

Navy sails warship through Taiwan Strait

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy sent another warship through the Taiwan Strait over the weekend, which also included an unconfirmed visit to the island by the officer in charge of intelligence gathering in the Indo-Pacific region, according to wire and Navy reports.

Reuters on Monday reported that Rear Adm. Michael Studemen, director of intelligence for Indo-Pacific Command, arrived in Taiwan on Sunday. The Pentagon declined comment, the report said.

Studemen's visit would not be the first by a high-ranking U.S. official to Taiwan this year. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, the most senior U.S. official to visit Taiwan since 1979, was also there in

August.

On Saturday, the Navy continued a record-seeking pace by sending a warship through the Taiwan Strait for the 12th time this year, according to 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley. The guided-missile destroyer USS Barry's "routine Taiwan Strait transit" was conducted "in accordance with international law," he said by email on Saturday.

The transit matched the Navy's all-time high of 12 Taiwan Strait transits in a single year, which was set in 2016. It made nine such trips last year, three in 2018 and five in 2017.

"The ship's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," Keiley said.

The Barry, based in Yokosuka, last

steamed through the strait on Oct. 12.

The number of Navy trips through the strait has increased along with tensions between the United States and China in the South and East China seas. The 110-mile-wide strait separates mainland China from Taiwan, and Navy passes through the waterway typically provoke condemnation from Beijing.

The U.S. regards the strait as part of international waters and acknowledges China's claim to Taiwan under its "One China" policy, but views the island's status as unsettled. Taiwan split from mainland China in 1949.

The Barry's transit came a day after the U.S. and Taiwan agreed to annual economic talks for the next five years, according to the State Department.

Pilot error, poor visibility blamed for F-15C crash

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Disorientation and reduced visibility were factors in the death of a U.S. Air Force pilot who crashed his F-15C fighter jet off the coast of England earlier this year, service officials said in a statement Monday.

Air Force 1st Lt. Kenneth "Kage" Allen, 27, with the RAF Lakenheath-based 48th Fighter Wing, was killed when his plane plunged into the North Sea about 140 miles northeast of the base during an exercise on June 15.

The crash was the result of "the pilot's fixation on the intercept of the simulated adversary aircraft and failure to execute cockpit instrument visual scans" while flying through cloud cover and experiencing spatial disorientation, said a report by an Air Force accident investigation board.

At the time of the crash, multiple cloud layers were reported at altitudes of up to 25,000 feet. Other pilots in the area said the horizon was "difficult if not impossible to discern below" 9,000 feet, the report said.

Allen was considered an inexperienced pilot with only about 271 total flight hours. More than half of those were clocked in the F-15C simulator.

On the day of the crash, he was flying as the No. 4 jet in a four-against-six air-to-air exercise.

While flying east at 20,300 feet, Allen was directed to make a hard-right turn back toward the west and look for the adversary aircraft at a lower altitude, the report said.

He made the turn, simulated a missile shot against the other aircraft and continued his descent to 12,000 feet. When told his simulated strike was a probable miss, Allen entered a steep diving left turn to intercept the aircraft, descending at one point to a vertical velocity of 38,800 feet per minute, the report said.

At about 1,000 feet, Allen maneuvered his aircraft to nearly wings-level and pulled 8.2 G-forces in an apparent attempt to recover his jet above the water, the report said.

It appeared Allen was focused on intercepting the other aircraft, visually or with his radar, "and did not monitor his aircraft altitude, airspeed and attitude cockpit instruments," accident board president Maj. Gen. Dean Tremps said in the report.

As he exited the low cloud layer at about 1,000 feet with a "visible horizon and 'ground rush' of the rapidly approaching ocean," he sensed his position and tried to

recover the aircraft, but was unable to, due to his speed and altitude, Tremps wrote in his opinion summary.

Allen hit the water at about 651 miles per hour. He was too low for a successful ejection, and there was no evidence that he attempted to eject, Tremps said.

The aircraft, valued at an estimated \$45 million, was destroyed.

A search and rescue effort was launched immediately by the Air Force, but was hampered by poor visibility. United Kingdom coast guard and navy assets assisted with the search.

About two hours after the crash, teams located an oil slick and the pilot's shredded liferaft. Other items recovered from the debris field included the pilot's survival kit and unopened parachute. Allen's body was recovered the same day, the report said.

The report ruled out aircraft malfunction, component failure and maintenance issues as contributing factors to the crash.

"Lt. Allen was an outstanding officer and a tremendous asset to the team," Gen. Jeff Harrigian, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa commander, said in a statement. "No words can compensate for such a painful and sudden loss."

Marines help woman pinned under car

By **IMMANUEL JOHNSON**
Stars and Stripes

Things could have gone tragically wrong for a woman who was hit by a vehicle and pinned underneath it this month as she rode a scooter in downtown Washington, D.C., but for the fact that the accident happened near the Marine barracks in the capital.

“I was just going to the chow hall to get some breakfast and we hear a Marine call out, ‘A woman was just run over by a car,’” said Cpl. Denny Bohne of Guard Company, Marine Barracks Washington, on 8th and I Streets near the Navy Yard, in a video post-

ed on Facebook of the dramatic rescue that followed. The accident happened a block away from the barracks.

