

STARS AND STRIPES®

Sunday, February 5, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Mattis to Asian allies: We have your back

By **ERIK SLAVIN**
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — If the Pentagon named bilateral talks the way it did military operations, Jim Mattis' first trip abroad as defense secretary might have been deemed Operation Allied Reassurance.

Officials in Japan and South Korea, the United States' closest treaty allies in the region, each had concerns that America might back away after President Donald Trump's "America First" campaign rhetoric questioned their contributions to the bilateral alliances.

While some concern remains, Japan largely heard what it wanted from Mattis: a renewed commitment to aid Japan if China ever attacks the contested Senkaku Islands, public praise for the billions of dollars annually that Japan contributes to U.S. forces, and reaffirmation of plans for U.S. military realignment in the region.

In Seoul, Mattis talked of ironclad commitments to security partners and warned North Korea against testing the alliance with South Korea.

Mattis also got some reassurances of his own. Japan hinted at taking on a greater security role when Defense Secretary Tomomi Inada told reporters Saturday the country was ready to "enhance our alliance" in the name of regional stability.

Getting Japan to pay substantially more for U.S. bases is unlikely to happen, security analysts and Japanese lawmakers said.

Japan already spends between \$1.65 billion and \$1.9 billion annually on hosting U.S. troops, depending on currency exchange rates. It also provides another \$1 billion in labor and is spending billions

more on a future transfer of servicemembers from Okinawa to Guam.

Mattis called the agreement that stations 50,000 servicemembers in Japan "a model of cost sharing and burden sharing."

"We can point to our Japan-U.S. cost-sharing approach as an example for other nations to follow," Mattis said.

A recent Nikkei poll found a majority of Japanese support current spending levels, with only 5 percent saying they should pay more.

However, Japanese officials have said they are open to expanding their security operations in the region, which is expected to please Washington, though the particulars remain unclear.

Following Inada's comments Saturday, Mattis cited the 2015 U.S.-Japan defense guidelines, which discussed global operations for the first time, as a document that lays "the foundation for us to do much more together."

"There is no complacency in terms of the alliance," Mattis said.

Mattis' meetings with Inada and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will guide discussion on security matters when Abe and Trump meet in Washington on Friday — and possibly for golf in Florida the next day, according to Japanese media reports.

Trump's past comments led to concerns that the alliance would drift, said Yasushi Watanabe, a professor at Keio University's school of government.

However, Mattis appears to have a realistic grasp of security issues in the region, Watanabe said.

"It's a valuable opportunity (for Japan) to have someone like that to come first, understand Japan's situation and relay it to

Mr. Trump prior to the summit meeting," Watanabe said.

Mattis also used the Tokyo trip to restate Washington's opposition to China's aggressive movements in the East and South China seas.

Mattis' phrasing was perhaps more harsh than former Defense Secretary Ash Carter's at times, but the substance was similar. He called on China to respect international law and to resolve disputes through arbitration rather than coercion.

Mattis ruled out any American "dramatic military maneuvers," but he reasserted the rights of both Navy and commercial vessels to sail through international waters despite claims by China to the contrary.

Meanwhile, Mattis had little new to say during the South Korea leg of the trip, said Kim Joon Hyung, an international politics professor at Handong Global University in Pohang. The Trump administration is likely more interested in fighting the Islamic State group and addressing trade issues with South Korea than in significant changes within the security alliance, Kim said.

The visit did give Mattis a chance to send a tough message to North Korea, Kim added.

Mattis also got to speak on behalf of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, a missile system supported by President Park Geun-hye prior to her impeachment, as well as by South Korea's interim president.

Mattis came to Seoul to gauge the uncertain political situation "because there is a chance of a turnover of political power in South Korea, and presidential candidates from South Korean opposition parties are skeptical about the THAAD issue," Kim said.

DOD's Mattis an instant hit in Japan, S. Korea debut

Associated Press

TOKYO — In his debut abroad as the first retired general to lead the Pentagon in more than a half-century, Jim Mattis found that in Japan and South Korea, his experience in uniform is seen as an asset.

Not everyone who knows Mattis well in the U.S. shares that view, but he clearly was an instant hit in northeast Asia.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was effusive in his endorsement as the two

shook hands Friday before a phalanx of Japanese and international news reporters and cameras. "I was very encouraged to see someone like you, who has substantial experience both in the military and in security, defense and diplomacy, taking this office," Abe said.

Abe noted that Mattis' military career included a stint on Okinawa, which the U.S. returned to Japanese control in 1972 based on an agreement signed a year earlier to end the postwar period of U.S. military

control. "So I believe that you are quite familiar with the situation surrounding Japan," he said.

In Seoul, where civilian control of the military has a mixed history, Mattis' counterpart, Han Min Koo, portrayed him as a kindred spirit. Han told reporters he knew why they were able to forge a bond in their very first meeting.

"I believe this was possible because we both served as active-duty servicemen for 40-plus years," Han said.

Appeals court denies request to restore Trump's travel ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court on Sunday denied the Justice Department's request for an immediate reinstatement of President Donald Trump's ban on accepting certain travelers and all refugees.

The Trump administration had appealed a temporary order restraining the ban nationwide, saying a federal judge in Seattle overreached by "second-guessing" the president on a matter of national security.

The appeals court's denial of an immediate stay means the legal fight over the ban will continue for days at least. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco asked challengers of the ban to respond by early Monday, and for the Justice Department to file a counter-response by the evening.

Acting Solicitor General Noel

Francisco, representing the administration, told the appeals court that the president alone has the power to decide who can enter or stay in the U.S. — an assertion that appeared to invoke the wider battle to come over illegal immigration.

