

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

US patrol ship fires warning shots at Iranian military boat

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Navy warship in the northern Persian Gulf fired warning shots near an Iranian military vessel Tuesday as the boat approached the U.S. patrol ship at a high rate of speed, defense officials said.

An Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps boat came within about 150 yards of the USS Thunderbolt, a Cyclone-class patrol ship, before sailors fired multiple warning shots into the water near it, said a defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity. The Iranian boat

ceased advancing toward the American ship once the shots were fired.

The Thunderbolt made several attempts to contact the Iranian vessel by radio and shot warning flares into the air before opening fire, another defense official said. The boat ignored all communication attempts until shots were fired.

The Bahrain-based Thunderbolt was conducting a routine training exercise alongside other American ships in the Persian Gulf when the Iranian vessels approached, the officials said.

Tuesday was the second time this year that a U.S. Navy warship was forced to fire warning shots to fend off an approaching Iranian boat. In January, the USS Mahon fired warning shots from a .50-caliber machine gun near four Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps vessels as they approached the American guided-missile destroyer at a high rate of speed and ignored radio calls and visual warning signs. That incident occurred in the southern Persian Gulf, near the Strait of Hormuz. The Pentagon deemed the interaction “unsafe and unprofessional.”

China denies its pilots flew dangerously

Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Tuesday denied its fighter jet pilots operated dangerously during an encounter with a U.S. surveillance plane in international airspace in which the American pilot took evasive action to avoid a possible collision.

Spokesman Ren Guoqiang said in a statement on the Defense Ministry’s microblog that the performance of the pilots of the two J-10 fighters was “legal, necessary and professional.”

Ren criticized frequent close-in surveillance runs by U.S. planes as raising the chance of accidents, saying such missions “threatened China’s national security, harmed China-U.S. sea-air military safety, endangered the safety of pilots from the two sides and were the root cause of China-U.S. sea-air unexpected incidents.”

The U.S. should stop such “unsafe, unprofessional and unfriendly military activities,” Ren said, in a repetition of China’s standard policy toward U.S. surveillance missions intended at collecting Chinese computer and voice data in hopes of gaining insight into the workings of the People’s Liberation Army.

U.S. Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said the Chinese fighters intercepted the U.S. EP-3 surveillance plane Sunday in international airspace between the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea, in an area he described as west of the Korean Peninsula.

Davis said one of the Chinese planes approached at a high rate of speed from beneath the American plane, then slowed and pulled up, prompting the EP-3 pilot to take evasive action. He called the Chinese pilot’s move unsafe.

Mattis blasts DOD bureaucracy over spending

USA Today

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis criticized the Pentagon bureaucracy for “cavalier” spending in light of a recent report that showed as much as \$28 million had been wasted in buying uniforms for the Afghan army, according to a memo obtained by USA Today.

The report found that U.S. military officials have purchased the forest-camouflage uniforms since 2007 without testing their effectiveness or accounting for the fact that just 2 percent of Afghanistan is covered by woods.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction also found that special tailoring boosted the cost of the uniforms, as did using a licensed camouflage pattern when free versions were at hand. The report was to be the focus of a hearing by a panel of the House Armed Ser-

vices Committee on Tuesday.

“Cavalier or casually acquisitive decisions to spend taxpayer dollars in an ineffective and wasteful manner are not to recur,” Mattis wrote.

Mattis’ letter is unusual in that the military regularly pushes back at reports by the special inspector general’s office, which is led by John Sopko. It has disputed his finding, for example, that millions were wasted building a gas station in Afghanistan.

This time, Mattis took the hit on the uniforms and made sure those in charge of purchasing decisions and policy knew about it. He addressed his memo to the undersecretaries for acquisition and policy, and the comptroller.

“Buying uniforms for our Afghan partners, and doing so in a way that may have wasted tens of millions of taxpayer dollars over a 10-year period, must not be seen as inconsequential

in the grand scheme of the Department’s responsibilities and budget,” Mattis said.

Sopko’s office determined that the Pentagon could save as much as \$71 million over the next 10 years by switching to a new camouflage scheme. So far, the Pentagon has spent \$93 million to buy 1.3 million uniforms in the forest camouflage pattern for the Afghan army.

Mattis, in his memo, returned to a theme that has guided his decision-making as defense secretary, notably the readiness of U.S. and allied forces to fight the enemy. If decisions do not enhance what Mattis refers to as the “lethality,” he has little time for them.

The inspector general’s report drew rebukes from senior senators, including Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa. McCaskill demanded answers from the Pentagon on the uniform.

Monthlong Talisman Saber exercise ends

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

U.S. and Australian forces wrapped up their largest joint biennial war games Tuesday during a ceremony aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan near Brisbane.

The monthlong Exercise Talisman Saber drills involved more than 33,000 troops, 26 ships and 200 aircraft taking part in “high-end warfighting scenarios” to “innovatively prepare for regional and global security challenges,” the Navy said before the exercise kicked off aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard near Sydney on June 29. Coalition forces — including Canadian, Japanese and New Zealand troops — then spent the next month battling a free-thinking, unencumbered and fast-moving foe modeled after China and Russia. The mock enemy was played by Army National Guard soldiers and other coalition actors.

Talisman Saber was highlighted by real-world warfare problems like cyberattacks, ambushes, improvised explosive devices planted in roads, enemies out of uniform or near civilian centers and GPS jamming. Naval assets tracked highly capable enemy submarines throughout the drills.

