

Marines, sailors return to US after deployment to Middle East, Africa

The San Diego Union-Tribune

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — After a seven-month deployment to the Middle East and Africa, the more than 5,000 Marines and sailors of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit began disembarking at Camp Pendleton on Friday, the Marines said in a statement.

The MEU includes the San Diego-based amphibious assault ship Makin Island and amphibious transport docks Somerset and San Diego. The sailors and Marines deployed in November.

The unit supported the withdrawal of U.S. troops in Somalia as well as operations in Iraq and Syria. After its combat support and training missions, the unit sailed to Alaska this month to participate in a joint training exercise — meaning the unit went from the hot, desert climes of the Persian Gulf to the cold waters of the Arctic.

“The 15th MEU and Makin Island ARG deployed during an unprecedented pandemic and demonstrated the ability of the Navy and Marine Corps team to successfully and safely execute operations in a COVID-19 environment,” said Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, the commanding officer of the MEU, in a statement. “I am so in-

credibly proud of the professionalism, toughness and mental resilience demonstrated by our Marines and Sailors.”

The months preceding the deployment were marred by disaster.

The unit was training for deployment near San Clemente Island in July when a Marine assault amphibious vehicle suffered a series of catastrophic mechanical failures and sank, killing nine young service members. A Marine Corps investigation found the unit’s AAVs were in poor repair and should not have been in the water that day. Additionally, the Marines and sailors of the battalion landing team were not properly trained in waterborne evacuations.

The Marines opened another investigation in April to focus on the formation of the 15th MEU after outcry from family members of some service members killed in the accident. Marine Expeditionary Units consist of Marines from across different commands, such as infantry, aviation and supply who come together to train and deploy. The investigation is examining how training and material readiness impacted the unit’s formation, the Marines said.

Bill would speed up visa process for at-risk Afghans

BY SARAH CAMMARATA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A pair of House lawmakers introduced a bill on Thursday that would expedite the visa process for Afghan military translators, amid growing calls from Congress for the Biden administration to act quickly to shuttle allies out of the country ahead of the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

The bill from Reps. Jason Crow, D-Colo., and Brad Wenstrup, R-Ohio, would allow applicants to the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program to forgo a medical examination, which can cost thousands of dollars.

“The U.S. must honor our promises and protect our Afghan partners whose lives are now at risk by the Taliban,” said Crow, a former Army Ranger who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. “We can help expedite the SIV process by waiving the medical examination requirement in Afghanistan, which is cost prohibitive and difficult for many applicants to safely receive.”

Crow, along with several other lawmakers, expressed frustration earlier this

month at a House Armed Services Committee hearing after defense officials testified they lack a clear plan to provide safety for thousands of Afghans whose visa applications remain stalled due to bureaucratic inefficiencies.

The State Department-run Special Immigrant Visa program has been plagued by delays since it was created in 2009 to provide a pathway for Afghan interpreters, contractors, and other personnel to safely reach the U.S. and eventually gain citizenship.

The legislation, titled the “Honoring Our Promises through Expedition for Afghan SIVs Act of 2021,” aims to remove one bureaucratic hurdle that some applicants face in completing a medical exam.

One facility in Kabul, Afghanistan’s capital, conducts all immigrant visa examinations for the country, which forces some people who live outside the city to travel there under dangerous circumstances, the lawmakers said.

“In many cases, it’s untenable for them to remain in their home country due to active death threats for helping America, and our

interpreters and other local allies are in mortal danger,” Wenstrup said.

David Helvey, acting assistant defense secretary for the Indo-Pacific region, said Thursday at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that the Pentagon is working with the State Department to look at how to improve the program.

“That program in and of itself is limited. We’d like to be able to work with Congress to be able to increase the quotas and the resources for Special Immigrant Visas,” Helvey said.

The fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets annual spending and policy priorities for the Pentagon, added 4,000 more visas to the program. Yet, almost 19,000 applications were stalled as of September 2019, according to the 2020 review of the program by the State Department.

At the House hearing earlier this month, Rep. Michael Waltz, R-Fla., a former Army Green Beret who served multiple deployments in Afghanistan, called for these Afghans to be evacuated out immediately.

Leaders praise soldier mocked by Cruz

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Army leaders rallied around a soldier featured in a recruitment video clip that Sen. Ted Cruz mocked as representative of an “emasculated military.”

Cruz, a Texas Republican, retweeted a video Thursday that featured Cpl. Emma Malonelord, an air defense system operator stationed in South Korea.

The original video, part of a five-part series called “The Calling,” showed an animated depiction of Malonelord’s life and the reasons why she joined the military.

Cruz retweeted a shorter version of the ad that was juxtaposed with a video of Russian service members staring menacingly into the camera.

“Holy crap,” Cruz said on Twitter to his

4.4 million followers. “Perhaps a woke, emasculated military is not the best idea.”

