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Mattis cancels China trip after incident

BY WYATT OLSON
AND COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Tuesday that U.S.-Chinese relations have not worsened despite canceling his visit to the rival nation one day after a Chinese ship veered within 45 yards of a U.S. Navy destroyer.

The Navy described the encounter Sunday in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea as “an unsafe and unprofessional maneuver.” The USS Decatur, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, was conducting a routine freedom-of-navigation patrol about 8:30 a.m. near Gaven Reefs when the People’s Republic of China destroyer Luyang approached the ship, the Navy said in a statement.

“The PRC destroyer conducted a series of increasingly aggressive maneuvers accompanied by warnings for Decatur to depart the area,” Lt. Cmdr.

Tim Gorman, a spokesman for U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in the statement. “The PRC destroyer approached within 45 yards of Decatur’s bow, after which Decatur maneuvered to prevent a collision.”

On Monday, Mattis scrapped plans to visit China later this month, a U.S. defense official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to confirm the trip, which had not been officially announced by the Pentagon.

Mattis and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo were planning the joint security talks with their Chinese counterparts, the official said. It would have marked the second visit to China for Mattis, who visited Beijing in June.

Despite the increased tensions, Mattis insisted in remarks made Tuesday in Paris that the relationship between the two countries was not worsening.

“There’s tension points in the relationship, but based on

discussions coming out of New York last week and other things that we have coming up, we do not see it getting worse,” Mattis told reporters traveling with him to Paris, according to The Associated Press. “We’ll sort this out.”

The latest developments came after China protested recently about American bombers flying over sections of the South and East China Seas in operations the Pentagon described as routine. Additionally, China last week denied an American warship request for a port call in Hong Kong and it canceled a planned visit of its top naval officer to Washington.

China has also demanded the United States cancel its sale to Taiwan of \$330 million in parts for U.S.-made F-16 fighters and other military aircraft used by the island nation, which mainland China regards as a renegade province.

The United States recently put in place sanctions on Chi-

na’s Equipment Development Department, as well as its director, because of aircraft and missile purchases it made this year from a Russian arms exporter.

The United States had placed sanctions in 2017 on that exporter, Rosoboronexport, in response to Russia’s interference in America’s 2016 presidential election.

Tensions between the two powers have long existed, primarily over the Chinese militarization of manmade islands — including the Spratlys — in portions of the South China Sea that are claimed by several counties.

In a 2016 ruling, the tribunal of the Permanent Court of Arbitration — an intergovernmental organization that resolves international disputes including territorial and maritime boundaries — concluded Gaven Reefs did not possess significant land features and thus lacked an exclusive economic zone, as China had claimed.

US, NATO say new Russian missile violates nuke treaty

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Russia must halt development of a nuclear-capable missile system or the U.S. would consider destroying it before it becomes a threat, the U.S. ambassador to NATO said Tuesday.

At issue is Russia’s new 9M729 ground-launched missile, which the U.S. says violates the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty ban on ground-launched intermediate-range cruise and ballistic missiles.

“It is time now for Russia to come to the table and stop the violations that we know they are making,” U.S. Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison told reporters in Brussels, according to an

official transcript, on the eve of a meeting between Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and his NATO counterparts.

She said that if the system became “capable of delivering,” the U.S. “would then be looking at the capability to take out a missile that could hit any of our countries in Europe and hit America in Alaska.”

Hutchison’s comments about “taking out” a Russian missile system didn’t detail whether she meant a pre-emptive strike against targets or an intent to develop missile defense technology to neutralize the threat.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the missile system is putting at risk the

31-year-old nuclear treaty between Washington and Moscow, which has long been regarded as a cornerstone of stability in Europe.

“We have looked into this intelligence and we are extremely concerned,” Stoltenberg told reporters at alliance headquarters in Brussels on Tuesday. “After years of denials, Russia recently acknowledged the existence of a new missile system, called 9M729.”

“Russia has not provided any credible answers on this new missile. All allies agree that the most plausible assessment would be that Russia is in violation of the treaty.”

Stoltenberg declined to say

where the missile system could be deployed, citing intelligence concerns.

Mattis said Tuesday that he will discuss the Russian missile system at the NATO meeting this week.

“I’m going to lay out the situation,” Mattis said during a news conference in Paris, according to The Associated Press. “I want their advice as I return to Washington, D.C.”

Russian officials have said for years that U.S. missile defense systems in Europe violate the treaty. However, U.S. officials have always maintained that its systems on the Continent are geared toward long-range missile threats from conflict areas such as the Middle East.

Judge denies US motion to dismiss Guam suit

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

A federal judge has denied the United States' attempt to dismiss a Guam lawsuit against the Navy seeking payment for the service's share of the costs to clean a dump it gave to the Guamanian government.

Judge Ketanji Jackson, of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, rejected the U.S. government's motion to dismiss the suit on grounds Guam exceeded the statute of limitations under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, according to court documents. Jackson has not issued her reasoning behind her weekend decision, but a memorandum is expected soon.

