

Family: Marine out of brig, but fight not over

By **CHAD GARLAND**
Stars and Stripes

The struggle to free Marine Cpl. Thae Ohu from the brig is over, but her family says their fight for justice isn't.

Ohu was released under a plea agreement last week after nearly a year in pre-trial confinement at the Navy Consolidated Brig in Chesapeake, Va., on charges of attempted murder, aggravated assault and other offenses stemming from an April 2020 attack on her then-boyfriend. The attempted murder charges were dropped as part of the deal.

The 27-year-old's case drew widespread attention last year after her family publicly called for the Marine Corps to release her into mental health treatment, saying the assault came amid a psychological breakdown.

Ohu had suffered severe post-traumatic stress disorder and other issues since she was raped by a Marine supervisor in Japan five years ago, her advocates said.

"Although we cannot and will not overlook the failures of the United States Marine Corps and DamNeck leadership, we are overjoyed Thae is released from their toxic control," the family said in a statement on

the website Justice for Thae Ohu.

Ohu had been assigned to the Marine Corps Intelligence Schools at Dam Neck Naval Base in Virginia.

Advocates for rape survivors and others have criticized Ohu's treatment as emblematic of the military's mishandling of sexual assault and mental health issues.

Her sister, Pan Phyu, posted a video to a TikTok account with 27,000 followers last month, saying she was eager for a trial so the defense could detail its allegations about the command's negligence and "toxic leadership."

"#JusticeForThaeOhu isn't over yet!" Phyu said in a Facebook post last week after Ohu's release. "We still need to correct the measure that took place in [her] circumstances."

The victim of Ohu's attack, Michael Hinesley, also a Marine, had called for the case to be dropped. In a statement to the court published on the Justice for Thae Ohu site, he described her command as more focused on fast-tracking her out of the service, rather than giving her proper care.

Ohu had a history of mental illness before the service, but Hinesley said her condition worsened after the 2015 sexual assault on

Okinawa. Locking her up for last year's assault "stripped away" any progress she'd made in treatment, he said.

The Marine Corps' lead prosecutor in the case, Maj. Zachary Phelps, argued that Ohu's actions were not the result of mental illness, but a sign of "complete disrespect for the law," and that she deserved punishment to deter would-be offenders.

Ohu pleaded guilty to aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon for the April incident, two charges of assault consummated by battery, and destruction of military property for a hospital incident, as well as a charge with two specifications of willfully disobeying a superior officer, Marine Corps Times reported.

She was sentenced to time served, reduction in rank to E-1 and a bad conduct discharge, but Zimmerman recommended the discharge be suspended for six months, citing her significant mental health history as extenuating and mitigating circumstances.

A bad conduct discharge would make Ohu ineligible for guaranteed veteran benefits, and her attorneys argued that medically retiring her instead would let her keep those benefits and allow her to get the help she needs.

Navy secretary wants mental health pros in units

By **CAITLIN DOORNBOS**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy has submitted a reprogramming request to the Defense Department that would allow the service to reallocate some of its current budget to spend on mental health services, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Harker told reporters Wednesday.

The move would fund more embedded mental health practitioners "at the pointy end of the stick with the sailors and Marines, being able to give them services at the units where they are," Harker said. "This is an area that we strongly believe in because it helps get people ac-

cess to treatment at an early level, access to informal treatment."

The program sends hospital corpsmen who have taken behavioral health technician classes into units to act as a "immediate first response" for sailors suffering from mental health issues, Harker said. About 35% of those trained as mental health practitioners in the Navy are embedded now.

Harker did not say how much money the service is asking to move to the program nor where it would come from in the budget. The reprogramming request would require approval from the defense secretary and

Congress to enact, he said.

The Navy is also considering an investment of additional funds for the program in its fiscal year 2022 budget, which is expected to be released next week, Harker said.

The acting Navy secretary made the announcement as his office conducts a mental health awareness month video series. In it, he asks Navy personnel to share their personal experiences with mental health.

In the video, Harker said he benefited from military mental health resources after a traumatic experience while serving aboard Coast Guard cutter Dauntless in February 1993 af-

ter it responded to a capsized Haitian ferry vessel carrying nearly 2,000 people.

But "what began as a rescue operation soon became one of recovery," and his ship took onboard the bodies of more than 80 drowned men, women and children, he said in the video. Afterward, the Coast Guard sent psychologists, psychiatrists and clergy to help the crew process what they had witnessed.

"After an experience like that, no one wanted to talk to mental health professionals, we just wanted to go home, but I'll always be grateful that the Coast Guard made sure we received counseling," Harker said.

USS Reagan departs for 1st patrol of year

Stars and Stripes

Sailors in summer white uniforms manned the rails of the USS Ronald Reagan on Wednesday as the aircraft carrier pulled away from the pier for its first patrol of the year and its second during the coronavirus pandemic.

The carrier's air wing — based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in southwestern Japan — is expected to join the ship at sea. The Ronald Reagan typically deploys with a strike group of destroyers, cruisers and an unannounced submarine presence.

