

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Mattis: Military option on N. Korea could be necessary

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The United States must face the “somber reality” that military action against North Korea could be necessary should diplomacy fail to curb the nation’s hostile provocations, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Wednesday.

“This is still a diplomatically led effort,” Mattis told the Air Force Association’s annual Air, Space & Cyber Conference in Washington. “It is one that is fully supported by the Department of Defense, in terms of ensuring that the military options exist.”

Mattis’ comments came the day after President Donald Trump during his speech to the U.N. General Assembly threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea if Kim Jong Un’s regime forced the United States to defend itself or its allies.

Pentagon leaders have provided Trump with a range of military options for dealing with Kim, whose regime has launched 22 missiles in 2017. This month, North Korea conducted its sixth, and most powerful, nuclear test.

Mattis and other Pentagon leaders have been tight-lipped on what the options entail. The de-

fense secretary told reporters Monday that they include actions that would not risk Seoul, South Korea’s capital of more than 10 million people in range of North Korean artillery. He declined to say whether the options included a cyberattack.

A war on the Korean Peninsula would be brutal and likely kill millions of civilians on both sides, Mattis and other Pentagon officials have said.

That’s the primary reason that the United States for now is relying on the international community to find a diplomatic solution, Mattis said Wednesday.

Nonetheless, Kim has shown no sign that he intends to stop testing missiles or abandon his nuclear program.

The military routinely sends strategic bombers and fighter aircraft to fly near North Korean airspace after a Kim provocation.

On Monday, two American B-1 bombers and four F-35 strike fighters flew over the Korean Peninsula alongside South Korean aircraft in a show of force that followed Kim’s latest missile launch. The planes dropped live weapons over a South Korean training range, according to U.S. Pacific Command.

## New Navy unit will focus on ship readiness

BY TYLER HLAVAC  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy is standing up a new unit to look at warship readiness in the Western Pacific following a string of serious accidents.

Naval Surface Group Western Pacific will focus on ships assigned to the 7th Fleet, Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, Naval Surface Forces commander, told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday. Rowden is in Japan this week visiting 7th Fleet ships at naval bases in Yokosuka and Sasebo.

Some have suggested lack of time for training, maintenance and certification is at least partly to blame for collisions involving 7th Fleet ships that have killed 17 sailors in recent months.

The new unit will differ from the Yokosuka-based Afloat Training Group Western Pacific, which looks at certifying specific ship parts but doesn’t evaluate vessels as a whole. It will let the Navy know whether a ship is able to conduct operations or if another ship should be sent instead, he said.

Led by a yet-to-be-named officer who has already commanded a cruiser, destroyer, amphibious squadron or amphibious-assault ship, the group will be an honest broker that can say, “Should this ship go do that, or is there another ship that’s available?” Rowden said.

A previous version of the group worked out of Subic Bay, Philippines, before moving to Singapore in 1992 to become Logistics Group Western Pacific, which is now focused on supporting ships logistically in the region. A similar group, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, oversees the maintenance and training of ships homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

## Staff at Navy hospital reassigned after calling babies ‘mini Satans’

*The Washington Post*

Two medical staffers at a U.S. Navy hospital in Florida were barred from caring for patients after they were seen in disturbing images mishandling a newborn, making obscene gestures and calling babies “mini Satans.”

One video shows a female staffer in gloves and medical scrubs holding the infant by the armpit, moving the arms and body as music played in the background.

One photo shows a staffer

flipping a middle finger at the infant. Its caption reads: “How I currently feel about these mini Satans.”

It’s unclear from the images if the female employee in the video is the same person flipping her middle finger in the photo.

ABC affiliate WFTS reported that the photo is an image from a Snapchat account belonging to one of the employees.

The post also said that the “navy nurse” and her friend held up the baby and made it dance to rap music, according

to WFTS.

Capt. Brenda Malone, spokeswoman for the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, which oversees several hospitals around the country, said the employees are corpsmen for the Navy, not nurses.

Malone said they are still assigned at the Jacksonville, Fla., hospital but are no longer providing direct patient care.

She said the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, which looks into felony offenses affecting the Navy and Marine Corps, is investigating.

## AF backs chaplain who said Christians should not support those of other faiths

BY DIANNA CAHN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Air Force said Tuesday it stands behind a Reserve chaplain who has come under fire for saying that Christian servicemembers should not support the rights of other religions to practice their faith because “that will lead them to hell.”

Capt. Sonny Hernandez, a chaplain with the 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, was called out for his controversial remarks last week. The Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which advocates on behalf of a pluralistic military with sharp separation of church and state, filed a new complaint to the Department of Defense Inspector General requesting it investigate Hernandez after the chaplain called Christian servicemembers who give credence to other faiths “counterfeit Christians.”

MRFF founder and President Mikey Weinstein said in a statement that Hernandez “blatantly and indisputably advocates the subordinating of the U.S. Constitution to his personal Christian ideology” and charged that he violated his military oath. Weinstein didn’t respond to voicemail and email requests Tuesday for comment.

The controversy raises questions over the role of chaplains and where the boundaries lie between spiritual leadership and innate freedoms of religion and speech guaranteed under the Constitution that all servicemembers swear to “support and defend.” Chaplains must be certified as “willing to function in a pluralistic environment ... and to support directly and indirectly the free exercise of religion by all members of the Military Services, their family members and other persons authorized to be served by the military chaplaincies,” according to the Defense Department.

