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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Boeing unveils tanker drone entry for Navy

The Washington Post

Boeing recently offered a first glimpse of its newest military aircraft, a large, stingray-shaped drone it hopes will win an intense Navy competition to build an uncrewed aircraft capable of landing on an aircraft carrier.

Drones have been a vital part of the Pentagon's arsenal for years, but the competition for a Navy carrier-based version that can refuel jet fighters in midair would mark a significant advancement in the technology — and would be another sign of how the military increasingly is integrating robots into the way it fights.

In addition to Boeing, two of the Pentagon's top suppliers, General Atomics and Lockheed Martin, are also vying for a contract to build as many as 76 of the vehicles that would become operational in the mid-2020s. Bids are due Jan. 3, setting the stage for a high-stakes competition in 2018. Though the Navy has not yet released the value of the contract, an earlier incarnation of the effort — in which the drones both would serve as refueling aircraft and would have attack capabilities — would have been worth \$3 billion through 2022. As conceived now, the aircraft would not be configured to strike targets.

In recent years, the Pentagon has shown that drones are not just capable of flying from airstrips around the world, but from

the sea as well. In 2013, Northrop Grumman's X-47B became the first drone to take off from and land on an aircraft carrier, the USS George H.W. Bush, in a flight that one top Navy official said marked "an inflection point in history on how we will integrate manned and unmanned aircraft on carrier flight decks in the future."

Then, a year later, the X-47B flew in concert with F/A-18 fighter jets. It took its next step in 2015 when it was refueled in midair by a tanker jet.

If successful, the MQ-25 would become a key component for the Navy. With more capable defense systems, potential adversaries, particularly China, are pushing the Navy's aircraft carriers farther from shorelines — and out of striking distance of fighter jets.

The ability to refuel those jets in midair with a drone would allow them to strike deeper into enemy territory, even while the carriers stay safely off shore. Without that capability, defense analysts fear the U.S.'s long-held air dominance could be diminished and its fleet of aircraft carriers, perhaps one of the most significant ways the Pentagon projects force from wherever, whenever, could become obsolete.

"The Navy has a growing concern with threats to its aircraft carriers," said Loren Thompson, a defense consultant, who works with many of the large contractors.

"Carriers cost billions of dollars and have thousands of personnel on board, so if it can attack targets without having to get too close, that's a big warfighter advantage."

In addition to refueling fighter jets, including the F/A-18 Super Hornet and the F-35C, the drones also could be used on surveillance missions, staying aloft for long stretches, Thompson said.

Though it developed the X-47B, Northrop Grumman suddenly dropped out of the competition in October, stunning many in the industry who had thought it had a good chance to win. During a conference call with Wall Street analysts to discuss quarterly financial results, Wes Bush, Northrop's chairman and chief executive, said the program didn't make financial sense for the company, which is already developing a new stealth bomber for the Pentagon.

"When we're looking at one of these opportunities, let me be clear: Our objective is not just to win. Winning is great, it feels good on the day of an announcement," he said. "But if you can't really execute on it and deliver on it to your customer and your shareholders, then you've done the wrong thing."

For Boeing and Lockheed, which teamed up on the bomber contract but lost, the Navy competition represents a significant opportunity to build a new military airframe.

Mattis nixes holiday tradition of war zone troop visits

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For only the second time since 9/11, America's defense secretary didn't visit U.S. troops in a war zone during December, breaking a long-standing tradition of personally and publicly thanking servicemembers in combat who are separated from their families during the holiday season.

Pentagon boss Jim Mattis, who spent more than four decades in the Marine Corps and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, made a five-day trip through the Middle East in early December. He stopped in Kuwait and Pakistan — countries adjacent to Iraq and Afghanistan — but didn't cross the borders to see troops at war in either

country. Last week, he visited troops in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and at military bases in Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina, wishing them holiday cheer.

It has been 15 years since a U.S. defense chief didn't travel to a war zone during the festive season. And the only time a holiday visit was skipped since Americans began fighting in Afghanistan was in December 2002. That year, then-Secretary Donald Rumsfeld went to a command post in Qatar that would be used a few months later to coordinate the launch of the Iraq War.

Asked recently why he wasn't going to Iraq or Afghanistan, Mattis said he didn't want to discuss his travel. "I carry out my duties to the best of my ability," said Mat-

tis, who visited Iraq and Afghanistan earlier this year.

Dana White, his chief spokeswoman, said the secretary "wanted the troops to enjoy their holiday uninterrupted. He is keenly aware of the logistical challenges of a senior leader visit, especially in a war zone."

Defense secretary trips historically have been aimed at boosting troop morale, letting servicemembers know that senior leaders and the U.S. public recognize their sacrifice. And generals who have chaired the Joint Chiefs of Staff have routinely done their own December trips to war zones, taking celebrities on their flights as part of a USO entertainment tour.

Mattis: US won't pursue ISIS into Assad areas

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military will not attack Islamic State fighters who have escaped Syrian territory seized by American-backed forces to land controlled by President Bashar Assad's regime, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Friday.

