

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Subpar military housing on front burner

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—In December 2017, a group of distressed military spouses submitted a 53-page presentation to the Military Family Readiness Council that painted a disturbing portrait of housing troubles for servicemembers across the country.

They were told the council didn't handle such worries, Crystal Cornwall and Jean Coffman remembered.

Now that damning media coverage has sparked a rash of congressional hearings and dozens of military town hall meetings, the women said there's a long road ahead to addressing their original 2017 report.

"I hope they are going to recognize there is a big problem," Cornwall, 35, who is now based out of Marine Corps Base Quantico in northern Virginia, said of lawmakers and military leaders. "The military has to start believing their own people."

The concerns have coalesced

into what appears to be the largest crisis to hit military housing since a 1996 privatization initiative let outside contractors take over the residences. Previously, the military managed the properties.

In recent months, the military's services have hosted dozens of town halls on bases. Some families, previously afraid to speak for fear of retaliation, are increasingly coming forward.

On Friday, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson met privately with families at MacDill Air Force Base, where she asked command staff to leave so they could speak freely. On Thursday, the Senate Armed Services Committee is slated to hold its second hearing on military housing problems to examine the chain of command's role in the crisis, with service secretaries and chiefs slated to testify.

"I heard compelling testimony from military families and read statements from dozens more who have endured horrific living conditions," Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the

Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a recent statement. "Families felt they had no advocate within the military to ensure they had high-quality, affordable housing. That is unacceptable, and we need to ensure that the chain of command appropriately supports these families entrusted to their care."

Dallas-based Lincoln Military Housing, which manages 37,000 residences, will also listen to family concerns when it hosts a private town hall at Quantico on Thursday evening, said Trent Duffy, a spokesman for Lincoln.

"I regret when even one servicemember family feels we have come up short," Jarl Bliss, president of Lincoln, said at a recent Senate hearing. "I deeply regret any of our families feel this way."

During a Feb. 27 subpanel meeting of the Senate Armed Services Committee, personnel leadership of each military branch said the housing issue is a priority and commanders were visiting housing areas to

see for themselves what the living conditions are for servicemembers and their families.

"Our commanders have a responsibility for making sure our airmen and their families are taken care of," said Air Force Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services.

Top officials from the Pentagon's four military services have vowed to make the issue of unfit privatized housing a top priority. Across the United States and at posts overseas, top installation officials have held town hall meetings to hear directly from the families of servicemembers affected by housing problems.

The new legislative and Defense Department efforts were launched after a 2018 series by Reuters exposed extensive disrepair and dilapidated conditions found at military housing properties. People included in the series, such as Cornwall, recounted battles with the private companies that manage the homes at a congressional hearing last month.

EUCOM commander requests 2 more Navy destroyers

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

The top U.S. officer in Europe told lawmakers Tuesday he has insufficient military firepower on the Continent and wants two more Navy warships under his command, along with more ground forces to counter Russia.

Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, head of U.S. European Command and NATO's supreme allied commander, said additional forces are needed in light of Russia's military modernization efforts that threaten to "erode" the U.S. military advantage.

"I am not comfortable yet with the deterrent posture that we have in Europe," Scaparrotti told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

While U.S. military capabilities in Europe have grown during the past several years, Scaparrotti said, he needs more rotational forces, more investment in military infrastructure, more cyber assets, a beefed-up Navy presence and more intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets.

The Navy currently has four destroyers based out of Rota, Spain, but Scaparrotti said he needs six.

Meanwhile, Scaparrotti warned Turkey that it should not move forward with a plan to buy a Russian missile defense system. If it does, the U.S. should not move forward with a plan to sell F-35 fighters to Turkey, Scaparrotti said.

"My best military advice would be we don't then follow through with the F-35," he said.

Turkey has said it is committed to buying Russia's S-400 system, which allies have warned is incompatible with NATO's own systems.

Scaparrotti's comments come ahead of the Pentagon's 2020 budget request, which is expected to be released next week.

Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he backs funding efforts focused on deterring Russia.

"Perceived weakness will only provoke further aggression from (Russian President Vladimir) Putin," Inhofe said. "We need a defense budget that is of sufficient size and invests in the key capabilities we need in Europe—areas like long-range fires, cruise missile defense, anti-submarine warfare and the supporting infrastructure."

Trump: Didn't discuss war games with Kim

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea—President Donald Trump denied that the order to cancel war games with South Korea was a concession offered during nuclear talks with the North, saying he “made that decision long ago” to save money. He was reacting Monday to criticism that the decision fulfilled a longtime demand by the North, which hates the exercises, while getting little in return after last week’s second summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un collapsed without an agreement.

“The military drills, or war games as I call them, were never even discussed in my mtg w/ Kim Jong Un of NK—FAKE NEWS!” he tweeted on Monday. “I made that decision long ago because it costs the U.S. far too much money to have those ‘games,’ especially since we

are not reimbursed for the tremendous cost!”

The Pentagon announced Saturday it was shelving the springtime drills known as Key Resolve/Foal Eagle and replacing them with smaller scale training drills that began Monday.

It said the decision was made jointly with South Korea and “reflected our desire to reduce tension and support our diplomatic efforts to achieve complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a final, fully verified manner.”

