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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Report: Afghan civilians killed in strike

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — U.S. airstrikes authorized after two American soldiers were wounded in southern Helmand province's hotly contested Sangin district on Thursday may have killed as many as 25 civilians, officials said.

The U.S. troops were injured while supporting Afghan forces, who have been battling the Taliban in the district for weeks. The militants see Sangin as a stepping stone to encircling and eventually capturing Helmand's capital, Lashkar Gah.

One of the American soldiers suffered a gunshot wound and was flown out of the country for treatment. The other suffered minor shrapnel wounds and returned to duty, Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland, the spokesman for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, said Saturday.

Cleveland said the airstrikes were called in after the troops were injured.

Hayatullah Mayar, a provincial council member in Helmand, said the strikes hit local homes, resulting in the deaths of between 20 and 25 civilians.

"To avoid being bombed, the Taliban are hiding in people's homes, and that's why the civilians' houses were hit," Mayar said. "According to our initial information, all members of two families were killed, including women and children, and a number of Taliban were also killed."

The Helmand governor's office said 60 Talibs, including eight commanders, were killed in the operation but denied any civilian deaths.

"All the targets were clearly Taliban gatherings; there were no civilians killed in those attacks," a statement by the office said.

Sangin has seen heavy fighting during the past two years as the Taliban attempt to take control of Helmand. Two weeks ago, militants detonated bombs under an army post, using tunnels they had dug under the city center.

The district was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting from 2009 and 2011, when U.S. Marines attempted to wrest control of the province from the Taliban.

Cleveland said U.S. Forces-Afghanistan had begun an investigation into suspected civilian casualties caused by Thursday's

airstrikes.

"As with all claims of civilian casualties, we will investigate them to determine what the facts are and whether civilians were hurt or killed as a result of our operations," he said.

"We take every precaution to prevent and mitigate civilian casualties, and we take every allegation seriously."

Airstrikes by Afghan and international forces caused 590 civilian casualties, including 250 deaths, last year — nearly double the number recorded in 2015 and the highest since 2009, the United Nations said in a report released last week.

U.S. officials confirmed American troops were operating in Helmand but, citing security concerns, would not discuss their specific roles.

The Marines said last month that some 300 troops would deploy to Helmand in the spring, when fighting with insurgents traditionally intensifies.

The White House in June expanded the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan beyond assisting and advising, allowing troops to occasionally accompany Afghan forces in their operations.

Navy researchers eye uses for hagfish-derived slime

The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot

PANAMA CITY, Fla. — It looks and feels a lot like snot, but Navy researchers believe slime produced by the primitive hagfish could help save lives.

The bottom-dwelling fish is commonly referred to as a slime eel because it looks like an eel and produces a slimy substance that quickly expands in water to enable it to escape from predators by clogging up an attacker's gills.

That unique capability is what has captured the Navy's imagination.

Its researchers believe that, by reproducing the slime, they one day could replace synthetic products derived from petroleum, such as the Kevlar that's

used in bulletproof vests. It's not just science fiction, either.

The Navy says one of its research teams in Panama City, Fla., already has re-created the material. Now, it's beginning to work on how best to turn the synthetic slime into something useful.

"From a tactical standpoint, it would be interesting to have a material that can change the properties of the water at dilute concentrations in a matter of seconds," Ryan Kincer, a materials engineer at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Panama City Division, said in a statement.

The Navy also envisions using the material in products to protect firefighters and divers, as an anti-shark spray and

as a coating for ships to protect against algae, barnacles and other aquatic life that typically attach to them. Eventually, some products derived from the slime could work their way into the private sector.

While there are several varieties of hagfish — frequently called one of the world's ugliest species — Navy researchers used the Pacific hagfish in their slime-duplication efforts. That's because the Pacific hagfish already has been genetically sequenced.

Josh Kogot, a biochemist at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, said in a telephone interview that using the Pacific hagfish allowed researchers to work quickly by specifically

looking into its DNA sequence and proteins.

The slime they're interested in is a combination of two proteins and salt water. Kogot said it took about six months to reproduce the slime into a filament.

To create the proteins, Kogot grew them in separate petri dishes filled with *E. coli* bacteria, isolated and purified them and then combined them using a centrifuge. Researchers knew they had successfully duplicated the slime by examining their version with a scanning electron microscope.

Kogot said some practical-application testing on the material has already begun, but he did not elaborate for what uses.

Bannon's worldview shaped by his service

The Washington Post

It was just after midnight on March 21, 1980, when a Navy destroyer navigated by Stephen Bannon, a junior officer, met with the supercarrier USS Nimitz in the Gulf of Oman. The convoy headed near the Iranian coast, where a secret mission would be launched a month later to rescue 52 U.S. Embassy hostages held in Tehran.

Bannon's ship, the USS Paul F. Foster, trailed the Nimitz, which carried helicopters that would try to retrieve the hostages. But before the mission launched, Bannon's ship was ordered to sail to Pearl Harbor, and he learned while at sea the rescue had failed. A U.S. helicopter crashed into another aircraft in the Iranian desert, killing eight servicemen and dooming the plan to liberate the hostages.

"I have the perfect word" for how the crew felt upon learning the mission failed, said Andrew Green, one of Bannon's shipmates. "Defeated. We felt defeated."

