

STARS AND STRIPES®

Sunday, October 15, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Massive bomb blast strikes Mogadishu

Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — The death toll from the most powerful bomb blast witnessed in Somalia's capital rose to 231 with more than 275 injured, making it the deadliest single attack ever in this Horn of Africa nation, a senator said Sunday.

Abshir Abdi Ahmed cited doctors at hospitals he had visited in Mogadishu. Many of the bodies in mortuaries had not yet been identified, he said. Officials feared the toll would continue to climb from Saturday's truck bomb that targeted a busy street near key ministries.

Doctors struggled to assist horrifically wounded victims, many burned beyond recognition.

"The hospital is overwhelmed by both dead and wounded," said Dr. Mohamed Yusuf, the director of Medina hospital. "This is really horrendous, unlike any other time in the past."

Ambulance sirens echoed across the city as bewildered families wandered in the rubble of buildings, looking for missing relatives. "In our 10 year experience as the first responder in #Mogadishu, we haven't seen anything like this," the Aamin Ambulance service tweeted.

Grief overwhelmed many.

"There's nothing I can say. We have lost everything," said a weeping Zainab Sharif, a mother of four who lost her husband. She sat outside a hospital where he was pronounced dead after hours of efforts by doctors to save him.

'This is really horrendous, unlike any other time in the past.'

Dr. Mohamed Yusuf
hospital director

by hospitals to donate blood. "I am appealing to all Somali people to come forward and donate," he said.

Angry protesters gathered near the scene of the attack as Somalia's government blamed the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group for what it called a "national disaster." Al-Shabab, which often targets high-profile areas of the capital with bombings, had yet to comment.

"They don't care about the lives of Somali people, mothers, fathers and children," Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire said. "They have targeted the most populated

area in Mogadishu, killing only civilians."

Rescue workers searched for survivors trapped under the rubble of the largely destroyed Safari Hotel, which is close to Somalia's Foreign Ministry. The explosion blew off metal gates and blast walls erected outside the hotel.

The United States condemned the bombing, saying "such cowardly attacks reinvigorate the commitment of the United States to assist our Somali and African Union partners to combat the scourge of terrorism."

U.S. Africa Command said U.S. forces had not been asked to provide aid. A spokesman told The Associated Press that first responders and local enforcement would handle the response and "the U.S. would offer assistance if and when a request was made."

The U.S. military has stepped up drone strikes and other efforts this year against al-Shabab, which is also fighting the Somali military and more than 20,000 African Union forces in the country.

The United Nations special envoy to Somalia called the attack "revolting," saying an unprecedented number of civilians had been killed. Michael Keating said the U.N. and African Union were supporting the Somali government's response with "logistical support, medical supplies and expertise."

US-backed forces begin final assault in Raqqa

Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed Syrian fighters launched an operation to retake the last Islamic State-held pocket of the northern city of Raqqa on Sunday after some 275 militants and their family members surrendered.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said the operation will continue "until all the city is cleansed from terrorists who refused to surrender."

The SDF has been on the offensive in Raqqa since early June and now controls about 90 percent of the city that was once the extremist group's self-styled

capital. Most of the fighters who remain in the pocket are foreigners, according to the SDF and opposition activists.

The operation was named after Adnan Abu Amjad, an Arab commander with the SDF who was killed in August while fighting against ISIS in central Raqqa.

The loss of Raqqa would hand another major blow to ISIS, which has lost most of the territory it once held in Syria and Iraq. Iraqi forces captured the northern Iraqi city of Mosul — the largest ever held by the extremist group — in July, and

Syrian government forces retook the eastern Syrian city of Mayadeen, near the border with Iraq, on Saturday.

ISIS still holds parts of Syria's Deir el-Zour province and Iraq's Anbar province, as well as small, scattered pockets elsewhere.

On Saturday, the U.S.-led coalition and local officials said Syrian ISIS fighters and civilians would be allowed to leave Raqqa, but not foreign fighters. The evacuation appeared aimed at sparing the lives of civilians being used as human shields.

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights, said among the fighters who remain in Raqqa is an official who planned attacks in France that killed and wounded dozens of people. Abdurrahman said the man is either a French or Belgian citizen of North African origin.

Two Kurdish officials, Nawaf Khalil and Nasser Haj Mansour, said the evacuation took place early Sunday, adding that some gunmen remained in a pocket they still control in Raqqa.

Khalil said the civilians who left Raqqa included families of fighters.

Bergdahl guilty plea could yield unique trial

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Some eight years after Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl walked off his combat outpost in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan, he is expected to plead guilty Monday to charges he deserted his unit and misbehaved before the enemy, endangering his fellow soldiers.

The plea would follow years of legal wrangling between Bergdahl's attorneys and Army prosecutors, but Monday's court hearing at Fort Bragg, N.C., will not end the saga for Bergdahl, 31, who spent five years in the custody of Taliban-aligned militants in Pakistan.

The plea hearing only sets the stage for yet another court proceeding scheduled to begin Oct. 23, a process unique to military courts-martial in which evidence will be presented during a pre-sentencing trial.

In Bergdahl's case, that trial is likely to include testimony about three servicemembers who were severely injured on missions to rescue him, and it could last several days.

