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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Services work to lighten load for troops

BY ALEX HORTON

Stars and Stripes

The Army and the Marine Corps are working together to lighten the things they carry.

Close-up urban combat and the threat of improvised explosive devices in Iraq following the 2003 invasion transformed the ideas of how much armor troops needed to protect themselves, said Cary Russell, the director of defense capabilities and management at the Government Accountability Office.

In addition to ballistic protection plates worn by combat troops on the front and back, the Pentagon buried troops under items such as throat and groin protectors and side plates to protect the abdomen and to shield against snipers and concealed roadside bombs used by insurgents. That caused the weight of personal armor to grow to unprecedented num-

bers, Russell said.

But now that troops have returned from deployments and training with physical injuries caused by heavier equipment, the military has looked to bring the overall weight of gear back down.

"The Army and Marine Corps are learning a lot more about the impact of weight," Russell said Tuesday. "They started to see how it affects performance and looked for alternatives."

Russell led a recently released GAO assessment, a provision within the 2017 budget, on how the two services are working to reduce the load of gear that soldiers and Marines carry into combat.

Helmets, armor plates and plate-carrying vests account for about 27 pounds of the 119 pounds carried by combat arms soldiers and 117 pounds by Marines, which is nearly a quarter of the load that also includes

weapons, ammunition, food, water, communications equipment and other items, the report stated. Russell said it is unclear when that weight peaked.

An Army field manual on foot marching published in 1990 suggested a fighting load of no more than 48 pounds and marching load limited to 72 pounds. While the debate over an acceptable combat load has been a fixture of warfare for centuries, Russell said he was not aware of any other Army manual that has offered new recommendations.

Russell said the 1990 manual is dated, printed 13 years before improvised explosive devices became the signature weapon of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the catalyst for the increase in layers of personal armor.

The manual will be updated this year and could reflect a new suggested load, he said.

The Army is developing a

goal to reduce the weight of armor plates by 20 percent by examining new manufacturing and technological practices, and both services are looking to trim the weight of their vests in half by eliminating excess protection, the report stated. Russell said 20 percent was a realistic target based on the latest technology before diminishing returns are triggered and plates simply cannot be made lighter.

Armor improvements are "constrained so that protection never decreases through the course of weight reduction, and in some cases the protection level is increased simultaneously with the weight reduction," said Debi Dawson, a spokeswoman for PEO Soldier, an Army program that evaluates equipment and gear.

"We examine each situation against the operational needs and the technological capabilities available," she said.

US Army receives its first female infantrymen

Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer

Moments before 18 women were about to walk across Inouye Field at Fort Benning, Ga., to become brand new privates and specialists, a female drill sergeant offered clarity.

"This is a big deal," she said to the younger women Friday morning on the grounds of the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center in Georgia. "You are making f--ing history."

It was the kind of clarity that only a drill sergeant can provide.

The four women were among 18 who graduated from One Station Unit Training as the first women to take the enlisted route to become infantrymen.

It was another in a string of

historic Army gender-integration events that have played out at the Maneuver Center of Excellence over the last four years. Friday's graduation was part of the third and final phase.

Though Friday's graduates are the first enlisted women to complete infantry-specific basic training, they are part of a much broader initiative that started in 2013 when the Army made the formal move to integrate women into military occupational specialties previously closed to them.

The women will be moving to assignments at either Fort Hood, Texas, or Fort Bragg, N.C. They will be going to units where there will be women in positions of responsibility at platoon, company and battal-

ion levels, Army officials have said. Some will remain at Fort Benning to complete Airborne School before moving on.

During Friday's graduation ceremony, there was no official mention of the historic event and media coverage was limited to two outlets, The New York Times and the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer. The only time gender was mentioned during the ceremony was when various speakers referred to the new soldiers as "infantrymen" and 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment commander Lt. Col. Sam Edwards referred to the Infantry in its historic context as the "queen of battle."

The colonel, charged with overseeing basic training at Fort Benning, said the women

earned the blue cords and the right to call themselves infantrymen.

"It is not soccer camp. Everybody doesn't get a trophy here," said Col. Kelly Kendrick, the 198th Infantry Brigade commanding officer. "It's very demanding. And we only give this to those who earn it. We don't give this away — man or woman."

There were 48 female trainees who arrived at Fort Benning in February, and 32 of them were deemed ready to attempt basic training without any additional physical training. The 18 graduates were among those 32 soldiers.

There were 148 men who started the class, and 119 of them graduated.

N. Korea fires another missile

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired a missile that flew more than 310 miles before crashing into the sea Sunday, officials said, dealing what the Japanese prime minister called a “challenge to the world.”

The launch — the eighth missile test so far this year — came a week after the North fired a new missile that it said has the ability to carry a heavy nuclear weapon long distances.

White House officials traveling with President Donald Trump in Saudi Arabia said the missile launched Sunday had a shorter range than others tested recently.

The latest provocation dealt a new blow to efforts by the new U.S. and South Korean presidents to force the communist state to halt its nuclear weapons program.

Trump’s administration has vowed to seek tougher sanctions at the U.N. Security Council even as it has dangled the possibility of talks.

The medium-range missile was launched eastward from the vicinity of Pukchang, north-east of the capital, Pyongyang,

the U.S. Pacific Command said.

“The missile was tracked until it landed in the Sea of Japan,” command spokesman Cmdr. Dave Benham said in an email.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile traveled more than 310 miles, but it stressed that Washington and Seoul were still analyzing its type and trajectory.

