

Air Force, Navy team up on Houthi strike

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

U.S. forces struck underground weapons storage facilities in Yemen on Wednesday in what the Pentagon's top official called a display of America's ability to destroy enemy targets "anytime, anywhere."

The precision airstrikes included using B-2 Spirit long-range stealth bombers to target five bunkers holding weapons components that Iranian-backed Houthi militants have used to attack ships in the region, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement.

"This was a unique demonstration of the United States' ability to target facilities that our adversaries seek to keep

out of reach, no matter how deeply buried underground, hardened or fortified," Austin said.

President Joe Biden ordered the strikes to cripple the Houthis' ability to attack ships and disrupt Red Sea commerce, he added.

The Defense Department didn't identify the weapons components kept in the storage facilities or say how much damage the strikes had done.

Assessments were pending but no civilian casualties were indicated, U.S. Central Command said in a separate statement.

Use of the subsonic bomber, which can carry conventional and nuclear weapons, sent a

message to Iran as tensions with Israel threaten to erupt into a full-scale war in the Middle East.

The B-2 Spirit is the only aircraft capable of striking Iran's underground nuclear facilities, The New York Times reported on Thursday.

Use of the bomber demonstrates "U.S. global strike capabilities to take action against these targets, when necessary, anytime, anywhere," said Austin, who did not mention Iran.

Wednesday's action follows U.S. strikes earlier this month that targeted Houthi weapons systems, bases and other equipment in Yemen.

On Sept. 27, three Navy ships shot down a barrage of Houthi

drones and missiles as they transited the Bab el Mandeb strait connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. None of the U.S. ships were struck and there were no injuries, the Pentagon said.

It wasn't clear how many B-2 Spirit bombers were involved in Wednesday's strike, which also included unspecified Navy assets.

There are about 20 B-2s based at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. In previous years, they've flown missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, according to the Air Force. The B-2 is crewed by two pilots, flies as high as 50,000 feet and can carry a payload of 40,000 pounds.

Zelenskyy: 10K N. Korean troops preparing to join Russians

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

Ukrainian public radio reported several North Korean soldiers stationed in Russia deserted their posts this week, fueling accounts that Pyongyang has deployed troops to Moscow's ongoing war with neighboring Ukraine.

Around 18 North Koreans stationed four miles from the Russia-Ukraine border left their stations, according to public broadcaster Suspilne, which cited unnamed intelligence officials.

Russia's military is searching for the deserters, who were still at large Wednesday, South Korean newspaper Chosun Ilbo reported that day, citing an unnamed Ukrainian official.

And on Thursday, The Associated Press reported that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country has intelligence that 10,000 North Korea troops are being prepared to join Russian forces fighting against his country.

"We know about 10,000 soldiers of North Korea that they are preparing to send (to) fight against us," Zelenskyy said, saying that any North Korean involvement would be

"the first step to a world war."

The claims come amid mounting reports that North Korea may have deployed thousands of troops to Russia in support of Moscow's two-year invasion of Ukraine. The North has sent 10,000 soldiers to Russia, although their roles are not clear, an unidentified Western diplomat told the Kyiv Independent for a report Monday.

In June, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a treaty saying they would solidify their alliance and provide military assistance during a conflict "without delay."

Unnamed intelligence sources earlier this month told the Kyiv Post that six North Korean military officers were killed by a Ukrainian missile strike near Donetsk on Oct. 3. Three North Koreans were also wounded in the attack, which claimed 20 lives, according to the report.

Zelenskyy in his daily video address on YouTube also alluded to the reports of Pyongyang shipping more than just military supplies to Moscow.

"This is no longer just about transferring weapons," he said Sunday. "It is actually

about transferring people from North Korea to the occupying military forces."

South Korea has pledged nearly \$400 million in humanitarian and reconstruction aid this year to Ukraine.

Seoul will be reviewing its policy of withholding lethal aid to the Ukrainian front, due to the military pact between North Korea and Russia, South Korean national security adviser Chang Ho-jin said at a June 21 news conference.

Reports of North Korean troops participating in the war was just "another piece of fake news," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said during a press conference Oct. 10, according to Russia news agency Tass.

The U.S. State Department is "concerned by the reports of [North Korean] soldiers fighting on behalf of Russia," spokesman Matthew Miller said Tuesday during a press conference in Washington, D.C. "If that's true, it would mark a significant increase in the relationship between those two countries," Miller said.

"It would also indicate a new level of desperation by Russia, as it continues to suffer significant casualties on the battlefield."

Defense contractor to pay in fraud case

Associated Press

NEW YORK — RTX Corp., the defense contractor formerly known as Raytheon, agreed Wednesday to pay more than \$950 million to resolve allegations that it defrauded the government and paid bribes to secure business with Qatar.

The company entered into deferred prosecution agreements in separate cases in federal court in Brooklyn and Massachusetts, agreed to hire independent monitors to oversee compliance with anti-corruption and anti-fraud laws and must show good conduct for three years.

