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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

USS Fitzgerald senior officers relieved

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy relieved the USS Fitzgerald's two senior officers and a senior enlisted sailor Friday and held a slew of officer and enlisted watch standers accountable for the deadly June 17 collision between the destroyer and a merchant ship.

Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, 7th Fleet commander, relieved commanding officer Cmdr. Bryce Benson due to a loss of confidence in his ability to lead, stating that Benson had "absolute accountability for the safe navigation of Fitzgerald," according to a statement issued by the fleet.

The "avoidable" collision was caused by "flawed watch stander teamwork and inadequate

leadership" as well as "poor seamanship" from both the Fitzgerald and the Philippine-flagged ACX Crystal, which collided with the destroyer about 64 miles southwest of Yokosuka, the statement added. The collision killed seven sailors, injured three — including Benson — and damaged both ships.

Benson was relieved after a thorough review of the facts and circumstances leading up to the accident, the statement said. He will be reassigned to Naval District Washington at the Washington Navy Yard, where he will have access to area medical facilities.

The destroyer's executive officer, Cmdr. Sean Babbitt, and command master chief, Master Chief Petty Officer Brice Baldwin, were also blamed for contributing to the accident.

The statement said their actions "contributed to the lack of watch stander preparedness and readiness."

Several junior officers who had served as watch standers for the bridge and combat-information center during the accident were relieved of their duties due to "poor seamanship and flawed teamwork," said the statement, which added that further administrative action was taken against watch standers from both watch teams.

Cmdr. Garret Miller will take over as the Fitzgerald's commanding officer sometime this month, the statement said, relieving Cmdr. John "Jack" Fay, who has been serving as acting commander.

The Fitzgerald, which was placed in dry dock at Yokosuka on July 11, will be taken

to the mainland United States on a heavy lift ship to undergo repairs in the fall, the service announced this week.

A Navy investigation into the incident released Thursday shows that the 1:30 a.m. collision ripped a 17-by-13-foot hole in the side of the ship. One of the Fitzgerald's berthings, where 35 sailors were sleeping, flooded within 90 seconds.

Jolted awake by the crash, sailors rushed to check on their shipmates, taking actions that investigating officer Rear Adm. C.F. Williams determined likely saved the lives of at least two sailors.

However, seven sailors inside the berthing perished, all drowning, according to the report.

Trump to receive Afghan options at meeting

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — National Security Council leaders were scheduled to present President Donald Trump with detailed options to adjust the nation's policy for South Asia and the war in Afghanistan during a meeting Friday at Camp David, according to U.S. officials.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Thursday he expected the president to soon reach a decision on the new strategy for the region and the military's role in Afghanistan.

"We will move this toward a decision," Mattis said of the meeting at the presidential retreat in Maryland. "We are coming very close to a decision, and I anticipate it in the very

near future."

Mattis, speaking alongside Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at the State Department, echoed comments he made at the Pentagon earlier in the week when he said all options for the war in Afghanistan remained under consideration.

On Monday, Mattis confirmed those options ranged from a full military withdrawal to increasing the number of troops by several thousand.

The Trump administration's strategy for Afghanistan had been expected about a month ago. Mattis told lawmakers in June that the new strategy would be unveiled by mid-July. The defense secretary told reporters recently that he had expected to hit that deadline, but decisions "take time" and plan-

ning is "hard work."

There are about 8,400 U.S. troops serving in Afghanistan. The vast majority are assigned to the NATO mission to train and advise Afghan security forces battling the resurgent Taliban. The United States also maintains a force within the country, with the mission to directly combat terrorist groups, including al-Qaida and Islamic State.

If the Pentagon has its way, it will pour up to 5,000 more servicemembers into Afghanistan to bolster that two-fold mission and attempt to break a deadlock with the Taliban, U.S. defense officials said.

Pentagon leaders generally agree with the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Army Gen. John Nicholson, who says

the training mission needs at least 3,000 more Americans to be successful, a defense official said Thursday.

However, several White House officials close to Trump do not agree with that assessment, the official said on condition of anonymity to discuss private planning.

Trump in June granted Mattis the authority to send additional troops to Afghanistan. However, the defense secretary has delayed new troop deployments until Trump signs off on a full strategy.

The war in Afghanistan remains dangerous for American troops. This year, 10 U.S. servicemembers have been killed in action in the country.

Plan for independent Cyber Command OK'd

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. Cyber Command will be elevated to a full combatant command and might split from the National Security Agency to streamline the military's cyberspace operations, the White House announced Friday.

Elevating Cyber Command will give its commander increased authority to conduct offensive and defensive operations on the digital battlefield, according to the Pentagon. The move will occur once a four-star commander to be nominated by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is confirmed by the Senate, said Kenneth P. Rapuano, assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and global security.

Rapuano said the long-awaited move reflected the command's

"maturity" and the Defense Department's long-term commitment to cyberspace as "a warfighting domain."

"This change is a welcome and necessary one that ensures that the nation is best positioned to address the increasing threats in cyberspace," he told reporters Friday at the Pentagon.

