

STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, August 27, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

McCain name mythic in military history

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Six days after Roberta McCain's Navy pilot son was shot down and taken prisoner in Vietnam, she wrote an urgent letter to President Lyndon Johnson.

As the wife of a four-star admiral, she knew of the McCain military heritage — the men go to war and come back. This time, it wasn't clear whether that would hold true for John Sidney McCain III — a haunting question for the family during his brutal 5½ years of captivity.

Yet Roberta did not waver. The family's feisty matriarch understood another well-worn McCain tradition to put the country first, even above the well-being of her son.

"As the parent of a son who was shot down in Hanoi last week and is now a prisoner of war, I wonder if you are interested to know that both my husband and I back you and your policies 100 percent in Vietnam?" she wrote in a Nov. 1, 1967, note to Johnson. "One reads so much of other opinions that I just hope that you know the people really making the sacrifice, believe in our country and in you."

By then, relatives of Sen. John McCain were etched into U.S. military history. His father, John Sidney "Jack" McCain Jr., and grandfather John Sidney "Slew" McCain Sr., were the first father-son duo to reach the Navy rank of four-star admiral.

His great-uncle William Alexander "Wild Bill" McCain took part in the chase of Pancho Villa as he fought in the 1916 Mexican Expedition. His great-great-uncle Maj. Gen. Henry Pinckney McCain was a West Point graduate known as the father of the draft for his organization of Selective Service

in World War I and the name-sake of Camp McCain Training Center in Grenada, Miss.

Before them, McCain ancestors fought in the American Revolutionary War and for the Confederacy in the Civil War. By the Vietnam War, a McCain or one of their ancestors had fought in every American war.

"The McCain name and its impact goes back decades and decades and decades before John McCain III was even on the scene," said former McCain adviser Richard Fontaine, who is now president of the Washington think tank Center for New American Security. "It's a legendary name through generations of the military. You can read history books on Adm. McCain, you can sail on the USS John S. McCain and there is the annual McCain conference (at the Naval Institute). It's almost very rare to meet somebody in the military who doesn't know John McCain or the McCain name."

'I loved it'

By April 1968, more than five months into John McCain's captivity as a POW, his father was elevated to commander in chief of Pacific Command, which oversaw U.S. forces in the Vietnam.

The elder McCain would hold the post until 1972, the year that he retired from a 41-year career in the service and a year before his son would be released from captivity.

Even now at 106, Roberta McCain looks back on those days without regret.

"I married into the military and I loved it," she said. "I loved it every day."

By the end of World War II, "Slew" McCain appeared weary as the stress of combat had taken its toll. He died at home during a homecoming party four days after the Japa-

nese surrendered in 1945. He was posthumously awarded a fourth star, the Navy's highest rank.

His son, John Sidney "Jack" McCain, who also attended the Naval Academy, became a World War II submarine commander who quickly rose through the ranks.

In the senator's 2018 book, "The Restless Wave," the Arizona Republican recalls an early memory of his father as he dashed away to the war.

"I had been a boy of 5, playing in the front yard of my family's home in New London, Conn., when a black sedan pulled up and a Navy officer rolled down the window and shouted to my father, 'Jack, the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor,'" McCain wrote. "The news and the sight of my father leaving in that sedan is one of my most powerful memories."

Although the McCain sailors excelled beyond many of their peers in their careers, none was the best Naval Academy student. All three graduated at the lowest levels of their class. McCain Jr. and McCain III were known for misfit stunts, hard drinking and defiance.

'Raised to go to war'

"For two centuries, the men of my family were raised to go to war as officers in America's armed services," McCain said in his 1999 tome, "Faith of My Fathers: A Family Memoir." "It is a family history that, as a boy, often intimidated me, and for a time, I struggled halfheartedly against its expectations. But when my own time at war arrived, I realized how fortunate I was to have been raised in such a family."

As Jack McCain chased his fourth star, he became a Navy legislative liaison on Capitol Hill, a role that his son would hold 20 years later. From his

home with Roberta near the Cannon House Office Building, they hosted social gatherings for top political and military figures.

But it was son John McCain III who took a direct line into politics after his time as a Navy legislative liaison. After marrying Cindy Lou Hensley, from a wealthy family that ran a large Arizona beer distribution company, he won his first congressional election from that state in 1982.

"He started all the trouble," Roberta McCain quipped of her son's political career. "We were OK until he came along."

Roberta, dubbed by some as a "fireball" for her determination and wit, inspired her son's interests to navigate the political arena. As relatives and friends tell it, Roberta was the family's secret weapon and the original maverick whom her son would model in his political ascension.

More than three months into his battle against brain cancer, McCain, in an emotional speech, revisited family memories in a talk before a brigade of midshipmen at the Naval Academy. He joked that while the academy was likely glad to rid themselves of his antics, it was different for his son.

"My father was here, and his father before him," McCain said in the Oct. 30 speech. "Like me, their standing was closer to the bottom than the top of their class. My son, Jack, is the nonconformist in the family. He managed to reach the upper half of his class, even to be a midshipman officer. His forebears, though less accomplished midshipmen, nevertheless left here to devote the rest of their lives to our country — in war and peace, good times and bad. And each of us considered himself to be the luckiest man on Earth."

Making a uniform every branch can wear

Bloomberg

Why does the U.S. military have so many different uniforms?