The money the company owes includes penalties in the criminal cases, as well as civil fines, restitution and the return

of profits it derived from inflated Defense Department billing and business derived from alleged bribes paid to a high-ranking Qatari military official from 2012 to 2016.

The biggest chunk is a \$428 million civil settlement for allegedly lying to the government about its labor and material costs to justify costlier no-bid contracts and drive the company's profits higher, and for double-billing the government on a weapons maintenance contract.

The total also includes nearly \$400 million in criminal penalties in the Brooklyn case, involving the alleged bribes, and in the Massachusetts case, in which the company was accused of inflating its costs by \$111 million for missile systems from 2011 to

2013 and the operation of a radar surveillance system in 2017.

RTX also agreed to pay a \$52.5 million civil penalty to resolve a parallel Securities and Exchange Commission investigation into the bribery allegations and must forfeit at least \$66 million to satisfy both probes.

At a hearing in Brooklyn federal court, RTX lawyers waived their right to an indictment and pleaded not guilty to charges that the company violated the anti-bribery provision of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the Arms Export Control Act. They did not object to any allegations in court documents filed with the agreement.

RTX said in a statement that it is "taking responsibility for the misconduct that occurred" and

is "committed to maintaining a world-class compliance program, following global laws, regulations and internal policies, while upholding integrity and serving our customers in an ethical matter."

The various legal resolutions came to light over the span of several hours.

First, at the Brooklyn hearing, prosecutors revealed that RTX was to pay a \$252 million penalty to resolve criminal charges in the bribery case. Then, court documents hit the docket in Boston showing another criminal penalty of nearly \$147 million to resolve the missile and radar case.

The Justice Department issued a news release putting the total north of \$950 million.

DOD confirms mysterious drones flew above Va. base

The Virginian-Pilot

The Pentagon this week confirmed news reports of unidentified drones swarming the airspace at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va., last year.

The Hampton base experienced incursions of unauthorized unmanned aerial systems in December, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh told reporters Tuesday.

"The number of those UAS incursions did fluctuate on any given day, but they didn't appear to exhibit any hostile intent," Singh said during the news briefing. "It's something that we have kept our eye on, but I just don't have more to provide on that."

Joint Base Langley-Eustis is home to the Air Force's Air Combat Command.

The spokesperson's comments came after previous reporting from The Wall Street

Journal that detailed how, from Dec. 6-23, a fleet of up to a dozen drones swarmed the airspace above Langley and other Hampton locations such as Gosnold's Hope Park, Buckroe Beach and Grandview Nature Preserve. According to the article, the drones also flew south across the Chesapeake Bay toward Norfolk.

When asked why the military didn't shoot down the drones, Singh said the base commander had the authority to do so if they were a threat to the base.

"All I can tell you is that the Air Force base did experience a number of incursions and that we have been looking into it," Singh said. "And if I have more to share, I certainly will."

According to the Wall Street Journal article, drones have appeared over other military and other government sites in recent years.

Growler crash site found but aviators still missing

BY GARY WARNER

Stars and Stripes

TACOMA, Wash. — Search crews have located the wreckage of an EA-18G Growler jet that crashed near Mount Rainier, Navy officials said Wednesday.

"The status of the two crew members is unknown," said Cmdr. Beth Teach, a Navy spokeswoman in San Diego.

The wreckage was spotted at about 12:30 p.m. Wednesday on a steep ridge that cannot be reached yet on foot or by vehicle, she said.

Search teams are making plans to climb to the crash site Thursday as soon as a safe route in the snow and rain can be mapped out.

An emergency operations center has been established at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, home to all but one Navy Growler squadron. The Grow-

ler that crashed was assigned to Electronic Warfare Squadron 130, nicknamed "Zappers."

The two-seat jet crashed at about 3:23 p.m. Tuesday, the Navy said.

Navy P-3 Orion and P-8A Poseidon reconnaissance planes from NAS Whidbey Island flew over large swaths of the region on the southwestern border between Washington and Oregon looking for the crash site.

A Navy MH-60S Sea Hawk search and rescue helicopter and other helicopters from nearby Joint Base Lewis-McChord also took part in the search for the Growler crash or the crew near the 14,411-foot Mount Rainier.

Teach said the search crews were hampered by unsure footing in the snow and rain as they often hiked with little visibility during the little more than nine hours of daylight.

Israel: Top Hamas leader killed in Gaza

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli forces in Gaza killed Hamas' top leader Yahya Sinwar, a chief architect of last year's attack on Israel that sparked the war, the military said Thursday. Troops appeared to have run across him in a battle, only to discover afterward that a body in the rubble was the man Israel has hunted for more than a year.

Sinwar has topped Israel's most wanted list since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war just over a year ago, and his killing strikes a powerful blow to the militant group. There was no immediate confirmation from Hamas of his death.

The military confirmed Sinwar's death after conducting DNA and other tests on a body that it said was among three militants killed Wednesday during operations in Gaza. Foreign Minister Katz called Sinwar's killing a "military and moral achievement for the Israeli army," saying it

would "create the possibility to immediately release the hostages."

