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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Afghan blast kills 2 US servicemembers

BY ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL
AND CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Two U.S. servicemembers were killed Wednesday when an explosive-laden vehicle blew up near a NATO convoy outside a base in the southern city of Kandahar, the U.S. military said.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, announced the two deaths but withheld names of the victims. Their deaths bring to nine the number of U.S. combat fatalities in Afghanistan this year.

Kandahar police spokesman Zia Durrani said a vehicle parked alongside the road was detonated as the convoy

drove by. Earlier reports indicated the attacker had sped toward the NATO convoy. Local media, quoting the Kandahar governor's office, said one military vehicle was damaged in the blast.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. They said in a statement that a suicide bomber detonated a pickup truck, destroying two armored vehicles and killing 15 foreign troops, including two generals. The Taliban routinely embellish their claims.

The Taliban, which originated in Kandahar in the 1990s, said the convoy was targeted as it returned to Kandahar Air Field after a meeting at the provincial governor's resi-

dence. U.S. and NATO troops are based at the airfield, the country's second-largest military base, about 14 miles south of the city center.

Afghanistan's TOLO News also reported that the insurgents this week have been battling Afghan forces north of Kandahar along the highway linking the city to the country's capital, Kabul, about 300 miles away.

NATO's 39-nation Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan consists of 13,500 troops — about 7,000 of them Americans. The Trump administration is deciding whether to send about 4,000 or more U.S. troops to stem Taliban gains in the nearly 16-year war.

NATO and Afghan government forces are also battling an Islamic State affiliate that has gained a foothold in the country and has carried out a number of high-profile attacks.

The blast in Kandahar occurred a day after a suicide bomber stormed into the largest Shiite Muslim mosque in western Herat province, opening fire on worshippers before blowing himself up.

The AP reported that authorities in Herat tightened security Wednesday ahead of a mass funeral for the victims of the attack there, which killed 32.

Another 66 worshippers were injured in the horrific suicide assault Tuesday evening.

Pentagon misses deadline for finishing review of Guard bonuses

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Despite a last-minute push, the Pentagon has failed to fully meet a deadline set by Congress to review and mostly reverse efforts to recover enlistment bonuses for up to 17,500 California National Guard soldiers and veterans, including some who were wounded in battle.

Pentagon officials refused Tuesday to provide a breakdown of how many California Guard soldiers had their debts waived and how many are still facing repayment demands for bonuses that ranged from \$15,000 to \$80,000.

Officials have told lawmakers that they have resolved thousands of California Guard cases since Congress set the deadline last December in an effort to deal with a scandal first revealed by the Los Angeles Times last year.

But military officials have scrambled to finish paperwork for hundreds of remaining California Guard soldiers and veterans in recent days, in some cases sending checks out just before Monday's deadline.

Retired Master Sgt. Bill McLain, who now lives in Las Vegas, said he received a bank transfer of \$4,500 on Monday to reimburse him for his payments on the \$30,000 that the California Guard insisted he owed. He said he had fought the debt for five years.

"It's disheartening that when they owe you money they're in no rush, but it's a different story when you owe them money," said McLain, who was wounded during one of his four combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Completion of the review was slowed by the need to conduct a case-by-case review — and in some cases to finish lengthy ap-

peals by soldiers still facing demands for repayment of some or all of their bonuses, officials said.

"The Department is near completing its review of enlistment bonuses," said Laura Ochoa, a Pentagon spokeswoman. "This diligent review in coordination with Congress ensures we provide the appropriate solutions to our servicemembers and respects our obligation to the taxpayer."

But Rep. Jeff Denham, R-Calif., a member of the House Armed Services Committee who spearheaded the push to let most Guard members keep their bonuses, criticized the Pentagon's failure to meet the deadline.

"Our intention was for it to be 100 percent resolved by now," Denham said, noting that Pentagon officials had told him they were 98 percent done. "It's

disappointing to see this has gone all the way to the deadline and beyond."

Denham said he is skeptical that the Pentagon had abandoned heavy-handed tactics to recover money and that it had waived debts of all those eligible.

"They need to prove to me that this is no longer an issue for anyone they contacted and harassed," Denham said.

In particular, he said, he wanted assurances that the Pentagon had helped soldiers contact credit agencies to correct any adverse effect on credit scores from the recoupment efforts.

"The reimbursement is obviously very, very important, but it's equally important to make sure their credit is fixed," Denham said.

Sailor missing in S. China Sea

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A U.S. sailor was reported missing early Tuesday from a warship in the South China Sea, launching a joint U.S.-Japanese effort to recover the sailor, the service said.

The missing sailor was reported overboard from the guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem about 9 a.m. Tuesday, according to a statement from the Navy's Pacific Fleet.

When the sailor's absence was discovered, the Stethem was conducting routine operations in the South China Sea, where competing claims on islands by China and other nations contribute to tensions.

U.S. and Japanese ships and aircraft were conducting searches for the sailor through Wednesday, the Navy said. The Stethem, the USNS Amelia Earhart and the USNS Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler were searching for the sailor alongside the JS

Izumo and JS Sazanami, ships of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force.

A Navy P-3 Orion maritime surveillance plane and helicopters from the Izumo were searching from the air, according to the Navy. The U.S. Joint Personnel Recover Center from Hawaii was also assisting in the search, the service said.

