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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

'I don't know how we got here'

Female Marines detail harassment in wake of nude photo scandal

The Washington Post

Some female Marines were sent screenshots of nude and private pictures of themselves from concerned colleagues. A few would get texts from their friends alerting them to what was online. Others found vulgar messages from strangers in their inboxes. The red flags were different, but the revelation was the same: Their intimate photos had been shared online without their consent.

Marine officials on Sunday said the branch was looking into a number of Marines, as well as current and former servicemembers, who shared naked and compromising photos of their female colleagues on social media through a shared drive on a Facebook group called Marines United.

The incident has prompted an outcry from senior Marine leaders and an investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, but according to

nine current and former female servicemembers interviewed by The Washington Post, online harassment goes well beyond a single shared drive or Facebook group. The behavior has become pervasive in the younger enlisted ranks throughout the Marine Corps, threatening unit cohesion at the lowest levels and its ethos at the highest, they say.

The existence of the shared drive was first reported through the website Reveal, in conjunction with the War Horse military news website. Many of the women who spoke to the Post for this article did so on the condition of anonymity because they fear reprisals from fellow servicemembers and their chains of command.

The Marines' highest-ranking officer, Gen. Robert Neller, wouldn't comment on the specific investigation but called the reported postings "distasteful."

"I expect Marines to give their all to be the best human

beings, teammates, and Marines possible," Neller said in a statement.

Women who have experienced the public shaming firsthand take a starker view.

"It's Marine Corps-wide," said Marine Pvt. Kally Wayne, 22, who joined in 2013 and was removed from the service three years later for disciplinary problems. In early 2016, her ex-boyfriend, a Marine, posted a sex tape they had made in 2013 to a Marines Facebook group, which quickly spread, eventually getting posted on Marines United, which has 30,000 members, where it appeared sporadically.

"I went to the police to get them to take it down, and they told me because I didn't live in North Carolina, they couldn't do anything," Wayne said. "I went to his command, and they said, 'Why don't you not make sex tapes?'" Wayne said she knows at least 10 other women who have endured online sexual harassment. She said a meme

of her had already appeared on another group after Marines United was taken down after the War Horse article.

It is hard to trace where the Marine Corps' online culture of illicit photo-sharing began.

In 2013 and 2014, the Marine Corps Times and the military website Task and Purpose wrote stories about the Marine Facebook group called "Just the Tip of the Spear," commonly known as JTTOTS. The group bills itself as a hub for "some of the camaraderie" that veterans miss after they leave the service.

Wayne's video was first posted as a comment on the group in 2016 and was distributed from there, she said. "I don't know how we got here," said one female Marine, whose pictures also appeared on the Marines United group as well on other pages and Tumblrs. "A couple years ago, it was just people making fun of other Marines messing up online. Now this."

Iranian vessels approach US Navy surveillance ship

The Washington Post

Swift-moving Iranian vessels came dangerously close to a U.S. Navy surveillance ship in the Strait of Hormuz over the weekend, U.S. officials said Monday.

The apparent harassment of the USS *Invincible* on two occasions, on Thursday and Saturday, came amid Iranian state media reports that Iran had tested its newly acquired S-300 missile air defense system that is designed to inter-

cept incoming missiles.

In addition, Fox News reported that Iran had itself test-fired a pair of ballistic missiles that destroyed a floating barge over the weekend, but that could not be independently confirmed.

Iran fired a medium-range ballistic missile last month, apparent violating a U.N. Security Council Resolution. The administration responded with its first economic sanctions, placing 13 people and 12 businesses on a list that prohibits Americans from dealing with them.

Taken as a whole, the incidents form a pattern suggesting Tehran and Washington could be squaring off for a more direct confrontation. President Donald Trump came to office condemning the Obama administration for being what he characterized as weak on Iran, and he has vowed to be tougher. Iran seems to be testing whether Trump means what he says.

In the incidents involving the *Invincible*, an Iranian frigate came within 150 yards of the Navy ship last Thursday, Penta-

gon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis told reporters. On Saturday, a number of smaller boats approached the U.S. ship, closing to within 600 yards, Davis said.

Surveillance ships like the *Invincible* are typically equipped with scientific instruments and radar that allow them to monitor missiles and rockets from their launching to the point that they land.

A Navy official condemned the Iranian actions as "unsafe and unprofessional."

Iraqi forces hoist flag in Mosul

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — U.S.-backed Iraqi forces were fighting their way through a government complex in the heart of western Mosul after storming the buildings in an overnight raid and were facing fierce counterattacks Tuesday from the Islamic State group.

According to Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Rasheed Yar Allah, the troops hoisted an Iraqi flag on the complex of buildings in the Dawasa neighborhood earlier in the morning, hailing the federal police units who stormed the compound as heroes.

By noon, troops on the ground said the complex had not yet been fully secured and that they are battling a wave of intense Islamic State counterattacks.

Sgt. Azam Ibrahim, of the

federal police, was one of the first troops to storm the Mosul government complex. His unit then pulled back to a base on the edge of Mosul's Tayran neighborhood, saying the clashes were still underway at the complex later Tuesday.

"We were pulled back because we had killed and wounded," Ibrahim told The Associated Press. "The (Iraqi) forces there are surrounded. The Humvees cannot reach them, nor can the ambulances."

