

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Navy's LCAC replacement a year late

BY JAMES BOLINGER

*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy's first Ship-to-Shore Connector — a modernized hovercraft slated to replace the legacy Landing Craft Air Cushion — is a year behind schedule because of production issues and technological bugs, according to an official from Naval Sea Systems Command.

Manufactured by Rhode Island-based Textron Inc., the SSC is larger, faster and more efficient than the LCAC, which has been used since the early 1980s to ferry Marines and their equipment from amphibious ships to shore during combat or disaster relief efforts.

The first SSC — dubbed Craft 100 and earmarked for research and development — was sup-

posed to be delivered in 2017, NAVSEA spokeswoman Colleen O'Rourke recently told Stars and Stripes.

"The first set of craft to be deployed to the Fleet will be SSCs 101-106," she said in an emailed statement. "That grouping, or detachment, of six craft will be delivered to Assault Craft Unit Four at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia, in the August 2020 time frame."

Craft 101 has left the production line and entered the testing phase, O'Rourke said, while the other five are at various stages of completion.

Craft 100's delivery was first delayed after production slipped in 2015 due to a fire at the factory where the propellers are produced.

Additional delays occurred as they worked out bugs in the new technology, she said. The problems included issues with the drivetrain and electronic components in the Command, Control, Communications, Computers & Navigation, or C4N, system.

The drivetrain suffered from a lack of lubrication, and the control system issues were solved with software updates, O'Rourke said. Textron is working with vendors to update parts in the gearbox to resolve the drivetrain issue.

Despite the delays, Craft 100 had logged more than 20 hours of flight time at Textron's test facility as of July, O'Rourke said. The Navy expects it to be delivered before the year ends.

The Navy has plans to pur-

chase 73 of the crafts at \$57.7 million each to replace its LCAC fleet on a one-to-one basis, she said.

The SSC is powered by four gas turbine engines, measures nearly 92 feet long and can travel faster than 35 knots. It has a five-sailor crew and can carry 74 short tons.

The new vessels boast a variety of upgrades that will likely make its predecessor obsolete.

According to a fact sheet on the NAVSEA website, the SSC's hull includes more corrosion-resistant aluminum than the LCAC and more composites in the propeller shroud assembly, which the Navy says will increase craft availability and lower maintenance costs.

## Tiny outpost in Syria assumes huge role in US strategy

*The Washington Post*

TANF BASE, Syria — To understand how the United States is countering Iran's expansion across the Middle East, consider the outpost at Tanf.

This tiny garrison, a jumble of dirt-filled blast barriers and tents surrounded by the immense desert of southern Syria, was established to roll back Islamic State's once-vast domain.

But its strategic position along a highway linking the Syrian regime in Damascus to its backers in Tehran has made the base an unintended bulwark against Iranian influence in Syria and, now, a potential locus in White House plans to confront Iran's reach across the region.

President Donald Trump has vowed to make countering Iran's support for allies and proxies across the region, from Lebanon to Yemen to Syria, a centerpiece of his Middle East

strategy. Already he has slapped new economic sanctions on Iranian affiliates and pulled out of his predecessor's nuclear deal.

Officials now say the U.S. will commit to remaining in Syria until Iranian forces depart, vowing to force an end to Tehran's program of massive military and financial support that has helped Syrian President Bashar Assad reverse the course of the war.

Gen. Joseph Votel, who leads U.S. Central Command, described Tanf as a key element in the continuing military mission to extinguish ISIS and ensure the group cannot stage a comeback.

Speaking during a visit to the base Monday, he said it also had additional benefits in hindering Iran, as the U.S. presence there makes it harder for Tehran to build up its military presence in Syria and help the Assad re-

gime claw back areas outside its control.

"There's no denying that we have some kind of indirect effect on them," Votel said.

That deterrent could strengthen the hand of U.S. officials as they launch a newly intensified bid, led by the State Department, to hammer out a political end to the war.

"We are trying to provide leverage for our diplomats as they pursue their objectives," Votel added during a visit that for the first time allowed members of the news media to access the remote installation.

The garrison, manned by several hundred foreign troops and a similarly sized force of Syrian fighters, illustrates how the U.S. has sought lower-risk means to counter Iran on the ground even as senior officials escalate a war of words and intensify econom-

ic and diplomatic pressure on Tehran.

The high stakes involved in the U.S. presence in southern Syria were apparent last year when American forces fired on Iran-linked elements that came within a 30-mile air and ground exclusion zone around the base. They also shot down two Iranian drones near the base, together marking U.S. forces' most serious confrontation with Iran-linked elements since they arrived in Syria in 2014.

But military officials have been reluctant to countenance any larger conflict with Iran as they seek to wind down the insurgent conflicts of the post-9/11 era and embrace a shift toward countering threats from Russia and China. They are also wary of the costs of an escalation of rhetoric between Washington and Tehran.

# New Marine base on Guam to be named for revered general

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The new Marine Corps base under construction on northern Guam will be named after one of the island's most revered sons.

The main cantonment area of the Finegayan base, which had been referred to as Marine Corps Base Guam, will honor Marine Brig. Gen. Vicente "Ben" Tomas Garrido Blaz, according to a statement released Sunday by Guam Rep. Madeleine Bordallo.

