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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Army: Some soldiers to get raises next year

BY ALEX HORTON
Stars and Stripes

SAN ANTONIO — Recruiters, drill sergeants and the storied guards of the Tomb of the Unknowns are among the soldiers who will receive pay bumps next year, the Army said Wednesday.

An Army panel decided those specialties will receive incentives due to their uncommon degree of responsibilities requiring “extraordinary effort,” an Army news release stated.

Those incentives range from about \$100 to more than \$450 per month, said Lt. Col. Randy Taylor, an Army personnel spokesman.

The panel meets every two years to discuss recommendations for pay increases among various specialties for soldiers with the rank of private first class or above, said Larry Lock, the chief of the 2016 special pay panel.

The panel also makes recommendations to adjust or delete past incentives, the release stated.

Those specialties join Rangers, command sergeants major, special operations aviation soldiers and other personnel who receive pay incentives.

Soldiers of the Caisson platoon, the last remaining full-time horse-mounted unit responsible for escorting deceased troops and veterans for burial at Arlington National Cemetery, were specifically approved for the pay incentive.

Incentives also will go to Old Guard soldiers who stand watch at the Tomb of the Unknowns, the news release stated.

Navy: 134K sailors' data stolen

BY ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The names and Social Security numbers of 134,386 sailors were accessed by “unknown individuals” from a contractor’s laptop computer, the Navy announced Wednesday.

The Navy said it was notified by Hewlett Packard Enterprise Services on Oct. 27 that one of its employees supporting a Navy contract had a laptop compromised, according to a service statement.

There is no evidence for now that the personal data have been misused, according to the preliminary results of an ongoing

Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigation.

“The Navy takes this incident extremely seriously — this is a matter of trust for our sailors,” Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Robert Burke said, according to a Navy statement. “We are in the early stages of investigating and are working quickly to identify and take care of those affected by this breach.”

The Navy will contact affected sailors by phone, mail and email, according to the statement.

A Navy official said the data came from the Career Waypoints database, known as

C-WAY, which sailors use to submit re-enlistment and Navy Occupational Specialty requests, according to Navy Times.

The Navy is considering credit-monitoring options for affected sailors, according to the statement.

The federal government provided free credit monitoring services after hackers beginning in 2014 penetrated the Office of Personnel Management, stealing the data of more than 20 million civilians and servicemembers.

The OPM learned of the hack more than a year later after a private contractor uncovered the theft.

USS Rushmore commander steps down

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Following a rare request to be relieved of duty on Monday, Cmdr. Sarah H. De Groot — the highly decorated skipper of the warship USS Rushmore — has been replaced.

Cmdr. DeWayne Sanders temporarily takes the helm of the landing dock ship, according to a statement issued by Naval Surface Force spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Rebecca Haggard.

De Groot, 42, declined to comment when contacted by The San Diego Union-Tribune. Officials indicated that she was not under investigation for any wrongdoing.

The Rushmore, an aging, Whidbey Island-class amphibious warship, has been undergoing shipyard maintenance in San Diego, its homeport.

The crew’s training phase is not slated to begin until early 2017.

De Groot has long ties to the Rushmore. She took command of the vessel in March

after serving two years as the warship’s executive officer. She also was the Rushmore’s first lieutenant during her first department head tour.

During the June 1 celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Rushmore’s commissioning, De Groot proudly told her sailors that it was an honor to serve aboard the vessel, adding that their “success during the maintenance availability... will ensure the ship will have many more successes to come.”

The Rushmore boasts a storied history. During its first deployment, the amphib spearheaded the 1992 beach landing in Somalia, kicking off Operation Restore Hope. It became the largest military-led humanitarian mission in history.

The 38th vice chief of naval operations, Adm. Michelle Howard, commanded the Rushmore in 1999 — the first black woman to skipper an American warship.

In 2015, the Rushmore rescued 65 survivors clinging

to a life raft that was spotted drifting through Indonesia’s Makassar Strait following a ferry disaster.

Raised in Long Beach, Calif., De Groot has awards including five Navy and Marine Corps commendation medals and the Meritorious Service Medal.

After serving aboard the amphibious warship Pearl Harbor, she became the supercarrier Constellation’s combat systems maintenance officer in the early stages of the invasion of Iraq. She returned to Iraq to become the force protection officer for Destroyer Squadron 50, where she guarded the nation’s offshore oil infrastructure during a brutal counterinsurgency war.

Her shore tours have included serving as the flag secretary for the commander of Naval Surface Force Atlantic and later as the top tactical action officer mentor at Afloat Training Group San Diego.

De Groot’s resignation likely ends her 18-year Navy career.

Pentagon holds GI Bill benefits for reservists

BY ALEX HORTON
Stars and Stripes

SOTO CANO AIR BASE, Honduras — Nearly 300 Marines came home from their seven-month deployment to Central America this week. They have a few things in tow — wood carvings from local artisans and the grit of experience responding to Hurricane Matthew, among the world's worst recent natural disasters.

But the reservists returned without something that most were counting on: seven months of GI Bill benefits.

A relatively new and obscure deployment code, a measure the Pentagon created in 2014 to scale back spending on benefits, is the reason. By law, reservists involuntarily mobilized under Title 10, section 12304b, do not receive credit for the GI Bill while they are activated.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is paid out by the amount of active duty time racked up. Reservists say deployments are in

high demand in part because education benefits will grow much faster than relying on drill time.