It's understandable that each branch would have its own dress outfit. And it makes sense to tailor battlefield clothing to the fighting environment — brown for desert, green for woodlands, white for mountain climes. But over the past 70 years, the Pentagon has built up quite the sartorial stockpile, with various uniforms for base and battlefield, ships and planes, working and working out, and pretty much everywhere in between.

Now this sprawling empire of martial clothing is getting taken in a bit.

The Air Force decided a few months ago to adopt the new combat uniform of the Army, accelerating a broader effort to slim down the wardrobe of military personnel and better unify

forces that increasingly operate together.

The design, replacing an 11-year-old camouflage uniform, is borrowed from the Army's Operational Camouflage Pattern, or OCP, a jumble of brown, green and beige introduced by that branch three years ago.

The goal is for the U.S. armed forces to look more unified. The military often combines personnel from its various branches in operations, making similar uniforms practical. They can also foster camaraderie between services, officials said — a sore point with some traditionalists, though, given that distinct uniforms were intended to instill pride in one's particular branch.

Having grown out of the Army after World War II, the Air Force has often borrowed Army innovations, including uniform design. Following the Vietnam War, the military moved to make

camouflage uniforms standard on and off the battlefield. That's when technology was brought to bear in an effort to perfect designs using multiple colors — and later, mottled ones — to hide soldiers from the enemy.

But different services meant different uniforms for airmen, soldiers, sailors and Marines.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. John Wayne Troxell, senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was cool at first to the idea of uniform unification. While he conceded that in some theaters of operation, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, it makes sense for members of all branches to wear the same kind of uniform, he told the Air Force Times in 2015 that "distinct uniforms also affect a service's culture." Switching to a joint pattern would "lose that kind of identity that brings esprit de corps," Troxell told the newspaper.

Three years later, Troxell

has modulated his views, telling Bloomberg that while service personnel should be proud of their individual branch, the growing emphasis on joint operation — and making sure enlisted personnel can operate in different environments — has become a critical focus of the military.

Toward this end, in 2015 the Army began phasing out an earlier camouflage pattern in favor of the OCP. Not to be outdone, the Navy last year decided to streamline its uniforms, issuing a new pattern similar to OCPs in place of its blue camouflage. The new green, tan and black-patterned uniform will answer sailors' petitions for something more comfortable, lightweight and breathable. Such complaints, along with almost two decades of fighting, during which new designs and innovations were battle-tested, played a role in this military-wide aesthetic shift.

Half-ton WWII bomb defused in Germany

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Thousands of residents were evacuated Sunday while a half-ton World War II-era bomb was defused in the southwestern German city of Ludwigshafen.

Some 18,000 people were moved from the area while a disposal team worked to unearth the rusted 1,100 pound bomb. The site was successfully cleared by Sunday afternoon, according to the city's official Twitter feed.

The bomb removal occurred about 10 miles from the U.S. Army's Coleman Barracks in Mannheim, which was well outside the evacuation zone.

Such bombs come in all shapes and sizes. In June, a 4-pound British incendiary bomb was removed from the U.S. Army's Robinson Barracks in

Stuttgart after being found at a base work site. In November, a 500-pound bomb was found next to another Stuttgart-area base that prompted a small evacuation.

About 2,000 tons of unexploded bombs and other munitions left over from WWII are found each year in Germany, usually during construction projects.

Roughly 15 percent of the bombs dropped during the war failed to explode, and many remain buried deep in the ground. Normally, ordnance experts can defuse the rusty bombs without a mishap, but in the past decade several technicians have been killed when the munitions detonated.

This summer forest fires in parts of Germany have set off numerous long-buried bombs, which has created added danger for firefighters.

Two found guilty of terror plot in Germany

By MARCUS KLOECKNER

Stars and Stripes

Two associates of a man who once planned to attack Ramstein Air Base were found guilty of charges related to a planned suicide bombing at a German town.

Kevin T., 22, was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison for supporting a foreign terrorist organization, while Amal E., 17, was sentenced to nine months of probation, Friday in a Duesseldorf court.

The full names of the defendants were not released, in keeping with German law.

The defendants were accomplices in a planned 2016 attack in Neuss, Germany, the court determined last week.

Kevin T. and Amal E. had been associates of Lorenz K., an Austrian of Albanian descent who was convicted earlier this

year of plotting attacks in Neuss and at a Christmas market in Ludwigshafen.

Lorenz K. initially had considered attacking Ramstein Air Base, home to thousands of U.S. servicemembers and their families, as well as other NATO personnel. However, he backed off those plans and focused on the Neuss attack.

Kevin T., who sympathized with Islamic State, allowed Lorenz K. to live at his apartment in Neuss and provided him with material for a bomb, the court said.

Lorenz K., who was 19 at the time, was convicted in April by an Austrian court of two counts of attempted incitement to murder as a terrorist crime, as well as membership in a terrorist organization in connection with the plot in Neuss. He was sentenced to nine years in prison.

Man kills 2, self at gaming competition

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Marquis Williams and Taylor Poindexter at first thought they heard a balloon popping. When the loud bangs kept coming, the Chicago couple and fellow video gamers attending a weekend tournament recognized them as gunfire and began scrambling for an exit.

As he fled, Williams, 28, said, he could see the back of the gunman's head as the attacker appeared to be walking backward as he fired.

"We didn't see like a face," Poindexter, 26, told reporters a few hours after the attack, standing on crutches after spraining her ankle trying to escape. "We did see him with two hands on a gun, walking back just popping rounds."

