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Pilots risk oxygen loss in Boeing F/A-18

Bloomberg

As President Donald Trump pushes for the Pentagon to buy more of Boeing's F/A-18 aircraft, the U.S. Navy is grappling with an escalating problem: pilots suffering potentially dangerous oxygen deprivation or a loss of cabin pressure in the fighter jets.

All F/A-18 models, including the Super Hornet that Trump has championed, have shown steady annual increases in what the Navy calls "physiological episodes," according to service testimony obtained by Bloomberg News. What's more, the data show that incidents of oxygen deprivation and cabin decompression have escalated in the last year, while service officials work to determine the root cause of the problems.

Trump's promotion of the Super Hornet began in December, when the president-elect said in a Twitter posting, "Based on the tremendous cost and cost overruns of the Lockheed Martin F-35, I have asked Boeing to price-out a comparable F/A-18 Super Hornet!" Translating Trump's request into action, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis commissioned a review of improvements that would "provide a competitive, cost effective, fighter aircraft alternative" to the F-35C, the Navy version of Lockheed Martin's Joint Strike Fighter.

"Since May 1, 2010, all models" of the F/A-18 "show steady, yearly increases in the number of physiological episodes," accord-

ing to a staff memo prepared in advance of a hearing Tuesday of a House Armed Services subcommittee. Navy officials testifying before the committee called the problem the "No. 1 safety issue."

"I am concerned about this growing trend — one that has a significant effect on readiness and one that needs to be fixed," Rep. Mike Turner, the Ohio Republican who leads the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee, said in his opening statement.

This isn't the first time a high-performance U.S. military aircraft that flies at high altitudes has run into such episodes. In 2012, the Air Force had to solve a mystery after at least a dozen pilots flying Boeing's F-22 Raptor fighters became dizzy and disoriented. The service eventually determined a valve that regulated oxygen flow into the Raptor pilot's pressure vest was too weak to prevent the vest from inflating unnecessarily and restricting the pilot's ability to breathe.

The newest versions of the F/A-18 — the Super Hornet and the Growler, which is tailored to jam an adversary's electronics — "appear to have challenges in regards to hypoxia," according to the memo on the problem written by staff members of House subcommittee. Hypoxia is a deficiency in the amount of oxygen reaching the body's tissues.

Older versions of the plane, the A through

D models, have problems with cabin pressure. Decompression sickness occurs due to cockpit depressurization at altitude and the resulting formation of nitrogen bubbles in the body's venous system and other organs.

The rate of reported occurrences of the physiological episodes per 100,000 flight hours almost doubled in the year ended Oct. 31 from the previous year on older F/A-18 models. They doubled on the newest Growlers and increased 11 percent for the newer Super Hornet.

That resulted in 45 instances for the Super Hornet compared with 39 the previous year, according to Navy statistics obtained by Bloomberg. The trend continued in the three months since Nov. 1, with nine incidents reported by Jan. 31 during 28,600 hours of flying.

The Super Hornet and Growler issues "would appear to point to the onboard oxygen generating" system to which the Navy has made changes, the staff memo said.

"We are working closely with the Navy's Physiological Episode Team to help identify root causes of physiological episodes and their solutions," Caroline Hutcheson, a spokeswoman for Chicago-based Boeing, said in an email. "We take safety in flight very seriously and will continue to assist the Navy on the way forward."

Funding may force Marines to shut down some fighter squadrons

By TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marines could shut down 10 fighter squadrons in the summer if Congress does not pass the 2017 Defense Department budget, the commander of Marine Corps aviation said Tuesday.

"We'll start shutting down squadrons that are not next to deploy," Lt. Gen. Jon Davis told members of the House Committee on Armed Services subcommittee on tactical air and land forces. "Six F/A-18 squadrons and four Harrier squadrons will

basically cease flying operations. So half of our fleet."

Navy and Marines Corps aviation leadership testified at the Tuesday hearing. Navy Rear Adm. Dewolfe "Chip" Miller said the Navy's fighters are similarly affected.

"We are going to have to shut down squadrons as well," Miller said, without providing how many squadrons would be affected.

Earlier this month, the Pentagon unveiled a \$30 billion supplemental budget request for 2017. Congress failed to pass the 2017 Defense Depart-

ment budget last year, opting to pass a continuing resolution that only funded the government through the end of April in order to give the administration of newly elected President Donald Trump an opportunity to shape defense spending.

Congress is still trying to pass the 2017 budget, and is not clear whether the \$30 billion supplemental request will pass a deeply divided Congress. If lawmakers do not approve a spending plan, military operations would be funded at budget caps set at 2016 spending levels.

The Marine Corps has 20 tac-

tical fighter squadrons, though the lack of funding for spare parts and other servicing has decreased the number of aircraft in each unit. More so, many aircraft are older, need maintenance more often and are not available for as many missions, Davis said. The impact also cuts deep into the number of hours that pilots can train.

In the F/A-18 Hornet fleet, "the average pilot in the Marine Corps flew 9.1 hours a month," Davis said. "They are supposed to get 16 hours a month."

Sealift Command a good fit for ex-sailors

BY ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

HAMBANTOTA, Sri Lanka — Lashawnta Jenkins left the Navy after seven years and soon regretted her choice.

“I was young, thought I was in love — so wrong,” she said. “So I got out of the military. For years I beat myself up saying I shouldn’t have.”