But since The Associated Press reported on Oct. 6 that Bergdahl's attorneys would enter a guilty plea to the charges of "misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place" and "desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty," it remains unclear what led to that decision and what it could mean.

The Army on Thursday announced Bergdahl would enter his plea during the hearing Monday.

However, neither Bergdahl's lead attorney, Eugene Fidell, nor chief prosecutor Army Maj. Justin Oshana would comment about the plea or acknowledge whether an agreement had been reached. The more serious misbehavior charge carries a potential life sentence, while the maximum sentence for the desertion charge is five years' imprisonment.

A guilty plea would not necessarily indicate Bergdahl's attorneys have reached a deal with prosecutors and the four-star general overseeing the case, known as the convening authority, according to several military law experts who spoke with Stars and Stripes.

"The fact that [Bergdahl's plea] comes a week ahead of time doesn't tell me if he has a deal with the government or not," said Eric Carpenter, an assistant law professor at Florida International University and former Army defense attorney and prosecutor. "It just means that he's going to plead guilty."

If a deal exists, Army Col. Jeffery Nance, the judge in the case, would acknowledge it at the hearing Monday, Carpenter said. However, the terms of the agreement would not be made public until the pre-sentencing trial has concluded and Nance has made his own ruling on Bergdahl's punishment, he added. By military law, the judge cannot be influenced by the terms of a deal.

Ultimately, if the convening authority, Gen. Robert Abrams, the chief of Army Forces Command, has approved a plea bargain, Bergdahl would receive the lesser

of two possible sentences — the punishment agreed to in that deal or the judge's sentence rendered following the trial.

If no deal exists — known as a "naked plea" — it indicates Bergdahl's attorneys are throwing their client's future at Nance's mercy, said Rachel VanLandingham, an associate professor of law at Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles and a former Air Force judge advocate.

"With a guilty plea, the judge has to take into consideration ... that the guy is taking responsibility and saying, 'I did this, I'm throwing myself at your mercy,'" she said.

Bergdahl's defense attorneys have failed to sway Nance on several major motions that sought to have the case thrown out over comments made by top U.S. officials, including Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who is the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which has oversight over the military. The soldier's lawyers also attempted to have the case dismissed over disparaging comments made by President Donald Trump during his campaign, which he never recanted after taking office.

Defense attorneys also failed to convince Nance that testimony about the three servicemembers injured on search-and-rescue missions — two Army National Guard members and a Navy SEAL — should not be included at the sentencing phase.

Bergdahl admitted to a two-star general after he was released from captivity in May 2014 that he left Observation Post Mest in Paktika province without permission before he was kidnapped by Taliban fighters.

After helo mishap, Okinawans to seek helipads' closure

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEN KUNIYOSHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Okinawan villagers living near where a Marine Corps helicopter made an emergency landing after catching fire want the U.S. military to shutter six helipads in the nearby Northern Training Area.

A CH-53E Super Stallion from 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was forced to make an emergency landing in a farmer's field Wednesday evening after an inflight fire occurred during routine training, Marine officials said. The aircraft burst

into flames and thick, black smoke could be seen billowing from the landing site.

There were no injuries, and the incident's cause is under investigation, Marine officials said.

"People are feeling anxiety all the time, thinking [a U.S. military aircraft] may fall on their property, and that has become a real problem," Higashi Village Takae Ward Chief Kumiko Nakamine told reporters Friday.

She and 14 other ward representatives agreed to present the helipad closure request to the Okinawa Defense Bu-

reau, which represents Japan's central government, during a meeting Thursday evening.

"I plan to express [my request to the Defense Bureau] with much stronger words than before," Nakamine added.

Defense Bureau officials said they had not received such a request as of Friday afternoon.

The Marine Corps ordered a 96-hour operational pause Thursday for all Okinawa-based Super Stallions to ensure "readiness and the safe conduct of our aviation community," a statement said. The service also expressed regret over the incident and vowed to

compensate anyone with property damage.

At least a third of the aircraft was destroyed, according to local village leaders.

The Navy later determined the incident was a Class A mishap, which means damage exceeded \$2 million.

About 200 people demonstrated Thursday evening in front of Camp Foster, home to some of the Marine Corps' top Pacific leaders. They denounced the Super Stallion incident and past MV-22 Osprey crashes and called for a "complete withdrawal" of U.S. military from the island prefecture.

Is US readying for war amid N. Korea talk?

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Do the ominous rhetoric from President Donald Trump and repeated flights by **ANALYSIS** U.S. strategic bombers over the Korean Peninsula mean Washington is readying for what many feel is unthinkable — a military conflict with a nuclear-armed North Korea that would put millions of civilians at risk?

U.S. B-1B bombers flew last week over South Korea with fighter jet escorts from the allied nation in what's become an increasingly familiar show of force to Pyongyang. It came just days after Trump said "only one thing will work" with North Korea and referred, ambiguously, to "the calm before the storm" — remarks he said Friday referred to the North.

White House chief of staff John Kelly said Thursday that North Korea can't be allowed to develop the ability to strike the U.S. but the threat is "manageable" for now.

Jim Schoff, a former senior Pentagon

adviser for East Asia policy, said it doesn't appear "U.S. policymakers think we're on the brink of all-out war."

