

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Taliban: Deal to be signed by month's end

*The Washington Post*

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The Taliban said Monday that a peace deal with the United States will be signed by the end of the month, with the top U.S. negotiator describing himself as “cautiously optimistic” about the process.

Mullah Abdul Salam Hanafi, a senior Taliban leader and member of the political commission in Doha, Qatar, said in a video message shared with journalists that after negotiations, “both sides have initiated the final draft of the peace agreement. Now talks are concluded.”

This is the first formal statement released by the Taliban since the United States announced a peace deal with the movement Friday.

Hanafi said “both sides have agreed to sign the agreement by the end of this

month,” after making a “favorable environment before signing of the agreement.” What Hanafi appears to be describing is what U.S. negotiators and Afghan government officials are calling a period of reduced violence that approximates a cease-fire and will last seven days.

Hanafi gave no further details on what a favorable environment would entail. American and Afghan officials have also been tight-lipped regarding details of the violence reduction.

In his first public comments since the peace talks breakthrough, U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, the chief negotiator with the Taliban, said he’s “cautiously optimistic.”

“But I am realistic enough to know that there are lots of challenges ahead,” he added.

Khalilzad said that while he had received

security guarantees from both the Afghan government and the Taliban, the potential remained for “spoilers” both inside Afghanistan and outside the country to upend months of diplomatic progress.

“I believe that maybe better than any time in the last couple of decades, there is an opportunity for peace,” he said, speaking in Islamabad at a United Nations conference on refugees marking 40 years of conflict in Afghanistan.

Some Afghan officials said the reduced violence would be countrywide and all parties to the conflict would halt planned offensive operations. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to discuss the deal publicly.

There is no official word on when the reduction in violence will begin, but it’s expected to be sometime this week.

## Military working dogs expand their skills in Hawaii

BY WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII — Yenkie is happy-go-lucky, hyperactive and a friend to all. The much older Diego is calm, seasoned and intense.

What these two military working dogs at Marine Corps Base Hawaii have in common, however, is an exceptional aptitude for tracking by scent.

It’s a trait that Staff Sgt. Matthew Settle, the kennel master in charge of the 14 working dogs employed by the Provost Marshal’s Office, recognized last summer when the base commenced a pilot program to expand the dogs’ skill set to include tracking humans at great distances.

Most military working dogs are “dual-purpose,” meaning they have been trained to both subdue suspects and detect hidden objects, such as bombs or narcotics.

Yenkie and Diego — both

German shepherds — showed the drive, trainability and personality to learn tracking quickly, Settle said.

In October, the pair became certified as trackers, making them the only working dogs certified in three skills in the Defense Department’s law enforcement community, Settle said.

“This is still a proof of concept,” said Sgt. Brandon Sperlazza, Yenkie’s handler. “We’re still trying to prove this can be replicated over and over again, so that’s what we’re doing now. We’re training two new dogs to have that asset of tracking, and we’re seeing where that goes.”

If they are successful at morphing this kennel of dual-purpose dogs into multidiscipline K-9s, such a framework could be transferred to law enforcement entities at other Marine Corps installations or even other services, Settle said.

“We’re trying to progress to become a larger force multi-

plier, with costing less money,” Settle said. “That’s really kind of what we’re trying to prove here.”

The need for tracking dogs at the Hawaii base became apparent in January 2019 during a fruitless search for a fleeing suspect by provost officers.

“There was all kinds of intelligence or information saying that he was dangerous and violent,” Settle said. “He ended up running off base and taking off and getting away.”

Settle had spent four years training combat tracking dogs at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas before being assigned to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

“I got over here and the stars aligned,” he said.

He received permission from the Hawaii base and the military working dog program at the Pentagon to expand the kennel’s tracking capacity.

Sperlazza and Danny Narvaza, Diego’s civilian handler, began training them to track

last summer.

During a recent demonstration for Stars and Stripes at the K-9 obstacle course, Narvaza tossed a green tennis ball while Diego was not looking. The dog put his nose to the ground, sniffing in ever-widening circles.

“See? Watch how he keeps his nose to the ground,” Narvaza said. In a half minute he finds the ball.

Many dogs would search for a ball by scanning the area with their eyes, but the sniffing stance came naturally for Diego and Yenkie, putting them to the head of the tracking class, Narvaza said.

With the right training and methodology, virtually all working dogs can be trained to track, but the aptitude possessed by Yenkie and Diego allowed the pilot program to “put the pedal to the metal,” Settle said.

“This thing will close the gap between either saving a life or losing a life,” he said.

# Fighting ‘factual sufficiency’

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

A three-judge panel from the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals in July overturned a child sex abuse conviction against Marine Col. Daniel Wilson without ever hearing from the 7-year-old accuser in person.

In a move unique to military justice, the appellate judges supplanted the court-martial jury’s decision and made their own determinations about Wilson’s guilt.

However, unlike the jury, they saw no witnesses testify, including the alleged victim, and made their decision based solely on trial transcripts and videotaped interviews from early in the investigation.

The panel overturned the verdict of the jury’s four generals and three colonels, citing a legal standard known as “factual sufficiency.”

The July dismissal angered the family of the girl, who was 6 when the abuse allegedly occurred, as well as advocates for victims of sexual abuse who argue that civilian appellate courts could not, in most cases, make a similar decision.

Wilson was released from the brig in October and last week, allowed to retire, while the girl’s parents, Marine Lt. Col. Breck Perry and his wife, Adrian Perry, began to lobby members of Congress to change the Uniform Code of Military Justice to strip factual sufficiency review powers from appellate judges and bring the UCMJ more in line with the civilian justice system.

