

DOD budgets \$1.2B for Mideast restock

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will spend about \$1.2 billion to maintain ships deployed as part of operations in the Red Sea and to replenish stocks of missiles fired to repel attacks by Iran and its proxies, according to new budget documents.

The spending, detailed in two Sept. 6 budget documents submitted to congressional defense committees and posted online, helps shine a light on the cost of maintaining a stepped-up presence in the region, as well as shooting down drones and missiles deployed by Iran and one of its proxies, the Houthis in Yemen.

About \$190 million will be spent on the restock of the sea-launched RTX Corp. Standard Missile-3

Block 1B and about \$8.5 million will go for more heat-seeking air-to-air AIM-X Sidewinder missiles, according to the documents.

The largest chunk of projected Pentagon spending from a year's worth of Middle East operations is \$300 million for unplanned depot maintenance on the USS Bataan amphibious assault ship and ships with the USS Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group that conducted Red Sea operations, the Pentagon said in the documents.

More mundane but important to the U.S. air and naval support is a bill for \$16,000 to restock flares. Israel's air defenses, with help from the U.S. and others, repelled a barrage of some 300 drones and missiles fired by Iran in April.

The spending is linked to "costs

incurred by the DOD within the U.S. Central Command region in responding to the situation in Israel or to hostile actions in the region as a direct result of the situation in Israel," one of the documents says.

Each advance model Standard Missile-3 Block 1B costs between \$9 million and \$10 million. Two Navy destroyers last week fired about 12 Standard Missiles in defending Israel from another wave of Iranian assaults on Tuesday, according to a Navy official who declined to disclose the exact models and asked not to be identified discussing non-public information. That means last week's U.S. assistance likely cost about \$120 million.

The documents also reveal re-

quests for \$276 million to buy additional Standard Missile, SM-6 model weapons as well as by \$57.3 million for Tomahawk cruise missiles. Another \$6.7 million is earmarked Enhanced Sea Sparrow self-defense missile. All those weapons are made by RTX.

The Pentagon will also spend \$25 million for Boeing Jdam-GPS guidance kits and \$7.4 million for its Small Diameter Bomb.

The request includes \$26.4 million to replace RTX "Coyote Block 2" drone interceptors "expended since October 2023 in support of DoD's response to the situation in Israel," it said. Another \$20 million will be spent on additional BAE Systems PLC laser-guided Advance Precision Kill Weapon System rockets.

Austin shares NDAA provision concerns with lawmakers

CQ Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has sent to leaders of the Armed Services panels a 15-page letter detailing his serious worries about several dozen pending provisions in the House or Senate NDAs.

Some of these are "topics of significant concern," Austin wrote in the Sept. 26 letter, obtained by CQ Roll Call. "If left unaddressed, certain provisions in the House-passed or Senate-proposed bills will substantially impact the Department's ability to accomplish our strategic goals."

House and Senate negotiators have begun reconciling the House-passed fiscal 2025 NDAA, or National Defense Authorization Act, with the Senate Armed Services Committee's version and hope to clear a bicameral measure later this year.

Austin's new missive is this

year's version of an annual Pentagon communication, known as the "heartburn letter." In it, the department tells the authorization committees of provisions in the House or Senate NDAA that are causing the department worry as lawmakers meet to write a final version of the measure.

The new letter reiterates some Pentagon concerns that were previously known — for example, about provisions in the House GOP-authored bill to limit what the U.S. military can do on "culture war" matters such as transgender health care and diversity promotion.

But the document also reveals Defense Department concerns about numerous other provisions that are less well-known. These include a number of NDAA proposals to prescribe or proscribe weapons or military organizations, as well as disclo-

sure of several cost estimates and projections of budgetary implications.

Austin thanked the defense authorizers for major investments in U.S. defense programs.

"Nevertheless," he added, "the respective FY 2025 House-passed and Senate-proposed NDAA bills include certain provisions of significant concern to the Department."

In the document, Austin reiterated the department's opposition to procuring a second Virginia-class attack submarine in fiscal 2025. He conveyed officials' concern that U.S. manufacturers lack the workforce and capacity to build two attack subs this fiscal year and deliver them on what he called "a reasonable schedule."

The secretary argued that being required to build the second sub would force a \$400 million cut to the Navy's developmental

"next generation fighter" program, making it "unexecutable and degrading the Navy's ability to field next generation aircraft capabilities required in the 2033 to 2037 timeframe."

In addition, Austin said the department "strongly objects" to the House's proposal to increase pay for junior enlisted military personnel by nearly 20%, saying it is excessive and would unacceptably narrow the difference between junior and senior pay rates.

The House's proposed pay changes "would cost over \$3.3 billion in FY 2025 and a total of more than \$21.9 billion from FYs 2025 to 2029," he wrote.

Austin assailed the Senate bill's proposed restrictions on cutting U.S. forces in Syria and on closing the U.S. military-run prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, or moving detainees from there to U.S. prisons.

US, S. Korea agree to shared defense deal

By MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States and South Korea have tentatively agreed to a new deal covering the costs of maintaining the American military presence there, the U.S. State Department and South Korean foreign ministry announced Friday.