Hernandez says he was expressing a theological argument that there is only one path to spiritual redemption. He believes his role is as a missionary — to share that message with as many people as he can.

“I am a Christian; I am 24/7, 365 days a year an evangelist and a missionary,” he said. “These are my moral principles and I have a standing objective to defend that.”

Air Force Reserve spokesman Lt. Col. Chad Gibson said Hernandez is expressing his own views, not those of the Air Force, and his freedom to express his own faith is an essential protection in the military. The Air Force is not conducting an investigation, he said.

# IG probes can take time, usually mean retirement

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY  
*Stars and Stripes*

VICENZA, Italy — If the investigation into Maj. Gen. Joseph Harrington’s alleged flirtatious texting of a local woman proceeds like similar past probes, he’ll join an Air Force three-star, a Marine four-star and scores of other senior officers in undergoing months of turbulence, followed by retirement.

Harrington, commander of U.S. Army Africa since June 2016, was suspended from command Sept. 1 after allegations that he’d for months exchanged messages with an enlisted soldier’s young wife who he’d met at the gym.

The Army Inspector General opened an investigation just as some of the messages were provided to the press.

Although the investigation was just beginning, experts said that the texts, harmless in other circumstances, would likely be enough to support a finding of conduct unbecoming an officer.

Among the factors are Harrington’s rank and marital status, as well as the woman being the wife of an enlisted soldier.

Although the soldier was not in Harrington’s chain of command, he fell under Harrington’s court-martial convening authority.

“It’s pretty clear it’s conduct unbecoming an officer,” said Boston law professor and former Army lawyer Victor Hansen, who reviewed some of the messages.

Hansen has represented a dozen senior officers undergoing IG probes, which are administrative and intended to investigate a variety of misconduct, including minor criminal matters.

Similar cases have resulted in a letter of reprimand from the vice chief of staff, which would effectively end a general’s career, Hansen said.

That assumes no other misconduct is unearthed by the investigation, Hansen said, which could delve into Harrington’s texts, emails, travel vouchers, expense reports and more.

There have been no allegations that Harrington and the woman, who has requested anonymity, engaged in anything more than the texting relationship.

The investigations usually begin when an audit turns up potential wrongdoing, or after someone files a complaint.

The investigations are on no particular timeline — some have lasted years — and

are usually kept secret, although in some cases the final reports are made public when misconduct is found.

Their subjects, meanwhile, spend their time under a cloud of suspicion, usually as “special assistants” in administrative jobs, unable either to retire or move to a new assignment. They are also provided little information as the investigation churns on.

“They’re left in the dark and they’re basically told nothing,” said Hansen, who called the probes “Kafkaesque.”

One of Hansen’s clients, a major general accused of misusing a government contractor, became so despondent and angry that his wife left him, Hansen said.

“The universal cry of all these guys is, ‘This is so unfair, this is such minor stuff,’” Hansen said. “They all say that — and they’re right. But the Army comes back and says that the expectations we have of our senior leadership is very high. If you can’t meet it, sorry.”

Don Christensen, a former Air Force top prosecutor and judge who is now president of Protect Our Defenders, the advocacy group for military sexual assault survivors that received the alleged Harrington emails from the woman, said top military officers enjoy enormous prestige and power and should act accordingly.

“You’ve accepted the position of a two-star — these things can’t happen now because of how it affects your authority as a two-star,” Christensen said. “In that position, you just can’t do it.”

Two-thirds of Hansen’s cases involved some sort of sexual misconduct, he said. The misconduct ranged from suggestive emails to affairs to one senior officer back from Iraq with an alcohol problem who groped multiple women, including a major, at a party.

Had any of them been wrongly accused? “Oh, hell, no,” Hansen said.

Hansen said on average the IG investigates six to 12 senior officers a year for some sort of sexual misconduct.

A few of Hansen’s clients were philosophical in the face of their downfall, admitted that they had erred and had gotten caught, and accepted their fates, he said.

“The one thing these guys luck out with is that the Army has no interest in making these cases public. From a defense standpoint, that’s your leverage,” Hansen said. “You go in there, own up to it and say, ‘Let’s get me gone.’”

# Navy awards \$17.9M contract on Guam

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Virginia-based company has been awarded a \$17.9 million contract to build a waterfront headquarters building at Naval Base Guam as part of plans to relocate Okinawa-based Marines to the tiny Western Pacific territory in the coming years, Navy officials said Tuesday.

Construction by Contrack Watts Inc. is set to include reinforced concrete with pile

foundations and all components such as exterior walls, windows, roofing, mechanical and electrical systems, as well as furniture, fittings and equipment, according to a statement released by Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific. The mechanical and electrical systems will be built to meet Guam's earthquake and weather standards.

The work will be paid for by the Japanese government and is expected to be completed at Apra Harbor in April 2019, the

Navy said.

The contract was the better of two proposals received, and is the latest in a string of contract awards made in support of the Defense Policy Review Initiative, the statement said.

In August, the Navy awarded a \$164.89 million contract to design and build "utilities and site improvements" for the future Marine Corps Base Guam on Naval Computer and Telecommunications Site Finegayan and a \$78 million contract to design and build a live-fire

training range complex at Andersen Air Force Base's Northwest Field.

