

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

AF Reserve extends some airmen's duty

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Air Force Reserve pilots, maintainers, space operators and cyber specialists who want to quit the service will have to stay in uniform for at least six months under a plan to address critical skills shortages.

The involuntary service commitment is to ensure that the Air Force Reserve meets recruiting and end-strength goals, according to a memo on the policy that went into effect Sunday.

Airmen will be forced to stay only if they voluntarily reassign to the Inactive Ready Reserve, volunteer to separate or be discharged, or will retire before Sept. 30, the Air Force Reserve Command said in a statement Tuesday.

"This is not a stop-loss, but merely an extension of service for six months while we transition to onboarding Citizen Airmen and most importantly, the success of the mission supporting the Nation's defense," the statement said.

Airmen whose reassignments, discharges or retirements were approved prior to April 1 are not affected, according to the memo published on the Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook page the day before the policy took effect.

Airmen who are transferring to an active-duty component, have reached high-year tenure or are on conditional release to the Air National Guard are also unaffected.

Those who are being involuntarily separated or discharged from service will not be retained.

America's improving job market means more opportunities for people in the private sector, the command said in its statement.

"To compete with these new opportunities there are recruitment, retention and relocation benefits as some of the compensation options available to Reserve Citizen Airmen," it said.

Other retention incentives include a pathway for airmen to commission as officers, and career advice, the statement said.

"Our purpose is to retain as many experienced Reserve Citizen Airmen as possible through the end of the fiscal year to provide seamless integration of duties in accomplishing our mission to compete, deter and win," the statement said. "The Air Force Reserve is committed to building our future leaders and preserving a lethal force for the defense of our nation."

Trump instructs military to plan for leaving Syria

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has instructed military leaders to prepare to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria but has not set a date for them to do so, according to a senior administration official.

In a meeting with top national security officials Tuesday, Trump stressed that U.S. troops can be involved in current training tasks for local forces to ensure security in areas liberated from Islamic State, the official said.

But the president said the U.S. mission would not extend beyond the destruction of ISIS, and that he expects other countries, particularly wealthy Arab states in the region, to pick up the task of paying for reconstruction of stabilized areas, including sending their own troops, if necessary.

In a statement Wednesday, the White House said the military mission to eradicate ISIS in Syria is coming to a "rapid end" but offered no timetable for withdrawal.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the U.S. and its partners are committed to eliminating ISIS pockets that still operate in Syria.

Trump on Tuesday had repeated his desire to quickly "get out" of Syria, even as his top commander for the Middle East outlined the need for a continuing military presence there.

Trump said at a White House news conference that "I want to get out. I want to bring our troops back home."

The U.S., he said, had gotten "nothing out of \$7 trillion [spent] in the Middle East over the last 17 years," a calculation that apparently included the Afghanistan War against the Taliban in Southwest Asia, where he last year approved a U.S. troop increase.

"So, it's time. It's time. We were very successful against ISIS," Trump said. "But sometimes it's time to come back home, and we're thinking about that very seriously, OK?"

Trump has used the \$7 trillion figure many times, including during his cam-

paign, although numerous experts put the figure at about half that, beginning in Afghanistan in 2001 and continuing through U.S. military operations in Pakistan, Iraq and Syria. The figure also would include substantial costs tied to veterans' care and disability benefits, and war-related domestic and diplomatic security measures.

Many military officials were taken aback by Trump's stated intent, first mentioned last week, to withdraw from Syria. In a speech ostensibly devoted to his domestic infrastructure plans, Trump told a rally in Ohio on March 29 that U.S. forces would "be coming out of Syria, like, very soon."

On Tuesday, speaking at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Gen. Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Central Command, said, "A lot of very good military progress has been made over the last couple of years, but the hard part, I think, is in front of us." Upcoming efforts, he said, include the military's role in "stabilizing [Syria], consolidating gains" and "addressing long-term issues of reconstruction" after the defeat of ISIS.

Votel, along with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, also has repeatedly said in recent months that U.S. troops would be staying in Syria for the foreseeable future to guarantee stability and a political resolution to the civil war, which initially created space for ISIS to advance.

There are about 2,000 U.S. troops there, advising and assisting local proxy forces and directing U.S. airstrikes against ISIS forces. Trump described that mission as "close to 100 percent" accomplished, while Votel said that "well over 90 percent" of Syria had been "liberated" from the militants, even as "the situation continues to become more and more complex" and "other underlying challenges" become more apparent.

Among those challenges are the need to stabilize areas cleared of militants to prevent their reappearance, to forge a political solution that will end Syria's civil war without ceding power to Russia and Iran, and resolving U.S. difficulties with neighboring Turkey.

4 Marines feared dead in crash

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps launched an investigation into a helicopter crash that is believed to have killed four crewmembers during a routine training mission in southern California near the Mexican border, Marine officials said Wednesday.

A CH-53E Super Stallion heavy lift helicopter crashed Tuesday about 2:35 p.m. local time outside the border town of El Centro, Calif., with the crewmembers aboard, according to a statement by the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. The crew was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, just north of San Diego.

Maj. Morgan Frazer, a spokesman for the unit, said additional details about the crash were not available Wednesday morning. He did not say whether the Marines in the helicopter had been confirmed killed or whether their families had been notified. The Pentagon typically withholds identification of fallen troops until 24 hours after next-of-kin notification.

