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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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7th Fleet commander relieved

By TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The head of the Navy's 7th Fleet was relieved of command Wednesday in the wake of a string of accidents across the Pacific involving Navy ships.

Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin lost his job "due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command," said a Navy statement issued Wednesday. The news comes just days after the USS John S. McCain collided with a Liberian-flagged oil tanker east of Singapore, injuring five sailors and leaving 10 missing.

Rear Adm. Phillip Sawyer, who was slated to take over the 7th Fleet during a ceremony on Sept. 7, will assume command "immediately," the statement said. Sawyer, who is coming off a tour as Pacific Fleet's deputy commander, previously led the fleet's submarine forces.

Aucoin planned to retire after his tenure was up.

Adm. Scott Swift, Pacific Fleet com-

mander, told reporters Tuesday evening in Singapore that search-and-rescue efforts, which are ongoing, have turned up a number of bodies.

Swift also said he would be traveling Wednesday to Yokosuka, where the 7th Fleet is based.

The McCain, which is homeported at Yokosuka, was traveling to Singapore for a routine port visit early Monday when it collided with the Liberian-flagged Alnic MC oil tanker.

Swift said Navy and Marine Corps divers discovered remains while searching sealed compartments in damaged areas of the ship. The Malaysian navy also discovered a body that could be one of the missing sailors.

While the Navy has not released the names of the 10 missing sailors, family members have identified four: Petty Officer 3rd Class Logan Palmer, 23, of Decatur, Ill.; Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenneth Smith, 22, of Cherry Hill, N.J.; Jacob Drake, 21, of Columbus, Ohio; and John Hoagland, 20, of Killeen, Texas.

The McCain is the fourth Navy ship to be involved in a serious accident in the Pacific this year.

In January, the USS Antietam ran aground and spilled roughly 1,100 gallons of hydraulic fluid into Tokyo Bay.

In May, the USS Lake Champlain collided with a South Korean fishing boat while operating off the east coast of the divided peninsula.

In June, a deadly collision between the USS Fitzgerald and a Philippine-flagged merchant ship killed seven sailors and injured three. The commanding officers of both ships were relieved of their duties.

Aucoin assumed command of 7th Fleet in September 2015, after serving as deputy chief of Naval Operations for Warfare Systems. He had prior experience in the Pacific, having served as commander of Carrier Air Wing 5, which is based at Naval Air Station Atsugi.

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Drill sergeants suspended amid assault accusations

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army has suspended multiple Fort Benning drill sergeants as it investigates allegations of sexual assault raised by a female trainee, officials at the Georgia installation said Wednesday.

The Army's Criminal Investigation Command and the Maneuver Center of Excellence, which oversees recruit, infantry and armor training at Fort Benning, are investigating the allegations, said Ben Garrett, a spokesman for the Army post.

The inquiry began after one

female trainee alleged that a drill instructor sexually assaulted her, but a preliminary investigation revealed indications of additional "sexual misconduct" involving drill sergeants and trainees, according to a Fort Benning statement.

"We take these allegations very seriously, and we will ensure a full and thorough investigation of the facts," the statement read.

"The drill sergeants have been suspended from drill sergeant duties, and will have no contact with trainees during the course of the investigation."

It is not clear how many in-

structors have been suspended or how many women raised assault or other allegations.

Garrett said he could not provide more information, including which unit or training program the trainees or instructors were assigned to.

The allegations come just months after the first women graduated from infantry training at Fort Benning.

The Army last year opened the infantry and armor schools to female trainees.

The first group graduated infantry One Station Unit Training in May.

It is not the first time female Army recruits have raised allegations of sexual assault by

a drill instructor.

In 2014, a Fort Leonard Wood drill sergeant was convicted of sexually assaulting several female trainees at the Missouri Army post.

"There is no place for sexual harassment or sexual assault in our Army," the Fort Benning statement released Wednesday said.

"Our Army remains committed to maintaining a values-based climate, intolerant of these acts, and to respond appropriately when accusations are made."

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Navy: Sepsis caused sailor's sudden death

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy said sepsis was to blame for a USS Ronald Reagan sailor's abrupt death last fall during a patrol in the Yellow Sea.

Seaman Recruit Danyelle Luckey, 23, who served as a personnel specialist, died aboard the Yokosuka-based aircraft carrier on Oct. 10. A Navy statement issued at the time said a sailor had "died suddenly after a brief illness."

An autopsy was conducted a few days after Luckey's death

by the U.S. Forces Korea Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Center, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Paul Newell said Friday.

Sepsis "is a complication caused by the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. It can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death.

The incident triggered a line-of-duty inquiry and Judge Advocate General Manual and Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigations. The Navy's Virginia-based Bureau of Medicine and Surgery also con-

ducted a quality-of-care review to "encourage candid peer appraisal and quality assurance for constant process improvement within Navy medical treatment facilities both ashore and underway," Newell said.

Luckey's family received both reports as well as the autopsy results, he added.

Newell said the Ronald Reagan's crew held a memorial ceremony for Luckey aboard the carrier shortly after her death. The crew lined the passageways from the medical department to the flight deck while the ship was underway.

"Her loss comes as a tragic

shock to her shipmates," Capt. Michael Donnelly, the Ronald Reagan's commanding officer, said in an October statement. "For the crew, our thoughts and prayers are focused on her family during this time."

