

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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DOD to White House: Stop politicizing military

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The Pentagon has told the White House to stop politicizing the military amid a furor over a Trump administration order to have the Navy ship that bears the name of the late U.S. Sen. John McCain hidden from view during President Donald Trump's recent visit to Japan.

A U.S. defense official said Pat Shanahan, Trump's acting defense chief, also is considering sending out formal guidance to military units in order to avoid similar problems in the future.

Shanahan confirmed details about a Navy email that said the White House military office wanted the USS John McCain kept "out of sight" when Trump was in Japan about a week ago. The internal Navy email came to light last week, triggering a storm of outrage.

Trump, who long feuded

with McCain, has said he knew nothing about the request, but added that "somebody did it because they thought I didn't like him, OK? And they were well-meaning, I will say."

Shanahan told reporters traveling with him to South Korea on Sunday that he is not planning to seek an investigation by the Pentagon's internal watchdog into the matter "because there was nothing carried out" by the Navy. He added that he still needs to gather more information about exactly what happened and what servicemembers did.

Shanahan did not detail what those steps could be, but a defense official said Shanahan is considering a clearer directive to the military about avoiding political situations. The goal would be to ensure there is less ambiguity about how the military should support VIP events and how servicemem-

bers should respond to such political requests, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The order to keep the Navy destroyer out of sight reflected what appeared to be an extraordinary White House effort to avoid offending an unpredictable president known for holding a grudge, including a particularly bitter one against McCain.

The McCain incident has dogged Shanahan throughout his weeklong trip to Asia, even as he tried to deal with critical national security issues involving the eroding U.S. relationship with China and the continuing threat from North Korea.

Shanahan, who has been serving in an acting capacity since the first of the year, has yet to be formally nominated by Trump as permanent defense

chief. His speech to a major national security conference in Singapore on Saturday was a chance to audition for the job on the international stage.

A formal nomination has been expected, and Congress members have said they believe there will be a hearing on his nomination in the next month or so. The McCain issue is sure to come up, but it's not clear how it may affect either his nomination or confirmation by the Senate. It may well depend on what steps he takes to respond to the matter in the coming days.

According to Shanahan spokesman Lt. Col. Joseph Buccino, Shanahan told his chief of staff Friday to speak with the White House military office "and reaffirm his mandate that the department of defense will not be politicized." Buccino said the chief of staff reported back that he delivered the message.

Shanahan: Major South Korea drills remain on hold

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan said Sunday that so far he sees no need to restore large-scale military exercises with South Korea that have been curtailed over the past year as a diplomatic olive branch to North Korea.

"I'm confident that we have the readiness that we are required to have," Shanahan said as he flew to Seoul to meet with his commanders and South Korean officials. But he also said he wants to discuss the issue with his top American commander in South Korea, Army Gen. Robert Abrams, to "make sure that the plan that we put in place is sufficient."

Shanahan's visit to Seoul

comes as the U.S. and partners in the region weigh how to respond to missile tests conducted last month by North Korea. The tests fuel debate over whether the elimination of drills may impair the U.S. and South Korea's ability to respond if the North is once again turning away from diplomacy and moving to heighten hostilities.

Senior U.S. officials, including Shanahan, have said that the North Korean test launches of what they believe were short-range ballistic missiles were a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. The North has defended the launches as efforts to exercise its right to self-defense.

South Korea and the U.S. last year eliminated larger mili-

tary drills and said they would replace them with smaller exercises. The North has viewed the large drills as an invasion rehearsal. In place of the bigger exercises, the U.S. and South Korea have been conducting newly designed command post drills and revised field training programs.

The decision to dump the bigger drills came last June after President Donald Trump's first summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Trump abruptly announced the decision, saying that he disapproved of what he called U.S. "war games" in South Korea. He called the maneuvers provocative and expensive.

At the time, military leaders defended the move as a way to

support diplomacy aimed at resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis. Pentagon officials said they believed the shift to smaller exercises would not harm military readiness, but that the decision would be periodically reevaluated.

Some experts say it will likely weaken the allies' military readiness and hurt the ability of the U.S. and South Korean troops to work seamlessly together in the event of an attack or other emergency.

On Saturday in Singapore, Shanahan told the Shangri-La Dialogue security conference that Pyongyang has "neared a point where it could credibly strike regional allies, U.S. territory and our forward-deployed forces."

2nd Fleet returns to face growing challenges

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK, Va. — Lurking beneath the surface of the Atlantic Ocean is a threat that has not been the focus for national security strategists in the United States since the end of the Cold War: Russian submarines.

The vessels are quiet, hard to detect and an asset in which the Russian military has continued to invest. During the last several years, Russia has sent submarines farther into the North Atlantic and Mediterranean and Black seas. They are a growing concern for the United States as Russia attempts to stretch its power and influence around the world.

The U.S. Navy's answer to the increased maritime competition with Russia is the reestablishment of its 2nd Fleet, which declared initial operational capability last week, meaning it can start commanding and controlling forces in the Atlantic Ocean.

The U.S. military has pivoted in the last two years from focusing on counterterrorism to what the Pentagon calls "great-power competition" with several nations. The biggest challengers to the United States are the Russians and Chinese. With Russia's increasingly aggressive posturing, the feeling in the U.S. military has been to meet this new challenge with a mindset similar to its Cold War stance when the two nations went head to head around the world.