Two years ago, Jenkins found a new way to serve on a Navy ship, swapping her uniform for a Duckmen of Louisiana shirt.

Jenkins is one of about 7,000 civilians working for Military Sealift Command, a fleet with a \$3 billion annual budget and more daily missions than many of the world’s active-duty sea services.

The command’s broad mission portfolio includes transporting supplies and people, detecting missile launches and gathering intelligence. These civilians work all over the world in peace and wartime, often alongside servicemembers.

For several of the servicemembers aboard the USNS Fall River for the Pacific Partner-

ship humanitarian exercise in South Asia, this was the first time they’d heard of the unheralded command or met its civilian mariners.

While many come from Merchant Marine programs, commercial shipping or unrelated backgrounds, more than 40 percent of the command’s afloat civilians were in the military.

Their reasons for signing up vary, but for several, it’s a second chance at a life they missed.

“I loved being out on the water,” said Patrick Picker, chief steward aboard the Fall River and a 13-year Navy veteran. “It was a good opportunity for me to get back what I’d lost.”

Leaving the Navy was a culture shock, particularly in the Navy-dominated Virginia Beach area, where the cost of living without the service’s housing and shopping benefits remains high.

Picker discovered the sealift command at a job fair and found that he lived close to the command’s Norfolk-area “pool,” where civilian mariners wait for assignments. The command maintains another pool in

San Diego.

Civilian mariners say there are trade-offs in working for the afloat Navy’s civilian side. The federal government benefits for direct hires are generous by civilian company standards, but fall short of the free active-duty health care and retirement pension still available after 20 years of service.

Some also spoke of a disconnect between the afloat mariners and the command’s shore staff.

If mariners don’t speak up, they can’t always rely on staff to find them a job, which means lost income.

Ship deployments are supposed to last four months, which is shorter than most underway periods on Navy ships. However, that can be extended, sometimes for several weeks, if detailers don’t find other mariners to relieve them. That can lead to less time with family and many of the same difficulties associated with military life.

“If I’m having a rough day, I just remember how I felt when I got the phone call that I got this job and it always put things back

in perspective,” Jenkins said. “Oh god, I was so happy.”

An able seaman performing deckhand duties earns a starting base salary of about \$40,000 a year. Special skills in communications, electric and other fields rate higher starting salaries, while top ship officers can clear well over \$100,000, plus overtime and bonus pay. Many prior service sailors qualify for an advanced merchant mariner rating.

The military’s “up or out” promotion mentality isn’t part of the civilian culture. There are opportunities to advance for people motivated to do it, but those who really like their jobs can keep doing them, Picker said.

The banter with servicemembers on many of these ships is a bonus for mariners like Picker, who talked about his experiences while sitting next to a Navy lieutenant at the mess.

“Now that I’m a civilian, I get to give the khakis a bunch of grief that I couldn’t as an enlisted folk,” he said.

Webb reluctantly declines Naval Academy group’s award

The Washington Post

Former Sen. Jim Webb declined Tuesday to accept an award as a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, citing pressure from a “small but vociferous group” of alumnae who are angry about past statements he made that women aren’t suited for combat and shouldn’t attend the academy.

Webb, D-Va., was expected to receive a Distinguished Graduate Award along with four other alumni Friday in a ceremony in Annapolis, Md. The recognition is the most prestigious awarded by the Naval Academy Alumni Association and Foundation, and goes to living alumni whose character, service and stature “draw wholesome comparison to the qualities that the U.S.

Naval Academy strives for in keeping with its ideals of duty, honor, loyalty and integrity,” according to criteria published by the association.

But critics said the selection of Webb — a highly decorated Marine veteran, 1968 academy graduate and recent presidential candidate — was unacceptable because of his history of disrespecting women. They pointed primarily to an article published in *Washingtonian* magazine in 1979 in which he criticized women attending the academy and said that a dormitory there was a “horny woman’s dream.” The article, headlined “Women Can’t Fight,” was written by Webb after he left the military and while he was a popular academy professor.

Webb released a statement through the alumni association Monday night that said he was sorry for any trouble he caused. But Tuesday he changed course, saying on his website that he expected more protests and does not want to be a distraction at the awards ceremony. He was nominated by classmates who graduated with him in 1968, he said.

“From conversations with the Alumni Association, including information passed down from top Navy leadership in the Pentagon, it is clear that those protesting my receipt of this award now threaten to disrupt the ceremonies surrounding its issuance,” Webb said. “I am being told that my presence at the ceremony would likely mar the otherwise celebratory

nature of that special day, and as a consequence I find it necessary to decline to accept the award.”

The announcement of the award came last week as the U.S. military struggled with a sprawling scandal in which hundreds of servicemembers, mostly Marines, are under investigation for sharing nude photographs of their female colleagues without their permission. The Marine commandant, Gen. Robert Neller, and the top Navy officer, Adm. John Richardson, have promised to address the issue, but critics of Webb’s selection said the timing of the decision is tone-deaf and underscores how female servicemembers still struggle to be respected.

Avoiding civilian casualties in Mosul poses a challenge

By TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Avoiding civilian casualties in Iraq will become more difficult as the battle to recapture western Mosul from the Islamic State group intensifies, Army Gen. Joseph Votel told House lawmakers on Wednesday.

Votel, who leads U.S. Central Command, was questioned by members of the House Armed Services Committee about the battle for Mosul and other aspects of the military campaign against the Islamic State group in the wake of reports that three U.S. airstrikes, including one on March 17, might have led to the death of hundreds of civilians.

