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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Families welcome USS Ronald Reagan home

By TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS Ronald Reagan returned to its homeport in Japan on Monday after a fall patrol highlighted by a rare tri-carrier exercise and a plane crash that killed three sailors.

Capt. Buzz Donnelly, the Ronald Reagan's commander, suggested that early November's four-day drills with the USS Nimitz and USS Theodore Roosevelt strike groups east of the Korean Peninsula were a milestone of the outing that began in early September.

The training — which took place as President Donald Trump wrapped up his lengthy tour of five Asian nations — included air-defense drills, sea surveillance, defensive air combat training and close-in

coordinated maneuvers.

"It is very complex whenever we have multiple carrier strike groups operating together, and that's why we look for any opportunity to exercise that capability," Donnelly said.

The last tri-carrier exercise took place in 2007 off the coast of Guam during exercise Valiant Shield. Since then, the Navy has occasionally conducted dual-carrier operations in the South China, East China and Philippine seas.

Petty Officer 1st Class Edgar Ibay, a hospital corpsman aboard the Ronald Reagan, said he's looking forward to relaxing and spending time with family.

The carrier's crew accomplished a lot during the patrol, he said.

"It's been pretty busy — nonstop," he said. "We operate 24/7 to support the mission."

That hectic schedule included port visits to Hong Kong and Busan, South Korea, and sailing more than 15,000 miles, Donnelly said.

Tragedy struck toward the end of the mission when a C-2A Greyhound transport plane carrying 11 crewmembers and passengers went down Nov. 22 while en route to the Ronald Reagan southeast of Okinawa.

Three sailors were killed in the crash: Lt. Steven Combs, Seaman Matthew Chialastri and Seaman Apprentice Bryan Grosso. Combs was embarked aboard the Ronald Reagan; Chialastri and Grosso were assigned to the carrier.

The crash's cause is unknown. The Ronald Reagan was conducting an annual bilateral maritime field-training exercise with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force at the time.

Raptor has problem during war games in South Korea

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A state-of-the-art U.S. stealth fighter jet malfunctioned after landing and had to be towed to a hangar during joint war games that kicked off Monday, officials said.

The five-day annual training exercise known as Vigilant Ace began days after North Korea test-fired its most powerful missile, causing already high tensions to spike as the country demonstrates rapid progress in its nuclear weapons program.

The drills involve 12,000 U.S. servicemembers along with South Korean airmen and more than 230 warplanes, including for the first time six F-22 Raptors, six F-35A Lightning IIs and 12 F-35Bs. The B variant is the short-takeoff, vertical-landing version of the stealth aircraft.

One of the Raptors touched down about 8 a.m. Monday at a South Korean base in Gwangju, 170 miles south of Seoul, but then couldn't move and had to be towed, a South Korean official told Stars and Stripes.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the issue, didn't provide more details, referring other questions to the Air Force. The 7th Air Force public affairs office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Yonhap News Agency first reported the problem and published photos of an F-22 being towed.

North Korea has condemned the five-day annual air force training exercise, known as Vigilant Ace, saying it would push the divided peninsula "to the brink of nuclear war."

U.S. and South Korean officials insisted the drills were defensive in nature.

The exercise, previously known as Beverly Bulldog, involves troops from all branches and 230 aircraft at eight U.S. and South Korean military installations.

The U.S. maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea, which remains technically at war with the North after their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Sen. Graham says it's time for US military families to leave South Korea

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Lindsey Graham said Sunday that he believes it's time to start moving the families of American military personnel out of South Korea as North Korea pushes the U.S. closer to a military conflict.

Graham, R-S.C., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he also will urge the Pentagon not to send any more dependents to South Korea.

"It's crazy to send spouses and children to South Korea, given the provocation of North Korea. South Korea should be an unaccompanied tour," the South Carolina Republican said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

Last week, North Korea shattered 2½ months of relative quiet by firing off an intercontinental ballistic missile that some observers say showed the reclusive country's ability to strike the U.S. East Coast.

Pearl Harbor sailor to get posthumous Bronze Star

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A sailor who saved the lives of six men at Pearl Harbor will receive a posthumous award for valor during this week's 76th annual commemoration of the Dec. 7, 1941, surprise Japanese attack.

Chief Boatswain's Mate Joseph George, who died in 1996, will be awarded the Bronze Star with "V" device for valor for his actions aboard the repair ship USS Vestal, the Navy announced Friday.

The medal — the nation's fourth-highest award for combat actions — will be presented by Rear Adm. Matthew Carter, deputy commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, to George's daughter, Joe Ann Taylor, during a Thursday ceremony at the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor.

The Navy also recently announced it would award the Silver Star — a medal that honors gallantry in combat — to Lt. j.g. Aloysius Schmitt for his actions while serving aboard the battleship USS Oklahoma. Schmitt died on the ship while helping other sailors escape.

"The presentation of the medals is not only appropriate but simply the right thing to do," Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer said in a statement. "One of my highest priorities is to honor the service and sacrifice of our Sailors, Marines, Civilians, and family members and it is clear that Lt. Schmitt and Chief George are heroes whose service and sacrifice will stand as an example for current and future service members."

George was commended in 1942 by his commander after the attack, but he was not awarded a medal, the Navy said.

Two sailors who credit George with saving them on the Arizona — Lauren Bruner and Don Stratton — petitioned for him to be presented a medal.

