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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Blast targets US convoy; 3 GIs injured

By ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL
AND PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A suicide car bomber targeted a U.S. military convoy in the Afghan capital Wednesday, killing at least eight civilians and wounding three U.S. servicemembers, officials said.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the morning rush-hour attack near the U.S. Embassy.

“The barbarity and depravity of this at-

tack only reminds all Americans of why we are in this fight and strengthens our dedication and solidarity with our Afghan allies,” Ambassador Hugo Llorens said in a statement.

Another 25 Afghan civilians, including women and children, were wounded by the blast, according to Najib Danish, deputy spokesman for the Interior Ministry.

U.S. Navy Capt. Bill Salvin, a spokesman for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, confirmed the three servicemembers were injured. He added their wounds were not

life-threatening.

The attack came less than three months after U.S. forces dropped the largest non-nuclear bomb ever used in combat on the group’s local affiliate, known as Islamic State-Khorasan Province, in eastern Afghanistan.

The United States has vowed to destroy ISIS-K, estimated to number fewer than 1,000 fighters, in 2017 as part of its counter-terrorism mission in the country.

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US firm in Iraq ignores smuggling, security risks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An American company that was paid nearly \$700 million to secure an Iraqi base for F-16 fighter jets turned a blind eye to alcohol smuggling, theft, security violations and allegations of sex trafficking — then terminated investigators who uncovered wrongdoing, an Associated Press investigation has found.

Documents and interviews with two former internal investigators and a half-dozen former or current Sallyport Global staff describe schemes at Iraq’s Balad Air Base that were major contract violations at best and, if proven, illegal.

The fired investigators, Robert Cole and Kristie King, said they uncovered evidence that Sallyport employees were involved in human trafficking for prostitution.

Staff on base routinely flew smuggled alcohol onto the base in such high volumes that a plane once seesawed on the tarmac under the weight. Rogue militia stole enormous generators using flatbed trucks and a 60-foot crane, driving right past Sallyport security guards.

The trouble stretches to headquarters in Reston, Va., say the investigators and other ex-employees interviewed by the AP.

They say what they uncovered was not revealed to the U.S. government, which was footing the \$686 million contracting bill, until early this year — after an auditor started asking questions. The investigators were fired abruptly March 12 and immediately flown out of Iraq. They say they had been looking into timesheet fraud allegations and were set to interview company managers, whom they considered suspects.

In a statement to the AP, Sallyport said it follows all contracting rules at the base, home to a squadron of F-16s that are indispensable to the operations of the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State.

In one allegation, informants told the investigators that “flight line” staff, who directed airplanes on the runways and handled cargo, were showing up drunk. At one point they passed around a bowl of gummy bears soaked in vodka.

Alcohol on base was restricted, but the booze was everywhere, smuggled in by plane, several former employees told the AP. According to investigative documents and witnesses, empty suitcases were loaded onto Baghdad-bound round trip flights. The bags returned packed with alcohol-filled plas-

tic water bottles that skirted security.

Stuckart said Sallyport stood by its security procedures and got “high marks” from the U.S. Air Force. But Steve Anderson, who worked on flight logistics, says he was told by managers to sign off on manifests he knew had been falsified to hide alcohol and guns. The planes were so heavy that one tipped over nose-first while parked, “like a seesaw,” he recalled.

When he raised concerns, it was suggested he find a new job, said Anderson, whose position was soon eliminated.

Balad is controlled by the Iraqi government. Americans have been there off and on since 2003. The base was evacuated in June 2014, when ISIS began overrunning Iraqi territory.

When the Americans returned, Sallyport’s job was to keep Balad safe for the F-16s — and their Iraqi pilots. The contract required investigations into potential crimes and contract violations. That was the job of Cole and King.

Cole’s reports noted lax protection for the F-16s. Despite requirements to report major security breaches, the U.S. government was not informed until early this year of a truck skidding near a jet or an armored-

SUV theft, according to Cole and two other former Sallyport employees. Both spoke only on condition of anonymity because they did not want to jeopardize their current jobs.

As Cole and King sought to get to the bottom of the alcohol smuggling, they stumbled across a prostitution ring in Baghdad whose customers included Sallyport employees, informants said. They learned that four Ethiopians who had previously worked as prostitutes at the hotel had moved to Balad and were doing the same while moonlighting as Sallyport housekeepers.

Before either investigation was completed, a Sallyport executive in Virginia shut them down, they say. Stuckart said the prostitution allegations were not substantiated.

By then, Cole and King had begun their investigation into complaints that Sallyport managers were falsifying timesheets and people were getting paid without working.

The investigators say company lawyers ordered them to keep two sets of books, which they interpreted as an attempt to deceive auditors.

“One for the government to see and one for the government not to see,” said King.

US inaction in South China Sea raising questions

BY ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. military hasn't announced any freedom-of-navigation operations in the South China Sea since last year, signaling a break from earlier Trump administration rhetoric on curbing China's ambitions.

The Pentagon has quashed multiple Navy requests to conduct the operations within 12 nautical miles of artificial islands and territories controlled by China but claimed by several nations, according to a New York Times report on Wednesday and a Breitbart report in March.

Pacific Command in Hawaii on Tuesday referred questions from Stars and Stripes on its freedom-of-navigation operations to the Pentagon, which was not immediately available for comment early Wednesday.

