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Trump cancels summit, warns N. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Donald Trump on Thursday canceled the planned summit with North Korea and warned that the U.S. military was ready to respond to any “foolish or reckless acts” by the communist state.

It was a possibly fatal blow to hopes for a relatively quick diplomatic resolution to the crisis over the North’s nuclear weapons program, which raised fears of a new war last year.

The summit, which would have been the first between a North Korean leader and a sitting U.S. president, had been scheduled for June 12 in Singapore.

Trump announced his decision in a letter to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, which was released Thursday hours after the isolated nation lashed out at Vice President Mike Pence for

invoking the so-called “Libya model” for giving up a nuclear weapons program.

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi surrendered his nuclear weapons in the early 2000s in exchange for sanctions relief. He was later killed at the hands of a mob after being ousted in an uprising supported by NATO airstrikes. North Korea has pointed to his fate as an example of why they need a nuclear arsenal, which the communist state insists is for self-defense.

Trump cited “tremendous anger and open hostility” from North Korea in saying that it would be “inappropriate, at this time, to have this long-planned meeting.” He left the door open for future negotiations but insisted his so-called “maximum pressure” policy of tough economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure will continue.

The final straw appeared to be a statement reported earlier Thursday in which North

Korean official Choe Son Hui warned that her nation was prepared for a “nuclear-to-nuclear showdown.”

The North Koreans have expressed anger over the Trump administration’s insistence on invoking the “Libya model” of denuclearization and continued joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises.

“You talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God they will never have to be used,” Trump said in his letter.

“I felt a wonderful dialogue was building up between you and me, and ultimately, it is only the dialogue that matters,” Trump said. “Some day, I look very much forward to meeting you.”

He later called it a “tremendous setback” and issued a blunt warning, saying he had spoken to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and other military officials.

“Our military, which is by far

the most powerful anywhere in the world that has been greatly enhanced recently, as you all know, is ready if necessary,” he said later at a bill signing ceremony.

Trump also said he had spoken to key U.S. allies South Korea and Japan.

“They are not only ready should foolish or reckless acts be taken by North Korea, but they are willing to shoulder much of the cost of any financial burden, any other cost associated by the United States in operations if such an unfortunate situation is forced upon us,” he said.

The United States is “more ready than we have ever been before,” he added, promising the country will never compromise its safety and security.

The announcement came days after the U.S. Army tightened a curfew to ensure the main fighting unit on the divided peninsula is ready for action.

McCain chief pleads guilty in court-martial, loses rank

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A chief charged with training and use of a navigational system on the USS John S. McCain at the time the destroyer collided with a commercial tanker in the Straits of Singapore pleaded guilty Thursday to dereliction of duty and acknowledged his role in the deaths of 10 sailors last year.

Chief Petty Officer Jeffery D. Butler appeared somber and tearful during a summary court-martial at the Washington Navy Yard for the criminal charge under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The 20-plus-year servicemember was sen-

tenced to a loss of rank, forcing Butler, 40, to lose his anchors after being demoted to petty officer first class.

“I could have done more,” he said ahead of sentencing. “I’ve learned my lesson the hard way.”

Butler had pleaded during Thursday’s hearing to keep his rank, since it would hurt his family and cost them \$200,000 in lost pay over time.

Cmdr. William Weiland, the Navy judge presiding over Thursday’s court-martial, ordered the loss of rank but passed on other punishment that would have triggered a forfeiture of a portion of one month’s pay and limitation of duties for up to 60 days.

Thursday’s hearing, which was attended by several relatives of the sailors who died Aug. 21, is one of a series of courts-martial resulting from the McCain collision.

“I’m truly sorry for your loss,” a tearful Butler said while facing the families of the McCain fallen. Those lost on the McCain were more than shipmates, “they were family members,” he said.

Butler is among several Navy members facing punishment in the wake of separate collisions involving two Japan-based Navy destroyers in 2017.

Two months before the McCain collision, the USS Fitzgerald collided with a merchant container ship off the coast of

Japan, killing seven sailors. Hearings earlier this month were tied to the June 17 fatal crash.

Butler was charged for “negligently trained and certified helm watch standers on the controls of the Integrated Bridge and Navigation System onboard the USS John S. McCain ... as was his duty to do to obtain required qualifications, gain a proper understanding of the system, provide adequate training and properly qualify junior sailors” between August 2016 and August 2017.

Butler said Thursday that he was not properly trained on the Integrated Bridge and Navigation System and could have done more to seek training.

China rips US drills invitation withdrawal

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's Defense Ministry on Thursday criticized as "unconstructive" Washington's withdrawal of an invitation for it to participate in a multinational naval exercise the U.S. is hosting this summer.

A statement on the ministry's website said the move would do nothing to change China's resolve to "play a role in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

The U.S. move raises the prospect of a renewed chill in military relations between the two countries amid high-stakes maneuvering over North Korea's nuclear program, which was scheduled to be the subject of a now-canceled meeting in June between President Donald Trump and the North's leader, Kim Jong Un.

The U.S. had included China in the past two versions of the naval exercise known as Rim of the Pacific, or RimPac, in 2014 and 2016.

A Pentagon statement said the decision to disinvite the Chinese navy was "an initial response" to what it called China's militarization of the South China Sea, which China claims almost in its entirety.

