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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Why not try to take out N. Korea missile?

By **KIM GAMEL**

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. and its allies knew the North Koreans had fired a missile and tracked its path over Japan last week. Sirens blared in Hokkaido, and the Japanese government urged people to take cover.

The advance warnings — with one report saying Vice President Mike Pence saw pictures of the missile a day before it

ANALYSIS

was launched on Friday — raise questions about why the U.S. and Japan didn't try to shoot it down.

It was the second missile to fly over Japan in less than three weeks and sent a clear message of defiance to the U.N. Security Council, which just four days earlier unanimously adopted tough new sanctions aimed at punishing the communist state for a Sept. 3 nuclear test.

The 15-nation council condemned Friday's missile test in an emergency session and called on all countries to "fully, comprehensively and immediately" implement all U.N. sanctions. New measures included a cap on oil imports and a ban on textile imports but fell short of the original U.S. proposal for a full oil embargo due to opposition from China and Russia.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, meanwhile, declared the launch a success, saying it showed his country was nearing its final goal of establishing "the equilibrium of real force with the U.S." and preventing U.S. rulers from talking about military options — an apparent reference to President Donald Trump's warnings that he's prepared to unleash "fire and fury" on the communist state.

The North insists its weapons program is necessary for self-defense.

"We should clearly show the big power chauvinists how our state attain[s] the goal of completing its nuclear force despite their limitless sanctions and blockade," Kim was quoted as saying Saturday by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Trump planned to meet with South Korean and Japanese leaders to discuss the issue during a luncheon summit Thursday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, according to the White House.

"America and our allies will never be intimidated," Trump said in a wide-ranging

speech Friday marking the 70th anniversary of the Air Force at Joint Base Andrews, Md. "We will defend our people, our nations and our civilization from all who dare to threaten our way of life. This includes the regime of North Korea, which has once again shown its utter contempt for its neighbors and for the entire world community."

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley and National Security Adviser Gen. H.R. McMaster expressed hope sanctions and diplomatic pressure would work, but said military options were ready if needed.

"We've been kicking the can down the road, and we're out of road," McMaster said Friday at a joint news briefing in Washington. "And so for those who have said and have been commenting about the lack of a military option, there is a military option."

The missile reached a maximum altitude of 480 miles and traveled about 2,300 miles before splashing into the Pacific Ocean after flying over Hokkaido, officials said.

It was the farthest distance achieved by a North Korean ballistic missile and followed 13 other tests this year as Kim's regime has dramatically stepped up the pace of its nuclear weapons program.

Pyongyang also test-fired a missile over Japan on Aug. 29 and two intercontinental ballistic missiles into the sea off its eastern coast in July.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., said the U.S. should intercept such missile tests as a show of force.

"I would hope that we shoot it down as a message to the North Koreans and to other people, like in Japan, who are counting on us," he said Tuesday during a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing. "Unless we demonstrate we're willing to use force, there's no reason for them to believe we will."

U.S. and Japanese officials said they could have targeted the missile but did not make the effort because it was not aimed at land.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said his government "had a complete grasp of the missile's movement from the moment it was launched and was ready for all possible measures." But Japanese officials said no debris or damage were reported and the country's Self-Defense Forces did not take measures to shoot it down.

The New York Times reported that the

Trump administration had seen the missile being fueled up a day before Friday's launch but decided not to take it out on the launching pad. Pence was shown images of the missile during a visit to an intelligence agency, the Times reported, citing anonymous officials.

U.S. Pacific Command said the intermediate-range ballistic missile never posed a threat to North America or the U.S. Pacific island territory of Guam.

Pentagon spokesman Col. Rob Manning told reporters Friday that if the IRBM had been a direct threat to U.S. territory or its allies, "we would have taken appropriate action."

Seoul also was ready for it and conducted its own missile test nearly simultaneously on Friday morning, firing from its Hyunmoo-2 system into the sea off the peninsula's east coast.

The U.S. has missile-defense capabilities in the region, including Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems on Guam and in South Korea, as well as Patriot missiles. It also has sea-based platforms, including Aegis-equipped destroyers and an integrated air-defense network.

South Korea and Japan also have the ability to defend against the North's growing arsenal.

But analysts pointed out that an attempt to use the systems against a North Korean missile test in the absence of a real threat would be risky and expensive.

Jeung Young-tae, director of military studies at Dongyang University in South Korea, said a missile fired at U.S., Japanese or South Korean territory likely would trigger military action, but the North Koreans so far have been careful to avoid posing a direct threat.

"It's just a test, so it's not worth it," Jeung said in a telephone interview. "You don't really want to hit them because it could cause things to escalate into conflict."

Michael Auslin, an Asia expert at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, also said the use of missile-defense systems could expose any weaknesses because they could fail.

"It's a big gamble to decide whether or not to do this," he told NPR. "If we fail, then it would reveal the hollowness of the missile-defense policy that we have."

gamel.kim@stripes.com
Twitter: @kimgamel

Japanese learning about F-35

BY LEON COOK

Stars and Stripes

A group of Japanese airmen recently visited Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to learn more about the F-35 Lightning II ahead of the stealth fighter's expected arrival at Misawa Air Base by 2019.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 hosted members of the Japan Self-Defense Force's 3rd Air Wing for an educational tour about the aircraft, a Marine Corps statement said. The JASDF is set to acquire 10 F-35As for the Misawa squadron.

