

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy grounds crew over phallus drawn in the sky

The Seattle Times

What were they thinking?

Was the giant phallus sketched by a Navy aircrew in the sky above Okanogan, Wash., on Thursday intended as some sort of testosterone-fueled art?

Or amid all the sexual scandals unfolding in recent weeks about men behaving badly, could this have been a kind of defiant, politically incorrect statement?

We may never know the motives. But Navy brass are not amused, and the crew of the EA18-G Growler — based at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station in Washington state — appears to be in big trouble.

“We have grounded the aircrew and are conducting a thorough investigation,” said a statement released Friday by the Navy. “The Navy apologizes for this irresponsible and immature act, and [to] anyone who was offended by this unacceptable action.”

A Navy spokeswoman said one aircraft was involved. The names of the two crewmembers have not been released.

On a blue-sky day, the Growler flew over Okanogan, a northeastern Washington town of some 2,500 people. The crew flew in a pattern that left what the Navy statement called “a condensed air trail resembling an obscene image to observers on the ground.”

Many residents took photos and posted them on social media, where they were viewed widely.

Ramone Duran said he was running errands when he looked up and saw what he thought looked like the start of someone trying to draw a male member with jet contrails.

About five minutes later, Duran said, the drawing was complete.

“After seeing circles at the bottom, I knew what it was and started laughing,” Duran said. “It was pretty funny to see that. You don’t expect to see something like that.”

Misty Waugh, a server and bartender at The Club in Okanogan, said she wasn’t aware of the drawing until her 12-year-old son texted her a picture.

“A lot of people have been talking about it,” Waugh told The Spokesman-Review.

Vice Adm. Mike Shoemaker, in a written statement, said “sophomoric and immature antics of a sexual nature have no place in Naval aviation today.”

US troops in Japan under booze ban after fatal crash

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. military has ordered servicemembers in Japan not to buy or consume alcohol until further notice after a fatal vehicle accident involving a 21-year-old Marine on Okinawa.

The alcohol restriction, which applies on and off base, took effect Sunday evening and will remain in place until further notice, said U.S. Forces Japan spokesman Capt. Tyler Hopkins.

In addition, all servicemembers on Okinawa are under “Tier 3 Liberty Status,” according to a message issued late Sunday by III Marine Expeditionary Force. Tier 3 status means all personnel must return to their quarters after work, and authorized leave must be taken off the Japanese island.

USFJ commander Lt. Gen. Jerry Martinez ordered the alcohol ban after police on the southern island prefecture arrested Lance Cpl. Nicholas James-McLean Sunday on suspicion of negligent driving resulting in death and driving under the influence of alcohol.

A breath test indicated that James-McLean had a blood-alcohol level that was three times Japan’s legal limit of 0.03 percent, a Naha police spokesman said.

Okinawa is home to about half of the approximately 100,000 U.S. servicemembers, civilian base workers and their families stationed in Japan.

Commanders across Japan have been directed to “immediately lead mandatory training to address responsible alcohol use, risk management and acceptable behavior,” a USFJ statement said. All military members and U.S. government civilians in Japan are required to attend.

“The vast majority of [servicemembers] and civilians in Japan serve honorably and make great contributions to the defense of Japan,” the statement added. “When our service members fail to live up to the high standards we set for them, it damages the bonds between bases and local communities and makes it harder for us to accomplish our mission.”

James-McLean was still in custody Monday, and police planned to refer his case to prosecutors Tuesday, the Naha police spokesman said.

A small truck driven by Hidemasa Taira, 61, was making a turn about 5:30 a.m. at an intersection in Naha when it was hit by an Isuzu Elf driven by James-McLean coming from the opposite direction, the spokesman said. Witness accounts say Taira had the right of way, and that the Marine may have gone through a red light.

Taira died at a local hospital from chest wounds and bleeding suffered in the crash, the spokesman said. James-McLean had minor injuries.

Police said the minitruck that James-McLean was driving belonged to the U.S. military, and that U.S. officials told them he was off duty at the time of the crash.

Servicemembers on mainland Japan seemed to be taking news of the alcohol ban in stride.

Staff Sgt. Ian Rose, of the 515th Air Mobility Operations Group at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, expected the restriction to affect his Thanksgiving.

“Drinking is a regular part of my off-duty life, so that’s going to change my weekend plans,” he said. “I guess I’ll have to figure out something else to do.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Brittany Buhman, a hospital corpsman at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, pointed out there’s a lot more to do in Japan than just “going out and getting trashed on the weekend.”

“We’re in a gorgeous country that people need to take some time and experience sober,” she said. “If liberty isn’t restricted, there are so many things [servicemembers] can go out and do.”

Rose said a blanket punishment of servicemembers isn’t the best way to battle impaired driving.

“But I understand that the ambassador and USFJ commander had to show that they took some sort of action to address the problem,” he said. “It’s a necessary evil.”

Stars and Stripes reporters Leon Cook, Tyler Hlavac and Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
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US, Afghan planes bomb opium facilities

By COREY DICKSTEIN AND
PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. and Afghan warplanes bombed 10 Taliban-controlled opium production facilities in Helmand province Sunday in the first major use of new White House-approved authorities to target the insurgents' revenue stream, the top U.S. general in Afghanistan said Monday.

