

STARS AND STRIPES®

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Collision site known for night congestion

BY MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO — The site of a fatal collision between a U.S. Navy destroyer and a container ship off Japan's coast is notorious for congested sea traffic, particularly during the night when merchant ships are trying to reach Tokyo's port by daybreak.

The USS Fitzgerald collided with the ACX Crystal about 12 nautical miles off the southern tip of the Izu Peninsula in the early hours of Saturday just as the two ships were to merge into heavy traffic.

Maritime officials and ship operators call the area a convergence zone, where ships coming from the east and west converge with others leaving Tokyo. On average, about 400 ships pass through the waters each day.

The area, also known for strong tides, is the most acci-

dent-prone in Japanese waters. The Japan Transport Safety Board investigated 28 serious collisions between 2008 and 2014, including one between a Japanese navy submarine and a fishing boat in 1988 in which 30 people died.

"Because many ships unload their cargo in Tokyo during the day, they want to be there early in the morning. Many of them pass through the area during the night," said Hiroshi Ando, an official in the Japanese coast guard's navigation safety department.

"It's known as one of the busiest waters, where ships from different routes merge," Ando said.

The nighttime rush hour continues from about 1 to 3 a.m. A second rush hour goes from about 8 to 9 p.m. as ships that reloaded in Tokyo leave through the area, he said.

The ACX Crystal was a typical example. The 19,060-ton ship, carrying about 1,000 containers from Nagoya, was traveling east and scheduled to arrive in Tokyo at 8 a.m., according to its operator, NYK Line. The coast guard says it and the Fitzgerald collided about 1:30 a.m.

How the collision occurred is still under investigation, but experts generally agree that the Philippine-flagged container ship was likely trying to pass the destroyer from behind when the two collided. The Navy ship suffered severe damage to its starboard side. An underwater gash flooded two sleeping compartments, killing seven sailors who were trapped inside.

Ships heading to Tokyo have to decide whether to take a shortcut between the Izu Peninsula and Izu Oshima island or make a bigger circle around the island,

partly to avoid traffic. Most ships take the shorter route, Ando said. He said route decisions are up to the captains.

Because of the frequent accidents, the transport ministry has proposed to the International Maritime Organization a virtual median line between the peninsula and the island, with Tokyo-bound ships traveling on the east side and those from Tokyo on the west side. The proposal, adopted by the IOM earlier this month, is to take effect next year.

A senior official at Shin-shinkisen Co., a passenger ferry operator, said it assigns three crewmembers to monitor surrounding traffic when its ferries pass through the area, even though they operate only during the day. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the topic.

Help offered to Fitzgerald sailors who lost items

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A number of groups at U.S. bases in Japan have stepped up to assist sailors from the USS Fitzgerald after seven of the ship's crewmembers were killed last weekend in a collision off the Japanese coast.

Many of the sailors lost personal items — everything from clothing to debit cards — in the early Saturday incident between the Yokosuka-based destroyer and a Philippine-flagged cargo ship. Some lost everything but the uniforms they were wearing at the time.

The American Red Cross was one of the first groups to respond, meeting the sailors at the pier with comfort kits, said Regional Program Director Amanda Rolsen.

"Once we knew the ship was going to arrive, our volunteers started putting toiletry kits together and canteen items like food, drinks and blankets," she said. "These guys lost their home. Where the berths were, it was flooded. They lost all of their personal items."

Supplies arrived from nearby Naval Air Station Atsugi, Camp Zama and Yokota Air Base, said Rolsen, who added that the Red Cross also provided the sailors with gift cards to purchase basic necessities.

Fitzgerald sailors have also been receiving replacement uniforms and civilian clothing from the Yokosuka branch of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. The group, which usually sells used clothing and uniform items at low prices, has been offering Fitzgerald sailors the clothing free of charge.

Volunteer Minte Irmer said the organization has received so many donations of new and used uniform items that it opened a temporary makeshift location out of the base's Hawk's Nest to serve Fitzgerald sailors.

Yokosuka's USO branch has also pitched in, staying open 24 hours a day to accommodate the Fitzgerald sailors, said Operations Manager Shandra Kraft.

Kraft said the group has been serving hot meals three times a day since Saturday night, and has remained open to provide the sailors with a place to relax, watch movies, access the internet or use Skype to call home.

Yokota's USO office has been taking donations of new or gently used blankets and pillows as well as monetary donations to help the Yokosuka USO provide 24-hour services.

At Misawa Air Base, the 35th

Fighter Wing is hosting donation drives throughout the week with Naval Air Facility Misawa, said Capt. Samantha Morrison, an Air Force spokeswoman. Many of the component units are holding their own donation drives as well, she said.

The Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni USO has asked for donations of navy or plain black garment bags or money to buy them for Fitzgerald sailors. David Robinson, a former Japan District commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said the VFW was spending \$3,000 on gift cards for Fitzgerald sailors to replace items lost in the flooding such as computers and uniforms.

Camp Zama's VFW post has provided sanitary items, and some individual donors have contributed another \$2,000 to buy the sailors new uniforms, he said.

Court investigating unlawful influence in SEAL rape case

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — The key question in the case of Keith Barry is whether the Navy's top lawyer, Vice Adm. James Crawford III, and Rear Adm. Patrick Lorge illegally conspired against the SEAL.

