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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Experts say 'pivot' to Asia will remain priority for US military

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. military is pushing ahead with a rebalancing of military forces to the Pacific first signaled by former President Barack Obama in 2011, experts say.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, speaking in Singapore earlier this month, said six out of every 10 Navy ships, 55 percent of the Army and two-thirds of fleet Marine forces are assigned to U.S. Pacific Command's area of responsibility.

"Soon, 60 percent of overseas tactical aviation assets will be assigned to this theater," he said.

Pacific Command chief Adm. Harry Harris recently told troops in Japan that the region remains a priority for Washington.

"We're sending our best and newest assets to Japan, whether we're talking C-130s, F-35s at [Marine Corps Air Base] Iwakuni or the ships in Yokosuka [Naval Base]," he said.

Cutting against the military buildup, President Donald Trump followed through in January on a campaign promise to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement with 11 other Pacific nations.

Meanwhile, the State Department, which embarked on a program of greater engagement in the region under Obama, plans to cut 2,300 posi-

tions and to slash its budget by \$10 billion.

The issue came to the fore after Trump's administration rejected the idea of a "pivot" or "rebalancing" as part of its efforts to distance its policies from those of the Obama administration.

Pacific allies should expect the United States to stay engaged, said Jan Van Tol, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington.

"[The Trump administration] is very much going in the same direction and maintaining a strong American presence in the Western Pacific," Van Tol, a former Navy captain, told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

He noted that both of the Navy's new America-class amphibious ships would be assigned to the Pacific and predicted that the Marine Corps would continue to build its presence in northern Australia.

David Johnson, executive director of the Center for Advanced Defense Studies in Washington, said via email he expects the U.S. to continue to invest in the security of its Pacific allies as it has done since World War II.

"The 'pivot,' if such a thing ever existed, is not dead," he said. "The U.S. approach has simply evolved and remains consistent with long-term interest in this vital region."

Admiral to lead Navy probe into collision

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Rear Adm. Brian Fort will lead a Navy investigation into the collision that killed seven USS Fitzgerald sailors off the Japanese coast, a 7th Fleet statement said Friday.

The accident between the destroyer and the Philippine-flagged ACX Crystal cargo ship happened about 2:30 a.m. June 17, about 64 miles southwest of Yokosuka Naval Base near the Izu Peninsula, a Navy statement said.

The sailors' bodies were found in flooded berthing compartments after search-and-rescue crewmembers gained access to spaces that were damaged during the collision, the 7th Fleet said in an earlier statement.

The ACX Crystal was heading east, not far from its Tokyo Bay destination, when it turned around and traveled in a circle, according to public data from the ship's automatic tracking system posted on Marinetraffic.com. It had completed its circle at roughly the same time of the reported collision, according to the data.

The Japan Coast Guard initially announced that the collision happened at 2:20 a.m. after receiving a radio report at 2:25 a.m. from the container ship's crew that the accident had just occurred, the spokesman said. However, after investigating, the coast guard now believes the collision happened at 1:30 a.m.

Coast guard official Tetsuya Tanaka told The Associated Press the agency is trying to resolve what happened during that 50-minute span.

Mayor supports Navy squadrons' relocation

BY HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Citing the threat from North Korea, a Japanese mayor says he supports a bilateral agreement that will relocate the bulk of a Navy carrier air wing to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, an Iwakuni City official said Friday.

Iwakuni Mayor Yoshihiko Fukuda told the city assembly he approves of the arrival of several squadrons from Carrier Air Wing 5, now based at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, closer to

Tokyo.

"Everyone recognizes that the unity of the Japan-U.S. alliance is important more than ever when thinking about the security environment Japan is in, especially the circumstances involving ballistic-missile launches by North Korea," Fukuda said.

Though the relocation was not something the city was eager to take on, the mayor said many Japanese citizens understand that "cooperation between U.S. forces and [Japan] Self-Defense Forces is necessary

under the Japan-U.S. security arrangement."

All fixed-wing aircraft squadrons are scheduled to move to Iwakuni, with two helicopter squadrons and a logistics squadron remaining at Atsugi.

The city official said Fukuda had promised to announce his decision before the move, which will happen later this year.

The governor of Yamaguchi prefecture and leaders from two towns surrounding the base are expected to announce their acceptance of the plan next week, Mainichi Shimbun reported.

Marine uses origami to carry message of peace and respect

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Sadako Sasaki began folding paper cranes as she lay dying of leukemia in a Hiroshima hospital 10 years after the atomic bombing in 1945. Legend had it that if she could fold 1,000 of the elegant little birds, she would be rewarded with a get-well wish.

The 12-year-old died eight months later before reaching her goal, but she captivated a nation and became an everlasting symbol of peace and denuclearization around the world.

Sixty-two years after her death, Sasaki's message lives on through a U.S. Marine.

Staff Sgt. Ismael Esconde has folded thousands of cranes and donated them to area hospitals, nursing homes and Japanese civic organizations where he has been stationed over the past year, most recently on Okinawa, to show appreciation to the

Japanese allies of the United States.

Esconde, from Inglewood, Calif., got a book on origami while in high school, but he never opened it. After graduating in 2003, he joined the Marine Corps. A year later, he got around to the book on the ancient art of folding paper into shapes and animals as a way to ride out rolling blackouts at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Soon, Esconde had 12 shapes in his repertoire, including variations of a crane.

