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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Political climate affects BRAC efforts

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Longtime efforts to streamline the military through the Base Realignment and Closure process are dead for now, as communities play a larger role in thwarting the moves especially in the midst of an election year, Rep. Adam Smith said Tuesday.

These communities in recent years have better mobilized to fend off BRAC for fear of seeing an economic hit, such as the loss of jobs or other concerns, said Smith, of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee.

He said it's likely why President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis didn't push for such reforms in this year's military budget proposals.

"Very small groups of interest have developed an enormous amount of power to stop things from happening that they don't

want to happen. So BRAC has become more difficult because communities have organized more strongly to try and prevent it," Smith told an audience at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington, D.C.

With several failed BRAC votes on Capitol Hill in recent years, Smith said he suspected "Secretary Mattis and President Trump did not want to tilt at this particular windmill this year. ... [I]t's proven to be very difficult politically to accomplish."

Last month, the Pentagon released a 2019 budget plan seeking a 10 percent hike in funding to \$686.1 billion to increase the size and might of the military. But the plan was largely absent of traditional spending reforms, such as BRAC or management restructuring, and could add to a ballooning U.S. deficit along the way.

"It's a lot more fun to spend money than it is to reduce," Office of Management and Bud-

get Director Mick Mulvaney said last month during a Senate hearing. "It's incumbent upon all of us to start making difficult decisions to decide together as a legislature, as an administration, are these deficits that we are willing to tolerate?"

The effort to rein in wasteful spending through the BRAC process has been upended in a heightened political environment, Smith said. One potential option is giving the Pentagon more flexibility to move assets and shut down some facilities through new legislation, the congressman said.

"Most people have surrendered on the idea of getting another BRAC round anytime soon," he said. But "the military is particularly hamstrung right now in their ability to move assets."

Smith teamed up with Christopher Preble, the Cato Institute's vice president for defense and foreign policy studies, to tackle the BRAC issue in a new piece

for Strategic Studies Quarterly. Preble argued Wednesday that there are several models of successful BRAC efforts that have helped revitalize communities.

For example, Preble pointed to the 1990s BRAC effort in Austin, Texas, which led to the opening of the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. The city, strained by a fast-growing population and limited space, converted the former Bergstrom Air Force Base to a much-needed new airport close to its center.

Today, the city's airport is a jewel to its technology and tourism sectors, as it now hosts a long list of annual events, from the South by Southwest festival to its Circuit of the Americas racetrack. That said, each case is unique and different, he said. There's more pushback against base closures in smaller communities where the economic picture appears more precarious.

"Location matters a lot," Preble said.

Falling jobless rate challenges Army recruiting

Bloomberg

The lowest unemployment rate in a decade is good news for Americans, but bad news for an expanding U.S. military.

To meet President Donald Trump's goal for a bigger military, Army recruiters are seeking 80,000 more men and women willing to join the Pentagon's largest service as deployments continue from Iraq to Afghanistan. That's 11,500 more soldiers this year than in 2017.

Working against the military is the U.S. jobless rate. Initial jobless claims were at the lowest in almost five decades last month. The U.S. economy added 313,000 jobs in February, while

the unemployment rate held steady at 4.1 percent. Though the Pentagon has managed to meet its recruiting targets in recent years, unemployment rates below 6 percent — the norm since late 2014 — are seen as a key factor undermining those efforts.

To meet Trump's goals, the Army has added 400 recruiters to the 9,000-strong force it already employs. Hundreds of millions more dollars are also going toward offering perks to lure recruits. There's even a "quick-ship bonus" for those willing to go to basic training within a month. People ready to take on hard-to-fill jobs in engineering and cybersecurity can also get more money.

"Our recruiters are aware of the difficult environment they're working in," Kelli Bland, a spokeswoman for the Army Recruiting Command in Fort Knox, Ky., said in an interview. "But it's not something that we can't overcome."

Another challenge is lack of knowledge about the military, Bland said. Army research shows about 50 percent of youth know nothing about the military and can't name most branches. Recruiters are boosting efforts to win over "influencers," such as high school principals and teachers, who can become advocates for joining. The effort includes "educator tours" to bases, where they can climb into helicopters and talk with pi-

lots to learn of opportunities.

Such moves follow decades of studies on how recruitment is affected by the civilian economy, according to Beth Asch, a senior economist at Rand Corp. in Santa Monica, Calif., who researches military manpower.

"When the unemployment rate goes down — as it has been — military enlistment goes down as well," Asch said in an interview. "There's a positive relationship."

The pool of applicants is also shrinking. Thanks to high rates of obesity, drug use, criminal records and failing grades on the Army's aptitude test, the pool of eligible recruits is just 29 percent of the available population of 17- to 24-year-olds.

Special Ops aiding Kabul fight

The Washington Post

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — The United States is bolstering its efforts to assist the Afghan government squash a rash of deadly high-profile attacks in its capital city through Special Operations raids, intelligence to map out who lives in the city and additional military advising, the top U.S. general here said.

Army Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr. said that defending Kabul is the main effort for the U.S.-led military coalition right now. While the number of bombings in the sprawling city has remained about the same, they have increased in size, he said. Hundreds of people have been killed within the last year, terrorizing civilians and damaging embassies and other buildings.

