

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Pentagon used money meant for medical gear on military supplies

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A \$1 billion fund Congress gave the Pentagon in March to build up the country's supplies of medical equipment has instead been mostly funneled to defense contractors and used for making things such as jet engine parts, body armor and dress uniforms.

The change illustrates how one taxpayer-backed effort to battle the coronavirus, which has killed more than 200,000 Americans, was instead diverted toward patching up long-standing perceived gaps in military supplies. The Cares Act, which Congress passed earlier this year, gave the Pentagon money to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus." But a few weeks later, the Defense Department began reshaping how it would award the money in a way that represented a major departure from Congress' original intent.

Congress, at President Donald Trump's urging, is now debating whether to pass another massive stimulus package, and the Pentagon and defense contractors have called for another \$11 billion to be directed toward their programs.

The \$1 billion fund was allocated under the Defense Production Act, which allows Trump to compel U.S. companies to manufacture products in the nation's interest. But in the months after the stimulus package was passed, the Pentagon gave defense contractors hundreds of millions of dollars from the fund, mostly for projects that have little to do with the coronavirus response. DOD lawyers quickly determined that the funds could be used for defense production, a conclusion that Congress later disputed.

Navigating an uncertain future

In Calif., Esper scrutinizes a Navy in flux and warship gutted by fire

The Washington Post

SAN DIEGO — The amphibious warship USS Bonhomme Richard sits charred in a shipyard at a pier in this city's picturesque bay. Two months after a fire turned the vessel into a towering inferno, Navy officials still say they have no clue when or whether it will sail again.

The ship, stretching 844 feet long, has not budged since the fire broke out July 12, prompting a four-day battle in which hundreds of sailors and civilian firefighters doused flames that melted metal and belched smoke for miles. Sailors have begun repainting the hull to protect it from corrosion, and hoses now stretch upward from the pier into the hull to provide ventilation. But those who have been inside describe a ship in ruin, with gaping holes in the flight deck that allow sunlight to beam through several layers.

"I'm not going to lie — I was scared," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Hayley Craig, recounting her eight trips into the ship to fight the fire. "I think everybody was. You couldn't really see nothing. It was incredibly hot. I didn't know your body could take that much heat."

The price to fully renovate the ship is not yet clear, but its replacement will probably cost several billion dollars, based on comparisons with similar-size ships.

The Bonhomme Richard's uncertain future is among the troubles the Navy has faced as the service attempts to change the way it fights, deploys and organizes.

Recent challenges include two ship collisions in the Pacific that killed 17 sailors in 2017, a corruption scandal in which several Navy officers were con-

victed of accepting bribes from a Malaysian defense contractor known as "Fat Leonard" Francis, and questions about the service's ability to keep ships ready while meeting demands for deployments.

The service is a key part of the Pentagon's plan to reorient itself after nearly 20 years of counterinsurgency wars, with new high-tech aircraft, unmanned vessels and weapons planned as China becomes the primary focus of the military's agenda.

But the Navy in some ways has lost control of its future.

The Navy has long touted its goal to expand to 355 warships to meet U.S. needs, and President Donald Trump has touted a similar plan for at least 350. But Defense Secretary Mark Esper has scrutinized the Navy's target, rejecting the service's shipbuilding plan and launching a review this year by Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist to assess options.

Esper, in a three-day trip to California last week, declined several interview requests from reporters traveling with him, including about the naval force study.

But Esper's public remarks reveal some clues to what could lie ahead.

The defense secretary, speaking last Wednesday at the Rand Corp. think tank in Santa Monica, Calif., said that Norquist's study was recently completed and that it considered a "wider, more ambitious range of future fleet options."

Officials from the Navy, Marine Corps and Joint Staff and outside advisers examined what ships are available and what vessels are needed to retain dominance given China's modernization plans, Esper said. Then they launched war games

to see the strengths and weaknesses of each potential combination of ships.

"The results are a game-changer that reflect a good deal of serious work and effort based on facts and data," Esper said.

Esper, speaking to sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson off the coast of California on Thursday, said the deployment of unmanned vessels will make reaching the 355-ship goal possible. That amounts to a shift in what the Pentagon and Congress consider a warship.

"Unmanned will enable us to grow the United States Navy well beyond 355 ships," Esper said. "It will add more lethality, survivability, capability, et cetera, to the United States Navy and indeed to the joint force."

Despite the changes, aircraft carriers will remain a centerpiece of the fleet, Esper said.

On Friday, Esper toured the charred Bonhomme Richard in rubber boots, a mask and a hard hat. His spokesman, Jonathan Rath Hoffman, said one concept Esper is considering is the deployment of the Marine Corps' F-35s on amphibious ships such as the Bonhomme Richard, complementing the aircraft deployed aboard carriers in an unconventional configuration.

Whether that future includes the Bonhomme Richard is another story.

After touring the ship, Esper thanked sailors on the pier for their efforts to save the ships. "We're going to have a Bonhomme Richard for sure," he said.

But Hoffman said afterward that Esper was expressing to the crew his hope that the ship will survive. The ship's future, Hoffman said, is still unclear.