The missile came as Trump was in Saudi Arabia as part of his first trip abroad since taking office on Jan. 20.

A South Korean military official told The Associated Press that the missile appeared to be similar in range and apogee to a solid-fuel missile fired by North Korea in February. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the missile fired Sunday reached a maximum altitude of about 350 miles.

Experts have said the North is making progress in developing a missile using a solid-fuel engine, which would allow the projectile to be fired more quickly than those that use liquid fuel.

The North celebrated the scientists and technicians behind last week’s test with a parade Thursday in Pyongyang, state-

run media reported.

Experts said that was one of North Korea’s most successful tests yet and the missile would have the potential to reach Andersen Air Base on Guam if fired at a normal trajectory.

Sunday’s launch occurred just hours after South Korean President Moon Jae-in announced his new Cabinet picks. Moon convened a meeting of his National Security Council.

Moon took office earlier this month pledging a more moderate approach toward the North but he said last week that dialogue is only possible if the North “changes its behavior.”

Pyongyang insists its nuclear program is in self-defense, meant as a deterrent to what it believes is a threat of invasion by the U.S. and allied South Korea. It vowed to continue the program in a state-run media report Saturday.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, meanwhile, called the missile test a “challenge to the world,” saying the North’s repeated provocations “trample on the efforts by the international community toward a peaceful solution” to the standoff.

Drone spotted near Chinese vessels in Japan’s waters

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Four Chinese government vessels — accompanied by what appeared to be an aerial drone — entered Japanese territorial waters near a contested island group Thursday, just weeks after the last intrusion in the East China Sea.

The first of the four white-hulled and numbered China Coast Guard ships entered the 12-nautical-mile zone around Uotsuri, one of the Senkaku Islands, just after 10 a.m. and remained there until about noon, said a Japan Coast Guard spokesman in Naha.

What appeared to be an unmanned aerial vehicle was seen flying near one of the ships, the first time a drone has been spotted above a Chinese government vessel in the area.

Maritime confrontations and jet interceptions between China and Japan have become commonplace in recent years. The last incident occurred May 8 when four similar vessels, including one that appeared to have a gun turret, were spotted near the islands.

The Senkakus are an uninhabited island chain in the East China Sea, between Okinawa and Taiwan. Their resource-rich waters are claimed by both Japan and China, which refers to them as the Diaoyu, as well as by Taiwan.

The United States has long declined to take a position on future sovereignty regarding the islands; however, President Donald Trump and former President Barack Obama have said the defense of Japan includes the island chain.

As of Friday afternoon, three of the Chinese ships remained on patrol in Japan’s contiguous zone, which extends 24 nautical miles from shore, the spokesman said.

Servicemembers who died in Okinawa crash ID’d

BY LAUREN KING
Stars and Stripes

The two U.S. servicemembers who were killed in a motorcycle crash Thursday night on Okinawa have been identified.

Seaman Apprentice Savannah Cagle and Airman 1st Class Gabriel Antonio Fuentes-Lebron died while riding on a motorcycle that collided with a car in Chatan town, Okinawa, according to U.S. military officials.

“It is with a heavy heart that I extend my sympathies to the parents of both Savannah and Gabriel,” Navy Capt. Robert Mathewson said in a

statement.

“The contributions these two have made, their service to their country, will not be forgotten,” he said.

The pair were traveling north on the motorcycle about 8:40 p.m. Thursday when it collided with a southbound car that was making a right-hand turn, a spokesman for the Okinawa prefectural police in Okinawa City said, citing witnesses.

The motorcycle was thrown to the ground and smashed.

Cagle was taken to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead at 11:23 p.m. Fuentes-Lebron died at a different hospital at 12:15 a.m. Friday.

The driver of the car was a 19-year-old female airman assigned to Kadena Air Base, the police spokesman said. She was not hurt.

Cagle, 20, who served as a master at arms with the Commander Fleet Activities Security department, is survived by her parents, Alan and Felicia Cagle.

Fuentes-Lebron, 21, who served as a security force response leader with the 18th Security Forces Squadron, is survived by his parents, Miguel Fuentes and Maribel Lebron.

No other details about the crash have been released.

Buying 3 carriers at same time could save money, time

The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — The only shipyard to build aircraft carriers in the U.S. said the Navy's vision for building them more frequently could save \$1.5 billion for every three carriers built and could reduce construction time for each by up to two years.

The Navy's top admiral, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, released a paper last week that called for greatly expanding the size of the fleet at a much faster pace. He wants to achieve a 350-ship Navy in the 2020s rather than the 2040s to keep up with global competitors like China and Russia.

The Navy has about 275 ships today, and its most recent shipbuilding plan puts the service on pace for reaching 310 ships in 2022. The Congressional Budget Office has said getting to 355 ships would cost up to an extra \$5 billion per year for 30 years. But those figures don't include extending the lives of some ships, as Richardson also is proposing.

Newport News Shipbuilding, which builds, refuels and overhauls all U.S. aircraft carriers, says buying three at once instead of the current practice of buying one at a time would create substantial savings.

"This approach would provide stability to Newport News Shipbuilding and our supply chain of more than 2,000 companies in 46 states to better plan and invest in our workforce and facilities," Christie Miller, a shipyard spokeswoman, said in an email. "It would also allow us to purchase materials in quantity, and to plan and phase work to maximize learning."

Food a priority for crew in destroyer's visit to Alaska

Juneau (Alaska) Empire

JUNEAU, Alaska — Two months out from their homeport of Pearl Harbor, the crew of the destroyer USS O'Kane has a top priority as they visit Juneau for five days.

