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Possible LPMC blood supply threat probed

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — An employee at the U.S. military's main hospital in Europe is under investigation for potentially endangering its blood supplies, military medical officials said Monday.

"Landstuhl Regional Medical Center was notified of a potential threat to its blood supply from a current employee," Gino Mattorano, a spokesman for Regional Health Command Europe, said in a statement. Hospital leaders took immediate steps to ensure the safety of its blood supply, patients and staff, he said.

"The employee has been removed from duties. The hospital commander reported the matter to law enforcement for appropriate investigation and action," Mattorano said.

The hospital did not provide details about the nature of the

The medical center is the European home to the Armed Services Blood Program, which collects blood at donation centers throughout Europe each week. Its blood is used throughout U.S. European Command, Africa Command and Central Command.

threat or say who is under investigation. The matter came to the attention of the hospital on Dec. 11, Mattorano said.

"Our patients, staff and community can rest assured that at no time have any of them been at risk," he said.

However, the hospital did not explain how it could guarantee that no patients were ever put

at risk, citing an investigation.

"Due to an ongoing investigation by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, we cannot provide additional details about the alleged threat," Mattorano said.

The medical center's staff of about 2,400, which includes outlying clinics, is composed of 43 percent Army active duty and Reserve soldiers, 12 percent Air Force personnel and 45 percent Army civilians and local nationals, spokeswoman Gia E. Oney said.

The medical center is the European home to the Armed Services Blood Program, which collects blood and other blood products at donation centers at up to three mobile drives throughout Europe each week. Its blood is used throughout U.S. European Command, Africa Command and Central Command.

Landstuhl also serves as a trauma center for U.S. troops

injured in conflict zones. Troops hurt in Afghanistan as well as Africa often stop at Landstuhl before moving on to the United States for more care.

Since 2001, more than 95,000 troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan have received treatment at the hospital.

In 2017, the hospital treated 488 patients from Afghanistan and has seen 500 patients from that country so far this year, hospital spokeswoman Stacy Sanning said earlier this month. The numbers include battle wounded, injured and ill patients, both inpatient and outpatient, Sanning said.

At least one U.S. Green Beret was medically evacuated to Landstuhl following a deadly bombing in central Afghanistan in late November. Landstuhl is also the primary military hospital for thousands of servicemembers stationed at Ramstein Air Base and several nearby Army bases.

Saudi Arabia 'rejects' US Senate resolution

The Washington Post

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — The government of Saudi Arabia on Monday condemned a recent U.S. Senate resolution blaming Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, calling the Senate vote "blatant" interference in the kingdom's internal affairs, according to a Saudi government statement.

The Senate measure, which passed unanimously Thursday, was a sweeping condemnation of Mohammed's policies including his crackdown on internal dissent. And it was a rebuke of President Donald Trump's defense of the crown prince and his position that Khashoggi's

death should not threaten the financial and strategic ties between Saudi Arabia and the United States.

In its lengthy response to the Senate on Monday, Saudi Arabia accused the lawmakers of making "unsubstantiated claims and allegations" and said it "categorically rejects any interference in its internal affairs, any and all accusations, in any manner, that disrespect its leadership, represented by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Crown Prince, and any attempts to undermine its sovereignty or diminish its stature."

The Saudi government used similar language during a flare-up in August with Canada, after

the Canadian Foreign Ministry called for the release of an imprisoned Saudi women's rights activist. Saudi Arabia announced that it was expelling the Canadian ambassador to Riyadh and halting new trade and investment deals.

Saudi officials did not announce any measures against the United States on Monday, and its statement took pains to praise the Trump administration, saying "the Kingdom appreciates the prudent position taken by the United States Government and its institutions regarding recent developments."

Khashoggi, a contributing columnist to *The Washington Post*, was killed by Saudi government agents in the Saudi

Consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2. A CIA assessment concluded that the crown prince, who is the country's effective ruler, had likely ordered and monitored the killing.

The Senate's rebuke of Mohammed went beyond the Khashoggi case, faulting him for contributing to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, the continuing blockade of Qatar by Saudi Arabia and its allies and the detention and torture of Saudi dissidents and activists, including a group of women's rights advocates.

The Senate also approved a separate measure on Thursday to end U.S. participation in the Saudi-led war effort in Yemen.

Vets groups again urge rejection of cost-cut proposal

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A cost-saving proposal that sparked backlash from veterans in 2017 has resurfaced in a new Congressional Budget Office report as an option to help reduce the federal budget deficit.

The report suggests removing approximately 235,000 disabled veterans from a Department of Veterans Affairs program called Individual Unemployability in 2020, projecting it could save \$47.6 billion in the next 10 years. Veterans removed from the program would see their monthly income decrease by an average of \$1,300, according to CBO estimates.

One veterans group, AMVETS, is urging the White House and VA to publicly disavow the proposal before it creates a groundswell of anger within the veterans community.

"We want the White House to immediately make a statement saying this recommendation is out of line and will not be considered," said Joe Chenelly, director of AMVETS. "We understand that the White House is looking to trim costs, but this cannot be an option in that."