The couple said people trampled others in the panic to escape. They ran to a nearby restaurant, where workers were waving people inside, and hid in a bathroom until police arrived.

The deadly violence stunned gamers competing Sunday in Jacksonville during a "Madden NFL 19" video game tournament. Jacksonville Sheriff Mike Williams said the gunman killed two people and shot nine others before fatally shooting himself.

The competition was held in a gaming bar that shares space with a pizzeria. Viewers could watch the games online and see the players.

Williams said authorities believe David Katz, 24, of Baltimore, carried out the attack using at least one handgun at the Jacksonville Landing, a collection of restaurants and shops

along the St. Johns River.

The sheriff said Katz was attending the tournament in Florida. The "Madden" game's maker, EA Sports, lists a David Katz as a 2017 championship winner.

Authorities did not give a motive for the shootings.

"No one deserves to die over playing a video game, you know?" said "Madden" competitor Derek Jones, 30, of Santa Fe, N.M. "We're just out here trying to win some money for our families and stuff."

Jones said he knew Katz by the gamer tags he used online — often "Bread" or "Sliced Bread" — and had played against him online but had never spoken to him personally.

Nine other people wounded by the gunfire were all in stable condition Sunday evening after

being taken to hospitals, Williams said.

He added that two others were injured in the rush to flee the gunfire.

Investigators were looking into an online video that appeared to capture the scene right before the shooting began, Williams said.

A red dot that appears to be a laser pointer is visible on the chest of a player seconds before the first of about a dozen gunshots rings out.

On Sunday evening, the FBI said, its agents searched a family home of the man authorities believed was behind the attack.

Heavily armed agents, some in bulletproof vests and brandishing long guns, could be seen entering an upscale townhome complex near Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

Trump says he'll end NAFTA, sign new Mexico accord

Bloomberg

President Donald Trump said he would terminate the North American Free Trade Agreement and sign a new trade accord with Mexico, potentially leaving Canada out of the bloc.

Trump announced the agreement with Mexico in a hastily arranged Oval Office event Monday with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto joining by conference call. Peña Nieto said he is "quite hopeful" Canada would soon be incorporated

in the revised agreement, while Trump said that remains to be seen.

Trump said he would speak with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "in a little while" and hoped to begin negotiations with him "almost immediately."

As he announced the move, Trump said he would drop the name NAFTA from the accord because of its unpopularity.

"We're going to call it the United States/Mexico Trade

Agreement," he said. NAFTA "has a bad connotation because the United States was hurt very badly by NAFTA for many years."

The president hailed the Mexico agreement as "a big day for trade."

There is no deal reached yet with Canada, people familiar with the agreement said. The northern neighbor has been on the sidelines of the talks since July as Mexico and the U.S. focused on settling differences.

A spokesman for Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland issued a statement Monday that warned against jumping to conclusions. "Canada's signature is required," spokesman Adam Austen said in an email. "We will only sign a new NAFTA that is good for Canada and good for the middle class" and "we will continue to work toward a modernized NAFTA."

Peña Nieto tweeted Monday that he spoke with Trudeau and stressed the importance of Canada rejoining NAFTA talks.

Charges against lawmaker, wife draw angry GI reaction

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Daniel Riley joined the Marines in 2007 and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2010, in Afghanistan, he stepped on an IED, losing both legs and half of his left hand.

As a fellow Marine, he said, he had a physical reaction to the allegations against Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif.

"It's disgusting," he said. "Disgusting and unbelievable."

The federal case against Hunter and wife, Margaret, claims the couple — among other things — repeatedly spent campaign funds on personal expenses and claimed that they were charitable donations.

In one example, Duncan, a combat veteran, allegedly spent more than \$200 at Dick's Sporting Goods on personal items such as running shoes and attributed the expense as a dona-

tion to an unspecified wounded warriors organization.

Hunter pleaded not guilty Thursday. He and his attorneys say the prosecution is a witch hunt tainted by partisanship.

However, in a case laid out over 47 pages that included 200 allegations of questionable spending, the government brought the receipts.

In another example widely circulated on social media, the

congressman wanted to purchase "Hawaii shorts" but was out of money. His wife told him to buy them at a golf pro shop so they could claim the expense later as "some (golf) balls for wounded warriors," prosecutors allege.

Hunter was an officer in the Marines and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was the first combat veteran of those wars to be elected to Congress.

Money and loyalty: A look at the Trump-Cohen rift

Associated Press

NEW YORK — For Michael Cohen and Donald Trump, it's always been about money and loyalty.

Those were guiding principles for Cohen when he served as more than just a lawyer for Trump during the developer's rise from celebrity to president-elect. Cohen brokered deals for The Trump Organization, profited handsomely from a side venture into New York City's real estate and taxi industries and worked to make unflattering stories about Trump disappear.

Money and loyalty also drove Cohen to make guilty pleas this past week in a spinoff from the swirling investigations battering the Trump White House.

Feeling abandoned by Trump and in dire financial straits, the man who once famously declared that he would "take a bullet" for Trump now is pledging loyalty to his own family and actively seeking to cooperate with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation.

The unraveling of their relationship was laid bare last week when Cohen pleaded guilty to eight criminal charges and said in federal court that he broke campaign finance laws as part of a cover-up operation that Trump had directed.

In the days after Cohen's guilty plea, two close associates — the magazine boss who helped him squash bad stories and the top financial man at the president's business — have been granted immunity for their cooperation. These moves could have a ripple effect on the legal fortunes of Cohen and, perhaps, Trump.