Pollution warning in place after fire near Aviano base

BY NORMAN LLAMAS
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An Italian ordinance advising residents to avoid touching the grass and soil remained in place Tuesday pending environmental testing, following a weekend fire at a waste facility about 6 miles from the U.S. air base at Aviano.

The blaze, which began Saturday evening, filled the sky with dark smoke that could be seen for miles. One worker at the Servizio Nettezza Urbana Ed Affini plant was injured, Italian media reports said.

Twelve fire brigade teams from nearby towns had largely extinguished the fire by late Monday.

After the fire began, the

Aviano municipality issued a warning to residents to remain indoors, close their windows, and avoid gardening and other activities that require touching the ground. It also instructed people to avoid eating garden-grown vegetables, or poultry and eggs produced at home.

Air pollution levels four times above normal were reported Sunday by the local environmental agency. Air quality had returned to normal by Monday, the agency said, adding that regular outdoor activities could resume.

Aviano Air Base carried the city warnings on its website.

“It’s important to note that the city ordinance is still in effect and the mayor is waiting for further results on soil qual-

ity,” wing spokesperson Maj. Sarah Babcock said Tuesday. The Aviano mayor expects to retract the warning in the next day or two pending test results, she said.

A tanker and four airmen from the 31st Civil Engineering Squadron fire department supported the Italian response, Babcock said.

“We’re extremely proud of the efforts these airmen played,” she said.

The Carabinieri is leading the investigation into the cause of the blaze at the site, the second since October last year, media reports said. They sealed off the area where the fire was centered, but not the full industrial site, where normal business had resumed, they said.

Navy ousts shipyard commander

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The commander of Norfolk Naval Shipyard was relieved Monday over loss in confidence in his ability to command, the Navy said.

Capt. Kai Torkelson was removed by Vice Adm. Bill Galinis, head of Naval Sea Systems Command, “due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command,” according to a statement released that day.

Torkelson’s duties at the Virginia shipyard will be assumed by Rear Adm. Howard Markle, director of the Sea System Command’s Industrial Operations Directorate.

The decision to oust Torkelson was based on his oversight of the shipyard’s output, not due to a single specific incident, Naval Sea Systems Command spokesman Rory O’Connor told USNI News on Monday.

“The issues are related due to a loss of confidence in leadership to correct underlying performance issues that affect Norfolk Naval Shipyard’s ability to meet ship maintenance schedules,” he told the news outlet.

The Navy spent \$2.8 billion from 2015 to 2019 to improve the performance of its shipyards, which have faced persistent and substantial delays in ship maintenance, according to a report by the Government Accountability Office last month.

The report singled out Norfolk as the only one of the Navy’s four shipyards to have decreased its number of fully trained production personnel over the past five-year period.

Torkelson took command of the Norfolk shipyard in June 2018.

Torkelson was among the first five engineering duty officers to volunteer for assignment to Operation Iraqi Freedom, which began in 2003, the biography said.

Prosecutors say NYPD officer, Army reservist worked as a spy for China

The Washington Post

NEW YORK — A New York police officer assigned to a Queens station house has been spying for the Chinese government, tracking local supporters of the Tibetan independence movement and giving “intelligence” to Chinese officials, federal prosecutors alleged Monday.

Baimadajie Angwang, 33, who is also a U.S. Army reservist as a staff sergeant stationed at Fort Dix in New Jersey, has been charged with illegally acting as a foreign agent, wire fraud and making false statements for lying on official government forms about his contacts with China.

He’s also accused of obstructing his national security background check, which helped conceal his spying efforts that began in 2014.

He faces a maximum of 55 years if convicted.

Angwang, a naturalized U.S. citizen, has been a member of the New York City police department since 2016. As an Army reservist, he had “secret” security clearance.

Federal investigators say several members of Angwang’s family have been members of the Chinese Communist Party and have served in the People’s Liberation Army, and that Angwang

has maintained relationships with two officials at the Chinese Consulate in New York.

He reported to his contacts at the consulate about “the activities of ethnic Tibetans” and worked to identify potential sources of information from within the community to assist in the PRC’s monitoring efforts, according to court papers filed in the Eastern District of New York.

Angwang also tried to connect one of his consulate contacts with influential members of the NYPD by inviting the official to events, prosecutors said.

At his arraignment in federal court in Brooklyn on Monday, Angwang was ordered detained. His attorney can argue for bail at a future proceeding.

Angwang, who is ethnically Tibetan, had been given asylum in the United States after overstaying a visa and claiming that he’d been arrested and tortured by China “due partly to his Tibetan ethnicity,” according to the criminal complaint.

He “violated every oath he took in this country” including to his country, the U.S. Army and the NYPD, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea said in a statement.

'Unfathomable': US virus death toll hits 200K

Associated Press

The U.S. death toll from the coronavirus topped 200,000 Tuesday, a figure nearly unimaginable eight months ago when the scourge first reached the world's richest nation with its state-of-the-art laboratories, top-flight scientists and stockpiles of medicines and emergency supplies.

"It is completely unfathomable that we've reached this point," said Jennifer Nuzzo, a Johns Hopkins University public health researcher.

