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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy fires 2 more officers over crashes

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy relieved two more 7th Fleet commanders Monday amid fallout from two deadly collisions involving the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain.

Task Force 70 commander Rear Adm. Charles Williams and Destroyer Squadron 15 commander Capt. Jeffrey Bennett were relieved of command by 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer “due to a loss of confidence in their ability to command,” the Navy announced in a Monday statement.

As both the CTF 70 and Carrier Strike Group 5 commander,

Williams had tactical control of the 7th Fleet’s cruisers and destroyers, as well as Carrier Air Wing 5 and the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan.

Williams assumed command of CTF 70 in July 2016 from Rear Adm. John Alexander, who has since been promoted to vice admiral and took command of the U.S. 3rd Fleet on Friday.

As DESRON 15 commander, Bennett oversaw all destroyers assigned to the 7th Fleet. He assumed command of DESRON 15 last year in September.

Williams and Bennett were relieved following the removal of 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin last month. All three were relieved following a string of accidents involv-

ing Navy ships in the Pacific.

In January, the USS Antietam ran aground and spilled roughly 1,100 gallons of hydraulic fluid into Tokyo Bay. In May, the USS Lake Champlain collided with a South Korean fishing boat while operating off the east coast of the divided peninsula. In June, a collision between the USS Fitzgerald and a Philippine-flagged merchant ship killed seven sailors.

Last month, a collision between the USS John S. McCain and a civilian merchant vessel killed 10 sailors.

The commanding officers of the Fitzgerald and Antietam were relieved of their duties.

Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, who was serving as commander of

the 7th Fleet’s amphibious forces, has taken command of CTF 70. DESRON 15’s deputy commander, Capt. Jonathan Duffy, has assumed command.

The reliefs come as senior Navy officials are reviewing a fleet known throughout the Navy for its grueling operational tempo in the Asia-Pacific region — a workload that reports say came at the expense of training and other critical needs.

A Government Accountability Office study found more than one-third of needed warfare certifications for Japan-based cruiser and destroyer crews had expired, according to congressional testimony Sept. 7. The agency first reported on that concern in May 2015.

US bombers, stealth jets fly near Korean DMZ

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. supersonic bombers and stealth jets flew near the border with North Korea on Monday, officials said, in a show of force after a senior American diplomat warned the communist state could face military action if it persists with its nuclear weapons program.

In what has become a familiar pattern, two B-1B Lancers and four state-of-the-art F-35B stealth fighter jets were joined by South Korean fighters in conducting a bombing drill on the divided peninsula three days after the North test-fired a missile that flew over Japan.

The Guam-based Air Force bombers and Japan-based Marine fighter jets flew in a sequenced “bilateral show of force” in response to Friday’s missile test, according to a U.S. Pacific Command statement.

The U.S. and South Korean aircraft released live weapons at the Pilsung Range training area in South Korea, it said, adding that the U.S. and Japanese planes flew together over waters near Kyushu, Japan.

A South Korean defense official, who pro-

vided more details on condition of anonymity, said the U.S. aircraft flew near the tense military demarcation line that separates the countries.

The United States and its allies have shown increasing impatience with North Korea, which has consistently defied diplomatic pressure and U.N. sanctions aimed at forcing it to curb its nuclear ambitions.

The issue is expected to top the agenda at this week’s U.N. General Assembly. President Donald Trump is scheduled to address the 193-member body on Tuesday.

Friday’s missile test occurred four days after the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted tough new sanctions that included a cap on oil imports, a ban on textile exports and other measures.

However, they fell short of a full embargo proposed by Washington due to opposition from China and Russia, which have refused to sign on to any resolution that threatened to cripple the North Korean regime.

The communist state has so far overcome all efforts to stanch its progress toward its stated goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could target the U.S. mainland. It has conducted 14 missile tests this year and carried out its sixth and most powerful

nuclear test on Sept. 3.

The missile launched Friday flew about 2,300 miles before crashing into the Pacific, the longest distance achieved by a North Korean ballistic missile.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley said the sanctions need time to work and maintained hope that Pyongyang would return to the negotiating table.

But Haley suggested patience was wearing thin and said she would be happy to hand the matter over to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

“If North Korea keeps on with this reckless behavior, if the United States has to defend itself or defend its allies in any way, North Korea will be destroyed,” Haley said on CNN’s “State of the Union” on Sunday. “And none of us want that. None of us want war.”

The U.S. has frequently deployed the Lancers to the peninsula after North Korean tests, but it sent the F-35s from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni for the first time on Aug. 31 after another missile was lobbed over the Japanese island of Hokkaido.

The South Korean official said Monday’s flight was the first time the Marine jets flew so close to the North Korean border.

Advanced Navy subs to use Xbox controllers

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

ABOARD USS JOHN WARNER — The control room of the Navy's most advanced submarine is filled with sophisticated computers, flat-screen monitors and sailors who grew up in a digital world.

At times, it can look a bit like a video game arcade, and not just because of the high-resolution graphics.

The Navy is beginning to use an Xbox 360 controller — like the ones you find at the mall — to operate the periscopes aboard Virginia-class submarines.

Unlike other types of submarines people are familiar with from Hollywood, Virginia-class submarines don't have traditional, rotating-tube periscopes that only one person can look through at a time.