"The purpose of [Wednesday's] tour was to bring some JASDF maintainers down ... and show them how we operate our maintenance department

here in Iwakuni," Maj. Adam Wellington, an aircraft maintenance officer for VMFA-121, said in the statement.

JASDF personnel took part in several classes covering subjects such as maintenance, serviceability and operability, the statement said. They also took a peek at Iwakuni's F-35B hangar to see, touch and study the aircraft up close.

"It is very significant for us to see, meet and talk with personnel who are already operating or supporting the F-35," JASDF Lt. Col. Mamoru Yamaura, the F-35A Lightning II program office chief with the 3rd Air Wing, said in the statement. "This exchange program is very instructive for us. We've learned a lot about the F-35 and the United

States Marine Corps. I believe we should have many more exchanges like this."

The F-35B used by the Marines is a short-takeoff, vertical-landing aircraft meant to replace the F/A-18 Hornet, the AV-8B Harrier and the EA-6B Prowler. Its development was plagued with problems, and at one point President Donald Trump indicated he might scrap the program altogether.

The F-35A lacks the short-takeoff and vertical-landing capabilities of the B variant, but the airframe and its characteristics are common to both models. Japan's Defense Ministry included a \$797 million request for six F-35As in this year's budget.

US-backed forces say 6 wounded in Russia strike

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A U.S.-backed force in Syria said a Russian airstrike wounded six of its fighters Saturday near the eastern city of Deir el-Zour while in southeastern Syria, Syrian troops and their Iran-backed allies began a new offensive aiming to capture areas along the Iraq border under the cover of Russian airstrikes.

The command of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said in a statement that Saturday's air raid occurred on the eastern side of the Euphrates River in the industrial area that recently was liberated from Islamic State.

The U.S. military said in a statement that Russian forces struck a target east of the Euphrates River near Deir el-Zour, causing injuries to U.S.-led coalition partner forces.

"Russian munitions impacted a location known to the Russians to contain Syrian Democratic Forces and Coalition advisers," the statement said, adding that the wounded SDF fighters received medical care following the strike.

It said that multinational coalition troops advising and assisting the SDF were present but were not wounded as a result of the Russian strike.

"Coalition officials are available and the deconfliction line with Russia is open 24 hours per day," said coalition commander Lt. Gen. Paul E. Funk II. "We put our full efforts into preventing unnecessary escalation among forces that share ISIS as our common enemy."

"The coalition and its partners remain committed to the defeat of ISIS and continued deconfliction with Russian officials," the statement said. "Coalition forces and partners always retain the right of self-defense."

US denies weapons transfer from Ramstein

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
AND MARCUS KLOECKNER

Stars and Stripes

The German prosecutor's office in Kaiserslautern said Friday it is looking into a report that the Pentagon used Ramstein Air Base to transport weapons covertly to rebel fighters in Syria — an allegation, that if true, might have broken German law.

Ramstein — a key U.S. military logistical hub overseas from which cargo is ferried throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa — was linked to Washington's effort beginning in 2013 to arm Syrian rebels fighting Islamic State, according to a report Tuesday in the German newspaper *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*.

The weapons transfer through Ramstein would have required permission from the German government, the report stated.

Officials with Germany's Economic Affairs Ministry told Stars and Stripes that the ministry did not give the U.S. military permission to transport weapons to Syria through the country. They denied having any knowledge of such activities.

A spokeswoman for the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein referred an inquiry about the weapons report to a spokeswoman at the Pentagon, who said the department "does not store or transit weapons or ammo bound for Syria in or through any U.S. bases in Germany."

The Department of Defense "has and will continue to comply with all German laws," Army Lt. Col. Michelle Baldanza, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said in a statement to Stars and Stripes on Friday. "To that end, DOD has specifically directed our contracted vendors to not transit or store equipment in Germany that is intended for use in Syria."

The report was based on months of research by journalists with the newspaper, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. The organizations cite internal emails they stated were obtained from the U.S. military, interviews with whistleblowers and official documents, such as the United Nations arms export reports for 2015 and 2016.

Udo Gehring, the district prosecutor in Kaiserslautern,

confirmed Friday that his office was reviewing the allegations against the base since they involved a "possible criminal act." The case is complicated and "not easy to review," he said, declining to comment further.

The report alleged that U.S. military contractors purchased Soviet-style weapons from across central and Eastern Europe and had them shipped to Syria through ports in Romania and Bulgaria, as well as via Ramstein. Transit licenses approved by German authorities specified U.S. military bases in countries such as Germany, Romania and Turkey as the delivery point — but not Syria, according to the report.

The supply route was diverted from Germany in late 2016, as transit permits were taking longer to get approved "due to the large number of requests and questions" from German authorities, according to an internal Pentagon email the report stated was leaked to BIRN and OCCRP. At that time, contractors were told the State Department would assume responsibility for requesting new transit licenses.

Experts: Challenge 'bad paper' discharges

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Easing challenges created for veterans who receive "bad paper" discharges will require changes in practices and procedures at the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, some experts said Friday.

But first, it will take public outrage.

"I think if veterans with bad paper are going to succeed in their campaign, which they must, it's going to take organizing and getting out in the streets," said Michael Wishnie, a professor at Yale Law School who has represented veterans in their fights for discharge upgrades.

Wishnie joined other experts Friday at the Capitol who presented findings of their studies into the military's and VA's handling of other-than-honorable discharges, which are commonly referred to as "bad paper." The studies from Rand Corp., the Government Accountability Office, Brown University, Protect Our Defenders and Swords to Plowshares have a common theme: The military has unjustly kicked out thousands of servicemembers who are now ineligible for VA benefits because of it.

