southern Africa's tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho confirmed its first COVID-19 case Wednesday, the last African country to report an infection.

Elsewhere, there was progress. New Zealand reported no new cases Wednesday for the second consecutive day, and Thailand's health authorities also reported no new confirmed cases for the first time in more than two months, and no new deaths. Restaurants in Bangkok were allowed to reopen last week under social distancing rules.

Japan was considering partially lifting its nationwide state of emergency ahead of its scheduled May 31 expiry date amid signs of slowing infections.

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo said that he will make a decision after consulting with a panel of experts before his announcement Thursday.

CDC documents stress plans for more flareups

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Advice from the nation's top disease control experts on how to safely reopen businesses and institutions in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic included detailed instructive guidance and some more restrictive measures than the plan released by the White House last month. The guidance, which was shelved by Trump administration officials, also offered recommendations to help communities decide when to shut facilities down again during future flareups of COVID-19.

The Associated Press ob-

tained a 63-page document that is more detailed than other, previously reported segments of the shelved guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It shows how the thinking of the CDC infection control experts differs from those in the White House managing the pandemic response.

The White House's "Opening Up America Again" plan that was released April 17 included some of the CDC's approach, but made it clear that the onus for reopening decisions was solely on state governors and local officials.

By contrast, the organiza-

tional tool created by the CDC advocates for a coordinated national response to give community leaders step-by-step instructions to "help Americans re-enter civic life," with the idea that there would be resurgences of the virus and lots of customization needed. The White House said last week that the document was a draft and not ready for release.

It contains the kinds of specifics that officials need to make informed decisions, some experts said.

"The White House is pushing for reopening, but the truth of the matter is the White House has just not had a comprehen-

sive plan where all the pieces fit. They're doing it piecemeal," said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

Such detailed advice should have been available much earlier, said Stephen Morse, a Columbia University expert on the spread of diseases.

"Many different places are considering how to safely develop return-to-work procedures. Having more guidance on that earlier on might have been more reassuring to people. And it might have prevented some cases," Morse said.

Ky. governor: Rallies send 'message of hate'

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Protesters upset with the pace of Kentucky's economic reopening risk accelerating the coronavirus outbreak by flouting health guidelines and send a "message of hate" by waving Confederate flags at rallies, Gov. Andy Beshear said Tuesday.

The Democratic governor, who has shown a calm response throughout the turmoil, offered some of his harshest criticism yet of his detractors. It came the same day that a group of protesters sued him, arguing his pandemic measures infringed on their right to protest at the state Capitol.

Beshear said he supports the right of others to speak out against his actions, but said protests need to be conducted safely. Rally participants were encouraged to take off face masks and to ignore social distancing guidelines meant to contain the virus, he said at his daily briefing.

A recent rally drew hundreds of protesters to the Capitol steps. Protesters held signs calling for Beshear to "unlock Kentucky" and waved U.S. flags. Video from media outlets showed at least two Confederate flags in the crowd.

Kentucky embarked Monday on a wave of business reopenings. Auto and boat dealerships resumed in-person service. Also reopening were manufacturing, construction, office-based businesses, pet grooming and photography businesses.

The state is allowing retail to reopen May 20 and restaurants to open at a third of capacity starting May 22. Salons and tattoo parlors will reopen May 25 and fitness centers and movie theaters on June 1.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Gov. Doug Ducey said Tuesday he'll let gyms and public swimming pools reopen and will allow his stay-at-home order to expire this week as he continues easing the painful restrictions he imposed on businesses and individuals to tamp down the coronavirus outbreak.

Gyms and pools, among the

last remaining facilities that have not been allowed to operate, could open their doors Wednesday if they follow recommendations from health officials. The governor also invited professional sports to resume without fans.

Ducey's stay-home order was set to expire Friday, and he said he won't renew it.

California

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom moved to further ease the coronavirus choke-hold on California's economy Tuesday by allowing more businesses to reopen and following through on his promise to swiftly approve requests from counties to move ahead more quickly if they have been minimally harmed by the pandemic.

