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Durbin: DOD to use unspent pay on wall

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
AND LISA MASCARO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is planning to tap \$1 billion in leftover funds from military pay and pension accounts to help President Donald Trump pay for his long-sought border wall, a top Senate Democrat said Thursday.

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., told The Associated Press, “It’s coming out of military pay and pensions. \$1 billion. That’s the plan.”

Durbin said the funds are available because Army recruitment is down and a voluntary early military retirement program is being underutilized.

The development comes as Pentagon officials are seeking to minimize the amount of wall money that would come from military construction projects that are so cherished by lawmakers.

Durbin said, “Imagine the Democrats making that proposal — that for whatever our project is, we’re going to cut military pay and pensions.”

Durbin, the top Democrat on the Appropriations panel for the Pentagon, was among a bipartisan group of lawmakers who met with Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Thursday morning.

The Pentagon is planning to transfer money from various accounts into a fund dedicated to drug interdiction, with the money then slated to be redirected for border barriers and other purposes.

More attention has been paid to Trump’s declaration of a national emergency to tap up to \$3.6 billion from military construction projects to pay for the wall. The Democratic-controlled House voted last month to reject Trump’s move, and the GOP-held Senate is likely to follow suit next week despite a White House lobbying push.

Senate Republicans met again Wednesday to sort through their options in hopes of making next week’s voting more politically palatable. They are struggling to come up with an alternative to simply voting up or down on the House measure as required under a never-used Senate procedure to re-

ject a presidential emergency declaration. Lawmakers in both parties believe Trump is inappropriately infringing on Congress’ power of the purse.

Senators are increasingly uneasy ahead of voting next week because they don’t know exactly where the money to build the wall will come from and if it will postpone military projects in their home states.

Vice President Mike Pence told senators during their meeting a week ago that he would get back to them with an update. But senators said they don’t yet have a response from the administration.

“It’s a concern,” said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas. He said a number of senators have been talking to the White House about other ways the administration could shuffle the money without relying on the authority under the emergency declaration, which is likely to become tied up in litigation.

The pitch is, “Why have this additional controversy when it could be done in a less controversial way?” he said. “Apparently, the White House is not persuaded.”

HHS asks Pentagon to help house migrant children

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — The Defense Department was asked this week to provide more support in the mission to control immigration along the U.S.-Mexico border by finding space to house up to 5,000 migrant children, Army Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Thursday.

The request comes as Customs and Border Protection announced Tuesday that apprehensions of unaccompanied minors along the southern border is up 54 percent compared to one year ago.

Eric Hargan, deputy secretary of the Department Health and Human Services, on Tuesday requested the Defense De-

partment’s support to identify space on military installations to house the children through Sept. 30, Davis said.

More than 11,500 children are in federal custody as unaccompanied minors, according to the website for HHS’ Office of Refugee Resettlement.

“DOD will work with the military services to identify potential locations for such support, and will work with HHS to assess any DOD facilities or suitable DoD land for potential use to provide temporary shelter for unaccompanied alien children,” Davis said.

From there, the Pentagon will present the space available for the children to HHS. Should that agency “determine use of DOD facilities or land is necessary, HHS will submit an

additional request to DOD to execute such support,” he said.

The military has become increasingly involved along the U.S. border with Mexico. Pentagon officials have estimated the Defense Department will spend more than \$700 million on providing National Guard and active-duty servicemembers to support Border Patrol operations. About 6,000 troops are deployed now on that mission.

The Pentagon also was asked in June 2018 to provide 21 lawyers to federal courthouses in the southwest to help with the backlog of immigration cases.

This is not the first time that the Defense Department has been asked to house migrants. A similar request came last summer as President Donald

Trump’s administration faced scrutiny for separating parents from their children as they crossed the border. HHS, as well as the Department of Homeland Security, were seeking space to house adults and minors. Neither agency acted on those requests.

However, the Pentagon identified three potential installations in western Texas — Fort Bliss in El Paso, Dyess Air Force Base near Abilene and Goodfellow Air Force Base near San Angelo. Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas also was considered.

Last year’s review of military bases capable of housing children included potential impact studies, with some of the results being made public.

Air Force secretary Wilson set to resign

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson will resign as the service's top civilian at the end of May once she is formally named the next president of the University of Texas at El Paso, she said Friday in a letter to President Donald Trump.

The University of Texas System Board of Regents on Friday named Wilson as the sole finalist for the position, and the board is expected to finalize her nomination for the university's top position in a vote scheduled to occur in about three weeks. The board announced its unanimous decision to name her sole finalist Friday morning on their website as Reuters reported the news of Wilson's imminent departure.

In her letter to the president, Wilson, 58, said she would leave her job on May 31 to "allow sufficient time for a smooth transition and ensure effective advocacy during

upcoming" budget hearings on Capitol Hill. She said it had been a "privilege" to lead the Air Force for the last two years.

"I am proud of the progress that we have made restoring our nation's defense," Wilson said Friday in a prepared statement emailed to Stars and Stripes. "We have improved the readiness of the force, we have cut years out of acquisition schedules and gotten better prices through competition, we have repealed hundreds of superfluous regulations, and we have strengthened our ability to deter and dominate in space."