The carrier completed sea trials in preparation from the deployment last week, according to a Wednesday statement announcing the patrol.

"Ronald Reagan's flexible presence is a key element in helping assure our regional

allies and partners that the United States remains committed to ensuring freedom of the seas," the carrier's commander, Capt. Fred Goldhammer, said in the statement.

Navy officials declined to say whether the strike group would make port calls or if the crew will get liberty during the patrol.

Last year, the service kept many of its warships at sea for extended periods and sidestepped most port calls because of the coronavirus. The guided-missile destroyer USS Stout broke a service record of 208 consecutive days at sea due to coronavirus mitigation and operational requirements.

"There aren't any Navy-wide decisions on vaccinations and liberty, but there is one requiring [restriction of movement] for those who aren't vaccinated," the service's chief of information, Vice Adm. Charles Brown, told

Stars and Stripes on May 14.

During its six-month patrol last year, the Ronald Reagan made only one port call, which was at Guam.

"Sailors had access to specific designated areas on the pier and a secured beach on base," carrier spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Dawn Stankus told *Stars and Stripes* in an email May 12.

She declined to say whether the Ronald Reagan or the ships in its strike group would make more stops this time or what the liberty policy will be for both vaccinated and non-vaccinated crew members while in port.

All sailors are encouraged to receive a vaccine, but it remains voluntary at this point, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Joe Keiley said in an email before the warship left Yokosuka.

Destroyer completes Navy's latest Taiwan Strait transit

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

A guided-missile destroyer sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Tuesday, the fifth time a Navy ship has passed this year through the politically sensitive waters that separate the island from the Chinese mainland.

The USS Curtis Wilbur's passage "demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," the Navy said in a statement Tuesday.

"The United States military will continue to fly, sail, and operate anywhere international law allows," the statement added.

The Navy sent warships through the Tai-

wan Strait 11 times in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, according to a January report by the Congressional Research Service.

Beijing considers Taiwan a renegade province that must, at some point, be unified politically with the mainland.

A Chinese military spokesman, Col. Zhang Chunhui, said Chinese forces tracked and monitored Tuesday's passage, according to *The Associated Press*.

Such U.S. actions are "sending wrong signals to the 'Taiwan independence' forces, deliberately disrupting and sabotaging the regional situation and endangering peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," he

said in a statement on the Defense Ministry's website.

The high tempo of Navy transits through the strait coincides with the Communist Party of China's tightening grip on Hong Kong and a belief by some that Beijing could use force on Taiwan to bring it to heel.

In June last year, China imposed a national security law on Hong Kong that was quickly used to silence or imprison dissenters.

That move ran contrary to China's agreement to allow Hong Kong a degree of political autonomy — the so-called "one country, two systems" principle — after Great Britain handed over the former colony in 1997.

Triton maritime surveillance drones arrive at Misawa

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Two Navy MQ-4C Triton surveillance drones have deployed to Misawa Air Base in northeast Japan, where they will operate in support of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The Guam-based aircraft, assigned to Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19 at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla., landed at the home of the 35th Fighter Wing on Saturday, said U.S. Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo.

Approximately 80-100 personnel have traveled to Misawa to operate the aircraft, which are on their maiden deployment to Japan, she said in an email Wednesday.

"The Triton is an unmanned, unarmed aerial reconnaissance system with a mission of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance," Cerezo said. "Triton's primary mission is maritime surveillance. It provides high-resolution, all-weather imagery across large geographic areas, which offers an important capability in support of the Japan-U.S. alliance."

Exactly how long the planes will be in Japan is

unclear.

"As a matter of policy and security, we do not comment on operational schedules," Cerezo said.

The Navy also did not provide a reason for the deployment.

However, the Tritons' mission coincides with the deployment of RQ-4 Global Hawk drones to Yokota Air Base, home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo. U.S. forces have temporarily deployed the Guam-based Global Hawks to Japan each summer since 2014 to avoid typhoons.

Guardsmen asked to stay at Mexico border

BY SARAH CAMMARATA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Homeland Security has sent a request to the Defense Department to keep troops at the U.S.-Mexico border beyond Sept. 30, which is the end of the fiscal year, the National Guard's top general said Tuesday.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine., said during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on National Guard and Reserve forces that the Defense Department received a request from Homeland Security to continue the Guard's border deployment into the 2022 fiscal year.

She asked Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, to share details on the status of the planning to extend the Guard's mission at the southern border.

"We received that request recently. I know it's going through

the Office of Secretary of Defense right now to determine how that's going to be resourced going forward," Hokanson said.

The general said active-duty troops could be called up to provide support in place of Guard members, and the department is "looking at all options."

"We're making sure that we do this as quickly as possible to notify those forces so there's no break in coverage," Hokanson said.

Pentagon spokesman Chris Mitchell said Tuesday that the department has received a formal request, but did not provide further details.

About 4,000 National Guard troops are now providing infrastructure support, operational support, detection and monitoring support and air support along the U.S.-Mexico border, Mitchell said last week.

