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Crashed plane located in Philippine Sea

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy has located the C-2A Greyhound that crashed into the Philippine Sea in November, killing three sailors.

Deepwater salvage experts operating out of a contracted salvage vessel found the aircraft the last week of December using a system to hone in on the downed plane's emergency relocation pinger, said a Navy statement issued Friday.

The Greyhound is about 18,500 feet down, which would make the aircraft recovering operation the deepest ever attempted, the statement said. In the coming weeks, salvage teams will begin mapping the debris field and attaching heavy lines to the ship to bring the aircraft to the surface.

"Despite very challenging conditions, every effort will be made to recover the aircraft

'Despite very challenging conditions, every effort will be made to recover the aircraft and our fallen sailors.'

U.S. Navy statement

and our fallen sailors," the statement said.

The Greyhound was carrying 11 passengers and cargo from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan when it crashed on Nov. 22. It was assigned to Carrier Air Wing 5, the aviation component of carrier's strike group.

The Yokosuka-based Ronald Reagan was conducting an annual bilateral maritime field-training exercise with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force at the time of the incident.

Shortly after the crash, eight people were rescued by Navy

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 12. U.S. and Japanese ships and aircraft spent two days searching for the three missing sailors — Lt. Steven Combs, Seaman Matthew Chialastri and Seaman Apprentice Bryan Grosso — over an area of nearly 1,000 square nautical miles.

The Navy is considering a posthumous award for Combs, whose flying has been credited with possibly saving the lives of the other passengers.

"Lt. Combs' co-pilot was effusive in his praise. He said, 'He flew the hell out of that plane,'" Navy Cmdr. Ronald Flanders, a spokesman for Naval Air Forces, told Stars and Stripes. "It

was heroic. A remarkable piece of flying that was instrumental in saving eight lives."

The Navy has yet to announce the official cause of the crash. It appears the Greyhound suffered a rare double engine failure, two Navy officials previously told Stars and Stripes on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation. The officials said it was unclear what would have caused the engines to fail.

The crash capped off a deadly year for the Navy's Japan-based 7th Fleet that included a series of high-profile accidents and mishaps. In January, the USS Antietam ran aground and spilled roughly 1,100 gallons of hydraulic fluid into Tokyo Bay; in June, a collision between the USS Fitzgerald and a merchant ship killed seven sailors; and in August, the USS John S. McCain ran into an oil tanker, killing 10 more.

Helicopter makes emergency landing on Okinawa

BY HANA KUSUMOTO
AND MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

There were no injuries after a U.S. military helicopter made an emergency landing Saturday on Okinawa, Marine Corps and Japanese officials said.

The Marines told Japanese officials that a UH-1Y Venom from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing made a "preventive landing" just after 4 p.m. on an Ikei Island beach after a warning light came on indicating excessive speed from its main rotor, said a spokesman for the Okinawa Defense Bureau, which is part of Japan's Defense Ministry.

There were no reports of damage or injuries, including to the Venom's four crewmembers, the spokesman said. The

aircraft was still at the beach Sunday being checked by the Marines.

A witness told Okinawa Prefectural Police there was no fire or smoke coming from the helicopter after the incident.

Marine officials confirmed that the landing was made because of indications that the aircraft's main rotor was moving too fast.

"We are grateful that all crew members are unharmed, no one was hurt and no property was damaged," Marine 2nd Lt. Gregory Cronen told Stars and Stripes in a statement Sunday.

The Marine Corps vowed to "rigorously" investigate the cause of the incident.

"We care deeply for the safety of both our pilots and crew in our aircraft as well as the communities around which we operate," he said.

The incident is the latest in a string of

recent U.S. military aircraft mishaps on or around the southern Japanese island prefecture that have led to heightened safety concerns among Okinawa's local population.

On Dec. 13, a CH-53E Super Stallion's window inexplicably became separated from the aircraft and landed on an elementary school sports field adjacent to Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's fence line. More than 50 schoolchildren were playing at the time, and one boy was slightly injured from a pebble that flew up during impact.

On Dec. 7, a plastic part thought to belong to a U.S. military helicopter landed on the roof of a local day care facility, leading to protests in front of U.S. military facilities.

In October, a 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Super Stallion made an emergency landing in a farmer's field outside Okinawa's Northern Training Area after an inflight fire. The aircraft was an almost total loss.

Carl Vinson en route to Western Pacific

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

More than 6,000 sailors have left the West Coast for the tension-filled Western Pacific.

The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, along with the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain and guided-missile destroyers USS Wayne E. Meyer and USS Michael Murphy, are heading to the region on a regularly scheduled deployment, the Navy said Friday.

The Hawaii-based Michael Murphy will link up with the San Diego-based ships later. The Carl Vinson brings with it Carrier Air Wing 2, which includes over 70 aircraft.

The strike group is deploying to the region under the Third Fleet Forward initiative, the Navy said. That will allow the ships to remain in the 3rd Fleet

chain of command while operating in 7th Fleet waters.

"I look forward to the strike group further demonstrating Third Fleet's evolving operational role across the Indo-Pacific region," Rear Adm. John Fuller, the strike group's commander, said in a Navy statement. "We are trained and ready to execute our mission."

Chief of U.S. Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson told Stars and Stripes last month that more ships from the 3rd Fleet could be deployed to the region.

"We will continue to assure that we meet all of our missions here in the Asia-Pacific area," he said. "It could be something coming forward from 3rd Fleet or something like that to meet those requirements."