The consistent advance — it's been more than two weeks since the new push started to clear Mosul's western side of militants — has been a major blow to the extremists, who once controlled nearly a third of Iraq.

Iraqi forces declared eastern Mosul "fully liberated" in January after officially launch-

ing the operation to retake the city in October. Yar Allah, who commands the army operations in Ninevah province, where Mosul is the provincial capital, said the troops now also control the western side of a second bridge across the Tigris River, known as the Hurriyah Bridge.

Last week, the troops reached the first bridge from the south in western Mosul, known locally as the 4th Bridge. U.S.-led airstrikes disabled all of Mosul's five bridges last year in a bid to isolate the militants.

Hours after announcing Tuesday's advance, Iraqi state TV said Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi visited the troops in Mosul. Al-Abadi was shown descending from a military plane at the city's airport and meeting with senior military officers. It was unclear if al-Abadi visited the western part of Mosul.

US military moves closer to Syrian city to deter infighting

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States has deployed small teams of troops into a crowded northern Syrian battle space to help focus several armed forces in the region on the battle against the Islamic State group, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday.

U.S. troops moved closer to Manbij over the weekend, flying large American flags on top of their Stryker armored combat vehicles and Humvees as a display for the other forces converging in the area, said Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman.

"We want to have a visible show that we are there in order to deter all parties from fighting anybody other than [the Islamic State group] and to reassure that [the group] has been driven from Manbij," Davis told reporters Monday at the Pentagon.

The U.S. military has been in northern Syria for nearly a year, but its mission has been primarily to train and advise rebel forces fighting against the Islamic State group.

With tensions mounting near Manbij between the Syrian Democratic Forces — the primary U.S. proxy force in the fight against the Islamic State group — and NATO ally Turkey, the U.S.-led coalition decided the American deployment was necessary.

In the last week, the SDF, Turkish forces with the Syrian rebels they support and Russia-backed Syrian regime forces have converged near Manbij. In some areas, the forces are all within "hand-grenade range" of each other, Army Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the commander of the anti-Islamic State group coalition, said last week.

He urged all of the armed groups to retain their focus on the Islamic State group, which is still present to the south of Manbij.

Deployment of THAAD begins in S. Korea

By KIM GAMEL
AND MARCUS FICHTL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. began deploying a controversial missile-defense system in South Korea, shortly after the North launched four missiles in a test that heightened concerns it is making progress with its nuclear-weapons program.

China, which strongly opposes the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, known as THAAD, warned Washington and Seoul to be prepared to bear the consequences.

"We will definitely be taking necessary measures to safeguard our own security interest," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters in Beijing.

Two launchers and other parts of the system arrived at Osan Air Base on the divided peninsula overnight on Monday.

"The first elements of THAAD arrived within the last 24 hours. It's here now," U.S. Forces Korea

spokesman Christopher Bush told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

The military didn't provide a specific timeline for completing the construction of the system, which includes truck-mounted interceptors, an AN/TPY-2 radar that can detect and track ballistic missiles in descent, and fire control.

The commander of U.S. Forces Korea, Gen. Vincent Brooks, said in November that he expected it to be operational in eight to 10 months.

However, since then the allies have agreed to expedite the deployment, in part because of a growing sense of urgency about the threat but also presumably to ensure political turmoil in South Korea doesn't derail the process, analysts said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted a military official in Seoul as saying THAAD could be operational as early as April.

President Park Geun-hye, a strong advocate of the system, is facing impeachment that could force early elections. While the

prime minister and acting president also support THAAD, the main opposition candidate, Moon Jae-in, has said a decision on the deployment should be left to the next administration.

Washington and Seoul agreed in July to deploy THAAD to counter a growing threat from North Korea, which has defiantly continued to pursue its nuclear-weapons program despite diplomatic pressure and tightened U.N. Security Council sanctions.

But the plan met several obstacles. Chief among them is adamant opposition from China, which fears the battery's powerful radar could be used to spy on its military. Beijing has reportedly already responded with economic retaliation against South Korea in the form of curbing tourism and targeting South Korean businesses.

Military officials also reiterated U.S. insistence that the system was aimed solely at protecting South Korea from North Korean missiles.

Guam lawsuit: Navy owes some dump cleanup costs

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

Guam has filed a lawsuit against the Navy, claiming the service is partially responsible for environmental contamination at a closed landfill once used for municipal and military waste.

The U.S. territory is also hoping to collect a share of past and future cleanup costs totaling more than \$200 million, according to the civil complaint filed Thursday at a U.S. district court in Connecticut.

"Guam should not be left to shoulder the full financial burden of having closed Ordot Dump when it is clear that the United States Navy is also responsible for the environmental condition of the dump," Guam Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson, who authorized the suit, said in a statement.

In 2002, the U.S. government sued Guam under the Clean Water Act, saying that discharge from the unlined and uncapped landfill was leaking into the Lonfit River and two of its tributaries, the complaint said.

That eventually led Guam to agree to close the landfill and shoulder the burden to repair the environmental damage, which included capping the landfill and installing storm-water management ponds, discharge water storage tanks and a sewer line. That work began in 2013 and continues today.

