

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Soldier will get MOH for '15 Iraq rescue

Associated Press

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. — A soldier who helped rescue about 70 hostages set to be executed by Islamic State militants in Iraq has been approved to receive the Medal of Honor for actions during a daring 2015 raid, The Associated Press has learned.

Sgt. Maj. Thomas “Patrick” Payne, a Ranger assigned to the U.S. Army’s Special Operations Command, will receive the U.S. military’s highest honor for valor in combat in a White House ceremony set to be held on the 19th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The medal approval was confirmed by two Defense Department officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to speak on the record. Payne was initially given the Army’s second-highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross, for the special operations raid, which is being upgraded to a Medal of Honor.

Contacted by the AP on Monday, the Pentagon would not comment. The White House

did not respond to an email inquiry.

The medal will honor Payne’s actions in a daring predawn raid on Oct. 22, 2015. Seeking to rescue 70 hostages held by ISIS, American and Kurdish commandos flew in CH-47 Chinook helicopters to the town of Huwija, located roughly 9 miles west of Kirkuk.

The Kurdish Regional Government, the autonomous body that governs the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, had received a tip that the 70 prisoners, including peshmerga fighters, as the Kurdish forces are known, would soon be massacred by ISIS militants. Aerial photos of the compound showed what intelligence officials believed to be freshly dug mass graves where their bodies would be dumped.

The plan called for members of the American unit to support the Kurdish commandos in their operation but not join in on the main effort to rescue the prisoners.

“Time was of the essence,” Payne said, according to a news release obtained by the AP and not yet made public. “There

were freshly dug graves. If we didn’t action this raid, then the hostages were likely to be executed.”

The raid began with a failure. Kurdish forces attempted to make a dynamic entry by blasting a hole in the compound’s outer wall, but the blast failed. The explosion alerted the ISIS militants, who opened fire on the Kurdish forces.

Payne and his unit climbed over a wall and entered the prison compound. The soldiers quickly cleared one of the two buildings known to house hostages. Once inside the building, the unit encountered enemy resistance. The team used bolt cutters to break the locks off the prison doors, freeing nearly 40 hostages.

Moments later, an urgent call over the radio was received from other task force members engaged in an intense gun fight at the second building.

Between 10 to 20 soldiers, including Payne and Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler maneuvered toward the second building that Payne said was a “heavily-fortified building, which was partially on fire.” Kurdish

commandos were pinned down by the gunfire.

At some point in his attempt to rescue the Kurdish forces, Wheeler was shot and killed. Wheeler was the first American killed in action since the U.S. launched renewed military intervention in Iraq against ISIS in 2014. 20 ISIS fighters were also killed in the operation.

The team scaled a ladder onto the roof of the one-story building under a savage fusillade of enemy machine-gun fire from below. From their rooftop vantage point, the commandos engaged the enemy with hand grenades and small-arms fire, according to the press release.

ISIS fighters continued to exchange gunfire with the commandos as they entered the building. Payne moved to open another fortified door.

Once the door was kicked open, both American and Kurdish commandos escorted about 30 more hostages out of the burning building that was about to collapse and under enemy gunfire.

Payne reentered the building two more times to ensure every hostage was freed.

Overseas post offices make long-delayed digital switch

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — After months of delays, the switch to electronic customs forms at military post offices overseas was made Thursday without advance notice to customers in some areas.

The requirement “to complete online customs forms takes effect today,” U.S. Army Europe said in a statement Thursday. “The required systems are all operating, and

clerks will no longer accept handwritten forms.”

The change is expected to cause longer lines and wait times, military postal officials have said.

The Postal Service began transitioning to electronic customs forms in March due to international regulations but granted military post offices an extension.

Military post offices in Europe and the Pacific were set to roll out the new requirement Aug. 13. Many installed a com-

puter, printer and scale so customers could print a customs declaration form at the post office.

But shortly before the launch, the change was postponed “until further notice,” due to the Postal Service “discovering new issues with the process,” the postmaster at Yokota Air Base in Japan said at the time.

The Sept. 3 start wasn’t as widely publicized. The post offices at Yokota and Kadena Air Base on Okinawa put out a notice of the new date last week

on their Facebook pages.

In Germany, Ramstein/Kapaun Postal Operations announced the switch Thursday on its Facebook site, apologizing to customers for the abrupt change.

Packages found with handwritten customs forms in the mail after Sept. 13 will be returned to the sender, the Postal Service said.

Electronic labels can be completed at kiosks at military post offices or created and printed at home.

Senators ask Esper to keep funding Stripes

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of 15 senators urged Defense Secretary Mark Esper in a letter Wednesday to maintain support for Stars and Stripes, which could be forced to stop publishing by the end of the month without Defense Department funding.

“Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation’s freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom,” the senators — four Republicans and 11 Democrats — wrote in the letter. “Therefore, we respectfully request that you rescind your decision to discontinue support for Stars and Stripes and that you reinstate the funding necessary for it to continue operations.”

In February, Esper proposed

ending the Defense Department’s funding of about \$15.5 million to Stars and Stripes. But the senators wrote such a decision should wait until Congress finishes work on the Pentagon’s fiscal year 2021 budget before moving to end the editorially independent news organization’s operations.