"The power to expel or exclude aliens is a fundamental sovereign attribute, delegated by Congress to the executive branch of government and largely immune from judicial control," according to government's filing.

The government has suspended the ban's enforcement in compliance with order of the order of U.S. District Judge James Robart. His ruling was an extraordinary setback for the new president, who only a week earlier acted to suspend America's refugee program and to halt immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries that

the government said raise terrorism concerns.

Trump mocked Robart, who was appointed by President George W. Bush, calling him a "so-called judge" whose "ridiculous" ruling "will be overturned."

"Because the ban was lifted by a judge, many very bad and dangerous people may be pouring into our country. A terrible decision," he tweeted.

Trump's direct attack recalled his diatribes during the campaign against the federal judge of Mexican heritage who oversaw lawsuits alleging fraud by Trump University, and may prompt some tough questions as these challenges rise through the courts.

But the government's brief repeatedly asserted that presidential authority cannot be questioned by judges once the nation's security is invoked.

Trump asked about Putin, says US not 'so innocent'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he respects Vladimir Putin, and when an interviewer called the Russian leader "a killer," Trump said the United States has many of them.

"What do you think? Our country's so innocent?" he told Fox's Bill O'Reilly in an excerpt released by the network. The president's interview was to air Sunday afternoon on the Super Bowl pregame show.

Trump has long expressed a wish for better ties with Moscow, has praised Putin and has signaled that U.S.-Russia relations could be in line for a makeover, even after U.S. intelligence agencies determined that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign to help Trump win against Democrat Hillary Clinton. Putin has called Trump a "very bright and talented man."

During Putin's years in power, a number of prominent Russian opposition figures and journalists have been killed.

In the interview, Trump says, "I do respect him," and then is asked why. "I respect a lot of people, but that doesn't mean I'm going to get along with him. He's a leader of his country. I say it's better to get along with Russia than not. And if Russia helps us in the fight against ISIS, which is a major fight, and Islamic terrorism all over the world — that's a good thing," Trump said, using an acronym for the Islamic State group. "Will I get along with him? I have no idea."

O'Reilly then said about Putin: "But he's a killer, though. Putin's a killer."

Trump responded: "There are a lot of killers. We've got a lot of killers. What do you think? Our country's so innocent?"

In the excerpt, Trump did not cite specific U.S. actions. It was unclear whether he expanded on the comment or added context later in the interview.

Duterte warns rebels against attacks

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte warned Sunday that the military is ready to respond with airstrikes and new offensives if communist rebels launch attacks after both sides lifted separate cease-fires and he announced he was scrapping peace talks with the guerrillas.

Duterte, speaking at a news conference, called the rebels "terrorists" as months of steady progress in talks brokered by Norway rapidly turned hostile after New People's Army rebels killed six soldiers and kidnapped two others in fresh violence that enraged the president.

"It seems to me that these terrorists want another 50 years of war, of killing of Filipinos," Duterte told reporters after attending the wake of three of the slain soldiers in southern Ca-

gayan de Oro city.

"I don't want a bloody thing, but if they choose to do it, fine," the tough-talking president said. "With my lifting of the cease-fire, they can begin their attacks and we are prepared, and I will use the assets. We have so many planes now. We have jets. I will drop all (the bombs)."

Duterte lifted the government's 6-month-old cease-fire with the rebels Friday and ordered troops to prepare for new fighting after the guerrillas abandoned their own truce two days earlier and killed the six soldiers in fresh violence. He angrily said some of the slain soldiers were killed like pigs and raked with gunfire.

He said Saturday that he was scrapping the talks with the rebels and would order government negotiators not to participate in negotiations for a joint cease-fire

accord scheduled this month in Norway, adding that "peace with the communists might not come in this generation."

The rebels have yet to react to Duterte's moves.

Despite his tough talk, Duterte asked thousands of guerrillas to abandon a nearly half-century of bloody rebellion in the countryside with an offer of land reform and housing.

"I'm offering you peace," he said. "You should just come down, and I will look for money to place you in settlements and I will proceed with the land reform." Duterte said several rebel leaders who were temporarily freed to join the peace talks in Europe should immediately return to the Philippines and go back to prison, warning that he would cancel their passports and order them to be arrested.

UK leads exercise in tense Persian Gulf

CHRIS CHURCH
Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE HMS OCEAN — The Unified Trident exercise and the British navy's current deployment in the Middle East at a time of rising tensions with Iran has given Britain a preview of the future as it prepares to introduce the new HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier, which is due to start sea trials later this year.

At some 65,000 metric tons, the Queen Elizabeth and its sister, the HMS Prince of Wales, will be the biggest ships the British navy has built, and they mark Britain's return to carrier-launched aircraft operations.

The return to carrier strike operations is still some time off, as the first of the \$3.74 billion carriers isn't expected to be operational until 2020. Last week, the United Kingdom's minister

of defense procurement said the Queen Elizabeth's sea trials would be delayed.

When the 920-foot-long carriers enter the British fleet, they'll operate with the F-35 joint strike fighter.

The carriers will be able to operate anywhere in the world, and it's likely they'll deploy to the Middle East at some point, British navy Commodore Andrew Burns, who led Unified Trident, said.

Unified Trident was the first time the British navy led an exercise involving all of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command task forces, NAVCENT says.

For Burns, who since November has led NAVCENT's Task Force 50, bringing all the task forces together for the exercise was the culminating event of the deployment after smaller exercises were conducted with all of the task forces individually.