Wilson, the 24th Air Force secretary, had been considered by some senior Pentagon officials to be among the top choices for Trump to nominate for defense secretary. Pat Shanahan has been serving as the acting defense secretary since Jan. 1, when Trump's first defense chief, Jim Mattis, stepped down over stark differences in policy with the president.

Wilson also clashed with Trump at times,

officials have said privately. She initially pushed back on Trump's wish to develop a sixth military service, the U.S. Space Force. Eventually, Trump decided to place the proposed Space Force within the Air Force Department, similar to the Marine Corps' relationship with the Navy Department. That was viewed as a huge victory for Wilson.

In 1982, Wilson was among the first women to graduate from the Air Force Academy. She later served for seven years as an Air Force officer after studying at Oxford University in England as a Rhodes Scholar, earning a master's degree and a doctorate.

Wilson served on the National Security Council for President George H.W. Bush and then served five terms in Congress as a Republican representing New Mexico's first district from 1998 through 2009.

Chelsea Manning jailed for not testifying to grand jury

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning has been sent to jail for refusing to testify to a grand jury investigating Wikileaks.

U.S. District Judge Claude Hilton ordered Manning to jail for contempt of court on Friday after a brief hearing in which Manning confirmed she has no intention of testifying. She told the judge she "will accept whatever you bring upon me."

Manning has said she objects to the secrecy of the grand jury process, and that she already revealed everything she knows at her court martial.

The judge said she will remain jailed until she testifies or until the grand jury concludes its work.

Manning's lawyers had asked that she be sent to home confinement instead of the jail, because of medical complications she faces.

The judge said U.S. marshals

can handle her medical care. Prosecutor Tracy McCormick said the jail and the marshals have assured the government that her medical needs can be met.

Manning anticipated being jailed. In a statement before Friday's hearing, she said she invoked her First, Fourth and Sixth amendment protections when she appeared before the grand jury in Alexandria on Wednesday. She said she already answered every substantive question during her 2013 court-martial, and is prepared to face the consequences of refusing to answer again.

Manning served seven years of a 35-year military sentence for leaking a trove of military and diplomatic documents to the anti-secrecy website before then-President Barack Obama commuted her sentence.

McCormick said Manning can easily end this incarceration on the civil charge simply by following the law.

Judge OKs restrictions on transgenders in military

The Washington Post

A federal judge in Maryland cleared the way Thursday for the Trump administration to implement broad restrictions on transgender people serving in the military.

U.S. District Judge George Russell rescinded an earlier order that he had issued to bar the administration from putting its policy in place.

Russell's order comes after the Supreme Court in January lifted similar injunctions in cases filed in California and Washington state, but the order issued in Maryland remained until Thursday.

In a six-page ruling, Russell said he had to follow the Supreme Court's lead and could not make exceptions for transgender individuals in the Maryland case seeking to enlist or become military officers.

"The court is bound by the Supreme Court's decision to stay the preliminary injunctions in their entirety," Russell wrote.

The Defense Department said in a statement after the ruling that current policy allowing transgender troops to serve "will remain in effect until the department issues further guidance, which will be forthcoming in the near future."

American Civil Liberties Union lawyer Joshua Block, the lead attorney for the transgender servicemembers in Maryland, said the ruling Thursday does "concrete, severe harm." Block called it "particularly outrageous and irrational" that the government would not accommodate clients who were on the cusp of enlisting or being commissioned as officers.

"It's petty and it is disappointing when you drill down to the level of real people who are making career plans," he said.

The case in Maryland was filed days after Trump formally ordered the Pentagon to ban the recruitment of openly transgender people.

Three sailors arrested on rape charges in Georgia

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Three sailors have been arrested and charged for raping a woman during a house party in Georgia, according to law enforcement officials.

Following an investigation by the Richmond County Sheriff's Office and Naval Criminal Investigative Service, sheriff's deputies arrested Michael Billington, Teddy Diake and Johnathan Augustus, all 24 years old, on Tuesday on charges of rape and aggravated sodomy, according to the county's jail records. The sailors are stationed at Fort Gordon, which is in Richmond County, Ga.

An 18-year-old woman was reportedly raped Sunday by three men in a bedroom during a party at a home, the sheriff's office said in a statement. The woman was treated at University Hospital in Augusta, where "a number of undisclosed injuries were observed on her body," the sheriff's office said.

Party attendees identified the three suspects to law enforcement, according to the statement. Billington, Diake and Augustus were later arrested and charged for the assault.

The three men work at Fort Gordon for Navy Information Operations Command as cryptologic technicians, according to personnel records provided by the Navy. Fort Gordon is home to the Army's Cyber Center of Excellence, Army Signal Corps and Army Cyber Corps.

Billington, a petty officer third class, is originally from Ohio and enlisted in the Navy in May 2014.

Diake, originally from Michigan, is a seaman who enlisted in May 2017.

Augustus, originally from Texas, is a seaman recruit who enlisted in December 2014.

ISIS sows seeds of insurgency

The Washington Post.