Sinwar was one of the chief architects of Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and Israel has vowed to kill him since the beginning of its retaliatory campaign in Gaza. He has been Hamas' top leader inside the Gaza Strip for years, closely connected to its military wing while dramatically building up its capabilities.

An Israeli security official said it appeared that the man who turned out to be Sinwar was killed in a battle, not in a planned targeted airstrike. Photos circulating online showed the body of a man resembling Sinwar with a gaping head wound, dressed in a military-style vest, half-buried in the rubble of a destroyed building. The security official confirmed the photos were taken by Israeli security officials at the scene. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation.

The Israeli news site N12 said Sinwar appears to have been killed by chance in a battle. It said troops tracked a group of militants into a building, then attacked the militants with tank fire, causing the building to collapse. As troops unearthed the dead militants, they noticed that one appeared to resemble Sinwar.

Sinwar was imprisoned by Israel from the late 1980s until 2011, and during that time he underwent treatment for brain cancer — leaving Israeli authorities with extensive medical records.

President Joe Biden has been briefed and U.S. officials have been in close contact with Israeli officials, according to a senior administration official.

Sinwar was chosen as Hamas' top leader in July after his predecessor, Ismail Haniyeh, was assassinated in an apparent Israeli strike in the Iranian capital Tehran. Israel has also claimed to have killed the head of Hamas'

military wing Mohammed Deif in an airstrike, but the group has said he survived.

The report of his death came as Israeli forces continued a more than week-old major air and ground assault in the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza. On Thursday, an Israeli strike hit a school sheltering displaced Palestinians, killing at least 28 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Fares Abu Hamza, head of the Gaza Health Ministry's emergency unit in the north, said the dead included a woman and four children, correcting an earlier report of five children. He said dozens of people were wounded.

The Israeli military said it targeted a command center run by Hamas and Islamic Jihad inside the school. It provided a list of around a dozen names of people it identified as militants who were present when the strike was called in. It was not immediately possible to verify the names.

Report on Pa. shooting says Secret Service needs 'reform'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An independent panel investigating the attempted assassination of Donald Trump at a Pennsylvania campaign rally faulted the Secret Service for poor communications that day and failing to secure the building where the gunman took his shots. The review also found more systemic issues at the agency such as a failure to understand the unique risks facing Trump and a culture of doing "more with less."

The 52-page report issued Thursday took the Secret Service to task for specific problems leading up to the July 13 rally in Butler, as well as deeper one within the agency's culture. It recommended bringing in new, outside leadership and refocusing on its protective mission.

"The Secret Service as an agency requires fundamental reform to carry out its mission," the authors wrote. Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas of the Homeland Security Department, the Secret Service's parent agency, in a letter accompanying their report. "Without that reform, the Independent Review Panel believes another Butler can and will happen again."

One rallygoer was killed and two others wounded when Thomas Michael Crooks climbed onto the roof of a nearby building and opened fire as Trump spoke. The former president was wounded in the ear before being rushed off the stage by Secret Service agents. That shooting, along with another incident in Florida when Trump was golfing has led to a crisis in confidence in the agency.

Harris' sit-down with Fox gets heated on immigration

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris engaged in a combative interview with Fox News on Wednesday, sparring with anchor Bret Baier on immigration and shifting policy positions while asserting that if elected, she would not represent a continuation of Joe Biden's presidency.

Harris' interview marked her first foray onto the network, which is popular with conservative viewers, as she looked to broaden her outreach to GOP-leaning voters with less than three weeks until Election Day. Her sit-down with Baier repeatedly grew heated.

A week after saying she couldn't think of any move made by Biden that she would have done differently, Harris

asserted, "My presidency will not be a continuation of Joe Biden's presidency."

Harris did not offer specifics, but said, "Like every new president that comes into office, I will bring my life experiences, and my professional experiences and fresh and new ideas."

On immigration, Harris expressed regret over the deaths of women who were killed by people who were detained and then released after crossing into the U.S. illegally during the Biden administration, but she criticized opponent Donald Trump for his role in blocking a bipartisan immigration bill earlier this year that would have boosted border funding.

Harris indicated she no longer supports decriminalizing crossing the border illegally.

Biden's student debt relief program marks a milestone

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A student loan cancellation program for public workers has granted relief to more than 1 million Americans — up from just 7,000 who were approved before it was updated by the Biden administration two years ago.

President Joe Biden announced the milestone on Thursday, saying his administration restored a promise to America's teachers, firefighters, nurses and other public servants. He celebrated it even as his broader student loan plans remain halted by courts following legal challenges by Republican-led states.

"For too long, the government failed to live up to its commitments," Biden said in a statement. "We vowed to fix that, and because of actions from our administration, now over 1 million public service workers have gotten the relief they are entitled to under the law."