The strike group's deployment comes at a time when the

7th Fleet is facing a ship shortage after two deadly collisions and a delayed deployment. Collisions over the summer involving the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain put the destroyers out of commission for the immediate future.

The destroyer USS Milius, which was scheduled to join the 7th Fleet last summer, had its deployment pushed forward to an unknown date in 2018 while the ship undergoes a modernization process that will outfit it with the Aegis Baseline 9 combat system.

The Lake Champlain was involved in a collision with a South Korean fishing boat last spring that a Navy investigation released in November declared was "avoidable." The report said failures in watch-standing and navigation were the main causes of the collision, which

resulted in administrative and disciplinary actions against the Lake Champlain's captain, executive officer and several other crew members.

The Carl Vinson strike group conducted a dual-carrier training exercise with the USS Ronald Reagan group last summer in waters near the Korean Peninsula. The Carl Vinson's deployment irked North Korea, which threatened to target the ship with "merciless ultra-precision strikes" and later released a propaganda video showing missiles striking the carrier and sinking it.

The ships wrapped up a three-week training exercise in late November that included "a series of at-sea drills, missile shoots, and strike operations using a variety of naval platforms and weapons," the Navy statement said.

USS Wasp joins 7th Fleet operations

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

The USS Wasp entered the 7th Fleet's operations area Saturday, moving closer to its new homeport in Japan.

Navy officials announced that the amphibious-assault ship will soon pull into Sasebo Naval Base — an arrival that was delayed after the Wasp was diverted to the Caribbean in September to assist with disaster-relief efforts.

The Wasp is joining the Navy's 7th Fleet as its forward-deployed amphibious-assault ship and will serve as the flag ship of the fleet's amphibious forces. It's replacing the USS Bonhomme Richard, which has been homeported in Sasebo since April 2012. The bulk of the ships in the 7th Fleet's amphibious force are based in Sasebo.

The ship departed Naval Station Norfolk, Va., in August and was en route to Japan when it

was diverted to the Caribbean to assist with relief efforts in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Dominica after Hurricane Irma. The Wasp was then tapped to provide aid to Puerto Rico after the island was struck by the Category 5 Hurricane Maria.

Aircraft aboard the Wasp flew 108 missions in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, totaling 385 hours of flight time and moving 1,129 passengers along with 26,720 pounds of equipment and 1,718,200 pounds of various logistical support items, including 328,100 pounds of food and water, a Navy statement said.

In October, the ship resumed its voyage to Japan, with stops in Brazil and Hawaii along the way. The Wasp also conducted drills during the transit that covered damage control, combat systems, aviation and casualty response.

The Wasp brings new capa-

bilities to the 7th Fleet and can support the next-generation F-35B Lightning II fighter, which is capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings. The stealth jets are flown by Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, which arrived last year at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

"This move ensures that our most technologically-advanced air warfare platforms are forward deployed," Capt. Andrew Smith, the Wasp's commander, said in a previous statement.

The Wasp typically includes a crew of about 1,000 sailors and can embark more than 1,600 Marines. The 844-foot flattop ship employs 31 aircraft, as well as Marine amphibious craft out of its well deck.

The Bonhomme Richard will remain in Sasebo along with the Wasp for an undetermined period in 2018 before heading to its new home in San Diego, where it will undergo maintenance and upgrades.

USAFE nears end of mission in Lithuania

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. will hand over the lead in NATO's Baltic air-policing mission to Denmark next week, concluding a four-month stay in Lithuania that saw U.S. fighter jets scramble about 30 times to identify Russian aircraft flying near NATO airspace, officials said.

That number was comparable to past air-policing rotations, said Capt. Kay Nissen, a U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa spokeswoman. But, she said, there was increased activity in the beginning of the rotation because of a Russian military exercise at the time.

With the mission winding down, USAFE on Friday released two video clips of "safe and standard" interceptions that occurred during the U.S.-led rotation.

DNA test completes quest to find father

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Hairstylist Chikako McMaster had struggled with abandonment issues for more than a half-century because she never knew her father, an American servicemember.

He was in a relationship with her Japanese mother during the 1960s and, for whatever reason, left Okinawa after she got pregnant and never returned. McMaster, 55, never even knew his name.

“It was tough,” said the married mother of three who owns a salon just outside Camp Pendleton, Calif. “I always felt that I was left behind.”

Four months ago, McMaster took a DNA test at the behest of her daughter, who was interested in tracing their heritage. It was the start of an odyssey that came full circle last month when McMaster stood at Camp Courtney, Okinawa, and witnessed the Marine Corps honor her birth father — Marine Staff Sgt. Claude Dorris — by naming a newly renovated barracks building after the Navy Cross recipient.

While assigned to 3rd Marine Amphibious Force, Dorris was killed by an enemy rocket Jan. 7, 1968, in Thua Thien province, Vietnam, as he led a successful effort to repel a superior attacking enemy force.

Friends and relatives on Okinawa say McMaster’s story resembles a Hollywood movie.

She grew up in Uruma — specifically, in the area where Camp Courtney now stands — and attended Japanese schools on the island through fifth grade. She transferred to an American school after her mother, Fumiko Nakamura, married a Marine. She moved to Camp Pendleton at 18 when her stepfather was stationed there.

Years passed, and though McMaster stayed connected to her Okinawan roots, she got wrapped up in running her salon and raising a family with her husband, David. She became resigned to the fact that she might never find her birth father.

‘A dream come true’

In August, McMaster submitted a DNA sample to 23andMe — a genomics and biotechnology company that performs genetic testing and analysis — after constant prodding from her daughter, Lena.

