

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## 'Golden ticket' helps some return to Navy

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — In its latest initiative to retain sailors, the Navy on Wednesday announced an incentive program that takes a nod from Willy Wonka.

The Targeted Reentry Program allows commanding officers to recommend eligible outgoing sailors for "golden tickets" or "silver tickets" that would expedite their re-entry processes should they wish to rejoin.

Golden-ticket holders could return to active duty within a year of their release, the Navy said. Those with silver tickets could get active-duty status within two years of release, depending on the Navy's needs.

Rejoining sailors using the

tickets will regain their most recent rates and pay grades upon return to active duty. Sailors must remain fully qualified for active duty to use their tickets.

The initiative is among about 45 the Navy is unrolling as part of its Sailor 2025 program, which aims to "more effectively recruit, develop, manage, reward and retain the force of tomorrow," the service said.

Vice Adm. Robert Burke, chief of naval personnel, said the program should help the Navy attract and retain the best of the best.

"Talent is tough to draw in and even tougher to keep," he said in a Navy statement. "These changes are designed to maximize opportunities for command triads to advance their best Sailors while manag-

ing community and individual rates' health."

The re-entry program is open to officers of ranks O-3 and O-4 as well as E-4 to E-6 enlisted sailors who have less than 14 years of active status and have completed their required minimum service. Sailors also must have met character standards, must have passed their most recent physical fitness assessments and must have superior performance noted on evaluations to be eligible for tickets.

Those who accept tickets will go into a minimum reserve status after leaving active duty. Those sailors will not have a participation requirement, but will not be eligible for benefits such as health care or retirement points.

Seaman Robert Ikes, an aviation boatswain's mate on

the USS George Washington, is halfway through his five-year tour. Ikes, who is considering leaving the service after this enlistment, said having the "backup option" of a golden or silver ticket could be beneficial.

"It's good because some people get out and they don't know what's going to happen — they could hit rock bottom," he said. "I think it's a good idea trying to help people to make it easier for people to come back in instead of jumping through hoops."

The program will become available for enlisted sailors who enter Intends to Separate status on or after April 1. Officers' pending resignation requests that have not yet been adjudicated must be dated Oct. 1 or later to be eligible, Burke said.

## Navy probes incident that left pilots cold, flying blind

*Los Angeles Times*

LOS ANGELES — In the latest frightening example of cockpit problems in high-performance military aircraft, the Navy is investigating a recent incident in which the cockpit temperature of an EA-18G Growler reportedly plunged to minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Ice coated flight instruments and windows, forcing the plane's two-person crew to land using a Garmin watch and spoken instructions from air controllers.

Trade publication Defense News, which first reported the incident, said the crew suffered serious injuries from frostbite, including severe blistering and burns on their hands.

The jet, which specializes in jamming enemy electronics, took off Jan. 29 from Naval

Air Station Whidbey Island in northern Washington and was bound for Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake near Ridgecrest, Calif., where the aircraft is based, said Cmdr. Ron Flanders, Naval Air Forces spokesman.

The crew received a warning that the environmental control system that supports cabin air quality and temperature was icing, according to Defense News. Citing sources familiar with the incident and an internal report it obtained, the trade publication said a mist pumped into the cockpit and iced over windows and flight instruments, rendering the pilot and the plane's weapons system officer "almost completely blind."

The crew was able to land the plane successfully back at Whidbey Island, Flanders said.

One of the crewmembers has since "returned to a flight status," meaning they are cleared for flight. The other flier has not yet been cleared, though they, too, are "expected to make a full recovery," he said.

Flanders said he could not provide further details of the flight or the reported injuries due to the Navy's investigation into the matter and patient privacy laws. Results of the investigation will determine whether further action is necessary, he said.

A spokesman for Boeing Co., which builds the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet and its derivative, the EA-18G Growler, said the company could not comment on this specific incident or the environmental control system because of the Navy investigation.

The incident with the Growl-

er is the latest in-cockpit flight issue the U.S. military has dealt with. Pilots have reported oxygen deficiency, also known as hypoxia, while flying a variety of fighter planes, including the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet, the F-22 and the F-35A. Modern fighter pilots don't get enough oxygen in their bloodstreams when flying at high altitudes, meaning that the aircraft must produce its oxygen during flight. Pilots breathe that oxygen through masks.

Last year, the Navy set up a physiological event action team to identify and find solutions to so-called physiological episodes, which include hypoxia and other conditions.

Analysts said the Growler incident seemed to be an unusual failure of the environmental control system.

# Forgotten failure

## Japan's ill-fated 2nd Hawaii attack helped turn tide of WWII in Pacific

BY WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The Japanese surprise air attack of Dec. 7, 1941, on Hawaii was a staggering military triumph that decimated the U.S. Pacific Fleet's battleships in Pearl Harbor and wiped out most of Oahu's air defenses.

Three months later, the Japanese Imperial Navy sought to repeat a surprise bombing raid on the island using its newest long-range aircraft, the "flying boat" Kawanishi H8K.

While the two H8Ks successfully flew the 4,800-mile round trip from the Marshall Islands to Hawaii, the March 4, 1942, bombing raid was a tactical flop.

But its greatest failure was strategic, tipping the Japanese navy's hand to U.S. military leaders, who leveraged the intelligence to achieve victory in the Battle of Midway three months later.

