

Army pilots told they owe 3 more years

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

An Army human resources error that will force hundreds of aviation officers to stay in the service three more years is drawing backlash, including a lawsuit threat, from some pilots who thought they were nearing the end of their time in the military.

Army Human Resources Command said in a statement that it had made errors in aviation officers' personnel files and it was working to ensure pilots understand precisely how much more time that they must serve on active duty. The issue was caused by incorrect dates that command personnel added to some pilots' personnel files, which indicated they could leave the Army three years earlier than their contractual agreements state, service officials said.

"We acknowledge that there were errors in information placed in the Assignment Interactive Module Portal from representatives of the Human Resources Command," said Lt. Col. Allie Scott, a spokeswoman for the command. "We know that service includes both soldiers and their families. We also understand the importance of early communication to inform career and life

choices. HRC will continue to review and apply statutory, contractual, and regulatory obligations to determine the length of an individual's service obligation."

The problem came to light after some aviation officers who commissioned in about 2015 were denied their requests for release from active-duty late last year, even though their personnel files indicated they were eligible, said Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, the Army's personnel chief. Human Resources Command personnel reviewed aviation officers' files and found some 600 pilots likely believed they owed three fewer years of active-duty service than they might have thought because of the unique service obligations for aviators, he said.

While all officers sign contracts upon commissioning that state they owe a certain number of years of active-duty time, pilots also owe additional time after they complete flight school. All Army pilots who entered the military before 2020 must serve six years after graduating flight training, but some officers also owe an additional three years, service officials said. Those who have entered the service since 2021 owe 10 years of service after they complete flight train-

ing, according to the Army.

Those impacted by the mistake are officers who commissioned into the aviation field via the military academy at West Point, N.Y., or through ROTC and selected aviation as their branch of choice via the Branch of Choice Active Duty Service Obligation, or BRADSO. That BRADSO contract includes the additional three years of service obligation for aviation officers, Scott said.

Many pilots believed those three years of additional service ran concurrently with their six-year flight school obligation, said an Army aviator who commissioned in 2017 and has been informed he owes three more years of service. Army officials, including Stitt, argued the BRADSO contracts "clearly state" the additional three-year obligation, which means those officers owe the Army nine years after flight school.

The Army said some 190 pilots were probably approved to leave active-duty service before fulfilling their BRADSO requirements. The Army does not plan to call those former pilots back to active duty, Scott said.

She said the Army was continuing to review the issue and expects to complete a full audit of the service obligation issue by July.

Fighter jets nearly collide, lead to NATO alert

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — NATO put its fighter jets on heightened alert last week after a Russian warplane and a Polish aircraft nearly collided over the Black Sea, the U.S.-led alliance said Tuesday.

The encounter involved a Polish border guard plane that was carrying out a mission in connection with a European Union Frontex border agency initiative, according to Polish authorities.

A Russian Su-35 jet flew within about 15 feet of the Polish plane, carrying out "aggressive and dangerous ma-

neuvers" causing the Polish air crew to briefly lose control of the aircraft, Polish border guard spokeswoman Anna Michalska said in a statement.

A NATO official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with NATO policy, said the alliance remains vigilant in the aftermath of the episode.

Such encounters have occurred from the Baltics to Syria, where U.S. pilots have had numerous close calls with Russian planes.

Friday's episode near Romania follows a pattern of actions in the Black Sea and elsewhere by Russian pilots that U.S. mil-

itary officials have deemed dangerous.

Two months ago, a Russian fighter pilot intentionally struck a U.S. drone over the Black Sea, causing the unmanned aircraft to crash.

NATO has a standing air policing mission that calls for allied jets to scramble when there are signs of Russian planes operating in unpredictable ways along its eastern flank.

On Monday, a contingent of U.S. Air Force F-22 fighters was dispatched to Estonia for a quick-reaction deployment to bolster NATO's air policing efforts there.

While Romania serves as a hub for those effort in the south, allies have a similar mission that covers the Baltics.

The transfer of planes to Estonia highlights the operational readiness of NATO allies, U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa said Monday in a statement.

The Romanian Defense Ministry said Monday that the incident last week happened 40 miles from its airspace and involved "aggressive and dangerous maneuvers" by the Russian fighter that were "totally unacceptable."

It slammed "the provocative approach of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea."

Solar effort set for Army homes on Hawaii

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The installation of solar panel clusters is expected to begin in July at 200 homes in the Army's Aliamanu Military Reservation in Honolulu, an energy resiliency project that is planned for thousands of military residences on Oahu.

Lendlease Communities, which operates nearly 8,000 homes on Oahu under a partnership between its subsidiary Island Palm Communities and the U.S. Army, has contracted with Delaware-based Holu Hou Energy to install photovoltaic and battery systems in four- to six-home clusters on the island.

The panel-battery system within any single cluster is optimally sized so that most of the power generated is used within that group of homes, Brad Hansen,

chief executive officer for Holu Hou, said by phone April 14. Each cluster will use about 75% to 80% of the power generated by its system, he said. Homes remain connected to the grid for shortfalls in the solar supply.

