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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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DOD: China likely training for US strikes

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Chinese bombers have been flying farther from home and have the capability of striking U.S. military bases as far afield as Guam, according to the Pentagon's annual report to Congress on the communist nation's military.

"The [People's Liberation Army] has long been developing air strike capabilities to engage targets as far away from China as possible," said the report released last week. "Over the last three years, the PLA has rapidly expanded its overwater bomber operating areas, gaining experience in critical maritime regions and likely training for strikes against US and allied targets."

China "may continue to ex-

tend its operations beyond [the South and East China seas] demonstrating the capability to strike US and allied forces and military bases in the western Pacific Ocean, including Guam," the report added.

Last year, satellite images showed Chinese missile test sites in the Gobi Desert that looked similar to U.S. bases in Japan.

Beijing began to field longer-range H-6K bombers in 2013, incorporating cruise missile pylons to turn them into stand-off strike platforms. The H-6K's capabilities provided the Chinese air force an offensive strike capability against Guam with land-attack cruise missiles, the report to Congress said.

The bombers could be used to attack Taiwan or launch from new bases in the South China

Sea to fly into the Indian Ocean, it added.

China's Global Times newspaper on Sunday quoted a Chinese military official who said the Pentagon report misinterpreted China's strategic intention and hyped up the "China military threat."

"The release of such reports by the U.S. side year after year has harmed mutual trust and is not in line with the common interests between China and the United States," said Wu Qian of the Ministry of National Defense. "We ask the United States to abandon its Cold War mindset, adopt an objective and rational attitude towards China's defense and military developments, stop issuing such irresponsible reports, and make concrete efforts to maintain the stable development of relations

between the two militaries."

Brad Glosserman, a visiting professor at Tokyo's Tama University, said Monday that it's clear that the Chinese military is planning for contingencies that assume the U.S. would be an adversary.

"To operationalize that strategy means they should be doing exactly what they are doing," he said. The behavior is consistent with a rising regional power, and it's pointless for Americans to suggest that the Chinese should do something different, he added.

The U.S. military has decades of Cold War experience dealing with the sort of challenges that China might pose, Glosserman said.

"If we can deal with the Russians we can deal with the Chinese," he said.

Taliban mum on cease-fire offer by Ghani

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban did not respond as of Monday afternoon to a three-month cease-fire offer, a deal put forward by the Afghan government amid insurgent offensives throughout the country.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's new offer is dependent on the Taliban following suit, unlike a unilateral cease-fire declared in June that the Taliban eventually joined for three days during the Muslim holiday Eid al-Fitr.

The United States, Pakistan, the United Nations and NATO voiced support for Ghani on Sunday.

"The United States welcomes the announcement by the Afghan government of a cease-fire conditioned on Taliban partici-

pation," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement. "The last cease-fire in Afghanistan revealed the deep desire of the Afghan people to end the conflict, and we hope another cease-fire will move the country closer to sustainable security."

Meanwhile, one Afghan commander said his troops would honor the intent of the cease-fire offer even without a deal in place.

"Right now, we are in a defensive 'alert' situation," said Brig. Gen. Abdul Raziq Safi, commander of the Afghan National Army's 203rd Corps, 4th Brigade, in Logar province. "We are going to follow the truce on the Afghan side 100 percent, and unless we are attacked, there won't be any shooting."

The Taliban in two statements Monday announced they were releasing hundreds of prison-

ers in connection with the Eid al-Adha holiday, which began Monday.

In recent days, the Taliban have launched several high-profile attacks on cities across Afghanistan, leading to the deaths of hundreds of security personnel, destruction in the key city of Ghazni and the capture of several small military bases in northern Afghanistan.

Taliban militants continued their attacks by kidnapping 170 passengers aboard three buses in northern Afghanistan on Sunday night. Afghan forces rescued 149 hostages and were fighting to free the remaining 21, Afghan officials said Monday.

Hard-liners in the Kabul government have pushed back against Ghani's offer. Amrullah Saleh, a prominent political figure and the nation's former

spy-master, accused Ghani on Twitter of "ridiculing our fallen heroes and pursuing a policy of sell out & appeasement."

Ahmed Zia Massoud, the nation's first vice president, accused the Kabul government of helping the Taliban.

Citizens in Baghlan, where the Taliban killed dozens of government troops and police officers last week, published a letter on Twitter on Monday criticizing Ghani and saying he was no different than the Taliban leader. The letter said citizens would not follow the cease-fire and will shoot at any "terrorists" who enter the city.

The Taliban could accept the cease-fire offer in a bid to build goodwill among Afghans, who are desperate for peace, said Graeme Smith, a consultant to the International Crisis Group, a nonprofit think tank.

US Marines' 'USA' dance video goes viral in Japan

By LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

A video of Marines dancing to a Japanese pop hit is a viral internet sensation, with millions of views and hundreds of thousands of likes and retweets.

The 30-second clip — posted to Marine Corps Installations Pacific's Japanese-language Twitter account last week — shows Marines gyrating to the chart-topping song "USA" by Okinawan group DA PUMP.

With its recurring lyrics of "C'mon baby, America!" and "C'-C'-C'-C'-C'-C'-C'-C'mon, baby U.S.A.," the song is about Japan's obsession with all things American.

