

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Marine Corps suicides hit 10-year high

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

*Stars and Stripes*

The number of suicides and suspected suicides among active-duty Marines hit a 10-year high in 2018, according to data released by the service this week.

The Marine Corps counted 44 verified active-duty suicides, 13 suspected suicides, pending verification, and an additional 18 verified and suspected in the Reserve, for a total of 75, according to data provided to Stars and Stripes by Marine Manpower and Reserve Affairs. The 75 cases among all Marines would top the previous high of 59 active-duty and Reserve suicides in 2012.

Among active-duty troops, 57 suicides and suspected suicides last year topped the previous high of 52 in 2009.

The Reserve started recording suicide data in 2012, when

there were 11 cases. Since then, the lowest number of suicides among reservists in one year, 10, happened in 2017, according to Marine officials. Nineteen reservists committed suicide in 2016, the highest number.

The total number of Marines who served last year could not be confirmed Wednesday; however, there were about 186,000 active-duty Marines and 38,500 reservists during fiscal year 2017, according to the Defense Department.

The Marine Corps is typically a younger force than the other services, Marine Manpower and Reserve Affairs spokesman Maj. Craig Thomas wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes. About 63 percent of the Marines who died by suicide in 2018 were under age 25. While not all the DOD Suicide Event Reports were finalized, most who committed suicide had not

seen combat or been deployed overseas.

“Recent data represents a concerning upward trend in the number of deaths by suicide over the past three years,” Thomas wrote. “The reason for the increase in suicides is very complex and there is no one root cause. The Marine Corps is working with Navy Bureau of Medicine, United States Marine Corps Health Services, sister services, and the Defense Suicide Prevention Office to identify ways to reduce the number of suicides.”

Marine officials said the suicide data was accurate as of Jan. 8, but subject to change. They said the service felt confident only in its ability to track the Selected Reserve portion of Marine Reservists with “accuracy and reliability.” Those members are considered to be in an active status.

The data released did not include demographic information.

Thomas said most Marines who die by suicide have no known history of seeking treatment for behavioral health.

News of the increase in suicides came within days of commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert Neller’s “Message to the Force 2019,” which was drafted Jan. 25, according to a copy provided to Stars and Stripes. In that document, Neller said he felt compelled to address the issue.

“No one goes through life without dealing with stress and pain, which is why we continue to resource and grow programs to address mental health and the growing problem of suicide, both within our active-duty Marines as well as our veterans; but we have to continue to do better,” he wrote.

## Kurdish leader: No sign of US troops’ exit from Syria

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — More than a month after President Donald Trump announced that U.S. forces were leaving Syria, there has been no sign of troop departures or a change in the relationship between Americans and their Syrian Kurdish allies, according to the leadership of the political umbrella organization of the Kurdish fighters.

“There has been no change in the situation on the ground,” said Ilham Ahmed, who heads the executive committee of the Syrian Democratic Council. The situation is “just like before” Trump’s announcement, she said.

Trump administration and defense officials have provided

little information on how the departure is being organized, or on what timeline. Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said Tuesday that the military continued a “deliberate, coordinated, disciplined withdrawal” from Syria but that the process remained in the “early stages.”

Fighters of the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Defense Forces, who have led the ground fight against Islamic State in Syria, have expressed concern over the withdrawal, and Shanahan, at a Pentagon news conference, said that “99.5 percent plus” of militant-controlled territory had been returned to the Syrians. “Within a couple of weeks, it’ll be 100 percent,” he said.

The Defense Department announced on Jan. 11 that a

withdrawal had begun, but it appeared to cover only the packing up of limited amounts of equipment.

Trump said last month that the defeat of the militants meant the United States no longer had a mission in Syria and that about 2,000 U.S. troops there were “coming home now.” After criticism from Congress — and the resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in protest — Trump said the withdrawal timeline would be flexible.

Much of the criticism stems from fears that the Syrian Kurds, who control much of liberated eastern Syria under U.S. auspices, would be left vulnerable to attack by Turkey, which considers them terrorists and objects to their presence on its border with Syria.

Ahmed is in Washington to try to understand and influence U.S. policy and ensure that the Kurds are protected — as Trump has promised.

Although she was not scheduled to meet with the president, Ahmed had an impromptu exchange with the president Monday night, when they were dining separately at Trump’s hotel in Washington.

Introduced to her, Trump shook her hand and exclaimed “I love the Kurds,” Ahmed said. She thanked him and asked that he not “let the Kurds be slaughtered” by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, she said. Trump responded by telling her not to worry, that the Kurds were “not going to be killed.”

# Fallen Navy linguist's family fights regulation

By CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Navy Chief Petty Officer Shannon Mary Kent wasn't supposed to be in Syria.

Last year, the 35-year-old mother of two was slated to attend a clinical psychology doctoral program near Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

But an obscure Navy rule derailed those plans and led to her fifth combat deployment instead. She was killed less than two months later.

Now, her family wants to finish the fight started by Kent to undo the regulation.

"The regulation still hasn't been fixed and that's something we're working on now," said Joe Kent, 38, her husband and father to their two children. "We'd like to change it in her honor."

Shannon Kent, along with 18 others, including another U.S. servicemember, a Defense Intelligence Agency civilian and a Defense Department contractor, were killed Jan. 16 by a suicide bomber at a restaurant in the Syrian city of Manbij. She was the first female U.S. servicemember killed in Syria since the U.S.-led coalition's campaign against Islamic State began there in late 2014.