The suit alleges the dump was under Navy and U.S. government supervision before World War II and through the early 1970s, when it was handed over to local authorities.

Guam is seeking to tether the Navy to the cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980.

Navy officials on Guam said they could not comment about ongoing litigation.

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Green Berets' dads: Jordanian military guard's actions 'murder'

BY DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The fathers of three Green Berets killed in Jordan in November declared Tuesday that in the wake of Army and FBI investigations, they believe their sons were murdered by a Jordanian soldier standing guard outside the air base where they were staying during their deployment.

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Lewellen, who was posthumously promoted, and Staff Sgts. James F. Moriarty and Kevin McEnroe were killed Nov. 4 as their vehicles entered King Faisal Air Force Base in al-Jafr, Jordan. Their fathers, Charles Lewellen, James R. Moriarty and Brian McEnroe, said a video of the incident and forensics investigations by the FBI and the Army show their sons had followed procedure and the guard shot at them without warning.

The fathers called on Jordan to be held accountable for the slayings, saying the Army investigation exonerated their sons of any wrongdoing and made clear that accounts carried in the Jordanian news reports and by Jordanian officials were false.

"Over four months have passed since our boys were murdered," McEnroe said. "None of

our families has heard any apology, condolences or explanation from the Jordanians other than these false narratives — insulting false narratives. And in my mind, Jordan is, at the very least, guilty of complicity in the murder of these three American brave servicemen."

The three Green Berets from the Fort Campbell, Ky.-based 5th Special Forces Group, were on a training mission in Jordan. They were returning to the air base when the guard at the gate opened fire on their convoy, killing the three and injuring a fourth Green Beret.

The three fathers said they received a briefing last week from the investigating agencies and they watched the video that showed the sequence of events.

The Army Special Operations Command released its investigation Tuesday following the news conference. The investigation said the soldiers acted properly, and reports of any wrongdoing on their part were not true.

The report also states that an FBI investigation is ongoing into whether there was any criminal action involving the Jordanian guard. The FBI declined to comment on the deaths because the investigation is still open.

During their news conference, the fathers described the incident in detail. There were

four cars in the convoy that approached the first gate, and as they did, Jordanian soldiers moved the spike strips from the road and raised the gate, allowing the convoy to continue toward the checkpoint a few yards away. The second gate was alongside a concrete guard shack in the center of the road that was covered with camouflage netting, making it difficult to see inside. Jordanian soldiers lifted that gate as well, allowing the first car in the convoy to pass through without incident.

Lewellen and McEnroe were in the next vehicle. As it passed by the shack, the guard inside the shack unleashed a hail of bullets from behind the netting, killing McEnroe instantly. Lewellen was mortally wounded, according to the report.

The guard, M'aarek Abu Tayeh, survived after being shot himself.

Moriarty and another Green Beret were driving the next two vehicles. Each jumped out of their truck and took cover. They tried to talk to the Jordanian soldier while motioning to the other soldiers around them, with whom they'd been working that morning, Moriarty's father said. But Abu Tayeh opened fire again, killing Moriarty before the fourth Green Beret shot him, Moriarty's father said.

US conducted freedom-of-navigation ops against 22 nations in 2016, DOD reports

BY ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The United States challenged the maritime claims of allies and rivals alike with freedom-of-navigation operations aimed at 22 countries last year, according to a Defense Department report released Monday in Washington.

Operations aimed at Chinese claims in the East and South China seas have grabbed the

most attention in recent years because of China's construction and militarization of several artificial islands there — moves that have stoked tensions with neighboring nations and Washington.

The U.S. challenged Chinese claims on five aspects of international law in the air and sea during fiscal year 2016, more than any other country on the list. However, the U.S. also challenged excessive claims by

Japan, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines, among its security allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

The freedom of navigation program "is comprehensive in scope and executed in an even-handed manner, challenging excessive maritime claims based on principle rather than identity of the coastal State asserting the claim," a DOD statement said.

Winds hamper effort to contain wildfires across several states

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — High winds hindered the efforts of emergency personnel battling wildfires Tuesday in Texas, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma that have forced hundreds of people from their homes and destroyed several buildings.

Dry conditions also have brought a red-flag warning of critical wildfire conditions in Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska, the National Weather Service said.

A pair of fires in the Texas Panhandle burned more than 195 square miles. One of the blazes near Amarillo threatened about 150 homes, while a separate, larger fire in the far northeast corner of the Panhandle near the Oklahoma border was only 5 percent contained as of Tuesday morning, according to Texas A&M Forest Service.

Forest Service spokesman Phillip Truitt said as many as four firefighters were hurt battling the fires Monday. He provided no details on their conditions Tuesday morning.

In Colorado, a fire in rural Logan County burned more than 45 square miles, forced the evacuation of three schools and threatened as many as 900 homes. The Logan County Emergency Management Office said at least four structures, including three homes, were destroyed.

More than 70 firefighters from 13 departments battled the blaze, which was reported east of Sterling on Monday morning. The fire, which was driven by wind gusts of nearly 50 mph, jumped Interstate 76 and spread into Phillips County.