"It's food," said Cmdr. Colby Sherwood, Commanding Officer of the O'Kane.

"Food and booze," clarified Rhiannon Ladwig, a sailor sitting in the O'Kane's mess on Monday.

"Food is a big one, and for some, they'll also partake in alcoholic beverages," Sherwood admitted. "It's clearly on the agenda, so we talk about drinking responsibly."

For the nearly 300 people aboard the O'Kane, Juneau is a welcome rest stop regardless of the agenda.

"This is a pure liberty port for us," Sherwood said. "(The crew) deserve it."

Since leaving Pearl Harbor, the O'Kane and its crew have trained at one of the U.S. Navy's Hawaiian ranges, have served as the "bad guy" in drills with the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, visited San Diego for four days of maintenance, sailed north to the Gulf of Alaska, and drilled for two weeks in the Gulf with the U.S. Air Force and two other ships.

"They haven't had the weekends off to decompress and do fun stuff, so this is their opportunity," Sherwood said of his crew. "A lot of sailors just want to get off the ship."

"We're within 505 feet of 300 sailors" for three months, Sherwood said. "You just want to get away."

Anyone who runs into a sailor on the town should just say, "Hello," he said.

"Sailors are really excited about their jobs; get their perspective. They'll generally be more than happy to talk about it," he said.

While in Juneau, some of the O'Kane's crewmembers have booked hotel rooms ashore, hauling backpacks and bags to and from the launch that departs every 30 minutes from the U.S. Coast Guard's downtown floating dock.

The food, while high quality, "gets monotonous," Sherwood said.

Without prompting, he was able to recite an entire week's menu, including a description of the "hamsters" — prepackaged chicken cordon bleu.

"Good food is a definite," said crewman Greg Sherwood of his plans for shore. "I like to go different places and try the food from that area. So when you go into San Diego, you go and get some good Mexican food. When you come up here, you'll get the crab legs and that kind of stuff."

Sailor Ryan Grabill said he's looking out for hiking and ziplining, "things I'm not going to be able to do or see in Hawaii," he said. "I've never been to Alaska, so I'm going to get in as much as I possibly can."

Senior Chief Petty Officer Edward Beams visited the Mendenhall Glacier on Sunday and crossed Alaska off his list of states to visit. It was the last state on his list.

"Early on in my career, it was basically partying and all of that stuff. But you can go ahead and do that at any given time," he said. "Nowadays, I mainly just go and see places that I know I'll never ever see ever again."

5th Fleet commander visits historic hospital in Bahrain

BY CHRIS CHURCH

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — The commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet, toured the American Mission Hospital in Bahrain on Sunday, a visit that coincided with President Donald Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia.

The timing of the visits was coincidental, a U.S. NAVCENT spokesman said, but Vice Adm. Kevin M. Donegan's visit highlighted a long relationship between the two countries and the importance of the hospital in establishing it.

"There is no better time to be coming than when our president has decided to come here to the region with his very first

visit, so it says a lot," Donegan said. "I was just with His Royal Highness (Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, king of Bahrain) yesterday, talking to him. Every time I visit with him, he always tells the story of the American Mission Hospital. That's how important it is."

The hospital's roots began in the late 19th century when American missionaries came to the region to establish the "Arabian Mission," according to the hospital's website. One missionary, Samuel Zwemer, opened a medical dispensary in Bahrain's "Old Souk" in 1883, "igniting the vision of a health service for Bahrain in a single step."

Donegan discussed the hospital's history with Chief Medical Officer George Cherian, and also took a tour of the hospital's

facilities, including the children's ward, which is adorned by Disney artwork painted by U.S. Navy sailors years ago.

"My first impression is it's a great hospital, and I think it really tells a great story about the United States' relationship here with Bahrain, and it's really founded on the right things," Donegan said.

"I think it also shows you the openness of the Bahraini society. Because here, this is a mission hospital, here, in the middle of the Middle East, and I think Bahrain is the only place in the Middle East where you'll find that openness and acceptance to not only have the hospital, but to sustain it for 130 years with the full support of the Bahraini government."

DOD uses fuel profits to plug budget gaps

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon has generated almost \$6 billion during the past seven years by charging the armed forces excessive prices for fuel and has used the money — called the “bishop’s fund” by some critics — to bolster mismanaged or underfunded military programs, documents show.

Since 2015, the Defense Department has tapped surpluses from its fuel accounts for \$80 million to train Syrian rebels, \$450 million to shore up a prescription-drug program riddled with fraud and \$1.4 billion to cover unanticipated expenses from the war in Afghanistan, according to military accounting records.

The Pentagon has amassed the extra cash by billing the armed forces for fuel at rates often much higher — sometimes \$1 per gallon or more — than what commercial airlines paid for jet fuel on the open market.

Under a bureaucracy that dates to World War II, the Defense Department purchases all of its fuel centrally and then resells it at a fixed price to the Air Force, Navy, Army, Marine Corps and other customers, who pay for it out of their own budgets.

The Defense Department is the largest single consumer of fuel. Each year, it buys about 100 million barrels, or 4.2 billion gallons, of refined petroleum for its aircraft, warships, tanks and other machines.

The practice of exploiting fuel revenue to plug unrelated gaps in the defense budget has escalated in recent years, prompting allegations — and official denials — that the accounts are being used as a slush fund.

Lawmakers are increasingly questioning the budgeting methods that have enabled the Pentagon to accumulate large windfalls from fuel sales in the first place.