Each has been replaced with two photonics masts that rotate 360 degrees. They feature high-resolution cameras whose images are displayed on large monitors that everyone in the control room can see. There's no barrel to peer through anymore; everything is controlled with a helicopter-style stick. But that stick isn't so popular.

"The Navy got together and they asked a bunch of J.O.s and junior guys, 'What can we do to make your life better?'" said Lt. j.g. Kyle Leonard, the USS John Warner's assistant weapons officer, referring to junior officers and sailors. "And one of the things that came out is the controls for the scope. It's kind of clunky in your hand; it's

real heavy."

Lockheed Martin and Navy officials have been working to use commercial, off-the-shelf technology to reduce costs and to take advantage of the technological skills sailors grow up with. The integration of the video game Xbox controller grew out of that effort.

Lockheed Martin refers to the classified research lab in Manassas, Va., where testing occurred as the submarine version of "Area 51," the nickname for the Nevada base where some of the Air Force's most advanced and secretive projects are tested.

The Xbox controller is no different than the ones a lot of crewmembers grew up playing with. Lockheed Martin says the sailors who tested the controller at its lab were intuitively able to figure out how to use it on their own within minutes, compared with hours of training required for the joystick.

The Xbox controller also is significantly cheaper. The company says the photonic mast handgrip and imaging control panel that cost about \$38,000 can now be replaced with an Xbox controller that typically costs less than \$30.

"That joystick is by no means cheap, and it is only designed to fit on a Virginia-class submarine," said Senior Chief Mark Eichenlaub, the John Warner's assistant navigator. "I can go to any video game store and procure an Xbox controller any-

where in the world, so it makes a very easy replacement."

The Navy says the system has gone through extensive testing during the past two years and that the Xbox controller will be included as part of the integrated imaging system for Virginia-class subs beginning with the future USS Colorado, which is supposed to be commissioned by November.

The Xbox controller will be installed on other Virginia-class submarines, such as the Norfolk, Va.-based John Warner, through the normal modernization process, according to Brienne Lang, a spokeswoman for the Navy's program executive office for submarines. The John Warner had a demonstration model aboard last week as it transited from Naval Station Norfolk to Groton, Conn.

Eichenlaub said the Navy doesn't plan to stop innovation with the Xbox controller. The goal is to develop technology that young people already are comfortable with, such as working with electronic touch screens on iPads and in virtual environments.

"Ideally, what they want to see in 10 years down the road is, there's basically a glass panel display with windows, and you can just pull a window of information, review that, push it off, bring in the next window," he said. "They want to bring in sailors with what they have at home on their personal laptop, their personal desktop, what they grew up with in a classroom."

3rd Fleet gets new leader as role in Pacific expands

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Vice Adm. John Alexander took command of the Navy's 3rd Fleet last week, vowing to continue expanding its role in the Pacific.

Alexander took over from Vice Adm. Nora Tyson during a ceremony Friday aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in San Diego. Tyson, the first woman to command an operational numbered fleet and the first female commander of a carrier strike group, is retiring after 38 years, a Navy statement said.

The 3rd Fleet, which includes five carrier strike groups, more than 30 submarines and more than 400 aircraft based in California, Washington and Hawaii, has expanded its presence in the Western Pacific in recent years under an initiative known as 3rd Fleet Forward.

The initiative allows it to retain com-

mand of some ships operating in the Yokosuka, Japan-based 7th Fleet's operations area.

In April, the 3rd Fleet's USS Carl Vinson strike group drilled with South Korean warships off the Korean Peninsula, and the fleet's USS Nimitz strike group joined an annual Malabar exercise in July alongside ships from the Indian navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift said in the Navy's statement that Alexander would continue the changes at 3rd Fleet.

"Cultural change is commander's work, and it takes time," he said.

Alexander said he looked forward to bringing the fleet back to its Pacific roots. It was formed in 1943 and played a key role in battling Japanese naval forces in the Pacific during World War II, the Navy said. Japanese surrender documents ending the war were signed aboard the USS Missouri,

then the flagship of the fleet.

"[Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift's] vision of 3rd Fleet Forward as a second maneuver element in the Pacific is more relevant today than ever ... we must remember our roots," Alexander said in the statement. "It is our time to carry this operational vision forward."

The 3rd Fleet's Pacific expansion comes at a time when the 7th Fleet, the Navy's forward-deployed force in the Pacific, has suffered a string of accidents and delays that have left it with four fewer warships.

The cruiser USS Antietam was damaged after running aground in January; the destroyer USS Fitzgerald was damaged in a June 17 collision that killed seven sailors; and the USS John S. McCain was damaged in an Aug. 21 collision that killed 10 sailors. The Navy announced in July that the destroyer USS Milius' deployment to Japan had been pushed back to 2018.

US, NATO still hashing out Afghan strategy

The Washington Post

TIRANA, Albania — Even though President Donald Trump announced his strategy for the war in Afghanistan in August, the Pentagon and NATO are still trying to map their way forward in the nearly 16-year-old conflict, according to U.S. officials.

The delay is the byproduct of the U.S. commander's vision for the war and the alliance's ability to provide the troops required to make it a reality, according to a U.S. official who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing deliberations.

In recent weeks, the U.S. deployed additional forces into Afghanistan — a move that coincided with the announcement of Trump's strategy — to help bolster Afghan forces during the final months of this year's fighting season. The immediate surge was a short-term so-

lution, requested by battlefield commanders, but the Pentagon is still assessing how U.S. troops will be deployed in the country in 2018, according to a U.S. official in Afghanistan.