President Donald Trump has already indicated he may be taking a softer approach with China in the hopes it will help prevent North Korea from developing its nuclear weapons program.

After a missile test last month, Trump tweeted that "North Korea disrespected the wishes of China & its highly respected President when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!"

Trump also declined to label China a currency manipulator, citing North Korea.

China may not want a nuclear North Korea, but its larger concerns have long revolved around U.S. troops on its border in a reunified Korea, as well as North Korean migrants flooding into China.

It remains unspoken whether

a softer stance on China's militarization of the South China Sea — where more than \$1.2 trillion in U.S. trade transits annually — is part of Trump's North Korea calculus.

Lack of an Asia policy and Pentagon manpower may have been behind the lull in freedom-of-navigation operations, said experts who spoke in March with Breitbart, a right-wing website previously run by Trump adviser Steve Bannon. Of 53 presidentially appointed positions at the Pentagon, only Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' job had been filled.

Although vacancies remain, enough time has passed to determine whether the lack of freedom-of-navigation operations in the South China Sea is part of the White House's new stance.

China's claim to nearly 90 percent of the South China Sea based on "historical discovery" — a claim largely invalidated by an international tribunal that China ignored last year — has led to boat ramming, arrests and other low-level clashes between China and neighboring nations.

International officials and analysts have voiced repeated concerns that overreaction by any one party could result in a conflict that threatens peace in the region and the global economy.

The Navy routinely sends its ships, most often those based with the 7th Fleet in Japan, on regular patrols through the South China Sea's international waters. However, the White House didn't approve freedom-of-navigation operations, which challenge violations of international norms, for nearly three years in the South China Sea.

Anonymous reporting of online bullying now part of Navy app

The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — Updates to the Navy's LiveSafe mobile safety application include a tip button that allows sailors to anonymously report social media harassment and bullying.

The service is nearly six months into a program to pilot the app. Capt. Charles Marks, U.S. Fleet Forces Command's sexual assault prevention and response officer, said one of its most frequently used services is SafeWalk, a virtual escort that allows users to designate contacts to follow them as they travel. But the Navy faces a challenge with trying to convince sailors that the service is not using the app to track them, Marks said.

"Because it's a Navy-provided thing, there's suspicion that we're trying to get something other than trying to help the sailors out," Marks said. He added that the Navy will work with commands, chaplains and others, including chapters of the peermentoring group Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions, to find advocates.

The Navy spent \$150,000 for development and use of the app for a year in Hampton Roads, Va., and Rota, Spain. It is targeted toward junior sailors and intended to combat destructive behaviors while also providing resources, including counseling services, off-limits locations and suicide prevention. Marks would not provide details on the number of users, but said most are sailors in the 18-25 age group and are about evenly split between men and women.

The Navy has updated the app's features following rounds of focus groups that included users and nonusers, and will continue exploring uses, Marks said. New offerings include an updated taxi feature that allows users to call services cleared to drive on base, bus schedules and opportunities to announce and sign up for volunteer events, he said. It also will feature Navy-specific information regarding questions about changes to the service's transgender resources and on improper online conduct in the wake of the Marines nude photo-sharing scandal.

Commander: More GIs needed to deter Russia

SAN ANTONIO — The top U.S. commander in Europe tasked with countering Russian aggression told lawmakers Tuesday that he envisions the need for an additional combat brigade and support troops in his theater of operations.

Army Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, leader of U.S. European Command and NATO's supreme allied commander, told a Senate appropriations subcommittee hearing that the success of the European Reassurance Initiative rests on long-term investment and commitments, in-

cluding ramped-up numbers of U.S. troops, equipment and facilities to house and store them.

Only two combat brigades are permanently positioned in Europe — the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Germany and the 173rd Airborne in Italy, roughly one-sixth of 60,000 U.S. troops stationed on the continent. There is also a rotational armored brigade of 4,000 soldiers deployed in Europe with an additional 1,750 from an aviation brigade, but more forces, including increased armor and infantry, are needed to mirror Russia's military composition on its western flank, Scaparrotti said.

From staff reports

Women testify on West Point assaults

By TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — West Point cadets Ariana Bullard and Stephanie Gross were in Gross' dormitory at the U.S. Military Academy when a fellow male cadet, who was drunk, burst into the room.

Bullard left the room as a few others approached and thought Gross would be able to get the male cadet to leave. A few minutes later, Gross called, hysterical.

The two women had already survived sexual assault and harassment at the academy, experiences from which they bonded and became friends.

"I immediately went to her room and saw the distraught, battered state she was in," Bullard said Tuesday. "With new bruises forming on her neck and chest, she told me repeatedly she would never report again, that no one would believe her, that she had no faith she would be taken care of."

Bullard and Gross were two of four female cadets who testified Tuesday to the House Armed Services subcommittee on personnel about sexual assault and harassment at the military academies and to talk about how they were treated after reporting being assaulted.

Gross said she had been raped by a fellow cadet in spring 2013, her freshman year. The attack was violent enough that she had needed emergency pelvic surgery. Gross said she reported the incident but an investigation by military leadership at the academy did not find enough evidence to bring charges.