Bohne and other Marines rushed to the car, removed the jack from the trunk and began lifting the back of the vehicle. Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Belko, who was the guard duty officer when the accident occurred on Nov. 7, used another jack that was handed to him by a passerby to lift the front of the car.

The Marines’ actions “were integral to reducing the amount of time it took for us to take care of that victim,” said Lt. Leo Ruiz, a rescue worker from D.C. Fire and Emer-

gency Medical Services, who helped take the woman to a hospital.

It was unclear what injuries she sustained, but the woman survived, thanks in large part to the Marines’ actions, Ruiz said in the video.

“Honestly, if they hadn’t done what they had done, it could have delayed care for that victim,” he said. “We’re always taught in the fire service when you talk about EMS and trauma care, that (it’s imperative) getting those victims ... to the right place quickly, and they absolutely helped us to do that.”

Search continues for airman missing after surfing

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
AND **AYA ICHIHASHI**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Search efforts continued off Okinawa’s coast Monday for a 21-year-old airman last seen surfing at Cape Hedo a day earlier, officials said.

The airman, assigned to Kadena Air Base, was last spotted clinging to his board about 300 yards offshore by a surfing companion at approximately 9 a.m. Sunday, a spokesman from the Japan Coast Guard’s Nakagusuku Office told Stars and Stripes

by phone Monday.

The airman appeared unable to return to shore and was drifting farther out to sea.

The companion called base security forces, which in turn called Japan Coast Guard headquarters in Naha, the spokesman said. Boats were dispatched to the area immediately, but darkness eventually hampered search-and-rescue efforts.

“Regretfully, we had to stop searching after sunset yesterday,” the spokesman said. “We hope to find him safe today.”

Airmen from the 31st and 33rd rescue squadrons continued searching through

the night and into the early morning hours, according to an 18th Wing statement emailed to Stars and Stripes on Monday.

“The search continues today with our Japanese Coast Guard partners on location in the search area,” the statement said.

Japan Coast Guard officials returned before 8 a.m. Monday with a 100-foot boat, two smaller craft and an MH-915 helicopter from Naha Air Base, the coast guard spokesman said.

The Air Force has not yet confirmed the missing airman’s identity.

Marines facing gun charges tied to white supremacy

From wire reports

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Two men previously charged with conspiring to make and sell illegal firearms also discussed shooting protesters after scouting a Black Lives Matter rally and had participated in live-fire weapons training where participants displayed Nazi symbols, prosecutors said in court documents unsealed Friday.

The U.S. Department of Justice said Paul James Kryscuk, 35, Liam Montgomery Collins, 21, Jordan Duncan, 26, and Justin Wade Hermanson, 21, were charged in a superseding indictment obtained in federal court in North Carolina. Hermanson is a current Marine while Collins and Duncan are former Marines previously assigned to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, the department added in its news release. A story in the New York Daily News said that Kryscuk reportedly is a porn star.

While the firearms charges against Dun-

can, Collins and Kryscuk were previously disclosed, Friday’s release represents the first time prosecutors referred to the group’s “ties to white supremacy.”

According to the indictment, Collins posted frequently on the online message board platform called Iron March, which prosecutors said was used by neo-Nazi and white supremacy extremist groups. Collins spoke of recruiting for a group he described as “a modern day SS” located in the Northeast, and in 2016, he posted that he was organizing a paramilitary force.

The indictment said Collins and Kryscuk would eventually discuss the three steps they felt were necessary to effect the change in the country they were seeking, including “knocking down The System, mounting it and smashing (its) face until it has been beaten past the point of death.”

According to the news release, Iron March shut down in late 2017.

From May 2019 to now, the indictment said, Collins made multiple money transfers through his personal account to Kryscuk to buy firearms, including a 9 mm pistol and suppressor, as well as a short barrel rifle. Kryscuk then bought items from vendors to make the firearms and suppressors.

Collins and Kryscuk recruited additional members, including Duncan and Hermanson, and conducted training, including a live-fire training in a desert area near Boise, Idaho, the news release said.

The indictment also described how Kryscuk was within sight of a Black Lives Matter rally on the campus of Boise State University on July 21, initially sitting in his vehicle before driving slowly around the rally for approximately 20 minutes.

One month later, Black Lives Matter held another protest in downtown Boise and Kryscuk’s vehicle was in the vicinity for around six minutes, the indictment said.

Long lines for tests ahead of holidays

Associated Press

The day after Amanda Serulneck found out she might have been exposed to COVID-19, she visited a rapid testing center in New Jersey but was turned away because they ran out of tests.

She returned at 7 a.m. the next day. After waiting for an hour, officials said they had run out again. On her third try, Serulneck and her friend called several testing centers before driving for an hour to one with availability.

Lines for free COVID-19 tests stretch for blocks and hours in cities where people feel the dual strain of the coronavirus surge and the approaching holidays. But an increasing number of pop-up clinics promise visitors instant results — at a cost. Some charge \$150 or more for a spot at the front of the queue.