Luckey, of Pittsburg, Calif., enlisted in May 2016 and joined the ship during a port visit to Guam shortly after the carrier finished participating in Valiant Shield drills last September.

The Ronald Reagan was her first duty station following basic training and military occupational school.

Memorial for missing lieutenant

Stars and Stripes

The Navy has held a memorial service for the USS Stethem sailor reported overboard from the guided-missile destroyer earlier this month in the South China Sea.

The ceremony for Lt. Stephen Hopkins took place Tuesday at the Chapel of Hope at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, according to a photo posted Wednesday on the 7th Fleet's official Facebook page.

The Stethem, which is homeported at Yokosuka, was transiting about 140 miles west of the Subic Bay, Philippines, when Hopkins disappeared on Aug. 1.

Approximately 10,000 square nautical miles of ocean was searched in 79 hours, the Navy said. The effort was called off when Hopkins was not found after more than three days.

Hopkins, a Texas native, joined the Navy in 2009 and reported to the Stethem in July, officials said after the incident.

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Guilty plea in theft from base rec center

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Federal prosecutors say a Filipino woman has pleaded guilty in Kansas to stealing nearly \$100,000 from a U.S. Navy base in Japan.

The prosecutors announced Monday that Cynthia Lopez Creseni pleaded guilty Friday

to theft of public money. She stole \$99,068 from the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

At the time of the thefts, Creseni was lead cashier of the game/slot room.

Prosecutors said Creseni was placed on administrative leave after reporting the funds

missing when she returned from a U.S. vacation in February 2015.

Agents learned she entered the U.S. in July 2015. She was arrested in January 2017 in Overland Park, Kan., for overstaying her visa.

Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 4.

N. Korean leader orders more engines for rockets

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered the production of more solid-fuel rocket engines and warhead tips, state-run media said Wednesday.

The Korean Central News Agency also published photos indicating that North Korea is developing a new ballistic missile. The photos showed diagrams hanging on a wall behind Kim during a visit to an engine factory.

The report comes amid high tensions over the North's nucle-

ar weapons program following more than a year of surprising progress, including the test-launches of two intercontinental ballistic missiles last month.

The leader "instructed the institute to produce more solid-fuel rocket engines and rocket warhead tips by further expanding engine production process and the production capacity of rocket warhead tips and engine jets by carbon and carbon compound material," during his visit to the Chemical Material Institute of the Academy of Defense Science, KCNA said.

Pilot rescued after ejection over Pacific

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Navy rescued a pilot who ejected from an aircraft off the San Diego coast.

The Navy said a civilian contractor ejected from a Hawker Hunter on Tuesday afternoon about 100 miles off the coast of Point Loma.

The pilot was picked up by a helicopter from the USS Theodore Roosevelt and taken to a naval hospital for examination.

The Navy said the Hawker was providing support during a training exercise for the Roosevelt's carrier strike group. The Navy said it's not immediately clear why the pilot ejected.

Associated Press

Back to the battlefield

On familiar ground, Marines prepare for their next chapter in Afghanistan

The Washington Post

CAMP SHORAB, Afghanistan — In Marine Brig. Gen. Roger Turner Jr.'s office on this small, dusty base, there is a leather couch, a map of Helmand province and a white board marked with half a dozen goals. One of them reads: "Get thru fighting season."

That aim — survival — demonstrates how modest U.S. ambitions in Afghanistan have become.

In 2011, when Turner was last in Afghanistan and in charge of thousands of Marines spread across a constellation of outposts in this province, the fighting season was almost distinct, lasting the summer and early fall months as Taliban militants spent revenue from the spring's poppy harvest on ammunition. Now Turner is the first to admit that the fighting season never really ends, and the small group of 300 Marines here is trying to help the Afghan army hold a fraction of the territory U.S. troops controlled six years ago.

Turner's unit, called Task Force Southwest, based out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., is the first Marine deployment to Helmand since 2014. His base is wedged between the headquarters for the Afghan army unit responsible for the province — the 215th Corps — and the derelict remains of Camp Leatherneck, the sprawling installation that was once home to thousands of Marines and might now be reopened. A third of Turner's troops have been to Helmand before, and many of them wear bracelets commemorating their dead friends, steel reminders of the 349 Marines who died in the surrounding countryside.

Task Force Southwest represents what could be the next chapter of the United States' longest war, which President Donald Trump vowed in a speech Monday to continue fighting. The Marine unit doesn't have a combat mission — like most U.S. troops in Afghanistan since 2014 — but it's quietly moving toward a more

aggressive, hands-on effort to train and advise Afghan troops, including having Marines get closer to the front lines.

Trump promised Monday that U.S. troops "will fight to win," and leaders such as Turner believe the Marines are trying a different approach.

"We can at least see a path forward," Turner said, adding that the Army unit that had preceded his Marines had controlled the "hemorrhaging" in the province after the 215th Corps suffered record-high casualties in 2015 and lost two districts to the Taliban.

To some of the Marines, though, optimism, no matter how cautious, rings hollow after nearly 16 years of war.

"You know, it's like everyone forgot," said one Marine, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the issue frankly. "Like someone hit the reset button and now we're out here again saying, 'We can do this, we can win this thing.'"

