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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Marines unhappy over losing specialty

BY MARTIN EGNASH

Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Some Marines are unhappy about the planned elimination of the infantry assault specialty, a move that aims to free up personnel for other job fields.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller announced the cancellation of the military occupational specialty last week. Beginning in October, the Marine Corps will cease training infantry assault Marines and will start phasing out assault sections within rifle companies.

“I found out officially last week. I don’t agree with it,” said Cpl. Calin Perrone, an assaultman with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, who joined the Marines expressly for this niche specialty.

“It seemed like a really cool job. You’re like a jack-of-all-trades in the infantry,” Perrone said. “It was assault Marine or nothing.”

Infantry assault Marines, designated as 0351s, utilize a variety of weapons and explosives to destroy enemy tanks, clear obstacles and provide rocket fire to support other infantrymen.

Using explosives is definitely part of the appeal of the job, Perrone said.

Canceling the military occupational specialty has caused these roughly 500 assault Marines to change their current plans in the Corps.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do now,” said Perrone, who is considering getting out of the Marine Corps instead of re-enlisting because of this cancellation.

Other assaultmen, who will

transfer to a different combat military occupational specialty, will already have the skills necessary to thrive because of similar training, Perrone said, though “it will take some getting used to.”

In the past few decades of fighting wars in the Middle East, assaultmen have been underutilized and marginalized by other infantry specialties because of the lack of enemy tanks and traditional obstacles on that battlefield, said Sgt. Joseph Varley, who is in Perrone’s unit.

“A lot of people don’t know what we are,” Varley said. “I’ve had situations where I was left ... during a training operation because a squad leader didn’t know what I was capable of or what my team was capable of.”

When squad leaders do know how to utilize assaultmen, they usually take them on every pa-

trol because of their versatility and lethality, Varley said.

“It’s always a toss-up, of being utilized very well or being left behind and forgotten,” he said.

The cancellation will be fully implemented in 2021 or 2022, when current 0351s will be required to transfer to another specialty. Combat engineers will be attached to rifle companies to handle demolitions and clearing obstacles.

Still, the assault Marines on the ground worry that the many roles they fill will not be adequately replaced by other infantrymen.

“I don’t think getting rid of us and replacing us with another [military occupational specialty] is going to work out as well as it needs to,” Varley said.

However, Varley added that “if the commandant gives us an order, we take care of it, and make sure that it gets done.”

Another helo makes emergency landing on Okinawa

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND HANA KUSUMOTO

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — No injuries or damage were reported Tuesday evening after a Marine Corps helicopter made an emergency landing on Okinawa for the third time this month.

An AH-1Z Viper from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma’s 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was brought down at a municipal helipad on Tonaki Island, Marine and Okinawa Defense Bureau officials said. The pilot decided to land after a warning indication went off in the cockpit during routine training.

“The aircraft systems performed as designed and notified the pilot of the issue,” 1st MAW spokeswoman 1st Lt. Karoline Foote told Stars and Stripes in an emailed statement. “The aircrew performed as trained and chose the safest option, landing the aircraft in accordance with standard procedures.”

Marine officials sent a maintenance team to the site Wednesday to inspect the Viper and fix any issues to ensure that it was safe to return to Futenma. It departed that morning, Japan’s Kyodo news agency reported.

Marine aviation in Japan has come under the microscope after a series of mishaps and incidents in recent months.

Japanese officials complained last week after a UH-1Y Venom and two Vipers reportedly flew over an Okinawan elementary school where a CH-53E Super Stallion’s window had inexplicably fallen last month. That was followed by emergency landings by Marine helicopters on Jan. 6 and Jan. 8.

On Dec. 7, a plastic part thought to belong to a U.S. military helicopter was found on the roof of an Okinawan day care facility. In October, a 1st MAW Super Stallion made an emergency landing in a farmer’s field outside Okinawa’s Northern Training Area after an inflight fire.

Those mishaps led Secretary

of Defense Jim Mattis to apologize to his Japanese counterpart, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera, during a Jan. 9 phone call.

Onodera told reporters Wednesday the ministry had requested that the U.S. military conduct thorough checks on all Vipers at Futenma and refrain from flying them until they are checked, the Asahi newspaper reported.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga reiterated Onodera’s sentiments during a Wednesday news conference, but said the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance as a valuable deterrent in the Pacific region should not be overlooked.

Cooper leading Pacific amphibious forces

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Rear Adm. Brad Cooper assumed command of the Navy's amphibious forces in the Pacific during a ceremony this week on Okinawa.

He replaced Capt. Ed Thompson as head of Task Force 76, which includes 10 ships and about 5,500 personnel in Japan, South Korea and Guam.

The unit received the USS Wasp earlier this month, which is replacing the USS Bonhomme Richard as the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious-assault ship and is capable of supporting the advanced F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter.

"I'm honored and excited to serve with this incredible

team and excited about the operations that are on the horizon," Cooper said in a Navy statement.

"This staff has an outstanding reputation in 7th Fleet for its professionalism and mission accomplishment. I am confident we will continue to operate at such a high level of performance — as a team that includes this staff and every unit in CTF 76."