The Public Service Loan For-

givenness program was created in 2007, promising college graduates that the remainder of their federal student loans would be zeroed out after 10 years working in government or nonprofit jobs. But starting in 2017, the vast majority of applicants were rejected because of complicated and little-known eligibility rules.

A 2018 report from the Government Accountability Office found that 99% of applicants were denied, often because they weren't in the right loan repayment plan or because their payments had temporarily been paused through deferment or forbearance — periods that weren't counted toward the 10 years of public work.

The GAO faulted the Education Department for failing to make the rules clear.

The program was the subject of legal and political battles, with Democrats in Congress calling on the Trump administration to loosen the rules and

uphold the spirit of the program. Betsy DeVos, the education secretary at the time, countered that she was faithfully following the rules passed by Congress.

Declaring that the program was "broken," the Biden administration in 2021 offered a temporary waiver allowing borrowers to get credit for past periods of deferment or forbearance, among other changes. A year later, the Education Department updated the rules to expand eligibility more permanently.

Since then, waves of borrowers have been approved for cancellation as they reach the 10-year finish line. On Thursday, 60,000 more hit the mark, pushing the total past 1 million. When Biden took office, just 7,000 borrowers had been granted relief over the previous four years.

In all, the program has erased \$74 billion in loans for public workers.

New FTC rule eases canceling of services

Associated Press

The Federal Trade Commission adopted a final rule Wednesday that will require businesses to make it easy for consumers to cancel unwanted subscriptions and memberships.

The "click-to-cancel" rule will prohibit retailers and other businesses from misleading people about subscriptions and require them to obtain consumers' consent before charging for memberships, auto-renewals and programs linked to free trial offers.

The FTC said businesses must also disclose when free trials or other promotional offers will end and let customers end recurring subscriptions as easily as they started them. Most of the provisions take effect 180 days after the rule is published in the Federal Register, the agency said.

"Too often, businesses make people jump through endless hoops just to cancel a subscription," FTC Chair Lina Khan said in a statement. "The FTC's rule will end these tricks and traps, saving Americans time and money. Nobody should be stuck paying for a service they no longer want."

The Biden administration included the FTC's proposal as part of its "Time is Money" initiative, a government-wide initiative that was announced in August with the aim of cracking down on consumer-related hassles. The initiative featured new regulations and the promise of more for industries spanning health care and fitness memberships to media subscriptions.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce criticized the administration's approach, saying in August that "heavy-handed regulations that micromanage business practices" will lead to higher costs for consumers.

US retail sales see increase last month

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans stepped up their purchases at retailers last month as low unemployment, steady pay gains and rising stock and home values helped sustain their willingness to spend despite higher prices.

Retail sales rose 0.4% from August to September, the Commerce Department said Thursday, up from 0.1% the previous month and the third straight increase. Online retailers, restaurants, and grocery stores all reported higher sales.

Sales at gas stations fell, because of lower pump prices. The retail sales figures aren't

adjusted for inflation, and the prices of goods fell slightly last month.

With the presidential election in its final weeks, Thursday's figures provided the latest sign that household spending is fueling a steady economic expansion even while inflation has cooled. In his campaign for the White House, Donald Trump has insisted that sweeping new tariffs on all imports and lower corporate taxes are needed to deliver healthy growth. Vice President Kamala Harris has countered with proposals for expanding tax credits for families with children and subsidizing home construction to try to

lower housing costs.

"Retail sales came in well above expectations and continue to defy the 'weak economy' thesis," said Quincy Krosby, chief global strategist for LPL Financial, a wealth management firm.

Restaurant sales jumped 1% from August to September, a sign that many Americans remain confident enough in their finances to boost their discretionary spending. Rising sales at sporting goods outlets point in the same direction.

Clothing store purchases leapt 1.5% last month, though sales at electronics and furniture stores dropped.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Spicy-dish lawsuit by doctor gets trial date

CA SAN JOSE — A lawsuit by a San Jose doctor claiming the Dragon Balls appetizer at a Los Gatos Thai restaurant was so spicy it burned her internally is set to go before a jury next year.

Harjasleen Walia sued Coup de Thai in July last year in Santa Clara County Superior Court, alleging the dish scorched her vocal cords, esophagus and the inside of her right nostril.

"She incurred permanent injuries and will forever be damaged," the lawsuit claimed.

The court has set Aug. 25, 2025, for a jury trial expected to last five to seven days.

The restaurant in a court filing last year denied causing injury to Walia.

State paying \$13M after shooter drill scared kids

MI DETROIT — A judge has approved a \$13 million settlement in a lawsuit over an unannounced active shooter drill at a Michigan psychiatric hospital for children, an event that terrified kids and staff and caused them to scramble for cover, text family and urgently call 911.

Someone at the front desk declared through a speaker system that two armed men were inside the state-run Hawthorn Center in suburban Detroit and that shots were fired, attorney Robin Wagner said. It wasn't true, but the message on Dec. 21, 2022, set off a frenzy.

