

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, September 18, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Sailor dies in 'mishap' on carrier's flight deck

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Navy sailor was killed Monday afternoon aboard the USS George H.W. Bush off the East Coast of the United States, service officials said Tuesday.

The officials described the death aboard the aircraft carrier as "a mishap" on the ship's flight deck. The Bush was at sea conducting carrier qualification training after it had departed from Norfolk, Va., last week ahead of Hurricane Florence's landfall.

No other individuals were injured in the incident, and officials said an investigation

has been launched.

They declined to provide additional details Tuesday about the incident.

The name of the dead sailor was withheld Tuesday, per Pentagon policy not to publicly identify fallen service-members until 24 hours after family notification.

"We ask for your patience and understanding as the crew grieves the loss of one of their shipmates," the Navy said in a statement.

The Bush is one of 25 Navy ships sent to sea last week ahead of Florence.

The Navy has two ships prepared to aid hurricane relief efforts off the coast, but the Bush is not one of them.

15,000 troops, 15 surface ships part of Valiant Shield

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

The USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and 15,000 troops are taking part in large-scale military drills on Guam and in the Marianas Islands.

Fifteen surface ships and more than 160 aircraft from the Navy, Air Force, Army and Marine Corps are participating in Valiant Shield, the latest iteration of an exercise that has happened every other year since 2006.

"A wide range of skills will be exercised ... any of which U.S. forces may be called upon to conduct during contingency situations," 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday. Those in-

clude "maritime interdiction; defensive counter-air operations; personnel recovery; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; anti-submarine warfare; and command and control."

Troops are also learning to work with personnel from other branches and conducting live-fire drills, a 7th Fleet statement said.

"The Marianas Island Range Complex is a premier training environment that allows the joint force a unique opportunity to come together and train side-by-side at the high end," Rear Adm. Daniel Dwyer, who is directing the drills, said in the statement.

Valiant Shield, which kicked off Sunday, runs until Sunday, the statement said.

Wilson: USAF needs big combat squadron boost to stay on top

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force must add 74 combat squadrons to retain military advantages over near-peer adversaries seeking to challenge American power, the service's top civilian said Monday.

"We know now from analysis ... that the Air Force is too small for what the nation expects of us," Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said during a speech on the opening day of the Air Force Association's annual Air, Space and Cyber Conference at National Harbor in Maryland, just south of Washington. "312 operational squadrons is not enough."

Citing military gains by China and Russia, which recently completed its largest military training exercise in decades, Wilson announced the Air Force should grow to 386 combat squadrons by 2025 or 2030, representing a roughly 24 percent boost.

For years, Wilson and other top Air Force officials have been calling for an increase in the service's size, noting airmen have been busy for nearly two decades fighting in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Meanwhile, mandatory budget cuts during much of the last decade forced the service to downsize.

"The [National] Defense Strategy tells us that we need to be able to defend the homeland, provide a credible nuclear deterrent, win against a major power, while encountering a rogue nation, all while managing violent extremists with lower levels of

effort," Wilson said. "While all those missions rely on every service working together — each relies heavily on the Air Force."

Her announcement Monday was the first time that the Air Force officially presented a goal of increasing the force's size. Though Wilson did not detail how many new airmen would be needed to reach her goal of 386 combat squadrons, Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, the Air Force's personnel chief, said Monday that the force could potentially grow to 740,000 to 745,000 personnel, including airmen and civilians. It now boasts about 685,000 people, he said.

It was also unclear Monday how much additional money the Air Force would need to achieve its growth goals.

Todd Harrison, a defense budget analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the Air Force spends about \$53 billion each year on aircraft operations, training and recruiting and a 24 percent increase in combat squadrons would likely add about \$13 billion annually in operating costs alone. However, he said he could not immediately estimate the costs to add the new aircraft that the new squadrons would operate.

Wilson said the Air Force must grow and continue to improve technologically to ensure its combat readiness is not surpassed by other nations, she said.

"Our dominance as a global power is not a birthright. It is a choice made by a nation that is a force for good in the world," Wilson said.

Navy's No. 2 talks 7th Fleet readiness

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy's second-highest ranking officer heard from the source how the Navy's largest foreign command is keeping up with readiness challenges, including a significant maintenance backlog and increasingly assertive adversaries.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Bill Moran visited Navy bases in South Korea and Japan last week on a tour that he said brought helpful insight into on-the-ground operations in the Pacific.

"We in Washington have our own views about things and it's largely programmatic in nature, budgetary in nature and some policy," he said in an interview Thursday. "But to get feedback from sailors, commanding officers, chiefs and master chiefs in the fleet really helps us refine and make sure that we're supporting from Washington what they need (in the Pacific)."

Readiness challenges

At Yokosuka on Thursday, Moran spent time on the waterfront discussing ship maintenance. The base is home to U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility Japan Regional Maintenance Center, which is working on what Moran called a "not insignificant" backlog. A request for exact numbers on that backlog went unanswered.

The 7th Fleet is operating with fewer ships than it had planned after two of its destroyers — the USS Fitzgerald and the USS John S. McCain — were severely damaged in separate fatal collisions at sea last year.