“My daughter kept on insisting, ‘I want to know my grandfather,’” she said. “I kept on saying, ‘If it’s meant to be, I will find him.’”

The service came back with a hit. It said McMaster had a relative — also registered with the company — living in the U.S. That relative turned out to be a second cousin who revealed that they had eight great-uncles who served in the U.S. military. But only one — Dorris — had been to Okinawa.

The news was both exciting and heart-breaking when McMaster found out her father had been killed in Vietnam.

“I was very emotional,” she said.

Her family held one another and wept after seeing Dorris’ photo, McMaster said. The resemblance was uncanny.

“It was a dream come true,” she said. “I never imagined, at my age, finding my biological father.”

McMaster then was put in touch with a half-brother, Oregon native Eric Schregardus, who revealed even more information.

About three years ago, Schregardus’ mother, Helen, began to suffer from Alzheimer’s. Before she lost her faculties, she told her son that he had a half-sister on Okinawa.

Through him, McMaster learned that Dorris had attempted to visit her mother on Okinawa before going to Vietnam. After discovering from the landlord that she had moved, Dorris went to the home of McMaster’s grandmother. McMaster’s Okinawan relatives then pointed out a 5-year-old girl with Western features.

“He told his wife, ‘I have a daughter in Okinawa and I would like to bring her back to the states,’” McMaster said. “When I learned that he wanted me, it was just unbelievable.”

Selfless devotion

On Dec. 22, about 50 Marines, including a color guard, stood at attention for the dedication of Camp Courtney’s new barracks for staff noncommissioned officers.

McMaster returned to Okinawa for the first time in 15 years for the ceremony and to visit her Okinawan family, who also were in attendance.

The “Marines’ Hymn” blared through tall speakers before officials spoke about Dorris and his sacrifice.

He was born Aug. 4, 1938, in Louisville, Ky., and went to Vietnam as a squad leader and adviser for the Combined Action Program. CAP advisers were embedded in small numbers in remote villages in Vietnam, where they lived with the locals, got to know them and trained them as a militia to fight the communist Viet Cong insurgency.

Dorris was sent to Nuoc Ngot Village. Early on Jan. 7, 1968, CAP Marines came under heavy bombardment from enemy mortar and rocket fire, according to Dorris’ Navy Cross citation. They were assaulted by a superior force.

The enemy seized the northern wall of the compound as the Marines and militia members moved to the sandbagged southern wall. Dorris was “shot in both legs and [was] still making sure all the Marines were out,” Marine Col. Giles Boyce, commander of camps Courtney and McTureous, said at the ceremony.

“Then he came across a young Vietnamese boy who was injured and rendered first aid,” saving his life, he said. “I mean, do you have that kind of composure? Everything he did is what we want Marines to do. He was focused on his Marines and sailors and the people he was there to protect, and he did all of it.”

“He fearlessly remained in his dangerously exposed position in an attempt to halt the advancing enemy force until he was mortally wounded by an enemy rocket round,” his Navy Cross citation says. “His heroic and timely actions inspired his men and prevented the enemy from overrunning the compound.”

Dorris was one of three Marines to die that day and to be honored posthumously with the Navy Cross, the nation’s second-highest award for valor in combat, next to the Medal of Honor. McMaster was overcome with emotion when she first heard about her father’s actions.

Boyce said the Marine Corps looked at restarting CAP in Iraq in 2004 but wouldn’t accept the same risks that their forefathers had in Vietnam — small units, often in remote, enemy territory, with little to no quick-reaction forces or fire support. He said it was one of the most dangerous jobs of the war.

‘Very special’ journey

Throughout the ceremony, McMaster dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief. When it was over, a piece of red fabric came down, revealing large, black, block lettering that said “Dorris Hall.”

McMaster thanked the Marines for welcoming her and honoring her father and then toured the building with her family, Boyce and his staff.

Marine 1st Lt. Ryan Lowcher, a 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman, suggested naming the barracks after Dorris a little less than a year ago. His suggestion almost didn’t make the final cut, but he fought to keep it on the short list.

“I immediately homed in on his story, specifically, because he was killed in action while trying to help others around him, and it’s representative of the mission we have here in Okinawa with our Okinawan and Japanese neighbors,” Lowcher said. “It really resonated with me.”

Smiling, McMaster told Lowcher, “Because of you, I’m here, too.”

Dorris had vowed to return to Okinawa for his daughter. But it was McMaster who had come back to find him.

She clutched a bouquet of lilies given to her by the Marines. McMaster said they were the favorite flower of her mother, who died in 2004 — something they couldn’t have known. “It was meant to be,” she said of her journey. “This is very special.”

Trump open to talking to N. Korean leader

Associated Press

THURMONT, Md. — President Donald Trump, shelving comparisons about the size of a “nuclear button,” said Saturday he is open to talking with the North Korean leader he’s called “Little Rocket Man” and hopes some progress results from upcoming talks between the Koreans.

Trump, who last year lambasted his chief diplomat for talking about negotiations with the nuclear-armed North, told reporters at Camp David that some dialogue or direct conversation with Kim Jong Un was not beyond the realm of possibility.

“Sure, I always believe in talking,” Trump said. “Absolutely I would do that; I wouldn’t have a problem with that at all.” But he was quick to add that any talks would come with conditions, which he did not specify.

The first formal talks between North and South in more than two years are set to take place in a border town Tuesday as the rivals try to find ways to cooperate on the Winter Olympics in the South and to improve their ties.

