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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Sailors deployed longer than Navy wants

The Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — About 18,000 sailors spent more than 60 percent of the year away from home during fiscal 2016, exceeding the Navy's guidelines for keeping its crews well-rested and reducing strains on sailors' personal lives, according to a congressional watchdog report. The Navy says the figure is likely even higher.

The Navy's goal has been to limit sailors' time away from home to 220 days per year or 400 days every two years since 2014. However, a Government Accountability Office report released in late April shows that mark is routinely flouted because of heavy operational demands that include lengthy deployments and requisite time away from home to train for them.

Before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Navy deployments typically lasted about six months. As demand for forces around the world grew in conjunction with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as other conflicts, deployments were increased to nine or 10 months.

Under a plan by Norfolk-based U.S. Fleet Forces Command, the Navy is working to make seven-month deployments the new standard. The USS Harry S. Truman was

supposed to be the first aircraft carrier to deploy under the seven-month plan in 2016, but even that deployment was extended by a month.

While the GAO relied on information from the Defense Manpower Data Center to come up with its estimate, the Navy said that figure is likely an undercount. The Navy estimated 31,000 sailors were away from home for more than 220 days during the 2016 fiscal year but it couldn't explain the discrepancy, according to the report.

In 1999, Congress required the Pentagon to begin tracking how much time servicemembers spent away from home, including for deployments, training and exercises. The Defense Department calls that time "perstempo," which is short for personnel tempo and includes deployments that are part of the more commonly used phrase of operational tempo.

The Pentagon hasn't defined a perstempo threshold that encompasses events outside of deployment, nor has it directed the individual services to do so, according to the report. Only the Navy and Special Operations Command had established measurable limits.

As a result, the GAO said, the Pentagon can't adequately track just how long

servicemembers are spending away from home — data that are important "in monitoring and gauging the stress on the force" as well as associated effects on readiness.

Defense Manpower Data Center analyzed by the GAO showed at least 51,000 active-duty troops were gone at least seven months in fiscal 2016, a number it called "conservative" because of incomplete data.

Records were also missing for at least 145,000 personnel who deployed between fiscal 2014 and 2016.

"[The Department of Defense] has simply not made this a priority," John Pendleton, the GAO's director of defense capabilities and management, said in a podcast posted to the office's website along with the report.

The report recommended that the under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, along with individual service branch leaders, clarify perstempo thresholds while moving to collect complete data. The Pentagon agreed with both recommendations.

"Until they answer these questions by setting clear policy and gathering reliable data, I think they'll be challenged to keep their commitment to take care of servicemembers and their families," Pendleton said.

Navy ups tour lengths for Japan, Guam, Spain sailors

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Incoming first-term sailors assigned to sea duty in Japan, Guam or Spain will now be required to serve four years at their new commands, the Navy announced Tuesday.

The change — which affects first-term sailors in those locations who receive orders issued May 1 or later — aims to "improve readiness and reduce turnover of our Forward Deployed Naval Force," the service said.

Previously, the standard tour length was three years for such servicemembers.

Sailors stationed in the affected countries will continue to serve out the rest of their two- or three-year deployments, the Navy said.

Affected sailors whose dependents are denied command sponsorship will be issued a maximum of two years unaccompanied orders, the service said. In February, the Navy started allowing accompanied tours for sailors E3 and below. Those without dependents will receive the full four years.

Vice Adm. Robert Burke, who serves as chief of Naval Personnel and deputy chief of Naval Operations, first told sailors of the Navy's intent to extend tour lengths during a January town

hall meeting in Yokosuka.

"A sailor gets [to Japan and] they're taking 12 to 18 months to learn their training and then maybe doing their job for a short ... period of time before it's time for them to move again," Burke said in January. "That puts the commands in a state of continuously having to train up their people and not having a seasoned, experienced crew that can train up the new junior folks."

After 17 sailors were killed last year in two separate collisions involving 7th Fleet ships, experts recommended changes to improve training and manning. Reports on the crashes cited deficient and ineffective

training and unprepared crews as contributing factors.

Those who were assigned to sea duty in Japan, Guam or Spain before May 1 will be eligible for incentives to extend their tours. In February, the Navy offered to waive any remaining sea time on tour lengths and guarantee shore duty for the next assigned tour if sailors opted to extend their tours to four years.

Those extending tours by a year or more are given preferential consideration for announced billets in the Career Management System/Interactive Detailing, a web-based system used to view and apply for jobs.

Blue Ridge to head to sea soon

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy's oldest deployable warship is slated to head out to sea this summer after wrapping up a nearly two-year maintenance period.

All "major" work has been finished on the USS Blue Ridge after an extended dry dock and upkeep period, the Navy announced Monday in a statement that said the command ship is now officially "safe-to-train and safe-to-operate."

"It has been 23 months since we started this [maintenance period], making it the longest in Blue Ridge's history," Capt. Brett Crozier, the ship's skipper, said in the statement. "But it was essential, as we extended the life of the ship another 20 years, meaning this will one day be a 70-year-old ship."

Blue Ridge — flagship of the Navy's Yokosuka-based 7th Fleet — should undergo sea trials this summer, Task Force 76 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Adam Cole told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

The ship entered dry dock in June 2016 for what was supposed to be 14 months to undergo maintenance, repairs, refurbishments and system upgrades. However, unexpected issues with the Blue Ridge's engineering plant were discovered, causing it to remain in dry dock past its scheduled completion date of August 2017.

