

Army makes power plan amid German cutbacks

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Army garrisons in Germany will not be bound by new German government measures to conserve energy but will attempt to make cuts of their own amid concerns of a possible gas shortage this winter, military officials said.

As of Thursday, public buildings in Germany must not be heated over 66 degrees Fahrenheit, and heating should be turned off completely in hallways and foyers. The measures, approved by the government last week, will be applied through the winter.

Public buildings and monuments lit up solely for aesthetic purposes also will remain dark, and businesses could be banned from keeping their stores illuminated at night.

It's all part of efforts to trim gas usage in Germany by 2% after Russia, the country's biggest source, raised fears of a potential shortage by cutting supply.

The Army relies on the local power grid for most of the electricity it uses to power its five garrisons in Germany, according to In-

stallation Management Command—Europe.

But command officials said they're following their own path to reduction.

They've provided garrisons with recommendations but have not advised them to set specific temperatures, IMCOM-Europe spokeswoman Anna Morelock said in a statement.

Those recommendations include turning off heating in hallways and stairwells, keeping doors and windows closed, reducing water consumption and reducing office heating to an unspecified level.

"Some of our garrisons may also need to look at additional measures for short-term efficiencies, for example, taking a closer look at part of facilities that might not be used," IMCOM-Europe spokesman Mark Heeter said.

IMCOM-Europe didn't specify whether the German government has asked the military to abide by its rules, which exempt hospitals and other social institutions.

The Army spent \$6.6 million in natural gas for its garrisons in Germany during the

2021 fiscal year and is expected to spend \$9.7 million this fiscal year, IMCOM-Europe said.

Air Force officials in Germany were not available Thursday to comment on their plans.

U.S. European Command gave assurances that any gas shortage in Germany would not affect the military's mission.

Russia cut flows of gas through the key Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany to 20% of capacity this summer, a move Moscow blamed on technical reasons. But Berlin believes that it is retaliation for European Union sanctions against Russia for invading Ukraine.

Russia halted all gas delivery through the pipeline Wednesday for what state provider Gazprom said was planned maintenance work, according to a Reuters report.

Before the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, Germany got 55% of its gas from Russia. The German government said it has reduced that share to 35%, and it is vowing to end all Russian gas imports eventually.

Fall virus surge unlikely but new variant may appear

The Washington Post

Cold weather favors the coronavirus. But as summer gives way to fall, infectious-disease experts are guardedly optimistic that the spread of COVID-19 this autumn and winter won't be as brutal as in the previous two years of the pandemic.

Coronavirus scenarios from multiple research teams, shared in recent weeks with federal officials, foresee stable or declining hospitalizations in early fall. The scenarios show the possibility of a late-fall surge. A new variant remains the biggest wild card. But several factors — including the approval last week of reformulated boosters and the buildup of immunity against the latest

strain of the virus — could suppress some of the cold-season spread, experts say.

"There's sort of even odds that we would have some sort of moderate resurgence in the fall. But nothing appears to be projecting anything like an omicron wave," said Justin Lessler, a University of North Carolina epidemiologist who helps lead the collection of COVID-19 planning scenarios from a group of research organizations.

The scenarios assume that reformulated vaccine boosters will be embraced by the public at a rate similar to that of the annual flu shots — possibly an optimistic assumption given that more than half of Americans el-

igible for boosters have yet to receive their first dose.

Peter Marks, the top vaccine official at the Food and Drug Administration, said in a briefing Wednesday that the approval of reformulated boosters comes as the agency is "looking at a possible fall wave, with a peak around December 1st."

Predictions about the pandemic rarely age well.

In the United States, the pandemic appeared to be winding down in May 2021 amid a vigorous vaccination campaign, only to get wound up again with the rise of the new variants.

The emergence of a new variant in September could result in a wave of infections and severe illness in December, according

to Lauren Ancel Meyers, director of the University of Texas Covid-19 Modeling Consortium.

A variant emerging in October would push the peak to January, she said.

Any new variant that could change the pandemic's trajectory would have to be more transmissible than the omicron subvariant BA.5 currently circulating.

It might emerge from an obscure branch of the virus' family tree — which is exactly what happened last November, when omicron, with its stunning package of mutations, appeared in southern Africa and immediately overtook the reigning delta strain.

4 years after Marine's death on base on Okinawa, his mom seeks answers

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HANSEN, Okinawa — Four years after his decomposing body was found in a ditch on this Marine Corps base in Japan, Pfc. Ronald Valentin's death remains unsolved.

Around 9 p.m. on Aug. 31, 2018, Valentin, 21, reportedly left a small party in a barracks room at Camp Hansen, one of six Marine installations on the island. A search party of more than 100 Marines found his body six days later.

An autopsy found Valentin had suffered a fatal skull fracture.

His mother, Gloria Ortiz, believes her son is a homicide victim, based on what she said naval criminal investigators told her. She holds onto hope that her questions will one day be answered.

"My son was murdered, and somebody knows something and they're not talking," Ortiz told Stars and Stripes by phone Aug. 19. "I'm hoping that they find it in their heart, that they talk."

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information related to Valentin's death, spokesman Jeff Houston said Aug. 29.

Both NCIS and Marine Corps Installations Pacific, to which Valentin was assigned, declined comment last month, citing the ongoing investigation.

Ortiz provided Stars and Stripes with copies of investigation reports she was given by NCIS.