An appeals court has barred all Navy and Marine Corps judges from hearing a case involving allegations that high-ranking military leaders exerted unlawful influence to doom a San Diego SEAL's defense against rape charges. The order was issued Monday by the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces in Washington.

It sends the case back to a special master in San Diego, who will investigate whether Crawford illegally conspired

with then-Rear Adm. Lorge, commander of Navy Region Southwest, in the aftermath of Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Barry's 2015 court-martial to sway the final verdict against him.

David Sheldon, Barry's attorney in Washington, told The San Diego Union-Tribune that the appellate court "took the very first step in righting the wrong that is Senior Chief Barry's case."

No longer in the military, the highly decorated Barry was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a dishonorable discharge, but he has never stopped fighting to clear his record and his name.

His court-martial stems from a brief romance he had with a

civilian woman. In court, she said Barry raped her. He said she lied about their consensual relationship as a way to get even after he quit dating her.

Military law allows commanders who convene court-martial proceedings to nix a ruling they believe is unjust.

Lorge approved the court-martial conviction against Barry, but he claimed in a recently filed affidavit that he had actually wanted to overturn the conviction based on what he saw as insufficient evidence.

Lorge has alleged that Crawford encouraged him to let the conviction stand so it would appease congressional critics of the military justice system and the administration of President Barack Obama.

USS Dewey leaves port before war games

By KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey has left a South Korean island after making a port visit to complete "required maintenance" and won't participate in upcoming joint war games, a Navy spokesman said Wednesday.

The Arleigh Burke-class destroyer arrived on Jeju Island on Tuesday along with two Royal Canadian frigates for what the Navy said was a "routine port visit and planning meeting ... prior to the navies participating in a trilateral exercise" with South Korea and Japan.

But Lt. Josh Kelsey, a spokesman for Naval Forces Korea, said the ship departed Jeju on Tuesday evening "to complete required maintenance" at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

"This means they will not be part of the scheduled trilateral exercise," he said.

More details were not immediately available. Dewey was one of several ships and aircraft that participated in search-and-rescue efforts after the USS Fitzgerald's collision with a merchant vessel off the Japanese coast on Saturday.

The island port call came amid rising tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. The ship was deployed from its homeport in San Diego to the region earlier this year as part of a program aimed at expanding U.S. Pacific Command's options.

The Navy did not give dates for the maritime drills, but South Korean naval officials said they would begin Friday and last for five days.

North Korea objects to the presence of U.S. ships and joint military exercises, which it alleges are a rehearsal for an invasion despite Washington's insistence that the drills are defensive in nature.

Bergdahl lawyers focus on Trump remarks

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Lawyers for Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl said Wednesday they want to ask prospective jurors in the soldier's court-martial about their opinions on President Donald Trump to ensure their client receives a fair trial.

The questions, submitted in a private 41-question survey, seek to determine whether potential jurors would be influenced by disparaging comments by Trump on the campaign trail about the former Taliban captive, Eugene Fidell, Bergdahl's lead attorney, said during a pre-trial hearing at Fort Bragg, N.C. Bergdahl, 31, faces a court-martial in October on charges that he deserted his post in eastern Afghanistan in June 2009 and endangered his unit through misbehavior.

In addition to asking the potential jurors whether they are familiar with Trump's comments, defense attorneys also

seek to ask if they voted for Trump, one of 17 questions to which prosecutors objected.

Trump made more than 60 negative references to Bergdahl during public campaign rallies and speeches between June 2014 and August 2016, calling him "a dirty, rotten traitor" and opining he should be executed or sent back to his captors. As president, Trump has not made public mention of Bergdahl and the White House has declined to comment on his past statements.

The judge overseeing the case, Army Col. Jeffery R. Nance, called Trump's statements "disturbing" and potentially "problematic." But in February, he declined to dismiss the case over them, instead granting defense attorneys great leeway to ask potential jurors questions about any potential influence the president's comments might have on them.

However, prosecutors argued Wednesday that some of the proposed questions are too

far-reaching or are irrelevant. Army Maj. Justin C. Oshana, one of the prosecutors, asked Nance not to include questions about personal politics and argued that simply asking jurors if they had heard Trump's comments went far enough for the initial questionnaire.

Nance said he would decide which questions he would allow before the end of next week, when the questionnaires will be sent to the pool of prospective jurors.

Nance will also consider whether to allow prosecutors to include evidence that two servicemembers were severely injured on missions to rescue Bergdahl before he is sentenced, should he be convicted.

The Army charged Bergdahl with "misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place" and "desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty" in March 2015.

He has yet to enter a plea to the charges.

House panel wants space force within the US Air Force

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — A House Armed Services panel intends to create a new fighting force called Space Corps within the Air Force to improve the U.S. military's ability to address threats in space, according to a summary of the Strategic Forces panel's forthcoming fiscal 2018 mark.

"There is bipartisan acknowledgement that the strategic advantages we derive from our national security space systems are eroding," said a joint statement from Mike Rogers and Jim Cooper, the panel's chairman and ranking Democrat. "We are convinced that the Department of Defense is unable to take the measures necessary to address these challenges effectively and decisively, or even recognize the nature and scale of its problems. Thus, Congress has to step in."

The Space Corps, they added, would be "a separate military service responsible for national security space programs for which the Air Force is today responsible."

Its mark also would establish

U.S. Space Command as a four-star position under U.S. Strategic Command.