But he added that doesn't mean the administration is bluffing or has ruled out some kind of limited strike in response to a North Korean provocation. He said most telling were the repeated B1-B bomber flights, which he said were not intended just to signal U.S. resolve, but to practice making the long flight from the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, where they are based, and "to get a feel for what kind of air defenses North Korea has and how we see them react."

For now, there's little indication that either the U.S. or North Korea is preparing for a resumption of the 1950-53 Korean War, which devastated the peninsula.

North Korea is in the midst of a fall harvest for which military manpower is needed. Civilians are not reported to be mobilizing for war.

In South Korea, there's been no move to prepare civilians for evacuation, among them more than 100,000 Americans. They

include thousands of family members of the 28,500 U.S. troops based there. Many live in the capital, Seoul, in range of thousands of North Korean artillery guns and rockets positioned close to the tense frontier.

Probably the closest the enemies have come to resuming the Korean War came in 1976, after North Korean troops bludgeoned to death two U.S. military officers in the demilitarized zone over a dispute about a tree obscuring the allies' line of sight. The U.S. mobilized fighter jets and B-52 bombers and deployed an aircraft carrier off the coast.

Among the options considered by the administration of President Gerald Ford were an airstrike at the eastern end of the DMZ or an artillery attack on a North Korean barracks. In the end, Ford decided against military reprisals because of the potential for escalation, and the U.S. settled for cutting down the tree amid a massive show of force. North Korea's leader at the time, Kim Il Sung, subsequently expressed regret over the initial incident.

Guam-based submarine makes S. Korea port call

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The USS Michigan arrived in the southern port city of Busan on Friday, the second U.S. submarine in as many weeks to arrive on the divided peninsula.

The Navy said the Ohio-class guided-missile submarine was making a routine visit during a regularly scheduled deployment to the region.

But the port call comes at a time of escalating tensions between the United States and North Korea, which has stepped up the pace of its nuclear weapons program.

President Donald Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" the North if forced to defend the U.S. or its allies.

Washington has agreed to deploy so-called strategic assets in and around South Korea on a more regular basis to provide better deterrence against the North.

South Korea sees that as an important measure of the U.S. commitment to the long-stand-

ing alliance between the two allies, which fought together in the 1950-53 Korean War.

The 560-foot-long USS Michigan, which weighs more than 18,000 tons when submerged, is armed with tactical missiles and capable of launching strikes and supporting missions by special operation forces, a statement said.

Its homeport is Bremerton, Wash., but the submarine is based in the U.S. Pacific island territory of Guam.

The smaller USS Tucson, which is capable of firing Tomahawk cruise missiles, made a port call Oct. 7 at the U.S. base in Chinhae.

The U.S. also has sent Guam-based B-1B bombers over the peninsula twice in recent weeks in a show of force amid speculation the North is preparing to conduct another ballistic-missile test.

Experts have warned the uptick in belligerent rhetoric from Trump and posturing by the military could lead to a miscalculation and possibly an open conflict.

Tillerson defends his Washington standing

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Rex Tillerson defended his standing within the administration on Sunday, saying President Donald Trump's social media pronouncements on major global issues did not undercut the nation's top diplomat.

"I'm not going to deal with that kind of petty stuff," Tillerson said on CNN's "State of the Union," rejecting a chance to address reports that he called Trump a "moron" during a meeting of top national security officials. "I don't work that way."

Tillerson's appearances on the Sunday talk shows provided his most fulsome comments since NBC News reported that, during a meeting of top national security officials, the secretary of state called Trump a "moron" after the president suggested a massive buildup in the nation's nuclear stockpile. That was followed by Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., a close ally of Tillerson's,

suggesting that Trump had "castrated" the secretary of state with tweets undermining his diplomatic missions to China to try to resolve the standoff with North Korea.

"I checked, I'm fully intact," Tillerson said, after being pressed by CNN's Jake Tapper about the castration remark.

The secretary of state said his relationship with the president, often described as strained, was fine, and there was often a frank exchange of views. "I call the president Mr. President," Tillerson said, declining to address the "moron" comment.

Tillerson said Trump has assembled an "unconventional team" of national security leaders, noting he is an "unconventional" secretary of state as a former chief executive of ExxonMobil.

He said it does not matter that many observers see his refusal to address the "moron" controversy head-on as tacit confirmation that he did use that word to describe Trump.

Calif. getting 'upper hand' on some blazes

Associated Press

SONOMA, Calif. — California fire authorities said Sunday they have turned a corner in battling several of the wildfires that have devastated wine country and other rural parts of Northern California during the past week.

Some counties were preparing to let more evacuees return to their homes amid improving weather. The winds that have been fanning the deadliest and most destructive cluster of wildfires in California history did not kick up overnight as much as feared.

"Conditions have drastically changed from just 24 hours ago, and that is definitely a very good sign," said Daniel Berlant, spokesman for the California Department

of Forestry and Fire Protection. "And it's probably a sign we've turned a corner on these fires."

"We're starting to see fires with containment numbers in the 50 and 60 percent, so we're definitely getting the upper hand on these fires."

The wildfires that erupted last weekend have killed at least 40 people and have destroyed at least 5,700 homes and other structures. As of Sunday, roughly 75,000 people were under evacuation orders, down from nearly 100,000 the day before.

On Sunday, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office said the county would start assessing evacuated areas, which is a first step toward allowing people back home. Mendocino County said it expected to allow

even more people home on Sunday as well.