The plan to relocate Marines to Guam from Okinawa was first agreed upon in 2006 after small but fervent Okinawan protests. The southern Japanese island prefecture hosts about half of all U.S. military and civilian personnel stationed in Japan. Approximately 4,100 Marines are scheduled to be moved to Guam sometime between 2022 and 2026.

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## Soldiers training for retaking land

BY LEON COOK  
*Stars and Stripes*

EAST FUJI MANEUVER AREA, Japan — U.S. and Japanese troops trained to retake territory occupied by an invading force during live-fire drills near Mount Fuji on Tuesday.

Six hundred members of the Alaska-based 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division worked with an equal number of Japanese troops from the 34th Infantry Regiment, 1st Division, Eastern Army during the annual Orient Shield exercise.

The Japanese troops are being encouraged to be more aggressive than in the past, not only defending positions but working to recapture ground taken by invaders, said Lt. Col. Josh Davis, commander of the Army's 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment.

In one drill, Japanese artillery pummeled the countryside before U.S. and Japanese infantry and fighting vehicles moved forward to seize objectives. After the attack, Japanese forces took up defensive positions while U.S. soldiers stayed on offense, Davis said.

"The Japanese are masters of defense," Davis said. "Their ability to defend is

unmatched."

The scenario reflected increased tension in a region where North Korea launched a second missile over Japan's northern island of Hokkaido late last week. That happened just days after Japan Ground Self-Defense Force 1st Division commander Lt. Gen. Shoichi Shibata talked about a "grave situation" at the Orient Shield opening ceremony.

The focus on recapturing territory also saw troops train to enter and clear buildings, an unusual task for the defense-centric Japanese.

"It's in line with the Japanese self-defense plan," Davis said. "After an incursion from an adversary they will go on the offense and then transition back to the defense."

While the infantry and artillery were putting lead on targets, U.S. and Japanese medics practiced evacuations using each other's helicopters.

"The Japanese medics are very highly trained and I'm confident in their skills," said 1st Lt. Preston Keim, a physician assistant with 3-21 Infantry.

Orient Shield concludes Monday after two weeks of training.

## Coast Guard sets record for cocaine seizures at sea

*The Washington Post*

The Coast Guard has set a record for cocaine seizures at sea for the second consecutive year, an effort that admirals are linking to border security as they look to build new ships while President Donald Trump presses for a border wall.

The service was to highlight the record Wednesday in San Diego alongside Attorney General Jeff Sessions as it was set to offload 50,550 pounds of cocaine and a smaller amount of heroin from the USCGC Stratton, a 418-foot cutter that is one of several vessels involved in recent operations. The drugs were confiscated by four Coast Guard cutters and the Navy destroyer USS Chaffee in the eastern Pacific Ocean, a longtime trafficking route from South and Central America.

Overall, the Coast Guard has seized more than 455,000 pounds of cocaine through Sept. 11 in the fiscal year that will end Oct. 1, breaking the record of 443,790 pounds set last year. About 85 percent of that comes from the eastern Pacific, service officials said. The Coast Guard also has detained at least 681 suspected smugglers in those operations, up from 585 last year and 503 in 2015.

Adm. Paul F. Zukunft, the Coast Guard commandant, said in an interview that massive

offloads of drugs are starting to become "just another day in the service." The amount of cocaine on the high seas has exploded since the Colombian government eased the aerial eradication of coca plants through spraying in 2016 as part of a peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a rebel group with which it had warred for 52 years.

The Coast Guard has pressed for additional funding as it looks to gradually build eight large national security cutters for service in open ocean, 25 offshore patrol cutters for intermediate operations and 58 fast-response cutters for missions near shore to replace an aging fleet of about 90 ships, according to a Congressional Research Service report released in August.

The service got a wakeup call in March when a draft version of Trump's budget called for the service to take a \$1.3 billion budget cut to \$7.8 billion in 2018 to help fund the president's border wall. The sea service eventually secured level-funding after Republicans and Democrats alike protested the choice, but Zukunft acknowledged that he has become more vocal in advocating for the Coast Guard as a part of border security in part because of that experience.

But the service is still short-handed at sea.

# Maria floods much of Puerto Rico

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — One of the strongest hurricanes ever to hit Puerto Rico pummeled the island Wednesday, tearing off roofs and doors, toppling cell towers and unleashing heavy flooding in an onslaught that could deepen the U.S. territory's financial crisis.

Maria, which left at least nine people dead in its wake across the Caribbean, blew ashore in the morning in the southeast coastal town of Yabucoa as a Category 4 hurricane with winds of 155 mph.

It was expected to punish the island with life-threatening winds for 12 to 24 hours.

As people took cover inside stairwells, bathrooms and closets, Maria slowly crossed the island, knocking down communication towers, snapping trees and unloading at least 20 inches of rain. Widespread flooding was reported across the island, with dozens of cars half-submerged in some neighborhoods and many streets turned into rivers.

The storm threatened to ravage the island's already crumbling power grid and worsen its economic woes. Puerto Rico is struggling to restructure a portion of its \$73 billion public debt, and the gov-

ernment has warned it is running out of money as it deals with furloughs and other austerity measures imposed by a federal board overseeing the island's finances.