American B-52 bombers and stealth F-22 Raptor fighter jets struck eight drug labs where the Taliban was producing narcotics, including heroin, from the vast poppy fields that it controls in the region, said Army Gen. John Nicholson. The Afghan air force struck two other facilities with their American-provided A-29 Super Tucano attack planes, and Afghan commandos conducted a raid on a prison in a mission tied to the operation dubbed Jagged Knife.

Nicholson said the operation would continue to target many of the Taliban's 400 to 500 other heroin-producing facilities throughout the coming weeks.

"This is going to be steady pressure that is going to stay up," he told reporters at the Pentagon from his headquarters in Kabul. "We're not going to let up."

The strikes were conducted under new rules granted in August as part of President Donald Trump's reworked strategy for

south Asia including Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The strategy includes boosting American forces in Afghanistan by some 3,000 troops to the roughly 14,000 there now.

The new authorities also allow the United States to target the Taliban directly with airstrikes. In recent years, American warplanes could strike the Taliban only if it was in support of an Afghan security forces operation or to protect U.S. or NATO troops. Among the tools that Trump provided Nicholson was the ability to launch strikes such as the attacks Sunday designed to cripple the Taliban's narcotics network, which accounts for the bulk of its funds, the general said.

The Taliban is believed to take in about \$200 million yearly from poppy cultivation and opium production, Nicholson said.

The insurgents have used the funding to achieve battlefield gains. They are now said to control more territory than at any time since a U.S.-led invasion ousted the Taliban from power in 2001.

Washington has provided \$8.6 billion for counternarcotic efforts in Afghanistan since 2002, according to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR. Still, the area used for poppy cultivation in the country has continued to grow.

This year, opium production

in Afghanistan reached a record high, a report released last week by the Afghan government and the U.N. said.

The report said production jumped from about 5,300 tons last year to 9,900 tons so far in 2017.

"It is high time for the international community and Afghanistan to reprioritize drug control," said Yuri Fedotov, executive director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Nicholson said the counternarcotics operations were part of the U.S.-backed Afghanistan security forces' plans to continue offensive operations against the Taliban throughout the winter, a time of year when fighting has traditionally lulled in the country.

The strategy seeks to push the Taliban toward reconciliation talks within two years. Nicholson said the Afghans aim to control about 80 percent of Afghanistan's nearly 36 million people by 2019.

As of August, the government controlled or influenced only 56.8 percent of the country's 407 districts, a 1 percent decline during the past six months and a more than 6 percent decline from the same period last year, according to the most recent SIGAR report. The Taliban controlled or influenced 13 percent of the population, a 2 percent increase in its territory from the previous six months, the same report

found. The rest of the nation is contested.

Nicholson pushed back Monday on concerns about the Taliban's gaining influence. The areas where the insurgents gained control were in rural regions, he said, adding the advances occurred before Trump granted the new war authorities in August.

"We didn't see the enemy attempt to take cities like they did," Nicholson said. "They did go after some district centers, but when they did they undertook heavy casualties. ... These new authorities give me the ability to go after the enemy in ways that I really couldn't before, and it's freed us up now to use airpower the most effective way going forward."

The attacks Sunday included the first use of the advanced F-22 fighters for strikes in Afghanistan.

While the B-52s dropped 500- and 2,000-pound bombs to obliterate opium facilities, the F-22s were used to fire smaller, more precise munitions.

"We used an F-22 Raptor aircraft that can carry 250-pound bombs and hit direct targets," Nicholson said.

The twin-engine, stealth aircraft had been engaged in anti-Islamic State missions in the Middle East. But the plane had not been used operationally in Afghanistan until now.

Warship saves sailors after boat sinks off California

By LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

The Navy rescued three recreational boaters Saturday just minutes after their vessel sank off the coast of Southern California.

Sailors on a stricken 32-foot craft sent an emergency signal about 8 a.m. after their boat began taking on water 40 miles off the coast of La Jolla, a Navy statement said.

The distress call was relayed by the Coast Guard and picked up by the guided-missile destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer, which was in the area on a routine operation.

The Meyer quickly rendezvoused with the pleasure boat and deployed an inflatable craft to rescue its three crew, the statement said.

"We were in close proximity to the crew members just minutes after their boat sub-

merged, and are proud to have quickly assisted and returned these men home without injury," Cmdr. Alex Mamikonian, the Meyer's executive officer, said in the statement.

The rescued mariners were evaluated by a medical team and transferred to a Coast Guard cutter. No injuries were reported.

"Although we continually train for all types of contingencies, it's the performance of the

crew, when lives are at stake, that allow you to gauge the effectiveness of our training," said Cmdr. Vince Fortson, commanding officer of the Meyer.

The San Diego-based Meyer is part of the USS Carl Vinson carrier strike group, which wrapped up a three-week sustainment exercise off the coast of Southern California on Thursday in preparation for a deployment to the Western Pacific early next year.

US to declare N. Korea sponsor of terrorism

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump announced Monday that the U.S. will designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism amid heightened nuclear tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Trump said the designation will impose further penalties on the country. He called it a long-overdue step and part of the U.S. “maximum pressure campaign” against the North. North Korea would join Iran, Sudan and Syria on the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

“In addition to threatening the world by nuclear devastation, North Korea has repeatedly supported acts of international terrorism, including assassinations on foreign soil,” Trump said during a Cabinet meeting.

U.S. officials cited the killing of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s estranged half brother in a Malaysian airport in February as an act of terrorism.

The designation had been debated for months inside the administration, with some officials at the State Department arguing that North Korea did not meet the legal standard to be relisted as a state sponsor of terrorism.