Marine officials said it was too early to determine what caused Tuesday's crash.

The CH-53E, often deployed aboard amphibious assault ships, is the military's largest, heaviest and most powerful helicopter, according to its manufacturer, Sikorsky. The aircraft can carry massive loads, according to the Marine Corps, including a 26,000-pound light armored vehicle, 16 tons of cargo or a force of combat-loaded Marines to lead an assault.

But the aging platform has faced problems, especially in training, in recent years. The crash on Tuesday appears to be the deadliest CH-53 incident since a crash off the coast of Hawaii in 2016 killed 12 Marines during a nighttime training flight. The Marines ultimately ruled that crash was the result of pilot error, leading to two of the massive aircraft colliding in the air.

Nonetheless, the Super Stallion fleet was described as "inadequate" in November by Marine Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, the service's deputy commandant for aviation. He said only 37 percent of the Marines' 143

CH-53s were airworthy.

The Super Stallion fleet is due to be upgraded to new CH-53K models known as King Stallions in the coming years. The Marine Corps has said it intends to buy 200 of the new, more powerful models, also produced by Sikorsky.

The crash Tuesday followed another Marine aviation crash in Africa.

The Marine Corps reported an AV-8B Harrier attack jet crashed just after takeoff from Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport, which includes the U.S. military's Horn of Africa post known as Camp Lemonnier.

The Harrier pilot, assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 162 and embarked aboard the USS Iwo Jima, was listed in stable condition while being evaluated at Camp Lemonnier's expeditionary medical facility, according to a Navy statement.

There were no reports of injuries to personnel on the ground or damage to the infrastructure at the airport. The cause of the crash is under investigation, the statement said.

Exercise called off for weather

By KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and South Korea canceled plans to conduct a Marine amphibious assault exercise as part of joint war games this week due to bad weather, the Combined Forces Command said Wednesday.

The announcement comes days after the allies began annual military drills known as Foal Eagle amid a diplomatic push with North Korea that has sharply eased tensions on the divided peninsula.

The allies are keeping this year's exercises low-key due to the developing detente with the North after months of saber rattling and missile tests as it made progress in its nuclear weapons program.

The U.S.-led command said the changes to the Ssangyong exercises, which are part of Foal Eagle, were due to bad weather.

The assault exercise, which evokes memories of the World War II invasion of Normandy, had been scheduled for Thursday.

"U.S. and (South Korean) leadership canceled the amphibious landing portion of the training exercise ... after weather assessments indicated unsafe landing conditions for servicemembers," the CFC said in a press release.

Participating units in the air and sea portions will continue training as planned, it said, adding the routine drills are held twice a year to build and maintain fundamental military readiness.

"This was a good call by the on-scene commanders, who must balance readiness and risk — even in a training environment," said Gen. Vincent Brooks, commander of the CFC and U.S. Forces Korea.

The allies resumed the field-training drills Sunday with about 11,500 U.S. troops and 290,000 South Korean troops expected to participate. Foal Eagle is due to last about a month, half the duration of last year's exercises.

US to boost military aid to Baltics

By CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The White House announced Tuesday that the United States would boost its alliance with the Baltic states through an infusion of more than \$170 million in military aid as the region looks to fend off potential Russian aggression.

But earlier Tuesday, it was uncertain whether the Baltics leaders would get such reassurances during a free-wheeling lunchtime discussion with President Donald Trump in which he meandered from proposing that the military guard the U.S.-Mexican border to bashing tech giant Amazon and his former presidential oppo-

nent, Hillary Clinton.

By an afternoon joint news conference with Presidents Dalia Grybauskaitė, of Lithuania; Raimonds Vejonis, of Latvia; and Kersti Kaljulaid, of Estonia, a more scripted Trump touted strong support of the Baltic states.

"We are with [the Baltic states]; we are friends and we are allies," Trump said from the East Room while flanked by the Baltic leaders. "The Baltic republics can trust the United States will remain a strong, proud and loyal friend and ally."

The White House on Tuesday said the United States would boost its Baltic defense and security cooperation with nearly \$100 million to procure

large-caliber ammunition and more than \$70 million in training and equipment programs to build the capacity of the national-level military or security forces of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The United States will also continue its efforts to improve defense and security infrastructure in the Baltic region, strengthen Baltic national resilience efforts and build defense capacity through security assistance programs such as the Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training programs, or IMET, the White House said.

Stars and Stripes reporter John Vandiver contributed to this story.

Source: Mueller says Trump not now a target

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Special counsel Robert Mueller has informed President Donald Trump's attorneys that the president is not currently considered a criminal target in the Russia investigation, according to a person familiar with the conversation.

The person, who was not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations and demanded anonymity, said the president is considered a subject of Mueller's probe — not a target. A subject is typically someone whose conduct is of interest to investigators but prosecutors are not certain they've gathered enough evidence to bring charges.

The designation could change at any time, though. The development was first reported

by The Washington Post.

Trump's designation as a subject came up as prosecutors and the president's legal team have been negotiating the terms of an interview with him. The president has said he wants to speak with Mueller's team, but his lawyers have not publicly committed to allowing him to be questioned.