Bullard, who was recruited to the academy as a top swimming athlete, said she was isolated after she reported being sexually harassed by swim team members. After reporting the harassment that she faced in fall 2013 and through the next spring, she was ostracized and forced to train alone.

The three service academies — West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Air Force Academy — are required by law to report annually the number of sexual assault incidents on their campuses. According to the most recent statistics, from the 2015-16 academic year — released in March by the Department of Defense — the number of reports had dropped to 86 in the 2015-16 academic year from 91 reports in 2014-15.

However, the percent of cadets experiencing unwanted sexual contact rose to 12 percent among women, up from 8 percent the previous year. Also, 1.7 percent of men reported un-

wanted sexual contact, an increase from the 1.1 percent in the previous report.

"Since the last report in 2014, fewer students at the service academies have reported sexual assault and harassment but the estimated rates of unwanted sexual conduct have increased," said Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif. "Both of these are trending in the wrong direction. One reason could be the ostracism of sexual assault victims."

Speier said the academies have to do more to change the culture of harassment and find ways to reduce retaliation so failures at the academy level don't become future failures within the active-duty ranks.

When Bullard tried to help Gross, she said she believes her past history of filing complaints was used against her. "I was forbidden to accompany her (Gross) to the hospital, and forced to sign a confidentiality agreement," Bullard said.

Gross' assailant was found guilty of assault, but not sexual assault, Gross told lawmakers, which she thinks occurred because the criminal investigators did not take DNA samples from her clothing.

Bullard said she encouraged Gross to file the second report. With each report that Gross filed about her second assault,

she said a perceived disciplinary action would follow, such as being required to take a mental fitness test or drug test.

She and Gross were prohibited from socializing with each other and continued to face disciplinary actions, they said.

By January 2015, Bullard said she felt she had no option but to resign from the academy. She said the process normally takes a month. She received her dismissal in one day.

She was removed from West Point the day she left the hospital, wearing nothing more than the T-shirt and shorts that she had been wearing when she was admitted. All of her belongings had been packed up, even her identification badge. Military police escorted her to a plane.

Gross said she sought help from West Point's leadership to hear her case and draw attention to the retaliation. But she was denied an audience, she told the lawmakers, including from the academy's superintendent, Army Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen.

"My entire chain of command denied me," Gross said.

She also resigned from the academy before graduation.

Both women were honorably discharged, but are working with Speier's office to regain entry into West Point to finish their degrees.

Current GI fought with separatists in Ukraine

The Washington Post

A prominent militant who fought with Russia-backed separatists in Ukraine and participated in far-right European politics recently completed U.S. Army training and is serving in an American infantry division in Hawaii, according to Army and other records.

Guillaume Cuvelier, 29, shipped for basic training in January and graduated as an infantryman at Fort Benning, Ga., the records show. In a short exchange with *The Washington Post*, Cuvelier confirmed he was serving in the U.S. Army.

With his documented his-

tory of espousing extreme right-wing views and his role in an armed group backed by a U.S. adversary, Cuvelier's ability to join the Army raises questions about the recruitment process and whether applicants are thoroughly screened before they enlist.

Born and raised in France as a dual French and American citizen, Cuvelier spent his formative years alongside French ultranationalists before picking up a Kalashnikov rifle in eastern Ukraine in 2014, according to social media posts, a documentary in which he was featured, and accounts from people who knew him. A year

later he fought with the Kurdish peshmerga in northern Iraq before coming back to the United States.

Following inquiries by *The Washington Post*, the military has "begun an inquiry to ensure the process used to enlist this individual followed all of the required standards and procedures," Kelli Bland, a spokesman for the U.S. Army's recruiting command, said in an email.

The U.S. Army often forbids those who display "extremist views or actions" from entry, Lt. Col. Randy Taylor, a spokesman for the Army's Department of Manpower and Reserve Af-

fairs, said in an email. Taylor added that "if an Army official determines an applicant has the potential for meeting Army standards, the official may in exceptional cases allow those who have overcome mistakes and past conduct, made earlier in their lives, to serve their country. However, in many cases a history of gang or extremist activity is disqualifying."

Cuvelier said he has changed.

"The [U.S.] army is my only chance of moving on and cutting with my past," Cuvelier said in a text message. "I realized I like this country, its way of life and its Constitution enough to defend it."

FBI chief defends his handling of Clinton email investigation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Under fire from Democrats, FBI Director James Comey said Wednesday it would have been “catastrophic” to keep Congress in the dark about developments in the Hillary Clinton email investigation that emerged close to Election Day.

Comey, in the most impassioned and public defense of how he handled the case, also said it made him feel “mildly nauseous” to think his actions in October might have influenced the race won by Republican Donald Trump over Democrat Clinton.

But he told the Senate Judiciary Committee that the FBI cannot take into account how its actions might benefit or harm politicians.

“I can’t consider for a second whose political futures will be affected and in what way,” Comey said. “We have to ask ourselves what is the right thing to do and then do it.”

The persistent questions from senators, and Comey’s testimony, made clear that the FBI

director’s decisions of last summer and fall continue to roil national politics.

Speaking at times with a raised voice, Comey said he faced two difficult decisions when agents told him they had found emails potentially connected to the Clinton case on a laptop belonging to former Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., who was married to close Clinton aide Huma Abedin.