Fifty children at the hospital each will receive roughly \$60,000. Among staff, 90 people will receive an average of more than \$50,000, depending on

their score on a trauma exam, Wagner said. Two dozen others will get smaller amounts.

Police apparently didn't know anything about a drill. Dozens of officers responding to 911 calls showed up with body armor and high-powered weapons, anticipating the worst.

Two people who were told to pose as shooters were captured, Wagner said. They were not armed.

Lawyers told to apologize for blaring screams

PA PHILADELPHIA — Lawyers who blared a looped recording of a woman screaming as a test in their civil rights lawsuit against the city of Philadelphia must apologize in person and in writing to residents where the loud test took place, a federal judge ordered last week.

U.S. Judge John F. Murphy described the hour-long pre-dawn test on Sept. 23 as lacking foresight and judgment, resulting in "a deeply disturbing and potentially dangerous situation." He gave the lawyers who oversaw the loudspeaker's recorded screaming in south Philadelphia until the end of October to apologize to people who live nearby.

"It was so jarring," neighbor Rachel Robbins told The Philadelphia Inquirer. "It was just really awful."

The lawyers represent a man who is suing the city and several officers over his arrest, conviction and 19 years in prison for sexual assault before the conviction was vacated in 2020. The man was shot by police three times at the scene. At issue in the lawsuit is whether the man, who said he was trying to help

the victim in the case, could have heard the woman's screams from two blocks away.

Commuter train hits part of a tree, killing operator

NJ MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP — A New Jersey Transit commuter train struck a chunk of a tree on the tracks Monday, leaving the train operator dead and nearly two dozen people injured.

The accident occurred shortly after 6 a.m. just north of the Roebling Station in Mansfield Township, NJ Transit said in a statement. There were 42 passengers aboard the River Line train, and television news video showed a large piece of the tree under the front of the train.

Twenty-three people were treated for minor injuries, NJ Transit said. Authorities worked to determine how the tree ended up on the tracks.

Eatery apologizes after Nazi reenactors dined

MA HUDSON — A couple of World War II reenactors dressed as Nazis should've been asked to change out of their SS soldier costumes before they were served at a Massachusetts restaurant, the business wrote in an online apology.

"Last night we fell short, and we deeply apologize," Kith and Kin in Hudson said on Facebook the morning of Oct. 13. Hudson is about a 40-mile drive northwest from Boston.

The Nazi reenactors were seated at a table of eight with four reenactors dressed as U.S. soldiers and one wearing a military nurse costume, according to the restaurant's Facebook post. They were living histori-

ans from the American Heritage Museum in Hudson, Kith and Kin wrote.

Kith and Kin has faced harassment and threats after news reports about the incident, the restaurant wrote Oct. 15 on Facebook.

Feds to monitor voting after sheriff's comments

OH RAVENNA — The U.S. Justice Department will send election monitors to an Ohio county where a sheriff was recently accused of intimidating voters in a social media post, federal officials announced Tuesday.

The Justice Department said it will monitor Portage County's compliance with federal voting rights laws during early voting and on Election Day. The agency said it regularly sends staff to counties around the U.S. to monitor compliance with civil rights statutes related to elections and voting.

Portage County Sheriff Bruce Zuchowski, a Republican running for reelection, came under fire for a social media post last month in which he said people with Kamala Harris yard signs should have their addresses written down so that immigrants can be sent to live with them if the Democrat wins the presidency. He also likened people in the country illegally to "human locusts."

The sheriff's comment about Harris' supporters — made on his personal Facebook account and his campaign's account — sparked outrage among some Democrats. His supporters argued he was making a political point and was exercising his right to free speech.

— From wire reports

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Ohtani, Dodgers rout Mets for 2-1 NLCS lead

Associated Press

NEW YORK — By the time Shohei Ohtani stepped to the plate in the eighth inning Wednesday night, the Los Angeles Dodgers were already in control.

Once the ball left his bat, Game 4 of the National League Championship Series was over.

Ohtani launched a three-run homer and the Dodgers pulled away for an 8-0 victory against the choppy New York Mets that gave them a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series.

Kiké Hernández hit a two-run shot to make it 4-0 in the sixth with his 15th career postseason homer and waved to the Citi Field crowd he quieted. Los Angeles rebounded from a loss at home by pitching its fourth shutout in the past five playoff games.

"These guys are locked in. And they understand they have a job to do to prevent runs," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "And I think we're playing good defense, too."

Game 4 was set for Thursday night in Queens, with \$325 million rookie Yoshinobu Yamamoto scheduled to start for Los Angeles against veteran left-hander Jose Quintana.

Ohtani connected for a towering 410-foot drive that soared into the second deck in right field. He gave a little lean at home plate as he watched the ball barely stay fair above the foul pole.

Max Muncy went deep in the ninth for his 13th career postseason homer, tying Corey Seager and Justin Turner for the franchise record. Muncy also connected in Game 2.