“In every domain, we’ve had those simulated threats throughout the exercise,” said Navy Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, commander of the Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group. “When I talked about the complexity of the exercise this year, that is what has created that.”

Before the ground portion kicked off in earnest on July 13, naval and air assets practiced electronic warfare, acts of deception and bombardment, commanders said. The Reagan carrier strike group provided the protection necessary to perform amphibious operations, including the largest amphibious landing by Australian troops since World War II. Then, in the final weeks of the exercise, there was a significant land battle at Shoalwater Bay Training

Marines battle-test new technology during drills

BY MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Australia — The Marine Corps offered a glimpse into how the service might operate in the future during the massive, monthlong Talisman Saber drills in Australia.

The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., showcased Sea Dragon 2025 — a program the service described as a “commitment to innovation through experimentation” and a “quest for solutions to the problems of tomorrow” — during an amphibious assault with Australian soldiers late last week on the central Queensland coast.

“[Sea Dragon 2025] is an initiative for innovation in the Marine Corps,” Capt. Tyler Anthony told Stars and Stripes after his troops stormed the beach. “All we are doing is applying some new thoughts and technology.”

A three-tier system of drones provided aerial surveillance as Marines waded ashore. Those included the micro Prox Dynamics Black Hornet for fireteam and squad use, the medium-sized PSI InstantEye for squad and platoon use and the larger company level Aeryon Sky Ranger. Tilt-rotor V-22B Ospreys dropped off Polaris MRZRs — a cross between a dune buggy and an all-terrain vehicle — to give Ma-

rines instant mobility once they reached land.

The experimental unit also tested new features for tablets used by each Marine. Command-and-control variants of the MRZRs offered Wi-Fi bubbles and HF, VHF and UHF connectivity, and the KILSWITCH app provided on-the-fly situational awareness and map overlays of friendly forces and potential bad guys, said Capt. Joe Masini, who is evaluating the systems as part of a team from the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab in Quantico, Va.

While the drones and tablets don’t always communicate with each other, the Marines hope they will in the future, officials on the USS Bonhomme Richard told reporters last Thursday.

The unit also tested other gadgets, including Magpul’s PMAG magazine, which is light and allows Marines to see how many rounds are left, and Iridium satellite phones that can be used anywhere in the world.

“These things will save time and manpower,” Masini said.

Some Sea Dragon 2025 technology wasn’t popular with all Marines at Talisman Saber.

“I felt like we were there more to support the technology than the technology supported us,” said Sgt. Douglas Shaffer, a squad leader who took part in last week’s amphibious assault.

Area in eastern Queensland.

In Talisman Saber’s closing days, coalition forces pushed the opposition to the west. Borders were re-established, and

the land was handed over to a United Nations’ peacekeeping force for rebuilding.

Dalton said coalition partners worked well together during the

naval portion of the drills.

“We seamlessly integrated with the Australian military,” he said. “That’s exemplified by not only the Australian and New Zealand ship that we operated with but by the fact that (Australian) Capt. Guy Holthouse and his team embarked onboard Bonhomme Richard and acted as one of my warfare commanders for the surface and undersea domains.”

Dalton served under Australian Commodore Mal Wise, commander of Talisman Saber’s maritime component, who said coalition forces did more than just defend against threats on the sea and in the air — they also took the fight straight to the enemy.

The integration between coalition partners began at sea but extended onto shore, with the Okinawa, Japan-based U.S. 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit working closely with the Australian Army’s 3rd Brigade.

Reports of a Chinese spy ship monitoring the exercise in the area meant that the nations targeted by the Talisman Saber scenario had taken notice.

“It was a really fantastic exercise,” Dalton said. “It gave us tremendous confidence in our ability to operate together in a range of contingencies. This was very much a complex, high-end scenario, but the things we demonstrated we can do in moving equipment and people ashore is applicable in anything from a natural disaster up to a high-end scenario like this.”

Wise agreed, adding that Australia’s amphibious-capable ships have come a long way in the three years since they were first fielded.

“Being able to work side by side with a partner is not only showing us other (amphibious) capabilities but it’s also allowing us to realize the full potential ... being able to integrate quickly and exploit the maximum potential of all of the assets in that combined force is our professional responsibility,” he said. Wise added that lessons learned during the exercise will help them improve in the future.

Behind the front lines in Afghan ISIS fight

The Washington Post

ACHIN, Afghanistan — A recurring rumble of explosions echoes off the barren, boulder-strewn slopes of the Spin Ghar mountains, each ordnance aimed wishfully at redoubts where Islamic State militants are suspected of hiding. Afghan and U.S. special forces listen in on enemy chatter, intercepting dozens of their radio channels.

American AC-130 gunships and F-16 fighter jets whir in circles overhead, at low altitude, waiting for strike orders. Soldiers on the ground man the mortars.

The operation against Islamic State in Khorasan — or ISIS-K, as the Syria-based group's Afghan contingent is known — is now into its fourth month of unrelenting warfare. The U.S. military has pledged to “annihilate” the group by year's end, and the redoubled assault has contributed to a spike in U.S. airstrikes to levels not seen in Afghanistan since President Barack Obama's troop surge in 2012. One in five of those strikes is against ISIS-K, despite it controlling only slivers of mountainous territory.