The United States is also investigating whether civilians were killed in an airstrike that destroyed a building in al-Jinah, Syria. The Pentagon has said the strike killed al-Qaida fighters who were meeting there, but the building might have been part of a larger mosque complex. A third report of ci-

vilian casualties caused by an airstrike near Raqqa was found not to be credible.

In the Mosul airstrike, it is possible Islamic State fighters had trapped hostages inside the building, rigged it to explode, then purposefully lured U.S. forces to attack it by positioning fighters on the building, Army Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the top U.S. commander for the campaign against the Islamic State group, said Tuesday. As many as 200 civilians are reported to have been killed in that strike.

On Wednesday, Votel also said it is likely U.S. airstrikes had a role in the civilian deaths March 17. More so, he said, as fighting intensifies in densely populated western Mosul, it will be more difficult to avoid hitting civilians.

"I believe as we move into these urban environments, it is going to become more and more difficult to apply an extraordinarily high standard for certain things we are doing, although we will try," he said.

As part of a White House review of the campaign to defeat the Islamic State group, it has been reported that loosening the rules of engagement has been considered, including a greater tolerance for civilian casualties. Some rules of engagement, which determine when U.S. forces can fire on combatants, were loosened in December. However, Townsend and Votel said this week that no changes to the rules of engagement were part of the March 17 operations.

Townsend and Votel also said the Islamic State group used civilians in the building as human shields to deter U.S. or coalition jets from hitting their position.

"I do believe they understand our sensitivity to civilian casualties and that they are exploiting that," Votel told the House Armed Services Committee.

"It's [the Islamic State group's] air defense system," said Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., a committee member and retired Air Force A-10 squadron commander.

Ex-senior chief gets 4 tears for ID thefts

The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — A search of a senior chief's home last year uncovered more than just evidence that the Bronze Star recipient stole two subordinates' identities and fraudulently obtained \$24,000 in loans, according to court documents.

Agents also found a stack of documents relating to nine other people, including seven subordinates. Most of those records had been organized into target check lists to make it easier for the now-former senior chief petty officer to fraudulently apply for more loans, prosecutors said.

Clayton Pressley III, 41, of Chesapeake, was sentenced Monday to four years and two months in prison. He pleaded guilty in August to one count each of bank fraud and aggravated identity theft.

Bruce Sams, Pressley's attorney, called the sentence harsh but said his client knew he would have to serve some time.

According to court documents, Pressley applied for and received two loans totaling \$14,000 in the name of one sailor and a third, \$10,000 loan in the name of the other. He used the proceeds for his own benefit, the documents said.

The loans were from Pioneer Services, a division of MidCountry Bank that caters to military members.

Federal sentencing guidelines recommended Pressley receive no more than 3½ years in prison, and that was what prosecutors asked for.

"This defendant held an awesome trust and respect reserved for operators within the U.S. Military who have served their country honorably," then-Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Alyssa Nichol said in court documents in January. "He has betrayed that trust and sullied that respect."

Pressley served in the Navy almost 20 years, leaving in February.

Push on for terrorism war monument

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has long been the inspiration for Andrew Brennan to establish a national memorial to honor the men and women who served in the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, which he envisions as a place for veterans to gather and remember their friends and for others to learn about the war's costs.

"In the 35 years since the [Vietnam] Wall was dedicated, the Vietnam generation has seen healing related to that memorial," said Brennan, 32, an Afghanistan War veteran and former Army captain. "There's camaraderie. That wall serves

as a solid reminder to our citizenry of the cost of military action."

Nearly 7,000 servicemembers have been killed in the Global War on Terrorism, which has lasted for 15 years. Roughly 2.8 million veterans served in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a nonprofit organization.

To honor them, Brennan created the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation and now has the help of Jan Scruggs, the man who conceived the idea for the Vietnam Wall and spent seven years struggling to get it built. They got a step closer to their goal Tuesday when Reps. Mike Gallagher, R-Wis., and Seth Moulton, D-Mass., intro-

duced legislation to clear the way for a war memorial on the National Mall.

The bill would allow an exception for the Global War on Terrorism to the law that requires a conflict to be over for 10 years before a national commemorative can be established. Similar legislation stalled in Congress last year. It was introduced by former Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., a former Navy SEAL who is now secretary of the Department of Interior, which is responsible for managing the National Mall.

"If we're going to wait to build it 10 years after, that could be another 100 years. I don't want to hear it," Scruggs said. "These veterans deserve it. The country needs it. And the time is right."

Much at stake as Britain begins EU exit

The Washington Post

LONDON — A little over nine months after British voters chose to withdraw from the European Union, Britain took a decisive — and likely irreversible — step Wednesday toward leaving a partnership that has bound the country to the continent for nearly half a century.

With the simple handoff of a letter in Brussels in the early afternoon, the British government became the first country to ever trigger Article 50, the mechanism by which nations can exit the European Union.

“This is a historic moment from which there can be no turning back,” Prime Minister Theresa May announced to a momentarily hushed House of

Commons, before debate later turned rowdy.

The move instantly plunged Britain and the 27 other EU nations into two years of what will almost certainly be messy and acrimonious negotiations over the terms of divorce.

The talks will encompass a dizzying array of subjects, including trade terms, immigration rules, financial regulations and, of course, money. Britain joined the group that became the European Union in 1973, so decades of ties, pacts and arrangements are part of the complicated unraveling.

