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Stakes high for Trump Asia trip

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Donald Trump will face fears that rising tensions with North Korea could erupt into conflict and alliance jitters when he makes his first official visit to Asia.

The high-stakes trip begins Friday with a briefing from Pacific Command in Hawaii followed by stops in Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Philippines.

It comes as regional anxieties are high after months of North Korean missile and nuclear tests as well as saber-rattling from Trump himself with a series of tweets and speeches, including a threat to unleash “fire and fury” against the communist state.

The Navy has deployed three aircraft carrier strike groups in the Pacific in a show of force ahead of Trump’s visit, although U.S. military officials have insisted their presence is coincidental.

Underscoring Trump’s unconventional approach to foreign policy, he plans to break with longstanding presidential tradition by skipping a highly symbolic visit to the Demilitarized Zone that divides the Korean peninsula. Instead he will visit a U.S. Army garrison south of Seoul.

“I think the best outcome from Trump’s first official visit to the region is that no overt threats are made or no kinetic crisis occurs,” said Catherine Dill, a defense analyst with the California-based Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. “Trump should focus on reassuring allies first and foremost,” she said.

Asian leaders will be looking for clarity about Trump’s policies toward the region beyond his tweets. His administration

has declared former President Barack Obama’s “pivot” or “rebalancing” to Asia dead but has yet to clearly outline a new approach.

The president has bounced between saying he would be “honored” to meet with North Korea’s leader under the right conditions and threatening unilateral military action.

Southeast Asian nations are especially worried they’ll be overlooked by his “America First” approach and focus on security. China, meanwhile, is poised to fill the vacuum.

“This trip represents an opportunity for the administration to dispel the uncertainty about U.S. engagement that has haunted the region since January,” said David Shear, a former assistant secretary of defense for East Asia. “It’s about time.”

Trump has two major speeches planned — one at South Korea’s National Assembly on Wednesday and the other on Nov. 10 in Vietnam, where he’ll participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC, meetings.

The White House said Trump’s trip “will underscore his commitment to longstanding United States alliances and partnerships, and reaffirm United States leadership in promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region.”

The question of how to deal with North Korea and trade talks also are expected to top his agenda.

The North test-fired two intercontinental ballistic missiles and sent two other projectiles over the Japanese island of Hokkaido this past summer. It also conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3, a major advance toward its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could reach the U.S. mainland. Trump has taken a hard line against the North,

dubbing leader Kim Jong Un “Little Rocket Man” and warning that he’ll “totally destroy” the country if necessary to defend the U.S. and its allies.

His administration also has pressed for the toughest U.N. Security Council sanctions yet against the North and has made inroads in persuading China and other countries to do more to implement the punishing measures.

For its part, North Korea lobbed a fresh salvo in the war of words on Tuesday, with its state-run news agency calling Trump “incurably mentally deranged.”

The North also has upped the ante by threatening to conduct an atmospheric nuclear test over the Pacific Ocean and to fire missiles into the waters near the U.S. territory of Guam.

Despite the rhetoric, the North hasn’t conducted a high-profile provocation since Sept. 15, when it sent a missile soaring over Japan for the second time in less than a month. Experts said it’s too soon to tell if it’s an operational pause or a sign of restraint.

Alexander Vershbow, who was U.S. ambassador to Seoul from 2005 to 2008, also noted reports that the mountain that covers North Korea’s nuclear testing site was devastated by the latest underground blast.

“So there may be good reasons for the North Koreans to hit the pause button,” he said Wednesday in a conference call organized by the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank.

Advocates of resuming long-stalled dialogue with Pyongyang have urged the isolated regime to put its weapons program on hold even if it refuses to abandon its efforts altogether.

China, which wields leverage as North Korea’s main economic lifeline, has proposed a

so-called freeze for a freeze in which the North would halt its tests and the U.S. would stop or scale back joint military exercises with the South.

Both adversaries have dismissed that idea, and Trump recently called efforts to negotiate with the North a waste of time.

However, Reuters reported earlier this week that the U.S. is quietly pursuing direct diplomacy with the North. The news agency quoted a senior State Department official as saying U.S. envoy Joseph Yun has been in contact with a diplomat at Pyongyang’s U.N. mission to urge the communist state to “stop testing” nuclear bombs and missiles, among other points.

Experts said Trump and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping are likely to put on a show of friendship despite simmering disputes over North Korea and Beijing’s claims to the South China Sea.

Trump’s visit to South Korea also will be watched closely for signs of cracks in the nearly seven-decade alliance amid increasing concern on the peninsula that Seoul is being sidelined in important decisions.

Trump still has not named a new U.S. ambassador to Seoul more than nine months since taking office. The Republican leader also has called for a renegotiation of the 5-year-old Free Trade Agreement between the two countries, calling it a “job killer.” Seoul insists the deal has minimized the deficit and wants a joint review of its impact on the two economies.

South Korea’s President Moon Jae-in favors engagement with the North and insisted that no military action be taken without his approval. He also wants changes in the joint military structure to expedite the transfer of wartime operational control of South Korean forces from the U.S. to his government.

Prosecutors recommend 14-year term for Bergdahl

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Army prosecutors on Thursday recommended that Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was held captive by the Taliban for years after walking off his post in Afghanistan, serve 14 years in a military prison for deserting and endangering his fellow troops.

