

IG: Army cut watercraft fleet as need rose

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Army trimmed its watercraft fleet by half over the past six years, even as demand for those vessels increased, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, according to a federal watchdog agency's recent report.

As of May, the Army's watercraft fleet had shrunk to 70 vessels from 134 in 2018, according to the report released Wednesday by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

The Army's fleet moves supplies, equipment and personnel in deep ocean, shallow coastal waters, inland waterways and rivers.

The watercraft gap has left the Army far short of its mission-capability goal of 90% of equipment being ready and available to perform missions, according to the report. The fully mission capable rate for wa-

tercraft has steadily declined from 75% in 2020 to less than 40% this year.

The Army's watercraft fleet is a "key enabler" of the joint force, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, the Defense Department's priority theater," the report states.

"Within this region, China is recognized as the only country that poses a military, technological, and economic challenge to the United States and its regional partners and allies," the report states. "China has set a timeline for its military to be capable of taking Taiwan by 2027 and, according to DOD, recent events in the Taiwan Strait have some questioning the prospects of a near-term invasion."

Army watercraft vessels are stationed at two U.S. locations, Virginia and Hawaii, and two locations in Japan, Yokohama and Naha, Okinawa, the report states.

In the Pacific, the watercraft

participate in exercises such as Talisman Saber in Australia and Balikatan in the Philippines.

Eight of the Army's vessels were involved in construction of a temporary pier off the coast of Gaza in support of humanitarian aid.

The challenges facing the Army's current watercraft fleet are wide-ranging, but central to the difficulty are the repercussions of the Army's decision a few years ago to divest itself of watercraft.

In 2018, the commander of the Army Materiel Command recommended to Secretary of the Army Mark Esper that the service could save more than \$140 million each year by transferring its watercraft capabilities to other service branches or outside entities.

In May 2019, the Army moved to partially divest and inactivate part of the fleet, resulting in the sale of 64 vessels and the termi-

nation of funding for all Army Reserve Component vessels, the report states. Among the vessels purged from the fleet were 27 landing craft mechanized, 16 large and small tugs and 17 landing craft utility.

Some lawmakers objected to the draw down, and language in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act prohibited further inactivation of Army watercraft until the Defense Department completed a review on the Army's ability to meet the requirements of the combatant commands.

The Army is working on a revised watercraft modernization strategy, expected to be completed early next year, which looks at watercraft needs from 2030 to 2040, but "it remains unclear whether it will include any mitigation plans to address the current challenges, risks, and gaps affecting the watercraft fleet," the report states.

USS George Washington to replace USS Reagan in Japan

By **JOSEPH DITZLER**
Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS George Washington is on its way to Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, where it will take the place of the USS Ronald Reagan, the Navy announced Friday.

The George Washington left Naval Base San Diego on Oct. 8 for routine operations, according to a news release from the Yokosuka-based U.S. 7th Fleet. The carrier is expected to arrive in Tokyo Bay later this fall, according to the release.

"USS George Washington departed San Diego to begin the final phase of its redeployment to

Japan, where it will once again serve as the Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier," said Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, commander of Carrier Strike Group 5.

"George Washington, with all its capabilities, represents America's commitment to stability in the region where it will sail and fly with our partner navies as we strive to move from interoperability to true interchangeability," he said.

The Ronald Reagan left Yokosuka in May and arrived in August at Naval Base Kitsap, Wash., for scheduled maintenance at the shipyard there. The carrier was spotted off San Die-

go this month.

Meanwhile, the George Washington underwent its midlife nuclear refueling and overhaul at Newport News Shipbuilding in May 2023 and after 10 months of certifications and inspections left Norfolk Naval Base, Va., in April. It steamed around South America to arrive in San Diego in July, according to the Navy.

Carrier Air Wing 5 will embark with George Washington for its trip across the Pacific Ocean and its home base at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. The wing recently completed training at Naval Air Station Fallon, Nev., according to

Friday's release.

"I am incredibly proud of this team and everything they have accomplished this year," said the George Washington's skipper, Capt. Timothy Waits, in the release. "This crew, alongside Carrier Air Wing 5, is trained, tested, and ready to return to 7th Fleet as the Navy's premier forward-deployed aircraft carrier."

The George Washington served as the centerpiece of 7th Fleet's carrier strike group from 2008 to 2015, when it was relieved by the Ronald Reagan. It was the first nuclear-powered carrier deployed to Japan, according to the Navy.

Hundreds protest US airman's acquittal

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany — Hundreds of people protested the acquittal of a U.S. airman accused of killing Michael Ovsjannikov, expressing disbelief, anger and frustration at what many called a lack of justice and accountability for the death of the beloved martial arts athlete from the nearby town of Wittlich.

"We are scared because if every murderer is set free, the next one will lose all hesitation," said Katja, who organized the demonstration that shut down the base's main gate Friday night for hours.

"You can't just go around killing people without facing consequences, it just can't work like that," Katja added, declining to give her last name.