“Yes, the Taliban is in the city,” Nicholson said. “Yes, there are facilitation networks in the city. These networks need to be identified and destroyed, and

then the safe houses or whatever locations they have developed need to be identified and eliminated.”

The use of secretive Special Operations forces against networks of militants has been common from the streets of Baghdad to the mountains of eastern Afghanistan. But it rarely has been discussed in the city of Kabul before. It comes as the U.S. and Afghan governments plan to build the number of Afghan special forces from 19,022 to 33,896 by 2020, according to a Pentagon report to Congress released in December.

Nicholson spoke to reporters Wednesday at the main U.S. airfield north of Kabul as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis wrapped up a two-day visit in Afghanistan. The defense secretary, who did not grant interviews to media traveling with him Wednesday, left Bagram afterward. He arrived later in Bahrain, where he will

meet with King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa and visit with U.S. troops.

Like Mattis, Nicholson sees a window open for the U.S. and Afghan governments to reach a peace deal with some members of the Taliban. He cited Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s recent invitation to the Taliban to talk without preconditions, the Taliban not rejecting it out of hand and the ongoing U.S.-led military campaign among the factors that could force a negotiated settlement.

But the attacks in Kabul must be addressed, the general said. The city, once seen as relatively safe as compared with the countryside, has been the site of some horrendous attacks over the last few years. U.S. military and intelligence officials have warned that the Taliban will continue to carry out high-profile attacks, an effort to show that the Afghan government does not have control.

US, Japanese subs drill in S. China Sea

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — U.S. and Japanese warships are once again conducting anti-submarine drills together, this time in the South China Sea.

The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and the destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer have been working alongside the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force’s JS Ise, a Hyuga-class helicopter destroyer, since Sunday, a Navy statement said. The warships are doing formation steaming, anti-submarine and air-defense training.

It’s the second anti-submarine drill the allies have conducted this month. A Japanese destroyer, the JS Fuyuzuki, joined the USS Antietam, USS Curtis Wilbur, USS Benfold and USS Mustin for anti-submarine, surface warfare and live-fire training off Guam during the annual MultiSail exercise that ended Wednesday.

In recent years, China has built artificial islands in the South China Sea, militarizing them with airstrips, ports, hangars and other military-related infrastructure. That has upset several of its neighbors — including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines and Vietnam — that also have maritime claims in the region.

Chinese activity in the East China Sea has been an issue for Japan. Tokyo protested to Beijing in January after a submarine, presumed to be Chinese, was detected near Okinawa and the disputed Senkaku Islands. Vice Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama expressed “great concern” over the issue and urged China not to repeat the incursion.

However, a JMSDF spokesperson said the latest anti-submarine training isn’t geared toward specific incidents.

US delivers drones to Philippines

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. delivered six surveillance drones to the Philippines on Tuesday, bolstering the country’s ability to respond to a growing militant threat.

The ScanEagle drones, which are worth more than \$13 million, will “increase the Philippine military’s maritime domain awareness, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and counterterrorism capabilities,” the U.S. Embassy in Manila said in a statement.

The drones can operate above 15,000 feet and stay airborne for 20 hours, according to manufacturer Boeing. They were first deployed to Iraq in 2004 by the Marine Corps.

The Philippine air force will fly the ScanEagles out of Antonio Bautista Air Base in Palawan province, the embassy said.

The drones, provided through the Foreign Military Financing program, are the latest American military hardware given to the Philippines as the country struggles to contain Islamic insurgents in the south.

Last year, the U.S. provided a pair of Cessna 208B Grand Caravan intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance planes as part of \$33 million counterterrorism package.

The drones and aircraft transfers “represent our strong commitment to enhance the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines,” U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim said at a ceremony marking the drone handover, according to the embassy statement.

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the delivery is a sign of the U.S. and Philippines’ “goodwill, deep friendship and genuine commitment to peace,” according to

local media.

Analysts have warned that Islamic State, reeling from losses in Syria and Iraq, is looking to shift operations to Southeast Asia.

Last year, Filipino troops fought for five months to free the city of Marawi on the southern island of Mindanao from hundreds of militants who had sworn allegiance to ISIS. U.S. Special Forces provided intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance to Filipino commanders during the campaign, according to U.S. Pacific Command.

The long-standing relationship between the U.S. military and the Philippines has continued despite a rocky relationship between the U.S. and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, who has insulted American leaders, curtailed joint military exercises and tried to improve his nation’s relationship with China.

Parents: Military ignored on-base abuse

Associated Press

Three military fathers sat at the commander's conference table, pleading for help, after their daughters told them they'd been sexually assaulted by a boy in their first-grade class at the U.S. Army base school in Germany.

The principal had known about the boy's behavior for months, they said, but the abuse continued.

The girls' parents had turned to military police, child-abuse authorities and sex-assault specialists. The response was always the same, they said: Sorry this has happened; there's nothing we can do.

"It gives us a sense of hopelessness," one of the fathers, a soldier, said. "We can only do so much as parents."

Tens of thousands of children and teenagers live and attend school on U.S. military bases while their parents serve the country. Yet if they are sexually violated by a classmate, a neighborhood kid or a sibling, they often get lost in a legal and bureaucratic netherworld.