The agreement, which must still be approved by the South Korean government and ratified by its parliament before taking effect, would see Seoul's contribution rise by 8.3% during

the first year of the five-year deal, to \$1.125 billion.

Additional increases, capped at 5% per year, would then be applied.

There are about 28,500 U.S. forces in South Korea to help deter potential aggression from North Korea and fewer than a handful of major bases.

"The agreement will be a significant accomplishment for both sides, and will strengthen our alliance and our shared defense," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

He did not detail the costs to South Korea, which were outlined in a simultaneously released statement from the South Korean foreign ministry.

The current agreement was not due to expire until next year, but the Biden administration had been pushing to complete the "Special Measures Agreement" with South Korea before November's U.S. presidential election, in part to allay South Korean concerns that a possible victory by former President Donald Trump might complicate future negotiations.

During Trump's term, he repeatedly accused South Korea and other U.S. allies of freeloading and suggested he would demand billions of dollars more to extend mutual defense agreements. That led to fears that decadeslong alliances could be jeopardized, and the previous agreement was not extended until President Joe Biden took office.

The new agreement, if approved by the South Koreans, would run until 2030, beyond the four-year term of the next U.S. president.

Sex assault cases against US troops up on Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A modest spike in sexual assault cases against U.S. troops has again raised the specter of rape on Okinawa but data show it's a sporadic, infrequent crime.

All categories of felony crime attributed to the U.S. military on the island have fallen since Okinawa reverted to Japanese control in 1972, according to data obtained in August from the Okinawa Prefectural Police.

This year, two cases of sexual assault and one of attempted sexual assault pending in Okinawa courts have returned the island's attention to that category of crime and revived the memory of a schoolgirl's kidnapping and rape 29 years ago.

Police investigated a fourth case of alleged sexual assault this year that prosecutors decided not to pursue. The data indicate reports taken, not whether prosecutors filed criminal charges or obtained convictions.

The four cases are among at least six felonies alleged against

the U.S. military population this year, the most reported against U.S. service members in 16 years. They buck a trend in declining crime rates on Okinawa going back 50 years.

"I do think that the general sort of noticeable decline over decades has to do with the U.S. armed forces taking these situations very seriously and trying to educate personnel," said Marc Gallicchio, the Mary M. Birlie chair in American History at Villanova University. "And I think cooperation with Japanese authorities also accounts for some of that."

The number of felony incidents tends to fluctuate over time, with relatively few or none some years and sensational numbers in others, according to the police data.

"I think that has to do with power dynamics," said Gallicchio, a former Fulbright lecturer at the University of the Ryukyus. "And I mean, it's an issue within the military itself, so in some ways we shouldn't be surprised that it's occurring outside the military."

Sailor aboard USS Truman dies during Atlantic transit

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A sailor aboard USS Harry S. Truman died last week as the aircraft carrier was transiting the Atlantic Ocean, according to Navy officials.

Petty Officer 1st Class Jelani Hill had a medical emergency unrelated to shipboard operations and died Tuesday, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a statement Thursday.

Hill was treated in the ship's intensive care unit but couldn't be revived, according to the statement.

The Navy typically doesn't release sailors' medical and other personal information, citing privacy concerns.

Hill, an electrician's mate from Florida, enlisted in December 2018 and had served aboard Truman since October 2020, according to his service biography.

He completed recruit training in February 2019 and went on to attend the Nuclear Field A School and Nuclear Power Training Unit in Charleston, S.C.

Truman left its homeport in Norfolk, Va., on Sept. 23 for a routine deployment to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, which spans from the Arctic Ocean to the coast of Antarctica, including all of Europe and most of Africa.

The strike group's deployment comes as the Pentagon sends thousands of troops to the Middle East to bolster security for service members already in the region and to aid in the defense of Israel if needed.

On Friday, it wasn't clear whether Truman had yet transited the Strait of Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean Sea.

In May 2022, Truman made its first port call to Naples in six years. Hill, who was serving aboard the ship during that deployment, posted photographs on Instagram of visits to the city, the nearby archaeological site of Pompeii and Rome.

A few weeks earlier, the ship also made a port call to Trieste, in northeastern Italy.

"I absolutely love Venice," Hill said in an April 2022 post. "I wish I had more time here."

Biden praises jobs data in surprise briefing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—After 1,080 days as president, Joe Biden on Friday decided to pop in and take questions in the White House briefing room for the first time, striding in with a grin after a strong monthly jobs report and the temporary settlement of a strike by ports workers.

The president has been less available than his recent predecessors to questions from the White House press corps, making his surprise appearance welcome to the gathered reporters who waited as his press secretary's daily briefing was moved up 15 minutes, then delayed for nearly one hour.

The president stepped through the press room's blue door in a dark gray suit and red tie and proceeded to make news in response to questions about comments on the 2024 presidential election, the latest jobs numbers and the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

The 81-year old stepped aside from the Democratic nomination this summer, backing Vice President Kamala Harris in-

stead. He acknowledged doubts about whether the November election would be peaceful, given comments by former President Donald Trump that the results could be rigged.