Business offices can reopen statewide with appropriate precautions if their employees cannot easily telecommute, while malls can begin offering the same curbside pickup already allowed for other retailers, Newsom said. The state also offered more guidance for resuming the operation of niche businesses including car washes and pet groomers.

Georgia

ATLANTA — Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp eased a few restrictions Tuesday on businesses and child care operations, but said he was keeping most current rules until at least the end of May.

The Republican governor reiterated that he believes Georgia is containing the COVID-19 respiratory illness, despite areas of concern.

Kemp said he's most encouraged by low demand for critical care hospital beds since he started loosening restrictions last month.

The number of hospitalized patients fell again Tuesday to 1,125 statewide, the lowest since the state began keeping those statistics April 8. Meanwhile, the number of ventilators in use ticked up to 884.

On Tuesday, Georgia was reporting nearly 35,000 con-

firmed cases overall and 1,465 confirmed deaths from the virus.

Top health experts continue to warn that loosening restrictions too quickly could spark a resurgence of infections. Kemp has captured nationwide attention with his reopening moves because they were among the earliest and most aggressive.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — Officials in a New Hampshire town near the Massachusetts state line have been considering an ordinance that would make wearing a face mask mandatory indoors in a public space.

The proposed ordinance in Salem would require anyone over age 2 to wear some type of face covering, or face up to a \$200 fine.

The board of selectmen discussed the matter during a virtual meeting Monday, but didn't vote on it.

As of Monday, 3,160 people in New Hampshire had tested positive for the virus, an increase of 89 from the previous day. There have been at least 133 coronavirus-related deaths in the state.

Oregon

PORTLAND — Oregon workplace safety regulators cited an Oregon food processor for unsafe practices after nearly three dozen of its employees tested positive for the coronavirus.

The \$2,000 penalty against National Frozen Foods in Albany appears to be the first since Gov. Kate Brown ordered businesses to ensure distancing between workers, the Democrat-Herald reported. The food manufacturer had employees standing as close as 2 feet apart, rather than 6 feet, as ordered by Brown.

National Frozen Foods has 30 days to appeal the citation.

Additionally, several workers at Pacific Seafood's plant in Warrenton have tested positive for the coronavirus, the second seafood processor on the northern Oregon coast with an outbreak, the Astorian reported.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's top prosecutor has opened criminal investigations into several nursing homes amid a coronavirus outbreak that has killed 2,600 residents of nursing homes and other facilities that care for older adults, more than two-thirds of the state's death toll, his office announced Tuesday.

The attorney general's office did not say how many facilities it is investigating, or reveal their names or provide any other details about the specific allegations. In general, the attorney general's office has jurisdiction in matters of criminal neglect.

The virus has sickened about 12,000 residents of 540 nursing and personal care homes, accounting for about one-fifth of the state's confirmed infections, according to the Health Department. The National Guard has been deployed to more than a dozen homes with severe outbreaks.

The Pennsylvania National Guard says some personnel are sick with COVID-19, including those who contracted the virus while deployed.

Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Keith Hickox said his agency has helped 13 long-term care facilities in response to the pandemic. It's nearly impossible to know how the Guard troops became sick, he said, describing the total number as relatively low, considering what they have been doing.

Washington

OLYMPIA — More than 1,300 people in Washington state have been trained and are ready to work with local health departments to do contact tracing once a case of the coronavirus has been confirmed in a county.

At a news conference Tuesday, Gov. Jay Inslee said that of those already trained, 351 are from the National Guard, 390 are from the Department of Licensing and 630 are state or local health professionals. He said that number could be expanded even more in the coming weeks.

Wisconsin candidate backed by Trump wins

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Tom Tiffany, a state senator endorsed by President Donald Trump, easily won a special congressional election Tuesday in a heavily conservative, rural Wisconsin district, cheering Republicans even as Democrats argued that the victory revealed vulnerabilities for the president among his base.