As Bannon has told it, the failed hostage rescue is one of the defining moments of his life, providing a searing example of failed military and presidential leadership — one that he carries with him as he serves as President Donald Trump's chief strategist. He has said he wasn't interested in politics until he concluded then-President Jimmy Carter had undercut the Navy and had blown the rescue mission.

Bannon, a former Goldman Sachs investment banker best known as former chairman of the conservative website Breitbart, has become one of the most powerful figures in Washington as chief strategist for Trump. Moreover, in an unusual move for a political operative, Bannon secured a permanent seat on the National Security Council, giving him a voice in critical decisions on defense and foreign policy.

Bannon served seven years in the Navy, with two deployments at sea and then three years as an underling in a Pentagon office dealing with budget and planning. White House press secre-

tary Sean Spicer cited Bannon's naval service as justification for giving him a seat on the National Security Council, saying during a Jan. 29 appearance on ABC's "This Week" that such service gave him "a tremendous understanding of the world and the geopolitical landscape that we have now."

A review by The Washington Post of Bannon's naval career, based on interviews with more than 25 shipmates and an examination of deck logs stored at the National Archives, found that his service was steady but unremarkable. Bannon's naval service is the least-known part of his career, and many details have not been previously reported. The records show that his deployments never involved warfare, and the closest he came to conflict may have been his brief experience at the edge of the hostage rescue fiasco.

Still, the experience shaped his thinking. He saw the military buildup under President Ronald Reagan, and the hostage-taking in Tehran continues to inform his view about that region of the world, as well as the role of U.S. military power and its commander in chief.

Bannon declined to be interviewed.

Raised a Democrat

Bannon, who grew up in a Democratic family in Richmond, Va., signed up for the Naval Reserve in 1976 after graduating from Virginia Tech, and then arrived at 24 years old at the Navy's training center in Rhode Island in 1977. The following year, he set sail aboard the Foster, on which he would travel mostly in the Pacific and Indian oceans from 1978 to 1980, stopping at ports in countries such as the Philippines and Singapore. It was an anti-submarine destroyer whose mission was to trail aircraft carriers and keep them safe.

He was an ensign and then a lieutenant junior grade, assigned to a windowless, two-bed stateroom with desks and a wardrobe area, a comfortable accommodation compared with

the warren of bunks where most sailors slept. His first job gave him responsibility for engineering, including air conditioning, hydraulics and electronics. It was "all the inelegant work of the ship," said Edward "Sonny" Masso, a retired rear admiral who served with Bannon. "Not just anybody succeeds in that job."

Bannon later became a navigator, guiding the ship — at times with a sextant when the electronic system lost contact with satellites — and writing reports.

Quiet, proficient

Bannon is remembered by many of his shipmates as a quiet, proficient and studious officer.

William Keating, who was Bannon's roommate for two years, called him "a good guy who did his job," and he had no recollection of political discussion. The portrayal of Bannon today as a far-right nationalist "is not the individual that I knew," Keating said.

Some shipmates had more critical recollections of Bannon.

"He wasn't the best engineer we had, but he wasn't bad. He was basically an above-average officer," said Robin Mickle, a retired Navy captain.

Mickle said he did not get along personally with Bannon and found him "obnoxious" at times. "His only problem was that he wasn't in it for the long run. He never really wanted to stay. He told us it would look good on his resume if he went into politics. The politics part didn't impress any of us."

Bannon told Bloomberg Business Week in 2015 that "I wasn't political until I got into the service and saw how badly Jimmy Carter f---ed things up. I became a Reagan admirer."

Greg Garrison, who served as an engineer on the Foster, said: "What I remember was he was kind of uppity; he didn't get along with enlisted men. He just kind of stuck his nose up at us."

Some of Bannon's shipmates recalled that the crew was given a ribbon for its modest role. But Bannon and many other crew-

members were livid at Carter for the botched hostage rescue.

"It shattered his confidence in President Carter," Masso said. "It made him all the more in the tank for Reagan."

In October 1980, with the Foster in port at Long Beach, Calif., Bannon went to Masso's home to watch a debate between Carter and Reagan. "He watched that debate like a prize fight," Masso said.

Three months later, after Reagan won the election, Bannon was working for the new president, serving as an assistant in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations at the Pentagon. He watched with satisfaction as Reagan increased the military budget and strengthened the Navy, with most of the focus on combating the Soviet Union. He served for three years and simultaneously studied national security and earned a master's degree at Georgetown University.

Patrick McKim, who served with Bannon at the Pentagon and has remained a close friend and sometimes writes for Breitbart, said the period is crucial to understanding Bannon's development. When Bannon arrived at the dawn of the Reagan era, McKim said, the military was still trying to emerge from the post-Vietnam era and the failed hostage rescue mission.

"People made you ashamed to be an officer," McKim said in an interview arranged by a Bannon associate. Reagan's arrival and the military buildup changed that view, and Bannon idolized the new president. Two years before Bannon left the military in 1983 and headed to Harvard Business School, he told McKim that he had a vision of his future. "He mentioned that he'd go to Harvard and come back and be secretary of defense," McKim recalled.

Bannon did not get the top job at the Pentagon. But 34 years after revealing that ambition, Bannon's Navy career can be seen in a different light: It launched him on a path to Trump's side, which may prove to be an even more powerful position.