In Kansas, wind-blown fires blazed in 21 counties over the

course of Monday, with rural fire crews struggling to keep up, The Wichita Eagle reported. The fires forced the evacuations of several small towns and the closure of a couple of short stretches of Interstate 70 in Lincoln County and nearby Ellsworth County in the central part of the state.

"The bottom line is we can't stop the fire, so we're just trying to save houses and people," said Millie Fudge, the emergency services chief for south-central Kansas' Clark County, where more than 900 residents of two towns were evacuated Monday afternoon as the fires that began in Oklahoma pressed closer.

Two grass fires near Hutchinson also charred about 6,000 acres. Some 300 people have been allowed to return after they were evacuated over the weekend.

UN chief in Somalia to highlight famine crisis

Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made an emergency visit to Somalia on Tuesday to highlight the country's famine crisis, meeting the new president and saying the worsening hunger requires a massive response.

"People are dying. The world must act now to stop this," the U.N. chief tweeted after arriving in the Horn of Africa nation.

"We need to make as much noise as possible," Guterres said. "Conflict, drought, climate change, disease, cholera. The combination is a nightmare."

Somalia is part of a massive, \$4 billion aid appeal launched last month for four nations suffering from conflict and hunger. The others are Nigeria, Yemen and South Sudan, where famine already has been declared.

Somalia over the weekend announced its first death toll since declaring a national disaster last week, saying 110 people had died in a 48-hour period in a single region. The United Nations estimates that 5 million people in Somalia need aid amid warnings of a famine.

Welcoming the U.N. chief, Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed said, "My first priority is to address this drought crisis, and my main priority is to make an appeal to the international community to help us."

Somalia is one of the six Muslim-majority countries affected by the revised travel ban ordered by President Donald Trump. Mohamed took Guterres' visit as an opportunity to speak out against it.

"Definitely, we will prefer to see that this travel ban should be lifted and, of course, we have to communicate with the U.S. government because as everyone knows, we have a large Somali community in the United States who I'm sure have contributed to the U.S. economy," Mohamed said in response to press questions. He himself has dual Somali-U.S. citizenship.

McMaster 3-star status gets Senate panel's OK

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday recommended that White House national security adviser H.R. McMaster be allowed to continue serving in the position as an active-duty, three-star general.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., the committee chairman, said the 23-2 vote sends McMaster's service status to the full Senate for a final decision. However, some committee members raised questions over White House chief strategist Steve Bannon's position on the National Security Council and some Democrats balked at recommending McMaster because they wanted more time for consideration.

President Donald Trump picked McMaster, an Army lieutenant general, as his new national security adviser Feb. 20 after Lt. Gen. Mike Flynn resigned. Under federal law,

the Senate must reappoint McMaster so he can continue to serve as a three-star general while acting as national security adviser.

"We will now schedule his promotion issue to the full Senate and I am confident that it will be approved particularly given the overwhelming vote in favor that was just given in the Armed Services Committee," McCain said.

The committee chose to expedite its consideration of McMaster's active-duty status during the closed-door executive session meeting with the general, waiving a rule that requires it to deliberate for seven days. But McCain said he could not rule out attempts by Democrats to delay a final Senate vote, which had not been scheduled yet.

McCain said committee members raised questions during the meeting about Bannon's unorthodox role as a member of the National Security Council, which weighs national security

and foreign policy issues for the president.

McMaster was tasked with reorganizing the White House foreign policy staff after Flynn's departure and questions have swirled over whether he will address the National Security Council issue.

"I have voiced concern over having for the first time in history the president's political adviser as a member of the National Security Council," McCain said. "It should not be and no less a person than former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said that it was totally unacceptable."

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., was among two Armed Services Committee members who abstained from voting on the McMaster recommendation, saying she did not have enough information following reports that the general had been rebuked by the Army in 2015 for his handling of sexual assault allegations.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Boy gets finger stuck in gumball machine

CT GREENWICH — A young boy eager for a gumball during a visit to the barbershop got more than he bargained for when he got his finger stuck in the machine.

The Greenwich Time reported that firefighters and police officers responded to Palms Barbershop in Greenwich after getting a 911 call on Saturday. Co-owner Tony Socci said staff first tried to free the boy's finger by spraying oil on it.

Fire Lt. Tom Lenart said the boy, who was around 4, "managed to wedge his finger between the mechanism that spins and allows the gumball to drop." Firefighters freed him by breaking the plastic casing around the gumballs with pliers and dismantling the feeder with a screwdriver.

The boy was not hurt — and still got his haircut.

Dance event dedicated to trooper sets record

NY SOUTH GLENS FALLS — A New York high school's annual dance marathon that was dedicated to a fallen state trooper raised the most money in the event's 40-year history.

Organizers at South Glens Falls High School in Saratoga County said the 800-plus students who participated raised more than \$823,000, beating last year's record of over \$760,000.

The school's 40th dance marathon started Friday night and lasted into Saturday night.

The event was dedicated to Timothy Pratt, a New York state trooper who died in an accident in a neighboring town last fall. Pratt was a South Glens Falls graduate who helped provide security at the dance marathon for many years.

Assault victim uses phone app to get help

NJ SOUTH BRUNSWICK — Police said a person being assaulted in a New Jersey motel parking lot used a video phone app to summon help.

