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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Bush hailed as a great political statesman

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former President George H.W. Bush is returning to Washington as a revered political statesman, hailed by leaders across the political spectrum and around the world as a man not only of greatness but also of uncommon decency and kindness.

Bush, who died late Friday at his Houston home at age 94, is to be honored with a state funeral at National Cathedral in the nation's capital on Wednesday, followed by burial Thursday on the grounds of his presidential library at Texas A&M.

Before that, his body will lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda for a public viewing from his arrival in Washington on Monday until Wednesday morning.

President Donald Trump, who ordered federal offices closed for a national day of mourning on Wednesday, is to attend with first lady Melania Trump and other high-ranking officials.

Bush's crowning achievement as president was assembling the international military coalition that liberated the tiny, oil-rich nation of Kuwait from invading neighbor Iraq in 1991 in a war that lasted just 100 hours. He also presided over the end of the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union.

"We didn't agree much on domestic policy, but when it came to the international side of things, he was a very wise and thoughtful man," former

Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, a Democrat who lost the presidency to Bush in 1988, told The Associated Press on Saturday. He credited Bush's ability to negotiate with former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev as playing a key role.

"It was a time of great change, demanding great responsibility from everyone," Gorbachev told the Interfax news agency. "The result was the end of the Cold War and nuclear arms race."

During that time and after, Gorbachev said, he always appreciated the kindness Bush and his family showed him.

In Washington, the former Republican president won praise from leaders of both parties.

Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan, of Wisconsin, lauded him for leading the nation with "decency and integrity," while Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi, of California, said it was a "privilege to work with him."

Republican Sen. Bob Corker, of Tennessee, said Bush "befriended political foes, reminding Americans that there is always more that unites us than divides us."

At the G-20 summit in Argentina, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was raised in East Germany, told reporters she likely would never have become her country's leader had Bush not pressed for the nation's reunification in 1990.

Gulf War dominates President Bush's Mideast legacy

Associated Press

AL-JAHRA, Kuwait — On the outskirts of Kuwait City, the love Kuwaitis have for former U.S. President George H.W. Bush could be seen in 2016 on a billboard one Bedouin family put up to announce their son's wedding.

That son being Bush al-Widhan, born in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War that saw U.S.-led forces expel the occupying Iraqi troops of dictator Saddam Hussein.

"He was a real man, a lion," said Mubarak al-Widhan, the father of the Kuwaiti Bush, of the American president. "He stood for our right for freedom, and he gave us back our country."

With Bush's death, his legacy across the Middle East takes root in that 100-hour ground war that routed Iraqi forces. That war gave birth to the network of military bases America

now operates across the Persian Gulf supporting troops in Afghanistan and forces fighting against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

However, Bush ultimately would leave the Shiite and Kurdish insurgents he urged to rise up against Saddam in 1991 to face the dictator's wrath alone, leading to thousands of deaths. That mixed picture only extends to the presidency of his son, George W. Bush, who ordered the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that overthrew Saddam, whom he once famously described as "the guy who tried to kill my dad one time."

"I feel tension in the stomach and in the neck ... but I also feel a certain calmness when we talk about these matters," the elder Bush once said about the 1991 Gulf War, according to biographer Jon Meacham. "I know I am doing the right thing."

Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, angry that the tiny neighbor and the United Arab Emirates had ignored OPEC quotas, which Saddam claimed cost his nation \$14 billion. Saddam also accused Kuwait of stealing \$2.4 billion by pumping crude from a disputed oil field and demanded that Kuwait write off an estimated \$15 billion of debt that Iraq had accumulated during its 1980s war with Iran.

Bush came to view Saddam as similar to Adolf Hitler, a madman who seized neighboring Kuwait and could plunge the world into conflict if he continued into Saudi Arabia. He rallied together a coalition of nations to back the U.S. as it deployed troops to the region and began bombing runs. He talked Israel out of retaliating for Iraqi Scud missiles attacks for fear of alienating Arab allies.

"This will not stand. This

will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait," Bush famously warned.

And it didn't. On Feb. 24, 1991, U.S. troops and their allies stormed into Kuwait. It ended 100 hours later. America suffered only 148 combat deaths during the whole campaign, while more than 20,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed.

In the aftermath of the campaign, some called for Bush to continue into Iraq and topple Saddam. Bush in speeches encouraged Iraqis to rise up against the dictator.

"The freedom that we enjoy here in Kurdistan, it is because of him really," said Sherwan Mohammed Abdullah, 46, a Kurdish former soldier. "Even when he launched the strike on Kuwait ... not a single soldier in my battalion was injured."

Navy's top Mideast commander found dead in Bahrain

Stars and Stripes

The commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the 5th Fleet was found dead Saturday in Bahrain, the Navy announced.

Vice Adm. Scott Stearney, 58, was found in his quarters, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said in a statement.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Bahraini Ministry of Interior are investigating but no foul play is suspected, Richardson said.

He described Stearney as a "decorated naval warrior" and a "devoted husband and father."

"This is devastating news for the Stearney family, for the team at Fifth Fleet, and for the entire Navy," Richardson said.

Rear Adm. Paul Schlise, the deputy commander of the 5th Fleet, has assumed command and "is maintaining continuity in our responsibilities and posture in the U.S. 5th Fleet," Richardson said.