The Marines were sent to Helmand in the spring, not knowing how, or whether, the strategy might change.

The uncertainty made Gen. Robert Neller, the top Marine Corps officer, hesitant to send Marines to Helmand again after he was asked by the commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan last fall, according to U.S. military officials familiar with the deliberations. Before Task Force Southwest deployed in April, Neller told the 300 Marines that part of their mission, along with assisting the Afghans, was to "not get blown up." When Neller visited Helmand in July, and was asked by Marines what they were fighting to achieve, he was blunt.

"I can't guarantee your kids won't be here in 20 years with another old guy standing in front of them," he said, according to multiple Marines at the meeting.

The situation in Helmand deteriorated rapidly after the United States withdrew in 2014 as part of the Obama admin-

istration's drawdown, leaving the 215th Corps with no advisers and air support, and a false sense of confidence that they could fight the Taliban by themselves.

Three years later, the 215th has a new commander, and U.S. and Afghan officials are confident that he can keep the Taliban from overrunning the provincial capital and motivate the ranks under him. Maj. Gen. Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, stocky and with a thick mustache, is considered a rising star in the Afghan military.

"The new corps commander is a warfighter, he wants to take the fight to the enemy," said Col. Matthew Reid, the deputy commander for Task Force Southwest. "It's not all rosy, there's clearly work to do."

The Marines, drawn to Ahmadzai's aggressiveness, have helped the Afghan commander plan and carry out operations designed to take pressure off the provincial capital and relieve some of the 215th Corps' most beleaguered troops. The missions — called expeditionary advisory packages — allow the Marines to travel with Ahmadzai close to the front, providing him with air support and reconnaissance drones to help his troops advance.

"I have not seen such support from any other unit," Ahmadzai said of the Marines.

Air support has long been an issue in the province since the 2014 drawdown, and finite resources — including helicopter gunships and reconnaissance drones — need to be tightly scheduled to ensure there is constant coverage. The Afghan air force, still in its infancy, is helping, although the Afghan helicopters and attack planes are usually used only for pre-planned missions. Capt. Brian Hubert, a Marine officer who helps staff the command center at Camp Shorab, said the Afghans ask — often via cellphone — for some sort of air support once a day.

Without Marines in the field and a heavy reliance on video

feeds, mistakes can happen. Last month, an airstrike directed by the Marines hit a cluster of Afghan local police in the Gereshk district. According to Marines who were in the command center, Turner studied the screen for several minutes — watching what he thought were Taliban, armed and dressed in civilian clothes, move around — before authorizing the strike. The Marines, after consulting with Afghans on the ground, were under the impression that no government security forces were in the area. The strike killed about a dozen of the police, including a father and his two sons. The Marines gave out condolence payments to the families, a familiar act during the last time they were deployed to the province.

"Look at Iraq, where you have guys calling for [airstrikes] with an iPad and radios and here it's an illiterate Afghan who can't read a map with a cellphone," one Marine said of the difficulty of coordinating strikes with the Afghans.

To rectify gaps in air coverage, the Marines are looking at putting guided rocket artillery back in the province. With about a 40-mile range and an ability to be fired quickly and in bad weather, the rockets would free up the F-16s flying out of Bagram Air Base near Kabul.

Under the watch of a pair of armed Marines near Camp Shorab, Staff Sgt. George Caldwell trained six Afghan soldiers last week on how to set up a 60mm mortar, a small piece of mobile artillery that needs to be assembled and sighted in before it can be fired. The hope is that the Afghans — after instruction from Caldwell — will then go back to their unit and train their comrades.

As part of their training, Caldwell runs them through "gun drills," pitting two teams against each other as they race to set up the gun. One of the Afghan teams quickly assembles the mortar. Caldwell inspects and moves to the other group, which is fumbling with the weapon's bipod.

"The biggest thing is not doing it for them, and not to interject too much," Caldwell said. "We only kind of push the hand in the right direction; it's up to them to go forward with it. If we do it for them, we'll be here forever."

Trump revisits Charlottesville comments in Phoenix speech

Associated Press

PHOENIX — President Donald Trump opened his political rally in Phoenix with calls for unity and an assertion that “our movement is about love.” Then he erupted in anger.

He blamed the media for the widespread condemnation of his response to violence at a Charlottesville, Va., protest organized by white supremacists. He said he had simply been misrepresented in news coverage.

He read from his three responses to the racially charged violence — getting more animated with each one. He withdrew from his suit pocket the written statement he’d read the day a woman was killed by a man who’d plowed a car through counter-protesters, but he skipped over the trouble-causing part that he’d freelanced at the time — his observation that “many sides” were to blame.

That, as well as his reiteration days later that “both sides” were to blame for the violence that led to the death of Heather

Heyer and two state troopers, led Democrats and many Republicans to denounce Trump for not unmistakably calling out white supremacists and other hate groups.

Trump also suggested he still intends to pardon former Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who is awaiting sentencing in Arizona after his conviction in federal court for disobeying court orders to stop his immigration patrols. But he left little doubt that he wanted to do it. He said he’d aimed to avoid “controversy” by not immediately granting the pardon. But Trump also said, “I’ll make a prediction: I think he’s going to be just fine.”