Gov. Ricardo Rossello urged people to have faith. "We are stronger than any hurricane," he said. "Together, we will rebuild."

He later asked President Donald Trump to declare the island a disaster zone, a step that would open the way to federal aid.

El Nuevo Dia newspaper reported that 80 percent of homes in a small fishing community near San Juan were damaged and that an emergency medical station in the coastal town of Arecibo lost its roof, while communication was severed with several emergency management posts.

About 90 percent of customers were without power. Those who sought shelter at a coliseum in San Juan were moved to the building's second and third floors, radio station WKAQ-AM reported.

Many feared that extended power outages would further sink businesses already struggling amid a recession that has lasted more than a decade.

Previously a Category 5 with 175 mph winds, Maria hit Puerto Rico as the third-strongest storm to make landfall in the

United States based on a key measurement that meteorologists use: air pressure. The lower the central pressure, the stronger a storm is. Maria's pressure was 917 millibars, lower than Irma's 929 millibars when it roared into the Florida Keys earlier this month.

Maria struck less than two weeks after Puerto Rico got sideswiped by Hurricane Irma, which caused no deaths or widespread damage on the island but left more than 1 million people without electricity. More than 70,000 people were still without power as Maria approached.

Hurricanes tend to veer north or south of the island. The last Category 4 hurricane to blow ashore in Puerto Rico was in 1932, and the strongest ever to hit the island was San Felipe in 1928 with winds of 160 mph.

More than 4,400 people were in shelters by late Tuesday, the governor said.

The storm's center passed near or over St. Croix overnight Tuesday, prompting U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Kenneth Mapp to warn people to remain alert. St. Croix was largely spared the widespread damage caused by Irma on the chain's St. Thomas and St. John islands.

## Mexicans search for survivors after 7.1 quake

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Rescuers said Wednesday they have found a surviving child in the ruins of a school that collapsed in Mexico's magnitude 7.1 earthquake, one of many efforts across the city to save people trapped in under schools, homes and businesses toppled by a quake that killed at least 225 people.

Helmeted workers worked at the debris, sometimes calling for silence, as they tried to reach the girl at the Enrique Rebsamen school in southern Mexico City.

Foro TV reported that rescuers spotted the child and shouted to her to move her hand if she could hear them, and she did. A search dog subsequently entered the wreckage and confirmed she was alive.

Tuesday's magnitude-7.1 quake struck on the 32nd anniversary of the 1985 earthquake that killed thousands. Just hours before it hit, people

around Mexico had held earthquake drills to mark the date.

One of the most desperate rescue efforts was at the Rebsamen primary and secondary school, where a wing of the three-story building collapsed into a massive pancake of concrete slabs. Journalists saw rescuers pull at least two small bodies from the rubble, covered in sheets.

Volunteer rescue worker Dr. Pedro Serrano managed to crawl into the crevices of the tottering pile of rubble that had been the Enrique Rebsamen school. He made it into a classroom, but found all of its occupants dead.

"We saw some chairs and wooden tables. The next thing we saw was a leg, and then we started to move rubble and we found a girl and two adults — a woman and a man," he said.

"We can hear small noises, but we don't know if they're coming from above or below, from the walls above (crumbling), or someone below call-

ing for help."

A mix of neighborhood volunteers, police and firefighters used trained dogs and their bare hands to search through the school's ruins. The crowd of anxious parents outside the gates shared reports that two families had received WhatsApp messages from girls trapped inside, but that could not be confirmed.

Rescuers brought in wooden beams to shore up the fallen concrete slabs so they wouldn't collapse further and crush whatever airspaces remained.

The federal Education Department reported late Tuesday that 25 bodies had been recovered from the school's wreckage, all but four of them children.

In a video message released late Tuesday, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto urged people to be calm and said authorities were moving to provide help as 40 percent of Mexico City and 60 percent

of nearby Morelos state were without power. But, he said, "the priority at this moment is to keep rescuing people who are still trapped and to give medical attention to the injured people."

People across central Mexico already had rallied to help their neighbors as dozens of buildings tumbled into mounds of broken concrete. Mexico City Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera said buildings fell at 44 sites in the capital alone as high-rises across the city swayed and twisted and hundreds of thousands of panicked people ran into the streets.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 7.1 quake hit at 1:14 p.m. and was centered near the Puebla state town of Raboso, 76 miles southeast of Mexico City. Much of Mexico City is built on former lakebed, and the soil can amplify the effects of earthquakes centered hundreds of miles away.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Coyotes surround dog walker, try to take pet

**NJ** SADDLE RIVER — Police in New Jersey are warning that a pack of coyotes surrounded a dog walker and attempted to snatch the dog.

The confrontation took place Sept. 14 on Oak Road in Saddle River.

Police said approximately five coyotes circled within a 6-foot radius of the person and the small, leashed dog.

The pack ran off when a passing motorist honked the horn and got out of the vehicle.

State wildlife officials are investigating.

### Man accused of shooting at egg-throwing teens

**MT** BILLINGS — A Billings man is accused of firing an assault rifle at three teenage boys who threw eggs at his house.

KULR-TV reported that Brandell Jamez Zavala was charged with felony criminal endangerment for the incident that happened July 11.