Despite the long-stated goal of the U.S.-led, anti-ISIS coalition to destroy ISIS in Iraq and Syria, Mattis said the U.S. would observe its commitment to Russia and Syria to keep its forces, including warplanes, east of the Euphrates River. ISIS militants who have escaped toward central Syria will be left for Russian or Syrian government forces to attack.

"It's not a big issue," Mattis told reporters at the Pentagon. "They'll have to be hunted down. But I seriously doubt that Assad sees this as a positive on his side, either."

Mattis and other coalition officials have declined to estimate publicly the number of ISIS fighters who have fled from the middle Euphrates River valley in recent months. However, the defense secretary said he had seen no indications those groups posed a serious threat.

U.S. forces will continue to monitor the groups, Mattis said, not ruling out attack-

ing them if they grow in size, launch major attacks or are allowed to reorganize.

"There's only a safe haven if people make a decision to give them one," he said of Assad's regime.

U.S. officials have expressed doubts for years about Assad's military capabilities, describing his forces as small and weak, enabling ISIS to take root in Syria and to grow into a worldwide threat.

Nonetheless, Mattis said he was confident they would handle the remnants of ISIS in the region west of the Euphrates River.

The U.S. now estimates there are fewer than 1,000 ISIS fighters remaining in Iraq and Syria, a force that at its height reached about 40,000. The bulk of ISIS's remaining forces are in a small section of territory along the Euphrates River in eastern Syria, where U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces continue to battle them.

Mattis said the war would go on until the final 2 percent of the roughly 34,000 square miles ISIS once held across Iraq and Syria is cleared.

"We are in the process of crushing the life out of the caliphate," he said.

When the war against ISIS concludes, it will not indicate the end of the U.S.

military's mission in Syria. The mission for about 2,000 American troops there is likely to shift in early 2018, Mattis said. U.S. troops will focus on stability operations after more than two years of training, advising and assisting SDF forces to battle ISIS.

Mattis said the mission will be to ensure ISIS or a group like it cannot return to the region. That includes training local police forces to handle small groups of militants. It also means providing security and logistics operations for American diplomats who Mattis expects to flow into eastern Syria in the coming months.

Diplomats are expected to oversee projects to restore services to areas impacted by the brutal fighting, such as ISIS's former capital Raqqa and the neighboring town of Tabqa, the site of a key dam, Mattis said. Diplomats also will help with the distribution of international monetary aid, he added.

"It's an attempt to move toward normalcy," Mattis said. "That takes a lot of support. It's terribly dangerous ... so, the military would move them around [and] make certain they are protected."

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DOD leader looking for culture shift in military

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

A top Pentagon official believes the U.S. military is moving closer to a new way of doing business that would allow troops and families to stay at installations like Fort Bragg, N.C., for longer periods of time.

Robert Wilkie, who was sworn in as undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness in late November, said he believes the military's current way of doing business is outdated and detrimental to families and the retention of troops.

He was critical of both the constant movement that has become a trademark of military families and the "up or out" career trajectories of the services, which he said needlessly boots troops who can still contribute to the nation's warfighting efforts.

The potential changes would be part of a larger cultural shift for the military. Nothing is set in stone, he added. But the possible changes are more than idle chatter.

Currently, Wilkie said, a servicemember is sent to a new assignment every few years. For family members, that means finding a

new school, adjusting to a new community and finding new careers.

He said the constant moves limit the careers of many military spouses, cause unnecessary stress for families and are a "tremendous strain" on the Defense Department budget.

"It was built at a time when less than 10 percent of the military had families," Wilkie said. "Today, 70 percent have families."

Wilkie, a Fayetteville, N.C., native whose father was a Fort Bragg officer, spoke with *The Fayetteville Observer* on Wednesday while in town for the holidays. He said not every installation is large enough to host troops and their families for extended tours.

But installations like Fort Bragg are more than capable of providing a variety of opportunities without dragging a military family across the country every two or so years, he said.

Other installations that could host military families for extended tours include Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Naval Station Norfolk, Va.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Hawaii; and Joint Base San Antonio.

"There are enough places," Wilkie said. "We're certainly looking into it."

Wilkie said the military also is taking a closer look at the support it provides families through child care, health care and other programs, recognizing that support plays a key role in a servicemember's decision to continue serving.

Decades ago, the military did not always make such considerations because "there were always tens of thousands of people being pushed up into the system," Wilkie said.

But in an all-volunteer force, the military no longer has that luxury.

For the same reason, Wilkie said, the military must rethink its "up or out" policy with promotions.

Under the current system, troops are pushed out of the military if they don't constantly advance along their career paths. But, Wilkie said, those troops can still make valuable contributions.

"Not everyone is on track to become vice chief of staff of the Army," he said. "As long as you meet standards, you should be allowed to stay."

House members push bulk carrier buy

(Newport News, Va.) Daily Press

Congressional support continues to build for the purchase of two aircraft carriers in fiscal year 2019, a double-buy that would boost the fortunes of Newport News Shipbuilding and thousands of smaller contractors across the country.

Last week, 131 House members signed a letter to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis supporting the idea.

Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., who is influential on Navy shipbuilding, released a copy of the letter in a news release. A two-carrier purchase, he said, would further the administration's goal of a 355-ship Navy, which would include a 12-carrier fleet, up from the current 11.