Japan's December attack, which had finally drawn a reluctant United States into World War II, had hit all eight Pacific battleships, sinking four of them. The USS Arizona and USS Oklahoma were unsalvageable. More than 2,400 Americans died in the attack.

Imperial Japan immediately set about attempting to occupy most of Asia with the assurance that the Pacific Fleet would be too crippled to stop them.

Japanese war planners soon recognized that "crucial targets" such as the Pearl Harbor shipyards, maintenance shops and fuel-reserve facilities had been largely undamaged, according to an exhibit at the Pacific Aviation Museum in Honolulu. From those shipyards, America mobilized an astoundingly speedy and effective effort to repair vessels damaged in the December attack.

The Japanese hoped to stymie that salvage work with Operation K, a bombing raid using the first two prototypes of the H8K amphibious plane.

"It was probably the best seaplane in the war, very heavily armed," Burl Burlingame, historian at the Pacific Aviation Museum, said of the 167 four-prop H8Ks that Japan built during the war. "It would actually engage in combat with American fighters on occasion. It was huge, and for its size it was very maneuverable, very rugged."

Despite being a better seaplane than anything produced by the U.S. or Great Britain during the war, the H8K is "one of those iconic aircraft of the Pacific war that's pretty much forgotten," Burlingame

said.

While a significantly smaller attack than the one three months earlier, the March 1942 bombing raid was audacious — the longest distance run of the war.

The H8Ks, with a 124-foot wingspan and a top speed of nearly 300 mph, took off from Wotje Atoll in the Marshall Islands on March 3 and set down in the calm waters of French Frigate Shoals about 560 miles northwest of Honolulu. There they were refueled by two waiting submarines.

They then flew in the dark toward Oahu, each plane carrying four 550-pound bombs. They were detected by U.S. radar about 200 miles out, and American fighter planes were scrambled to intercept them. Without airborne radar, the fighters could not find the H8Ks.

But the lion's share of bad luck fell upon the Japanese raiders, who had been counting on a moonlit night to spot their targets. The H8Ks reached Oahu in the early hours of March 4, but a canopy of heavy rain and dense clouds covered the southern half of the island and obscured most landmarks.

There were virtually no artificial lights on the ground to guide the pilots. A complete nighttime blackout had been ordered after the December attack, and all civilian lights — whether from bulbs or flames — were extinguished at dusk. Car headlights were painted a dark color to dim them.

A Japanese submarine dispatched to Pearl Harbor with the task of aiding the planes to their targets on the docks never showed.

The pilots were more or less flying blind, calculating their targets simply by the direction and distance they'd traveled.

"Essentially using dead reckoning, they pickled their bombs and scooted for home," Burlingame said.

The bombs from one landed in the mountain foothills overlooking the city of Honolulu, shattering some windows on nearby Theodore Roosevelt High School.

"It woke everyone on Honolulu up," Burlingame said.

The second plane likely dropped its bombs into the harbor water, as no trace of them was ever found. No one was injured or killed.

Potentially, 4,400 pounds of bombs landing on the intended target — the 1,010-foot dock on Pearl Harbor — would have been a seismic setback for America's ability to wage war.

But Imperial Japan's quixotic second raid instead triggered a chain of events that turned the tide of war in America's favor in the Pacific.

The bombing raid was a wakeup call for U.S. military leaders concerning their vulnerability to long-distance bombing raids.

The Japanese propaganda ministry trumpeted the attack as a great victory and provided key information about the raid's logistics, Burlingame said.

Based on radar plots, American intelligence analysts correctly deduced that the bombers had refueled using submarines at French Frigate Shoals.

"The Americans responded by putting a destroyer up at French Frigate Shoals for the rest of the war," Burlingame said.

The U.S. conducted its own daring long-distance bombing raid on April 18, 1942. Sixteen B-25s launched off the carrier USS Hornet in the Western Pacific. The Doolittle Raiders dropped bombs on Tokyo, Yokohama, Yokosuka, Nagoya and Kobe, delivering the intended message that the Japanese homeland was not invulnerable to Allied attack.

"It was probably the most effective bombing raid of World War II because it freaked out the Japanese so badly that they changed their war plans," Burlingame said. To keep America truly out of the fight and away from the mainland, the Japanese concluded they had to seize the Hawaiian Islands, he said.

That would begin with an attack on the Midway Islands, about 1,300 miles west of Oahu, with the intention of crushing America's carrier fleet.

Japan had intended to send H8Ks to collect crucial reconnaissance on U.S. carrier movements immediately before the battle, which commenced June 4, 1942. But the beefed-up patrols kept the refueling subs out of French Frigate Shoals, and the H8K missions had to be scratched.

The Japanese navy had no way of knowing that the U.S. — which had recently broken the enemy's code — had set its own trap by dispatching the carriers USS Enterprise, USS Hornet and USS Yorktown north of Midway.

Had the Japanese kept secret the stealth and reach of the H8Ks, they might very well have learned of the positions of those U.S. carriers, which had left Pearl Harbor only days before June 4.

Instead, the Japanese carriers Akagi, Kaga, Soryu and Hiryu were caught by surprise and destroyed in the battle, which many historians regard as the most decisive of the war in the Pacific.