U.S. officials involved in the internal deliberations said there was no debate over whether the slaying of half brother Kim Jong Nam was a terrorist act. However, lawyers said there had to be more than one incident, and there was disagreement over whether the treatment of American student Otto Warmbier, who died of injuries suffered in North Korean custody, consti-

tuted terrorism.

The officials were not authorized to speak publicly about the deliberations and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The move returns North Korea to the ignominious list for the first time since 2008, when the North was removed in a bid to salvage a deal to halt its nuclear development. In the years since, the North has made advanced leaps in both its nuclear and missile programs, proving the capacity to reach U.S. territories with the devastating weapons earlier this year.

Trump has faced pressure from congressional lawmakers to re-list the country amid its advancing nuclear missile program, though some fear it could increase already heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Moore accuser denies being paid for her story

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A woman accusing Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore of initiating sexual contact when she was 14 said Monday she was “absolutely not” paid to tell her story publicly.

The declaration by Leigh Corfman comes after Moore’s supporters claimed without evidence that reporters were offering thousands of dollars to women for accusations. The state election is being watched closely, as several GOP senators have called on Moore to drop out, and President Donald Trump remains mostly quiet on the issue.

“My bank account has not flourished,” Corfman told NBC’s “Today” show. “If anything, it’s gone down because I’m not working.”

Corfman said Moore’s stature in Alabama — he was a noted attorney who went on to become a powerful judge — prevented her from coming forward years ago.

Moore has denied allegations of sexual misconduct. Nevertheless, his victory in the Dec. 12 special election would saddle GOP senators with a colleague accused of abusing and harass-

ing teenagers, a troubling liability heading into the 2018 congressional elections.

Republicans hold a 52-48 edge in the Senate, and the narrow majority already has made it difficult for the GOP to push through its agenda. Moore’s name cannot be removed from the ballot even if he withdraws from the race, though a write-in campaign remains possible.

White House aides said Trump — who faced his own allegations of sexual misconduct and was caught on tape bragging about forcibly grabbing women without their consent — is uncomfortable with the allegations against Moore but thinks voters should decide his fate.

Trump “doesn’t know who to believe. I think a lot of folks don’t,” said Mick Mulvaney, Trump’s budget director.

In the NBC interview, Corfman said, “I was a 14-year-old child trying to play in an adult’s world, and he was 32 years old,” Corfman said.

She later added: “It took years for me to regain a sense of confidence in myself, and I felt guilty. I felt like I was the one to blame. It was decades before I was able to let that go.”

2nd woman says Franken improperly touched her

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A second woman has accused Minnesota Sen. Al Franken of inappropriate touching, saying Monday that he put his hand on her bottom as they posed for a picture at the Minnesota State Fair in 2010 — after he had begun his career in the Senate.

Lindsay Menz told CNN the interaction made her feel “gross.” She said she immediately told her husband Franken had “grabbed” her bottom, and she said she posted about it on Facebook.

Menz’s allegation comes days after a Los Angeles broadcaster, Leeann Tweeden, accused Franken of forcibly kissing her during a 2006 USO tour. Franken already faced a Senate ethics investigation over Tweeden’s allegation, but the Menz allegation is potentially more damaging for Franken because it would be behavior that occurred while he was in office.

Franken, 66, a Democrat, told CNN he didn’t remember taking the photo with Menz, but said in a statement to the network that he feels badly that she felt disrespected.

“I take thousands of photos at the state fair surrounded

by hundreds of people, and I certainly don’t remember taking this picture,” Franken told CNN. “I feel badly that Ms. Menz came away from our interaction feeling disrespected.”

Franken’s office did not immediately respond to Associated Press messages.

Menz, 33, who now lives in Frisco, Texas, said her father’s business was sponsoring a radio booth at the Minnesota fair and that she took photos with several elected officials and political candidates as they stopped at the booth.

She said as she posed with Franken, he “pulled me in really close, like awkward close, and as my husband took the picture, he put his hand full-fledged on my rear,” Menz said. “It was wrapped tightly around my butt cheek.”

Menz said she told her husband, Jeremy Menz, and father, Mark Brown, about it right away. Both men affirmed that to CNN. Menz also said she posted the photo with Franken on Facebook on Aug. 27, and when her sister commented on the photo, she replied: “Dude — Al Franken TOTALLY molested me! Creeper!”

US sets new limit on Russian flights over Hawaii bases

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser

In late October when two Russian Tu-polev bombers approached the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan in the Sea of Japan, the U.S. sent up fighters to intercept.

In May, fighters were dispatched to intercept Russian bombers and fighters off Alaska.

But last month a Russian Tu-154M jet conducted a surveillance flight unchallenged over military installations in Hawaii, U.S. government officials confirmed.

The Russian overflight conducted between Oct. 4 and Oct. 6 was sanctioned by the United States as part of the Treaty on Open Skies, which has been in effect since 2002 to verify arms control agreements and promote stability through transparency of military forces and activities.

Russian planes fly over U.S. military installations, capturing imagery, and the same is true for U.S. planes and Russia. Some 34 countries are part of the overflight deal. The flights are not publicized, and many people are not aware they occur.

But Moscow soon will be limited to about half the recent overflight distance over Hawaii per a new U.S. restriction. The curb is a probable tit-for-tat over worsening relations and what an Open Skies observer called a “poke in the eye” to Russia for limiting flying time over Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea to 310 miles on each mission.