Cruz’s retweet was shared over 14,500 times and the edited video received over 3 million views. Following his viral tweet, Army leaders expressed support for Malonelord and her service.

U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Robert Abrams called Malonelord a “superstar by any measure.”

“For what it’s worth, I met this Corporal a few months ago during a routine unit visit,” Abrams tweeted Friday. “Exceptionally sharp, professional, technical expert, highly respected by her peers, superiors and subordinates.”

The Army Enterprise Marketing Office, which manages the service’s recruitment efforts, also supported Malonelord’s ser-

vice and added that “it is important that the Soldiers featured in the campaign reflect the incredible diversity of both the Army and the American public.”

A spokeswoman for Cruz responded to Stars and Stripes.

“Sen. Cruz passionately supports the brave men and women of the United States military and has repeatedly expressed concerns that Democrat politicians, left wing bureaucrats, and the media are politicizing our armed forces to promote a fringe woke agenda based on identity politics,” Erin Perrine wrote in an emailed statement. “Our military should be focused on winning wars, and we endanger our national security and our servicemembers when they focus on anything else.”

Georgia base opens airborne graduation to public

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Tim and Jolie Tallant knew they would not be able to speak face-to-face with their son Friday, but that did not stop them from making the hourslong drive to watch him graduate from the Army’s Basic Airborne Course.

They cheered from the stands as an instructor pinned airborne wings on Army Pvt. Jacob Tallant. It was the first moment of the 20-year-old’s Army career that his parents were allowed to witness in person, since he shipped to Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., in October amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Fort Benning’s Basic Airborne Course on Friday held its first public graduation ceremony since public activities were shut down military-wide last March as the pandemic spread around the globe.

“You could tell all along the Army was trying really hard to make it as good an experience as it can for the parents under the circumstances,” Tim Tallant of Monroe, Ga., said after the graduation ceremony. He and Jolie had to watch Jacob graduate from basic and Advanced Individual Training via livestream on Facebook. “But this, today — you can see it in every one of [the soldiers’] faces, that they get to see their people [and] how important

that is to them. I know I could see it in his.”

It was also an important milestone for the Airborne Course cadre, said Army Lt. Col. Isaac Henderson, the commander of 1st Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which is in charge of the Airborne Course. Since Henderson took command just eight months ago, airborne graduations have been informal events, with graduates receiving their wings with little fanfare.

Now, as more Americans have been vaccinated and coronavirus infection rates fall nationally and locally, officials this month made the call to open graduation ceremonies to soldiers’ loved ones.

Commission head: No decisions yet on renaming bases

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The leader of a congressionally mandated commission ordered to examine the renaming of Defense Department assets that honor the Confederacy said Friday that the group is still working on criteria for the process, and a decision on what names need to change will not be made until October 2022.

The eight commissioners, appointed in February, have until October 2022 to devel-

op procedures, nominate assets to be renamed and suggest new names, said retired Navy Adm. Michelle Howard, the commission’s chairwoman.

So far, the group has identified 10 installations to consider renaming and are working on the renaming criteria before meeting with leaders at candidate bases in the coming months.

But it’s not just military bases that are eligible for change. The congressional mandate requires all Defense Department as-

sets named to honor the Confederate States of America — from ships and buildings to streets and facilities — to be renamed, Howard said.

“We understand, based on the extensiveness of the assets, this is going to take some time,” she said Friday. “The commission was built out over a lengthy time frame up until October ‘22, giving us time to account from local sensibilities [and] work our way through what potentially could be a big inventory list.”

Talks held to firm up Israel-Hamas truce

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Egyptian mediators held talks Saturday to firm up an Israel-Hamas cease-fire as Palestinians in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip began to assess the damage from 11 days of intense Israeli bombardment. A 130-truck convoy carrying urgently needed aid was headed to Gaza.

Saturday marked the first full day of a truce that ended the fourth Israel-Hamas war in just over a decade. In the fighting, Israel unleashed hundreds of airstrikes against militant targets in Gaza, while Hamas and other militants fired more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel. More than 250 people were killed, the vast majority of

them Palestinians.

Gaza City's busiest commercial area, Omar al-Mukhtar Street, was covered in debris, smashed cars and twisted metal after a 13-floor building in its center was flattened in an Israeli airstrike. Merchandise was covered in soot and strewn inside smashed stores and on the pavement. Municipal workers removed broken glass and twisted metal from streets and sidewalks.

"We really didn't expect this amount of damage," said Ashour Subeih, who sells baby clothes. "We thought the strike was a bit further from us. But as you can see not an area of the shop is intact." Having been in business for one year, Subeih estimated his losses were double what he has made so far.

Both Israel and Hamas have claimed victory. There was a widespread expectation that the cease-fire would stick for now, but that another round of fighting at some point seems inevitable. Underlying issues remain unresolved, including an Israeli-Egyptian border blockade, now in its 14th year, that is choking Gaza's more than 2 million residents and a refusal by the Islamic militant Hamas to disarm.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is to meet with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli leaders when he visits in the coming week. Abbas is expected to raise demands that any Gaza reconstruction plans go through the Palestinian Authority to avoid strengthening Hamas.