She described Ovsjannikov, 28, as a fighter in the ring but a kind, gentle person outside of it.

For more than two hours under steady rain, demonstrators

chanting "Justice for Micha" in English and German pressed up against about 50 German police officers standing between them and the locked base gate.

"Prison for murder"; "Guilty"; "America, give some justice"; "Shame for America"; and "Don't close your eyes, don't look away, this is not fair" were among the other chants and slogans on signs.

From inside the gate, a handful of Security Forces airmen watched silently.

Many in the crowd held lit candles, some of which by the end of the evening were set on the pavement to make a heart symbol and spell out Micha, Ovsjannikov's nickname. German police said about 800 protesters turned out in a demonstration they described as peaceful.

The protest came one week after a court-martial jury found Airman 1st Class Grant Harrison not guilty of unpremeditated murder in the stabbing death of Ovsjannikov.

kov.

The 26-year-old transient aircraft journeyman with the 726th Air Mobility Squadron was also found not guilty of aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon and obstructing justice.

Military jurors weighed conflicting testimony from witnesses about a confrontation on Aug. 19, 2023, involving Ovsjannikov, Harrison and another Spangdahlem airman from the same squadron, Staff Sgt. Robert Cain II.

The verdict was a shock to the family, said Ovsjannikov's father, Michael, who has the same name as his son.

"It's unbelievable," he said at the protest, incredulous that Harrison could be acquitted despite confessing to the crime.

Lawyers for the defense and government acknowledged during a discussion with the judge at the court-martial that Harrison confessed during initial interviews with investigators. But the

confession was suppressed in an earlier ruling, according to the trial discussion, and the jury was never made aware of it during the proceedings.

A witness who testified to seeing the fight said it was Cain — not Harrison — who stabbed Ovsjannikov following what was described as a chance encounter after a night of drinking at Pig Fest, an annual street fair in Wittlich. Ovsjannikov was stabbed four times, the most serious wounds to his back and one side of his abdomen.

The verdict cannot be vacated or overturned, Spangdahlem officials said in a statement Friday.

"At this time, charges have not been brought against any additional personnel," the statement said. "The Air Force will continue to pursue charges in all cases in which the interests of justice, preservation of good order and discipline, and probable cause dictate so doing."

Air National Guard planes head to Antarctic mission

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Five Air National Guard ski-equipped airlifters and 400 airmen are headed to Antarctica for an annual mission supporting research on the frozen continent.

The LC-130 Hercules "ski-birds" of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing lifted off Wednesday and Thursday from Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y., bound for McMurdo Station, Antarctica, according to the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs' website.

Operation Deep Freeze, which dates to 1955, is the logistical support the military provides to the U.S. Antarctic Program managed by the National Science

Foundation.

The mission takes advantage of the Southern Hemisphere's summer months when daylight hours run around the clock in Antarctica. The LC-130s and airmen will support the Antarctic research mission until March, the division said in a statement on Wednesday.

"The aircraft will make a five-day trip to Christchurch, New Zealand, before they complete their journey to Antarctica," the statement said.

The 109th Airlift Wing's primary mission this season is to resupply science stations on the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, the Siple Dome Field camp and the Amundson-Scott South Pole Station, the division said.

Trial near for former Marine charged in chokehold death

Associated Press

NEW YORK — To some New Yorkers, he's the white vigilante who choked an innocent Black man to death on the subway. To others, he's the U.S. Marine Corps veteran whose attempt to subdue a mentally ill man ended in tragedy.

A Manhattan jury will soon have its say on Daniel Penny, who is charged with manslaughter for placing Jordan Neely in a fatal chokehold on May 1, 2023. Jury selection in Penny's trial begins Monday.

The court proceedings, which are expected to last six weeks, will shed light on a killing that was a flashpoint in the nation's debate over racial injustice and crime.

Neely's death also divided a city grappling with what to do

about people experiencing mental health crises in a transit system where some subway strap-hangers still don't feel safe, despite a drop in violent crime rates.

Penny, 25, has been free on a \$100,000 bond. He faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted of second-degree manslaughter and up to four years if convicted of criminally negligent homicide.

Witnesses said Neely — a 30-year-old former Michael Jackson street impersonator struggling with drug addiction, mental illness and homelessness — had been shouting, throwing things and acting erratically on a subway train in Manhattan when Penny approached him. The medical examiner's office ruled the death a homicide caused by compression of the neck.

GOP, Democrats preparing for long legal battles over results

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican Donald Trump, who still refuses to accept that he lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden, says he wants a presidential victory Nov. 5 to be so overwhelming that the results are “too big to rig.”

“We want a landslide,” he recently told supporters in Georgia. “We can’t let anything happen.”

No matter the margins, Republicans and Democrats are preparing for a potentially lengthy battle over the results once they come in. Dozens of lawsuits that could set the stage for challenges after the votes are counted are already playing out in courts across the country.