President Donald Trump on Friday also tasked Mattis with determining whether Cyber Command could safely be detached from its command structure under the dual-hatted commander of the NSA. Currently, Navy Adm. Michael S. Rogers heads both organizations. It was not clear whether Mattis would renominate Rogers to serve as the head of the new command or if another general or flag officer would be nominated.

Rapuano said that since the command's inception in 2009 it

was meant to break away from the NSA commander. However, by law, the agencies cannot be split until authorities certify that there would be no negative operational impact on either, he said.

In addition to a commander, Cyber Command and the NSA share facilities and a digital network at Fort Meade in Maryland. The president did not dictate a timeline on Mattis' decisions on the split.

President Barack Obama endorsed splitting the agencies before he left office.

Cyber Command is charged with disrupting and destroying enemy's digital networks, according to the Pentagon. It also defends the United States from digital threats and cyberattacks on key federal and military systems.

The NSA is a digital spy agency tasked with gathering intelligence on adversaries and

foreign governments through electronic channels. Its only defensive operations are to protect the United States' classified networks. Since it was founded in 1952 it has been commanded by a four-star military officer.

Cyber Command was established by the Pentagon in 2009 to improve the Defense Department's digital operations. It is subordinate to U.S. Strategic Command, which oversees the military's nuclear weapons, missile defense and space operations.

It will become the Pentagon's 10th unified combatant command, joining the regional commands, Strategic Command, Transportation Command and Special Operations Command.

In a statement Friday, Trump said his decision demonstrated his "increased resolve" to defend the nation against cyberthreats.

What president got wrong in telling Pershing tale

The Washington Post

A sordid tale of Gen. John J. Pershing executing Muslim insurgents in the Philippines at the turn of the century is a favorite of President Donald Trump.

"They were having terrorism problems, just like we do," Trump told a throng of cheering supporters in South Carolina in February 2016.

"[Pershing] caught 50 terrorists who did tremendous damage and killed many people. And he took the 50 terrorists and he took 50 men and he dipped 50 bullets in pigs' blood — you heard that, right? He took 50 bullets, and he dipped them in pigs' blood. And he had his men load his rifles, and he lined up the 50 people, and they shot 49 of those people. And the 50th person, he said: You go back to your people, and you tell them what happened. And for 25 years, there wasn't a problem."

It's a story Trump has re-

peated and echoed again Thursday after what authorities have called a terrorist attack in Barcelona, Spain, that killed at least 14 people and left many more wounded when a driver smashed his van onto a busy sidewalk.

"Study what General Pershing of the United States did to terrorists when caught. There was no more Radical Islamic Terror for 35 years!" he tweeted.

Brian M. Linn, a history professor at Texas A&M University, did just that nearly two decades ago when he published "Guardians of Empire," a book on the U.S. military presence in Asia from 1902 to 1940.

His verdict on Trump's claim? "There is absolutely no evidence this occurred," he told *The Washington Post*. "It's a made-up story. It doesn't seem to matter how many times people say this isn't true. No one can say where or when this occurred."

But Trump's claims, and the wider belief in a routinely de-

bunked story, has far-reaching effects. Not only is the story untrue but the convenient twist — of an insurgency defeated only with the use of brutal war tactics — points to precisely the opposite lessons Pershing and his troops learned in the Philippines campaign from 1899 to 1913, Linn said.

"The U.S. military learned escalating counterterrorism was not effective, and they took great steps, including Pershing, to de-escalate," Linn said.

Pershing was a U.S. Military Academy graduate who first earned distinction in the Indian-American Wars and he later earned his nickname, "Black Jack," after commanding the all-African American Buffalo Soldiers unit.

He was an astute and battle-experienced captain who first arrived in the Philippines in 1899 where he learned the value of defusing tribal grievances among the Moro, the followers of Islam on the archipelago

engaged in tribal violence and insurrection against the United States.

Pershing studied the Quran and drank tea with tribal leaders to emphasize he was there to put down violence, not to continue a religious war the Spanish had waged for centuries.

"He did a lot of what we would call 'winning hearts and minds' and embraced reforms which helped end their resistance," Lance Janda, a military historian at Cameron University, told *PolitiFact*. "He fought, too, but only when he had to and only against tribes or bands that just wouldn't negotiate with him."

Lost in Trump's falsehood, Linn said, is the distortion of an officer who dedicated his life to a certain code of conduct.

"It's a terrible defamation of the American soldier," Linn said. "What does it say about Americans that they would take 50 people and shoot them? It's a major war crime."

Colleges brace for hate attacks

Associated Press

BOSTON — Nicholas Fuentes, 19, is dropping out of Boston University and heading south, pressing ahead with his right-wing politics despite receiving online death threats.

Fuentes joined a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va., last weekend and posted a defiant Facebook message promising that a “tidal wave of white identity is coming,” less than an hour after a car plowed into a crowd of counterprotesters.

Now, he’s hoping to transfer to Auburn University in Alabama.

At college campuses, far-right extremist groups have found fertile ground to spread their messages and attract followers.

For many schools, the rally in Virginia served as a warning that these groups will no

longer limit their efforts to social media or to flyers furtively posted around campus.

The violence in Charlottesville introduced many Americans to a new brand of hate, bred on internet message boards and migrating to the streets with increasing frequency.

