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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy fires 3rd senior officer this week

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — For the third time this week, the Navy has removed a senior officer from duty aboard a warship — the second from the 7th Fleet, according to a Navy statement Thursday.

Lt. Cmdr. Randall Clemons was relieved of duty Tuesday “due to a loss of confidence in his ability to fulfill his responsibilities as executive officer” of the destroyer USS McCampbell, according to the statement. Capt. Jonathan Duffy, commanding officer of Destroyer Squadron 15, removed Clemons from his position, the Navy said.

“The U.S. Navy holds executive officers to a very high standard and holds them accountable when those standards are not met,” the Navy said in the statement.

The executive officer is the second-in-command aboard a ship and manages day-to-day activities, such as maintenance and logistics. The executive officer also takes charge when the commanding officer is absent.

Clemons was “administratively reassigned” within the destroyer squadron, which is based at Yokosuka, according to the Navy statement. Lt. Cmdr. Chris Bland, the squadron’s chief staff officer, is assuming interim executive officer duties aboard the McCampbell.

“Executive officers are entrusted with significant responsibilities to their Sailors and their ships,” the Navy said in its statement. “They are expected to maintain the Navy’s high standards for leadership demonstrating competence in their duties at all times.”

Clemons enlisted in 1997 and was commissioned in 2003 after graduating from Prai-

rie View A&M University in Texas, according to his official Navy biography. He previously served as integrated air missile defense officer for the 7th Fleet. He was the executive officer of the destroyer USS Fitzgerald in the immediate aftermath of the ship’s fatal 2017 collision.

His removal came the same day Capt. Tadd Gorman was removed as commander of the cruiser USS Antietam for “a loss of confidence in his personal judgment and ability to lead,” the Navy said in a statement Tuesday. Gorman was the second Antietam commander to be fired since 2017 when Capt. Joseph Carrigan was relieved about a month after the ship ran aground off Yokosuka.

Clemons’ and Gorman’s removals were unrelated, the Navy said in its Thursday statement.

On Monday, the Navy relieved Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Cebik from

his post as executive officer of the attack submarine USS Jimmy Carter, homeported at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Wash., due to loss of confidence in his personal judgment, according to a Navy statement.

Cebik was also reassigned to an administrative job while the Navy investigates questions about his personal conduct, according to the statement.

Both Clemons and Gorman took on their positions this year. Clemons had served as the McCampbell’s executive officer since February, while Gorman had spent less than three months on the Antietam. Cebik spent about a year and four months in his position before his removal. Gorman was reassigned to Task Force 70, based at Yokosuka, and is now working on the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, according to a Tuesday report by Military.com.

Army officer on NASA short list of 12 for moon mission

BY SCOTT WYLAND

Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. Anne McClain is one of 12 female astronauts who could become the first woman on the moon by 2024, a list compiled by NASA shows.

She’s also the only one of the 12 who’s in the Army.

After President Donald Trump directed NASA in late 2017 to return to the moon, the space agency said it would make putting the first woman on the lunar surface one of its key objectives.

But the Army, which most people associate with earth-bound, ground warfare rather than space travel, may appear to be an unusual pool from which to draw astronauts.

McClain, who joined NASA

in 2013, is nevertheless a seasoned astronaut and has 2,000 flight hours in 20 different aircraft, including the Black Hawk helicopter and C-12 Huron transport plane, under her belt.

Experience in the Army has taught her to work in austere environments with few amenities, and also the value of teamwork, leaving her well-suited for space missions, NASA astronaut and retired Col. Shane Kimbrough said in a recent talk at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

“It’s all about how you interact with people, how you can be a team player, how you can be a leader,” Kimbrough said. “All that are things that I learned in the Army, so it has really helped me personally ... at NASA.”

McClain’s recent stint on the

International Space Station also will help her as she competes to be part of NASA’s return to the moon, Kimbrough said.

A native of Spokane, Wash., McClain earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical/aeronautical engineering from West Point and master’s degrees in aerospace engineering and international relations from the Universities of Bath and Bristol in England. If chosen, she would be part of NASA’s Artemis program, named after the Greek goddess of the moon, who was the twin sister of Apollo — the name of the NASA program that put the first man on the moon 50 years ago.

Two male soldiers also could vie for a place in NASA’s first lunar missions in half a century — Col. Andrew Morgan and

astronaut candidate Lt. Col. Frank Rubio. NASA’s original plan was to resume manned lunar missions in 2028 but the timeline was moved up by four years at the White House’s urging.

Part of the renewed interest in returning to the moon is to explore the mass of ice identified at its south pole, NASA says on its website. Scientists think the ice can be converted to drinking water, oxygen and hydrogen fuel, which could allow the moon to serve as a way station for voyages to Mars. NASA hopes to get missions to the red planet underway in the 2030s.

The moon’s ice also might have uses on Earth, giving the lunar missions economic as well as scientific value, NASA says on its website.

US, Taliban resume Afghan talks

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A United States envoy and the Taliban resumed negotiations Thursday on ending America's longest war.

