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N. Korean missile lands in sea off Japan

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile into the waters off the coast of Japan on Friday, its second successful test of a long-range missile, the Pentagon reported.

The weapon was fired from Mupyong-ni, an arms plant in the far northwest of the country, and splashed down into the Sea of Japan about 620 miles east of the launch site, said Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman.

The U.S. military detected and tracked the missile throughout its flight and quickly determined it posed no threat to North America.

Had the missile threatened American assets or its allies, Davis said, the U.S. was prepared to respond.

“Our commitment to the defense of our allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan, in the face of these threats, remains ironclad,” he said. “We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies from any attack or provocation.”

The Pentagon had been anticipating a North Korean test of an intercontinental ballistic missile, Davis said.

U.S. officials had said they expected another North Korean missile launch this week, citing increased activity at known missile sites.

Thursday also marked the 64th anniversary

of the armistice that ended the Korean War, and North Korea often attempts to time its tests with high-visibility events, the officials said.

Japanese government officials said the missile launched Friday flew for about 45 minutes before falling into the waters in Japan’s exclusive economic zone, according to a report by Kyodo News, a Japanese news agency.

Davis said the Pentagon was continuing its assessment of the missile.

Davis could not say how far the missile was capable of traveling or if it was capable of threatening the U.S. mainland. By definition, an ICBM is capable of traveling farther than 3,400 miles.

The test marks the second time that Kim Jong Un’s regime has successfully tested the longest-rang class of missiles.

On July 4, North Korea launched an ICBM for the first time. That missile flew for 37 minutes before landing in waters off the coast of Japan, the Pentagon said.

The North Koreans have demonstrated increased range of their weapons in 2017 and also increased the frequency of tests.

The country has now conducted 14 ballistic missile tests in 2017, according to Shea Cotton, a research associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. It conducted 16 tests in 2016 and only 16 during the entire 17-year reign of Kim Jong Il.

The missile launched July 4, a Hwasong-

14 ICBM, might have had the range to hit Alaska or Hawaii, Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told lawmakers July 18.

North Korea did not demonstrate the “capacity to strike the United States with any degree of accuracy or reasonable confidence of success,” he said at the time.

But the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency has concluded that North Korea will be able to field a reliable and nuclear-capable ICBM as early as next year, according to The Washington Post.

Unnamed U.S. officials familiar with the classified DIA assessment told the Post North Korea has validated its basic weapons designs with the increased pace of testing, and it could begin industrial production of ICBMs within a few months. Previously, the U.S. intelligence committee had predicted North Korea would be unable to strike the United States with a nuclear-tipped ICBM until 2020 at the earliest.

The Pentagon has provided President Donald Trump with military options against North Korea, but Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other top military officials have warned of “horrific” consequences of those actions.

Dunford said Saturday at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado that he supported continued efforts to impose stronger economic sanctions on the country.

ISIS claims deadly attack on US-backed forces in Syria

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Islamic State militants have carried out a deadly attack on U.S.-backed forces in Syria, killing and wounding many fighters and civilians, Syrian monitors and an ISIS-linked media outlet said Friday.

The assault took place Thursday near the northern city of Raqqa — ISIS’s de facto capital, where U.S.-backed Syrian fighters are battling to rout the extremists from their

stronghold.

The Syrian Democratic Forces have captured wide areas from ISIS in northern Syria since late last year, and on June 6, the U.S.-backed forces launched an offensive to capture the city of Raqqa. The fighting recently has been concentrated inside the city, but ISIS staged Thursday’s surprise attack on a village about 11 miles away from Raqqa.

The Amaq news agency said the attack killed 53 SDF

members and damaged two armored vehicles. It added that ISIS fighters safely returned to their base afterward.

Nisreen Abdullah, a spokeswoman with the U.S.-backed SDF, said ISIS has been carrying out attacks against the SDF but strongly denied the high number of casualties given by Amaq.

“Daesh is trying to boost the morale of its fighters,” Abdullah said by telephone from northern Syria, using the Ara-

bic acronym for ISIS.

“Daesh is facing collapse,” she added, referring to the loss by the group of almost half of Raqqa in the fighting so far in the city.

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said ISIS fighters used motorcycles in the Thursday attack. He said they were able to kill and kidnap dozens of SDF fighters and civilians.

5 minutes and a gunfight for survival

Anatomy of the attack that killed 3 Green Berets in Jordan

The Washington Post

It is still unclear what sparked the shootout that led to the deaths of three American soldiers at King Fasal Air Base in Jordan in November. What is clear, according to recently released video, is that after the initial burst of gunfire, the remaining Americans were outgunned and stalked by a person set on killing them.

The Nov. 4 attack, carried out by Jordanian Air Force 1st Sgt. Ma'arik al-Tawayha, began as a group of Green Berets was returning from an exercise. The Army soldiers, highly trained in preparing local ground forces for combat, had been detailed to the CIA and were teaching opposition forces from neighboring Syria how to use small arms and other light weapons.

As one of the U.S.'s staunchest allies in the Middle East, the Jordanians and their military installations are no strangers to having U.S. forces come and go. Yet in the hours and initial weeks after the attack, Jordanian officials painted a murky picture of what had happened. Immediately following the shootout, they indicated that the Americans had run the gate, failing to stop when instructed to. When U.S. officials questioned that account, Jordanian authorities suggested there had been an accidental discharge in one of the Americans' vehicles that led to the shootout.