Most have been filed by Republicans and their allies. Many of the cases involve challenges to mail-in balloting, ballots from overseas voters and claims of voting by people who are not U.S. citizens.

Trump, who faces federal criminal charges over his ef-

forts to overturn his 2020 defeat, has repeatedly declined to state unequivocally that he will accept this year’s results.

Democrats, meanwhile, warn that election deniers installed in key voting-related positions nationwide may refuse to certify legitimate results and prompt litigation.

“In 2020, the election deniers were improvisational. ... Now that same election denialist impulse is far more organized, far more strategic and far better funded,” Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center for Justice, told reporters during a telephone briefing. “At the same time, the election system is far better able, we believe, to handle something like this.”

While partisan battles over voting rules have long been part of presidential campaigns, election litigation has soared in recent years. With money pouring in for legal fights and the number of outside groups involved in election litigation proliferating,

the disputes are not likely to slow down anytime soon.

“It’s not even just the parties — it’s outside organizations, and they’re fundraising on how they’re able to protect democracy, how they’re able to preserve the integrity of the election, whatever it might be,” said Derek Muller, an election law expert and professor at the University of Notre Dame Law School. “They have wealthy donors who are backing this litigation. So there doesn’t seem to be any de-escalation in sight.”

With a little over two weeks before Election Day, about 180 voting and election cases have been filed so far this year, according to Democratic lawyer Marc Elias, who founded the election litigation tracking group Democracy Docket.

It comes four years after Trump and his allies flooded the courts with lawsuits claiming fraud. Those filings were roundly rejected by judges nominated to the bench by presidents of both major political parties.

Ferry dock gangway collapses in Georgia

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Georgia authorities said Sunday that they are investigating the “catastrophic failure” of a dock gangway which collapsed and killed seven on Sapelo Island, where crowds had gathered for a fall celebration by the island’s tiny Gullah-Geechee community of Black slave descendants.

“It is a structural failure. There should be very, very little maintenance to an aluminum gangway like that, but we’ll see what the investigation unfolds,” Georgia Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Walter Rabon said at a news conference.

The gangway was installed in 2021, authorities said.

Rabon said three people remained hospitalized in critical condition from Saturday’s collapse.

Rabon said “upwards of 40 people” were on the gangway when the “catastrophic failure” occurred, and at least 20 people fell into the water.

The gangway connected an outer dock where people board the ferry to another dock onshore.

None of the seven people killed were residents of the island, Rabon said. Eight people were taken to hospitals, at least six of them were initially reported Saturday to have critical injuries.

The ferry dock was rebuilt after Georgia officials in October 2020 settled a federal lawsuit by residents of the tiny community of Hogg Hummock, who complained the state-operated ferry boats and docks they rely upon to travel between Sapelo Island the mainland failed to meet federal accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

Mail carriers reach tentative deal with Postal Service including raises

Associated Press

Some 200,000 mail carriers have reached a tentative contract deal with the U.S. Postal Service that includes backdated pay raises and a promise to provide workers with air-conditioned trucks. The new agreement, which still needs to be ratified by union members, runs through November 2026.

Letter carriers have been working without a new contract since their old one expired in May 2023. Since then,

they have continued working under the terms of the old contract.

Both the union and the Postal Service welcomed the agreement, which was announced Friday.

“Both sides didn’t get everything they wanted. But by bargaining in good faith, we ended with an agreement that meets our goals and rewards our members,” Brian Renfro, the president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, told The Associated

Press. “To make that happen, the Postal Service had to recognize the contributions of members to the Postal Service and the American people.”

Among other improvements, the deal increases the top pay and reduces the amount of time it takes new workers to reach that level, Renfro said. He credited Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and his deputy for bargaining in good faith throughout the arduous process.

Israel continues to strike northern Gaza sites

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli strikes on multiple homes in the northern Gaza Strip overnight and into Sunday left at least 87 people dead or missing, the territory's Health Ministry said.

It said another 40 people were wounded in the strikes on the town of Beit Lahiya, which was among the first targets of Israel's ground invasion nearly a year ago. The Israeli military said it carried out a precise strike on a Hamas target.

Israel has been carrying out a large-scale operation in northern

Gaza for the last two weeks, saying Hamas has regrouped there. Palestinian officials said hundreds of people have been killed and that the health sector in the north is on the verge of collapse.

The United States is meanwhile investigating an unauthorized release of classified documents that assess Israel's plans to attack Iran, according to three U.S. officials. A fourth U.S. official said the documents appear to be legitimate.

The documents, attributed to the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency and marked top secret,

indicate that Israel was moving military assets in place to conduct a military strike in response to Iran's ballistic missile attack on Oct. 1.

The U.S. is urging Israel to press for a cease-fire in Gaza following the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar last week. But neither Israel nor Hamas has shown any renewed interest in such a deal, after months of negotiations sputtered to a halt in August.

Iran supports Hamas and the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, where a year of escalating tensions boiled over into all-out

war last month. Israel sent ground troops into Lebanon at the start of October.