Biden betting on growth, as GOP wary of inflation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration recently gave a bit of simple advice to businesses that are unable to find workers: Offer them more money.

This recommendation, included in a White House memo about the state of the economy, gets at a fundamental tension in an economy that is returning to full health after the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses are coping with spiking prices for goods such as steel, plywood, plastics and asphalt. Yet workers, after enduring a year of job losses, business closures and social distancing, are no longer interested in accepting low wages.

Administration officials say the White House is not trying to target a specific wage level for workers. But officials say higher wages are a goal of President Joe Biden and a byproduct of his \$1.9 trillion relief package and at least \$3.5 trillion in additional spending being proposed for infrastructure and education.

Boosting wages gets at the central promise of the Biden presidency to improve the lives of everyday Americans and re-

store the country's competitive edge in the world. Republicans say that Biden's policies have already let loose a torrent of inflation that will hurt the economy. The outcome of these competing forces could decide the trajectory of the U.S. economy as well as the factors weighing on voters in next year's elections.

The New York Federal Reserve reported this month that there has been a 26% increase over the past year in wage expectations by noncollege graduates. The lowest average salary they expect for a new job is \$61,483.

The Senate's Republican leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, says he has seen enough from the data so far. He has told voters that Biden's decision to provide an additional \$300 a week in unemployment benefits and the spending in his relief package are hurting the economy.

He said Thursday on Fox Business that the package "Democrats jammed through on a party-line vote" is "producing both people not wanting to work and raging inflation."

Poll: Few say focus on cop violence led to positive shift

Associated Press

A year after George Floyd's murder at the hands of a white police officer sparked global protests and a racial reckoning, a majority of Americans say racism and police violence are serious problems facing the nation. Yet relatively few believe attention in the past year to the issues has led to positive change.

A poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows Americans are more likely than they were before Floyd's death to say that police violence is a serious problem and about half think police who cause harm on the job are treated too leniently by the justice system. The poll also found that about 6 in 10 Americans say racism in the United States is a very or extremely serious problem; it's similar to the percentage that said the same thing one year ago.

But about half of Americans, including about 6 in 10 Black Americans, say Derek Chauvin's conviction in Floyd's murder has not changed their level of confidence in the criminal justice system. About one-third

say their confidence increased. Chauvin, a former Minneapolis police officer, was convicted in April on state charges of murder and manslaughter in Floyd's death. A federal grand jury indicted Chauvin and three other former Minneapolis police officers involved in Floyd's arrest and death after the poll was conducted.

Relatively few Americans, 24%, say attention on police violence against Black Americans over the past year has led to change for the better, while 31% say it has led to change for the worse and 44% say it has made no difference. Fifty-four percent of Black Americans say it has not made a difference, with the remainder split evenly between seeing change for the better and for the worse.

"Nothing has really fundamentally changed, even if you put one individual in prison for police violence," said Kyle T. Mays, assistant professor in African American Studies and American Indian Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and author of "An Afro-Indigenous History of the United States."

Thailand brings in top dogs to aid virus battle

Associated Press

BANGKOK — Thailand has started deploying a canine virus-detecting squad in hopes of quickly identifying people with COVID-19 as the country faces a surge in cases, with clusters at construction sites, crowded slum communities and large markets.

Angel, Bobby and Bravo are among six Labrador retrievers that have been trained by researchers at the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University to sniff out a unique odor that people with COVID-19 produce in their sweat, the researchers say.

Since May 10, the three have tested more than 1,000 samples from college staff, students and people outside the university.

The results so far are impressive with a success rate of nearly 95%.

After a few seconds of sniffing sweat samples placed in metal containers, the dogs can tell which people have COVID-19. If there's no trace of infection, the dog will walk past the sample. If it is positive, it will sit in front of it.

Prof. Kaywalee Chatdarong, head of the research team, said she was aware that other countries have been using dogs to identify the coronavirus, including Finland, the United Arab Emirates, Germany and India, but that she had no idea if it would work in Thailand because of the country's spicy and flavorful cuisine.

Suwanna Thanaboonsombat, a volunteer who collects samples to bring to the lab, said the canine testers add a big element of convenience because they can check samples from people who can't go out to be tested.

"People can simply put cotton balls underneath their armpits to collect sweat samples and send them to the lab. And the result is quite accurate," Suwanna said.

The researchers plan to send the canine team out to communities suspected of being new COVID-19 hotspots. The dogs will work inside a mobile unit, while the collecting team can comb through the community collecting samples.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, dogs are among a small number of pets that can become infected with the coronavirus, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19. It says the risk of animals spreading the virus to people is considered low.