In the video, which was filmed over a few days at various bases on Okinawa, Marines strut their stuff to the song in offices, warehouses and motor pools.

By Monday afternoon, it had been viewed more than 6 million times, with more than 357,000 likes and 144,000 retweets.

Japanese viewers posted more than 1,000 comments about the video, such as: "Marines are having fun. Great dance moves!" and "They look so cute with smiles!" Many asked to see a longer version of the clip.

"We expected this video to be popular," said Ike Hirayasu, a Marine Corps social media manager on Okinawa. "But we're overwhelmed with just how successful it's been."

In early 2017, MCIP released a video of Marines dancing to "Koi Dance," a song played during the closing credits of a popular Japanese sitcom. That clip was viewed about 5 million times; however, the "USA" video has quickly outperformed it.

To view the US Marines' and DA PUMP videos, go to:
stripes.com/go/pump



Servicemember killed, others hurt in Iraq helicopter crash

By CHAD GARLAND
AND COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

An American servicemember was killed and several other troops were injured late Sunday in Iraq when their helicopter crashed after participating in a raid against an Islamic State target, military officials said Monday.

There are no indications that the helicopter was downed by enemy fire, said Army Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman. All personnel who were aboard the aircraft were quickly recovered after the crash, and the Operation Inherent Resolve coalition has launched an investigation into the incident, he said.

Three servicemembers were evacuated for additional medical treatment, Manning said. It was not immediately clear whether the injured troops were also American, as Manning declined further comment on the crash before the dead servicemember's name is released after next-of-kin are notified.

Manning and other Pentagon

officials on Monday declined to identify where in Iraq the crash occurred or the location of the mission. U.S. and coalition forces are primarily fighting ISIS in its last strongholds in eastern Syria's Middle Euphrates River Valley, but they also target remaining ISIS terrorist cells in other parts of Syria and Iraq. The coalition partners with Iraqi security forces for operations in Iraq and with Syrian Democratic Forces to fight ISIS in eastern Syria.

Earlier Monday, Newsweek reported there were 10 troops aboard the aircraft.

Citing unnamed officials, the magazine said the aircraft was an MH-60 Black Hawk flown by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, known as the Night Stalkers, which pioneered nighttime techniques for special operations missions.

Special Operations Command referred inquiries about the crash to Operation Inherent Resolve. Officials for the international alliance and at the Pentagon would not confirm details about the nationality, unit or type of helicopter involved in the crash.

The death brings the number of U.S. troops who have died in Iraq and Syria this year to 11 — eight of which were the result of helicopter crashes. It was the second fatal helicopter crash in Iraq this year, following the March downing of an Air Force HH-60 Pave Hawk in western Anbar province, when seven servicemembers died after it struck a power line.

A rash of deadly aviation incidents this year, including crashes during training outside of combat zones, has raised concern of a military readiness crisis, which some officials contend has been brought on by years of continuous combat operations, aging equipment and deferred modernization efforts.

The latest defense spending bill, which President Donald Trump signed into law last week, created an independent National Commission on Military Aviation Safety to review and assess the causes driving such incidents. The commission would make related safety, training, maintenance, personnel and other policy recommendations.

Shots fired at US Embassy in Turkey

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Shots were fired from a moving car at the U.S. Embassy in Turkey before dawn Monday, an attack that came during heightened tensions between the two NATO allies. Turkish state media said a suspect was detained.

There were no casualties and no claim of responsibility for the fleeting attack, in which three of the six bullets fired hit the embassy gate and a reinforced window.

"We can confirm a security incident took place at the U.S. Embassy early this morning. We have no reports of any in-

juries and we are investigating," embassy spokesman David Gainer said. He thanked Turkish police for their "rapid response."

Turkey's official Anadolu news agency said one person was detained in Ankara. It did not elaborate.

Turkish officials, who are locked in a trade and diplomatic dispute with the United States, condemned the shooting in Ankara. Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin tweeted that it was "an attempt to create chaos."

A top official in Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party said the attack was

a "clear provocation" and that foreign diplomats are guests of the country.

"The utmost sensitivity will be shown to ensure their security," said the party spokesman, Omer Celik. "Turkey is a safe country."

Tensions between the U.S. and Turkey are high, partly because of the case of Andrew Brunson, an American pastor who is being prosecuted in Turkey for alleged espionage and terrorism-related offenses.

He denies any wrongdoing, and President Donald Trump has called for his immediate release.

US firms: Don't impose more tariffs on Chinese imports

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fishermen off the Alaskan coast. A Florida maker of boat trailers. A building materials distributor in Tennessee.

Those and hundreds of other American businesses are delivering the same plea to President Donald Trump as he considers imposing tariffs on nearly 40 percent of imported Chinese goods:

Don't do it.

The Trump administration will hold six days of hearings starting Monday in Washington on the next barrage in an escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies: Trump's proposed tariffs of 10 to 25 percent on \$200 billion in Chinese goods that could kick in as early as next month.

Once in effect, the tariffs would immediately inflate the prices that American companies would have to pay for Chinese components they need to build their products. Those companies would have to decide whether to pass those costs on to their customers or absorb the higher prices themselves.

The first shots have already been fired. In July, Trump slapped 25 percent tariffs on \$34 billion in Chinese imports. Taxes on an additional \$16 billion are set to kick in this week. China is counterpunching with tariffs of its own.

