

USS Ford set for its first deployment

Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — Following years of delays and problems with its new technology, the U.S. Navy's most advanced aircraft carrier embarks on its first deployment this week and will train with other NATO countries at a time of increasing Russian aggression in Ukraine.

The USS Gerald R. Ford leaves the world's largest Navy base in Norfolk, Va., on Monday along with destroyers and other warships, the U.S. Navy said in a statement Thursday. The carrier strike group will join ships in the Atlantic Ocean from countries that include France, Germany and Sweden for various exercises, including anti-submarine warfare.

"The Atlantic is an area of strategic interest," Vice Adm. Daniel Dwyer said in a statement. "Our primary goal is to contribute to a peaceful, stable and conflict-free Atlantic region through the combined naval power of our Allies and partners."

Dwyer commands the U.S. Navy's 2nd Fleet, which oversees American warships as they deploy between the U.S. East Coast and the Barents Sea, off of the coasts of Norway and Russia. The U.S. has sharpened its focus on the North Atlantic in recent years after the Russian military ramped up operations to a pace not seen since the end of the Cold War.

This week's exercises come seven

months after Russia invaded Ukraine. Western countries, including the U.S., have provide weapons to Ukraine, increasing tensions with the Kremlin.

Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened to send more troops into battle and potentially use nuclear weapons to ward off Ukraine's attempt to reclaim control of Moscow-occupied areas.

Bradley Martin, a senior policy researcher with the Rand Corp., told The Associated Press that the exercises will showcase American military capabilities and support for NATO. Concerns about Russia are part of the mission's broader calculus.

"We're also showing Russia that there are an array of forces they'd have to deal with if they go beyond Ukraine or escalate in Ukraine in ways we find unacceptable," said Martin, a retired Navy captain.

American aircraft carriers demonstrate the U.S.'s unique ability to dispatch warplanes around the world, Martin said. Despite the USS Ford's well-publicized problems, he said it's still part of a larger display of the nation's military might.

The \$13.3 billion warship — the nation's most expensive — is the first of the Navy's new Ford class of aircraft carriers. They're designed to carry a wider variety of planes and operate with several hundred fewer sailors. They use an electromagnetic sys-

tem for launching planes, which replace steam catapults and are supposed to increase flying missions by a third.

The Ford's first deployment comes five years after it was commissioned. And it's been beset by various issues, including problems with the launch system and the elevators that bring missiles and bombs to jets on the flight deck.

A Congressional Research Service report from late August stated that the Navy had "struggled to meet promises it repeatedly made" to defense oversight committees to complete, test and certify the weapons elevators. The Navy said the ship's 11th and final weapons elevator was certified in December.

In 2017, then-President Donald Trump told Time magazine that the Navy should revert to steam for launching planes because the electromagnetic system "costs hundreds of millions of dollars more money and it's no good."

Dwyer, the admiral, told reporters in a phone call on Monday that the Ford "has already successfully conducted over 10,000 catapults and carrier landings."

Martin, of the Rand Corp., said the system is yet to launch planes at the higher rate for which it was designed.

And it will likely take years to do so, which he said is not unexpected for the first in a new class of carriers.

Navy monitors sickened sailors linked to USS Nimitz

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

Five sailors who may have been sickened by water contaminated with jet fuel aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz are being monitored by medical workers, the Navy said.

Officials from 3rd Fleet on Thursday did not detail the concerns reported by the sailors aboard Nimitz, which has delayed a deployment after finding contamination in its water sup-

ply earlier in September.

Nimitz leadership is encouraging crew members to immediately report any illness or injury that could be connected to contaminated water exposure, Cmdr. Sean Robertson, a 3rd Fleet spokesman, said in an emailed response to Stars and Stripes.

"If we receive any additional reports of potentially contaminated water, we will immediately investigate and take appro-

appropriate action to safeguard the crew," he said.

The source of jet propellant-5, or JP-5, contamination has been isolated to one of the 26 potable water tanks aboard the ship.

That tank has been isolated from the potable water system, according to the statement.

"As an added precaution, three other nearby tanks have also been isolated," Robertson said. The Navy didn't offer details explaining how the jet fuel

found its way into the tank.

About two weeks ago, sailors reported irregularities in the ship's water supply. Subsequently, crew members identified trace amounts of jet fuel in the Nimitz's water while it was off the coast of Southern California.

Since then, the ship has been moored at Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego while workers have tested the water and examined the water supply system.

Ukrainians retake city used as Russian hub

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia attacked the Ukrainian president's hometown and other targets Sunday with suicide drones, and Ukraine took back full control of a strategic eastern city in a counteroffensive that has reshaped the war.

Russia's loss of the eastern city of Lyman, which it had been using as a transport and logistics hub, is a new blow to the Kremlin as it has sought to escalate the war by illegally annexing four regions of Ukraine and heightening threats to use nuclear force.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's land grab has threatened to push the conflict to a dangerous new level. It also prompted Ukraine to formally apply for NATO membership, a bid that won backing Sunday from nine central and eastern European NATO members fearful that Russia's aggres-

sion could eventually target them as well.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced Sunday that his forces now control Lyman: "As of 12:30 p.m. (0930 GMT) Lyman is cleared fully. Thank you to our militaries, our warriors," he said in a video address.