For years, Cohen was a fixture in Trump's orbit.

Despite telling confidants that he thought he had a shot at White House chief of staff

after the election, Cohen was never given a West Wing job. He remained in New York when Trump moved to Washington.

Cohen found ways to profit from the arrangement, making millions from corporations by selling access to Trump, but felt adrift and isolated from Trump, according to two people familiar with his thinking who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private conversations.

But early one April morning, more than three dozen federal agents raided Cohen's home, office and hotel room.

A chief focus for investigators was Cohen's role in making payments during Trump's campaign to women who claimed they had sex with Trump, and whether campaign finance laws were violated.

Worry grew within the White House about what had been seized. That April day, Trump berated the raid as "an attack on all we stand for." But then, in a "Fox & Friends" interview, Trump began to dramatically play down his relationship with Cohen.

A dispute soon broke out between Cohen and Trump over who would pay the former fixer's mounting legal bills. Holed up in a Park Avenue hotel after his apartment flooded, Cohen began to worry about his financial future, according to the two people.

Eager to hit back and attempt to regain some hold on the story, Cohen hired Lanny Davis, a former Bill Clinton attorney, to be his public relations lawyer. Davis began striking back at the White House and lobbed a clear warning shot at the president when he released a secret recording of a conversation in which Trump appears to have knowledge about hush-money payments to former Playboy model Karen McDougal, who also alleged an affair with the developer.

Cohen is due to be sentenced Dec. 12.

Pope accused of hiding abuse allegations

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — In a remarkable and scathing recrimination, the Vatican's former ambassador to Washington accused Pope Francis and his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI on Sunday of knowingly hiding sexual abuse allegations involving a now-disgraced American cardinal, further convulsing a church in crisis.

The former envoy's 11-page broadside rocked the Roman Catholic world as Francis finished a two-day visit to Ireland, where he faced demonstrations and begged forgiveness in the once-fervently Catholic country for the "scandal and betrayal" done by decades of clerical sex abuse, and an elaborate cover-up by church authorities.

In his letter, Archbishop Cardinal Carlo Viganò, who was papal nuncio, or ambassador, in Washington from 2011 to 2016, accused Francis and Benedict of being aware of and tolerating the transgressions of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the former archbishop in Washington, for years.

McCarrick resigned on July 28 after news reports disclosed that he had a 50-year history of sexual relations with male seminarians and young priests, some consensual, some forced.

Viganò, 77, is a controversial figure in the church and may have his own agenda. A longtime critic and political enemy of Francis, he was recalled from Washington two years ago amid allegations that he'd become embroiled in the U.S. political battle over same-sex marriage, which he bitterly opposed.

Speaking to reporters on his flight home from Dublin late Sunday, Francis declined to comment on the letter, saying it "speaks for itself." He said he would trust journalists to judge its veracity. The Vatican offered no other comment.

Macron backs new push for united EU defense

Associated Press

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron announced a new push Monday for a European defense project, saying the continent's security shouldn't rely so much on the U.S.

In a speech to French ambassadors in Paris, Macron said "Europe cannot rely on the United States only for its security. It's up to us to meet our

responsibilities and guarantee our security, and therefore European sovereignty."

He said discussions on defense cooperation should be extended to all European countries and Russia, on condition that progress is made with Moscow on the fighting in eastern Ukraine between the government and Russia-backed separatists. He did not elaborate.

Macron's speech aimed to set out the roadmap of French diplomacy for the next year.

Since his election in May 2017, the 40-year-old leader has called for a more integrated European Union, with a common European defense budget and security doctrine.

In November, EU countries officially launched a new era in defense cooperation with a pro-

gram of joint military investment and project development aimed at helping the EU confront its security challenges.

Of the EU's 28 member nations, 23 signed up to the process, known as permanent structured cooperation, or PESCO.

Britain, which is leaving the EU in 2019, and Denmark, which has a defense opt-out, were among those not taking part.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Titanic passenger's watch sells at auction

TX DALLAS — A pocket watch that was recovered from a passenger who died on the Titanic sold at auction for \$57,500.

Heritage Auctions said the watch, which sold Saturday, had been recovered from passenger Sinai Kantor, 34, a Russian immigrant who managed to get his wife, Miriam, to a lifeboat before he died in icy waters after the ship hit an iceberg.

Kantor's body was later pulled from the Atlantic Ocean and he was buried in New York.

The pocket watch was sold by a direct descendant of Miriam and Sinai Kantor.

American flag stilt house burns off coast

FL PORT RICHEY — The American flag stilt house off Florida's coast was destroyed by fire after a lightning strike.

The often-photographed home that attracted scores of boaters burned Saturday in the Gulf of Mexico off the Pasco County shore.

Pasco County used remote pumps and a fireboat to try to save the home but reported the structure was a total loss.

The department said lightning caused the fire.

The home was known for having the American flag painted on two sides of the structure. It was also featured on the website of Visit Florida, the state's tourism agency.

Judge scolds deputies for illegal detention

ID COEUR D'ALENE — A northern Idaho judge scolded sheriff's deputies after

a man was held at gunpoint for having a loud muffler and driving slightly more than the speed limit.