The battle is lopsided, but each day the front line here in Achin district moves back only slightly. Both local intelligence officials and the U.S. military believe that ISIS-K is replenishing its stock of fighters almost as quickly as it loses them. A sense that this may be an indefinite mission has set in.

Soon after its founding in

2014, ISIS-K descended into this district and established it as its stronghold.

Entire villages emptied as word of the group's mercilessness spread. For nearly three years, ISIS-K held firm not just in the Spin Ghars but in the vacated villages in the fertile valley beneath them.

In April, the U.S. military dropped its largest non-nuclear bomb, an MOAB — nicknamed “the mother of all bombs” — on a cave complex in one of Achin's valleys, known as the Momand. It is unclear how many fighters, if any, were killed. The MOAB was followed by weeks of airstrikes on compounds that ISIS-K fighters had held for two years.

On a recent trip up the valley, the bodies of at least four were still there, lying in abandoned fields overgrown with wild cannabis.

Over the past three years, ISIS-K has succeeded in carrying out ghastly attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But as Islamic State territory in Iraq and Syria is whittled away, coalition forces here are worried that Afghanistan's notoriously ungovernable eastern provinces could become a safe haven for fleeing fighters and a new staging ground for attacks on the West.

“We believe that ISIS-K is not currently able to launch attacks because they are essentially being hunted,” said Capt. William Salvin, spokesman for the U.S. military here.

But he did not refute the as-

essment of a local Afghan intelligence officer in Achin, who spoke on a condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media: In terms of numbers, ISIS-K has not been severely reduced. The battle is looking more like one of attrition.

While the Pentagon maintains that ISIS-K is down to about 1,000 fighters across Afghanistan, from a high of 2,500 in 2015, the Afghan intelligence officer surmised that there were more than 1,000 in Achin district alone.

Last week, the Pentagon announced that a U.S. drone strike killed Abu Sayed, ISIS-K's leader, or emir. That took place in neighboring Konar province, indicating that the fighting has spread at least that far.

Most of ISIS-K's fighters are thought to be Pashtuns, with few, if any, coming from Iraq and Syria. According to Salvin, the United States sees ISIS-K as more of an “authorized franchise of ISIS-main” than the ISIS operation in Libya, which is more closely tied to the fighting in the Middle East.

Instead, Afghan analysts say, ISIS-K derives much of its support from Pakistan's military establishment.

“In Nangahar, it is Pakistan's game,” said Davood Moradian, director of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies, referring to the province in which Achin is located. Pakistan has launched its own military operation against Islamic militants on its side of the Spin Ghar

range, but Moradian was skeptical that they shared the goal of the group's elimination.

Pakistan has always denied playing a destabilizing role in Afghanistan, but its neighbor's ongoing instability has proved hugely lucrative for Pakistan's military, which has ruled the country for almost half its 70-year existence. George W. Bush's and Barack Obama's administrations gave the Pakistanis a combined \$33.4 billion in aid, and there is little evidence their support for Afghan militants has stopped.

Members of the U.S. Congress have been calling for years for a drastic reduction or elimination of security assistance to Pakistan, as well as ending its status as a major non-NATO ally — or even designating it as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said that the Trump administration's new Afghanistan strategy, expected this month, will have a “regional component,” but it is unclear if that means a curtailment of U.S. aid to Pakistan. In fact, a hostile Pakistan might well pose a greater threat to the U.S. mission here.

Even so, exasperation toward Pakistan runs high here.

“That people are even asking the question ‘Should the U.S. stop giving money to Pakistan?’ shows the silliness of the discourse in Washington,” said Moradian. “It is like asking if we should stop giving heroin to an addict.”

US soldier pleads not guilty to supporting militants

Associated Press

HONOLULU — A U.S. Army soldier based in Hawaii pleaded not guilty Monday to charges of attempting to support Islamic State.

Sgt. 1st Class Ikaika Kang was arraigned in federal court in Honolulu after a grand jury indicted him last week on four counts of attempting to provide material support to the group.

The indictment and an FBI

affidavit filed previously allege that Kang met with undercover agents he believed were part of ISIS. He allegedly provided them with classified military information, a drone, military equipment and training in combat fighting.

Kang may suffer from service-related mental health issues that the government was aware of but neglected to treat, his defense attorney, Birney Bervar has said.

Bervar is seeking a mental health evaluation for Kang, whose trial was set for September.

When Kang met with the undercover agents he thought were from ISIS at a home in Honolulu, he pledged allegiance to the group and kissed an ISIS flag, according to court documents.

In a separate case, a 22-year-old California man has been

charged with attempting to support terrorism by allegedly using social media to promote ISIS and offering to join the organization, according to court documents.

Federal prosecutors allege Amer Sinan Alhaggagi “went so far as to meet with undercover agents on multiple occasions to plan a potential terrorist attack,” said a court filing unsealed Friday.

Sessions feels heat amid Trump's attacks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump turned up the heat on Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Tuesday, launching a fresh Twitter tirade against him while musing privately about firing the man who was the first U.S. senator to endorse his candidacy.

The future of the nation's top law enforcement officer seemed to hang in the balance as pressure on him to resign mounted, even as the pushback to Trump's extraordinary public rebuke began from fellow Republicans.

The president's latest broadside came in the form of an early morning tweet: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions has taken a VERY weak position on Hillary Clinton crimes (where are E-mails & DNC server) & Intel leakers!"