For both sides, the stakes are enormous. Britain could be forced to reorient its economy — the world’s fifth-largest — if it loses favorable terms with its

biggest trade partner. It also may not survive the departure in one piece, with Scotland threatening to bolt.

The European Union, which for decades has only expanded its integrative reach across a continent long divided, faces perhaps an even greater existential threat. If Britain is allowed to get a good deal, other countries that are already contemplating their own departures could speed toward the exits.

The British public stunned the world last June when it opted to leave, voting 52 to 48 percent in a referendum. Polls show that voters who opted for “leave” were driven by concerns that immigration was out of control under the EU’s free-movement laws, and that Britain needed

to leave the bloc to restore its sovereignty.

Advocates for “remain” had forecast grievous economic harm and a weaker British role in global affairs.

The still-raw divisions in British society were on vivid display in a special of House of Commons session. May was cheered by Brexit backers and jeered by its opponents as she called for “a new, special and deep partnership with the European Union that works for us all.”

Parliament spent weeks debating whether to grant May the right to trigger Article 50. The assent of lawmakers was needed because the referendum’s outcome was only advisory.

Soldier saves woman, baby in fire

BY MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

OSAN, South Korea — A soldier’s weekly commissary run turned into a daredevil rescue last month when he scaled an apartment building to save a woman and her baby after spotting a fire near Camp Humphreys.

Sun Yong Helmer was home with her baby when she smelled smoke around 4 p.m. on Feb. 5. She tried walking out of her third-floor apartment toward the stairs, but thick black smoke prevented her escape.

“The smoke started coming through under the door, first white, then grey and then black,” Helmer said in an interview with Camp Humphreys’ public affairs office, which was shared with Stars and Stripes. “I was so so scared.”

She called the fire department, but instead of firemen at her door, she found Staff Sgt. Victor Gomoimunn hanging from her window.

Gomoimunn, 33, from Waterford, N.Y., and assigned to the 339th Quartermaster Company at Camp Humphreys, was driving to the grocery store with his

wife and two daughters when they noticed smoke billowing from the apartment building in his neighborhood.

They stopped and joined a crowd of people gathered around the building. Helmer’s husband said his wife and child were trapped on the third floor and his attempts to reach the apartment had failed.

“No one was doing anything — so I went,” Gomoimunn said.

He climbed up what he thought was a water pipe but turned out to be for gas and reached Helmer, a civilian employee who was working as a nurse at Camp Humphreys. Helmer and her husband have since been transferred to Germany.

Helmer was shocked to find a stranger outside her window.

“I felt horrified, but he brought big comfort,” she said. “He tried to examine the rooms and see what he could do.”

While initially hoping to bring Helmer and child down, Gomoimunn decided it would be safer to bring Helmer and her 10-month-old daughter to the balcony and wait for firefighters.

Twenty minutes later firefighters arrived and escorted all three out of the building.

News of the rescue was slow to emerge because a humble Gomoimunn didn’t tell anybody at first.

Now dubbed Spider-Man by his unit, he insists it was a family effort.

His wife started a Facebook group seeking aid for the people affected by the fire, which has since been taken over by the unit. His two daughters helped calm the other children from the apartment. They also took the initiative to donate shoes and clothes so the kids could attend school the next day.

Gomoimunn said it was ultimately the thought of his family being in danger that drove him that day.

“If my wife and kids were stranded in a fire and I wasn’t able to do anything, I would pray for someone who could,” he told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday in a telephone interview from the southeastern port city of Pohang, where he is participating in a military exercise.

Video Game Hall of Fame names finalists

Associated Press

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — The World Video Game Hall of Fame’s 2017 finalists span decades and electronic platforms, from the 1981 arcade classic “Donkey Kong” that launched Mario’s plumbing career to the 2006 living room hit “Wii Sports.”

The hall of fame at The Strong museum in Rochester said Tuesday that 12 video games are under consideration for induction in May. They also include “Final Fantasy VII,” “Halo: Combat Evolved,” “Microsoft Windows Solitaire,” “Mortal Kombat,” “Myst,” “Pokemon Red and Green,” “Portal,” “Resident Evil,” “Street Fighter II” and “Tomb Raider.”

The finalists were chosen from thousands of nominations from more than 100 countries, said museum officials, who will rely on an international committee of video game scholars and journalists to select the 2017 class. The winners will be inducted May 4.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man jailed for role in heist with tot in car

KS KANSAS CITY — A second man who helped rob a Kansas bank before leading police on a chase with a toddler in the getaway car has been sentenced to federal prison.

A judge sentenced Jacob L. Smith, 19, on Monday in his hometown of Kansas City. Smith pleaded guilty to bank robbery and brandishing a firearm. A co-defendant, Gary Jordan, 40, is serving a related three-decade prison term.

Authorities say the men held up the First National Bank in Stilwell in March of last year, then fled into Missouri with law enforcers in pursuit. Smith was accused of firing shots during the chase and Jordan of trying to carjack another vehicle after they wrecked.

The toddler of Danille Morris, 27, wasn't hurt. Morris was sentenced to more than 16 years in prison.

4-legged fugitives take free rein on highway

CA WALNUT CREEK — That mustang in the rearview mirror turned out to be a real horse running on a Northern California highway — followed by a mule.

