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Navy leads the way as obesity rates rise

By CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

The Navy was the most obese and the Marine Corps was by far the least, but the overall rate across the military continued a steady increase, a Defense Department study found.

Marines, meanwhile, were hampered most by back and knee injuries, said the Health of the DOD Force report, which also looked at the services' rates of injury, sleep disorders and behavioral disorders.

More than 17% of military personnel were considered obese across the DOD, up from less than 16% four years earlier, said the report, published in the August edition of the military's Medical Surveillance Monthly Report.

For the Navy, the rate was 22%, compared with 8.3% of Marines. The Army's rate matched the overall average and the Air Force was slightly higher at about 18%.

"This report highlights obe-

sity as a growing health concern among sailors," the study authors said. "Obesity contributes to hypertension, diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, all-cause mortality and increased health care costs."

The findings follow earlier studies that have found dramatic increases in obesity among the services since 2001.

But while obesity has grown, overall rates of injury have decreased since 2016, the report found. As with obesity, the results were not the same across all the services.

The Navy fared the best, with the lowest rates of acute and cumulative trauma injuries and lower than average rates of sleep disorders and behavioral health diagnoses, such as adjustment disorder, depression and anxiety.

The Army, the largest branch, saw soldiers suffering the highest rates of injury and behavioral health and sleep disorders, the study found.

Mission-specific training

and operational requirements were likely to blame for the rate of injury, which was about 26% higher than the DOD average, it said.

The study recommended the military look at the causes and prevention of behavioral health and sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea and insomnia, given their potential to reduce performance or lead to disability and separation.

The Air Force saw among the highest rates of injuries from repeated "micro-trauma," which caused pain and inflammation in backs, knees and other joints.

The Marine Corps, which is the smallest branch, also has the youngest force, which likely explains its relatively low rate of obesity.

The military data show more than one-quarter of troops over age 35 were obese, compared with less than 10% of those under age 25. Nearly 90% of Marines were under age 35, compared with about three-

quarters of the other services.

But the Corps suffered higher rates of acute injuries, such as sprains and strains, compared with the DOD as a whole. Back and knee joint disorders were the leading causes of limited duty. Such injuries resulted in reduced deployability and increased medical separations, the study said.

To calculate obesity rates, the study used data for all servicemembers where height and weight were measured on the same day and cross-referenced with birthdate, sex and branch-of-service information. It relied on body mass index, a measure of body fat based on height and weight, and excluded pregnant troops. A BMI of 30 or more was considered obese.

While less accurate than methods of direct measurement, high BMI is linked to many of the same negative health effects of increased body fat, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said.

Future troops may prefer injections to night-vision goggles

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Nanoparticle injections could give warriors the power to see in the dark without the bulky goggles worn by today's troops during nighttime operations, according to an Arizona State University technology expert.

The process is explained in a paper published in February by researchers from the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester and the University of Science and Technology of China in Hefei.

Nanoparticles that convert near-infrared light into visible light were injected into the eyes

of mice, allowing them to see in the dark, the researchers wrote in a summary of their work.

They tested their process by training mice to swim through a maze following triangular signs. Mice injected with the nanoparticles were able to find their way out of the maze in the dark, the researchers said.

The research was a collaboration between Xue Tian, a Hefei-based vision physiology expert, and Gang Han, a Worcester-based nanoparticle expert.

"I definitely think it will work in humans," Xue said, according to Science magazine.

The scientists found that the

nanoparticles bound tightly to photoreceptors in the eyes of the mice and stayed in place for up to 10 weeks with no obvious lasting side effects, the magazine reported.

Nanoparticles would have an advantage over other night-vision technology if they could be safely injected into soldiers, Arizona State University engineering professor Braden Allenby said in an email Friday.

"This might be a way to equip warriors with night vision directly, and because it is temporary, it might be less risky than permanent treatments such as genetically engineering warriors' optical

systems," he said.

Nanoparticles might be designed to enable perception of radiation in other wavelengths, giving inspectors and customs officials the power to see smuggled radioactive materials, Allenby said.

Members of a military unit might be equipped with different visual capabilities, he said, adding: "It will be a while before warriors are getting this treatment because there needs to be a lot of work to make sure it is safe for deployment and works as advertised with humans in the field."

Latest Taliban attack angers Afghans

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban on Tuesday defended their suicide bombing against an international compound in the Afghan capital that killed at least 16 civilians and wounded 119 people just hours after a U.S. envoy said he and the militant group had reached a deal “in principle” to end America’s longest war.

Angry Kabul residents whose homes were shredded in the explosion climbed over the buckled blast wall and set part of the compound, a frequent target of the militants, on fire. Thick smoke rose from the Green Vil-

lage, home to several foreign organizations and guesthouses, whose location has become a peril to nearby local residents as well.

“People were screaming and saying, ‘My children are trapped in the rubble,’” one witness, Faiz Ahmad, said.

The Taliban continue such attacks even as a U.S. envoy says the deal with the insurgents needs only the approval of President Donald Trump to become a reality.

The accord would include a troop withdrawal that the Taliban already portray as their victory.

Taliban spokesman Zabihul-

lah Mujahid told The Associated Press that “we understand that peace talks are going on ... but they must also understand that we are not weak and if we enter into talks ... we enter from a strong position.”