Trump: Might give travel ban a tweak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he might give his refugee and immigration travel ban a second try, either as a revision or as a new order, as he contends with an appeals court ruling that prevents the ban from being enforced.

Trump said he expected to win the legal battle over his original directive even though options were being considered by the White House.

Advisers were debating the next step in response to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that upheld a restraining order on the travel ban. The White House directive had suspended the nation's refugee program and barred all entries from seven Muslim-majority countries.

A White House official initially suggested the administration would not ask the Supreme Court to overturn that order. But chief of staff Reince Priebus scrambled to clarify to reporters that "every single court option is on the table," including a high court appeal or "fighting out this case on the merits" in a lower court.

Trump's executive order was hastily unveiled at the end of his first week in office. While the White House boasted that Trump was fulfilling a campaign promise to toughen vetting procedures for people coming from countries with terrorism ties, the order caused chaos at airports in the U.S. and sparked protests across the country.

The president has cast the order as crucial for national security. Earlier Friday, he promised to take action "very rapidly" to protect the U.S. and its citizens in the wake of the appeals court decision, but he did not specify what steps he planned to take.

"We'll be doing things to continue to make our country safe," Trump pledged at a news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. "It will happen rapidly. We will not allow people into our country who are looking to do harm to our people."

The 9th Circuit ruling represented a significant setback for Trump in just his third week in office. The appellate decision brushed aside arguments by the Justice Department that the president has the constitutional power to restrict entry to the

United States and that the courts cannot second-guess his determination that such a step was needed to prevent terrorism.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., tweeted that Trump "ought to see the writing on the wall" and abandon the proposal. Schumer called on the president to "roll up his sleeves" and come up with "a real, bipartisan plan to keep us safe."

Congress' Republican leaders, House Speaker Paul Ryan, of Wisconsin, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, declined to comment.

U.S. District Judge James Robart in Seattle issued the temporary restraining order halting the ban after Washington state and Minnesota sued, leading to the federal government's appeal.

The Trump administration has said the seven nations — Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — have raised terrorism concerns. The states have argued that the executive order unconstitutionally blocked entry based on religion and that the travel ban harmed individuals, businesses and universities.

Immigration officials arrest hundreds in raids

The Washington Post

U.S. immigration authorities arrested hundreds of undocumented immigrants in at least a half-dozen states last week in a series of raids that marked the first large-scale enforcement of President Donald Trump's Jan. 26 order to crack down on the estimated 11 million immigrants living here illegally.

The raids, which officials said targeted known criminals, also netted some immigrants who did not have criminal records, an apparent departure from similar enforcement waves during former President Barack Obama's administration that aimed to just corral and deport those who had committed crimes.

Trump has pledged to deport up to 3 million undocumented immigrants with criminal records. Last month, he also made a change to the Obama administration's policy of prioritizing deportation for convicted criminals, substantially broadening the scope of who the Depart-

ment of Homeland Security can target to include those with only minor offenses or those with no convictions at all.

Immigration officials confirmed that agents last week raided homes and workplaces in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, the Los Angeles area, North Carolina and South Carolina, netting hundreds of people. But Gillian Christensen, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said they were part of "routine" immigration enforcement actions.

ICE dislikes the term "raids," and prefers to say authorities are conducting "targeted enforcement actions."

Immigration activists said the crackdown went beyond the six states DHS identified, and said they had documented ICE raids of unusual intensity during the past two days in Florida, Kansas, Texas and Northern Virginia.

Democrats seek probe of national security adviser

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional Democrats on Friday called for an investigation into whether White House national security adviser Michael Flynn discussed U.S. sanctions in phone calls with Russia's ambassador while President Barack Obama was still in office, conversations that may have broken U.S. law aimed at barring private citizens from conducting diplomacy.

The White House said President Donald Trump had "full confidence" in Flynn, a show of support coming as the administration scrambled to manage the fallout from reports that Flynn addressed U.S. sanctions against Russia in a phone call late last year. The report contradicted both Flynn's previous denials, as well as those made by Vice President Mike Pence in a televised interview.

Democratic Sens. Ed Markey, of Massachusetts, and Chris Murphy, of Connecticut, called for an investigation of Flynn.

Other Democrats demanded that Trump fire the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general.

A Trump administration official told The Associated Press Friday that Flynn "can't be certain" sanctions did not come up on the call. The official said Flynn has "no recollection" of discussing the sanctions, but left open the possibility that the issue did come up when he spoke with Ambassador Sergey Kislyak during the transition.

The Kremlin denied Friday that Flynn and Kislyak discussed the sanctions before Trump took office.

The Washington Post, citing several current and former U.S. officials, reported late Thursday that Flynn made explicit references to election-related sanctions imposed by the Obama administration in his conversations with Kislyak.

The report immediately put pressure on the vice president, who had defended Flynn after news of the phone call first broke earlier this year.

Administration might change policy on transgender students

The Washington Post

The Trump administration signaled Friday that it was changing course on the previous administration's efforts to expand transgender rights, submitting a legal brief withdrawing the government's objections to an injunction that had blocked guidance requiring that transgender students be allowed to use restrooms that match their gender identity.

The move by the Justice Department does not immediately change the situation for the nation's public schools, as a federal judge had already put a temporary hold on the guidance as a lawsuit by a dozen states moved through the courts.