Well after his appearance had ended, Trump sent a tweet on his Twitter account saying: “Not only does the media give a platform to hate groups, but the media turns a blind eye to the gang violence on our streets.”

He followed up Wednesday morning on Twitter, writing “Phoenix crowd last night was amazing — a packed house. I love the Great State of Arizona.

Not a fan of Jeff Flake, weak on crime & border!”

As for how he would assist with the upcoming Herculean tasks facing Congress — passing tax reform, raising the debt ceiling, and agreeing on a budget — Trump offered little detail. He did threaten that if legislators force a government shutdown “we’re building that wall,” a reference to his campaign promise to close off the border with Mexico.

He also said he thinks the U.S. will “end up probably terminating” the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico “at some point,” though he said he hasn’t made up his mind.

Trump was on a two-day trip to the west. Wednesday he traveled to an American Legion convention in Reno, Nev. He began his Arizona visit Tuesday with a brief trip to the southern edge of the country, touring a Marine Corps base in Yuma that is a hub of operations for the U.S. Border Patrol.

Protests turn unruly after talk

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A day of noisy but largely peaceful protests of President Donald Trump’s speech in Phoenix turned unruly as police fired pepper spray at crowds after someone apparently lobbed rocks and bottles at officers.

A haze enveloped the night sky Tuesday as protesters and police clashed outside the convention center where Trump had just wrapped up his speech. People fled the scene coughing as an officer in a helicopter belted through a speaker urging protesters to leave the area.

Four people were arrested on charges related to the protest, and one person was arrested on an unrelated warrant, Police Chief Jeri Williams said. Two officers were treated for heat exhaustion, she said.

The disturbance didn’t start until after the speech had ended. A contingent of protesters stayed behind after the clash with police had ended. Their numbers were small.

Authorities were on high alert as thousands of people lined up in the triple-digit heat to attend Trump’s first political rally since the violence in Charlottesville, Va. Protesters filled the streets of downtown Phoenix and engaged in shouting matches and a few minor scuffles with Trump supporters, but those events were generally peaceful.

By the time Trump took the stage, police said there had been no arrests or major incidents.

Phoenix police kept most members of the two opposing groups behind barricades and apart on separate sides of the street. Officers wearing riot gear and carrying rifles sauntered through the lane between the sides.

Studies: Car safety systems reducing crashes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Safety systems to prevent cars from drifting into another lane or that warn drivers of vehicles in their blind spots are beginning to live up to their potential to significantly reduce crashes, according to two studies released Wednesday.

At the same time, research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety raises concern that drivers may be less vigilant when relying on automated safety systems or become distracted by dashboard displays that monitor how the systems are performing.

The two institute studies found that lane-keeping systems, some of which even nudge the vehicle back into its lane for the driver, and blind-spot monitoring systems had lower crash rates than the same vehicles without the systems.

The lane-keeping study looked at police crash data from 25 states between 2009 and 2015 for vehicle models where the systems were sold as optional. Lane-keeping systems lowered rates of single-vehicle, sideswipe and head-on crashes of all severities by 11 percent, and crashes of those types in which there were injuries, by 21 percent, the study found.

Because there were only 40 fatal crashes in the data, researchers used a simpler analysis that didn’t control for differences in drivers’ ages, genders, insurance risk and other factors for those crashes. They found the technology cut the fatal crash rate by 86 percent.

That’s probably high, said Jessica Cicchino, the institute’s vice president for research, but even if lane-keeping systems cut such crashes by half it would be significant, she said. Cicchino said about a quarter of traffic fatalities involve a vehicle drifting into another lane.

A second institute study of blind-spot detection systems — usually warning lights in side mirrors — found the systems lower the rate of all lane-change crashes by 14 percent and the rate of such crashes with injuries by 23 percent.

A separate study by the insurance industry-funded institute and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s AgeLab found that drivers using automated systems that scan for parking spots and then park the car spend a lot more time looking at dashboard displays than at the parking spot, the road in front or the road behind.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspected TV thief wore 'I'm Broke Baby' T-shirt

MO LEE'S SUMMIT — Police in suburban Kansas City are on the hunt for a man accused of stealing a TV while wearing a T-shirt with the phrase "I'm Broke Baby" on it.

The Lee's Summit Police Department said on its Facebook page Monday that "yes, we realize his shirt is ironic!"

A photo on the page shows the man wearing the black and white shirt, a matching ball cap and sunglasses.

He's clutching a cellphone and what appears to be a shopping cart handle.

The post had been shared nearly 270 times as of Monday afternoon.

Lab sets new magnet strength record

FL TALLAHASSEE — Florida's National High Magnetic Field Laboratory is reclaiming its status as home to the world's strongest magnet.

Lab officials said Tuesday they tested a 41.4-tesla magnet. That beats the old mark for resistive magnets which was held by a 38.5-tesla magnet in China. A tesla is a measure of magnetic field strength.

The push at the Florida State University facility to create a record magnet was called "Project 11." That's a reference to the comedy film "This is Spinal Tap" where a guitarist has an amp that goes to 11 instead of 10.

Resistive magnets are a type of electromagnet used for research. Pulsed magnets can reach a higher field but can sustain that power for only a fraction of a second. Resistive magnets can run continuously.