He said the attack was a response to raids by U.S. and Afghan forces on civilians across the country. While he acknowledged there should be less harm to civilians, he said they shouldn’t live near such an important foreign compound.

Questions are growing among some in Washington about the dangers of trusting the Taliban to make peace.

On Tuesday, several former

U.S. ambassadors to Afghanistan warned in a joint statement published by the Atlantic Council that “it is not clear whether peace is possible,” saying the Taliban have “made it clear that the war will go on against the Afghan government.”

A full U.S. troop withdrawal that moves too quickly and without requiring the Taliban to meet conditions such as reducing violence could lead the militant group to avoid making compromises with other Afghans, the former envoys warned. Civil war could follow and give al-Qaida and the local Islamic State affiliate space to grow, they said.

Former SEAL, 52, starts his freshman year at Yale

Associated Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Former Navy SEAL James Hatch says heading to class as a freshman at Yale University is just about as nerve-racking as preparing for the uncertainty of combat.

At 52 years old, Hatch does not fit the profile of the traditional Yale freshman.

“My experience in academia is somewhat limited, at best,” he said. “But I want to learn, and I feel this can make me a better person. I also feel my life experience, maybe with my maturity — which my wife would say is laughable — I think I can help some of the young people out.”

Hatch’s journey to the Ivy League has been serpentine.

He joined the military out of high school, became a SEAL and spent just short of 26 years in the Navy, fighting in Afghanistan and other hot spots.

His military career ended after he was seriously wounded in 2009 during a mission to find Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who had walked off his post.

Eighteen surgeries and some notoriety followed after his

story became public during Bergdahl’s trial. He suffered from post-traumatic stress, fell into drinking and drugs and even attempted suicide. But he got help from professionals and his family, he said, and is now better able to cope.

Hatch has authored a memoir, become a speaker and runs Spikes K-9 Fund, a nonprofit organization that helps cover the health care costs and provides ballistic vests for police and military dogs. It’s a cause he has been passionate about since being a dog handler in the military. He credits dogs with saving his life several times, including on his final mission, when one alerted him to the position of the enemy.

Hatch was admitted to Yale after applying to be an Eli Whitney scholar, a program for nontraditional students who have had their educational careers interrupted.

Hatch is in Yale’s Directed Studies program, which teaches students how to analyze great texts and write persuasive essays through courses in philosophy, literature and historical and political thought.

Venomous habu snakes spotted at Okinawa base

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Officials on Okinawa are warning people to be wary of habu snakes on Marine Corps bases after the lack of a mowing contract has led to large swaths of tall grass and sightings of the venomous reptiles.

If left untreated, a habu’s bite can be deadly.

“There have been multiple sightings of habu snakes around tall grassy areas on Camp Kinser,” said an Aug. 20 Facebook post from Combat Logistics Regiment 37, 3rd Marine Logistics Group. “The grass has not been cut due to working out the new contract and unfortunately there has been a lot of rain. Please pass to anyone you know on Camp Kinser to stay out of the deep grass until it is cut.”

The Marine Corps uses Japanese contractors for mowing on its bases, said a spokesman from the Okinawa Defense Bureau, which represents Japan’s Ministry of Defense on the

island. While some on-base contracts are negotiated and awarded by the Japanese government, the Marines serve as the contracting authority for on-base mowers.

Marine officials have had the grass cut in problem areas at various times over the past few months, but servicemembers and their families have taken to social media to complain that it has gotten so high it obscures oncoming traffic on some base roads and encroaches on school bus stops.

The Marine Corps has prioritized grass-cutting in areas that “impact the operational readiness and training of our tenant units,” as well as the “quality of life for our base residents,” Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman Maj. Andrew Aranda said in an email to Stars and Stripes on Aug. 30.

There have been no snake bites treated at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa this year, down from two last year, Aranda wrote. Marine officials credit education for the decline.

The scope of the problem remains unclear.

'Catastrophic' Dorian parks over Bahamas

Associated Press

FREEPORT, Bahamas — Practically parking over the Bahamas for a day and a half, Hurricane Dorian pounded away at the islands Tuesday in a watery onslaught that devastated thousands of homes, trapped people in attics and crippled hospitals. At least five deaths were reported, with the full extent of the damage far from clear.

The United Nations and the International Red Cross began mobilizing to deal with the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Prime Minister Hubert Minnis called it "a historic tragedy."

The storm's punishing winds and torrential rain battered the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama, which have a combined population of about 70,000 and are known for their marinas,

golf courses and all-inclusive resorts. The Grand Bahama airport was under 6 feet of water.

Desperate callers trying to find loved ones left messages with local radio stations as Health Minister Duane Sands said Dorian devastated the health infrastructure on Grand Bahama island and severe flooding rendered the main hospital there unusable. He said he hoped to send an advanced medical team soon to the Abaco Islands.

"We will confirm what the real situation is on the ground," he said. "We are hoping and praying that the loss of life is limited."

Red Cross spokesman Matthew Cochrane said more than 13,000 houses, or about 45% of the homes on Grand Bahama and Abaco, were believed to

have been severely damaged or destroyed. U.N. officials said more than 60,000 people on the hard-hit islands will need food, and the Red Cross said some 62,000 will need clean drinking water.