Military STD rates up despite education, treatment efforts

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Sexually transmitted disease cases are rising in the military in line with a record number of reported cases across the civilian population in the U.S.

"Not long ago, gonorrhea rates were at historic lows, syphilis was close to elimination, and better chlamydia diagnostic tests and more screening were available," Dr. Gail Bolan, the Centers for Disease Control's director of STD prevention, wrote in a recent agency report. "That progress has since unraveled."

The CDC reported its highest-ever number of STD cases this year after increases over a three-year period. Similar rising trends are being seen in the military.

Syphilis diagnoses doubled during the past decade, according to the military's Medical Surveillance Monthly Report released in September. Chlamydia and gonorrhea cases, stable or declining since a spike in 2008, also were beginning to rise.

Gonorrhea cases have doubled in less than a year at Vicenza, said Lt. Col. Orlando Ruiz Sosa, chief of preventive medicine at the Army's base health center. Chlamydia cases have increased by more than a third, Ruiz Sosa added.

Vicenza health officials have responded by starting a program that they hope will encourage more people to get tested and treated.

Troops and others with military health benefits may "self-refer" themselves for testing by going to the health center lab — without an appointment, doctor's referral, sergeant's sick call approval or commander involvement.

Test results are sent to a confidential physician, if desired. Positive results are relayed in a phone call, followed by treatment and counseling.

Contact information for recent sexual partners is sought so that they also can be tested and, if necessary, treated — but they aren't told who mentioned them.

The program "is just one more thing to help people access care, with the idea that earlier diagnosis will prevent spread," said health center spokeswoman Tamara Passut.

Undetected STDs can lead to serious health consequences, yet they frequently show no symptoms. That's especially true for women, whose physiology makes them more likely to contract chlamydia and gonorrhea from a male partner than the reverse, and more likely to suffer complications.

"Chlamydia — for men it's an inconvenience. For women, it's secondary infertility," said Lt. Col. Eric Garges, director of sexually transmitted infection research at the Uniformed Services

University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md.

Experts recommend that all sexually active women younger than 25 be tested annually for chlamydia. People also should be tested if they've had sex with a new partner or multiple partners, or their partners did.

The military has significantly higher STD rates than civilian populations, despite free health care, free condoms and chlamydia screenings, Garges said. Even compared with similar civilian demographics, military rates are significantly higher — three to six times higher, according to one study.

"The question is why is the rate higher once they put on the uniform?" Garges said.

Part of the reason is explained by demographics, experts say. Troops are young, as are the majority of those at risk for STDs.

Where troops come from also plays a role: 44 percent of troops enlist from the southern U.S., which has the highest rates in the nation for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

"They bring their STDs with them," Garges said.

Troops also can access expanding sexual networks, with partners at their duty stations, in the local civilian community, on deployment and when they go home on leave.

"We think when people put on the uniform, they're exposed to higher-risk networks," Garges said. "Your partners have other partners. It allows for diseases to move through populations."

Surveys have indicated high alcohol use in the military, which is associated with riskier sex and less condom use. One study of Navy women suggested many believed they'd be viewed as sexually promiscuous if they had condoms or insisted on their use.

Ruiz Sosa said many people he's counseled after they'd been diagnosed expressed embarrassment or shame. "I've seen males and females crying," Ruiz Sosa said. "I try to comfort them. I say it could happen to anyone."

He also tells them that avoiding STDs requires abstinence or monogamy, and that consistent condom use is highly effective in reducing the risk for sexually active people. "I say, 'Be careful. Be responsible,'" he said.

But Garges said the military needed a new overall approach to dealing with STDs. Advising troops merely to be careful and to use condoms obviously has been ineffective, he said.

"I've been working on this for years," Garges said. "We have the exact same problem we had 50 years ago. We have this high burden of disease and we've just sort of accepted it."

Aviators who drew phallus punished

*The (Spokane, Wash.)
Spokesman-Review*

Two U.S. Navy aviators responsible for skydrawing a phallic symbol over Okanogan County on Nov. 16 received administrative punishment Nov. 22, according to the San Diego Union-Tribune.

The unnamed pilot, along with his unnamed backseat aviator, were given six months of probation, according to the newspaper, and must present a series of "Change the Culture" briefs to fellow crews and students. Both airmen were based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash.

Both are members of the "Zappers" Electronic Attack Squadron 130 at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. The pilot was identified as a male lieutenant, according to the Union-Tribune, and used an EA-18G Growler's contrails to draw the obscene image during a routine training course.

Neither aviator was arrested nor charged with a crime under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Navy told the Union-Tribune, but still face separate investigations from their Virginia-based Carrier Air Wing 3.

"When they came down, the aviators were apologetic," Navy spokesman Cmdr. Ron Flinders told the newspaper.

US paratroopers earn foreign wings during Toy Drop event

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

After safely landing from an airborne operation over Sicily Drop Zone, American paratroopers marched in formation, waiting for the next command from their Dutch jumpmaster.

The jumpmaster paced in front of the group, lauding the paratroopers for their successful jumps and landings.

"Congratulations from Dutch paratroopers," he said, before awarding pins of Dutch wings to each soldier. "The U.S. and the Netherlands work together, not just in training, but deployments. We're coalition partners and really proud to be coalition partners with the U.S."

More than 1,100 American paratroopers were expected to receive foreign airborne wings from one of eight countries through the 20th Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop, an annual philanthropic toy drive run by U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command. Paratroopers secured spots on the airborne operations by entering a lottery after donating toys that will go to needy children in the area.

