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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Israel downs Iranian drone, strikes Syria

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military shot down an Iranian drone it said infiltrated the country early Saturday before launching a “large-scale attack” on at least a dozen Iranian and Syrian targets inside Syria. Responding anti-aircraft fire led to the downing of an Israeli fighter jet.

Israel said the drone infiltration was a “severe and irregular violation of Israeli sovereignty” and warned of further action against unprecedented Iranian aggression.

The military said its planes faced massive anti-aircraft fire from Syria that forced two pilots to abandon an F-16 jet that crashed in northern Israel. One pilot was seriously wounded and the other lightly wounded.

Syrian officials reported large explosions in the center of the country, and the Syrian counter fire set off warning sirens throughout northern Israel.

The Israeli strikes marked its most significant engagement since the fighting in neighboring Syria began in 2011 and said Iran would be held responsible for its outcome.

“This is a serious Iranian attack on Israeli territory. Iran is dragging the region into an adventure in which it doesn’t know how it will end,” Israel’s chief military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Ronen Manelis, said in a special statement. “Whoever is responsible for this incident is the one who will pay the price.”

Gen. Hossein Salami, acting commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, did not

acknowledge Israel’s claim it shot down the drone. “We do not confirm any such news from Israel,” he said. Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasem called the Israeli claim “ridiculous.”

But the joint operations room for the Syrian military and its allies denied the drone violated Israeli airspace, saying it was on a regular mission gathering intelligence on Islamic State militants.

Syria’s Defense Ministry said in statements on its website that its air defenses responded successfully to the Israeli operation and hit more than one plane. “The Israeli enemy has once again attacked some of our military bases in the southern area and our air defenses responded and foiled

the aggression,” it said.

Israel has mostly stayed out of the prolonged fighting in Syria, wary of being drawn into a war in which nearly all the parties are hostile toward it. It has recently been warning of the increased Iranian presence along its border, but military spokesman Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus said Saturday’s incident marked the most “blatant and severe violation of Israeli sovereignty” yet.

He said Israel has no interest in further escalation but that it would “extract a heavy price” for such aggression. Conricus said Iran was “playing with fire” by infiltrating Israeli airspace. He also said the unmanned aircraft Israel shot down was “on a military mission sent and operated by Iranian military forces.”

Bagram hospital braces for more casualties

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Medical officials in Afghanistan are preparing for more casualties as the U.S. military sends more troops close to the front lines to advise government forces in their fight against militants and terrorists.

The Craig Joint Theater Hospital here has had what officials believe to be a record success rate at keeping casualties alive — many of them Afghans wounded in operations with U.S. forces — which officials said helps boost battlefield confidence. Those lifesaving capabilities likely will see even greater demand as the U.S. steps up operations here against the Taliban and Islamic State.

The number of Americans wounded in action in Afghanistan rose by more than 25 percent last year compared with each of the previous two years, according to an analysis of Pentagon data. Officials have said U.S. forces will be at greater risk under the Trump administration’s more aggressive strategy in the region, which al-

ready has increased troop levels, loosened rules of engagement and sharply increased airstrikes.

At Bagram, officials said they were consulting the Central Command about adding staff to prepare for an increase in operations tempo and casualties.

“The more combat you have, the more casualties you’re likely to have,” said Col. Walter M. “Sparky” Matthews, head of the 455th Expeditionary Medical Group. He oversees the military’s medical task force responsible for nonspecial-operations medical teams here. “It would be unwise for us not to plan for an increase in casualty numbers.”

The medical system is ready and able to treat more wounded than it has been, even without added staff, Matthews said, because the number of casualties is normally pretty low. The Bagram hospital was quiet on a recent afternoon, and its emergency and operating rooms were empty. A few Afghans in civilian attire and bandages sat in a waiting area.

It’s likely that as casualties rise, the Afghans will continue to bear the brunt of

the losses, and officials here said they’re working both to shore up Afghan medical capabilities and to treat those they can in the coalition’s system.

A flight surgeon descended from a Texas Ranger who rode out of Abilene in the 1860s, Matthews exudes a kind of cowboy charm to go with the hat, lariat and spurs that hang on his office wall. He wears a sidearm strapped to his hip.

Instead of challenge coins, his staff earn what look like miniature Texas Ranger stars for good work, and they’re encouraged to wear the coveted symbols on their ID badge pulls. One of their achievements the Austin native likes to tout is a more than 99 percent survival rate. That’s up from an earlier 98 percent, officials said.

“We’re super proud of that,” Matthews said, comparing it with survival rates as low as 25 percent in conflicts over the past 150 years.

The motto on rounds here is “no one dies today,” and as they’ve come close to achieving that goal, deaths have become so rare that Matthews said it’s unnerving when someone does not survive.

Immigration fight looks tougher after budget debate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders, top Democrats and President Donald Trump all are claiming big wins in the \$400 billion budget agreement signed into law Friday. But the push to pass the massive legislation underscored enduring divisions within both parties, and those rifts are likely to make the next fight over immigration even more challenging.

In Washington's latest display of governance by brinkmanship, the bipartisan accord bolstering military and domestic programs and deepening federal deficits crossed the finish line just before dawn — but not before the government shut down overnight.