Shutting down Stars and Stripes “would have a significantly negative impact on military families,” the letter reads, highlighting the news organization’s unique reporting on issues including the military’s school system.

The Senate version of the NDAA did not authorize funding for the news organization. The Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to consider its version of the annual appropriations bill and it hasn’t scheduled hearings to draft

that legislation. Nine members of that committee — the four Republicans and five Democrats — were among the senators who signed the letter.

The Republicans who endorsed the letter are Sens. John Boozman of Arkansas, Jerry Moran of Kansas, Shelly Moore Capito of West Virginia, and Susan Collins of Maine. The Democrats are Sens. Dianne Feinstein of California, Richard Durbin of Illinois, Patty Murray of Washington, Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, Jon Tester of Montana, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Doug Jones of Alabama, Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Margaret Wood Hassan of New Hampshire, and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., sent a separate letter to Esper last month to convince

the defense secretary to allow Stars and Stripes to continue publishing until Congress has completed its appropriations process.

In Graham’s Aug. 26 letter, he noted “strong support” for Stars and Stripes within Congress. The organization, he wrote, has adapted to the modern digital age and provides “timely and accurate news for more than 1.3 million readers a day” in print and online.

“As a veteran who has served overseas, I know the value that the Stars and Stripes brings to its readers,” wrote Graham, a former Air Force Reserve lawyer who retired as a colonel.

The senators wrote Stars and Stripes was “historically significant” and continuing to fund it would have a “negligible impact on the department’s bottom line.”

7th service member to die of virus is Army reservist

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A 58-year-old Army reservist from Florida is the seventh service member, and fourth reservist, to die from the coronavirus, according to an Army Reserve official.

Sgt. 1st Class Clifford R. Gooding from Gulfport, Fla., died Aug. 28 in Largo from complications related to the coronavirus, Lt. Col. Simon Flake, a spokesman for the Army Reserve, said Thursday in a statement.

Gooding tested positive for the coronavirus June 23, and he was admitted to Palms of Pasadena Hospital in St. Petersburg. When his condition worsened, he was transferred to the Largo Medical Center where he later died, according to Flake.

Gooding is survived by his wife, Rosana, and several

children.

Gooding was a full-time reservist at the time of his death, and his most recent assignment was as the maintenance supervisor for the 301st Field Hospital in St. Petersburg, according to Flake. He served in the Army for more than 27 years, 24 of which were spent with the Reserve.

His awards include the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Gooding is the fourth Army reservist to die from complications related to the coronavirus. On Aug. 17, Master Sgt. Brian K. Tolliver, 46, also died at Largo Medical Center after testing positive July 10. He was the command paralegal for U.S. Army Reserve Command’s headquarters in Pinellas Park near Largo.

Turkey: Russia to hold live-fire exercises in the Mediterranean

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey has announced that Russia will hold live-fire naval exercises in the eastern Mediterranean, amid escalating tensions between Turkey and its coastal neighbors, Greece and Cyprus, over rights to search for energy resources in the region.

The navigational notice issued late Wednesday said the Russian exercises will take place Sept. 8-22 and Sept. 17-25 in areas of the Mediterranean where Turkish seismic research vessels are operating.

There was no immediate comment from Russia on the exercises, which Turkey announced after the United States said it was partially lifting a 33-year-old arms embargo against ethnically divided Cyprus.

It’s unclear why NATO-member Turkey would announce such drills on Moscow’s behalf, but the two countries have sig-

nificantly strengthened their military, political and economic ties in recent years. They are coordinating closely on their military presence in Syria, while Turkey has purchased Russia’s advanced S-400 missiles and has broken ground on a Russian-built nuclear power plant that will be located on its southern coast.

Turkey has reacted angrily to the U.S. move that it said went against the “spirit of alliance” between Washington and Ankara. It also warned that it would harm efforts to reunify Cyprus, which is split between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Turkish officials have also vowed to take steps to guarantee the security of a self-declared Turkish state in the island’s north.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Thursday that the lifting of the embargo will lead to a deadlock.

Budget deficit set to hit record \$3.3 trillion

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The federal budget deficit is projected to hit a record \$3.3 trillion as huge government expenditures to fight the coronavirus and to prop up the economy have added more than \$2 trillion to the federal ledger, the Congressional Budget Office said.

The spike in the deficit means that federal debt will exceed annual gross domestic product next year — a milestone that would put the U.S. where it was in the aftermath of World War II when accumulated debt exceeded the size of the economy.

The \$3.3 trillion figure released Wednesday is more than triple the 2019 shortfall and more than double the levels experienced after the market meltdown and Great Recession of 2008-09. Government spending, fueled by four coronavirus response measures, would register at \$6.6 trillion, \$2 trillion-plus more than 2019.

The recession has caused a drop in tax revenues, but the changes are not as dramatic as seen on the spending side, with individual income tax collections running 11% behind last year. Corporate tax collections are down 34%.

The economy shut down in the spring so people could be in isolation, in a failed national attempt to defeat the pandemic. That shutdown led lawmakers and President Donald Trump to pump money into business subsidies, larger unemployment benefits, \$1,200 direct payments and other stimulus steps that have helped the economy in the short term.

Most economists are untroubled by such huge borrowing when the economy is in peril, and the debt was barely a concern when a cornerstone \$2 trillion coronavirus relief bill passed almost unanimously in March.