“The powers of factual sufficiency review given to military criminal appeals courts need to be revoked,” Breck Perry said at a news conference Oct. 4 on Okinawa, where he is stationed.

“As it stands now, [appellate judges have] the ability to overturn a conviction of a predator based solely on his/her interpretation of a cold stack of court papers,” he said. “Under its current construct, the criminal appeals process is a failed system that requires an overhaul now.”

The Perry family’s ordeal began in summer 2016 at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Their daughter, 6, said Wilson, then the II Marine Expeditionary Force operations officer, had touched her inappropriately.

During a court-martial in 2017, Wilson was convicted of the sexual abuse of a child, six counts of conduct unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman and absence without leave. He was sentenced to 5½ years in prison and dismissed from the service. His wife, Susan Wilson, denied the charges against her husband in multiple emails to Stars and Stripes after the conviction.

The Perrys sued the Marine Corps for \$25 million in June 2018 for not punishing

Wilson for earlier misconduct that, they alleged, allowed him to prey on their daughter, but they later dropped the suit.

Wilson appealed the court-martial conviction, asking for a factual sufficiency review. Factual sufficiency consists of two basic principles under military justice: “sufficiency of the evidence” and “weight of the evidence.”

Sufficiency of the evidence means there is evidence of each element of the crime, without regard to the strength of that evidence, said Anthony Musto, co-executive director of the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section’s Specialized Practice Division. This means, if the evidence is believed, in a light most favorable to the prosecution, a reasonable jury could convict.

Weight of the evidence is a measure of whether evidence points jurors to one side or the other, such as a conviction, he said.

In the July 1 appellate decision, Senior Judge Navy Cmdr. Angela Tang took issue with the weight of the evidence against Wilson. She listed inconsistencies in the girl’s statements and testimony at trial to render it moot. She also cited examples — from expert testimony at trial — that both explained and undermined those inconsistencies. There was no other compelling evidence in the case, the panel’s decision states. Without ever seeing the alleged victim testify under oath, the panel dismissed the charges with prejudice, meaning they cannot be refiled.

“This is a particularly cruel result,” said Don Christensen, a former Air Force chief prosecutor, military judge and current president of Protect Our Defenders Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to ending rape and sexual assault in the military. Christensen and the foundation provided legal assistance and support to the Perry family in their suit against the Marine Corps.

“It is not easy to go through a court-martial, especially as a child, and to later have three adults sitting in an office in [Washington,] D.C. attack your credibility having never met you, never observed you, is just not what American justice is about.”

On Feb. 5, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Gregory Slavonic allowed Wilson to retire with an “other than honorable” discharge as a lieutenant colonel, according to a copy of the decision. He declined to consider the sexual abuse allegations.

Wilson now plans to file federal lawsuits against the alleged victims and the U.S. military, “alleging defamation of character and malicious prosecution,” his attorney Andrew Cherkasky told the military website Task & Purpose.

Having someone accuse another person

Marine family working to change UCMJ after appeals court dismisses colonel’s sexual abuse conviction

of sexual abuse and testify under oath is generally considered enough evidence to send a case to a judge or a jury, meeting the bar for sufficiency of the evidence. The weight of the evidence is then left up to the judge or jury to decide.

In the civilian justice system, appellate judges generally won’t consider challenges to weight of the evidence, Musto said. “There’s a reason for that. The trier of fact — the jury or the judge — they observe things. They hear the tone of voice; they see the facial expressions; they see the body language of all of these people that are testifying. ... Appellate courts tend very much to say, ‘We’re going to let that trier of fact make that determination.’”

The federal courts are similar, according to Lisa Schenck, former senior Army appellate judge and George Washington University law professor. They are required to view evidence in the light “most favorable to the government, resolving conflicts in the government’s favor, and accepting all reasonable inferences that support the verdict,” Schenck wrote in a 2016 paper in the *Southwestern Law Review*. They will not second-guess credibility determinations made by a judge or jury in lower courts.

In the military system, the opposite is true. Convictions are not affirmed by military appellate courts unless the judges believe in guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, which essentially means the cases are retried. Military appellate judges don’t have to give any deference to decisions made at earlier trials.

The Defense Department in 2015 recommended that Congress amend the UCMJ code that covers courts of criminal appeals and factual sufficiency as part of the Military Justice Act of 2016, DOD spokeswoman Lisa Lawrence wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes.

Military legal experts recommended forcing appellate judges to give deference to the trial court on “controverted questions of fact,” the recommendation said. Appellate judges would still have the authority to overturn a conviction, they would have to be “clearly convinced the finding was against the weight of the evidence.”

The Senate passed the reform, but it was rejected by the House Armed Services Committee and stricken from the final defense authorization bill, Lawrence said.

Adrian Perry knows it will be an uphill battle to get members of Congress to reconsider factual sufficiency review.

“What happened to our daughter at the appellate level of military justice is a disgrace to our country and an embarrassment to the military justice system,” Perry said.



# USS Arizona attack survivor Stratton dies

BY WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Donald Stratton, a sailor severely burned while aboard the doomed USS Arizona during the Japanese surprise attack Dec. 7, 1941, died Saturday at his home in Colorado Springs, Colo. He was 97.

His passing leaves only two living survivors of the battleship, Lou Conter and Ken Potts.

Stratton's wife of 69 years, Velma, and son Randy announced his death in a Facebook post Sunday, saying they were beside him when he "passed away peacefully."