The Tu-154M even landed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for refueling, according to Pacific Air Forces and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

At the Open Skies Consultative Commission in Vienna on Sept. 26, the U.S. announced it would decrease the permissible flight distance over the Hawaiian Islands, cease waiving certain Federal Aviation Administration restrictions, and discontinue allowing Russia overnight accommodations at some Open Skies refueling airfields, PACAF said.

Charles Manson dead at 83

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Charles Manson, the cult leader who became the hypnotic-eyed face of evil across America after orchestrating the gruesome murders of pregnant actress Sharon Tate and six others in Los Angeles during the summer of 1969, died Sunday after nearly a half-century in prison for the crimes. He was 83.

Manson, whose name to this day is synonymous with unspeakable violence and madness, died at 8:13 p.m. of natural causes at a hospital, according to a California Department of Corrections statement.

Michele Hanisee, president of the Association of Deputy District Attorneys, reacted to the death by quoting Vincent Bugliosi, the late Los Angeles prosecutor who put Manson behind bars. Bugliosi said, “Manson was an evil, sophisticated con man with twisted and warped moral values.”

“Today, Manson’s victims are the ones who should be remembered and mourned on the occasion of his death,” Hanisee said.

California Corrections spokeswoman Vicky Waters said it’s “to be determined” what happens to Manson’s body. Prison officials previously said Manson had no known next of kin, and state law says that if no relative or legal representative surfaces within 10 days, it’s up to the department to determine whether the body is cremated or buried. It’s also unclear what happens to his property, which is said to include artwork and at least two guitars. State law says the department must maintain his property for up to a year in anticipation there might be legal battles over who can make a legitimate claim to it.

A petty criminal who had been in and out of jail since childhood, the charismatic, guru-like Manson surrounded himself in the 1960s with runaways and other lost souls and then sent his disciples to butcher some of Los Angeles’ rich and famous in what prosecutors said was a bid to trigger a race war — an idea he got from a twisted read-

ing of the Beatles song “Helter Skelter.”

The slayings horrified the world and, together with the deadly violence that erupted later in 1969 during a Rolling Stones concert at California’s Altamont Speedway, exposed the dangerous, drugged-out underside of the counterculture movement and seemed to mark the death of the era of peace and love.

Linda Deutsch, the longtime courts reporter for The Associated Press who covered the Manson case, said he “left a legacy of evil and hate and murder.”

“He was able to take young people who were impressionable and convince them he had the answer to everything and he turned them into killers,” she said. “It was beyond anything we had ever seen before in this country.”

The Manson Family, as his followers were called, slaughtered five of its victims on Aug. 9, 1969, at Tate’s home. The next night, a wealthy grocer and his wife, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca, were stabbed to death in their home across town. The killers scrawled such phrases as “Pigs” and “Helter Skelter” (sic) in blood at the crime scenes. Three months later, a Manson follower was jailed on an unrelated charge and told a cellmate about the bloodbath, leading to the cult leader’s arrest.

In the annals of American crime, Manson became the embodiment of evil: a short, shaggy-haired, bearded figure with a demonic stare and an “X” — later turned into a swastika — carved into his forehead.

“Many people I know in Los Angeles believe that the Sixties ended abruptly on August 9, 1969,” author Joan Didion wrote in her 1979 book “The White Album.”

Manson and three followers — Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and Leslie Van Houten — were found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Another defendant, Charles “Tex” Watson, was convicted later. All were spared execution and given life sentences after the California Supreme Court struck down the death penalty in 1972.

FBI probing death of Border Patrol agent in Texas

Associated Press

VAN HORN, Texas — Authorities are searching Texas’ Big Bend area for potential suspects and witnesses after a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent was fatally injured responding to activity there.

Border Patrol spokesmen said they could not provide any details Sunday on what caused the agent’s injuries or what led to them. Spokesman Carlos Diaz said the FBI has taken over the investigation.

Another spokesman, Douglas Mosier, said Agent Rogelio Martinez, 36, and his partner were transported to a local hospital, where Martinez died. Martinez’s partner is in serious condition. His name wasn’t released. Martinez had been a border agent since August 2013 and was from El Paso.

President Donald Trump commented about the incident on Twitter on Sunday night amid a series of unrelated tweets.

“We will seek out and bring to justice

those responsible,” Trump’s tweet read. He also reiterated his call for a wall at the U.S. border with Mexico.

Border Patrol records show Big Bend accounted for about 1 percent of the more than 61,000 apprehensions its agents made along the southwest border between October 2016 and May 2017. The region’s mountains and the Rio Grande make it a difficult area for people to cross illegally into the U.S. from Mexico.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge orders state to treat sick inmates

FL TALLAHASSEE — Florida may have to pay millions to treat as many as 20,000 inmates after a federal judge ruled state prison officials failed to properly care for felons infected with the hepatitis C virus.

The Miami Herald reported U.S. District Court Judge Mark Walker on Friday ordered the Florida Department of Corrections to treat inmates who test positive for the viral infection with direct acting antiviral drugs, a 12-week treatment that now costs about \$37,000 per patient.

Walker concluded the state prisons system had failed to properly treat inmates due to a lack of funding. He told the state he wanted a plan submitted by Dec. 1 that included timetables that showed how Florida would comply with the order.

Paper's probe finds raffle irregularities

IL BELLEVILLE — A newspaper investigation has found that at least a dozen raffles conducted largely by veterans' organizations in southwestern Illinois may not be in accordance with state law.

