

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, November 11, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Niger villager: US soldier bound, executed

The Washington Post

NIAMEY, Niger — The body of Sgt. La David Johnson, one of four U.S. soldiers killed in an ambush by Islamist militants in Niger last month, was found with his arms tied and a gaping wound at the back of his head, according to two villagers, suggesting that he may have been captured and then executed.

Adamou Boubacar, 23, a farmer and trader, said some children tending cattle found the remains of the soldier Oct. 6, two days after the attack outside the remote Niger village of Tongo Tongo that also left five Nigerien soldiers dead. The children notified him.

When Boubacar went to the location, a bushy area roughly a mile from the ambush site, he saw Johnson's body lying face down, he said. The back of his head had been smashed by something, possibly a bullet, said Boubacar. The soldier's wrists were bound with rope, he said, raising the possibility that the militants — whom the Pentagon suspects were affiliated with Islamic State — seized Johnson during the firefight and held him captive.

The villagers' accounts come as the Niger operation is under intense scrutiny in the U.S., with lawmakers expressing concern that they have received insufficient or conflicting information about what happened. The Pentagon is conducting an investigation into the attack in Niger, where the U.S. military is helping the Nigerien government confront a threat by militants associated with ISIS and al-Qaida.

Boubacar, a resident of Tongo Tongo, said in a phone interview that he informed the village's chief after seeing Johnson's body.

"His two arms were tied behind his back," he said. The chief called Nigerien military forces, who dispatched troops to retrieve Johnson's remains.

The village chief of Tongo Tongo, Mounkaila Alassane, confirmed the account in a separate phone interview.

"The back of his head was a mess, as if they had hit him with something hard, like a hammer," recalled Alassane, who said he also saw the body. "They took his shoes. He was wearing only socks."

A U.S. military official with knowledge of the investigation into the ambush acknowledged that Johnson's body appeared viciously battered but cautioned against reaching any conclusions until the probe is completed.

"When the Americans received Johnson, his hands were not tied," said the U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter.

The two Tongo Tongo villagers said they also saw the bodies of the three other American soldiers — Staff Sgts. Bryan Black, Jeremiah Johnson and Dustin Wright — who U.S. officials say were killed in action. One was slumped inside the team's pickup truck, they said. The bodies of the other two were on the ground, one clutching a walkie-talkie.

They were wearing T-shirts and boxer shorts, the two men said. It was unclear

whether the militants had stripped off their uniforms.

The accounts could help explain why it took two days to find Johnson's body, while the other men's remains were retrieved several hours after the battle. Johnson's widow has said the U.S. military advised her not to view his corpse, a suggestion often made when remains are badly disfigured.

The widow, Myeshia Johnson, has emerged as a prominent figure in the uproar over the Niger attack, accusing President Donald Trump of acting cavalierly during a condolence call about her husband, a charge the White House has denied. She also has complained of receiving little information about what happened to her spouse.

FBI and U.S. military investigators have arrived in this impoverished West African nation to try to determine what happened in the Oct. 4 assault on an 11-member Army Special Forces team and 30 Nigerien troops. Among the questions they are addressing: Were there intelligence lapses? Did the unit have adequate equipment? Was the extremist threat properly assessed before the mission began?

The case has received enormous attention in the U.S. because of conflicting accounts over whether the soldiers were on a low-risk patrol or had changed plans and set out in pursuit of Islamist insurgents. Questions also have been raised about why the team was lightly armed, given the danger in the area.

Former Marine instructor gets 10 years for recruit abuse

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A former Marine Corps drill instructor has been sentenced to 10 years behind bars after being convicted of tormenting and abusing young recruits, especially Muslim-Americans, including one who later killed himself.

A military jury also ordered that Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Felix, 34, an Iraq war veteran, forfeit all pay, be demoted to private and be given a dishonorable discharge.

Friday's sentencing at Camp Lejeune,

N.C., came after Felix begged for forgiveness before the eight-member jury, which a day earlier convicted him of abusing more than a dozen trainees at the Marine boot camp at Parris Island, S.C.

Felix was convicted of dozens of criminal violations as the jury on Thursday found he taunted three Muslim recruits as "terrorists" or "ISIS" (Islamic State) and ordered two of them to climb into an industrial clothes dryer, spinning one of them around in the scorching machine until he

renounced his faith.

Defense attorney Navy Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Bridges declined a request to comment on the conviction and sentencing.

Felix was a central figure among a group of abusive drill instructors at Parris Island, the jury was told. After the March 2016 suicide at the base, a hazing investigation led to charges against Felix, five other drill instructors and the training battalion's commanding officer. Eleven others faced lesser discipline.

Outposts combat 'tyranny of distance'

Associated Press

QAIM, Iraq — The U.S.-led coalition's newest outpost in the fight against Islamic State is in a dusty corner of western Iraq near the border with Syria. Here, several hundred American Marines operate close to the battlefield, a key factor in the recent series of swift victories against the extremists.

The Americans directed Iraqi troops in their victory early this month in the recapture of the nearby border town of Qaim, the militants' last urban holding. Now the Marines will lead the equally difficult task of clearing the extremists from their last redoubt: a large stretch of empty desert north of the Euphrates River adjoining the border with Syria.

They also face the possibility of friction with Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite militias that are increasing their own presence in the border region.