The FBI obtained a warrant to search the laptop and sifted through thousands of emails, Comey said, including ones that had been forwarded to Weiner’s laptop and that contained classified information. But there was nothing found that changed the FBI’s decision not to recommend charges.

Comey said he knew it was unorthodox to alert Congress to that discovery 11 days before Americans picked a new president. But he said he decided it would have been “catastrophic” to keep silent, especially when he had testified under oath that the investigation had been concluded.

“I sat there that morning and

could not see a door labeled ‘No action here,’” Comey said.

Later in the hearing, under questioning from Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, of Vermont, Comey maintained that he did not treat disclosures about investigations into Clinton’s emails differently than potential connections between the Trump campaign and Russia.

The FBI began a counterintelligence investigation last July into whether Russia had coordinated with Trump campaign associates to influence the American election, but he did not disclose that until a hearing in March, after Trump had been elected and taken office.

That prompted Democrats to complain of a double-standard in the way the investigations were treated.

But Comey said that other than confirming the Clinton investigation existed, he did not discuss it until after it concluded last year. And he said the FBI does not expect to have anything to say about the Russia investigation until that one was over.

House GOP mulls bid to add \$8B for health care

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Top House Republicans scrambling to prevent another collapse of their push to repeal much of the Affordable Care Act may have found a way to win over some moderate GOP holdouts.

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., an influential centrist who’d initially announced opposition to his party’s health care bill, said he’s crafting an amendment with the backing of party leaders that could gain crucial support for the languishing measure.

Upton and other lawmakers were meeting with President Donald Trump on Wednesday at the White House to discuss the bill, a senior White House official said. Republican conservatives and moderates have been at odds over the bill, but a second official said that “all parties signed off on” the amendment. It’s not clear, though, if that’s the case. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the talks publicly.

Upton said the proposal would provide \$8 billion over five years to help some people with pre-existing medical conditions pay costly insurance premiums. It comes with many moderates opposing the high-priority legislation.

Upton, former chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, described the plan to The Associated Press late Tuesday. Hours earlier, he said he was opposing the bill because it weakened insurance protections the ACA provides people with pre-existing illnesses.

“It’s not quite a done deed yet, but it addresses many of my concerns,” Upton said of the new proposal.

Including Upton, the AP has counted 21 GOP lawmakers opposing the Republican bill, one shy of the 22 needed to kill it, assuming all Democrats vote no. At least 11 others said they were undecided, but all the figures are subject to fluctuation as both sides lobby heavily.

More rain forecast for flooded Midwest

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Flooded areas of the Midwest were bracing for another round of heavy rain Wednesday, the last thing they needed with rivers in several places at or near record levels.

Heavy rain last weekend resulted in a sudden rise in rivers in Missouri, Illinois and Arkansas. After a couple of days of calm weather, forecasters expect 2 inches of rain or more in parts of the same hard-hit areas through Thursday.

Missouri has seen the worst of it so far. Five people have died in flooding in Missouri, and several towns have sustained damage. Along the Meramec River in suburban

St. Louis, thousands of sandbags are protecting about 50 homes and several businesses in Eureka, and a levee is bulging at the seams in nearby Valley Park, where many residents have evacuated.

St. Louis County officials say 200 homes along the Meramec have been damaged in the flooding and another 1,500 are potentially in harm’s way.

In Arkansas, parts of Pochontas were evacuated as the flooded Black River rose toward an expected record crest on Thursday.

In Illinois, much of the central and southern parts of the state are under flood warnings. Two southern Illinois counties,

Jackson and Franklin, declared disasters due to flood damage.

Hundreds of roads are closed across the three states, including a 57-mile stretch of Interstate 44 from central to southern Missouri, and a 23-mile stretch in suburban St. Louis.

The nation’s biggest rivers are flooding, too. Significant flooding is forecast by the end of the week on the Mississippi River south of St. Louis at towns such as Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Cairo, Ill. Several points on the Missouri River in eastern Missouri are expected to rise 10 feet above flood stage or higher by the end of the week.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man leaving hospital drives over cop's foot

MD TAKOMA PARK — Authorities said a man about to enter a hospital in Maryland changed his mind, got into a car and drove over a police officer's foot.

Takoma Park police spokeswoman Cathy Plevy said the man locked himself in a relative's car after exiting the hospital on Sunday. Relatives summoned police, and when the man took off, he drove over the officer's foot.

Media outlets reported that after the man, still wearing a hospital gown, drove off from Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, police said he headed for Washington, D.C.

Plevy said the man went to his home in Washington and climbed up to the attic. When officers arrived, Plevy said, the man fell through the ceiling onto an officer.

Plevy said the man was treated for cuts and bruises and was returned to the hospital.

Plumber's remains flushed at ballparks

NY NEW YORK — A New York City man is on a mission to flush the cremated remains of his lifelong friend — a plumber — down ballpark toilets around the country.

Tom McDonald told The New York Times that it's a fitting tribute for Roy Riegel.

The two baseball fans were childhood friends in Queens, not far from Flushing Meadows, where the Mets play.

Like baseball, this endeavor has rules. The game has to be in progress when McDonald sprinkles the ashes into the toilet from a little plastic bottle.

So far, he's done the deed at 16 stadiums. In Cleveland, he flushed ashes at both Progressive Field and the Rock & Roll

Hall of Fame.