"It's definitely a blessing. I can't be thankful enough that I've had the opportunity to play enough games to be able to accrue those numbers," he said. "Thankful to be able to be on a team and an organization that gets to the postseason every single year."

Dodgers starter Walker Buehler struck out Francisco Lindor on a full-count knuckle

curve to leave the bases loaded in the second.

A fired-up Buehler shouted as he walked off the mound, and then again in Lindor's direction.

"That was the pitch of the game," Roberts said. "Obviously, the crowd was into it. They were gaining momentum. To get the breaking ball down below the zone and get a great hitter out was huge. And I think that just kind of speaks to experience."

No. 9 batter Francisco Alvarez fanned right before Lindor and went down looking all three times up. New York stranded six runners in the first three innings against Buehler when the game was still close.

"Walker, he's a different animal in the postseason. I don't care what his regular-season numbers are, especially this year coming off the second Tommy John (surgery)," Muncy said. "We all knew once we got into this setting he was going to be Walker Buehler, and he was definitely that tonight."

Winless since May 18 during an injury-plagued season, Buehler made his 17th career postseason start. He struck out six in four innings of three-hit ball after failing to whiff a single batter during his Division Series loss to San Diego.

"Being in big games, that's literally all I care about," said Buehler, who ditched his wind-up early in the game and began working exclusively out of the stretch because he couldn't feel his cold right foot on a hard mound.

"This is definitely a big momentum win for us. But if we don't do something with it, then it doesn't really matter a whole lot."

Buehler combined with four relievers on a four-hitter as the Dodgers got five stingy innings from their hard-throwing bullpen.

"This guy has proven year after year that when there's a big game and the Dodgers need a win, he's the right guy to be on the mound," Hernández said.

49ers' Super Bowl loss still stings headed into rematch

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Eight months later, the pain of losing a second Super Bowl in five seasons to the Kansas City Chiefs has barely subsided for the San Francisco 49ers as they prepare for a rare regular-season rematch.

Memories of Chris Jones blowing up key plays with pressure, Patrick Mahomes creating plays with his arm and feet, and Travis Kelce getting open in key spots in Kansas City's 25-22 overtime victory are hard to avoid as the Niners (3-3) watch tape of that game back in February in preparation for a visit from the Chiefs (5-0) on Sunday.

"Everyone understands that we've lost the two Super Bowls to them. So I mean, that can give a little post-traumatic stress when you turn on the tape," coach Kyle Shanahan said Wednesday.

"I think that's human nature. But you've got to make sure you don't get caught up in

that. This game has nothing to do with past games, that was last year."

The game Sunday marks the 10th time in NFL history the teams that met in the Super Bowl played again in the following regular season, with the defending champion going 6-3 in those games.

The 49ers don't want to dwell on that game and know a regular-season win won't make up for a Super Bowl loss. But they also can't avoid rewatching it in search of any tips that can help them this week.

"It's definitely a little emotional," defensive end Nick Bosa said. "But at this point, it's just a game so we're just looking at the tape, trying to learn from it. A lot of similarities from last year. A few new guys, but a really good defense and an offense obviously has No. 15 (Mahomes) back there. So always dangerous."

The most painful plays are the missed third-down pass at the end of regulation that quarterback Brock Purdy said this

summer still bothers him since it gave Kansas City time to tie the game and the inability to stop Mahomes on that fourth-down run.

"That was tough especially because we have calls that can negate that," Bosa said. "They ran the zone read a few times and we just didn't find an answer to it. I definitely thought he was going to hold it or keep it, but I've got to do my job, especially in a big moment like that. ... We definitely have a plan for the zone read this time. Hindsight is 20-20."

Linebacker Fred Warner said there were things San Francisco could have done better to stop that play but added that the game didn't come down to one snap.

"You want to be great in those critical situations to ultimately to end and win the game, but there are little plays throughout the entire game you could have said, 'Aw, that was the one. That could have won it,'" he said. "You've got to look at all of them."

LeBron, Bronny prep for historic family pairing

Associated Press

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — LeBron James gets to end every practice these days by shooting hoops with his son.

When the Los Angeles Lakers cool down with small-group shooting sessions after workouts at their training complex, the top scorer in NBA history and 20-year-old Bronny James take turns putting up dozens of jumpers alongside third-year guard Max Christie.

Getting all this family time at work is still surreal to LeBron, even though he willed it into reality.

“For a father, it means everything,” LeBron said.

Less than three years after James declared his desire to cap his decorated career by playing alongside Bronny, they’ve already teamed up in the preseason. They’ll soon become the first father and son to play in a real NBA game at the same time, let alone on the same team.

“It’s a special feeling, a different feeling, to work with him,” said LeBron, who turns 40 in December. “When you go to work every day, you want to try to help each other. If it’s a bad day for

him, you pick him up. ... There’s things we can do that doesn’t even need words. We can just look at each other and know.”

The sports world has been looking at them both this fall as the Lakers embark on a remarkable experiment — albeit one that could present unique challenges for the James family’s teammates and the Lakers’ rookie head coach, JJ Redick.