Obscure accounting

The obscure accounting policy exemplifies the enormous scale and complexity of the U.S. military’s business operations, and how waste and inefficiency in the defense bureaucracy can

dwarf what Washington spends on other parts of the federal government.

Such fiscal problems are deeply rooted. For the past quarter-century, the Defense Department has failed to meet a congressional mandate to clean up its books so it can pass an audit.

Some senior leaders with the armed forces accused the Pentagon of intentionally overbilling the Air Force, Navy, Army and Marine Corps for fuel and pocketing the difference to pay for other priorities.

“We’ve been complaining about this,” Ray Mabus, who served as Navy secretary for eight years during the Obama administration, said in an interview. “But if we do it too loudly, oh man, they come back on us really hard.”

Mabus and other officials said artificially high fuel prices have left the Navy, at times, with less money for military training, operations and maintenance. The Air Force and the Army have not complained publicly about the arrangement.

In a statement, the Pentagon acknowledged it accumulated \$5.6 billion in “enterprise gains” from fuel purchases between 2010 and 2016 but said the surplus was the result of falling oil prices.

Lower prices

Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work, the Pentagon’s second-ranking civilian official, denied that the Pentagon had a “bishop’s fund” or a deliberate strategy to inflate the price of fuel. “I vehemently disagree with that characterization,” he said, adding an expletive for emphasis.

John Roth, the Pentagon’s acting comptroller and chief financial officer, said it would be impossible to hide a multibillion-dollar slush fund from Congress. He said the Pentagon must receive approval from four different legislative committees whenever it wants to spend money from fuel savings on other programs.

Legislative aides said they did not think that the Defense Department was intentionally manipulating fuel prices. At the

same time, Congress has heightened its scrutiny of how the pool of excess cash has materialized.

Poor projections

In reports commissioned by Congress since 2014, the Government Accountability Office has found that the Pentagon has done a poor job of projecting its annual fuel budget and how much petroleum it would actually consume in a given year.

Lawmakers have asked the Pentagon to give back some of the surplus. In 2015, they forced the Defense Department to return \$1 billion and reduced the budgets for other military programs by \$2.6 billion to reflect lower-than-expected fuel costs.

And in approving a defense-authorization bill last year, the Senate Armed Services Committee concluded in a report that it was “concerned about the quality and transparency” of the Pentagon’s methodology for setting fuel prices.

The Defense Department purchases all of its fuel centrally through the Defense Logistics Agency, which then resells it to the branches of the armed forces.

Instead of operating like a neighborhood gas station and changing its resale prices daily or weekly, however, the Defense Logistics Agency charges a standard price for fuel that is supposed to remain fixed for an entire fiscal year.

Gains and losses are absorbed by the DLA in a revolving account known as a working-capital fund.

From 2001 until 2009, the system worked as intended, even when oil prices skyrocketed. The DLA’s energy revenue and expenses largely balanced out. The armed forces bought fuel from the DLA at rates that roughly tracked what commercial airlines were paying for jet fuel on the open market, plus a modest markup — averaging around 11 cents per gallon — to cover overhead costs, according to a Navy analysis of fuel data.

But starting in 2010, a large spread developed. The DLA fixed its standard fuel prices at rates that were often much higher than what the airlines were paying.

Thomas Hicks, who served as the Navy’s deputy undersecretary for management until February, said that Navy officials began raising questions about the discrepancy in 2011 during meetings with the DLA and the Office of the Defense Secretary.

Nothing ‘plausible’

Those officials responded that the differential was necessary to upgrade distribution centers and other infrastructure, Hicks said. But when pressed for data to justify the price increases, their numbers didn’t add up, according to Navy officials.

Pentagon officials said the comparison between what the armed forces and commercial airlines paid for fuel was misleading. They said about three-quarters of the \$23 billion difference paid for overhead expenses and specialized military fuel requirements that airlines do not have to worry about.

The officials acknowledged that the remainder of the spread — about \$5.6 billion — amounted to a fuel-savings windfall. They said that the savings piled up because energy prices had dropped more than expected and stayed low.

The military’s standard fuel price is set by the Pentagon’s comptroller in consultation with the DLA and the White House Office of Management and Budget. Although it is supposed to remain fixed for 12 months at a time, the price can be adjusted if energy markets spike up or down.

The Pentagon, however, even has tried to raise its fuel price when energy markets were flat or declining, documents show.

In April 2013, for example, Roth notified the armed forces in a memo that the Pentagon’s comptroller would raise the standard price of fuel the next month by 27 percent, from \$3.73 to \$4.72 per gallon.

The memo said the unplanned increase was necessary “to ensure the continued solvency” of the Pentagon’s working-capital fund for fuel.

The unexpected price increase provoked an uproar from the armed forces.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Firefighters battle brush fire, rattlesnakes

CT HARTFORD — Firefighters battling a brush fire near the Appalachian Trail in western Connecticut were dealing with another threat last week — rattlesnakes.

Authorities said the blaze burned about 200 acres of rugged terrain in an area known as Schaghticoke Mountain in Kent between Wednesday and Friday afternoon, when it was brought under control.

Kent Volunteer Fire Chief Alan Gawel said the fire disturbed the dens of the Timber rattlers, and more than a dozen snakes were spotted fleeing the heat, including one that slithered between the legs of a firefighter.

Bear cub puts kibosh on high school games

VT WELLS RIVER — The appearance of a bear cub forced the cancellation of a pair of high school baseball and softball games in Vermont.

