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Film reveals rigors of Navy boot camp

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II

Stars and Stripes

People who think the Navy may have gone soft on new recruits can see the tough training that goes on at a modern boot camp via a new documentary.

“Boot Camp: Making a Sailor” is an hour-long look at training for new sailors produced by the Navy’s All Hands magazine.

Filmmakers followed four recruits from their homes to the Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill., to observe their trials and tribulations over three months on the road to graduation.

Austin Matthias Rooney, an Emmy-award winner and lead producer of the documentary, said he wanted to let a new generation of Americans who might be thinking about joining the Navy know what they’d be in for.

“We wanted a more accurate portrayal of Navy boot camp,” he said. “There were a lot of rumors out there, such as recruits keeping their cellphones and no more yelling, which were totally untrue.”

The documentary shows that boot camp isn’t easy and lets recruits know they should come prepared and motivated.

Rooney hopes it shows sailors, veterans and family members that while boot camp has been updated, its traditions are intact and recruits are well-trained and ready for the job.

“The uniform they wear is earned, not given,” he said.

The documentary also takes a deeper look at recruits’ characters.

“I wanted to show their backstories and where they came from so the audience could connect with them,” Rooney said.

The filmmaker didn’t know what to expect heading into the project, but the former sailor said he could compare the recruits’ experience to his own time in uniform.

“I had my own experiences from years ago which I remembered as a pretty intense and a challenging experience,” he said.

The documentary shows the moment recruits get off the bus to be met by yelling commanders. One recruit asks what he’d got himself into.

“Immediately stepping off the bus with the recruits, it was like going in a time warp to back when I stepped off the bus, the nerves of pulling up and then the all-out chaos,” Rooney said.

The film shows recruits recognizing the challenges they face and working out that they’ll need discipline and teamwork to get through.

Rooney saw some changes in the program since his Navy days, such as more hands-on training and less classroom time, allowing commanders to focus on individuals and have more influence over who is deemed fit to serve.

The documentary shows recruits learn-

ing water survival, firefighting, seamanship and marksmanship. The culmination of the course involves trainees putting all their skills together aboard a 210-foot replica of a destroyer.

At the end of the film, viewers watch the new sailors don white uniforms and graduate in front of their families and friends.

Each year, an average of 38,000 to 40,000 recruits pass through Navy boot camp. A typical division starts with 88 recruits, but those numbers can drop if individuals don’t meet standards and are sent back for more training or get expelled.

“For people who want a challenge, who are motivated and excited for it, this documentary will make them even more excited to join,” Rooney said. “For anyone who watches it and decides they wouldn’t be able to handle it, I think it’s better they make that decision from watching a video than from getting there in person and dropping out from training.”

Sally Isabel Santiago, of Queens, N.Y., leaves for boot camp Dec. 11. She said she had only a vague idea about what was in store before watching the documentary.

After watching the documentary, Santiago said she had a better idea of how to mentally and physically prepare.

“I now have a goal of passing boot camp, and every way I’ve prepped has helped me become a better person already,” she said.

Company of female Marines graduates in new dress blues

Stars and Stripes

A company of Marines became the first to graduate in the service’s new female blue dress uniforms Friday at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.

Marines from November Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion marched in newly approved outfits that include mandarin collars, white belts and gold waist plates, a Marine Corps statement said. The new coats resemble those worn by male Marines but lack pockets

and lines on the uniform.

Female Marines had complained that their old coats weren’t being recognized as belonging to the Marines because civilians were more familiar with the male versions, Mary Boyt, a member of the Marine Corps Uniform Board, said in the statement.

“We knew what the male uniform looked like, and we wanted to develop a female uniform that was similar to the males’ but met the unique design challenges of the female shape,”

she said. “We didn’t want to just throw a male coat on them and say this is it.”

The new outfits are “form fitting,” November Company drill instructor Sgt. Jazmin Penado said in the statement. “Now that we’re wearing the same uniform as male Marines, I feel like we are all equal. I know that’s what the Marine Corps is striving for, to make everything the same. I personally love the uniform.”

Another November Company drill instructor, unit historian

Staff Sgt. Kara Sykes, said the new uniform is a throwback to older World War II-era outfits.

“If you look back at history, when females first came into the Marine Corps, we had the high coats with the high neck collars and then we changed over the years to a different coat,” she said in the statement. “The coat we have now is similar to when we first started.”

The new coat will be phased in over the next several years and become mandatory in October 2022.

GIs at border are expected to be home by Christmas

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The roughly 5,800 active-duty troops sent to locations along the U.S.-Mexico border ahead of the Nov. 6 midterm elections will spend Thanksgiving in Texas, Arizona and California, but they are expected to return home in time for Christmas, Pentagon officials said Monday.

The troops supporting the operation assisting U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents once known as Faithful Patriot are expected to return to their home stations by Dec. 15, said Army Col. Rob Manning, a Defense Department spokesman. He indicated the Pentagon did not expect to deploy more troops to the border region “unless directed otherwise.”

In fact, Manning announced some servicemembers could return home before Dec. 15 as they complete their work stringing coiled razor wire and emplacing other temporary barriers at locations on and near the border. “The bottom line is that our numbers will be commensurate with the capabilities that ... CBP is requesting,” he said.