About 180 Guard troops in

Arizona and 600 Guard troops in Texas are also performing state missions along the border, he said.

Collins said at the hearing that she supports the move to keep troops at the southern border due to the influx of migrants that are crossing from Mexico into the United States.

"It is evident that the border patrol agents — though they work so hard — are overwhelmed and really need assistance. So I hope that will be approved or that active-duty forces will assist," the senator said.

It was unclear Tuesday how many troops have been requested to stay at the border or for how long. Homeland Security officials, however, told the Government Accountability Office during a review in February of the Pentagon's mission at the border that they want troops to

remain there for the next three years.

"DHS anticipates needing at least the current amount of [Defense Department] support for the next three to five years, possibly more," according to the report on the cost and readiness implications of continued DOD support to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

When President Joe Biden took office in January, he rolled back former President Donald Trump's national emergency declared at the border. That declaration from February 2019 and other policies from Trump on the border served as the Pentagon's basis for approving Homeland Security's support requests, according to the report.

However, the Pentagon has said Biden's actions have not impacted the mission or the presence of troops at the border.

EU takes major step toward easing travel for vaccinated

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union on Wednesday took a step toward relaxing tourism travel for visitors from outside the bloc, with EU ambassadors agreeing on measures to allow fully vaccinated visitors in.

They also agreed on easing the criteria for nations to be considered a safe country, from which all tourists can travel. Up to now, that list included only seven nations.

The EU imposed strict measures last year to contain COVID-19 outbreaks, but the bloc's 27 ambassadors now say many of those restrictions on nonessential travel should be eased. Specifically, tourists from outside the bloc who have been fully vaccinated should be allowed in.

The European Council "will now recommend that member states ease some of the current restrictions" for those who have been vaccinated, said EU Commission spokesman Christian Wigand. He didn't give a precise date for when the borders will reopen since EU countries have yet to

formally approve the measures.

"The council should also soon expand the list of non-EU countries with a good epidemiological situation from where travel is permitted," said Wigand. The EU's European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control is to give advice on the list.

The relaxation of rules was proposed earlier this month by the European Commission, which said entry should be granted to all those fully vaccinated with EU-authorized shots. Coronavirus vaccines authorized by the European Medicines Agency, the bloc's drug regulator, include Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson. The EMA hasn't approved any vaccines from Russia or China as of yet, but is looking at data for Russia's Sputnik V jab.

Wigand said ambassadors also agreed on an "emergency brake" mechanism designed to stop dangerous virus variants from entering the 27-nation bloc through quickly enacted travel limits if the infection situation deteriorates in a non-EU country.

India sets global record for daily COVID-19 deaths

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — India on Wednesday reported more coronavirus deaths in a single day than any other country at any time during the pandemic, while infections continued to spread through vast rural areas with weak health systems.

The Health Ministry reported a record 4,529 deaths in the past 24 hours, driving India's confirmed fatalities to 283,248. It also reported 267,334 new infections, as daily cases remained below 300,000 for the third consecutive day. The numbers are almost certainly undercounts.

The previous record for most daily deaths from the virus was set on Jan. 12 in the United States, when 4,475 people died, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Experts say new infections in India, which had been rising steeply, may finally be slowing. But deaths have continued to rise and hospitals are still crowded with patients. Over the last month, India's COVID-19 fatalities have jumped six-fold.

NC deputies won't be charged in man's death

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

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. — The district attorney for Pasquotank County, N.C., will not bring criminal charges against sheriff's deputies who shot and killed Andrew Brown Jr. in Elizabeth City — a move that led to increased tension and protest over police violence.

District Attorney Andrew Womble announced the news while discussing the state's investigation at a news conference in the county's public safety building Tuesday.

Womble said Brown's death "while tragic, was justified" because his actions caused three deputies to "reasonably believe it was necessary to use deadly force to protect themselves and others."

Brown died April 21 after being shot by sheriff's deputies who came to his house to serve arrest

and search warrants related to drug charges.

On Tuesday evening, roughly 80 protesters gathered outside the sheriff's office, accusing Womble of lies and calling video snippets selectively edited.

"Nothing's changed," said Kirk Rivers. "If it did anything, it made you realize you have to go harder. We have to do more."

Pasquotank County Sheriff Tommy Wooten, in a video statement posted on Facebook, said the three deputies involved will keep their jobs, but be "disciplined and retrained."

"This was a terrible and tragic outcome, and we could do better," Wooten said.

Law enforcement involvement began in the weeks prior to the shooting when a detective with the Dare County Sheriff's Office received information from a reliable confidential source that Brown was selling drugs in Dare County, Womble said. The detec-

tive contacted Pasquotank County and confirmed Brown's identity and that he was a known drug dealer, Womble said.

The two felony arrest warrants for the sale of controlled substances and search warrants came as a result of undercover buys from Brown of cocaine and heroin that was laced with fentanyl, Womble said.