Tiffany's win over Democrat Tricia Zunker in northern Wisconsin's 7th District comes in the state's second election amid the coronavirus pandemic the past five weeks. Tiffany will replace former reality TV star Sean Duffy, a Republican who retired in September. The district has been vacant since Duffy's retirement.

In 2016, Trump won Wisconsin by less than a point, but carried the district by 20 points. Tiffany's win over Zunker was about six points less than that, based on preliminary results. Tiffany rejected Democrats' argument that the smaller margin was a sign that Trump's support was waning.

"Any time you lose by 14 points, I don't think that's a moral victory," Tiffany said. "This is a decisive victory here."

The win is in a district that Trump will need to once again win big if he hopes to again carry Wisconsin. Tiffany's big victory also helps to erase the taste of a loss by a conservative Wisconsin Supreme Court justice in last month's election, a race that boosted Democrats' confidence.

"Tonight was a win for President Trump and Tom Tiffany that demonstrates the enthusiasm behind our president across Wisconsin," said Trump campaign spokeswoman Anna Kelly.

Wisconsin Democratic Party spokeswoman Courtney Beyer said that the results showed a drastic swing for Democrats, despite the margin of Zunker's loss.

"For Trump to win reelection, red areas have to get redder to balance out blue areas getting bluer," she said.

Zunker said that the race "laid the groundwork for this seat to turn blue in November."

Zunker, president of the Wausau School Board, was trying to become the first Native American from Wisconsin elected to Congress. She pulled in big-name endorsements including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, but the numbers were against her.

GOP on cusp of retaking US House seat in Calif.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A former Navy combat pilot built a double-digit lead in the fight for an open U.S. House seat north of Los Angeles, positioning Republicans to capture a Democratic-held congressional district in California for the first time in over 20 years.

Political rookie Mike Garcia had a 12-point edge Tuesday over Democratic Assemblywoman Christy Smith in the special election for the swing 25th District. An unknown number of ballots remained uncounted and Los Angeles County, where most of them are located, wasn't expected to update its tally again until Friday.

California routinely counts large numbers of votes after Election Day, and mail ballots can arrive as late as Friday and still be counted as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday.

A Garcia win would provide a jolt of encouragement for the state's beleaguered GOP, which has been drifting toward obscurity in California for years.

The contest took on outsized importance as the only competitive House race in the country in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. It's seen nationally as a proxy vote on President Donald Trump's leadership and a possible harbinger for November elections.

An incomplete tally showed Garcia with about 56% of the vote, with 143,000 ballots counted.

Virtually all voters were expected to mail in ballots because of the virus outbreak, though a sprinkling of polling places were available for those who wanted to vote in person.

Garcia stopped short of claiming victory in a conference call with supporters after the polls closed, but said that "things are looking very encouraging."

In a statement, Smith thanked her supporters and said that she was looking forward "to seeing a thorough counting of the remaining ballots."

Trump, who lost the district that runs through a swath of suburbs and small ranches in 2016, urged voters to support the political newcomer Garcia, while former President Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and other high-profile Democrats lined up behind state legislator Smith.

The seat became vacant last year after the resignation of Democratic Rep. Katie Hill, who stepped down after admitting to an affair with a campaign worker.

The House opened an ethics probe into an allegation that she was involved with a member of her congressional staff, which Hill denied.

3D mammograms accessible soon for Tricare users

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will add 3D breast cancer screenings to its Tricare coverage after female veterans in Congress pushed the Pentagon to make them available to active-duty service members, retirees and their families.

The permanent change will take effect May 29, according to a Pentagon policy memorandum issued last month. Tricare users over age 30 will be eligible for digital breast tomosynthesis, a 3D mammogram said to better detect breast cancer.

"This is a major victory for our female service members and veterans covered

under TRICARE," Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., said Tuesday in a statement. "Women in our Armed Forces now have access to the best preventative breast cancer screenings. I'm glad the Defense Department heard our repeated calls for change and implemented this common-sense policy."