But the troops are expected to remain in place at least through this week.

The Pentagon is sending an untold number of traditional Thanksgiving meals to troops supporting the border operation, Manning said.

Some of their tasks have been completed. As of Friday, the 2,800 active-duty troops supporting CBP operations in Texas had finished their mission of “hardening” immigration entry points in the Brownsville area at the state’s most southern tip.

However, Manning could not say Monday whether those troops would remain in Texas or be shifted to other locations along the U.S.-Mexico border.

There were also 1,500 active-duty troops operating in both California and Arizona.

S. Korea unearths 9 sets of war dead remains near DMZ

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has unearthed nine sets of remains of war dead, including a rare, relatively intact skeleton, during a mine-clearance operation inside the heavily fortified border that divides the peninsula, the military said Monday.

The return of remains from the 1950-53 Korean War, including 55 cases containing the remains of American troops who were lost in North Korea, has been a bright spot in otherwise slow diplomatic efforts to persuade the North to give up its nuclear weapons.

The Defense Ministry announced it had recovered five sets of remains, including one that “appears to be complete,” last week during work in the Cheorwon area northeast of Seoul. It released a photo of the skeleton, which still had a shoe on one foot.

“All the five sets have been determined during the on-site investigation to be the remains of war dead,” the ministry said in a press release. They will be sent to the ministry’s agency for

the recovery and identification of troops killed in action, known as MAKRI, for DNA analysis and further identification.

The total number of remains found since the operation began Oct. 1 at Arrowhead Hill is now nine. The site saw fierce fighting during the war, which ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Major fighting at Arrowhead, also known as Hill 281, involved American, French, South Korean and Chinese forces, according to retired Lt. Col. Steve Tharp, a military history expert who is researching the battles. The North Koreans were farther east and would not have been involved, he said.

The joint effort to remove land mines and excavate remains from the DMZ, a 2.5-mile-wide, 155-mile-long no man’s land, is part of an inter-Korean military pact that was reached during a summit between the two countries in September. Some 7,675 Americans remain unaccounted for since the war, with an estimated 5,300 believed to be on the North Korean side. More than 133,000 South Koreans are still missing from the conflict, according to the Defense Ministry.

North Korea also returned 55 cases said to contain the remains of American servicemembers in July as part of an agreement between leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump during their June 12 summit in Singapore. It was the first such repatriation in more than a decade.

The Americans initially captured Arrowhead in 1951 and suffered major losses in attacks in August 1952, when the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division was in control, according to Tharp.

A French battalion took over in October 1952 and fought with South Korean soldiers on nearby White Horse Hill as the area came under heavy attack by the Chinese, who also released a dam upstream to flood the river and block the United Nations from sending reinforcements, he said.

“The French hung on, but they did lose some people there,” Tharp said.

The next major battle in the area occurred toward the end of the war when the Chinese attacked South Korean soldiers as part of a surge in fighting to gain ground before the armistice was signed on July 27.

Attorney: Woman in alleged homeless veteran scam was duped by boyfriend

Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. — A woman charged with scamming GoFundMe donors out of more than \$400,000 with a fake story about a homeless veteran was duped by her former boyfriend and genuinely thought she was helping the man, her attorney said Monday.

James Gerrow told ABC’s “Good Morning America” that Mark D’Amico was “calling the

shots” in the alleged scheme that resulted in criminal charges last week against Katelyn McClure, D’Amico and homeless Marine Johnny Bobbitt.

The criminal complaint alleges the three concocted a story about the couple reaching out to help Bobbitt after Bobbitt gave McClure his last \$20 when her car ran out of gas in Philadelphia last year. Then they allegedly spent all the money on

luxury items and casino trips.

“People have to understand that this was an abusive relationship. Mr. D’Amico was the one behind this and he was the one calling all the shots,” Gerrow said. “She didn’t understand or appreciate that this may very well be a crime.”

McClure and D’Amico are charged with conspiracy and theft by deception. Bobbitt also is charged.

Trump and McRaven have a war of words

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump has long put the American military at the center of his presidential brand, tapping retired officers to serve as advisers, touting increases in defense spending, and citing support from troops and veterans as a sign of his success.

But the commander in chief has risked alienating parts of the military community by escalating a fight with one of its most revered members, retired Adm. William McRaven, amid other recent remarks and decisions that have fanned controversy in the ranks and among some who served.

In an interview with Chris Wallace on “Fox News Sunday,” Trump went after McRaven, the retired Navy SEAL and Special Operations commander who oversaw the killing of Osama bin Laden and the capture of Saddam Hussein during his 37 years in the U.S. military.

Trump derided McRaven as a “Hillary Clinton fan” and an “Obama backer” before suggesting that the four-star admiral, who recently left his post as chancellor of the University of Texas amid a battle with chronic lymphocytic leukemia, should have caught bin Laden faster.

“Wouldn’t it have been nice if we got Osama bin Laden a lot sooner than that, wouldn’t it have been nice?” the president said. “You know, living — think of this — living in Pakistan, beautifully in Pakistan, in what I guess they considered a nice mansion, I don’t know, I’ve seen nicer. But living in Pakistan right next to the military academy, everybody in Pakistan knew he was there.”