The morning of the incident, the deputies were briefed on Brown's criminal history and interactions with law enforcement, Womble said. He noted Brown's resisting arrest charges and convictions for assault, assault with a deadly weapon and assault inflicting serious injury dating back to 1995.

Brown was sitting in his car in his driveway, attempting to flee, when he was shot by deputies who arrived at the scene in full tactical gear.

Womble described a 44-second encounter in which seven depu-

ties blocked Brown in his driveway, trying to serve the warrants. He showed video clips and photos from body camera footage.

Brown ignored orders to raise his hands and get out of his car, and he struck a deputy with the vehicle while trying to escape, Womble said.

"My review of the incident indicates there is no evidence that deputies who fired the fatal shots acted in any manner that is inconsistent with the threat they perceived," Womble said, "and certainly no evidence that the deputies acted in any way contrary to or in violation of North Carolina law."

A private autopsy commissioned by Brown's family showed he was hit by at least five bullets, with the fatal wound from a shot into the back of his head. But on Tuesday, Womble said Brown was shot twice, in the shoulder and the back of the head, with shrapnel wounds elsewhere.

NY opens criminal probe of Trump Organization

Bloomberg News

New York Attorney General Letitia James said her investigation of The Trump Organization, which had been civil, has morphed into a criminal probe. The disclosure means that former President Donald Trump's company is under criminal investigation by two state officials, James and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.

"We have informed the Trump Organization that our investigation into the organization is no longer purely civil in nature. We are now actively investigating the Trump Organization in a criminal capacity, along with the Manhattan DA. We have no additional comment at this time," Fabien Levy, a spokesman for James, said in a statement issued late Tuesday.

One focus of James' investigation had been the appraisal of Seven Springs, a Trump property

on 212 acres in Westchester County, outside New York City. James' investigators have been trying to determine whether Trump's company gave an accurate valuation for the property when it served as the basis for about \$21.1 million in tax deductions for donating a conservation easement for the 2015 tax year.

It's not clear whether James' probe is expanding into other tax issues, and her spokesman declined to provide any further information.

Vance initially focused on the Trump Organization's reimbursements of 2016 hush-money payments made by Michael Cohen, Trump's personal lawyer and fixer, to women claiming to have had affairs with Trump. Since then, his probe has expanded into a broader review of the company's dealings, including whether the Trump Organization lied to secure credit lines and tax breaks.

Netanyahu vows to continue military offensive in Gaza

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to press ahead with a fierce military offensive in the Gaza Strip, pushing back Wednesday against calls from the United States to wind down the operation that has left hundreds dead.

Netanyahu's tough comments marked the first public rift between the two close allies since the fighting began last week and could complicate international efforts to reach a cease-fire.

Israel continued to pound targets in Gaza with airstrikes Wednesday, while Palestinian militants bombarded Israel with rocket fire throughout the day. In another sign of potential escalation, militants in Lebanon fired a barrage of rockets into northern Israel.

After a visit to military headquarters, Netanyahu said he

"greatly appreciates the support of the American president," but said Israel will push ahead "to return the calm and security to you, citizens of Israel."

He said he is "determined to continue this operation until its aim is met."

He spoke shortly after U.S. President Joe Biden told Netanyahu "that he expected a significant de-escalation today on the path to a ceasefire," the White House said.

Biden had previously avoided pressing Israel more directly and publicly for a cease-fire with Gaza's Hamas militant rulers. But pressure has been ramping up on Biden to intervene more forcefully as other diplomatic efforts also gather strength.

Netanyahu has repeatedly vowed to press ahead with the operation, and his latest response to Biden signaled he had no intentions of stopping.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Trapped cat rescued from NFL player's car

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Firefighters in Florida were called to rescue a cat — not out of a tree, but from the undercarriage of a car owned by New York Giants cornerback Isaac Yiadom, officials said.

Rescue workers responded to Yiadom's home, according to a Facebook post by the Fort Lauderdale Fire Department.

Firefighters jacked up the Maserati and partially disassembled the car to reach the small tabby, which was stuck above the rear differential. The cat didn't appear to be injured.

Yiadom was drafted by the Denver Broncos in 2018 and then traded to the Giants in September.

Man gets jail time for cattle theft, bank fraud

MT MISSOULA — A Montana man who was charged in a cattle rustling scheme was sentenced to 30 months in prison after pleading guilty to wire fraud and to selling cattle that were collateral for loans, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Montana said.

U.S. District Judge Dana Christensen ordered Joshua James Chappa, of Bozeman, to pay nearly \$451,000 in restitution at a rate of \$2,000 per month. It would take nearly 19 years to make full restitution.

Chappa, 45, who was a ranch manager, began dealing in cattle, including stealing cattle from his employer and selling them as if they were his own, prosecutors said. He was ordered to pay the ranch \$241,000 in restitution.

He also borrowed money from

Northwest Farm Credit Services, pledging his cattle as collateral. However, he sold the cattle without repaying the loans. He was ordered to pay Northwest nearly \$205,000.