The Senate made a similar push earlier this month. Nine senators, including Virginia Democrats Tim Kaine and Mark Warner, backed a two-carrier purchase in a letter to Mattis.

A dual buy would save \$2.5 billion compared with a single-ship purchase, the

House letter says. It also would signal the Pentagon's commitment to the Newport News yard and some 3,000 suppliers that make up the carrier industrial base, allowing them to plan ahead and to invest in their facilities.

All House members from Virginia signed the letter.

A double order would cover the construction contract for the future USS Enterprise, plus a carrier yet to be named. Enterprise is the third Gerald R. Ford-class ship and advance work is already underway at Newport News. Shipbuilders celebrated the first cut of steel earlier this year.

The \$2.5 billion in estimated savings is based on an analysis by industry and the Department of the Navy, according to the letter. Besides cost savings, lawmakers cite the strain on the current carrier fleet, with three of 11 ships deployed and up to seven carriers underway in recent weeks.

Wittman chairs the armed services sea power and projection forces panel. He

pushed for language on a two-carrier purchase in the 2018 defense authorization bill, but failed.

The Navy orders Virginia-class attack submarines in larger blocks, and that program is considered a success.

Two-carrier purchases happened twice during the Reagan defense buildup. The carriers Theodore Roosevelt and George Washington were purchased in fiscal year 1983; the John C. Stennis and Harry S. Truman carriers were ordered in 1988.

The Pentagon's fiscal year 2019 budget request is due to Congress in the first part of 2018. Then comes debate over another authorization bill, followed by the defense budget, itself.

The Newport News yard, a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries, has pushed the idea as well, running ads in Beltway-area markets earlier this year to support bulk buying. The yard is the sole builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers for the Navy.

Officials move albatross eggs from naval facility

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Wildlife conservationists and the Navy have moved more than 20 Laysan albatross eggs to Oahu from a naval facility on Kauai, aiming to reduce the risk of aircraft striking the federally protected birds.

Officials say the eggs were located in a nesting colony near the airstrip at the Pacific Missile Range Facility on the western side of Kauai, where the birds have been nesting for decades.

Officials say a Navy aircraft recently transported the eggs in a foam-padded cooler functioning as an incubator to another nesting colony in the Kaena Point Natural Area Reserve.

Officials say Laysan albatross at Kaena Point will serve as surrogate parents for the eggs, which are expected to hatch in a couple of months.

Navy's captured flags rediscovered

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The curator of the U.S. Naval Academy Museum wasn't exactly sure what would be found: records indicated five display boxes long used to exhibit captured British flags from the War of 1812 actually concealed more banners underneath.

But not until all 61 banners were painstakingly removed in December for a conservation effort did curator Charles Swift, who is also the museum's managing director, actually see what was hidden. And he was gratified to learn that conservationists had uncovered dozens of other flags — many captured by the Navy in other conflicts of the 19th century.

The 46 newly discovered flags — including banners from battles in Asia and from the Spanish-American War — had originally been put on display in 1913. But seven years later, they were covered up by the 15 flags from the War of 1812 — and sealed up for nearly a century.

No one alive had seen the flags long hidden from view.

"More importantly than just seeing them was seeing the colors," said Swift. "It is what struck me immediately. It was sort of dark, but you could see the colors — the vibrant colors — of them having not been in light for 100 years, and so it was exciting."

The flags, covered by the others in boxes with large plate-glass lids, speak to an earlier era of U.S. intervention overseas. They include one taken from a Chinese pirate fort off Macau dating to 1854 and another captured in Korea in 1871, according to Swift. There were even some replicas of Revolutionary War-era flags among them.

He said no one had attempted to open the boxes for so long until it came time for needed conservation.

"It was mostly the recognition that after 100 years, these things really needed to be taken down, because hanging like this places stresses on the flags," said Swift.

In 1849, then-President James K. Polk designated the academy in Annapolis, Md., as the repository of flags cap-

tured in battle by the Navy. The museum is now home to about 800 flags and trusted with their conservation, Swift said. About 250 of them are trophy flags seized in battle. The museum also houses seafaring instruments, naval uniforms, medals, photographs, art and items recalling past naval expeditions and explorations.

Amelia Fowler, a well-known flag preserver who restored the original Star-Spangled Banner in 1914, was contracted in 1912 to conserve the academy's collection of trophy flags. She worked with dozens of other women in the museum's Mahan Hall, using a patented stitching method to help preserve the fabric. All told, they stitched up enough flags to cover two football fields, Swift said.

Camille Myers Breeze is working on a new conservation process for the flags as director of an independent conservation studio, Museum Textile Services, based in Massachusetts. She said Fowler's work has enabled her crew to handle the flags without risk of damage.

Gunman opens fire outside Coptic church near Cairo

Associated Press

CAIRO — A gunman on a motorcycle opened fire Friday outside a church in a Cairo suburb and at a nearby store, sparking a shootout that killed at least nine people, including eight Coptic Christians, Egyptian authorities said. It was the latest attack targeting the country's embattled Christian minority.