The Lebanese army said three of its soldiers were killed in an Israeli strike on their vehicle in southern Lebanon. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on Sunday's strike.

On Saturday, a drone targeted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house, causing no casualties. It wasn't clear if the house was hit. The military said Hezbollah fired around 160 projectiles into Israel on Sunday. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Russia airs doomsday weapons to deter Ukraine support

Associated Press

This year has seen President Vladimir Putin repeatedly brandish the nuclear sword, reminding everyone that Russia has the world's largest atomic arsenal to try to deter the West from ramping up support for Ukraine.

He ordered his military to hold drills involving battlefield nuclear weapons with ally Belarus.

He announced Russia will start producing ground-based intermediate range missiles that were outlawed by a now-defunct U.S.-Soviet treaty in 1987.

And last month, he lowered the threshold for unleashing his arsenal by revising the country's nuclear doctrine.

Putin is relying on those thousands of war-

heads and hundreds of missiles as an enormous doomsday machine to offset NATO's massive edge in conventional weapons to discourage what he sees as threats to Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Federation of American Scientists estimated this year that Russia has an inventory totaling 5,580 deployed and non-deployed nuclear warheads, while the United States has 5,044. Together, that's about 88% of the world's nuclear weapons.

Most of these are strategic, or intercontinental-range weapons. Like the U.S., Russia has a nuclear triad of ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, long-range bombers and ICBM-armed submarines.

Moscow and Washington have relied for decades on nuclear deterrence under the

concept of mutually assured destruction — MAD for short — based on the assumption that an overwhelming retaliation would discourage either side from launching an attack.

Russia's nuclear doctrine adopted in 2020 envisaged using such ultimate weapons in response to a nuclear strike or an attack with conventional weapons that threatens "the very existence of the Russian state." Moscow hawks criticized that document as too vague, urging Putin to toughen it. He reinforced the message by announcing a new version of the nuclear doctrine that considers a conventional attack on Russia by a nonnuclear nation that is supported by a nuclear power to be a joint attack on his country — a clear warning to the U.S. and other allies of Kyiv.

N. Korea says remains of S. Korean drone found in capital

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said Saturday that authorities found the remains of a South Korean drone during a search in the capital, Pyongyang, and that the drone proved the South's military was behind the alleged drone infiltrations over the city's skies earlier in the month.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff in a statement described the North Korean claim as "uni-

lateral" and "unworthy of responding."

The North's official Korean Central News Agency released photos showing a seemingly damaged aircraft with wide, V-shaped wings and winglets. It said a joint investigation by North Korea's military and state security agencies concluded that the aircraft, which it said was found Oct. 13, was the same type of drone that appeared in a South Korean military parade

earlier in October.

North Korea accused South Korea of flying drones over the night skies of Pyongyang three different times this month to drop anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets.

The aircraft allegedly found in Pyongyang was likely one of the drones that were used to drop leaflets, North Korea's Defense Ministry said, but further examinations were needed to verify that.

The ministry said that should South Korea deny the aircraft was used to drop leaflets, that would only confess to a separate infiltration of North Korea's airspace by the South's military. If North Korea confirms another violation of its territorial ground, airspace and waters by the South's military, that will be regarded as a "declaration of war and an immediate retaliatory attack will be launched," the ministry added.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Rare copy of Constitution sells for \$9M at auction

NC ASHEVILLE — A rare copy of the U.S. Constitution printed 237 years ago and sent to the states to be ratified was sold for \$9 million at an auction Thursday in North Carolina.

Brunk Auctions sold the document, the only copy of its type thought to be privately owned, at a private auction. The name of the buyer was not immediately released.

Bidding took just over seven minutes, with bids coming in at \$50,000 intervals mostly over the phone. There was a pause at \$8.5 million, then another after someone on the phone bid \$9 million.

The copy is one of about 100 copies printed by the secretary of that Congress, Charles Thomson. Just eight are known to still exist and the other seven are publicly owned.

Walter White featured in campaign against littering

NM SANTA FE — The lead character from the “Breaking Bad” streaming series has a new starring role in a public service ad campaign against littering in New Mexico.

The 15- and 30-second ad spots were unveiled Thursday at an arthouse movie theater in Santa Fe’s urban railyard district. Local officials hope actor Bryan Cranston’s brief reprise of the character Walter White will draw new awareness to the impacts of everyday litter and illegal dumping of trash, tires and appliances.

The ad is titled “Breaking Bad habits,” and it depicts White rolling a steel drum into the remote New Mexico desert before using it to collect and dispose of litter by hand. The maniacal chemist-turned-drug dealer tells viewers in a menacing voice to “keep litter out of my territory.”

Judges shields docs doing emergency abortions

TN NASHVILLE — A three-judge panel on Thursday ruled that Tennessee doctors who provide emergency abortions to protect the life of the mother cannot have their medical licenses revoked or face other disciplinary actions while a lawsuit challenging the state’s sweeping abortion ban continues.

