

## US transfers Kandahar Airfield to Afghans

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — U.S. forces have left Kandahar Airfield, a southern Afghanistan base that was once one of the largest NATO and coalition installations in the country, Afghan and U.S. officials said.

The airfield has been transferred to the Afghan security forces, a U.S. defense official said Thursday on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the matter.

The official did not say when the base was transferred or when the last U.S. service members left, citing security concerns.

The NATO Resolute Support press office declined to comment on the airfield's status Thursday. The Afghan Defense Ministry

said earlier this week that the handover wouldn't occur until sometime after the Eid al-Fitr holiday, which ends Saturday.

The United States did not hold a handover ceremony at the base, which housed an estimated 30,000 troops and contractors at the height of the war.

American forces left the base without coordinating with Afghan forces, said Khwaja Yahya Alvi, a spokesman for Afghanistan's 205th Atal Military Corps. The move left Afghan officials uncertain whether the U.S. left Tuesday night or Wednesday morning.

"The Americans have vacated their bases and they have left," Alvi said.

An Afghan security official at the Kandahar airport confirmed that U.S. troops left this week without a ceremony.

"They left in the night" and there are no

more U.S. forces in Kandahar, "not at this moment," said Gen. Faqir Qowahi, commander of the military side of the Kandahar Airport.

Massoud Pashtoon, the facility's director of civil aviation, also told Stars and Stripes that U.S. troops had left.

Security has diminished in the province around the base since last year's U.S.-Taliban deal and subsequent drawdown of troops. Fighting over the winter led to attacks on the city's outskirts and militants fired on Kandahar Airfield this spring, in an attack that U.S. forces said caused no injuries or damage to equipment.

The U.S. plans to fully withdraw its 2,500-3,500 service members from Afghanistan by Sept. 11. On Monday, U.S. Central Command said the withdrawal was 6-12% complete.

## Hamas, Israel fighting escalates even amid talks

*Associated Press*

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Hamas sent a heavy barrage of rockets deep into Israel on Thursday, and Israel pounded Gaza with more airstrikes. The relentless escalation of hostilities came even as Egyptian negotiators held in-person talks with the two sides, intensifying efforts at mediation.

Previous fighting between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, including a devastating 2014 war, was largely confined to the impoverished and blockaded Palestinian territory and Israeli communities on the frontier. But this round seems to be rippling farther and wider than at any time since the 2000 Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

While some rocket attacks have reached the Tel Aviv area, Arab and Jewish mobs have rampaged through the streets, savagely beating people and torching cars. Flights have been canceled or diverted away from the country's main airport.

Weary Palestinians, meanwhile, somberly marked the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on Thursday as militants fired one barrage of rockets after another and Israel carried out waves of bone-rattling airstrikes. Since the rockets began Monday, Israel has toppled three high-rise

buildings that it said housed Hamas facilities after warning civilians to evacuate.

Gaza's Health Ministry said the death toll has climbed to 87 Palestinians, including 18 children and eight women, with 530 people wounded. Islamic Jihad confirmed the deaths of seven militants, while Hamas has acknowledged 13 of its militants killed, including a senior commander. Israel says the number of militants dead is much higher.

Seven people have been killed in Israel. Among them were a soldier killed by an anti-tank missile and a 6-year-old child hit in a rocket attack.

Many world leaders have condemned the violence and urged restraint, and a visit by Egyptian security officials was a significant development in international efforts to bring about a cease-fire; such efforts have been key to ending past rounds of fighting. The officials met first with Hamas leaders in Gaza before holding talks with the Israelis in Tel Aviv, two Egyptian intelligence officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press.

Still, both Israel and Hamas seemed determined to press ahead.

Even as word came of the mediators' presence, Gaza militants fired a volley of some 100 rockets nearly simultaneously, raising air raid sirens around southern and central Israel.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties — but the barrage appeared aimed at demonstrating that Hamas' arsenal was still full even after three nights of airstrikes and the killing of several Hamas leaders involved in the rocket program Wednesday.

"The decision to bomb Tel Aviv, Dimona and Jerusalem is easier for us than drinking water," a spokesman for Hamas' military wing declared in a video message. Dimona is the site of Israel's nuclear reactor.

In another sign fighting could escalate further, the Israeli military's chief spokesman, Brig. Gen. Hidai Zilberman, said forces were "preparing the option of a ground maneuver." He told Israeli public television station Kan that tanks, armored personnel carriers and artillery were being readied "for this option for mobilization at any given moment."

But the level of forces was not believed to be strong enough yet for a possible ground invasion.

# Small rise in military sex assault reports

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reports of sexual assaults across the U.S. military increased by a very small amount in 2020, a year when troops were largely locked down for months as bases around the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, according to U.S. officials.

Officials familiar with the data said sexual assault reports went up by about 1%, compared with the 2019 totals. They said the Army and Marine Corps saw slight increases in the number of reports, while the Navy and Air Force saw small decreases. Offi-

cialists spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss data not yet made public.

In 2019, there were more than 7,800 reported sexual assaults, up from more than 6,000 the previous year. It is unclear how much of a role the pandemic played in the small increase in assaults last year.

