

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, March 18, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Bases largely underwater after flooding

BY ROSE L. THAYER

*Stars and Stripes*

Offutt Air Force Base is operating with only essential personnel and the National Guard's Camp Ashland is completely closed as floodwaters remain high at both Nebraska bases from massive flooding over the weekend after rivers breached several levees following heavy rain and snowmelt upstream.

Military officials at the bases said Monday that they are surveying damage as they wait for the water to recede, which isn't expected until Thursday.

Flooding began Friday at Offutt, which is near Bellevue, peaked Sunday evening and flooded about one-third of the base. Overnight, the water receded only about a foot, Col. Michael Manion, commander of the 55th Wing Command, which is headquartered at Offutt, wrote on his Facebook

page. He also oversees base operations.

His team at the base is now preparing its priorities for when the water recedes, focusing first on safety and then on "generation of combat power," he wrote.

Since preparation began Friday, the colonel has chronicled online the devastating flooding that now covers much of the southeastern portion of Offutt. That area includes the majority of the aircraft hangars for the wing's RC-135s, fixed-wing reconnaissance aircraft, said Ryan Hansen, 55th Wing spokesman. The majority were moved to higher ground on the base and eight were flown off base to a National Guard facility in Lincoln and MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla.

Base officials evacuated the Base Lake, a recreational camping area, early Friday, and personnel worked around the clock to fortify facilities

with more than 235,000 sandbags and 460 flood barriers to minimize damage as much as possible, according to a news release on the Offutt Facebook page.

The efforts couldn't stop the water from overflowing. With 30 buildings flooded and one access gate blocked by water, the base, which is also home to U.S. Strategic Command, is open only to mission essential personnel. About 10,000 people work on the installation. Of those 6,500 are active-duty servicemembers.

The flooded facilities range from the 55th Wing's headquarters to a veterinary clinic to a 55th Maintenance Group facility that is on the edge of the flooded area. Hansen estimated the maintenance facility is flooded with water about 2 to 3 feet high, with other base facilities further east flooded worse.

No housing or barracks were

flooded, Hansen said.

"It is extremely clear that we face a grand challenge," Manion wrote Sunday, with photos of the airfield's partially flooded runway. "Our goal is to only reopen when it's safe."

Record-setting snowfall this winter is now melting, causing water levels to rise in the Missouri and Platte rivers and Papio Creek. Offutt sits north of where the two rivers meet.

Camp Ashland, a training site, is about 25 miles west of Offutt on the Platte River and is "completely underwater," said Spc. Lisa Crawford, spokeswoman for the Nebraska National Guard. Flooding there began Wednesday and the 225 soldiers on base taking classes were evacuated.

Over the weekend, a levee protecting the base broke and military officials have not been able to access the base and assess damage, Crawford said.

## Police: Suspect in deadly Dutch tram shooting detained

*Associated Press*

UTRECHT, Netherlands — Utrecht's police chief said the man suspected of killing three people and wounding five others on a tram in this Dutch city had been detained. Dutch authorities had said the shooting could have been connected to terrorism.

At the end of a news conference Monday evening, chief Rob van Bree told reporters, "I just heard that the suspect we were hunting has been arrested."

Further details were not immediately available.

The shooting took place on a streetcar Monday morning in what the mayor said appeared to be a terrorist attack, touching off a manhunt as heavily armed

officers with dogs zeroed in on an apartment building. Authorities immediately raised the threat alert for the area to the highest level, and Dutch military police tightened security at airports and key buildings. A few hours after the shooting, Utrecht police released a photo of a 37-year-old Turkish-born man they identified as Gokmen Tanis and said he was "associated with the incident." The photo showed a bearded man aboard a tram in a blue hooded top.

The attack came three days after 50 people were killed when an immigrant-hating white supremacist opened fire at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

A few hours after the shooting, Utrecht police released a photo

of a 37-year-old Turkish-born man they identified as Gokmen Tanis and said he was "associated with the incident." The photo showed a bearded man aboard a tram in a blue hooded top.

Authorities reduced the threat level in Utrecht back to four out of five following the arrest of the suspect.

The Netherlands' counterterrorism coordinator announced the scaling down of the threat level in a tweet Monday evening. A level four terrorism alert is in line with the rest of the Netherlands.

The attack came three days after 50 people were killed when an immigrant-hating white supremacist opened fire at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, during Friday prayers.

There was no immediate indication of any link between the two events.

Utrecht Mayor Jan van Zanen said three people were killed, and police put the number of wounded at five.

"We cannot exclude, even stronger, we assume a terror motive. Likely there is one attacker, but there could be more," van Zanen said earlier Monday.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said that "a terror motive is not excluded" and that the attack was met throughout the country with "a mix of disbelief and disgust."

"If it is a terror attack, then we have only one answer: Our nation, democracy, must be stronger than fanaticism and violence," he added.

# Poseidons watch seas as Russia lurks

By SCOTT WYLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Sicily — The P-8A Poseidon crew spotted a submarine periscope, possibly Russian, poking up from the waves of the Mediterranean Sea.

They were told to fly onward — another mission took priority. The U.S. Navy aircrew was on its way to a simulated submarine hunt, part of the 11-day exercise Dynamic Manta that ended this month, and there was little room to deviate from the plan.