Task force 50 is responsible for planning and conducting strike and contingency operations in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

Besides the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, the exercise brought together more than 15 ships from the British, Australian and French navies, along with a number of other assets, including various aircraft platforms in the Persian Gulf.

By having several navies working together, a task group is better equipped to meet security challenges than any one country alone, he said.

Unified Trident comes as tensions have intensified in Middle Eastern waters.

The U.S. imposed sanctions on Friday, after the exercise concluded, in response to a ballistic missile test Iran carried out last week. As Iran conducted military exercises Saturday, an

Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander said Teheran would use missiles to defend its security, Reuters reported.

Also last week, two Saudi sailors were killed after Houthi rebels, who are fighting the government in Yemen, used suicide boats to attack a Saudi frigate operating in the Red Sea. Last fall, the Houthis fired missiles at U.S. Navy ships on several occasions and also struck a United Arab Emirates vessel.

Unified Trident involved scenarios addressing threats in subsurface, surface and air environments, Burns said. Some of the threats coalition forces defended against during the exercise appeared similar to recent events involving Iran, such as the confrontation of allied ships by fast-attack craft. But officials emphasized that Unified Trident wasn't a response to any specific threat.

US raid in Yemen reveals al-Qaida affiliate's strength

The Washington Post

CAIRO — A U.S. commando raid in Yemen that set off a fierce firefight revealed the growing strength of an al-Qaida affiliate that has targeted both the U.S. and Europe.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula — or AQAP — had collected enough intelligence to anticipate the raid late last month, Yemeni officials and analysts said. The militants also had the firepower to counterattack from their bastion.

By the end of the raid, a Navy SEAL was dead and three other American troops were wounded. Yemeni officials said as many as 30 civilians, including 10 women and children, also were killed. Among them was the 8-year-old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, the Yemeni-American al-Qaida leader who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2011.

The raid and civilian casualties have triggered widespread anger across Yemen toward Washington, adding to tensions over President Donald Trump's travel ban on citizens of Yemen and six other majority-Muslim countries.

On Thursday, the watchdog group Amnesty International called for Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to launch an investigation into the civilian deaths and, if appropriate, "prosecute those responsible."

The raid was the first counterterrorism operation greenlighted by Trump, and he hailed it as a success. But regional analysts

say it could help AQAP gain sympathy and support from local populations.

The militant group, which U.S. officials consider al-Qaida's most dangerous branch, seized large swaths of southern Yemen in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring revolts that topped longtime autocrat Ali Abdullah Saleh. Now, with Yemen gripped by a 2-year-old civil war, AQAP has expanded its reach, gaining territory and recruits and deepening its influence among local tribes.

AQAP was behind some of the most audacious assaults against the West in recent years, including a failed attempt to blow up a U.S.-bound airliner over Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009. It also asserted responsibility for the deadly 2015 shootings at the satirical Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris.

Also of concern is an emerging Islamic State affiliate that has staged numerous suicide bombings against Yemeni military and government officials in the south.

The ill-fated raid was an indicator of how much the political fallout from the Arab revolts has weakened U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Yemen. As the nation slid toward civil war, Washington scaled back on counterterrorism training, intelligence-gathering and advising of Yemeni forces. The conflict pits an alliance of northern rebels known as Houthis and Saleh loyalists against forces nominally loyal to President Abed Raboo Mansour Hadi, who is leading a government in exile. The U.S., along with

a regional coalition led by Saudi Arabia, is seeking to restore Hadi to power.

Today, a small contingent of U.S. special operations forces is helping Hadi's government and regional units combat AQAP and the Islamic State group.

U.S. counterterrorism efforts during the Obama administration mostly involved drone strikes targeting the radical groups. Many AQAP leaders and operatives were killed, but the overall strategy did little to neutralize the radical groups.

Analysts say it is unclear what broader strategy the Trump administration will employ, but that it appears he also might rely heavily on drones and special operations.

AQAP has forged alliances with Sunni groups and tribes, often with cash payments. It earns revenue from smuggling goods into Yemen, where an air, sea and land blockade is being enforced by the Saudi-led coalition.

To avoid alienating people, the group has stopped enforcing its rigid Islamic codes in some areas, wrote Michael Horton, a Yemen analyst, in last month's issue of CTC Sentinel, a magazine published by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

Horton, who described AQAP as "better funded and armed than at any point in its history," said the group is bolstering its intelligence and counterintelligence cells while creating a network of informants and sympathizers, even in areas where the group no longer rules.

Last C-130H navigators prep to move on

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Maj. Jesse Barnes describes himself as “the last of a special breed.”

The 39-year-old Detroit native is one of the last navigators flying C-130 Hercules cargo planes for the 36th Airlift Squadron at Yokota Air Base.

When the old H-model aircraft — the last of their type flying in the Air Force — are replaced this month by 14 state-of-the-art C-130J Super Hercules, Barnes and his teammates will be out of a job.

The airmen, who support U.S. forces across the Pacific from the western Tokyo base, have been working hard to keep the older C-130Hs in the sky while learning new skills to fly and maintain the C-130Js, said Maj. Brian Miller, who is overseeing

the transition. Some trained on the new planes at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., while others did the work before they arrived in Japan, he said.

But the Hercules’ navigators and flight engineers are getting ready to move on. There were 35 navigators and 25 flight engineers flying Yokota’s C-130Hs before officials began transitioning to the new model.

“We are not all going to the same place,” said Barnes, who has yet to receive an assignment.

Some navigators have applied to become pilots, and others are transferring to other planes, including RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft.