Thompson, who used to serve as the unit's deputy commander, was Task Force 76's interim commander for five months. His previous boss, Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, left the job in September to take over Task Force 70 when its commander, Rear Adm. Charles Williams, was relieved after 17 sailors

were killed in collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain. Thompson will return to his job as deputy commander.

"This staff performed superbly during a critical time of refocus on maintenance, training and certifications and the readiness of our task force is a testament to the dedication by everyone in the CTF and on the staff," Thompson said in the statement. "Our sailors, ships and staff remain committed to ensuring our force is ready for all assigned missions, the sailors take pride in their work and demonstrate they are the professionals that our nation requires in the Forward Deployed Naval Forces."

Task Force 76 is the Navy's

only forward-deployed amphibious force.

Though its headquarters are at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, most of the ships are homeported in Sasebo, Japan. Those vessels usually sail from the Japanese mainland to Okinawa, where they take on Marines before heading out on patrol.

Cooper, who previously served as Naval Forces Korea's commander, graduated from the Naval Academy in 1989.

His previous tours include serving as flag aide to the commander of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, operations officer for the Fitzgerald and commander of both the USS Russell and USS Gettysburg.

6 women earn infantryman badge

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

Six women quietly broke through barriers last fall when they became the first in the Army to earn the prestigious Expert Infantryman Badge at Fort Bragg, N.C.

The badge, which was created in the 1940s, only recently opened to women when the Department of Defense struck down regulations that prevented them from serving in infantry jobs. The women earned the badge during testing with hundreds of male candidates in November — about two years after infantry jobs opened to women.

"This historic achievement is a reminder of the great things we can achieve when women are seen and treated as equals and given the same chance to contribute to their country," Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., said in a statement. Duckworth was among the first Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"These six incredible women prove exactly why the Depart-

ment of Defense was right to allow women to serve in all military roles, an action that was long overdue," she said. "Remember, women have served attached to infantry units for decades without being formally assigned to the unit — so even when they meet the requirements, they technically could not earn the EIB until now."

Through a spokesman for the 82nd Airborne Division, all six women who earned the badge declined to talk about their achievement or the significance of the badge. The division did not name the women.

Division leaders declined interview requests for this story.

To earn the Expert Infantryman Badge, a soldier must successfully complete 30 tasks that prove mastery infantry skills. If a soldier makes three errors, they fail and must wait one year to try again.

At Fort Bragg, soldiers were tested on weapons proficiency and medical and patrol skills.

Soldiers assembled the Carl Gustav recoilless rifle, claymore mine, Javelin and AK-

47 weapons systems. Among medical tasks, they performed first aid for a suspected fracture, open head wound, open abdominal wound and burns. In the patrol lane, soldiers decontaminated themselves and equipment, identified terrain features on a map and applied camouflage.

The testing takes place over several days, during the day and at night.

Of the 1,000 candidates who tested for the badge at Fort Bragg in November, 287 earned it. The candidates came from Fort Bragg, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 18th Airborne Corps and units at Fort Stewart, Ga.

Traditionally, only about 18 percent of all candidates who test for the badge earn it.

Testing for the Expert Infantryman Badge is conducted at several installations each year. Standards for the test are set by the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga.

Historic female Marine buried at Arlington

The Washington Post

Fifty or so people gathered at Arlington National Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon to say goodbye to retired Marine Master Sgt. Catherine G. Murray.

Murray was the first enlisted female Marine to retire from active duty.

Murray, who lived to be 100 years old, died Dec. 20 at her home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., with Mark Adkins, her caretaker and companion of 22 years, by her side.

She was a fierce supporter of the Marines until the day she died, Adkins said. Murray served for nearly 20 years after enlisting in 1943. "I thought it was the best," Murray said in a February 2015 YouTube video.

She was driving home from church on Dec. 7, 1941, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced the attack on Pearl Harbor. Without telling her family, Murray decided then to enlist in the Marines, Adkins said.

Attack on charity in Afghanistan kills 4

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack Wednesday on the international charity Save the Children that left at least four victims dead and 26 wounded after a gunbattle that lasted nearly 10 hours.

The charity, one of the largest relief organizations in Afghanistan, temporarily halted operations and shuttered its offices in the country, where it helps children and mothers,

providing health care and education in 16 of the country's 34 provinces.

The attack began with a suicide car bomb at the gate of the charity's compound in the eastern city of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. Militants stormed the compound, leading to a gunbattle with security forces, said Attaullah Khogyani, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Three of the charity's staffers and a soldier were killed. Twenty-six others, including three security forces members,

were injured. Officials said most were treated for minor wounds at area hospitals and released.

Of the attackers, Khogyani said, one was killed in the blast and four gunmen were killed in subsequent fighting as security forces worked to free 46 people hiding in the office's safe room, including 12 women.

On Twitter, photographs purportedly taken from nearby show children and adults fleeing after the attack began around 9 a.m. At least two schools are in the area.

The shooting subsided after eight hours, and Khogyani said he thought it was over, but then the shooting picked up again. It finally ended two hours later, he said.

