

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Some US Embassy workers told to leave Iraq

BY CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

Government employees at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and its consulate in Irbil began leaving Iraq following Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's "ordered departure" of nonemergency personnel Wednesday.

Employees were told to "depart Iraq by commercial transportation as soon as possible" and avoid U.S. facilities in the country, a security message posted on the embassy website and distributed via email said. The departure order was prompted by what U.S. officials have described in recent days as intelligence indicating Iran or its proxy forces were planning attacks on U.S. forces or interests in the region, State Department officials said.

"Given the increased threat stream we are seeing in Iraq, which we shared with the Iraqi government during [Pompeo's] visit on May 7 and in subsequent engagements, the secretary has decided to place Mission Iraq on ordered departure," an embassy spokesperson in Baghdad said by phone, reading prepared language about the matter.

The official declined to discuss the number of employees affected by the order but said they had already begun to depart.

The State Department mission in Iraq will have limited ability to provide routine and emergency services for Americans, officials have said, and normal visa services were temporarily halted at both the Baghdad and Irbil posts.

The U.S. Consulate in Basra was evacuated last fall, following what Pompeo described in September as "repeated incidents of indirect fire" from Shiite militias with ties to Iran. Operations there remain suspended, the embassy spokesperson said. Earlier this week, the embassy had warned U.S. citizens in the country to "remain vigilant" and avoid places where Americans were known to gather.

The State Department's ordinary process following an ordered departure calls for a review of the situation every 30 days and a final determination after six months, the embassy spokesperson said.

For more than a week, U.S. officials have said that there is an elevated threat level facing U.S. troops deployed in Iraq and Syria, primarily emanating from Iran-controlled Shiite militias. U.S. officials have also reportedly observed Iran-controlled

## Murky threats add to Gulf tensions

*Associated Press*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Murky claims of sabotage to oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates. A drone attack on a pipeline in Saudi Arabia. A U.S. aircraft carrier strike group steaming toward an unspecified threat.

The events roiling the Persian Gulf in recent days have the potential to affect everything from the price of a gallon of gas to the fate of nations.

And for those feeling confused by it all, don't worry: Everyone else seems to be puzzled too, only raising the possibility of a miscalculation.

Just as what sparked the rapid series of market-moving events remains unclear; so does the reason for the White House deploying warships and B-52 bombers to the region.

Iran marked the anniversary of President Donald Trump withdrawing the U.S. from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers by announcing it also would begin backing away from the accord. It set a 60-day deadline for Europe to offer it a better deal before it would begin enriching uranium to higher levels that the West fears could allow it to obtain atomic bombs.

"We are very worried about the risk of a conflict happening by accident with an escalation that is unintended really on either side but ends with some kind of conflict," British Foreign Secretary

Jeremy Hunt said recently. The main threat Hunt referred to was any confrontation between the U.S. and Iran. This has been brewing ever since Trump, who campaigned on tearing up Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, came to office.

After pulling out of the deal last year, the U.S. began a maximalist pressure campaign against Iran.

Iran announced May 8 it would back away from the nuclear deal. Four days later, on Sunday, everything changed. A pro-Iran Lebanese channel falsely claimed the Emirati port of Fujairah was ablaze after explosions, reports carried by Iranian state media and semi-official outlets. Hours later, the United Arab Emirates issued a vague statement alleging four ships "were subjected to sabotage operations."

By Monday, it was clear something happened. One of the four oil tankers affected, a Norwegian-flagged ship, clearly had a hole punched through its hull. A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said the other three did as well. Suspicion, but not publicly verifiable evidence, has fallen on nearby Iran.

Trump told reporters he would "absolutely" be willing to send troops to the Middle East, but that he's not planned for that and hopefully won't have to plan for that. In Tehran, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei cautioned: "Neither we, nor them, is seeking war. They know that it is not to their benefit."

vessels in the Persian Gulf transporting military hardware including missiles.

U.S. Central Command increased its force posture level for the anti-Islamic State coalition in Iraq and Syria and is at a "high level of alert as we continue to closely monitor credible and possibly imminent threats to U.S. forces in Iraq," Navy Capt. Bill Urban, a spokesman, said in a statement Tuesday.

Last week, the U.S. sent a bomber group to the Middle East and expedited the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group's

transit toward the Persian Gulf in response to the intelligence reports.

The U.S. is also sending a Patriot missile battery to the region and directing an amphibious warship carrying Marines, landing boats and helicopters to Central Command waters.

Trump administration officials have also reportedly discussed updated plans that would involve sending 120,000 troops to the region in the event U.S. troops were attacked by Iran-backed forces or the country restarted its nuclear program.

# CNO: South China Sea patrols 'consistent'

Associated Press

SINGAPORE — A top U.S. admiral said Wednesday the Navy has not stepped up maritime patrols to challenge China's sweeping territorial claims in the South China Sea but is maintaining a "consistent" presence in the disputed waters.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, addressing an international security conference in Singapore, sought to reassure regional partners, some of whom have opposing claims in the waters but benefit from good relations with China on other fronts.

"I've done the analysis so that I can state with confidence that our level of operations, our presence there, has been consistent over the decades," Richardson said.