However, defense attorneys recommended Bergdahl receive no jail time. They suggested the judge hand him a dishonorable discharge, arguing the soldier faced enough punishment at the hands of Taliban-linked Haqqani militants in Pakistan during his five years of captivity.

The judge overseeing Bergdahl's case, Army Col. Jeffery Nance, indicated in his courtroom at Fort Bragg on Thursday that he could determine the soldier's fate by Friday but promised to spend hours deliberating.

In closing arguments of a sentence hearing Thursday, Maj. Justin Oshana, the lead prosecutor, argued that despite Bergdahl's suffering, which included beatings, long-term isolation in a small cage and subjection to videos of beheadings, he deserves to be punished further for his actions that led to massive search operations across eastern Afghanistan. In addition to prison, Oshana recommended that Nance hand down a punitive discharge and reduce Bergdahl in rank to E-1 private.

Army Capt. Nina Banks, in closing arguments for the defense, countered Bergdahl's documented mental health conditions precluded him from understanding the chain of events that would transpire after he walked off his post, a decision she called a "horrible mistake" for which he already has suffered and has apologized. "Justice is not rescuing Sgt. Bergdahl from his Taliban captors and the cage he spent years inside only to place him in a cell," she said.

Navy: Pacific fleet unprepared for emergencies, stretched thin

By STEPHEN CARLSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A U.S. Navy report released Thursday depicts a Pacific fleet that is unprepared for emergencies, lacking in training and severely overstretched in dealing with threats in the region.

The Navy Fleet Comprehensive Review identified five areas with serious deficiencies after fallout from two separate collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain that killed 17 sailors.

The collisions, the worst of four major accidents in 2017, raised serious questions about basic seamanship and readiness within the Pacific-based 7th Fleet. Eight senior officers, including the commander of the 7th Fleet, have been fired.

"The risks that were taken in the Western Pacific accumulated over time and did so insidiously," the report said, according to the Navy Times. "The dynamic environment normalized to the point where individuals and groups of individuals could no longer recognize that the processes in place to identify, communicate and assess readiness were no longer working at the ship and headquarters level."

The review identified deficiencies in fundamental skills, teamwork, operational safety, assessment procedures and culture. Qualification certifications for sailors on watch are also a key aspect of the report. Basic training requirements for bridge watch personnel also were acknowledged as badly deficient.

"We will spend every effort needed to correct these problems and be stronger than before," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richard-

son said in a statement Wednesday after Navy accident reports concluded the fatal collisions were "avoidable."

The surface-fleet review, ordered by Richardson, was overseen by Fleet Forces Command Head Adm. Philip Davidson. During previous testimony to Congress, the Navy has said that regular training among 7th Fleet sailors did not meet standards. Sailors on watch in the Fitzgerald and McCain incidents were unprepared for the emergency situations, according to the report.

The readiness review comes one day after Navy accident reports were released that concluded the fatal collisions were "avoidable."

The broader review released Thursday said the 7th Fleet was severely overstretched with threats from North Korea and China alongside normal operations putting strains on the fleet that made proper procedure difficult. The Navy role in stopping North Korea from employing its nuclear weapons was particularly a factor, considering that both collisions involved Arleigh Burke-class destroyers with anti-ballistic-missile capabilities. The Navy has been forced to surge several ships to take the place of the Fitzgerald and McCain for regional missile defense.

The report notes that ongoing budget problems have made fulfilling all that is expected of the Navy difficult. It repeated the standard Defense Department call during the past several years for reliable budgets while decrying sequestration and President Barack Obama's caps on military spending.

"The ability to supply forces to the full demand is, and will remain, limited," according to the report.

Bahrain takes over anti-piracy force

By JASON BEHNKE
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Royal Bahrain Navy Capt. Yusuf Almannaei assumed command of Combined Task Force 151 on Thursday, marking the first time Bahrain has led the multinational counterpiracy force.

Formed in 2009, CTF 151 is charged with patrolling parts of the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and the eastern coast of Somalia. It operates under the Combined Maritime Forces, a coalition of 32 member nations led by the U.S. Navy's 5th fleet commander.

Since its formation, global piracy has been in decline. Almannaei credits some of that to the

overall force's work.

"The piracy had reached its peak in 2010, 2011," he said. "With the efforts of Combined Maritime Forces, the piracy trends up to zero."

Almannaei relieved Rear Adm. Emre Sezenler of the Turkish Navy. Under Sezenler, who had command since July, CTF 151 said that there have been attempts, but no successful attacks by pirates. Almannaei hopes to continue this trend, while continuing to provide mariners with guidance on avoiding, deterring and defending against attacks.

There were 445 reported pirate attacks worldwide in 2010, according to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. That number dropped to 191 in 2016.

Feds: Suspect planned NY attack for months

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The suspect in the deadly New York City truck rampage was inspired by Islamic State's online videos and plotted his attack for two months, renting a truck ahead of time to practice turning it, federal authorities said in bringing terrorism charges against the Uzbek immigrant.

Sayfullo Saipov chose Halloween for the attack because he figured there would be more people on the streets, according to the criminal complaint. After his attack was halted by a police bullet, he asked to display ISIS' flag in his hospital room, saying "he felt good about what he had done," authorities said.