Blue Mountain Union High School and Oxbow High School gave up Friday after a curious black bear cub refused to be shooed away and then wandered into a dugout.

Oxbow baseball coach Shawn French told the Valley News that it was a first that sent players and fans scurrying indoors.

Officials said the cub had been lurking for a couple of days, necessitating cancellation of school recess at Blue Mountain school in Wells River.

Chief: Boy called police to say father had drugs

MA LAWRENCE — Authorities in Massachusetts are praising an 11-year-old boy who called police to report that his father had

drugs in his luggage.

Lawrence Police Chief James Fitzpatrick said the boy also told officers Wednesday he had seen his father selling drugs earlier in the day.

Police said they found more than 200 grams of heroin and the powerful opioid fentanyl, with a street value of about \$8,500, in a suitcase.

Prosecutors said the father, Yamil Mercado, 41, was scheduled to be arraigned Friday on charges of trafficking heroin and reckless endangerment of a child.

Giraffe born at Omaha zoo is given a name

NE OMAHA — A new name has been picked for a baby giraffe born last month at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium.

Officials told the Omaha World-Herald that the giraffe born April 30 has been named Malcolm.

The name was picked through a public naming contest that took submissions through May 8. Zookeepers picked from nearly 3,360 submissions.

The zoo will present the person who submitted the winning name with a giraffe-themed gift basket.

Police: Man tries to set Denny's diners on fire

CA HAYWARD — Police said a man tried to light several diners, including a small child, on fire at a Denny's restaurant in Northern California.

Hayward police Sgt. Ruben Pola said the 43-year-old man had been eating breakfast when he took out a small container of flammable liquid on Thursday and sprayed it onto several people near the restaurant's entrance. He sprayed a line of the fluid from the customers

to the door and tried to set that aflame.

Employees and patrons grabbed the man before he could ignite it.

Pola said the man, whose name has not been released, is on a psychiatric hold.

Letter carrier, others accused of drug sales

TN MEMPHIS — A U.S. Postal Service mail carrier and 24 other people have been charged with selling heroin and other drugs in Memphis.

Media reports said Memphis police and the district attorney in Shelby County announced Thursday the results of a seven-month investigation called "Wait a Minute Mr. Postman."

Police allege that Letravious Shaw, the letter carrier, helped the Grape Street Crips gang bring drugs into Memphis through the postal system. Court records show he is charged with two counts of conspiracy to manufacture, deliver and sell a controlled substance.

During the investigation, authorities seized marijuana, heroin, fentanyl and oxycodone, plus 13 guns, 33 vehicles and cash.

Suspect in officer's death honored in error

OH CINCINNATI — The mayor of Cincinnati has tearfully apologized to city police after his office unwittingly approved a proclamation honoring a man suspected of killing an officer in an ambush.

Mayor John Cranley delivered his apology Thursday at the police union hall, saying the proclamation was stamped by a new staffer. He said he also called the officer's widow to apologize.

"This was a huge mistake," said Cranley.

"It's human error, but the buck stops with me."

The proclamation designated June 1, 2017, as "Tre Day" in honor of Trepierre Hummons. Investigators say Hummons was hoping for "suicide by cop" when he killed Officer Sonny Kim in June 2015 before being gunned down by another officer.

Biker hurt after hitting 10-foot-long alligator

FL WIMAUMA — A man riding a motorcycle hit an alligator that was crossing a rural Florida road, throwing him from his bike.

The Florida Highway Patrol said in a news release that Calun Nelson, 27, was riding his motorcycle south of Tampa early Friday when he saw the more than 10-foot-long alligator crossing the road in front of him. He tried to avoid the gator but couldn't.

Troopers said Nelson was taken to a Tampa hospital with serious injuries.

Man sought in theft of \$2,300 in cologne

DE DOVER — Police are searching for a man accused of stealing \$2,300 worth of cologne from drug stores in Delaware.

Delaware State Police said Samlie Irvin Jr., of Milford, is wanted on charges of shoplifting, and criminal mischief, among other things.

Police said the 50-year-old used a tool to open locked display cases and steal cologne at three Walgreens stores in March. Police said Irvin was unable to get the display case open at a fourth Walgreens store in Magnolia.

Police are asking anyone with information about Irvin to contact authorities.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

13-1 long shot Cloud Computing takes Preakness

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Sometimes it pays to have a fresh horse.

Cloud Computing skipped the Kentucky Derby, while eventual winner Always Dreaming and Classic Empire mixed it up in the mud at Churchill Downs.

Two weeks later, Cloud Computing pounced on those two horses in the Preakness, pulling off an upset victory by a head at 13-1 odds Saturday. He became the first horse to skip the Derby and win the second leg of the Triple Crown since filly Rachel Alexandra in 2009.

"Some of the reason that we won today was because we were patient and didn't throw an inexperienced horse against a 20-horse field in the Derby on a very difficult track," winning co-owner Seth Klarman said. "We made a great call."

Always Dreaming and Classic Empire duelled for most of the race before Classic Empire stuck his nose in front midway on the far turn. It looked as if Classic Empire would go on to win, but Cloud Computing ran him down on the outside.

Always Dreaming faded to eighth in the 10-horse field on a cool and cloudy day at Pimlico. The crowd of 140,327 and wagering total of \$94,127,434 were records, bettering the marks set last year.

Ridden by Javier Castellano, Cloud Computing ran 1³/₁₆ miles in 1:55.98 and paid \$28.80, \$8.60 and \$6. It was just the dark brown colt's fourth career start, the fewest of any horse in the race, and only his second win. He didn't run as a 2-year-old because of injury.