Epstein guards who faked records may avoid prison

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The two Bureau of Prisons workers tasked with guarding Jeffrey Epstein the night he killed himself in a New York jail have admitted they falsified records, but they will skirt any time behind bars under a deal with federal prosecutors, authorities said Friday.

The prison workers, Tova Noel and Michael Thomas, were accused of sleeping and browsing the internet instead of monitoring Epstein the night he took his own life in August 2019.

They were charged with lying on prison records to make it seem as though they had made required checks on the financier before he was found in his cell. New York City's medical examiner ruled Epstein's death a suicide.

As part of the deal with prosecutors, they will enter into a deferred prosecution agreement with the Justice Department and will serve no time behind bars, according to a letter from federal prosecutors that was filed in court papers Friday. Noel and Thomas would instead be subjected to supervised release, would be required to complete 100 hours of community service and would be required to fully cooperate with an ongoing probe by the Justice Department's inspector general, it says.

The two have "admitted that they 'willfully and knowingly completed materially

false count and round slips regarding required counts and rounds" in the housing unit where Epstein was being held, the letter says.

The deal would need to be approved by a judge, which could happen as soon as this week.

Sen. Ben Sasse, a Republican member of the Senate Judiciary Committee who has been a vocal critic of the Justice Department's handling of Epstein's case, called the deal "unacceptable" and said the public deserves to see a report detailing the prison agency's failures.

"One hundred hours of community service is a joke — this isn't traffic court," Sasse said in a statement. "The leader of an international child sex trafficking ring escaped justice, his co-conspirators had their secrets go to the grave with him, and these guards are going to be picking up trash on the side of the road."

Both officers who were guarding Epstein were working overtime because of staffing shortages. One of the guards, who did not primarily work as a correctional officer, was working a fifth straight day of overtime. The other guard was working mandatory overtime, meaning a second eight-hour shift of the day.

Before they were arrested, both officers had declined a plea deal with federal prosecutors.

2 separate quakes strike China

Associated Press

BEIJING — A strong, shallow earthquake shook southwestern China near the border with Myanmar, killing at least three people and injuring more than two dozen, while a separate, more intense quake early Saturday collapsed a bridge and caused other damage in central China.

The first 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Yunnan province late Friday. The second 7.3 magnitude quake occurred hours later in the southern part of Qinghai province, about 621 miles to the south, according to Chinese measurements.

U.S. Geological Survey geophysicist Jonathan Tytell said the two quakes were not related.

The Qinghai earthquake was followed by 453 aftershocks throughout the early morning into midday, according to the official People's Daily newspaper. At least eight people were injured.

While no deaths have been reported so far in Qinghai province, the quakes tore up roads and bridges, with one collapsing completely, broken into segments.

The Yunnan province seismological bureau said it struck 5 miles below the surface northwest of the city of Dali.

The earthquake caused strong shaking around Dali, but Chinese news reports showed relatively little damage.

Three people died and 28 were injured, Yunnan province's publicity department said Saturday.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

12 high school students charged for senior prank

NC DENVER — Twelve North Carolina high school students have been charged for a senior prank that involved putting meat and eggs in the school's vents, authorities said.

The sheriff's office estimates that the prank caused around \$5,000 in damage.

Deputies responded to a call about vandalism at East Lincoln High School in Denver, according to a news release from the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office.

School officials reported that buses and some areas inside the school were covered with a sticky substance and glitter.

The students were charged with trespassing, breaking and entering, and injury to property.

Deputy lifts overturned car to free trapped lady

VA GLOUCESTER COUNTY — A deputy in Virginia single-handedly lifted an overturned car to free a woman pinned underneath.

In a body camera recording that the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office shared on Facebook, Deputy Jon Holt can be heard pulling over in his patrol vehicle and telling dispatch that the car is "flipped upside down."

The one-minute clip of the scene of the accident then shows Holt running to the vehicle where one child is screaming that his mother is stuck. The deputy helps another smaller child out of the car, and then he can be heard groaning as he lifts the vehicle.

Fire crew rescues parrot from office building ledge

IL CHICAGO — The Chicago Fire Department didn't have to raise a ladder to rescue a cat from a tree, but firefighters did grab a pole to snatch a pet parrot from an office building ledge.

A fire crew was returning from an emergency medical run when they were flagged down by the owner of the bird to grab what appeared to be a macaw from a second-floor ledge of the Railway Exchange Building.

The bird apparently was with someone who had taken it with them to a protest rally, according to city officials.

Fire department spokesman Larry Merritt said the person asked for a ladder and a crew member instead used a pole to retrieve the brightly colored bird.

Couple pleads guilty to attacking bears with dogs

FL OCALA — A married couple has pleaded guilty to using doughnuts and pastries to lure black bears in rural Florida, allowing packs of dogs to attack them and then posting the gruesome videos on social media.

Charles Scarbrough entered guilty pleas of conspiracy to commit racketeering, animal baiting and fighting, unlawful use of a two-way communicating device and unlawful taking of a black bear, the Ocala Star Banner reported. He has agreed to cooperate with prosecutors.