"There's nothing that has spiked recently."

The International Maritime Security Conference was attended by representatives from 33 navies, including 16 navy chiefs. A Chinese delegate was also present.

The U.S. Navy maneuvers in the South China Sea, so-called freedom of navigation operations, "are by design nonprovocative, nonescalatory. They're just challenging excessive maritime claims in a very consistent basis," Richardson told the conference.

China has built military installations on seven man-made islands in the crucial waterways it claims on historical grounds. The other claimants, most notably the Philippines and Vietnam, have protested China's behavior but they also maintain good

relations with Beijing.

Richardson said "routine" freedom of navigation operations will proceed with transparency, consistency and predictability.

They usually involve a U.S. vessel sailing within an island's coastal waters without prior notification and draw sharp rebukes from China, which claims the South China Sea virtually in its entirety.

Meanwhile, U.S. and Philippine coast guard ships conducted a joint exercise in the South China Sea.

Capt. John Driscoll, commanding officer of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, told reporters during a port call in Manila that two Chinese coast guard ships were spotted in the vicinity of the exercise.

## Friday Night Fights promotes readiness

BY MATTHEW KEELER

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The 2nd Infantry Division has launched a Friday Night Fights tournament featuring progressively more difficult hand-to-hand combat to promote readiness within its formations.

The tournament, which began Friday, will bring soldiers from all major subordinate commands under 2nd ID to Sitman Fitness Center on Camp Humphreys each week to determine who will advance to the next round and fight to be the first Friday Night Fights champion.

"We are bringing the soldiers in because tournaments like this build their resiliency, their confidence in each other and their readiness," Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Dillon, the division's operations noncommissioned officer, told Stars and Stripes on Friday.

"If a soldier has the confidence to go out there, toe-to-toe with someone they don't know, overcome that fear of essen-

tially being in hand-to-hand combat with an individual, it's going to build their resilience, their self-confidence is going to grow and they will be more resilient when facing tough times out on missions," Dillon said.

Also, the tournament gives soldiers something fun to do, he said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Phil Barretto, 2nd ID's highest ranking enlisted servicemember, said the tournament is also a means for soldiers to relieve the stress they endure during their tour.

Thirty-four soldiers registered for the tournament debut, allowing for 17 bouts for the evening's fight card.

"At work we are expected to act a certain way and say roger to everything," said Spc. Matthew Murphy, of 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade. "When you're on the mats you can express yourself and do what you've learned and trained for. It's a good way to tap into energy that we can't really release throughout a typical day."

The tournament will advance in levels of difficulty and rules as it progresses each week.

## The story behind Navy plane that drew a phallus in the sky

*The Washington Post*

For nearly two years, little was reported on the infamous "sky penis" — crudely scrawled across Washington state airspace using exhaust from a naval jet.

Admired by some and declared childish by others, the illustration over the Okanogan Highlands prompted a full investigation into the unit involved. Thanks to the Navy Times, we finally have a direct look into the minds of the artists responsible.

The publication filed a Freedom of Information Act request and obtained an abundance of details regarding the phallic affair, which apparently was spurred by boredom and culminated in regret.

Two junior officers, both of Electronic Attack Squadron 130, reportedly found themselves with time to spare following a training session on Nov. 16, 2017 — and their EA-18G Growler jet was producing particularly strong contrails.

What came next is best explained by the lieutenants themselves; their occasionally not-safe-for-work dialogue was

picked up by the cockpit's video recording system and published by the Navy Times.

"Draw a giant penis, that would be awesome" one of the officers said to the pilot. "You should totally try to draw a penis."

"I could definitely draw one; that would be easy," the pilot responded. "I could basically draw a figure eight and turn around and come back."

When their masterpiece was completed, the lieutenants flew some distance away, laughing to themselves while capturing photos of their work, according to the Navy Times.

But the gleeful lieutenants suddenly realized they had a problem: their artwork was lingering much longer than anticipated.

As photos of the penis taken from the ground went viral, senior Naval officer Vice Adm. Mike Shoemaker vowed to look into the matter.

The lieutenants responsible were not identified in the report, and it was not immediately clear what discipline they faced.



# Alaska floatplanes collided at 3,300 feet

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Two sightseeing planes carrying cruise ship passengers in Alaska collided at about the 3,300-foot level before they crashed, the National Transportation Safety Board announced after a team arrived from Washington to investigate the crash.

The two planes collided in midair Monday. The Coast Guard raised the death toll to six people on Tuesday after finding the bodies of two people who had been missing.

Five of the dead were passengers and the sixth was the pilot of one of the planes.

Federal investigators said the larger plane, a de Havilland Otter DHC-3 with

10 passengers and its pilot, had descended from 3,800 feet and collided with a smaller de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver, carrying four passengers from the same cruise ship, the Royal Princess, and the pilot.

The federal investigation into the cause of the crash could take months.

Coast Guard Lt. Brian Dykens said Tuesday evening his agency and the Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Squad found the two bodies of those who were missing near the crash site of the smaller plane involved in the collision, a single-engine de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver.