A major investor in Holu Hou, China-based Borqs Technology Inc., is being forced to divest in the company due to national security considerations. Borqs acquired 51% of Holu Hou in October 2021.

Borqs announced in December that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, an inter-agency governmental committee with jurisdiction over foreign acquisitions of U.S. businesses involved with technologies critical to national security, had reviewed the acquisition and required divestiture.

"We never had any products or services or anything from Borqs," Hansen said. "They were a pas-

sive investor, so the unwinding is pretty simple."

Holu Hou first tested the cluster concept a few years ago at a 134-unit low-income housing development on Kauai, he said. Then, through most of 2022, Holu Hou conducted a pilot project with a cluster of six homes at Aliamanu. With that successful trial, Lendlease plans to set up clusters throughout all the housing managed by Island Palm Communities on Schofield Barracks, Wheeler Army Air Field, Fort Shafter, Tripler Army Medical Center, Helemano Military Reservation, Red Hill and Aliamanu.

"We can get the maximum benefit sharing at about six units," Hansen said. "Beyond that, you can add more units if you want, but you've already reached the maximum benefit of the sharing."

Homes will be clustered primarily based upon proximity.

Trenching will be required to bury electric cables connecting the cluster, but groupings will be arranged to avoid trenching across asphalt as much as possible.

Holu Hou is partnering with at least two large Hawaii-based firms to perform the installations. Work on the first 200 homes is expected to begin in July and be completed by the end of the year, Hansen said.

Hawaii's electricity prices are roughly three times the U.S. national average, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. In September, Hawaiian Electric Co., which supplies most of the state's electricity, ended the use of its last coal-fired power plant and forecasted an average increase of 7% for individual electric bills. The state is working toward transitioning its energy generation to 100% renewable sources by 2045.

Former senior commander named Space Force chief master sergeant

Tribune News Service

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — A former senior commander at Peterson Space Force Base will soon step into the most senior enlisted role within the youngest military branch.

Gen. Chance Saltzman selected John F. Bentivegna last week as the next chief master sergeant of the Space Force, according to a Monday news release. He will replace Chief Master Sgt. Roger Towberman as an adviser to Saltzman and the secretary of the Air Force on issues such as welfare, readiness, morale and development of the branch.

He will also provide direction for the enlisted force and represent its interests to the public and the government.

"It's overwhelming and incredibly humbling to be offered the opportunity to become the next

chief master sergeant of the Space Force," Bentivegna said in a statement. He is the second person to serve in the role.

He is stepping into the new role as the Space Force is maturing and working to speed up its research and development efforts and sending up hundreds of new satellites to counter threats from China and Russia.

"We have run really fast to develop the service and shape what it's going to be," Bentivegna said in the statement. "We have charted a vision for the future, and I want to deliver that vision to our Guardians and the joint force."

Bentivegna is the senior enlisted adviser to the chief operations officer and the enlisted space systems operations career field manager for Space Force in Washington, D.C., according to a news release.

Soldier's texts shared in Texas sentence hearing

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — A U.S. Army sergeant convicted of murder in the fatal shooting of an armed protester during a Black Lives Matter demonstration in Texas could be facing up to life in prison, even as Gov. Greg Abbott presses for the chance to pardon him.

The two-day sentencing hearing for Daniel Perry began Tuesday with the state presenting dozens of pages of text messages and social media posts that they said demonstrated Perry's hostile views of the Black Lives Matter protests following the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white Minneapolis police officer.

Perry was working as a ride-share driver in downtown Austin on the summer night in 2020 when he shot and killed Garrett Foster, 28, an Air Force veteran.

Foster was legally carrying an AK-47 rifle as he participated in the demonstration. Perry was convicted of murder in April.

According to evidence presented by prosecutors, Perry wrote on Facebook a month before the shooting: "It is official I am a racist because I do not agree with people acting like animals at the zoo." Perry's attorneys objected to the statements as taken out of context and said Perry had a right to free speech. State District Judge Clifford Brown said although excluded at trial, the messages may be considered relevant in the punishment phase.

Forensic psychologist Greg Hupp testified that he believed Perry has post-traumatic stress disorder from his deployment to Afghanistan and being bullied as a child.

Deal or default? Biden and GOP must set ground rules

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Before President Joe Biden and congressional leaders can even try to avert an unprecedented U.S. government default, their initial challenge Tuesday will be to agree on what exactly they're talking about as they hold their first substantive meeting in months.

With the government at risk of being unable to meet its obligations as soon as June 1, raising the specter of potential economic calamity, Republicans are coming to the White House hoping to negotiate sweeping cuts to federal spending in exchange for allowing new borrowing to avoid default.

Biden, on the other hand, is set to reinforce his opposition to allowing the country's full faith and credit to be held "hostage" to negotiations — and to affirm his willingness to hold talks on the budget only after default is no longer a threat.

The chasm between these diametrically opposite postures is fomenting uncertainty that is already roiling financial markets, and threatens to turn into a tidal wave that swamps the country's economy if not resolved.