Born in New Jersey but raised about 50 miles northwest of Boston in Fitchburg, Mass., Valentin was family oriented and enjoyed working and playing basketball and video games, Ortiz said. He had dreams of starting his own

fashion brand.

"He was a very sweet young man," she said.

Valentin enrolled at the University of Maine after graduating from Fitchburg High in 2015, his mother said. In 2017, he enlisted in the Corps and in June 2018 reported to MCIPAC's Headquarters and Support Battalion at Camp Butler, Okinawa, according to records Ortiz provided.

Investigators pieced together Valentin's disappearance based on interviews with the Marines who last saw him. He arrived that evening at building 2446 and the second-floor barracks room of a Marine he'd only recently met, according to multiple redacted NCIS witness statements. Valentin brought along a 12-pack of beer.

Several male Marines and at least two female Marines were present, the statements said. They played video games and listened to music; the women danced.

At approximately 9 p.m., Valentin unexpectedly left the room, an unnamed witness told investigators.

The statements did not indicate how long Valentin was gone before they started looking for him. The party's host, identified only as Escobar, said he stepped outside and called Valentin's name, though other witnesses did not recall this.

Escobar told investigators he messaged Valentin via Snapchat and received an unintelligible reply of random letters, which was automatically deleted by the application after it was read.

Five days after he walked out of the party, Valentin was still missing. His roommate reported him missing to the Provost Marshal's

Office after Valentin missed work at the Hansen post office, a redacted statement said. He also filed a missing person's report with Japanese police.

Valentin's disappearance didn't initially raise red flags with his command because it happened on the first day of the four-day Labor Day holiday weekend granted to many troops serving overseas.

Several transactions posted to Valentin's bank account after he disappeared, but it is unclear if any were charged after his death. A Navy Federal Credit Union spokesperson did not respond to an email Aug. 5 seeking comment.

On Sept. 6, authorities mounted a basewide search of Hansen with tracker dogs, Marine helicopters and more than 100 Marines on the ground. They found Valentin's body that afternoon inside a drainage ditch in a remote corner of the base, adjacent to building 2134, a 9th Engineer Support Battalion warehouse, records show.

The same day, Escobar returned a backpack Valentin left behind to the post office where he worked, a redacted NCIS report said. Inside were his wallet, dog tags, military paperwork and a pair of glasses.

Ortiz said her son would not have left those items behind. She said his vision was poor and he would have worn his glasses when he left the room.

Valentin's skull had been fractured, according to an autopsy report by Dr. Sherry Jilinski, a Navy commander and pathologist at Naval Hospital Okinawa at the time. She listed the cause of death as "blunt force head injury."

"The head injury may have been sustained in a fall but there is

not enough evidence to support this or to exclude a direct impact to the head," Jilinski wrote. The manner of Valentin's death is officially "undetermined."

Escobar told investigators he and Valentin had been drinking, but the autopsy report's toxicology screen showed no drugs or alcohol in Valentin's system.

Valentin's former commander, Col. Vincent Ciuccoli, now the head of the Philadelphia Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps Consortium, said he is still troubled by the incident and the fact no one reported him missing for five days.

After Valentin was flagged for an unauthorized absence, the command met with Marine security forces, looked at the logbook to his barracks and around his room to see if anything appeared awry, according to a redacted NCIS statement given by an unnamed postal director. They also took pictures from his Instagram page and made flyers. Ciuccoli said he also found statements made by the last people who saw Valentin alive to be unsettling.

"They didn't seem as concerned as I would have wanted them to be," he told Stars and Stripes by phone on Aug. 19. "There was always that weird feeling that they're holding stuff back."

Ortiz blames the Marine Corps for failing to keep her son safe and NCIS for not pressing harder to solve the case. She hopes someone will come forward and give "Ronny" justice.

"We knew we had to be prepared that he would go to war and that anything could happen, but not this, being murdered by his own brothers, on base, too," Ortiz said.

Drill preps F-35 pilots for dogfighting

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

RAAF TINDAL, Australia — Precision-guided missiles mean today's fighter pilots can engage targets long before they're close enough to see.

During Pitch Black drills in Australia's Northern Territory, U.S. and Australian pilots are honing the skills they need to carry out long-range missile strikes. The 21-day exercise involving 17 nations and hundreds of airmen ends Thursday.

But they're also using the opportunity to sharpen their ship-to-ship air combat abilities, otherwise known as dogfighting.

That means performing in real life the kind of aerobatic maneuvers filmed for "Top Gun: Maverick," now playing at the theater on Royal Australian Air Force Base Tindal.

Training for dogfights means the aircraft are relatively close, Capt. Brandon Howard, an F-35B Lightning II pilot with

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, told Stars and Stripes on a dusty road near Tindal's runway Thursday.

"Any air-to-air engagement in the modern arena runs the risk of collapsing down into a visual engagement," said Howard, who has been flying from Tindal for the past month.

Australia's F-35As can fly 1.6 times the speed of sound and pull 9 Gs in a turn, which makes the pilot feel like they weigh nine times their normal weight, according to David, a 28-year-old RAAF flight lieutenant from Brisbane, Australia.

Australian F-35A pilots are only authorized to provide first names to the media, he said by phone Friday from RAAF Darwin.

"The F-35A has a long-range stealth game plan but we still train dogfighting," he said. "That's some of my favorite training."