DEIR AL-ZOUR, Syria — The road to the final scrap of Islamic State's self-declared caliphate in eastern Syria is quiet for the most part. U.S.-backed forces cruise past fields of flowers in their armored vehicles. Locals forage for truffles, and dogs roam barren patches of earth, too, digging up bodies from the battles that were fought here.

But when the vehicles reach al-Suwar, a nondescript town on the road to the jihadis' last stronghold, the passengers spring into high alert. Guns are cocked, and drivers hit the gas. Then they belt down the road.

"It's not safe here," one young fighter said on a recent drive. "We know there are sleeper cells, and we know they are watching us."

As ISIS cadres mount a final stand in what remains of their protostate, the group is already switching gears, returning to its insurgent roots by seeding sleeper cells across parts

of Syria and Iraq it once controlled. The U.S.-supported Syrian Democratic Forces fear to linger in the villages they technically hold on the road to Baghouz, ISIS' final redoubt. Assassinations are mounting, locals say. Jihadis set up checkpoints by night, then melt away with the dawn.

ISIS' unprecedented rise across territory the size of Britain was enabled by the chaos of Syria's civil war and near-total collapse of Iraq's security forces across the border.

With its remaining members scattered across the desert hinterlands of both countries, there is no suggestion ISIS will regain significant territory anytime soon. But experts warn that the coming months could determine whether the group will be able to destabilize the still-fragile security situation and set the stage for fresh violence.

Conditions in Deir al-Zour, where ISIS is mounting its final stand, remain unusually fertile for the jihadis. Clandestine

cells are active in several areas where shattered villages and vast tracts of desert are difficult to police, experts say.

Across the porous border in Iraq, the central government has regained control over areas once occupied by the militants. But corruption and sectarian discrimination remain a problem, and the long-standing mistrust between residents and state security forces — which has fueled local support for ISIS in the past — has not gone away.

"One of the main vulnerabilities here is trust; whether those forces are here to help you or police you, whether they are there to govern your areas properly or exploit them," said Hassan Hassan, a research director at the Washington-based Center for Global Policy.

In Syria, he projected that the security forces and local authorities have between one and two years to get trained and improve local services before a new insurgency emerges.

Trump demands allies pay more for troops

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — President Donald Trump is pushing a plan that demands allies pick up the full cost of hosting U.S. troops in their countries, plus a 50 percent premium for the privilege of American protection, according to a news report.

Called "Cost Plus 50," the plan would cost five or six times more for countries such as Germany, Japan and South Korea, Bloomberg news reported Friday.

Trump has been championing the idea for months, Bloomberg reported, citing about a dozen unnamed administration officials. Trump even tested the idea during recent negotiations over a cost-sharing agreement with South Korea, which was on the brink of collapse before

a deal was finally reached in February.

"We want Cost Plus 50," Trump demanded at one point during the talks, as quoted by the media organization.

While the U.S. eventually backed off the demand, the idea hasn't gone away and could be used to pressure allies to increase their own defense budgets. For two years, Trump has railed against allies, especially in Europe, whom Trump has described as security-free riders unwilling to pay for their own defense.

It isn't clear how close the Cost Plus 50 idea is to becoming official U.S. policy. Bloomberg reported that Trump's advisers have pushed back against the idea. But the president's interest in the proposal has nonetheless sent "shock waves through the departments of Defense

and State," it reported.

The plan would likely face fierce resistance from U.S. allies, especially Germany, which hosts about 32,000 American troops. Unlike South Korea, which relies on a large military presence as a line of protection against the north, the American forces in Germany don't serve as territorial guardians. While there were some 300,000 troops in Europe during the Cold War, there are about 70,000 in total on the Continent today. The contingent in Germany consists mostly of enabling forces and headquarters. The Army has just one infantry brigade in the country.

Bloomberg reported the White House was also considering a measure to ease the financial burden — a discount for countries whose policies were in line with Washington's.

Analysts: N. Korea rocket site restored to normal operations

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. analysts say North Korea appears to have restored normal operations at a long-range rocket launch site it had partially dismantled last year as part of disarmament steps.

Some experts say North Korea is trying to convey displeasure over the breakdown of a high-stakes nuclear summit last month between leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump over what the Americans said were Kim's excessive demands for sanctions relief.

North Korea's state media on Friday acknowledged for the first time that the summit ended without an agreement. But the Rodong Sinmun, which primarily targets the domestic

audience, held back from criticizing the United States and instead berated "detestable" Japan for supposedly celebrating the "unexpected" setback and supporting sanctions against the North.

The United States and North Korea accused each other of causing the breakdown of the talks in Vietnam, but both sides left the door open for future negotiations.

North Korea-focused website 38 North said Thursday that commercial satellite images from Wednesday indicate that the launch site appears to have returned to "normal operational status" following rapid construction to rebuild a launch pad and a rocket engine test stand.

The Washington-based Cen-

ter for Strategic and International Studies published similar findings and said the North's actions amount to a "snapback" from the moderate dismantlement it undertook following the first Trump-Kim summit last June.