Default, officials have said, would have sweeping impacts, threatening to disrupt Social Security payments to retirees, destabilize global markets and tilt the nation into a potentially debilitating recession.

Biden's Oval Office meeting with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell was set to begin at 4 p.m. — after U.S. financial mar-

kets close for the day.

Expectations for an early breakthrough are low.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen acknowledged the "very big gap" between Democrats and Republicans in an interview Monday with CNBC.

"They're very far apart," she said. "The president hopes to establish a process for discussing and compromising on those issues, but he's not willing to do it with a gun to not only his head — more importantly, it's a gun to the head of the American people and the American economy."

Already looking past the meeting, Biden on Wednesday is set to go to Westchester County, N.Y., where he plans to deliver a speech on how proposed spending cuts approved by House Republicans could hurt teachers, older adults needing food aid and veterans seeking health care.

It's part of a broader campaign by Biden to try to paint the Republican cuts as draconian. Aides believe the message both strengthens his position in talks with the GOP and boosts his nascent 2024 reelection effort. His Wednesday visit will be to a congressional district won by Biden in 2020, but that is now represented by a Republican, Rep. Mike Lawler.

While calling for a "clean" increase to the debt limit, Biden has said he is open to discussion about how to reduce the federal deficit. His budget plan would trim deficits by nearly \$3 trillion over a decade, mainly through tax increases on the wealthy and changes such as letting the government negotiate over prescription drug prices.

Trump foes see opening as probes strengthen

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An investigation into Donald Trump's handling of classified documents has intensified in recent weeks, with prosecutors summoning a broad range of witnesses before a federal grand jury and zeroing in on questions of whether the former president or others obstructed government efforts to recover the records.

It remains unclear when the investigation led by Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith might end or whether Trump might face charges over documents found at Mar-a-Lago, his Florida estate. But as probes in Washington and Atlanta proceed, Republican critics of Trump see an opportunity for intensifying legal woes to take away his frontrunner mantle in the 2024 presidential race in a way that an earlier indictment in New York failed to do.

The ongoing investigations "are the ones that have the meat," said Bobbie Kilberg, a longtime Republican donor who has become a vocal Trump critic.

A grand jury in the Mar-a-Lago case has heard testimony over the last few months from numerous Trump associates. Prosecutors have put before the panel a lawyer who helped respond to Justice Department demands for the classified documents last year, and have also been interested in Mar-a-Lago surveillance footage.

At least one witness was asked to testify a second time, suggesting prosecutors may be looking to lock in particular testimony they view as useful, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss secret legal proceedings.

Navy reservist who praised Nazis gets four more years in jail for obstruction

The Washington Post

A Navy reservist assigned to do intelligence work in Northern Virginia was sentenced Monday to four additional years in prison for obstructing Congress' confirmation of the 2020 election results and committing four other misdemeanor offenses in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot by Trump supporters.

Hatchet M. Speed, a petty officer first class formerly assigned to Naval Warfare Space Field Activity at the National Reconnaissance Office in Chantilly, Va., was convicted in March after a bench trial before U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden.

Prosecutors joined Speed's defense attorney in asking McFadden to impose a sentence that ran concurrent with Speed's sentencing earlier this year to three years in prison, after he was found guilty of possessing three unregistered firearms silencers in a separate felony case.

U.S. prosecutors said Speed was a Nazi sympathizer with top-level U.S. government security clearance who breached the Capitol with members of the Proud Boys extremist group. In sentencing documents, the government cited Speed's alleged statements to an undercover FBI employee, including using violence against "enemies" who live near government in Washington.

Putin leads a more muted Victory Day

The Washington Post

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that a “real war” is being waged against Russia amid muted Victory Day celebrations on Tuesday, with many mass events canceled over security concerns after last week’s alleged drone attack on the Kremlin and a looming Ukrainian counteroffensive.

The event marking the Soviet Union’s role in defeating Nazi Germany 78 years ago was also marred by an outburst from Yevgeniy Prigozhin, a key participant in the war on Ukraine and a vocal critic of the military leaders managing it. The chief of the Wagner mercenary group said in a video message that today’s Russians don’t deserve to celebrate the World War II victory of their grandfathers.

In his seven-minute speech, Putin said: “A real war has once again been waged against

our homeland. Today, civilization is at a critical juncture.

“We want to see a future of peace, freedom and stability,” added the leader who more than a year ago ordered what he has called “the special military operation” in Ukraine that has resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths. Putin quickly pivoted to blaming the war on “Western elites.”

“We believe that any ideology of superiority is inherently disgusting, criminal and deadly,” he said. “However, Western globalists and elites still talk about their exclusivity, pit people and split society, provoke bloody conflicts and upheavals, sow hatred, Russophobia, aggressive nationalism and destroy traditional family values that make a person a person.”

Putin then reiterated his claim that Ukraine

has become “hostage to a coup d’etat and the criminal regime formed by its Western masters” and “a bargaining chip in the implementation of their cruel, selfish plans.”