The stealth jets carry only four missiles, but their cockpits

have much larger display screens in the cockpit than older fighters, giving their pilots a wider view and allow them to pinpoint their adversaries more easily, David said.

"Yesterday we flew a mission where the Australians were flying with (South) Korean F-16s," he said. "The F-35s would stay at the back and allocate targets to the F-16s."

The Marine Corps deployed 12 F-35Bs — capable of short landings and vertical takeoffs — to Pitch Black from Marine Fighter Attack Squadrons 242 and 121, both based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

They spent two weeks training with Australian F-35As from the Tindal-based No. 75 Squadron ahead of Pitch Black, Howard said.

The Australian jets are operating out of RAAF Darwin during the exercise, he said.

It's the first time Howard, whose been flying F-35Bs for

four years, has been to Australia.

Since he reported to MCAS Iwakuni in 2020, he has mostly trained in Japan, sometimes with F-35As from the Japan Air Self-Defense Force at Misawa Air Base in northeast Japan, he said.

There's more space to fly in Australia than there is in Japan, Howard said.

"It's nice to be able to take off and make a left or right turn and be in the (training) airspace," he said. "In Japan, there is more civilian air traffic and we have to transit to airspace where we train."

The F-35Bs can operate from amphibious ships with shorter decks than conventional aircraft carriers, unlike the Australians' F-35As, which can operate only from conventional airfields.

However, the Australian jets can go farther and faster and "pull more Gs" when they turn, Howard said.

'Dirt det' marks 1st time jets operated from an Australian base

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

RAAF TINDAL, Australia — A dozen Marine Corps F-35B Lightning IIs flying from this Outback base are the first of the U.S. military's latest stealth jets to operate from Australian soil.

The fifth-generation aircraft belongs to Marine Fighter Attack Squadrons 121 and 242, both deployed from their home base, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, for Pitch Black 2022, an airpower exercise that ends Thursday after 21 days.

The Marines' F-35Bs flew over Australia during the biennial Talisman Sabre drills in 2019 and 2021 but those jets operated from amphibious ships offshore, Capt. Michael Donahue, 28, of Philadelphia, an intelligence officer with the 242nd, said Thursday at Royal

Australian Air Force Base Tindal. The Marines call the Australian mission a "dirt det," or dirt detachment, since it's on dry land rather than at sea, where the short takeoff, vertical landing F-35Bs operate from amphibious assault ships with shorter flight decks than aircraft carriers.

RAAF Tindal, just over 200 miles' drive south of Darwin in an expanse of red soil and gum trees, is home to the F-35As of No. 75 Squadron and is one of only two bases with a unit of Australia's newest fighters.

The other is RAAF Base Williamtown in New South Wales, home to stealth jets from No. 3 and No. 77 Squadrons as well as 2 Operational Conversion Unit, which trains pilots to fly the conventional takeoff and landing F-35As.

Australia has, so far, accepted 50 of 72 F-35As from Fort Worth, Texas-based manufacturer Lockheed Martin, according to the RAAF.

Three hundred Marines from the two squadrons in Japan have been at Tindal for a month, Donahue said. They operate day and night shifts; the day crew sleeps in tents and the night crew rests in air-conditioned bunkers during daylight hours, he said. The base has a well-watered Australian Rules football pitch and a large, shaded and refrigerated swimming pool where the Marines can cool off.

Marine F-35B mechanics work on the jets in open hangars while others guard a small operations center surrounded by gum trees and razor wire where pilots plan missions.

One of the Marines helping

guard the F-35Bs, Sgt. Connor Ballard, 26, of Atlanta, said he's helping translate local accents.

His childhood involved frequent trips to Perth in Western Australia, to visit his Australian mother's relatives, he said Thursday during a break near the RAAF Tindal flightline.

Another Marine with the F-35Bs, Gunnery Sgt. Terrence Hubbard, 35, of New Albany, Ind., said he's seen wallabies, snakes, spiders, colorful birds and bats during the mission.

"I'm into marine biology and hope to see crocodiles and sharks," he said Thursday as jets screamed overhead nearby.

The Marine said he enjoys working with the Australians.

"If things go bad, we are going to be working side by side to defeat our nations' enemies," he said.

Fire-stricken Calif. town learns to live on edge

Associated Press

WEED, Calif. — The fire-stricken Northern California town of Weed has long been seen by passersby as a whimsical spot to stop along Interstate 5 and buy an ironic T-shirt, but residents say they've grown edgy in recent years due to a new danger: Dark skies, swirling ash and flames that race so quickly they leave little time for escape.

Their fears exploded to life again in recent days as California's latest inferno burned homes and buildings and forced evacuations in the small community about 280 miles northeast of San Francisco.

Among the thousands of people displaced was Naomi Vogelsang. Her home destroyed, dog missing, and 10-year relationship with her boyfriend recently ended — all she could do on Saturday was sit outside a wildfire evacuation center with \$20 in her pocket, waiting for a ride to the casino.

"It can't be any worse," she said.

The day before, flames raced from Rose-

burg Forest Products, which makes wood products, into Weed's Lincoln Heights neighborhood where a significant number of homes burned and residents had to flee for their lives. The blaze known as the Mill Fire had spread to more than 6.6 square miles by Saturday evening and was 25% contained.