On the eve of Saturday’s rally, young white men in khakis and polo shirts marched through the University of Virginia’s campus, holding torches as they chanted racist and anti-Semitic slogans. The next morning, many donned helmets and shields, and clashed with counterprotesters before a car drove into the crowd, killing a 32-year-old woman and injuring 19 others.

On Monday, Texas A&M University canceled plans for a “White Lives Matter” rally in

September. On Wednesday, the University of Florida denied a request for white nationalist Richard Spencer to rent space on campus for a September event. Spencer and his supporters are promising court challenges.

Expecting more rallies to come, former University of Wisconsin-Madison police chief Sue Riseling’s International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators group is planning training events to help campus police prepare.

Last school year, racist flyers popped up on college campuses at a rate that experts called unprecedented. The Anti-Defamation League counted 161 white supremacist “flying incidents” on 110 college campuses between September and June.

Pelosi: Remove Confederate statues from US Capitol

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi called Thursday for the removal of Confederate statues from the U.S. Capitol as the contentious debate over the appropriateness of such memorials moved to the halls of Congress.

Pelosi asked House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., to join Democrats in supporting legislation to remove the Confederate statues. The legislation can’t pass without support from Republicans.

Pelosi said the statues in the Capitol should “embody our highest ideals as Americans, expressing who we are and who we aspire to be as a nation.”

About 10 statues in the Capitol’s Statuary Hall are of men who served as Confederate soldiers or politicians.

“The Confederate statues in the halls of Congress have always been reprehensible,” Pelosi said in a statement.

“If Republicans are serious about rejecting white supremacy, I call upon Speaker Ryan to join Democrats to remove the Confederate statues from the Capitol immediately,” she said.

Each state is allowed to place two statues in the Capitol’s National Statuary Hall. Doug Andres, a spokesman for Ryan, said the display of statues is a decision for the states to make.

The statues in Statuary Hall are required to be of someone deceased for at least 10 years and must be made of marble or bronze.

An exception was made for the statue of Rosa Parks, which was moved to its current location in 2013, as well as for any replacement statues, according to a Congressional Research Service report.

Among the statues present are those of Gen. Robert E. Lee, Virginia; Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America, Mississippi; and Alexander Hamilton Stephens, the Confederate vice president, Georgia.

Democrats want Confederate names off US military facilities

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A New York Democrat is drafting legislation to require the Pentagon rename any military installations named for Confederate generals, part of an urgent effort by black lawmakers to force public institutions to stop celebrating historical figures who defended slavery.

“Naming military property after armed insurrectionists with American blood on their hands is an affront to members of the Armed Forces, many of whom are people of color, who take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution,” writes Rep. Yvette Clarke, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, in the bill text. “There are an ample number of meritorious members of the Armed Forces, who loyally served the United States, for whom military property could and should be named.”

Clarke’s bill has 10 co-sponsors, all House Democrats from New York and New Jersey. Hers is not the only effort.

The Associated Press reported that Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, both Democrats, want the secretary of the Army to rename the 55-year-old Lee Barracks at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

West Point is where Robert E. Lee learned to be a soldier and later served as superintendent before resigning from the U.S. Army to lead Confederate troops during the Civil War. A cadet barracks now carries the Virginian’s name.

Gillibrand’s Washington office said Thursday

that she’s asking acting Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy to change the name of all facilities at West Point that honor Confederate figures, according to the AP. West Point officials didn’t respond when asked if there are other places on the grounds named after Confederates.

Maloney’s office confirms that he is seeking the name change. Maloney, whose district includes West Point, will convey his stance directly to McCarthy, the congressman’s office said.

Gillibrand and Maloney are members of a West Point advisory board.

The fate of the name-changing measures in a GOP-run Congress seems certain. Even as Republicans have criticized Trump’s comments about violence at a white supremacist rally around a statue of Lee in Charlottesville, Va., many have kept mum on their opinions about taking down Confederate memorials and monuments.

In all, 10 major U.S. Army bases honor Confederate heroes, including some that are named after the Georgia chief of the Ku Klux Klan, the head of the Confederate Army, and the commander who led the attack that started the Civil War.

While the public debate has focused on renaming public squares, roads and schools, there has been little movement to pressure the U.S. military to change the names of the bases.

Clarke’s bill may give the military an opening to discuss the possibility of changing names of bases that honor Confederate leaders.

Bannon out at White House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Steve Bannon, a forceful but divisive presence in President Donald Trump's White House, is leaving.

Trump accepted Bannon's resignation on Friday, ending a turbulent seven months for his chief strategist, the latest to depart from the president's administration in turmoil.

"We are grateful for his service and wish him the best," White House spokesman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement confirming reports of Bannon's departure.

A combative and unorthodox Republican, Bannon was a key adviser in Trump's general election campaign, but he has been a contentious presence in a White House divided by warring staff loyalties. The former leader of conservative Breitbart News has pushed Trump to follow through on his campaign promises and was the man behind Trump's travel ban and decision to pull out of the Paris Climate agreement.

But Bannon repeatedly clashed with other top White House advisers and often ran afoul of the president himself.