The comments escalated a war of words that began last year when McRaven called Trump’s description of the news media as the “enemy of the people” the greatest threat to American democracy he had

ever seen.

Last summer, McRaven went to bat for John Brennan, defending the former CIA director as a man of integrity in an article in *The Washington Post*, after Trump revoked Brennan’s security clearance.

In a rare moment of political candor, McRaven wrote that Trump, instead of putting others above himself and setting an example as president, had “embarrassed us in the eyes of our children, humiliated us on the world stage and, worst of all, divided us as a nation.”

In a statement initially released to CNN and confirmed by *The Washington Post*, McRaven said he didn’t back Clinton or anyone else in the 2016 presidential election and was a fan of Barack Obama and George W. Bush, both of whom he worked for while in uniform.

“I admire all presidents, regardless of their political party, who uphold the dignity of the office and who use that office to bring the nation together in challenging times,” McRaven said.

Former CIA deputy director Michael Morrell pointed out on Twitter that McRaven’s forces had nothing to do with locating bin Laden. Morrell said it was the CIA that did the “finding” and McRaven’s forces that did the “getting,” moving out within days of receiving the order.

Trump recently has signaled discontent with the top retired generals serving in his administration, raising questions about whether he is souring on the military brass in his orbit.

The comments followed the president’s decision to thrust the American military into the center of a political maelstrom ahead of the midterm elections by sending thousands of troops to the border with Mexico in what critics labeled a political stunt to fire up anti-immigrant sentiment among his base.

Agent Orange exposure linked to hypertension

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—Researchers with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found for the first time that enough evidence exists to link hypertension to Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

The finding, announced Thursday, bolsters the case for veterans with hypertension to be granted easier access to Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, advocates argued. Before last week’s announcement, researchers had determined there was only “limited” or “suggestive” evidence hypertension could be caused by the chemical herbicides used in Vietnam.

In addition to hypertension, researchers determined there’s sufficient evidence linking Agent Orange to monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance, or MGUS, a condition in which an abnormal protein is in your blood that progresses to other disorders, including some forms of blood cancer. A link between the condition and Vietnam War service hadn’t previously been considered.

Based on the new report, Vietnam Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars called on VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to add hypertension and MGUS to the list of diseases presumed to be caused by Agent Orange. There are 14 diseases on the list, and veterans suffering from them are allowed quicker access to VA benefits.

“There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that Agent Orange made veterans sick, it made their children sick and it brought pain and suffering and premature death to many,” VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence said in a statement. “We now call on VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to use his authority and recognize the science in the report to swiftly add these two illnesses to the presumptive list so that these veterans can finally receive the assistance

they earned and deserve.”

Congress requires the National Academies of Sciences to review scientific literature about Agent Orange exposure every two years. The first report was published in 1994.

There have been previous attempts to get hypertension onto the list of presumptive diseases.

Following the 2016 report, when researchers recognized there was “suggestive” evidence linking hypertension to Agent Orange, the VA sent a recommendation to the White House that it be added. At the same time, the agency recommended adding three other diseases: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson’s-like tremors.

The recommendation is still sitting in the Office of Management and Budget. Members of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs were told in June that the OMB was waiting on the results of two studies before making a decision. One of the studies isn’t expected to be complete until 2020.

With the new report bolstering their case, Rick Weidman, policy director for Vietnam Veterans of America, is pushing for Wilkie and President Donald Trump to add hypertension and MGUS. But he has his doubts.

Earlier this fall, Wilkie came out opposed to legislation that would extend Agent Orange benefits to tens of thousands of “Blue Water” Navy veterans who served on ships off the coast during the Vietnam War. At the time, Wilkie cited high costs and a lack of scientific evidence as his reasoning.

“With the actions of the new secretary in regard to Blue Water Navy, I’m not hopeful,” Weidman said. “It all has to do with the president. It depends on whether he loves us enough to spend money on us.”

If the executive branch won’t move on the issue, Congress needs to step in, he said.

“It really depends on Congress and how much pressure they’re willing to put on the VA to act,” Weidman said.

Will Kelly stay or not? Trump praises and criticizes aide

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump isn't committing to a previous pledge to keep chief of staff John Kelly for the remainder of his term, part of widespread speculation about staffing changes that could soon sweep through his administration.

Trump, in a wide-ranging interview that aired on "Fox News Sunday," praised Kelly's work ethic and much of what he brings to the position but added, "There are certain things that I don't like that he does."

"There are a couple of things where it's just not his strength. It's not his fault. It's not his strength," said Trump, who added that Kelly himself might want to depart.

Asked whether he would keep Kelly in his post through 2020, the president offered only that "it could happen." Trump had earlier pledged publicly that Kelly would remain through

his first term in office, though many in the West Wing were skeptical.

Trump said he was happy with his Cabinet but was thinking about changing "three or four or five positions." One of them is Homeland Security chief Kirstjen Nielsen, whose departure is now considered inevitable. Trump said in the interview that he could keep her on, but he made clear that he wished she would be tougher in implementing his hard-line immigration policies and enforcing border security.