The program applies to veterans who have a 60 to 100 percent disability rating through the VA and are unable to secure a job because of their disability. It allows them to receive the highest compensation rate.

The CBO suggested removing veterans from Individual Unemployability once they reach age 67, claiming those veterans would be eligible for Social Security by that time.

The cut was one of 121 cost-saving proposals included in the CBO report, titled "Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2019 to 2028." The CBO periodically compiles the list of policy options to help inform lawmakers.

The CBO including the cut to Individual Unemployability in its report doesn't mean the White House or Congress will consider the proposal. However, now that it's public, it's likely to trigger concern among veterans who would face substantial financial consequences if the idea ever became law, Chenelly said.

AMVETS and other veterans groups said they heard from thousands of veterans in 2017 when the same cost-saving measure was included in President Donald Trump's 2018 budget. Then-VA Secretary David Shulkin quickly backed off the proposal, but concerns have lingered.

The White House and VA did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday.

The CBO report was released Thursday.

Adult daughter of retired general details sex abuse

The Washington Post

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — For retired Maj. Gen. James Grazioplene, getting arrested and photographed in an orange jumpsuit in Virginia this month was the latest humiliation following a lengthy military investigation in which the Army charged him with rape, only to have the case dismissed on a technicality.

For his daughter and military prosecutors, it was something else: a second chance at seeing whether a court will convict Grazioplene of rape.

Jennifer Elmore, 47, said in an interview that she first reported to the Army in 2015 that her estranged father had sexually abused her when she was a child. The service investigated for two years before bringing a case against Grazioplene in April 2017.

"Sometimes, it's just easier to shut your mouth," said Elmore, a senior vice president with Abbot Downing, a division of Wells Fargo focused on wealthy clients. "But if I stay silent and the next person opts for that, and the next person opts for that, and the next person opts for that, where are we?"

As a matter of policy, *The Washington Post* does not identify alleged victims of sexual assault, but Elmore said she wants to tell her story and discussed it at length with the Post over the past seven months. Five other people, as well as letters from the 1980s and 1990s, corroborated parts of Elmore's account. Those people included Grazioplene's sister, who said the general admitted years ago that he assaulted his daughter.

Grazioplene, 69, is among the few generals that the Army has attempted to court-martial. He retired in 2005 after a career that included stints as a commander within the 82nd Airborne Division and senior staff positions at the Pentagon. After retiring, he became a vice president at the contractor DynCorp International but is no longer with the company.

He says he is innocent, but he and one of his lawyers, Thomas Pavlinic, declined to discuss the case. Attempts to reach other family members, including his wife, son and other siblings, were unsuccessful.

The Army last year convened a hearing at Fort Meade, Md., in which Elmore testified. The service determined that there was enough evidence to hold a trial, but the case was dismissed because of a decision in another case by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. It found that a five-year statute of limitations applied in that case.

On Dec. 3, however, a grand jury in Prince William County, Va., indicted Grazioplene on multiple counts of rape and incest, and he was arrested in Gainesville. There is no statute of limitations in Virginia on rape charges.

Elmore said her memories of abuse start when she was 3. Her first recollection of it is her father molesting her while she was sitting on a washing machine in her grandmother's home in LeRoy, N.Y., she said.

"It was just him and myself, and I can picture it. The laundry. The stairs. The stone," she said. "I couldn't understand what was happening, but I knew I was terrified."

Okinawa-based Marine gets 6 years for sexual assault and harassment

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A member of the III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa was sentenced to six years in a military prison Monday after being convicted last week of sexual assault and sexual harassment charges.

Cpl. Jose Araujo Jr., of Fitchburg, Mass., was found guilty at a general court-martial of sexually assaulting a female Marine and sexually harassing seven other Marines, according to 2nd Lt. Tori Sharpe, a spokeswoman for the 3rd Marine Logistics Group.

Araujo's sentence also includes a reduction in pay grade from E-4 to E-1, forfeiture of \$1,630 in pay per month for 72 months and a dishonorable discharge.

A female Marine from Marine Corps Installations Pacific alleged that Araujo, an administrative specialist with the logistics group, had raped her on or about March 31, the charge sheet said. Araujo was arrested on April 2 and held for trial. He was also charged with sexually harassing the other Marines by "engaging in unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors," according to the charge sheet.

Taliban and US officials holding meetings

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban said Monday they were holding “another” meeting with U.S. officials, this time in the United Arab Emirates and also involving Saudi, Pakistani and Emirati representatives in the latest attempt to bring a negotiated end to the war in Afghanistan.

Khalil Minawi, director of Afghanistan’s state-run Bakhtar news agency, also confirmed the meeting. He said on Twitter that officials from the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UAE held meetings Sunday ahead of “the Pakistani-sponsored U.S.-Taliban meeting.”

While Afghan officials were not expected to attend Monday’s meeting, their presence in the UAE is a significant step in efforts to get the two sides talking. So far, the Taliban have refused to hold direct talks with the Af-

ghan government, calling it a puppet of America and insisting only on negotiating with the U.S.