But it suggests the Trump administration will take a different approach on the issue of transgender rights, which many conservatives thought went too far under President Barack Obama.

And how the administration decides to proceed on the

particular issue of transgender students and bathroom use would affect several cases in which students are challenging their school districts' policies, including one involving Virginia student Gavin Grimm, which is scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court this spring.

The brief, filed in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, came as part of a long-running suit by 12 states opposed to Education Department guidance directing the nation's public schools to allow transgender students to use the bathroom of their choice. The Obama administration took the position that barring the students from bathrooms that matched their gender identity was a violation of Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in public schools.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor had sided with the states and issued a temporary injunction blocking the guidance last year. The Obama ad-

ministration appealed asked that the injunction apply only to those 12 states. Oral arguments in the case were scheduled for Tuesday in Austin.

But the Justice Department and the suing states said in a joint brief Friday that they were withdrawing that request. The brief asked the court to cancel arguments, explaining that "the parties are currently considering how best to proceed in this appeal."

The request was immediately granted, according to Equality Case Files, a nonprofit that provides legal updates on cases related to gay and transgender rights. The decision drew immediate criticism from gay and transgender rights groups.

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement. "It is heartbreaking and wrong that the agency tasked with enforcing civil rights laws would instead work to subvert them for political interests."

At least 6 killed in Philippine earthquake

Associated Press

SURIGAO, Philippines — A powerful nighttime earthquake in the southern Philippines killed at least six people and injured more than 120, with officials combing through cracked buildings and nearby towns Saturday to check on the damage and other possible casualties.

The magnitude-6.7 quake roused residents from their sleep late Friday in Surigao del Norte province, forcing hundreds of people to flee their homes. The quake was centered about 8 miles northwest of the provincial capital of Surigao at a relatively shallow depth of 6 miles, said Renato Solidum of the Philippine Institute of Seismology and Volcanology.

Nearly 100 aftershocks have been felt, officials said. Evacuation centers accommodated wary residents overnight, but many returned home Saturday, Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo said, adding that officials were continuing to assess the damage in Surigao and outlying towns.

Provincial information officer Mary Jul Escalante was being interviewed by ABS-CBN TV network when another aftershock struck. "Oh sir, there's an aftershock," she said. "I'm shaking, we have a phobia now."

At least six people were killed, mostly after being struck by falling debris and concrete walls, provincial disaster-response official Gilbert Gonzales said. At least 126 others were injured in Surigao, where the quake knocked out power and forced the closure of the domestic airport due to deep cracks in its runway, officials said.

Several buildings, including a state college, a hotel and a shopping mall, were damaged in the city, located about 430 miles southeast of Manila.

Man who beheaded bus passenger gains freedom

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — A Canadian man who was found not criminally responsible for beheading and cannibalizing a fellow passenger on a Greyhound bus has been granted his freedom.

Manitoba's Criminal Code Review Board announced Friday it gave Will Baker, formerly known as Vince Li, an absolute discharge, meaning he is no longer subject to monitoring.

Baker, a diagnosed schizophrenic, killed Tim McLean, a young carnival worker who was a complete stranger to Baker, in 2008. A year later, he was found not criminally responsible due to mental illness.

McLean's mother, Carol de Delley, has been outspoken against granting Baker freedom, saying there would be no

way to ensure he continued to take his medication.

Baker was initially kept in a secure wing of a psychiatric hospital but was given more freedom every year.

He has been living on his own in a Winnipeg apartment since November, but was still subject to monitoring to ensure he took his medication.

Baker's doctor, Jeffrey Waldman, told the board earlier this week that he is confident Baker will remain on his medication and will continue to work with his treatment team if released. Waldman testified that Baker knows it's the medication that keeps his illness at bay.

In a written decision, the review board said it "is of the opinion that the weight of evidence does not substantiate that Mr. Baker poses a signifi-

cant threat to the safety of the public."

Baker sat next to the 22-year-old McLean on the bus after the man smiled at him and asked how he was doing.

Baker said he heard the voice of God telling him to kill the man or "die immediately."

He repeatedly stabbed McLean while he fought for his life. As passengers fled the bus, Baker continued stabbing and mutilating the body before he was arrested. He severed McLean's head, displaying it to some of the passengers outside the bus, witnesses said.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1999 that a review board must order an absolute discharge if a person doesn't pose a significant threat to public safety.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Gov. helps motorist stranded in snow

NY HAWTHORNE — A motorist stranded on a New York highway during Thursday's snowstorm received assistance from a passer-by who just happens to be governor.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office said the Democrat's motorcade was traveling on the Sprain Brook Parkway in Westchester County around 3 p.m. Thursday when it came upon a driver stuck on a roadside snowbank in Hawthorne. Cuomo checked on the driver and then helped attach tow cables from his security detail's SUV onto the man's car.

The governor and his security team successfully pulled the car free.

Cuomo's chief of staff, Melissa DeRosa, tweeted out pictures of the snow rescue.

Lawsuit seeks rhino horns from safari trip

TX HOUSTON — A Houston businessman is suing a South African company for failing to deliver two horns from the white rhinoceros he shot during a safari trip.

In his lawsuit, Kevin Poynter says he has been waiting more than a year since his safari trip in August and September of 2015 for the horns to be sent to him. The suit was filed in Houston.