A Taliban member familiar with, but not part of, the talks that resumed in Qatar said U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad also met one-on-one Wednesday with the Taliban's lead negotiator, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.

The Taliban member spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk with reporters.

Baradar is one of the Taliban's founders and has perhaps the strongest influence on the insurgent group's rank-and-file members. Some in Afghanistan fear that Taliban fighters who reject a deal with the U.S. could migrate to other militant groups such as the brutal local affiliate of Islamic State, which claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at a Kabul wedding over the weekend that killed at least 80 people.

That attack again raised fears among Afghans that a U.S.-Taliban deal will bring little peace for long-suffering civilians who have died by the tens of thousands in the past decade alone.

The U.S. and the Taliban have held several rounds of negotiations in the past year on issues including a U.S. troop withdrawal, a cease-fire, intra-Afghan negotiations to follow and Taliban guarantees that Afghanistan will not be a launch pad for global terrorist attacks.

Previously, Khalilzad has said the intra-Afghan negotiations will be the occasion to work out thorny issues such as constitutional reforms, the fate of the country's many militias and even the name for Afghanistan, as the Taliban still refers to it as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

It was not immediately clear when a deal might be reached after both the U.S. and Taliban earlier this month signaled they were nearing one. President Donald Trump, who wants to

bring home at least some of the 13,000 troops he says remain in Afghanistan before next year's election, was briefed on the negotiations Aug. 16.

This week, Trump said it was "ridiculous" that U.S. troops have been in the country for almost 18 years. Two U.S. servicemembers were killed on Wednesday, joining more than 2,400 U.S. service personnel who have died since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001 to topple the Taliban, whose government had harbored al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

Trump this week also said Afghanistan remains dangerous and "we have to have a presence" — a stance that could complicate talks with the Taliban, whose top demand has been the departure of all U.S. and allied troops, which number close to 20,000.

The prospect of a troop withdrawal has created widespread concern that another civil war in Afghanistan could follow as various armed parties jostle for power.

Lewis back to command at Iwakuni

BY JAMES BOLINGER

Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — A Marine colonel with prior experience at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni returned Thursday to assume command of the base.

Col. Frederick L. Lewis Jr. took over from Col. Richard F. Fuerst in a ceremony in front of a formation of Marines.

Lewis, an F/A-18 Hornet pilot, returns to MCAS Iwakuni after a tour in London as the lead planner for United Kingdom military operations in the Middle East.

He was previously the commander of the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron at Iwakuni from June 2012 to June 2014. He left that post for studies at the National War College in Washington, according to his official biography.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to return to Iwakuni," Lewis said in a written statement provided to the media before the ceremony. "I am humbled to command the finest Marines, Sailors, civilians and Japanese partners that make up MCAS Iwakuni.

"The capabilities of this installation, and the special relationship that we have with the community makes this one of the most important locations for US and Japanese forces in the region."

After three years in command, Fuerst, an MV-22 Osprey pilot, departs Iwakuni to become the director of operations for Marine Corps Installations Command at the Pentagon.

During his tenure, Fuerst oversaw the final stages of the \$7 billion overhaul of MCAS Iwakuni, which is home to the Marine Corps' most advanced fighter, the F-35B Lightning II. He also coordinated the relocation of the Navy's Carrier Air Wing 5 from Naval Air Station Atsugi to MCAS Iwakuni in 2018.

Kadena airman helps save boy

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II
AND AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

CHATAN, Okinawa — Two months after arriving in Okinawa, Air Force Master Sgt. Roger Halle found himself resuscitating a 4-year-old boy who nearly drowned at Araha Beach.

Halle, stationed at Kadena Air Base with the 18th Civil Engineer Squadron as the assistant chief of operations, was recognized along with three local lifeguards Monday by Chatan Mayor Masaharu Noguni for their efforts July 26 to revive the boy who was visiting from Hong Kong.

Noguni praised Halle's rapid response to the emergency and credited all first responders' efforts with saving the young

boy's life.

"Mr. Halle used his professional skills to save a life with speedy techniques and tremendous courage," Noguni said through an interpreter during a ceremony Monday to present Halle with a letter of appreciation. "I thank you for your daily work and using the skills to save a life quickly."

Halle, of Willard, Mo., received the letter at the Chatan Town Hall in front of his family and fellow airmen and gave credit to the other lifeguards who were on the scene with him.

"It's not (only) me; I was there to help and assist, but in my opinion, they were the ones who saved his life," he said.

Halle, who works at the air base fire station, said his 13

years as a first responder and his Air Force training kicked in that day at Araha Beach.

Halle; his wife, Stephanie Halle; and their five sons headed for their first trip to the local beach around 3 p.m., he said. About three hours later the announcement played over the loudspeakers that the lifeguards were going off-duty for the day.

While Halle was talking with another beachgoer, "I heard screaming," he told Stars and Stripes on Aug. 8.

He turned to see a man carrying a child to the shore from the netted area of the water.

"I believe it was the father that was pulling him up, and once I saw him, I knew it was not good," Halle said.