Passage left nerves frayed and Democrats with little leverage to force congressional action on their most high-profile priority: preventing deportation of hundreds of thousands of the young immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children and remain here without permanent legal protection.

Lawmakers rushed to limit the disruption and impact over the lapse in government funding, voting in the middle of the night to reopen agencies before workers were due to report to the office.

Sen. Rand Paul did not share the urgency. Late Thursday, the tea party leader and Kentucky Republican put the brakes on the bill in protest over Congress' sudden willingness to embrace big deficit spending. Paul noted that he and many in his party railed against deficit when Democrats held the White House, but now seemed willing to look the other way with Republicans in control.

The budget measure provides Pentagon spending increases sought by Trump and the GOP, more money for domestic agen-

cies demanded by Democrats and \$89 billion that both wanted for disaster relief. The two-year pact, which also continues the government's authority to borrow money, postpones any possible federal default or likely shutdowns until after the November elections.

But the 652-page budget bill says nothing about protection for the "Dreamer" immigrants. In January, after a three-day closure, Senate Democrats secured from GOP leaders the promise of a debate and vote on a deal to protect the younger immigrants from deportation.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., set Monday as the start of a freewheeling immigration battle, a debate he promised when Democrats agreed to vote to reopen the government last month.

Democrats want to extend the Obama administration-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, which lets the immigrants temporarily live and work in the U.S. but that Trump would end March 5. The Democrats also want to make the immigrants eligible for citizenship or permanent residence.

In exchange, Trump wants \$25 billion to build his beloved, proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall and other barriers. He also wants reductions in legal immigration, including limiting the relatives whom legal residents can sponsor and eliminating a lottery that offers visas to residents of diverse countries.

There's no obvious compromise that could win the 60 votes from Republicans and Democrats needed to prevail in the Senate. The most promising outcome may be a narrow bill extending DACA protections for a year or so and providing some border security money for Trump.

\$700B: Highest budget Pentagon has ever seen

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's the biggest budget the Pentagon has ever seen: \$700 billion. That's far more in defense spending than America's two nearest competitors, China and Russia, and will mean the military can foot the bill for thousands more troops, more training, more ships and a lot else.

And next year, it would rise to \$716 billion. Together, the two-year deal provides what Defense Secretary Jim Mattis says is needed to pull the military out

ANALYSIS of a slump in combat readiness at a time of renewed focus on the stalemated conflict in Afghanistan and the threat of war on the Korean Peninsula.

The budget bill that President Donald Trump signed Friday includes huge spending increases for the military: The Pentagon will get \$94 billion more this budget year than last — a 15.5 percent jump. It's the biggest year-over-year windfall since the budget soared by 26.6 percent, from \$345 billion in 2002 to \$437 billion the year after, when the nation was fighting in Afghanistan, invading Iraq and expanding national defense after the 9/11 attacks.

Every secretary of defense since 2011, when the Congress passed a law setting firm limits on military and domestic spending, has complained that spending caps set by the Budget Control Act were squeezing the military so hard that the number of ready-to-fight combat units was dwindling. Aging equipment was stacking up, troops were not getting enough training and the uncertain budget outlook was clouding America's future.

"I cannot overstate the negative impact to our troops and families' morale from all this budget uncertainty," Mattis said just hours before the House and Senate approved the deal.

More money for the Pentagon, however, is not the simple solution some might think. Even with the spending caps of

recent years, the defense budget has been robust by historical standards. Todd Harrison, a defense budget specialist at the Center for Security and International Studies, said military funding has been near the inflation-adjusted peak levels of the armed forces buildup during the 1980s under President Ronald Reagan.

The problem, Harrison said, is that the budgets have been stretched by rising personnel costs, more expensive technology investments and other factors, compounded by the cumulative effects of more than a decade of combat in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. And throughout this period, the military has been required to keep up or even increase its pace of operations at home and abroad — and there is no letup in sight.

"We are stretched too thin," Harrison said Friday. "We are trying to do too much with the size force that we have all around the world. Money doesn't necessarily fix that."

The enormous increases in defense spending agreed to by lawmakers on Friday go beyond what President Donald Trump asked for. Of the \$700 million in spending for the 2018 budget year that started last Oct. 1, about \$629 billion is for core Pentagon operations, and nearly \$71 billion is for the wars in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Trump had requested a 2018 military budget of \$603 billion for basic functions and \$65 billion for war missions.

The deal Congress approved early Friday also sets the Pentagon's 2019 budget at \$716 billion, giving Mattis the financial stability he's been demanding.

The biggest winners in the military buildup are the country's largest defense contractors, such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing and General Dynamics, that spend millions of dollars each year lobbying Congress.

The legislation that Trump signed Friday is expected to translate into billions more for one of the Pentagon's highest priorities: missile defense.

Trump: Dems playing politics with memo

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Saturday accused the Democrats of playing politics with classified information, asserting that their memo countering GOP allegations about the conduct of the FBI's Russia probe was a trap to "blame the White House for lack of transparency."

Citing national security concerns, the White House notified the House Intelligence Committee on Friday that the president was "unable" to declassify the Democratic memo. White House counsel Don McGahn said in a letter to the committee that the memo contains "numerous properly classified and especially sensitive passages" and asked the committee to revise it with the help

of the Justice Department.