"The rebuilding activities at Sohae demonstrate how quickly North Korea can easily render reversible any steps taken toward scrapping its WMD (weapons of mass destruction) program with little hesitation," the CSIS said in a study authored by Joseph Bermudez and Victor Cha.

Trump said he's a "little disappointed" by the reports of the new North Korean activity and that time will tell if U.S. diplomacy with the reclusive country will be successful.

Manafort sentenced to 47 months

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort has been sentenced to nearly four years in prison for tax and bank fraud related to his work advising Ukrainian politicians, much less than what was called for under sentencing guidelines.

Manafort, sitting in a wheelchair as he deals with complications from gout, had no visible reaction as he heard the 47-month sentence. While that was the longest sentence to date to come from special counsel Robert Mueller's probe, it could have been much worse for Manafort. Sentencing guidelines called for a 20-year term, effectively a lifetime sentence for the 69-year-old.

Judge T.S. Ellis III, discussing character reference letters submitted by Manafort's friends and family, said Manafort had lived an "otherwise blameless life."

Manafort has been jailed since June, so he will receive credit for the nine months he has already served. He still faces the possibility of additional time from his sentencing in a separate case in the District of Columbia, where he pleaded guilty to charges related to illegal lobbying.

Ellis imposed the sentence, Manafort told him that "saying I feel humiliated and ashamed would be a gross understatement." But he offered no explicit apology, something Ellis noted before issuing his sentence.

Manafort steered Donald Trump's election efforts during crucial months of the 2016 campaign as Russia sought to meddle in the election through hacking of Democratic email accounts. He was among the first Trump associates charged in the Mueller investigation and has been a high-profile defendant.

But the charges against Manafort were unrelated to his work on the campaign or the focus of Mueller's investigation: whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russians.

Major blackout in Venezuela raises tensions

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Much of Venezuela was still without electricity Friday amid one of the largest power outages in years, raising tensions in a country already on edge from ongoing political turmoil.

President Nicolas Maduro ordered schools and all government entities closed and told businesses not to open to facilitate work crews trying to restore power.

The blackout hit 22 of 23 states by some accounts. It struck the capital Caracas, which until now has been spared the worst of a collapse in the nation's grid, at the peak of the evening rush hour on Thursday and was still wreaking havoc more than 14 hours later.

Thousands of commuters flooded into the streets because subway service was stopped. A snarl of cars jammed the streets amid confusion generated by blackened stoplights. Others had to walk long distances to

get home.

At the darkened maternity ward at the Avila Clinic in wealthy eastern Caracas, several mothers cried as nurses holding candles monitored the vital signs of premature babies in incubators after backup generators shut off.

Venezuela's socialist government blasted the outage as an "electrical war" directed by the United States. Communications Minister Jorge Rodriguez said right-wing extremists intent on causing pandemonium in Venezuela and taking orders from Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio were behind the blackout, although he offered no proof.

"A little bit of patience," Rodriguez urged on state television, saying service would be restored in a few hours. "If you're in your home, stay in your home. If you're in a protected space or at work, it's better for you to stay there."

But as the night wore on in

Caracas, patience was running thin.

Residents threw open their windows and banged pots and pans in the darkness. Some shouted out expletives at Maduro in a sign of mounting frustration. Normally hyperactive social media was eerily silent as much of the country was knocked offline. Even state TV went silent.

Venezuela's electrical system was once the envy of Latin America but it has fallen into a state of disrepair after years of poor maintenance and mismanagement. High-ranking officials have been accused in U.S. court proceedings of looting government money earmarked for the electrical system.

While local authorities expressed concern about the sick and elderly, and a few people had to be rescued from elevators, some residents in Caracas expressed awe at the sight of stars hanging over the normally bustling city of 2 million.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man nearly forgets his winning lottery ticket

NJ ALPHA — An unemployed New Jersey man said he almost forgot his \$273 million jackpot-winning Mega Millions lottery ticket at the store where he bought it.

Mike Weirsky told NJ.com he was messing with his phone when he walked out of a Quick Check store in Pohatcong Township and left behind the tickets.

The man said a good Samaritan, who he wants to reward, found the tickets and gave them to the store to hold until Weirsky returned.

Weirsky, 54, found out Sunday he had won the top prize. He appeared at a news conference Thursday with lottery officials to discuss his experience.

Hospital replacing boy's prosthetic leg

IL BELLEVILLE — A children's hospital in St. Louis is replacing a southern Illinois boy's prosthetic leg that was stolen in a car break-in.

Officials with Shriners Hospitals for Children told the Belleville News-Democrat that Josiah Rainey, 3, was fitted for a new prosthetic Monday and he should receive a new one in a week. Spokeswoman Tammy Robbins said there will be no charge for the prosthetic, which costs about \$10,000.

The stolen prosthetic was in a black backpack that Josiah's mother, Brie Rainey, says was stolen from her unlocked car in Belleville sometime last week.

Belleville police said they're investigating and have received tips. They ask anyone with information to contact them.

Josiah's grandmother, Karen Frey Stephens, said the family has been overwhelmed with support. She said they "feel very blessed."

Nonworking grenade launcher found by TSA

PA ALLENTOWN — A Florida man's plans to bring a military rocket-propelled grenade launcher back home were shot down after security screeners at a Pennsylvania airport spotted the nonfunctioning weapon in his checked bag.

