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Mattis gives NATO allies an ultimatum

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

BRUSSELS — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis delivered a blunt warning to NATO allies Wednesday that the U.S. could “moderate its commitment” to the alliance should European members not establish a plan by year’s end to carry a larger share of the security burden.

“America will meet its responsibilities, but if your nations do not want to see America moderate its commitment to this alliance, each of your capitals needs to show support for our common defense,” Mattis said in a statement delivered to members of the 28-nation military pact.

The warning came on Mattis’ first visit as Pentagon chief to NATO’s headquarters in Brussels, where, in response, allies emphasized the need to accelerate efforts to increase their own defense expenditures.

In 2017, NATO must adopt a

plan that sets milestone dates toward spending levels member states have already agreed to: dedicating 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense, Mattis said. Only five NATO states — the U.S., Estonia, Poland, Greece and the United Kingdom — currently meet that benchmark.

“No longer can the American taxpayer carry a disproportionate share of the defense of Western values. Americans cannot care more for your children’s future security than you do,” Mattis said. “Disregard for military readiness demonstrates a lack of respect for ourselves, for the alliance, and for the freedoms we inherited which are now clearly threatened.”

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg confirmed that defense ministers discussed ways to ensure that member states meet spending targets, including the possibility of establishing roadmaps to chart individual nations’ progress.

The allies have been under heavy pressure from the new U.S. administration to boost defense spending. The failure of many European allies to spend 2 percent of their gross domestic product on military matters — a NATO benchmark — has emerged as a point of contention for President Donald Trump.

Mattis, in a brief statement Wednesday, called NATO a “fundamental bedrock for the United States,” offering comments aimed at reassuring some allies who have grown concerned about Trump’s stated desire for closer cooperation with Russia.

During the past two years, the U.S. has intensified operations in Europe, rotating more soldiers into the Baltics as part of an effort to deter Russian aggression and sending hundreds of tanks and other fighting vehicles back to Europe. The effort has cost the U.S. several billion dollars. In light of Mattis’ comments in Brussels, the future

of those efforts could now be viewed contingent upon allies contributing more to the collective security burden.

Stoltenberg highlighted progress as allies attempt to reverse many years of defense spending decline. In 2016, NATO members increased their overall defense spending by about 3.8 percent, or \$10 billion.

Still, allies must do more, Mattis said.

“It is a fair demand that all who benefit from the best defense in the world carry their proportionate share of the necessary cost to defend freedom,” Mattis said. “We should never forget it is ultimately freedom that we defend here at NATO.”

Meanwhile, NATO will set up a new anti-terrorism hub in Naples, Italy, which will serve as a focal point for monitoring threats growing along the alliance’s southern doorstep, NATO’s top official said.

Pentagon: Russian aircraft buzzed American destroyer

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Several Russian aircraft flew close to a U.S. destroyer conducting routine operations in the Black Sea in three separate incidents last week that were deemed “unsafe and unprofessional” by the ship’s commander, an American military spokesman said Tuesday.

Russian fighter and surveillance aircraft buzzed the USS Porter, a guided-missile destroyer, in international waters three times on Friday, said Air Force Lt. Col. David Faggard, a spokesman for U.S. European Command.

The Porter attempted to make contact with the Russian aircraft each time but received no response, he said, adding the planes were flying without transponders turned on.

“Incidents like this concern us because they could possibly result in accident or miscalculation,” Faggard wrote in an email.

In the first incident, a Russian Ilyushin Il-38 surveillance aircraft flew near the Porter at an “unusually low altitude,” he said. Later, two Sukhoi Su-24 Fencer fighters flew near the ship at “a low altitude and a high speed.” A third Su-24 performed a similar “unsafe and unprofessional” maneuver later in the day, Faggard said.

The last Su-24 flew closest to the ship, when the plane came within 200 yards of the Porter at an altitude of about 300 feet and a speed of 500 knots, according to a U.S. defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details of the encounter.

The Porter was in the Black Sea where it had earlier in the week participated in Exercise Sea Shield 2017, an annual Ro-

manian-led training operation designed to improve coordination and proficiency of NATO naval units.

The incidents were the first unsafe and unprofessional interactions between the U.S. Navy and Russia’s militaries in the Black Sea in several months. In September, a Russian jet flew within 10 feet of a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft over the Black Sea.

Last April, two Russian Su-24s and a KA-27 Helix helicopter performed low passes over the USS Donald Cook, a destroyer, in the Baltic Sea. Pentagon officials said at the time of that incident that the Russian jets flew within 30 feet of the warship and conducted simulated attacks.

The incidents last week were not nearly as hostile as the April incident, the defense official said.

McCain: Russia testing Trump with actions

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Russia is testing President Donald Trump with its treaty-busting deployment of cruise missiles and other recent military provocations, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said Wednesday.

The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and other lawmakers in both parties decried the missile deployment as the newest proof Russia is violating a Cold War-era treaty brokered by then-President Ronald Reagan.

Meanwhile, the Defense Department also confirmed Russian fighters and surveillance aircraft flew close to a U.S. destroyer in the Black Sea — a first under the Trump administration — and a Russian surveillance ship has parked in international waters off the East Coast of the United States.

“They are testing this president, just as I predicted,” McCain said Wednesday.