As of 11 a.m., Dorian's winds had dipped to 110 mph, making it a Category 2 hurricane, down from a fearsome Category 5 when it struck.

The storm was centered about 45 miles north of Freeport and 105 miles east of Fort Pierce, Fla.

After standing still for nearly a day, it was on the move again, but just barely, pushing northwest at 2 mph, or about as fast as a person walks. Hurricane-force winds extended up to 60 miles from its center.

NASA satellite imagery through Monday night showed spots in the Bahamas where

Dorian had dumped as much as 35 inches of rain, said private meteorologist Ryan Maue.

Dorian was on track to approach the Florida coast later Tuesday, but the threat to the state eased significantly, with forecasters not expecting a direct hit. The forecast instead showed North Carolina in the crosshairs toward the end of the week.

The U.S. Coast Guard airlifted at least 21 people injured on Abaco Island, which Dorian hit on Sunday with sustained winds of 185 mph and gusts up to 220 mph, a strength matched only by the Labor Day hurricane of 1935, before storms were given names.

At least two designated storm shelters in the Bahamas flooded.

Neighbor: Texas gunman was 'violent, aggressive'

Associated Press

ODESSA, Texas — The gunman in a west Texas rampage "was on a long spiral of going down" and had been fired from his oil services job the morning he killed seven people, calling 911 both before and after the shooting began, authorities said.

Officers killed Seth Aaron Ator, 36, on Saturday outside a busy Odessa movie theater after a spate of violence that spanned 10 miles, injuring around two dozen people in addition to the dead.

FBI special agent Christopher Combs said Monday that Ator called the agency's tip line as well as local police dispatch on Saturday after being fired from Journey Oilfield Services, making "rambling statements about some of the atrocities that he felt that he had gone through."

"He was on a long spiral of going down," Combs said. "He didn't wake up Saturday morning and walk into his company and then it happened. He went

to that company in trouble."

Fifteen minutes after the call to the FBI, Combs said, a Texas state trooper unaware of the calls to authorities tried pulling over Ator for failing to signal a lane change. That was when Ator pointed an AR-style rifle toward the rear window of his car and fired on the trooper, starting a terrifying police chase as Ator sprayed bullets into passing cars, shopping plazas and killed a U.S. Postal Service employee while hijacking her mail truck.

Ator's home on the outskirts of Odessa was a corrugated metal shack. Combs described it as a "strange residence" that reflected "what his mental state was going into this."

A neighbor, Rocio Gutierrez, told The Associated Press that Ator was "a violent, aggressive person" that would shoot at animals, mostly rabbits, at all hours of the night.

"We were afraid of him because you could tell what kind of person he was just by looking at him," Gutierrez said.

Reservists' housing allowance lawsuit is allowed to proceed

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A U.S. federal court has denied an Army motion to dismiss a lawsuit by reservists who say they were wrongly denied housing allowances and then improperly subjected to criminal investigation, marking the latest chapter in a long-running battle between soldiers and the service.

The U.S. Court of Federal Claims in a ruling last week said the case must move forward but that, for now, the proper venue to settle the dispute is the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records.

The board provides "an opportunity to grant plaintiffs the relief they are seeking — to correct their military personnel records and award payments resulting from such corrections if warranted," Senior Judge Mary Ellen Coster Williams wrote in an Aug. 29 decision.

The court's decision was wel-

comed by the reservists, whose battle with the Army began three years ago.

The reservists said they lawfully received dual housing allowances — one for their homes of record and one for off-base housing they were ordered to live in while on assignment in Europe. They received both allowances to make up for not being able to work in civilian jobs that pay their rents and mortgages.

The dual allowance payments ended abruptly as scores of soldiers were accused of fraudulently receiving payments.

The federal ruling is "a big victory because it means that my clients will either be getting relief from the Army Board for Corrections of Military Records or, at the very least, they will get their day in court to have a federal judge rule on the merits of the issue," said Patrick Hughes, an attorney with Patriots Law Group.

The Army has repeatedly declined to comment on the case, citing ongoing litigation.

No one found alive in Calif. dive boat fire

Associated Press

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — Officials said Tuesday that 34 people died after a boat packed with scuba divers caught fire near an island off the Southern California coast and they have called off search efforts for survivors.

The Coast Guard and law enforcement said no one has been found alive after flames tore through the dive boat early Monday as passengers on a recreational scuba diving trip slept below deck.

The Conception carried 33 passengers and 6 crew members, and only five of the crew sleeping on the top deck were able to escape by jumping off and taking a small boat to safety.

Investigators have not yet determined how the fire broke out.

Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown

said the bodies of 20 victims have been recovered and divers have seen between four and six others in the sunken wreckage. He said authorities are trying to stabilize the boat that sank in about 60 feet of water so divers can recover those remains.

Most need to be identified by DNA analysis, and officials are collecting DNA samples from family members, Brown said.

One passenger, marine biologist and veteran diver Kristy Finstad, 41, was identified in a Facebook post by her brother, Brett Harmeling, of Houston.

The missing and dead were among 39 passengers and crew who had departed Santa Barbara Harbor on Saturday aboard the boat for a Labor Day weekend trip.