The repairs cost more than \$60 million and took about 135,000 man hours to complete, the Navy said.

The ship "received numerous upgrades, including installation of the Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services computer system, moderniza-

tion of the ship's engineering plant and refurbishment of the main condenser and ventilation systems," a previous statement said. Installing CANES on a ship will "consolidate and modernize communications, computers and intelligence network systems," according to Northrop Grumman.

"Significant work was done completely rebuilding the boilers and associated equipment in the fire room and engine room, making this another major step we have been preparing and training for," Crozier said. "So, this is not the finish line for us. There is still plenty of work to accomplish."

Crozier said the Blue Ridge's crew is excited.

"We're kind of like a baseball team being able to finally take the field in a new ballpark after months of practicing in the parking lot," he said.

Military: Su-27 jet actions were safe

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A Russian fighter jet flew within 20 feet of a Navy reconnaissance plane over the Baltic Sea in a maneuver deemed safe but unprofessional by the U.S. military, CNN reported Wednesday.

The intercept on Tuesday involved a Russian Su-27 jet and a Navy P-8 Poseidon, which routinely conducts surveillance missions in the region.

The Navy declined to provide details about the encounter, but confirmed that it was "safe."

"Due to standing (Defense Department) policy, we do not release the details of safe interactions," said Cmdr. Tom Gordy, a spokesman for the Navy in Europe. "If an unsafe interaction occurs in the future, we will provide more information at that time."

Russian, U.S. and NATO air forces operate near one another over the Baltic Sea, and intercepts aren't unusual near Russia's borders with NATO territory. However, on occasion, the military will publicly call out certain intercepts as dangerous.

In January, a Russian fighter flew within 5 feet of a U.S. Navy reconnaissance plane over the Black Sea, which risked a collision, the Navy said at the time.

Such encounters are an ongoing concern for the U.S. military, which has faced a series of provocative intercepts by Russian aircraft during the past few years.

In November, a Russian fighter crossed within 50 feet of a U.S. surveillance aircraft flying over the Black Sea.

Navy will join other services, no longer announce when commanders are fired

USA Today

WASHINGTON — The Navy has halted its practice of announcing the names of commanders relieved for poor performance or misconduct, a step back from the transparency the service had championed, and a move that comes in the wake of one of the worst bribery scandals in Pentagon history.

The Navy's previous practice had been to announce on its website the names of commanders it had canned. It then broadcast the action in emails to news outlets and generally referred to the reason for firing as a loss of confidence in the officer's ability to command. The new practice puts the Navy in line with the other armed services, which do not regularly announce discipline of their senior leaders.

"Navy Public Affairs will continue to respond to every query on reliefs in a timely and thorough manner," Capt. Greg

Hicks, the Navy's top spokesman, said in a statement about the Navy's new practice.

Rep. Jackie Speier, of California, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, criticized the Navy's change in practice.

"I'm disappointed that the Navy is running away from the transparency they espoused just a few months ago," Speier said. "The American people have a right to know when senior officers exhibit ethical lapses or commit fraud and cost the taxpayers untold millions of dollars. The public expects that officers will be appropriately punished and not simply given a slap on the wrist."

The Navy has been reeling from the fallout of the "Fat Leonard" scandal, a bribery scheme that has ensnared top officers and civilians. For years, defense contractor Leonard Glenn Francis lavished money and prostitutes, pricey meals,

booze and lodging on sailors from the 7th Fleet in exchange for classified information that he used to gouge the Navy for servicing its ships.

The 350-pound Francis, who owned Glenn Defense Marine Asia, has pleaded guilty to defrauding the government of tens of millions of dollars and is cooperating with authorities. More than 17 senior Navy and Pentagon officials have pleaded guilty to criminal misconduct.

The Navy has established an office to determine if hundreds of Navy officers who allegedly received something of value should be prosecuted. The office already has adjudicated more than 300 cases, according to the Pentagon inspector general.

The new practice will not change how the Navy deals with commanders who fail to measure up, Hicks said.

Questions about officers who have been relieved will be answered.

DOD: Beer, wine soon will be available at commissaries

By LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

Commissaries will start selling beer and wine within the next few months, according to a memo written by a Defense Department official.

"The availability of beer and wine at military commissary stores will increase customer satisfaction and convenience, and align with common commercial grocery store practices," Robert Wilkie, the department's undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said in an April 27 memo quoted by Military Times.

Beer and wine sales will begin within 90 days. Hard liquor is excluded from the new

policy, according to the memo.

Commissary alcohol prices will be comparable to those at military exchanges, Wilkie said in a separate memo about the change.

Commissaries haven't sold beer or wine in the past aside from a few limited trials.

To minimize impact on exchange profits, the commissary will purchase alcohol for resale from the exchange in the same way that tobacco products are sold, Wilkie said.

Commissary officials will comply with the DOD requirements for on-base alcohol sales, including age restrictions, quantity limits and inventory controls, he added.

The initiative follows past recommendations, including

one by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Committee in 2015, to allow commissaries to sell beer and wine to make a profit, and to add to customer convenience.