USS Blue Ridge ignites its boilers for first time in 2 years

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS Blue Ridge lit its boilers for the first time in two years this week, signifying a big step toward bringing the Navy's oldest deployable warship back to sailing condition.

As steam plumed from the 7th Fleet's flagship late Tuesday evening, sailors who had watched the Blue Ridge undergo various repairs, refurbishments and system upgrades since June 2016 felt a great sense of accomplishment.

"I saw this engine room before dry dock, when she was still steaming. Then, during the time that it was shut down and ripped apart, it seemed like everything was working against us," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Raymond Davis III, a machinist's mate attached to the Blue Ridge. "To finally light off the boilers is one of the best feelings I have had in the United States Navy."

Commissioned on Nov. 14, 1970, the Blue Ridge has spent 38 years forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan. It is scheduled to stay in service for at least another two decades.

With the boilers ignited, the warship can operate under its own power — meaning it is "one step closer to returning to sea and being fully operational in support of the 7th Fleet," the Navy said.

The warship's maintenance period was expected to last 14 months before unexpected issues arose with its engineering plant. In the end, repairs took about 135,000 man-hours and cost more than \$60 million.

Upgrades included modernizing the engineering plant and refurbishing the main condenser and ventilation systems, the service said. It was also outfitted with the Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services computer system,

which "consolidate[s] and modernize[s] communications, computers and intelligence network systems," according to Northrop Grumman.

The amount of time the ship spent undergoing maintenance offered various challenges. There was a large turnover of crewmembers, and about 80 percent of the Blue Ridge's engineers came "straight from boot camp or other nonengineering assignments" because the ship had entered restricted availability status, the Navy said.

"They had to go from learning the difference between the bow and the stern to learning how to conduct a material check on an advanced piece of equipment," said Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Hartley, the ship's chief engineering officer.

Before the boilers could be ignited, the warship's crew underwent a weeklong light-off assessment. The ship's programs, standard operating procedures, equipment and emergency response protocols were evaluated "to ensure maximum compliance" before the first flame in two years could be sent into boiler, the Navy said.

"The magnitude of the boilers to the Blue Ridge cannot be underestimated. They produce steam for the ship's propulsion, electrical power, auxiliary systems and potable water," the Navy said. "Managing the complex engineering system is no easy feat, but the Blue Ridge demonstrated it was up to the task."

Capt. Brett Crozier, the Blue Ridge's commanding officer, said lighting the boilers was a rewarding milestone after the nearly 24-month maintenance period.

"Lighting these boilers is a reflection of all the hard work that has been put in by the crew, the ship-repair facility here in Yokosuka, the contractors and the Japanese shipbuilding company assigned to complete the majority of projects," he said.

Military designs new body armor for women

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Female Marines and soldiers will soon have access to a redesigned helmet harness that allows them to more comfortably wear their hair in a bun.

The improvement is among many planned for women's body armor outlined in a Marine Corps Systems Command presentation recently provided to Stars and Stripes.

Women had complained that the "X-Back" design of an apparatus holding chin straps interfered with hair buns, making it difficult for the helmet to fit securely.

Dubbed the "Army Improved Retention System," the new harness is designed to be used with enhanced combat helmets.

The female-specific "H-Back" apparatus includes an opening for a bun, Army Lt.

Col. Ginger Whitehead, project manager for Soldier Protective Equipment, recently told Military.com.

This solution, along with improvements to retention straps to keep them from interfering with peripheral vision and cutting into earlobes, was "widely accepted by [the] female soldier community," Whitehead said.

Black women face additional challenges, said Capt. Viola Kelley, who is assigned to the

Eighth Army at Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

"If you're wearing braids, wigs or anything of that nature, your [helmet] is most likely not going to fit and sit on top of your head like a pop-top," she said.

Other body armor enhancements identified in the Marines' report include smaller armor plates and an adjustable-frame backpack to help female Marines shoulder heavy loads.

As SEAL gets MOH, related case still unsettled

The Washington Post

Two Chinook helicopters carrying elite U.S. troops roared through the chilly Afghan air above a mountaintop when disaster struck. Rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire ripped into one of the lumbering aircraft as it approached a landing zone, ejecting a Navy SEAL Team 6 member and prompting a rescue operation.

On Thursday afternoon, President Donald Trump was to award retired Master Chief Britt Slabinski the nation's highest award for valor in combat, the Medal of Honor, for his actions 16 years ago on 10,000-foot Takur Ghar mountain. The SEAL is credited with braving withering fire from Taliban and al-Qaida fighters in waist-deep snow while leading the rest of his team — call sign “Mako 30” — in search of missing Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts.

The White House ceremony will recognize Slabinski's actions on March 3-4, 2002, in what became known as the Battle of Roberts Ridge. The operation has spawned books, has prompted study at U.S. warfare schools and has been depicted in a video game, in large part because of its dire nature. Seven Americans, including Roberts, were killed, and the operation was scrutinized afterward for its flawed planning and communication at more senior levels.

Another part of the story was unlikely to be told in detail at the White House: Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Chapman, one of Slabinski's deceased teammates, also has been nominated for the Medal of Honor. The White House and the Pentagon have not disclosed whether Chapman will get it.