It's not unusual for forward-deployed P-8A squadrons to discover Russian subs — it's part of their daily flight duties to track Russian maneuvers in European waters. Such moves have increased in recent years after a two-decade lull following the Cold War.

"Certainly, in the past decade, we've observed an increase in Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea," said Rear Adm. Andrew Lennon, commander of NATO's submarines, while on a Dutch frigate during Dynamic Manta. "They've developed some very quiet and very capable submarines."

A low-flying Poseidon roared

overhead, interrupting Lennon. These planes, which first deployed to Europe six years ago, are vital in anti-submarine warfare because they can detect enemy boats and provide aerial defense of allied ships, he said.

One benefit of NATO exercises helping partner nations learn to work together across the alliance is that one military tracking a hostile submarine can pass the track on to an ally before heading home, said Lt. Luke Moragne, mission commander of the P-8A's sub-tracking drill during Dynamic Manta.

Still, daily missions offer realistic training the crews can't get during an exercise, he said.

"There's nothing like being on top of an actual submarine," Moragne said.

Anti-submarine operations have been part of Naval Air Station Sigonella's operations since the 1960s, when the Soviets began sending submarines into the Mediterranean. Russian deployments tapered off in the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union, as Moscow struggled to fund its military.

Russia has grown more militarily assertive in recent years, sending out ships, subs and aircraft to trail its rivals in the region. In December, Russian subs were involved for the first

time in combat operations in Syria, when they fired volleys of cruise missiles at rebel targets.

Since Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, the U.S. has been stepping up its efforts to counter its Cold War enemy. Three years ago, the Navy deployed its first P-8As — modified twin-jet Boeing 737s — to this base on Sicily to replace aging P-3C Orions. The installation now operates seven of the aircraft, making it the Poseidon hub for Europe.

Squadrons from Jacksonville, Fla., and Whidbey Island, Wash., deploy to Sigonella in six-month rotations to conduct year-round aerial reconnaissance.

Run by nine-person crews, the sub-hunting planes are outfitted with high-tech sensors, communications systems and radars that can detect ships hundreds of miles away or pinpoint a periscope hundreds of feet below on the ocean's surface.

"It's like seeing a straw in the middle of the water — it's difficult," said Lt. Mason Bailey, a P-8A pilot and flight commander. "But something in a wake ... you can see it."

During the anti-submarine exercise, Bailey's P-8A flew southeast of Sicily to meet a NATO submarine the crew was assigned to hunt. Five

crewmembers sat shoulder-to-shoulder in front of electronic screens, with Moragne at the center. They monitored radar, GPS, cameras, ocean conditions and radio transmissions from ships, planes and sonobuoys.

The aircraft are equipped with 129 of the small floating devices, which are dropped into the water and transmit sonar data back to the plane to help track underwater targets.

With the help of computers that fuse the various data into a coherent picture that can be passed to friendly ships and planes, Moragne helped plot the aircraft's course and follow the subsurface quarry.

Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Graham opted for anti-submarine warfare in 2005 because he heard it was "the most awesome" Navy job, but his first years in the field were during the height of the U.S. wars in the Middle East, so he spent much of his time in aerial reconnaissance searching for desert targets. With Russia and China becoming more active underwater and the U.S. military shifting its focus to monitor them, Graham is now doing what he signed up for.

"It's exciting," he said. "There's something new every day."

## 7th Fleet: Chinese ship maneuver won't alter Navy sail-bys

*Associated Press*

MANILA, Philippines — The U.S. Navy won't alter its so-called freedom of navigation sail-bys in the disputed South China Sea and has pressed ahead with such operations despite a dangerous maneuver by a Chinese navy ship against an American destroyer, a senior U.S. Navy commander said Monday.

Vice Adm. Phillip Sawyer, commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, told reporters in Manila that Washington protested that "unprofessional behavior" by the Chinese ship, which maneuvered very close to the USS De-

catur as the latter sailed closely by a Chinese-occupied island in the Spratlys in September.

"No, it's not going to change where we do our freedom of navigation operations," Sawyer said when asked if the Sept. 30 incident off Gaven Reef would change such U.S. Navy operations. Several such sail-bys have been undertaken by American naval ships since that close encounter, he said.

"It was concerning because the ships got too close," Sawyer said, adding that U.S. officials have voiced "our displeasure with what we consider to be unprofessional behavior."

The USS Decatur had sailed

within 12 nautical miles of Gaven Reef when a Chinese destroyer approached within 45 yards of the bow of the U.S. Navy ship, which changed course to prevent a collision. The Decatur was also warned to leave the area, U.S. Pacific Fleet officials said at the time.

China said the Luoyang, a missile destroyer, was deployed to identify the U.S. warship and drive it away near Chinese territory. Beijing protested the Decatur's action as provocative.

One of seven disputed reefs transformed by China into militarily fortified islands in recent years, Gaven is claimed by China, the Philippines, Viet-

nam and Taiwan. Malaysia and Brunei also have claims in the South China Sea. While Washington has no claims to the waterway, it has declared freedom of navigation and the peaceful resolution of the disputes are in the U.S. national interest.

The U.S. Navy will continue freedom of navigation sail-bys and patrols in the South China Sea and elsewhere "until there are no excessive maritime claims throughout the world," said Sawyer, who spoke onboard the USS Blue Ridge, which arrived in Manila on Thursday for a visit after sailing through the South China Sea.