The ruling also outlined specific pregnancy-related conditions that would now qualify as “medical necessity exceptions” under the ban, which currently does not include exceptions for fetal anomalies or for victims of rape or incest.

The judges determined that the following medical conditions now fall under the state’s abortion exemptions: premature rupture of the amniotic sac that surrounds the fetus; inevitable abortions; fatal fetal diagnoses that result in severe preeclampsia or mirror syndrome associated with fetal hydrops; and fatal fetal diagnoses leading to an infection that will result in uterine rupture or potential loss of fertility.

The abortion law initially only explicitly stated that ectopic or molar pregnancies qualify as exemptions, as well as cases

threatening the woman’s life or substantial harm.

Man gets life in killing of transgender woman

SC COLUMBIA — A South Carolina man was sentenced to life in federal prison Thursday in the killing of a Black transgender woman after the exposure of their secret sexual relationship.

U.S. District Judge Sherri A. Lydon sentenced Daqua La-meek Ritter in federal court in Columbia. Ritter was the first person in the nation convicted of killing someone based on their gender identity.

Ritter was convicted in February of a hate crime for the shooting death of Dime Doe in 2019.

Ritter shot Doe three times with a .22 caliber handgun after word started getting out about Ritter’s relationship with Doe in the small town of Allendale, prosecutors said.

Man accused of using drone to deliver drugs

CA LOS ANGELES — A Southern California man was arrested after federal prosecutors say he used a drone to deliver fentanyl and other drugs to customers, including one who died of a fentanyl overdose.

Christopher Patrick Laney, 34, of Lancaster, was arrested on several charges, including distribution of fentanyl resulting in death, four counts of knowingly and willfully operating an unregistered aircraft in furtherance of a felony narcotics crime, and possession with

intent to distribute methamphetamine and fentanyl, U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada for the Central District of California said in a statement.

Between December 2022 and January 2023, Laney allegedly used an unregistered drone to deliver fentanyl and other narcotics from his home to a nearby church parking lot, where another person received the drugs and gave them to customers, including a woman who died of a fatal overdose in January 2023, federal prosecutors said.

Suit targets official’s classroom Bible mandate

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — A group of Oklahoma parents of public school students, teachers and ministers filed a lawsuit Thursday seeking to stop the state’s top education official from forcing schools to incorporate the Bible into lesson plans for students in grades 5 through 12.

The lawsuit filed with the Oklahoma Supreme Court also asks the court to stop Republican State Superintendent Ryan Walters from spending \$3 million to purchase Bibles in support of his mandate.

The suit alleges that the mandate violates the Oklahoma Constitution because it involves spending public money to support religion and favors one religion over another by requiring the use of a Protestant version of the Bible.

It also alleges that Walters and the state Board of Education don’t have the authority to require the use of instructional materials.

— From wire reports

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Yankees earn berth in World Series

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Juan Soto was supposed to be the difference maker, the one who pushed the New York Yankees back to the top.

They're one step away.

Soto hit a three-run homer with two outs in the 10th inning and the Yankees advanced to their 41st World Series — and first in 15 years — by beating the Cleveland Guardians 5-2 in Game 5 of the AL Championship Series on Saturday night.

Baseball's biggest brand is going back to October's main stage.

Soto, who was acquired in a seven-player trade from San Diego in December, pushed the Bronx Bombers into position with one big swing.

This was why he came, for this moment and for so many more.

"Obviously he put up an amazing season statistically speaking, but in the biggest mo-

ments, that's what he does," said Yankees manager Aaron Boone. "And it shouldn't be taken for granted."

The Yankees, who missed the playoffs a year ago, will try to win their 28th title against either the New York Mets or Los Angeles Dodgers. Game 6 of the NL Championship Series was Sunday at Dodger Stadium with the Dodgers up 3-2 in the series.

With the score tied 2-2 in the third consecutive tight game in three nights at Progressive Field, Austin Wells walked with one out in the 10th and Alex Verdugo followed with a grounder to Guardians second baseman Andrés Giménez, whose soft toss to the bag was dropped by rookie shortstop Brayan Rocchio for an error.

Hunter Gaddis struck out Gleyber Torres and had Soto in a 1-2 count before New York's stylish outfielder, who fouled off four pitches, sent a towering shot over the wall in center."

"Just an at-bat for the ages," Boone said.

Soto danced down the first-base line and paused to celebrate with his teammates before circling the bases.

"I was just saying to myself, 'You're all over that guy. You're all over that guy. He ain't got anything,'" said Soto, who moved alongside Boone as the only New York players to homer in an extra-inning, series-clinching win.

Luke Weaver got the final three outs with Lane Thomas flying out to right field for the last one, which was caught by Soto — naturally.

When he got to New York, there were those who wondered how he would fit in. Could he handle the searing spotlight of playing in the Big Apple where every game is dissected like a season? Could he co-exist alongside Aaron Judge?