He had always been moved by Sasaki's story, but as he found himself lost on Kadena Air Base one day during a 2016 deployment, he came face to face with a sign outside the base that read, "No base, no rape, no tears."

So Esconde began to fold on June 26, 2016, he said. A month later, he had 1,000 paper cranes. In memory of Sasaki, he decided to gift them to the pediatric

ward at Hokubu Hospital in Nago.

Over the next few weeks, Esconde was able to recruit four other Marines and an Okinawan woman to help with a second batch.

They folded 1,000 cranes and donated them to Naha City Hospital on Nov. 10. The hospital staff used some to decorate their Christmas tree, said Hiroko Janado, chief nurse at the Naha City Hospital's pediatric ward.

The group then grew to 10 other Marines from six units on Okinawa. They donated 1,000 cranes to Pay Nursing Home Fuga in Kin on Nov. 25. Each resident received a pair. They are all war survivors and are very sensitive about the world and peace, said Takateru Iju, manager of the day-care facility "Challenge," which shares the building with the nursing home.

GAO clears way for Sig Sauer to make Army sidearms

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The dismissal earlier this month of a bid protest by firearms maker Glock Inc. over a \$480 million handgun contract clears the way for the Army to begin using a new sidearm for the first time in over 20 years.

On Friday, the Government Accountability Office, which reviews protests to federal contract awards, announced it had dismissed Glock's claims that, among other things, the Army improperly evaluated the firearms maker's proposal and that the solicitation intended that multiple contracts be awarded.

In January, the Army announced New Hampshire-based Sig Sauer would supply its standard sidearm for the next decade, replacing the Beretta USA-made M9 9-millimeter pistol, which has been in service since 1995.

"Overall, despite the evaluation errors uncovered in the course of this protest, we have no basis to conclude that Glock would have a substantial chance at an award," the GAO's decision concluded. "Even when the errors are considered together, we find no prejudice to Glock."

The award followed an industrywide competition, with nine manufacturers submitting bids.

The proposals by Glock and Sig Sauer were considered the two finalists, the GAO decision said.

Sig Sauer's bid of \$169 million was roughly \$100 million less than Glock's, but what put it ahead, as far as the Army was concerned, was the "outstanding" rating Sig Sauer received for its manufacturing plan and ammunition licensing, the GAO said.

The Army sidearm to be supplied by Sig Sauer is based on the firm's P320 pistol, using a modular system with interchangeable grips and caliber sizes. The contract also includes accessories and ammunition.

Images show China's sub-hunting aircraft now in South China Sea

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Satellite images from May show China's newest submarine-hunting aircraft have been deployed to Hainan province on the South China Sea.

Commercial satellite photos taken on May 10 and 20 by DigitalGlobe showed four Shaanxi Y-8Q planes, according to Defense News, which obtained the images. The planes were photographed while on the ground at Lingshui Air Base, which is in the southeastern part of the island province.

Some of the features of the Y-8Q are comparable to those of the U.S. military's P-3C Orion and P-8 Poseidon. It is capable of carrying torpedoes and is equipped with infrared cameras to detect heat waves and wakes of small vessels, drones and the periscopes of submarines.

It is most readily identifiable by the 8-yardlong "stinger," called a magnetic anomaly detector, jutting out of its tail. That boom detects the magnetic signature of the metal hulls of submerged

submarines as it passes over them.

China only recently has begun beefing up its anti-submarine capabilities.

Defense-analysis firm Stratfor reported in 2015 that it would take another decade for China to produce the needed number of anti-submarine aircraft and related surface vessels "to seriously contend with the threat of U.S. submarine operations in the East and South China seas."

This is the first time that Y-8Qs have been sighted on Hainan, where the older Y-8J and Y-8X models routinely have deployed, Defense News reported.

The satellite photos also revealed three drones, the long-range Harbin BZK-005, Defense News reported.

That drone model has been sighted at a Chinese air base at Woody Island, which is part of the Paracel chain to the south of Hainan. China, Vietnam and Taiwan dispute sovereignty over parts of the Paracels.

Pakistan building fence on border with Afghanistan

The Washington Post

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The 1,800-mile border between Pakistan and India has long been treated as a hostile red line between neighboring, nuclear-armed rivals. Its sole official crossing is a heavily guarded military post. Long stretches are illuminated by powerful floodlights, and the 340-mile, militarized portion that divides the contested Himalayan Kashmir region, known as the Line of Control, has been the site of alpine combat, long-distance shelling and periodic shootings of both Indian and Pakistani border troops.

In contrast, Pakistan's 1,500-mile border with Afghanistan has always been more porous and politically complicated. Thousands of cargo trucks traverse its two major crossings every week. In the north, where ethnic Pashtun communities straddle both sides of the line drawn by British rulers in 1896, Afghans insist the "real" border lies deeper into Pakistan. They have long accused Pakistani authorities of letting insurgents slip across, stage attacks and retreat to safe havens.

Now, with thousands of steel posts and scrolls of deadly razor wire, Pakistan is trying to remove all such ambiguity.

Last week, military officials announced that they are proceeding with a long-stalled plan to build a fence and to heighten security measures along the entire border, beginning with the mountainous, semiautonomous tribal regions of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in the north and gradually extending the work south through the lawless desert badlands of Baluchistan province.