Because the children are civilians, military law doesn't

apply. The federal legal system that typically enforces civilian law on base, though, isn't equipped or inclined to prosecute juveniles. The Defense Department's education system affords them fewer protections than public schools if they are sexually attacked by a classmate on campus.

The Pentagon's response to addressing these child-on-child assaults stands in contrast to how it cracked down on sexual violence in the ranks more than a decade ago, following congressional scrutiny.

The Associated Press does not name sex assault victims without consent and extended that anonymity to three sets of parents who agreed to speak on the record. What happened at the German base school is further documented in sworn statements by the soldier, as well as other military records.

In late July 2015, the soldier's wife said she discovered their daughter was sexually assaulted at Grafenwoehr Elementary School during the school year that had just ended. She said her daughter told her the boy had similarly violated at least five other girls.

Days later, she said, she learned from another family that the school had already known about the boy's sexual aggression. The family told her that the principal called them months earlier to say the boy sexually touched their daughter. That little girl also said the boy had targeted other first-graders, including the soldier's daughter, and the family said it shared the information with the principal.

But neither the principal nor his staff notified any of the girls' parents about the possible assaults, several families told AP. When the soldier and his wife met with the principal in early August, he insisted he had contacted the parents of every girl named and their daughter wasn't among them, they recalled.

The assaults at Grafenwoehr Elementary were among more than 150 that weren't disclosed in a "serious incident" report to the Pentagon's school system headquarters, the AP found. Sexual attacks among the system's 71,000 students are supposed to be reported, but officials wouldn't explain why Grafenwoehr was missing.

The Pentagon also wouldn't allow the principal to speak with the AP, and he did not respond to direct requests for comment. Department of Defense Education Activity said an investigation eventually showed Grafenwoehr Elementary's staff "took the appropriate actions to best meet the needs of all students involved."

AP began investigating sex abuse among military children and teens after readers of its 2017 investigation about student assaults in U.S. public schools reported even more complicated problems on bases.

An executive order in 2000 attempted to hold federal education programs, such as those run by the Pentagon, to federal anti-gender discrimination laws but did not grant students the right to sue for damages or request outside investigations — the leverage often needed to get action.

The girls' parents also tried to seek help from Army investigators and the base commander. But, they said, they were told that nothing could be done because their daughters had been abused by another child or that it was a school matter.

Trump proposes military space force as a new service

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America should create its own separate military space force, President Donald Trump mentioned in an offhand remark Tuesday that would change the course of U.S. space policy.

But don't expect Captain Kirk ordering phasers set on stun, Battlestar Galactica or ray guns blazing in orbit in the near future, space experts said. And some said a military space force may make it harder to keep Earth's orbit a place of peace.

Saying his national security strategy "recognizes that space is a war-fighting domain, just like the land, air and sea," Trump said at a San Diego Marine Corps base that he's considering "a space force" that would be the equivalent of the Air

Force, Army and Navy.

Trump said at first he wasn't serious when he floated the concept, but "then I said, 'What a great idea, maybe we'll have to do that.'"

This is more about boosting reconnaissance and cybersecurity than fighting in orbit, said Sean O'Keefe, who was both NASA administrator and Navy secretary under President George W. Bush.

Trump's own defense secretary and Air Force secretary argued vociferously against it when members of Congress pushed it last year, O'Keefe said. You can emphasize more help for the military in space without going to the massive organizational change and expense, he said.

It could be a bureaucratic nightmare, said O'Keefe, a pro-

fessor at Syracuse University.

He said some people may argue that a space force would "compromise the sanctity of considering space to be off limits from warfare."

Ever since the Space Age started with the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik, there has been a military and national security aspect to space, even though there are treaties and a United Nations committee that explicitly talk about keeping space a place of peace. In the 1950s, President Dwight Eisenhower established two space programs — a civilian one that became NASA, and a military one. NASA is much more public, but the military program is just as big.

The military space program has mostly been led by the Air Force. For the past several

years, the military has been flying an unmanned space plane, a lot like the retired civilian space shuttle but smaller, experts said.

"It's really what we're already doing but giving elevated status to the mission," American University space expert Howard McCurdy said of Trump's proposal.

The military toyed with the idea of an Air Force space station in orbit in the 1960s, but President Richard Nixon's administration killed the idea, mostly because it found that robotic space efforts were more effective and efficient, McCurdy said.

McCurdy, O'Keefe and others said any space force would probably consist of cadets on the ground operating robotic systems in space.

Dems claim win, GOP hangs on in Pa.

Associated Press

MOUNT LEBANON, Pa. — A razor's edge separated Democrat Conor Lamb and Republican Rick Saccone early Wednesday in their closely watched special election in Pennsylvania, where a surprisingly strong bid by first-time candidate Lamb severely tested President Donald Trump's sway in a GOP stronghold.

Lamb claimed victory before exuberant supporters early Wednesday as the number of votes still to be counted dwindled in a contest that has drawn national attention as a bellwether for the midterm elections in November when the Republican Party's House and Senate majorities are at

risk.

The Marine veteran told his crowd that voters had directed him to "do your job" in Washington. "Mission accepted," he declared.