In the lawsuit, Guam is claiming the U.S. should contribute funds for the cleanup of Ordot Dump, which was under the supervision of the federal government and Navy for more than three decades before being handed over to Guam in the 1970s. The previously unlined and uncapped landfill leaked into the Lonfit River and two tributaries, according to a 2002 complaint from when the U.S. sued Guam under the Clean Water Act to have it cleaned.

Guam ultimately closed the dump and cleanup began in 2013 with the U.S. territory paying to fix the environmental damage, "which included capping the landfill, installing stormwater management ponds, discharge water storage tanks and a sewer line," Stars and Stripes reported in March 2017.

Guam Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson called the denial of the motion to dismiss "a significant win for Guam" in a Monday statement from her office.

"We are now able to continue our environmental law suit against the federal government to recover costs Guam incurred to close Ordot Dump," she said.

Truman Strike Group conducts quick-deploy North Sea patrol

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The USS Harry S. Truman Strike Group was conducting maneuvering Tuesday in the North Sea, a rare deployment in northern European waters as the Navy tests its ability to deploy on short notice and keep quiet about it.

Rear Adm. Gene Black, commander of the Truman strike group, said the Navy's new "dynamic force employment" model, which is designed to make deployments more unpredictable for adversaries, has also introduced new challenges for sailors.

While those problems are not "insurmountable by any stretch, one of them is retraining and I guess re-embracing operational security to a much higher degree than previously," Black said in a phone interview with reporters.

In the past, the Navy was more open about carrier group deployments, but a new defense strategy requires more secrecy to maintain an element of operational surprise, Black said.

The varying deployment times also presents challeng-

es to families, who have for years scheduled their activities around sailors getting underway for between six and eight months at a time. Those periods were generally followed by maintenance and several months ashore, barring an unexpected mission.

Earlier this year, the Navy formally introduced its new deployment strategy for its carrier groups, which came in response to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and his emphasis on building a more nimble force. The idea centers on being "strategically predictable and operationally unpredictable," Black said.

It also means fewer announcements about the comings and goings of carriers as they maneuver from one area of operation to another.

"We've pretty much shattered that model," Black said.

The Truman has been at sea since late August, deploying from its homeport in Norfolk, Va., just 38 days after its previous deployment.

The Truman strike group deployed on April 11 to the Mediterranean and north Atlantic and returned to Norfolk on July

21 for routine maintenance and training.

The Truman's current deployment has included patrols in the waters off Iceland and now the North Sea.

"We've made the most of operating in an area where American aircraft carriers don't typically frequent," Black said.

The mission comes as U.S. European Command has sought to increase the combat readiness of forces because of concerns about a more aggressive Russia. In recent years, there have been numerous close encounters between U.S. and Russian ships and aircraft. The U.S. has repeatedly criticized unsafe Russian maneuvers and the buzzing of U.S. Navy ships.

Black said the Truman strike group has had no encounters with Russian ships during its current deployment.

Operating in northern European waters, the Truman has navigated through rough weather, but the ships are sailing well, Black said.

"We also have shown we can operate in fairly heavy seas and we are gaining confidence in that every day," Black said.

US military IDs soldier found dead in Vicenza

The soldier found dead on Monday in his barracks at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, has been identified as Sgt. Kevin Deon Connor.

Connor, 24, of Sherrills Ford, N.C., was assigned to 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, U.S. military officials said Tuesday. The death is under investigation by U.S. military and Italian authorities.

Dubai court jails driver for assaulting US sailor

DUBAI, United Arab Emir-

ates — A court in Dubai sentenced an Egyptian taxi driver in the sheikhdom to six months in prison and deportation after convicting him of sexually assaulting a U.S. Navy officer.

The National, an English-language, state-aligned newspaper in Abu Dhabi, reported the verdict in its Tuesday's edition.

It said the 34-year-old Egyptian grabbed the 22-year-old woman's thigh and forced her to touch his groin while driving her from a mall to Dubai's Jebel Ali port in March 2017.

The taxi driver was initially cleared of the charge in a lower court, but prosecutors appealed and won a conviction at Dubai's Court of Appeal.

Guardsman charged in carrier theft faces trial

RICHMOND, Va. — An Army National Guard officer accused of stealing an armored personnel carrier from Fort Pickett, Va., and leading police on a 60-mile chase has been deemed competent to stand trial.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported that Joshua Phillip Yabut, 30, appeared in court Friday. His attorney and a prosecutor reached a deal that dismisses charges of driving under the influence and unauthorized use of a vehicle. Yabut will still face a charge of felony eluding police.

From staff and wire reports

Suicide bomber hits Afghan election rally

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A suicide bomber struck an election rally in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province on Tuesday, killing at least 13 people and wounding around 40, a provincial official said.

The attack, the first since campaigning began last week ahead of elections for the lower house of parliament, underscored the widespread violence gripping the country 17 years after the U.S.-led invasion toppled the Taliban.

The vote is scheduled for Oct. 20 but it's unclear if the balloting will go ahead in areas controlled by the Taliban, who have seized several districts across the country in recent years and who carry out near-daily attacks.

Tuesday's attack targeted a rally for Abdul Naser Mohmand, an independent candidate,

who was unharmed.

"Most of the people killed or wounded are elders who had gathered for the campaign rally," said Attahullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor. He said some of the wounded were in critical condition, indicating the death toll could rise.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and an Islamic State affiliate are active in the province and opposed to elections.

