

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Guilty plea at first 'Fat Leonard' trial

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — The first sailor to face a military trial in connection with the Navy's expansive "Fat Leonard" corruption scandal has pleaded guilty and been sentenced to six months' confinement and a \$10,000 fine.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brian Ware pleaded guilty to ethics violations during a court-martial at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., on Thursday that included violation of a lawful order and graft. Prosecutors said he accepted more than \$8,000 worth of hotel rooms, cellphones and personal drivers during more

than a dozen port visits in Asia that were paid for by Glenn Defense Marine Asia.

Ware was the food service officer aboard the 7th Fleet command ship USS Blue Ridge and the aircraft carrier USS George Washington from 2010 to 2013. In that role, he placed food orders with Glenn Defense, which was the only authorized contractor at the time. Company officials said they were able to significantly mark up the price of the orders Ware made, which ranged from small amounts to up to \$100,000.

While the Navy used a standard 21-day menu, Ware had

discretion to decide which items to buy and in which quantities, according to a stipulation of facts Ware signed.

Ware has lived in Japan since 2009 and is assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. He enlisted in 1987 and was charged by the military less than two weeks before he was set to retire. He is one of five sailors who has been charged by the Navy in connection with the "Fat Leonard" scandal instead of by the Justice Department.

"Fat Leonard" is the nickname for Leonard Francis, the owner and chief executive of Glenn Defense. Francis pleaded

guilty in 2015 to presiding over a conspiracy involving "scores" of Navy officials, tens of millions of dollars in fraud and millions of dollars in bribes and gifts in return for lucrative contracts to provide services to ships while in southeast Asia, according to the Justice Department.

During his sentencing hearing, Ware broke down emotionally and said he was ashamed of what he had done and that his wife in Japan and their newly adopted 2-year-old daughter would suffer. "I lost everything. I love this uniform. I love the Navy," Ware, 49, said through tears.

US seeking new nukes to deter Russia threat

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With Russia in mind, the Trump administration is aiming to develop new nuclear firepower that it says will make it easier to deter threats to European allies.

The plan, not yet approved by President Donald Trump, is intended to make nuclear conflict less likely. Critics argue it would do the opposite.

The proposal is part of a policy document, known officially as a "nuclear posture review," that puts the U.S. in a generally more aggressive nuclear stance. It is the first review of its kind since 2010 and is among several studies of security strategy undertaken since Trump took office.

In many ways, it reaffirms the nuclear policy of President Barack Obama, including his commitment to replace all key elements of the nuclear arsenal with new, more modern weapons during the coming two decades.

It says the U.S. will adhere to existing arms-control agreements while expressing doubt about prospects for any new such pacts. The Trump nuclear doctrine is expected to be published in early February, followed by a related policy on the role and development of U.S. defenses against ballistic missiles.

Where the Trump doctrine splits from Obama's approach is in ending his push to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense policy. Like Obama, Trump would consider using nuclear weapons only in "extreme circumstances," while maintaining a degree of ambiguity about what that means. But Trump sees a fuller deterrent role for these weapons, as reflected in the plan to develop new capabilities to counter Russia in Europe.

The Huffington Post published online a draft of the nuclear policy report Thursday, and The Associated Press independently obtained a copy

Friday. Asked for comment, the Pentagon called it a "pre-decisional," unfinished document yet to be reviewed and approved by Trump, who ordered it a year ago.

Russia and, to a degree, China are outlined as nuclear policy problems that demand a tougher approach.

The administration's view is that Russian policies and actions are fraught with potential for miscalculation leading to an uncontrolled escalation of conflict in Europe. It specifically points to a Russian doctrine known as "escalate to de-escalate," in which Moscow would use or threaten to use smaller-yield nuclear weapons in a limited, conventional conflict in Europe in the belief that doing so would compel the U.S. and NATO to back down.

The administration proposes a two-step solution.

First, it would modify "a small number" of existing long-range ballistic missiles carried by Tri-

dent strategic submarines to fit them with smaller-yield nuclear warheads.

Secondly, "in the longer term," it would develop a nuclear-armed, sea-launched cruise missile — re-establishing a weapon that existed during the Cold War but was retired in 2011 by the Obama administration.

Together, these steps are meant to further dissuade "regional aggression," which means giving Russia greater pause in using limited nuclear strikes.

Interest in the condition and role of U.S. nuclear weapons has grown as North Korea develops its own nuclear arsenal it says is aimed at the U.S.

The Trump administration views the North Korean threats, along with what it sees as provocative nuclear rhetoric from Russia, as evidence that security conditions no longer support the idea that the U.S. can rely less on nuclear weapons or further limit their role in national defense.

US military history rich with immigrants

The Washington Post

In a rocky valley in Afghanistan eight years ago, Taliban fighters opened fire on U.S. forces from three sides, pinning the Americans and the Afghan troops they were training in a kill zone. Chaos erupted immediately. One group of U.S. Marines was pinned down under a hail of fire alone, and other American soldiers and Marines tried to fight their way to them.

The bloody Sept. 8, 2009, battle in Kunar province's village of Ganjgal is one of the U.S. military's most traumatic in the long war in Afghanistan. Five U.S. servicemembers were killed, prompting soul-searching about whether the U.S. troops in the field were supported adequately, and it led to two Medals of Honor — the nation's highest award for valor in combat.