The list of potential replacements for Nielsen includes a career lawman, two military officers and a former acting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement head. But her eventual replacement will find there's no getting around the immigration laws and court challenges that have thwarted the president's agenda at every turn — even if there's better personal chemistry.

Trump also discussed the removal of Mira Ricardel, a deputy national security adviser who is being moved to another position in the administration after clashes with the East Wing culminated in an extraordinary statement from first lady Melania Trump that called for her removal. The president said Ricardel was "not too diplomatic, but she's talented" and downplayed the idea that his wife was calling the shots in the White House.

He also dismissed a series of reports that he had been fuming in the week after the Democrats captured the House of Representatives, claiming instead that the mood of the West Wing was "very light."

The president also downplayed a federal judge's decision to restore CNN reporter Jim Acosta's White House press pass but derided an alleged lack of "decorum" among reporters who cover the administration.

Calif. search gains urgency as rain looms

Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. — The search for remains of victims of the devastating Northern California wildfire has taken on new urgency as rain in the forecast could complicate those efforts while also bringing relief to firefighters on the front lines.

Up to 400 people fanned out Sunday to search the ash and rubble where homes once stood before flames roared through the Sierra foothills town of Paradise and surrounding communities, killing at least 77 people in the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century.

Wearing white coveralls, hard hats and masks, teams of volunteers and search and rescue crews poked through the smoky debris for fragments of bone before rains can wash them away or turn loose, dry ash into a thick paste. The so-called Camp Fire has destroyed more than 10,500 homes.

A team of 10 volunteers, accompanied by a cadaver dog, went from house to house in the charred landscape. They scrutinized the rubble in five-minute sweeps, using sticks to move aside debris and focused on vehicles, bathtubs and what was left of mattresses.

Robert Panak, a volunteer on a team from Napa County, said he tried to picture the house before it burned and think where people might have hidden. His morning search was fruitless, but he wasn't deterred.

"I just think about the positives, bringing relief to the families, closure," Panak said.

Sheriff Kory Honea said it was within the "realm of possibility" that officials would never know the exact death toll from the blaze. He also questioned whether the search for remains could be completed by midweek, when rain is forecast. The National Weather Service said the area could get 20 mph sustained winds and 40 mph gusts midweek, which could make it hard to keep making progress against the blaze.

Calif. inmate confesses to 90 deaths; 30 confirmed

Associated Press

DALLAS — A man convicted of three California murders and long suspected in numerous other deaths now claims he was involved in about 90 killings nationwide spanning nearly four decades, and investigators already have corroborated about a third of those, a Texas prosecutor said last week.

Ector County District Attorney Bobby Bland said Samuel Little, 78, was booked into jail recently following his indictment in the 1994 death of a Texas woman. Investigations are ongoing, but Little has provided details in more than 90 deaths dating to about 1970, Bland said.

Little was brought to Texas in September, and investigators with law enforcement agencies in several states traveled to

speaking with him about unsolved homicides.

"They're able to match up over 30 cases so far," Bland said. "So far we don't have any false information coming from him."

If the number of killings Little claims to have committed proves true, it would make him one of the most prolific killers in U.S. history. Ted Bundy confessed to 30 homicides from about 1974 to 1978. John Wayne Gacy killed at least 33 boys and young men in the 1970s.

Arguably one of the deadliest globally was an English general practitioner named Harold Shipman, who an investigative panel determined was responsible for the deaths of 250.

During Little's 2014 trial in Los Angeles, prosecutors said he was likely responsible for at

least 40 killings since 1980.

Bland said Little recently provided details to Texas Ranger James Holland that showed Little was in Odessa, Texas, when Denise Christie Brothers was last seen in 1994. Her body was found about a month later in a vacant lot. Holland eventually elicited a confession from Little and admissions to dozens of other killings from about 1970 to 2005, Bland said.

For years he had denied to investigators in different states that he was responsible for any killings. Bland speculates that he finally confessed after the appeals to his life sentence in California were ultimately rejected and he no longer had any reason to hide his role.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman forces teen to walk naked in public

FL DADE CITY — A Florida woman is facing felony child abuse charges after deputies said she forced a 13-year-old girl to walk naked in public as punishment for misbehaving.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that Rosalie Contreras, 34, of Dade City was arrested Thursday by Pasco County sheriff's deputies. Her relationship to the girl was not disclosed.

According to investigators, Contreras forced the girl to take off her clothes and get out of the car. When another car came into view, she told the girl to get back in the car.

The girl told investigators Contreras slapped her, punched her and twisted her breasts. Contreras was released on \$20,000 bond.

Pet lovers meet pet stars at PetCon

NY NEW YORK — Pet lovers got to meet some pet stars from social media this past weekend at PetCon in New York City, a convention dedicated to all things linked to beloved animals.

While there were some cats and other creatures there, PetCon in Manhattan is mostly about dogs and their humans.

Elaine Marzorati was in line to see a Chihuahua and dachshund mix named Tuna Melts My Heart who's become famous on Instagram. Rick Hendrix brought his French bulldog, Izzy, wearing a Valentino-inspired dress.