Suspect stops to watch eclipse, gets arrested

FL ORLANDO — Authorities in Florida say an auto theft suspect who wanted to watch the moon blot out the sun instead has a blot on his record.

The Orange County Sheriff's Office said on its Facebook page that Jocsan Rosado was arrested Monday after he parked what deputies say was a stolen car to watch the eclipse.

Deputies said Rosado stole the vehicle, and unbeknownst to him, was being followed by detectives with the auto theft unit.

Deputies said he stopped at a hardware store to purchase a welding mask for watching the eclipse safely.

He was arrested next to the stolen car, wearing the welding mask and looking up at the sky.

Movie prop money being passed as real

PA ALIQUIPPA — Movie prop money is being passed as though it's real in one western Pennsylvania city.

Aliquippa police have posted pictures of a fake \$20 bill that was passed at a local business.

Although the bill looks convincingly real otherwise, there is one dead giveaway: The words "Motion Picture Use Only" are printed clearly on the front and back of the bill in question.

Police haven't said if they know where the money came from or who passed it.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not against the law to use real U.S. currency in movies and TV shows. But producers of such shows often use fake bills so they don't have to concern themselves with theft or loss, especially when large sums of

money appear on screen.

Hiker dies after being hit by boulder

CA OJAI — A 53-year-old woman died after a boulder hit her as she was hiking in Southern California.

The Ventura County coroner said Monday that Toni Large of Ojai died at a hospital.

Sheriff's officials told the Ventura County Star she was with a group when the boulder hit her in the Los Padres National forest on Sunday evening.

The county fire department was summoned to find an injured hiker in the area, but could not find her.

Authorities later said she had been taken to the hospital in a private vehicle.

Woman gets video of eagle killing deer fawn

WI CRIVITZ — A woman in northeast Wisconsin videotaped a bald eagle killing a deer fawn swimming in a lake.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported that Julie Smith caught the incident on camera on June 30 at her vacation home on Lake Noquebay near Crivitz.

Smith said she began filming the moment because although deer sightings are common in the area, seeing a deer in the water is unusual.

The video shows a deer fawn in the water near the shore. Suddenly, a bald eagle swoops in and strikes the fawn. It latches onto the young deer's back and eventually pushes it underwater.

The eagle eventually dragged the fawn's body onto the shore. Smith left it untouched, and the eagle returned to the fawn carcass to feed for the next three days.

Rockwell painting sells for \$1.6M at auction

TX DALLAS — A rendering by Norman Rockwell of one of his best known paintings has sold at auction for \$1.6 million.

Heritage Auctions said the painting sold Sunday in Dallas to a buyer who wants to remain anonymous.

The work was a study — a preliminary work — for Rockwell's "Tough Call." The painting with three umpires looking skyward pondering whether to call a game because of rain arguably is the most recognizable of his baseball-themed works.

The Austin family that put the work up for auction had thought they just had a print of the work before they had it examined.

The final painting is in the possession of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Monkey on the loose evades capture

TN KNOXVILLE — A pet monkey named "Pretty Boy Floyd" is on the loose in Tennessee.

The Knoxville News Sentinel reported that a monkey tried to enter a home in Knoxville on Monday and escaped into the trees when animal control arrived. It remained at large as of Wednesday.

Knoxville Police Department spokesman Darrell DeBusk said authorities aren't optimistic about their chances of catching the animal with the traditional traps they set.

Zoo Knoxville spokeswoman Tina Rolen said the animal appears to be a Capuchin monkey, based on photos. She says the zoo's animals are accounted for.

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Cavs deal Irving to Celtics for Thomas

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Kyrie Irving was tired of being teammates with LeBron James.

Now he has to figure out how to beat him.

Cleveland's All-Star guard, who asked owner Dan Gilbert to trade him earlier this summer, was dealt Tuesday night to the Boston Celtics for fellow All-Star Isaiah Thomas, forward Jae Crowder, center Ante Zizic and the Brooklyn Nets' unprotected 2018 first-round draft pick.

"It's extremely rare to trade for a 25-year-old player that's done what he's done, the offensive weapon that he is," Celtics president Danny Ainge said. "We feel like his best basketball is still ahead of him.

"We have a player that's proven to be a sure thing. We know how unpredictable the draft can be. You do pay a heavy price for a player of that age and that caliber."

Irving, whose late three-pointer helped Cleveland win the 2016 NBA championship — and the city's first title since 1964 — is on his way to Boston, where he'll join a Celtics team that lost to the Cavs in last season's conference finals.

And as fate will have it, the Cavs will host the Celtics in their season opener on Oct. 17.

"Of course we know who our competition is, and we know

who our biggest threats are each year," Ainge said. "But we feel like this is a trade that can make us better, and that's why we did it."

The blockbuster deal caps a wild summer for the Cavs, who lost their title defense in five games to Golden State in June. Since then, general manager David Griffin left, the team failed to convince Chauncey Billups to join its front office and James has played with fans' emotions with veiled postings on social media about his future.

Irving's trade demand cast a shadow over the entire organization.

But Cleveland may have salvaged its offseason.

"This trade needed to include both players and assets that we felt strongly could help us continue to compete for championships and we believe it does," said new general manager Koby Altman, who pulled off a deal that protects Cleveland's present and future.