The Navy withheld the name of the missing sailor while the search was ongoing. The Pacific Fleet statement said multiple thorough searches of the Stethem were conducted ahead of the search-and-rescue operations.

Earlier this year, American and Japanese ships spent more than 50 hours searching for a sailor missing from the guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh off the coast of Okinawa, Japan, only to later discover Petty Officer 3rd Class Peter Mims had been hiding aboard the ship.

Mims earlier this month admitted he had actively avoided

searches between June 8 and June 15, when he was found. He was charged with abandoning watch and dereliction of duty and received administrative punishment for his action. The Navy has declined to publicly disclose Mims' punishment. The maximum would include loss of pay and six months confinement, but the Navy has said it would pursue additional administrative procedures against Mims, which could include a bad conduct discharge.

The Stethem, based in Yokosuka, Japan, has been operating throughout the Pacific for much of 2017. On July 12, it conducted a "freedom-of-navigation operation," challenging Chinese control of Triton Island in the Paracel Islands of the South China Sea, U.S. officials said. The destroyer sailed within 12 nautical miles of the island, also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam, to show the United States does not recognize it as anyone's sovereign territory.

Higher risk with opioids seen in vets' private care

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Veterans who use Department of Veterans Affairs programs to receive private-sector medical care are at "significant risk" for abusing opioids, according to a VA watchdog report released Tuesday.

New VA policies that aim to decrease opioid prescriptions do not cover private-sector doctors who sign on with the VA to treat veterans, the VA Office of Inspector General found. There's also a lack of communication between the VA and non-VA providers about what's been prescribed. That creates a high-risk situation for veterans, who are already disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. According to a 2011 study of the VA, veterans are twice as likely to die from overdoses as civilians.

"Veterans receiving opioid prescriptions from VA-referred clinical settings may be at greater risk for overdose and other harm because medication information is not being consistently shared," VA Inspector General Michael Missal said in a statement. "That has to change. Health care providers serving veterans should be following consistent guidelines for prescribing opioids and sharing information that ensures quality care for high-risk veterans."

The findings come as Congress, the VA and veterans organizations prepare for a discussion about major reforms to how the VA handles private-sector care.

Last week, the House debated legislation to provide urgent funding to the Choice program, which is expected to be depleted in mid-August. The House passed legislation only after including equal investment into VA personnel and infrastructure at the demand of veterans groups.

Tillerson open to talks with N. Korea

By AARON KIDD
Stars and Stripes

In comments aimed at North Korea, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the U.S. does not seek to topple the communist regime but must respond to its "unacceptable threat."

Tillerson, who added he hoped to "sit and have a dialogue" with Pyongyang at some point, made the remarks Tuesday during a State Department briefing in Washington just days after the North test-fired its second intercontinental ballistic missile.

"We're not your enemy, we're not your threat," he said. "We do not seek a regime change, we do not seek the collapse of the regime, we do not seek an accelerated reunification of the [Korean Peninsula], we do not seek an excuse to send our military north of the 38th parallel," he

said, referring to the boundary that divides the two Koreas.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un boasted that late Friday's launch of a Hwasong-14 missile proved Pyongyang was able to carry out a surprise attack with weapons that could reach "all across the continental U.S."

North Korea's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that America should "wake up to the reality" that Pyongyang has reached a new high and "act with discretion," according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Meanwhile, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said President Donald Trump told him "there will be a war with North Korea over their missile program if they continue to try to hit America with an ICBM."

"He has told me that," Graham said in an interview Tues-

day on NBC's "Today" show. "I believe him, and if I were China I would believe him, too, and do something about it."

The senator, who added the situation forces Trump to choose between regional stability and homeland security, insisted any war to stop Kim would not happen on U.S. soil.

"If thousands die, they're going to die over there and they're not going to die here, and [Trump] told me that to my face," Graham said.

In a statement issued shortly after Friday's launch, Tillerson said the U.S. "will never accept a nuclear-armed North Korea nor abandon our commitment to our allies in the region."

The secretary of state also suggested that China and Russia should do more to rein in their communist ally.

US power concerns many allied nations

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A growing number of people in Germany, South Korea and Japan, all hubs for U.S. forces overseas, regard American power as a “major threat” on a par with traditional adversaries China and Russia, according to a new poll.

A poll released Tuesday by the Pew Research Center found a broad decline in America’s international standing, with favorability rates declining by 13 percentage points among 30 countries examined since 2013.

“Concerns about U.S. power as a threat are comparable to worries over Chinese and Russian power in much of the world.

About three-in-ten around the globe name China or Russia as a major threat,” Pew analysts wrote.

The proportion of the public that views American power as a major threat increased in 21 of the 30 nations between 2013 and 2017, Pew found in a poll of 42,000 people conducted between February and May.

The margin of error varied among countries, from plus or minus 3 percentage points to plus or minus 5 percentage points. The survey did not explain how respondents felt threatened but asked in general terms whether they regarded the power and influence of respective nations as a “major threat.”

In Germany, where President Donald Trump is deeply

unpopular, concern about U.S. power increased by 10 percent in the past year alone. Now, 35 percent of Germans polled see U.S. power and influence as a major threat to their country, compared with 33 percent for Russia, which registered 31 percent last year.