Under a plastic tent, the Marines run an austere joint command center about 12 miles

from the border. A dozen monitors relay surveillance footage and troop positions in the town of Qaim nearby. Using racks of radio and satellite equipment, the coalition forces and Iraqi officers at the base pass information between forces on the ground and al-Asad air base, the coalition's main base in Anbar province, some 80 miles to the east.

Such outposts have become more common in the past year, bringing the Americans out of main bases and closer to the action. U.S. commanders say the tactic has paid off in the swift rollback of ISIS.

The capture of Qaim completed the sweep, driving ISIS from major towns along the Euphrates Valley in Iraq. Along the river on the Syrian side, Syrian government forces took the city of Deir el-Zour earlier this month and the border town of Boukamel facing Qaim on Thursday.

All that remains from the so-called "caliphate" that once

stretched from northwestern Syria to the edges of Baghdad are a small stretch of villages on the Euphrates in Syria and the enclave of desert straddling the border into both Syria and Iraq.

Marine Col. Seth Folsom, commander of Task Force Lion, oversaw the Qaim fight and said he expects clearing and holding the retaken territory in Anbar to be more difficult than the assault, itself.

Much of Anbar and Iraq's border with Syria has been beyond central control for decades. The deserts there have served as havens for smugglers for generations.

Iraqi forces are stretched thin. Many are deployed in support of local police in liberated towns and cities and along major roadways. Others have been diverted to the borders of the Kurdish region amid the military standoff between Baghdad and Kurdish forces.

Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces — the mostly Shiite and largely Iranian-backed para-

military forces — also have built up their presence along Iraq's border with Syria.

They make no attempt to hide that they are working to physically extend the influence of U.S. rival Iran. Jaafar al-Husseini, a spokesman for the Hezbollah Brigades, a group under the PMF, boasted during the Qaim fighting that the forces are securing a route from "Iran to Beirut."

"We have foiled the American project in Iraq and on the Syrian borders, and we have succeeded in securing the road that links Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon," he told The Associated Press.

Coalition forces do not directly coordinate with the PMF, but rely on the Iraqi military to relay their movements to avoid striking the fighters.

Marine Maj. Greg Duesterhaus said the PMF presence complicates things but is not a great concern. "They are part of the forces that are out there on the battlefield," he said.

Gitmo: Hunger striker cheats with 'smoothies'

Miami Herald

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVY BASE, Cuba — Trump administration lawyers argued in a court filing Tuesday that a Pakistani prisoner, whose lawyers claim is being starved at the war-on-terrorism prison, is actually eating on the down low and no longer needs forced feeding.

Ahmed Ghulam Rabbani, 47, "is not malnourished," Justice Department lawyers wrote in a 35-page filing unsealed at the U.S. District Court in Washington. Prison camp monitoring of him has detected that he "routinely eats solid food."

Moreover, they wrote, based on information blacked out in the filing, "He also frequently makes 'smoothies' as he desires."

Lawyers for the captive have asked Judge Royce Lamberth to order an outside medical expert to evaluate him. They also seek release of Rabbani's military medical records. They argue that U.S. military medical teams have "a new policy of medical neglect" that dangerously withholds regular nasal-gastric feedings of Rabbani, leav-

ing him "precariously close to death."

In an affidavit, the family medicine physician in charge of low-value detainee medical care said he took Rabbani off a tube-feeding list on Sept. 20 "because it is no longer medically indicated to preserve his life and health."

The Trump administration filing explains that starting in September, the Guantanamo prison began tweaking its tube- and forced-feeding policies. A long-term hunger striker who has kept a "consistent low body weight" and does not "display signs of malnutrition" requires less nourishment, the government lawyers argue.

Now, tube feedings are recommended "only when it becomes medically necessary to prevent death or serious harm," the lawyers wrote. "A detainee will be removed from the involuntary enteral feeding list when he no longer shows signs of malnutrition."

Rabbani's lawyers describe the captive as a committed long-term hunger striker. They described the prison's implementation of the policy this way in an Oct. 16 filing:

"The government now is allowing the strikers to either reach the brink of death only to revive them after they have suffered serious risk of permanent damage, or the alternative of eating ordinary food, which hunger strikers could not digest — several years into a hunger strike — even if they wanted to."

The doctor, an anonymous Navy commander, wrote in an affidavit that while Rabbani pointedly rejects communal meals in his Camp 6 cellblock, the doctor personally observed Rabbani doing something surreptitiously behind a sheet in his cell on the evening of Oct. 19, suggesting he was eating on the sly. He also saw him making a cup of tea and carrying closed containers to his cell.

It is not known what the Navy doctor meant by Rabbani making smoothies. The U.S. military has not permitted reporters to observe life on the Camp 6 cellblocks since mid-summer. Communal captives had access to a pantry but no blender could be seen.

Based on weight charts, the unnamed doctor estimated that Rabbani was consuming at least 1,200 calories a day.

Trump: Putin 'insulted' by US election meddling accusations

Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — President Donald Trump said Russia's Vladimir Putin denied interfering in the 2016 U.S. elections during their talks on the sidelines of an economic summit Saturday. Trump didn't say if he believed Putin, but made clear he's not interested in dwelling on the issue.

"He said he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did," Trump said of Putin, speaking with reporters aboard Air Force One as he traveled to Hanoi, the second to last stop of his Asia trip.