In Thomas, they're getting a proven playmaker with a stellar reputation. The 5-foot-9 guard is one of the league's most dynamic backcourt players with an uncanny ability to get to the basket. Irving may be the only better finisher among point guards.

The 28-year-old Thomas was taken with the final selection in the 2011 draft — 59 picks after

Irving was picked first overall. But he has steadily scaled his way up to elite status.

Thomas' reputation in Boston was cemented when he led the Celtics through the playoffs last season despite the death of his sister on the eve of the postseason. He also had a front tooth knocked out during the second-round series against Washington and a hip injury eventually forced the team to shut him down early in the East finals, won by the Cavaliers in five games.

"Isaiah had just an amazing season this year and entertained us all, the whole city of Boston. And everybody fell in love with him," Ainge said. "He's such an underdog because of his size and his heart and his spirit which he plays."

Thomas is eligible for free agency next summer and believes he is worthy of a maximum contract. He has been quoted saying, "They better bring out the Brinks truck."

Cleveland also is getting Crowder, a solid perimeter defender, and a first-round pick that Boston got from Brooklyn. The package could help the Cavs reload if James opts out of his contract next summer and leaves Cleveland for a second time.

The Cavs drafted Irving with the No. 1 overall pick in 2011. He struggled in his first

few seasons but blossomed in recent years alongside James. However, that didn't seem to be enough for the 25-year-old, who has wanted to be the focal point on his own team.

James wished Irving well on Twitter, calling him a "special talent/guy."

"Nothing but respect and what a ride it was our 3 years together," James wrote.

Asked about trading a fan favorite who rose from the depths of the draft for a player who asked out of a team with the NBA's best player, one year removed from a championship, Ainge said he has done his homework.

"We feel comfortable with who Kyrie is and who he can be," he said.

Minnesota showed some interest in Irving after his trade request became public, but were unwilling to part with star Andrew Wiggins as the centerpiece of a deal. Wiggins is expected to sign a max contract extension in the coming weeks to stay with the Timberwolves.

The Phoenix Suns reportedly were not interested in parting with rookie Josh Jackson in a deal that also would have required Eric Bledsoe and the New York Knicks gave no indication that Kristaps Porzingis was ever on the table in a potential Irving trade.

Kyrie gets his way, but Cavaliers get the win

Associated Press

MIAMI — It's not the principals that will define the blockbuster trade between Cleveland and Boston. Great point guard leaves one city for another. That seems fair.

All the other parts, they will tell the story.

There are many ways to claim victory in the deal made Tuesday night. Kyrie Irving wanted his own team and got it, so he wins. Isaiah Thomas gets to play with LeBron James, so he wins. The Cavaliers got rid of a supposedly disgruntled star, so they won. The Celtics now won't have to decide if Thomas is worth something like a \$180 million deal next summer, so they won. It's

all semantics.

But look past all that. In the end, Cleveland won. James won, too.

Here's a few reasons why James will be celebrating this deal: He'll still have a high-octane point guard; he's getting an absurdly good defender in Jae Crowder (he could have helped the Cavs' cause against Golden State in The Finals); he won't be going into the season dealing with drama about Irving's Cleveland future; this trade might even reap the Cavaliers the No. 1 pick in next year's draft.

All good things, all edge to Cleveland.

Give the Celtics credit for being bold. Danny Ainge knew winning the Eastern Conference's regular-season crown last

season was meaningless, so he completely blew up a team that was a No. 1 seed and got hammered by the Cavaliers in the East finals. Sure, the Celtics played most of that series without Thomas, but that wasn't going to matter. The Cavs weren't losing that series.

So Ainge goes out and gets an All-Star point guard in Irving, after he hauls in Gordon Hayward during free agency and adds probable rookie of the year front-runner Jayson Tatum to the mix in the draft.

It's not a bad deal for the Celtics. They get Irving. It's his team. A storied franchise is in his hands and he will savor that.

It's just a better deal for Cleveland, at least right now.

Browns close to naming starting QB

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Coach Hue Jackson is letting the drama build to a crescendo. His pick as Cleveland's starting quarterback is only hours away.

Drum roll, please.

Following weeks of training camp practices and two exhibition games, Jackson said Tuesday he still hasn't decided if Brock Osweiler, rookie DeShone Kizer or Cody Kessler will start the team's season opener on Sept. 10 against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

He's close, but not quite there.

Jackson said he's leaning toward one of the QBs, but will wait to consult with members of the front office before finalizing his decision.

"I think I feel pretty good about where I am," Jackson said on a conference call. "I have been feeling pretty good about what I feel and what I think for

a little while now, but you have to let things, as I have always said, play out. Today, I wanted to finish the things I wanted to watch, have the conversations I wanted to have with others and just kind of move from there."

Jackson spent Tuesday reviewing tape of Monday night's win over the New York Giants. He wanted to dissect the footage and digest it before meeting with the club's executive staff.

Osweiler and Kizer are the front-runners for the QB job, which has seemingly been up for grabs at the start of every season in Cleveland. The Browns have gone through 26 different starting quarterbacks since 1999.

