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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Dual carrier deal could save Navy \$4B

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

The Navy has awarded a \$14.9 billion construction contract for a pair of Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers, according to a Defense Department contract announcement.

The nuclear-powered CVN 80 and CVN 81 will be designed and built by Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding, according to the announcement issued Thursday. Most of the work will be done in Newport News, Va., and is expected to be completed by February 2034.

The total price of the two ships is estimated to reach about \$24 billion once government-furnished systems such as electromagnetic aircraft launch systems and advanced arresting gear are added, according to

a USNI News report Thursday.

The contract was designed to offer "significant savings to the government," the Navy said in a statement Thursday. By committing to the construction of two carriers in a single contract, the service said it will pay \$4 billion less than originally estimated for procuring the ships individually.

The announcement comes following criticism over mounting costs in procuring and deploying the USS Gerald R. Ford, the first carrier of its class, which was commissioned in 2017 but is still undergoing fixes.

The Navy buys most ships in block-buy contracts, but larger vessels are typically bought individually because of their higher costs.

That concept could be changing, as some Navy officials

have considered using a similar two-ship tactic to buy the next amphibious assault ships, according to the USNI News report.

Navy Secretary Richard Spencer said in the service's statement that the contract team achieved the savings by "focusing on optimizing construction activities and material procurement."

"One contract for construction of the two ships will enable the shipbuilder flexibility to best employ its skilled workforce to design once and build twice for unprecedented labor reductions while providing stability and opportunities for further efficiencies within the nuclear industrial base," he said.

Also included in the contract are costs for modifications required to integrate Mk 38 gun

systems, F-35C Lightning II stealth fighters and MQ-25 Stingray Unmanned Aircraft Systems, according to the statement.

"These modifications increase the lethality of the Ford class and represent an additional \$100 million in savings that is in addition to the \$4 billion, since these new capabilities were not included in the original single-CVN Navy estimate," the Navy said in the statement.

CVN 80 will replace the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, which has been in service since 1977, according to the Navy. CVN 81 will replace the 1982-commissioned USS Carl Vinson. They will be the third and fourth members of the Ford class of aircraft carriers, behind the Ford and upcoming USS John F. Kennedy.

Marine honored for aiding airman after accident

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An Okinawa-based Marine sergeant was awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal on Friday for rendering first aid to an Air Force airman injured in a New Year's Eve motorcycle accident.

Airman 1st Class Chace Wozniak was touring in northern Okinawa that afternoon alongside a group of five Toyota Supras — including one driven by Sgt. David Nguyen Lam — when he collided with a pair of roadside barriers and a water pipe. His left femur and right arm were broken, and bones were protruding from his body.

Lam and other Marines involved that day recently told Stars and Stripes how they relied on their training and basic

lifesaving skills to assist the injured airman.

"Being in the military, it gave me more confidence in this situation to know that I could do something," Lam said. "Instead of being in shock, I was able to give a quick reaction."

Lam was decorated by Lt. Col. Matthew Mulvey, commanding officer of the 3rd Transportation Support Battalion, during a Friday morning formation at Camp Foster. It was unclear whether the other Marines involved would also be honored.

"I had an 'oh, snap' moment," Lam said when recalling the crash. "I put my emergency brakes on. I stopped and ran towards [Wozniak]."

Lam, the first at the accident scene, was soon joined by six Marines in the four other Supras. The group had started at 8

a.m. on a farewell ride for one of their drivers.

Wozniak, assigned to the 353rd Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, crossed paths with the Supras at about 1 p.m. as their drivers turned back toward a missed exit. He complimented the crew on their vehicles and asked to join the ride, said Cpl. Devon Duran-Wernet.

Less than 30 minutes later, Wozniak maneuvered from the rear of the pack to the middle and in front of Lam. He took a turn on the curvy, two-lane road, struck two roadside barriers and hit a water pipe, according to the Marine witnesses. They said Wozniak appeared badly injured.

Lam said a Japanese woman who lived nearby called an ambulance, and the other vehicles

in the group turned around to assist.

When Cpl. Gerardo Lujan, of Bravo Company, also of the 3rd Law Enforcement Battalion, arrived, he asked the woman for scissors to cut Wozniak's clothes to look for injuries.

"She took me to her house," Lujan said. "I saw a piece of wood, too, that I took to use as a possible splint."

All seven Marines played individual roles. Some applied first aid to the injuries on Wozniak's arms and legs; others supported his head to lessen the possibility of injury to the neck and back.

At about 2 p.m., an ambulance took Wozniak to a helicopter that carried him to emergency care.

He sent the Marines text messages after the accident, thanking them for their response.

Trump taps former doctor for promotion

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has tapped a senior Navy officer that he considered last year to be his Veterans Affairs secretary for promotion to two-star admiral and to be his chief medical adviser, even though there is still an open Pentagon investigation against him into allegations that derailed his VA secretary nomination.

The White House sent Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson's name for promotion consideration to the Senate on Jan. 15. He was serving as the president's doctor last April when Trump nominated him for the VA post, and he withdrew from consideration after accusations of mismanagement and misconduct as White House physician emerged.

A spokesman for the Defense Department Inspector Gener-

al's Office, Bruce Anderson, said his office's investigation into Jackson is still ongoing. The office, considered the Pentagon's top watchdog, said in June that it had opened a case against Jackson, though it would not comment on the scope of it.