“Right now, they’re talking Olympics. It’s a start; it’s a big start,” Trump said during a question-and-answer session after meetings with GOP leaders in Congress and Cabinet members on the administration’s 2018 legislative agenda. Kim “knows I’m not messing around. I’m not messing around, not even a little bit, not even 1 percent. He understands that,” Trump said.

Trump rips ‘very weak’ libel laws

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Plainly agitated by a new book portraying him as dysfunctional, President Donald Trump is bemoaning his country’s “very weak” libel laws and making the case that he’s “like, really smart” and, indeed, a “very stable genius.”

Trump defense of his mental fitness in a series of tweets was a singular episode in a presidency rife with moments unlike any that have come before in that office.

He was pushing back against “Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House,” which paints him as a leader who doesn’t understand the weight of his office and whose competence is questioned by aides.

“Actually, throughout my life, my two greatest assets have been mental stability and being, like, really smart,” Trump tweeted from Camp David, the

presidential retreat in Maryland, a few hours before a strategy session on the 2018 legislative agenda with Republican congressional leaders and Cabinet members.

His ire was directed at author Michael Wolff, whose book draws a derogatory portrait of the 45th president as an undisciplined man-child who didn’t actually want to win the White House and who spends his evenings eating cheeseburgers in bed, watching television and talking on the telephone to old friends.

The book also quotes Trump’s former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, and other prominent advisers as questioning the president’s competence.

“I consider it a work of fiction,” Trump told reporters. “The libel laws are very weak in this country. If they were strong, it would be very helpful. You wouldn’t have things like that happen where you can say whatever comes to your head.”

Assessing this week’s discussions, Trump said that “if something can happen and something can come out of those talks, that would be a great thing for all of

humanity.” The president also said he had spoken with South Korean leader Moon Jae-in, who “thanks me very much for my tough stance.”

Quality control issues found in Air Force rocket program

The (Colorado Springs, Colo.) Gazette

Pentagon investigators have found that Air Force rocket programs have a problem with messy factories and sloppy procedures that could endanger military launches.

The new report found animal feces in an Aerojet Rocketdyne test area for rocket motors used aboard the military’s Atlas and Delta rockets. At rocket upstart SpaceX, investigators found bottles of soda and personal items in a rocket-testing area that was supposed to be kept clear of debris. At United Launch Alliance, investigators found workers didn’t follow procedures to prevent electrostatic issues, leaving rocket parts vulnerable to damage.

The 26-page report, which found 181 distinct quality control issues, slammed the Air Force Space Command’s rocket-buying program, saying leaders “did not perform adequate quality assurance.” The command is headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The Defense Contract Management

Agency, which oversees military contractors, said it “issued corrective action requests to each contractor. Each contractor submitted corresponding corrective action plans and they are well underway in implementing those corrective actions.”

Air Force Space Command’s top rocket man, Col. Robert P. Bongiovi, director of launch systems, praised the report. “Our priority is mission success on every launch and we appreciate the [Defense Department inspector general’s] diligence in ensuring our provider’s quality systems and processes are tuned to ensure continued launch success,” he said.

Issues like those highlighted in the report can create big problems in a business with little room for mistakes, said John Pike, who runs the Virginia-based think tank GlobalSecurity.org. Pike said they also point to bigger problems. Two decades of successful launches could have bred complacency in the Air Force’s rocket enterprise that could lead to failures, he said.

In the late 1990s, the Air Force suffered a

string of spectacular launch failures — six in nine months. The service was ordered by Congress to probe the problems, and the service found a series of issues, many based on faulty quality control procedures by contractors.

This time, the Pentagon has ordered a “root cause analysis” to figure out why pop cans and poop were allowed into the same room as rocket engines.

Investigators delved into whether contractors complied with a set of regulations that control everything from product testing and materials safety to control of debris and keeping track of expiration dates on equipment.

In one example, the investigators found expired glue at a rocket plant run by Aerojet Rocketdyne. At SpaceX, investigators say they spotted workers using tools that weren’t specified in a manual. At United Launch Alliance, investigators say workers weren’t taking precautions to avoid static electricity and to control humidity around rocket parts.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

DUI suspect calls 911 on himself

FL WINTER HAVEN — Authorities said a Florida man called 911 to report that he was driving drunk on New Year's Eve and needed to be pulled over.

Polk County Sheriff's officials said they got a call from Michael Lester. The operator repeatedly directed Lester to pull over.

When deputy's caught up with him, they said, Lester first told them he'd had only two beers, but later admitted having several and swallowing methamphetamine. He also told deputies he'd barely slept in several days.

According to a Facebook Post from the sheriff's office, Lester's history includes a previous DUI, aggravated battery, drug possession and hit-and-run.

Lawn-mowing man guilty in shooting spat

IN INDIANAPOLIS — An Indianapolis-area man who was wounded when an argument with a neighbor escalated into across-the-fence gunfire has pleaded guilty in the case.

The Johnson County prosecutor's office in July charged Jeffrey S. Weigle with criminal recklessness with a deadly weapon. He pleaded guilty Thursday in an agreement with prosecutors and a judge gave him credit for about six months already served in jail. He was released Thursday night.

Video shows the two trading insults on their properties in Greenwood on June 27 before Weigle — apparently riding a lawn mower — pulls out a handgun.

The video then shows Indianapolis firefighter Dean Keller firing his gun and Weigle returning fire.

Mayor-elect doesn't show up to swearing-in

MT LAUREL — A different mayor of a southern Montana town was sworn into office a day after the mayor-elect failed to appear for a swearing-in ceremony.