The measure would bar the Pentagon from buying satellite services if there is a threat that they could be compromised by cyber vulnerabilities or because they are launched by or contained parts from adversary nations. The subcommittee also would authorize \$705 million for missile defense systems in Israel that U.S. companies would develop or produce with the Israelis.

The panel would institute oversight mechanisms to ensure a capable nuclear command and control infrastructure.

It would support several Missile Defense Agency priorities that were not formally part of the budget request but that were included on the agency's first-ever unfunded priorities list, submitted to Congress earlier this month. Those include requirement that the agency begin developing a new system of missile-tracking satellites and procure 24 additional interceptors for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense batteries.

Navy: USS Ford will join fleet next month

Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — The nation's newest aircraft carrier will officially join the fleet next month.

Navy officials said Tuesday in a statement that the USS Gerald R. Ford will be commissioned on July 22. The ceremony will take place at Naval Station Norfolk.

The ship is named after the country's 38th president, who served in the Navy during

World War II.

The Ford is the first of the Navy's new Ford class of aircraft carrier. The vessel can carry more planes and operate with several hundred fewer sailors. It will also increase flying missions by a third.

The ship is being commissioned after more than a year of delays, cost overruns and glitches. The ship will go through workups at sea before becoming operational in 2020.

NATO intercepts Russian aircraft

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

A NATO F-16 was scrambled Wednesday to intercept an aircraft carrying the Russian defense minister over the Baltic Sea, the second close encounter this week between Russian and western planes.

Russian media said the NATO F-16 approached the minister's jet, which was being escorted by SU-27 fighters in international airspace. Video of the incident showed one of the Russian fighters maneuvering toward the F-16 and tilting its wings to show that it was armed. The F-16 then flew off.

Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu was en route to Kaliningrad, Russia's heavily fortified Baltic enclave bordered by NATO territory, Russian news agencies said. They said he was

going there for a meeting with military commanders.

NATO said it was forced to scramble its fighters because the Russian aircraft did not respond to air traffic control.

"NATO can confirm that three Russian aircraft, including two fighters, were tracked over the Baltic Sea earlier today," an alliance official said. "As the aircraft did not identify themselves or respond to air traffic control, NATO fighter jets scrambled to identify them, according to standard procedures. Our pilots acted in a safe and professional way. NATO has no information as to who was on board the Russian planes."

A Russian parliamentarian called the incident an act of "military rudeness."

USAREUR to boost presence in Baltics

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Army will deploy hundreds of paratroopers to the Baltics this fall to allay concerns among some allies that a large-scale Russian war game scheduled to commence in September could serve as a pretext for aggression in the region.

USAREUR chief Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, during a recent stop at a Polish military base, told reporters planning is underway to send some 600 U.S. paratroopers to the Baltics to reinforce the alliance's eastern flank.

"Russia's military aggression in both Georgia and Ukraine has destabilized the European security environment, and we must ensure Russia is deterred from further aggression,"

Cathy Vandermaarel, a USAREUR spokeswoman, said in a statement.

The paratroopers are to be positioned in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia and will take part in exercises that fall under Operation Atlantic Resolve — the ongoing campaign to reassure allies anxious about a more aggressive Russia.

The U.S. paratroops will be deployed for the duration of Russia's Zapad 2017 exercise, scheduled for mid-September.

NATO members have expressed concern about Zapad, which Moscow says will involve about 13,000 troops carrying out a range of drills with partner Belarus.

NATO has sought to assuage such concerns, setting up new multinational battalions in each Baltic state and Poland.

Congress told of Russian meddling in 2016 election

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Current and former government officials painted a sinister portrait Wednesday of Russian cyberattacks on the United States aimed at interfering in the U.S. presidential election last year. Moscow stockpiled stolen information and selectively disseminated it during the campaign in an effort to undermine the legitimacy of the American political process, they said.

The Russians “used fake news and propaganda and they also used online amplifiers to spread the information to as many people as possible,” Bill Priestap, the FBI’s top counterintelligence official, told the Senate Intelligence Committee.

While he said the Russians had conducted covert operations targeting past American elections, the internet “has allowed Russia to do so much more” than before. But, he added, the “scale and aggressiveness” was different this time, with the primary goal being to sow discord and aid the candidacy of Republican Donald Trump, the eventual winner.

“I believe the Russians will absolutely try to continue to conduct influence operations in the U.S.,” which will include cyberattacks, Priestap said.

The House Intelligence Committee, also investigating Russian meddling in the election, heard former Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson from the Obama administration say that the high-tech intrusion did not change ballots, the final count or the reporting of election results.

Johnson described the steps he took once he learned of the hacking of the Democratic National Committee.

“In 2016 the Russian government, at the direction of [President] Vladimir Putin himself, orchestrated cyberattacks on our nation for the purpose of influencing our election — plain and simple,” Johnson said.

GOP keeps House seat in Ga.

Associated Press

DUNWOODY, Ga. — Republican Karen Handel declared victory in Georgia’s 6th Congressional District with a promise that she’ll work to gain the confidence of voters who backed her Democratic opponent.

But Handel’s thank-you to President Donald Trump in the same speech Tuesday night is unlikely to comfort backers of the Democrat who came to symbolize anti-Trump resistance.

Handel won about 52 percent of the vote to quell the upstart phenomenon of Jon Ossoff, a 30-year-old Democrat who raised more than \$23 million and became a symbol of opposition to Trump.