Trump attorney Jay Sekulow declined to confirm or discuss the conversations with Mueller.

"We do not discuss real or alleged conversations between our legal team and the Office of Special Counsel," Sekulow said.

White House lawyer Ty Cobb also declined to comment.

Mueller's team has signaled that they're interested in discussing several key episodes

in the early parts of the Trump administration as they probe possible obstruction of justice.

Prosecutors have told the legal team they want to question Trump about the firings of former FBI Director James Comey and former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Investigators want to discuss conversations Trump had with Comey in which the former FBI director has said the president encouraged him to end an active investigation into Flynn. They're also interested in the events leading up to Flynn's firing in February 2017.

Investigators have said they want to hear from the president to understand his intent and thinking during those events.

AF sued over religious rights

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

Oscar Rodriguez wanted an apology from the Air Force for cutting him off from giving a speech that mentioned God.

A retired senior master sergeant, Rodriguez had been invited by Master Sgt. Charles Roberson to speak while the flag was folded during Roberson's retirement ceremony at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., two years ago.

Instead, Rodriguez was forcibly removed from the ceremony as he shouted out the words of a speech that the Air Force says was against regulation at the time.

The Air Force never apologized and now Rodriguez, along with Roberson, who's also retired, are suing the service for alleged violations of their civil rights.

The two veterans are plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed Monday on their behalf by First Liberty Institute, a conservative religious-freedom organization based in Plano, Texas.

"No one should be assaulted for saying the word 'God' on an Air Force base," said Hiram Sasser, general counsel for First Liberty, in a statement. "Certainly our United States Airmen are strong enough to be exposed to the word 'God' at a retirement ceremony."

The lawsuit asks the court for a judgment declaring that the Air Force violated Rodriguez's and Roberson's free-speech rights, free exercise of religion and due process, and rights against unreasonable search and seizure.

It also wants the court to require the Air Force to follow the looser interpretation of what kinds of speeches are allowed at flag-folding ceremonies — revised after

the Travis incident — and allow Rodriguez to continue to perform his speech at retirement ceremonies and other events where he's invited to do so. The plaintiffs are seeking unspecified damages and attorney's fees.

The incident drew national attention, and members of Congress demanded the Air Force investigate what happened. The service determined in September 2016 that Rodriguez was not removed because of the religious content of his speech. Rather, the service said he was forcibly escorted from the ceremony because he was using an unauthorized flag-folding script and had a history of misconduct that had led the squadron commander to bar him from speaking at the event.

Rodriguez intended to recite his own flag-folding speech, one that touches on religion. "This is what we fight for, and if necessary to touch the hand of God in her defense, the charge that we accept as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines is a noble one ..." the written speech said, according to the lawsuit, which was filed in U.S. district court in Washington.

In 2005, the Air Force adopted an official flag-folding script that struck out religious references and focused on the flag's history and its significance in the service.

Roberson was told that Rodriguez could attend the ceremony but was not welcome to give his speech, according to the lawsuit. He told Rodriguez that despite "the potential tension," he still wanted Rodriguez to give his speech, according to the lawsuit.

"That the Air Force would do this to myself, as it's my retirement, I was very embarrassed and humiliated in front of all my family and friends," Roberson said in an online video posted by First Liberty.

Police say YouTube shooter had grudge

The Washington Post

The woman who police say opened fire Tuesday at YouTube's headquarters in San Bruno, Calif., had a grudge against the company, family members told local media, and she appeared to be a prolific user of the video sharing platform who accused YouTube moderators of suppressing her content.

Police identified the shooter as Nasim Najafi Aghdam, 39, of San Diego. They said she opened fire with a handgun in a courtyard outside the company's headquarters, wounding three people before taking her own life.

A woman matching Aghdam's name and appearance maintained several YouTube channels and a personal website where she published videos about a range of topics, including veganism, animal cruelty and fitness. She also frequently ranted against YouTube, claiming the company discriminated against her and filtered her videos to prevent them from getting views.

The channels each had several thousand subscribers, and some uploads had hundreds of thousands of views. All of them were offline by late Tuesday, with statements saying the channels had been terminated "due to multiple or severe violations" of YouTube's policies.

Police said Aghdam opened fire at YouTube's headquarters about 12:45 p.m. Tuesday, sending terrified employees fleeing. Some took shelter in nearby businesses, while others barricaded themselves in conference rooms. Police said four people were transported to the hospital, three of them suffering from gunshot wounds.

Events mark 50th anniversary of MLK assassination

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The daughter of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. remembered him as “the apostle of nonviolence” as admirers marked the 50th anniversary of his assassination Wednesday with marches, speeches and quiet reflection.

The Rev. Bernice A. King recalled her father as a civil rights leader and great orator whose message of peaceful protest was still vital decades later.

“We decided to start this day remembering the apostle of nonviolence,” she said during a ceremony to award the Martin Luther King Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize held at the King Center in Atlanta.

In Memphis, where King died, hundreds of people bundled in hats and coats gathered early for a march led by the same sanitation workers union whose low pay King had come to protest when he was shot.