Investigators never were able to determine a motive, and al-Tawayha insisted throughout his trial that he thought his base was under attack. Last week, he was sentenced by a Jordanian court to life in prison for the murders of Staff Sgt. Matthew C. Lewellen, 27, of Kirksville, Mo.; Staff Sgt. Kevin J. McEnroe, 30, of Tucson, Ariz.; and Staff Sgt. James F. Moriarty, 27, of Kerrville, Texas.

The sole survivor of the gunfight, a Green Beret who requested his name be withheld

because of his past involvement with covert operations, described the sequence of events that occurred during the attack in an email, pointing out that what the video shows disproves any notion of misconduct on behalf of the Americans.

The video begins innocuously enough. It is just after noon on Nov. 4 when the four-vehicle convoy enters the vehicle checkpoint. The Jordanian soldier casually pulls a set of spike strips away and opens the manually operated gate, letting the unmarked green vehicle through. The Americans are wearing clothes typical of military trainers on a civilian range — khakis and short-sleeve shirts.

About the video's one-minute mark, the shooting begins; it is 12:05 p.m., according to the video. Bullets, likely fired from the M16 al-Tawayha is carrying, punch through the glass of the second vehicle. Lewellen is gravely wounded and McEnroe is killed. "The other guard did not react to whatever shot or sound claims he heard," the Green Beret said. "So that's the first hole in his story."

The gate guard, startled, runs for cover, seemingly gripping a weapon on his belt. On the left side of the screen, another Jordanian pokes his head out of a guard shack before dipping back inside. The unnamed Green Beret opens the driver's side of the third vehicle and, using the frame of the door, squares off toward al-Tawayha and fires three rounds from his Glock 19, but is outmatched by the Jordanian's rifle.

As he fires, Moriarty moves from the fourth vehicle to a concrete barrier on the right side of the screen. As bullets impact both vehicles, the soldiers take cover. The entire time, the remaining Green Berets are yelling that they are friends in both English and Arabic.

"[Al-Tawayha] wants us to put our hands up. We want him to drop his weapon and put

his hands up also. We are still under the impression that this is a huge mistake or misunderstanding," the Green Beret said. "We refuse to give up our cover, but we place our pistols on the ground and put our hands up, hoping to de-escalate the situation. Moriarty repeats in Arabic how we are friends."

About three minutes into the video, as the Green Beret moves to put his hands up, al-Tawayha fires a bullet that hits a barrier inches from his head, sending up a cloud of debris. It is then that the two survivors decided that they were going to have to fight their way out.

"Definitely could have taken my head off," the Green Beret said of the shot. "It did not seem like a warning shot. He did this multiple times. We decided to pick up our pistols and re-engage. We determined he was trying to kill us, whether this was a misunderstanding or not, and we needed to stop him instead of figuring it out."

When the shooting began that day, al-Tawayha was firing from roughly 25 yards, the Green Beret said. Though he and Moriarty were trained to engage targets at that range and to shoot from barricades like the ones behind which they were pinned down, "[al-Tawayha] was just very effective with his rifle and that dominated the entire encounter," the Green Beret said.

At the 3:30 mark, Moriarty starts waving to a truck off-screen. The Green Beret said it was a group of Jordanians who had been at the training range with them that morning and that they had stopped a hundred yards or so off-screen.

"They didn't move for whatever reason — they had no clue what was going on more than likely," the Green Beret said. "It was probably tough for them to figure out at the time that one of their own guys was doing this. They were gesturing for us to move to them."

"There was no safe way for us to get to them."

"We decide to move. We are in a bad spot there and need a better position," the Green Beret said. "[Moriarty] is pointing to the place that we are going to move to. We did not expect him to continue to pursue us. ... We constantly attempt to de-escalate the situation. We move away from him. He has the opportunity to move back to his guard shack, and instead he pursues us. He is definitely not under attack."

Almost as soon as the Americans are behind a new set of barriers, al-Tawayha appears on the right side of the screen, his weapon is at the ready, and he wipes his brow as he moves to take up a firing position on the bed of the third vehicle.

"We still are showing him our hands," the Green Beret said. "He continues to [advance]."

As he closes distance with them, al-Tawayha is still yelling at the Americans to come out.

"[Al-Tawayha] still wants us to stand up and reveal our entire bodies and completely surrender. He doesn't give us any confidence in doing that though, because he continues to shoot very accurately at us."

In the final seconds, al-Tawayha finally comes upon the Green Berets' flank, leaving them nearly exposed. The final burst from the Jordanian's rifle spurs the two to duck down, allowing al-Tawayha to rush their position. Both Americans return fire. Moriarty, more exposed and seemingly drawing al-Tawayha's fire, is hit and collapses. The last Green Beret dips to the other side of the barrier and fires into al-Tawayha while he's still shooting at Moriarty, wounding him. It is 12:10 p.m. The Green Beret disarms al-Tawayha and moves toward the Jordanian soldiers pictured off-screen, as other troops come from the direction from which Tawayha had come.

Sessions says he will stay, fight for Trump's agenda

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — His loyalty to the boss severely tested but seemingly intact, Attorney General Jeff Sessions says he will stay in the job for as long as President Donald Trump wants him to serve.

Sessions told The Associated Press he and Trump have a “harmony of values and beliefs” and he intends to stay and fight for the president’s agenda “as long as he sees that as appropriate.” His assessment came after a week of being berated by Trump in the most public fashion as a weak and ineffective leader.