But the \$200 billion in additional Chinese goods that the Trump administration is considering taxing would mark a significant escalation in its trade fight with Beijing.

Washington and Beijing are clashing over U.S. allegations that China uses predatory tactics to try to overtake American technological dominance. Those tactics, the administration argues, include cybertheft and pressure for U.S. companies to hand over trade secrets in return for access to the Chinese market.

So far, the U.S. tariffs have targeted imported Chinese industrial products — not the electronics, toys and food that ordinary Americans might buy at a mall or order online. But adding \$200 billion to the target list would expose to hefty taxes many more of the \$506 billion in goods that China shipped to the United States last year, including many consumer products. The list includes 6,031 Chinese imports — an eclectic compilation that ranges from buttons to burglar alarms to motorboats.

In their filings to the Trump administration, companies that import from China complain that the tariffs will force them to raise prices, pay higher costs, try to find alternative suppliers or lose business to foreign rivals that don't have to pay a penalty on components and machinery they import from China.

Texas school where 10 died opens with more officers

Associated Press

SANTA FE, Texas — Students in Santa Fe began a new school year Monday with additional security measures in place following a mass shooting in May that left 10 people dead.

The school district had metal detectors installed at entrances and hired five additional police officers, as well as 10 "security assistants" who will monitor hallways throughout the day. Teachers are receiving training on both trauma support and active-shooter situations.

For some students, Monday will be the first time they've been back in class since the shooting rampage, which happened toward the end of the school year.

"We are going to try our best to get it all right on Monday, but I'm sure there will be things we'll have to go back and tweak to get it right," school board President J.R. "Rusty" Norman said last week, according to the Houston Chronicle. "But we will get it right."

Also, the school has built a new hallway so students and staff won't need to walk in the art classroom area, where authorities say Dimitrios Pagourtzis began a rampage

that killed eight students and two teachers. A grand jury has indicted Pagourtzis on capital murder charges, and he remains jailed without bond.

The school has hired additional counselors who specialize in trauma to aid students and staff, Superintendent Leigh Wall said in a video posted on the district's website that outlines the security changes.

"It's going to be difficult in many ways for many people to return," Wall said. "But I also think it's going to be a great opportunity for us to come together and pull together as a community."

Rhonda Hart, whose daughter, Kimberly Vaughan, 14, was among the students who died in the shooting, said she and other victims' parents welcomed new safety features at the high school, including the metal detectors. However, Hart, who has been outspoken on the need for more gun control, said her middle-school-age son would not be returning to a Santa Fe district school this year.

"As long as we have the leadership in Austin and Washington, D.C., that we have now, I don't trust Texas schools to protect my kid," Hart said.

Trial date set for newsroom shooting suspect

(Annapolis, Md.) Capital Gazette

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Jarrod Ramos, the man charged in the Capital Gazette shooting, made his first court appearance Monday and will stand jury trial within a year.

Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Judge Laura Kiessling set a trial for Jan. 15, 2019, to last about 10 days. She also granted a good cause motion by public defender Bill Davis to extend the plea deadline until Oct. 24 and set a motions hearing for Dec. 18-19.

Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Wes Adams is seeking life without the possibility of parole for each of the five victims.

Ramos, Davis and Adams met Monday morning to set dates for motion hearings and trial in the Capital Gazette case, then appeared in court to enter the dates into the record. Ramos, 38, wore glasses, a green prison shirt and pants and tan flip flops with white socks in the Annapolis courtroom. The Laurel, Md., man, confined in leg irons, had long hair and a beard.

Ramos faces 23 different charges related to the Capital Gazette attack, including five counts of first-degree murder in the killings

of Gerald Fischman, Rob Hiaasen, John McNamara, Rebecca Smith and Wendi Winters — all Capital Gazette employees. Police arrested Ramos inside the Capital Gazette office at 888 Bestgate Road after a gunman shattered the glass front doors and opened fire.

He has pleaded not guilty to the counts.

Last week, Davis indicated in filings the defense might consider a plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity.

Davis filed a motion Aug. 13 arguing the defense has "good cause" to extend the plea deadline in order to consider the insanity plea. Maryland law requires a defendant enter a plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity when the defendant enters his or her official plea.

A hearing on the state's motion to protect witness information was also requested by Davis.

Adams' motion indicates the state will call survivors and representatives of the victims as witnesses, but requests Kiessling withhold information about those witnesses from the defense.

Separated Korean families reunite briefly

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The elderly South Korean woman wept and stroked the wrinkled cheeks of her North Korean son on Monday, their first meeting since they were driven apart during the turmoil of the 1950-53 Korean War.

“How many children do you have? Do you have a son?” Lee Keum-seom, 92, asked her son, Ri Sang Chol, 71, during their long-awaited encounter at the North’s Diamond Mountain resort.

The emotional reunion came after dozens of elderly South Koreans crossed the heavily fortified border into North Korea to meet temporarily with their relatives. The weeklong event, the first of its kind in nearly three years, was arranged as the rival Koreas boost reconciliation efforts amid a diplomatic

push to resolve a standoff over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.

Hugging the woman he’d last seen when he was 4, Ri showed his mother a photo of her late husband, who had stayed behind in North Korea with him after being separated from his wife while fleeing south. “Mother, this is how my father looked,” Lee said.

