

Navy plans to retire 14 ships from service

BY GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy plans to remove 14 ships and submarines from its fleet this year, according to a Pentagon report.

Plans for disposing of or reusing the vessels were contained in an April 26 administrative memo from Rear Adm. M.D. Behning, the acting deputy chief of naval operations for warfighting requirements and capabilities.

The inactivation list includes three Cold War-era nuclear-powered submarines: Los Angeles-class fast attack submarines USS Newport News and USS Alexandria, and the Ohio-class missile submarine USS Georgia.

The Navy has been phasing out the Los Angeles-class submarines as it received new Virginia-

class attack submarines.

The Newport News, commissioned in 1989, collided with the Japanese tanker Mogamigawa while submerged in the Strait of Hormuz in 2007. The Alexandria was commissioned in 1991.

The Georgia was commissioned in 1984 as an Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine, carrying Trident I missiles to launch at targets in the event of nuclear war. The submarine collided in March 1986 with harbor tugboat USS Secota near Midway Island. The Secota sank, with the loss of two sailors. The Georgia suffered only minor damage.

The Georgia was converted in 2005 to a guided-missile submarine that could fire volleys of Tomahawk cruise missiles. It could also operate with a special

compartment on its hull to carry and deploy special forces commandos.

The three submarines are to be “recycled,” a process at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in which they are decommissioned and stripped of parts, and their nuclear reactors are removed. The reactors are encased in protective materials and taken by barge from Puget Sound to the Pacific Ocean, then down the Columbia River, where they are unloaded into a special trench for spent nuclear waste at the Hanford Nuclear site in southeastern Washington state.

The other vessels are either scrapped, designated as logistics support assets or turned over to the U.S. Maritime Administration for disposal.

Two Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers — USS Lake Erie and USS Shiloh — along with the dock landing ship USS Germantown and replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson, will be used as “logistics support assets” to be “cannibalized” for spare parts, Behning says in the memo.

The Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Fort Worth would be dismantled.

Five ships would be transferred to the U.S. Maritime Administration. Three are the vehicle cargo ships USNS Red Cloud, USNS Watkins and USNS Pomeroy. The agency would also receive the offshore petroleum distribution vessel USNS Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler, and the replenishment oilers USNS Pecos and USNS Big Horn.

Up to 5K troops to leave Germany amid DOD review

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The United States will pull up to 5,000 troops from Germany in the coming months, a move that comes amid a Pentagon review of the American military mission in Europe and tensions over the conflict in Iran.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered the withdrawal, which is expected to be completed within six to 12 months, the Pentagon said Friday.

“This decision follows a thorough review of the Department’s force posture in Europe and is in recognition of theater requirements and conditions on the ground. We expect the withdrawal to be completed over the next six to 12 months,” chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement.

President Donald Trump,

when asked about the plan on Saturday, said, “We’re going to cut way down. And we’re cutting a lot further than 5,000.”

The move comes after German Chancellor Friedrich Merz earlier in the week said the United States was being “humiliated” by Iran during the course of the prolonged war in the Middle East. Merz’s comments prompted a strong reaction from Trump, who has complained that European allies have not done more to support the U.S. conflict.

The U.S. has roughly 34,000 troops in Germany, the highest number of any country in Europe.

If the U.S. aims to reduce the force presence quickly, rotational forces that move in and out of Germany could be the first to go. If the plan involves moving permanently based units, such as

the Vilseck, Germany-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the Pentagon will need to uproot troops and families and find a new base of operations for those forces.

According to CBS News and The Wall Street Journal, the move is expected to affect one brigade combat team in Germany and cancel a planned deployment of a long-range fires battalion later this year. The deployment, which involved long-range conventional missiles, had been announced by the United States and Germany at the 2024 NATO summit in Washington.

At the end of his first term, Trump sought to remove 12,000 troops from Germany in connection with complaints about Berlin’s laggard defense spending. At the time, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment was identified as a unit to be redeployed to the United States. The plan also called for

moving U.S. European Command headquarters from Stuttgart to Belgium among other moves.

The plan never came to fruition and was later canceled by former President Joe Biden.

Given that the Vilseck unit is the only brigade-sized combat unit in Germany, 2nd Cavalry Regiment appears to have been targeted again.

Even after a 5,000-troop reduction, U.S. forces in Europe would remain at around 80,000 — above the 76,000 threshold set by Congress. However, uprooting an entire regiment could run afoul of other aspects of the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, which prohibits the Defense Department from using funds to make drastic changes to U.S. European Command before meeting a long list of reporting and justification requirements.

US weighs cuts to troops in Italy, Spain

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Italy and Spain will likely face U.S. troop cuts in retaliation for not cooperating with the American military operation against Iran, President Donald Trump said Thursday.

Trump's comments came one day after he said he also was considering reductions in Germany following recent criticism from Chancellor Friedrich Merz over the Iran situation.

"Yeah, probably will," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked whether he planned to pull some service members out of Italy and Spain.

"Why shouldn't I? Italy has not been of any help. Spain has been horrible. Absolutely," Trump added.

The flurry of threats from Trump comes as the U.S. and

Iran remain deadlocked on how to end the conflict, which started Feb. 28 with joint American and Israeli strikes against the Iranian leadership.