# Defense Travel System breach exposes many to identity theft

BY MARTIN EGNASH  
*Stars and Stripes*

The sensitive information of thousands of Marine reservists and others was sent in an unencrypted email to the wrong distribution list, potentially putting many at risk of identity theft, officials said Thursday.

The email was sent Monday by the Defense Travel System, the organization servicemembers and some civilians use for government travel. It was addressed erroneously to several usmc.mil unclassified Marine domains and to some civilian

accounts.

The Marines are still investigating the extent of the breach of sensitive data.

"It was very quickly noticed, and email recall procedures were implemented to reduce the number of accounts that received it," said Maj. Andrew Aranda, spokesman for Marine Forces Reserve.

However, once the information got outside the Marine domain, there was no telling how widely it could have circulated on the internet.

The data breach included Social Security numbers, bank

routing numbers and the credit card information of at least 21,426 Marines, sailors and civilians.

The Marine Corps is taking steps to mitigate any potential identity theft spurred by the incident, Aranda said.

"We are still looking into the spread of the information after the initial email was sent, and while no malicious intent was involved, we still are going to notify all those affected and inform them of the appropriate steps to safeguard their identity and credit from illegal use," he said.

## Marine general suspended

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The head of the Marine Corps suspended a top adviser accused of creating a "hostile work environment," officials said Wednesday.

Gen. Robert Neller, the commandant of the Marine Corps, said in a written statement that he took action against Brig. Gen. Norman L. Cooling pending the outcome of a Defense Department review. Cooling has served as Neller's legislative assistant since July.

"We are committed to being an organization in which every Marine has the opportunity to serve at their full potential, unimpeded by discrimination, bias, or hostile working conditions," Neller said.

Neller said the Senate Armed Services Committee had asked Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to look into allegations of a hostile work environment. Neller did not elaborate on the allegations.

An official said Cooling is alleged to have made disparaging comments about women, thereby undermining trust among those working in his office, including female Marines. The official was not authorized to discuss details and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Cooling has served at least two tours of duty in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

## Navy's 6th Fleet gets new leader

BY SCOTT WYLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Vice Adm. Lisa Franchetti assumed command of the Navy's 6th Fleet on Thursday, taking over at a time of growing tensions with Russia.

Vice Adm. Christopher Grady relinquished the command, which he had held for 16 months, and is now in line for a promotion to full admiral in charge of U.S. Fleet Forces.

The change-of-command ceremony took place aboard the USS Mount Whitney in Naples.

"I am confident this team here will continue to excel under your leadership," Grady said to Franchetti, a former commander of Naval Forces Korea who recently worked at the Joint Staff.

Brandishing a ceremonial sword, Grady said, "Always, always keep the cutlass sharp!" — a metaphor for the Navy's power to defend.

Franchetti called the 6th Fleet and its allies the region's "insurance policy."

Under Grady's watch, the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush struck at Islamic State from the Mediterranean, and two of the fleet's destroyers launched Tomahawk missiles at Syria in response to a chemical gas attack.

Russia has significantly beefed up its naval presence in the Mediterranean, where its warships have been supporting combat operations in Syria. Heightened tensions between Russia and the U.S. in the Middle East and Europe have led the Navy to send more destroyers into the Black Sea.

## Navy nominates Thomas to lead Task Force 70

BY TYLER HLAVAC  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy has nominated an E-2C Hawkeye pilot to lead a troubled task force that includes the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, its carrier wing and an armada of forward-deployed cruisers and destroyers.

Career aviator Rear Adm.

Karl Thomas has been nominated to command the Yokosuka-based Task Force 70, Navy Secretary Richard Spencer and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson announced Wednesday.

The unit's current commander, Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, took charge last September after his predecessor, Rear Adm. Charles Williams, was relieved in the wake of two

deadly accidents that killed 17 sailors last year. The collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain were part of a string of incidents involving the task force, including the November crash of a C-2A Greyhound assigned to the Reagan's air wing that killed three and the grounding of the USS Antietam in Tokyo Bay in January 2017.

Thomas, who now directs

the 21st Century Sailor Office in Arlington, Va., commanded Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 117 during Operation Iraqi Freedom and the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson during a deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in 2014. He was executive officer on the aircraft carrier USS George Washington when it forward-deployed to Japan in 2008.

## Sessions pushes back on criticism from Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Harshly criticized yet again by his boss, Attorney General Jeff Sessions has abandoned his usual stony silence and pushed back against President Donald Trump for saying Sessions' response to Republican complaints about the FBI was "disgraceful."

Sessions gave no suggestion he would step down in light of Trump's charge Wednesday on Twitter and insisted he would "continue to discharge my duties with integrity and honor."

Trump's latest tirade stems from a comment Sessions made Tuesday, when he suggested the Justice Department's inspector general will evaluate whether prosecutors and FBI agents wrongly obtained a warrant under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to monitor the communications of a onetime Trump campaign associate. Sessions had asked the watchdog office to review the complaints in response to pressure from congressional Republicans who, like Trump, have fumed about what they believe to be bias within the FBI.

Trump tweeted: "Why is A.G. Jeff Sessions asking the Inspector General to investigate potentially massive FISA abuse. Will take forever, has no prosecutorial power and already late with reports on Comey etc. Isn't the I.G. an Obama guy? Why not use Justice Department lawyers? DISGRACEFUL!"