But the battle also is something else: a lesson in how the U.S. military is a kaleidoscope of cultures, races and religions, with units pulling together to meet common goals under occasionally brutal circumstances.

That reminder seems timely following an Oval Office meeting on Thursday in which Trump

questioned why the U.S. would accept more immigrants from Haiti and "shithole countries" in Africa as he rejected a bipartisan immigration deal, according to people at the meeting.

The White House did not deny the report Thursday night, and other media outlets subsequently confirmed it. Trump took to Twitter on Friday morning and said the language he used in the meeting was "tough," but "this was not the language used," but Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., who was present during the meeting, decried Trump's comments a short time later as "hate-filled, vile and racist."

In Ganjgal, the Medal of Honor recipients were then-Marine Cpl. Dakota Meyer, of Greensburg, Ky., and Army Capt. William Swenson, of Seattle. But they were greatly assisted by two other servicemembers who were immigrants.

Marine Maj. Ademola Fabayo, a Nigerian-born American citizen, earned the Navy Cross — second only to the Medal of Honor in recognizing combat valor — for maneuvering through a kill zone on foot, "effectively engaging the enemy at close range with his

M-4 rifle." Then a first lieutenant, he moved under heavy fire to assist in the recovery of a wounded U.S. soldier who later died, Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Westbrook, and drove back into the kill zone in an unarmored truck with Swenson in an attempt to find the missing Marine Corps team members.

Then-Marine Staff Sgt. Juan Rodriguez-Chavez — originally from Mexico — also earned the Navy Cross. He is credited with driving Meyer into the kill zone three times in attempt to reach the missing Marines and then making a fourth trip with Meyer, Fabayo and Swenson to recover the remains of their fallen colleagues after Meyer found them. Rodriguez-Chavez parked the vehicle in a way in which it could block intense enemy fire, allowing others to leave the vehicle and recover the bodies.

The Americans killed in the battle include Gunnery Sgts. Edwin "Wayne" Johnson and Aaron Kenefick, 1st Lt. Michael Johnson and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class James Layton. Westbrook died a month later in a military hospital.

There are many other examples of immigrants stepping forward to serve. In one recent

example, Pfc. Emmanuel Mensah, a member of the Army National Guard who emigrated from Ghana several years ago, was killed in a Dec. 28 fire in New York's Bronx section while attempting to rescue others.

He was credited with saving four lives. Army Times reported Wednesday that he will receive the Soldier's Medal, his service's highest award for valor outside combat.

In 2016, the image of a tearful Haitian immigrant at his commencement ceremony at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., 2nd Lt. Alix Schoelcher Idrache, went viral after the Army published it. The soldier, who went on to train to fly helicopters, later thanked people for their support and said he was overwhelmed in the moment the photograph was taken.

"Knowing that one day I will be a pilot is humbling beyond words," Idrache wrote in an Instagram post. "I could not help but be flooded with emotions knowing that I will be leading these men and women who are willing to give their all to preserve what we value as the American way of life. To me, that is the greatest honor. Once again, thank you."

After hours at Bagram: Flaky pizza crust, stretchy cheese

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

Editor's note: Chad Garland covers Iraq and Afghanistan for Stars and Stripes. He thinks about food a lot.

At the Pizza Hut in the AAFES complex on Bagram Air Field, I was in charge.

"How are you, boss?" Rashid asked. "What would you like, boss?"

I ordered a 9-inch super supreme and a full-strength Coca-Cola, a drink I was told at the time had been in low supply in the fridges at base dining facilities.

"Your order will be ready in

10 minutes, boss," Rashid told me.

Unlike my colleagues in Europe and the Pacific, who regularly review restaurants for "After Hours" features, I have few opportunities to share the culinary experiences on my beat. But as I waited what ended up being 20 minutes for my pizza, I salivated at the thought of writing this dispatch.

The food options in Kabul are an embarrassment of riches compared to the fare on Bagram or other bases I've visited in Afghanistan, and it would feel cruel to write about eateries servicemembers might never get to try.

So when "weather" left me stranded on Bagram for a few days, waiting for clouds of wintertime smoke to clear over Kabul, I figured I'd see how the other half eats when they're not being served by contractors in hair nets and white paper hats.

The medium supreme set me back \$11. The Coke, a buck-fifty. The Stars and Stripes I read while waiting was free.

By the time my meal was ready, I was crunched for time, making it a bit of a chore to eat the six piping hot slices. On the plus side, the crust was flaky and the cheese did that stretchy thing TV pizzas always do. But there was a tragic lack of sauce.

"Dry mouthful," I wrote in my notes. "Not great."

Less than a week later, I was back at Bagram and I got a second bite at the Hut.

Planning to feed five of us and our minders, I ordered a \$24 "mega feast" — a large pie with beef and olives (I asked for double sauce), plus sides of garlic bread and cheese sticks and two Cokes. The slightly less impressive "standard feast" is a medium with one side and a drink for \$16.

The extra sauce made all the difference. The taste reminded me of home and of the free pizzas I'd earned reading books in the third grade.

CDC: Nasty flu is widespread, likely to linger

The Washington Post

A nasty flu season is in full swing across the U.S., with a sharp increase in the number of older people and young children getting hospitalized, federal health officials said Friday.

The latest weekly data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show influenza has spread across the country.