Poynter's lawyer, Joel Mohrman, told the Houston Chronicle the hunt was "completely legal" and the company, Limcroma Safaris, failed to fulfill its contractual duties to send the horns.

Many airlines won't transport such hunting trophies, including from the so-called big five African animals: lions, el-

ephants, rhinos, leopards and Cape buffalo.

A spokesman for Limcroma Safaris didn't immediately return a phone call Thursday seeking comment.

Bill would create sales tax holiday for guns

TN NASHVILLE — A bill proposed in Tennessee's legislature would create a sales tax holiday for guns and ammunition.

The bill, filed Wednesday by Republican Rep. Dennis Powers, calls for a "Second Amendment sales tax holiday" on the first weekend of September each year.

Knoxville station WBIR reported that Tennessee already has a sales tax holiday at the end of the summer that's meant for back-to-school shopping. Last year, Louisiana and Mississippi each hosted sales tax holiday weekends on guns.

Steel Native American statue finds new home

OR WARRENTON — A steel statue removed from a coastal Oregon town after the state banned Native American mascots has found a new home.

The Daily Astorian reported Wednesday that the statue, called "The Warrior," has been moved from Warrenton High School to a Warrenton street corner. The statue is an abstract human form comprised of hundreds of small warrior cut outs.

Warrenton-Hammond Superintendent Mark Jeffery said the school board left the statue to him to dispose of after the district divested itself of most Native American imagery.

The statue was made in 1969 by students and is often featured in senior pranks and other

school events. Jeffery said he found one of the students who helped make the statue to help find its new home.

Challenges to teen sentencing rejected

MI ANN ARBOR — A judge has rejected constitutional challenges to how Michigan sentences teens convicted of first-degree murder, ending seven years of litigation.

Since 2010, federal Judge John Corbett O'Meara has made a series of decisions, some favoring so-called juvenile lifers who were given no-parole sentences when they were under 18. But some rulings were stopped by an appeals court.

O'Meara closed the case Tuesday, noting that Michigan law has greatly changed because of decisions from the U.S. Supreme Court. No-parole sentences for teenagers still are possible but they're not mandatory.

Attorney Deborah LaBelle had urged O'Meara to strike the law as unconstitutional. She said no-parole sentences are supposed to be rare, but prosecutors still are trying to keep more than 200 inmates behind bars for life at new hearings.

Woman saved after she's swept off reef

CA SAN DIEGO — A bystander and lifeguards were able to save a woman who was swept off a reef near San Diego.

The San Diego Union-Tribune reported that a bystander called 911 Wednesday to report hearing the screams of a woman struggling in the water off Coast Walk Trail near La

Jolla Cove. Another witness jumped into the water to help keep the woman afloat until lifeguards arrived.

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department spokeswoman Monica Munoz said the 30-year-old woman did not know how to swim and was having trouble breathing once rescuers got to her in the water.

The woman was brought to shore and lifeguards administered CPR. She recovered her breath and was later hospitalized.

A lifeguard who gave the woman CPR suffered a broken finger.

Probation for ex-DEA agent in strip club lie

NY NEW YORK — A former high-ranking Drug Enforcement Administration agent was sentenced to one year of probation for concealing his double-life as a manager of a New Jersey strip club where prosecutors say there was evidence of prostitution.

David Polos wept and asked for forgiveness from his family and former DEA colleagues when he appeared in federal court in Manhattan on Wednesday. Among his misdeeds was having an affair with a Brazilian dancer who was in the country illegally.

Polos, 52, had faced up to six months in jail for his conviction at a trial last year on charges he lied on national security forms that asked about outside employment that might put him "in proximity to crime" and at risk for getting blackmailed. On Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Paul G. Gardephe called Polos' behavior "truly shocking" for a decorated agent who rose to sensitive supervisory positions at the DEA during at 23-year career there.

From wire reports

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Hockey has Plan B ready for Olympics

Associated Press

If the NHL doesn't send its players to the 2018 Winter Olympics, the hockey tournament in Pyeongchang will look familiar.

It will look a lot like the Olympics in Lillehammer in 1994, Albertville in 1992 and Calgary in 1988.

Maybe even a little like 1980 in Lake Placid, site of the "Miracle On Ice."

With a year before the opening ceremony, the league, players union, International Ice Hockey Federation and International Olympic Committee still don't have an agreement to send NHL players to their sixth consecutive Olympics. There is still time — an agreement last time around came in July before the 2014 Games in Sochi — but everyone is forming a Plan B just in case.

Russia might have Alex Ovechkin if he makes good on his intention to go no matter what. But the United States, Canada and other countries are preparing for life without the best players in the world.

If the likes of Patrick Kane,

Jonathan Quick, Jack Eichel and Ryan Suter aren't available, USA Hockey will look mostly to the college ranks. If Hockey Canada can't take Sidney Crosby, Jonathan Toews, Drew Doughty or Carey Price, it will try to defend the gold medal with a mix of European-based professionals, North American minor leaguers and players from the Canadian junior leagues and NCAA.

"It's a big world, and we've got to make sure that we're ready to go," Hockey Canada president Tom Renney said. "Should the NHL choose not to go, we'll make sure we're ready, willing and able a year from now."