Before leaving for North Korea, Lee said she wanted to ask her son “how he grew up without his mom and how his father raised him.”

Most of the participants in the reunions are in their 70s or older and are eager to see their loved ones once more before they die. Most have had no word on whether their relatives are still alive because they are not allowed to visit each other across the border or even ex-

change letters, phone calls or email.

About 90 elderly South Koreans, accompanied by their family members, will have three days of meetings with their North Korean relatives before returning to the South on Wednesday. A separate round of reunions from Friday to Sunday will involve more than 300 other South Koreans, according to Seoul’s Unification Ministry.

During Monday’s meeting, many elderly Koreans held each other’s hands and wiped away tears with handkerchiefs while asking how their relatives were doing. They showed photos of family members who couldn’t come to their meetings.

Han Shin-ja, 99, a South Korean woman, was at a loss for words after she reunited with her two North Korean daughters, both in their early 70s.

Not knowing their separation would be permanent, she left them behind in the North during the war while fleeing south with her third and youngest daughter.

Kim Sun Ok, 82, an 81-year-old North Korean woman, said she found that she and her 88-year-old brother, from South Korea, resembled each other a great deal. “Brother, it would be really good if Korean unification comes. Let’s live together even at least one minute after unification before we die,” the woman said tearfully.

Before this week’s reunions, nearly 20,000 people had participated in 20 rounds of face-to-face reunions since 2000. Another 3,700 exchanged video messages with their North Korean relatives. None has had a second chance to see or talk with their relatives.

Russian military braces for war games in east

Associated Press

MOSCOW—Russia’s military forces in the country’s east were put on high alert Monday ahead of massive war games that also involve China and Mongolia, the largest show of power in nearly 40 years, the Russian defense minister said.

Sergei Shoigu said the five days of military drills will pave the way for the Vostok (East) 2018 military exercise. Shoigu said those maneuvers, set for next month, will be the largest since the massive Soviet war games in 1981.

The Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said President Vladimir Putin could attend the exercise.

Speaking to the top Russian military brass, Shoigu said army, air force and navy units will take part in the exercise that will be held across the Far East and Siberia. He added that military units from China and Mongolia also will take part.

As part of a smaller, separate military exercise this week under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization — a security group dominated by Moscow and Beijing — Chinese warplanes landed Monday at a Russian air base in the Chelyabinsk region in the Ural Mountains.

The Russian military has increased both the scope and frequency of its maneuvers amid tensions with the West. It also has expanded military ties with China. Moscow and Beijing have conducted a series of joint military maneuvers, including exercises in the South China Sea and navy drills in the Baltics last summer.

The two countries have forged what they described as a “strategic partnership,” expressing their shared opposition to the “unipolar” world — the term they use to describe perceived U.S. global domination.

Italian bridge designer warned in 1979 of risks

Associated Press

ROME — The Italian engineer who designed the Genoa bridge that collapsed and killed dozens warned four decades ago that it would require constant maintenance to remove rust given the effects of corrosion from sea air and pollution on the concrete.

RAI state television broadcast excerpts Sunday of the report that the late engineer Riccardo Morandi penned in 1979, 12 years after the bridge bearing his name was inaugurated in Genoa. The Associated Press downloaded the English-language report from an engineering news portal.

At the time of writing, Morandi said there was already a “well-known loss of superficial chemical resistance of the concrete” because of sea air and pollution from a nearby steel plant. He said he chose to write about it because the degradation represented a particular “perplexity” given the “aggressiv-

ity” of the corrosion that wasn’t seen in similar structures in different environments.

Morandi reaffirmed the soundness of the reinforced concrete bridge design he used but warned, “Sooner or later, maybe in a few years, it will be necessary to resort to a treatment consisting of the removal of all traces of rust on the exposure of the reinforcements, to fill in the patches.”

He recommended using an epoxy resin to cover the reinforcements with materials “of a very high chemical resistance.”

A huge section of the bridge collapsed Aug. 14 during a fierce storm, killing 43 people and forcing the evacuation of nearby residents in the densely built-up area.

The cause is under investigation, and a team of engineers appointed by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation carried out a preliminary inspection Sunday after rescue crews concluded their search for the missing.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

School removes sign social media panned

TX HOUSTON — A sign at a Houston elementary and middle school that sparked criticism on social media has been removed.

The Houston Independent School District said the sign that read, “The more you act like a lady, the more he’ll act like a gentleman,” was removed Friday night. The sign was above a row of lockers in a girls’ locker room at Gregory-Lincoln Education Center.

The sign drew attention after a Houston resident posted a picture of it on Twitter. Critics on social media called the sign “victim-blaming” and misogynistic.

Man bites off another man’s finger in brawl

MA PLYMOUTH — A man is charged with biting off another man’s finger during a brawl at a Massachusetts golf course.

Police said Derek Harkins, 46, was to be arraigned Monday on charges of assault and battery, mayhem and disturbing the peace.

Plymouth Police Chief Michael Botieri said two four-somes were at Southers Marsh Golf Club on Friday evening when there was some sort of altercation. He said the 57-year-old victim from Marshfield had a finger bitten off “to the knuckle.” He was taken to the hospital but doctors could not surgically re-attach the digit.

Whale capsizes boat; ex-firefighter saves 2

NJ DEAL — State police said a retired firefighter rescued two fishermen after their 20-year-old vessel was capsized by a whale surfacing

beneath them off the New Jersey coast.