"I'm confident it will be free and fair. I don't know whether it will be peaceful," Biden said. "The things that Trump has said, and the things that he said last time when he didn't like the outcome of the election, were very dangerous."

Biden has tried to rebut a political movement that has at times openly trafficked in conspiracy theories, with the latest revolving around the government reporting Friday that employers added 254,000 jobs last month and the unemployment rate ticked down to 4.1%.

"Another fake jobs report out from Biden-Harris government today," Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., posted on social media. "But all the fake numbers in the world aren't going to fool people dealing with the Biden-Harris."

The jobs reports are legitimate and have capped a solid run for the U.S. economy.

Growth has stayed solid even as the inflation rate has dropped from a four-decade high in 2022 to an annual rate of 2.5%.

Consumer confidence has been weak relative to overall economic growth, a sign that many people still don't feel the strength seen in the latest jobs and inflation numbers. But Biden stressed that he was operating on valid data despite unfounded claims of falsification by supporters of Trump's Make America Great Again movement.

"If you notice, anything the MAGA Republicans don't like they call 'fake,'" Biden said. "The job numbers are what the job numbers are. They're real. They're sincere."

The president also highlighted the deal reached Thursday to suspend a strike by 45,000 dockworkers on East and Gulf coast ports until Jan. 15, creating time to try to hash out a new contract.

Still, challenges remain for Biden as his final months as president involve the risk of a wider war in the Middle East.

Since Hamas attacked Israel

nearly a year ago, Israel has retaliated by bombarding the Gaza region in ways that have raised human rights concerns, as well as killing Hezbollah leaders and launching airstrikes in Lebanon. On Tuesday, Iran fired at least 180 missiles into Israel and there are concerns about additional retaliation that could cause the conflict to deepen.

When asked, Biden clarified his comments from a day earlier about Israel possibly striking Iranian oil facilities, which caused the price of the commodity to jump on the prospect of supplies being squeezed.

"Look, the Israelis have not concluded what they're going to do in terms of a strike," Biden said Friday. "That's under discussion. I think if I were in their shoes, I'd be thinking about other alternatives than striking oil fields."

The president emphasized that he and Harris are "singing from the same song sheet" on foreign and domestic policy, calling her a "major player in everything we've done."

Helene death toll up as more bodies recovered

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. — The death toll from Hurricane Helene inched up to 230 on Sunday as the grim task of recovering bodies continued more than a week after the monster storm ravaged the Southeast and killed people in six states.

Helene came ashore Sept. 26 as a Category 4 hurricane and carved a wide swath of destruction as it moved northward from Florida, washing away homes, destroying roads and knocking out electricity and cellphone service for millions.

The number of deaths stood at 225 on Friday; two more were recorded in South Carolina the following day. It was still unclear

how many people were unaccounted for or missing, and the toll could rise even higher.

Helene is the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland United States since Katrina in 2005. About half the victims were in North Carolina, while dozens more were killed in Georgia and South Carolina.

So far, North Carolinians have received more than \$27 million in individual assistance approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said MaryAnn Tierney, a regional administrator for the agency. More than 83,000 people have registered for individual assistance, according to the office of Gov. Roy Cooper.

Tropical Storm Milton could hit Fla. as major hurricane

Associated Press

MIAMI — People across Florida were given notice Sunday that Milton, for now just a tropical storm off the coast of Mexico, could intensify rapidly into a major hurricane before slamming midweek into the storm-ravaged Gulf Coast. Tropical Storm Milton's center was about 860 miles west-southwest of Tampa, Fla., early Sunday, heading east at 5 mph with maximum sustained winds of 60 mph, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Sunday that while it remains to be seen just where Milton will strike, it's clear that Florida is going to be hit hard, saying

"I don't think there's any scenario where we don't have major impacts at this point."

"You have time to prepare — all day today, all day Monday, probably all day Tuesday to be sure your hurricane preparedness plan is in place," the governor said. "Know your evacuation zone — there will be mandatory and voluntary evacuations."

DeSantis said as many as 4,000 National Guard troops are helping the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Florida Department of Transportation to remove debris, and he declared a state of emergency in 35 counties ahead of Milton.

US notes vital differences in Israel, Ukraine missile attacks

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

The United States helped Israel shoot down Iranian missile attacks in recent days while shooting down Ukraine's request to do the same against Russian missiles.

The two conflicts represent very different landscapes and battlefields, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said.

"We feel that Ukraine has been able to successfully defend against Russian strikes to their cities, to their populations, to their infrastructure," Singh told reporters Thursday.

The White House remains opposed to such action even if air defense strikes were launched from inside NATO territory without the need for putting allied boots on the ground in Ukraine.

While Ukraine has had some success in countering air strikes, its defenses have frequently been overwhelmed by Russian bombardments, which have left many cities

and towns in ruins.

"Jointly intercepting Iranian missiles is no different from jointly intercepting Russian missiles," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday during a visit to Kyiv by new NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte. "What we need in our region is more determination from our partners to put an end to Russian terror."

Zelenskyy's comparison aside, the wars the two countries are fighting and the relationships Ukraine and Israel have with the U.S. differ significantly.

For starters, Ukraine isn't a NATO ally while Israel is one of Washington's closest security partners.