The election campaign kicked off Friday with 2,565 candidates vying for seats in the 249-member chamber, including 417 female candidates.

In the run-up to campaigning, five candidates were killed in separate attacks. Officials from the country's Independent Election Commission said another two candidates have

been abducted, with their fates unknown, and that three others have been wounded in attacks. Afghan security forces killed three bodyguards of an independent candidate during a raid on a house near his residence in the eastern Kunar province on Sunday.

A number of political parties and opposition groups have expressed concerns over the transparency of the vote, leading to demands that a biometrics system be used to register voters — a first in Afghanistan's history.

Afghanistan's parliament includes a lower and an upper house, but only members of the lower house are directly elected. The upper house consists of parliamentarians chosen from local councils and those appointed by the president, as well as members elected in district elections.

Afghan forces have struggled to combat the Taliban and ISIS in recent years, suffering heavy casualties and withdrawing from many rural areas.

Security forces battling insurgents in the southern Helmand province were struck Monday by an errant NATO airstrike, which killed four police, a soldier and an intelligence agent, according to Ghafor Ahmad Jawad, a Defense Ministry spokesman. He said another 20 Afghan forces were wounded in the friendly-fire incident.

Cmdr. Grant Neeley, a U.S. military spokesman, acknowledged a "serious incident" in Helmand province on Monday involving Afghan and U.S. forces, without providing further details. "We are assessing the incident with our Afghan partners to prevent a recurrence," he said.

Syria: Iran coordinated missile attacks

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syria's foreign minister said in remarks broadcast Tuesday that the Iranian ballistic missile attack on militants in eastern Syria the previous day was part of "legitimate" cooperation between the two countries to combat terrorism.

Walid al-Moallem's comments came during a wide-ranging interview with the Beirut-based Al-Mayadeen TV. The full interview was to air later in the day.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard launched six ballistic missiles as well as drone bombers into eastern Syria's Deir el-Zour province on Monday, targeting Islamic State militants it blamed for an attack on a military parade in Iran last month.

The strikes were the second time Iran had used cross-border missiles inside Syria. Last year, Iran also struck in militant positions in Deir el-Zour's town of Mayadeen and follow-

ing another attack, in Tehran, that was blamed on ISIS.

Monday's strikes come after Syrian government forces and allied Iran-backed militias gained control of the strategic border town of Boukamal late last year, likely improving Iran's intelligence and capabilities in the area.

The strikes were also seen as a threat to Iran's regional adversaries at a time when Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers unravels.

"The Iranian missiles are in the framework of combating terrorism," said al-Moallem.

The Syrian government and its allies, as well as the U.S.-led coalition, are separately battling ISIS, which still controls a sliver of land along Syria's border with Iraq.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard, meanwhile, said its strikes targeted only ISIS militants for the first time, claiming that some 40 militant leaders were killed in the strike.

Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh,

head of the Guard's aerospace division, identified one of the dead as the ISIS commander of its Mosul district, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

The Guard also published pictures it described as the targets hit, which appeared to be villas. It described the attack as "precision" strikes.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war in Syria, said the strikes killed eight people in Hajin, a town still controlled by ISIS.

It was not clear if all the killed were militants, the Observatory said, adding that one of the missiles hit a house that had been seized by ISIS.

The U.S. military's Central Command acknowledged that Iranian forces conducted "no-notice strikes" in the area Monday and said it was assessing the damage. The coalition said no coalition forces were in danger.

9 extremists killed in US Somalia strike

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — The U.S. military says it has conducted an airstrike that killed nine al-Shabab extremists after its fighters attacked Somali government forces.

The U.S. Africa Command statement says the airstrike on Monday was carried out about 24 miles northeast of the port city of Kismayo.

The statement says another extremist was wounded.

It adds that according to its assessment, no civilians were injured or killed in the airstrike that was carried out in coordination with the Somali federal government.

The U.S. military has carried out 24 airstrikes, including drone strikes, this year against the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab, the deadliest Islamic extremist group in sub-Saharan Africa.

S. Korean says North has up to 60 nuke bombs

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — A top South Korean official told lawmakers that North Korea is estimated to have up to 60 nuclear weapons, in Seoul's first public comment about the size of the North's secrecy-clouded weapons arsenal.

Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon told Parliament on Monday the estimates on the size of North Korea's nuclear arsenal range from 20 bombs to as many as 60. He was responding to a question by a lawmaker, saying the information came from intelligence authorities. South Korea's main spy agency couldn't immediately comment.

Cho may have unintentionally revealed the information. His ministry said Tuesday Cho's comments didn't mean that South Korea would accept North Korea as a nuclear state, suggesting Seoul's diplomatic efforts to rid the North of its nuclear program would continue.

The South Korean assessment on the North's arsenal is not much different from various outside civilian estimates. According to South Korean government reports, the North is believed to have produced 110 pounds of weaponized plutonium, enough for at least eight bombs.

Former Green Beret awarded Medal of Honor for 2008 acts

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Dillon Behr never understood how he and Ron Shurer received the same valor award for their actions in the midst of a savage, six-hour firefight in which their Green Beret unit was nearly overrun in the jagged, icy cliffs of eastern Afghanistan.