The incidents come as the Trump administration is reeling from the resignation Monday of national security adviser Mike Flynn over his communications with Russian officials and growing questions over its relationship with Russia.

Trump has pressed for a closer relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin. But that position, which breaks with long-held Republican views, is under scrutiny after Flynn’s departure and reports his election campaign was in close communication with the Russians last year.

US downplays presence of Russian ship near Conn.

By TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is downplaying the presence of a Russian intelligence ship off the coast of Connecticut, despite two other recent incidents with Russia that have raised security concerns.

The Vishnya-class Viktor Leonov is an intelligence collection ship that can carry surface-to-air missiles but it was not clear whether the ship is armed, a U.S. defense official said on the condition of anonymity.

The ship had been making

its way up the East Coast, the official said, and was spotted off the coast of Delaware on Tuesday. By Wednesday, it was 30 miles south of a U.S. submarine base in Connecticut.

The Pentagon downplayed its presence, saying that the spy ship remains in international waters.

“We are aware of the vessel’s presence. It has not entered U.S. territorial waters,” said spokeswoman Lt. Col. Valerie Henderson. “We respect freedom of navigation exercised by all nations beyond the territorial sea of a

coastal state consistent with international law.”

The ship sighting is one of three recent security incidents that could escalate tensions between the U.S. and Russia. On Tuesday, The New York Times reported that Russia deployed a new cruise missile that is prohibited under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty signed in 1987. Also Tuesday, U.S. European Command confirmed that Russian jets had conducted unsafe fly-bys of a U.S. Navy destroyer, the USS Porter, in the Black Sea on Friday.

McCain said the fielding of cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads is a “significant threat” to the U.S. forces stationed in Europe and ally members of NATO. He called for an immediate response to shore up protections there.

The administration of President Barack Obama charged Russia with violating the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty by developing the weapons. The deployment is the latest dispute with Moscow over the arms.

Republicans laid blame on Obama for not responding adequately to the growing missile threat. The Russian military has also harassed U.S. warships in the past but the inci-

dent involving the USS Porter last week is the first time a ship was buzzed during the Trump administration.

The Russian surveillance ship was loitering about 30 miles from Groton, Conn., where the Navy has a submarine base, according to Fox News.

Now, it is Trump’s turn to determine how to respond.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called the deployment of the prohibited cruise missiles disturbing and said it is a signal to the president for stronger action.

“Our military has warned publicly that such a violation poses a military risk to the United States, our allies, and our

deployed forces,” Thornberry said in a released statement. “There are clearly lessons here for the Trump administration about the price of not confronting aggression which puts international security at risk.”

The Cold War treaty and its prohibition on the short-range, ground-launched nuclear missiles is “the backbone” of the Reagan strategy to deal with the Russians, said Rhode Island Sen. Jack Reed, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

“This is not a new threat, but it is a serious concern that should serve as a wakeup call to the Trump administration’s dealings with Russia as of late,” Reed said in a released statement.

US troops prepare to back Iraqi push into west Mosul

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

BARTELLA, Iraq — Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division are honing Iraqi security forces’ urban combat skills ahead of a planned offensive to eject the Islamic State group from the western half of

Iraq’s second-largest city.

“They (the Iraqi troops) already know how to clear rooms,” said Sgt. 1st Class Bradley Thomas, 36, one of 1,000 soldiers from the legendary airborne unit that is advising and helping government forces battling the militants in

Mosul.

The paratroopers, who have been in Iraq for a month, aren’t teaching the Iraqis new tactics for fighting in built-up areas. Rather, they’re providing tips that will help them limit casualties during what’s expected to be a tough battle in some of

Mosul’s most densely populated and oldest neighborhoods, Thomas said.

“They want to be the ones doing it rather than having U.S. forces do it for them. We just give them input on how they can improve,” said Thomas, a native of St. Joseph, Mo.

Navy brings in actors to battle sex assault

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy is revamping its approach to combating sexual assault in its presentation to sailors and potentially in the way it monitors the accused.

Lectures with bullet points on large screens are being sidelined in favor of actors roleplaying the tough issues, as 7th Fleet sailors at Yokosuka saw Tuesday and Wednesday during programs that addressed themes like victim retaliation and male-on-male sexual assault.

Scenarios included a sailor being ostracized by friends and peers for reporting a rape, and a sailor struggling to reconcile a childhood sexual assault with his ideas of traditional masculinity.

Using Pure Praxis, a California-based theater group contracted by the Navy since 2015, is more time-consuming and expensive — but also more effective, said Jill Loftus, director of the Navy's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Office.

Sailors who spoke with Stars and Stripes following the performances generally agreed that the actors gave the issues more emotional resonance.

"I've been in the Navy 13 years and it's all been PowerPoint," said Petty Officer 1st Class Roberto Coriano, a ship's serviceman at Yokosuka's Naval Supply Fleet Logistics Center. "Bringing [the training] on stage, it makes you think about it more. [Sailors] see the real thing on stage.

"You hear about these situations, but when you see it physically it bothers you more."

The scenarios the actors portray are realistic, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jacob Hightower, a quartermaster aboard the USS Shiloh. Hightower said he recently intervened in an incident at an off-base club where a group of men were aggressively harassing a female.