The Memphis events were scheduled to feature King’s contemporaries, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., along with celebrities such as the rapper Common. In the evening, the Atlanta events were to culminate with a bell-ringing and wreath-laying at his crypt to mark the moment when he was gunned down on the balcony of the old Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. He was 39.

President Donald Trump issued a proclamation in honor of the anniversary, saying, “In remembrance of his profound and inspirational virtues, we look to do as Dr. King did while this world was privileged enough to still have him.”

The anniversary of King’s death coincides with a resurgence of white supremacy, the continued shootings of unarmed

black men and a parade of discouraging statistics on the lack of progress among black Americans on issues from housing to education to wealth. But rather than despair, the resounding message repeated at the commemorations was one of resilience, resolve and a renewed commitment to King’s legacy and unfinished work.

Wednesday’s events followed a rousing celebration the night before of King’s “I’ve Been To the Mountaintop” speech at Memphis’ Mason Temple Church of God in Christ. He delivered this speech the night before he was assassinated.

Inside the church, Bernice King called her older brother, Martin Luther King III, to join her in the pulpit, and she discussed the difficulty of publicly mourning their father — a man hated during his lifetime, now beloved around the world.

“It’s important to see two of the children who lost their daddy 50 years ago to an assassin’s bullet,” said Bernice King, 55. “But we kept going. Keep all of us in prayer as we continue the grieving process for a parent that we’ve had yet to bury.”

Lee Saunders, a national labor leader, recounted how on that night in 1968 King made an unplanned appearance to deliver the famous speech without notes after his aides saw how passionate the crowd was: “There was one man they wanted to hear from.

“Dr. King’s work — our work — isn’t done. ... That’s why we’re here in Memphis. Not just to honor our history, but to seize our future,” he said.

Some of the sanitation workers who participated with King in a 1968 strike sat in the front row and were treated like celebrities, with audience members stopping to take photos with them before events began.

Study: Antibiotics, antacids boost children’s allergy risk

Associated Press

Infants who are given antacids such as Zantac or Pepcid are more likely to develop childhood allergies, perhaps because these drugs may alter their gut bacteria, a new large study suggests.

Early use of antibiotics also raised the chances of allergies in the study of nearly 800,000 children.

Researchers combed the health records of kids born between 2001 and 2013 and covered by Tricare, an insurance program for active-duty and retired military personnel and their families. A surprising 9 percent of the babies received antacids, reflecting the popularity of treating reflux in infancy.

Over four years, more than half of all the children developed allergies to foods or medications, rashes, asthma, hay fever or other allergic diseases. The study couldn’t prove causes, but the connection with antacids and antibiotics was striking.

For children who received an antacid during their first six months, the chances of developing a food allergy doubled; the chances of developing a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis or hay fever were about 50 percent higher.

For babies who received antibiotics, the chances doubled for asthma and were at least 50

percent higher for hay fever and anaphylaxis.

The results were published Monday in JAMA Pediatrics.

“These medicines are considered generally harmless and something to try with fussy babies who spit up a lot,” said lead researcher Dr. Edward Mitre, of the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, Md. “We should be a little more cautious prescribing these medicines.”

In the study, it’s possible medications were given to infants who already had allergies and were misdiagnosed, the authors acknowledged. But that didn’t seem likely to explain all of the strong effect they saw.

Gut bacteria play a role in a healthy immune system. Antibiotics and antacids might change the makeup of a baby’s microbiome, perhaps enough to cause an overreaction in the immune system that shows up as an allergy, Mitre said.

Antacids also change the way protein is digested, and some may alter development of immune system pathways.

Study co-author and pediatrician Dr. Cade Nylund, of Uniformed Services University, said parents can try offering fussy babies smaller amounts of food more often and frequent burping during meals.

Airman’s death ruled homicide

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

The stabbing death of an airman last week at Andersen Air Force Base was homicide, Guam’s chief medical examiner said Wednesday.

Airman 1st Class Bradley Hale, 20, who was deployed from Barksdale Air Force Base, La., was found unresponsive at a temporary lodging facility and declared dead at 3 a.m. on March 27, the Air Force said.

An airman, who has not been charged or identified, was arrested after a knife was found at the scene. He was “read his

rights and placed in pretrial confinement on suspicion of Article 118 (Murder or Manslaughter),” the Air Force said.

Dr. Aurelio Espinola, chief medical examiner in Guam, said there were three fatal wounds to Hale’s neck along with numerous superficial cuts.

Espinola, who did not perform the autopsy, said he was given the autopsy report by the Air Force.

The Air Force is still investigating the death and has not disclosed information about the autopsy or the airman in custody.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspect sings 'Cops' theme after arrest

NJ HAWORTH — A teenager sang the theme from the television show "Cops" after he was arrested following a chase in New Jersey.

Haworth police told The Record the 16-year-old was driving a stolen car when officers gave chase on Saturday. Officers pursued the vehicle through a golf course before the suspect bailed out. He can be heard singing on dashcam video, "Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do?"

The teen, whose name was not released because he's a juvenile, faces charges including eluding, resisting arrest by flight, burglary and receiving stolen property.

Fake severed fingers cause scare at garage

NY NEW YORK — Police said a report of severed fingers caused a scare at a New York City parking garage before officers figured out they were fake.

The New York Police Department said a cleaner called 911 on Monday after discovering what appeared to be bloody fingers in a baggie inside the garage.