The numbers were worse in the Pacific.

In Japan, people regard Chinese and American power and influence as almost equally threatening — 62 percent and 64 percent of respondents, respectively, take a fearful view of both countries.

In South Korea, 70 percent of respondents considered the U.S. a major threat, compared with 83 percent who held similar views toward China.

Japan, Germany and South Korea, together home to nearly 100,000 U.S. troops, host more American military personnel than any other foreign countries.

Only one country — Turkey — considered the U.S. to be the top overall threat. Seventy-two percent of Turkish respondents feared U.S. power and influence, 8 points higher than concerns over a refugee crisis that has strained the government in Ankara.

The U.S. has more than 3,000 troops operating in Turkey, the majority deployed to Incirlik Air Base, which dates to the Cold War. Last year, the U.S. was forced to pull American military spouses and children from Incirlik for security reasons.

Suit: Trump involved in discredited story

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A new lawsuit lays out an explosive tale of Trump allies, the White House and Fox News Channel conspiring to push a false story about Democratic leaks and an unsolved killing in order to distract attention from the Russia investigation swirling around the president.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday against Fox by an investigator who had been looking into the killing of Seth Rich, a former Democratic National Committee staff member who died in 2016 in what police say was a botched robbery. The investigator alleges that Fox quoted him as saying things he never said and was willing to show President Donald Trump its story before it was posted online.

It’s the second time in two days that Trump has been accused of being actively involved in pushing a public narrative to lower the heat of the Russia story. The Washington Post reported that the president had written a misleading statement for his son to give to The New York Times about Donald Trump Jr.’s meeting last summer with a Russian who promised dirt on Democrat Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign.

Rich’s death has become fodder for conspiracy theorists, deeply

angering the 27-year-old’s family. In May, the story was thrust into the headlines again when Fox posted a story on its website in which investigator Rod Wheeler said there had been contact between Rich and WikiLeaks, the organization that posted a trove of DNC emails last year. The story was heavily promoted by Fox News host Sean Hannity, who has informally advised the president.

In the lawsuit, Wheeler now says he never made that statement. He also contends he was told his false comments were put in the story because Trump wanted it that way.

Rich’s family released a statement Tuesday night supporting the lawsuit: “While we can’t speak to the evidence that you now have, we are hopeful that this brings an end to what has been the most emotionally difficult time in our lives and an end to conspiracy theories surrounding our beloved Seth.”

Fox says it’s “completely erroneous” to suggest it pushed the story to distract from the Russia investigation. Wheeler has made contradictory statements regarding the case and is simultaneously filing a racial discrimination lawsuit against the network, represented by a lawyer who has other lawsuits against Fox.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump had no knowledge of the false story before it was posted and that it was “completely untrue” that the White House had any role in shaping it.

Wheeler, a Fox contributor on law enforcement issues, said he was brought into the Rich case by donor and Trump supporter Ed Butowsky. He says Butowsky, who has also made occasional guest appearances on Fox News, was intent on establishing a link between Rich and WikiLeaks.

Two days before the Fox article was published, Wheeler said he got a text message from Butowsky: “Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It’s now all up to you. But don’t feel the pressure.”

Butowsky said in a phone interview Tuesday he has never met Trump and his text message to Wheeler was “tongue-in-cheek.”

Fox removed the story from its website a week after it was published, saying “it was not initially subjected to the high degree of editorial scrutiny we require for all of our reporting.” Hannity backed away, saying he was acting out of respect for Rich’s family.

Air Force, Boeing in talks for 747s

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Air Force, which has been looking for ways to lower the cost of new planes for Air Force One, is talking to Boeing about buying two jumbo jets that were ordered but never delivered to a now-defunct Russian airline.

The Air Force and Boeing confirmed Tuesday that they are working on a deal involving Boeing 747s but declined to disclose further details.

Two people close to the matter said that the discussions are centered on planes that were ordered by a Russian carrier. They spoke anonymously because the deal is not final and has not been publicly announced.

President Donald Trump has complained about the cost of new presidential planes, even threatening to cancel the order.

The current list price for the Boeing 747-8 is \$386.8 million, according to Boeing’s website. It was not clear whether that price would apply to planes that are already built and sitting in Boeing’s inventory.

Customer shoots, kills would-be Ariz. robber

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Authorities say a customer at a Phoenix drug-store shot and killed a man who was attempting to rob the pharmacy Tuesday night.

Phoenix police told the Arizona Republic that a man jumped the pharmacy counter, pointed the gun at people and demanded oxycodone from the pharmacist. An armed customer shot and wounded him.

Sgt. Jonathan Howard said officers found about a dozen workers and customers hiding in the Walgreens. After officers cleared the store, a police dog pulled the suspect away from his gun. Police administered CPR, but he died at the scene.

Couple charged after corpse of man's ex found in freezer

The Washington Post

Prosecutors said an Ohio man stored his former girlfriend's corpse in a freezer while his new girlfriend lived with him in the dead woman's apartment, used her credit cards and phone, drove her car and even cared for her dog, according to The Associated Press.

Police arrested Arturo Novoa and Katrina Layton on Sunday after finding human remains in an upright freezer Novoa was storing at a friend's house near Youngstown, Ohio.