South Brunswick police said the person was on FaceTime and alerted a relative, who called police early Sunday to say the victim was at the La Mirage Motor Inn and the suspect was nearby.

An officer found the victim and the suspect fled in a car. Another officer tracked down the vehicle, and police charged Jaron Thomas, 25, of Somerset with aggravated assault, obstruction of justice and hindering apprehension.

Woman killed by falling tree at national park

CA YOSEMITENATIONAL PARK — Yosemite National Park has reopened an area where a woman was struck and killed by a ponderosa pine tree on Sunday.

Park spokesman Scott Gedinman said the accident happened Sunday in Half Dome Village. It's an area that has tent cabins and wooden cabins that are utilized by park visitors and park employees, but no one else was injured in the accident Sunday.

Authorities identified the woman who was killed as Destiny Rose Teixeira Borges, 20, of Ceres, Calif. She was in Yosemite working for a company contracted by the park concessionaire amid heavy snow and high winds.

Korean War vet laid to rest after remains found

TN CLARKSVILLE — A Korean War soldier whose remains were found 66 years after he went missing has been laid to rest with full mili-

tary honors in Tennessee.

The Leaf Chronicle reported the remains of Sgt. Robert Roy Cummings, 20, were found in November. A funeral was held Saturday in Clarksville.

Cummings was part of the 187th Infantry Regiment based at Fort Campbell, Ky. After his unit was ambushed during a reconnaissance, the Army declared him missing in action in November 1950.

Paleontologist says he uncovered new dinosaur

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A New Mexico paleontologist says he has uncovered a new species of dinosaur after examining fossilized fragments in a museum collection.

Sebastian Dalman, who works at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, had questioned the fragments, which were thought to be from a torosaurus, a relative of the triceratops. Last year, Dalman headed to the site in south-central New Mexico where the bones were originally unearthed to help with two digs. The search turned up more parts of the dinosaur, including pieces of its cranium.

Dalman is scheduled to formally announce his findings in April.

Snake migration closing road in national forest

IL HARRISBURG — A 2½-mile road in the Shawnee National Forest will close to allow snakes and other amphibians to migrate from the limestone bluffs where they've spent the winter to a nearby swamp.

The Southern Illinoisan reported the stretch known as Snake Road will close to motor vehicle traffic from March 15 to May 15 to ensure safe crossing. The road — also known as

LaRue Road and Forest Service Road No. 345 — will remain open to foot traffic.

People from across the country visit the national forest to see the gradual migration.

Driver's ed may include traffic stop training

NC RALEIGH — Deadly encounters between police officers and motorists have lawmakers across the country thinking driver's education should require students to be taught what to do in a traffic stop.

Legislators in North Carolina and at least three other states are considering bills this year designed to teach new drivers how to interact appropriately with police. Another bill in Virginia awaits the governor's signature.

Illinois passed a similar law recently, a "Rules of the Road" publication could provide a model about proper driver behavior.

University to rebury 105 bodies found on campus

GA ATLANTA — University of Georgia officials said they will rebury the remains of 105 bodies discovered when expanding a building on the campus.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that construction to expand Baldwin Hall was temporarily halted after workers found grave sites in December 2015.

The grave sites were part of Old Athens Cemetery near Baldwin Hall. The area served as the official town cemetery for most of the 19th century.

The remains will be reburied in Oconee Hill Cemetery during a public ceremony on March 20.

From wire reports

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Top players labor on struggling teams

Associated Press

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — Joey Votto fielded grounders over and over again until most of the Cincinnati Reds were long gone, off to a spring game, weights or just the rest of the day. He threw home. He threw to second. He practiced underhand tosses to first, backhands, everything.

A group of coaches hollered in appreciation after one diving stop and crisp throw, and Votto responded with a simple “Same thing,” looking for another grounder in the same spot. Right back to work for one of baseball’s best players on a rebuilding team.

“As long as I’m on the field I feel like I’m one of the guys that’s going to change the direction and be a part of a winning atmosphere here,” Votto said back at his locker after the fielding session. “So I feel like, although I do have an individual set of goals and responsibilities I hold myself to, inevitably the No. 1 priority is winning and coming out here every day and looking forward to competing, looking forward to big and better things in October. That’s the No. 1 priority in my job.”

October has been mostly empty for Cincinnati for the

last couple of seasons, even with Votto regarded as one of the game’s great hitters, an on-base machine in an era that appreciates his talents more than ever. The first baseman is one of several sluggers putting up big numbers for losing teams in recent years.

Votto, Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado and Braves slugger Freddie Freeman placed in the top seven in NL MVP voting last season, and their teams finished a combined 63 games under .500. Los Angeles Angels star Mike Trout became the first AL MVP from a losing team since Alex Rodriguez for Texas in 2003 and just the fifth player ever to accomplish the feat, joining Hall of Famers Ernie Banks (1958 and 1959), Andre Dawson (1987) and Cal Ripken (1991).

“I absolutely hate it. Losing takes a toll,” said Arenado, who had 41 homers and 133 RBIs last season. “It’s not fun. It’s hard. I’ve been fortunate to win Gold Gloves, Silver Sluggers. I’ve won those things before, and it never gets old, but something I’ve never won before is a division title or a World Series. I’m interested in that.”