Russia's military didn't comment Sunday on Lyman, after announcing Saturday that it was withdrawing its forces there to more favorable positions.

The British military described the recapture of Lyman as a "significant political setback" for Moscow, and Ukraine appeared to swiftly capitalize on its gains.

Hours after Zelenskyy's announcement, Ukrainian media shared an image of Ukrainian troops carrying the country's yellow-and-blue flag in front of a statue marking the village of Torske,

9 miles east of Lyman and within sight of the Russian-held Luhansk region. Shortly later, a video posted online showed one Ukrainian soldier saying that Kyiv's forces had begun to target the city of Kreminna, just across the border in Luhansk. Outgoing artillery could be heard in the background.

While Ukrainian forces did not immediately acknowledge a breakthrough, writers close to the Russian military have described a new offensive by Kyiv in the Kherson region.

In southern Ukraine, Zelenskyy's hometown of Krivyi Rih came under Russian attack by a suicide drone that destroyed two stories of a school early Sunday, the regional governor said. The Ukrainian air force said Sunday that it shot down five Iranian-made drones overnight, while two others made it through air defenses.

Russian attacks also targeted the city of Zaporizhzhia, Ukrainian authorities said Sunday. And Ukraine's military said Sunday that it carried out strikes on multiple Russian command posts, ammunition depots and two S-300 anti-aircraft batteries.

The reports of military activity couldn't be immediately verified.

Lyman, which Ukraine recaptured by encircling Russian troops, is in the Donetsk region near the border with Luhansk, two of the four regions that Russia illegally annexed Friday after forcing what was left of the population to vote in referendums at gunpoint. In a daily intelligence briefing Sunday, the British Defense Ministry called Lyman crucial because it has "a key road crossing over the Siverskyi Donets River, behind which Russia has been attempting to consolidate its defenses."

Germany to add Indo-Pac to its security strategies

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Though the German military has prioritized keeping a close watch on the war in Ukraine, the country aims to demonstrate through frequent Indo-Pacific deployments that this region is also a concern.

German warplanes are deployed to NATO's eastern flank to make clear to Russia that the alliance's territory is a red line, Lt. Gen. Ingo Gerhartz, who leads the country's air force, told journalists at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo on Thursday.

"We will defend it if somebody attacks it," he said.

At the same time, Germany is sending forces elsewhere, including to the Indo-Pacific, where there's the potential for

conflict amid China's rapid military buildup. Thirteen German warplanes have been carrying out a mission called Rapid Pacific since summer.

They started by participating in Australia's Pitch Black exercise, which involved 100 aircraft from 17 nations, including the United States, between Aug. 19 and Sept. 8. The drills prepare air forces to work together in large-scale aerial combat by day or night. Three German Eurofighter Typhoons involved in Rapid Pacific, including one piloted by Gerhartz, flew from Singapore to Japan on Wednesday.

Next summer, German soldiers will travel to Australia for the biennial Talisman Sabre exercise, which typically involves tens of thousands of U.S. and Australian troops.

Officials: Nord Stream gas pipelines no longer leaking

Associated Press

HELSINKI — Authorities in Denmark said Sunday that the Nord Stream 1 natural gas pipelines have stopped leaking, a day after officials said that the ruptured Nord Stream 2 pipelines also appeared to stop leaking.

"The Nord Stream AG company has informed the Danish Energy Agency that a stable pressure now appears to have been achieved on the two Nord Stream 1 pipelines. This indicates that the blowout of gas from the last two leaks has now also been completed," the Danish agency tweeted Sunday.

The Danish agency said Saturday that the Nord Stream 2 ruptured natural gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea appeared to have stopped leaking natural gas.

Undersea blasts that damaged the Nord Stream I and 2 pipelines last week have led to huge methane leaks. Nordic investigators said the blasts involved several hundred pounds of explosives.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday accused the West of sabotaging the Russia-built pipelines, a charge vehemently denied by the United States and its allies.

The U.S.-Russia clashes continued later at an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council in New York called by Russia on the pipelines attacks and as Norwegian researchers published a map projecting that a huge plume of methane from the damaged pipelines will travel over large swaths of the Nordic region.

Deaths rise amid Ian recovery woes

Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Rescuers evacuated stunned survivors on a large barrier island cut off by Hurricane Ian and Florida's death toll climbed sharply, as hundreds of thousands of people were still sweltering without power days after the monster storm rampaged from the state's southwestern coast up to the Carolinas.

Florida, with nearly four dozen reported dead, was hit hardest by the Category 4 hurricane, one of the strongest to make landfall in the United States. Flooded roadways and washed-out bridges to barrier islands left many people isolated, amid limited cellphone service and a lack of basic amenities such as water, electricity and the internet.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Saturday that multibillio-

naire businessman Elon Musk was providing some 120 Starlink satellites to "help bridge some of the communication issues." Starlink, a satellite-based internet system created by Musk's SpaceX, will provide high-speed connectivity.

Florida utilities were working to restore power. As of Sunday morning, nearly 850,000 homes and businesses were still without electricity, down from a peak of 2.67 million.