There are various reasons

servicemembers could've received bad paper unfairly, the experts said. From World War II to 2011, when the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy was repealed, veterans were other-than-honorably discharged for being gay. Others struggled with service-related post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma or other disorders that affected their behavior and led to their bad paper. Protect Our Defenders President Don Christensen, a former Air Force judge advocate general, explained there also was a racial disparity in the military justice system.

The experts had different ideas about how to remedy the issue. Brad Carson — a former undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness who's now with the research and advocacy organization Human Rights Watch — called on Congress to force the Defense Department to make their decisions more transparent.

Kristofer Goldsmith, an Iraq War veteran who has fought for more than 10 years to change the government's handling of bad paper and to have his own discharge upgraded, said the boards who decide upgrades need more resources. He's been urging Congress to hold hearings and to start investigations

into the issue.

Dana Montalto, a fellow at Harvard Law School, is petitioning for change to VA regulations concerning veterans with other-than-honorable discharges. The VA in July began providing urgent mental health care to those veterans — aid that wasn't available previously. Though VA Secretary David Shulkin's announcement was a shift in how government officials talked about veterans with bad paper, critics argued the policy didn't go far enough.

Wishnie, along with others, argued that to achieve change, the American public would have to call for it.

"We're not here to yell at the DOD and VA," Goldsmith said. "The DOD and VA do what the American people want. The American people need to speak up and make sure every veteran is welcomed home."

Besides veterans law, Wishnie focuses on immigration. On Thursday, he was in a court in Brooklyn, N.Y., representing immigrant "dreamers" over President Donald Trump's possible repeal of the federal program that shields young, undocumented immigrants from deportation. Hundreds of people gathered on the courthouse steps in support of the dreamers, Wishnie said.

But there's a different response when he goes to court to represent veterans seeking discharge upgrades.

"It's been a long time since there's been veterans mobilizations in the streets to match the work of veterans in the halls of Congress, in the research centers, in the courts," Wishnie said. "And I think that veterans service organizations could learn from current civil rights movements the importance of organizing a peaceful, nonviolent protest to communicate to the public their concerns and ideas. To do this all behind closed doors misses that point."

There is reason for optimism, Wishnie said.

In August, the Defense Department issued a sweeping policy change to afford more leeway to veterans seeking upgrades to their other-than-honorable discharges.

The Army Review Boards Agency — the office charged with changing military records — was instructed to give liberal consideration to veterans looking to upgrade their other-than-honorable discharges because of mental health conditions or traumatic brain injuries, sexual assault or sexual harassment and outlined what should be considered when deciding an upgrade.

Windows smashed in 2nd violent night near St. Louis

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Protests turned violent for a second night near St. Louis following the acquittal of a white former police officer in the fatal shooting of a black man as a small group of demonstrators refused to disperse, breaking windows at dozens of businesses and throwing objects at police, who moved in with hundreds of officers in riot gear to make arrests.

The confrontation took place late Saturday night in the Delmar Loop area of University City, a suburb about 10 miles west of St. Louis near Washington University. The area is

known for concert venues, restaurants, shops and bars, and includes the Blueberry Hill club, where rock musician Chuck Berry played for many years.

University City had been the scene of a peaceful march earlier in the evening to protest a judge's ruling Friday clearing ex-officer Jason Stockley of first-degree murder in the 2011 shooting of Anthony Lamar Smith, 24. That march ended with organizers calling for people to leave and reconvene Sunday afternoon.

But a few dozen protesters refused to go. Police ordered them to disperse, saying the protest

was illegal. Hundreds of police in riot gear eventually moved in with armored vehicles. The demonstrators retreated down a street, breaking windows with trash cans and throwing objects at police.

Several protesters were seen in handcuffs, and city and county police later tweeted that they had arrested at least nine people. Police were seen carrying one handcuffed man away from the scene upside down. At least one demonstrator was treated after he was hit with pepper spray.

After the spasm of violence ended, a reporter for The Asso-

ciated Press found at least half of the businesses on one side of the street with broken windows along a two-block area.

Sam Thomas, who was helping his friend clean up the glass from the shattered windows of his clothing-and-accessories boutique, OSO, said he understood why people were angry. The U.S. justice system is broken and needs to be fixed, Thomas said.

"I'm not saying this is the right way to fix it," he said of the damage.

"The window isn't murdered. Nobody is going to have a funeral for the window. We can replace it."

Officials' warning to Fla. Keys residents: 'Not what you left'

Associated Press

MIAMI — As the devastated Florida Keys began reopening to residents who fled Hurricane Irma, officials warned the returning islanders to bring enough supplies to sustain them for a while because no one knows when water and power will be fully restored.

"The Keys are not what you left several days ago when you evacuated. Electricity, sewer and water are intermittent at best," said Monroe County Mayor George Neugent during a news conference Saturday.

Officials opened up U.S. 1 on Saturday all the way south to Marathon for residents, business owners, disaster workers and supply trucks. They also announced plans to let the same groups have access all the way to Key West starting at 7 a.m. Sunday.

Roads were being cleared and recovery centers are being set up in the area to help residents fill out FEMA, insurance and small business relief paperwork.

Officials had agonized over

the decision to reopen the islands, knowing residents were desperate to assess damage, yet worried about harsh living conditions for those who choose return.