Former City Councilman Tom Nelson was sworn in as the new mayor of Laurel on Wednesday after mayor-elect Dave Waggoner did not show up to the City Council's Tuesday meeting. Nelson had lost to Waggoner in the election.

Waggoner was asked to leave his position at the city's wastewater treatment plant before he could take office. City officials say Waggoner did not submit a letter of resignation for his city job, so the council appointed Nelson.

Man gets month in jail for bathroom cameras

ME YORK — A Massachusetts man was sentenced to a month in jail following his arrest for hiding small video cameras in a beach rental to spy on guests.

WCSH-TV reported Joseph McGrath, 32, of East Longmeadow, Mass., rented the home in York last September and placed four hidden cameras in bathrooms. He was staying at the home with his wife and children.

Police said McGrath placed the cameras inside air fresheners atop the backs of the toilets. The cameras had clear views of showers. Police said McGrath was convicted of 10 counts of violation of privacy.

Car plunges into river during police chase

MO NIXA — A dive team is searching for a car that crashed into a

southwest Missouri river during a police chase.

KYTV reported that the driver was unhurt.

A Christian County deputy on Wednesday attempted to stop the car for speeding. Sheriff Brad Cole said the deputy suspected the car was stolen, and that the driver was intoxicated.

A chase began. The car left the roadway on Highway 14 near Nixa and landed in the James River near an access area.

Woman charged in shooting streamed live

IL CHICAGO — A Chicago woman has been charged in the nonfatal shooting of a 27-year-old woman as the victim streamed video live on Facebook.

Police said Labritney Austin, 29, of University Park, turned herself in a day after Tuesday's shooting on the South Side. Police announced Friday that she's charged with aggravated battery by discharging a firearm.

Police said Austin and the victim were seen arguing in a car, and that Austin was observed pulling out a gun and firing multiple shots, striking the victim in the arm.

Army vet sentenced for mosque vandalism

CO FORT COLLINS — A former Army medic has been sentenced for throwing rocks and a Bible through the windows of a Colorado mosque.

The Coloradoan reported Joseph Giaquinto, 36, was sentenced to three years in wellness court and six months of work release Thursday.

Prosecutors say Giaquinto's actions against the Islamic Center of Fort Collins in March

escalated to a hate crime because they were deliberate.

The defense argued that Giaquinto is a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress and alcohol abuse disorders.

3 hurt as ambulance is hit by tow truck

PA MCKEES ROCKS — Authorities said an ambulance carrying a Pennsylvania police officer from the scene of a house fire was struck head-on by a tow truck, injuring three paramedics and tossing the officer around in the back of the emergency vehicle.

The police chief in McKees Rocks said the officer was being taken to a hospital for smoke inhalation when the crash happened Wednesday morning.

Chief Richard Deliman said the officer had been on patrol when she noticed the house ablaze and went to help. He said the officer suffered only minor bumps and bruises in the crash but he didn't know the condition of the paramedics. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Lawyer: Man says TV host told him to kill

OH AKRON — A northeast Ohio man who reportedly believed he was instructed to kill his elderly mother by the host of "Wheel of Fortune" has been found not guilty in her death by reason of insanity.

The Akron Beacon Journal reported that a judge made the ruling Thursday in the murder case against Derrick Williams, 48.

Williams' attorney, Brian Pierce, said the Akron man believed he was getting messages from the TV game show when he heard his hometown mentioned. He thought that host Pat Sajak was telling him to kill his mother when Sajak said, "Do it."

From wire reports

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Titans rally, stun Chiefs in second half

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Marcus Mariota did everything he could to help the Titans advance in the playoffs, throwing a crazy touchdown pass to himself, running for crucial first downs and providing the kind of spark that Tennessee needed to rally from a 21-3 halftime hole.

Heck, he even threw a crucial block on the run that clinched the game.

It all added up to a heart-stopping 22-21 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs on Saturday, the first postseason win for the Titans in 14 years and one that will provide some relief — for the week, at least — for embattled coach Mike Mularkey and his remarkable bunch of underdogs.

“Special,” said Mariota, whose 205 yards passing included the go-ahead 22-yard strike to Eric Decker with six minutes left. “I’m part of a great team. I’m part of a group of guys that really believe in each other. And it’s something special.”

Now, the Titans will find out Sunday whether they’re headed to New England or Pittsburgh next.

Derrick Henry added a career-high 156 yards rushing and another score for Tennessee (10-7), while a defense fileted by Alex Smith and the Chiefs (10-7) in the first half pitched a shutout in the second half — dooming the Kansas City franchise

to another humiliating postseason defeat.

The Chiefs haven’t won a home playoff game since January 1994.

“I’m in shock,” Smith said. “The swing at halftime to the final whistle, definitely a shock. Yeah. Didn’t feel like we played up to how we’re capable of playing and that’s disappointing.”

Smith threw for 264 yards and two touchdowns, but most of that came before halftime. He couldn’t get going in the second half and misfired on fourth-and-9 at the Titans 44 with just over two minutes to go, denying the Chiefs a chance for Harrison Butker to kick a go-ahead field goal.

Adding to the depression? Henry appeared to fumble as Tennessee tried to run out the clock.

The Chiefs’ Derrick Johnson picked up the ball and returned it for a touchdown with 1:47 to go, and the crowd went wild as fireworks shot off over Arrowhead Stadium. But a replay clearly showed Henry down, the call was overturned and Tennessee succeeded in running out the clock. Mariota threw a block that helped spring Henry for a 22-yard gain on third-and-10 late that helped finish off the comeback.