But now that lawmakers and the White

House are quarreling over the size and scope of a fifth virus relief bill, Republicans are growing skittish at the enormous costs of battling the pandemic. The Democratic-controlled House passed a \$3.5 trillion measure in May, though House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., says she is willing to cut that figure to \$2.2 trillion.

Caseloads remain unacceptably elevated, however, as the virus exacts a painful, lingering toll on the economy and sentiment remains high for a fifth virus rescue package that would include money to reopen schools, patch state budgets and continue enhanced jobless benefits that have kept families afloat.

Among Republicans, there seems to be less ardor for a deal — at least at what they see as unfavorable terms. GOP leaders had been pressing for a package in the \$1 trillion range, but party talks during August have focused on a smaller package.

Magnolia flag chosen to appear on Miss. ballot

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi voters will decide whether to accept a new state flag with a magnolia to replace an old one legislators retired under pressure because it included the Confederate battle emblem that's widely seen as racist.

A commission voted 8-1 Wednesday to recommend the magnolia over one other final design that featured a shield with wavy lines representing water.

"We'll send a message that we live in the future and not in the past," former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Reuben Anderson, the flag commission chairman,

said after the vote.

The single design will go on the November ballot. If voters accept the design, it will become the new state flag. If they reject it, the design process will start anew — and Mississippi will remain a state without a flag for a while longer.

The commission decided Wednesday that leading to the November election, it will promote the magnolia flag by calling it the "In God We Trust" flag.

"More than any other time in our country, we need the mercy and grace of God," said commission member TJ Taylor, who is an attorney and policy director for the

state House speaker.

After the meeting Wednesday, the magnolia flag was raised on a pole outside the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson, where it fluttered in a brisk breeze.

Later in the day, Republican Gov. Tate Reeves praised the magnolia design.

"I think they did a good job," Reeves said. "It's, I think, a well-done flag."

Legislators shelved the Confederate-themed flag two months ago against the backdrop of widespread protests over racial injustice. The flag had been divisive for decades in a state with a 38% Black population.

N. Korea plans for military parade amid virus concerns

By KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Recent satellite images indicate that North Korea has started rehearsing for a military parade, probably to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its ruling party, despite coronavirus concerns, a think tank said.

Two images taken 30 minutes apart on Monday show hundreds of vehicles parked in lots adjacent to the parade grounds and thousands of troops in formations, according to 38 North, a website that monitors activity in the North.

The rehearsals were held in an area of eastern Pyongyang that simulates Kim

Il Sung Square, named for the country's founder and the current leader's grandfather.

Such parades have been highly provocative in the past because they were used to showcase North Korea's arsenal of ballistic missiles, which are being developed as part of its nuclear weapons program.

The communist state has toned down such displays since it began engaging in diplomacy with the United States in 2018, including an unprecedented summit between leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump in Singapore.

Those talks have stalled following a failed summit between the two leaders in

February 2019 in Vietnam that exposed sharp differences over the extent of sanctions relief in exchange for disarmament steps.

At the beginning of the year, Kim declared that his country was no longer bound by a self-imposed long-range missile and nuclear testing moratorium and vowed to unveil a new strategic weapon.

Many observers have predicted that North Korea would hold a military parade on Oct. 10 to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party.

"These images provide the first evidence that rehearsals are underway," 38 North said in an article posted on Tuesday.

CDC says be ready for vaccine on Nov. 1

Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The federal government has told states to prepare for a coronavirus vaccine to be ready to distribute by Nov. 1.

The timeline raised concern among public health experts about an “October surprise” — a vaccine approval driven by political considerations ahead of a presidential election, rather than science.

In a letter to governors dated Aug. 27, Robert Redfield, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said states “in the near future” will receive permit applications from McKesson Corp., which has contracted with CDC to distribute vaccines to places including state and local health departments and hospitals.

“CDC urgently requests your assistance in expediting applications for these distribution facilities and, if necessary, asks that you consider waiving requirements that would prevent these facilities from becoming fully operational by November 1, 2020,” Redfield wrote.

He wrote that any waivers will not compromise the safety or effectiveness of the vaccine. The Associated Press obtained the letter, which was first reported by McClatchy.

The CDC also sent three planning documents to some health departments that included possible timelines for when vaccines would be available. The documents are to be used to develop plans for early vaccination when the supply might be constrained, according to one of the documents, which outlined a scenario in which a vaccine could be available as soon as the end of October.

Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON — The number of laid-off Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell to roughly 880,000 last week, a sign of possible improvement but evidence that the viral pandemic keeps forcing many businesses to slash jobs.

The latest figures, released

Thursday by the Labor Department, suggest that nearly six months after the eruption of the coronavirus, the economy is still struggling to sustain a recovery and rebuild a job market that was devastated by the recession. In the previous week, more than 1 million had sought jobless aid.

All told, the government said that 13.3 million people are continuing to receive traditional jobless benefits, up from 1.7 million a year ago.

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas on Wednesday reported its largest single-day increase in deaths from the illness caused by the coronavirus, while the number of active cases at the University of Arkansas’ Fayetteville campus jumped to nearly 400.

The Department of Health reported 27 new deaths from COVID-19, bringing the state’s total fatalities since the pandemic began to 841. But the department said 13 of the deaths were late reports, one of them dating back to May.