Votto and Trout are the only active members of one of base-

ball’s most exclusive clubs, a list of 23 players with at least a .300 batting average, .400 on-base percentage and .500 slugging percentage with a minimum of 400 career plate appearances, according to data at baseball-reference.com that date to 1871.

It just hasn’t amounted to much in the standings.

The 25-year-old Trout batted .315 with 29 homers, 100 RBIs and 30 steals, but Los Angeles finished fourth in the AL West. He scored 17 percent of the Angels’ runs, the highest percentage for an AL player since Rickey Henderson with the 1985 New York Yankees.

The center fielder also won the AL MVP award in 2014 and finished second in the voting three times in his first five years in the majors. But he has played in just one playoff series, with the Royals sweeping the Angels out of the postseason three years ago.

“It’s frustrating, for sure,” Trout said. “You want to get to the playoffs. It’s fun. You’ve seen the World Series last year. You want to be in that atmosphere.”

Votto and the Reds got to the playoffs three times in four years from 2010 to 2013, but

they had a short stay each time. They won the first two games in their 2012 division series against San Francisco, but the Giants rallied on the way to the World Series title.

It has been mostly tough sledding since that success. Cincinnati lost 98 games in 2015 and 94 last year.

“It can be difficult playing games from May on that you know you’re fighting an uphill battle,” said Votto, who turns 34 in September. “But every single organization goes through this and I’ve been with this team for a good bit of time and it’s inevitable that this sort of thing happens.”

While the team has floundered, Votto has continued his high level of play. The 2010 NL MVP, who has a \$225 million, 10-year contract that runs through the 2023 season, hit .326 with 29 homers, 97 RBIs and a .434 on-base percentage last year. It was his highest batting average since he hit .337 in 2012, and he led the NL in on-base percentage for the fifth time.

He batted .378 over the final 106 games, continuing his torrid surge long after the Reds had fallen off the pace in the NL Central.

MLB commissioner Manfred says WBC on solid ground

Associated Press

TOKYO — The commissioner of Major League Baseball on Tuesday denied reports that 2017 would be the last edition of the World Baseball Classic, saying the tournament is as popular as ever.

The fourth edition of the tournament run by MLB and the players’ association began in Seoul on Monday. Japan kicked off its campaign Tuesday with an 11-6 victory over Cuba at the Tokyo Dome.

Media reports in the U.S. suggested the 2017 tournament would be the last because of a lack of revenue. MLB commissioner Rob Manfred said noth-

ing could be further from the truth.

“The WBC will be broadcast in 182 countries,” Manfred said in Tokyo. “This will be a \$100 million event over this brief, less than two-week period. From Day 1, while it was a profitable event from the beginning, it has really grown in terms of its revenue significance and its popularity around the world.”

Japan won the tournament in 2006 and 2009 with a full complement of major league players, including Ichiro Suzuki, Yu Darvish and Daisuke Matsuzaka. But those big names sat out the 2013 version won by the Dominican Repub-

lic and Japan will field a team this year with just one major leaguer — Norichika Aoki of the Houston Astros.

Without its best players, the United States has failed to finish better than fourth.

The WBC comes at a time when MLB players are reporting for spring training. Many players are hesitant to risk injury in the WBC.

Buster Posey, Giancarlo Stanton and Andrew McCutchen are some of the more prominent MLB players on this year’s U.S. team.

Japan, Israel post wins

Nobuhiro Matsuda hit a

three-run homer as Japan scored five runs in the fifth inning on its way to an 11-6 win over Cuba in Tokyo.

With two-time champion Japan leading 3-1 in the fifth inning, Matsuda made it 6-1 with a homer into the left-field stands at Tokyo Dome.

In Seoul, Ryan Lavarney hit a two-run homer in the third inning and Nate Freiman added a three-run shot in the ninth to help Israel beat Taiwan 15-7 and improve to 2-0.

In the other game in Seoul, Jurickson Profar and Randolph Obuder both hit two-run homers to give the Netherlands a 5-0 win over South Korea.

Iona nips Siena for MAAC bid

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — Jordan Washington played his way through major foul trouble — all the way to the NCAA Tournament.

Washington had 21 points and 10 rebounds, freshman E.J. Crawford had a tiebreaking layup in overtime and Iona topped Siena 87-86 on Monday night to win the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference title for the second straight time.

Despite playing with four fouls for more than 13 minutes, Washington exerted himself in the tense extra period, hitting a tough scoop shot and four free throws around Crawford's clutch basket with 27.2 seconds left.

"My coaches said to just keep playing hard," said Washington, who was named tournament MVP. "I had to do what I had to do. I'm still emotional right now. We don't stop until it (the clock) hits zero and that's

what we did."

Marquis Wright hit a three at the final buzzer as Siena came up just short.

"Life's a funny thing," Siena coach Jimmy Patsos said. "Sometimes, you just don't get that extra bounce."

Iona (22-12) won its MAAC-record 10th title and improved to 9-0 against Siena in the conference tournament. Fourth-seeded Siena (17-17) advanced to the conference championship game for the first time in seven years.

Beating the Saints again on their home court made the championship more special for Iona, which split regular-season games with Siena, each team winning on the road.