The Belleville News-Democrat said its investigation revealed that some Queen of Hearts raffles appear to violate parts of the state's Raffles and Poker Runs Act.

The investigation also found ordinances in cities hosting raffles don't appear to be consistent with state law or enforced.

Scooby the camel returned after escape

OH TOLEDO — A young camel named Scooby

is back at home after going on a 90-minute jaunt that blocked traffic and provided an uncommon photo opportunity for motorists in Ohio.

The Blade reported 1-year-old Scooby escaped from his fenced-in home in Springfield Township on Friday afternoon and began walking along township streets.

A neighbor of the owner alerted the Lucas County Sheriff's Office. Owner Nabil Shaheen then was contacted and led Scooby safely home.

Saw falls off truck; 10 vehicles hit it

OR SALEM — Authorities said a large band saw fell off a truck on Interstate 5, and 10 vehicles hit the object.

Oregon State Police Lt. Cari Boyd said one motorist was injured and most of the vehicles sustained only minor damage in the incident Nov. 14 near Woodburn.

Boyd said the driver of the pickup initially stopped and ran toward the band saw. He turned around once vehicles started hitting it. The man got back into the pickup and left the scene.

Coast Guard stops a runaway boat

NC WILMINGTON — The U.S. Coast Guard said it stopped a runaway boat near the North Carolina coast after the boat's operator was knocked into the water.

The Coast Guard said watchstanders in Wilmington received word about 9:45 a.m. Saturday that a 14-foot jon boat was spinning in circles with no one aboard in the vicinity of Goose Creek and Dixon Creek in Pamlico County.

A crew launched from Ho-

bucken and found a wake had ejected the boat's operator into the water and caused the tiller of the boat to turn.

A good Samaritan had picked up the boat's operator, who was taken to the nearest dock by Coast Guard personnel.

Man arrested after store parking dispute

FL KEY LARGO — A Florida man was arrested on suspicion of punching another man who parked in a spot reserved for disabled drivers.

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office said that Mark Wheaton, 57, was in a Key Largo grocery store parking lot Friday night when he saw a 61-year-old man park in the spot for disabled drivers.

The man left his wife in the car and went into the grocery store.

Wheaton is suspected of following him and yelling at him inside the store. Witnesses and victims told authorities that Wheaton punched the victim times in the face.

The victim, who was not identified, was treated at a hospital for a fractured nose and other facial injuries. Wheaton was arrested later at his Key Largo home and charged with aggravated battery.

Firefighters rescue 2 teens stuck in cave

MN ST. PAUL — Firefighters rescued two teens who got stuck in a deep cave in St. Paul during the weekend.

The boys descended 100 feet down a shaft to reach the cave on St. Paul's West Side but could not climb back out early Saturday.

One of the teens' friends who had not followed them down the

shaft called 911 about 1:30 a.m. It took firefighters 2½ hours to pull the teens out. No one was hurt.

Man accused of killing girlfriend with truck

CA WATERTOWN — Authorities have charged a 42-year-old Watertown man suspected of killing his live-in girlfriend by running over her with his truck.

Casey Belden Hoskins is charged with criminal vehicular homicide in the death of Jessica Ludenia, 33.

According to the complaint, witnesses said the couple had been arguing and the victim jumped into the truck bed as Hoskins tried to drive away Tuesday night.

A fire captain at the scene reported Hoskins appeared intoxicated and had an open beer bottle in the back pocket of his pants.

Ludenia died at a hospital of blunt-force torso injuries. Hoskins remains jailed.

3 die after car careens off road

FL PERRY — Three men were killed in Florida when their car careened off the road and caught fire Saturday night in Taylor County.

The Florida Highway Patrol said that as the car approached a right-hand curve, the car crossed the northbound lane into a ditch on the opposite side. The Chevrolet Camaro went airborne, striking several trees and catching fire.

The three killed in the accident were Matthew York, 30, of Baxley, Ga., and passengers Brett King, 33, of Lamont, Fla., and Brett Bassett, 25, of Perry.

From wire reports

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Truex wins title; Earnhardt celebrates

Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt Jr. chugged another beer, left his crew guys on pit road after a nearly hour-long post-race party and bolted for the championship stage.

He had another celebration ahead with one of his best buddies in racing.

Earnhardt raised a cold one. Martin Truex Jr. hoisted a trophy.

Two friends who hunt together, own property together and once raced on the same team had another reason to come together: To revel in Truex's first Cup title.

Truex capped the most successful season of his journeyman career as NASCAR's champion Sunday by winning the season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway. He beat Kyle Busch, Kevin Harvick and Brad Keselowski — all former series champions — to claim the crown. He was mobbed by his Furniture Row Racing team, sobbed during a long embrace with cancer-stricken partner Sherry Pollex and thanked team owner Barney Visser for saving his career.

But he couldn't forget Junior, the guy who gave him his first shot in NASCAR when he lured Truex from New Jersey to

North Carolina to pursue a professional racing career. Driving for Earnhardt's second-tier Xfinity Series team, Truex won two championships.

"I wouldn't be here today without him. My path would surely be different," Truex said. "There's a lot of things that would be different if it wasn't for Dale. He's just been an amazing friend, and always there for me. To see how happy he was, genuinely happy to come to Victory Lane, I love him like a brother."