Court documents accuse Zavala of coming out of his home with an AR-15 and firing one round toward the boys as they ran away.

Police said Zavala refused to let officers in his home at the time of the incident and also refused to show them the gun. Officers said Zavala changed his story multiple times throughout the evening.

### 70-year-old man charged after machete fight

**FL** DELAND — Police said a 70-year-old Florida man cut another man's face with a machete during a fight in a bank parking lot.

The Orlando Sentinel reported that the DeLand Police Department responded to a fight Monday morning and found George Dominguez with a large cut on his face and Arlen Hubbard waiting in his car.

Dominguez told police Hubbard had almost hit him with his car, leading to a verbal confrontation that escalated into a physical fight.

The arrest report says the two began pushing each other, and Hubbard got a machete and cut Dominguez.

Dominguez told police he didn't want to press charges against Hubbard. He was taken to the hospital.

Hubbard faces aggravated battery charges.

### Prosecutor: 24 indicted in staged crash case

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Nevada's top state prosecutor said 24 people have been indicted in a scheme alleging they staged car crashes and filed about \$500,000 worth of fraudulent insurance claims in Las Vegas.

Attorney General Adam Laxalt said Monday the 68-count indictment filed Sept. 14 in Clark County District Court represents the largest multi-defendant case in the history of his office.

Charges include racketeering, conspiracy, battery with a deadly weapon, insurance fraud and multiple transactions involving fraud or deceit in the course of an enterprise.

Laxalt said most crashes happened in a 2½-year span on Nellis Boulevard in northeast Las Vegas in an area with heavy traffic and 45 mph speed zones.

One accused ringleader faces 56 felony charges in the case. Another defendant faces 19 counts.

### Police capture alligator found near campground

**RI** GLOCESTER — Rhode Island authorities captured an alligator hanging out near a campground.

WJAR-TV reported that motorists spotted the 4-foot-long alligator near the Holiday Acres Campground in Gloucester last weekend.

Police, animal control officers and the state Department of Environmental Management responded to the scene after receiving calls.

Police caught the wayward reptile with the help of a man who jumped on top of it. Authorities said no one was hurt during the capture.

Environmental Management officials took the alligator away. Investigators said it's unclear how the alligator ended up in Gloucester.

### 500-pound musical clock new to downtown

**IL** EFFINGHAM — A law firm in downtown Effingham has added a more-than-500-pound cast-iron clock that will play music.

The Effingham Daily News reported that staffers at the Taylor Law Office building have been working with an Ohio company for several months on the personalized clock. It was delivered Sept. 11. The clock is more than 7 feet tall and nearly 4 feet wide. It's black with gold ribbing with the wording "Taylor Law" and "Est. 1883" written on it.

Office administrator Gayle Leuschke said the firm "wanted to give something back to the community." The idea for the clock has been around about a decade but it wasn't put into production until the spring when the style, face type and paint color were selected.

### Man wanted for stealing dead man's clothes

**KY** LEITCHFIELD — Police in Kentucky are seeking a man who broke into a funeral home and stole several items from a man who was scheduled to be buried.

WYMT-TV reported Sunday that surveillance video showed the man going inside Watson and Hunt Funeral Home in Leitchfield last week, taking a nap, drinking soda and stealing candy and the keys to a hearse. The suspect then took clothing and jewelry belonging to a man who was to be buried.

Police said the suspect might be connected to a Walmart theft last week.

### Twice bitten, man won't play with snakes again

**AZ** PHOENIX — A 48-year-old Arizona man hospitalized for a week after being bitten twice by a rattlesnake he was holding says he "ain't gonna play with snakes no more."

Victor Pratt, of Coolidge, told the Arizona Republic that the rattler slipped out of his grasp as he showed it off to friends and family after finding the snake on his property.

Pratt said he was bitten once when he was 19 so he knew he needed to go to a hospital immediately.

He's been undergoing treatment with antivenin, first being treated at a local hospital and then transferred to Banner-University Medical Center Phoenix.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Penguins hit ice eyeing 'three-peat'

Associated Press

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP, Pa. — A month. That's it. That's all the down time Sidney Crosby afforded himself following one of the more dominant runs in hockey history.

At the end of an equal parts thrilling and draining two-year stretch that included over 200 games, a World Cup of hockey gold medal for Team Canada and a pair of Stanley Cup parades through downtown Pittsburgh, the Penguins captain managed to squeeze — or maybe tolerate is the better word — four weeks off during another abbreviated summer.

More than enough, Crosby insists, for the fire that burns within to start anew.

"It's a pretty short offseason, but short offseasons are good," Crosby said Friday as the Penguins began training camp. "Having that type of hockey fresh in your mind isn't necessarily a bad thing, either."

Not when the prospect of history beckons. Pittsburgh became the first team in nearly two decades to repeat as champion when it ended Nashville's

stunning run to the Cup Final last spring. No club since the New York Islanders of the early 1980s has captured three consecutive Cups.

Not Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier and the 1980s Edmonton Oilers. Not Crosby's boss, Penguins owner Mario Lemieux, who came up short in Pittsburgh's bid for a three-peat in 1993. Not Crosby's idol, Hall of Fame center Steve Yzerman, who couldn't get out of the conference semifinals with Detroit in 1999.