“Grit. It’s just grit,” Henry said. “We told them we’ve got 30 minutes left, all we’ve got to do is play our game. Execute the plays and everything will take care of itself.”

In the first half, the Chiefs looked every bit the team that had won four straight in convincing fashion, and the Titans looked every bit the team that backed into the playoffs.

Kareem Hunt, the league’s top rusher this season, plunged in from 1 yard for a 7-0 lead. Smith hit Travis Kelce, who later left with a concussion, with a 13-yard touchdown pass. And he added another TD toss to Demarcus Robinson on the final offensive play for a 21-3 lead at the break.

“We were feeling good,” Johnson said. “We came in 21-3 and that’s all we were talking about: ‘Finish. Don’t get complacent. We have bigger goals than this game.’”

But it was the Titans who finished, and it was Mariota who led the way. He capped a 91-yard TD drive to start the second half in the bizarre fashions: Mariota threw a TD pass to himself.

His throw to the end zone was batted right back at him by Darrelle Revis, and Mariota hauled it in and dived for the goal line. It was the first time a player has thrown a TD pass to himself in the playoffs, and the first time in any game since the Vikings’ Brad Johnson during the 1997 season.

“Right place, right time,” Mariota said with a smile.

Falcons shut down Rams to advance

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Atlanta Falcons know they’ll have to win three consecutive road games to get a chance for Super Bowl redemption.

The Falcons already nabbed the first victory by spoiling a festive night in Los Angeles, and they seem quite confident about their chances to run the table in other people’s buildings on the way to Minneapolis.

Matt Ryan passed for 218 yards and hit Julio Jones for an 8-yard touchdown with 5:48 to play, and the defending NFC champion Falcons advanced from the wild-card round with a 26-13 victory over the upstart Rams on Saturday night.

Devonta Freeman rushed for an early score and Matt Bryant kicked four field goals for the Falcons (11-6), who dropped to

the sixth seed in the conference after finishing one game out of first place in the NFC South. Atlanta went only 5-3 on the road in the regular season.

But judging from a comprehensively solid performance against the hungry Rams (11-6), that tough division race and last season’s deep playoff run prepared Atlanta for the grind necessary to win back-to-back NFC titles.

“We don’t care where we play these games, because we know it’s about us, not the crowd or the opponent,” Atlanta safety Ricardo Allen said.

The next place they’re headed is Philadelphia: The Falcons advanced to face the top-seeded Eagles on Jan. 13.

“Doesn’t matter where we’re going, we’re going,” Ryan said. “And that’s the most exciting

part.”

Atlanta’s journey to the Super Bowl last season ended infamously with that blown 28-3 lead against New England. In their first playoff game since, the Falcons spoiled the Rams’ first playoff game in 13 years with a methodical performance derived from hard-earned experience.

The Falcons’ defense held the NFL’s highest-scoring offense to one touchdown while muzzling Todd Gurley and harassing Jared Goff, who went 24-for-45 in his playoff debut.

Jones caught nine passes for 94 yards for Atlanta, which never trailed while winning playoff games in consecutive seasons for the first time in franchise history. Against an opponent that had just six players on its roster with prior

postseason appearances, the Falcons’ experience showed through.

“I think having gone through these situations, understanding what it’s like, the atmosphere, those kinds of things, knowing that it’s going to be tough, all those things kind of carry forward,” Ryan said. “But at the end of the day, experience or no experience, you’ve got to execute.”

Robert Woods caught nine passes for 142 yards, but rookie Cooper Kupp scored the Rams’ only touchdown late in the first half. Pro Bowl kick returner Pharoh Cooper also muffed a punt and fumbled a kickoff return early, leading to 10 points for the Falcons.

“You see why the Falcons are the defending NFC champs,” Rams coach Sean McVay said.

NBA roundup

Curry, Warriors top depleted Clippers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Steph Curry scored a season-high 45 points without playing the fourth quarter and the Golden State Warriors ran away from the Los Angeles Clippers 121-105 on Saturday for their fourth straight victory.

Curry took advantage of the guard-depleted Clippers, making 11 of 21 shots, including 8 of 16 three-pointers, going against rookie Juwan Evans and G-League call-up Tyrone Wallace.

The Clippers' Blake Griffin suffered a concussion late in the first quarter when he stumbled driving into the lane from the right wing and hit his head on JaVale McGee's right elbow. Griffin fell to the floor and remained down for several minutes as team physicians tended to him. He walked off under his own power and went to the locker room.

Nick Young and JaVale McGee each scored 11 points for Golden State, playing with Kevin Durant sidelined by a right calf strain. The Warriors improved to 17-2 since Nov. 27. They lost won 12th straight against the Clippers.

Lou Williams scored 23 points, and DeAndre Jordan added 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Clippers.

Cavaliers 131, Magic 127: LeBron James had 33 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists to just miss a triple-double in Cleveland's victory over host Orlando.

Kevin Love added 27 points, and Isaiah Thomas had 19 points and four assists in his first start since returning from a hip injury that delayed his Cavaliers debut. Dwayne Wade added 16 points.

Aaron Gordon led Orlando with 30 points, and Elfrid Payton had 20 points and five assists.

Celtics 87, Nets 85: Jayson Tatum had a driving dunk and a three-pointer on consecutive late possessions, pulling Boston out of a late hole on the road against Brooklyn.

Playing without Al Horford because of a sore left knee, Boston won its sixth straight heading into its trip to London to face Philadelphia on Thursday.

Pistons 108, Rockets 101: Tobias Harris scored 27 points and host Detroit held off Houston.

