

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Dakota pipeline halted as vets arrive

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

CANNON BALL, N.D. — Veterans were still arriving at a main Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp Sunday afternoon when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers told Sioux tribal leaders that it had temporarily halted construction of the oil pipeline.

After more than 100 days of protest, the Army Corps rejected an easement that would have given Energy Transfer Partners LP permission to continue to build the pipeline along its planned route under Lake Oahe, a large reservoir on the Missouri River about a half-mile from Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The easement is a legal agreement that would have given the company the right to cross or use the Sioux land for a specific purpose.

Law enforcement and protesters had been calling for a decision on the easement. The decision came on the first day

of “Veterans Stand for Standing Rock,” which brought 2,400 veterans from across the country to join the protest and to build infrastructure to help protesters withstand the coming winter.

As of Sunday afternoon, nearly 1,000 veterans had registered at the Oceti Sakowin Camp near Cannon Ball, N.D. Anthony Diggs, a spokesman for the group, said there were about 2,400, though the exact number wasn't clear. Diggs said some of the credit for the Army Corps decision should go to the veterans and the attention they brought with them.

“I think they saw 2,500 veterans showing up and the attention from media internationally,” he said. “I think they saw the world was paying attention and realized they had an issue.”

The protesters, who prefer to be called “water protectors,” celebrated the decision, erupting in cheers and holding their fists in the air. They have been claiming since protests started in August that the pipeline posed

a risk for the Sioux tribe's drinking water and treaty rights and could harm sacred sites. Veterans joined in the celebration.

“This changes the background for our visit 180 degrees,” Diggs said. “It's done. It's stopped.”

Army veteran Chris Condon, a member of a Sioux tribe in South Dakota, was a little more reserved about the news. He's been living at the Oceti Sakowin Camp since August and has taken to the front lines multiple times, facing off with law enforcement.

“I have this feeling of, ‘What's going to happen now?’” he said.

Jo-Ellen Darcy, assistant secretary for civil works for the Army Corps, said the agency would conduct an environmental impact study to consider alternate routes for the pipeline. She also said the \$3.8 billion pipeline was only temporarily halted and that the study would include public input.

Energy Transfer issued a statement late Sunday saying the company is committed to

finishing the pipeline without rerouting it around Lake Oahe.

Ron Ness, president of the North Dakota Petroleum Council, said in a statement that he expected the decision to be reversed when President-elect Donald Trump enters office in January.

“It's a good feeling, but I'm being gun-shy, you know?” Condon said of Sunday's announcement.

Some veterans, including Condon, took to a hill overlooking the camp soon after the news broke, snapping photos on their cellphones and other devices.

Condon, 36, stood apart from the crowd, taking in the celebratory sounds — yelps of excitement, drum circles and honking horns from thousands of his fellow protesters below — and reflected on the costs of the protest.

“I'm thinking back to everybody that was hurt in this whole process,” he said. “Injured or hurt or arrested.”

NATO to seek closer cooperation with EU on security

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Top NATO officials will seek closer cooperation with the European Union on a range of security measures during a two-day meeting that opens Tuesday in Brussels.

It will be the final gathering of NATO leaders before President-elect Donald Trump, who has voiced ambivalence about the alliance, takes office.

“At a time when the peaceful order is being challenged in new ways, NATO and the EU need to work closer than ever before,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said

during a news conference Monday at NATO headquarters.

Secretary of State John Kerry will be on hand for the meeting of the alliance's 28 foreign ministers on Tuesday and Wednesday, when efforts against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, political turmoil in Turkey, ongoing violence in eastern Ukraine and concerns about a more aggressive Russia are all likely points of discussion.

Questions persist over how NATO's positions on this range of challenges will square with the worldview of Trump, who has sent mixed messages about the value of the alliance to the

United States and its role in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

“This week's meeting of foreign ministers is an important building block for our summit next year here in Brussels,” Stoltenberg said. “I look forward to welcoming the new U.S. president, Donald Trump, to the summit and to working with him and his national security team as NATO continues to adapt to the challenges we face.”

The talks in Brussels also will occur at a time of political upheaval in Europe. NATO is seeking more cooperation with the EU even as the European political body struggles to

maintain its own unity.

Still, NATO expects to endorse a plan to better collaborate with the EU in areas such as cyberdefense and maritime security. “Cooperation with the European Union is also an important way in which NATO projects stability beyond our borders,” Stoltenberg said.

Since Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election, EU nations have accelerated plans for closer cooperation on defense issues. NATO's leadership is worried that such plans — which would make the bloc less dependent on Washington — ultimately would undermine the alliance's purpose.

Rebels shell Russia's Aleppo field hospital

Associated Press

ALEPPO, Syria — Rebel shelling of the Syrian government-held part of Aleppo killed a Russian nurse in a makeshift Russian hospital in the city Monday while the Defense Ministry in Moscow said a Russian fighter jet crashed into the Mediterranean Sea after returning from a sortie over Syria.

The developments were a blow to Russia, which has been one of the staunchest supporters of Syrian President Bashar Assad in his country's bitter civil war, now in its sixth year.

The shelling that killed the female nurse also wounded two Russian doctors, a Russian officer in Aleppo told reporters. He spoke on condition of anonymity. The hospital equipment was part of aid that Moscow had sent into the Furqan neighborhood in the government section of the city the previous day.