"I like this type of training," he said. "PowerPoints are boring; people fall asleep and they are kind of pointless. Getting involved [in the role-playing]

allows people to examine how they would actually respond in a real-life scenario."

Half of Pure Praxis' performances center on victim retaliation, with sailors being asked to analyze retaliation scenarios acted out in front of them.

Although the Navy is seeing fewer sexual assault incidents, victim retaliation continues to be an issue.

A 2014 Rand Corp. survey found that roughly half of all active-duty female servicemembers who reported a sexual assault believed they suffered professional or social retaliation.

"We see reports of survivors who say the worst part of reporting sexual assault is when they come back to their ship or unit and they are ostracized by their own peers and friends," Loftus said.

Retaliation and social ostracism play possible roles in the rise of restricted sexual assault reports.

With a restricted report, the names of the victim and accuser are kept confidential, allowing

the victim to receive treatment without triggering a legal response toward the assailant.

The Navy's 2015 report on sexual assault, the service's most recent report, showed a 25 percent increase in restricted reports not converted into unrestricted ones, where authorities investigate the crime.

Loftus attributes that to better Navy training in recent years encouraging more sailors to report sexual assaults they survived prior to joining the service. Servicemembers are keeping the report restricted to avoid implicating a friend or family member, she said.

However, the Navy is considering a change — pending legal review — to the restricted reporting system that could preserve victim anonymity while giving the service a better chance of spotting serial predators.

Following a restricted report, an alleged assailant's name would be placed in a database for future tracking, Loftus said.

Navy starts 'caring contact' suicide prevention program

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — The Navy has rolled out a program aimed at providing added support for sailors considered at risk for suicide.

Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life, or SAIL, was announced servicewide earlier this month and is now available at all Fleet and Family Support Center locations.

The voluntary program works by linking sailors who have demonstrated suicidal behavior with Fleet and Family Support Center counselors trained in assessing suicide risk. Those counselors remain in contact with the participant for three months, said Capt. Michael Fisher, director of the Navy Suicide Prevention Branch. They can help identify stressors, like

financial issues, and link the sailor with resources, he said.

Participation in SAIL is not intended to replace therapy.

"A caring contact is all it is," Fisher said.

SAIL is patterned after the Marine Corps' Marine Intercept Program, which began in 2014. A pilot of the Navy's version began in August in the Pacific Northwest. At least 91 sailors accepted SAIL's services out of 175 referrals between Aug. 28 and Feb. 3, according to Navy data.

Navy Personnel Command data show 51 active-duty sailors and 10 reservists killed themselves in 2016, according to preliminary numbers. About 40 percent of sailors who commit suicide had a previous attempt or impulse, Fisher said.

DOD: Nuke 'football' officer not in trouble for viral photo

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A photo of a smiling, uniformed Army officer identified as the aide carrying nuclear launch information — the so-called nuclear "football" — for the president went viral Monday as social media users wondered whether it was prudent for him to be identified, but military officials said he did nothing illegal or against protocol.

A member of President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, Richard DeAgazio, posted the photo on Facebook.

U.S. military officials said it's not illegal for the officer to take the photo, or against protocol, though they acknowledged it is strange.

"There is an understanding that we, as military offi-

cials and those who serve our elected officials, typically seek to maintain a low profile," said a senior U.S. defense official, who wasn't authorized to speak on the matter. "It's never about us. It's about the mission and the people we serve."

The photo of the aide doesn't pose any immediate security risk, but it's illustrative of another problem, said Stephen Schwartz, a nuclear weapons policy expert and the co-author of "Atomic Audit," which assesses the costs of the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

"The idea that a rich guy could walk up to one of them and snap a photo with them to brag to his friends strikes me as flat-out wrong," he said.

The White House has not addressed the photograph.

Officials: Trump kept Pence in dark on Flynn

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just six days into his presidency, Donald Trump was informed his national security adviser had misled his vice president about contacts with Russia. Trump kept his No. 2 in the dark and waited nearly three weeks before ousting the aide, Michael Flynn, citing a slow but steady erosion of trust, White House officials said.

Flynn was interviewed by the FBI about his telephone conversations with Russia's ambassador to the U.S., a sign his ties to Russia had caught the attention of law enforcement officials.

But in the White House's retelling of Flynn's stunning downfall, his error was not that he discussed U.S. sanctions with the Russian before the inauguration — a potential violation of a rarely enforced law — but the fact that he denied it for weeks, appar-

ently misleading Vice President Mike Pence and other senior Trump aides about the nature of the conversations. White House officials said they conducted a thorough review of Flynn's interactions, including transcripts of calls secretly recorded by U.S. intelligence officials, but found nothing illegal.

Pence, who had vouched for Flynn in a televised interview, is said to have been angry and deeply frustrated.

Trump lashed out at the news media Wednesday morning, sending out a tweet berating some news organizations for focusing on "This Russian connection non-sense." In a post on his verified Twitter account, Trump said, "The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred." He added that the news reporting was "merely an attempt to

cover-up the many mistakes made in Hillary Clinton's losing campaign."

Flynn, in an interview with The Daily Caller News Foundation, said Monday "there were no lines crossed" in his conversations with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak.