Hank Riegel said his brother "definitely" would approve.

University students protest noose incidents

DC WASHINGTON — Hundreds of students marched at American University a day after bananas were found hanging from string in the shape of nooses on campus.

Television station WRC-TV reported that students walked out of a town hall meeting administrators were holding Tuesday, a day after the bananas were found at several campus locations.

University officials said Monday in an email to students, faculty and staff that the bananas were marked with the letters AKA, the initials of the predominantly black Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. Officials have said the university is no place for "these racist, hateful messages."

Police investigating how man got nailed to tree

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Police in Albuquerque said a man was found alive with his hands nailed to a tree in a forest.

They said officers received a call at approximately 8:30 a.m. Monday about an injured man on the east bank of the Rio Grande. Police said they found a man standing in front of a tree with his hands next to his shoulders, and each of his hands had one nail through it.

The Albuquerque Journal reported that the nails were about 3 inches long, and the man wasn't bleeding when officers found him. Police removed the man from the tree and took him to a hospital. His name hasn't been released. Police don't know how long the man had been in the bosque or how

he ended up nailed to a tree.

Jackpot! Ice finally moves on Tanana River

AK NENANA — Alaska's favorite spring guessing contest has concluded.

Nenana Ice Classic Manager Cherrie Forness said ice on the Tanana River went out at 1 p.m. Monday.

For contest purposes, that means the official correct guess for winning the annual contest is 12 p.m. Alaska Standard Time.

The jackpot is \$267,444. Forness said the number of winning tickets should be known by the end of the week.

The annual guessing contest started in 1916, when surveyors for the Alaska Railroad bet when the ice would go out. Thousands of people now pay \$2.50 per guess. Organizers split proceeds between payouts and charitable organizations in Nenana.

The winning time is determined when a cable attached to a tripod on the river ice trips a clock on shore.

Machete-wielding naked man attacks mailboxes

FL CAPE CORAL — Police in southwest Florida said they arrested a naked man who was attacking mailboxes with a machete.

The News-Press reported that Yudier Duenas-Sosa, 36, was arrested Saturday night in a Cape Coral neighborhood. Officers said Duenas-Sosa was taken into custody without incident, but his cousin was arrested after she charged at officers in an attempt to prevent Duenas-Sosa's arrest. Police said the man and woman had been in the area for a party and were both intoxicated.

Duenas-Sosa faces charges of aggravated assault and criminal mischief, while his cousin is

charged with resisting arrest.

New charges filed against 'spanker'

WA SPOKANE — New charges have been filed against a man accused of slapping the backsides of women along a popular hiking trail that runs through the eastern Washington city of Spokane.

KXLY-TV reported that Jonathan Smith, 28, is charged with 11 counts of fourth-degree assault with sexual motivation. Smith pleaded not guilty when he appeared in district court Friday.

He was arrested April 20, a day after he went to the offices of KHQ television station, identified himself as the spanker and apologized to victims.

Court documents released Friday say Smith noted that in almost every incident, he was sexually aroused before, during or after the attack.

Dispatcher snoring on 911 call is suspended

OH CLEVELAND — A Cleveland police dispatcher heard snoring on a recorded 911 call has been suspended for six days for sleeping on the job.

WJW-TV reported that Jamin Thomas pleaded no contest to internal charges from the department's investigation.

The local police union president, Steve Loomis, said Thomas is a single mother who was working full time and attending college. Loomis said those aren't excuses but the reality of Thomas' situation, and the concerns about her sleeping on duty have led her to change her lifestyle.

From wire reports

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Racism in sports still lingers in Boston

Associated Press

When Red Sox fans hurled the N-word toward Orioles outfielder Adam Jones in Fenway Park, it was a reminder of Boston's racial legacy — particularly around its sports teams.

Boston's reputation as a racist sports town developed through decades of barriers broken and maintained, intertwined with broader struggles for progress along with today's climate of racial tension that sports can't avoid.

Despite its teams and the city making strides on race, Boston still has perceptions of racism to overcome.

"Boston has a reputation, partially left over from a long time ago, that there is more racism within Boston sports,"

said Richard Lapchick, director of the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida. "The type of incident that happened ... is something I would've expected to read about in Boston 25 years ago."

Jones was given an extended ovation on Tuesday night as he stepped to the plate for his first at-bat, a moment sharply different from what he described Monday night, saying he heard fans call him the N-word and had peanuts thrown in his direction in the dugout, hitting a nearby police officer.

Fenway security said 34 people were ejected, but only one for using foul language toward a player and it was unclear whether that was toward Jones. Police said the peanut-thrower

was thrown out by stadium security before police could identify him.

The All-Star said he felt "it was just the right time" to speak out after experiencing previous racial heckling at Fenway over 12 seasons, though he said it was more a sign of larger racial issues than an indictment of Boston or its fans. Several black ballplayers Tuesday said Jones was just describing what they regularly experience.

The Celtics and the Bruins were pioneers in professional basketball and hockey during the 1950s. But the Red Sox were the last Major League Baseball team to field a black player. Pumpsie Green debuted at Fenway in 1959 — more than a decade after Jackie Robinson played for the Dodgers, and

even after Willie O'Ree took the ice for Boston in the all-white National Hockey League.