Classic Empire returned \$4.40 and \$4, and 31-1 shot Senior Investment was another 4³/₄ lengths back in third and paid \$10.20.

New York-based trainer Chad Brown earned his first victory in a Triple Crown race. Castellano won for the second time. He rode Bernardini to victory in the 2006 Preakness.

Castellano comes from a racing family, with a father, uncle and brother who have been jockeys.

"We've been working for a long time for this moment," he said. "It's great for the family."

The 142nd Preakness had been billed as a match race between Always Dreaming and Classic Empire, and it was from the start.

They broke out of the starting gate next to each other and the fight was on. Always Dreaming took a slight lead with Classic Empire on his flank.

Meanwhile, Cloud Computing was back in third as Castellano watched the duel unfold.

Always Dreaming was the first to throw in the towel, surrendering the lead to Classic Empire midway around the final turn.

"We didn't have an excuse," said Todd Pletcher, who trains Always Dreaming. "We were in a position we expected to be, and I think the turnaround was a little too quick. He ran so hard in the Derby and today just wasn't his day."

Always Dreaming lost for the first time in five races this year. He'd won his first four by a combined 23¹/₄ lengths.

Classic Empire and Julien Leparoux went into the stretch with three-length lead, seemingly on his way to the winner's circle.

At that point, trainer Mark Casse thought he was headed there, too.

"Of course," he said. "But I thought I was going to win a lot of times before, so it doesn't shock me."

Predators top Ducks, take 3-2 series lead

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Pontus Aberg spent most of the season in the minors, and he had a part-time depth role for the Nashville Predators in these Stanley Cup playoffs until injuries thrust him into a key role in Game 5 of the Western Conference finals.

And now the unassuming Swede has another new role for Nashville: He's the hero of the latest clutch victory in the Predators' increasingly irresistible Stanley Cup push.

Aberg scored his first career playoff goal with 8:59 to play, and the Predators moved to the brink of their first Stanley Cup Final with a 3-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks to take a 3-2 series lead Saturday night.

Aberg had to send himself flying across the crease to swat home a rebound of Filip Forsberg's shot for the Predators, epitomizing Nashville's persistent effort through a defensive victory.

A moment before he scored the biggest goal of his life, Aberg was upended during a scramble. He had to be taken off the ice for medical evaluation immediately after his celebration, but his teammates hung on to move one win away from playing for hockey's ultimate prize.

"I face-planted there and lost my tooth, but it didn't hurt my head," Aberg said with a smile.

Not much seems to wound these resilient Predators, who overcame the injury absence of top scorer Ryan Johansen and captain Mike Fisher. Nashville leaned heavily on stalwart goalie Pekka Rinne and got barely enough offense to survive, with Colin Wilson scoring the tying goal late in the second period and Austin Watson adding an empty-netter.

"We knew coming into tonight that we've just got to come together, play well defensively and grind it out," Rinne said. "I thought that's what we did. We showed a lot of character. For us, the first couple of rounds was fairly smooth sailing.

Things were going our way. You deal with adversity, but right now, it's something that every team is going to face, and I feel like we handled it really well."

Game 6 is Monday in Nashville.

Aberg, who also has one career NHL regular-season goal, was only in position to win it because the Predators were on a counterattack after a prolonged scramble in front of Nashville's net. Rinne, who made 32 saves, ended that frantic sequence prone in the starfish pose, frustrating the Ducks for the umpteenth time and earning his fifth victory in Nashville's seven playoff games at Honda Center over the past two seasons.

Chris Wagner scored the only goal on a frustrating day for the Ducks, who began the game without injured 30-goal scorers Rickard Rakell and Patrick Eaves before losing starting goalie John Gibson to a lower-body injury during the first intermission.

Anaheim's collection of veteran stars and up-and-coming talent will have to win back-to-back elimination games to avoid crashing out in the conference finals for the second time in three years.

"I thought we had energy coming out, and it deteriorated throughout the game," captain Ryan Getzlaf said. "We've got to do a better job maintaining what we want to do with our game plan, because they played hard tonight."

Jonathan Bernier took over for Gibson and stopped 16 shots in his first appearance in nearly two weeks for the Ducks, calling it a "weird situation." Ducks coach Randy Carlyle said Gibson wants to play in Game 6, but will be re-evaluated.

"We have a lot of areas of concern off our performance tonight," Carlyle said. "We're not going to hang our head with doom and gloom. We'll get ourselves ready. We'll re-energize our group, and we'll look forward to playing a better game. We've won in that building before, so it doesn't really matter where we go."

Durant, Warriors beat short-handed Spurs

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The Spurs were injured, but Golden State was expecting a fevered fight on the home floor of the five-time NBA champions.

The Warriors' depth and talent settled things early.

Kevin Durant had 33 points and 10 rebounds and Golden State beat injury-riddled San Antonio 120-108 on Saturday night to take a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference Finals.

"They were going to come out and hit us in the mouth," Durant said of what the Warriors anticipating entering the game. "I think we did a good job of taking that punch and just kept playing."

Golden State has a chance to complete its third straight series sweep in Game 4 at San Antonio on Monday night. The Warriors are the third team in NBA history to win their first 11 playoff games. Cleveland is 10-0, with a 2-0 lead over Boston in the Eastern Conference final.

