

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

North Korean special ops forces potent

The Washington Post

Dozens of special operations troops marched in North Korea's military parade this month, covered from head to toe in green, brown and black camouflage. Carrying variants of the Kalashnikov rifle with high-capacity "helical" magazines, they shouted slogans in support of Kim Jong Un, seemingly delighting the North Korean leader as he watched.

The scene underscored a long-held understanding about Pyongyang's military: Special operations troops have an outsize role.

An assessment of those forces likely will come up Wednesday when the Trump administration hosts an unusual White House briefing for lawmakers about North Korea's military capabilities as Washington pressures Pyongyang to halt its advancing

nuclear weapons program.

In the past few years, national security analysts and senior defense officials have suggested that it may not be North Korea's ballistic missiles or artillery that are used to launch a large-scale attack on South Korea or U.S. installations, but North Korean commandos potentially armed with biological weapons.

The Pentagon also last year quietly realigned its efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction under U.S. Special Operations Command rather than U.S. Strategic Command, which has other missions that range from space operations to missile defense. A senior defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity in order to discuss sensitive operations, said at the time that he considered the situation with North Korea very uncertain and that defense

officials were preparing contingency plans.

North Korean special operations troops have been involved in some of the country's most notorious military operations during the past few decades. They include a 1968 raid on South Korea's capital of Seoul that led to fatalities on both sides and a 1996 incident in which a North Korean reconnaissance submarine ran aground in South Korean waters, prompting a manhunt, firefights and an eventual statement of regret from Pyongyang.

The exact number and capabilities of North Korean special operations forces are not known, but a 2015 Defense Department report to Congress suggests there are at least 180,000 commandos — roughly the same number of U.S. Marines on active duty. The report added that

while it was unlikely that North Korea would launch an attack so large that it prompts an overwhelming response from the U.S. and South Korea, Pyongyang may see value in smaller, asymmetric attacks, in which special operations often play a role.

"Strategic SOF (Special Operations Force) units dispersed across North Korea appear designed for rapid offensive operations, internal defense against foreign attacks, or limited attacks against vulnerable targets in the ROK (Republic of Korea) as part of a coercive diplomacy effort," the report said. "They operate in specialized units, including reconnaissance, airborne and seaborne insertion, commandoes, and other specialties. All emphasize speed of movement and surprise attack to accomplish their missions."

US reassures S. Korea on THAAD after Trump comments

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. administration reassured South Korea on Sunday that it will pay the cost of an advanced missile defense system, officials said in a bid to quell outrage after President Donald Trump said Seoul should cover the \$1 billion cost.

Trump's statement cast a shadow over the long-standing alliance between the two countries at a time of rising tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

The North test-fired a missile Saturday. Military officials said it broke up over land shortly after takeoff, but the launch underscored Pyongyang's defiance despite mounting international pressure and the threat of new economic sanctions.

The USS Carl Vinson strike

group also joined South Korean ships in joint war games off the east coast of the divided peninsula Saturday.

The growing nuclear and missile threat from North Korea was the reason cited by Washington and Seoul when they agreed after months of talks last year to deploy a U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system in a remote southeastern area. But the decision has met fierce opposition from local residents and China, which fears it could be used against its own military.

Protests broke out Wednesday after U.S. trucks carried several THAAD components to their new home in the farming area of Seongju in an overnight operation despite the fact that a promised environmental assessment has yet to be completed.

The issue has emerged as

a hot topic in the May 9 snap presidential election that is expected to usher in a left-leaning government.

"South Korea is already paying dearly for the deployment of the system," the Korea Times newspaper wrote in an editorial published Sunday. "National unity was deeply divided over it. The country is also suffering huge losses from economic retaliation by China, which opposes THAAD."

Critics also say the system is designed to mainly protect U.S. forces in southern hubs and doesn't have Seoul within its range. Military officials insist it is part of a layered defense system, and the South Korean capital is covered by Patriot missiles already in place.

Trump questioned why the United States should pay for the system. "I informed South

Korea it would be appropriate if they paid. It's a billion-dollar system," he told Reuters in an interview on Thursday.

South Korea's military quickly rejected that assertion, saying that according to the agreement, Seoul is responsible for providing the land and basic facilities for THAAD while Washington should pay costs for the deployment and operational work.

White House national security adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster reaffirmed that stance in a 35-minute phone call Sunday with his South Korean counterpart, Kim Kwan-jin, South Korea's presidential office said.

"The two reconfirmed what has been already agreed between (South Korea) and the U.S. regarding cost-bearing for the THAAD deployment by U.S. Forces Korea," it said.

Turkey threatens new action vs. Kurds

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday his country may take further action against Kurdish militants in Iraq and Syria as U.S.-backed forces in Syria closed in on the last neighborhoods of a former stronghold of Islamic State.

The U.S. views the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces as the most effective partner to counter ISIS in northern Syria, an assessment bolstered by the SDF's steady advances against the jihadis.

But it has complicated relations with Turkey, which views the group's Kurdish component as an extension of a terrorist group operating inside its own borders.

In Istanbul, Erdogan insisted that U.S. support for such groups "must come to an end," and said he would bring up the matter at a meeting with President Donald Trump next month.

The SDF, which include Arab fighters, seized six neighborhoods from ISIS militants in Tabqa on Sunday, according to the affiliated Hawar news agency.