Brought to court in a wheelchair, Saipov was held without bail on charges that could bring the death penalty. Separately, the FBI was questioning people who might have information about his actions before the attack, including a second Uzbek man.

The charges against Saipov, 29, came a day after the attack near the World Trade Center killed eight people. Investigators in multiple states raced to retrace Saipov's steps and understand his motivations, which they said were illuminated by a note he left by the truck: "Islamic Supplication. It will endure." The phrase "it will endure" commonly refers

to ISIS, and Saipov had a cell-phone loaded with the group's propaganda, an FBI agent said in the criminal complaint.

The FBI released a poster saying it was looking for one of Saipov's associates, Mukhammadzoi Kadirov, only to announce less than 90 minutes later it had found him. A law enforcement official said Kadirov was a friend of Saipov's and may not have had any role in the case.

A married father of three and former commercial truck and Uber driver, Saipov began planning an attack a year ago and settled on a truck assault a couple of months ago, according to the criminal complaint.

During the last few weeks, Saipov searched the internet for information on Halloween in New York City and rented a truck to practice turns. He chose a route along a lower Manhattan highway and initially hoped to continue to hit more pedestrians on the Brooklyn Bridge, the complaint said.

Saipov sped down a bike path on a riverfront esplanade in a rented truck for nearly a mile Tuesday, running down cyclists and pedestrians, before crashing into a school bus, authorities said. He was shot after he jumped out of the vehicle brandishing two air guns and yelling "God is great!" in Arabic, they said.

Russian hackers had targets in sight beyond US election

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The hackers who disrupted the U.S. presidential election had ambitions beyond Hillary Clinton's campaign, targeting the emails of Ukrainian officers, Russian opposition figures, U.S. defense contractors and thousands of others of interest to the Kremlin, according to a previously unpublished digital hit list obtained by The Associated Press.

The list provides the most detailed forensic evidence yet of the close alignment between the hackers and the Russian government, exposing an operation that stretched back years and tried to break into the inboxes of 4,700 Gmail users across the globe — from the pope's representative in Kiev to the punk band Pussy Riot in Moscow.

Keir Giles, director of the Conflict Studies Research Center in Cambridge, England, and one of five outside experts who reviewed the AP's findings, said the data were "a master list of individuals whom Russia would like to spy on, embarrass, discredit or silence."

The AP findings draw on a da-

tabase of 19,000 malicious links collected by cybersecurity firm Secureworks, dozens of rogue emails, and interviews with more than 100 hacking targets.

Secureworks stumbled upon the data after a hacking group known as Fancy Bear accidentally exposed part of its phishing operation to the internet. The list revealed a direct line between the hackers and the leaks that rocked the presidential contest in its final stages, most notably the private emails of Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

Secureworks' list covers the period between March 2015 and May 2016. Most of the identified targets were in the U.S., Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and Syria.

In the U.S., the list skewed toward workers for defense contractors such as Boeing, Raytheon and Lockheed Martin or senior intelligence figures, prominent Russia watchers and Democrats. More than 130 party workers, campaign staffers and supporters of the party were targeted, including members of Clinton's inner circle.

House Republicans release plan to reform tax code

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans on Thursday unveiled a tax cut plan that slashes the corporate tax rate, lowers taxes for most Americans but limits a cherished deduction for homeowners as President Donald Trump and the GOP seek to deliver on the first tax revamp in three decades.

The proposal would add \$1.5 trillion to the nation's debt over the next decade as Republicans largely abandoned fiscal discipline in a desire to secure a legislative achievement for Trump and score a political win ahead of next year's midterm elections.

Middle-income families would pay less, thanks to doubling of the standard deduc-

tion and an increase in the child tax credit. Wealthy Americans would benefit from the repeal of the alternative minimum tax and phase-out of the estate tax.

Some two-income, upper middle class families would pay more after being bumped into a higher tax bracket and losing a valuable deduction on state income taxes.

GOP leaders briefed rank-and-file lawmakers on the proposal Thursday morning ahead of an event at the White House.

The proposal would leave intact the existing rules on 401(k) retirement accounts and the ability of Americans to contribute up to \$18,000 into the accounts tax-free. But the plan limits the widely used deduction

for mortgage interest for new home loans of \$500,000 or less, a sharp reduction from the current \$1 million cap.

The plan also limits the deductibility of local property taxes to \$10,000 while eliminating the deduction for state income taxes.

The plan shrinks the number of tax brackets from seven to three or four, with respective tax rates of 12 percent, 25 percent, 35 percent and a category still to be determined. The tax system would be simplified, and most people would be able to file their returns on a postcard-sized form.

The plan slashes the corporate tax rate to 20 percent and repeals the inheritance taxes on multimillion-dollar estates.

Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands status limits disaster relief

Miami Herald

MIAMI — After Hurricane Irma and then Maria tore through the Caribbean islands, the United Nations swung into action with helicopters, food drops and multimillion-dollar recovery plans.

But even though both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands were decimated by the hurricanes, they couldn't call the U.N. — an expert in disaster relief — for help. The islands are U.S. territories with their own governors but no voting representation in Congress, so they must turn to the U.S. in times of need, even if they aren't on many Americans' radar.

"The governor of Puerto Rico can certainly not call the U.N. for help," said Christina Duffy Ponsa-Kraus, a Puerto Rico expert who teaches legal history at Columbia Law School. "Puerto Rico's foreign relations are handled as if Puerto Rico were fully domestic, a state like any other."