Trooper Alejandro Goetz told the Asbury Park Press that the two boaters, both 64, were not injured when they were tossed into the sea Thursday about a mile off Deal.

Goetz said retired Trenton firefighter Gary Szabo posted a video showing the two clinging to the hull.

Boy, 8, saves brother, 2, from dog attack

IN MUNSTER — Northwestern Indiana police said an 8-year-old boy who saved his 2-year-old brother from a dog attack suffered numerous bites in the rescue.

Sacha Pchelenkov jumped into action Wednesday when he saw his mother trying to pull a large pit bull off his 2-year-old brother, Micha Moore. Sacha grabbed the dog outside the family’s home, allowing his brother to escape unharmed.

The dog and another pit bull then pounced on Sacha, who suffered bite wounds and numerous scratches.

Dad, daughter held on drug-related charges

GA CUMMING — A man and his teenage daughter are in custody after Georgia deputies alleged the two were dealing drugs.

News outlets reported that Daniel Williams, 51, and his 17-year-old daughter are being held without bond on numerous drug-related charges.

Investigators with the Johns Creek-Alpharetta-Forsyth County Drug Task Force on Wednesday raided the family’s home in the Quail Hollow community, as well as a storage unit. Deputies seized 2 pounds of marijuana, 87 colorful MDMA pills (also known as “Molly” or ecstasy) and \$22,000 in cash.

Pet owners allowed to take ‘fur-ternity’ leave

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A digital marketing company in Minneapolis has adopted a new policy that it calls “fur-ternity” leave, allowing employees with new pets to work from home.

Minnesota Public Radio News reported that Nina Hale’s policy was inspired by the senior accounts manager, Connor McCarthy. McCarthy adopted a Goldendoodle named Bentley in May and wanted to help his puppy settle into his new home. He said he discussed making adjustments to his schedule with his supervisor so he could work and spend time with Bentley.

Allison McMenimen, the executive vice president for client services at Nina Hale, said McCarthy’s request tipped off company leadership that animals were as important to their employees as human babies.

Police say man stole patrol car, school bus

CA SACRAMENTO — A man who allegedly stole a California Highway Patrol car, drove it onto a college campus and used it to commandeer a school bus was arrested Friday after students on the bus jumped him, authorities and witnesses said.

The man, 35, of Vallejo, was taken into custody by Sacramento police.

A CHP officer was investigating a two-car crash on Highway 50 about 12:30 p.m. when one driver jumped into the patrol car and drove off, the agency reported. The man drove the cruiser to California State University, Sacramento, where he used it to pull over a bus containing 10 student government participants from San Joaquin Delta College. The bus driver, Mary Speck, thought the man

was a police officer.

The man drove the bus off campus and onto Avenue J, where authorities stopped him.

Man charged with destroying 6 owl nests

FL CAPE CORAL — A Florida man was charged with destroying the nests of six burrowing owls. The birds are protected by the state.

Wildlife officials said Jerlis Villalba, 52, and his crew were doing landscaping work when he instructed the crew to clear land near the burrows. According to a probable cause affidavit, Villalba admitted that he knew the owls and their burrows were protected and decided to get close anyway because he hadn’t seen the birds in a long time.

Villalba was charged Friday with intentionally killing or wounding a threatened or endangered species, its eggs or its nest.

Teen is accused of stealing firetruck

PA MANCHESTER — Pennsylvania officials alleged a 15-year-old ex-junior firefighter who is accused of stealing a county vehicle also stole a firetruck from a community fire station in York County.

Northern York County Regional Police said it happened when the teen allegedly stole a county-owned SUV after leaving a juvenile facility in Springettsbury Township. The York Dispatch reported the teenager then is accused of driving to the Strinestown Community Fire Co. station in Manchester where he stole a firetruck along with firefighter gear.

Officials say the firetruck didn’t appear to have severe damage. The teenager has been charged with theft.

From wire reports

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LB Allen making most of second chance

Associated Press

Dakota Allen went from thinking that one huge mistake would keep him from ever playing football again to “Last Chance U” — and then an unexpected second opportunity at Texas Tech.

“I feel like redemption is important for me,” Allen said. “A lot of people that did give me this second chance, I really don’t want to let them down.”

On or off the field, after a burglary charge jeopardized his career.

“You can’t let one mistake define you,” Red Raiders defensive back Jah’Shawn Johnson said. “He owned up to it, and we know who he really is, and yes, that’s why we respect him 100 percent and that’s why he’s our team leader.”

Allen was picked as team captain right after his return to the Lubbock campus last year. He now goes into his senior season as a preseason All-Big 12 pick and is considered a top NFL draft prospect at linebacker.

After being Tech’s second-leading tackler with 87 stops as a redshirt freshman in 2015, Allen and two former teammates were charged with a second-degree felony count of burglary of a habitation. They were all kicked off the team and out

of school.

“I remember leaving and saying, ‘Man, I’m never going to be in Lubbock again,’” Allen said. “It was one point at time I thought I was going to never play football again off of just one mistake I made.”

Allen then went to East Mississippi Community College, the first school featured on “Last Chance U,” which focuses on talented and often troubled players who had few, if any other, options.