"Every time he sees me, he says: 'I didn't do that.' And I believe, I really believe that when he tells me that he means it," Trump said, noting that Putin is "very insulted" by the accusation.

Trump and Putin did not have

a formal meeting while they were in Vietnam for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, but the two spoke several times on the event's sidelines and reached an agreement on a number of principles for the future of Syria.

But Trump made clear that the issue of Russian meddling in the election hovers over the leaders' relationship.

"Having a good relationship with Russia's a great, great thing. And this artificial Democratic hit job gets in the way," Trump told reporters. "People will die because of it."

Trump danced around the question of whether he believed Putin's denials, telling reporters that pressing the issue would have accomplished little.

"Well, look, I can't stand there and argue with him," he added later. "I'd rather have him get out of Syria, to be honest with you. I'd rather have him, you

know, work with him on the Ukraine than standing and arguing about whether or not — cause that whole thing was set up by the Democrats."

Earlier Saturday, the Kremlin issued a statement saying the leaders had reached agreement on a number of principles for the future of civil war-torn Syria now that Islamic State has largely been pushed out. Among the agreements' key points, according to the Russians, were an affirmation of de-escalation zones, a system to prevent dangerous incidents between American and Russian forces, and a commitment to a peaceful solution governed by a Geneva peace process.

The Kremlin quickly promoted the agreement as the White House stayed silent. Trump told reporters the deal was reached "very quickly" and it would save "tremendous numbers of lives."

Some in GOP fear Moore will lose Ala. Senate race

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — His party suddenly and bitingly divided, Alabama Republican Roy Moore emphatically rejected increasing pressure to abandon his Senate bid as fears grew among GOP leaders that a once-safe Senate seat was in jeopardy just a month before a special election.

Moore, an outspoken Christian conservative and former state Supreme Court judge, attacked as "completely false and misleading" a Washington Post report that he had sexual contact decades ago with a 14-year-old girl and pursued three other teenagers.

In an interview Friday with conservative radio host Sean Hannity, Moore, now 70, did not wholly rule out dating teenage girls when he was in his early 30s.

Asked whether that would have been usual for him, Moore said, "Not generally, no." He added: "I don't remember ever dating any girl without the permission of her mother." As for the encounter with Leigh Corfman, then 14, as described by Corfman in Thursday's Post article, he said, "It never happened."

The story has produced a wave of concern among anxious GOP officials in Washington but little more than a collective shrug from many Republicans in Alabama, which holds a special election on Dec. 12 to fill the seat previously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

"Humphrey Bogart started dating Lauren Bacall when she was a teenager," said state auditor Jim Ziegler, referring to the then-19-year-old actress.

"I'll always vote for him," said Erica Richard, 28, of Altoona, Ala., adding that she wouldn't change her mind even if the allegations of sexual misconduct are proved true. "He's a good man. I love him and his family, and they are all good people."

Louis C.K. says he misused power, caused pain

Associated Press

NEW YORK — With his career imploding over allegations of sexual misconduct, comedian Louis C.K. confessed Friday to masturbating in front of women and expressed remorse for using his influence "irresponsibly."

The comedian said in a statement that the harassment claims by five women detailed in a New York Times report published Thursday "are true."

"I can hardly wrap my head around the scope of hurt I brought on them," he said.

"There is nothing about this that I forgive myself for," he wrote. "And I have to reconcile it with who I am. Which is nothing compared to the task I left them with."

He apologized to the cast and crew of several projects he's been working on, his family, children and friends, his manager and the FX network,

among others.

The 438-word statement ends with the comedian vowing to stop talking and leave the spotlight, stating, "I will now step back and take a long time to listen."

The comedian stepped forward on the same day indie distributor The Orchard said it will scrap the release of C.K.'s film "I Love You, Daddy." C.K. already has been edited out of the upcoming HBO benefit "Night of Too Many Stars," and his work is being scrubbed from the cable network's vaults.

More fallout came Friday when Netflix said it will not produce a second planned standup special starring the comedian, citing his "unprofessional and inappropriate behavior." He had been tapped for two specials, with the first airing in April. At least five of the comedian's standup spe-

cials remain on Netflix.

In a further blow, FX Networks and FX Productions said they are ending their association with C.K., which means cancellation of a deal with his production company, Pig Newton, and removing him as executive producer on the four shows FX is making with him, including "Better Things," "Baskets," "One Mississippi" and "The Cops." His compensation is ended, as well, FX said.

C.K. behaved professionally on all his series for FX "as far as we know," according to a statement Friday.

"However, now is not the time for him to make television shows," FX said. "Now is the time for him to honestly address the women who have come forth to speak about their painful experiences, a process which he began today with his public statement."

Big gaps in FBI background check system

The Washington Post

The FBI's background-check system is missing millions of records of criminal convictions, mental illness diagnoses and other flags that would keep guns out of potentially dangerous hands, a gap that contributed to the shooting deaths of 26 people in a Texas church last week.

Experts who study the data say government agencies responsible for maintaining such records have long failed to forward them into federal databases used for gun background checks — systemic breakdowns that have lingered for decades as officials decided they were too costly and time consuming to fix.

As the shooting at a Texas church last Sunday showed, what the FBI doesn't know can get people killed. In that case,

the gunman had been convicted at a court-martial of charges stemming from a domestic violence case. Officials say the Air Force never notified the FBI of his conviction, so when he purchased weapons at a retail store, he cleared the background check.