The state’s top health official urged college students to avoid large parties and gatherings, as the cases at the University of Arkansas continued to rise. The school reported 185 new cases at its campus between Sunday and Tuesday, bringing its total number of active cases to 399.

California

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles City Council declared a fiscal emergency on Wednesday, paving the way to furlough about 15,000 employees as the city struggles with an economic body blow from the coronavirus pandemic.

Another 1,280 employees would receive \$80,000 in cash incentives as part of an early retirement buyout program.

Mayor Eric Garcetti was expected to approve the measure, which aims to avoid outright layoffs.

The furloughs, which would

begin Oct. 11, would require civilian employees to take up to 18 unpaid days off from work for the fiscal year that began in July.

That amounts to a 7% pay cut.

Sworn police and fire employees are exempt. But civilian workers in those departments would be included.

Florida

MIAMI — A Florida business owner who received more than \$2 million in coronavirus relief funds used about a third of that money to buy a new boat, authorities said.

Casey David Crowther, 35, of Fort Myers, was arrested Wednesday on a federal charge of making a false statement to a lending institution, according to court records. If convicted, Crowther faces up to 30 years in federal prison.

Crowther applied for a loan in April on behalf of his company, Target Roofing & Sheet Metal Inc., according to a criminal complaint. Prosecutors said he claimed the funds would only be used for business-related purposes, such as retaining workers and paying bills.

But shortly after receiving the money, Crowther spent \$689,417 on a 2020 40-foot catamaran, which he registered in his name, the complaint said.

Illinois

URBANA — The University of Illinois is ramping up enforcement of restrictions on student activity after more than 330 COVID-19 cases in two days on the school’s Urbana-Champaign campus, school officials said Wednesday.

In an email to students, Chancellor Robert Jones said he expects all undergraduates to “limit their in-person interactions to only the most essential activities” for the next two weeks starting Wednesday evening.

“These include things like taking twice weekly COVID-19 tests, attending class, purchasing groceries and food, going

to work, engaging in individual outdoor activity, attending religious services and seeking medical attention,” Jones wrote.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear signaled on Wednesday that he expects to extend his mask mandate again later this month, saying the facial covering requirement is “more important than ever” amid efforts to reopen schools and protect the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For a second straight day, the governor reported more than 800 new coronavirus cases in Kentucky. He said statewide cases appear to be “creeping up, and we need to watch it.” He later said the state is in “a dangerous place” in battling the outbreak.

With more than 1,600 confirmed cases in the past two days, Kentucky was approaching a total of 50,000 cases since the start of the pandemic.

Beshear also reported 18 more virus-related deaths in Kentucky, raising the death toll to 36 in the past three days.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — The administration of Gov. Tom Wolf on Wednesday moved to relax restrictions on spectators at some fall sporting events, though attendance might be impossible at high school volleyball and water polo, and difficult for football, because of statewide limits on mass gatherings.

The revised guidance says that “spectators may attend sporting events,” but they count toward the statewide gathering limits of 25 people indoors and 250 people outdoors.

Spectators must wear masks unless they’re outside and can consistently maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet, the Wolf administration said.

Wolf has urged schools to cancel all youth sports until January to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man bites 2 officers who were arresting him

SD SIOUX FALLS — A Sioux Falls man bit two officers who were trying to arrest him for allegedly assaulting his girlfriend, according to police.

The 30-year-old man got in a fight with the woman while she waited for a ride from a friend, police spokesman Sam Clemens said.

The man started hitting the woman and threatened to kill her, he said. After the friend pulled up, the man and woman got into another vehicle and drove away. The friend called police.

Police found them nearby and when they tried to arrest the man he fought with them and bit two officers, the Argus Leader reported.

Officers said they found a methamphetamine pipe on the man who was being held on possible charges of aggravated domestic assault, aggravated assault on law enforcement and other counts.

Officials: Evicted tenant set fire to complex

LA NEW ORLEANS — A Louisiana woman facing eviction from her apartment has been accused of setting the 25-unit complex on fire, leaving a dog dead and 26 residents displaced, authorities said.

Jazlynn Major, 25, was arrested Tuesday in Huntsville, Texas, and charged with 26 counts of aggravated arson, news outlets reported.

Major appeared in court Monday and received a 24-hour eviction notice, requiring her to leave the Amies Paradise apartments in New Orleans by 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, according to First City Court Clerk Austin Badon.

Later that evening, witnesses

told investigators that Major left her apartment around 8:40 p.m. Monday and a glow could be seen from her window. The glow grew brighter and witnesses realized it was a fire, officials said.

A New Orleans Fire Department spokesperson said 26 residents in 20 units left their apartments unharmed but a dog belonging to one of the residents died, the spokesperson said.

Police: Woman exits car with child to escape

GA DULUTH — A woman jumped out of a moving car with her 1-year-old child to escape being kidnapped by a man who car-jacked her vehicle, according to authorities in Georgia.

The man first approached the woman when she was eating by her car at a Lawrenceville gas station on Aug. 18, the Gwinnett County Police Department said in a statement posted Tuesday on Facebook.

Authorities said the man punched the victim multiple times on her face and reached for what she believed to be a gun. He then told her to get in the backseat of the car, where her child was sleeping, according to police.