“If he wants to make a change, he has every right,” Sessions said in an interview outside the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador during a mission to increase international cooperation against the MS-13 gang. “I serve at the pleasure of the president. I’ve understood that from the day I took the job.”

Congressional Republicans have rallied around Sessions, a former senator from Alabama, and expressed mortification at the humiliation visited on him by Trump in several interviews and a series of tweets.

Trump is upset that Sessions recused himself months ago from the investigation into interactions between Russian officials and the Trump campaign, and that Sessions has not taken a tougher line against Trump’s defeated Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton.

McCain kills health care bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., appeared poised to be the savior of the GOP health bill when he returned to the Capitol earlier this week despite brain cancer.

He turned out to be the bill’s executioner.

In an astonishing development early Friday, the longtime Arizona senator turned on his party and his president, joining two other GOP senators in voting “no” on Republicans’ final effort to repeal “Obamacare.”

His unexpected vote killed the bill, and also dealt what looks like a death blow to the Republican Party’s years of promises to get rid of Barack Obama’s health care law.

In the twilight of a remarkable career, McCain, 80, lived up to his reputation as a maverick. When he walked into the well of the Senate about 1:30 a.m. and gave a thumbs-down to the legislation, Democrat senators briefly broke into cheers, which Minority Leader Chuck Schumer quickly waved his arm to quiet.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell stood stone-faced, his arms crossed. President Donald Trump later tweeted his disapproval, but a president who once mocked McCain’s years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam apparently did not have much sway when it counted.

Just days earlier, on Tuesday, McCain

had buoyed GOP health care efforts when he returned to the Capitol for the first time after getting diagnosed with a brain tumor and cast a decisive vote to open debate on the GOP legislation. Yet even then he forecast that his support could not be counted on, as he took the floor to lecture his colleagues, the scars from his surgery etched severely along the left side of his face.

“The Obama administration and congressional Democrats shouldn’t have forced through Congress without any opposition support a social and economic change as massive as Obamacare. And we shouldn’t do the same with ours,” McCain said then.

“Why don’t we try the old way of legislating in the Senate, the way our rules and customs encourage us to act,” he added. “If this process ends in failure, which seem likely, then let’s return to regular order.”

The outcome McCain predicted came to pass — he made sure that it did. And now if Republicans want to get anything done on health care, they will have little choice but to return to regular order and to turn to Democrats.

McCain was not the lone Republican senator in killing the health care bill. Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska ignored criticism and even threats from Trump and his administration to cast a “no” vote, as did Susan Collins of Maine, a moderate who has opposed GOP efforts all along.

Scaramucci tirades ignite tensions in White House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s new communications director exploded the smoldering tensions at the White House into a full-fledged conflagration Thursday, angrily daring Trump’s chief of staff to deny he’s a “leaker” and exposing West Wing backstabbing in language more suitable to a mobster movie than a seat of presidential stability.

In a pull-no-punches, impromptu CNN interview that he said was authorized by the president, Anthony Scaramucci went after chief of staff Reince Priebus in graphic terms. “The fish stinks from the head down,” he said. “I can tell you two fish that don’t stink, and that’s me and the president.”

Not even a week into his new job, Scaramucci accused unidentified senior officials of trying to sabotage him and committing a felony by leaking information. But the personal financial information that he said someone had “leaked” about him

simply had been obtained through a public records request.

Then in an expletive-laden interview published by The New Yorker late Thursday, an angry Scaramucci accused Priebus of being a “f----- paranoid schizophrenic.” He also used a graphic sexual reference to make the point that he believes White House chief strategist Steve Bannon used Trump’s election win to burnish his own reputation.

He also threatened to fire White House staffers who leaked news about a dinner he had with the president.

“They’ll all be fired by me,” Scaramucci told the magazine. “I fired one guy the other day. I have three to four people I’ll fire tomorrow. I’ll get to the person who leaked that to you. Reince Priebus — if you want to leak something — he’ll be asked to resign very shortly.”

By day’s end Scaramucci sounded calmer, though not regretful.

“I sometimes use colorful language. I will refrain in this arena but not give up the

passionate fight for @realDonaldTrump’s agenda. #MAGA,” he tweeted. The tag at the end stands for Trump’s “Make America Great Again.”

He also blamed the reporter, Ryan Lizza, for reporting the conversation. “I made a mistake in trusting in a reporter,” he added later. “It won’t happen again.”

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders referred reporters to the first tweet.

The president’s senior counselor, Kellyanne Conway, had speculated earlier in a Fox News interview that unnamed forces were out to get Scaramucci, saying: “Somebody is trying to get in his way and scare him off.”

“There are leaks and then there are people using the press to shiv each other in the ribs,” she said.

Meanwhile, no one in the White House took up for Priebus — including Priebus, himself. Sanders avoided giving a direct answer when asked whether Trump has confidence in Priebus.

Worsening drought stressing US crops

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Drought conditions worsened in several states during the past week from extreme heat and weeks with little rain, raising the prospect that grocery staples such as bread and beans could cost more as the region that produces those commodities is hit hardest.

Drought conditions have begun to stress corn, soybeans, wheat and livestock in some areas, according to the weekly U.S. Drought Monitor released Thursday by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Nearly 11 percent of the continental U.S. is in moderate drought or worse, said Richard Heim, a meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in this week's drought summary. The report is compiled weekly using data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and NOAA.

"Much of Montana and parts of the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas had no rain this week; some areas have been drier than normal for the last two to three months; and some drought indicators reflect dryness for the last 12 months," Heim wrote.