The Taliban immediately denied involvement. By evening, an ISIS affiliate that operates in the area had claimed responsibility for the attack, according to the group's Aamaq news agency.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

Turkey's campaign in Syria moves close to US troops

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday that Turkey will expand its military campaign in Syria into an area where a small number of U.S. forces are known to operate.

Erdogan, speaking in Ankara, said Turkey intends to "clear" its border region of terrorists, "beginning with Manbij."

In March, the Pentagon said it deployed a contingent of troops to Manbij to serve as a deterrent force in connection with concerns about fighting between U.S.- and Turkish-backed rebels.

A U.S. official told Voice of America on Tuesday that any Turkish offensive in Manbij "would be a cause for concern and we're monitoring it closely. The protection of our forces is a top priority."

On Saturday, Turkey launched an air and ground offensive against U.S.-backed Kurdish forces in the Syrian city of Afrin, about 50 miles from Manbij. While no U.S. forces operate there, the military has roughly 2,000 troops deployed elsewhere in Syria.

On Wednesday, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag told Reuters he did not think Turkey will come "face-to-face" with the U.S. as it carries out military operations in Syria, but acknowledged there was a possibility it could happen in Manbij.

For the U.S., the Kurds have been the most reliable fighting force in the campaign against Islamic State in Syria, but that partnership has infuriated Turkey. Ankara regards the Kurdish rebels as an extension of the domestic PKK terrorist group, which has been Turkey's primary security concern for decades.

On Wednesday, Erdogan and President Donald Trump were slated to discuss events in Syria.

So far, building up the Syrian Democratic Forces has been the centerpiece of the U.S. strategy in Syria. Tensions with Turkey will test the political durability of that effort. The U.S. wants to help ensure a force that can hold territory recently cleared of ISIS fighters. However, the Syrian Democratic Forces is dominated by Kurdish fighters, which Ankara says it cannot accept.

US: Weekend airstrikes kill 150 ISIS fighters in Syria

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Airstrikes against an Islamic State headquarters in eastern Syria killed some 150 militants Saturday, the U.S.-led Operation Inherent Resolve coalition announced Tuesday, underscoring the continuing fight against the terrorist group.

The ISIS fighters in the town of As Shafah appeared to be massing for a movement when the strikes occurred, according to coalition officials. As Shafah, about 10 miles from Syria's eastern border with Iraq, is one of a few remaining towns in the middle Euphrates River Valley controlled by ISIS.

Heavy fighting between ISIS and the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces has continued in that part of Syria, the coalition said in a statement, even after some military leaders have declared the terrorist group defeated.

U.S. officials describe the fewer than 1,000 remaining ISIS militants as "hard core" fighters who are seeking to regroup after losing about 98 percent of the land they once controlled across Syria and Iraq. At its height in 2014, ISIS included more than 40,000 fight-

ers who controlled some 34,000 square miles of land.

The strikes Saturday were monitored and guided by SDF fighters on the ground and they highlight the ongoing fight against ISIS, said Army Maj. Gen. James Jarrard, commander of special operations forces for the coalition.

"Our SDF partners are still making daily progress and sacrifices, and together we are still finding, targeting and killing ISIS terrorists intent on keeping their extremist hold on the region," he said in a statement.

The attacks come as Turkey has launched an offensive in northwestern Syria to clear areas along its border of Kurdish groups, including members of the YPG, U.S.-backed Kurds who are members of the SDF and have proved indispensable in the fight against ISIS.

American officials have urged Turkey to use caution. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis called Turkey's offensive disruptive, just days after telling reporters that the country has "legitimate security concerns" along its border.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials have urged the SDF to retain its focus on ISIS until the group is entirely dismantled in eastern Syria.

Schumer rescinds wall offer

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer has pulled back an offer of \$25 billion for President Donald Trump's long-promised southern border wall as lawmakers scrambled to figure out how to push a deal to protect 700,000 or more so-called Dreamer immigrants from deportation.

Schumer had made the offer last Friday in a last-ditch effort to head off a government shutdown, then came scalding criticism from his party's liberal activist base that Democrats had given up too easily in reopening the government without more concrete promises on immigration.

"We're going to have to start on a new basis, and the wall offer's off the table," Schumer, D-N.Y., told reporters Tuesday.

The shutdown battle — settled mostly on Trump's terms — complicated the already difficult search for an immigration pact. GOP hard-liners appeared emboldened, while Democrats absorbed withering criticism from progressives.

Neither development seemed likely to push the combatants toward the compromises needed to produce a bill that can pass both the tea party-driven House and the more pragmatic Senate.

Still, there were fresh signs of a willingness to keep hunting for a solution, with a flurry of meetings on Capitol Hill and an assessment from White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders that "I don't think they're that far apart."

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said he'd been to three meetings Tuesday about immigration. "I know there's a lot of skepticism around here and not much trust," he said, "but I do believe that there is a bona fide bipartisan concern about getting this done."

Even if the Senate can come up with the votes to pass a plan, Democrats fear there is little chance such a bill would gain the support of House Republicans.