Most C-130s return after USAF inspection

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The Air Force has completed inspections of more than a quarter of its fleet of C-130 Hercules transports, which were pulled from flying operations after the discovery of signs of cracking on the wing joints.

Of 113 aircraft inspected, all but one have been cleared to return to operational duty, Air Mobility Command said Wednesday.

Ten other aircraft singled out for inspection were already

undergoing depot maintenance and will be inspected on schedule, officials said.

“This process has been swift, deliberate and effective,” Col. Jed McCray, AMC associate director of logistics, engineering and force protection, said in a statement. “Of the 113 C-130s inspected, only one has been found to have a rainbow fitting crack, and that aircraft will require depot-level maintenance to repair it and bring it back into service. All others have been returned to duty without issue.”

The upper and lower rainbow fittings connect the outer

wings with the center wing box, which sits over the fuselage on a C-130.

AMC Commander Gen. Maryanne Miller on Aug. 7 ordered the temporary grounding of 123 C-130 H- and J-model C-130s, a move that affected more than a quarter of the 450 C-130 aircraft in Air Force inventory.

The suspension came after maintainers discovered cracks on the lower center wing joint on an Air National Guard C-130H model at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., during depot maintenance.

Miller’s order applied to C-130s in the fleet that had yet to

receive an extended service life center wing box and had logged more than 15,000 flight hours.

Each inspection for cracks took about eight hours. AMC said that if cracking was identified, the plane would either be flown to depot or a depot team would be brought to the aircraft locations, depending on the severity of the findings.

The statement did not say where the aircraft found to have cracks was based and where it would be repaired.

The grounding did not affect the Hercules’ support to overseas contingency operations, AMC said.

Luxury cottages offer more comfort to Marines in Calif.

By MARTIN EGNASH

Stars and Stripes

When Marines say they go to every clime and place, they usually mean rugged jungles, inhospitable mountains or dangerous desert terrain.

Now, they can add to that list luxurious cottages just feet away from a sandy beach with gently lapping waves.

The Marine Corps recently dedicated several cottages at San Onofre Beach in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Servicemembers and California residents came together Aug. 15 for a dedication ceremony for the cottages, which have replaced older beach trailers that were beyond repair and will provide a comfortable place for off-duty Marines to relax, the Corps said in a statement earlier this month.

“I think they’re awesome,” said Marine veteran James Hoyet, who retired from the Corps earlier this month.

“In general, I don’t think Marines get nice things. We have the smallest budget ... We get the shorter end of the stick on basically everything, especially when it comes to extra/new creature comforts.”

But over the years, the Corps has been improving the quality

of life for Marines with projects like this, Hoyet said.

“It’s a noticeable difference than when I first came in,” he said.

Each of the cottages has a beach view, and all of them are “built to last,” with new metal roofs, composite siding and railings and new, stainless-steel appliances and furniture, the Corps statement said.

The cottages are more luxurious and accessible too. They feature walk-in showers and bigger patios and doorways wide enough to accommodate wounded or disabled servicemembers who use wheelchairs.

Staff Sgt. Connor McGregor, a data network systems chief who recently moved to Camp Pendleton, said Marines there are raving about the cottages.

“One of the first things my wife and I heard about were these cottages on the beach,” McGregor said.

The cottages will be an especially good resource for single Marines who live in the barracks, McGregor said.

“They can’t invite their relatives to [where they live], so this is a great alternative,” he said.

“These are a great way for Marines to get rest and relaxation away from the barracks.”

Pearl Harbor’s Dry Dock 1 celebrates 100 years of service

By WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — The Pearl Harbor dry dock that was key in turning the tide of World War II in America’s favor was bestowed a Hawaiian name Wednesday to commemorate its centennial anniversary.

Workers at the shipyard labored around the clock for three days in late May 1942 so the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown could take part in the Battle of Midway, regarded by many historians as the turning point in the Pacific war.

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard’s Dry Dock 1, which began operation in 1919 with its flooding, was given a Hawaiian blessing during a Wednesday ceremony and named Keaonamano, which translates to “The Realm of the Sharks.”

The shipyard’s Building 1 — the site’s historic centerpiece that housed the analysts who broke Japan’s secret code during World War II — was also given a Hawaiian name: Keaowamaluha, or “The Light in the Time of Peace.”

The names were conferred in partnership with the Alii Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club,

the state’s Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Hawaii Department of Natural Resources.

Dry Dock 1 was built on ground held sacred by the people who lived on the shores of Pearl Harbor, Capt. Gregory Burton, commander of the shipyard, told the audience of roughly 500 attending the ceremony celebrating the 100-year milestone.

The new Hawaiian name is “an offering to their deified ancestors, including the shark goddess, who have protected the inhabitants since the time of creation,” Burton said.

He said the name is “quite applicable” for a Navy installation.

“As I understand it, these ancestors act as guardians or protectors,” Burton said. “The Navy has been doing the same on a global scale.”

Several hundred shipyard employees stood a short distance away watching the ceremony. Addressing them from the podium, Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said, “For the past 100 years, you guys, the workers here, have kept our Navy and our different branches fit for fighting.”