About half of the nation's spring wheat, 13 percent of winter wheat, 15 percent of corn and 14 percent of the soybeans are in drought, the report said.

Consumers could see the price of bread at the grocery counter rise, said Doug Goehring, agriculture commissioner for North Dakota, the nation's largest producer of spring wheat and second-largest grower of winter wheat.

"There have been people in this business for five decades who have said they have never seen conditions like this," Goehring said.

Senate OKs Russia sanctions bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate's decisive vote to approve a new package of stiff financial sanctions against Russia, Iran and North Korea sends the popular bill to President Donald Trump, who will be under pressure to sign it after weeks of intense negotiations.

Trump's likelihood of supporting the measure is a remarkable concession that the president has yet to sell his party on his hopes for forging a warmer relationship with Moscow. Trump's vow to extend a hand of cooperation to Russian President Vladimir Putin has been met with resistance as skeptical lawmakers look to limit the executive power's leeway to go easy on Moscow over its meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

The Senate passed the bill, 98-2, two days after the House pushed the measure through by an overwhelming margin, 419-3. Both are veto-proof numbers as the White House has wavered on whether the president would sign the measure into law.

Never in doubt, however, was a cornerstone of the bill that bars Trump from easing or waiving the additional penalties on Russia unless Congress agrees. The provisions were included to assuage concerns among lawmakers that the president might relax the penalties without securing concessions from the Kremlin.

Trump privately had expressed frustration over Congress' ability to limit or override the power of the president on national security matters, according to Trump administration officials and advisers. They spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal White House deliberations.

But faced with heavy bipartisan support for the bill in the House and the Senate, the president has little choice but to sign it into law. Trump's communications director, Anthony Scaramucci, suggested Thursday on CNN's "New Day" that Trump might veto the bill and "negotiate an even tougher deal against the Russians."

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said that would be a serious mistake. If Trump rejected the bill, Corker said, Congress would overrule him.

Still, signing a bill that penalizes Russia's election interference would mark a significant shift for Trump. He repeatedly has cast doubt on the conclusion of U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia sought to tip the election in his favor. Also, he's blasted as a "witch hunt" investigations into the extent of Russia's interference and whether the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow.

The bill underwent revisions to address concerns voiced by American oil and natural gas companies that sanctions specific to Russia's energy sector could backfire on them to Moscow's benefit. The bill raised the threshold for when U.S. firms would be prohibited from being part of energy projects that also included Russian businesses.

Lawmakers said they also made adjustments so the sanctions on Russia's energy sector didn't undercut the ability of U.S. allies in Europe to get access to oil and gas resources outside of Russia.

The North Korea sanctions are intended to

Russia orders cut in US diplomats, closes retreat

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia's Foreign Ministry on Friday ordered a reduction in the number of U.S. diplomats in Russia and said it was closing down a U.S. recreation retreat in response to fresh sanctions against the country.

The U.S. Senate approved stiff financial sanctions Friday against Russia, Iran and North Korea and sent it to President Donald Trump to sign.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said that in response, it is ordering the U.S. Embassy in Russia to reduce the number of its diplomats by Sept. 1. Also, Russia will close down the embassy's recreational retreat on the outskirts of Moscow, as well as warehouse facilities.

The ministry said the number was being cut to 455 diplomats.

Relations between Russia and the U.S. dropped to a post-Cold War low following Russia's annexation of Crimea and interference in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Reports of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election have put a damper on hopes for better ties that the Kremlin pinned on Trump's presidency.

The package of sanctions aims to hit President Vladimir Putin and his inner circle by targeting suspected corrupt officials, human rights abusers and crucial sectors of the Russian economy, including weapons sales and energy exports.

Russia's Foreign Ministry dismissed the new sanctions as "creating unfair competitive advantages for the U.S. economy."

thwart Pyongyang's ambition for nuclear weapons by cutting off access to needed cash. The bill prohibits ships owned by North Korea or by countries that refuse to comply with U.N. resolutions against it from operating in American waters or docking at U.S. ports. Goods produced by North Korea's forced labor would be prohibited from entering the United States, according to the bill.

The sanctions package imposes mandatory penalties on people involved in Iran's ballistic missile program and anyone who does business with them. The measure would apply terrorism sanctions to the Revolutionary Guard and would enforce an arms embargo.

Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rand Paul, R-Ky., voted against the sanctions bill.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Clown wielding machete arrested

ME HOLLIS — A man is accused of drunkenly strolling down a Maine road wearing a black-hooded sweatshirt and a clown mask, and brandishing a machete taped to where his arm had been amputated.

Maine State Police said Corey Berry, 31, of Hollis, was arrested Tuesday and charged with criminal threatening.

Police said Berry was first spotted in Hollis but then fled into the woods. He was taken into custody after re-emerging in Waterboro. Police say Berry was intoxicated but cooperative. He told officers that he was copying previous clown sightings as a prank.

Woman escapes as her car falls into hole

FL SPRING HILL — Mary Boone of Spring Hill did not have a good night's sleep.

Awakened by a loud bang around 3:30 a.m. Thursday, she looked outside and saw the driveway buckling under her car. She said she hurried out to move it, but just as she got in, the driveway collapsed, and the car fell nose-first into a 6-foot deep hole. She told news outlets she managed to get out, but now the hole stretches about 30 feet under her home, which had to be evacuated.

Hernando County officials said water from a broken main washed away sandy soil.