In Moscow, Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov confirmed the death of one Russian medic in Aleppo and said two were seriously wounded in an artillery attack that hit the Russian military hospital. He said an unspecified number of local residents who were at the hos-

Another Russian plane crashes

The Washington Post

MOSCOW — A Russian warplane crashed off the coast of Syria on Monday, the second plane in less than a month to plunge into the Mediterranean Sea while attempting to land on Russia's Soviet-era Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier.

The Russian Su-33 Flanker crashed after flying a combat mission, Russia's Ministry of Defense announced on Monday, but the cause of the accident was a mechanical malfunction aboard the aircraft carrier.

"After carrying out its mil-

itary activity in the skies over Syria, a Su-33 fighter fell off the deck of the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov on landing because a cable in the arresting gear snapped," the ministry said in an official statement.

The pilot ejected and was saved by a search-and-rescue team, the statement added. The pilot was not injured.

Last month, a Russian MiG-29K fighter jet crashed while attempting to make an emergency landing on the aircraft carrier shortly after take-off.

pital were also wounded and accused the United States, Britain and France of tipping off rebels about the hospital's location.

"The blood of our soldiers is on the hands of those who ordered this murder. Those who created, nurtured and armed these beasts in human form and named them the 'opposition,'" Konashenkov said.

Separately, the Defense

Ministry said a Russian Su-33 fighter jet, based on the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, crashed into the Mediterranean Sea after returning from a sortie over Syria. The ministry said that "because of the failure of the arrester system's cable, the Su-33 fighter rolled off the deck" on Monday.

The pilot successfully ejected.

In Aleppo, rebel shelling on the government-held part of the city has intensified in recent weeks as Syrian government and allied troops push their way into parts of Aleppo controlled by the opposition.

In an offensive that began last week, Syrian government forces seized large swaths of the Aleppo enclave that have been under rebel control since 2012. The fighting was most intense on Monday near the dividing line between east and west Aleppo as government and allied troops pushed their way from the eastern flank, reaching within less than half a mile from the citadel in the center of the city.

Rebel fighters clashed with advancing troops and also lobbed mortars and shells into the government-controlled part of Aleppo to the west. Syrian State TV said four civilians were killed Monday in three different neighborhoods in western Aleppo.

The opposition-run Thiqa News agency and the Syrian Civil Defense in Aleppo city said four civilians were killed in rebel-held Zabadiyeh district when barrel bombs were dropped there.

UN agency gives aid to uprooted families from Mosul

Associated Press

KHAZIR, Iraq — The U.N. refugee agency distributed aid on Monday to dozens of Iraqi families uprooted from their homes in and around the city of Mosul, reiterating its dire need for funds to offer winter assistance in an area that sees temperatures fall below zero.

UNHCR aid workers handed out kerosene heaters, jerry cans, big sheets and hygiene kits to about 30 families. Unlike in some areas inside Mosul where chaos erupted when hundreds of civilians overwhelmed aid trucks, the people lined up to get the aid in a camp in the

town of Khazir, about 19 miles east of Mosul.

"We have received these items. But we need heating oil," said Haider Mahmoud Ahmed.

"They're here. Blankets, a heater, but we don't have water, drinking water," Ahmed added. "All the tankers around here are empty. There is no water in them. We want them to be filled so we can live. Yesterday we were freezing. There is no heating oil."

Some are still haunted by what they experienced before leaving for the camp.

"It was raining mortars on us," said Abdullah Ahmed

Saleh. "There were snipers. And a rocket landed in the middle of the front yard. Inside the garage."

The UNHCR's senior public information officer, Caroline Gluck, said the aid items are part of emergency assistance "for families who've literally fled for their lives. Often most don't have anything apart from what they're wearing."

She added that temperatures during nighttime fall to below zero, and "it's really tough for these families."

The families are among the nearly 5,500 people living in tents in a camp east of Mosul,

where the battle to retake the city from the Islamic State group is underway. So far, nearly 70,000 civilians have fled, according to the United Nations.

Many Mosul residents decided to stay in their homes, which the Iraqi government had requested in order to avoid a large-scale displacement. But as progress on the ground slows, hundreds of thousands are now stuck with dwindling food and water supplies. That has prompted chaos whenever supply trucks do make it to trapped civilians.

Japanese PM set to visit Pearl Harbor with Obama

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit Pearl Harbor with President Barack Obama at the end of this month, becoming the first leader of his country to go to the site of the Japanese attack that propelled the United States into World War II.

Monday's unexpected announcement came two days before the 75th anniversary of the attack and six months after Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit the memorial in Hiroshima for victims of the U.S. atomic bombing of that city at the end of the same war.

Abe, in a brief statement to reporters, said he would visit Hawaii on Dec. 26 and 27 to pray for the war dead at the naval base at Pearl Harbor and to hold a final summit meeting with Obama before the latter's presidency ends.

"We must never repeat the tragedy of the war," he said. "I would like to send this commitment. At the same time, I would like to send a message of

reconciliation between Japan and the U.S."

The White House confirmed a meeting in Hawaii on Dec. 27, saying "the two leaders' visit will showcase the power of reconciliation that has turned former adversaries into the closest of allies, united by common interests and shared values."

More than 2,300 U.S. servicemen died in the aerial attack, which will be marked Wednesday by a remembrance ceremony and a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., when the Japanese planes hit their first target.