Police: Terror attacks in Spain linked, took long time to plan

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — The back-to-back vehicle attacks in Barcelona and a nearby resort had been planned for a long time by an Islamic terrorist cell — and could have been far deadlier had its base not been destroyed by an apparently accidental explosion this week, Spanish officials said Friday.

Police intensified their manhunt for an unknown number of suspects still on the loose Friday. They shot and killed five people early Friday who were wearing fake bomb belts as they attacked the seaside resort of Cambrils with a speeding car. Police also arrested four others believed linked to the Cambrils attack and the carnage Thursday on a Barcelona promenade.

The number of victims stood at 13 dead and 120 wounded in Barcelona, and one dead and five wounded in Cambrils. The dead and wounded in the two attacks hailed from 34 countries. An American, two Italians and a Belgian woman were among the dead, officials said.

Sixty-one people wounded by a van in Barcelona remained hospitalized on Friday, with 17 of them in critical condition.

Authorities said the two attacks were related and the work of a large terrorist cell that had been plotting attacks for a long time from a house in Alcanar, 124 miles down the coast from Barcelona. The house was destroyed by an explosion

of butane gas on Wednesday night that killed one person. Senior police official Josep Lluís Trapero said police were working on the theory that the suspects were preparing a different type of attack using explosives or gas, and that the apparently accidental explosion prevented them from carrying out a far more deadly rampage.

Islamic State quickly claimed responsibility for Europe's latest bout of extremist violence, in which a van roared down Barcelona's historic Las Ramblas promenade on Thursday. Hours later, a blue Audi plowed into people in the popular seaside town of Cambrils.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy declared Friday that the fight against terrorism was a global battle and Europe's main problem.

Police said they arrested two more people Friday, after an initial two were arrested Thursday — three Moroccans and one Spaniard, none with terrorism-related records. Three of them were nabbed in the northern town of Ripoll. Another arrest was made in Alcanar.

"We are not talking about a group of one or two people but rather a numerous group," regional Interior Ministry chief Joaquim Forn told Onda Cero radio.

Amid heavy security, Barcelona tried to move forward Friday, with Las Ramblas promenade quietly reopening to the public and King Felipe VI and Rajoy joining thousands in observing a minute of silence in the city's main square.

Search expands for 5 missing GIs in Black Hawk crash

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

HALEIWA, Hawaii — The search for five missing soldiers has been expanded to 50 miles off Oahu's northwest shore after an Army helicopter crashed Tuesday during nighttime training in Hawaii.

Though debris was found from the UH-60 Black Hawk, there has been no sign of the two pilots and three crewmembers who were aboard when controllers lost radio contact with it at about 10 p.m. The missing soldiers are from the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade based at Wheeler Army Airfield.

"Anytime you're in the water, you get drift," Lt. Scott Carr, a Coast Guard spokesman in Hawaii, told reporters Thursday near the search's command

center at Haleiwa Harbor. "Certain currents move north. Certain currents move west. And that's going to expand your search area over time. We're very aware of that, and we plan out ahead of it."

Air and surface vessels from the Coast Guard, Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Honolulu Fire Department have been searching around the clock for the missing aviators. Fixed-wing planes on Thursday were searching areas more than 30 miles from the shore, and helicopters and boats were searching 15 to 30 miles offshore, Carr said. Wednesday's search efforts had focused on an area just 5 miles offshore.

"I will continue to emphasize that this is still a highly active search-and-rescue operation," said Lt. Col. Curt Kellogg, 25th

Infantry Division spokesman. "That is our focus; that is our mission — bringing our soldiers home."

The Coast Guard announced Thursday it was expanding a safety zone, which has a radius of 5 nautical miles and begins about 5.5 miles off Kaena Point, the northwesternmost part of Oahu. No vessels are allowed into that area without Coast Guard approval.

A team from the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., arrived Thursday to assist, Kellogg said. That unit is usually involved in incidents that "may have Armywide impact," he said.

Weather conditions have been good during the search, just as they had been on the evening of the crash.

The Black Hawk was one of two helicopters conducting routine nighttime training. The second aircraft began searching for the lost crew almost immediately after radio contact was lost.

Early last year, 12 Marines were killed when two CH-53E helicopters collided during nighttime training off Oahu's North Shore. A Marine Corps investigation found low aircraft readiness led to inadequate pilot proficiency. It also blamed the squadron's lack of focus on basic aviation practices. Poor light made it difficult for crews to gauge the distance between the two aircraft, the Marine Corps said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman in wheelchair drives it into river

NY BALDWINSVILLE — Authorities said a paralyzed woman fell asleep while fishing in her motorized wheelchair and accidentally drove it into a central New York river.

Police in Baldwinsville said the 62-year-old woman and a friend went fishing Monday night along the Seneca River outside Syracuse. According to officials, the woman, who is paralyzed from the waist down, was in her wheelchair when she nodded off.

Officials told The Post-Standard she hit a button that sent her wheelchair into the river. Nearby residents heard the friend's screams for help and called 911.

Two police officers threw ropes to the woman, who was rescued by emergency crews using a boat.

Her wheelchair remains at the bottom of the river.