Trump's intensifying condemnation of Sessions has fueled speculation that the attorney general may step down even if Trump opts not to fire him. The president's anger over Sessions' decision to recuse

himself from the government's investigation of Russian meddling in the U.S. election had burst into public view Monday when he referred to Sessions in a tweet as "beleaguered."

Privately, Trump has speculated aloud to allies in recent days about the potential consequences of firing Sessions, according to three people who have recently spoken to the president. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

But the president's ongoing criticism of Sessions drew a fiery response from one of his former Senate colleagues on Tuesday, suggesting that all Republicans may not fall in line behind any effort to oust the attorney general.

"Jeff Sessions is one of the most decent people I've ever met in my political life," said South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham. "President Trump's tweet today suggesting Attorney General Sessions pursue prosecution of a former political rival is highly inappropriate."

Sens. Richard Shelby, of Alabama, and

Thom Tillis, of North Carolina, also voiced support of their former colleague. But the White House only turned up the heat further.

Anthony Scaramucci, the president's new communications director, said in a morning interview with radio host Hugh Hewitt that Trump is "obviously frustrated" and that the two men "need to work this thing out."

Scaramucci then replied "you're probably right" when Hewitt says it's clear that Trump wants Sessions gone.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told Fox News' "Fox & Friends" that the president is "frustrated and disappointed" with Sessions for recusing himself from the Russia probe.

"That frustration certainly hasn't gone away. And I don't think it will," she said.

House Speaker Paul Ryan punted Tuesday on a chance to defend Sessions, saying "the president gets to decide what his personnel is."

The attorney general said last week he intended to stay in his post.

McCain's return sets stage for Obamacare repeal vote

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump urged Republicans to "step up to the plate" for Tuesday's crucial Senate vote on their bill eviscerating much of the Obama health care law. The stage was set for high drama, with Sen. John McCain returning to the Capitol to cast his first vote since being diagnosed with brain cancer.

No stranger to heroic episodes, the Navy pilot who persevered through five years of captivity during the Vietnam War announced through his office that he would be back in Washington for the critical roll call on beginning debate on the legislation. McCain, 80, has been at home in Arizona since he revealed last week that he's undergoing treatment for brain cancer.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., scheduled the initial vote on beginning debate for Tuesday, though it remained unclear exactly which version of the

legislation would be in play. The Republican leadership expects McCain to support taking up the measure, and his mere presence could make it harder for wavering Republicans to cast a vote against even considering the bill.

Democrats uniformly oppose the effort to tear down President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement. Republicans control the chamber 52-48, meaning they can afford to lose just two Republicans with McCain around and only one in his absence. Vice President Mike Pence would cast a tie-breaking vote.

McConnell's bill would abolish much of Obama's law, eliminating its tax penalties on people not buying policies, cutting Medicaid, eliminating its tax boosts on medical companies and providing less generous health care subsidies for consumers. At least a dozen GOP senators have openly said they oppose or criticized the measure.

Teen driver livestreams crash that killed sister

Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. — A teenage driver lost control of her car while she was livestreaming on Instagram and recorded part of the crash that authorities say killed her younger sister in California.

After a gap in the livestream, the driver is seen leaning over the body of the girl, trying to shake her awake and saying she was sorry. She said she expected to spend the rest of her life in prison but doesn't care.

"This is the last thing I wanted to happen, OK? ... Rest in peace, sweetie," the teen says. "If you don't survive, I'm so (expletive) sorry."

Authorities said Obdulia Sanchez, 18, was driving the car Friday when it veered onto the shoulder of a road about 75 miles northwest of Fresno.

She overcorrected, causing the vehicle to swerve and overturn into a field, ejecting her sister, the California Highway Patrol said on Monday.

Jacqueline Sanchez, 14, of

Stockton, died in the crash, Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke said. Another girl, also 14, was in the back seat and survived with a leg injury.

The driver was wearing a seat belt but not the two girls, the CHP said.

The teenagers' father, Nicandro Sanchez, told Fresno television station KFSN he has seen the video and that he believes the crash was "an accident."

Nicandro Sanchez said Obdulia had a difficult childhood and graduated from high school last year. She was in the custody of Child Protective Services the past two years, he added.

Obdulia Sanchez was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving and vehicular manslaughter and remained in jail with bail set at \$300,000.

The livestream was recorded on Instagram and posted on Facebook by someone who had seen it.

Sanchez is expected to make her first court appearance Wednesday.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Passengers are picked up in a stolen taxi

PA PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia police said a woman stole a taxi and picked up a fare.

They said Betty Thomas, 65, caught the cab about midnight Thursday and asked to be taken to the SugarHouse Casino. On the way, she asked the driver to make a stop at a gas station.

It was at the station where police allege the woman got into a dispute with the driver about the fare before jumping into the driver's seat and taking off.

Police stopped the taxi 30 minutes later and found a 23-year-old woman and her infant daughter in the back seat. The mother told officers she had hailed the cab earlier, not realizing it was stolen.

Shade tents criticized for lack of coverage

NM SANTA FE — A shady deal in Santa Fe is drawing scrutiny because it's not a complete cover-up.

The Santa Fe New Mexican reported that a \$320,000 state-funded project that installed 94 prefabricated shade structures around New Mexico's capital is being criticized for not covering playground equipment or picnic tables. Also, depending on the time of day, the shade cast is minimal.