Speaking to a small group of reporters, Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, the head of U.S. European Command and Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, said he expects to have a "full picture" on NATO commitments by October.

"There is still a lack of clarity which positions, which functions, to focus their contributions," said Czech Gen. Petr Pavel, chairman of the NATO Military Committee. Speaking at a news conference here, Pavel added that the recently announced U.S. strategy provides a clearer picture of the way forward, but the alliance won't make final troop decisions until another conference in October.

With the military mission in Afghanistan primarily focused on training the Afghan military, the U.S. wants its NATO allies to take up the bulk of that role, freeing up U.S. forces to push closer to the front. The U.S. military in Afghanistan has the infrastructure, including fire support and medical evacuation capabilities, to move its troops forward, not only to train and advise but also to assist — through airstrikes and artillery — their struggling Afghan counterparts, the official said.

The Pentagon's recent reluctance to discuss additional troop numbers likely is linked with the fact that NATO has yet to say if it will completely agree to Gen. John Nicholson's requests. U.S. officials, however, repeatedly have said that enough troops will deploy to Afghanistan in the coming months to bring the total num-

ber of U.S. troops in the country to about 14,000. Aside from the additional troops, the increase likely will bring more air-support and artillery units to help push back the Taliban and protect U.S. forces on the ground.

In addition to advising the Afghan military, U.S. forces also conduct counterterrorism operations against groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaida. Ten U.S. troops have been killed by hostile fire in Afghanistan in 2017, the majority of whom were fighting ISIS militants in the country's east. On Friday, a Romanian soldier was killed in a suicide bombing in Kandahar.

More than 2,000 Americans have died since the U.S. invaded in 2001, though Afghan civilians have borne the brunt of the violence, with more than 1,500 killed this year alone, according to the United Nations.

Trump focuses on reforms in debut at United Nations

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — President Donald Trump made his debut at the United Nations on Monday, using his first moments at the world body to urge the 193-nation organization to reduce bureaucracy and costs while more clearly defining its mission around the world.

But while Trump chastised the United Nations — an organization he sharply criticized as a candidate for president for its spiraling costs — he said the United States would "pledge to be partners in your work" in order to make the U.N. "a more effective force" for peace across the globe.

"In recent years, the United Nations has not reached its full potential due to bureaucracy and mismanagement," said Trump, who rebuked the U.N. for a ballooning budget. "We are not seeing the results in line with this investment."

The president pushed the U.N. to focus "more on people

and less on bureaucracy" and to change "business as usual and not be beholden to ways of the past which were not working" while also suggesting the U.S. was paying more than its fair share to keep the New York-based world body operational.

But he also complimented the steps the U.N. had taken in the early stages of the reform process. His measured tone stood in stark contrast to his last maiden appearance at a global body, when he stood at NATO's new Brussels headquarters in May and scolded the member nations for not paying enough and refused to explicitly back its mutual defense pact.

While running for office, Trump labeled the U.N. as weak and incompetent, and not a friend of either the U.S. or Israel. But he has softened his tone since taking office.

Trump's big moment comes Tuesday, when he delivers his first address to a session of the U.N. General Assembly.

Some lawmakers push for a Space Corps military branch

The Washington Post

For generations, the U.S. military has fought its wars on land, in the air and on the seas, from the Ardennes forest to skies over Vietnam to the Persian Gulf. Now the Pentagon is increasingly focused on extending its prowess to the cosmos, where many believe future wars will be won and lost.

But even as military leaders have taken steps to prepare for conflict in space, some in Congress fear those measures haven't gone far enough. Now, as the Senate debates the Defense Department's spending plan, it is considering how best to hold and defend the ultimate high ground. This year, the House took a radical step, proposing the creation of a Space Corps by 2019, a new military branch that would be dedicated to space. The move comes as Russia and China have taken giant leaps in beefing up their national security space systems, officials have said.

China has demonstrated the ability to hit a satellite in low Earth orbit with a missile. It also has developed the capability to hit a target in a farther orbit, where the U.S. has many military and spy satellites.

"It is disturbing the rate at which China and Russia are pursuing these capabilities," Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., said at a recent event at the policy-oriented Center for Strategic and International Studies. "We have lost a dramatic lead in space that we should have never let get away from us. So that's what gave us the sense of urgency to get after this."

His proposal, crafted with Jim Cooper, D-Tenn., would keep the Space Corps within the Air Force. But it would have its own funding, procurement programs and staff made up of servicemembers trained specifically in space issues — creating a potentially lucrative opportunity for the commercial space industry.

Protests resume after 80 arrests in St. Louis unrest

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Following another night of unrest and more than 80 arrests, a racially mixed crowd of demonstrators locked arms and marched quietly through downtown St. Louis on Monday morning to protest the acquittal of a white former police officer in the killing of a black suspect.

The latest action follows three days of peaceful protests and three nights of violence in the city that has been rocked since Friday, when a judge announced he found Jason Stockley not guilty in the 2011 death of Anthony Lamar Smith.

Hundreds of riot police mobilized downtown late Sunday, arrested more than 80 people and seized weapons amid reports of property damage and vandalism. The arrests came after demonstrators ignored orders to disperse, police said.

