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NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

RUSSIANS DRAFTED TO JOIN FIGHT IN UKRAINE

Military mobilization escalates; some civilians flee to avoid conscription

THE NEW YORK TIMES

A day after President Vladimir Putin announced a call-up that could sweep 300,000 civilians into military service, thousands of Russians across the country received draft papers Thursday and some were marched to buses and planes for training — and perhaps soon a trip to the front lines in Ukraine.

Putin's escalation of the war effort was reverberating across the country, according to interviews, Russian news reports and social media posts. As the day wore on, it became increasingly clear that Putin's decision had torn open the cocoon shielding much of Russian society from their leader's invasion of a neighbor.

Mothers, wives and children were saying tearful goodbyes in remote regions as officials — in some cases, schoolteachers — delivered draft notices to houses and apartment blocks. In mountainous eastern Siberia, Russian news media reported, school buses were commandeered to move troops to training grounds.

Russian officials said the call-up would be limited to people with combat experience. But the net appeared wider, and some men decided it was best to head for the borders.

Yanina Nimayeva, a journalist from the Buryatia region of Siberia
SEE RUSSIA • A8

READY FOR THE AIR SHOW

At Marine Corps Air Station Miramar on Thursday, members of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force rehearse with infantry Marines for a demonstration that will be part of the Miramar Air Show, which begins today and runs through Sunday. Story, B1.

S.D. SENTENCING PUT OFF FOR 'FAT LEONARD'

Francis, central figure in Navy bribery scandal, in custody in Venezuela

BY GREG MORAN & ALEX RIGGINS

It was meant to be the culmination of nearly a decade of revelations about corruption at the highest levels of the Navy, where Leonard Glenn Francis — the mastermind of the scandal that has tarnished the service — was supposed to be sentenced for his crimes.

Instead, the hearing Thursday

morning in the San Diego federal courtroom of U.S. District Judge Janis Sammartino was oddly muted — mostly because the main figure was in custody some 3,500 miles away in Caracas, Venezuela.

Francis, known by the nickname "Fat Leonard" because of his once-ample size, was arrested by Interpol agents on Tuesday at Simón Bolívar International Airport. He had been on the run for more than two weeks after cutting off his GPS



Leonard Glenn Francis

monitor at his rented home in Torrey Highlands on Sept. 4 and high-tailing it out of the jurisdiction.

Francis was about to board a plane, trying to reach his final destination of Russia, when he was apprehended, according to a Venezuelan Interpol official.

That meant the hearing was a bit of an anticlimax. Sammartino said there was not much to do without Francis being present. She set another hearing for Dec. 14 to further assess the status of the case.

Francis will have to be extradited back to the U.S., which will almost certainly be challenging. While the U.S. and Venezuela have

an extradition agreement dating back 100 years, diplomatic and other relations between the nations are poor.

The U.S. does not recognize the country's president, Nicolás Maduro, as the legitimate ruler of the nation and has imposed heavy sanctions on him. Instead, the U.S. considers Juan Guaidó, the leader of Venezuela's National Assembly, as the interim president.

Even when relationships between countries are strong, an extradition can take months or years to complete, according to the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, which
SEE FRANCIS • A7

UC MAY OFFER SOME SECOND CHANCE AT ADMISSION IF THEY TAKE PREP COURSES

BY TERESA WATANABE

The University of California, aiming to widen admission access for disadvantaged students, will give a second chance to thousands of rejected California high school applicants who had a qualifying 3.0 grade point average but failed to complete the required series of 15 college preparation courses.

But there's a catch to receiving a guaranteed spot at the highly competitive universities: Students must first successfully complete their missing lower division and general education courses at a community college and earn the program's required grades.

The proposed pilot program, presented Wednesday at the Board of Regents meeting in San Diego, is aimed at about 3,700 of the 10,000 California first-year UC applicants who did not meet the system's first-year admission requirements — about half of whom were low-income, underrepresented students of color or the first in their families to attend college.

Beginning next year, such students who meet the pilot program's requirements will receive a guaranteed spot at one of six UC campuses —
SEE UC • A6

SAN DIEGO'S LUXURY HOME SALES SINK; HIGH-END MARKET SLUMPS

Region is among those showing the biggest slowdowns

BY PHILLIP MOLNAR

San Diego luxury home sales are down by more than half as the high-end market sees its biggest drop in at least a decade.

Out of the 50 most-populated metro areas, San Diego had the fourth-highest drop in luxury sales from June to August, said a report from Redfin released Thursday. The number of sales was down 55.3 percent from the same time last year.

The markets with the biggest drops were Oakland (down 63.9 percent), San Jose (down 59.6 percent) and Miami (down 55.5 percent). The lowest drops were in Kansas City (down 10.4 percent) and Indianapolis (down 7.5 percent).



JOHN GIBBINS U-T FILE

Luxury home sales in San Diego are plummeting. Experts attribute the reversal to a number of factors including interest rate increases.

Redfin defined luxury housing as the top 5 percent of the highest-priced homes for sale. So, what is considered luxury differed greatly across metro areas. For example, the median price of a luxury home in Cleveland was \$629,000, compared to \$3.3 million in San Diego metro (which includes all of

San Diego County).

Rising mortgage rates are cited as the main reason for the entire housing market slowing down. Redfin also said economic uncertainty and a tepid stock market also were dampening sales.

Redfin chief economist
SEE LUXURY • A7

JUDGE ASKED TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Lawyers for plaintiff in Ash Street lawsuit seek chance for trial

BY JEFF MCDONALD

Lawyers for taxpayer John Gordon pleaded with a Superior Court judge Thursday to look beyond the language of the Ash Street lease and consider what they said was outside evidence that San Diego city officials were lied to and cheated before acquiring the vacant office tower.

The defendants in the two-year-old lawsuit, meanwhile, urged judge Joel Wohlfeil to uphold his tentative ruling from Wednesday and dismiss the trustee representing lender CGA Capital of Maryland from the litigation.

"At the end of the day, we have shown that the lease is constitutional," said attorney Craig Ganz, who represents Wilmington Trust, the agency managing the \$6.4 million in annual payments the city was obligated to make for a 19-story office tower that is not safe to occupy.

"The plaintiff has utterly failed to show any evidence to the contrary," Ganz told Wohlfeil at the Thursday hearing.
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