# Syrian defense minister slams GI presence as 'illegitimate'

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Syria's defense minister on Monday slammed what he called the "illegitimate" U.S. military presence in his country, vowing that Damascus has a right to self-defense, while Iraq said a border crossing with Syria will open in the coming days.

Syrian Gen. Ali Ayoub spoke during a rare joint news conference with visiting Iranian and Iraqi army commanders who have been holding meetings in the capital, Damascus.

The U.S. currently has about 2,000 troops in eastern and northern Syria and is expected to withdraw hundreds of them in the coming months.

The meeting in Damascus illustrates the strong alliance be-

tween Iran, Iraq and Syria at a time when the U.S. is seeking to isolate and increase sanctions against Iran and its regional allies.

Tehran has sent troops and Iran-backed fighters into Syria and Iraq to fight alongside government forces against Islamic militants, including Islamic State, which is on the verge of defeat by U.S.-backed Kurdish-led fighters in the last area under its control in eastern Syria.

"The Americans will leave Syria as they left other places because this is an illegitimate presence and is rejected no matter what the justifications are," Ayoub said.

"Syria has affirmed the necessity of the withdrawal of these forces. It is a force of oc-

cupation and violates the country's sovereignty," he said.

After years of setbacks, Syrian government forces have been on the offensive since 2016 and have regained control of large parts of the country thanks to Russian and Iranian support.

Iranian army commander Maj. Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, who arrived in Damascus on Sunday, said that Iranian troops had been invited by Syrian authorities and would leave only when asked by the Syrians.

Iran's official IRNA news agency quoted Bagheri as saying that Iran, Syria and Iraq will work together to bring an end to the presence of foreign forces in Syria.

## Unexploded bomb found in Iwakuni is removed

BY JAMES BOLINGER  
AND HANA KUSUMOTO

*Stars and Stripes*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — A World War II-era American bomb was removed safely Sunday morning from a school construction site in Iwakuni by the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

Explosive ordnance disposal technicians defused the bomb in two hours, an Iwakuni City crisis-management official said. The 500-pound bomb was discovered Jan. 7 at the construction site about 1.25 miles north of MCAS Iwakuni.

Iwakuni-based Marines and sailors were directed to shelter in place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. if they were near the construction site, which is close to the Iwakuni train station.

More than 1,000 people living within a 200-meter radius of the site were evacuated for the duration of the morning, the official said. The evacuation order was lifted at 11:17 a.m.

The bomb was approximately 3.5 feet long and more than a foot in diameter, according to an Iwakuni City press release. Officials believe it was dropped during an air raid Aug. 14, 1945.

"It's not often that we find unexploded bombs," the official said. It is customary in Japan for government spokesmen not to identify themselves by name when giving statements to the press.

The city last disposed of a World War II-era bomb about 30 years ago.

"Iwakuni was attacked by a large air raid, but it was mainly around the [Iwakuni] station and they are not scattered around the city," the official said.

World War II munitions are not commonly found near Iwakuni. Some were discovered during the construction of Iwakuni station, he said.

"Most of them were removed soon after the war," he said.

## Woman battling cancer seeks help from GIs

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A German woman in need of a stem cell transplant to save her life is appealing to the international community, including Americans living in the Kaiserslautern area, for help in finding a donor.

Astrid, a mother of two young boys from Frankfurt, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia last fall after going to the doctor for a sore throat. Doctors have said her best chance of beating the less than 50 percent odds of surviving the aggressive blood cancer is a stem cell transplant, said her family friend, Sara.

Astrid, 41, is facing an uphill battle in finding a genetic match, given her mixed African and Caucasian ethnicity, Sara said, speaking on Astrid's behalf. Both women requested only their first names be used to protect their families' privacy.

Their plea comes in an area where Defense Department

personnel can easily register on base to become a bone marrow donor. However, officials say minorities are underrepresented in the department's globally accessible registry.

Less than 3 percent of all registered donors worldwide are of an ethnic mix, Sara said. Even fewer have African and Caucasian genes. Astrid needs to find a "genetic twin," someone who has the same genetic makeup, Sara said. "That hasn't been found yet."

Astrid's father was from Nigeria — belonging to the Igbo, one of the largest of all African ethnic groups.

"What we didn't know before this happened to Astrid is that ... 70 percent" of registered stem cell donors are Caucasian, Sara said.

"We just need to reach way, way, way more people, not just for Astrid but for everybody with similar backgrounds," she said, "because it can become a problem for everybody."

The U.S. military cannot advise or endorse participation

in the campaign to help Astrid, officials at Ramstein Air Base said. But DOD personnel, Coast Guardsmen and immediate family members in the Kaiserslautern area can easily register to become a stem cell or bone marrow donor for anyone in need because Ramstein is one of about 65 walk-in registration sites for the C.W. Bill Young Department of Defense Marrow Donor Program, also called Salute to Life.

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 60 in general good health may register through the program. On Ramstein, the 86th Medical Group oversees registration at the base medical clinic and has about 50 collection kits on hand, officials there said.

Registration can be completed in about seven minutes and doesn't cost anything, said Eddy Medina, the senior recruiter for the DOD marrow donor program. It involves filling out a form and having each cheek swabbed twice.