Earlier, Saccone, a 60-year-old Air Force veteran, told his own supporters, "It's not over yet; we're going to fight all the way, all the way to the end. We'll never give up."

Lamb told CNN on Wednesday he hadn't yet heard from Saccone, but added, "I congratulate him on fighting hard the whole way."

Regardless of the outcome — and a recount was possible — Lamb's showing in a district Trump won by 20 points in the presidential race was sure to

stoke anxiety among Republicans nationwide and renewed enthusiasm among Democrats.

Wednesday morning, Lamb's lead stood at 641 votes — out of more than 224,000 votes cast, according to unofficial results. Election officials said there are about 200 absentee votes and an unknown number of provisional ballots still to be counted.

The four counties in the western Pennsylvania district have seven days to count provisional ballots.

The ultimate winner will face re-election in just eight months, and the congressional district as currently shaped will likely vanish next year thanks to a court-ordered re-

drawing of the state's district maps.

For Democrats, a win would reverberate nationwide, while even a narrow loss would be viewed as a sign of increased Democratic potential as the midterm season begins.

Democrats must flip 24 GOP-held seats this fall to seize control of the House, and months ago few had counted on the district to be in play. The seat has been in Republican hands for the past 15 years.

It was open now only because longtime Republican congressman Tim Murphy, who espoused strong anti-abortion views, resigned last fall amid revelations of an extramarital affair in which he urged his mistress to get an abortion.

Expect confirmation fights on Trump's State, CIA picks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Back in 2017, the Senate gave quick confirmation to President Donald Trump's national security team and his first secretary of State. It's not likely to go as smoothly for Trump's new nominees to run State and the CIA.

Senate Democrats — and some top Republicans — are slow-walking the process amid fresh questions over the Trump administration's stance toward Russia and revived inquiries into the CIA's dark history of torture.

The president's firing of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson touched off a Senate confirmation battle that will play out this spring ahead of midterm elections when control of Congress hangs in the balance.

By tapping CIA Director Mike Pompeo to replace Tillerson, the White House is counting on a repeat of Senate support for the former Kansas congressman confirmed last year to lead the clandestine agency.

But the political ground has

shifted since the 66-32 vote to confirm Pompeo in January 2017 when the GOP-led Congress was eager to put the new president's team in place and Democrats were unwilling to stand in the way.

In the year since, Pompeo has drawn scrutiny for actions and statements showcasing his loyalty to Trump and his approach toward Russia.

At the same time, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., made it clear he had plenty of questions for Trump's choice of Gina Haspel to head the CIA over the "nature and extent" of her involvement in the agency's waterboarding of terrorism suspects.

As a career intelligence officer, Haspel oversaw a secret CIA prison in Thailand from 2003 to 2005 where top terrorism suspects were waterboarded, and she later helped carry out an order to destroy waterboarding videos. Although she now serves as CIA deputy director, Haspel has not previously had to undergo Senate confirmation.

Sources: Trump ponders replacing VA's Shulkin

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is considering ousting embattled Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, who has faced an insurgency within his department and fresh allegations that he used a member of his security detail to run personal errands.

Trump has floated the notion of moving Energy Secretary Rick Perry to the VA to right the ship, believing Shulkin has become a distraction, according to two people familiar with White House discussions. They were not authorized to discuss internal deliberations.

However, speaking after a Senate hearing Wednesday, Perry said he's keeping his job and made a reference to reports as "fake news."

Shulkin has faced several investigations over his travel and leadership of the department but until now has received praise from the president for his work to turn it around. The news comes after Trump fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday.

Shulkin did not respond to requests for comment via phone and text message. He has been holding on to his job by a thread since a bruising internal report found ethics violations in connection with his trip to Europe with his wife last summer. A spokeswoman for Perry also had no comment.

The VA inspector general also is looking into a complaint by a member of Shulkin's 24-7 security detail that he was asked to accompany the secretary to a Home Depot and carry furniture items into his home, according to two people familiar with the allegation who requested anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation.

"The honeymoon is ending with a crash that hurts veterans most of all," said Paul Rieckhoff, founder and CEO of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, who has been a close observer of the VA for more than a decade. "VA always has bad news, but Shulkin's ethical and leadership failures are still significant — despite any internal attacks."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Famous buried 'ghost tracks' appear

NJ LOWER TOWNSHIP — The back-to-back winter storms hitting New Jersey have helped unveil famed abandoned train tracks confined to a remote stretch of a beach in Cape May County.

The famed "ghost tracks" at Higbee Beach have drawn a number of visitors and photographers since their re-emergence. NJ.com reported that the latest section to be uncovered on the bay beach in Lower Township is more intact and level than the segment that appeared last summer.

The ghost tracks are all that remains of a rail line that once served as support for sand mining and munitions testing facilities during World War I.

Pizzeria hosts free weddings for Pi Day

NY NEW YORK — A New York City pizzeria hosted a full day of free weddings in honor of Pi Day on Wednesday.

The restaurant chain, &pizza, has been holding "Pi Day Weddings" since 2015, and many couples have taken part. WNBC-TV reported that a total of five couples were expected to wed at the pizzeria, with flowers and photography provided for free.

The couples also were to receive free food and drinks for their ceremonies.