Not only has Soto fit in. He's led the charge.

"He's just easy to be around," Boone said. "You bring a superstar player in, how is he going to look? What's he going to be like? He's just one of the guys. That's been rewarding to see, man, I don't have to go out of my way to worry about him. He's good. I feel like I've developed a great relationship with him, but he's one of the guys."

The 25-year-old Soto is eligible for free agency this winter, and Yankees fans chanted "Resign Soto!" during the post-game festivities. He's expected to get a contract upwards of \$600 million, and his heroics in Game 5 may have raised his price.

"I think we should re-sign Soto," said third baseman Jazz Chisolm Jr. "\$700 million, final offer!"

Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run homer and was named ALCS MVP as the Yankees took care of the Guardians in five games. It wasn't easy.

Etienne's 3 touchdowns help Georgia topple Texas

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Trevor Etienne ran for three touchdowns, the first two set up by cornerback Daylen Everette's takeaways, and fifth-ranked Georgia went on to beat Quinn Ewers and No. 1 Texas 30-15 on Saturday night.

Etienne's last score was a 1-yard plunge on fourth down with 12:04 left. That came right after an ugly sequence when Texas fans littered the field with water bottles and other trash after referees called a pass-interference penalty that initially wiped out an interception and long return, before the flag was picked up and set up a Longhorns TD.

"These players bring the best out of me," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "They tried to rob us with calls in this place. And these guys are so resilient."

Georgia (6-1, 4-1 Southeastern Conference), which began the season at No. 1, has won three in a row since a 41-34 loss at then-No. 4 Alabama, when the Bulldogs overcame a 28-0 deficit and went ahead late dur-

ing an exchange of long TD passes.

The Bulldogs never trailed in their first trip to Austin since 1958 to take on the SEC newcomer that had gotten through the first half of its schedule pretty much unscathed.

Texas (6-1, 2-1) won at reigning national champion Michigan in Week 2 and had been behind for less than four minutes all season before facing the team that won two straight national titles before the Wolverines won last year.

The 15-point loss was the most lopsided for a No. 1 team at home since Notre Dame's 31-16 win at Pittsburgh in 1982, according to Sportradar, when Dan Marino was the Panthers quarterback.

"Unfortunately, we didn't play our best football tonight, but we were still competitive. Hopefully, we get another crack at them," Texas coach Steve Sarkisian said. "They've been the standard in college football now for about five, six, seven years and we played them really well in the second half."

Georgia quarterback Carson Beck im-

proved to 19-2 as a starter, including a 7-2 mark against ranked teams. He was 23-for-41 for 175 yards and finished with three interceptions, though Texas didn't get anything out of the two he threw in the first quarter. The Longhorns had only 38 yards total when trailing 23-0 at halftime.

Jahdae Barron's pick and 36-yard return to the Georgia 9 late in the third quarter came after contact with Arian Smith that drew a pass interference penalty. Sarkisian was irate at officials, then went to the far corner of the field where students sit signaling for them to quit throwing things.

As the debris was being picked up, officials were discussing the play and picked up the flag. Two plays later, Ewers threw a 17-yard touchdown to Jaydon Blue to get the Longhorns to 23-15.

The Southeastern Conference released a statement early Sunday morning that said officials made the proper decision with their decision to not call a penalty on the play.

Ewers completed 25 of 43 passes for 211 yards.

Daily, No. 23 Army pummel East Carolina

Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Bryson Daily rushed for a career-high five touchdowns and set Army's single-season record for rushing TDs, helping the No. 23 Black Knights beat East Carolina 45-28 on Saturday.

Daily had 171 yards on 31 carries in his sixth straight 100-yard rushing game. The senior, who also threw a touchdown pass, has 19 rushing TDs on the season. Mike Mayweather, Carlton Jones and Trent Steelman shared the previous record of 17.

"It's an absolute testament to this offense that (coordinator) Cody Worley runs, the offen-

sive line, the guys that block on the outside," said Daily, who was 7-for-10 passing for a season-high 147 yards. "Two or three touchdowns today were walk-ins. I'm extremely lucky to be in the position I am."

Daily showed off an impressive spin move on his first rushing TD against East Carolina, a 17-yarder in the second quarter.

"I get made fun of because I don't have the juke moves like the other guys," Daily said. "It was reactionary. I dropped my shoulder and his momentum made me spin."

The Black Knights (7-0, 6-0 American Athletic Conference)

extended the nation's longest win streak to 11 games.

Army opened the scoring on Daily's 13-yard touchdown pass to running back Miles Stewart. The Black Knights extended their lead to 24-0 at halftime on Daily touchdowns runs of 17 and 31 yards and Trey Gronotte's 23-yard field goal.

East Carolina (3-4, 1-2) managed only 95 yards in the first half. But Katin Houser threw for three second-half touchdowns and finished with 282 yards passing.