In a sad, cruel twist in Chapman's case, the Air Force concluded that he was forced to fight to his death alone after Slabinski ordered an evacuation of other SEALs in the face of a vastly larger enemy force. At the time, Slabinski believed that Chapman was dead, the Air Force found.

But the service, using Predator drone video that originally was not considered, concluded in 2016 that Chapman was probably unconscious and continued to fight off al-Qaida fighters when he regained consciousness. That finding, first reported by The New York Times, marked the first time that the military had based a valor award nomination on drone video footage. Traditionally, cases rely primarily on eyewitness accounts.

The cases center on two sons of New England who grew up as strangers about 50 miles apart but are connected by their actions during the opening months of the war in Afghanistan.

Slabinski, originally of Northampton, Mass., completed a 25-year career in 2014. He was considered a legend in the Navy's SEAL Team 6 and received a Navy Cross

— second only to the Medal of Honor — in recognition of his actions on Roberts Ridge. More recently, he has been dogged by media reports suggesting that he mishandled enemy remains, including a story by the Intercept that included previously unpublished audio in which a voice said to be his describes shooting one dead enemy fighter up to 20 times in the legs, and calls it a form of therapy.

Chapman, a native of Windsor Locks, Conn., posthumously received the Air Force Cross for his valor in 2003, and already was considered perhaps his service's greatest modern war hero. He left behind a wife and two young daughters. He was a combat controller, an enlisted airman who specializes in communicating with pilots to guide airstrikes on target in the middle of hair-raising special operations.

Deborah

‘I’ve always said that I could never blame anybody for what happened on that mountain.’

Lori Chapman Longfritz

sister of Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Chapman

James, who served as Air Force secretary during the Obama administration, said in an interview that she approved a packet for Chapman's nomination in 2016, convinced that the totality of his actions recognized by the Air Force

Cross along with the actions captured afterward in the drone footage deserved the Medal of Honor.

“These ISR feeds, to me, were like forensic evidence,” James said, using an acronym for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. “Forty years ago, nobody knew what DNA was. But 40 years later, cold cases are solved because of that evidence. To me, this was the equivalent.”

James had directed Air Force Special Operations Command to review whether it had any past valor cases that merited upgrades out of concern that the service was grading itself too difficultly, a contention that many servicemembers have made since the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The assessment came back with a recommendation to upgrade some awards to levels below the Medal of Honor, and to consider elevating Chapman's decoration to the award, James said.

But in allegations first reported this month by Newsweek, securing approval for the Chapman case was difficult in part because in 2016, James said, some witnesses in the battle declined to sign the sworn statements they gave shortly after the battle. James said the top officer in U.S. Special Operations Command, Army Gen.

Raymond “Tony” Thomas, assured her in the summer of 2016 that he would support Chapman's nomination, but later requested an amendment asking that the findings based on the video not be considered.

James — and at least one member of Chapman's family — consider the actions an attempt to downplay what happened on Takur Ghar mountain. They say Slabinski did his best and deserves the Medal of Honor, but they are frustrated at what they see as attempts to cover the truth that the SEAL was faced with the difficult call to withdraw from the mountain without Chapman.

“Nobody thinks that he did anything other than his absolute best on the worst day of his life,” James said of Slabinski. “He thought [Chapman] was dead, and he was responsible for four or five others that he was trying to save.”

Chapman's older sister, Lori Chapman Longfritz, declined to talk about what the military has told her family in recent days. But she “wants the truth told” about her brother, and said she is “glad that he'll finally be getting what he earned 16 years ago,” raising the possibility that he also will receive the Medal of Honor.

“I’ve always said that I could never blame anybody for what happened on that mountain,” said Longfritz, of Cheyenne, Wyo. “I was never there, I’ve never been shot at, and I’ve never been in deep snow like that. But I don’t think they’ve been entirely forthcoming in the 16 years since then, and I can definitely hold them accountable for that.”

A spokesman for Thomas, Navy Capt. Jason Salata, referred all questions about the general's involvement in the case to the office of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

Several U.S. military officials said privately that it is assumed that Chapman's Medal of Honor also has been approved, but that they are not sure how it is being handled.

A report by Task & Purpose in April said the White House informed Chapman's family in March that a Medal of Honor was approved for him, citing a source close to the process. The White House has declined to comment.

Considering the sensitivities, there's weariness in the Pentagon that so many details about the Chapman case have spilled out into public, and a desire to closely manage the presentation of facts about Slabinski's Medal of Honor. Air Force and Navy officials have referred questions about the case to the White House and Mattis' office.

Typically, Medal of Honor recipients sit for media interviews leading up to their ceremonies, but requests for Slabinski by The Washington Post have been declined and no other new public remarks from him have been published.

Blue flames burn in Hawaii volcano cracks

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Scientists in Hawaii have captured rare images of blue flames burning from cracks in the pavement as the Kilauea volcano gushes fountains of lava in the background, offering insight into a new dimension in the volcano's weeklong eruption.

Volcanos produce methane when hot lava buries and burns plants and trees. The gas flows through the ground and up through existing cracks.

"It's very dramatic. It's very eerie," Jim Kauahikaua, a U.S. Geological Survey scientist, told reporters.

He said it was only the second time he's ever seen blue flames during an eruption.

The methane can seep through cracks several feet away from the lava. It also can cause explosions when it's ignited while trapped underground. Those blasts can toss blocks several feet away, said Wendy Stovall, also a scientist at the USGS.

