

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, August 26, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Hurricane Harvey wreaks havoc on Texas

Associated Press

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — Hurricane Harvey rolled over the Texas Gulf Coast on Saturday, smashing homes and businesses and lashing the shore with wind and rain so intense that drivers were forced off the road because they could not see in front of them.

The fiercest hurricane to hit the U.S. in more than a decade came ashore late Friday about 30 miles northeast of Corpus Christi as a mammoth Category 4 storm with 130 mph winds. It weakened overnight to Category 1.

But the storm's most destructive powers were just beginning. Rainfall that will continue for days could dump more than 40 inches of water and inundate many communities, including dangerously flood-prone Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city.

"Our focus is shifting to the extreme and potentially historic levels of flooding that we could see," said Eric Blake, a specialist at the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

No deaths were immediately reported. High winds kept emergency crews out of many places, and authorities said it could be hours before emergency teams are able to fully assess damage.

By dawn, nearly 300,000 consumers were without power in the coastal region, and nearly 20 inches of rain had fallen in some

places.

The mayor of Rockport, a coastal city of about 10,000 that was directly in the storm's path, said his community took a blow "right on the nose" that left "widespread devastation," including homes, businesses and schools that were heavily damaged. Some structures were destroyed.

Mayor Charles "C.J." Wax told The Weather Channel that the city's emergency response system had been hampered by the loss of cellphone service and other forms of communication.

About 10 people were taken to the county jail for treatment after the roof of a senior housing complex collapsed, television station KIII reported.

In the storm's immediate aftermath, the Coast Guard sent two helicopters to try to rescue the crews of three tugboats reported in distress in a channel near Port Aransas.

About 4,500 inmates were evacuated from three state prisons in Brazoria County south of Houston because the nearby Brazos River is rising from Hurricane Harvey's heavy rain.

The hurricane posed the first major emergency management test of President Donald Trump's administration. The president signed a federal disaster declaration for coastal counties Friday night.

In Corpus Christi, the major city closest to the storm's center, wind whipped palm trees and stinging sheets of horizontal rain slapped against hotels and office buildings along the seawall as the storm made landfall.

Daybreak revealed downed lamp posts and tree limbs and roof tiles torn off buildings. The city's marina was nearly unscathed, save an awning ripped from a restaurant entrance and a wooden garbage bin uprooted and thrown.

The storm's approach sent tens of thousands of people fleeing inland. Families who escaped Rockport were worried about neighbors and whether their homes were still standing.

Just hours before the projected landfall, the governor and Houston leaders issued conflicting statements on evacuation.

Gov. Greg Abbott urged more people to flee, but Houston authorities told people to remain in their homes and recommended no widespread evacuations.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said there might be a "greater danger" in having people who don't need to be evacuated on roads that could flood. Harris County Judge Ed Emmett said that because the hurricane was not taking direct aim at Houston, the city's primary concern was heavy flooding.

Trump: Implement ban on transgender troops

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Friday directed the Pentagon to ban the recruitment of openly transgender people, but is leaving it to military leaders to determine whether individuals already in the armed forces should be allowed to continue to serve.

The presidential memorandum signed by Trump also will prevent the military from providing medical treatment for sex reassignments.

Trump is reversing an Obama administration policy that was the latest step in the

advancement of rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the U.S. military in recent years. But the White House said Trump believes his predecessor failed to provide sufficient basis to determine whether terminating the Department of Defense's long-standing policy on transgender individuals would "hinder military effectiveness and lethality, disrupt unit cohesion, or tax military resources."

The memorandum signed by the president states that "further study" is necessary to ensure that the policy change would not have negative effects

on military readiness.

In June 2016, President Barack Obama allowed transgender servicemembers to serve openly in the military and to receive related medical treatment while ordering the Pentagon to determine a policy for allowing transgender people to join the armed forces within a year.

But Defense Secretary Jim Mattis earlier this year delayed the entry of transgender troops until January 2018, citing the need to further evaluate the impact on the military's "readiness and cohesion."

The memorandum comes

weeks after Trump abruptly announced the ban in a series of tweets on July 26. It was not immediately implemented by the military, which said it would wait for further guidance from the White House.

The memo released Friday gives the Pentagon six months to determine how to implement Trump's directive as it relates to transgender people currently serving. Until that determination is made, no action will be taken against any individuals, the memo states. That plan will be implemented by March 23, 2018.

N. Korea tests more short-range missiles

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea—North Korea fired several rockets into the sea Saturday in the continuation of its rapid nuclear-weapon and missile expansion, prompting South Korea to press ahead with drills involving U.S. troops that have angered Pyongyang.

The U.S. Pacific Command revised its initial assessment that the first and third short-range missiles failed during flight to say they flew about 155 miles. It said the second missile appears to have blown up immediately, and none posed a threat to Guam, toward which the North had warned it would fire missiles.

South Korea's presidential office and military said North Korea fired "several" projectiles in what was presumed as a test of its 300-millimeter rocket

artillery system.

Kim Dong-yub, a former South Korean military official who is now an analyst at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said that South Korean assessment doesn't necessarily contradict the U.S. evaluation that the launches involved ballistic missiles. North Korea's large-sized artillery rockets blur the boundaries between artillery systems and ballistic missiles because they create their own thrust and are guided during delivery, Kim said.