Curfews remained in effect, and returning residents received a clear message from Keys officials — you must be self-sufficient. They encouraged residents to bring tents, small air-conditioning units, food, water and medications.

Officials said their hurricane plan didn't account for some challenges brought by Irma, which nearly wiped out parts of the middle Keys, while Key West remained in decent shape.

Getting Key West residents and business owners to the southernmost point remained a challenge as authorities work to keep out tourists, gawkers, looters and others who could hamper recovery efforts.

Nearly two dozen checkpoints in the hardest hit areas will be heavily staffed with law enforcement officers to check IDs to ensure only authorized residents and relief workers get

through.

Meanwhile, officials said they hope to open government offices, courts and schools in the Keys on Sept. 28.

Further north in Broward and Miami-Dade counties, students in two of the nation's largest school districts still don't know when they'll return to class, forcing many Florida parents to juggle childcare as they head into a second week of recovering from Hurricane Irma.

Miami-Dade and Broward counties had hoped to resume operations Monday. But dozens of schools in the districts, which serve almost 700,000 students, are without power.

In some southwest Florida districts, classes were postponed until Sept. 25.

Irma spread damage across the entire Sunshine State. In southwest Florida on Saturday, officials went door-to-door warning residents who live near the Withlacoochee River north of the Tampa Bay area of the potential for record-high flooding in the coming days.

Hundreds turn out for Trump rally

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Organizers had dubbed it the Mother of All Rallies and hoped to bring out thousands to pack the National Mall on Saturday in support of President Donald Trump. In the end, hundreds of flag-waving demonstrators did their best to make some noise in support of the president, who had left town for the weekend.

The pro-Trump rally was part of a day of diverse political demonstrations in the nation's capital that highlighted the stark political divisions in the United States. It was preceded Saturday morning by a small anti-Trump protest near the White House, where about two dozen people demanded tougher action against Russian President Vladimir Putin in retaliation for Moscow's interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

While the pro-Trump demonstrators clearly outnumbered the anti-Trump contingent, both sides were dwarfed by the juggalos, as supporters of the rap group Insane Clown Posse are known. In front of the Lincoln Memorial, about 1,500 juggalos staged an all-day rally and concert to protest what they say is class-based discrimination by law enforcement.

A 2011 report by the Justice Department's Gang Task Force labeled the juggalos, who favor extensive tattoos and outlandish face paint, a "loosely organized hybrid gang." It's the same classification used for overtly violent gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips.

The band, along with the ACLU, sued the FBI in 2014 seeking to change the classification but with little success.

Although far fewer people turned out for the pro-Trump rally than the organizers expected, the demonstrators were determined to show their support for the president.

Trump was spending the weekend at his golf club in New Jersey before attending the U.N. General Assembly.

2nd man arrested in London subway attack

Associated Press

LONDON — The British government lowered the country's official terrorism threat level Sunday after a second man was arrested in connection with the attack on a London subway train where a bomb partially exploded.

The downgrading of the threat level from "critical" to "severe" means authorities no longer believe an attack is imminent. The "severe" classification, the second-highest level of alert, is based on the assessment that an attack is "highly likely."

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said the easing of the alert indicates that police and security services are making "good prog-

ress" in the sprawling investigation into the attack on a subway train that injured 30 people during the rush hour Friday morning.

Police announced the second arrest early Sunday, offering the clearest indication yet that authorities do not believe the person who planted the homemade bomb acted alone.

The first person arrested was an 18-year-old man who was taken into custody Saturday in the departure area of the port of Dover. The Metropolitan Police Service said a 21-year-old man was arrested Saturday shortly before midnight in the west London borough of Hounslow.

The force said the second sus-

pect was being held under the Terrorism Act and questioned at a south London police station Sunday but has been neither charged nor identified.

Police on Sunday also launched an urgent search of a property in the southwestern suburb of Stanwell that authorities said was linked to the latest arrest.

They continued searching a home in Sunbury, another southwestern London suburb, where neighbors were evacuated on Saturday.

During the attack on a stopped train at the Parsons Green station, a bomb hidden in a plastic bucket inside a supermarket freezer bag only partially exploded, sparing the city much worse carnage.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Driver impaired while transporting kids

NC WAYNESVILLE — Police say the head of an after-school program in North Carolina was arrested after she was discovered driving a bus while intoxicated with two children on board.

Local news sources reported the Waynesville Police Department said Angell Kirkpatrick Benson, 46, was charged with misdemeanor driving while impaired and failure to maintain lane control.

According to police, an officer stopped Benson on Wednesday after authorities received several calls about the bus.

Police said tests showed Benson registered a 0.19 percent blood alcohol level and she performed poorly on several on-scene tests. She also refused to give a breath sample before being taken to the Haywood County Jail.

The police report said more charges are pending.

Impersonator muddles city's race for mayor

CO LOVELAND — Officials say a woman has been impersonating a candidate for mayor in a Colorado city but there's little they can do about the situation.

City of Loveland Spokesman Tom Hacker told The Loveland Reporter-Herald that the city received a report of a woman claiming to be mayoral candidate Jacki Marsh.

Marsh, Ward III councilor John Fogle and former council member Larry Heckel are bidding to replace the sitting mayor.

Marsh said the woman seems to be a supporter but she's concerned voters may not know when they're speaking to an impersonator. Marsh said the impersonator has come into her

jewelry store before, claiming various identities and confronting customers.