Negotiations following a ceasefire failed, and NATO member countries have varied in their willingness to help U.S. efforts in the mission, known as Operation Epic Fury.

It's unclear whether Trump intends to follow through on his various threats related to where U.S. forces are based in Europe.

In the case of Spain and Italy, Trump would have fewer options than he does with Germany, which has the largest U.S. military presence on the Continent, some 34,000 troops.

There are roughly 12,000 U.S. military personnel based in Italy, home to the Navy's European headquarters in Naples. Another

hub is Vicenza, where the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade operates.

The brigade serves as the Army's contingency force in Europe and is designed to deploy quickly to crises in Europe and Africa.

The Army has been building up over the past few years in Vicenza, where an ongoing \$500 million housing project is slated to create more than 470 homes by 2028.

The Pentagon's other main location in Italy is an air base in Aviano, home to the 31st Fighter Wing and its two F-16 fighter squadrons, among other capabilities. The base airfield also is key to the 173rd's quick-response mission.

The country's defense minister, Guido Crosetto, told Italian news outlet Ansa that he didn't

understand the basis for Trump's comments that Italy has been unhelpful. Crosetto also said Italy is prepared to assist in a mission to protect commercial navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, something other allies in Europe have been discussing for weeks.

Any European mission to secure navigation, however, would come once hostilities have ended, allies have said.

Trump would have even fewer withdrawal options in Spain, home to about 3,000 service members. Most of the U.S. military presence is at the Navy base in Rota.

Spain has faced the toughest criticism from the Trump administration for its refusal to allow bases and airspace to be used for any operations related to the Iran conflict.

'Ike' back to work after extensive repair, overhaul

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Navy's second-oldest aircraft carrier, has completed a maintenance overhaul and sea trials to return to active status.

The Planned Incremental Availability (PIA) maintenance on "the Ike" at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard provided extensive repair, overhaul, inspection and modernization of the carrier, the Navy said.

The carrier was commissioned in 1977.

The carrier will return to its homeport at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. It is available for deployment, but the Navy has yet to announce the carrier's next mission.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower last deployed in October 2023 to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of oper-

ations in the Middle East, shortly after the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas. It led the U.S. response in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to missile and drone attacks on military and commercial ships by Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower went into the PIA in January 2025 and was scheduled to finish work by this summer. The Navy said the work involved more than 4,000 people daily who put in the equivalent of 25,000 work days. The Navy said the project was completed early due to time savings in task planning.

"This team also meticulously managed to execute the required new work under budget, saving 2,000 resource days," said Cmdr. Jason Downs, the project superintendent.

DOD eyes boost to troops' special combat pay rates

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon is considering doubling the rates troops are paid while serving in certain dangerous areas, officials said last week.

The proposal would raise the current monthly caps on imminent danger or hostile fire pay troops can receive from \$225 to \$450, according to officials and military budget documents. A Pentagon official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said no decision about the potential pay boost has been made.

"The Department continuously evaluates its policies to ensure that they are advancing its mission," the official said. "At this time, no decision has been made to increase the current rates for hostile fire event or imminent danger pay."

Any increase in those pay rates would have to be approved by Congress.

Under the new proposal, hostile fire pay would be increased to \$450, and imminent danger pay would increase to \$15 per day, according to budget documents and officials.

The proposed pay boost for the two types of special combat pay was noted in documents outlining the fiscal 2027 budget requests for the Army and Air Force sent to Congress last month. The Navy and Marine Corps budgets make no mention of the potential combat pay boost.

If approved, the new rate would be the first increase in the special combat pay categories since 2003, when the rates were updated from \$110 per month maximum to \$225.

Spirit Airlines shuts down all operations

South Florida Sun Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Pioneering discount carrier Spirit Airlines formally announced an end to more than three decades of flying early Saturday after the U.S. government and the Dania Beach-based company failed to reach an agreement designed to save the cash-strapped firm and help it emerge from bankruptcy.

“All Spirit flights have been canceled, and Spirit Guests should not go to the airport,” declared a statement distributed shortly after 2:30 a.m. by Spirit Aviation Holdings Inc., the airline’s parent.

Spirit said it “regretfully” made the decision to end operations “effective immediately.” The last Spirit flight landed in Dallas from Detroit, an Airbus jetliner with a familiar yellow fuselage and black lettered livery bearing the number NK1833.

On its final day, the airline “safely flew more than 50,000 passengers,” a spokesperson said by email. And management was working to transport more than 1,300 crew “safely home to their bases.”

As of 4 a.m. Saturday, the tracking service FlightAware showed 100% of the airline’s flights were canceled. Of the 277

flights, 85 of them were at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, where Spirit was the leader in passengers served.

The airline had been operating under Chapter 11 protection of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code since August of last year, and was close to exiting the process until the U.S. war with Iran caused jet fuel prices to spike, plunging the airline into a renewed financial crisis.

As the airline ran short of cash, the company turned to the federal government for a rare last-ditch bailout, but no agreement could be reached.

Spirit’s shutdown immediately ended the jobs of most of the carrier’s 17,000 direct and indirect employees who served the airline in the U.S., Caribbean and Latin America. Some of them worked for Spirit for more than 25 years.