Authorities said Novoa told his friend that he couldn't keep the freezer at his place because his power was off. The friend grew suspicious because the

freezer was padlocked. He and his wife popped it open over the weekend and found a corpse inside, CBS News reported.

Authorities identified the body as Shannon Graves, 28, Novoa's former girlfriend, who was reported missing several months ago, according to WKBN 27. A cause of death has not been released.

Both Novoa, 31, and Layton, 34, of Ohio were charged with abuse of a corpse. Layton was also charged with obstructing justice. They both remain in jail, and bond has been set at \$1 million each. It is unclear if they have entered a plea.

"No one was charged with a murder because we have no

idea what the cause of death was," Youngstown Police Lt. Doug Bobovnik told WKBN.

Authorities also claim that Layton began living Graves' life after she disappeared. While she didn't assume the identity of the missing woman, Layton allegedly lived in her home with Novoa and used her belongings as if they were her own.

"Basically, Miss Layton moved in with Mr. Novoa and started living her life," Youngstown Prosecutor Dana Lantz said at a news conference, according to People. "She didn't hold herself out to be Shannon, she just lived her life, using her phone, caring for her dog."

Teen opens emergency door, slides out of plane

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A teenage boy traveling alone opened an emergency door after his plane landed, slid down the wing and jumped onto a tarmac at San Francisco before shocked passengers could do anything to stop him, witnesses said.

The 17-year-old, a U.S. citizen, removed the door minutes after the Copa Airlines flight arrived from Central America, San Francisco Airport spokesman Doug Yakel said.

An airfield construction crew working nearby confronted the boy and held him until police arrested him. The teen, who appeared to be in emotional distress during the flight, was not injured, Yakel said.

Witnesses said the teen seemed fidgety and anxious throughout the seven-hour flight from Panama City, Panama, and that by the time passengers realized the door had been opened, he was already

on the ground, running.

Sophia Gibson, of San Jose, Calif., said people sitting next to him were shocked when he jumped out of the plane and onto the wing.

"It was as if he was like flying out, like it was really fast," Gibson told San Jose television station KNTV.

Copa Airlines said in a statement that over-wing emergency exits are designed to be opened by passengers after the plane reaches a lower altitude to allow for an evacuation in case of an emergency but that it is a federal law violation to open them without having been instructed to do so by the crew.

Matt Crowder, of Atherton, Calif., said people sitting near the exit row stood up when the boy jumped out and started to shout.

"They were yelling, 'Tell the flight attendants. Relay the message back. The door's open. Someone jumped off,'" Crowder told the television station. "It was pretty crazy."

Family of bullied girl, 12, who killed herself to sue

Associated Press

ROSELAND, N.J. — The family of a 12-year-old girl who killed herself said Tuesday it will sue her school district for not stepping in to address the problem of cyberbullying.

An attorney for the family of Mallory Grossman said he will file a notice of intent to sue the Rockaway Township, N.J., school district for negligence. The notice is a required precursor to the filing of a lawsuit. Mallory took her own life in June after months of bullying by several classmates in person and through social media, her mother, Dianne Grossman, said Tuesday. Attorney Bruce Nagel said some of the messages were "vile and malicious."

"For months she was told she was a loser, she had no friends, and finally she was told, 'Why don't you kill yourself?'" he said.

Dianne Grossman said she and her husband pleaded with school officials, to no avail.

"We feel we followed the

school's protocol," she said. "We started low on the totem pole and worked our way up until it finally made its way to the principal. Their words were, 'We'll investigate it, we'll look into it.'"

She added, "I'm going to make the assumption the school did something, but I'm also going to make the assumption, based on where we are today, that they didn't do enough."

Nathanya Simon, an attorney for the school district, said in an email Tuesday that the district "has not seen the written claim(s) and upon receipt will review with legal counsel. We anticipate that we will be able to make a statement soon."

Nagel said he was considering suing the parents of some of the other students identified as the perpetrators of the bullying. He said he wasn't concerned about potentially opening a Pandora's box that could lead to an avalanche of lawsuits.

"We want to push against the hornet's nest," he said. "We want to end this forever."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Bride arrested for pointing gun at groom

TN MURFREESBORO — A Tennessee bride was arrested hours after saying “I do” after authorities say she pointed a gun at her groom.

Murfreesboro police Sgt. Kyle Evans told WTVF-TV on Monday that Kate Elizabeth Prichard, 25, was still in her wedding dress when she was arrested on an aggravated domestic assault charge.

Evans said officers responded to a report of Prichard and her husband arguing at a Clarion Inn motel a few hours after they were married.

Police said witnesses reported that Prichard pulled a 9 mm pistol out of her dress, pointed it at her husband’s head and pulled the trigger.

The gun wasn’t loaded. Police said Prichard then loaded a round in the chamber and fired a shot in the air.

Man drowns in lake trying to retrieve hat

NJ JEFFERSON — Authorities said a man drowned after jumping from a pontoon boat into a lake to retrieve his hat.

State police said roughly 10 relatives were riding Saturday with Bo Long on Lake Hopatcong when his hat blew off. They said the 51-year-old Livingston man turned the boat around and shut off the engine before he entered the water.