The Pentagon first made 3D mammogram available under Tricare starting Jan. 1, 2020, but only on a temporary basis. Tricare offered DBT in some instances for diagnosing patients but not for routine screenings.

Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said in December he could not approve the addition of

DBT for screenings permanently because the United States Preventative Services Task Force doesn't recommend the technology. It wasn't immediately clear Tuesday what caused the Pentagon to make the change permanent starting May 29.

Digital breast tomosynthesis builds a three-dimensional image of a breast to better detect and diagnose cancer, especially for women with dense tissue. The technology is available to women who use Medicare or the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care. Tricare, though, covered only mammograms with two-dimensional images, which McSally and other lawmakers contended was a suboptimal standard of care.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

'Happy cow' suit against Ben & Jerry's dismissed

VT BURLINGTON — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit against Ben & Jerry's that alleged that the ice cream maker and its parent company misled consumers by saying the milk and cream in its products comes from "happy cows."

In a complaint filed Oct. 29 in Burlington, where Ben & Jerry's was founded, environmental advocate James Ehlers said only some of the farms are part of the company's "Caring Dairy" program.

U.S. District Judge Christina Reiss threw out the lawsuit, saying Ben & Jerry's, owned by the multinational firm Unilever, did not claim that all its milk comes from farms enrolled in Caring Dairy, Vermont Public Radio reported.

She also noted that Ben & Jerry's no longer uses the "happy" cow label on its ice cream cartons.

Fundraiser started to replace burned teepee

KS LAWRENCE — A fundraiser is underway to replace a teepee that burned on the Haskell Indian Nations University campus in Lawrence.

The Lawrence Journal-World reported that fire had almost completely consumed the teepee's sheathing when fire crews responded. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical Division Chief Dan Fagan said the cause of the fire is still unknown, but arson is a possibility.

Haskell Foundation executive director Aaron Hove said the teepee will cost \$2,500 to \$3,000 to replace. It was erected to honor Haskell's 2020 graduating seniors.

Peacock on the prowl falls for officer's decoy

MA BOSTON — A Boston police officer used an electronic mating call to help capture a peacock that had escaped from a nearby zoo.

An officer lured the curious peacock that had escaped from Franklin Park Zoo into a fenced-in yard while playing a mating call on his cellphone, The Boston Globe reported.

The officers on patrol in the Roxbury area were approached by a concerned citizen, who reported that the bird, named Snowbank, had escaped from the zoo, Boston police said in a statement.

Snowbank was returned to the zoo and is reported to be doing well, according to zoo officials.

Man who sought trial by combat found not insane

IA HARLAN — A Kansas man who sought legal permission in Iowa to engage in a sword fight with his ex-wife is not insane but merely angry over their child custody arrangement, according to a psychological evaluation.

David Ostrom, of Paola, Kan., asked in a Jan. 3 court filing to be allowed to fight his former wife, Bridgette Ostrom, of Harlan, and her attorney, Matthew Hudson, so that he can "rend their souls" from their bodies. The Ostroms have been embroiled in disputes over custody and visitation issues, and property tax payments.

An Iowa judge responded by temporarily suspending David Ostrom's child visitation and ordering the evaluation. It found he is not troubled, but has "adjustment disorder with mixed emotional features," Ostrom told the Des Moines Register.

Ostrom has asked the court to order psychological evaluations of his ex-wife and her attorney.

Man caught after chase in stolen police Humvee

AZ KINGMAN — A man accused of stealing a police vehicle was arrested in Kingman after leading authorities on a car pursuit.

Kingman police say they received reports that a Humvee was driving erratically and hit another car. Officers tried to pull the driver over, but the vehicle continued.

The Humvee stalled, but the driver refused officers' request to get out of the vehicle. Authorities say the suspect then got the Humvee started again and hit two Kingman police cars.

Police booked Michael Joseph Lapeer, 26, into Mohave County Jail on aggravated assault, burglary, theft of means of transportation and criminal damage.