Long-standing Western concern about military escalation with Russia, a nuclear power with vast resources, also factors into matters.

Iran is acknowledged to be capable of enriching weapons-grade uranium, but hasn't produced a deliverable

nuclear weapon.

Though Zelenskyy has pushed for NATO help in intercepting missiles, the 32-nation alliance isn't showing an interest, even if countries such as Poland have expressed openness to the possibility.

The alliance appears ambivalent about even signaling that it will shoot down any Russian drones that cross into allied airspace. On Thursday, Rutte said such a decision would be a matter for individual nations to decide.

"NATO has already significantly reinforced its air defenses on the eastern flank," Rutte said. "And we recognize fully the rights of every ally to protect its own airspace."

For its part, the U.S. has made significant contributions to bolstering those defenses, including the deployment of Patriot missile defense units to Poland. The U.S. and other allies have also supplied billions of dollars in weaponry to Ukraine, including air defense systems.

Hamas attack anniversary observed by global rallies

Associated Press

PARIS — Crowds were participating in pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli protests and memorial events across the world Sunday on the eve of the first anniversary of the Hamas attacks on Israel.

Sunday's events follow massive rallies that took place Saturday in several European cities, including London, Berlin, Paris and Rome. Other events are scheduled through the week, with an expected peak on Monday, the date of the anniversary.

In Australia, thousands of people Sunday protested in support of Palestinians and Lebanon in various cities, while a pro-Israeli rally also took place in Melbourne.

Samantha Gazal, who came to the rally in Sydney, said she was there "because I can't believe our government is giving impunity to a violent extremist nation and has done nothing. ... We're watching the violence play out on livestream, and they're doing nothing."

In Melbourne, supporters of Israel held up posters showing Israeli hostages who are still missing.

"We feel like we didn't do anything to deserve this," said Jeremy Weinstein, one of the participants. "We're just supporting our brothers and sisters who are fighting a war that they didn't invite."

At a rally in Berlin, near the Brandenburg Gate, hundreds of pro-Israeli demonstrators set off up the famed Unter den Linden behind a banner that read "Against all antisemitism," accompanied by a police escort.

Memorial events organized by the Jewish community and prayers for those still in captivity were also held in Paris.

Strike on mosque as Israel bombards northern Gaza and southern Lebanon

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — An Israeli strike on a mosque in the Gaza Strip early Sunday killed at least 19 people, Palestinian officials said, as Israel intensified its bombardment of northern Gaza and southern Lebanon in a widening war with Iran-allied militant groups across the region.

Israel is still battling Hamas a year after the group's Oct. 7 attack on Israel, and has opened a new front in Lebanon against Hezbollah, which has traded fire with Israel along the border

since the war in Gaza began. Israel has vowed to strike Iran itself after Tehran launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel last week.

The widening conflict risks further drawing in the United States, which has provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Israel. Iran-allied militant groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have joined in with long-distance strikes on Israel.

A stabbing and shooting attack at the central bus station in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba left one person dead

and 10 wounded, according to first responders. Police said the woman killed was a border police officer. They did not identify the assailant but said they were treating it as a terror attack.

Israel is on high alert ahead of memorial events for the Oct. 7 attack, while rallies continue around the world marking the anniversary.

The Israeli strike hit a mosque where displaced people sheltered near the main hospital in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Governor: Nibi the beaver to stay at rescue center

MA BOSTON — The question of whether a 2-year-old beaver named Nibi can stay with the rescuers she has known since she was a baby or must be released into the wild was resolved Thursday when the Massachusetts governor stepped in to protect Nibi.

The state issued a permit to Newhouse Wildlife Rescue for Nibi to remain at the rehabilitation facility and serve as an educational animal.

Nibi's fate had made it all the way to the state courts before Gov. Maura Healey stepped in.

A judge on Tuesday had said that Nibi would be allowed to stay in her home at the rescue center in Chelmsford, located northwest of Boston. A hearing had been set for Friday in a case filed by the rescuers against MassWildlife, the state's division of fisheries and wildlife, to stop the release.

Crash saves teen whose car sped up to 120 mph

ND WEST FARGO — Sam Dutcher had just finished running errands when the 18-year-old's Honda Pilot suddenly began to accelerate, even though his foot wasn't on the gas pedal. The brake wouldn't work, he couldn't shift into neutral, and before long, the runaway SUV was speeding into the western Minnesota countryside with no way to stop.

"I had the brake to the floor," Dutcher said Thursday, but the SUV kept going faster and faster, eventually reaching 120 mph.

A last-ditch plan averted disaster that September evening — a trooper sped in front of the Honda and Dutcher was told to crash into the rear of his squad car, allowing it to ease safely to a stop moments before reaching a dangerous intersection.

Dutcher tried using voice command on his phone to call 911, but it didn't work. So he called his mom. Catherine Dutcher was in the drive-thru line at Hardee's. In her 911 call, she mentioned that the Honda had just been in the shop because the accelerator was apparently getting stuck. Authorities suspect that the SUV's computer malfunctioned.