Kent was part of a small, secretive cryptologic intelligence community. She was based out of Fort Meade, Md., and part of the Navy's Cryptologic Warfare Activity 66, a unit within Cryptologic Warfare Group 6 that focuses on national, strategic and tactical level intelligence, military officials have said.

"She was doing intelligence legwork. They most certainly were not going out to lunch," Joe Kent, a retired Green Beret warrant officer, said of his wife's last moments. "They wanted to run down every last bit of ISIS."

Kent was due to return to the United States by April. She had hoped to attend Officer Development School in June, followed by her postponed academic plans as part of her com-

missioning program in August.

Last year, the Navy essentially disqualified Kent from pursuing her doctoral studies because she previously had thyroid cancer.

Joe Kent remains stunned at the Navy's denial.

"It is pretty unbelievable she was considered physically fit to be deployable and ... for a special operation in Syria, but not for a classroom to be a psychologist," he said.

Last week, Kent's family wrote to Adm. William Moran, vice chief of naval operations, to ask for his help to change the rule that they contend has blocked some enlisted personnel from becoming officers.

The family met Moran at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware when Kent's remains were returned Jan. 19 from overseas. She is slated to be interred at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia in the coming weeks.

The Navy said the regulation is under review but no final decision has been made.

"The Navy mourns the loss of a great sailor and offers condolences to her family," said Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Eklund, a Navy spokesman. "The office of the vice chief of naval operations did receive correspondence from her family and has asked the chief of navy personnel to review the regulation regarding the physical examination standards for enlisted sailors seeking a commission."

Kent, a marathon runner and then-mother of one son, started to feel lethargic in 2016.

That summer, the new mother was diagnosed with thyroid cancer while her husband was deployed. Quickly, doctors determined she required surgery and her thyroid was removed.

There was no chemotherapy, and Kent received several scans showing that she was cleared of cancer in subsequent years.

The couple suspected the thyroid cancer was related to the burn pits she was exposed to during her four combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan in her 20s.

As she fended off the can-

cer, Kent was completing her master's degree in psychology through Chicago-based Adler University and applied for the Navy's doctoral program in psychology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Kent saw the program as the perfect solution to merging her new life as a mom with her work in the Navy. The Kents' two sons were born in 2015 and 2017.

Kent wanted to help servicemembers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, he said. And with that, there would be less chance she would deploy into combat zones.

Kent was accepted and got initial Navy clearance to attend the psychology program in February 2018. However, by the end of the month, that changed. The Navy then said Kent had to meet higher medical standards reserved for joining the service versus the requirements for remaining an active servicemember. The service ruled her out from the program because of her previous cancer.

A regulation contained within several sections of Chapter 15 of the Navy's Manual of Medical Department, which covers physical standards for medical examinations, lists several health conditions, including cancer, that can disqualify servicemembers from receiving a commission.

"The causes for rejection," reads section 15-34 of the chapter, which goes on to list several health conditions, including "tumor of thyroid or other structures of the neck."

Within days of her denial, Kent received orders deploying her to a combat zone, her family said.

Staff for Maryland Democratic Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen worked with Kent in her efforts last year. Van Hollen's office took the lead on Kent's case on behalf of the Maryland delegation, Cardin said.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of Chief Petty Officer Shannon Kent this past month," Cardin said in a statement. "Chief Kent was an incredible

leader who honorably served her country and the Navy. Ms. Kent worked with my office and Sen. Van Hollen's office on an issue related to her eligibility to become a commissioned officer in the Navy."

When the Navy rejected Kent for the doctoral program and several subsequent waiver applications, she began researching how to fight the requirement that derailed her plans.

In the summer of 2018, Shannon, with her husband's help, lobbied lawmakers. The Kents had hoped to have a new provision attached to the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, legislation that dictates policy and spending at the Pentagon. They were not successful.

"We want the regulation changed ... to retention standards," Joe Kent said. "Basically, if you are fit enough to remain in the service, you should be fit enough to apply for a commissioning program."

Still, the clock was ticking as a November deployment to Syria approached. And Kent didn't want to desert her unit.

A neighbor of the Kents was able to connect them with the office of Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., a longtime vocal opponent of the post-9/11 wars. Jones, who is now battling health issues and in hospice care, also fought for Kent and wrote Navy Secretary Richard Spencer on her behalf.

Spencer responded to Jones' letter, Joe Kent said. In it, they learned the Navy would issue a policy that directed a more expansive waiver process, raising optimism that Kent might finally attend her program this year, her family said.

The day before she died, Shannon saw her husband and children in a FaceTime call. She also wrote she needed to get to bed because she had an early outing the next day.

"She basically said, 'I am going out this morning, I will text you back when I am back and safe,'" Joe Kent said. "And that was our last talk."

## US to expand audit of ally refueling reimbursements

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Defense Department investigators will launch an audit of refueling missions in the Africa and Central Command areas of operation to determine whether the military is getting paid back for supplies provided to local partners.

The upcoming inspector general probe, announced Monday, follows recent revelations about accounting errors that resulted in failures to properly bill Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for refueling missions that supported the Saudi-led coalition in fighting in Yemen.