Trump now says tax cuts not required with 'strong economy'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A day after considering cutting taxes to promote economic growth, President Donald Trump changed course and said he would abandon the idea because the nation already has “a strong economy.”

Trump’s flip-flop on Wednesday came after recent market volatility and economic uncertainty and amid a debate about whether the United States was heading for a slowdown that would imperil his reelection chances. Trump earlier this week acknowledged, for the first time, that his China trade policies may mean economic pain for Americans, though he insisted the tariffs are needed for more important long-term benefits.

But his consideration of cutting payroll taxes appeared short-lived.

“I’m not looking at a tax cut now,” he told reporters at the

White House. “We don’t need it. We have a strong economy.”

Trump also knocked down the idea of indexing to the capital gains tax, which applies when investors sell assets, to inflation. He said he feared “it will be perceived, if I do it, as somewhat elitist.”

Analysts have warned that a slowdown, if not full-blown recession, could hit before next year’s election. Trump, however, has largely praised the economy’s performance and his handling of it. He has often blamed the Federal Reserve and Chairman Jerome Powell and the global slowdown for creating dark clouds at home.

“Jay Powell and the Federal Reserve have totally missed the call. I was right and just about everybody admits that,” Trump said Wednesday. “He raised interest rates too fast, too furious, and we have a normalized rate. And now we have to go the other direction.”

Some White House advisers fear Trump has undercut Powell’s credibility. They worry that the president’s calls for rate cuts and his discussion of indexing or a payroll tax cut could spook rather than reassure markets.

Trump indicated he had no choice but to impose the trade penalties that have been a drag on U.S. manufacturers, financial markets and, by some measures, American consumers.

“Somebody had to do it. I am the chosen one,” Trump said on the White House lawn, looking skyward. “Somebody had to do it. So, I’m taking on China. I’m taking on China on trade.”

China, though, said trade with the U.S. has been “mutually beneficial” and appealed to Washington to “get along with us.” A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang, expressed hope Washington can “meet China halfway” in settling disagreements.

Report: US deficit to exceed \$1T next year

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The federal budget deficit is expected to balloon to more than \$1 trillion in the next fiscal year under the first projections taking into account the big budget deal that President Donald Trump and Congress reached this summer, the Congressional Budget Office reported.

The return of \$1 trillion annual deficits comes despite Trump’s vow when running for office that he would not just balance the budget but pay down the entire national debt.

“The nation’s fiscal outlook is challenging,” said Phillip Swagel, director of the nonpartisan CBO. “Federal debt, which is already high by historical standards, is on an unsustainable course.”

The office on Wednesday upped this year’s deficit projection by \$63 billion and the cumulative deficit projection for the next decade by \$809 billion. The higher deficit projections come even as the CBO reduced its estimate for interest rates, which lowers borrowing costs, and as it raised projections for economic growth in the near term.

The number crunchers at CBO projected that the deficit for the current fiscal year will come to \$960 billion. In the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, it will exceed \$1 trillion.

The CBO said the budget deal signed into law earlier this month, which took away the prospect of a government shutdown in October and the threat of deep automatic spending cuts, would boost deficits by \$1.7 trillion over the coming decade. Increased spending on disaster relief and border security would add \$255 billion. Downward revisions to the forecast for interest rates will help the picture, trimming \$1.4 trillion.

Sanders unveils his \$16T climate plan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has released a \$16.3 trillion climate plan that builds on the Green New Deal and calls for the United States to move to renewable energy across the economy by 2050 and declare climate change a national emergency.

While the Vermont senator had already endorsed the sweeping Democratic proposal to combat climate change and had teamed up with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, of New York, on climate legislation, Sanders’ climate plan provides the most detail yet on how he envisions the climate change moonshot taking shape if he is elected president.

Sanders describes his plan,

released Thursday, as a “ten-year, nationwide mobilization centered on equity and humanity” that would create 20 million new jobs. The Green New Deal resolution, which Ocasio-Cortez put forth with Sen. Ed Markey, of Massachusetts, calls on the nation to eliminate its carbon footprint by 2030 and to shift away from fossil fuels such as oil and coal and replace them with renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power.

Among Sanders’ ideas is sourcing 100% of the country’s electricity from renewable and zero-emissions power. He is calling for committing \$2.18 trillion in grants for low- and middle-income families to weatherize and retrofit their homes and businesses, with the goal of reducing residential

energy consumption by 30%. He would charge the Energy Department with making sure that both new and existing commercial structures, as well as high-income homeowners, meet his administration’s energy retrofitting goals.

Sanders also is calling for an overhaul of the nation’s transportation system by investing in electric vehicles, high-speed rail and expanded public transit. He calls for spending \$526 billion in modernizing the electrical grid across the United States.

Sanders’ plan calls for a \$16.3 trillion investment and the campaign is proposing covering the costs over 15 years by a patchwork of measures that includes eliminating existing fossil fuel subsidies and taxes on that industry.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

County creates plan to capture loose emu

NC HILLSBOROUGH — Officials in North Carolina have tracked down an emu who's been on the loose for several weeks, but he hasn't been captured.