Blaz — who died in 2014 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery — is the highest-ranking Chamorro to have served in the Marines, the statement said. He also represented Guam for four terms as the territory's delegate to the House of Representatives.

The honor was recommended by Bordallo and endorsed by Marine Corps commandant Gen. Robert Neller and Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer, the statement said.

"We believe [the commemoration] is in the best interest of the Marine Corps and reflects the strong and unique relation-

ship of the Marine Corps and the people of Guam," Neller wrote to Spencer, according to the statement.

Bordallo said she looked forward to the base being named in Blaz's honor when it is completed in the coming years.

"As the first Chamorro Marine Corps flag officer and Guam's former member of Congress, General Blaz embodied the values and spirit of Guam, the Chamorro people and the U.S. Marine Corps," she said in the statement. "He served our country and island with distinction, and he was a true patriot and statesman."

Blaz was born in Guam's capital, Agana, on Feb. 14, 1928, according to his congressional biography. He was 13 years old when the Japanese invaded during World War II, beginning a brutal occupation.

Under Japanese rule, Blaz worked in their labor camps, the biography said. He built aviation fields, planted rice and dug trenches until Marine landings in July 1944 that liberated the island.

After the war, Blaz graduated from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, the biography said. He joined the Marine

Corps Reserve while in school and was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

He served two tours in Japan and one in Vietnam, commanding one of Guam's liberators, the 9th Marine Regiment, the biography said. He rose to the rank of brigadier general in 1977 and was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star with "V" device, the Navy Commendation Medal and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. His career spanned 29 years.

The Marine base that will bear Blaz's name is a product of the Marine Corps' Asia-Pacific realignment, an effort to reduce the burden on Okinawa in southern Japan by shifting forces to Guam, Hawaii, mainland Japan and, rotationally, to Australia.

The \$8.7 billion project will send about 4,000 Okinawa-based Marines to Guam in the mid-2020s, though there is no deadline set for the project's completion.

The first piece being built at the new base, unaccompanied Marine barracks, is scheduled to be finished in about two years.

## Overseas commissary alcohol sales uncertain

BY LEON COOK  
*Stars and Stripes*

A recent trial of beer and wine sales at some stateside commissaries has proved popular, but officials can't say if and when alcohol will be available at overseas facilities.

"We believe that the initial rollout to the 12 pilot commissary stores was executed by [the Defense Commissary Agency] and exchanges in a successful manner," Air Force Maj. Carla Gleason, a Defense Department spokeswoman, recently told Stars and Stripes via email.

Between late July and Sept. 22, commissaries reported \$173,000 in alcohol sales, including \$90,175 of beer and \$82,861 of wine, she said.

To minimize the impact on the profits of each branch's exchange service, the commissary has been buying alcohol for resale from the exchange, in the same way tobacco products are handled, according to an April memo from then-Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Robert Wilkie.

"Because this is the first time we've offered these products in our stores, and without further analysis, it is difficult to state whether these results are good or bad," Gleason said. However, there have been many positive comments from shoppers about the convenience of commissary alcohol sales, Gleason said.

The pilot isn't quite over, and analysts have yet to examine the sales data. A decision on whether the sales will be rolled out at commissaries worldwide won't be available until that study is complete, she said.

A separate study assessing whether whiskey, vodka and distilled spirits should be sold at commissaries is also underway, she said.

## 3 GIs honored for aiding motorist in Germany

BY MARTIN EGNASH  
AND MARCUS KLOECKNER  
*Stars and Stripes*

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Three U.S. Army soldiers and two German civilians were honored recently for helping save the life of a driver pinned under his car after an accident near the Army's training area in Grafenwoehr.

After a single-car crash on April 29, the victim's arm was trapped under the roof of the overturned car.

The five men, who stopped to help at the site of the crash, lifted the car and provided the motorist, who is 31 and was not identified by police, with basic medical care until emergency workers arrived.

The awards were presented Friday at the police station in Sulzbach-Rosenberg for Col. Jason McGuire, Spc. Alejandro Ortega and Capt. Ryan Russel, all members of the Army's 1st Infantry Division based at Fort Riley, Kan., and local citizens

Siegfried Buecherl and Klaus Ebensberger.

The soldiers, who were in Germany as part of a deployment to Europe, are now back at Fort Riley.

Since they were not present to receive the awards, Sgt. Maj. Micheal Sutterfield, the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, and James Federline, an American member of Cavalier of the Streets, accepted the awards on their behalf.

## Trump threatens to cut aid to 3 nations with citizens in caravan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says the U.S. will begin cutting aid to three Central American countries he accused of failing to stop thousands of migrants heading for the U.S. border. But across his administration there was no indication of any action in response to what he tweeted was a “National Emergency.”

For hours on Monday, White House officials were unable to provide an explanation for the president’s threats, which reflected both his apparent frustration with the migrant caravan and his determination to transform it into Republican election gains. Federal agencies said they’d received no guidance on the president’s declaration, issued as he attempts to make illegal immigration a focus of next month’s midterm elections.

If Trump should follow through with his threat to end or greatly reduce U.S. aid, that could worsen the poverty and violence that are a root cause of the migration he has been railing against, critics said.

Trump tweeted, “Sadly, it looks like Mexico’s Police and Military are unable to stop the Caravan heading to the Southern Border of the United States.” He added without evidence that “criminals and unknown Middle Easterners are mixed in.”