He said Trump was "inclined" to release the memo if revisions are made. Trump weighed in with a tweet on Saturday.

"The Democrats sent a very political and long response memo which they knew, because of sources and methods (and more), would have to be heavily redacted, whereupon they would blame the White House for lack of transparency," he tweeted.

The president's rejection of the Democratic memo contrasted with his enthusiastic embrace of releasing the Republican document, which accuses the FBI and Justice Department of abusing their surveillance powers in obtaining a secret warrant to monitor former Trump campaign foreign policy adviser Carter Page.

Even before reading the GOP document, Trump pledged to make it public. It was published over Justice Department objections.

The Intelligence Committee's top Democrat, California Rep. Adam Schiff, criticized Trump for treating the two documents differently. Still, Schiff said, Democrats "look forward to conferring with the agencies to determine how we can properly inform the American people about the misleading attack on law enforcement by the GOP."

California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, has read the classified information both memos are based on. She tweeted that Trump's blocking the memo is "hypocrisy at its worst."

The head of the House com-

mittee, Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., who produced the GOP memo, encouraged Democrats to accept the Justice Department's recommendations and "make the appropriate technical changes and redactions."

The House Intelligence Committee voted Monday to release the Democratic memo. Republicans backed the release, but several said they thought it should be redacted. Ryan also said he thought the Democratic document should be released.

In declining to declassify the document, the White House also sent lawmakers a letter signed by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and FBI Director Christopher Wray, as well as a marked-up copy of the memo, laying out portions it considers too sensitive to make public.

President praises aide accused of abusing wives

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has defended former aide Rob Porter, wishing him well in his future endeavors without any mention of the two ex-wives who have accused Porter of physical and emotional abuse.

Trump's comments Friday set off a firestorm at a time of national conversation about the mistreatment of women. And they came amid rampant White House finger-pointing about who knew what, and when, about the severity of the spousal abuse allegations.

Trump said Porter, who resigned when the abuse allegations became public this week, had "worked hard" at the White House and wished him well.

"It's a, obviously, tough time for him. He did a very good job when he was in the White House. And we hope he has a wonderful career," Trump said in his first comments on the allegations.

"He said very strongly yesterday that he's innocent," Trump added.

He gave no nod to the treatment of the women whose reports of abuse led to Porter's resignation, but which he vehemently denies.

Also Friday, a second White House staffer, speechwriter David Sorensen, resigned because of abuse allegations.

Spokesman Raj Shah said the White House learned Thursday night about the allegations before being contacted by the media. "We immediately confronted the staffer, he denied the allegations, and he resigned today," said Shah. Sorensen worked for the Council on Environmental Quality.

The Washington Post first reported the allegations against Sorensen and his resignation.

Kelly, meanwhile, tried to push his own timeline concerning Porter in brief comments to The Associated Press and several other news outlets, repeating a narrative he had presented Friday at a senior staff meeting that contradicts accounts provided by multiple White House officials.

Accused US detainee says militants kidnapped him

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. citizen suspected of fighting with Islamic State said he wasn't a fighter but was kidnapped by the militant group, tried to escape several times and was only in Syria to "understand firsthand and report" about the conflict, according to court papers filed Friday.

New details about the unidentified detainee, held without charge in Iraq by the U.S. for nearly five months, were included in documents the American Civil Liberties Union filed in U.S. District Court in Washington.

If the U.S. government wants to continue to detain him, it must charge him with a crime, the ACLU told the court.

The ACLU said the man, who surrendered on the Syrian battlefield to U.S.-backed forces, claims the allegations against him are "riddled with inaccuracies." The U.S. military is detaining him in Iraq as an enemy combatant.

"Not even the government al-

leges that he ever took up arms against the United States or anyone else," the ACLU said.

The government has claimed the right to detain him under war powers Congress passed after 9/11 in the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaida, the 2002 congressional authorization for the war in Iraq and presidential power to imprison Americans indefinitely for national security reasons. The ACLU argues those war powers don't apply in the battle against ISIS.

"The executive cannot circumvent Congress by imprisoning Americans based on statutes authorizing military force for different wars against different adversaries," said ACLU attorney Jonathan Hafetz. "In detaining this U.S. citizen without charge for months on end, the Trump administration is unlawfully reviving one of the most egregious abuses of executive power we saw after 9/11. The administration is also pushing the dangerous claim that President Trump has the independent authority to indefinitely detain Americans at will."

Duterte issues threat over sea wealth

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine president says he has no intention of going into war over territorial feuds but will order the navy to fire if other countries extract resources from waters within his country's exclusive economic zone.

President Rodrigo Duterte told a news conference late Friday that the Philippines will continue talks with China over disputed South China Sea territories. He also stressed the Philippines' sovereign rights over Benham Rise, a vast frontier off his country's northeast coast.

"But just the same, we cannot

fight America, just like China. I'll just keep quiet," Duterte said. "But if you get something there from the economic zone, I will order the navy to fire."

Duterte was referring to the country's 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone, a stretch of sea where coastal states have been granted exclusive rights to exploit natural resources under a 1982 U.N. treaty. Foreign ships, however, could pass through those waters but could not fish or extract oil and gas from the under the seabed.