Man accused of owing \$88K in tolls, fees

NJ FORT LEE — Police have arrested a New Jersey man who is accused of evading nearly \$88,000 in tolls and fees.

A Port Authority of New Jersey and New York officer pulled over Anthony Cotugno, 60, of Newark, after, they say, he drove through an E-ZPass lane on the George Washington Bridge without paying a toll Wednesday. Police said a records check showed he owes more than \$40,700 in tolls and fees at Port Authority crossings and an additional \$47,000 in unpaid tolls and fees on the New Jersey Turnpike.

Cotugno is charged with theft of service, toll evasion and a traffic violation.

Fugitive found tanning in family's backyard

NH CONCORD — The U.S. Marshals said they found an advertised "fugitive of the week" tanning in a family member's backyard.

The U.S. Marshal's Fugitive Task Force featured Amy Beth Tremblay, 35, in local media in New Hampshire on July 12. An arrest warrant had been issued for her in March on bail violations following a drug conspiracy charge.

The task force said Wednesday, tipsters reported seeing Tremblay sunning herself in a yard in Haverhill, Mass. Task force members showed up and arrested her.

Man robs bank, gets naked, throws money

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Authorities said they arrested a man who robbed a bank, stripped naked and ran down the street throwing stolen money.

According to the FBI, Alexander Sperber, 25, said he woke up Tuesday morning and decided to rob a bank to start his career as a comedian.

Authorities said he parked his car at the bank, made a gun motion with his hand and de-

manded money from the teller. She allegedly gave him about \$4,700 in a bag. Officials said a red dye pack exploded, leaving dye on his clothes and on a cast on his left wrist.

The Sun Sentinel reported Sperber was taken to the hospital and found to be coherent and uninjured. He was charged with bank robbery.

Police find 77-pound tortoise on roadside

NY MASSAPEQUA — Police on Long Island are looking for the owner of a 77-pound tortoise found on the side of a road.

Newsday reported Nassau County police found the large African spurred tortoise in the Massapequa area. The animal was brought to Dr. Ned Horowitz and his staff at the Massapequa Pet Vet on Wednesday.

Horowitz said he and his staff were relieved to receive the "pleasant" and "domesticated" spurred tortoise instead of an alligator snapping turtle, which are frequently found in the area. He said the tortoise appears to be well cared for, and he believes it may have escaped from its owner's home.

1800s 'corduroy road' found near new sewer

MI GRAND HAVEN TOWNSHIP — Construction crews in western Michigan have uncovered a centuries-old road beneath a roadbed.

Grand Haven Township Manager Bill Cargo said an approximately 50-foot section of "corduroy road" was discovered Monday as crews installed a storm sewer. Cargo said a corduroy road, or "log road," is made by placing logs perpendicular to the direction of the route of low or swampy areas. The roads were built in the 1800s to

help horse-drawn wagons get through muddy areas.

Community Development Director Stacey Fedewa said the Tri-Cities Historical Museum in Grand Haven is planning to use some of the historic roadway for a future exhibit.

Man faces 8 counts after nuptials canceled

NY PLATTSBURGH — Authorities said a Texas man who was in northern New York to get married set fire to eight cars after the nuptials were called off.

Police in Plattsburgh said officers responded early July 9 to reports of several vehicles on fire in the north end of the city.

Police looked at hours of street surveillance video before focusing on Jimmy Williams, 35, as the suspect. He was tracked down in the Houston area. Williams was brought back to Plattsburgh late Tuesday and charged with eight counts of arson.

Police suspect man drove to station drunk

CA PETALUMA — A Northern California man showed up at a police station to talk about a hit-and-run crash, only to be arrested on suspicion of drunken driving after police determined he had driven to the station intoxicated.

The Press Democrat in Santa Rosa, Calif., reported that Richard Elwood, 68, was awaiting a morning interview Tuesday in the police lobby when the smell of alcohol tipped off a desk clerk. Petaluma police Lt. Tim Lyons said officers determined Elwood had driven to the station while under the influence of alcohol. Elwood was arrested and booked into Sonoma County Jail.

From wire reports

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Cormier seeks validation versus Jones

Associated Press

BURBANK, Calif. — Daniel Cormier recognizes the cosmic paradox at the bottom of his bitter rivalry with Jon Jones.

If anybody in the world could relate to the exact pressures and pitfalls faced by Jones over the past several years as a wildly successful mixed martial artist, Cormier would be that man.

If any fighter could teach Jones about the perseverance and steadiness necessary to forge a successful career with something besides spectacular athletic talent, it would be the man standing across from Jones in the UFC 214 cage on Saturday night.

“If we weren’t what we are today, there are a lot of things that I could give to him, to help him be a better version of himself,” Cormier said of his troubled antagonist with a rueful laugh.

Instead, Cormier and Jones are locked in one of the greatest rivalries in MMA history, one featuring street-clothes scuffles, epic trash-talking and a pointed animosity that can only grow out of familiarity.

More than 2½ years after Jones beat Cormier to defend the light heavyweight title, Cormier is the champion heading into their rematch at Honda Center in Anaheim, California.

Cormier (19-1) realizes he needs a victory over his self-sabotaging archrival to validate his own title reign — and any empathetic thoughts about Jones (22-1) have been drowned out by years of anger and frustration with an enemy who could have been a friend.

“I’ve allowed myself to let go of that thought: ‘Why am I so disappointed in him?’” Cormier said during a recent lunch break from his other job as an MMA analyst for Fox. “Why was I so upset when he was throwing everything away? It shouldn’t matter to me. When I was finally able to let that go, it freed me.”