His time in Scooba, Miss., was well-documented during the second season of the popular Netflix series that didn’t air until he was already back at Texas Tech. That was also after he had successfully completed a 12-month pre-trial diversion program that led to the dismissal of charges after a time in community supervision.

In one episode, while speaking with former EMCC academic adviser Brittany Wagner, Allen makes reference to a curfew he had to abide by at the time. When Wagner asked if he was scared the night he was arrested and briefly jailed, Allen said he wasn’t scared but mad at himself. He then says in an interview while sitting in a dorm room that he got involved with some people he shouldn’t have been involved with.

Like Johnson, Texas Tech defensive

coordinator David Gibbs kept in constant contact with Allen while he was at East Mississippi.

When Gibbs asked one day if he would be interested in returning, Allen still didn’t think it was possible. But Gibbs talked to coach Kliff Kingsbury, who spoke with athletic director Kirby Hocutt, helping set up his second chance at Texas Tech.

“Dakota is a special kid, a special young man. And I got to know Dakota before he left us,” Hocutt said. “I know he’s learned his lesson, and the way that he’s represented us since he’s been back has been just terrific. And he’s a leader, on the field and off the field now for us, and I’m proud of that young man.”

Allen said he didn’t want to go anywhere else because he wanted to finish what he had started with the Red Raiders.

“Between Kirby and myself, we were willing to stick our necks out because we knew wholeheartedly that it would be a success story because of the type of young man he is and what we knew about him before the one incident,” Kingsbury said.

In many ways, Allen still views this as his last chance.

“The redemption story,” he said, “isn’t over.”

Titans, Eagles have most helmet hit flags

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The NFL tapped Titans coach Mike Vrabel to narrate a video detailing the new rule on lowering the head to initiate contact, hoping the man who played 14 years as a linebacker in the league could more easily explain how players should adapt.

Now Vrabel’s own Titans find themselves tied with defending champion Philadelphia for the most lowering-the-head penalties through two preseason games with five apiece. Tennessee was flagged three times for the new rule in an opening loss in Green Bay, and the Titans added two more in Saturday night’s 30-14 loss to Tampa Bay.

Getting it right matters because any player initiating contact with his helmet could be ejected after an in-game video review decided in New York.

So far this preseason, blame either the player making con-

tact, the speed of the game or everyone still getting used to the new rule.

“Pretty much all those are going to fall into one of those categories,” Vrabel said Sunday.

Titans safety Kenny Vaccaro drew one penalty for running across the field to tackle Bucs wide receiver Mike Evans at the end of a 38-yard reception on the sideline. Wide receiver Nick Williams was flagged late in the third quarter while on punt coverage, costing the Titans 15 yards.

Vrabel said Vaccaro has to do a better job avoiding contact with the crown of his helmet while trying to break up the pass. The coach wasn’t sure if Williams made contact, but noted the receiver’s head was in the linear position the NFL is trying to eliminate from the game. The Titans will turn those plays into the league for an explanation.

The coach said he already showed his team an eight-minute video from the NFL of penalties in the first week of the preseason.

“We’ll keep doing that and we’ll keep coaching it and we’ll keep stressing it, and hopefully it doesn’t, one, lead to injuries, or two, cost us yards,” Vrabel said.

Even though the rule is new, six NFL teams that have played two preseason games have not been flagged even once for lowering the head to initiate contact. Indianapolis, who played Baltimore on Monday night, was not flagged in its preseason opener. Behind the Titans and Eagles, five teams have been penalized under the rule three times apiece: Arizona, Atlanta, Carolina, the Rams and San Francisco.

Chicago has three such penalties through three exhibitions.

Asked if officials might be a

bit overzealous enforcing the rule during the preseason before scaling back in the regular season, Vrabel said he wasn’t really sure.

“I try to do my job. They ask me to provide a video, a voiceover video, on what I thought was the right way to play outside linebacker or inside linebacker taking these blocks on, tackling. I thought I tried to go through and provide examples of what was good and what was probably needed to be fixed and changed in some of the style of play,” Vrabel said.

“But they don’t tell me, ‘Hey, coach, this is going to get scaled back in the regular season.’ I think these guys are doing what their boss, and the league, is just telling them to do. So if they see that position and they see contact, they’re calling it.”

That leaves Vrabel and his assistants coaching the Titans better to adjust how they play.

Verlander earns 200th win as Astros top A's

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Once they got behind closed doors in the clubhouse, the Houston Astros showered Justin Verlander with champagne.

No, it wasn't for helping them avoid a sweep at the Coliseum. But that was a nice benefit, too.

Verlander pitched just well enough to earn his 200th career win, and the Astros hit five home runs, beating the Oakland Athletics 9-4 Sunday to retake sole possession of the AL West lead.

"That was one of the tougher wins I had to get this season," Verlander said. "Our boys swung the bats and that made for a great day."

The surging A's had won the first two games at the Coliseum to tie shaky Houston atop the division. But Yuli Gurriel hit a three-run homer in the

third inning and Evan Gattis, Alex Bregman, Marwin Gonzalez and Martin Maldonado later homered for the defending World Series champions. Maldonado also tripled and doubled.

"What a great way to get Verlander his 200th," Bregman said. "We hand the ball to JV and he wins. He got us going in the right direction. He battled his head off for us."