"One of Donald's final wishes was that people remember Pearl Harbor and the men aboard the USS Arizona," the posting said. "Share their story and never forget those who gave all for our great country."

Stratton spent much of his later life doing just that, and in 2016 he published the memoir "All the Gallant Men," recounting the surprise attack,

and his injuries, recovery and subsequent return to combat in World War II.

Stratton often summed up the happenstance of being aboard the Arizona on the morning of the attack with, "Everybody had to be someplace. We were there." The attack that turned the Arizona into an inferno killed 1,177 sailors and Marines, and Stratton barely made it off alive, burned over two-thirds of his body.

Born July 14, 1922, Stratton was raised in the small Nebraska town of Red Cloud and joined the Navy in the fall of 1940, he wrote in the memoir, which was coauthored by Ken Gire. Within a couple of months, he was one of the roughly 1,500 men serving aboard the USS Arizona. He was assigned to one of the ship's five portside anti-aircraft guns.

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, he stepped onto an outside deck, catching sight of Japanese dive bombers attacking Ford Island, the berthing point for the eight massive warships

of Battleship Row: California, Maryland, Nevada, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia and Arizona.

With no time to fire up the Arizona's boilers to steam out of port, the ship's broadside became an easy target. At one point, a bomb ignited the forward magazines, causing a catastrophic explosion.

"Men stumbled around on the deck like human torches, each collapsing into a flaming pile of flesh," Stratton wrote. "Others jumped into the water. When they did, you could hear them sizzle."

"My T-shirt had caught fire, burning my arms and my back. My legs were burned from my ankles to my thighs. My face was seared. The hair on my head had been singed off, and part of my ear was gone."

Stratton and a handful of sailors huddled together likely would have died if not for a sailor aboard the repair ship Vestal who managed to toss a rope across to the burning ship.

About two weeks after the

attack, he was transferred to a hospital specializing in burn treatment on Mare Island near San Francisco to begin a long recovery, which included a treatment using maggots to eat away the dead and diseased skin left from the burns. He was medically discharged from the Navy in September 1942 and returned to Red Cloud.

But as the following weeks passed in his hometown, he came to realize that "everything innocent and trusting and carefree" had been ripped from him with the attack, and he was overwhelmed with the urge to be back in the Navy.

He was allowed to reenlist in February 1944 but was required to repeat basic training.

Back aboard ship, he saw action in New Guinea, the Philippines and Okinawa.

He left the Navy at war's end, but he couldn't give up the sea. He worked for a diving company off the coast of California, and later on oil drilling platforms at sea.

## Marine uses wrestling past to train martial arts teachers

*The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot*

Sgt. Melissa Paul is a wrestler who has been fighting all her life.

Fighting through the pain of growing up without a father since she was 4, when hers was sent to prison in Colorado.

Fighting to get an education in Alaska when her drug-abusing mother wanted her to quit high school and to make a living fishing instead.

Fighting to find a safe home when her mother paid a friend to take her off her hands, for a television.

"When I was younger, I would always pray, 'God, I just want a family. I just want a family.' And I ended up never really having a family, so then I kind of got angry at God," Paul said. "I didn't realize that I did have a family with my wrestling team."

The Marine based at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va., who trains mar-

tial arts instructors has been wrestling for as long as she can remember, long before it was common for women to do so.

She had little control over her circumstances, but when it came to wrestling, Paul found she could be in complete control. She was dominant on the wrestling mat. She won competition after competition while she wasn't sure where her mother was, where her next meal would come from or where she would sleep.

"I knew that if I worked hard enough in wrestling, I could be anybody," she said. "So wrestling became like my mentor, and it became like my parent, it became everything to me. It became my foundation."

Living in a small community near Anchorage, she started sleeping on the couches of her high school teammates, keeping her clothes in a trash bag. A guidance counselor at her school who was married to a wrestling coach at another

school soon learned what was going on. They initially paid other teachers out of their own pockets to take Paul in.

Eventually, they brought her into their home. Paul fought that at first, too. She wanted to be emancipated at 16 because she didn't want to be a burden on anyone. But the guidance counselor she now calls Mom let her know they would support her and her wrestling dreams.

When she graduated from high school and turned 18, she decided to pursue wrestling full time and moved to the Olympic Training Center. She became a national champion and took third place in a world competition. During the 2012 Olympic trials she came just short of making the team, earning a spot as an alternate.

An ankle injury ended her dreams of making the 2016 squad, but she used the time while she recovered to speak out about child abuse and neglect. Eventually, Paul's injury

healed, and the Department of Defense took notice that she still had major wrestling talent. The military sponsors athletic competitions around the world and was looking to get women involved in wrestling.

Always eager to challenge herself, Paul decided to join the toughest branch she could imagine, the Marine Corps. She became the first female wrestler in the Marines and only the second in the U.S. military.

At Yorktown, she trains with Marines who are part of elite Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Teams that go to hot spots around the world to protect embassies and consulates.

In the Marines, she also found she has yet another family. She wants those she leads at Marine Corps Security Regiment to know she has their back and always will.

"All the stuff I went through in wrestling and life wasn't about me," she said. "It was so I can touch other people."

# 14 American tourists with virus go from ship to planes, now in US

*The Washington Post*

Fourteen Americans evacuated from the coronavirus-stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan tested positive for the illness but were allowed to board two chartered planes bound for quarantine on United States military bases.

Their return almost doubles the number of confirmed cases, which previously stood at 15, of the new coronavirus in the U.S.