A Navy spokesman, Lt. Christina Sears, said Jackson is still assigned to the White House. The Navy originally submitted Jackson's name for promotion last year before Trump tapped him as VA secretary, and the White House resubmitted it, she said. The website Task & Purpose first reported the resubmission of Jackson's nomination on Friday evening.

The White House could not be reached for comment.

It isn't clear whether the Armed Services Committee will act on Jackson's new nomi-

nation while the investigation is still ongoing.

"We don't comment on pending nominations, ongoing investigations or, in this case, both," said Chip Unruh, a spokesman for Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., the ranking Democrat on the committee.

The new nomination thrusts back into the limelight a controversy that had started to fade from view for the Trump administration.

After Trump nominated Jackson for the VA secretary post last April, Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, released a two-page summary of accusations against him that included freely dispensing medication, drinking on the job and creating a hostile workplace. Some former colleagues said

he was nicknamed the "Candyman" because of how he dispensed medications.

The White House disputed the most serious of those allegations, saying it had conducted a thorough investigation of his past and found no evidence. Brian McKeon, a former executive secretary and chief of staff of the National Security Council in the Obama administration, also said in an interview in April that the allegations did not ring true.

Jackson, who previously served as President Barack Obama's attending physician, denied any wrongdoing, and Trump leaped to his defense.

"Ronny L. Jackson is one of the finest men I've ever met," Trump said last April, adding that "Washington can be a very mean place."

Sailor found drunk, taking a shower inside home in Japan

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
AND HANA KUSUMOTO

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A U.S. servicemember was arrested Saturday in the home of a Japanese couple who found him naked after he'd used their shower, according to local news reports.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Nathaniel Williams, 27, is accused of walking through the unlocked front door of a home in Ebina City while intoxicated about 5:10 a.m., the Kanagawa Shimbun reported Saturday.

Williams is assigned to the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Navy officials said Saturday evening.

Ebina City neighbors Atsugi. Williams was discovered after a 44-year-old man who lives in the home woke up to use the bathroom and heard water running, the Kanagawa Shimbun report said.

The man thought a family member was using the shower but soon saw Williams emerge naked from the bathroom, according to the newspaper.

The man then woke up his wife, who called police, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

Police arrested Williams on suspicion of trespassing, a Kanagawa prefectural police spokesman told Stars and Stripes on Saturday afternoon.

Officers detected alcohol on Williams' breath, according to the Kanagawa Shimbun report.

The residence is on the second floor of an apartment building. There were no signs of forced entry, so police believe Williams entered from an unlocked front door, according to the newspaper.

Police planned to send the case to the prosecutors office Sunday, the police spokesman said.

Marine combat engineers practice bridge-building

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II
Stars and Stripes

NAHA, Okinawa — Marine combat engineers recently practiced their bridge-building skills at Naha Military Port, demonstrating how to quickly erect a span up to 328 feet long in as little as a half-hour.

With few other options available, the port affords a site for the Marines to maintain their readiness and qualify newly assigned servicemembers. The 9th Engineer Support Battalion certified eight more Marines as bridge operators, for a total 13.

For three days, Jan. 29-31, the Marines maneuvered the bridge-erection boat, a small tuglike vessel used to manipulate sections of an improved ribbon bridge into place. Marines worked day and night to build the bridge. Combat engineers must be licensed to deploy the improved ribbon bridge, which can also be used as a raft, to cross bodies of water, or in Ma-

rine parlance, a "wet gap obstacle." The licensing process takes roughly two weeks and includes classroom instruction, a written test and demonstration of basic and advanced maneuvers with the boat.

"It's been a great opportunity," said Cpl. Malon Johnson, who took the test to be a licensed operator. "I'm getting familiar with the boats to be able to use them myself, and train other Marines on how to use them."

When Marine units cannot cross water on foot or in vehicles, the combat engineers jump into action with the improved ribbon bridge to get units and supplies from the near shore to the far shore, Johnson said.

The bridge is a foldable, aluminum system whose individual segments, or bays, can be used as a raft or connected to span opposite shorelines, according to 1st Lt. Daniel Asheim, the improved ribbon bridge platoon commander from 9th Engineer Support Battalion.

DREAM COME TRUE

Former Vietnamese 'boat person' first to become brigadier general in US military

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — He was a penniless, traumatized Vietnamese teenager with a fifth-grade education when he arrived in the U.S. in 1980. He knew how to survive in the jungle, to evade checkpoints and to control the terror he often felt.

But he couldn't speak more than a few words of English and had little practice in how to live a regular life.

Yet within seven years after his American arrival, Lap The Chau had a new name, a degree from the Virginia Military Institute and a career as "an officer in the greatest Army on Earth," as he put it.

Brig. Gen. Lapthe C. Flora, as he's now known, is deputy commander of U.S. Army Africa and assistant adjutant general of the Virginia National Guard.

He is thought to be the only Vietnamese "boat person" to become a general officer in the U.S. military.

"After what I went through, practically death, and then somebody gives you that opportunity to live again, I can only say from my own perspective that I'm very grateful for what this country has done for me," Flora said in an interview with *Stars and Stripes*.

Flora, who in civilian life is an engineer holding several patents on night-vision goggles,

has recounted his unlikely story many times.

"The possibility in this great nation is boundless; the American Dream is real, only if you dare to pursue it with laser-focused hard work and perseverance," Flora said in a speech when he was promoted to brigadier general more than two years ago.

He has also showed appreciation for those who helped upon his arrival in America.