The explanation of the episode left many questions unanswered, including why Trump didn't alert Pence to the matter and why Trump allowed Flynn to keep accessing classified information and taking part in the president's discussions with world leaders up until the day he was fired.

White House officials also struggled to explain why Trump counselor Kellyanne Conway had declared the president retained "full confidence" in Flynn just hours before the adviser had to submit his letter of resignation.

Later Tuesday, The New York Times reported that U.S. agencies had intercepted phone calls last year between Russian intelligence officials and members of Donald Trump's 2016 campaign team. Current and former U.S. officials who spoke to the Times anonymously said they found no evidence that the Trump campaign was working with the Russians on hacking or other efforts to influence the election.

Trump initially thought Flynn could survive the controversy, according to a person with direct knowledge of the president's views, but a pair of explosive stories in The Washington Post in recent days made the situation untenable. While the president was said to be upset with Flynn, he also expressed anger with other aides for "losing control" of the story and making his young administration look bad.

Suspect arrested in death of Kim's half brother

Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Malaysian police arrested a woman Wednesday in connection with the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's half brother.

Police released a statement saying the woman was carrying Vietnamese travel documents when she was arrested at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Kim Jong Nam died Monday after suddenly falling ill at the budget terminal of Kuala Lumpur International Airport, said a senior Malaysian government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the case involves sensitive diplomacy.

Kim, who died on the way to a hospital, told medical workers that he had been attacked with a chemical spray, the official said.

Malaysian officials have provided few other details. Police said an autopsy was planned to determine the cause of death.

Since taking power in late

2011, Kim Jong Un has executed or purged a slew of high-level government officials in what the South Korean government has described as a "reign of terror."

Multiple South Korean media reports, citing unidentified sources, said Kim Jong Nam was killed at the airport by two women believed to be North Korean agents.

According to the Malaysian government official, Kim Jong Nam was in a shopping concourse and had not yet gone through security for a planned flight to Macau when the incident occurred.

Kim was estranged from his half brother, the North Korean leader. Although he had been originally tipped by some outsiders as a possible successor to his late dictator father, Kim Jong Il, others thought that was unlikely because he lived outside the country, including recently in Macau, Singapore and Malaysia.

Trump tweaks health care rules as he seeks repeal

Bloomberg

The Trump administration moved to stabilize Obamacare's health insurance markets on Wednesday, issuing rules to tighten when people can sign up for coverage and give health insurers greater flexibility.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services proposed new regulation even as President Donald Trump seeks to repeal the law. In the meantime, the health department led by his new health secretary, Tom Price, is trying to placate health insurers and keep them in the program's government-run markets.

The rule would cut in half the time when people can sign up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act, to about a month and a half. It would also curtail so-called special enrollment periods that allow people to sign up for coverage outside the regular window. Insurers have said that those sort of exceptions let people game the system and only sign up after they get sick.

Obamacare presents a conundrum for Republicans, who control the White House and both chambers of Congress. They campaigned on repealing the Affordable Care Act but now find themselves responsible for managing it as they debate how, or if, they should replace it.

At town halls held in their home districts, some Republican lawmakers faced questions and protests from citizens demanding to know their plan. Facing that blowback, moderates have said they want to see a replacement policy before voting for repeal. More conservative members want to move ahead before they lose momentum.

The regulation issued Wednesday is a proposed rule, meaning that the Department of Health and Human Services will get feedback on the measure before finalizing it. Many of the provisions won't go into effect until 2018, and could be moot if Republicans have replaced the law, or parts of it, with something else by then.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Teachers reprimanded for recorded comments

MI BANGOR — Six southwestern Michigan teachers have been reprimanded and a school secretary has resigned after they were secretly videoed joking about which co-workers they would marry, have sex with or kill.

Robert Huber, an attorney for the Bangor Public Schools, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that a staffer whose name came up under the “kill” portion of the game complained to the police. No criminal charges have been filed.

Huber said three students’ names also came up in chatter heard on the video, but that the teachers didn’t name them in their crude game.

The cellphone video was recorded in January at a tavern in Bangor. The woman who posted the video on YouTube told WOOD-TV she didn’t record it.

Hospital denies trans man’s lawsuit claims

NJ TRENTON — A Roman Catholic hospital in New Jersey has denied that it discriminated against a transgender man who sued after it refused to allow his surgeon to perform a hysterectomy procedure.

Saint Joseph’s Healthcare System said a ruling in Jionni Conforti’s favor would violate its federal and state constitutional right to freedom of religion. The hospital filed its response to the lawsuit last week in federal court.

Conforti, 33, of Totowa, had scheduled the surgery at St. Joseph’s Regional Medical Center in Paterson in 2015. He alleges in the lawsuit that a hospital administrator then told him the procedure to remove the uterus couldn’t be done because it was a “Catholic hospital.”

Man plunges 100 feet to death at waterfall

NC SALUDA — A Charlotte man died after plunging about 100 feet while hiking with his children at Big Bradley Falls near Saluda.

Saluda Fire and Rescue Deputy Chief Zach Pace told local media his department was called about 4:45 p.m. Sunday. Pace said witnesses told him the man was standing on the lookout rock when he turned to make sure his daughters were making it down the trail. Pace said the man tripped and fell.