"There were no commitments made in the House" as legislators worked to end the government shutdown, House

GOP Whip Steve Scalise, of Louisiana, said Monday, warning against any "amnesty" measure.

Trump weighed in Tuesday via Twitter: "Nobody knows for sure that the Republicans & Democrats will be able to reach a deal on DACA by February 8, but everyone will be trying... with a big additional focus put on Military Strength and Border Security. The Dems have just learned that a Shutdown is not the answer!"

Cornyn, the No. 2 Senate Republican, said Schumer had promised \$25 billion for the wall and other border security measures, though not all of that would have been immediate funding. He called Schumer's withdrawal of the offer "a step backward."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has committed to trying to reach a deal on immigration and key budget issues by Feb. 8, though Cornyn said Monday that "strikes me as highly difficult."

Instead, the Senate appeared more likely to start a freewheeling debate next month.

Report on e-cigarettes is mixed

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Electronic cigarettes could be a boon to public health or a major liability, depending on whether they help Americans quit smoking or encourage more young people to try traditional cigarettes, a new report concludes.

The report issued Tuesday wrestles with the potential benefits and harms of the vapor-emitting devices which have been sold in the U.S. for more than a decade. But those effects may not be known for decades, in part because of how slowly illnesses caused by smoking emerge.

"In some circumstances, such as their use by nonsmoking adolescents and young adults, their adverse effects clearly warrant concern," said David Eaton, of the University of Washington, who headed the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine committee that studied the issue. "In other cases, such as when adult smokers use them to quit smoking, they offer an opportunity to reduce smoking-related illness."

There are no long-term studies on the health consequences of e-cigarettes and little consensus on whether they are effective in helping smokers quit, according to the report requested by the Food and Drug Administration.

The experts found "substantial" evidence that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to try cigarettes. On the other hand, experts found only "limited evidence" that e-cigarettes are effective tools to help adult smokers quit.

The committee's review of more than 800 studies yielded many findings that were largely in line with prior assessments by other researchers. For instance, the panel found "conclusive evidence" that most e-cigarettes contain numerous chemicals that can be toxic. However, there was equally strong evidence that e-cigarettes contain fewer toxicants and at lower levels than regular cigarettes.

Trump may soon face questioning

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Jeff Sessions was questioned for hours in the special counsel's Russia investigation, the Justice Department said, as prosecutors moved closer to a possible interview with President Donald Trump about whether he took steps to obstruct an FBI probe into contacts between Russia and his 2016 campaign.

The interview with Sessions last week makes him the highest-ranking Trump administration official, and first Cabinet member, known to have submitted to questioning. It came as special counsel Robert Mueller investigates whether Trump's actions in office, including the firing of FBI Director James Comey, constitute improper efforts to

stymie the FBI investigation.

With many of Trump's closest aides having now been questioned, the president and his lawyers are preparing for the prospect of an interview that would likely focus on some of the same obstruction questions.

Expected topics for any sit-down with Mueller would include not only Comey's firing but also interactions the fired FBI director has said unnerved him, including a request from the president that he end an investigation into a top White House official.

In the Oval Office on Tuesday, Trump said he was "not at all concerned" about what Sessions may have told the Mueller team.

The recent questioning of the country's chief law enforcement officer shows the investigators'

determined interest in the obstruction question that has been at the heart of the investigation.

Sessions is a potentially important witness given his role as a key Trump surrogate on the campaign trail and his direct involvement in the May 9 firing of Comey, which he advocated.

The White House initially said the termination was done on the recommendation of the Justice Department and cited as justification a memo from Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein that faulted Comey for his handling of the Hillary Clinton email server investigation.

Trump said later that he was thinking of "this Russia thing" when he fired Comey, and he had decided to make the move before the Justice Department's recommendations.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man smuggles king cobras in chip cans

CA LOS ANGELES — A Southern California man has been sentenced to five months in federal prison for smuggling three highly venomous king cobras hidden in potato chip canisters through the mail.

In a plea agreement, Rodrigo Franco, 34, admitted smuggling another 20 cobras, as well as sending protected turtles to Hong Kong. City News Service said Franco was also sentenced to two years of supervised release.

Customs and Border Protection officers found the three live king cobra snakes while inspecting a package mailed from Hong Kong last March. Each was about 2 feet long.

Llama is captured after months on lam

MO LUEBBERING — A llama has been captured after spending months on the lam in eastern Missouri.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that the llama was spotted eating grass along roads and jumping into animal enclosures in the Luebbering area of Franklin County, about 40 miles southwest of St. Louis.

The llama was cornered earlier this month after someone agreed to take it. Deputies took a photo of the animal, and a message was posted on the Franklin County sheriff's Facebook page, but no owner ever called to claim the missing animal.

Sheriff's office records clerk Melissa Dahms said there were reports that a family that owned llamas moved out of the area after major floods last May, possibly leaving one animal behind.

Kumar the orangutan escapes, then returns

SC GREENVILLE — Officials said an orangutan named Kumar briefly got out of a South Carolina zoo exhibit and then went back inside.