Under Putin, the May 9 parades and marches designed to commemorate the World War II victory in Europe and honor its remaining veterans have morphed into a showcase of Russian military might, with giant Iskander ballistic missiles and modern Armata tanks rolling through the streets of Moscow.

But Tuesday’s display was much more modest compared with those of previous years. Military experts noted that the 45-minute parade featured about 50 vehicles, a drastic decrease from the 2021 event that showcased 131 pieces, and there was only one tank — a World War II-era T-34. The traditional flyover of military aircraft was canceled.

Britain set to deliver long-range missiles to Ukraine

The Washington Post

Britain, which has prided itself on being ahead of its Western allies in introducing new weapons systems to Ukraine, now appears poised to send Kyiv the long-range missiles the Biden administration has long denied it.

In a procurement notice posted last Tuesday by the British-led International Fund for Ukraine, a group of northern European countries that have set up a mechanism to send weapons to the battlefield, the United Kingdom’s Defense Ministry asked for “expressions of interest” in providing strike capabilities with a range of up nearly 200 miles. The notice asked for responses within three days.

No final decision has been made, according to a British official who declined to confirm the type, timing or quantity of weapon-

ry under consideration. But the notice is a substantive step toward Britain itself supplying such munitions, and the requested specifications and capabilities closely match its air-launched Storm Shadow cruise missiles.

Ukraine has long pleaded with Western nations for longer range missiles, arguing that such weapons could change the course of the war by allowing its forces to target Russian command centers, supply lines, ammunition and fuel dumps deep inside Crimea and Russian-held territory in eastern Ukraine. As Kyiv prepares to launch a major counteroffensive as soon as within the next several weeks, the ability to strike far behind Russia’s front lines would help clear the way for a ground assault with tanks and infantry troops.

Storm Shadows can be mounted on Uk-

raine’s Soviet-made jets and reach into Russian territory. Kyiv has long sought that capability, and tried to ease Western escalation fears with pledges it would refrain from using donated weapons in such attacks.

“If we could strike at a distance of up to 300 kilometers (about 186 miles), the Russian army wouldn’t be able to provide defense and will have to lose,” Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov told Europeans earlier this year. “Ukraine is ready to provide any guarantees that your weapons will not be involved in attacks on the Russian territory.”

Moscow has charged that Kyiv has adapted drones for long range use in what have been sporadic attacks deep inside Russia. Kyiv has not asserted responsibility for any of the attacks, but has claimed its right to hit internal Russian targets with its own weapons.

Thousands march in Serbia after two mass shootings

Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia — Thousands marched in silence on Monday in Serbia in a major outpouring of grief and anger against the populist government and how it reacted after two mass shootings last week that left 17 people dead and 21 wounded, many of them children.

The gatherings in Belgrade and the northern city of Novi Sad were dubbed “Serbia against violence.” They were

called by opposition parties, which demanded the resignations of government ministers and the withdrawal of licenses to the state-controlled mainstream media that promote violence and often host convicted war criminals and crime figures on their programs.

After the protest officially ended, some of the protesters chanted slogans against Serbia’s increasingly autocratic president, Aleksandar Vucic, demanding that he step

down, as they passed by government headquarters in Belgrade.

The president later dismissed the protest as “shameful” during an interview on pro-government Happy television. He accused the opposition of abusing people’s grief for their political ends and inciting violence.

The shootings — on Wednesday in Belgrade at an elementary school, and on Thursday in a rural area south of the capital — left the nation stunned.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Former UFC champion arrested following crash

CA LOS ANGELES — UFC veteran Tony Ferguson was arrested early Sunday in Hollywood for suspicion of drunken driving after he allegedly crashed into parked cars and flipped his truck, police said.

Los Angeles police arrested Ferguson at about 2 a.m. Police said Ferguson's truck hit at least two parked vehicles and flipped over near Sunset Boulevard. No one was reported injured, a police spokesperson said.

Ferguson, a 2017 interim UFC lightweight champion, allegedly refused to take a breathalyzer test at the scene and was later arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence, police said.

2 sentenced for armed robbery of postal worker

FL TAMPA — Two Florida men have been sentenced to federal prison for the armed robbery of a postal worker.

Omar Rochester Miller Jr., 23, and Christopher Diaz, 27, were sentenced in Tampa federal court, according to court records. Miller received nine years and two months, and Diaz received eight years. Both pleaded guilty in January to armed robbery of a postal mail carrier and theft of postal keys. Miller also pleaded guilty to brandishing a firearm during the commission of the robbery.

Miller robbed a letter carrier at gunpoint while she was delivering mail at a Tampa apartment complex and stole her postal keys, according to court records. The keys can be used to

steal checks and other valuables sent through the mail.

After pushing the mail carrier to the ground, Miller ran to a getaway car, driven by Edwin Betancourt Vega, prosecutors said. The robbery was organized through phone calls and text messages between Betancourt Vega and Diaz, investigators said. Betancourt Vega was previously sentenced to four years and three months in prison.