Tournament raises over \$500,000

VT ESSEX — A Vermont whiffle ball tournament has raised over \$500,000 for people with spinal cord injuries — the second-highest collection in the tournament's history.

The Travis Roy Foundation WIFFLE Ball Tournament is held annually in Essex and was played last weekend. The Burlington Free Press reported the event was held at the home of Essex residents Pat and Beth O'Connor — who have three backyard fields.

All funds raised by the tournament are donated to the Travis Roy Foundation, which benefits and creates awareness for people with spinal cord injuries. It is named after the former Boston University men's

hockey player who suffered a spinal cord injury during his first game.

In its 16 years, the tournament has raised about \$4.6 million.

Message scrawled on Lincoln Memorial

DC WASHINGTON — The National Park Service said someone used red spray paint to scrawl an anti-law message on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

According to the park service, the vandalism took place early Tuesday morning. A photo released by the service shows an expletive followed by the word "law" scrawled on the inside of one of the memorial's columns.

Workers are using a "gel-type architectural paint stripper safe for use on historic stone" to remove the graffiti. They say treatments will be applied until all evidence of the paint is gone.

Cops: Teacher let her teen son sell drugs

OH SPRINGBORO — An Ohio elementary school teacher faces criminal charges over allegations she let her 15-year-old son sell drugs and let teenagers use LSD in her home.

Amy Panzeca, 40, of Springboro, pleaded not guilty Tuesday to charges including permitting drug abuse and endangering children. She was freed on bond.

Prosecutors said Panzeca's son sold LSD to at least 20 high school students. He faces felony drug charges and is being held in a juvenile detention center.

A drug task force found LSD and marijuana during a search of the family's home in May.

Panzeca teaches fifth grade. The Springboro school district

has placed her on paid leave.

Woman claims to find needle in hamburger

KY LEXINGTON — Officials in Kentucky are investigating a McDonald's after a woman reported finding a needle tip in her hamburger.

News outlets reported the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department investigated the restaurant Monday.

The woman's stepdaughter, Erin Spellman, posted a Facebook photo of the needle tip and a warning about the restaurant. Spellman said her 5-year-old son and his grandparents were eating at the McDonald's when her stepmother bit into the needle tip. Spellman said they had to visit the hospital to get a hepatitis B vaccination and antibiotics.

Health department spokesman Kevin Hall said a health inspector visited the restaurant, surveyed hamburger ingredients and found no evidence of contamination.

The restaurant's owner, Denise Long, said the restaurant is working to verify facts. The McDonald's remains open.

Llama makes bid for freedom on links

NH JACKSON — Golfers at Eagle Mountain Golf Course in Jackson were joined Monday on the sixth fairway by a llama that escaped his pen about 2 miles away through some woods.

The Conway Daily Sun reported that the pack animal, named Noir, was friendly and got in pictures with the golfers.

The fugitive is well known to local police. Officers escorted him home in June when he escaped from his electric fence enclosure. And this time, Jackson police Chief Chris Perley again returned him to his pen

with help from his owner, Russ Miller.

Miller admits the electric fence needs to be a little higher.

Daredevils charged for trespassing on bridge

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Two would-be daredevils from Wisconsin are now criminal defendants for scaling the Golden Gate Bridge.

The Marin County district attorney on Thursday charged Thomas Rector, 21, and Peter Kurer, 18, with misdemeanor trespassing for climbing the bridge's north tower earlier this year.

The West Bend, Wis., residents were charged after posting their exploits to social media sites. A five-minute clip posted online shows them climbing the structure's north tower. They filmed themselves doing flips and hanging from cables without safety gear. They each face a year in jail if convicted.

Woman tried to sell Arctic fox online

NY BUFFALO — Environmental authorities in upstate New York have cited a woman who they say tried to sell an Arctic fox on Craigslist.

WGRZ-TV reported the state's Department of Environmental Conservation responded to a call about a suburban Buffalo woman who listed an 8-week-old Arctic fox pup for sale on Aug. 3.

Officials said the Kenmore woman was seeking \$600 for the pup. They said it is illegal to sell a wild animal as a pet in New York. The woman was issued a ticket and faces up to a \$250 fine.

From wire reports

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Jacksonville opens up QB competition

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Blake Bortles might have started his last game in Jacksonville.

Coach Doug Marrone opened up the team's quarterback competition Thursday night after another inconsistent performance from Bortles, the third overall pick in the 2014 NFL Draft.

Bortles completed eight of 13 passes for 65 yards in a 12-8 exhibition loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. All four of his possessions ended with punts. The first-team offense has scored three points in Bortles' six pre-season possessions.

He misfired to Allen Robinson twice Thursday, including a woefully underthrown pass down the seam that drew boos from the home crowd and caused head-shaking on the sideline.

"It's hard to not hear people booing," Bortles said. "But if they're cheering or booing, it's kind of irrelevant, at least for me it is. I think you've got to treat adversity and prosperity the same way. They're not boo-

ing for no reason. They're booing because you didn't do your job."

Bortles hasn't gotten it done in three-plus seasons.

The former Central Florida standout has 11 victories and 11 interceptions returned for touchdowns in 45 career starts.

His mechanics have mostly been a mess. His decision-making has been dreadful at times. And his confidence sure seemed crushed after an awkward few weeks of training camp.