Stearney took command of the 5th Fleet in May after Adm.

John Aquilino moved on to command the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Stearney earned his commission in 1982 after graduating from the University of Notre Dame, according to his Navy biography. He graduated from the prestigious Navy Fighter Weapons School, popularly known as TOPGUN, where he later served as an instructor.

Stearney flew the F/A-18 Hornet in multiple squadrons and served aboard the aircraft carriers USS Theodore Roosevelt, USS George Washington and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. Stearney also served in Afghanistan as chief of staff of Joint Task Force 435, which advises Afghan security forces.

His flag assignments included tours as commander, U.S. Transportation Command's Joint Enabling Capabilities Command; commander, Strike Force Training Atlantic; commander, Carrier Strike Group 4; commander, Navy Warfare Development Command and director of operations, U.S. Central Command.

Navy commissions destroyer in Boston

Associated Press

BOSTON — The U.S. Navy on Saturday commissioned its newest destroyer, named for a Navy pilot from Massachusetts who received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Korean War.

Much of the commissioning ceremony for the USS Thomas Hudner, held in Boston, paid tribute to the late Thomas Hudner. He was a Fall River native and longtime Concord resident who was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Harry Truman for crash-landing his plane to try to save the life of Ensign Jesse Brown, who was trapped behind enemy lines during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in December 1950.

Brown was shot down and trapped in his burning plane. Hudner intentionally crash-landed in freezing temperatures, packed the fuselage with snow using his bare hands to keep the flames away from Brown and tried unsuccessfully to pull his squadron-mate free.

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Brett Litchfield said at Saturday's ceremony that the destroyer's crew will strive to exemplify Hudner's selfless devotion to

his shipmate.

"In that same spirit, this ship will sail the oceans, often alone. It will stand vigilant against those who would threaten democracy and freedom," he told the crowd. "This crew is honored to serve on a ship that bears his name."

Hudner died last November at age 93. However, he lived to personally attend the April 2017 christening ceremony at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, for the massive Arleigh Burke-class destroyer that bears his name.

On Saturday, Hudner's widow, Georgea, and Barbara Miller, wife of retired Vice Adm. Michael Miller, had the honor of ordering the crew to "man our ship and bring her to life." Within seconds, the crewmembers rushed aboard, taking their positions along the decks of the ship as the U.S. Navy's march song, "Anchors Aweigh," was performed.

The destroyer will be homeported at Naval Station Mayport, Fla. The Navy said it is capable of engaging in air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously. It also has integrated air and missile defense capabilities.

Naval Academy midshipman pleads guilty to drug distribution

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A U.S. Naval Academy midshipman has pleaded guilty to using and distributing illegal drugs to fellow midshipmen at the academy, a school spokesman said Friday.

Zachary Williams has been sentenced to 13 months' confinement and dismissal from the Navy, said Cmdr. David McKinney, the academy's spokesman.

Williams, of Canal Fulton, Ohio, pleaded guilty at the Washington Navy Yard on Thursday to introduction of a controlled substance on a military installation and distribution of a controlled substance. He also pleaded guilty to failure to obey a general

regulation, possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance and use of a controlled substance.

The charges were based on an investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service that began in November 2017 after midshipmen brought the drug use to the attention of school officials. Some of the charges related to Williams' arrest by the Dover Police Department in Delaware for selling and possessing controlled substances at a music festival in June.

As a result of the investigation, six midshipmen were kicked out of the academy for using illegal substances and five were disciplined for other policy violations.

The guilty plea from Williams concludes

the case, McKinney said. "The U.S. Navy and the Naval Academy both have a zero tolerance policy towards the wrongful use of controlled substances," McKinney said.

The case prompted the academy to conduct a full review and make changes to urinalysis drug testing. Every midshipman will be tested randomly at least three times a year.

Prosecutors said Williams obtained drugs on the dark web, where people search for drugs through secret web browsers and buy them using encrypted channels, code names and virtual currencies. Some of the drugs named in the case included cocaine, ecstasy and mushrooms.

North Korean soldier defects to South

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A North Korean soldier fled across the heavily fortified frontier Saturday, the military said, a rare escape that presents the first test of recent military tension-reduction measures by the two adversaries.

On the diplomatic front, President Donald Trump said a second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is likely to be held in January or February and three sites are being considered for the meeting. He didn't name the sites. Trump and Kim agreed to work toward the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" during their first meeting on June 12 in Singapore. But negotiations over details and conflicting demands have stalled.

South Korean troops guided the North Korean defector to

safety after surveillance equipment detected him crossing an eastern section of the so-called Military Demarcation Line that bisects the peninsula, the military said in a text message.

The military said no unusual North Korean activity was reported on Saturday.

The military said it will question the soldier about how he escaped across the border, a 2.5-mile-wide, 155-mile-long buffer zone that's lined with barbed wire and filled with land mines.

The defection came just over a year after another North Korean soldier dashed across the border in the truce village of Panmunjom under a hail of gunfire from his former comrades.

More than 30,000 North Koreans have fled to the South since the 1950-53 war on the peninsula ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty. Most fled via China and other

countries to avoid heavy border security.