The return of the 2nd Fleet marks the Atlantic Ocean as an operational area instead of just an area of transit for ships.

"That is, that there may be real world, peace time and war time operations going on there. And that tracks to the revival of Russian military activity in the Atlantic," said Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Washington think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"You know they're sending

submarines out again. You can see that they are reasserting military power again. So the Navy felt that it needed to recreate this fleet in order to be able to respond operationally."

Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis, 2nd Fleet commander, told an audience at a CSIS event in November that "the Russian undersea threat is real and they are very competent and very operationally capable," adding that a U.S. submarine group had also been reestablished on the East Coast and he is working in coordination with the commander on the anti-submarine warfare mission.

Fall, rise of 2nd Fleet

Why the 2nd Fleet was shut down in 2011 and then had to be brought back seven years later is a story very familiar to the military: downsizing and changing priorities.

Former President Barack Obama's administration was pivoting to the Pacific Ocean as it was pulling forces out of Europe and drawing down forces in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Cancian said.

"Well if you're going to do that, then of course the Atlantic becomes much less important," he said.

That drop in importance also affected its standing when former Defense Secretary Robert Gates wanted to cut Pentagon overhead costs, so the military looked to reduce its number of headquarters, according to Cancian. The Atlantic was a major focus of anti-submarine warfare during the Cold War, but that threat had been diminishing, so the 2nd Fleet was disbanded, with its personnel, responsibilities and assets moved under U.S. Fleet Forces, according to a Navy news release at the time.

But in early 2014, Russia invaded Crimea and started a war in eastern Ukraine. Europe once again became an area of heightened concern for the United States and its NATO allies as Russia looked to reas-

sert itself in Eastern Europe.

More so, by 2018, the counterterrorism strategy of the past 15 years was surpassed by the growing concern over Russian resurgence as well as China's desires to unseat the United States as the preeminent power in the Indo-Pacific.

Last August, the Navy held a reestablishment ceremony to bring back the 2nd Fleet officially to meet the needs of defending the Atlantic Ocean as far north as the Arctic. It was also tasked to develop concepts that test the Navy's warfighting abilities in various scenarios and conditions.

The 2nd Fleet is again based at Naval Station Norfolk on the coast of Virginia, considered the largest U.S. naval base.

The fleet's staff of officers and sailors will stay relatively small, currently at about 100, and will likely double as it reaches full operational capability in December, according to Lt. Marycate Walsh, a 2nd Fleet spokeswoman.

Unlike other fleet commands, the 2nd Fleet will not be constrained to a specific geographic area, operating missions in the Atlantic Ocean and up to the Arctic and reporting to either U.S. Naval Forces North or U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

NATO and the Arctic

Lewis is also commander of Joint Force Command Norfolk, which is a command in NATO. The partnership between the 2nd Fleet and NATO is important to its mission, especially because it will operate alongside these allies in the northern Atlantic.

With the 2nd Fleet marking its initial operating capability, the fleet's command will now travel to the Baltic Sea region to lead the 47th annual Baltic Operations exercise, known as BALTOPS. The maritime exercise will train participants from 18 nations, strengthening the partnerships through learning how to work together, according to a Navy statement

in April.

The BALTOPS exercise, which has been designed to train on responding to a near-peer competitor, will demonstrate the 2nd Fleet's expeditionary capability by relocating "out onto a command ship in the Baltic in order to command and control this exercise," said Cmdr. Shaun Servaes, the deputy of plans and policy at 2nd Fleet and the lead BALTOPS planner.

The fleet also will focus on the Arctic, an area that is becoming a greater strategic concern as more ice is melting, opening more routes to travel through the region. The Russians have increased their presence in the region by establishing military bases and operating a large icebreaker fleet, according to Cancian.

That has raised concerns in the U.S. government with keeping those trade routes open to all...," Lewis said.

Challenges ahead

Even as the Navy embraces the 2nd Fleet's new position among the other commands, Cancian believes the fleet is going to face a challenge getting ships, including for training and exercises.

"Navy ships are limited and there are a lot of claimants. And there will always be demands to send ships to the Middle East like right now," he said. "A lot of demands to send them off to Europe to face the Russians. Of course, then there's the Pacific with the Chinese. So there are way more demands than the Navy can meet."

In early May, the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group expedited its transit from the 6th Fleet's area to the 5th Fleet's area in the Middle East as the Trump administration pointed to credible threats by Iran and its proxies against Americans and U.S. interests. Iran is mentioned in the 2018 National Defense Strategy as a rogue regime.

China vows to protect Taiwan, sea interests

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SINGAPORE — China's defense minister on Sunday denounced U.S. military operations in the South China Sea and support for Taiwan, warning that Beijing will "resolutely take action" to protect its interests.

Gen. Wei Fenghe, however, insisted that the China-U.S. relationship has been growing "despite all the ups and downs."

In a speech that was both challenging and cooperative, he said China is ready to fight the United States on trade but the door remains open for talks, throwing the ball into Washington's court.

"As for the recent trade friction started by the U.S., if the U.S. wants to talk we will keep the door open," he said during a wide-ranging speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, a major security conference in Singapore.