Air Force Special Operations Command calls its C-130J navigators “combat systems officers,” Barnes said.

Flight engineers have the option to switch to other aircraft,

such as C-5 transport planes or Osprey tilt-rotors, he said.

In preparation for the J-models, which are 15 feet longer than the planes they replace, Yokota is lengthening a hangar and building facilities to repair composite materials used instead of aluminum on some new components.

Senior Master Sgt. Colby Bruschi, 37, of Aurora, Colo., who is overseeing the maintenance group’s transition, said gauges and switches are replaced by multifunctional screens in the cockpits.

Maintainers also have had to come to grips with a different Rolls-Royce engine and six-bladed, composite propellers, he said.

Tech Sgt. Brian Joseph, 32, of Vacaville, Calif., another Yokota maintainer, called working on the C-130H a “labor of love.”

“It can give you some long days and get your hands dirty, but crew chiefs enjoy finding a discrepancy and getting it corrected for the mission to go on,” he said. “The J-model takes out 80 percent of that work. The computer does it all.”

Flying with two fewer crewmembers doesn’t diminish the aircraft’s combat capability, said Maj. Jesse Klaetsch, 36, of Estacada, Ore., who is also overseeing the transition.

Computers on the new planes take some burden away from the pilots. For example, auto-throttles allow a pilot to select a speed, then the plane adjusts the throttle to match, he said.

“A flight engineer was watching things like oil temperature and fuel levels,” he said. “Now the computer controls all that and advises the pilot if something needs to be done.”

Trump-Mexico tensions could affect military ties

By **ALEX HORTON**
Stars and Stripes

SAN ANTONIO — Recent political spats between the U.S. and Mexico, including President Donald Trump’s comments that he might send U.S. troops to Mexico, could negatively affect the military relationship between the two countries, security analysts said.

ANALYSIS “You have a bunch of bad hombres down there,” Trump told Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto during a phone call Wednesday, according to an excerpt leaked to The Associated Press. “You aren’t doing enough to stop them. I think your military is scared. Our military isn’t, so I just might send them down to take care of it.”

The White House downplayed the comments, saying Trump’s comments were “lighthearted.”

“Suggesting that U.S. troops may intervene on Mexican soil, for whatever reason, takes the relationship back a century,” said Iñigo Guevara Moyano, an IHS Jane’s Aerospace, Defense and Security consultant who closely follows the U.S.-Mexico defense dynamic.

Trump’s remarks were “part of a discussion about how the United States and Mexico could work collaboratively to combat drug cartels and other criminal elements,

and make the border more secure,” the White House said.

Political tensions have risen since last month, when Trump and Nieto publicly sparred over a White House executive order signed Jan. 25 to start construction on a border wall, along with U.S. proposals to levy a 20 percent import tax on Mexico goods.

Caught in the middle of the political maneuvering is a relationship between the nations’ militaries, which recently have built bonds across the border but could unravel under further tension.

The relationship was created by senior political figures and was ramped up in 2006, he said, when the Mexican drug war was launched and officials in both countries reassessed how they could share defense responsibilities. The security of the continent remains the primary goal of the partnership, Moyano said.

“It’s really sad to see 10 years of trust-building could crumble within 10 days,” he said of the recent political fallout.

One immediate effect of deteriorating relations, Moyano said, could be a breakdown of trust at the unit level, where missions like intelligence-sharing happen constantly across the border. Intelligence missions in the recent past have involved CIA-provided targeting data on drug kingpins, The Washington Post reported in 2013.

Common intelligence-sharing between the two militaries involves missions like air and maritime surveillance to interdict drug smuggling. Close coordination is achieved partly through Mexican liaison officers within the Northern and Southern commands.

Waning political trust between nations could affect military personnel responsible for carrying out the day-to-day relationship, Moyano said.

Security assistance has transitioned to direct foreign military sales in recent years, which also could be affected by souring relations, said John Lindsay-Poland, an arms-trade analyst with American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker peace-focused nonprofit.

Northern Command recently facilitated the sale of 25 UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, with eight of those delivered to the Mexican army and air force as of December, said Roberto Garza, a command spokesman. Recent sales also have included 2,250 Humvees, of which 1,320 have been delivered, Garza said.

Many private company sales, like a \$266 million deal signed in 2015 for Sig Sauer to deliver rifles and pistols to the Mexican military and police, are supplied over several years. It’s unclear if escalating trade disputes could disrupt future deliveries, Lindsay-Poland said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Boy lifts toilet lid, sees rattlesnake in bowl

TX ABILENE — Rattlesnakes often hide in rural Texas homes, but few are discovered peering up from a toilet.

Snake-removal expert Nathan Hawkins said Friday that he was called to a home near Abilene last month after a boy lifted the toilet lid and was surprised to find an adult rattlesnake poking out of the water with most of its body extended down into the drain.

Hawkins said the snake found its way into the house's plumbing through an exposed pipe.

The boy's mother decapitated the snake and Hawkins removed 23 others that he found nesting in the storm cellar and beneath the home.

Hawkins posted details of the account to his company's Facebook page and the post has been shared thousands of times.

Conference call on pot marred by flushing

AK JUNEAU — Everyone's had a bad conference call experience when someone who dialed in puts the call on hold, and loud hold music makes it impossible for the call to continue.

The Alaska Marijuana Control Board had a bit of that and a sound of a different sort during its meeting Thursday. Someone who had dialed in to the meeting in Juneau flushed a toilet.

About 40 people were on the line when muffled noises were heard in the background and then the distinct sound of a toilet flushing.