Saturday's escape occurred after both sides demolished front-line guard posts and swept for mines in a section of the Demilitarized Zone as part of an ambitious plan to disarm the area.

The Koreans reached the military agreement during the third summit between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in as part of a diplomatic offensive that began earlier this year, reversing months of rising tensions that had threatened to erupt in a nuclear war.

Trump has remained optimistic but has insisted economic sanctions and other U.S.-led efforts to pressure the communist state into giving up its nuclear weapons will continue until concrete progress is made.

"We're getting along very well. We have a good relationship," he told reporters Satur-

day aboard Air Force One en route home from a G-20 summit in Argentina. He also said he'd like to invite Kim to the United States at some point.

The president also discussed North Korea with his South Korean and Chinese counterparts on the sidelines of the G-20 summit.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump and Moon renewed their commitment "to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization" of the North and agreed on the need to maintain economic sanctions "to ensure (North Korea) understands that denuclearization is the only path."

Moon's office said Trump also gave the green light for Kim to visit Seoul, saying the two leaders agreed that would "provide additional momentum to their joint efforts to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula."

Top jobs split as 2 take over at US Forces Japan

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — U.S. Forces Japan and the 5th Air Force have a new senior enlisted leader and a new command chief, respectively, at their headquarters in western Tokyo.

Chief Master Sgt. Terrence Greene, who had been taking on

both roles, handed them off to Chief Master Sgt. Richard Winegardner Jr., who will serve as the USFJ senior enlisted leader, and Chief Master Sgt. Brian Kruzelnick, who will be the 5th Air Force command chief.

It's the first time the jobs have been split, according to USFJ commander Lt. Gen. Jerry Martinez, who presided over Wednesday's change-of-respon-

sibility ceremony at Yokota. "We have witnessed the security environment change drastically in the past two years," he said in a statement posted on the 5th Air Force website. "The threats around Japan have grown extremely fast, so now is the time to ensure we have laser-focused attention not only on the readiness of our joint forces, but also [working together] with and

among the Japanese enlisted joint forces."

Winegardner has served with V Corps, XVIII Airborne Corps and Army Special Operations Command. Kruzelnick has served all over the Air Force and has a wide breadth of experience from training and mobility to intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance and space operations, Martinez said.

Rocket, air units added to Army inventory in Europe

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — A long-range artillery unit was reactivated on Friday, just two days after the Army added a new air defense battalion to its inventory in southern Germany.

The 41st Field Artillery Brigade was reconstituted at U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, 13 years after being deactivated.

The original unit was located in Babenhausen, Germany, from 1972 to 2005.

"Our mission is to provide long-range, precision fires to Europe," brigade commander Col. Seth Knazovich said.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the United States and NATO have boosted defenses in Eastern Europe with rotational units to counter potential Russian aggression. The Army has deployed

an armored brigade to Europe on nine-month rotations since 2017.

In March, European Command chief Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti told Congress he needed a fires brigade added to the permanent force structure in Europe.

The Multiple Launch Rocket System unit will bring about 1,000 additional soldiers to the area. They are part of the larger push to increase U.S. troop

strength in Germany by 1,500 soldiers by 2020 — adding to the more than 33,000 servicemembers already here.

This is the second unit activation in Bavaria this week. The 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment activated on Wednesday in nearby U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach.

The force structure change is a result of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

Tariff hike canceled after Trump, Xi meet

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump took his first step back in his monthslong confrontation with China on Saturday, agreeing to cancel a planned Jan. 1 tariff increase on Chinese products in return for purchases of what the White House called a “very substantial” amount of American farm, energy and industrial goods.

The limited bargain, reached with Chinese President Xi Jinping over dinner, will see the U.S. and China restart talks aimed at resolving a trade dispute that is damaging the global economy, worrying some of Trump’s Republican allies and unnerving investors.

But the partial accord re-

called previous deals that administration officials have disparaged as unenforceable and unproductive.

The two leaders struck the agreement during a roughly 2.5-hour dinner on the sidelines of the summit of G-20 leaders in Buenos Aires, Argentina, personally tackling several of the greatest irritants in the U.S.-China relationship.

Trump and Xi agreed to “immediately” begin talks on Chinese industrial policies, including coercive licensing of U.S. technology, trade secret theft and nontariff trade barriers.

“This was an amazing and productive meeting with unlimited possibilities for both

the United States and China,” Trump said in a statement issued from Air Force One as he returned to Washington. “It is my great honor to be working with President Xi.

Even as Trump appeared to soften his approach to China, he talked tough on a separate trade front. Aboard Air Force One, the president told reporters that he would formally terminate the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement in a political gamble designed to force wavering lawmakers to back his replacement treaty dubbed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA.

The temporary ceasefire in the U.S.-China trade war left

the toughest issues to future bargaining sessions, which will attempt to succeed where earlier efforts failed — and under an ambitious 90-day deadline.

If the latest effort encounters the same roadblocks, Trump said he will proceed with his previous plan to raise tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese products to 25 percent from 10 percent, which was to have taken effect on Jan. 1.

The president also has threatened to extend the tariffs to everything that the U.S. imports from China, which would involve an additional \$267 billion in goods. There was no mention of that threat in the White House account of Saturday’s talks.