Bortles had a five-interception performance during the team's first practice in full pads last month and has been up and down since. He seemingly got benched last week after throwing two interceptions early in practice.

Marrone said Bortles' "arm looked tired." Bortles denied having any issues. That was the first indication that Bortles' job security was in jeopardy.

The Jaguars probably should have seen this coming. After all, Marrone and offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett watched Bortles up close the

last two years and knew all his flaws.

But instead of drafting a quarterback or bringing in a veteran to compete with Bortles, Jacksonville publicly supported him. Coughlin and general manager Dave Caldwell even picked up the fifth-year option in Bortles' rookie contract, which would pay him \$19 million in 2018. The deal is guaranteed for injury only, meaning the team can part ways with Bortles and not owe him anything beyond this season.

Still, putting Bortles on the field could be considered a financial risk.

Marrone surely doesn't have money on his mind.

"I'm looking for someone who is going to lead this offense," Marrone said. "I'm not happy with the performance. I'm not going to sit here and BS anyone. Everyone saw it out there. Whatever you want to call it, I'm still trying to evaluate who the best person is at that position."

It could be Chad Henne.

The 10th-year pro and former second-round pick by Miami completed six of 10 passes for

44 yards against the Bucs. Henne's first pass should have been a touchdown, but rookie Keelan Cole dropped it at the goal line.

Henne started 22 games for Jacksonville between 2012 and 2014, but has backed up Bortles since. He has completed 59 percent of his passes for 12,931 yards, with 58 touchdowns and 63 interceptions.

"I always took it as I'm always competing and never really said I'm the backup even though that's the way it was," Henne said. "I still study hard and try to prove in practice what I can do. All I can do is to try to get myself better prepared each week."

Henne isn't a long-term solution. So Jacksonville surely will start over at the all-important position in 2018 by selecting a quarterback in what appears to be a strong draft class or signing one in what appears to be a solid free-agent fold.

"We're going to figure this thing out," Marrone said. "It's just simple. I'm not going to try to make this thing complicated. I'm looking for the best person to lead our offense."

Darby impressive in first game with Philadelphia

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Of all the high-profile players making debuts in new uniforms, Eagles cornerback Ronald Darby was the most impressive.

The cornerback intercepted a pass from former teammate Tyrod Taylor and returned it 48 yards. Darby also broke up two passes in his first game since Philadelphia acquired him from Buffalo last week, and the Eagles beat the Bills 20-16 on Thursday night.

"They were running a lot of routes that looked similar, so I was being patient with everything and cutting them off," Darby said.

Alshon Jeffery, a former Pro Bowl wide receiver signed by the Eagles in the offseason,

caught his first pass from Carson Wentz and finished with two receptions for 23 yards.

Bills cornerback E.J. Gaines had an interception in his first game since coming from the Rams in a trade last week. Gaines intercepted a pass from third-string quarterback Matt McGloin.

Wideout Anquan Boldin, a three-time Pro Bowl pick recently signed by the Bills, caught one pass for 5 yards.

The Eagles traded wide receiver Jordan Matthews and a 2018 third-round pick for Darby. Matthews, a popular player in Philadelphia's locker room, didn't make the trip because of a chest injury.

Anthem protest: Chris Long, the Philadelphia defensive end

who grew up in Charlottesville, Va., put his arm around teammate Malcolm Jenkins as a show of unity while the safety stood with his right fist raised in the air as he's done since last season. Long was to his right with his left arm on Jenkins' shoulder.

"I think it's a good time for people that look like me to be there for people that are fighting for equality," said Long, who is white.

Ravens 31, Dolphins 7: At Miami Gardens, Fla., Jay Cutler's night started by getting an ovation from Miami fans just for taking the field, and ended with him giving a shout-out to Mark Bowen, the surgeon who fixed his right shoulder after his season with the Chicago

Bears ended last December.

Cutler's shoulder is just fine, and that's about all Miami had to cheer about. Ryan Mallett threw for 113 yards and a touchdown, Josh Woodrum ran for two scores and Baltimore beat Miami in the second pre-season game for both teams.

"Dr. Bowen in Chicago, nice job," Cutler said, with a thumbs-up for emphasis.

Buccaneers 12, Jaguars 8: Jameis Winston continued his solid preseason, completing 21 of 29 passes for 196 yards and helping visiting Tampa Bay beat woeful Jacksonville.

Winston had two passes dropped, including what would have been a 43-yard touchdown strike to Mike Evans in the first quarter.

Snyder back coaching after cancer scare

Associated Press

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Bill Snyder likes to spin a well-worn story about an old man from western Kansas, who had driven through the night many years ago to visit Kansas State's coach after a victory in the Copper Bowl.

Snyder was in the early stages of turning around one of the worst programs in college football, what became known as the "Miracle in Manhattan." And the man was so appreciative of Snyder that he patiently sat in his car outside the coach's office awaiting his early-morning arrival.

They chatted about family and life. Hopes and dreams. Then, the man said the Wildcats' bowl victory was "the greatest experience of my life," words that stick with Snyder to this day.

"That," Snyder said, "made me understand what this all means."