Estranged wife arrested in guardsman's death

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah woman has been arrested for investigation of murder after she told a confidential informant that she shot her estranged husband in his sleep and buried him in a shallow grave but did not disclose the location, police said.

Jennifer Gledhill, 41, of Cottonwood Heights, was jailed in Salt Lake County without bond, according to court records.

The body of Matthew Johnson, 51, had not been found as of Thursday, police said. The Utah National Guard member was reportedly shot late Sept. 20 or early Sept. 21, the informant told police Sept. 28 — six days after Gledhill "openly admitted" to killing Johnson, police records said.

Gledhill said she shot Johnson on the bed, buried his body and removed items from the house and destroyed them to cover up the crime, the informant

said.

A search of the house found a bloodstain on the carpet under the bed, blood on the bed frame and evidence the wall had been bleached.

TikTok's 'Mr. Prada' charged in slaying

LA NEW ORLEANS — A TikTok personality known as Mr. Prada is charged in the bludgeoning death of a Louisiana therapist whose body was discovered in a rolled up tarp near a state highway, authorities said Thursday.

The body of Nicholas Abraham, 69, of Baton Rouge, was found Sept. 29 in rural Tangipahoa Parish. On Tuesday, police in Dallas County, Texas, arrested 20-year-old Terryon Thomas, who is known on social media as Mr. Prada, after Baton Rouge police said he fled from them in Abraham's car.

Thomas' relationship to the victim and a motive for the killing were unclear, the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office said in a news release. Thomas is charged with second-degree murder and was awaiting extradition from Texas to Louisiana, the news release said.

Two of Thomas' multiple TikTok accounts each has more than 4 million followers.

Court rejects Murdaugh's claim sentence too harsh

SC COLUMBIA — A federal court has rejected Alex Murdaugh's request to throw out his 40-year sentence for stealing from clients and his law firm. The disgraced South Carolina lawyer said his punishment is a decade longer than what prosecutors recommended.

U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel said in April that he chose a harsher prison sentence because Murdaugh stole from "the most needy, vulnerable people," clients who were maimed in wrecks or lost loved ones and had placed all their problems and all their hopes with the now disbarred attorney.

The U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals decided Tuesday to dismiss the appeal, saying in a two-page ruling that when Murdaugh agreed to plead guilty, he waived his right to appeal except in extraordinary circumstances, and a harsher-than-expected sentence didn't count.

Explosion suspect also accused in 3 arson fires

CA LOS ANGELES — A California man has been hit with additional charges in a courthouse bomb attack that injured five people, officials said Tuesday, including for three local arson fires.

Nathaniel McGuire, 20, was charged by federal officials with maliciously damaging a building with an explosive. Santa Barbara County prosecutors are charging him with 10 counts, including two counts of attempted murder, use of an explosive device with the intent to murder, and carrying a loaded firearm.

He is also being charged with arson of forest land in connection with three fires that occurred on the outskirts of Santa Maria, a city of about 110,000 in California's central coast region, that officials say were set in preparation for the courthouse attack.

— From wire reports

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Vanderbilt knocks off No. 1 Alabama

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Fans of the Vanderbilt Commodores danced onto the field, jumping up and down as they tore down a goal post, carried it out of the stadium and rang out sweet sounds of victory.

Then they toted the goal post just over a couple of miles and tossed it into the Cumberland River.

Their school's historic win over No. 1 Alabama deserved to be celebrated this way.

Sedrick Alexander ran for two touchdowns, Randon Fontenette scored on a pick-six and Diego Pavia outplayed Heisman Trophy candidate Jalen Milroe as Vanderbilt stunned Alabama 40-35 on Saturday for the Commodores' first win over the nation's top-ranked team.

Vanderbilt (3-2, 1-1 Southeastern Conference) had lost all 60 games against AP top-five teams, according to SportRadar. The Commodores hadn't

beaten Alabama on the field in 40 years, but they snapped a 23-game skid making big play after big play to give coach Clark Lea his alma mater's biggest win ever.

"This is the dream, right here," Lea said. "And for the next 12 hours, I'm going to enjoy the dream. We've got more ahead of us, but this is what Vanderbilt football needs to be about: Big wins on big stages. We're going to go get some more."

The Commodores scored the first 13 points and took a 16-point lead that was their largest ever over the No. 1 team in the country. Only Jam Miller running for his second TD just before halftime trimmed that to 23-14.

Alabama had just moved to the top of the AP Top 25 last week after a win over then-No. 2 Georgia. It'll be a short stay, and first-year coach Kalen DeBoer said it's back to work for a team that wasn't at its best Saturday.

"We're going to find out really how much we care about each other and what it looks like moving forward," DeBoer said. "We've been tested in different ways really a lot of the games here this season, and this is a different type of test now in our response."

Alexander capped the game's opening drive with a 7-yard TD to put Vandy ahead to stay. It marked the first time since 2007 that Vandy had opened a game against Alabama with a TD, the last time being Nick Saban's second game as coach.

The Tide (4-1, 1-1) helped Vanderbilt pad that lead with too many mistakes, sloppy play and penalties.

Alabama got to 30-28 with Milroe's 58-yard TD pass to Ryan Williams.