While small, the increase is likely to only fuel the escalating debate about the Defense Department's failure to reduce the number of sexual assaults and harassment over the last decade or more. And it will do little to quash growing arguments that

military prosecutions of the crimes must be taken away from commanders and turned over to civilians.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's first directive after he took office in January ordered senior leaders to look into their sexual assault prevention programs, and he later created an independent panel to study the matter. That panel has already recommended that decisions to prosecute service members for sexual assault be made by independent authorities, not commanders.

Such a change would be a ma-

major reversal of military practice and a shift long sought by congressional lawmakers. Austin has given service leaders 30 days to review the recommendation and come back to him with their input.

Formal reports of sexual assaults have steadily gone up since 2006, including a 13% jump in 2018 and a 3% increase in 2019 that included a much larger 9% increase for the Air Force, according to Pentagon data.

The 2019 report found that commanders took some kind of action on close to two-thirds of the cases.

## Congress gets few answers on Afghan stability in future

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense officials had few solid answers Wednesday as frustrated lawmakers sought details on how the United States will keep the terrorist threat from reemerging in Afghanistan after American and coalition troops leave later this year.

Under persistent questions from members of the House Armed Services Committee, the officials said discussions and negotiations are continuing on almost every aspect of the pullout: the post-withdrawal security of Afghanistan, the training of Afghan troops, intelligence collection, protections for Afghans who have helped coalition troops and the potential for a U.S. diplomatic presence in the nation.

The testimony from David Helvey, acting assistant defense secretary for the Indo-Pacific, and Brig. Gen. Matthew Trollinger, deputy director for political and military affairs on the Joint Staff, laid bare the lack of solutions so far on how the Biden administration will monitor and possibly fight threats in Afghanistan from "over the horizon."

"What we've heard today is when it comes to basing, when it comes to the visas for these people who have helped us, when it comes to training the Afghan forces going forward, we're hearing, 'We're working on it,'" said

Alabama Rep. Mike Rogers, the top Republican on the committee. "I'm of the opinion this should have been resolved before you announced you were leaving."

President Joe Biden announced last month that all U.S. troops would be out of Afghanistan by Sept. 11. There are at least 3,300 American troops and special operations forces there now; hundreds more have gone in to provide security and logistical help for the withdrawal.

Military leaders have said they will monitor threats from "over the horizon," to ensure that al-Qaida and other groups cannot again use Afghanistan as a base to launch attacks against the U.S. But those leaders have provided few details.

Helvey acknowledged there are no agreements yet with any of Afghanistan's neighbors to allow the U.S. to base troops there or permit overflights into Afghanistan, including for surveillance. He said the State Department is leading the effort in talks with other countries.

Pressed by lawmakers on whether the U.S. would stay longer in Afghanistan if needed to get all those solutions worked out, Helvey said the withdrawal timeline and the negotiations are on parallel tracks, "but are not linked."

## DOD seeks 85 F-35s in next year's budget

Bloomberg

The Biden administration will seek \$11 billion to buy 85 Lockheed Martin F-35 jets in the coming fiscal year, tracking a plan outlined last year by the Trump administration, according to a U.S. official.

With a \$715 billion budget request for fiscal year 2022, the Pentagon had considered increasing the quantity of next-generation fighters it planned to buy but decided to instead focus on using additional funding to upgrade the F-35 with new capabilities every six months, the official said.

"It's not unusual for a new administration's first budget to change relatively little from its predecessor," J.J. Gertler, a military aviation analyst for the non-partisan Congressional Research Service, said in an email. "But using the prior number for FY 22 adds fuel to the idea that the big changes for the program will come in '23," he said.

At an estimated cost of \$398 billion, the F-35 is America's biggest weapons program, a critical part of U.S. and allied efforts to upgrade their armed forces. Yet while the \$715 billion defense budget number is public, the Pentagon hasn't yet detailed how that will be spent and there is no formal release date yet from the Office of Management and Budget.

# US virus deaths fall to lowest level in 10 months

*Associated Press*

COVID-19 deaths in the United States have tumbled to an average of around 600 per day — the lowest level in 10 months — with the number of lives lost dropping to single digits in well over half the states and, on some days, hitting zero.

Confirmed infections have fallen to about 38,000 per day on average, their lowest mark since mid-September. While that is still cause for concern, reported cases have plummeted 85% from a daily peak of more than a quarter-million in early January.

The last time U.S. deaths from the pandemic were this

low was in early July of last year. The number of people with COVID-19 who died topped out in mid-January at an average of more than 3,400 a day, just a month into the biggest vaccination drive in the nation's history.

The Boston Herald put a huge zero on its front page Wednesday under the headline "First time in nearly a year state has no new coronavirus deaths." Indiana reported one COVID-19 fatality Tuesday. Kansas, which peaked at 63 reported deaths on Dec. 22, has been in the single digits since February and seen multiple days with just one virus-related death.

Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist at Johns Hopkins University, said that vaccinations have played a crucial role even as the nation struggles to reach herd immunity. "The primary objective is to deny this virus the ability to kill at the rate that it could, and that has been achieved," he said. "We have in effect tamed the virus."

About 45% of the nation's adults are fully vaccinated, and nearly 59% have received at least one dose, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This week, Pfizer's vaccine won authorization for use in 12- to 15-year-olds, a

move that could make it easier to reopen the nation's schools.