This year, jumpmasters from Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Colombia, Latvia, Sweden and Poland participated in the training exercise. Although the operation is conducted at Fort Bragg, N.C., soldiers earn foreign jump wing pins because they are under the command of foreign jumpmasters inside the aircraft.

Staff Sgt. Sacha Rogers, of the 82nd Airborne Division's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, earned Latvia jump wings.

The 15-year Army veteran said she was thrilled to participate in Operation Toy Drop and work with a foreign country. She previously

earned Dutch wings when she jumped in Operation Toy Drop a few years ago.

"It's fun to see other jumpmaster teams," she said.

Rogers said the operation instills confidence that Americans can work seamlessly under the command of a partner country.

Spc. Matthew McGann, an infantryman for the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, earned a Polish jump wing pin. His unit recently returned from a deployment to Iraq, where he said they worked alongside coalition countries.

McGann said he appreciated that Operation Toy Drop gave him a chance to work with foreign jumpmasters. He said he will proudly show off his new wings.

"I'm just excited to have foreign jump wings," McGann said. "It's having something unique, something you'll carry with you for the rest of your career."

Paratroopers mingled around Sicily Drop Zone, showing off their wings and snapping pictures with the foreign jumpmasters.

Strengthening relationships with partner countries is critical to the success of future operations, said Brig. Gen. Darrell Guthrie, commander of USACAPOC. Six of the eight countries that participated in Operation Toy Drop are NATO partners, he said.

Guthrie, who is a new commander for the unit, said the training exercise instilled confidence in American paratroopers who may be called to deploy rapidly and to work in a coalition.

"We usually have a lot more in common once we see each other start to operate," he said.

Trump offers full support for Moore in Ala. Senate race

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump endorsed embattled Republican Roy Moore in the Alabama Senate race on Monday, looking past sexual misconduct allegations against the GOP candidate to argue that his vote is needed in Congress.

Trump tweeted early Monday that "Democrats refusal to give even one vote for massive Tax Cuts is why we need Republican Roy Moore to win in Alabama."

It was Trump's strongest show of support for Moore since allegations surfaced that the candidate had inappropriate sexual contact with teenage girls decades ago, including one who said he molested her

when she was 14 and he was in his 30s. Many national Republicans have called on Moore to step aside in the wake of the multiple sexual misconduct and harassment allegations.

Shortly after Trump's tweet, Moore responded on Twitter: "Thankful for President Trump's support. The America First agenda will #MAGA. Can't wait to help him #DrainTheSwamp."

Trump also had assailed Moore's Democratic rival, Doug Jones, tweeting that "Putting a Pelosi/Schumer Liberal Puppet Jones into office in Alabama would hurt our great Republican Agenda of low on taxes, tough on crime, strong on military and borders...& so much more."

Trump for weeks was silent after the allegations against Moore surfaced, and the White House has said he had no plans to make campaign appearances before the Dec. 12 election. But Trump in recent days has raised doubts about the allegations against Moore, and he has agreed to headline a campaign-style rally in Pensacola, Fla. — less than 20 miles from the Alabama border — just four days before the Alabama election.

Trump tweeted of Moore on Monday: "We need his vote on stopping crime, illegal immigration, Border Wall, Military, Pro Life, V.A., Judges 2nd Amendment and more. No to Jones, a Pelosi/Schumer Puppet!"

EU, UK not there yet on Brexit deal

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union and Britain ended a flurry of top-level diplomacy on Monday without a deal on the terms of divorce. But they said they were within striking distance of such an agreement that would allow the EU to broaden the talks to the topic of future relations.

On a day that see-sawed between hope and disappointment, the leaders fell just short of reaching what the EU considers “sufficient progress” on the divorce issues: the exit bill, rights of citizens on each other’s territories and guarantees for a transparent border on the island of Ireland. EU leaders want a deal on these issues in time for them to agree at a summit on Dec. 14-15 whether to move the negotiations on to the next stage of talks, including on topics like trade. The lack of progress so far has raised concerns that Britain may not have a deal on key issues by the time it officially leaves on March 29, 2019.

“Despite our best efforts and the significant process we and our teams have made over the past days on the remaining withdrawal issues, it was not possible to reach an agreement,” said EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

“This is not a failure,” Juncker added after a long negotiating lunch with British Prime Minister Theresa May.

“I am also confident we will conclude this positively,” said May.

EU Council President Donald Tusk had earlier said he was “encouraged” by last-minute progress in the effort to break the impasse, especially in the thorny issue of the Irish border.

The Irish breakthrough under discussion would allow for the border between the EU’s Ireland and the U.K.’s Northern Ireland to remain transparent for trade. Both sides would promise to keep the trading rules compatible.

Deposed Yemen ruler killed

The Washington Post

Ali Abdullah Saleh, the deposed president of Yemen who used guile and charisma to rule Yemen for more than three decades, has died in the latest outbreak of violence in the country’s civil war, members of Saleh’s political party said Monday.

Saleh’s death was also announced by the Yemeni rebel group that gained strength after he was pushed from power in 2011 and that later made an alliance with Saleh and forces loyal to him. The Associated Press also reported the death.

The exact circumstances of his death could not be immediately confirmed.

Images circulating on social media showed Saleh’s body cradled in a blanket, surrounded by fighters, with what appeared to be a large head wound. Initial reports indicated he was killed by the rebel group, known as the Houthis — a startling turn, given that Saleh had been allied with the Houthis until sometime last week.