Tabqa is 25 miles southeast of ISIS' de facto capital, Raqqa, and an important stronghold for the militants. It lies next to the Tabqa Dam, one of several controlling the flow of the Euphrates River.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said the SDF's control of Tabqa was "practically total."

A U.S. airlift of artillery and Special Forces advisers to place them behind ISIS lines in March was a turning point in the Tabqa offensive and underscored the closeness between Washington and the SDF.

Servicemember killed in Iraq

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A U.S. servicemember in Iraq was killed Saturday by an explosive device outside Mosul, according to a statement released by the Defense Department.

The Pentagon said the servicemember died from wounds sustained in an "explosive device blast," stating further information would be released as appropriate.

Saturday's incident marks the second American military fatality since the start of the Mosul operation against Islamic State more than six months ago.

In October, just days after the

operation to retake Mosul was formally launched, Navy Chief Petty Officer Jason C. Finan, 34, of Anaheim, Calif., died of wounds sustained in a roadside bomb attack north of Mosul.

Finan was part of a team of advisers assisting Iraq's Kurdish fighters known as the Peshmerga.

The Pentagon has acknowledged more than 100 U.S. special operations forces are operating with Iraqi units in and around Mosul, with hundreds more playing a support role in staging bases farther from the front lines.

The servicemember who was killed on Saturday is the fifth combat death in Iraq since the

United States launched military operations against ISIS in August 2014.

ISIS fighters began growing in power in Iraq in early 2014 in the country's west, and in the summer of 2014 swept across much of the country's north.

Since the beginning of the U.S. campaign against ISIS in Iraq, the number of U.S. troops in the country has steadily grown. There are now more U.S. forces in Iraq than at any time since the 2011 U.S. withdrawal from the country, marking an intensifying war as Iraqi forces and the U.S.-led coalition work to push ISIS out of the last pockets of territory the extremists control in Iraq.

DOD: Probes in March find coalition strikes in Iraq, Syria killed 45 civilians

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Investigations conducted in March reveal that U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria killed 45 civilians, mostly in and around the Iraqi city of Mosul, according to a Pentagon statement released Sunday.

In each incident, the Pentagon said "all feasible precautions were taken," but the strikes still resulted in "unintentional" loss of civilian life.

The report did not include findings from an ongoing investigation into a March 17 strike targeting Islamic State fighters in Mosul. That strike resulted in more than 100 civilian deaths, according to reports from residents.

This month, the U.S. acknowledged coalition planes conducted a strike "at the location corresponding to allegations of civilian casualties" but did not confirm the reports of high civilian casualties.

Coalition officials have declined to give a time frame as to

when the investigation into the incident will be complete.

The Pentagon acknowledged that at least 352 civilians have been killed by coalition strikes in Iraq and Syria since the start of the air campaign against ISIS in 2014. Activists and monitoring groups put the number much higher. The London-based monitoring group Airwars reported that coalition strikes have killed more than 3,000 civilians in Iraq and Syria since 2014.

The March 17 strike sparked outrage in Iraq and beyond, with calls from local government officials as well as the United Nations for greater restraint in the fight against ISIS for Mosul. The United Nations reported nearly 2,000 civilians have been treated for trauma since the fight for western Mosul began in February, following the formal launch of the operation to retake Mosul in October 2016.

Iraqi forces declared Mosul's eastern half "fully liberated" in January but have struggled since to retake the city's west-

ern side. Claustrophobic terrain and tens of thousands of civilians being held by the extremists as human shields have bogged down Iraqi and coalition forces.

The Sunday statement also included the findings of an audit begun in March that inspected the way the U.S.-led coalition reports and tracks civilian casualties in the fight against ISIS. The statement said the audit found that 80 civilian deaths caused by coalition airstrikes previously had not been publicly reported, and two civilian deaths previously reported were found not to have been caused by the coalition.

The U.S. began the campaign of airstrikes against ISIS in 2014 after the extremists pushed into Iraq from Syria, overrunning Mosul and large swaths of Iraq's north and west. Since then, Iraqi forces have slowly clawed back territory. Now, a cluster of western Mosul neighborhoods is the last significant urban terrain under ISIS control in Iraq.

VA hospital seeks vets' input

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The American Legion is attempting to expose veterans' issues at the Department of Veterans Affairs' flagship hospital in Washington, following a watchdog report earlier this month that found the facility could have endangered the well-being of patients.

The American Legion, which represents more than 2 million veterans nationwide, will host a town hall-style meeting Wednesday. Washington's congressional delegation and VA staff will be there, and the veterans group is asking any veteran who uses VA health care facilities in the city to show up and share their experiences.

Joe Plenzler, director of media relations for the American Legion, said the group became "very concerned" after the VA inspector general released findings April 12 that the hospital was running out of various medical equipment and failing to sterilize storage areas.

"We remain concerned about ongoing issues," Plenzler said.

"Why we're having this is so veterans' voices are heard, and to learn their opinions on the quality of care at the DC medical center."

In an unusual move, Inspector General Michael Missal released findings about the hospital before his office finished its investigation.

The report stated 18 of 25 sterile storage areas for medical supplies were dirty, and more than \$150 million in equipment was unaccounted for because the facility did not have an adequate inventory system.

A lack of medical supplies caused delays in patient surgeries in multiple instances, the report stated.

