

What to know about Fort Knox's gold depository

BY REBECCA REYNOLDS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — President Donald Trump says Elon Musk will be looking at Fort Knox, the legendary depository in Kentucky for American gold reserves, to make sure the gold is still there.

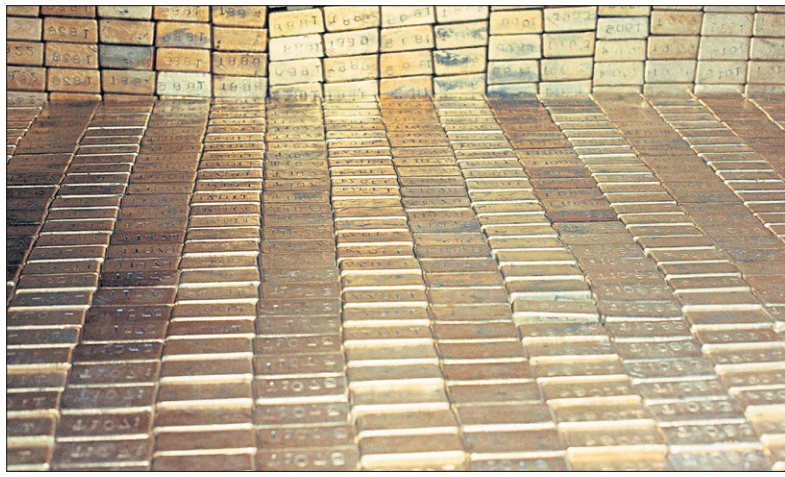
Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent says there is an audit every year and that “all the gold is present and accounted for.”

The United States Bullion Depository at Fort Knox has stored precious metal bullion reserves for the United States since 1937 and has become synonymous for secure and well protected. Along with protecting gold reserves, Fort Knox is currently also used as the Army's human resources command center, and it hosts the Army's largest annual training event each summer.

FORT KNOX HISTORY AND LOCATION

The Army post is about 35 miles south of Louisville and encompasses 109,000 acres in three Kentucky counties — Bullitt, Hardin, and Mead.

Camp Knox was established during World War I and became an artillery training center,



Barry Thumma/AP photo

Gold bars are stored at the U.S. Depository in Ft. Knox, Kentucky, Sept. 24, 1974.

according to the Army post's website. It was made a permanent installation in 1932 and has been known since then as Fort Knox. The first gold arrived at Fort Knox in 1937 with the 1st Cavalry Regiment called on to guard the shipment.

With the outbreak of World War II in Europe, the Army created the Armored Force at Fort Knox, and thousands of soldiers were ordered there and introduced to the tank. For nearly 80 years, the post was known as the “Home of Cavalry and Armor.”

In 2005, the Army decided

to move the Armor Center and School to Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Human Resource Command Center of Excellence was established at Fort Knox. In 2013, ROTC Cadet Summer Training was consolidated at Fort Knox. The post hosts the Army's largest annual training event each summer.

HOW MUCH GOLD IS STORED AT FORT KNOX

According to the U.S. Mint, current gold holdings at the US Bullion Depository at Fort Knox are 147.3 million ounces. About

half of the Treasury's stored gold is kept at Fort Knox.

Has the gold ever been removed? The Mint says only very small quantities have been removed to test the purity of the gold during regularly scheduled audits. Except for these samples, no gold has been transferred to or from the depository for many years. The gold's book value is \$42.22 per ounce.

JUST HOW SECURE IS FORT KNOX

The depository is very secure. The actual structure and content of the facility is known by only a few, and no one person knows all the procedures to open the vault.

What is known publicly is that the facility was built in 1936 using 16,000 cubic feet of granite, 4,200 cubic yards of concrete, 750 tons of reinforcing steel and 670 tons of structural steel. The facility is heavily guarded and has broken its strict policy of not allowing visitors only three times.

HAS ANYONE BEEN ALLOWED TO SEE THE GOLD RESERVES?

In 1974, the US Mint opened the vaults to a group of journalists and a congressional delega-

tion so they could see the gold reserves. The Treasury secretary allowed the visit after persistent rumors that the gold had been removed. Until then, the only person other than authorized personnel to access the vaults was President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Since then, the vaults have been opened one other time: In 2017, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin visited with Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin and congressional representatives. Current Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said he would happily arrange an inspection for any senator who is interested in seeing the vaults.