While Yokosuka added a destroyer — the USS Milius — earlier this year, the fleet remains down two operational ships because the Milius was originally intended to be an additional ship in support of Indo-Pacific operations, former Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift told Stars and Stripes last year.

Moran said the McCain, which is being repaired in Yokosuka, is expected to get out of drydock this fall and the Navy is aiming to have it underway in the spring. The Fitzgerald is undergoing maintenance in Pascagoula, Miss., and the service has said the goal is to return it to sea by 2020.

Moran said ship maintenance "is a key critical element for overall fleet readiness."

On Sept. 12, Moran and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith toured Yokosuka's USS Blue Ridge, which has been undergoing maintenance for about two years. Crews first relit the boilers on the Navy's oldest commissioned operational ship in June, and Moran said the 7th Fleet's flagship is "about ready to go to sea."

"She's outfitted like an old '57 Chevy that we've took the engine out, took the dashboard out and put all modern capability in, and, man, she sounds and she's going to run kind of nice," Moran said.

The Blue Ridge's staff moved back onto the ship this summer. Capt. Brett Crozier, the Blue Ridge's commander, said it was an honor to host Moran.

"We're always proud to show off the ship," he said in a Navy statement. "We're glad the VCNO and MCPON are able to see the ship after all the hard work the crew has put in to prepare us for a return to sea."

After manning shortages and training and certification problems were determined to have contributed to last year's fatal collisions, the Navy created a new unit — Naval Surface Group Western Pacific — to oversee the maintenance and training that 7th Fleet crews undergo before deployments.

While the new setup has received some criticism, Moran said he believes it will be better received over time.

"To some, it may seem like an added layer of bureaucracy; to others, it may seem like an added layer of compliance. Actually, it's designed to do neither," Moran said. "It's to cinch up some of the

seams between those out here who are scheduling ships for operations and an organization that is designed to make sure that the maintenance is getting done and that the training, manning and equipping is properly provided to the ships at the right time early in their maintenance phase and post-maintenance or basic phase."

Competitive waters

Moran said he was encouraged by the questions he received from sailors across the Pacific during his visit. He said he believed they were indicative of sailors being "more and more aware of their purpose."

"They're asking about readiness to fight; being ready to go to sea to take on adversaries that might emerge in this part of the world; and being ready to answer the nation's call, whatever that may be," he said.

That awareness is important as competition in the region grows, Moran said.

"There are plenty of competitors out here ... Certainly we know about the Korean Peninsula; we know that China is pushing further and further out and competing for water space resources," he said.

The 7th Fleet regularly conducts freedom-of-navigation exercises in the South and East China seas. China has been militarizing reclaimed land in the area, is involved in territorial disputes with other countries in the region and protests when they sail too close to certain islands.

"There are signs that our competitors around the globe — but particularly out in this area — are trying to change the international rule of order," Moran said. "... We've got a lot of allies out here and a lot of partners out here who are looking at us to enforce what has been a very successful international order for trade, commerce, freedom, freedom of the seas, access to goods and services.

To stay ahead of the competition, Moran said the Navy must

focus on its personnel development by "train(ing) better, smarter and frequent enough to build proficiency."

He also said technology must "not only be defensive so that we can protect our assets, but also demonstrate that we have the punch and the ability to counterpunch somebody who might want to take us on."

Team players

While the Navy continues implementing its new training and maintenance programs to bolster readiness, Moran said a strength the service has now is its people.

"I'll be perfectly frank with you; I thought as soon as the unemployment rate in the United States dropped below 4.1 percent, we would have a heck of a time retaining good sailors in our Navy, and the good news is that retention right now is very good," he said.

Moran attributes that to programs that have rolled out recently to encourage re-enlistments.

For example, the Navy in March offered aviators bonuses of up to \$90,000, depending on which aircraft they fly. In May, some sailors were offered preferential billet selection and guaranteed shore duty on their next tours if they took a one-year extension on tours in Japan, Guam and Spain. The service has also developed better technology for accessing career goals.

Moran returned to Washington on Friday, missing a planned visit to the deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan because of typhoons in the region.

He said he would take back to Washington the questions he heard from sailors and lessons he learned during his trip to Korea and Japan.

"It's really important that ... we answer to things that young men and women that serve in any capacity today expect from a high-end profession like the United States Navy," Moran said.

USAF: \$13B for Space Force's 1st 5 years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Creating a Space Force as a separate military service, as proposed by President Donald Trump, would cost an estimated \$12.9 billion in its first five years, according to a detailed Air Force plan for how to go about it.

This is the first publicly available cost estimate. When the White House announced plans to establish a Space Force in August, Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan declined to give a figure but said it would be in “the billions.”

The Air Force's estimate is contained in a Sept. 14 memo from Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson, who proposed that the Pentagon ask Congress for the author-

ity and money to establish a Space Force headquarters in 2020.

“The President has clearly communicated his desire for a military department for space,” she wrote. “Strategic competition with Russia and China is the focus of our approach.”