The Pistons are only four games over .500, but hold wins over Golden State, Boston, San Antonio, Minnesota and now the Rockets. The Rockets are without injured star James Harden, but the Pistons were missing their own standout, with Andre Drummond sidelined because of a right rib contusion.

Bucks 110, Wizards 103: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 34 points and 12 rebounds, Eric Bledsoe added 21 points and visiting Milwaukee pulled away late to beat Washington.

Antetokounmpo also had seven assists to help Milwaukee win for the fourth time in six games and snap Washington's four-game winning streak.

Timberwolves 116, Pelicans 98: Karl-Anthony Towns and Jimmy Butler each scored 21 points, Andrew Wiggins added 20 and host Minnesota cruised past New Orleans.

Pacers 125, Bulls 86: Victor Oladipo had 23 points and nine assists in three quarters in his return from a right knee injury in Indiana's victory over visiting Chicago.

Kings 106, Nuggets 98: Forty-year-old Vince Carter scored 10 of his 12 points in the fourth quarter and host Sacramento held off Denver.

NHL roundup

Bergeron scores 4 goals in Bruins' win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Patrice Bergeron had four goals and an assist, surpassing 700 points for his career while leading the Boston Bruins to a 7-1 rout of the Carolina Hurricanes on Saturday.

Brad Marchand assisted on all of Bergeron's goals and David Pastrnak had a goal and two assists for the Bruins, who scored on their first two shots and led 5-1 after the first period. Boston also got goals from Riley Nash and Jake DeBrusk while improving to 8-0-2 in its last 10 games.

Anton Khudobin had 27 saves for the Bruins.

Jordan Staal scored a power-play goal for Carolina in the first period and Scott Darling stopped 23 of 28 shots in relief of Cam Ward, who was pulled after allowing two goals on two shots.

Senators 6, Lightning 3: Ryan Dzingel scored twice and Mark Stone had a goal and two assists to help host Ottawa beat league-leading Tampa Bay.

Matt Duchene, Zack Smith and Jean-Gabriel Pageau also scored for the Senators, who have won consecutive games for the first time since Dec. 13-16. Craig Anderson stopped 45 shots.

Maple Leafs 3, Canucks 2 (SO): Auston Matthews and Tyler Bozak scored in the third period and again in the shootout, and Toronto beat visiting Vancouver.

It's the second straight shootout win for Toronto. Frederik Andersen stopped 2 of 3 shootout attempts after making 34 saves.

Rangers 2, Coyotes 1 (SO): Henrik Lundqvist stopped 37 shots through overtime and all three he faced in the shootout, Mika Zibanejad scored in the tiebreaker and New York beat Arizona.

Lundqvist stopped long-time former Rangers teammate Derek Stepan's shot on Arizona's last attempt of the shootout

to seal New York's third win in five games, and seventh point in the last four.

Predators 4, Kings 3: Austin Watson scored two goals, P.K. Subban added two assists and Nashville sent Los Angeles to its first regulation loss at home since mid-November.

Roman Josi and Scott Hartnell scored early goals and Pekka Rinne made 26 saves for the Predators, who wrapped up a three-game West Coast road trip with their first win.

Stars 5, Oilers 1: Linemates Alexander Radulov, Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin scored first-period goals within a span of 6½ minutes, leading Dallas over visiting Edmonton.

The Stars have won six of their past eight games. Edmonton has lost three of its past four and has been outscored 16-2.

Avalanche 7, Wild 2: At Denver, Carl Soderberg had two power-play goals, Nathan MacKinnon also scored with the man-advantage and added two assists, and Colorado beat Minnesota.

Mikko Rantanen also had a goal and two assists, and Gabriel Bourque and Patrik Nemeth each scored in the opening period for the Avalanche, who pushed their season-best winning streak to five games.

Flyers 6, Blues 3: Sean Couturier scored two goals, Claude Giroux had a goal and two assists, and the Flyers spoiled Brayden Schenn's return to Philadelphia with a victory over St. Louis.

Scott Laughton, Jordan Weal and Wayne Simmonds also scored, Jakub Voracek earned his NHL-high 41st assist and Brian Elliott made 28 saves against his former team in the Flyers' third win in four games.

Flames 3, Ducks 2: Dougie Hamilton scored with 16 seconds left to lift host Calgary over Anaheim.

Hamilton took a pass from Micheal Ferland and tucked a shot past John Gibson to give the Flames their third straight win.

College hoops roundup

Wolfpack topples No. 2 Duke

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Omer Yurtseven had 16 points while Torin Dorn hit two huge three-pointers in the final 2 minutes to help North Carolina State upset No. 2 Duke 96-85 on Saturday night.

It was the second win against a No. 2-ranked team this season for N.C. State (11-5, 1-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), which upset Arizona in November.

The Wolfpack shot 55 percent after halftime, though the two biggest shots came from Dorn.

He first hit a three from the corner over an oncoming Marvin Bagley III with 2:02 left and N.C. State protecting a four-point lead. Then Dorn hit one to beat the shot clock on an inbounds pass while being fouled by Javin DeLaurier, a four-point play that pushed the Wolfpack to a 91-80 lead with 1:06 left.

“The first one definitely felt good leaving my hand,” Dorn said. “The four-point play, when it left, I got hit and it felt good, too. But I couldn’t see it go in because I fell.”

Bagley finished with 31 points and 10 rebounds for the Blue Devils (13-2, 1-2).

No. 3 Villanova 100, Marquette 90: Jalen Brunson had 27 points and eight assists and host Villanova bounced back from its first loss of the season.