The bleak milestone, by far the highest confirmed death toll from the virus in the world, was reported by Johns Hopkins, based on figures supplied by state health authorities. But the real toll is thought to be much higher, in part because many COVID-19 deaths were probably ascribed to other causes, especially early on, before widespread testing.

The number of those dead from the virus is still climbing. Deaths are running at close to 770 a day on average, and a widely cited model from the University of Washington predicts the U.S. toll will double to 400,000 by the end of the year as schools and colleges reopen and cold weather sets in. A vaccine is unlikely to become widely available until 2021.

"The idea of 200,000 deaths is really very sobering, in some respects stunning," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, said on CNN.

The United States hit the threshold six weeks before a presidential election that is certain to be in part a referendum on President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis.

In an interview Tuesday with a Detroit TV station, Trump boasted of doing an "amazing" and "incredible" job against the scourge, adding: "The only thing we've

done a bad job in is public relations because we haven't been able to convince people — which is basically the fake news — what a great job we've done."

For five months, America has led the world by far in sheer numbers of confirmed infections and deaths. The U.S. has less than 5% of the globe's population but more than 20% of the reported deaths.

Brazil is second with about 137,000 deaths, followed by India with approximately 89,000 and Mexico with around 74,000. Only five countries — Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Spain and Brazil — rank higher in COVID-19 deaths per capita.

"All the world's leaders took the same test, and some have succeeded and some have failed," said Dr. Cedric Dargatzis, an emergency physician at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston who has seen death firsthand. "In the case of our country, we failed miserably."

Policies set for military children seeking citizenship

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Military children who are not U.S. citizens and live overseas with their American parents are finally able to obtain citizenship automatically now that a new law is being implemented by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which had changed the policy last year.

USCIS announced Friday that it had updated its policy to implement the Citizenship for Children of Military Members and Civil Servants Act, almost a year after the agency had changed how it determined the residency requirement for children living overseas. It forced military families to file new paperwork and pay more fees to gain

citizenship for their child.

Military children younger than 18 years old who are not citizens are able to acquire automatic citizenship under Section 320 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, according to the new law, which was passed in March. The section states that a child who was born outside of the United States can automatically become a citizen if they are physically living in the U.S. with their parent who is a citizen. USCIS will again consider military children who are living with an American parent stationed overseas to be considered as residing within the U.S.

The new policy also includes children living with a parent who is a U.S. government employee stationed abroad and a

spouse of a service member or government employee stationed abroad, according to the USCIS statement.

These military children "are just as worthy of automatic citizenship as any other children," Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., said in a statement Tuesday about the new policy. She sponsored the Senate's version of the Citizenship for Children of Military Members and Civil Servants Act.

The reason that the USCIS gave for changing the policy was that the agency was clarifying two conflicting rules about the definition of "residence," and issued the new guidance that military children would no longer be considered as residing in the U.S., one of the ways for anyone born overseas to obtain citizenship automatically.

At UN, Trump raps China as originator of coronavirus

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Tuesday demanded that the United Nations hold China accountable for the coronavirus pandemic as he defends his own handling of COVID-19 in the United States, where the death toll has reached 200,000.

"We have waged a fierce battle against the invisible enemy — the China virus — which has claimed countless lives in 188 countries," Trump said in a prerecorded address to the U.N. General Assembly.

"As we pursue this bright future, we

must hold accountable the nation which unleashed this plague onto the world: China."

While Trump blames China, he has been harshly criticized for his administration's track record in battling the coronavirus, now a top issue in his bid for reelection. Democratic opponent Joe Biden claims Trump bungled the response to COVID-19 and is responsible for the U.S. having more deaths than any other nation. Trump encouraged the reopening of U.S. society even as the virus was spreading rapidly and holds campaign rallies where few wear

face masks or practice social distancing.

But Trump points to the virus's origins in China and said the Chinese government was irresponsible in allowing it to spread.

"The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions," Trump said. The president also took aim at China's environmental record and the U.N. itself.

"Those who attack America's exceptional environmental record while ignoring China's rampant pollution are not interested in the environment. They only want to punish America. And I will not stand for it," Trump said.

San Diego's reopening plan could be delayed

From wire reports

SAN DIEGO — The start of the semester at San Diego State University was, as always, a time for students to make and renew friendships on and off its urban campus and enjoy the beach and the city's unmatched August weather.

The coronavirus meant far fewer people returned to campus this year but the parties, cookouts and other festivities that mark the start of the fall semester went on as usual for a week or two, then abruptly stopped as infections quickly mounted.

California has seen remarkable recent success with the virus — the infection rate of 2.8% for the last week is the lowest since the pandemic began, and hospitalizations dropped to a level not seen since the first week of April. But the campus outbreak may put San Diego County over a state threshold for cases that mandates many businesses close or restrict indoor operations.

Wisconsin

MADISON — State health officials are recommending against trick-or-treating as usual this Halloween because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Going house-to-house and having in-person contact is not a good idea, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

If individual communities decide to go ahead with traditional trick-or-treating, health officials recommend leaving individual treat bags on the porch for children to pick up.

Some Wisconsin communities have scheduled trick-or-treat times as usual, with suggestions for taking precautions. Other communities are conferring with their local health departments before making a decision.