# Top court agrees to hear DC sniper case

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider Virginia's plea to reinstate the life-without-parole sentence of a man who as a teenager participated in sniper shootings that terrorized the Washington region in 2002.

The justices said they will take up the state's appeal in the case of Lee Boyd Malvo, who was 17 when he and John Allen Muhammad fatally shot 10 people in Maryland, Virginia and Washington. Malvo was sentenced to life-without-parole terms in Virginia and

in Maryland; Muhammad was sentenced to death and was executed in 2009.

Malvo was sentenced to four life terms for crimes he committed in Virginia. But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled last year that while Malvo's life-without-parole sentences were legal when they were imposed, Supreme Court decisions that followed altered sentencing requirements for juvenile offenders.

The appeals court judges said a resentencing would determine whether Malvo qualifies as "one of the rare juvenile of-

fenders" who can be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole because his "crimes reflect permanent incorrigibility." They said if his crimes instead "reflect the transient immaturity of youth" he's entitled to a sentence short of life without parole.

The Supreme Court will review that decision. As is typical, the justices did not make any comment in agreeing to hear the case, which likely will be heard in the fall.

Regardless of what the Supreme Court decides, Malvo isn't getting out of prison any-

time soon. He isn't currently getting a new sentencing hearing in Maryland, where he struck a plea deal and was sentenced to six life-without-parole prison terms for shootings that took place in that state.

A judge previously ruled that Malvo would not get new sentencing hearings in Maryland. Malvo has appealed.

Malvo and his mentor, Muhammad, who was 41, shot people as they pumped gas, loaded packages into their cars and went about their everyday business during a three-week period.

# Bin Laden's son in crosshairs of world powers

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Years after the death of his father at the hands of a U.S. Navy SEAL raid in Pakistan, Hamza bin Laden now finds himself in the crosshairs of world powers.

In rapid succession in recent weeks, the U.S. put a bounty of up to \$1 million on him; the U.N. Security Council named him to a global sanctions list, sparking a new Interpol notice for his arrest; and his home country of Saudi Arabia revealed it had revoked his citizenship.

Those measures suggest that international officials believe the militant, now 30, is an increasingly serious threat. He is not the head of al-Qaida, but he

has risen in prominence within the terrorism network his father Osama bin Laden founded, and the group may be grooming him to stand as a leader for a young generation of militants.

"Hamza was destined to be in his father's footsteps," said Ali Soufan, a former FBI agent focused on counterterrorism who investigated al-Qaida's attack 2000 on the USS Cole in Yemen. "He is poised to have a senior leadership role in al-Qaida."

"There is probably other intelligence that indicates something's happening, and that's what put this thing on the front burner," he said.

Much remains unknown about Hamza bin Laden — particularly, the key question of where he is — but his life has

mirrored al-Qaida's path, moving quietly and steadily forward, outlasting its offshoot and rival, Islamic State.

Hamza bin Laden's exact date of birth remains disputed, but most put it in 1989. That was a year of transition for his father, who had gained attention for his role in supplying money and arms to the mujahideen fighting against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

As the war wound down, Osama bin Laden would launch a new group that sought to leverage that global network for a broader jihad. They named it al-Qaida, or "the base" in Arabic.

Already, bin Laden had met and married Khairiah Saber, a child psychologist from Saudi Arabia's port city of Jiddah. She

gave birth to Hamza, their only child together, as al-Qaida took its first, tentative steps toward the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"This boy has been living, breathing and experiencing the al-Qaida life since age zero," said Elisabeth Kendall, a senior research fellow at Pembroke College at Oxford University who studies Hamza bin Laden.

In August 2015, a video emerged on jihadi websites of Ayman al-Zawahri, the current leader of al-Qaida, introducing "a lion from the den of al-Qaida" — Hamza bin Laden.

Since then, he has been featured in about a dozen al-Qaida messages, delivering speeches on everything from the war in Syria to President Donald Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia.

# Mozambican leader: Cyclone death toll may be above 1K

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — As much as 90 percent of Mozambique's central port city of Beira has been damaged or destroyed by tropical Cyclone Idai, according to the Red Cross.

Beira has been severely battered by the cyclone, which cut off electricity, forced the airport to shut down and closed road ac-

cess to the city of 500,000, said the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on Monday.

Cyclone Idai first hit Beira last week and then moved inland, spreading heavy winds and rainfall to Zimbabwe and Malawi. More than 215 people have been killed by the storm, hundreds more are missing and more than 1.5 million people

have been affected by the widespread destruction and flooding, according to the Red Cross and government officials.

The scale of the damage to Beira is "massive and horrifying," said Jamie LeSueur, who led a Red Cross aerial assessment of the city. The team had to view the city by helicopter because roads were flooded, he said.

"The situation is terrible. The scale of devastation is enormous. It seems that 90 percent of the area is completely destroyed," said LeSueur.

With Beira's airport closed, the team drove from Mozambique's capital, Maputo, before taking a helicopter for the last part of the journey because roads into Beira have been flooded.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Trained dogs to help round up rare turtles

**IA** IOWA CITY — Specially trained dogs from Montana are coming to Iowa to help round up a rare and threatened turtle species.

The Iowa City Press-Citizen reported that the Bur Oak Land Trust is coordinating the project this spring to help gather the ornate box turtle, Iowa's only native terrestrial turtle.