Sessions answered hours later, saying his department had taken the appropriate step and "will continue to do its work in a fair and impartial manner according to the law and Constitution."

## Top Trump aide Hicks leaving

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — White House communications director Hope Hicks, one of President Donald Trump's most trusted and longest-serving aides, abruptly announced her resignation, leaving a void around a president who values loyalty and affirmation.

The departure of Hicks, who worked as a one-woman communications shop during his campaign, came as a surprise Wednesday to most in the White House — and cast a pall over the West Wing at a trying time for the president. It leaves Trump increasingly without support of the familiar aides who surrounded him during his campaign and marks the latest in a string of high-level departures in the administration's second year.

Hicks, 29, had a seemingly untouchable role in the West Wing, often viewed more as a surrogate daughter than a staffer. Perhaps most importantly, she served as Trump's glamorous shield and validator, always ready to provide "Mr. Trump" with a smiling dose of positive reinforcement, and controlling reporters' access. She was the fourth person to occupy the position since the president was sworn in, as the Trump White House has set modern records for staff turnover.

In a statement, Trump praised Hicks for her work during the past three years, saying he "will miss having her by my side." Hicks informed Trump of her decision Wednesday, a White House official said.

Hicks, who occupied the desk closest to the Oval Office in the West Wing, has been a central participant in or witness to nearly every milestone and controversy of the Trump campaign and White House. She began her White House tenure as director

of strategic communications — a title that only partly captured her more expansive role as the president's gatekeeper to the press.

The news came a day after Hicks was interviewed for nine hours by the House panel investigating Russia interference in the 2016 election and contact between Trump's campaign and Russia.

Hicks acknowledged to the House intelligence panel Tuesday that she has occasionally told "white lies" for Trump, according to a person familiar with the testimony.

But she said she had not lied about anything relevant to the Russia investigation. She also has been interviewed by special counsel Robert Mueller's team about her role in crafting a statement about Donald Trump Jr.'s 2016 meeting with Russians, as Mueller's expansive probe of Russian interference in the 2016 election and potential misdeeds committed by those in the president's orbit moves ever closer to the Oval Office.

Hicks' departure leaves a vacuum in the White House communications team, and in the president's collection of trusted aides. The announcement came a day after news broke of the impending departure of deputy communications director Josh Raffel, and just a few days after senior adviser Jared Kushner saw his security clearance downgraded — limiting his access to classified information.

"I can't imagine anyone here leaving a bigger hole in the White House than Hope on her departure," said White House lawyer Ty Cobb.

White House officials and outside advisers suggested Hicks' departure would strengthen chief of staff John Kelly's control over what has been an oftentimes chaotic West Wing.

## Putin boasts of new Russian nuclear weapons

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia has tested an array of new strategic nuclear weapons that can't be intercepted, President Vladimir Putin announced Thursday, marking a technological breakthrough that could dramatically increase Russia's military capability, could boost the Kremlin's global position and also raises Western concerns about a potential renewed arms race in the 21st century.

Speaking in a state-of-the-nation speech, Putin said the weapons include a nuclear-powered cruise missile, a nuclear-powered underwater drone and a new hypersonic missile that have no equivalent elsewhere in the world. He said the creation of the new

weapons has made NATO's U.S.-led missile defense "useless," and means an effective end to what he described as Western efforts to stymie Russia's development.

The announcement comes as Putin is set to easily win another six-year presidential term in the March 18 election.

He said the nuclear-powered cruise missile tested last fall has a "practically unlimited" range and high speed and maneuverability allowing it to pierce any missile defense.

The Russian leader said the high-speed underwater drone also has an "intercontinental" range and is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead that could target both aircraft carriers and coastal facilities. He said

its operational depth and high speed would make it immune to enemy interception.

Putin noted that the tests of the compact nuclear reactor to power the new drone were completed last fall.

He added, to applause, that names for the nuclear-powered cruise missile and the drone haven't yet been chosen, and suggested that the Defense Ministry run a nationwide contest for the best names.

The Russian leader said that another new weapon called Avangard is an intercontinental hypersonic missile that would fly to targets at a speed 20 times the speed of sound and would strike "like a meteorite, like a fireball."



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Fleeing suspects land in police lot

**AZ** PHOENIX — Two shoplifting suspects running from police scaled a fence to get away from officers and landed in a secure parking lot of a police station — and in custody.

Officials told KTAR-TV that officers were called to a gas station for possible shoplifting Feb. 23. Authorities said that as officers arrived, the suspects, Marwan Al Ebadi, 28, and Salma Hourieh, 29, took off running.

The pair ran along the side of a building and jumped a fence, despite a sign for “Peoria Police” above the door.

## Youth program to raffle AR-15-style gun

**OR** SALEM — An Oregon youth softball program decided to move forward with plans to raffle an AR-15-style assault weapon as part of its fundraiser.

The Statesman Journal reported Monday that residents have called the raffle tone-deaf in wake of the Parkland, Fla., school shooting.

The Lady Dragons fast-pitch softball program of Dallas, Ore., is hosting the fundraiser for equipment, field improvements and to help ensure registration fees remain low for families. The program has teams for girls ages 10 and under through 16 and under.