His wife, Hannah Scarbrough, was sentenced to more than five years of probation on charges of unlawful taking of a

black bear and unlawful use of a communication device.

Prison worker smuggles meth-laced lollipops

SC RIDGELAND — A South Carolina prison sergeant was caught smuggling meth-laced lollipops into the facility where she worked, investigators said.

Warrants released show that Dana Fisher, 39, has been charged with distribution of methamphetamines, providing contraband to an inmate and misconduct in office.

A contraband officer at the Ridgeland Correctional Institution thought the wrappers on Blow Pops that Fisher brought in appeared as if they had been altered with glue, the state Department of Corrections said.

Some of the lollipops tested positive for drugs.

Man accused of taking purses from Asian women

WA SEATTLE — Officers have arrested a man they think has been stealing purses and bags from more than a dozen women in Seattle's Chinatown-International District, Rainier Valley and Beacon Hill neighborhoods, police said.

Detectives believe he's one of two men who has been approaching mostly Asian women between 40 and 80 years old outside grocery stores, then grabbing their bags and fleeing in a vehicle, The Seattle Times reported.

The man arrested was allegedly involved in about 14 cases of theft at Asian markets in Seattle from early April to mid-May, according to probable-cause documents.

License plate to honor Negro Leagues Museum

MO JEFFERSON CITY — Missourians will soon be able to purchase license plates highlighting the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, after Gov. Mike Parson signed legislation creating the plate, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

It gives motorists the option of donating \$10 to the museum, which makes them eligible to apply for the specialty license plates. The plate itself requires another \$15 charge on top of the regular license plate registration fee. The law is effective Aug. 28.

Woman arrested after assaulting 3 at school

CA SANTA ROSA — Students were evacuated from a classroom after a woman ran inside, punched a teacher and two students and began removing her clothes, police said.

Santa Rosa Police officers were sent to the Pivot Charter School after staff called to report that there was an unknown female on campus who ran into a classroom.

When the woman entered the classroom she punched a teacher and two students, police said in a statement.

School staff were able to evacuate students and lock the woman inside the classroom, where she vandalized desks and electronic equipment causing damage estimated at \$1,000, police said in a statement.

Sgt. Christopher Mahurin said it was unclear what had motivated her.

— From wire reports



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Bruins' power play takes control of series

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Bruins had to cut short one goal celebration to skate to the defense of a teammate, who was taking some abuse from oft-suspended Capitals forward Tom Wilson.

They didn't fight back.

They just kept scoring.

After 15 periods of neck-and-neck hockey, the Bruins finally broke one open in their playoff series against Washington on Friday night, getting goals from David Pastrnak and Charlie Coyle 34 seconds apart early in the third period to win 4-1 and send the Capitals to the brink of elimination.

Brad Marchand and Matt Grzelcyk added power-play goals for Boston, which was 3 for 5 with the man advantage.

"We kind of had a mindset of,

'Hey, let's make these guys pay,' in response to the penalties they were taking," Bruins defenseman Charlie McAvoy said. "You always want to score ... but I think we responded well to the penalties they were taking and ultimately making them pay on the scoreboard."

Tuukka Rask stopped 19 shots for his 54th playoff victory, breaking the Bruins franchise record that was set by Hall of Famer Gerry Cheevers in 1980. Boston took a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series and can advance with a victory in Game 5 in Washington on Sunday.

"It doesn't really matter who is the hero every night," said Pastrnak, who netted his first goal of the series and was originally credited for Marchand's goal. "As long as you win, you feel amazing."

After three straight overtime games in which neither team managed as much as a two-goal lead, the Bruins made it 2-0 on Pastrnak's power-play goal 29 seconds into the third. The 25% capacity crowd had barely settled down before Jake DeBrusk's shot bounced high off the glass behind Ilya Samsonov and landed in the crease for Coyle to poke it into the net.

Behind the play, Wilson put a few extra shots on Nick Ritchie — one of many scuffles in the game. For the second straight game, Rask was the target of a Capitals hit; Bruins defenseman Kevan Miller was sent to the hospital by a high hit from Dmitry Orlov.

"Their guy left his feet, borderline late, and drove right under his chin," said Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy, who added that

Miller left the rink for the hospital. "It's unfortunate for Kevan, but we'll see how he is."

Alex Ovechkin made it 3-1 with 15 minutes left in the game when his shot was deflected into the net by Bruins defenseman Brandon Carlo. It was Ovechkin's first goal of the 2021 playoffs and the 71st of his postseason career, moving him past Steve Yzerman and into a tie with Bryan Trottier for 16th most in NHL history.

But Grzelcyk restored the three-goal lead on Boston's third power-play goal, with five minutes left.

"They scored power-play goals tonight," Capitals coach Peter Laviolette said. "Some of the penalties I don't like, some of them are part of the game. It's physical out there. At the end of the day, there's got to be discipline."