Some people were growing increasingly impatient to return home — or at least to see whether their homes were still standing.

"We're on pins and needles," Travis Oglesby, who evacuated from his home in Santa Rosa, told the Sonoma County sheriff on Saturday. "We're hearing about looting."

Douglas and Marian Taylor stood outside their apartment complex Saturday in Santa Rosa with their two dogs and a sign that read "End evacuation now."

Hundreds of people remain unaccounted for, though officials said they believe they will locate most of them alive.

Trump's speech stirs new war of words with Iran

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — President Donald Trump's refusal to certify the Iran nuclear deal has sparked a new war of words between the Islamic Republic and America, fueling growing mistrust and a sense of nationalism among Iranians.

His speech announcing the move has served to unite Iranians across the political spectrum — fed also by anger over Trump's refusal to refer to the Persian Gulf, the waterway through which a third of all oil traded by sea passes, by name.

The reaction is undercutting those trying to change Iran's

clerically overseen government from within, and likely will strengthen the hand of hard-liners who long have insisted the U.S. remains the same "Great Satan" denounced in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"Under the deal, it was supposed to be that we get concessions, not that we give more concessions," the hard-line newspaper Kayhan raged.

Iranian officials and media outlets on Saturday uniformly condemned Trump for accusing Iran of violating the spirit of the 2015 accord and calling on Congress to toughen the law governing U.S. participation. Trump said he was not ready to pull out

of the deal but warned he would do so if it were not improved.

In a televised speech shortly after Trump made his announcement, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said his country would remain in the deal, but criticized Trump's words, referring to them as "cursing and futile accusations."

Rouhani also said Iran would continue to build and test ballistic missiles, something allowed under the nuclear deal though Americans believe it violates the accord's spirit. "We have always been determined, and today we are more determined," Rouhani said. "We will double our efforts from now on."

The Iranian president also offered a list of moments that showed the U.S. could not be trusted by the average Iranian, dating to the 1953 CIA-backed coup that cemented U.S.-backed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's power.

Like many others in Iran, Rouhani focused on the fact that Trump used the term "Arabian Gulf" to refer to the Persian Gulf. Some traded online video clips of past American presidents calling it the Persian Gulf, while one semi-official news agency published a photo gallery with the title "Persian Gulf forever."

Fed chair sounds upbeat note on economy, inflation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen on Sunday sketched a bright outlook for the U.S. economy and for inflation prospects in coming months, saying the impact of the recent hurricanes will likely slow economic growth slightly but only temporarily and should be followed by a rebound by year's end.

Speaking to an international banking seminar, Yellen acknowledged that the persistence of undesirably low inflation this year has been a surprise. But she said she expected inflation to start picking up as the effects of temporary factors, such as fall-

ing prices for consumer cellphone service, begin to fade.

The Fed chair's comments suggested that the central bank will soon resume raising interest rates to reflect the strengthening economy. Most economists foresee the next rate increase — the third this year — coming in December.

"Economic activity in the United States has been growing moderately so far this year, and the labor market has continued to strengthen," Yellen said in a speech to a panel that included central bank officials from China, Japan and the European Central Bank.

Of the hurricanes that struck Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Yellen noted that they caused enormous damage. But she added, "While the effects of the hurricanes on the U.S. economy are quite noticeable in the short term, history suggests that the longer-term effects will be modest and that aggregate economic activity will recover quickly."

Yellen said that the economy's growth, as measured by the gross domestic product, might have slowed slightly in the July-September quarter as a consequence of the hurricanes but that growth is likely rebounding in the current quarter.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Sheriff: 2 escape jail to visit girlfriends

OK HUGO — An Oklahoma sheriff said two inmates briefly escaped to visit their girlfriends and to smoke marijuana and then walked back to the jail.

Choctaw County Sheriff Terry Park told The Oklahoman that inmates Harley Davidson and Rakeem Lennox waited for jail staff to leave the area near their room about 10:30 p.m. Wednesday. He said the men then entered the booking room to steal a laundry room door key and fled.

The sheriff said they returned to the county jail on foot after midnight and could face additional charges.

Man slain in mulch drop was lawmaker's kin

UT BRIAN HEAD — A spokesman for U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, of Utah, confirmed that a man killed by mulch dropped from a helicopter was the senator's brother-in-law.

Lee's spokesman, Conn Carroll, confirmed Tuesday that Bryan Burr, 58, was the brother of Lee's wife, Sharon.

Burr was killed Oct. 7 when he was hit by mulch dropped on the burn scar from a massive wildfire in southern Utah. The Alpine man was on the ground calling out locations to drop the mulch near Brian Head.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating because an aircraft was involved in the industrial accident

Bear killed after getting inside a post office

AK ANCHORAGE — A 300-pound black bear was killed after it wandered

into an Anchorage post office.

Anchorage television station KTVA reported the bear got inside the building Oct. 8 after walking through an open door near the loading dock.

The facility was closed, but U.S. Postal Service spokeswoman Dawn Peppinger said about 75 employees were sorting mail when the bear got inside the post office near the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

Airport Deputy Police Chief Dave Schulling said several officers responded, and the bear was killed when their efforts to get the animal back outside failed.