Local officials said there's nothing they can do aside from encouraging voters to get to know the real candidates.

Viral photo of officers yanked after complaint

FL GAINESVILLE, FLA. — A Florida police department has removed a widely-shared Facebook photo of three officers who had been praised for their good looks amid an investigation into a complaint against one of the men.

Gainesville police say in a statement that several people have brought information to the department's attention regarding a complaint against Officer Michael Hamill, the bearded officer at the center of the group selfie. The department hasn't disclosed the nature of the complaint, but The Gainesville Sun reported screen shots sent to the newspaper show anti-Semitic posts on Hamill's personal Facebook page. The Sun reported the posts were made in 2011 and 2013.

Hamill's selfie produced more than 100,000 comments after it was posted to the Gainesville police Facebook page on Sept. 10.

DUI suspect totting human organs, tissue

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Authorities in central Indiana said a pathologist arrested on suspicion of drunken driving had human organs and tissues in his pickup when he was pulled over along a rural highway.

Elmo Griggs, 75, was arrested Tuesday in the Morgan County town of Brooklyn after another motorist reported a truck driving erratically along Indiana 67 about 10 miles

southwest of Indianapolis.

Griggs was released from jail after posting bail.

Morgan County Coroner Annette Rohlman said Griggs had several totes inside the truck and in its bed that contained brain and liver samples and internal organs for his private autopsy practice. She said it's not surprising that a pathologist would be transporting such samples.

Town eyes renaming officials Selectwomen

MA BROOKLINE — A Massachusetts town says it will consider changing the name of its governing body from the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Selectwomen.

Brookline Town Meeting member Michael Burstein told NECN that under his proposal all members of the board, whether male or female, would be referred to as selectwomen. A second proposal would create gender-neutral language for the board and its members.

Board members will take up the proposals at their November meeting.

Board member Heather Hamilton said she believes titles and symbols matter and she's looking forward to an "interesting hash out" on the proposals.

Town residents say the titles should be all-inclusive. They suggest using terms such as "selectpeople" and just "person" because that probably "would make everybody happy."

Police: Barbed wire strung across trail

NH PELHAM — Police in New Hampshire are working to find who strung up barbed wire across a neighborhood trail in Pelham.

Pelham police said the way the wire was wrapped led them

to believe it was intentional, as it also was found deep in the middle of the trail. WMUR-TV reported police believe the barbed wire was set up between Sept. 7 and 10.

Pelham Police Sgt. Glen Chase said it serves no purpose other than to injure someone. He said it would have been "catastrophic" if a jogger ran into it.

Owner hopes pig thief will bring Spam back

OH CLEVELAND — Cleveland police are investigating a reported break-in after a couple said someone entered their home Sept. 11 and stole their 15-pound pet pig named Spam, jewelry, TVs and a camera.

The owners said they suspect the thief is planning to sell the miniature pig, which they said could be valued at as much as \$1,000.

Valerie Couch posted about the missing pig on Facebook and said she hopes her public plea will lead the thief to return Spam.

Fisherman gets close to humpback whale

NH SEABROOK — A fisherman said he had a close encounter with a humpback whale near a New Hampshire beach.

Michael Lamagna was wearing a GoPro camera while fly-fishing on a paddleboard near Seabrook Beach on Sept. 11.

His camera captured a whale swimming just a few feet from him. Lamagna posted the video on Facebook.

Lamagna, 30, from Massachusetts, said he definitely thought he was going to fall into the water when he saw the whale. He described it as a 25-foot juvenile humpback.

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Golovkin retains middleweight titles after draw with Alvarez

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Canelo Alvarez and Gennady Golovkin argued afterward about who won their middleweight showdown.

No one could argue it wasn't a great fight.

Golovkin retained his middleweight titles Saturday night, fighting to a 12-round draw with Alvarez in a brutal battle that ended with both fighters holding their hands aloft in victory. It was a fight neither deserved to lose and, when the scores were tallied, neither did.

The middleweight bout years in the making lived up to its hype as the two fighters traded huge punches and went after each other for 12 rounds. Neither was down or seriously hurt, but both landed big punches to the head that had the crowd screaming in excitement.

Alvarez rallied late to win the last three rounds on each scorecard and pull out the draw, though both fighters claimed victory.

"I won 7-8 rounds easily," Alvarez said. "I was superior inside the ring."

"Today people give me draw. I focus on boxing," Golovkin said. "Look my belts, I'm still champion. I've not lost."

Golovkin was the aggressor throughout and landed punches that had put other fighters to the canvas. But he couldn't knock Alvarez down, and the Mexican boxer more than stood his own in exchanges with Triple G. The two were still brawling as the final seconds ticked down.

Alvarez was leading after the first three rounds, then Golovkin dominated the middle rounds. After a pep talk from his corner, Alvarez came out more aggressive in the 10th round to pull out the draw.

Two scorecards were close, with Golovkin ahead 115-113 on one and a 114-114 draw on the other. But veteran judge Adalaide Byrd inexplicably had Alvarez winning 118-110, giving him all but two rounds. The Associated Press scored it 114-114.

Golovkin, who has never lost in 38 fights, retained his middleweight titles. But Alvarez showed that he could not only take the punches of the fighter from Kazakhstan but land telling punches of his own.

A frenzied crowd of 22,358 at the T-Mobile Arena roared throughout the fight as the two middleweights put on the kind of show that boxing purists had anticipated. They brawled, used sharp jabs and counter punched at times, with neither one willing to give the other much ground.