"I think it's great, and could save people a trip," Air Force Master Sgt. Karl Bradley, a trombone player for the 5th Air Force's Band of the Pacific at Yokota Air Base, Japan, told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

"However, it's not going to have a huge impact on me. It could be more or less convenient for [servicemembers] depending on what state they're stationed in," he said, explaining that grocery stores in Missouri sell alcohol while those in Colorado do not.

New United rules could strand some DOD pets

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A new United Airlines policy could force some military families serving overseas to leave their cats and dogs behind, while others may be able to take them at a far higher cost.

When United Airlines resumes shipping pets in June, it will no longer transport some 25 breeds of dogs and cats and will bar oversized carriers commonly used for large dog breeds, such as Labradors, golden retrievers and German shepherds.

The ban on certain breeds — including mixed breeds — is based on the greater health risks they face in flight, according to United.

The airline temporarily ceased shipping pets in March because of several well-publicized mishaps.

The new restrictions, announced Tuesday after a review of its PetSafe program, begin June 18 and are part of what United says will improve the safety of pets traveling as cargo.

But the effect will be "catastrophic for pet owners," particularly military families overseas who already have fewer options, said Leo Mendoza, whose company in South Korea ships pets to and from that country and Okinawa, Japan.

United spokesman Charles Hobart said the new policy is aimed at improving the safety of pets while traveling.

The airline is collaborating with American Humane, the country's first national humane animal organization, in its revamp of the program.

Other airlines, such as Lufthansa and Korean Air, will ship large-breed dogs but at more than twice the cost of what United charged, he said.

Military air is an option, but Patriot Express flights take only a few animals per plane.

The ban includes bulldogs, pugs, boxers, pit bulls, Shih-Tzus, and Persian and Himalayan cats.

DOD bans electronics from 2 Chinese manufacturers

By WILL MORRIS
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The three military exchange services has pulled all smartphones made by Chinese electronics manufacturers Huawei and ZTE from stores around the world and banned their sale because of the security risks the devices pose, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

The Defense Department's undersecretary for personnel and readiness issued a ban of "all Huawei and ZTE cellphones, personal mobile internet modems and related products from locations worldwide," DOD spokesman Maj. Dave Eastburn said in an email to Stars and Stripes.

"Given the security concerns associated with these devices, as expressed by senior U.S. intelligence officials, it was not prudent for the Department's exchange services to continue selling these products to our personnel," Eastburn said. He added the DOD is "evaluating the situation" to see if any additional security measures are needed, including an outright ban on use of the phones by servicemembers.

Stars and Stripes first reported last week that an Army and Air Force Exchange Service concession at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, had been selling the mobile electronic devices on base. The products were also found for sale at U.S. bases in

other overseas locations.

In February, the director of national intelligence, along with the heads of the CIA, FBI, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency all testified before a Senate committee that Americans should not use Huawei or ZTE products because of security concerns.

Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment manufacturer, is a private company started by a former People's Liberation Army officer. U.S. intelligence officials say the company has very close ties to China's government.

FBI Director Christopher Wray testified that Huawei products give the Chinese government the ability to gather or alter sensitive corporate and military information undetected.

The concern about Huawei first focused on routers, switches and other high-bandwidth commercial products; it later expanded to consumer mobile phones. They are already banned for official government use in most cases.

Huawei also makes personal mobile internet modems, called "pucks," which in recent years have been sold to U.S. troops at a coalition base near Irbil, the capital of Iraq's Kurdish region. Some soldiers may have purchased similar devices made by ZTE.

GI killed in Afghanistan ID'd

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A 25th Infantry Division soldier serving his first combat deployment was identified Tuesday as the American servicemember killed in action Monday in eastern Afghanistan.

Army Spc. Gabriel D. Conde, 22, of Loveland, Colo., was killed by small-arms fire during a firefight in the Tagab district in Kapisa province, the Pentagon said Tuesday in a prepared statement.

Conde was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska.

Pentagon officials described Conde's death as occurring during a combat operation but declined to provide details about the mission's objective or which group was responsible for the soldier's death. They said his death was under investigation.

U.S. military officials in Afghanistan did not respond to a

request for information about the operation in which Conde was killed.

One other American soldier was wounded in the engagement. That soldier was reported in stable condition at Bagram Air Field following the battle and was expected to survive his injuries. Several Afghan troops were also killed or injured in the attack, officials with the U.S.-led NATO coalition in Afghanistan said Monday.

The roughly 15,000 American forces in Afghanistan have two primary missions — training and advising Afghan forces to fight the Taliban and a counterterrorism mission in which U.S. troops routinely accompany Afghan commandos on operations against groups including Islamic State's Afghan affiliate.

The location of Conde's death would appear to indicate the engagement likely occurred with Taliban fighters, as ISIS' influence is primarily confined to Nangarhar province farther south and east than Kapisa, in the mountains bordering

Pakistan.

Tagab district was considered as contested by U.S. and NATO military officials in January, according to an assessment of the 17-year-old war released Monday by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Contested districts are under the full control of neither the Afghan government nor the Taliban.

An infantryman serving his first overseas tour, Conde enlisted in the Army in August 2015, according to his service biography. He joined his unit in Alaska in April 2016 and deployed to Afghanistan in September 2017. He was due home next month upon completion of his unit's nine-month tour.