Alaska life slowly settling down after major earthquake

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Life is slowly settling down in Alaska following a powerful earthquake that rattled buildings, disrupted power and caused heavy damage to the only highway that goes north of Anchorage.

Still, hundreds of aftershocks frayed nerves Saturday as people worried about being caught in more massive shakers.

“They’re disturbing, and I’m not putting anything away that could fall until they calm down,” Randall Cavanaugh, an Anchorage attorney, said following a restless night at home. “I kept waking up.”

Employees who live in communities north of Anchorage were waiting to see if they can take Monday off or work from home to reduce the number of cars on Glenn Highway as crews repair damage.

Motorists trying to travel north on Friday were at a virtual standstill on the highway.

Gov. Bill Walker, who leaves office Monday, has given state office workers in the Anchor-

age area the day off to ease traffic congestion.

“Even though we are making very significant progress on the highway travel, it would still behoove all of us to see if we can keep the volumes down,” Municipal Manager Bill Falsey said at a news conference.

The magnitude 7.0 quake didn’t cause widespread damage to structures or collapse buildings. There’s a good reason for that.

A devastating 1964 Alaska earthquake — the most powerful on record in the United States — led to stricter building codes that helped structures withstand the shifting earth Friday.

The quake was centered about 7 miles north of Anchorage, which has a population of about 300,000. People ran from their offices or took cover under desks. A 5.7 aftershock followed within minutes. Then came a series of smaller quakes.

There were about 550 aftershocks, including 11 with magnitudes of 4.5 or greater, in the 24 hours following the Friday tremor.

Ukraine asks allies to boost navies in Black Sea

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Ukraine’s leader called on Germany and its allies to boost their naval presence in the Black Sea to deter Russia from further aggression in the region and said Russia was blockading Ukrainian ports on the nearby Sea of Azov.

President Petro Poroshenko says Russia has deployed a large number of troops along its border with Ukraine. He alleged in an interview published Sunday that Russia intends to push inland into Ukraine following a clash in the Black Sea between the countries’ forces.

“We need a strong, unified, unambiguous reaction to Russia’s aggressive behavior,” Poroshenko said in the interview published by Germany’s Funke Media Group.

Citing the imminent threat of a Russian offensive, Poroshenko persuaded the Ukrainian parliament to implement 30 days of martial law.

During the naval clash a week ago, Russian coast guard vessels fired upon and seized three Ukrainian naval boats and their 24 crewmembers. The incident

has driven tensions between Russia and Ukraine to their highest point since Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014.

Russia and Ukraine have blamed each other for the Nov. 25 clash in the Kerch Strait, which links the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. During that engagement, Russia closed the Kerch Strait to all traffic. Ukrainian officials have since accused Russia of denying passage to Ukrainian commercial traffic in and out of Mariupol and Berdyansk.

Speaking at a Ukrainian military event Saturday, Poroshenko said Russia has deployed “more than 80,000 troops, 1,400 artillery and multiple rocket launch systems, 900 tanks, 2,300 armored combat vehicles, 500 aircraft and 300 helicopters” along their common border.

The martial law order included a ban on entry to Ukraine of all Russian males aged 16 to 60, a move Poroshenko said is designed to prevent undercover Russian military units from infiltrating the country.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Deputies rescue man stuck in water well

SD SIOUX FALLS — The Custer County Sheriff's Department said two deputies rescued a man who became trapped in a well.

The Argus Leader reported deputies Derrick Reifenrath and Carl Maude were called Thursday to a report of a man stuck in a water well who was unresponsive.

The sheriff's office said the man, 32, had been repairing the well but became stuck and appeared to be semiconscious and suffering from oxygen deprivation.

The two deputies pulled the man out and gave him oxygen until medical services arrived.

2 officers on leave over 'racist display'

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Two Minneapolis police officers were placed on paid leave Friday after their apparent involvement in Christmas tree decorations that the city's mayor called "despicable."

The Christmas tree at a precinct station on the city's North Side was decorated with items such as Newport cigarettes, police crime tape, a can of malt liquor, a Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen cup, and other things that Mayor Jacob Frey said amounted to a "racist display." A picture of the tree circulated online before the items were removed.

Police Chief Medaria Arraondo said the display was removed and he has started a full investigation into the incident.

Man fined \$5K for jumping off vessel

WA RICHLAND — The Coast Guard issued a \$5,000 fine to someone who

jumped overboard from an entertainment vessel into the Columbia River in Richland in June.

The fine was issued in mid-November after the Coast Guard received an investigation report from the Benton County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office responded to the June 15 incident after they say a man climbed over the rail of a dinner cruise boat and jumped off. The sheriff's office said the man had asked the captain if he could jump, but the captain said no.

Intentionally jumping into the water from a passenger vessel is considered interfering with the safe operation of the vessel and is illegal.

Preschoolers served Pine-Sol, not juice

HI HONOLULU — Officials said three children took sips of the household cleaner Pine-Sol after a classroom assistant at a Honolulu preschool mistook the liquid for apple juice.

The Honolulu Emergency Services Department said paramedics evaluated three young girls at the Kilohana United Methodist Church Preschool on Tuesday, finding no signs of trauma or sickness.