At least 54 people were confirmed dead: 47 in Florida, four in North Carolina and three in Cuba. The weakened storm had drifted north on Sunday and was expected to dump rain on parts of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and southern Pennsylvania, according to the National Hurricane Center, which has warned of the potential for flash flooding.

More than 1,000 people were rescued from flooded areas along Florida's southwestern coast alone, Daniel Hokanson, a four-star general and head of the National Guard, told The Associated Press while airborne to Florida.

In Washington, the White House announced that President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden would travel to Florida on Wednesday. But a brief statement did not release any details of the planned visit.

The bridge to Pine Island, the largest barrier island off Florida's Gulf Coast, was destroyed by the storm, leaving it accessible only by boat or air. The volunteer group Medic Corps, which responds to natural disasters worldwide with pilots, paramedics and doctors, went door-to-door asking residents if they wanted to be evacuated.

Some flew out by helicopter, and people described the horror of being trapped in their homes as water kept rising.

"The water just kept pounding the house and we watched, boats, houses—we watched everything just go flying by," Joe Conforti said, fighting back tears. He said if it wasn't for his wife, who suggested they get up on a table to avoid the rising water, he wouldn't have made it: "I started to lose sensibility, because when the water's at your door and it's splashing on the door and you're seeing how fast it's moving, there's no way you're going to survive that."

While swollen rivers have crested or are near cresting, the levels aren't expected to drop significantly for days, National Weather Service meteorologist Tyler Fleming said.

Men pick up hundreds of pounds of trash caused by hurricane

Special to The Washington Post

Manny Rionda said he has developed a habit he never imagined he'd have: picking up trash. He called it both addictive and life changing.

So when the Florida man saw waste piling up along the shore as Hurricane Ian sent tropical storm-force winds to Miami, he went straight to the beach. He brought with him fellow environmentalist Andrew Otazo. They removed 310 pounds of derelict lobster traps, marine rope and other waste on Key Biscayne Beach that had washed up on the shore.

"We call ourselves weirdos who pick up trash on the beach," Rionda said. "It's a badge of honor."

The lobster traps can harm reefs and marine animals, Otazo said, and they can do more damage on the shore than in the ocean, as they also pose a risk to turtles and birds.

"They're basically big wreck-

ing balls," Otazo said of the lobster traps. "They can do a tremendous amount of damage."

He said the ocean floor has piles of large pieces of trash.

"There's a repository that's just accumulated over the years, and whenever we have a big storm, it gets pushed onto the land," said Otazo, who is a long-distance swimmer and marathoner.

Using a radar app to track the hurricane bands, Otazo and Rionda waited for winds to temporarily dissipate before heading out to the beach Tuesday. Then they hauled in hundreds of pounds of washed-up waste, which they accomplished with the help of a stranger and his son, who eagerly joined the impromptu cleanup.

Wearing reusable gloves, the men used serrated scissors and a shovel to sift through the waste and pile it on the side of the beach. They then contacted Key Biscayne Public Works to remove the dangerous debris.

Venezuela swaps 7 jailed Americans for Maduro kin

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a rare softening of hostile relations, Venezuela freed on Saturday seven imprisoned Americans in exchange for the United States releasing two nephews of President Nicolás Maduro's wife who had been jailed for years on narcotics convictions.

The swap of the Americans, including five oil executives held for nearly five years, follows months of back channel diplomacy by senior U.S. officials — secretive talks with a major oil producer that took on greater urgency after sanctions on Russia put pressure on global energy prices.

The deal amounts to an unusual gesture of goodwill by Maduro as the socialist leader looks to rebuild relations with the U.S. after vanquishing most of his domestic opponents. While the White House denied any change in policy is afoot, the freeing of Ameri-

cans could create political space for the Biden administration to ease crippling oil sanctions on Venezuela if Maduro shows progress in on-again, off-again talks with his opponents.

The transfer took place Saturday in the Caribbean island of St. Vincent and Grenadines, which is ruled by an ally of Maduro, three people in Venezuela briefed on the matter told the AP on the condition of anonymity.

Those freed include five employees of Houston-based Citgo who were lured to Venezuela in 2017 to attend a meeting at the headquarters of the company's parent. Once there, they were hauled away by masked security agents who busted into a Caracas conference room. Also released was Matthew Heath, a former U.S. Marine corporal from Tennessee who was arrested in 2020, and a Florida man, Osman Khan, who was arrested in January.

Tear gas triggers crush as fans killed at soccer match

Associated Press

MALANG, Indonesia — Panic and a chaotic run for exits after police fired tear gas at an Indonesian soccer match to drive away fans upset with their team's loss left at least 125 dead, most of whom were trampled upon or suffocated, making it one of the deadliest sports events in the world.

Attention immediately focused on the police use of tear gas, and witnesses described police beat them with sticks and shields before shooting canisters directly into the crowds.

The president of FIFA called the deaths at the stadium “a dark day for all involved in football and a tragedy beyond comprehension,” while President Joko Widodo ordered an investigation of security procedures. While FIFA has no control over domestic games, it has advised against the use of tear gas at soccer stadiums.

Violence broke out after the game ended Saturday evening

with host Arema FC of East Java's Malang city losing to Persebaya of Surabaya 3-2.