The 14 passengers tested positive for the virus after disembarking the cruise liner, which is moored off the Japanese port of Yokohama, but before boarding the planes. They were all asymptomatic, so health authorities deemed them “fit to fly,” the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services said in a statement Monday.

They were cordoned off from the other passengers during the flight, it said.

A total of 328 Americans were evacuated on the two flights. All are due to go into quaran-

tine for 14 days, the maximum incubation period for the virus, at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, Calif., or Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Flight data showed that one flight had landed at Travis late Sunday night local time, and the other in San Antonio early Monday.

Another 44 Americans from the cruise ship had previously tested positive for coronavirus and had been taken to hospitals in Japan to recover.

Japan’s Health Ministry on Monday reported 99 new cases of coronavirus among the passengers and crew of the Diamond Princess, increasing the total number of infections from the ship to 454. Of those, 18 are in serious condition, the Yomiuri newspaper reported.

The Australian government said that it would evacuate more than 200 of its citizens stranded onboard the Diamond Princess on a charter flight that will depart from Japan on Wednesday. They will all have to spend two weeks in quarantine in the northern city of Darwin.

# Assault weapons ban dies in Va. Senate

*The Washington Post*

RICHMOND, Va. — A Virginia Senate committee killed a bill Monday that would have banned the sale of assault-style weapons and possession of high-capacity magazines, handing gun-rights activists a rare win in a Capitol that Democrats won last year on the promise of sweeping gun control.

Gov. Ralph Northam, a Democrat, backed the legislation, part of a package of eight gun-control measures he advanced after a shooter killed 12 people at a Virginia Beach municipal building on May 31. Republicans’ refusal to act on those bills last summer, in a special session that they gavelled out in 90 minutes, became a rallying cry for Democrats in the November elections. They flipped the state House and Senate blue for the first time in a generation.

The House has passed all eight of Northam’s bills. But four Democrats — Sens. Creigh Deeds, of Bath; John Edwards, of Roanoke; Chap Petersen, of Fairfax; and Scott Surovell, of Fairfax — sided with Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject the assault-weapons bill for the year. On a 10-5 vote, the committee sent the measure to the state’s Crime Commission for study.

Northam was “disappointed” with the vote but “fully expects the Crime Commission to give this measure the detailed review that Senators called for,” spokeswoman Alena Yarmosky said. “We will be back next year.”

The bill was the most controversial part of Northam’s gun-control agenda, with gun-rights activists warning that the state was planning to confiscate firearms. Since the election, more than 110 Virginia counties, cities and towns have passed some type of “Second Amendment sanctuary” resolution, many of them asserting that local officials will not enforce laws they consider unconstitutional.

The Senate, which had no assault weapons bill of its own, has passed five of the governor’s bills. The Senate’s bill requiring an owner to report the loss or theft of a firearm within 24 hours was rejected in a floor vote, with Petersen and Sen. Lynwood Lewis Jr., D-Accomack, voting against it. Its version of a child-access prevention bill died in committee, with Petersen and Deeds joining Republicans in opposition.

“Despite today’s vote, the Governor is proud of the several common-sense gun safety measures that continue to advance,” Yarmosky said.

# Water released from Miss., Tenn. dams worsens flooding

*Associated Press*

JACKSON, Miss. — Days and days of heavy rain have created a dilemma for authorities managing dams along swollen rivers in Mississippi and Tennessee. The water has to be released eventually, worsening the flooding for people living downstream.

Dramatic video posted by a Tennessee fire department showed the impact: Two houses tumbled down a bluff over the Tennessee River, while many others have been swamped to their rooftops, as entire neighborhoods disappear in muddy water below the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Pickwick Reservoir.

“It absolutely kills you, knowing that” houses are getting destroyed downstream

from the dam, TVA spokesman Jim Hopson told The Associated Press on Monday. “We have engineers on duty 24/7 trying to figure out what’s the most effective way to move this water downstream with the least impact. They feel it. I feel it.”

February’s rains have been “400% of normal, and we have more coming in this week. It’s kind of a never-ending battle,” Hopson added.

Mississippi’s Pearl River, meanwhile, crested Monday at just under 37 feet, well short of its historic worst-case-scenario, and should begin draining soon, Gov. Tate Reeves said Monday. He said that there were no reports of flood-related injuries, and thanked the people of Mississippi for heeding evacuation orders. Only 16 search-

and-rescue missions were necessary, he said, even though as many as 1,000 homes were flooded.

In one Jackson neighborhood, residents paddled canoes, kayaks and small fishing boats to check on their houses, giving lifts to other neighbors. Some were able to enter their homes, while others peeked into the windows to see what, if any damage, had been done inside. Floodwaters lapped at mailboxes, street signs and cars that had been left in driveways.

The heavy rains and flooding has affected a wide area. Mississippi emergency management officials said Sunday that they had received preliminary damage reports from 11 counties connected with the severe weather that began on Feb. 10.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Sisters give birth same day at same hospital

**IN** INDIANAPOLIS — Two inseparable sisters found themselves upping their togetherness game by giving birth on the same day — at the same hospital.

Sisters Charell and Cierra Anthony gave birth last week at Indianapolis' Community Hospital East. Charell Anthony's son, Terry Valentino, was born at 12:40 a.m., and Cierra Anthony's daughter, Dream Monique, came into the world at 6:29 p.m., the Indianapolis Star reported.

The babies were due weeks apart, but they evidently had other plans.

## New Lincoln sculpture planned at museum

**IL** SPRINGFIELD — A new sculpture honoring the 16th U.S. president is coming to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

Museum officials announced plans for the "Beacon of Endurance" piece, designed by B.J. Krivanek. He described the sculpture in a statement as standing 24 feet, 10 inches tall.