Truex, the regular-season champion, was the favorite to win this title. He dominated nearly every statistical category all year — he led the most laps and won the most stages — and his victory was his series-best eighth in 2017.

So even though it was Earnhardt's finale as a full-time driver, Truex earned his share of the spotlight.

It was the first championship for Denver-based Furniture Row Racing. It was the second title in three years for manufacturer Toyota.

Busch finished second for Joe Gibbs Racing, helping Toyota — the most dominant manufacturer this season — go 1-2 in the finale.

Kyle Larson, who was eliminated from the playoffs last month, finished third in a Chev-

rolet for Chip Ganassi Racing. Harvick, seeking his second title, was fourth in a Stewart-Haas Racing Ford.

Keselowski wound up seventh, failing to give Team Penske a season sweep of the two top American racing series. Penske won the IndyCar title in September.

Truex also denied Ford its third win of the weekend. Ford drivers won titles in the Truck and Xfinity series. The manufacturer has not won a Cup championship since 2004.

Ford may not have had a realistic chance because of how strong Truex has been all year. When he finally took the checkered flag, he sobbed and struggled to collect his thoughts.

"I was a mess. I couldn't even talk," Truex said. "I was a wreck thinking about all the tough days, the bad days, the times where I thought my career was over with, the times when I didn't think anyone believed in me, but the guys, the people who mattered did, my fans, my family."

"Then when I got with this team ... they resurrected my career and made me a champion."

Missing from the celebration party was team owner Visser. He suffered a heart attack two weeks ago and is sidelined in Colorado. After pouring mil-

lions into his race team, Visser watched it win its first championship on television.

Even as Earnhardt partied on pit road with his crew, he tried to put the focus on Truex. He had driven alongside Truex after the race and hit his car in celebration.

"I am so proud of him," Earnhardt said. "This sport needs drivers like Martin Truex Jr., and everything that he went through as a driver, and everything he went through in his personal life, and everything Sherry has gone through, it's just great. And they (Furniture Row) are the outsiders up there in Colorado, came down here and beat all of us from North Carolina."

Even with that early success with Earnhardt's second-tier team, Truex's career took a while to take off. He had a ride with Dale Earnhardt Inc., which closed and was folded into the Ganassi lineup. He finally found some success after signing with Michael Waltrip Racing, but he got snared in an MWR cheating scandal in 2013 that ultimately cost Truex his job and led to the eventual shutdown of the organization.

He acknowledged earlier this week that he worried he'd never race again at NASCAR's top level.

Top 25 roundup

Bridges sprains ankle in No. 2 Spartans' win

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Miles Bridges stayed in school to chase a national championship instead of cashing in on his potential in the NBA.

Three games into his sophomore season, he is hurt.

Bridges scored 20 points before limping off the court after injuring his left ankle, casting a pall over No. 2 Michigan State as it beat Stony Brook 93-71 on Sunday night.

"Thank God it's not a high-ankle sprain," coach Tom Izzo said. "It's just a sprain where he rolled it. He'll be day to day."

The Spartans play DePaul on Thursday

in Oregon in the Phil Knight Invitational.

The Spartans (2-1) bounced back from their loss to top-ranked Duke with a win that will be remembered as being costly if Bridges' injury lingers.

No. 8 Florida 70, New Hampshire 63: Jalen Hudson scored 26 points, including a dunk midway through the second half that put Florida ahead for good in the Gators' home victory.

No. 10 Southern California 93, Vanderbilt 89 (OT): At Nashville, Tenn., Jordan McLaughlin scored a career-high 35 points, and Southern California rallied from a 10-point deficit midway through the

second half to beat Vanderbilt in overtime.

No. 14 Minnesota 92, Western Carolina 64: Jordan Murphy had 23 points and 11 rebounds, and host Minnesota cruised past Western Carolina.

Texas Tech 85, No. 20 Northwestern 49: Keenan Evans scored 25 points to lead Texas Tech over Northwestern in the championship game of the Hall of Fame Tip-Off Tournament at Uncasville, Conn.

No. 21 Saint Mary's 79, San Jose State 61: Jock Landale had 22 points and nine rebounds, Emmett Naar matched his career high with 12 assists and visiting Saint Mary's beat San Jose State.

NFL roundup

Brady, Pats dominate Raiders

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Tom Brady felt right at home in his first appearance in Mexico by throwing for 339 yards and three touchdowns, to the delight of an adoring crowd, in the New England Patriots' 33-8 victory over the Oakland Raiders on Sunday.

Brady completed his first 12 passes and picked apart Oakland's suspect defense to chants of "Brady! Brady!" from an amped-up crowd at Azteca Stadium. The large contingent of Patriots fans in the well-divided crowd for a Raiders "home" game had plenty to cheer about as New England (8-2) dominated from start to finish.

After winning their debut trip to Mexico City last year against Houston, the Raiders (4-6) were completely overmatched in their return. The offense failed to score until Derek Carr threw a TD pass to Amari Cooper in the fourth quarter with Oakland trailing by 30 points.

Saints 34, Redskins 31 (OT): Host New Orleans extended its winning streak to eight games with an unlikely comeback, erasing a 15-point deficit inside the final six minutes or regulation and kicking a short field goal in overtime.

Mark Ingram capped a 131-yard rushing performance with gains of 20 and 31 yards on back-to-back carries in overtime to set up Wil Lutz's winning 28-yard kick.