The U.S.-China trade war escalated last month after President Donald Trump slapped new tariffs on Beijing after accusing it of renegeing on commitments in negotiations.

Wei was responding directly to comments made the day before by acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan at the same podium.

Shanahan criticized what he called China's efforts to militarize the South China Sea and to steal technology from other countries, calling them part of "a toolkit of coercion" that threatens to destabilize the region.

China claims much of the contested waterway as its own despite protests from smaller countries in the region and has engaged in a massive construction program including outposts equipped with airstrips, radar and missile stations.

Wei, the most senior Chinese delegate to address the annual conference in Singapore, tried to turn the tables by accusing the U.S. of stoking tensions by sending warships and aircraft to the area in so-called freedom of navigation operations.

"Building facilities on one's own territory is not militarization," he said. "We are deploying the facilities because we feel the threat."

He also warned the U.S. against supporting the self-governing island of Taiwan. On Saturday, Shanahan stressed the U.S. provision of defense articles and services to Taiwan, saying the support "empowers the people of Taiwan to determine their own future."

Blue Ridge back home after 4 months

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS Blue Ridge recently dropped anchor back in its homeport in Japan after 114 days spent visiting 11 ports in nine Indo-Pacific nations.

The 7th Fleet flagship — the Navy's oldest operational ship — left Yokosuka on Feb. 4 and since then has covered more than 22,000 nautical miles to make port calls in Otaru and Sasebo, Japan; Hong Kong; Singapore; Busan, South Korea; Manila, Philippines; Kota Kinabalu and Langkawi, Malaysia; Jakarta, Indonesia; Thailand; and Guam, according to a Navy statement Wednesday.

While at sea, the embarked 7th Fleet command staff conducted several exercises around the Indo-Pacific. Just before returning to Yokosuka, the Blue Ridge took part in Pacific Vanguard, a new multilateral exercise with the United States, Japan, Australia and South Korean navies.

With each port visit, the Blue Ridge was the hub for professional exchanges among regional navies, hosting more than 30 senior leader engagements, maritime cooperative activities with the Philippine navy and staff talks in Thailand, according to the statement.

USS Chung-Hoon returns to Hawaii after 7 months

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — The destroyer USS Chung-Hoon, named for a Hawaiian admiral who displayed extraordinary heroism in World War II, returned to port in Pearl Harbor on Friday after a seven-month deployment that covered 54,000 nautical miles and included a freedom of navigation operation in the South China Sea.

Hundreds of family members, friends and shipmates crowded the pier as the ship arrived mid-morning. Among them was Michelle Punana Chung-Hoon, niece of the ship's

namesake and the sponsor who christened the vessel in 2003, who rarely misses attending the destroyer's departures and returns.

The deployment took the Chung-Hoon to the areas of operations of the U.S. 5th, 6th and 7th fleets.

"I think some of the biggest accomplishments we had were the drug seizures," said Cmdr. Brent Jackson from the ship's deck shortly after arriving. "We had drug seizures totaling \$5 million."

Chung-Hoon transited Bab el-Mandeb Strait between Yemen and Djibouti 14 times and the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf four times.

Navy wraps up Pacific Partnership in Thailand

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

Three months and seven countries after setting out from Guam, the USNS Fall River recently arrived in Singapore, marking the conclusion of this year's Pacific Partnership after its final stop in Thailand.

This year's largest annual, multilateral disaster response and preparedness mission in the Indo-Pacific region featured two expeditionary fast transport ships for the first time, the Fall River and USNS Brunswick.

Personnel attached to both ships made stops in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, the Marshall Islands and the Federated

States of Micronesia, according to a Navy statement Tuesday.

Unlike past Pacific Partnerships that primarily focused on providing direct medical care during each country visited through the hospital ship USNS Mercy, the mission has evolved to focus on bolstering relations with nations around the Pacific by providing assistance in disaster relief preparedness, according to the statement.

Over the course of the three-month mission, personnel conducted more than 60 humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness expert exchanges through workshops, symposiums and exercises, the statement added.

Virginia Beach gunman had just resigned

Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — The gunman who opened fire inside a Virginia Beach government building, killing 12 people, resigned by email hours before the shooting, a city official said Sunday.

There was no immediate indication why the man, a civil engineer, had notified a superior of his intention to leave his job in two weeks.

The assailant was an employee “in good standing” in his department, said City Manager Dave Hansen, who described the man’s performance as “satisfactory.”

Authorities have identified the attacker as DeWayne Craddock, 40. He was killed following a gunbattle with police.

Police Chief James Cervera said he had no information to

indicate that the shooter targeted anyone specifically.

He described how officers who entered the building pursued the man through a tightly packed warren of offices and exchanged gunfire with him. He did not know how many rounds were fired but said it was “well into the double digits.”

Among the dead were four other engineers who worked to maintain streets and protect wetlands and three right-of-way agents who reviewed property lines. Others included an account clerk, a technician, an administrative assistant and a special projects coordinator.

One of the dead employees had worked for the city for 41 years. Six worked in the same department as the suspect, though authorities have declined to say if anyone was specifically targeted or if the

suspect had issued threats before.