Disappointed with their team's loss, thousands of supporters of Arema, known as “Aremania,” reacted by throwing bottles and other objects at players and soccer officials. Witnesses said fans flooded the Kanjuruhan Stadium pitch and demanded that Arema management explain why, after 23 years of undefeated home matches against Persebaya, this one ended in a loss.

The violence spread outside the stadium where at least five police vehicles were toppled and set ablaze. Riot police responded by firing tear gas, including toward the stadium's stands, causing panic among the crowd.

“The stadium turned into a smoke-filled battleground when police fired tear gas,” said Rizky, who came with his cousin to watch the game.

“I felt hot and stinging in my

eyes, I couldn't see clearly while my head was dizzy and everything went dark. ... I passed out,” he said. When he woke up, he was already in the emergency room. He said his cousin died because of head injuries.

“We wanted to entertain ourselves by watching a football match, but we got disaster,” he said.

Another spectator, Ahmad Fatoni, said police had started beating the fans with sticks and shields, and they fought back.

“Officers fired tear gas directly at spectators in the stands, forcing us to run toward the exit,” he said. “Many victims fell because of shortness of breath and difficulty seeing due to tear gas and were trampled.”

He said he climbed the roof of the stands and only came down when the situation calmed down.

Others suffocated and were trampled as hundreds of people ran to the exit to avoid the tear gas.

Four elite paramilitary Guards killed in Iran clash

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — An attack by armed separatists on a police station in a southeastern city killed 19 people, including four members of Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported Saturday.

The assailants in Friday's attack hid among worshippers near a mosque in the city of Zahedan and attacked the nearby police station, according to the report.

IRNA quoted Hossein Modaresi, the provincial governor, as saying 19 people were killed. The outlet said 32 Guard members, including volunteer Basiji forces, were also wounded in the clashes.

It was not immediately clear if the attack was related to nationwide antigovernment protests gripping Iran after the death in police custody of a young Iranian woman.

Sistan and Baluchestan province borders Afghanistan and Pakistan and has seen previous attacks on security forces by ethnic Baluchi separatists, although Saturday's Tasnim report did not identify a separatist group allegedly involved in the attack.

IRNA on Saturday identified the dead as Hamidreza Hashemi, a Revolutionary Guard colonel; Mohammad Amin Azarshok, a Guard member; Mohammad Amin Arefi, a Basiji, or volunteer force with the IRG; and Saeed Borhan Rigi, also a Basiji.

Tasnim and other state-linked Iranian news outlets reported Friday that the head of the Guard's intelligence department, Seyyed Ali Mousavi, was shot during the attack and later died.

Dozens killed as packed vehicle overturns in northern India city

Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India — A farm tractor pulling a wagon loaded with people overturned and fell into a pond in northern India, killing 26 people, most of them women and children, officials said Sunday.

The wagon was carrying around 40 people returning from a ceremony at a nearby local Hindu temple Saturday night, said police Superintendent Tej Swaroop Singh. He said most of the deaths were due to drowning.

At least 10 people were injured in the accident in Kanpur city's Ghatampur area, about 60 miles southwest of Uttar Pradesh state's capital, Lucknow. The injured have been admitted to a hospital.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted condolences Saturday: “Distressed by the tractor-trolley mishap in Kanpur. My thoughts are with all those who have lost their near and dear ones. Prayers with the in-

jured.”

It is the second incident in the last three days when a tractor carrying people overturned, killing at least 12 people.

Uttar Pradesh's top elected official Yogi Adityanath discouraged the use of farm tractors for passenger transport.

“A tractor-trolley should be used for agricultural work and to transfer goods, not to ferry people,” he said in a statement.

India has some of the highest road death rates in the world.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman dubbed 'black widow' dies in prison

CA SACRAMENTO — A woman who prosecutors dubbed a “black widow” because she had her husband killed, died of natural causes while serving a life sentence, authorities said.

Susan Russo, who was convicted of first-degree murder and conspiracy in the 1994 slaying of David Russo, 43, died Thursday, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said.

Russo, 67, was serving her sentence at the Central California Women’s Facility prison in Madera County. She had been receiving medical treatment at a local medical facility since Aug. 16, the department said. It didn’t say what Russo was being treated for.

The Fresno County Sheriff’s Office will determine her cause of death, it said.

Russo arranged to pay her boyfriend \$100 to kill her husband, who was a U.S. Navy chief petty officer serving at Lemoore Naval Air Station south of Fresno, so she could collect benefits as his surviving spouse, including a nearly \$1 million insurance policy, authorities said.

Man, 12-year-old nephew accused of robbery spree

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Authorities said an Albuquerque man and his 12-year-old nephew are behind a string of recent armed robberies at retail clothing stores.

Albuquerque police said Jason Pete Roper and his nephew were both taken into custody on multiple robbery-related

charges.

Investigators said the boy was arrested at his school. Their questioning of him led them to arrest Roper.

According to detectives, Roper drove the boy in a Cadillac to various businesses over the past few months to rob them. They robbed or tried to rob five places, including three branches of Ross Dress for Less.

