Special delivery: Military to produce MRE pizzas

By Scott Wyland
Stars and Stripes

Troops will soon get pizza in places where delivery drivers don’t go. The military is preparing to produce Meals, Ready to Eat pizzas that are engineered to stay fresh for three years in a pouch. Troops could taste their first pizza MREs in the field by next year, Army officials say.

These don’t compare to the freshly made pizzas at an Italian restaurant, but they stack up well to store-bought pizzas, said David Accetta, spokesman for Natick Soldier Research Development & Engineering Center in Massachusetts.

“ать it’s better than frozen pizza,” he said.
The pizzas come with only one topping
SEE PIZZA ON PAGE 5

Out with a bang

Closing ceremony brings end to heavily political Winter Games » Back page

Amid sanctions, N. Korea open to meeting with US

By Kim Gamel
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea expressed a willingness to hold talks with the United States, boosting hopes that the recent thaw in tensions on the divided peninsula may extend beyond the Olympics.
The White House responded that it will see if the message “represents the first steps along the path to denuclearization.”
It was too soon to know if the apparent olive branch would lead to a breakthrough in the standoff over the growing threat from the North.
The communist state has consistently maintained that it’s nuclear weapons program is not up for negotiation.
Just two days ago, the U.S. Treasury Department slapped a tough new round of sanctions on several companies and ships accused of illicit trading with the North. The communist state decried the new sanctions and said that any blockade would be considered an “act of war.”
But the offer was a diplomatic victory for South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has said he hoped the detente fostered by the Winter Games would lead to broader talks including Washington and Pyongyang.
SEE OPEN ON PAGE 14
Amphibious squadron leaders relieved of duties

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The commander and deputy commander of the Navy’s Japan-based amphibious squadron have been relieved of their duties, the Navy announced Sunday.

Amphibious Squadron 11 commander Capt. George Doyon was relieved for mishandling complaints from his staff about harassment from the unit’s deputy commander, Capt. Jeff Oakey, over a yearlong period, a statement from the service said.

Oakey was relieved from his position for “substandard performance of duty.”

Both officers were relieved Saturday by Expeditionary Strike Group 7 commander Rear Adm. Brad Cooper and have been temporarily assigned to other jobs at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, the statement added.

Doyon took charge of the unit in January 2017 after serving as its deputy commander.

Seventh Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss told Stars and Stripes the harassment claims against Oakey were not sexual in nature.

“Most of our commanders complete their tours with distinction, but all are expected to meet high standards of leadership, reliability and responsibility, and the Navy holds them accountable when those standards aren’t met,” he said.

Capt. Ed Thompson, who led the unit before Doyon, has temporarily reassumed commander duties. Capt. Marc Boran, former deputy chief of staff for operations and plans at ESG-7, is serving as temporary deputy commander.

Headquartered at Sasebo, Amphibious Squadron 11 is responsible for the Navy’s forward-deployed amphibious ships, including the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp, the amphibious transport dock ship USS Green Bay and the dock landing ships USS Germantown and USS Ashland.

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3ID soldiers deploy to Korea for first time since the war

BY MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — The 3rd Infantry Division is back on the Korean Peninsula for the first time since the Korean War.

The 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Stewart, Ga., began a nine-month rotation Friday by unfurling its unit colors at the Eighth Army’s new headquarters south of Seoul.

The “Raider Brigade” replaces soldiers from the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas.

This is the first time soldiers wearing the 3ID patch have served on the peninsula since fighting in the Korean War,” Raider Brigade commander Col. Mike Adams said at the ceremony.

The soldiers will continue the division’s commitment to defense of a country that’s technically still fighting the Korean War, Adams said. Hostilities ended in 1953 with an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

“We will fulfill the requirement for [the armored brigade combat team] to support 2nd Infantry Division in deterring North Korean aggression and maintaining peace,” he said.

The new arrivals make up the fifth rotational brigade to come to South Korea since 2ID’s 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team — known as the “Iron Brigade” — inactivated in July 2015. The unit was the last permanently stationed brigade combat team on the peninsula.

2ID commander Maj. Gen. Scott McKean told the Raider Brigade that “the armored brigade combat team is the most lethal formation in our Army” and that their unit is “ready to take the mantle of responsibility.”

The brigade arrived during a period of relative calm as North and South Korea and the U.S. competed in the Winter Olympics at Pyeongchang. However, tensions are expected to rise once U.S. and South Korean forces resume peninsula-wide exercises that were postponed by the games.

Next Wednesday, another rotational unit — the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment — will arrive in South Korea to replace the 2nd Battalion, 4th Field Artillery regiment. Both units hail from Fort Sill, Okla., Eighth Army officials said in an email.

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Pak Chon U/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

The 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division colors are uncased at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Friday.
Above: Sailors on an ordnance disposal team practice cold-water scuba diving to test advanced underwater demolition procedures as part of the multinational Exercise Arctic Specialist in Ramsund, Norway, on Feb. 5. During the annual exercise, hosted by the Royal Norwegian Navy, teams of sailors from the 6th Fleet — based in the warmer environs of Rota, Spain — practiced recovering and neutralizing explosive devices. Sailors dove in near-freezing waters and conducted patrols in snow-capped passes and gorges to train in anti-explosive measures.

Photos courtesy of the U.S. Navy

6th Fleet sailors take to the cold during Arctic exercise

Above: Teams from the United States and Norway practice mine countermeasures on Feb. 7.