Physicians like Dr. Tom Dean in South Dakota's rural Jerauld County are cautiously optimistic, concerned about the many people who have decided against getting vaccinated or have grown lax in guarding against infections. The county has recorded just three confirmed cases in the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins data.

"What I'm afraid of is people believing this whole thing is over and you don't have to worry about it any more," Dean said. "I think complacency is our biggest threat right now."

## Furious officials act fast on illegal street racing in US

*Associated Press*

Jaye Sanford, a 52-year-old mother of two, was driving home in suburban Atlanta on Nov. 21 when a man in a Dodge Challenger muscle car who was allegedly street racing crashed into her head-on, killing her.

Sanford was remembered by friends as kind and thoughtful, but now she will also be remembered for something else: a new state law that requires jail time for all convictions for drag racing and stunt driving.

Across America, illegal drag racing has exploded in popularity since the coronavirus pandemic began, with dangerous upticks reported from Georgia and New York to New Mexico and Oregon.

Street racers block roads and even interstates to keep police away while they tear around and perform stunts, often captured on videos that go viral. Packs of vehicles, from souped-up jalopies to high-end sports cars, roar down city streets, through industrial neighborhoods and down rural roads.

Experts say TV shows and movies glorifying street racing had already fueled interest in recent years.

Then shutdowns associated with

the pandemic cleared normally clogged highways.

Now, police in many cities are stepping up enforcement, and states are fighting back with new laws.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed the bill named for Sanford last week after it passed the General Assembly. Besides mandating at least 10 days of jail time for all drag racing convictions, the measure requires people convicted a third time within five years to forfeit their vehicles.

"This illegal activity is very dangerous," the Republican governor said at a bill-signing ceremony. "Our goal is simple: to protect every family in every community."

In Denver, police have deployed a helicopter to track races, closed lanes often used by racers and sent officers to places where racers meet. On April 3, a mother was killed when a street racer broadsided her car in downtown Denver.

In one of the most notorious incidents, hundreds of street racers clogged a stretch of interstate in nearby Aurora on March 7 while they raced and cruised. Police warned other motorists to stay away amid reports of guns being brandished and fireworks going off.

## US unemployment claims at a pandemic-low 473K

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week to 473,000, a new pandemic low and the latest evidence that fewer employers are cutting jobs as consumers ramp up spending and more businesses reopen.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department showed that applications declined 34,000 from a revised 507,000 a week earlier. The number of weekly jobless claims — a rough measure of the pace of layoffs — has fallen significantly from a peak of 900,000 in January. Instead of cutting jobs, many employers are struggling to attract enough applicants for open positions.

With hiring up, vaccinations increasing and the economy accelerating, consumers have grown more confident and, on average, are flush with cash after limiting their spending during the pandemic. Stimulus checks have also bolstered many bank accounts.

Now, more Americans are venturing out to shop, travel, dine out and congregate at entertainment venues. The reopening has proceeded so fast that many businesses aren't yet able to staff up as quickly as they would like.

Economists monitor weekly jobless claims for early signs of where the job market is headed. Since the pandemic, though, these numbers have become a less reliable barometer than they normally are. States have struggled to clear backlogs of unemployment applications. And suspected fraud has clouded the actual volume of job cuts.

In April, employers added 266,000 jobs, far fewer than expected and a sign that some businesses struggled to find enough workers. The surprisingly low gain raised concerns that businesses may find it hard to hire quickly as the economy keeps improving and that regaining pre-pandemic employment levels could take longer than hoped.

## 7 charged after spiritual leader's body found in Colo.

*Associated Press*

DENVER — Prosecutors have charged seven people after the mummified body of the leader of a spiritual group called Love Has Won was found decorated with Christmas lights and glitter in what appeared to be a shrine in a southern Colorado home.

Amy Carlson, 45, who was known as “Mother God” by her followers, was found dead in a home in the tiny, rural town of Moffat on April 28, according to arrest affidavits. Each of the defendants is facing charges related to tampering with or abusing a corpse as well as child abuse.

They appeared in court virtually Wednesday to be advised of the charges, which were filed May 6. A coroner's office has not said how or when Carlson died.

One of Carlson's followers, who has not been charged, told investigators that he took in the group because they needed a place to stay, and he found the body in a back bedroom when he returned home from a trip to Denver. He called police and said he believed the group had brought Carlson's body to his home from California.

“The mummified remains appeared to be set up in some type of shrine” and “have what appears to be glitter type makeup on around the eyes,” according to the affidavits. Investigators searched an SUV on the property and said the backseat was laid down in a position “consistent with someone transporting the mummified remains.”

Two children — a 13-year-old girl and a 2-year-old boy — were in the home at the time, which presumably led to the child abuse charges. The follower who reported the body also told investigators that he was prevented from leaving the home with his son, prompting a false imprisonment charge against one of the defendants.

According to the affidavits, the sheriff's office has received “many complaints” from families across the country saying Love Has Won is brainwashing people and stealing their money.

Carlson's followers believe she communicated with angels and that she was leading them to a great awakening, The Denver Post has reported. The group, which established itself in southern Colorado in 2018, offers “spiritual intuitive ascension sessions” and sells spiritual healing products online.