She obeyed, and police say the man drove off with the vehicle.

During the drive, officials said he demanded money from the woman and threatened to kill her. That's when she grabbed her child and jumped out of the car.

The man continued to drive, and the victim's car was found abandoned the next day in Duluth, a city located about 12 miles northwest of Lawrenceville.

The victim was treated for injuries she sustained during the fall when police arrived. The child was not injured.

Pilots report jetpack flier near airport

CA LOS ANGELES — The Federal Aviation Administration said Tuesday it is investigating reports from airline pilots that someone was flying in a jetpack as they approached Los Angeles International Airport to land last weekend.

"Two airline flight crews reported seeing what appeared to be someone in a jetpack as they were on their final approaches to LAX around 6:35 p.m. PDT Sunday," the FAA said. The statement did not elaborate.

Fox 11 Los Angeles obtained recordings of communications between the aircraft and the tower.

"Tower, American 1997, we just passed a guy in a jetpack," one pilot said.

"American 1997, OK, thank you, were they off to your left side or your right side?" the controller asked.

"Off the left side at maybe 300 yards or so at our altitude," the pilot said.

K-9 agent can sniff out electronic storage items

TN NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has added a pooch to the force who can sniff out hard drives, flash drives and other electronic storage devices that could hold evidence, especially in child exploitation cases.

The agency said a 2-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever named Zeus has a nose trained to detect a chemical compound used on practically all electronic storage items, even micro SD cards less than a millimeter thick.

TBI said Zeus will help find devices in hard-to-see places, including wall cracks, clothing, ceiling tiles, boxes, dirty laun-

dry or the garbage.

He also will serve as a comfort companion.

Man accused of posing as teen to enroll in school

GA MILLEDGEVILLE — A 21-year-old Georgia man who allegedly claimed to be a homeless teenager was arrested after providing false information to enroll in a high school as a 14-year-old student, authorities said.

The Baldwin County Sheriff's Office was called to a report of an "unruly juvenile" last week and discovered Abay Holmes fighting with a woman who was trying to take away his school-issued laptop, Deputy Brandon Towe wrote in a report.

Capt. Brad King told McClatchy News the woman let Holmes, whom she thought was a homeless teen, stay at her home, but called police after the two got into a disagreement.

Investigators determined Holmes, who had enrolled at Baldwin High School under a fake name, did not have a legal guardian in Georgia. School officials and deputies found discrepancies between names and addresses on his records.

Fingerprints proved he was actually an adult.

Driver arrested after flipping farm combine

ND BERTHOLD — A man has been arrested for driving drunk after flipping a farming combine in a field in northwestern North Dakota.

Police say the combine landed upside down in the field near Berthold on Monday.

Authorities say the 45-year-old man was intoxicated and taken to the Ward County Jail in Minot. The combine has extensive damage.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Hall of Fame pitcher Seaver dies at 75

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tom Seaver transformed a franchise and captivated a city, setting enduring standards as he whipped his powerful right arm overhead for the Miracle Mets and dirtied his right knee atop major league mounds for two decades.

A consummate pro and pitching icon, he finished fulfilled after a career remembered with awe long after his final strikeout.

“It is the last beautiful flower in the perfect bouquet,” Seaver said on the afternoon he was inducted into baseball’s Hall of Fame.

Seaver, the galvanizing force who steered the New York Mets from National League laughingstock to a stunning World Series title in 1969, has died. He was 75.

The Hall said Wednesday night that Seaver died Monday from complications of Lewy body dementia and COVID-19. Seaver spent his final years in Calistoga, Calif.

Seaver’s family announced

in March 2019 he had been diagnosed with dementia and had retired from public life. He continued working at Seaver Vineyards, founded by the three-time NL Cy Young Award winner and his wife, Nancy, in 2002 on 116 acres at Diamond Mountain in Northern California.

Seaver was diagnosed with Lyme disease in 1991, and it reoccurred in 2012 and led to Bell’s Palsy and memory loss, the Daily News of New York reported in 2013.

“He will always be the heart and soul of the Mets, the standard which all Mets aspire to,” Mike Piazza, a former Mets catcher and Hall of Famer, tweeted when Seaver’s dementia diagnosis was announced.

Said ex-Mets closer and captain John Franco: “As a kid, you always wanted to be Tom Seaver.”

Nicknamed Tom Terrific and The Franchise, the revered Seaver was a five-time 20-game winner and the 1967 NL Rookie of the Year. He went 311-205 with a 2.86 ERA, 3,640 strikeouts and 61 shutouts dur-

ing an illustrious career that lasted from 1967-86. He became a constant on magazine covers and a media presence, calling postseason games on NBC and ABC even while still an active player.

“He was simply the greatest Mets player of all-time and among the best to ever play the game,” Mets owner Fred Wilpon and son Jeff, the team’s chief operating officer, said in a statement.

Seaver was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1992 when he appeared on 425 of 430 ballots for a then-record 98.84%.

Seaver pitched for the Mets from 1967-77, when he was traded to Cincinnati after a public spat with chairman M. Donald Grant over Seaver’s desire for a new contract.