Unions representing thousands of suddenly idled pilots, flight attendants and ground workers all issued statements demanding economic protections for their members in bankruptcy court.

The airline directed travelers to visit spiritrestructuring.com for more information about Spirit’s cessation of operations.

US to raise tariff rate on EU auto imports to 25%

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump said he was raising tariffs on cars and trucks from the European Union to 25%, claiming that the bloc had failed to fully comply with a trade agreement negotiated with the U.S.

“I am pleased to announce that, based on the fact the European Union is not complying with our fully agreed to Trade Deal, next week I will be increasing Tariffs charged to the European Union for Cars and Trucks coming into the United States,” Trump said Friday in a social media post.

“The Tariff will be increased to 25%.”

Trump said the levies would not apply to automobiles built in U.S. facilities. “It is fully understood and agreed that, if they produce Cars and Trucks in U.S.A. Plants, there will be NO TARIFF,” the president said.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Friday, Trump reiterated his claim that the EU was “not adhering” to their agreement, without providing more details, and said the levies would force their automakers to “move their factory production

much faster” to the U.S.

The decision injects fresh volatility into an auto industry that’s still adapting to Trump’s whipsawing trade policies from last year that significantly increased costs and squeezed profits for carmakers and their suppliers. Trump has pushed automakers to expand their U.S. manufacturing operations by imposing tariffs on vehicles and parts that cross the border, even from countries with prior trade agreements.

A number of prominent European automakers have assembly

plants in the U.S., including Volkswagen AG, Mercedes-Benz Group AG and BMW AG. Stellantis NV, owner of the Chrysler and Dodge brands, has a significant U.S. footprint as well, mostly focused on brands such as Jeep and Ram.

Trump’s announcement Friday would “threaten the progress that has already been made to open EU markets and grow the U.S. auto industry,” said Jennifer Safavian, president of Autos Drive America, a trade association representing automakers based outside the U.S.

Future USNS Solomon Atkinson christened in Ala.

Stars and Stripes

The future USNS Solomon Atkinson, a Navajo-class rescue and salvage ship, was christened during a ceremony Saturday at Austal USA in Mobile, Ala.

The ship is named in honor of retired U.S. Navy Chief Warrant Officer 4 Solomon Atkinson, who was one of the first Navy SEALs.

A veteran of the Korean War, Atkinson served aboard the

USS Washburn. He later completed three combat tours during the Vietnam War, earning a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and the Navy Commendation Medal with a Combat “V.” His naval service included training 48 astronauts in the Apollo and Gemini space flight programs, including Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, the Navy said in a news release.

Atkinson, who died in 2019, was born in Metlakatla in 1930

and raised in Alaska’s only federally recognized Indian reservation. Before enlisting in the Navy in 1952, he worked as a commercial fisherman. After his retirement from the Navy in 1973, Atkinson founded the first veterans organization on Annette Island and served as mayor of Metlakatla, among other roles in the community.

The ship’s sponsors, JoAnn Atkinson, Michele Gunyah and Maria Hayward — the wife and

daughters of the ship’s namesake — performed the traditional bottle break against the bow.

Navajo-class rescue and salvage ships can support a range of missions, including towing, rescue, salvage, humanitarian assistance, oil spill response, and search and surveillance, according to the Navy. Navajo-class ships can tow U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems.

'Not happy' Trump reviews new Iran offer

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he will review Iran's latest peace offer but wouldn't rule out restarting strikes on Tehran's military targets should the regime "misbehave."

Trump, speaking to reporters in Florida on Saturday, said he had been briefed on the "concept of the deal" offered by Iran, but moments later cast doubts that Iran's latest offer would be satisfactory.

"I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity, and the World, over the last 47 years," he said moments later in a post on Truth Social.

The U.S. president has voiced frustration at the lack of progress

on the peace negotiations, telling reporters on Friday that he is not satisfied with what Iran has proposed so far. Energy prices have soared because of the blockage of the vital Strait of Hormuz, fueling concerns in the White House that the Republicans could suffer a major defeat in November's mid-term elections.

"We just had a conversation with Iran. Let's see what happens," he said Saturday, adding that he would prefer not to restart hostilities in a war that began with U.S. and Israeli strikes in late February. "But I would say that I am not happy."

Tehran "will not back down from our position on the Strait of Hormuz, and it will not return to its prewar conditions," Iran's deputy parliament speaker said Sunday, according to The Associated Press. Ali Nikzad, who has no decision-making power in parlia-

ment, spoke while visiting port facilities on strategic Larak Island.

Iran's foreign minister said Tehran's ready to continue diplomatic efforts if the Americans change their approach and avoid "excessive demands, threatening rhetoric, and provocative actions."

The Islamic Republic's military remains "fully vigilant," Abbas Araghchi said.

Thousands of people have been killed across the Middle East, mainly in Iran and Lebanon.

The Strait of Hormuz — through which about a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas normally flows — lies at the heart of the stalemate. Iran insists the U.S. must end a naval blockade on its ports before Tehran's leaders are willing to reopen the waterway. The White House says the blockade is working by squeezing Iran's economy and

choking off its oil exports. It hopes to force Iran into concessions by continuing the naval operation.