Hawaii County has ordered about 2,000 people to evacuate from Leilani Estates and surrounding neighborhoods since the eruption began on May 3.

Dutch investigators say Russian missile downed airliner in Ukraine

The Washington Post

BRUSSELS — A Dutch-led international team of investigators said Thursday that a missile that downed a Malaysian Airlines jetliner over eastern Ukraine in 2014 came from the Russian military, opening the possibility that Dutch prosecutors could sue the Kremlin in connection with the attack that killed all 298 aboard.

The long-running inquiry already established that a Russian-made Buk antiaircraft missile downed flight MH17, but it previously had not made a direct link to the Russian military.

Criminal charges against the Russian military or Russia's government likely would exacerbate tensions between the Kremlin and the West even further, implicating Russian officials in the death of European tourists who were on their way to Kuala Lumpur. The July 17, 2014, incident led to a crushing round of Western sanctions against Russia.

Since then, the Kremlin has clashed with Europe and the U.S. on issues ranging from Russia's support for Syrian leader Bashar Assad to the attempt to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential elections and the March nerve agent poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain.

The investigative team "has come to the conclusion that the Buk TELAR by which MH17 was downed originated from the 53rd Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade from Kursk, in the Russian Federation," said Wilbert Paulissen, the head of the crime squad of the Netherlands' national police. "All of the vehicles in the convoy carrying the missile were part of the Russian armed forces."

However, they left open the possibility that the

missile could have been fired by another party.

Rebel leaders said at the time they were receiving military assistance from Russia. Investigators have been working to determine whether Russian troops shot the missile or whether it was Ukrainian rebels to whom the antiaircraft system had been supplied.

The team said Thursday that the Buk missile system was towed onto Ukrainian territory shortly before the attack and was towed back onto Russian territory shortly afterward.

Paulissen said the investigators possessed "legal and convincing evidence that will stand in a courtroom."

In July 2014, the battlefield in eastern Ukraine was seething with different armed groups. That spring, separatist fighters opposed to a new, pro-Western government in Kiev seized control of broad patches of territory in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland. They were operating with Russian support, and Western journalists also spotted at least some Russian troops moving into eastern Ukraine that summer. The Russian government has long denied direct involvement in the conflict.

Flight MH17 took off from Amsterdam and passed over eastern Ukraine on its way to Kuala Lumpur, packed with Dutch tourists. In video footage from immediately after it was shot down, rebel fighters can be seen gathering in the sunflower fields where the bulk of the fuselage fell, celebrating what they thought was the downing of a Ukrainian military aircraft. Their celebration turned to concern when they realized that it was a civilian jetliner.

Security troops at Wyo. nuclear missile base took LSD

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — One airman said he felt paranoia. Another marveled at the vibrant colors. A third admitted, "I absolutely just loved altering my mind."

Meet servicemembers entrusted with guarding nuclear missiles that are among the most powerful in America's arsenal. Air Force records obtained by The Associated Press show they bought, distributed and used the hallucinogen LSD and other mind-altering, illegal drugs as part of a ring that operated undetected for months on a highly secure military base in Wyoming. After investigators closed in, one airman deserted to Mexico.

"Although this sounds like something from a movie, it isn't," said Capt. Charles Grimsley, the lead prosecutor of one of several courts-martial.

A slipup on social media by one airman enabled investigators to crack the drug ring at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in March 2016, details of which are reported here for the first time. Fourteen airmen were disciplined. Six of them were convicted in courts-martial of LSD use or distribution or both.

None of the airmen was accused of using drugs on duty. Yet it's another blow to the reputation of the Air Force's nuclear missile corps, which is capable of unleashing hell in the form of Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs. The corps has struggled at times with misbehavior, mismanagement and low morale.

Although seen by some as a backwater of the U.S. military, the missile force has returned to the spotlight as President Donald Trump has called for strengthening U.S. nuclear firepower and has exchanged

threats last year with North Korea. The administration's nuclear strategy calls for hundreds of billions of dollars in new spending in coming decades.

The servicemembers accused of involvement in the LSD ring were from the 90th Missile Wing, which operates one-third of the 400 Minuteman 3 missiles that stand "on alert" 24/7 in underground silos scattered across the northern Great Plains.

Documents obtained by the AP during the past two years through the Freedom of Information Act tell a sordid tale of off-duty use of LSD, cocaine and other drugs in 2015 and 2016 by airmen who were supposed to be held to strict behavioral standards because of their role in securing the weapons.

"It's another black eye for the Air Force — for the ICBM force in particular," said Stephen Schwartz, an independent consultant and nuclear expert.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man planned to eat gopher tortoises

FL STUART — Florida wildlife officials said a man they found in possession of two gopher tortoises said he didn't want to keep them as pets — he planned to eat them.

Martin County sheriff's officials said they found Robert Lane, 28, digging into the ground pulling out gopher tortoises at Seabranh Preserve State Park.

Gopher tortoises are a federally protected threatened species. They dig deep burrows for shelter.

The Sun Sentinel reported that Lane could face charges related to poaching on state property.

Bizarre graffiti found scrawled on building

NY NEW YORK — The New York Police Department said vandals defaced a historic New York City courthouse with bizarre graffiti.