Except they aren't states like any other.

"That is the awfulness of being a territory," said Jose Fuentes, chairman of the Puerto Rico Statehood Council. "You have no political power within your own government and you don't have the ability to do anything internationally because everything has to go through the U.S. State Department."

The U.S. might have been more willing to intervene more

aggressively if the two-hurricane ravaged territories actually were foreign countries, Ponsa-Kraus said.

"The territories are marginal, they are invisible, and they have no voice in Washington because you need a vote to have a voice," she said. "You've got these populations of American citizens living in these territories, but most Americans don't understand that they are American citizens."

A September poll conducted by Morning Consult, a media and polling firm, showed that only 54 percent of Americans surveyed knew that Puerto Ricans were fellow U.S. citizens.

The U.S. has five populated territories around the world plus a smattering of islands that are little more than unpopulated specks in the Pacific Ocean. Puerto Rico, with a population of 3.4 million, is by far the largest. The other populated territories are the U.S. Virgin Islands — which include St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix and 50 smaller islands and cays — American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Puerto Ricans and U.S. Virgin Islanders are Americans but they can't vote for president unless they move to the mainland, and their representatives in the U.S. House can't cast votes. U.S. dollars are the currency, but they don't receive proportional federal funding for programs such as Medicaid.

Pope Francis visits US military cemetery

BY SCOTT D. WYLAND

Stars and Stripes

NETTUNO, Italy — Pope Francis gazed out at a sea of cross-shaped headstones and thousands of followers as he gave a solemn mass for war dead Thursday at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery.

The pope's All Souls Day mass was to honor all who died in wars throughout history, but this ceremony marked the first official visit by a pope to an American military cemetery overseas.

About 7,860 U.S. soldiers are buried at the 77-acre site, and 3,095 who were missing in action are memorialized there. Most died in Sicily, Anzio and Salerno during Allied invasions of Italy in World War II.

"This visit represents a continuing friendship between Italy and the United States," said David Americo, assistant superintendent for the Florence American Cemetery near Rome.

An estimated 13,000 people packed the cemetery grounds for the mass.

Francis has said that he conducts masses at military cemeteries every year on the papal holiday to take note of war's terrible costs.

Popes have often visited or conducted religious rites at war cemeteries, but this was the first time a pope has publicly visited an American one, said John Wessels, deputy secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission's overseas operations.

Fourteen years ago, Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger visited the Normandy American Cemetery before becoming Pope Benedict XVI, Wessels said.

The Rome-Sicily cemetery is the largest of Italy's two American military grave sites. The Florence cemetery has 4,400 soldiers buried there and memorializes 1,400 missing in action.

The American cemeteries scattered throughout Europe use a simple white cross as a headstone, regardless of the soldier's rank. Gen. George S. Patton has the same marker for his grave as the lowest private at the Luxembourg American Cemetery.

These cemeteries are a poignant reminder of those who never made it home, even after death. About 40 percent of bereaved families chose to let their loved ones be buried near their comrades in the country they fought to liberate, Americo said.

Hidden chamber found in Egypt's Great Pyramid

Associated Press

CAIRO — Scientists say they have found a hidden chamber in Egypt's Great Pyramid of Giza, in what would be the first such discovery in the structure since the 19th century and one likely to spark a new surge of interest in the pharaohs.

In an article published in the journal *Nature* on Thursday, an international team said the 30-meter void deep within the pyramid is situated above the structure's Grand Gallery and

has a similar cross-section.

The purpose of the space is unclear, and it's not yet known whether it was built with a function in mind or if it's merely a gap in the pyramid's architecture. Some experts say such empty spaces have been known for years.

"This is a premiere," said Mehdi Tayoubi, a co-founder of the ScanPyramids project and president of the Heritage Innovation Preservation Institute. "It could be composed of one or several structures ... maybe

it could be another Grand Gallery. It could be a chamber; it could be a lot of things."

The scientists made the discovery using cosmic ray imaging, recording the behavior of subatomic particles called muons that penetrate the rock similar to X-rays, only much deeper. Their paper was peer-reviewed before appearing in *Nature*, an international, interdisciplinary journal of science.

Egypt's former antiquities minister and famed archaeologist, Zahi Hawass, who has

been testing scanning methods and heads the government's oversight panel for the new techniques, said that the area in question has been known of for years and thus does not constitute a discovery. He has long downplayed the usefulness of scans of ancient sites.

"The Great Pyramid is full of voids. We have to be careful how results are presented to the public," he said. He said the chamber likely was empty space that builders used to construct the rooms below.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Headless tuna found in woods of seaport

MA GLOUCESTER — Spotting a 400-pound tuna in Gloucester is not unusual, but finding a headless tuna in the woods of the Massachusetts city known as America's oldest seaport is a bit odd.

State Environmental Police and federal fisheries regulators are trying to figure out who dumped the headless fish, which had to be hauled out of the trees by a tow truck.

Ally Rogers, a spokeswoman for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement, told the Gloucester Daily Times that the fish was illegally harvested.

The tuna season runs from early June to November.

State plans to give away half of bridge

MN BAUDETTE — The Minnesota Department of Transportation is giving away half of a bridge that spans the Rainy River between Baudette and Canada.