"There's no one who can get to where they are on their own. You need help," he said in a 2017 talk at Raleigh Court United Methodist Church in Roanoke, Va.

The church had sponsored him and several family members in 1980.

'It was a joy'

"We had a house for them. They came with nothing," said Sharon Alexi, a former kindergarten teacher active in the church who helped settle the 11-member Chau family. She helped teach Flora and his brother English and how to drive.

"They caught on very quickly," she said. "It was fun. It was a joy."

A couple in the congregation were so taken with Flora that they adopted him when they were in their 60s and he was either 21 or 23; his birthdate is uncertain.

Flora is among 800,000 people who fled Vietnam by sea starting in 1975 in an international humanitarian crisis that took years to resolve. The exodus reached its height in 1978, when some 5,800 refugees a month were landing in Asian countries increasingly unwilling to accept them, and an untold number were dying at sea.

President Jimmy Carter responded by ordering U.S. ships to the rescue, then doubled the number of refugees accepted into the U.S., from 7,000 to 14,000 a month despite polls showing a majority of Americans disapproved.

"I benefited greatly from the U.S.' decision to accept me into this country," Flora said. "I'm extremely grateful for the circumstances that led to my citizenship."

In the end, nearly all of his family arrived in the U.S., including his future wife, his mother and a long-lost sister who'd been given up for adoption in Vietnam.

"I don't like to think about hypothetical paths my life could've taken," Flora said. "Instead, I focus on the future and my ability to give back whenever possible and sharing my story to inspire others."

That story includes many early hardships and eventual triumphs. When he was 2, his merchant marine father was killed in a mortar attack, Flora

said. The death plunged the ethnic Chinese family into poverty so severe that his mother gave her infant daughter to another couple.

Flight to freedom

His escape came after a sister and brother-in-law in 1979 secured 11 spots for the family on a cramped, fetid fishing boat. The terrifying voyage lasted five horrible days and nights, he said, with little food or water, and they were vulnerable to storms, shipwreck and pirates. A toddler on board died before they landed in Indonesia.

He graduated from high school in three years while working part time bagging groceries, and he was accepted to VMI.

From the start of his military career, Lapthe Flora made an impression. As a young lieutenant with the 116th Infantry Regiment in 1991, when Capt. Eric Barr met him, it was clear it wasn't just his backstory that made him unique.

"It just jumped out at me that Lapthe was one of the most professional, squared-away officers," Barr said. "It was just obvious he knew his business."

On a 2007 deployment to Kosovo, "whenever something really tough came up, Lapthe was known as the go-to person," said Barr, now a retired colonel.

Air Force commits to spending \$3B to rebuild Tyndall

The (Panama City, Fla.) News Herald

PANAMA CITY — The Air Force is committed to spending \$3 billion during the next five years to rebuild Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., including an initial investment of at least \$40 million by the end of 2019, senior service officials announced at a community forum Thursday.

Bay County officials said the ambitious reconstruction effort likely will create between 4,000 and 5,000 jobs, a major economic boon to the hard-

pressed civilian community.

"We are fully committed to the rebuilding of Tyndall Air Force Base," said John Henderson, assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations, environment and energy. A formal master plan for the base's recovery from Hurricane Michael will be sent to Congress this spring to guide the Air Force's funding requests, he said.

Henderson and other Air Force officials on Thursday spent several hours detailing the damage the base suffered from the storm and their blueprints

for transforming the 80-year-old base into a state-of-the-art military facility that will meet the service's requirements well into the next century. The first-of-its-kind "Tyndall Industry Day" attracted an audience of almost 500 people to the Holley Center at Florida State University-Panama City.

Addressing an array of local political leaders and construction industry executives in the hall, Henderson said: "We cannot do this without your help. We have some immense challenges in front of us."

Even though federal leaders from President Donald Trump to Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson previously stated their support for restoring Tyndall to a state-of-the-art air base, the forum at FSU-PC left a number of local officials breathing a deep sigh of relief.

"There's no doubt of their commitment," said Bay County Commissioner Robert Carroll, who also chairs the county's Long-Term Recovery Task Force. "We're getting our opportunity to rebuild."

Va. governor says he is not in racist photo

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's insistence that no, on further consideration, that's not him in the racist photo that appeared on his 1984 medical school yearbook page did nothing to quell the clamor from his own party Sunday for him to resign.

In fact, the Democrat's stunning about-face might have made things worse.

Northam on Friday apologized for appearing in a photograph that featured a man in blackface and a second person in a Ku Klux Klan hood and robe.

He did not say which costume he was wearing, but in a video he posted on Twitter, he said he could not "undo the harm my behavior caused then and today."

On Saturday, though, the governor reversed course and said he wasn't in the picture after all. Northam said he had not seen the photo before Friday, since he had not bought the yearbook or been involved in its preparation 35 years ago.

"It has taken time for me to make sure that it's not me, but I am convinced, I am convinced that I am not in that picture," he told reporters at the Executive Mansion in Richmond, calling the picture offensive and horrific.

Northam, who is one year into

his four-year term, again rejected demands that he step down.

While talking with reporters, Northam admitted he once used shoe polish to put on blackface as part of a Michael Jackson costume for a 1984 dance contest in Texas, when he was in the Army. Northam said he regrets that he didn't understand "the harmful legacy of an action like that."

Both of Virginia's U.S. senators, Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, joined the dean of Virginia's congressional delegation, Rep. Bobby Scott, in saying in a statement Saturday night that they no longer believe Northam can effectively serve as governor.