Police officers and city medical examiner personnel responded by sealing off the garage and searching for other body parts. They later determined the fingers were rubber and possibly placed there as a prank. No one was charged.

Sleeping girl shot as mom's gun goes off

IL LANSING — Police said a girl, 5, was shot and wounded while sleeping after a gun her mother was handling went off at a party in suburban

Chicago.

The accidental shooting happened in Lansing. Police responded early Monday and said the girl was treated at a hospital in nearby Munster, Ind., before being transferred to a Chicago hospital. WGN-TV reported that the girl was in serious but stable condition following surgery.

Police said an initial investigation found that the child was sleeping during the party when the gun went off.

Names of those involved weren't immediately released, and no arrests were immediately reported.

Police: Man shot dog instead of his target

AL TRUSSVILLE — Police said a man has been charged with attempted murder after trying to shoot a man but shooting his own dog instead.

AL.com reported that Trussville police were responding to a report of shots fired on Saturday and found Michael Jeremy Downs, 38, trying to leave the scene.

Police determined that Downs had attempted to shoot a man he was arguing with but instead he shot his own dog, which had been seated near the man.

The dog is expected to recover and is being treated at a local humane society.

Downs was being held on bail.

Police: Couple ran brothel; kids present

PA INGRAM — Authorities said a Pennsylvania couple ran a brothel out of a residence where three young children live.

Ingram police said Brittany Patrick, 26, and her boyfriend,

Lukas Trout, 27, both face child endangerment charges. Patrick is also charged with prostitution, while Trout faces a conspiracy charge.

Authorities said they learned of the brothel after receiving complaints from Patrick's neighbors. Investigators discovered an ad Patrick had placed on an adult website. The probe culminated Friday when an undercover officer went to Patrick's apartment and Trout allegedly welcomed him and directed him to a bedroom.

Patrick and Trout are the parents of an 18-month-old child who lives in the apartment. Authorities said the children of Patrick's roommate, ages 8 and 10, were also allegedly present while prostitution was actively occurring.

Pregnant woman not allowed to take cruise

FL MIAMI — Disney Cruise Lines prevented a Missouri woman from boarding one of its ships because she is 25 weeks pregnant.

Emily Jackson and her family arrived in Miami last week after her doctor had cleared her to vacation aboard Disney Magic. But the line does not allow women who are more than 24 weeks pregnant to sail out of safety concerns, and a doctor's note is not accepted.

An armed police officer escorted the family from check-in.

Jackson said, "We had a terrible Disney experience."

Disney refunded the family for the cruise.

Pokemon Go Fest planners settle suit

IL CHICAGO — The organizers of a Pokemon Go Fest in Chicago have settled a class-action lawsuit by dissatisfied attendees for about \$1.6

million.

Last year's festival in Chicago's Grant Park went awry when technical glitches prevented many fans from logging on to the augmented reality game.

The problems forced game developer Niantic Inc. to issue a full refund for the \$20 tickets and \$100 in credits for use of the app. The game uses GPS to locate, capture, battle and train virtual creatures.

Plaintiff's attorney Tom Zimmerman said the settlement will cover a number of the festivalgoers' expenses, including travel, lodging, car rental, mileage and gas, tolls and parking.

The settlement must be reviewed and approved by a judge.

Captain indicted after evidence room theft

MA WEST SPRINGFIELD — A Massachusetts police captain previously placed on leave amid "discrepancies" involving evidence-room money has been indicted.

Prosecutors said West Springfield Capt. Daniel Spaulding was indicted Friday for allegedly stealing more than \$1,000 from the department. Spaulding, 50, was charged with using an official position to obtain unwarranted privilege. He was the senior officer in charge of evidence until October.

Authorities allege he took the money from the department's evidence room between May 2016 and May 2017. They say he later replaced the money and returned missing evidence bags.

Spaulding was placed on paid administrative leave in August. West Springfield's police chief said Spaulding has now been suspended without pay pending the outcome of the case.

From wire reports

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Woods' return brings buzz to Augusta

Associated Press

This Masters is as much about a red shirt as a green jacket.

Tiger Woods is back for only the second time in the last five years, and what makes the sight of him at Augusta National even more tantalizing is that Woods is starting to look like the player who dominated golf for nearly 15 years.

He has power. His short game is sharp. He makes putts.

Never mind that Woods is not ranked among the top 100 players. Or that it has been 13 years since he last won the Masters in that Sunday red shirt, and four years and eight months since he last won any tournament.

The buzz following Woods since his return from a fourth back surgery has been bigger and louder than when he was No. 1 in the world, piling up 79 victories on the PGA Tour and 14 majors. The longer he was away from the game, the more his feats looked even more legendary. And the longer he was gone, the more plausible it was that Woods might never return, at least not at a competitive level.

In his last three starts leading to the Masters, Woods was within one shot of the lead at some point in the final round. His only close call was the Valparaiso Championship, when he was a 40-foot birdie putt away on the 18th hole from forcing a

playoff.

That prompted Jason Day to say, "For him to come back and win ... I don't think it's going to be a huge surprise now."

As much as golf has missed the energy he brings to a tournament, Woods has missed golf, especially that first full week in April.