Bronny has already acknowledged and lamented the social media stigma of favoritism and nepotism hovering over the start of his NBA career. The Lakers have also been criticized for using a draft pick to guarantee this father-son pairing, with detractors questioning the inclusion of Bronny and his still-raw skills in any contender’s plans from a competitive standpoint.

“It won’t be an easy situation necessarily to navigate,” said Stan Van Gundy, the longtime NBA coach and current commentator. “There will be a lot of external noise about Bronny. If he doesn’t play, people are going to want him to play with LeBron. If he’s playing, people are going to say he doesn’t deserve to be playing. ... But I think the focus

should be that this is something to be celebrated. This is a phenomenal thing that we’re not going to see much.”

Indeed, only a handful of great athletes have ever played on the same professional sports team as their sons — and Ken Griffey Sr., Tim Lincecum and Gordie Howe were not still at the peak of their formidable skills when they teamed up with their progeny.

LeBron is still one of the NBA’s best players, and the Lakers aspire to championship contention for a roster built around him and Anthony Davis.

In other words, this is no time for a stunt.

But Bronny’s first few months on the roster have generated overwhelming positivity around the Lakers, both from the front office that orchestrated it and from the players suiting up alongside the James duo. No matter how much or how little the James family ends up playing together this season, the Lakers clearly don’t regret making this bit of basketball history.

Davis has known Bronny since well before Davis joined the Lakers in 2019, watching Bronny’s maturation from a shy

teen into a young man.

“It’s awesome,” Davis said. “It’s historic. It’s powerful. Bronny’s locker is across from mine, so every time I walk in and see it, it’s still surreal for me that he’s on the same team as his dad. I can’t wait until they step on the floor and officially make history, but it’s been super dope to watch so far.”

Bronny’s new teammates have uniformly praised his work ethic and commitment to improving — and they say it’s no surprise, since he has spent his life watching his father’s relentless drive to extend his unmatched career, which is now in its record-tying 22nd season.

Bronny has particularly earned respect for his defensive abilities since summer league play.

“He’s tough,” Davis said. “Obviously he’s defensive-minded. Some great blocks. The physicality he gets over on screens. He’s good with his hands as far as deflections and steals. But he’s also still learning. He’s still trying to figure everything out. We have to realize that. He’s still a rookie. It’s a different style of basketball, but I like what I’m seeing.”

Liberty top Lynx, on verge of first WNBA championship

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Sabrina Ionescu watched Breanna Stewart carry the New York Liberty all game, until it was time to win it.

Then the ball was hers.

“In the timeout, (coach) Sandy (Brondello) was like, ‘You’re going to shoot the shot,’” Ionescu said.

The star guard made it, a 3-pointer with a second remaining that gave the Liberty an 80-77 victory over the Minnesota Lynx on Wednesday night and moved them a win away from an elusive first WNBA title.

New York leads the finals 2-1 — the first time it has ever been ahead in the championship round — and can win the series Friday night in Minnesota.

“We know we’re one game away from

winning the championship, and I think that they are going to give us their best shot,” said Stewart, who won two titles with Seattle. “They are going to give everything they have got, and you know what, so are we. The turnaround is quick but we are going to continue to be ready.”

Ionescu said she had to watch replay of her shot after the game to see exactly what happened.

“I didn’t even really remember it. I had to go look at the video really quickly to see like how far I was,” she said.

“I feel like I was able to get a little separation in range and get a really good shot to go.”

With the game tied at 77, Ionescu had the ball and dribbled around before pulling up a few steps behind the arc and hitting from 28 feet to break the tie.

“It’s pretty special. It was never in doubt. Obviously Stewie got us back in there, willed us in there, but I thought the right time, this is Sabrina,” Brondello said. “She just made a big shot. She’s a great shooter and she just needed a little bit of separation.”

Stewart scored 22 of the team’s 45 points in the second half and finished with 30 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots.

“We don’t win this game without Stewie,” Ionescu said.

“There’s nothing I can say. That shot’s nice, but what she was able to do for us tonight willed us back into the game.”

Minnesota didn’t get a real shot to tie at the buzzer.

“Great player made a good shot,” Minnesota guard Kayla McBride said. “I guarded her for 40 minutes.”

Alabama, Tennessee chasing CFP bids

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Who wins the latest game in the historic rivalry known as the Third Saturday of October may matter more than ever for Alabama and Tennessee.

On Saturday, the seventh-ranked Crimson Tide and No. 11 Tennessee are playing for separation with the winner facing an easier path to a College Football Playoff berth in the first year of the 12-team bracket while also getting a game up in the Southeastern Conference race. Both teams are part of a four-way tie in the expanded SEC with one loss apiece.

"It's a rivalry game," said Tennessee coach Josh Heupel.

"College football as good as it gets."

Tennessee (5-1, 2-1 SEC) dropped three spots in the AP Top 25 after an overtime win against Florida. For Alabama, Tennessee is asking fans to wear all orange, and the Vols have won 16 of their last 17 at Neyland. The loss was to then-No. 1 Georgia.