"Congratulations all my friends from Mexico," Golovkin said. "I want a true fight. I want a big drama show."

There was plenty of drama toward the end of the fight as Alvarez rallied in the late rounds and rocked Golovkin with uppercuts and big right hands. But just as soon as he landed, he often took one back from the slugger so feared that most other fighters avoided him.

There was even more drama on the scorecards, as Byrd's score was off the other two by a wide margin.

"That's the life of a judge," said Bob Bennett, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. "She had a bad night in a big fight."

It was a battle from the opening bell, as Golovkin tried to walk Alvarez down only to get hit by sharp counter punches.

Both fighters raised their hands in triumph at the final bell and jumped into the arms of corner men. Then they waited as the scorecards were added up to see who would leave the ring with the belts.

"It's not my fault," Golovkin said. "I put pressure on every round."

Golovkin predicted before the fight that the late rounds would resemble a street fight, and in a way they did. Both fighters were willing to trade, and both had no problems landing hard shots to the head.

Ringside punching stats credited Golovkin landing 217

of 703 punches while Alvarez landed 169 of 505.

Golovkin had chased Alvarez for nearly two years, trying to get the signature fight that would pay him millions and make him a pay-per-view draw on his own. Alvarez, the redhead known as Canelo, finally agreed to the match after Golovkin looked vulnerable earlier this year against Daniel Jacobs in a decision win that stopped his knockout streak at 23 fights.

But Alvarez said Golovkin didn't have anything he wasn't expecting, and that his power wasn't what it was made out to be.

Golovkin, who moved to Los Angeles from Kazakhstan to pursue stardom in the ring, said he would welcome a second fight

"Of course I want a rematch," he said. "I want a fight. A true fight. I have my belts. I want a championship fight."

Alvarez said he was more than willing to do it again.

"Obviously yes, if the people want it," Alvarez said. "He didn't win, it was a draw. I always said I was going to be a step ahead of him."

After the decision was announced, both fighters hugged and Triple G whispered something in Alvarez's ear. They then exchanged thumbs-up signs and a handshake, knowing they had done their jobs well.

"We knew this was going to be a war," said Golovkin trainer Abel Sanchez. "There were no surprises."

The draw was the first mark on Golovkin's record, which now stands at 37-0-1. Alvarez is now 49-1-2, his only loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Golovkin entered the ring first, one of the concessions he had to make to get the fight with Alvarez despite holding all the middleweight belts. Alvarez, who brings millions of Mexican and Mexican-American fans, also got a bigger share of the fight proceeds and top billing.

Rockhold cements contender status

PITTSBURGH — No. 3 middleweight Luke Rockhold beat David Branch with a flurry of strikes in the second round of a showdown between ranked fighters Saturday night, re-establishing himself as a top contender in the division.

Rockhold (16-3) took Branch to the ground in the second round and established top control, hammering blows on Branch's head and neck. Branch submitted 4:05 into the period.

Branch (21-4) showed off his boxing prowess early, backing Rockhold up against the cage with an aggressive attack in the first round. That led the jiu-jitsu-trained Rockhold to take him to the ground.

The fight was Rockhold's first since losing the middleweight title to Michael Bisping last June. Rockhold suffered a knee injury while training for a fight against Jacare Souza in November.

Branch, who entered the fight ranked ninth in the division, took his first defeat since May 25, 2012, breaking an 11-bout unbeaten streak.

Hamilton wins as title rival Vettel crashes

SINGAPORE — Lewis Hamilton profited from the chaos to win the Singapore Grand Prix and extend his championship lead on Sunday, while title rival Sebastian Vettel lost huge ground after crashing out on the first lap.

Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo prevented a Mercedes 1-2 by finishing ahead of Valtteri Bottas, who placed third.

Vettel can have little complaint as he seemed to cause the first-turn mayhem, despite starting from pole position. The crash caused a domino effect, taking out his Ferrari teammate Kimi Raikkonen, Red Bull's Max Verstappen and McLaren's Fernando Alonso.

Having started from fifth, on one of the toughest tracks in Formula One for overtaking, Hamilton could not believe his luck. The field opened up perfectly for the British driver to seal his third straight win, seventh of the season and 60th overall.

— From the Associated Press

Gators stun 23rd-ranked Tennessee

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Tyrrie Cleveland was one of the last players to leave Florida Field. He slapped hands, posed for pictures, and just before disappearing into the locker room tunnel, he turned and waved one final time.

He easily could have taken a bow.

Cleveland hauled in a 63-yard touchdown pass from Feleipe Franks as time expired, and No. 24 Florida stunned 23rd-ranked Tennessee 26-20 in a wild, wacky and sometimes unwatchable rivalry game Saturday.

Franks scrambled away from the rush on a first-and-10 play with 9 seconds remaining and found Cleveland behind safety Micah Abernathy for a Hail Mary that no one — especially the Volunteers — saw coming.

The final play capped a crazy fourth quarter in which the teams combined for 37 points and little, if any, defense.

“It was a really fun way to end a game,” Franks said. “You grow up waiting for moments like that to happen in your life, and when it does happen, you don’t have any words to describe it.”

Here’s one: Unpredictable.

After watching Florida’s offense sputter all afternoon, there surely were arm-chair quarterbacks everywhere thinking the Gators (1-1, 1-0 Southeastern Conference) should take a knee and head to overtime. Instead, they burned the Volunteers (2-1, 0-1) with a deep pass for the second time in as many visits to Gainesville.