The Transportation and Security Administration said the unassembled parts of the launcher and a replica grenade were found Monday when an alarm went off as the bag passed through security equipment at Lehigh Valley International Airport in Allentown. The man, from St. Augustine, was stopped by police and told officials he thought he could bring the nonfunctioning launcher on board in a checked bag.

American takes win in annual pancake race

KS LIBERAL — A pancake-flipping Kansas teacher has bested her trans-Atlantic competitors to win an annual Shrove Tuesday tradition.

The High Plains Daily Leader reported that Maggie Lapinski ran the 415-yard Liberal, Kan., leg of the race with a time of 62.98 seconds. That was almost 7 seconds faster than Amy Butler, who ran a similar race in Olney, England, with a time of 70 seconds. Contestants must carry a pancake in a frying pan and flip it at the beginning and end of the race.

The race began in Olney in the 15th century. In 1950, the city of Liberal challenged Olney to a competition.

Lapinski, who coaches cross country, also won the Liberal leg of the race in 2017, but a winner couldn't be determined because of a technical glitch in Olney.

Deadline near to enter ice guessing contest

VT NEWPORT — There is less than one month left to guess how long the ice will last on Vermont's Lake Memphremagog.

The Caledonian-Record reported that participants in the annual Joe's Pond Ice-Out Contest have until April 1 to guess when a block attached to a time clock will drop in the lake.

Newport Parks and Recreation put a large drawing of a bottle of vanilla extract on the block, naming the facade "Vanilla Ice."

Last year, the clock stopped at 11:27 a.m. on May 4. The winner received more than \$4,500.

Proceeds from the contest are divided between the winner and the Joe's Pond Association, which plans to use the money on the Gardner Memorial Park Playground and Splashpad project.

23 sheep killed in probable wolf attack

OR SALEM — Wildlife officials say 23 sheep were killed in a probable wolf attack in southwestern Oregon.

A USDA Wildlife Services specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture found the dead sheep on a private pasture in Curry County. Some of the animals were found partially consumed.

An investigation found the attack was "consistent with a wolf attack," though there wasn't enough evidence to differentiate between a wolf and a domestic dog.

The attack comes as federal wildlife officials plan to lift protections for gray wolves. States would manage the animals, which are despised by farmers and ranchers.

Police: Man opens fire after failed inspection

TX EL PASO — A West Texas man is in the county jail after police say he became angry when his vehicle failed a state inspection and he shot the owner of the auto shop.

Arturo Garcia Medina, 60, was being held Wednesday in the El Paso County jail on two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Police said he took his vehicle into the El Paso shop Monday and began arguing with the owner when he received a failing inspection. Investigators said Medina pulled a weapon and shot the 52-year-old owner in the abdomen. The victim was taken to a hospital in critical condition. An employee of the shop was grazed by gunfire.

Bottles of rare Scotch going up for auction

PA HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania is planning to auction two bottles of rare Scotch whisky.

The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board is offering a Macallan 1949 Single Malt Scotch bottled in 2002 and a Macallan 1989 Single Malt Scotch bottled in 2010. The minimum bid for the 1949 Single Malt Scotch is set at \$25,000, and the minimum bid for the 1989 Single Malt Scotch is set at \$9,000.

The board says the state acquired the bottles through a supplier. Board spokesman Shawn Kelley said they anticipate a lot of interest from Scotch lovers who will have a chance to acquire what could be the "crown jewel" of their collection.

Sealed bids will be accepted through 4 p.m. April 5. Winners must be able to pick up the bottles at a state liquor store.

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Mets' pitching great Seaver diagnosed with dementia at 74

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Seaver, the star of the Miracle Mets 1969 World Series championship team, has been diagnosed with dementia at age 74.

His family made the announcement Thursday through the Hall and said Seaver has retired from public life. He will continue to work at Seaver Vineyards, founded by the retired player and wife Nancy in 2002 on 116 acres at Diamond Mountain in the Calistoga region of California.

Seaver was diagnosed with Lyme disease in 1991, and it reoccurred in 2012 and led to Bell's Palsy and memory loss, the New York Daily News reported in 2013.

"He will always be the heart and soul of the Mets, the standard which all Mets aspire to, this breaks my heart," tweeted former Mets catcher Mike Piazza, a fellow Hall of Famer. "Do not feel worthy to be mentioned in the same breath."

A three-time NL Cy Young Award winner and the 1967 NL Rookie of the Year, Seaver was 311-205 with a 2.86 ERA, 3,640 strikeouts and 61 shutouts from 1967-86. A five-time 20-game winner nicknamed Tom Terrific, Seaver was elected to the Hall in 1992 when he appeared on 425 of 430 ballots for a then-record 98.84 percent. His mark was surpassed in 2016 by Ken Griffey Jr. and this year by Mariano Rivera, the first unanimous selection.

Seaver pitched for the Mets from 1967 until 1977, when he was traded to Cincinnati after a public spat with Mets chairman M. Donald Grant over Seaver's desire for a new contract.