Three and a half years later, the war came to an end after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, and on the city of Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945. Japan surrendered six days later.

Obama's decision to visit Hiroshima in May divided Americans and was broadly welcomed in Japan. Abe said Monday that Obama's message aiming for a world without nuclear weapons still touches the hearts of many Japanese.

Uptick in suicides of airmen to be addressed

BY LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Pacific Air Forces is looking into a spate of airman suicides, including three since April from Yokota's maintenance group, says 374th Airlift Wing commander Col. Kenneth Moss.

About 200 airmen and civilians gathered last week for a town hall meeting at the base's main chapel to share their feelings about the recent deaths.

"The only way to realize you're not alone is to understand that other people have many of the same struggles we all share," Moss told those in attendance. "The only way to know that is to have a conversation. I can handle broke airplanes. I can't handle broke airmen."

PACAF has sent a team to investigate the Yokota incidents, and will also evaluate Misawa and Kadena air bases, he said.

The "suicide prevention support team" will "offer assistance and recommend improvements in order to affect changes targeted at preventing future suicide attempts and saving lives," an Air Force official told Stars and Stripes via email.

The team includes a mix of experts from several PACAF installations and the Air Force Personnel Center, including mental and spiritual health specialists, resiliency and community readiness experts, and junior and senior enlisted airmen.

The team will spend about three weeks at each installation, starting with Kadena last week.

The three who took their lives at Yokota were all assigned to the 374th Maintenance Group. An airman who knew them told Moss that none had showed signs of suicidal behavior.

Overwork, especially in the maintenance group, was cited by some at the meeting as a cause of stress.

Carson tapped to be HUD secretary

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump, moving to complete formation of his Cabinet and decide other key posts, chose former campaign rival Ben Carson on Monday to be secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Trump's decision, announced by his transition office, comes as the real estate mogul continues a series of interviews, meetings with aides and other deliberations aimed at forming his administration.

In a statement, Trump said he was "thrilled to nominate" Carson, describing the retired neurosurgeon as having "a brilliant mind" and saying he "is passionate about strengthening communities and families within those communities."

Carson had been coy about joining the new administration, saying shortly after Trump's election victory that he wasn't certain he'd fit into a Cabinet-style role. The discussion at that

time centered on speculation that Carson might be selected to head the sprawling Department of Health and Human Services.

"Ben shares my optimism about the future of our country," Trump said, "and is part of ensuring that this is a presidency representing all Americans."

Carson was among the 16 Republican candidates who challenged Trump for the nomination.

Trump treated Carson harshly during the primary, saying he had a "pathological temper." Still, Carson quickly endorsed Trump after he dropped out of the contest.

Last week, Trump announced that he planned to nominate former Goldman Sachs executive Steven Mnuchin as his treasury secretary and billionaire investor Wilbur Ross to lead the Commerce Department. He chose Betsy DeVos to be secretary of education and Elaine Chao, the wife of Senate Republican Leader Mitch

McConnell, to be transportation secretary. Trump also has turned to retired Marine Gen. James Mattis to be defense secretary.

He now has expanded his pool of candidates for secretary of state, raising a question about whether former CIA Director David Petraeus' guilty plea for leaking classified information disqualifies him to serve as the nation's top diplomat.

During the 2016 Republican presidential primary, Carson's inspirational life story, Christian faith and anti-establishment message briefly catapulted him ahead of Trump and other rivals in opinion polls.

His success on the campaign trail quickly crumbled amid questions about whether elements of his rags-to-riches autobiography were exaggerated or fabricated. Carson's business dealings also faced scrutiny, including his ties to a wealthy Pittsburgh dentist whom he helped avoid prison time for felony health care fraud.

Roof allowed to rehire lawyers

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — A federal judge on Monday allowed a white man accused of fatally shooting nine black parishioners at a Charleston, S.C., church to hire back his lawyers, at least for the first phase of his trial.

Dylann Roof, 22, asked U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel over the weekend if he could use his attorneys during the guilt phase but still be his own lawyer during the penalty phase.

Prosecutors have asked for the death penalty. Such cases are split into two parts — the guilt phase, and then a separate portion that focuses on whether the defendant will be sentenced to death, or life in prison.

Gergel agreed Monday, but warned Roof that he can't

change his mind again. Last Monday, Roof fired his high-powered legal team and handled the selection of a pool of 67 potential jurors himself, a decision the judge called "very unwise" but within Roof's constitutional rights.

Ever since then, his high-powered legal team has sought to play a larger role in his defense, saying late last week they feared Roof wouldn't introduce evidence that could possibly spare his life.

The week of jury qualification was much shorter than in the federal death-penalty trial of Boston bomber Dshokhar Tsarnaev, which took almost two months.

Authorities have said Roof killed the parishioners in a racially motivated attack at the Emanuel AME Church in June 2015. After an hour of Bible

study and prayer, authorities say, Roof hurled racial slurs during the shooting and left three people alive so they could tell the world the killings were because he hated black people.

Final jury selection and opening statements in Roof's federal trial on dozens of federal charges, including hate crimes and obstruction of the practice of religion, are scheduled to begin Wednesday. He also faces a death penalty trial on state murder charges.