The municipal building was open to the public, but security passes were required to enter inner offices, conference rooms and other work areas. As a current employee, Craddock would have had the pass to enter the inner offices, Hansen said.

At least three other people who were wounded remained hospitalized Saturday.

Craddock appeared to have had no felony record, making him eligible to purchase guns.

The police chief said at least one had a noise suppressor.

Hundreds of people attended Saturday prayer vigils for the dead. Scott said he, his wife and several others prayed for the shooter too.

One of the dead, Christopher Kelly Rapp, of Powhatan, enjoyed Scottish music and joined

a pipe band last fall. He played with the group in October during a Celtic festival in Virginia and marched with bandmates on St. Patrick’s Day.

Another victim, Mary Louise Gayle, of Virginia Beach, was described as a “super sweet lady” who always had a big smile.

The other employees who were killed were identified as Tara Welch Gallagher, Alexander Mikhail Gusev, Katherine A. Nixon, Ryan Keith Cox, Joshua O. Hardy and Michelle “Missy” Langer, all of Virginia Beach; Laquita C. Brown and Robert “Bobby” Williams, both of Chesapeake; and Richard H. Nettleton of Norfolk. The 12th victim, Herbert “Bert” Snelling of Virginia Beach, was a contractor who was in the building to seek a permit.

Arkansas flooding abates but danger is still lurking

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Officials from a small Arkansas city where a levee breached say the risk of widespread flooding has abated because the Arkansas River crested without inundating the city, though communities downriver aren’t out of danger yet.

Dardanelle Mayor Jimmy Witt said in a Facebook post Saturday night that he thought the city of about 4,700 people “will be OK” after the flow of water toward the community began to slow.

The river on Friday made a 40-foot hole in a levee in Dardanelle, which is roughly 100 miles upstream from Little Rock.

Nearby rural communities were flooded, though some residents had already evacuated. Floodwaters turned a small community of about 25 people a few miles south of Dardanelle into a temporary island.

On Saturday, officials said

they were constructing a temporary levee, calling it a “last ditch effort” to shore up the city’s southern border and predicting that up to 800 homes could be affected by creeping floodwaters.

The threat decreased hours later as the flow of water through the busted levee slowed.

By Sunday morning, Dardanelle appeared to be safe. Yell County Office of Emergency Management Director Jeff Gilkey said the river never reached the temporary levee.

Floodwaters have crested in Dardanelle and levels should begin slowly dropping soon, though both Witt and Gilkey warned that more rain could reverse the city’s fortunes.

Arkansas is expected to get more rain later in the week, which would increase the likelihood of flash-flooding, National Weather Service meteorologist Dennis Cavanaugh said.

Huge cruise ship plows into boat, dock in Venice

Associated Press

VENICE, Italy — A towering, out-of-control cruise ship rammed into a dock and a tourist riverboat on a busy Venice canal Sunday morning, injuring four tourists and sparking new calls for placing restrictions on cruise ships in the famed but strained tourist city.

The collision happened about 8:30 a.m. local time on the Giudecca Canal, a major thoroughfare that leads to St. Mark’s Square in the north-eastern Italian city.

The cruise ship, apparently unable to stop, blared its horn as it plowed into the much smaller riverboat and the dock as dozens of people run away in panic.

Medical authorities said four female tourists — an American, a New Zealander and two Australians between the ages of 67 and 72 — were injured falling or trying to run away when the cruise ship rammed into the tourist boat, the River

Countess.

Venice is a tremendously popular site for both tourists and cruise ships, especially during the summer tourist season.

The cruise ship’s owner, MSC Cruises, said the ship, the MSC Opera, was about to dock at a passenger terminal in Venice when it had a mechanical problem. Two tugboats guiding the cruise ship into Venice tried to stop the massive ship, but they were unable to prevent it from ramming into the riverboat.

Calderan said the cruise ship’s engine was locked when the captain called for help.

Following the collision, calls for banning cruise ships in Venice, long a source of contention in the over-extended tourist city, were renewed.

For many, the crash served as a wake-up call. Opponents say cruise ships are out-of-scale for Venice, cause pollution, endanger the lagoon’s ecosystem and pose a danger.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Alligator breaks into home through window

FL ORLANDO — Those home at a Clearwater residence received a shock when a large alligator broke into the house and toppled furniture early Friday morning, according to a tweet by the City of Clearwater.

The 11-foot alligator aggressively broke into the Eagles Landing Circle West home during the night through a low window in the kitchen, shattering the glass.

The large gator began causing a loud ruckus and toppled stools in the kitchen.

The Clearwater Police Department responded to the scene with an alligator trapper, who removed the animal.

Python escapes truck, remains at large

WV MORGANTOWN — Authorities said a 15-foot python is on the loose in West Virginia.

Morgantown Police said the python slithered out of a truck and escaped into the woods as a man was transporting it late Thursday.

Police are asking residents to pay close attention to children and small pets while outdoors.

Old steam engine runs again after 40 years

PA BETHLEHEM — A century-old steam engine has been put on display at Pennsylvania's National Museum of Industrial History after workers got it running again for the first time in nearly four decades.

The 115-ton Corliss engine once pumped 8 million gallons of water a day for the York Water Co. in York. It's now a

showpiece at the industrial history museum in Bethlehem, which has spent the last 10 years restoring it.