This ambitious project, while unlikely to stop all human traffic, is aimed at sending a tangible signal to Afghanistan, and perhaps more importantly to officials in Washington, that Pakistan is a victim rather than a perpetrator of cross-border terrorism. Building a wall is the only way to control the border, military officials here assert.

On Friday, as news spread that terrorists had killed 85 people in scattered attacks across Pakistan that included suicide bombings at both ends of the border, Pakistan's military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor, sent out a terse tweet: "Security/surv[eillance] of Pak-Afg border enhanced. Stringent actions agst illegal Bdr crossers. Recent terrorist incidents linked to sanctuaries across."

Afghan officials have objected strongly to the new measures, saying they will disrupt normal cross-border traffic and unfairly punish families and communities on both sides. They also say the actions are unlikely to hinder the cross-border movement of insurgent groups sponsored by Pakistan's security agencies.

But Pakistan, which routinely denies it shelters anti-Afghan militants, has also been trying to turn the tables by ramping up accusations against Afghanistan for harboring anti-Pakistan militants.

Taliban: War will end when NATO leaves Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The leader of the Afghan Taliban said on Friday that a planned U.S. troop surge will not end the protracted war in the country and vowed to fight on until there is a full withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan.

The remarks by Maulvi Haibatullah Akhunzadah came in a message ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan — something the Taliban do every year to rally followers.

It also followed a horrific suicide car bombing claimed by the Taliban in Afghanistan's Helmand province that targeted Afghan troops and government workers waiting to collect their pay ahead of the holiday.

By Friday, the death toll from that attack rose to 34 people, most of them civilians, provincial government spokesman Omar Zwak told The Associated Press.

In the Taliban message this year, the militant leader seemed to harden his stance, saying the Afghan government is too corrupt to stay on and warning of another civil war in Kabul — along the lines of the 1992 fighting when mujahedeen groups threw out the Communist government in Afghanistan and turned

their guns on each other. That conflict killed more than 50,000 civilians and gave rise to the Taliban.

The Taliban says it is waging war against the government and not targeting civilians. When claiming the Helmand attack, they insisted no civilians died.

Zwak, however said, most of the dead in the attack in the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, were civilians, although there were soldiers inside the bank at the time of the explosion. Witnesses said children were among the dozens wounded.

Earlier, the Defense Ministry had urged soldiers to collect their salaries from banks inside army bases.

Akhunzadah, the Taliban leader, also boasted of allegedly growing international support, saying "mainstream entities of the world admit (the Taliban) effectiveness, legitimacy and success," an apparent reference to reports of overtures by Russia and China to the Taliban amid concerns of an emerging Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan.

While the ISIS affiliate's stronghold is in Nangarhar province, the branch has managed also to stage high-profile attacks in Kabul and other cities. The presence of battle-hardened Uzbek militants in the ranks also further worries Moscow.

Philippines declares 8-hour cease-fire in besieged city

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine military on Sunday began observing an eight-hour halt in its air and ground offensive against Islamic militants in southern Marawi city to allow residents, most of them displaced by the monthlong fighting, to celebrate the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the "humanitarian pause" in military assaults took effect at 6 a.m. Sunday in predominantly Muslim Marawi but will be lifted immediately if the militants open fire or threaten troops and civilians.

"If the enemy starts firing ... anyone

can exercise their right to self-defense," Padilla said in a statement.

It's the first planned respite in the massive offensive after a month of daily street battles and military airstrikes that have left at least 280 militants, 69 soldiers and police and 26 civilians dead. The intense fighting has turned large swaths of the mosque-dotted city, a bastion of Islamic faith in the south of the largely Roman Catholic nation, into a smoldering war zone.

About 500 gunmen aligned with Islamic State, including several foreigners, stormed the lakeside city of 200,000 people, occupied buildings, burned schools and hoisted ISIS-style black flags on May 23.

Turkey won't remove troops from Qatar

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Turkey's president on Sunday rejected a demand by major Arab states to remove Turkish troops from Qatar, saying their sweeping list of ultimatums has threatened the small Gulf country's sovereignty.

Speaking after Eid al-Fitr prayers in Istanbul, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called the demand "disrespectful" and said Turkey would not seek permission from others when making its defense cooperation agreements.

"Demanding that Turkey pull its soldiers is unfortunately also disrespectful toward Turkey," he said.

He said Turkey would continue to support Qatar against the many sanctions it has faced since several Arab countries moved earlier this month to isolate the country for its alleged support of terrorism. Turkey shipped supplies and food via cargo planes to Qatar after its neighbors closed down air, land and sea routes.

In a sign of support, the Turkish parliament swiftly ratified a 2014 military agreement with Qatar earlier this month, allowing the deployment of troops to its base there. The military said a contingent of 23 soldiers reached Doha on Thursday.

Erdogan said he made a similar offer to Saudi Arabia to set up a base there in the past

but did not hear back from the king.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement Sunday reiterated that the deployment of Turkish troops in Qatar contributed to regional security and was not aimed at a specific country.

"Just like the presence of other foreign military bases or units in other countries of the region, our military presence in Qatar is principally based on a decision taken by the two countries relying on their sovereign rights," ministry spokesman Huseyin Muftuoglu said.