Tennessee

NASHVILLE — Fox News Channel's Steve Doocy apologized on Monday "for any confusion" in reporting a

now-debunked story about the mayor of Nashville, Tenn., supposedly concealing the number of coronavirus cases linked to bars and restaurants in the city since they were so low.

But on Monday night, Fox's Tucker Carlson said that "we don't know the truth" about the Nashville case.

The story came from a Thursday report by Nashville's Fox affiliate WZTV on "leaked emails" that the station retracted late Friday upon learning that they didn't mean what its reporter thought they did.

A fact-check done Friday by The Nashville Tennessean debunked the WZTV reporting, which was retweeted by Donald Trump Jr. and led to Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn, a Republican, to publicly call for an investigation into Mayor John Cooper, a Democrat.

New Mexico

SANTA FE — The U.S. Justice Department sided Monday with the father of a seventh grade prep school student in a lawsuit that challenges pandemic-related limits on classroom capacity at private schools in New Mexico as more restrictive than public school guidelines.

Albuquerque-based U.S. Attorney John Anderson filed a statement of interest that argues the state is violating the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution by limiting attendance at private schools to 25% of building capacity under a public health order.

The limit is set at 50% for public schools under guidance from the Public Education Department, though only select groups of elementary school and disabled students have returned to classrooms.

The initial lawsuit was filed earlier this month by Douglas Peterson, the father of a student at Albuquerque Academy, after the school opted for online instruction in response to the state's public health order. The lawsuit asserts that the school could have moved forward with classroom instruction if it had

the same 50% capacity limit as public schools. Peterson is seeking a restraining order and preliminary injunction to lift the 25% capacity limit.

Iowa

DES MOINES — The Des Moines School board on Monday night set a date for returning to school, but put off establishing a coronavirus infection rate that would force the district to revert to online-only instruction.

Des Moines, Iowa's largest district with more than 33,000 students, has been the state's only school system that has refused Gov. Kim Reynolds' order that they hold at least half their classes in-person unless they have received a waiver because of high infection rates.

The Department of Education has threatened to deem the district not in compliance, potentially forcing it to extend its school year at a cost of about \$1.5 million a day. The board has argued that a high prevalence of the coronavirus statewide and in Polk County makes it unsafe to hold in-person classes.

The board agreed on a 6 to 1 vote to gradually start a hybrid plan of in-person and online courses, starting with pre-kindergarten on Oct. 12 and ending with high school on Nov. 10.

Michigan

Two U.S. lawmakers from Michigan questioned the safety protections for Amazon employees after touring a company warehouse in their state, raising new criticisms about working conditions at the e-commerce giant during the coronavirus pandemic.

Reps. Rashida Tlaib and Debbie Dingell, both Michigan Democrats, made a surprise visit this month to an Amazon warehouse in Romulus. The lawmakers said they were asked to wait outside for about 90 minutes before being invited in for a tour. While they waited, someone inside the building called the police on them.

Tlaib on Monday tweeted

video of part of the visit, showing Amazon workers cleaning the facility while she and Dingell waited. The video includes police responding to the site after being called by Amazon in response to the lawmakers' surprise appearance. The two were let in and were told that they could not take video inside the warehouse.

"Employee screening is poorly executed, cleaning is insufficient, social distancing is often difficult or impossible and Amazon's relentless quota system does not allow for breaks for adequate personal hygiene," Tlaib said.

An Amazon spokeswoman called the police appearance "an unfortunate misunderstanding when one of our night shift security guards was not expecting external visitors to be filming on site and was not aware of the identity of those filming at the entryway of the facility — the situation was resolved and we toured the congresswomen through the site."

Nebraska

OMAHA — Nebraska prison officials announced that five more staffers in the Nebraska Department of Corrections recently tested positive for the coronavirus, as numbers from state health officials show 442 people have died and more than 41,000 have tested positive for the virus.

Four of the prison staffers testing positive work at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services said in a news release Sunday. The fifth works at the Diagnostic Evaluation Center in Lincoln.

All five are self-isolating at home, the release said. The latest release brings the number of prison staffers across the state infected to 132, the department said.

The state's online virus tracker on Monday showed that 41,083 in Nebraska have tested positive since the outbreak began, including 1,162 from Friday through Sunday.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Small plane crash lands on street, 2 injured

PA MOOSIC — A small plane on a flight from Vermont crash-landed on a residential street in Pennsylvania, injuring the pilot and a passenger.

The single-engine aircraft was trying to land at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport when the pilot apparently had engine trouble and brought the plane down on Stone Street, officials said. The plane took down power lines and left more than 500 customers without electricity.

Witnesses described hearing a loud noise before the lights went out.

The plane had damage to the nose, wings and landing gear.

The pilot and the passenger sustained injuries that were not considered life-threatening, police said. Their names were not released. Nobody was injured on the ground. The National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA are investigating.

Man faces over 300 sex-related charges

NC RAEFORD — A North Carolina man is facing more than 300 separate counts for sex-related crimes involving a juvenile, authorities said.

Joshuah Taylor Bradshaw, 30, was apprehended by the FBI in Etta, Miss., Hoke County Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said in a news release.