Commuters east of San Francisco on Monday were stunned to see a white horse and a brown mule running across Interstate 680. Steve Burdo, with Contra Costa County Animal Services, said the animals broke through a fence about a mile away. The pair used an on-ramp to enter the highway.

Authorities shut down lanes shortly before 7:30 a.m. as motorists shot cellphone video and officers rounded up the four-legged fugitives.

Man donates 32 gallons of blood over 64 years

KS TOPEKA — A Kansas man who has donated 32 gallons of blood over more than six decades credits his father for his award-winning generosity.

Harold Facklam Jr., 87, of Topeka, recently was recognized by the Kansas Health Care Association and the Kansas Center for Assisted Living for the 259 pints he has donated through the American Red Cross, the Topeka Capital-Journal reported.

Facklam, who donated until health reasons caused him to stop in April 2015, said he doesn't think about how his donations have affected others or even saved lives.

But he gave a nod to his late father, Harold Facklam Sr., who he said encouraged him to donate when the younger Facklam was almost 21 in 1951.

Man pleads not guilty in destructive DUI crash

MA WOBURN — Prosecutors said a Massachusetts man charged with driving drunk and causing a crash that took down four utility poles, knocking out power to an entire neighborhood, told police he drank a dozen beers in the hours before the crash.

Ryan Carney, 22, of Woburn, was released on personal recognizance after a not guilty plea was entered on his behalf Monday in connection with the crash, which occurred in Stoneham at 1 a.m. Sunday. He was also ordered not to drink alcohol.

Carney's attorney disputed that his client had 12 beers.

Fire Chief Matthew Grafton says it's the most damage he's ever seen from a single-vehicle crash. No one was injured.

Officers lift car to rescue pinned woman

PA UPPER DARBY — Officials said a woman was struck by and pinned underneath a car over the weekend before police officers and an emergency responder lifted it off her. She remains in critical condition.

Police in Delaware County's Upper Darby said the woman, whose name wasn't released, was jogging when she was struck about 8 a.m. Saturday by a car driven by a man on his way to church.

Superintendent Michael Chitwood said the woman was trapped under the vehicle, and three Upper Darby police officers and an emergency responder lifted it off.

The 86-year-old driver remained at the scene and was cooperating.

2 accused of trying to sell baby online for \$3K

TN ELIZABETHTON — Authorities said a Tennessee couple is accused of trying to sell a 5-month-old baby online for \$3,000.

Local news outlets reported that the Greene County Sheriff's Office said Deanna Lynn Greer, 37, and John David Cain, 26, were arrested Friday on charges of aggravated child abuse and aggravated child neglect or endangerment.

Sheriff Pat Hankins said authorities were alerted after another couple saw an ad posted on Craigslist listing the infant for sale. Hankins said an undercover officer contacted Greer and Cain and was given the price for the child. He said the couple then met with the agent at a store and, exchanged the baby for cash.

Dad of boy hit by car won't condone shooting

OH CINCINNATI — The father of a 4-year-old boy hit by a vehicle in Cincinnati said he doesn't condone the subsequent slaying of the driver and is sorry for the man's family.

Police said Jamie Urton, 44, got out of his car after hitting the child Friday and was repeatedly shot in a confrontation.

Initial reports indicated the boy was struck in the street, but his father, Jamal Killings, told WCPO-TV the child was on the curb. Killings said he tried to stop the car from going too fast in a neighborhood full of playing kids, and it swerved around him and struck his son.

Killings said he tended to the boy, who's now out of the hospital, and he didn't realize someone shot the driver. Police are looking for several suspects.

Man arrested after gun, pot found in stroller

IL CHICAGO — A Chicago man outside with a 1-year-old boy was arrested after police allegedly found a handgun and marijuana in his baby stroller.

Chicago police said Anthony Kennedy, 32, is charged with unlawful possession of a handgun by a felon, child endangerment and other charges.

A weekend police statement says officers responded to a call on Friday afternoon of someone with a gun in a West Side neighborhood and approached Kennedy. As they did, Kennedy allegedly fled but was soon captured. The child with Kennedy is now in the care of relatives.

Kennedy was ordered held on \$100,000 bail.

From wire reports

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Sluggers top new breed of shortstops

Associated Press

CLEARWATER, Fla. — As an All-Star shortstop in the 1970s and '80s, Larry Bowa recalls having a clear job description: "Catch the balls and make all the plays."

Bowa typified the traditional sandpaper shortstop, grinding out a long career on fast feet, relentless effort and the expectation that power should come from the corner spots.

But more than 30 years after his retirement, Bowa's breed is nearing extinction in the major leagues. Carlos Correa, Addison Russell and a bumper crop of sluggers at short hit more homers than ever in 2016. The kids are bringing unprecedented pop to the middle infield, and modern metrics are hastening the surge.

"If sabermetrics were in play when I played," Bowa said, "I would have never put on a big league uniform."

Today's shortstops are being asked to play a different game. They totaled 493 home runs last season, easily surpassing the next highest mark of 423 from 2002 — right in the heart of the Steroid Era.

It's not a top-heavy group. Fifteen shortstops hit at least 15 homers last year, more than doubling the previous high of seven in 2002. Eleven of those players are 27 or younger, led by Colorado's Trevor Story (24) and Oakland's Marcus Semien (26) with 27 homers each. The

pack behind them included rookies Corey Seager (22) of the Dodgers and Aledmys Diaz (26) of the Cardinals. Xander Bogaerts (Red Sox) didn't turn 24 until October. Russell (Cubs) and Francisco Lindor (Indians) turned 23 in the offseason. Correa (Astros) is only 22.