"Flu is everywhere in the United States right now. There's lots of flu in lots of places," said Daniel Jernigan, director of CDC's influenza division. Of particular concern, he said, is the "very rapid increase" in the number of people hospitalized with laboratory-confirmed cases. The overall hospitalization rate for the week ending Jan. 6 — 22.7 per 100,000 — is almost double that of the previous week. Seven children died in the first week of January, bringing the total number of pediatric deaths to 20.

This increase comes at a time when hospital workers are scrambling to deal with an ongoing shortage of intravenous fluids used to deliver medicine and to treat dehydrated patients. Supplies from factories in hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico have been slow to rebound, the Associated Press reported.

CDC officials said there are also spot shortages of antiviral medicines in parts of the country with lots of flu. The agency has been in regular contact with manufacturers, and while the national supply should be sufficient to meet demand, some manufacturers are reporting delays in filling orders, Jernigan said.

President defends vulgar comments on immigrants

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump offered a partial denial in public but privately defended his extraordinary remarks disparaging Haitians and African countries.

Trump said he was only expressing what many people think but won't say about immigrants from economically depressed countries, according to a person who spoke to the president as criticism of his comments ricocheted around the globe.

Trump spent Thursday evening making a flurry of calls to friends and outside advisers to judge their reaction to the tempest, said the confidant, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to disclose a private conversation. Trump wasn't apologetic about his inflammatory remarks and denied he was racist, instead, blaming the media for distorting his meaning, the confidant said.

Critics of the president, including some in his own Republican Party, took time Friday to blast the vulgar comments he made behind closed doors. In his meeting with a group of senators, he had questioned why the U.S. would accept more immigrants from Haiti and "shithole countries" in Africa as he rejected a bipartisan immigration deal, according to one participant and people briefed on the remarkable Oval Office conversation.

The comments revived charges that the president is racist and roiled immigration talks that were already on tenuous footing.

"The language used by me at the DACA meeting was tough, but this was not the language used," Trump insisted in a series of Friday morning tweets, pushing back on some depictions of the meeting.

But Trump and his advisers notably did not dispute the most controversial of his remarks: using the word "shithole" to describe African nations and saying he would prefer immigrants from countries like Norway instead.

Sen. Dick Durbin, of Illinois, the only Democrat in the room, said Trump had indeed said what he was reported to have said. The remarks, Durbin said, were "vile, hate-filled and clearly racial in their content."

He said Trump used the most vulgar term "more than once."

"If that's not racism, I don't know how you can define it," Florida GOP Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen told WPLG-TV in Miami.

Tweeted Republican Sen. Jeff Flake, of Arizona: "The words used by the president, as related to me directly following the meeting by those in attendance, were not 'tough,' they were abhorrent and repulsive."

Trump gets first medical checkup since taking office

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump received his first medical checkup as president at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Friday, undergoing a physical examination amid suggestions in a recent book and by his detractors that he's mentally unfit.

Trump, 71, boarded Marine One at the medical facility in Bethesda, Md., outside Washington, Friday afternoon after about three hours at the hospital. Trump shook hands with his physician, Dr. Ronny Jackson, and then waved before boarding his helicopter. Later in the day, the president was traveling to Florida for the weekend.

The relatively routine exam for previous presidents has taken on outsized importance in the age of Trump, given the tone of some of his tweets, comments attributed to some of his close advisers and Trump's

recent slurring of words on national TV.

Some of the comments were published in a new book about Trump's first year, "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House," by Michael Wolff, which White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders has denounced as "complete fantasy" for portraying her boss as undisciplined and in over his head as president.

Trump, himself, has pushed back hard against any suggestion that he's mentally unfit, declaring himself "a very stable genius."

The examination lasted several hours and measured things like Trump's blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, heart rate and weight.

The White House said Jackson, Trump's physician, was expected to release a brief statement on Friday after the exam and then to provide a detailed readout of the

exam on Tuesday and to answer questions from reporters.

But conclusions about Trump's mental acuity aren't expected. The White House said Trump will not undergo a psychiatric exam. Officials did not address a different type of screening: assessments of cognitive status that examine neurologic functions including memory. Cognitive assessments aren't routine in standard physicals, though they recently became covered in Medicare's annual wellness visits for seniors.

While the exams are not mandatory, modern presidents typically undergo them regularly and release a doctor's report declaring they are "fit for duty."

How much of Trump's health information is released to the public is up to the president, but Sanders said she expects the White House to release the same kind of details past presidents have made public.

4 former sailors may receive nearly \$3.5M under Va. bill

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

RICHMOND, Va. — The “Norfolk Four,” Navy sailors wrongly convicted in the rape and murder of an 18-year-old woman in 1997, would split nearly \$3.5 million in state compensation if a bill passes the General Assembly in Virginia.

But unlike similar wrongful conviction compensation bills in the past, the four could still sue the city or employees.

Del. Chris Jones, R-Suffolk, admitted it is unusual, but the bill is written that way because “this is an extraordinary case due to the circumstances and intentional actions of several individuals employed by the city (of Norfolk).”

Compensation includes about \$895,000 for Danial Williams, about \$875,000 for Joseph Dick, \$865,000 for Eric Wilson and \$860,000 for Derek Tice.