The Orange County Government posted a photo of Eno the Emu with a bowl of food and a bucket of water on its social media pages.

The update said Orange County Animal Services is leaving the items for the emu.

News outlets reported Eno has been on the run since June. It's unclear where he escaped from.

Nothing inside capsule from 50 years ago

NH DERRY — Officials in a New Hampshire town are trying to figure out how a recently opened time capsule from 50 years ago has nothing in it.

Library director Cara Potter in Derry told WMUR-TV that since she started there five years ago, the safe has been sitting on a shelf. Before that, it was kept at the old municipal building in town.

The combination was on the back of the safe. Potter said it took several tries to get it open recently on the 50th anniversary of when it was sealed in 1969. But it was empty.

State to restore Huey helo for firefighting

WA OLYMPIA — An aircraft nearly 50 years old is being restored to help fight wildfires in Washington state.

KING-TV reported the Department of Natural Resources is using \$1.1 million from the

state's budget to bring the Huey helicopter back to life.

The helicopter was first built in 1970 and used in Vietnam.

The DNR already has nine former Hueys in its fleet to drop water on fires across the state. The aircraft were given to the DNR free of charge when the Army decommissioned them.

Prison employee smuggled in ring

IN NEW CASTLE — Authorities said a prison food employee who was smitten with an Indiana inmate smuggled a wedding ring behind bars.

Online court records show Rebecca Landers pleaded guilty to trafficking with an inmate, a misdemeanor. A felony charge of official misconduct was dropped. She was jailed for four days before her guilty plea, and won't face any additional time behind bars.

Investigators at the Department of Correction quote Landers, 46, as saying she was in love with Chad Shackelford and planned to have him move in with her when he's released in 2022.

Councilwoman sworn in using Seuss book

MO CLAYTON — A newly elected St. Louis County councilwoman was sworn into office using a Dr. Seuss book.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that the council doesn't require members to be sworn in on a Bible, and newly elected 2nd District member Kelli Dunaway chose "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"

Her 5-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter held it for her during last week's ceremony.

Cops wear armbands after police dog dies

KS ANDOVER — A Kansas police dog named Thor died just a few weeks before he was to retire.

The Andover Police Department said in a Facebook post that officers will wear black armbands in honor of the Belgian malinois. He had a brief illness and died last weekend, just short of his 10th birthday.

Man accused of slitting boss' throat

TN NASHVILLE — Authorities allege a Tennessee man sliced his supervisor's throat with a steak knife at work, narrowly avoiding a main artery.

News outlets reported John W. Herren, 40, was arrested and charged with attempted criminal homicide.

An affidavit from Ashland City police said Herren was carrying two knives when he walked into his workplace at civil engineering firm Dale & Associates. The report said Herren went behind the supervisor's desk, grabbed the man's head and cut his throat.

Police said the supervisor was taken to Centennial Medical Center to be treated for superficial cuts on his throat.

Defendant throws table in courtroom

NY SYRACUSE — A man facing trial for raping a 74-year-old woman in Syracuse caused bedlam in the courtroom by throwing a table in the air.

The Post-Standard of Syracuse reported that Shamik King stood up during jury selection, picked up the defense table and threw it. It landed on

the prosecution table and sent splinters flying.

No one was injured, but one woman was excused from jury service after an apparent panic attack.

Probe of kids giving Nazi salute to reopen

CA GARDEN GROVE — School officials in Orange County, Calif., said they will reopen an investigation into a group of high school students seen on video giving Nazi salutes last year after more racist images surfaced, according to a report Wednesday.

The initial video obtained by the Daily Beast shows members of the boys' water polo team at Pacifica High School in an empty room. The video showed about 10 boys in a stiff-arm salute while singing a Nazi marching song.

The Garden Grove Unified School District said administrators had "addressed the situation with all students and families involved," but failed to specify what disciplinary actions it took.

The Los Angeles Times reported that since Monday officials said several other videos showing students engaged in hate speech have surfaced.

Parts of county park unknowingly auctioned

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Five acres of a Florida county park were unknowingly auctioned last year to a private company, which is threatening to sue if park visitors continue to trespass.

The Sun Sentinel reported that Miami-based Dorado Bells LLC won the bid for \$23,900 for parts of West Lake Park in Hollywood.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Pac-12 preview

Utah is narrow pick for the leader

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Pac-12's national championship drought hits 15 years this winter, and there are few signs of a respite. Several of the conference's traditional powers are in states of rebuilding or disarray heading into a season that's murkier than a Mike Leach metaphor.

Even the preseason media poll couldn't identify a clear favorite, with plucky Utah barely emerging on top after several schools essentially split the vote.

But to the coaches entrusted with returning the West Coast's major conference to national competitiveness, this seeming parity actually underlines the overall strength of a league on the rise again. Elite talent is easy to find around the Pac-12, and several programs are in a position to potentially put it all together.