“I have alerted Border Patrol and Military that this is a National Emergency,” he wrote. “Must change laws!”

Associated Press journalists traveling with the caravan for more than a week

have spoken with Hondurans, Guatemalans and Salvadorans but have not met any of the “Middle Easterners” that Trump claimed had “mixed in” with the Central American migrants. It was clear, though, that more migrants were continuing to join the caravan.

Trump’s tweets marked the latest escalation of his efforts to thrust immigration politics into the national conversation in the closing weeks of the congressional elections. He and his senior aides have long believed the issue — which was a centerpiece of his winning presidential campaign — is key to revving up his base and motivating GOP voters to turn out in November.

“Blame the Democrats,” he wrote. “Remember the midterms.”

At a campaign rally in Houston on Monday night, he falsely accused Democrats of “encouraging millions of illegal aliens to break our laws, violate our borders and overwhelm our nation.”

Trump for months has sought to use foreign aid as a cudgel more broadly, threatening to withhold humanitarian and other aid from “enemies of America” and using it to pressure foreign governments to bend to his will. On Monday, he said he would be making good on his threat.

“Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador were not able to do the job of stopping people from leaving their country and coming illegally to the U.S. We will now begin cutting off, or substantially reducing, the massive foreign aid routinely given to them,” he wrote.

## Weary migrants still far from US border

Associated Press

HUIXTLA, Mexico — Thousands of Central American migrants awoke Tuesday in a makeshift encampment in a rain-soaked town square in far southern Mexico, some weary, foot-sore and coughing, still distant from their goal of reaching the U.S. border.

The caravan, estimated to include more than 7,000 people, had advanced about 45 miles since crossing the border from Guatemala, and still facing more than 1,000 miles, and likely much further, to the end of the journey.

But as the sun rose, a chorus of coughs arose from the shapeless forms wrapped in blankets and bits of plastic sheeting. Burned by the relentless heat and cold from the night’s chill, eating badly and sleeping rough, many appeared to be developing respiratory symptoms. Edwin Enrique Jimenez Flores, 48, of Tela, Honduras, had one of those persistent coughs, but still vowed to reach the U.S. to seek work. “I feel strong. My feet are good,” he said.

But Marlon Anibal Castellanos, 27, a former bus driver from San Pedro Sula, was finding the journey difficult as he prepared to rest Monday night. He was traveling with his wife and his 9-year-old daughter and 6-year-old son.

“It’s difficult to travel with children,” he said. “Today we walked six hours” before finally paying 25 pesos — about \$1.30 — from their thin savings to a van driver who took them the rest of the way to Huixtla.

Another hazard — trucks crowded with hitchhiking migrants — claimed a man Monday; he fell from the back of a truck and died.

A smaller caravan earlier this year headed for the distant Tijuana-San Diego crossing, dissipating as it advanced. Only a fraction — about 200 of the 1,200 in the group — reached the California border.

The same could happen this time around as some turn back, splinter off on their own or take their chances on asylum in Mexico — as 1,128 have done so far, according to the country’s Interior Department.

## Coalition troop killed was Czech

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A Czech soldier with the U.S.-led NATO coalition in Afghanistan was killed and two others wounded in western Herat province on Monday, the Czech Defense Ministry said.

The soldier was the fourth from the Czech Republic to be killed in the war since the country agreed in June to raise its NATO contribution to 390 troops, up from 230.

Initial assessments indicated a member of Afghanistan’s security forces carried out an attack, the coalition said late Monday, prompting speculation that an insurgent had infiltrated the forces.

Taliban insurgents quickly claimed responsibility. However, The New York Times, quoting unnamed Afghan officials, reported the shooting may have resulted from an argument at Herat’s Shindand base and had nothing to do with the Taliban.

An investigation into the incident is ongoing, Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Ghafoor Ahmad Jawed said Tuesday.

The attack targeted a Czech vehicle, the Czech Defense Ministry said. The three soldiers were provided first aid at the scene and evacuated to Bagram Air Field for further treatment. The injuries to the two wounded soldiers were not life-threatening, a ministry statement said.

Czech Radio identified the dead soldier as Sgt. Tomas Prochazka, 42, and said his remains would be repatriated Wednesday.

In August, a Taliban suicide bomber killed three Czech soldiers on a foot patrol near the Bagram base, the largest U.S. base in Afghanistan. Last week, five Czechs were wounded when a suicide bomber struck an armored vehicle they were riding in near the base.

The Czech military says its units operate in Bagram, Herat, Kabul and Logar provinces.

Monday’s attack came just days after an Afghan bodyguard shot and injured the U.S. commander in southern Afghanistan, Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Smiley. Two senior Afghan leaders in the province were killed in the incident.

Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. general in Afghanistan, also attended the meeting where the attack occurred but was unharmed.

# Erdogan says Saudis plotted killing for days

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Saudi officials murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi in their Istanbul consulate after plotting his death for days, Turkey's president said Tuesday, contradicting Saudi Arabia's explanation that the writer was accidentally killed. He demanded that the kingdom reveal the identities of all involved, regardless of rank.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also said he wants Saudi Arabia to allow 18 suspects that it detained for the Saudi's killing to be tried in Turkish courts, setting up further complications with the Saudi government, which has said it is conducting

its own investigation and will punish those involved. Saudi Arabia has described the suspects as rogue operators, even though officials linked to Saudi Arabia's assertive Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have been implicated in the killing.