Those numbers were calculated by a state formula based

on years wrongfully imprisoned and other factors. Jones said his bill adds on time for when they were listed as sex offenders since they had trouble getting jobs, he said.

Steve Northup, a lawyer representing Wilson, said the amount “wouldn’t come close to being fair compensation for what happened,” but at least it’s a start in getting some justice.

The men also plan to seek \$68 million from the city, according to claims they filed.

In 1999, Omar Ballard, whose DNA was at the scene of the murder, confessed that he alone raped and murdered Michelle Moore-Bosko.

Lawsuits say Norfolk police officers coerced false confessions and hid evidence that could have kept them free. Jones agreed to carry the bill after meeting with one of the victims and reading the testimony that came out of previous court cases.

“Reading it made me sick to my stomach,” he said of the intentional misrepresentation of the facts by one particular Norfolk detective.

The bill states Norfolk officials withheld evidence when then-Gov. Tim Kaine granted conditional pardons to three of the men.

In March, Gov. Terry McAuliffe granted pardons to all four.

Jones said the city has been unwilling to negotiate for a fair settlement for the men. Northup agreed.

“We had an initial meeting and thought there were lines of communication ... then, nothing,” Northup said. “And I mean nothing. I don’t understand it.”

In May, the Pilot reported the city has only \$7 million in the reserve fund it uses to pay lawsuit judgments. The city is self-insured, meaning it alone is responsible for covering damages.

Winter storm drops snow, ice on South

Associated Press

PARKERS CROSSROADS, Tenn. — James A. Jones saw enough cars stranded along the icy highway to know it was time to pull over as a winter storm blasted parts of Tennessee and Kentucky with sleet, freezing rain and snow Friday.

Jones counted 25 cars stuck by the road as he drove from Memphis to McMinnville, Tenn., about 280 miles away. He decided not to risk it any longer and took a break in the West Tennessee town of Parkers Crossroads. “It’s rough riding,” he said. “If you was in the wrecker business, you’d be making some money today.”

The winter storm, which began with an icy mix before turning to snow, forced schools and businesses to close in Tennessee and Kentucky. Ice that coated swaths of the South snarled traffic.

Throughout the day, highway patrol troopers and road crews dealt with multiple crashes involving trucks and cars along Interstate 40 between Memphis and Nashville. At least two tractor-trailers jackknifed and blocked Tennessee interstates.

Heavy snow made visibility difficult, and a mixture of snow, ice and sand used to dry out the roads became a slushy mess and made for hazardous driving. Accidents on the busy interstate led to long lines of parked vehicles as drivers waited for crews to clear the highway.

Memphis police responded to more than 100 crashes.

In Tennessee, Kim Ruehl and Mercedes Volk waited out the storm at a fast-food restaurant in Parkers Crossroads with their daughter, Quinn, 3.

They were heading from Asheville, N.C., to Fort Smith, Ark., to research a book. They stayed overnight in Nashville and were hoping to drive west through the storm in their Mini Cooper. They pulled off Interstate 40 because of the dangerous driving conditions.

“An hour into our drive, I was like, we should have stayed in Nashville,” Volk said.

Brother of man killed fighting for ISIS given 10 years on terrorism charges

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The brother of a San Diego man believed to be the first American citizen killed while fighting alongside Islamic State in Syria has been sentenced to 10 years in prison on terrorism-related charges.

Marchello Dsaun McCain, 35, was sentenced Friday in federal court in San Diego for illegal possession of a cache of firearms and body armor and making false statements to federal agents about international terrorism.

McCain’s brother, Douglas McCain, 33, was killed in 2014.

The United States also unsealed a two-count indictment charging Canadian national and former San Diego resident Abdullahi Ahmed Abdullahi with conspiring with Douglas McCain and others in the U.S. and Canada to provide support to terrorists in Syria.

Marchello McCain pleaded guilty in 2016 to making false statements during several interviews with federal agents from 2014 to 2015, including denying knowing that his brother planned to fight for the terrorist group. He told the FBI

that he thought his brother was going to Turkey to play music and teach English.

In his plea agreement, McCain acknowledged that he allowed his brother to use a debit/credit card belonging to McCain’s wife to buy airline tickets to Turkey and put money to cover the purchase into his wife’s account.

“By lying to federal agents, Marchello McCain delayed, frustrated and thwarted an investigation into a group that supplied U.S. and Canadian fighters to ISIS,” U.S. Attorney Adam Braverman said in a statement.

McCain’s brother left the United States in March 2014 and five months later was reported killed fighting the Free Syrian Army.

Marchello McCain, who was convicted of shooting at two people in Minnesota in 2005, also pleaded guilty in 2016 to six counts of being a felon in possession of guns, ammunition and body armor.

Prosecutors said McCain not only helped his brother to get to Syria, he agreed to travel there and join him in violent jihadist activities. He regularly communicated with his brother and others regarding the financial and logistical needs of foreign fighters.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Frank Lloyd Wright building demolished

MT WHITEFISH — A commercial building in northwestern Montana designed by Frank Lloyd Wright was demolished overnight after negotiations aimed at saving the historic building failed.

Developer Mick Ruis had agreed sell the former medical center in Whitefish for \$1.7 million if a purchaser was found by Wednesday.

The Chicago-based Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy had attempted to negotiate a deal, but, according to the conservancy, the owner's terms did not provide realistic means to acquire the building.