While her friend who lacked insurance had to pay \$125 for the test, Serulneck's price was only \$35. The real cost came from the two days she had to take off from work, she said. "People are just trying to get by, and they can't be taking off work for a week to wait for results," said Serulneck, who works at a spa. "People need rapid testing to be available and affordable."

Dr. Mark Shrimme said his work gave him the flexibility to wait in line six hours for a test in New York City last week, but he knows that not everyone can do the same.

"If I'm an hourly worker, I can't take off six hours just so I can get a test so I can go back to work," said Shrimme, who needed a test to avoid a 14-day quarantine after traveling from Boston. "Another option was another place 10 blocks away from me where I

could pay \$250 to get a rapid test, so the structure that we set up for people to be able to keep themselves safe from COVID baked into those structures is an inequity."

Serulneck says it's been frustrating to watch people do rapid tests so that they can go to parties or travel for the holidays.

"Some people who need rapid testing to work can't afford it," she said. "It's not fair. The majority of people are in my position."

As numbers of infections cases climb in the United States and the country faces what health experts say will be a dark winter due to the uncontrolled spread of the virus, the demand for testing becomes greater. The U.S. has had more than 12 million reported cases and more than 255,000 deaths from the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic.

Third major vaccine shown as effective, cheaper than others

Associated Press

LONDON — Pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca said Monday that late-stage trials showed its coronavirus vaccine was up to 90% effective, giving public health officials hope they'll soon have a cheaper vaccine that's easier to distribute than others.

The results are based on interim analysis of trials in the U.K. and Brazil of a vaccine developed by Oxford University and manufactured by AstraZeneca. No hospitalizations or severe cases of COVID-19 were reported in those receiving the vaccine.

AstraZeneca is the third major drug company to report late-stage results for a potential COVID-19 vaccine as the world anxiously waits for scientific breakthroughs that will bring an end to a pandemic that has wrought economic devastation and resulted in nearly 1.4 million confirmed deaths.

Pfizer and Moderna last week reported preliminary results from late-stage trials showing their vaccines were almost 95% effective. But, unlike its rivals, the AstraZeneca vaccine doesn't have to be stored at ultra-cold temperatures, making it easier to distribute, especially in developing countries.

"I think these are really exciting results," Dr. Andrew Pollard, chief investigator for the trial, said during a news conference. "Because the vaccine can be stored at fridge temperatures, it can be distributed around

the world using the normal immunization distribution system. And so our goal ... to make sure that we have a vaccine that was accessible everywhere, I think we've actually managed to do that."

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is also cheaper. AstraZeneca, which has pledged it won't make a profit on the vaccine during the pandemic, has reached agreements with governments and international health organizations that put its cost at about \$2.50 a dose. Pfizer's vaccine costs about \$20 a dose, while Moderna's is \$15 to \$25, based on agreements the companies have to supply their vaccines to the U.S. government.

All vaccines must be approved by regulators before they can be widely distributed.

Oxford researchers and AstraZeneca stressed that they aren't competing with other projects, and that multiple vaccines will be needed to reach enough of the world's population to end the pandemic.

"We're not thinking about vaccinations working in terms of one person at a time. We have to think about vaccinating communities, populations, reducing transmission within those populations, so that we really get on top of this pandemic," said Sarah Gilbert, a leader of the Oxford research team. "And that's what it now looks like we're going to have the ability to contribute to in a really big way."

Nebraska man is arrested in attack at Sonic

Associated Press

BELLEVUE, Neb. — Authorities arrested a 23-year-old man in an attack at a Nebraska fast food restaurant in which two employees were shot and killed, two were wounded and officers responding to a report of a possible bomb inside a moving truck in the parking lot arrived to find the vehicle on fire.

Roberto Carlos Silva Jr. of Omaha was booked into Sarpy County jail early Sunday on suspicion of first-degree murder and first-degree arson in Saturday night's attack at a Sonic Drive-in restaurant in Bellevue, the Omaha World-Herald reported. Silva was being held without bond Sunday before making his initial court appearance.

In a news release early Sunday, Lt. Andy Jashinske said Bellevue police received a call at 9:23 p.m. Saturday about a possible bomb in a U-Haul truck parked outside of the restaurant in the Omaha suburb. A minute later, the call was updated to a possible shooting, he said.

Officers who arrived found the moving truck burning and four restaurant employees who had been shot. Two were sent to the University of Nebraska Medical Center for treatment, and the other two were declared dead at the scene, Jashinske said.

With tourist lag, NY gift shops struggle

Associated Press

NEW YORK — In souvenir shops from Times Square to the World Trade Center, shelves full of T-shirts and trinkets still (heart) New York. But the proprietors wonder when their customers will, again.

The coronavirus pandemic has taken a voracious bite out of a slice of New York life as recognizable as a piece of pizza: the gifts-slash-luggage-and-sometimes-slash-electronics stores that dot tourist-friendly areas, offering Statue of Liberty figurines, toy taxis, NYPD ballcaps, Big Apple fridge magnets and anything and everything emblazoned with the famous “I (HEART) NY” logo

Like the miniature-skyline snow globes they sell, the shops are a microcosm of a city that has thrived on drawing visitors from around the world and now is feeling their near-absence.