Missal wrote he had a "lack of confidence" in VA leadership to quickly fix the root cause of the issues.

The day that Missal released the report, VA Secretary David Shulkin relieved the Washington hospital's medical director and named an interim director. Retired Army Col. Lawrence Connell, one of Shulkin's senior advisers, is now temporarily leading the hospital.

Shulkin told reporters two

weeks later, on April 26, that Connell has been at the hospital "day and night." He also said he sent a team to establish a new electronic inventory system at the facility that was put in place within 48 hours of the report's release.

In the report, the inspector general's office said it hadn't yet determined whether any veterans had been harmed because of the issues at the facility. The office is continuing its investigation.

Shulkin said he also has a team investigating.

"Patient safety is not at all compromised," he said April 26. "There has not been any patient harm that we are aware of from this. And we are continuing our investigation as to the actions that will result from the management perspective."

Plenzler said the American Legion is anticipating some of Shulkin's staff will attend the town hall Wednesday.

"Our goal is to bring veterans together with them and elected officials," he said. "Veterans can stand up and speak, and everyone else gets to close their mouth and listen."

Unexploded bomb found in S. Korea

BY MARCUS FICHTL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — Construction workers dredging the sea near Pyeongtaek found an unexploded Korean War-era bomb, officials said Friday.

Explosive ordnance disposal units from South Korea's 10th Fighter Wing and the 2nd Fleet defused the bomb while the coast guard patrolled the waterway, coast guard spokesman Park Se-eun said. It was then taken to Suwon Air Base.

The bomb was discovered Thursday by workers dredging the bottom of the site where they're building the Pyeongtaek South Maritime Police Quay, 40 miles south of Seoul. Park said the operation took less than four hours.

A South Korean military official said the bomb was believed to be a GP-250/AN-M57 — a 250-pound bomb commonly used by U.S. forces during the Korean War. The bomb will be kept at Suwon, as policy dictates, until higher headquarters makes a decision about its disposal, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A report from the Asian-Pacific Journal in 2009 said U.S. forces dropped 635,000 tons of bombs on the Korean Peninsula, 132,000 tons more than the United States dropped in the Pacific theater during World War II.

U.S. forces first engaged North Korean troops in the Pyeongtaek region on July 5-8, 1950.

The Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953, ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty, leaving the peninsula divided.

Thousands of servicemembers and their families live in Pyeongtaek between the two major military installations of Osan Air Base and Camp Humphreys.

Soldier gets 5 years for smuggling meth

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A South Korean court gave a U.S. soldier a suspended five-year prison sentence for smuggling just over 9 pounds of methamphetamine via the U.S. military postal system. Another soldier was acquitted in the case.

The drugs were hidden in cookie boxes sent from Los Angeles and discovered in late October by the customs service at the Incheon airport near Seoul.

A panel of three judges in Uijeongbu found Wednesday that Pfc. Dominique Graham, a 2nd Infantry Division soldier based at Camp Stanley, agreed to receive the package on behalf of a

South Korean man. Prosecutors accused Graham of arranging for the shipment to be sent to a fellow soldier's Army Post Office address.

Both men were charged in the case, but the court found the other soldier, Pfc. Julian Bean, not guilty due to a lack of evidence.

Graham was given a five-year suspended sentence, meaning he won't have to go to jail as long as he does nothing wrong within that period.

The judges said the fact that the methamphetamine never made it into circulation and Graham's limited role in providing access to the APO box were mitigating factors. They also cited Graham's lack of criminal history and military

service in deciding not to give him prison time.

The 2nd Infantry Division's public affairs office said Graham "has been released back to his chain of command for further disposition."

Soldiers convicted of crimes in South Korea may still be subject to discipline under the Uniform code of Military Justice and through administrative actions.

In a similar case, two U.S. soldiers based at Camp Humphreys, south of Seoul, have been accused of using an APO box to smuggle methamphetamine on behalf of a third party. South Korean prosecutors are investigating the possibility that the cases were linked to a broader smuggling ring.

Trump calls Duterte, affirms treaty alliance

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — U.S. President Donald Trump has called Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte and expressed Washington's commitment to their treaty alliance and his interest in developing "a warm, working relationship," a Filipino official said Sunday.

Presidential spokesman Ernie Abella said Trump mentioned he was looking forward to visiting the Philippines in November to attend an East Asia summit that Duterte will host with several world leaders and that Trump invited Duterte to visit the White House.

"The discussion that transpired between the presidents was warm, with President Trump expressing his understanding and appreciation of the challenges facing the Philippine president, especially on the matter of dangerous drugs," Abella said in a statement.

A White House statement described Saturday's call as "very friendly" and said the U.S.-Philippine alliance "is now heading in a very positive direction."

Abella's remarks reflect the friendlier attitude Duterte has taken with Trump after the antagonistic stance he had to-

ward President Barack Obama, whom he once asked to "go to hell" for criticizing the Philippine leader's bloody anti-drug crackdown. During Obama's final months in office, the Philippine president moved to build closer economic ties with China and Russia while repeatedly threatening to end his nation's long-standing military alliance with the U.S.

Duterte's apparent dislike for Obama began when the U.S. State Department expressed concern over his drug war — which has left thousands of suspects dead — and asked Philippine government officials to take steps to stop extrajudicial killings.