He has been to Augusta National each of the last two years for the Champions Dinners. Just like always, Woods walked up the stairs to the locker room reserved for Masters champions. But there were no clubs. No boxes of golf balls. No need to register. No tee time.

"Very frustrating," Woods said. "Because I love playing Augusta National. I love it. And I know how to play it. Sometimes I don't play it well, but I know how to play it. Me being out there on those greens and hitting putts and being creative, there's no other golf course like it in the world and there's no other golf tournament like it."

"It is literally ... it's a players' heaven."

Can he win? It seems like such an absurd thought considering where Woods was even a year ago.

He told Jack Nicklaus at the Champions Dinner last year how much he was hurting, and Nick Faldo was struck by the negative tone. Woods had fusion surgery on his lower back two weeks later. Then, in another low moment, he was arrested

in the early hours of Memorial Day on a DUI charge when Florida police found him asleep behind the wheel of his car.

The image of Woods pumping his fist in that red shirt was replaced by the sunken eyes of his mug shot. Woods attributed it to a bad combination of prescription drugs and sought treatment.

He sure didn't look like a Masters favorite then. He didn't look like one just over six months ago at the Presidents Cup, where as an assistant captain he said he could picture a scenario where he didn't return to competition at all.

Now he has one thing in mind: another green jacket.

The biggest obstacle for Woods? So is everyone else.

Adding to the anticipation of the Masters, which starts Thursday, that all the best players are hitting their stride going into the first major of the year. In the first 12 weeks, 11 players who won on the PGA Tour already were eligible for the Masters.

That list even includes Phil Mickelson, still going strong, as capable as ever to win a fourth Masters and become the oldest champion at age 47. The playoff victory over Justin Thomas in the Mexico Championship was the validation that Lefty needed.

"I needed to get a win before Augusta so I wasn't trying

to win for the first time in 4½ years at that event," Mickelson said. "This certainly boosts my confidence and gives me a lot of encouragement."

Woods, Thomas, Dustin Johnson and Rory McIlroy are the betting favorites for this Masters.

For McIlroy and Johnson, there is a mixture of pressure and redemption. Three players have a shot at the career Grand Slam this year and it starts with McIlroy at the Masters, who for the fourth year goes to Augusta National needing only a green jacket to compete the greatest collection in golf.

Johnson will make progress simply by teeing off. He was denied that last year after he slipped down the wooden staircase of his rental home in Augusta on the eve of the Masters and had to withdraw with a back injury. He was the clear favorite a year ago, the winner of three straight tournaments.

Gone, at least for now, are the back problems that kept the starter on the first tee at Augusta National from uttering four words that golf fans long to hear: "Fore, please. Tiger Woods."

For those who felt as though the Masters could not get here soon enough, Woods was right there with them.

"Very eager," he said with a smile. "I feel like I'm physically able to do it again. And it's going to be a lot of fun."

Pats send Cooks to Rams for 1st-round pick

Associated Press

BOSTON — Tom Brady is losing one of his top receivers, and Jared Goff is getting a speedy new target.

The New England Patriots traded receiver Brandin Cooks to the Rams on Tuesday for Los Angeles' first-round draft pick, the 23rd overall.

The 24-year-old Cooks had 65 catches for 1,082 yards and seven touchdowns in his only season with the Patriots. His receiving stats were second on the defending AFC champions' roster only to tight end

Rob Gronkowski, who barely topped Cooks in all three categories.

Cooks' clear chemistry with Brady makes the trade fairly surprising for New England, particularly after the recent departure of another favorite Brady target, Danny Amendola, who signed with the Dolphins.

But the defending NFC West champion Rams made an aggressive offer to secure a potential No. 1 receiver and proven deep threat just three weeks after Sammy Watkins left to join the Kansas City Chiefs in free agency.

After weeks of rumors about the Rams' interest in acquiring star receiver Odell Beckham Jr. from the New York Giants, they managed to find another elite talent at the position. Cooks' speed and versatility should fit in well in coach Sean McVay's schemes as he lines up alongside Robert Woods and Cooper Kupp in the NFL's highest-scoring offense last season.

The trade also appears to be a strategic move on the part of the Patriots. Cooks is entering the fifth year of his rookie contract, and he can become a free agent after the 2018 season.

Freeman leads Braves over Nationals

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Braves have reason to be encouraged about their offense, even with two starters on the disabled list and top prospect Ronald Acuna's debut probably at least two weeks away.

Freddie Freeman and Preston Tucker each hit a three-run homer, and Atlanta handed Washington its first loss with a 13-6 victory over Bryce Harper and the Nationals on Tuesday night.

Third baseman Johan Camargo and catcher Tyler Flowers are on the disabled list, but the Braves' 41 runs through five games is the team's best offensive start since 2006. The Braves' 56 hits are tied with the 2008 team for the Atlanta record through five games.

"It's early but I kind of like how we're going about it right now," manager Brian

Snitker said.

The 20-year-old Acuna will open the season at Triple-A Gwinnett after hitting .432 in spring training. Tucker, expected to be a short-term starter in left field, is hitting .421.

Freeman and Tucker each delivered a big blow as Atlanta scored four times in each of the first two innings. Tucker's drive in the first against A.J. Cole reached the restaurant behind the right-field seats, and Freeman cleared the wall in right-center in the second.