Long soon retrieved the hat, but by then the boat was drifting away. He tried to return to the boat but soon had difficulty swimming.

Two passengers jumped into the lake after Long slipped below the surface but they couldn’t reach him.

Police: Driver won’t

leave burning car

NH PELHAM — New Hampshire police said they were forced to drag a driver out of his burning car after it crashed into a tree and he refused to leave, telling them he was a mechanic.

Police said a witness reported the crash in Pelham on Monday night and said the driver didn’t want help from police or firefighters.

When they arrived, Michael Hines, 53, of Derry refused to get out of the car. Police said they removed him but he tried to get back in as the fire spread and the tires exploded.

Police dragged him out. Hines wasn’t hurt.

He was charged with driving under the influence and possession of cocaine.

Utility workers retrieve wedding ring from sewer

NY NEW YORK — A commuter is thanking two kind utility workers for finding her wedding ring after it plunged into a New York City sewer.

WCBS-TV reported Westchester County resident Sarah Sommer was leaving Grand Central Terminal when she found herself uncomfortable. The expecting mother, who’s eight months pregnant, took her ring off to help relax.

Sommer said before she knew it, the ring had slipped out of her grasp, bounced along the sidewalk and dropped through a grate into the sewer. The distraught woman called 911 before flagging down a nearby Con Edison truck.

Con Ed workers Jason Wertheimer and Kenyatta Charles opened the grate, drained the sewer and found Sommer’s ring. They said it was their daily good deed.

Teens post videos of vandalism spree

GA ATLANTA — Two teens accused of vandalizing a high school, several restaurants and a police car have been arrested after posting videos on Snapchat of their spree in an Atlanta suburb.

Local news outlets reported on Monday that Gary Higginbotham and Christopher Gonzales posted videos to their Snapchats of them breaking into Lassiter High School in Marietta. The videos also show the two spraying a fire extinguisher from a car at patrons on a restaurant patio as they drive by. They’re seen jumping on the hood of an unoccupied Cobb County police car as well.

WSB-TV reported the teens were charged with five felonies and four misdemeanors.

Chief sending officers back to driving school

AZ CASA GRANDE — An Arizona police chief is sending his patrol officers back to driving school after a slew of minor accidents involving the department’s vehicles.

The Casa Grande Dispatch reported Monday that Casa Grande Police Chief Mark McCrory said nine of his department’s police vehicles have been involved in accidents since April 5.

There were only five such accidents in all of 2016.

Each collision will cost the taxpayers a \$1,000 deductible paid to the insurance company.

McCrory said four units were damaged in two separate incidents in which officers driving vehicles bumped into parked police vehicles. Two were damaged in separate incidents in

which officers struck poles.

Updike’s childhood home will become a museum

PA SHILLINGTON — The childhood home of author John Updike is nearing its transformation into a museum and literary center.

The future of the home in Shillington, Pa., had been uncertain until The John Updike Society purchased it in 2012. Since then, the society has worked to re-create the 1930s-era vibe of the late Pulitzer-Prize winner’s home, based on old photographs and Updike’s writings.

Updike, who won Pulitzers for the novels “Rabbit Is Rich” and “Rabbit at Rest,” died in 2009 at age 76.

The Reading Eagle reported Updike’s daughter is donating furniture from her father’s childhood to the museum.

The Updike Society said restoration should be finished by the end of summer.

Man posts video of climb up City Hall tower

PA PHILADELPHIA — A guy who goes by the name Carson King posted an online video of himself climbing Philadelphia City Hall and its tower, which reaches about 500 feet into the air.

King told KYW-TV that he climbed the building while scaffolding was up earlier this year due to renovations and maintenance of the bronze William Penn statue at its apex.

King said he climbed the building to take pictures from a unique vantage point.

From wire reports

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and Military News

Families detail life with CTE

Associated Press

BOSTON — Jim Hudson's wife came home one day and found him sitting on a couch, clutching a golf ball, with tears streaming down his face.

The former New York Jets defensive back, a star of the team's only Super Bowl championship, had played a lot of golf; he was a single-digit handicap at the time. But he was watching the Golf Channel because he had forgotten what the ball in his hand was for, or how to play.

"You watch the life go out of someone's eyes," Lise Hudson said.

A college national champion whose interception in the Super Bowl helped clinch the 1968 NFL title for Joe Namath and the Jets, Hudson was among more than 100 former football players diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy in a study published this week.

The disease can cause memory loss, depression, violent mood swings and other cognitive and behavioral issues in those exposed to repetitive head trauma.

Boxers. Members of the military. Football players — including not only Hudson but also Earl Morrall, whose pass he intercepted in Super Bowl III to help seal what is still considered the greatest upset in NFL history.

"I hope it doesn't kill the game, but that it stops killing the players," Lise Hudson said. "We'd better get on it and figure it out."

"He was told, 'Put your head down and go for the guy's chin and then lift up. Use that head. And he told us those stories even before any of this came out.'" — Rani Lenzion, daughter of Don Paul, a leather helmet-wearing linebacker and center for the Los Angeles Rams.

In the largest update on CTE so far, Boston University and VA researchers reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on Tuesday that they found signs of the disease in nearly 90 percent of the 200

brains examined, including 110 of 111 from NFL players.