The gunman also was killed, along with at least one police officer, officials said.

The attack began when the gunman tried to break through the security cordon outside the Coptic Church of Mar Mina. It was not clear how many assailants were involved. Egypt's Interior Ministry referred to only one, but the Coptic Orthodox church mentioned "gunmen."

Five people were wounded,

including another police officer, Health Ministry spokesman Khaled Megahed said.

The attack came amid tightened security around churches and Christian facilities ahead of the Coptic Orthodox Christmas celebrations of Christmas on Jan. 7. Police have been stationed outside churches and in nearby streets across Cairo. President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has personally chaired meetings with his top security chiefs in recent days to discuss security during New Year's Eve and the Orthodox Christmas.

A video circulating on social media after Friday's attack apparently showed the gunman lying on the ground with his face covered in blood. Authorities closed off the area around the church.

The Interior Ministry iden-

tified the assailant as Ibrahim Ismail Mostafa, who, the agency said, was involved in several previous militant attacks. The Interior Ministry said he was wounded and arrested but made no mention of his death, which was reported by the Health Ministry.

The assailant had earlier opened fire at the nearby store owned by a Christian, the Interior Ministry said.

No group took immediate responsibility for the attack, which bore the hallmarks of Islamic militants, who have for years battled security forces in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in an insurgency now led by a local affiliate of the extremist Islamic State group. It is centered in the turbulent northern part of Sinai but has also carried out attacks in the mainland.

Police: Child caused fire in the Bronx

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City's deadliest residential fire in decades was accidentally lit by a 3½-year-old boy playing with the burners on his mother's stove, officials said Friday.

The flames spread quickly through the kitchen, then roared through a door the boy's mother had left open as she fled her first floor apartment with the boy and her other child, Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro said. A stairwell acted like a chimney, carrying the flames through the entire building within minutes and blocking the main escape route.

Twelve people died, including girls ages 1, 2 and 7 and a boy whose age was not given.

"We were told the boy had a history of playing with the burners and turning them on, and before the mother knew it, this fire had gotten a good hold of the kitchen," Nigro said.

Excluding the Sept. 11 attacks, it was the deadliest fire in the city since 87 people were killed during a social club fire in the same Bronx neighborhood in 1990.

The blaze broke out on the first floor of a five-story building just before 7 p.m. and quickly tore through the roughly century-old structure near the Bronx Zoo.

Many residents of the building, a mix of native New Yorkers and Latino and African immigrants, were able to flee via fire escapes. At least 20 people were clambering down the icy, metal escapes when firefighters arrived, Nigro said. But the flames moved so fast that many never made it out of their apartments.

About 170 firefighters worked in bone-chilling cold, just 15 degrees, to rescue a dozen people from the building.

Many questions remained in the immediate aftermath of the blaze, including how the fire spread so quickly in a brick building built after catastrophic fires at the turn of the 20th century ushered in an era of tougher enforcement of fire codes.

Midwest and eastern US see dangerously cold temperatures

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Dangerously cold temperatures and significant snowfall are setting in across half the country, and officials are urging people to assist the homeless and elderly.

Forecasters warned people to be wary of hypothermia and frostbite from the arctic blast that's gripping parts of the U.S. from the Midwest to the Northeast, where the temperature, without the wind chill factored in, dipped to minus 32 degrees Fahrenheit on Thursday morning in Watertown, N.Y. Temperatures rose to minus 7 early Friday.

The prolonged, dangerous cold weather has sent advocates for the homeless scrambling to get people off the streets and to bring in extra beds for them.

Warming centers also were set up in some locations including recreation centers across Cincinnati.

Boston's Pine Street Inn is sending a van with outreach workers around to persuade people to spend the night inside, but some said they prefer the streets.

A shelter spokeswoman said that if people don't want to go to a shelter, they're given blankets, warm clothing and a hot beverage, and informed of the dangers of extreme cold.

The Ohio Department of Aging said older people are at increased risk from such severe cold, from medication side effects to falling risks.

The department encouraged people to check on family members, friends and neighbors to make sure they're warm enough and have their needed medications and sufficient food and water.

Animal advocates also urged people to remember their pets.

On Thursday, cold weather records were set from Arkansas to Maine, and the freezing air will linger through the weekend, reaching as far south as Texas and the Florida Panhandle.

In New Hampshire, the cold set a record for the day of minus 34 atop the Northeast's highest peak, Mount Washington.

In the Midwest, temperatures in Minneapolis aren't expected to top zero this weekend, and it likely will be in the teens when the ball drops on New Year's Eve in New York City.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Famous hippo Fiona nears 1st birthday

OH CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Zoo plans to celebrate the first birthday of its famous baby hippo, Fiona, with special treats and a visit by specialists from a children's hospital who helped her survive after her premature birth.

Fiona turns 1 on Jan. 24. The zoo will celebrate a bit early on Jan. 20, with events including cake and ice cream for visitors and question-and-answer sessions with Fiona's caretakers.

She had a roller coaster first year, from battling early health complications to becoming a social media star and the subject of several books. The zoo said Fiona can't be outside in low temperatures, so she is spending winter mostly indoors.