Renderings of the piece show an obelisk with a base inscribed with quotes from Lincoln and a stainless-steel upper portion inscribed with words describing him. Members of an advisory panel will weigh in on which words to include, and the museum also plans to take ideas from the public through social media.

## Arrest made in break-in at military museum

**CT** MIDDLETOWN — Police arrested a man they said used an ax to break into a Connecticut military

museum.

Middletown police announced that Isaiah Nemecek, 22, faces third-degree burglary, sixth-degree larceny and other charges in connection with a break-in at the Greater Middletown Military Museum.

Surveillance video posted on Facebook shows a hooded and masked person swinging the ax several times at a rear door lock mechanism to break into the museum.

Museum officials said the suspect took a replica .45 caliber automatic pistol from a Vietnam War display. Police said an item from the museum was recovered.

## Deputies confront black man wearing KKK robe

**VA** STAFFORD COURTHOUSE — A black man seen wearing a Ku Klux Klan robe and hood at a Virginia shopping center told sheriff's deputies that he was performing a social experiment, according to authorities.

The Stafford County Sheriff's Office was called to a Target store at the Stafford Marketplace to investigate reports of someone wearing the costume, Maj. Shawn Kimmitz said in a video statement posted to social media.

Deputies warned him about wearing a mask in public and he left the scene, Kimmitz said. Virginia law prohibits wearing masks with the intent to conceal identity in public.

## Four men accused in \$69K jewelry heist

**LA** HAMMOND — Four Texas men are accused of smashing display cases with a sledgehammer and stealing \$69,000 worth of jewelry from a Louisiana store, and Texas police are reportedly investigating similar heists.

Lacy Landrum, the city's director of administration, said that three men in hoodies smashed cases at the Kay Jewelers store in Hammond and drove off in a white Toyota Avalon with Texas plates. A bystander photographed the car as it sped off, and Baton Rouge police stopped it on Interstate 12, arresting four men, Landrum wrote in a news release.

Ellis Gholson, 43; Kameron McCoy, 21, and Travion Walker, 29, all of Houston, and Frederick Gibson Jr., 22, of Fresno, Texas, face armed robbery charges in Hammond, and Houston police are among those investigating similar robberies, she said.

## Former teacher pleads guilty to dragging student

**KY** GREENUP — A former Kentucky teacher seen on video dragging an elementary school student pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor assault charge.

The plea agreement calls for Trina Abrams to serve 120 days of home confinement as part of a two-year probation sentence, The Daily Independent reported.

Abrams was a teacher at Wurtland Elementary in Greenup in October 2018 when school video showed her dragging the boy by his wrists through the halls.

The boy's mother, Angel Nelson, told news outlets at the time that her son's wrists were sprained. She said that her son has limited speech and has been diagnosed with autism and other disorders.

## Man admits to removing slave auction marker

**VA** CHARLOTTESVILLE — Police in Virginia arrested a man who admitted to taking a historic

marker memorializing the site of slave auctions in the city where a deadly white nationalist rally was held in 2017.

Richard H. Allan III, 74, was arrested by Charlottesville police, news outlets reported citing a press release from the city.

Allan told multiple news outlets that he removed the plaque because he believed it was insulting to enslaved Africans and their descendants. The marker was built into a sidewalk in Charlottesville's Court Square.

Allan told The Washington Post that he removed the historic marker with a crowbar and threw the plaque into the James River. He declined to tell police where the marker could be found, Charlottesville Police Chief RaShall Brackney said.

## Business to pay \$100K in case of fake trips

**ID** BOISE — Business owners in Idaho reached a settlement agreement after they were accused of selling fake fishing trips in Alaska and leaving people stranded, a newspaper reported.

Access Life's Adventures and its owners, Craig and Crystal Fletcher, agreed to pay more than \$100,000 in refunds to 25 customers, the Idaho Statesman reported.

They have also agreed not to advertise or sell vacation packages, travel or vacation-related goods or services from within Idaho or to customers in the state for 10 years. The Fetters have said that they did not violate any regulations and agreed to the settlement to resolve the complaints.

The couple must repay the funds within the 10 years or the ban becomes indefinite, the settlement said.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Smith difference-maker for No. 9 Terps

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Maryland's ascent to the top of the Big Ten standings coincides with the heightened effectiveness of sophomore forward Jalen Smith, who's notched eight straight double-doubles and become an intimidating shot-blocker for the resurgent Terrapins.

After losing two straight in mid-January, Maryland stood at 3-3 in the conference and was winless on the road. With Smith leading the way, the ninth-ranked Terps have since rattled off eight successive victories to gain sole possession of first place.

Nicknamed "Stix" in high school because of his wiry frame, the 6-foot-10 Smith hit the weight room after his freshman season. He tacked on 15 pounds to reach 225, and in the past three weeks has beefed up his stats in an effort to get Maryland deep into the NCAA Tournament.

Smith is averaging 18.5 points and nearly 12 rebounds during Maryland's eight-game run. In addition, he swatted away six shots in a win over Rutgers last week and saved the Terrapins from a potential upset loss with a late block in last Tuesday night's 72-70 escape against Nebraska.

"Stix has been terrific. I knew he was going to block that shot," a relieved Maryland coach Mark Turgeon said after the narrow victory.

Senior guard Anthony Cowan Jr. leads Maryland in scoring and assists but is quick to acknowledge Smith's play has been a difference-maker for the Terps (21-4, 11-3).