On Sunday, former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe told CNN's "State of the Union" that Northam — who served as McAuliffe's lieutenant governor — would eventually resign.

"Ralph will do the right thing for the Commonwealth of Virginia," McAuliffe said. "He's going to do the right thing."

If Northam does resign, Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax would become the second black governor in the state's history. In a statement, Fairfax said the state needs leaders who can unite people, but he stopped short of calling for Northam's departure.

Witnesses say El Chapo had sex with minors

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Newly unsealed documents about notorious Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman contain claims by witnesses that he had sex with minors he called "vitamins," a disturbing allegation coming just as a jury is about to start deliberating in his U.S. drug-trafficking case.

According to papers made public late Friday, a key government cooperator told authorities Guzman had him drug girls as young as 13 before Guzman had sex with them at one of his Mexican hideouts in the late 2000s.

On Saturday, one of Guzman's lawyers called the accusations "extremely salacious" and questioned the timing of the government filing.

Guzman "denies the allegations, which lack any corroboration and were deemed too prejudicial and unreliable to be admitted at trial," attorney Eduardo Balarezo said in a statement.

"It is unfortunate that the material was publicly released just prior to the jury beginning deliberations."

The jury is set to begin deliberations Monday after a nearly three-month trial on charges that, as the head of the Sinaloa cartel Guzman oversaw a drug-smuggling empire that flooded the U.S. market with at least 200 tons of cocaine and made

\$14 billion off of it. The defense said cooperating witnesses have made Guzman a scapegoat for their own crimes.

The unsealing of the documents came at the request of The New York Times and Vice News. U.S. District Judge Brian Cogan had ordered prosecutors to review the material — originally sealed because it was deemed unrelated to the drug charges — and make portions of it public within four days after the government rested its case against Guzman.

One document said Colombian drug trafficker Alex Cifuentes, while living with Guzman around 2007, told investigators someone known as Comadre Maria would offer photos of young girls to Guzman. For \$5,000, the one of Guzman's choice would be sent to a secluded Sinaloa ranch, Cifuentes said, according to the papers.

Guzman directed Cifuentes to put a "powdery substance" into the girls' drinks before sex, said Cifuentes. Guzman "called the youngest of the girls his 'vitamins' because he believed that sexual activity with young girls gave him 'life,'" he added.

Cifuentes also admitted having sex with minors but without drugging them. The document said other cooperating witnesses have backed up the claims about Guzman's interactions with underage girls.

US sees limitations on reuniting migrant families

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The Trump administration says it would require extraordinary effort to reunite what may be thousands of migrant children who have been separated from their parents and that even if it could, the children would likely be emotionally harmed.

Jonathan White, who leads the Department of Health and Human Services' efforts to reunite migrant children with their parents, said removing children from "sponsor" homes to rejoin their parents "would present grave child welfare concerns." He said the

government should focus on reuniting children currently in its custody, not those who have already been released to sponsors.

"It would destabilize the permanency of their existing home environment, and could be traumatic to the children," White said in a court filing late Friday, citing his years of experience working with unaccompanied migrant children and his background as a social worker.

The administration outlined its position in a court-ordered response to a government watchdog report last month that found many more migrant children may have been split

from their families than previously reported. The government didn't adequately track separated children before a federal judge in San Diego ruled in June that children in its custody must be reunited with their parents.

Ann Maxwell, Health and Human Services' assistant inspector general for evaluations, said last month that the number of separated children was certainly larger than the 2,737 listed by the government in court documents. The department's inspector general report didn't have a precise count.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Prosecutors: Man held 'death party' for wife

MN SEARLES — A Minnesota man is accused of removing his ailing wife from a care center, taking her home and holding what is described as a “death party” with methamphetamine before she died.

Duane Johnson is charged with criminal neglect. Prosecutors said he failed to provide proper care for Debra Lynn Johnson, 69, who died at their home in Searles Jan. 24.

Prosecutors said Johnson told investigators he was fulfilling a promise to his wife that he would not let her die in a nursing home when he removed her from a transitional care facility. Authorities said Johnson told them he gave some methamphetamine to his wife because she wanted to party before her death.

Saudi suspected in hit-and-run disappears

OR PORTLAND — The parents of a teenage girl who was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver while crossing a street in Portland said they are having a hard time dealing with the fact that the suspect has disappeared and may have been helped by the government of Saudi Arabia.

Fallon Smart, 15, was struck Aug. 19, 2016. Police said the vehicle was driven by Abdulrahman Sameer Noorah, a Saudi who was charged with manslaughter, reckless driving and other crimes. The government of Saudi Arabia posted his bail.

Federal law enforcement officials believe the Saudi government then helped him escape the country.

Robbery try ends when gun gets stuck

MO ST. LOUIS — St. Louis police are searching for a would-be robber whose crime was thwarted when his gun got stuck in his pants.

Police told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that a gunman walked into a Family Dollar store Thursday afternoon and ordered an employee to give him the cash register. The worker said he couldn't, so the suspect reached for a firearm from the waistband of his jeans.

Unable to pull out the weapon, the man ran away without getting any money.

Rescue farm accused of neglecting horses

NH LANGDON — State Police have accused a woman who runs an animal rescue farm of neglecting the care of 26 horses that were seized by the state.

Olexandra Beck, 63, of Langdon, was arrested Thursday on four misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty.

Her farm was investigated in November following complaints made about the horses' condition.