Resident Elisa Boyles said the tentlike, 12-foot-by-12-foot tarps mounted on metal poles were useless.

Santa Fe County Commissioner Anna Hansen defended the shade structures and said they are "quite attractive" and do provide at least some shade.

Man looking for phone falls into trash chute

DC WASHINGTON — A man looking for a

dropped cellphone ended up tumbling into a building's trash chute where he had to be rescued.

Washington fire spokesman Vito Maggiolo said the man was throwing out trash at an apartment building when he thought he dropped the cellphone in the chute. Maggiolo said the man leaned in to check and fell inside.

Maggiolo said the man was able to call 911 from inside the trash chute about 3 a.m. Sunday. Firefighter rescue crews pumped fresh air down the chute through a hose and eventually hauled the man out using a harness.

Marijuana business offers weed for weeds

ME GARDINER — A medical marijuana businessman in Maine is offering weed for weeds in a program to encourage Gardiner residents to clean up their city.

WCSH-TV reported that Dennis Meehan, owner of Summit Medical Marijuana, offered residents who collected trash Saturday free marijuana. The businessman said anyone who was over 21 was offered free marijuana if they presented a bag of trash that was collected in town.

Meehan said he hopes to expand what he calls "the day of service" program to the entire state. Meehan said the program is about bringing awareness to the "life-changing" nature of cannabis, as well.

Worker gets pinned in elevator shaft, dies

NY NEW YORK — Police said a construction worker was found dead, pinned in an elevator shaft after he returned to his worksite to retrieve something he'd forgotten.

Stephen Simpson, 53, of

Brooklyn, was pronounced dead Sunday after workers discovered his body in the shaft of a 56-story Manhattan luxury building at West 41st Street and Tenth Avenue.

Police received a call Sunday morning reporting an unconscious person. He'd been found by a security guard.

Man suspected of setting home ablaze

WA TACOMA — Tacoma police arrested a man suspected of starting a fire at a home with his wife and two teenage children inside.

Kenneth Massey was booked into Pierce County Jail early Sunday on investigation of attempted murder and arson. The News-Tribune reported that no one was hurt in the Saturday night fire.

Police said Massey threw a container of gas at a front window of the house, starting the fire. Police said he knew his wife and children were inside at the time.

A police spokeswoman said Massey's estranged wife called 911 to report the blaze. She and the children told police they believed Massey had set fire to the home. Police found him nearby and arrested him.

Men arrested trying to buy drugs from police

CT HARTFORD — Police said two men were arrested after they tried to buy drugs from an officer at a Connecticut police station.

Hartford police said an officer had finished his shift and was walking to his vehicle Sunday when two men approached and asked if he would sell them cocaine.

The two men said they needed to find an ATM to get cash, so the officer directed them to a machine inside the lobby of the

police department. Police said that while the men went inside to get \$60 for drugs, the officer called for help and the men were arrested.

A department spokesman posted the police report to Twitter on Monday, saying, "and this happened."

Coyotes problematic at golf club, airport

GA AUGUSTA — Coyotes are creating concerns for golfers and for pilots at a nearby airport in east Georgia.

The Augusta Chronicle reported that the howling of coyotes has been heard in recent weeks at Augusta Municipal Golf Course.

The animals also are causing concerns at the neighboring Daniel Field Airport. Wildlife on the runways can create hazardous conditions for pilots as they attempt to take off or land.

Golf course General Manager Ira Miller believes the coyotes are finding ways through a chain-link fence separating the course from the airport.

Veteran, 92, injured defending flag at home

TX KAUFMAN — A 92-year-old Marine veteran has been injured while trying to defend the U.S. flag outside his Texas home.

Howard Banks fought in World War II and was left legally blind by a flare on Iwo Jima. After hearing noises outside his Dallas-area home earlier this month, Banks said, he went outside and found someone trying to pull his flag down from its pole. The would-be thief knocked him down before running off, and neighbors rushed to help.

Banks was left with bumps, bruises and a twisted knee.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news
updated 24/7 from bases
around the world.
Now online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Fitzgerald motivated by missing title

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Training camp is a drag at this point in Larry Fitzgerald's long and accomplished NFL career. Of course, the quest for the ring is the main reason the 14-year veteran continues to play.

The longtime Arizona Cardinals wide receiver isn't sure what his future holds as far as retirement.

"That's the only reason I'm playing at this point," Fitzgerald said Sunday, the second day of Cardinals training camp. "From a personal standpoint, things I've accomplished, they're fine. But the thing that you will say is out of your control because you're in a team sport is a championship."

Fitzgerald said he feels good, and when retirement comes there won't be a podium or tears because "that's not who I am."

Yet it is important to him to still be productive as a player when he decides to step away. Fitzgerald admitted it would be a struggle to accept a diminished role due to not being able to give 100 percent.

"The end is never really pretty for elite athletes. It never looks good. You watch Michael Jordan in a Washington Wizards uniform or see Tony Dorsett playing for the Denver Broncos. ... It's weird because you're used to seeing them at their most dominant stage," Fitzgerald said. "For me, I really want to do things at a high level and be able to walk away and still be someone who can play at a high level."

Fitzgerald has asked others who are closer to retirement or have retired about their thought process going into it.

He's been doing that for the

last few years, checking in with the likes of Tom Brady, Peyton Manning and Tony Gonzalez.

For now he still enjoys being around teammates and staff, asking questions in an effort to improve as a player and setting an example and providing leadership for young players.