Doha received a 13-point list from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain that included demands to shut down the media

network Al-Jazeera and cut ties with Islamist groups including the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar said it was reviewing the ultimatum but added it would not negotiate under siege.

Turkey's president said his country "admires and embraces" Qatar's attitude, while slamming the demands by arguing they contradict international law.

"Here we see an attack against a state's sovereignty rights," Erdogan said.

Erdogan called the demand that Qatar shut down Al-Jazeera an attempt to take away the network's press freedom and urged rights groups to speak out against that.

Oil tanker explodes, killing scores

Associated Press

BAHAWALPUR, Pakistan — An overturned oil tanker burst into flames in Pakistan on Sunday, killing 153 people who had rushed to the scene of the highway accident to gather leaking fuel, a hospital official said as the death toll continued to rise.

Dr. Javed Iqbal, of Bahawalpur's Victoria Hospital in south Punjab, said the latest deaths occurred at a hospital in Multan, where some of the 50 critically injured, many of whom suffered extensive burns, had been taken.

The death toll could rise further as dozens are still in critical condition, said Dr. Mohammad Baqar, a senior rescue official in the area. There were dozens of other injuries of varying degree, he said.

Local news channels showed black smoke billowing skyward and scores of burned bodies, as well as rescue officials speeding the injured to hospital and army helicopters ferrying the wounded.

Saznoor Ahmad, 30, whose two cousins were killed in the fire, said the crowd of people screamed as the flames engulfed them.

"The fire moved so fast," he said. When the flames subsided, the field was strewn with bodies, and nearby were the charred shells of motorcycles and cars that the villagers had used to race to the scene.

As the wounded cried out for help, residents wandered through the area looking for loved ones.

Zulkha Bibi was searching for her two sons. "Someone should tell me about my

beloved sons. Where are they? Are they alive or are they no longer in this world? Please tell me," she pleaded.

The disaster came on the eve of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. While Saudi Arabia and most other Muslim countries celebrated the holiday Sunday, Pakistanis will mark it on Monday.

The tanker was driving from the southern port city of Karachi to Lahore, the Punjab provincial capital, when the driver lost control and crashed on the national highway outside Bahawalpur.

A loudspeaker atop a local mosque alerted villagers to the leaking fuel, and scores raced to the site with jerry cans, said Rana Mohammad Salim, deputy commissioner of Bahawalpur.

Highway police moved quickly to redirect traffic but couldn't stop the scores of villagers who raced to collect the fuel, spokesman Imran Shah told a local TV channel.

When the fire erupted, the same mosque loudspeaker called on the remaining villagers to help put it out.

Mohammed Salim ran toward the smoke carrying buckets of water and sand but said the heat was too intense to reach those in need. "I could hear people screaming but I couldn't get to them," he said.

Abdul Malik, a local police officer who also was among the first to arrive, described a "horrible scene."

"I have never seen anything like it in my life. Victims trapped in the fireball. They were screaming for help," he said.

10 bodies found, many missing in China landslide

Associated Press

MAO COUNTY, China — Rescuers recovered 10 bodies and were still searching for 93 other people on Sunday, a day after a massive landslide buried a picturesque mountain village in southwestern China.

More than 2,500 rescuers with detection devices and dogs were looking for signs of life amid the rubble of huge boulders that rained down on Xinmo village in Sichuan province early Saturday.

As of Sunday afternoon, only three people — a couple and their month-old baby — had been rescued from the disaster site.

Sitting on the eastern margin of the Tibetan Plateau in Aba prefecture's Mao County, Xinmo has in recent years become a tourism destination for its picturesque scenery of homes in lush meadows tucked between steep and rugged mountains. After the landslide, the village was reduced to a vast area of rubble.

While heavy machines removed debris and men scoured the rubble for survivors on Sunday, relatives from nearby villages sobbed as they awaited news of their loved ones.

"It was as if strong winds were blowing by, or a big truck rumbled by," Tang Hua, 38, who lives in a nearby village, told The Associated Press. "As we ran for safety, we looked this way and saw the village flattened," she said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fisherman catches camera, finds owner

FL ST. AUGUSTINE — A man who was fishing in the Tennessee River reeled in a waterlogged camera and then used social media to track down its owner in Florida.

The St. Augustine Record reported Nate Wilson's line snagged as he was fishing June 10. Then he reeled in the algae-covered camera that Alex Mansur, 37, accidentally dropped during a vacation five years ago.

Wilson found the memory card and uploaded the images to Facebook in hopes of finding the camera's owner.

It didn't take long. About eight hours later, one of Mansur's cousins in Tennessee called him.

Felony charges filed in beehive theft case

CA FRESNO — Authorities in Central California have filed felony charges in a criminal case that's created a buzz in the beekeeping world.

Prosecutors in Fresno County said Thursday that two men they've charged could spend more than 10 years in prison each if convicted.

The case stems from a tip in April that led investigators to Pavel Tveretinov and Vitaliy Yeroshenko at work among stacks of mismatched beehives reported stolen from orchards in several counties. Prosecutors alleged they had 1,200 stolen beehives worth more than \$200,000.

TV truck stolen as crew worked on crime story

NM ALBUQUERQUE — While a television news crew was gathering

footage for a story about crime in the Albuquerque downtown area, a thief drove off in the station's SUV.