The most anticipated MMA matchup of the summer is the headline bout on a stacked card, but Cormier is unable to take much satisfaction in this lucrative pinnacle of his career. The decisive loss to Jones in January 2015 remains the only blemish on Cormier’s record, and he has reigned atop the 205-pound division for two years since Jones’ title was stripped a few months afterward.

Jones’ misdeeds are almost too long to list at this point, even when limited just to the trouble since 2014. He had a positive test for cocaine use around the time of their first bout, followed by an embarrassing hit-and-run accident in which a pregnant woman’s arm was broken, followed by another failed drug test revealed shortly before their scheduled rematch at UFC 200 and blamed on an erectile dysfunction medication.

Cormier has lampooned and criticized Jones with each mistake, but only because he sees Jones making the mistakes that he has avoided. While Jones lives his madcap life, Cormier is a former Olympic wrestler with a late-blooming MMA career and a stable family existence in the Bay Area.

“I can almost sympathize with Jon more

today than I did before,” Cormier said. “Because I see all the traps, the excess — from girls to new friends. There’s just so much available to you that you don’t really want to be involved with. But I got it as a 36-year-old man. He was a 23-year-old kid, and then it just became a part of who he was. You’ve got to avoid those traps. I live in what’s important. My family, my training, my jobs.”

When Jones blew his title shot and received a yearlong suspension last year, he also cost Cormier a great deal of money by forcing their bout’s cancellation. Anderson Silva agreed to be a late replacement, and Cormier did the only thing he could against one of his heroes: He pinned the Spider to the mat for most of their three rounds, earning an easy victory and boos from fans who have embraced Jones’ antihero ethos more than Cormier’s good-guy life.

“I didn’t get here being stupid,” Cormier said. “There was no way to win in that situation, but I had to take the criticism for it.”

Cormier finally has a way to win this Saturday, but he is an underdog. Jones still is widely considered the greatest fighter in the world, and he appears to be focused on regaining his belt.

Their animosity hasn’t cooled, either. At their ceremonial faceoff Wednesday in downtown Los Angeles, a shirtless, chiseled Jones glowered at the smaller, suit-wearing champion.

“I know what I’ve got to do,” Cormier said. “We finally have to have this moment. It’s time.”

Cyborg’s journey to UFC glory almost complete

Associated Press

LA MIRADA, Calif. — Most mixed martial artists put only a token effort into their public workouts during the week before a big fight. Their actual training is long completed, and they simply throw a few flashy punches before signing a few autographs.

When Cris Justino showed up to one of the UFC’s suburban Los Angeles gyms on Thursday, she was ready to perform.

The fighter known to all as “Cyborg” stepped into the cage and put on a capoeira-inspired routine for hundreds of adoring fans, showing off the graceful, dance-like Brazilian martial art with a training partner.

“I like the energy, and I have friends who do capoeira,” she said with a smile. “I still have a lot of fans in Brazil, so I try to take a little bit from Brazil — the capoeira, the samba — to show it to the fans in America.”

After years of giving these extra efforts and hurdling innumerable obstacles, Justino’s winding journey to UFC stardom seems to be almost complete.

With a victory over Tonya Evinger at UFC 214 in Anaheim on Saturday night, the featherweight widely considered to be the most dangerous pound-for-pound fighter in women’s MMA finally would wear a UFC championship belt from a weight class essentially

created by the promotion to showcase her talent.

“I’ll think about everything on Saturday after the fight,” said Justino, a native Brazilian who lives in Orange County. “I’m going to keep my mind on that fight, and when I finally have the belt, I’ll feel very happy.”

Cyborg is already a champion, reigning over the Strikeforce and Invicta promotions since 2009. She also acquired an irresistible outlaw image from her setbacks in drug testing and her combative relationships with both UFC President Dana White and Ronda Rousey.

But the biggest reason for Justino’s stardom is the fact that she hasn’t lost a fight since her MMA debut in May 2005,

dominating nearly all of her opponents with superior skill in almost every aspect of the sport.

Cyborg also earned one of the biggest victories in women’s MMA history in August 2009 when she clobbered star Gina Carano to win the Strikeforce title in a widely seen bout.

While Evinger is a talented veteran, Justino is the overwhelming favorite for a coronation on Saturday.

“I think it will be a great moment for all my fans and for Cyborg Nation,” she said. “It will be the end of one chapter in my life and the beginning of a new one. It will be a new belt in the house. I already have two, and this will be one more.”

Nationals tee off on Blazek, Brewers

BY DAVID GINSBURG

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Washington Nationals staged their own version of the Home Run Derby, with Michael Blazek serving as the unwilling batting practice pitcher.

Washington tied a franchise record with eight homers and matched two major league marks during a prolific third inning that highlighted a 15-2 rout of the fading Milwaukee Brewers on Thursday.

Bryce Harper and Ryan Zimmerman each homered twice for the Nationals, who banged out 19 hits in reaching double figures in runs for the 18th time this season.

“We have a lineup that can do some special things,” Harper said. “Anything can happen.”

Washington equaled two big league records in a seven-run third: Most consecutive home runs (four) and most home runs in an inning (five).

“We had a big offensive barrage today,” manager Dusty Baker said, understating the obvious.

All the home runs in the third inning were hit off Blazek (0-1), who was making his first major league start following 108 appearances in relief.