In December, the Pentagon said it would seek a \$331 million reimbursement for those missions. Now, the inspector general appears concerned that billing irregularities could be more widespread.

In a letter to U.S. Africa Command, CENTCOM and the Defense Logistics Agency, the inspector general said the objective is to determine whether the military is getting fully reimbursed for refueling missions. It will conduct audits in Stuttgart; Tampa, Fla.; and Manama, Bahrain.

While the U.S. decided late

last year to cease refueling Saudi aircraft involved in missions in Yemen, the military has a long history of providing fuel support to partners in Africa and across the Middle East.

In recent years, the U.S. Air Force has routinely provided air-to-air refueling for allies in support of operations against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. It also provides extensive support to the French military in Africa.

Since 2013, Air Force units have regularly deployed in support of Operation Juniper Micron, which supports French counterterrorism operations in western Africa. KC-135 Stratotankers are typically positioned in Spain for rotations to Africa.

French counterterrorism efforts in Africa are focused around Mali and Niger and are focused on disrupting the flow of Islamic militants in the region. French Mirage fighter planes were part of the emergency force that responded when U.S. troops came under attack during an October 2017 ambush in Niger that left four soldiers dead.

AFRICOM on Wednesday said it couldn't comment on the upcoming inspector general audit, but added "all movements are done in coordination with applicable host nations and support partners."

## Taliban said open to working with Afghan government

*Associated Press*

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban said Wednesday they are not seeking a monopoly on power in a future administration in Afghanistan but are looking for ways to co-exist with Afghan institutions — the most conciliatory statement to date from the militants.

The statement came amid intensified U.S.-led efforts to resolve the long-running Afghanistan War. U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad reported this week that there had been "agreements in principle" toward a framework for peace with the Taliban, who now control almost half of the country and carry out near-daily attacks, mainly targeting Afghan security forces and government officials.

Suhail Shaheen, a spokesman based in Qatar where the Taliban have a political office, said that once U.S. forces withdraw from Afghanistan, the Taliban want to live with other Afghans, "tolerate one another and start life like brothers." Shaheen's statement was provided in an exclusive audio message to The Associated Press.

"After the end of the occupation, Afghans should forget their

past and tolerate one another and start life like brothers," Shaheen said. "We believe in an inclusive Afghan world, where all Afghans can see themselves in it."

Shaheen said another round of talks with Khalilzad is planned for Feb. 25 in Doha.

Khalilzad, who held talks with the Taliban for six days last week in Qatar, said Monday that much more remains to be done but that there has been significant progress toward an agreement.

In turn, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani assured Afghans that no deals would be made without the Kabul government's awareness and full participation.

U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan in November 2001 and ousted the Taliban, which had harbored al-Qaida and its leader, Osama bin Laden. The Taliban, which had ruled Afghanistan since 1996, had imposed a harsh form of Islamic law.

Shaheen also said the U.S. and the Taliban will establish joint technical teams to work out details of a future U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and preventing Afghanistan from again becoming a haven for terrorist groups.

## 7 Navy SEALs given immunity to testify in war crime case

*The Orange County (Calif.) Register*

Seven Navy SEALs have been granted immunity and are expected to testify against their former teammate, a Navy SEAL chief, who will stand trial accused of killing a teen Islamic State fighter, Navy officials confirmed Tuesday.

Chief Edward "Eddie" Gallagher, a highly decorated Navy SEAL and special warfare operator, is expected to go on trial Feb. 19 at a court-martial at Naval Base San Diego.

The decision to grant immuni-

ty to the SEALs came as part of a motion hearing held Jan. 25 by court-martial judge Navy Capt. Aaron Rugh. At that hearing, Rugh reviewed motions filed by Gallagher's defense and the government prosecutors, said Brian O'Rourke, spokesman for Navy Region Southwest, the court-martial's convening authority.

Gallagher, 39, was arrested Sept. 11 while he was being treated at Camp Pendleton's Intrepid Spirit Center in California. He pleaded not guilty to all war crime charges he is

accused of committing during a 2017 deployment in Iraq, said his defense attorney Phillip Stackhouse, a Marine veteran.

Gallagher, who has served in the Navy for 19 years, is accused of premeditated murder in the fatal stabbing of a 15-year-old ISIS fighter, according to the prosecution. He also is accused of posing with the corpse while taping a re-enlistment video.

Gallagher is also charged with shooting a man in June 2017 and a woman in July of that year, both civilians classified as noncombatants.

Lt. Jacob Portier, a Navy officer who supervised Gallagher's platoon, was charged with various offenses tied to the case on Jan. 22, including allegations he conducted the SEAL's alleged battlefield re-enlistment ceremony and encouraged enlisted personnel to pose for photos with the corpse.

Portier's attorney, Jay Sullivan, said his client will plead not guilty to all charges.

Rugh scheduled another hearing for Feb. 12.

# Trump: 'Wall' must be part of legislators' border deal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Capitol Hill negotiators are hopeful of an agreement as they officially kick off talks Wednesday on a homeland security spending bill stalled over funding for President Donald Trump's proposed border wall.

Left on their own, the seasoned House and Senate lawmakers say they could easily reach a border security deal as they have for two years in a row. But whether Trump would sign it is another matter altogether.

Trump tweeted Wednesday morning, hours before the negotiators were to sit down for their first meeting, that the group of Republicans and Democrats is "Wasting their time!" if they aren't "discussing or contemplating a Wall or Physical Barrier."