PetCon also has a dog adoption garden, plus panels on topics such as how dogs are treated under the law and how much money is spent on pets.

Police find 5 dead dogs in filthy home

CT FAIRFIELD — Fairfield police said five dead dogs were found in the home of a local woman.

Police were called to the home Wednesday after the landlord discovered the carcasses. Authorities said Saturday that officers later entered the home with a search warrant and found the decomposed bodies of five dogs.

Lt. Robert Kalamaras told the Connecticut Post that conditions were deplorable, with dog feces and the carcasses creating a strong bad smell.

Officials said the dogs were left in crates and it appeared they were abandoned. No one had been in the home in some time.

Bones of man dead for centuries found

IL ANTIOCH — A woman doing landscaping on her suburban Chicago property unearthed the bones of a man who died 800 to 1,000 years ago.

The Lake County News-Sun reported that the woman was digging in Antioch Township near Fox Lake in September when she unearthed some bones. She called authorities when she found a jaw that looked human. The newspaper said the woman didn't want to be identified.

Crime scene investigators, anthropologists and other experts secured the area and recovered 75 percent of the skeleton of a man about 20 to 30 years old.

Art museum to launch \$1.5M space balloon

NV RENO — A museum in Nevada says it

is about to send a diamond-shaped sculpture into space that will be visible to the naked eye at night.

The Nevada Museum of Art's \$1.5 million project was to launch Monday from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base, the Reno Gazette Journal reported.

While on Earth, it has not had a smooth ride, with some scientists deeming it obnoxious and a blemish on the night sky.

The 100-foot-long sculpture will be stuffed in a package attached to a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. The sculpture that self-inflates as a balloon will burst from the package and remain in orbit for about 60 days before it burns.

Police seize heroin worth \$4M, arrest man

RI PROVIDENCE — Providence police have seized at least \$1 million worth of heroin in one of the largest drug busts in city history.

Authorities said they found nearly 51 pounds of pure heroin hidden in school bus seats in a city apartment Friday morning. Officials said the heroin could be worth at least \$4 million.

The bust came during an investigation by city detectives looking into large amounts of heroin being sold and bought in Providence.

Police arrested Jose Figueroa Rosales, 45, on drug charges. He is being held without bail.

Kitty's obit raises \$3K for humane society

VT BELLOWS FALLS — A Vermont man helped raise more than \$3,000 for a local humane society through a humorous and heartfelt obituary for his cat.

The Brattleboro Reformer reported that Bellows Falls

artist Charlie Hunter posted the obituary for his cat, Pvt. Silas Goodrich, on Facebook last week, saying his nearly 18-year-old companion has gone to "the catnip patch in the sky."

Hunter said that Goodrich was put to sleep after his health declined due to kidney disease.

Hunter encouraged readers to donate to the Windham County Humane Society in exchange for a sticker of Silas' face.

Woman fatally shot as husband cleans gun

NY CORINTH — Police said an upstate New York woman was killed in an apparent accident when a shot discharged as her husband was cleaning his gun.

New York state police said Ashley Rosenbrock, 34, was shot Thursday night in her home in Corinth. She was pronounced dead at Saratoga Hospital.

Police said Saturday that Rosenbrock's husband, Eric Rosenbrock, 35, was "performing maintenance" on his legally owned handgun when it went off. The investigation is ongoing.

Lack of meat delays state crabbing season

OR NEWPORT — State shellfish managers have delayed the start of the commercial Dungeness crabbing season along the Oregon coast due to lack of meat on the crustaceans.

The ocean commercial crab season typically opens Dec. 1. But the Department of Fish and Wildlife has pushed that back until at least Dec. 16.

Officials said they will do more testing in coming weeks and decide whether to open the crabbing season Dec. 16 or take other actions.

From wire reports

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Army ranked for first time since 1996

Associated Press

Army is ranked for the first time since 1996, moving into The Associated Press poll at No. 23 on Sunday as it begins preparations to face rival Navy.

The Black Knights (9-2) have been edging toward the Top 25 in recent weeks, and they finally broke through. The rest of the rankings were mostly unchanged after a weekend with few big games or surprising results.

Led by unanimous No. 1 Alabama, the top six stayed the same as last week. Clemson was No. 2, followed by Notre Dame, Michigan, Georgia and Oklahoma.

Washington State moved up a spot to No. 7 and UCF jumped three spots to No. 8, season highs for both schools. LSU tied Central Florida at No. 8 and Ohio State was 10th.

Also debuting this season in the Top 25 was Pittsburgh at No. 24.

Army being ranked has been a rarity since the early 1960s. From 1963-2017, there have been only two seasons in which the Black Knights appeared in the AP Top 25. In 1985, Army was No. 19 for one week on its way to a 9-3 season. In 1996, Army went 10-2 and was ranked in four of the final five polls of the season. The Cadets finished 25th that season.

Army managed just one winning record from 1997-2015. But under coach Jeff Monken, who took over in 2014, Army has had three straight winning seasons. The Black Knights head into the Navy game on Dec. 8, looking for a third straight victory against the Midshipmen and a second consecutive 10-win season.