The Polk County Sheriff’s Office said Monday the victim was Lance Healy, 47. Capt. B.J. Bayne said Healy was hiking with his daughters, ages 9 and 12. Big Bradley Falls is a 75-foot waterfall in a gorge on Cove Creek near Saluda.

Gun is fired during spat over parking spot

MD BALTIMORE — A Baltimore man has been accused of firing a gun to intimidate his neighbor during a fight over a parking space.

Police said patrol officers near Pimlico Race Course were stopped Friday night by a man who said Andolphus Covell, 33, had fired a gun to scare him off while the two argued over a parking spot.

No one was hurt, and police said they recovered the handgun.

Covell has been charged with aggravated assault, reckless endangerment and weapons charges.

Man kills wife, slits own throat, crashes vehicle

IA DES MOINES — Authorities said a man killed his wife at her Des Moines

home and then slit his throat before crashing into the back of a semitrailer on Interstate 80.

Officers and medics who were sent to the home about 2:30 a.m. Monday to check a stabbing report found the body of a woman later identified by police as Rasema Keco, 51. Police said investigators found evidence and information that led them to suspect her throat had been slit by her husband, Ekrem Keco, 58.

Des Moines police said his vehicle soon was spotted in Altoona. He refused to pull over and instead fled on Interstate 80, slit his own throat and ran into the back of the truck. Police said he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Woman rescues dog tossed from car window

FL BOCA RATON — A Florida woman said she was driving home in Boca Raton when she saw a sport utility vehicle slow down and someone push an emaciated Dalmatian out of the passenger window.

Lisa Gabrielle, 23, told local news outlets the dog chased after the SUV. She stopped and ran after the dog and took it home with her.

On Sunday, Gabrielle took the dog to the Tri-County Animal Rescue. Suzi Goldsmith, the group’s co-founder and CEO, said the dog is “pathetically thin and malnourished.”

Goldsmith said the dog didn’t have a chip or a tag on his beige collar. She believes he’s about a year old and has had some training because he knows how to sit. She reported the incident to Boca Raton police.

Driver takes off with cop on running board

PA PHILADELPHIA — Police are seeking

an SUV driver they say drove off with an officer standing on the vehicle’s running board and continued for several blocks, leaving the officer injured.

Police said officers saw the Ford Explorer strike a parked vehicle about 2:40 a.m. Saturday. One approached the passenger window and jumped on the running board to avoid approaching traffic.

Police said the driver pulled off and drove for about four blocks despite the officer’s attempt to get his attention by striking the window. When he slowed, the officer jumped off and was left with injuries to both hands, his legs and his left foot. Police later found the vehicle and are seeking the driver, described as in his mid-30s.

Police kill driver who hit officers, apartments

HI HONOLULU — A man is dead after Honolulu police fired at a pickup truck that hit officers as it rammed apartments.

Police said officers responding to a parking complaint Saturday morning found the man and a woman asleep inside the truck that had been reported stolen. Police said the officers told them to exit the vehicle.

Maj. Dagan Tsuchida told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser that the male driver tried to flee, pinning two officers as the truck rammed apartments and dragging another officer before police opened fire.

The driver died at the scene, police said. Three officers and the woman sustained injuries that were not life-threatening.

Tsuchida said police arrested the woman, Chayla Belford, 19, on outstanding warrants. KHON reported the 33-year-old man had six felony convictions.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

High hopes return with spring training

Associated Press

LAKELAND, Fla. — Even for an accomplished veteran like Justin Verlander, the start of spring training can be special.

“I usually sleep pretty well. I woke up early today,” the Detroit ace said Tuesday. “On one hand, you want to appreciate everything as much as you can. It’s not such a whirlwind anymore — you kind of know what to expect. But in the same aspect, every day is pretty much the same thing I’ve done for 12 years, so it also starts going faster.”

Verlander’s Tigers were among 15 teams with their first scheduled workouts for pitchers and catchers Tuesday. As major leaguers took the field in Florida and Arizona, that familiar sound of balls popping into mitts served as a reminder that in baseball at least, winter is finally over.

While Verlander and the Tigers went through their routine at their newly renovated facility in Lakeland, the Boston Red Sox were about 115 miles to the south, holding their first work-

out of the post-Papi era. It’s Boston’s first season without David Ortiz since the Red Sox signed him in January 2003, but Big Papi’s retirement may not be too big a blow to a team that added star left-hander Chris Sale.

Over in Arizona, the Cleveland Indians began preparing to defend their American League title. Cleveland won the AL Central comfortably last year and made it to the World Series before losing to the Chicago Cubs in seven games.

“This time of year, everyone is at glass half-full,” Indians manager Terry Francona said. “We have good reason to be.”

Hopes are always high at the start of spring training, but occasionally there’s some injury news on the first day. Baltimore manager Buck Showalter said right-hander Chris Tillman had a platelet-rich plasma injection on his right shoulder and won’t start the season until April 7 at the earliest.

The Kansas City Royals said left-hander Brian Flynn broke a rib and had three minor vertebrae fractures in a bizarre offseason injury. Flynn is ex-

pected to miss two months after falling through a barn roof at his Oklahoma residence.

The Royals and Miami Marlins begin this season with heavy hearts following the deaths of pitchers Yordano Ventura last month and Jose Fernandez in September, and Tigers owner Mike Ilitch died Friday at age 87.