Peterkin said that detectives went to a Raeford home Aug. 7 for a reported juvenile sexual assault. Arrest warrants were obtained, but Bradshaw left North Carolina, according to the news release.

He was extradited from Mississippi and received 332 charges. The counts include statutory sexual offense, tak-

ing indecent liberties with children, crimes against nature and sexual exploitation of a minor, the release said. The alleged offenses occurred from February through August.

Snorkeler attacked, injured by bull shark

FL KEY WEST — A 30-year-old snorkeler from Atlanta was attacked by a shark in the Florida Keys.

Andrew Eddy was in a private boat with his family exploring the reefs at Sombrero Key Light when he was bitten on the shoulder by a bull shark, Monroe County Sheriff's officials said. Family members immediately began first aid.

Authorities said boaters in the area had spotted the bull shark earlier. Witnesses described the shark as eight to 10 feet in length.

Eddy was air lifted to a Miami hospital with a severe shoulder injury.

Donkey sculpture on front lawn burned

ME BOWDOINHAM — A donkey sculpture on a front lawn in a Maine town was set on fire in what one lawmaker called an act of "political terrorism."

The sculpture was burned in Bowdoinham, on the property of former select board member Theresa Turgeon, who said she's running for the town's select board again.

The large donkey sculpture was built by Doug Chess, a local artist and bus driver, as a symbol of the Democratic Party. It's made out of wood, wire, cardboard, Fiberglas and other materials. It had been circulating to different lawns around Bowdoinham and Richmond, and had been at Turgeon's since Friday.

New kind of license plate making debut

KY FRANKFORT — A new kind of Kentucky license plate has started appearing on vehicles across the state.

The biggest difference is in the way the new plates are manufactured. They're digitally printed on flat aluminum instead of traditional, embossed metal with raised letters and numbers, state transportation officials said. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will save money on storage space, bulk manufacturing and unused inventory, they said.

With digital technology, standard and specialty license plates can be produced as needed rather than having to be mass-produced. Kentucky Correctional Industries will continue making the plates at the Kentucky State Reformatory.

3 injured after subway hits debris and derails

NY NEW YORK — Three passengers suffered minor injuries when a New York City subway train derailed after hitting construction debris that had been thrown onto the tracks, authorities said.

The derailment happened at the 14th Street and Eighth Avenue station in Manhattan. Interim New York City Transit president Sarah Feinberg said a northbound A train hit debris as it was pulling into the station. Feinberg said the 134 passengers on board the train were safely evacuated. A fire department spokesperson said three of the riders suffered minor injuries. One person was taken to a hospital for evaluation and the other two declined treatment.

A 30-year-old man was arrested and charges against him are pending.

State taking in more of a rare squirrel species

DE DAGSBORO — A rare squirrel species is being released into a wildlife area in Delaware.

The Wilmington News Journal reported that some Delmarva fox squirrels are being placed in the Assawoman Wildlife Area in Dagsboro this month. The species was removed from the federal endangered species list in 2015. They are fairly abundant on Maryland's Eastern Shore, but the species has been slow to expand its range.

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and its partners hope to increase the species' numbers and secure its permanence. Squirrels captured from Dorchester County, Md., will be released into the wildlife area in southeastern Sussex County in Delaware.

Police arrest man who stole moored houseboat

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Authorities said a hooded man stole a houseboat moored off an island along the Mississippi River in Minneapolis before he was arrested at shore.

The boat was tied up off Nicollet Island along the river across from downtown, where it was stolen, the Star Tribune reported. Police officers grabbed the boat a little more than an hour later and brought the man to shore to the north at Boom Island, witness Chris Stellar said. Stellar provided a photo to the newspaper showing a police officer standing in the water and aiming a Taser at the suspect.

From wire reports

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Raiders win first game at new home

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Derek Carr and the Las Vegas Raiders delivered a performance worthy of their fancy new home.

Too bad none of their fans were able to see it in person.

Carr threw three touchdown passes and the Raiders gave their new fans in Las Vegas plenty to celebrate even if they weren't allowed in the stadium by beating the New Orleans Saints 34-24 on Monday night.

The new \$2 billion stadium in the desert held its first event following the Raiders' move from Oakland without any fans because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Hopefully our fans, even though they couldn't be here tonight, hopefully see something they like," coach Jon Gruden said. "We can't wait to get them back in this place. It's such a great place to see a game."

That was one of the few things that didn't go right for the Raiders (2-0), who overcame an early 10-point deficit to the Saints (1-1) and opened the season with two straight wins for the fourth time in the past 25 seasons.

"This organization means everything to me," Carr said. "They've stuck behind me through some hard times. Through some times our team, we struggled, there's no doubt about it. But when you can get on the other side of things, be 2-0, as the Las Vegas Raiders, that's a pretty cool thing."

Carr was in control for most of the night, completing 28 of 38 passes for 282 yards. Darren Waller had 12 receptions for 103 yards as Carr's most trusted option.

Carr engineered four straight scoring drives in the second and third quarters to turn a 10-0 deficit into a 24-17 lead.

"Derek Carr was awesome tonight," Gruden said. "He made some some plays today that very few guys that I've coached could make. I tip my hat to him."