Roper has been booked on five counts of conspiracy to commit armed robbery, two counts of armed robbery, evidence tampering, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and abandonment or abuse of a child.

The boy is being held for armed robbery, attempt to commit a felony and conspiracy.

Man has found 78 rings around beach in 7 years

SC MYRTLE BEACH — Seven years, 78 recoveries.

It’s not in the thousands, but when you look at the task of finding a very small piece of metal in the miles and miles of beaches along the Grand Strand coastline, Myrtle Beach resident Matthew Fry’s work as a ring finder is impressive.

Fry, 60, has been using his “state of the art” metal detector equipment since late 2014 to help tourists and residents alike find their lost rings on beaches, roads, parks and almost anywhere he can put his \$1,500 equipment to good use.

Fry is a part of a global network called the Ring Finders, a group of metal detector enthusiasts who find lost rings for others in their free time. The network spans across 26 countries.

With all finders combined, the network has made over 10,000 recoveries to date according to the website.

Crematorium that didn't refrigerate bodies must pay

ME LEWISTON — A funeral home operator accused of leaving bodies unattended without refrigeration must pay \$5.5 million to the daughter of a man whose body lay decomposing for up to two weeks.

The jury’s award marked the conclusion of the first of several civil trials targeting the conduct of Lewiston-based Affordable Cremation Solution.

The lawsuit contended Marielle Bischoff-Wurstle suffered emotional harm upon learning that her father’s remains had been mishandled by the Lewiston crematorium, the Sun Journal reported.

“The jury has spoken loud and clear: What Ken Kincer and Affordable Cremation Solutions did was wrong,” said Ben Gideon, one of the attorneys representing Bischoff-Wurstle.

The crematorium was shut down and its funeral licenses were suspended in June 2021 by the state, which said unrefrigerated bodies were found stacked in the basement of the building.

Low water on river impacting barge traffic

MO O’FALLON — Parts of the Mississippi River are so low from weeks of drought that barge traffic is being limited at the worst possible time — as crop harvests begin.

Some Mississippi River communities between St. Louis and

New Orleans may see record low water levels in the coming days, including Caruthersville, Mo., and Osceola, Ark. The National Weather Service predicts the reading at Memphis, Tenn., will reach its second-lowest level ever by Oct. 13.

The timing is bad. Corn and soybeans harvested in the early fall need to be moved, and barges are vital in getting the commodities from one place to another.

Officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said that normally, tows are able to move 36 barges at a time. With the water level so low, shippers have voluntarily agreed to cut that to 25 barges.

Car plunges from cliffside road onto beach below

CA PACIFICA — A man was critically injured after his car plunged off a winding, cliffside road south of San Francisco and landed on a beach below, authorities said.

California Department of Fire and Forestry Protection officials posted a video of the smashed car at the bottom of the cliff and said a witness called authorities to say a car had careened off Highway 1 south of the Tom Lantos Tunnel in the city of Pacifica. The area of steep cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean is known as Devil’s Slide. Multiple cars have plunged into the beach below in recent years.

First responders found the driver “conscious and breathing” inside the car, Mark Andrews, a spokesperson for California Highway Patrol, told the San Francisco Chronicle. The man was airlifted to a hospital.

— From wire reports

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Georgia rallies in 4th quarter to top Missouri

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The two most important characteristics that Georgia coach Kirby Smart seeks in his team are composure and resiliency, and the top-ranked Bulldogs needed to rely on both to rally past Missouri on Saturday night.

Or, as Smart put it: “We had to OD on those.”

Kept out of the end zone until the fourth quarter and facing a 10-point deficit, the Bulldogs got their run game going just in time to avoid the upset. Kendall Milton finished off one long drive with a touchdown, then Daijun Edwards got into the end zone with just over four minutes to go, lifting the Bulldogs to a 26-22 victory.

“They played really physical and really hard and whipped us up front, but I’m really proud of us,” Smart said. “We always talk about rising to the competitive nature of the opportunity and we did that tonight.”

The Bulldogs (5-0, 2-0 SEC) trailed almost the entire way before finally solving the red-zone woes that forced Jack Podlesny into kicking four field goals. Quarterback Stetson Bennett also struggled all night against the blitzing Missouri defense, but the leader of the defending national champions still had 312 yards passing and no interceptions.

“It felt like an SEC game in the fourth quarter that we had to win,” Bennett said afterward.

“They have pride, too. They expect to win, too. And they played hard, too.”

Brady Cook had 192 yards passing and a touchdown for the Tigers (2-3, 0-2), who have never beaten a top-ranked team in 17 tries. But they also struggled to reach the end zone against one of the country’s best defenses, forcing Harrison Mevis into kicking five field goals one week after he missed a potential game-winner in an overtime loss at Auburn.

“We were self-inflicted wounds away from winning that game,” Tigers coach Eli Drinkwitz said.

Georgia riled up the Tigers long before kickoff when several of them walked through their pre-

game drills, and Bulldogs defensive tackle Jalen Carter and Missouri’s Darius Robinson had to be physically separated.

The Tigers carried their angst right into the game. Their rebuilt defense behind coordinator Blake Baker forced an early fumble and bunch of punts, and Missouri capitalized on the good field position.