"We said if we can win in this environment, this will be one that you remember forever," Iona coach Tim Cluess said. "The place is packed, everyone's against you. These guys can remember it's an overtime

game, on the road, with 7,000 or 8,000 (fans) screaming against you."

Deyshonee Much had 18 points for Iona, and Rickey McGill finished with 14.

Wright finished with 29 points. Javion Ogunyemi had 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Saints, and Brett Bisping added 16 points and 14 rebounds before fouling out in the final seconds.

"Right now, it hurts," Bisping said. "I mean, I'm really proud. We really fought. I can honestly say I think everyone gave it everything they had tonight, and you can live with that."

Trailing by a basket at the break, the Gaels tied it at 40 when McGill drained an open three from the corner early in the second half. Schadrac Casimir and Much followed with two more from beyond the arc and a layup by Much gave the Gaels a 50-44 lead with 16:44 left.

Cromer lifts ETSU to victory

Associated Press

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — T.J. Cromer looked down at the white basketball net hanging around his neck.

"It's my new favorite necklace," the senior guard said with a wide smile.

Cromer scored 23 points, and East Tennessee State beat top-seeded UNC Greensboro 79-74 to win the Southern Conference Tournament championship on Monday night.

The Buccaneers (27-7) rallied in the second half to secure their first trip to the NCAA Tournament since 2010.

Francis Alonso made five three-pointers and scored 28 points for UNC Greensboro (25-9), which beat East Tennessee State twice during the regular season and led by seven at halftime. R.J. White had 23 points before fouling out in the final minute.

UNC Greensboro had a chance to tie the game in the final seconds after an unlikely three-pointer by big man Jordy Kuiper and a steal in the backcourt. But Alonso's three-point attempt from the left wing rattled out and A.J. Merriweather knocked down two clinching free throws.

"I thought it was going in," ETSU coach Steve Forbes said of Alonso's three-point attempt. "I was like, 'Well at least we're going to overtime.'"

The Spartans were unable to stop the Buccaneers down the stretch. ETSU shot 59 percent from the field in the second half. Merriweather had 11 of his 13 points after halftime, including seven straight during a crucial 17-4 run.

Cromer was 6-for-13 from the field and 11-for-11 at the free-throw line. The tournament's most outstanding player also had 41 points in ETSU's semi-final win over Samford.

The Buccaneers last played in the NCAA Tournament in 2010 and lost 100-71 to Kentucky.

UNC Wilmington defends Colonial title

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — C.J. Bryce, Devontae Cacok and company were headed off to celebrate when UNC Wilmington coach Kevin Keatts reminded his jubilant players to take their box scores.

"That's a championship stat sheet," Keatts said. "Get used to that."

They're working on it.

Bryce scored 24 points, and UNC Wilmington clinched its second straight NCAA Tournament berth with a 78-69 victory over College of Charleston in the Colonial Athletic Association championship Monday night.

"We're champions again," Keatts said. "We're going dancing."

The Seahawks (29-5) grabbed control with an 18-5 run in the second half. Bryce sparked the decisive surge with a three-pointer and finished it off with another long-range basket, making it 65-50 with 8:25 remaining.

College of Charleston closed to 76-69 on Evan Bailey's three-pointer with 17 seconds left, but it ran out of time for a comeback. The Cougars (25-9) dropped to 0-6 in conference tournament finals since they last made it to the NAAs by winning the Southern Conference title in 1999.

Seahawk fans rushed the court to join the celebration when the buzzer sounded. Players

jumped and shouted. "We're not done yet," Bryce told the crowd.

Cacok had 15 points and 14 rebounds for the Seahawks, who extended their single-season record with their 29th victory. It was Cacok's 12th double-double of the season.

UNCW is 1-5 in its five previous NCAA tournaments, winning its first-round game in 2002 against No. 4 seed USC before falling in the next game to Indiana.

The Seahawks lost 93-85 to fourth-seeded Duke a year ago. Bryce had 16 in that game.

"This is definitely a confidence boost," said Bryce, a sophomore named the tournament's most outstanding player. "As long as we stay focused, we'll be good."

Keatts declined to address whether the Seahawks deserve a better NCAA seed than last year's group. "But since last year's (Duke) loss, we've only lost five games," he said. "That's hard to do."

Denzel Ingram had 11 points for UNC Wilmington.

Joe Chealey had 21 points for the Cougars, and Jarrell Brantley finished with 20.

Chealey said the team will learn from the experience.

"We got a taste of what it's like," he said. "We'll be back."

Bogut breaks leg in debut with Cavs

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — LeBron James didn't need to speak with Andrew Bogut or see the X-rays on the center's leg.

"I heard it break," he said. "I heard it crack."

In an ugly instant, Cleveland lost much more than a game Monday night.

Bogut broke his left leg less than one minute into his debut and the Cavaliers never recovered while being outgunned 106-98 by the surging and not-to-be-overlooked Miami Heat, who beat the NBA champions twice in three nights.

Dion Waiters scored 29 points, Goran Dragic added 21 and the Heat held off a late rally by the Cavs, who trimmed a 20-point deficit to 103-98 in the final minute. It could have gotten tighter but James missed a long three-pointer before Waiters banked one in with 12.2 seconds left.