Young dolphin found stranded on beach

FL PANAMA CITY BEACH — Marine life experts are caring for a bottlenose dolphin that was found stranded on a Florida beach.

The News Herald reported that Gulf World Marine Institute and Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge rescued the 1-year-old female Oct. 8. Two beachgoers on Okaloosa Island had reported the beached dolphin to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The sea mammal was transported to Gulf World Marine Institute for rehabilitation.

Homeless woman sues city over dead dog

OR EUGENE — A homeless woman is suing the city of Eugene in federal court, saying police officers allowed her dog to die in her car after they violated her civil rights while detaining and arresting her two years ago.

The Eugene Register-Guard reports Tamala Bemis' lawsuit seeks a ruling backing her claim that police violated her

rights, along with unspecified monetary damages.

Eugene police stopped Bemis while she was walking along a sidewalk Oct. 5, 2015, and subsequently arrested her on warrants.

The lawsuit says officers stopped her without reasonable suspicion and failed to ensure that her dog — parked in a nearby car — was OK. Bemis said that when she was released from jail, she found the dog dead inside the vehicle.

Police investigating telephone scam

MA TAUNTON — Police in Taunton are warning residents of a telephone scam in which a man posing as a lawyer claims a family member has been hurt in a car crash.

The Taunton Daily Gazette reported that an 80-year-old victim told police he wired \$10,000 through Western Union when a man said his grandson had been involved in a crash and was under arrest in Connecticut.

Police said the victim talked to a person posing as his grandson who said his voice was different because his nose had been broken in the crash.

Police said the man reported the call after talking to his grandson and his daughter.

Sheriff: 3 survive plane crash into home

VA MIDDLESEX — Authorities said a small plane crashed into a home in Virginia and the three people aboard survived with minor injuries.

No one was home at the time of the crash.

Middlesex County Sheriff David Bushey told WWBT the single-engine plane took off just before 9 a.m. on Oct. 7 from

an airport in Topping, about an hour east of Richmond. Two adults and a juvenile were on board.

The station reported the pilot lost control, flew between two trees, and crashed into the home in Middlesex County.

Haitian-American pirate radio hit with steep fine

FL MIAMI — A pirate radio station popular in Miami's Haitian-American community has been hit with a steep fine by the Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC says Radio Touche Douce operates illegally from a backyard shed in North Miami. The Miami Herald reported the agency is proposing a fine of more than \$144,000, the largest amount allowed under FCC regulations.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said pirate radio stations interfere with lawful use of airwaves and can disrupt public safety communications.

Station owner Fabrice Polynice, who has broadcast for 24 years, declined comment.

Governor issues first pardon in theft case

KS TOPEKA — Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback has issued his first pardon in almost seven years in office to a man convicted of felony theft as a college student in 1994.

Brownback's office announced the pardon Tuesday for Mark Schmitt, of Parker, Colo. Schmitt is a Liberal native convicted of felony theft while living as a college student in Ottawa.

The governor's office said the charge arose from a false insurance claim for \$1,552. It said Schmitt completed probation, paid restitution and had his record expunged.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

On a mission to provide credible reporting and daily news to America's military, wherever they serve.

Mobile apps available: www.stripes.com/apps.

Altuve's score lifts Astros over Yanks

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Jose Altuve raced home on Carlos Correa's double in the ninth inning, Justin Verlander struck out 13 in a complete game and the Houston Astros beat the New York Yankees 2-1 Saturday for a 2-0 lead in the AL Championship Series.

Correa also homered, but Houston needed a daring dash from Altuve to get Verlander a win. The 5-foot-6 AL MVP front-runner reached with a one-out single against closer Aroldis Chapman, then sprinted around from first base on Correa's shot to right-center field, sliding past catcher Gary Sanchez as he misplayed a short-hop. Altuve had two more hits and is 13-for-23 (.565) this postseason.

Verlander pitched another gem for the Astros, setting a postseason career best for strikeouts and allowing five hits in his second career complete game in the postseason. He threw a season-high 124 pitches and retired baby Bronx Bombers Aaron Judge, Sanchez and Greg Bird in the top of the ninth.

In the bottom of the inning, Judge picked

up Correa's hit in right field and threw toward second base. Shortstop Didi Gregorius fielded there, and his throw beat Altuve to the plate by a few steps. But Sanchez bobbled the one-hop as Altuve slid by, and the Astros mobbed Correa in shallow center field. Altuve pointed toward Correa and his teammates from behind the plate.

The Astros took their first ever 2-0 lead in a Championship Series in front of a crowd of 43,193 which included Houston Rockets stars James Harden, Chris Paul and Trevor Ariza in front-row seats. Minute Maid Park buzzed throughout, and fans let out huge cheer when manager A.J. Hinch sent Verlander back out to pitch the ninth inning.

"No words were necessary," Verlander said. "It was my game to win or lose."

Verlander got the first complete game by any pitcher this reliever-heavy postseason and his first nine-inning outing since his Tigers beat the Astros 3-2 on July 30, 2016. This was the seventh time Verlander had 10 or more strikeouts in the postseason, extending his major league record, and his seventh postseason game with 120 pitches

or more.

The durable right-hander struck out the side in the eighth, and television shots showed fianc Kate Upton in a pink sequined shirt cheering and clapping wildly as he walked off.