Prosecutors estimate it will take about seven days to present their case against Roof. Gergel also ruled Monday that Roof's parents, grandmother and grandfather can remain in the courtroom during the trial even though they're potential witnesses. All other witnesses must stay out until they testify. Roof's grandfather is a lawyer.

Fake news story leads gunman to DC pizzeria

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A fake news story prompted a man to fire a rifle at a popular Washington pizza place as he attempted to "self-investigate" a conspiracy theory that Hillary Clinton was running a child sex ring from there, police said.

Edgar Maddison Welch, 28, of Salisbury, N.C., was arrested Sunday afternoon at Comet Ping Pong on Connecticut Avenue in an affluent neighborhood of the nation's capital, police said in a statement. No one was injured.

He was expected to make his first appearance in court Monday afternoon.

Bartender Lee Elmore told news outlets that people in the restaurant started to panic as the man walked to the back of the restaurant. "One of the hosts runs up and says, 'Did you see that guy? He had a big gun,'" Elmore said.

"His demeanor was bizarre, in that if you come into a place to eat, you ask for a host or grab a seat at the bar," Elmore said. "Didn't make any eye contact, didn't talk with anybody."

Police say Welch told them he had come to the restaurant to "self-investigate" the fictitious online conspiracy theory that spread during Clinton's unsuccessful run for the White House. Upon arriving at the restaurant, he walked in the front door and pointed a gun toward an employee, who fled and contacted police.

Welch fired the rifle inside the restaurant, and rounds possibly hit the walls, door and a computer, all of which were damaged, police spokeswoman Karimah Bilal said.

Authorities set up a perimeter and arrested Welch safely, Interim D.C. Police Chief Peter Newsham said. Welch was charged with assault with a dangerous weapon. Police recovered an AR-15 rifle, a Colt .38 handgun, a shotgun and a folding knife.

Area where warehouse fire started believed found; death toll reaches 36

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The death toll in the Oakland warehouse fire has grown to 36, and authorities say they expect the number to rise when they resume work later Monday following a temporary work stoppage. A wall is leaning inward, posing a safety hazard to those who have been searching the building that erupted in fire Friday night.

Eleven of the victims have been positively identified, but all the names have yet to be publicly released. Also, authorities believe they've located the section of the building where the fire started, but the cause remains unknown.

The fire erupted during a dance party late Friday night. Since then, survivors and friends of those who perished have placed flowers on several small memorials. Bouquets of sunflowers, single white roses, lilies and carnations were stuck in chain-link fences, votive candles burned on sidewalks

and post-it notes paid tribute to the missing and the dead in the most lethal building fire in the U.S. in more than a decade.

Kai Thomas and a group of classmates from an arts high school in San Francisco pressed against police tape Sunday near the street corner where the "Ghost Ship," a warehouse converted to artist studios and illegal living spaces, rapidly went up in flames, taking the life of a friend.

Three of the boys had been in the cramped and dark building, Thomas said, but one got separated from them 30 seconds before someone yelled, "Fire."

"It was just really smoky and hard to see," said Thomas, a high school junior who wasn't there, but recounted what he had been told by two others who didn't want to speak. "They jumped off the second-floor balcony and ran out."

The boys waited for their 17-year-old friend for more than three hours, but he never emerged.

Firefighters had searched less

than half the building and expected more casualties as they worked around the clock to remove debris bucket by bucket.

The district attorney's office sent a team to search for signs of a crime in the warehouse that was already under investigation by the city for possible code violations. The space was permitted only as a warehouse and neighbors had complained of trash piling up and people illegally living there.

Authorities would not answer questions about the couple that operated the Satya Yuga collective, who were identified as Derick Ion Almena and Micah Allison and were believed to have been out of the building at the time of the blaze.

The couple had a troubled relationship, said Michael Allison of Portland, Ore., the father of Micah. He and other family members persuaded his daughter to go to a drug rehabilitation center in 2015, but Almena talked his way into the clinic and persuaded Micah to leave with him, Michael Allison said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man sues jail after gouging out own eye

CO DENVER — A man who gouged out his own eye while in jail is suing Rio Grande County, saying jailers failed to adequately protect him from himself.

The Denver Post reported Gordon Sawyers' lawsuit alleges that while he was under suicide watch — which calls for cell checks every 15 minutes — no one checked on him for three hours one night in early December, during which he gouged out his right eye.

Sawyers had been arrested Nov. 18, 2015 on suspicion of burning down an art gallery to cleanse it of witches.

The lawsuit says Sawyers' psychiatrist told jailers Sawyers was suffering from severe mental illness and should be watched carefully because his delusions were likely to intensify.

Man apologizes over immigration posts

NV LAS VEGAS — A part-time math instructor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, has issued an apology for social media posts that said he'd tell immigration authorities about students in his class who are in the U.S. illegally.

The instructor, George Buch, acknowledged making the Facebook posts with a statement to his students and to the campus newspaper following criticism and a campus protest Thursday that drew dozens of people.

He said he realized his comments were hurtful, and said he meant them as a joke but it wasn't funny.

Man gets prison time after stabbing mom

MD ANNAPOLIS — A man who pleading

guilty to stabbing his mother with a steak knife and stealing her Percocet has been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The Anne Arundel County State's Attorney's Office said Paul Tond, 32, of Brooklyn, had pleaded guilty to first-degree assault.