Also significant is the presence of the Saudis and Emiratis — both have significant influence over the Taliban — apparently geared toward pushing the insurgents toward concessions that could eventually lead to face-to-face talks with Kabul.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Pakistan were the only three countries to recognize the Taliban government during its five-year rule that ended with their 2001 overthrow. Washington, meanwhile, has considerable sway over the Afghan government, which it heavily bankrolls. The U.S. has spent \$1 trillion in Afghanistan since ousting the Taliban and the war there has become America’s longest.

While the U.S. State Depart-

ment has neither denied nor confirmed previous meetings with the Taliban, Washington’s special peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad previously said he has held several meetings with all Afghans involved in the protracted conflict — a reference that would include the Taliban, who control or hold sway in nearly half of Afghanistan.

A Taliban statement last month said they held three consecutive days of talks with Khalilzad in Qatar, a Mideast country where the insurgent group maintains a political office. Afterward, Khalilzad went to Kabul, where he urged Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to cobble together a team that could hold talks with the Taliban with the intent of reaching an agreement on a “roadmap for the future of Afghanistan.”

Khalilzad said he would like

to see this agreement reached before Afghan presidential elections, scheduled for next April.

Since his September appointment, Khalilzad has tried to jumpstart peace talks and has made several tours of the region. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan later said Khalilzad asked Pakistan to assist in getting the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Khan said Pakistan would sponsor the UAE talks and insisted that a military solution is not the answer.

President Donald Trump has long accused Islamabad of taking billions of U.S. dollars while doing nothing to aid peace efforts and has assailed Khan since his election as prime minister last summer. Washington has suspended hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to Pakistan.

Turkey: US gave ‘positive’ signals on Syria

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Turkey’s leader said he received “positive answers” from President Donald Trump on the situation in northern Syria, where Turkey has threatened to launch a new operation against American-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan did not elaborate Monday. The two leaders spoke by phone Friday.

Turkey has vowed to launch a new offensive against the People’s Protection Units, or YPG, which is the main component of a U.S.-allied force that drove Islamic State militants out of much of northeastern Syria.

Turkey views the YPG as a terrorist group because of its links to the Kurdish insurgency inside Turkey.

Erdogan says Turkey is waiting for the U.S. to keep its promises but could launch a new offensive “anytime.”

The U.S.-Kurdish alliance has soured relations between Ankara and Washington.

The U.S. military has set up observation posts to try to prevent friction between its NATO ally and the Syrian Kurdish militia. U.S. troops are based in the area, in part to reduce tensions.

The Pentagon on Wednesday warned Turkey against unilateral action in northeastern Syria.

Flurry of US airstrikes kill 62 militants in Somalia

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A flurry of U.S. airstrikes killed 62 militants over a two-day span in Somalia, U.S. Africa Command said Monday.

The attacks bring 2018’s strike total in Somalia to 45 — eclipsing last year’s tally of 35, AFRICOM said.

“U.S. forces, in cooperation with the government of Somalia, are conducting ongoing counterterrorism operations

against al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia to degrade the groups’ ability to recruit, train and plot terror attacks in Somalia and the region,” Maj. Karl Wiest, an AFRICOM spokesman, said in a statement.

On Saturday, four strikes were launched, killing 34 al-Shabab militants, AFRICOM said. Two more strikes in the same area on Sunday killed 28 fighters, the command said.

For years, Somali troops and their international back-

ers have been battling against the militant group known as al-Shabab, which is recognized as the most active terrorist group in Africa. The group’s attacks are focused almost exclusively inside Somalia, where it has battled for more than a decade in hopes of seizing control of the fragile country. More recently, there also have been flickers of Islamic State activity in Somalia.

“ISIS-Somalia and al-Shabaab pose a direct threat to

Americans, our allies and interests in the region. We support the Federal Government of Somalia, its forces and partners, and will continue to degrade the functional networks of ISIS-Somalia and al-Shabaab,” Wiest said.

The U.S. has stepped up its military support of Somalia over the past few years. In addition to airstrikes, U.S. special operations troops train and advise their Somali counterparts, accompanying local forces on missions against militants.

N. Korea lashes out at US over sanctions

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea lashed out last weekend at the United States over the latest round of sanctions, warning that increased pressure tactics will “block the path” to denuclearization.

The strongly worded statement from the foreign ministry came nearly a week after the Treasury Department black-listed three North Korean officials, including a top aide to leader Kim Jong Un, for serious human rights abuses and censorship.

The U.S. administration has insisted it will maintain the policy it calls “maximum pressure” even as it engages in a diplomatic offensive to persuade the North to give up its nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang says it should be rewarded for steps already taken since Kim and President Donald Trump made a vague promise to work toward the “complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” at their June 12 summit in Singapore.

Trump has maintained optimism despite little evidence of

progress in nuclear talks since the summit.

The state-run Korean Central News Agency was careful to praise Trump in its report Sunday, noting he “avails himself of every possible occasion to state his willingness to improve [North Korean]-U.S. relations.”

But it heaped criticism on the State Department and Treasury for imposing sanctions against North Korea, Russia, China and other countries “by fabricating pretexts of all hues such as money laundering, illegal transactions through ship-to-ship transfer and cyberattack.”