"I'm proud to tell you the city of St. Louis is safe and the police owned tonight," Interim Police Chief Lawrence O'Toole said at a news conference early

Monday.

Earlier Sunday, more than 1,000 people had gathered at police headquarters, then marched without trouble through downtown St. Louis, the posh Central West End and the trendy Delmar Loop area of nearby University City. Protesters also marched through two shopping malls in a wealthy area of St. Louis County.

By nightfall, most had gone home. The 100 or so people who remained grew increasingly agitated as they marched back toward downtown. Along the way, they knocked over planters, broke windows at a few shops and hotels and scattered plastic chairs at an outdoor venue.

According to police, the demonstrators then sprayed bottles with an unknown substance onto officers.

One officer suffered a leg injury and was taken to a hospital. His condition wasn't known.

Soon afterward, buses brought in additional officers in riot gear, and police scoured downtown deep into the night,

making arrests and seizing at least five weapons, according to O'Toole.

Early on Monday, more than 150 protesters marched arm-in-arm, some carrying signs, to City Hall. Police turned traffic away as the marchers blocked a busy St. Louis street during the rush-hour crush.

The recent St. Louis protests follow a pattern seen since the August 2014 killing of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson. The majority of demonstrators, though angry, are law-abiding. But as the night wears on, a subsection emerges, a different crowd more willing to confront police, sometimes to the point of clashes.

The late-night unrest since the verdict was issued has led to destruction across the St. Louis area. It was after nightfall Friday that people shattered a window at the home of Mayor Lynda Krewson, smashed about two dozen windows and threw trash cans and rocks at police in University City on Saturday and knocked out windows downtown on Sunday.

Zinke urges changes to 10 national monuments

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has recommended President Donald Trump modify 10 national monuments created by his predecessors, including shrinking at least four western sites, according to a copy of the report obtained by The Washington Post.

The memorandum, which the White House has refused to release since Zinke submitted it late last month, does not specify exact reductions for the four protected areas Zinke would have Trump narrow — Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, Nevada's Gold Butte and Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou — or the two marine national monuments — the Pacific Remote Islands and Rose Atoll — for which he raised the same prospect.

The secretary's set of recommendations also would change the way all 10 monuments are managed. It emphasizes the need to adjust the proclamations to address concerns of local officials or affected industries, saying the administration should permit activities like grazing, logging, coal mining and commercial fishing.

If enacted, the changes could test the legal boundaries of what powers a president holds under the 1906 Antiquities Act.

Although Congress can alter national monuments easily through legislation, presidents have reduced their boundaries only on rare occasions.

The memorandum shows Zinke concluded after a nearly four-month review that both Republican and Democratic presidents went too far in recent decades in limiting commercial activities in protected areas.

Zinke says Trump should use his authority under the Antiquities Act to change each of the 10 sites' proclamations to permit activities that are now restricted.

The White House is reviewing the recommendations and has not reached a final decision on them.

UK police hold 2 ex-foster kids over subway bomb

Associated Press

LONDON — The two suspects detained over last week's London subway bombing are an 18-year-old refugee from Iraq and a 21-year-old believed to be from Syria, both of whom were fostered by a British couple, according to a local official and media reports.

The 18-year-old was detained Saturday at the southeast England port of Dover, a departure point for ferries to France.

The 21-year-old was held later the same day in Hounslow in west London.

Photos published by the Sun newspaper showed a man being detained outside a fast-food restaurant in Hounslow which was

searched by police.

Both men are being held under the Terrorism Act and are being questioned at a London police station about Friday's attack.

Thirty people were injured when an improvised explosive device partly exploded aboard a crowded London Underground train at Parsons Green station during the morning rush hour. None of the injuries was life-threatening, and experts said it appears the main charge of the bomb didn't detonate.

After the rush-hour bombing, British officials raised the country's terrorism threat level to the highest level, "critical," meaning an attack may be imminent. They lowered it Sunday

to "severe," and police said the investigation was making rapid progress.

Police searched three addresses, including the house in suburban Sunbury, outside London, of Penelope and Ronald Jones. The couple have been honored by Queen Elizabeth II for fostering more than 200 children, including refugees from Middle Eastern conflicts.

Ian Harvey, who heads local Spelthorne Borough Council, said he believed the 18-year-old was an Iraqi orphan who moved to the U.K. when he was 15 after his parents died and had lived in the Sunbury house. He said the 21-year-old also was a former foster child of the Joneses.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Nonprofit launches State Parks beer

TN NASHVILLE — A nonprofit group is celebrating the release of State Parks Blonde Ale, a new beer from Tennessee Brew Works.

Proceeds from the sale of the new beer will go to Tennessee State Parks Conservancy to help preserve and protect the state's natural areas and cultural assets.

State Park Blonde Ale is an American blonde session ale.

The Tennessee State Parks Conservancy raises money for educational programs, health initiatives and special park projects.

Tax collector indicted over theft of funds

MA TYNGSBOROUGH — A tax collector in a Massachusetts town has been indicted on charges that she stole hundreds of thousands of dollars from the town.

Nancy Dutton, 56, is charged with five counts of larceny and one count of money laundering. Prosecutors allege she stole tax money and falsified records to cover it up.

Dutton was hired as an assistant tax collector in Tyngsborough in 2002 and was made deputy tax collector in 2016. Prosecutors say the alleged theft started in 2004.