He improved to 8-0 over five regular-season starts and three playoff appearances with Houston since being traded from the Tigers on Aug. 31, including his Game 4 win in relief during a Division Series against Boston.

Correa's homer in the fourth off starter Luis Severino sailed just out of reach of Judge and 12-year-old Carson Riley, who was sitting in the front row in right field. The ball bounced off Riley's glove and into the stands, and manager Joe Girardi asked for video review to check for fan interference. Umpires upheld the call.

Riley hopes to get the ball signed by Correa and called the moment: "A really cool one."

The 23-year-old Correa is the fifth player ever with five home runs in the postseason before turning 24.

Taylor, Puig power Dodgers to win in Game 1

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Although Clayton Kershaw once again failed to dominate in a postseason start, these Los Angeles Dodgers don't need one guy to carry them.

With a relentless lineup, flawless relief pitching and a collective charisma epitomized by the bat-flipping Yasiel Puig, the Dodgers are still unbeaten in the postseason and off to a strong start in the NL Championship Series.

Chris Taylor hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning, Puig added a homer and an RBI double to his dynamite postseason, and the Dodgers overcame a short start by Kershaw for a 5-2 victory over the Chicago Cubs on Saturday night in the NLCS opener.

"We just tried to set the tone early against the Cubs," closer Kenley Jansen said. "We understand they're the defending champions, so they're a really good team. We understand that we won 104 games, but right

now it doesn't matter."

Charlie Culberson doubled, drove in the tying run and scored another while replacing injured All-Star shortstop Corey Seager for the resourceful Dodgers, who improved to 4-0 in this postseason."

With another collective offensive effort and four innings of perfect relief for Kershaw, the Dodgers calmly overcame an early two-run deficit and took the first game of this rematch of the 2016 NLCS, won in six games by the Cubs on the way to their first World Series championship in 108 years.

"It's two different ballclubs," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "There are some similar players, but I think that the season we had versus the season they had last year, I think that you could parallel those two, and the confidence we have in our group, and they had in their group last year. I just know that this year we're a very focused group, very confident group."

The Dodgers hadn't won the opening game of an NLCS since

1985. Game 2 was Sunday, with Rich Hill starting at home against Chicago's Jon Lester.

Kershaw pitched five innings of four-hit ball, but the Los Angeles ace fell behind 2-0 before getting pulled for a pinch-hitter during the Dodgers' tying rally.

After winning 104 games in the regular season and sweeping Arizona in the Division Series, the Dodgers have a lineup and bullpen equipped to handle almost anything. They made Kershaw's latest laborious postseason start virtually irrelevant, just as they did after he gave up four homers in his 2017 playoff opener against the Diamondbacks last week.

Albert Almora Jr. hit a two-run homer in the fourth, but the final 18 batters failed to reach base for the weary Cubs, still bouncing back from a 10-hour cross-country flight after finishing off Washington in an epic Game 5 late Thursday night.

"Their bullpen is pretty firm, and we have to really get our feet back on the ground," Cubs

manager Joe Maddon said.

Puig added another huge offensive game to his recent surge with his first career postseason homer — though in a postgame interview on TBS, he was convinced he had hit one before.

The Cuban slugger also included his usual array of creative bat discards and portentous pauses at the plate.

Los Angeles finally got rolling in the fifth when Logan Forsythe and Austin Barnes drew one-out walks before Puig hammered a double to left-center. The ebullient Cuban slugger headed to second only after flipping his bat and spreading his arms wide at the plate.

Puig's sky-high homer off Mike Montgomery in the sixth barely got over the fence in left. Puig is 7-for-15 with six RBIs in the Dodgers' first four playoff games.

"I grew up a little bit," Puig said. "(I'm) going to home plate having fun, because I know (if) I hit nothing, (if) I do nothing in the game, my teammates are going to have my back."

Defense lifts LSU over No. 10 Tigers

Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — LSU coach Ed Orgeron didn't want the game ball, turning down a chance to stick it in the faces of so many critics who think he is in over his head.

Across Tiger Stadium, Auburn fans clustered in the stands near the visitor's locker room voiced their displeasure with coach Gus Malzahn, some yelling audibly that he's "got to go."

Such is life in the Southeastern Conference, where a young LSU team might be changing minds — and winning back disillusioned fans — thanks to a pair of gritty victories.

D.J. Chark returned a punt 75 yards for a touchdown, Connor Culp kicked field goals of 42 and 36 yards inside the final three minutes, and LSU erased a 20-point deficit on its way to a 27-23 victory over No. 10 Auburn on Saturday.

"We're just becoming a football team. Our whole staff is galvanized. Our football team is galvanized," Orgeron said. "We were going to be resilient.

We weren't going to give up. We were going to block out the noise and we were going to fix the things that were fixable."

LSU's defense improved dramatically in the second half, when it allowed no points and just 64 yards. That enabled LSU (5-2, 2-1) to win with special teams play.

Defensive coordinator "Dave Aranda had ice in his veins tonight," Orgeron said. "We made some mistakes very early. Other people would have tended to quit. Not us."

Russell Gage made a diving 14-yard touchdown reception and had a 70-yard run that set up another TD in the first half, when LSU closed to 23-14 to set up a tense finish.

Kerryon Johnson rushed for 156 yards and a short TD for Auburn (5-2, 3-1), which had won four straight.