She has grown from 29 pounds at birth to over 600 pounds, though that's still far from the size of an adult hippo.

Man punched ATM for giving too much cash

FL COCOA — A Florida man told investigators he punched an ATM because it gave him too much cash.

An arrest report said Michael Joseph Oleksik, 23, caused \$5,000 in damage to an ATM at a Wells Fargo bank branch in Cocoa on Nov. 29. He was arrested Dec. 22 on a criminal mischief charge after bank officials pressed charges.

Florida Today reported surveillance video captured Oleksik striking the touch screen.

An arrest report said Oleksik told a bank manager he was angry the machine was giving him too much money, and he didn't know what to do because he was in a hurry for work. He apologized for causing damage.

Prosecutor's parents arrested on pot charges

VT BURLINGTON — A Vermont prosecutor is the son of a couple arrested in Nebraska with 60 pounds of marijuana they told police they planned to give as Christmas presents.

Chittenden County State's Attorney Sarah George said Tuesday Justin Jiron is not connected to his parents' suspected crime other than by relation.

Police arrested his parents, Patrick Jiron, 80, and Barbara Jiron, 70, on Dec. 19 with an estimated \$300,000 worth of marijuana in their vehicle.

The Jirons told police they were unaware it was illegal to transport marijuana through Nebraska. The couple have been cited for possessing marijuana with the intent to deliver.

George said Justin Jiron is "surprised and upset," but he is still performing his duties in office.

Suspect in theft wore 'Trust Me' T-shirt

VA FALLS CHURCH — A suspect wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with "Trust Me" allegedly stole a car with an accomplice in Fairfax County, Va.

The Washington Post reported that the two suspects from Falls Church were arrested by police in the stolen car not long after the unlocked Honda Civic was taken as it warmed up.

Police said they also found forged checks during the arrests.

The newspaper said Wilmer Lara Garcia has been charged with auto theft and two counts of forgery. According to police, he was wearing the shirt that read "Trust Me."

His accomplice was charged with auto theft.

Judge won't grant elephants 'personhood'

CT HARTFORD — A petition by an animal rights group to grant three elephants at a Connecticut zoo personhood has been denied by a state judge who called the request "wholly frivolous."

The Nonhuman Rights Project filed suit in November on behalf of elephants at Commerford Zoo, a traveling petting zoo based in Goshen. The group wanted the elephants released to a natural habitat sanctuary.

The group says elephants "have a sense of self, remember the past and plan for the future, engage in complex communication, show empathy, and mourn their dead."

The judge's decision Tuesday was based on the fact that the group didn't have standing to bring the petition and there was no precedent.

Chief: Abandoned hot dogs caused house fire

SC YORK — Officials said unattended hot dogs caused a South Carolina house fire that injured two firefighters.

Chief Domenic Manera told the Herald of Rock Hill that the York Fire Department got a call about a fire at a duplex just after 11 p.m. Tuesday. He said two firefighters were hit with falling debris when the roof of the porch collapsed. Both were treated at hospitals for muscle injuries and released.

Manera said the fire was caused by unattended hot dogs left cooking on a kitchen stove in the rear of the two units of the duplex.

No residents were hurt in the fire, but five people from two families have been displaced. Authorities are still investigating.

Statue of Confederate general painted pink

TN NASHVILLE — A Confederate statue on private property along an interstate in Tennessee has been painted pink in the latest act of vandalism there.

The Tennessean reports the statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest seems to have been painted late Tuesday or early Wednesday. The statue portrays the early Ku Klux Klan leader and former Confederate general riding a horse.

Owner Bill Dorris said the statue has been "shot at six times," among other acts of vandalism. He said he plans to leave the pink paint, which he expects will turn red in sunlight and attract more attention to the statue along Interstate 65 south of downtown Nashville.

Woman stunned to find \$284B electric bill

PA ERIE — A Pennsylvania woman says she went online to check her electric bill and was stunned at the amount — more than \$284 billion.

The Erie Times-News reports that Mary Horomanski said her eyes "just about popped out" of her head when she saw the amount. She suspected that her family had put up their Christmas lights wrong.

The silver lining was that she didn't have to pay the full amount until November 2018 — only a \$28,156 minimum payment was due for December.

Horomanski's son contacted Penelac, her electric provider, who confirmed the error. Parent company First Energy said a decimal point was moved accidentally. Her new amount was quickly corrected to \$284.46.

From wire reports

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Military Bowl

Abey's 5 scores lead Navy in rout of UVA

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Two quarterbacks put on one heck of a show for Navy in the Military Bowl.

Backup Zach Abey scored five touchdowns, starter Malcolm Perry ran for 114 yards and two scores and the Midshipmen rolled to a surprisingly easy 49-7 victory over Virginia on Thursday.

After Virginia's Joe Reed took the opening kickoff 98 yards for a touchdown, the Midshipmen (7-6) got two TDs apiece from Perry and Abey in taking a 28-7 halftime lead.

Perry left in the third quarter with a foot injury, leaving Abey to score on runs of 5 and 20 yards to make it 42-7 in a game Navy entered as a 1½-point favorite.