An attorney for Ruis told the Flathead Beacon that the owner had listed the building for sale more than a year ago, giving ample time for groups to find a buyer.

The brick building was designed by Wright in 1958, a year before he died. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.

Hunter aiming at snow geese strikes ferry

VT BURLINGTON — Vermont officials said a ferry caught the wrong end of a snow goose hunter who miscalculated his mark.

Game Warden Robert Currier told WCAX-TV he got a call from staff at Lake Champlain Ferries on Dec. 27 saying pellets were striking the ferry as it was coming into the dock.

Currier said the hunter was hunting legally off the shore, but he was not practicing proper safety.

Police have charged Brendan Lamos, 19, with reckless endangerment. If convicted, Lamos could have to pay up to

a \$1,000 fine or spend a year in prison.

Currier said there was no significant damage to the ferry.

Man admits \$185K Social Security theft

NJ TRENTON — A New Jersey man admitted not reporting his great aunt's death to the government in order to collect nearly \$185,000 in Social Security benefits for nearly 20 years.

U.S. Attorney Craig Carpeni-to said Lance Nelson, 56, pleaded guilty Wednesday in federal court in Trenton. NJ.com reported Nelson, who worked as an assistant zoning officer for Perth Amboy through the end of 2017, faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

He is to be sentenced April 17.

Chilly alligators poke heads above ice for air

NC OCEAN ISLE BEACH — Although North Carolina's recent bitter cold snap deterred plenty of humans from sticking their noses outdoors, a group of alligators stuck their snouts into the frost and hunkered down in the name of survival.

When the alligators at Shalotte River Swamp Park last week found themselves beneath a sheet of ice as temperatures plunged below freezing, they poked their nostrils above the surface so they could get some air.

The odd scene was a matter of survival for the gators. When they get cold, they slow their metabolism and their breathing, and before the surface ices over, they poke their noses out of the water to continue breathing.

Outdoor center warns of dive-bombing owl

ME NEW GLOUCESTER — Officials at a Maine outdoor center are warning skiers to watch out for an "aggressive, dive-bombing" owl that recently struck a man.

Pineland Farms said in a Facebook post the owl cut the man's head when it attacked, and neither skiers nor trail groomers have seen the bird since.

Pineland said the owl is protecting a nest near the Campus Loop Ski Trail in New Gloucester. They believe the bird is either a barred owl or a great horned owl.

The center has posted warning signs around the trail.

Pineland said "owls are silent when they strike, so you will not hear it coming."

Church bells' 'Amazing Grace' draws fire

NM ALBUQUERQUE — An Albuquerque resident said new bells and the constant playing of "Amazing Grace" by a Latino Catholic church have created a living hell for her.

KOB-TV in Albuquerque, N.M., reported Bernadette Hall-Cuaron said she can no longer stand the regular ding-dongs coming from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church's new electronic bell system.

Hall-Cuaron said the bells ring about 20 to 25 times a day, and its keeping people from church because the sounds are so annoying. She said the bong songs make it hard for her to sleep.

Pastor Rev. Joe Vigil said he's responded to the complaints by lowering the volume and moved the bells start time from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m.

Structure held hostage on Canadian island

ME LUBEC — A marine building on the National Register of Historic Places is half-submerged on a Canadian island — and may disintegrate before legal tangles are resolved.

The Bangor Daily News reported that the Jan. 4 blizzard tore the brine shed from McCurdy's Smokehouse, and it floated to nearby Campobello Island.

McCurdy's is the traditional smoked-herring facility in the U.S., and Lubec Landmarks has worked for almost 25 years to preserve it.

Lubec Landmarks President Rachel Rubeor said Canadian officials aren't allowing U.S. contractors to proceed with a rescue because of "bureaucratic nonsense." She said the legal tangles include salvage rights claims by some Canadian citizens.

Rubeor said she fears Canadian vandals with chain saws will "cannibalize our building" before the issues are sorted out.

Police: Grenade found in trash disarmed

CT STRATFORD — A hand grenade found in the trash by Connecticut waste management employees was disarmed.

Police responded to the Stratford trash company Thursday and, after finding what appeared to be a hand grenade, called the state police bomb squad to disarm the explosive. Police said the grenade appeared to be from either World War I or World War II and was thrown out alongside garbage that ended up at the waste facility.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Steelers prep for heavy running game

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Technically, it went into the scorebook as a 2-yard touchdown run.

The highly GIF-able reality told a more compelling story, one that served as the symbolic launch point for both the Jacksonville Jaguars' breakout season and the rookie running back at the center of it all.

The Jaguars were driving deep in Pittsburgh territory early in the second quarter at Heinz Field on Oct. 8.

On second down at the Steelers 2, Jacksonville quarterback Blake Bortles took the snap and stuffed the ball into Leonard Fournette's gut.

Fournette took two steps then vaulted into the air at the 4.

All 240 pounds of him sailed over the line of scrimmage and landed untouched at least a yard into the end zone.

Just like that, Fournette and the Jaguars arrived, making the Steelers believers in the process.

"Fournette is good," said Steelers linebacker Bud Dupree, who then immediately

corrected himself. "Fournette is great."

Yet for all of Fournette's breathtaking feats of athleticism — including a 90-yard bolt to the end zone that served as the exclamation point on Jacksonville's 30-9 victory three months ago, he's just part of a group that led the NFL in rushing.