Already, the country has begun curbing production as its storage tanks fill up, Bloomberg reported on Saturday. Yet Tehran has decades of experience preparing for versions of this scenario. It is proactively reducing crude output to stay ahead of capacity limits rather than waiting for tanks to fill completely, according to a senior Iranian official, who asked not to be identified because the information is sensitive.

Oil prices eased on Friday after touching wartime highs last week. Brent crude settled near \$108 a barrel, taking its gain for the week to 2.7%.

Trump has repeatedly asserted that energy prices will fall quickly once the war is over, and that talks with Iran were stalling because of divisions among its leaders.

Cuba's lifelines in peril as US widens sanctions

Bloomberg News

Sweeping new U.S. economic sanctions on Cuba could chase international companies off the island as Donald Trump's administration continues to threaten military force to dislodge the 67-year-old regime.

On Friday, Trump unveiled measures that would allow Washington to target almost any non-U.S. citizen or entity involved in business on the island. While specific targets are yet to be determined, the order says it will focus on defense, mining, finance and security.

The sanctions raise questions for companies including Turkey's Karpowership — which runs an energy barge in Havana — and Canada's Sherritt International, which mines for nickel and cobalt in Cuba, said William Leo-Grande, a professor of government and a specialist in U.S.-Latin American relations at Ameri-

can University in Washington.

"These sanctions are incredibly, incredibly broad," Leo-Grande said, adding that he expects the Trump administration to eventually use the new economic weapon to "terrify" companies into quitting the island.

Hours after publishing the sanctions, Trump teased a possible military intervention in Cuba in comments to an audience in Florida. In what appeared to be a joke, he said that when the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier returns from the war with Iran it could "stop about 100 yards offshore" Cuba "and they'll say, 'Thank you very much, we give up.'"

Trump's administration has imposed a near-total fuel blockade on the island since January as it presses for outright regime change. Cuba has said that its form of government and its leadership aren't up for discussion.

Americans in Philippines warned after rebel clashes

By **SETH ROBSON**

Stars and Stripes

CLARK AIR BASE, Philippines — The U.S. State Department is warning American citizens in parts of the Philippines to avoid contact with armed individuals following deadly clashes between government forces and communist rebels.

The advisory, posted Friday on social media by the U.S. Embassy in Manila, comes as about 17,000 troops from the United States, the Philippines and several other nations are participating in the annual Balikatan military exercise, which began across the archipelago on April 20 and runs through Friday.

Exercise officials did not immediately respond to questions about whether additional guidance has been issued to U.S. or other foreign troops in the country.

The advisory applies to the is-

lands of Leyte, Mindoro, Negros and Samar, the embassy said.

The warning follows fighting on April 19 in the coastal town of Toboso in Negros Occidental province, where Philippine government forces killed 19 members of the New People's Army, or NPA, according to local news reports.

The group is designated as a terrorist organization by both the U.S. and the Philippines.

Anyone in proximity of NPA elements is at grave risk of arrest, injury or death, according to the embassy's post.

"Foreign terrorist organizations actively recruit Americans to participate directly in terrorist activities and/or provide financial support," it said.

The alert urged U.S. citizens who encounter armed individuals not affiliated with police or the military to leave the area immediately.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Court rules against convicted tattoo artist

MA BOSTON — A tattoo artist convicted of assaulting a female client argued that the victim had consented to sexual touching based on where she wanted her tattoo — an argument the Massachusetts Appeals Court doesn't buy.

A Leominster District Court jury in 2023 convicted Jose Benevides of indecent assault and battery based on a complaint by a client who said that he repeatedly touched her pubic area without her consent and generally made her uncomfortable as she got a thigh tattoo.

Benevides appealed, saying that the judge should have made a required finding of not guilty.

He argued that it wasn't clear she hadn't given consent to his actions since she wanted a tattoo on her thigh and she "clearly gave her consent for him to touch her in areas specifically identified by this court as 'private areas,'" the Massachusetts Appeals Court summarized.

Members of the appeals court said that "this argument misapprehends the scope of the victim's consent" and they denied his appeal.

Camp Mystic says it will not reopen this summer

TX DALLAS — Camp Mystic said Thursday it will not reopen this summer following last year's catastrophic floods that killed 25 girls and two camp counselors.

The surprise announcement comes a month before the camp planned to welcome roughly 850 girls, a decision that prompted an outcry among many, including families of the

victims. The camp said it informed the Texas Department of State Health Services that it would withdraw its application for a license.

"No administrative process or summer season should move forward while families continue to grieve, while investigations continue and while so many Texans still carry the pain of last July's tragedy," the camp said in a statement.

Camp Mystic leaders faced deepening scrutiny over their preparation and response to the floods and backlash for their plan to reopen.

Fellow state chapter of fraternity was shut down

KS MANHATTAN — The fraternity where a Kansas State University freshman and Overland Park native died after falling from a window last month in Manhattan saw its University of Kansas chapter shut down for hazing in 2022.

Jack Fleischaker, 19, fell from a second-story window of a fraternity house near the university campus, Riley County police told WIBW in Topeka.

The incident occurred early April 25, according to WIBW.

Riley County police told a Topeka TV station that the incident occurred at a fraternity house in the 1200 block of Fremont Street. The fraternity home for Sigma Chi, Fleischaker's fraternity, is the only building that matches the description.