This week, The Associated Press asked the surviving relatives of more than a dozen players involved in the study to describe living and dying with CTE.

These are the people who saw the disease up-close. Some gave up the game. Others just want it to be safer.

"It's something parents should be discussing with their kids: 'You're not going to feel it now, but you'll feel it later,'" said Scott Gilchrist, the son of Buffalo Bills star Cookie Gilchrist. "Would you like to try golf?"

"We're still trying to recover from the financial damage. To say nothing of the loneliness and the sorrow that losing him to this disease has brought, it's brought a lot of financial distress, also." — Kay Morris, wife of Larry Morris, a member of the NFL's All-1960s team.

John Grimsley died in 2008 at the age of 45 from an accidental gunshot wound. It was a new gun — a Christmas present — and his wife thinks he may have forgotten a bullet was in the chamber.

Virginia Grimsley was at church making funeral arrangements when a friend brought her a message from Chris Nowinski, one of the founders of the Concussion Legacy Foundation.

"I looked at her and said, 'He wants John's brain doesn't he?' And she said, 'Yeah, he does,'" Grimsley said. "I said, 'What do I have to sign?'"

"You feel like you got cheated out of some of the best years of your life, not having your father." — Ollie Matson Jr., son of the two-time Olympic medalist and a Hall of Fame running back for the Chicago Cardinals, who barely spoke for the last four years before he died.

Lew Carpenter wasn't just a CTE victim. He was also a carrier of the disease.

A running back who won three NFL championships in a

10-year career with the Lions, Browns and Packers, Carpenter stuck around the sidelines for another 31 years as an assistant coach. He preached what he heard from Hall of Fame coaches like Vince Lombardi: walk it off, or we'll find someone who can.

"He was promulgating it," his daughter, Rebecca Carpenter, said. "'Rub a little dirt in it. Get back out there. There are 1,000 guys who want your job. Is this the moment that you're going to choose to be weak, and let everybody down?'"

"That's a distillation of who he was. Not because he's a [jerk]," she said. "My father really understood something about football at the professional level: You can't let anybody see your vulnerability, because then you're dead."

"I'd be very, very concerned if I was a professional football player who had concussions or head hits and I'm 40 years old and I'm saying, 'I'm fine.' That's not how this movie's going to end." — Mike Keating, whose uncle, Oakland defensive tackle Tom Keating, was diagnosed with CTE.

Add them all up, as Kevin Turner once did for his father, and he probably had more than 100 concussions.

"That's probably the sad part of it. He'd probably do it again," Raymond Turner told a reporter at his lakeside home in suburban Montgomery, Ala.

Kevin Turner died last year at 46.

One room at the house remains filled with memorabilia from his son's career. Next to the front door hangs a drawing of Kevin in a football jersey, wearing his No. 34.

"He was given this life because he was strong enough to live it," the inscription read. "And he lived it well."

Jets' rookie: Words about his passion

Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J.— Jamal Adams meant no disrespect to players and families dealing with the effects of concussions. He simply loves football.

The New York Jets rookie safety drew sharp criticism from some fans, media and former and current players when he said Monday that if he had the choice, the field would be the "perfect place to die." In light of the backlash, Adams tried to clarify his comments Tuesday after practice.

"Honestly, I really didn't see it getting that far," Adams said. "I was speaking about being passionate about the game that I love. I understand that some families were affected by this disease and I definitely didn't mean it in any type of way."

During a question-and-answer session that included NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell at the team's facility, one of the approximately 150 Jets season-ticket holders asked the panel about player health and safety. Adams, who never mentioned concussions or chronic traumatic encephalopathy, spoke about how enjoying the game.

"Literally, if I had a perfect place to die," he said, "I would die on the field. I would be at peace. Literally. That's not a lie."

Adams, a first-round draft pick from LSU, said during the forum that he wasn't so fond of the NFL rules that often protect offensive players. But he added that he understands why they're in place, and then talked about his passion for the sport before then making his critical comments.

"My comments were simply for passion, nothing else," Adams reiterated Tuesday. "Not one time did I say anything about CTE or say anything negative. I respect it. I understand what the outcome of it is and I know there's families that are affected, but at the same time, everything's about passion, what I said."

Bolt ready to close career on high note

Associated Press

LONDON — An encore for Usain Bolt? Unthinkable.

A loss in his going-away party? Impossible.

Track's fastest man and greatest entertainer made both those points clear Tuesday leading to his final world championships this week. It was an engaging hour filled with reminiscences, chats about his plans and thoughts about where his troubled and soon-to-be-starless sport might be headed.

Sporting the goatee he wears during world championships, but not the Olympics, the superstar who went 9 for 9 at the Summer Games, shattering records while dancing and smiling his way through the journey, dispensed any notion he might come back: "For me, the next championships should be fun because now it's time to watch and see who can hold their nerves," said the 11-time world champion, who turns 31 on Aug. 21.

As for the possibility he'd change his mind should he lose

in Saturday night's 100-meter final: "It's not going to happen, so we won't have that problem. Don't worry," he said.

He said he's looking forward to a life of motivational speaking, occasional soccer games with friends and maybe dipping his toe into action movies to keep the adrenaline flowing.

As for the past, one of Bolt's most interesting revelations was that his now-famous "To the World" pose, which he debuted after winning his first Olympic gold medal in Beijing, was completely unplanned.