The planes came down about a mile and a half apart, with some of the debris falling on land near George Inlet, about 8 miles from the cruise ship port of Ketchikan.

The Beaver, the smaller plane, appears to have broken apart in midair, according to Jerry Kiffer, duty incident commander of the Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Squad. He said the plane's tail and section of the fuselage were 900 feet from the aircraft's floats, which landed near shore.

The smaller plane was partially submerged in the shore of George Inlet after the single-engine plane overturned and hit some trees before crashing, according to Coast Guard Lt. Brian Dykens.

The larger Otter landed in water and sank, he said.

One passenger on the larger plane died, as did two passengers and the pilot on the smaller plane, Princess Cruises said in a statement.

## Lawmakers question FAA's approval of 737 Max plane

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's top aviation regulator assured Congress on Wednesday that the Boeing 737 Max, grounded after two deadly accidents, will return to flying only when a government analysis shows that it is safe.

The Federal Aviation Administration is under scrutiny for how it relied on Boeing to certify the Max and then didn't ground the plane until after the second crash, in March.

Acting FAA chief Daniel Elwell told the House aviation subcommittee that his agency "welcomes scrutiny that helps make us better."

Elwell listed several reviews of the FAA's handling of the matter, adding, however, that only the FAA would decide when the Max is safe enough.

"In the U.S., the 737 Max will return to service only when the FAA's analysis of the facts and technical data indicate that it is safe to do so," Elwell said.

House Aviation subcommittee Chairman Rick Larsen said he expects answers about the FAA's certification of the Max, the role of Boeing employees in assessing key features on the plane, and the FAA's role in developing pilot training for the

plane.

"The FAA has a credibility problem," he said.

Larsen added a note of economic urgency to the grounding of the Max, Boeing's best-selling plane and one that is built in his home state of Washington. He said Congress must help make the public feel safe about flying because "if they don't fly, airlines don't need to buy airplanes," and "then there will be no jobs" in aircraft manufacturing.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., criticized Boeing for pilot manuals that didn't mention a new automated flight control system implicated in both accidents, and for a design that pitched the plane's nose down based on readings from a single sensor that could fail.

The two plane crashes in Ethiopia in March and in Indonesia last October killed 346 people.

DeFazio, who heads the full Transportation Committee, also said Boeing hasn't provided documents that he and Larsen requested, saying he hoped the company would provide them voluntarily and soon.

"Boeing has yet to provide a single document," he said. "We've got to get to the bottom of this."

## House again unanimously approves Blue Water bill

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — For the second time in less than a year, the House unanimously approved a bill Tuesday that would extend benefits to Vietnam War sailors who have fought for years to prove they were exposed to the chemical herbicide Agent Orange.

The House voted 410-0 to advance the bill to the Senate, following a vote last year of 382-0.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 aims to grant Department of Veterans Affairs benefits to "Blue Water" Navy veterans who served aboard aircraft carriers, destroyers and other ships but had been deemed ineligible for the same disability benefits as others who served on the ground and inland waterways.

Agent Orange, a dioxin-laden herbicide, has been found to cause respiratory cancers, Parkinson's disease and heart disease, as well as other conditions.

The House approved a similar bill last June in the previous congressional session, but the effort stalled and ultimately failed in the Senate.

Reps. Mark Takano, D-Calif., and Phil Roe, R-Tenn., leaders of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, are pleading with the Senate to take the bill up quickly this time. They asked senators to vote and pass the bill by May 27, which is Memorial Day, less than two weeks away.

"That would be a proper, fitting tribute," Takano said.

It was unclear Tuesday whether the Senate would schedule a vote on the bill. There remained questions of whether the chamber would wait for the end of an ongoing court battle regarding Blue Water Navy veterans.

The Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled 9-2 in January that Blue Water Navy veterans are eligible for VA disability compensation and other benefits.

However, the Department of Justice could appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

"It's sort of got everybody in a freeze frame right now. Do we go ahead? What do we do?" Roe said Tuesday during a news conference prior to the House vote. "If we codify this in law, then [the VA has] their marching orders. There's absolutely a simple way to solve this."

# Ala. lawmakers vote to ban most abortions

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama lawmakers voted to outlaw almost all abortions in the state, igniting a legal and political battle over what would be the most restrictive law in the country as conservatives aim to challenge the Supreme Court's 1973 decision that legalized abortion nationwide.

The legislation would make performing an abortion a felony at any stage of pregnancy with almost no exceptions and is the most far-reaching attempt to limit abortion since *Roe v. Wade* was decided more than 40 years ago.

Abortion rights advocates Wednesday morning urged Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey to reject the bill and vowed swift legal action

if it is enacted.

"We are laser-focused on urging Gov. Kay Ivey to veto this dangerous bill," said Staci Fox, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Southeast. "If she chooses not to, then we will take this to court and ensure that abortion remains safe and legal and accessible in the state of Alabama."

Ivey has not commented on the bill but the Republican fixture in Alabama has long identified as anti-abortion and the bill's sponsor, Rep. Terri Collins, said she expects her to sign the legislation.

In Alabama and other conservative states, anti-abortion politicians and activists emboldened by the addition of conservative justices to the U.S. Supreme Court

hope to ignite legal fights and eventually overturn the landmark 1973 decision *Roe v. Wade*.