Duchene scores in second overtime to lift Predators

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Matt Duchene made his first playoff game in Nashville with the Predators a moment to remember.

He scored his first goal of the series at 14:54 of the second overtime and the Predators beat the Carolina Hurricanes 5-4 to cut their series deficit to 2-1.

"It was just amazing to play here at home," Duchene said. "I was really disappointed last year when we went to the bubble and we didn't have games here, so best fans in the NHL. It's just incredible to play here, and yeah we needed that. It feels good."

Now the Predators, 0-5 after trailing 2-0 in a best-of-seven series, will try to tie it Sunday in Game 4.

"It was another step in the right direction," Predators forward Filip Forsberg said.

Duchene scored his first goal of the series in the longest game yet of this postseason and the third-longest in Predators' history. Roman Josi flipped the puck to Duchene, who skated up the slot and flipped the puck over Alex Nedeljkovic for the victory.

Nashville is 4-3 in games going two or more overtimes.

Ryan Ellis had a goal and two assists, and Ryan Johansen, Filip Forsberg and Mikael Granlund also scored for Nashville. Juuse Saros had his first career assist and tied the franchise record with 52 saves for only his second postseason victory.

Sebastian Aho had a goal and two assists for Carolina, and Jordan Staal, Vincent Trocheck and Brett Pesce also scored.

Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour made clear he wasn't happy his Hurricanes were called for seven penalties for a second straight game. It could've been eight, but officials didn't call them for delay of game when the puck went over the glass in the first overtime. Nashville finished with three penalties.

"We're also fighting refs, that's plain and simple," Brind'Amour said.

He also didn't like the hooking penalty on Max LaJoie in the second overtime at 11:40, saying it flipped the momentum. Nashville's Eeli Tolvanen hit the post 38 seconds into that power play.

"They scored the next shift after because we were out of rotation," Brind'Amour said. "That's not how it should go. I didn't tell them that, but I'm proud of my group because they just battled."

Asked about Brind'Amour's comments, Nashville coach John Hynes said, "I'm just focused on our team."

Avalanche 6, Blues 1: Ryan Graves had a goal and two assists, Philipp Grubauer made 31 saves and visiting Colorado beat St. Louis to take a 3-0 series lead.

Alex Newhook scored his first NHL goal, and Tyson Jost, Brandon Saad and J.T. Compher also scored for the Avalanche, who can complete a series sweep Sunday in Game 4 in St. Louis.

Tyler Bozak scored for the Blues, and Jordan Binnington made 21 saves.

During the game, Colorado's Nazem Kadri was suspended for eight games by the NHL for a check to the head of Justin Faulk in the third period of Game 2.

Jets 1, Oilers 0 (OT): Paul Stastny scored at 4:06 of overtime to lift visiting Winnipeg past Edmonton for a 2-0 series lead.

Stastny's screened wrist shot beat goaltender Mike Smith high to the right corner.

Connor Hellebuyck made 38 saves for Winnipeg, and Smith stopped 35 shots.

Oilers captain Connor McDavid and teammate Leon Draisaitl — the NHL's top two scorers — have been held off the scoresheet in the first two games.

Morant, Grizzlies top Warriors in OT

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Ja Morant and the Memphis Grizzlies came with aggression, determination and absolutely no fear, going at Golden State every which way — crashing the offensive glass to create extra chances, jumping in the passing lanes to force turnovers and getting far more production from the bench.

The Grizzlies had an answer for every Stephen Curry flurry, and now they're going back to the playoffs.

Morant made consecutive jumpers in the final 48 seconds of overtime and scored 35 points, and Memphis advanced to the postseason for the first time in four years by holding off Curry and the Warriors 117-112 on Friday night in a thrilling play-in game.

"What a moment in time for the Grizzlies. Took a lot out of us all season long. It's just a proud moment," coach Taylor Jenkins said. "We gave it all we had to move on and I know we have more left. What a heck of a

game. It took overtime against a heck of a ballclub. There were so many things that don't show up in the boxscore. We have to keep building, keep fighting."

Memphis earned the No. 8 seed and advanced to face top-seeded Utah in the first round of the best-of-seven Western Conference playoffs. Game 1 is Sunday in Salt Lake City.

Jordan Poole hit a go-ahead three-pointer with 1:50 left in OT for Golden State only to see Xavier Tillman answer with a baseline three moments later. Poole lost the ball out of bounds leading to Morant's basket with 4 seconds left, then Poole made another improbable threewith 2 seconds remaining.

Morant shined on the big stage — now it gets bigger for him, Dillon Brooks and the Grizz.

"I know it's a big accomplishment for all of us, but me and Dillon know the job's not finished," Morant said. "We're not trying to be done making it to the playoffs. We have to lock back in to playing Utah who has

the best record in the league."

Morant also contributed six rebounds, six assists and four steals. He shot 14 for 29 with five three-pointers as Memphis more than doubled its total from deep this time against Golden State to win on the Warriors' home floor just five days after losing 113-101 in the regular-season finale.