The Coeur d'Alene Press reported that Judge Lansing Haynes dismissed methamphetamine and paraphernalia charges against Jared A. Tanner, 28, on Thursday. In his remarks, Haynes said deputies intentionally detained Tanner illegally and unconstitutionally beyond the reason for the original traffic stop.

According to police reports, Tanner was pulled over by a Kootenai County deputy on May 9 for driving 31 mph in a 25 mph speed zone, as well as having a loud muffler. It took nearly an hour to write the two tickets. In that time, deputies called a drug dog to search the car.

Fight at football game prompts evacuation

AR LITTLE ROCK — Authorities said a fight during a Little Rock high school football game caused panic and prompted more than 38,000 people in attendance to quickly exit the stadium, resulting in a few minor injuries.

Little Rock police spokesman Steve Moore said a disturbance happened Saturday night during the third quarter of the game between Benton and Bryant high schools.

Authorities said the crowd at the game might have thought shots had been fired, causing people to flee. Police said the sound of a barricade being knocked over might also have spooked the crowd.

Man says he spent at least a day in sewer

DE WILMINGTON — Fire officials in Delaware said a man they pulled from a sewer system told rescuers he'd spent at least a day

stuck underground.

The News Journal reported that roughly 30 firefighters and paramedics were called to a Wilmington intersection at about 1:45 p.m. Saturday after a passer-by reported hearing a voice coming from a nearby sewer grate.

Michael Schaal, a battalion chief with the city's fire department, told the newspaper two rescuers were lowered into the sewer, found the man and pulled him out about 22 minutes after the department arrived on scene.

Schaal said the man told firefighters he fell in about a mile from where he was rescued and had been lost for at least a day.

Tribe feasts on whale killed by ship

WA SEKIU — A 31-foot humpback whale struck and killed by a ship is being turned into a feast by the Makah Indian Tribe.

The Seattle Times reported that the tiny tribe with a reservation on the northwestern tip of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington state has been butchering the whale that was pulled ashore Thursday.

Makah Tribe Chairman Nathan Tyler said the tribe has deep regrets about the death of the whale, but it will live on through the tribe's culture.

Authorities said the whale had a broken jaw and fractured skull.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration spokesman Michael Milstein said the juvenile male humpback was likely feeding when it was struck and killed by a ship.

Man suspected of biting off his girlfriend's ear

HI HILO — Police said a Big Island man beat his girlfriend and a 77-year-old

man with a meat cleaver and also bit off a part of the woman's ear.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported that Puna patrol officers received a report of a woman being assaulted with a knife Tuesday night.

Officers said the woman, 53, had multiple lacerations on her face and a partially severed ear.

Police said the woman and the man were parking a vehicle when they were confronted by the woman's boyfriend, who forced himself into the car holding the meat cleaver.

Police said the boyfriend struck the man multiple times in the head with the cleaver's handle and struck the woman repeatedly with his fists.

The attacker, 41, was arrested and is facing eight charges.

Thief returns stolen office supplies tenfold

LA MINDEN — Someone who stole pencils and markers from a Louisiana office more than 40 years ago has sent an anonymous tenfold donation of office supplies to make up.

The Times of Shreveport reported Friday that the box of new pens, pencils and highlighters arrived Wednesday at the Louisiana State University AgCenter extension office in Minden.

A letter says the sender took a box of pencils and some markers while a teen summer worker whose mother was struggling to make ends meet in the 1970s.

The writer asked the office to use the supplies or share them with a needy family. The signature was "Forgiven and Free."

Area nutrition agent Joan Almond put a photo of the note on Facebook, saying it shows God never gives up on us.

From wire reports

On a mission to provide objective reporting to America's military, wherever they serve.
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STARS AND STRIPES®

Swinney delivers on promise

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Few believed 10 years ago Dabo Swinney could transform Clemson into a perennial championship contender.

It was a longshot that he even got the job. But there he stood in an ill-fitting orange coat, the down-home guy with the folksy dialogue and no head coaching experience, smiling, trying to make a good first impression.

It sounded like the normal rhetoric from the new guy when Swinney vowed Clemson's football program would be second to none and that the skeptics should take another look because, "We will not disappoint."

But a decade later, they haven't.

Clemson has lived up to that pledge with seven 10-win seasons, four Atlantic Coast Conference crowns, the 2016 national title and has become one of the top programs in the sport.

There isn't one blueprint for college football success, but former Texas coach Mack Brown said Clemson has all the necessary ingredients:

- A dynamic leader people believe in.

- Resolve to stick with an overall plan yet having a willingness to adjust.

- Ability to consistently recruit the best in players.

- Top-notch coaches and resources.

- Commitment from administrators.

"You can't have a program that wins like Clemson's without those things," said Brown, who has a national championship on his resume.

Brown also believes Clemson has the mix to keep the run going for a while.

Swinney is still one of Clemson's biggest cheerleaders, but he has demonstrated to players that he is a leader with vision who'll accept nothing less than their best.

"You've got to change the inside before you can change the outside," Swinney said.

Swinney seemed to have little

chance at the fulltime job when then-Clemson athletic director Terry Don Phillips showed Tommy Bowden the door six games into the 2008 season and elevated the Tigers' 38-year-old receivers coach to take over.

Phillips, who retired in 2012, said when he went to Clemson's practices, he'd find himself watching receivers and Swinney's animated coaching style. When Phillips walked through the football offices, he'd find players packed in Swinney's room, many who were not receivers.

"He just has a way" with players, Phillips said.