The other half belongs to Canada. The steel bridge was built in 1960 and is being replaced.

The Star Tribune said the free half-bridge has a catch. Anyone who wants it will have to haul it away and agree to a list of conditions, including approval by transportation officials on how the structure will be reused.

Starbucks releases a self-color cup

NY NEW YORK — It'll be a (mostly) white Christmas cup for Starbucks this year. The coffee chain's latest holiday design lets customers color it in themselves.

A plainer, red cup in 2015 spurred an outcry from critics upset that it lacked snowflakes, reindeer or specific symbols of Christmas.

This year the cups feature splashes of red and green amid illustrations of presents, snowflakes and a Christmas tree with a star on top. The black-and-white illustration is mainly blank for customers to personalize.

Woman accused of trying to steal car

NH LEBANON — Police in New Hampshire have accused a woman of trying to steal a man's car while he was dropping a child off at school.

Lebanon police said Sarah Pavia, 20, of Burlington, Vt., tried to pull the man from the car Monday morning at Lebanon Middle School. His two children were with him.

Police said Pavia left and was later confronted by an officer who said Pavia tried to steal his cruiser. She was taken into custody.

Police said Pavia is suspected of stealing a vehicle from Burlington on Sunday and crashing it on Interstate 89 in Lebanon. She faces charges of attempted robbery, theft, and receiving stolen property.

Restaurant criticized; renames a breakfast

NC CHARLOTTE — Bad Daddy's Burger Bar has renamed a breakfast it called the "Border Patrol Scramble" that was served at a North Carolina airport following criticism that the name for a dish featuring jalapeno peppers and salsa was racially offensive.

The company told The Charlotte Observer that the egg dish will be called the "Spicy Morning Scramble."

Activist Andrea Pino spotted the scramble, which was available only at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport location, and objected to it on Twitter. More people criticized the name on Facebook, calling it "racist" and insensitive to immigrant families.

Law banning dancing in bars repealed

NY NEW YORK — Cut loose! New York City lawmakers have voted to legalize dancing in bars.

The City Council voted Tuesday to repeal a 91-year-old law that banned dancing at most nightspots.

The anti-dancing law prohibits dancing in bars and restaurants that don't have a cabaret license.

Critics say the law originated as a racist attempt to police Harlem's 1920s jazz clubs and has continued to be enforced unfairly.

Man finally sees brother, 84, wed

PA PENNDEL — A war kept Wayne Wood's brother from attending his first wedding, and a hurricane briefly derailed the secret plans for his second, but the 84-year-old has finally said "I do" again — this time with his unsuspecting brother serving as best man.

Wood and his new wife, Joyce, of Lake Placid, Fla., devised a ruse to get married in Pennsylvania while visiting Wood's brother, Gordon. The Bucks County Courier Times reported the ceremony was scheduled for September but was put on hold after Hurricane Irma.

Last week, Joyce said she needed to pick something up at a Bucks County courthouse. Instead, she and Wayne were married on the spot.

Gordon Wood was serving in the Korean War during his brother's first wedding.

Eisenhower memorial groundbreaking set

DC WASHINGTON — Ground will be broken this week for a long-planned memorial in Washington for Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The Eisenhower Memorial Commission chairman, U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, described Eisenhower as "Kansas' favorite son" and said it's "an honor to see this memorial become a reality."

Congress approved the memorial in 1999 and allocated funding for planning, but the project became bogged down over objections to the design. Eisenhower's relatives announced last year that they had dropped their objections after the design was modified, in part to place more emphasis on the 34th president's home state.

Woman posed as lawyer, bilked inmates

NY ALBANY — Authorities said a 48-year-old woman admitted to passing herself off as a lawyer while bilking hundreds of New York prison inmates out of more than \$20,000.

The state Attorney General's Office said Antonia Barrone pleaded guilty to scheme to defraud and will serve 1 1/3 to 3 years in state prison. She has also been ordered to pay nearly \$270,000 in restitution and fines.

Officials said Barrone created a fake persona as a parole attorney named Mario Vredenburg and swindled \$23,000 from 400 state inmates and their families through a business called the NYS Prisoner Assistance Center.

From wire reports

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Houston captures first title with Game 7 win

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — From laughingstock to lift-off.

George Springer and the Houston Astros rocketed to the top of the baseball galaxy Wednesday night, winning the first World Series championship in franchise history by romping past the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-1 in Game 7.

Playing for a city still recovering from Hurricane Harvey, and wearing an H Strong logo on their jerseys, the Astros brought home the prize that had eluded them since they started out in 1962 as the Colt .45s.

"I always believed that we could make it," All-Star slugger Jose Altuve said. "We did this for them."

For a Series that was shaping up as an October classic, Game 7 quickly became a November clunker as Houston scored five runs in the first two innings off Yu Darvish. Hardly the excitement felt during the Cubs' 10-inning thriller in Cleveland last fall.

Well, except for everyone wearing bright orange. Back in Houston, a huge crowd filled Minute Maid Park to cheer as fans watched on the big video board, and the train whistle wailed when it was over.

"We're coming home a champion, Houston!" Springer said after accepting the World Series MVP trophy named this year for Willie Mays.

Star shortstop Carlos Correa turned the party into a proposal. After doing a TV interview, he got down on one knee and asked girlfriend Daniella Rodriguez, a former Miss Texas USA, to marry him.