There were no immediate comments from U.S. or Chinese embassy officials.

Duterte ordered an end to all foreign scientific research missions in Benham, which his government renamed Philippine Rise, and asked the navy and air force to patrol the waters. Some believe the waters could be harboring undersea gas and oil deposits in addition to its rich fishing grounds.

"I'm putting notice to the world that the Philippine Rise, which we call Benham Rise, is ours ... and the economic zone is ours," Duterte said.

Benham Rise, which faces the Pacific Ocean, is approximately 59 million acres in size and encompasses the Philip-

pinas' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf further out in the ocean.

Philippine security officials raised concerns about intrusions when a Chinese ship was monitored in the waters early last year, drawing public attention to the territory.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said Tuesday that all foreign scientific groups, including from China, Japan, South Korea and the United States, have concluded their research work in the waters, and Duterte wanted future research missions to be done by Filipinos.

Skater saving pups from dog meat trade

Associated Press

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — Canadian figure skater Meagan Duhamel is hoping to win a gold medal in South Korea this month — though no prize could be more life-changing than her previous Pyeongchang souvenir.

Not after last year, when the two-time world champion pairs skater brought home Moo-tae — an affable miniature dachshund mix with big ears, bowed legs and the bad luck of being born into the Korean dog meat trade. Duhamel, a vegan and animal lover, helped rescue Moo-tae by accompanying him on his flight from South Korea to Canada last February. The 2-year-old pup has been living with her and husband/coach Bruno Marcotte in Montreal since, spending his days doing yoga with Duhamel and making friends at the local dog park.

It's been a different life for Moo-tae. Like roughly 2 million dogs each year, he was supposed to be raised on a Korean dog meat farm, where conditions are often poor. Certainly, he would have been sold and slaughtered, then probably served in soup at one of many

restaurants still popular among Korea's elderly population.

Koreans have been eating dog for thousands of years, though the practice has waned recently, and most in the country don't do it regularly. Many older Koreans believe dog meat aids virility, though younger citizens are largely either against the practice or indifferent to it. Some major dog meat shops — like the Moran Market in Seongnam — have been shuttered, and President Moon Jae-in even made a campaign promise to adopt a shelter dog if he won last year's presidential election. He welcomed a 4-year-old mixed breed named Tory in July.

Still, the industry persists, and despite pressure from animal rights groups — particularly from Western countries — Pyeongchang won't completely shelter Olympic visitors from the trade this month. Area restaurants were offered government aid if they stopped selling dog meat, but some declined to change their menus.

A Gangwon province official told The Associated Press there were no plans to relocate dog farms situated near Olympic areas.

Flu season equals epidemic of 2009

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The flu has further tightened its grip on the U.S. This season is now as bad as the swine flu epidemic nine years ago.

A government report out Friday shows 1 of every 13 visits to the doctor last week was for fever, cough and other symptoms of the flu. That ties the highest level seen in the U.S. during swine flu in 2009, and it surpasses every winter flu season since 2003, when the government changed the way it measures flu.

"I wish that there were better news this week, but almost everything we're looking at is bad news," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on Friday.

Flu season usually takes off in late December and peaks around February. This season started early and was widespread in many states by December. Early last month, it hit what seemed like peak levels — but then continued to surge.

The season has been driven by a nasty type of flu that tends to put more people in the hospi-

tal and cause more deaths than other more common flu bugs. Still, its long-lasting intensity has surprised experts, who are still sorting out why it's been so bad. One possibility is that the vaccine is doing an unusually poor job; U.S. data on effectiveness is expected this week.

Some doctors say this is the worst flu season they've seen in decades. Some patients are saying that, too.

Veda Albertson, 70, a retiree in Tampa, Fla., was sick for three weeks with high fever and fluid in her lungs. She said she hadn't been this sick from the flu since the 1960s, when she was a young mother who couldn't get out of bed to go to the crib of her crying baby.

"It was like, 'Wham!' It was bad. It was awful," she said of the illness that hit her on Christmas Day.

Heather Jossi, 40, a Denver police officer and avid runner, said her illness last month was the worst flu she's experienced. "I don't remember aches this bad. Not for four days," said Jossi. "It took me out."

Albertson said she got a flu shot, Jossi did not.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Campaign wants lovers to think of animals

PA PITTSBURGH — An environmental group wants couples to think of wild animals before acting like them this Valentine's Day.

The Center for Biological Diversity handed out endangered species condoms at the Carnegie Science Center's adults-only Valentine's event Friday.

The wrappers featured colorful artwork and slogans such as "Before it gets any hotter ... remember the sea otter," and "Can't refrain? Think of the whooping crane."

The group hopes to show how human population growth negatively affects wildlife.

Suspect told judge he was 'threat to society'

VA RICHMOND — A Virginia man who four years ago wrote to a judge that he was a "threat to society" and needed mental health treatment has been arrested in a killing that happened last month.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported Devrick R. Gail, 29, was arrested last Monday for the shooting death of Davon R. Daniel, who was found dead Jan. 2.