The presidential office in Seoul said the U.S. and South Korean militaries will proceed with their ongoing war games "even more thoroughly" in response to the launch. They are the first known missile firings since July, when the North flight tested a pair of intercontinental

ballistic missiles that analysts say could reach deep into the U.S. mainland when perfected.

The White House said President Donald Trump was briefed on the latest North Korean activity and "we are monitoring the situation."

The rival Koreas recently saw their always testy relationship get worse after Trump traded warlike threats with the North. Saturday's launch comes during an annual joint military exercise between the United States and South Korea that the North condemns as an invasion rehearsal, and weeks after Pyongyang threatened to lob missiles toward Guam.

North Korea had walked back from the threat to lob missiles toward Guam, but there had been concerns that hostility will flare up again during the

Ulchi-Freedom Guardian drills between the allies that run through Aug. 31.

However, some experts say North Korea is now mainly focused on the bigger picture of testing its bargaining power against the United States with its new long-range missiles and likely has no interest in letting things get too tense during the drills. They say the North may limit its reactions to low-level provocations like artillery and short-range missile launches.

South Korea also has been testing new missiles of its own, including the 497-mile-range Hyunmoo-2. Although the missile has not been operationally deployed yet, it is considered a key component to the so-called "kill chain" pre-emptive strike capability the South is pursuing.

DOD waives repayment from Calif. National Guard members

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will let California National Guard members keep more than \$190 million in disputed enlistment bonuses and other payments — far more than previously acknowledged — after the military spent six years trying to recover the money from veterans who had served at the height of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

In all, repayments were waived for 17,092 California Guard soldiers who were given what were later deemed questionable bonuses, according to a Defense Department report obtained by the Los Angeles Times/Tribune Washington Bureau. Those who already repaid their bonuses are being reimbursed.

The report, which was sent to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees this month, concludes that the overwhelming majority of California Guard soldiers did nothing

wrong in accepting bonuses of \$15,000 to \$80,000 each. Only 393 soldiers have been ordered to return the money, chiefly due to disciplinary or criminal conduct.

The sweeping forgiveness represents an almost total retreat by the Pentagon and the California Guard, which drove the aggressive recoupment effort against thousands of military veterans — including some who were wounded in combat — and has yet to publicly apologize to them.

The California Guard used tax liens, wage garnishments and other heavy-handed tactics to try to recover the bonuses it paid to soldiers chiefly to enlist or re-enlist between 2004 and 2010, a period when the Pentagon was desperate for troops it could send to war.

The scandal offers a dark perspective on the Pentagon's use of hefty cash incentives to fill its all-volunteer force during the longest era of warfare in the nation's history.

Remains of victims of Osprey crash recovered

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The remains of three Marines killed in the crash of an MV-22 Osprey off Australia's coast this month have been recovered, the Marine Corps announced Friday.

The bodies of Capt. Benjamin R. Cross, Cpl. Nathaniel F. Ordway and Lance Cpl. Ruben P. Velasco were recovered from the aircraft and will soon be returned to their families, according to the Japan-based III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Ordway's and Velasco's remains have been transferred to Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. Cross' remains, which were recovered more recently, will be sent to the base "as expeditiously as possible," according to the statement.

The Marines were trapped inside the doomed Osprey after it struck the deck of a Navy amphibious transport dock and crashed into the water about 18

miles off the coast of the Shoalwater Bay Training Area in Queensland during a training exercise.

Cross, 26, was posthumously promoted to captain. He was an Osprey pilot from Maine who commissioned into the Marine Corps after graduating from Virginia Military Institute in 2013. He had been stationed in Okinawa with the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 for about a year.

Ordway, 21, was a crew chief also assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265. He was from Sedgwick, Kan.

Velasco, 19, was posthumously promoted to lance corporal. He was an artilleryman assigned to Battery G, Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. He was on his first overseas assignment after joining the Marine Corps following his graduation from West Covina High School in California in May 2016.

Iran's drones pose rising threat to US

Associated Press

ABOARD THE USS NIMITZ — High above the Persian Gulf, an Iranian drone crosses the path of American fighter jets lining up to land on the USS Nimitz.

The drone buzzes across the sky more than a mile above the massive aircraft carrier and is spotted by the fighters. It is unarmed.

But for the senior Navy commanders on the ship, the presence of the enemy drone so close is worrying. Their biggest fear is the surveillance aircraft will start carrying weapons, posing a more direct threat to U.S. vessels transiting one of the world's most significant strategic and economic international waterways.

"It's just a matter of time before we see that," said Navy Rear Adm. Bill Byrne, commander of the carrier strike group that includes the Nimitz. He said the Iranian drone activity has "generated a lot of discussion" and was becoming an increasingly pressing matter of concern.

If, at some point, Byrne believes a drone is threatening his ship, he and his staff would have to carefully proceed through the required responses — efforts at communication, sounding the horn, firing flares and warning shots, and flying a helicopter close to the unmanned vehicle. If all those efforts fail and he still perceives a threat, Byrne said it would be his duty, his "responsibility," to shoot down the Iranian drone.

So far, it hasn't come to that. But the

drones have become an even more dangerous security risk as U.S. carriers in the Persian Gulf like the Nimitz play a key role in Iraq and Syria. Planes from these ships are regularly flying to each country to bomb militants fighting with Islamic State and other targets. From the Nimitz alone, U.S. fighter jets flew missions resulting in at least 350 bombs being dropped on ISIS militants just in the past month.