Nearly a million reservists have deployed since Sept. 11, 2001, according to data from the Pentagon's Defense Manpower Data Center.

Marine Sgt. William Hubbard is one of nearly 600 Marine reservists affected since 2014. He deployed to Honduras in May as part of the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, a rapid-response unit based in Honduras to strengthen security in the region and respond to natural disasters, like Hurricane Matthew in October.

His civilian job lends him a special perspective on restricting access to the GI Bill.

He is the vice president of government affairs at Student Veterans of America, a national veterans advocacy group that focuses on education policy.

Hubbard said fellow Marines in Honduras are stunned as the

word has slowly spread through the ranks. Most incorrectly believed they would receive seven to nine months' worth of credit for GI Bill benefits, including Hubbard, a benefits legislation expert.

"Reservists serve their country like any other component, and they have to balance civilian employment, education and the military," Hubbard said. "And to say they don't rate the full benefit? It doesn't add up."

Every reserve component has used authorization 12304b since its creation; 1,780 reservists from across the military have deployed under the code, according to data from each reserve service branch released to Stars and Stripes.

The actual number is certainly higher. That count does not include the Army National Guard. The National Guard Bureau was unable to produce data on mobilizations under that authorization after weeks of requests.

The Army Reserves account-

ed for the largest share, with 1,100. The Air National Guard has activated 87 airmen since 2014.

The Navy Reserves, with six activations, used authorization 12304b instead of more common authorities to learn its unique procedure and to retain that institutional knowledge, said Cullen James, a Navy Reserves spokesman.

James and other Navy spokesmen could not say how the mobilization of individual sailors is made under 12304b, referring questions to Pentagon officials with insight into manpower and personnel staffing issues. Those repeated requests also went unfulfilled.

The exception has fueled the belief that reservists are not afforded the same benefits as active-duty troops. Hubbard estimated only a third of the reservists at Soto Cano knew they would not receive GI Bill accrual time, based mostly on his effort to spread the information.

Osprey maintainers take pride in their vital role

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION FUTENMA, Okinawa — Tyler Simon spends his nights assessing risks as a day trader, and he's pretty good at it. The Marine corporal is even better at his day job, which is all about avoiding risks.

Simon, 30, is one of about 170 aircraft maintainers from Marine Aircraft Group 36. He and the other members of his team from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 — Lance Cpl. Eric Brundy, Pvt. 1st Class Eilis Flaherty and Lance Cpl. Taegen Todd Duncan — have an important yet largely unheralded job maintaining MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and Navy ships in the Pacific.

Not only are they responsible

for safeguarding the lives of their fellow Marines and their nearly around-the-clock flights, they also hold the political sensitivities of the Japanese people in their calloused hands.

Simon, like every MAG-36 mechanic, knows that just one mistake could mean a loss of life or a surge in protests on the island, where a small-but-vigorous movement has been working to reduce U.S. military presence. He manages the pressure with a positive attitude, leaning on his training and his fellow Marines, and he never becomes complacent.

"I take a lot of pride in what we do," said Simon, who works on his own and inspects his team's efforts. "I'm putting my name on what I do with the other Marines."

Simon, from Missouri, spoke to Stars and Stripes in early No-

vember while turning nuts and bolts on an aircraft ahead of a long-range raid for Blue Chromite, a Navy-Marines interoperability exercise. The aircraft was to be airborne for more than nine hours the next day, traveling to just outside Tokyo and back with a full complement of combat-loaded Marines.

The Marines stay busy with exercises, certifications and humanitarian operations throughout the region, said Simon, who understands the risks.

Simon and his team are also working to restore the Osprey's reputation. The helicopter-plane hybrids were seen as controversial and were met with protests when they arrived several years ago after high-profile crashes.

However, the Marine Corps' workhorse has recently performed admirably in the humanitarian and combat spheres.

Japan will soon add the Osprey to its aircraft arsenal, and other tilt-rotor platforms are in development.

Simon said he likes the way Ospreys maneuver and how they can change from helicopter to airplane mode during flight.

"If you're not expecting it, it kind of rattles your stomach a little bit, like if you're driving a car and you go over a big hump and you get that weightlessness feeling, but it is pretty fun to fly on," he said.

After a mission, Simon said they make sure each aircraft is serviced and ready to go so they never have to rush the day before a long flight or major exercise.

"Once we're done, then we get to see it fly and then come back. And sometimes we don't have to fix it because it's not broke. Those are good days."

Clinton urged to seek recount

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A group of election lawyers and data experts has asked Hillary Clinton's campaign to call for a recount of the vote totals in three battleground states — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — to ensure that a cyberattack was not committed to manipulate the totals.

There is no evidence that the results were hacked nor that electronic voting machines were compromised. The Clinton campaign on Wednesday did not respond to a request for comment as to whether it would petition for a recount before the three states' fast-approaching deadlines to ask for one.

President-elect Donald Trump won Wisconsin and Pennsylvania by razor-thin margins and has a small lead in Michigan. All three states had been reliably Democratic in recent presidential elections.

The group, led by voting-rights attorney John Bonifaz

and J. Alex Halderman, the director of the University of Michigan Center for Computer Security and Society, contacted the Clinton campaign this week. That call, which was first reported by New York Magazine, raised the possibility that Clinton could have received fewer votes than expected in some counties that rely on electronic voting machines.