Curry, who became scoring champion against the Grizzlies on Sunday, finished with 39 points and six three-pointers while dazzling in front of an animated, roaring crowd of 7,505 in the biggest game yet at second-year Chase Center. He committed seven of his team's 21 turnovers, while Draymond Green had six miscues but also a triple-double with 11 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists.

"There were some pivotal turnovers that bit us a little bit, but I think the intentions were right and we were trying to make the right play, and sometimes it doesn't go your way," Curry said. "That is something to nitpick for sure. It's a part of

the game you have to have solid possessions and get solid shots. I loved our aggressiveness and our intentions. ... It didn't go our way."

Curry let loose, just as he did all season in one of his best years yet at age 33.

Curry's three-point play with 9:40 left got Golden State to 80-78, then he made a magnificent falling three the next time down. Morant hit from deep moments later.

The Grizzlies held off San Antonio 100-96 at home Wednesday night, then traveled back to the Bay Area. The Warriors lost a heartbreaker to LeBron James and the Lakers 103-100 at Staples Center on Wednesday.

"Obviously a crushing way to go out, two straight games that were basically gut punches," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "We felt like we had control of the game the other night and lost and then really didn't have the control of this one but could have won, we had the last shot in regulation. The ball just didn't go our way."

Mickelson, Oosthuizen share PGA championship lead

Associated Press

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. — Phil Mickelson doesn't need to be reminded of his age at the PGA Championship. The numbers alone speak for that, and not just his age of 50.

Buffeted by the wind along the closing holes, Mickelson was dropping shots — not unusual on the brute of an Ocean Course at Kiawah Island — and was back to even par for the championship.

And then the guy who keeps everyone in suspense ran off five birdies and finished the day with a 3-under 69 to share the lead with Louis Oosthuizen, much steadier in his round of 68.

Even at the halfway point, Mickelson joined some elite company.

He became the sixth player since 1900 to have at least a share of the lead after any round in a major over four decades. The first time for Lefty was at the 1996 PGA Championship.

"I'm having a lot of fun, and to know I'm

playing well heading into the weekend, to be in contention, to have a good opportunity, I'm having a blast," Mickelson said.

The other five players were Sam Snead (starting in the 1930s), Gary Player (1950s), Jack Nicklaus and Raymond Floyd (1960s) and Tom Watson (1970s).

No one in his 50s has been atop the leaderboard in a major since 52-year-old Fred Couples after two rounds of the 2012 Masters. The most famous senior was Watson, who was 59 when he led after 54 holes at Turnberry in the 2009 British Open.

Mickelson majored in psychology, not history, at Arizona State. All that matters to him is winning, and no one over 50 has ever done that in a major.

Mickelson played the opening two rounds with Pdraig Harrington, who turns 50 in August. Harrington was only five shots out of the lead, not enough for him to make some comparisons about how their minds work.

"I'm bullish about where I am and I'm sure

Phil is, too," Harrington said. "He's not here to make the cut. Even 15th would be a disappointment. You know what? Even second would be a disappointment for Phil. I'm a little bit like that, too. ... It doesn't do my career any good. It doesn't do Phil's any good."

"That might make it harder for us at times because we over-push and over-try because winning is the only thing that will bring any satisfaction."

There's enough hard work ahead of them, and everyone else who made the cut at 5-over 149.

That list doesn't include three of the top four players in the world — Dustin Johnson (1), Justin Thomas (2) and Xander Schauffele (4).

There's plenty of entertainment around for those who will be around on the weekend, and it figures to be a much better show than the last time at Kiawah Island. Rory McIlroy won in 2012 and set the PGA Championship record with an eight-shot victory.

Strasburg makes winning return for Nats

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Stephen Strasburg pitched into the sixth inning in his return from the injured list, allowing just one hit as the Washington Nationals defeated the Baltimore Orioles 4-2 on Friday night.

Strasburg (1-1) started for the first time since April 13. He had been sidelined with right shoulder inflammation. He picked up his first win in a regular-season game since Sept. 26, 2019.

Strasburg allowed only Anthony Santander's leadoff single in the second. He walked four and struck out four in 5½ scoreless innings.

Washington scored two runs against Jorge López (1-5) in the fifth. López allowed four straight hits, including back-to-back doubles by Josh Bell (3 hits) and Kyle Schwarber and a run-scoring single by Josh Harrison.

Freddy Galvis hit a two-run home run with two outs in the ninth against Brad Hand. Trey Mancini had two hits for the Orioles, who have lost 11 of 13 since John Means threw a no-hitter on May 5.

Dodgers 2, Giants 1: Trevor Bauer struck out 11 in his first career start against San Francisco, Chris Taylor hit a two-run homer and visiting Los Angeles extended its winning streak to five.

Coming off an 8-1 homestand, the Dodgers pulled within one game of the first-place Giants.