"My biggest disappointment? Leaving the Mets the first time and the difficulties

I had with the same people that led up to it," Seaver told The Associated Press in 1992. "But even that I look back at in a positive way now. It gave me the opportunity to work in different areas of the country."

He pitched his only no-hitter for the Reds in June 1978 against St. Louis and was traded back to New York after the 1982 season. But Mets general manager Frank Cashen blundered by leaving Seaver off his list of 26 protected players, and in January 1984 Seaver was claimed by the Chicago White Sox as free-agent compensation for losing pitcher Dennis Lamp to Toronto.

While pitching for the White Sox, Seaver got his 300th win at Yankee Stadium, and he did it in style with a six-hitter in a 4-1 victory. He finished his career with Boston in 1986. He was a 12-time All-Star and led the major leagues with a 25-7 record in 1969 and with a 1.76 ERA in 1971.

"From a team standpoint, winning the '69 world championship is something I'll remember most," Seaver said in 1992. "From an individual standpoint, my 300th win brought me the most joy."

Perhaps his most memorable moment on the mound was at Shea Stadium on July 9, 1969, when he retired his first 25 batters against the Chicago Cubs. Pinch-hitter Jimmy Qualls had a one-out single to left-center in the ninth inning before Seaver retired Willie Smith on a foulout and Don Kessinger on a flyout.

"I had every hitter doing what I wanted," Seaver recalled in 1992. "Afterward, my wife was in tears and I remember saying to her: 'Hey, I pitched a one-hit shutout with 10 strikeouts. What more could I ask for?'"

Spring training not just fun in the sun — it's aches and pains

Associated Press

LAKELAND, Fla. — Earlier this week, Detroit manager Ron Gardenhire left several of his top players out of the starting lineup. It was a rainy morning, but that wasn't the only reason. Gardenhire said some were dealing with aches and pains.

"I talked to a number of our guys," Gardenhire said Tuesday. "Because of these hard fields in spring training, they get little hips and groin soreness, and I just said — weather, hips and groin, that's not good. So I just changed the whole lineup."

It may look like a few weeks of relaxed fun in the sun, but make no mistake: Spring training can be a grind. Pitchers need to build up their arms slowly, and position players face their own challenges. At this time of year, Florida and Arizona climates obviously are better for baseball than many others, but the warm, sunny weather does have a few drawbacks.

Spring training is halfway over now, and Kansas City infielder Whit Merrifield already feels like he's had enough.

"I wish spring training would be done, right about now — but I understand pitchers need to build their arms up and all that," Merrifield said. "It should be three or four weeks, that's enough. If it was me, it would start about right now and then you go into the season."

Merrifield might be glad to see the following trends in position player workload in spring training: In 2009, Houston's Michael Bourn led the majors in exhibition plate appearances with 107. In 2010, Julio Borbon had 97 for Texas. Last year, nobody had more than 74.

"A couple years ago, I was trying to make the team and I played in like every spring game but one," Merrifield said. "I came into the season sore

— the spring is tough in that regard — but once you get established, you get days off, play the first half a game and get out."

Gardenhire isn't alone in his concern about hard fields. Merrifield, whose team trains in Arizona, said "it's like concrete out there" on hot, sunny days. New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone experienced spring training when he was a player, and now he has to monitor his team.

"At different times probably in my career, yeah, when the sun's going and it dries out a little, it can get a little bit hard," Boone said. "Especially as you're building yourself up and getting used to standing out there and playing a couple hours in a game in your spikes all the time. It's part of the buildup."

Gardenhire was already looking beyond Tuesday's game in Lakeland. The next day, his team was slated to play Atlanta at the Braves' complex in Kissimmee.

"Going over to Disney, it's a rock," he said. "The infield is really hard over there. I don't even want to take my players over there."

The Tigers did indeed send a team to Disney, but Miguel Cabrera, Josh Harrison, Jordy Mercer and Jeimer Candelario — Detroit's likely starters this year in the infield — didn't play Wednesday.

In about three weeks, the 162-game regular season starts — with its own grueling elements. At least those games will count.

"As the time goes on here, it's going to get harder and harder, because it starts getting really hot every day, the longer we go in spring training," Gardenhire said. "The fields, by the end of it, your spikes don't even dig in sometimes."

College basketball roundup

No. 12 Houston earns share of ACC title

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Houston rebounded from its second loss of the season to wrap up at least a share of the American Athletic Conference regular-season title and the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament.

Armoni Brooks had 20 points and 10 rebounds, Corey Davis Jr. added 17 points and No. 12 Houston beat SMU 90-79 on Thursday night.

With No. 25 Central Florida's 58-55 home victory over No. 20 Cincinnati, the Cougars (28-2, 15-2) clinched at least a share of their first regular-season championship since they shared the Southwest Conference crown in 1991-92.

"We're 15-2 and conference champions," Houston coach Kelvin Sampson said. "I have only been here five years, so I don't have the perspective of 27 years."

Davis said the players were told midway through the first half about UCF's win, which gave Houston extra motivation to win.

"It means everything," Davis said. "We worked very hard and have been so determined. We

fought every game. We worked hard in practice every day. It's a testament to how hard we've worked and how bad we really want this."