The fire broke out about 3 a.m. Monday as the Conception was anchored off Santa Cruz Island, about 90 miles west of Los

Angeles. The crew appeared to quickly call for help.

“The call was garbled, it was not that clear, but we were able to get some information out of it to send vessels,” Coast Guard Petty Officer Mark Barney said.

Capt. Paul Amaral, of the vessel assistance company TowBoatUS, also launched a fast boat from Ventura Harbor, but it was 30 miles away. By the time it got there around 5 a.m., a Coast Guard helicopter and a fireboat were on scene.

Amaral said he first searched the water and shoreline, then turned back to the Conception, which was adrift. He attached a line and pulled it into deeper water so the fireboats could reach it.

The five crew members went on a dinghy to a private fishing boat that was anchored near the north shore of Santa Cruz Island.

Hong Kong’s Lam denies wanting to resign

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Tuesday she has never tendered her resignation to China over the anti-government protests that have roiled the city for three months.

Lam was asked repeatedly at a news briefing about a Reuters report on Monday citing leaked audio of her telling business leaders recently that she would quit if she had a choice.

“I have never tendered a resignation to the central people’s government. I have not even contemplated to discuss a resignation ... the choice of not resigning was my own choice,” Lam said when asked why Beijing refused to let her quit.

“I know it is not going to be an easy path,

and that’s why I have said that I have not given myself the choice to take an easier path and that is to leave.”

Lam also slammed the recording and leaking of her comments from the private meeting as “unacceptable.”

Lam was elected as Hong Kong’s chief executive by a pro-Beijing committee of Hong Kong elites, and the mainland government has spoken in support of her government and the city’s police force throughout the sometimes violent protests.

The demonstrators who have filled parks and streets regularly since early June want democratic reforms to Hong Kong’s government and an independent inquiry into police actions against protesters.

Lam has come under withering criticism for pushing an extradition bill that would

allow Hong Kong residents to be sent to mainland China for trials. She has suspended the bill, but the protesters want it entirely withdrawn.

Clashes between police and protesters have become increasingly violent, with demonstrators throwing gasoline bombs and rods at officers in protests last weekend. Authorities in turn have employed water cannons, tear gas, rubber bullets and batons. Over 1,100 people have been detained.

Lam said Tuesday that the “one country, two systems” formula under which the former British colony was returned to China in 1997 would be upheld. The formula promised greater civil rights in Hong Kong than those afforded to mainland Chinese, but Hong Kong residents have expressed worries that promise is eroding.

Iranian oil tanker pursued by US turns off tracker

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — An Iranian oil tanker pursued by the U.S. turned off its tracking beacon, leading to renewed speculation on Tuesday that it will head to Syria.

The disappearance of the Adrian Darya 1, formerly known as the Grace 1, follows a pattern of Iranian oil tankers turning off their Automatic Identification System to try and

mask where they deliver their cargo amid U.S. sanctions targeting Iran’s energy industry.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani reiterated on Tuesday that Tehran will not enter into direct talks with the U.S. unless Washington rejoins the 2015 nuclear deal that President Donald Trump withdrew America from more than a year ago.

Trump’s withdrawal and

the imposition of heavy economic sanctions on Iran have blocked it from selling its crude oil abroad, a crucial source of government funding for the Islamic Republic.

Meanwhile, tensions have spiked across the Persian Gulf over mysterious tanker explosions, the shooting down of a U.S. military surveillance drone by Iran and America deploying more troops and war-

planes to the region.

The Adrian Darya, which carries 2.1 million barrels of Iranian crude worth some \$130 million, switched off its AIS beacon just before 16:00 GMT Monday, or about 4 p.m., according to the ship-tracking website MarineTraffic.com. The ship was some 45 nautical miles off the coast of Lebanon and Syria, heading north at its last report.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Hunters nab giant as alligator season opens

MS GAUTIER — Soon after alligator season opened at noon Friday with favorable conditions, two Mississippi hunters caught a giant that could break a state record.

Derrick Saucier, of Pascagoula, and Jarrod Davis, of Hurley, were making passes of Mary Walker Bayou in Gautier when they spotted the large gator, according to the Clarion Ledger.

Saucier said they spotted the alligator about 11:57 a.m. A few minutes later the pair had hooked the 13-foot, 6-inch alligator and then spent 90 minutes battling it.

1790s general store getting new owner

VT PUTNEY — A Vermont general store that dates to the 1790s is getting a new owner.

The Putney Historical Society is set to close the sale of the Putney General Store on Wednesday, and incoming owners Mike and Kim Cosco are slated to take over the store the next day, the Brattleboro Reformer reported.

The building has been managed for more than two years by the historical society's Betsy McIsaac and Lyssa Papazian since shortly after the death of the previous owner. The store was built in 1796.

Black Hills National Forest getting bigger

SD CUSTER — The U.S. Forest Service has purchased an additional 350 acres for the Black Hills National Forest for preservation of wildlife habitat and protection of at-risk watersheds and

impaired streams.