Osweiler, acquired in a March trade from Houston, didn't do anything to badly damage his chances during his second consecutive start on Monday. He completed 6 of 8 passes for 25 yards and had a

tipped pass intercepted.

However, he failed to lead the Browns to any points in six series and Jackson has mentioned that as being a major factor in separating the contending QBs.

Osweiler is experienced — he's 13-8 in NFL starts — and that could be the tipping point for Jackson, who many not want to rush Kizer into the lineup before he's ready.

In his two exhibition starts, the 26-year-old Osweiler completed 12 of 22 passes for 67 yards. He was not sacked.

Kizer closed the gap on the veterans in camp, and it wouldn't be a huge surprise if Jackson decides to give him the job.

The former Notre Dame starter has been impressive with his composure and confidence, and there's no doubt that he's got the arm strength to make any throw.

Kizer has been the most pro-

ductive QB in the preseason, leading the Browns (2-0) to three TDs. He has completed 19 of 31 passes for 258 yards and threw for a touchdown to rally Cleveland to a win over New Orleans.

Jackson's main critiques of Kizer have been with taking charge on the field and communicating with the sideline. He improved in both areas against the Giants.

"He got better at communicating with his teammates in the huddle," Jackson said. "I thought that was pretty obvious. I thought there were times where he could have gotten the ball out better and a little sooner, and I think he saw those. That comes from playing and playing with players and going through the system. There was improvement, and there are things he has to keep growing at. This is going to be a process for him as he continues to move forward."

Falk back to finish final chapter of career with WSU

Associated Press

PULLMAN, Wash. — Back when Luke Falk was a freshman walk-on at Washington State, struggling to strike a balance between being a first-year college football player, school and trying to have a few dollars of his own, he picked up a part-time job working for a catering company.

One of his assignments was working a high-end booster event where Falk was asked to serve, of all people, Washington State athletic director Bill Moos.

"Here I am serving our athletic director. He didn't know me at the time, probably. But, he's heard the story now," Falk recalled. "He was one of the only guys that said, 'Thank you, and please, and thank you.'"

Years later, everyone associated with Washington State knows Falk. He's no longer overlooked. He doesn't work

with catering companies on the side anymore, either. His serving happens on the field, and he's done it quite well, to the tune of nearly 11,000 yards passing already in his career.

For a nightcap, Falk bypassed early entry into the NFL and returned for his senior season with a chance to complete one of the greatest careers in the quarterback-rich Pac-12 Conference.

If all goes to plan, Falk will rewrite the Pac-12 record book by the end of the season, the result of being the distributor in coach Mike Leach's Air Raid offense. Falk needs just 2,700 yards passing and 28 TD passes to overtake the all-time Pac-12 leaders in those categories — Oregon State's Sean Mannion (13,600 yards passing) and USC's Matt Barkley (116 TD passes).

While the cast around him has improved throughout his career, Falk is a major reason

No. 24 Washington State has morphed into a contender.

Not bad for a walk-on.

"To be perfectly honest, I think he kind of assumed he was going to be the starter a little before I did," Leach said. "I'd figured it was a battle, and we had a kid that we recruited ahead of him. But I was definitely going to allow it to be and make it a battle. Then he ends up beating the guy out, and off we go, you know?"

Falk has brought Washington State to a place of relevance that's been elusive for the program. The Cougars have gone to two straight bowl games and getting to a third in Falk's senior season would be just the second time Washington State has gone to three straight bowl games. A year ago, the Cougars played in a de facto Pac-12 North championship game, the result of eight straight wins, before losing to rival Washington.

He's the next in a long line

of great quarterbacks to make their way through Pullman, a list that includes the names of Thompson, Rypien, Bledsoe, Leaf and Gesser. Yet none of them were asked to run a system as intricate as Leach's, which is why the coach regularly lauds his quarterback for his smarts and comprehension.

Now remember that Falk has accomplished all this because he was willing to take a risk. There was no guarantee of a scholarship or even an opportunity when he arrived at Washington State. At one point in his high school career, Falk seemed destined for Florida State, only to have that opportunity dissolve. In the end, his choices appeared to be Cornell, maybe Idaho and maybe Wyoming.

If not for Leach's arrival in Pullman, Falk likely would have headed for the Ivy League and received limited football exposure.

Cubs break with tradition against Reds

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — With the Cubs comfortably ahead, Joe Maddon added to his lore as a manager who's not afraid to go against tradition and have some fun, too.

Maddon had left-handed Anthony Rizzo play third base in the ninth inning — filling in while Kris Bryant went for precautionary X-rays on his hand — as Chicago finished off a 13-9 victory over the Cincinnati Reds on Tuesday night.

Why not?

“Looking at it, the only thing left was (catcher Alex) Avila at third, which is no fun, or Rizzo at third and Avila at first, which is fun, and that's why we did it,” Maddon said.

Rizzo didn't get any balls hit his way in his role as only the third left-handed third baseman in Cubs history. George Decker and Jimmy Ryan also played there in the 1800s.

Bryant's hand was fine — X-rays were negative, and he might miss a day. The National League MVP wasn't aware that Rizzo had taken his spot in the ninth, and he knew he wouldn't hear the end of it from his lefty fill-in.

“He'll put that on his Twitter bio: Third baseman,” Bryant said.