The entire 12-man force from Operational Detachment-Alpha 3336 had fought valiantly April 6, 2008, on that Nuristan province mountain where they'd been sent to kill or capture a high-value leader of the Hezbe-Islami Gulbuddin insurgent group, Behr said Sunday. But Shurer not only single-handedly kept Behr alive after he was shot through the hip early in the fight known now as the Battle of Shok Valley, but he also ultimately was responsible for ensuring all of the American troops on that mountain made it out alive.

"Without Ron Shurer at my side, I would have died that day. No question," Behr said. "His presence gave me the confidence to know I could make it. There's a good chance if he would have been critically injured or killed on the battlefield ... we all might have died out there."

Months after the battle, 10 soldiers who fought that day were awarded the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest honor

for valor, representing the most such battlefield awards earned in a single engagement since the Vietnam War. On Monday, Shurer's Silver Star was upgraded to the Medal of Honor when President Donald Trump presented the nation's highest military honor to the former Green Beret during a ceremony at the White House. Trump smiled widely as he presented the award to Shurer, tapping him on the shoulder of his dress blue Army Service Uniform.

Behr and eight other members of Shurer's unit who fought in the battle with him attended, as did two Afghans who fought by their side. The upgraded award felt right, Behr said.

"Knowing that he was awarded the Silver Star, the same award that I got, it didn't really seem fair," Behr said the day before the ceremony. "So, to see him elevated and given the nation's highest honor — there's nobody else that could deserve it any more, and I'm extremely proud to know him."

For Shurer, 37, who has worked as a Secret Service agent since he left the Army in 2011, the upgraded award was unexpected and the result of a Pentagon review that began in 2016 of high-level, post-9/11 combat awards. On Sept. 4, Shurer was summoned to the West Wing. There, the president told the soldier that he would receive

the Medal of Honor, Trump said during the ceremony.

"It was a moment I will never forget," Trump said in the East Room before a standing-room-only audience of senior military leaders, Secret Service agents and Shurer's family and friends. "It's a great story ... for Ron, a good man."

Before his meeting with Trump, Shurer said he was not aware his Silver Star was under consideration for an upgrade. Ultimately, he said, the award is about recognizing the other men who fought alongside him on that mountain a decade ago.

"I want to dedicate this to the other men in ODA 3336," he said Monday just after he was presented the award. "Without them, this Medal of Honor really never would have been possible. It was truly a team effort."

Shurer, who last year was diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer, hopes his award can draw some attention to the sacrifice Green Berets have made through the years and continue to make today.

"Hopefully, [it will] remind the American public about all the servicemembers we still have out there, still doing the missions today, just quietly going about their jobs, you know, not asking for recognition," he said. "Whatever little voice I get, I hope to just be able to direct attention that way."

White House clears FBI to talk to anyone about Kavanaugh

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House has given the FBI clearance to interview anyone it wants to by Friday in its investigation of sexual misconduct allegations against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

The new guidance, described to The Associated Press by a person familiar with it, was issued to the FBI over the weekend in response to Democratic and news media pushback that

the scope of the probe was too narrow.

It comes as the FBI presses ahead with its investigation, questioning in recent days at least four people about accusations of misconduct against Kavanaugh dating to when he was in high school and college. Among the witnesses interviewed were men who California college professor Christine Blasey Ford says were present at a party of teenagers in the early 1980s at which she says

she was sexually assaulted by Kavanaugh.

President Donald Trump, addressing concerns about the probe's expansiveness at a news conference Monday, said he wants the FBI to do a "comprehensive" investigation and "it wouldn't bother me at all" if agents pursued accusations made by three women who have come forward. But he also said Senate Republicans are determining the parameters of the investigation and, "ultimately,

they're making the judgment."

"My White House will do whatever the senators want," Trump said. "The one thing I want is speed."

The White House instructed the FBI to interview anyone it deems relevant to the inquiry, but required the work to be done by Friday, according to the person familiar with the discussions, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mother sues because son didn't make team

MO LADUE — A federal judge won't order a Missouri high school to put a 16-year-old boy on a soccer team while his family sues for discrimination.

KSDK-TV reported that a federal judge denied the temporary restraining order Monday.

The lawsuit says the boy, who was identified as John Doe, didn't make the varsity soccer team at Ladue Horton Watkins High School last month. The suit says his family wanted him to return to the junior varsity team but was told he couldn't because precedence on that team is given to younger players with more years to polish their skills.

The lawsuit says that's discrimination, noting that the school lets female juniors play on the girls JV team.

Security fence cut at jail to deliver phones

MS McCOMB — Authorities said someone on the outside has been cutting into a security fence around the jail in a Mississippi county.

The Enterprise-Journal reported it appears to be an effort to drop off banned items including cellphones for inmates.

The chief deputy for the Pike County Sheriff's Department, Johnny Scott, told county supervisors it cost \$1,400 to repair the fence, and then somebody cut it again. Scott said there are security cameras, but not in the area where the break-ins are happening.

Source of flaming hole remains a mystery

AR MIDWAY — County officials in northern

Arkansas are still investigating the cause of a mysterious hole in the ground that flared into a 12-foot-high flame.