The graffiti was discovered Tuesday morning painted on the pillars of the historic Tweed Courthouse in lower Manhattan, which houses the city's Department of Education. One of the scrawled messages read "Unconstitutional Murder Lower Economic Education Feudal Class" while another read "Human Rights ERA Plato Wilfred Socrates."

Much of the graffiti has been removed.

Bear trapped in car trashes the interior

CT CANTON — What might be the world's hairiest vandal destroyed the interior of a Connecticut woman's car.

Linda Morad told WFSB-TV

she was house-sitting in Canton on May 18 when she noticed her car lights on and heard strange noises. She called police.

Officers found a full-grown bear that had gotten into Morad's car and could not get out.

Police opened a door and ran to the other side of the vehicle, and the bear scampered into the woods.

The car's exterior was almost untouched but the interior was torn to shreds.

Space Needle getting a \$100M face-lift

WA SEATTLE — Seattle's 56 year-old Space Needle is set to unveil a \$100 million renovation next month against the backdrop of a booming tourism industry.

The city and King County benefited from \$7.4 billion of spending by a record 40 million visitors last year, according to Visit Seattle, a nonprofit advocacy group for the tourism industry.

Seattle's Wright family, which built and owns the Space Needle, is installing floor-to-ceiling glass in the observation deck and remodeling the restaurant in the first phase of the renovation.

Repainting the exterior of the 600-foot structure and replacing its three elevators will follow.

Stolen ambulance taken on joyride

RI PROVIDENCE — Police said a Boston man stole an ambulance from outside a Rhode Island hospital and took it on a 40-mile joyride before being stopped in Connecticut.

Police said Providence Rescue 6 was taken from Rhode Island Hospital about 6 a.m. Monday. It had just dropped off

a patient.

The suspect was pulled over on Interstate 95 in North Stonington, Conn.

Connecticut police charged Johnny Kimbrough, 36, with motor vehicle larceny.

'Book trees' not stolen; being fixed

DE WILMINGTON — What was thought to be a theft of children's "book trees" from a Delaware park has turned out to be something much less upsetting.

Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki issued a press release last week lamenting the apparent theft of two "book trees" that had been installed just one month earlier in the city's Barbara Hicks Park.

The trees are basically mini-libraries mounted on posts to give kids access to free reading materials in their neighborhood.

The trees were donated by the local Rotary club.

The News Journal reported the city parks department had taken them in for maintenance after the posts were damaged.

Courthouse gets clock tower 80 years later

IN CRAWFORDSVILLE — An Indiana courthouse that lost its clock tower nearly 80 years ago is sporting a timepiece once again.

A crowd of onlookers watched last week as a crane lowered the Montgomery County Courthouse's new four-sided clock tower into place in three sections.

The (Lafayette) Journal & Courier reported the 1876 courthouse in Crawfordsville lost its original clock tower in 1941, when it was removed amid structural concerns.

Fundraisers to replace it began

more than two decades ago.

The new \$500,000 clock tower will be dedicated June 17.

Employee at nursing home pepper-sprayed

NH LANCASTER — Officials said a resident at a New Hampshire nursing home used bear pepper spray on an employee.

WMUR-TV reported that the Country Village Center employee was taken to a hospital emergency room for treatment Tuesday and the Lancaster facility was evacuated because of the spray's strong odor.

The National Park Service said bear spray is normally used to stop aggressive behavior in bears, and is not the same as human pepper spray.

Lawsuit: Woman, 98, left in sun for hours

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A family filed a lawsuit alleging their 98-year-old grandmother died after a Florida health care facility left her outside in 90-degree heat for more than five hours.

Eva Mae Rhodes had second-degree burns and was unresponsive when paramedics took her to St. Mary's Hospital in 2017.

According to the lawsuit, Rhodes died of hypothermia two weeks later.

Candace McKinley said her grandmother suffered from dementia, couldn't talk and was in a wheelchair.

Lakeside Health Center told The Palm Beach Post they were unaware of the complaint.

From wire reports

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and Military News

Caps earn berth in Stanley Cup Final

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Alex Ovechkin lifted the Prince of Wales Trophy, spun around and set it back down on a table.

The rest of the Capitals joined him for a team photo after beating the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-0 on Wednesday night in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference final, a victory that sent Washington to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time in 20 years.

A decade of playoff frustration is fading fast.

"I think Ovie has been on a mission," Capitals coach Barry Trotz said. "They wanted this game, no question."

Ovechkin scored early and Andre Burakovsky added two second-period goals as the Caps continued to shed a label as postseason underachievers.

Braden Holtby stopped 29 shots for his second straight shutout and the Lightning, who led the NHL in goals during the regular season, failed to score in the last 159 minutes, 27 seconds of the series — a stretch of

nearly eight periods.

Ovechkin, who had never advanced beyond the second round, scored 1:02 into the winner-take-all showdown he had described as probably the "biggest game in my life."

"The first goal was very important," Ovechkin said. "After that you could see we have all the momentum on our side. Holts was unstoppable today. He was special. Everybody was all in. Everybody was sacrificing their bodies. I think we all deserve the win."

To earn a spot in the Stanley Cup Final, where they'll play the Vegas Golden Knights, the Capitals beat the top-seeded Lightning three times on the road, improving to 8-2 away from home this postseason.