Creation of a Space Force as a separate military service will require congressional action. The administration is expected to submit proposed legislation early next year authorizing the establishment of a Space Force.

A copy of the Air Force memo was obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

The memo says the first-year cost of a Space Force would be \$3.3 billion, and the

cost over five years would be an estimated \$12.9 billion.

In an indication of the complexities of creating a new military service, the Air Force says the proposed U.S. Space Force would be a separate department organized under a civilian secretary appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, along with an undersecretary, four assistant secretaries, a chief lawyer, an inspector general and a legislative liaison. A four-star general would serve as chief of staff.

The proposal said the missions of Space Force would include missile defense. More broadly, it would be “responsible for the preparation of forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war.”

First married pilots to fly B-2 retire together

Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. John Avery and Lt. Col. Jennifer Avery, the first pair of married pilots to fly the B-2, retired together this month at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

“It’s an honor to speak as John and Jennifer Avery retire from the Air Force, just as it was to speak at their wedding,” said Col. Jared Kennish, the 131st Bomb Wing Operations Group commander, at the pair’s joint retirement ceremony on Sept. 7, according to an Air Force statement. “This couple has made history.”

Both served for 20 years, John retiring with more than 2,500 flying hours and Jennifer retiring with more than 1,600 flying hours in the active-duty Air Force and Missouri Air National Guard.

Jennifer was the first female B-1 pilot to go to combat, with four sorties over Kosovo in support of Operation Allied Force in

1999, according to the Air Force. Her first flight in a B-2 in 2002 made her the first woman to fly the B-2 stealth bomber. Since then, seven more women have become B-2 pilots and others are now in training. In 2003, she became the first woman to fly the B-2 in combat, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She remains the only woman to have flown the B-2 in combat.

John earned his pilot wings in 2000 and was stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., to fly the B-1. He and Jennifer began dating, and less than six months later she left to fly the B-2.

“I wanted to fly the B-2 because that was the plane my future wife was going to fly,” John said in an Air Force statement. “That, and it’s without a doubt the world’s most elite aircraft. As a pilot, there’s nothing more rewarding.”

Air Force regulations don’t let married couples fly in the same plane with each

other, though John and Jennifer did fly together in a T-38 training jet before they were married.

In 2007, Jennifer decided to leave her active-duty career. First, she worked as a civilian at Whiteman and then she joined the Missouri Air National Guard, flying the B-2.

John transitioned to the Missouri Air National Guard in 2008, becoming part of the first group of guardsmen to fly the B-2. He was the first guardsman to fly the B-2 in combat, during a 2011 sortie over Libya in support of Operation Odyssey Dawn. He was also the first Air National Guard member to attend B-2 Weapon Instructor School.

The family, including son Austin, 12, and daughter Elizabeth, 9, moved to Boise, Idaho. John flies for FedEx, and Jennifer works as a Defense Department consultant.

Russia blames Israel for downing of plane off Syria

Associated Press

MOSCOW — A Russian reconnaissance aircraft was brought down by a Syrian missile over the Mediterranean, killing all 15 people onboard, the Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday. It blamed Israel for the crash, saying the plane was caught in the crossfire as four Israeli fighters attacked targets in northwestern Syria.

The Russian military said that the Il-20 reconnaissance aircraft was hit 22 miles offshore late Monday as it was returning to its home base nearby.

“The Israeli pilots were using the Russian aircraft as a shield and pushed it into the line of fire of the Syrian defense,” ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said in a statement.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu called his Israeli counterpart, Avigdor Lieberman, later on Tuesday to say that Israel is “fully to blame” for the deaths, the ministry said.

The military said Israel did not warn it of its operation over Latakia province until one minute before the strike, which did not give the Russian plane enough time to escape.

Both the Israeli military and Israel’s Foreign Ministry declined comment on the Russian claim.

The Russian Defense Ministry said a recovery operation in the Mediterranean Sea is underway and that it has already located the wreckage in the sea and has retrieved some bodies and some fragments of the plane.

Flood victims get food, water; rain spreads to the Northeast

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, N.C. — Still stranded by Florence's epic floods days after the hurricane hit North Carolina, Wilmington residents lined up by the hundreds Tuesday for free food, water and tarps as officials struggled to open new routes to one of the state's largest cities.

The death toll from the storm rose to at least 32 in three states, with 25 fatalities in North Carolina, as remnants of the once-powerful Category 4 hurricane — now reduced to a rainy, windy mass of low pressure — dumped rain on the heavily populated Northeast.

Parts of southern New Hampshire and much of Massachusetts were under a flash flood warning, and a tornado warning was issued near Salem, Mass.

In Wilmington, population 120,000, workers began handing out supplies using a system that resembled a fast-food restaurant drive-thru: Drivers pulled up to pallets lining a street, placed an order and left without having to get out.

Todd Tremain needed tarps to cover up spots where Florence's winds ripped shingles off his roof. "The roof is leaking, messing up the inside of the house," he said.

Others got a case of bottled water or Meals, Ready to Eat. An olive-drab military forklift

moved around huge pallets loaded with supplies.