The turtles are listed as "threatened" in Iowa, and the trust wants to preserve a small population in Johnson County.

The trust is bringing in John Rucker, a Montana dog trainer and turtle expert, along with his Boykin spaniels.

### Caged dogs in garage at cemetery rescued

**MI** ROSEVILLE — Police in suburban Detroit said 33 dogs were rescued from a garage in a cemetery.

Roseville police said a woman, 51, living in a home next to the garage told officers she was operating a rescue nearby before recently moving the dogs to the Roseville location. She said the garage was serving as temporary quarters for the dogs.

Police said they were alerted to the situation Saturday by a passer-by. They said the dogs were held in various cages and needed immediate attention due to conditions at the garage.

Police didn't identify the woman or say if she'll face criminal charges.

### Owner of 'Flintstone House' sued by town

**CA** HILLSBOROUGH — A San Francisco Bay Area town is suing the owner of the quirky "Flintstone House,"

alleging she violated local codes when she put dinosaur sculptures in the backyard and made other landscaping changes that caused local officials to declare it a public nuisance.

The town of Hillsborough filed a complaint last week against Florence Fang, a media mogul who purchased the orange-and-purple, bulbous-shaped house in 2017.

She began installing the large metal sculptures, a sign in the driveway that reads, "Yabba Dabba Doo," figurines of characters from "The Flintstones" animated sitcom, a staircase, a parking strip, a deck and other additions to the front and backyard.

Fang is a former publisher of The San Francisco Examiner. Her grandson said in a statement that his grandmother "will fight to save the Flintstone House."

### Tiny town to celebrate smelt with fish fry

**ME** COLUMBIA FALLS — A tiny town in Downeast Maine will once again welcome hundreds of people this year to celebrate a little fish and the arrival of spring.

Organizers of the Downeast Salmon Federation's Annual Smelt Fry and Fisheries Celebration say this year's event will take place on April 13.

The festival includes activities and displays about fisheries and conservation, and it's also a celebration of local food.

### South American lizard showing up in state

**GA** SAVANNAH — A South American lizard could be establishing a breeding population in south Georgia, state wildlife officials say.

The lizards — known as tegus — can grow up to 4 feet long.

Talk of large, odd-looking lizards has been circulating in eastern Toombs and western Tattnall counties, The Savannah Morning News reported.

People have reported seeing the reptiles crossing dirt roads, and they've shown up on trail cameras.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has documented at least four adult Argentine, black-and-white tegus in the state.

Also, there have been 20 sightings in the stretch of forest, farmland and streams from the south Georgia town of Lyons to Reidsville.

### Police charge school bus driver with DUI

**KY** CRESTWOOD — Police in Kentucky charged a bus driver with drunken driving after a bus with 33 elementary school students on board crashed. No one was injured.

News outlets reported that Lesley Harvey, 54, was charged Friday with operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol, failure to report an accident, leaving the scene of an accident and 33 counts of wanton endangerment.

The Oldham County Police Department said in a news release the bus carrying Crestwood Elementary School students hit a security barrier near a subdivision.

### Cops: Theft suspect dressed as unicorn

**MD** BALDWIN — Apparently not all unicorns are the embodiment of purity and grace.

Baltimore County Police said a person dressed in a unicorn costume and wielding a crow-

bar tried to rob a convenience store Saturday morning in the Baldwin community.

Officers arrived just after the High's store opening time of 5 a.m. to respond to the robbery call.

Police said the suspect fled in a silver car. They located what appeared to be the same car after it had wrecked.

Police said two people involved in the crash were taken to a hospital, and detectives are working to determine what their involvement was in the robbery. No charges were immediately filed.

Police didn't say if money or merchandise was taken in the robbery.

### Naked man confronts, robs random woman

**PA** LOWER BURRELL — Authorities said a naked man attacked and robbed a woman he encountered on a street.

Lower Burrell police said officers encountered city resident Robert E. Brown, 48, late Wednesday night after he allegedly ripped off the woman's sweatshirt, causing minor injuries. A witness told them Brown had accused the woman of an improper action from his childhood, even though they had never met.

Brown ran off but was soon found sitting on the porch of a vacant house. He then kicked in the front door and ran into the empty home but eventually surrendered without incident.

Police said Brown was found wearing the sweatshirt that he ripped from the female victim. He allegedly told officers he had been using various drugs.

From wire reports

On a mission to provide objective reporting to America's military, wherever they serve.  
Read us online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Committee makes Duke top overall seed

Associated Press

It's going to take more than a busted sneaker to stop Zion Williamson.

The way he's going, he might not be done until he's cutting down nets at the Final Four.

Impressed by how Duke is playing with college basketball's best player in the lineup, the NCAA selection committee made the Blue Devils the overall top seed for March Madness, perfectly in step with the oddsmakers, who had already established Duke as the 9-4 favorite to take it all.

The other 67 teams in the NCAA Tournament now have three weeks to figure out how to slow the 6-foot-7, 285-pound freshman who, many times this season, has appeared unstoppable.

"I think there's a verve when he's in there," Duke associate head coach John Scheyer said. "I think it's both ends. He's a guy who eliminates easy baskets and he can get you some easy baskets."