Iran routinely has challenged U.S. ships and aircraft across the Gulf, asserting at times that the entire waterway is its territory. Navy commanders say Iran's unpredictable behavior is the biggest safety hazard.

"Iranians don't always follow the rules," Byrne said. "There is a well-established set of norms, standards and laws. They don't tend to follow them."

To counter the threat, Pentagon experts are searching for new ways to deter, defeat or disable the drones. According to Byrne and Cdr. Dave Kurtz, the Nimitz's executive officer, Iranian drones fly over the carrier strike group almost daily.

They said the danger is that as the F/A-18 fighters return from their missions in Iraq and Syria, they circle overhead, lining up for their turn to land on the carrier. Even if the Iranian drones are only meant to annoy, their buzzing across the American flight paths risks an accident.

Up in the carrier's control room, a book on Iranian naval and maritime forces sits

above the radar screen. Commanders on the ship announce when a drone appears. Then they go through a careful, planned response of attempted radio calls and warnings.

Gen. Joseph Votel, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East, visited the Nimitz on Thursday, also stopping on the nearby USS Vella Gulf, a guided-missile cruiser. The drone, he said, also flew over that ship.

"The proliferation of drones is a real challenge," said Votel, who was finishing his 10-day trip to the Middle East and Afghanistan. "It's growing exponentially."

Speaking with traveling reporters, Votel said the Pentagon has sought to devise more high-tech ways to handle the drones through the Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization, originally set up in 2006 to counter improvised explosive devices used by insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan to kill and maim American troops.

Much as it did with that decade-old roadside bomb battle, the organization now focuses on how to deal with Iran's drones, Votel said. He didn't provide details, but he acknowledged that U.S. cyberoperations capabilities could be used to defeat a drone or the network controlling it.

The military is training troops on drone response, he said. But right now, said Byrne, they're still following their normal procedures. And he still hasn't been forced to shoot one down.

Air Force seeks retired pilots for staff jobs

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force is hoping some retired pilots will return temporarily to active duty to serve in staff positions in a move aimed at keeping its current, middle-ranked pilots in the air, the service's top civilian said Friday.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson announced the service is looking for up to 25 retired pilots to return to the service on 12-month contracts to fill staff jobs that require the expertise of a military pilot. It is the Air Force's latest attempt to keep experienced, midlevel officers in their cockpits as it faces continued pilot-retention issues.

"We'd like to keep our pilots who are current in the aircraft in the aircraft and try to fill some of these vital flight slots with people who have the experience needed but who have subsequently retired from the service," Wilson told reporters at the Pentagon on Friday. "... Come on back to active duty, give us another year of service in a staff job."

Retired pilots who volunteer to return to work in those jobs would not be allowed to fly.

Wilson also announced the Air Force would increase flight pay for officers and enlisted airmen for the first time since 1999.

The service will boost the maximum aviation career

incentive pay for officers to \$1,000 per month beginning Oct. 1. The maximum is now \$840. Career enlisted flyer incentive pay also will increase from a maximum of \$400 per month to \$600.

The Air Force largely blames attractive jobs in commercial aviation for its pilot-retention issues, which has left the service short more than 1,200 fighter pilots and 300 tanker and cargo aircraft pilots.

Most regional airlines require significantly less cockpit time for military pilots than their civilian counterparts — about 750 flight hours as opposed to about 1,500. Airlines have hired pilots extensively in recent years to replace

baby boomers as they reach the mandatory retirement age of 65. Wilson said Friday that commercial airlines have hired more than 4,000 pilots in the past year.

But in addition to attractive civilian pilot jobs, Air Force pilots also have blamed limited flight training time, increased administrative duties and long, recurring overseas deployments for leaving the service, Air Force officials have acknowledged.

Wilson said the service is tackling the issue head-on.

Last month, the Air Force announced it would pay eligible pilots retention bonuses ranging from \$10,000 to \$35,000 to remain in the service.

Trump uses 1st pardon for Arpaio

Associated Press

PHOENIX — President Donald Trump spared former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio the prospect of serving jail time in granting the first pardon of his tenure, wiping away the lawman's federal conviction stemming from his immigration patrols that focused on Latinos.

The White House said Arpaio, 85, was a "worthy candidate" for the pardon, citing his "life's work of protecting the public from the scourges of crime and illegal immigration." Trump granted the pardon less than a month after a judge found Arpaio guilty of a misdemeanor contempt-of-court charge in a trial that was prosecuted by the Justice Department.

The pardon drew a swift and harsh denunciation from Latinos and political leaders, who said it amounted to presidential approval of racism by eliminating the conviction of a law officer who the courts said had used patrols to racially profile

Latinos. And it overturned what critics saw as a comeuppance for a lawman who escaped accountability for his use of headline-grabbing tactics as sheriff in Phoenix.

"Pardoning Joe Arpaio is a slap in the face to the people of Maricopa County, especially the Latino community and those he victimized as he systematically and illegally violated their civil rights," Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton said.

The White House announced the pardon Friday as a Category 4 hurricane threatened Texas with flooding and on the same day Trump fleshed out the details of his ban on transgender individuals serving in the military.