Drew Brees passed for 385 yards and two touchdowns, going 11 of 11 for 164 yards and his only two touchdowns on New Orleans' final two possessions of regulation. His first TD went to tight end Josh Hill with 2:53 to go, and the last to Alvin Kamara with 1:05 left.

Giants 12, Chiefs 9 (OT): Roger Lewis Jr. made a spectacular catch to set up the winning 23-yard yard goal by Aldrick Rosas in overtime and the host Giants responded from weeks of adversity to beat the AFC West-leading Chiefs on a

blustery, cold day.

Vikings 24, Rams 7: Lata-vius Murray rushed for 95 yards and two touchdowns, Adam Thielen turned a short catch into a 65-yard score and the host Vikings smothered the NFL's highest-scoring offense.

Case Keenum completed 27 of 38 passes for 280 yards and no turnovers against the team that benched him last season for No. 1 overall draft pick Jared Goff. He also guided the Vikings (8-2) to their sixth straight victory in a matchup of division leaders.

Ravens 23, Packers 0: The Ravens forced five turnovers in their third shutout of the season. Visiting Baltimore last accomplished the feat when the Ray Lewis-led defense had four shutouts for the Super Bowl-winning team in 2000.

Jimmy Smith, Eric Weddle and Marlon Humphrey each picked off passes for Baltimore (5-5), which led the NFL in interceptions entering the weekend. But a problematic offense couldn't generate a touchdown drive until Joe Flacco's perfect deep ball to Mike Wallace over two defenders for a 13-point lead nearly two minutes into the third quarter. Flacco threw for 183 yards, going 22 of 28 with an interception.

Chargers 54, Bills 24: Casey Hayward made two of the host Chargers' five interceptions during a horrific first half by Buffalo rookie quarterback Nathan Peterman, and Los Angeles cruised over the slumping Bills.

Korey Toomer returned Peterman's first interception 59 yards for a touchdown on Buffalo's opening drive, the rookie threw two more interceptions in the first quarter and two additional picks in the second.

Peterman was pulled from his first NFL start with a 37-7 halftime deficit after just 14 pass attempts for the Bills (5-5), who lost their third straight.

Bengals 20, Broncos 17: Andy Dalton threw three touchdown passes in Cincinnati's win over the Broncos, their

first win in Denver since 1975 when franchise founder Paul Brown was their head coach.

That snapped the Bengals' 10-game losing streak in Denver and sent the Broncos (3-7) to their sixth straight loss, their longest skid in 27 years.

Lions 27, Bears 24: Matthew Stafford threw for 299 yards and two touchdowns, Matt Prater kicked a 52-yard field goal with 1:35 remaining.

Visiting Detroit (6-4) took the lead after Tarik Cohen had tied it for Chicago (3-7) with a 15-yard touchdown run.

Jaguars 19, Browns 7: Blake Bortles threw a touchdown pass and Jacksonville linebacker Telvin Smith recovered a fumble for a TD with 1:14 remaining as the visiting Jaguars won their fourth straight and moved into sole possession of first place in the AFC South.

Buccaneers 30, Dolphins 20: Ryan Fitzpatrick threw for 275 yards and two touchdowns, Patrick Murray kicked a 35-yard field goal with 4 seconds remaining and Tampa Bay snapped a six-game road slide by topping the penalty-prone Dolphins.

O.J. Howard and DeSean Jackson caught those scoring throws for the Buccaneers, who outscored Miami 17-0 in the second quarter.

Texans 31, Cardinals 21: Rookie D'Onta Foreman ran for 65 yards and two fourth-quarter touchdowns before being carted off the field with an ankle injury to help host Houston snap a three-game skid.

The Texans (4-6) went on top when Foreman scored his first career touchdown on a 3-yard run early in the fourth quarter. The Cardinals were stopped for a loss on a fourth-and-1 later in the fourth. Foreman dashed 34 yards on the next play to push the lead to 31-21 with about six minutes left.

Foreman was injured on the play, falling to the ground in the end zone.

Eagles roll over Cowboys

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — No kicker, no problem for the Philadelphia Eagles.

Carson Wentz threw for two touchdowns and three 2-point conversions after Philadelphia lost kicker Jake Elliott to a head injury, and the Eagles all but wrapped up the NFC East with a 37-9 victory over the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday night.

The Eagles (9-1) outscored the Cowboys 30-0 in the second half while extending their winning streak to eight games, their longest since 2003-04 and tied with New Orleans for the best current run in the NFL.

Philadelphia leads the defending division champion Cowboys (5-5) by four games with six to play after handing Dallas its worst home loss at 8-year-old AT&T Stadium.

Dallas' Dak Prescott threw a career-high three interceptions and lost a fumble that was returned for a touchdown in his second straight loss without star running back Ezekiel Elliott, serving a six-game suspension for alleged domestic violence.

Jake Elliott's injury wasn't a factor for nearly a half because the NFL-leading Eagles couldn't get in scoring position. They failed to get a first down on five straight first-half drives, starting with one at the Dallas 15 when Elliott missed a 34-yard attempt and soon after left the field.

Trailing 9-7 at halftime, Wentz led the Eagles on scoring drives of 75, 90 and 85 yards, the middle one boosted by Jay Ajayi's 71-yard run in his second game since getting traded by Miami.

Eagles coach Doug Pederson declared at halftime that he would go for every fourth down and try 2-point conversions after every touchdown.