"He tweets and all you guys do is spend your whole day following up on his tweets," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md. "In any event, our answer is the same. We're in negotiations. These I think are going to be good faith negotiations. And we want to reach an agreement. We want to make sure the government doesn't shut down again."

Democrats, who hold the House, remain united against Trump's vision for a massive wall project, yet some are signaling a willingness to deal in the wake of the 35-day partial government shutdown.

"We've consistently said that we do not support a medieval border wall from sea to shining sea," said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y. "However, we are able to support fencing where it makes sense, but it should be done in an evidence-based fashion."

For their part, GOP leaders want to de-escalate the battle over the border wall and suggest they too could be flexible as bargainers, who hold their first session Wednesday, seek a bipartisan agreement.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who pressured Trump last week to end the shutdown, warned the president against triggering another shutdown or declaring a national emergency on the Southwest boundary, a move that could let him redirect budget funds to building segments of the wall.

## Lockheed pushes back after F-35 is criticized

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Executives from Bethesda, Md.-based defense giant Lockheed Martin sought to reassure investors after a top Defense Department official criticized the cost of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a \$90 million jet that is the crown jewel of Lockheed's business, in a news conference Tuesday morning.

Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, a former Boeing executive, said the F-35 "has room for a lot more performance" in response to questions about whether he is biased toward his former employer, which competes with Lockheed for Pentagon weapons deals. His comments come amid news reports that the Pentagon is considering buying F-15 fighter jets from Boeing.

"I am biased toward performance," Shanahan said. "I am biased toward giving the taxpayer their money's worth. And the F-35, unequivocally, I can say, has a lot of opportunity for more performance."

Lockheed Martin chief executive Marillyn Hewson responded by saying she had been assured by Defense Department officials that any purchase of Boeing F-15 jets would not affect how many F-35s it buys.

"If they chose to have an order on F-15 ... it won't be at the expense of F-35 quantities," Hewson told investors. "I'm hearing that directly from the leadership in the Pentagon."

Almost since its inception, the F-35 has been criticized by acquisition experts and politicians from both parties for its soaring costs. Longtime chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee John McCain called it a "poster child for acquisition malpractice" as he took the Pentagon and Lockheed Martin to task for delays and cost overruns.

## Midwest's freeze even stops mail

Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — A deadly arctic deep freeze enveloped the Midwest with record-breaking temperatures on Wednesday, triggering widespread closures of schools and businesses and prompting the U.S. Postal Service to take the rare step of suspending mail delivery to a wide swath of the region.

Many normal activities shut down and residents huddled inside as the National Weather Service forecast plunging temperatures from one of the coldest air masses in years.

The bitter cold is the result of a split in the polar vortex that allowed temperatures to plunge much farther south than normal.

In Chicago, temperatures were still dropping after plunging early Wednesday to minus

19 degrees, breaking the day's previous record low set in 1966. Snowplows were idled overnight in southwestern Minnesota, where temperatures dropped to minus 29 degrees. The temperature in Fargo, N.D., was 31 degrees below zero.

Officials throughout the region were focused on protecting vulnerable people from the cold, including the homeless, seniors and those living in substandard housing. Some buses were turned into mobile warming shelters to help the homeless in Chicago.

Governors in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan declared emergencies as the worst of the cold threatened on Wednesday. In Chicago, major attractions closed because of the bitter cold, including the Lincoln Park Zoo, the Art Institute and the Field Museum.

"These (conditions) are ac-

tually a public health risk and you need to treat it appropriately," Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said Tuesday. "They are life-threatening conditions and temperatures."

At least four deaths were linked to the weather system Tuesday, including a man struck and killed by a snowplow in the Chicago area, a young couple whose SUV struck another on a snowy road in northern Indiana and a Milwaukee man found frozen to death in a garage.

The U.S. Postal Service said it suspended mail delivery on Wednesday in parts or all of several Midwest states including North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Jewelry store thief went in through ceiling

**NY** NEW YORK — Authorities said a thief who cleaned out practically all of the merchandise in a jewelry store grabbed the haul after going in through the ceiling.

Police said the thief went into Shlomi Jewelry in Queens through the ceiling and then cut all the wires to the surveillance equipment.

The store owner said almost all of the inventory was taken and put the loss at more than \$1 million.

### 911 dispatcher helps boy with homework

**IN** LAFAYETTE — Police dispatchers are trained to deal with a number of situations, and a dispatcher in Indiana had to know her numbers when a boy called 911 seeking help with his homework.

Lafayette Police dispatcher Antonia Bundy answered the call from the boy, who said he had “a bad day at school.” It seemed the boy had “tons of homework” before the dispatcher narrowed down that he was having trouble with fractions.

An audio recording of the call posted on Twitter shows how the dispatcher helped the child solve the equation: three-fourths plus one-fourth.

Police said they don’t recommend calling 911 for homework help.

### Police: Man pushed his face into buttocks

**NC** KERNERSVILLE — Authorities have accused a North Carolina man of pushing his face into the buttocks of three women in public.

The Winston-Salem Journal

reported Kernersville police said Stefan Ryan Shuford, 25, was charged with three counts of sexual battery and three counts of assault on a female on the town’s main street.