Prosecutors said that on April 16, 2015, Tond punched and stabbed his mother with a steak knife in her home to get Percocet from her. Authorities said the woman had been sleeping with the medication under her clothing so Tond wouldn't try to steal it.

School ousts student over racist license

PA PITTSBURGH — A western Pennsylvania high school student has been removed from school after posting images on social media of a fake license to hunt black people, using a racial slur.

Officials in the Highlands School District in suburban Pittsburgh told KDKA-TV a student posted the image on Snapchat and shared it with multiple people in the district. The fake "license" says the holder is permitted to hunt and kill black people during open season from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

Suit: Districts blocked teacher over blindness

OH CINCINNATI — A substitute music teacher has filed a federal lawsuit against three school districts in southwest Ohio, alleging he was prevented from teaching there because he's blind.

The attorney for Kyle Conley told The Cincinnati Enquirer the Lakota, Fairfield and Ross school districts failed to accommodate his client under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Conley's lawsuit seeks back

pay, other attorney fees and costs and a jury trial.

Conley's lawsuit states Fairfield officials felt he couldn't keep students safe in a possible emergency, and Lakota and Ross also blocked him because he's blind. Ross and Lakota say the allegations are unfounded.

Shop owner finds car in hit-and-run crash

NJ TOMS RIVER — Authorities said the owner of an automotive shop who helped police identify a car involved in a fatal hit-and-run later saw the car being towed on a highway, helping lead police to the suspected driver.

Ocean County Prosecutor Joseph Coronato said Al Picker saw the Nissan Altima on the Garden State Parkway and called police, who tracked the car to a home. Police on Thursday charged Maxine Pickard, 73, with leaving the scene of the accident.

Authorities said she hit John Ekarius, 34, of Dover Woods, on Route 70 on Nov. 22 and then drove away. He later died.

Family secret leads to report of missing baby

NM ROSWELL — A family secret turned into a police investigation when a woman came home with a baby that wasn't hers.

Roswell police spokesman Todd Wildermuth said the investigation began Thanksgiving weekend when a woman called police to report she suspected the baby her 30-year-old sister brought home didn't belong to her.

Police later learned the baby belonged to relatives of the woman in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where the mother of the baby filed a child abduction report.

New Mexico officials took the baby and later gave the baby to

Mexican authorities.

Wildermuth said it turned out that the child's mother filed a false report because she was embarrassed about giving up her baby.

Visitor is Omaha zoo's 2 millionth for year

NE OMAHA — Omaha's award-winning zoo has reached a new milestone — its 2 millionth visitor for the year.

The zoo said Jacquie Keys, 32, of Omaha, and her two young children marked the occasion Nov. 29 when they walked through the front gate of the Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium.

It's the first time the zoo has recorded 2 million visitors in a year — a mark fewer than a dozen American zoos reach.

Zoo staff members, including zoo Director Dennis Pate, gathered at the gate to welcome the Keys.

The family was also given a prize package worth about \$4,000, including a \$500 zoo gift card, a zoo-themed gift basket, a personal photographer for the day at the zoo and a two-year zoo membership.

Man pulls ATM off wall, then steals it

NY NEW YORK — A man used his car to pull an outdoor ATM off the wall at a Queens gas station, then put it in the car and drove off, the New York Post reported.

Authorities said it happened around 7 a.m. Friday, with the man backing his car up to the machine, tying some kind of rope or chain to the ATM and then accelerating.

The machine came off the wall, and the man can be seen on the station's surveillance video putting it into the car and driving off.

From wire reports

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Physical NFL teams have edge in cold

Associated Press

It doesn't hurt to be physical in the NFL. Well, actually, it hurts quite a bit. Especially on the Lambeau Field tundra. Or when the Ravens are pounding you. Or the Steelers are treating you like a rag doll.

When the schedule hits December, and the hitting gets more ferocious, physicality is an irreplaceable edge.

We saw that specifically Sunday in Green Bay, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Oakland.

"We knew we had a long game in front of us," said the Steelers' sensational running back Le'Veon Bell after a 24-14 whipping they put on the Giants. "But our guys up front, they prepared for the battle. They were out there talking trash and going back and forth.

"You have to give credit to our line. They kept churning and wearing them out over the course of the game. I just wanted to make sure that I kept running hard. Then, in the fourth quarter, the holes got a little bigger. I started running through a couple of tackles and started breaking some runs."

And breaking some spirits.

All four losers in those rugged matchups entered with winning records. The Giants (8-4) had their six-game winning string snapped by Pittsburgh. Miami (7-5) also saw its six-game streak end at Baltimore.

Buffalo (6-6) blew a big lead and got pushed around in the second half by Oakland. Houston (6-6) not only couldn't han-

dle the Packers' intensity, it couldn't deal with the snow, wind and cold in Green Bay, where the Packers finally found that fierce edge to their game.

New York figures to rebound from its beating — it better, considering Dallas comes to the Meadowlands next Sunday night and can clinch the NFC East with a win. The other three, should they fall short of the postseason, likely can point to how much Week 13 took out of them.

Although it's just as probable that Weeks 14-17 will be as physical and exhausting.

"We need everyone in this locker room to get the job done," Packers safety Morgan Burnett said. "It's going to be tough and challenging. At this time of the year, no one is feeling great, but you have to go out there having grit and get the job done."