Board member Mark Springer stopped the meeting and admonished the unknown flusher

as being rude. He asked whoever had flushed the toilet to mute their phone.

Trump's likeness found on heroin envelopes

FL BROOKSVILLE — Heroin seized during a Florida drug bust was being held inside envelopes featuring the likeness of President Donald Trump.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that about 5,550 heroin envelopes were collected in a Hernando County bust on Jan. 27. Some of the envelopes also had the name of Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman printed on them.

Police arrested Kelvin Scott Johnson, 46, on suspicion of heroin trafficking and other charges. He is being held on \$75,000 bail.

Authorities said Johnson came to their attention in May 2016, after the U.S. Postal Service intercepted a package containing 550 doses of heroin.

Police: Man stalked, chained ex-girlfriend

NM ESPANOLA — Authorities allege a Nevada woman found chained and handcuffed in a van stopped by police in New Mexico had been stalked and abducted by an ex-boyfriend.

The Albuquerque Journal reported a New Mexico State Police affidavit says the 28-year-old woman told police that Jack William Morgan, 31, said he was going to take her to a cave to "brainwash her to be his wife."

The woman was abducted Jan. 30 in Las Vegas and was freed that night when the police stopped the van near Espanola.

Morgan, of Tarrant County, Texas, and Samuel Lee Brown, 19, of Phenix City, are jailed in

Santa Fe on charges of kidnaping, false imprisonment, and conspiracy.

Officers to be honored for house fire rescue

RI CENTRAL FALLS — The city of Central Falls is honoring three police officers credited with rescuing seven people from a burning home.

Sergeant Derrick Levasseur and Officers Yomaira Rodriguez and Bari Cameron will receive the Mayor's Medal of Merit at a ceremony on Monday. Mayor James Diossa said the officers are being recognized for their "heroic actions."

Officials said Rodriguez spotted smoke coming from the building in the early morning hours of Jan. 28. She entered the building along with the other two officers and together they rescued six adults and a young child, who were asleep at the time.

Surveillance video showed a man in a winter coat and a hat approach the building's porch and start the fire. Police have offered a reward for information.

Horses need homes as deadline looms

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Hundreds of wild horses at a troubled South Dakota sanctuary are enduring bitter weather while a group of volunteers works to feed and care for them.

Others are sorting through adoption applications and networking on social media in search of homes for the horses.

More than 800 horses were impounded in October at the nonprofit International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros after a state veterinarian found they were being neglected. All but 20 were eventually surrendered

by their owner.

Homes for some 500 horses have been found, but volunteers at the ranch near Lantry, in north-central South Dakota, say many of the remaining animals could be more difficult to place.

Woman uses pizza to convey note to senator

UT SALT LAKE CITY — The voicemail box for Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch was full, so a Utah woman tried using a pizza to ask for a "no" vote on one of President Donald Trump's Cabinet nominees.

The ham-and-pineapple pizza that Julia Silge ordered for Hatch's Salt Lake City office to convey a brief note against Education nominee Betsy DeVos didn't reach its destination, but the message did.

The Salt Lake Tribune reported that Hatch's office refused the delivery because it didn't order the pizza. However, Hatch's staff ultimately saw Silge's Twitter post of her online order. Her tweet was retweeted thousands of times.

Dismembered remains discovered in suitcase

NV LAS VEGAS — Police reports say dismembered remains of a homicide victim were found in a scorched suitcase in a vacant lot in Las Vegas.

Media outlets reported the suitcase containing remains of Ulyses Molina didn't have his head, hands or feet.

A homeless woman who was sleeping in the lot found the suitcase early on Dec. 28 after hearing car doors slam and tires squeal.

Police say he was killed on Christmas after an argument.

From wire reports

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Warner, Tomlinson heading to Hall

Associated Press

HOUSTON — LaDainian Tomlinson, Terrell Davis and Kurt Warner earned their spots in the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Saturday. Terrell Owens, though, got turned away in a decision that went viral on social media and led the receiver to blame a “flawed process” in an after-the-fact tweet.

Also making it were sackmaster Jason Taylor — in on his first ballot, the same as Tomlinson — and Morten Andersen, the NFL’s all-time leading scorer, who joins Jan Stenerud as the second pure place-kicker to make the hall.

Seahawks safety Kenny Easley made it as a senior nominee, while Cowboys owner Jerry Jones is in as a contributor. Former NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue did not get in, with his role in downplaying the severity of the league’s concussion problem a factor in the vote.

Tomlinson’s victory shed a glimmer of light on a dark year for San Diego fans. The city lost its team, but gained a Hall of Famer.

“Those fans there inspired me to run harder, to dig deeper in times when I was tired in the fourth quarter and didn’t think I had anything left,” Tomlinson said.

In nine years with the Chargers, then two with the Jets, the 5-foot-10 Tomlinson reset the template for what had been known as a scatback, proving someone of his size and

speed could be a game changer, not merely a change of pace.

As dangerous catching the ball (4,772 career yards) as he was running it (13,684), in 2003, LT became the first player to rush for 1,000 yards and catch 100 passes. His 31 touchdowns scored in 2006 are still the single-season record. He finished his career with 145 TDs, not counting the seven he threw on halfback options.

In giving the thumbs-up to Davis and Warner, the 48 Hall of Fame voters answered ‘Yes’ to the question of whether a few truly dominating years are enough for someone to be enshrined.

Getting a big, fat ‘No’ for the second straight year was Owens, the league’s second-leading all-time receiver, but also one of its most divisive players over a career that spanned 1996-2010.