The FBI said it doesn't know the scope of the problem, but the National Rifle Association says about 7 million records are absent from the system, based on a 2013 report by the nonprofit National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics. That report determined that "at least 25 percent of felony convictions ... are not available" to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System maintained by the FBI.

Experts who study the data say that estimate can be mis-

leading because felons often have multiple convictions so if one is missed, others may still alert authorities to individuals who cannot legally buy a gun.

The government funded a four-year effort beginning in 2008 to try to estimate how many records existed of people who should be barred under federal law from buying a gun but aren't flagged in the FBI system. That effort was abandoned in 2012 because of the cost.

The NRA has complained that the federal database is inadequate. The powerful gun rights lobbying group opposes calls for more restrictions on gun buying, arguing that the government should focus instead on making its current background-check system fully functional.

In light of the Texas shoot-

ing, Air Force officials have launched an internal review and faulted the staff at an air base for not sending the necessary information to the FBI, but federal officials who work on the database effort say the problem of military nonreporting of domestic violence cases extends far beyond a single base or service branch.

According to FBI records, at the end of last year, the Pentagon had exactly one active record for a misdemeanor domestic violence conviction in one of the FBI's main gun background-check databases, though there are two other large databases in which such records could be gathered and for which data was not available. By contrast, the database held nearly 11,000 dishonorable discharge records.

Texas church shooter's behavior described as odd

Associated Press

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, Texas — Less than a week before the Texas church massacre, the gunman who slaughtered more than two dozen people showed up at a festival dressed in black and acted so strangely that people kept a close eye on him, two parishioners said Friday.

Devin Patrick Kelley "was completely distant and way out in thought," recalled Judy Green. She and her husband said Kelley often exhibited trou-

bling behavior.

At the fall festival held Halloween night at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Kelley "didn't even blink — he just stared," she said.

Rod Green, a former law enforcement officer in Montana, said when he saw Kelley arrive, he examined him to make sure he was not carrying a gun. The Greens both have licenses to carry handguns and they are friends with Kelley's in-laws.

If Kelley had been carrying

a weapon, Green said, he would have escorted him away because of all the children there. Judy Green said she positioned herself to keep an eye on Kelley at all times.

"There was something wrong with the picture," she said. "I was thinking forward, and that was what was scaring me."

At a Christmas dinner one year, Kelley had "bragged about being armed," Rod Green said.

Wilson County Sheriff Joe Tackitt has said the church pas-

tor saw Kelley at the festival, but the pastor did not witness any behavior that raised alarms.

Investigators have said the shooting last Sunday appeared to stem from a domestic dispute involving Kelley and his mother-in-law, and that he had sent threatening messages to her. The mother-in-law sometimes attended services at the church but was not present that day. Kelley died of what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound after the massacre.

Clue, Wiffle Ball, paper airplane join Toy Hall of Fame

Associated Press

The board game Clue. In the National Toy Hall of Fame. With the Wiffle Ball and paper airplane.

The mystery of which toys earned the status of toy superstardom was solved Thursday with the announcement of the hall of fame's Class of 2017.

The whodunit game Clue, in which players also must name the crime scene and murder

weapon, continues to sell millions of copies each year since being patented by a British couple during World War II.

The annual hall of fame inductees are chosen on the advice of historians and educators following a process that begins with nominations from the public.

To make the cut, toys must have inspired creative play across generations. Historic and

modern versions of the winners are displayed in the hall, which is located inside The Strong museum in Rochester, N.Y.

This year's other finalists were: the game Risk, the Magic 8 Ball, Matchbox cars, My Little Pony, the PEZ candy dispenser, play food, sand, Transformers and the card game Uno.

Like Clue, the Wiffle Ball remains a big seller more than six decades after it was in-

vented by a retired semi-pro baseball player in Connecticut whose son had given up on regular backyard baseball for lack of space and too many broken windows.

Exactly who made the first paper airplanes is unclear, though artist and inventor Leonardo Da Vinci gets credit for designing flying machines out of parchment in the 15th century.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 jaguar cubs make debut at Houston Zoo

TX HOUSTON — There's something new to spot at the Houston Zoo with the debut of two jaguar cubs.

The nearly 4-month-old male and female cats, which made their first public appearances Thursday, are named Fitz and Emma. They're the first jaguars born at the Houston Zoo in a dozen years.

The Houston Zoo said in a statement the jaguar siblings have spent the past few months behind-the-scenes bonding with their mother, Maya.

Zoo officials said the young jaguars can be seen most mornings exploring their habitat with their mom.

Truck rolls over, spills sewage on highway

MA FAIRHAVEN — A truck carrying 3,000 gallons of sewage crashed on a Massachusetts highway and spilled all over the road, closing it for hours.

Two people were hurt in Thursday's crash on Interstate 195 in Fairhaven.

Authorities said the truck carrying septic tank sewage crashed with a pickup truck and rolled over around 3:30 p.m.

All westbound lanes were closed during the cleanup.

The victims were taken to Rhode Island Hospital. State police said they were both expected to survive.

Man drops coke while in court on drug charge

CO EAGLE — Authorities said a man who was in a Colorado court for violating his bond on a drug charge is in even more trouble after a wad of cocaine fell from his hat while he was in front of

the judge.