Baxter County Judge Mickey Pendergrass told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette that investigators have ruled out methane as the source of the flaming hole in Midway on Sept. 17.

Pendergrass said there aren't utility or fuel lines in the area that might have been leaking. He said the hole has been on the private property for at least 10 years.

Couple gets engaged with 'Marry Me Mint'

VT WATERBURY — A New York man had some help from Ben and Jerry's for his wedding proposal.

Angelo Orlando was captured on video getting on one knee at a New York grocery store and handing Kelly Becker a pint of the ice cream labeled, "Marry Me Mint."

Orlando said he knew Becker's favorite flavor was mint, and he worked with the staff at the company's Burlington location to make the proposal possible.

Last month, the couple visited the company's Waterbury factory to see how their ice cream is made.

Hunter hurt after bear falls, dislodges rocks

AK ANCHORAGE — A hunter sustained life-threatening injuries after a bear he shot tumbled down a slope, dislodging rocks.

Alaska State Police said William McCormick, 28, was struck by a rock and the bear. It's not known how big the bear was.

McCormick was flown by helicopter to a hospital in Anchor-

age on Saturday.

McCormick and his hunting partner, Zachary Tennyson, 19, are soldiers stationed at Alaska's Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Drunk man mows stranger's lawn

SC ST. HELENA ISLAND — Police said a man who had too much to drink took it upon himself to landscape a South Carolina woman's yard.

The Island Packet cited a Beaufort County Sheriff's Office report that said the woman reported a man rode around her property on a lawn mower before urinating on the grass Saturday.

The report said she told him to leave the yard, but he couldn't understand her. Responding deputies found the shirtless man on the back porch, and he told them he was "just walking on the beach."

He's charged with public disorderly conduct. His name hasn't been released.

Proposal on peak leaves pair in distress

CO BOULDER — A Texas man found a scenic location in the Colorado mountains to propose to his girlfriend, but the couple ran into trouble on the way down.

The Boulder County sheriff's office said Joshua Mason, 27, of Denton, Texas, took Katie Davis, 28, on a hike Saturday to Jasper Peak at an elevation of nearly 13,000 feet.

They got lost as darkness fell.

The couple were showing signs of altitude sickness and dehydration when a hiker found them.

He led them to his camp and

gave them food, water and a place to warm up.

Rescuers reached the camp early Sunday and walked the couple to their car.

Mermaids perform at park aquarium

FL ORLANDO — Florida's famous performing mermaids are swimming in new waters in the state's theme park hub.

The mermaids of Weeki Wachee Springs State Park now are performing three days a week through Oct. 21 at Sea Life Orlando Aquarium.

It's the first time in the troupe's history that the mermaids have performed in Orlando.

The mermaids swim in Sea Life's Pacific Habitat.

Delivery driver foils kidnapping

WI WALDO — A pizza delivery driver is credited with alerting police to a kidnapping in Sheboygan County.

The county sheriff's office said the driver delivered a pizza to a home in Waldo on Thursday and saw a woman with a black eye inside the home mouth "help me" and "call the police."

The Sheboygan Press reported that the driver made the call, and deputies responded to the home and arrested a 55-year-old man.

Authorities said the man had entered the woman's home earlier in the day, punched her, tied her up with a power cord and tried to persuade her to get back into a relationship with him.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Brewers win first Central title since '11

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Christian Yelich's easy smile and champagne-soaked T-shirt said it all.

A division title is much more fun than a Triple Crown.

Yelich collected three more hits as the Milwaukee Brewers won their first NL Central title since 2011, beating the Chicago Cubs 3-1 on Monday in a tiebreaker game. The silky-smooth slugger stalled in his bid for the league's first Triple Crown in decades, but he starred once again as the Brew Crew captured the biggest prize of the day.

"I know how hard it is to get to this point and I'm proud to be a part of this group," Yelich said as Milwaukee's boozy party swirled around him, filling every inch of the cramped visitors' clubhouse at Wrigley Field.

Lorenzo Cain hit a go-ahead single in the eighth inning to help Milwaukee to its eighth straight win and home-field advantage throughout the NL playoffs. The Brewers will host the wild-card winner starting Thursday in the best-of-five Division Series.

Chicago stayed at Wrigley for Tuesday night's wild-card game against the Colorado Rockies, who lost to the Dodgers on Monday.

"It's no fun. Of course we'd prefer the other route," manager Joe Maddon said.

It's a quick turnaround after falling short in their bid for a third straight division title, but the Cubs were sending ace left-hander Jon Lester to the mound for the elimination game.

"We'll be ready. This team has responded all year," said Anthony Rizzo, who homered for Chicago.

Yelich singled home Milwaukee's first run and won the NL batting title with a .326 average. He had 110 RBIs, one behind the Cubs' Javier Baez, and finished with 36 home runs. The tiebreakers were game 163 of the regular season and counted in the totals.

Joe Medwick in 1937 was the last NL player to win the Triple Crown. Miguel Cabrera did it for Detroit in 2012.