The thank-you to Trump was Handel’s most public show of support of the man who wasn’t embraced by many voters in the well-educated suburban Atlanta district in November and who she handled delicately throughout a primary and runoff election to fill the congressional seat vacated by Tom Price to take a spot in Trump’s Cabinet.

Handel devoted much of her speech to thanking national and state Republicans for back-

ing her campaign before making a direct appeal to Ossoff’s supporters.

“To the Jon Ossoff supporters, know that my commitments, they extend to every one of you as well,” Handel said. “We may have different beliefs, but we are part of one community, the community of the 6th District. And I will work just as hard to earn your confidence in the weeks and months ahead.”

She also noted last week’s shooting of Republican Majority Whip Steve Scalise, of Louisiana, and said politics has become too embittered.

“What happened on that ballfield was a terrible tragedy and we need to all continue to lift up Steve and the others who were injured that day,” Handel said. “And we need to also lift up this nation so that we can find a more civil way to deal with our disagreements. Because in these United States of America, no one — no one — should ever feel their life threatened over their political beliefs and positions. And I say that, ladies and gentlemen, in regards to both sides of the political aisle.”

A day after the election, Democrats are left with the bitter hope of another tighter-than-

usual margin, still searching for a contest where anti-Trump energy and flush campaign coffers actually add up to victory.

Handel, who left an abusive home as a teen, will be the first Republican woman to represent Georgia in Congress.

Handel’s tough race, combined with closer-than-usual GOP House victories in Kansas, Montana and South Carolina, suggests Trump will dominate the coming election cycle, forcing Republicans to make peace with him, for better or worse.

In a Tuesday night tweet, Trump congratulated Handel, saying, “We are all very proud of you!”

Republicans immediately crowed over winning a seat Democrats spent at least \$30 million trying to flip. “Democrats from coast to coast threw everything they had at this race, and Karen would not be defeated,” House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., said in a statement.

Democrats must defend their current districts and win 24 GOP-held seats to regain a House majority next November.

Ossoff told his supporters, “The fight goes on.”

Trump backer wins House race in SC

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Republicans retained control of Mick Mulvaney’s U.S. House seat, with Ralph Norman winning a special election victory that was closer than expected in South Carolina’s 5th Congressional District.

The GOP had strong hopes it would hold onto the district, where President Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton by more than 18 percentage points. Mulvaney rode a tea party wave to victory in the 5th District in 2010, defeating a three-decade Democratic incumbent.

Norman, a former state lawmaker who aligns himself with Trump, said support from the president resonated positively with voters. Trump recorded a robocall in support of Norman’s

campaign and sent out Twitter messages encouraging voters to back him.

“Everybody’s had their differences with President Trump,” Norman told The Associated Press on Tuesday night. “It didn’t overshadow individual needs of what they wanted — business, less taxes, less government. He’s a polarizing president, but I think a majority of the people like what he’s doing.”

Norman, a millionaire real estate developer who celebrated his 64th birthday on election night, defeated Democrat Archie Parnell with roughly 51 percent of the vote. Parnell had roughly 48 percent of the vote. Three third-party candidates also waged campaigns to replace the new White House

budget director in Congress.

High-level surrogates stumped on behalf of both candidates, with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and former South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint campaigning with Norman, who also received support during a seven-way primary and ultimate runoff from conservative groups like the Club for Growth.

Democrats took interest there, too, with Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez campaigning with Parnell. But it was small in comparison with the party’s investment in a special election in Georgia’s 6th District, seen as an early test for the GOP and Trump. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee put only \$275,000 into South Carolina’s race.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man fatally shot during altercation at barbecue

NY ALBANY — Police said a man was shot and killed at a Father's Day barbecue attended by dozens of friends and family in upstate New York.

The Albany man was pronounced dead shortly after police responded to reports of gunshots Sunday afternoon. The Times Union, of Albany, reported that police said the shooting came after some sort of altercation.

Albany police on Monday identified the victim as Terrence Roberts, 46.

Police declined to provide details about potential suspects.

Truck lands on roof of home; 2 in vehicle killed

CA YORBA LINDA — Authorities said a full-sized truck went airborne, crashing into a California home and killing the two adults inside the vehicle.

The Orange County Register reported that all five people inside the home suffered minor injuries in the crash, which occurred late Saturday.

Orange County Sheriff's Department Lt. Steve Gil said the Dodge truck landed on top of the house, over a bedroom that was unoccupied at the time of the crash.

Patrol investigating reports of fake police

MO FARMINGTON — The Missouri State Highway Patrol is investigating reports of fake police pulling over women in eastern Missouri.

The Park Hills Daily Journal reported that on June 8, a 24-year-old woman was stopped in Jefferson County by a car with flashing lights. She told police a

man wearing a black ski mask and a hoodie tried to open a rear door. She pointed a pistol and he left.

At 4:40 a.m. on June 10, a 19-year-old woman was stopped by an SUV with flashing lights in St. Francois County. She sped away when she saw the SUV driver wearing a ski mask and a hoodie.

The patrol urges anyone unsure if they're being pulled over by a real officer to slow down, turn on hazard lights and call 911.

Coke marketing tweet targets wrong city

PA PITTSBURGH — Coca-Cola's marketing efforts during the weekend's heat wave in Pittsburgh backfired when the company mistakenly used a map of Philadelphia in a post on Twitter.