It's Washington's first Cup Final appearance since 1998, and the first during Ovechkin's 13-year career.

"We played a great game," defenseman John Carlson said. "We deserved to win this."

Two games after being a healthy scratch for Game 5,

Burakovsky became the 17th player to score a goal for Washington in the playoffs this year — four shy of the NHL record — when he beat Andrei Vasilevskiy on a breakaway at 8:59 of the second period.

The winger, who played two games in the first round against Columbus before sitting out 10 straight with an upper-body injury, added a breakaway goal to make it 3-0 heading into the last period.

Nicklas Backstrom had an empty-netter to complete the rout.

"What a game. What an experience. We had a lot of guys pitching in," winger T.J. Oshie said. "The biggest guy of all had to be Holts. He played fantastic, back-to-back shutouts."

Tampa Bay, which rebounded from losing the first two games at home to win three straight for a 3-2 series lead, had plenty of chances. A couple of shots clanged off the post, Yanni Gourde was unable to get his stick on a loose puck in front on an empty net and the game

gradually slipped away.

Washington was the more physical team in evening the series with a bruising 3-0 victory in Game 6. They played with urgency from the start again Wednesday night and never let up.

Tampa Bay's last goal in the series came 33 seconds into the second period of Game 5, which the Lightning went on to win 3-2.

"We're here to win as team, no matter who gets the credit," said Holtby, the fifth goalie to deliver a Game 7 shutout to clinch a spot in the Stanley Cup Final.

"I felt we could have won every game," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "We ran into a tough Washington team that was probably feeling the same thing, and once you get this far you've probably done some magical things on the way."

It was the 33rd time in league history that a Game 7 was required to determine a Stanley Cup finalist. Home teams are 21-12 in those games.

Vegas GM McPhee made all the right moves to contend

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — George McPhee's endgame has always been about making the Golden Knights contenders.

Strategic moves to keep winning.

The veteran general manager has ridden his savvy all the way to the Stanley Cup Final, a stirring run by the first-year franchise and the first major sports team in Las Vegas. While the expansion draft gets most of the attention in attempts to explain the unusual success, the moves made by McPhee in late February, when the trade deadline came along, have proven just as important.

"I wanted to wait as long as we could to determine what we had as a team," McPhee recalled. "At the trade deadline we felt it was a very good team. But it was getting thin, we were

getting banged up, guys out of the lineup, we had other guys playing hurt. We wanted to do the very best we could for this team that was playing its guts out, to help it."

He began moving pawns across the NHL chessboard, starting with the acquisition of forward Tomas Tatar from the Red Wings for three draft picks: a first-round pick in 2018, a second-rounder in 2019 and a third-rounder in 2021. Tatar brought with him a contract worth \$15.9 million through the 2020-21 season.

Perhaps the biggest trade was the one for bruising forward Ryan Reaves from Pittsburgh, a move that included the Golden Knights acquiring 40 percent of Derick Brassard's contract. Brassard going to Pittsburgh from Ottawa meant the talented center would not be

going to Winnipeg — the team Vegas just beat in a rugged Western Conference final.

Many wondered whether the trade would be worth it given Reaves' notoriety for physical play. But Reaves brought some brawn to the Golden Knights and scored the game-winning goal in Game 5 at Winnipeg.

"We just thought when we get into the games down the stretch and we're in the playoffs, we can have a guy that can play the game right," McPhee said. "Ryan did a good job of providing the line and getting us good, hard, safe minutes on some nights. Even though they're not scoring like some of the other lines, they're one of our better lines because they're playing the game right. The other team isn't getting chances, we're keeping it deep on them and playing physical on them."

McPhee and coach Gerard Gallant also wanted to make sure the chemistry built over the first five months of the inaugural season wasn't disrupted. And that meant keeping most of the lineup intact.

That included unrestricted free agents David Perron and James Neal, both of whose names swirled in trade rumors, and at the beginning of the season were perceived as rentals until the deadline.

Nobody saw the Golden Knights doing as well they did, so it was conceivable guys like David Perron and James Neal could've been sent to playoff contenders for draft picks or younger, up-and-coming players by the deadline.

As it turned out, Perron and Neal were already on a playoff contender and on their way to stellar seasons.

Tatum, Celtics beat Cavs for 3-2 lead

Associated Press

BOSTON — LeBron James is tired. The young Boston Celtics seem to be getting stronger.

Rookie Jayson Tatum scored 24 points — his ninth 20-point game of the postseason — and Boston beat Cleveland 96-83 on Wednesday night to take a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals.

The Celtics held James to two fourth-quarter points, earning their 10th straight victory in Boston to remain perfect at home this postseason and move within one win of their first trip to the NBA Finals since 2010.

“I just enjoy playing in the big moments, in the big games. That’s when I have the most fun,” said Tatum, who needs one more 20-point game to tie Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s rookie record of 10 in a postseason.

“I can’t say it enough: We’re one win away from being in the finals,” Tatum said. “The

playoffs bring the best out of people.”

Game 6 is in Cleveland on Friday night, with the decisive seventh game back in Boston on Sunday if necessary. The home team has won every game so far in the series, and none has been closer than nine points.

“We’re looking forward to having an opportunity to force a Game 7,” said James, who had 26 points and 10 rebounds but also had six turnovers. “It’s up to us to see if we can come back here for one more.”