The Cadets have won seven straight since losing in overtime at Oklahoma on Sept. 22.

"The two biggest games of the year are coming up," Monken said Sunday of Navy and a bowl game. "We'd trade any ranking for a win over Navy to be sure. But it's nice to be recognized."

Redskins' QB Smith suffers season-ending broken leg

Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md.

As much as the NFL would rather if everyone discussed all of the yards and TDs produced in game after game, and for whatever advancements have been made in player safety over time, pro football is, at its core, a brutal sport — and what happened to Alex Smith's right leg is not very different from what happened to Joe Theismann's right leg, exactly 33 years apart.

Theismann knew it right away.

The former Washington Redskins QB — whose career ended after he was hurt on a

sack by Lawrence Taylor on Nov. 18, 1985 — was at FedEx Field on Sunday and turned away so he wouldn't have to see the unnatural way in which current Redskins QB Smith's tibia and fibula twisted as they were fractured under the weight of Texans defenders J.J. Watt and Kareem Jackson.

"It was horrible," Theismann said in a telephone interview. "My heart went out to him. I feel so bad for him."

Washington center Chase Rouiller had an even more up-close-and-personal view when Smith was sacked and offered a little insight into what life as an NFL player is like.

They all know, naturally,

that at any moment, it could be them down on the turf, covering their face with their hands before being driven away on a cart.

"You say your prayers while it's happening," Rouiller said, "and you've got to get ready for the next play."

Said Redskins coach Jay Gruden: "These things happen in pro football, unfortunately. Just hate to see them happen with a guy like Alex."

Smith was not, of course, the only player hurt in this game, which ended with AFC South-leading Houston holding on for a 23-21 victory, their seventh win in a row after an 0-3 start.

Bears top Vikings, tighten grip on division

Associated Press

CHICAGO — No doubt about it now, the Bears really are serious about winning the NFC North.

Khalil Mack had a sack and fumble recovery, Eddie Jackson returned an interception for a touchdown and Chicago tightened its grip on the division with a 25-20 victory over the second-place Minnesota Vikings on Sunday night.

Mack and Jackson led a dominant effort by the defense. And Chicago (7-3) took a big step toward its first division championship since 2010.

The Bears won their fourth in a row, their longest streak since a six-game run in 2012. Chicago finished 10-6 that year, missed the playoffs and fired coach Lovie Smith after that season.

"You've got to understand the situation, facing a division opponent, knowing we're going to face them twice a year," Mack said. "We've got to make that jump and you [saw] it today. It's knowing what's at stake. Everybody showed up ready to play."

The Monsters of the Midway simply dominated Minnesota on Sunday, taking out the defending division champions after beating three struggling teams — the New York Jets, Buffalo Bills and Detroit Lions.

The Bears also have victories the past two weeks over NFC North opponents after dropping 10 in a row against division foes.

"This isn't about proving, I don't think for us, as much as it is about our guys just learning that they can trust one another," coach Matt Nagy said. "When you stick together through the highs and the lows and you work as hard as our guys do together and you listen to the coaches and the coaches listen to the players — there's a collaboration — you then get a chance to be in a situation like this tonight, to play in front of the whole world."

Chicago suffocated the Vikings (5-4-1), with big advantages in total yards (308-268) and time of possession (34:29-25:31) even though quarterback Mitchell Trubisky had his

difficulties.

"They're a good defense, but a lot of times we hurt ourselves," Vikings receiver Adam Thielen said.

The Bears were leading by eight midway through the fourth quarter when Jackson picked off a pass from Kirk Cousins that was intended for Laquon Treadwell. His 27-yard TD return and a 2-point conversion pass from Trubisky to Adam Shaheen made it 22-6.

Cousins then threw a 13-yard TD to Aldrick Robinson and a 2-point conversion to Adam Thielen, making it 22-14. But Cody Parkey kicked to 48-yard field goal with 2:48 left. And the Bears hung on from there.

Trubisky was 20-for-31 for 165 yards and a touchdown. But he was intercepted two times by Anthony Harris.

Parkey shook off a performance unlike any other by making all three of his field goal attempts. It was a big improvement over the previous week, when he hit uprights four times while missing two field goals and two extra points against Detroit.

Logano captures his 1st NASCAR title

Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — Joey Logano was the underdog in NASCAR's title race, the driver few thought capable of keeping pace with the Big Three and stealing the title from one of the favorites.

Logano proved everyone wrong with an upset victory in a season in which he only became a true contender once his Team Penske group started the postseason. He blazed his way through the playoffs and closed out his improbable run Sunday with a win at Homestead-Miami Speedway that seized his first NASCAR title.

"It's been so hard and such a long road to get here and been so close and had that feeling of defeat, and man, it stings," Logano said. "But I felt so confident going into this week that we were the car to beat. My race team, I wasn't worried about them at all, and I knew I just had to do my job and everyone was going to do their job and everything was going to be fine."

Logano, nicknamed "Sliced Bread" before his NASCAR debut at age 18 because he was predicted to be "the best thing since ...," soundly defeated Kyle Busch, Kevin Harvick and reigning series champion Martin Truex Jr., in a finale Logano had dubbed "the Big Three and me."