A magistrate said Shuford was charged in a similar case two weeks ago and was released on bail.

After his arrest Friday, police said they had received many reports of a man inappropriately touching women.

### Woman rescued after 3 days in elevator

**NY** NEW YORK — Police said a woman was rescued after being stuck for three days in the private elevator of a Manhattan townhouse owned by a billionaire investment banker from Arkansas.

A police spokesman said the woman, 53, was in stable condition Monday at a hospital. The woman is a family employee.

Authorities responded to a 911 call from the home on East 65th Street, near Central Park. Firefighters freed the woman after forcing entry into the elevator.

The luxury townhouse is owned by Warren A. Stephens and his wife, Harriet.

### Woman stops bus after driver dies

**NH** NASHUA — A passenger in New Hampshire said she jumped into action to stop an out-of-control bus after the driver suffered a fatal medical emergency.

Lizette Markham said she was riding the Nashua Transit System bus Monday morning when it struck a fire hydrant and a parked car.

Markham said she noticed the driver was slumped over, so she rushed to the front of the bus and held her foot on

the brake until first responders arrived.

The driver has not been identified, and his cause of death has not been released.

### Wrong-way driver charged with DUI

**CT** NORWICH — Authorities said a Nebraska man who drove 17 miles in the wrong direction on a highway in Connecticut was charged with driving while intoxicated.

State police said officials received numerous 911 calls Saturday reporting that an SUV was traveling south in the northbound lane on I-395 in the town of Plainfield.

Officials said the SUV narrowly missed multiple police vehicles before officers could deploy stop sticks to deflate three of its tires. The driver kept going, but police eventually stopped and arrested him.

Police said Kory Langan, 37, of Columbus, was also charged with reckless driving and other offenses.

### Suspect who hopped on moving semi arrested

**CA** FRESNO — Police in central California arrested a carjacking suspect caught on video escaping by jumping on the side of a moving semi-truck.

Officials said the man grabbed a woman’s keys as she pumped gas Jan. 9 in southeast Fresno. The woman fought the suspect as he tried to get into her car and he ran from the scene.

A bystander recorded cell-phone video of the suspect clinging to the cab of a truck as it drove away.

The Fresno Bee reported Saturday that Bryan McCarter, 59, was arrested Jan. 21 without incident.

### 30-year-old orca dies at Orlando park

**FL** ORLANDO — Officials at SeaWorld’s Orlando park said Kayla, a 30-year-old orca, died after a brief illness.

SeaWorld officials said a cause of death won’t be known until a post-mortem examination is conducted.

Kayla began showing signs of discomfort on Saturday, and veterinarians began treating her based on what they found from a physical exam.

Park officials said her condition worsened on Sunday and she was given around-the-clock care until her death.

Kayla was among the last orcas at SeaWorld’s Orlando park as well as at parks in California and Texas.

### Hundreds of bats find way into high school

**LA** GUEYDAN — Hundreds of bats have made their way into a Louisiana high school.

News outlets reported that Vermilion Parish Schools Superintendent Jerome Puyau said Gueydan High School was closed Monday and Tuesday.

Puyau said they had 600 bats flying around the hallways. He said the animals may have found their way into the school through a vent or some other opening.

School officials were advised to let the animals leave naturally Monday night before closing any openings around the building.

From wire reports

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# Bromance helps Pats reach Super Bowl

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Teammates have called their relationship a “bromance.”

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady himself openly uses the word love to describe his bond with Julian Edelman, a receiver he’s come to depend on during his career.

As the duo prepares to play in a fourth Super Bowl together, each says the connection might be tighter than ever — both on and off the field.

“We have a great relationship, Jules and I, and I trust him so much,” Brady said. “He’s always been kind of like my little brother, in a good way. I don’t have a little brother, but he’s kind of like a little brother and he knows how much I love him.”

In Edelman’s case, it’s a little brother who has established himself as one of the best slot receivers in Patriots history.

He missed the entire 2017 season with a torn ACL and the first four games of this season for violating the league’s performance enhancers policy. But the 32-year-old helped Brady steady an offense that struggled early this season and had to adjust following the suspension of Josh Gordon head-

ing into the final two games.

Edelman ended the regular season with a team-high 850 receiving yards and was second on the team with 74 receptions and six touchdowns. His production has continued through New England’s first two playoffs games, with Edelman hauling in 16 catches for a team-high 247 yards.

Heading into the matchup with the Rams, his 1,271 post-season receiving yards are the most in Patriots history. There are also just two receivers in NFL postseason history with over 100 catches: Jerry Rice with 151 and Edelman with 105.

It’s earned him high compliments not only from Brady, but from Rice, who praised Edelman as someone who has an attitude of “I’m going to do what I want to do, and I’m going to go out and I’m going to ball.”

It not unlike the determination used to describe Brady, who at age 41 continues to prove his skeptics wrong.

“He’s a really good football player, the best,” Edelman said. “He goes out and he consistently proves it. He’s one of our leaders and he’s a leader for a reason.”

Though they first met as teammates in New England

when Edelman was drafted by the Patriots a decade ago, he and Brady took remarkably similar paths to get to the NFL.

Both natives of California, each of them grew up idolizing the San Francisco 49ers’ dynasty led by Joe Montana and Rice.

Brady played his college ball at Michigan, with Edelman eventually choosing Kent State across the border in Ohio.