"He was always a student of the game, but he's a better student of the game," Cardinals coach Bruce Arians said, citing how Fitzgerald and veteran QB Carson Palmer look as camp gets rolling. "Is it still burning inside? I think both he and Carson, they're as young as anybody out there right now."

Arians has said Fitzgerald won't play in the Cardinals' exhibition opener, the annual Hall of Fame Game on Aug. 3 against Dallas. Palmer, who was given Sunday off from practice as the team looks to

manage his snaps over an extended training camp, will also not play in that game.

"As a player, you play when you're told to play, you play as long as you have to play. Once you get out there on the field it's the same game I've been playing since I was 6 years old," Fitzgerald said.

The extra rest might do him some good at age 33, but Fitzgerald feels confident he can still play well. There isn't much to suggest otherwise: Fitzgerald is coming off back-to-back seasons of 100-plus catches and 1,000-plus yards.

Fitzgerald posted those numbers despite moving inside to slot receiver, where he's flourished.

"I knew if my number was called, I could still make the play. I've proven that over the last few years again, and that's the way I still feel," he said.

NFL briefs

Nearly all football brains in study had CTE

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Research on 202 former football players found evidence of brain disease in nearly all of them, from athletes in the NFL, college and even high school.

It's the largest update on chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, a brain disease linked with repeated head blows.

But the report doesn't confirm that the condition is common in all football players; it reflects high occurrence in samples at a Boston brain bank that studies CTE. Many donors or their families contributed because of the players' repeated concussions and troubling symptoms before death.

"There are many questions that remain unanswered," said lead author Dr. Ann McKee, a Boston University neuroscientist. "How common is this" in the general population and all football players?

"How many years of football is too many?" and "What is the genetic risk? Some players do not have evidence of this disease despite long playing years," she noted.

Dr. Munro Cullum, a neuropsychologist at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, emphasized that the report is based on a selective sample of men who were not necessarily representative of all football players. He said problems other than CTE

might explain some of their most common symptoms before death — depression, impulsivity and behavior changes. He was not involved in the report.

CTE was diagnosed in 177 former players or nearly 90 percent of brains studied. That includes 110 of 111 brains from former NFL players; 48 of 53 college players; nine of 14 semi-professional players, seven of eight Canadian Football league players and three of 14 high school players. The disease was not found in brains from two younger players.

Police clear WR Whitehead

OXNARD, Calif. — Police in Lucky Whitehead's home state of Virginia say the former Dallas Cowboys receiver's identity was falsely used in a shoplifting arrest.

Prince William County police said Tuesday they were confident the man charged in a case involving \$40 worth of stolen food and drink from a convenience store in June wasn't Whitehead. The Cowboys released him Monday after reports that he was arrested and subsequently cited for missing a court hearing.

Whitehead's agent, Dave Rich, contended that his client wasn't in Virginia at the time of the reported arrest. Police said they are

seeking the person who used the identity of Whitehead, whose given name is Rodney Darnell Whitehead Jr.

The release of Whitehead came on the first day of training camp after a tumultuous offseason for the Cowboys, including the arrests of two defensive players.

Olsen opts against holdout

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — Panthers star tight end Greg Olsen chose team over himself.

Olsen reported to training camp on time Tuesday, saying he didn't want to hold out and be a distraction to an organization aiming to win its first Super Bowl.

The 32-year-old Olsen has two years left on his contract, but has outplayed his current deal, becoming the first tight end in NFL history with three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons. He was voted second-team All-Pro in 2015 and 2016.

Olsen contemplated holding out for more money, but ultimately decided against it.

"I just didn't feel it was right for me to put my situation and my own personal interests above that of the team," Olsen said.

Olsen caught 80 passes for 1,073 yards and three touchdowns last season.

White Sox end skid, top streaking Cubs

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Adam Engel and Matt Davidson homered and the White Sox snapped a nine-game losing streak with a 3-1 victory over the crosstown rival Cubs at Wrigley Field on Monday.

The Cubs lost for just the second time in 10 games since the All-Star break to fall a half-game behind idle first-place Milwaukee in the NL Central.

Engel lined his third homer of the season off reliever Justin Grimm (1-1) into the wind and several rows into the left-center bleachers to snap a 1-1 tie in the sixth. Davidson led off the eighth with his 19th homer, which sailed over the left-field stands and onto Waveland Avenue.

Jose Abreu had two hits and doubled in a run for the AL-worst White Sox, who ended their longest slide in four years.

In his first start since June 4 because of tendinitis in his pitching hand, Cubs right-hander Kyle Hendricks pitched 4¹/₃ innings and allowed a run and eight hits.

Orioles 5, Rays 0: Kevin Gausman pitched six strong innings, Adam Jones homered and visiting Baltimore won for the sixth time in eight games and sent Tampa Bay to its season-worst fifth straight loss.

Indians 6, Reds 2: Josh Tomlin pitched six efficient in-

nings, Carlos Santana homered twice and host Cleveland won its fourth straight, over tumbling Cincinnati in the makeup of a May 25 rainout.

Santana homered in the seventh and eighth as the Indians moved over .500 (25-24) at Progressive Field for the first time since winning their home opener on April 11.

Royals 5, Tigers 3 (12): At Detroit, Salvador Perez and Mike Moustakas hit consecutive homers in the 12th inning, and visiting Kansas City won its sixth straight game.