Point is, the power is on at the 6-spot, and there's juice enough to keep it running for years.

It's not that the position has always lacked muscle. Boston's Vern Stephens and Rico Petrocelli hit their share of big flies over the Green Monster in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, and Ernie Banks smacked many of his 512 career homers while playing shortstop for the Cubs in the '50s and '60s. But those players were exceptions. For everyone else, the expectations were simple — catch the ball, throw the ball and don't embarrass yourself at the plate.

Cal Ripken Jr. changed that in the 1980s. Standing 6-foot-4 but with a point guard's agility, Ripken infused uncommon might at the position and began to redefine the role of the middle infielder.

In the 1990s and 2000s, stars like Alex Rodriguez, Nomar Garciaparra, Derek Jeter and Miguel Tejada took the baton from Ripken, and Troy Tulowitzki followed soon after. But even at the peak of the Steroid Era, power at short was a luxury, not a necessity — in the early 2000s, All-Stars like Omar Vizquel, Rafael Furcal,

David Eckstein and Jack Wilson rarely if ever reached double-digit homers in a season.

Now, homer-happy kids like Story, Seager and Correa are driving the glove-first, slap-hitting shortstop out of the game. There aren't many established, everyday shortstops left that haven't topped 15 homers at least once. Alcides Escobar, Elvis Andrus, Adeiny Hechavarria, Erick Aybar and Jose Iglesias have built careers on sharp defense and low strikeout rates. Jordy Mercer and Matt Duffy are a bit stronger, each topping out at 12 home runs in a season. And that's it.

Providing that power can mean sacrificing defensive range, but sabermetrics are encouraging the shift. Scouting reports have become so advanced, teams can predict with greater certainty where opponents will hit the ball. Sure hands and a strong arm are still crucial, but a slow first step isn't the deal breaker it used to be.

"We didn't have all that stuff," Bowa said. "We just went on range and your pitcher's ability to put the ball where the catcher's glove was. That part of it's changed.

"When I played, I wish I had spray charts like that, where a guy pulls, if he hits 75 ground balls, 70 of them are dead pull between third and short," Bowa added. "That'd be great."

Data isn't changing the position by itself, though. These players are built differently.

Ripken's rare physique made him a generational talent, but now the majors are stocked with big-framed shortstops. Seager and Correa stand 6-foot-4, and Bogaerts and Didi Gregorius (Yankees) are 6-3. Russell is only 6-foot but has superhero-sized shoulders. Lindor isn't so large at 5-foot-11, but he still generates enough bat speed to threaten the outfield fences.

"They have that combination of speed, power, range, arm, that no matter what the sabermetrics say, your eyesight tells you what they have," Bowa said. "And they're special. You build teams around guys like that."

They're gifted, but they've also tailored their bodies specifically for the position. Bogaerts and Russell, for instance, made baseball a full-time endeavor at 15 or 16 years old, abandoning other sports to refine swings and improve footwork.

Though strength has never been more important, staying lithe is a priority for these broad-shouldered shortstops. Russell even took it upon himself to lose 20 pounds as a high school senior when scouts questioned whether he could stick up the middle.

"For me, it's kind of an even balance," Russell said. "It seems like my frame kind of does all the talking there. Work really hard in the gym. Work really hard on agility, quickness and fast-twitch moving, so all those things, we're just getting better at right now."

NFL owners revamp replay, nix 'leapers'

Associated Press

PHOENIX—NFL owners got busy Tuesday passing several rules changes, adopting resolutions they believe will speed up the game and enhance player safety, and perhaps even allow for more personality in player celebrations.

One day after approving the Oakland Raiders' move to Las Vegas, the owners sped up discussions on dozens of subjects.

That led to a change in handling officiating of video replays; eliminating "leapers"

trying to block field goals or extra points; adding protections for defenseless receivers running their routes; and further discussions with the players about loosening restrictions for on-field celebrations.

The NFL also extended bringing touchbacks out to the 25-yard line for another year; made permanent the rule disqualifying a player who is penalized twice in a game for specific unsportsmanlike conduct fouls; and tabled reducing overtime in the regular season from 15 minutes to 10, a subject likely to be addressed at the May

meetings in Chicago.

Referees will now watch replays on the field using Surface tablets, eliminating "going under the hood" to watch on television monitors. League officiating chief Dean Blandino and his staff in New York will make the final decisions on those calls, with input from the referee, who in the past was the ultimate arbiter after consulting with league headquarters.

The leaper rule was a slam dunk, and passed unanimously.

Americans hang on, draw with Panama

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY — Christian Pulisic was sent tumbling to the ground early on. The 18-year-old phenom bounced back up, and so did the United States.

Pulisic made an outstanding individual move to spin a defender and feed Clint Dempsey for his 56th international goal, and the Americans hung on for an important 1-1 draw against Panama on Tuesday night that kept up their rebound in World Cup qualifying.

Dempsey's 39th-minute goal on a warm and humid night moved him within one of Landon Donovan's American scoring record, but Gabriel Gomez tied the score four minutes later when the U.S. allowed him a clear shot after a throw-in bounced off a scrum.

"Just the atmosphere and the environment we played in today, I think we can be satis-

fied going home with one," Pulisic said of the point.