Professor apologizes for false Indigenous identity

CA SAN FRANCISCO — An anthropology professor at the University of California, Berkeley, whose identity as Native American had been questioned for years apologized for falsely identifying as Indigenous, saying she is “a white person” who lived an identity based on family lore.

Elizabeth Hoover, associate professor of environmental science, policy and management, said in an apology posted on her website that she claimed an identity as a woman of Mohawk and Mi'kmaq descent but never confirmed that identity with those communities or researched her ancestry until recently.

“I caused harm,” Hoover wrote. “I hurt Native people who have been my friends, colleagues, students, and family, both directly through fractured trust and through activating historical harms. This hurt has also interrupted student and faculty life and careers. I acknowledge that I could have prevented all of this hurt by investigating and confirming my family stories sooner. For this, I am deeply sorry.”

Hoover's alleged Indigenous roots came into question in 2021 after her name appeared on a list compiled by Jacqueline Keeler, a Native American writer and activist, that includes more than 200 people Keeler said are falsely claiming Native heritage.

182-year-old historic church closes doors

AL BIRMINGHAM — Dwindling attendance by an increasingly elderly congregation at a historic Alabama church has prompted the difficult decision to close its doors for good, with the final worship service held Sunday after 182 years.

“There is a certain sadness,” said Sharon Eich, lay pastor of Five Mile Presbyterian Church in Birmingham. She said the congregation “has been such a beacon to the community for so long,” al.com reported.

There were about 40 church members when Eich became lay pastor in 2002. Now it's down to about nine.

“Most of the congregation is in their 80s,” she said. “It's just time.”

The white clapboard church, complete with a bell tower, was built in 1880. However, Eich said it holds just 30 people and lacks modern amenities.

Suciasaurus rex named state's official dinosaur

WA OLYMPIA — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has signed a bill designating the Suciasaurus rex as the official dinosaur of the state.

The new law honors a theropod fossil discovered in 2012 at Sucia Island State Park in

Washington's San Juan Islands.

The fossil belonged to a theropod, a two-legged meat eater like the Velociraptor and the Tyrannosaurus rex, according to the Burke Museum. The fossil was a thigh bone slightly smaller than a T. rex's. Because the fossil is incomplete, paleontologists weren't able to identify its exact family or species.

Rep. Melanie Morgan, D-Parland, sponsored the bill starting in 2019 at the suggestion of a group of fourth-graders in her district. The class at Elmhurst Elementary in the Franklin Pierce School District researched the dinosaur and how a bill becomes law and then brought the idea to Morgan.

Judge suspended for his behavior during traffic stop

WV CHARLESTON — It wasn't the first time Judge C. Carter Williams had been pulled over by West Virginia law enforcement for minor violations.

But his behavior at a traffic stop two years ago — berating the police officer, calling the officer's supervisors to complain and even driving to the mayor's house to lecture her — crossed a line. Now, Williams has been suspended for six months without pay and was fined \$5,000 for actions that “ventured past coercion into retaliation,” according to a state Supreme Court sanction issued.

Beth Walker, the Supreme Court's chief justice, wrote that Williams' call to the officer's supervisor during the traffic stop “can only reasonably be interpreted as coercive, and the calls made thereafter were a blatant invocation of his office.”

— From wire reports



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Lakers rally past Warriors for 3-1 series lead

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Although Lonnie Walker began the season as a starter for the Los Angeles Lakers, he got injured and slipped all the way out of their rotation after they transformed their roster at the trade deadline.

Walker didn't sulk or complain. He cheered from the bench, worked even harder in practice and waited for his chance to shine.

And when it arrived, the unsung pro with inextinguishable confidence outshot Stephen Curry in the fourth quarter of a playoff win that put his Lakers on the brink of an unlikely trip to the Western Conference finals.

"(It's) the greatest feeling you could ever imagine," Walker said with a smile. "As a kid, this is something I've been dreaming of."

Walker scored all of his 15

points in a phenomenal fourth quarter, and the Lakers rallied late to take a 3-1 second-round series lead with a 104-101 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Monday night.

LeBron James scored 27 points and Anthony Davis had 23 points and 15 rebounds for the seventh-seeded Lakers, who moved one win away from knocking off the champions with their eighth consecutive home victory since March.

Los Angeles overcame Curry's third career postseason triple-double down the stretch largely because of Walker, who has made a seismic impact in returning to the Lakers' rotation in this series. He went 6-for-9 in the fourth quarter, starting with a three-pointer on the opening possession of the period to cut Golden State's lead to four points.

After sitting out Game 1, Walker contributed nine points in Game 2 and 12 more in Game 3. His emergence in this series is a shocker to most, but not to Walker or his teammates.

"I'm a scorer mentality first," Walker said. "I've got a lot of confidence in myself. I know what I'm capable of, and after a lot of sacrifice and a lot of time in the gym, the fruition finally came today."

Walker eventually hit the go-ahead jumper with 1:53 to play. Curry's layup with 1:05 left trimmed the Lakers' lead to one point, but Curry missed a long jumper and a three-point attempt on Golden State's next possession before Walker made two free throws with 15 seconds left, and Los Angeles got one last defensive stop to seal it.