Yankees 2, White Sox 1: Gleyber Torres homered and singled home the winning run in the ninth inning as host New York — moments after a turning a clutch triple play — beat Chicago.

The White Sox put two runners on to open

the ninth against closer Aroldis Chapman (3-0). Rookie Andrew Vaughn hit a sharp grounder toward third, where Gio Urshela stepped on the bag and went around the horn to nip Vaughn and suddenly end the inning as first baseman Luke Voit make a long stretch.

Padres 16, Mariners 1: Fernando Tatis Jr. became the fastest shortstop in history to hit 50 home runs and made another spectacular defensive play for San Diego, which routed visiting Seattle for its seventh straight win.

Tatis, playing in his 171st career game, tied Ryan Braun for the fifth-fastest player overall to reach 50 homers. Tatis finished with four RBIs. He also made a spectacular play in the fifth when he avoided a collision with Jorge Mateo in shallow center to catch Jarred Kelenic's popup and then doubled Eric Campbell off first to end the inning.

Athletics 8, Angels 4: At Anaheim, Calif., Ramón Laureano homered among his four hits and made a leaping catch above the center-field wall, Chad Pinder hit a go-ahead drive in the seventh inning and Oakland beat Los Angeles.

Twins 10, Indians 0: Max Kepler and rookie Alex Kirilloff drove in two runs apiece in Minnesota's nine-run fourth inning and the Twins shook off a couple long days of cross-country travel by pounding host Cleveland.

Red Sox 11, Phillies 3: Rafael Devers and Danny Santana hit homers to back Martin Perez, and visiting Boston beat Philadelphia.

Braves 20, Pirates 1: Ronald Acuña Jr. hit a grand slam in the second inning off Tyler Anderson, pinch-hitter Ehire Adrian-

za added another slam in the eighth against position player Wilmer Difo and host Atlanta homered seven times in a rout of Pittsburgh.

Reds 9, Brewers 4: At Cincinnati, Jesse Winker hit three solo home runs while going 4-for-4, leading the Reds over Milwaukee.

Rockies 7, Diamondbacks 1: At Denver, German Marquez scattered four hits over seven scoreless innings, Ryan McMahon homered twice and drove in three runs, and Colorado beat Arizona to snap a five-game losing streak.

Cubs 12, Cardinals 3: Joc Pederson homered on the first pitch of the game, Ian Happ got two hits during an eight-run burst in the eighth inning and Chicago halted St. Louis' five-game home winning streak.

Mets 6, Marlins 5 (12): Rookie Khalil Lee hit a tiebreaking RBI double in the 12th inning for his first major league hit after strikeouts in his first eight at-bats — a major league record — and visiting New York beat Miami, despite totaling only eight hits against 10 Marlins pitchers.

Tigers 7, Royals 5: Miguel Cabrera hit a solo homer and a grand slam, doubling his season total to four home runs and leading Detroit over host Kansas City.

Rays 9, Blue Jays 7 (12): At Dunedin, Fla., Francisco Mejia hit a grand slam in the 12th inning and Tampa Bay won its eighth consecutive game by beating Toronto.

Rangers 7, Astros 5 (10): Adolis García hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the 10th inning, giving host Texas a victory over Houston after Astros starter Tyler Ivey was spared a loss in his major league debut against his hometown team.

Elliott still chasing first victory of season

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — NASCAR is set to race the Circuit of the Americas for the first time and all eyes are on both Chase Elliott and an unsettling weather forecast of rain that could make the inaugural Texas Grand Prix a wild one.

Elliott, NASCAR's defending champion and most popular driver, was expected to start Sunday as the favorite given his career mastery of road courses. And he needs a win. NASCAR's season of parity has so far produced 10 winners through 13 races but none from Elliott.

Elliott's been close with five top-five finishes and he was runner-up at the Daytona

500 and at Martinsville. He led a race-high 44 laps on the road course at Daytona but a late yellow flag ruined his chance at victory.

It may not be time to worry about Elliott's season, but his Hendrick Motorsports teammates have all been to victory lane this year. Kyle Larson and William Byron have one win each, while Alex Bowman's victory earlier this month was his second of the season.

"I'm not one to guarantee things in my life," Elliott said when asked if he expected to win by now. "We all want to win as a team. I want to win as much as anyone else. But we haven't and that's really the bottom line."

In normal conditions, Elliott should feel as comfortable as anyone on a new track.

His five career road course wins are the most among active drivers and he's won four of the last five outings on road tracks.

If he wins a sixth race on a road course, Elliott would be just the seventh driver in history to reach that mark, tying him with Bobby Allison, Richard Petty, Rusty Wallace and Ricky Rudd.

But the dark cloud looming over Sunday was the likelihood of rain, which National Weather Service forecasted at better than 50%. The drivers slipped and slid their way through Saturday morning's windy and wet practice session that may have been fun for some, but likely left none of them feeling comfortable about the race.