The Commodores answered with 10 points. Of their total, 13 came off Milroe's two turnovers, the second a strip sack by Miles Capers that was reco-

vered by Yilanan Ouattara at midfield.

Pavia capped the drive with a 6-yard TD pass to Alabama native Kamrean Johnson with 5:07 left for a 40-28 lead. Milroe tried to rally Alabama, with Williams scoring on an end around on fourth-and-1 from 2 yards out with 2:46 left.

Vanderbilt fans and players started celebrating as Pavia knelt down to run out the clock.

"Games like this change your life," Pavia said.

Milroe had his second pass of the game tipped into the air by De'Rickey Wright, who committed to Alabama and wound up at Vanderbilt. Fontenette grabbed the ball and ran 24 yards to the end zone for the pick-six and a 13-0 lead at 8:03 of the first quarter.

Vanderbilt jumped out to a 23-7 lead, just the second time in the last 10 seasons that a No. 1 team trailed an unranked opponent by 16 or more points.

Midshipmen, Black Knights stay unbeaten, go to 5-0

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Quarterback Blake Horvath ran for 115 yards and Eli Heidenreich added 100 yards rushing and receiving, leading Navy to a 34-7 victory over Air Force on Saturday in the first game of this season's Commander In Chief series.

In the 1,400th game in program history, Navy won with its usual ground dominance (329 yards) and a defense that allowed only 273 yards. The Midshipmen have gone on to win the CIC Trophy 11 of the past 12 times they defeated Air Force.

Horvath ran for two touchdowns, Heidenreich added one rushing touchdown and his 51-yard run set up another score in the fourth quarter.

It was the first time since 2003 that Navy had two 100-

yard rushers and a 100-yard receiver. Heidenreich is believed to be the first player in school history to rush for 100 yards and have 100 yards receiving in the same game. He ran for exactly 100 yards and caught five passes for 101 yards.

Navy had 185 yards rushing in the first half, highlighted by Nathan Kent's 34-yard end-around touchdown on a fourth-down play. Navy led 21-7 at halftime.

Air Force scored on a 45-yard pass from Quentin Hayes to Tre Roberson in the second quarter. Hayes completed 5 of 6 passes for 115 yards. The Falcons (1-4) ran it 48 times for 158 yards.

The Midshipmen, 5-0 for the first time since 2017, got 134 yards passing from Horvath, who completed 9 of 15 passes.

It was the fourth time this

season that Navy held its opponent to three touchdowns or less.

Army 49, Tulsa 7: Bryson Daily threw two touchdown passes and ran for two more scores, Kanye Udoh ran for 137 yards and two TDs on just six carries and the visiting Black Knights beat the Golden Hurricane for their ninth win in a row, dating to last season.

Army (5-0, 4-0 American Athletic Conference) is off to its best start since 1996 and now has the longest active winning streak in the nation after Missouri lost to Texas A&M.

Daily finished 5-for-5 passing for 140 yards and added 110 yards rushing on 13 carries. Noah Short had three receptions for 121 yards and two touchdowns for the Black Knights.

Daily scored on a 4-yard run with about 5 minutes to play in the first half that made it 14-7 and Army led the rest of the way. He hit Short for a 58-yard TD about 3 minutes later to make it a two-touchdown game at halftime before Udoh ripped off scoring runs of 63 and 68 yards and Daily added a 27-yard touchdown run in the third quarter to make it 42-7 going in to the fourth.

Quarterback Cooper Legas led Tulsa (2-4, 0-2) with 81 yards rushing, including a 1-yard TD run late in the first quarter that made it 7-7.

Daily connected with Short for a 37-yard touchdown that opened the scoring with 10:30 left in the first quarter for Army and Dewayne Coleman's 4-yard TD run midway through the fourth made it 49-9.

Vikings hold off Jets, improve to 5-0

Associated Press

LONDON — Andrew Van Ginkel returned the first of Aaron Rodgers' three interceptions 63 yards for a touchdown and Minnesota stayed undefeated by holding on for a 23-17 win over the New York Jets at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Sunday.

The Jets trailed 17-0 early, but had a chance to drive for a potential winning score in the final minutes. But Stephon Gilmore intercepted Rodgers' pass intended for Mike Williams and the Vikings improved to 5-0 for the first time since 2016.

Van Ginkel snatched Rodgers' quick slant before breaking a tackle and outrunning the Jets linemen down the sideline for a 63-yard score and a 10-0 lead. The linebacker also had a pick-6 in the season opener against Daniel Jones and the New York Giants.

Rodgers threw a 1-yard touchdown pass to Garrett Wilson to make it 20-17 with just

over six minutes remaining before Vikings rookie kicker Will Reichard hit a 41-yard field goal — his third of the game.

A slow start ultimately doomed the Jets (2-3).

Fullback C.J. Ham's 2-yard run made it 17-0 before the Jets got back in the game when Rodgers found Allen Lazard for a 14-yard touchdown pass late in the first half.

Rodgers clutched his left leg after a big hit in the third quarter. But after a roughing the punter call, he immediately went back onto the field and drove the Jets to the Minnesota 14. They settled for Greg Zuerlein's 32-yard field goal to make it 17-10.