FORT KNOX IN POPULAR LEXICON

The gold depository at Fort Knox has a reputation for being impenetrable, which has gained it a place in popular culture. As early as 1952, a Looney Tunes cartoon featured Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam digging for gold Fort Knox. Fort Knox has also been featured in the plot of movies such as the 1964 James Bond spy thriller “Goldfinger,” and the 1981 comedy “Stripes,” which was partially filmed at the post.



New York State Attorney General office/AP photo

This image provided by the New York State Attorney General office shows body camera footage of correction officers beating a handcuffed man, Robert Brooks, 43, at the Marcy Correctional Facility in Oneida County, N.Y., on Dec. 9, 2024.

NY prison guards charged in inmate's death appear in court

BY MICHAEL HILL

UTICA, N.Y. — Six New York prison guards have been indicted for second-degree murder in the beating death of a handcuffed inmate, a brutal incident captured on body-worn cameras that triggered widespread outrage and calls for justice.

Four other corrections workers were charged with lesser crimes in the December death of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility in an indictment unsealed Thursday.

The special prosecutor, Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick, said especially disturbing to him was the “sense of normalcy” of the employees on the video, which was caught unintentionally on the body-worn cameras.

“I think any sentient human being looking at the tapes naturally comes to the conclusion that he must have said something. He must have spit at the officers. He must have resisted in some way. And the fact of the matter is, he did absolutely nothing,” Fitzpatrick said during a news conference after the court proceeding.

Handcuffed corrections employees appeared one after another in a packed Utica court to enter not guilty pleas. Fitzpatrick said at least six made bond in court. Bail for the murder charges was set at a \$250,000 bail bond or a \$1 million partially secured surety bond.

After some of the corrections officers were released, one man said, “This is not justice, judge — These people killed a Black man,” as he left the courtroom. One woman was removed after shouting “murderer, murderer.”

Protesters were upset that officers were offered bail. Fitzpatrick said the judge followed the law and the men were not flight risks.

Prison guards Nicholas Anzalone, David Kingsley, Anthony Farina, Christopher Walrath and Mathew Galliher were among the people charged with second-degree murder, according to court documents. The name of the sixth person was redacted because they'll appear in court next week.

All six were also charged with first-degree manslaughter, meaning prosecutors believe they are criminally liable for the conduct of others.

Brooks had been serving a 12-year prison sentence for first-degree assault since 2017. He arrived at the prison 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of New York City only shortly before the videotaped beating after being transferred from another nearby facility.

Fitzpatrick said Brooks was beaten three separate times as soon as he arrived at the prison, the last being the fatal beating in the infirmary caught on body-camera footage.

The video shows officers pummeling Brooks, whose hands are cuffed behind his back. Officers strike him in the chest with a shoe and lift him by the neck and drop him. The video recorded on the night of Dec. 9 has no sound, but the guards meting out the punishment and watching it appear unconcerned. Brooks, 43, died the next day.

Brooks died of a “massive beating” that broke a bone in his neck, ripped his thyroid cartilage and bruised several internal organs. He also died as a result of repeated restrictions to his

airways, which caused brain damage, and choking on his own blood, Fitzpatrick said. Fitzpatrick said Thursday that he'll prove in court that the guards thought the body-worn cameras were off, raising concerns about a culture among guards in which a group beating of an inmate could be carried out with an apparent “sense of normalcy.”

Robert Brooks Jr., the victim's son, said after witnessing court proceedings that the indictments were a step toward accountability.

“These men killed my father, it was on video. The whole world got to see it. Waiting a month for these charges has been incredibly hard. But these men must be prosecuted and convicted of the crimes they made,” the younger Brooks said.

Robert Brooks Jr. claimed in a federal lawsuit filed in January that his father's attackers “systematically and casually beat him to death” and that the prison system tolerates violence.

Fitzpatrick said the charges reflected responsibility: Those who beat Brooks, those who watched, and those who knew about it or should have, but did absolutely nothing to stop it.