Sunday's tweet said, "Today's forecast in Pittsburgh: Record heat, followed by an ice-cold wave of ahhhhhhh. #Sharea-Coke." The message was accompanied by the wrong map.

A spokeswoman for Atlanta-based Coca-Cola apologized Monday, saying the company is "exploring innovative, adaptive technologies to serve up personalized content to our fans ... in this case, our map accidentally missed the mark — literally."

Man who died at US Open had just lost wife

WI ERIN — The elderly golf fan who died while attending the U.S. Open at Erin Hills had lost his wife of 68 years earlier in the week.

Marshall "Chick" Jacobs, 94, died Friday in the arms of his son, Bill, after becoming unresponsive at the sixth green. Just three days earlier, Lucille Jacobs died after experiencing complications from a broken hip.

Bill Jacobs recalled that when his father made plans to go to the tournament when it was awarded to Erin Hills in 2010, he remarked that he hoped he would still be alive to attend. Jacobs told the Journal Sentinel that he and his dad spent "three hours of bliss" Friday watching the game's greatest players.

Student left at park; officials suspended

CT WATERBURY — Three city and school district administrators have been suspended after a student involved in an after-school program was left behind at a Waterbury park.

Authorities told the Republican-American that the boy fell ill during the program on April 24 and was moved to an internal room of the Chase House Park to lie down. Staffers forgot the student when they left.

Officials said the boy, whose age was not disclosed, called his father, who then notified police. Recreation Superintendent Edward McCann, recreation leader James Geary and school district coordinator Tina Jacovino all received three-day suspensions without pay.

Woman pleads guilty in deadly 142-mph crash

IN FORT WAYNE — A northern Indiana woman who was driving 142 mph when she caused a fatal crash has pleaded guilty but mentally ill.

Stacey R. Motz-Altman's trial had been scheduled for September. She pleaded guilty but mentally ill last week to reckless homicide and criminal recklessness.

Police said Motz-Altman, 38, was driving east on U.S. 30 last September at 142 mph when she rear-ended a car and pushed it

into the rear of a semitrailer.

The car's driver, Luann Simon, 54, was pinned inside her vehicle's wreckage and later died.

Man accused of killing kitten at train station

IL BELLEVILLE — A southern Illinois man accused of stomping a kitten to death because he wasn't allowed to take it on a light-rail train has been charged with felony animal cruelty.

The suspect, DeCarlos Johnson-Foston, 23, is jailed on \$75,000 bond. St. Clair County Sheriff's Capt. Bruce Fleshren said Johnson-Foston was at a Belleville MetroLink station Friday with a kitten on his shoulder. A security guard told him the cat would not be allowed on the train. Fleshren said Johnson-Foston slammed the kitten to the platform and stomped on its head, then walked away and left on a bus.

Rancher, wranglers corral wayward gator

TX HAWKINS — A Texas rancher lassoed a 10-foot alligator and wranglers crawled atop the thrashing reptile's back after it got a little too close to the landowner's cattle.

Bystanders shot video of the takedown near Hawkins, about 100 miles east of Dallas.

Byron South, of Convergent Hunting Solutions, said he got a call from the landowner, Hal Conover, after the alligator broke into a pen where he was weaning calves. Game wardens were also summoned. South said that Conover was able to throw a rope around the reptile. The video later shows two men atop the gator as it thrashes and bites one man's hand. The man suffered minor injuries.

From wire reports

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Fultz expected to be top pick in draft

Associated Press

In the often unpredictable world of the NBA, there is some symmetry in Markelle Fultz and Ben Simmons likely becoming teammates as pros.

Barring an unforeseen change, Fultz will be the No. 1 pick in the NBA Draft on Thursday night, joining Simmons with the Philadelphia 76ers in an attempt to invigorate a once-proud franchise. Two stars worthy of the top pick in consecutive years, neither of whom was able to lead their college programs to team success in their one season on campus.

LSU didn't reach the NCAA Tournament in Simmons' lone year in Baton Rouge before becoming the top pick by the Six-

ers last year, and Washington finished 9-22 this season with Fultz.

Of course, that's about where the connections between Fultz and Simmons end. They have different skill sets and personalities, but will likely be at the core of how Philadelphia tries to return to relevance.

Fultz is a natural talent on the court who moves with fluidity and ease, and his abilities and tendencies have been dissected heavily heading into Thursday's draft. Off the court, he is exceedingly loyal to those that believe in him.

He is also a fan of posting trick shots to social media. His drive and humility comes from once being cut from the varsity of his high school team.

"When I'm on the court, I

feel at peace really," Fultz said in an interview last October with The Associated Press. "It feels like my home. I'm always thinking of something creative to do like trick shots or something like that. It's just something about the basketball court that touches me, it makes me feel like nothing is wrong on the court."

Fultz was hyped as a possible No. 1 draft pick from the time he stepped on campus at Washington. Whether he was worthy of such a selection was debated endlessly because of the failures by the Huskies. They lost the final 13 games of the season, six of which Fultz was a spectator because of a knee injury.

"It was very tough. Nobody went in thinking we were going

to lose that many games," Fultz said recently after a workout with the Los Angeles Lakers. "But I think I built relationships and we learned more than you could ever learn losing that many games. How to fight through adversity, sticking together, sticking with each other through everything off the court, on the court. I think that was pretty big."