While Pittsburgh (13-3) will be focusing on Fournette's No. 27 wherever he goes on Sunday when the Steelers host the Jaguars (11-6) in the divisional round of the playoffs, they're well aware they can't take the other players in the backfield lightly.

Sure, Fournette finished with 1,040 yards rushing and nine touchdowns, Chris Ivory, T.J. Yeldon, Corey Grant and Bortles combined for 1,205 yards and seven touchdowns.

"Minimizing their run is more than just focusing on Leonard," Pittsburgh coach Mike Tomlin said Tuesday. "Obviously, we have to do a good job there, but we have to do a good job for 60 minutes and in all areas. We want to minimize the ways that

they run the ball and the ways that they possess the ball and control the game."

The Jaguars finished with 231 yards rushing in the first meeting, the most allowed by the Steelers this season.

While Fournette's late burst skewed the numbers a bit, it was a run made possible by the 36 attempts that came before it as Jacksonville simply wore Pittsburgh down until the Steelers yielded.

More of the same is likely this weekend. The Jaguars are hardly apologetic for their approach, one that emphasizes controlling the clock and the tempo.

It's a formula that helped them reach the playoffs for the first time in a decade and one they used effectively — if not exactly glamorously — while outlasting Buffalo in the wild-card round.

Bortles included. For all of his occasional issues throwing the ball, Bortles can make up for it with his legs.

He ran for more yards (88) than he passed for (87) against the Bills. He had four runs of

10 yards or more. He had only five passes that traveled that distance.

"People talk about his skillset or whatever," Steelers safety Mike Mitchell said. "At the end of the day they won the game. It's dangerous, we respect it. Our job is to be able to cover."

And tackle. And not get so caught up in trying to get to Bortles that they let him squirt loose, a bad habit Pittsburgh picked up at times this season even as it led the NFL and set a franchise record with 55 sacks, one more than the Jaguars.

"You've got to be controlled," Dupree said. You've got to stay in your rush lane. You don't want him to hurt you with his feet. It might be third-and-12, he might get 10 yards. You don't want that to happen. You've got to make sure you're constricting the rush lane, pushing the pocket. Just get him to step up in the pocket, we can chase him down then."

And, the Steelers hope, run all the way to the AFC title game in the process.

Saints say they've evolved since playing Vikings

Associated Press

METairie, La. — For Saints coach Sean Payton and his players, it's a bit of a stretch to call their return to Minnesota a rematch.

Sixteen games have passed since Week 1, when the Saints needed a late, inconsequential touchdown just to reduce the Vikings' victory margin to 10 points.

New Orleans has lost numerous players to injuries. Other players have grown into more significant roles. Chemistry developed, and coaches became more adept at playing to the strengths and covering up weaknesses of various players. The result has been an NFC South championship and a victory in the wild-card round of the NFC playoffs.

"There are some similarities in regards to scheme. But when you go through the course of an NFL season and you look at the attrition that takes place, there's — shoot — eight or nine of our [regulars] that were playing in that game that aren't playing in this game," Payton said Monday. "You begin to take shape as the season progresses as to who you become."

Seven players listed as starters in Minnesota in Week 1 won't be playing for New Orleans this weekend. Running back Adrian Peterson was traded after four games. Six others are injured: left guard Andrus Peat; right tackle Zach Strief; defensive end Alex Okafor; linebackers A.J. Klein and Alex Anzalone; and safety Kenny Vaccaro.

In addition, tight end Coby Fleener is on injured reserve.

Payton complimented the way linebackers Craig Robertson and Manti Te'o have handled increased roles. Robertson has two sacks, two interceptions, five tackles for losses, a forced fumble and fumble recovery. Te'o has made or assisted on 62 tackles, including seven for losses, and has a fumble recovery.

Payton also named tight end Josh Hill, guard Senio Kelemete, cornerback P.J. Williams and fullback Zach Line in a similar vein. Hill had a touchdown and key first-down catches in New Orleans' playoff triumph over Carolina. Kelemete, pressed into service often this season because of injuries.

Line, who scored a short TD against Carolina, wasn't on the regular-season roster until Oct. 4.

The contributions from such players have been "the most encouraging thing," Payton said, adding that "the resiliency and the fight" of his team "is something that's great to be around."

New Orleans' defense, in particular, has played much better since the Minnesota loss, when the Saints gave up 470 yards and allowed the Vikings to convert nine of 14 third downs.

"We've been playing together for a while now, so we kind of know the strengths and the weaknesses of the guys. We know how to play together, we know where people are going to be and so we're a lot more confident," Te'o said. "Week 1, we were a relatively young team as far as experience goes and as far as time together."

Donaldson, Bryant avoid arbitration

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Third basemen Josh Donaldson and Kris Bryant set records Friday when they were among 145 players who agreed to one-year contracts rather than swap proposed salaries in arbitration with their teams.

Donaldson and Toronto agreed at \$23 million, the largest one-year deal for an arbitration-eligible player. The 32-year-old, a three-time All-Star, topped the \$21,625,000, one-year deal covering 2018 agreed to last May by outfielder Bryce Harper and Washington.