Williamson led the Blue Devils to the Atlantic Coast Conference title and ended any doubt about his health, or his willingness to finish his season playing college ball before heading to the NBA. His status had been shaky since the Feb. 20 blowout of his Nike sent him tumbling to the ground, writhing in pain with a Grade 1 knee sprain.

Some said he'd be a fool to play another minute of college ball, given the millions awaiting him in the NBA, where he's expected to be the first pick in the draft later this year.

But even in the billion-dollar business that is March Madness, there are some things money just can't buy, and Williamson wants to savor every bit of this fleeting college career, whether it lasts one more game or six.

"It's like everyone's 0-0 now," he said. "We've just got to lock in on this tournament."

Of Duke's five losses this season, only two have come with Williamson in the

lineup, but one of those came when another potential lottery pick, Cam Reddish, was out sick and top defender Tre Jones hurt his shoulder.

"When you get two guys hurt and injured, there is no game plan anymore," coach Mike Krzyzewski said after that one.

It leaves Gonzaga as the only team to top Duke at full strength. That 89-87 victory came in the final of the Maui Classic in November. At that time, nobody had a grasp on how monumental the accomplishment really was.

Gonzaga earned the No. 1 seed in the West; the Zags would meet Duke in the national semifinals if both teams make it to the Final Four. North Carolina and Virginia were the top seeds in the Midwest and South, and would meet on that side of the bracket if they make it.

But there's plenty of drama to play out between now and then. Not all of it will involve Duke.

## EAST REGIONAL

### Blue Devils stand out even among champs

*The Kansas City (Mo.) Star*

It's been suggested that seeding didn't help this year's conference tournament champions. Michigan State, which defeated Michigan on Sunday for the Big Ten title, is a second seed. SEC tourney champion Auburn is a No. 5 seed; Iowa State from the Big 12 is a No. 6.

It's possible none of those teams improved its seeding with its tourney run as March Madness opens.

But Duke's impressive ACC championship pushed the Blue Devils to the overall No. 1 seed.

Duke didn't win the ACC regular season. But the Blue Devils were without star freshman Zion Williamson for six games with a knee injury when he came out of his shoe in a Feb. 20 game against North Carolina.

With Williamson back at full strength, Duke topped the Tar Heels in the ACC semifinals and roared past Florida State in the champion-

ship game. In the tourney opener against Syracuse, Williamson made all 13 of his field-goal attempts and drew this praise from Orange coach Jim Boeheim: "I've been in this game over 50 years, and he can do things nobody has done in this game."

Duke, a No. 1 seed for the 14th time, bids for its sixth NCAA title and starts from a position of strength.

Second-seeded Michigan State was terrific in winning the Big Ten tournament after navigating through a season of injuries.

Also in the East is SEC regular-season champion LSU, which will be coached by Tony Benford after Will Wade was indefinitely suspended.

Down-bracket intrigue finds No. 10 Minnesota, coached by Richard Pitino, taking on Louisville. Former Cardinals coach Rick Pitino, Richard's dad, is suing Louisville for \$44 million in a contract dispute.

**Winner:** Duke over Michigan State.

## SOUTH REGIONAL

### Virginia on high alert to avoid upset again

*The Kansas City (Mo.) Star*

Gardner-Webb provided one of the best celebration scenes during the NCAA Tournament reveal. Even though the moment was inevitable, the Runnin' Bulldogs cheered when they saw their name on the screen.

It's a great moment for the university in Boiling Springs, N.C., which will make its first NCAA appearance since joining Division I in 2000 after winning the Big South tournament as a No. 4 seed. It probably doesn't matter to the program that they'll be facing perhaps the most motivated top seed in NCAA Tournament history for a first-round game.

Virginia is the opponent, and the Cavaliers made history last year by becoming the first top seed to lose its first NCAA game when UMBC pulled off the shocker.

Virginia will hear all about that game this week as it opens play in the South Region.

Second-seeded Tennessee also

was an early loser in upset fashion in last year's tournament, falling as a No. 3 seed in the final seconds to 11th-seeded Loyola Chicago. The Volunteers spent four weeks as the nation's top-ranked team this season, and their 29 victories are the second most in program history.

But the Vols got a potentially tough break this year and could be on a collision course with seventh-seeded Cincinnati in Columbus, Ohio.

The bracket also features a pair of major conference co-champions in Purdue (Big Ten) and Kansas State (Big 12). Neither got to their conference tournament final.

Tennessee's Grant Williams won his second straight SEC Player of the Year award and averages 19.2 points and 7.6 rebounds. He and Admiral Schofield (16.4) are one of the nation's top tandems.

**Winner:** Tennessee over Virginia.

## MIDWEST REGIONAL

# Bluebloods gather with Houston in mix

*The Kansas City (Mo.) Star*

Bluebloods are the favorites by seed in the Midwest Regional.

North Carolina is a No. 1 seed for a record 17th time. All three of Roy Williams' NCAA championships have come as a top seed.

Kentucky, college basketball's all-time winningest program, is the No. 2. Kansas, second on that list, is the No. 4 seed. Third-seeded Houston also has a rich tradition, with five Final Fours in its history.

The Tar Heels, like Duke, have played all of the No. 1 seeds, and North Carolina has a better record in those games at 3-2. After a 21-point loss to Louisville early in the ACC season, the Heels regrouped

and won 15 of their next 17, losing only to Virginia and Duke.