“Unfortunately I DID NOT MAKE IT again this year,” Owens tweeted. “Thanks to ALL my fans & supporters. #FlawedProcess.”

Warner on Owens: “When you just look at what he accomplished, everybody looks and says, ‘C’mon.’ The numbers are there, the impact is there.”

Warner’s heyday was 1999-2001 with the Rams, whose offense was known as “The Greatest Show on Turf.” Warner quit his job bagging groceries, and went on to win two overall MVPs and one at the Super Bowl to close the 1999 season, when the Rams

captured their only Lombardi Trophy.

Davis helped the Denver Broncos to 45 victories and finally pushed John Elway over the top with two Super Bowl titles. In 1998, Davis became the fourth runner to surpass 2,000 yards, with 2008.

Andersen lasted 25 seasons, played in 382 games and scored 2,544 points for five teams. He was among the first to make the 50-plus-yard field goal routine. His 40 kicks of 50-yards plus were the most in NFL history at his retirement.

Taylor was Defensive Player of the Year in 2006 with 13½ sacks and finished his 15-year career, most of them with the Dolphins, with 139½ sacks, eight interceptions and 29 fumble recoveries.

Easley was the hard-hitting Seattle safety who also played only seven seasons, but made them all count. He was Defensive Player of the Year in 1984 and a four-time All-Pro selection. He finished with 32 interceptions.

Jones is still very much active in charting the league’s course in the 21st century. His \$1.2 billion stadium, dubbed “Jerry World,” set the standard for stadiums to follow, and his role in brokering TV and marketing deals have helped turn the league into a \$13 billion-a-year business.

“His impact on our organization, the National Football League is significant,” Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said. “He’s changed the league in so many ways.”

Falcons’ Ryan, Cowboys big award winners

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan was voted The Associated Press 2016 NFL’s Most Valuable Player and top offensive player Saturday night.

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott took Offensive Rookie of the Year and Jason Garrett was selected Coach of the Year by a nationwide panel of 50 media members who regularly cover the league.

On the eve of the Super Bowl in which he will face off with two-time league MVP Tom Brady, who finished second in this year’s balloting, Ryan outdistanced Brady 25-10 for MVP. He beat Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers 15½ to 11 for Offensive Player of the Year.

Ryan, of course, was not on

hand at the “NFL Honors” TV show. But in a taped acceptance speech, he said:

“I just want to say thank you. This is an incredible honor for me. Obviously, there are so many other great candidates and players who had amazing seasons.

“I want to thank all my teammates. Obviously, without them, none of this is possible. We’ve had so many guys on our team make great plays and have great seasons for us, so thank you to those guys.”

Garrett drew 25 votes for best coach, beating out New England’s Bill Belichick (14).

“This is an extension of our football team and I really accept it on their behalf,” said Garrett, who took over as Dallas coach in 2010. “It’s a team award.”

Prescott, in a two-man race with his running back, Ezekiel Elliott, won 28½ to 21½, and brought his teammate onstage to share in his special moment.

“He deserves it just as much as I do from his yards, his catches,” Prescott said. “The way we handled things in the backfield is always together.”

Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan, apparently headed to San Francisco after the Super Bowl to be head coach of the 49ers, took the assistant coaching award.

Packers receiver Jordy Nelson, returning from a devastating knee injury, was selected Comeback Player of the Year.

Oakland edge rusher Khalil Mack slipped past 2016 Super Bowl MVP linebacker Von Miller for Defensive Player of the Year, 18-17.

San Diego lineman Joey Bosa won top defensive rookie honors in a landslide.

“I don’t really set goals like this for myself very often, awards,” said Bosa, who missed the first four games after a holdout. “But I definitely wanted this one.”

Cardinals receiver Larry Fitzgerald and Giants quarterback Eli Manning shared the Walter Payton Man of the Year award.

“Quite simply this is the most meaningful honor an NFL player can receive, and I am flattered beyond words that the selection committee deemed me worthy of it,” Fitzgerald said. “More than anything it is a reflection on my parents whose words and example taught my brother and me the value of service and the importance of giving back.”

Kansas State stuns No. 2 Baylor

Associated Press

WACO, Texas — Three days earlier, Kansas State was about as low as a team can get after blowing a lead late in regulation and dropping a home game to TCU in overtime.

The Wildcats are back on top of the emotional roller-coaster that often results from playing in the Big 12.

Kamau Stokes scored 15 points and Kansas State held off a late rally to snap a three-game losing streak and hand No. 2 Baylor its first home loss of the season, 56-54 on Saturday.

Stokes made both of the Wildcats' field goals in the final 6:29, including a baseline jumper with 1:40 to go off an inbounds pass with 1 second left on the shot clock that made it 55-51.

"Great screen by D.J. (Johnson). He gave me the opportunity," Stokes said. "He gave me the opportunity against TCU, and it fell

short. This one, I knew I was going to make this one."

That made it a two-score game at 55-51, but Baylor still had chances. Manu Lecomte missed a jumper with 20 seconds left that would have given the Bears the lead, and Johnathan Motley missed two shots in the final seconds with a chance to tie the score. The first was a point-blank look that fell off the rim, and Johnson blocked the latter for Kansas State (16-7, 5-5 Big 12) as time ran out and the Bears lost their second straight game.

"[Motley], front of the rim, we're all taking that," Baylor coach Scott Drew said. "That one play didn't cost us the game. We trust him, we trust Manu. People are going to miss shots, and we have to control what we can control. That's the offensive rebounding, it's our turnovers, which again was a problem. We're going to focus on those things."