At one point, Duterte suggested he even could move to abrogate a 2014 defense agreement that allows U.S. military access to five Philippine military camps. He has walked back most of those threats but has proceeded with his efforts to align closer with China.

On Sunday, three Chinese navy ships, including a guided-missile destroyer and a guided-missile frigate, were welcomed in Davao city, Duterte's southern hometown, military officials said.

Trump touts record for first 100 days

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — President Donald Trump on Saturday marked his 100th day in office by claiming historic action on his agenda, renewing promises on health care and taxes and attacking the news media for misleading Americans.

In his morning radio address Trump issued an assurance: "My only allegiance is to you, our wonderful citizens." To supporters at an evening rally in Pennsylvania, he promoted American power and patriotism while emphasizing such priorities as American manufacturing, better trade deals, a border wall with Mexico and a still-to-be defined tax cut plan.

Trump's 100th day events were set in a politically important state that he won with 48 percent of the vote. It was the first time Pennsylvania had voted for a Republican presidential candidate since George H.W. Bush in 1988.

Trump's rally Saturday night in Harrisburg offered a familiar recapitulation of what he

and aides have argued for days are administration successes, including the successful nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, his Cabinet and the approval of construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

But the president began the rally by pointing out he was not attending that night's White House Correspondents' Association dinner and issuing a scathing attack on the news media.

A failed effort to overhaul President the Affordable Care Act behind him, Trump is turning to what he's billed as the nation's biggest tax cut. It apparently falls short of Reagan's in 1981, and tax experts are skeptical that the plan would pay for itself.

Executive orders in line to be signed Saturday would be the 31st and 32nd since Trump took office — the most of any president in his first 100 days since World War II. During the campaign, Trump railed against Obama's use of orders, which don't need congressional approval.

7 dead, dozens hurt as tornadoes, flooding hit South

The Washington Post

At least seven people were killed and dozens were injured Saturday after tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and floods ripped through Texas, Missouri and Arkansas, as well as parts of the Midwest.

In eastern Texas, the National Weather Service confirmed at least three tornadoes swept through Henderson, Van Zandt and Rains counties, covering an area about 60 miles southeast of Dallas. The weather agency said damage surveys Sunday would reveal if there were additional tornadoes.

At least five people died in Van Zandt County, including one along Interstate 20 in the small city of Canton, which appeared to be hit the hardest on Saturday, according to NBC DFW News.

"We won't know what exactly we are dealing with until the sun comes up," Canton Mayor Lou Ann Everett told the NBC

DFW News on Saturday night. "We have no power. We have three major transmission stations that are damaged."

Hospitals in the East Texas Medical Center Regional Healthcare System treated 56 patients after the storm, spokeswoman Rebecca Berkley told The Washington Post. Two remained in critical condition as of Saturday morning, while the other patients had injuries that were not life-threatening, she said.

Images of a Dodge dealership along I-20 in Canton showed overturned cars, piles of debris and a destroyed building, according to the Dallas Morning News.

Gov. Greg Abbott said on Twitter that he would send Texas Task Force 2, a search-and-rescue team, to assist the areas affected by the storms.

In Missouri, the National Weather Service warned of a "dangerous and life-threatening flood event" for the southern part of the state

and parts of southeastern Kansas Saturday and Sunday. Several flash-flood warnings were issued throughout Missouri.

A 72-year-old woman drowned near Clever, a city in southwestern Missouri, after floodwaters swept her vehicle away, the Kansas City Star reported.

Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens declared a state of emergency in response to the flash flooding. On Saturday, the governor's office reported that there had been 93 evacuations and 33 rescues.

In Arkansas, the Weather Service continued to issue severe thunderstorm and flash-flood warnings throughout the state on Sunday. Torrential rains had pummeled much of the state on Saturday, triggering flash floods and closing roads.

In DeWitt, a small city in eastern Arkansas, one woman was killed after a tree fell onto her mobile home Saturday evening, Fox 16 News reported.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

SeaWorld surprised by newborn sea lion

CA SAN DIEGO — SeaWorld San Diego is caring for a sea lion that was unexpectedly born to a sick mother.

The park said the pup was discovered Wednesday when a team went to check the health of her mother, who was rescued from an Oceanside beach Tuesday.

The newborn is being nursed with a special milk formula through a feeding tube because the mother is too sick to care for her. The park said the mother may have eaten shellfish or fish poisoned by domoic acid, a naturally occurring toxin from algae.

Trooper lassos llama loose on roadway

MA RUSSELL — Massachusetts State Police are praising the cowboy skills of one of their troopers after he lassoed a llama that was loose on a state highway and led it to safety.

Police said Troopers Matthew Kane and Kyle Minnicucci were called to state Route 23 in Russell on Thursday after a llama was spotted on the road. Kane grabbed a rope from his cruiser, fashioned it into a lasso and slung it around the llama's neck.

Police: Woman's purse saved her from bullet

NY NEW YORK — Police said a New York City woman shot at point-blank range during a robbery was saved from a bullet wound thanks to her purse.

The New York Police Department said a 52-year-old man ran up to his intended victim on a

Brooklyn street Wednesday and demanded her car keys.

The Daily News reported that the 39-year-old woman fought back. During the struggle, the man fired a round that, according to the NYPD, tore through the victim's purse, wallet and clothes but stopped short of hitting her body.