Mevis made the first of his field goals to put the Bulldogs in their first hole of the season.

They wound up spending the rest of the night digging out of it.

“This team bonded tonight,” Smart said. “Don’t get me wrong: We have a long way to go. But the resiliency that they showed tonight made me proud.”

QB Young injured, but Alabama tops Arkansas

Associated Press

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Alabama did it once. That was probably enough for Nick Saban’s tastes.

The second-ranked Crimson Tide lost starting quarterback Bryce Young to a shoulder injury in the second quarter against Arkansas on Saturday in a 49-26 win over No. 20 Arkansas. For a period, though, Alabama appeared in trouble without the reigning Heisman Trophy winner.

Saban, who has never lost to Arkansas in his 16 years as Alabama coach, is hopeful Young will be fine for the Crimson Tide’s game next week against Texas A&M — the only team to beat Alabama in the regular season last year.

“Bryce has a little AC sprain in his shoulder. We’ll have to take it day-to-day,” Saban said. “I think he’s OK. He doesn’t have a serious injury.”

After opening a 28-0 lead in the second quarter behind two touchdown series from Young and another two from his replacement, redshirt freshman Jalen Milroe, the Alabama offense began to

sputter. Arkansas capitalized.

Milroe, who finished just 4 of 9 passing for 65 yards and a touchdown, and the Alabama offense had minus-1 yard in the third quarter. Then they saw their 28-point lead evaporate to five entering the fourth.

Arkansas rallied with its running game, trickery and Alabama’s own mistakes.

Arkansas ran for 187 yards on the ground, the most Alabama has allowed since Week 3 last year. Rocket Sanders, who entered the game as the SEC’s leading rusher, had his fourth 100-yard game of the season, going for 101 on 22 carries. His touchdown with 19 seconds left in the third quarter trimmed Alabama’s lead to five.

It came after a bad snap on a punt attempt resulted in the Razorbacks taking over on the Crimson Tide 3.

“We didn’t maintain our intensity. We let them get back in the game at one point,” Saban said. “The kicking game errors, the on-side kick, the bad snap on the punt. Those were really our errors.”

No. 5 Clemson tops No. 10 NC State in ACC confrontation

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — DJ Uiagalelei played well as he has all season to power No. 5 Clemson’s offense. The Tigers’ defense finally looked like the stellar group it was projected to be.

The result was Clemson’s most complete game of the season: a 30-20 win over 10th-ranked North Carolina State on Saturday night.

“That was a great thing to see on both sides of the ball,” fifth-year defensive end K.J. Henry said.

Uiagalelei ran for two touchdowns and threw for a third as Clemson beat the Wolfpack (4-1, 0-1) for the ninth time in 10 seasons.

The Tigers (5-0, 3-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) won their ACC record-tying 37th straight at home, their 11th in row overall and a clear path back to league championship game they won annually from 2015 through 2020.

Clemson followed up its 51-45 overtime victory at No. 22 Wake Forest last week by shutting down North Carolina State in

the second half to hold division tiebreakers over the two teams many figured would be the most likely to knock the Tigers out of title contention for a second straight year.

Instead, Clemson once more looked like the class of the league.

“I thought we did a great job tonight,” Uiagalelei said. “I thought we did a great job in execution, a great job taking what the defense gave us.”

It was Uiagalelei front and center at the game’s most critical stretch. After North Carolina State passer Devin Leary connected with Cedd Seabrough on the game’s first touchdown for a 10-6 less than two minutes before the half, Uiagalelei led a 75-yard drive he ended by stretching the ball over the goalline to send Clemson into the break ahead instead of behind.

Uiagalelei completed 21 of 30 passes for 209 yards and ran for a team-high 73 yards. He sealed the victory with 9-yard scoring run with about three minutes to play for a 31-13 lead.

Last-minute FG lifts Vikings over Saints

Associated Press

LONDON — Greg Joseph kicked a 47-yard field goal with 24 seconds left and the Minnesota Vikings hung on for a 28-25 win over New Orleans on Sunday at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium when the Saints' Wil Lutz's 61-yard tying attempt hit the left upright and then the crossbar as time expired.

Vikings star receiver Justin Jefferson beat Marshon Lattimore on a 39-yard reception to set up Joseph's go-ahead kick — after the kicker had missed an extra point earlier in the quarter.

The missed kick left the Vikings with a 25-22 lead.

The Saints then had an eight-play drive and Lutz made a 60-

yard field goal with 1:51 left to tie the game for the Saints (1-3), who have lost three straight games. But Lutz's next attempt was just a little bit off.

Jefferson had 10 receptions for 147 yards and ran for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter for the Vikings (3-1).

The Vikings squandered multiple scoring chances, settling for field goals — Joseph was 5-for-5 — but still held off a New Orleans team that played without key starters, including quarterback Jameis Winston and running back Alvin Kamara.

Kirk Cousins completed 25 of 38 passes for 273 yards with a touchdown and an interception. The Vikings under first-year coach Kevin O'Connell

are off to their best start since going 4-0 in 2016.

The Saints arrived early in the week to acclimate to the time difference, but in the end it didn't matter and their losing streak is now at three games under coach Dennis Allen.