The Red Sox ballpark and offices are located on Yawkey Way, named for franchise owner Tom Yawkey who presided over the team at the time. The Red Sox passed on Robinson in 1945 and also passed on a chance to sign future Hall of Famer Willie Mays.

The Celtics were the first team to draft a black player, the first to field an all-black starting five and the first to hire a black head coach. Bill Russell was among the league's first black players and champions, but he wasn't embraced by fans during his career and was embittered by his experience in Boston for years, though he is now beloved in the city.

Jones applauded before Baltimore's loss to Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Adam Jones received extended applause from Fenway Park fans a night after he was racially taunted, both teams were warned after Boston ace Chris Sale threw behind Manny Machado's legs in the first inning and the Red Sox went on to beat the Baltimore Orioles 5-2 Tuesday night.

Machado homered out of Fenway Park for the second straight night, a seventh-inning drive, and the Orioles turned an usual triple play in the eighth inning on a popup to short left field.

Before the game Jones received an apology from Red Sox president Sam Kennedy on behalf of the club. Many fans stood during a lengthy round of applause in the first inning, and Sale stepped off the mound to extend the reception.

But one batter later the game turned testy when Sale's first pitch to Machado went to the backstop. Emotions have been elevated since Machado injured Red Sox star Dustin Pedroia on a slide April 21 at Baltimore. Pedroia missed the next three

games.

Hanley Ramirez homered twice, Mookie Betts hit a two-run double and Sale struck out 11 in eight innings.

Sale (2-2) allowed two runs and three hits, and Craig Kimbrel got three straight outs for his AL-leading ninth save in 10 chances.

Orioles starter Alec Asher (1-1) gave up three runs and six hits in six innings.

Yankees 11, Blue Jays 5: Aaron Judge hit two more home runs after destroying a flat-screen television with a long drive during batting practice, and Brett Gardner also went deep twice to power host New York past Toronto.

Astros 8, Rangers 7: Marwin Gonzalez hit two home runs, including a go-ahead grand slam in the eighth inning that rallied host Houston over Texas.

Dodgers 13, Giants 5: Yasiel Puig drove in four runs with two singles and rookie Cody Bellinger added three more with a bases-clearing triple as host Los Angeles rallied to beat San Francisco.

Diamondbacks 6, Nation-

als 3: Jake Lamb and Chris Herrmann homered off Tanner Roark (3-1), and visiting Arizona bounced back from an early deficit to beat high-scoring Washington.

Angels 6, Mariners 4 (11): Albert Pujols' RBI double in the 11th inning scored Mike Trout from first base and visiting Los Angeles held on for a win over Seattle.

Cubs 8, Phillies 3: Javier Baez came within a double of the cycle with four hits and three RBIs, Kyle Schwarber broke out of a slump with a three-run homer and host Chicago beat Philadelphia.

White Sox 6, Royals 0: Jose Quintana (2-4) gave up just four singles in eight innings and visiting Chicago beat Kansas City.

Tigers 5, Indians 2: Miguel Cabrera hit his 450th homer in his first game off the disabled list and host Detroit beat Cleveland.

Cardinals 2, Brewers 1: Carlos Martinez (1-3) pitched effectively into the eighth inning and host St. Louis once again beat Wily Peralta.

Braves 9, Mets 7: R.A. Dickey's (3-2) floaters were more

effective than Matt Harvey's (2-2) fastballs for the second time in a week, Ender Inciarte drove in three runs with three hits and host Atlanta beat New York.

Pirates 12, Reds 3: Josh Harrison hit a three-run homer — his third in two games — and right-hander Tyler Glasnow (1-1) singled home two runs during a six-run rally that helped visiting Pittsburgh to its first victory of the season over Cincinnati.

Twins 9, Athletics 1: Ervin Santana (5-0) struck out seven in six shutout innings and Brian Dozier hit two of host Minnesota's six home runs.

Rays 3, Marlins 1: Edinson Volquez (0-4) struck out nine but allowed a career-high eight walks, and visiting Tampa Bay took advantage of his historically uneven performance to beat Miami.

Padres 6, Rockies 2: Yangervis Solarte and Ryan Schimpf hit back-to-back home runs off Tyler Chatwood (2-4) in the sixth inning and San Diego beat Colorado to spoil Rockies manager Bud Black's return to Petco Park.

Thomas, Celtics outlast Wizards in OT

Associated Press

BOSTON — It was his sister's birthday. She would have been 23.

Isaiah Thomas spent four or five hours in the dentist's chair having work done on the tooth that was knocked out in Game 1, a day after he was in oral surgery for six hours having it repositioned in his mouth. His mouth was swollen, and he could barely talk. Still, he never considered not playing Tuesday night.

"The least I can do is go out there and play for her," Thomas said after scoring 53 points — the second-highest total in Celtics playoff history — to lead Boston to a 129-119 overtime victory over the Washington Wizards.

"I knew once game-time came, my guys would get me going, get me the energy to go out and win a game," Thomas said, ducking his face into his hands as he mentioned his sister, Chyna, who died in a car crash on the eve of the playoffs. "There was no way I was sitting out."

Fiddling with his new mouth guard throughout the game,

Thomas scored 20 points in the fourth quarter and nine in overtime to help the Celtics take a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinals. The 53 points were the most in an NBA playoff game since Allen Iverson scored 55 in 2003, and just one shy of John Havlicek's franchise post-season record of 54.