Saleh’s apparently violent

end removed one of the Arab world’s most resilient and ruthless strongmen, a onetime U.S. ally who was toppled six years ago during the Arab Spring protests that swept the region but who managed to retain his influence. His death left Yemen — chronically impoverished, riven by violence and in the throes of a catastrophic civil war — facing even greater uncertainty.

The war began in 2015 and has killed more than 10,000 people while drawing in a Saudi-led military coalition, backed by the U.S. The United Nations and aid groups have called for international efforts to ease one of the world’s most dire humanitarian crises.

The Houthis and Saleh forces — bitter foes for years — had struck an alliance of convenience in the latest conflict. The march across Yemen by their combined forces stunned the country’s neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, which views the Houthis as a proxy force for the Saudis’ regional enemy Iran.

Over the last year, the multi-

sided conflict had settled into a bloody stalemate.

Saleh’s death came as the battle took another confounding turn this week. His party’s alliance with the Houthis disintegrated, and the two sides fought in Sanaa, the capital.

The rift appeared to be part of a plan by the Saudi-led coalition to finally turn the tide of battle in its favor. A punishing campaign of airstrikes by the coalition has killed thousands of civilians over the last 2½ years, but it has failed to dislodge the Houthis from territory in northern and central Yemen or to prevent ballistic missile attacks on Saudi territory.

On Saturday, Saleh extended a hand to the Saudi coalition in a speech, calling on it to stop its bombing campaign and start “a new page.”

A Houthi spokesman, Abdel-Rahman al-Ahnomi, told the Associated Press that rebel fighters killed Saleh as he tried to flee toward Saudi Arabia though Marib province east of Sanaa. The account could not be verified independently.

More ‘ghost boats,’ bodies wash up in Japan

Associated Press

TOKYO — Three bodies of people believed to be North Koreans were recovered in northern Japan on Monday, two days after authorities found a dilapidated empty boat, coast guard officials said.

The coast guard said a Japanese fishing boat picked up a male body floating off the coast of Sakata in Yamagata prefecture, and two more bodies washed up on a nearby beach an hour and a half later. The bodies were decomposed, but one had a lapel pin thought to be North Korean.

Winds and water currents push dozens of boats onto Japan’s northern coasts annually. Rickety North Korean fishing boats are particularly vulnerable because they lack the sturdiness and equipment to return home.

But the alarming pace over the past few weeks has prompted Japanese authorities to step up patrols.

Twenty-eight of the vessels — dubbed “ghost boats” — were detected in November, up from just four in November last year. Usually, only the boats or fragments wash ashore. It is rare for survivors to be rescued and brought ashore by the Japanese.

The increase may be related to a campaign pushed by leader Kim Jong Un to boost fish harvests as a means of increasing sources of protein for the nation, which continues to fall short of food self-sufficiency and remains vulnerable to health problems caused by the lack of a varied, balanced diet.

In order to reach their quotas, North Korean fishermen may be taking more risks and venturing farther from their

usual waters.

Japanese authorities are also holding 18 people from two other boats. They claim to be North Korean.

The first batch of 10 landed on a small uninhabited island off southern Hokkaido on a damaged fishing boat and allegedly stole electronic appliances and other items from an unmanned shelter while temporarily taking refuge from rough seas. Japan’s coast guard rescued them last week.

Eight other survivors managed to reach shore in Akita on a ragged boat — which is believed to have fallen apart and sunk soon after they were rescued — and have been transferred to immigration custody.

Japanese officials said the 10 are being investigated for possible theft, while the other eight are expected to be sent home via China.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Man escapes facility, starts a fire

TX AUSTIN — An Austin man who told authorities he escaped from a mental health facility is charged with arson after investigators say he set a fire in his family's home.

Police said that when firefighters arrived, they heard crashing sounds and found Edward Avalos, 28, inside the house with a shovel. Court documents show the blaze was confined to a bedroom but was set intentionally.

The Austin American-Statesman reported Avalos told authorities he fled a mental health facility after spending about three weeks there, became angry when his mother was upset to see him back at home and wasn't pleased to see his brother was staying in his room.

Avalos was taken to the Travis County jail, where he was being held on \$30,000 bond.

Teacher donates a kidney to student

WI OAKFIELD — A 9-year-old Wisconsin girl is living a new life more than a year after receiving a life-saving kidney from a teacher at her school.

Oakfield Elementary School teacher Jodi Schmidt gave third-grader Natasha Fuller a kidney.

Natasha had been sick with prune belly syndrome since birth. The condition causes urinary tract disease and the need for kidney dialysis.

USA Today Network-Wisconsin reported Natasha has gained nearly 40 pounds since the surgery. She has more freedom in her diet, including the ability to eat chocolate and French fries.

Man guilty of pulling gun on plow driver

SD SIOUX FALLS — A South Dakota man accused of pulling a gun on a snowplow truck driver was found guilty of assault charges after a two-day trial.

The Argus Leader reported that Jason Schmidt, 41, was indicted earlier this year on charges of aggravated assault, simple assault, intentional damage to property and disorderly conduct.

The incident happened Jan. 25 in the parking lot of a convenience store in Sioux Falls. Authorities said Schmidt pulled a gun in the lot on one snowplow truck driver he said he believed was armed after arguing with a different driver both outside and inside the store.