"Yes?" he said, putting a ring on her finger as she cried.

Altuve, one of four holdovers from a club that lost an embarrassing 111 times in 2013 after switching from the NL to the AL, and this collection of young stars silenced Dodger Stadium from the get-go, taking a 5-0 lead in the second inning.

Altuve was in perfect position for the final out, a grounder by Corey Seager to the 5-foot-6 second baseman.

"I caught the last out for the Houston Astros to become a world champion. It was a groundball to me, I threw to first, and I think it was the happiest moment of my life in baseball," Altuve said.

The Astros streamed from the dugout and bullpen to go wild, tossing their gloves in the air. A thousand or so fans crowded behind the first base dugout, chanting "Hou-ston! Hou-ston!"

Later, some little Astros kids ran around the outfield grass dressed in Halloween outfits. Their dads, meanwhile, were putting on championship hats and shirts.

At last, they had completed the ascent some predicted after a rebuilding club purged payroll and stripped down to bare bones a few years back.

Famously, now, there was the Sports Illustrated cover in 2014 — after Houston had lost more than 100 games for three straight seasons — that proclaimed: "Your 2017 World Series Champs" and featured a picture of Springer in a bright Astros jersey.

On the other side, ace Clayton Kershaw and several Dodgers leaned against the dugout railing, watching the Astros celebrate. Los Angeles led the majors with 104 wins and a \$240 million payroll, and rallied to win Game 6, yet it didn't pay off for part-owner Magic Johnson and his team.

"Obviously, this one hurts," manager Dave Roberts said. "And like I told the guys, when you put everything, every ounce of your being into something and you come up short, it hurts. And it's supposed to hurt."

Normally a starter, Charlie Morton finished up with four stellar innings of relief for the win.

"We held down a really tough lineup," Morton said. "For my teammates, for the city of Houston, it's just unbelievable."

Springer led off the evening with a double against Darvish, and soon it was 2-0.

Springer hit his fifth homer — tying the Series mark set by Reggie Jackson (1977) and matched by Chase Utley (2009) — when he connected for a record fourth game in a row, making it a five-run lead.

That was plenty for Houston manager A.J. Hinch. He pulled starter Lance McCullers Jr. soon after the curveballer crazily plunked his fourth batter of the game, and began a parade of four relievers that held the lead.

Throughout the postseason, Hinch and the unconventional Astros overcame a shaky bullpen by using starters in relief.

"I knew yesterday I didn't have much," said McCullers, the Game 3 winner. "I knew I didn't have much to give other than to gut it out as long as I could."

Forever known for their space-age Astrodome, outlandish rainbow jerseys and a handful of heartbreaking playoff losses for stars like Nolan Ryan, Jeff Bagwell and Craig Biggio, these Astros will be remembered as champions, finally, in their 56th season.

Astros' Springer obvious choice for World Series MVP

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — George Springer hit so many clutch home runs, he was a clear pick for World Series MVP.

He often was the Most Vocal Person, too — and that might be the most remarkable part of his story.

The Houston leadoff man hammered his way to the award, homering and doubling Wednesday night to boost the Astros to their first championship with a 5-1 win over the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 7.

"The wildness of this series, the wackiness of this series, the emotional ups and downs, being able to play in this is something that I will never, ever forget, even if this is the only time I will ever get here," he said.

He launched a Series record-tying five homers, including shots in each of the final four games, and celebrated those Springer dingers by hollering around the bases.

Many years ago, that type of trip would've been hard to believe. Impossible, really.

As a kid, Springer stuttered so severely that he frequently fell silent, unless he was around his family or close friends. Over time, he's improved so much that he graciously grants interviews, even on national television, and never seems to shy away from the spotlight. He even wore a live mic in the outfield during the All-Star Game in July.

Watch closely and you can see Springer, just for a moment, still begins to stumble over words sometimes. So he will calmly slow himself down, or pause for a second, before gathering himself and continuing on eloquently.

At 28, the All-Star center fielder has taken every chance he's gotten this postseason to talk about Camp SAY — that's the Stuttering Association for the Young.

Springer is a spokesman for the two-week summer camp that benefits kids and teens who stutter. He also runs a charity bowling event, raising money to help people attend the program.

"I hope there's somebody somewhere out there that is impacted and can learn to just go be who you are and not let any stage or any place stop you," he said last week.

On baseball's big stage, the Dodgers couldn't stop him.

Springer led off Game 7 with a double and scored. In the second, his two-run homer made it 5-0 and finished Yu Darvish.

Springer bounced back fast from a tough start, when he struck out all four at-bats in the opener, extending his slump to 3-for-30. But manager A.J. Hinch firmly said Springer would stay atop the lineup.

Good move. Springer went 11-for-25 the rest of the way.

Dallas' Morris ready to step in for Elliott

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — Alfred Morris bristled when asked what has changed for him now that Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott is serving a six-game suspension over domestic violence allegations with fading hopes for a third reprieve in court.

Presumably the top candidate to replace last year's NFL rushing leader, Morris sternly reminded the swarm of a dozen-plus reporters that little had changed from his work week when he was Elliott's backup.

"I mean, other than all these cameras in my face," Morris said.