"Malcolm did a masterful job. The kid's phenomenal, man," Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo said. "He brings another dimension to our offense. To Zach's credit, he came in there and played really, really well."

The Midshipmen rolled up a Military Bowl-record 452 yards rushing, including 101 by Chris High and 88 by Abey, who began the season as the starter before losing the job.

"That's the best we've played all year," said Niumatalolo. "We put it together on both sides of the ball."

Going back and forth with Perry and Abey might be the way to go in 2018.

"They're both really good football players. I've got to find a way to use them both,"

Niumatalolo said. "Just what you saw today is probably what you're going to see next year."

After scoring on a 1-yard run with 11:11 remaining, Abey sat down after becoming the fifth player in FBS history to rush for five TDs in a bowl game.

"We did what we were supposed to do," Perry said. "It all starts up front. The guys were really physical. We played Navy football today."

Playing in their first bowl since 2011, the Cavaliers (6-7) could not contain Navy's triple option and had no success moving the ball.

"I think coach Niumatalolo had his team very well prepared," Virginia coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "Clearly, I didn't have our team prepared to perform to their true potential, offensively, defensively or special teams."

Seeking its first winning season in six years, Virginia instead absorbed its sixth loss in seven games.

"The team worked really hard to get to this point, and that's an accomplishment," Mendenhall said. "I don't think it takes the edge off (the season), but it certainly takes some off because it's never fun to not play well and to lose the game. But it's also reflective of exactly where we are."

They're currently in the second tier of the Atlantic Coast Conference, and at least on this day not nearly as good as Navy.

"They just outplayed us," Virginia free

safety Quin Blanding said. "That's the bottom line. They came ready to play and we didn't."

Virginia senior Kurt Benkert came in with a school-record 3,062 yards passing this season, along with 25 touchdown passes. In this one, he went 15-for-34 for 133 yards and an interception, and the Cavaliers finished with a season-low 175 yards of offense.

"It was windy and it was cold," Benkert said. "It was hard to get into a rhythm, and we never really found our stride."

After Reed went the distance with the opening kickoff, Navy responded with a 69-yard drive that ended with a 1-yard run by Abey. The Midshipmen then forced a three-and-out, and Perry finished an eight-play drive with a 22-yard touchdown run for a 14-7 lead.

Perry scored from 19 yards out and Abey concluded the first-half scoring with a 1-yard TD.

The takeaway

Virginia: The Cavaliers tripled their win total of a year ago and ended their six-year bowl drought, but now they've got this defeat to think about during the offseason.

Navy: The Midshipmen salvaged a disappointing season in which they started 5-0 before losing six of the next seven, including 14-13 to Army. Navy also discovered just how good Perry can be at QB, with Abey available when needed.

Camping World Bowl

Rudolph leads Oklahoma St. past Virginia Tech

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — They started playing football at Oklahoma State 116 years ago, and never in that span had there been a run of three consecutive 10-win seasons.

Until now.

Mason Rudolph threw for 351 yards and a pair of touchdowns on his way to winning game MVP honors, James Washington had a long touchdown grab and became Oklahoma State's career receiving yards leader, and the 17th-ranked Cowboys beat No. 22 Virginia Tech 30-21 in the Camping World Bowl on

Thursday night.

"It's cool. It speaks a lot about the senior class, about the leadership on both sides of the ball," Rudolph said. "It's a great achievement for us."

Washington caught five passes for 126 yards, giving him 4,472 for his career and passing Rashaun Woods for the school mark. Justice Hill ran for 120 yards and another score for the Cowboys (10-3).

"A really good win for our organization," Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy said. "Defensively, we gave up a lot of rushing yards but we were able to make some stops and force

some turnovers. For Oklahoma State, really in the end, that's what it comes down to."

Josh Jackson ran for two scores and threw for another for the Hokies (9-4), including a rush that got Virginia Tech within 27-21 with 5:40 remaining. Deshaun McCleese ran for 124 yards, a Virginia Tech season-best, but the Hokies were hurt by two turnovers in Oklahoma State territory.

"We had a plan and we executed well at times," Virginia Tech coach Justin Fuente said. "I don't really remember Oklahoma State making very many, if any, mistakes. And we

made a handful, just enough to kind of keep us from pulling the thing off. That's not to say that Oklahoma State doesn't deserve credit for winning the game. They do."

Hill came through with perhaps the play of the night. Facing a third-and-11 with 3:30 left, Hill took a handoff, went left, waited for a lane to open — and broke loose for a 31-yard gain down to the Hokies' 18. Matt Ammendola's 38-yard field goal with 2:34 left put the Cowboys up by nine, essentially sealing the outcome.

College football roundup

TCU storms back to win Alamo Bowl

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — There is something about TCU and big comebacks in the Alamo Bowl. Never count out the Horned Frogs.

In 2015, they stormed back from down 31-0 to win. They did it again Thursday night, rallying from 21-3 down to beat No. 15 Stanford 39-37 behind Kenny Hill, who passed for two touchdowns, ran for another, and even caught one. Cole Bunce kicked the winning 33-yard field goal with just over 3 minutes left after Stanford had retaken the lead.