Donaldson, the 2015 AL MVP, got a \$6 million raise after rebounding from an injury-slowed 2016 to hit .270 last season with 33 homers and 78 RBIs in 113 games. The sure-

handed infielder missed time from April 14 through May 25 with a calf injury, which also hampered him during spring training.

Bryant settled with the Chicago Cubs at \$10.85 million, the most for a player eligible for arbitration for the first time. The previous mark was held by Philadelphia first baseman Ryan Howard, who was awarded \$10 million by a three-person panel in 2008.

“Arbitration is a fairly rote exercise where you put up your numbers, you accumulate your rewards, then you compare them to guys who have done similar things in the past,” Cubs President of Baseball Operations Theo Epstein said. “In his case, you know you don’t usually go a decade back for a comp, but Ryan Howard having won the MVP and obvious-

ly there’s been some inflation since then. It took care of itself. He earned it.”

Bryant hit .295 with 29 home runs and 73 RBIs last year, when he made \$1.05 million. The previous season, he earned National League MVP honors when he hit .292 with 39 homers and 102 RBIs. The Cubs won the World Series that year for the first time since 1908.

Baltimore third baseman Manny Machado agreed at \$16 million, Colorado outfielder Charlie Blackmon at \$14 million, Houston pitcher Dallas Keuchel at \$13.2 million and injured Orioles closer Zach Britton at \$12 million. The quartet, like Donaldson, can become free agents after the season. Britton ruptured his right Achilles tendon in offseason training and figures to have a delayed start to his season.

Just 27 players swapped figures and remain on track for hearings, which will be held from Jan. 29-Feb. 16 in Phoenix.

Mookie Betts and Boston had the biggest gap at \$3 million, with the outfielder asking for \$10.5 million and the Red Sox offering \$7.5 million. Outfielder George Springer and World Series champion Houston had the second-biggest difference (\$10.5 million vs. \$8.5 million) and second baseman Jonathan Schoop and Baltimore the third (\$9 million vs. \$7.5 million).

A trio of right-handed pitchers had the smallest difference: Mike Foltyniewicz and Atlanta (\$2.3 million vs. \$2.2 million), Dan Straily and Miami (\$3.55 million vs. \$3,375,000), and Shelby Miller and Arizona (\$4.9 million vs. \$4.7 million).

Sports briefs

49ers LB Foster arrested in pot possession case

Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — San Francisco 49ers linebacker Reuben Foster has been arrested in Alabama and charged with second-degree possession of marijuana.

AL.com says the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff’s Office arrest database indicates Foster, who just finished his rookie season, was arrested Friday. Bond was set at \$2,500.

A statement from the 49ers Friday night said, “The San Francisco 49ers organization is aware of the matter involving Reuben Foster and we are currently gathering all relevant facts.”

The former Alabama linebacker was a first-team All-American for the Crimson Tide in 2016 and won the Butkus Award. He was a first-round pick in last year’s NFL Draft.

Foster started all 10 games he played in this season and posted 72 tackles.

Brignone wins super-G; Vonn finishes ninth

BAD KLEINKIRCHHEIM, Austria — Federica Brignone won the penultimate women’s World Cup super-G before the Pyeongchang Olympics on Saturday.

The Italian timed 1 minute, 9.80 seconds on the Karnten-Franz Klammer course to beat Lara Gut of Switzerland by 0.18. Cornelia Huetter of Austria was 0.46 behind in third.

Lindsey Vonn finished 1.43 off the lead in ninth place, a day after the American standout was considering skipping the race to avoid the risk of getting injured on the partly weakened course. However, snow conditions vastly improved after a cold night.

Texans hire new GM, extend O’Brien’s pact

HOUSTON — The Hous-

ton Texans have hired Brian Gaine as general manager and extended the contract of coach Bill O’Brien through 2022.

The team announced the deals Saturday. Gaine signed a five-year contract and O’Brien was extended for four years.

Gaine brings 19 years of NFL personnel experience to Houston. He spent the 2017 season as the Buffalo Bills’ vice president of player personnel. He also served as the Texans’ director of player personnel from 2015-16 and director of pro personnel in 2014.

Houston finished 4-12 this season after consecutive AFC South titles the previous two years. O’Brien’s 31 career victories in four years are tied for the most by a coach in franchise history.

Meyers Taylor, Jones win 2-woman bobsled

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland

— The United States won a two-woman bobsled World Cup on Saturday but lost a third qualifying entry in the Olympic lineup.

Elana Meyers Taylor, driving her first win this season, and Lolo Jones set an Olympia track record of 1 minute, 7.4 seconds in a combined two-run time 0.21 faster than Mariama Jamanka and Annika Drazek of Germany.

German European champion Stephanie Schneider and Lisa Buckwitz were third, 0.49 back.

Deeper in the field, American pilot Brittany Reinbolt had to beat Canada’s third-ranked sled to secure her team’s third spot in the Pyeongchang Olympic races next month.

Reinbolt and push athlete Aja Evans finished 15th, one place and 0.16 behind Canadian driver Christine de Bruin and Melissa Lotholz.

NHL roundup

Backlund helps Flames win 6th in row

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Mikael Backlund had an empty-net goal and a pair of assists, helping lift the Calgary Flames to their sixth straight victory with a 4-2 win over the Florida Panthers on Friday.

Johnny Gaudreau, Matthew Tkachuk and Sean Monahan also scored for the Flames, and David Rittich stopped 41 shots in his first start in seven games.