“It’s a fight for survival,” Ali Zaidi said one recent morning at his shop two blocks from the World Trade Center. And with coronavirus cases rising and winter approaching, what would normally be the build-up to a busy holiday season instead is “getting worse and worse, day by day.”

California

SACRAMENTO — California Gov. Gavin Newsom and his family are quarantining after three of his children were exposed to someone who tested positive for the coronavirus, his office said late Sunday.

Newsom, his wife and four children, ages 4 to 11, all tested negative for the virus Sunday, spokesman Jesse Melgar said in an emailed statement.

Newsom was notified Friday evening that a California Highway Patrol member who had contact with three of his children later tested positive for the virus, the statement said. The CHP provides security for Newsom and his family. It said Newsom and his wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, did not have contact with the officer.

The Newsoms were not tested until Sunday based on advice from health professionals “to improve the accuracy of the test,” Melgar said.

Delaware

WILMINGTON — The seven-day average daily coronavirus case count in Delaware set an all-time high as the state tested a record number of people in the days before Thanksgiving.

The numbers show more people in Dela-

ware are seeking out a test and a significant portion of them are returning positive results. The daily average percent of tests that are positive is 5.9%, the highest it’s been since early June. The average daily case count has grown by 90% over the past two weeks.

Health officials in Delaware and across the country are urging people to reconsider holiday plans, especially those that involve travel, and celebrate only with members of their households.

Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — The Navajo Nation is reporting 383 more confirmed cases of COVID-19, an all-time high for the vast reservation.

Tribal health officials Sunday announced the latest daily figure of new cases as well as five more coronavirus-related deaths. The total number of known cases now stands at 15,039, including 42 delayed reported cases.

The death toll for the Navajo Nation is now up to 631.

Tribal health officials said 147,793 people have been tested for COVID-19 since the pandemic started and 8,131 have recovered.

The Navajo Nation is currently under a three-week stay-at-home order. Only essential workers are allowed to come and go. Others are permitted to travel in cases of emergency or for essentials.

Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS — Gov. Tim Walz planned to unveil a new technology Monday that’s designed to help slow the spread of COVID-19, which has been surging in the state this month.

Minnesota health officials reported 7,219 new coronavirus cases on Sunday, lifting the total number of positive cases to more than 270,000 since the start of the pandemic. Officials also confirmed 40 deaths due to complications from COVID-19 in the last day, for a total of 3,241 fatalities.

There were 1,591 new cases per 100,000 people in Minnesota over the past two weeks, which ranks sixth in the country for new cases per capita. One in every 120 people in Minnesota tested positive in the past week.

North Dakota

BISMARCK — North Dakota health officials are rolling out free rapid COVID-19 testing for teachers, staff and school administrators this week as part of a pilot project

designed to slow the virus’ spread by identifying and quickly isolating people who may be asymptomatic.

Testing of K-12 teachers will start in the Fargo and West Fargo school districts and will be expanded to other districts in coming days and weeks. Teachers, staff and administrators who work closely with students are being encouraged to get tested weekly through Dec. 31. Students will not be tested as part of the effort.

State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler said the rapid testing will add an additional layer to strong mitigation strategies schools are already using to keep in-person learning safe.

Nebraska

LINCOLN — Nebraska reported one of the smallest numbers of new virus cases this month Sunday, but the number of people hospitalized with the virus remained high and continues to strain hospital capacity in the state.

The state reported 1,032 new virus cases to give Nebraska a total of 114,061 cases since the pandemic began.

Nebraska said 976 people were being treated for COVID-19 in the state’s hospitals, which is slightly below the record of 987 set on Friday. So 23% of the state’s hospital beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients, which is approaching the threshold of 25% that will trigger more social distancing restrictions from the state.

Nebraska had the seventh-highest rate of infection in the nation Sunday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — At least 100 people protested New Hampshire Republican Gov. Chris Sununu’s mask mandate, chanting “Breathe free or die,” and “We will not comply,” outside his home in Newfields.

Sununu issued an executive order requiring masks be worn in public spaces, indoors or outside, when social distancing isn’t possible.

Sununu had resisted calls for a statewide mandate, even as surrounding states enacted similar measures. He said last week a mandate was appropriate given the rising percentage of positive test results, the fact that the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 has doubled in the last two weeks, new outbreaks at five nursing homes and an “incredibly alarming rate” of asymptomatic community transmission.

Man spit at hikers; claimed he has virus

MA ASHBURNHAM — Police in a central Massachusetts town are asking the public's help in identifying a hiker who claimed he had COVID as he spit at two other hikers for not wearing face masks.

Ashburnham police said two young women were hiking the Midstate Trail near the New Hampshire state line Nov. 15 when the incident happened.

WCVB-TV reported an older man criticized the two hikers for not wearing protective face masks while they paused at the Hudson Overlook.

A video of the incident shows the man and at least one of the women arguing before he approaches them, removes his mask and then spits in their direction while saying "I have COVID."

"It was hostile, it was inappropriate, it was threatening, it could even be assaultive," Police Lt. Chris Conrad told the station.

Possible weather balloon crashes in remote area

AZ PHOENIX — Navajo Nation officials in eastern Arizona are trying to determine if a satellite or a high-altitude weather balloon crash-landed in a remote area of the reservation.