"I'm not surprised," Golden State point guard Stephen Curry said of the lead. "Our goal is to win every game we play. We answered a lot of challenges throughout the course of the playoffs and learned a lot of lessons through winning. Against the Spurs, they challenge you no matter who's out there. You've got to play well to beat them."

Curry added 21 points and became the franchise leader in postseason points, passing Hall of Famer Rick Barry.

Already without leading scorer Kawhi Leonard and starting point guard Tony Parker, the Spurs lost David Lee to a left knee injury in the opening quarter.

"We have to fight with the soldiers we have," San Antonio veteran Manu Ginobili said. "Nobody is going to feel sorry for us."

Lee left with 2:57 remaining in the first, unable to put any weight on his left leg after he landed awkwardly on it following a foul by Draymond Green. Joel Anthony had to take a free throw in place of Lee, who was taken to the locker room in a wheelchair. Lee's status is unknown.

San Antonio still managed to match a postseason high with 33 points in the opening quarter and lead by as many as six points in the first half.

The Spurs played on emotion, but eventually succumbed to the Warriors' firepower.

"It's not easy. Even if we were healthy, they're a great team," San Antonio guard Danny Green said. "It wouldn't be easy, regardless. With the bodies going down, very much so an uphill battle."

Durant had 19 points in the third quarter.

"I feel I can make every shot I shoot because I shoot good ones and I try to get to my spot," Durant said. "So, when they called my number, I just tried to go out there and be aggressive."

Golden State shot 55 percent from the field and was 11-for-7 on three-pointers.

"Every time you look up, you're playing against four All-Stars," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said.

Klay Thompson had 17 points, and Javale McGee added 11 points, including 11 in the opening quarter for the Warriors.

Ginobili led the Spurs with 21 points, joining Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the only players 39 or older to score 20-plus points in a conference final.

San Antonio has been outscored by 73 points since Leonard left Game 1 with 7:52 remaining and the Spurs leading 78-55.

Aldridge's struggles: Spurs forward LaMarcus Aldridge had 18 points on 7-for-17 shooting after stressing it was imperative for him to score following Leonard's injury.

"I tried my best and they still doubled and clogged from the elbow, tried to make things difficult," Aldridge said. "I tried to pick my spots to take my shots, even if it was a tough shot. They keyed on some things and made things tough out there."

Always trying: Ginobili chuckled when asked if he decided to be more aggressive offensively with Leonard and Parker out.

"I swear, I try every game," Ginobili said. "Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't. I tried the same way against Memphis, of course I scored zero points four games in a row. Today, I just happened to make a couple."

Ginobili was 7-for-9 shooting while scoring a team-high 21 points.

Tip-ins

Warriors: Curry has 1,774 career postseason points in 69 games to set the franchise record. Barry previously held the franchise record with 1,776 points in 66 games.

Spurs: Popovich opted to sit Leonard after conferring with the team's medical staff, but it wasn't a decision his All-Star forward agreed with. "In the end, I guess it's my decision," Popovich said. "He's not thrilled he's not playing, but he's not ready." ... The Spurs are 1-2 in the postseason without Leonard and were 7-1 in the regular season without their leading scorer.

Celtics' Thomas out for remainder of playoffs

Associated Press

BOSTON — Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas will miss the rest of the playoffs because of a hip injury, further damaging — if not outright dooming — the team's chances in the Eastern Conference finals against Cleveland.

The Celtics made the announcement Saturday, a day after Thomas left Game 2 at halftime. The Cavaliers already led by an NBA-record 41 points at that point, and they went on to a 130-86 victory that gave them a 2-0 lead over the top-seeded Celtics in the best-of-seven series.

The Celtics said Thomas injured the hip in March and aggravated it in Game 6 of the East semifinals against Washington. The swelling increased during the first two games against Cleveland, team doctor Brian McKeon said, and Thomas was limping on the court just before halftime on Friday night.

"Isaiah has worked tirelessly to manage this injury since it first occurred," McKeon said. "In order to avoid more significant long-term damage to his hip, we could no longer allow him to continue."

Thomas did not travel with the team to Cleveland for Game 3 on Sunday. The Cavaliers

could finish off the sweep with victories in Cleveland.

"He was pretty despondent not to be able to play," Boston coach Brad Stevens said Friday night. "He's a tough guy, and for him to have to sit is really hard."

A 5-foot-8 guard who was the last selection in the 2011 NBA draft, Thomas emerged as a star this season, averaging nearly 29 points and leading the league in fourth-quarter scoring.

Last week, he earned All-NBA second team honors, the first Celtics player to be selected to the All-NBA first or second team since Paul Pierce in 2009.

This despite the death of his

sister on the eve of the first-round series against Chicago, an emotional blow that also took a physical toll through the cross-country travel to Washington state so he could be with his family and attend the funeral.

And having his front tooth knocked out in Game 1 of the conference semifinals against Washington, forcing him to spend several more off-days in oral surgery.

"Can't say enough about #thelittleguy @Isaiah_Thomas," assistant general manager Mike Zarren said on Twitter. "Last month one of the guttiest performances (thru all sorts o' stuff) I've ever seen."

Tigers snap Rangers' 10-game streak

Associated Press

DETROIT — The way Justin Verlander saw it, Texas may have been due for a loss.

With three straight homers in the first inning, Verlander's Detroit Tigers set about ending the Rangers' 10-game winning streak.

Alex Avila, Miguel Cabrera and J.D. Martinez hit consecutive home runs, and the Tigers beat Texas 9-3 on Saturday night. Nicholas Castellanos added a three-run homer in the third, and Verlander pitched seven solid innings to hand the Rangers their first defeat since May 8.