KOB-TV News Director Michelle Donaldson said the vehicle was recovered within a half-hour without police assistance by following the GPS tracking device that was on board.

She said the thief had fled the scene and the SUV was locked, with the keys missing.

Huge stuffed cow saves boy, 2, in fall

MA CHELSEA — Police in Massachusetts are crediting a huge stuffed cow with saving a 2-year-old boy who fell out second-story window and onto concrete below Wednesday in Chelsea.

Police said the boy was playing in a bedroom with his 12-year-old sister and was bouncing on the bed when he bounced right out of the window. He fell 16 feet onto the concrete. He was holding onto the cow, which broke his fall.

The boy has some cuts and was taken to a hospital for observation but has been released.

Woman gets probation over theft of pension

NY BUFFALO — A western New York woman will not go to jail for collecting her dead mother's pension payments for more than 30 years.

State officials said Pearlann MacVittie was sentenced Thursday to five years of probation and 300 hours of community service.

MacVittie, of the Buffalo suburb of West Seneca, pleaded guilty in April to grand larceny. She acknowledges stealing nearly \$300,000 in benefits from the City of Buffalo Firemen's Pension Fund.

Authorities said MacVittie knew she wasn't entitled to the benefits after her mother, a firefighter's widow, died in 1983. They said she signed her mother's name on yearly forms to keep the checks coming.

7 kids taken from dirty home; 2 women held

FL DAYTONA BEACH — Seven children were taken from a Florida apartment that was so filthy it was difficult for responding police officers to breathe.

Their mothers, who are sisters, face one count each of felony child abuse. Police arrested Melida Jenkins, 27, and Shameka Jenkins, 31, on Wednesday.

Police officers said the mixture of mold, urine and feces was strong. A police report said children were lying on a "severely stained" mattress with no sheets. The younger children — ranging in age from 1 to 8 — were wearing dirty diapers and soiled diapers littered the floor.

The Florida Department of Children and Families took custody of the children.

Police: Woman shot gun near inattentive spouse

PA ALLENTOWN — A Pennsylvania woman was jailed because police say she fired a gunshot in the direction of her inattentive husband.

Mercedes Rosario, 43, remained in the Lehigh County jail on Friday and was unable to post bail on a charge of reckless endangerment.

Allentown police said she became upset when her estranged husband, who still lives with her, wouldn't listen to her. Police said she grabbed his holstered, 9 mm pistol from a shelf, then fired a shot into the wall in his direction.

Emergency declared in theft by town officials

OH MOUNT STERLING — The state auditor has declared a fiscal emergency in a central Ohio village where he said thefts by former officials have taken a "heavy financial blow."

The Columbus Dispatch reported Mount Sterling's budget deficit was \$270,000 deficit at the end of April. Auditor Dave Yost said financial problems were "inflicted by corrupt former officials and employees."

The current mayor of the Madison County village 25 miles southwest of Columbus said daily operations haven't been affected.

The former village administrator received 10 years in prison in March for stealing around \$725,000 between 2012 and 2016. The former mayor and a former administrative assistant were indicted in April on theft in office charges.

Man hurt after joyride on back of delivery van

NE OMAHA — Police said an Omaha man was injured after hopping onto a van for a joyride, then jumping off onto a busy street.

The Omaha World-Herald reported the 30-year-old man jumped onto the back of the delivery van Wednesday afternoon while it was stopped for a red light in northeast Omaha.

He said he stayed on the back of the van for about three blocks before he decided it was going too fast and jumped off. Officers said he suffered a gash on the back of his head, a cut to his left elbow and extensive road rash on his back.

Themantoldpolicehehadbeen smoking methamphetamine.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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Golovkin, Alvarez tout 'true boxing'

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Think about this as the real fight.

Forget that "event" three weeks earlier that is making such a splash. The middleweight bout in Las Vegas on Sept. 16 between Gennady Golovkin and Canelo Alvarez is all about boxing.

Showdown, not showtime.

Sure, Floyd Mayweather is coming out of retirement to face mixed martial arts champion Conor McGregor on Aug. 26 in a matchup that has generated tremendous buzz. But for true fans of the "sweet science," Golovkin-Alvarez is the most anticipated fight since Mayweather outpointed Manny Pacquiao two years ago.

One that figures to be a lot more of a fight than Mayweather-Pacquiao, too.

"Conor is not a boxer, he's a UFC fighter," Golovkin said Tuesday. "That is a big commercial show, it's show business. It's not boxing and people understand if they want a true boxing show, a classic, it is Sept. 16."

That would be when the undefeated Triple G (37-0, 33 knockouts) puts his middleweight belts on the line against Alvarez (49-1-1, 34 KOs, the loss to Mayweather in 2013).

"The fact it's three weeks before the major boxing holiday of Sept. 16 and a

classic fight between two great champions doesn't affect it a bit," adds promoter Oscar De La Hoya. "If people want to see a real fight, then tune in on Sept. 16."

Golovkin-Alvarez has been a long time in the making. There were claims the fighters (and their promoters) were ducking each other, or that top money wasn't there. But after Golovkin outpointed Danny Jacobs — his first fight going 12 rounds — and Alvarez destroyed Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. earlier this year, the bout was made.