Police: Over \$1M in drugs washes ashore

AL ORANGE BEACH — Police are investigating after more than \$1 million worth of marijuana and cocaine washed ashore here.

Orange Beach police told WALA-TV that beachgoers found the drugs last month.

One package contained 21 pounds of marijuana and one kilogram of cocaine. Another bundle contained 38 kilograms of cocaine.

Orange Beach is on the Gulf of Mexico about 50 miles south-east of Mobile, Ala.

Restriction on food trucks is upheld

MD BALTIMORE — A Maryland judge is again ordering food truck operators to stay away from Baltimore's restaurants.

Multiple media organizations reported state Court of Special Appeals Judge Douglas R.M. Nazarian on Thursday overturned a lower court's ruling that declared the ban too vague to enforce.

The decision means mobile food vendors must park at least 300 feet from a restaurant or face \$500 fines and the loss of their licenses.

San Diego County missing a fire engine

CA SAN DIEGO — San Diego County's Fire Authority has filed a stolen vehicle report with the Sheriff's Department over a missing fire engine.

The San Diego Union-Tri-

bune said the \$300,000 engine was based at a station staffed by members of the Julian-Cuyamaca Fire Protection District.

The district was the county's last volunteer fire department. It was dissolved in April and the Fire Authority took over but volunteers are challenging the move in court.

When the county inspected the Cuyamaca station, the fire engine was missing. It wasn't at the main station in Julian, either. That's where volunteers have holed up, refusing to surrender the property during the court challenge.

Woman reunited with dog after 5 years

KY ELIZABETHTOWN — A woman who lost her two Jack Russell terriers five years ago has been reunited with one of them.

The Lexington Herald-Leader reported that Janece Parsons got a call Tuesday that said her dog Army had been found safe and was identified through a microchip.

Parsons and her family picked up the 16-year-old deaf dog from the Hardin County Animal Shelter in Elizabethtown just as the shelter opened the next day.

Parsons said she was visiting Hardin County in 2014 when the dogs vanished, likely scared off by a nearby shooting range.

Police: Wanted man found in trunk of car

PA MANHEIM — Police said a man found in the trunk of a car that arrived for sale at a Pennsylvania auto auction is wanted in New York.

LNP newspaper reported Leon Parks, 25, of New York

City, is wanted for parole violations and on weapons charges.

Workers processing the vehicle at the Manheim Auto Auction facility found him inside. The facility is about 90 miles west of Philadelphia.

Police said Parks was treated at a hospital before being taken to jail to await extradition.

Ex-guide banned from hunting for poaching

MT BILLINGS — A 23-year-old hunting guide has received a lifetime suspension of his hunting, fishing and trapping rights for poaching multiple trophy big game animals in 2017.

The Billings Gazette reported Brandon K. Schuhen, 23, was also ordered Friday by District Judge Don Harris to complete 500 hours of community service for a wildlife conservation organization, serve 10 years of probation and pay \$33,050 in restitution to the state of Montana.

1 arrested, second man sought in thefts

LA SLIDELL — One man was arrested in Texas and another suspect is being sought following last month's theft of tires and wheels valued at about \$120,000 from a Louisiana car dealership.

The theft of 124 tires and wheels from 31 vehicles happened at Matt Bowers Chevrolet in Slidell. The Slidell Police Department said the evidence led detectives to Houston, where two suspects were identified.

Police said Wednesday that Eric Summage, 39, of Humble was arrested in Texas. Police are searching for Riley Richardson, 44, of Houston.

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Ruiz stuns Joshua for heavyweight title

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Andy Ruiz had six weeks to prepare for the most important fight of his life.

He'll have a lifetime to celebrate one of boxing's biggest heavyweight upsets.

A massive underdog on the order of Buster Douglas, Ruiz knocked down British champion Anthony Joshua four times — four! — and the final two in the seventh round proved decisive.

Ruiz, the first heavyweight of Mexican descent to win a heavyweight title, capped one of boxing's epic upsets to win Joshua's share of the heavyweight championship Saturday night at Madison Square Garden.

"I just feel so good, man," Ruiz said. "This is what I've been dreaming about, this is what I've been working hard for. I can't believe I just made my dreams come true."

Ruiz etched his name in heavyweight lore at 1:27 of the seventh round by TKO to become the surprise champ in a bout that had shades of Douglas' upset over Mike Tyson for the heavyweight title in 1990. Ruiz barely was on anyone's heavyweight radar when he was summoned as a replacement to fight champion Joshua in front of a packed Garden.

Considered a joke by fans, all Ruiz did was dominate the British champion and used a TKO to turn his life and the heavyweight division upside down. The 270-pound Ruiz knocked down Joshua twice in

the third round and did it two more times in the seventh before referee Mike Griffin ended the fight.

He stepped in after fighting on April 20, when he stopped Alexander Dimitrenko. Jarrell Miller's failed drug tests sent the challenger to the sideline and paved the way for Ruiz's unexpected title shot.

Ruiz (33-1, 21 KO's) seized the opportunity and made boxing history to win the WBA/IBF/WBO/IBO championships.

Ruiz raised his arms in celebration and jumped around the ring as his corner quickly mobbed him and a wild celebration kicked off.