A Navajo Nation Council delegate said the gray object appeared to have four large solar panels with an orange parachute.

Navajo Police Department spokeswoman Christina Tsosie described the object as a satellite, which she said crash-landed in the remote area of Dennehotso.

Tsosie said the cause of the crash wasn't immediately known and the "satellite material" was released to employees from a company called Polar Field Services, the Republic said.

FBI arrests man after drone hits police helicopter

CA LOS ANGELES — A Hollywood man was arrested for allegedly operating a drone that crashed into a Los Angeles Police Department helicopter and forced an emergency landing two months ago, the U.S. attorney's office said.

FBI special agents arrested Andrew Rene Hernandez, 22, on a complaint charging him with one count of unsafe operation of an unmanned aircraft, a statement said.

The complaint states that police officers responding to a burglary call requested air support. The police helicopter was ap-

proaching the scene when the pilot saw the drone and unsuccessfully attempted to evade it.

The helicopter's nose, antenna and bottom cowlings were damaged.

The drone's camera and memory card led to identification of Hernandez as the operator.

Sheriff: Woman jumps from car to escape captors

NC ROCKINGHAM — A woman jumped from the trunk of a speeding car to escape her captors, and deputies have arrested two of three people wanted in the case, a North Carolina sheriff's office said.

The Rockingham County Sheriff's Office said in a news release that deputies responded to a call from a motel in Madison about an assault and kidnapping.

Investigators said three people entered the victim's room, assaulted her and put her in the trunk of their car. The sheriff's office said the car traveled 200 yards before she jumped out of the trunk. According to the sheriff's office, the woman suffered severe injuries and was taken to a hospital for treatment.

The sheriff's office said Takiyah Kenyatta Broadnax, 21, was charged with first-degree kidnapping, breaking and entering, and assault inflicting serious injury.

An unidentified juvenile faces similar charges.

Rabid stray cat bites animal control officer

NJ HAMILTON — A rabid cat bit an animal control officer in New Jersey last week, authorities said.

Police said in a news release that the stray cat was found in Hamilton Township. The Press of Atlantic City reported.

Atlantic County authorities said the cat bit the animal control officer as he was removing it from the road.

County spokeswoman Linda Gilmore said the cat was taken for evaluation and was euthanized due to the extent of its injuries. The state lab confirmed that the animal tested positive for rabies.

The animal control officer has been treated for rabies exposure, Gilmore said.

Monster truck museum will relocate to new town

IN BUTLER — A shrine to the best drivers and builders in the history of monster truck competition is relocating from one northern Indiana town to another.

The International Monster Truck Museum and Hall of Fame, currently housed at Kruse Plaza in Auburn, is moving to the former Eagles lodge in Butler, museum president Jeff Cook said.

The 12,700-square-foot building will allow the museum to expand and display historic monster trucks, as well as monster trucks currently used on tour.

A monster truck parade is planned for next spring, in addition to an open house sometime in May or June, Cook said.

Salvation Army bell ringer thwarts bucket theft

GA ALBANY — A Salvation Army volunteer in southwest Georgia said he couldn't bear to stand aside after thieves snatched his donation bucket.

Instead, Larry Adams, 65, sprang into action when someone grabbed his bucket outside the Albany Mall and hopped into a pickup truck.

Adams reached into the driver's side window as the thieves tried to drive away, WALB-TV reported. Adams said he kept pulling on the steering wheel until the driver stopped and handed the bucket back to him.

Albany police said they're still investigating the attempted heist. Adams has volunteered as a Salvation Army bell ringer for two years. He said he acted without thinking when he chased after the thieves. And he hasn't missed a shift outside the mall in the week since it happened.

Boy, 13, gets juvenile sentence for thefts

IL URBANA — A 13-year-old central Illinois boy who admitted stealing five vehicles earlier this year was sentenced to seven years in juvenile prison after a judge rejected his pleas for another chance.

The Rantoul teen sobbed as a Champaign County judge sentenced him for the vehicle thefts, which occurred in Champaign and Urbana between June and October.

State's Attorney Julia Rietz told the court that after the first vehicle theft, the boy was given a chance at a diversion program, but he was arrested again.

The teen pleaded guilty to an August vehicle theft and was on home detention when he was arrested again the day before his sentencing hearing.

He pleaded guilty to two September vehicle thefts and was again released on home detention pending sentencing. Rietz said the teen then committed the fifth vehicle burglary in October.

— From The Associated Press

Playoff push goes awry for resurgent teams

Associated Press

Mediocrity is mediocrity. You can't hide it, especially in the NFC East, where being mediocre is a compliment.

This, however, isn't about those weaklings. It's about teams many thought might be making moves toward relevance in the standings: New England, Minnesota, San Francisco, Chicago. Maybe even Detroit and Atlanta.

Never mind.

Thanksgiving week is here, which means the stretch run to the playoffs is at hand. Even with the extra wild card in each conference, it's a pipe dream to rely on those half-dozen teams.