“The United States will not be unaware of the self-evident fact that its threat, blackmail and pressure against the other side cannot be a solution,” the policy research director of the ministry’s Institute for American Studies was quoted as saying.

The report warned that increased sanctions and pressure would be the “greatest miscalculation” and “it will block the path to denuclearization on the Korean peninsula forever — a result desired by no one.”

USAF to launch next-gen GPS satellites into space

Associated Press

DENVER — After months of delays, the U.S. Air Force is about to launch the first of a new generation of GPS satellites, designed to be more accurate, secure and versatile.

But some of their most highly touted features will not be fully available until 2022 or later because of problems in a companion program to develop a new ground-control system for the satellites, government auditors said.

The satellite is scheduled to lift off Tuesday from Cape Canaveral, Fla., aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. It’s the first of 32 planned GPS III satellites that will replace older ones now in orbit. Lockheed Martin is building the new satellites outside Denver.

GPS was developed by the U.S. military, which still designs, launches and operates the system. The Air Force controls a constellation of 31 GPS satellites from a high-security complex at Schriever Air Force Base outside Colorado Springs, Colo.

Compared with their predecessors, GPS III satellites will have a stronger military signal that’s harder to jam — an improvement that became more urgent after Norway accused Russia of disrupting GPS sig-

nals during a NATO military exercise this fall.

GPS III also will provide a new civilian signal compatible with other countries’ navigation satellites, such as the European Union’s Galileo system. That means civilian receivers capable of receiving the new signal will have more satellites to lock in on, improving accuracy.

The new satellites are expected to provide location information that’s three times more accurate than the current satellites.

Current civilian GPS receivers are accurate to within 10 to 33 feet, depending on conditions, said Glen Gibbons, the founder and former editor of Inside GNSS, a website and magazine that tracks global navigation satellite systems.

With the new satellites, civilian receivers could be accurate to within 3 to 10 feet under good conditions, and military receivers could be a little closer, he said.

Only some aspects of the stronger, jamming-resistant military signal will be available until a new and complex ground-control system is available, and that is not expected until 2022 or 2023, said Cristina Chaplain, who tracks GPS and other programs for the Government Accountability Office.

S. Korea wants to build in North, N. Korea still uses ‘forced labor’

The Washington Post

SEOUL, South Korea — When Lee Oui-ryuk was accepted as a 17-year-old into North Korea’s Aug. 28 work brigade in early 2006, his orphanage celebrated with flowers, speeches and cheers.

Lee saw the work brigade as a path toward possible membership in the Workers’ Party one day and restoring his name in the eyes of North Korea’s leadership.

That dream was soon forgotten. Lee said he endured endless hours of backbreaking labor seven days a week — con-

stantly hungry and impossibly exhausted — constructing apartment buildings in Pyongyang for the elite. He saw a colleague plunge to his death, and others deliberately injured themselves to be excused from work.

North Korea’s economy — and construction industry, in particular — is built on slave labor. For decades, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are dragooned into *dolgyeokdae*, literally “storm-trooper,” work crews for little or no pay, barely fed enough to survive and often forced to sleep

in makeshift housing they built themselves, according to rights groups and reports by the State Department and others.

Today, South Korean President Moon Jae-in is talking boldly of building road and railway links inside North Korea as a first step toward European Union-style regional economic integration.

In September, Moon took his country’s business elite, including the head of the national railway company, to Pyongyang to persuade North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that the South was ready to invest as soon as

U.N. sanctions are lifted.

But human rights activists are asking: Could Moon’s ambitious plans help undermine North Korea’s entrenched system of forced labor? Or will they inadvertently fuel and encourage that system?

The South Korean president appears to be focused on building engagement with the North and avoiding sensitive topics, such as human rights, that could derail his efforts. During his September visit, Moon beamed and waved at the crowds in Pyongyang that had been ordered out to welcome him.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Ruthie the chimp dies at zoo after 39 years

NC ASHEBORO — A chimpanzee that lived at the North Carolina Zoo for nearly 40 years has died after suffering congestive heart failure for about a year.

Zoo officials said Ruthie, 47, was euthanized Thursday. Zoo officials said she was known for being silly, sassy and stubborn.

She had arrived in 1980 and was one of the animals that lived longest at the zoo in Asheville. A chimp named Maggie also arrived in 1980, and C'sar the elephant came in 1978.

Ruthie was diagnosed seven years ago with heart disease.

Octogenarian not into bingo, gets her degree

TX RICHARDSON — After raising five kids and retiring at age 77 from her secretarial job, Janet Fein couldn't be blamed for finally relaxing, but that's not her.

Fein, now 84, went to back to school. And this week she'll accomplish a long-held goal when she graduates from the University of Texas at Dallas with a bachelor's degree.

Fein said, "I didn't have anything to do in retirement and I didn't think playing bingo was up to my speed."

Fein made it to class even after she had to start using a walker. Then her knees gave out, so she did a semester of independent study and took online classes.

Trucker saves dogs thrown from vehicle

NY WHITNEY POINT — A pair of beagle mixes are on the mend after authorities say a real-life Cruella de Vil threw them out of a moving vehicle on a snowy New York

highway.