Chase Sowell scored East Carolina's first touchdown on a 53-yard reception in the third

quarter. Sowell broke multiple tackles while taking a short pass all the way to the end zone.

"We got to start better, that's obvious," East Carolina coach Mike Houston said. "We didn't execute very well offensively in the first half, and that put our defense in a bad spot."

The Black Knights scored a touchdown on their first drive for the seventh straight game. Army's defense set up the score, making a fourth-down stop on the game's opening possession for the second straight week.

Army has a bye week before hosting Air Force on Nov. 2.

Peele's 2 TD returns lift No. 25 Navy over Charlotte

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Cornerback Dashaun Peele became the first Navy player to return two interceptions for touchdowns in a game, Blake Horvath threw three scoring passes and the No. 25 Midshipmen routed Charlotte 51-17 on Saturday.

Navy improved to 6-0 for the first time since 1979 and is 4-0 in the American Athletic Conference. The Midshipmen are bowl-eligible for the first time since 2019.

"It's a team that is focused on the work and the process," Navy coach Brian Newberry said. "I thought we were going to be a

bowl team, but it was not based on the talent of our football team, it was based on the character and the intangibles and the work that we put it in."

Peele had a 61-yard return and an 84-yarder. Navy forced five turnovers, its most since 2019.

"I feel like I was at the right place at the right time," Peele said. "Throughout the week, we were kind of working on those plays."

Horvath was 7-for-13 for 117 yards. He has 10 touchdown passes this season, three shy of the school record set by Ricky Dobbs in 2010.

Navy fullback Alex Tecza scored three touchdowns in the first quarter on two runs inside the red zone and a 46-yard reception.

"We really put an emphasis on a quick start," Horvath said. "It helps the defense out. It allows them to play more free."

Midshipmen tight end Cody Howard caught an 11-yard touchdown pass and wide receiver Brandon Chatman had a 19-yard scoring reception.

Max Brown threw a pair of touchdown passes for Charlotte, a 20-yard touchdown strike to O'Mega Blake, and a 13-yarder to Duane Thomas Jr.

"It was very frustrating," Charlotte coach Biff Poggi said. "It was a very important game for us and a game we thought we could win. To start that way was the last thing everyone thought we would start that way. We worked all week on protecting the football and we came out the gate with multiple turnovers. Disappointing, but we go back to work."

Red-zone success

Navy had been 20 for 20 scoring touchdowns inside the red zone until Nathan Kirkwood converted a 22-yard field goal with 3:02 left in the first quarter.

No. 11 Tennessee secures late win over No. 7 Alabama

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Cigars were lit and goalposts came down as thousands of fans celebrated No. 11 Tennessee's 24-17 victory over No. 7 Alabama Saturday.

Chris Brazzell II made a diving 16-yard touchdown catch from Nico Iamaleava midway through the fourth quarter to give the Volunteer defense a 21-

17 lead to work with.

Dylan Sampson rushed for 139 yards and two touchdowns for the Volunteers (6-1, 3-1 Southeastern Conference). The victory keeps Tennessee in the hunt for a College Football Playoff spot.

"(That's how) they've played all year," Tennessee coach Josh Heupel said of his defense. "How they played tonight kept

us in the ballgame when, offensively, we were a little bit off."

Sampson has rushed for at least 100 yards in all but one game this season, and his 17 TDs rank second in FBS.

"(Sampson) sparked it," Heupel said. "What a night on Rocky Top."

The Crimson Tide (5-2, 2-2) have their work cut out for them the rest of the season. Alabama

quarterback Jalen Milroe struggled, connecting on 25 of 45 passes for 239 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions. Alabama rushed for just 89 yards.

"I gotta take full ownership (of the loss)," Milroe said. "When it comes to communication up front, communication to the guys around, I gotta do better."

Bigsby's 2 TDs help Jags down Pats

Associated Press

LONDON — Tank Bigsby rushed for 118 yards and two touchdowns and Parker Washington returned a punt 96 yards for a score in Jacksonville's 32-16 comeback win over the New England Patriots on Sunday at Wembley Stadium.

Rookie receiver Brian Thomas Jr. caught a touchdown pass as the Jaguars (2-5) erased an early 10-0 deficit.

In his second start, Patriots rookie quarterback Drake Maye led one fourth-quarter scoring drive but couldn't muster a second one as New England (1-6) lost its sixth straight game.

Bigsby scored on a 4-yard run after the Patriots turned the ball over on downs after the two-minute warning.

The win should at least temporarily ease some pressure off Jaguars coach Doug Pederson.

The Jaguars scored on four straight possessions after falling behind early.

Thomas caught a 6-yard touchdown pass on third-and-goal to get the Jags on the board and he set up Jacksonville's go-ahead score when he streaked down the middle of the field and caught a 58-yard pass to the New England 21.

Four plays later, Bigsby's 1-yard plunge gave the Jags a 14-10 lead.