GOP leaders were mixed in reacting to the pardon. Sen. John McCain criticized the move and said it undermines Trump's "claim for the respect of rule of law as Mr. Arpaio has shown no remorse for his actions." Republican Gov. Doug

Ducey said Arpaio should be given credit for his crime-fighting efforts and allowed to "move on" and enjoy his retirement.

Arpaio earned a national reputation by taking aggressive action to arrest immigrants in the country illegally. But years of legal issues and related costs took a toll on his political power at home, and he was handily defeated by a Democrat in the 2016 election.

Arpaio defied court orders he stop the patrols and has been pardoned by a president who has shown lack of respect for judges with whom he disagrees. Trump has had harsh words about judges overseeing the case against his now-defunct Trump University and his travel ban.

Arpaio was accused of prolonging the patrols for 17 months after a judge had ordered them stopped so that he could promote his immigration enforcement efforts in a bid to boost his successful 2012 re-election campaign.

Iraq: 90 percent of Tal Afar retaken from ISIS

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq's military said Saturday it has driven Islamic State militants out of 90 percent of the northern town of Tal Afar and has retaken the town center.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool, a military spokesman, spoke hours after Iraq's foreign minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, said that 70 percent of the town west of Mosul had been retaken. Al-Jaafari spoke during a news conference with his French counterpart.

Iraqi officials often declare areas liberated before the fighting has completely ended, and the militants have been known to carry out surprise counterattacks.

Iraq launched the operation to retake Tal Afar on Sunday, a month after it declared the northern city of Mosul, the country's second-largest, to be fully liberated. Tal Afar is about 93 miles from Syria's border and it's among the last ISIS-held towns in Iraq.

Iraqi and Syrian forces have advanced against the extremist group on a number of fronts in recent months with the help of a U.S.-led coalition. U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led forces are currently battling ISIS inside the group's self-declared capital, Raqqa, in northern Syria.

ISIS still controls large areas in Syria and a handful of towns in Iraq. In the past, it has managed to inspire or carry out attacks in Europe and elsewhere even while suffering battlefield setbacks in the Middle East.

On Friday, Iraqi military investigators said they had discovered two mass graves near a former ISIS prison outside Mosul that contain the bodies of 500 ISIS victims.

The Media Cell Security Investigation team said in a statement that one grave near the Badoush Prison site contained the bodies of 470 prisoners killed by ISIS. It said a second grave contained 30 victims.

US soldier missing after Black Hawk crash off Yemen

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

A search is underway for a missing U.S. soldier after an Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed Friday while training off the coast of Yemen, U.S. Central Command said Saturday.

Five others aboard the aircraft were rescued by U.S. forces immediately after the crash, which took place approximately 20 miles off Yemen's southern coast, Central Command said in a statement.

It's unclear what caused the crash, which occurred about 7 p.m. local time. Central Command said it was investigating the incident. Officials did not release the identities of the troops or units involved in the crash, but in an email to Stars and Stripes, a spokesman said it was an Army helicopter and crew.

"This aircraft was based and launched from an overseas location [in support of] U.S. Central Command operations," the email said, declining to name the location due to operational concerns. "U.S. forces were conducting routine helicopter training in order to maintain proficiency within the operational environment."

The U.S. military's Horn of Africa operations are based less than 100 miles across the sea from

Yemen's southern coast in Djibouti's capital city, and a contingent of U.S. forces is reportedly based in Yemen's port city of Mukalla on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula to support operations against an al-Qaida affiliate in the country.

U.S. special operations forces have also conducted ground raids this year, including a controversial operation in late January, one of the first authorized by President Donald Trump, in which Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William Owens was killed and an MV-22 Osprey was destroyed. Children were also among the casualties.

A small number of U.S. troops were on the ground in Yemen earlier this month to provide "intelligence sharing" with government forces battling al-Qaida loyalists there, the Washington Post reported. The U.S. was also providing midair refueling and overhead reconnaissance support.

Asked if the crash involved another special operations raid, Central Command told The Associated Press that "this was a routine training event specifically for U.S. military personnel."

The crash comes a little more than a week after a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed off the coast of Hawaii during training. A search for the five crewmembers missing in that crash later was suspended.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

1-armed man arrested with machete, mask

ME BIDDEFORD — A one-armed Maine man accused of startling neighbors by going for a stroll wearing a clown mask and brandishing a machete says it was supposed to be a prank.

Hollis resident Corey Berry, 31, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to criminal threatening and weapons charges.

Police said Berry was intoxicated but cooperative when they arrested him last month. They say he had a machete taped to the stump of his amputated arm and was wearing a mask to copy previous clown sightings.

Priest wanted 'revenge' on God for poker losses

PA HONESDALE — A New Jersey priest was trying to get revenge on God for poker losses when he collected computerized child pornography at his weekend home in Pennsylvania.

The Rev. Kevin Gugliotta was sentenced Thursday to 11½ to 23½ months in the Wayne County jail, receiving credit for 10 months he's already served. He pleaded guilty to a single count of disseminating child pornography.

Pretrial records show Gugliotta told probation officers he felt God was attacking him when he lost poker tournaments and games, and got "revenge" by collecting the porn. The Archdiocese of Newark says Gugliotta is removed from active ministry and could be defrocked.