Teacher arrested in sexual assault of teen

CO BOULDER — Police in Colorado arrested a teacher from a Buddhist meditation center in connection with an alleged sexual assault of a teenage girl.

The Boulder Police Department said Friday that William Lloyd Karelis, 71, had been arrested on suspicion of sexual assault of a child by a person in a position of trust.

Police said Karelis was a teacher and leader during med-

itation retreats at the Boulder Shambhala Center and sexually assaulted the girl multiple times since 2000, when she was 13.

Juvenile arrested in vandalism of temple

KY LOUISVILLE — Police in Kentucky said a juvenile suspect has been charged with burglary and criminal mischief in connection with vandalism at a Hindu temple.

Louisville Metro Police Detective Russell Montfort told news outlets the 17-year-old suspect was arrested Thursday.

Authorities allege the teen broke windows and spray-painted “repugnant messages of hate” and black crosses inside the Swaminarayan Temple.

Police Chief Steve Conrad said there were xenophobic and sexist messages, and someone spray-painted the eyes of a Hindu religious figure with black paint.

City loses appeal in squirrel damage case

IA DES MOINES — The Iowa Supreme Court said an insurance company does not have to pay the city of West Liberty for damage to property caused by a squirrel that climbed onto an electrical transformer and created an electrical arc.

The court said in a decision released Friday that the policy held by the city from EMC insurance excluded damage caused by electrical arcs that were not related to lightning. The city filed a lawsuit in January 2016 after EMC refused to pay the more than \$213,000 in damage.

The city claimed the squirrel caused the damage but a district court judge and the Iowa Court of Appeals concluded the damage was caused by the electrical

arc generated when the squirrel touched a 7,000-volt clamp and a grounded metal frame.

U-Haul, ex-manager plead guilty in blast

PA PHILADELPHIA — A U-Haul subsidiary and the former general manager of one of its Philadelphia stores have pleaded guilty after a food truck explosion that killed a woman and her teenage daughter.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported the U-Haul Company of Pennsylvania and Miguel Rivera entered their pleas Tuesday to violating federal hazardous materials regulations.

Prosecutors said they used untrained workers to fill propane tanks at the Philadelphia facility in June and July 2014.

Investigators have said food truck owner Olga Galdamez took her propane tanks to U-Haul where they were filled despite being old and damaged. Galdamez and her daughter, Jaylin, died from burn-related injuries after the July 2014 blast.

Lincoln library to tell stories of artifacts

IL SPRINGFIELD — The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is launching a new educational program designed to tell the history of the nation's 16th president through stories behind specific objects linked to him.

The program is called “If Objects Talked.” Among the artifacts experts will show and explain is a toy canon that belonged to one of Lincoln's sons and an invitation to another son's birthday party.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Gonzalez in colorful Hall of Fame class

BY EDDIE PELLIS

Associated Press

ATLANTA — For towering tight end Tony Gonzalez, this was a slam dunk.

The 6-foot-5 Gonzalez, who turned the celebratory post-TD dunk over the crossbar into an art form, was voted into the Hall of Fame on Saturday.

Joining him will be two more first-time nominees, Champ Bailey and Ed Reed, along with another defensive back, Ty Law, and center Kevin Mawae; Law and Mawae were both in their third year as finalists.

The contributor nominees, Broncos owner Pat Bowlen and Cowboys and NFL executive Gil Brandt, each made it, as did senior nominee Johnny Robinson, the defensive back who helped the Chiefs win Super Bowl 4.

Gonzalez started in Kansas City and finished in Atlanta, where voters met on the eve of the Super Bowl to select the Class of 2019; they didn't need much time to debate his worthiness.

In short, Gonzalez had more than his fair share of chances to jam. (Maybe not by

accident, the NFL banned the practice in 2014, the year after he retired.)

The most prolific pass catcher at his position over a 17-year career, Gonzalez caught 1,325 passes (second in NFL history) for 15,127 yards (sixth) and 111 touchdowns. He was a six-time All-Pro, made 14 Pro Bowls, and his 916 catches with the Chiefs set one of 22 franchise records he held upon his retirement.

"I knew I had a good chance, I'm not going to lie about that," he said. "Still, when you hear the knock, your heart drops."

As it turns out, Gonzalez isn't the only one who can get good air.

"Threw my phone across the room," Mawae said, of his reaction upon learning he was in. "I had a higher vertical than at the combine."

He'll be donning the yellow jacket this summer alongside Gonzalez, and three players who spent part of their careers trying to stop the groundbreaking tight end.

This marks the first time more than two defensive backs have made it in the same class.

Bailey played 15 years — five with Washington, then 10 more with Denver after the

Redskins swapped him for Clinton Portis. Like so many great cornerbacks, Bailey did not rewrite the record book, in part because he was, for a huge chunk of his career, considered the best cover guy in the league. So most quarterbacks simply avoided him.

Still, he made three All-Pro teams, 12 Pro Bowls and a none-too-shabby 52 interceptions. His best-remembered pick was a 103-yard return against Tom Brady in the 2006 playoffs that did not go for a touchdown.

Denver did score shortly afterward, though, on the way to the win. Eight years later, Bailey made his only Super Bowl.

Reed won his only title in the 2012 season, his last with the Ravens. Running the defense from his safety position, he was a standout playmaker on a roster full of them — including Ray Lewis, Terrell Suggs and Peter Boulware. Reed finished his career with 64 interceptions, and led the league in picks three times.