"It's just something that happened," Bolt said. "I guess it was by the grace of God. It became big. For me, it worked."

Almost every celebration since — the moderator said Bolt has taken 147 victory laps over his career — has been pre-planned, drenched in Jamaican flags and reggae music and every bit worth the wait. Among the few impromptu moments came at the last world championships, two years ago in Beijing, when a photographer riding a Segway accidentally

upended him during his victory lap.

That man made a videotaped appearance at the news conference and told Bolt, "You inspired me to become more focused in my work."

"It was shocking," said Bolt, who popped right back up after the spill. "I didn't get hurt, so it was funny."

On a more serious note, he was asked how he has prepared for each season as his career has progressed. Like flipping through the calendar, Bolt ticked off his goals and motivations for each year since he burst onto the scene in 2008, a relative unknown whose only goal was to become an Olympic champion in his main race, the 200 meters.

Early on, he took umbrage to the slights: for instance, that despite setting four world records, his success in 2008 came because his main challenger, Tyson Gay, was hurt. Or how in 2012, many were favoring teammate Yohan Blake at the Olympics after Bolt lost to him twice earlier in the summer in

Jamaica.

As the calendar kept turning and Bolt kept proving himself, his mission became more about trying to secure his place in history. When he swept gold for the third straight Olympics last year in Rio de Janeiro, he reached the legendary status he sought.

"Now that I got to my goal, I'm good with it," he said. "I've proven myself."

He fielded the obligatory questions about doping. Bolt has never been caught. Many in his country, and in the sprint game he dominates, have. The last two years have been filled with sordid stories of doping corruption in Russia that brought track and field to a new low.

"The only place track and field has to go is up," Bolt said. "Hopefully, we're going to get it going in the right direction and continue going in the right direction."

His most telling comments — or noncomments — came when he was asked who might fill his shoes after he leaves.

Florida State opens practice with eye on Alabama

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida State coach Jimbo Fisher needs to find answers about his own team before he can begin focusing on the season opener in Atlanta against Alabama in four weeks.

The biggest challenge facing the Seminoles is finding a replacement for All-American running back Dalvin Cook, who was drafted by the Vikings in the second round. Fisher said on Tuesday that Jacques Patrick is opening camp as the starter.

Patrick, a 6-foot-3, 231-pound junior, was Cook's primary backup the past two seasons, averaging 5.4 yards per carry, and has a pair of 100-yard games.

The coach hinted during the spring that he was considering

going to a backfield by committee approach, but Tuesday noted that Patrick has the potential to take most of the carries.

"He's earned that right. He has proven he can do it at a good level. I love everything about him," Fisher said.

Patrick will be pressed by a trio of underclassmen. Freshman Cam Akers, considered the nation's top running back by many recruiting services in the class of 2017, got plenty of work during the spring as an early enrollee. Also getting a look will be sophomore Amir Rasul, an adept receiver out of the backfield, and freshman Khalan Laborn, who was a consensus four-star prospect. Senior Ryan Green, who is back on offense after playing cornerback last season, could also factor into the mix.

Running back isn't the only

concern for Florida State, which returns 20 starters from last season's 10-3 team but only two at skill positions on offense. The top four receivers are gone but Fisher believes the development of juniors Nyqwan Murray and Auden Tate over the second half of last season gives them an edge. Murray had two 100-yard games and two touchdowns in the Orange Bowl win over Michigan.

On the offensive line, Rick Leonard will move to left tackle after starting six games at right tackle last year. Center Alec Eberle (hip) and Landon Dickerson (knee) are ready to go after offseason surgeries.

One place that isn't lacking in experience is quarterback. Deondre Francois started all 13 games last season as a sophomore looks more confident and in control of the offense.

The Seminoles, who started last season 3-2, including a 42-point loss at Louisville, will be tested right out of the gate when they take on Alabama. But opening against a major opponent is nothing new for Florida State.

It is the third time in the past four years the Seminoles are opening against a Power 5 opponent at a neutral site. They beat Oklahoma State in Arlington, Texas, in 2014 and Mississippi in Orlando last season.

"It's going to be good for the program and it's one of the things you can test yourself. They're going to test themselves with us. You find out where your team is at early in the season," Fisher said. "It is very challenging and very risky at the same time, but that's what it's about."

Dodgers stretch win streak to 9 games

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Yu Darvish is making an impact for the Los Angeles Dodgers before even joining the team.

Kenta Maeda allowed only two hits in seven scoreless innings Tuesday night, leading the streaking Dodgers past the Atlanta Braves 3-2 for their ninth straight win.

After the game, Maeda acknowledged he believed he needed to protect his spot in a crowded rotation.

“Yes, I do feel the pressure,” Maeda said through a translator. “That’s the reality right now. We have a lot of really good pitchers who are producing.”

The slumping Braves were

shut down by Maeda (10-4) but cut their deficit to one run with Johan Camargo’s two-run homer off Josh Ravin in the eighth. Atlanta ended the inning with Brandon Phillips, who had a pinch-hit single, on third base.

Maeda struck out six and walked one. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said the right-hander was “just attacking the strike zone. It was fun to watch.”