Four days after Florence blew ashore and began unloading more than 2 feet of rain that paralyzed much of North Carolina, Wilmington was still virtually cut off from the rest of the state, with only one road tentatively open as a supply route. Officials said they will open roads as flooding recedes and downed trees and power lines are cleared away. It's not clear when that might happen.

Items have been brought into the city by big military trucks and helicopters, which also have been used to pluck hundreds of desperate people from atop homes and other structures.

"Thank you," a shirtless Willie Schubert mouthed to members of a Coast Guard helicopter crew who picked up him and his dog, Lucky, from atop a house encircled by water in Pollocksville on Monday. It wasn't clear how long he had been stranded.

The dead include a 1-year-old boy who was swept away after his mother drove into floodwaters and lost her grip on him. Authorities in Virginia said one person was dead after an apparent tornado.

Downgraded from a tropical depression, the deadly storm still had abundant rain and top winds around 25 mph. Forecasters said states in the Northeast are in for as much as 4 inches of rain before the system moves offshore again.

Hearing for accuser, Kavanaugh in limbo

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Wrestling for advantage, Democratic and Republican senators argued Tuesday over who could, should or would testify at Monday's hearing with Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and the woman who accuses him of a sexual assault when they were in high school. Doubts were even raised whether she would appear.

Meanwhile, Kavanaugh was at the White House for a second straight day.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said on radio's "Hugh Hewitt Show" that he'd not yet received confirmation from the accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, that she would appear, despite several attempts to reach her camp.

"So it kind of raises the question, do they want to come to the public hearing or not?" Grassley said.

A day earlier, the Republican abruptly agreed to hold a public Judiciary Committee hearing at which Kavanaugh and Ford have been invited to testify. Party leaders made that concession under pressure from senators demanding that the nominee and his accuser give public, sworn testimony before any vote on President Donald Trump's nominee.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Democrats want more than two witnesses, including Mark Judge, who Ford has said was a Kavanaugh friend present during the alleged incident.

Limiting the hearing to just Kavanaugh and Ford would be "inadequate, unfair, wrong and a desire not to get at the whole truth," Schumer said.

He also said the FBI should be given time to reopen its background investigation into Kavanaugh so it could check Ford's assertions. And he said the Judiciary Committee should not rush the nomination through by voting on Kavanaugh a day or two after Monday's hearing.

US lowers cap on refugees it will accept

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. will slash the number of refugees it will accept for a second straight year, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, insisting amid criticism from human rights groups that the country is still committed to providing sanctuary to people fleeing the world's danger zones.

Up to 30,000 refugees will be allowed into the country next year, down from a cap of 45,000 this year. It will be the lowest ceiling on admissions since the program began in 1980. The announcement Monday came despite concerns from global humanitarian groups that this year's cap of 45,000 was too low.

Pompeo sought to head off potential criticism of the reduction by noting that the U.S. would

process more than 280,000 asylum claims in addition to more than 800,000 already inside the country who are awaiting a resolution of their claims.

"These expansive figures continue the United States' long-standing record as the most generous nation in the world when it comes to protection-based immigration and assistance," he said.

The 30,000 cap is the maximum number of refugees the U.S. will admit during the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. The actual number allowed in could be lower. So far this year, the U.S. has admitted only 20,918 refugees for the fiscal year set to end in two weeks, according to State Department records.

President Barack Obama raised the ceiling to 110,000 in 2017, but the pace slowed

dramatically after President Donald Trump took office and issued an executive order addressing refugees.

Pompeo said the lower ceiling reflected commitment to aiding families forced to flee their homes by war, persecution or natural disasters while "prioritizing the safety and well-being of the American people." He cited the case of an Iraqi refugee who was arrested in California for killing a policeman in his homeland while fighting for Islamic State.

"This year's proposed refugee ceiling must be considered in the context of the many other forms of protection and assistance offered by the United States," he said, citing U.S. contributions to foreign aid and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man accidentally shoots self at eatery

WA TACOMA — A man who shot himself in the leg at a Chuck E. Cheese in Tacoma caused panic at the children's party center.

KOMO-TV reported the man, 22, was hospitalized after the gun was fired accidentally just after 5 p.m. Sunday. Tacoma police said no one else was hurt and the man will not be charged.

Panicked patrons feared it could be an active-shooter situation at the restaurant, which caters to families.

Tacoma police said the shooter had a concealed-carry permit for the weapon, though firearms are banned at the restaurant. He is expected to make a full recovery.

Officials: Golf carts are a hazard on roads

GA ST. SIMONS ISLAND — Local officials said golf carts are posing a traffic hazard on one of Georgia's most populous barrier islands.

The Brunswick News reported Glynn County's police chief and a county commissioner are considering an ordinance to ban golf carts from main roads on St. Simons Island.

Police Chief John Powell said at a recent town hall meeting he's talking with Commissioner Peter Murphy and the county's attorney about the idea.

Murphy said he agrees with Powell that keeping golf carts off the island's main roads is a good idea.

State rehires woman after prison term

DE DOVER — Records show a state employee fired while serving prison time for a fatal drunken-driving crash was rehired a few years

later.