## More single adults crossing border, US agency reports

*Associated Press*

LA JOYA, Texas — Parents emerge from the brush into a baseball field, carrying exhausted children. Border Patrol agents dictate orders: Families with young children in one line and unaccompanied children in another. The smallest of three lines is for single adults.

The scene Tuesday night in La Joya, a town of about 4,000 people, plays out nightly in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, presenting Joe Biden with one of the most serious challenges of his young presidency — high numbers of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border to seek asylum. April was the second-busiest month on record for unaccompanied children encountered at the border, following March's all-time high.

But while asylum-seeking families and children dominate public attention, single adults represent a growing number of border encounters, nearly two of every three in April. They are less likely to surrender to authorities than families and children, making them less visible.

The Border Patrol's 173,460 total encounters in April were up 3% from March, marking the highest level since April 2000. The

numbers, released Tuesday, are not directly comparable because most of those stopped were quickly expelled from the country under federal pandemic-related powers that deny rights to seek asylum. Being expelled carries no legal consequences, so many people try to cross multiple times.

Single adults — more than half of them from Mexico — drove the increased activity. The Border Patrol had 108,301 such encounters in April, up 12% from March. Nearly nine of 10 adult encounters ended in expulsions under pandemic-related authority that began under former President Donald Trump and continued under Biden.

Biden, however, exempts unaccompanied children from expulsion, allowing them to stay in the U.S. while pursuing asylum claims. Families with young children are also often released in the U.S. while their cases wind through the bottlenecked immigration courts.

Some current and former border enforcement officials say massive attention on families and unaccompanied children consumes agents' time and has created an opening for single adults and drug smugglers to elude authorities.

## As pipeline comes back, gas stations in US await relief from panic buying

*The Washington Post*

The nation's largest fuel pipeline may officially be back in service, but much of the Southeast was still waiting for relief Thursday after the panic buying that cleaned out more than half the gas stations in Georgia, Virginia and the Carolinas.

Colonial Pipeline announced Wednesday evening that it was restarting operations after a ransomware hack — thought to be the biggest known cyberattack on U.S. energy infrastructure — forced it offline last week. But the Alpharetta, Ga.-based company warned that it could be a few days before kinks in the supply chain are worked out.

“Some markets served by Colonial Pipeline may experience, or continue to experience, intermittent service interruptions during the start-up period,” according to a company statement.

Despite warnings from government offi-

cial and experts, panicked drivers have flocked to pumps all over the Eastern U.S., draining more than 12,000 stations, including many that would not otherwise have been affected by the pipeline hack. The heightened demand also pushed the national average price for a gallon of gas to \$3.02 on Thursday, its highest level since 2014 according to AAA.

Some signs of improvement surfaced overnight in Atlanta; Charlotte, N.C.; and Raleigh, N.C., which were among the hardest-hit metro areas. But as of Thursday morning more than 70% of stations in North Carolina remained dry, and states as far as Delaware and Kentucky were feeling the artificial crunch, according to Patrick De Haan, head oil analyst at GasBuddy. The panic has driven up U.S. gas demand more than 11% so far this week, De Haan tweeted.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Judge accused of assault now faces ethics charges

**GA** KNOXVILLE — A Georgia judge accused of assaulting an inmate who he said repeatedly cursed at him during a hearing is now facing ethics charges, according to a state judicial agency.

The Georgia Judicial Qualifications Commission's investigative panel alleges Crawford County Chief Magistrate Cary Hays III followed the inmate into a hallway after a December first appearance hearing, then grabbed him and pushed him against a wall while the man was handcuffed and restrained at his feet.

Hays, who was sworn into office in 2017, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Monday that he did not injure the inmate "in any way."

"The inmate continued to curse me over and over and over again," the newspaper quoted the judge as saying. "At some point, I'd just heard enough of it."

The man began cursing at Hays when the judge set his bond, according to the complaint.

### Police: Dunkin' customer fatally punched by worker

**FL** TAMPA — Police said a Dunkin' store employee fatally punched a 77-year-old customer in Florida after the employee said the man repeatedly used a racial slur against him.

The victim, a man whose name police did not disclose, was punched May 4 and died last Friday. That led to a manslaughter charge against Corey Pujols, 27, who worked at the store.

Pujols told police that the man was "extremely rude" and had

called him a racial slur. Pujols, who is Black, said he confronted the man about the slur, at which point the 77-year-old repeated it. The slur was not described further by police.

A Tampa Police Department report says after he was punched, the victim fell backward and hit his head on the concrete floor.

Pujols was jailed Tuesday without bail on a charge of aggravated manslaughter of a person older than 65.

### Fire destroys barn at farm dating to 18th century

**NH** STRATHAM — A fire destroyed a barn at a New Hampshire farm that's been the backdrop for political events for Republican presidents and candidates through the years.

The fire burned down the Scamman Farm barn in Stratham. The fire broke out a little after 10:30 p.m. Monday. Fire crews from numerous towns responded. The cause of the fire is under investigation, the Stratham Fire Department said.

In 2011, Mitt Romney announced at the farm that he was running for president. Former Presidents George W. Bush, and his father, George H.W. Bush, also had visited the farm.