State police on Saturday asked for the public's help in finding the suspect in the incident last Wednesday on Interstate 81 near Whitney Point.

So far, they have no leads.

A trucker driving nearby said the dogs were thrown from the rear passenger window of a dirty, rusty Dodge Durango. The trucker stopped and rescued the dogs.

Time capsule removed from state Capitol wall

HI HONOLULU — Hawaii officials have located a time capsule that was entombed in a wall of the state Capitol a half-century ago.

Information had been lost about exactly where the time capsule was sealed, KHON-TV reported. A group spent nearly 30 hours carefully drilling a hole into the building.

There were no instructions for how to remove the capsule, said Adam Jansen, a state archivist.

After a slow process of removing concrete layers, they removed the 20-pound copper box. It contains governmental records from when Hawaii was transitioning into a U.S. state, Jansen said.

More than 50 head of cattle taken from ranch

CO AURORA — Colorado police are investigating the theft of more than 50 head of cattle worth about \$75,000 from a ranch.

Rancher Ray Wooters said the theft of his cattle occurred at night last week, possibly by two people on horseback who were seen moving the cattle off the ranch east of Denver.

Wooters thinks they were then loaded on waiting trucks and taken away. He said most of the cattle were pregnant and

were expected to deliver calves in the spring.

Prized lumber found in gutted warehouses

WI RACINE — A Wisconsin material-design company is reclaiming timber from gutted warehouses in Racine.

Urban Evolutions co-owner Jeff Janson said he's found the wooden equivalent of a hidden stash of gold in some dismantled JI Cast steam engine and thresher machine warehouses.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported that much of the timber is 19th-century, old-growth, longleaf pine from forests in the South. The forests were all but wiped out in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by America's rapidly growing demand for lumber.

Arsonist shoots arrow at approaching officers

VT ST. ALBANS — Police said a man set an apartment on fire and then shot an arrow at officers as they moved to apprehend him.

St. Albans police told WPTZ-TV that a 30-year-old man is facing arson and attempted aggravated assault charges for intentionally setting a Friday afternoon fire at an apartment building in St. Albans.

A witness advised police that the man was carrying knives and a bow. Police found the man at a family member's residence in a playhouse, where he also lit several items on fire.

Police said the man shot an arrow from inside the playhouse at approaching officers.

Teacher steals student's violin to pay \$700 ticket

GA DECATUR — A Georgia teacher is facing charges after surveillance

video captured him stealing a violin from one of his students.

WSB-TV reported that police said the teacher confessed.

Investigators said Brockett Elementary School teacher Kalif Jones, 21, allegedly made his move while students were eating lunch in the DeKalb County school's cafeteria.

The criminal investigation began in late November after a 9-year-old student came home without his instrument. The violin is valued at \$750. Police said the child's mother reported it stolen to the school's principal. Administrators reviewed surveillance video that showed the teacher taking the violin.

Police arrested Jones after he admitted stealing the violin because he had recently received a \$700 ticket and needed some money to help pay for it.

Suspect pins officer between 2 vehicles

PA PHILADELPHIA — Police said a Philadelphia officer was injured during a traffic stop when she was pinned between a U-Haul van and a patrol vehicle. A suspect was quickly arrested.

A police spokesman said two highway officers in northwest Philadelphia on Saturday night spotted a U-Haul van that had been stolen and pulled in front of it at a red light.

Police said the driver accelerated, pinning the officer between the two vehicles, and fled. The officer's partner got into the U-Haul and reversed, freeing the officer. She was treated at Temple Medical Center.

Police said part of the offender's jacket was found on a barbed-wire fence leading to a bridge, and a helicopter unit spotted a heat signature underneath the span. The suspect, 24, was arrested.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

NFL getting back to balance

Associated Press

Football purists are smiling. For one week, the video game nature of the NFL hit pause.

The Rams' Jared Goff was the only quarterback this weekend to throw for 300 yards, let alone 400, and his team lost. No pinball shootouts.

Ten players rushed for at least 100 yards, and Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson went for 95.

There were two shutouts!

Quite the reality check to learn that strong defense, an efficient ground game, and control of the clock still can win. Yes, some nasty weather in Baltimore and the New Jersey Meadowlands contributed to the lower number of points. We figure to see more of that over the final two weeks of the schedule; it is December, after all.

These developments, if they aren't an aberration, could bode well for such teams as Baltimore, Chicago, Seattle — which actually was upset at San Francisco — and Dallas, which also lost, blanked at Indianapolis. They could be bad news for the high-scoring machines whose defenses are leaky, including previously considered powerhouses in Kansas City, New England and Pittsburgh.

"You've got to stay on the field on offense," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said Sunday after a wet 20-12 victory against Tampa Bay. "If you do that, you have a chance to generate some points."

And yards. Baltimore rushed for 242 of them on 49 attempts. Unheralded rookie Gus Edwards finished with 104. Jackson averaged 5.3 yards per rush and the Ravens are 4-1 since he replaced injured Joe Flacco as starter.

"He makes you play 11-on-11 football instead of 11 on 10," Bucs coach Dirk Koetter said of Jackson, the 32nd overall pick in April's draft. "We had him wrapped up a couple of times and he squirted out of there and was able to extend plays."