## Woman kicked out of museum for costume

**NJ** BURLINGTON — A New Jersey woman said she was kicked out of New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art because she showed up in an authentic period costume

that a guard accused her of stealing.

Eliza Vincz, 26, of Burlington, said she wore the dress to give a talk on historical fashion at the museum Saturday. NJ.com reported a guard approached her in the lobby and claimed she had stolen her period costume from the museum’s Costume Institute.

Vincz said she spent a substantial amount of money and time crafting the dress herself.

## Antiques dealer admits artifact a fake

**CT** HARTFORD — A man said he forged a museum artifact in Connecticut that was once described as a “treasure to behold for art and history buffs alike.”

Massachusetts antiques dealer Harold Gordon told The Hartford Courant he turned a plain writing desk into the “Bingham Family Civil War Memorial Secretary.” The piece was said to be a gift given to a Civil War veteran in honor of his brother who was killed at the Battle of Antietam.

Gordon said he sold the piece to a Connecticut antiques dealer because he needed the money. The dealer showed the piece at a 2015 Winter Antiques Show in New York, where it was purchased by the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art.

## Police dog loses teeth helping arrest suspect

**CA** SANTA ANA — Authorities said a police dog that tackled a carjacking suspect after a wild Southern California chase lost most of its teeth taking him down but will recover.

Santa Ana police Cpl. Anthony Bertagna said the Dutch shepherd, named Puskas, probably hit the pavement snout-

first after the dog clamped its jaws on the man Monday in neighboring Irvine.

Authorities said the man had tried to run after crashing a truck and carjacking an SUV.

Bertagna told the Orange County Register that the 8-year-old dog lost his upper and lower teeth except for his canines. Bertagna said Puskas is recovering after surgery and should be able to work again in a few weeks.

## Bear leaves his mark on woman’s car

**MS** SONTAG — Stealing a picnic basket is one thing. Mauling a car is quite another.

A Mississippi wildlife department biologist said a bear attacked a woman’s car Friday in the Sontag community about 60 miles south of Jackson.

Jamie Holt told the Jackson Clarion-Ledger there were tooth and claw marks consistent with a bear on the front wheel wells and hood. There was headlight damage, and the front license tag holder was ripped off.

## Sauce on face leads to arrest in meatball theft

**PA** HAZLE TOWNSHIP — Police said a damning clue led to the arrest of a Pennsylvania man charged with stealing a pot of meatballs — red sauce smeared on his face and clothes.

Authorities in Luzerne County charged Leahman Glenn Robert Potter, 48, with burglary, criminal trespass and theft by unlawful taking for allegedly swiping a pot of meatballs from a man’s garage Monday.

Police said the victim told officers he saw Potter standing in front of his house with red sauce on his face and clothes.

## Officer breaks ankle chasing naked suspect

**RI** PROVIDENCE — A police officer was injured trying to chase down a man found naked with a woman in a parked van.

The Providence Journal reported Officer Sean Corley broke his ankle early Tuesday as he chased Sharkym Brown, 22.

Brown was with an unnamed woman in a van outside the Colony House apartment complex just after 2 a.m. Police said Brown became agitated after being asked to get dressed and get out of the van.

Police said Brown shoved one of the officers and ran. He jumped a chain-link fence before he was eventually caught.

Brown pleaded no contest to simple assault and obstructing police and was sentenced to one year of probation.

## Man gets late mom’s ring 27 years later

**WI** WAUSAU — A Wausau man received a memento of his mother that has been missing since she died 27 years ago.

WAOW-TV reported that Ben Dakins lost his mom, dad and brother in a car crash in 1991. Last week Dakins was presented with his mother’s high school class ring that a woman found at a Wausau garage sale in 2016.

A few weeks ago, Jessica Foster searched on Facebook for the ring’s owner.

Sheila Ostrowski Mabry, a high school friend of Dakins’ mom, saw Foster’s posting about the 1978 DC Everest High School ring with the initials KZ engraved into the metal.

From wire reports

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# Gruden back in his element at combine

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Lured out of the broadcast booth with a \$100 million contract that makes him the highest-paid football coach ever, Jon Gruden sauntered up to the podium and flashed that mischievous smile.

"I'm very excited to be back here in Indianapolis," Gruden declared. "I sure have missed the combine."

Gruden is navigating an off-season NFL landscape that's changed drastically since he last roamed the sideline nearly a decade ago.

"It's a lot different because you're not allowed to have any interaction with the players, and I've always complained about that since the new [collective bargaining agreement] came into place," Gruden said Wednesday. "A lot of players would come to see me in Tampa to get their football fix."

"So, you're not allowed to have contact with these guys. But what's most discouraging to me is we've got to make some decisions on our roster, on salaries, on players and their futures and you can't even meet them," Gruden grumbled.

"I don't know these guys. I've never coached them. I never met half of them. So, that's been very, very difficult for me and I've been emotional about it at times."

On the next podium was Matt Patricia, who, unlike his former colleague Josh McDaniels, didn't balk at leaving Bill Belichick's coaching brigade.

Then there was Andy Reid, in the midst of another major roster shakeup, and his protege, Doug Pederson, still basking in Philadelphia's first Super Bowl triumph in just his second season as coach of the Eagles.

All are gathering this week in Indianapolis hoping to better their chances of winning in 2018.