Rodgers threw two first-quarter interceptions and three in the game. It was the first time in his career he threw two interceptions in the first quarter. The Jets offense struggled so much last week in a 10-9 loss to Denver that Rodgers and coach Robert Saleh spent much of this past

week saying that their relationship is solid.

Reichard kicked a 53-yard field goal to give Minnesota a 20-10 lead early in the fourth quarter. He also had a 54-yarder and has yet to miss this season.

Sam Darnold, who was drafted by the Jets No. 3 overall in 2018, finished 14-for-31 for 179 yards with an interception and one fumble. Justin Jefferson had six receptions for 92 yards for the Vikings.

Rodgers was 29-for-54 for 244 yards, with two touchdown passes and three picks. The Vikings started the 2009 season 6-0 in Brett Favre's first year with the team.

The Jets also fell behind 17-0 the previous time they played in London when they lost to the Atlanta Falcons in 2021.

Rodgers' milestone

Rodgers became the ninth player in NFL history to throw for 60,000 yards in regular-season games on a 7-yard pass to

Tyler Conklin in the third quarter. He also surpassed Hall of Famer Dan Marino for seventh on the NFL's list for total yards passing in both regular-season and playoff games.

Rodgers now has 60,148 yards passing regular-season games.

Injuries

Jets: CB Sauce Gardner was evaluated for a head injury in the third quarter after colliding with a teammate LB Quincy Williams, but returned late in the game ... CB Michael Carter II left in the first quarter with a hamstring injury and didn't return ... LB C.J. Mosley (toe) was inactive after being limited in practice this week.

Vikings: RB Aaron Jones left in second quarter with a hip problem and was later ruled out. ... Darnold left for one play after taking a hit in his midsection in the first quarter. Nick Mullens completed a pass for a first down. Darnold returned and fumbled on the next play.

Devils sweep Sabres in season openers in Prague

Associated Press

PRAGUE — Newcomer Paul Cotter proved his value, scoring again in Prague as the New Jersey Devils beat the Buffalo Sabres 3-1 on Saturday for a sweep of their regular-season-opening series in the Czech capital.

Cotter, among New Jersey's new additions, also scored in a 4-1 win Friday and added an assist.

"He's got more to offer to our group than he's shown in the league previously," coach Sheldon Keefe said. "He obviously scored a huge goal for us and I thought he played a good game."

The international games were part of the NHL global series. Almost 17,000 spectators attended each of the games. Two more will be played in Tampere,

Finland, on Nov. 1-2 when defending champion Florida faces Dallas.

Defenseman Seamus Casey and Timo Meier also scored and Jack Hughes had two assists for the Devils, who outshot the Sabres 37-18.

"It was tight and I was glad to see our guys stay with it and find a way," Keefe said.

Buffalo's Tage Thompson opened the scoring 8:18 into the second period, poking the puck under the pads of Jake Allen.

Casey tied it a few minutes later on a power play in his second career NHL game.

Jack Hughes fed Cotter with a cross-ice pass from the right for the unmarked forward to beat Devon Levi in the third period.

Allen stopped 17 shots for the Devils. Levi had 34 saves for the

Sabres.

At 6:02 in the opening period, Buffalo forward JJ Peterka took a hit from defenseman Brenden Dillon, was helped off the ice and didn't return due to an upper body injury.

Coach Lindy Ruff said Peterka, who was the team's leading scorer with 28 goals last season, had a concussion. Ruff said he had to change his power-play unit after he was out and "we didn't look very good on power play."

"We've got a lot of work ahead of us but it's something that you take, this is a challenge right now," he said.

Czech forward Ondrej Palat missed Saturday's game for New Jersey and was flying to America where his wife was expected to give birth to their sec-

ond child.

The Devils allowed 3.43 goals per game last season, tied for the fifth most in the NHL. In Prague, they could rely on goaltenders Jacob Markstrom and Allen, and still have two top-six defensemen in Luke Hughes and Brett Pesce injured.

The Sabres wasted all their power plays in the series, two on Saturday and another four on Friday. They were tied for 28th on the power play (16.6%) last season.

This is the 11th season the NHL has played in Europe as part of its efforts to grow the fan base in hockey-mad countries like the Czech Republic, Sweden, Finland and others. Prague hosted nine of those games. Stockholm, Sweden, is the only location that has had more.

Ohtani goes deep in debut, Dodgers win

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Shohei Ohtani hit a three-run homer in his postseason debut, Teoscar Hernández's two-run single gave Los Angeles its first lead in a playoff game in two years, and the Dodgers beat the San Diego Padres 7-5 in their NL Division Series opener Saturday.

Manny Machado's two-run homer off starter Yoshinobu Yamamoto, also making his first playoff appearance, put Los Angeles in an early 3-0 hole.

Ohtani quickly bailed out the Dodgers with his two-out homer that tied it in the second inning. The Japanese superstar went deep with Hall of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax looking on and fans chanting "MVP! MVP!" His shot traveled 372 feet to right field, the sellout crowd of 53,028 recording it all on their phones.