News outlets reported that Kumar escaped the Greenville Zoo exhibit Monday. Zoo Administrator Jeff Bullock told WSPA-TV Kumar escaped as contractors were working on his enclosure and repairing the mesh panels.

City Manager John Castile told The Greenville News that Kumar figured out that the netting wasn't properly secured. Castile said Kumar got out of the exhibit for a short period of time and then went back inside.

Robber crawls through drive-thru window

AZ COTTONWOOD — Police said a robbery at a Cottonwood restaurant's drive-thru counter was carried out by a woman who doused an employee in the face with pepper spray and by a man who crawled through the window.

The Taco Bell employee made a glancing blow at the man's head shortly after the robber entered the restaurant late Sunday night. The man responded by hitting the worker in the head twice with the butt of a pistol. The employee suffered serious injuries.

No money was taken during the robbery, and no arrests have been made.

Driver following GPS plunges into lake

VT BURLINGTON — Divers removed an SUV that sank to the bottom of Lake Champlain when a motor-

ist drove onto the frozen lake while following GPS.

Tara Guertin told WCAX-TV that some of her friends borrowed her Jeep to take a trip from Connecticut to Vermont for a ski vacation earlier this month. Guertin said the group started following a GPS device when they got lost and ended up driving on top of the icy lake.

Guertin's buddies were able to safely escape the sinking Jeep, but the vehicle was left in the lake for more than a week.

Guertin contacted Donley's Underwater Salvage, which removed the vehicle Monday.

Police: Man pulled toy gun on man littering

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A New Mexico man is facing charges after police say he pulled a toy gun on a man littering outside an Albuquerque convenience store.

Police said John Joel Robinson was arrested last week following a frantic call about a man with a gun at a Circle K.

According to a criminal complaint, Robinson, 35, pulled his Glock-style handgun on a man he saw throwing trash on the ground. Officers later discovered the weapon was a "very real-looking toy gun." Robinson was charged with aggravated assault with a weapon.

Police: Man attacked wife with a machete

LA OUACHITA PARISH — A Louisiana man is accused of attacking his wife with a machete after she refused sex.

An Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office affidavit says Phillip Smith, 53, was arrested Friday and charged with one count of domestic abuse, aggravated assault and child endangerment.

The report quotes Smith's

wife as saying they were arguing about sex while she was driving. She said he then pulled out the machete and started swinging, but he didn't hit her.

Man jailed in theft, crash of police cruiser

MA HARWICH — A Massachusetts man has been convicted of stealing and intentionally crashing a police cruiser.

The Cape Cod Times reported that Joseph Burns, 27, was found guilty Monday of motor vehicle theft, leaving a scene with property damage and driving with a revoked license. He was sentenced to 18 months in jail.

Court records show a police officer left his cruiser running while he went into a store in Dennis on Oct. 3 when Burns jumped in and drove away. Another police officer spotted the car in Harwich and tried to pull Burns over, but he crashed into items on the side of the road.

Field of Dreams is damaged by vandal

IA DYERSVILLE — A vandal has caused thousands of dollars in damage to the Field of Dreams by driving a vehicle onto the site made famous by the 1989 movie of that name.

The Dubuque Telegraph Herald reported workers at the site outside Dyersville found the damage Tuesday morning and were still assessing the costs and needed repairs.

Owner Denise Stillman said a vehicle made deep gashes in the outfield and damaged a sprinkler system. She said repairs will continue through the summer but the field will remain open.

From wire reports

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Eagles go all-in on 'team' philosophy

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Winning is an easy sell.

The Philadelphia Eagles are the first team since the 1990 New York Giants to reach a Super Bowl without a player totaling 1,000 scrimmage yards, though running backs Jay Ajayi and LeGarrette Blount and wide receivers Alshon Jeffery and Torrey Smith have done so in the past.

That group plus Pro Bowl tight end Zach Ertz, wide receiver Nelson Agholor and others have bought into a team-first, unselfish concept. They're not checking their stats after games. The only number they cared about all season was the win column.

One more against New England in the Super Bowl brings home the team's first NFL title since 1960.

"I think this group of guys is as good as you could ask to be around," offensive coordinator Frank Reich said. "Really, the character and the work ethic, the camaraderie, just the commitment to the process that Coach (Doug Pederson) and our staff is always talking about. There's a complete buy-in."

"It really helps that we've had the success and the execution. It's always easier to buy in when you're having the success that we've had."

Blount didn't even get a carry in a loss at Kansas City in Week 2. Then he ran for a season-high 136 yards two weeks later at the Chargers. It was the only 100-yard rushing performance by Philadelphia this season.

Blount, who led the NFL with 18 rushing touchdowns with New England last year, led the Eagles with 766 yards rushing but his touches decreased

after Ajayi was acquired from Miami.

"You can't be selfish when everybody has one common goal," Blount said. "You have to make sacrifices for the betterment of the team. We've done that and it's gotten us this far."

Ajayi came to Philadelphia with a reputation for selfishness, but it hasn't been an issue. He knelt on the turf and sobbed after the Eagles beat Minnesota in the NFC championship game.

"It's a special feeling to not be done and to still have our goal of winning a Super Bowl right there in front of us," he said.