"This game is obviously a big deal to the fans and ... to us," Alabama coach Kalen DeBoer said of what will be his first game at the 101,915-seat stadium.

Making this even more crucial is how the Crimson Tide (5-1, 2-1) and the Vols have mirrored each other the past two

weeks.

Alabama suffered a historic loss at Vanderbilt, which had never beaten an AP Top 25 team in 60 previous tries. The Tide then struggled to beat South Carolina 27-25 while playing at home.

Tennessee's four-game winning streak ended 19-14 at Arkansas before the Vols held off the Gators.

Which QB delivers

While both defenses have been dominant at times, the quarterbacks will be key with Alabama's Jalen Milroe and Tennessee's Nico Iamaleava struggling recently. Milroe was intercepted three times in the

last two games and had problems with the Gamecocks' pass rush. Iamaleava turned it over twice and was sacked three times by Florida.

"It starts with (Milroe), him being part of the run game and playmakers on the outside," Heupel said of Milroe.

Tennessee has allowed only three plays of 30 yards or longer all season and is tied for the fewest nationally with Army, Nebraska and top-ranked Texas. The Vols understand too well that Milroe is a dual threat.

Iamaleava is averaging 203.2 yards passing per game with seven touchdown passes and three interceptions.

Pens' stars reach milestones in OT win over Sabres

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Sidney Crosby scored a power-play goal at 1:38 of overtime and the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied to beat the Buffalo Sabres 6-5 on Wednesday night.

Evgeni Malkin became the 48th player in NHL history to score 500 career goals and Crosby became the 10th player in NHL history to reach 1,600 regular-season points in a career. Crosby, from behind the net, sent a between-the-legs pass in front to Malkin, who was sitting on the ice when he scored his goal.

Crosby reached the milestone when he recorded the secondary assist on Bryan Rust's power-play goal at 11:01 of the first period. Rust scored his second goal with 46 seconds left to force overtime. Drew O'Connor scored a short-handed goal and Jesse Puljujarvi added his second of the season.

Tristan Jarry allowed three goals on five shots in the first period before he was pulled. Joel Blomqvist came on and finished with 26 saves.

J.J. Peterka, back after missing the last two games with a concussion, scored twice for Buffalo. Ryan McLeod, Tage Thompson and Jordan Greenway also scored for the Sabres and Alex Tuch had two assists. Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen stopped 36 shots.

Maple Leafs 6, Kings 2: Auston Matthews broke out of a season-opening points drought, scoring his first goal and adding his first two assists as host Toronto's captain in its victory over Los Angeles.

Matthews made it 2-0 midway through the first period, quickly regaining control after fanning on a shot and beating David Rittich with a wrist shot.

The NHL goals leader last season with 69, Matthews also assisted on two power-play goals to help the Maple Leafs win for the third straight time after an opening 1-0 loss at Montreal.

Bobby McMann scored twice in Toronto's three-goal first period, Morgan Rielly, William Nylander and John Tavares added goals and Anthony Sto-

larz stopped 32 shots. Mitch Marner had three assists.

Alex Turcotte and Kevin Fiala scored in the third period for Los Angeles.

Bruins 5, Avalanche 3: David Pastrnak and Hampus Lindholm scored 13 seconds apart in the second period to help visiting Boston send Colorado to its fourth straight loss.

It's the longest skid to start a season for the Avalanche since 1998-99. That squad got back on track behind a lineup that featured Joe Sakic, Peter Forsberg and Patrick Roy. They made it to the Western Conference finals before losing to Dallas.

Cole Koepke and Charlie Coyle added goals, with John Beecher wrapping up the game on an empty-netter with 2:01 remaining. Joonas Korpisalo stopped 22 shots for the Bruins.

Ross Colton, Cale Makar and Mikko Rantanen scored for the injury-riddled Avalanche. The Bruins led 4-1 midway through the second period only to see the Avalanche cut it to 4-3 on Rantanen's goal with 15:08 remaining.

Alexandar Georgiev allowed

four goals. He's now surrendered 17 goals over four games. Last season, Georgiev led the NHL with 38 wins.

Ducks 5, Utah 4 (OT): Leo Carlsson scored 54 seconds into overtime and host Anaheim won its ninth consecutive home opener, over Utah.

Clayton Keller put Utah ahead 4-3 with 9:10 to play in regulation, but Pavel Mintyukov tied it for Anaheim with 5:05 left.

Carlsson, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2023 draft, then converted a pass from Troy Terry for the first goal of his second NHL season.

Robby Fabbri scored his first goal since joining Anaheim, and Terry got his second goal of the season. Lukas Dostal made 26 saves.

Keller and Barrett Hayton both scored their fourth goals in five games this season for Utah. Jack McBain and Michael Kesselring also scored.

Connor Ingram stopped 29 shots for Utah, which dropped to 3-1-1 in the finale of a four-game road trip.