Two years ago, Will Grier found Antonio Callaway for a 63-yard touchdown on a fourth-and-12 play with 1:26 remaining that propelled Florida to a 28-27 victory.

This time, the play called “Train Right Open, Big Ben In” will go down in Florida lore as one of the most memorable in school history. It gave the Gators a 12th win in the last 13 years against Tennessee and allowed them to avoid the program’s first 0-2 start since 1971.

No. 3 Clemson pounds Louisville

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Kelly Bryant had time to read the defense, allowing the Clemson quarterback to make good decisions and crisp throws. Heisman Trophy-winning counterpart Lamar Jackson didn’t get that same luxury for Louisville.

That stark difference paid off with a decisive victory for the third-ranked Tigers.

While Clemson held Jackson in check for most of the game, Bryant accounted for three touchdowns as the Tigers routed No. 14 Louisville 47-21 on Saturday night in an Atlantic Coast Conference showdown.

Clemson’s first-year starting QB completed 22 of 32 passes for 316 yards, all career highs. Bryant also rushed for 26 yards including an 8-yard TD to get the defending national champions started; they never let up against the 2016 Heisman winner.

“All I was trying to do was do my job. Nothing more, nothing less,” said Bryant, who also rushed for a 1-yard TD. “We could have done better, but I did everything the coach wanted me to do.”

Jackson passed for 317 yards and three TDs, but most of that came with things already in hand for Clemson (3-0, 1-0 ACC). The Tigers’ Dorian O’Daniel returned an interception 44

yards for a TD and a 26-7 third-quarter lead, and they sacked Jackson four times.

Jackson had TD passes of 11 yards to Charles Standberry, 36 yards to Jaylen Smith and 8 to Dez Fitzpatrick. But the junior struggled to throw and run all night for Louisville (2-1, 1-1 ACC). The Cardinals were outgained 613-433, saving face somewhat with a 14-point fourth quarter.

Jackson carried 17 times for 64 yards and broke the ACC career record for rushing yards by a QB, which turned out to be a footnote on a night that belonged to Kelly and Clemson.

“We just didn’t play our game today,” said Jackson, who was 21-of-42 passing with a 78-yard completion. “We came out, we weren’t scoring points. The offense did a horrible job tonight.”

Credit Clemson’s defense making things difficult. Jackson was off in missing his first four attempts, but having just 118 yards passing through three quarters was the biggest example of how effectively Clemson disrupted him and Louisville’s offense.

“We had lot of guys make plays,” said Tigers coach Dabo Swinney, whose team won its 11th straight road game. “We got a lot of contributions from a lot of guys. That’s a happy locker room in there. We settled in and really played good football.”

Travis Etienne’s 81-yard run capped Clemson’s scoring.

USC rallies to 2OT win over Texas

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Deep into the fourth quarter, Southern California and Texas played a defense-dominated, turnover-plagued game that had none of the poetry or flair of these powerhouse programs’ last meeting in the 2006 Rose Bowl.

Then the offenses finally found their stride. Texas’ freshman quarterback led a gutsy 91-yard touchdown march in the final minutes of regulation. USC answered with a desperate drive to force overtime.

By the time walk-on Chase McGrath hit a walk-off field goal, this famed matchup definitely had its mojo back.

Sam Darnold passed for 397 yards and three touchdowns, and USC’s freshman kicker hit a 43-yard field goal to end the No. 4 Trojans’ thrilling 27-24 victory over the Longhorns on Saturday night.

Vince Young and Matt Leinart were the quarterbacks for

Texas’ 41-38 victory in that famous Rose Bowl matchup 12 seasons ago, and they watched every twist in this sequel from the Coliseum stands.

Darnold and his Trojans (3-0) earned their own memorable win by outlasting a Texas offense led by Sam Ehlinger, the freshman from Austin who nearly engineered a huge win early in coach Tom Herman’s debut season with Texas (1-2).

“It’s good to get a great win against such a great Texas team,” Darnold said. “We gave it all we had. They gave it all they had. It was just a great win for our guys. We learned a lot of things about our offense. Good things, and things we’ve got to figure out.”

Christian Rector made the biggest defensive play in a game full of them, forcing a goal-line fumble by stripping the ball from Ehlinger in the second OT. McGrath then coolly ended it with the second field goal of his college career.

USC has won 12 consecutive games and 12 straight at home.

“We had to finish strong, and that’s what we did,” said USC receiver Deontay Burnett, who caught eight passes for 123 yards and two touchdowns.

Ehlinger passed for 298 yards for the Longhorns, who fell agonizingly short in a sold-out Coliseum.

“It’s amazing how many mistakes you can overcome with attitude and effort, and we made our fair share of them,” Herman said. “Turned the ball over four times, had issues with the snap, a couple of costly calls that didn’t go our way, but our guys kept fighting.”

Darnold and Ehlinger embraced briefly after the game, with Darnold giving words of encouragement and slapping the freshman on the helmet.

“I believed in [Ehlinger],” Texas linebacker Malik Jefferson said. “That kid always has heart. He represented a lot of tonight of what we want to be.”

Indians clinch 2nd straight Central title

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Cleveland shortstop Francisco Lindor planned to pour a bottle of water over his head. On Sunday, he'll switch to champagne.

For the second year in a row, the Indians are AL Central champions.

A few hours after they beat Kansas City 8-4 in the first game since the Royals stopped their AL record winning streak at 22, the Indians clinched the division title when second-place Minnesota lost to Toronto.