The man then pistol-whipped the woman, took her keys and drove off in her vehicle. Police found him nearby and arrested him on attempted murder charges.

Florist accused of cemetery plant theft

NJ PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP — Police said a flower shop owner stole plants and other items from graves at a New Jersey cemetery for months.

Capt. Christopher DePuyt said police installed surveillance cameras at the First Reformed Church Cemetery in Pequannock Township after two plants disappeared from the mausoleum and replacement plants were stolen two days later.

He said the cameras caught a woman in a minivan taking the plants. Riverdale officers recognized her as a former police dispatcher and current flower shop owner.

Authorities charged Lynda Wingate, 59, of Riverdale, with the disorderly person's offense of theft of moveable property.

2 men kill each other over pot fight on 4/20

NM CLOVIS — Two men found dead on marijuana culture's high holiday are accused of arguing about their portions and killing each other.

The Eastern New Mexico News reported that police had completed a weeklong investi-

gation into the deaths. The victims are David "Bo Bo" Lopez, 43, and Carlos Gallegos, 25.

Clovis Police Capt. Roman Romero said Lopez was found in an apartment building with a single gunshot to his buttocks. He said Gallegos was found in a car a few blocks away with a stab wound to his neck.

Witnesses told police a fistfight started April 20 after Lopez and Gallegos argued over marijuana.

Singing group booted from campus for hazing

NY ITHACA — Cornell University officials said the college's oldest all-male a capella group has been permanently dismissed from campus for hazing that included requiring new members to put Icy Hot muscle cream on their genitals.

According to the Ivy League school's website on hazing, Cayuga's Waiters initially were suspended two weeks into the fall 2016 semester for hazing that also included requiring members to sit naked in ice baths and making them run up and down a street and then consume food.

According to the website, during an investigation, group members admitted the hazing had been going on for at least 10 years.

City sees spike in bikes crashing into car doors

IL CHICAGO — The Illinois Department of Transportation said there were more than 300 reported cases of bikes hitting open car doors in Chicago in 2015 — a 50 percent jump from the year before.

The Chicago Tribune reported there were 302 such incidents for the most recently available 2015 data. That was up

from 203 in 2014. The numbers in 2015 were down from the 334 reported in 2012.

Event marks riot's 25th anniversary

CA LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles City Council members and others have marked 25 years since the LA riots by joining hands and surrounding City Hall.

Hundreds of people, including City Hall employees and schoolchildren, took part in the event Friday, the eve of the anniversary. Organizers said the "Hands Around City Hall" event was a symbolic gesture of "cross-cultural unity."

Saturday was the anniversary of the 1992 riots that erupted in South Los Angeles after a jury acquitted four white police officers in the beating of black motorist Rodney King. The violence claimed more than 50 lives and caused more than \$1 billion in damage.

Mother of 7 donates kidney to co-worker

FL VENICE — A Florida mother of seven children has donated one of her kidneys to her Lowe's co-worker.

Christine Higbee donated her kidney to co-worker Zac Pacyna last December.

The co-workers have known each other for seven years and were friendly because Pacyna worked for Higbee's boyfriend on the overnight shift at the store.

The Sarasota Herald-Tribune reported that the Higbee, 45, said donating her kidney to Pacyna, 26, was no big deal.

She joked that if she ever needs another kidney, she can borrow one from one of her seven kids.

From wire reports

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Receiver Robinette undrafted following Air Force ruling

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Wide receiver Jalen Robinette, who led the nation at 27.4 yards per catch, went undrafted after the Air Force told him just last week that he'd have to serve two years in the military before being allowed to play in the NFL.

Robinette, who is set to graduate from the academy in less than a month, had prepared for the draft believing he'd be allowed to play in the NFL right away because of a U.S. Department of Defense ruling last summer.

Robinette was informed Thursday night as the first round was underway that Air Force leaders had informed the academy that cadets still would be required to serve at least two years on active duty before being allowed to apply for the Ready Reserve, which would allow them to play professional sports.

A projected midround pick, Robinette was the first Air Force player ever invited to the East-West Shrine Game, the Senior Bowl and the NFL Combine. He maintained a full class load while commuting 100 miles six days per week to train with other hopefuls in suburban Denver included Stanford's Christian McCaffrey. He's on track to graduate May 24.

After Navy standout quarterback Keenan Reynolds was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens last year, the defense department changed its policy for service academy athletes who are offered the opportunity to play professionally, saying they could receive reserve appointments upon graduation and start their pro careers immediately rather than having to serving two years of active duty first.

In a statement, the Air Force said it informed the academy, however, that it "would not approve requests to waiver active duty military commitments for cadet athletes," adding, "The Air Force places tremendous value on our cadet athletes and their contributions to the nation as we continue to build leaders of character, engage in combat operations overseas and continue to ensure our highest military readiness at home."

At a shade under 6-foot-4 and just shy of 220 pounds, Robinette reminds some scouts of Broncos star receiver Demaryius Thomas, who came out of Georgia Tech's triple option offense.

Robinette caught just 35 passes his senior season but they covered 959 yards for an NCAA-best 27.4-yard average, and he had six touchdown receptions. Over his four seasons for the Falcons, he caught 120 passes for 2,697 yards and 18 touchdowns.