Authorities say Lapeer took the Humvee from a Mohave County Sheriff's Office facility and rammed a chain link gate to flee.

Bear paw print makes an impression at beach

NC CAPE LOOKOUT — National Park Service rangers are telling beachgoers at Cape Lookout to be on the lookout for a black bear.

In a Facebook post, Cape Lookout National Seashore said that a park biologist found a bear's paw print in the sand on South Core Banks, part of the chain of Outer Banks barrier islands.

The park says it's rare for bears to make their way onto the barrier islands, but they're excellent swimmers and can generally make their way

across inlets to hop from island to island.

Downed drone had 2 packages of meth

AZ SAN LUIS — A U.S. Border Patrol agent at the Yuma Station recovered a downed drone containing two packages of methamphetamine, authorities said.

They said agents reported a downed drone near the New Canal on the west side of San Luis.

Along with the drone were two packages of a white powdery substance later determined to be meth.

Border Patrol officials said the total weight of the narcotics was 727 grams with an estimated street value of \$3,200.

They said the direction of the drone indicates that it had come from Mexico.

Teen sinks shrimp boat for Eagle Scout project

AL ORANGE BEACH — An Alabama teen earned his Eagle Scout badge by accomplishing an unusual service project: sinking a shrimp boat in the Gulf of Mexico.

Garrett Ard is the son and grandson of fishing captains in Orange Beach, where multiple boats have been sunk offshore to attract fish for anglers. So Ard raised \$25,000 to purchase an old, 50-foot-long steel shrimp boat named Southern Heritage and sink it in 90 feet of water.

Ard said the project was in memory of his late grandfather Glovice Ard, a charter boat captain.

From wire reports

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Pandemic will likely alter minor leagues

Associated Press

As North America's pro football, basketball, baseball and hockey leagues try to play again in a pandemic, minor league sports face a more treacherous climb to return.

While the NFL, NBA or Major League Baseball can run on television revenue, it's virtually impossible for many minor leagues to survive with empty stadiums. The possibility of no games in 2020 could put some teams in jeopardy and change the landscape for attendance-driven sports in the short- and long-term future.

"There's no future for minor league sports with empty stadiums. There's zero," said Gary Green, who owns Triple-A and Double-A baseball teams and an expansion franchise in the United Soccer League that plays in suburban Omaha, Neb. "If some of the teams don't have deep-pocketed ownership groups or owners, I don't know how they're going to pay their bills."

It is by far the most pressing question facing Minor League Baseball, the American Hock-

ey League, ECHL, USL and others. The minors are deeply baked into the North American sports landscape as talent developers for the majors and cheap, family friendly entertainment in towns big and small. Experts are divided on how they will survive and how soon they can bounce back.

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred estimated a 40% loss of revenue if baseball is played with no fans and Herrick Feinstein sports law group co-chair Irwin Kishner estimated it is probably twice that for minor league sports. As it is, Green doesn't expect minor league baseball this year, while both the ECHL and the AHL canceled the rest of their hockey seasons.

Plans for 2020-21 include the grim possibility of empty or near-empty arenas.

"There's a million questions that need to be answered," minor league hockey player Nathan Paetsch said. "What's next season going to look like? What's the possibility of it starting? What type of season is it going to look like? Is there going to be fans or no fans? Is

it going to be the same length of the season?"

Smith College economics professor Andrew Zimbalist agreed with Green that ownership will affect which teams survive. He also pointed to the ill-fated second attempt by the XFL as a cautionary tale.

"Some of the younger leagues that are out there I think are really, really fragile," Zimbalist said. "I suspect that we're going to see a lot of organizations and some leagues going out of business."

There already were 40 minor league baseball teams scheduled to lose their MLB affiliations before the pandemic under a restructuring plan that would have to try to make it independently.

Beyond those teams, Syracuse University sports analytics professor Rodney Paul is worried about the status of others as the crisis goes on. He said there could be a redistribution of teams in multiple sports around the U.S. and Canada — and perhaps smaller leagues.