Marlins 4, Rangers 0: Giancarlo Stanton hit two more home runs and moved into a tie for the major league lead, sending Adam Conley and host Miami over Texas.

Stanton has 32 homers, including six in his past seven games, and matched Yankees rookie Aaron Judge for most in the majors. Stanton hit a two-run drive in the first inning and a solo shot in the eighth.

Texas star Adrian Beltre went 4-for-4, giving him 2,993 career hits. He moved closer to becoming the 31st player to reach 3,000.

Cardinals 8, Rockies 2: Randal Grichuk hit a two-run homer, Mike Leake pitched seven scoreless innings and host St. Louis beat Colorado.

Dodgers 6, Twins 4: Cody Bellinger continued his super rookie season, drilling a three-

run homer in the eighth inning to rally host Los Angeles to a victory over Minnesota.

It was Bellinger's 28th home run of the season, second in the National League behind Miami's Giancarlo Stanton's 32.

Edward Paredes, making his major league debut after 12 seasons in the minors, threw a scoreless eighth to earn the win. Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth to earn his 25th save.

Blue Jays 4, Athletics 2: Francisco Liriano won for the first time in three starts, Russell Martin homered and host Toronto beat Oakland, snapping a three-game losing streak.

Martin had two hits and Ezequiel Carrera reached base three times as the last-place Blue Jays won the opener of a seven-game homestand.

Mets 5, Padres 3: Jacob deGrom won his eighth straight start and visiting New York held on when San Diego pinch-hitter Jabari Blash's bid for a game-winning home run was barely foul.

DeGrom (12-3) gave up two runs in eight innings, striking out eight. The last Mets pitcher to win eight straight starts was Bobby Jones in 1997.

Mariners 4, Red Sox 0: James Paxton allowed four singles in seven innings to win his fifth consecutive start in July and Kyle Seager homered to pace host Seattle over Boston.

Paxton (10-3) retired the first

13 hitters before Jackie Bradley Jr.'s single to center with one out in the fifth. The left-hander, who worked out of trouble in the sixth and seventh innings, struck out 10 and walked none.

Diamondbacks 10, Braves 2: J.D. Martinez hit a three-run home run to help Zack Greinke and host Arizona cruise to a win over Atlanta.

Martinez, hitless in his first five at-bats as a Diamondback after coming over in a trade with the Detroit Tigers last week, hammered a 1-2 pitch from reliever Matt Wisler high off the center field batters eye with nobody out in the bottom of the sixth. It was his 17th home run of the season.

Pirates 10, Giants 3: Andrew McCutchen hit a three-run homer and had four RBIs, Gerrit Cole won for the fifth time in six starts, and visiting Pittsburgh beat San Francisco.

Jordy Mercer added a three-run homer of his own in the eighth to further back Cole (8-7), 5-1 in his past eight starts.

Astros 13, Phillies 4: Jose Altuve had two doubles and two singles, stretched his sizzling hitting streak to 16 games and helped visiting Houston rout Philadelphia.

A day after tying his career high for hits in a game at Baltimore, Altuve got four more and drove in three runs while raising his major league-leading average to .365.

Royals add pitching in trade with Padres

Associated Press

DETROIT — After scrambling back into contention in the AL Central, the Kansas City Royals are gearing up to make another bid for a postseason spot.

The Royals acquired three pitchers from the San Diego Padres on Monday, getting starter Trevor Cahill, closer Brandon Maurer and reliever Ryan Buchter. Kansas City sent pitchers Matt Strahm and Travis Wood, minor league infielder Esteury Ruiz and cash to San Diego. The deal came one week before the nonwaiver trade deadline.

Kansas City entered Monday night's game at Detroit trailing first-place Cleveland by only 1½ games, and the Royals are

also right in the mix for a wild card.

"We wanted to move sooner than later," general manager Dayton Moore said.

The Royals had been looking to bolster their rotation and bullpen, and did it with one swap. Cahill was 4-3 with a 3.69 ERA in 11 starts for the Padres. The 29-year-old right-hander was an All-Star with Oakland in 2010.

Maurer is 20-for-23 on save tries, and 1-4 with a 5.72 ERA. The 27-year-old righty began his big league career with Seattle in 2013 as a starter.

Buchter is 3-3 with one save and a 3.05 ERA in 42 games. The 30-year-old lefty pitched 67 times for the Padres last year.

Kansas City won the World Series in 2015 and the American League pennant the year before that. The Royals fell back to .500 last year, and after they went 7-16 this April, it looked like 2017 might be the end of their chance to contend with this core of players. Eric Hosmer, Mike Moustakas, Alcides Escobar and Lorenzo Cain can all become free agents after this season.

The Royals are back over .500 now, though, and they entered Monday on a five-game winning streak.

"We're very excited. We've always felt good about this team," Moore said. "We're certainly very much in the thick of a pennant race in our division."

Keselowski inks new Penske deal

Associated Press

MOORESVILLE, N.C. — Team Penske has reached an agreement with 2012 NASCAR Cup champion Brad Keselowski on a multiyear extension.

The 33-year-old Keselowski has driven for Penske throughout his 10-year career in NASCAR's top series, notching 23 wins and the series title five years ago. His crew chief with the No. 2 Ford, Paul Wolfe, has also agreed to a multiyear extension with Penske.