The move was widely seen as a concession to the North, which considers the exercises to be rehearsals for an invasion and frequently lashes out against them.

Trump has long complained about the cost of military exercises as part of his demands for U.S. allies to pay more their own defense, including South Korea and NATO. But he also

has called them “provocative” and linked them to efforts to persuade the North to relinquish its nuclear weapons, noting on Sunday that “reducing tensions with North Korea at this time is a good thing!”

The president insisted the drills didn’t come up during his talks with Kim on Feb. 27-28 in Hanoi, Vietnam, which stalled due to differences on the scope of sanctions relief for the North and the definition of denuclearization.

The issue came to the fore after the first U.S.-North Korean summit on June 12 in Singapore as Trump surprised allies and some of his own aides by announcing he was suspending the military exercises amid negotiations with the North.

The Pentagon’s decision took that a step further by saying it decided “to conclude the KEY RESOLVE and FOAL EAGLE series of exercises.” It didn’t say anything about the other

major drills known as Ulchi Freedom Guardian, which are usually held in the fall but were canceled last year.

Retired Lt. Gen. Thomas Spoeher, director of the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative U.S. think tank, called it “the wrong decision for the wrong reasons.”

“A typical exercise costs around \$14 million — not a trivial amount, but necessary in order to practice military coordination with allies and iron out the wrinkles that inevitably emerge in complex military operations,” Spoeher wrote in a commentary published Sunday on the foundation’s The Daily Signal website.

“The best military is of little value unless it is properly trained. And by canceling, not just suspending, these exercises, the U.S. is unilaterally lowering its readiness,” he said.

Ex-sailor sentenced in gun resale scheme

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

Using his military discount, a Norfolk-based sailor bought and resold 23 firearms for profit, according to court documents.

Many of Petty Officer 3rd Class Julio Fernando Pino’s customers were criminals.

Pino, who was honorably discharged from the Navy in December, was sentenced Monday to 2½ years in prison.

“The defendant bought and re-sold firearms so many times that, unsurprisingly, he sold some firearms to prohibited people, including a juvenile, a drug-addicted armed robber, a drug dealer trafficking in stolen firearms and many others,” Assistant U.S. Attorney William B. Jackson said in court documents.

According to court documents, Pino’s scheme stretched from Nov. 6, 2015, through Jan. 21, 2017. Prosecutors said he il-

legally engaged in the business of dealing firearms without being a licensed dealer.

In all, Pino, now 26, purchased at least 60 firearms during that time before advertising them on www.VAguntrader.com and www.armslist.com.

Court documents outline one particular sale of a .40-caliber Glock Model 23, which he purchased March 12, 2016, from the Marine Corps Exchange in Norfolk. The original sale price was \$439.99.

In the process, he signed a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives form in which he said he was the actual buyer and transferee of the weapon even though he had no plans to keep it, documents said.

Less than three hours after the purchase, a potential buyer responded to an advertisement for the weapon. Later that day, he sold it to the person for \$550, documents said.

Assistant Federal Public Defender Keith Kimball said his client tried to be careful about who he sold the firearms to but obviously failed.

“Mr. Pino has no criminal history and did not seek to put guns in the hands of people who would use them to commit crimes,” he said, lamenting how his client now realizes he exercised “extremely poor judgment.”

Regarding a Dec. 16, 2015, gun sale in Maryland that involved a 16-year-old boy, Kimball said his client didn’t know the buyer’s age at the time.

Jackson countered that ATF agents told Pino not to buy firearms to immediately resell them and that he didn’t listen.

“Despite repeated warnings by ATF agents, he continued to sell guns without a license, even after telling them that he would stop,” Jackson said as he argued for a sentence of more than three years in prison.

Navy rescues sick cruise ship passenger

A Navy rescue helicopter hoisted a sick passenger from the deck of a cruise ship Monday morning near Guam, the mission commander told Stars and Stripes.

An MH-60S Knighthawk — the Navy’s version of the Black Hawk helicopter — from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25, lifted the passenger off the Arcadia, a 951-foot-long liner operated by a U.K. company called P&O Cruises. The Arcadia was on its way to Kagoshima, Japan, from Papua New Guinea, according to the cruise-tracking website crew-center.com.

“I had never actually flown to a cruise ship,” he said. “We had to hover really high because there was nowhere to land.” That dictated hoisting the patient from the Arcadia, an 11-deck ship, onto the aircraft, Schuster said. The passenger was taken to U.S. Naval Hospital Guam in stable condition.

From staff reports

Trump executive order eases vet transition into Merchant Marine

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed an executive order Monday easing the process for veterans to transition into the Merchant Marine.

The order will clear the way for the Merchant Marine to waive licensing fees for sea service veterans and count their military training toward its credentialing system, said Peter Navarro, a White House trade policy adviser.

Trump's administration is positing the action as part of a broader effort to transition veterans into civilian jobs. It's also a method to boost the number of highly qualified mariners in the Merchant Marine, which has faced a shortage in recent years, Navarro said.

"I think the whole point here is to leverage their experience that they gain and education they gain in the military to move directly into the Merchant Marine and do it in a way where the fees and costs are minimized," Navarro said Monday during a briefing with reporters.