Their stories continued to mirror each other when it came time for the NFL draft.

Brady infamously wasn’t selected until the sixth round in 2000. Edelman, an undersized quarterback who switched to receiver, didn’t hear his name called until the seventh round in 2009.

Chasing the NFL was a leap of faith for Edelman, who nearly signed a contract with the CFL’s British Columbia Lions to play quarterback.

“I sat down with my father and basically, he’s like ‘Let’s do it,’” Edelman recalled. “I just had an eerie feeling in my stomach and I told him I didn’t grow up wanting to play in the CFL. I went and tried to play in the NFL. That was my decision. Everything happens for a reason.”

Edelman was already a fan of Brady’s when he arrived as a

rookie, but he said he almost instantly recognized an underdog spirit in his new quarterback as well. As their relationship has evolved, they say they’ve developed their own sort of silent language on the field, and have unique ways to hype up each other.

An example was during the AFC championship game when video captured Edelman in Brady’s face yelling, “You’re too old!” as Brady sat on the bench after throwing a first-half touchdown pass.

“You’ve got two fiery guys. I think it’s fun to watch,” Patriots cornerback Jason McCourty said. “You see two guys that are the ultimate competitor. How hard they both compete in practice, you see the bromance at times, you see the fiery looks they give each other sometimes if someone messes up. Just that look of not disappointment, of just like ‘get it together.’ I think it’s almost like brothers.”

Brady said he continues to be amazed by Edelman.

“Look at his stature. He wasn’t built like Megatron (Calvin Johnson). He’s just built the way he was built and I think he’s just worked so hard over the years to learn how to play receiver,” Brady said. “He’s just done an incredible job.”

## Falcons’ Garland wins NFL’s Salute to Service

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Atlanta Falcons guard Ben Garland has won the NFL’s Salute to Service Award.

Garland was recognized Wednesday by the league and USAA for his exceptional efforts to honor and support members of the military community. He will be recognized on Saturday night during NFL Honors, the prime-time TV show in which The Associated Press presents its individual awards for the 2018 season.

“I am honored to win the award, but, honestly, I am just honored to be part of an organization that puts military first from the top down, from (owner) Arthur Blank to our head coach (Dan Quinn),” Garland said. “They do so much for our military and I am proud to be with an organization that is the spear in the NFL of showing how

to do it right and how to truly give back and say thank you to the military members that absolutely deserve it.”

USAA, a leading provider of insurance and other services to U.S. military members, veterans and their families, will contribute \$25,000 in Garland’s honor to the official aid societies representing all five military branches. The NFL will match USAA’s donation of \$25,000, which will be donated to Garland’s military charity of choice.

“From his time at the Air Force Academy and continuing throughout his NFL playing career, Ben Garland has embodied and demonstrated the understanding and appreciation for the service and sacrifice of the U.S. military and their families for which this award stands,” said Vice Admiral (Ret.) John Bird, USAA senior vice president of military affairs. “In the true

spirit of the Salute to Service Award presented by USAA, we salute Ben for his tireless effort to support our military, veterans, and their families, as well as his own service to our country as a member of the Colorado Air National Guard.”

In 2018, Garland traveled on two USO tours, the first to Italy and Germany and the second to Iraq and Kuwait.

Garland is involved with helping veterans make the adjustment after their service and in helping raise awareness of PTSD. Last year, he participated in the Armed Forces Mission’s Georgia LOSS Walk. He walked alongside veterans, servicemembers and their families in honor of “Turning the Tide on Veteran Suicide.”

As a current member of the Colorado Air National Guard, he also supports his fellow active-duty servicemembers.

## College basketball roundup

# Virginia outlasts NC State in OT

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The mistakes kept piling up for third-ranked Virginia, which was careless with the ball, struggled on the offensive glass and squandered a double-figure lead in the second half.

Fortunately for coach Tony Bennett, the Cavaliers still managed to squeeze out a road win against a ranked opponent. Kyle Guy hit the go-ahead three-pointer with two minutes left in overtime and Virginia held on to the horn to beat No. 23 North Carolina State 66-65 on Tuesday night.

"We'll live and learn," Bennett said. "Fortunate to get out of here."

Indeed, Virginia (19-1, 7-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) went from controlling the game's flow in a hostile environment to blowing a 14-point lead and then having De'Andre Hunter improbably foul N.C. State's Markell Johnson on a forced-up 3-pointer for the tie in the final seconds of overtime.

Johnson — who had hit two free throws with 29.7 seconds left in regulation to force overtime — missed the first free throw, made the second and then sank the third while apparently trying to miss. Ty Jerome then inbounded the ball to Guy, who flung it to the other end of the court as time expired.

**No. 1 Tennessee 92, South Carolina 70:** Admiral Schofield had 20 of his 24 points in the second half to lead the visiting Vols to their school record-tying 15th straight victory.

Grant Williams added 23 points for Tennessee (19-1, 7-0 Southeastern Conference), which saw a double-digit lead cut to 60-58 with 13 minutes to play. Jordan Bone then scored five straight points to start an 18-6 run over the next six minutes that helped Tennessee stay perfect in SEC play.

Tennessee matched its program-best winning streak, which began in January 1915 and lasted through February 1917.

**No. 5 Michigan 65, Ohio State 49:** Zavier Simpson had 11 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds, and the host Wolverines handed the Buckeyes their sixth loss in seven games.