Christensen also ordered Chappa to pay \$5,000 to Willers Mitten Brand of Norfolk, Neb., after partnering with the company in cattle ventures and failing to make payments to the company when he sold the cattle.

Passenger's actions lead to emergency landing

NY NEW YORK — A flight out of Kennedy Airport made an emergency landing after an unruly, foul-smelling passenger refused to wear a mask, snorted a white powder, groped a woman and uttered racial slurs, according to reports.

The suspect was taken into custody when the JetBlue flight to San Francisco made an unscheduled landing in Minneapolis. The 42-year-old passenger, who lives in upstate New York, was charged with drug possession, according to reports.

One passenger said the man oddly said he wanted a white Porsche, while others said he refused to wear a mask and was using a plastic fork as a potential weapon.

Scuba divers begin effort to rid lake of trash

CA SOUTH LAKE TAHOE — A team of scuba divers has completed the first dive of a massive, six-month effort to rid the popular Lake Tahoe of fishing rods, tires, aluminum cans, beer bottles and other trash accumulating underwater.

The team collected about 200

pounds of garbage during their one-tank session and found 20 large or heavy items, including buckets filled with cement and car bumpers, that will have to be retrieved later by a boat with a crane, said Colin West, a diver and filmmaker who founded Clean Up the Lake, the nonprofit spearheading the project.

They plan to dive three days a week down to 25 feet in depth. The clean-up effort will cost \$250,000 — money the nonprofit has collected through grants — and will last through November.

Reward split between 2 who reported arson

GA SAVANNAH — Two people in Georgia are sharing a reward for providing crucial tips to authorities after someone set fire to a city government office building.

Savannah fire officials announced the two witnesses will share the \$10,000 reward. Each was credited with reporting unusual activity on May 3, 2020, when the city's code enforcement building was destroyed by fire.

Those tips helped lead to the arrest of Stephen Charles Setter, 19, who was sentenced to five years in federal prison in March after pleading guilty to a charge of arson.

24 hikers rescued in Organ Mountains

NM LAS CRUCES — Authorities said a group of 24 hikers who became separated, disoriented and stranded in the Organ Mountains were rescued by the Las Cruces Fire Department and other law enforcement officers.

The hiking group from El Paso, Texas, was trying what authorities called an ambitious attempt to scale The Needle — one of the most difficult ascents in the mountain range near Las Cruces.

The group was made up of hikers with various trail experience. Authorities said some fell behind, splintered onto different trails and became disoriented. They became stranded once the sun set and were unable to find their way off the mountain.

Hikers made several calls to 911 prompting the search and rescue mission.

Man accused of poisoning stream fined

HI HILO — The Hawaii Board of Land and Natural Resources fined a man more than \$600,000 on accusations of poisoning a stream, killing an estimated 6,250 Tahitian prawns.

Wayne Keaulana Spatz, 54, allegedly poured ant poison into Paaheehee Stream in North Hilo on the northeastern side of the Big Island.

Officials indicated it's unlikely that Spatz, who they said has no known address, would be able to pay the penalties and that they were unable to contact him to inform him of the impending fine, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

Spatz's alleged activity was discovered after Edwin Shishido, an official with the state's Department of Land and Natural Resources, received a tip from a person living nearby of someone pouring "Home Defense" liquid ant poison into the stream last July. Thousands of dead Tahitian prawns flowed downstream.

— From wire reports



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McIlroy favored to win again at Kiawah

Associated Press

Rory McIlroy knows as well as anyone how quickly fortunes can change in golf.

Until winning at his happy hunting ground of Quail Hollow last week, McIlroy had gone 18 months without winning anywhere, the second-longest dry spell of his career. Now he's the betting favorite for the PGA Championship, which starts Thursday at Kiawah Island.

It's not much different from nine years ago, the last time the PGA Championship went to the South Carolina shores of Kiawah Island.

McIlroy was practically an afterthought. In the three months leading up to the final major of 2012, he had missed the cut in four of the eight tournaments he played worldwide and didn't seriously contend in the other four. His best finish in a major that year was a tie for 40th at the Masters.

And then over four days, the bounce in his step returned, his short game was exquisite and he set the PGA Championship record with an eight-shot victory. He finished the rest of the year by winning three more times and meeting the PGA of America employee who became his wife. It was a good year.

Is this the start of another big run?

Perhaps the better question is who's next?

Going into the second major of 2021, it's

hard to find anyone else in top form. Justin Thomas has an ice-cold putter. Bryson DeChambeau was another flop at the Masters, and while his tee shots still go far, he's not always sure which direction.

Brooks Koepka will have played only twice in three months because of another knee injury. Dustin Johnson, who withdrew from his final tuneup, has gone three months without a top-10 finish. Has anyone seen Xander Schauffele and Patrick Cantlay on a late Sunday afternoon when they weren't partners? Cantlay has missed three straight cuts on his own ball for the first time in his career.

Only two players — Thomas at No. 3 and defending PGA champion Collin Morikawa at No. 6 — were in the top 10 when they won PGA Tour events this year.