Darvish, acquired by the Dodgers from the Texas Rangers on Monday, will join the team Wednesday. Roberts said Darvish will make his debut with the team when he starts Friday at the New York Mets.

Roberts said he knows his

starting pitchers feel pressure to keep their spots.

“I think that plays into it, the competition,” he said.

Cody Bellinger led off the fourth with his 29th homer into the Braves’ bullpen in right-center off Atlanta starter Lucas Sims (0-1).

Kenley Jansen struck out the side in the ninth for his 28th save in 29 chances.

Yasiel Puig doubled and scored on Chris Taylor’s double in the third. Puig also singled, stole third base and scored on catcher Tyler Flowers’ throwing error in the fifth.

Sims and second baseman Ozzie Albies made their major league debuts for Atlanta, which has lost six in a row.

Sims yielded three runs and six hits in six innings.

“Definitely a day that I will never forget,” Sims said. “I wish I could have executed a couple of pitches a little better, but for sure it was a special night.”

The Braves have lost 12 of 15 since reaching .500 at 45-45 on July 16.

Chase Utley, who singled while pinch-hitting for Maeda in the eighth, was thrown out at the plate by Nick Markakis while trying to score from second on Bellinger’s single to right field.

Jim Johnson, who lost his sole claim as the Braves’ closer with eight blown saves, pitched a perfect seventh.

Vazquez’s 9th-inning homer lifts Red Sox over Indians

Associated Press

BOSTON — With the game on the line, Christian Vazquez launched a long drive that even Austin Jackson couldn’t reach.

Vazquez hit a three-run homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning and the Boston Red Sox pulled off the final rally of a wild game Tuesday night, beating the Indians 12-10 despite an astonishing catch by Jackson.

“Some odd things took place offensively,” Boston manager John Farrell said, marveling at the outcome and the many twists and turns that preceded it as the Red Sox moved back into first place in the AL East.

The teams combined for 28 hits and six home runs, but Jackson made a defensive play that stood above all the offense when he robbed Hanley Ramirez of a leadoff homer in the fifth with a leaping grab in the right-center triangle at Fenway Park.

The center fielder reached way above the wall and tumbled head over heels into the Red Sox bullpen, disappearing from view momentarily before popping up and showing the ball was in his glove — to the

amazement of players on both sides.

A replay review confirmed Jackson held on for the catch, and the sensational play earned him a standing ovation from rival Red Sox fans.

“That was one of the best catches I think I’ve ever seen,” Cleveland manager Terry Francona said. “I’ve been in the game a long time. That’s a hard wall out there and a lot of guys run away from it. Austin went up and over.”

Vazquez also went up and over, ending the game with a shot to center that Jackson could only turn around and watch leave the park as Vazquez rounded the bases and the Red Sox celebrated an unlikely victory. Mitch Moreland had just struck out swinging for what should have been the final out, but the pitch from Cleveland closer Cody Allen (0-6) was wild and Moreland reached first safely to extend the inning.

Allen then fell behind 3-1 in the count and Vazquez pounced on the next pitch.

Rays 6, Astros 4: Evan Longoria became the second franchise player to hit for the cycle and drove in three runs

to lead visiting Tampa Bay past Houston.

Tigers 4, Yankees 3: John Hicks hit a three-run homer in his first big league game in more than a month, Justin Upton added a solo drive off CC Sabathia, and visiting Detroit held on to beat New York.

Marlins 7, Nationals 6: Max Scherzer hit his first career homer to help build a six-run lead, but he pitched only one inning before departing with a neck spasm, and host Miami rallied to beat Washington.

Brewers 3, Cardinals 2: Jimmy Nelson (9-5) finally beat St. Louis with six strong innings, and host Milwaukee held on.

Rockies 5, Mets 4: Nolan Arenado hit a three-run homer in the sixth inning and a game-winning single in the bottom of the ninth that lifted host Colorado past New York.

Padres 3, Twins 0: Austin Hedges hit a two-run home run in the eighth inning and Jhoulys Chacin (11-7) combined with two relievers on a three-hitter for host San Diego.

Orioles 7, Royals 2: Dylan Bundy (10-8) allowed three hits over a career-high eight innings, newcomer Tim Beck-

ham had two hits and scored twice and host Baltimore won its fourth straight.

Reds 9, Pirates 1: Billy Hamilton hit a three-run homer and tripled, Eugenio Suarez and rookie Jesse Winker also went deep, and visiting Cincinnati overwhelmed Pittsburgh.

Blue Jays 8, White Sox 4: Justin Smoak hit his 31st homer, Josh Donaldson homered and drove in three runs, and visiting Toronto beat Chicago.

Cubs 16, Diamondbacks 4: Jon Lester hit his first major league homer and struck out nine to reach 2,000 for his career, helping host Chicago cruise past Arizona.

Mariners 8, Rangers 7: Robinson Cano doubled twice and drove in three runs as visiting Seattle beat Texas.

Giants 10, Athletics 4: Hunter Pence hit a three-run homer and Nick Hundley added a two-run shot to back a stellar start by Jeff Samardzija (6-11) and lead visiting San Francisco past Oakland.

Angels 7, Phillies 1: Albert Pujols hit a three-run homer and a two-run double, and host Los Angeles snapped Philadelphia’s five-game winning streak.