The store clerk called police after Schmidt struck and broke the first plow truck's mirror.

Schmidt argued that he had pulled the gun in self-defense.

Tip leads to arrest of man in killing of deer

ND MINOT — A Balta man is accused of illegally killing deer after a tip was called in to the state's "Report All Poachers" hotline.

The Minot Daily News reported that Daryl Klein is facing seven counts of unlawful taking of a big game animal. State Game and Fish Department officials said they discovered about 20 dead deer in or near the Klein farmstead.

An affidavit says Klein admitted to killing at least seven deer and likely more. He told investigators he was frustrated because the animals were eating his grain.

Klein is facing a maximum penalty of a year in jail on each charge.

Homeless man saves 2 children from fire

NV LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas firefighters are calling a homeless man a hero for saving two small children from a fire.

Fire officials said a 3-year-old girl and a 10-month-old boy were trapped in a burning apartment Friday morning.

Authorities said the children's grandfather was cooking food and the stove caught fire. The grandfather escaped from a back bedroom but couldn't get to the children.

Las Vegas Fire and Rescue spokesman Tim Szymanski said that's when Anival Angulo, 36, happened by and pried a screen door open. The man pulled both children out of the home.

Szymanski said the children could have been burned or killed if Angulo had not been there. The children were treated at a hospital for smoke inhalation.

Video of boy throwing cat onto street probed

CA ONTARIO — Authorities say an animal cruelty investigation is underway after a 16-year-old boy was seen on video throwing a cat onto the street.

KABC-TV reported the Ontario Police Department launched an investigation into the incident that eventually led them to identify a teen boy believed to be responsible for the abuse of the kitten. The suspect, who will not be identified due to his age, has not been located and arrested.

Authorities said the video was posted on Snapchat.

Investigators said they located the cat and its owner. They said the cat has a fractured leg but is expected to be OK.

4 get prison in scam over sweepstakes

FL MIAMI — Four men have been sent to federal prison for their roles in a Florida sweepstakes fraud scheme involving thousands of victims around the U.S.

The Miami U.S. Attorney's Office said in a news release that the four were sentenced to prison terms of between seven and just over three years. They were convicted of mail fraud conspiracy charges.

Prosecutors said they falsely notified people by mail that they had won substantial prizes and that the recipients had to pay fees of between \$20 and \$50 to claim their winnings. The letters told victims to pay the fees in cash or by check or money order payable to fictitious companies. About 100,000 people were victimized.

Stranded puppy rescued from island

OR SPRINGFIELD — A 2-month-old puppy named Blondie stranded on an island in a western Oregon river for about a week has been rescued.

The Register-Guard reported that a Eugene Springfield Fire boat rescue team captured the possible Chihuahua-corgi mix on Friday. Officials say the 6- to 8-pound dog yelped but soon settled down and snuggled into a towel held by one of the rescuers. Officials said Blondie is in good health.

John Gordon, 56, a homeless man, said he abandoned the island in the McKenzie River about eight days ago amid rising water, but Blondie didn't respond to his calls to come.

It's not clear if Blondie will be returned to Gordon. He said he has two other puppies from the same litter.

From wire reports

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updated 24/7 from bases
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STARS AND STRIPES®

Wilson, Seahawks beat Eagles

Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Seahawks felt they were being written off, with injuries and the schedule converging to create doubt about whether Seattle was still among the NFC's elite.

With Russell Wilson, the Seahawks seemingly always have a chance.

"He was in the zone," Seattle wide receiver Doug Baldwin said. "I told him whatever that felt like, he's got to hold on to it because we need him to be in that mode for the rest of the season, because if he does that, we'll be unstoppable."

Wilson was masterful while throwing three touchdown passes, the last a 15-yard strike to J.D. McKissic with 7:29 left, and the Seahawks stayed in the NFC playoff hunt with a 24-10 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night.

Seattle (8-4) snapped Philadelphia's nine-game winning streak thanks largely to another brilliant performance by its quarterback. Wilson was 20 of 31 for 227 yards and threw touchdowns of 11 yards to Jimmy Graham, 1-yard to Tyler Lockett and the TD to McKissic after the Eagles had trimmed the lead to seven.

"I thought Russell was phenomenal tonight. I thought that was Russell showing you everything he's all about," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "From start to finish, from the first play of the game he was on it."

Philadelphia (10-2) was the highest-scoring team in the NFL with 31.9 points per game. But the Eagles got just 10 points out of seven drives that reached Seattle territory. Twice this year Seattle has faced what was the top scoring offense in the NFL at the time. Both times they scored 10 points against the Seahawks.

"I felt like everybody was sleeping on us and nobody expected us to win this game," Seattle linebacker Bobby Wagner said. "But we expected to win this game. This is not a surprise to us."

Carson Wentz was 29 of 45 for 348 yards with one touchdown and one interception. Wentz had a costly fumble at the Seattle 1 on the opening drive of the second half that could have pulled the Eagles even at 10-all.

Wentz was inches shy of breaking the plane when Sheldon Richardson ripped the ball free. The loose ball bounced around the end zone and eventually over the end line for a touchback and Seattle's ball. It was a major turning point, as Seattle went 80 yards in 11 plays, capped by Wilson's 1-yard pass to Lockett for a 17-3 Seattle lead. The touchdown was set up by a 47-yard pass to Doug Baldwin on third-and-10, beating a Philadelphia blitz.

"I make my big plays here and there," Richardson said.