Washington's three-run first inning marked the fifth straight game the Nationals handed a lead to their starting pitcher. But Cole (0-1) allowed 10 runs and 10 hits in 3²/₃ innings, perhaps endangering his hold on the No. 5 spot in the rotation.

"I'm trying to go out there and show them I can compete ... and I'm trying to

help our bullpen as well," Cole said.

Manager Dave Martinez said he told Cole "to keep his head up — and nice home run."

Ryan Zimmerman hit a two-run homer in the first for Washington, and Cole added his first career homer in the second. Leading off the third, Harper continued his hot streak with his fourth homer in the last three games.

Atlanta ace Julio Teheran was charged with five runs in 2¹/₃ innings, ending his streak of 19 consecutive scoreless innings against Washington. The right-hander threw 89-mph fastballs on the homers hit by Zimmerman and Cole.

Ozzie Albies had three hits and scored three times for Atlanta, which lost 8-1 in the series opener Monday. Freeman added a run-scoring single off Enny Romero in the fifth.

MLB roundup

Ohtani hits 3-run HR in first home at-bat

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani hit his first major league home run in his first Angel Stadium at-bat, helping the Los Angeles Angels beat the Cleveland Indians 13-2 on Tuesday night.

Ohtani capped a six-run first inning with a three-run drive to center off Josh Tomlin (0-1). The Japanese two-way player got the silent treatment from teammates when he returned to the dugout, but not from the crowd. After players broke character and jumped around Ohtani to celebrate, Mike Trout pointed to the field and instructed Ohtani to take a curtain call.

Trout, Justin Upton, Luis Valbuena and Rene Rivera also homered for the Angels, who broke a 12-game losing streak to the Indians. Garrett Richards (1-0) got the win.

Jose Ramirez hit a two-run home run in the first for the Indians.

Brewers 5, Cardinals 4: Christian Yelich and Ryan Braun hit consecutive homers off Dominic Leone with two out in the ninth, sending host Milwaukee past St. Louis.

Astros 10, Orioles 6: Josh Reddick hit a two-run homer in the sixth inning and a grand slam in host Houston's five-run seventh.

Reddick, who was 1-for-11 this season before his homer in the sixth, tied a career high with six RBIs. It was his first multihomer game since 2014 and No. 7 overall.

Yankees 11, Rays 4: Didi Gregorius hit a pair of three-run homers and drove in a career-high eight runs, and New York won Aaron Boone's chilly first home opener as manager.

Gregorius had four hits and walked, setting a major league record for RBIs by a player in a home opener. He also set a Yankees record for RBIs by a shortstop.

Padres 8, Rockies 4: Rookie Christian Villanueva hit three impressive home runs and drove in five runs, and host San Diego became the last team to get its first victory of 2018.

The 26-year-old Villanueva joined Hunter Renfroe as the only Padres rookies to hit three homers in a game.

Diamondbacks 6, Dodgers 1: Host Arizona's Daniel

Descalso and David Peralta became the first left-handed teammates to homer off Los Angeles ace Clayton Kershaw in the same game.

It's just the fourth time Kershaw (0-2) has allowed two homers to left-handed hitters in the same game — the previous were multihomer efforts by Washington's Adam Dunn, Colorado's Carlos Gonzalez and Cincinnati's Jay Bruce.

Red Sox 4, Marlins 2 (13): Hanley Ramirez hit a two-run double with two out in the 13th inning, and another night of stingy pitching helped visiting Boston extend its winning streak to five games.

Mookie Betts singled with one out in the 13th off Tayron Guerrero (0-1) and advanced on a groundout. Following an intentional walk to Andrew Benintendi, Ramirez lined his third extra-base hit of the season.

Mets 2, Phillies 0: Right-hander Matt Harvey allowed one hit over five sharp innings in his encouraging season debut with host New York.

With most seats empty in the 40-degree mist and chill,

a healthy-looking Harvey gave the Mets reason to believe he can rebound this year from two terrible seasons interrupted by injury.

Blue Jays 14, White Sox 5: Josh Donaldson and Aledmys Diaz each hit a two-run homer, helping host Toronto to its fourth consecutive victory.

Donaldson went 2-for-4 with three RBIs. Diaz had three hits before leaving after six innings because of back spasms.

Rangers 4, Athletics 1: Ace Cole Hamels struck out 11 in five innings, and Joey Gallo hit his 50th home run in 204 games for visiting Texas.

Mariners 6, Giants 4: Mitch Haniger hit a two-run single, helping Seattle spoil San Francisco's home opener.

Seattle's Marco Gonzales (1-0) allowed three runs and six hits in 6¹/₃ innings. Edwin Diaz got three outs for his third save.

Royals 1, Tigers 0: Jake Junis took a shutout into the eighth inning, and visiting Kansas City earned its first victory of the season.

NBA roundup

Warriors overcome Westbrook's night

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The standings indicated Golden State had nothing to play for Tuesday night.

The Warriors' effort and performance said otherwise.