This was the first week when weather was a factor, and it's not going to get any more temperate in outdoor stadiums in New England, New York, Green Bay, Kansas City or Denver. Don't think that those clubs aren't built at least in part toward dealing with Mother Nature.

Perhaps with the exception of the Patriots, the rest of those teams, plus the Ravens and Steelers, will be turning to their defenses even more down the stretch.

What bodes well for most of them is how they don't shy away from the physicality needed when they discover throwing the ball through 30 mph gusts is ludicrous. Or

when opening up the offense in sleet or single-digit temperatures is unwise.

Baltimore's defense has been coming on for weeks, and the Ravens have the winning experience to ride it, similar to how Denver surged to the title last season.

Pittsburgh doesn't exactly have a Steel Curtain, but the Steelers also are playing their best D right now. They overwhelmed the Giants on Sunday even without perhaps their most important defender, the injured Cam Heyward.

Kansas City gives up points, but it also comes up with big plays. Bob Sutton's unit, as thorny as they come, often makes up for a pedestrian offense.

New York's pass rush has progressed to the point it leaves many opposing quarterbacks unnerved, or at the least, reticent about taking the time required to let plays develop downfield.

Denver is still Denver, packing a wallop on nearly every play.

Many of those contenders are quite rugged with the ball. The Raiders have the second-best offensive line to Dallas, and are happy to show off its power. Bell will run through anybody if need be, as will the Patriots' LeGarrette Blount.

December definitely is not a time for anyone who can be intimidated. Don't think for a second the intimidators won't turn ultra-physical over the next four weeks.

Chiefs' Berry caps emotional game with go-ahead score

Associated Press

As it is, this was going to be an emotional afternoon for Kansas City Chiefs safety Eric Berry, who grew up in suburban Atlanta and was playing at the Falcons for the first time as a pro — and, more meaningfully, the first time since he was treated for cancer in the city.

"I shed a few tears before the game. I shed a few during the game. And I shed a few after," Berry said. "So I think I held it together pretty good."

Did he ever.

Berry picked off a 2-point conversion throw and returned it 99 yards for the go-ahead score with 4½ minutes left, after earlier going 37 yards with an interception for a TD, leading Kansas City to a 29-28 victory over Atlanta.

He accounted for eight points all by himself, more than the output of three entire teams Sunday (Carolina, Miami and San Francisco).

"The last time I came home during the season, it was to get chemotherapy," said Berry, who was diagnosed with lymphoma in the 2014 season. "This time, it was actually to play the game, so I was just thankful for the opportunity."

In case you missed it, here are some other top topics after the NFL season's 13th Sunday:

You are what you wear: It was bizarre enough that reigning MVP Cam Newton was not on the field for the opening play of Carolina's 40-7 loss to Seattle. It was even nuttier that Panthers backup QB Derek Anderson was picked off on that play. And it was downright ludi-

crous-sounding when Panthers coach Ron Rivera said he held out Newton for what he termed a "travel dress-code violation." (On a serious note, the most significant moment of this lopsided game was when Seahawks safety Earl Thomas broke his left leg.)

Tom gets 201: Tom Brady set a record for most career victories by a quarterback, including postseason, with No. 201 — one more than Peyton Manning — as New England beat Los Angeles 26-10 to improve to 10-2. Brady is 201-61 as a starter in the NFL, a "Did I read that right?" winning percentage of .767. The Rams, meanwhile, confirmed that they gave coach Jeff Fisher a two-year contract extension a while back. Yes, you read that right. The lasting image

of Fisher from the day his team dropped to 4-8: When he searched his coat pocket, struggling to locate his red challenge flag. (Then again, why does the NFL even have that silly system for challenging calls?)

Bradley and Bortles: No one would be surprised if the Jacksonville Jaguars (2-10) have a new coach AND a new quarterback next season. That's because the team has posted double-digit loss totals in each of Gus Bradley's four years in charge, as of a 20-10 loss to Denver and backup rookie QB Paxton Lynch. And Jaguars quarterback Blake Bortles' pick-6 against the Broncos means his career total of interceptions returned for TDs (11) is higher than his NFL victory total (10).

Seahawks win, but Thomas breaks leg

Associated Press

SEATTLE — The missing necktie that cost Carolina's Cam Newton one play is insignificant compared to what the Seattle Seahawks lost on Sunday night.

There is no replacing Earl Thomas and all he means to Seattle's stingy defense. Now, the Seahawks must play the rest of the regular season and likely a big chunk of the postseason without their star safety.

"You can't make up for it," defensive end Michael Bennett said. "You just try to find some others who can do half of what he does."

Seattle's 40-7 romp over the Panthers kept the Seahawks on track for another NFC West title. They are three games ahead of Arizona with four remaining, and Seattle (8-3-1) moved back in front of Detroit for a coveted first-round bye.

But playoff positioning or Seattle reaching the 40-point mark for the first time

since its Super Bowl rout of Denver was secondary to Thomas' broken lower left leg. Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said Thomas has a cracked tibia and the injury is "always six weeks," but his status for a possible return during the postseason remains very much in question.

Thomas missed the first game of his pro career last week when he sat out against Tampa Bay due to a hamstring injury. He returned just 14 days after first getting hurt and lasted less than two quarters before the course of Seattle's season changed.