“I got to know him as best as an owner and player can know each other,” said Detroit catcher Alex Avila, whose father Al is the team’s general manager. “He was always a very gracious and generous person — very nice to myself, my family. ... Very loyal. I know as a family, we always felt we had to kind of reciprocate that loyalty because he’s a tremendous man. They’re a great family.”

The Arizona Diamondbacks have also found themselves dealing with some sobering news. Their bench coach, former Minnesota Twins manager Ron Gardenhire, has prostate cancer and is set to have surgery. He said doctors believe they caught the cancer early.

The Diamondbacks went 69-93 last year and are one of

a few National League teams that started workouts Tuesday amid tepid expectations. The Phillies, Reds and Rockies also finished well out of the postseason picture in 2016, but that doesn’t mean they can’t set goals for themselves.

Philadelphia manager Pete Mackanin said he wants his team to play .500 baseball deeper into the season after the Phillies lost 91 games last year.

For the first time since 2009, the Giants are entering an odd-numbered season without a World Series title to defend. After winning it all in 2010, 2012 and 2014, San Francisco made the playoffs last year as a wild card but lost in the Division Series to the Cubs.

The Giants look like contenders again in 2017, and manager Bruce Bochy had plenty of reasons to be upbeat Tuesday when his pitchers and catchers took the field.

“It’s a day you look forward to, getting a chance to see everybody and hear the sound of the bat, watch these guys work out again,” Bochy said. “So it’s a good day.”

Lesnar informs UFC he’s retired from competition

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Former UFC heavyweight champion Brock Lesnar has informed the mixed martial arts promotion that he is retired from competition.

The UFC confirmed the 39-year-old Lesnar’s decision Wednesday.

Lesnar returned from a 4½-year MMA absence last July to beat Mark Hunt at UFC 200, but the result was overturned after Lesnar failed two doping tests. He was subsequently suspended from competition for a year by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which administers the UFC’s doping policy.

Lesnar’s decision to retire means he has been removed from USADA’s drug-testing

pool, which monitors the fighters year-round.

If he decides to return to competition, he would have to serve the remaining five months of his suspension.

The decision doesn’t affect Lesnar’s professional wrestling career, where the multitasking athlete has spent most of the past five years. He is scheduled to perform for the WWE at WrestleMania in Orlando on April 2.

Cards’ Reyes to have Tommy John surgery

JUPITER, Fla. — St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Alex Reyes ruptured a ligament in his right elbow and needs season-ending Tommy John surgery.

General manager John

Mozeliak confirmed the diagnosis on Wednesday after the right-hander had an MRI. The 22-year-old Reyes is expected to have surgery on Thursday.

An off-speed pitch before spring training effectively ended Reyes’ season before it began.

A candidate for the final spot in the starting rotation, he also was expected to pitch for the Dominican Republic in the World Baseball Classic.

In other baseball news:

■ Reliever Fernando Salas and the New York Mets have finalized a \$3 million, one-year contract.

The deal had been agreed to Feb. 3 pending a successful physical and was completed Wednesday.

Salas can earn an additional

\$350,000 in performance bonuses base: \$50,000 each for 40, 45, 50, 55, 65, 70 and 75 relief appearances.

Surgery sidelines Bucks’ Parker for year

MILWAUKEE — The Bucks say the knee surgery on forward Jabari Parker was a success and he is expected back in approximately 12 months.

Parker suffered a season-ending left knee injury for the second time in three years on Feb. 8 during a home loss to Miami. The surgery performed Tuesday was to repair his ACL.

Parker will miss the remainder of the season with the recovery and rehabilitation period estimated at 12 months.

Canadiens fire Therrien, hire Julien

Associated Press

In the midst of losing their grip on first place, the Montreal Canadiens abruptly fired coach Michel Therrien on Tuesday and hired Claude Julien in hopes of getting their season back on track.

Montreal general manager Marc Bergevin made the announcement two days into his team's bye week. Julien was fired as coach of the Boston Bruins last week and predictions that the veteran wouldn't be out of work for long proved true.

At 1-5-1, the Canadiens are the NHL's worst team since the start of February, including a 4-0 loss to the Bruins. They next play Saturday against Winnipeg.

Therrien, 53, was in his fifth season of his second tour of duty as Canadiens coach and had three playoff appearances with a trip to the 2014 Eastern Conference final. They missed the playoffs last season after goaltender Carey Price injured his knee in November.

Owner Geoff Molson tweeted Tuesday afternoon: "Michel Therrien, merci beaucoup pour tout, thank you for giving everything you had to our team."

Therrien went 194-121-37 as coach of the Canadiens this time around.

He was also fired and replaced by Julien 46 games into the 2002-03 season. This time, it took 58 games.

"The decision to remove Michel from his coaching duties was a difficult one because I have lots of respect for him," Bergevin said in a statement. "I came to the conclusion that our team needed a new energy, a new voice, a new direction."

That will come from Julien, who returns to Montreal, where he coached from 2003-2006. He won the Stanley Cup with the Bruins in 2011 and was the longest-tenured coach in the NHL until last week.

Julien has coached 997 regular-season games and will hit the 1,000 milestone behind the Canadiens' bench on Feb. 23.