He threw his only no-hitter for the Reds in June 1978 against St. Louis and was traded back to New York after the 1982 season. But Mets general manager Frank Cashen blundered by leaving Seaver off his list of 26 protected players, and in January 1984 he was claimed by the Chicago White

Sox as free agent compensation for losing pitcher Dennis Lamp to Toronto.

While pitching for the White Sox, Seaver got his 300th win at Yankee Stadium and did it in style with a six-hitter in a 4-1 victory. He finished his career with the 1986 Boston Red Sox team that lost to the Mets in the World Series.

Supremely confident — and not necessarily modest about his extraordinary acumen on the mound — Seaver was a 12-time All-Star who led the major leagues with a 25-7 record in 1969 and a 1.76 ERA in 1971. A classic power pitcher with a drop-and-drive delivery that often dirtied the right knee of his uniform pants, he won Cy Young Awards with New York in 1969, 1973 and 1975. The club retired his No. 41 in 1988, the first Mets player given the honor.

“From a team standpoint, winning the ’69 world championship is something I’ll remember most,” Seaver said in 1992. “From an individual standpoint, my 300th win brought me the most joy.”

No. 1 women’s seed Pliskova ousted from US Open

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Under normal circumstances, Karolina Pliskova would not have been seeded No. 1 at the U.S. Open and so, while a second-round loss certainly would have been disappointing to her, and noticed by others, it wouldn’t have been as newsworthy.

But what’s normal in 2020? With the women who are 1-2 in the rankings choosing to skip the trip to Flushing Meadows because of the pandemic, No. 3 Pliskova ascended to the top spot in the draw — and by Day 3, she was gone.

Pliskova, the 2016 runner-up at the U.S. Open, made her mood clear during a 6-1, 7-6 (2) loss to 50th-ranked Caroline Garcia on Wednesday by throwing a racket, then again

afterward with a series of clipped responses at her news conference.

Pliskova fidgeted with the microphone. Sighed. Shrugged her shoulders. Rolled her eyes.

When a reporter offered possible explanations for the defeat — a new, faster surface on the courts, a lack of atmosphere because there are no spectators, the pressure of her high seeding — Pliskova replied: “Nothing from what you said.”

Her reasoning for the result? “I didn’t play good,” Pliskova said, “so that’s it.”

When another member of the media said this back-and-forth must be boring to Pliskova, she said, “Yeah, a little bit. Did you see the match or no?” and soon after remarked, “I don’t know if you understand tennis well enough.”

After a first round that went more to form than ever — 29 of 32 seeded women won their opening matches, a U.S. Open record since the number of seeds was doubled from 16 in 2001 — the surprises started in the second round.

Three Americans turned in upsets of seeded women. Shelby Rogers, ranked 93rd, beat 11th-seeded Elena Rybakina 7-5, 6-1; Ann Li, who is ranked 128th, topped 13th-seeded Alison Riske 6-0, 6-3 in a match-up between two players from Pennsylvania; and Madison Brengle, ranked 84th, took out 19th-seeded Dayana Yastremska 6-2, 6-3.

Other seeded women who were eliminated: No. 12 Marketa Vondrousova, No. 30 Kristina Mladenovic, No. 31 Anastasija

Sevastova.

Mladenovic’s loss was the wildest of them all. She led 6-1, 5-1, then later held four match points, but never was able to finish things off and ended up on the wrong end of a 1-6, 7-6 (2), 6-0 result against 102nd-ranked Varvara Gracheva.

Two seeded men exited, too: No. 13 Cristian Garin and No. 24 Hubert Hurkacz.

Unlike Pliskova, the No. 1-seeded man, Novak Djokovic, only had a brief blip on his way to the third round and a 25-0 record in 2020. Going back to late last season, his winning streak is 28 matches overall.

Next up for him is No. 28 Jan-Lennard Struff, someone Djokovic dismissed 6-3, 6-1 last week at the Western & Southern Open.

NBA playoffs roundup

Rockets take Game 7, series from Thunder

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — James Harden couldn't get his shot to fall all night, so the scorer turned stopper.

In this wild Game 7 that took one strange turn after another in the final seconds, the biggest play came when a guy known almost entirely for his offense turned up the defense.

Harden made up for a miserable shooting night with a big blocked shot, Russell Westbrook scored 20 points against his former team and the Houston Rockets edged the Oklahoma City Thunder 104-102 on Wednesday night to win the first-round series.

"It was one of those nights offensively so I just wanted to change the game defensively and I think I did that," Harden said.

The Rockets pulled out a tense final game of the first round that lasted past the final basket as replays and fouls were sorted out.

"I've been around a long time and just at the end it was a little crazy," Houston coach Mike D'Antoni said.

In the end, the Rockets prevailed to set up a second-round matchup with the Los Angeles Lakers that begins Friday despite Harden, the NBA's leading scorer, going 4-for-15 from the field.

"These are the games, you want to win a championship or win playoff games, you've got to do it with your heart," D'Antoni added.

The frantic final seconds of a game that was tight throughout had Houston take the lead for good at 103-102 when P.J. Tucker scored with 1:25 remaining. After changes of possession, the Thunder got the ball to Lu Dort, who attempted a three-pointer that Harden blocked with 4.8 seconds left.

Robert Covington made a free throw with 1.4 seconds to

go and Harden was whistled for fouling Danilo Gallinari before the ball was inbounded, giving the Thunder one free throw and the ball. But Gallinari missed the free throw and the Thunder turned it over on the last inbound pass.