Evgenii Dadanov scored both goals for the Panthers, breaking a 19-game goal drought. James Reimer made 25 saves in his 16th consecutive start, but it wasn't enough to keep the Panthers from their fourth loss in five games.

Capitals 4, Hurricanes 3: Jay Beagle scored with 1.3 seconds remaining and visiting Washington rallied to beat Carolina.

Brett Connolly notched the tying goal with 3:08 left, and Alex Ovechkin added his NHL-leading 28th goal and two assists for first-place Washington.

Lars Eller scored on the power play and Philipp Grubauer stopped 36 shots to help the Capitals earn their second come-from-behind victory in Raleigh in 10 nights. Washington won 5-4 in overtime on Jan. 2 on two late goals by Ovechkin.

The Hurricanes got power-play goals from Jordan Staal and Sebastian Aho — with each player assisting on the other's goal — and an even-strength goal from Jeff Skinner.

Canucks 5, Blue Jackets 2: Sven Baertschi sparked a four-goal second period for his team, Jacob Markstrom had 27 saves and visiting Vancouver beat Columbus.

Seth Jones put Columbus up 1-0 during a strong first period, but Vancouver powered ahead in the second. Baertschi, Erik Gudbranson, Brandon Gaunce and Alexander Edler scored, and Jake Virtanen added an empty-net goal with 9 seconds left in the third to help the Canucks snap a five-game skid.

Thomas Vanek and Henrik Sedin each had two assists for

Vancouver, which won for just the third time since Dec. 7.

Sergei Bobrovsky let in four of the Canucks' 12 shots in the second period. He finished with 24 saves. Matt Calvert also scored for Columbus.

Blackhawks 2, Jets 1: Rookie center David Kampf scored his first NHL goal and added an assist on his 23rd birthday, Jeff Glass blocked 31 shots and host Chicago held off Winnipeg.

Jan Rutta also scored for the Blackhawks, who ended the Jets' three-game winning streak and handed Winnipeg its first regulation loss in seven games (6-0-1).

The 32-year-old Glass lost a bid for his first career shutout when Patrik Laine scored with 3:41 left in the third period. Winnipeg, the high-scoring Central Division leaders, came on with a late flurry, but Glass was sharp in his fifth NHL game to improve to 3-1-1.

Chicago's No. 1 goalie, Corey Crawford missed his ninth game with an upper-body injury. No timetable is set for his return.

Anthony Duclair, acquired from Arizona on Wednesday as part of a four-player trade, had an assist in his Blackhawks debut.

Oilers 4, Coyotes 2: Darnell Nurse scored twice on rising slap shots from the left circle and Edmonton overcame an early two-goal deficit to beat host Arizona.

Nurse broke a tie at 3:57 of the third period, beating goalie Antti Raanta above the glove from about the same spot where the 6-foot-4 defenseman started the comeback in the first.

Patrick Maroon and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also scored, Connor McDavid had two assists and Al Montoya stopped all 19 shots he faced in relief of Cam Talbot to help Edmonton end a three-game losing streak and win for the second time in nine games.

Brad Richardson and Josh Archibald scored in a 1:14 span early in the first for Arizona. The NHL-worst Coyotes were coming off their bye week.

NBA roundup

Pacers rally from 22 down, hand Cavs 3rd straight loss

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Lance Stephenson had 16 points and 11 rebounds, Darren Collison scored 22 points and the Indiana Pacers rallied from a 22-point, first-half deficit to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 97-95 on Friday night.

The Pacers have won three of four and improved to 3-0 against the three-time defending Eastern Conference champs.

LeBron James did everything he could to prevent the Cavs from losing a third straight game. He finished with 27 points, 11 assists and eight re-

bounds, while Kevin Love had 21 points and 10 rebounds.

But James had two chances in the final two seconds to win it and missed both opportunities — after Victor Oladipo gave Indiana the lead for good on a three-pointer with 2:09 left in the game.

Warriors 108, Bucks 94: Kevin Durant scored 26 points, Draymond Green added 21 and visiting Golden State used a 13-4 run in the fourth quarter to beat Milwaukee.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 23 points to lead the Bucks.

Timberwolves 118, Knicks 108: Karl-Anthony Towns fell one assist shy of his second

career triple-double, scoring 23 points and grabbing 15 rebounds in Minnesota's victory over visiting New York.

Rockets 112, Suns 95: Chris Paul scored 25 points to lead six players in double figures and Houston, still without injured James Harden, rolled past host Phoenix.

Wizards 125, Magic 119: Bradley Beal and John Wall each scored 30 points and host Washington snapped a two-game skid.

Pelicans 119, Trail Blazers 113: Anthony Davis scored 36 points in his return from a right ankle sprain, and New Orleans beat visiting Portland.

Hornets 99, Jazz 88: Kemba Walker scored 22 points and Frank Kaminsky added 16 to lead host Charlotte over Utah for its fourth victory in six games.

Nets 110, Hawks 105: Spencer Dinwiddie had 20 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds, Jahlil Okafor added 17 points in a reserve role and visiting Brooklyn beat Atlanta.

Nuggets 87, Grizzlies 78: Will Barton scored 17 points, Trey Lyles had 16 and host Denver overcame a slow start to beat Memphis, snapping a season-high, three-game losing streak.