Still, when entrusting a football team like Clemson's to a new coach, everyone has an opinion "and hiring a receivers coach who was never a coordinator is not what they had in mind," Phillips said with a laugh.

Swinney was called a stop-gap, a "coupon coach" hired on the cheap at less than \$1 million who was way out of his depth.

And for a minute, it looked like it would be a short ride for Swinney.

Clemson won its first ACC Atlantic Division title in Swinney's initial season, yet when the Tigers finished 6-7 in 2010, plenty of fans, boosters and people of influence wondered if Swinney was indeed the guy to make Clemson a perennial title contender.

Inside the program, there was still belief in Swinney.

"We knew he was and we knew if we kept believing, things would change," said record-setting quarterback Tajh Boyd.

They did. Boyd and the Tigers were 32-8 from 2011-2013.

It helped, Boyd said, that Tiger coaches went after and landed some of the top players in the country. The 2011 roster included NFL receivers DeAndre Hopkins, Martavis Bryant and Sammy Watkins.

"You could see the talent getting better each time," Boyd said.

When you win, more players get to play meaning a bigger buy-in from everyone, said Brown, who also revived North

Carolina before moving to Texas.

An appealing style of play under the leadership of personable coaches has also contributed to Clemson's rise.

Defensive coordinator Brent Venables is on the top of that list.

Phillips said his full-blown coaching search in 2008 included Venables, who was Oklahoma's defensive coordinator at the time. Three years later, Venables reached out to Phillips that he might be ready to change jobs. Phillips told Swinney and the coach called Venables, who now runs one of the most respected defenses in the country.

Then there are the players that Boyd mentioned.

Boyd himself was almost never a Tiger.

He said if Philip Fulmer wasn't fired at Tennessee 10 years ago, he would've signed with the Vols and never come to Clemson. Instead, Clemson assistant Danny Pearman, who remains with the staff, convinced Boyd to visit with Swinney.

Now players like Boyd, tailback C.J. Spiller and quarterback Kyle Parker maintain connections with the school. Parker recently completed two years a graduate assistant. Former All-American defensive lineman Da'Quan Bowers currently follows a similar path.

Swinney has also maintained a solid core of assistants who players can count on.

Venables begins his seventh year on staff. Co-offensive coordinators Tony Elliott and Jeff Scott were former Clemson teammates who were on staff and were promoted when Arkansas coach Chad Morris left after the 2014.

"You see the same faces year after year," senior tight end Milan Richard said. "That's a benefit for us."

At the top, of course, is Swinney.

The coach simply says what he feels and makes sure his players are told not what they'd like to hear, but what they need to hear.

"The best," Swinney said, "is yet to come."

Hawaii wins Little League title

Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — It only took one pitch for Mana Lau Kong to deliver Hawaii its first Little League World Series title in a decade.

Against a South Korea team that hadn't surrendered a home run in the tournament, Kong drove the first pitch his team saw over the center field fence. As he rounded the bases and headed home, his teammates poured out of the dugout in a pack led by pitcher Ka'olu Holt and formed a huddle around home plate.

"It was great," Holt said, "because we all knew that pitcher was tough to hit."

Holt took it from there, throwing a two-hitter to lead Hawaii to a 3-0 victory in the Little League World Series championship, the first shutout in a title game since 2002. It was Holt's first-ever complete game.

The team from Honolulu allowed just three runs in the entire tournament, shut out four of its five opponents and struck out 53 batters in 34 innings.

"Someone asked me, what's the strength of the team, and I honestly have to say, it's that they play as a team," Hawaii manager Gerald Oda said. "Ka'olu pitching, or Aukai (Kea) pitching, Mana hitting a home run, it's everybody just doing the best that they can do. Once they bought in and once they accepted their roles, it makes my job a lot easier."

In the bottom of the second inning, Hawaii had the bases loaded with no outs, but failed to score. So Oda took a more aggressive approach on the basepaths with two runners in scoring position in the third.

Pinch-runner Zachary Won scored Hawaii's second run on a wild pitch from starter Kim Yeong-hyeon. As catcher Kim Gi-jeong chased the ball, Oda sent Taylin Oana all the way home from second to give Hawaii its third run.

No. 1 Halep ousted in US Open opener

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Simona Halep made a quick-as-can-be exit from the U.S. Open on Monday, becoming the first No. 1-seeded woman to lose her opening match at the Grand Slam tournament in the half-century of the professional era.

Halep simply was overwhelmed by the power-based game of 44th-ranked Kaia Kanepi of Estonia 6-2, 6-4 in a match that was stunningly lopsided and lasted all of 76 minutes.

It was the first match at the rebuilt Louis Armstrong Stadium, which now has a retractable roof, and what a way to get things started. That cover was not needed to protect from rain on Day 1 at the year's last major tournament — although some protection from the bright sun and its 90-degree heat might have been appreciated.

Since professionals were

admitted to the Grand Slam tournaments in 1968, only five times did women who were seeded No. 1 lost their opening match at a major — and never before had it happened at the U.S. Open. It happened twice to Martina Hingis and once to Steffi Graf at Wimbledon, once to Angelique Kerber at the French Open and once to Virginia Ruzici at the Australian Open.

Halep won the French Open in June for her first Grand Slam title and is assured of remaining at No. 1 after the U.S. Open, even with her first-round departure. She got off to a slow start at Roland Garros this year, too, dropping her opening set, also by a 6-2 score, but ended up pulling out the victory there and adding six more to lift the trophy.