"Maybe it's the same number of teams, but it's in different cities based upon how things

have changed over time," Paul said. "Some of those areas that can't afford that level of team because of either population change or income change in the area or something like that changes to a different area. But my guess gets to be that the longer this goes out, the fewer of those minor league teams in total we'll have."

That worries Professional Hockey Players Association executive director Larry Landon because jobs will be lost if teams fold, and players like Cameron Gaunce might be left trying to make ends meet.

"I think you'd be naive if guys weren't worried about it," Gaunce said. "I'll make sure that I plan far enough in advance and I'll have a contingency plan in place, whether that's getting something to supplement my income or whether that is playing in a league that is going."

Pro leagues elsewhere could be operating, providing other opportunities to baseball, hockey and soccer players short of the elite level. Foreign prospects could stay home longer to play.

Will college football prospects stay closer to home?

Associated Press

Concerns about the coronavirus are preventing football prospects from visiting campuses this spring and keeping coaches from traveling to evaluate them.

North Carolina coach Mack Brown said he believes this could cause more 2021 recruits to stay closer to home, though that remains up for debate.

"I do think all the kids being at home with their families, there is a little concern," Brown said. "You love your family, you're wanting everybody healthy. So I do think that this is encouraging people to stay closer to home."

Brown built the Tar Heels into a power in the 1990s by making sure North Carolina's

best recruits didn't leave the state. He is doing it again in his second stint at Chapel Hill.

Eleven of the top 13 verbally committed 2021 prospects from North Carolina have chosen the Tar Heels, according to composite rankings of recruiting sites compiled by 247Sports.

That same database shows that, so far, recruits are not necessarily sticking closer to home because of the pandemic: More than 60% of verbally committed prospects to Power Five schools who made their decisions on or before March 11 — the day the NBA suspended play to trigger the general shutdown of the sports world — chose schools within 300 miles of their hometowns.

Yet, more than half the re-

cruits who committed to Power Five schools since March 11 selected a college more than 300 miles away.

Whether they're opting to stay near home, prospects are deciding earlier than ever. 247Sports reported that 627 players in the 2021 class had committed by May 6 — more than twice the number of 2020 prospects who had announced decisions by that date.

"Kids want to get settled and feel like they've got a scholarship locked up," said Barton Simmons, the 247Sports director of scouting. "On the other side, colleges (see that) with the writing being on the wall that the evaluation period is essentially done, their board is what their board is. They're feeling a

little bit of pressure to go ahead and get guys committed, get some guys locked in and then go from there."

Many prospects aren't hesitating to pick a school far away.

Minnesota's list of 11 verbal commitments since March 11 includes three players from Texas, two from Georgia and one from Arizona. Tennessee's flurry of 12 verbal commitments since April 10 includes three players from Florida schools or academies, one from Texas and none from the state of Tennessee.

"I feel the pandemic will be over by the time I get to Tennessee," said De'Shawn Rucker, a defensive back from Tallahassee, Fla.

NBA players' union shows support to play

Associated Press

MIAMI — A person familiar with the results of a poll of NBA players taken by their union says there would be “overwhelming” support for any plan that has this season resuming in a safe way amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The poll conducted by the National Basketball Players Association was informal but gave a clear sense that players would like to not only get to the playoffs but also resume at least some of the regular season, according to the person who shared details with The Associated Press on Tuesday on the condition of anonymity because it was not to be detailed publicly.

The exact results of the poll were unknown, and the methodology behind the poll — including how many players participated — was unclear.

The NBPA sent a letter to agents Tuesday discussing, among other things, the results

of the player polling and some details of the call the union and its membership had late last week with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. In that call, Silver talked about the possibility of resuming a season without fans and playing at a centralized site — notions that have been discussed for some time.

There are numerous hurdles to clear to get games back, the need for testing of players and staff when play resumes among them, and what could be viewed as positive signs Tuesday were just that — signs, not absolute indicators that there is a path for a return to play this season.