Westbrook helped defend that, perhaps remembering some of his old coach's plays.

"I kind of know a little bit," Westbrook said.

Heat 116, Bucks 114: Jimmy Butler made two free throws with no time remaining and Miami wasted a six-point lead in the final seconds yet found a way to beat Milwaukee for a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Butler rattled in the first, which was the only one that mattered, then made the second for the final margin. He got fouled by Giannis Antetokounmpo with about a tenth of a second left on a jump shot from the left corner.

Referees sent Butler to the line, with no one else on the lane, as some Heat teammates knelt at midcourt. And just like that, the Heat became the first No. 5 seed in NBA history to take a 2-0 series lead over a No. 1 seed.

Goran Dragic scored 23 points, Tyler Herro added 17 off the bench and Jae Crowder had 16 for Miami.

Bam Adebayo scored 15 points, Butler and Duncan Robinson each had 13 and Kelly Olynyk added 11 for Miami — which is 6-0 in this postseason.

Antetokounmpo had 29 points and 14 rebounds for the Bucks, who were down by six with 27 seconds left and tied it. Khris Middleton scored 23 points for Milwaukee, the last three of those coming when Dragic was called for fouling him with 4.3 seconds left.

Hutchinson helps
Avs force Game 7

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The biggest boost for the Colorado Avalanche in must-win game after must-win game comes from an unlikely source — their third-string goaltender.

Michael Hutchinson stopped 27 shots and the Avalanche beat the Dallas Stars 4-1 on Wednesday night to force a decisive Game 7 in their second-round playoff series.

The 30-year-old Hutchinson was back in net with starter Philipp Grubauer and backup Pavel Francouz both sidelined. It was just Hutchinson's second career NHL playoff start — and second win. He stymied the Stars all night after allowing an early goal.

"He's an easy guy to cheer for," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "For him to be able to step in and do what he's done for us the last couple games is nothing short of amazing. He deserves all the credit."

Rookie defenseman Cale Makar scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, while Nikita Zadorov and Mikko Rantanen also added goals. Nathan MacKinnon scored an empty-netter for the Avalanche, who staved off elimination for a second straight game to tie the series at three wins apiece. Colorado has never won a postseason series when trailing 3-1.

Game 7 is Friday.

"Our mindset's changed," Makar said. "Obviously, we're on the ropes and we have a team that's going to fight to the end here. The next one is a big one for us. It's going to be a fun one."

Miro Heiskanen scored for the Stars, while Anton Khudobin made 20 saves.

Both teams lost in Game 7 last season in the second round. Colorado is attempting to advance to the Western Conference finals for the first time since 2002. Dallas last went in 2008.

"We never thought it was going to be a sweep or an easy series," Stars forward Tyler

Seguin said. "We always said it can go Game 6 or 7, and it's 7, so here we are."

This marked the first time in the high-scoring series the winning team didn't net at least five goals. Colorado increased its lead to 3-1 on a goal by Rantanen that was set up on a flip pass from MacKinnon with 16:39 remaining.

It was well protected by Hutchinson, who was acquired in a February trade with Toronto and locked things down.

"He calms things down for us," MacKinnon said. "Galvanizes the team, for sure. We feel very confident when our goalie is playing like that."

The Stars are looking for ways to disrupt Hutchinson's rhythm.

"Give Colorado a lot of credit," Stars interim coach Rick Bowness said. "They're doing a great job protecting him."

MacKinnon's goal and assist give him at least a point in all 14 games this postseason. He's the first player to notch 25 postseason points (nine goals, 16 assists) in 14 or less games since Wayne Gretzky with Los Angeles in 1993 (eight goals, 17 assists in 14 games).

What stood out to MacKinnon, though, was the defensive effort. The Avalanche only took one penalty.

"We were one of the best defensive teams in the regular season. People don't really realize that," MacKinnon said.

Makar put Colorado up 2-1 midway through the second period by dropping down from the blue line, taking a pass from Rantanen and sailing the puck past Khudobin. Makar's 15 points this postseason are the most by a rookie defenseman in Stanley Cup playoffs history. Right on his heels, though, is Quinn Hughes, who has 14 points for Vancouver.

A banged-up Colorado squad saw captain Gabriel Landeskog limp off the ice after taking a skate to his right leg late in the second period. He briefly returned in the third.

Dodgers past Diamondbacks in the 10th

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mookie Betts hit a tying homer in the ninth inning, Will Smith lined an RBI single in the 10th and the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied past the reeling Arizona Diamondbacks 3-2 Wednesday night.

The Dodgers — who lead the Majors with a 28-10 record — won their ninth in a row at home despite getting only four hits. Reigning NL MVP Cody Bellinger missed his second straight game due to a lat injury.

“We battled and stayed in the game,” said Betts, who is second in the NL with 12 home runs. “You have to play 27 outs, and sometimes more, like today. The most important thing is just putting pressure for all 27, and I think we did a decent job of that.”

After Arizona scored a run in the top of the 10th, Max Muncy began the bottom half as the automatic runner at second base and didn’t need much time to score. He advanced to third on Chris Taylor’s sacrifice bunt and continued home when Junior Guerra (1-1) threw wide of the bag, which also allowed Taylor to move to second.