"This is an extremely tough loss from the standpoint that we got off to an extremely good start," said Malzahn, whose team had won its previous three SEC games by 21 points or more.

OU holds off Texas

Associated Press

DALLAS — Emotionally and physically spent just a few minutes earlier, Baker Mayfield found the energy to gallop into the Cotton Bowl tunnel joyously, "Golden Hat" trophy on his head, after beating his hometown Texas Longhorns again.

Mayfield threw 59 yards to Mark Andrews for the go-ahead touchdown in the fourth quarter after Oklahoma had blown a 20-point lead, and the 12th-ranked Sooners held on to beat Texas 29-24 on Saturday.

Mayfield's second TD throw of more than 50 yards came 68 seconds after freshman quarterback Sam Ehlinger ran 8 yards to give the Longhorns their first lead after trailing 20-

0 in the second quarter.

An Austin native who grew up often wearing Sooner gear, Mayfield came back after slowly leaving the field at the end of a second-half series, appearing to favor his right arm.

He didn't miss a play, and the decisive throw was perfect to Andrews running free down the sideline on the Texas side of the half-burnt orange, half-crimson Cotton Bowl in the middle of the Texas State Fair.

"For the older guys that were around here and got nicked up, it's realizing it's your last one," said Mayfield, a fifth-year senior and former Texas Tech walk-on who threw for 302 yards and two scores. "You'll fight through a little extra pain. It was a mental decision for all of us."

Sun Devils stun No. 5 Washington

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — The desert air is not kind to the Washington Huskies.

Manny Wilkins completed 29 of 41 passes for 245 yards, Arizona State's defense smothered Washington most of the game and the Sun Devils stunned the No. 5 Huskies 13-7 on Saturday night.

It was the highest-ranked team the Sun Devils (3-3, 2-1 Pac-12) have beaten since they defeated then-No. 1 Nebraska on Sept. 21, 1996.

"A monumental win for our program," Arizona State coach Todd Graham said, "and we're not surprised."

Washington (6-1, 3-1 Pac-12) lost at Arizona State for the seventh straight time and hasn't won in Tempe since 2001.

"We expected to win this game," Arizona State defensive back J'Marcus Rhodes said. "It's not a shock to us. This game is what's going to turn the ship around. We dominated them tonight."

The Huskies were the fourth top-10 team to lose this weekend, joining No. 2 Clemson, No. 8 Washington State and No. 10 Auburn.

"A tough day at the office," Washington coach Chris Petersen said. "We could not get any rhythm going whatsoever and when we did we get a penalty and couldn't capitalize in the red zone."

"One of the more frustrating nights we have had in a long time on offense."

The Sun Devils had allowed at least 30 points in 11 straight games. They had a bye last week, giving them two weeks to prepare for the Huskies.

"We told ourselves for the past two weeks 'believe,'" Wilkins said. "We're underdogs. Nobody else is going to believe."

Washington entered the night averaging 43 points per game but struggled all night against

the Sun Devils.

Huskies freshman Van Soderberg missed field goals of 27 and 21 yards, the first one wide left, the second off the right upright.

Washington finally scored with a 14-play, 71-yard drive in the fourth quarter, Jake Browning sneaking in from the 1 to cut Arizona State's lead to 13-7 with 5:32 to play. Tristan Vizcaino replaced Soderberg for the conversion kick.

The Huskies never got the ball again. On fourth-and-three at the Washington 37, Wilkins connected with Ceejhay French-Love for a 30-yard gain to the 7-yard line.

Wilkins took a knee three times to run out the clock.

"Am I shocked that they came ready to play after an off week, at home, at night?" Browning said. "No. Anybody can lose to anybody."

Arizona State scored a touchdown on its first possession of the game and got field goals of 52 and 25 yards from freshman Brandon Ruiz to lead 13-0 at the half.

The Sun Devils sacked Browning five times. The Washington quarterback had only been sacked six times total in the first six games but he was under duress most of the night, often because the Arizona State secondary blanketed his receivers.

"He had nobody open," Sun Devils defensive lineman JoJo Wicker said, "so we were just chasing him around and getting him."

Takeaway: The loss was a blow to Washington's national playoff hopes. It knocked the Huskies into a tie with Washington State and Stanford for the lead in the Pac-12 North.

Arizona State picked up one of its biggest wins under Graham, who entered this season on the hot seat after a 5-7 season a year ago.

Academies

Memphis surprises No. 25 Navy

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Riley Ferguson didn't throw one, but he was certainly enjoying seeing a late-game interception Saturday.

The Memphis quarterback was watching helplessly on the sidelines as Navy took over on its 10 with 1:51 to go and an opportunity for a second-straight, last-minute victory. But Tigers defensive back Austin Hall picked off Zach Abey at the Midshipmen 33 to end the threat and secure a 30-27 upset of 25th-ranked Navy.

Ferguson threw three touchdown passes and Memphis took advantage of five turnovers to hand the Midshipmen their first loss of the season.

Abey ran for 146 yards for Navy (5-1, 3-1 American Athletic Conference), but the Tigers held the nation's leading running game 100 yards below its 416-yard average.

Memphis (5-1, 2-1) beat a Top-25 opponent for the third straight time, including two this season.