But Halderman, in an article posted on Medium on Wednesday, stressed that the group has no evidence of a cyberattack or voting irregularities. He urged that a recount be ordered just to eliminate the possibility.

"The only way to know whether a cyberattack changed the result is to closely examine the available physical evidence — paper ballots and voting equipment in critical states like Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania," Halderman wrote.

Recounts, which are often costly and time-intensive efforts, likely would be initiated only if the Clinton camp pushed

for one, though Wisconsin independently announced that it would conduct an audit of its vote. A call for a recount, particularly coming on the heels of a fiercely contested and sharply partisan election, likely would be cheered by Democrats but denounced by Republicans eager to focus on governing.

A request for comment to the Trump transition team was not returned immediately.

Trump's campaign had long believed that his message of economic populism would resonate in the Rust Belt. He frequently campaigned in Pennsylvania and made a late push in both Wisconsin and Michigan, successfully turning out white working-class voters whom pollsters may have missed.

Many pre-election polls showed Clinton with slight leads. While advocating for the recounts, Halderman writes that "the most likely explanation" for Trump's surprise win "is that the polls were systematically wrong."

Investor is chosen for Commerce

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Wilbur Ross, the billionaire investor considered the "king of bankruptcy" for buying beaten-down companies with the potential to deliver profits, is President-elect Donald Trump's choice for commerce secretary, a senior transition official said.

The official isn't authorized to publicly discuss the matter and requested anonymity.

Reputed by Forbes to be worth nearly \$3 billion, Ross would represent the interests of U.S. businesses domestically and abroad as the head at Commerce. His department would be among those tasked with carrying out the Trump administration's stated goal of protecting U.S. workers and challenging decades of globalization that largely benefited multinational corporations.

With a Florida home down the road from Trump's Mar-a-Lago retreat, Ross, 78, played a role in crafting and selling the president-elect's tax-cut and infrastructure plans. Ross has suggested that much of America is disgruntled because the economy has left middle-class workers behind and has said Trump represents a shift to a "less politically correct direction."

For 24 years as a banker at Rothschild, Ross developed a lucrative specialty in bankruptcy and corporate restructurings. He founded his own firm, W.L. Ross, in 2000 and earned part of his fortune from investing in troubled factories in the industrial Midwest and in some instances generating profits by limiting worker benefits. That region swung hard for Trump in the election on the promise of more manufacturing jobs from renegotiated trade deals and penalties for factories that outsourced their work abroad.

A specialist in corporate turnarounds, Ross buys distressed or bankrupt companies at steep discounts, then seeks to shave costs and to generate profits.

School choice advocate gets nod

Associated Press

Within minutes of being named Donald Trump's choice for education secretary, Betsy DeVos pledged to oversee a "transformational change" in U.S. education, something the wealthy Republican donor has pursued in her home state of Michigan and beyond as an advocate for school choice.

"I am honored to work with the president-elect on his vision to make American education great again," DeVos, 58, tweeted after the announcement Wednesday afternoon. "The status quo in ed is not acceptable."

Just as swiftly came the backlash — from some conservatives who warned she previously had supported the Common Core education standards that Trump railed against during the campaign, and from teachers' unions fiercely op-

posed to the kinds of reforms she supports.

"To clarify, I am not a supporter — period," she tweeted Wednesday as questions circulated about her position on the Common Core learning standards adopted by many states to improve student readiness for college or a career.

On her website, DeVos said the higher standards supported by governors made sense at first but "got turned into a federalized boondoggle."

Trump called her "a brilliant and passionate education advocate."

"Under her leadership, we will reform the U.S. education system and break the bureaucracy that is holding our children back so that we can deliver world-class education and school choice to all families," the incoming president said.

For her part, DeVos was slow

to warm to Trump. She told The Associated Press in July, "A lot of the things he has said are very off-putting and concerning." At the Republican National Convention in July, she was a delegate for Gov. John Kasich of Ohio.

The choice reinforces Trump's pledge to make school choice an education priority. In September, he pledged to funnel \$20 billion in existing federal dollars into scholarships for low-income students, an idea that would require congressional approval.

DeVos, a former Michigan Republican Party chairwoman, leads the American Federation for Children, which along with its state-affiliated PACs contributed to 121 races in 12 states in the general election to support pro-school-choice candidates, according to its website.

CDC: Abortion rate at lowest in decades

BY DAVID CRARY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The number and rate of abortions tallied by federal authorities have fallen to their lowest level in decades, according to new data released Wednesday.

The latest annual report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, incorporating data from 47 states, said the abortion rate for 2013 was 12.5 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44. That is down 5 percent from 2012, and is half the rate of 25 recorded in 1980.

The last time the CDC recorded a lower abortion rate was in 1971, two years before the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* deci-

sion, which established a nationwide right for women to have abortions. Abortion was legal in some states at that time.

The CDC tallied 664,435 abortions in 2013 from the 47 states, down 5 percent from 2012 and down 20 percent from 2004. The CDC does not receive abortion data from California, Maryland and New Hampshire — and thus its total is less than the widely accepted current estimate of more than 900,000 abortions per year in all 50 states.

In 1990, when California was supplying data, the CDC recorded a peak of more than 1.4 million abortions.