The Rapid City Journal reported the Forest Service announced the purchase Aug. 28 from the Trust for Public Land. The land was owned by the Myrle G. Case Trust, care of Wells Fargo Bank. It was bought with money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Apps help farmers time crop treatment

WI BLACK RIVER FALLS — Rains that inundated Wisconsin this past spring after a wet fall and winter forced farmers to plant their crops historically late and that has led to uneven growth stages.

Plant pathologist Damon Smith, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said that has made it difficult for farmers to decide when to apply fungicide to crops because it's based on specific plant growth stages. But an app is helping farmers make better decisions about when to do so, Wisconsin Public Radio reported.

Smith said one of his programs developed smartphone apps to help. One, called Sporecaster, lets farmers input data like location and plant growth to help predict the best time to treat for white mold in soybeans.

Contaminated water causes beach closures

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis park officials said contaminated water have led to a record number of beach closures this summer.

Half of the city's 12 beaches were not safe to swim in at various times during the summer. That's the most since Minneapolis started a water sampling program in 2003, Minnesota

Public Radio reported.

Park officials said heavy rainfall brings in storm water runoff and that runoff brings in debris and bacteria from streets and yards.

Man arrested after car rams into City Hall

MD TANEYTOWN — Police in a Maryland city arrested a "disgruntled resident" accused of intentionally ramming his car into City Hall and damaging the building, the city's mayor said Sunday.

The driver didn't injure the lone Taneytown city employee who was in City Hall on Friday evening when the car plowed into it, Mayor Bradley Wantz said.

The Taneytown Police Department said in a statement posted on its Facebook page that the driver was arrested on charges including second-degree assault, second-degree burglary, reckless driving and malicious destruction of property.

The police statement doesn't name the suspect.

Wantz said the man was angry because his water service had been shut off for failure to pay his bill.

Persian cat missing 3 years back with family

MI IONIA — A Persian cat that was missing for three years has been reunited with her family in Grand Rapids.

The Ionia Sentinel-Standard reported that Violet was found in Ionia on Aug. 6. She was barely able to stand and was covered in maggots, flies and fleas.

Ionia County Animal Control Director Carly Quinn took Violet to a vet who was able to iden-

tify the 10-year-old because she is microchipped.

It took more effort to track down her humans, 30 miles away.

Drew Potter adopted Violet from the Humane Society in 2012, but the contact information on the chip was outdated. Quinn persisted and found him on Facebook after a few hours.

Zoo to change giraffe herd after 4 deaths

OH TOLEDO — The Toledo Zoo plans to change its giraffe herd after a series of deaths.

Four of the zoo's Masai giraffes have died since 2016.

Its curator of mammals, Michael Frushour, told The Blade newspaper the zoo is talking about switching to reticulated giraffes. He said it's believed that subspecies isn't as prone to some of the health issues seen with Masai giraffes.

An 8-year-old male giraffe, Trevor, collapsed Aug. 24 while on exhibit and died within minutes. His female offspring, Binti, had to be euthanized in June. Lab results showed both had severe anemia, adding to the suspicion of a genetic issue.

Program for Navy Reserve officers set

ME ORONO — The University of Maine is launching a new program for Navy Reserve officers.

WABI-TV reported that the five-year program will lead to students becoming commissioned naval officers.

The university has selected 10 students based on their academic qualifications, leadership qualities and interest in pursuing science and engineering fields.

From wire reports

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NFL still has room for older players

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee Titans linebacker Cameron Wake knows he's not the best friend, drinking buddy or wing man.

Forget asking the Tennessee Titans linebacker to grab a cheeseburger altogether. Don't hand him a bag of chips or fries for a quick snack either. He's been eating cleanly for so many years that tuna with sunflower seeds sounds so good. Wake can imagine wanting that meal even in retirement.

"It's a decision you have to make to say, 'I decide to do this and give up that,'" said Wake, now 37 and going into his 11th NFL season. "Could be nights out, could be drinking, it could be food. Whatever you decide is going to benefit you in your journey. I've had mine. And again, I know guys that aren't playing now ... household names back when I was coming out of college and I'm still here doing it."

The NFL isn't exclusively for the young. From fortys-

omethings Tom Brady and Adam Vinatieri to those nearing a fourth decade (Eli Manning, Philip Rivers and Terrell Suggs), there's still a place for the aged in football. Sticking around the NFL long enough to celebrate big birthdays requires plenty of skill along with sacrifice, the right mindset and a commitment that never ends.

Wake, who's also been a personal trainer, does what he told clients wanting to get in shape to do. He eats lean meats and vegetables, avoiding fried food, processed food, candy, chips and cheese. The menu doesn't change once the season ends, an approach the five-time Pro Bowl linebacker has followed for at least the past 13 years.

It's simply a smarter business model for the man who spent a year as a mortgage broker after being cut as a then-rookie free agent by the New York Giants in 2005.

"I'm going to choose long term over the here and now, delayed gratification, all those things," Wake said.

Eating better has helped Los

Angeles Rams left tackle Andrew Whitworth, who turns 38 on Dec. 12, going into his 14th season. He also sleeps better than during his early years with Cincinnati.

"I probably sleep less, but I at least get quality sleep," Whitworth said. "I tailor my schedule way more than I used to when I was young. Offseason, too. I don't really take any break at all. I just kind of continuously work out year-round."