"He's hoopin'. He knows what he's supposed to do — scoring, rebounds," Cowan said. "We need him to do that."

"Hoopin'" is not in the dictionary, but it adequately describes Smith's performance of late: A complete basketball player who is dominant on both ends of the court.

"It's just me being more assertive and making sure that I try to grab every rebound that comes off that rim," Smith said. "I know my offense is always going to come to me, so I'm not really worried about that. I just focus my emphasis on defense, and once I get my rebounds going and my defense going, offense just flows."

Though Smith is imposing inside, he provides opposing defenses an additional challenge with his ability to pop a shot from beyond the arc. He's nailed 13 three-pointers in his past eight outings and is 22-for-47 in Big Ten games — including a big three pointer with 3:08 remaining to start Maryland's game-closing run against Michigan State on Saturday.

"What he's shooting in league play from the three-point line is pretty incredible," Nebraska coach Fred Hoiberg marveled. "The kid is such a unique player because of his skillset and his size. And that athleti-

cism. Defense, what he did against Rutgers was incredible."

In addition to rejecting a half-dozen shots by the Scarlet Knights, Smith snagged 15 rebounds and hit a trio of three-pointers. Smith has made 26 shots from beyond the arc compared to 19 all of last year.

"He's a really good player to begin with, and you add (Smith's three-point shooting) in and it gives another dimension to their offense," Rutgers coach Steve Pikiell said.

Smith went 4-for-6 beyond the arc in a 77-76 win at Indiana and capped a 29-point effort with the game-winning shot. To celebrate, he taunted the crowd with such exuberance that Turgeon bolted across the floor and grabbed Smith's jersey while scolding him.

"I just lost my emotions. I couldn't control them," Smith said.

"Very uncharacteristic of Jalen," Turgeon said. "If you knew him, he's a great kid."

Maryland has never won the Big Ten title since joining the league in 2014, and for that to happen the first time, the Terrapins are going to have to stay hot over their final six games. On the positive side, Maryland is riding a four-game road winning streak and has Smith on its side.

"He does what it takes to win," Turgeon said. "I'm happy for him. He's playing well."

## Top 25 roundup

# San Diego State routs Boise State, improves to 26-0

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — No. 4 San Diego State keeps winning, forcing coach Brian Dutcher to dig deep for creative ways to keep his team focused.

After the Aztecs beat Boise State 72-55 Sunday, he revealed some of his slogans that keep the team on task.

"Early in the year, we had five games in eleven days, so we were like, 'Let's win five in eleven,'" Dutcher said. "And then we had five games the entire month of December, so we said, 'Let's win five in December.' And we did it. I told our team they don't hang a banner for twenty wins, so we hung a banner with four to go."

His mantra changed after

San Diego State (26-0, 15-0 Mountain West) wrapped up the conference regular season title, though his message hasn't.

The Aztecs, who own the nation's longest active winning streak, looked special in handling a Broncos squad that hadn't lost a home conference game since Feb. 27, 2019.

Malachi Flynn scored 22 points and dished out six assists to lead San Diego State in scoring, joined by all four of the team's starters in double digits. Yann Wetzell added 14 points and seven rebounds.

Boise State (17-10, 9-6) struggled to find any rhythm on offense and finished the game shooting 41.2% from the field.

**No. 15 Villanova 76, Temple 56:** Collin Gillespie scored a season-high 29 points to lead the host Wildcats over the rival Owls.

Jermaine Samuels added 13 points and Jeremiah Robinson-Earl had 10 for Villanova (19-6), who won their seventh straight game over Temple while finishing 4-0 in the Big 5.

Quinton Rose scored 22 points and Nate Pierre-Louis had 16 for the Owls (13-12).

**No. 17 Oregon 80, Utah 62:** Payton Pritchard scored 25 points and led an early three-point shooting spree as the host Ducks rolled over the Utes.

Shakur Juiston had 11 points and freshman Addison Patterson finished with 10 off the

bench as Oregon shot 58% from the field and made half of their 24 three-point attempts. The Ducks (20-6) regained a share of first place in the Pac-12 with Colorado at 9-4.

Utah (14-11, 5-8) was led by freshman Rylan Jones with 18 points. Branden Carlson and Timmy Allen each had 10.

**No. 21 Iowa 58, Minnesota 55:** Luka Garza scored 24 points, Ryan Kreiner added 10 points and the visiting Hawkeyes came back to win.

The Gophers' Daniel Oturu missed the front end of a 1-and-1 free-throw attempt with a chance to tie it with 3.8 seconds left and Iowa (18-8, 9-6 Big Ten) came away with a rare road win in conference play.



# Manfred: No tolerance for beaming Astros

Associated Press

NORTH PORT, Fla. — With baseball ablaze over the Houston Astros' cheating scandal, commissioner Rob Manfred met with nearly half of the major leagues' managers Sunday and told them to knock off any notion of get-even beanballs.

"I hope that I made it extremely clear to them that retaliation in-game by throwing at a batter intentionally will not be tolerated, whether it's Houston or anybody else," Manfred said. "It's dangerous and it is not helpful to the current situation."

Cody Bellinger, Kris Bryant, Trevor Bauer and Carlos Correa were among the All-Stars recently trading threats, accusations and barbs as spring training opened. The revelation of Houston's sign-stealing

scam, the punishment imposed by Major League Baseball and poorly received apologies by the Astros further enhanced anger across the sport, with players, club management and fans all joining in.

"I think that the back and forth that's gone on is not healthy," Manfred said.