The CDC's latest findings meshed with

an Associated Press state-by-state survey conducted last year — with extensive data from 2014 — showing that abortions had been declining in virtually every state since 2010. There were big declines in conservative states passing laws to restrict abortions and also in more liberal states that protected abortion rights.

The CDC report suggests there are several factors behind the abortion decline, including a sharp drop in adolescent pregnancies, expanded coverage of contraception costs by health care plans and increased use of effective, long-lasting contraceptive methods such as intrauterine devices and hormonal implants.

Drugs, alcohol not involved in bus crash; 6th child dies

Associated Press

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — A school bus driver had no drugs or alcohol in his system when he careened off a road and smashed into a tree, killing six elementary schoolchildren, police said Wednesday.

Chattanooga Police Sgt. Austin Garrett said a toxicology test was performed on Johnthony Walker, 24, the bus driver now in jail on five vehicular homicide charges.

Later Wednesday, the police department said in a statement that a sixth child had died of injuries from the crash and another vehicular homicide charge would be added.

Federal authorities said Walker left the designated bus route and had driven onto a curvy road while carrying 37 children on their way home from Woodmore Elementary School.

Police said he was driving well over the posted 30 mph limit when he lost control of the bus and slammed into a tree. Five children remain in the hospital.

National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Christopher A. Hart said it's unclear why driver Walker left the designated route and drove the bus down Talley Road.

"One of the things we're ex-

ploring is A, has he done it before, and B, if so, why?" Hart said.

He said Walker, who has no criminal record in the state, had taken on a second job at an Amazon Fulfillment Center, and part of the agency's investigation will look at whether fatigue played a role in the wreck.

The NTSB also will bring in a specialist to analyze video and audio recordings from the bus' interior cameras that were damaged in Monday's wreck.

Police disputed one woman's claim that the driver asked the children if they were "prepared to die" just before the wreck. Jasmine Mateen, whose 6-year-old daughter was among the dead, said one of her two surviving children who were on the bus told her about the driver's remarks.

Garrett, however, said at a Wednesday news conference: "I want to be very clear on this. No witness we have spoken with has that information or provided it directly to our investigators."

He added that investigators have not yet interviewed the children on the bus and asked anyone with additional information to bring it to police.

Mich. university officer dies of gunshot wound

Associated Press

DETROIT — A Wayne State University police officer has died a day after he was shot in the head while on patrol near the campus in Detroit.

Officer Collin Rose, 29, died Wednesday about 5:45 p.m. at a hospital, Detroit police Sgt. Michael Woody said.

"This is a tragedy felt by all of us," Wayne State President M. Roy Wilson said in a statement. "Collin served Wayne State with distinction, and we owe those he left behind our deepest sympathies and our strong support."

Wilson said Rose, a five-year veteran of the university's police force, is the only Wayne State officer killed in the line of duty.

Police said a suspect in the shooting was arrested late Tuesday night a few blocks from where Rose was shot, but no charges have been filed. The Detroit man in custody has had several run-ins with police.

Detroit Police Chief James Craig had said Rose was on duty about 6:30 p.m. Tuesday when he radioed to say he was investigating possible thefts of navigation systems from vehicles and that he was about to speak to someone on a bicycle. Officers who arrived on the scene found Rose injured on

the ground.

Wayne State, which has more than 27,000 students, employs about 65 officers.

Authorities said ambush-style shootings on Sunday left one police officer dead in San Antonio, Texas, and another wounded in St. Louis, underscoring fears in the law enforcement community that the uniform is increasingly becoming a target.

Wayne State Police Chief Anthony Holt said that wasn't the case in Detroit on Tuesday.

"I don't believe it was an ambush," Holt said at a news conference Wednesday. "I don't believe he was specifically targeted."

Holt said no weapon has been recovered and that the investigation is ongoing. "We're trying to put the pieces together," he said.

University spokesman Matt Lockwood said Wednesday morning that Rose had undergone surgery and that his parents and fiancée were by his side.

Rose was a cadet with the New Baltimore Police Department and had his first job as an officer with the village of Richland, Lockwood said. Rose, a cyclist interested in dog training, graduated from Ferris State University in 2010 and was president of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mural paying tribute to military painted over

VA VIRGINIA BEACH — A tribute to the U.S. military at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront is being painted over.

The Virginian-Pilot reported that as of Monday morning, white primer and gray paint covered more than half of the nearly 12,000-square-foot mural that depicts Navy jets flying above the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier.

Artist Sam Welty painted the six-story-tall mural years ago across the back wall of the Howard Johnson hotel. Now that the building is being leased out, the Howard Johnson owners are not required to keep the mural.

The hotel's management company, VAB Management Group, said in a statement the hotel has unsuccessfully tried to work with Welty to preserve the mural.

Welty said he hadn't heard from the hotel owners in six months but was aware it needed a touch-up.

Chicken rescuer helps retrieve runaway turkey

PA PITTSBURGH — A noisy rooster's piercing calls will no longer plague Pittsburgh.

Following several weeks on the lam, the male chicken was scooped up Sunday afternoon by Frank Cantone, who runs a chicken rescue in St. Louis.

Cantone offered to help Henry Gaston remove the bird after hearing Gaston faced fines for having a rooster on his property. Roosters are banned in Pittsburgh, and neighbors told a city inspector the bird was waking them up early in the morning.