The Coast Guard already runs a "Military to Mariner" program to help transitioning servicemembers get credentialed for the Merchant Marine. Navarro said the new order was part of the "ongoing process" of the initiative.

The Merchant Marine includes a fleet of private and government-owned vessels manned by civilian mariners to transport cargo and passengers. In wartime, it can be used as an auxiliary to the Navy. During World War II, the Merchant Marine transported vast quantities of equipment and troops.

Mark Buzby, administrator of the Maritime Administration at the Department of Transportation, told Congress last year that he was concerned about a decreasing number of mariners who were qualified to operate large ships. The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y., as well as other maritime academies, graduate more than 1,000 officers each year, but there's a shortage of mariners to serve in senior-level positions, Buzby said.

There might not be enough mariners to help if called upon during a crisis, he warned.

The Government Accountability Office called attention to the shortage of mariners in a November report. The GAO estimated there were about 11,770 qualified and available mariners as of June 2017 — about 2,000 short of what would be needed for a drawn-out military effort.

"The men and women of the Merchant Marine have always stood up in times of need to meet any task set for them and would likely extend their time at sea beyond normal tours if called upon to do so," Buzby wrote in a statement to Congress. "However, it is critical to ensure we have enough qualified U.S. mariners to safely crew our government vessels so that the readiness of the force is not negatively impacted."

Buzby was at the White House on Monday when Trump signed the order, which is titled "Supporting the Transition of Active Duty Service Members and Military Veterans into the Merchant Marine."

In addition to helping national security, Navarro said the order would assist veterans with securing high-paying jobs.

Parents of dead cadet get permission to retrieve sperm

Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — The parents of a West Point cadet fatally injured in a skiing accident raced the clock to get a judge's permission to retrieve his sperm for "the possibility of preserving some piece of our child that might live on."

U.S. Military Academy Cadet Peter Zhu, 21, was declared brain dead Feb. 27, four days after the California resident was involved in a skiing accident at West Point that fractured his spine and cut off oxygen to his brain.

"That afternoon, our entire world collapsed around us," Monica and Yongmin Zhu, of Concord, Calif., said in a court petition. But they saw a brief window to fulfill at least part of Peter's oft-stated desire to one day raise five children.

The parents asked a state court judge Friday for permission to retrieve his sperm before his organs were removed for donation later that day at Westchester Medical Center.

They argued the procedure needed to be done that day.

"We are desperate to have a small piece of Peter that might live on and continue to spread the joy and happiness that Peter brought to all of our lives," read the parent's filing in state court in Westchester County, N.Y.

The first documented post-mortem sperm removal was reported in 1980, and the first baby conceived using the procedure was born in 1999, according to medical journals. Usually, the request comes from a surviving spouse.

The parents told the court that Peter is the only male child of the Zhu family and that if they don't obtain the genetic material, "it will be impossible to carry on our family's lineage, and our family name will die."

The judge later that day directed the medical center to retrieve the sperm and ordered it stored pending a court hearing March 21 regarding the next steps.

Navy recruit dies during fitness test

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Navy recruit died during her final fitness test at boot camp, one week before she was to graduate, according to the Navy's Recruit Training Command.

Seaman Recruit Kierra Evans, 20, collapsed following a physical fitness assessment on Feb. 22, Lt. Joseph Pfaff, a spokesman for Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, wrote in an email statement. Evans was immediately given first aid and transported to Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital, where she died sev-

eral hours later.

"The Navy and Recruit Training Command take the welfare of our sailors very seriously and are investigating the cause of this tragic loss," Pfaff wrote.

The fitness assessment was given during her sixth week of boot camp prior to graduation, following weeks of physical training, Pfaff said. The assessment has three portions: curlups, pushups and a run.

An online obituary for Evans stated she graduated in 2017 from Neville High School in Monroe, La., where she had been a member of the Navy Junior ROTC for four years.

Evans' burial was Saturday, one day after she was supposed to graduate boot camp, according to the obituary.

"A tragedy like this is rare," Pfaff said. The last time a recruit died during a training incident was more than four years ago.

"The Navy and Recruit Training Command have the highest focus on recruit safety and welfare, including medical screening, monitoring of activities by medical personnel, recruit division commanders, and support staff, while executing a carefully developed curriculum," he said.

'Riverdale,' '90210' actor Perry dead at 52

The Washington Post

Luke Perry, the rebellious teen idol of the 1990s TV series "Beverly Hills, 90210," who in recent years has played the father of another high school heartthrob in the CW drama "Riverdale," died Monday. He was 52.

His publicist confirmed the death to The Associated Press, saying Perry suffered a stroke last week. Additional details were not immediately available.

Perry was a frequent guest actor on television and was slated to appear in Quentin Tarantino's upcoming mystery crime film "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," as an actor in a TV Western. Since 2016, he had starred in "Riverdale" — based on the Archie Comics series — as Fred Andrews, the divorced father of Archie.

But it was "Beverly Hills, 90210" that defined him for a generation of viewers. Created by Darren Star and produced by Aaron Spelling, the show centered on a pair of Minnesota twins, played by Jason Priestley and Shannen Doherty, who move to Southern California and adapt to life at glamorous (and fictional) West Beverly Hills High.