Jordan Poole scored 15 points for Michigan (20-1, 9-1 Big Ten), which led by six at halftime and kept Ohio State (13-7, 3-6) frustrated after that.

**No. 7 Kentucky 87, Vanderbilt 52:** P.J. Washington had a double-double by halftime and finished with 26 points and 12 rebounds as the visiting Wildcats routed the Commodores and earned their seventh straight victory.

Kentucky (17-3, 6-1 Southeastern Conference) won its sixth straight in this series.

**No. 8 Nevada 87, UNLV 70:** Caleb Martin had 26 points and six rebounds in leading the visiting Wolf Pack past UNLV.

Since losing at New Mexico on Jan. 5, Nevada (20-1, 7-1 Mountain West) has won six straight — five by double digits.

The Runnin' Rebels (11-9, 5-3) lost their second in a row and third in five games.

Jordan Caroline added 18 points and 10 rebounds for Nevada, his 12th double-double of the season. Cody Martin chipped in with 10 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Kris Clyburn paced UNLV with 23 points and eight rebounds. Amauri Hardy scored 17.

**No. 9 North Carolina 77, Georgia Tech 54:** Cameron Johnson scored 22 points and the visiting Tar Heels won their fourth straight game.

Coby White added 19 points and shot 5-for-9 from three-point range for North Carolina (16-4, 6-1 ACC).

Abdoulaye Gueye scored 14 points to lead Georgia Tech (11-10, 3-5).

**Texas 73, No. 11 Kansas 63:** Dylan Osetkowski scored 16 points and the host Longhorns used stifling defense to snap a 10-game losing streak to Kansas.

Texas hadn't beaten the Jay-

hawks since 2014.

Texas held Kansas' leading scorer Dedric Lawson without a point in the first half, and the Jayhawks to their fewest points in a half this season.

**No. 18 Buffalo 83, Ball State 59:** Dontay Caruthers scored 21 points and the host Bulls cruised to their 21st straight home victory.

CJ Massinburg had 16 points and nine rebounds, while a smothering defense forced 18 turnovers as Buffalo scored the first seven points and never trailed.

Buffalo (19-2, 7-1 Mid-American Conference) hasn't dropped a home game since a 73-62 loss to St. Bonaventure on Dec. 2, 2017. The 21-game streak is the second-longest in the nation behind No. 13 Houston's 30 in a row at home.

**No. 21 Maryland 70, Northwestern 52:** Bruno Fernando had 22 points and 10 rebounds, freshman Jalen Smith scored 14 points and the host Terps emphatically ended a two-game skid.

It was the third straight double-double and 13th of the season for Fernando, a 6-foot-10 sophomore who helped Maryland (17-5, 8-3 Big Ten) finish with a 44-28 rebounding advantage. Anthony Gaines scored 18 points and Dererk Pardon added 14 for the Wildcats (12-9, 3-7).

**Alabama 83, No. 22 Mississippi State 79:** Donta Hall scored 19 points to lead the host Tide to the upset over the Bulldogs.

John Petty scored 13 points and Riley Norris added 11 for Alabama (13-7, 4-3 Southeastern Conference), which built a 12-point lead at halftime.

**No. 24 Wisconsin 62, Nebraska 51:** Brad Davison scored 10 of his 13 points in the second half and fueled the visiting Badgers' decisive surge in the win over the Cornhuskers.

Wisconsin (15-6, 7-3 Big Ten) won its fourth straight game.

## NHL roundup

# Connor lifts Jets past Bruins in shootout

Associated Press

BOSTON — A pair of Connors helped the Winnipeg Jets avoid their first three-game losing streak of the season.

Kyle Connor scored back-to-back goals 34 seconds apart in the third period and delivered the only goal in a shootout as the Jets rallied behind goalie Connor Hellebuyck to beat the Boston Bruins 4-3 on Tuesday night.

Hellebuyck stopped 36 shots, shutting out the Bruins in the five-minute overtime and all three rounds of the tiebreaker.

"I had a couple lucky ones tonight. I will say that," said Hellebuyck, who stopped Brad Marchand on Boston's final chance in the shootout. "I'll definitely take some credit, but I'm not the only one out there and I think everyone out there did their part."

Josh Morrissey also scored for the Jets and Mark Scheifele had two assists as Winnipeg rebounded from a 3-1 loss Monday night at Philadelphia following a nine-day layoff that encompassed the All-Star break.

**Sabres 5, Blue Jackets 4:** Conor Sheary scored early in the third period to lift visiting Buffalo over Columbus.

Sheary and Evan Rodrigues each had a goal and an assist for the Sabres, who won their first game back from a bye week and the All-Star break. They had lost four of five before the time off.

**Flyers 1, Rangers 0:** Oskar Lindblom scored early, Anthony Stolarz stopped 38 shots for his second NHL shutout and Philadelphia held on to beat host New York for its season-high fifth straight win.

Stolarz, making his eighth start this season and 12th of his career, got his first shutout since Dec. 11, 2016.

## NBA roundup

## Sixers tinker with lineup, rout Lakers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Philadelphia 76ers coach Brett Brown decided to experiment with his lineup during Tuesday night's game against the Los Angeles Lakers. If one game is any indication, Brown can consider it a success.