When their second crown became official, the Indians were long gone from Progressive Field, leaving the ballpark to spend time with family or toast a memorable week. In Lindor's case, he was set to eat pizza and watch the boxing match between Gennady Golovkin and Canelo Alvarez.

Lindor said if the Twins lost he would dump water on himself before focusing on the fight.

But a division crown is only the first step for the Indians, whose mission is to win the World Series after coming so close last year. From the moment they lost to the Chicago Cubs in seven games, the Indians have been focused on getting back. Cleve-

land hasn't won a Series title since 1948, baseball's longest drought.

"Our goal is to go out there and win games and make it to the postseason and make it as far as we can in the postseason," said Lindor, who set a club record by getting an extra-base hit in his 10th straight game. "That's our goal. It doesn't matter what I do or what we did in the past."

Manager Terry Francona's team will finally get to spray champagne inside its own park following Sunday's series finale. Last year, Cleveland won the division and ended two playoff series on the road, so this year's celebration is long overdue.

This is the Indians' ninth Central title and the first time they've won consecutive division titles since 1999, when they finished a run of five straight first-place finishes with dominant teams. None of those teams won the Series, either.

While Cleveland's historic winning streak is no longer the talk of baseball, Lindor's on a personal roll that's become notable.

The All-Star's double in the sixth off Jason Hammel (8-12) gave him an extra-base hit in 10 straight games — a club record and four shy of the major league mark of 14, shared by Chipper Jones (2006) and

Paul Waner (1927).

"I didn't even know that," Lindor said. "I saw it on the scoreboard."

Carlos Carrasco (16-6) pitched into the seventh and Edwin Encarnacion hit his 35th homer as the Indians improved to 32-5 in their last 37 games.

Alex Gordon connected for the Royals, whose wild-card hopes took another blow and couldn't stay close to the Indians.

Following Friday's 4-3 loss, the Indians were warmly saluted by their fans, who gave them a rousing standing ovation in appreciation for the longest win streak baseball has seen since the 1916 New York Giants won 26 in a row.

No doubt the streak was fun, but it served as little more than a September diversion for these Indians.

"I was happy about that," Francona said of his team's ability to rebound. "I didn't think we wouldn't, but it's nice to see them go right back to trying to be as good of a team as we can be."

The Indians now have three pitchers — Kluber, Carrasco and Trevor Bauer — with 16 wins. They are the first Cleveland pitchers to get at least 16 in the same season since Early Wynn, Bob Lemon and Herb Score in 1956.

Roundup

Dodgers top Nats, close in on NL West crown

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Cody Bellinger hit his 38th homer to match the National League single-season record for rookies, helping the Dodgers move closer to the NL West title with a 3-2 win over the Nationals.

Chase Utley had two doubles and scored twice to help Los Angeles reduce its magic number to win the division to five. Rich Hill (10-8) and five relievers combined on a four-hitter.

Los Angeles also moved seven games ahead of Washington in the race to secure home-field advantage throughout the NL playoffs. The Dodgers have won four straight since dropping 11 in a row.

Blue Jays 7, Twins 2: Marco Estrada pitched eight efficient innings and Josh Donaldson homered twice among his four

hits as Toronto topped host Minnesota.

Angels 2, Rangers 0: Justin Upton hit two home runs, Parker Bridwell outpitched Cole Hamels and Los Angeles moved up in the AL wild-card race by beating visiting Texas.

Diamondbacks 2, Giants 0: Zack Greinke pitched eight innings of two-hit ball and Paul Goldschmidt hit a two-run homer as Arizona defeated host San Francisco.

Rockies 16, Padres 0: Tyler Anderson pitched six innings in his first start since returning from knee surgery and Charlie Blackmon set an NL season record for RBIs by a leadoff man as Colorado won a testy game against visiting San Diego.

Yankees 9, Orioles 3: Didi Gregorius and Greg Bird homered for the second straight game, rookie Jordan Mont-

gomery pitched six shutout innings and host New York won its fourth straight game.

Astros 8, Mariners 6: Dallas Keuchel threw six solid innings, Carlos Beltran had three hits and two RBIs and host Houston lowered its magic number for clinching the AL West title to one.

Cubs 4, Cardinals 1: Kyle Hendricks pitched six-hit ball into the eighth inning, Addison Russell homered and host Chicago earned its fifth straight victory.

Marlins 7, Brewers 4: Derek Dietrich hit a two-run homer and Adam Conley pitched into the sixth inning as visiting Miami beat Milwaukee to stop a six-game slide.

Red Sox 3, Rays 1: Rick Porcello took a shutout into the eighth inning and Mookie Betts hit his 22nd home run as visit-

ing Boston won for the eighth time in 10 games.

Mets 7, Braves 3: Jacob deGrom set a career high in wins, Dominic Smith and Gavin Cecchini each drove in two runs and the Mets snapped a five-game skid with a victory over host Atlanta.

White Sox 10, Tigers 4: Matt Davidson and Nicky Delmonico homered and Tim Anderson had four hits as visiting Chicago captured its season series with Detroit for the first time since 2008.

Reds 2, Pirates 1: Sal Romano pitched a career-high eight shutout innings and Jesse Winker homered, leading host Cincinnati to the victory.

Phillies 5, Athletics 2: Jorge Alfaro homered and Philadelphia's relievers pitched six strong innings after a rain delay in a win over visiting Oakland.