Despite the losing, there have been very few questions raised about Fultz's capabilities as a pro. He's been hounded with comparisons to fellow point guard Lonzo Ball. But it's not just Ball that Fultz will forever be compared to. It's De'Aaron Fox, Dennis Smith and the rest of the talented point guards in the class.

Gonzaga's Collins highlights list of best post players

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The role of the big man has changed in the NBA, and that's evident in the way teams pick centers and post players entering Thursday's draft.

The style of play favors versatile players who can space the floor, or play inside and out. And that means players who spend more time in the post — such as Gonzaga's Zach Collins or Wake Forest's John Collins — have become harder to project for the NBA and lack the top-of-the-lottery value as in years past.

Still, both players offer plenty of potential when it comes to interior scoring and rebounding, and they headline this year's crop of post players:

Zach Collins

The 7-footer was Gonzaga's first McDonald's All-American and was a key reserve during the Bulldogs' run to the NCAA championship game.

STRENGTHS: The freshman averaged 10 points and 5.9 rebounds while shooting a conference-best 65 percent, showing nice touch around the paint, mobility and athleticism. He's a possible

lottery pick.

CONCERNS: Collins has a small sample size for teams to evaluate. He's also had issues with foul trouble.

John Collins

The 6-10 sophomore made a rapid rise to become a candidate for Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year with his efficient offensive game.

STRENGTHS: Collins is a good athlete with a soft shooting touch (62 percent). He often proved nearly unstoppable in the post (19.2 points, 9.8 rebounds) with the ability to finish at the rim or elevate over defenders, making him a first-round prospect.

CONCERNS: Collins battled foul trouble at times during his two-year Wake Forest career. He also needs to improve defensively, particularly with footwork and post positioning.

Harry Giles

The 6-10 one-and-done from Duke is a prospect with massive potential — if he can stay healthy.

STRENGTHS: Giles was projected by many as the nation's top high school recruit and even a possible No. 1 overall pick before suffering a serious knee injury in high school. He's an active player who can run the floor, has good athleticism and boasts a 7-3 wingspan.

CONCERNS: He missed his senior season of high school after tearing liga-

ments in his right knee, then had pre-season arthroscopic surgery on his left knee to remove scar tissue from a previous injury and was limited throughout much of last year. If healthy, he could be a steal in the middle of the first round or later.

Justin Patton

Creighton's 7-foot redshirt freshman displayed a soft touch and flashed an efficient offensive game.

STRENGTHS: Patton averaged 12.9 points while shooting nearly 68 percent from the field (second nationally). He also averaged 6.2 rebounds and 1.4 blocks to become the Big East freshman of the year, drawing attention from scouts for a variety of post moves and his ability to run the floor to become a possible first-round prospect.

CONCERNS: The 20-year-old weighs 230 pounds, so he'll need to get stronger and refine his game. He'll also need to improve at the line after making just 52 percent of his free throws at Creighton.

Jarrett Allen

The 6-11 freshman showed potential in his one season with Texas.

STRENGTHS: Allen averaged 13.4 points and 8.4 rebounds, and showed off some of his athleticism in a 22-point, 19-rebound effort against Kansas in January. He showed good mobility and a soft shooting touch (57 percent from the

floor) to go with a 7-5 wingspan, making him a possible first-round prospect.

CONCERNS: Allen needs to improve at the line after making just 56 percent of his free throws. The 19-year-old will also need time to develop his game, cut down on mistakes (2.5 turnovers per game) and add bulk to a 235-pound frame.

Others to keep an eye on

■ **BAM ADEBAYO:** The 6-10 freshman from Kentucky offers a physical presence in the paint and rebounding. He's a possible first-rounder.

■ **IKE ANIGBOGU:** The 6-10 freshman from UCLA didn't make a huge impact in his one college season, though he could be a first-round pick with his 7-6 wingspan and his physical presence.

■ **TONY BRADLEY:** The 6-11 freshman entered the draft after being a key reserve on North Carolina's NCAA championship run. He's a possible first-round pick.

■ **ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN:** The 7-1 center from Germany has appeared in the late first round in some mock drafts.

■ **ANZEJS PASECNIKS:** The 7-2 big man from Latvia is an intriguing international prospect but needs to get stronger. He's appeared in the first round of some mock drafts.

■ **CALEB SWANIGAN:** Purdue's 6-9, 250-pound sophomore led the country in double-doubles (28) and was second in rebounding (12.5). He could be a late first-rounder and provide a rugged physical presence.

TCU eliminates Texas A&M from CWS

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Roommates Brian Howard and Ryan Merrill are going to have plenty to talk about around their apartment whenever they and the rest of the TCU Horned Frogs return to Fort Worth.

Howard matched his career high with 12 strikeouts in seven-plus innings. Merrill, playing before friends and family in his hometown, homered to start a three-run third inning and the roomies helped keep the Frogs' season going with a 4-1 win over Texas A&M in a College World Series elimination game Tuesday.

"Big Game Howie," as Howard is known around the program, flummoxed the Aggies with pinpoint location of his fastball and cutter. The Oakland Athletics' eighth-round draft pick struck out six of the first seven batters he faced and held the Aggies scoreless until Braden Shewmake's RBI groundout in the sixth inning.

"I think today was probably the best stuff I had all season," Howard said. "I'm pumped I didn't walk anybody. I didn't

give up any free bases. I felt like I was attacking the strike zone from the beginning, and I was able to carry that through."