After fleeing the fire, 63-year-old Judy Christenson remembered a similar escape 40 years ago when, as a young parent, she had to rush her children out of a burning home.

Last summer, a wildfire forced her to evacuate and leave her pets behind. Now, Christenson says she leaves harnesses on her pets all the time so she can grab them at a moment's notice and leave.

"Whenever this happens, I get really bad," Christenson said from the front seat of a car at an evacuation center in Yreka as Felix, her orange cat, napped in the backseat. "I can't think straight."

Nestled in the shadow of Mt. Shasta — a 14,000-foot volcano that is the second-highest peak in the Cascade Range — Weed is no stranger to wildfires.

Strong winds in the area that fan flames drew the town's founder for a very different reason. Abner Weed, a Civil War soldier who is said to have witnessed the Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender before moving to California, chose to put a sawmill there because the wind would dry out the timber, according to Bob West, a lifelong resident who co-owns Ellie's Espresso and Bakery, a coffee and sandwich shop that contains some historical items of the town's past.

The winds make Weed and the surrounding area a perilous place for wildfires, whipping small flames into a frenzy. Weed has seen three major fires since 2014, a period of extreme drought that has prompted the largest and most destructive fires in California history.

Search inventory reveals new info from FBI seizure

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Along with highly classified government documents, the FBI agents who searched former President Donald Trump's Florida estate found dozens of empty folders marked classified but with nothing inside and no explanation of what might have been there, according to a more detailed inventory of the seized material made public on Friday.

The agents also found more than 10,000 other government documents kept by Trump with no classification marked.

The inventory compiled by the Justice Department reveals in general terms the contents of 33 boxes and containers taken from Trump's office and a storage room at Mar-a-Lago during the Aug. 8 search. Though the inventory does not describe the content of the documents, it shows the extent

to which classified information — including material at the top-secret level — was stashed in boxes at the home and mixed among newspapers, magazines, clothing and other personal items.

And the empty folders raise the question of whether the government has recovered all of the classified papers that Trump kept after leaving the White House.

The inventory makes clear

for the first time the volume of unclassified government documents at the home even though presidential records were to have been turned over to the National Archives and Records Administration.

The Archives had tried unsuccessfully for months to secure their return from Trump and then contacted the FBI after locating classified information in a batch of 15 boxes it received in January.

China, Japan ground flights as typhoon approaches

Associated Press

BEIJING — Cities in eastern China suspended ferry services and classes and flights were canceled in Japan on Sunday as Typhoon Hinnamnor, the strongest global storm this year, blew its way past Taiwan and the Koreas with fierce winds and heavy rains.

Shanghai grounded ferry services and deployed more than 50,000 police officers to aid with rescues and guide traffic away from danger areas. The eastern business hub of Wenzhou ordered all classes sus-

pending on Monday.

Hinnamnor is forecasted to move gradually northward into the East China Sea with maximum sustained winds of 109 miles per hour, according to the Hong Kong Observatory.

Evacuations and flight cancellations have been ordered in Japan's southern Okinawa Island. The typhoon is also expected to bring intense rainfall to the Korean Peninsula, bringing the possibility of flooding.

China's National Meteorological Center issued a yellow typhoon warning at 10 a.m.

Sunday, and warned of heavy rains in northeastern Zhejiang, Shanghai and self-governing Taiwan.

Ships were told to return to port to take shelter from the wind, and the center also urged people against large gatherings both indoors and outdoors.

In Japan, the typhoon lashed Okinawa and nearby islands with heavy rain and fierce winds, threatening flooding and grounding more than 100 flights connecting the islands and parts of the main southern island of Kyushu.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man 3D prints device to alter semi-automatics

MS JACKSON — A Mississippi man has pleaded guilty to three counts in a case that involved using a 3D printer to create devices that turn semi-automatic weapons into machine guns, federal officials said.

Kent Edward Newhouse, 41, of Jackson, pleaded guilty to one count of engaging in business as a firearm manufacturer and two of possessing a firearm after a felony conviction, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Federal law classifies the conversion devices — called “auto-sears” — as machine guns, the statement said.

“The use of 3-D printers to unlawfully manufacture firearms, and to make devices to convert semiautomatic firearms into machine guns, poses a real and current threat to our communities,” said Kurt Thielhorn, ATF special agent in charge.

Man sentenced for Brady Super Bowl ring fraud

CA SANTA ANA — A New Jersey man who posed as a former New England Patriots player in order to buy and sell Super Bowl rings that he claimed were gifts to Tom Brady's family was sentenced to three years in federal prison.

Scott V. Spina Jr., 25, of Roseland, was sentenced by a judge in Southern California's Orange County.

In 2017, Spina bought a Patriots' 2016 Super Bowl championship ring from a Patriots player who then left the team. Prosecu-

tors said Spina paid the player — identified only as T.J. — with at least one bad check and sold the ring for \$63,000 to an Orange County broker of championship rings.

“When Spina obtained the player ring, he also received the information that allowed the former player to purchase Super Bowl rings for family and friends that are slightly smaller than the player rings,” the U.S. attorney's office said in a statement.

Spina then called the company that made the rings, claimed to be the former player and ordered three family-and-friend rings with “Brady” engraved on them, claiming they were gifts for Brady's baby, prosecutors said.

Spina sold the rings to an auction house for \$100,000 — much more than he'd paid for them, prosecutors said.