He told The Associated Press this spring that he realizes he could have gone to another school and put up bigger numbers but said he never regretted choosing Air Force, not even when he caught just 16 passes in freshman year nor when an NFL future first came into focus his junior year.

Robinette said he especially felt fortunate when the defense department changed its rules last year and he realized he could get both a great education and be able to fulfill his NFL dreams.

"I knew I was in the right place despite the stats," Robinette said back in February. "I've never been huge on stats. I just like to play."

Now that will have to wait until 2019.

Bills fire GM Whaley

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — First Rex Ryan, now Doug Whaley.

Bills owner Terry Pegula completed an offseason front-office purge by firing general manager Whaley and the team's entire scouting staff on Sunday, a day after completing the NFL Draft.

Though pleased with the collaborative effort that took place in the draft room between Whaley and rookie coach Sean McDermott, Pegula went ahead with the change after what he called a lengthy review of his operation. Pegula said the timing coincided with the end of the draft, but he declined to detail the reasons why he felt the overhaul was necessary.

"Doug's a good guy. He's a smart man, but we made the decision," Pegula said during a 15-minute news conference at the team's headquarters. "And the reasons remain private to us."

The shake-up further solidifies McDermott's authority and influence, which has grown incrementally in the three months since he replaced Rex Ryan, who was fired in the final week of last season. The 42-year-old detail-oriented defensive specialist has become the voice of the franchise in discussing all team-related topics, including free agency and the draft.

Besides Whaley, the Bills also dismissed player-personnel director Jim Monos and Kelvin Fisher, the team's former amateur scouting director who had previously been demoted to an advisory role.

Devils defy odds to win NHL Draft lottery

The New Jersey Devils bucked the NHL lottery odds, and lady luck wasn't with Las Vegas.

New Jersey won the lottery, vaulting four teams including the last-place Colorado Avalanche and expansion Vegas Golden Knights for the right to the first pick in the draft.

The Philadelphia Flyers and Dallas Stars both made huge

jumps in winning the second and third lottery drawings on Saturday night. Given just a 2.2 percent chance of winning, the Flyers went from the 13th spot to second. The Stars moved from the eighth spot to third in a lottery process that scrambled the final standings.

Colorado entered with the best odds to win the lottery, but fell three spots and will select fourth. The Golden Knights will select sixth, moving back three spots from where they were slotted. Vegas and its desert rival Arizona Coyotes were each awarded the third-best odds to win at 10.3 percent.

The seven-round draft will be held in Chicago on June 23 and 24.

Joshua scores TKO victory over Klitschko

LONDON — Anthony Joshua remained in the ring long after 90,000 of his supporters had filed out of Wembley Stadium, posing happily for pictures with his team and hugging just about everyone he knew.

No reason to leave early when being the heavyweight champion is so much fun.

"I just want to fight everyone, man," Joshua said. "I'm really loving this right now."

There was a lot to love Saturday night in front of a packed crowd at England's national stadium, where Joshua got off the canvas to stop longtime champion Wladimir Klitschko in a coming out party of sorts that electrified the boxing world.

The biggest heavyweight fight in British history was also the best. There was an epic fifth round where Joshua knocked Klitschko down and then held on himself to survive, along with a knockdown a round later by Klitschko.

And when Joshua had finished almost taking Klitschko's head off in the 11th round, a heavyweight division moribund for years was suddenly very much alive once again.

"Anthony was better today than I," Klitschko said. "It's really sad that I didn't make it tonight. I was planning to do it. It didn't work. But all the respect to Anthony, congratulations."

Penguins chase Holtby, take 2-0 lead

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When Sidney Crosby wasn't beating the Washington Capitals putting the puck through his legs, he was doing it belly down on the ice.

No matter the unconventional plays or style of game, Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins are rolling after beating the Capitals 6-2 in Game 2 Saturday night to take a 2-0 lead in the second-round series between the NHL's top two teams. Crosby set up two goals and Phil Kessel and Jake Guentzel each scored two as Pittsburgh chased reigning Vezina Trophy winner and finalist Braden Holtby to go home in total command.

"I think we've got a gritty group out there, scrappy," coach Mike Sullivan said. "It's not perfect by any stretch out there. We're aware of that, we know that. But what I love about this group of players is that they respond the right way and they've shown an ability to do that time and time again and I think this group finds ways to have success."

Success came in the form of another brilliant outing from goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury, who stopped 34 of the 36 shots he faced, including 16 in the first period.

Sullivan called Fleury the Penguins' best player, and even with Crosby's four points through two games he's not wrong.

Holtby has not been on his game for the Capitals and was pulled after allowing three goals on 14 shots. Barry Trotz could go back to Holtby in a crucial Game 3 Monday night in Pittsburgh after backup Philipp Grubauer allowed two goals on the first four shots he faced in relief.

That's as big a game as Washington will face as just 18 of the previous 87 teams to lose the first two in a best-of-seven series have come back to win, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

"I thought some of the goals he wasn't as sharp as he can be for us," Trotz said of Holtby. "He's a game-changer for us. When he didn't change the game, I just looked to change the mojo a little bit there, that's all."

Fleury hasn't been the Penguins' backbone, serving as the backup to Matt Murray during their Stanley Cup run last year and splitting the duties with the young goalie this season. But the 2009 Cup winner is one of the biggest reasons they're up 2-0 as he has stopped 67 of 71 shots through two games.