That can all change with a moment's notice, of course.

"It's happened to me," McIlroy said. "I hadn't sniffed a weekend of a golf tournament for a couple of months. I guess it turned around quickly. But there's a lot of work in between to get to that point. I think once you see progress and you get that little spark of confidence, then things can start to move pretty quickly."

One player who would seem to have some momentum is Masters champion Hideki

Matsuyama, except that he took his green jacket home to Japan, where he quarantined for two weeks. There wasn't much to do except read Japanese newspapers about his Masters victory, which is more than he'd ever read about himself.

"I'm not used to all that attention," he said, "but grateful that people took notice."

Another player is Jordan Spieth, who has reason to get plenty of attention at Kiawah Island.

Spieth had not won since the 2017 British Open and was on the verge of falling out of the top 100 in the world when he missed the cut in his first start of the year. Then, he played in the final group the next two weeks. He contended at Bay Hill and then he capped off his return by winning the Texas Open, followed by a tie for third at Augusta National.

But then he tested positive for COVID-19 during a two-week break that turned into four weeks. He returned at the AT&T Byron Nelson hopeful of knocking off some rust he didn't initially expect to be there.

At stake for Spieth is another chance — his fifth and possibly his best — to win the PGA Championship for the final piece of the career Grand Slam. Only five others have won all four majors, most recently Tiger Woods in 2000. No one has completed it at the PGA Championship.

Trio of Indy 500 winners quiets youth movement

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The kids were at last quieted when Indianapolis Motor Speedway opened for practice. Experience mattered once again, and a trio of former Indianapolis 500 winners led the way.

Will Power ran 226.470 miles per hour Tuesday in a Chevrolet for Team Penske, followed next by Ryan Hunter-Reay and Takuma Sato. The trio has combined to win four of the past seven runnings of "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing," and two-time winner Sato is the defending champ.

Simon Pagenaud, Scott Dixon and Tony Kanaan, all former Indy 500 winners, were sixth, eighth and 10th on the speed chart, while two-time winner Juan Pablo Montoya ranked 12th in his first Indy 500 practice

since 2017.

"At the end of the day, you've got to run the 200 laps and see what happens. First of all, you've got to make it to 200," said Montoya. "And you know, we'll see."

The changing of the guard in the IndyCar Series is happening at breakneck speed with three first-time race winners this season and four winners aged 24 or younger.

And there's only been five races. Dixon, the six-time series champion, is the only veteran with a win so far, and the youth movement is so hot that Colton Herta earned a two-year contract extension last week because Andretti Autosport worried another team would poach the 21-year-old phenom.

"How many young guys have won the 500 the last few years?"

Montoya asked. "I think that answers the question. I mean, do they have a shot? For sure, no question."

Alexander Rossi was a 24-year-old rookie when he won in 2016 but brought an extensive racing background to his first Indy 500.

Next up on the calendar is the 105th running of the Indy 500, the race when the veterans can reclaim their spot in the pecking order and show the fearless young drivers a thing or too about speed.

"I think there's obviously a lot of talent in the field and a lot of new talent coming up and deserving race winners, but I think this place definitely pays tribute to the veterans that have experience," Hunter-Reay said.

Preparation for the 500 is a

mental battle learned only through experience. Tuesday's session was run in cloud cover and mild 70 degree temperatures, an anomaly because beginning Wednesday it's scheduled to start getting warmer and warmer — all the way until Sunday when it calls for a high of 90 degrees when the pole is decided.

The track changes with the weather and the cars drive different each day. There's pressure to not only make the 33-car field — there are 35 entries, so two drivers won't qualify — but earning a starting spot on the first three rows is critical because last year's race showed that passing is a challenge with the current Indy car and its heavier cockpit-protecting aeroscreen.

Tigers' Turnbull no-hits Mariners

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Spencer Turnbull walked out of the bullpen Tuesday night feeling terrible, hoping a shaky pregame warmup would dissipate once he stepped on the mound.

A few hours later, Turnbull was being slammed in the face with a shaving cream pie and doused in water, beer and baby powder by his Detroit Tigers teammates on the grass at T-Mobile Park.

There was plenty to celebrate after Turnbull joined the parade of no-hitters in 2021.

“It is by far the best night of my life, most exciting, and it’s definitely kind of like one of those landmark stamps on my career up to this point,” Turnbull said.

The 28-year-old right-hander tossed the fifth no-hitter of the major league season, baffling the Seattle Mariners in Detroit’s 5-0 win.

Once best known for leading baseball in losses in 2019 when he had a 3-17 record, Turnbull twirled a gem that overmatched the Mariners and continued to highlight the dominance of pitchers through the first quarter of the season.

The five no-hitters through May 18 match the 1917 season for the most in baseball history by that date. Two of the five were thrown against Seattle at T-Mobile Park, and the Mariners are the first team since the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2015 to get no-hit twice in a

month.