"To blame such an incident on a handful of security and intelligence members would not satisfy us or the international community," Erdogan said in a speech to ruling party lawmakers in parliament.

"Saudi Arabia has taken an important step by admitting the murder. As of now, we expect of them to openly bring to light those responsible — from the highest-ranked to the lowest — and to bring them to justice," said the Turkish president, who used the

word "murder" 15 times in his speech.

Erdogan's speech was previously pitched as revealing the "naked truth" about Khashoggi's slaying. Instead, much of what he said confirmed reports and leaks citing anonymous officials in the days since the journalist walked into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Erdogan didn't mention Mohammed by name in his speech. However, he kept pressure on the kingdom with his demands for Turkish prosecution of the suspects, as well as punishment for the plot's masterminds.

"All evidence gathered shows that Jamal Khashoggi was the victim of a savage murder. To cover up such savagery would hurt the human conscience," he said.

# South Korea approves deals with North Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's liberal president on Tuesday formally confirmed his recent reconciliation deals with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, triggering immediate backlash from conservatives who called him "self-righteous" and "subservient" to the North.

Some experts say President Moon Jae-in's move is largely symbolic, but others say it shows his determination to carry out the September deals despite growing skepticism about whether his engagement policy will eventually lead to North Korea's nuclear disarmament.

Moon "ratified" the deals on Tuesday afternoon, hours after his Cabinet approved

them during a regular meeting, his office said in a statement.

The back-to-back endorsements came with no prior parliamentary endorsement. In South Korea, a president is allowed by law to ratify some agreements with North Korea without consent from lawmakers.

At the start of the Cabinet meeting, Moon said in televised remarks that the ratification would help further improve ties with North Korea and accelerate global efforts to achieve the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

The main conservative opposition Liberty Korea Party criticized Moon's action, saying the deals would only undermine national security and waste taxpayers' money.

"We deplore the fact that the Moon Jae-in government is weighted toward its subservient North Korea policy and is consistently being self-righteous and lacking communication" with parliament, said party spokesman Yoon Young-seok.

Moon, who took office last year, has said that greater reconciliation with North Korea would help resolve the international standoff over the North's nuclear ambitions.

Moon has met with Kim three times this year, and he shuttled between Pyongyang and Washington to help arrange a series of high-level talks between the countries, including a June summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in Singapore.

# Kremlin: Exit from treaty without new deal offer 'dangerous'

Associated Press

MOSCOW — The Kremlin said Tuesday that President Donald Trump took "a dangerous position" by deciding to abandon an existing nuclear weapons treaty with Russia without offering anything to replace it.

As Trump's national security adviser prepared to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Putin's spokesman acknowledged the 1987 arms control deal had "weak spots." But Dmitry Peskov warned Washington against withdrawing from the agreement without proposing improvements or a substitute treaty.

"Right now, we don't have any prospects whatsoever for a new deal," Peskov said. "It's important to figure out if it's possible or not."

Trump on Monday restated his threat to pull out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty because of alleged Russia violations. He said the United States would start developing the type of ground-launched nuclear cruise and ballistic missiles the treaty banned until "people come to their senses" and then "we'll all stop."

In Moscow, Peskov said that sacrificing the landmark pact for a hypothetical better deal was "a dangerous position."

The treaty was signed by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, prohibiting the U.S. and Russia from possessing, producing or test-flying ground-launched nuclear cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 300 to 3,400 miles.

China was not a party to the original

agreement, and Trump said Monday it should be included in the treaty.

U.S. national security adviser John Bolton is scheduled to meet with Putin in Moscow on Tuesday. Bolton struck a conciliatory note in his talks with senior Russian officials earlier in the day.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu lauded Bolton for making a two-day visit and said that "even small steps will benefit our relations and help restore trust" between the two countries.

He also said that Russia and the U.S. should build up their cooperation in Syria that helped to prevent major incidents in the sky or on the ground.

Bolton told Shoigu he was in Moscow to work on Trump's commitment to improve security cooperation with Russia.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Woman cited for DUI after blocking road

**ND** GRAND FORKS — A motorist has been charged with drunken driving after police said they found her passed out behind the wheel and blocking traffic at an intersection in Grand Forks.

Officers initially were unsuccessful in waking the woman, 24, Sunday evening. They saw the car was still in drive and that the woman had her foot on the brake. They couldn't get into the car because it was locked, so officers placed a patrol car in front of the woman's vehicle to prevent her from suddenly taking off and causing a crash.

The woman eventually woke up and drove into the patrol car, causing minor damage to both vehicles. No one was hurt.

### Tailgaters' hot coals damage other cars

**NJ** EAST RUTHERFORD — Hot coals left by tailgaters are blamed for fires that damaged seven vehicles Sunday at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium parking lot during the game between the New York Jets and the Minnesota Vikings.

State Trooper Alejandro Goetz told the Star-Ledger of Newark a driver parked in an area where tailgaters had dumped coals from a grill.

Another vehicle parked over coals in another lot, and flames spread to five other vehicles.