Jeffery was the go-to man in Chicago before joining the Eagles. He didn't have one 100-yard game, but led the team with nine TD catches.

"We're not looking at numbers, just going out there and

playing," Jeffery said. "No matter who's out there having a great game, or whoever the ball's going to, as long as we're doing our job and just catching and working and getting those wins, that's all that matters."

There were no "throw me the damn ball" moments in Philadelphia's locker room.

"I didn't have to sell it too much," Pederson said. "These guys are unselfish players. They are team players. I think any time that you factor in the wins, and they're contributing to the wins, it sort of minimizes or sort of takes away the (idea) that, 'I've got to have 1,000 yards; I've got to have 10 touchdowns; I've got to rush for this many yards and have this many touchdowns.' I think it minimizes that a little bit, because the team is doing well and the success of the offense."

Federer, Chung advance to semis of Australian Open

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Roger Federer beat long-time rival Tomas Berdych to set up an Australian Open semifinal against Hyeon Chung, a champion of the so-called Next Generation.

Defending champion Federer extended his winning streak to 14 in Australian Open quarterfinals and to nine in a personal duel with Berdych that dates to the 2004 Olympics. The 19-time major winner wins that head-to-head contest 20-6, including all five meetings at Melbourne Park.

The 36-year-old Swiss star overcame a shaky start, dropping his opening service game and uncharacteristically challenging the chair umpire because of a technological fault, before winning 7-6 (1), 6-3, 6-4 on Wednesday night.

"I had to get a bit lucky. A bit angry. A bit frustrating maybe at the umpire," Federer said. "Anyway, glad to get out of that first set. It was key to the

match."

Chung became the first Korean to make a Grand Slam tennis semifinal when he beat No. 97-ranked Tennys Sandgren 6-4, 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the afternoon match on Rod Laver Arena.

The 21-year-old Chung hadn't let up when upsetting No. 4 Alexander Zverev or six-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic en route to the quarterfinals, but he let his guard down in the last game and needed six match points and to fend off two break points to hold off Sandgren.

"In last game, I think at 40-love ... if I win one more point, I make history in Korea. I have to think about the ceremony, something," he said, explaining how he got slightly ahead of himself. "After deuce, break point. I was like, no, nothing to do with ceremony. But just keep playing — keep focused."

Then he fully embraced the moment, joking in an on-court TV interview, introducing the audience to his parents and

his coach, and taking the microphone to speak in Korean to millions of new tennis fans back home.

"I think all the people is watching Australian Open now because we make history in Korea," he said.

The No. 58-ranked Chung is the lowest-ranked man to reach the Australian Open semifinals since Marat Safin in 2004. He's also the youngest to reach the last four at a major since Marin Cilic did it here in 2010.

With Chung already through, and Kyle Edmund playing No. 6 Cilic, it's the first time since 1999 that multiple unseeded players have reached the Australian Open semifinals.

Two women who've been to this stage at a Grand Slam before will meet in the last four. One has two major titles, the other still seeks a breakthrough. Top-ranked Simona Halep recovered from an early break to win nine straight games in a 6-3, 6-2 win over No. 6 Karolina Pliskova and set up

a semifinal match against 2016 champion Angelique Kerber, who routed U.S. Open finalist Madison Keys 6-1, 6-2.

Kerber has been the only Grand Slam singles champion in the women's draw since her third-round win over Maria Sharapova. Two-time French Open finalist Halep has had a tougher road — having to save match points in a third-round win over Lauren Davis that finished 15-13 in the third — to reach the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the first time.

Sandgren's unexpected surge to the quarterfinals — he beat 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka and No. 5 Dominic Thiem en route to the quarterfinals — was overshadowed by heavy scrutiny of his Twitter account and his follows and retweets of far-right activists.

Kerber has had no serious distractions on a 14-match winning streak, and is hoping to emulate her breakout year in 2016.

Nassar gets 40-175 years for sex assaults

Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — The former sports doctor who admitted molesting some of the nation's top gymnasts for years was sentenced Wednesday to 40 to 175 years in prison as the judge declared, "I just signed your death warrant."

The sentence capped a remarkable seven-day hearing in which scores of Larry Nassar's victims were able to confront him face to face in a Michigan courtroom.

Judge Rosemarie Aquilina said Nassar's "decision to assault was precise, calculated, manipulative, devious, despicable."

"It is my honor and privilege to sentence you. You do not deserve to walk outside a prison ever again. You have done nothing to control those urges and anywhere you walk, destruction will occur to those most vulnerable," Aquilina said.

When the hearing ended, the courtroom broke into applause.

A prosecutor said Nassar found competitive gymnastics to be a "perfect place" for his crimes because victims saw him as a "god" in the sport.

"It takes some kind of sick perversion to not only assault a child but to do so with her parent in the room," prosecutor Angela Povilaitis said. "To do so while a lineup of eager young gymnasts waited."

She described the "breadth and ripple" of Nassar's sexual abuse as "nearly infinite."

"What does it say about our society that victims of sexual abuse have to hide their pain for years when they did nothing wrong? What does it say about our society when victims do come forward ... and are treated as liars until proven true?" Povilaitis said.