Smuggled Bengal tiger confiscated at border

CA SAN DIEGO — U.S. border officials have

confiscated a Bengal tiger cub after inspecting a car heading from Mexico to California.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a news release Thursday that the cub was found during a routine inspection of the car Wednesday at the Otay Mesa border crossing, southeast of downtown San Diego.

Officials said the 18-year-old driver is a U.S. citizen and has been arrested.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service officials took custody of the cub and are working with the San Diego Zoo to care for it.

Candidate charged after tagging trees

MA WARREN — A political candidate from Massachusetts was charged after allegedly painting a campaign slogan on a tree.

The Telegram & Gazette reports that Brian Corriveau, was charged with tagging after police in Warren believe he painted "Corriveau For Selectmen" on the trunk of a tree near his home.

The slogan in lime green paint was discovered on May 1, the day before the election. Officers who went to Corriveau's home that day say they found signs with similar lettering painted in gold, and paint on Corriveau's hands.

He did not win the seat.

Tagging is punishable by up to two years in prison.

Firefighter cuts grass for heart attack victim

MI TAYLOR — A Detroit-area man who apparently collapsed while cutting his grass doesn't have to worry about his lawn.

After the man was taken away in an ambulance, firefighter Chris Hudson stayed at the house in Taylor to finish the

job.

Hudson told WXYZ-TV he was raised "to help out somebody in need." He says cutting the ill man's grass was "nothing big" and took only 10 to 15 minutes.

Cops: Mom left kids to help fugitive boyfriend

PA PITCAIRN — Police say a Pittsburgh-area woman is wanted on charges that she left her five children alone so she could drive her fugitive boyfriend across the state to avoid arrest.

Tiffany Jackson, 34, of Pitcairn, is charged with child endangerment and hindering the apprehension of her boyfriend, among other charges.

Pitcairn police say Jackson drove the man to Philadelphia on Wednesday because police have warrants for his arrest, while leaving her children behind. Police say they range in age from 16 years old to 9 months old.

Police say they've tried but failed to find Jackson's boyfriend at her house several times.

Giant pot bale launched over fence along border

AZ DOUGLAS — Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona have seized a nearly 100-pound bundle of marijuana after spotting it flying over the border fence.

Surveillance video on Wednesday captured the large package launching through the air over the fence from Mexico to the United States. Agents on the ground found a large, plastic-wrapped bundle worth about \$48,000.

Spokeswoman Stephanie Dixon said drug smugglers are increasingly launching massive bundles of pot over the border fence, posing a danger

to nearby residents and businesses because of the weight of the bundles.

Man gets life term for bow-and-arrow slaying

CA LANCASTER — Los Angeles County prosecutors say a Lancaster man has been sentenced to 26 years to life in prison for killing an acquaintance with a bow and arrow during an argument.

The district attorney's office says Garrett Taylor Adams, 26, was sentenced Thursday for first-degree murder.

In August 2014, Adams got into an argument with his girlfriend at their home.

His brother and an acquaintance, Charles Briggs, attempted to stop the fight.

Adams began arguing with Briggs outside the house, then got his hunting bow and an arrow and began following Briggs down the street.

Adams ultimately shot the arrow into Briggs' chest. The victim died at a hospital.

Cyclist arrested after slowing highway traffic

PA PHILADELPHIA — A man riding his bike in the middle of a Philadelphia interstate during morning rush hour traffic — causing delays as drivers tried to avoid hitting him — has been taken into custody.

WPVI-TV reported the ordeal happened Friday around 8:30 a.m. in the westbound lanes of I-76, also called the Schuylkill Expressway.

A reporter with the TV station was on her way to work and saw the man riding between the left and center lanes of the expressway — a major artery cutting through the center of Philadelphia.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news
updated 24/7 from bases
around the world.
Now online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Titans remove restraints from Mariota

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The kid gloves are off for Marcus Mariota.

The Tennessee Titans believe Mariota is ready to blossom as a quarterback in his third NFL season, so they're giving him a bit more responsibility. They're trusting Mariota to make sure the Titans have the right play called before snapping the ball.

Oh, the quarterback won't be stepping to the line, surveying the defense and flipping mentally through the whole playbook. Coach Mike Mularkey has asked Mariota to use those valuable seconds before the ball hits his hands to counter a defense ready to blitz or positioned to blow up what the Titans previously called in to the quarterback.

"Putting more on his plate that he can hopefully get us to the right play," Mularkey said. "Not a lot, but just enough to maybe save us a couple of snaps."

Mariota, the 2014 Heisman Trophy winner and the No. 2 pick overall in the 2015 draft,

has earned his coaches' trust after his first two seasons. Injuries have been his biggest challenge so far. Knee injuries cost four games as a rookie, and Mariota missed the 2016 season finale after breaking his right leg in a Dec. 24 loss at Jacksonville.

On the field, Mariota has put together a résumé that ranks among the league's best. He already has thrown multiple touchdown passes in 16 games. The only quarterbacks to have more games with two or more touchdown passes in their first two seasons were Hall of Famer Dan Marino (22) and Oakland's Derek Carr (17).

Now Mariota is going into his second full season with Mularkey and offensive coordinator Terry Robiskie, and Mularkey says the quarterback's familiarity with the playbook has helped the Titans work faster this offseason and preseason.