“I felt like I made some decent pitches but they were locked in on everything,” the right-hander said. “It’s not how I pictured it going.”

He could have hardly imagined becoming the first pitcher in baseball history to allow five home runs in an inning.

Only five other major league teams hit five homers in an inning, a feat that had not occurred since Milwaukee did it in 2006. Washington became the eighth team to hit four in a row, the first since Arizona in 2010.

After Harper connected in the first inning, Brian Goodwin started the long-ball party in the third with a two-run drive after Blazek walked Washington starter Max Scherzer.

“The last thing I wanted to do was lead off the inning with a walk, especially to a pitcher,” Blazek said. “It just kept build-

ing and building from there.”

Wilmer Difo, Harper and Zimmerman followed with long home runs.

The streak was interrupted when Daniel Murphy flied out, after which some of the fans reacted with good-natured booing.

Anthony Rendon resumed the fun with a shot to dead center that finally chased Blazek, who gave up seven hits — six of them long balls.

Zimmerman and Jose Lobaton both homered off Wily Peralta in the fourth for a 15-1 lead.

The eight home runs tied the franchise mark set in July 1978 by the Montreal Expos against Atlanta.

Cleveland Indians extend win streak to 7

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Indians are finally starting to look like the defending American League champions.

Cleveland ran its winning streak to a seven games — its longest of the season — and moved to a season-high 10 games over .500 with Thursday’s 2-1 victory over the Los Angeles Angels.

Manager Terry Francona knows the streak has come at a critical point for his team, which stumbled out of the All-Star break with a 1-5 road trip.

“We needed it, but needing it and doing it are two different things,” he said.

“We’re trying to play the game the right way, that’s what we did,” said Francisco Lindor, who singled to break a tie in the seventh. “It helps a lot. You win a couple of games in a row and it definitely builds up your confidence.”

Trevor Bauer (9-8) pitched a season-high eight innings, striking out six and allowing seven hits. Cody Allen pitched the ninth for his 18th save while JC Ramirez (9-9) took the loss.

Bauer worked out of a jam in the seventh that began with runners on second and third

and no out. The right-hander realized he had one of two options.

“I either give up runs and we probably lose or I find a way to get out of it,” he said. “Thankfully, it worked out.”

The Angels were swept for the first time since April 14-16 at Kansas City.

Yankees 6, Rays 5 (11): Shortstop Adeiny Hechavarria and second baseman Tim Beckham watched Gary Sanchez’s playable grounder bounce between them on the left side of the infield for a tying single with two outs in the ninth inning before Brett Gardner homered leading off the 11th as host New York beat Tampa Bay for its fourth straight win.

Gardner tripled to the left-center wall off Alex Colome leading off the ninth, but Clint Frazier hit a soft grounder to third and AL home run leader Aaron Judge flied to right.

Sanchez hit a two-hopper between Hechavarria and Beckham, but the two infielders looked at each other as the ball bounced into the outfield and Gardner scored.

Gardner then homered, his career-high 18th, in the 11th off Andrew Kittredge, who lost in his first big league decision.

Cubs 6, White Sox 3: Kyle Schwarber homered twice and drove in four runs as the Cubs beat the host White Sox for their third consecutive victory.

Anthony Rizzo also connected and Jon Lester pitched seven effective innings as the Cubs improved to 11-2 since the All-Star break. The NL Central leaders also increased their advantage over the second-place Brewers to 1½ games ahead of their big series this weekend in Milwaukee.

Blue Jays 8, Athletics 4 (10): Steve Pearce hit a game-winning grand slam in the 10th inning as Toronto beat visiting Oakland to complete a four-game sweep.

Oakland reliever Liam Hendriks (3-2) walked the bases loaded with two outs before Pearce hooked a 3-2 pitch down the left field line and into the second deck.

Kendrys Morales, who hit a game-winning homer in the ninth inning Wednesday, had two more home runs Thursday.

Padres 7, Mets 5: Manuel Margot came within a triple of the cycle while fellow rookie Dusty Coleman hit his first major league home run, leading San Diego past visiting New York.

Luis Perdomo (5-5) got the victory after pitching into the seventh. Brad Hand earned his fifth save and ran his scoreless streak to 18⅓ innings.

Margot drove in three runs, a career high for the former Boston prospect.

Coleman, the 30-year-old minor league veteran, was promoted this week when shortstop Erick Aybar got hurt.

Marlins 4, Reds 1: At Miami, Chris O’Grady looked like a much different pitcher against Cincinnati than he did five days ago.

O’Grady pitched seven scoreless innings to help Miami beat the Reds to open a four-game series.

O’Grady (2-1) allowed five hits. He struck out five and walked two. It was a much stronger outing against the Reds after allowing three runs and six walks in 4⅔ innings against them five days ago.

Diamondbacks 4, Cardinals 0: J.D. Martinez hit a grand slam and Zack Godley pitched seven innings as Arizona beat host St. Louis.

The Diamondbacks won their third game out of four, improved to 59-43 and snapped the Cardinals’ three-game winning streak.

Rays trade 2 for Duda, Jennings

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dan Jennings walked into the Tampa Bay Rays clubhouse, saw Logan Morrison walk by and gave his old Miami Marlins teammate a poke on the arm. Morrison did a double-take and gave the pitcher a hug.

Rays reinforcements arrive daily.

Tampa Bay acquired Jennings from the Chicago White Sox on Thursday to boost the left side of the bullpen and obtained first baseman Lucas Duda from the New York Mets. The Rays sent first baseman Casey Gillaspie, the 20th overall draft pick in 2014, to the White Sox and right-hander Drew Smith, a third-round selection two years ago, to the Mets.