In 2022, the University of Kansas chapter of Sigma Chi was shut down by the national organization for participating in years of hazing activities and lying about it to national leaders.

In August, KU spokesperson

Erinn Barcomb-Peterson wrote in an email to The Star, "Sigma Chi, which was sanctioned by its national organization, does not have current members and is now focused on rebuilding its membership."

Director envisions 'very challenging' fire season

CO DENVER — Colorado's dry winter and abnormally warm spring will translate to high risk for a difficult fire season, state leaders warned.

"We are facing a very challenging fire year where our resources will be tested, across not only Colorado but across the West," said Mike Morgan, the director of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, at a news conference Thursday.

The Front Range and northwestern Colorado face the highest risk of fire through June and July, Gov. Jared Polis said.

But every corner of the state will be vulnerable. Drought covered all of Colorado as of Tuesday, according to data released Thursday by the U.S. Drought Monitor. Much of the northwest corner of the state was categorized as exceptional drought — the most severe category used by the monitor.

Opossums become allies in fight against pythons

FL MIAMI — Scientists in Florida have launched a new offensive against the Burmese python invasion, this time using opossums, one of the giant snake's favorite prey.

The initiative comes from biologists A.J. Sanjar and Michael Cove of the Crocodile

Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Key Largo, South Florida.

The researchers attach tracking devices to three-pound opossums, allowing them to track and capture the pythons, an invasive species that devours local wildlife.

Sanjar, Cove, and Jeremy Dixon — the refuge's manager — told the Sun Sentinel that they have made significant progress in refining this method over the past two years, turning it into an effective tool. They currently have 32 GPS-collared animals in the field and expect to have at least 40 by summer.

House OKs plan to stick with daylight saving time

MO JEFFERSON CITY — Like clockwork, the Missouri House again has endorsed a plan to adopt daylight saving time year-round.

Debating an issue for at least the 10th year in a row, the House approved legislation that would end the practice of Missourians having to change their clocks twice a year by making daylight saving time permanent.

With less than two weeks to go before the Legislature's scheduled May 15 adjournment and a crowded calendar of bills to act upon, it would be a long shot for House Bill 1758 to work its way through the Senate this year.

Even if the proposal did make it to Gov. Mike Kehoe's desk, the change would not be a lock to go into effect any time soon.

Since 2018, 19 states have adopted laws calling for a move to permanent daylight saving time, but such a maneuver needs congressional approval to go into effect.

— From wire reports



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Golden Tempo goes last to first for Derby win

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — After being asked all week about the possibility of becoming the first woman to train a Kentucky Derby winner, Cherie DeVaux was nearly speechless when Golden Tempo charged from the back of the pack Saturday to make history for her.

“I’m just glad I don’t have to answer that question anymore,” DeVaux said to a rousing round of applause.

DeVaux joined Jena Antonucci, with Arcangelo in the 2023 Belmont, as the only women to train the winner of a Triple Crown race. She was just the 18th woman to saddle a horse in the Derby in its 152-year history, and the gravity of the situation came into focus for her days earlier when she saw a young girl on the backstretch and realized the impact she is making.

“It really is an honor to be able to be that person for other women or other little girls to look up to,” DeVaux said. “You can dream big, and you can pivot. You can

come from one place and make yourself a part of history.”

DeVaux credits growing up with seven brothers and two sisters for her toughness. After winning the Derby on her first try eight years after starting her own stable, she thanked her husband for inspiring her to give it a chance.

“I didn’t believe,” DeVaux said. “I started my career here 22 years ago as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed exercise rider. And I would not believe that I would be sitting up here today. Never in my life did I think I would.”

It came with a lot of hard work. DeVaux fielded questions this week about Golden Tempo’s cracked heels, and she downplayed concerns. She put a lot of time into getting the colt into form, trying blinkers and other things to get the son of Curlin to focus.

Jockey Jose Ortiz even described Golden Tempo as lazy. But Ortiz showed what he and the horse could do Saturday, winning the Derby for the first time

in his 11th try — and doing so in impressive fashion.

Ortiz navigated past 17 other horses around the final turn and made a hard charge down the stretch. With a crowd of more than 100,000 watching and roaring at Churchill Downs, Golden Tempo passed morning line favorite Renegade — ridden by brother Irad — just before the wire to win the 1¼-mile race in 2:02.27 at odds of 23-1.

Golden Tempo paid \$48.24 to win, \$19.14 to place and \$11.90 to show. Renegade paid \$7.14 to place and \$5.46 to show. Ocelli — who didn’t get into the field until Thursday when Brad Cox’s Fulleffort was ruled out — paid \$36.34 to show after going off at 70-1.

The 152nd Kentucky Derby went on with just 18 horses following a scary incident before the race. Great White was a late scratch by track veterinarians after flipping and throwing his jockey.

Great White’s trainer, John Ennis, confirmed to The Associated

Press that the big gray gelding and jockey Alex Achard were fine.

Great White became the fifth horse scratched this week and the second Saturday. Silent Tactic was ruled out Wednesday, Fulleffort on Thursday and Right to Party on Friday, with Great White, Ocelli and Robusta getting in. The Puma was out, less than 12 hours before post time, because of a swollen leg from a skin infection, but it was too late to replace him.