The state Department of Health inspected the preschool afterward and found the cleaner was in its original container and properly labeled.

Owner of injured horse found on road sought

FL GAINESVILLE — Authorities said they're trying to track down the owner of a horse found injured near a Florida highway.

The Orlando Sentinel reported that the male horse was found early Friday morning along Interstate 75 just south of

Gainesville. Officials believe he either fell out of a trailer or was hit by a vehicle.

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office said the horse, nicknamed "Teddy Bear Highway," was taken to a veterinarian for knee surgery.

Chicken Soup Hotline soothes sick students

PA UNIVERSITY PARK — A Penn State University student group is helping soothe sick students with a chicken soup delivery service.

The Daily Collegian reported Penn State Hillel's Chicken Soup Hotline program runs Monday through Thursday. Student manager Matt Altman said the Jewish student life group offers free "kosher-style matzah ball soup in chicken and vegetable options."

The soup is prepared every month at a kosher kitchen in the university's spiritual center before it's frozen. Students then reheat and deliver the soup on campus and in the downtown area.

Noah Bender, who supervises the soup operation, said donations from across the country support activities like the hotline.

Man buried beneath feed on farm dies

MI HARTFORD — A Middleville man, 35, died after being buried beneath cattle feed on a dairy farm in southwestern Michigan.

The Herald-Palladium, of St. Joseph, reported that a 30-foot-high corn silage stack broke loose about 6:30 a.m. Friday on the farm in Van Buren County's Hartford area, southwest of Grand Rapids.

The county sheriff's office said the man was a subcontractor for a Grand Rapids company that was at the farm to conduct

testing. Another worker found the man buried, and he was pronounced dead at a hospital.

Rape case dismissed after deadline missed

OH AKRON — The case involving an alleged rape along the Ohio Turnpike has been dismissed because of a missed legal deadline.

The Akron Beacon Journal reported Saturday that the dismissal stemmed from a communication breakdown between the Ohio State Highway Patrol and Summit County prosecutors. A lawyer for the prosecutor's office called it almost "the perfect storm of how it could go wrong."

A woman claimed she was raped at gunpoint Aug. 10 by a truck driver on the turnpike near Hudson. She escaped in Mahoning County and alerted troopers, who arrested Anthony Ingram. The case was dismissed Nov. 14 after Ingram's 90-day speedy-trial deadline passed without rape and kidnapping allegations being presented to a grand jury.

Authorities are exploring federal charges against Ingram, who is free.

Hawk is discovered out of its element

ME PORTLAND — A hawk that is native to regions of Central and South America appears to have taken up residence in Maine for the winter.

The great black hawk was first spotted by Biddeford bird watchers in August, and popped up in a Portland park Thursday.

Maine Audubon said no one really expected a great black hawk would show up in Maine, let alone in the United States.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

College Football Playoff semifinals set

Associated Press

Faced with a tricky choice, the College Football Playoff selection committee fell back on some simple criteria: One loss is better than two. Winning a conference championship is better than not. Go with the team that didn't get blown out.

Oklahoma is in the playoff, moving into the fourth and final spot Sunday after avenging its only loss by winning the Big 12 championship against Texas.

The Sooners (12-1) will face No. 1 Alabama (13-0) in the Orange Bowl on Dec. 29 in a matchup of Heisman Trophy front-runner quarterbacks — Kyler Murray of Oklahoma and the Tide's Tua Tagovailoa. No. 2 Clemson (13-0) plays No. 3 Notre Dame (12-0) in the Cotton Bowl on the same day.

The winners meet in the championship game on Jan. 7 in Santa Clara, Calif. The rest of the New Year's Six bowl pairings were to be announced later Sunday.

Georgia (11-2) dropped a spot to fifth and Ohio State (12-1) remained sixth in the selection committee's final top 25 released Sunday. The Bulldogs lost a dramatic Southeastern Conference championship game to Alabama on Saturday while the Buckeyes won the Big Ten championship against Northwestern.

"In the end one-loss conference champion with their only loss being on a neutral field to a ranked team, which they avenged in their conference championship," selection committee chairman Rob Mullens said on ESPN. "Every combination was vetted,

looking at their full body of work, their resumes side-by-side. In the end, what we decided was amongst the group of three, Oklahoma, Georgia, Ohio State, the committee voted that no one was unequivocally better than the other so then we leaned on the protocol. So we went with the one-loss conference champion."

Selection committee protocol states conference championships work as a virtual tiebreaker when teams are close.

The Sooners beat Texas for the Big 12 title on Saturday, paying back a three-point loss in October in the Red River Rivalry.

Oklahoma is making its third appearance in the five-year-old playoff. Alabama has played in them all. Clemson is making its fourth straight appearance. Notre Dame is in the playoff for the first time, making it 10 teams in five seasons to participate in the playoff. Unbeaten UCF, eighth in the CFP rankings coming into Sunday, was nowhere to be found in the committee's playoff discussion. The Knights will take their 25-game winning streak to a marquee bowl game, probably the Fiesta Bowl.

The debate leading up to championship Saturday was whether Oklahoma or Ohio State might take the fourth spot if Alabama beat Georgia.