"I think you just go tell yourself that they're bound to lose one here sooner or later," Verlander said. "They're not going to win them all, so maybe the odds are on our side."

The Rangers were on their longest winning streak since a 12-game run in 2011, but it came to an emphatic conclusion against Detroit. A.J. Griffin (4-1) allowed nine runs and nine hits in 3¹/₃ innings.

"We'll wipe it clean and go out there and begin again," Griffin said.

Cabrera homered in his first at-bat after missing three games with a strained oblique, but Detroit second baseman Ian Kinsler left the game in the fifth with left hamstring tightness. The team said he was taken out for precautionary reasons.

Jonathan Lucroy homered for the Rangers.

Detroit hit three consecutive homers for the first time since June 1, 2013, at Baltimore, when Victor Martinez, Jhonny Peralta and Avila did it.

Indians 3, Astros 0: Mike Clevinger pitched no-hit ball into the seventh inning, and Andrew Miller and Cody Allen completed the three-hitter to pitch Cleveland past host Houston.

Mets 7, Angels 5: Jose Reyes had three instrumental hits, including the 2,000th of his career, as host New York held off Los Angeles.

Orioles 7, Blue Jays 5: Wellington Castillo hit a go-ahead home run for the second consecutive game to lead Baltimore at sold-out Camden Yards.

Braves 5, Nationals 2: Rio Ruiz, Matt Kemp and Tyler Flowers hit home runs as host

Atlanta again relied on their bullpen for a victory over Max Scherzer and Washington, the Nationals' fourth straight loss.

Pirates 6, Phillies 3: Ivan Nova pitched into the eighth inning for his first win in four starts since April 29, leading the Pittsburgh Pirates past the Philadelphia Phillies.

Athletics 8, Red Sox 3: Chad Pinder hit a monster home run while Khris Davis and Mark Canha also connected in the fifth inning as host Oakland cleared the fences four times in all to beat Boston for its third straight win.

Rays 9, Yankees 5: Corey Dickerson homered twice as host Tampa Bay won its season-high fourth in a row, beating New York in a game that included three hit batters, three ejections and one animated argument.

Yankees rookie Aaron Judge hit his 15th home run, most in the majors. He also doubled and has a career-best eight-game hitting streak.

New York manager Joe Girardi used his hands to cover the plate with dirt after being tossed by umpire Scott Barry in the fifth inning. That came

right after pitching coach Larry Rothschild was ejected by Barry during a mound visit.

Giants 3, Cardinals 1 (13): Christian Arroyo's two-run double broke a scoreless tie as San Francisco outlasted host St. Louis.

Reds 12, Rockies 8: Scott Schebler's homer completed host Cincinnati's comeback from a five-run deficit as the Reds ended a seven-game losing streak — their longest in a year — with a victory.

White Sox 16, Mariners 1: Avisail Garcia homered in his first two at-bats and had a career-high six RBIs, and visiting Chicago battered Seattle's depleted pitching staff.

Marlins 10, Dodgers 6: Giancarlo Stanton hit three doubles in a game for the first time in his career while Dan Straily didn't allow a hit until the fifth inning as visiting Miami snapped a five-game losing streak.

Diamondbacks 9, Padres 1: Robbie Ray took a shutout into the eighth inning and David Peralta had four hits as visiting Arizona beat San Diego for its fifth straight win.

Kyle Busch claims \$1M with All-Star race win

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.C. — In a race built on brave, bold moments, Kyle Busch used one to win NASCAR's annual All-Star race and its \$1 million prize.

Busch used an aggressive three-wide pass for the lead Saturday night to take the All-Star event for the first time.

Although the race does not count in the standings, it was Busch's first Cup victory of the season and first at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Busch also won the Truck Series race Friday night, but the victory Saturday was the first time he's ever been to Victory Lane at Charlotte in a Cup car.

Busch dove low around Brad Keselowski and Jimmie Johnson on the restart to take the lead on the final 10-lap sprint. This year's format pitted 10 drivers against each other for 10 final laps with the money on the line.

"I wouldn't take anyone else but Kyle

Busch on a restart," said crew chief Adam Stevens.

Clean air was the difference and Busch was untouchable once out front.

"We have never won in Charlotte in a Cup car and we finally did that," Busch said from Victory Lane. "We won a million dollars. There is reason to celebrate big. We are relieved, eluded and excited."

Kyle Larson, winner of the first two 20-lap segments and the clear car to beat, finished second. He was stymied by a slow final pit stop that prevented him from restarting as the leader.

Bourdais crashes in qualifying

INDIANAPOLIS — Ed Carpenter turned a tough draw into a winning hand Saturday.

Now he has to do it all over again.

The only full-time owner-driver in the IndyCar Series took advantage of a cooling

early evening track for a four-lap average of 230.468 mph on the first day of Indianapolis 500 qualifying, Takuma Sato was second at 230.382, and Scott Dixon, the 2008 Indy winner, third at 230.333.

Two-time Formula One champion Fernando Alonso finished seventh at 230.034.

All of the times will be erased for Sunday's nine-car pole shootout when Carpenter chases his third pole in five years on his home track.

Sebastien Bourdais' astonishingly hard, head-on crash marred qualifying. The French driver had just completed his second straight lap over 231 mph when his car wiggled going through the second turn, slid up the track and slammed into the wall. It flipped before coming to a stop in the back straightaway.

The 38-year-old driver has multiple fractures in his pelvis and a fractured right hip and underwent surgery Saturday night.