In 2019, Scamman Farm was named to the National Register of Historic Places. The barn dated back to the 18th century.

### Bear has close call on utility poles in border city

**AZ** DOUGLAS — Residents of an Arizona border city were left in disbelief by a surprise visit from a bear.

The Arizona Game & Fish Department said the bear appeared Sunday in downtown Douglas.

The animal climbed up two utility poles and even sat on the wires.

State wildlife officials, Douglas police, the Cochise County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Border Patrol closed off U.S. Highway 191 and tried to get the bear to leave.

Authorities said the seemingly unfazed bear eventually climbed down and scampered off.

### Police say drunken driver crashes into fenced pool

**NY** RONKONKOMA — A Long Island woman has been charged with drunken driving after she drove her car into a backyard swimming pool, police said.

Samantha Perez, 24, was driving a Mazda in Ronkonkoma at about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday when she failed to negotiate a turn, Suffolk County police said. Perez, of East Patchogue, hit a parked car, crashed through a fence and drove into a backyard pool, police said.

Perez, the sole occupant of the car, was not injured, police said. She was arrested on charges of driving while ability impaired by alcohol and drugs and criminal possession of a controlled substance.

### No charges for principal who spanked student, 6

**FL** CLEWISTON — A Florida elementary school principal will not be prosecuted for spanking a 6-year-old girl in front of her mother last month, officials said.

The State Attorney's Office that covers Hendry County released a memo last Friday explaining that corporal punishment is legal in Florida and that the principal of Central Elementary School in Clewiston ap-

peared to have explicit permission from the child's mother.

A school staff member called the girl's mother on April 13 to report that the first-grader had damaged some computer equipment and that the mother would have to pay for it, officials said. The mother reportedly told the staff member that the girl was also causing damage at home, but she was afraid to spank the child. The mother then asked whether a school staff member could spank the girl, officials said. The staff member explained that the mother would have to give permission in person and be present for the punishment, officials said.

A video secretly taken by the mother and later turned over to law enforcement shows the principal and staff member, both women, holding the girl in place while the principal spanks her three times. The mother can be heard thanking the principal near the end of the video, officials said.

### 12 winners share jackpot in ice guessing game

**AK** NENANA — The 12 winners of this year's Nenana Ice Classic will get equal shares of the jackpot in Alaska's favorite guessing game, an official said Tuesday.

Each ticket holder correctly guessed the ice would go out 12:50 p.m. on Friday, April 30, said ice classic manager Cherrie Forness.

The ticket holders will each get \$19,465.92 for guessing the exact time when the ice would move enough to trigger a mechanism that stops a clock inside a tripod set up on the Tanana River.

The event began in 1917 as a bet among railroad engineers waiting for river ice to break up.

— From wire reports

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Reporting  
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# Kinley takes command of his NFL future

*Tampa Bay Times*

TAMPA, Fla. — He is beyond qualified to defend a nation. You would think somebody would trust him to protect the goal line.

“I’ve gotten to fly planes, sail the seas,” said former Navy defensive back Cameron Kinley.

He has been president of his class at the U.S. Naval Academy since his junior year. He was the team captain who held the Midshipmen together when the coronavirus pandemic interrupted their season for a month in 2020.

But when the NFL draft ended last week, Kinley’s name had not been called. For about 10 minutes, the square-jawed Kinley had run out of stiff upper lips.

“I had a lot of family and friends around me, so there was just a little disappointment,” Kinley said during a break between final exams. “I felt like I let some people down. Having my little brother there. I tried to set the example for him. He plays college football. So I had just a little disappointment come over me after I found out my name wasn’t called in the draft.

“So I took a little walk down the street with my cousin. We were just kind of talking it out. I let a few tears out, and I got a call from my agent saying that Tampa Bay wanted to bring me in. The emotions flipped real quick. It turned into tears of joy and of celebration. It was definitely a moment to remember.”

Actually, two teams had called wanting to sign the 6-foot-2, 204-pound Kinley. You could’ve found both playing in Super Bowl 55 in February in Tampa.

The first to call when the draft ended was the Kansas City Chiefs. But the Bucs had the upper hand because linebackers coach Mike Caldwell had played college football with Kinley’s father, Richard, at Middle Tennessee State. Kinley’s older brother, Jonathan Brown, played one season for Bruce Arians with the Arizona Cardinals.

“I felt I had a connection down there heading down to Tampa,” Kinley said.

Kinley was scheduled to arrive in Tampa with the rest of his rookie class on Wednesday night. They will undergo physicals Thursday and have minicamp practices Friday and Saturday.

If there was a depth chart for the 2021 Bucs, with their 22 returning starters, Kinley’s name would appear near the bottom. But if you know anything about Kinley, you know it may not be there for long.

Coming out of Lausanne Collegiate School in Memphis, Tenn., Kinley was a three-sport star who earned varsity letters in basketball, football and track. His dream was to attend Vanderbilt. He also took visits to the U.S. Air Force Academy, Princeton and Yale.

But his blood pumps Navy blue.