Celebrating a 40th birthday in the NFL isn't easy. An Associated Press survey in January found the average amount of playing experience on an NFL roster had shrunk from 4.6 to 4.3 years between 2005 and 2018. Quarterback, as always, remains the position where experience is most valued, with the average experience rising from nearly 4.8 years to 5.8 years between 2005 and 2018 — in large part due to the current crop at that position.

Brady turned 42 last month and is going into his 20th season, while Drew Brees will become the 21st quarterback 40 or

older ever in the NFL this season. The Patriots quarterback, who abstains from alcohol, detailed his diet and exercise approach in "The TB12 Method" in 2017, a diet that has the six-time Super Bowl champ believing he can play until he's 45. Brees, who turned 40 in January, follows his own regimen for sleeping, eating, training and recovery.

Saints coach Sean Payton says today's players know so much more about health and nutrition.

"When you're seeing players play later in their career at the level that they're playing, we've come up a lot further along than we would have been 20 years ago," Payton said. "All the things that he does relative to preparing for a season that go unnoticed — there's so much that goes into it. He's in great physical shape. He spends year-round on training, so it's not just take the summer off. ... There's a lot that goes into what you're seeing on the field."

Game week arrives as Cowboys prepare minus Elliott

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — Ezekiel Elliott's holdout wasn't a topic when Jason Garrett addressed the Dallas Cowboys for the first time at training camp in California, or at least that's what the coach says.

Now that the Cowboys have held their first practice in preparation for the opener against the New York Giants at home Sunday and Elliott still isn't around, Garrett says the approach hasn't changed.

"Again, we're just focused on our football team now," Garrett said Monday on the fourth straight Elliott-related question to start his daily meeting with reporters. "We're going to practice at 10:45. It will be an hour and 15 minutes and we're going to go out and practice as well as we can. That's really

where our attention is."

Similar questions could have been asked before any of the 15 practices in Oxnard, or the five at the team's facility in Frisco, and Garrett's answer would have been about the same.

But there's no doubting an increasing urgency, or the growing possibility that even if the sides reach a deal in the contract stalemate this week, it might not be in time for Elliott to contribute against the first of two NFC East rivals to open the season (Washington is the second).

The two-time rushing champion missing all of the preseason wasn't a huge deal because Elliott didn't play a single snap in the exhibitions last year either. Plus, the weekend before the opener did bring word that the sides were talking and perhaps getting closer to an agreement.

It's also worth noting that Monday's practice was a bonus session after players had the weekend off following the pre-season finale. The regular season routine kicks in now, with Tuesday off before what will normally be the first full practice Wednesday.

If Elliott and the Cowboys haven't worked out their differences by then, the chances of him playing Week 1 drop considerably. The fourth overall pick from the 2016 draft has two years left on his rookie deal, at \$3.9 million this season and \$9.1 million in 2020.

The former Ohio State star wants to be the NFL's highest-paid back a year after Todd Gurley of the Los Angeles Rams set the standard with a \$57.5 million, four-year contract with \$45 million guaranteed.

Judging by the reaction in

the locker room, Elliott's teammates were still behind him on the 39th day of his holdout.

"He's not just a teammate, he's family," offensive lineman La'el Collins said. "Having that kind of guy around, that personality, it brings everybody up. I don't know another guy with as strong a look in his eyes as Zeke. You feed off that."

Rookie Tony Pollard, a fourth-round pick out of Memphis, had a strong preseason and is set to be the starter if Elliott doesn't show up. Alfred Morris, the primary replacement during Elliott's six-game suspension two years ago, is the backup after rejoining Dallas early in camp.

"We're going to have to play with what we've got," right guard Zack Martin, a Pro Bowler each of his first five seasons, said last week.

No. 9 Irish pull away from Cardinals

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Briefly caught off guard by Louisville's intensity, Notre Dame turned up its energy as well to take control with big plays.

Ian Book ran for one touchdown and threw for another, Jahmir Smith rushed for two scores and the No. 9 Fighting Irish beat Louisville 35-17 on Monday night.

Tony Jones Jr. rushed 15 times for 110 yards, including an 11-yard TD, as the Fighting Irish worked harder than expected to put away the rebuilding Cardinals in Scott Satterfield's debut as coach.

Figuring it out in time pleased Notre Dame coach Brian Kelly.

"There's a litany of things we can get better at," he said. "We still won the game, and we have some good things to take away."

Starting well was important to the Irish in their first game since a 30-3 loss to Clemson last

December in the College Football Playoff semifinal. Besides wanting to put that defeat behind them and mounting another national championship run, Kelly was interested to see how his team replaced key players, especially on defense.

Their answer to Louisville's challenge might have been the most impressive part.

Notre Dame trailed 14-7 in the first before Jones' score tied it, and Book followed with an 11-yard score just before halftime.

Book's TD came after a bizarre sequence featuring three consecutive fumbles between the teams, the last of which Notre Dame recovered at Louisville's 20. The Irish forced five fumbles overall and recovered three.

"We just had to focus on some smaller details," said Book, who rushed for 81 yards on 14 carries. "They were there. Just had to execute what was called. We trust the coaches to put in the right decision and we just

had to execute it. All 11 guys."