The series premiered on Fox in 1990 to dismal ratings and reviews but took off during a special "summer season" the following year. Drawing millions of viewers each week, it ran for 10 seasons, spawned a spinoff series, "Melrose Place," and served as a model for teen dramas such as "Dawson's Creek" and "The O.C."

Perry played Dylan McKay, Doherty's off-and-on love interest, a moody loner who struggles with alcoholism and a fractured relationship with his wealthy father. He appeared alongside Jennie Garth and Ian Ziering, who played spoiled classmates; Brian Austin Green, whose character aspired to join the popular crowd; and Tori Spelling, the producer's daughter, who played a close friend of Doherty.

While the show addressed topics such as AIDS, date rape, learning disabilities and teenage pregnancy, the principal draw for many viewers was its handsome male leads. Sporting leather jackets, sideburns and a "Rebel Without a Cause" persona, Perry was featured in a People magazine cover story that dubbed him "TV's hottest heartbreaker."

Coy Luther Perry III was born in rural Mansfield, Ohio, on Oct. 11, 1966, and

raised in nearby Fredericktown, where he said his high school "had classes on giving birth to cows and driving tractors." His father was a steelworker, and his mother was a homemaker; they divorced when Luke was 6, according to a profile in People, and he was raised by his mother and construction worker stepfather.

Through a failed audition for "Ferris Bueller," a short-lived sitcom based on the movie starring Matthew Broderick, he met a casting director who suggested him for "Beverly Hills, 90210." Seeking to demonstrate his range as an actor, Perry left that series for several years. He starred in the film "8 Seconds," as bull-riding champion Lane Frost.

Perry returned to "Beverly Hills, 90210" for its final three seasons but did not appear in the show's revival, which featured the shortened title "90210" and ran on the CW from 2008 to 2013. According to USA Today, Perry also did not sign on for a six-part "Beverly Hills, 90210" reboot scheduled for this summer. The series was announced by Fox on Wednesday.

In 1993 he married Rachel "Minnie" Sharp. They had two children, Jack and Sophie, and divorced in 2003.

Calif., 20 other states to sue over federal abortion rule

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — California and 20 other Democratic-led states announced they were challenging the Trump administration's effort to set up obstacles for women seeking abortions, including barring taxpayer-funded family planning clinics from referring patients to abortion providers.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said Monday that the state filed its own federal lawsuit in San Francisco that aims to block a new family planning rule from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department. Opponents of the rule say it would shift millions of dollars from Planned Parenthood to faith-based family planning organizations.

Twenty states and Washington, D.C., said they would sue separately Tuesday. The states are: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts,

Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin. Washington's Democratic attorney general also previously said the state would challenge the rule.

Trump administration officials have told abortion opponents that they expected a number of legal challenges to the new family planning rule, which also prohibits federally funded family planning clinics from being housed in the same place as abortion providers.

Planned Parenthood and other groups representing the clinics say the physical separation of facilities would be costly and all but impossible to fulfill.

Health and Human Services Department officials declined to comment, citing the litigation. The changes to the program will go into effect in May unless blocked in court.

\$1.5B lottery jackpot claimed

Associated Press

The mystery is over. Partly.

Lottery officials on Monday announced that a South Carolina resident had stepped forward to claim the \$1.5 billion Mega Millions jackpot from last October — the largest jackpot payout to a single winner in U.S. history — but elected to remain anonymous.

A lottery commission statement said the person submitting the claim for what was the second-largest lottery in U.S. history has chosen the cash option, a one-time payment of nearly \$878 million.

The biggest jackpot in U.S. history — a \$1.585 billion Powerball prize won on Jan. 13, 2016 — was split between buyers in three states. That jackpot also had some mystery as the California winners didn't come forward until about six months later.

"We are delighted that the winner is a South Carolinian and has come forward to claim this remarkable prize," said

Hogan Brown, the commission's executive director. "We respect the winner's decision to remain anonymous and we will honor the winner's wishes."

The commission said the winner " marvels at how every decision made that day brought the winner to the store at that very moment" to buy the winning ticket. The winner allowed a fellow customer to make a Mega Millions purchase in front of the winner while in line at the store, the commission said.

"A simple act of kindness led to an amazing outcome," the statement said.

South Carolina is one of a handful of states where winners can remain anonymous — a choice that winners often make to protect themselves from being targeted by criminals or unscrupulous people seeking money.

The winning ticket was sold between Oct. 20 and Oct. 23 at the KC Mart convenience store in Simpsonville, a suburb of Greenville.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Zoo collects polar bear poop for testing

OH CINCINNATI — An Ohio zoo has become the repository for the world's largest collection of polar bear poop as researchers work to create a pregnancy test to aid the survival of the endangered species.

WLWT-TV reported the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens is storing 30,000 samples of fecal matter from the U.S. and Canada used by scientists with the Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife.

Researchers say a pregnancy test will help zoos better monitor and care for females who can display signs of pregnancy when they are not.

Truck spills fuel, dressing into creek

MD CLEAR SPRING — Authorities in Maryland said a tractor-trailer hauling ranch dressing crashed near a creek in Clear Spring, spilling dressing and about 75 gallons of diesel fuel into the water.