One out later, Smith lined a single to left for the third walk-off hit of his career.

“I thought it was a really well-played baseball game,” Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said. “I think we’re so used to home runs and offense, but to get pitchers making pitches, and some defensive plays, low scoring where every pitcher, every base runner matters, I thought it was fun.”

The Dodgers had been held to one hit

by three Diamondbacks pitchers for 8¹/₃ innings until Betts homered to center off Kevin Ginkel. Corey Seager followed with a double off the left-field wall but was stranded.

Arizona took a 2-1 lead in the 10th when Daulton Varsho came home on a bases-loaded walk by Kenley Jansen (2-0) to Christian Walker.

Arizona manager Torey Lovullo said he practiced bunt defense and throws to third frequently in the three weeks of summer camp leading up to the season due to the new rules, which made this loss even more frustrating.

Walker homered and Zac Gallen allowed only one hit in seven-plus innings for the Diamondbacks, who have dropped four straight and 13 of their last 14.

MLB roundup

Atlanta’s Duvall repeats Ozuna’s 3-HR feat at Fenway

Associated Press

BOSTON — Adam Duvall hit three home runs a night after teammate Marcell Ozuna become the first NL player ever to hit three homers in Fenway Park, and the East-leading Atlanta Braves beat the stumbling Boston Red Sox 7-5 Wednesday night to complete a three-game sweep.

Duvall hit a pair of two-run shots over the Green Monster and a solo blast to center for his five RBIs. Ozuna added a long, tiebreaking solo drive for the Braves, who entered the three-game set 0-12-3 in their last 15 series against the Red Sox.

It was Atlanta’s first sweep in Boston since capturing a three-game set in 2002. Freddie Freeman had two hits to extend his hitting streak to 16 games.

Jackie Bradley Jr. hit a solo homer and J.D. Martinez had two hits and two RBIs for the Red Sox.

Indians 5, Royals 0: Triston McKenzie tossed six innings of three-hit ball to celebrate his 23rd birthday, and Tyler Naquin hit a pair of homers for the only runs of the game to lead Cleveland to a win at Kansas City.

McKenzie (2-0) needed just 81 pitches thanks to six strikeouts, no walks and some slick defense behind him.

Astros 2, Rangers 1: Michael Brantley hit a two-run homer early to back up a strong start from rookie Cristian Javier and Houston held on to beat visiting Texas.

Brantley, who had a three-run shot in a loss on Tuesday night, connected off Kolby Allard (0-4) with one out in the first on his homer to the seats in right field to give the Astros an early lead.

Blue Jays 2, Marlins 1: Lourdes Gurriel homered and Hyun Jin Ryu pitched six solid innings to lead Toronto to a win at Miami.

After Marlins pitcher Sixto Sanchez got through the first four innings on 43 pitches, Gurriel snapped the rookie right-hander’s 11-inning scoreless string with a two-run shot for a 2-0 lead in the fifth.

Reds 4, Cardinals 3: Joey Votto’s single in the bottom of the ninth inning drove in Shogo Akiyama with the winning run for host Cincinnati.

Facing Giovanny Gallegos (1-1), Akiyama and Curt Casali walked with one out and Votto

delivered a sharp line drive to right to send Akiyama sliding across the plate and extend his hitting streak to six games.

Phillies 3, Nationals 0: Zack Wheeler tossed three-hit ball over 6²/₃ innings to outpitch Max Scherzer, Jay Bruce hit a solo homer and host Philadelphia beat Washington.

Neil Walker was 3-for-3 with two RBIs for the Phillies, who’ve won eight of nine and three in a row to go two games over .500 for the first time since they were 79-77 last Sept. 24.

Brewers 8, Tigers 5: Keston Hiura and Jace Peterson homered as host Milwaukee snapped Detroit’s six-game winning streak.

Eric Sogard’s sacrifice fly off Joe Jimenez (1-2) scored Justin Smoak with the go-ahead run in the seventh inning as the Brewers responded after falling behind 4-0. Peterson provided insurance with a pinch-hit, two-run shot in the eighth.

Mets 9, Orioles 4: Michael Conforto went 4-for-5 with a homer and five RBIs, Pete Alonso hit a lengthy solo shot and New York won at Baltimore to snap a five-game losing streak.

Conforto matched his career

high in hits with a two-run homer in the first inning, RBI doubles in the fifth and seventh, and a run-scoring single in the eighth.

Rays 5, Yankees 2: Mike Brosseau got some revenge against New York, hitting two home runs as visiting Tampa Bay topped its AL East rival again.

Rockies 9, Giants 6: Garrett Hampson and Sam Hilliard homered and newcomer Kevin Pillar delivered a key triple as host Colorado bounced back from a battering, rallying to beat San Francisco.

Cubs 8, Pirates 2: Javier Baez hit a three-run home run and Kyle Hendricks pitched one-run ball over six innings to lead Chicago to a win at Pittsburgh.

Twins 8, White Sox 1: Josh Donaldson returned from the injured list with two hits and two RBIs for host Minnesota.

Padres 11, Angels 4: Jason Castro hit a tiebreaking, two-run double against the team that traded him three days ago, and San Diego rallied for eight runs in the eighth inning to win at Los Angeles.