Ah yes, 11-on-11 football. Not the flag football, 44-40 variety that excites fantasy fanatics,

but the balanced game in which solid tackling, crunching blocks and a variety of strategies are paramount.

As the playoffs approach, the supersonic offenses could sputter. Teams primarily relying on them should know they might need to win man against man in the trenches, rule in a slugfest rather than in a points spree.

Of the division leaders, the Saints and possibly the Rams own that balance, though neither is as physical as, say, the Cowboys, Bears or Seahawks.

But the clubs unlikely to light up scoreboards also know if they can establish the tempo with their ground games and their stingy defenses — and an attitude that no opponent will intimidate them — they can be valid contenders in January.

Two of those clubs took a step backward on Sunday. Still, the Cowboys figure to win the NFC East and the Seahawks aren't likely to blow a wild-card spot. Rather than panic after their defeats — Seattle's loss against the lowly 49ers being the more problematic — they'll go back to what they do best.

Because they have confidence in what they do best, which helped them turn around 2018 after slow starts.

"We didn't give ourselves a chance," Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott said. "We weren't scoring and so it wasn't a complementary game of football. That's what we've been playing these last five weeks and we didn't do that tonight."

Heading into December, the prevailing view was that a prolific offense was a necessity to win the NFL championship. People became enamored of the fireworks the Rams, Saints, Chiefs and Chargers could provide.

Now, with two weeks left in the schedule, it's becoming clear that asymmetry isn't such a great thing. Maybe some of the clubs who are showing they feature balanced game plans and approaches and talent — say Houston, Chicago, Indianapolis and the Chargers — should be reckoned with as much as New Orleans and Kansas City and the Rams.

Foles, Eagles stymie Rams

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Philadelphia Eagles already knew Nick Foles could do it.

After all, it was only last December when the veteran quarterback replaced an injured Carson Wentz in a victory over the Los Angeles Rams at the Coliseum. Less than two months after coming off the bench in that game, he was an improbable Super Bowl MVP.

One season later in the same arena, Foles went back into Wentz's spot under center after three months without game action.

Foles promptly recaptured the magic, passing for 270 yards and confidently leading the Eagles to a 30-23 win over the Rams on Sunday night with plenty of help from his defense and his playmakers.

Foles' encore might not end in the Super Bowl again. It might not even include the playoffs. But after guiding Philadelphia to another win with a grace and poise belying his inactivity, the Eagles are thrilled to have him back in the game.

"It's been really emotional," said Foles, who went 24-for-31 with one interception. "You hate for your teammate to get hurt. I feel really bad for Carson. ... What you've done in the past, what I've done in the past, it doesn't matter when you step on that field. It's a new day. So I was dealing with the emotions, but prepping as hard as I could, and then realizing I'm not alone. I have great teammates out there. All I have to do is spread the ball around, lean on them, stay in the moment, and we were able to do that tonight. Today was a huge win for us."

Wendell Smallwood rushed for two touchdowns and rookie Josh Adams ran for another score as the Eagles (7-7) kept their playoff hopes quite viable with a gritty victory over the Rams (11-3), who lost consecutive regular-season games for the first time in coach Sean McVay's tenure.

Foles hadn't played since Week 2, but Wentz is out with a back injury that could sideline him for the rest of the season.

Colts' defense shuts down Cowboys

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indianapolis Colts running back Marlon Mack kept his eyes down the field and his legs churning Sunday.

His teammates took the cue.

The offensive line created enough space for Mack to run for a career-high 139 yards and two scores, an improving defense smothered the league's hottest offense and the Colts

rolled past Dallas 23-0 to stay in the AFC playoff hunt.

"When I saw those holes, I was like 'Yeah, it might be a good day,'" Mack said. "Holes like that don't come often."

If Mack continues to exploit the creases, there's no telling what the Colts (8-6) could do if they earn a postseason trip.

Since losing five of their first six, Indy has won seven of eight. Andrew Luck contin-

ues to play the best football of his career and Mack appears ready to thrive with starting center Ryan Kelly back in the lineup.

The Colts' vastly improved defense has allowed 27 points over the past three weeks including two games against division leaders, Houston and Dallas, and has its first shutout since a 27-0 victory over Cincinnati on Oct. 19, 2014.

Sloppy Patriots fall to Steelers

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — No last-second meltdown. No double-lateral magic by the opponents. No, the New England Patriots couldn't point to anything fluky in a 17-10 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sunday.

Not after a game in which they were penalized 14 times for 106 yards.

One in which they punted on five straight possessions and managed all of three points in three trips to the red zone.

One in which the Steelers finally figured out a way to slow down Rob Gronkowski and keep Tom Brady from carving them up, something he'd done with remarkable ease throughout the years.

The Patriots (9-5) are still in comfortable position to win their 10th straight AFC East title. Yet rarely during their dynasty have they looked so vulnerable so late in the season. New England dropped its second straight and fell to 3-5 away from Gillette Stadium, meaning it will almost certainly have to go on the road at least once and possibly twice to reach another Super Bowl.