Kentucky got good news during the SEC Tournament with the return of Reid Travis from a knee sprain.

If the Wildcats win two games, they will play an NCAA Tournament game in Kansas City for the first time.

Fourth-seeded Kansas has been in Kansas City many times. So has Williams, the Jayhawks' coach from 1988-2003.

Kelvin Sampson has led Houston to one of its greatest seasons. The Cougars are 31-2. Only the 1984 team that lost to Georgetown for the national championship won more games in program history.

Winner: Kentucky over North Carolina.

## WEST REGIONAL

# No. 1 Gonzaga needs to rebound in opener

*The Kansas City (Mo.) Star*

How will Gonzaga respond to its loss to St. Mary's in the West Coast Conference tournament final? It was a stunning outcome, but the selection committee kept the Zags as a top seed.

After all, the Bulldogs defeated Duke on their way to a 30-3 season. Gonzaga has one of the nation's most efficient offenses, and the program knows its way to the Final Four, having played in the 2017 NCAA title game.

Rui Hachimrua and Brandon Clarke are Gonzaga's dynamic duo who combine to average 37 points and 15 rebounds. Hachimura hits 47 percent of his three-pointers and Clarke averages 3.1 blocks per game.

No telling where second-seed Michigan would be if it could solve Michigan State. The Wolverines have lost three of their last seven, all to the Spartans. The good news for John Beilein's club is he wouldn't have to face Michigan State again until the national semifinals.

Third-seeded Texas Tech reached a region final last year and overachieved this season as co-champion of the Big 12 after being picked in the pre-season to finish seventh. The Red Raiders are one of the nation's top defensive teams and should have coach Chris Beard's attention after getting upset by West Virginia in their first conference tournament game.

Winner: Michigan over Florida State.

## NHL roundup

# Islanders move into tie atop Metropolitan

*Associated Press*

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A pair of guys who played high school hockey in Minnesota helped the New York Islanders pick up an important two points on the road Sunday night.

They also did no favors for the home team.

Brock Nelson scored 1:04 into overtime and the Islanders beat the Wild 3-2 to move into a tie atop the Metropolitan Division.

"It's a great moment for him and, hopefully, he gets a few minutes to share it with them after this and then we've gotta head home," said Devon Toews, who assisted on a goal by Anders Lee.

Nelson played for Warroad near the Canadian border; Lee is from the Minneapolis suburb of Edina.

Lee scored for the fourth straight game and Jordan Eberle added a goal for New York, which has won five of seven. Thomas Greiss made 32 saves. The Islanders are tied with Washington with 91 points with 10 games remaining, but currently hold the tiebreaker with a greater scoring differential.

In the extra session, Nelson converted a feed from Mathew Barzal to beat Alex Stalock with a wrister from the slot. Nelson, who added an assist, established a new career high of 47 points.

**Flyers 2, Penguins 1:** Sean Couturier beat Matt Murray with 3 seconds remaining in overtime and visiting Philadelphia put together an improbable rally.

James van Riemsdyk tied the score with 18 seconds left in regulation when Murray's glove couldn't quite reach van Riemsdyk's wrist shot from the slot. The team traded a flurry of quality chances in the extra period before Couturier danced around Pittsburgh star Sidney Crosby on the rush then sent a

shot over Murray's stick to give Philadelphia's fading playoff hopes a needed jolt.

**Canucks 3, Stars 2 (SO):** Josh Leivo scored in the fourth round of the shootout to lift visiting Vancouver.

Leivo's shot went over Stars goalie Anton Khudobin after Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom had stopped four Dallas skaters.

**Sabres 4, Blues 3 (SO):** Sam Reinhart scored the deciding goal in the shootout to lead host Buffalo.

After the Sabres' Jack Eichel and St. Louis' Tyler Bozak traded goals to open the tiebreaker, Reinhart scored on Buffalo's final attempt when he got just enough on his wrist shot to get it past Jake Allen, who got a piece of it with his glove.

Ryan O'Reilly then had a chance to extend the shootout against his former team, but his backhand chance hit the crossbar.

**Ducks 3, Panthers 2:** Jakob Silfverberg scored the tie-breaking goal with 4:33 left to lift host Anaheim past Florida.

Anaheim won for the sixth time in nine games to pull nine points behind Arizona for the second wild card in the Western Conference, with five other teams in between.

**Golden Knights 6, Oilers 3:** Jonathan Marchessault scored two goals, and host Vegas beat Edmonton.

The Golden Knights improved to 8-1-0 in nine games since acquiring Mark Stone from Ottawa at the NHL trade deadline.

**Avalanche 3, Devils 0:** Philipp Grubauer made 22 saves for his third shutout in his last five starts to lead host Colorado.

Tyson Barrie scored twice as the Avalanche stayed in the mix for a second straight playoff appearance. Nathan MacKinnon scored his 37th goal.

## NBA roundup

## Embiid, Sixers top Bucks

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo scored a career-high 52 points, but Joel Embiid had 40 points and 15 rebounds to lead the Philadelphia 76ers over the Milwaukee Bucks 130-125 on Sunday.

Antetokounmpo was 15-for-26 from the field, including 3-for-8 from three-point range, and made 19 of 21 free throws to better his previous career best by eight points.