Washington Capitals coach Barry Trotz joked that Julien would find another job within five minutes. It took seven days. The Canadiens had to get permission to speak with Julien before hiring him because the 56-year-old was still under contract.

"Claude Julien is an experienced and well-respected coach with a good knowledge of the Montreal market," Bergevin said. "Today we hired the best available coach and one of the league's best. I am convinced that he has the capabilities to get our team back on the winning track."

The Canadiens are atop the Atlantic Division with 70 points at 31-19-8 and have a six-point lead on the Bruins and Ottawa Senators. But they've played six more games than Ottawa and have struggled lately despite getting Alex Galchenyuk and other previously injured players back in their lineup.

Therrien is the fifth NHL coach fired this season.

Ducks' Vermette ejected for slashing ref

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Anaheim Ducks goalie John Gibson got all the cushion he needed five minutes into a game against the Western Conference-leading Minnesota Wild on a night teammate Antoine Vermette was ejected for slashing a ref.

Gibson made 37 saves for his fourth shutout of the season, rookie Joseph Cramarossa scored his fourth goal and Anaheim beat Minnesota 1-0 on Tuesday night.

Vermette was ejected in the third period with a game misconduct for abuse of an official. After losing a faceoff near center ice, Vermette used his stick to hit the linesman on the back of the legs. Vermette will face a suspension, with the number of games based on the category decided by officials. NHL rules state deliberately applying physical force on an official results in an automatic 10-game suspension.

Gibson stalled the league's fourth-highest scoring team, and the Ducks beat former coach Bruce Boudreau for the first time in three meetings this season.

"You never know what's going to happen, but I think it's a pretty rare situation that an early goal in the first holds up," Cramarossa said. "But it is what it is. ... Gibby stood on his head there to not let any in for them. We'll take it, and we're going home now for a little home stretch."

The Wild were 0 for 5 on the power play and lost in regulation for the first time in six games and the fifth time since the start of December, a span of 34 games. Devan Dubnyk made 22 saves.

"You could tell very early on, or I could — maybe I know him a little bit — but he was really on his game and it was going to take something special to beat him," Boudreau said of Gibson. "But we couldn't find that."

Penguins 4, Canucks 0: Evgeni Malkin had a goal and an assist in his return from a lower-body injury and Sidney Crosby got his 999th career point with an assist as host Pittsburgh rolled by Vancouver.

Phil Kessel, Jake Guentzel and Matt Cullen also scored for the defending Stanley Cup champions. Matt Murray

stopped 29 shots for his third shutout this season and the fourth of his career.

Maple Leafs 7, Islanders 1: Auston Matthews scored twice, Frederik Andersen earned his 100th NHL win and host Toronto routed New York in a game with playoff implications.

The Maple Leafs set a season high for goals and won for the third time in nine games. They moved three points ahead of the Islanders for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference.

Devils 3, Avalanche 2: Devils defenseman Andy Greene scored the go-ahead goal on a power play and Kyle Palmieri converted on an odd-man rush with Taylor Hall to lead host New Jersey over struggling Colorado.

Cory Schneider made 28 saves and Pavel Zacha added a goal as New Jersey won for the fourth time in six games (4-1-1) in its push to make the playoffs.

Sabres 3, Senators 2: Robin Lehner made 39 saves against his former team, and Matt Moulson and Justin Bailey scored in the third period to

rally Buffalo past host Ottawa.

Lehner is 4-0-2 against the club that selected him in the second round of the 2009 NHL draft. He was traded away with David Legwand in June 2015 to Buffalo for the 21st overall pick in that year's draft.

Jets 5, Stars 2: Patrik Laine got his third hat trick of the season, including the go-ahead goal with 5:07 left to lift host Winnipeg over Dallas.

The Finnish rookie has 26 goals, including two in the third period as the Jets broke open a tight game. Joel Armia and Blake Wheeler also scored to help Winnipeg snap a four-game skid.

Oilers 5, Coyotes 2: Leon Draisaitl and Oscar Klefbom each had a goal and two assists as host Edmonton overcame a slow start to beat Arizona.

Matt Hendricks, Mark Letestu and Patrick Maroon also scored for the Oilers, who won for the second time in six games. Cam Talbot finished with 23 saves.

Josh Jooris and Martin Hanzal had the goals for the Coyotes, who won their previous two.

LeBron, Cavaliers down Timberwolves

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — LeBron James spent the morning sending a crystal clear message to the Cleveland Cavaliers in the wake of Kevin Love's knee injury: things will be just fine as long as James is on the court.

He spent the night backing that up against an emboldened Andrew Wiggins and the Minnesota Timberwolves, as if anyone doubted him in the first place.

James had 25 points, 14 assists and eight rebounds to lead the Cavaliers to a 116-108 victory over the Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

Channing Frye had 21 points and 10 rebounds while starting for Love, who will miss at least the next six weeks after having surgery on his left knee. Kyrie Irving scored 25 points for the Cavs and James sealed the victory with a stepback three-

pointer with two minutes to play.

"The one thing that we can always rely on is the fact that we've played without Kev before," James said. "We've had to do that in the playoffs. As much as you don't like to play without some of your big guns, sometimes if it happens then you're just ready for it."