Mariota, a Hawaii native, is a quiet workaholic who's at the job early every morning. Mularkey warns not to be fooled by Mariota's easygoing demeanor.

"You wouldn't expect him to be able to do what he does," Mu-

larkey said. "He can pick you apart. He can beat you with his feet. He can do a lot of things. He does all his talking with his play, and I like that."

So do his teammates, especially after the Titans went from an NFL-worst 3-13 in Mariota's rookie season to 9-7 in his second. Wide receiver Harry Douglas said they see Mariota's competitive streak on the field. Mariota only speaks when needed, but Douglas said the quarterback makes clear exactly what he wants without being derogatory or critical.

"He shows his teammates respect, and because of that, man, we appreciate him 100 percent," Douglas said. "We'll run through a wall for him."

In 2016, Mariota ranked 10th in the NFL with a 95.6 passer rating. He also threw 26 touchdown passes with nine interceptions.

Mariota has been at his best inside an opponent's 20, where he leads the NFL with a 114.6 passer rating over the past two seasons; he has yet to be intercepted in that area. The Titans scored touchdowns on 72 percent of their red-zone trips to

lead the NFL last season.

But Mariota completed only 61.2 percent of his passes overall, putting him 20th among the league's top passers. That's why the quarterback has focused on being more consistent.

"I want to play at a high level all year," Mariota said. "I thought last season, for me personally, started a little slow. Just want to start good, start on a high note and just kind of keep it throughout the year."

Mariota and the Titans did start slowly. Then he gave a glimpse of what Mularkey's "exotic smashmouth" offense can look like over the final 13 weeks of the schedule. Mariota ranked fifth in the NFL with a 105 passer rating as he threw 22 TDs with only four interceptions. He completed at least two TD passes in eight straight games.

The Titans acquired a handful of newcomers for Mariota to target. They drafted receivers Corey Davis and Taywan Taylor as well as tight end Jonnu Smith, and signed veteran receiver Eric Decker in late June.

Edelman injures knee in Patriots' victory over Lions

Associated Press

ALLEN PARK, Mich. — The New England Patriots may have a new challenge to overcome when they begin defending their Super Bowl title in less than two weeks.

Julian Edelman, who led the team in receptions and yards receiving last year, limped off the field with an injured right knee early in New England's 30-28 victory over the Detroit Lions on Friday night.

The preseason victory may have been costly.

Edelman was injured as he was tackled by safety Tavon Wilson, a former teammate, after having three receptions for 52 yards in a four-play stretch. He was evaluated in a blue tent behind his team's bench briefly before being

taken to the locker room on a cart and getting ruled out for the game.

Edelman was hurt on the opening possession that ended with Tom Brady throwing his first of two touchdown passes to Chris Hogan in a 30-28 victory over the Detroit Lions on Friday night.

"We've got great chemistry together, and he's an incredible player," Brady said. "But someone will have to step up."

Brady was 12-for-15 for 174 yards with two TDs and an interception. He helped New England take a 24-0 lead late in the first quarter and the 40-year-old, five-time Super Bowl champion was in midseason form.

"He's as good as they come," Detroit coach Jim Caldwell said. "He gets the ball out quickly.

He makes good decisions. He's an unusual guy. There hasn't been anybody who has stopped him since he has been in this league."

Matthew Stafford threw a 23-yard TD pass to Marvin Jones late in the first half and an 18-yard pass to Dwayne Washington for another score early in the third against New England's backups. He finished 15-for-22 for 190 yards, two TDs and an interception that he threw into traffic over the middle.

Seahawks 26, Chiefs 13: Kansas City running back Spencer Ware's right knee injury might not be as bad as first feared.

Ware sprained his right knee and was carted off the field in the Chiefs' 26-13 preseason loss to the Seattle Seahawks on

Friday night. But Kansas City coach Andy Reid said after the game that X-rays came back negative and that Ware would have an MRI to further assess the damage.

Russell Wilson was again brilliant for Seattle, throwing for 200 yards and a touchdown, but his performance was secondary to the injury suffered by Ware and how it could affect the Chiefs.

Ware's injury was part of a lackluster effort from Kansas City's offense. Alex Smith was 7-for-17 for just 44 yards although there were a handful of drops. The Chiefs had just 102 total yards in the first half against Seattle's starters and Kansas City's only touchdown came on a 95-yard kickoff return from De'Anthony Thomas.

Florida coach hints at playing 3 QBs

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Florida coach Jim McElwain hasn't settled on a starting quarterback. He hasn't even pared down the three-man competition.

McElwain said Wednesday that fourth-year junior Luke Del Rio, redshirt freshman Feleipe Franks and graduate transfer Malik Zaire will play this season, maybe even in next week's season opener against No. 11 Michigan.

"You're going to see a bunch of them in there playing," McElwain said. "The three guys have done a really good job. I think there's some things that they all bring to the table that are really good. Now the key to us is putting them in those positions, you know, that play to their strengths.

"Will all play? I don't know yet. Will a couple of them play? I don't know yet. I know we will have somebody at the position."

McElwain insisted he's not playing games with the Wolver-

ines or trying to gain a game-planning advantage. He simply suggested that none of the three has become a clear-cut choice for the 17th-ranked Gators.

"Ultimately, the guy that the team moves with the best," he said. "The guys that create positive plays on third down and get the ball in the end zone. That's kind of where we're at."