Pool bursts, washes woman down ravine

WA TACOMA — A Washington state woman had to be rescued after her above-ground swimming pool burst and washed her down a ravine.

The News Tribune reported that the woman had been working on the pool Monday when it suddenly burst. The water swept the woman about 30 feet down the gully.

Fire crews pulled the woman out of the gully using a litter and ropes.

The woman was taken to a hospital with unknown injuries. Fire officials said she was conscious when rescued.

Sno-Cat resembling 'General Lee' stolen

CO MINTURN — Authorities in Colorado are looking for a man suspected of stealing a Sno-Cat fitted out to look like the "General Lee," the famous car featured in the classic television series "The Dukes of Hazzard."

Co-owner John Brandenburg said the large, treaded snow vehicle was on a trailer outside a Minturn restaurant when someone hitched it up and drove away sometime Sunday. He immediately took to social media and received several responses from people who said they saw a pickup hauling it west on Interstate 70.

KCNC-TV in Denver reported that the Sno-Cat was tracked to a garage in the Grand Junction area. A SWAT team was deployed, but the suspect got away.

Possible deal in child waterboarding case

PA ALIQUIPPA — A prosecutor said a Pennsylvania couple could be reunited with the 12-year-old daughter they are accused of waterboarding if a judge approves a plea deal.

Beaver County District Attorney David Lozier said the deal calls for guilty pleas from Malissa and Dion Stevens to child en-

dangerment and for sentences of seven years' probation that could eventually be reduced to five years. The couple would be reunited under supervision with their daughter.

Authorities allege the girl was dragged into the Aliquippa home's basement, a wet towel was placed over her face and her chair was tilted backward as a bucket of cold water was poured onto her, preventing her from breathing.

Man driving in funeral procession shot dead

MD BALTIMORE — Police said a man driving in a funeral procession was shot dead in Baltimore.

The Baltimore Sun reported that Baltimore police Detective Jeremy Silbert said Monday that officers on patrol found Dannta Holmes, 39, suffering from gunshot wounds Saturday. Silbert said a preliminary investigation indicated that suspects had approached the vehicle that was participating in the procession and opened fire before fleeing.

Holmes was pronounced dead at a local hospital.

Boy cited in setting of fire at playground

SD SIOUX FALLS — Sioux Falls police said a 10-year-old boy is accused of setting fire to an apartment playground.

Crews were called Sunday night to the fire at a private playground on the grounds of Autumn Park Apartments.

A police spokesman said an investigation found the fire began with the boy playing with a lighter and a piece of paper. The fire spread to the rest of the playground, which had just been installed in December and cost \$65,000.

The Argus Leader reported the child was cited for second-degree arson and intentional damage to property.

Bride accused of DWI on way to her wedding

AZ MARANA — A bride in southern Arizona was arrested on suspicion of impaired driving after she was involved in car crash on the way to her wedding.

Amber Young, 32, was wearing an open-back dress when she was handcuffed and put into a police cruiser Monday in Marana.

Police spokesman Sgt. Chriswell Scott said Young is believed to have caused the three-vehicle collision. One person suffered minor injuries in the crash.

Lack of vacancy leads to attack at hotel

NM LAS CRUCES — A New Mexico man is facing charges after police say he slammed his truck into a security guard when a Las Cruces hotel told him it had no vacancies.

KTSM-TV in El Paso reported Dal Iacofano, 55, was arrested last week following the alleged attack at Hotel Encanto.

According to police, Iacofano became enraged after he arrived at the hotel around 2 a.m. and was told no rooms were available. Police said Iacofano was escorted from the lobby and later hit a security guard with his truck.

Authorities said Iacofano then hit two other parked cars.

He faces a number of charges, including aggravated assault.

From wire reports

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Bonnies oust UCLA from tournament

Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — The basketball was still high in the air — flung to start the celebration — when the buzzer sounded and the Bonnies' long-awaited March celebration commenced. Players chest-bumped on court. Coach Mark Schmidt jumped and waved his arms.

The crowd at the University of Dayton Arena — a place where St. Bonaventure usually is booed — got caught up in the moment, too. And why not? It had been 48 years since anyone saw something like this out of St. Bonaventure.

Courtney Stockard returned from a hamstring injury and scored 26 points, and Jaylen Adams hit a jumper and three free throws in the final minute Tuesday night, rallying the Bonnies to a 65-58 victory over UCLA and their first NCAA Tournament victory since 1970.

At long last, it was time to party in March.

"It can't get better," Schmidt said.

They'll have more chances. The 11th-seeded Bonnies (26-7) will play sixth-seeded Florida (20-12) in Dallas on Thursday night in the East region. They did interviews, showered and headed for a flight to their next destination.

"Florida's got four or five days on us, so we'll be watching tape on the plane," Schmidt said. "We've got a 2 a.m. flight, but it couldn't be a better flight. Ever."

St. Bonaventure set a school record with its 26th win. Stockard got the Bonnies in position for the drought-busting victory by leading a late 12-0 run. The Bonnies lack depth and were glad to get Stockard back from the hamstring injury. He's scored 21, 31, 22, 19 and 26 points in the past five games.