"I just really have never seen a guy in the biggest of moments come through as consistently as he has," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "I wish a lot of other players had that ability. He's just very unique in that."

San Diego went ahead 5-3 before the Dodgers rallied with three runs in the fourth.

Tommy Edman scored on a wild pitch by reliever Adrian Morejon, who took the loss.

Ohtani had a broken-bat single and later scored, along with Mookie Betts, on Hernández's single off Jeremiah Estrada that put the Dodgers ahead 6-5.

It was their first lead in a postseason game since the seventh inning of Game 4 against the Padres in a 2022 NLDS. Los Angeles was swept by Arizona in a Division Series last year.

"We need to fight, and that's what we did," Roberts said. "Guys in the 'pen picked us up and the offense was relentless with their at-bats."

The Dodgers earned their first postseason win since Oct. 11, 2022, in Game 1 of the Division Series against San Diego. They improved to 1-15 in the playoffs when trailing by three or more runs through the first inning.

Down 7-5, the Padres had the potential tying runs on base with two outs in the ninth. Fernando Tatis Jr. singled off Blake Treinen before Jurickson Profar walked to bring up Machado, who struck out swinging. Treinen earned the save.

Mets 6, Phillies 2: Mark Vientos and Brandon Nimmo keyed another late comeback, helping visiting New York break through for five runs in the eighth inning against a pair of All-Star relievers as it rallied past Philadelphia in Game 1 of their National

League Division Series.

The Mets had been stymied by Phillies ace Zack Wheeler, held to just one hit while trailing 1-0 after seven innings.

With Wheeler lifted after nine strikeouts and a startling 30 swings-and-misses over 111 pitches, the Mets — whose whirlwind week included a victory in a makeup doubleheader at Atlanta to clinch a postseason spot and three games in the Wild Card Series at Milwaukee — pounced against losing pitcher Jeff Hoffman and fellow reliever Matt Strahm in the eighth.

In true New York fashion this October, the Mets had to rally, not just on the scoreboard, but with a gut-check in each critical at-bat.

Francisco Alvarez hit a leadoff single against Hoffman before three straight batters reached base after facing 0-2 counts. Francisco Lindor worked a walk and Vientos followed with a tying single. Nimmo laced a go-ahead single off Strahm past a drawn-in infield for a 2-1 lead.

Pinch-hitter J.D. Martinez added an RBI single and Pete Alonso, who hit a go-ahead, three-run homer in the ninth inning of the series clincher in Milwaukee, and Starling Marte each added a sacrifice fly in the eighth for a 5-1 lead that sent the Mets into a frenzy in the dugout.

Guardians blank Tigers in opener of AL Division Series

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Lane Thomas hit a three-run homer in a five-run outburst before Detroit got an out, and the Cleveland Guardians unleashed their lights-out bullpen to complete a four-hitter in a 7-0 win over the Tigers in an AL Division Series opener on Saturday.

Thomas' shot — on his first career postseason swing — helped the Guardians cool off the Tigers, who stormed into the playoffs with a second-half surge before sweeping AL West champion Houston in the wild-card round.

"It was electric," said Thomas, acquired from Washington at the trade deadline. "It was everything I had thought and more."

Tanner Bibee pitched 4⅓ innings before Guardians manag-

er Stephen Vogt swung the door open to baseball's best bullpen to finish off the Tigers.

Cleveland's relievers combined for 4⅓ hitless innings to finish and match the largest shutout victory margin in club postseason history. Detroit struck out 13 times and didn't get a runner past first in the final four innings.

The shutout was the worst in Detroit playoff history since Game 1 of the 1945 World Series.

"We're going to see a lot of this bullpen," Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said. "The more you look at them, hopefully, the more comfortable you get."

Cleveland's bullpen was as advertised. Rookie Cade Smith (1-0) replaced Bibee and struck out all four batters. Tim Herrin took care of the seventh, Hun-

ter Gaddis the eighth, and Emmanuel Clase, who led the AL with 47 saves, worked the ninth.

Yankees 6, Royals 5: Alex Verdugo hit a tiebreaking single in the seventh inning and saved at least one run with a sliding catch along the left-field line, boosting host New York over Kansas City in their AL Division Series opener.

New York's Gleyber Torres and Kansas City's MJ Melendez hit two-run homers in a back-and-forth game in which the Royals wasted leads of 1-0, 3-2 and 5-4 and the Yankees failed to hold 2-1 and 4-3 margins. It was the first postseason game with five lead changes, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Kansas City pitchers tied their season high with eight walks, forcing in a pair of runs

in the fifth inning. The Yankees were just 1-for-11 with runners in scoring position before Verdugo lined a single off loser Michael Lorenzen.

Verdugo's hit scored Jazz Chisholm Jr., who singled leading off and stole second on a play allowed to stand following a video review.

Boone started a slumping Verdugo in left over rookie Jason Domínguez in a decision influenced by defense.

Verdugo entered in a 3-for-25 skid at the plate.

With the Yankees trailing 3-2, Verdugo made a sliding catch on Michael Massey's fourth-inning fly just inside the line to strand two runners. The ball hit the heel of Verdugo's glove and bounced off his chest before he grabbed it with his bare hand.