Golden State coach Steve Kerr, whose team wouldn't be headed to the playoffs and was preparing to play home games in an empty arena because of the virus threat before the league suspended the season, told radio station 95.7 The Game in the Bay Area on Tuesday that he believes the Warriors' season is over.

“We'll be good soldiers. If

the league asks us to play more games, we'll play,” Kerr said. “I don't anticipate that happening, but we'll be ready if it does. And in the meantime, you know, it's not my decision, it's not our decision — it's the NBA's decision, what to do, when to do it.”

NBA players had somewhat different reactions. Memphis' Ja Morant, the likely frontrunner for rookie of the year, tweeted that he wants to play. And Orlando guard Evan Fournier said international soccer inching toward a return “gives me hope” that the NBA can do the same.

“Everybody in the league, we want to finish this year,” Cleveland's Larry Nance Jr. said earlier Tuesday. “One, obviously because we love the game, but at the same time, there's a serious chance of us missing out on, what, 20-plus percent of our contracts, which is for a lot of guys pretty significant.”

The NBA suspended its season on March 11 with 259 regular season games remaining, or

roughly one-fifth of the season.

Players have been paid in full on each of the four paydays that have followed, though that will change Friday when most of the league sees a 25% reduction in their paycheck.

Players stand to lose roughly \$850 million in gross salary if the regular season is not resumed and the NBA exercises its right to withhold roughly 1.08% of each player's salary for any game that is ultimately canceled. On average, that would mean each NBA player stands to lose about 21% of his total salary. No games have been officially canceled yet; the 25% reduction starting with Friday's check was negotiated between the league and the union with the expectation that the season will eventually be shortened.

A handful of teams have opened their facilities for voluntary workouts; Miami and Orlando were expected to be the next two teams to do so on Wednesday.

No economic plan yet from baseball negotiations

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball did not include an economic proposal during its opening presentation to the players' union on terms to start the coronavirus-delayed season.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker criticized big leaguers for not being willing to cut pay further at a news conference on Tuesday, and Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey said his state is open to games without spectators for all the major sports starting Saturday.

The electronic meeting of MLB and the players' association lasted between three and four hours and consisted of baseball officials explaining their view of the economics, science and logistics of getting the season under way, several people familiar with the session told The Associated Press. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because no details were announced.

Owners gave the go-ahead Monday for a proposal that players receive the percentage of their 2020 salaries based on a 50-50 split of revenues MLB receives during the regular season and postseason, a person familiar with that plan told the AP. That

person also spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan was not announced.

The concept would cut the expenses of teams worried about playing in empty ballparks due to the pandemic. The union views revenue sharing as a salary cap, which it has said it will never agree to, and the concept was not presented.

If empty stadiums or neutral sites are used, an agreement with the players' association is needed to play ball.

Opening day was to have been March 26. MLB's plan could lead to the season starting around the Fourth of July with an 82-game regular season, playoffs expanding from 10 teams to 14 and the designated hitter used for the first time in games between National League teams.

MLB officials showed slides during the meeting and the union delegation, which included players, caucused and asked questions. Baseball officials explained how they would use a lab in Utah to give the sport its own testing ability, the people said.

Baseball officials also expressed concern about a second wave of the coronavirus in the fall and their worries it could force cancellation of the postseason. While

players are paid their salaries during the regular season, the bulk of MLB's national broadcasting revenue derives from the postseason.

Players agreed March 26 to a deal in which they would be paid prorated shares of salaries based on the portion of the 162-game regular-season schedule that is played. As part of that agreement, if no games are played, they would receive service time for 2020 matching what they earned last year.

“I realize that the players have the right to haggle over their salaries, but we do live in a moment where the people of Illinois and the people of the United States deserve to get their pastime back, to watch, anyway, on television,” Pritzker said in response to the last question of his news conference.

A member of the family that controls Hyatt hotels, Pritzker's net worth has been estimated by Forbes at \$3.4 billion.

The players' association declined comment on his remarks, spokesman Chris Dahl said.