The Vail Daily reported Wednesday that Juan Jose Vidrio Bibriesca, 43, was standing next to two other defendants at an Eagle County District Court podium when he took his hat off and a square of folded paper fell out. A police officer watched the paper filled with cocaine fall to the floor, and after reviewing surveillance footage, authorities determined it fell from Bibriesca's hat.

Bibriesca was then walked to the county jail. He was charged with narcotics possession and another bond violation.

Suspect hands out doughnuts during theft

TX HOUSTON — A suspect robbing a Houston doughnut shop handed out doughnuts to customers whose cellphones he stole.

The Star-Telegram reported that the robbery happened at 3 p.m. on Oct. 16 at a Shipley's Do-Nuts. Police released surveillance video that shows three men wearing hoodies and bandannas robbing the store.

While two of the men were behind the counter demanding the cash from the registers, the third took the cellphones of the two customers in the store. He then jumped over the counter, exchanged words with the customers and picked out two crumblers, which he handed to them in wax paper.

Some drivers get turkeys, not tickets

MT BILLINGS — Some Montana drivers got Thanksgiving turkeys instead of tickets when they were pulled over by traffic officers.

The Billings Gazette reported that officers with the Billings Police Department checked for outstanding warrants Wednesday after pulling over drivers

for traffic violations.

If they found none, they issued a warning and a frozen turkey.

Businessman Steve Gountanis bought the 20 turkeys and asked the department to distribute them in time for the holiday.

Driver Larry Riddle appreciated the surprise after he was pulled over for not signaling a turn. His wife died of cancer, and he lives alone on a limited budget. Each year, he tries to make a holiday meal for his daughter.

Large cheetah-like feline captured in town

PA READING — Police said they captured a big African cat, resembling a cheetah, running loose through the streets of a small Pennsylvania town.

Reports about the spotted feline started coming in on Nov. 3. When Reading officers tracked it down, they initially thought they'd found a cheetah.

The Animal Rescue League of Berks County said they got a call from the police department about the feline on Saturday.

When staff responded, they found an African serval. The cats are illegal to own in Pennsylvania without a license. The animal was declawed and very friendly, leading animal workers to presume it had been a pet.

It's been transported to a big cat rescue group.

Bar boycotts NFL for Veterans Day

NJ FARMINGDALE — A New Jersey bar won't show any NFL games over the Veterans Day weekend and will raise money for a local veterans' charity instead.

An Army veteran asked the owners of Woody's Roadside Tavern in Farmingdale to sacrifice Sunday football.

Andy Barcellona told News

12 New Jersey the idea grew as NFL players chose to kneel during the national anthem to protest racism and police brutality. He said the players have lived privileged lives, and it's hurtful.

Twenty percent of food sales will be donated to help veterans.

Interview with suspect ends after 'flatulence'

MO KANSAS CITY — Court records said a Kansas City man who's charged with federal gun and drug charges had one police interrogation ended because of his flatulence.

The Kansas City Star reported that Sean Sykes Jr., 24, made an initial appearance Monday on charges that include being a felon in possession of three firearms.

A detective who interviewed Sykes wrote in a report that Sykes "leaned to one side of his chair and released a loud fart" before answering a question about where he lived. The report said the detective ended the interview after Sykes "continued to be flatulent."

Man wore bunny mask in bakery robbery

KS WICHITA — Authorities said a man wearing a bunny mask and another whose face was covered with a bandanna are accused of stealing about \$600 from a Wichita bakery.

Wichita police Officer Charley Davidson said the men fled on foot Wednesday after robbing Kneaders Bakery & Cafe. According to The Wichita Eagle, both men are thought to be about 25 years old. Each man also wore a black jacket and gloves.

From wire reports

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Aggies upset WVU in Armed Forces classic

Associated Press

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Tyler Davis had 23 points and 13 rebounds, Admon Gilder scored 23 points and No. 25 Texas A&M overcame a sluggish start to dominate No. 11 West Virginia 88-65 early Saturday in the Armed Forces Classic.

D.J. Hogg added 19 points for the Aggies, who played without suspended forward Robert Williams and point guard J.J. Caldwell. Gilder also had nine rebounds and seven assists.

James "Beetle" Bolden led West Virginia with 19 points. Jevon Carter added 13 and Wes Harris scored 12.

The game was played in a hangar on the sprawling Ramstein Air Base in southwestern Germany and it marked the only matchup among ranked men's teams on the opening day of the college basketball season.

West Virginia had its highest AP preseason ranking since

2009-10. But the Mountaineers struggled mightily after jumping to an early 13-point lead.

West Virginia got sloppy with the ball and committed several turnovers against the Aggies' zone defense late in the first half.

Texas A&M went on a 19-2 run spanning both halves, with Gilder's three-pointer giving the Aggies a 57-40 lead with 15:29 left.

By then, the Mountaineers looked spent and Texas A&M kept pouring it on.

Behind Gilder and Hogg, the Aggies' bench outscored West Virginia's reserves 49-25.

Troops salute: The game marked the sixth straight year of the Armed Forces Classic, which has been held at venues around the world with a heavy presence of U.S. military personnel. Michigan State and Connecticut participated in the inaugural event at Ramstein Air Base in 2012. Next year's event will be held at Fort Bliss, Texas.