Mexican referee Cesar Ramos, working in place of injured countryman Roberto Garcia, called 26 fouls, including 19 against Panama, but no yellow cards.

"Three minutes into the game, you realize you're playing 12 against 11," American goalkeeper Tim Howard said.

Already the best American player at age 18, Pulisic was one day short of the anniversary of his international debut and the focal point of opponents. He took a chip from Dempsey in the 29th minute, and Luis Tejada made a hard slide tackle that took out his legs. Pulisic went down, grabbing his left leg, and got up, irate, yelling and pointing at Tejada. The Panamanian reached out a hand only to see Pulisic turn and walk away.

"I think Panama thought

there was a bull's-eye on his back, and they went after him from minute 1 all the way through," U.S. coach Bruce Arena said. "He has to learn that, that if the referee is not going to protect him he's got to deal with it, and I think he did well."

Howard put it even more bluntly.

"When you play against top, top defenders in Europe, they recognize the talent and they defend properly," the 38-year-old goalkeeper said. "In CONCACAF, they don't defend properly, they just come steaming through you."

After an 0-2 start led the U.S. Soccer Federation to fire Jurgen Klinsmann and bring back Bruce Arena, the Americans have climbed to fourth in the final round of the North and Central American and Caribbean region. Mexico leads with 10

points, followed by Costa Rica with seven, Panama with five, the U.S. and Honduras with four each, and Trinidad and Tobago with three.

The top three nations in the hexagonal qualify for next year's World Cup in Russia, and the No. 4 team advances to a playoff against Asia's fifth-place nation.

"Sometimes it's not always about soccer in these games," Pulisic said. "You've got to really stay focused and physical out there."

The U.S. goal came after Pulisic played the ball by Jermaine Jones and won it from Panama captain Felipe Baloy at the edge of the penalty area and broke in on goal. Pulisic stopped, stepped on the ball with his right foot as defender Roman Torres spun, played the ball from his right foot to his left and cut it back to Dempsey.

US women's hockey team, USA Hockey settle dispute

Associated Press

Just three days before hosting the world championships, USA Hockey and the women's national team reached an agreement to end a wage dispute and avoid a boycott on home ice.

The four-year deal finalized Tuesday night pays players beyond the six-month Olympic period, up to \$129,000 if they win Olympic gold and improves development of the sport.

"We didn't want to settle for something that wasn't going to push women's hockey as far as we thought it was able to go," U.S. captain Meghan Duggan said by phone. "Really excited about what this brings for the future of women's hockey."

The deal means players will be on the ice Friday in Plymouth, Mich., to begin their title defense against archrival Canada. The team is scheduled to practice Wednesday once everyone arrives for hurried preparations in advance of a tournament that now will be a celebration of USA Hockey

instead of a stage for criticism after the dispute drew the attention of several sports unions and U.S. senators.

USA Hockey executive director Dave Ogrea said laying a foundation for the future of the women's game was the crux of the agreement.

"It was critical to go through this process and to get this done, and I'm pretty sure that the women are very, very satisfied with where we ended up and it puts us in a great place to all move forward in a great way," Ogrea said by phone Tuesday night.

Coming off making just \$1,000 a month for six months around the Olympics, this contract pays players roughly \$3,000 a month. Annual compensation can surpass \$70,000 when combined with contributions from the United States Olympic Committee.

Players receive Olympic medal bonuses of \$20,000 for gold and \$15,000 for silver from USA Hockey and \$37,500

for gold, \$22,500 for silver and \$15,000 for bronze from the USOC. It could be a banner year for the women's national team if successful at the 2018 Olympics in South Korea.

The agreement includes insurance protection and the same business class travel that the men get for the world championships.

"There was compromises on both sides, but the contract in its entirety, it's going to change the lives of the current players that are on the team right now (and also) the next generation," star forward Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson said by phone. "It's going to be a turning point for women's hockey in the U.S. (and) I feel like a turning point for women's hockey in the world."

USA Hockey president Jim Smith said people will look back on this day "as one of the most positive in the history" of the organization.

After more than a year of negotiations over wages and

equitable support, players announced March 15 that they'd boycott the International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship if significant progress wasn't made toward an agreement. The sides met for 10-plus hours in person last week and continued conversations before finally agreeing to a deal.

Duggan said it was possible the original team wouldn't be on the ice for the tournament.

"That was a reality from Day One," Duggan said. "We put that on the line."

The deal includes the formation of a women's high performance advisory group with current and former players — like Hockey Canada has had for some time. The group's goal is to advance girls' and women's hockey programming, marketing, promotion and fundraising to augment existing grassroots programs.

"That's an instrumental part in the contract," Lamoureux-Davidson said.

Wizards clinch Southeast Division title

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Water pooled on a table in the middle of the noisy locker room and soaked in the carpet. The Washington Wizards had just celebrated clinching the Southeast Division for the franchise's first division title in 38 years.

"We had a little water bottle fight in here," a smiling Bradley Beal said after a 119-108 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night. "It's history for us."

John Wall shot 14-for-25 for 34 points and Beal was held to 16 points on 7-for-16 shooting, but the Wizards ended the longest division-title drought in NBA history with their fourth straight victory.

"John and I especially, we've been on the team for five years," Beal said. "It's big-time for us and we're excited to keep it moving forward."

When the franchise last claimed a division title in 1978-

79, it was known as the Bullets and played in suburban Landover, Md. The team had won its lone NBA championship the previous season and went on to lose the 1979 Finals to the Seattle SuperSonics.