At a February 2018 auction, one of them sold for more than \$337,000, authorities said.

Man in custody after stolen truck strikes train

CO NUNN — After a brief standoff, police have taken into custody a man who sideswiped a freight train with a truck reported stolen in rural northern Colorado.

Aerial footage broadcast by a news station helicopter showed Weld County sheriff's deputies and local police taking the man into custody alongside a rail line near the town of Nunn, about 65 miles north of Denver.

The man, whose identity wasn't immediately released, refused to leave the truck after the collision. That prompted a standoff with officers bearing firearms and shields, said Joe

Moylan, a spokesman with the Weld County Sheriff's Office.

Officers tried firing one round of tear gas to force him out, then smashed a window on the passenger's side of the vehicle to distract him and grabbed him from the driver's side, Moylan said.

Funds taken from city electronically recovered

KY LEXINGTON — More than \$3.9 million in housing funds that was taken electronically has been recovered, a Kentucky mayor said.

The funds were seized from a private account and refunded to the city of Lexington, a news release from the city said.

The federal rent assistance and transitional housing funds were meant to be transferred to the Community Action Council. But someone managed to divert the funds into a private account, the release said.

Investigators have no evidence of criminal activity by employees of the city or Community Action Council, the release said. The investigation is continuing.

Police: Arrest made in jogger's disappearance

TN MEMPHIS — Police in Tennessee said Sunday that an arrest has been made in connection with the abduction of a jogger last week.

The Memphis Police Department said Cleotha Abston, 38, has been charged with especially aggravated kidnapping and tampering with evidence in the disappearance of Eliza Fletcher, of Memphis. A second person was also arrested, but police

said that suspect was “currently not believed to be connected” to Fletcher's abduction early Friday.

Authorities say Fletcher, 34, was forced into a vehicle near the University of Memphis campus. She was jogging when a man approached her and forced her into a dark-colored GMC Terrain after a brief struggle. Fletcher was reported missing when she did not return home.

Fletcher is the granddaughter of the late Joseph “Joe” Orgill III, a Memphis hardware businessman and philanthropist, according to news outlets.

Police said Fletcher is still missing.

3 teens cause \$100K in damages at school

FL PALATKA — A trio of teens broke windows, damaged toilets and backed-up sinks in acts of vandalism that caused \$100,000 in damages to a Florida middle school, authorities said.

The three 14-year-olds caused extensive damage to most buildings at Jenkins Middle School in Palatka, Fla., according to the Putnam County Sheriff's Office. Palatka is about 65 miles south of Jacksonville.

The school closed for repairs.

The teens discharged 17 fire extinguishers and broke security cameras, but not before the cameras recorded the destruction, including an image of one of the suspects who was identified later by a school resource deputy at Palatka Junior-Senior High School.

The juveniles were charged, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

— From wire reports



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No. 2 Ohio State wears down Irish

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — With its vaunted offense bogged down, No. 2 Ohio State leaned on its revamped defense in a top-five opener against a former Buckeye that tested its toughness.

C.J. Stroud threw two touchdown passes and Ohio State shut out No. 5 Notre Dame over the final 42 minutes in a gritty 21-10 victory on Saturday night.

“The story of the night was the defense, to turn around and play the way they did after what’s been said about them in the offseason, questioning their toughness, and play the way they did against the No. 5 team in the country ... I thought the energy was off the charts for the defense tonight,” Ohio State coach Ryan Day said.

The first regular season meeting of the storied programs since 1996 was a homecoming for first-year Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman. The former Buckeyes linebacker has made a meteoric rise to lead the Fighting Irish at the age of 36.

Freeman is 0-2 as a head coach after losing a bowl game just weeks after being named Brian Kelly’s successor.

The Irish hung with the high-scoring Buckeyes for most of three quarters, frustrating Heisman Trophy finalist Stroud and putting together a couple of first-half scor-

ing drives.

“We battled for two-and-a-half quarters, but then they scored with 17 seconds left in the third and we didn’t respond,” Freeman said.

Ohio State’s defense, too generous against the run last season, put the clamps on the Irish and new starting quarterback Tyler Buchner in the second half.

“We were called soft all last year and we had to sit there and just eat,” Ohio State defensive back Lathan Ransom said.

Day turned over his defensive staff in the offseason, bringing in Jim Knowles from Oklahoma State to be coordinator.

How quickly the Buckeyes would pick up a scheme that is considered more complicated than the one they have been running was an open question.

They looked good in game one, as the Irish managed just 253 yards and punted on their last six possessions. Tommy Eichenberg had two of Ohio State’s three sacks.

“We got a lot to prove. And everyone just played extremely confident, too,” Eichenberg said.

The Irish D could only hold up for so long.

On a third-and-long, Notre Dame brought multiple blitzers and Ohio State gave Stroud plenty of time to find Xavier Johnson open down the vacated deep middle for a 24-yard

score. That put the Buckeyes up 14-10 with 17 seconds left in the third quarter.

On its next drive, Ohio State went 95 yards on 14 plays, taking seven minutes off the clock and making it 21-10 on a 1-yard surge by Miyan Williams.

Williams ran for 84 yards on 14 carries and TreVeyon Henderson had 91 on 15 attempts.

Ohio State led the nation in scoring and yards per play last season, but for much of the night it was a slog for Stroud. And Day seemed thrilled to see his team endure.