Dutton was placed on unpaid leave June 1, shortly after police began investigating.

City delays enforcing ban on bikini baristas

WA SEATTLE — The city of Everett, Wash., has agreed not to enforce its ban on bikini baristas while it's challenged in court.

Seven bikini baristas and the owner of a chain of the coffee

stands called "Hillbilly Hotties" sued the city in federal court last week, saying two recently passed ordinances banning bare skin violate their right to free expression.

The city said there's been "a proliferation of crimes of a sexual nature" at the stands. It wants the baristas and employees of other quick-serve establishments to wear a minimum of a tank top and skirt or shorts.

K-9 tracks suspect in stolen generator case

FL EDGEWATER — Authorities say a K-9 officer tracked down a suspect who stole his neighbor's generator.

William Packard said he heard his generator shut off suddenly Friday and spotted a man in the backyard running off with the \$1,200 device. He told Edgewater police he tried to catch him.

According to a police report, a K-9 officer tracked the suspect to a neighbor's house. They found Jeremy Swartz, 31, inside and a generator partially hidden in a bedroom closet. The report said a resident in the house pointed at Swartz and said, "He did it."

Swartz was charged with unarmed burglary of an occupied dwelling, possession and use of burglary tools and grand theft between \$300 and \$500.

Man robs gas station but runs out of fuel

IN LAPORTE — Authorities said an Indiana man who robbed a gas station made off with food, drinks and cigarettes. What he didn't steal was gas.

The (Northwest Indiana) Times reported that a state trooper arrested Sean Harris, 33, on Wednesday after finding him stranded by the side

of a two-lane highway with his vehicle out of fuel. Police said the South Bend-area man's blood-alcohol level was above the legal limit.

Authorities said Harris was arrested not long after a man entered the Lacrosse gas station, implied he had a gun and took the items.

Homeless men found prepping lobster, lamb

CO ASPEN — A Colorado police officer started a recent shift with a routine call — checking on reports of smoke in a wooded area.

When Aspen Police Sgt. Rob Fabrocini arrived at the spot that's a popular campsite for homeless people, he found two men with lobster tails, rack of lamb and salmon steaks loaded onto a small grill.

Fabrocini told The Aspen Times the men also had a 12-pack of Stella Artois beer to accompany their meal.

Fabrocini said the men told him they just received a paycheck and were celebrating. The men weren't cited, but Fabrocini suggested another spot they could finish cooking without risk of fire catching in dry woods.

Thieves steal SUV pulling U-Haul, casket

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Police are searching for thieves who stole an SUV and an attached U-Haul trailer with a casket inside outside an Albuquerque motel.

Albuquerque police said the heist occurred early Sept. 11 at a Residence Inn. The casket was found later not far from the site where it was taken. Authorities said the casket contained the body of the victim's father-in-law.

The U-Haul was located after police searched for a black 2005

Chevy Trailblazer SUV with Oklahoma license plates.

Police said the deceased man's daughter and her husband were on their way from Oklahoma to Kirtland, N.M., to bury him.

Firefighters save dogs trained to take cover

WA OLYMPIA — Firefighters in Washington state were able to save the lives of two dogs that are trained to seek cover in the bathtub if they sense danger.

The West Thurston Regional Fire Authority went to a house fire on Wednesday and found the dogs unconscious in a bathtub.

Authorities said one dog began to seize and the other was making efforts to breathe as they were given oxygen masks and taken to an animal clinic, where vet staff treated the dogs for smoke inhalation.

The dogs' owners, who were not home at the time of the fire, said their pets are self-trained to go into the bathroom, shut the door and get into the tub if they sense danger.

Surfer hospitalized after likely shark bite

FL DAYTONA BEACH — A 28-year-old surfer was taken to the hospital after apparently being bitten by a shark.

Volusia County Beach Safety officials said the unidentified Melbourne man was bitten Saturday while surfing near the jetty in Ponce Inlet. The Orlando Sentinel reported the man suffered several cuts on his foot from what appeared to be a shark bite.

The surfer's condition wasn't immediately known.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news
updated 24/7 from bases
around the world.
Now online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Nothing certain around league

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Whether you had already anointed or condemned, Week 2 of the NFL season should have put the brakes on such actions.

Exhibit No. 1: New England.

Exhibit No. 2: Dallas.

Exhibit No. 3: Jacksonville.

Exhibit No. 4: Tennessee.

And don't forget the Redskins and Rams. Or the Bills and Vikings.

OK, we'll give Minnesota a break because starting quarterback Sam Bradford's knee was too sore for him to suit up at Pittsburgh. A better judgment of the Vikes can be made when Bradford is behind center rather than Case Keenum.

The NFL schedule might be short compared to other pro sports, placing an extra emphasis on each result. But to push the panic button or start planning playoff trips after opening week is foolhardy.

This weekend displayed that for many teams.

Let's begin with the Patriots and Cowboys, who headed in opposite directions Sunday.

All that gloom and doom in New England now will fade before the leaves begin to do the same following a 36-20 romp at New Orleans that was over after one quarter. That's how long it took Tom Brady to show that 40 ain't old in pro football — at least not for him — with three TD passes, a first for him in an opening period. Kansas City's defense troubled Brady in the opener, and the Patriots' D was shoddy.

Then came Sunday's immediate turnaround: a Big Easy in the Big Easy.