Following Golden Tempo’s victory in the \$5 million Run for the Roses, the immediate question was whether he would run back in two weeks in the Preakness Stakes on May 16. After two of the previous four Derby winners did not participate in the Preakness, DeVaux said it would be determined in the coming days.

“We’re going to let him decide that,” DeVaux said. “We’re going to have to allow him to tell us, because the horse is first. We’re not here for ourselves. We’re not here for our egos. We’re here for the horse.”

Embiid, 76ers top Celtics in Game 7 to finish comeback

Associated Press

BOSTON — Joel Embiid and the Philadelphia 76ers advanced to the Eastern Conference semifinals, beating the Jayson Tatum-less Boston Celtics 109-100 on Saturday night to complete the NBA’s 14th comeback from a 3-1 deficit.

Embiid finished with 34 points, 12 rebounds and six assists. Tyrese Maxey added 30 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists. VJ Edgecombe scored 23 points and Paul George had 13.

Philadelphia, the No. 7 seed, will visit No. 3 New York on Monday night in Game 1 of the second round.

The 76ers franchise improved to 2-10 in road Game 7s. Their only other win came in 1982 at the Boston Garden. It’s a small measure of revenge after Boston blew

out Philadelphia in Game 7 in the second round of the 2023 playoffs.

“We had a chance to beat them three years ago, didn’t do it. We came in and got it done,” Maxey said.

Embiid, who debuted in Game 4 after recovering from appendectomy surgery, is the first player in NBA history to score 100 points in a playoff series despite missing the first three games. He and Maxey also became the third duo in league history to each have 25 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in a Game 7.

Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 33 points and nine rebounds. Derrick White had 26 points, including five 3-pointers. Neemias Queta finished with 17 points and 12 rebounds. Boston struggled from the 3-point line for the third straight game, finishing 13 of 49.

The Celtics played without Tatum after he was ruled out about 90 minutes before tipoff with left knee stiffness. Brown said he didn’t find out until about 45 minutes before the game.

Philadelphia led for all but 31 seconds in the game, increasing a five-point halftime edge to 18 points in the third quarter. It was down to 13 at the start of the fourth and Boston opened the period on a 16-4 run to pull within 92-91.

The Sixers were leading 101-98 when Maxey got free for a layup with 1:15 remaining. The Celtics missed their next four shots and Philadelphia pushed it to 105-98 on a pair of free throws by Maxey.

Mazzulla said Tatum came to the team facility Saturday with knee discomfort, and the medical team decided for him not to play. Tatum briefly left Game 6 in the

third quarter for unspecified treatment to his left calf. Mazzulla downplayed the significance, saying initially Tatum would play in Game 7. With Tatum out, Mazzulla made radical changes to the starting lineup, opting to start Baylor Scheierman, Luka Garza and Ron Harper Jr. alongside Brown and White.

It was the first time that group started together this season and the Celtics quickly fell into a 9-0 hole. The 76ers led by 15 in the first quarter and 32-19 when it ended.

Boston wasn’t as quick to fire up 3s, instead opting to attack the interior of Philadelphia’s defense to get easier looks.

The Celtics started the second quarter on an 18-4 run to take their first lead of the night, 37-36, on a 3-pointer by Payton Pritchard. The Sixers led 55-50 at halftime.

Canes shut out Flyers to open 2nd round

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Logan Stankoven scored twice to continue his postseason tear and the Carolina Hurricanes smothered the Philadelphia Flyers in a 3-0 victory Saturday night to open the second-round series.

Jackson Blake also scored for Carolina, and Frederik Andersen stopped 19 shots for his second shutout of these playoffs and seventh in his postseason career.

Game 2 of the series is Monday night in Raleigh, with the Hurricanes yet to trail in any of their five postseason games so far after jumping to a 2-0 first-period lead in this one.

“We had a good start, obviously,” Carolina coach Rod Brind’Amour said. “That’s what won the game.”

The Hurricanes closed a first-round sweep of Ottawa

last weekend, then had an extended break while Philadelphia battled to push past Pittsburgh in overtime of Game 6 on Wednesday night. That led to rest-versus-rust conversations about how the Eastern Conference’s top seed would start Saturday night.

Instead, Carolina pounced from the opening puck drop, a departure from how all four regular-season meetings went to overtime or a shootout.

Stankoven scored in each of the four wins against the Senators, then scored on a redirect from the slot just 1:31 in.

“I think you’re just trying to get it off quick,” Stankoven said. “Obviously, it’s nice to have that confidence that comes with putting the puck in the net, and yeah, you just kind of build off of it.”

Blake followed at 7:30, splitting two defenders as he en-

tered the zone and charging in to slip a puck behind Dan Vladar.

That was more than enough offense on this night with the Flyers struggling to apply much pressure on Andersen, who also opened the Ottawa series with a shutout.

“We definitely came ready to play,” Andersen said.

Philadelphia started its first postseason since 2020 by battling through the Penguins to close out a six-game series in overtime on Cam York’s Wednesday night winner. But the Flyers sputtered from the start, managing just nine shots on goal through two periods.

Otherwise, they struggled to find much open ice with the Hurricanes’ aggressive style closing in rapidly to shut down lanes toward Andersen or for the pass.