Neither the 49ers (4-6), the most injury-ravaged team in the NFL, nor the Bears (5-5), the most offensively inept, played this week. Barring almost inhumanly quick health improvement for San Francisco, it won't come close to defending its NFC title, particularly in the NFC West, where everyone else decidedly isn't mediocre.

As for Chicago, it's not unreasonable to see the Bears go from 5-1 to the bottom of the NFC North, which other than Green Bay decidedly is mediocre.

New England might be the most disappointing of these underperformers, though losing the main reason it won six Super Bowls, Tom Brady, is significant enough to cause a major step backward.

Those who believed the Patriots were progressing after a down-to-the-wire win over the winless Jets and a home victory in nasty weather against a now-slumping Baltimore can't be buoyed by Sunday's defeat at

Houston. Yes, a Texans club whose only two previous victories were over the second-worst team in the league, Jacksonville.

"It's disappointing, but we'll turn the page here and move on," New England coach Bill Belichick said. "(I) still have a lot of confidence and belief in the team. If we just do things a little bit better, then the results will be different and better. But, I don't know, we just couldn't do it today."

Nor on many other days in a 4-6 campaign.

Then there are the Vikings, who started 1-5 before they won three straight division games. A home victory over the struggling Cowboys could have established Minnesota's place in the playoff chase. Instead, inconsistency on both sides of the ball led to an ugly loss.

"There are positives to point to," quarterback Kirk Cousins said, "but ultimately when you don't win, you leave the stadium feeling sick to your stomach."

Indeed, nausea often accompanies mediocrity.

Then there are the Falcons and Lions, really outsiders to join in the postseason chase even before Sunday. Atlanta had won three of four under interim coach Raheem Morris after an 0-5 start. So it lost to a quarterback making his first NFL start, Taysom Hill, and the Saints, in a relative blowout. The Lions were even worse, getting blanked for the first time in 11 years at Carolina, which broke a five-game slide using a QB also in his first NFL start, P.J. Walker.

Hill mainly has been a special-teamer and Walker's last start was in the XFL.

"We have really good guys here," embattled Lions coach Matt Patricia said when asked if he feels as though he's losing the locker room. "We have guys who are fighting every day and working really hard. That's the one thing — I just love this locker room. These guys are strong; they want to win. They're trying to compete. They're trying to do everything right."

Maybe they are just too mediocre to achieve that.

Also stumbling in Week 11 was Miami, which had won five straight but lost at Denver. The Dolphins' defense is for real, and they are well coached. But they lack maturity.

That said, they seem much more solid than the collection of current pretenders mentioned above.

Finally, there's the case of the Cleveland Browns, who are 7-3 and quite possibly headed to 10 or 11 victories and ending the league's longest playoff drought — since the Browns' only such appearance during their reincarnation, in 2002.

Philadelphia, one of those NFC East weaklings, pretty much handed the Browns their win Sunday. Other than taking down Indianapolis before the Colts began their turnaround, Cleveland has beaten the dregs of the NFL: Cincinnati twice, Washington, Dallas, Houston and Philly. None of those teams has won more than three times in 2020. The losses were against Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Las Vegas — all legit.

Ahead for the Browns are Jacksonville, the Giants and Jets, which all should be wins.

Mahomes' late TD pass to Kelce overcomes Raiders

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Even after Jason Witten's touchdown put the Las Vegas Raiders ahead with 1:43 to play, the mood on the Kansas City Chiefs' sideline was calm and cool.

Not much can stop the Super Bowl champs lately. Not when they have the quarterback who makes everything go.

"We've got Patrick Mahomes," running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire said. "I'm not worried about anything."

Mahomes threw a 22-yard touchdown pass to Travis Kelce with 28 seconds to play, and the Chiefs avenged their only loss in the last 12 months with a 35-31 victory over the

Raiders on Sunday night.

Mahomes passed for 348 yards and led two go-ahead scoring drives in the frantic fourth quarter for the Chiefs (9-1), who split their season series with Las Vegas (6-4) in dramatic fashion. Kansas City also took firm control of the race for its fifth straight AFC West title with an assertive comeback in its closest rivals' home building.

"I'd take him over everybody," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said of Mahomes. "And I'm lucky to have him, as we are as a football team, as we are as a city. When you're behind, he can make things happen."

The Chiefs' supreme confidence in their Super Bowl MVP wasn't shaken when they

lost 40-32 at home to Las Vegas last month, prompting the Raiders to take a celebratory victory lap around Arrowhead Stadium in their buses.

Kansas City also didn't worry when Mahomes threw only his second interception of the season late in the first half of the rematch. And when Derek Carr found Witten for the Raiders' go-ahead score, Mahomes said he knew what would happen next.

"We're going to score," Mahomes said. "I just didn't know if it was going to be overtime, or we were going to win it."

The Chiefs didn't need a tying field goal: They only needed 75 seconds to march 75 yards.

Henry carries Titans past Ravens in OT

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — For three quarters, the undermanned Ravens put the clamps on Derrick Henry and the Tennessee Titans.

By the time it was all over, the star running back and Tennessee would again head out of Baltimore with an upset victory to savor.

Henry ran for a 29-yard touchdown with 5:21 left in overtime Sunday to cap another memorable performance against the Ravens and provide the Titans with a 30-24 win.