He won the title with two victories and eight top-10 finishes in the postseason. At Homestead, where it was winner-take-all,

Logano led a race-high 80 laps but needed a late caution for one final shot to win the race. It came when teammate Brad Keselowski spun Busch teammate Daniel Suarez for a race-changing caution.

Logano was fourth on the restart with 15 laps remaining but powered his way alongside leader Truex, then used a strong move in the outside lane three laps later to take over the top spot. Logano pulled away from there and won for Penske.

"We were the favorite. We executed down the stretch like nobody's business," Logano said. "I knew we had a short-run car. I said it before the race started that if it was anything longer than 25 laps we were going to be in trouble. That showed all day. But it came down to the short run and we are champions. NASCAR champions."

Logano won the title in his 10th season at NASCAR's top level and is the first driver from Connecticut to win a championship.

Logano capped a banner year for Roger Penske, who also was elected into the NASCAR Hall of Fame, won the Indianapolis 500 for a record 17th time and celebrated Team Penske's 500th victory.

Team Penske also has been the cornerstone for Ford the last six seasons, and Logano gave the manufacturer its first Cup title since 2004.

The Big Three won 20 of 36 races in 2017. Harvick (23), Busch (22) and Truex

(20) also are the first trio of drivers to have 20-plus top-fives in a season since Cale Yarborough, Richard Petty and Benny Parsons in 1997.

Here are some other items of note from Sunday's championship race:

One for the road: Jimmie Johnson hugged it out with crew chief Chad Knaus and toasted with beers to the end of their 17-year professional relationship. Johnson and Knaus are parting ways after seven NASCAR championships.

They couldn't grasp greatness one final time, finishing 14th in the finale and going winless in a season for the first time in his Cup career.

"He is my brother, there is just no way around it," Johnson said.

Johnson hasn't won since Dover in 2017, an unthinkable string of 59 straight losses.

It's the pits: Busch and Harvick combined to win 16 races, lead nearly 3,500 laps and each were considered a heavy favorite to win a second NASCAR championship. They got a big 0 in the win column when they needed it most.

Harvick, dominant in the No. 4 Ford all year, lagged on the speed charts all weekend. The Joe Gibbs Racing pit crew flubbed two stops for Busch — the blunders cost him six and four spots off pit road — that denied one of NASCAR's biggest career winners a second title.

Top 25 roundup

Green, No. 10 Kentucky hold off stubborn VMI

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Quade Green came off the bench to score a season-high 17 points, including five in the final 90 seconds, to help No. 10 Kentucky hold off VMI 92-82 on Sunday night.

Leading by 19 midway through the second half, the Wildcats (3-1) had to work to put away the stubborn Keydets, who made 12 second-half three-pointers and got within 85-79 with 1:49 remaining. Green answered with a three-pointer 19 seconds later and Ashton Hagans made a free throw for a 10-point edge.

Tyler Creamer responded with the Keydets' final three to

get within 89-82 before Green made two free throws with 33 seconds left. PJ Washington (19 points) made a free throw with 17 seconds left to seal Kentucky's third consecutive win.

Bubba Parham had career highs of 10 three-pointers for 35 points for VMI (3-2).

No. 11 Michigan State 101, Tennessee Tech 33: Nick Ward scored 23 points and Cassius Winston added 19 to lead host Michigan State to a victory against Tennessee Tech, tying the largest margin of victory in program history.

No. 12 Kansas State 64, Penn 48: At St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Dean Wade scored 17 points, and Kansas

State overcame an early deficit to beat Penn in the second semifinal at the Paradise Jam tournament.

Kamau Stokes added 16 points and Xavier Sneed had 11 for the Wildcats (4-0), who will face Missouri in Monday night's championship game at the University of the Virgin Islands' Sports and Fitness Center.

No. 16 Virginia Tech 89, No. 23 Purdue 83: Nickeil Alexander-Walker had 25 points, Ahmed Hill and Justin Robinson had 23 points apiece and Virginia Tech rallied from 12 points down in the second half to beat Purdue in the Charleston Classic championship in Charleston, S.C.

The Hokies (4-0) trailed 50-38 after Ryan Cline's three-pointer with 18:27 left, but wiped out the deficit over the next six minutes.

After Carsen Edwards tied things at 77-all with a layup with 4:21 to go, Hill hit a driving basket and got fouled to put the Hokies ahead 80-77.

Hill followed with a three-pointer and Purdue (4-1) could not recover.

No. 18 Michigan 66, Providence 47: At Uncasville, Conn., Ignas Brazdeikis scored 20 points to lead Michigan to a victory over Providence and the championship of the Air Force Reserve Tip-Off tournament.

Jon Teske added 17 points for the Wolverines (5-0).

NBA roundup

James scores 51 as Lakers beat Heat

Associated Press

MIAMI — LeBron James scored 51 points against his former club and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Miami Heat 113-97 on Sunday night.

James had 19 points in the first quarter to help the Lakers open a big lead.

The 51 points were a season high for James, and the most he's scored against Miami; he had 47 against the Heat twice. His last shot was a 32-footer with 16 seconds left, capping the 13th 50-point game of his career — including playoffs — and he threw the ball skyward at mid-court when time expired.