Crosby, who turned 30 in August, welcomes the opportunity but also didn't spend July and August pondering what another raucous Cup victory would mean to his own burgeoning legacy.

"You've got a window to be a professional hockey player and you just want to enjoy that and give my absolute best in that time frame," Crosby said. "And I think just being able to be on a winning team last year, coming back and see a lot of the same faces and have that fresh in your mind and want that again, that's enough motivation."

Not every face is the same.

While Pittsburgh general manager Jim Rutherford deftly kept the group that won it all in 2016 largely intact, no amount of creative accounting could help the Penguins avoid the reality that success comes at a substantial cost in the salary-cap era.

Goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury was sent to expansion Las Vegas following the rise of Matt Murray. Trevor Daley bolted for a big contract in Detroit. Nick Bonino did the same in Nashville. Chris Kunitz took a one-year deal in Tampa. Matt Cullen put off retirement one more year so he could have a last hurrah in his native Minnesota.

"You really miss those guys, but that being said, you can't wallow in self-pity when they're not here or long after them like a heartbroken lover, if you will," Pittsburgh defenseman Ian Cole said. "Those guys will certainly be missed. If you said anything else, you'd be lying. But it's something that's the name of the game and that's the business that we're in."

One the Penguins stress will not prevent them from setting their sights on another extend-

ed playoff stay, preferably the kind that ends with champagne showers in the dressing room in mid-June. There are holes that need to be addressed, namely at third-line center after Bonino split for the Predators. Yet Rutherford is in no hurry to fill them. Last he checked, the Penguins still have Crosby and Evgeni Malkin. Two of the best players in the world on the roster have a way of buying peace of mind.

"That's why I don't have to be pressured to have one for opening night when you have those two centers," Rutherford said. "They carry the load."

Oh, and they have help. Jake Guentzel was a sensation during his rookie season, scoring an NHL-high 13 goals during the playoffs and his versatility could make him a candidate at center in a pinch. Defenseman Kris Letang is back after recovering from neck surgery in April that rendered him an impeccably dressed spectator.

Letang considers himself "lucky to be on the ice" and called his first workout with his teammates in months "a big step."

## Ovechkin expects Caps to be right in hunt for Cup

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — Alex Ovechkin doesn't think the Washington Capitals suddenly stink.

Forwards Justin Williams, Marcus Johansson and Daniel Winnik and defensemen Karl Alzner, Nate Schmidt and Kevin Shattenkirk are gone, as are the expectations of Washington being a no-doubt Stanley Cup contender following another disappointing playoff exit. But now that he has put the Olympic question to bed, Ovechkin is ready to prepare for a different kind of season and show that he and the Capitals are still relevant.

"I think we have still good team," Ovechkin said Fri-

day after the first practices of training camp. "We're gonna be fine."

On paper, the Capitals lost 60 goals from their departed forwards alone and will be counting on more from Ovechkin — who turned 32 on Sunday — and fellow leaders Nicklas Backstrom, T.J. Oshie and Evgeny Kuznetsov. Back-to-back seasons with the NHL's most points were followed by a salary-cap crunch that will infuse Washington's roster with some young, unproven talent and put the onus on the big-money players to shoulder a bigger load.

"I know the situation we have right now: We all have to step up," said Kuznetsov, who is beginning a \$62.4 million, eight-year contract. "The few guys

never win the Cup. It's always about team. If you look at some not-friendly teams who win two times in a row, they have young guys every year and they step up and they score."

The past two seasons, the Capitals went out in the second round to the back-to-back Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins. Fair or not in a team sport, Washington's lack of playoff success has affected how Ovechkin is seen as a player with three first-round and six second-round exits during his 12 NHL seasons.

Losses to the Penguins showed the Capitals that team speed is as valuable as anything else, and MacLellan hopes that's one benefit of bringing in younger players. Prospects

Jakub Vrana, Riley Barber and Nathan Walker are competing for forward spots and Lucas Johansen, Christian Djoos and Madison Bowey for jobs on defense.

"There's opportunities here," MacLellan said. "We've got a lot of good, young guys trying for jobs."

Ovechkin's job as the face of the franchise and a top player is safe, though he'll be counted on to produce more with less roster depth. So even though Ovechkin doesn't see scoring goals as his goal, he'll have to do that to get Washington back to the playoffs for the 10th time in 11 seasons.

"I want to win a Stanley Cup, and that's my priority," Ovechkin said.

# Giants find plenty to work on

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The only thing going right for the New York Giants these days might be the standings after two games.

The offense has scored 13 points total. The defense that carried the team to its first playoff berth since the 2011 season is not playing as well as last season, and special teams has generated nothing on returns and gave up rookie Jamal Agnew's game-breaking 88-yard punt return on Monday night in a 24-10 loss to the Detroit Lions.

Winning 11 games this season would appear to be wishful thinking at this point, especially with Denver, Kansas City, Oakland and five more NFC East contests in the remaining 14 games.

If there is any reason for optimism, it's the fact that there are only three undefeated teams in the conference — the Lions, Falcons and Panthers.

The bottom line for coach

Ben McAdoo and his staff is that there is a lot to fix, and he is promising changes for Sunday's game in Philadelphia against the Eagles (1-1).

He even said he would look at whether he will continue to call plays on offense, but don't expect him to change that.