The Rays, 2½ games out of first in the AL East, are trying to reach the playoffs for the first time since 2013. They obtained infielder Trevor Plouffe from Oakland on June 17, infielder Adeiny Hechavarria from the Marlins on June 26 and right-hander Sergio Romo from the Los Angeles Dodgers on July 23.

“This has been a great group to watch play and to play themselves into the position that we’re in,” Tampa Bay senior vice president of baseball operations Chaim Bloom said. “We believe in these guys and we really like these group, and we want to keep sending them reinforcements to show them that we want to do everything we can to help them get where they’re trying to go.”

Jennings was 3-1 with a 3.45 ERA in 48 appearances for the White Sox this season and held left-handed hitters to a .169 batting average (12-for-71) with one extra-base hit.

The 30-year-old Jennings is not eligible for free agency until after the 2019 season.

Duda, a 31-year-old eligible for free agency after this season, is hitting .246 with 17 homers and 37 RBIs. The Rays envision him spending most of his time at designated hitter.

Pats start camp in reset mode

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Entering last season, much of the intrigue that surrounded the New England Patriots centered on the players who wouldn’t be on the field.

Not only was Tom Brady on the verge of serving his four-game “Deflategate” suspension, but several players were dealing with injuries.

That’s was then.

The Patriots opened training camp Thursday both healthy and retooled after capturing the franchise’s fifth Super Bowl title.

“New year, starting all over again, a lot of new challenges,” coach Bill Belichick said Wednesday as veterans reported to the team facility.

For Belichick, the preparations for 2017 began the day after his team’s historic comeback win against Atlanta in February’s Super Bowl. Veteran safety Devin McCourty said it makes it very easy to get into the “start from scratch” mentality that Belichick demands.

“If you get a chance to walk

in on one of Bill Belichick’s meetings, you won’t have a hard time figuring that out,” he said.

Both McCourty and fellow Pro Bowler Matt Slater said it’s also why they scoff at the lofty preseason expectations being heaped on the Patriots, which have included predictions of an undefeated season.

“I don’t subscribe to the Twitters and the Instagrams,” Slater said. “But I watch a little stuff from time to time ... I think it’s quite foolish some of the things being said.”

The productivity of Brady is one of the biggest reasons many believe the Patriots could become the first back-to-back champion since they did so in the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

Brady enters camp just a week shy of his 40th birthday, and is the oldest player on New England’s roster. Yet, he is still easily its most important piece.

Offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels, who turned 40 last year, says he doesn’t plan to have any jokes for the reigning Super Bowl MVP as he marks

the milestone.

“We have a competitive room. I don’t really talk about age in there a whole lot,” McDaniels said. “There’s a wide variety of that across our team, so that’s really a nonfactor for us.”

Even still, as Brady prepares for his 18th NFL season he will be protected by five returning starters on the offensive line. That group was in disarray only two years ago as injuries and constant shuffling culminated in Brady being sacked 38 times and taking a generally high amount of contact in the pocket.

But the return of Dante Scarnecchia as offensive line coach, combined with the installation of David Andrews and Marcus Cannon as full-time starters and addition of rookie Joe Thuney, were stabilizing. Brady was sacked 15 times in 2016.

It’s why Slater said no one discounts Brady when he says he’d like to play until his mid-40s, if not longer.

Said Slater: “Kevin Garnett said, ‘Anything is possible, right?’”

Markov joins KHL, hopes for Olympics

Associated Press

Andrei Markov wanted badly to play a 17th season with the Canadiens and finish his career in Montreal.

When it was clear that wouldn’t happen, the veteran defenseman decided to go home to Russia and play next season in the Kontinental Hockey League. Markov hopes to represent Russia in the Olympics next February in South Korea, the first without NHL players since 1994.

“It depends on the way I’m going to play,” Markov said on a conference call Thursday. “If I’m going to play well and everything, (if) I’m going to deserve to be part of the Russian team in the Olympics, I will be happy. But it’s not my decision. All I can do (is) just play my game, do my best and hopefully I’m going to be there.”

Even at 38, Markov is still an upper-echelon defenseman with a knack for quarterbacking the power play and the ability to skate over 20 minutes a game. As long as he’s healthy, he should be Russia’s No. 1 defenseman at the Olympics, where he played in 2006, 2010 and 2014.

He cited family reasons for going home but is looking forward to a fourth Olympic appear-

ance that wouldn’t have been an option had he remained in the NHL.

“It’s something special, and it’s too bad that NHL (is) not going there, NHL players not going there,” Markov said. “Everybody understands it’s a business and whatever decision NHL made, it’s their decision. But for the athletes, it’s a great experience, it’s a great feeling and to represent your country in such a big tournament, it’s huge and it’s something special.”

On Wednesday, Canadian star Connor McDavid of the Edmonton Oilers said he was disappointed not to get the chance to play in the Olympics. Canada has won the past two Olympic gold medals.

Russia has not won an Olympic medal of any color since 2002 when it got the bronze. Now that Markov won’t chase the Stanley Cup in 2018, he has his sights set on Olympic gold.

“It’s another dream — not just for me, but for many athletes — to be winner of Olympic Games,” he said. “Everybody want to win.”

Markov did not rule out returning to Montreal in the future. Owner Geoff Molson called Markov “one of the best defensemen in franchise history” and a model of dedication.