From 1979-80 on, Washington has had one of the worst winning percentages in the league, and while the team has made the playoffs 14 times in that span, it hasn't gotten past the second round.

Warriors 113, Rockets 106: Stephen Curry scored 32 points, Klay Thompson had 25 and the Golden State Warriors built a big lead early and held on for a win over host Houston.

The Warriors scored 37 points in the first quarter and never trailed on the way to their eighth straight victory and 60th this season.

Heat 97, Pistons 96: Hassan Whiteside tipped in a shot with his left hand as time expired to lift Miami over host

Detroit.

Whiteside, playing with a thick bandage on his right hand to protect 13 stitches he got a week ago, tipped in Goran Dragic's miss after a wild final play over the game's final 11.3 seconds. James Johnson took the initial shot for Miami, Dragic muscled the rebound off the rim and Whiteside elevated over Andre Drummond for the winning tip.

The win was huge for Miami (36-38), which moved one game ahead of No. 9 Chicago for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Trail Blazers 122, Nuggets 113: Jusuf Nurkic had a career-high 33 points with 16 rebounds against his former team, CJ McCollum had 39 points and host Portland beat Denver to take hold of the eighth seed in the West.

Hawks 95, Suns 91: Dennis Schroder hit consecutive three-pointers to spark a 17-1

run for a victory that snapped host Atlanta's seven-game losing streak and boosted its playoff hopes.

Timberwolves 115, Pacers 114: Ricky Rubio made three free throws with 3.4 seconds left to give visiting Minnesota a victory over Indiana.

Minnesota snapped a season-high six-game losing streak.

Bucks 118, Hornets 108: Tony Snell scored a season-high 26 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 20 points and eight rebounds and host Milwaukee handed Charlotte's playoff hopes a potentially devastating blow.

76ers 106, Nets 101: Dario Saric scored 23 points, Robert Covington had 21 points and 13 rebounds and undermanned Philadelphia beat Brooklyn.

Rookie guard Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot had 17 points and nine boards for the 76ers, who dressed only nine players.

Oshie, Ovechkin lift Capitals over Wild in overtime

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — T.J. Oshie scored his second goal of the game 1:42 into overtime to bookend Alex Ovechkin's hat trick, Braden Holtby earned his 40th win and the NHL-leading Washington Capitals beat the Minnesota Wild 5-4 on Tuesday night for their fifth straight victory.

After Eric Staal's goal for the Wild tied the game with 26.6 seconds left in regulation, Oshie took a pass in the left circle from Marcus Johansson and beat struggling Wild goalie Devan Dubnyk with a wrist shot. Johansson had four assists.

Martin Hanzal and Jason Pominville had a goal and an assist apiece, but the Wild lost for the eighth time in nine games and fell to 3-11-1 in March after forward Zach Parise exited early with an injury.

Oshie started Washington's longest road trip in six years, five games over an eight-day

span, with a first-period goal set up by Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom. Holtby made 26 saves, brushing off goals by Jared Spurgeon and Staal in the final five minutes to reach 40 victories for the third consecutive season. Martin Brodeur (2005-08, New Jersey) and Evgeni Nabokov (2007-10, San Jose) are the only other goalies in NHL history to do so.

Dubnyk, who stopped 15 shots, has given up 26 goals over his last eight games.

Ovechkin gave him even more trouble, guiding the Capitals one step closer to the Presidents' Trophy and home-ice advantage throughout the Stanley Cup playoffs. His 17th career three-goal game came all on power plays.

Ovechkin has a whopping 11 goals and six assists in six career games against Dubnyk, four of those with Minnesota.

Oilers 2, Kings 1: Cam Talbot made 34 saves and host Edmonton earned a playoff spot

for the first time in 11 years by beating Los Angeles.

Sharks 5, Rangers 4 (OT): Brent Burns scored a power-play goal 3:10 into overtime and host San Jose snapped a six-game losing streak, rallying past New York on a night when both teams clinched a playoff berth.

Ducks 4, Canucks 1: Corey Perry and Patrick Eaves scored 74 seconds apart early in the first period, and visiting Anaheim cruised past Vancouver to extend its season-high winning streak to five games.

Bruins 4, Predators 1: Tuukka Rask made 24 saves in his return from a one-game absence and host Boston beat Nashville to boost its playoff chances.

Maple Leafs 3, Panthers 2: Auston Matthews broke Wendel Clark's 31-year-old franchise rookie record with his 35th goal of the season in host Toronto's victory over Florida.

Blue Jackets 3, Sabres 1:

Cam Atkinson scored his team-leading 34th goal and Sergei Bobrovsky made 41 saves to power host Columbus past Buffalo.

Hurricanes 4, Red Wings 1: Lee Stempniak and Joakim Nordstrom scored about five minutes apart in the first period, and host Carolina beat Detroit in the second meeting between the teams in two nights.

Flyers 3, Senators 2 (SO): Jordan Weal scored the only shootout goal after tying the game late in the third period to lift host Philadelphia over Ottawa.

Canadiens 4, Stars 1: Brendan Gallagher put host Montreal ahead early in the third period against Dallas.

Jets 4, Devils 3 (SO): Patrik Laine scored in the shootout and visiting Winnipeg rallied from a two-goal deficit to beat New Jersey in the makeup of a game postponed by a snowstorm this month.