"I've got that Mexican blood in me," he said. "Talking about the Mexican style? I just proved it."

When ring announcer Michael Buffer announced the name of the judges "should this fight go the distance," fans laughed at the ridiculous possibility as Ruiz was nearly a 30-1 underdog.

Joshua and Ruiz were both knocked down in an electrifying third round that had the sellout crowd of 20,201 howling with each heavy hit. Joshua knocked down Ruiz early in the round and the promise of an early finish seemed to be on the horizon.

Ruiz, his trunks a bit too low for his portly frame, came right back and used an overhand right that stunned the champ and sent him to the canvas. Joshua recovered only to get pummeled in the corner, turning his legs to mush. Ruiz knocked him down again in the final seconds of the round as fans in a stunned Garden crowd

screamed "Oh my God!" Again, Joshua beat the count and the bell saved the Brit from going a second longer in his weakened state. Had it not been a championship fight, perhaps Griffin would have stopped the bout.

Alas, for Joshua, it went on.

Ruiz, whose father, a native of Mexico, got him into the gym when he was 6 and had his son in bouts a year later, stunned the boxing world. Joshua was the fan favorite and had all the hype for his first fight in the United States.

"If it wasn't for my dad, I wouldn't be here," Ruiz said.

NBA star Kyrie Irving and rapper Meek Mill were among the celebrities in the house expecting Joshua to roll to a win and set up more ambitious, lucrative bouts against the likes of Tyson Fury, Deontay Wilder and a few other potential opponents.

"Sorry I let my fans down, sorry I let my supporters down," Joshua said.

Wilder, owner of the WBC crown, decided to give Luis Ortiz a rematch. Ortiz battered Wilder for parts of their fight in early 2018 before running out of gas and getting knocked out.

Wilder tried to steal the headlines this week when he announced his rematch with Fury was set for 2020. Wilder and Fury fought to a split draw in December in Los Angeles, with Wilder retaining his WBC heavyweight title after knocking down his British challenger twice.

Joshua instead heads toward a likely rematch against Ruiz later this year.

Bruins' stars finally shine in rout of Blues

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — David Pastrnak flashed a wry smile, brimming with confidence.

No even-strength points through the first two games of the Stanley Cup Final for the first line put plenty of pressure on Boston's best players to produce. Pastrnak shrugged it off, saying on scale of 1 to 10, they felt the pressure level was something around a 2.

Then they got on the ice and delivered.

The stars led Boston to a 7-2 rout of the St. Louis Blues on Saturday night to take a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series. Defenseman Torey Krug scored a goal and had three assists, top-

line center Patrice Bergeron had a goal and two assists, Pastrnak and Brad Marchand got on the scoresheet and the top power-play unit was a perfect 4-for-4 — on four shots.

"It's about time we get going," said Pastrnak, who scored his first goal in the final. "I still think we haven't played our best. But we are up 2-1 and we need to meet tomorrow, look at the video and get even better. That's our focus in this group, and we've got a lot of good players, so we know we can even elevate more."

Game 4 is Monday night in St. Louis.

Boston chased Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington, silenced actor and Blues super fan Jon

Hamm and a raucous crowd that was fired up for the first Cup Final game in St. Louis in 49 years. The Bruins survived an initial onslaught and then simply took it to the home team.

"We've been through so much together this year that we just rely on one another in uncomfortable situations," said Marchand, who assisted on Krug's goal. "When we get through it, we get through it together."

Tuukka Rask was solid as usual in goal with 27 saves, and the Bruins continued to get contributions all over their lineup. Trade deadline pickup Charlie Coyle continued his hot run with his eighth goal of the playoffs, fourth-liner Sean

Kuraly scored his second in three games and Marcus Johansson added goal No. 7 in the final minutes.

"It's fun to see everyone contribute," Johansson said. "I don't think anyone cares who scores or what, but it's fun to see everyone contribute."

The Bruins are two victories away from their first Stanley Cup since 2011 and Boston's third in a row in the four major North American professional sports.

Binnington allowed five goals on 19 shots before getting the hook for the first time in his young NHL career but will be back in net for Game 4.

"I've got to be better," Binnington said.

Federer, Nadal easily reach quarters

Associated Press

PARIS — Roger Federer's return to French Open clay is going so smoothly he still has not dropped a set in reaching the quarterfinals.

The 20-time Grand Slam winner eased through with a 6-2, 6-3, 6-3 win Sunday against unseeded Argentine Leonardo Mayer and is one match away from a potential semifinal — and a 39th career match — against defending champion and longtime rival Rafael Nadal.

Nadal won by the same score as Federer on Sunday, but he was at least given a little bit more of a test by another unseeded Argentine, Juan Ignacio Londero.

While Federer did not face a single break point in beating Mayer for the fourth time in four meetings, Nadal dropped his serve once — late in the third set — and saved four other break-point chances in his first-ever match against the quick-hitting Londero.

Serving at 40-30 in the eighth game of the third set, Nadal was given a time violation warning,

which he felt was the correct call made in the wrong circumstances because of persistent talking from the crowd as he prepared to serve in that game, and during his previous service game.

"Ok, I agree with you but (they are) still talking," Nadal told the chair umpire, referring to the crowd.