Just imagine how thankful that man would be these days, after nearly 25 years interrupted by a brief retirement. The Wildcats have been a perennial Big 12 title contender and bowl

participant, and a program that was once a national laughing-stock has triggered a university-wide renaissance, marked by a campus building boom, enrollment increases and alumni pride.

The 77-year-old Snyder's name now adorns the football stadium, where about \$200 million in recent renovations have turned it into a jewel of the Flint Hills. The Hall of Famer's life-sized statue stands sentinel at the front gates, and a short drive away is a highway bearing his name.

His shadow falls heavily across the entire Big 12. Indeed, all of college football.

"Last year I was in Scottsdale at an event," new Baylor coach Matt Rhule recalled, "and my wife sat down next to a lovely lady, and she's talking to her. She said, 'You should meet her husband!'"

"I looked over and it was Bill Snyder. It was Coach Snyder! I was frozen in fear."

Snyder has that effect on people — a sense of awe and wonderment. Part of it comes from more than 200 career wins, achieved at an out-of-the-way

school that rarely lands top talent. Part comes from the way Snyder has run his program, rarely finding his players embroiled in scandal. And part comes from the revolutionary offensive and defensive systems that he helped introduce to the game.

A big part, though, has to do with his longevity.

Snyder was hired at Kansas State in 1988, when new Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley was 5 years old. Snyder will begin his 26th season on Sept. 2 with a team expected to once again contend for a title.

"The way in which he resurrected a program, or basically built it, is the thing that's most interesting to me," Kansas coach David Beaty said. "The guy to me is the picture of class. Everyone in our conference respects him."

That respect has only grown this year, while Snyder was being treated for throat cancer.

The diagnosis came about the time the Wildcats were preparing for the Texas Bowl last winter, and chemotherapy began in January. Yet the normally debilitating rounds of

treatment never slowed him. He was active throughout the recruiting process, presided over spring practice as if nothing was amiss and was back on the field when fall camp began.

He's received thousands of supportive letters, so many that he's struggled to answer them all. The treatments did leave him drained from time to time, but he insists that he's doing fine.

The biggest change? His ubiquitous cup of coffee has disappeared.

"I drink water all day. Between water and food, it's driving me crazy," Snyder said. "They give me X-number bottles of water every day, and I've had more water in the last four months than I've ever had in my entire life. I've also had more food placed in front of me in the same time period."

Snyder has treated his cancer scare with self-deprecating humor, but the gravity of the situation caught even those closest to him by surprise.

The diagnosis and treatments were also the first signal that the seemingly immortal silver fox might just be fallible.

Manfred: MLB working on rule changes to speed up play

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Major League Baseball is having conversations with the players' association over possible rule changes designed to speed the pace of play, and Commissioner Rob Manfred said Thursday he hopes to reach an agreement instead of implementing any measures unilaterally.

Manfred also said the Bruce Sherman-led ownership group trying to purchase the Miami Marlins has presented the league with a financial structure that would work for finalizing the deal, and he expressed confidence that a major league franchise can be successful in the market. Speaking at the conclusion of the owners meetings, he also expressed sur-

prise with veteran umpire Joe West's reaction to his suspension for his comments about Texas Rangers third baseman Adrian Beltre.

The average time of a nine-inning game is a record 3 hours, 5 minutes this season, up from 3 hours last year and 2:56 in 2015, Manfred's first season as commissioner. Management proposed making changes for this year, such as installing pitch clocks and limiting trips to the mound by catchers, but players' association head Tony Clark said his side would not agree. The league can implement changes by itself with one-year advance notice.

"We met with Tony Clark and a group of players last week," Manfred said. "The tone of those conversations have been

very positive. Hats off to Tony and the players on that, and I remain confident that we will have changes for next year on the issue of pace of game that will be significant."

The owners had a light agenda for their quarterly meeting at a hotel in downtown Chicago, and one of the major topics was Sherman's signed \$1.2 billion agreement to purchase the Marlins from Jeffrey Loria. Former New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter is a limited partner in the group and will take over Miami's business and baseball operations if the transaction is approved.

West, 64, was disciplined this month after he told USA Today that Beltre was the biggest complainer in the major leagues. West, the majors' senior um-

pire, also said he told Beltre during a recent game that he may be a great ballplayer but that he was the worst umpire in the league.

Manfred said he met with West after his comments became public and they agreed a three-day suspension was appropriate.

"Unfortunately Mr. West decided he didn't want to live up to that agreement," Manfred said. "I assume in consultation with the (World Umpires Association), given the statements that they've made, and we had to proceed in a different way."

The umpires' union announced West's suspension and said it strongly disagreed with the decision. It is seeking the restoration of West's lost salary.

Yankees finish sweep of Subway Series

Associated Press

NEW YORK — This year's Subway Series was a one-way ride.

Gary Sanchez homered and matched a career high with five RBIs, Luis Severino got right back on track and the New York Yankees made it a four-game sweep of the crosstown-rival Mets with a 7-5 victory Thursday night.

Four games behind first-place Boston in the AL East, the Yankees begin a three-game series Friday night at Fenway Park. The Red Sox took two of three last weekend when the longtime rivals played at Yankee Stadium.