Al Horford had 15 points and 12 rebounds, and 21-year-old Jaylen Brown had 17 points for Boston. Tatum added seven rebounds, four assists and four steals one day after finishing a single vote shy of a unanimous selection to the NBA’s All-Rookie team.

“The sky’s the limit” for Tatum, Brown said. “He’s going to continue to get better. He’s my workout partner. I ex-

pect it in myself and I expect it in him.”

Kevin Love scored 14 points for the Cavaliers, who are trying to reach the finals for the fourth consecutive season. James has played to the end in seven straight seasons.

To extend that streak, he’ll need to win two in a row.

One of them will be in Boston.

“Our focus — LeBron’s focus — is to win,” Cleveland coach Tyronn Lue said. “That’s the only thing that matters.”

The Celtics opened a double-digit lead in the first quarter and nursed it the rest of the way, holding on through a four-minute scoring drought that saw Cleveland score nine straight points to cut the deficit to 83-71. But Terry Rozier hit Horford with an alley-oop to snap the skid, and that was as close as the Cavs got.

Reserves Marcus Morris and Marcus Smart each scored 13.

Fading star: James had one basket on four shots in the fourth quarter, and afterward conceded that he was worn down. He finished 1-for-6 from three-point range in the game; the Cavaliers made just nine of 34 attempts from beyond the arc and shot just 42 percent overall.

“I had my moments, but I think everybody at this point is tired, worn down whatever the case may be,” he said. “I was still trying to make plays, put our team in position to win.”

Tip-ins: Teams that win Game 5 to take a 3-2 lead in a best-of-seven series win 83 percent of the time. ... James had 16 points, four rebounds and three assists at the half. Tatum had 13 points, and Horford had 10 points and seven boards at the break. ... It took until midway through the third quarter for a Cavs starter other than James or Love to make a basket.

Sato back to defend Indy 500 crown with new team

Associated Press

The fans lined up one by one in the most orderly fashion, waiting for their chance to take a photograph or snag an autograph from the first Japanese winner of the Indianapolis 500.

Good thing they were patient, too.

Takuma Sato spent time chatting with every single one of them.

The meet-and-greet came during a triumphant tour of Japan late last year, which included stops at the Twin Ring Motegi racetrack, Mt. Fuji and the Tokyo headquarters of Honda. Along for the ride was the massive Borg-Warner Trophy, with the face of Sato now molded into it alongside the rest of the Indy 500 champions, as it left the United States for the very first time.

“The fans were overwhelming,” recalled Scott Gallett, a vice president at BorgWarner Inc., who was on the trip as

the trophy’s caretaker. “We had people that came to multiple events. They’d just follow us around. And it was something to see such an appreciation for Takuma and what he’d accomplished.”

The 41-year-old Sato may not carry the name recognition of Unser or Andretti even after winning last year’s race for Andretti Autosport. But with a quick smile, easy laugh and ebullient personality, he was nonetheless a popular champion, so much so that nobody seemed to care a whole lot that he denied perpetual fan favorite Helio Castroneves from joining the hallowed club of four-time winners.

That was just in America, too. Sato was positively revered in Japan, where he first shot to stardom years ago driving in Formula One, far and away its most popular motorsports series.

When he first returned home last June to celebrate his win,

hundreds of fans and media were on hand to greet him at Narita Airport. And during a four-day victory tour in the Japanese capital, he visited the world-famous Shibuya Cross intersection — Tokyo’s version of New York City’s Times Square — where the finish of the Indy 500 was shown on a giant video screen.

The love affair continued into this season, too.

Sato threw out ceremonial first pitches for Cubs and Angels games. He got to spend some time with baseball sensation Shohei Ohtani, bringing two of Japan’s most popular sports stars together.

“I’ve had so many different things and people I’ve met — Olympians, baseball plays. Yes, Shotani,” Sato said this week, shortly before surviving bump day to make the 33-car field for Sunday’s race.

“Baseball, you know, I like it but I never played in my life, so I never thought I’d get to

throw out a first pitch,” he said. “Motor racing is big but baseball is the national sport.”

There are a few reasons why Sato has been in such high demand.

For one thing, he has a go-for-broke style that resonates among auto racing fans regardless of nationality. He’s willing to push the limit, even if it means crashing out in search of the win.

That was the case in 2012, when he challenged Dario Franchitti for the lead on the final lap. Sato was pushed low, lost control and the two cars clipped tires, sending him into the wall. Franchitti held on to win the race while Sato, despite his disappointment, was gracious in defeat.

That’s the other big reason he’s in demand: His personality is magnetic. He’s the kind of driver that fans can’t help but cheer for, and he returns their love for him in kind.

Ohtani helps Angels rally in 9th for win

Associated Press

TORONTO — Shohei Ohtani helped the Los Angeles Angels finally scrounge up some runs just in time.

Ohtani hit a tying two-run single, Andrelton Simmons added another two-run hit and the Angels rallied to beat the Toronto Blue Jays 5-4 on Wednesday night.

Simmons went 2-for-5 and right fielder Kole Calhoun made a game-saving throw in the bottom of the ninth as the Angels scored more than three runs for just the second time in their past 11 games.

"It was a big win," Simmons said. "We needed that."