The Frogs (48-16) avoided going 0-2 for the first time in five all-time CWS appearances. The Aggies (41-23) have gone two-games-and-out in their last three appearances and have lost eight in a row in Omaha.

Texas A&M starter Stephen Kolek (4-5) was knocked out in 2²/₃ innings, matching his shortest start of the season. Kaylor Chafin held the Frogs to three singles the rest of the way.

Howard (12-3) left after George Janca doubled leading off the eighth, having struck out 12 for the second time in four starts.

"He was coming in both sides of the plate with his fastball, and he was getting us to chase a little bit," the Aggies' Cole Bedford said. "He's an adrenaline guy. When he gets in a groove, he's got good stuff."

Merrill graduated from Millard West High School in Omaha and passed on a chance to walk on at Nebraska, instead

playing two years at nearby Iowa Western Community College. The St. Louis Cardinals drafted him in the 15th round in 2015, but instead of signing, he went to TCU for the chance to someday return to his hometown to play in the CWS.

Merrill made the all-tournament team last year, and he made another memory in his first at-bat Tuesday, drilling Kolek's 1-2 pitch off the back wall in the right-field bullpen for his sixth homer of the season and seventh of his TCU career. Evan Skoug doubled in a run and Elliott Barzilli had an RBI single to make it 4-0.

"I don't hit many home runs, so I was sprinting," Merrill said. "As soon as I saw it leave, that's when it just hit me how cool that experience is."

Howard, who normally keeps to himself in the dugout on days he's pitching, said he went nuts when he saw the ball leave the yard.

"He always tells me stories about how 'I saw them win the national championship here' and all that stuff," Howard said. "He's been here since he

was a kid and to see him do that was really special."

Since the Big 12 Tournament, Howard is 4-0 with a 1.20 ERA and 38 strikeouts in 30 innings. Howard's 12 strikeouts tied for most in a CWS game since the event moved to TD Ameritrade Park in 2011.

The game matched teams located 175 miles apart and rivals since their days in the old Southwest Conference. TCU won three-game super regionals against the Aggies in 2015 and 16, and beat them 11-10 in 15 innings in their regular-season meeting. The Aggies still lead the all-time series 162-94-4.

Aggies' foil. This is the third straight year TCU has eliminated the Aggies from the NCAA Tournament. It's the eighth time one team has eliminated the same team in three consecutive seasons in any round of the tournament.

It's about the K's. TCU, with 14 strikeouts on Tuesday, has had 10 or more in 28 games this season. The Frogs had 40 strikeouts in 24 innings against the Aggies this season.

Florida moves 1 victory from spot in title series

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Florida entered the College World Series last year with eight players taken in the first 10 rounds of the 2016 Major League Baseball draft and was an overwhelming favorite to win its first national title in baseball. The Gators scored three runs in 18 innings and became the first Southeastern Conference team since 2007 to go two games and out.

This year, with 16 freshmen and sophomores and two 2017 draft picks, the Gators have allowed one run in their first two games and are one victory from playing in the best-of-three finals next week.

A couple guys who went through that 0-2 debacle last year played major roles in the Gators' 5-1 win over Louisville

on Tuesday night. Brady Singer pitched seven strong innings, Deacon Liput hit a three-run homer, and Florida (49-18) has won its first two CWS games for the first time in four appearances since opening 3-0 and reaching the finals in 2011.

"We learned so much last year, going two and out, and now winning the first two games, we've learned a lot," Singer said. "Obviously, slow the heart rate down and then just pitching to your strengths and hitting to your strengths and doing what you've always done."

Louisville (53-11) managed one run and six hits and struck out nine times against Singer (8-5). Florida pitchers finished with 10 strikeouts, making it their fifth straight game with double-digit Ks.

Left-handed-swinging freshman Austin Langworthy sliced a ball just inside the left field foul pole in the third inning and Liput hit a three-run homer to right in the fourth. Both homers came against Louisville starter Kade McClure (8-4), who otherwise was impressive in striking out nine and walking one in six innings.

"I thought the stuff was electric," Cardinals coach Dan McDonnell said. "He just had that one hiccup in the fourth. I know that's going to eat him up."

The 6-foot-7, 230-pound McClure walked Nelson Maldonado with two outs in the fourth and Jonathan India blooped a single before Liput drove a low 1-2 pitch into the bullpen for his second homer in four games and third of the season.

"A four-pitch walk is on me,

and then a jam shot and [Liput] golfed the ball over the fence," McClure said. "That's what happens. Like Coach said, it's baseball. Not too worried about it."

Singer hummed along through six innings, striking out eight, walking none and limiting the Cardinals to three singles. Louisville broke through for a run in the seventh when Brendan McKay doubled and scored on Colin Lyman's two-out single. A base hit and walk followed, but the Cardinals left the bases loaded when Logan Taylor grounded out.

"I guess I was getting a little bit tired," Singer said. "I just had to fight through it."

Now the Gators get two days off and will be content to face Louisville or TCU at the end of the week.

Seager hits 3 HRs as Dodgers drub Mets

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Corey Seager suddenly joined the Los Angeles Dodgers' home run parade Tuesday night, and right-hander Brandon McCarthy thinks he knows what prompted him.

The Dodgers' other young star, rookie Cody Bellinger, has been making history en route to the National League home run lead.

"Whatever Bellinger's doing, I don't understand," McCarthy said. "I think Seager got mad and decided to hit some balls out."