Picking apart the New Orleans defense with short passes, the Raiders controlled the clock and kept Drew Brees and the Saints off the field. Las Vegas converted 10 of 17 third downs and also went for it successfully twice on fourth down.

The Raiders even survived a

fumbled pitch by Jalen Richard by stopping the Saints and then scoring on the ensuing drive on a 20-yard run by Richard.

After being gashed on the ground early, the Raiders did a good job against Brees, who struggled without his injured No. 1 receiver, Michael Thomas.

Brees went 26-for-38 for 312 yards with one touchdown and a key interception at the end of the first half that set up a field goal for the Raiders.

"If there's one thing I wish I could take back from the game it would be that," Brees said. "Otherwise, we had a lot of mental errors. I felt like we were not playing as fast and just as sure and confident."

After the Saints cut the deficit to 31-24 on Alvin Kamara's second TD run, the Raiders took advantage of a pass interference call against Janoris Jenkins and iced the game with a 54-yard field goal by Daniel Carlson.

"We got to do a better job coaching," Saints coach Sean Payton said. "I don't think it's going to be a real pleasant film to watch — for some of our star

players as well."

Averting disaster

The Raiders almost had a big blunder on the opening drive of the third quarter when Carr fumbled a snap on third down from the 1. Alec Ingold recovered for Las Vegas and Carr threw a 1-yard TD to Waller on fourth down to give the Raiders their first lead at 24-17.

Tale of two quarters

The Raiders' first game in Las Vegas didn't get off to a great start with the Saints driving for scores on their first two drives to take a 10-0 lead on Kamara's first TD run. The Raiders punted on their first two drives before Carr and the offense got going. Carr went 14-for-18 for 139 yards in the second quarter, throwing a 3-yard TD pass to Ingold and a 15-yarder to Zay Jones. The TD was capped by Jones pretending to give teammates hand sanitizer. Nicholas Morrow then intercepted Brees late in the half, setting up Daniel Carlson's 28-yard field goal that made it 17-17.

NFL issues hefty fines for violation of mask mandate

Associated Press

NFL coaches thumbed their collective — and exposed — noses at the NFL's mask mandate in Week 2.

The league responded with hefty fines of \$100,000 per coach and \$250,000 per club. The first three to get fined were Denver's Vic Fangio, San Francisco's Kyle Shanahan and Seattle's Pete Carroll, according to a person with knowledge of the punishment who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the coaches were not identified.

The punishment was meted out a week after the NFL reminded team personnel on the sidelines about the rules for wearing face coverings during the coronavirus pandemic, lest they put the fledgling season at risk.

More coaches and clubs can expect similar punishments as the memo last week from Troy Vincent, who oversees the

league's football operations, was largely ignored throughout the weekend.

Among other offenders: Patriots coach Bill Belichick and his offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels, Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo, Colts coach Frank Reich and Rams coach Sean McVay.

The scenes were similar Sunday with head coaches and assistants apparently finding it too hard to keep their faces covered as required under the league's COVID-19 protocols with either a mask, gaiter or face shield. Players, who, like the coaches, are subject to daily COVID-19 tests, are exempt from the face covering requirements.

Some coaches such as Belichick, McDaniels and Steelers coach Mike Tomlin wore their masks or gaiters over their mouths but not noses. Others such as Carroll, Spagnuolo and Fangio wore their face coverings around their chins or necks, exposing both their mouths and noses.

In his strongly worded memo, Vincent said teams "must remain vigilant and disciplined in following the processes and protocols put in place by not only the league, union and clubs, but also by state and local governments."

Vincent added: "Becoming careless or ignoring face covering and physical distancing requirements will put the 2020 season at risk."

The rules don't apply to players, but all other individuals with bench area access, including coaches and members of the club medical staff, are required to wear face coverings at all times.

Failure to do so, Vincent warned in his memo, "will result in accountability measures being imposed against offending individuals and/or clubs. The face covering must be worn as designed so that it securely fits across the wearer's nose and mouth to prevent the transmission of the virus."

Lightning even series with Stars

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Nikita Kucherov and the Tampa Bay Lightning got themselves up off the ice to get even in the Stanley Cup Final.

After the Lightning got knocked around in Game 1, and Kucherov took some more hard hits early in Game 2, he had the primary assists on power-play goals by Brayden Point and Ondrej Palat in the first period. Kevin Shattenkirk then scored for an early three-goal lead and Tampa Bay held on for a 3-2 victory over the Dallas Stars on Monday night.

"It was a tough start I guess," Kucherov said. "It's the playoffs, you have to play, it doesn't matter what happened."

All of the Lightning's goals came in a span of four shots in less than four minutes against Anton Khudobin, who made a Stanley Cup Final-record 22 saves in the third period for the Stars in their 4-1 win in Game 1. It was the first time in seven games that Tampa Bay scored the opening goal.

Game 3 is Wednesday night.

Joe Pavelski and Mattias Janmark scored for Dallas on passes from John Klingberg, with Alexander Radulov also assisting on both.

"After that, we really got back to what makes us successful as a team, we got pucks deep, we were good on the forecheck, we got some good opportunities," said Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman, who had two assists. "I liked the way we responded ... to close them out."