However, Miami's latest impressive win was overshadowed by the injury to Bogut, who signed with Cleveland last week and had been welcomed to the team earlier in the day by being given jersey No. 6.5 — a joke that made the big Australia-

lian smile.

Now, though, the Cavs don't know when or if Bogut will be able to help defend their title.

"It's very deflating," James said. "It's a tough moment. We all were excited about the acquisition, you know, bring him in here. It's a tough one, not only obviously for him, first of all, but then for our ballclub."

Kyrie Irving scored 32 and James had 30 points and 17 rebounds for Cleveland.

The 32-year-old Bogut was on the court for just 58 seconds before going down with the injury, a devastating blow to the former No. 1 overall pick who spent the past four seasons with Golden State and was hoping to meet with the Warriors again.

Bogut was on the perimeter guarding Miami's Okaro White, whose knee connected with the center's lower leg. Bogut crumpled to the floor in obvious pain and as he sat up near the scorer's table, TV cameras caught him telling his teammates his leg was broken.

James knew it already.

"As soon as the collision happened I heard it break," James said. "I went over to him and I knew it."

Spurs 112, Rockets 110:

Kawhi Leonard scored 39 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter, and made big plays on both ends in the final 30 seconds as host San Antonio rallied to beat Houston.

Warriors 119, Hawks 111:

Andre Iguodala scored a season-high 24 points on a subpar shooting night for the Splash Brothers, carrying Golden State over host Atlanta, whose chances were ruined by a dispute on the court that led to the benching of Dennis Schroder.

Schroder led the Hawks with 23 points — 19 coming in the first quarter, the highest-scoring period of his career. But he went to the bench with 8:41 left in the third after having words with teammate Dwight Howard, leaving Curry open for a three-pointer.

Clippers 116, Celtics 102:

Blake Griffin scored 26 points, Chris Paul added 23 and host Los Angeles rallied to beat Boston.

Pistons 109, Bulls 95:

Reggie Jackson scored 24 of his 26 points in the second half, and host Detroit pulled away down the stretch for a victory over Chicago.

Jazz 88, Pelicans 83: Gordon Hayward scored 23 points and host Utah led from start to finish against New Orleans.

Hornets 100, Pacers 88: Kemba Walker scored 28 points, Nicolas Batum added 21 and host Charlotte beat Indiana.

Nuggets 108, Kings 96: Wilson Chandler scored a career-high 36 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, helping host Denver weather the absence of Nikola Jokic to beat Sacramento.

Nets 122, Grizzlies 109: Jeremy Lin scored 18 points, including nine straight in a fourth-quarter Brooklyn rally, Sean Kilpatrick added 23 and the visiting Nets won for only the second time in 20 games.

Bucks 112, 76ers 98: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 24 points, Tony Snell had 18 of his season-high 21 in the first half and Milwaukee trailed in a victory over host Philadelphia.

Knicks 113, Magic 105:

Courtney Lee scored 20 points, Lance Thomas added 17 and New York used a big fourth quarter to rally past host Orlando.

Stars snap Capitals' home winning streak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even if Dallas Stars players didn't know how much they've dominated the Capitals lately, they were well aware of Washington's home winning streak.

"Yeah," forward Patrick Sharp said. "We all were."

Behind 42 saves from goaltender Kari Lehtonen, the Stars beat the Capitals 4-2 Monday night to snap that home winning streak at 15 and home point streak at 17.

It was the NHL-leading Capitals' first regulation loss at home since Dec. 17 and their first of any kind at home since Dec. 29.

"It's a tough place to play," said Sharp, whose empty-netter sealed the victory. "You can see when their big guys get going, it's tough to settle the game down. We're a younger team and to hold on to win that

one in the third period is big for us going forward."

The Stars extended their point streak against the Capitals to 12 games, going 10-0-2 in the series dating to their previous regulation loss to them Nov. 30, 2006. Dallas won in D.C. for the sixth consecutive visit to move within five points of a playoff spot.

That puzzling domination continued because of a stellar performance from Lehtonen and three goals on 11 shots that chased Vezina Trophy-winning goaltender Braden Holtby. The Capitals outshot the Stars 44-22, but made costly errors that dug a hole too deep to climb out of.

Holtby fell to 0-4-0 with a 4.79 goals-against average and .837 save percentage in five games against the Stars, the only team in the league he hasn't beaten. He entered the game first in the league with a 1.89 GAA and second with a .931 save

percentage.

Rangers 1, Lightning 0 (OT): Mika Zibanejad scored 3:56 into overtime, Antti Raanta made 38 saves, and visiting New York beat Tampa Bay.

Zibanejad beat Andrei Vasilevskiy during a breakaway.

Sharks 3, Jets 2: Joe Pavelski scored twice and visiting San Jose defeated Winnipeg.

Joe Thornton assisted on Pavelski's empty-net goal to give him 1,000 assists.

Aaron Dell stopped 31 shots in his 14th game for the Sharks.

Senators 4, Bruins 2: Mike Hoffman had a power-play goal early in the third period and host Ottawa defeated Boston.

Derick Brassard, Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Alex Burrows also scored as the Senators extended their winning streak to three games. Craig Anderson made 25 saves.