Turnbull is the first pitcher not named Justin Verlander to throw a no-hitter for the Tigers since Jack Morris in 1984. Verlander threw two during his tenure with the Tigers, the last coming on May 7, 2011, in Toronto.

A decade later, Turnbull added his name to the team’s record book.

Turnbull had never gone more than seven innings in any of his previous 49 starts over three seasons. Now, he owns a no-no.

“He was pretty relentless,” Detroit manager A.J. Hinch said. “I’m really proud of him. He’s worked really hard and deserves every bit of tonight.”

Turnbull leaned on a fast-

ball in the mid-90s (mph) and a biting slider to keep Seattle’s batters guessing. He also got a great defensive play from third baseman Jeimer Candelario in the seventh inning to rob Mitch Haniger of a possible hit, and then struck out Haniger in the ninth to end it.

“Probably three of the best pitches I made all night,” Turnbull said.

Turnbull (3-2) fanned nine and walked two. He issued a free pass to Jose Marmolejos leading off the ninth when a full-count curveball missed wide, just the second baserunner for Seattle. Turnbull struck out Sam Haggerty for the first out and got Jarred Kelenic to ground into a fielder’s choice for the second.

Reliever Hunter gets first hit as Mets hold off Braves

Associated Press

ATLANTA — One night after getting struck in the face by a 95 mph fastball, Kevin Pillar popped out of the dugout to deliver the lineup card to home plate.

No way the New York Mets were losing this game.

Even if it took a hit from the most unlikely of players.

Jonathan Villar and Tomás Nido homered for the Mets, powering a 4-3 victory over the Atlanta Braves on Tuesday night, but it was a third-inning single by reliever Tommy Hunter that symbolized how resourceful New York has been in the face of a staggering rash of injuries.

“He was due,” Nido quipped.

Was he ever.

Hunter, a 34-year-old right-hander, was second to the mound on a night when the Mets relied on their bullpen to get by without a true starter. He had batted only four times previously in his 14-year career.

He finally got his first hit, lining one cleanly to left field.

“That was the coolest thing I’ve ever done in the big leagues,” Hunter said, still riding high during a giddy Zoom session with reporters several hours later. “I got a knock in The Show. ... I feel like I’m a real baseball player now.”

With everyone on the top step of the New York dugout to applaud his accomplishment, Hunter waved in their direction, gave a little shake of the hips and fist-bumped first-base coach Tony Tarasco.

Hunter’s hit proved huge. With two outs, Villar drove a 1-1 pitch into the seats in left-center for a two-run shot.

Yankees 7, Rangers 4: DJ LeMahieu had a season-high three RBIs, including the tie-breaking, two-run double in his team’s big inning, and visiting New York beat Texas.

Giants 4, Reds 2: Anthony DeSclafani (4-1) gave up one run over seven good innings, Alex Dickerson hit a three-run homer and visiting San Francisco beat Cincinnati.

Padres 2, Rockies 1 (10): Jorge Mateo scored from third base on Daniel Bard’s wild pitch in the bottom of the 10th inning to lift host San Diego to its fifth straight win.

Cardinals 5, Pirates 2: Nolan Arenado hit a two-run homer, his fourth in four games, and host St. Louis beat Pittsburgh.

Indians 6, Angels 5: Josh Naylor hit a tie-breaking homer in the eighth inning and visiting Cleveland snapped a four-game losing streak.

Shohei Ohtani hit his major league-leading 14th home run for Los Angeles, which got bad news earlier in the day when Mike Trout was placed on the injured list with a strained

right calf.

Cubs 6, Nationals 3: David Bote and Ian Happ homered, and host Chicago beat Washington.

Royals 2, Brewers 0: Andrew Benintendi drove in the go-ahead run with two outs in the eighth inning and host Kansas City spoiled a masterful start by Milwaukee’s Brandon Woodruff.

Athletics 6, Astros 5: Ramón Laureano hit two home runs, then lofted a game-ending sacrifice fly in the ninth inning as host Oakland ended Houston’s six-game winning streak.

Rays 13, Orioles 6: Mike Zunino hit two home runs and visiting Tampa Bay connected five times in all for its fifth straight win.

Phillies 8, Marlins 3: Pinch-hitter Ronald Torreyes delivered a tiebreaking, two-run double in the eighth inning to lift host Philadelphia past Miami.

Blue Jays 8, Red Sox 0: At Dunedin, Fla., Hyun Jin Ryu pitched seven masterful innings, light-hitting Danny Jansen played a key offensive role and host Toronto beat Boston.

Dodgers 9, Diamondbacks 1: Gavin Lux hit his first career grand slam and Julio Urias pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning against Arizona as host Los Angeles won for the sixth time in seven games.

Tatum scores 50, Celtics top Wizards

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Celtics were one of the NBA's worst teams over the final month of the regular season.

Thanks to Jayson Tatum, they'll still have a chance to make a playoff run.

Tatum scored 32 of his 50 points in the second half, and the Celtics rallied to beat the Washington Wizards 118-100 in the play-in round on Tuesday night.