### Student, 11, dragged and kicked in video

**SC** GOOSE CREEK — An elementary school teacher in South Carolina is accused of dragging an 11-year-old student to the edge of her classroom before kicking him out of the way to shut the door.

News outlets report a spokeswoman for the Berkeley County School District, Katie Orvin Tanner, announced last week that Tierra Walker no longer works for the district. Surveillance video shows the boy dragged to the edge of the classroom, his backpack thrown into the hall and a leg kicking him out of the doorway.

Police said witnesses reported the boy was making animal noises and refused to leave. Police said no charges will be filed.

### Venomous caterpillar makes return to state

**FL** SPRING HILL — A venomous caterpillar is making its way back to the Sunshine State.

According to Fox 13, the puss caterpillar can cause severe pain when it comes into contact with humans and other animals. It's most active in the spring and fall.

Experts say the sting is similar to that of a bee but worse.

A Spring Hill man was stung recently, and a couple in Hillsborough County said they found three in their yard.

Doctors warn people not to touch the fuzzy creatures and to keep them away from pets.

### Dispatcher helps man deliver wife's baby

**IA** MUSCATINE — A grateful mother is thanking an emergency services dispatcher in eastern Iowa for calmly guiding her husband as he helped her deliver their baby daughter.

Kala Walker, 27, gave birth to little Kalee last week at home with her husband, Lee Walker, 29, assisting. Kala Walker said Ben Sharpe at Muscatine County Joint Communications knew what to say to her husband and "knew how to walk him through

it, which was wonderful."

The Walkers had been sent home from Trinity Hospital earlier because she was still dilating, but not long after they arrived, Kala Walker began having contractions.

Lee Walker called 911 for help, and after five minutes on the phone with Sharpe, the little girl arrived.

### Police: Truck's metal skirt killed driver

**TN** KNOXVILLE — Police in Tennessee said a metal skirt became dislodged from a tractor-trailer and went through another vehicle's window, killing the driver.

Knoxville police said on the agency's Facebook page the wind skirt broke off a truck on an Interstate 40 exit and hit the vehicle Sunday morning. Police said the skirt went through the driver's side window.

Police said the passengers maneuvered the vehicle onto an exit, where it rolled to a stop. The driver was pronounced dead at the scene.

### USPS probes boxes of mail found in woods

**NY** SOMERS — The U.S. Postal Service is investigating after several boxes of mail were found in the woods in New York's northern suburbs, marking the latest in a series of postal woes in the area.

The Journal News reported that the mail was found last week in Somers.

Jeffrey Powers, an assistant special agent in charge for the Postal Service inspector general's office, said the office is probing possible misconduct by a postal employee. He wouldn't say more or identify the worker.

The investigation comes after a postal carrier in Yonkers was arrested in June on suspicion of involvement in a mail-theft

scheme in which thousands of dollars was stolen.

### Suburbs grapple with rat population boom

**MA** BOSTON — Suburban Boston communities are dealing with a surge in rat infestations.

The Boston Globe reported that towns like Belmont and Peabody have focused efforts on eradicating growing rat populations. The Waltham City Council recently approved \$15,000 to manage rodent issues after reports of dozens of rats playing in puddles.

Experts said an increase in trash could explain growing rat populations in suburban areas. Others cite climate change. Scientists say warmer winters allow rats to reproduce more frequently.

Peabody officials have created a half-hour public access program that teaches residents how to prevent rat infestations.

### Cave warning issued near Mississippi River

**MN** ST. PAUL — St. Paul authorities are again warning people to stay away from the city's caves by the Mississippi River.

Crews were called to rescue two teenagers who were seen entering a hole leading to the caves Friday afternoon. St. Paul Assistant Fire Chief Mike Gaede said the teens emerged by themselves and were not hurt.

The Star Tribune reported the teens entered a hole the city had planned to close Saturday.

The cave system has posed a danger for curious explorers for decades. Gaede said the caves are not safe, and it's illegal to be in them.

From wire reports

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# LeBron unfazed by Lakers' 0-3 start

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James hit the tying three-pointer late in regulation. He led a Lakers lineup of three second-year pros and a rookie making his NBA debut to a 142-136 lead with 55 seconds left in overtime.

James was then reminded in spectacular fashion that nothing will be easy in this West Coast chapter of his career.

Patty Mills hit a go-ahead jumper with 6.8 seconds left and the San Antonio Spurs kept the Lakers winless with LeBron, rallying from a six-point deficit in the final minute of OT for a wild 143-142 victory Monday night.

James tied it on a magisterial three with 2.4 seconds left in regulation, and he finished his second Lakers home game with 32 points, 14 assists and eight rebounds.

But the superstar missed two free throws with 12.8 seconds to play before Mills coolly put the Spurs ahead. James then missed a step-back three-pointer at the buzzer, thoroughly deflating Staples Center as the Lakers fell to the first 0-3 start in James' career since his second season with Cleveland in 2004-05.

After cooling down, LeBron did not seem discouraged by the Lakers' last-minute failure against a quality opponent — and while Los Angeles was missing suspended starters Rajon Rondo and Brandon Ingram.

"It's not" discouraging, James said.

"I know what I got myself into," he added. "It's a process. I get it, and we'll be fine. I didn't come here thinking we were going to be blazing, storming right out of the gate. It's a process, and I understand that."