Conde was a 2014 graduate of Berthoud High School in northern Colorado, according to the Loveland Reporter-Herald newspaper. He ran track and cross country as a student and attended the Colorado School of Mines university for a year before he enlisted, the newspaper reported.

5 believed killed in Ga. WC-130 crash

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Five people aboard an Air Force WC-130 Super Hercules plane that crashed late Wednesday morning during a training flight near Savannah, Ga., are presumed dead, according to an Air Force spokesman.

The cargo plane from the Puerto Rico Air National Guard went down about 11:30 a.m. within a few miles of the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport, Air Force Capt. Jeffrey E. Bezore, a spokesman for the Savannah-based 165th Airlift Wing, said in a statement. The 165th is a Georgia Air National Guard unit that flies C-130s and responded to the crash as did local emergency responders, officials said.

Bezore said an investigation into the incident would be launched soon and that all five personnel aboard the aircraft are presumed dead. Their names will be withheld until 24 hours after their families have been notified, he said.

Gregory Martin, a spokesperson for the Federal Aviation Administration, told The Island Packet in Hilton Head Island, S.C., that the plane was bound for Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona.

Photographs and video of the scene showed the aircraft's tail intact just behind a massive fire. Chatham County EMS confirmed the plane crashed at the intersection of Georgia Highway 21 and Crossgate Road in Garden City, Ga.

Chelsea Sinclair, who works at a nearby Parker's, said the store shook when the plane crashed, according to The Island Packet.

"It went nose-first down," she said. "We were seeing a bunch of black smoke, but now it's just EMS and firetrucks and police."

The plane was assigned to the Puerto Rico Air National Guard's 156th Airlift Wing, an Air Force spokeswoman said.

Puerto Rico's fleet of WC-130s is based at Muñiz Air National Guard Base in the city of Carolina.

Trump subpoena mulled in probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The special counsel leading the Russia investigation raised the prospect in March of issuing a grand jury subpoena for President Donald Trump, his former attorney said, confirming that investigators have floated the extraordinary idea of forcing a sitting president to testify under oath.

Attorney John Dowd told The Associated Press on Tuesday that special counsel Robert Mueller's team broached the subject during a meeting with Trump's legal team while they were negotiating the terms of a possible interview with the president.

It was not immediately clear in what context the possibility of a subpoena was raised or how serious Mueller's prosecutors were about the move. Mueller is probing not only Russian elec-

tion interference and possible coordination with Trump associates but possible obstruction of justice by Trump.

Trump lashed out against the investigation in a familiar fashion Wednesday, saying on Twitter: "There was no Collusion (it is a Hoax) and there is no Obstruction of Justice (that is a setup & trap)."

Even if Mueller's team decided to subpoena Trump as part of the investigation, he could still fight it in court or refuse to answer questions by invoking his Fifth Amendment protection from self-incrimination.

Dowd's comments come more than a month after he resigned from the legal team, and they provide a new window into the nature of the Trump lawyers' interactions with the special counsel, whom the president has increasingly tried to undermine through public attacks.

On Tuesday, Trump said it was "disgraceful" that a list of proposed questions drafted in response to Mueller's negotiations with the legal team was "leaked" to the news media.

The four dozen questions were compiled by Trump's lawyers during negotiations with Mueller's investigators earlier this year over the prospect of a presidential interview.

A person familiar with the matter, who insisted on anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations, told the AP that the president's lawyers extrapolated the list of expected questions based on conversations with Mueller's team about the topics prosecutors wanted to cover in a potential sit down with Trump. The questions reflected what the defense lawyers anticipated Trump would be asked, rather than verbatim queries that Mueller's team provided.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Man broke into Taco Bell to eat shells

CA PASADENA — Police said a man showed up at a Southern California police station and confessed to breaking into a Taco Bell because he was drunk and hungry.

Lt. Pete Hettema said witnesses gave a description of the suspect in the break-in early Saturday in Pasadena, and a few hours later a man matching the description admitted to the crime. The suspect told police he had been drinking and wanted a snack, so he broke into the restaurant to eat taco shells.

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune said Jose Cruz, 22, of Pasadena, could face charges including commercial burglary.

GPS leads trucks to hit historic bridge

GA SMYRNA — A historic covered bridge in Georgia that was rebuilt after being burned down during the Civil War now faces a different foe: GPS systems.

WABE-FM reported that since December five vehicles have rammed into the top of the 7-foot-high warning beam just before the entrance to the Concord Covered Bridge.

Cobb County spokesman Ross Cavitt said officials attribute a spike in accidents to navigation apps that lead oversized vehicles to the bridge. He said the county is working with such companies to see if they can provide in-app warnings.

2 hurt in crash during blinding dirt storm

SD MILLER — Authorities say blowing dirt led to a two-vehicle crash that seriously injured two people in central South Dakota.

The dirt storm prompted au-

thorities to shut down a stretch of U.S. Highway 14 near Miller for six hours Sunday and led motorists through zero visibility caused when high winds blew dirt from freshly plowed fields across the highway.

South Dakota Public Safety spokesman Tony Mangan said two people suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries when one vehicle was rear-ended by another on Highway 14 west of Miller.