Brooks made six three-pointers, Davis had four and the Cougars shot 53 percent overall, going 12-for-29 from behind the arc. Breanon Brady added 16 points, Galen Robinson Jr. had 11, and Houston turned 15 SMU turnovers into 22 points.

"This means a lot because people doubted us," Robinson said. "We've always been players who play with chips on our shoulders. When our backs are against the wall and you doubt us, that's when we play our best."

The 28 regular-season wins tied the 1967-68 team for most in school history.

Jahmal McMurray had 24 points, and Ethan Chargois added 21 points for SMU (13-16, 5-12). Isiaha Mike scored 15 points, and Feron Hunt had 10 for the Mustangs.

No. 25 UCF 58, No. 19 Cincinnati 55: B.J. Taylor scored 22 points and the host Knights held off the Bearcats.

Tacko Fall added 10 points

and six rebounds for UCF (23-6, 13-4 American Athletic). Trevon Scott had 20 points on 9-for-15 shooting and added nine rebounds for Cincinnati (25-5, 14-3).

Taylor broke a tie with two free throws with 1:16 left and made it 57-53 with a layup with 17 seconds to go. Jarron Cumberland cut it to two with a layup with 10 seconds left, and Chad Brown made a free throw for UCF with 9 seconds to go. Cumberland and Can Broome missed three-point attempts in the final seconds.

No. 21 Wisconsin 65, Iowa 45: Ethan Happ had 21 points and 14 rebounds in his final home game to help the Badgers beat the Hawkeyes.

Fellow senior Khalil Iverson added 11 points and 11 rebounds for Wisconsin (21-9, 13-6 Big Ten).

Iowa (21-9, 10-9) played without coach Fran McCaffery as he completed a two-game suspension for an outburst at an official Feb. 26. The Badgers had a season-low points total — 20 below their previous low — and shot a season-worst 31 percent from the field.

Jordan Bohannon led Iowa with eight points.

Service academies

Navy 60, American 56: Evan Wieck had 18 points as the visiting Midshipmen narrowly beat the Eagles in the Patriot League tournament quarterfinals.

John Carter Jr. had seven rebounds for Navy (12-18). George Kiernan added nine rebounds.

Sa'eed Nelson had 29 points for American (15-15). Stacy Beckton Jr. added nine rebounds. Sam Iorio had eight rebounds.

Lehigh 75, Army 70: Jordan Cohen had 18 points as the host Mountain Hawks edged the Black Knights in the quarterfinals of the Patriot League tournament.

Lance Tejada added 16 points for Lehigh, while James Karnik chipped in 15. Karnik also had nine rebounds for the Mountain Hawks.

Jeameril Wilson had 11 points for Lehigh (20-10).

Tommy Funk had 22 points for Army (13-19). Matt Wilson added 17 points. John Emezue had 10 points.

Source: Broncos agree to trade Keenum to Redskins

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Case Keenum is on the move again. The Denver Broncos have agreed to trade the veteran quarterback to the Washington Redskins, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The teams will also swap 2020 draft picks, with Denver receiving a sixth-rounder and Washington a seventh-rounder, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal cannot be announced until next week.

Keenum's contract will be reworked with the Broncos and Redskins each picking up half

of the \$7 million he is guaranteed in 2019.

The Broncos decided to move on from Keenum last month when they agreed to acquire Super Bowl-winning veteran Joe Flacco from the Baltimore Ravens. Like the Keenum trade, the Flacco trade cannot become official until the start of the league year on March 13.

For the second consecutive offseason, the Redskins opted to trade for a quarterback. Keenum enters the equation to try to replace 2018 addition Alex Smith, who broke his right tibia and fibula in November and is expected to miss the entire 2019 season.

A year ago, Keenum was coming off a career year in Minnesota, where he went 11-3 and led the Vikings to the NFC championship game. That made him a hot commodity in free agency, second only to Kirk Cousins among available quarterbacks.

After the Vikings signed Cousins, Keenum signed a two-year, \$36 million deal with Denver that included \$25 million in guarantees.

Broncos general manager John Elway hoped he'd finally found a worthy successor to Peyton Manning after failures by Mark Sanchez, Trevor Siemian, Brock Osweiler and Paxton Lynch. But Keenum also

found it difficult to thrive in the quarterback-crazed city where both Elway and Manning continue to cast long shadows.

The Broncos went 6-10 last season, leading Elway to fire coach Vance Joseph and hire Vic Fangio. After his career year in Minneapolis, Keenum threw for 18 touchdowns and a career-high 15 interceptions in 2018.

Elway said at the NFL combine that he'd prefer for Keenum to rework his deal and stay in Denver as the backup, but he left it up to Keenum, saying he'd honor a release request or would try to trade him if a suitable partner emerged.

NHL roundup

Zucker, Minnesota shut out Tampa Bay

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Jason Zucker kept putting the puck in the net for the Minnesota Wild. And, Devan Dubnyk refused to let any get by him.