Manfred had previously planned to attend a news conference at the Atlanta Braves' new camp, along with managers and representatives of teams training in Florida to talk about the upcoming season. Instead of an uplifting look at the upcoming season, as this annual press session is, there was no doubt what was the No. 1 topic.

Manfred said he would personally talk to the managers of the teams that train in Arizona on Tuesday.

In further fallout from the Astros' scheme, Manfred said the investigation into the Boston Red Sox could be completed within two weeks. He also said he planned to meet the players' union to discuss new rules limiting in-game video access.

"I do expect that we will for 2020 have really serious restrictions on player and playing personnel access to video in-game," Manfred said. "I think it's really important for us to send a message to our fans that not only did we investigate and punish, but we altered our policies in a way that will help make sure it doesn't happen again."

Manfred said MLB officials discussed vacating the Astros' 2017 World Series championship.

"First of all, it had never happened in baseball," Manfred said. "I am a precedent guy."

The 2017 World Series will always be looked at as different, whether not you put an asterisk or ask for the trophy back. Once you go down that road as for changing the result on the field, I just don't know where you stop."

Astros players were granted immunity for taking part in the investigation, but Manfred said that "if I was in a world where I could have found the facts without granting immunity, I would have done that."

"They had an obligation to play by the rules and they didn't," Manfred said. "I understand when say the players should have been punished."

Manfred said expanding the MLB playoff format is being discussed internally but that no decision has been reached.

# Team LeBron wins revamped NBA All-Star Game

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Players were taking charges, bodies were hitting the floor, calls and non-calls were being screamed about on both ends. The fourth quarter of the NBA All-Star Game was as intense as the final moments of a playoff game, the biggest stars in the league holding absolutely nothing back.

And in the end, Anthony Davis was a hometown hero by making a free throw.

Kobe Bryant — ever the competitor — would have simply loved the way this night went.

"That was pretty damn fun," a sweat-soaked, exhausted LeBron James said at the end.

Davis made a game-ending free throw to give Team LeBron a 157-155 win over Team Giannis in the revamped NBA All-Star Game on Sunday night, the format overhauled to put in elements for charity and ensure that someone was going to hit a shot to end the game.

That someone was Davis, the Chicago native who missed the first free throw and made the second to end the NBA's midseason showcase that went down as the closest All-Star Game since the Eastern Conference topped the Western Conference 141-139 in 2010.

Kawhi Leonard, the game's MVP and the first recipient of the trophy now named for Bryant, scored 30 points for Team LeBron,

while James — his team's captain — and Chris Paul each scored 23, and Davis finished with 20.

"This one's for him," Leonard said, speaking of Bryant afterward.

Giannis Antetokounmpo, who captained his team, led his squad with 25 points, Kemba Walker had 23 for Team Giannis, Joel Embiid scored 22 and Rudy Gobert added 21.

The finish was frantic, and then some. James tried a layup that would have put his team one point away — it was blocked by Antetokounmpo, called a goaltend at first but ruled a clean block after review. Team LeBron controlled the resulting jump ball and James tried a 40-footer to end it but missed. James Harden then had a chance to win it for Team LeBron, and his three-pointer went in — but it was waved off by Kyle Lowry taking a charge against the NBA's scoring leader. James got a dunk not long afterward to make it 156-153, and Embiid made two free throws to cut Team LeBron's lead to one.

With that, it was next-basket-wins time.

Davis was fouled on the next trip, got the free throw to win it, and that was that.

"I told my team I was going to miss the first one to put a little more pressure on myself here at home," Davis said.

James' team wore blue jerseys, all with the No. 2 for Gianna Bryant. Antetokounmpo's team wore red, every player wearing No. 24 on the back for Kobe Bry-

ant. And on their right shoulders was a black circular patch with nine stars, one for each victim of the helicopter crash that took the lives of Bryant, his daughter and their seven friends on Jan. 26.

"His presence was felt," James said.

And with the new rules, the teams went at it in the fourth: Antetokounmpo got out to block a shot by James, Lowry took a charge from former Toronto teammate Leonard, elbows got up in collisions for rebound positioning, Paul was screaming encouragement to teammates in a time-out.

It was the first All-Star Game with a new format: The teams played a mini-game in each of the first three quarters, the scores starting at 0-0 in each of those periods.

James' team won the first quarter 53-41, Antetokounmpo's team won the second quarter 51-30.

The third quarter had down-to-the-wire, big-money drama and ended tied 41-41.

The cumulative score at that point was Team Giannis 133, Team LeBron 124 going into the untimed fourth quarter — with the first to reach 157 declared the winner. The NBA decided, as part of the series of Bryant tributes, that the winner of the All-Star Game would be the team that added 24 points, a nod to his jersey number, to whatever the leading total score was after three quarters. The game clock was off. The shot clock stayed on. The stage for drama was perfectly set, and the All-Star Game was entertaining again.

## NHL roundup

# Surging Bruins top Rangers for ninth win in 10 games

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Charlie McAvoy, Charlie Coyle and Patrice Bergeron scored, and the NHL-leading Boston Bruins began a four-game road trip with a 3-1 win against the New York Rangers on Sunday.

“We expect to play well every night,” Bruins alternate captain Brad Marchand said. “When we play well, we are going to win a majority of the games. We just hold ourselves to a high standard. We don’t accept losing in the room, or in the organization.”

Jaroslav Halak made 25 saves as Boston picked up its ninth win in 10 games.

Mika Zibanejad scored for the Rangers, but their four-game winning streak was snapped. Alexandar Georgiev made his third start in a row and had 31 saves.