Holiday was the Bruins' indispensable player on offense in the last six games, averaging 26 points while sitting out

for only 43 seconds total. The Pac-12's leading scorer got the Bruins going early, hitting his first three shots as they pulled ahead 14-5. He missed his next eight shots as St. Bonaventure rallied.

St. Bonaventure's 26 wins surpass the 25 by the 1969-70 team that reached the Final Four.

UCLA was booed by the Dayton crowd when it took the court. St. Bonaventure — like the Flyers, an Atlantic 10 team — got a loud ovation. St. Bonaventure also played at UD Arena on Jan. 3 and lost to the Flyers 82-72. That time they were booed, of course.

Holiday is the first UCLA guard to average at least 19 points in a season since Reggie Miller had 22.3 as a senior in 1986-87.

"I'm still not 100 percent," Stockard said, "but I'm feeling way better than when I did when I left the Richmond game. So I can't really let an opportu-

nity like this pass."

UCLA (21-12) was surprised that it got relegated to the First Four for the first time in its history — the Bruins have been to 18 Final Fours. They had trouble making shots against the Bonnies' zone defense and matched its season high with 20 turnovers, a disappointing ending to a season that started with an international incident.

Jalen Hill, Cody Riley and LiAngelo Ball were accused of shoplifting during a trip to China in November. All three were suspended for the season, and Ball left the school.

UCLA's Aaron Holiday led the Pac-12 in scoring but couldn't put his touch on the First Four game. He scored 20 points but had 10 turnovers, including three in the final 29 seconds as the game slipped away.

"I felt like we matched them pretty well," Holiday said. "We just turned the ball over too much."

Radford tops LIU Brooklyn to register first-ever win

Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Carlik Jones had a substantial and loud cheering section at University of Dayton Arena, a lot of folks traveling about an hour up Interstate 75 from his Cincinnati hometown to see him play for Radford in a First Four game.

Jones didn't disappoint them. The redshirt freshman guard was the engine that drove the Highlanders, scoring 12 points to go with career highs in rebounds with 11 and assists with seven as Radford beat LIU Brooklyn 71-61 on Tuesday night to get its first-ever NCAA Tournament win.

"It's just big to be able to come back home and perform in front of my family and friends that haven't been able to see me play," Jones said. "And it's just been a good feeling."

Radford didn't play its prettiest game, but the team from

rural southwest Virginia will celebrate briefly before heading to Pittsburgh to play No. 1 seed Villanova on Thursday. The Big South champion Highlanders are making their third tournament appearance and first since 2009.

Ed Polite Jr. had 13 points and 12 rebounds, and Travis Fields Jr. also scored 13 for Radford.

Despite hitting just seven of 23 shots from the floor in the second half, LIU Brooklyn managed to stay within striking distance, even taking the lead briefly early in the second half. The Northeast Conference champion Blackbirds got to within a point with five minutes left, but a 9-1 surge by the Highlanders opened up the lead.

"We remained calm," Polite said. "Basketball is about a game of runs. So we knew they're a good team, so they're going to make shots. So we just

had to remain focused and go with the game plan. And that's to pressure them even though they're a fast-paced team and don't give them any easy baskets."

The Blackbirds went without a field goal in the last seven minutes of the game and shot 30.4 percent in the second half. Each team committed 15 turnovers.

"I thought (Radford) did a nice job grinding it out on the offensive end of the floor and taking time off the clock to where we couldn't get moving," LIU Brooklyn coach Derek Kellogg said.

Jashaun Agosto scored 16 points and Raiquan Clark added 14 for LIU Brooklyn, which is winless in seven trips to the tournament.

Radford led 30-28 at the end of a sloppy first half after leading by as many as nine. The Blackbirds scored 11 of their points on nine turnovers by

Radford but were just 3 for 13 from beyond the three-point line in the half.

The Blackbirds got hot in the NEC Tournament but couldn't sustain it on the big stage, shooting just 38 percent compared to 47.5 percent for Radford.

The Highlanders' defense helped limit LIU Brooklyn's leading scorer, Joel Hernandez, to just eight points. Averaging 20.9 points per game during the season, Hernandez was just 3-for-11, including 1-for-5 from the three-point line.

"He's so strong and he can score in a variety of ways," Radford coach Mike Jones said. "We knew we weren't going to shut him out. He had 32 in their championship game and just willed their team. And when he hit that shot at the end of the first half, we told our guys, hey, understand now he's coming at you with both barrels blazing in the second half. And We just tried to make it tough on him."

Packers cut WR Nelson; RB Peterson out

Associated Press

Adrian Peterson's short stint in Arizona is over. Jordy Nelson's long and productive stay in Green Bay has ended, too.

Meanwhile, Drew Brees is staying put in the Big Easy and Kirk Cousins will make his first visit as a free agent to Minnesota. The Vikings long have been considered a natural landing spot for one of the most valuable quarterbacks available.

One day before the league's new year begins, veteran runningback Peterson was released by the Cardinals on Tuesday, and receiver Nelson — Aaron Rodgers' favorite target — was let go by the Packers.

Seven-time All-Pro running back Peterson began last season with New Orleans but,

after barely playing there, was dealt to the Cardinals. Peterson rushed for 134 yards in a win over Tampa Bay and 159 in a win over San Francisco. In six games, he gained 448 yards on 129 carries for Arizona before being sidelined with a neck injury.