The News Journal reported Sandi R. Spiegel, 36, was hired by the Delaware Division of Public Health in 2014, five years after she was fired from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

DPH spokeswoman Jen Brestel said the department would not comment on Spiegel's hiring process, calling it a personnel matter. Spiegel was hired shortly after Delaware's "ban the box" law, which bars requiring applicants to disclose criminal histories before a first interview.

Driving lesson ends in swimming pool

MD MONTGOMERY VILLAGE — A driving lesson went off the deep end in Maryland when authorities say the car jumped a curb, crashed through a fence and landed in a swimming pool.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue spokesman Pete Piringer told The Washington Post that the driver and the passenger were uninjured Saturday.

He said the occupants were a man and a woman in their 50s or 60s. He said one was teaching the other to drive.

The car landed in the North Creek Community Center Pool, which was closed.

Ex-inmate spotted at mall in jail jumpsuit

NC WINSTON-SALEM — The Winston-Salem Journal reported a video of a man clad in an orange jumpsuit stamped "Forsyth County Detention Center" at a mall spread this past weekend. Chief Deputy Brad Stanley clarified that the man was not an escapee nor was he currently wanted.

But it turns out that Mustapha Khallid Muhammad, 57, is an outfit repeater. He was jailed

last year for failure to appear and comply and should have surrendered the jumpsuit when released Dec. 13.

Stanley said it's unclear whether Muhammad took the jumpsuit or had one made for himself, but for now he's wanted for possession of stolen property.

Hundreds of chicks found on vacant lot

PA PHILADELPHIA — Animal welfare officials said they rescued hundreds of baby chicks from an empty lot in Philadelphia.

The Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said investigators responded to calls Saturday and found the chicks in a lot across from a shopping center in the Olney section of the city.

Officials said the owner had hoped to take over the lot, which is owned by an adjoining business, and start raising the chicks for resale but hadn't contacted the property owner and failed to provide the animals with proper housing or feeding and watering stations. They said he estimated he had lost more than 1,000 chicks prior to the discovery of the birds.

Cat population at shelter poses crisis

IL CHICAGO — Chicago's Animal Care and Control shelter is in dire need of people willing to foster or adopt cats because more felines are coming in than the shelter can handle.

The Chicago Tribune reported that nearly 300 rescued cats were housed at the shelter early last week. That's a record number for the year, leaving some at risk of being euthanized.

The population of homeless cats typically surges this time of year because mother cats give birth to their second or third

litters before the weather turns cold. The shelter posted an urgent plea on Facebook seeking temporary homes.

Chase after robbery crosses state line

DE NEW CASTLE — Authorities said the robbery of a 7-Eleven in Delaware triggered a chase that ended in Maryland.

Citing a Delaware State Police news release, The News Journal reported that a multiagency effort Saturday tracked and followed the suspect's car, which was familiar to police. Authorities had active warrants for the suspect, Timothy J. Brewer, 42.

The chase began in New Castle, and ended in Chesapeake, Md., when the suspect's car ran into a trooper's vehicle.

Authorities said the suspect refused to comply with verbal commands and was shot with a stun gun before being taken into custody.

A handgun-style pellet gun was found in his car.

2 students arrested in attempted gun sale

KS LAWRENCE — Two juveniles at Lawrence High School were arrested last week after a parent reported hearing that a student tried to sell a gun to another student.

Principal Matt Brungardt said in an email to parents that police and school officials discovered the weapon had been taken from a parent's home. Lawrence police recovered the firearm off the school campus.

District spokeswoman Julie Boyle said the gun was found Thursday.

She said the parents of the students were notified and disciplinary action had been taken in accordance with district policy.

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Anxiety on the rise among new coaches

Associated Press

Misery loves company, and there's plenty to go around for first-year coaches at some of the high-pedigree programs in college football.

Chip Kelly is 0-3 at UCLA, Scott Frost is 0-2 at Nebraska, Willie Taggart hasn't beaten a Football Bowl Subdivision opponent at Florida State and neither has Kevin Sumlin at Arizona.

Dan Mullen has the distinction of being the first Florida coach since 1986 to lose to Kentucky and the first to do it at home since 1979. Arkansas' Chad Morris lost to lowly Colorado State and watched his punt coverage unit fooled by that faux fair catch sparking a 90-yard return for a touchdown in a 27-point home loss to North Texas.

Turnarounds? These things take time, and fans don't like waiting. But there's a reason

these jobs were open in the first place. All these programs were struggling.

Kelly was the splashiest hire of all. An innovator known for his offensive wizardry at Oregon, he got fired by two NFL teams and took last year off before signing on with UCLA. He took over a program that's been in decline since 2015.

The young Bruins have lost twice at home to Group of Five teams, most recently 38-14 to Fresno State on Saturday. In between was the 49-21 loss at top-10 Oklahoma. It gets no easier. Pac-12 crossover games against Washington, Oregon and Stanford — all ranked — are looming.

Kelly wouldn't go there when asked if the Bruins took a step backward with their penalty-filled loss to Fresno State.