Nassar turned to the courtroom gallery to make a brief statement, saying that the ac-

counts of more than 150 victims had "shaken me to my core." He said "no words" can describe how sorry he is for his crimes.

"I will carry your words with me for the rest of my days" he said as many of his accusers wept.

He faces a minimum prison term of 25 to 40 years.

One of the first athletes to publicly accuse Nassar of sexual assault was the last victim to offer statements at his sentencing hearing.

Rachael Denhollander is a Kentucky lawyer who stepped forward in 2016 after the sports governing body was accused of mishandling complaints of sexual assault. She said Nassar groped, fondled and penetrated her with his hands when she was a 15-year-old gymnast in Michigan.

Denhollander's statements to Michigan State University police put the criminal investigation in high gear in 2016.

"You have become a man ruled by selfish and perverted desires," she told Nassar, who worked at the university and USA Gymnastics, the governing body that also trains Olympians.

Nassar, 54, pleaded guilty to assaulting seven people in the Lansing area, but the sentencing hearing has been open to anyone who said they were a victim. His accusers said he would use his ungloved hands to penetrate them, often without explanation, while they were on a table seeking help for various injuries.

The accusers, many of whom were children, said they trusted Nassar to care for them properly, were in denial about what was happening or were afraid to speak up. He sometimes used a sheet or his body to block the view of any parent in the room.

NHL roundup

Drouin helps Canadiens end Avs' winning streak at 10

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Jonathan Drouin had a goal and two assists, and the Montreal Canadiens ended Colorado's 10-game winning streak Tuesday night with a 4-2 victory over the Avalanche.

Nicolas Deslauriers, Alex Galchenyuk and Brendan Gallagher also scored for the Canadiens. Carey Price made 20 saves for his 14th win of the season.

Nathan MacKinnon and J.T. Compher scored late in the third period for the Avalanche, who lost for the first time in 2018. Colorado's previous defeat came against Arizona on Dec. 27.

Jonathan Bernier stopped 36 shots but dropped to 0-7-2 in Montreal. The former Toronto Maple Leafs goalie is 1-10-3 vs. the Canadiens.

Montreal outshot Colorado

40-22 and won for only the second time in six games.

The Avalanche were coming off a 4-2 win Monday night in Toronto and their legs looked heavy to start the game. Colorado fired just five shots on Price in the first, none too dangerous.

After a scoreless opening period, Deslauriers put the Canadiens in front at 5:42 of the second. Drouin's shot was blocked by Mark Barberio, but Deslauriers got his stick on the loose puck in the slot and beat Bernier through his legs for his career-best seventh of the season.

Bruins 3, Devils 2: Brad Marchand had a goal and an assist, and host Boston kept surging toward the All-Star break with a win over New Jersey.

Lightning 4, Predators 3 (OT): Yanni Gourde scored 1:45 into overtime to give visit-

ing Tampa Bay a victory over Nashville.

Flyers 3, Red Wings 2 (OT): Travis Konecny scored 27 seconds into overtime to lift visiting Philadelphia over Detroit.

Penguins 3, Hurricanes 1: Dominik Simon and Jean-Sebastien Dea scored 76 seconds apart in the second period, fellow rookie Casey DeSmith made 34 saves and host Pittsburgh beat Carolina.

Blues 3, Senators 0: Carter Hutton made 25 saves for his 10th career shutout and host St. Louis got goals from Vladimir Sobotka and Vladimir Tarasenko to beat struggling Ottawa.

Stars 6, Panthers 1: Alexander Radulov had two goals and an assist to lead host Dallas past Florida in a penalty-filled game.

Sabres 5, Oilers 0: Jack Eichel had a goal and three assists, Ryan O'Reilly scored

twice and visiting Buffalo earned an easy win over Edmonton.

Golden Knights 6, Blue Jackets 3: William Karlsson scored two goals against his former team, Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots and host Vegas beat Columbus.

Ducks 6, Rangers 3: Andrew Coglian and Adam Henrique capped host Anaheim's four-goal first period against slumping New York.

Jets 5, Sharks 4 (OT): Bryan Little scored his second goal of the game 18 seconds into overtime, lifting visiting Winnipeg over San Jose.

Canucks 6, Kings 2: Loui Eriksson led his team's early outburst with two goals and an assist in the first six minutes, Brock Boeser scored twice in the second period and host Vancouver cruised past Los Angeles.

NBA roundup

James hits 30,000 points in loss to Spurs

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — LeBron James became the youngest player ever with 30,000 career points, then got upstaged by the youngest player on the court.

Spurs point guard Dejounte Murray — a friend and mentee of James — had 19 points, 10 rebounds and seven steals to lift San Antonio over the slumping Cleveland Cavaliers 114-102 on Tuesday night.

“He’s fearless; he’s not impressed,” Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said of the 21-year-old. “He really sets the pace for us. He’s a fine defender. He’s learning how to play the game and doing a fine job.”

Murray, making his second start since replacing a healthy Tony Parker, needed that fortitude while battling James in the fourth quarter. He soared for a tip follow, then rose to disrupt James’ driving layup,

which led to a three-pointer by Danny Green that gave the Spurs a 105-94 lead with 4:20 remaining.