TSA finds knife hidden inside shampoo bottle

NC CHARLOTTE — A Florida man tried to board a flight last week at Charlotte Douglas International Airport with a knife hidden inside a bottle of shampoo, the Charlotte Observer reported.

Transportation Security Administration officials said officers noticed something wrong with the bag of Gonzalo Gonzalez, 72, as it was being scanned at a security checkpoint on April 26, and when they checked it, they found the knife in the shampoo minibottle.

Gonzalez was charged with carrying a concealed weapon.

Boy, 10, dies after hiding in tumble dryer

TX HOUSTON — Police said a Houston boy died after he climbed into a tumble dryer during a game of hide-and-seek.

The Harris County medical examiner's office said Monday the boy was electrocuted. Investigators initially thought he may have suffocated when he climbed into the machine in the laundry room of an apartment complex Friday.

Christina Rodriguez identified the child to KTRK-TV as her son, Fernando Hernandez Jr., 10.

Police Detective Michael

Arrington told the Houston Chronicle that other children who were playing with Fernando found him unresponsive in the dryer.

Officer throttles coyote attacking child

NY THORNWOOD — An off-duty police officer jumped on a coyote and throttled it as the animal attacked a young girl on a suburban New York playground.

Kasey King-Petrellese told WNBC the coyote appeared out of nowhere and ran "like a cheetah" toward her daughter, Natalia, 5, and 3-year-old son on Sunday in Thornwood. The family fled, but the coyote caught up to them.

King-Petrellese kicked and punched the animal as it moved in and bit Natalia. Off-duty Irvington Officer Arcangelo Liberatore said he put his hands around its neck and "tried to squeeze the life out of it."

Mount Pleasant police then shot and killed the coyote.

Phony Bigfoot tracker arrested for child porn

AR WALNUT RIDGE — Authorities said an Arkansas man under investigation for claiming he tracked Bigfoot for the U.S. government has been arrested on a child pornography charge.

The Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported that Keith Barnes, 46, was arrested last week. Lawrence County sheriff's officials said they received an anonymous tip that Barnes viewed or possessed child pornography during their impersonation investigation.

The investigation began after people reported seeing Barnes wearing a uniform with a badge and claiming he was a cryptozoologist with the Inte-

rior Department.

The department said that job title doesn't exist and Barnes doesn't work for the agency.

Court records: Man waterboarded wife

CA NEWPORT BEACH — A Newport Beach man is facing multiple felony charges that he beat and tortured his 65-year-old wife in their home in January, according to Orange County Superior Court records.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Mark Geller told City News Service that Richard David Schlosser, 36, "kept her captive in the apartment for hours. He actually waterboarded her."

Schlosser faces one count each of torture, corporal injury on a spouse, false imprisonment and criminal threats. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges, court records show.

Student sues over ban on pro-gun T-shirt

NV RENO — An eighth-grade Nevada student has filed a federal lawsuit accusing the Washoe County School District of violating his First Amendment rights after he says he was told his pro-gun T-shirt violates the district's dress code.

The suit filed last week in U.S. District Court in Reno says the district policy prohibiting depictions of "anything that promotes weapons" is unconstitutional.

The Reno Gazette Journal first reported on its website that the boy, who attends Depoali Middle School in Reno, was disciplined twice for wearing pro-gun clothing. One shirt had a logo for a local gun store with silhouettes of a rifle and a handgun.

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Ovechkin's goal lifts Caps in Game 3

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom have spent their entire careers chasing the Pittsburgh Penguins and shouldering their own franchise's onerous history of playoff failures.

One brilliant end-to-end rush gave the two Washington Capitals teammates and their resilient club something they've rarely enjoyed against the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions: momentum.

Ovechkin knocked his own rebound out of midair and by Matt Murray with 1:07 remaining to lift the Capitals to a 4-3 victory on Tuesday night in Game 3 of their increasingly testy Eastern Conference semifinal series with Pittsburgh.

Ovechkin's initial shot smacked off the far post.

The Russian star, however, stayed with the play and with Murray out of position, he deftly flicked it into the open net to give the Capitals a 2-1 series

lead.

"It's a good thing I didn't raise my arms up (after the first shot), you know to (celebrate) the play," Ovechkin said after scoring his eighth goal of the playoffs. "Got lucky."

Matt Niskanen, John Carlson and Chandler Stephenson also scored for Washington, which improved to 4-0 on the road in the postseason. Braden Holtby finished with 19 saves. Backstrom had three assists, including the helper on Ovechkin's winner.

"It's huge, huge goal," Ovechkin said. "Obviously for our team, you know we want to win tonight and we did. It doesn't matter what, it doesn't matter who scored. We sacrifice. We play hard. And we have to do the same moving forward."

Game 4 is in Pittsburgh on Thursday night.

Jake Guentzel had a goal and an assist for Pittsburgh. Sidney Crosby and Patric Hornqvist also scored, but the Penguins lost consecutive playoff games

for only the fourth time since the start of their run to consecutive Stanley Cups began in 2016.

Pittsburgh also lost forward Zach Aston-Reese to a broken jaw and a concussion following a violent collision with Washington's Tom Wilson at the game's midway point.

Aston-Reese was stickhandling near the Washington bench when Wilson slammed into him, sending the 6-foot-4 Aston-Reese to the ice.