Clear Spring Volunteer Fire Sgt. Jacob Altman told The (Hagerstown) Herald-Mail that two people in the truck were treated at a hospital. State police and 911 center officials said the tractor-trailer ran off the road on Interstate 70 early Saturday and crashed into a ditch, spilling some cargo and fuel into the Little Conococheague Creek.

Cop who sued to join department retires

NY NEW YORK — A New York City police detective who sued to join the police department at age 48 has retired 20 years later as the department's oldest officer.

The Daily News reported that Detective Michael Cusumano retired Thursday at age 68.

Cusumano was working in his family's kitchen and bath business when he decided to pursue his lifelong dream of joining the New York Police Department. He passed the written and physical tests but was told he couldn't enter the academy because the age limit for new recruits was 35.

Cusumano and 39 other recruits filed a class action lawsuit seeking to join the force. They reached a settlement two years later that allowed them to join.

FBI offers reward in 'Scream Bandit' thefts

VA RICHMOND — The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a man nicknamed the "Scream Bandit" who is suspected in a string of armed robberies in central Virginia.

Authorities said the man is a suspect in the recent robberies of three gas stations in Richmond, Chesterfield and Henrico. The suspect has worn a mask resembling the villain from the "Scream" slasher movies.

In each of the robberies, the man carried a semi-automatic handgun and demanded money from the clerk. He wore a black sweatshirt, dark pants and blue latex-style gloves.

Officials: Gay bunnies book needed an OK

FL SANFORD — A Florida school district said a teacher should have asked before reading a picture book about gay bunnies.

The Orlando Sentinel reported Seminole County Public Schools issued a report after parents complained teacher Tyler Bond read "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver Presents a Day in

the Life of Marlon Bundo." The title is a gay-themed spoof by HBO host John Oliver of a book by the wife and daughter of Vice President Mike Pence.

The report released Friday said Bond overheard students at Pine Crest Elementary School in Sanford talk about lesbian women who wanted to get married and thought the book would teach about tolerance. It wasn't in the curriculum.

Program offers to sell vacant homes for \$1

MO ST. LOUIS — The city of St. Louis has launched a program to allow people to purchase vacant homes for \$1.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that the city's land bank, the Land Reutilization Authority, has set aside 522 vacant houses for the new Dollar House pilot program. The buildings are single-family residential structures, less than 1,500 square feet and located in neighborhoods that have seen significant divestment in recent years.

Applicants must prove they have the financial means to renovate the property. New homeowners have to live in the property for at least three years.

Police: Mom left baby alone 3 times in 1 day

CT TORRINGTON — Police said a Connecticut woman left her 2-month-old baby home alone three times on one day, including for 45 minutes as she went out to get something to eat.

Torrington police charged Kianni Marie Reidy, 21, with three counts of risk of injury to a child. She was released on a promise to appear in court on March 21.

Police went to her home after

a neighbor reported hearing a baby's cries. Reidy arrived home when officers were at the scene.

Cadaver program seeks more bodies

SD ABERDEEN — The coordinator of a University of South Dakota program that provides human bodies to schools for anatomy and physiology classes said there's a severe shortage of donors.

Sara Bird, who coordinates the program, told the Aberdeen American News that the program needs 60-65 human bodies to be donated every year to fulfill all requests. She said the program had just 36 bodies at the start of the 2018-19 school year.

Bird said the shortage of donations means the program has had to turn away schools, limit requests and reduce the number of students in programs, including at the University of South Dakota.

Museum to return early 1900s firetruck

OK LAWTON — A 1913 firetruck and a horse-drawn hose cart from the 1850s will be returned to an Oklahoma community where both were used before being donated to a museum.

The Lawton Constitution reported that the Lawton Fire Department is negotiating a transfer date from the Oklahoma State Firefighters Museum.

The Lawton City Council last month accepted an offer for return of the firefighting equipment after years on display at the museum in Oklahoma City. Museum officials cited limited storage space plus duplication of some donated items.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Coaches seeking ability, agility in bigs

Associated Press

Coaches used to walk into a gym, see a big guy dominating the paint and want to recruit him right away. Get a talented big man who could play with his back to the basket and the program would be set offensively and defensively for the next few years.

Oh, how things have changed.

As the sport has shifted to a more up-tempo, free-flowing style, college coaches have sought big men who can dribble, shoot places other than at the rim and move defensively instead of anchoring in the paint.

Back-to-the-basket ability has become a bonus.

“When you think about the NBA and college, 10 to 15 years ago there was always bigs that were plodders, they would use their fouls, they would be great screen setters,” said Eric Musselman, coach at No. 12 Nevada. “With the spacing of today’s game, you need bigs who can pass, dribble, can shoot and can move.”

College basketball still has a handful of centers who play mostly on the low post, but the majority are athletic players who can shoot from the perimeter — or at least midrange — and handle the ball without getting it snatched by smaller guards.

Basketball has become more of a position-less game, with every player on the floor able to play and guard multiple positions. The Golden State Warriors helped change the NBA with their freewheeling, everyone-can-shoot-it style and the college game has followed.

Spacing is key in today’s offenses, so

every player, including the big man, must have the agility to make it work. Even if they can’t shoot three-pointers, big men must at least be able to handle the ball on the perimeter and be athletic enough to get to the rim on ball screens.