"We're not going to panic," McAdoo said Tuesday afternoon. "We're not the first good team to start 0-2."

"When we first got together in April we talked about we weren't going to sneak up on anybody this year. We're going to get everybody's best shot and we've had two prime-time football games against pretty good opponents. It's not excuses. We have to find a way to get better."

The offense has not scored 20 points in eight straight games and the group does not have much rhythm or confidence.

The line is not opening holes for the run or giving Eli Manning time to throw. The two-time Super Bowl MVP was sacked five times by Detroit

and he looks as if he is rushing things in self-preservation mode.

While Odell Beckham Jr. returned to action after missing the opener against Dallas with a sprained left ankle, he was limited and finished with four catches for 36 yards. Free agent signee Brandon Marshall has been a bust and his drop of a long sideline pass came seconds before Agnew's return.

Defensively, Steve Spagnuolo's unit has been overtaxed with the offense doing nothing. There have been too many big plays, way too many third-down conversations allowed and a not-so-stout run defense.

"I am confident in this group of men," McAdoo said of his team. "I am confident in this group of coaches. We have a lot of work to do. We are not happy the way the game went last night. There are a lot of things we can do better, not just playing the game, but how we approach the game and we have to learn from it."

# Dolphins suspend Timmons

Associated Press

MIAMI — AWOL linebacker Lawrence Timmons wanted to rejoin the Miami Dolphins.

Instead, they suspended him indefinitely and traded for a replacement, moves that signal his disappearance from the Dolphins' defense may be permanent.

The Dolphins announced Timmons' suspension in a one-sentence news release Tuesday, a day off for the team.

They also acquired linebacker Stephone Anthony from the New Orleans Saints for a fifth-round draft pick in 2018.

Anthony, who has been nursing a sprained ankle, fell out of favor with the Saints after they took him with the 31st overall pick in the 2015 draft.

Timmons' agent, Drew Rosenhaus, declined to comment on the suspension. Coach Adam Gase was angered by the disappearance of the 11th-year veteran, which occurred Saturday in Los Angeles the day before Miami's season opener at the Chargers.

The Dolphins filed a missing person report before making contact with Timmons, who apparently was dealing with a personal matter. He wasn't at the game and didn't fly back to South Florida on the team plane after Miami's 19-17 win.

Anthony started all 16 games for the Saints as a rookie, but was mostly a reserve last season for New Orleans' woeful defense. He has yet to play this season because of his injury.

Undrafted rookie free agent Chase Allen started in Timmons' place Sunday and made three tackles. Middle linebacker Mike Hull, making his second career start, played every snap and led Miami with 10 tackles.

Timmons signed a \$12 million, two-year deal with Miami in March.

# San Francisco still looking for end zone

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers have taken possession 21 times in two games this season and been stopped short of the end zone each time.

That's not quite what they expected when they hired Kyle Shanahan as head coach after he led the league's most productive offense a year ago for Atlanta.

Despite those struggles to start the season, the 49ers (0-2) are trying to stay positive heading into Thursday night's game against the Los Angeles Rams when they will try to avoid joining the expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1976 and the 1943 Brooklyn Dodgers as the only teams in history to go three straight games to start a season without a touchdown.

"Getting frustrated isn't going to help us score touchdowns," receiver Pierre Garçon said. "It's just going to make everyone else frustrated and slow down the process. We have to have the right attitude and move forward."

The 49ers have 11 punts, four field goals, three turnovers and three failed fourth-down attempts on their 21 drives as they have been dealing with an adjustment to a new offense and the addition of several new players.

They have little time this week to work on

those issues with a Thursday game giving them only one practice before facing the Rams.

"There's something to be said about new scheme and all that stuff," left tackle Joe Staley said. "This scheme has definitely proven to be successful. It's nothing schematic-wise. We just have to perform better up front and perform better as an offense as a whole and do a better job of making plays when they're there."

After getting beat 23-3 in the opener against Carolina, the Niners showed some progress last week in a 12-9 loss at Seattle thanks to a productive running game led by Carlos Hyde. San Francisco ran for 159 yards, including 124 from Hyde, and averaged 8.4 yards per carry against a usually stout Seahawks defense.

The problem was Brian Hoyer and the passing game couldn't get anything going. Hoyer went 15-for-27 for 99 yards and an interception against Seattle and ranks near the bottom of the league in several statistics. His 4.7 yards per attempt are second lowest, his 60.7 rating is third worst and he ranks last in generating first downs on just 20.3 percent of his pass plays.

"For us, it's just going out and executing. Starting with the quarterback and everywhere else down the line. Every position," Hoyer said.

# Brewers keep pace with win over Bucs

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The zeroes keep piling up for Brewers' pitchers. So are the wins.

Chase Anderson had eight strikeouts in six innings, Domingo Santana homered and the Milwaukee Brewers shut out the Pittsburgh Pirates for the second straight day, 1-0 on Tuesday night.

The Brewers won for the ninth time in 11 games, keeping pace in the NL Central and wild-card races. It was the 12th shutout of the season for the Brewers, tied for the second-most in the NL.

"At a time and place that we seem to really be struggling to score runs, the pitching has picked up the slack for sure," Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. "They're winning games for us."