"Being 0-1 with a 10-day break felt like a year," Brady said. "All the veterans had a chance to say the things they wanted to say to their different (position) groups. ... I'm glad we executed. There were a lot of tight plays and we made them."

Dallas didn't. Seven days after manhandling the Giants with a bullying defense and an imposing-its-will offense, the Cowboys pretty much were manhandled themselves in Denver.

Granted, the Mile High city is a difficult place to play, but the dropoff in physicality for Dallas was stark.

"We started slow and they had the momentum at their home," Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott explained. "It's a great environment and they thrived off of that. We never got ourselves going. We never gathered that momentum as much as we should."

Nor did the Jaguars in a 37-16 loss to the Titans.

Now, nobody is comparing the Jags to the Cowboys. But in Week 1, they were as overpowering as America's Team. This week, much like Dallas, they disappeared.

Jacksonville went from 10 sacks at Houston to one at home against Tennessee. The Jags went from rushing for 155 yards to gaining 99. And they went from a plus-4 in turnover margin to having three giveaways.

"We had a lot of mistakes," wide receiver Marqise Lee said. "Even when we found ways to move the ball forward, we still found ways to bring ourselves back. You can't win the game doing things like that."

You can win it when you are on the other end, which the Titans were in north Florida. A week after they were dominated at home by Oakland, a budding AFC power, Tennessee stuck with it after a slow start, then spurted away. They won't be singing those sad country tunes on Broadway in Music City this week.

The blues being sung in Washington will be silenced for a while after the Redskins survived in Los Angeles. And just as the Rams were being celebrated for their annihilation of Indianapolis a week ago, there now will be plenty of "when do the Dodgers play next" comments in Southern California.

Don't laugh. The wild swings in support and derisiveness are common among NFL fans and observers. And it's simply the nature of the sport that drawing conclusions after one win or loss is a wasteful exercise.

Denver's 'D' shuts down Cowboys

Associated Press

DENVER — Where so many others saw a Super Bowl favorite in Dallas' swaggering offense with its all-star linemen and pair of backfield superstars, Denver's defense envisioned a chance to show everybody that the Broncos are back.

They did just that in a 42-17 crushing of the Cowboys.

They held Ezekiel Elliott to an NFL career-worst 8 yards on nine carries — 43 yards fewer than his previous low — and forced Dak Prescott to throw a career-high 50 times while also putting a dozen hits on Dallas' second-year QB, a beating that left Jerry Jones complimenting the Broncos (2-0) for being everything he thought his Cowboys (1-1) were.

It included Aqib Talib's 103-yard interception return for a touchdown, an interception by Chris Harris Jr., two sacks plus five more QB hits by Von Miller, two TD catches by Emmanuel Sanders, 154 scrimmage yards and two TDs from C.J. Anderson and a career high-tying four touchdown throws by Trevor Siemian.

Elliott's less-than-1-yard-per-carry average was the exclamation point.

"He had nine carries for 8 yards? Wow. Damn, that's crazy," said linebacker Brandon Marshall. "We are the best defense in the NFL. I don't know how many times we have to say it. I saw the picks on the NFL Network, everyone picked the Cowboys. Everyone thinks Dak is this and Zeke is that. They are good players, don't get me wrong."

"But I take it as the same thing as when we played in the Super Bowl" two years ago, added Marshall, whose block of Prescott guided Talib into the zone on his pick-6. "Everyone picked the Panthers because of their offense. But neither team had ever faced a defense like this. There is no defense in the NFL like this."

Packers fall short against Falcons

Associated Press

ATLANTA — New season. New stadium. Same ol' result.

Matt Ryan and the Atlanta Falcons picked up where they left off against the Green Bay Packers, building a big halftime lead on the way to a dominating 34-23 victory Sunday night. The rematch of last season's NFC championship game was essentially a repeat: Ryan threw for 252 yards and a touchdown, Devonta Freeman had a couple of scoring runs,

and Desmond Trufant darted to the end zone off an attempted pass by Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers that was ruled a fumble.

"We came out aggressive," said Julio Jones, who had five catches for 108 yards. "We did a great job and got after them."

Back in January at the Georgia Dome, Atlanta earned a trip to the Super Bowl by racing to a 31-0 edge early in the third quarter on the way to a

44-21 blowout of the Packers.

In the first regular-season NFL game at \$1.5 billion Mercedes-Benz Stadium — and the first sporting event in which the facility's camera lens-like roof was open — the Falcons put on quite a show to mark the occasion.

They were ahead 24-7 at halftime and 31-7 less than a minute into the third period.

Unlike the Super Bowl, Atlanta (2-0) made sure this lead stood up.

NFL roundup

Dolphins spoil Chargers' home opener

Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — Cody Parkey hit his fourth field goal from 54 yards with 1:05 to play as the Miami Dolphins rallied in the fourth quarter to spoil the Chargers' home opener with a 19-17 victory.

The Chargers' South Korea-born placekicker Younghoe Koo missed a 44-yard field goal attempt with 5 seconds left after Philip Rivers maneuvered the Chargers (0-2) into scoring range in the final minute before a crowd of 25,381 in their first home game since relocating to the Los Angeles area after 56 seasons in San Diego.

Patriots 36, Saints 20: Bouncing back with a vengeance from a season-opening loss, New England's Tom Brady threw three touchdown passes in the first quarter for the first time in his career and eclipsed 300 yards passing in the first half for only the second time.