"We don't win this game tonight without Lonnie Walker,

that's for sure," James said. "As hard as this game was, it's going to be even harder. We understand that. We know that."

Game 5 is Wednesday night in San Francisco.

Curry had 31 points, 10 rebounds and 14 assists in his 13th career triple-double for the sixth-seeded Warriors, who will have to overcome a 3-1 series deficit for only the second time in franchise history to continue their NBA title defense. Golden State also did it in the 2016 Western Conference finals.

"It feels like what it is: (a) 3-1 (deficit). You go home, take care of business, get a win, and the momentum is right back in your favor," coach Steve Kerr said. "That's all it is. ... The Lakers did a great job of holding serve here, so now we've got to go back and get a win at home and flip the momentum."

Heat win Game 4, on verge of eliminating Knicks

Associated Press

MIAMI — The lead was shaky at times. The shooting went cold. The building got tense. There were moments when the Miami Heat looked like they were about to get themselves into trouble.

And they found a way — again.

The unpredictable ride of the eighth-seeded Heat continues, with Miami on the brink of yet another trip to the Eastern Conference finals. Jimmy Butler had 27 points and 10 assists, Bam Adebayo finished with 23 points and 13 rebounds and the Heat topped the New York Knicks 109-101 on Monday night.

"It was great that we were able to hold home court," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "But we know we have a task in New York."

They'll take a 3-1 lead into Madison Square Garden for Game 5 on Wednesday night, one win from wrapping up this East semifinal matchup and returning to the conference finals for the third time in four years.

"We've got a job to do," Butler said, "and I think we're very capable."

Max Strus scored 16 points, Kyle Lowry added 15 and Caleb Martin had 10 for the Heat. Miami became only the fourth No. 8 seed in this NBA playoff format — now in its 40th season — to win at least seven games.

The 1999 Knicks won 12 on their way to the NBA Finals, while Memphis won seven in 2011 and Philadelphia won seven in 2012.

Jalen Brunson finished with 32 points and 11 assists for fifth-seeded New York, while RJ Barrett had 24 points and Julius Randle scored 20 for the Knicks before fouling out with about three minutes left.

"You've got to win four to win a series," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. "So, all we're thinking about is win the next game. Go quarter by quarter. Win the first quarter, win the second quarter, win the third, win the fourth. And then the next day we'll think about the next day."

Miami missed 12 of its first 15 shots of the fourth quarter, but the Knicks didn't take full advantage — trimming only three points off the Heat lead in that span. It was nine entering the fourth, and a pair of free throws by Brunson with 4:40 left got New York within 99-93.

But a slam by Martin breathed some life into an antsy building, and the roars got a bit louder about a minute later. With the Knicks down seven, Randle went into the lane but Strus beat him to the spot, drawing contact that became the New York star's sixth foul with 3:08 left. The Heat held control the rest

of the way.

"They got to offensive rebounds, to loose balls, they've got some tough guys that get respect," Barrett said. "I give them credit. They're working hard. They've got guys falling every possession, they're getting calls, they're getting rebounds. They're playing hard. We played hard as well."

The Knicks never led in Game 3, then held the lead twice in Game 4.

Barely.

They had a pair of one-point leads in the opening quarter, for a combined 33 seconds, with Miami erasing the deficits with immediate baskets on its next possession.

But unlike Game 3, when Miami's lead was double digits for nearly the entirety of the final three quarters, this one remained in some doubt much of the way.

The Knicks cut what was an 11-point deficit down to 67-65 on a three-pointer by Barrett with 7:07 left in the third, but never got all the way over the hump. An 8-1 spurt over a two-minute stretch late in the third restored the 11-point lead, Miami's cushion was 90-81 going into the fourth, and the Heat held on.

"We're kind of fighting an uphill battle," Brunson said. "Didn't do enough within the 48 minutes."

Golden Knights get road win over Oilers

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The Vegas Golden Knights are used to shuffling goaltenders. When starter Laurent Brossoit had to leave with an injury early in their latest game, Adin Hill came in and led them to a win.

Jonathan Marchessault scored his first two goals of the playoffs, Jack Eichel had a goal and an assist, and the Golden Knights beat the Edmonton Oilers 5-1 on Monday night for a 2-1 lead in their second-round playoff series.

Zach Whitecloud and Chandler Stephenson also scored for Vegas. Brossoit appeared to injure his left leg sliding across the crease and left the game in pain at 11:44 of the first period after turning away three of four shots. Hill stopped all 25 shots he saw in relief.

The Golden Knights started five different goaltenders in the regular season because of injuries before settling on Brossoit as their playoff starter.

“We’ve used a lot of different

guys at this position. They’ve all played well,” Golden Knights coach Bruce Cassidy said. “That’s the good part for us. We know the guy going in there is going to make some timely saves. We don’t rely on him to win games for us. It might have to happen here or there, but in general we have tried to play well in front of our goaltender no matter who is in there.”