In 2014, Gail wrote a letter to U.S. District Judge Robert E. Payne while still incarcerated. In it, he cited a 66 percent recidivism rate and said "that's not a statistical category I want to be a part of." Gail also said he was "more of a detrimental threat to society" than ever before.

Vacancy sign flashes at 'Green Roof Inn' jail

FL BUNNELL — Looking to stay at the Green Roof Inn? Probably not.

A Florida sheriff said rooms are available, and a new retro-neon sign purchased with drug-seized assets features a blinking "vacancy" light.

Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly dubbed the county jail the Green Roof Inn. A sign lists the amenities at the facility north of Daytona Beach. There is no privacy, group bathrooms and no meal selection.

But inmates do get free transportation to court and state prisons, designer handcuffs and leg irons, color coordinated jumpsuits and shoes.

Suspect buries coat but gets caught cold

AK ANCHORAGE — Police in Alaska's largest city said a man robbed a fast food restaurant and attempted a get-away by burying his coat in fresh snow.

Anchorage police received a report last week of a robbery at a Taco Bell.

The suspect wore a black, hooded jacket and a black towel covered his face. He demanded money, then fled on foot.

As patrol officers responded, dispatchers took a call of a man taking off his outerwear and burying it in snow three blocks from the restaurant.

Officers followed tracks and spotted a man several blocks away who was not dressed for temperatures in the low 20s.

Oxford comma a factor in lawsuit settlement

ME PORTLAND — A Maine dairy company has settled a lawsuit over an overtime dispute that was the subject of a ruling hinging on the use of the Oxford comma.

Drivers with Oakhurst Dairy filed the lawsuit in 2014 seeking more than \$10 million.

Court documents filed Thursday show that they settled for \$5 million.

A federal appeals court decided to keep the drivers' lawsuit alive last year. The suit concerned an exemption from Maine's overtime law that says it doesn't apply to "canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment or distribution of" foods.

The disagreement stemmed from the fact there's no Oxford, or serial, comma in the "packing for shipment or distribution" part. The drivers said the words referred to the activity of packing and shipping, but they don't do any packing.

Board decides cat can't stay in public library

MI LYONS — Officials in a central Michigan community have said no to allowing a cat to stay in the public library.

The Sentinel-Standard of Ionia reported the Lyons Township District Library Board of Directors recently reached its decision on the gray and white cat, known as Aww Kitty.

The board had decided in December that the cat would have to leave the Lyons Public Library because some patrons are allergic, but local residents last month asked the board to reconsider.

Aww Kitty was a stray before she came to the library about 2 years ago. She now is living at another home.

Catholic school may bar girl over sticker

CT GREENWICH — The parents of a student at a Roman Catholic school in Connecticut said their daughter was told to remove a Planned

Parenthood sticker from her laptop or she wouldn't be allowed to re-enroll.

The "I stand with Planned Parenthood" sticker is one of several on Sacred Heart Greenwich sophomore Kate Murray's laptop.

Brian and Tracy Murray told the Greenwich Time their daughter removed the pro-abortion rights group's sticker so she could attend class this week but hasn't decided if she'll stay longterm.

The school's head wouldn't discuss the situation directly but wrote that the school discourages the display of anything "supporting or opposing political candidates, positions or organizations."

Fans return Eagles rookie's lost cellphone

PA PHILADELPHIA — A group of fans helped return Philadelphia Eagles rookie cornerback Sidney Jones' lost cellphone during the team's Super Bowl victory parade — but not before taking a selfie.

Jones was with several of his teammates in Philadelphia on Thursday as they celebrated the Eagles' 41-33 victory over the New England Patriots when his phone reportedly fell out of his back pocket.

A photo appeared on the player's verified Instagram page shortly afterward that showed several smiling fans with the caption, "Guess who dropped their phone at the parade!" The fans promised to return it.

Jones confirmed his cellphone was missing in a post on Twitter.

He later posted an image on Instagram of him among a group of fans saying he got his phone back with the hashtag "#RealLove."

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Olympic medals roundup

Dutch sweep podium on opening day

Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — An all-orange medal podium isn't really that surprising at the Olympic speedskating oval anymore. After all, the Dutch had four sweeps at the Sochi Games four years ago.

But to see Carlijn Achtereekte towering over two-time 3,000-meter champion Ireen Wust and her anointed successor Antoinette de Jong, that was stunning indeed.

In another jaw-dropping performance from the Dutch on the first day of the Olympic speedskating program, they already raised expectations that their record 23-medal haul from Sochi could be within reach.

Amazingly, Achtereekte went under 4 minutes, which only two other women had done at sea level, and her time of 3 minutes, 59.21 seconds was the best of the night.

The event seemed set to give Wust a third Olympic gold medal in the 3,000, but she finished .08 seconds behind Achtereekte after struggling through the final lap.

Biathlon: Laura Dahlmeier was laying on

the frozen ground at the Olympics, blocking out the glare of the lights from above, blocking out the bitter 10-degree temperature and the gusts of wind, and fired five shots from her .22-caliber small-bore rifle at a target 50 meters away.

Dahlmeier, the sport's rising star, managed the conditions just fine on Saturday night, taking home gold in the women's 7.5-kilometer sprint after hitting all 10 of her targets. But she collapsed to the ground exhausted after what she called a "perfect race."