Cantone failed to apprehend the fugitive fowl on Satur-

day when it flew about 75 feet up into a tree. He and his two young daughters managed to trap the rooster the following day by luring it into a corner with a hen on a harness.

OD victim is rescued after falling from bluff

CA ORANGEVALE — A woman was rescued from a slippery spot on a steep bluff along the American River in suburban Sacramento after tumbling about 70 feet onto a ledge a few feet above the frigid waters.

The Sacramento Bee reported that the 46-year-old woman was hoisted up the bluff by Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District firefighters who tied one end of a rope to an ambulance and hauled her up the slope.

The incident began about 10:30 p.m. Sunday when crews were dispatched to a home in nearby Fair Oaks for an overdose report. When firefighters and Sacramento County Sheriff's deputies arrived, the overdose patient was gone. She was located on the bluffs and transported to a hospital.

Filmmaker's restaurant may have been a stunt

OH COLUMBUS — An Ohio pop-up restaurant promoted by the maker of the documentary film "Super Size Me" as a test for a restaurant concept may have been a stunt about how marketing can misrepresent food quality.

Morgan Spurlock's "Holy Chicken!" in Columbus was announced as a "mission-driven, farm-to-table, all-natural" chicken "experience." It was praised by the mayor's office and other agencies, and promoters said it sold out of food within hours Saturday.

ThisWeekNews reported few diners noticed the restaurant's

twist, including table cards explaining that the chickens were raised similarly to "industrial chickens" and a sign suggesting a wooden counter would make customers think of "cute, little farms with barns and other healthy stuff."

Man seeking religious exemption from taxes

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Attorneys for an Indianapolis man have argued before a state appellate court that Indiana's religious freedom law protects him from paying taxes.

Rodney Tyms-Bey, 41, argued at trial that the state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act is a valid defense for not paying his state taxes because he sees them as a burden on his religion. The court rejected his argument.

Tyms-Bey owes about \$1,000 and was charged in 2014 with three counts of felony tax evasion, The Indianapolis Star reported. Oral arguments in his case went before the state Appellate Court on Monday.

Some defendants in Indiana have been citing the 2015 law as a defense because a clause in the act permits individuals to use the law in criminal legal proceedings.

Man, 60, injured by falling tree at home

NH BARRINGTON — Authorities in New Hampshire said a 60-year-old man was injured when he was struck by a falling tree.

Barrington Fire Chief Rick Walker told Foster's Daily Democrat that crews were called to a private home around 9 a.m. Saturday. The man had been pinned under the tree.

Walker said the man was airlifted to a Boston hospital.

The victim wasn't immediately identified.

2 plead not guilty in snowplow truck thefts

RI CRANSTON — Two men charged in connection with the 2015 theft of two Cranston-owned trucks fitted with snowplows have pleaded not guilty.

Jason Lehman, 42, of Warwick, and John Lyons, 48, of Providence, were arraigned last week on charges that include larceny and destruction of public property.

Authorities said the trucks were stolen from a fenced-in area at Cranston Stadium last December. The thieves drove through a locked gate.

The trucks were found abandoned in Providence on Dec. 27, but the plows had been removed. The plows remain missing.

Firefighter dies during Savannah River rescue

GA SAVANNAH — A firefighter died after trying to save people who fell into the Savannah River.

Local news organizations reported that Master Firefighter Michael Curry was helping pull people from the water after a loading dock collapsed Saturday.

The Savannah Fire Department said in a news release that Curry suffered a "medical condition" during the rescue. He was transported to the hospital and was pronounced dead Saturday afternoon.

As many as 30 people were injured and 13 were hospitalized as a result of the dock collapse.

A scholarship has been created for Curry's 8-year-old son.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Michigan-Ohio State: Great storylines

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Besides having national playoff implications, this year's Ohio State vs. Michigan game is full of questions, storylines and intriguing matchups.

Can Ohio State quarterback J.T. Barrett solve Michigan's best-in-the-nation defense?

Will Michigan superstar Jabrill Peppers be able to shut down Curtis Samuel, Ohio State's do-it-all hybrid back?

Will injured quarterback Wilton Speight be healthy enough to play for Michigan? If not, can backup John O'Korn rebound from a lackluster performance last week to hurt Ohio's State's ball-hawking defense?

If Ohio State triumphs, does it belong in the College Football Playoff even without a conference championship on its resume?

Most of those answers will become clear Saturday afternoon after No. 2 Ohio (10-1, 7-1 Big Ten) State and No. 3 Michigan (10-1, 7-1) tangle in Ohio Stadium in the 2016 version of the storied rivalry. "The Game" hardly needs any more hype, but it returns to the national

spotlight for the first time in a decade because the winner is likely to end up in the playoff, with the loser shut out.

"Yeah, we're playing for it all, pretty much," Ohio State center Pat Elflein said. "The stakes are always pretty high for this game. Everyone knows you can save a season by beating this team, no matter what your record is, but definitely the stakes are higher."

Michigan tight end Jake Butt, who graduated from the same suburban Columbus high school as Elflein, said he can't wait to get on the field at Ohio Stadium.

"No. 2 vs. No. 3, really everything on the line," Butt said. "For both teams it's an absolute must-win game, so it's going to be a great atmosphere. Everybody is going to be tuning in to watch this."

Some other things to watch as Michigan visits the Horseshoe on Saturday.