"There are not a lot of conferences out there that can legitimately look up and say more than half their conference has a chance to win the conference," Stanford coach David Shaw said. "The people that know football know how deep and how difficult this conference is. The people that only want to look in two spots, in the SEC and the Big Ten footprint, you can't win them over anyway, because they're not paying attention to the scope of college football."

Still, the Pac-12 doesn't have a traditional power in peak form after graduation losses at defending champion Washington and Stanford, Southern California's miserable 2018 season and the questions still looming around resurgent Oregon and its 5-4 conference mark.

Into the gap stepped Utah, the (relative) conference newcomer with numer-

ous returning starters, an elite defense and promising quarterback Tyler Huntley. Whether the Utes live up to their hype or another power emerges, Huskies coach Chris Petersen is confident this league is on its way up again.

"Five or six years ago, the Pac-12 could do no wrong," Petersen said. "We were in the greatest position ever, and we were going to do this and that. And five years later, (people think) we don't even know how to play football anymore. It's always somewhere in between. I know we've got good players out here, and good coaches and programs. I think it's all cyclical."

Here are more things to watch during the Pac-12 football season:

Utes up front

Utah is the preseason favorite, but it's not going to anybody's head in Salt Lake City, according to coach Kyle Whittingham. In fact, he wants his Utes thinking not about national championships, but only about achieving Pac-12 supremacy, largely because the league's South Division teams are 1-7 in the league championship game. "We felt like we were going to have some preseason hype, and so we wanted to make sure that we got out ahead of it and talked to our players about just ignoring the noise and staying focused," Whittingham said.

Herbert's return

Quarterback Justin Herbert returned to Oregon for his senior season, and he'll finally have the same coach in consecutive years. Mario Cristobal's Ducks should contend for their first league title since 2014 if Herbert takes another step from his

3,000-yard season last fall. Herbert calls it "a huge bonus" to have the same coaching staff for the first time: "We go from having spent all this time learning to teaching. We're able to reach out to those younger guys, get them dialed up and up to speed so they are able to jump in as soon as we can."

Huskies recharge

Although Washington is heading into its biggest rebuilding season in a half-decade after losing 13 starters from last year's champions, quarterback Jacob Eason has hopes running high in Seattle. The touted local product returned from Georgia last season in hopes of replacing four-year starter Jake Browning this fall. Petersen insists Eason is competing with sophomore Jake Haener in camp, but most expect Eason and running back Salvon Ahmed to step in for Huskies stalwarts Browning and Myles Gaskin.

The Chip dip

UCLA is coming off its worst season since 1977 after going 3-9 in coach Chip Kelly's debut. Those Bruins largely got a pass due to the program's steady decline in Jim Mora's final seasons, and they also beat USC. But the deep-pocketed UCLA boosters who attracted Kelly will be looking for some return on their investment this fall, and they might get it if Kelly fields an improved offense around quarterback Dorian Thompson-Robinson.

Auburn's Wanogho has a new dream to chase

Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — Prince Tega Wanogho came to Alabama wanting to be the next LeBron James.

He became Auburn's left tackle instead.

Wanogho now is the anchor of the 16th-ranked Tigers' all-senior offensive line, some five years after he stepped on a foot-

ball field for the first time.

A native of Delta State, Nigeria, Wanogho came to Alabama as a 16-year-old hoping to land a college scholarship — in basketball. He wound up at Edgewood Academy in suburban Montgomery after getting noticed at a basketball camp. Wanogho then obliged when an Edgewood coach suggested giving football a shot. He

played defensive end at about 225 pounds and quickly started getting interest from football programs, enough so that a reporter asked him if Alabama coach Nick Saban had visited.

"I was like, 'Who's Nick Saban?' It's crazy, because everybody thought it was funny," said Wanogho, who also played soccer growing up. "My teammates and coaches. The dude

that was doing the interview, he thought it was funny, too. He was shocked because I didn't know who coach Nick Saban was. When I said that, everybody was surprised.

"I was like, you can't blame me because I came all the way from Nigeria and I'm here playing a new game. I don't really know what goes on here."

Jets RB Bell wants to be hit in practice

Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Le'Veon Bell wants his teammates to hit him.

Nothing too hard or violent, but just enough for him to feel it.

The New York Jets running back isn't playing during the preseason, so he's doing whatever he can to be ready for football when the regular season starts.

"Give me a little something," he tells some of the veterans on defense. "Go for the ball, things like that, just so I can get prepared."

Bell hasn't played in a game in nearly 20 months, a lengthy layoff as a result of his contract dispute with Pittsburgh. He sat out last season, signed with New York in March and is being held out of preseason games as a precaution.

The three-time Pro Bowl

pick has been getting plenty of action in practice, though. And he feels ready to go.

But just to be sure, he goes up to guys such as nose tackle Steve McLendon, linebacker C.J. Mosley and safety Jamal Adams and asks them to get physical. He knows they might be wary, not wanting to injure him — so he'll try to make them angry by running harder so they'll give him a pop.