“My granddad is a retired Chief in the Navy. Navy was my first offer, and ever since then, he was putting a little bug in my ear,” Kinley said. “I didn’t know too much about the military. I wasn’t very interested. My dream school has been Vanderbilt, but when that didn’t go as planned, I was like, let me buckle down and look at what I have. A lot of my teachers at my high school were telling me to look into this opportunity.

“When it came down to it, Navy was the total package. First and foremost, I knew I was going to be able to develop as a man, which was going to make me a better husband, father and leader in the future. I was going to place myself in an uncomfortable situation, which is going to cause me to grow. Also, the academics here are top-notch. A degree from here will open doors for me.”

Actually, Kinley was the one who has spent the last four years trying to open doors for everyone else.

Navy head coach Ken Niumatalolo has encountered a few good men who played at Annapolis and went onto NFL careers: Patriots long snapper Joe Cardona, Dolphins wide receiver Malcolm Perry and Keenan Reynolds, a former option quarterback who played slot receiver for the Baltimore Ravens and Seattle Seahawks.

“As far as Cameron Kinley, he’s everything that’s great about our country,” Niumatalolo said. “He epitomizes what our program is all about. He’s one of the best captains we’ve had on the field. He’s been a good defensive back for us because of his length, speed and physicality. He played a lot of corner for us and can play a lot of different positions. He’s just a player that did everything for us.

“It was tough last year. Take out the football, it was a tough year. I thought he did as good a job as a captain as anyone we’ve ever had. He did a great job inspiring our guys.”

Before he returned to Navy for summer workouts, Kinley had a brush with death. He was involved in a serious car accident in June.

“It had just started to sprinkle, I was coming around a bend on a highway. I hy-

droplaned, started spinning, then I hit an 18-wheeler that came off the side of the road,” Kinley said. “I was lucky to walk away from that with no injuries and still be alive. For sure, God was watching over me.”

The pandemic was particularly hard on Navy players. They were basically restricted to their dorms after a coronavirus outbreak on campus.

“It’s difficult, for sure, especially being one of the team captains, just trying to keep the team focused,” Kinley said. “It was weird. You’d got through a whole week of practice, and then on Thursday, you would get a text from the team saying that the game is going to be canceled on Saturday. So a lot of guys would be disappointed. But we always have to keep the end goal in mind. Control what you can control.”

Since high school, Kinley had always been involved in student government. After seeing the murder of George Floyd over the summer, he helped create a council for racial equality at Navy and was part of a Midshipmen diversity team.

“We started holding different panels, getting people involved,” Kinley said. “Getting people educated about what goes on around our country ... We made a lot of efforts in the Yard. We just had our first diversity conference a couple weekends ago, which is good. And we had some fruitful discussions. But it’s just the beginning, it’s just the start.”

Politics is in Kinley’s future. But first, he owes the Navy five years of service. He won’t be immediately commissioned as an officer when he graduates May 28 in order to pursue his NFL career. But eventually he will be a leader in the Navy’s information warfare department.

All that will have to wait. Due to COVID-19, Navy couldn’t host a pro day, so Kinley convinced coaches from the rival Memphis program to let him participate in their workouts. He ran the 40-yard dash in 4.52 seconds and had a 33-inch vertical jump.

Like the other Bucs cornerbacks, he is long, strong and athletic.

When his NFL career ends, he has long-term plans to run for President of the United States.

At the graduation and commissioning ceremony, he will give a speech. Vice President Kamala Harris will be there.

“We come here to lead,” Niumatalolo said, “and he was the leader amongst the best leaders in the country.”

# Harvey hammered by Mets in return

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Matt Harvey was greeted warmly by Mets fans in his return to Citi Field and harshly by New York's hitters, as the Mets beat the Baltimore Orioles 7-1 on Wednesday.

Harvey pitched against his former team for the first time and allowed Kevin Pillar's two-run triple in a three-run second inning that carried the Mets to their seventh straight win.

Wearing orange and black instead of blue and orange, Harvey (3-3) gave up a season-high seven runs and eight hits in 4½ innings, and his ERA rose from 3.60 to 4.81 as the last-place Orioles lost for the fifth time in six games.

Taijuan Walker (3-1) lowered his ERA to 2.20, allowing one run and four hits over seven innings as part of a five-hitter.

Dominic Smith had three hits and two RBIs for NL East-leading New York, which completed a two-game sweep that finished a 5-0 homestand. The Mets are on their longest hot streak since winning eight straight from Aug. 3-10, 2019.

**Yankees 1, Rays 0:** Gerrit Cole struck out 12 over eight stellar innings, Aaron Hicks had

a sacrifice fly and New York beat Tampa Bay amid a coronavirus outbreak that sidelined shortstop Gleyber Torres.

Cole (5-1) scattered four hits and has five starts this season of at least 10 strikeouts and no walks to break Mike Mussina's single-season team record set in 2001. Aroldis Chapman completed the four-hitter to get his ninth save.

**Padres 5-2, Rockies 3-3:** Josh Fuentes capped a big night with a two-out, walk-off single in the eighth inning after hitting a two-run homer earlier, and host Colorado salvaged a doubleheader split against virus-hampered San Diego.