Heading into the fourth quarter, Henry had 44 yards on 18 carries and Tennessee trailed 21-13. He finished with 133 yards on 28 carries — his sixth 100-yard game of the season. His big day also put him over 1,000 yards for the third consecutive year.

“You could just kind of tell as the game wore on to the fourth quarter that we were wearing on them offensively,” Titans coach Mike Vrabel said.

It was reminiscent of Henry’s outing last January, when he rambled for 195 yards to carry his team to a 28-12 upset of top-seeded Baltimore in the AFC divisional playoff.

“I try to do anything I can when the ball’s in my hand to help our team win,” Henry

said.

This one didn’t have the same win-or-go-home significance, but it was close.

“It’s a violent game, a physical game, an emotional game,” Vrabel said.

The harsh stare downs and trash talking began before the game and carried well into overtime.

“We kind of knew there was going to be some extra stuff coming into this game because of last year,” Tennessee wide receiver Corey Davis said.

“We tried to keep our poise and go out there and handle business.”

After forcing a Ravens punt to begin overtime, the Titans (7-3) moved 73 yards on six plays to get back on track after losing three of their previous four games.

“I had a ton of confidence that as soon as we got the ball we were going to march it down and get in the end zone,” quarterback Ryan Tannehill said.

Baltimore (6-4) has lost two straight and three of four. Until the fourth quarter, the Ravens did a decent job of controlling Henry without injured defensive linemen Calais Campbell (calf) and Brandon Williams (ankle).

Tennessee trailed 21-10 early in the third quarter and 21-16 late in regulation before launching a 90-yard drive featuring the running of Henry and some precise throws by Tannehill.

On third down from the Baltimore 14, A. J. Brown caught a short pass on the right side and broke four tackles before scoring while standing up with 2:18 left. Tannehill ran in the conversion to make it 24-21.

Lamar Jackson then drove the Ravens to the Tennessee 10 before Justin Tucker kicked a 29-yard field goal with 15 seconds remaining to force overtime.

“We’ve got to finish drives,” Jackson lamented. “We’ve got to stop putting Tuck out there. We’ve got to punch it in.”

Jackson went 17-for-29 for 186 yards and J.K. Dobbins, seeing the most extensive action of his first NFL season with Baltimore, ran for 70 yards on 15 carries and scored a second-quarter touchdown.

Baltimore went up 21-10 early in the second half on a 31-yard touchdown pass from Jackson to Mark Andrews.

The Titans used a pair of field goals by Stephen Gostkowski to close to 21-16, setting the stage for a thrilling fourth quarter.

Steelers dominate reeling Jaguars to start 10-0

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Pittsburgh’s latest victory was picture perfect.

The Steelers defense gathered in the end zone after each turnover — four times in all — and posed for the cameras. Some of the celebrations were planned, some candid, most cheesy.

All of them well-deserved.

Ben Roethlisberger and Co. gladly shared the spotlight during a 27-3 drubbing of skidding Jacksonville on Sunday. After all, it was the defense’s latest and greatest performance of the season.

Terrell Edmunds and Minkah Fitzpatrick intercepted two passes each and the Steelers steamrolled the lowly Jaguars (1-9) to get to 10-0 for the first time in franchise history.

“They’re fun to watch,” Roethlisberger said. “They’re turning the ball, getting turnovers for us.”

Rookie quarterback Jake Luton looked lost most of the day against the blitzing Steelers, who allowed 206 yards and finished with just two sacks even though Bud

Dupree and T.J. Watt dominated Jacksonville’s offensive tackles. Luton completed 16 of 37 passes for 151 yards, with four interceptions and a couple more close calls.

“No matter what happens on the last play, you’ve got to play the next one,” Luton said. “Whatever happened last time, you can’t let it affect you. That’s the mindset I try to have. Unfortunately, it kept pouring into another bad play into another bad play and I can’t let that happen. I’ve got to clear it and move it onto the next snap.”

The turning point came late in the second quarter. With Jacksonville trailing 10-3 and driving for a potential tying touchdown, former Jaguars defensive lineman Tyson Alualu tipped Luton’s pass at the line of scrimmage. Fitzpatrick picked it off at the 2 and returned it 37 yards.

“The defense is playing big,” Edmunds said. “It’s go so much going for them. We just play for each other.”

Roethlisberger found Diontae Johnson down the left sideline a few plays later. Johnson made a leaping, juggling, contested catch at the 1, setting up Benny Snell’s

TD run.

It was all Steelers the rest of the way.

“We did the job today,” coach Mike Tomlin said. “We checked the boxes. It wasn’t perfect, but nothing is perfect about us except our record. We talked openly about that last night. We want to wear it the proper way.”

The Steelers started slow, having to settle for field goals (one made, one missed) early and weren’t really sharp in the third quarter. But they were plenty effective to beat Jacksonville, which tied a single-season franchise record with its ninth consecutive loss.

“It was a tough day,” Jaguars coach Doug Marrone said. “We’re all disappointed. This team has done everything it can. I’ve had zero issues. ... The record’s obviously bad. I get that. I wish I could do something for them. They’re going to play for each other and the coaches. We’re all going to make sure we do our job.”