Let's get physical

Peppers said he has watched other teams, including Penn State, Wisconsin and Northwestern, give the Buckeyes

problems by getting extra physical. He and the Wolverines plan to test their rival in the same way.

"We're going to see how they respond with physicality," Peppers said. "We come with bad intentions. It's never our intention to hurt anyone, but when we hit you, we want you to feel it."

Peppers, who plays a position that is a hybrid between linebacker and defensive back, believes Michigan is in a much better position to win The Game than it was a year ago when Ohio State won in a rout.

"We got a lot of smart, savvy guys who have been through the 5-7 seasons and winning seasons," he said. "We got a lot of experience on our side. We got much better athletes this year, too."

Containing Barrett

Michigan defensive end Chris Wormley said the experience playing against other teams that run a spread offense should help them to corral Barrett, who's passed for 2,304 yards and 24 touchdowns, and added

722 yards and seven scores on the ground. Last year against Michigan, Barrett ran for 139 yards and three touchdowns in Ohio State's 42-13 win.

"The last couple years we played him he put some numbers up against us," Wormley said. "We've seen a lot of similar offenses this season, the spread, different option plays they have, quarterback runs and things like that, so we've been preparing all year. Obviously they have different athletes and things like that. It's going to be a game where we're going to have to shut down a few players, and I feel we're ready for that task."

Last home game for J.T.?

Barrett demurred when he was asked this week if the Michigan game might be his last at Ohio Stadium. In other words, would he leave for the NFL after this season?

"Nah, I haven't really begun to think about that, really," he said. "I'm just taking each week, trying to focus on the moment. But yeah, my mind, I haven't got there."

Iron Bowl is for state championship, and that's enough

Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — The only title Alabama likely has on the line this week is of the statewide variety, and that's typically more than enough.

The top-ranked Crimson Tide enter Saturday's Iron Bowl against No. 16 Auburn with their spot in the Southeastern Conference championship game already reserved. Since the only other unbeaten team in the Top 25 is No. 14 Western Michigan, a win probably isn't even mandatory to make the playoffs.

That doesn't diminish the game's meaning to Tide players and fans.

"It might have been cool to look at from the outside, but from the inside it's still going to

be a highly contested game and definitely a lot on the line for both teams," Alabama defensive end Jonathan Allen said. "It's still an important game for us."

This one seemed destined to have the Western Division title and playoff hopes potentially on the line for both teams, just like the 2013 game the Tigers won on a 109-yard return of a missed field goal. Auburn's loss to Georgia two weeks ago diminished the big-picture stakes somewhat.

The game between No. 2 Ohio State and No. 3 Michigan has clearly usurped the pre-eminent role in terms of national title implications.

Alabama's just trying to remain above the fray that has

swept up every other Power-5 conference contender along the way with at least one loss. The Tide, meanwhile, have skated along to 23 consecutive wins.

Alabama (11-0, 7-0 SEC, No. 1 CFP) enters the week as a 17½-point favorite over the Tigers (8-3, 5-2, No. 15), who may be without injured quarterback Sean White and tailback Kamryn Pettway.

The next one for 'Bama is against No. 13 Florida in Atlanta for the SEC title.

That's for folks outside the team to talk about, mostly.

"We don't really worry about hype too much," Alabama tailback Damien Harris said. "We just worry about doing whatever we have to do to be the better team."

The Tide might have gotten jolted awake after a game against FCS Chattanooga that was still 14-3 after 40 minutes before winding up a 31-3 victory. It left coach Nick Saban telling a TV interviewer at halftime that he was "embarrassed" by the performance.

Even a defense that hasn't given up a touchdown in nine-plus quarters was disappointed with its effort.

"We didn't play good that last game," linebacker Ryan Anderson said. "It felt like we gave up 21 points last game. I was embarrassed."

Center Bradley Bozeman called the performance "kind of a wake-up call for us."

That's not typically needed leading up to the Alabama-Auburn game.

No. 1 Kentucky routs Cleveland State

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — As top-ranked Kentucky develops in small steps, the on-court relationship between Malik Monk and De'Aaron Fox is clearly off and running.

Monk scored 23 points and Fox had 16 points and 11 assists to propel the Wildcats to a 101-70 rout of Cleveland State on Wednesday that was impressive on several fronts.

With leading scorer Isaiah Briscoe sidelined by a back injury, the freshman duo picked up the slack and did it quickly, helping Kentucky (5-0) roll to a 16-2 lead that was never threatened in its first game this season as the nation's No. 1 team. They combined for 31 first-half points alone, with 19 from Monk, whose 4-for-4 start from long range and 8-of-12 shooting overall helped him match his career scoring best set last week against Michigan State.

"We played well," Fox said. "Without Isaiah today, people stepped up and we ended up getting the win."

They combined for 15 assists — including 10 in the first half

— and seven rebounds with two steals apiece, looking to each other when Kentucky was in transition.

Which was often.

"We have great chemistry," Monk said. "Although we never played that much together, we know where we are on the court. That's another thing that makes this team so close."

Their chemistry was evident in the first half when Monk stole the ball near midcourt and drove toward the basket before bouncing the ball off the glass perfectly back to the trailing Fox, whose thunderous dunk brought a roar from the crowd of 22,441 at Rupp Arena.

No. 2 Villanova 63, College Of Charleston 47: Josh Hart had 13 points and 11 rebounds and Kris Jenkins scored 11 points for the host Wildcats.