"In the time that Brad has driven for Team Penske, he has risen to the top echelon of stars in NASCAR," owner Roger Penske said Tuesday. "Brad and Paul have established a terrific, winning combination and they are both real leaders within our team."

Keselowski has two Cup wins so far this season, at Atlanta and Martinsville, and is sixth in the points standings.

"Roger and everyone at Team Penske have given me everything we need to win championships at the highest levels of NASCAR," said Keselowski. "As I have said all along, Team Penske is where I want to be and I am thrilled to continue with the organization well into the future. I have a lot of years left in the sport and I truly feel our best years are ahead of us."

Keselowski joined Penske near the end of the 2009 season and Wolfe joined him prior to the 2010 Xfinity Series season. They won the 2010 Xfinity drivers' championship with six wins and a series-record 26 top-five finishes. Wolfe then joined Keselowski on the No. 2 and they have earned six trips to the NASCAR playoffs.

"There is no one I want helping make my racecars go fast more than Paul Wolfe," Keselowski said. "We have a lot of continuity between the two of us, and really the entire No. 2 Ford team, which is so important in today's NASCAR."

Keselowski is tied with Ricky Rudd for 33rd on the career wins list.

Source: Rose signs to join Cavs

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — For the moment, the Cavaliers have one content, proven point guard.

Free agent Derrick Rose agreed Monday to sign with Cleveland, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press. Rose, a former NBA MVP who has struggled with knee injuries, will get a one-year contract at the veteran's minimum of \$2.1 million, said the person who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the agreement.

The deal was expected to be finalized and announced Tuesday.

Rose played for the New York Knicks last season and averaged 18 points and 4.4 assists. The 28-year-old Rose's role with the Cavs is still to be determined. He could be used as a backup or even start depending on what the team does with All-Star Kyrie Irving, who recently asked for a trade.

Irving's demands have complicated things for the defending Eastern Conference champions, who were beaten by Golden State in the Finals. They'll certainly find interest in Irving, but it may be challenging to find comparable talent in return.

That's where Rose comes in. If healthy, Rose is a dynamic

scorer capable of taking over a game, and paired with LeBron James, he could be even more dangerous.

Not long after reports surfaced of Rose's agreement, James posted a message on Twitter with five rose emojis followed by, "Let's Rock G!!"

Rose drew interest from other teams. He met with Cleveland's front office on Monday, when the team promoted Koby Altman to be its full-time general manager after he served as the interim GM since mid-June.

Rose just completed his eighth season since being drafted first overall by Chicago in 2008. He was named the league's MVP in 2011 while with the Bulls.

Gonzalez goes with heart, picks US

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jesse Gonzalez started in the 2015 Under-20 World Cup for Mexico, his parents' homeland. Then last month, the 22-year-old FC Dallas goalkeeper switched his affiliation to join the United States, his home country.

Gonzalez just felt more comfortable in the red, white and blue.

"The U.S. has given me a lot. I'm grateful for what they have given me and the opportunity they have given me," he said after joining the U.S. roster for the knockout rounds of the CONCACAF Gold Cup.

Tim Howard, now 38, remains the top U.S. goalkeeper as the Americans try to qualify for next year's World Cup. Brad Guzan, who will be 33 in September, is entrenched as the No. 2.

After that, no keepers have emerged at the top level in the next generation. Gonzalez, and fellow 20-somethings Sean Johnson, Bill Hamid, Cody Cropper and Ethan Horvath all figure to compete with Guzan for the starting job in the 2019-22 World Cup cycle.

"I don't have any doubt that he will be one of the best keep-

ers in America," Dallas coach Oscar Pareja said of Gonzalez after discovering the teen prospect when he was playing in a youth tournament.

Gonzalez's parents emigrated from Mexico, and he was born in Edenton, N.C.

His family moved to Houston and then on to Dallas when Gonzalez was a child. After spotting Gonzalez on a recreational team, Pareja persuaded the family to switch the keeper to the FC Dallas youth academy. He played there alongside midfielder Kellyn Acosta, who has broken into the U.S. starting lineup this year.

"They taught me how to be more responsible," Gonzalez said. "It was almost like a job at the time, just waking up early and being on time to training."

Pareja, a Colombian national team midfielder in the early 1990s, said the 6-foot-4 Gonzalez's long arms and quick reflexes immediately reminded him of late Colombian keeper Miguel Calero. Gonzalez debuted for Dallas' under-16 team in September 2010 and was signed to a professional homegrown player contract in March 2013. Just more than two years later, he became the youngest keeper to start in team history:

at 20 years, 89 days.

By then, Mexican team scouts had noticed Gonzalez, and asked whether he had interest in playing for El Tri.

Gonzalez started Mexico's first four matches at the 2015 CONCACAF Under-20 Championship, then had a pair of saves during penalty kicks to lift Mexico over Panama in the final. At the Under-20 World Cup in New Zealand, he played in Mexico's second and third games,

The following January, Gonzalez turned down an invitation from U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann to attend a national team training camp. Instead, Gonzalez went to a Mexican Under-23 team camp ahead of the Olympics, but he was not picked for El Tri's Rio de Janeiro roster.

Gonzalez spent a long time before deciding this spring to apply to FIFA for a change of affiliation. Because he had not played a competitive match for Mexico's senior national team, he was allowed a one-time switch.

For now, Gonzalez's role is limited to training and pushing others on the practice field.

"We just want to see what he's about," U.S. coach Bruce Arena said.