Air Force 34, UNLV 30: At Air Force Academy, Colo., Facing a daunting comeback, Air Force quarterback Arion Worthman focused on the clock, not the scoreboard.

It was the second largest comeback by Air Force (2-4, 1-2 Mountain West Conference), which overcame a 28-point deficit in a 44-38 overtime victory over Fresno State in 1996.

Army 28, Eastern Michigan 27: Ahmad Bradshaw rushed for 171 yards and one touchdown, Darnell Woolfolk broke a fourth-quarter tie with a 13-yard run, and James Gibson made a dramatic goal line tackle on a two-point conversion attempt in the final minute.

A week after winning for the first time on the road, Army (5-2) kept its perfect record at home intact after four games.

NHL roundup

Blue Jackets rally to top Wild in OT

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Alexander Wennberg was in the perfect spot to get another two points for the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Wennberg scored 47 seconds into overtime and Columbus rallied from a two-goal deficit to beat the Minnesota Wild 5-4 on Saturday night.

In the extra time, Artemi Panarin cut to the slot and his shot was stopped by goalie Devan Dubnyk. However, the rebound went off the chest of Wennberg, off his stick and into the Minnesota net. The goal was upheld by video review.

"I didn't have any intention to put it in my hand or anything like that. I just went to the net and got rewarded," Wennberg said.

Zach Werenski, David Savard, Cam Atkinson and Josh Anderson also scored for the Blue Jackets, winners of three straight.

Down by two early in the third, Atkinson scored on a rebound and the Blue Jackets kept up the pressure and were rewarded when Anderson redirected a slap shot from Savard past Dubnyk with 3:37 left in regulation. Columbus held a 13-5 shot advantage in the period.

Tyler Ennis scored two power-play goals for Minnesota, which got 30 saves from Dubnyk. Eric Staal and Landon Ferraro also scored.

Flyers 8, Capitals 2: Claude Giroux, Scott Laughton and Sean Couturier each scored two goals to lead host Philadelphia past Washington.

Penguins 4, Panthers 3: Sidney Crosby scored two goals for host Pittsburgh, including a bad-angle deflection in the third period.

Blackhawks 2, Predators 1 (OT): Brandon Saad scored his sixth goal 3:05 into over-

time, and Chicago beat visiting Nashville.

Stars 3, Avalanche 1: Tyler Seguin and Jamie Benn each had a goal and an assist in the second period, powering host Dallas to the victory.

Maple Leafs 4, Canadiens (OT): Auston Matthews scored his second goal of the game 48 seconds into overtime, sending visiting Toronto to the victory.

Bruins 6, Coyotes 2: Zdeno Chara had a goal and two assists, Anton Khudobin stopped 29 shots in his first start of the season and Boston kept host Arizona winless.

Devils 3, Rangers 2: Drew Stafford scored early in the third period and Keith Kinkaid stopped 29 shots in his season debut, leading visiting New Jersey to the victory.

Lightning 2, Blues 1: Nikita Kucherov became the first Tampa Bay player to score in each of the first five games of a season as the Lightning topped visiting St. Louis.

Jets 2, Hurricanes 1: Nikolaj Ehlers scored his team-leading fifth goal, sending host Winnipeg to the victory.

Kings 4, Sabres 2: Drew Doughty scored the tiebreaking goal on a power play with two minutes left for host Los Angeles.

Senators 6, Oilers 1: Mike Hoffman had two goals and an assist as Ottawa routed Edmonton to sweep a three-game road trip through Western Canada.

Islanders 3, Sharks 1: Thomas Greiss stopped 40 shots, Brock Nelson scored a tiebreaking goal in the second period and New York rallied to beat slumping host San Jose.

Flames 5, Canucks 2: Dougie Hamilton had two goals and an assist, and Jaromir Jagr got his first point for Calgary in a win over host Vancouver.

Federer beats No. 1 Nadal in China final

Associated Press

SHANGHAI — Roger Federer extended his winning streak over Rafael Nadal this year to four matches after beating the top-ranked Spaniard 6-4, 6-3 to win the Shanghai Masters on Sunday.

The Swiss 19-time grand slam winner, who still trails Nadal 23-15 in their overall head-to-head record, didn't face a break point and started and ended the match with service breaks.

"I don't know what my expectations were going in," Federer said. "I thought I might struggle early on because it was a late finish last night."

"I had no nerves before the match, surprisingly. I think I was pretty clear about how I wanted to play the match. I started off very well and relaxed from then on."

Despite his dominance in 2017, Federer doesn't rate his chances of catching Nadal in their head-to-head record.

"It's not going to happen. We don't have enough years left on the tour. We ranked too good so we play each other only in finals at the moment... You can't win them all against Rafa, to be honest. He's too good of a player," Federer said.

Federer took advantage of three of seven break point opportunities in the match to snap Nadal's 16-game winning streak, which included his China Open victory last week.

Federer, who has won the last five encounters between the pair dating back to the 2015 Basel final, also beat Nadal in the Australian Open final, a round of 16 match at Indian Wells and the Miami final this year.

Nadal arrived on court with a bandage under his right knee, the same leg he twice smacked with his racket after losing his serve for the first time this week in the semifinal.

Federer said he was surprised to see the wrap and didn't feel Nadal was struggling with his movement.