Motley led Baylor (20-3, 7-3), which lost 73-68 at No. 3 Kansas on Wednesday, with 17 points and 14 rebounds, but he was 6 for 17 from the field.

Kansas State was in control most of the game. The Wildcats shot 50 percent in the first half, and their 15-0 run over a 4-minute span pushed its lead to 37-18 with 4:05 to go before halftime.

"I thought the first 16 minutes were about as good a basketball as we've played since maybe early in the year," Kansas State coach Bruce Weber said. "When you're talking about playing one of the top two, three teams in the country on their court, and you're up 16, 18 points, you've got to be pretty impressed. But I told them, defense is the only way we're going to win. I was very disappointed in our defense the last three games."

Dean Wade added 12 points for the Wildcats and Wesley Iwundu had 10.

Cyclones end No. 3 Jayhawks' home streak

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Iowa State followed up a terrible practice with a terrific game.

One of its most satisfying in years.

Deonte Burton hit seven three-pointers and scored 29 points, Monte Morris added 25 and made two crucial free throws in overtime, and the Cyclones rallied from a big half-time deficit to beat No. 3 Kansas 92-89 on Saturday and end the Jayhawks' 51-game winning streak in Allen Fieldhouse.

"This is just a special win, special day for these guys," said Cyclones coach Steve Prohm, who lamented with a laugh that "terrible" practice Friday. "Yesterday was awful."

Things were a whole lot better Saturday.

Naz Mitrou-Long added six three-pointers and 22 points, and the Cyclones (14-8, 6-4 Big 12) made a school-record 18 three-pointers while forcing the Jayhawks (20-3, 8-2) into 21 turnovers.

They also overcame a monster game by the Jayhawks' Frank Mason III, who had a career-best 32 points while going

9-for-11 from the field, 4-for-5 from beyond the arc and 10-for-12 at the free throw line.

No. 1 Gonzaga 90, Santa Clara 55: Jordan Mathews scored 16 points, Josh Perkins had 15 and host Gonzaga extended the nation's longest winning streak to 24 games.

No. 4 Villanova 92, St. John's 79: Josh Hart had 26 points and nine rebounds, Donte DiVincenzo scored a career-high 20 points and host Villanova earned its third straight win.

No. 13 Oregon 85, No. 5 Arizona 58: Tyler Dorsey scored 23 points, including six three-pointers, and host Oregon snapped Arizona's 15-game winning streak.

No. 6 Louisville 90, Boston College 67: Deng Adel scored a career-high 19 points, and Donovan Mitchell also had 19 as visiting Louisville won for the seventh time in eight games.

Oklahoma St. 82, No. 7 West Virginia 75: Phil Forte scored all 13 of his points in the second half to lead visiting Oklahoma State.

No. 24 Florida 88, No. 8 Kentucky 66: Kasey Hill matched a career high with 21

points, Devin Robinson added 16 and host Florida coach Mike White got the breakthrough win he wanted.

Syracuse 66, No. 9 Virginia 62: Tyus Battle had a career-high 23 points and Andrew White also had 23 as host Syracuse beat a ranked team for the second time in eight days.

No. 11 UCLA 107, Washington 66: Lonzo Ball dazzled in a showdown of standout freshmen, scoring 22 points in UCLA's runaway road win.

No. 14 Cincinnati 82, Connecticut 68: Kyle Washington scored a career-high 27 points, and Gary Clark had his fifth double-double of the season as host Cincinnati got its 14th straight win.

No. 23 Purdue 73, No. 17 Maryland 72: Carsen Edwards made two free throws with 2.1 seconds left, and Purdue rallied to beat host Maryland and knock the Terrapins out of first place in the Big Ten.

No. 18 Saint Mary's 71, San Diego 27: Calvin Hermanson and Jock Landale each scored 14 points, and Saint Mary's cruised to a season sweep of host San Diego.

No. 19 South Carolina 77, Georgia 75: J Dozier scored seven of his 21 points in the final 2:21 as host South Carolina finished off its first regular-season sweep of Georgia in eight years.

No. 21 Duke 72, Pittsburgh 64: Grayson Allen scored 18 of his 21 points in the second half, and host Duke won in coach Mike Krzyzewski's return after a four-week break following back surgery.

Xavier 82, No. 22 Creighton 80: J.P. Macura scored 13 of his 15 points in the second half, and visiting Xavier capitalized on its hot shooting late in the game.

Loyola 78, Army 63: Andre Walker scored 25 points, draining five of his team's six three-pointers and host Loyola won its fourth-straight game.

Colgate 55, Navy 52: Jordan Swopshire scored 13 points and grabbed five rebounds as host Colgate snapped Navy's eight-game win streak.

Wyoming 83, Air Force 74: Justin James had 26 points, on 7-for-12 shooting, and a career-high seven assists, Alan Hennon scored 16 with four blocks and visiting Wyoming hit 13 three-pointers.

Cousins, Kings top Golden State in OT

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Stephen Curry just plain missed when it mattered most and said so afterward. Steve Kerr insists he got what he deserved being ejected for going absolutely crazy at the refs and losing his cool. The Golden State Warriors showed some flaws and played one of their worst games yet.

Draymond Green failed to knock down a three-pointer from the top of the arc at the final buzzer and DeMarcus Cousins scored six of his 32 points in overtime and overcame several key mistakes as the Sacramento Kings snapped a 13-game losing streak to the Warriors with a wild 109-106 win Saturday night.

"We got what we deserved — before I was tossed and after," Kerr said. "It was one of the worst games we played all season. We had no purpose. The ball didn't move. I didn't even recognize our team out there tonight. Maybe we were due for one."