Book hit Tommy Tremble with a 26-yard TD pass midway through the third for a 28-14 lead. He finished 14-for-23 passing for 193 yards. Smith rushed for touchdowns of 3 and 1 yards and totaled 24 on eight carries.

Louisville junior quarterback Jawon Pass rushed for touchdowns of 8 and 17 yards in the first quarter, but the Cardinals struggled after that and managed only Blanton Creque's 46-yard field goal midway through the fourth quarter.

The Cardinals were out-gained 425-383.

Satterfield nonetheless found bright spots in the Cardinals' performance against Notre Dame, a storied program coming off a quest for a national championship.

"I was extremely proud of the way our guys played," he said. "The fight, the energy they had was awesome to see. The one thing coming into this game that we didn't know about

was when they faced adversity, how were they going to react to it. And they did a great job."

The takeaway

Notre Dame: The defense initially looked shaky before adjusting to keep Louisville out of the end zone after the first quarter. Four sacks highlighted that performance, along with the fumble recoveries that stopped drives and momentum. Book's feet helped set the offensive tone as the Irish rushed for 232 yards. He then threw the key touchdown for a cushion they never lost.

Louisville: The Scott Satterfield Era got off to an exciting start as the Cardinals showed more energy and execution on both sides of the ball than during a 2-10 season in grabbing an early lead. They have more work ahead after failing to sustain the effort, struggling to move the ball and coughing it up five times. They did outrush the Irish by 19 yards, though.

Defending champion Osaka eliminated from US Open

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Naomi Osaka's achy left knee didn't let her serve without pain, so she didn't practice that key part of her game leading into the U.S. Open. The knee also prevented her from covering the court and preparing for shots the way she'd like.

Those weren't the only reasons that the No. 1-seeded Osaka's 10-match winning streak at the U.S. Open and title defense ended Monday in the fourth round. Belinda Bencic's clean, crisp strokes, struck with the ball still on the rise, contributed plenty to the outcome, too.

Osaka joined 2018 men's champion Novak Djokovic on the sideline before the quarterfinals, exiting with a 7-5, 6-4 loss to the 13th-seeded Bencic under a closed roof at Arthur Ashe Stadium on a rainy afternoon. Djokovic stopped playing in his fourth-rounder Sunday

night because of a problematic left shoulder.

"I honestly didn't move well today. You know what I mean? I felt like I was always flat-footed. ... The knee was a little bit annoying in the movement aspect," Osaka said. "But I think that that's something I should have overcome."

As for her powerful serve, Osaka called it "inconsistent," saying she hadn't been working on it coming into the year's last Grand Slam tournament "because I can't really land on my leg that great."

Osaka has been wearing a black sleeve on the knee and was given a pain-killing pill by a trainer midway through the second set Monday.

By then, Bencic was up a set and a break, employing a quick-strike style of taking balls early and snapping them back, rushing Osaka and not leaving her enough time to respond. It

worked before: Bencic is now 3-0 against Osaka in 2019.

"I don't have the biggest power. Don't have the most winners or most aces. But I think I can really read the opponent's game well," said Bencic, who will face No. 23 Donna Vekic of Croatia in the quarterfinals. "I definitely try to do that against anyone, not only against her."

Bencic finished with far more winners, 29, than unforced errors, 12, and showed once again that she is a big-match player. She owns a tour-leading nine victories over top-10 opponents in 2019 and is 4-1 for her career against top-ranked players.

Bencic is 22, just a year older than Osaka, but her progress was slowed in recent years by injuries, including wrist surgery.

Back in 2014, when she was 17, Bencic became the youngest woman into the U.S. Open quarterfinals since 1997, when

another Swiss woman, Martina Hingis, took the title.

In men's action, No. 2 Rafael Nadal's bid for a fourth U.S. Open trophy and 19th Slam title in all progressed via a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 victory over 2014 champion Marin Cilic at night in front of an appreciative Ashe crowd that included Tiger Woods throwing uppercuts to celebrate spectacular shots. Nadal's quarterfinal foe will be No. 20 Diego Schwartzman, a 3-6, 6-2, 6-4, 6-3 winner against No. 6 Alexander Zverev, who was undone by 17 double-faults.

No. 24 Matteo Berrettini gave Italy its first U.S. Open men's quarterfinalist since 1977 and made it this far himself for the first time at any major with a 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (6) victory over Andrey Rublev. Berrettini now plays No. 13 Gael Monfils, who overwhelmed Pablo Andujar 6-1, 6-1, 6-2.

Mets end Nationals' 4-game win streak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Noah Syndergaard had far too much time to dwell on allowing 10 runs in his last start. One thought, in particular, continued to surface.

"I wanted to make sure that never happened again," the New York Mets right-hander said.

There was never a hint it would Monday as Syndergaard pitched seven shutout innings and struck out 10 while the Mets handled the Washington Nationals 7-3.

Jeff McNeil hit a two-run homer for New York, which played a holiday afternoon game about 15 hours after falling at Philadelphia on Sun-

day night. The Mets remained four games behind the Chicago Cubs for the NL's second wild-card spot.

The loss ended Washington's four-game winning streak and denied the Nationals from moving 20 games over .500 for the first time this season. Syndergaard was easily the biggest reason, allowing three hits without a walk in his first start since yielding that career-high 10 runs against the Cubs on Wednesday.