"Smartest player I ever coached," said Reed's former coach, Brian Billick.

Mahomes wins MVP, Offensive POY; Donald repeats as defensive POY

BY BARRY WILNER

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Patrick Mahomes' breathtaking breakthrough season earned him the NFL's Most Valuable Player award.

The Chiefs quarterback landed a pair of honors at NFL Honors on Saturday night, taking The Associated Press 2018 MVP and Offensive Player of the Year awards. In his second pro season, Mahomes led Kansas City to its first AFC title game since 1993 with some of the most creative and clutch plays the league has seen in years.

"I'm so humbled," he said. "This is just the beginning. We've got a long ways to go."

"It is an honor. It's a hard award to win. The next award I hope I can get is the Super Bowl."

Mahomes received 41 votes from a nationwide panel of media members who regularly cover the league. New Orleans

quarterback Drew Brees got the other nine.

With only one previous start, Mahomes entered the season as something of a curiosity in Kansas City after the Chiefs traded veteran Alex Smith to open up the job. It didn't take long to erase any doubts as Mahomes led the Chiefs to their first AFC title game since the 1993 season, throwing for 50 touchdowns, 5,097 yards and had a 113.8 QB rating, trailing only Brees.

Mahomes' ingenuity — the guy can throw from all angles and make plays inside and outside the pocket — energized the Chiefs' fan base and excited fans across the league.

"The play is never dead. He can find new ways to get you the ball," Chiefs All-Pro tight end Travis Kelce said. "It may look like a screwball, a slider here or there, but it'll get to you eventually."

Mahomes is the sixth straight quarterback and 11th of the

past 12 years to win MVP. No Kansas City player had won the award since the Chiefs joined the NFL in 1970.

Earlier, he was selected as the top offensive player, beating Brees 30 votes to 16.

"Yeah, I mean, it's awesome ... I got put into a great situation," he said. "I got to learn behind a great quarterback in Alex Smith. I got to be on a team with a lot of playmakers who helped me excel my game and make me look really good on a daily basis. And, then, to be able to go out there and win football games in front of a passionate fan base is something I get the luxury of doing."

Rams defensive tackle Aaron Donald, who will play in Sunday's Super Bowl against New England, took his second straight Defensive Player of the Year award.

Donald, the only unanimous All-Pro this season and the first Rams player selected for the top defensive honor, joins

Lawrence Taylor and J.J. Watt as players to win the award in back-to-back seasons. Donald led the NFL with 20½ sacks.

Chicago's Matt Nagy, in his first season with the Bears, was voted Coach of the Year.

Nagy has overseen the development of quarterback Mitchell Trubisky, who blossomed in his second pro season, and saw a defense befitting the "Monsters of the Midway" dominate opponents at times. He is the fifth Bears coach to win the award, joining team founder George Halas (1963, 1965), Mike Ditka (1985, 1988), Dick Jauron (2001) and Lovie Smith (2005).

Colts quarterback Andrew Luck was the Comeback Player of the Year, following a lost 2017 season to a shoulder injury. Giants running back Saquon Barkley was the top offensive rookie, while the defensive rookie award went to Indianapolis linebacker Darius Leonard.

College basketball roundup

Low point total: Hokies throttle Wolfpack

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — No. 23 North Carolina State was held to a stunningly low point total, beaten by No. 12 Virginia Tech 47-24 on Saturday in the Wolfpack's lowest-scoring output of the shot-clock era.

Kerry Blackshear had 13 points and 13 rebounds and Nick-eil Alexander-Walker added 11 points for the Hokies (18-3, 7-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), who led the entire way despite playing without point guard Justin Robinson. Virginia Tech didn't put up huge numbers, shooting just 36 percent and making seven of 21 three-pointers.

"I don't think even in high school I've seen anything like it," Virginia Tech's Ty Outlaw said. "I just thought it was an ugly game. We weren't exactly firing on all cylinders on offense either."

Then again, Virginia Tech didn't need much production against the cold-cold-cold-shooting Wolfpack (16-6, 4-5).

N.C. State made just nine of 54 shots for the game, a conversion rate of 16.7 percent that included a 2-for-28 showing from three-point range. It was N.C. State's lowest scoring output in any game since managing 12 points in a win against Duke in the 1968 ACC Tournament, nearly two decades before the implementation of the shot clock.

"It was crazy," Wolfpack coach Kevin Keatts said. "It was almost like there was something on the rim."

No. 1 Tennessee 93, Texas A&M 76: Grant Williams scored 22 points and the Volunteers beat the host Aggies to set a school record with their 16th straight win.

Tennessee (20-1, 8-0 Southeastern Conference) surpassed the 15-game streak it had from February 1915 to January 1917 and are off to their best start in conference play since also going 8-0 in 1981-82.

Wendell Mitchell finished with 18 points for Texas A&M

(8-12, 1-7), which lost for the fifth time in the last six games.

No. 2 Duke 91, St. John's 61: Freshman phenom Zion Williamson scored 29 points, Tre Jones flirted with a triple-double and the host Blue Devils routed the Red Storm.

Duke's RJ Barrett added 15 points and 14 rebounds while Jones had 13 points, seven rebounds and seven assists while also playing lockdown defense on Shamorie Ponds. The Blue Devils (19-2) shot 56 percent while winning their fifth straight.

No. 3 Virginia 56, Miami 46: De'Andre Hunter scored 14 points, Mamadi Diakite had 11 points and three blocks, and the host Cavaliers locked down on defense again.