"*Roe v. Wade* has ended the lives of millions of children," Alabama Republican Sen. Clyde Chambliss said in a statement. "While we cannot undo the damage that decades of legal precedence under *Roe* have caused, this bill has the opportunity to save the lives of millions of unborn children."

Democrats criticized the bill.

"The state of Alabama ought to be ashamed of herself. You ought to be ashamed. Go look in the mirror," Sen. Bobby Singleton said "Women in this state didn't deserve this. This is all about political grandstanding."

## Student called mom while subduing shooter

Associated Press

LITTLETON, Colo. — A student who helped thwart a shooting at a suburban Denver high school says he was still pinning one of the attackers down when he decided to call one of the most important people in his life — his mother.

Joshua Jones, 18, a senior at STEM School Highlands Ranch, said during a news conference Tuesday he was watching "The Princess Bride" in his British literature class when a classmate pulled a gun and told everyone to stay still. Jones said he was acting on instinct when he, Kendrick Castillo and Brendan Bialy subdued one of two students who attacked the school south

of Denver on May 7.

Castillo was killed, and Jones was shot twice in one leg but said he is recovering.

"There wasn't a whole lot that was going through my mind at the time. Adrenaline and tunnel vision are a crazy thing," said Jones, who described himself as just a normal teenage kid. "They make it so that you don't really focus on anything but what's right in front of your face at that moment."

He did, however, have the presence of mind to call his mom.

"She always has been a problem solver for me," he said, adding that she told him not to worry. "It was a pretty quick conversation.

"It was really just something like, 'Hey, Mom. There's been a school shooting. I've been involved. The authorities are on the way. They're going to get an ambulance and I'm going to go to the hospital. That's all I got right now for you.'"

The second shooter was captured by an armed security guard.

Authorities have said those acts of bravery helped minimize the bloodshed from the attack, which also wounded eight students, all of whom have since been released from the hospital.

Jones declined to talk about the shooters Tuesday, instead focusing on Castillo and his own physical and emotional recovery.

## Explorer recounts events of deepest-ever ocean dive

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Taking the hourslong journey to what is believed to be the deepest point mankind has visited in any ocean was a complicated one, and for Victor Vescovo, it meant being constantly on the alert as he monitored his state-of-the-art vessel.

But when he reached 10,928 meters into the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench of the Pacific Ocean, Vescovo took the advice of the man whose record he just broke — Oscar-winning movie director James Cameron — and took 15 uninterrupted minutes to take in the view and the enormity of the moment.

Cameron told him he'd be busy, of course, but noted that "few if any people have seen what you've seen" so "deeply appreciate

how fortunate you are to see it," Vescovo recalled in an interview.

Last month's groundbreaking mission was filmed as part of an upcoming Discovery Channel documentary series that will chronicle Vescovo's trips to the furthest parts of the world's waters — the Atlantic Ocean, the Southern Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean. He has done all except the Arctic plunge, which is set for the fall.

The entire journey took nearly 12 hours — four hours to descend, four hours spent at the bottom, then about four hours to ascend again. Vescovo, a businessman and amateur pilot who has also traversed the highest mountain peaks, including Mount Everest, said the goal of the expedition was not to best Cameron's mark in the ocean,

but to go to areas of the waters that were unexplored.

"I was stunned to discover when I did my research that of the five oceans, four had never had a visitation to their bottoms," he said. "I thought it was about time that someone actually did that."

For his journey, Vescovo traveled in a vessel called the SDV Limiting Factor, a titanium craft that is billed as the "ultimate submersible" and the only one able to travel to such depths. It was outfitted with high definition cameras that documented everything, including creatures unknown to man.

He saw a very unusual jellyfish in the Indian Ocean but there was also an unsettling find — trash, particularly plastic, in the deepest part of the water.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Hearing is delayed for 900-pound man

**VA** RICHMOND — A hearing scheduled in Virginia in a cocaine conspiracy case was delayed after the 900-pound defendant had to be taken to the hospital.

U.S. Magistrate Judge David J. Novak continued the hearing for Kenneth T. Hicks, 48, until May 21. It's expected that Hicks will plead guilty in the case.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported that Novak revoked Hicks' bond and directed that for Hicks' own safety and dignity — he cannot wear clothing — that he appear in the loading dock of a courthouse for proceedings. It is expected that he will arrive via ambulance.

## Man topples toilet with woman inside

**MO** CARSONVILLE — A man was charged with an attack at a suburban St. Louis light rail station in which authorities said he toppled a portable toilet with a woman trapped inside.

Christopher Ewing, 40, of Uplands Park was arraigned Monday on felony counts of kidnapping, attempted kidnapping and assault.

Charging documents say he punched a woman exiting a portable restroom, closed her inside and pushed it over as she was calling 911 for help.

Authorities said he then tried to force another woman to give him a ride in her pickup before he was arrested.

## Record walleye doesn't stand up

**ND** BISMARCK — North Dakota doesn't have a new state record walleye after all.

Lincoln angler Tom Volk on April 21 was shore-fishing the Heart River in Mandan when he hauled in a 16-pound, 9-ounce walleye. The state Game and Fish Department initially said it was a record.