Seahawks 12, 49ers 9: Russell Wilson avoided two potential sacks and found Paul Richardson in the front corner of the end zone for a 9-yard touchdown with 7:06 left for host Seattle.

It was an offensive nightmare as both teams had combined for 14 total quarters without a touchdown this season before the Seahawks finally broke the seal on the goal line.

Raiders 45, Jets 20: Marshawn Lynch ran for a touchdown in his first home game with host Oakland and Derek Carr threw three TD passes to Michael Crabtree.

Redskins 27, Rams 20: Kirk Cousins threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Ryan Grant with 1:49 to play to give the visiting Redskins the victory against their former assistant coach, Rams rookie head coach Sean McVay.

Chiefs 27, Eagles 20: Chiefs rookie Kareem Hunt reached

the end zone twice, Travis Kelce took a shovel pass 15 yards for the go-ahead touchdown and host Kansas City held on.

Cardinals 16, Colts 13 (OT): Carson Palmer's late rally got the Cardinals into overtime and Tyrann Mathieu's interception set up Phil Dawson for a 30-yard field goal to win it for visiting Arizona.

Dawson made the most of his second chance after pushing a 42-yarder wide right as regulation time expired.

Steelers 26, Vikings 9: Ben Roethlisberger threw a pair of first-half touchdown passes, Le'Veon Bell ran for 87 yards and the host Steelers kept Minnesota in check.

Roethlisberger hit Martavis Bryant for a 27-yard score in the first quarter and flipped a shovel pass to JuJu Smith-Schuster that the rookie turned into a 4-yard score. Roethlisberger finished 23 of 35 for 243 yards and the two scores as the

Steelers (2-0) improved to 10-1 in home openers under Mike Tomlin.

Buccaneers 29, Bears 7: Jameis Winston threw for 204 yards and one touchdown, helping the host Buccaneers return from an unscheduled bye week forced by Hurricane Irma.

Ravens 24, Browns 10: Host Baltimore relentlessly harassed two Cleveland quarterbacks, Joe Flacco ramped up his production with a pair of touchdown passes and the Ravens breezed.

Titans 37, Jaguars 16: Derrick Henry, Delanie Walker and Jalston Fowler each ran for touchdowns as the Titans dominated the host Jaguars.

Panthers 9, Bills 3: Host Carolina's defense allowed only three points for the second straight week, and Graham Gano converted three field goals.

Racing roundup

Truex opens playoff with Chicagoland win

Associated Press

JOLIET, Ill. — Martin Truex Jr. stretched his arms to his side and waited for a shower of green slime, the colored goop traditionally poured over the heads of game-show contestants and A-list celebrities.

Add NASCAR race winner to the list.

"It's a lot funner to watch people get slimed than it is to get slimed," a smiling and sticky Truex said. "But it's definitely worth it to get that after the race."

Truex might have left the rest of the field green with envy that he was again the driver celebrating in Victory Lane.

Truex backed up his regular-season dominance with a victory Sunday in NASCAR's playoff opener at Chicagoland Speedway that solidified himself as the driver to beat over the final nine races as he chases his first Cup championship.

He raced to his fifth victory of the season and earned an automatic berth in the second round of the playoffs, piling on more

points in his bid to compete for the title in the finale at Homestead.

A driver with three Cup wins in his first 10 seasons, Truex has nine over the last two years for Furniture Row Racing.

"I think we all realize it's just a unique time in history, in all our lives, that this has come together," team owner Barney Visser said.

Truex was in cruise control over the final 55 laps and built a nearly 7-second lead over Chase Elliott to win at Chicagoland for the second straight season. Truex's car flunked inspection following the win last season and the No. 78 Toyota ran into more issues Sunday — the car needed four tries through pre-race inspection before it was cleared and Truex later overcame an early pit-road penalty. By the end, there was no doubt the path to the NASCAR championship goes through the 37-year-old Truex.

Elliott was second, followed by playoff drivers Kevin Harvick, Denny Hamlin and Kyle Larson.

Truex had a win snatched from him last week at Richmond because of a late caution and he ended up crashing.

Truex entered the playoffs at the No. 1 seed with four wins, 18 stage wins and he totaled a whopping 53 bonus points that he can keep through the first three playoff rounds.

Truex leads the standings by 27 points over Larson.

IndyCar: Josef Newgarden won his first IndyCar championship by closing out the best year of his career as the top driver at Team Penske.

Newgarden turned in a nearly flawless performance Sunday at Sonoma Raceway to prevent his Penske teammates, as well as four-time champion Scott Dixon, from taking the title away from him. Penske driver Simon Pagenaud used pit strategy to win the race, but Newgarden finished second to win the title by 17 points.

Newgarden is only the second American in 11 years to win the IndyCar title.

Astros clinch division for first time since '01

Associated Press

HOUSTON — When the Houston Astros traded for Justin Verlander less than three weeks ago, they envisioned days like this.

Verlander struck out 10 batters over seven innings in his first home start for Houston, Derek Fisher and Marwin Gonzalez homered in a big fifth inning and the Astros clinched the American League West with a 7-1 win over the Seattle Mariners.

“The story is almost too good to be true,” manager A.J. Hinch said. “We trade for him for this exact reason to come up in big moments. He was locked in from the very beginning. Nobody better to have on the mound and nobody better to celebrate with.”