Top college prospects, including a group of quarter-

backs that could produce five first-round draft picks, will spend four days getting poked and prodded, tested and timed.

GMs and coaches will pepper them with questions either in formal 15-minute interviews or during a mixed zone after their physical assessments.

"It's a chance to get to know these guys, to know exactly what you're getting when they come into the building," said new Texans general manager Brian Gaine.

He said their athleticism and acumen are already well-known, and they'll flash their strength, speed and swiftness this week at Lucas Oil Stadium.

What the GMs and coaches want to do is get a look under the hood.

"We'd like to talk about football as much as we can, but we need to know everything we can to find out about these players," Gaine said. "So when they come into our building (we know) that they're a good fit for us in the locker room, in the weight room, in the training room, in the meeting rooms, out on the practice field."

After this week, teams will retreat to their headquarters and begin preparing for the annual flood of free agents that will hit the market in mid-March.

NFL.com reported this week that teams will soon receive in-game player-tracking data on every NFL player in the league, something that could change the way they scout opponents and evaluate free agents.

Also meeting in Indianapolis this week is the league's competition committee, which is looking into fixing the catch rule, something commissioner Roger Goodell said was his top offseason priority.

The committee is also pondering whether to change the defensive pass interference rule from a spot foul into a 15-yard infraction as it is in college.

# Cousins atop Broncos' quarterback wish list

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — John Elway is giving his clearest indication yet that he's going to pursue Kirk Cousins, the prize of this year's free-agent quarterbacks.

"We're going to explore all options in free agency and see where that goes," Elway said Wednesday at the NFL combine. "Obviously we've got the fifth pick in the draft, too. That will all play into it. We'll continue to look at all of the options out there when it comes to quarterback."

The Denver Broncos general manager stressed that he'll look at "anybody that won't be under contract."

With the Washington Redskins moving on to Alex Smith, whom they've agreed to acquire from Kansas City, that group of free agents would include Cousins, who figures to command more than the record \$27.5 million that Jimmy Garoppolo will receive in his new deal with the San Francisco 49ers.

Elway said he's confident the team could absorb a big free-agent contract under the salary cap, revealed the Broncos are considering moving Ronald Leary back to left guard and

indicated highly paid receivers Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders aren't going anywhere.

"Yes, the plan is to have them back," Elway said.

That means Elway will pick up Thomas' \$4 million bonus in March, which will keep the last two years of the wide receiver's contract in place.

"That is the plan, yes."

Elway has been stung by the draft selections of Brock Osweiler and Paxton Lynch, but he hit the jackpot six years ago when he landed Peyton Manning.

The Broncos have missed the playoffs each of the two seasons after Manning retired, including a 5-11 season last year when they cycled through quarterbacks Trevor Siemian, Osweiler and Lynch twice.

Elway got burned two years ago when he moved up to take Lynch with the 26th overall pick only to watch him founder on the sideline most of the past two seasons.

"Believe me, I'm not done swinging and missing," Elway said with a laugh. "Misses don't bother me. We just have to figure out a way to get it right. That is what we are working on."

# HoF QB Kelly: Tests show return of cancer

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Buffalo Bills Hall of Fame quarterback Jim Kelly has once again been diagnosed with oral cancer.

Kelly released a statement Thursday through his publicist saying he is "shocked and deeply saddened" by the news, and vows to once again fight to overcome the disease.

"As our family has faced many trials and triumphs throughout the years, you have blessed us with your prayers. We are asking for those prayers once

again," Kelly said. "With all of you by my side, we will fight and win this battle together."

The diagnosis comes a few weeks after Kelly celebrated his 58th birthday. Kelly had been cancer-free since September 2014.

"Jim is a tough and courageous man, and we know he will fight this battle with strength and determination," the Bills said in a statement released by the team. "The Buffalo Bills will support the Kelly family during this trying time."

# USOC chief resigns amid abuse scandal

Associated Press

Scott Blackmun resigned as chief executive of the U.S. Olympic Committee on Wednesday, stepping aside so he can tackle his worsening bout with prostate cancer and to allow the federation to move forward under new leadership to address the sex-abuse scandal that has rocked gymnastics and other sports.

The 60-year-old CEO was diagnosed with prostate cancer in January and did not attend the Pyeongchang Games.

Blackmun leaves as calls for his ouster were growing louder — from two U.S. senators and, more notably, from a number of gymnasts and other athletes who said neither he nor the USOC at large reacted properly to cases including those involving Larry Nassar, the doctor who sexually abused members of the U.S. gymnastics team.

The USOC is conducting an independent review of when Blackmun and others learned the details about abuse cases at

USA Gymnastics and whether they responded appropriately.

Susanne Lyons, a member of the board, will step down from that position and serve as acting CEO while the search for Blackmun's replacement begins.

At a news conference to kick off the Olympics, chairman Larry Probst said Blackmun had served the USOC with distinction and the board found no reason to relieve him. In an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday, Probst said Blackmun has since received more information about the treatment he'll need.

"We need a CEO in place who can [tend] to this current situation and work hard to get things back on a positive track," Probst said.