Kyle Guy added 10 points on just 4-for-15 shooting for Virginia (20-1, 8-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), which played without point guard and third-leading scorer Ty Jerome because of a sore back.

No. 4 Gonzaga 85, San Diego 69: Rui Hachimura scored 32 points and the host Bulldogs beat the Spartans to go undefeated through the first half of the West Coast Conference season.

Zach Norvell Jr. added 21 points for Gonzaga (21-2, 8-0), which won its 12th consecutive game since a pair of December losses knocked it from the No. 1 spot in The AP Top 25.

Indiana 79, No. 6 Michigan State 75 (OT): Romeo Langford hit a go-ahead three-pointer early in overtime and the visiting Hoosiers ended a seven-game skid.

Banged-up Indiana (13-9, 4-7 Big Ten) stopped its longest losing streak in nearly eight years. Already minus ailing forward Zach McRoberts, the Hoosiers lost star forward Juwan Morgan to a shoulder injury in the first half.

No. 7 Kentucky 65, Florida 54: Tyler Herro scored 19 points, including a dagger three-pointer with about three minutes to play, and the visit-

ing Wildcats rallied from an 11-point deficit.

PJ Washington added 15 points and 12 rebounds for Kentucky (18-3, 7-1 Southeastern Conference), which won its eighth consecutive game and ended a two-game skid against the Gators (12-9, 4-4).

No. 8 Nevada 93, Boise State 73: Caleb Martin scored 30 points and twin brother Cody Martin added a season-high 21 as the host Wolf Pack cruised past the Broncos.

Nevada (21-1, 8-1 Mountain West) struggled the previous time it played Boise State, winning 72-71 on Cody Martin's three-pointer in the final seconds on Jan. 15. This time, the Wolf Pack broke away before halftime and shot 55.6 percent. Nevada went on a 9-2 run and led 41-30 at the break.

No. 9 North Carolina 79, No. 15 Louisville 69: Luke Maye had 20 points and 11 rebounds, Cameron Johnson finished with 19 points and 10 rebounds, and the Tar Heels won on the road to avenge an earlier blowout loss to the Cardinals.

The victory came three weeks after North Carolina (17-4, 7-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) was pounded by 21 points by Louisville (16-6, 7-2), their worst defeat at home under coach Roy Williams.

No. 11 Kansas 79, No. 16 Texas Tech 63: Dedric Lawson had 25 points and 10 rebounds, Devon Dotson added 20 points and the host Jayhawks took out the frustration of a lousy week on Texas Tech.

Lagerald Vick added 13 points and Ochai Agbaji had 10 for Kansas (17-5, 6-3 Big 12), which came into the showdown of Big 12 title contenders having lost two straight and three of four.

Arkansas 90, No. 19 LSU 89: Mason Jones hit a driving floater off the glass with 22 seconds left and the Razorbacks handed the Tigers their first conference loss this season and first home loss in more than a year.

Daniel Gafford scored 23 points for Arkansas (13-8, 4-4 SEC), which squandered an 18-point, second-half lead before pulling out the win and halting LSU's streak of 18 straight victories at home.

No. 20 Iowa State 65, Texas 60: Talen Horton-Tucker scored 15 points, Marial Shayok had 12 and the host Cyclones (17-5, 6-3 Big 12) hit their last four field goals and held off Texas for their fifth win in six games.

No. 22 Mississippi State 81, Mississippi 75: Quindary Weatherspoon scored 27 points, freshman Reggie Perry added a career-high 21 and the Bulldogs earned a road win over rival Ole Miss. Mississippi State (16-5, 4-4 SEC) has won four of its last six games.

No. 25 Florida State 59, Georgia Tech 49: Mfiondu Kabengele and Terance Mann each scored 12 points, and the host Seminoles won their third straight game after the Yellow Jackets failed to score in the last 4:14.

Navy 71, Loyola (MD) 68: Evan Wieck scored 13 points and Hasan Abdullah added 12 points and the host Midshipmen held on to beat the Greyhounds.

George Kiernan made a pair of free throws with 5:20 remaining and Navy (7-14, 4-6 Patriot League) led 61-52.

Lehigh 75, Army 70: Kyle Leufroy scored 22 points, Jordan Cohen added 18 and the visiting Mountain Hawks rallied from 18 points down in the second half, scoring the last seven points of the game.

Cohen hit the go-ahead three-pointer with 1:28 to play and two free throws at 25 seconds. Leufroy's free throws closed it out with 11 seconds to go. Lehigh shot 67 percent in the second half.

NBA roundup

Warriors get past LA without James

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Klay Thompson returned from a one-game absence with an illness to score 28 points and light up the Lakers for the second time in 13 days, leading the Golden State Warriors to a 115-101 victory Saturday night over a Los Angeles team again missing LeBron James.

Splash Brother Stephen Curry missed his first eight shots before a layup with 6:20 remaining and still wound up with 14 points, two days after going off for 41 in a loss to the 76ers when he hit 10 three-pointers. Andre Iguodala hit a go-ahead three in the final minute of the third, and two more early in the fourth as Golden State pulled away and finished with 17 points. DeMarcus Cousins had 18 points and 10 rebounds.

The Lakers hung tough without James just as they did here in a 127-101 victory on Christmas. James returned from a 17-game absence Thursday against the Clippers only to sit again Saturday.