The U.S. has a fresh set of heroes after shootout star Troy Terry, defenseman Charlie McAvoy and goaltender Tyler Parsons won world junior gold last month. Mix them with top college players like Notre Dame's Anders Bjork and Wisconsin's Trent Frederic and ex-NHLers Keith Aucoin and Nathan Gerbe who are playing in Europe, and the Americans will have plenty of youth and

experience.

Dave Starman, a former coach in the minors and now an analyst for CBS Sports, said USA Hockey's priority should be scoring, scoring and more scoring.

"You can't win unless you can score," Starman said. "It's got to have a ton of speed, it's got to have a really high skill level, it's got to have defense-men who can get in the play. You need a little bit of dog on bone in your lineup, but I don't think you can sacrifice skill guys for toughness."

No problem there for Canada, which has plenty of big, tough skill players and hasn't waited for the IIHF to set any 2018 parameters as it prepares its contingency plan. Canada's team for the December Spengler Cup in Switzerland could serve as a blueprint: minor leaguers Cory Conacher and Zach Fucale and European recent NHL players Daniel Paille and Nick Spaling.

While IIHF President Rene Fasel would like a final decision sooner than later to plan for South Korea, Renney said Hockey Canada could put a

team together quickly. Like USA Hockey, Canada can pull from its national junior team but has more veteran talent in Europe and the American Hockey League to choose from. Former NHL goaltender Ben Scrivens in Russia's Kontinental Hockey league is an option, for example, as is journeyman Michael Leighton, who is in the Carolina Hurricanes' system.

Though Leighton firmly believes NHL players will go, the 35-year-old said he would "train as hard as I possibly can to get that job" if they don't. AHL president and CEO David Andrews expects his league to be open to allowing players to go to the Olympics as long as NHL teams give individual minor leaguers permission.

"I think it'll be an interesting question, though, for a lot of general managers because the player that is going to be asked for is going to be probably their No. 1 player outside the NHL club," Andrews said. "They kind of face that question of, 'Do we want our No. 1 call-up to be in South Korea for two or three weeks?'"

Blackhawks beat Jets for first time this season

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Patrick Kane and the Chicago Blackhawks finally beat the Winnipeg Jets.

Kane and linemates Artem Anisimov and Artemi Panarin each scored and combined for seven points to help the Blackhawks beat the Jets 5-2 on Friday night. Winnipeg won the first four games between the teams this season, outscoring Chicago 14-5.

"I think we had a great first. That's the way we want to play right there," Kane said. "Every line was going, we had a couple good power plays. We didn't score on them, but had some chances, got the lead and great period overall. That's the way we want to play."

Duncan Keith's late goal was

the winner, and Marian Hossa also scored.

The goaltenders were busy in the fifth and final meeting of the season between the Central Division rivals.

Chicago's Corey Crawford made 28 saves in his 22nd victory of the season.

"I think, definitely, we played really good in our end," Hossa said. "Obviously, Corey stood on his head tonight, but I think overall we're improving defensively which is a good sign."

Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck stopped 31 of the 34 shots he faced.

"(Hellebuyck was) real good," Jets coach Paul Maurice said. "Busy overall, for sure early, which is tough. You'd love to see him ease into a game. It was lots of action to the net

early in the game."

Bryan Little and Adam Lowry scored for Winnipeg.

"I thought we had a bit of a slow start. I thought they came out hungry and controlled a lot of the play early in the game and got that goal right away," Little said. "I thought we did a good job in the second and the third battling back and getting our chances and making it a close game."

Kane opened the scoring at 15:37 of the opening period with his 18th of the season, firing a one-timer off Panarin's long cross-ice feed to beat Hellebuyck low to the glove side.

The goal was Kane's 269th, moving him past Tony Amonte for the most goals by an American in Blackhawks history, and into sixth on the overall fran-

chise list.

Little found the equalizer for Winnipeg at 1:43 of the second, quickly grabbing a net-side rebound off a Tobias Enstrom point shot.

Wild 2, Lightning 1 (SO): Mikko Koivu scored the lone goal in the shootout as host Minnesota beat Tampa Bay to avoid losing consecutive home games for the first time this season.

Koivu used a masterful left-right move to flip the puck past Andrei Vasilevskiy, who denied Jason Pominville and Zach Parise before and after Koivu. Brayden Point, who scored for Tampa Bay in regulation, Jonathan Drouin and Nikita Kucherov all went wide right with their shootout attempts against Devan Dubnyk.

Speith's 65 good enough for Pro-Am lead

Associated Press

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Jordan Spieth knew the pin position on the ninth hole at Spyglass Hill as much by memory as by sight, which was a good thing considering the fog creeping across the Monterey Peninsula on Friday.

The crowd behind the green couldn't see Spieth, only a golf ball that landed behind the flag and spun back 3 feet below the cup. Spieth tapped that in for his eighth birdie of the round and a 7-under 65 that put him atop the leaderboard in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Spieth was at 10-under 133.

Derek Fathauer was 8 under for his round at Pebble Beach and tied with Spieth at 10 under. Fathauer had to return Saturday morning to finish his round on the ninth hole. The bigger threat might be Jason Day, the world's No. 1 player, who was 7 under through 12

holes at Spyglass when play was stopped. Day was at 9 under.

Patrick Reed, who withdrew two weeks ago from the European Tour event in Australia next week because of a respiratory infection, was at 7 under and had one hole to play.