The Cubs' day not only ended with weirdness, it started that way, too. Ben Zobrist was in the original starting lineup, but couldn't make it to Cincinnati because he couldn't find a rental car in Nashville. The Cubs were off on Monday, and Zobrist was in a panic as he tried to get back from his home state.

“Holy smokes, I was flustered for about seven hours today,” said Zobrist, who finally made it to Great American Ball Park about an hour before the first pitch. “It was a nightmare. I've

had nightmares about being late to games before.”

He was scratched from the lineup, but got his chance in the seventh when the Cubs started their big rally and moved a season-high 10 games over .500.

Chicago loaded the bases with two outs. Javier Baez fell behind 0-2 against left-hander Wandy Peralta (3-4), worked the count full, fouled off a pitch and then singled to right for a pair of runs that tied it 6-6, his bat shattering on impact.

Zobrist pinch hit and doubled for Chicago's first lead and was a bit sheepish over the congratulations he received.

“When I got back to the dugout, I said, ‘If you show up for the game when I did today, you'd better do something good,’” Zobrist said.

Chicago sent nine batters to the plate for five more runs in the eighth against Blake Wood, with Zobrist driving in another

run.

The nine-run surge in the last three innings preserved John Lackey's streak of no losses since the All-Star break. He gave up six runs in five innings, including the first of Eugenio Suarez's two homers and Scooter Gennett's solo shot. The right-hander is 5-0 in his last seven starts.

Hector Rondon (4-1) escaped a bases-loaded threat in the sixth.

Reds starter Homer Bailey left after only three innings because he felt irritation in the back of his pitching shoulder. Bailey missed the first half of the season while recovering from elbow surgery.

“I probably could've continued tonight, but we thought it was better to get out and make sure I can keep going (for the rest of the season),” Bailey said. “I want to finish this thing up right.”

Fister throws one-hitter, leads Red Sox past Indians

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Doug Fister gave up a leadoff homer in the first inning to Francisco Lindor and then nothing else, finishing with a career-best one-hitter, and Eduardo Nunez had five RBIs as the Boston Red Sox rolled to a 9-1 victory over the Cleveland Indians on Tuesday night.

Fister (3-6) was facing AL Central-leading Cleveland for the third time in four starts, and the right-hander took advantage of his familiarity with the Indians' lineup. He allowed two walks and hit a batter, but was otherwise in control. Backed by two double plays, he pitched his first complete game since 2014 with Washington.

Jackie Bradley Jr. homered in the fifth off Carlos Carrasco (12-6) and Nunez connected for a two-run double in the seventh and a three-run homer in the eighth.

Angels 10, Rangers 1: Albert Pujols hit a three-run

homer to become the major league career leader for home runs by a player born outside the United States, and host Los Angeles beat Texas.

Pujols hit his 19th homer of the season and the 610th of his career, snapping his tie with Sammy Sosa for eighth all-time.

Braves 4, Mariners 0: Rookie Lucas Sims (2-3) pitched three-hit ball over six innings and host Atlanta scored on a crazy play that took three rundowns.

Nationals 4, Astros 3: Matt Wieters hit a two-run homer, Howie Kendrick had a two-run triple and visiting Washington beat Houston for the ninth straight time.

Washington's winning streak over the Astros dates to 2012. The NL East-leading Nationals have won 13 of 14 against Houston since 2011.

Dodgers 8, Pirates 5: Chris Taylor had three hits and drove in three runs as visiting Los Angeles beat Pittsburgh.

Yankees 13, Tigers 4: Gary Sanchez hit two home runs — including a first-inning drive estimated at nearly 500 feet — and Masahiro Tanaka (9-10) pitched seven tidy innings in his return from the disabled list to lead visiting New York over Detroit.

Royals 3, Rockies 2: Danny Duffy (8-8) and four relievers combined on a two-hitter, helping host Kansas City hold off Colorado.

Marlins 12-7, Phillies 8-4: Marcell Ozuna hit a two-run homer, Christian Yelich had a three-run shot and robbed Nick Williams of a two-run drive as visiting Miami completed a doubleheader sweep.

Ichiro Suzuki's pinch-hit three-run homer broke a tie in the seventh inning of the opener and Giancarlo Stanton added his major league-leading 46th home run.

Twins 4, White Sox 1: Jorge Polanco homered for the third time in two days as visiting Minnesota beat Chicago.

Brewers 4, Giants 3: Travis Shaw hit a two-out double in the seventh inning to drive in Neil Walker with the go-ahead run and visiting Milwaukee held on to beat San Francisco.

Diamondbacks 7, Mets 4: J.D. Martinez hit an early three-run homer, Patrick Corbin (11-11) pitched eight smooth innings to win his third straight stingy start and visiting Arizona coasted past sinking New York.

Padres 12, Cardinals 4: Yangervis Solarte homered and drove in a career-high six runs, Austin Hedges also went deep and visiting San Diego beat St. Louis.

Athletics 6, Orioles 4: Ryon Healy homered twice, Jed Lowrie hit a two-run drive and visiting Oakland beat struggling Baltimore.

Rays 6, Blue Jays 5: Lucas Duda and Corey Dickerson homered in the first two innings and Chris Archer (9-7) struck out 10 for host Tampa Bay.