“Even if they’re not great shooters, I’d like for him to be able to play on the perimeter,” Buffalo coach Nate Oats said. “If they don’t have the perimeter skills, they better be athletic enough to, you know, to play with four other guys that space the floor out. If you can get some ball screens and getting to the rim, be really athletic, you can play with a guy like that.”

Even if a team doesn’t follow the latest trend of wanting to play faster, it still has to have the players to stop teams that do.

Today’s big men need lateral movement and quickness to accommodate the switching required to stop the free-flowing offenses. Get a big man who doesn’t move well and opponents will ball screen your team into oblivion because he can’t rotate quick enough.

“If there are teams not playing fast offensively, they certainly need a big to get back in transition defense because a majority of your opponents are going to play it’s somewhat of a quicker pace than was maybe being played 10 or 15 years ago,” Musselman said.

Nearly all of the nation’s top teams have athletic big men who can move and shoot.

Dedric Lawson can play multiple positions and hit three-pointers for No. 15 Kansas. No. 4 Kentucky’s PJ Washington has expanded his game, becoming a perimeter

threat while being active enough to guard nearly anyone. Top-ranked Gonzaga’s big man, Brandon Clarke, isn’t much of a three-point shooter, but he’s agile and active, can handle the ball without being pickpocketed every time and is a superb shot blocker.

Montell McRae and Nick Perkins, the two big men for No. 21 Buffalo, can both shoot the three and give the Bulls the spacing they need.

Those are the current success stories. Coaches are always looking for more like them for their next recruiting classes — and the players know.

They see what’s happening in college and the NBA and prepare for it.

Big kids who used to just plop in the middle of the lane and shoot over smaller kids now practice their ball handling skills and shooting. High school and AAU coaches help the process as well, no longer restricting them to under-the-basket duty, allowing them to work on skills that used to be limited to guards and small forwards.

Big men come prepackaged, to a certain degree.

“When you watch AAU, there’s hardly any bigs that want to play with his back to the basket anymore,” Musselman said. “There’s still room in the game for guys to play with their back to the basket, but they don’t want it anymore because they’re watching the NBA, where bigs have now become perimeter guys. Today’s younger players are understanding the importance of ball handling and things like that.”

And that’s just what college coaches are looking for.

Top 25 roundup

Long ball lifts No. 2 Virginia over Syracuse

Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Shot after shot the net kept swishing, and Kyle Guy and the Virginia Cavaliers kept smiling.

Guy hit a career-high eight three-pointers to lead a long-range barrage that produced 18 makes from beyond the arc, and No. 2 Virginia beat Syracuse 79-53 on Monday night. Ty Jerome and De’Andre Hunter each had five threes as the Cavaliers tied the school record for three-pointers, the most ever allowed by the Orange.

As this season winds down, the memory of Virginia’s stunning first-round loss to No.

16 seed UMBC in the NCAA Tournament last March is still on the mind.

“Everybody knows how last season ended, so we never forget about it, we always remember it, hold it in the back of our head,” Guy said. “It’s just a chip on our shoulder and we’re shooting that well and we’re in the zone.”

The Cavaliers (27-2, 15-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), whose only two losses were to Duke, have won seven straight since losing for the second time to the Blue Devils and lead North Carolina by a half game in the ACC.

“I guess it’s contagious the way we were shooting,” Hunter said. “Everyone’s playing well. Everyone’s hitting shots. We’re playing great defense and getting stops. The morale was really high.”

Syracuse (19-11, 10-7) was coming off a solid road win at Wake Forest, but the Orange’s vaunted zone defense was torched for eight three-pointers during a 27-3 spurt in the second half.

No. 8 Texas Tech 70, Texas 51: Jarrett Culver scored 16 points, Matt Mooney added 15 and host Texas Tech stayed even with Kansas State atop

the Big 12 with one game remaining.

Brandone Francis scored all 12 of his points in the second half in an eighth straight win for the Red Raiders (25-5, 13-4 Big 12).

No. 18 Kansas State 64, TCU 52: Barry Brown had 16 points to lead four Kansas State players in double figures and the visiting Wildcats maintained a share of the Big 12 lead with one game remaining in the regular season.

Kansas State (23-7, 13-4 Big 12) went ahead to stay with a tiebreaking 13-4 run to end the first half.

Judge, Gardner think Yanks can top last year

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Aaron Judge and Brett Gardner think the Yankees can break the major league season record of 267 home runs that New York set last season.

“Get this whole team healthy, we’re going to crush the record that we set last year,” Judge said.

New York broke the previous mark of 264 by the 1997 Seattle Mariners despite injuries that limited Judge to 112 games, Gary Sanchez to 89 and Greg Bird to 82.

“I just think that we’re capable of doing better than we were last year overall as an of-

fense,” Gardner said.

Judge, slowed by a right wrist injury last season, and Gardner each hit two homers in Sunday’s 7-1 win over the Detroit Tigers.

Judge came to camp after a normal offseason. He was slowed slightly at the start of spring training last year following left shoulder surgery.

“Just working on my swing. Last year I didn’t get a chance to do that at all,” Judge said. “I’m just trying to have a healthy season. Then we’ll see where the numbers are at.”