Warren Foegele scored the first goal of the game for Edmonton before the Golden Knights countered with five. Stuart Skinner was pulled in the second period after giving up four goals on 23 shots. Jack Campbell replaced him and made nine saves.

The Golden Knights took the series opener 6-4 before falling 5-1 at home on Saturday night.

“Forty-eight hours ago, we played a game we really liked,” the Oilers’ Connor McDavid said. “Forty-eight hours later, we’re here talking about not a very good one. So, our game is not gone, it’s not far — we need

to bring our best Game 4.”

Game 4 of the best-of-seven series is here Wednesday night, followed by Game 5 on Friday night at Las Vegas.

Skinner was removed from Game 4 of Edmonton’s first-round series against the Los Angeles Kings and the Oilers overcame a three-goal deficit to win in overtime with Campbell in net, but there was no similar comeback this time.

Vegas wanted more puck possession in Game 3 and got it. The Golden Knights scored the majority of their goals getting inside defenders and striking from the edge of the crease.

“I just didn’t think we were sharp,” Edmonton head coach Jay Woodcroft said. “I don’t think we skated well. I don’t think our battle level was where it needed to be. ... Our team wasn’t good in any area tonight.”

Vegas vowed to spend more time playing even-strength, and not give Edmonton’s vaunted power play running at 56% the minutes it had in Game

2. The Oilers went 0-for-2 with the man advantage during the game, while Vegas was 0-for-4.

“Everyone knows how great their power-play is and it’s important to play as much five-on-five as we can,” Eichel said.

Edmonton center Leon Draisaitl, who came in with 13 goals and four assists in eight playoff games, was held off the scoresheet for the first time. Oilers captain McDavid also didn’t record a point for the first time since the series opener against L.A.

They led 2-1 and outshot the Oilers 15-7 after 20 minutes, then scored three more goals in the second period.

Vegas took a 3-1 lead at 7:25 when Whitecloud skated to the faceoff circle to Skinner’s left and wired a shot over the Edmonton goalie’s glove.

Eichel beat Skinner far side with a wrist shot at 12:03, after Edmonton’s Evan Bouchard fell in the neutral zone to give Eichel a lane. That gave the Golden Knights a three-goal lead and ended Skinner’s night.

Chicago wins NHL Draft lottery, right to pick Bedard

Associated Press

SECAUCUS, N.J. — Connor Bedard is going to the Chicago Blackhawks thanks to a big win in the NHL Draft lottery that could alter the future of the storied Original Six franchise.

The Blackhawks won the lottery Monday night for the right to choose Bedard, the league’s most anticipated drawing since Connor McDavid in 2015. Bedard as a generational talent has drawn comparisons to McDavid and three-time Stanley Cup champion and two-time playoff MVP Sidney Crosby, whom he idolized growing up.

Chicago will try to get back to hockey’s mountaintop with Bedard as the new face of the franchise, replacing departed stars Patrick Kane and Jonathan

Toews, who combined to help them win the Cup three times from 2010-15. This is the Blackhawks’ first lottery win since 2007 when they got Kane.

Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly unveiled a placard featuring the Blackhawks logo at 8:22 p.m. EDT, signifying they had gotten the No. 1 pick and setting off a wild celebration among fans at a watch party. Chicago had the third-highest odds of winning the lottery at 11.5%, behind Anaheim’s 25.5% and Columbus’ 13.5%.

“I think I just said, ‘Wow’ because you understand the impact that a first overall pick can have — and having a first overall pick in the right year,” Blackhawks general manager Kyle Davidson said at a news confe-

rence in Chicago. “Hopefully that’s what we’ve got here. It can change a franchise, it can change a city and it can change an era in a team’s history. There’s a lot of weight to that and lot of significance to that.”

League-worst Anaheim won the second pick and will get to choose from among a trio of talented forwards: Canadian Adam Fantilli, Russian Matvei Michkov and Swede Leo Carlsson.

Columbus is set to pick third, continuing the Blue Jackets’ run of lottery losing. GM Jarmo Kekalainen said an on-air slip up revealing his team was picking third “spoiled the moment.”

“We’re going to get a great player at 3, there’s no question about it in my mind,” Kekalai-

nen said on a video call with reporters. “Everyone wants to win the lottery, then everything is your control, and obviously everybody’s talked about a special player at the top of the rankings. But we’re confident that we’re going to get a big difference maker at 3.”

Bedard has been the presumptive top pick in the 2023 draft for several years. He has also been considered the best prospect available since McDavid — and before that, Crosby.

A native of North Vancouver, British Columbia, Bedard led all junior players across Canada with 72 goals and 143 points this past season while playing for the Regina Pats of the Western Hockey League. He doesn’t turn 18 until July.

Keller's shutout ends Pirates' losing streak

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mitch Keller pitched his first career complete game and Rodolfo Castro hit a two-run homer as the Pittsburgh Pirates snapped their seven-game losing streak with a 2-0 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Monday night.

Keller (4-1) shut out the Rockies on four hits in his first time pitching into the eighth inning. The fifth-year veteran struck out eight and walked one in a game that took just 1 hour, 55 minutes.