At 35, Triple G is nearly nine years older than Alvarez. He doesn't see that as significant.

"I feel like 25," Golovkin told The Associated Press. "I believe on Sept. 16, I will have my peak. It will be amazing for boxing."

Alvarez, who wasn't quite ready for a tactical master like Mayweather in their 2013 fight, believes he's matured now. Of course, Mayweather never has punched like Triple G does.

"I was very young against Mayweather. I didn't have the experience that I possess now, the wisdom I can display when I'm in the ring, the total fighter I've become," he said. "It's all very different. I was 22, 23 in that fight. I was a bit immature with my boxing to face someone like Mayweather, but we fought and that was the outcome."

"But I learned a lot of stuff. Things about being in the ring and outside the ring. It all motivated me more. I always crave to be the best and I'm the best right now."

That will be proven — or disproven — three months from now. What is unquestioned is that Alvarez has a strong following in Las Vegas, where Golovkin has never fought. He also looked far better in his most recent win than did Golovkin, though the difference in quality of opponent was vast.

Then again, Triple G might have benefited from going the distance with Jacobs, another hard puncher.

"I needed that fight with Danny. He brought me to the 12th round," Golovkin said, a smile creasing his face. "I needed the experience of the decision. I needed the decision part to show it is the second step (besides winning by knockout)."

Alvarez doesn't expect any decisions in this fight. As De La Hoya notes, more than 75 percent of their fights have ended in KOs. Neither is interested in having the judges decide a winner.

"We'll have a knockout in all likelihood due to the heavy punch of both, the style of both," Alvarez said. "And obviously it is that they will raise my arm at the end of the fight."

Or Triple G's.

Sonnen tops Silva in unanimous decision

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chael Sonnen took out one MMA legend, called out another, then unloaded his misery about fighting at Madison Square Garden.

"I hate New York," he belted in the cage.

Sonnen won on the scorecards, if not the adulation from MSG fight fans, and took a unanimous decision over Wanderlei Silva in a much-delayed grudge match in a light heavyweight bout Saturday night.

It was a dreadful night for Silva and fellow MMA great Fedor Emelianenko in Bellator's MSG debut. Matt Mitrione knocked out Emelianenko in just 74 seconds in a heavyweight bout.

But the result didn't stop Sonnen from challenging Emelianenko to another bout some-

where down the line. Bellator must love the gimmick of putting a pair of 40-somethings in the main event of a future card.

"I respect Fedor and I think he and I's paths are going to cross sooner rather than later," Sonnen said.

Emelianenko, following his first fight in the United States since 2011, said he would not retire.

Sonnen and Silva had feuded — and even brawled in street clothes during a taping of an MMA reality show — for years and had an anticipated bout for a UFC pay-per-view scrapped in 2014. Sonnen (29-15-1) pressured Silva and stayed on top of the MMA great for most of the three rounds. Sonnen, who can self-promote with his mouth as well as anyone in the game, was dropped once but never in any

serious trouble.

Silva, also 40, made his name fighting for Pride in Japan, and made his Bellator debut following a nearly four-year layoff. Sonnen was choked out by Tito Ortiz in his Bellator debut in January. Ortiz was on hand at the Garden and egged on fans who cursed him out during the main event.

Mitrione (12-5) and Emelianenko both connected on right hands and hit the canvas for a double knockdown in the co-main event. But Mitrione, who briefly played in the NFL, pounced and smashed Emelianenko (36-5) with uppercuts to finish off the Russian great.

"He's not arguably the great heavyweight of all time, he is the greatest heavyweight of all time," Mitrione said.

Emelianenko, maybe the greatest fighter to never sign

with UFC, had won his last five fights, but the days when he ruled in Japan as one of MMA's most dynamic fighters and top heavyweights are well behind him. Emelianenko, in his Bellator debut, was bloodied and looked well past his prime.

Bellator loaded the card in front of 12,133 fans with some of the biggest names in MMA to make a splash in New York. In a sign Bellator craves star power over super bouts, neither of the two main events were for a championship.

But there were title fights on the card, highlighted by Brent Primus defeating Michael Chandler in a gruesome fight to win the 155-pounds title. Chandler broke his left ankle and the fight was stopped in the first round.

"Cut it off! Cut this thing off! I'll keep going!" he barked.

LSU advances past top seed Oregon St.

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Nothing LSU encounters in the College World Series championship series will be any more daunting than the task the Tigers had to complete to get there.

The Tigers had to beat an Oregon State team that owned the most formidable record of any team in four decades, and they had to do it twice.

They did it in dominating fashion.

Caleb Gilbert held the No. 1 national seed Beavers to two hits in 7¹/₃ innings, Michael Papierski homered from both sides of the plate and LSU won 6-1 on Saturday a day after beating them 3-1.

"To lose four games the entire season, and we beat them two days in a row, it's hard to predict those things to happen, but that's why you have to play the games," Tigers coach Paul Mainieri said. "Our kids embraced the challenge."

The Tigers (52-18) won their third straight elimination game

and will play Florida in the best-of-three finals beginning Monday.

The Beavers (56-6) had a pair of 23-game winning streaks and finished the season with a .903 winning percentage — the best since Texas' mark of .908 in 1982.

"It's a tough day when you've had such a great year," Beavers coach Pat Casey said. "Now is not the time to really think about that or talk about it, but I know there will be a time when they get to sit back and reflect and realize what they accomplished."