LaMarcus Aldridge had 37 points and 10 rebounds, and DeMar DeRozan added 32 points and 14 assists before Mills made the biggest shot. The Australian guard did it while playing Tony Parker's traditional role on a familiar San Antonio play.

"It's always good when you make shots or make an impact," Mills said. "Other than that shot, it was a team victory. It was a gutsy win. Everyone participated."

Kyle Kuzma had 37 points and eight rebounds for the Lakers, and Josh Hart added 20 points and 10 rebounds.

James' dramatic three from a full step beyond the arc capped the Lakers' improbable rally from an eight-point deficit in the final 1:04 of regulation. The Lakers then took a 142-136 lead late in overtime with huge contributions from unsung rookie big man Johnathan Williams, who played important minutes in his NBA debut after JaVale McGee fouled out.

But the Lakers sputtered and the Spurs rallied. Rudy Gay's three-pointer cut the Lakers' lead to 142-141, and James missed his free throws before the jumper by Mills, who had 12 points.

"It's always fun to play close games and have them be that type of atmosphere, and

overly competitive," Aldridge said. "It was nice to get a close win. It just builds character and makes guys be more confident."

**Tip-ins: Spurs:** Dante Cunningham had three points and 12 rebounds in 29 minutes as a starter.

**Lakers:** Svi Mykhailiuk and Williams made their NBA debuts in the shortened rotation. Mykhailiuk went scoreless in 17 minutes, but he got an assist on Williams' dunk for his first NBA bucket. Williams finished with eight points.

**No calls:** Lakers coach Luke Walton was infuriated by the officiating which gave 38 free throws to the Spurs and just 26 to Los Angeles, even though the Lakers outscored San Antonio 74-50 in the paint. Walton got a technical foul in the second quarter for protesting a no-call on contact with James, but his postgame complaints were multifold. McGee fouled out after scoring 16 points, and Ivica Zubac was called for five fouls in less than five minutes. Hart, an aggressive driver to the hoop, wasn't given a free throw in nearly 39 minutes of action. "I know they're young, I get that," an animated Walton said. "But if we're going to play a certain way, let's not reward people for flopping 30 feet from the hole on plays that have nothing to do with that possession ... and then not reward players that are physically going to the basket and getting hit. It's not right."

## NBA roundup

# Vucevic scores 24 as Magic hold off Celtics

Associated Press

BOSTON — The way things went on the road for the Orlando Magic last season, one of the final two three-point attempts by Boston probably would have gone in.

But it's a new season and the ball bounced the right way in the closing seconds for Orlando.

Nikola Vucevic had 24 points and 12 rebounds while the Magic survived two three-point attempts by Boston in the final seconds to beat the Celtics 93-90 on Monday night.

"We definitely held our breath," Vucevic said of the second three-point attempt. "Once it hit the rim and I looked at the clock, it was almost over

and I was like: 'all right, we're good.'"

Jonathan Isaac added 18 points and 12 boards for the Magic (2-2), who went just 8-33 on the road last season, losing 25 of their last 28.

Kyrie Irving led the Celtics (2-2) with 22 points. Al Horford had 15 and Gordon Hayward 11. Irving and Hayward each missed a three in the final seconds.

"It had a chance for sure," Hayward said. "It was a good look. Kind of the story of the night, we had a bunch of good looks and just didn't knock them down."

**Wizards 125, Trail Blazers 124 (OT):** Markieff Morris had 28 points, including six three-

pointers, and visiting Washington needed overtime to win for the first time this season.

Bradley Beal added 25 points for the Wizards, and Otto Porter Jr. blocked Damian Lillard's layup attempt at the final buzzer to seal the win.

**Warriors 123, Suns 103:** Stephen Curry scored 15 of his 29 points in the third quarter and also had eight assists, leading host Golden State past Phoenix.

**Raptors 127, Hornets 106:** Kawhi Leonard scored 22 points, Kyle Lowry had 16 points and a season-high 14 assists, and host Toronto never trailed in a victory over Charlotte, the team's fourth straight victory to open the season.

**Timberwolves 101, Pacers 91:** Jimmy Butler returned to the lineup and scored 20 points to lead host Minnesota to a win over Indiana.

**Bucks 124, Knicks 113:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 31 points and 15 rebounds, Khris Middleton sank a pair of late three-pointers and host Milwaukee survived a furious second-half rally by New York.

**Mavericks 115, Bulls 109:** DeAndre Jordan became the first Dallas player in 24 years to start a season with three straight double-doubles, getting 18 points and 16 rebounds to help host Dallas beat Chicago.

**Grizzlies 92, Jazz 84:** Mike Conley scored 23 points to lead Memphis to a victory over host Utah.

# Ryan guides Falcons to win over Giants

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Matt Ryan is putting up MVP-like numbers, even on a team that hasn't lived up to expectations.

Matty Ice turned in another brilliant performance in prime time Monday, throwing for 379 yards and completing his final 18 passes to lead the Atlanta Falcons to their second straight victory, 23-20 over the struggling New York Giants.

"Whatever it takes to win," Ryan said. "That's the mindset we have every week."

Ryan threw a 47-yard touchdown pass to Marvin Hall, Tevin Coleman broke loose on a 30-yard scoring run and the Falcons added another chapter to New York's miserable season, sending the Giants (1-6) to their fourth straight loss.