Thomas collided with teammate Kam Chancellor as both attempted to intercept a pass from Newton. True to Thomas' nature, he was talking about the break he made on the ball as he laid on the ground in pain, teammate Richard Sherman said.

"We're all going to miss the heck out of Earl because we love having that guy back there," Carroll said. "But we don't get to."

Seattle will rely on Steven Terrell to fill

Thomas' role as the center fielder patrolling the back of the defense.

Of course, if the Seahawks continue to put up 40 points and rush for 240 yards, there will be less pressure on the defense.

"The running game is a big part of the offense and it complements everything that we do," receiver Doug Baldwin said. "When we run the ball like we did tonight, the defense has to account for it."

Carolina (4-8) has its own injury issues it's been dealing with, but it was a missing necktie that became the focal point of what turned into a blowout loss. Newton was benched for the first series of the game because he violated the Panthers' dress code by not having a necktie for the team flight to Seattle.

That one series lasted just one play as Derek Anderson's pass for Mike Tolbert deflected into the arms of Seattle linebacker Mike Morgan and was the beginning of a miserable night for Carolina.

Carr, Mack help Raiders rally past Bills

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — In a dizzying 15-minute stretch of the second half, Derek Carr and the Oakland Raiders took a big step toward ending their long playoff drought with a comeback to extend Buffalo's stretch of futility yet another season.

Carr threw two touchdown passes to help Oakland rally from 15 points down with four straight touchdowns that gave the Raiders their sixth straight win, 38-24 over the Bills on Sunday.

The Raiders (10-2) scored 29 points in 15:27 to climb out of a 24-9 hole, while the Bills went three-and-out on three straight possessions and then threw an interception by Tyrod Taylor that was forced by Khalil Mack.

Oakland outgained Buffalo 212-8 during that stretch behind its two big young stars Mack and Carr. The team's top two picks in the 2014 draft have the Raiders positioned to make the playoffs for the first time since 2002.

"We feed off each other, that's for sure," Carr said. "You can always tell when someone

makes a play, the stadium gets going, the momentum starts swinging. It's a great thing. I say it all the time, but I'm glad they took him first. I'm glad he's on my team. I'm glad we can help lead this team together, it's really fun."

The Bills' playoff drought is the only active one longer than Oakland's. Buffalo (6-4) hasn't been to the postseason since 1999 and could have used a road win over a top team to strengthen its cause.

Cardinals 31, Redskins 23: Carson Palmer threw for 300 yards and three touchdowns and David Johnson scored twice.

Palmer's 25-yard touchdown pass to Johnson with 11:09 to play put host Arizona ahead 24-20, the fourth lead change of the second half.

Steelers 24, Giants 14: Ben Roethlisberger passed for 289 yards and two touchdowns, Le'Veon Bell rolled up 182 yards of total offense, and host Pittsburgh's resurgent defense harassed Eli Manning into a flurry of mistakes.

Buccaneers 28, Chargers 21: Jameis Winston threw a go-ahead, 12-yard touchdown pass to Cameron Brate mid-

way through the fourth quarter and Keith Tandy intercepted Philip Rivers in the end zone with 2:56 left to give the visiting Buccaneers their fourth straight victory.

Packers 21, Texans 13: Aaron Rodgers threw for 209 yards and two touchdowns, and the host Packers pulled away with two fourth-quarter touchdowns.

The Packers (6-6) weathered snowy conditions at Lambeau Field, making just enough plays on the cold turf.

Lions 28, Saints 13: Matthew Stafford passed for 341 yards and two touchdowns.

Golden Tate exploited a coverage breakdown on third-and-long for a 66-yard touchdown early in the fourth quarter when Detroit (8-4) was clinging to a six-point lead.

Ravens 38, Dolphins 6: Joe Flacco threw for 381 yards and four touchdowns, and the Ravens overwhelmed the Dolphins in the first half to end Miami's six-game winning streak.

Host Baltimore (7-5) led 24-0 at halftime behind Flacco and a dominant performance from the league's second-ranked defense. Flacco went 27-for-34 for 258 yards and three scores

over the first 30 minutes, and the Ravens yielded only 115 yards and intercepted a Ryan Tannehill pass.

Patriots 26, Rams 10: Tom Brady became the NFL's career leader in victories by a quarterback, earning his 201st by throwing for 269 yards and a touchdown. Brady, who was 33 of 46, had tied Peyton Manning last week in a win over the New York Jets.

Broncos 20, Jaguars 10: Bradley Roby returned an interception 51 yards for a touchdown, helping the visiting Broncos gain ground in the AFC playoff picture.

Bengals 32, Eagles 14: Andy Dalton threw a pair of touchdown passes and host Cincinnati (4-7-1) finally got its depleted offense moving without receiver A.J. Green.

Bears 26, 49ers 6: Jordan Howard ran for 117 yards and a career-high three touchdowns and the host Bears handed San Francisco its 11th straight loss.

The 49ers (1-11) extended their franchise-record losing streak and set a club low with 6 yards net passing on a day when Colin Kaepernick got lifted for Blaine Gabbert.

Westbrook's triple-double streak reaches five in win

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook became the first NBA player with five consecutive triple-doubles since Michael Jordan had seven straight in 1989, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New Orleans Pelicans 101-92 on Sunday night.

Westbrook finished with 28 points, 17 rebounds and 12 assists. The Thunder have won all five games during Westbrook's triple-double stretch. It was his 10th triple-double of the season and the 47th of his career.