It was James' first time winning against Miami since he left the Heat after the 2014 NBA Finals. He was 0-4 when facing the Heat since.

Wayne Ellington scored 19

points for Miami.

Spurs 104, Warriors 92: LaMarcus Aldridge had 24 points and 18 rebounds and San Antonio fended off a late rally to beat short-handed Golden State, extending the visiting Warriors' skid to three games.

DeMar DeRozan had 20 points, and Rudy Gay added 19 to help San Antonio snap a three-game slide.

Kevin Durant scored 26 points and Klay Thompson had 25 for Golden State. The Warriors are 2-5 since an eight-game winning streak. The Warriors were without injured starters Stephen Curry and Draymond Green, and their absence led to a cold start. Three nights after being held to a season-low output in a 107-86 loss at Houston, the two-time defending NBA champions nearly

matched that dubious mark.

Trail Blazers 119, Wizards 109: Damian Lillard scored 40 points, C.J. McCollom added 25 and Portland beat host Washington to snap a two-game losing streak and improve to 11-5.

Jusuf Nurkic had 13 points, 14 rebounds and matched his career high with eight assists.

John Wall scored 24 points for the Wizards.

Magic 131, Knicks 117: Aaron Gordon scored 20 of his 31 points in the first quarter and Orlando held off visiting New York for its seventh victory in nine games.

Nikola Vucevic had 28 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists. The Magic shot 57 percent and set a season high for points, surpassing the 130 they scored Saturday night against the Los

Angeles Lakers.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 32 points for New York, Trey Burke added 31 and Enes Kanter had 21 points and 19 rebounds. The Knicks have lost five straight.

Grizzlies 100, Timberwolves 87: Marc Gasol had 26 points and 13 rebounds, Mike Conley added 18 points and nine assists and Memphis pulled away to beat host Minnesota,

Gasol was 4-for-7 from three-point range and Memphis hit 12 overall. The Grizzlies forced Minnesota into 20 turnovers and turned them into 19 points.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 15 points and 20 rebounds for the Timberwolves. They had won three straight games since trading Jimmy Butler to Philadelphia.

NHL roundup

Rantanen lifts Avalanche in overtime

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — A few ticks left on the clock were all Mikko Rantanen needed to make a winner of the Colorado Avalanche.

Rantanen's power-play slap shot with 1.3 seconds remaining in overtime gave the Avalanche a 4-3 victory Sunday over the slumping Anaheim Ducks.

Colorado overcame a 3-1 deficit to hand the Ducks their 12th loss in 15 games. Rantanen added two assists to his eighth goal of the season, increasing his NHL-leading total to 32 points.

"He's a highly competitive individual player," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "He wants to be on the ice all the time."

Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and two assists, and Philipp Grubauer stopped 30 shots for the Avalanche.

"He made some really big saves," Rantanen said. "One breakaway save, I think that was the highlight. He kept it a 3-2 game. It was a really good game from him. He made some big saves in the OT, too."

Sven Andrighetto and Gabriel Landeskog scored the other Colorado goals.

Brandon Montour, Ryan Getzlaf and

Ondrej Kase scored for Anaheim. Backup goalie Ryan Miller made 38 saves.

Landeskog tied it 3-all at 11:20 of the third period, taking a nice feed from behind the net.

"We kind of felt like we had more to give going into the third period," Bednar said. "We come up with a big power-play goal at the end of the second to get within striking distance, then came out and won the third."

The Avalanche, meanwhile, have won three of four. Their first line of Rantanen, MacKinnon and Landeskog is the top-scoring line in the NHL and it began to dominate from the third period on.

Pontus Aberg was penalized for slashing MacKinnon with 15 seconds on the clock in overtime, and Rantanen wasted little time making the man-advantage count.

"You just kind of had the feeling with some of the chances that they started to create that they'd be difference-makers," Bednar said. "And then they end up getting a couple goals for us, a couple big goals for us."

The Ducks led 3-2 after a high-scoring second period.

Blackhawks 3, Wild 1: Jonathan Toews and Brandon Saad scored first-period goals, Corey Crawford made 39 saves and host Chicago held on for the win.

Dominik Kahun added an empty-netter with 58.5 second left as the Blackhawks improved to 2-2-2 under coach Jeremy Colliton, who replaced Joel Quenneville on Nov. 6. Patrick Kane had two assists for Chicago, 2-0-1 in its last three games.

Hurricanes 2, Devils 1: Justin Williams and Micheal Ferland scored in the game's first 30 seconds and host Carolina held on for the victory.

Curtis McElhinney made 33 saves for Carolina.

Stars 6, Islanders 2: Esa Lindell scored twice during Dallas' four-goal second period and the visiting Stars won their second straight game.

Golden Knights 6, Oilers 3: Jonathan Marchessault had two goals and an assist to help Vegas beat host Edmonton.

William Karlsson, Cody Eakin, Max Pacioretty and Reilly Smith also scored, Smith tacked on two assists and Colin Miller had three. The Golden Knights have won two of their last three to improve to 9-11-1.