Seager hit a trio of homers in a game for the second time in his career, leading a five-homer attack for the Dodgers in a 12-0 win over the New York Mets for their fifth consecutive victory.

The Dodgers have hit nine home runs the past two nights against the Mets. Bellinger, who hit two on Monday, hit his 22nd of the season Tuesday —

all in just 52 games. He has 10 homers over his past 10 games.

"We're having a great time," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "As much as we're excited for Cody, we're playing very good baseball and ready to go tomorrow."

Seager finished with six RBIs and has 12 home runs. Over his last 10 games, he is hitting .415 with four home runs, 13 RBIs and five doubles.

"Hitting is contagious," Seager said. "Everyone's starting to roll. When one guy starts going — a guy like Bellinger comes in — everyone's excited, everyone wants to get on base, everyone wants to be the guy."

McCarthy (6-3) pitched four-hit ball through six innings for Los Angeles. He walked one, struck out four and lowered his ERA to 2.87. Brock Stewart got his first career save with three hitless innings in his first outing of the season.

"He's just been on the attack,"

Roberts said of McCarthy. "Outside of a few pitches that he yanked on the glove side, he was really good. His whole mix was on tonight, and he was filling up the strike zone."

Yasmani Grandal added a solo home run for the Dodgers, his seventh homer of the season.

Rookie Robert Gsellman (5-5) gave up four homers and eight runs over 4¹/₃ innings. For the second consecutive night, the Mets fell behind 4-0 in the first inning.

"It's tough for me to sit here night after night, look up, and we're just not making pitches," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "If you're going to battle, you've got to make pitches."

More Seager. Seager also hit three home runs on June 3, 2016, against Atlanta. Mookie Betts, Juan Gonzalez and Boog Powell are the only other players in major league history with a pair of three-homer games

before their 24th birthday.

Older brother Kyle Seager hit a game-ending double in the 10th inning for the Seattle Mariners in a 5-4 win over the Detroit Tigers later Tuesday night.

Tough homecoming. Gsellman is a Los Angeles area native who was making his first career start in front of his family and friends. Said Collins: "I understand Robert being a little geeked out tonight, with the fact that it's his first game back in his hometown. First time in the big leagues to pitch in front of his family. But it's about making pitches, it's about execution. That's what the game's all for."

Six All-Stars. Roberts believes he has six players deserving of All-Star recognition — Clayton Kershaw, Kenley Jansen, Justin Turner, Seager, Bellinger and Grandal. Said Roberts, "I'm biased, but it's a no-brainer to me."

Roundup

Arenado's triple helps rally Colorado past Arizona

Associated Press

DENVER — Nolan Arenado came through with another big swing for the Colorado Rockies.

Arenado hit a two-run triple off Zack Greinke in the eighth inning, and the streaking Rockies rallied past the Arizona Diamondbacks 4-3 on Tuesday night in the opening game of their NL West showdown.

Carlos Gonzalez homered and saved a run with a diving catch to help Colorado win its sixth straight. The NL West leaders extended their advantage to two games over third-place Arizona, which had won seven in a row. Second-place Los Angeles remained a half-game back of the Rockies.

Cardinals 8, Phillies 1: Yadier Molina and Tommy Pham both homered in a seven-

run 11th inning to help visiting St. Louis beat Philadelphia.

Angels 8, Yankees 3: Cameron Maybin hit a tiebreaking home run off struggling reliever Tyler Clippard to spark a three-run seventh inning, helping visiting Los Angeles beat New York.

Red Sox 8, Royals 3: Chris Sale shut down host Kansas City while pitching into the ninth inning, and a rag-tag bunch of Boston players filling in for injured starters pounded their way to a victory.

Nationals 12, Marlins 3: Bryce Harper started the scoring with a two-run single that extended his hitting streak to 13 games, and Gio Gonzalez pitched seven innings to help visiting Washington beat Miami.

Rays 6, Reds 5: Corey Dickerson went deep, Alex

Cobb threw seven solid innings and host Tampa Bay beat Cincinnati.

Giants 6, Braves 3: Austin Slater hit a three-run homer after his team botched a potential double-play grounder, sparking San Francisco to a victory over host Atlanta that snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Pirates 7, Brewers 3: Chad Kuhl got his first victory since April, Andrew McCutchen homered for the fifth time in seven games and host Pittsburgh beat Milwaukee.

Cubs 4, Padres 0: Anthony Rizzo hit another leadoff home run to help Mike Montgomery get his first win of the season in host Chicago's victory over San Diego.

Orioles 6, Indians 5: Manny Machado went 4-for-4, homered twice and drove in four

runs to help host Baltimore end Cleveland's six-game winning streak.

Rangers 6, Blue Jays 1: Carlos Gomez homered in a four-run first inning, Nick Martinez allowed two hits while taking a shutout into the seventh and host Texas beat Toronto.

Twins 9, White Sox 7: Miguel Sano and Kennys Vargas each hit a long home run to help host Minnesota bounce back from a demoralizing sweep.

Astros 8, Athletics 4: George Springer hit a leadoff homer to spark a five-run first inning and visiting Houston once again made itself at home in its opponent's ballpark with a victory over host Oakland.

Mariners 5, Tigers 4 (10): Kyle Seager's double off the right-field wall drove home the winning run in the 10th inning to lift host Seattle over Detroit.