The agency now says an investigation has concluded that the fish was not legally hooked and can't be recognized as a record.

That means the state record continues to be a 15-pound, 13-ounce walleye that Bismarck angler Neal Leier caught in the Missouri River in May 2018.

## Geyser roars back to life after 3 years

**WY** YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — A noisy geyser in Yellowstone National Park has roared back to life after three years of quiet.

Ledge Geyser is one of the biggest in Yellowstone's Norris Geyser Basin.

The Billings Gazette reported the geyser shoots hot water at an angle up to 125 feet high and a distance of 220 feet.

Yellowstone geologist Jeff Hungerford said Ledge Geyser is noisy because its water and steam must pass through a narrow opening in the ground.

## Giant wooden troll has new home in ski town

**CO** BRECKENRIDGE — A huge wooden troll has found a new home in a Colorado ski town.

The Summit Daily reported that the troll was relocated to a location behind an ice arena in the south end of Breckenridge. The troll's creator, Danish artist Thomas Dambo, visited the location to affix a heart-shaped stone to the troll's wooden body.

It was originally assembled beside a trail last summer for

a festival, but it was so popular with visitors that nearby homeowners complained about the crowds. It was taken down in November.

## Police: Man stole 4 vehicles in chase

**TN** CHATTANOOGA — Authorities arrested a man suspected of leading them on a chase through three counties that included four stolen vehicles, the last of which was driven into the Tennessee River.

Kendall Speegle faces multiple charges including aggravated burglary and theft over \$10,000.

The Chattanooga Times Free Press reported the incident began when Rhea County deputies responded to a report of suspicious activity. Arriving at the scene, they saw a white Chevrolet pickup being driven through a closed garage door.

Deputies chased it through parts of two other counties before it was abandoned. The driver fled on foot, stealing and abandoning two other vehicles before he stole a Chevrolet Cruze and drove it into the Tennessee River.

## Governor makes lemonade state drink

**AZ** PHOENIX — Gov. Doug Ducey signed off on legislation thought up by a Gilbert teenager making lemonade Arizona's official state drink.

The bill signed by the Republican governor faced an unusual battle for feel-good legislation in the Senate before ultimately passing. Senators originally rejected it in April.

The measure by Republican Rep. Warren Peterson passed the House on a 57-3 vote. Senators then brought up several

objections.

One proposed margaritas instead, another objected to glorifying a sugary beverage, and others thought it was silly to waste time on a lemonade bill while a state budget plan languishes.

## Police: Kids caused \$80K in house damage

**ID** POCATELLO — Police in southern Idaho said three young children caused roughly \$80,000 in damage by vandalizing a home before trying twice to burn it down.

The Idaho State Journal reported the children, ages 9, 12 and 13, were charged in juvenile court with second-degree arson and malicious destruction of property.

The home reportedly had heavy damage from urine and paint, dishes and lamps and appliances were broken and furniture was destroyed. Police said the children tried to burn the home down to hide the vandalism, but the fires extinguished themselves.

## Town sets fine for pilfering beach rocks

**MA** WESTPORT — A Massachusetts town is sick of homeowners and businesses raiding its beaches for free landscaping materials.

So the coastal community of Westport approved a town bylaw that would impose a \$250 fine on people who take rocks or vegetation from town-owned beaches.

Sean Leach, vice president of the Westport Beach Committee, said he's seen people and commercial landscapers fill up trucks with rocks that they use for fire pits, rock gardens and driveway aprons.

From wire reports

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# Pelicans win lottery, get top draft pick

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Zion Williamson has never been to New Orleans.

That might be changing very soon.

The Pelicans bucked seriously long odds Tuesday night, winning the NBA Draft lottery and the right to have the first chance at selecting the former Duke star next month — and potentially pairing him with Anthony Davis in what would immediately become one of the league's most intriguing front-court duos.

"I don't believe the universe makes mistakes," said David Griffin, who is barely a month into his tenure as New Orleans' executive vice president of basketball operations. "I just think we have something special going on."

Griffin doesn't play the lottery, unless the jackpot is one of those billion-dollar-type enormous ones.

Maybe he should. The ping-pong balls seem to bounce his

way a lot.

Griffin was with Cleveland when the Cavaliers won the lottery in 2011, 2013 and 2014. And now it's the Pelicans, his new employer, which has struck lottery gold. They defied the odds to do it; the Pelicans entered the lottery with a 6% chance of winning the No. 1 pick for the June 20 draft.

So now, instead of going into a summer where they may have traded Davis — the player New Orleans got when it won the lottery in 2012, the player who was openly disgruntled this season — the Pelicans have a chance at becoming much better, and fast.

"This just jump-starts the process," Griffin said. "It'll be harder for me to mess it up than it would have been before this."

Memphis will choose second, New York third and the Los Angeles Lakers will pick fourth. The Pelicans, Grizzlies and Lakers all moved up to get a top-four spot; New York, Phoenix and Cleveland had the

best odds of winning the lottery at 14% each, and none of those clubs even got a top-two pick.