Wilson was not penalized on the play, the second time in as many games he was not disciplined for a borderline hit.

Pittsburgh defenseman Brian Dumoulin went into the league's concussion protocol after Wilson blindsided him in Game 2 while Dumoulin was bracing for a collision with Ovechkin.

The NHL's Department of Player Safety didn't ask Wilson to explain himself during a hearing and Dumoulin was back in the lineup to start

Game 3.

Both teams stressed the need to move forward with so much at stake. But that was before Aston-Reese slowly made his way off the ice, flinging one of his gloves at the Washington bench in frustration, his jaw mangled and his status for the rest of the postseason uncertain.

The initial point of contact was hard to discern, even on replay. Was it the shoulders? The head? Either way the tenor changed considerably.

Asked afterward about the hit, Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan replied "at some point we hope the league might do something."

Maybe not. Officials conferred for several minutes before deciding to take no action against Wilson.

"They all got together and they said, 'You know what, we've got a good, clean check here,'" NHL on-site supervisor Paul Devorski said through a pool reporter.

Jets rally from three-goal deficit to down Predators

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Down 3-0 after a disastrous opening 20 minutes, there was no flipping of tables or peeling of paint off the walls in the Winnipeg Jets' locker room.

They instead spent the first intermission calmly trying to figure a way out of that deficit.

"We got kicked in the teeth a little bit," Jets captain Blake Wheeler said. "Our goal was just to win the second period and give ourselves a chance."

They did that, and a whole lot more.

Wheeler scored on the power play with 4:59 left after Winnipeg roared back from that early deficit to defeat the Nashville Predators 7-4 on Tuesday night and grab a 2-1 lead in their second-round playoff series.

"It's definitely not how you draw up a first period, but nobody panicked," said Jets de-

fenseman Jacob Trouba, who finished with a goal and an assist.

"We just regrouped. It wasn't really any different in here than if it was a tie game or if we were winning.

"We just went out there and played a little bit faster and played with a little bit more confidence."

Dustin Byfuglien had two goals and an assist for Winnipeg, and Paul Stastny added a goal and two assists.

Wheeler, who also had an assist, scored the first of two empty-net goals in the final minute, with Brandon Tanev getting the other.

Mark Scheifele added two assists to become the first player since Sidney Crosby in 2010 to have five consecutive multi-point games in a postseason. Connor Hellebuyck made 26 stops.

Filip Forsberg and P.K. Sub-

ban each had a goal and an assist for Nashville, while Mike Fisher and Austin Watson also scored. Mattias Ekholm and Ryan Johansen both added two assists for the Predators, who got 38 saves from Pekka Rinne.

"We just stopped playing," Nashville defenseman Ryan Ellis said. "You can't win hockey when you stop playing."

Johansen said the Predators stopped skating after blowing the lead.

"We stopped moving our legs," Johansen said. "We did a lot of things poorly and they got better. Momentum swings in playoffs, they can be deadly."

Game 4 is Thursday night in Winnipeg before things shift back to Nashville for Game 5 on Saturday.

After the Predators surged ahead on goals by Fisher, Subban and Watson in the first period, the Jets roared out of

the gate in the second to tie it during a frantic three-minute stretch.

Stastny got the comeback started at 2:38 when Trouba's bouncing shot from the point struck his skate in front and ricocheted in off the crossbar and straight out.

The veteran center raised his arms in celebration, but play continued for a few seconds before officials blew the sequence dead to check if the puck crossed the line.

Wheeler then missed a wide-open net after Rinne's turnover before getting cleaned out by Watson along the boards.

Scheifele came to Wheeler's defense to nullify what would have been a Winnipeg power play, but the Jets seemed to get a boost from the exchange and made it 3-2 when Byfuglien blasted his second of the playoffs past Rinne at 5:11.

Curry returns, Warriors down Pelicans

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Long before tipoff, Stephen Curry swished his routine tunnel shot on the second try. Once the game began, the two-time MVP stood along the bench anxiously waiting for his turn, shaking his legs and clapping his hands with nervous energy and anticipation.

Then — mouthpiece dangling, of course — Curry finally entered at the 4:20 mark of the first quarter to a roaring ovation from the Oracle Arena crowd and immediately got to work. He knocked down a three-pointer from the left wing 11 seconds later and was off and running in Golden State's 121-116 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans on Tuesday night.

"It was an eternity it felt like, for sure," Curry said. "When the lights come back on after the starting lineups you're usually in the go kind of mind frame. I had to kind of pace myself and be patient with it. It seemed like it took forever but it was a good feeling to get back out on the floor and just let

loose and have fun."

Curry came off the bench to score 28 points in a triumphant return from a knee injury and nearly six weeks off, and the Warriors held off Anthony Davis and the pesky Pelicans to go ahead 2-0 in the Western Conference semifinals.

All is right with the Warriors again now that No. 30 is back on the floor — even as a backup.

"It brought a lot of life to the building, a lot of life to our team's spirit. Pretty fitting for sure," Draymond Green said of Curry's immediate three.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points with a huge three-pointer with 3:10 to play, to go with seven assists and six rebounds in Golden State's franchise-record 14th consecutive postseason victory at Oracle Arena. Green contributed 20 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds while battling Davis on both ends all night.

Davis finished with 25 points and 15 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday had 24 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Pelicans, who also got 22 points and 12 assists from Rajon Rondo.