UCLA trio will stay in China

Los Angeles Times

It was back to basketball for UCLA, and for that the Bruins could be thankful.

One of the most straining weeks in the program's recent history ended with a 63-60 victory over Georgia Tech on Friday night in the Pac-12 China game at the Baoshan Sports Center in Shanghai.

The No. 21 Bruins were missing freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley, who remained at a hotel in Hangzhou about 100 miles away, their futures uncertain after being questioned in connection with the alleged theft of sunglasses from a high-end designer store.

Their troubles could run much deeper.

An ESPN reporter tweeted

during the game that there was surveillance footage of the players stealing from three stores inside the swanky shopping center near their hotel. The reporter also tweeted that the UCLA players would not accompany their teammates home on the flight to Los Angeles and could remain in China for another week or two while the legal situation was resolved.

The Bruins held on for the victory after the Yellow Jackets missed two three-pointers in the final seconds. UCLA freshman forward Kris Wilkes finished with 18 points in his collegiate debut and freshman point guard Jaylen Hands added 14 points.

Georgia Tech's Ben Lammers scored 24 points but had only six after halftime.

Top 25 roundup

Bagley sensational in debut with No. 1 Duke

Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — Marvin Bagley had 25 points and 10 rebounds in his college debut, and No. 1 Duke opened another season of high expectations by routing Elon 97-68 on Friday night and moving Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski one victory away from his 1,000th career win.

Grayson Allen added 22 points and made six of the Blue Devils' 12 three-pointers while Gary Trent Jr. added 17 points and four more threes.

Duke shot 55 percent — 71 percent while pulling away in the second half — and held the Phoenix to less than 40 percent shooting while looking the part of a team beginning a second straight season atop the AP Top 25.

No. 2 Michigan St. 98, North Florida 66: Miles Bridges started his sophomore season with 20 points and 10 rebounds, helping the host Spartans in a tuneup for a highly anticipated game against No. 1 Duke on Tuesday night in Chicago.

No. 3 Arizona 101, N. Arizona 67: Allonzo Trier scored a career-high 32 points for the host Wildcats.

No. 4 Kansas 92, Tennessee St. 56: At Lawrence, Kan., Lagerald Vick scored 23 points, Svi Mykhailiuk added 15 and the Jayhawks routed Tennessee State in their lone tuneup before facing No. 5 Kentucky in the Champions Classic.

No. 5 Kentucky 73, Utah Valley 63: Hamidou Diallo scored 13 second-half points, most of them during an 18-0 run, and the host Wildcats shot 59 percent after halftime.

No. 6 Villanova 75, Columbia 60: At Philadelphia, Eric Paschall scored 15 points and Jalen Brunson had 14 to lead the Wildcats.

No. 7 Wichita St. 109, Missouri-Kansas City 57: Senior Darral Willis scored 19 points to lead the host Shockers.

No. 9 North Carolina 86,

Northern Iowa 69: At Chapel Hill, N.C., Luke Maye had a career-high 26 points to go with 10 rebounds for the Tar Heels.

No. 10 USC 84, Cal State Fullerton 42: At Los Angeles, Chimezie Metu had 18 points and 10 rebounds as the Trojans opened the season with their highest ranking since 1974-75.

No. 12 Cincinnati 107, Savannah St. 77: At Highland Heights, Ky., Cane Broome scored 17 points during his debut as the Bearcats point guard.

No. 13 Miami 77, Gardner-Webb 45: Sophomore Bruce Brown had his second career triple-double and the third in school history for host Miami.

No. 15 Minnesota 92, South Carolina Upstate 77: Jordan Murphy scored a career-high 35 points and grabbed 15 rebounds and Reggie Lynch added 15 points and 10 rebounds for the host Gophers.

No. 17 Xavier 101, Morehead St. 49: At Cincinnati, Trevon Bluiett scored 21 of his 25 points during the Musketeers' blistering 62-point first half.

No. 18 Gonzaga 97, Texas Southern 69: Josh Perkins scored 20 points — including six three-pointers — for the host Bulldogs.

No. 19 Northwestern 79, Loyola (Md.) 75: At Rosemont, Ill., Scottie Lindsey scored 26 points and Derek Pardon added 16 for the Wildcats.

No. 20 Purdue 115, SIU-Edwardsville 74: At West Lafayette, Ind., Dakota Mathias scored 15 points in the first half for Purdue.

No. 23 Seton Hall 90, FDU 68: Desi Rodriguez scored 17 points, 13 in the first half, leading Seton Hall to an easy win in the first round of the NIT Season Tip-Off in Newark, N.J.

No. 24 Baylor 107, Central Arkansas 66: Manu Lecomte scored 22 points, including six of the host Bears' 12 three-pointers, to lead six players in double figures.

Stanford derails Huskies' playoff bid

Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — When Bryce Love aggravated his injured ankle in the first half and had to go to the sideline to get checked out, Stanford coach David Shaw wasn't sure how much he'd be able to get out of his star running back.

Love showed he had plenty left in the latest signature performance in his campaign for the Heisman Trophy.

Love ran 30 times for 166 yards and three touchdowns on the gimpy ankle against the nation's stingiest defense, leading Stanford to a 30-22 victory over No. 9 Washington on Friday night.