“We talked about it, we just

didn’t live it on the ice,” Philadelphia coach Rick Tocchet said, pointing to a need to react quicker against Carolina’s pressure. “We weren’t quick enough for their speed. ... It’s a good baptism how some of our players are going to have to play.”

By the final 10 minutes, the game had turned testy with players having to be separated multiple times. That included 10-minute misconduct penalties on the Flyers’ Trevor Zegras and Nick Seeler, along with Blake and Shayne Gostisbehere for the Hurricanes.

Both teams were down key players. Philadelphia didn’t have regular-season goals leader Owen Tippett because of an undisclosed injury, while Carolina was missing defenseman Alexander Nikishin after he suffered a concussion in Game 4 against the Senators.

Benavidez KOs Ramirez to win cruiserweight belts

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — David Benavidez hasn’t given up the dream of facing Canelo Alvarez — and now he might have leverage.

Benavidez put on a show with Alvarez sitting ringside Saturday night, moving up 25 pounds in weight and dominating former sparring partner Gilberto “Zurdo” Ramirez.

He twice sent Ramirez to the canvas, including knocking him out at 2:59 of the sixth round to win the WBA and WBO cruiserweight titles and become the first boxer to win championships at 168, 175 and 200 pounds.

Benavidez (32-0, 26 knockouts) not only remained undefeated, but showed why he was a -600 favorite over Ramirez (48-2, 30 KOs).

Ramirez was taken to a hospital to receive a head scan, according to Jane Murcia, communications director for Golden Boy Promotions.

“He’s in good spirits and has a swollen eye,” Murcia said. “There’s no determination of a fracture at this point.”

In the co-main event, WBA super middleweight championship fight, Jaime Munguía (46-2, 35 KOs) upset title holder Armando Reséndiz (16-3, 11 KOs) by winning a resounding unanimous decision. Reséndiz was a -200 favorite, but Munguía — the former WBO junior middleweight champ — was the aggressor from the start and won by scores of 117-111, 119-109 and 120-108.

“It feels great to have this championship belt with me, but this is just the beginning,” Munguía said. “I’m excited for what comes next. We are ready for big challenges and great fights.”

Benavidez has chased Canelo with hopes of setting up a showdown, but Alvarez never agreed to it and it has been looking unlikely to happen.

Maybe now it’s different, and Benavidez didn’t waste the opportunity to make the case yet again.

“I see Canelo in the building. Let me just ask the fans this. Do you guys want to see Canelo versus David Benavidez?” the man known as “The Mexican Monster” asked, drawing a roar from the crowd.

“Enough said. That means we can’t leave that fight on the table. I have respect for Canelo. He’s a great champion. I’m a great champion, too. Let’s do it.”

Benavidez said he would be willing to go back down in weight to make it happen.

“I’m still champion at 175,” Benavidez said. “I’m champion at 175 and 200. So if they want to come get it at 175, let’s get it at 175.”

Boxing fans, or least those who support Benavidez, haven’t forgotten how Canelo has yet to take on the match. Alvarez,

wearing a black Munguía T-shirt, was booed all three times he was shown on the large video board.

Benavidez, even when being backed down by Ramirez, delivered his signature rapid-fire combinations, usually pelting his opponent’s head. A right hand to Ramirez’s head in the fourth staggered him, and Benavidez went for the knockout but settled for the knockdown at the end of the round when Zurdo went down to his left knee.

Then two rounds later, Ramirez again went to a knee. This time, the fight was over.

“We came up together,” Benavidez said. “We came up sparring together. I got him ready for his world championship fights. He got me ready for my world championship fights. I just want to say I love Zurdo Ramirez, but, you know, it is what it is in here. There’s only one ‘Monster.’”

Peraza, Angels walk off Mets in 10 innings

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Oswald Peraza hit a two-out RBI single in the 10th inning and the Los Angeles Angels snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 4-3 victory over the New York Mets on Saturday night.

Jorge Soler drew a leadoff walk from Austin Warren (0-1) to open the 10th and Jo Adell singled to load the bases with no outs.

Warren got Josh Lowe and Vaughn Grissom on flyouts and was one strike away from escaping the jam when Peraza dunked an 0-2 curve into left-center for the win.

Los Angeles got 3⅓ scoreless innings from its beleaguered bullpen. Sam Bachman struck out three in 1⅓ innings and Ryan Zeferjahn (2-1) threw a scoreless ninth and 10th for the win.

Brett Baty reached on catcher's interference to open New York's 10th. But Zeferjahn got Bo Bichette to ground into a double play and, after an intentional walk to Juan Soto, Francisco Alvarez to pop out to second.

Pirates 17, Reds 7: Carmen Mlodzinski (2-2) had a career-high 10 strikeouts in 5⅓ innings, Pittsburgh tied the MLB record for consecutive walks in an inning and the host Pirates beat Cincinnati.

Pittsburgh drew seven consecutive walks in its five-run second inning, tying the mark set by the Chicago White Sox (Aug. 28, 1909) and Atlanta Braves (May 25, 1983).

The Pirates set season highs for runs (17) and hits (19), and each starter in the lineup had at least one RBI.