No. 4 North Carolina 71, No. 16 Wisconsin 56: At Lahaina, Hawaii, Kennedy Meeks had 15 points and a career-high 16 rebounds and Joel Berry II scored 22 points as the Tar Heels won their fourth Maui Invitational title.

No. 6 Duke 88, William &

Mary: Freshman Frank Jackson scored 19 points to lead the host Blue Devils.

No. 10 Louisville 68, Old Dominion 62 (OT): At Paradise Island, Bahamas, Donovan Mitchell scored all 15 of his points after halftime for the Cardinals in the opening round of the Battle 4 Atlantis.

No. 13 Oregon 79, UConn 69: At Lahaina, Hawaii, Chris Boucher scored 21 points and Tyler Dorsey added 19 as the Ducks took fifth place in the Maui Invitational.

No. 17 Purdue 96, Auburn 71: At Cancun, Mexico, Carsen Edwards broke out of his shooting slump with 21 points and the Boilermakers shot 17-for-26 from three-point range to capture the Cancun Challenge title.

No. 20 Baylor 71, VCU 63: At Paradise Island, Bahamas, Al Freeman scored 15 points and came up with three baskets during a critical second-half sequence to help the Bears in the opening round of the Battle 4 Atlantis.

No. 24 Michigan St. 73, St. John's 62: At Paradise

Island, Bahamas, freshman Miles Bridges had 22 points and a season-high 15 rebounds to help the Spartans pull away late in the first round of the Battle 4 Atlantis.

South Carolina 61, No. 25 Michigan 46: Sindarius Thornwell had 21 points and 10 rebounds to lead the host Gamecocks past the cold-shooting Wolverines.

Service academies

Army 88, Columbia 83: Jordan Fox scored a career-best 22 points as the visiting Black Knights rallied.

Fox was 8-for-14 from the field including four from distance for Army (2-3). John Emezie added 16 points, Matthew Wilson had 13 points and Adam Roe chipped in 11.

Navy 78, UMBC 66: Ryan Pearson scored 15 points on 6-for-9 shooting from the field and the host Midshipmen snapped a three-game losing streak by beating the Retrievers.

George Kiernan went 3-for-3 from three-point range and 5-for-6 at the line for 14 points.

Well-traveled Vasiljevic finds home at Miami

Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Dejan Vasiljevic is a native of Canada with Serbian roots who grew up in Australia and has now found a home as a shooting guard for the Miami Hurricanes.

Vasiljevic is the most well-traveled member of a talented freshman class already playing a significant role for the Hurricanes, who compete in an eight-team tournament in Orlando beginning Thursday.

In Miami's first three games, all wins, Vasiljevic has averaged 11.7 points while going 9-for-18 from three-point range.

"He can really, really shoot," coach Jim Larranaga said. "I told him he reminds me of me — a really good offensive player who doesn't play much D. He really tries, but you're guarding a different kind of player, an athlete who is very skilled, and he hasn't faced that kind of athlete on a regular basis. So he's learning."

Vasiljevic's background suggests he's quick to adapt.

"My parents are from the former Yugoslavia," he said. "Because of the war, they decided to move here and there."

He was born in Calgary and moved to Melbourne when he was 6. He has Canadian and Australian citizenship, and plans to apply eventually for citizenship in Serbia, where he still has family. His parents and sister live in Australia.

Teammate Ja'Quan Newton said Vasiljevic was shy and quiet when he first arrived.

"But now he's talking the language we talk," Newton said. "He's picking up our lingo. He's very playful."

And he can play. His parents both played semi-professional handball, but he took up basketball at 12 and quickly became hooked, modeling his game after Croatian NBA star Drazen Petrovic, who died in a car crash four years before Vasiljevic was born.

Vasiljevic has given the young Hurricanes a perimeter threat as the offense retools after the departure of last season's

leading scorers, Sheldon McClellan and Angel Rodriguez.

His shooting ability caught the eye of college recruiters in the summer of 2015 playing for a U-19 team in Europe. He made visits to Miami and Stanford and chose the Hurricanes because he liked Larranaga and the weather.

"I thought it was the perfect fit for me," he said. "It's a new family to me, a new home."

Vasiljevic's parents probably won't make it to the United States this season to see him play in person. He said he misses mom's cooking, and notes there are no longer kangaroos in his backyard.

Vasiljevic wants to get a degree and plans on a four-year stay rather than an early exit for the NBA. He likes Miami so well he helped land two prospects in next year's recruiting class and would be happy to give other prep players his sales pitch.

"I'm 2-for-2," he said. "Let's see if I can keep it going."

Love's huge night powers Cleveland

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Kevin Love didn't think anything unusual was going on Wednesday night. The scoreboard told a different story.

Love scored 40 points, including an NBA-record 34 in the first quarter, and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Portland Trail Blazers 137-125.

Love fell three points shy of the league record for points in any quarter, set by Golden State's Klay Thompson, who scored 37 in the third on Jan. 23, 2015.

As his point total grew on every possession and the Quicken Loans Arena crowd was on its feet each time he shot the ball, Love just went about his business.

"I'm not trying to be nonchalant about it, but sometimes when you're in it you don't necessarily feel it," he said. "There was nothing out of the ordinary as far as our play-calling and our flow of the game. I just felt

like guys were finding me."