Spieth mainly was thrilled that he finished just before the horn sounded to suspend play again, this time for fog.

It's hard to know where anyone stands until three rounds are completed, let alone when only 33 out of 154 players were done with the second round. Spieth only knew that his swing was dialed in and his putter — the most dangerous club in his bag — was coming around.

"I didn't feel any nerves out there, even though I knew I was toward the lead, just because so much could happen with three courses," he said. "The first two rounds, it's been easy. Tomorrow might feel a little dif-

ferent. But in my opinion, I'm at 10 under now. If I can try and just make two (birdies) a side at Pebble Beach each time, and make up for the bogeys with maybe another birdie, it may be good enough."

The sun, rarely seen this week, is supposed to be make an appearance this weekend. Spieth and Day will play Pebble the final two rounds, and it typically is the easiest when the weather is benign.

What helped Spieth was going off in the third group at Spyglass and having what he considers the best greens on the rotation.

He picked up birdies on both par 3s on the back nine, had a two-putt birdie on a par 5 and made the turn in 4 under to take the lead. Then, he started to get hot with the putter. Spieth rolled in a 12-footer on No. 2, a 25-footer on No. 4 and he saved par with a 15-footer after find-

ing a bunker on the par-3 fifth.

The most flush shot he hit all day might have been with the putter.

Spieth barely reached the front of the green on No. 6, leaving him a 60-foot putt up the hill on a soft, spongy green, Dustin Johnson was right next to him after his approach pitched 3 feet from the hole and rolled all the way back.

Johnson hit his putt so hard that he said, "I thought it was going into the crowd."

"Second row," Spieth said in agreement.

It was still 5 feet short.

Spieth followed with what he thinks might be the hardest he ever swung a putter, and it stopped a few inches from going in. He wasn't so fortunate from the front of the eighth green, a similar putt up a ridge that he left 15 feet short. It led to his only bogey.

Stewart back on track, but this one isn't asphalt

Associated Press

OCALA, Fla. — Tony Stewart has returned to sprint car racing, though his first race back provided him more frustration than frivolity.

Stewart finished a disappointing 17th in the 26-car main event late Thursday at Bubba Raceway Park, and he ended the night arguing with a fellow driver and complaining to officials.

Stewart was driving a sprint car for the first time since he accidentally struck and killed Kevin Ward Jr. during a race in upstate New York in 2014. Stewart is still facing a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the fellow driver's family.

The three-time NASCAR champion, who retired after last season, declined comment after the dirt-track event out of respect for the Ward family and later told The Associated Press he didn't want his racing to even appear like he's "rub-

bing it in the Wards' faces."

He plans to keep a low profile during the event, racing again Friday and Saturday at the three-eighths mile track.

Sprint car racing is Stewart's passion and how he plans to spend much of his retirement. He owns the Arctic Cat All Star Circuit of Champions series, which opened its season Thursday night in Ocala. Given his status and star power, Stewart had the best spot in the pits, just a few steps from the track.

There were barricades alongside his stall, a little something extra to keep the near-capacity crowd a few feet away. Stewart declined photo and autograph requests between breaks, telling those who asked that he would do it all after the finale.

He eventually did, well after he climbed out of his car, walked to the scoring trailer and complained that fellow driver Chad Komenah blocked him at the start of the 30-lap

race. Stewart then hopped on a four-wheeler and drove through the pits to confront Komenah. Stewart shook his head and waved his hand at Komenah during their exchange.

It capped what surely had been a long day for Stewart, who arrived in Ocala early in the week and then flew up and back to Detroit early Thursday to join Stewart-Haas Racing drivers Clint Bowyer, Kurt Busch, Kevin Harvick and Danica Patrick for a Ford event that included a tour of the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation.

Stewart's crew in Ocala included his dad, his girlfriend and his dog. They had little to celebrate outside Stewart's return to winged sprint cars.

Although he started his heat race from the pole, he faded to sixth, failed to qualify for the A Main and then slammed his helmet on a table in his hauler. He eventually managed to race

his way into the main event by finishing second in the B Main. He was a non-factor in the finale, won by Tony Stewart Racing teammate Donny Schatz.

For the last two years, it was unclear when, or if, Stewart would get back in a sprint car after Ward's death. Stewart, who broke his right leg in a 2013 sprint car crash, was emotionally devastated and the incident was made worse by the accusation that he had intentionally targeted Ward, who had climbed out onto the track to confront the NASCAR veteran. A grand jury declined to indict Stewart.

Ward's mother, Pamela, told the AP on Thursday that the family could not comment on Stewart until the civil suit they've filed is over. She said a date for the trial, which will be held this year in Utica, N.Y., has not yet been set. The Wards are seeking unspecified damages.

Jokic, Nuggets knock off booed Knicks

Associated Press

NEW YORK—If Charles Oakley couldn't stop Nikola Jokic, at least he would've tried to hit him.

Oakley is banned from Madison Square Garden, and the Knicks played Friday like his old-school style of defense wasn't allowed, either.

Jokic scored a career-high 40 points to lead the Denver Nuggets to a 131-123 win over New York.

Fans chanted Oakley's name early in the game and booed the Knicks by the end after seeing none of the defensive intensity that was a hallmark of his beloved teams of the 1990s.