The lottery had a new format this year, one that the league hoped would even the playing field in a number of ways and didn't make all-out tanking a more enticing option to teams looking to maximize their chance at securing the No. 1 pick.

The Knicks, Suns and Cavs didn't have much interest in winning this season, with none winning more than 19 games. The ping-pong balls apparently weren't interested in having them win the lottery, either.

"I don't think you should ever not play to win basketball games," Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry said. "I don't see where it would help you."

Cleveland will pick fifth, followed by Phoenix, Chicago and Atlanta. Washington has the No. 9 pick, Atlanta goes again at 10 and Minnesota is at No. 11. Charlotte is next up, followed by Miami at 13 and Boston at 14. That pick was conveyed to

the Celtics by Sacramento as part of an earlier trade.

The Hawks felt they were big winners, too, after getting two top-10 picks.

"There are always good players," said Hawks guard Kevin Huerter, the No. 19 pick in last year's draft and part of Atlanta's contingent at the lottery. "Every team just has to go out and find them."

UCF center Tacko Fall, the 7-foot-6 draft hopeful, played against Williamson in the second round of the NCAA tournament — a 77-76 Duke victory that went down to the very last moment, a game where Williamson scored 32 points. Fall was asked Tuesday who he would take with the No. 1 pick in this draft, and he did not hesitate for even a second before answering.

"Zion," Fall said. "He's a once-in-a-generation player. I'd seen him on TV a lot, but when you play against this kid, you just see it. He's different."

## Curry leads Warriors past Trail Blazers in Game 1

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry had all kinds of room for a change and capitalized, finding his shooting touch in a hurry to get Golden State on a roll. Portland's defenders were too far back in the paint or a step behind all night.

"Practice shots," Trail Blazers star Damian Lillard said of Curry's wide-open chances.

So far, the Warriors are showing they can keep winning until Kevin Durant gets healthy.

Making it look easy again, Curry knocked down nine three-pointers on his way to 36 points, leading the two-time defending champions past the Trail Blazers 116-94 on Tuesday night in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

"I know what I'm capable of on the floor. The situation calls for me to be a little bit

more aggressive and hopefully that'll continue," said Curry, who came in shooting 37.1% on threes this postseason. "Obviously it's nice to see the ball go in. I didn't shoot the ball well for 4½ games the last series and got off to a good start tonight. I want to maintain that. Every game is different, you've got to re-establish yourself. That's my perspective no matter how I play."

Curry shot 12-for-23 in his fourth 30-point performance this postseason, finding far more open looks than he had in the last round against Houston. The two-time NBA MVP outplayed the Portland duo of Lillard and CJ McCollum, who combined to go 11-for-31 against a strong Golden State defense.

"It's good to see Steph have a game like that at a time that obviously we need him most,"

Draymond Green said.

Klay Thompson had 26 points, including a late one-handed slam. Green established the energy on both ends early for the well-rested Warriors, finishing with 12 points, 10 rebounds, five assists, three blocks and two steals.

Lillard scored 19 points back home in Oakland, just miles away from where he grew up.

"That's part of what makes it special, I'm from here," Lillard said. "I could walk home from here if I wanted to, that tells you how close it is."

McCollum had 17 and missed five of his six threes as the cold-shooting Blazers went just 7-for-28 from long range.

Game 2 is Thursday night, and the Warriors are unlikely to have Durant back from a strained right calf. An update on Durant's status is expected that day once the two-time

reigning NBA Finals MVP is re-examined.

"I think we played a terrible game and we still had a chance going into the fourth quarter," McCollum said, "so we need to tighten some things up and look forward to the game on Thursday."

Curry came off screens with authority and matched his postseason career high for threes, also accomplished in Game 1 of last year's NBA Finals against Cleveland. He found his groove far earlier than in the Game 6 clincher at Houston on Friday night, when he scored all 33 of his points in the second half.

Little brother Seth struggled with three points for Portland, which shot 36.1% overall.

Green has at least 10 rebounds in six straight playoff games, matching his postseason career-best streak of six, also done last year.



# Bruins on verge of sweep with 2-1 win

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Tuukka Rask and the Boston Bruins stood tall during an early deluge of shots and penalties, patiently waiting for their chance to take over the game.

Then one big burst put them on the brink of another trip to the Stanley Cup Final.

The Bruins beat the Carolina Hurricanes 2-1 on Tuesday night, taking a 3-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals after Chris Wagner and Brad Marchand scored 5:07 apart in the second period.

"The moral of the story is, we got through the first period — however you want to describe it — and off we went after that," coach Bruce Cassidy said.

Rask stopped 35 shots for the Bruins, who have won six straight postseason games for the first time since 1978. They are one victory away from their third Stanley Cup appearance in nine years.

Boston will go for the sweep on Thursday night.

"This year, I feel like we really have each other's backs," Rask said. "We've been in some tight games, and then our depth comes in, and we score some goals and we take over the games."

Calvin de Haan scored and Curtis McElhinney made

29 saves for the Hurricanes while starting in place of Petr Mrazek, who allowed 10 goals in the first two games of the series.