Verlander (12-8), who has not given up more than four runs in any of his 20 career games against the A's, entered the day with a major league-leading 1.74 ERA on the road. Matt Chapman and Kris Davis hit solo homers off Verlander in the first inning, and Davis added his 36th homer, a two-run drive, in the third that made it 4-all.

Gattis put the Astros ahead

for good in the fourth with his 24th home run.

"I'm guessing this won't be his last win," A's manager Bob Melvin said of Verlander. "You just look at his numbers. He's something special."

Verlander gave up four runs on seven hits over 5¹/₃ innings. He walked one and struck out six but gave up three home runs and has allowed 25 this season. He became the 114th pitcher with at least 200 career wins.

"When you reach a milestone, you look back, understand and relish what you've done," the 35-year-old Verlander said. "I look around from when I started and realized it's a long journey. From age 21 to now, mentally, it's been a process."

Brad Peacock took over for Verlander in the sixth, with two runners on and one out. He struck out Stephen Piscotty

on a full count, walked Marcus Semien and got Mark Canha swinging on a 2-2 pitch. Four Houston relievers shut down the A's on one hit over 3²/₃ innings.

The Astros won for the second time in nine games. The Athletics had won 13 of their past 16 games to draw even with Houston.

After allowing six runs in three previous August starts combined, Sean Manaea (11-9) gave up six in four-plus innings against the Astros.

Trainer's room

Astros: 2B Jose Altuve (right knee) began a rehab assignment Sunday for Triple-A Fresno at Tacoma, going 1-for-3 with a strikeout and hit by pitch. ... C Brian McCann (right knee) went 0-for-3 and caught six innings on Saturday night for the Grizzlies.

MLB roundup

Dodgers rout Mariners behind strong effort from Kershaw

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Clayton Kershaw pitched seven sharp innings for his 150th career win, Justin Turner homered and drove in five runs, and Los Angeles routed Seattle.

Kershaw (6-5) gave up four hits, struck out seven and walked one. The 30-year-old lefty with three NL Cy Young Awards improved to 150-69 in the majors.

Turner extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a season-high four hits, including a three-run homer in the ninth inning with position player Andrew Romine on the mound.

Kike Hernandez had an RBI single as part of the Dodgers' five-run first inning against Roenis Elias (2-1). He added his 18th home run and a bases-loaded walk as the Dodgers won for the third time in four games.

Rockies 4, Braves 2: DJ LeMahieu homered, German Marquez pitched seven solid innings and the Rockies closed out their first four-game sweep in Atlanta.

Colorado improved to 30-16 since June 26, and each of those 46 games came against teams with winning records at the time.

Mets 8, Phillies 2: At Williamsport, Pa.,

Amed Rosario had three hits and drove in three runs, and New York went from cheering on players in the Little League World Series to impressing the youngsters in a victory over Philadelphia.

Jeff McNeil added a two-run single to back Jason Vargas (3-8) as the Mets claimed the second Little League Classic and prevented the Phillies from moving into first place in the NL East.

Brewers 2, Cardinals 1: Mike Moustakas hit a two-run double, Jhoulys Chacin beat host St. Louis for the first time in his career and Milwaukee edged the Cardinals.

The Brewers (69-57) snapped a three-game losing streak and moved back ahead of St. Louis (68-57) for the second National League wild card.

Pirates 2, Cubs 1 (11): Adam Frazier hit a game-ending homer in the 11th inning, and Pittsburgh beat visiting Chicago for a split of their four-game series.

Indians 8, Orioles 0: Melky Cabrera hit a grand slam to cap a six-run fourth inning and host Cleveland beat Baltimore for its AL-leading 13th shutout.

Marlins 12, Nationals 1: Jose Urena pitched a two-hitter for his first complete game to lead visiting Miami over Washington.

Yankees 10, Blue Jays 2: J.A. Happ stayed unbeaten with host New York by topping his former Toronto teammates.

Rangers 4, Angels 2: At Arlington, Texas, Rougned Odor connected on a go-ahead, three-run homer in the seventh inning, and the Rangers beat Los Angeles to wrap up a soggy weekend.

Diamondbacks 4, Padres 3: A.J. Pollock homered in the ninth inning, and Arizona beat host San Diego to stay atop the NL West.

Twins 5, Tigers 4: Eddie Rosario hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning and Minnesota connected three times in all, beating visiting Detroit.

White Sox 7, Royals 6: Omar Narvaez homered and drove in the go-ahead run with a single off Brian Flynn (3-4), Chicago relievers tossed seven scoreless innings and the host White Sox rallied from a six-run deficit.

Reds 11, Giants 4: Eugenio Suarez hit a two-run homer during Cincinnati's seven-run third inning, and the Reds swept visiting San Francisco.

Rays 2, Red Sox 0: Jalen Beeks pitched four strong innings against the team that traded him last month, limiting host Boston to two singles.

Rossi wins at Pocono in wreck-marred race

Associated Press

LONG POND, Pa. — Alexander Rossi was as worried as the rest of the IndyCar field when a violent wreck shot Robert Wickens' car airborne, ripped up the catchfence and left the tub of the rookie's Honda toppled on the asphalt.

The crash at Pocono Raceway was the latest grim reminder how drivers in open-wheel racing put their lives on the line.

"It's part of our job, right? You've got to compartmentalize," Rossi said. "You've got to accept it and deal with that emotion after the race."