"He was real good. I mean real good," Washington manager Dave Martinez said. "He got us to chase the ball up. Threw a lot more breaking balls than I've seen (him) throw before."

Syndergaard (10-7) allowed a leadoff single to Trea Turner,

then retired the next 16 batters. It was Syndergaard's third 10-strikeout performance of the season and the 17th of his career.

Syndergaard needed only 90 pitches to make it through the seventh. It was the sixth time in seven starts he pitched at least six innings and allowed two runs or less.

"Today was vintage Noah," Mets outfielder Brandon Nimmo said. "This is what he's extremely capable of on an everytime-he-goes-out-there basis. He was hitting his spots, and with the stuff he has when he's hitting his spots, good luck up there."

McNeil was mired in a career-worst 0-for-15 slump before sending Joe Ross' two-

out sinker into the seats in right-center field in the fourth inning.

That ignited a five-run rally which included J.D. Davis' two-run double to chase Ross (3-4) and Nimmo's RBI double to greet reliever Austin Voth that made it 7-0.

New York took a 2-0 lead in the second on Joe Panik's RBI double and Rene Rivera's run-scoring single.

Ross allowed seven runs in 3²/₃ innings. He surrendered three runs in 25²/₃ innings in five starts in August.

Washington avoided the shutout when former Met Asdrubal Cabrera hit a two-out, three-run homer in the ninth off reliever Tyler Bashlor.

MLB roundup

Rangers deal Yankees first shutout in 221 games

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mike Minor and two relievers became the first pitchers in 221 tries to shut out the Yankees, helping the Texas Rangers beat New York 7-0 Monday.

The Yankees had the second-longest streak without being blanked since at least 1900 behind a 308-game stretch by the Babe Ruth-led Yankees from 1931 to 1933. New York was last shut out June 30, 2018, by Chris Sale and the Red Sox.

Jose Trevino, Delino DeShields and Shin-Soo Choo homered to back Minor (12-8), who allowed five hits over 7¹/₃ innings. The left-hander struck out five, walked one and threw 111 pitches before being pulled with two on in the eighth.

Shawn Kelley replaced Minor and retired DJ LeMahieu and Aaron Judge to end the eighth. Emmanuel Clase shut down the heart of the order in the ninth to stop New York's string of 220 straight games with a run.

Yankees right-hander Masahiro Tanaka (10-8) grinded

through six innings of two-run ball. He allowed seven hits, walked two and struck out five.

The Yankees' scoring streak nearly fell Sunday when they trailed Oakland 4-0 after 7¹/₂ innings, but New York rallied and won 5-4 on Mike Ford's game-ending solo homer in the ninth.

Astros 3, Brewers 2 (10): George Springer's home run in the 10th inning, which followed a game-tying homer by Christian Yelich in the ninth, lifted visiting Houston over Milwaukee.

The long balls overshadowed a 14-strikeout performance by Astros starter Gerrit Cole.

With Houston leading 2-1, Yelich led off the ninth with his 43rd home run of the season, a solo shot on an 0-2 pitch from reliever Roberto Osuna (4-3).

Rays 5, Orioles 4: Tommy Pham hit an RBI single with two outs in the 10th inning and host Tampa Bay won its fifth straight game.

The Rays held their narrow lead atop the AL wild-card race.

Pham's third hit of the game came off Dillon Tate (0-1) after Joey Wendle walked with one out and moved up on a grounder. He also had a two-run double.

Twins 4, Tigers 3: Max Kepler's two-out, two-run single in the eighth inning lifted AL Central-leading Minnesota over host Detroit.

Trailing 3-2, the Twins started the eighth with two singles off Buck Farmer (5-6). He retired the next two batters, but Ehire Adrianza's infield single loaded the bases for Kepler. Matt Hall relieved and Kepler lined his single to center field.

Braves 6, Blue Jays 3: Josh Donaldson and Johan Camargo hit two-run homers and Mike Soroka (11-3) snapped a streak of eight starts without a win in host Atlanta's victory over Toronto.

Phillies 7, Reds 1: Rhys Hoskins drove in three runs with two homers and Bryce Harper and Scott Kingery added two-run shots as visiting Philadelphia overpowered Cincinnati.

Cardinals 3, Giants 1: Adam

Wainwright tossed seven scoreless innings and Kolten Wong delivered a run-scoring triple to lead host St. Louis over San Francisco.

Cubs 5, Mariners 1: Kyle Schwarber had a three-run triple to highlight a five-run seventh, and host Chicago snapped a 24-inning scoreless streak, rallying to beat Seattle.

Diamondbacks 14, Padres 7: Josh Rojas, Eduardo Escobar and Christian Walker homered in the sixth inning off converted infielder Javy Guerra and host Arizona beat San Diego.

Indians 11, White Sox 3: Carlos Santana homered, Framil Reyes had a three-run double and host Cleveland defeated Chicago.

Dodgers 16, Rockies 9: Joc Pederson homered twice and drove in five runs before running into the right-field wall on a spectacular catch in the fifth inning, Gavin Lux scored three runs in his major-league debut, and host Los Angeles routed Colorado.