Not that one seemed particularly close at hand during another anemic showing in their road white uniforms. The Patriots have lost five games in the regular season for the first time since 2009, which also happened to be the last

time they finished under .500 on the road (2-6). A week ago it was Miami's dramatic 69-yard series of laterals on the final snap. This time around, the issues were far more basic.

"We obviously haven't played very well on the road," Brady said. "Obviously what we are doing isn't good enough. It's just a cumulative thing. We're out here as a team trying to compete. When you're on the road you have to play well. Some things are a little bit more challenging on the road. We have to embrace those things. And we just haven't done a great job on that."

Brady finished 25-for-36 for 279 yards to become the fourth player in NFL history to top 70,000 career yards passing, but had trouble getting the ball downfield after a busted coverage left Chris Hogan open for a 63-yard score on New England's third offensive snap. Gronkowski, who came in averaging 111 yards receiving in six games against Pittsburgh, caught two passes for 21 yards.

The Patriots also had trouble finishing drives. Each of their last three possessions ended up in the red zone, but the only points they managed were a 33-yard Stephen Gostkowski field goal in the third quarter that trimmed Pittsburgh's lead to 14-10.

"Just not converting, I think that's all it is," running back James White said. "Not executing the way we want to. We have to be better."

Top 25 roundup Ward leads Michigan in rout of Green Bay

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Michigan State gave up a basket, and Nick Ward immediately took off. The 6-foot-9, 245-pound forward beat everyone down the court and took a long pass for a layup.

Ward scored 22 of his 28 points in a nearly perfect first half to help the ninth-ranked Spartans rout Green Bay 104-83 on Sunday night. Ward made all nine of his field goal attempts in the first half, although he did miss a free throw. He was particularly impressive in transition and appeared to relish an up-tempo game.

"I've been doing that since forever, since I was little," Ward said. "That's just off of pure effort. Running takes no skill."

Ward also made his first two shots of the second half and finished 12-for-13.

Sandy Cohen III scored 22 points for Green Bay, which actually led 24-20 before a 27-4 run by Michigan State. The Phoenix (6-6) had only one timeout left by halftime, but nothing they tried was enough to slow the Spartans.

Michigan State (9-2) made its last seven shots of the first half to take a 64-35 lead.

"This is a hard game for us, because we play fast, they play fast, and they're just faster," Green Bay coach Linc Darner said.

No. 24 Houston 68, Saint Louis 64: Corey Davis Jr. hit the tiebreaking three-pointer with 29 seconds left and had 17 points in Houston's comeback victory over visiting Saint Louis.

Davis was 3-for-5 from three-point range and hit all six of his free throws. Armoni Brooks had 13 points and eight rebounds, and Galen Robinson Jr. added 13 for Houston (10-0) in its 23rd straight at home.

Ramos to join Mets for \$19M

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Mets have agreed to a \$19 million, two-year contract with free agent catcher Wilson Ramos, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

The agreement signals an end to the Mets' pursuit of Marlins catcher J.T. Realmuto. Instead, New York turned to a two-time All-Star coming off a strong year with the Tampa Bay Rays and Philadelphia Phillies. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday because the deal has not been announced and is pending a physical.

He would get \$8.25 million next year and \$9.25 in 2020, and the Mets would have a \$10 million option with a \$1.5 million buyout.

The 31-year-old Ramos batted .306 with 15 home runs and an .845 OPS last season, ranking fifth among catchers in Wins

Above Replacement at 2.4, via Fangraphs.

New York officials met last week with Ramos at the winter meetings in Las Vegas and with Yasmani Grandal, another free agent catcher, in Arizona. Ramos became the priority for the Mets, partly because of compensation required for signing Grandal, who turned down a \$17.9 million qualifying offer from the Los Angeles Dodgers. If New York had signed Grandal, the Mets would have forfeited their second-highest pick in next June's amateur draft and \$500,000 of international signing bonus allocation in 2019-20.

The Mets also discussed a possible trade for Realmuto but decided the players it would have had to give up in a swap were too high a cost.

Ramos crosses another item off the to-do list of new general manager Brodie Van Wagenen. The former agent acquired All-Star second baseman Robinson

Cano and closer Edwin Diaz from Seattle and also brought back former New York closer Jeurys Familia on a \$30 million, three-year deal. The team may still pursue an upgrade in center field and a left-handed reliever.

Ramos is expected to be New York's primary catcher, with Travis d'Arnaud and Kevin Plawecki as possible backups. D'Arnaud, who turns 30 in February, has been on the disabled list in five straight seasons as injuries limited him to 366 major league games, an average of 73 per season.

Ramos made the AL All-Star team this year but missed the game with a hamstring issue, and injuries have been a problem for him the past few years. He tore his right ACL at the end of a breakout 2016 season with the Washington Nationals, likely costing himself millions of dollars as a free agent that offseason.

NHL roundup

Tuch's OT goal lifts Knights over Rangers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Golden Knights needed overtime to earn two points after squandering a third-period lead for the second straight game.

Alex Tuch buried a sharp-angled shot just over two minutes into OT, giving the Golden Knights a 4-3 victory over the New York Rangers on Sunday.