“We wanted to be known as something other than talented,” Day said.

Playing mostly without star receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who took a hard hit on the first series, Stroud threw for 223 yards, including a 31-yard TD to Emeka Egbuka to make it 7-3 in the first quarter.

But that was it for the Buckeyes in the first half.

Buchner and the Irish responded with a long drive capped by Audric Etime’s 1-yard touchdown leap in the second quarter to put the Irish up 10-7.

That’s how it went to the half. Things could not have gone much better for Freeman to that point in his return to Ohio Stadium, but it turned out that was as good as it would get.

Air Force rushes for 582 yards, 5 TDs in opening win

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Haaziq Daniels completed three passes for 109 yards and carried it 12 times for 107 as Air Force opened the season with a 48-17 victory over Northern Iowa on Saturday.

Daniels’ first pass of the game went for an 80-yard touchdown as he scrambled and found Dane Kinamon wide open along the left sideline. It was the eighth longest pass play in program history. Kinamon also broke loose for a 71-yard touchdown run late in the first quarter.

Air Force led 27-3 at halftime. Daniels had 102 yards passing with a touchdown and 107 yards rushing, including a 12-yard touchdown. Kinamon had two rushes for 77 yards in the first half and one reception for 80 yards.

Air Force gained 582 yards on 62 carries and the Falcons’ defense held UNI to 405 total yards. Brad Roberts, Jalen Johnson, Kinamon and Jensen Jones each had a rush-

ing touchdown. Roberts rushed for a team-high 114 yards, including his 71-yard touchdown.

Theo Day threw for 286 yards with two touchdowns and one interception for Northern Iowa.

Coastal Carolina 38, Army 28: Grayson McCall threw for three touchdowns and added a rushing score with 3:01 remaining as the host Chanticleers held off the Black Knights in an opener for both teams.

Army used a 53-second drive to pull within 31-28 after Cade Ballard found Braheam Murphy wide open for a 73-yard score. But McCall led a 10-play, 75-yard scoring drive, capped by his 5-yard sneak up the middle.

CCU forced a four-and-out and took over with 1:36 left in front of 21,165, setting a program attendance record at Brooks Stadium.

McCall was 12 of 17 for 174 yards. Reese White led the Chanticleers on the ground with 21 carries for 133 yards and a touchdown. CJ Beasley added 91 yards on 19 car-

ries.

McCall led back-to-back scoring drives spanning the first-quarter break to give Coastal Carolina a 14-7 lead. McCall found White coming out of the backfield for a 6-yard score and Sam Pinckney later made a diving catch in the end zone from 26-yards out.

Tyrell Robinson opened the scoring for Amy with a 70-yard touchdown run up the middle. Army’s second big scoring play of the game came on a play action as Ay’Jaun Marshall was left wide open and Tyhier Tyler found him for a 54-yard connection.

Delaware 14, Navy 7: Nolan Henderson threw a pair of touchdown passes and FCS-member Delaware beat the host Midshipmen to give Ryan Carty a win in his debut as the Fightin’ Blue Hens’ coach.

It was Delaware’s first win over an FBS team and Navy’s first loss to an FCS team since the Blue Hens beat the Midshipmen in 2007.

Cease, White Sox fall short of no-hitting Twins

Associated Press

CHICAGO—Dylan Cease had fans on their feet, hoping he would get that final out and complete the no-hitter.

The White Sox's ace would have loved nothing more than to deliver. Instead, his bid ended just a little short.

Cease came within one out of his first career no-hitter, and the streaking Chicago White Sox pounded the Minnesota Twins 13-0 on Saturday night.

Cease got a huge ovation when he came out to start the ninth. With fans standing, he struck out Caleb Hamilton swinging on a 1-2 slider and retired Gilberto Celestino on a fly to center.

Luis Arraez, who leads the American League with a .318 average, then dumped a line-drive single into right-center on a 1-1 pitch, ending Cease's bid for Chicago's third no-hitter in as many years. Lucas Giolito tossed one against Pittsburgh in 2020, and Carlos Rodón did it against Cleveland on April 14, 2021.

"Obviously, it's disappointing," Cease said. "But that's the game."

After a meeting on the mound, Cease struck out Kyle Garlick to finish his first career nine-inning complete game. He threw a seven-inning shutout against Detroit in 2021.

Teammates lined up outside the dugout and high-fived Cease as he walked off. Fans chanted "Cease! Cease!" during a TV interview and showered him with more cheers as he left.

"It would have meant a lot," Cease said. "It's obviously an incredibly difficult feat to achieve. It definitely would have meant a lot."

Rays 2, Yankees 1: Corey Kluber limited the Yankees to a pair of singles over seven shutout innings and host Tampa Bay withstood Aaron Judge's 52nd home run to cut its deficit in the AL East to four games.

The first-place Yankees, who have seen their 15 1/2-game advantage slip away, have lost six of

seven. This was the second of six games between the teams in a 10-day stretch. Yandy Diaz hit a two-run single in the third inning and the Rays made it stand up.

Judge boosted his major league homer lead with a leadoff drive in the ninth inning off Jason Adam. But Adam retired the next three batters for his eighth save.

Kluber (10-7) struck out four without a walk as the Rays improved their AL-best record since Aug. 3 to 20-9. It was the first time the 36-year old has thrown a pitch in the seventh inning since his no-hitter for the Yankees on May 19, 2021, at Texas.