"I try to do that intentionally just so I can feel it," Bell said. "And, a lot of times you'll start seeing guys a little frustrated and they'll try to hit me back and that's what I need. They won't take me to the ground, they're not really going for my legs. Hitting me up top, things like that, I need all that."

Coach Adam Gase understands how important Bell is to his offense, giving quarterback Sam Darnold a versatile playmaker out of the backfield.

And from where Gase is watching, he sees a guy who is ready to play.

"It's his body demeanor and the way he's attacking the defense," Gase said. "Those guys know the difference between how a guy is going to (practice). Either we're thudding up and they're wrapping up and then when they see him start getting lower and accelerating toward them, they know, 'OK, he's looking to do some damage here.'"

The Jets have increased Bell's workload in practices the past couple of weeks, and he has been running well.

Still, the running back knows the real test won't come until he touches the ball for the first time against Buffalo on Sept. 8.

"Obviously, it's still practice," Bell said. "I know once I get to the game, it's going to be a little different. But that's something I'll adjust to. I've been playing football my whole life."

Bell has been talking to Gase about how he'll be used in practice and in preseason games. Gase announced last weekend that Bell will be held out of games until the regular season, a scenario with which the running back says he's "completely fine."

"It's going to come," he said. "I don't think four plays of the preseason is going to help me for Week 1 in the game."

That doesn't mean Bell isn't itching to get on the field.

"I really hate watching Sam play," Bell said with a smile. "I just want to be in there with him because I know how special he is and I want to play with that."

"Obviously, I know everybody's eager to watch me play. I'm eager to play."

That's evident in the way Bell has prepared for the first two preseason games, dressing in full uniform despite knowing he won't see the field.

Sports briefs

US basketball teams beats Australia in exhibition

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — With his team playing on a raised basketball court in a stadium normally used for soccer and cricket, U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said he felt like he was on a movie set.

"I kept looking behind me because I knew I was going to fall off the stage," he said.

But once the game started, Popovich thought it all seemed normal.

Kemba Walker scored 23 points, Myles Turner added 15 points and 14 rebounds, and the U.S. topped Australia 102-86 on Thursday before a crowd of 51,218 — billed as the largest crowd ever to watch a basketball game in Australia.

US sprinter Coleman may be facing ban

Gold-medal sprint contender

Christian Coleman's Olympic prospects might be in jeopardy after three missed drug tests, two people familiar with the case told The Associated Press.

The "whereabouts failures" are said to have happened over 12 months, which can be treated as a positive test and doping violation.

The 23-year-old Coleman is the reigning national champion at 100 meters. In 2017, he finished second to Justin Gatlin at the world championships — and one spot ahead of Usain Bolt.

Para-rower dies after boat capsizes

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — The governing body of rowing says para-rower Dzmitry Ryshkevich died after his boat capsized during training at the world championships in Austria.

World Rowing cites a police statement that the flotation device on the 33-year-old Belarus athlete's boat had broken.

Although Ryshkevich freed himself from the safety belts in the boat, he sank into the water near the Danube in Linz-Ottensheim on Wednesday as rescuers approached.

Lions sign veteran DT Harrison to extension

The Detroit Lions have signed defensive tackle Damon "Snacks" Harrison to an \$11 million, one-year extension.

The team announced the signing Thursday. Harrison, who has two years left on the \$46 million contract he signed with the New York Giants, is under contract for an additional season with the Lions. Detroit acquired the former All-Pro player in a trade with the Giants last season for a fifth-round

draft pick. He didn't attend the Lions' mandatory minicamp during this past offseason, hoping to get a new deal.

The run-stuffing tackle has 436 career tackles, nine sacks, forced four fumbles and made an interception during seven seasons.

In other NFL news:

■ New York Jets linebacker Brandon Copeland was suspended by the NFL on Wednesday for the first four games of the regular season for violating the league's policy on performance-enhancing substances.

Copeland can still participate in the team's preseason practices and games. He is eligible to return to the active roster on Oct. 7.

■ The Arizona Cardinals announced on Monday night they had signed veteran receiver Michael Crabtree to a one-year contract.

Muncy's HR wins it for Dodgers in 10th

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Tied in extra innings at home, the Los Angeles Dodgers always expect to win.

"Who it's going to be is always a question," manager Dave Roberts said.

It was Max Muncy's turn.

Frustrated after striking out in his first two at-bats, Muncy homered in the bottom of the 10th to lift the Dodgers over the Toronto Blue Jays 2-1 Wednesday night for their 50th home victory of the season.

It was the Dodgers' 11th walk-off win this year. Muncy has homered in a career-high five straight games.

"Got a little bit of a rhythm going," he said, having drawn walks in two other plate appearances. "The biggest sign

is if I'm getting walks. That means I'm not chasing."

Muncy sent his 33rd homer to center field off Tim Mayza (1-3) with one out. The slugger picked up the Dodgers after closer Kenley Jansen gave up a tying homer to Rowdy Tellez with one out in the ninth. Fans booed Jansen after he got two more outs to end the inning.