"Tonight it was bad," Carmelo Anthony said. "As players we've got to take that upon ourselves and hold ourselves accountable for that and we have to do better. We have to do better on the defensive end."

Jokic scored 18 points in the Nuggets' 36-point third quarter after they trailed at halftime by two. He was 7-for-9 in the period.

"In that third quarter, they just, 'Throw

him the ball inside.' I'm like, 'Oh, they trust me,' Jokic said. "I feel good. When you know that your teammates trust you, it's real easy to play."

Former Knicks forward Wilson Chandler added 19 points and Jameer Nelson had 16 points and 12 assists for the Nuggets, who shot 56.8 percent from the field.

Warriors 122, Grizzlies 107: Draymond Green had an uncommon triple-double while scoring only four points as visiting Golden State beat Memphis for the first time in three tries this season.

Green finished with 12 rebounds, 10 assists and a career-best 10 steals.

Heat 108, Nets 99: James Johnson scored a season-high 26 points as Miami rallied to win its 13th straight game, beating beleaguered host Brooklyn.

Miami's winning streak, the third-best in team history, is the longest current run in the NBA. It is the top streak in league annals by a team under .500 throughout, and the best that began with a club at least 19 games below .500. Miami was 11-30 when the run started with a victory over Houston

on Jan. 17.

Pelicans 122, Timberwolves 106: Anthony Davis had 42 points and 13 rebounds to win a duel with Karl-Anthony Towns and lift visiting New Orleans past Minnesota.

Wizards 112, Pacers 107: In a matchup between two of the NBA's top teams since New Year's Day, John Wall heard "MVP!" chants and had 26 points and 14 assists to lead host Washington past Indiana.

Spurs 103, Pistons 92: Kawhi Leonard scored 32 points and visiting San Antonio never trailed against Detroit.

Lakers 122, Bucks 114: Nick Young scored 26 points to help Los Angeles overcome a career-high 41 points by Giannis Antetokounmpo and withstand a furious late rally to beat host Milwaukee.

Kings 108, Hawks 107: Darren Collison drove past Dennis Schroder and made a layup with 3.5 seconds remaining to cap a big second-half comeback that lifted Sacramento over visiting Atlanta.

Suns 115, Bulls 97: Devin Booker scored 27 points and Eric Bledsoe added 23 as host Phoenix rolled past Chicago.

Maturity helping No. 1 Gonzaga cope

Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — If there is a single word that sums up No. 1 Gonzaga this season, it is maturity.

Coach Mark Few and his players talk often about the poise of this year's Zags, who have blown out many of their opponents and are on pace to finish the regular season undefeated.

Gonzaga (24-0, 12-0 West Coast Conference) starts three transfer students from power conference programs, along with veterans Przemek Karnowski and Josh Perkins.

All those players have plenty of college basketball experience, and it shows.

"There are a lot of leaders in this group," Perkins said. "We get everybody's best shot. This group is ready for it."

Guard Nigel Williams-Goss, who leads a balanced Gonzaga attack that averages 85 points per game, said the Zags are mature enough to avoid being swallowed up by hype.

"We don't feel any pressure," Williams-Goss said. "Our motto is: 'Get better every week.'"

The Zags have a big game this weekend at No. 20 Saint Mary's, which is shaping up as the biggest remaining obstacle to an undefeated regular season. The last team to do that was Kentucky in 2015.

Gonzaga is also just one win away from its 10th consecutive 25-win season, a milestone they could reach at Loyola Marymount on Thursday.

The players realized early that this team was special, Williams-Goss said.

"We had this belief in the preseason," Williams-Goss said. "If we took the defensive end seriously, we knew the sky was the limit for us."

Opponents have averaged only 61.7 points per game against Gonzaga this season, and the Zags have barely trailed in games. In their 24 games, the Bulldogs have trailed for just 63½ of the 960 total minutes played, roughly 6.6 percent of

the time.

Their narrowest victory was a 73-71 escape against Iowa State, which was ranked No. 21 at the time. They also had single-digit wins over No. 17 Florida and No. 9 Arizona.

The only other Gonzaga team to reach No. 1 was the 2013 squad led by Kelly Olynyk and Elias Harris. They were top-ranked for the final three weeks of the season. But that team lost during the first weekend of the NCAA Tournament, upset by a Wichita State team that would go undefeated in the next regular season.

This team wants to go farther, because the only poll that really matters is the one that comes out at the end of the season, Williams-Goss said.

This year's Zags are deeper than the 2013 squad. Six players average more than nine points per game. When Williams-Goss sat out the recent Santa Clara game with a sprained ankle, veteran guard Silas Melson started and the Zags roared

to a 35-point victory.

"It was good for our depth to stand up and show," Few said.

The Zags are the only remaining undefeated team in Division I, and their 24-game winning streak is tied for the longest in program history.

"Being undefeated is obviously a huge accomplishment," said Williams-Goss, a transfer from Washington who has yet to lose in a Gonzaga uniform. "But we've still got a lot of areas to grow in."

Only two Zags remain from the 2013 team. They are center Przemek Karnowski and little-used reserve Rem Bakamus, both seniors. Karnowski this season became the program's all-time leader in victories, going 124-13 (.905) as a Bulldog.

Few had praise for his team.

"I am happy with how they have approached this year," Few said. "They've stayed hungry and they've stayed humble."