Wiggins scored 41 points against the team that drafted him and Karl-Anthony Towns scored 26 for the Wolves, who finished a six-game homestand at 2-4. The Wolves allowed Cleveland to shoot 51 percent and hit 13 threes.

"It's always competitive playing them," Wiggins said. "I feel like it brings out the best in everybody."

James took his time to get going, choosing to get others involved, including with a no-look pass through Wiggins' legs to a diving Derrick Williams for a

layup in the second quarter. He threw down two soaring dunks later in the third and added a Jordan-like reverse layup as part of a highlight-filled night.

"It's been a burden on me since I got drafted. Why does it change now?" James said when asked if he has to do more with Love out. "Nothing's changed. I'll have my guys ready to play every single night."

The Cavs appeared to be pulling away when they opened a 14-point lead in the third quarter, but Wiggins exploded for 20 points in the period to make it a game. He hit a three-pointer and beat the buzzer on a long 2 to tie it at 93 going into the fourth.

Wiggins was chosen by the Cavs No. 1 overall three years ago, but that was before James made his surprising return to Cleveland. The Cavs traded Wiggins to Minnesota for Love

and Wiggins has always given them his best punch. He entered the night averaging 27.6 points per game against them, his highest scoring average against any team in the league.

"We'll get 'em eventually," Wiggins said.

Bulls 105, Raptors 94: Doug McDermott scored 20 points, All-Star Jimmy Butler had 19 points and 12 assists in his return to the lineup, and host Chicago beat Toronto for the 11th straight time.

Taj Gibson had 14 points and Rajon Rondo added 12 for the Bulls to snap a three-game skid.

Kings 97, Lakers 96: DeMarcus Cousins had 40 points and 12 rebounds, and visiting Sacramento held on for its fourth straight win.

Lou Williams scored 29 points off the bench to lead the Lakers.

Colson leads Irish rally over Boston College

Associated Press

BOSTON — Bonzie Colson remembered running around Boston College, having birthday parties and shooting around with some of the Eagles' notable players when his dad was an assistant coach.

He was having fun again Tuesday night.

Colson scored 20 points, Matt Farrell had 19 and No. 25 Notre Dame overcame a 13-point first-half deficit for an 84-76 victory over Boston College, sending the Eagles to their 10th straight loss.

"I just remember a lot of times shooting around before practice, being a ball boy. Just trying to learn the game and learn from them," said Colson, who recalled being around former Eagles like current NBA players Jared Dudley and Reggie Jackson to name a few.

"It's been something that's always been a huge part of my life and I'll never forget those memories," Colson said.

V.J. Beachem had 16 points and Steve Vasturia added 15 for the Fighting Irish (20-7, 9-5 Atlantic Coast Conference). It is coach Mike Brey's 13th time winning at least 20 games with Notre Dame.

Ky Bowman led Boston College (9-18, 2-12) with 29 points.

BC had cut it to 78-76 on Bowman's two free throws with just under a minute to play, but Beachem grabbed an offensive rebound and was fouled on the ensuing possession. He hit both free throws with 24.1 seconds to play.

The Fighting Irish trailed by 10 points early in the second half before outscoring BC 21-3 over a 4:50 span.

No. 3 Kentucky 83, Tennessee 58: Malik Monk had 20 points and a career-high eight rebounds, Derek Willis had 16 points and Kentucky made 10 of its 11 three-point attempts in the first half to roll past Tennessee.

Seeking to stay atop the SEC, the Wildcats avenged

last month's 82-80 road loss to the Volunteers with their best performance in a while. Long-range shooting provided the biggest lift as Kentucky (21-5, 11-2) made 11 threes, its first double-digit effort from behind the arc in a month.

No. 15 Florida 114, Auburn 95: Canyon Barry scored a season-high 30 points for the visiting Gators.

Florida (21-5, 11-2 Southeastern Conference) dominated after going into halftime locked in a 50-50 tie, coming out of the break on a 13-3 run en route to a seventh straight win.

No. 16 Purdue 74, Rutgers 55: Center Isaac Haas had 24 points and 11 rebounds, and power forward Caleb Swanigan added 12 points and 17 rebounds for the host Boilermakers.

Purdue (21-5, 10-3 Big Ten) led only 45-39 with just over 12:30 remaining, but Haas scored 16 points in a 9-minute span to help from the Boilermakers pull away for their fourth straight victory.

Michigan State 74, Ohio State 66: Alvin Ellis scored 15 of his 18 points with a three-point barrage in the first half for the host Spartans.

Miles Bridges had 17 points and 11 rebounds and Nick Ward scored 15 for Michigan State (16-10, 8-5 Big Ten), which has won four of five to improve its chances of extending its NCAA tournament streak to 20.

The Buckeyes (15-12, 5-9) have lost four of six.

Dayton 85, Saint Louis 63: Charles Cooke scored 18 points and visiting Dayton cruised to its fifth straight win.

The Flyers (20-5, 11-2 Atlantic 10) remain tied with VCU atop the conference standings.

VCU 91, Saint Joseph's 81: JeQuan Lewis scored a career-high 34 points with nine three-pointers, Justin Tillman added 14 points and 13 rebounds for his fourth straight double-double, and the host Rams (21-5, 11-2 Atlantic 10) win their seventh straight.