"It was tough," Davis said. "We were in it the whole game."

Andre Iguodala converted a snazzy three-point play with 6:41 left when he flipped the ball up and it came back down and through the net as he was fouled by Rondo, then Golden State pulled away.

The best-of-seven series resumes with Game 3 on Friday at New Orleans.

Curry shot 8-for-15 with five three-pointers and grabbed seven rebounds in 27 minutes. He let it fly for a 30-foot three in the closing minute of the third.

"He's going to score," New Orleans coach Alvin Gentry said.

The Warriors were focused on keeping their edge after a blowout Game 1 win.

Just the energy Curry brings helped that cause.

The whole place came alive when he made his first appearance on the floor.

"That was a special moment when Steph checked into the game," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

Curry had been sidelined

since spraining his left knee March 23, the same day he came back from a six-game absence with a right ankle injury.

He already had a history of brilliant returns from injuries.

In late December against Memphis, Curry came back after being sidelined 11 games with a sprained right ankle to score 38 points with 10 three-pointers.

Curry returned for Game 4 of the Warriors' five-game Western Conference semifinals against Portland two years ago and made 16 of 32 shots with five three-pointers and scored 17 points in overtime on the way to 40 in a 132-125 victory. He grabbed nine rebounds and dished out eight assists.

The game had its testy moments.

Curry made a bounce pass in transition to Iguodala late in the third and Solomon Hill was hit with a flagrant 1 for grabbing Iguodala's neck area as he shot. That came 14 seconds after a double-technical against Davis and Green after they got tangled and rolled around and over each other.

James' teammates step up in Cavs' win over Raptors

Associated Press

TORONTO — This time, LeBron James didn't have to do it all by himself.

James had 26 points, 13 assists and 11 rebounds for his 21st career playoff triple-double. J.R. Smith scored 20 points and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Toronto Raptors 113-112 in overtime on Tuesday night to win Game 1 of their second-round playoff series.

Kyle Korver scored 19 points, including the go-ahead three-pointer in overtime after Cleveland never led in regulation. Tristan Thompson had 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who have eliminated Toronto in each of the past two postseasons.

"My teammates were unbelievable tonight," James said.

"They stepped up when I wasn't at my best."

Jeff Green scored 16 points and Kevin Love had 13 rebounds.

James, who topped 40 points three times in seven games against Indiana in round one, shot 12-for-30 against Toronto, going 1-for-8 from three-point range, and called it "probably one of my worst games of the season."

Still, James came through when it counted, tying the score with two baskets in the final 92 seconds of regulation to complete Cleveland's comeback from a double-digit deficit.

"It got to a one-possession, two-possession game," he said. "That's what I like the most."

Toronto's Fred VanVleet missed a three-pointer with 3.4

seconds to go in overtime that could have won it for the Raptors, who couldn't hold on after taking a 10-point lead early in the fourth quarter.

"He got a heck of a shot," Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan said. "I'll live with him shooting that shot 10 times out of 10. We got a good look and it just didn't fall."

Jonas Valanciunas had 21 points and 21 rebounds, Kyle Lowry had 18 points and 10 assists, and DeRozan scored 22 points for the Raptors, who host Game 2 on Thursday night.

The Cavaliers beat the Raptors in six games in the Eastern Conference finals in 2016 before going on to win their first NBA championship. Last year, Cleveland swept Toronto in the second round.

Korver's three early in overtime gave the Cavaliers their first lead of the game, 108-105.

Lowry's three-point play made it 113-112 with 57 seconds to go and, after the Cavs were called for a shot-clock violation, Toronto had one more chance to win, but VanVleet couldn't come through.

"We feel good about the win but I think we were also very fortunate," Korver said.

VanVleet was one of four Raptors to miss in the final seconds of regulation. Toronto got four looks at the potential winning basket but missed all four, including a wide-open three by VanVleet, giving Cleveland the ball with 0.6 seconds remaining. Green inbounded to James, but his shot bounced off the rim.

MLB roundup

Giles takes hit in loss to Yanks

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Not long after Gary Sanchez delivered a knockout blow for the New York Yankees on Tuesday night with a three-run homer off Ken Giles in the ninth inning, the Houston closer landed a shot of his own.

Giles punched himself twice — with the second landing on his face — as he left one batter after Sanchez's go-ahead homer. A somber Giles said the outburst was fueled by frustration.

"Obviously, because I just screwed up a win," he said. "We should have won this game. We should have bounced back. I didn't give our team a chance. Of course I'm going to be frustrated over that."

The implosion by Giles spoiled a splendid outing by Justin Verlander, and the Yankees got a 4-0 victory after Jordan Montgomery's start was cut off by tightness in his left elbow.

Verlander tied a career-high by striking out 14 and allowed just three hits — all singles — in eight innings. Giles (0-1) took over and Aaron Judge singled to start the ninth for New York's first hit since the third inning. Didi Gregorius doubled to the gap in left field before Sanchez's home run sailed over the fence in center field for a 3-0 lead.

Aaron Hicks followed with a single to chase Giles. An emotional Giles punched himself in the chest with his still-gloved right hand while walking off the field before moving the glove to his left hand and throwing a blow to his face. He arrived in the dugout, picked up a bat and slammed it down, then kicked it before retreating to the clubhouse.