The wild card was Georgia beating the mighty Tide, which could have meant two SEC teams for the second straight season. Instead, the Bulldogs lost but played well enough to allow coach Kirby Smart to make that case that Georgia should remain in the top four. Smart told reporters after

the SEC title game to ask Alabama coach Nick Saban which of the teams he would like to avoid in the playoff? Saban, of course, endorsed his former defensive coordinator and conference-mate.

The committee didn't buy it and stayed with one consistent data point throughout the five years of playoff selections: No team with more than one loss has ever made the playoff. Of the 20 teams that have been selected, only two have not won a conference title.

Notre Dame's inclusion means for the second straight season two of the Power Five conferences were left out — and for the second straight season it was the Big Ten and Pac-12. Ohio State was the first team out last season and again appears to have gotten squeezed because of a lopsided loss to an unranked team. The Buckeyes were blown out by Purdue in October, similar to the way they lost at Iowa in 2017.

The Pac-12 was never really in the discussion, with its champion Washington finishing 10-3.

Georgia had both two losses and a blow-out loss (at LSU, by 20 in October). The Bulldogs have been rolling since and had Alabama on the ropes before the Tide erased a 14-point deficit. The Bulldogs proved they could hang against the best, but it was not enough.

Oklahoma has had defensive issues all season, but its offense has been virtually unstoppable. The committee moved past the defensive issues and went with what has worked before.

Sooners avenge lone loss with Big 12 championship

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Kyler Murray had another Heisman Trophy-worthy performance, Oklahoma's much-maligned defense made some big key plays and the fifth-ranked Sooners won yet another conference title.

Murray was 25-for-34 passing for 379 yards and three touchdowns as the Sooners beat then-No. 9 Texas 39-27 in the Big 12 championship game Saturday, avenging their only loss and making their case for their third playoff appearance in four years.

The win helped propel the

Sooners to No. 4 Sunday and an Dec. 29 College Football Playoff semifinal date with No. 1 Alabama in the Orange Bowl.

Two of Murray's TD throws were to Grant Calcaterra, who had an impressive one-handed grab for an 18-yard score on a third-and-10 play with two minutes left.

"That catch will live on in Oklahoma history forever," Riley said.

The Sooners (12-1, No. 5 CFP) won their seventh consecutive game — and became the first Power Five team to win four outright conference titles in a row since Florida in the SEC in the mid-1990s.

Buckeyes defeat Wildcats to capture Big Ten title

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Dwayne Haskins and Urban Meyer reveled in the victory celebration Saturday night.

Haskins made his case to win the Heisman Trophy by throwing five more touchdown passes, the Buckeyes defense fended off a second half charge from then-No. 21 Northwestern and Meyer put his hands on a third conference championship trophy in five years as the conversation quickly turned to the more immediate fate of No. 6 Ohio State.

"This means representing the Big Ten Conference, arguably

the best conference in college football, and the East Division, arguably the best division in college football," Meyer said after a 45-24 victory. "I think all you have to do is look at the body of work. We went on the road and won some tough games — TCU, Penn State and Michigan State. The way we played against our rival (Michigan) and the way we played tonight, I think we deserve a shot."

The Buckeyes, who moved up to No. 5 in the new rankings Sunday, but just out of the College Football Playoff, have won five straight overall, piling up 107 points in the last two games — against two stingy defenses.

Hurts lifts Tide to SEC title

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Jalen Hurts spent most of the season watching from the sideline, cheering on the guy who took his job and hoping for one more chance to lead the Alabama Crimson Tide.

He didn't pout. He didn't gripe. He didn't transfer.

On Saturday, Hurts got the call.

Boy, did he respond.

Hurts threw for one touchdown and ran for another with just over a minute to go, rallying No. 1 Alabama to a 35-28 victory over No. 4 Georgia in the Southeastern Conference championship game. It was a stunning twist on the scenario that played out less than 11 months earlier on the very same field.

"I've probably never been more proud of a player than Jalen," coach Nick Saban said.

If they had pitched this script to Hollywood, it would've been laughed out of the room for being too implausible. In last season's national title game at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, between these same two teams, Tua Tagovailoa replaced an ineffective Hurts at the start of the second half with Alabama trailing Georgia 13-0. The replacement threw three touchdown passes,

including a 41-yarder in overtime that gave the Tide a stunning 26-23 victory.

Tagovailoa won the starting job outright heading into this season and performed brilliantly before Saturday, throwing 36 touchdown passes with only two interceptions.

The SEC title game took a different path. Georgia put quite a beating on Tagovailoa, who was picked off twice, spent much of his spare time in the medical tent and was largely ineffective as the Bulldogs built a pair of two-touchdown leads.

Finally, with just over 11 minutes remaining, Tagovailoa went down for good after one of his own linemen stepped on his right foot as he attempted to throw.

Enter Hurts, who posted a 26-2 record as the starter before Tagovailoa claimed the job.

He calmly guided the Crimson Tide (13-0, No. 1 CFP) to a game-tying touchdown with a 10-yard pass to Jerry Jeudy, capping a 16-play, 80-yard drive that consumed more than 7 minutes.

After Georgia (11-2, No. 4 CFP) was stuffed on a fake punt near midfield, Hurts took matters into his own hands for the winning score. Spotting an opening up the middle, he took off on a 15-yard TD run with 1:04 remaining.