This one was closer, but it still wasn't enough to keep alive Carolina's postseason perfection at home — where a pig named Hamilton looks on from behind the corner boards.

"There's no way around it. There's no way to sugar-coat it," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. We got kicked in the you-know-where."

And now they're in an unenviable spot. Only four teams in NHL history have ever rallied to win a series they trailed 3-0, and none since Los Angeles in 2014 — though Carolina captain Justin Williams was on that Kings team that rallied to beat San Jose in the first round.

"I'm probably going to give you ... the cliches that are going to be thrown to you and everything," Williams said.

This one got away from them in the first 7½ minutes of the second, when the Bruins claimed control with their fourth line turning a turnover by Carolina's Brock McGinn into a 1-0 lead at 1:21.

Sean Kuraly collected the puck and passed low to Joakim Nordstrom, with the former Hurricane then finding Wagner alone in front for a tap-in.

"That line scored a goal by playing the right way, pursuing pucks," Cassidy said. "They're fourth-liners. You don't expect them to make a tic-tac-toe play, but they did, and good for them."

The Bruins entered with the NHL's best postseason power-play unit — converting on a full third of their chances in the playoffs — and they were 1-for-5 in this one with the man advantage against a Carolina penalty kill that began with a sub-50% success rate in this series.

But that one goal was a significant one.

With 19 seconds left on a high-sticking minor on Nino Niederreiter, Marchand put Boston up 2-0 when his shot from between the circles trickled past McElhinney.

It loomed large because the Hurricanes pulled within a goal when de Haan's slap shot off a draw got through Rask's pads for the defenseman's first goal since Nov. 8.

The Bruins thought Torey Krug had an insurance goal with 15:45 left, but the officials ruled Jake DeBrusk interfered with McElhinney — a decision that was confirmed after Boston's challenge led to a review in Toronto.

That seemed like a significant development.

Rask made sure it ultimately wasn't.

After stopping 20 shots in the first period alone — and becoming the first Boston goaltender since Tim Thomas in 2011 with that many in a postseason period — he remained difficult for the Hurricanes to figure out. Thwarting perhaps their best chance to tie it, Rask stuffed a slick power-play redirection by Jordan Staal with just under 13 minutes left.

"Probably right now," Cassidy said, "is the best I've seen him play."

This one was chippy throughout, with 14 penalties — 10 in the first period alone. That includes six by Boston and three by Williams, who also took his team's only two penalties in a 6-2 loss in Game 2.

But the Hurricanes' power play, which entered as the worst of the eight teams that advanced out of the first round, failed to score on five chances in this one, including four in the first, and fell to 1-for-12 with the man advantage in the series.

"Obviously, a little bit of frustration," defenseman Dougie Hamilton said. "I think we came out how we wanted to. We had a lot of shots, and obviously a lot of power plays and stuff. But we couldn't score, so that hurts."

## Jets fire GM Maccagnan 3 weeks after draft

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mike Maccagnan helped lead the Jets' coaching search this offseason, spent big money in free agency and oversaw the team's draft.

Now, stunningly, he's out as New York's general manager.

Team chairman and CEO Christopher Johnson announced the decision to fire Maccagnan in a statement posted Wednesday on the team's Twitter account. Coach Adam Gase will serve as the acting general manager in Maccagnan's place while the Jets search for a replacement.

"This morning, I informed Mike that he was being relieved of his duties as general manager of the team, effective immediately," Johnson said in the statement. "Mike

helped to execute the strategic vision of the organization during the last four seasons and especially the past few months. However, I came to the decision to make a change after much thought and a careful assessment of what would be in the best long-term interests of the New York Jets."

The timing is particularly strange because Maccagnan ran the Jets' draft less than three weeks ago, including taking defensive tackle Quinnen Williams with the No. 3 overall pick. There were some rumors, however, that there was tension between Maccagnan and Gase — which both denied.

Gase was irritated by the suggestion there were problems between the two when asked about the reports, saying last Friday:

"I don't know who decides to put that stuff out there. It kind of pisses me off a little bit. We have discussions on everything."

ESPN reported that Brian Heimerdinger, the Jets' vice president of player personnel, was also fired as part of the team's front office shake-up.

Maccagnan, who was hired as GM in 2015, was not relieved of his duties this past offseason when coach Todd Bowles was fired. He was fully involved in the coaching search and hiring Gase to replace Bowles. Maccagnan was also active in free agency in March, spending more than \$125 million to land the likes of running back Le'Veon Bell, linebacker C.J. Mosley and wide receiver Jamison Crowder.

# Guerrero hits first major-league HRs

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Vladimir Guerrero Jr. received some advice from his Hall of Fame father after hitting the first two home runs of his career. In return, the younger Guerrero plans on sending his father a few mementos from his historic night.

Guerrero homered twice to become the third-youngest player to hit his first two major league homers in the same game, and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the San Francisco Giants 7-3 Tuesday night.

Guerrero, who finished with three hits and four RBIs, became the youngest in franchise history to go deep as the Blue Jays won the opener of a six-

game trip after losing five of six on a homestand in which they totaled eight runs.