Down 16-7, Saints backup quarterback Andy Dalton led two scoring drives to help New Orleans take a 22-19 lead.

Saints tight end/quarterback Taysom Hill took a direct snap and ran it in from 2 yards for the go-ahead score in the fourth quarter and Dalton found a wide-open Jarvis Landry for the 2-point conversion to give the Saints a 22-19 lead.

The Vikings were in control early. Alexander Mattison weaved through traffic for a

15-yard touchdown reception on Minnesota's opening drive during which the Vikings were 3-for-3 on third down.

The Saints had no first downs in the first quarter, but got help when safety Tyrann Mathieu intercepted a long pass intended for Irv Smith Jr.

Dalton then drove the Saints 60 yards and found Chris Olave for a 4-yard touchdown pass — the rookie's first NFL touchdown — to make it 7-7 early in the second quarter.

The Vikings squandered two good opportunities deep in Saints territory late in the second quarter. Tight end Johnny Mundt dropped a short pass on a third-and-1 from the 10 and Minnesota opted for a field goal instead of going for it.

Air Force finds struggling run game, beats Navy

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Haaziq Daniels and the Air Force ground game finally got on track late to help the Falcons hold off Navy 13-10 on Saturday.

The option quarterback clinched the win for the Falcons (4-1) with an 18-yard scamper on third-and-6 in Navy territory, allowing them to run out the clock. This was soon after Matthew Dapore connected on a 22-yard field goal with 4:14 left to give Air Force the lead.

Daniels had 65 yards rushing to go with 156 through the air, including a 67-yard touchdown pass to David Cormier on the

third play of the game. The Falcons gained around 90 of their 200 yards rushing over the final two drives. They entered with the top rushing offense in the nation at 412.2 yards per game.

"It was tense, but we wouldn't want it any other way," Cormier said. "A service academy game — that's how they go."

Tai Lavatai tied the game at 10-apiece with 10:50 remaining with a 5-yard run on third-and-goal. Lavatai drifted back to pass but when the middle opened up, he cruised into the end zone. Navy (1-3) entered as a two-touchdown underdog.

After Dapore's field goal, Navy went

three-and-out. The Midshipmen finished 4-of-13 on third downs for the game.

"They brought a lot of different pressures," said Lavatai, who finished with 129 yards passing and 34 more rushing. "They were fast, physical. ... There's a lot of personal mistakes on the offensive side of ball. Just something we've got to clean up."

Air Force is now in position to win its first outright CIC Trophy since 2016. The Falcons play Army in Arlington, Texas, on Nov. 5.

"It means a lot for us seniors, to do something that hasn't been done in a while," Cormier said.

Army digs early hole, can't get out in loss to Georgia State

Associated Press

Darren Grainger ran for a touchdown and threw for another as Georgia State repelled Army on Saturday for a 31-14 win, the Panthers' first of the season.

After a Michael Hayes field goal opened the scoring, a shanked punt gave the ball back to the Panthers (1-4) at the Army 38 with Grainger scoring on a 13-yard keeper. Jamiest Williams'

33-yard burst up the middle was good for a 17-0 halftime lead after Army (1-3) turned the ball over on downs.

After Army closed to within three points during the second half, the Panthers scored two late touchdowns.

Army scored on its first drive of the second half on Tyhier Tyler's 1-yard run. A Panthers field-goal attempt went off the right

upright, and Tyler scored on a 5-yard keeper on the first play of the fourth quarter.

Army got the ball back after a fumble, but the Black Knights were stopped on fourth-and-goal from the Georgia State 1. The Panthers had to punt from their end zone, but Army, after taking over from its 45, failed on a fake punt on fourth-and-11 with the Panthers then clinching the win

on Grainger's 57-yard touchdown pass to Ja'Cyais Credle with three minutes left.

Georgia State's Tucker Gregg added a 56-yard touchdown, his school-record 20th rushing score to break a tie with Tra Barnett (2016-19).

Gainger threw for 157 yards and ran for another 48. Gregg rushed for 124 yards on 16 carries, and Williams had 106 yards on 12.

Braves take NL East lead over Mets

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dansby Swanson isn't surprised the Atlanta Braves have fought back to climb atop the NL East.

He's just surprised it took this long to get there.

"Just keep going," Swanson said. "This is no time to celebrate. There's four games left. So much left to be had of this season."

Swanson and Matt Olson homered off Max Scherzer, lifting the Braves to a crucial 4-2 victory Saturday night over the New York Mets and a one-game lead in the NL East.

The defending World Series champions beat aces Jacob deGrom and Scherzer on consecutive nights to take their biggest lead of the season in the division. New York, which held a 10½-game cushion on June 1, faces its biggest deficit of the year with four games remaining.

Atlanta will try for a three-game sweep Sunday night, when Charlie Morton faces Mets right-hander Chris Bassitt, with the winner earning the season-series tiebreaker between the teams. Even though both teams are headed to the postseason, that's important because the NL East champion gets a first-round bye in the playoffs.

"We've just got to take the same approach," Olson said. "We know those guys are good that they started the last two days and we know Bassitt is a competitor as well."