"You can take a macro look at what your season looks like — forward, backward, all those things," he said. "If I say it's for-

ward or backward, that doesn't mean anything. What do we do wrong, how do we improve upon that and learn from it and grow? That's what our whole process is with these guys."

Frost, Kelly's protege at Oregon, might not have known how big an undertaking Nebraska would be when he returned home after his splendid two-year run at Central Florida. That much is apparent after a 24-19 home loss to Troy. Never mind a walk-on quarterback started in place of the injured true freshman Adrian Martinez. Special teams gaffes, defensive breakdowns and untimely penalties were the overriding reasons for the loss.

The Huskers didn't look much different than they did while going 4-8 under Mike Riley last year. The no-huddle, up-tempo offense Frost learned from Kelly has been hit and miss so far, and now the Huskers sit 0-2 for the first time since 1957. A loss at Michigan

this week would make them 0-3 for the first time since 1945.

Frost's position as a native son who quarterbacked the Huskers to a share of the 1997 national championship earned him a long leash. He has a seven-year, \$35 million contract.

Unlike Frost, Florida State's Taggart is on the clock with the fans. Taggart professed the Seminoles were his "dream job," but he had no previous ties to FSU and took a sub-.500 coaching record with him to Tallahassee, though he was 25-12 the last three seasons (two at USF, one at Oregon).

The Seminoles have been nothing short of awful on offense, outscored a combined 54-10 by Virginia Tech and Syracuse, and they had to come from behind to beat Samford of the Football Championship Subdivision.

Sumlin got his first win at Arizona with a 62-31 victory over Southern Utah of the FCS.

Buckeyes' Meyer attempts to repair scandal damage

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said he has sent letters and had conversations with families of players as a key step toward containing and repairing the scandal that led to his three-game suspension, a saga he describes as "a window in time I made an error."

He acknowledged Monday that the program's reputation has suffered and said he hopes more clarity about what happened will help mitigate the damage.

In what normally would have been a press conference about the week's football game, the Ohio State coach met for nearly an hour with reporters who questioned him about his mismanagement of fired assistant Zach Smith and his resulting suspension after a university investigation.

"I think there was," Meyer

said when asked whether the program was damaged. He said the letters and talks with families of players were to assuage concerns that he turned his back on domestic violence allegations.

"The damage, I believe, is that we just went through a really hard time, and I made a mistake in helping a troubled employee, went too far in trying to help someone," Meyer said.

Beyond his players, Meyer's explanations and actions have ramifications with potential recruits. Four-star linebacker Kane Patterson from Tennessee already rescinded his commitment to Ohio State since Meyer was suspended.

Meyer reiterated his contention that he didn't ignore or cover up domestic abuse allegations against Smith, who was fired in July. Smith denies abusing his wife, Courtney Smith, and was never charged or pros-

ecuted for domestic violence. Meyer said his mistake was not asking more questions about their situation and instead trying to help Zach Smith keep his job so he could continue to support his family.

He also again denied lying to reporters about his knowledge of 2015 allegations against Smith, saying that he "mis-spoke." Ohio State's investigative report found that Meyer intended to keep details of Smith's troubles private when asked by reporters.

"I'm going to keep saying it for the rest of my life, this was about trying to help an employee with work-related issues. It was not about lying to the media," Meyer said.

Meyer was asked about memory issues cited by the report as a reason why he might not have remembered specific conversations. He said he's had some medical issues that required some "pretty heavy

meds at time," but said "I'm very healthy" and none of those issues would affect his running of the program.

Meyer was put on paid leave on Aug. 1, two days before the Buckeyes opened fall camp as the university launched its investigation.

That probe found that Meyer had for years tolerated misbehavior from Smith, who is the grandson of former Ohio State coach and Meyer mentor Earle Bruce. Meyer was suspended on Aug. 22. He was allowed to return to practice on Sept. 3, but could not be on the sideline for the first three games, which the Buckeyes won behind acting coach Ryan Day.

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith — no relation to Zach Smith — was suspended for two weeks.

Meyer will be back on the sideline for Saturday's home game against Tulane.

Mack helps lead Bears over Seahawks

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Khalil Mack once again put on the sort of havoc-wreaking show the Chicago Bears envisioned when they traded for the superstar pass rusher.

Even better for them, they came away with the victory this time.

Mack had one of six sacks against Russell Wilson, Prince Amukamara returned an interception 49 yards for a touchdown and the Bears beat the Seattle Seahawks 24-17 Monday night to give coach Matt Nagy his first career victory.

Mack sprinted out of the tunnel to a neat ovation prior to his first appearance at Soldier Field since a blockbuster trade from Oakland just over two weeks ago. That deal happened after he held out the entire off-season and preseason seeking a contract extension from the Raiders rather than play under the final year of his rookie con-

tract. Chicago gave him a six-year, \$141 million extension that guarantees \$90 million — the richest deal ever for an NFL defensive player.

Mack also had the crowd roaring with a strip-sack in the first half, smacking the ball out of Wilson's hand as he wound up to pass, and he consistently pressured the quarterback. It was more of the same from last week, when he had a strip-sack and interception return for a TD at Green Bay, except there was one key difference.