Kucherov left the bench momentarily early in the game after slamming into the boards during a collision with defenseman Jamie Oleksiak after trying to block a shot. Kucherov had already ended up on the ice twice before, when he was popped by Stars captain Jamie Benn and when he drew a high-sticking penalty against Janmark. He was back quickly.

"I left because my visor was broken or something," Kucherov insisted. "I went back in the room and changed it, nothing bad happened."

On its second power play in Game 2, Tampa Bay cycled the puck to set up Kucherov's pass to Point to open the scoring 11:23 into the game. Three minutes later with a man advantage again, Palat finished a nice passing sequence, taking advantage of a half-open net and another setup by Kucherov.

"It's easy to explain: we lost faceoffs and we were turning the puck over and we were taking penalties," Dallas interim head coach Rick Bowness said. "It was an even game until we started taking penalties. It's faceoffs, turnovers and penalties — things you can't afford to do against an elite team like that."

Shattenkirk scored less than a minute after Palat to make it 3-0. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 27 shots for the Lightning. Khudobin had 28 saves. Tampa Bay had failed to score on its previous 14 power-play chances with the man advantage, since Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finale, until the Kucherov-assisted goals with a man advantage.

"There's a couple good teams

that have somewhat of a foundation to win games and how you play," Pavelski said. "We definitely were closer to ours in Game 1, and we got away from it early tonight and it cost us."

The Stars finally got on the board on a power play with 5:17 left in the second. Klingberg took a shot from near the blue line, and Pavelski redirected the puck with his raised stick even with Ryan McDonagh all over him in front of the net.

In the third period, Klingberg was in the right circle, when instead of taking a shot as Vasilevskiy expected, passed to Janmark, who had charged and suddenly stopped behind Shattenkirk just beyond the crease to score.

The Lightning looked to have another goal, and a two-goal lead, with just under 11 minutes left when Mikhail Sergachev shot from the point and got the puck through traffic past Khudobin. Bowness challenged and the replay clearly showed Blake Coleman was offside.

Oilers' Draisaitl wins Hart Trophy as 1st German MVP

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The Stanley Cup Final is in Edmonton, and Oilers star Leon Draisaitl made history Monday night.

Only it had more to do with his home country than his home arena.

Draisaitl became the first German player to win the Hart Trophy as MVP after leading the league in scoring with 110 points in 71 games. He also won the Ted Lindsay Award for most outstanding player as voted by peers.

Draisaitl joins former NBA star Dirk Nowitzki as the only German players to earn MVP honors in one of the four major North American professional sports leagues.

"Dirk was obviously someone that I look up to, someone

that I admire: the way he presents himself and the way he really has achieved everything that there is to achieve for a professional athlete in North America," Draisaitl said.

Draisaitl finished ahead of Colorado Avalanche center Nathan MacKinnon and New York Rangers winger Artemi Panarin in voting by the Professional Hockey Writers Association. He scored 43 goals, and his 67 assists were a career high despite the regular season being cut short.

Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck won the Vezina Trophy as top goaltender, Nashville's Roman Josi got the Norris Trophy as the best defenseman, and Colorado's Cale Makar won the Calder Trophy as rookie of the year.

Draisaitl is the second Oilers

player to win the Hart in the past four years following Connor McDavid, who is widely considered the best hockey player in the world. Draisaitl played with and without McDavid this season and produced even more.

"I think Connor and I have a very healthy, great, competitive relationship and we just try and make each other better every day," Draisaitl said.

Hellebuyck is the first player from the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers franchise to win the Vezina. After backstopping a Winnipeg team with an injury-ravaged blue line, he finished ahead of Boston's Tuukka Rask and Tampa Bay's Andrei Vasilevskiy in voting by general managers.

The 27-year-old American, who had said one of his goals

was to win the Vezina, said, "It almost feels like getting a little bit of a monkey off my back."

Josi won his first Norris at age 30 after setting career highs with 16 goals, 49 assists and 65 points. He finished ahead of Washington's John Carlson and Tampa Bay's Victor Hedman.

Makar edged out Vancouver defenseman Quinn Hughes in a tight race for the Calder. The 21-year-old played 21 minutes a game and was the Avalanche's second-leading scorer behind MacKinnon.

Like Draisaitl, Makar was (virtually) presented the award by Wayne Gretzky on an awards show with an Oilers flare. That made it even more special.

"To have Wayne Gretzky give it to me, that was pretty cool," Makar said.

Hamlin, Jordan create team for Wallace

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Denny Hamlin has joined Charlotte Hornets owner Michael Jordan to form a NASCAR team with Bubba Wallace as the driver, a high-profile pairing of a Black majority team owner and the only Black driver at NASCAR's top level.

The partnership was announced Monday night in coordinated social media posts by Jordan and Hamlin, with Wallace adding his own comment. The posts showed a picture of

Jordan alongside a firesuit-clad Hamlin in a motorhome at a race track.

"Historically, NASCAR has struggled with diversity and there have been few Black owners," Jordan said. "The timing seemed perfect as NASCAR is evolving and embracing social change more and more."