Toronto turned to Tyler Clippard (4-2) in the ninth to protect a 3-1 lead, but he loaded the bases with consecutive walks to Mike Trout, Justin Upton and Albert Pujols.

Ohtani broke his bat but lined a single to center for his first hit of the series, and Simmons chased Clippard with a single

through the drawn-in infield.

Pinch-hitter Kendrys Morales hit an RBI double off Angels reliever Blake Parker in the ninth, but Calhoun kept the Angels in front by throwing out Curtis Granderson as he tried to score from third on a fly ball.

"That's a rocket," Los Angeles manager Mike Scioscia said. "There aren't many right fielders who are going to be able to stop a guy like Granderson but he put it right on the money."

Calhoun entered the day tied for the major league lead with six outfield assists.

"There's nobody else you want that ball going to," Simmons said. "You know he's going to give you a good throw every time."

Trout went 1 for 2 with three walks, raising his major league-leading total to 45.

The Angels came in 0-18 when trailing after eight innings.

Justin Anderson (1-1) pitched one inning for the win and

Parker survived a shaky ninth to record his third save. Parker struck out Justin Smoak to end it, stranding runners at first and second.

Yangervis Solarte and Devon Travis hit solo home runs for the Blue Jays, who have lost 13 of 17 at home.

Clippard blew a save for the second time in three appearances. The veteran has taken over the closer's role while Roberto Osuna is on administrative leave as MLB investigates an assault charge filed against him.

"These are tough days and tough losses to swallow," Clippard said. "You've just got to move on."

The Angels won despite having two runners thrown out at third base in the same inning by left fielder Granderson.

Zack Cozart was the first victim, getting caught too close to second base after a sliding Granderson couldn't handle Calhoun's sinking liner in the sixth. Granderson scrambled

to his feet and threw to third in time to get Cozart, who stumbled over the bag as he tried to avoid Josh Donaldson's tag.

The inning ended when Calhoun was thrown out trying to go from first to third on Trout's two-out single. Calhoun was tagged out before Martin Maldonado could score from second base, costing the Angels a run. Los Angeles challenged the play, but umpire Mike DiMuro's call stood.

Simmons made the defensive play of the game at shortstop, a leaping catch on Donaldson's line drive to end the seventh. Donaldson's liner had an exit velocity of 113 mph.

Simmons was ribbed by his teammates for a not-so graceful landing on the play, coming down face-first on the artificial turf.

"They showed me a couple of pictures of my face on the floor," Simmons said. "At least I didn't eat any grass. I'm just happy I made the play and I can still walk."

MLB roundup

Arrieta strikes out seven to tighten race in NL East

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jake Arrieta aced up.

Arrieta struck out seven in 62/3 sharp innings, Carlos Santana's swinging-bunt broke a scoreless tie and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Atlanta Braves 4-0 on Wednesday night.

The Phillies took two of three to win their first series against the NL East-leading Braves in four tries and closed within a half-game of first place.

Astros 4, Giants 1: Justin Verlander got some run support for the first time in nearly a month and led host Houston.

Indians 1, Cubs 0: Adam Plutko carried a no-hitter into the seventh inning and Andrew Miller provided stellar relief work, helping Cleveland beat

host Chicago.

Rangers 12, Yankees 10: Jurickson Profar had a bases-clearing double to put host Texas ahead to stay in a wild, series-clinching win over New York, which matched a major league record with four more homers.

Brewers 9, Diamondbacks 2: Travis Shaw hit a three-run homer and Jesus Aguilar had a go-ahead, two-run single during a seven-run fourth inning to help host Milwaukee send Arizona to its seventh straight loss.

Marlins 2, Mets 1: J.T. Realmuto and Starlin Castro each hit an RBI single off closer Jeurys Familia in the ninth inning, and Miami rallied past host New York.

Royals 5, Cardinals 2 (10): Drew Butera had a two-run

single in the 10th to lead Kansas City past host St. Louis.

Red Sox 4, Rays 1: Xander Bogaerts sparked a three-run rally in the ninth inning, David Price pitched the bulk of a three-hitter and visiting Boston won its fourth straight.

Padres 3, Nationals 1: Christian Villanueva hit a two-run double, Tyson Ross pitched into the seventh inning and San Diego salvaged the finale of a three-game series against host Washington.

Pirates 5, Reds 4 (12): Josh Harrison tripled in the go-ahead run off Dylan Floro (1-1) in the 12th inning — his fourth hit of the game — and visiting Pittsburgh rallied after wasting a late lead.

Tigers 4, Twins 1: Michael Fulmer won for the first time in four starts, Niko Goodrum

ended an 0-for-14 skid with a home run and Detroit stopped a five-game losing streak with a win over host Minnesota.

White Sox 11, Orioles 1: Dylan Covey (1-1) tossed seven strong innings for his first major league win, Yoan Moncada and Adam Engel each hit three-run homers and host Chicago pounded Baltimore.

Dodgers 3, Rockies 0: Kenta Maeda tossed two-hit ball into the seventh inning and struck out a season-high 12 to help host Los Angeles beat the NL West-leading Colorado for their second straight series win.

Mariners 1, Athletics 0: Marco Gonzales allowed two hits in seven innings in the longest start of his career, and visiting Seattle scored its only run on an error.