Owner Shad Khan fired then-coach Gus Bradley following his ninth straight loss in 2016.

Reality check for these CFP hopefuls

Associated Press

The College Football Playoff rankings will be released for the first time this season Tuesday.

Combine the latest AP Top 25 with a little history and you can find hints about what to expect.

Never has the selection committee's initial top four precisely matched the top four of the AP poll that preceded it. Only once, in 2018, have all four teams been the same in each set of rankings, but that year two of the teams were slotted differently. In three of the six seasons of the playoff, three of the four teams were the same in each ranking.

Reality Check believes the selection committee would be wise to match the AP voters this year. A quick look at 10 playoff hopefuls:

No. 1 Alabama (7-0)

Next: vs. No. 22 Auburn on Saturday.

Reality check: A little off the radar, WR DeVonta Smith is having a monster year as the Tide's unquestioned No. 1 receiver with 65 catches for 903 yards and 10 touchdowns.

No. 2 Notre Dame (8-0)

Next: at No. 25 North Carolina on Friday.

Reality check: Maybe the best offensive line in college football will be without two

starters against the Tar Heels: C Jarrett Patterson (foot) is gone for a while and G Tommy Kraemer is reportedly out after an appendectomy.

No. 3 Ohio State (4-0)

Next: at Illinois on Saturday.

Reality check: Buckeyes permitted four completions of at least 50 yards against Indiana. That matches the total number of 50-plus completions they allowed all last season. Jeff Okudah and Damon Arnette, the NFL first-rounders Ohio State had at cornerback last year, aren't walking through that door.

No. 4 Clemson (7-1)

Next: vs. Pittsburgh on Saturday.

Reality check: Assuming the Tigers do play next weekend, QB Trevor Lawrence will have gone more than a month between games.

No. 5 Texas A&M (5-1)

Next: vs. LSU on Saturday.

Reality check: Aggies have planted themselves a spot ahead of the Gators by beating Florida, but will the committee be so deferential to head-to-head? Will the AP voters continue to be?

No. 6 Florida (6-1)

Next: vs. Kentucky on Saturday.

Reality check: The news from the Gators' victory against Vandy was Kyle Trask only

threw three touchdowns passes. It's the first time this season he has been held under four in a game. He leads the nation with 31.

No. 7 Cincinnati (8-0)

Next: vs. Temple on Saturday.

Reality check: The Bearcats have been putting on a master class in how to contain explosive offenses. Against UCF, they allowed 4.27 yards per play — more than a yard below the Knights' previous season low — and held the ball for 37 minutes.

No. 8 BYU (9-0)

Next: San Diego State on Dec. 12.

Reality check: The Cougars are coming off a glorified scrimmage against North Alabama and are idle for two weeks. Not a great time of year to be out of site, but maybe that could change.

No. 9 Oregon (3-0)

Next: at Oregon State on Friday.

Reality check: The Ducks were hoping two blue-chip freshman linebackers could be major contributors on defense, but Justin Flowe was already expected to miss the season with a leg injury and Noah Sewell was carted off the field Saturday.

No. 10 Miami (7-1)

Next: at Wake Forest on Dec. 5.

Reality check: Hurricanes are getting two weeks off to get a COVID-19 outbreak in order.

Mitchell, Jazz agree on max extension

Associated Press

Donovan Mitchell got the life-changing news Sunday and immediately began celebrating. He ripped off his T-shirt, ran out of the house and leaped into the pool.

And just as he did in his first three seasons with Utah, he made a huge splash.

Mitchell is now a max-contract recipient, he and the Jazz agreeing Sunday on a five-year extension that guarantees him \$163 million — the new paydays start kicking in with the 2021-22 season — and could be worth \$196 million if he reaches the All-NBA level.

"A dream does not become reality through magic, it takes sweat, determination and hard work," Mitchell wrote on Instagram after sharing a toast with CAA Basketball agent Ty Sullivan and some family

members as the celebration continued.

The Jazz did not immediately comment. Typically, teams cannot discuss contracts publicly until they are signed, and it was unclear when Mitchell will put pen to paper to complete the transaction.

Mitchell averaged 20.5 points as a rookie, then 23.8 points in his second season and 24.0 points last season as a third-year player who wound up making the All-Star team for the first time. And even though the Jazz lost in first round of this past season's playoffs in a seven-game epic against Denver — the Nuggets rallied from a 3-1 series deficit — Mitchell was dazzling.

He averaged 36.3 points in that series, including 57 points — the third-highest scoring total by any player in an NBA playoff game — in Game 1 of the matchup. He fol-

lowed that with a 51-point outburst in Game 4, a game where he and Denver's Jamal Murray became the first duo with 50-point performances in the same playoff game; Murray had 50.

Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox was the first player from the 2017 draft class to get the max extension this offseason, doing so on Friday night. Like Mitchell's, his is for \$163 million over five years starting in 2021-22, with the chance of escalating to the \$196 million mark if he reaches the All-NBA level or meets other criteria.

Sunday was the first day that most NBA free-agent contracts could be signed. Free agent talks around the league opened Friday evening, and many of the deals that were struck over the weekend started becoming official Sunday.