Gilbert allowed an infield single and walk before Michael Gretler homered in the seventh. He struck out a career-high seven in his longest outing in his two seasons at LSU. Zack Hess allowed one hit the rest of the way.

"It's a surreal feeling to be able to pitch your team, when the back's against the wall in an elimination game, into the College World Series final," Gilbert said. "I just had all the

faith in the world in my teammates and my coaching staff and just really went out there and pitched my game, tried to attack early with a heater and get ahead and trust my defense behind me."

Papierski became the first player to homer twice in a CWS game since TCU's Bryan Holaday in 2010. He went deep from the left side off Bryce Fehmel in the second and the right side off Brandon Eisert in the fourth.

"I put some good swings on fastballs today," Papierski said, "and after that, the wind helped a little bit. But that wasn't the highlight of the game. It was Caleb Gilbert."

The Beavers managed only a season-low two hits on Friday and the three against Gilbert and Hess on Saturday. They went the first 17 innings Friday and Saturday without having a leadoff batter reach base.

"A lot of the game we were taking a lot of defensive swings," Gretler said. "We didn't put any pressure on them."

Before Saturday, Oregon State hadn't lost consecutive games since a five-game losing streak from May 6-13, 2016.

Fourth-seeded LSU bounced back from a 13-1 loss to Oregon State on Monday and reached the championship round for the first time since winning the national title in 2009.

The Beavers had made up a four-run deficit in a 6-5 win over Cal State Fullerton last Saturday, but Gilbert and Hess made that a nearly impossible task.

Oregon State's postseason was tainted by the revelation that Pac-12 pitcher of the year Luke Heimlich had pleaded guilty to molesting a 6-year-old female relative when he was a teenager. Heimlich didn't pitch in super regionals, and he didn't accompany the team to Omaha.

Fehmel made his third postseason start since the rotation was adjusted to account for the loss of Heimlich.

Faedo is fabulous again for Florida

BY ERIC OLSON

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Alex Faedo dominated TCU for a second straight time, and now he and his Florida Gators teammates will face a familiar opponent in the College World Series finals.

The Detroit Tigers' first-round draft pick pitched three-hit ball for 7¹/₃ shutout innings to lead the Gators to a 3-0 win Saturday night, setting up an all-Southeastern Conference best-of-three finals against LSU beginning Monday.

No. 3 national seed Florida (50-19) is in the finals for the first time since 2011 and looking for its first championship in baseball. Fourth-seeded LSU, which shared the SEC regular-season title with the Gators, advanced with a 6-1 win over No. 1 Oregon State on Saturday.

TCU beat the Gators 9-2 on Friday to force the winner-take-all bracket final and the teams' third meeting in a week.

"It helps that we've had to bounce back all year," Christian Hicks said. "The game before has no bearing on today's game. You just flush that and come back out and try to do your best today."

Faedo (9-2) struck out 11, just as he did last Sunday in a 3-0 win over the Horned Frogs. Michael Byrne finished for his 18th save.

"I thought our at-bats were significantly better today than they were the last time we faced him," TCU coach Jim Schlossnagle said. "But the chances that we did get, he made pitches. We hit some balls hard. The balls we did hit hard seemed to be at somebody. But that doesn't take away from how outstanding he was."

Faedo was the loser in the Gators' last game in Omaha in 2016, giving up a two-run homer in a 3-2 loss to Texas Tech in an elimination game.

"Just throughout the day, I just tried to think back to my start last year when I was kind of in the same situation," he said. "It all came down to one pitch. And that's what I tried to bring to the game this year — I just can't make that pitch again that lost the game last year. We've been in this situation before, and I tried to bear down with every pitch I threw."

The Gators had struggled on offense since they arrived in Omaha, but with Faedo holding down the Frogs they were able to muster enough against Jared Janczak (9-2).

Austin Langworthy doubled and scored on a groundout in the second inning, Hicks doubled in a run in the fifth, and

he scored in the seventh when he tripled and came home on Deacon Liput's grounder that deflected off first base.

Faedo reached for his cramping right calf after delivering a pitch to Josh Watson in the seventh, and he grabbed the calf again when he struck Watson out to end the inning. He came out for the eighth and got a groundout, but he left after Austen Wade singled.

Zach Humphreys greeted Byrne with a base hit, but the star closer struck out Evan Skoug and got Cam Warner to fly out to end the threat.

"All I was trying to do was get a groundball (against Skoug), and it just happened to be a strikeout, so that was big," Byrne said. "I had to get Cam out. He got me last game on a double in the gap. I threw good pitches to him and got out of it."

A's rookie trio makes home run history

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Oakland Athletics got a glimpse of their future on a day when the Chicago White Sox paid tribute to their past.

Matt Olson hit his first two major league home runs, Jacob Brugman and Franklin Barreto also launched their first career shots and the A's routed the White Sox 10-2 on Saturday.

Barreto homered in his big league debut. He joined Olson and Brugman in becoming the second trio of teammates to hit their first homers in the same game, the Elias Sports Bureau said. It also happened in 1914 with the Kansas City Packers of the Federal League — the rival circuit lasted a couple of seasons, and included many big leaguers.