"He just said like he always told me, 'Don't look for home runs. They're going to come,'" Guerrero said through a translator. "I'm going to give both balls and the bat to my dad. I'm going to keep using everything that I used today except the bat that I really want to give to my dad."

The touted 20-year-old Guerrero homered in the first inning against Giants opener Nick Vincent (0-2), his first in 14 big league games. His drive to straightaway center was measured at 111.3 mph and traveled an estimated 438 feet.

"He was talking about it dur-

ing batting practice and he did it," Toronto manager Charlie Montoyo said. "We knew that was coming. He's that good. He could carry a team if he gets hot. He can do stuff like that."

The Toronto slugger had a hard-hit single in the second, then added an even more impressive blast in the sixth off Reyes Moronta, a three-run drive estimated at 451 feet.

The crowd at Oracle Park let out a collective gasp as the ball sailed over the wall in left-center. Winning pitcher Trent Thornton even got caught up watching.

"I was on second base and I'm just watching it go and go, and I'm like, 'Wait, I gotta run,'" Thornton said. "He had a

great game. That was just a lot of fun."

The only players younger than Guerrero to hit their first two home runs in the same game were Brian McCall in 1962 (19 years, 248 days) and Manny Machado in 2012 (20 years, 35 days).

Two-sport star Danny Ainge was the youngest Blue Jays player to homer, doing so on June 2, 1979, at 20 years, 77 days old. Guerrero is younger by 18 days.

Guerrero grounded out in his final at-bat. He entered the day batting .191 with one RBI.

"He wasn't pressing," Montoyo said. "He just plays and he has fun. He's an even-keeled kind of kid."

## MLB roundup

# Red Sox's Sale fans 17 in 11th-inning loss to Rockies

Associated Press

BOSTON — Chris Sale pleaded but did not push when manager Alex Cora told him his day was done.

Cora was not about to risk the health his ace left-hander, even after he struck out a career-high 17 over seven innings. Sale may have righted whatever went wrong during an 0-5 start, but Cora still went to the bullpen for the eighth, costing Sale the chance to chase the major league record of 20 strikeouts in a nine-inning game.

Even after the Rockies rallied to a 5-4 win in the 11th, Cora and Sale seemed comfortable saying the skipper made the right call.

"AC's got two handshakes, and you get one or the other. And you know which one is the 'done' one," Sale said. "I'd love to have gone back out there, but as I said, I'll never question anything he does."

Sale became the first pitcher in major league history to fan 17 in a start of no more than seven innings. Boston pitch-

ers combined to strike out 24, but the Red Sox had their five-game winning streak come to an end.

Sale, who isn't the most cheerful guy in the clubhouse even after a win, couldn't help but smile a little after this one.

"I love this game and to be able to have a chance at doing something like that is special," Sale said. "But at the same time, it's still a close game. You've got a job to do and you just try to hold it down when you can."

**Twins 4, Angels 3:** Mitch Garver hit a two-run homer and tagged out Shohei Ohtani trying to score the tying run in the eighth inning before leaving with an injury, helping host Minnesota hold off Los Angeles.

**Mariners 4, Athletics 3:** Daniel Vogelbach, Tim Beckham and Mitch Haniger homered and Roenis Elias pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in host Seattle's win over Oakland.

**Padres 6, Dodgers 3:** Joc Pederson and Cody Bellinger hit two-run homers, Clayton

Kershaw threw seven solid innings and host Los Angeles beat San Diego in the opener of a two-game series.

**Cardinals 14, Braves 3:** St. Louis hit four home runs, including three-run shots by Marcell Ozuna, Yadier Molina and Kolten Wong, and beat struggling right-hander Mike Foltyniewicz and host Atlanta.

**Mets 6, Nationals 2:** Wilson Ramos hit a first-inning grand slam after Washington failed to complete what should have been a routine double play, Noah Syndergaard took a no-hitter into the sixth, and visiting New York won the game.

**Astros 11, Tigers 4:** Carlos Correa started another Houston onslaught with a three-run homer in the first inning, and his team routed host Detroit, extending its winning streak to seven games.

**Rays 4, Marlins 0:** Charlie Morton pitched six strong innings and Avisail Garcia homered and drove in three runs in Tampa Bay's win over host Miami.

**Brewers 6, Phillies 1:** Bran-

don Woodruff threw one-hit ball for six innings, Yasmani Grandal and Ryan Braun homered and Milwaukee topped host Philadelphia.

**Cubs 3, Reds 1:** Kyle Hendricks had three hits, including a two-run double, and pitched into the ninth inning as Chicago beat host Cincinnati.

The Cubs are 10-2 in May, their best start to the month since 1977. Chicago has won 22 of 28 games for the NL's best record at 25-14.

**Indians 9, White Sox 0:** Jordan Luplow hit two of Cleveland's five homers and Carlos Carrasco cruised through seven innings in a rout of host Chicago.

**Pirates 6, Diamondbacks 2:** Josh Bell homered twice and Joe Musgrove allowed one hit through seven strong innings as Pittsburgh beat host Arizona.

**Royals 11, Rangers 5:** Hunter Dozier drove in three runs, top prospect Nicky Lopez had an RBI single in his big league debut, and host Kansas City routed Texas.