The Padres, missing starters Fernando Tatis Jr., Eric Hosmer, Wil Myers and two others because of COVID-19 concerns, won the opener 5-3. Austin Nola, who's normally a catcher but was playing second base for short-handed San Diego, made a nifty catch with the bases loaded for the final out.

In the nightcap, Fuentes drove a changeup from reliever Nick Ramirez (0-1) to deep center to set off a celebration near second base as the Rockies snapped a five-game skid.

Fuentes' bat provided all the run production — he homered in the second.

**Brewers 4, Cardinals 1:** Travis Shaw hit a tiebreaking double and Avisail García added a two-run homer in the eighth inning as host Milwaukee capitalized on some good fortune to defeat St. Louis.

**Phillies 5, Nationals 2 (10):** Rhys Hoskins hit a go-ahead single in the 10th inning as visiting Philadelphia rallied and then took the lead against struggling Washington closer Brad Hand.

**Indians 2, Cubs 1 (10):** Amed Rosario's bases-loaded single with two outs in the 10th inning gave host Cleveland a win over Chicago.

**Tigers 4, Royals 2:** Miguel Cabrera drove in two runs and surpassed Omar Vizquel for the most major league hits by a Venezuelan player, leading host Detroit past slumping Kansas City.

**Blue Jays 4, Braves 1:** Teoscar Hernández hit two homers and drove in three runs, Hyun Jin Ryu pitched seven sharp innings and visiting Toronto continued its dominance of Atlanta.

**Reds 5, Pirates 1 (10):** Jesse

Winker and Eugenio Suárez combined to drive in four runs in the 10th inning as Cincinnati's bullpen threw 5⅓ hitless innings to win at Pittsburgh.

**Athletics 4, Red Sox 1:** James Kaprielian got the victory in his first major league start with five innings of one-run ball, Matt Olson homered, and Sean Murphy and Jed Lowrie also had RBIs for visiting Oakland.

**Astros 9, Angels 1:** José Altuve and Yuli Gurriel homered early as host Houston hit a season-high five long balls against Los Angeles.

**White Sox 13, Twins 8:** Touted rookie Andrew Vaughn hit his first career home run, Yasmani Grandal connected for the second straight day and host Chicago outslugged Minnesota for its fifth win in a row.

**Marlins 3, Diamondbacks 2:** Cody Poteet won his major league debut and Jesús Aguilar homered for a third consecutive game as Miami won at Arizona.

**Dodgers 7, Mariners 1:** Julio Urías pitched seven stellar innings of two-hit ball, Matt Beaty drove in three runs and host Los Angeles beat Seattle for its first back-to-back victories in 25 days.

# Harden's return from injury helps push Nets past Spurs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — James Harden had 18 points and 11 assists in his return from an 18-game absence to help the Brooklyn Nets beat the San Antonio Spurs 128-116 on Wednesday night.

Coming off the bench in an NBA game for the first time since he won the league's Sixth Man award for Oklahoma City in 2011-12, Harden also had seven rebounds after the longest layoff of his career, missing more than a month because of a strained right hamstring.

He said he had forgotten his routines from his days as a sub.

"But that sixth-man role, I mastered that as well," Harden said. "I got an award for that role. That role is easy. Come in and impact the game. Do whatever it takes to win, whether it's

defensively or offensively. But that's my role no matter what, especially on this team."

Landry Shamet scored 21 points and Nicolas Claxton had a career-high 18 for the Nets. They won their third straight and pulled within 1½ games of Philadelphia for the Eastern Conference lead.

**Lakers 124, Rockets 122:** Kyle Kuzma's driving layup with 6.9 seconds remaining helped keep short-handed Los Angeles' slim hopes of avoiding the play-in tournament alive.

Houston, playing on the road, had a final chance, but Kelly Olynyk had the ball stolen by Ben McLemore with 0.9 seconds remaining. Talen Horton-Tucker then hit the first free throw, but missed the second.

**Mavericks 125, Pelicans 107:** Luka Don-

cic scored 33 points, Kristaps Porzingis added 19 in his return from injury and Dallas beat visiting New Orleans to take a big step toward avoiding the play-in tournament.

The Pelicans were eliminated from post-season contention while playing without four starters. Lonzo Ball was scratched with a strained right thumb, joining Zion Williamson (broken left hand), Brandon Ingram (sprained left ankle) and Steven Adams (sprained toe) on the sideline.

**Trail Blazers 105, Jazz 98:** Damian Lillard scored 30 points and CJ McCollum added 26 to help Portland win at NBA-leading Utah.

Carmelo Anthony added 18 points for the Trail Blazers, who have won five straight and nine of 10 to tie Dallas for the fifth position in the Western Conference.

# Compher's hat trick propels Avs past Kings

Associated Press

DENVER — J.T. Compher had his first career hat trick to lead the Colorado Avalanche to a 6-0 victory over the Los Angeles Kings on Wednesday night.

Colorado remained in the hunt for the Presidents' Trophy and home-ice advantage throughout the postseason. The Avalanche clinched home ice for the first round and could finish first overall in the NHL if they beat Los Angeles again Thursday night.

A win would give Colorado 82 points, tied with West Division rival Vegas, but the Avalanche hold the tiebreaker of regulation wins. The Golden Knights beat San Jose 6-0 on Wednesday night. If Colorado doesn't earn two points, it will open the playoffs against Minnesota.