The Bears came out on top after blowing a 20-point lead against a hobbled Aaron Rodgers in a loss to the Packers.

"That's a great feeling," Mack said. "We took it over the top."

Amukamara jumped the route on a pass intended for Rashaad Penny near midfield for his first career touchdown, making it 24-10 with 6:37 left. It was his first interception since 2015 with the New York

Giants.

Danny Trevathan then stripped Wilson with his second sack of the game. The Bears' Leonard Floyd recovered the fumble.

"I'm just really looking forward to the future of this team and seeing how we respond not only to tough losses like Green Bay, but how do we respond to a good win for us," said Nagy, who replaced the fired John Fox. "Sometimes those are just as hard."

The Seahawks (0-2) lost for just the second time in nine Monday night games under coach Pete Carroll.

"We're still a work in progress," he said.

Wilson struggles: Wilson has been sacked six times in each game this season. With the Bears applying constant pressure and his receivers struggling to get open, the four-time Pro Bowl quarterback completed 22 of 36 passes for 226 yards with two touchdowns and an

interception.

But Wilson focused more on the two TDs Seattle scored in the fourth quarter, though the last one came in the closing seconds.

"The fourth quarter showed us who we are and who we can be. ... I don't think we're far off by any means," he said. "I think the margin of error is really small. I'm normally optimistic, you guys know, but I really mean that. I think that's the situation we're in."

Chicago's Mitchell Trubisky was 25-for-34 for 200 yards. The No. 2 overall pick in last year's draft, Trubisky threw touchdown passes to Trey Burton on Chicago's first possession and rookie Anthony Miller early in the fourth quarter. But he was also intercepted two times by Shaquill Griffin — on a deep ball that was underthrown and on another throw tipped at the line.

Patriots get Gordon from Browns for 5th-round pick

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Josh Gordon's strange, stuttering career will start anew in New England.

Bill Belichick and Tom Brady have a new offensive toy.

The Browns severed ties for good with the problematic wide receiver by trading him to the Patriots for a fifth-round draft pick on Monday, ending a relationship the team did all it could to save.

The deal came together two days after the Browns reached a breaking point with Gordon, who has been suspended numerous times by the NFL for drug violations since Cleveland drafted him in 2012.

"He is gone now," coach Hue Jackson said.

Gordon played in the Browns' season opener against Pittsburgh, but he reported to the team on Saturday with an unexplained hamstring injury

after practicing all week. The Browns decided to leave him behind when they traveled to New Orleans and later said they intended to release him.

However, Cleveland general manager John Dorsey found there was a crowded market for him and worked out the swap with New England, which will also get a seventh-round pick.

The Browns have been supportive of Gordon, but the team felt betrayed and decided it was time to move on.

"We've done all we can do for Josh," said Jackson, who didn't provide any specifics about Gordon's issues over the weekend. "We tried to provide the right environment. It just didn't work out. Sometimes you just need a change of scenery and hopefully things work out for Josh."

Gordon's tantalizing talent had caused the Browns to hang onto him while he dealt with drug and alcohol depen-

dence going back to his teens. He missed training camp to receive treatment and the Browns were cautiously optimistic he would help them this season.

But he again let them down, and Jackson acknowledged the separation was necessary.

"I hate to determine it a relief," Jackson said. "I'm glad there is closure. I'm glad that we're not in a space where we're thinking about those things: What could be, what could not be, and that we're coaching the guys that are here."

Gordon's departure will expand rookie Antonio Callaway's role. Callaway caught a 47-yard touchdown pass in the final two minutes Sunday, but the Browns were beaten 21-18.

Also, the Browns added some depth Monday by signing free agent Rod Streater, a sixth-year veteran who has played with Oakland and San Francisco.

Gordon's former Cleveland teammate Corey Coleman

— who had his own issues with the Browns before being traded last month to Buffalo, cut and then signing with the Patriots — was released by New England.

Belichick has a long history of reclamation projects with castoffs, including Randy Moss, Chad Johnson and Aqib Talib. The Patriots coach will try to work the same magic with Gordon, a 6-foot-3, 225-pounder with a dazzling blend of size and speed.

In his second season, Gordon led the league with 1,646 yards receiving and scored nine touchdowns. He had a memorable 80-yard TD catch against the Patriots, turning a short catch into an electrifying run on which he made New England's defenders appear to be standing still.

But that was in 2013, and Gordon has played in just 11 games since because of his off-field issues.

Brewers' Yelich hits for cycle

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Christian Yelich became the first major leaguer to hit for the cycle twice in one season against the same team, driving in four runs to lead the Milwaukee Brewers over the Cincinnati Reds 8-0 on Monday night.

"There's been so many great players to play this game," said Yelich, acquired in an off-season trade with Miami. "It just shows how freaky, I guess, that is. A lot of luck goes into that. It's hard enough to get four hits in a Major League Baseball game, yet alone have them all be the right ones and the right sequence."

Less than three weeks after his cycle in Cincinnati, Yelich accomplished the feat against the last-place Reds once again to help the Brewers in their playoff pursuit. Milwaukee remained 2½ games behind the first-place Cubs in the NL Central and three games up in the wild-card race.