Kevin Durant scored 34 points while being booed throughout the game, leading Golden State to a 111-107 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

The Warriors entered the night locked into the No. 2 spot in the Western Conference standings, but they still wanted to beat a rival that had taken two of the first three meetings this season. Golden State won despite guard Stephen Curry missing his sixth straight game with a left MCL sprain. Guard Andre Iguodala missed the game with left knee soreness and Shaun Livingston was out for personal reasons.

"It was a great win, short-handed and on the road against a good team fighting for playoff position," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "It's a hell of a win, especially without all our

guards."

Russell Westbrook had 44 points and 16 rebounds. He made 15 of 26 field goals and 11 of 12 free throws and had six assists. The Thunder were disappointed that they couldn't support Westbrook's dynamic performance.

"He was great," said Paul George, who scored 20 points. "He was great. He took it to another level — a level that those guys didn't have an answer for. Again, it's frustrating when we see that, we notice that and we can't help him by making shots and putting the ball in the basket."

Klay Thompson scored 20 points for the Warriors and the bench scored 38 points on 18-for-26 shooting. They helped make up for Durant's 2-for-13 shooting in the second half.

Cavaliers 112, Raptors 106: LeBron James scored 27 points, the last coming on a sensational layup, and host Cleveland gave Toronto another reminder of what could lie ahead in the playoffs.

Heat 101, Hawks 98: Hassan Whiteside's tip-in with a

minute left put Miami up for good, Josh Richardson blocked a potential go-ahead shot in the final seconds and host Miami clinched its 20th playoff spot in 30 seasons by rallying to beat Atlanta.

Rockets 120, Wizards 104: James Harden had 38 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, leading host Houston over Washington.

76ers 121, Nets 95: J.J. Redick scored 19 points and Ben Simmons had 15 points and 12 rebounds to lead host Philadelphia to its 11th straight victory.

Bucks 106, Celtics 102: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points and had a key block with 53 seconds left, Khris Middleton added 20 points and host Milwaukee held off short-handed Boston.

Clippers 113, Spurs 110: Tobias Harris scored 31 points, Lou Williams added 22 and host Los Angeles rallied to beat San Antonio.

Bulls 120, Hornets 114: Lauri Markkanen scored 24 points and Sean Kilpatrick added 21 off the bench to lead

host Chicago over Charlotte.

Mavericks 115, Trail Blazers 109: Dennis Smith Jr. scored 18 points, including a highlight-reel dunk to help keep lottery-bound Dallas ahead, delaying visiting Portland's hopes of clinching home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

Nuggets 107, Pacers 104: Nikola Jokic scored 30 points, Jamal Murray hit a clutch three-pointer late — his only one of the game — and host Denver received a boost to its playoff hopes by holding off Indiana.

Jazz 117, Lakers 110: Ricky Rubio scored 31 points on 10-for-15 shooting, added eight assists and six rebounds, and host Utah beat Los Angeles.

Suns 97, Kings 94: Josh Jackson scored 18 of his 28 points in the first half and host Phoenix ended a franchise-record 15-game losing streak with a victory over Sacramento.

Magic 97, Knicks 73: Mario Hezonja scored 19 points, Jamel Artis added 16 off the bench, and visiting Orlando beat New York.

NHL roundup

Disallowed goal costs Predators in loss to Panthers

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Panthers coach Bob Boughner went from hopeful to desolate to elated in a matter of seconds.

Filip Forsberg's apparent tying goal with 0.6 seconds left was disallowed due to goalie interference, giving Florida a 2-1 win over the Nashville Predators on Tuesday night.

"It was a crazy finish," Boughner said. "Ten seconds to go and you're thinking it's over, then you see the clock tick down and the puck go in."

Viktor Arvidsson was posted in front of Florida goalie Ro-

berto Luongo on the play, and his stick made contact with Luongo as he tried to shove in a rebound. The puck slid under Luongo in the crease, and Forsberg swooped in for an easy score. It was called a goal on the ice, but replay officials ruled that Arvidsson had interfered with Luongo, saying his stick "caused Luongo to spin and cause the covered puck to come loose."

Lightning 4, Bruins 0: Andrei Vasilevskiy made 33 saves, Braydon Coburn and Ryan Callahan both had two assists, and host Tampa Bay beat Boston.

Jets 5, Canadiens 4 (OT):

Kyle Connor scored three minutes into overtime, Patrik Laine added his 44th goal and visiting Winnipeg earned its 50th win of the season.

Blue Jackets 5, Red Wings 4 (OT): Pierre Luc-Dubois scored in overtime to lift host Columbus.

Golden Knights 5, Canucks 4 (SO): Shea Theodore scored in a shootout to lift Vegas in the final home game for Vancouver stars Daniel and Henrik Sedin, who are retiring at the end of the season.

Islanders 5, Flyers 4 (OT): Mathew Barzal had two goals and an assist, and host New

York beat playoff-chasing Philadelphia.

Devils 5, Rangers 2: Taylor Hall and rookie Will Butcher scored two goals apiece, and host New Jersey moved to the brink of its first playoff berth since 2012.

Stars 4, Sharks 2: Jamie Benn stole the puck from Tomas Hertl and scored the go-ahead goal with 3:06 left for visiting Dallas.

Coyotes 4, Flames 1: Kevin Connauton had a goal and an assist in continue his superb second half to lead visiting Arizona.