"I'm really enjoying this time right now,"

a smiling Fleury said. "I don't try to over-think stuff, just try and enjoy the game. It's fun to win."

Winning despite being outshot is becoming commonplace for the Penguins, who got opportunistic offense in the form of a short-handed goal from Matt Cullen to open the scoring and then a tip from Evgeni Malkin in the third period that ended any thought of a Capitals comeback. Washington outshot Pittsburgh 36-21 but has nothing to show for it.

The Penguins on the other hand are getting comfortable playing like this after beating the Columbus Blue Jackets in five games in the first round.

"I think that's the biggest thing for us," said Guentzel, who scored on a 2-on-1 and with an empty net and leads the playoffs with seven goals. "When we get those chances, we bear down and those are key goals for us."

Crosby was a one-man goal generator in Game 2. He put the puck between his legs and drew Alex Ovechkin and two defensemen to him before feeding Kessel for his first goal, then got down to block Justin Williams' shot and advanced the puck for a 2-on-1 rush from the ice on Guentzel's goal.

Pageau lifts Senators in 2OT with 4th goal

Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario — Jean-Gabriel Pageau might not have seen the goal that capped his 'legendary game' for the Ottawa Senators.

Pageau scored a career-high four goals, including the winner 2:54 into the second overtime to lift the Senators to a 6-5 victory over the New York Rangers on Saturday, giving Ottawa a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series.

"I think I closed my eyes when I shot and thankfully it went in," Pageau said of the winner. "I was on a cloud and it's a moment I'll never forget."

The 24-year-old Ottawa native also scored twice in the final 3:19 to tie the score. He tipped Zack Smith's shot past Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist to pull the Senators to 5-4 and then tied it by deflecting a shot by Kyle Turris with 1:02 remaining.

"That last deflection I don't even know how he did that,"

Lundqvist said. "The way he angled the stick he didn't even know he hit the net I think."

Pageau scored again 2:54 into the second OT, snapping in a shot during a 2-on-1 rush alongside Tommy Wingels. Pageau is the first Senator ever with four goals in a playoff game.

"I thought his quota was full," captain Erik Karlsson said when asked if Pageau was his pick for the double OT winner.

After his OT score, Pageau slid into the end boards, skated to the left corner and was swarmed by teammates. Wingels stopped to scoop the puck out of the goal before joining the pile.

"It's just great to see him get rewarded: four-goal game, overtime winner. It's just a legendary game," teammate Dion Phaneuf said.

The Senators have a 2-0 series lead for just the second time in franchise history, and first since the 2007 Eastern Conference final against Buf-

falo. They have never swept a four-game series.

Marc Methot and Mark Stone also scored for Ottawa, and Craig Anderson had 43 saves.

Brady Skjei had two goals for New York, his second putting the Rangers up two 5:10 into the third period. Michael Grabner, Chris Kreider and Derek Stepan also scored and Lundqvist stopped 28 shots.

"We played well enough to win this game, there's no question about it so it's really tough to lose this one," Lundqvist said. "Clearly they've gotten the bounces in the first two games. We've just got to go home and regroup. It's a really tough loss being up a couple goals, especially late in the game."

The series heads to New York for Game 3 on Tuesday night.

Ottawa lost Clarke MacArthur to injury and won despite letting Grabner and Stepan score short-handed.

After Karlsson's unlikely tally late in regulation lifted

Ottawa in Game 1, the Senators came out flying early in Game 2. Canadian Tire Centre appeared near capacity after more than 2,000 seats were left empty in the opener two nights earlier.

Ottawa had three straight power-play chances early, but it didn't even manage a shot on goal in that time, although Karlsson did hit a post. Mike Hoffman fired a sloppy pass that was picked off by Kevin Hayes at one point and MacArthur dropped another feed to no one in particular.

Grabner got his goal during Ottawa's second power play. Stone couldn't corral a puck that sailed around the boards, and Jesper Fast and Grabner sped away on a successful 2-on-1.

Pageau tied it with 6:01 left in the first, his second of the playoffs. The Ottawa native picked off Dan Girardi's pass in the neutral zone, then beat Lundqvist.

Dodgers rally past Phillies

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — With his team having homered twice to pull within a run in the ninth inning, Dodgers manager Dave Roberts sent Justin Turner to the plate to keep the rally going.

Turner did just that, hitting the third consecutive homer off Hector Neris to open the inning, and Adrian Gonzalez's tiebreaking RBI single capped the four-run rally to lift Los Angeles to a wild 6-5 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies on Saturday night.

"You always want to get the tying run to the plate, so that's why I put [pinch-hitter] Turner in and he responded," Roberts said.

The Dodgers trailed 5-2 before Yasiel Puig and Cody Bellinger — who homered twice — hit the first two homers of the ninth, and Turner's shot gave them three straight for the first time since Aug. 18, 2012.

With one out, Austin Barnes singled off Neris (0-1). Joely Rodriguez came in and got Andrew Toles to fly out, but Corey Seager singled and Gonzalez drilled a ball off third baseman Maikel Franco's glove that rolled into left field scoring Barnes with the winning run from second.

"It had that topspin on the second hop and that makes it really tough for infielders," Gonzalez said.

The Phillies wasted a strong outing by Zach Eflin, who allowed two runs and four hits in seven innings.

"It's crazy what happened," Eflin said. "You just have to come back and forget about it. It's baseball."