Milwaukee trailed Chicago by as many as five games in September, but manager Craig Counsell's club pushed the sea-

son to an extra day with a furious finish and then used its deep lineup and bullpen to outlast the playoff-tested Cubs.

"It just shows the heart and the mentality that this team has," Cain said. "Never give up. Continue to fight each and every day in each and every at-bat. We're going to continue to do that in the playoffs."

Orlando Arcia, batting in the eighth slot, had a career-high four hits, and Josh Hader closed out another dominant relief performance for the Brewers.

"All the guys in the 'pen, they're attacking the zone and putting us in a good position to win ballgames," Hader said.

Jose Quintana pitched six-hit ball into the sixth inning and Rizzo homered, but Chicago's bullpen faltered at a key moment. Daniel Murphy and Baez had the only other hits for the Cubs.

The game was tied at 1 before Milwaukee opened the eighth with three straight hits. Arcia singled on a 0-2 pitch from Justin Wilson (4-5), Domingo Santana had a pinch-hit double and Cain greeted Steve Cishek with a single back up the middle.

After Yelich struck out swinging — a rare occurrence during an extraordinary stretch for the NL MVP favorite — Ryan Braun got the Brewers an insurance run with a run-scoring single to center.

It was more than enough for Milwaukee's vaunted bullpen. Corey Knebel (4-3) extended his scoreless streak to 16 1/3 innings with a perfect seventh, and Hader worked two innings for his 12th save.

Rizzo had one last chance for Chicago, but he flied to right with Baez on second for the final out. When it was over, Hader wrapped his arms around catcher Erik Kratz as the rest of the Brewers poured out of the dugout.

A sizable portion of Milwaukee fans in the crowd of 38,450 chanted "Let's go Brewers!" — a rarity at Wrigley.

"We could hear 'em, we could really hear them and we fed off of that," Yelich said. "We wanted to bring this home for them."

Yelich also heard repeated "MVP!" chants when he singled in each of his first three at-bats. He drove in Arcia with his two-out hit in the third.

Rookie Buehler helps LA to 6th straight crown

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — What a day for Walker Buehler. The rookie with the preternatural calm pitched the Los Angeles Dodgers to a record sixth consecutive NL West title.

Buehler tossed one-hit ball into the seventh inning, and Cody Bellinger and Max Muncy launched two-run homers to beat the Colorado Rockies 5-2 in a tiebreaker on Monday.

"It's a normal baseball game. It's hyped up, there's an adrenaline, but you got to execute," Buehler said. "That's all you can do."

The defending NL champion Dodgers became the first major league team to win six straight division crowns since the Yankees captured nine AL East titles in a row from 1998-2006.

"It doesn't get old," confirmed ace Clayton Kershaw.

Los Angeles now hosts Atlanta in the best-of-five NL Division Series beginning Thursday.

"We're going to beat Atlanta," a shirtless Yasiel Puig proclaimed, rivulets of beer and champagne down his front and back. "No matter who's coming, we're going to the World Series and bring the 2018 championship here."

Denied their first division title in franchise history, the Rockies head to Wrigley Field to play the Chicago Cubs in the NL wild-card game on Tuesday night.

"Our guys will put it in the rearview for sure," Rockies manager Bud Black said of the loss. "The resiliency of this group has been awesome all year."

Pitching in 90-degree heat, Buehler was oh-so-cool in closing out a regular season that ended with Game 163 after both teams had identical records of 91-71.

The soft-spoken 24-year-old from Lexington, Ky., has been so steady of late that manager Dave Roberts had no qualms about giving Buehler the ball for the crucial game.

"He's ready for this moment," Roberts

said, "and he responded."

Buehler settled in quickly, retiring his first six batters in a row, and never did allow a run.

"Walker is a tremendous talent," Kershaw said. "His competitiveness is off-the-charts, his ability is off-the-charts."

Buehler (8-5) had his no-hit bid broken up in the sixth on Charlie Blackmon's single, one of his two hits for the Rockies.

"He didn't fold at all under pressure," Muncy said. "He went there and attacked them just like we knew he was going to."

Buehler even helped himself offensively, hitting a single in the sixth for his first professional RBI and extending the Dodgers' lead to 5-0.

After giving up a two-out walk to Carlos Gonzalez in the seventh, Buehler exited to a standing ovation from the announced crowd of 47,816. He waved his right hand and quickly strode to the dugout as fans chanted his last name. The right-hander struck out three and walked three.

Mahomes rallies Chiefs past Broncos

Associated Press

DENVER — Patrick Mahomes is athletic, agile — and ambidextrous, apparently.

Thanks in part to a nifty left-handed throw as he was about to get sacked by Von Miller at midfield on the game-winning drive, the right-handed Mahomes rallied the unbeaten Kansas City Chiefs past the Denver Broncos 27-23 on Monday night.

By overcoming a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit, the Chiefs (4-0) took a two-game lead over the Broncos (2-2), their AFC West rivals whom they've now beaten six straight times.

The only other remaining unbeaten team in the NFL is the Los Angeles Rams.

Down 23-13, Mahomes directed a 12-play, 75-yard drive that ate up more than six minutes and culminated with a 2-yard TD toss to tight end Travis Kelce.