No. 2 Tigers crush Pitt

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Exactly 10 years after being hired as head coach, Dabo Swinney made history with Clemson.

Travis Etienne ran for 156 yards and two touchdowns, Trevor Lawrence threw two short scoring passes to Tee Higgins and No. 2 Clemson beat Pitt 42-10 on Saturday night on a rainy night to become the first team to win four straight Atlantic Coast Conference championship games.

Clemson (13-0, CFP No. 2) will face third-ranked Notre Dame in the College Football Playoff on Dec. 29.

Clemson turned to its running game and piled up 301 yards and four touchdowns and averaged 9 yards per carry on a night in which Lawrence was limited to 118 yards passing.

College basketball roundup

KU still perfect with OT win over Stanford

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Lagerald Vick hit the tying three-pointer in the closing seconds of regulation, and then had eight of his 27 points in overtime to lead No. 2 Kansas (6-0) past Stanford 90-84 in overtime.

Daejon Davis hit two free throws with 13.3 seconds left to push the Cardinal's lead to 75-72 after driving in and drawing a foul by Dedric Lawson. Devon Dotson then found Vick for the tying three with just 7 seconds left.

Vick then opened overtime with another three and followed it with a dunk that set the Allen Fieldhouse crowd into a frenzy. He kept it going the next time down, hitting his seventh three to make it an eight-point game.

No. 3 Duke 113, Stetson 49: Freshman RJ Barrett had 26 points, seven rebounds and a season-high seven assists in the host Blue Devils' rout.

No. 5 Nevada 73, Southern California 61: Jordan Caroline scored 22 points and the No. 5 Wolfpack took control with a dominant second half to beat the host Trojans and equal their 8-0 start from last season.

No. 7 Michigan 76, No. 19 Purdue 57: Jordan Poole scored 21 points as part of a balanced offense and the host Wolverines were stingy on defense as they routed a third ranked team this season.

No. 10 Kentucky 78, UNC Greensboro 61: Reid Travis scored 22 points, Keldon Johnson added six of his 13 points during a 14-2 second half run and the host Wildcats won their seventh straight.

Marquette 83, No. 12 Kansas State 71: Markus Howard scored 45 points and went 19 of 21 from the foul line, and the host Golden Eagles used tight defense to hand the Wildcats their first loss.

No. 13 Va. Tech 94, Cen-

tral Conn. St. 40: Ahmed Hill scored 24 points to lead the host Hokies past the Blue Devils.

Houston 65, No. 18 Oregon 61: Armoni Brooks had 22 points and nine rebounds, Nate Hinton added 14 points and the host Cougars beat the Ducks to win their 20th straight home game.

No. 20 Texas Tech 78, Memphis 67: Tariq Owens had 13 points and 11 rebounds and tied a career high with eight blocks, Jarrett Culver scored 14 of his 20 points in the second half and the Red Raiders rallied to beat the Tigers.

No. 21 Buffalo 85, San Francisco 81: Nick Perkins scored 22 points, Jeremy Harris added 15 with eight rebounds and the Bulls held off the Dons in the title game of the Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Classic in Northern Ireland.

No. 23 Villanova 85, La Salle 78: Eric Paschall scored 27 points, Phil Booth

had 19 and the Wildcats held off the Explorers' upset bid in Philadelphia.

No. 24 Maryland 66, Penn State 59: Freshman Jalen Smith scored 16 points, Bruno Fernando had 12 points and 13 rebounds and the host Terrapins opened Big Ten play by slipping past Penn State.

Pacific 82, Air Force 69: Lafayette Dorsey scored 19 points and the Tigers beat the visiting Falcons. Dorsey was 6 of 11 from the floor and made all six of his free-throw attempts.

Brown 67, Navy 50: Desmond Cambridge scored 29 points missing just six of 18 shots and the Bears defeated the host Midshipmen.

Army 63, Fairfield 60: Matt Wilson scored 19 points, John Emezie added 16 with four steals and a crucial block in the last half-minute as the host Black Knights fought past the Stags.

NBA roundup

Pistons spoil Curry's return, top Warriors

Associated Press

DETROIT — Blake Griffin scored 26 points and the Detroit Pistons spoiled Stephen Curry's return, beating the Golden State Warriors 111-102 on Saturday night.

Curry returned after missing 11 games with a groin strain. He scored 27 points on 10-of-21 shooting, going 3-for-9 from three-point range.

Andre Drummond had 16 points and 19 rebounds to help Detroit win its fifth straight.

Kevin Durant scored 28 points for Golden State, and Klay Thompson added 21.

Raptors 106, Cavaliers 95: Kawhi Leonard scored 34 points, Fred VanVleet added 15 and visiting Toronto won its eighth straight game despite missing All-Star guard Kyle Lowry.

Danny Green and Pascal Siakam added 15 apiece to help the Raptors improve the NBA's best record to 20-4, reaching the 20-win mark quicker than at any time in their history. Toronto is a league-best 10-2 on the road.

Lowry missed his first game this season with an unspecified back injury. Raptors coach Nick Nurse didn't provide any details about Lowry's back other than to say it flared up earlier in the day.