Braves 2, Marlins 1: Robbie Grossman drew a tiebreaking bases-loaded walk against Steven Okert in the ninth inning, bailing out closer Kenley Jansen and giving host Atlanta the win.

Matt Olson singled to begin the ninth to break an 0-for-22 skid and advanced to third on Michael Harris II's double. After Okert (5-2) intentionally walked Vaughn Grissom to load the bases and pinch-hitter Travis d'Arnaud lined out against a five-man infield, Grossman took drew the walk to win it.

Austin Riley homered in his fourth straight game and Bryce Elder pitched six strong innings in a spot start for Atlanta. The Braves have won four in a row and 19 of 24 to move within two games of the first-place New York Mets in the NL East.

Angels 2, Astros 1 (12): Matt Duffy's bloop single in the 12th inning drove in Taylor Ward with the winning run to lead host Los Angeles on a night Shohei Ohtani reached 400 major league strikeouts.

With Ward as the automatic runner in the 12th, Max Stassi drew a walk from Will Smith with two outs. Seth Martinez (0-2) came on and Astros center fielder Mauricio Dubon appeared to make a diving catch on Duffy's ball, but first-base umpire Jordan Baker said Dubon didn't come up with it in time.

Instant replay upheld the call as the ball hit the ground before Dubon was able to get his glove on it.

Ohtani threw a a season-high 111 pitches over eight innings, allowing six hits and striking out five. It was the fourth time in the majors — and second this year — he has gone eight innings.

Giants 5, Phillies 4: Joc Pederson drove in three runs, drawing a bases-loaded walk that broke a sixth-inning tie and sending host San Francisco past Philadelphia.

The Giants won their second in a row following a seven-game losing streak. The Phillies have lost five of six, but still hold the third NL wild card spot.

Red Sox 5, Rangers 3: Brayan Bello pitched six scoreless innings in his first major league win and John Schreiber escaped a jam in the ninth, helping host Boston beat Texas.

Bello (1-4) allowed three hits, struck out five and walked one in the longest of his eight big league appearances. Rafael Devers drove in two runs in Boston's fourth straight victory. Devers, Xander Bogaerts and Trevor Story each had two hits.

Brewers 8, Diamondbacks 6 (10): Tyrone Taylor hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning after pinch-hitter Rowdy Tellez's tying solo shot in the ninth, lifting visiting Milwaukee past Arizona.

Andrew McCutchen pulled the Brewers within 6-5 with a run-scoring single in the eighth inning after an out call at the plate was overturned on review. Tellez then tied it with his 28th homer of the season in the ninth, a solo shot off Ian Kennedy.

Taylor, who also hit a solo homer in the fifth inning, put the Brewers up 8-6 with his homer off Joe Mantiplay (2-5) in the top of the 10th.

Blue Jays 4, Pirates 1: Bo Bichette hit a tiebreaking three-run double in the seventh inning to lift visiting Toronto over Pittsburgh.

George Springer and Bichette each had two hits for the Blue Jays, who won for the fourth time

in five games and maintained their lead for the third and final wild card in the American League. Toronto drew within six games of the division-leading New York Yankees in the AL East.

Mariners 4, Guardians 0: Robbie Ray started September the way he finished August with six solid innings as visiting Seattle beat Cleveland for its sixth straight win.

The AL Central-leading Guardians lost their fourth in a row and have been shut out in three of them.

Cardinals 8, Cubs 4: Paul Goldschmidt hit his 34th homer, and host St. Louis won its third straight.

Tommy Edman and Tyler O'Neill also went deep for the NL Central-leading Cardinals, who improved to 27-8 in their last 35 games. Yadier Molina had two hits and three RBIs, and Adam Wainwright (10-9) pitched five innings of four-run ball for the win.

Nationals 7, Mets 1: Mets ace Max Scherzer exited with left side fatigue after five sharp innings and 67 pitches and NL East-leading New York lost to visiting Washington.

Scherzer, who missed almost seven weeks earlier this season with a left oblique strain, had his fastball clocked as high as 96 mph. He retired his final seven batters before heading straight to the tunnel leading to the Mets' clubhouse following the fifth.

Orioles 8, Athletics 1: Ryan Mountcastle hit two of host Baltimore's five homers and drove in four runs in a win over Oakland.

Royals 12, Tigers 2: Kyle Isbel hit his first grand slam, Bobby Witt Jr. added a three-run home run and visiting Kansas City routed Detroit.

Dodgers 12, Padres 1: Julio Urias continued to solidify his spot atop the Dodgers' rotation while Mookie Betts hit one of host Los Angeles' four home runs in a win that ended its three-game losing streak.

Kvitova, Pegula set US Open rematch

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Much like for so many other folks, Serena Williams' last match at the U.S. Open was must-see TV for players who were still in the tournament, so Jessica Pegula and Petra Kvitova tuned in from their hotel rooms the night before their victories led off Saturday's schedule and set up a fourth-round showdown.

"Of course I watched Serena. I'm like everyone else," said Pegula, a 28-year-old American who is seeded No. 8 at Flushing Meadows and beat qualifier Yuan Yue 6-2, 6-7 (6), 6-0. "You feel kind of sad that's how it ends. But, I don't know, like I got a little, like, sentimental, too, watching her, how emotional she was getting."

Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon champion from the Czech Republic, credited Williams' last stand — the owner of 23 Grand Slam titles fended off five match points before bowing out in three sets against Ajla Tomljanovic on Friday night in what is expected to be her final contest — with offering inspiration.

"It was very special. She didn't want to leave the court, for sure.

That was the same case with me today, actually. I didn't want to go out of this tournament, so I was just there hanging (in), somehow," said Kvitova, who erased deficit after deficit, including a pair of match points, to edge Garbiñe Muguruza 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (12-10).

"That's what Serena showed last night," said Kvitova, who dropped her racket and covered her face with her hands when what she called a "nightmare" of a tiebreaker was over. "It was nice to see her yesterday, fighting until the end."

Yes, Williams is gone, leaving the year's last major tournament — and, in some ways, the sport as a whole — without its biggest star and storyline. Still, the show must go on.

So there was Kvitova, undaunted as ever, despite dropping the first set, despite trailing 5-2 in the third, despite being a point from defeat twice at 6-5.

Here's how close this one was: Kvitova won 109 total points, and Muguruza had 108.

"Left everything on the court today," said No. 9 Muguruza, a two-time Slam winner whose de-

parture means the bracket is without six of the top 10 women entering the fourth round.

No. 1 Iga Swiatek advanced by beating Lauren Davis 6-3, 6-4, and No. 6 Aryna Sabalenka defeated Clara Burel 6-0, 6-2.

During the night session in Ashe, 22-time major champ Rafael Nadal improved his career mark against Richard Gasquet to 18-0 with a 6-0, 6-1, 7-5 victory. Nadal won the opening nine games and was on his way to improving to 22-0 in Grand Slam matches in 2022.

Nadal did not have stitches or a bandage on his nose, two days after accidentally cutting it with his racket during his previous victory.

"A little bit bigger than usual, but it's OK," he said with a smile. "The nose is still there."

Nadal's win was followed by Australian Open runner-up Danielle Collins' 6-4, 7-6 (11-9) win over Alizé Cornet.

On Monday, Nadal will take on No. 22 Frances Tiafoe, the first American man since Mardy Fish in 2010-12 to get to the U.S. Open's fourth round in three consecutive years. Tiafoe eliminated

No. 14 Diego Schwartzman 7-6 (7), 6-4, 6-4.

It was going to be tough for any of the day's matches to live up to the sort of attention Williams drew, or the atmosphere she helped create, during her three-match run in Ashe.

"I just can't believe the 'era of Serena' on the tennis court is over," Pegula said. "I mean, it's just hard to picture tennis without her."

Pegula started her Grand Slam career by going 3-8. She's gone 22-7 since, including runs to quarterfinals at the Australian Open each of the past two years and the French Open this year.

Pegula came into Saturday with an 0-2 record in third-round matches at Flushing Meadows, including a loss to Kvitova in 2020. Pegula gets another shot at Kvitova on Monday.

"Petra is so hard to play. I feel like when she's on, she blows you off the court. And then sometimes she can be off. ... She's a fighter. When it clicks, it's really difficult," Pegula said, then was sure to add: "I think I'm a much better player now than I was when I played her last time."

Cavs add All-Star guard Mitchell, jump into East title hunt

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — With one bold, unexpected move, the Cleveland Cavaliers raised their profile in the Eastern Conference considerably.

They're back in the title hunt.

The Cavs made official Saturday their acquisition of three-time All-Star guard Donovan Mitchell in a trade with Utah, and can start figuring out ways to best integrate his talents into their young core.

Considered outsiders to land the dynamic player for much of this offseason, the Cavs swooped in and put together a package that the Jazz, which had offers from several other teams, couldn't resist.

Cleveland sent guard Collin Sexton, forward Lauri Markkanen and rookie guard Ochai Agbaji to Utah along with unprotected first-round draft picks in 2025, 2027 and 2029.

The teams will also swap their first-round drafting rights in 2026 and 2028.

Sexton, who was a restricted free agent, signed a four-year, \$72 million deal as part of the package, his agent Rich Paul of Klutch Sports told the Associated Press on Thursday.

In adding Mitchell, the Cavs have, at the very least, entered the conversation to contend in the overloaded East, where Boston, Brooklyn, Miami, Milwaukee and Philadelphia are all considered championship-worthy.

"The acquisition of Donovan Mitchell presented us with an incredible opportunity to bring one of the NBA's most dynamic young All-Stars to Cleveland," said Koby Altman, the Cavaliers' president of basketball operations. "Already a special and proven talent at just 25 years old, Donovan brings a competitive mentality that organically fits with the

core group of this team.

"We are excited to see the impact that someone of Donovan's caliber can bring to the Cavaliers with his ability to score the basketball, but also make plays for his teammates."

In Cleveland, which had a 22-win team two years ago, the rebuild appears to be complete for a franchise that got accustomed to winning when LeBron James was around.

The 25-year-old gives Cleveland the type of megastar it takes to win it all. A fearless driver, explosive scorer and creator, Mitchell is a give-me-the-ball-in-crunch-time player who raises his game and his teammates' game.

Cleveland hasn't made the playoffs since James left for a second time in 2018, ending the Cavs' four-year run to the Finals. They've been patient in putting things in place to take another shot at a title, and Mitchell gets them closer to one.