NBA roundup

Ball gets triple-double as Lakers win

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Lonzo Ball had his second career triple-double and Julius Randle scored 24 points in the Los Angeles Lakers' 127-109 victory over the short-handed Denver Nuggets on Sunday night.

Ball had 11 points, a career-high 16 rebounds and 11 assists in the 20-year-old rookie's first triple-double in front of his hometown fans at Staples Center.

"You should always play better in front of your fans, so I'm just trying to put on a good show for them and win at the same time," Ball said.

Ball became the youngest player in NBA history with a first triple-double eight days earlier in a loss at Milwaukee.

"This one was a lot better," Ball said. "I actually like this one. Just keep building on it."

Brook Lopez scored 21 points and Jordan Clarkson added 18 for the Lakers, who surged to a 24-point lead in the first half and easily won for just the second time in seven games.

Denver coach Mike Malone and top scorer Nikola Jokic were ejected in the second quarter after Malone stepped onto the court during play to argue a no-call on a play by Jokic around the basket. Malone

furiously confronted referee Rodney Mott, who swiftly ejected the coach and his best player when Jokic joined in the argument.

Forward Paul Millsap also left with a sprained left wrist in the second quarter of a miserable night at Staples Center for the Nuggets, who lost for just the second time in six games.

Ball and Magic Johnson are the only Lakers with multiple triple-doubles in their rookie seasons. Johnson had seven, and his new point guard has two in his first 17 games.

Warriors 118, Nets 111: Stephen Curry had season highs with 39 points and 11 rebounds, and visiting Golden State held on after he fouled out to beat Brooklyn.

The Warriors built a 22-point cushion after two quarters behind 22 points from Curry. They led by 28 in the third quarter, but Brooklyn cut it all the way to four after Curry picked up his sixth foul with three minutes remaining.

Klay Thompson then scored seven of his 23 points in the final two minutes.

Kevin Durant was out with a sprained left ankle, giving him extra rest before Golden State wraps up its four-game trip at Oklahoma City on Wednesday night in his former home arena.

Pacers 120, Heat 95: Bojan Bogdanovic

scored 26 points, Myles Turner added 25 and visiting Indiana embarrassed Miami in the second half.

Turner made 11 of 14 shots for the Pacers, who won their third straight.

Raptors 100, Wizards 91: DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points, C.J. Miles had 12 and host Toronto beat Washington to avenge its only home loss of the season.

Toronto won its season-high fourth straight and improved to 6-1 at home.

Pistons 100, Timberwolves 97: Andre Drummond had 20 points and 16 rebounds, Tobias Harris and Avery Bradley added 18 points each and visiting Detroit outlasted Minnesota.

Harris hit two free throws with 3.3 seconds remaining, and Jimmy Butler's last-second three-point attempt rattled out to draw a loud groan from the crowd as the Pistons snapped their two-game skid.

Suns 113, Bulls 105: T.J. Warren scored 27 points to lead six Phoenix players in double figures and the Suns handed visiting Chicago its sixth loss in seven games.

Rookie Lauri Markkanen, the former University of Arizona standout, scored a career-best 26 points for the Bulls in a matchup of the NBA's two youngest teams.

NHL roundup

Gibson stops 50 as Ducks edge Panthers

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Of all the ways to win a hockey game, this wasn't Anaheim's favorite.

John Gibson stopped 50 shots and the Ducks held on to beat the Florida Panthers 3-2 for their first winning streak in three weeks. The Ducks were outshot 52-28, but Gibson was able to make goals from Josh Manson, Rickard Rakell and Brandon Montour stand.

"He saved our butts," Ducks coach Randy Carlyle said.

Gibson was one save shy of tying his own franchise record, which he shares with Jonas Hiller.

"We got a stellar performance from our goaltender,

simple as that," Carlyle said.

Florida fell to a disappointing 7-11-2, with only 16 points in 20 games.

"Same story, different night," Panthers coach Bob Boughner said. "We threw everything we had at them."

Anaheim had not won consecutive games since Oct. 28 and 29.

After the Ducks took a 2-0 lead, Florida — shut out Saturday by the Kings — snapped its scoreless streak in the second period on a power play. Vincent Trocheck's wrist shot went top shelf for his ninth goal.

Knights 4, Kings 2: William Karlsson scored twice, Maxime Lagace stopped 27 shots and host Vegas beat Los Angeles.

It was the first meeting in what figures to be a fun Pacific Division rivalry considering the teams' proximity along Interstate 15.

Rangers 3, Senators 0: Henrik Lundqvist stopped 20 shots for his second shutout of the season and 63rd of his career, leading host New York over Ottawa.

Kevin Hayes, Michael Grabner and Mika Zibanejad scored, and Mats Zuccarello had two assists to help the Rangers win the teams' first meeting since the Senators eliminated New York in six games in the Eastern Conference semifinals in May.

Avalanche 4, Red Wings 3 (OT): Nathan MacKinnon

scored 2:55 into overtime and Colorado overcame a late two-goal deficit to beat host Detroit.

Niklas Kronwall put Detroit ahead 3-1 with 8:53 left in the third period, but Nail Yakupov made it 3-2 on a power play with 6:15 remaining before Carl Soderberg tied it with Colorado's goalie pulled in the final minute.

Hurricanes 4, Islanders 2: Teuvo Teravainen had two goals and an assist in host Carolina's victory over New York.

Sebastian Aho added a goal and an assist for the Hurricanes, extending his goals streak to four games after failing to score in his first 15 games of the season.