Rockies 3, Cubs 1: Charlie Blackmon and David Dahl opened the game with consecutive homers off Kyle Hendricks (2-2), and Nolan Arenado also homered as visiting Colorado stopped a three-game slide.

Rangers 8, Indians 6: Joey Gallo and Isiah Kiner-Falefa

homered on consecutive pitches off Nick Goody (0-2) in the 12th inning for visiting Texas.

Michael Brantley tied the game in the ninth with a two-out grand slam off Keone Kela, but the Rangers bailed out their closer, who entered the game with a 6-2 lead.

Braves 3, Mets 2: Mike Soroka (1-0) gave up one run and six hits in six innings as the 20-year-old right-hander won his big league debut. Soroka joined Ronald Acuna Jr., who is about four months younger, and the 21-year-old Ozzie Albies to give visiting Atlanta the three youngest players in the majors.

Brewers 7, Reds 6: Ryan Braun hit a tiebreaking double off Homer Bailey (0-4) for a 5-3 lead in the fifth and Travis Shaw ended his 0-for-19 slide with a two-run homer. Host Cincinnati fell to 7-23, matching the 1931 and 1934 teams for worst 30-game start in franchise history, and are winless in Bailey's seven starts.

Marlins 2, Phillies 1: Pinch-hitter Yadiel Rivera improved his .100 batting average with a one-out RBI single in the 10th that followed Cameron Maybin's triple against Yacksel Rios (3-1). Host Miami won its fourth straight and Philadelphia lost its fourth in a row.

Tigers 2, Rays 1: Matthew Boyd (1-2) allowed one run and seven hits in six innings for host Detroit. Shane Greene, who allowed a pair of ninth-inning homers in a loss to Tampa Bay on Monday, worked a perfect ninth a night later for his fifth save.

Royals 7, Red Sox 6: Alex Gordon hit a tying home run off Craig Kimbrel in the ninth inning, and Jorge Soler hit a three-run homer against Brian Johnson (1-1) in the 13th for visiting Kansas City.

Cardinals 3, White Sox 2: Matt Carpenter tied the score against Joakim Soria (0-1) when he led off the ninth with his 100th home run, and Yadier Molina hit a game-ending single as host St. Louis stopped a three-game losing streak.

Blue Jays 7, Twins 4: Kendrys Morales homered twice for Toronto and reached base all five times he batted, including an intentional walk in the 10th inning when visiting Toronto scored twice on wild pitches by John Curtiss.

Diamondbacks 4, Dodgers 3: Daniel Descalso atoned for a costly error with a two-run, go-ahead triple in the seventh inning and host Arizona rallied to hand Los Angeles its fourth straight loss and seventh in eight games.

Angels 3, Orioles 2: Justin Upton hit a walk-off single with the bases loaded, and host Los Angeles blew a two-run lead in the ninth inning before snapping a four-game skid with a victory over Baltimore.

Martin Maldonado and Ian Kinsler delivered one-out singles in the ninth against Brad Brach (0-1) before Mike Trout drew his fourth walk to load the bases. Upton, who had gone 0-for-3 after Trout's three previous walks, lined a clean single to left.

Padres 3, Giants 2: Eric Hosmer homered off Giants closer Hunter Strickland with two outs in the ninth inning, lifting San Diego over host San Francisco.

Mariners 6, Athletics 3: Nelson Cruz hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the fifth inning, Dee Gordon had five hits, and Felix Hernandez pitched six solid innings to send host Seattle over Oakland.

Nationals 12, Pirates 4: Slumping Bryce Harper was moved to the leadoff spot for the first time since 2013 and responded with a three-run homer that helped Max Scherzer win his fifth straight start for host Washington.

Harper entered in a 5-for-35 slump and had not gotten an extra-base hit since April 16. He grounded out in the first inning against Chad Kuhl (3-2), followed Wilmer Difo's go-ahead homer in the third with a flyout, then gave the Nationals a 5-0 lead in the fifth with his ninth homer this season.

Reid files collusion grievance

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL players' union says former San Francisco 49ers safety Eric Reid filed a grievance against the league, alleging that he remains unsigned as a result of collusion by owners.

Reid, a Pro Bowler in 2013, had joined former teammate Colin Kaepernick two seasons ago in kneeling during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial inequality.

Kaepernick wasn't signed for the 2017 season following his release in San Francisco. Reid continued the quarterback's protests. The 26-year-old safety became a free agent this offseason when his rookie contract with the 49ers expired.

"Our union is aware that Eric Reid and his legal representatives filed a collusion claim, which will be heard through the arbitration process as spelled out in our collective bargaining agreement," the NFL Players Association said in a statement Wednesday. "Our union supports Eric and we are considering other legal options to pursue."

Kaepernick previously filed a collusion grievance that is in the discovery stage. He deposed several league owners and executives, including Commissioner Roger Goodell. Reid is using the same attorneys as Kaepernick.

A league spokesman said Wednesday: "We are abiding by the confidentiality provision of the CBA and have no comment."

In March, Goodell was asked about Reid, one of the better players at his position in the NFL, not having a job.

"I've said this repeatedly to you: The 32 teams make individual decisions on the players who are going to best help their franchises," Goodell said.