"It's great to score in front of friends and family," said Tuch, from Syracuse, N.Y. "I know what Madison Square Garden is, what it means to the city. It's pretty cool to not only score the overtime winner, but to score in this building."

Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 27 shots in his 423rd career victory, which moved him into a tie with Tony Esposito for ninth on the NHL's wins list.

"Since the day we got him in the expansion draft, he is the leader of our group," Golden Knights coach Gerard Gallant said of Fleury. "He gives us a chance to win every night."

Paul Stastny, Reilly Smith and William Carrier scored for Vegas, which extended its points streak to four straight games. The Golden Knights blew a three-goal lead in an overtime loss to the New Jersey Devils on Friday night.

Chris Kreider, Brady Skjei and Mika Zibanejad scored for the Rangers, and Kevin Hayes had three assists. Henrik Lundqvist made 37 saves as New York dropped its third consecutive home game,

all after regulation.

"It was embarrassing," Rangers coach David Quinn said. "You can't come out and play hockey like that."

Flames 7, Blues 2: Johnny Gaudreau and Alan Quine each scored twice, and visiting Calgary beat St. Louis.

The Flames have won eight of nine and lead the Western Conference with 46 points

Calgary scored four times on its first 15 shots in the opening period and cruised to improve to 12-2-1 in its past 15.

Jets 5, Lightning 4 (OT): Mark Scheifele scored 4:18 into overtime to lift host Winnipeg over league-leading Tampa Bay for its season-high fifth straight win.

Patrik Laine skated in front of Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy and lost the puck while Scheifele swooped in and cleaned up the rebound for Winnipeg's third straight overtime win. Scheifele also had two assists, and the Jets tied for second in the NHL with Calgary.

Sabres 4, Bruins 2: Jeff Skinner tucked the winning goal past Tuukka Rask with 3:13 remaining for his second score of the night, and visiting Buffalo beat Boston.

Skinner's team-leading 24th goal came off a feed from behind the net from Jack Eichel, who had two goals and two assists in his return to Boston. Eichel grew up in nearby North Chelmsford and starred at Boston University.

Eichel added an empty-net goal with 24.2 seconds left. Linus Ullmark had 35 saves

for the Sabres (20-9-5), who had lost six of eight.

Sharks 7, Blackhawks 3: Melker Karlsson, Evander Kane, Kevin Labanc, Tomas Hertl and Logan Couture each had a goal and an assist, and visiting San Jose rallied for its fourth straight win.

Marcus Sorensen and Barclay Goodrow also scored for the Sharks, who have won six of seven and climbed into a tie with Anaheim for second in the Pacific Division.

Chicago goalie Corey Crawford left the game with 1:30 left in the first period after the back of his head struck the right post during a goalmouth pileup. He allowed two goals on eight shots and exited with the Blackhawks leading 3-2.

Last-place Chicago lost for 10th time in its last 11 games despite grabbing an early 2-0 lead.

Hurricanes 3, Coyotes 0: Warren Foegele scored his first goal since October, Petr Mrazek made 23 saves in his first shutout of the season and host Carolina beat Arizona.

Defenseman Calvin de Haan had two assists for the Hurricanes, who won for only the second time in seven games this month.

Canucks 4, Oilers 2: Brock Boeser had three power-play points and host Vancouver beat Edmonton.

Boeser had a goal and set up goals by Alex Edler and Elias Pettersson.

NBA roundup

Wall's big game helps Wizards rout Lakers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John Wall was at his attacking best: 40 points and 14 assists; one no-look, through-the-legs assist; one buzzer-beating rainbow step-back jumper.

LeBron James was at his sluggish worst: a season-low 13 points on 5-for-16 shooting.

So it made sense that Wall's reeling and undermanned Washington Wizards, amid so much losing and infighting and roster flux, would dominate James and his rising Los Ange-

les Lakers throughout a 128-110 win on Sunday.

"We're a team that's built on energy and depth," James said. "We didn't have either tonight."

A day after he and Lonzo Ball each registered a triple-double in a win at Charlotte, the four-time NBA MVP had six rebounds and three assists and sat out the fourth quarter of a lopsided laugher.

76ers 128, Cavaliers 105: Ben Simmons had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 14 assists for his third triple-double of the

season, Joel Embiid scored 24 points and Philadelphia won in Jimmy Butler's return, routing host Cleveland.

Nuggets 95, Raptors 86: Nikola Jokic scored 26 points, Jamal Murray had 15 of his 19 in the fourth quarter and Denver rallied past visiting Toronto in a contest between banged-up conference leaders.

Heat 102, Pelicans 96: Josh Richardson scored 22 points, Dwyane Wade added 19 in what was likely his final game in New Orleans, and Miami beat the Pelicans.

Kings 120, Mavericks 113: Buddy Hield and De'Aaron Fox each scored 28 points and Sacramento ended Dallas' 11-game home winning streak.

Pacers 110, Knicks 99: Victor Oladipo scored 26 points, Myles Turner had 24 and host Indiana beat New York for its seventh straight victory.

Nets 144, Hawks 127: D'Angelo Russell scored 32 points, Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 18 and Brooklyn beat visiting Atlanta for its fifth straight victory.