Coyle scored the winner with a short-handed goal at 18:42 of the second period. The forward stole a puck from Jacob Trouba at the blue line, then outskated everyone on the ice before converting a breakaway for his 14th of the season.

**Predators 2, Blues 1:** Kyle Turris scored with 2:12 left and host Nashville beat St. Louis to take the season series from the defending Stanley Cup champs.

Nashville improved to 13-11-4 at home. They now have won seven of their last 10, climbing within a point of the Western Conference’s second wild card.

Tyler Bozak scored for the first-place Blues, and Jordan Binnington finished with 22 saves.

**Penguins 5, Red Wings 1:** Patric Hornqvist had two goals and an assist as host Pittsburgh defeated Detroit.

Hornqvist has 14 goals this season. Sidney Crosby scored his 11th, Kris Letang added his 14th on the power play and Sam

Lafferty also scored for the Penguins, who moved within one point of first-place Washington in the Metropolitan Division.

Crosby extended his point streak to four games. He has six goals and 19 points in 12 games since returning from core muscle surgery on Jan. 14.

Matt Murray made 27 saves for Pittsburgh, which has won 11 of 15.

**Oilers 4, Hurricanes 3 (OT):** Josh Archibald scored his second goal of the game in overtime, NHL points leader Leon Draisaitl had a goal and two assists, and visiting Edmonton edged Carolina.

Draisaitl set up Archibald’s goal 3:57 into overtime for his 95th point of the season.

Sebastian Aho had two goals and an assist for the Hurricanes, including a tying goal with 5:02 left in the third period.

Edmonton is 3-1 without injured star Connor McDavid.

**Ducks 5, Canucks 1:** Adam Henrique scored twice, Derek Grant had a goal and an assist, and visiting Anaheim beat Vancouver.

The Ducks scored twice on the power play after going 1-for-21 with the extra man over their previous eight games.

The loss left the Canucks one point behind first-place Edmonton in the Pacific Division and one point ahead of Vegas. The Ducks remain 11 points out of a playoff spot.

**Devils 4, Blue Jackets 3 (SO):** Mackenzie Blackwood made a career-high 52 saves and stopped six of seven attempts in the shootout to lead host New Jersey over scuffling Columbus.

Nikita Gusev and Jesper Bratt scored in the tiebreaker for New Jersey, which beat the Blue Jackets for the first time in 10 meetings. The previous Devils victory over Columbus came

in December 2017.

Pierre-Luc Dubois had the only shootout goal for the Blue Jackets, who dropped to 0-2-3 in their last five games. Joey Anderson, Nicholas Merkley and Kyle Palmieri scored for the Devils in regulation.

Andrew Peeke, Zach Werenski and Kevin Stenlund provided the goals for the Blue Jackets. Elvis Merzlikins stopped 23 shots in losing his second straight.

**Senators 4, Stars 3 (OT):** Artem Anisimov scored at 3:48 of overtime to lift host Ottawa over Dallas.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau, Brady Tkachuk and Tyler Ennis also scored for the Senators.

John Klingberg, Stephen Johns and Joe Pavelski scored for the Stars as Dallas finished a 2-0-1 road trip.

**Sabres 5, Maple Leafs 2:** Jack Eichel scored the tiebreaker in the third period as part of a three-goal surge in 91 seconds that carried host Buffalo past Toronto.

Johan Larsson had a goal and an assist, and defensemen Rasmus Ristolainen and Colin Miller had two assists each for the Sabres, who won their third consecutive game.

Toronto dropped to 7-7-3 since a 9-0-1 run.

**Jets 3, Blackhawks 2:** Nathan Beaulieu’s first goal of the season early in the third period sent host Winnipeg past Chicago.

Playing in his 27th game of an injury-riddled campaign, the defenseman fired a one-timer from the point that hit a Blackhawks player and got by goalie Corey Crawford to give the Jets a 3-2 lead. Beaulieu also had an assist.

Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist for Chicago (26-25-8), which completed a 1-4-0 trip.

## Devils deal Greene to Islanders

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The New York Islanders solidified their defense for the playoff push Sunday, acquiring New Jersey Devils captain Andy Greene.

The Devils got young defenseman David Quenneville and the Islanders’ second-round pick in the 2021 draft in return for Greene.

The deal came eight days before the NHL trade deadline on Feb. 24.

The Islanders have been searching for a quality defenseman since losing Adam Pelech to an Achilles tendon injury on Jan. 2. It also gives them a lefty-shooting defender on a team filled with right-handed defensemen.

The deal reunites the 37-year-old Greene with Islanders president and general manager Lou Lamoriello, who signed him as an undrafted free agent out of Miami (Ohio) University in 2006.

New Jersey later traded forward Blake Coleman to Tampa Bay for 19-year-old left wing Nolan Foote and a 2020 first-round draft pick the Devils previously acquired from Vancouver. The deals give the Devils eight selections in this year’s NHL Draft, including three in the first round.

Greene, who is in the final year of a five-year, \$25 million contract, had a no-trade clause and had to approve the deal. His 14 seasons in New Jersey, which included a trip to the Stanley Cup Finals in 2012, made him the Devils’ longest-serving active player.

Devils interim general manager Tom Fitzgerald said he has talked to Lamoriello frequently over the past month.

“Lou is trying to help his team win right now,” said Fitzgerald, who has known Lamoriello since their days at Providence. “Andy is a guy that he obviously knows very well and feels very comfortable with him. We’re in this situation where playoffs aren’t in the picture for us.”