Spurs 113, Pelicans 108: LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and 14 rebounds and host San Antonio withstood another bat intrusion — with a nifty play from the team's coyote mascot — and held off depleted New Orleans.

The bat began hovering above the court three minutes into the game.

The mascot charged onto the court dressed in a Batman costume with a net. He missed his first swipe at the bat, then dove near the scorer's table and caught the bat in his net to huge cheers.

Rockets 125, Jazz 98: James Harden had 43 points for his 26th straight game with at least 30 points in Houston's victory over host Utah.

Bucks 131, Wizards 115: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored

37 points, making all of his season-high 17 free throws in a perfect night at the line for Milwaukee, and had 10 rebounds to help the NBA-leading Bucks rout host Washington.

Nuggets 107, Timberwolves 106: Nikola Jokic had his 25th career triple-double with 13 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists, to help Denver beat host Minnesota.

Mavericks 111, Cavaliers 98: Rookie Luka Doncic matched his season high with 35 points and did a little bit of everything for Dallas, and Harrison Barnes scored 13 points in the fourth quarter to lead the undermanned Mavericks past host Cleveland.

Clippers 111, Pistons 101: Lou Williams scored 16 Los Angeles points in a row during a torrid fourth-quarter stretch, and the Clippers overcame a 25-point deficit to beat host Detroit.

Kings 115, 76ers 108: Buddy Hield scored 34 points and set a career high for three-pointers with seven, and host Sacramento weathered a fourth-quarter flurry from Jimmy Butler.

Pacers 95, Heat 88: Bojan Bogdanovic scored 31 points, Darren Collison added 20 and Indiana had a big third quarter to beat stumbling host Miami.

Hornets 125, Bulls 118: Kemba Walker had 15 of his 37 points in the fourth quarter and host Charlotte pulled away for its fifth straight victory.

Hawks 118, Suns 112: John Collins matched his career high with 35 points and fell one shy of his career best with 16 rebounds, and Atlanta handed host Phoenix its 10th straight loss.

Magic 102, Nets 89: Nikola Vucevic had 24 points and 12 rebounds, Evan Fournier added 16 points for host Orlando.

NHL roundup

Flyers top Oilers in OT for 7th straight victory

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Nolan Patrick scored 2:01 into overtime and the Philadelphia Flyers rallied past the Edmonton Oilers 5-4 on Saturday, extending their winning streak to a season-best seven games.

Edmonton has lost four in a row and 13 of 18.

Patrick won it on the third opportunity by his line in OT after Edmonton goalie Cam Talbot made big saves on Travis Sanheim and James van Riemsdyk.

Travis Konecny and Claude Giroux scored in the third to pull Philadelphia even. Sean Couturier also scored, and Carter Hart made 40 saves.

Lightning 3, Rangers 2: Steven Stamkos scored in the second period to give Tampa Bay a three-goal lead, and Louis Domingue stopped 31 shots in the victory at New York.

Yanni Gourde and Erik Cernak also scored to help the league-leading Lightning get their 39th win.

Sharks 3, Coyotes 2 (OT): Brent Burns scored 3:14 into overtime and San Jose returned from a 10-day break to beat visiting Arizona.

Joe Pavelski and Kevin Labanc scored goals less than a minute apart in the second period and Martin Jones made 31 saves to help San Jose move within four points of first-place Calgary in the Pacific Division.

Devils 3, Canadiens 2 (OT): Nico Hischier scored at 1:56 of overtime after tying it midway through the third period in New Jersey's victory at Montreal.

Will Butcher also scored, and Mackenzie Blackwood stopped 37 shots for New Jersey.

Blackhawks 4, Wild 3 (OT): Erik Gustafsson scored his second goal of the game 1:19 into overtime to send Chicago to a win at Minnesota.

Jets 9, Ducks 3: Jack Roslovic had his first career hat trick and host Winnipeg scored

a franchise-record six goals in the first period in the rout of Anaheim.

Roslovic had three power-play goals and an assist.

Maple Leafs 3, Penguins 2: Zach Hyman snapped a tie late in the second period and Garret Sparks made 28 saves to lead host Toronto past Pittsburgh.

Auston Matthews also scored for Toronto, and Travis Dermott had a goal and an assist.

Blues 4, Blue Jackets 2: Vladimir Tarasenko had a goal and two assists as St. Louis returned from the All-Star break and a bye week to win at Columbus.

Red Wings 2, Senators 0: Jonathan Bernier stopped 35 shots for his first shutout of the season as Detroit won at Ottawa. Danny DeKeyser and Darren Helm scored for the Red Wings, who won their third straight.

Panthers 3, Golden Knights 1: Mike Hoffman's third-period goal put Florida ahead to stay and the host Panthers defeated Las Vegas.

Aleksander Barkov had a goal and an assist and Frank Vatrano also scored for Florida, which won for the fourth time in five games. James Reimer made 34 saves.

Islanders 4, Kings 2: Michael Dal Colle got the tie-breaking goal as New York scored three times in less than five minutes late in the third period to rally past visiting Los Angeles.

Canucks 5, Avalanche 1: Jake Virtanen and Antoine Roussel each had a goal and an assist as Vancouver raced to an early lead and won at Colorado.

Stars 3, Predators 1: Blake Comeau and Mattias Janmark scored late in the third period to lift Dallas to a win at Nashville. Stars goalie Anton Khudobin made 37 saves. Tyler Seguin also scored for Dallas, which has won four straight.