Embiid and the Sixers weathered a late charge by Milwaukee to beat the team with the best overall record in the NBA (52-18) and the top home record (27-6). It was the fifth time this season Embiid scored 40 or more points and came in his fourth game back after missing nine straight with left knee soreness.

Jimmy Butler added 27 points, JJ Redick 19 and Tobias

Harris 12 for the Sixers, near the top of the Eastern Conference standings at 45-15.

Milwaukee had a brief scare when Antetokounmpo was fouled on a driving layup and landed awkwardly late in the third. He got up favoring his right leg, but then sank one of two free throws.

**Knicks 124, Lakers 123:** Mario Hezonja blocked LeBron James' potential game-winning shot with 2.3 seconds to play, allowing the Knicks to complete a late rally and beat visiting Los Angeles.

**Clippers 119, Nets 116:** Lou Williams hit the game-winning three-pointer from the top of the key at the final buzzer to give host Los Angeles a victory over Brooklyn.

**Rockets 117, Timberwolves 102:** Chris Paul scored 25 points, tied a career high with six three-pointers and had 10

assists, and Houston used a big third quarter to pull away and get a win over visiting Minnesota.

**Heat 93, Hornets 75:** Goran Dragic scored 19 points off the bench, Dwyane Wade added 17 and came up with big plays late and host Miami got just enough offense to beat Charlotte.

**Pistons 110, Raptors 107:** Blake Griffin scored 25 points, Andre Drummond had 15 points and 17 rebounds and Detroit beat visiting Toronto to complete a season series sweep.

**Kings 129, Bulls 102:** Marvin Bagley III had 21 points and nine rebounds, Buddy Hield added 16 points and inched closer to host Sacramento's single-season record for three-pointers.

**Magic 101, Hawks 91:** Nikola Vucevic had 27 points and 20 rebounds to lead Orlando past visiting Atlanta.

## McIlroy holds on at Players

Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — His best swing was followed by his biggest drive, both setting up birdies, and from there Rory McIlroy knew how to finish.

Suddenly staked to a one-shot lead, McIlroy had a 125-yard walk along the water to the 17th hole to face an island that never looks smaller than on Sunday at The Players Championship, followed by the toughest hole on the TPC Sawgrass with water down the entire left side.

"Just make three more good swings ... and this thing is yours," McIlroy kept telling himself.

He delivered in a major way to win the next best thing to major.

McIlroy made two late birdies to regain the lead, was at his best when the pressure was the highest, and he closed with a 2-under 70 for a one-shot victory over Jim Furyk in his 10th appearance at The Players Championship.

"To step up and make those three good swings, it's very satisfying knowing that it's in there when it needs to be," McIlroy said.

McIlroy could not afford a mistake over the final hour because of Furyk, the 48-year-old former Ryder Cup captain who nearly pulled off a stunner. Furyk, one of the last players to qualify for the strongest field in golf, capped off a 67 with a 7-iron into the 18th so good that he started walking when he hit it. The ball plopped down 3 feet from the hole for a birdie to take the lead.

But not for long.

Coming off a careless bogey on the 14th, McIlroy thought he was in trouble when his tee shot went well to the right toward a clump of native grass. He was lucky it came down into the bunker, and from there he drilled a 6-iron from 180 yards.

## Kyle Busch ties Petty with 200th win

Associated Press

FONTANA, Calif. — Kyle Busch was dominating yet another race when a speeding penalty on pit road dropped him to the middle of the pack at Auto Club Speedway.

Busch had to pass 17 cars in 73 laps on sizzling old asphalt to get his landmark 200th victory across NASCAR's three major series.

Busch didn't even need 50 laps. He capped a series of brilliant passes by drafting off Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski to seize the lead again, and with this superb driver behind the wheel of a standout Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, absolutely nothing was stopping Busch's drive into history.

Busch tied Richard Petty's NASCAR record with his 200th win Sunday, making an impressive late surge to claim the Cup Series race on the same weath-

ered Fontana track where he got his first Cup win.

"It certainly is a monumental moment for all of us," Busch said. "I knew we had a great race car and we were fast. I just wasn't sure how we were going to be able to come back through traffic and get through the field. Maybe the stars aligned a little bit more perfectly today."

Busch dominated the first two stages before that speeding penalty added a degree of difficulty to this win. After he carved through the field he was aided by a timely late caution that helped Busch take the lead for good with 26 laps remaining.

The win was the fourth Cup victory overall and the third in seven years at Fontana for Busch. He has earned 53 of his 200 wins in the Cup Series, along with 53 in the Truck Series and 94 in Xfinity.

Busch previously expressed ambivalence about the achieve-

ment, saying 200 is just a number that doesn't compare neatly with Petty's achievements. All 200 of Petty's victories were in NASCAR's top Cup Series.

Busch's excitement was still obvious after crossing the line.

"All I do is win, win, win, no matter what," he said over the radio.

His team handed him a white flag with a logo emblazoned with "200 WINS" to display from his window during his celebratory drive across the track where he earned his first Cup victory way back in September 2005.

Logano was 2.534 seconds in back of Busch, while Keselowski finished third, unable to catch the winningest driver of their era.

Busch equaled Petty's victories mark in the 998th race of his 17-year career. Petty competed in 1,184 NASCAR races over 35 years.