"The bottom line is we need to start faster," TCU coach Gary Patterson joked after the game. "We fought back tonight."

Hill landed the biggest

punches. He scored the Horned Frogs' first touchdown on a 6-yard scramble. His 27-yard TD catch on a throw from receiver Desmon White capped No. 13 TCU's first drive of the second half.

And Hill's 93-yard touchdown pass to Jalen Reagor in the fourth quarter sent a charge through an Alamodome crowd that was dominated by TCU fans.

It was the second time this season Hill had a rushing, passing and receiving touchdown, providing a memorable finale to his college career. Hill began his career at Texas A&M, where he succeeded Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel in 2014, but transferred to TCU (11-3) after a rocky first season with the Aggies.

Holiday Bowl

Michigan State 42, Washington State 17: At San Diego, Brian Lewerke threw for 213 yards and three touchdowns, and LJ Scott ran for 110 yards and two scores for the Spartans, who took advantage of Luke Falk's absence to rout the Cougars.

Lewerke also rushed for 73 yards for Michigan State (10-3), which rebounded from a dismal 3-9 record last year to reach double digits in wins for the eighth time in program history.

"We were ready to play. We were fresh," said Mark Dantonio, who earned his 100th victory in 11 seasons as Spartans coach. "It wasn't good enough to win nine games. We needed

to win 10. We needed to have a great bowl game. This was a national stage. Holiday Bowl is an outstanding bowl. It's catapulted us up the rankings at least a little bit further.

"We reaffirmed our stature a little bit in college football. This has been a good football team and should continue to be a good football team."

Falk, who was photographed earlier in the week with a cast on his left wrist, went through warmups but came out in street clothes at game time. He was replaced by redshirt sophomore Tyler Hilinski, who made his first start and eighth appearance of the season. It's unclear precisely when Falk injured the wrist on his non-throwing hand, but he had issues with it throughout the season.

College basketball roundup

Seton Hall rallies from 13 down to beat Creighton

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Khadeen Carrington, Desi Rodriguez and Angel Delgado came back for their senior seasons at Seton Hall looking to make a run at the Big East title, and they are not letting anything get in their way.

Down 13 points early in the second half to No. 25 Creighton, no sweat. Down a point late with Delgado heading to the bench with five fouls, no problem.

All they had to do was find a way to win, and that's exactly what the 23rd-ranked Pirates (12-2, 1-0) did.

Carrington hit a go-ahead layup with 2:05 to play and Seton Hall held Creighton scoreless for the final 3:32 in posting a 90-84 victory in the Big East Conference opener for both schools on Thursday night.

"We know how good this league is," said Rodriguez, who scored 14 of 23 points in the

second half. "It is arguably the No. 1 conference in the country. This was a statement win. I think we needed this win to get back to playing good basketball. I saw a lot of good basketball in the second half and I was proud of my guys."

Carrington finished with 18 points, Delgado added 18 points and 14 rebounds and Myles Powell had 17.

"This is a great win," said Delgado, who walked off the court after fouling out and told his teammates they were not going to lose. "It's one of the best wins of the whole year because Creighton is a heck of a team. They play hard. They have great players. I think that team is going to go far but, wins like this are the wins that we need. We have to protect our home."

Martin Krampelj had a career-high 23 points and 10 rebounds for Creighton (10-3, 0-1), which had a five-game winning streak snapped. Mar-

cus Foster, who hurt his right knee early, finished with 14, but only two in the second half. Khyri Thomas had 13 for the Bluejays.

Foster said his knee bothered him at halftime but he gutted it out. The senior was more frustrated that the Bluejays lost to another ranked team after leading at the half. They led No. 18 Baylor and No. 20 Gonzaga in their other two losses.

"We always talk about wanting to be a great team," said Foster, who will have his knee looked at again on Friday. "In order to be a great team we are going to have to get over these little humps. We are going to have to figure out how to beat these teams. We have to learn from it. We've been saying this all year. We can't keep learning from it. We have to figure it out and get it done."

No. 20 Gonzaga 81, Pacific 48: Josh Perkins said the host Bulldogs did not panic when

their shots did not fall in the first half against the Tigers.

"We took the same looks and stayed confident," Perkins said. "They started to fall in the second half."

Did they ever.

Gonzaga outscored Pacific 50-27 in the second half and won the West Coast Conference opener for both teams on Thursday night.

Rui Hachimura scored 19 points and Perkins added 16 as the Zags won their 22nd consecutive WCC opener.

Zach Norvell Jr. scored 13 points for Gonzaga (11-3, 1-0 West Coast), which has beaten Pacific 11 consecutive times.

"We played a great second half," said Gonzaga coach Mark Few, who has never lost a conference opener in 19 seasons. "Our guys stuck with it. They played good defense."

Jahlil Tripp scored nine points to lead Pacific (5-9, 0-1), which has lost five games in a row.

NHL roundup

Ovechkin helps Caps top Bruins in SO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Alex Ovechkin made the most of a quick opportunity to make up for a shootout miss.

Ovechkin scored in regulation and the tiebreaker, lifting the Washington Capitals to a 4-3 victory over the Boston Bruins on Thursday night.