"He goes out there from start to finish and pours his heart out for his teammates," Shaw said. "I don't know if you could ask anything more of a football player. I don't know if you can find a better football player in America than Bryce Love."

Love has not had a full practice in about a month for Stanford (7-3, 6-2 Pac-12) since injuring the ankle four weeks ago against Oregon. His missed one game with the injury and was held to 69 yards last week in a loss at Washington State.

But he gutted it out against a Huskies defense that came into the game ranked first in the nation in yards allowed and second in scoring defense.

"I definitely felt like I was getting in more of a groove throughout," Love said. "Just seeing things better, feeling a little bit better and just knowing things would open up."

While he failed to extend his streak of games with a run of at least 50 yards to 11 games, he helped Stanford control the clock and delivered a couple of big runs late. Quarterback K.J. Costello said he had to ask Love if he was OK a few times in the first half.

"Then I watched him run

and I was like 'Dang, I think he's all right,'" Costello said. "I don't know what he's got inside but it's something real. He's a grinder, that's for sure."

The Huskies (8-2, 6-2 Pac-12, No. 9 CFP) started fast with touchdown runs by Myles Gaskin on the first two drives but stalled after that in a crippling blow to their hopes of getting back to the four-team playoff.

"We had not had fast starts on the road and we did that and then went stagnant for two quarters," coach Chris Petersen said.

The takeaway: Washington: The Huskies used an up-tempo offense to drive 88 and 89 yards for touchdowns on their first two drives before getting stopped on a fourth-and-1 from the Stanford 19 on the third possession. Washington had only two first downs on the next five drives as the Cardinal adjusted and took control of the game. Gaskin, who ran for 120

yards, added his third TD with 4:22 left to tie Bishop Sankey's school record with 37 career touchdown runs.

"Now we're going to find out who rallies and who will roll over and die," quarterback Jake Browning said. "Personally I think we're going to rally."

Stanford: The Cardinal trusted Costello more this week and he delivered with a pair of 39-yard passes to JJ Arcega-Whiteside in the first half for the two longest offensive plays of the season against the Huskies. Those set up a 2-yard TD run by Love and one of Jet Toner's three field goals. Costello converted six third downs through the air on the night and threw for a career-high 211 yards after having 105 a week ago.

"I put that completely on myself," Shaw said. "I think we were a little too conservative. We have to mix it up and we mixed it up today."

Steelers' Villanueva gives out infantry decals

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Gradually over the course of the post-bye practice week at Pittsburgh Steelers headquarters, Alejandro Villanueva made the rounds to visit each of his teammates.

The starting left tackle, Villanueva was handing out helmet decals. But these stickers weren't of his team's familiar logo, nor were they even stickers representing the six military branches that players across the NFL are wearing in November.

A West Point graduate, Villanueva had acquired decals representing army infantry divisions from his former school. With the blessing of the Steelers, he wished to distribute them for players to wear on their helmets during the Steelers game on Veterans Day weekend.

And not unlike a parent contemplating the perfect Christ-

mas gift for each of his children, the former Army Ranger was taking special care in choosing the appropriate decal for each teammate.

"Someone like him who served, taking the time out of his day to actually get us individual stickers that represent a certain infantry or a certain division, you always take a lot of pride and admiration in that," linebacker Arthur Moats said.

Moats — a respected veteran teammate of Villanueva's — showed off the ivy-inspired, diamond-shaped logo representing the 4th Infantry Division, a unit that uses the motto, "Steadfast and Loyal." Another example was a decal for the Fort Riley, Kansas-based 1st Infantry Division for Kansas-native lineman B.J. Finney.

Villanueva saved a special decal for the Steelers' cornerbacks corps.

"I believe that we have the

best corners in the NFL, so I assign them the best division in [the army], which is the 10th Mountain Division," said Villanueva, who was assigned to the unit for a counter terrorism tour in Afghanistan. "Obviously, I am biased. But I think they really are."

Players across the locker room shook hands with Villanueva upon being presented with their decal. Some hugged the well-respected player who's in his third season as a starter after not breaking into the league until his mid-20s because of his military commitments.

"Ultimately those guys in the 4th infantry, granted, I don't know any of them, but however I conduct myself on Sunday, they are going to be able to see that (logo), and they are going to be able to relate," Moats said.

That's important to service members and veterans, Villanueva said, and not only because

it's the NFL's "Salute to Service" month intended to honor veterans.

"I see the NFL try these attempts to honor the military," Villanueva said, "but as somebody who was in the military, I know exactly what means a lot to me. When I see a 'U.S. Army' [logo], I say, 'Yeah, cool.' But it doesn't really speak a lot to me."

"But you see, 'Oh, holy smokes, that's 'The 82nd,' or the '3rd I.D.' and Cameron Heyward is from Georgia, and so he's wearing the 3rd I.D., if the player knew the impact that he has on that specific unit, and he makes a play and you see the patch: 3rd I.D. those are huge. That means a lot more. It's almost like showing something you can truly identify with. The flag? Everybody is going to honor the flag, sure. We all love the flag. But the specific unit patch that you fought with? It means a lot to a lot of people."

NHL roundup

Stone helps Senators top Avalanche in OT

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Mark Stone scored in regulation and again in overtime to give the Ottawa Senators a 4-3 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Friday night in the first of two regular-season games in the Swedish capital.