After a three-and-out by Denver, Mahomes added a 60-yard touchdown drive, handing off to Kareem Hunt for the 4-yard score with 1:39 remaining.

On that last drive, Mahomes

was getting dragged down by Miller on third-and-5 at midfield when he shifted the ball to his left hand and threw it to Tyreek Hill a yard past the first-down marker at the Broncos 49.

"He's actually more athletic than people" realize, Denver linebacker Brandon Marshall said. "People talk about his arm, but he can move out of the pocket and make the necessary throws."

Even with his left hand.

"I didn't know he threw it with his left hand," marveled Miller. "He's a great quarterback."

"Patrick worked real hard on that left-handed throw," Chiefs coach Andy Reid quipped. "Some amazing plays there. We've seen it in practice but not under those conditions."

Mahomes proved slippery all night.

"We played well and we got to him but he would scramble out to his right as he likes to do," Marshall said. "It's almost like we'd have him in our fingertips and he'd scramble away and throw for a first down."

"The kid can play. He's going to be really good. He's really

good right now, but we should have won the game."

It was the first time since 2004 that the Broncos blew a 10-point fourth-quarter lead at home.

In between Kansas City's scoring drives, the Broncos, who had run roughshod over the Chiefs all night — a 7.2-yard average per run — suddenly abandoned their ground game in favor of three-wide receiver sets that resulted in a quick three-and-out that sent Denver's exhausted defenders right back out.

"We ran the ball to control the game," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said, "but you throw the ball to score."

After the three-and-out, struggling Broncos punter Marquette King shanked a 35-yarder out of bounds, giving the Chiefs the ball at their 40 with 4:35 left.

"He's got to perform better," Joseph said. "We're at home and it's his job to flip the field. It ain't happening."

The Broncos reeled off big run after big run against the soft underbelly of the Chiefs defense.

Phillip Lindsay and Royce Freeman ran all over the Chiefs. Each scored a touchdown and Freeman eluded seven defenders and dragged a linebacker into the end zone on his 14-yard score.

"We ran the ball well," Broncos quarterback Case Keenum said. "We started off so many series just pounding the rock at second-and-1, first-and-10. Even with some loaded boxes that K.C. brought, our offensive line played really well."

"We've got to keep running the ball well. If we keep running the ball like we do, we're going to win a lot of games."

Nobody could stop Lindsay and Freeman on Monday night — except Broncos offensive coordinator Bill Musgrave, who abandoned his great ground game at key moments in the Broncos' 27-23 loss.

That included a three-and-out series in which the Broncos lined up in three-receiver sets three times in between the Chiefs' final two drives, both of which ended in touchdowns as Mahomes rallied the Chiefs to victory.

Patriots get Edelman back from 4-game suspension

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — The New England Patriots got their sparkplug back Monday.

A matter of hours after a 38-7 thrashing of the previously undefeated Miami Dolphins, Julian Edelman returned from his four-game suspension for performance enhancers, reportedly showing up in the locker room for the first time in a month before 7 a.m.

"It's good. He hasn't changed a bit," Tom Brady said later in the day. "Four weeks off, he looks good."

Added long-time teammate Matthew Slater, whose locker is next to Edelman's: "It's good to see him. Julian and I have a very unique relationship. I'm glad that he's back. I'm look-

ing to attack the short week together."

The Patriots play host to the Indianapolis Colts on Thursday night.

Edelman was not available to reporters on Monday and a club spokesman said the slot receiver will talk "Thursday at the earliest."

There is no guarantee Edelman, who missed all last season after suffering a torn ACL in a non-contact injury in August 2017 in a preseason game, will even play Thursday. But don't bet against it. He has missed the past 23 meaningful New England games.

Edelman played in three of the four preseason games before having to leave the team. He had seven catches for 49

yards, three for first downs. But if you look back past the injury, you see a player who caught 98 passes for 1,106 yards and three touchdowns in 2016. He is third on the NFL's all-time postseason receptions list with 98, leading the Patriots in both catches and yardage in the postseason.

"We've played so much football together I really have no doubt of where he's going to be or what he's capable of," Brady said. "He's been a great player for our team and I think everyone's excited to have him back. Any time you have great players, it's going to help what you're doing."

"We all welcome him back and he's excited, ready to go, and hopefully he can go out and

play great."

Brady and Edelman have played together since 2009.

"When he's out there I obviously know his body language, I know his ability to get open, my confidence in him," Brady said. "All those things come up so when you get matchups and he gets open, he gets open so quick. That's the thing about Julian, his explosiveness in the routes, in and out of breaks."

"It's very comforting for a quarterback to see a guy get open really early in a route. Julian, we ask a lot of him. When you play five different spots, I think he's capable of moving in and out of different locations and kind of specialty type plays, there's a lot that he does well."

Other teams ready to challenge Caps

Associated Press

T.J. Oshie stepped to the microphone and apologized for his voice.

It was hoarse from days and nights of celebrating the Washington Capitals' Stanley Cup triumph and fans now had gathered on the National Mall after the championship parade. Oshie had enough left to start a chant among the tens of thousands of fans: "Back-to-back! Back-to-back!"

With a full voice and the shortest summer of his career behind him, Oshie hasn't changed his tune that the Capitals can repeat.