Galliher, one of the corrections officers, was further charged with gang assault. Three other prison guards were charged with lesser manslaughter offenses, meaning that prosecutors believe they did not commit murder, but were criminally responsible for the actions of others to some degree. They are Michael Mashaw, Michael Fisher and David Walters.

One worker, whose title was unclear, was charged with tampering with evidence.

Bills pushing abortion-related murder charges gain traction

BY KIMBERLEE KRUESI
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Abortion rights advocates feared the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that opened the door to state abortion bans would also lead to tracking women and charging women who get abortions with murder.

No states have allowed either, but the ideas, once off the table, have gotten attention in legislatures this month.

Oklahoma lawmakers killed a bill that would have allowed murder charges after a public hearing, and North Dakota did so after a floor debate. Similar bills have been introduced before, but they haven't been granted hearings, in part because most major anti-abortion groups oppose them.

A Missouri committee heard testimony on a bill to create a database of pregnant women deemed “at risk” of getting an abortion and connecting them with prospective adoptive parents.

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE PROPOSALS:

Missouri proposal would make a database of certain pregnant women

Under the Missouri legislation, the state Department of Social Services would be directed to create a new division tasked with maintaining a “central registry of each expectant mother who is at risk for seeking an abortion.”

The division would also keep a list of prospective adoptive parents and coordinate adoption proceedings.

House Speaker Jonathan Patterson, a Republican, said Thursday that he wants to aid adoption but that the bill doesn't have broad support among House Republicans. Two similar bills were rescinded this week.

“There is some question about the central registry and databases,” Patterson said. “That has to be really tightened up to make sure that people's privacy is protected.”

Republicans are also wary of expanding government and concerned about the measure's estimated \$30 million-a-year cost.

Still, it has won some support.

“Bills like this continue to disprove the false narrative advanced by pro-abor-



Mike Simons/AP photo

Zoe Staires protests against the U.S. Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade, June 24, 2022, in Tulsa, Okla.

tion advocates that the pro-life movement does not care about women, or care about children after they are born,” Susan Klein, executive director of Missouri Right to Life, wrote in a statement supporting the bill.

Tracking pregnancies is not a new worry for advocates

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America says the Missouri legislation is the first of its kind, though fears over the potential tracking of pregnant women are nothing new.

Abortion rights advocates have long argued that if individuals' reproductive health information is not kept private, then it could be used not only in targeted ads but also in law enforcement investigations. Some Democratic-led states have taken steps to protect such health data in recent years.

On a call with reporters Wednesday, Katie Knutter, executive director of Wellspring Health Access, which provides abortion in Wyoming, said that she hears from out-of-state patients that they might be tracked by their home states when they seek abortion — even though laws to do so are not on the books.

“The broader discussion in the media has made patients very aware and very concerned about these things,” Knutter said.

LAWMAKERS CONSIDER BUT REJECT ALLOWING CHARGES AGAINST WOMEN WHO OBTAIN ABORTION

Oklahoma's Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday voted 6-2 against advancing a proposal to allow murder

charges against women who obtain abortions, with possible punishments including the death penalty and life in prison.

A week earlier, North Dakota's House rejected a measure with similar features 77-16.

Groups including the National Right to Life Committee and Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America have for years been urging lawmakers not to consider those measures, arguing that women are often coerced into abortion and should not be punished.

Some conservative lawmakers see it differently.

“While the abortion clinics no longer offer or perform abortion, there is a massive loophole in Oklahomans' laws,” Sen. Dusty Deever, who sponsored the Oklahoma measure, told the judiciary committee during a hearing Wednesday. “Namely, they don't apply to the mothers themselves.”

FOR THE SPONSOR, THE INFLUX OF ABORTION PILLS IS THE GROWING CONCERN

Deever said his approach is the only way to stop the flow of abortion pills prescribed by doctors in other states via telehealth and shipped in. A survey conducted for the Society of Family Planning, which advocates abortion access, found that there were nearly 1,000 abortions via telemedicine in Oklahoma in the second half of 2023. The Guttmacher Institute, another research organization that supports abortion rights, has found that by 2023, more than 6 in 10 abortions in the formal healthcare system nationally involved pills.