Judge hit 27 homers last season and Giancarlo Stanton led the Yankees with 38 in the first season after he was acquired

Miami. Stanton led the major leagues with 59 homers in 2017, when Judge topped the AL with 52.

However, Didi Gregorius is expected to be sidelined until summer following Tommy John surgery last October. He hit a career-high 27 home runs last year; his replacement, Troy Tulowitzki, hasn’t played since 2017.

Bird is completing to regain his first-base job from Luke Voit, who hit 14 homers in 39 games after he was obtained from St. Louis.

“I think we have a nice balance both offensively and defensively,” general manager

Brian Cashman said. “But got a long way to go. It’s too early to get excited about anything, obviously, other than the fact that we feel like the collection of talent we have, you can see that talent on display.”

New York bypassed free agents Manny Machado and Bryce Harper, instead adding Tulowitzki, left-hander James Paxton, reliever Adam Ottavino and infielder DJ LeMahieu while re-signing pitchers CC Sabathia, J.A. Happ and Zack Britton along with Gardner.

“I’m closing the chapter on these questions about high-end free agents from the winter time,” Cashman said.

Sweat, Metcalf among big winners at NFL combine

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Receiver D.K. Metcalf showed off his muscle-man physique — and his speed — in Indianapolis.

Defensive end Montez Sweat proved big men can run fast, too.

The two pro prospects from rival colleges in Mississippi left the NFL’s annual scouting combine as the two biggest winners of the weeklong event. They were impressive.

Following Metcalf’s performance in the 40-yard dash, the New York Jets’ official Twitter account posted: “4.33? At that size?”

The comment could tip off the Jets’ plans for the No. 3 pick in April’s NFL Draft, considering quarterback Sam Darnold will be entering his second season in the league this fall.

And who could blame them for taking Metcalf, who possesses rare athleticism for a receiver that measures in at 6-foot-3³/₈, 238 pounds and has 1.6 percent body fat?

His performance was even better. After wowing scouts by doing 27 reps on the bench press at 225 pounds, he posted a vertical jump of 40½ inches, a broad jump of 11 feet, 2 inches, and the 40-yard dash time — all

top-five performances among the receivers.

What made it even more impressive for the son of former NFL offensive lineman Terrence Metcalf was that he did all of it after having season-ending neck surgery last fall.

“I’m not supposed to be here right now,” the former Ole Miss star told NFL Network following his workout.

Meanwhile, Sweat, the former Mississippi State defensive lineman, made his workout look like it was, well, no sweat.

The 6-foot-6, 260-pound Sweat was clocked at 4.41 seconds in the 40, the top speed by a defensive lineman since at least 2003 and faster times than those posted at the combine by Amari Cooper, Julio Jones or Odell Beckham Jr. Sweat also finished fourth among edge players in the broad jump (11 feet, 2 inches) and three-cone drill (7 seconds flat) and was sixth in the vertical jump (36 inches).

The only question might be his strength. He did 21 reps on the bench press, 12th at his position.

Looking good

The offensive and defensive linemen are supposed to be the

strength of this draft. The combine proved it.

Defensive end Nick Bosa and defensive tackle Quinnen Williams of Alabama put themselves in the conversation to be the top overall pick with strong showings. Bosa completed the 40 in 4.79 seconds and did 29 reps on the bench press. Williams, at 303 pounds, ran the 40 in 4.83 seconds.

Michigan’s dynamic duo of defensive end Rashan Gary and linebacker Devin Bush also helped themselves with strong showings Sunday. Gary ran a 4.58 in the 40 — No. 1 among defensive linemen — while Bush posted a 4.43.

Center Garrett Bradbury of North Carolina State and offensive tackle Andre Dillard of Washington State had the best performances Friday, the first full day of workouts in Indy. Both helped themselves with good performances in the 40 and demonstrated their agility with solid times in the three-cone drill and 20-yard shuttle. Bradbury also had 34 reps on the bench press, second among offensive linemen.

Safety Zedrick Woods of Mississippi posted a 4.29-second 40 on Monday, fastest time all week. Cornerback Jamel Dean of Auburn ran a 4.30-second 40

on Monday, the second-fastest time of the week.

The losers

At least four players couldn’t finish their workouts because of injuries, including potential first-round pick Jachai Polite from Florida.

The outside linebacker came to Indy with high expectations but ran the 40-yard dash in 4.84 seconds, slower than inside linebacker Manti Te’o in 2013, whose 4.82-second run helped him slide into the second round. Polite stopped after hurting his hamstring and will have to try to rebuild his stock before the draft.

Highly rated defensive tackle Dexter Lawrence of Clemson didn’t finish because of a minor thigh injury in his left leg, and his college teammate, linebacker Tre Lamar, hurt his right shoulder on the bench press.

Top cornerback Greedy Williams of LSU did not compete after suffering cramps Monday.

But the most serious injury may have come Sunday when Ohio State cornerback Kendall Sheffield suffered a torn pectoral muscle, NFL Network reported. Sheffield did not work out Monday.

NBA roundup

Suns rally, surprise NBA-leading Bucks

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Phoenix Suns have had a dreadful season, one of growing pains, long losing streaks and blowout losses. However, on Monday night they put together a performance that was far from that of the team that came in with the NBA's worst record.