Cubs 2, Diamondbacks 0: Shota Imanaga pitched seven crisp innings and Chicago ended Ildemaro Vargas' 27-game hitting streak while blanking Arizona.

Ian Happ homered, tripled and doubled for the Cubs, who extended their winning streak at Wrigley Field to 10 games, their

longest at home since 2008.

Vargas had hit safely in 24 games to start this season and three to end last season. He went 0 for 4, grounding out against Ben Brown in his final opportunity as the Diamondbacks lost their third straight.

Yankees 9, Orioles 4: Cody Bellinger went 4-for-4 with two homers and four RBIs, leading host New York over Baltimore for its 12th win in 14 games.

Bellinger hit a pair of solo homers on sliders, putting the Yankees ahead in the second off Kyle Bradish (1-4) and boosting the lead to 6-1 in the fifth against Keegan Akin for his 21st multi-homer game and second this season. Bellinger hit a RBI double in a two-run third and a RBI single in the seventh.

Blue Jays 11, Twins 4: Kazuma Okamoto hit his third home run in two days, Brandon Valenzuela homered in an eight-run eighth inning and visiting Toronto beat Minnesota.

Lenyn Sosa and Myles Straw also went deep for the Blue Jays, who scored a season high in runs while winning for the sixth time in eight games, but saw George Springer leave with an injury.

Marlins 4, Phillies 0: Max Meyer and two Miami relievers combined on a one-hitter, Xavier Edwards homered and the host Marlins beat Philadelphia.

Meyer (2-0) struck out seven in a career-high seven innings. The only baserunners he allowed in 83 pitches were a single to Garrett Stubbs in the third and a walk to Alec Bohm in the fifth.

Brewers 4, Nationals 1: Kyle Harrison worked in and out of trouble for six innings, Brandon Lockridge drove in two runs and visiting Milwaukee beat Washington.

Harrison (3-1) allowed at least one baserunner in each inning, giving up one run on seven hits. He struck out five and walked one. The left-hander has allowed two earned runs or few-

er in each of his six starts and lowered his ERA to 2.12.

Astros 6, Red Sox 3: Brice Matthews hit a three-run homer and made a leaping catch at the center-field wall to rob Willson Contreras of a hit that spoiled a potentially big inning, leading visiting Houston over Boston.

The Astros' Christian Walker added a solo homer, three hits and two RBIs before leaving the game in the ninth inning after getting hit in the head by a fastball from Tyler Samaniego. Walker walked to the dugout after being hit and after the game was checked by a doctor and said he expected to be in the lineup Sunday.

Guardians 14, Athletics 6: José Ramírez stole his 300th career base, David Fry and Kyle Manzardo both hit home runs and visiting Cleveland used a four-run fifth inning to rally past the Athletics.

Ramírez hit a two-run double in the fifth that gave the Guardians their first lead at 4-3 before he stole third base. He became the second player in franchise history with 300 or more stolen bases, joining Kenny Lofton. Ramírez also joined Starling Marte, Jose Altuve and Trea Turner as the only active players to reach the mark.

Rays 5, Giants 1: Jonathan Aranda hit a two-run single in host Tampa Bay's three-run fifth inning and the Rays defeated San Francisco.

Cedric Mullins and Jake Fraley also drove in a run for the Rays, who became the second AL team to reach 20 wins, joining the Yankees.

Tigers 5, Rangers 1: Dillon Dingler hit a three-run homer, Keider Montero (2-2) pitched into the seventh inning and host Detroit beat Texas.

Dingler's sixth longball of the season was a 443-foot shot to left in the first inning off Kumar Rocker (1-2). Kevin McGonigle and Gleyber Torres each had RBI singles in the second for the Tigers.

Cardinals 3, Dodgers 2: Jordan Walker homered and Michael McGreevy (2-2) shut out punchless Los Angeles for six innings as host St. Louis won its sixth straight game.

The Dodgers have lost a season-high four in a row and have gone five straight games without a home run for the first time since May 2015.

Braves 9, Rockies 1: Drake Baldwin homered and drove in four runs, Chris Sale allowed one run in seven innings and visiting Atlanta rolled past Colorado.

Austin Riley and Matt Olson also homered for the Braves, who won for the 14th time in 17 games and improved their MLB-best record to 24-10.

White Sox 4, Padres 0: Miguel Vargas hit a two-run single with two outs in the sixth inning and visiting Chicago beat San Diego to win its season-high fifth straight game and for the 10th time in 14 games.

Sean Burke (2-2) allowed only four hits and struck out eight against one walk in six innings as the White Sox handed the Padres their fourth straight loss. San Diego loaded the bases with no outs in the ninth against Grant Taylor, but he struck out Gavin Sheets and then Seranthony Domínguez came on to get the final two outs for his eighth save.

Royals 3, Mariners 2 (10): Michael Massey scored on Maikel Garcia's sacrifice fly in the 10th inning, and visiting Kansas City overcame a dominant 14-strikeout performance from Seattle starter Emerson Hancock to beat the Mariners.

The Royals tied the game in the ninth against Seattle closer Andrés Muñoz, as Salvador Perez led off with a single. Pinch-runner Lane Thomas advanced to second on a balk, and scored on Jac Caglianone's single to center that got by Julio Rodriguez and went all the way to the wall.