Swanson's 24th homer, a go-ahead, two-run shot in the fifth inning, touched off a frenzy among the sold-out crowd at Truist Park, the ball sailing a few rows up into the seats in left-center to make it 3-2.

"In those big spots, he's one of those guys I like up there," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "Ever since he's been here, he's shined in that spot. He keeps the game slowed down and stays in the moment and

gives himself a chance."

Marlins 4, Brewers 3: Devin Williams blew a ninth-inning lead and Milwaukee squandered an opportunity to pull even in the race for the final National League playoff spot, losing to visiting Miami.

Bryan De La Cruz hit a two-run single off Williams that put Miami ahead in the ninth. Milwaukee fell a game behind the Phillies, who split a doubleheader with Washington, for the third NL wild-card berth. Philadelphia holds the head-to-head tiebreaker between the teams.

Williams (6-4) walked two in the ninth and both runners advanced on a wild pitch before De La Cruz lined a single to left field that scored Jon Berti and Brian Anderson. Left fielder Christian Yelich misplayed the ball, allowing De La Cruz to reach second. Peter Strzelecki relieved Williams and got the final two outs of the inning.

Phillies 4-8, Nationals 13-2: Kyle Schwarber hit two of Philadelphia's five homers in the first four innings and the visiting Phillies got a much-needed win as they try to end an 11-year playoff drought, salvaging a split of a day-night doubleheader by beating Washington in a rainy Game 2.

Alec Bohm, Brandon Marsh and Matt Vierling also went deep in the nightcap for the Phillies, who quickly recovered from a 13-4 loss in the opener against the worst-in-the-majors Nationals. That was Philadelphia's sixth defeat in seven games.

Noah Syndergaard (5-2) got the win in Game 2 with 5½ scoreless innings as light rain fell for much of the evening. He gave up two singles and two walks. Rookie Christopher Sánchez threw the last three innings for his first career save.

Yankees 8, Orioles 0: Aaron Judge went 0-for-2 with two walks and was hit by a pitch on Saturday, remaining at 61 hom-

ers on the 61st anniversary of Roger Maris setting the American League record as the New York Yankees beat the Baltimore Orioles 8-0.

Judge reached base leading off to spark a three-run first and a four-run seventh and also struck out twice. He leads the AL with 110 walks.

Padres 5, White Sox 2: Jake Cronenworth hit a tiebreaking two-run homer and Mike Clevinger was brilliant for six innings in host San Diego's win over Chicago, which reduced the Padres' magic number for clinching an NL wild card to one.

Juan Soto and Manny Machado also connected for the Padres, who can claim their first playoff spot in a full season since 2006 on Sunday when they send lefty Blake Snell to the mound for the series finale.

Dodgers 6, Rockies 4: Mookie Betts, Freddie Freeman and host Los Angeles became the first National League team in more than a century to win 110 regular-season games, taking advantage of 10 walks to rally past Colorado.

Honus Wagner and the 1909 Pittsburgh Pirates (110-42) were the previous NL club to win 110 games. The last big league team to accomplish the feat was the 2001 Seattle Mariners (116-46).

Blue Jays 10, Red Sox 0: Teoscar Hernández homered, doubled twice and singled, Danny Jansen drove in five runs and host Toronto moved one step closer to wrapping up the top spot in the AL wild-card race by routing Boston.

Ross Stripling (10-4) and four relievers combined on a four-hitter as Toronto shut out the Red Sox for the second straight day. Bo Bichette went 4-for-4 as Toronto opened October with a 21-hit outburst.

Mariners 5, Athletics 1: Luis Castillo struck out eight in six innings of two-hit ball and host

Seattle beat Oakland to keep pace with Toronto Blue Jays in the bid to host an AL wild-card series.

Castillo (8-6) retired 16 in a row to help Seattle to its fourth consecutive win. The Mariners rested most of their key starters a day after securing a wild-card berth, ending the longest playoff drought in major professional sports in North America.

Royals 7, Guardians 1: Salvador Perez had four hits and drove in a pair of runs, Kris Bubic struck out a season-high eight and visiting Kansas City beat AL Central champion Cleveland.

Perez collected three singles and a solo homer in four plate appearances, spoiling the return of Cleveland right-hander Zach Plesac (3-12) following a one-month stay on the injured list with a broken pitching hand.

Astros 2, Rays 1: Cristian Javier threw six shutout innings and Jake Meyers had two hits in host Houston's victory over Tampa Bay.

Cardinals 13, Pirates 3: Albert Pujols hit a two-run single and Corey Dickerson had a grand slam in a six-run first inning to help NL Central champion St. Louis beat visiting Pittsburgh.

Angels 3, Rangers 2: José Suarez lost a perfect game and the lead in the seventh inning before host Los Angeles rallied for a win over Texas.

Tigers 3, Twins 2: Eric Haase had three hits, including a home run, and host Detroit beat Minnesota.

Diamondbacks 8, Giants 4: Sergio Alcántara had a pair of two-run doubles for visiting Arizona in its win over San Francisco. The Giants were officially eliminated from postseason contention with the loss.

Cubs 2, Reds 1: Seiya Suzuki hit a tiebreaking solo homer in the seventh inning, and host Chicago won its sixth in a row by topping Cincinnati.