Kemba Walker added 29 points for Boston, which secured the seventh seed for the playoffs and a first-round matchup with second-seeded Brooklyn. That series opens on Saturday.

Tatum has drawn criticism at times for his quiet leadership style. He said Tuesday's performance was how he wants to lead.

"I know that my teammates, I've earned their respect. I've earned the respect of the guys I play against," he said. "I believe in myself. That's all that matters."

The Celtics struggled down the stretch, dropping 10 of their final 15 games of the season. Coach Brad Stevens said having to respond was in line with a season in which they had to fight through multiple players being unavailable because of injuries and stints in the league's health and safety protocols.

"We've been through a lot, so we're hardened in a lot of ways," Stevens said. "We've been backs against the wall for most of the year. ... It takes a lot of togetherness and it takes staying together through tough times."

Washington hosts Indiana, which rolled over Charlotte in Tuesday's other play-in game, for the eighth seed on Thursday. The winner of that game will face Philadelphia, the top seed for the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Bradley Beal scored 22 points for the Wizards. Russell Westbrook added 20 points and 14 rebounds. Ish Smith had 17 points. But Washington struggled from deep all night long, going 3-for-21 from the three-point line.

"We couldn't find it. We couldn't find the basket," Wizards coach Scott Brooks said. "We haven't shot well all year long, but we're not a 3-for-21 shooting team."

The Celtics played without second-leading scorer Jaylen Brown, who had season-ending wrist surgery last week. He sat courtside to support his teammates, but they missed his offensive production in the first half while they struggled to get into a flow.

That changed in the third quarter. Boston opened the second half on a 22-4 run, open-

ing a 74-58 lead.

The Celtics followed Tatum's lead. The All-Star forward created space for open jumpers and drew contact in the lane. He was 17 of 17 from the free-throw line.

Washington closed to 91-84 in the fourth quarter, but Boston responded with a 15-6 run to push the lead to 106-88 with 5:32 to play.

"We just didn't do what we were supposed to do," Westbrook said.

Pacers 144, Hornets 117: Domantas Sabonis delivered. He found open teammates, cleaned up the glass and played solid defense.

The combination helped keep Indiana's playoff hopes alive — for at least two more nights.

Sabonis had 14 points, 21 rebounds and nine assists, and the short-handed Pacers routed visiting Charlotte in the Eastern Conference's first play-in game Tuesday.

"He's a point forward and sometimes when you're a point guard you have to score more and sometimes you have to assist more and make the right plays," coach Nate Bjorkgren said. "That's what I thought he was doing tonight. He was passing, hitting cutters, making the right play. He wants to make the right play."

Jarry saves 37, Penguins even series with Islanders

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Tristan Jarry challenged himself to simply be better following a shaky performance in Pittsburgh's playoff opener.

Admittedly, the soft-spoken goaltender knew the bar wasn't particularly high. Not after giving up four goals — most of them on relatively innocuous shots — in a Game 1 loss to the New York Islanders.

Two nights later, Jarry looked like the player whose steady play helped propel the Penguins to the East Division title. Solid at the start and stoic at the finish, Jarry turned aside 37 shots as Pittsburgh evened the series with a 2-1 victory over the Islanders on Tuesday night.

"I mean, that's his old self,

that's his game," Penguins defenseman Mike Matheson said of Jarry. "That's what we expect from him. I don't think it was anything out of the ordinary for him, as crazy as that sounds. He plays at such a high level for us, to call that his norm is pretty impressive and is a testament to how good of a goalie he is."

The victory was the first in the playoffs for Jarry as Pittsburgh won for just the second time in its last 12 postseason games.

Game 3 is Thursday night in New York.

Jarry, in his first season as the Penguins' unquestioned No. 1 goalie after two-time Stanley Cup winner Matt Murray was traded away last fall, stressed he didn't try to complicate things after four sometimes iffy peri-

ods in the opener.

Pittsburgh needed Jarry to get in front of every one of them during a taut third period as it clutched a one-goal lead. The last 90 seconds were the most fraught after a delay-of-game penalty by Penguins forward Bryan Rust gave the Islanders their only power play of the night. Yet Jarry turned aside a wrist shot by Oliver Wahlstrom with 1:12 remaining and the largest crowd to watch a game in Pittsburgh in 14 months exhaled when the final horn sounded.

Lightning 3, Panthers 1: Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 32 shots, Steven Stamkos and Ondrej Palat had first-period goals and visiting Tampa Bay beat Florida to take a 2-0 lead in the Central Division first-round

playoff series.

It's the seventh time that the Lightning have won the first two games of a series, the third time doing so on the road. They've never lost one of those matchups, and will look to put the Panthers on the brink of elimination when the series shifts to Tampa on Thursday.

Golden Knights 3, Wild 1: Alex Tuch had two goals, including the tiebreaking score in the second period, as host Vegas beat Minnesota and tied the first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

Jonathan Marchessault also scored for the Golden Knights.

Marc-Andre Fleury, the league's active leader in playoff wins (82) and games played (148), made 34 saves.