Anderson (11-3) allowed five singles. Anthony Swarzak retired six of the seven batters he faced, and Corey Knebel earned his 37th save with a perfect ninth.

Milwaukee won for the fourth time in the past seven days against reeling Pittsburgh, which has lost a season-high seven consecutive games and 12 of 13.

"There's no one happy in (the clubhouse)," Pirates manager Clint Hurdle said. "So you keep them fresh for the next day. Feel what you need to feel. There should be some angst — and there is."

Milwaukee remained 3½ games behind the Chicago Cubs for the division lead. After Wednesday's series finale at PNC Park, the Brewers head back to Milwaukee to host

a four-game series against the Cubs. Chicago won its seventh consecutive game Tuesday.

"I swear, I looked up, and they won again tonight, and I was like, 'Man!'" Brewers outfielder Brett Phillips said. "Hey, they want it just as bad as we want it."

The Brewers moved within 1 game of Colorado for the second wild-card spot. The Rockies lost 4-3 to San Francisco.

Santana extended his hitting streak to seven games when he turned on a 1-0 slider from Trevor Williams and hit it into the first row at one of PNC Park's most shallow points, a few feet to the right of the left-field foul pole.

That was one of three hits Williams (6-9) allowed over five innings. But Pittsburgh's struggling offense offered

no support; the Pirates have scored nine runs during their seven-game losing streak.

At one point Tuesday, Anderson retired 10 consecutive hitters and 13 of 14. But his most impressive work was getting out of a jam in his final inning.

Adam Frazier led off with a single to center and moved to second on an errant pickoff throw. Starling Marte followed with a well-placed bunt single, putting runners at first and third with no outs.

But Anderson struck out Andrew McCutchen, got Josh Bell to fly out weakly to center and induced an inning-ending pop-up from Gregory Polanco.

"Those innings kind of show you what you're made of," Anderson said, "and to get out of it with no runs was big for us tonight."

## MLB roundup

# Cubs edge Rays in Maddon's return to Tropicana Field

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Back at Tropicana Field, Joe Maddon got to show off his Chicago Cubs.

Mike Montgomery took a no-hit bid into the sixth inning, Kyle Schwarber hit his 28th home run and the Cubs extended their winning streak to a season-high seven by beating the Tampa Bay Rays 2-1 Tuesday night.

Maddon managed the Rays in 2006-14, then left to manage Chicago and last year led the Cubs to their first World Series title since 1908. Chicago is closing in on its third straight postseason berth, holding a 3½-game lead over second-place Milwaukee in the NL Central.

Tampa Bay remained five games behind Minnesota for the second AL wild card with 11 to play.

A crowd of 25,046, the largest at the Trop since opening day, gave Maddon a standing ovation after a scoreboard trib-

ute in the middle of the first inning.

"I thought it was playoff-esque," he said. "It starts at home with all the interviews and things like that. Then coming down here, as soon as you walk in the door you're greeting, which is good. I was able to go on the field before the game, got to visit with a lot of folks."

**Indians 6, Angels 3:** Jay Bruce had a triple and a double among his three hits, Austin Jackson singled four times and incredible Cleveland rolled on by beating host Los Angeles for its 25th victory in 26 games.

**Red Sox 1, Orioles 0 (11):** Jackie Bradley Jr. scored the game's lone run on a wild pitch by Brad Brach in the 11th inning, helping host Boston improve to 15-3 in extra-inning games.

**Yankees 5, Twins 2:** CC Sabathia recovered from a shaky start to pitch six innings, Brett Gardner had a pair of tying hits and host New York clinched its sixth straight series win.

**Phillies 6, Dodgers 2:** Rhys Hoskins had four RBIs for host Philadelphia, including a tie-breaking three-run double off Pedro Baez in seventh inning.

**Padres 6, Diamondbacks 2:** Travis Wood pitched six efficient innings and contributed two RBIs as host San Diego won.

**Giants 4, Rockies 3:** Charlie Blackmon had a two-run double in the second inning for his first career 200-hit season, but Colorado couldn't hold its early lead and lost to host San Francisco.

**Rangers 3, Mariners 1:** Shin-Soo Choo's sacrifice fly broke an eighth-inning tie, Elvis Andrus followed with an RBI single and Texas beat host Seattle to boost its slim playoff chances.

**Marlins 5, Mets 4 (10):** J.T. Realmuto homered in the 10th inning and host Miami beat New York after rallying for three runs in the ninth against former teammate A.J. Ramos.

**Cardinals 8, Reds 7 (10):** Dexter Fowler hit a tying homer in the eighth inning and a go-ahead double in the 10th to help St. Louis get past host Cincinnati.

**Nationals 4, Braves 2:** Max Scherzer allowed five hits in seven innings, and visiting Washington tuned up for the playoffs with a victory over Atlanta.

**Blue Jays 5, Royals 2:** Marcus Stroman pitched seven innings to win for the first time in six starts and Darwin Barney hit a two-run homer, helping host Toronto to the victory.

**Astros 3, White Sox 1:** Jose Altuve homered, Alex Bregman hit an RBI double and AL West champion Houston extended its winning streak to five games with a victory over visiting Chicago.

**Athletics 9, Tigers 8:** Jed Lowrie hit a go-ahead grand slam against Alex Wilson, and Oakland overcame a four-run deficit to beat host Detroit.