Nadal held with an ace for 5-3, and then broke Londero for the sixth time to clinch victory.

Federer won his only French Open in 2009, the year Nadal lost to big-serving Swede Robin Soderling in the fourth round.

The 37-year-old Federer is now into a record-extending 54th Grand Slam quarterfinal overall, compared to 38 for Nadal, which is fourth all-time. Federer also became the third oldest man to reach the last eight at Roland Garros.

"Of course the hope was to go deep and I'm in the quarters now, so I'm very, very happy at this point," Federer said. "I served super well and Leonardo had trouble returning. I was able to put pressure on him and I'm very happy with my performance."

After dropping his serve to lose the second set, Mayer angrily swiped the ball away and was given a code violation warning for ball abuse.

Federer was looking so clinical and assured that the crowd at a sun-baked Philippe Chatrier groaned in disbelief when he missed an easy-looking forehand volley at the net, early in the third set.

It was the second time Federer has beaten Mayer at a Grand Slam — the other also coming in straight sets, in the first round of the U.S. Open in 2015. That was also the last year Federer had played at Roland Garros, before skipping clay entirely until returning to the surface this year.

Four years ago, Federer lost in the quarterfinals to Swiss countryman Stan Wawrinka in straight sets.

He next faces Wawrinka, who beat Federer in the fourth round at this year's Australian Open.

Wawrinka edged Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (6), 5-7, 6-4, 3-6, 8-6 after 5 hours, 9 minutes to reach the quarterfinals at a Grand Slam tournament for the

first time in two years.

The 24th-seeded Wawrinka saved 22 of 27 break points, including eight of eight in the fifth set, against No. 6 seed Tsitsipas.

Wawrinka won the 2015 French Open for one of his three career major titles and was the runner-up in 2017. But he hadn't been past the fourth round at a Slam since, in part because he missed time after knee surgery.

Earlier Sunday, Petra Martic followed up her win over second-seeded Karolina Pliskova by rallying past Kaia Kanepi 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 on center court to reach her first Grand Slam quarterfinal.

The 31st-seeded Croat next faces Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova, who reached her first quarterfinal at a major without dropping a set.

Also advancing to the last eight was 26th-seeded Briton Johanna Konta, who beat 23rd-seeded Donna Vekic 6-2, 6-4. Konta's quarterfinal opponent will be 2017 U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens, who beat 2016 champion Garbine Mugu-ruza 6-4, 6-3.

Creighton ousts defending champ Beavers

Associated Press

The second day of NCAA regionals brought an early exit for the defending national champion, one of the greatest individual performances in tournament history and an upset of No. 1 national seed UCLA.

Oregon State was eliminated on its home field with a 4-1 loss to Big East champion Creighton on Saturday, marking the first time the Beavers have gone 0-2 in regionals in 14 appearances since 1985. They were knocked out in the regional round for the first time since 2015.

"It was a matter of us not playing good baseball. That's the bottom line," OSU interim coach Pat Bailey said.

The Beavers lost 10 of their last 15 games and finished 36-20-1 a season after they completed a two-year run in which they won 111 of 130 games under former coach Pat Casey.

The game was catcher Adley Rutschman's last for Oregon State. Rutschman is projected to be the No. 1 pick in the Major League Baseball draft on Monday. He was on deck when the Bluejays turned the game-ending double play. He had driven a ball to the warning track in his last at-bat and tipped his cap to the crowd as he jogged back to the dugout.

Baylor's Shea Langeliers hit three home runs and doubled while going 5-for-6 and driving in a tournament-record 11 runs in a 24-6 win over Omaha in an elimination game.

"When I was a little kid, I liked to think I was a pretty good hitter, but I think this game will probably be one of the most meaningful games for me as a hitter probably for the rest of my career," Langeliers said. "Our backs were up against the wall and we needed a big game from our offense and we got it. It was a lot of fun."

Langeliers, who likely will be the second

catcher drafted behind Rutschman, broke the NCAA postseason record of 10 RBIs in a game shared by Vanderbilt's Connor Kaiser (2018) and Miami's Kevin Brown (2001).

Langeliers' homers were for two, one and three runs. He also had a two-run single and three-run double.

Hours after Langeliers' big performance, Loyola Marymount beat UCLA 3-2 on the same field in Los Angeles. The Lions lost twice to the Bruins in the regular season and had dropped seven in a row against them.

Cooper Uhl, LMU's 9-hole batter, sent a run-scoring single into right field in the seventh inning to break a 2-2 tie. Nick Frasso earned his second save in two days, striking out three in two shutout innings.

UCLA had its 11-game win streak end and must beat Baylor in an elimination game to get a rematch with the Lions in the regional final Sunday night.

MLB roundup

Sanchez blasts Yankees past Red Sox

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gary Sanchez hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the fifth inning, Aroldis Chapman escaped trouble in the ninth and the New York Yankees bullpen held tight again to beat the Boston Red Sox 5-3 Saturday night.

After starter Domingo German was chased early, six Yankee relievers combined for 5¹/₃ scoreless innings to lock down another victory over the rival Red Sox — New York is 4-0 to start the season series, a first since 2012.