"It's nice to be in Celtics history with all the great players," Thomas said. "But until you win a championship, you can't consider yourself a great player. That's what it's all about."

John Wall scored 40 points with 13 assists for Washington, which will host Games 3 and 4 on Thursday and Sunday.

"Two teams played their hearts out. Two great players played well," Wizards coach Scott Brooks said. "

Asked if he had ever been in a one-on-one scoring battle like that against another point guard, Wall shook his head: "Nah," he said. "Nope. Nope. Nope."

Thomas attended his sister's funeral on Saturday and returned to Boston early Sunday morning — just hours before

the Celtics won 123-111 and the diminutive point guard lost a tooth. Team doctors jammed it back in, but Thomas spent large parts of the next two days in oral surgery.

"What else is there to say?" Celtics coach Brad Stevens asked. "There was a point today where he was not feeling good at all. He's had a tough day and I thought he was going to really have to gut this one out. Not only guts it out, he ends up with 50. Pretty impressive."

Al Horford scored 15 points with 12 rebounds for Boston, and Avery Bradley and Jae Crowder scored 14 apiece. Marcin Gortat had 14 points and 10 rebounds and Markieff Morris scored 16 for the Wizards, but both fouled out in overtime.

Running: One game after the Wizards scored the first 16 points of the game, they erupted for 42 points in the first quarter and opened a 13-point lead. Wall had 19 in the first to 15 for Thomas, but Boston erased the deficit in the second quarter and took a brief lead with just over a minute left before the half.

Otto Porter Jr. hit a three-

pointer to give the Wizards a 114-112 lead with 33 seconds left in the fourth. Thomas made two free throws to tie it, then both Wall and Bradley Beal missed short jumpers that could have won it in regulation.

Walking wounded: The game was only about a minute old when Morris threw Horford into the crowd under the Celtics basket. Late in the first, Wall had to shake it off after landing on a prone Kelly Olynyk. Bradley sustained a hip pointer in a collision with 1:11 to play in the first half. And seconds later, Porter landed hard on his right wrist and elbow, but remained in the game.

Thomas banged his face on the court in the third and spent the next few minutes adjusting his teeth.

Getting testy: Midway through the third, Porter and Thomas appeared to bang heads, and Porter headed to the locker room gushing blood from the nose. Thomas and Morris got into it, drawing double technicals; Thomas appeared to be having words with someone on the Wizards bench, and Morris tried to push him away.

Curry leads Golden State past Utah in series opener

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry pulled off a razzle-dazzle spin move right around big Rudy Gobert at the perimeter, went in for a layup and raised his hands, begging the sellout crowd to do its thing.

The Golden State Warriors sure did theirs, using that up-tempo, pass-happy style to run right by the Utah Jazz in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals.

Curry scored 22 points in three quarters of work and the top-seeded Warriors warmed up in a hurry after a weeklong layoff between playoff games, beating the Jazz 106-94 on Tuesday night.

"I'll keep enjoying it. I feel like I have one of the better

seats in the house and I'm not even paying for it," fill-in Warriors head coach Mike Brown said when asked about Curry's slick moves.

Draymond Green scored Golden State's first six points of the fourth quarter and wound up with 17 points, eight rebounds, six assists and two more blocks to bring his remarkable five-game playoff swat total to 19.

Kevin Durant added 17 points on an uncharacteristically cold shooting night at 7-for-17 and had five rebounds and five assists. He missed the middle two games against Portland because of a strained left calf then returned for 20 minutes in Game 4. Zaza Pachulia scored 10 points in 14 minutes.

Gobert had 13 points, eight rebounds, two blocks and a Flagrant 1 foul on Green in the fourth for the Jazz, who just finished off the Clippers in a seven-game series Sunday while the Warriors waited after eliminating Portland in a sweep April 24.

"We picked up right where we left off," Curry said. "We weren't clicking making shots early on but our defense really gave us an opportunity to find that flow, and that's what you need in the playoffs."

Game 2 is Thursday night back at Oracle Arena, where it was a night of nostalgia as Golden State honored its 2007 "We Believe" team that ended a 13-year playoff drought and stunned Dallas in the first

round.

Green insisted it might take the Warriors a quarter or so to find their rhythm as they finally got to play again. They weren't sharp from three-point range while going 7 for 29, with Klay Thompson making three of those on the way to 15 points.

The methodical, slow-you-down Jazz team making its first playoff appearance in five years couldn't keep pace in transition.

"If you have those moments where you're not urgent enough, they just punish you for it," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said.

The Warriors outscored the Jazz 29-6 on the break and committed only seven turnovers.

Zuccarello, Rangers blow out Senators

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mats Zuccarello got the New York Rangers off to a fast start and they cruised to a crucial win against the Ottawa Senators.

Zuccarello had a goal and an assist in the first period and the Rangers went on to a 4-1 victory Tuesday night that cut the Senators' lead to 2-1 in the Eastern Conference semifinal series. Michael Grabner, Rick Nash and Oscar Lindberg also scored, and Henrik Lundqvist stopped 26 shots.