The usually affable Morris was more pointed than angry, and admittedly a little wound up since he stumbled over his words a couple of times and finally interrupted an answer to say he was just talking too fast.

After all, Morris is looking at his first start in almost two years when Kansas City (6-2) visits Dallas (4-3) on Sunday. It's been even longer since he was the featured back in Washington.

Speaking of which, it will be

quarterback Dak Prescott's first meaningful start without Elliott since the dynamic rookies led the Cowboys to the best record in the NFC last season.

"This team was built on the run game before me or Zeke even got here," Prescott said. "We've got those running backs. Darren McFadden had a great year before Zeke even got here and we know what Alfred Morris can do. I don't think it changes. It is how this team is built."

Prescott said he exchanged text messages with Elliott after a federal judge in New York on Monday night turned down the NFL players' union request for an injunction that would have let him play while the case was in the courts.

Elliott's attorneys are seeking an emergency stay from a federal appeals court, but there's no indication when the court will rule or schedule a hearing. Without another injunction, Elliott will be out until the final three games of the season, starting Dec. 17 at Oakland.

Prescott said Elliott "obviously feels bad with the ruling coming down" but wouldn't

share his take on Elliott's frame of mind.

"I know he is looking forward. He is moving forward," Prescott said. "He is going to do the best he can to have his body and his mind ready to go when he returns."

Meantime, the Cowboys have said repeatedly through the twists and turns of the Elliott case that they are comfortable with their options.

Four years before the Prescott-Elliott pairing, Morris and Robert Griffin III shared standout rookie years with the Redskins. Morris followed that 1,613-yard season with 1,275 yards rushing in 2013 before fading from the lead role following a coaching change.

After the Cowboys let 2014 rushing leader DeMarco Murray go in free agency, McFadden led them with 1,089 yards even though he started just 10 games in 2015.

McFadden was Elliott's backup when he was healthy last season, but has been inactive all seven games this season in favor of Morris, who had 70 of his 105 yards this season rushing on one carry in a loss to the Los Angeles Rams.

Dallas also has been pleased with seldom-used Rod Smith, the older brother of linebacker Jaylon Smith and a special teams contributor who also has found an occasional role on third down.

"I've played a lot of football in this league, Alfred has played a lot of football in this league and Rod's done a heck of a job," McFadden said. "We're just going to go out there and make a play a different way."

Morris signed with Dallas as a free agent last year, a little less than two months before the Cowboys drafted Elliott with the fourth overall pick. By the end of last season, he was inactive, something he never imagined happening in his career.

So the uncertainty surrounding Elliott's status wasn't much different for him.

"It's just like, 'OK, you stay here and be ready. Whenever Zeke needs you, you be ready,'" Morris said. "That's just my role and I have to accept that. Am I a starter? I'm definitely a starter. I would never sit here and say I'm not a starter."

For now, Morris is the starter.

No. 6 Clemson has shot at control of ACC Atlantic

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Another week, another showdown for No. 6 Clemson.

The Tigers (7-1, 5-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) play Saturday at No. 20 North Carolina State (6-2, 4-0), their fourth contest — and third road game — against a ranked opponent this season. The winner grabs control of the ACC Atlantic, while a loss by Clemson likely ends its chance of defending its national title.

Clemson has been in this spot several times the past few seasons and almost always has come out on top.

"I feel like over these games we've figured out what kind of team we are," sophomore linebacker Tre Lamar said. "We're

confident in the team we have and we're confident in the pieces we have."

The Tigers had a September to remember with wins over three top-15 teams at the time in Auburn, Louisville and Virginia Tech. They won games at Louisville and Virginia Tech by a combined score of 78-48 and turned expected showdowns into runaways by the third quarter.

N.C. State is the only undefeated team in ACC play in the Atlantic Division. Clemson has one loss, Syracuse has two and the other four have three or more.

Clemson has won five straight against the Wolfpack, who may still feel the sting after nearly derailing the Tigers' national

championship run last year with a game they lost in overtime at Death Valley.

Now, it's N.C. State with the upper hand on the season, perfect through half its ACC schedule and eager to show its strong start is no fluke.

"This is playoff football right here," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said. "It's November and you're just trying to win and move forward if you want to stay in the hunt."

Tigers receivers coach and co-offensive coordinator Jeff Scott said there's plenty that comes from being battle-tested and performing strongly in big situations as Clemson has the past three seasons. The Tigers are 35-3 since the start of the 2015 season, including a 12-1

mark against ranked opponents. The one loss, of course, was to No. 2 Alabama in the 2015 national title game, a defeat the Tigers avenged last January in a 35-31 win over the top-ranked Crimson Tide.

"There's a lot of confidence by our guys that we've been in these type of games before and I think our guys know the formula," Scott said. "If we take care of the ball and control what we can control, I think we've got a great opportunity."

The Wolfpack had that same chance to make a mark last season and potentially capture the ACC Atlantic when it outplayed Clemson much of the way. It forced four turnovers, three in the red zone, to slow down the Tigers' high-powered offense.

NBA roundup

Embiid, Simmons dominate for 76ers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Joel Embiid was bleeped on TV when Ben Simmons slapped him on the chest during another victorious postgame interview.

The highlights reel was hard to watch, anyway, for Atlanta. Simmons switched from his left to right hand mid-air to score a bucket. Simmons let the ball roll high of his right fingertips for another uncontested score.