"They said something about it was the first time it has hap-

pened in a while. It's awesome to be able to share that moment with guys that I already built relationships with," said Olson, who played with Brugman and Barreto in the minors.

Former White Sox ace Mark Buehrle had his No. 56 jersey retired in a pregame ceremony. After the 30-minute tribute ended, the A's roughed up James Shields (1-1).

Daniel Gossett (1-2) took advantage of an early 6-0 lead for his first win in the big league. He gave up two unearned runs in six innings.

"It was a special experience for everyone. To get out of there with my first win was just the icing on the cake. It was an awesome experience to be a part of and I'm glad I was here," Gossett said.

White Sox manager Rick Renteria was ejected for the second straight game. He

threw his hat to the ground and was tossed, right after third baseman Todd Frazier was ejected for showing his displeasure over a replay review that wasn't reversed.

After a leadoff walk in the first, Olson homered to right. He added a two-run homer in the seventh. He was recalled from Triple-A Nashville on Thursday and is in fourth stint with the club.

Brugman hit a solo drive in the second. Barreto had a two-run homer in the third.

Barreto, a top prospect in the Oakland organization, was called up after shortstop Chad Pinder injured his hamstring Friday night and was placed on the 10-day disabled list.

Barreto was a late addition to the lineup at second base when Jed Lowrie couldn't play after a mild knee injury he sustained Friday night. The newcomer

went 2 for 5 and scored twice.

"Of anybody, you're not surprised. We've seen him hit homers in his first spring training at-bats, so not a total shock. But I think everybody kind of looked around and said, 'Wow, I can't remember that ever happening before,'" A's manager Bob Melvin.

Shields gave up six runs on seven hits in three-plus innings. He allowed three home runs in his second start since a two-month DL stint.

Buehrle's number was stenciled onto the dirt behind second base. He went 161-119 with a 3.83 ERA in 390 appearances for Chicago from 2000-11.

The lefty pitched two no-hitters for the White Sox, including a perfect game, and helped them win the 2005 World Series.

Orioles avoid dubious pitching record

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The Baltimore Orioles' long run of mound misery is over.

Dylan Bundy helped Baltimore avoid a dubious pitching record, throwing seven solid innings as the Orioles beat the Tampa Bay Rays 8-3 Saturday.

The Orioles had given up at least five runs in 20 straight games, matching the major league mark set by the 1924 Philadelphia Phillies. Baltimore went 6-14 over the stretch.

"It's one thing to identify a problem, it's another thing to solve it," Orioles manager Buck Showalter said. "We're in the business of trying to solve issues. You can start by looking at them and realizing that you have them, but I don't think anybody's got to tell us we've had problems with our starting pitching."

Bundy (8-6) allowed three runs and five hits in seven innings. Relievers Donnie Hart and Mychal Givens combined to keep the Rays scoreless over the final two innings.

"The story of the game was, probably, Dylan Bundy," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "He did a nice job kind of quieting our hot bats."

Bundy struck out eight and walked four.

"He did what he does best, he was attacking the hitter with the fastball and changeup and slider," Orioles catcher Welington Castillo said. "It was great to see him do that."

Nationals 18, Reds 3: Michael Taylor homered twice among his four hits, Trea Turner went 5-for-5 and host Washington romped.

Rangers 8, Yankees 1: Austin Bibens-Dirkx pitched seven dazzling innings in his first shot at host New York after 12 seasons in the minors, and Carlos Gomez homered for Texas.

Royals 3, Blue Jays 2: Jason Vargas became the first major league pitcher to reach 11 wins this season, pitching seven efficient innings to lead surging host Kansas City over Toronto.

Twins 4, Indians 2: Brian Dozier hit a leadoff homer against closer Cody Allen to break an eighth-inning tie and Minnesota defeated host Cleveland.

Braves 3, Brewers 1: Brandon Phillips homered for the third straight game, R.A. Dickey threw seven strong innings and host Atlanta beat Milwaukee.

Cubs 5, Marlins 3: Jon Lester gave up a three-run homer to J.T. Realmuto in the first inning and then settled down to help Chicago beat host Miami.

Mets 5, Giants 2: Jacob deGrom pitched

eight strong innings and Wilmer Flores homered as New York defeated host San Francisco.

Pirates 7, Cardinals 3: Jordy Mercer and Josh Harrison homered and starter Gerrit Cole pitched six innings, lifting Pittsburgh over host St. Louis.

Angels 6, Red Sox 3: JC Ramirez rebounded from his shortest career start with six solid innings, Cameron Maybin doubled home a run and scored another and visiting Los Angeles held off Boston.

Astros 5, Mariners 2: Josh Reddick homered, Brian McCann added a three-run double and Lance McCullers pitched into the sixth inning in his return from the disabled list to lift Houston over host Seattle.

Diamondbacks 9, Phillies 2: Jake Lamb homered, Chris Herrmann drove in three runs and Daniel Descalso had three hits, leading host Arizona.

Dodgers 4, Rockies 0: Clayton Kershaw threw six innings and Joc Pederson kept the streaking Dodgers' power surge alive with a home run in a victory over visiting Colorado, Los Angeles' ninth consecutive win.

Padres 7, Tigers 3: Pinch-hitter Hector Sanchez slugged a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth inning, powering the host Padres past Detroit and sending the Tigers to their eighth consecutive loss.