"I don't feel like we're a 1-6 team," Odell Beckham Jr. said. "That's what our record is, but that's not the feeling in the locker room."

Ryan was the league's MVP in 2016 when he led Atlanta to

the Super Bowl. While these Falcons (3-4) haven't played to that level, their quarterback is putting up numbers that measure up to what he did two years ago: a 71.1 percent completion rate, 2,335 yards passing, 15 touchdowns and just two interceptions.

Ryan is only focused on the team's performance.

"To inch our way closer to .500 is a positive for us," he said.

It was also a big night for Giorgio Tavecchio, who was signed during the week to fill in for injured Atlanta kicker Matt Bryant. The native of Milan, Italy, made all three of his field-goal attempts, including a 56-yarder that was the longest of his career and helped seal the victory.

"That kick was good from about 65 yards," Ryan said. "He did a great job for us coming in on short notice."

Facing one of the NFL's worst defenses, New York botched its best scoring chance by going for a touchdown on fourth-

and-goal from the 1 early in the third quarter. To the surprise of no one who has seen the Giants stumble through the season, Eli Manning's pass for tight end Scott Simonson fell harmlessly to the turf.

Manning was sacked four times but still managed to complete 27 of 38 passes for 399 yards. Beckham hauled in eight passes for 143 yards, pushing him past 5,000 yards in his career, and Sterling Shepard finished with 167 yards on five receptions.

**Barkley stymied:** The Falcons were the first team to hold Barkley to less than 100 yards rushing and receiving in a game.

The rookie running back was limited to 43 yards on 14 carries, to go along with nine catches for 51 yards.

It was Barkley's second-lowest rushing output of the season, eclipsed only by a 28-yard effort against Dallas in Week 2.

Barkley was coming off his best game of the season, to-

taling 229 yards (130 rushing, 99 receiving) in a loss to Philadelphia.

**Tavecchio steps up:** Bryant is one of the NFL's most accurate kickers, but Tavecchio sure made a good impression in his return to the NFL.

His 56-yard kick was the longest by a player in his first game with a new team in the last 40 seasons, according to NFL Research. He also connected from 40 and 50 yards.

Tavecchio kicked last season for the Oakland Raiders, but he was without a job until Bryant injured his hamstring making a long kick in Atlanta's victory over Tampa Bay.

That prompted the Falcons to bring back Tavecchio, who got a brief look from the team at the end of the preseason.

Even though Bryant will surely reclaim his job as soon as he's healthy, Tavecchio set himself up to draw attention from other teams when he goes on the open market again.

## Raiders in rebuild mode after trading WR Cooper

Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Soon after Jon Gruden arrived for his second stint as Oakland Raiders coach last winter he called Amari Cooper a "focal point" of the offense and pointed to Khalil Mack as a reason why he came back to coaching.

Less than two months into his first season back in Oakland, both former Pro Bowlers are gone.

The Raiders returned from the bye week Monday and immediately made another big trade, dealing Cooper to the Dallas Cowboys for a 2019 first-round pick. That trade follows the one made just over a week before the start of the season that sent Mack to Chicago for a package that included a pair of first-round picks.

Now a team that won 12 games less than two years ago

and was viewed as an up-and-coming franchise with core young players such as Mack, Cooper and quarterback Derek Carr is in full-fledged rebuild mode after a 1-5 start to the season.

"It's disappointing. Real disappointing," general manager Reggie McKenzie said. "It was starting to get that way last year when we somewhat took a nosedive, but I understand the NFL, the system will not allow you to keep them all."

The Raiders have three first-round picks for the first time since 1988, when they took Hall of Famer Tim Brown, five-time Pro Bowler Terry McDaniel and Scott Davis.

They have plenty of holes on the roster as evidenced by the early-season struggles and will now look to rebuild through the draft.

"We're building this thing in concert together, I'm talking about me and coach Gru," general manager Reggie McKenzie said. "We're doing this thing together. When we make a deal, I think these picks are going to help this team tremendously, bottom line. It's something I saw as a great opportunity. We're not tanking this season. These guys will have to step up and continue to work to win some ballgames. That will always be the case."

The deal came while the Raiders were on the practice field Monday and left his teammates surprised. But they later said it's just part of the business of football and wished Cooper well in Dallas.

"We still have to come in here and perform on Sunday with whoever we got," running back Jalen Richard said. "Just

focus in on the Colts and let everybody upstairs handle what they have to handle."

The deal is the latest move to raise questions about the relationship between McKenzie and Gruden. McKenzie was kept on as general manager after owner Mark Davis fired Jack Del Rio last offseason and lured Gruden back to coaching after several unsuccessful attempts.

While McKenzie kept his title as general manager, Gruden was given a 10-year contract worth up to \$100 million, making him the clear top dog in the organization. McKenzie tried to downplay that even after the team dealt away two of his recent first-round picks and Gruden has been unwilling to give significant playing time to 2016 and '17 first-rounders Karl Joseph and Gareon Conley.

# Dodgers' Machado wears many monikers

Associated Press

BOSTON — Most players are questioned ahead of their World Series debuts. Manny Machado was cross-examined.

October's villain is especially despised at Fenway Park for planting his spikes into Dustin Pedroia in April 2017. The Boston second baseman hasn't been the same.