There would be no such turnaround for her against Kanepi, a big hitter who dictated the points to claim her second ca-

reer win against a top-ranked player. Kanepi has shown the occasional ability to grab significant results, including a run to the quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows a year ago — when Halep also lost in the first round.

Halep's 2017 defeat came against five-time major champion Maria Sharapova, though. Kanepi is simply not that caliber of player.

On this day, though, Kanepi took charge of baseline exchanges, compiling a 26-9 edge in winners, 14 on her favored forehand side alone. Wearing two strips of athletic tape on her left shoulder, the right-handed Kanepi also had far more unforced errors, 28-9, but that high-risk, high-reward style ultimately paid off.

"Staying aggressive," Kanepi said, "all the time."

Early in the second set, on the way to falling behind by two breaks at 3-0, Halep slammed

her racket twice, drawing a warning for a code violation from the chair umpire.

Eventually, Halep got going a bit, taking advantage of Kanepi's mistakes to break back twice and get to 4-all in that set.

But Kanepi ended a 14-stroke exchange with a cross-court forehand volley winner to break right back, then served out the victory.

A long list of returns was scheduled for later Monday, including past champions Serena Williams, Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka on the court after missing last year's U.S. Open.

In addition, defending champions Rafael Nadal and Sloane Stephens were slated to play.

Williams was to face Magda Linette in Arthur Ashe Stadium to start the night session, followed by Nadal against David Ferrer in a rematch of the 2013 French Open final.

Freshman Daniels gets starting nod for USC

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Freshman J.T. Daniels has won the competition to start at quarterback for No. 15 Southern California.

Coach Clay Helton announced his decision in a news release Sunday night, ending the 3½-week audition for three strong contenders to be the successor to Sam Darnold.

When he takes the Coliseum field against UNLV on Saturday, the 18-year-old Daniels will be the first true freshman to start at quarterback for USC since Matt Barkley in 2009. Only three true freshmen have ever started a game at quarterback for the Trojans: Barkley, Heisman Trophy winner Carson Palmer (1998) and Rob Johnson (1991).

"I am honored that Coach Helton picked me as the starter," Daniels said in a statement released by the school, which hasn't allowed freshmen to speak to the media during camp. "I understand this it is a huge responsibility and I need to work hard to be prepared to handle it. It was a tight competition between all the quarterbacks throughout camp. We pushed each other every day. I felt that Coach's decision wouldn't be wrong whoever he picked."

Daniels is a passing prodigy who was named the 2017-18 Gatorade Male High School Athlete of the Year and the 2017 Gatorade National Football Player of the Year at Mater Dei High School in Orange County. He then graduated one full year early to enroll at USC this fall, likely sensing the chance to contend for the starting job immediately.

He looked sharp from the start of his fall camp competition with redshirt freshman Jack Sears and sophomore Matt Fink, who both had marginally more experience in the Trojans' offense.

"At the completion of camp, it became clear to me and our staff that JT had taken a step ahead of Matt, Jack and (walk-on sophomore) Holden (Thomas)," Helton said in a statement. "I thought the quarterback competition was very competitive and fair and I am satisfied with how our staff handled the process. We look forward to each young man continuing to grow and progress at the position and we are very fortunate to have each one here at USC."

Helton didn't formally make his decision until watching a mock game Saturday in which all three quarterbacks got a chance

to impress the coaches.

"I reminded each (quarterback) that they need to keep pushing to be ready to play when called upon," Helton said. "After this camp, we have no doubt that each one can lead our team when asked to do so. All are eager to keep working hard."

Fink is the only candidate with any collegiate playing experience, making three brief appearances last season. Sears was Darnold's successor at San Clemente High School, and he redshirted last season behind Darnold.

Daniels won't get an easy path in his first September at the controls of USC's offense. After the Trojans open at home against the capable Rebels, they'll make consecutive road trips to No. 13 Stanford and No. 23 Texas.

He also has big cleats to fill after the departure of Darnold, who won a Rose Bowl and a Pac-12 championship in his two seasons in charge. Darnold then was the third overall pick in the NFL Draft by the New York Jets.

Helton also released his opening-week depth chart for the Trojans on Sunday night, with Fink listed as Daniels' backup.

Rays hand BoSox 1st '18 sweep

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Blake Snell had his best fastball and that was more than enough against baseball's best team.

The All-Star lefty pitched two-hit ball over six innings and the Tampa Bay Rays won their eighth straight game Sunday, beating Boston 9-1 to hand the major league-leading Red Sox their first sweep of the season.

"There was a lot of energy today," Boston manager Alex Cora said, "but the guy on the mound sucked it up."

Snell (16-5) allowed one run and struck out eight. He has given up no more than one earned run in 14 consecutive starts at home, and he has a 1.08 ERA in four outings against the Red Sox this year.

"I almost have to tell myself to wake up over there. He's so good I feel like I don't even have to do much," Rays third baseman Matt Duffy said. "I'm just kind of chillin' over there. I've got a really good seat for the game. When he pitches I go, 'OK, wake up, the ball might come your way — if they make contact with it.'"

Boston (90-42) has lost six of eight and was outscored 24-5 in the three-game set. Duffy had three hits and drove in two runs for the surprising Rays, who completed their first undefeated homestand of more than one series. They won all seven games against the Royals and Red Sox, and are nine games above .500 (70-61) for the first time since June 2015.