Curry's layup attempt with 4.9 seconds left clanked off the rim and the two-time reigning NBA MVP also missed a short jumper with 6.9 seconds left, but finished with 35.

Cousins was unable to corral the rebound on the first miss and the ball went out of bounds at the baseline to the Warriors for one more try with 6.2 ticks remaining.

"I just missed it," Curry said. "Tough way to end the game with a shot at point-blank range to erase all the mishaps earlier."

Spurs 121, Nuggets 97: Gregg Popovich became the most successful coach with a single franchise in NBA history after leading host San Antonio over Denver on Saturday night.

Popovich earned his 1,128th victory to pass former Utah coach Jerry Sloan for the mark.

Wizards 105, Pelicans 91: John Wall had 24 points and 13 assists while Markieff Morris scored 18 points as host Washington held New Orleans scoreless for the final 5:52 of the fourth quarter to beat the Pelicans for its seventh straight win.

Washington has its longest winning streak since a seven-game stretch from Jan. 2005. The Wizards extended their home winning streak to 17 games, second-longest in franchise history.

Heat 125, 76ers 102: Hassan Whiteside scored 30 points and grabbed 20 rebounds while Dion Waiters needed only 10

shots to score 21 points as Miami pushed its winning streak to 10 with a win over visiting Philadelphia.

Pacers 105, Pistons 84: Paul George scored 21 points to help host Indiana extend its season-best winning streak to six games with a win over Detroit.

Cavaliers 111, Knicks 104: LeBron James had 32 points and 10 assists while Kevin Love added 23 points and 16 rebounds in his return from back spasms as visiting Cleveland beat New York.

Jazz 105, Hornets 98: Gordon Hayward scored 33 points as host Utah rallied to defeat Charlotte.

Hawks 113, Magic 86: Paul Millsap scored 21 points, all in the first three quarters, as Atlanta ever trailed in its runaway win over visiting Orlando.

Grizzlies 107, Timberwolves 99: At Minneapolis, JaMychal Green scored a career-high 29 points as short-handed Memphis grinded out a win over Minnesota.

Bucks 137, Suns 112: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 30 points to lead six Milwaukee players in double figures as the Bucks snapped a five-game losing streak by beating host Phoenix in its highest-scoring game of the season.

Leafs top Bruins, snap 3-game skid

Associated Press

BOSTON — William Nylander ended up with bragging rights over his good friend, David Pastrnak, and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Boston Bruins in a wild game.

Nylander got his first career hat trick, James van Riemsdyk scored his second of the game to break a tie with 1:36 left and the Maple Leafs snapped a three-game losing streak with a 6-5 win over the Bruins on Saturday night.

"We've got to bring Pastrnak on the road with us all the time to every rink," Toronto coach Mike Babcock said. "[Nylander] always wants to be better than 88, so we've just got to get an 88 on every team and he'll be unbelievable."

Connor Brown also scored for Toronto, which moved one point behind Boston for third place in the Atlantic Division. The Maple Leafs have played five

fewer games than the Bruins.

But it was Nylander's night.

"That's definitely a night he will remember, for sure," Maple Leafs rookie Auston Matthews said. "He was all over the puck. He obviously has an unbelievable shot, a really good release and he was able to utilize it on all three goals."

Pastrnak scored two goals for Boston, and Ryan Spooner, Patrice Bergeron and Torey Krug each added one. Bergeron and Krug had power-play goals.

The Bruins rallied from a 4-1 deficit and tied it at 5 late.

"You're always disappointed when you lose a game like that," Boston coach Claude Julien said.

Capitals 3, Canadiens 2: Nicklas Backstrom scored in the third period, helping visiting Washington beat Montreal.

Jay Beagle and Andre Burakovsky also scored for the NHL-leading Capitals. Braden

Holtby stopped 20 shots.

Penguins 4, Blues 1: Sidney Crosby had two goals and an assist while Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 22 shots as Pittsburgh beat host St. Louis.

Blackhawks 5, Stars 3: Trevor van Riemsdyk put in a rebound with 4:03 left to lift Chicago over host Dallas.

Kings 1, Flyers 0 (OT): Peter Budaj posted his NHL-leading seventh shutout while Jeff Carter scored midway through overtime as visiting Los Angeles won its fifth in a row.

Lightning 3, Ducks 2 (SO): Brian Boyle scored in the fourth round of the shootout as host Tampa Bay beat Anaheim.

Devils 5, Blue Jackets 1: Taylor Hall scored twice while Travis Zajac had a goal and an assist as New Jersey beat host Columbus.

Hurricanes 5, Islanders 4 (OT): Ron Hainsey's second goal of the game at 2:08 of over-

time lifted Carolina over host New York.

Red Wings 1, Predators 0: Petr Mrazek made 42 saves after Mike Green scored in the first period as Detroit beat host Nashville.

Pekka Rinne made 18 saves for Nashville while Mrazek recorded his first shutout of the season and 10th of his career.

Sabres 4, Senators 0: Robin Lehner made 37 saves and Kyle Okposo scored his 16th goal as host Buffalo beat Ottawa.

Avalanche 5, Jets 2: Jarome Iginla had a goal and an assist, leading the host Avalanche to a rare win.

Wild 6, Canucks 3: Mikael Granlund got his first career hat trick to help Minnesota beat host Vancouver.

Coyotes 3, Sharks 2 (SO): Mike Smith stopped Joe Pavelski in the third round of the shootout to preserve Arizona's victory over host San Jose.