Looking to avoid falling into a 0-3 series hole and with the home crowd buzzing from the singing of the national anthems, the Rangers came out aggressive from the start. They outshot the Senators 15-5 in the first period while building a 2-0 lead.

"We played a solid first period and we came out strong," Zuccarello said. "I think that we set the tone right away."

The Rangers have won three straight playoff games at Madison Square Garden after losing six straight on home ice, including Game 3 of the first round against Montreal.

"There's no doubt we played a strong game," New York coach Alain Vigneault said. "We were able to score a couple, get early pace and we were able to bring it home and win the game."

Zuccarello got the crowd fired up when he got the Rangers on the scoreboard 5:31 into the game. Mika Zibanejad brought the puck up the right side, came around the back of the Ottawa net while fighting off a defender and sent a pass in front to Zuccarello, who fired it past goalie Craig Anderson for his 11th career playoff goal.

Grabner made it 2-0 with 6:36 left in the opening period. Zuccarello sent the puck along the boards on the left side behind the Ottawa net and Grabner beat Anderson and defenseman Ben Harpur to it. He then came out and put in a wraparound before Anderson could recover.

"I was just trying to get it deep," Zuccarello said. "It was a lucky play and a good job by him, reading it and stealing the puck there."

Jean-Gabriel Pageau, who had four goals in Ottawa's 6-5 double-overtime win in Game 2, scored again for the Senators, and Anderson finished

with 26 saves.

"The game was lost in the first period," Senators coach Guy Boucher said. "They were ready, they were hungry, they were desperate and we didn't match that at all, that's it."

Game 4 is Thursday night.

Ottawa came out with more intensity in the second period, getting the first three shots of the period. The Senators had a 12-9 advantage on shots in the middle period but fell further behind.

Lundqvist, who leads all goalies with 289 saves in the playoffs, made a nice stick save in the opening minute of the second on Pageau, and both goalies made some nice stops through the middle of the period to keep the score 2-0.

"We didn't give up that much," Lundqvist said. "It felt like we were in control for the most part and played a really smart game. ... I think everybody felt like we played a really strong game when we needed it the most here."

Nash then increased the Rangers' lead with his 15th career postseason goal — third this year — with 7:39 remaining in the middle period. After

Senators defenseman Erik Karlsson and Harpur collided near center ice, Derek Stepan brought the puck down the middle and passed it to Nash, who fired it past Anderson from the left circle.

Lindberg made it 4-0 with 1:43 left in the period. J.T. Miller fought off a defender along the left side, skated in toward the net and passed it to Lindberg, who fired it over the glove of a sliding Anderson from the right side.

That gave the Rangers a goal from each of their four lines.

"That's huge, especially in the playoffs you need every line kind of going," Nash said. "Tonight we had that and it was obviously a difference maker."

Pageau then spoiled Lundqvist's shutout bid just 32 seconds later as he got a backhanded pass from Bobby Ryan from behind the net and scored his sixth of the postseason.

"They obviously played with a lot more desperation than we did from the start of the game," Karlsson said. "We just couldn't catch up at the end of the day. They started better and that's why they won this game."

Ellis, Predators push Blues to brink of elimination

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Predators defenseman Ryan Ellis gave goalie Pekka Rinne a hand in the crease with a key save inside the final minute of the second period, then he broke open a scoreless game with a power-play goal.

The St. Louis Blues just don't agree with how Nashville got the man advantage that led to Ellis' goal.

James Neal made sure it didn't matter, scoring the game-winning goal with 6:57 left, as the Predators beat the Blues 2-1 on Tuesday night to take a 3-1 lead in their Western Conference semifinal.

"That was by far the hardest game of the series," Ellis said.

"I thought they played well at both ends of the ice. I thought we played well, too. It was deadlocked at zeroes for most of the game and we just got a couple of bounces."

Rinne outdueled St. Louis' Jake Allen with 32 saves, and the Predators are a victory from reaching the Western Conference finals for the first time in franchise history.

Ellis scored at 5:09 of the third to break up a scoreless game. Neal then scored with 6:57 left to crank up the Nashville celebration as the Predators won their eighth straight playoff game at home.

Joel Edmundson scored with 3:49 left as St. Louis avoided the shutout. Blues coach Mike Yeo pulled Allen late, but they

couldn't beat Rinne again. Allen finished with 23 saves as the Blues lost consecutive road games for the first time since Feb. 28 and March 3.

Game 5 is Friday night in St. Louis.

The Predators got the first goal of the game after a scuffle along the boards in front of the Nashville bench put Joel Edmundson and forward Ryan Reaves in the box for roughing along with Predators forward Cody McLeod.

The puck bounced around before Ellis scored on a wrist shot from the edge of the left circle under Allen's head as the goalie went down.

Ellis tied the franchise record with a point in his seventh straight playoff game.

Yeo was upset about the call and said he didn't get an explanation.

"I thought that they did a really good job lobbying for that, and I mean every stoppage they're yelling at the refs," Yeo said of the Predators. "They're talking to the refs, and obviously it worked there. It's worked all series. Let's be honest."

St. Louis captain Alex Pietrangolo also wasn't happy with the way the officials called the penalties from the scrum.

"It is the first time I see a referee not let the captain talk to them," Pietrangolo said. "I am pretty sure that is what the 'C' is for, so the league can deal with them."