Swedish defenseman Fredrik Claesson and Christopher DiDomenico also scored for the Senators.

Nail Yakupov, Alexander Kerfoot and Nathan MacKinnon scored for Colorado.

Stone scored 59 seconds into overtime for his 11th of the season. MacKinnon tied it for Colorado with 7:07 remaining in regulation.

The teams will complete the NHL Global Series in Stockholm on Saturday night. It's for the fifth time the NHL has played regular-season games in Europe, but the first since 2011.

The capacity crowd of 13,000 spectators at Stockholm's Ericsson Globe cheered loudly for both teams, each led by Swedish captains — Colorado's Gabriel Landeskog and Ottawa's Erik Karlsson.

Capitals 4, Penguins 1: John Carlson and T.J. Oshie scored rare home power-play goals, and Braden Holtby became the second-fastest goalie in NHL history to 200 victories in Washington's win over Pittsburgh.

Holtby stopped 27 of the 28 shots he faced to pick up victory No. 200 in his 319th game, second only to Hall of Famer and six-time Stanley Cup winner Ken Dryden, who did it in 311. The only goal he allowed was credited to Phil Kessel, but went in off Capitals defenseman Dmitry Orlov.

Chandler Stephenson and Jakub Vrana also scored for Washington.

Panthers 4, Sabres 1: Roberto Luongo broke a tie with Curtis Joseph for fourth place on the NHL career victory list with 455, making 24 saves in visiting Florida's win over Buffalo.

Evgenii Dadonov and Aleksander Barkov each had a goal and an assist, and Ian McCoshen and Vincent Trocheck also scored to help the Panthers snap a five-game skid.

Kyle Okposo scored for the Sabres, and Robin Lehner stopped 27 shots.

Maple Leafs 3, Bruins 2 (OT): Patrick Marleau scored in overtime to give Toronto a victory in the first game of a home-and-home series.

James van Riemsdyk scored twice, the second to tie it with a minute left in regulation, and Frederik Andersen made 33 saves. The Maple Leafs have won three in a row to improve to 11-7-0.

Patrice Bergeron and David Pastrnak scored for Boston, and Anton Khudobin

stopped 30 shots.

Boston will host the back end of the two-game set Saturday night.

Stars 5, Islanders 0: Ben Bishop made 14 saves in his 20th career shutout and host Dallas beat New York.

John Klingberg had a goal and two assists for Dallas, and fellow defenseman Esa Lindell added a goal and an assist. Klingberg leads NHL defensemen with 18 points.

It was Bishop's first shutout of the season. He got some help 3½ minutes into the second period when Tyler Seguin swept the puck away from the net to prevent an Islanders goal.

Hurricanes 3, Blue Jackets 1: Jordan Staal had two goals, Cam Ward made 25 saves and visiting Carolina beat Columbus.

Staal snapped a 1-1 tie 8:54 into the third period when he beat Sergei Bobrovsky from the slot.

Golden Knights 5, Jets 2: William Karlsson scored twice for host Vegas, and David Perron had a goal and an assist.

Karlsson has six goals and four assists in his last 10 games. He had no goals and two assists in his first six games of the season.

Reilly Smith had two assists for Vegas, giving him 200 points in his NHL career.

NBA roundup

Celtics beat Hornets for 11th straight win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Jayson Tatum and Shane Larkin each had 16 points and the Boston Celtics overcame an injury to Kyrie Irving to beat the Charlotte Hornets 90-87 on Friday night for their 11th straight victory.

Terry Rozier had 15 points, seven rebounds and four assists, playing an increased role after Irving left in the first quarter after taking an elbow to the face. Jaylen Brown added 10 points and 13 rebounds.

Celtics center Aron Baynes' elbow inadvertently struck Irving when Baynes was landing after a rebound attempt. Irving was bleeding from the

nose as he was escorted back to the locker room. Irving was ruled out for the rest of the game while he was monitored for possible concussion symptoms.

Bucks 94, Spurs 87: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 28 points and 12 rebounds, and Milwaukee snapped a four-game skid with a victory over host San Antonio in Eric Bledsoe's debut with the Bucks.

Bledsoe started in his first game with Milwaukee three days after being acquired in a trade with Phoenix. Bledsoe made his first attempt, a runner from 13 feet, and he finished with 13 points and seven

assists on 6-for-15 shooting.

Thunder 120, Clippers 111: Paul George scored 42 points and Oklahoma City beat visiting Los Angeles to snap a four-game losing streak.

It was George's highest points total since joining the Thunder in an offseason trade. He made 13 of 22 shots and had nine rebounds and seven assists.

Pistons 111, Hawks 104: Andre Drummond had 16 points, 20 rebounds and a career-high seven assists, and Reggie Jackson made a pair of three-pointers in the final minute to lift host Detroit past Atlanta.

Magic 128, Suns 112: Aaron Gordon scored 22 points and Nikola Vucevic added 19 to help visiting Orlando beat Phoenix.

Pacers 105, Bulls 87: Victor Oladipo scored 25 points and Indiana beat host Chicago to snap a four-game losing streak.

Nets 101, Trail Blazers 97: D'Angelo Russell had 21 points, DeMarre Carroll added 16 and visiting Brooklyn snapped a four-game losing streak to Portland.

Heat 84, Jazz 74: Dion Waiters scored 21 points and Miami rallied to beat host Utah.