"That's old history," Machado said Monday, deflector shields raised.

He's Manny the Masher, Manny the Miscreant and Macho Manny all in one, whacking baseballs, opponents and questions.

Wearing a blue Los Angeles Dodgers World Series hoodie and gray pants, arms crossed, he sat between teammates Yasiel Puig and Ross Stripling, surrounded by a scrum of inquirers in the Pavilion Room on the 106-year-old ballpark's fourth level. Even with stubble on his chin and lips, Machado's

face looked boyish. His hair was styled into cornrows at the top and a crew cut on the side.

With hard slides at second base against Milwaukee and a foot planted on the heel of Brewers first baseman Jesus Aguilar, Machado acquired notoriety far exceeding the attention he gained as a four-time All-Star infielder with Baltimore. He even earned condemnation from Pete Rose, whose own rambunctious play included running over Ray Fosse in an All-Star Game.

"I don't think going in hard is the same as dragging your left foot, to kicking the guy's foot off the bag," Rose said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "I don't know Manny Machado, so I don't know if he's a dirty player or if he's not. But I just thought when he hit the first baseman's foot it was kind of unnecessary."

A few weeks from becoming a free agent at the age of 26, Machado's actions could signal

a giant "caveat emptor" sign to suitors, warning them buyer beware.

When he took out Pedroia during a slide at Baltimore on April 21 last year, Machado spiked his surgically repaired left knee and calf. Pedroia missed the next three games and has been limited to 92 games since.

"I know how I hurt my knee and I know what happened. That's it. We all know," Pedroia said.

Machado's response was out of "The Godfather": business, not personal.

"We're not friends," he said.

Because of what happened?

"That's a good one, man. That's a good one. That's a really good one," he said, chuckling.

Anger festered. Two days after the slide, Red Sox reliever Matt Barnes threw a fastball behind Machado's head and was suspended for four games.

When the teams met that May 2, Chris Sale threw a pitch

behind Machado's legs, and Machado criticized the Red Sox during a postgame interview that included 22 profanities in a 75-second span. He called Boston's behavior "coward stuff" and said "I've lost my respect for that organization, for that coaching staff, for everyone over there."

"We have bigger things to worry about now on both sides," Sale said ahead of his start in Tuesday night's opener. "We're not worried about any individual player."

Machado, as the saying goes, responded with his bat. He homered over the Green Monster and out of Fenway Park later in the series, then took a leisurely 29.8-second stroll around the bases. Machado's eight homers at Fenway are tied for his most at an opposing ballpark.

"For me to put something over that one, it's pretty cool," he said.

## NHL roundup

# Rantanen scores twice to lead Avalanche past Flyers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Mikko Rantanen had two goals, Matt Nieto and Gabriel Landeskog also scored, and the Colorado Avalanche beat the Philadelphia Flyers 4-1 on Monday night.

The Avalanche continued their early season hot streak and finished 3-0-1 on their four-game road trip. Landeskog had a hat trick on the trip against New Jersey and clinched this one with his eighth goal of the season early in the third period.

Semyon Varlamov was solid in net and stopped 37 shots.

The Flyers suffered their third home loss of the season.

Rantanen needed only 3:23 to beat Brian Elliott for his third goal of the season and the quick lead. Nathan MacKinnon

set up Rantanen for the power-play score, and they became the first players in franchise history with concurrent nine-game point streaks to start the season.

Nolan Patrick scored a third-period goal for the Flyers. Brian Elliott finished with 29 saves.

**Hurricanes 3, Red Wings 1:** Michael Ferland scored in his fourth straight game and Sebastian Aho had an assist and set a franchise record for points in consecutive games to start a season as visiting Carolina snapped a three-game losing streak.

Defenseman Justin Faulk also scored, and Jordan Martynok added an empty-net goal for the Hurricanes.

Petr Mrazek, who was drafted by Detroit in 2010 and played a number of seasons with the Red Wings, made 20 saves.

Aho assisted on Ferland's second-period goal. The assist stretched his season-opening points streak to nine games (four goals and 10 assists), surpassing the franchise record of eight by Victor Rask (2016-17).

Andreas Athanasiou scored for Detroit.

**Jets 5, Blues 4 (OT):** Bryan Little tied it late in the third period and Jacob Trouba scored in overtime to help host Winnipeg overcome a two-goal deficit.

Trouba took a pass from Kyle Connor and shot into an open side of the net behind goalie Jake Allen. It was Trouba's first goal of the season.

Mark Scheifele scored twice and Ben Chiarot added a goal for Winnipeg.

Ryan O'Reilly had a goal and two assists for St. Louis, and David Perron, Vince Dunn and

Colton Parayko also scored.

Connor Hellebuyck made 30 saves for Winnipeg (6-2-1), which has points in five straight games (4-0-1).

Allen stopped 31 shots for the Blues (2-3-3), who finished a three-game trip (1-1-1) through Canada.

**Capitals 5, Canucks 2:** Alex Ovechkin had two goals and two assists to lift visiting Washington over Vancouver.

The defending Stanley Cup champions also got goals from John Carlson, Evgeny Kuznetsov and T.J. Oshie.

Troy Stecher and Sven Baertschi scored for the Canucks.

Braden Holtby stopped 22 shots for Washington, while Vancouver's Anders Nilsson turned away 28.