"I was hunting that pitch," Tellez said of Jansen's cutter. "I wanted to get the pitch before it got to me. At this level, with how good these guys are, you've got to pick one spot, one pitch and kind of throw up prayers hoping that he throws it there."

Will Smith also went deep and Walker Buehler threw seven shutout innings for the major league-leading Dodgers, who have baseball's best home record as well at 50-16.

Buehler allowed five hits, struck out eight and walked none. Pedro Baez (7-2) got the win with one inning of relief.

The Dodgers struggled to eke out some offense one night after pounding out 15 hits in a 16-3 victory highlighted by five home runs.

Joe Kelly retired the side in the eighth against a trio of second-generation major leaguers: pinch-hitter Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Bo Bichette and Cavan Biggio.

That set up Jansen, who couldn't get the job done.

Still, Roberts continues to back Jansen, who has 26 saves but none since Aug. 6.

"I know Kenley feels bad," Roberts said. "If a save situation arises, he'll be back out there. Right now, Kenley is our closer. I still think Kenley is

tracking in a positive direction regardless of the outcome."

Jansen didn't appear in the clubhouse before it was closed to media.

Smith slugged his 12th homer on the first pitch from Zack Godley in the fourth. It was Smith's sixth homer in eight games.

"It's the first pitch of an outing and guy ambushes you and takes you deep," Godley said. "You can't even help but tip your cap and move on to the next guy."

Chris Taylor followed with a triple, but he got thrown out at the plate after outfielders Randal Grichuk and Teoscar Hernandez collided trying to field the ball.

It was a bullpen game for Toronto, which used six pitchers and lost its fourth in a row.

MLB roundup

Mets rally past Indians, stretch streak to four straight

Associated Press

NEW YORK — J.D. Davis lined an RBI single with two outs that capped a two-run rally in the 10th inning, and the New York Mets beat Cleveland 4-3 on Wednesday.

All-Star reliever Brad Hand's failure to cover first base on a potential game-ending double-play grounder cost the Indians. Davis made Cleveland pay with his first career game-ending hit.

New York won its fourth in a row and for the 20th time in 25 games, moving a season-high six over .500.

Carlos Santana hit a solo home run with two outs in the Indians' 10th off Luis Avilan (4-0) for a 3-2 lead.

Amed Rosario opened the Mets' 10th with a double off Hand (6-4), who later broke for the plate on what could have been a double play as the tying run scored.

Cubs 12, Giants 11: Kris Bryant hit a go-ahead, two-run

homer in the eighth inning to give host Chicago a wild victory over San Francisco.

Nicholas Castellanos and Kyle Schwarber also connected for the Cubs, who have won four straight despite losing leads twice in the last four innings. Chicago moved back into first place in the NL Central by a half-game over St. Louis, which lost to Milwaukee in a rain-shortened game.

Tigers 2, Astros 1: Justin Verlander pitched a two-hitter and lost, allowing homers to John Hicks and Ronny Rodriguez as Detroit won at Houston.

Athletics 6, Yankees 4: Khris Davis and Marcus Semien each hit a two-run homer to lead Mike Fiers and host Oakland past New York.

Brewers 5, Cardinals 3 (8): Mike Moustakas homered and Keston Hiura drove in a pair of runs to lead Milwaukee to a win at St. Louis in a rain-shortened game.

Phillies 5, Red Sox 2: Bryce

Harper homered to give Philadelphia a fifth-inning lead, and Corey Dickerson drove in two runs with a triple and a single to help the Phillies sweep a two-game series at Boston.

Rays 7, Mariners 6: Kevin Kiermaier drove in four runs, including a solo homer during a two-run ninth inning, and host Tampa Bay beat Seattle to avoid a three-game sweep.

White Sox 4, Twins 0: Lucas Giolito pitched a three-hit shutout of the second-highest scoring team in the major leagues, racking up 12 strikeouts as Chicago took the series at AL Central-leading Minnesota.

Braves 5, Marlins 0: Adieiny Hechavarria and Ronald Acuna Jr. each hit a two-run homer, Julio Teheran struck out a season-high nine and host Atlanta beat Miami.

The Braves are 14-4 against the Marlins this year after winning the 2018 season series between the NL East rivals 14-5.

Nationals 11, Pirates 1: Patrick Corbin pitched eight score-

less innings to remain unbeaten in more than two months, and Asdrubal Cabrera's three-run home run capped a six-run third as Washington rolled to a win at Pittsburgh.

Orioles 8, Royals 1: Host Baltimore tied a major league record by allowing its 258th home run this season but hit four of its own to beat Kansas City.

Rangers 8, Angels 7: Hunter Pence drove in three runs, including an RBI single in the ninth inning that pushed host Texas past Los Angeles.

Reds 4, Padres 2: Luis Castillo shook off his worst career start to pitch six solid innings and Jose Iglesias hit a solo home run to pace host Cincinnati past San Diego.

Rockies 7, Diamondbacks 2: Tim Melville pitched seven innings of two-hit ball in his first major league appearance in almost two years, and Colorado cruised to a win at Arizona.