Eric Paschall added 19 points and Mikal Bridges had 18 points and seven rebounds for the Wildcats (14-1, 2-1 Big East).

Providence 81, No. 5 Xavier 72: Kyron Cartwright had 19 points, nine assists and four steals to help host Providence snap Xavier’s 10-game winning streak and ending the best start in school history.

Kerem Kanter had 24 points and 12 rebounds — eight on the offensive boards — in 20 minutes for Xavier (15-2, 3-1).

No. 6 West Virginia 89, No. 7 Oklahoma 76: Teddy Allen scored 20 points off the bench and Sagaba Konate had 14 of

his 16 points in the second half for the host Mountaineers.

Lamont West and Jevon Carter added 17 points apiece for West Virginia (14-1, 3-0 Big 12).

Oklahoma freshman Trae Young, the nation’s scoring and assists leader, finished with 29 points on 8-for-22 shooting. Carter and his teammates spent much of the game double-teaming Young, whose streak of double-doubles ended at five games.

No. 8 Virginia 61, No. 12 North Carolina 49: Devon Hall scored 16 points and the host Cavaliers held the Tar Heels to their second-lowest point total of the season.

Virginia (14-1, 3-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) won its sixth in a row and sent the Tar Heels to consecutive losses for the first time since February 2016.

Joel Berry II led North Carolina (12-4, 1-2) with 17 points.

No. 10 Kansas 88, No. 16 TCU: Devonte Graham scored 28 points with eight straight free throws in the final 2:02 as visiting Kansas held on.

Svi Mykhailiuk added 20 points for Kansas, which was coming off a home loss to Texas Tech and avoided its first 1-2 conference mark since 1990-91.

LSU 69, No. 11 Texas A&M 68: Tremont Waters scored 21 points, including an off-balance three-pointer with 1 second remaining, to lift the visiting Tigers.

Leading scorer D.J. Hogg returned for the Aggies (11-4, 0-3) after a suspension, but it wasn’t enough to stop them from dropping their third straight after lopsided losses to Alabama and Florida.

No. 13 Purdue 74, Nebraska 62: Vincent Edwards scored 21 points and Isaac Haas added 14 to lead the host Boilermakers to their 11th consecutive win.

The Boilermakers (15-2, 4-0 Big Ten) extended their home-court winning streak to 18 and won their 10th straight home

game against a conference foe.

Colorado 80, No. 14 Arizona 77: McKinley Wight IV scored 16 points to lead five players in double figures as the host Buffaloes ended Arizona’s ine-game winning streak.

It’s the second straight game in which the Buffaloes (10-6, 2-2 Pac-12) have knocked off a ranked team. They defeated No. 4 Arizona State 90-81 in overtime Thursday.

No. 23 Tennessee 76, No. 17 Kentucky 65: Admiral Schofield had 20 points and nine rebounds and the host Vols rallied in the second half to end a two-game skid.

N. 18 Texas Tech 74, Kansas State 58: Keenan Evans scored 27 points and host Texas Tech backed up its big win at Kansas earlier in the week.

No. 19 Gonzaga 85, Loyola Marymount 66: Johnathan Williams scored 30 points and visiting Gonzaga opened the second half with a 17-0 run.

No. 21 Seton Hall 90, Butler 87: Khadeen Carrington scored 29 points and Angel Delgado had 28 points and 15 rebounds as visiting Seton Hall rallied from an 11-point deficit to win its fifth straight game.

Auburn 88, No. 22 Arkansas 77: Mustapha Heron scored 17 points and the host Tigers fended off a late comeback attempt to secure their 12th consecutive win.

No. 25 Clemson 74, Louisville 69 (OT): Marcquise Reed scored 24 points and Elijah Thomas had 12 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks to lead host Clemson.

Nevada 86, Air Force 75: Caleb Martin scored 23 points, Kendall Stephens added 21 on seven three-pointers and visiting Nevada pulled away over the last 10 minutes to defeat Air Force.

Bison get past JMU for title

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — Fargo to Frisco is a thing again at North Dakota State.

Easton Stick threw a 50-yard touchdown pass to Darrius Shepherd and the Bison took back the Football Championship Subdivision title, beating James Madison 17-13 on Saturday. The victory came a year after their five-year run atop the FCS ended against the Dukes in the semifinals.

NDSU (14-1) also preserved its division-record 33-game winning streak from three years ago, ending James Madison’s run at 26 straight, denying the Dukes a second straight title and spoiling what would have been their first undefeated, untied season.

By winning six championships in seven years in the suburb north of Dallas, the Bison tied Georgia Southern with the most FCS titles.

“It’s a legacy,” said linebacker Nick DeLuca, who was injured and missed last year’s 27-17 loss to James Madison in Fargo that denied the Bison their annual trip to Texas. “That’s everything that we work for ... Just happy to get back here.”

The Dukes (14-1), who trailed 17-3 late in the first half, had a chance to win after punter Harry O’Kelly ran 24 yards on a fake. But Bryan Schor’s desperation throw to the end zone on fourth-and-16 fell incomplete with 58 seconds left.

Schor had two interceptions, including one by Marquise Bridges in his first career start at the NDSU 3 late in the third quarter. Two possessions later, Terrence Alls dropped a pass while running behind the defense, and Schor was sacked for the fourth time on the next play, forcing a punt.

“They made plays and we made too many mistakes,” James Madison coach Mike Houston said. “That’s what it boils down to. But they deserve to hoist that trophy out there.”