“[Murray] was great,” said LaMarcus Aldridge, who had 30 points for San Antonio after being selected as an All-Star reserve earlier in the day.

“He’s very athletic and he brings something at that position that we haven’t had in a while. I was proud of him down the stretch. I thought he kind of grew up tonight.”

James had 28 points while becoming the seventh member of the 30,000-point club, yet he couldn’t keep the Cavaliers from dropping their 10th in 13 games.

Murray’s effort helped San Antonio push past Cleveland in a battle between teams entangled in turmoil.

The Spurs denied reports that injured superstar Kawhi Leonard is unhappy with how

the team is handling his right quadriceps tendinopathy and wants to be traded.

After missing his first two midrange jumpers and a pair of free throws, James made two driving layups and a 20-footer, and then rose above Green for a 19-foot jumper with one second remaining in the first quarter to reach the mark. The shot put Cleveland up 29-25.

At 33 years and 24 days, James is the youngest player to get 30,000. Kobe Bryant was 34 years and 104 days when he got there.

“It’s just a special moment,” James said. “It’s something I never set out to do. I’m not even a score-first guy when it comes to playing basketball. I love getting my teammates involved and seeing my teammates be excited about scoring and me getting assists. For me to sit here and be the youngest player ever to reach 30,000 ... I put

a lot of work into my game and it’s been a byproduct of that.”

Thunder 109, Nets 108: Russell Westbrook made a go-ahead layup with 3.3 seconds left to help host Oklahoma City rally from a 15-point second-half deficit and beat Brooklyn.

The lead changed hands six times in the final 2:23.

Lakers 108, Celtics 107: Kyle Kuzma scored 17 of his 28 points in a phenomenal fourth quarter, and surging Los Angeles sent visiting Boston to its fourth consecutive loss.

Warriors 123, Knicks 112: Stephen Curry scored 17 of his 32 points in the third quarter to go with seven assists and six rebounds, and host Golden State used a big second half to beat New York.

Kings 105, Magic 99: Garrett Temple scored 19 of his career-high 34 points in the fourth quarter to lift Sacramento over host Orlando.

Top 25 roundup

Young scores 26 to lift Sooners over Kansas

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Trae Young vowed to make changes after his spectacular, yet inefficient game against Oklahoma State.

He wasn’t kidding.

Oklahoma’s fabulous freshman point guard had 26 points on just nine field goal attempts, and the 12th-ranked Sooners rallied to beat the fifth-ranked Jayhawks 85-80 on Tuesday night.

Young scored 48 points against Oklahoma State, but he took 39 shots and missed potential game-winning three-pointers at the end of regulation and overtime in a loss. Before that, he turned the ball over 12 times in a loss to Kansas State.

“The way I played at OSU — I was overly aggressive at OSU,” Young said. “I think tonight, I managed the game a lot bet-

ter. I got back to the way I was playing before last week and even before K-State. I managed the game a lot better and teammates did a great job of making plays, too.”

Kansas coach Bill Self was impressed with the way Young adjusted.

“Kid played great,” Self said. “I mean he got 26 points on nine shots. That’s very impressive for a guard, and he was very under control and seemed to make the vast majority of the right plays for his team.”

Christian James scored 15 points and Brady Manek added 14 for the Sooners (15-4, 5-3 Big 12), who won their 13th straight at home.

Svi Mykhailiuk scored 24 points and Malik Newman added 20 for Kansas (16-4, 6-2), which had won five straight.

Devonte’ Graham, Kansas’

leading scorer, finished with 11 points on 4-for-19 shooting.

No. Villanova 89, Providence 69: Eric Paschall scored 17 points to lead the host Wildcats.

Villanova (19-1, 6-1 Big East) placed six players in double figures in its sixth straight win. Omari Spellman scored 16 points and Jalen Brunson finished with 15 on 5-for-15 shooting.

No. 2 Virginia 61, No. 18 Clemson 36: Devon Hall scored 14 points, Kyle Guy had 12 and the host Cavaliers broke open a close game with a 22-2 run in the second half.

Virginia (19-1, 8-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) allowed its fewest points of the season. It leads the nation in scoring defense.

Gabe DeVoe scored 11 points, all in the first 12 minutes, and was the only player in double

figures for the Tigers (16-4, 5-3). They managed just 13 points in the second half.

No. 4 Duke 84, Wake Forest 70: Wendell Carter Jr. had 23 points and 12 rebounds, powering the Blue Devils to the road win.

Marvin Bagley III had 16 points and 11 rebounds for Duke (18-2, 6-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), which built a 20-point lead with its defense and kept Wake Forest at arm’s length the rest of the way.

No. 14 Texas Tech 75, Oklahoma State 70: Keenan Evans scored 26 points, and the host Red Raiders rallied from a 15-point deficit.

No. 22 Tennessee 67, Vanderbilt 62: Jordan Bowden scored 19 points, Lamonte’ Turner hit a huge three-pointer and the host Volunteers held on for their fifth win in six games.