"If we continue with our style of play and everyone chips in like we did, I think we have a really good chance," Oshie said. "I know the odds are against us, we had a short summer, everyone else has a couple more months of training on them. But we still have all the pieces."

Even though the Pittsburgh Penguins went back-to-back in 2016 and 2017, the odds are against Washington repeating despite bringing back an almost identical roster from last year's run. What the Capitals

showed teams gunning for the Cup in 2019 is how a championship window is never closed as long you make the playoffs. The Penguins, Boston and Tampa Bay in the Eastern Conference, and the San Jose Sharks and St. Louis Blues in the West, take note: Previous postseason success and failure is little indication of what'll happen next.

"They don't give up after a lot of tough years," Blues winger Vladimir Tarasenko said of the Caps. "They work on their game, play hard and finally reach their goal. This is really good example for us. I think that's what we need to try to do."

The race to the playoffs begins with the Capitals and Vegas Golden Knights not favored to make it back to the Cup Final, Sidney Crosby ready to take back the trophy he has hoisted three times, Connor McDavid looking to lift the Oilers back into contention and an influx of talent in the West again threatening to make this spring another heavyweight rumble.

San Jose added two-time Norris Trophy-winning defenseman Erik Karlsson, St. Louis traded for center Ryan O'Reilly and Minnesota changed gen-

eral managers to take another run at an elusive title. Tampa Bay kept its deep core together, Boston is hoping for better health and Pittsburgh is loading up for another shot with Crosby eager to one-up career rival Alex Ovechkin again.

"He's very determined this year," said Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon, who like Crosby is a native of Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia. "With the Penguins, it's Stanley Cup or nothing for them. ... They have a great team. But Sid's their leader. Sid's the best player in the world and he's ready, for sure."

The Capitals' run through the playoffs mirrored the Penguins' three championships over the past decade in that they were built on stellar goaltending and center depth. Like Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and a host of third-line centers, Washington's Evgeny Kuznetsov, Nicklas Backstrom and Lars Eller showed they could match up against anyone and control games at home and on the road.

"They were pretty deep, obviously, in the middle — or anywhere, really," Bruins center Patrice Bergeron said. "Obviously the center position I think

is something that has a lot of impact in different ways in the game."

The Blues can now go down the middle with O'Reilly, Brayden Schenn and Tyler Bozak, and the Maple Leafs' signing of John Tavares gives them a 1-2-3 punch of the former Islanders captain, Auston Matthews and Nazem Kadri.

Matthews, Kadri and the Maple Leafs pushed Washington to six games before losing in the first round in 2017 but now have the horses to contend with anyone in the league. With Cup expectations hovering over the center of the hockey universe, the Capitals' years of playoff roadblocks and eventually breaking through make for another important lesson for the Maple Leafs.

"That's really how hard it is," Matthews said. "It's not easy. It's not just a walk in the park. Just because we added John Tavares doesn't mean it's going to be a walk in the park for the Toronto Maple Leafs in the playoffs. We still got to get there and no matter who you're playing, it's going to be a battle."

Rebuilding NHL teams lean on up-and-coming players

Associated Press

Jason Botterill has experienced both sides of the spectrum in confronting the challenges of building a competitive NHL team versus trying to sustain one.

In Buffalo, the Sabres' second-year general manager is attempting to rebuild from scratch a team in the midst of a franchise-worst, seven-year playoff drought. In his previous job as assistant GM in Pittsburgh, the test was keeping together a Sidney Crosby-led core of a team that became the first in nearly 20 years to repeat as Stanley Cup champions in 2016-17.

Botterill noted the common

denominator for both comes down to scouting.

"You're always searching for talent," Botterill said. "So it gets back to the importance of finding players that are going to join your system."

Teams at the bottom need to stockpile young talent, and hope it eventually jells. The Sabres, for example, enter this season with the top new player to watch in 18-year-old defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, the No. 1 pick in this year's draft.

Other rebuilding teams are counting on their youngsters to make immediate impacts.

In Ottawa, the Senators are turning to rookie first-round pick Brady Tkachuk. In Vancouver, there's center Elias

Pettersson. The Carolina Hurricanes, meanwhile, are counting on forward Andrei Svechnikov, the No. 2 pick, to help the franchise snap a nine-season playoff drought — the NHL's longest active streak.

There's pressure on the league's elite, too.

Winning teams lack the luxury of high draft picks, and are required to discover hidden gems in the draft and signing European and college free agents.

As Penguins GM Jim Rutherford also noted, the NHL's salary-cap system means successful teams have a more difficult time retaining their own talent.

"You want to keep those play-

ers, but you can't," Rutherford said. "We went through it two years ago when we lost a bunch of real key players. There's nothing to do about it."

Valuable as they were, forward Chris Kunitz, goalie Marc Andre-Fleury, defensemen Eric Fehr and Ian Cole, and in this offseason's case, forward Conor Sheary, were among the players the Penguins were unable to retain.

"The challenge is you have to have players coming in the front door," Hall of Fame coach Scotty Bowman said. "When I was in Montreal, they had a slogan that was in the dressing room. It said 'And the kids go marching on.' That was 50 years ago, but it's so much more now."