LeBron James recorded his 44th career triple-double with 31 points, 10 rebounds and 13 assists, but thought Love owned the night.

"Obviously we had a huge hot hand," James said. "That was lightning. We just kept giving him the ball and he kept knocking them down."

Cleveland also set a franchise record with 20 three-pointers and showed no signs of being rusty in its first game since Friday.

Love, who set a team record for points in a period, made 11 of 14 field-goal attempts, including 8 of 10 on three-pointers in the first quarter. He made his first six shots with five three-pointers.

Warriors 149, Lakers 106: Stephen Curry had 31 points with seven three-pointers and nine assists, Kevin Durant scored 28 and host Golden State discovered an astonishing first-half offensive flow to run away from undermanned

Los Angeles.

Pelicans 117, Timberwolves 96: Anthony Davis had 45 points and 10 rebounds, and New Orleans beat visiting Minnesota for its fourth straight victory.

Clippers 124, Mavericks 104: Chris Paul scored 18 points, DeAndre Jordan had 16 points and eight rebounds and host Los Angeles routed Dallas in a matchup of the teams with the best and worst records in the NBA.

Spurs 119, Hornets 114: Kawhi Leonard scored 30 points and visiting San Antonio beat Charlotte for its seventh straight victory.

Raptors 115, Rockets 102: DeMar DeRozan scored 21 of his 24 points in the third quarter and Toronto beat host Houston to snap a two-game skid.

Kings 116, Thunder 101: DeMarcus Cousins had 36 points and 13 rebounds, leading Sacramento over visiting Oklahoma City.

Hawks 96, Pacers 85:

Dwight Howard had 23 points and 20 rebounds to help visiting Atlanta beat Indiana.

Grizzlies 104, 76ers 99 (20T): Marc Gasol scored 27 points, Mike Conley had 25 and Memphis outlasted host Philadelphia for its sixth straight victory.

Pistons 107, Heat 84: Andre Drummond had 18 points and 15 rebounds, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 22 points in Detroit's victory over visiting Miami.

Jazz 108, Nuggets 83: George Hill scored 22 points in his return from an eight-game absence and host Utah beat Denver to break a four-game losing streak.

Suns 92, Magic 87: Alex Len had 17 points and 12 rebounds, and Eric Bledsoe added 16 points to lead Phoenix past host Orlando.

Celtics 111, Nets 92: Isaiah Thomas scored 23 points, Avery Bradley had 22 and visiting Boston beat Brooklyn.

Ovechkin scores hat trick to lift Capitals over Blues

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Alex Ovechkin stretched out his arms in celebration, teammates mobbed him along the boards and jubilant fans launched their hats onto the ice.

This was the performance they had waited to see.

Ovechkin scored his first hat trick this season and 16th of his 10-year NHL career to lead the Washington Capitals over the St. Louis Blues 4-3 on Wednesday night.

In the process, the three-time MVP and six-time goal-scoring champ showed the attitude that echoed his best seasons.

"He played with excitement again," Capitals coach Barry Trotz said of Ovechkin, whose 12 goals now tie him for second in the league. "I think sometimes we say he's not scoring enough and all that. ... I've been reducing the minutes a little bit

and spreading them out. He's fresher and I think it will pay off in the long run."

The 31-year-old Ovechkin played fewer than 16 minutes but had a goal in each period to move one hat trick ahead of Florida's Jaromir Jagr for the most among active players.

Ovechkin's second multi-goal game this season also propelled the Capitals to their third win through four games of a five-game homestand.

"Sometimes you just feel right away when you have an opportunity to shoot the puck," Ovechkin said, "and obviously feel the puck on your stick and just go out there and use the momentum."

Penguins 6, Rangers 1: Sidney Crosby had two goals and an assist during a five-goal second period and visiting Pittsburgh shut down division-leading New York in a rout.

Sharks 2, Blackhawks 1: Logan Couture and Joel Ward scored in the first period and host San Jose gave Chicago its second straight loss.

Oilers 6, Avalanche 3: Connor McDavid extended his scoring surge with a goal and two assists in the third period, Milan Lucic had four points and visiting Edmonton beat Colorado.

Flames 2, Blue Jackets 0: Chad Johnson made 34 saves for his second shutout in five starts, leading visiting Calgary over Columbus.

Kings 4, Islanders 2: Dwight King scored twice in 25 seconds late in the third period, Peter Budaj stopped 22 shots and host Los Angeles defeated New York for its fourth consecutive win.

Red Wings 2, Sabres 1 (SO): Gustav Nyquist scored in regulation and in a shootout

to help visiting Detroit snap a four-game losing streak.

Predators 5, Stars 2: Filip Forsberg, James Neal and Ryan Johansen each had a goal and an assist to lead host Nashville over Dallas.

Lightning 4, Flyers 2: Alex Killorn and Ryan Callahan scored 12 seconds apart in the third period to help host Tampa Bay beat Philadelphia.

Devils 5, Maple Leafs 4 (SO): Mike Cammalleri had four points in his return to the lineup and Jacob Josefson scored in the shootout as host New Jersey defeated Toronto.

Wild 3, Jets 1: Mikko Koivu, Jonas Brodin and Zach Parise scored to lead Minnesota past road-weary Winnipeg.

Canucks 4, Coyotes 1: Bo Horvat and Sven Baertschi each had a goal and two assists, helping visiting Vancouver beat Arizona.