The Astros acquired the ace from Detroit on Aug. 31, just minutes before the deadline for players to be eligible for postseason play. He had made two starts on the road before his Minute Maid Park debut.

“I don’t think you could ask for a better introduction for me to the city of Houston than this,” Verlander said. “First home start would have been great. First home

start and a win would have been great. First home start and to win in a division-clinching game — you can’t make that up. And I’m looking forward to hopefully many more wins.”

George Springer and Carlos Correa also homered for the Astros, who won their first division title since 2001 and seventh overall. The Astros become the first team in Major League Baseball history to win titles in three divisions after previously winning the NL West and NL Central.

As the Astros celebrated Sunday’s accomplishment, they were quick to target a strong finish to the regular season to try to secure home-field advantage in the postseason by finishing with the best record in the AL. Houston led the AL for most of the season, but Cleveland moved ahead with its recent 22-game winning streak.

Houston has reached the postseason three times as a wild-card team since last winning its division in 2001 — with a team that included Seattle manager Scott Servais. The Astros will return to the playoffs for the second time in three seasons after

ending a 10-year postseason drought in 2015. Owner Jim Crane, who bought the team in 2011 and oversaw rebuilding, reveled in the celebration.

“I had a little tear in my eye,” he said. “This has been a long time coming.”

For the few still on the team who endured the really lean years, winning this first division title in 16 years was even more special.

“It means a lot because I was here when we lost 100 games three years in a row,” Jose Altuve said. “Now I’m part of some winning teams and that means a lot to me.”

Verlander (13-8) retired his first seven batters before Ben Gamel homered into the right-center bullpen in the third. He allowed just two singles after that to improve to 3-0 with a 0.86 ERA since the trade. Verlander walked one and raised his strikeout total with Houston to 26 in three games.

“We knew we were going to have to keep it close because we probably weren’t going to get a lot off Verlander,” Servais said. “Obviously, he was really good again today.”

Roundup

Washington beats Dodgers to avoid sweep

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Nationals qualified for the playoffs in three of the previous five years, yet injuries have limited Stephen Strasburg to just one postseason start in that span. Left largely without the All-Star right-hander, Washington lost the opening series each time.

If Strasburg keeps up his current level, postseason failures may become a thing of the past.

Strasburg ended his club-record scoreless streak at 35 innings, but two home runs from Ryan Zimmerman helped the NL Cy Young Award contender win his fourth consecutive start as Washington beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 7-1 on Sunday night.

“Stras’ was awesome,” Nationals manager Dusty Baker said.

Tigers 12, White Sox 0: At Detroit, Matthew Boyd’s no-hit bid ended when Tim Anderson

doubled with two outs in the ninth inning, but the Tigers’ left-hander closed out a one-hitter for the first shutout of his professional career.

Rays 3, Red Sox 2: David Price returned from a nearly two-month layoff by pitching two hitless innings for the Boston Red Sox in a loss to host Tampa Bay.

Padres 4, Rockies 3: Colorado closer Greg Holland dropped the ball trying to tag Matt Szczur at home on Austin Hedges’ squeeze bunt in the ninth inning, allowing visiting San Diego to finish its rally and beat the Rockies.

Orioles 6, Yankees 4: At New York, Ubaldo Jimenez (6-1) struck out 10 in just five innings, and Tim Beckham hit a three-run homer off Sonny Gray (9-11), who allowed five runs in four innings during his shortest start this season.

Twins 13, Blue Jays 7: Eddie Rosario homered twice, Joe Mauer hit his first grand

slam at home and host Minnesota overcame a 5-0 deficit with seven runs in the second inning and six in the fifth.

Rangers 4, Angels 2: At Anaheim, Calif., Joey Gallo hit a home run off Garrett Richards (0-2) that landed near the top of the grass hill in center in the second inning, a drive that would have traveled 490 feet unimpeded, according to MLB Statcast.

Indians 3, Royals 2: A day after host Cleveland clinched the AL Central, Corey Kluber (17-4) allowed three singles in seven innings. He has not given up a run in 22 innings and has lost once since July 4.

Cubs 4, Cardinals 3: Jason Heyward hit a tiebreaking RBI single off Matt Bowman with two outs in the seventh as host Chicago overcame a 3-0 deficit to win its sixth straight game.

Brewers 10, Marlins 3: Travis Shaw, Jesus Aguilar and Manny Pina each had two hits in an eight-run fourth inning.

The Brewers won two of three in a series moved from Florida following Hurricane Irma.

Reds 5, Pirates 2: Eugenio Suarez and Scooter Gennett hit two-run homers in the sixth off Gerrit Cole (11-11) as Cincinnati completed its second three-game sweep of visiting Pittsburgh this season.

Athletics 6, Phillies 3: At Philadelphia, Joey Wendle hit a go-ahead grand slam off Edu-bray Ramos after the first two batters in the sixth reached off Henderson Alvarez (0-1).

Mets 5, Braves 1: At Atlanta, Robert Gsellman (7-7) allowed an unearned run and three hits in seven innings, while pinch-hitter Asdrubal Cabrera had a two-run, pinch-hit homer.

Giants 7, Diamondbacks 2: Pablo Sandoval homered and drove in three runs, as San Francisco snapped visiting Arizona’s nine-game road winning streak.