The USOC said it was starting several initiatives, including providing new funding and resources for Nassar victims and others in Olympic sports who have been subject to abuse; sex-abuse cases in swimming,

taekwondo and speedskating have also occurred during Blackmun's tenure. The USOC also will review its relationships with national governing bodies of Olympic sports and double funding to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

John Manly, an attorney representing Nassar victims in a lawsuit that seeks monetary damages and court oversight of USA Gymnastics, said it was victims speaking out about the USOC that forced Blackmun to resign.

"USOC has focused nearly all its efforts on money and medals while the safety of our athletes has taken a back seat," Manly said.

Blackmun's last several years at the helm of USOC have focused on establishing the SafeSport organization, which formed to compel all Olympic sports organizations to use the same rules for reporting and handling abuse cases.

It was a herculean task that involved raising millions of

dollars to start an entity independent of the USOC that could police abuse cases in a similar manner as the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency runs the anti-doping system in the United States.

But most of the cases in question occurred before the new protocols came into play. The shocking testimony in January from dozens of gymnasts who were abused by Nassar led to calls for a complete turnover of the USA Gymnastics board, and then for Blackmun's removal.

"The U.S. Olympic Committee must now bring on new leadership determined to deliver answers and accountability regarding how Larry Nassar was able to freely abuse young girls for decades, as well as answers to questions about abuse in other Olympic programs," said U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H.

Blackmun started as CEO just before the 2010 Vancouver Games and settled an organization that had been rife with infighting.

## NHL roundup

### Lundqvist makes 50 saves as Rangers snap 7-game skid

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — After enduring a long losing streak, goaltender Henrik Lundqvist didn't much care how the New York Rangers won a hockey game.

Lundqvist made a season-high 50 saves but the Rangers still needed John Gilmour's overtime goal to defeat the Vancouver Canucks 6-5 Wednesday night.

"It just feels good to win a game, to sit here and smile for once," Lundqvist said. "I am just tired of losing so I don't care how we win it, just as long as we win it."

The win snapped a seven-game New York losing streak (0-6-1). It also came after the struggling Rangers had jettisoned several of their high-pro-

file players at Monday's NHL trade deadline.

"It doesn't matter what you go through," said Lundqvist. "All the trades ... was depressing, I got to be honest."

"But we have to move past it now and it's about winning. Winning makes everybody smile and hopefully it can continue."

Gilmour, a rookie defenseman, won the game just 1:22 into overtime when he one-timed a pass from Ryan Spooner. It was Spooner's third assist of the game.

Neither the Canucks (24-32-8) nor the Rangers (28-30-6) are likely to make the playoffs but the teams put on a pretty exciting performance.

The Rangers took advantage of a couple of deflected shots to roar out to a 3-0 first period

lead. They scored goals 43 seconds apart with just 2:05 gone in the game.

**Sabres 2, Lightning 1:** Jason Pominville scored on a power play at 1:26 of overtime to give visiting Buffalo a victory over NHL-leading Tampa Bay.

Pominville beat Andrei Vasilevskiy with a one-timer from the left circle to give the Sabres their second straight victory over the Lightning.

**Canadiens 3, Islanders 1:** Jonathan Drouin and Nikita Scherbak scored in the second period and host Montreal extended its points streak to five games.

Paul Byron also scored and Antti Niemi made 27 saves to help the Canadiens improve to 2-0-3 in their last five. Mathew Barzal scored his 18th of the season for the Islanders. They

are winless in last four games and 4-8-2 in their last 14

**Blues 2, Red Wings 1:** Carter Hutton made 35 saves, Scottie Upshall and Alex Pietrangolo scored and host St. Louis beat Detroit to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Hutton improved to 6-2-1 in his last nine starts and 16-7-2 overall, allowing only Andreas Athanasiou's goal with 1:45 left.

**Avalanche 4, Flames 2:** Nathan MacKinnon and Tyson Barrie each had a goal and an assist in host Colorado's victory over Calgary.

Matt Nieto and Nikita Zadorov also scored, and Semyon Varlamov made 30 saves. The Avalanche have won 11 of 12 home games. Mikael Backlund and Michael Frolik scored for Calgary.



## NBA roundup

# Warriors beat Wiz

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A day after taking schoolkids to a museum instead of visiting President Donald Trump at the White House, the Golden State Warriors won for the seventh time in eight games by beating the Washington Wizards 109-101 as Kevin Durant scored 32 points, Stephen Curry added 25 and Klay Thompson limited Bradley Beal — averaging a team-leading 23.7 points — to eight Wednesday night.

**Pelicans 121, Spurs 116:** Anthony Davis had 26 points and 15 rebounds, and visiting New Orleans rallied to win in the final two minutes, adding to San Antonio's misery after losing LaMarcus Aldridge to an injury in the first half.

**Rockets 105, Clippers 92:** James Harden scored 17 of his 25 points in his team's dominant first quarter, and Houston rolled past host Los Angeles for its 14th consecutive victory.

**Celtics 134, Hornets 106:** Kyrie Irving scored 34 points in the first three quarters, and then sat out the fourth with the rest of his team's starters as host Boston routed Charlotte.

**Pistons 110, Bucks 87:** Andre Drummond had 15 points and 16 rebounds, and Detroit dominated inside in a victory over visiting Milwaukee.

**Raptors 117, Magic 104:** DeMar DeRozan scored 21 points to lead Toronto over host Orlando.

**Thunder 111, Mavericks 110 (OT):** Russell Westbrook scored 30 points, including the go-ahead three-point play in overtime, and visiting Oklahoma City beat Dallas.