The Sixers led throughout and were up by 24 in the second quarter as they rolled to a 121-105 victory over the short-handed Lakers.

Joel Embiid scored 28 points and grabbed 11 rebounds from his usual spot in the middle, but Jimmy Butler and Ben Simmons thrived in new roles. Butler had 20 points and six assists in his first game at point guard, and Simmons scored 19 while playing the stretch 4 — power forward with the range of a shooting guard.

"I think Jimmy did an amazing job getting everyone open. We still need to work on stuff to get better, but it was an amazing start," said Embiid, who had his NBA-leading 34th game with at least 20 points and 10 boards.

Brown said he changed the lineup because he wanted to

learn more about his team with the trade deadline less than two weeks away and with an eye toward possible matchups in the playoffs.

"There were some good things that came out of it," Brown said. "These are things to help us win and it gives us a greater level of knowledge about how we need to grow our team."

Brandon Ingram had a career-high 36 points for the Lakers, who were missing Kyle Kuzma (hip) along with LeBron James and Lonzo Ball.

Butler was back after missing three games due to a sprained wrist. He got off to a quick start with nine points in the first quarter as Philadelphia ran off 12 straight points to take control early. The Sixers extended their lead to 38-17 late in the first and were up 39-20 at the end of the period as they went 15-for-27 from the field and forced eight turnovers.

"It felt good playing the point," Butler said. "It's a different look. We've got so many guys that do so many things well that it allows us to get to the basket more."

**Bucks 115, Pistons 105:**

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 21 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds to help visiting Milwaukee beat Detroit, keeping the distinction of being the league's only team without two straight losses.

The NBA-leading Bucks improved to 13-0 after losing a game.

Milwaukee's Brook Lopez scored 12 of his 14 points in the first quarter when Antetokounmpo was limited to three points because he sat about half the quarter with two fouls.

**Pelicans 121, Rockets 116:** Jahlil Okafor scored 27 points and short-handed New Orleans overcame a big early deficit to beat host Houston in its first game since Anthony Davis' agent said the five-time All-Star wanted to be traded.

James Harden scored 37 points for Houston to extend his streak of 30-point games to 24, but he had a tough shooting night, making 11 of 32 overall and going 6-for-18 from three-point range. He had 11 rebounds, six assists and four steals.

**Spurs 126, Suns 124:** Rudy Gay hit a 21-foot jumper at the buzzer and host San An-

tonio overcame Devin Booker's 38 points to escape with a victory, extending Phoenix's losing streak to nine games.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 29 points and 14 rebounds for San Antonio, which is 2-0 on a four-game homestand despite playing without injured DeMar DeRozan.

**Thunder 126, Magic 117:** Paul George had 37 points, Russell Westbrook posted another triple-double, and Dennis Schroder scored 18 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter to rally Oklahoma City past host Orlando for its sixth straight victory.

**Nets 122, Bulls 117:** D'Angelo Russell scored 30 points, Shabazz Napier had 24 off the bench and Brooklyn beat Chicago for its ninth straight win at home.

**Cavaliers 116, Wizards 113:** Jordan Clarkson scored 28 points, Cedi Osman had 26 and host Cleveland held off Washington's fourth-quarter comeback.

Cleveland matched a season high with 15 three-pointers and built a 25-point lead in the fourth before Washington's reserves roared back.

## NBA fines Davis \$50,000 for trade demand

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Anthony Davis' agent let everyone know he wants out of New Orleans, and now it will cost his client \$50,000.

The NBA fined the Pelicans star because of his agent's comments that Davis won't sign an extension and wants to be traded.

The league office said in a written statement released Tuesday evening that Davis violated a collectively bargained rule prohibiting players or their representatives from making public trade demands.

The NBA said the fine is for statements that were made by Davis' agent, Rich Paul, on Monday in an intentional effort to undermine the contractual relationship between Davis and the Pelicans.

Davis is under contract with New Orleans through the end of the 2019-20 season.

He was drafted by the Pelicans with the first overall pick in 2012 after winning an NCAA national championship with Ken-

tucky and has been named an All-Star the previous five seasons.

However, the Pelicans have made the playoffs in only two of his six full NBA seasons and won only one playoff series, sweeping Portland in the first round last season before falling in five games to champion Golden State in the second round.

Davis has averaged 29.3 points and 13.3 rebounds per game this season, but has missed the past five games with a sprained left index finger while the Pelicans have fallen to 23-28.

Had Davis been committed to remaining in New Orleans, he would be eligible this summer for a five-year, roughly \$240 million extension that would have kicked in beginning with the 2020-21 season.

In previous years, Davis had professed his affection for New Orleans. But Davis has also said that his NBA salary is secondary to winning — a clear sign to Pelicans management that they could not take re-signing him for granted if they failed to surround him with players who would make New Orleans a contender.

When healthy, the Pelicans have looked formidable in short spurts, but injuries have exposed their lack of depth and cohesion as they've slipped near the bottom of the Western Conference through the first half of this season.

The Pelicans have acknowledged Davis' preference to be traded and appear inclined to honor it rather than lose him for nothing. But a statement from the franchise made it clear that the Pelicans' brass is prepared to be patient while awaiting a deal done on their terms and timeline.

The implication is that a trade may not come before the Feb. 7 deadline to make a deal this season, and more likely could come after the season, when 2019 draft slots are known.