Jordan becomes the first Black principal owner of a full-time Cup team since Hall of Famer Wendell Scott drove his own race car in 495 races from 1961 to 1973. Scott's 1964 victory at the Jacksonville 200 is

the only win by a Black driver in Cup history.

The NBA great, who earlier this year pledged \$100 million over 10 years for initiatives combating systemic racism, said the move into NASCAR is another step toward racial equality.

"I see this as a chance to educate a new audience and open more opportunities for Black people in racing," Jordan said.

Jordan joins former NBA player Brad Daugherty, a partner at JTG Daugherty Racing, as the only Black owners at

NASCAR's elite Cup level.

"Michael and Bubba can be a powerful voice together, not only in our sport, but also well beyond it," Hamlin said.

Hamlin, a three-time Daytona 500 winner and a top contender for this year's Cup title, will be part of a single-car Toyota entry aligned with Joe Gibbs Racing. Hamlin has raced his entire career for Gibbs.

"Deciding on the driver was easy," Hamlin said. "It had to be Bubba Wallace."

MLB roundup

Mariners down Astros, help Athletics clinch AL West

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Marco Gonzales threw eight shutout innings, Evan White broke the game open with a three-run homer in the seventh and the Seattle Mariners beat the Houston Astros 6-1 on Monday night.

Seattle's victory clinched the AL West title for Oakland, ending Houston's three-year run atop the division. The win also improved the Mariners' slim hopes of catching the Astros for second place in the division and a guaranteed playoff spot. Seattle is three games behind Houston with six remaining.

It was just the third win for the Mariners in their past 27 meetings with the Astros over the last two seasons.

Houston starter Lance McCullers Jr. (3-3) didn't allow a hit until Tim Lopes' one-out double in the sixth — but things quickly unraveled. Ty France had an RBI double and McCullers' night ended when White turned on a hanging 2-2 curveball and lined it over the left-field wall for his seventh home run and a 4-0 lead.

Indians 7, White Sox 4: Carlos Santana's two-run homer snapped a tie and Jose Ramirez homered again as host Cleveland moved closer to clinching a playoff berth — and delayed

Chicago's likely AL Central title.

The Indians cut their magic number to one.

Angels 8, Rangers 5: Jared Walsh hit his first career grand slam during host Los Angeles' seven-run fourth inning in a win over Texas.

Max Stassi had a two-run single in the final home game of the fifth consecutive losing season for the Angels (24-31), who have won 12 of 18 overall after taking three of four from the Rangers.

Reds 6, Brewers 3: Eugenio Suarez hit a two-run homer, Luis Castillo won his fourth straight start, and host Cincinnati moved above .500 for the first time since opening day.

The Reds (28-27) won for the eighth time in nine games. Milwaukee (26-27) had its season-high four-game winning streak snapped.

Cubs 5, Pirates 0: Jon Lester scattered four hits over six innings and Chicago inched closer to its first NL Central title since 2017 with a win at Pittsburgh.

Lester (3-2) struck out one and walked one in his first victory since Aug. 11. He retired the first nine batters he faced and kept the lowest-scoring team in the majors in check.

Only two of the Pirates' four hits left the infield.

Rays 2, Mets 1: Nate Lowe homered and scored both runs against NL Cy Young Award contender Jacob deGrom, and visiting Tampa Bay overcame 16 strikeouts to move closer to an AL East title.

The Rays trimmed their magic number to one for their first division title since 2010.

Nationals 5, Phillies 1: Bryce Harper was hitless in his return from back stiffness and Philadelphia manager Joe Girardi was ejected in the third inning of a loss at Washington.

Harper went 0-for-4 with three strikeouts as the designated hitter, dropping his average to .254.

Braves 5, Marlins 4: Austin Riley's two-run double capped a wild first inning and the deep Atlanta bullpen took it from there, allowing just one run over the final six innings to push the host a step closer to a third straight NL East title.

Tyler Matzek (4-3) pitched two hitless innings for the win, and Darren O'Day and Chris Martin each worked a scoreless frame. Will Smith escaped a bases-loaded jam in the eighth, and Mark Melancon claimed his 11th save.

Blue Jays 11, Yankees 5: Rookie Alejandro Kirk became

the first catcher 21 or younger since Johnny Bench with at least four hits that included two for extra bases, and Toronto beat visiting New York.

Kirk, who played at Class A last season and made his debut Sept. 12, singled in the third off Michael King, doubled in the fourth against Jonathan Loaisiga, singled in the fifth off Nick Nelson and hit an opposite-field homer to right in seventh off Chad Green for his first four-hit game.

Royals 4, Cardinals 1: Maikel Franco hit the go-ahead single with two outs in the sixth inning and the Kansas City bullpen shut down visiting St. Louis from the fourth inning on.

Alex Gordon and Jorge Soler also drove in runs for the Royals, who returned for their final homestand after getting swept in Milwaukee.

Rockies 7, Giants 2: Kevin Pillar homered against his former team and German Marquez pitched six strong innings to snap a five-game losing streak as Colorado won at San Francisco.

In the opener of an eight-game road trip to end the season, the Rockies knocked around Johnny Cueto for seven earned runs in 4¹/₃ innings.