And the exclamation point, a thunderous slam in the final minute that had fans standing and chanting “Trust the Process!”

Simmons had 19 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists, and Embiid had 21 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to their third straight win, 119-109 over the Atlanta Hawks on Wednesday night.

“Yeah, I’ve gotta dunk more,” Simmons said. “I don’t know. I just get out there and I’m like, uhh, these guys are pretty big. Once I start dunking it ...”

His thought trailed off but the Hawks — and the rest of the NBA — got the message. Sim-

mons is the real deal.

Simmons, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2016 draft, has lived up to his top billing in his rookie year. Simmons has scored in double figures in every game and flirted with his second triple-double.

Simmons keeps saying he can play better — but the 21-year-old has already joined Oscar Robertson as the only players in NBA history with 100 points, 50 rebounds and 40 assists in his first six games.

Just how much more is he capable of the rest of the way?

“There’s a lot more. Way more,” he said. “I think in a few years, it’s going to be fun.”

Robert Covington scored 22 points to help the Sixers (4-4) reach .500 for the first time in four years. The Sixers’ rebuild more commonly known as “The Process,” isn’t a success yet. But it’s November and they don’t have a losing record.

The Sixers were fired up coming off wins on the road at Dallas and Houston and hit their first six threes of the game. They led 25-8 and had everything going right in their

first win at home.

Pacers 124, Cavaliers 107: Thaddeus Young scored 26 points, Darren Collison had 25 and host Indiana sent Cleveland to its fourth straight loss.

LeBron James had 33 points and 11 assists, but it wasn’t enough to keep Cleveland from losing for the fifth time in six games and falling to 3-5.

Celtics 113, Kings 86: Kyrie Irving and Jaylen Brown each scored 22 points in three quarters, and host Boston coasted past skidding Sacramento for its sixth straight victory.

Suns 122, Wizards 116: T.J. Warren scored 28 of his career-high 40 points in the second half and visiting Phoenix overcame a 22-point deficit to beat Washington.

Rockets 119, Knicks 97: James Harden had 31 points and nine assists, and visiting Houston had its three-pointers falling again.

Hornets 126, Bucks 121: Kemba Walker had 26 points, rookie Malik Monk had a huge fourth quarter and host Charlotte put the clamps on NBA scoring leader Giannis Ante-

tokounmpo to beat Milwaukee.

Timberwolves 104, Pelicans 98: Jimmy Butler hit a go-ahead 20-foot jumper as he was fouled with 34 seconds left to cap off a 23-point performance for visiting Minnesota.

Magic 101, Grizzlies 99: Evan Fournier scored 22 points, Aaron Gordon added 19 and visiting Orlando held on.

Nuggets 129, Raptors 111: Jamal Murray scored 16 of his 24 points in a decisive third-quarter spurt, and big man Nikola Jokic added 16 rebounds and 10 assists in host Denver’s victory over Toronto.

Jazz 112, Trail Blazers 103 (OT): Rookie Donovan Mitchell scored a career-high 28 points and host Utah won in overtime.

Heat 97, Bulls 91: Goran Dragic scored 20 points, Tyler Johnson added 19 and host Miami beat Chicago to snap a three-game slide.

Clippers 119, Mavericks 98: Blake Griffin scored 20 points and Austin Rivers had 19 to help host Los Angeles roll past Dallas.

NHL roundup

Schneider helps Devils shut out Canucks

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Cory Schneider made 37 saves for his first shutout of the season and 24th of his career, leading the New Jersey Devils to a 2-0 victory over the Vancouver Canucks on Wednesday night.

Jimmy Hayes and Drew Stafford also scored to help the Metropolitan Division-leading Devils win for the ninth time in 11 games this season. New Jersey has won three straight and remains the NHL’s only team with a perfect road record (5-0-0).

Taylor Hall added two assists and now has three goals and six assists in his last eight games against the Canucks.

Jacob Markstrom stopped 24 shots for Vancouver.

Traded by the Canucks to the Devils for the ninth overall pick at the 2013 draft that Vancouver used to select center Bo Horvat, Schneider improved to 5-1-2 against his former team with a .940 save percentage.

Maple Leafs 3, Ducks 1: Patrick Marleau scored early in the third period and visiting Toronto ended a three-game losing streak.

Connor Brown also scored and Frederik Andersen stopped 28 shots for the Maple Leafs, who had dropped four of their last five after starting the season 6-1-0.

Penguins 3, Oilers 2: Evgeni Malkin’s tiebreaking power-play goal in the third period lifted visiting Pittsburgh past Edmonton.

Patric Hornqvist and Conor Sheary also scored for the defending Stanley Cup

champion Penguins, and Matt Murray stopped 35 shots.

Blackhawks 3, Flyers 0: Corey Crawford made 35 saves in his first shutout of the season, and host Chicago beat Philadelphia to stop a three-game slide.

Artem Anisimov and Jonathan Toews scored 20 seconds apart in the second and Crawford took over from there, helping the Blackhawks kill off three Flyers power plays in the last half of the game.

Sharks 4, Predators 1: Joonas Donskoi and Mikkel Boedker each had a goal and an assist to help host San Jose win its third straight.

Joe Pavelski and Marc-Edouard Vlasic also scored for the Sharks, and Martin Jones stopped 19 shots.