Del Rio, a college journeyman and the son of Oakland Raiders head coach Jack Del Rio, started six games last season before sustaining a season-ending shoulder injury in a loss at Arkansas in November. He had offseason surgery on both shoulders and missed all of spring practice. He got back in the mix last month and wants to prove doubters wrong.

"My arm is 100 percent healthy," he said last week. "I found it pretty ridiculous that fans are saying I had a noodle arm when I was throwing the ball 80 yards in the first game. So they have the memory of a goldfish, I guess.

"I've never had like a ridicu-

lous arm like Feleipe has a ridiculous arm. But I've always had a pretty adequate arm. I've been able to make every throw on time. It's the first time in my life I've heard, 'You don't have a strong arm.' So whatever."

Franks has been the penciled-in starter for months, maybe even a year. A four-star recruit with prototypical size (6-foot-6, 238 pounds) and arm strength, he sat out last year while learning the offense and bulking up. He certainly looks the part now, but the Gators may not really want to rely on Franks to make his first career start away from home and in front of 100,000 fans at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

The Gators added Zaire to the mix in June, a pretty clear indication that McElwain and offensive coordinator Doug Nussmeier weren't completely satisfied with their quarterback situation.

The Notre Dame graduate missed most of the 2015 season because of a broken ankle and lost his starting job to DeShone

Kizer in the 2016 season opener. Zaire threw for 816 yards and six touchdowns in three seasons in South Bend, Ind.

Zaire could be relegated to option and zone-read plays with the Gators. For now, though, he remains in an unsettled situation.

"Obviously it's not ideal," Zaire said. "I don't think anybody in the quarterback room wants that. But at the end of the day, you just got to do what coach wants. I feel like coach should be confident enough to stick with a guy and be able to roll with that guy because that's best for the team. When you have all these quarterbacks, you still have none at the end of the day.

"Being decisive, just like how quarterbacks have to be on the field, is (what's) most important for this team's success. ... I just leave it up to those coaches to make the great decisions that they do. That's why they get paid the big bucks. I just play my game and know I'll be ready when my number's called."

No. 22 West Virginia short on proven wide receivers

Associated Press

West Virginia is jostling to get enough capable targets for quarterback Will Grier to throw to with the season opener less than two weeks away.

With the top two wide receivers gone from last year's team and other problems cropping up, the Mountaineers are looking to Ka'Raun White to take over perhaps the same way his brother, current Chicago Bears receiver Kevin White, did in a big way in his senior season with West Virginia in 2014.

No. 22 West Virginia is lacking depth entering the Sept. 3 opener against No. 21 Virginia Tech in Landover, Md.

Jovon Durante, who had 17 career starts and was fourth on the team with receptions (35) and yards (331) last year, announced a week ago he is transferring to Florida Atlantic.

Marcus Simms, who played in nine games as a freshman and was projected to be a starter this season, was arrested earlier this month on charges of drunken driving and driving on a license that was revoked because of an earlier DUI arrest. Coach Dana Holgorsen suspended Simms for the opener.

That leaves White and Gary Jennings as the only returning wide receivers who had catches a year ago. They represent 22 percent of the team's receiving yards.

White was second on the team last season with 48 catches and five touchdowns. He missed the final two games with a broken bone in his right leg. Jennings and fellow junior David Sills have one combined start with the Mountaineers.

Holgorsen said White, Jen-

nings and Sills "do everything right, and I'm excited about what years that they're going to have."

White and his younger brother, Kyzir, a safety for the Mountaineers, followed older brother Kevin from Pennsylvania's Lackawanna Junior College to Morgantown. Kevin White was a second-team all-American in 2014.

The Mountaineers got touchdowns just 58 percent of the time when advancing to the 20-yard line last season, and the receivers will be counted on under new offensive coordinator Jake Spavital to help improve West Virginia's ability to score.

Kevin White, who had 1,447 receiving yards and 10 TD catches as a senior, was capable of doing that. Ka'Raun White, a senior, smiles at the

comparisons to his brother and said he's focusing on goal-line work with Grier, who sat out last season after transferring from Florida.

"The coaches are saying 'you guys have got to work on that communication, that connection,'" White said. "Because without that, we're not going to be successful this season."

Jennings had 165 receiving yards and two TDs in 2016. Sills had seven catches for the Mountaineers in 2015, making the winning TD grab in the Cactus Bowl against Arizona State. Sills returned to West Virginia after playing quarterback at a California junior college last season.

As for identifying capable backups at wide receiver, Holgorsen remains pessimistic and he'll go to the backfield for some help.

Stanton's 2 HRs lift Marlins over Padres

Associated Press

MIAMI — Giancarlo Stanton kept connecting.

Leading a dugout celebration following the Miami Marlins' latest go-ahead hit, Stanton slapped Marcell Ozuna repeatedly atop the head. The pounding from baseball's most prodigious slugger had to hurt, right?

"It made me feel great," Ozuna said with a grin.

Lately the Marlins are feeling no pain. Stanton homered twice Friday night, increasing his major league-leading total to 49, and Ozuna's three-run homer capped a comeback as Miami climbed above .500 for the first time since April by beating San Diego 8-6.

Stanton had his ninth multi-homer game this season, the most in the majors since Jose Bautista totaled nine with Toronto in 2010. Stanton's home run total is the highest in the National League since Prince Fielder hit 50 for Milwaukee in 2007 — and the Marlins still have 35 games to play.