"For us to do it against Kansas City and then Boston, the best team in the league right now, to be able to do that to them says a lot about our team," Snell said. "I'm excited to be in this clubhouse with these guys."

Red Sox starter Nathan Eovaldi (5-6), acquired from the Rays in a July 25 trade, dropped to 2-2 with Boston.

Roundup

Morales makes history in Jays' loss

Associated Press

TORONTO — Kendrys Morales became the seventh player in major league history to homer in at least seven consecutive games, going deep in the third inning of the Toronto Blue Jays' 8-3 loss to the Philadelphia Phillies on Sunday.

Morales hit a two-run shot off Vince Velasquez, his 21st homer of the season. He has a chance to equal the major league record of homers in eight consecutive games, shared by Ken Griffey Jr., Dale Long and Don Mattingly.

Rhys Hoskins and Carlos Santana hit back-to-back home runs for Philadelphia. Maikel Franco and Wilson Ramos each had two-run shots as the Phillies avoided a three-game sweep.

Ramos had four hits. He singled in the first, doubled home a run in the second, singled in the sixth and homered off Tyler Clippard in the eighth, his 15th.

Velasquez (9-9) allowed two runs and three hits in five innings for the victory as Philadelphia won for the second time in eight games.

Marco Estrada (7-10) allowed five runs and seven hits in two-plus innings as Toronto's winning streak ended at five.

Nationals 15, Mets 0: Trea Turner set off a lively dugout celebration after scoring a run that ended Washington's 32-inning scoreless drought and then the Nationals really went wild at the plate, hammering host New York.

The Nationals had been shut out in three straight games — for the first time since the team moved from Montreal to Washington in 2005 — before Juan Soto's RBI groundout in the sixth.

Yankees 5, Orioles 3: Luke Voit went 3-for-3 with a two-run homer to help Luis Severino earn his major league-leading 17th victory, and visiting New York completed a four-game sweep.

Rookie Miguel Andujar also had three hits and two RBIs for New York. The Yankees have won eight of nine to move with-

in six games of first-place Boston in the AL East, the closest they've been since Aug. 1.

Indians 12, Royals 5: Jason Kipnis hit an inside-the-park homer and finished with four RBIs, Edwin Encarnacion added a two-run shot and Cleveland beat host Kansas City to snap a four-game skid.

Kipnis rounded the bases for his two-run homer in the ninth inning, when his high flyball to right field bounced off the top of the wall and into no-man's land. It was his second career inside-the-park job and the second for the Indians this year.

Astros 3, Angels 1: Framber Valdez gave up one run over five innings in his first career start, and visiting Houston beat Los Angeles for its fifth straight win.

The Astros improved to 47-21 on the road, including an 18-5 mark in California.

Cubs 9, Reds 0: Kyle Hendricks allowed two hits in seven innings, David Bote and Kyle Schwarber homered and Chicago beat visiting Cincinnati to complete a four-game sweep.

Jason Heyward went 4-for-4 with a triple and drove in two runs for the NL Central-leading Cubs. Bote added two hits and three RBIs.

Cardinals 12, Rockies 3: Matt Carpenter tied a St. Louis record with four doubles, pitcher Austin Gomber had a two-run infield single in a six-run first inning, and the Cardinals routed host Colorado.

Carpenter matched a franchise mark that Joe "Ducky" Medwick set on Aug. 4, 1937, against the Boston Bees (now Braves). Carpenter doubled twice in the first, had another in the third and lined his fourth in the seventh on a day when St. Louis pounded out 16 hits. The first baseman wound up 4-for-5 with two RBIs.

Athletics 6, Twins 2: Matt Chapman homered twice, Jed Lowrie drove in three runs with a homer and double, and visiting Oakland's bullpen preserved an effective outing by call-up Chris Bassitt in a win over Minnesota.

Oakland maintained at least a four-game advantage for the second wild card spot over Seattle. The A's open a three-game series Monday at AL West-leading Houston.

Braves 4, Marlins 0: Kevin Gausman and four relievers combined on a two-hitter, and Atlanta beat host Miami despite an ongoing offensive slump.

The Braves earned a split even though they scored just seven earned runs in the four-game series. The NL East leaders finished 14-5 against last-place Miami this year.

Diamondbacks 5, Mariners 2: Paul Goldschmidt hit his 30th homer, Zack Greinke won for the first time in almost a month and host Arizona avoided a three-game sweep at the hands of Seattle.

With the victory and Colorado's 12-3 loss to St. Louis, the Diamondbacks were back alone in first place in the NL West.

Dodgers 7, Padres 3: Justin Turner drove in five runs while Manny Machado put Los Angeles ahead with a two-run homer, and the Dodgers swept a three-game series against visiting San Diego.

Turner tied it up with a two-run double in the fifth. Machado added his 31st home run of the season, and his seventh in 35 games with the Dodgers. Machado had a three-run homer Saturday.

The victory kept the third-place Dodgers 2½ games back of the Arizona Diamondbacks in the NL West.

Brewers 7, Pirates 4: Mike Moustakas and Manny Pina each hit a two-run homer in the third inning, Jonathan Schoop went deep in the seventh and host Milwaukee beat Pittsburgh.

White Sox 7, Tigers 2: Michael Kopech pitched six impressive innings for his first major league win and visiting Chicago scored four runs in the third against Detroit.

Giants 3, Rangers 1: Derek Holland pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning to beat his former team as host San Francisco topped Texas.