Giants fire coach, GM

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Coach Ben McAdoo and general manager Jerry Reese were fired Monday by the New York Giants less than one year after taking the team to the playoffs for the first time since 2011, a person familiar with the situation said.

McAdoo and Reese were fired a day after the Giants were beaten in Oakland and dropped to 2-10, according to the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not made an official announcement.

The firings cap an injury-marred season highlighted by the loss of catalyst wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. on Oct. 8.

The moves also came less than a week after the 40-year-old McAdoo made one of his biggest mistakes of his short tenure, mishandling the decision to bench two-time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning. The move led co-owner John Mara to admit he wished the decision had been handled better.

Reese was in his 11th season as GM, starting in 2007, the season the team won the Super Bowl. The Giants won a title again after the 2011 season, but Reese has been under fire in recent years with the team now missing the playoff in five of six years.

McAdoo posted a 13-16 record, and his firing is the first mid-season head coaching move by the Giants since Bill Arnsparger was replaced seven games into the 1976 season by John McVay.

The 2-10 mark is the Giants' worst 12-game record since they were 2-10 in 1976, and their worst mark since the advent of the 16-game schedule in 1978.

Mara and co-owner Steve Tisch had come to McAdoo's defense after an embarrassing loss to the then-winless 49ers on Nov. 12, saying his job was safe until the end of the season. His handling of the Manning benching seemed to seal his fate.

Saints again ride Kamara to win

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Saints quarterback Drew Brees isn't ready to ask rookie running back Alvin Kamara to stop trying to hurdle defenders.

He has but one request.

"Please land on your feet and not your head," Brees said.

Kamara landed head-first when he tried to soar over a Carolina Panthers tackler on Sunday — but only after a game-sealing 22-yard gain on a third-and-10 play in the final minutes. He wound up with a cut on his lip, which seemed like a small price to pay for his latest virtuoso performance as a runner and receiver.

He finished with 126 yards from scrimmage — 60 rushing and 66 receiving — and scored a pair of tackle-shedding touchdowns to help the Saints beat the Panthers 31-21 and take command of the NFC South Division.

With four games to play, Ka-

mara already has had a rookie campaign like few others in NFL history. He is one of only three rookies to eclipse 600 yards rushing and 600 yards receiving, joining Pro Football Hall of Famer Charley Taylor and Billy Sims. His 11 TDs put him in range of surpassing the Saints rookie record of 13 set by George Rogers back in 1981.

"It's been fun," Kamara said of his surreal first year as a pro. "You want it to keep going. You don't want it to end."

If Kamara keeps it up, the Saints season will extend into the playoffs for the first time since 2013.

Here are other key story lines emerging from New Orleans triumph over the Panthers:

Bouncing back: The Saints (9-3) recovered quickly from a loss to the Rams in Los Angeles which ended New Orleans' eight-game winning streak. The Saints now hold not only a one-game lead over Carolina

(8-4), but also own the head-to-head tie breaker, having also beaten the Panthers in Carolina in Week 3. Two games back of New Orleans is Atlanta (7-5), which hosts the Saints on Thursday night.

Matchup problems: The Panthers entered the game with the second-ranked defense in the NFL, but now have been gashed by Drew Brees and Co. in both meetings this season. The Saints had 362 total yards in a 34-13 Week 3 victory in Carolina and finished with 400 yards against the Panthers in the rematch in the Superdome. New Orleans' big plays included Mark Ingram's 72-yard run, which set up his 3-yard TD. One of Kamara's TD runs covered 20 yards. Michael Thomas caught five passes for 70 yards, including a 32-yard reception and 10-yard TD.

Panthers coach Ron Rivera said, "Right now they are real difficult to defend."

NFL roundup

Late hit by Gronk overshadows Patriots' eighth straight victory

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Rex Burkhead scored twice and the Patriots won their eighth straight, 23-3, in an AFC East showdown overshadowed by injuries and cheap shots.

Bills starting quarterback Tyrod Taylor had a towel draped over his head while being carted off the sideline with a left knee injury early in the fourth quarter.

Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski, meanwhile, was accused of making a dirty hit after pile-driving shoulder-first into the back of the head of Bills cornerback Tre'Davious White, who was laying on the field after making an interception with 4:50 remaining.

White was dazed as he got up and was immediately escorted to the locker room to be evaluated for a concussion. The hit sparked a shoving match between Bills safety Micah Hyde and Patriots receiver Danny Amendola. Bills defensive end Jerry Hughes was so upset he was flagged for making contact with an official.

Gronkowski was apologetic after the game.

Packers 26, Buccaneers 20 (OT): At Green Bay, Wisc., Aaron Jones' 20-yard touchdown run on his only carry, with 5:59 left in overtime, won it.

With the passing game struggling, Green Bay (6-6) wore down the Buccaneers on the ground. Brett Hundley had runs of 18 and 7 yards on the drive to start overtime.

The Packers grinded out a win to stay in the playoff race, though they trail NFC North leader Minnesota by four games. They hope to get starting quarterback Aaron Rodgers back from a collarbone injury in a couple weeks.

49ers 15, Bears 14: Robbie Gould kicked a 24-yard field goal in the closing seconds and Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 293 yards in his first San Francisco start.

Gould made five field goals in his first appearance at Soldier Field since Chicago cut him prior to the 2016 opener. The Bears' career leader in points and field goals made, he shouted at their sideline after he nailed the winner.