Philadelphia manager Pete Mackanin was disappointed with the outcome.

"What a way to lose," Mackanin said.

"That's one of the reasons I don't want to name a closer because I don't want to put a guy in that pressure even though I use him in that situation."

Rangers' Gomez hits for cycle

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Needing a seventh-inning home run on Saturday night to complete his second career cycle, Carlos Gomez of the Texas Rangers was looking fastball all the way. He wasn't disappointed.

Gomez sent Jose Valdez's first-pitch heater onto the hill beyond center field. That followed a first-inning double, a single in the third and a triple to the gap in right-center in the fifth that sailed just beyond the reach of a sprinting Mike Trout. Two-run homers by Gomez and Rowned Odor backed the performance of Yu Darvish, who threw 125 pitches in six innings, as the Rangers beat the Los Angeles Angels 6-3.

"It's exciting up there if you do that," Gomez said, "and you can enjoy it when you win."

His previous cycle came with the Minnesota Twins on May 7, 2008.

Texas' win snapped the Angels' five-game winning streak.

On a blustery night at Globe Life Park, Trout thought he had a shot at Gomez's triple.

"The wind was crazy," said Trout, who went 2-for-4 and extended his hitting streak to 13 games. "I couldn't even tell you what direction it was blowing."

Darvish (3-2) allowed one earned run, three hits and four walks while striking out 10, tying the season high that he set against the Angels on April 13. He fell five pitches short of his major league high, thrown as a rookie in 2013.

Darvish had thrown 97 pitches through five innings and finished the sixth despite leaving the bases loaded following three walks.

"They let me, so that was great," he said through an interpreter.

"He's our ace," Texas manager Jeff Banister said. "He's got to be able to pitch out of situations like that."

Darvish didn't allow a hit until the fourth inning, when he gave up an opposite field single to Kole Calhoun, an RBI

double to Trout and a sacrifice fly to Albert Pujols.

Jesse Chavez (2-4) gave up four runs, eight hits and two walks in six innings. Twice, he came within one strike of getting out of Texas' four-run fifth inning unscathed.

"When I get hurt, it's good location, wrong time," Chavez said.

Yankees 12, Orioles 4: Brett Gardner, Aaron Judge and thundering New York picked up right where it left off the previous night, steamrolling past visiting Baltimore on Saturday for its fourth straight victory.

Gardner homered twice from the leadoff spot and had his first four RBIs of the season. Austin Romine, the No. 9 batter, also went deep and knocked in five runs.

Judge, not to be outdone, clocked his latest colossal homer and scored four times as New York won its 14th in 17 games to boost the American League's best record to 15-7.

Braves 11, Brewers 3: Matt Kemp homered three times and drove in five runs, powering visiting Atlanta to its fourth straight victory.

Atlanta collected a season-high 20 hits. Dansby Swanson also homered, and Jaime Garcia (1-1) pitched six innings for his first win with the Braves.

Cubs 7, Red Sox 4: Anthony Rizzo hit a two-run homer, helping visiting Chicago rebound from a series-opening loss at Boston.

Miguel Montero and Ben Zobrist each connected for a solo shot for the Cubs, who had dropped two in a row. Kris Bryant had two hits and scored twice.

Mets 5, Nationals 3: Michael Conforto hit two home runs and slumping Jose Reyes also connected, leading visiting New York to the victory.

The banged-up Mets had lost six in a row when they began this series at Nationals Park against the team with the best record in the majors. Behind their power and bullpen, the Mets beat Washington for the second straight day.

White Sox 6, Tigers 4 (10):

Melky Cabrera led off the 10th inning with a homer against Justin Wilson and Avisail Garcia added an RBI triple, lifting visiting Chicago to its sixth straight win.

Jose Abreu homered twice in his return to the lineup for Chicago.

Detroit has lost four in a row.

Indians 4, Mariners 3: Danny Salazar got off to a rocky start, and then combined with two Cleveland relievers to hold visiting Seattle hitless over the final eight innings.

Cleveland has won eight of 11. Seattle's three-game winning streak ended.

Pirates 4, Marlins 0: Ivan Nova pitched a three-hitter in visiting Pittsburgh's third straight win.

Nova (3-2) struck out seven and did not walk a batter in the 95-pitch masterpiece. He retired 11 in a row at one point.

Miami has lost four in a row. **Blue Jays 4, Rays 1:** Justin Smoak had three hits, including a two-run homer, and host Toronto broke a three-game losing streak.

Rays outfielder Steven Souza left in the seventh after being hit on the back of the left hand by a pitch. X-rays were negative and Souza is day to day.

Rockies 7, Diamondbacks 6: Mark Reynolds hit a tying two-run single with two out in the ninth and Carlos Gonzalez scored the winning run on a wild ptch by Fernando Rodney, sending visiting Colorado to a wild comeback win.

Carlos Estevez (3-0) got the win with one scoreless inning and Greg Holland earned his 11th save for the Rockies, who have won the first two games of the three-game set between the top teams in the NL West.

Padres 12, Giants 4: Wil Myers capped host San Diego's eight-run sixth inning with a three-run homer.

Myers also singled off Chris Stratton (0-1) to start the big inning and had three hits for the game. San Diego scored 11 runs against the Giants' bullpen following five effective innings from San Francisco starter Matt Cain.