Silver medalist Marte Olsbu of Norway called the course "difficult" because of the wind on the shooting range. There should be more of that to come as the Olympics continue.

Cross-country skiing: Charlotte Kalla of Sweden won the first gold medal of the games and Norwegian cross-country skier Marit Bjoergen took silver in the women's 15-kilometer skiathlon to become the most decorated female Winter Olympian ever.

It was an 11th career medal for Bjoer-

gen, breaking a three-way tie with Raisa Smetanina of Russia and Stefania Belmondo of Italy.

Kalla won the race by more than seven seconds after breaking away from the pack in the last 2 kilometers to avenge her second-place finish to Bjoergen at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Krista Parmakowski of Finland was third and Jessica Diggins placed fifth, missing a chance to become the first American woman to earn a medal in cross-country skiing.

Ski jumping: The cold was biting. The wind was brutal. And for Andreas Wellinger, it added up to Olympic gold.

The 22-year-old German won the men's normal hill title despite the frigid temperatures and whipping wind at the Alpensia Ski Jumping Center. He nailed a jump of 113.5 meters to secure the gold with 259.3 points.

Johann Andre Forfang took silver ahead of Norwegian teammate Robert Johansson.

Host South Korea wins its first gold of Games

Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — Short-track speedskating is wildly popular in South Korea and the Olympic host country had reason to celebrate on the first night of racing.

Lim Hyo-jun won the crash-filled men's 1,500-meter final, giving South Korea its first gold medal of the Pyeongchang Games on Saturday. He raised his arms in triumph and let out a yell as the capacity crowd roared its approval.

Lim surged past Sjinkie Knegt of the Netherlands and finished about two blade lengths ahead in an Olympic-record of 2 minutes, 10.485 seconds.

"I was very overwhelmed because it's my home country," Lim said. "I wanted to show my really good attitude and best efforts, but the coach said, 'Don't stress yourself too hard. Make yourself comfortable.' I just followed his direction and I think that led to better results."

Knegt earned silver while bronze went to Semen Elistra-

tov, who became the first Russian medalist of the games.

Russia was banned from the Olympics for a massive doping scheme four years ago in Sochi, but Elistratov is among 168 competitors allowed in as "Olympic Athletes from Russia."

"I dedicate this medal to all guys that have been excluded from these games in such a hard and unfair way," Elistratov said. "This medal is for you."

American teenager Maame Biney advanced to the quarterfinals of the women's 500 in her Olympic debut. The 18-year-old was born in Ghana and moved to the U.S. as a child.

Biney finished second in her heat, while teammate Lana Gehring was eliminated on a difficult night for the U.S. team. Three-time Olympian J.R. Celski and John-Henry Krueger didn't make the 1,500 final after both got penalized. Aaron Tran finished last in the B final.

In the 1,500, defending Olym-

pic champion Charles Hamelin of Canada was penalized for impeding after crossing the finish in sixth place.

Lim beat out eight rivals in the crowded final, which had three extra skaters after some were advanced because of penalties in the semifinals. Knegt patted Lim on his helmet after the two crossed the finish line.

"I went in front a little too early, with about five laps to go," Knegt said. "I was not really prepared for that. Lim had a little more acceleration at the end. He was the best today."

Knegt's medal came shortly after the Dutch swept the podium in the women's 3,000 at the big oval, making it the first time the nation won four medals in a single day at a Winter Games.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and his wife watched the short-track competition at Gangneung Ice Arena with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and his wife, although the Moons left for the women's

hockey game featuring a unified Korean team before Lim's victory.

Lim wasn't even the strongest South Korean skater in the final. Hwang Dae-heon led the World Cup rankings after having won most of his 1,500 races this season, but he crashed. The other South Korean, Seo Yira, was relegated to the B final.

Lim's victory was unexpected, after the 21-year-old had back problems in recent months and was unable to compete in several World Cup events.

Lim credited six-time Olympic champion Viktor Ahn for giving him advice as a young skater.

"He told me I could do well. I have great respect for him," Lim said. "When I heard the news about Viktor Ahn, it was regretful."

In the women's 3,000 relay, teams from South Korea, Canada, China and Italy reached Tuesday's final.

NHL roundup

Islanders storm back, top Wings in OT

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Brock Nelson scored his third goal of the game 3:15 into overtime and the New York Islanders, boosted by rookie Mathew Barzal's five assists, beat the Detroit Red Wings 7-6 on Friday night.

The Islanders trailed 5-2 with 6:33 left in regulation when Detroit's Tyler Bertuzzi was assessed a major game misconduct for slashing Cal Clutterbuck.

New York took full advantage as Nelson, Anders Lee, Nick Leddy and Josh Bailey scored power-play goals in the span of 3:37 for a 6-5 lead. The four power-play goals in the third period set a franchise record.

Stars 4, Penguins 3 (SO): Tyler Seguin scored the decid-

ing shootout goal and Dallas goalie Kari Lehtonen stopped all three visiting Pittsburgh shooters in the tiebreaker.

Lehtonen won his fifth straight game, and stretched Dallas' winning streak to five games.

Capitals 4, Blue Jackets 2: Fourth-line center Jay Beagle put his team ahead for good with his 50th career goal, and Washington continued its dominance over visiting Columbus.