Kelly Oubre Jr. had 27 points and 13 rebounds, and the Suns rallied from a 10-point fourth quarter deficit to beat the NBA-best Milwaukee Bucks 114-105 on Monday night.

"We can't back down when a team goes on a run," Oubre said. "We've got to make our own, too, coming back at them."

Devin Booker added 22 points and Deandre Ayton had 19 points and 12 rebounds, including a key layup with 35.8 seconds to play that gave the

Suns a four-point lead.

Booker and Ayton teamed up on the play when Ayton rolled to the basket.

"He preached to me all the time about that move, about how guys overplay him sometimes and how the lane is right there for me," Ayton said.

The Suns outscored the Bucks 38-23 in the final quarter and swept the two-game season series with Milwaukee.

All-Star Giannis Antetokounmpo had 21 points and 13 rebounds, and Malcolm Brogdon scored 19 points for the Bucks, who have lost two straight games for the first time this season. Milwaukee shot 36.8 percent as a team.

"It's kind of hard to think we lost to Phoenix twice," Antetokounmpo said. "But they played better than us. They came out

there and set the tone."

"I don't think we take them as seriously as we should," Brogdon said. "It's just a lack of focus."

The Bucks led by 16 points in the first half, only to trail by three in the third quarter.

Milwaukee, the team with the NBA's best road record coming in, couldn't put away Phoenix in the final quarter.

"We're finding our rhythm. We're finding ways to pull out games," Oubre said.

Spurs 104, Nuggets 103: DeMar DeRozan had 24 points and LaMarcus Aldridge added 22 as host San Antonio withstood Denver's closing rally.

Clippers 113, Lakers 105: Danilo Gallinari scored 23 points, Lou Williams added 21 and the Los Angeles Clippers dealt another blow to the Los

Angeles Lakers' fading playoff hopes.

Kings 115, Knicks 108: Buddy Hield scored 28 points and Harrison Barnes had 22 points and 10 rebounds in his best game with his new team as host Sacramento beat woeful New York.

Pelicans 115, Jazz 112: Jrue Holiday and Julius Randle each scored 30 points to rally New Orleans past host Utah.

Nets 127, Mavericks 88: DeMarre Carroll scored 22 points, Rodions Kurucs had 19 and host Brooklyn snapped a three-game losing streak with an easy win over Dallas.

Heat 114, Hawks 113: Dwyane Wade scored 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter and Miami won its season-high third straight home game by topping Atlanta.

NHL roundup

Oilers overcome two-goal deficit, hold off Sabres

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Oilers coach Ken Hitchcock says he wasn't thanking his lucky stars when the Buffalo Sabres muffed two chances to score into an open net in the final eight minutes of Edmonton's 4-3 win on Monday night.

Instead, Hitchcock began believing the bad bounces the Oilers experienced during a 1-8-2 slump were finally evening out.

And, yes, that included hanging on for the win despite Oilers star Connor McDavid missing an open net in the final minute of a game in which Edmonton overcame a 3-1 deficit.

"I'm just proud of the way the guys responded," Hitchcock said of a team that's won three straight in closing out a five-game trip. "We didn't put our second foot on the bus. We dug in and played and compet-

ed, and it's a good sign for the team for now."

The Oilers scored three times over the final 3:31 of the second period, with Kyle Brodziak credited with the go-ahead goal with five seconds remaining. He was driving to the front of the net when Adam Larsson's shot from the left point deflected in off his skate.

Leon Draisaitl scored his team-leading 41st and added an assist, to extend his point streak to 11 games in which he had combined for nine goals and eight assists. McDavid had two assists, while Darnell Nurse and Zack Kassian also scored for Edmonton.

Mikko Koskinen stopped 35 shots, including the final 27 after allowing Jack Eichel to score Buffalo's third goal with 2:36 left in the first period, and earned two fortunate breaks to improve to 5-1-2 in his past

eight.

Buffalo's Jeff Skinner missed an open right side by directing a shot off the post with 7:34 left. Then with 3:40 remaining, Jason Pominville directed in Brandon Montour's pass through the crease, only to have his follow through hit the puck and sweep it back out before it crossed the goal line.

"I have no idea," Pominville said of how the puck didn't go in.

"I can probably take 100 shots from that area and it might never happen, but it happened tonight," he added. "It's a tough feeling when you see it going in, and then all of a sudden coming out."

Eichel scored twice and Casey Mittelstadt also scored for the slumping Sabres. Buffalo dropped to 2-7-1 in its past 10, and is 13-22-6 since a franchise-record-matching 10-

game win streak in November.

Maple Leafs 6, Flames 2: Tyler Ennis recorded his first career hat trick to lead visiting Toronto past Calgary.

Zach Hyman had two goals for Toronto. Mitch Marner had a goal and two assists, giving him 10 points (three goals, seven assists) in the last four games.

Matthew Tkachuk and Derek Ryan scored for Calgary, which has dropped two in a row after a seven-game winning streak. The Flames' lead atop the Pacific Division remained three points over San Jose.

Frederik Andersen made 35 saves and won his fifth straight, improving to 32-13-3.

David Rittich had 26 stops and slipped to 22-6-5. It was Rittich's second regulation loss since mid-December. He entered the game 11-1-4 in his last 16 games.