Washington's record-setting 96-yard punt return for a touchdown made it 22-10. Lawrence threw to Thomas for the 2-point conversion after the Patriots were offside on the extra-point attempt.

Lawrence completed 15 of 20 passes for 193 yards and a touchdown. Thomas had five receptions for 89 yards.

The Jags had trouble expanding their lead in the second half.

Batherson, Senators hand Lightning their first loss

Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario — Drake Batherson had two goals and an assist, and the Ottawa Senators handed Tampa Bay its first loss of the season with a 5-4 victory over the Lightning on Saturday.

Josh Norris, Brady Tkachuk and Noah Gregor also scored for Ottawa (3-2-0), and Anton Forsberg made 25 saves. Jake Sanderson collected three assists.

Gregor's short-handed goal lifted the Senators to a 5-3 lead 6:17 into the third period. It was his first goal of the season.

Nikita Kucherov scored his NHL-best seventh goal for Tampa Bay. Nick Paul, Jake Guentzel and Mitchell Chaffee also scored for the Lightning (3-1-0).

Red Wings 5, Predators 2: Andrew Copp scored twice, Alex Lyon made 37 saves and visiting Detroit beat winless Nashville.

Vladimir Tarasenko, Dylan Larkin and Simon Edvinsson also scored for Detroit, which dropped three of its first four games this season.

Stars 4, Oilers 1: Matt Duchene scored the first two goals, Jake Oettinger won his first start since signing a big contract extension and host Dallas beat Edmonton in their first meeting since last season's Western Conference finals.

Roope Hintz also scored and Jason Robertson added an empty-netter as the Stars improved to 4-0 at home this season by beating the team that eliminated them in six games in the West finals.

Panthers 4, Golden Knights 3 (OT): Gustav Forsling got the winning goal with 16.2 seconds remaining in overtime, and host Florida defeated Vegas.

Sam Reinhart scored a goal and added two assists for the Panthers, who won a matchup of the last two Stanley Cup champions. Sam Bennett and Eetu Luostarinen also scored for Florida, which got 23 saves from Sergei Bobrovsky.

Rangers 4, Maple Leafs 1: Chris Kreider scored twice and Igor Shesterkin stopped 34 shots as visiting New York beat Toronto.

Alexis Lafreniere and Artemi Panarin also scored for the Rangers, and Mika Zibanejad and Reilly Smith each had two assists. New York improved to 4-0-1 on the season.

Capitals 6, Devils 5 (OT): Tom Wilson's second goal of the game came four minutes into overtime to give visiting Washington a win over New Jersey.

Alex Ovechkin scored his first goal of the season for Washington on a deflection and is now 41 goals shy of Wayne Gretzky for the all-time lead (895). Ovechkin has 15 career goals at the Prudential Center, tying the league mark for a visiting player at the venue.

Islanders 4, Canadiens 3 (SO): Noah Dobson scored in the ninth round of the shootout to lead host New York to a win over Montreal.

Bo Horvat, Kyle Palmieri and Anders Lee scored in regulation for the Islanders, and Dobson had two assists. Semyon Varlamov finished with 21 saves.

Canucks 3, Flyers 0: Kevin Lankinen made 26 saves for his fourth career shutout and visiting Vancouver beat Philadelphia.

Nils Hoglander, Brock Boeser and Kyle Sherwood scored for the Canucks, who spoiled Philadelphia's home opener and the first NHL home game for top Flyers prospect

spect Matvei Michkov and Jett Luchanko.

Wild 3, Blue Jackets 1: Kirill Kaprizov had a goal and an assist, Filip Gustavsson made 23 stops and visiting Minnesota beat Columbus.

Marco Rossi scored his third goal of the season 12:40 into the game when he picked up a Jackets turnover in the slot and beat goalie Daniil Tarasov.

Blues 4, Hurricanes 3: Kasper Kapanen snapped a tie 4:26 into the third period, and host St. Louis beat Carolina.

Mathieu Joseph and Jake Neighbours each had a goal and an assist for St. Louis in its second straight win. Dylan Holloway also scored.

Sabres 4, Blackhawks 2: JJ Peterka scored his fourth goal in three games and assisted on a goal by Tage Thompson to lead visiting Buffalo past Chicago.

Peterka put Buffalo ahead 3-2 with 1:23 left in the second period, beating Arvid Soderblom with a one-timer from the low right circle off Thompson's cross-ice feed. Ryan McLeod added an empty-netter with 26 seconds left.

Utah 2, Bruins 1 (OT): Michael Kesselring scored at 2:46 of overtime to give host Utah a victory over Boston.

Vladislav Kolyachonok also scored for Utah, tying the game with 5:09 left in the third period to force overtime for the fourth time this season. Connor Ingram finished with 22 saves.

Kraken 2, Flames 1 (OT): Jordan Eberle scored 48 seconds into overtime and host Seattle beat Calgary in overtime.

Eberle, in his first year as the captain of the Kraken, netted his fifth goal in six games to start the season.