Dolphins 35, Broncos 9: Xavien Howard's 30-yard interception return for a touchdown highlighted a dominating defensive effort by host Miami, and they snapped a five-game losing streak.

The Broncos (3-9) lost their eighth in a row.

Miami won for the first time since Week 7, while the Broncos went from bad to worse, extending their longest skid in 50 years.

Ravens 44, Lions 20: Joe Flacco threw for 269 yards and two touchdowns, and the Ravens survived a strong comeback bid by Matthew Stafford and the Lions.

After relying heavily on their opportunistic

defense for much of the season, the Ravens (7-5) finally received an ample contribution from the league's 31st-ranked offense. Flacco helped Baltimore take a 20-0 halftime lead and directed three scoring drives in the fourth quarter to keep the Ravens in front.

Flacco completed 23 of 36 passes while guiding an offense that did not commit a turnover.

Rams 32, Cardinals 16: Jared Goff passed for two touchdowns, Los Angeles took advantage of two early interceptions thrown by Blaine Gabbert, and the visiting Rams solidified their grip on first place in the NFC West.

The Rams (9-3) won for the sixth time in seven games to clinch their first winning season since 2003 when they were in St. Louis. They took the season series with the Cardinals for only the second time in the last 14 years and first since 2012.

Jets 38, Chiefs 31: Josh McCown scored on a 1-yard quarterback sneak with 2:15 left, and host New York bounced back from a brutal start for a wild and wacky win over spiraling Kansas City.

Chandler Catanzaro kicked a 21-yard field goal to put the Jets (5-7) ahead with 3:55 left. But Kansas City's Bennie Logan was called for a personal foul for hitting long snapper Thomas Hennessy on the play. That gave the Jets the ball at the 1 with a new set of downs.

After two running plays, McCown threw incomplete — but Steven Nelson was penalized for defensive holding, making it first-and-goal from the 2. Three plays later, McCown kept the ball and shoved his way into the end zone.

Chargers 19, Browns 10: Philip Rivers passed for 344 yards and hit Keenan Allen for a touchdown, and the surging Chargers moved into a tie for first place in the AFC West with a victory over the winless Browns.

Allen had 10 catches for 105 yards in his third straight big game for the Chargers (6-6), who have won six of eight to pull even with Oakland and slumping Kansas City atop the division with four games to go.

Titans 24, Texans 13: At Nashville, Tenn., Shaun Sims intercepted a pass intended for DeAndre Hopkins in the end zone with 1:02 left, and the stayed atop the AFC South.

The Titans (8-4) won their second straight and sixth of their past seven. They improved to 4-1 in the AFC South to stay ahead of Jacksonville.

Jaguars 30, Colts 10: Blake Bortles threw two touchdown passes, Leonard Fournette scored for the first time in six weeks and host Jacksonville swept the series for the second time since they joined the AFC South in 2002.

The Jaguars (8-4) bounced back from a last-second loss at Arizona, reached eight wins for the first time since 2010, and remained in the thick of the playoff picture.

NHL roundup

Streaking LA beats Chicago

Associated Press

CHICAGO — There's nothing magical about the surging Los Angeles Kings' rise to the top of the Pacific Division. The formula of tight defense, sharp goaltending and timely scoring is working just fine.

Jonathan Quick made 24 saves, Christian Folin scored the game's first goal midway through the third period and the Kings beat the Chicago Blackhawks 3-1 on Sunday for their fifth straight win.

Folin's shot from the right point sailed over Anton Forsberg's glove with Anze Kopitar screening at 9:29. Dustin Brown scored an empty-net goal with 2:03 left to make it 2-0, and Kopitar added another empty-netter after Chicago's Jonathan Toews scored with Forsberg pulled for an extra skater.

The Kings have allowed six goals during their streak, which has moved them to second in the Western Conference.

Jets 5, Senators 0: Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves for his first shutout of the season, and captain Blake Wheeler had a goal and three assists as host Winnipeg routed Ottawa.

The victory boosted the Jets' Western Conference-leading record to 17-6-4. Their 38 points also tied them for first overall in the NHL with idle Tampa Bay.

Golden Knights 3, Coyotes 2 (OT): Reilly Smith scored 3:50 into overtime to lift host Vegas over Arizona.

Jonathan Marchessault set up the winner by passing the puck to himself off the boards before feeding Smith on a 2-on-1. The Golden Knights snapped a three-game skid.

Stars 7, Avalanche 2: Tyler Seguin sparked Dallas with two early goals and the visiting Stars beat Colorado for their fifth consecutive victory.

The Stars haven't lost since a 3-0 setback at Colorado on Nov. 22.

Top 25 roundup

Seton Hall rallies to upset Louisville

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Desi Rodriguez had a season-high 29 points, including an off-balance bank shot with 8 seconds remaining, to rally Seton Hall to a 79-77 upset victory over No. 17 Louisville on Sunday.

After Deng Adel's leaper tied it at 77, the Pirates ran the clock down before Rodriguez got the ball and dribbled left. He fired a hard shot off the glass for the lead in a tense, back-and-forth game between former Big East Conference rivals.

"I just wanted to be aggressive," Rodriguez said. "I knew I had to make a strong move, and I was just happy and excited that I finished strong."

The Pirates made their final seven shots.

Quentin Snider's three-point attempt missed with 4 seconds left and Rodriguez got the rebound to spark an on-court celebration for Seton Hall (7-1). The Pirates have won three straight.