**Hawks 107, Pacers 102:** Dennis Schroder scored seven of his team's final eight points to finish with 14, and host Atlanta held off a late Indiana rally.

**Suns 110, Grizzlies 102:** Devin Booker scored 34 points, Josh Jackson added a career-best 29 and visiting Phoenix snapped a 10-game losing streak by beating Memphis.

## College basketball roundup

# No. 4 Villanova survives scare

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — With a week to go until the conference tournament, No. 4 Villanova and Seton Hall showed everyone what Big East basketball is all about.

It's not pretty. It was ugly at times, but it was hard-fought, low-scoring, physical and it had the crowd of 13,711 at the Prudential Center on their feet most of the night. And it was fun.

Mikal Bridges scored 23 points, Jalen Brunson made big plays down the stretch and Villanova avoided consecutive losses for the first time since the 2012-13 season with a 69-68 overtime victory on Wednesday night.

"I don't know," Villanova coach Jay Wright said about the game. "I have to look at the film. It wasn't pretty. But it was a great experience for these guys, especially this time of year, coming into a great environment against a tough defensive team and finding a way to gut it out."

The Wildcats (26-4, 13-4) won because Bridges and Brunson stepped up in crunch time, especially Brunson who scored 12 of his 14 points in the final 3:56 of regulation and the overtime.

"This is something that is preparing us for the future and something we needed as a team," said Brunson, who hit two free throws with 6 seconds left in overtime to put the Wildcats up three points. "To see the guys together in this environment and have this type of game is a great step for us. We have to keep building off of it."

Khadeen Carrington closed out the scoring with two free throws with a second to play to finish off a 23-point night for Seton Hall (20-10, 9-8). However, he also missed a free throw with 11.6 seconds left in regulation that could have given the Pirates a late one-point lead.

"In this league when you play a game like this and both teams battle, I couldn't be more proud of my guys," Pirates coach

Kevin Willard said. "I hate losing, but when you go out and leave it all on the floor like our guys did, again I thought both teams should be proud. Sometimes you lose these games."

**No. 3 Xavier 84, Providence 74:** Trevon Bluiett scored 23 points in his final game at the Cintas Center, and the host Musketeers never trailed, clinching at least a share of their first Big East championship.

Xavier (26-4, 14-3) can win it outright by beating DePaul on Saturday and end Villanova's run of four straight regular-season titles.

Bluiett will leave Xavier as its second all-time scorer. He made the game's first basket on a driving layup, and finished off the Friars with a dunk and a pair of free throws in the final minute. Quentin Goodin added 18 points, one shy of his career high.

**No. 18 Clemson 76, Florida State 63:** Marcquise Reed scored 22 points and the host Tigers won a program-record 11th Atlantic Coast Conference game.

Clemson (22-7, 11-6) had won 10 league games six times in 64 years as an ACC member, but has never before won this many conference games in a regular season.

**No. 21 Nevada 101, UNLV 75:** Cody Martin scored 26 and Jordan Caroline added 22 to lead the Wolf Pack to an easy victory over the host Runnin' Rebels.

Martin, who was 10-for-19 from the field, also had nine rebounds, seven assists, and three steals as the rivals split their regular-season meetings.

**No. 23 Kentucky 96, Mississippi 78:** Kevin Knox had 22 points and Quade Green added 18, including eight during a 15-5 second-half run that helped the host Wildcats pull away.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 17 points, Wenyen Gabriel 15 and PJ Washington 10 as Kentucky (21-9, 10-7 Southeastern Conference) won its fourth

consecutive game and home finale, the first without departing seniors under coach John Calipari.

**No. 25 Houston 69, SMU 56:** Rob Gray had 19 points and nine assists and Corey Davis Jr. added 17 points to lead the visiting Cougars.

Houston (23-6, 13-4 American) has won seven of eight games and is a half-game behind second-place Wichita State.

**Wyoming 66, Air Force 54:** Justin James scored 18 points and the host Cowboys beat the Falcons.

Louis Adams and Hayden Dalton added 12 points and eight rebounds apiece for Wyoming (19-11, 10-7 Mountain West Conference) which closes out the regular season at Boise State on Saturday and is still in contention for a first-round bye in the upcoming conference tournament.

**St. John's 75, Butler 68 (2OT):** Justin Simon turned three takeaways in the last minute — a steal and two defensive rebounds — into five points at the other end and the host Red Storm defeated the Bulldogs in double overtime.

Simon, a transfer from Arizona, led St. John's (15-15, 4-13 Big East) with 24 points, 10 rebounds, four steals and five assists.

**Boston College 85, Syracuse 70:** The host Eagles had one too many sharp-shooting guards for the Orange's zone defense to contain.

Ky Bowman scored 23 points, Jerome Robinson had 22 and Boston College snapped a three-game losing streak by dealing Syracuse's NCAA tournament hopes a serious blow.

**Texas A&M 61, Georgia 60:** T.J. Starks scored 15 points and hit the go-head basket with 58 seconds remaining to help the visiting Aggies eke out a win.

Tyler Davis added 13 points and Admon Gilder and D.J. Hogg each scored 11 for Texas A&M (19-11, 8-9 Southeastern Conference).