Nelson had 550 receptions and 69 touchdown catches in 10 seasons in Green Bay. But his production declined last season with Rodgers sidelined much of the year by a collarbone injury. He missed the 2015 season with a major knee injury, and then was the 2016 Comeback Player of the Year.

"We cannot thank Jordy enough for all that he has given the Green Bay Packers and our community for the past 10 years," general manager Brian

Gutekunst said. "He has been an exemplary professional and teammate and greatly contributed to our success."

Brees has agreed to a two-year, \$50 million extension with New Orleans, with \$27 million guaranteed the first year, two people familiar with the contract told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity Tuesday because the agreement has not been announced.

Cousins will visit with the Vikings on Wednesday, agent Mike McCartney said. ESPN reported that Cousins will sign with the Vikings, but McCartney said no decision has been made yet by his client.

The Jets and Cardinals also made sense as fits for the 29-year-old who played consecu-

tive seasons for Washington on franchise tags. New York, however, re-signed last year's starter, veteran Josh McCown, and Arizona made a deal with Minnesota's Sam Bradford.

In other moves:

■ A person familiar with negotiations says the Jacksonville Jaguars have agreed to a contract with free-agent cornerback D.J. Hayden. The person says Hayden will sign a three-year deal Thursday.

■ A person familiar with the negotiations says the New York Giants have an agreement with offensive tackle Nate Solder. NFL Network reported the Giants will give Solder a four-year, \$62 million deal.

Thunder's Westbrook scores 100th career triple-double

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Russell Westbrook darted into the lane time and time again, hitting the shot, drawing a foul or finding an open teammate.

At the other end of the court, he lingered under the boards, pulling down one rebound after another — usually against players taller than him.

In other words, just another night for Mr. Triple-Double.

Westbrook joined a very exclusive club Wednesday by putting up double figures in points, assists and rebounds for the 100th time in his career, a feat accomplished by only three other players.

Oscar Robertson. Magic Johnson. Jason Kidd.

Not bad company.

"I'm just happy to be a part of the crew with those guys," Westbrook said after leading the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 119-107 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

It was another vintage performance by the point guard.

After Paul George went down with a groin injury, Westbrook took over in the fourth.

He guided a 16-0 run that

suddenly turned a back-and-forth game — it was tied, in fact, after Taurean Prince hit a three-pointer with 5:18 remaining — into a comfortable victory for Oklahoma City by the time the horn sounded.

Westbrook put the Thunder ahead for good with a pull-up jumper. He fed a pass to Jerami Grant for a three-pointer. He bolted for the basket to draw a foul and sank both free throws. He spotted Grant again on a fast break after an Atlanta turnover, threading a pass that set up a three-point play. He drew another foul, sinking one more free throw. And with the lead in double digits, he stayed on the court long enough to grab three more rebounds.

"I try to read and react and see what teams are doing defensively, and obviously find the ways to make the game easy for my teammates," Westbrook said.

Finally, after Carmelo Anthony knocked down the last of his six three-pointers to cap the run, Westbrook headed to the bench with just under a minute to go.

His work was done after a

night like so many others.

He finished with 32 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists.

"What it takes to do that on a night-in, night-out basis, the focus that you have to have, the intensity that you have to play with," Anthony marveled. "For me, being able to be a part of that, be alongside him, it's a special moment. It's something that we should all appreciate, moments like this, and appreciate what we have and who we have."

Westbrook insisted his gaudy numbers are not the most important thing.

He's proudest of the Thunder's record when he goes off for a triple-double — 82-18.

"I like winning," Westbrook said. "The most important part about this game is winning, embracing and enjoying it with your teammates."

Westbrook is barely halfway to Robertson's career record of 181 triple-doubles, but he's definitely got Johnson (138) and Kidd (107) in his sights.

Last season, Westbrook won the MVP award and set a league record with 42 triple-doubles, joining Robertson as

the only players to average a triple-double over a full year. This season, with more offensive help around him after the Thunder acquired George and Anthony, Westbrook has still managed 21 triple-doubles.

At this rate, he'll go by Kidd and Johnson in the next couple of seasons, having already become the third-fastest to reach the century mark behind Robertson (a mere 277 games) and Johnson (656 games). Westbrook needed 736 games to get there, but he's really stepped up the pace since Kevin Durant left for Golden State.

The sellout crowd in attendance-challenged Atlanta — a turnout befitting one of the league's brightest stars — broke into loud applause when Westbrook locked up his triple-double with 2½ minutes remaining.

"It's always crazy for me, man, to go on the road and just see — not just fans cheering, but kids wearing my jersey," he said. "I never, ever imagined me even playing in the NBA. To see that every time, it's always amazing for me. I never take it for granted."

NBA roundup

Turner helps Pacers hold off 76ers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Myles Turner scored 25 points, including two clutch free throws with 21.5 seconds remaining, and the Indiana Pacers beat the Philadelphia 76ers 101-98 on Tuesday night in a possible Eastern Conference playoff preview.

Thaddeus Young added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the surprising Pacers (40-28), who overcame an off shooting night by leading scorer Victor Oladipo to win their third straight and improve to a season-high 12 games over .500. They were coming off a 99-97 victory at Boston on Sunday night.