"It's really special, a really cool thing, especially to do it with these guys because we've been struggling," Keller said.

It was the first nine-inning shutout by a Pirates pitcher since Jameson Taillon on April 8, 2018, against Cincinnati.

Castro's homer off Kyle Freeland in the seventh broke the scoreless tie.

Freeland (3-4) also had a strong start, giving up two runs and seven hits in seven innings with four strikeouts and three walks.

Ke'Bryan Hayes had two hits for the Pirates, who hold a slim lead in the NL Central.

Rangers 2, Mariners 1: Marcus Semien ended Logan Gilbert's bid for a perfect game with a leadoff single in a two-run seventh inning, and Jon Gray pitched visiting Texas past Seattle.

Semien scored the tying run on Josh Jung's bases-loaded sacrifice fly, and Jonah Heim chased Gilbert (1-2) with a two-out RBI single.

Yankees 7, Athletics 2: Aaron Hicks broke out of his season-long slump with a two-run homer, and host New York went deep four times in a win over Oakland.

Gleyber Torres hit a tiebreaking solo drive in the sixth inning, and Oswaldo Cabrera and DJ LeMahieu launched two-run shots.

Rays 3, Orioles 0: Shane McClanahan worked six innings and became this season's first seven-game winner, Josh Lowe and Luke Raley homered and visiting Tampa Bay topped Baltimore in a matchup of the teams with the best records in the American League.

The Orioles lost a series opener for the first time this season after winning their first 11.

Nationals 5, Giants 1: Rookie Jake Irvin struck out five and didn't give up a run in 6½ innings, earning his first career victory for visiting Washington.

Luis García had a multi-hit performance in his fourth consecutive game and CJ Abrams drove in two runs.

Angels 6, Astros 4: Shohei Ohtani had a pair of RBI doubles, Brandon Drury drove in the go-ahead run with a triple in the

eighth inning and host Los Angeles rallied past Houston.

Taylor Ward had three hits and Hunter Renfroe homered for the Angels.

Tigers 6, Guardians 2: Joey Wentz settled down after allowing a double and single to start the game on the way to his first win, and Andy Ibañez homered and scored three runs in visiting Detroit's win over struggling Cleveland.

Royals 12, White Sox 5: MJ Melendez homered and drove in four runs, Nick Pratto had a three-run double during an eight-run sixth inning, and Kansas City won consecutive home games for the first time this season.

Cardinals 3, Cubs 1: Willson Contreras had two hits and two RBIs in his return to Wrigley Field, including a tiebreaking double, and St. Louis beat Chicago.

Diamondbacks 5, Marlins 2: Christian Walker crushed a 459-foot solo homer and added an RBI double and Zac Gallen threw seven solid innings as host Arizona beat Miami for its fourth win in five games.

Brewers 9, Dodgers 3: Joey Wiemer and Willy Adames hit three-run homers to back Freddy Peralta's strong pitching and host Milwaukee defeated Los Angeles for its second straight win after six straight losses.

Athletes at Iowa, Iowa St. investigated for gambling

Associated Press

The University of Iowa announced Monday that 26 athletes across five sports are suspected of wagering on sports in violation of NCAA rules, and more than 100 people have been linked to an investigation.

In addition, Iowa State acknowledged that some 15 of its athletes across three sports are also suspected of violating gambling rules.

The announcements came less than a week after Alabama fired its baseball coach, Brad Bohannon, following a report of suspicious bets made at an Ohio casino involving his team.

NCAA rules prohibit athletes, coaches and staff from betting on amateur, collegiate and professional sports in which the

NCAA conducts a championship. For example, athletes cannot bet on NFL games even if state laws would legally allow them to do so if they weren't competing under NCAA rules. It is illegal in Iowa for a person under 21 to wager on sports.

Brian Ohorilko, director of gaming for the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that his office was monitoring a law enforcement investigation of gambling among athletes at the two schools.

Ohorilko said he knows of no evidence indicating match fixing or suspicious wagering activity on Iowa or Iowa State contests.

The Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation is conducting

the investigation.

Ohorilko declined to comment on what triggered the DCI's investigation.

Iowa State issued a one-paragraph statement on the alleged gambling violations. It said the 15 Cyclones athletes suspected of involvement are from the football, wrestling and track teams.

Athletes caught gambling are subject to losing eligibility.

The University of Iowa said it is fully cooperating with the investigation, has alerted the NCAA of potential violations and hired outside counsel to assist.

Iowa said it has received information about 111 individuals — including 26 athletes from baseball, football, men's basket-

ball, men's track and field and wrestling — as well as one full-time employee of the athletic department.

The school said the "vast majority" are students who are on staff, former athletes or those with no connection to the athletic department.

Iowa said university leadership was notified May 2 of potential criminal conduct related to sports wagering that also suggested possible NCAA violations. Law enforcement last Wednesday provided the university with a list of individuals alleged to have participated in sports wagering.

In response, the university notified several athletes they would not be participating in upcoming competitions.