Evgeny Kuznetsov and Lars Eller each had a goal and an assist as Washington swept a home-and-home with Columbus and won its sixth straight against the Blue Jackets dating to last season.

Ducks 3, Oilers 2: Ryan Kesler scored early in the third

period, and host Anaheim held on for the win.

Corey Perry also scored and Hampus Lindholm had a goal and an assist for the Ducks, who are tied with San Jose and Calgary for third place in the Pacific Division with 64 points.

Rangers 4, Flames 3: Mika Zibanejad scored the go-ahead goal on a power play, Henrik Lundqvist made 28 saves in relief and New York beat visiting Calgary to snap a four-game losing streak.

Zibanejad scored at 12:41 off a cross-ice pass from J.T. Miller. Lundqvist replaced Ondrej Pavelec after Pavelec injured his knee in the first period.

Blues 5, Jets 2: Vladimir Tarasenko scored two goals and visiting St. Louis used a big push in the second period to

beat Winnipeg.

Tarasenko, Patrik Berglund and Alexander Steen scored in a 7½-minute span of the second, helping St. Louis open a 3-0 lead. Tarasenko added his 23rd goal in the third after Winnipeg pulled within one. Brayden Schwartz scored into an empty net and had an assist.

Kings 3, Panthers 1: Anze Kopitar scored his 22nd goal of the season, Jonathan Quick made 35 saves and visiting Los Angeles beat Florida for its third straight victory.

Jonny Brodzinski scored the go-ahead goal, and Nick Shore also connected for the Kings.

Hurricanes 4, Canucks 1: Brett Pesce, Phil Di Giuseppe and Sebastian Aho scored in the first period, leading host Carolina past Vancouver.

Sports briefs

Capitals sign Eller to five-year, \$17.5 million extension

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Washington Capitals have re-signed center Lars Eller to a \$17.5 million, five-year contract extension.

Eller will count \$3.5 million against the salary cap through the 2022-23 season. General manager Brian MacLellan announced the deal Saturday.

The 28-year-old Dane has 11 goals and 17 assists for 28 points in 53 games this season, three points shy of his career high. In 576 NHL games with the St. Louis Blues, Montreal Canadiens and Capitals, Eller has 96 goals and 113 assists.

Washington traded two second-round picks to Montreal for Eller at the 2017 NHL Draft.

Cordeiro elected new US Soccer president

ORLANDO, Fla. — Carlos Cordeiro has been elected president of the U.S. Soccer Federa-

tion, assuming control of an organization that must chart a new course after its men's team failed to qualify for this year's World Cup.

Cordeiro has been the right-hand man the past two years of outgoing president Sunil Gulati. He won on the third ballot Saturday with 68.6 percent of the vote. Cordeiro called the outcome "incredibly humbling."

The vote initially featured eight candidates. Cordeiro pulled away from Kathy Carter, on-leave president of Major League Soccer's marketing arm. She had the backing of MLS Commissioner Don Garber and narrowly trailed Cordeiro on the first ballot.

The other candidates were: former men's national team players Paul Caligiuri, Kyle Martino and Eric Wynalda, lawyers Steve Gans and Michael Winograd and former U.S. women's goalkeeper Hope Solo.

Johnson, Hossler tied for Pebble Beach lead

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Dustin Johnson apparently has an issue with the Shore Course at Monterey Peninsula only when the weather is ugly. Under a gorgeous sky Friday, the world's No. 1 player shot a 7-under 64 and shared the 36-hole lead with Beau Hossler in the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

Johnson opened with three straight birdies, including a 9-iron on the par-3 11th. The weather was so foul last year that he hit 4-iron. He heads over to Pebble Beach for the final two rounds as he tries to win his second straight PGA Tour event.

Hossler played bogey-free at Spyglass Hill for a 67. They were at 12-under par.

Rory McIlroy drove to the front of the par-4 fifth green and then took five putts from

there. He shot 74.

Father of Cowboys coach Garrett dies

DALLAS — Jim Garrett, the father of Dallas Cowboys coach Jason Garrett and a longtime scout for the club, has died. He was 87.

The team said Jim Garrett died Friday night with his wife, Jane, and his eight children by his side.

The elder Garrett first joined the Cowboys as a scout in 1968 and spent 36 of the next 38 years coaching or scouting in the NFL, including the last 17 of his career with the Cowboys. He wrote the original scouting report on Hall of Fame quarterback Troy Aikman, the No. 1 pick in the 1989 draft.

Jim Garrett was part of four Super Bowl teams in Dallas, including the championship teams from the 1992, 1993 and 1995 seasons.

NBA roundup

James, Cavs begin reboot with victory

Associated Press

ATLANTA — LeBron James had a triple-double and Kyle Korver scored a season-high 30 points, including four straight three-pointers to close the third period, as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Atlanta Hawks 123-107 on Friday night for a successful start to their reboot.

One day after unloading six players, including guards Isaiah Thomas and Dwyane Wade, in three trades, the Cavaliers were in a state of transition. They had only nine available players against the Hawks, but Korver more than made up for a short bench.

Korver, the former Hawks fan favorite, made 7 of 13 from three-point range and finished two points from matching his career high of 32.