Wickens was airlifted to a hospital and was being treated for injuries to his lower extremities, right arm and spine following an accident early in the race. IndyCar said the Canadian sustained a pulmonary contusion and will undergo an MRI and probable surgery at Lehigh Valley Hospital Cedar Crest in Allentown.

Once the race restarted after a two-hour stoppage to repair 80 feet of fence, Rossi got rolling.

Rossi dominated Sunday at Pocono and led 180 of 200 laps to win his second straight race and third of the season, slicing into Scott Dixon's grip on the championship lead with three races left in the season.

Dixon finished third and his points lead over Rossi dipped to just 29 points, as neither driver can afford much of a slip up in the title hunt.

"We've been a bit blah. They've been excelling," Dixon said.

Rossi, the 2016 Indianapolis 500 champion, ended Will Power's bid to win three straight Pocono races. Power made a hard charge down the stretch and finished second to keep his bid for a second career IndyCar title in sight.

Rossi also won for Andretti Autosport on the streets of Long Beach in April and the Mid-Ohio road course three weeks ago.

But the championship race

was tinged with worry over the 29-year-old Wickens, a driver on the rise in his first season with Schmidt Peterson Motorsports.

Wickens was attempting to pass Ryan Hunter-Reay when the two cars slightly touched just six laps into the race. That caused Hunter-Reay's car to careen into the wall and Wickens' car was pulled along for the ride. Once Wickens' car soared over Hunter-Reay's and hit the fence, it spun round and round like a top. The fencing was shredded and Wickens' car reduced to just the tub, which came to a rest on the track along an interior wall.

Medical workers calmly attended to Wickens, and the Canadian was taken to an ambulance before he was transported to the helicopter. The impact of the wreck tore out about 80 feet of fence, damaged a few posts and stopped the race. After the delay, the race resumed without another spate of aggressive driving — Graham Rahal tangled with Spencer Pigot as the field was brought to green — and ended without another caution.

For Rossi, his thoughts were with Wickens.

"It's tough to really celebrate after what happened," Rossi said.

Dixon echoed the thoughts of the rest of the paddock when he said IndyCar was a "close-knit family" and he was thinking of Wickens.

"That's the worst thing you can see. He's hurt. He's awake and alert and at least he's alive," driver Sebastien Bourdais said.

Bourdais, who finished fourth, raised concerns about the quality of the repairs and condition of the fence and did not want to get back in the car. Track President Ben May said: "It may not be the prettiest job but it's going to be safe."

Bourdais called the repairs, "pretty lousy."

Briefly

Djokovic tops Federer for 1st Cincinnati title

Associated Press

MASON, Ohio — Novak Djokovic gave his racket to a fan and tossed his sweatbands into the stands. No need for mementos from this victory. The long-awaited Rookwood pottery trophy would be plenty.

Djokovic finally mastered the one tournament that's eluded him, beating nemesis Roger Federer 6-4, 6-4 on Sunday for his first Western & Southern Open championship.

He got the better of a nostalgic rematch — they hadn't played in two years because of injuries — and broke through in a tournament that Federer has won seven times, never losing a title match.

"Thank you for letting me win once in Cincinnati," he told Federer as they stood on court for the trophy presentation.

After reaching the final five times and losing every time — three to Federer — Djokovic jumped and punched the air in celebration of his breakthrough. He's the first to claim all nine ATP Masters 1000 events since the series started in 1990, something that had become his quest after so many close calls.

"That's what the headline should be about — this is such an amazing accomplishment," Federer said. "He's the first to do it. I think it's very difficult to win Masters 1000s. These performances don't come easy."

Djokovic leads their all-time series 24-22, doing better in the biggest matches. He's 3-1 against Federer in Grand Slam finals and 12-6 overall in championship matches, including wins at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in 2015.

Djokovic completed a long comeback from elbow problems by winning his fourth Wimbledon title last month, then set out to get his hard-court game in order for the U.S. Open. He got better as the rainy week went on in Cincinnati, playing his best at the end.

"This seems to be a bit unreal, to be honest, to be back at this level," he said.

Terps to honor McNair with helmet sticker

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Members of the Maryland football team will wear a helmet sticker with No. 79 to honor former teammate Jordan McNair, who collapsed during a practice session in May and subsequently died.

In an announcement Monday morning, the school said no player will wear his number for the next three years.

In addition, a moment of silence will be held during Texas and Temple games and his locker will be encased.

McNair was running laps on the practice field on May 29 when he was overcome by heat and exhaustion. After being treated at the team facility, he was taken to a hospital and died of heatstroke on June 13.

The school has apologized to the family and acknowledged that mistakes were made in his treatment during the May 29 workout.

Coach DJ Durkin was placed on administrative leave on Aug. 11.

Snedeker opens with 59, closes with win

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Brandt Snedeker won the Wyndham Championship on Sunday for his ninth PGA Tour title, four days after opening with a 59.

Snedeker closed with a 5-under 65 for a three-stroke victory, breaking a tie with C.T. Pan on the final hole. Pan hit his tee shot out-of-bounds and made double bogey. Snedeker, playing in the group behind, made a 20-foot birdie.

Snedeker finished at 21-under 259 for his first win since 2016 and his second at the tournament, but first at Sedgefield Country Club.

Pan shot a 66 to tie for second with Webb Simpson (62).