Joel Embiid had 29 points and 12 rebounds and Ben Simmons finished with 10 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for the 76ers (36-30), who had won

13 straight home games.

Timberwolves 116, Wizards 111: Minnesota star Karl-Anthony Towns recovered from a shot to the mouth that left him down on the court and finished with 37 points and 10 rebounds.

Towns shot 13-for-17, including making all three of his three-point attempts.

Cavaliers 129, Suns 107: LeBron James had 28 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for his 69th career triple-double, powering the visiting Cavaliers to the wire-to-wire victory.

James is averaging a triple-double over his last 15 games.

Raptors 116, Nets 102: Jonas Valanciunas had 26 points and 14 rebounds, and visiting Toronto earned its ninth straight win.

DeMar DeRozan and reserve Fred VanVleet scored 15 points

apiece, and Kyle Lowry added 11 points and 11 assists for the Eastern Conference-leading Raptors.

Jazz 110, Pistons 79: Rudy Gobert had 22 points and 12 rebounds, sending host Utah to its seventh consecutive victory.

The Jazz had six players score in double figures. Joe Ingles added 17 points, seven assists and seven rebounds, and Jonas Jerebko had 16 points and eight rebounds.

Lakers 112, Nuggets 103: Isaiah Thomas scored 12 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter, and the host Lakers rallied for the win.

Julius Randle and Kyle Kuzma each had 26 points and 13 rebounds for Los Angeles, which trailed by as many as 13. Kuzma had only two points in the first half.

Pelicans 119, Hornets 115:

Anthony Davis had 31 points, 14 rebounds and five blocked shots, leading host New Orleans to the victory.

Mavericks 110, Knicks 97: Harrison Barnes scored 30 points, and the Mavericks handed the host Knicks their eighth straight loss.

Dallas couldn't stop New York early, and then dominated the second half to win for the third time in four games.

Clippers 112, Bulls 106: DeAndre Jordan dominated with 29 points and 18 rebounds, leading the Clippers to the road win.

Spurs 108, Magic 72: LaMarcus Aldridge scored 24 points, helping host San Antonio stop a three-game slide.

The Spurs led 62-37 at half-time and extended that cushion to 39 entering the fourth quarter.

NHL roundup

Pastrnak's hat trick helps rally Bruins past Hurricanes

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Boston Bruins trailed 4-1 with 10 minutes to go and were down to four healthy defensemen. It was an adverse set of circumstances, to be sure.

No matter. Spurred on by Brad Marchand's words and David Pastrnak's play, the Bruins pulled off a stirring comeback.

Pastrnak scored three of Boston's five goals in the final 10 minutes for his first career hat trick, and the Bruins stunned the Carolina Hurricanes by rallying for a 6-4 victory Tuesday night.

"We knew we didn't play well, close enough to our standards," Pastrnak said. "We don't quit, and that showed today."

Matt Grzelcyk, Pastrnak and Danton Heinen scored in a span of 77 seconds to turn a 4-1

Bruins deficit into a 4-all tie.

Grzelcyk fired home a slap shot with 9:56 remaining, Pastrnak scored on a wrister 56 seconds later and Heinen followed 21 seconds after that with the tying goal, banging home a one-timer off a 2-on-1 rush with David Krejci.

Pastrnak put Boston ahead on a power-play goal with 3:30 left and finished off his hat trick with an empty-net goal with 1:34 remaining.

"The whole night we kind of don't have the legs and look kind of tired, no energy," Pastrnak said. "And then we get a couple goals and it seemed like all of a sudden everybody is flying and everything clicks."

Marchand had a goal and two assists for the Bruins, who snapped a three-game road losing streak. Tuukka Rask made 29 saves.

Bruins coach Bruce Cas-

sidy credited Marchand, who missed the previous game with an upper-body injury and was a game-time decision, for rallying the bench when the team trailed 4-1.

"Right around Grzelcyk's goal, Marchy said, 'Listen, there's a lot of time, we're not out of it,'" Cassidy said. "We knew it was a big ask to be able to come back. There's a lot of energy there, a lot of emotion in his game. He brings it every night."

Predators 3, Jets 1: Pekka Rinne made 32 saves and surging Nashville scored two short-handed goals in beating visiting Winnipeg to tie for the top spot in the NHL standings.

Senators 7, Lightning 4: Mike Hoffman scored two goals and six other teammates had multipoint games as visiting Ottawa stopped Tampa Bay's 10-game streak without a

regulation loss.

Avalanche 5, Wild 1: Nathan MacKinnon scored his 33rd goal of the season, J.T. Compher had his first career two-goal game and visiting Colorado dominated Minnesota again.

Canadiens 4, Stars 2: Arturi Lehkonen scored twice and host Montreal snapped its five-game losing streak with a victory over Dallas.

Coyotes 4, Kings 3 (SO): Alex Goligoski scored the decisive goal in the fifth round of a shootout and Adin Hill earned his first NHL win for host Arizona against Los Angeles.

Flames 1, Oilers 0: Mike Smith made 28 saves, Johnny Gaudreau scored in the second period and host Calgary edged Edmonton to end a seven-game losing streak against its provincial rival.