No. 3 Michigan State 86, Nebraska 57: Nick Ward matched his season high with 22 points and the host Spartans beat the Cornhuskers in the Big Ten opener for both teams.

Michigan State (7-1) has won six straight since losing to top-ranked Duke, beating each team by at least 18 points.

Jaren Jackson had 15 points, 10 rebounds and three blocks, and Cassius Winston scored 16 points and had seven assists for the Spartans.

No. 5 Notre Dame 71, St. Francis (Brooklyn) 53: Martin Geben had 14 points and 10 rebounds to help host Notre Dame beat St. Francis despite ejections to All-American Bonzie Colson and coach Mike Brey with 6:02 left.

Colson, who had 13 points and nine rebounds, was called for a flagrant foul when he

swung his elbows and floored the Terriers' Glenn Sanabria. As Colson left the court following his ejection, Brey had to be restrained twice by his coaching staff, the second time leading to his ejection.

Matt Farrell added 12 points for the Fighting Irish (7-1).

No. 12 Minnesota 89, Rutgers 67: Nate Mason scored a season-high 26 points, Jordan Murphy had his ninth straight double-double to start the season and host Minnesota beat Rutgers in the Big Ten opener for both teams.

Murphy finished with 18 points and 16 rebounds to extend the nation's longest double-double streak. He came into the game leading the country in rebounding at 12.5 per game.

Reggie Lynch added 16 points, nine rebounds and five blocks for the Gophers (8-1).

No. 13 North Carolina 97, Tulane 73: Luke Maye had 22 points and 10 rebounds and host North Carolina routed Tulane.

Kenny Williams and Joel Berry II added 13 points apiece to help the Tar Heels (8-1) win their third straight. The defending national champions shot a season-best 65.5 percent and hit nearly 68 percent during their best-shooting half of the season.

Melvin Frazier scored 27 points for Tulane (6-2).

UCF 65, No. 24 Alabama 62: A.J. Davis made the go-ahead free throw with 25 seconds remaining, then Terrell Allen stole the ball and fired it to Dayon Griffin for an easy layup that sealed visiting Central Florida's upset victory.

Allen finished with 16 points and eight assists, and Griffin added 10 points and six rebounds for the Knights (5-3). Donta Hall had 20 points and four blocks for Alabama (6-2).

NBA roundup

Thunder top Spurs

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook had his seventh triple-double of the season to help the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the short-handed San Antonio Spurs 90-87 on Sunday night.

Westbrook had 22 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Thunder.

Steven Adams added 19 points and 10 rebounds for Oklahoma City, which won even though No. 2 scorer Paul George had just eight points on 2-for-17 shooting.

Dejounte Murray had 17 points and Derrick White added 16 for San Antonio. With a chance to tie it at the end, Brandon Paul missed a three-pointer and the Thunder rebounded.

Spurs starters LaMarcus Aldridge and Tony Parker sat out. San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said Aldridge rested with a minor knee issue and Parker was "dinged-up." The Spurs still are waiting for forward Kawhi Leonard's right quadriceps injury to heal. San Antonio's Kyle Anderson sprained his left knee with a minute remaining in the third quarter and did not return.

Warriors 123, Heat 95: Stephen Curry scored 30 points in 30 minutes, Kevin Durant added 24 and visiting Golden State rode a big third-quarter run to pull away and beat Miami.

Klay Thompson scored 19 points for the Warriors, who started the second half on an 18-3 run and outscored Miami 37-17 in the third. Golden State's lead was only two at the half, then ballooned to 99-77 going into the fourth.

Curry — playing with a sore finger on his shooting hand — had 16 of his points in the first quarter, then 10 more in the third.

Goran Dragic scored 20 points for the Heat. They led by eight in the early going and 36-33 after the first quarter. The Heat then scored 41 points in the next 24 minutes.

Starting with a layup by Curry late in the half, Golden State made 10 out of 11 shots in one stretch. Curry had two three-pointers in that third-quarter barrage, and his driving score pushed the lead out to 80-63. At that point, he had 30 points in the game's first 28½ minutes. He didn't score again, didn't even play in the fourth, and the Warriors didn't need much more help anyway.

Rockets 118, Lakers 95: James Harden scored 36 points, Eric Gordon added 22 and Houston beat host Los Angeles for its seventh consecutive victory.

Chris Paul had 21 points for Houston, which has won six straight road games and 13 of 14 overall. Harden also had nine assists.

Kyle Kuzma led Los Angeles with 22 points, and Brandon Ingram added 18. Rookie point guard Lonzo Ball struggled again, missing all four shots from the field and finishing with two points and three assists.

Magic 105, Knicks 100: Nikola Vucevic scored 34 points — eight straight in a decisive 10-0 fourth-quarter run — and visiting Orlando beat New York.

With the score tied at 85 midway through the fourth quarter, Vucevic made a short basket, a three-point play and a three-point shot in succession to give the Magic the lead for good.

Michael Beasley, who replaced the injured Kristaps Porzingis in the starting lineup, led the Knicks with 21 points.

Timberwolves 112, Clippers 106: Jimmy Butler scored 20 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter, Taj Gibson added 20 and host Minnesota outlasted Los Angeles.

The Wolves overcame a season-high 30 points from Austin Rivers, who matched his career best with seven three-pointers. Rivers' final three-pointer gave L.A. a 92-91 lead with 6:54 to play before Butler scored nine in a row to send the Clippers to their third straight loss.