Stanton is on pace to finish

with 63 homers.

"I'm not worried about homers," he said. "I just want to hit the ball hard and be in a position to strike when they give me a pitch, because it's going to get less and less, and I've got to be ready for that."

He had five RBIs to increase his season total to 105. Each number matched his career high.

Led by their All-Star right fielder, the Marlins (64-63) have recovered from a 14-27 start to join the NL wild-card chase. They've won 11 of their past 14 games, and the latest victory thrilled a lively crowd of 22,489, which gave Stanton a standing ovation after his second homer and booed when he was walked in the seventh.

Two batters later, Ozuna homered off Kirby Yates (3-5) to increase his RBI total to a career-best 101.

Leading the jubilant reception for Ozuna was Stanton, who said he didn't hold back when pounding on his teammate.

"Nah, you give Ozuna everything," Stanton said. "I was

proud of him for that at-bat. That's a baseball player's at-bat, a very smart at-bat. You've got to be able to download all the info and capitalize, which he did."

Carlos Asuaje and Jabari Blash hit two-run homers for the Padres.

Stanton's first swing of the night sent a pitch onto the left field concourse, traveling an estimated 462 feet to give Miami a 2-0 lead in the first inning. Dee Gordon rounded the bases ahead of Stanton, shaking his head with a grin of amazement at his teammate's bing.

The Marlins slugger barely cleared the wall — and the glove of a leaping Blash in right field — in the third inning for his 16th home run in August. He has 23 homers since the All-Star break.

"It has been incredible," manager Don Mattingly said. "He has fueled this run. Since the break he has been a terror."

Stanton also made a diving catch in right field in the second to rob Blash of a hit.

The Padres held Stanton to a

two-out, two-run double in the fourth, which put Miami ahead 5-2. All three of his hits came off Travis Wood.

"I missed a couple of pitches, especially to Stanton," Wood said. "If you miss, he's not going to miss it."

Blash's fourth home run of the year off Dustin McGowan (8-1) capped a four-run sixth for the Padres to put them ahead 6-5.

Brad Ziegler pitched a perfect ninth for his ninth save, all this month.

Lots of clout: The Marlins have outscored opponents 41-30 in their past five wins.

"We're swinging the bats good right now," Mattingly said. "I don't think you can do this over a long period. I'd like to have some different style of games."

Nickname game: With players around the majors wearing nicknames on the back of their jerseys this weekend, Stanton chose "Cruz," which is what his mother calls him. Giancarlo Cruz-Michael Stanton is his full name.

MLB roundup

Alonso's homer in 11th propels Mariners past Yanks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Yonder Alonso homered on a 100 mph fastball from demoted closer Aroldis Chapman in the 11th inning, and the Seattle Mariners outpitched the New York Yankees for a 2-1 victory Friday night.

Mike Zunino homered and had three hits for the Mariners, right in the middle of a crowded race for the second AL wild card. They used seven pitchers to hold down the Yankees, who lead the wild-card chase but trail first-place Boston by 4½ games in the AL East.

Alonso entered as a pinch hitter in the ninth and sent a drive to center field with two outs in the 11th against Chapman (4-3), the \$86 million reliever who

recently lost his job as closer.

James Pazos (4-4) tossed a perfect inning against his former team and Edwin Diaz got three outs for his 30th save.

Phillies 7, Cubs 1: Rhys Hoskins hit another homer and Cesar Hernandez ripped a three-run triple to back Jerad Eickhoff, helping host Philadelphia to the victory.

Mets 4, Nationals 2: New York ace Jacob deGrom had 10 strikeouts in 7²/₃ innings against Washington's make-shift lineup.

Orioles 16, Red Sox 3: Mark Trumbo and Chris Davis homered, and visiting Baltimore used a seven-run fifth inning to pull away for the victory.

Dodgers 3, Brewers 1: Yasmani Grandal hit a tiebreaking

RBI single in the fifth for host Los Angeles, and Yasiel Puig and Logan Forsythe homered.

Rays 7, Cardinals 3: Corey Dickerson had four hits, including two doubles, and visiting Tampa Bay won for the fourth time in five games.

White Sox 3, Tigers 2: Yolmer Sanchez drove in Tim Anderson with a game-ending single, and host Chicago earned its third straight win.

Indians 4, Royals 0: Rookie Ryan Merritt pitched a career-high 6²/₃ innings and host Cleveland recorded its AL-leading 13th shutout.

Astros 2, Angels 1: Rookie J.D. Davis homered for visiting Houston, and George Springer scored the winning run on a wild pitch.

Twins 6, Blue Jays 1: At Toronto, Minnesota right-hander Bartolo Colon pitched 6²/₃ innings for his second straight win, and Byron Buxton had three hits and two RBIs.

Braves 5, Rockies 2: Matt Kemp and Kurt Suzuki homered for Atlanta, and Julio Teheran won at home for the first time in four months.

Reds 9, Pirates 5: At Cincinnati, rookie Robert Stephenson fanned a career-high 11, and Scott Schebler drove in three runs with a homer and his first triple of the season.

Athletics 3, Rangers 1: Khris Davis homered twice for host Oakland, including a tie-breaking lead-off drive in the seventh.