Enes Kanter had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Victor Oladipo added 15 points for the Thunder.

Anthony Davis, the league's leading scorer, had 37 points

and 15 rebounds for the Pelicans. Buddy Hield, who led Oklahoma to the Final Four last season, scored 16 points in his first game back in the state.

Pacers 111, Clippers 102: Thaddeus Young scored 17 points and Indiana rallied from 15 points down to beat host Los Angeles, sweeping the season series for the first time since 2013-14 with just its second road win of the season.

Paul George scored 16 points in his return after missing four of the last five games with a sore left ankle and back. Rodney Stuckey also had 16 points and Jeff Teague added 15 points.

Knicks 106, Kings 98: Derrick Rose and Carmelo Anthony each scored 20 points, and New York held off visiting Sacramento for its eighth win in 11

games.

The Knicks took a 21-point lead in the first half, gave up 18 consecutive points in the third quarter and then outplayed the Kings down the stretch to win their third straight overall and improve to 9-3 at home.

Magic 98, Pistons 92: Serge Ibaka scored 21 points and blocked four shots to help Orlando beat host Detroit.

Pistons guard Reggie Jackson made his season debut after missing Detroit's first 21 games with knee tendinitis. He had 18 points in 23 minutes. Marcus Morris led the Pistons with 21 points.

Orlando won for the third time in four games while Detroit had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Williams leads Heels in blowout

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Kenny Williams III finally had the shooting flurry that third-ranked North Carolina has been waiting to see.

The sophomore had 14 of his career-high 19 points in the opening five minutes, helping the Tar Heels build a huge early lead and beat Radford 95-50 on Sunday.

Williams made his first five shots, including all four three-point tries, during that opening flurry. Quite a change for a player who was buried on the bench for a veteran team last year, making just 1 of 13 three-pointers and seeing his confidence suffer as a result.

"I've been waiting a year-and-a-half for a game like that," Williams said. "I don't want to say I knew it was coming, but with the confidence I have right now, I kind of expected it."

While Williams' play stood out, the Tar Heels (8-1) got a scare when they lost point guard Joel Berry II to a sprained left ankle early in the second half. The junior, averaging 16 points, came up hobbled as he drove into the paint and fell to the floor. He got up and walked slowly to the locker room for evaluation with 17:36 left, but didn't return to the UNC bench with the Tar Heels (8-1) up big.

No. 13 Indiana 83, Southeast Missouri State 55: Robert Johnson had 17 points and seven rebounds and De'Ron Davis added 14 points for host Indiana.

The Hoosiers (7-1) have won four straight, all in the last seven days. Denzel Mahoney led Southeast Missouri State (4-4) with 16 points.

No. 20 South Carolina 70, FIU 54: Duane Notice scored 27 points and P.J. Dozier had 20 for host South Carolina.

The Gamecocks (8-0) were without leading scorer Sindarius Thornwell. He was suspended indefinitely for violating an athletic department policy.

Flyers earn fifth straight victory

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Philadelphia Flyers are the hottest team in hockey.

Wayne Simmonds scored two power-play goals and Philadelphia beat the Nashville Predators 4-2 on Sunday night to win its fifth consecutive game.

Playing in front of a sellout crowd, the Flyers (14-10-3) earned their second road victory in two days against a Central Division team. They defeated the Chicago Blackhawks 3-1 on Saturday.

The Predators (11-9-4) lost in regulation for only the second time in 12 home games this season.

"We've got everything clicking. Our penalty kill has done a great job, our power play has scored some big goals and [goalie Steve Mason] has been standing on his head every night," Flyers defenseman Michael Del Zotto said. "At the start of the year, we'd have one good game and kind of get complacent. Now we're just keeping our foot on the gas. We keep playing well, playing as five-man units."

Simmonds, who leads the Flyers with 13 goals, scored twice against what had been a stingy Nashville penalty-kill at home. The Predators did not allow a power-play goal in their first 10 home games, but have given up three in their last two games.

Canadiens 5, Kings 4 (SO): Paul Byron

scored the clinching goal in the fourth round of the shootout, and Montreal avoided a winless swing through California.

Max Pacioretty had two goals and an assist for the Canadiens, who won for just the second time in seven road games. Montreal had only one win in its previous 11 games in California before scoring three times in the four-round shootout.

Jets 2, Blackhawks 1: Andrew Copp scored the tiebreaking goal with 4:45 left, Bryan Little got his third goal in three games and Winnipeg edged host Chicago.

Red Wings 4, Islanders 3 (OT): Danny DeKeyser scored 1:02 into overtime to give Detroit a victory over host New York.

Mike Green scored twice and Henrik Zetterberg had a goal and assist for Detroit, which improved to 4-1-2 in its last seven games.

Hurricanes 1, Lightning 0 (OT): Phillip Di Giuseppe scored his first goal of the season 1:26 into overtime, giving host Carolina a win over Tampa Bay.

Flames 8, Ducks 3: Johnny Gaudreau had a goal and an assist in his return from a broken finger, and host Calgary scored five times in a 6:04 span of the second period to rout Anaheim.

Wild 2, Oilers 1 (OT): Mikko Koivu scored 3:11 into overtime for visiting Minnesota, which snapped a three-game skid.