Chapman walked Mookie Betts and allowed a single to Andrew Benintendi leading off the ninth, but J.D. Martinez hit a double-play grounder and Rafael Devers rolled the last out to first.

Chapman got his 17th save in 18 tries, closing out a game where Chad Green (1-2) and Adam Ottavino stranded runners with timely strikeouts.

Twins 6, Rays 2: Marwin Gonzalez and Byron Buxton homered and drove in two runs each as Minnesota won at Tampa Bay.

The Twins, who lead the majors with 108 homers, failed to go deep while splitting the first two games of the series at Tropicana Field.

Brewers 12, Pirates 10 (13): Orlando Arcia hit his second homer of the game, a two-

run drive that sent Milwaukee to a win at Pittsburgh.

Both teams blew late leads before Arcia connected with two outs off Alex McRae (0-1) for his first multi-homer game in the majors. Earlier, Arcia hit a two-run homer in the second.

Indians 5, White Sox 2: Carlos Santana and Leonys Martin homered and visiting Cleveland took advantage of a blunder on the bases to end Chicago's five-game streak. The Indians climbed back to .500 and prevented the White Sox from reaching the break-even mark for the first time since April 5.

Rangers 6, Royals 2: Joey Gallo hit a tie-breaking home run for the second straight game before leaving in the fifth inning due to injury as host Texas beat Kansas City. Gallo was removed because of tightness in his left oblique while batting. He initially felt the injury while in the outfield and then again on a check swing during a plate appearance. He had an MRI and passed some strength tests after the game.

Giants 8, Orioles 2: Brandon Belt drove in four runs, Buster Posey homered and San Francisco used a rare offensive outburst to breeze to a win at Baltimore.

The Giants built a 7-1 lead in the fifth inning and cruised to only their second win in 10 games.

Marlins 9, Padres 3: Harold Ramirez's two-run double highlighted host Miami's five-run fourth inning, Bryan Holaday hit a two-run homer and Jose Urena won his third straight start.

Nationals 5, Reds 2: Gerardo Parra hit a three-run homer that ended Tanner Roark's streak of keeping the ball in the park and Matt Adams added a solo shot, leading Washington to a win at Cincinnati.

The Nationals have won nine of their last 10 at Great American Ball Park. Overall, Washington is 17-5 against the Reds since 2016.

Braves 10, Tigers 5: Mike Soroka won his sixth straight decision, Freddie Freeman and Austin Riley each hit a two-run homer, and host Atlanta beat Detroit to snap a three-game skid.

Soroka (6-1) scuffled a bit, allowing season highs of three runs and seven hits and striking out five in 6²/₃ innings.

Angels 6, Mariners 3: Kole Calhoun and Mike Trout homered late, Andrew Heaney struck out 10 and Los Angeles overcame two home runs by Edwin Encarnacion to win at Seattle.

Rockies 4, Blue Jays 2: Jon Gray struck out seven in a solid seven-inning outing, Nolan Arenado singled to extend his hitting streak to 12 games and

Daniel Murphy drove in two runs as host Colorado beat Toronto.

David Dahl had three hits as the Rockies won their seventh straight and improve to 8-1 on their homestand. Scott Oberg got the final out for his second save.

Dodgers 4, Phillies 3: Will Smith hit a towering, tiebreaking home run in the bottom of the ninth inning, giving host Los Angeles a comeback victory over Philadelphia in a matchup of division leaders and the two best teams in the National League. With one out, Smith smashed his first career homer into the left field pavilion off Hector Neris (1-2).

Astros 5, Athletics 1: Justin Verlander struck out eight over eight innings and moved into a share of the major league lead with his ninth win, pitching Houston to a win at Oakland.

Cardinals 7, Cubs 4: Dexter Fowler and Harrison Bader hit back-to-back homers in the eighth inning, and host St. Louis outlasted Chicago in a game that ended early Sunday after a rain delay of more than three hours.

Mets 5, Arizona 4: Carlos Gomez snapped a tie with a pinch-hit double during New York's bizarre two-run eighth inning, sending the Mets to win at Arizona.

Going, going, gone: MLB set homer record in May

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major league batters set a record in May for most home runs in any month.

Batters hit 1,135 home runs in May, topping the previous mark of 1,119 in August 2017, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Toronto rookie Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit No. 1,120 for the month on Friday night.

Four of the top five home run months have been in the last three years. June 2017 is third at 1,101, followed by May 2000

(1,069) and May 2017 (1,060).

Milwaukee's Christian Yelich led the big leagues with 21 homers through the end of May, followed by the Los Angeles Dodgers' Cody Bellinger with 20 and New York Mets rookie Pete Alonso with 19. Yelich hit another homer Saturday.

Through Friday, batters have hit 2,279 home runs this season, a record average of 1.34 per team per game. At that pace, they would finish with 6,508, shattering the mark of 6,105 set two years ago — which

topped the Steroids Era high of 5,693 in 2000.

Home runs dipped to 5,585 last season. Last year, there were 1,889 home runs through May.

Hits topped strikeouts in May — 7,178 to 7,137 — but strikeouts are ahead 14,885 to 14,397 for the season, according to Elias.

There were more strikeouts than hits for the first time last year, when the margin through May was 14,314 to 14,031. The team batting average was .249 through May.