Zucker scored all three of Minnesota's goals for his first career hat trick, Dubnyk made 25 saves for his second shutout of the season and the Wild beat Tampa Bay 3-0 on Thursday night to deny the Lightning a chance to become the first NHL team to clinch a playoff spot.

The Wild improved to 6-0-2 in their last eight games and maintained a hold on the second wild-card spot in the Western Conference playoff race, four points ahead of Colorado with 14 games remaining for both teams.

"We had some tremendous energy today and we pressured them all night long," Minnesota coach Bruce Boudreau said. "When you pressure any team, it's tough to make plays. We were forechecking, we stripped pucks and I thought it was (Dubnyk's) best game of the year."

Andrei Vasilevskiy finished

with 27 saves, but saw his 10-game winning streak snapped one game short of tying the franchise record set by Louis Domingue earlier this season.

A victory by the Lightning would have clinched a playoff spot after Columbus lost to Pittsburgh earlier Thursday night.

Tampa Bay lost for the second time in four games after a 12-0-2 stretch in the previous 14, and was shut out for the second time this season — first in regulation.

"We played a stubborn game tonight and stubborn in the sense that we didn't manage the puck at all," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "When you have to play that grind-it-out game, we refused to play it tonight."

Zucker put the Wild in front in the first period off a rush play, getting a deflection on Donato's shot at 10:50.

Minnesota protected the lead with a strong defensive effort the rest of the way. And the rare times the Lightning produced a chance, Dubnyk was there to keep the highest-scoring team

in the league off the board.

Islanders 4, Senators 2: Valtteri Filppula scored twice to lead visiting New York past Ottawa and into a tie for first place in the Metropolitan Division with the Washington Capitals.

Bruins 4, Panthers 3: Patrice Bergeron scored twice, including the winner with 7.2 seconds remaining, as host Boston scored twice in the final minute to beat Florida and extend its points streak to 18 games.

Red Wings 3, Rangers 2 (SO): Andreas Athanasiou scored in the third period and had the only goal in a shootout as host Detroit snapped an eight-game losing streak with a win over New York.

Penguins 3, Blue Jackets 0: Matt Murray stopped 25 shots for his 10th career shutout and host Pittsburgh won the opener of a pivotal home-and-home with Columbus.

Stars 4, Avalanche 0: Alexander Radulov recorded his first career hat trick in his return after missing the previous game for disciplinary reasons,

and Ben Bishop stopped 31 shots in his second consecutive shutout for host Dallas.

Blackhawks 5, Sabres 4 (SO): Jonathan Toews, Patrick Kane and Alex DeBrincat beat Carter Hutton during a perfect shootout as host Chicago beat Buffalo.

Coyotes 2, Flames 0: Darcy Kuemper made 30 saves to shut out Western Conference-leading Calgary past host Arizona.

Oilers 3, Canucks 2: Connor McDavid had two assists, Mikko Koskinen made 35 saves and host Edmonton kept up its playoff push by beating Vancouver.

Sharks 5, Canadiens 2: Tomas Hertl scored his career-high 30th goal of the season, Martin Jones made 37 saves and San Jose extended its two-decade home dominance over Montreal.

The Sharks haven't lost at home to the Canadiens since Nov. 23, 1999.

Blues 4, Kings 0: Vladimir Tarasenko had a goal and an assist, Jake Allen stopped 28 shots for his 19th career shutout and visiting St. Louis beat Los Angeles.

NBA roundup

Lillard's 51 points not enough in Portland's OT loss

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Russell Westbrook had 37 points and Paul George added 32 points and 14 rebounds for the Oklahoma City Thunder in a chippy 129-121 overtime win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Thursday night.

The victory gave the Thunder a four-game series sweep of the Blazers this season.

Damian Lillard had 51 points for the Blazers, while Jusuf Nurkic added 13 points and 17 rebounds before he was sent off with his second technical with under a minute to go in

regulation.

The teams had gone into the game knotted for third in the Western Conference — along with the Houston Rockets — with identical 39-25 records.

Westbrook's three-pointer in overtime put the Thunder up 118-117 and he made a pair of free throws to extend the lead. After George made the second of a pair of free throws, Westbrook's layup gave Oklahoma City a 123-117 lead. Regulation ended with a wild final minute when George appeared to elbow Nurkic, who was knocked to the floor as Terrance Fergu-

son made a layup that put the Thunder up 113-111. Portland players protested, but no call was made.

Words were then exchanged between Nurkic and George under Portland's basket. After a review both received offsetting technicals, and a foul was called on the Thunder.

Bucks 117, Pacers 98: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points and Khris Middleton added 27 to help the Bucks bounce back from their first consecutive losses of the season.

Milwaukee, which improved

to an NBA-best 49-16, was coming off back-to-back losses to Utah and Phoenix after opening a five-game road trip with three victories.

The Bucks gained control with a 12-0 spurt early in the fourth quarter. Kyle O'Quinn opened the final period with a floater from the lane to bring the Pacers within 10 at 84-74. Ersan Ilyasova hit a three-pointer to trigger the run, capped by Antetokounmpo's drive to make it 96-74 with 8:21 left.

Myles Turner had 22 points and Bojan Bogdanovic 17 for the Pacers.