Yelich singled in the first inning, doubled in the second, launched a two-run homer in the fifth and completed the cycle when he added a two-run triple in the sixth. With the Brewers nursing a large lead, he was lifted for a pinch-hitter in the eighth.

"I honestly don't even know how to describe it," Yelich said. "I don't know if it's really set in yet, but it's definitely crazy and you try to enjoy it as much as possible. It's nice to do it at home, too, in front of the home fans. It was a pretty exciting moment."

Yelich's huge second half has turned him into a top contender for the NL MVP award. He also hit for the cycle when he went 6-for-6 in a 13-12 comeback victory on Aug. 29 at Cincinnati, making him the fifth player to turn the trick twice in one season — and first in Brewers history.

The previous player with two cycles in one season was Aaron Hill in 2012.

Dodgers regain NL West lead

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Joc Pederson let his fist bump with a fan in the front row show just how good he was feeling Monday night.

The outfielder launched two home runs and tracked down a pair of potential extra-base hits on defense as Hyun-Jin Ryu and the Los Angeles Dodgers jumped back into first place in the NL West with an 8-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies.

"We're playing well right now," said Pederson, who exchanged pleasantries with a fan after running down Drew Butera's drive in the left-field corner. "It's just a good day I guess, you know? We're back in first place. Ryu threw unbelievable and we scored a lot of runs."

It was a rough night all-around for the Rockies, who lost slugger Trevor Story to a right elbow injury. The All-Star shortstop tweaked his elbow on a throw in the first inning and aggravated it on a swing in the fourth. He was to have tests Tuesday to determine the severity.

Colorado not only dropped a half-game behind the Dodgers in the division, the Rockies also fell a half-game behind the Cardinals for the second NL wild card.

Story was checked by manager Bud Black and a trainer before leaving the game. Already this season, Story has become the first shortstop in major league history with at least 40 doubles, 30 home runs and 25 steals.

Max Muncy added a three-

run homer and Ryu (5-3) pitched seven scoreless innings for the Dodgers, throwing 93 pitches to match a season high. He struck out five and didn't walk a batter as he lowered his ERA to 2.21 over seven starts since returning from a strained left groin.

"He's always been a big-game pitcher," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "For him to be healthy and set the tone for this series, he was in complete command tonight. His stuff was really good and we fed off of him."

The Rockies entered this showdown series with a half-game lead on Los Angeles, but the teams switched places as the Dodgers unleashed the high-powered offense that helped them win three of four last weekend in St. Louis.

MLB roundup

Cubs top Arizona, remain atop division

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Kyle Hendricks took a one-hit shutout into the ninth inning as the Chicago Cubs stifled the Arizona Diamondbacks with a 5-1 victory Monday night in the opener of their important three-game series.

Hendricks (12-11) struck out eight and walked one. A.J. Pollock hit a leadoff homer against Hendricks in the ninth and Paul Goldschmidt added a two-out single before Justin Wilson completed the three-hitter.

Javier Baez homered in a three-run sixth that broke open a pitchers' duel between Hendricks and Patrick Corbin (11-6).

Kris Bryant also homered as the Cubs maintained their 2½-game lead in the NL Central over Milwaukee.

Arizona is five games behind the first-place Dodgers in the NL West. The Diamondbacks have lost three straight and eight of 10 to fall five games out

of the second wild card as well.

Cardinals 11, Braves 6: Kolten Wong hit the first of four St. Louis homers, Miles Mikolas won his third consecutive start and visiting St. Louis beat NL East-leading Atlanta to give its playoff push another boost.

The Cardinals lead Colorado by a half-game for the second NL wild card.

Mariners 4, Astros 1: Rookie pinch-hitter Daniel Vogelbach's first career grand slam with two outs in the eighth inning lifted visiting Seattle over Houston.

The loss trimmed Houston's lead in the AL West to four games over idle Oakland with 12 to play.

Blue Jays 5, Orioles 0: Host Baltimore lost its 107th game, tied for most in a season since its arrival in 1954.

Mets 9, Phillies 4: Michael Conforto had a career-high six RBIs and Zack Wheeler pitched seven solid innings for his career-best 12th win for visiting New York.

Rays 3, Rangers 0: Tyler Glasnow allowed two infield singles in six innings for his first win since visiting Tampa Bay traded Chris Archer to get the right-hander.

Twins 6, Tigers 1: Kohl Stewart pitched six solid innings and Eddie Rosario homered for Minnesota before leaving with a right quad injury in a victory over host Detroit.

Pirates 7, Royals 6: Rookie catcher Jacob Stallings hit a two-out RBI single in the bottom of the ninth inning to rally Pittsburgh past Kansas City.

Marlins 8, Nationals 5: Washington reliever Wander Suero balked in a run as visiting Washington blew a four-run lead.

Giants 4, Padres 2: Brandon Crawford and Evan Longoria homered off Bryan Mitchell, and left-hander Andrew Suarez pitched into the eighth inning to lead visiting San Francisco past San Diego in a matchup of NL West teams playing out the season.