"These are really important games for us because the clock is ticking," manager Joe Girardi said.

Sanchez hit a three-run homer off struggling starter Steven Matz in the first inning and a two-run single in the fourth. Brett Gardner broke his 3-for-29 slump with a two-run double, and the Yankees won

twice at Citi Field just as they did back home in the Bronx earlier this week.

Curtis Granderson hit his seventh career grand slam off Bryan Mitchell in the ninth, pulling the Mets to 7-5. Dellin Betances was summoned immediately and got three quick outs for his eighth save.

"It's not what you really want to do, but we had to win the game so I had to go to him," Girardi said. "I probably won't have him (available) tomorrow."

Betances has pitched four of the past five days.

Since interleague play began in 1997, it was the third time one team swept the season series between these New York counterparts. The Yankees won all six meetings in 2003, and the Mets went 4-0 in 2013.

Severino (10-5) was working on a two-hit shutout with one out in the seventh when Aaron Judge dropped a fly ball in the right-field corner for a two-base error. The All-Star righty never got another out, throwing a wild pitch and giving up

two straight singles before he was removed without allowing an earned run. He struck out nine.

In his previous outing Saturday, the 23-year-old Severino had the worst start of his career. He allowed 10 runs, eight earned, and eight hits over 4 1/3 innings during a 10-5 loss to Boston.

Before that, Severino was 4-0 with a 1.36 ERA in a span of six games.

"I would say the difference tonight was his slider and his changeup," Sanchez, the Yankees' catcher, said through a translator.

Matz (2-7) was unable to turn things around, dropping to 0-6 with a 10.19 ERA in his last eight starts. The left-hander hasn't won since June 28 at Miami.

"It's nothing I can put my finger on. I've got to figure out what's causing it," he said.

Matz was his own worst enemy Thursday, throwing away Gardner's easy grounder for a two-base error to begin

the game. Aaron Hicks walked and, after Judge struck out for the 34th consecutive game, Sanchez hit his third home run against the Mets (53-66) this week.

"I've seen it in the past, a here-we-go-again kind of attitude," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "Certainly tonight, when we threw the ball away right at the start of the game, all of a sudden, boy, the air came out of the dugout, too."

Severino's bunt single in the fourth, his first major league hit, loaded the bases. Gardner doubled to left field off Matz, and Sanchez hit a two-run single on the first pitch from reliever Chasen Bradford.

Matz gave up seven hits in 3 1/3 innings and allowed seven runs for the second time in a month. Six were earned.

"We've absolutely wringed the rag dry with ideas that we've all seen in the past, that we've all used in the past," Collins said. "Back to square one."

Roundup

Mazara powers Rangers to fourth-straight victory

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Nomar Mazara drove in five runs, including a tiebreaking three-run homer in the fifth inning, and the Texas Rangers held on to beat the Chicago White Sox 9-8 on Thursday night.

The Rangers (60-60) reached .500 for the first time since July 15 with their fourth straight win and seventh in eight games. The defending AL West champs, out of the division race behind Houston, pulled within 1 1/2 games of the idle Los Angeles Angels for the AL's second wild card.

Mazara's 16th home run capped the Rangers' second four-run inning, which included two injury replacements on

the mound for the White Sox in their fifth straight loss.

The White Sox pulled within a run on Jose Abreu's 23rd homer, a solo shot in the ninth. But Alex Claudio finished a two-inning save for the left-hander's sixth of the season.

Reynaldo Lopez (0-1) gave up six runs and five hits in 4 1/3 innings.

Austin Bibens-Dirkx (4-2) retired all five batters he faced to pick up the win.

Nationals 2, Padres 1: Ryan Zimmerman homered with two outs in the eighth inning to lift NL East-leading Washington over host San Diego.

Giants 5, Phillies 4: Jeff Samardzija (8-12) struck out six over six innings to win for the fourth time in five starts and

Jarrett Parker hit a two-run double to lead host San Francisco past Philadelphia.

Cardinals 11, Pirates 7: Dexter Fowler's two-run triple keyed St. Louis' comeback against host Pittsburgh.

Indians 9-2, Twins 3-4: Max Kepler made up for a fielding mistake in the top of the inning with the go-ahead home run in the bottom of the seventh, sending host Minnesota to a victory in the second game to salvage a doubleheader split with Cleveland.

Yan Gomes and Jason Kipnis each homered and had three hits for the Indians in the opener as the Twins set a franchise record with 19 strikeouts.

Blue Jays 5, Rays 3: Justin Smoak hit a tiebreaking home

run in the eighth inning, Josh Donaldson added two solo blasts and host Toronto beat Tampa Bay.

Braves 10, Rockies 4: Ender Inciarte hit two of his team's four homers to lead visiting Atlanta past Colorado.

Reds 13, Cubs 10: Phillip Ervin hit a two-run homer to snap a tie in the seventh inning and had four RBIs in his first major league start as visiting Cincinnati rebounded to beat Chicago after giving up a nine-run lead.

Diamondbacks 4, Astros 0: Patrick Corbin (10-11) came within an out of his first career shutout and first complete game since 2013 in visiting Arizona's win over Houston.