Philipp Grubauer made 18 saves for his seventh shutout of the season and 18th of his career. Gabriel Landeskog scored his 20th goal, the eighth time he's reached the mark, and added an assist. Pierre-Edouard Bellemare and Joonas Donskoi also scored, and Mikko Rantanen had three assists.

**Golden Knights 6, Sharks 0:** Alex Pietrangelo and Keegan Kolesar scored in the first period, Marc-Andre Fleury had his 67th career shutout and visiting Vegas finished the regular season with a victory over San Jose that keeps it alive in the race for the division title.

Dylan Sikura scored twice in the third period, and William Carrier and Jonathan Marchessault also scored to help the Knights complete a sweep of the eight-game season series against the Sharks. Fleury made 17 saves.

San Jose missed the playoffs in back-to-back seasons for the first since 1996 and '97 with just 49 points in 56 games.

**Oilers 4, Canadiens 3 (OT):** Dominik Kahun scored 27 seconds into overtime to lift visiting Edmonton past Montreal.

Kahun went backhand to forehand on a feed from Leon Draisaitl to beat goalie Cayden Primeau, spoiling the Canadiens' regular-season finale.

The team also beat Montreal 4-3 in overtime Monday night on Connor McDavid's goal. The Oilers will finish the regular season

at home Saturday against Vancouver, then face Winnipeg in the playoffs.

Draisaitl, Alex Chaisson and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also scored for Edmonton, and Mike Smith made 26 saves. McDavid had two assists to push his NHL-leading points total to 104 in 55 games.

Tyson Barrie also had two assists for the Oilers to take the scoring lead among NHL defensemen with 48, one more than the New York Rangers' Adam Fox.

Nick Suzuki scored twice for Montreal, Cole Caufield had a goal and an assist, and Primeau stopped 18 shots. The Canadiens will face North Division champion Toronto in the playoffs.

**Senators 4, Maple Leafs 3 (OT):** Josh Norris scored nine seconds into overtime and host Ottawa beat Toronto to finish the season.

Mitch Marner turned over the puck to Brady Tkachuk off the opening faceoff in the extra period, and Tkachuk fed Norris for his 17th of the season.

Parker Kelly scored in his NHL debut for Ottawa, Connor Brown

had his league-leading fifth short-handed goal, Nikita Zaitsev had a goal and an assist, and Filip Gustavsson stopped 30 shots.

Auston Matthews scored his NHL-best 41st goal for Toronto. Jake Muzzin had a goal and an assist, and John Tavares also scored.

Frederik Andersen made 24 saves in his return following an eight-week injury absence for the North Division champion Maple Leafs.

The Maple Leafs will complete the regular season Friday night at Winnipeg, then open the playoffs against Montreal.

**Blues 4, Wild 0:** Ville Husso stopped 31 shots for his first career shutout and David Perron had a goal and two assists in host St. Louis' victory over Minnesota.

Torey Krug, Ivan Barbashev and Jaden Schwartz also scored. The Blues have won two in a row and seven of 11.

After winning four of its previous five, Minnesota was locked into the third spot in the West Division with the loss. St. Louis had already nailed down the fourth spot.

# Henman becomes first player signed by Kraken

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Whether he develops into a star or never plays a game at the highest level, Luke Henman will forever have a place in the history of the Seattle Kraken.

The 21-year-old center became the first player ever signed by the Kraken on Wednesday when he inked a three-year entry-level contract with the expansion NHL club, which is set to begin its first season this fall.

Henman is currently with the Blainville-Boisbriand Armada of the Québec Major Junior Hockey League. He will complete the season with the Armada — who are currently in the playoffs — before join-

ing Seattle for its rookie training camp later this year.

"When you play hockey as a kid growing up, your dream is to sign an NHL entry-level deal and today is one of the best days of my life and I'm going to remember it forever," Henman said. "I'm just kind of trying to enjoy and focus on that."

For now — and at least until the expansion draft this summer — Henman is the face of the Kraken on the ice. He brings a strong pedigree after playing the past five seasons for Blainville-Boisbriand, including the past two seasons as captain of the Armada.

Henman had a team-high 43 points in 32 games for the Ar-

mada this season, including 16 goals and 27 assists. He has scored six goals in eight playoff games this season.

Kraken general manager Ron Francis said Henman was the scouting staff's clear choice to target for the team's first signing, and the decision went beyond his productivity on the ice.

"To me, character is a big part of who you want in your organization. It's always easy when things are going well but when things are tough, it's the guys with the character that are able to pull you out of those tough situations," Francis said. "Everybody we've talked to and checked out in regards to Luke's character was outstand-

ing, and the fact that he was a captain for a couple of years, his leadership skills sort of bear that out. That was a big part of our decision making."

Henman was originally a fourth-round pick by Carolina in the 2018 NHL Draft. He was not offered an entry-level contract by the Hurricanes after the 2020 season and returned to Blainville-Boisbriand.

"I just put my nose down, went to work, came to camp here with the right attitude and didn't have the 'poor me' mindset," Henman said. "I had the mindset that I have to go out and prove people wrong. It's just an extremely exciting day for me and my family and I couldn't be more thrilled."