James had 22 points, 17 assists and 12 rebounds. Jeff Green, also coming off the bench, had 24 points.

Newcomers George Hill, Jordan Clarkson, Larry Nance Jr. and Rodney Hood joined the Cavs, but remained in the locker room during the game. They are expected to make their debuts with Cleveland on Sunday in Boston.

Heat 91, Bucks 85: Wade returned with a quiet game, but his mere presence got a rise out of the home fans, and teammates Hassan Whiteside and Tyler Johnson led the way as Miami snapped a five-game losing streak and capped a celebratory night.

Wade came off the bench to score three points on 1-for-6 shooting with two assists, one rebound, a key late block, and four turnovers in 22 minutes in his first game since being acquired in a trade from Cleveland on Thursday. Wade played 13 seasons and won three NBA championships with the Heat before leaving as a free agent for Chicago in 2016.

Trail Blazers 118, Kings 100: Damian Lillard scored 22 of his season-high 50 points in the third quarter, and visiting Portland beat Sacramento.

Johnson scored 19 points and Whiteside scored 12 points and had 16 rebounds. Bam Adebayo added 15 points and 10 rebounds, and Josh Richardson chipped in 16 points for Miami.

Clippers 108, Pistons 95: Lou Williams scored 26 points, and Los Angeles handed former teammate Blake Griffin his first loss with host Detroit.

It was a bit of an off night for Griffin, who scored 19 points but shot 7 of 19 from the field. The whole Detroit team faded down the stretch. The Pistons led 80-77 after three quarters but scored only 15 points in the fourth.

Jazz 106, Hornets 94: At Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell scored 25 points, and Utah extended its league-best winning streak to eight.

Bulls 114, Timberwolves 113: Zach LaVine scored 35 points against his former team, and the Bulls spoiled Jimmy Butler's return to Chicago.

Rockets 130, Nuggets 104: James Harden scored 28 points, Clint Capela added 23 points with a career-high 25 rebounds and Houston never trailed in a lopsided win over visiting Denver.

Pacers 97, Celtics 91: Victor Oladipo scored 35 points and helped Indiana recover after blowing a 26-point lead to beat host Boston.

76ers 100, Pelicans 82: Joel Embiid scored 24 points and grabbed 16 rebounds, and Dario Saric had 24 points and four threes as host Philadelphia rolled over New Orleans.

Rhode Island wins 15th straight game

Associated Press

KINGSTON, R.I. — Cyril Langevine came off the bench with Rhode Island leading by five points, and soon the advantage was down to one.

All he did over the next nine minutes was score 10 points and grab four rebounds while helping the 18th-ranked Rams open a 16-point lead.

"We're not a team, we're a program," coach Dan Hurley said on Friday night after Rhode Island beat Davidson 72-59 to match a school record with its 15th win in a row. "We've got a real deep team. You can go on winning streaks and have seasons like this when you have different guys step up each night."

Langevine scored a career-high 14 points and added eight rebounds in 22 minutes, and Jarvis Garrett scored all 17 of his points in the second half for the Rams (20-3, 12-0 Atlantic 10). URI last won 15 straight in 1939-40.

Kellan Grady scored 19 for Davidson (13-10, 8-4) and Peyton Aldridge scored 15. The Wildcats, who had won eight of their last 10, made 20 three-pointers in Tuesday's victory over Saint Joseph's, but shot just 4-for-17 from beyond the arc against URI.

"Eliminating the three-point line was key No. 1," Hurley said. "Our goal is five or less. We probably could have lived with seven or eight."

"We just didn't think they had a chance to beat us if they didn't shoot the ball well," Hurley added.

URI held a 15-13 lead before scoring 12 of the next 13 points to open a double-digit lead it never relinquished. Langevine had back-to-back dunks to start the run and also had a three-point play with 6:48 left in the first to make it 30-16 before returning to the bench for the rest of the half.

Don't do that

Langevine, who was coming off a game against Virginia

Commonwealth in which he grabbed a career-high 18 rebounds, had a crowd-pleasing dunk early in the second half that drew a technical foul for taunting.

Asked what the official told him, Langevine said, "He laughed at me. 'Cause I guess I flexed."

Coming out of the timeout, Rhode Island players were trying to pump up the crowd, but were told to stop by the referee. Aldridge made one of two free throws, cutting the deficit to 42-27.

Big picture

Davidson: The Wildcats entered the night on a three-game winning streak and holding a one-game lead over St. Bonaventure for second place in the Atlantic 10. They may still be second-best in the conference, but the gap between them and the Rams doesn't seem to be getting any smaller.

URI: At No. 18 in the AP Top 25, the Rams have already reached their highest ranking ever. They do not play again before the next votes are cast, so they could move up when the new poll is announced on Monday.

Shooters gotta shoot

Garrett missed his only shot in 12 minutes in the first half but made six of seven while playing 17 minutes in the second. He said he was catching the ball off balance in the first and not feeling like the shot was there.

"At halftime, my teammates were telling me to shoot," he said. "So I just came out shooting."

Up next

Davidson: Visits Virginia Commonwealth on Wednesday night.

Rhode Island: Hosts Richmond on Tuesday night.