Rockets 121, Bulls 105: James Harden made six three-pointers and scored 30 points to help host Houston beat Chicago.

Clint Capela added 18 points and 15 rebounds, and Chris Paul had 12 points and tied a season high with 13 assists in his second game back after missing three with a sore hamstring.

Zach LaVine had 29 points for the Bulls.

Celtics 118, Timberwolves 109: Gordon Hayward had a season-high 30 points and added nine rebounds and eight

assists, helping visiting Boston beat Minnesota for its third straight victory.

Hayward scored 11 of Boston's final 15 points over the last 3½ minutes of the game and made four of five shots from three-point range. Kyrie Irving pitched in 21 points and nine assists, Jayson Tatum added 19 points and nine rebounds, and Marcus Morris had 16 points on 4-for-7 shooting from three-point range for The Celtics had lost eight of 12 games before starting their streak.

Wizards 102, Nets 88: John Wall scored 30 points, Bradley Beal added 22 and host Washington handed Brooklyn its sixth straight loss.

Markieff Morris rebounded from a 1-for-10 shooting night Friday in a loss at Philadelphia to score 20 points on 9-for-12 shooting. He had 15 points in the fourth quarter.

Knicks 136, Bucks 134 (OT): Emmanuel Mudiay scored 28 points and New York outlasted visiting Milwaukee in overtime.

Rookie forward Kevin Knox had a career-high 26 points, and Damyean Dotson and Tim Hardaway Jr. added 21 points each. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points and 19 rebounds for Milwaukee.

Kings 111, Pacers 110: Willie Cauley-Stein scored on a putback dunk with 16.1 seconds left and host Sacramento held on to beat Indiana.

Bogdan Bogdanovic had 20 points and Cauley-Stein finished with 17 points and 13 rebounds to help the Kings end a four-game losing streak to the Pacers. Buddy Hield added 18 points, five rebounds and four assists.

Bojan Bogdanovic had a season-high 27 points for the Pacers. Darren Collison added 11 points and 12 assists.

NHL roundup

Lightning surge late, stop Panthers in OT

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Lightning believe in themselves.

Brayden Point scored a power-play goal 3:12 into overtime and the Lightning overcame a 4-1 deficit to beat the Florida Panthers 5-4 on Saturday night.

"It's a hole to climb out of for sure, but we didn't panic and kept playing our game," Point said. "We have a belief in our group that if we're down we're not out of it."

The Lightning got the power play when Florida's Frank Vatrano was called for interference at 2:13 of overtime.

Point took a pass from Nikita Kucherov across the front of the crease to the left side and flipped it past James Reimer. Tampa Bay improved to 19-7-1, a point ahead of Toronto for the overall NHL lead.

Maple Leafs 5, Wild 3: Nazem Kadri broke a tie with 3:20 to play and Zach Hyman scored twice in visiting Toronto's victory over Minnesota.

Hyman added an empty-net goal in the final minute to seal Toronto's fourth straight victory and Minnesota's third loss in a row.

Senators 6, Sharks 2: Ben Harpur scored his first NHL goal, Craig Anderson stopped 36 shots and the Senators beat San Jose to spoil Erik Karlsson's return to Ottawa.

The former Senators captain and two-time Norris Trophy winner was playing his first game in Ottawa since he was traded to San Jose in the offseason.

Mikkel Boedker had a goal and three assists.

Islanders 3, Blue Jackets 2: Casey Cizikas scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period and New York won in its return to the Nassau Coliseum, rallying to beat Columbus.

It was the Islanders' first regular season game in 3½ years at the Coliseum, the team's

home from its inception in 1972 until 2015.

Coyotes 6, Blues 1: Clayton Keller had a goal and two assists and host Arizona scored four second-period goals to rout St. Louis.

Adin Hill, pressed into service in goal with the Coyotes' top two goaltenders, Antti Raanta and Darcy Kuemper, out with injuries, finished with 25 saves in his second consecutive start.

Flyers 4, Penguins 2: Dale Weise scored in the first minute of the third period and visiting Philadelphia held on to beat Pittsburgh. Sidney Crosby scored his 14th for Pittsburgh, which has lost two straight and seven of 10.

Red Wings 4, Bruins 2: Frans Nielsen scored his first goal of the season to break a tie with 8:07 left, and Jimmy Howard made 37 saves in visiting Detroit's victory over Boston.

Stars 2, Canucks 1: Alex Radulov scored with 3:23 left to lift visiting Dallas past Vancouver.

Jamie Benn had a third-period goal, and Ben Bishop made 24 saves in his return from a lower-body injury. Dallas is 3-1-1 in its past five games.

Jets 4, Devils 3 (OT): Mark Scheifele scored his second goal of the game at 4:43 of overtime, tucking the puck past Keith Kinkaid to lift visiting Winnipeg past New Jersey. The Devils have lost five straight.

Predators 5, Blackhawks 2: Eeli Tolvanen scored his first NHL goal and added an assist to lead host Nashville past Chicago.

Canadiens 5, Rangers 2: Shea Weber and Artturi Lehkonen each scored twice and host Montreal beat New York to snap a five-game losing streak.

Oilers 2, Golden Knights 1: Ryan Spooner scored the tiebreaking goal early in the third period, lifting host Edmonton past Vegas.