The 32-year-old Ovechkin missed his shootout try during Wednesday night's 1-0 loss to the New York Rangers.

"That's one thing that Ovie does, is that (if) he had a failure, he sort of says 'I'm going to make up for it,'" Washington coach Barry Trotz said. "There was no doubt that thing was in."

Lars Eller and Brett Connolly also scored for the Capitals, who snapped a three-game losing streak and won their 12th consecutive game over the Bruins.

Washington also ended a scoring drought that lasted al-

most nine full periods and overcame deficits of 2-0 in the first period and 3-2 in the third.

David Backes scored twice for the second time this season, but Boston lost for the third time in its last 12 games. Noel Acciari also scored for the Bruins.

Connolly tied it at 3 with 8:38 left in the third when he attempted a centering feed toward Tom Wilson at the crease. Instead, the puck caromed off a Boston player and over the line before Khudobin could stop it.

Ovechkin had the only successful shootout attempt, finishing into the top right corner.

Maple Leafs 7, Coyotes 4: Auston Matthews scored during Toronto's three-goal first period in his Arizona homecoming.

Facing the Coyotes in Arizona for the second time in his career, the 20-year-old Matthews scored for the second straight game after missing six in a row because of concussion-

like symptoms.

Lightning 3, Canadiens 1: Steven Stamkos scored twice, and NHL-leading Tampa Bay earned its 10th win in 11 games.

Brayden Point got the tie-breaking goal in the third and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 31 saves as Tampa Bay picked up its eighth consecutive victory at home.

Golden Knights 3, Kings 2 (OT): David Perron scored 3:30 into overtime, and visiting Vegas earned its sixth consecutive victory.

Brendan Leipsic and Jonathan Marchessault also scored for the Knights, who have points in 11 consecutive games (10-0-1), a record for an expansion team. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 26 shots.

Canucks 5, Blackhawks 2: Thomas Vanek had two goals and three assists, Brock Boeser added a goal and three assists, and host Vancouver snapped a four-game losing streak.

Sam Gagner had two goals and an assist for Vancouver, which returned from its Christmas break with just its second victory in the last 10 games. Jacob Markstrom made 30 saves.

Sharks 3, Flames 2 (SO): Joonas Donskoi scored the winning goal in a shootout, and host San Jose rallied for the win.

The Sharks were stymied for most of the night by Flames goalie David Rittich, but they got a late goal in the third period on Timo Meier's re-directed shot.

Panthers 3, Flyers 2: James Reimer stopped 29 shots, helping host Florida to its fourth straight victory.

Derek MacKenzie and Jonathan Huberdeau scored in the second period as the Panthers earned their first win over the Flyers since March 12, 2016, snapping a four-game losing streak against Philly. Jared McCann also scored.

NBA roundup

Horford's hook completes rally, lifts Celtics over Rockets

Associated Press

BOSTON — Al Horford made a hook shot with 3.7 seconds left to give Boston its only lead of the game, and the Celtics rallied from a 26-point deficit to beat the Houston Rockets 99-98 on Thursday night.

Kyrie Irving scored 26 and Jayson Tatum finished with 19 for the Celtics, while Marcus Smart drew two offensive fouls against James Harden in the closing seconds to help Boston complete the comeback.

Smart and Terry Rozier had 13 points apiece.

Tatum made a layup with seven seconds left to pull the Celtics within 98-97, then Smart had position on Harden for an offensive foul that gave

Boston the ball and a chance to win it. Horford converted from the lane to put Boston up for the first time in a game Houston had led throughout and dominated until midway through the third quarter.

Harden finished with 34 points and 10 assists. Eric Gordon scored 24 points for Houston, which shot 25 percent (9-for-36) in the second half and lost its fourth straight.

Bucks 102, Timberwolves 96: Eric Bledsoe scored 26 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo added 22 to help host Milwaukee rally from a 20-point deficit and beat Minnesota.

Bledsoe had six points and made two key assists down the stretch and the Bucks found their missing defense, holding

the Timberwolves to a season-low 12 points in the fourth quarter. Minnesota went cold over the last 4:21 and had its five-game winning streak snapped.

Spurs 119, Knicks 107: LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and every San Antonio starter scored in double figures to beat visiting New York.

Pau Gasol added 17 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists for San Antonio.

The Spurs improved to 17-2 at home while winning their third straight overall.

Magic 102, Pistons 89: Elfrid Payton had 19 points, eight rebounds and eight assists to help host Orlando break a nine-game losing streak.

Evan Fournier scored 17

points and Aaron Gordon had 14 for Orlando, but it was the Magic's backup centers who made the difference in the game.

Bismack Biyombo had 12 points and 13 rebounds, and Marresse Speights scored 16 points as replacements for injured starter Nikola Vucevic.

Trail Blazers 114, 76ers 110: Shabazz Napier, who started for injured guard Damian Lillard, scored 15 of his season-high 23 points in the fourth quarter and Portland rallied to beat Philadelphia.

CJ McCollum led all scorers with 34 for the Blazers, who snapped a six-game losing streak at home. Portland had a season-high 42 points in the fourth quarter.