Left, technicians practice countermeasures for explosive devices.

An explosive ordnance disposal team goes on a cold-weather mountain patrol on Feb. 1.
Military’s ability to pursue old sexual assaults imperiled

BY DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

A ruling by a U.S. military appeals court jettisons the Pentagon’s ability to prosecute sexual assaults committed before 2006, just as more people are coming forward with years-old allegations as part of the #MeToo movement.

The ruling involves the case of Air Force Lt. Col. Edriel Mangahas, who in 2015 was accused of assaulting a woman in 1997 when they were both cadets at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces dismissed a rape charge against Mangahas this month, saying a five-year statute of limitations applied in the case.

The government argued that anyone facing a rape allegation technically could have been sentenced to death under criteria the military used in cases of rape between the fall of 1986 and the fall of 2006. A death sentence in the military has not occurred in decades, but applying that standard to this case as though it were a possibility would have left the statute of limitations open.

The ruling will make it more difficult to charge suspects in similar cases from that time period, military justice experts said. The decision is a “pretty dramatic reversal of precedent,” said Zachary Spilman, who left the active-duty Marine Corps in 2014 and now writes about military appeals cases on the website CAAFlog. It’s uncertain how the case could affect others cases in which people have been convicted of crimes from that time period, military justice experts said.

The decision is a “pretty dramatic reversal of precedent,” said Zachary Spilman, who left the active-duty Marine Corps in 2014 and now writes about military appeals cases on the website CAAFlog. It’s uncertain how the case could affect others cases in which people have been convicted of crimes from that time period, military justice experts said.

The defense team also noted that earlier this month, the appeals court cited a 1977 Supreme Court case, Coker v. Georgia, that held that a death sentence is a “grossly disproportionate and excessive punishment for the crime of rape and is therefore forbidden by the Eighth Amendment as cruel and unusual punishment.”

The prosecution countered with a Feb. 14 motion that argued the court should wait until a ruling in a similar case as though it were a possible.

The bottom-line answer that I give you in that prosecuting old sexual assault cases just got much harder, if not impossible,” Spilman said.

Legislation passed by Congress in 2006 explicitly says rape cases have no statute of limitations under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, but cases before then are subject to laws at the time of the crime.

Cases before 1986 had a five-year statute of limitations. But from 1986 to 2006, the military used more ambiguous criteria that said any offense punishable by death, including rape, “may be tried and punished at any time without limitation.”

The new ruling was issued as the Army was preparing for a court-martial in a highly unusual case in which the military recalled a retired senior officer to face charges years after his retirement.

Maj. Gen. James Grazioioplene, who retired in 2005, is accused of repeatedly sexually assaulting a girl between 1983 and 1989. The accusations first came to the Army’s attention in 2015, when the alleged victim, now 46, reported them.

After reviewing the evidence, Maj. Gen. Michael Howard, who is overseeing the case, decided in December that the case should proceed to court-martial. Grazioiplene’s defense lawyers have challenged that, arguing in a motion for dismissal that none of the allegations fall within the past five years.

The defense team also noted that earlier this month, the appeals court cites a 1977 Supreme Court case, Coker v. Georgia, that held that a death sentence is a “grossly disproportionate and excessive punishment for the crime of rape and is therefore forbidden by the Eighth Amendment as cruel and unusual punishment.”

The prosecution countered with a Feb. 14 motion that argued the court should wait until a ruling in the Mangahas case, which it said “frustrates the intent of Congress by limiting the prosecution of crimes ‘punishable by death.’”

Soldiers and their families prepare to pick up trash at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, on Saturday.

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes
GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Veterans, soldiers and families braved the cold weather to better their community when VFW Tower Post 10692 organized a group cleanup effort on base Saturday.

Almost 90 volunteers from units on base, JROTC the local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and other groups donated their time to pick up trash around Grafenwoehr and help clean up the local recycling center.

Trash is a problem at Grafenwoehr even though the facility has won awards for being environmentally friendly, said VFW post Commander James Joyce.

“We just wanted an event that would bring together all the different organizations here, to do something good for the community,” Joyce said. “In the States, VFWs are more confined to what they can do, and they’re more exclusive to being only for vets. But here, we try to bring together families and give them the opportunity to volunteer and do something good.”

After the cleanup, the VFW grilled lunch for all the volunteers.

Marine general’s chastisement as sergeant’s conviction is overturned

BY CARL PRINE
The San Diego Union-Tribune

A military court has reprimanded a Marine two-star general at Camp Pendleton, Calif., for allegedly mishandling a court-martial case against a noncommissioned officer accused of abusing his troops.


Prosecutors had alleged that Ortiz conspired with fellow noncommissioned officers to haze five junior Marines by forcing them to get special haircuts and ordering them to perform excessive physical exercises. Ortiz was also accused of punching two of them in the chest, according to court filings.

The Marines have tried to eradicate hazing for five years.

In 2013, Marine Commandant Gen. James Amos issued an anti-hazing order that was designed to track and stop abuse throughout the Corps.

The court said that in 2015, Ortiz took command of 1st Marine Division June 22. Ortiz was the 3rd one of his first acts was issuing a policy statement on hazing that called on his commanders to voluntarily discharge anyone found to have abused lower-ranking troops.

On July 11 and 12, Smith sent a series of emails to commandants and others, urging them to take immediate actions to curb hazing. Smith noted that he’d reviewed five hazing allegations during the week and called the abuse “the single biggest issue I have, and that word does not seem to be getting down to all hands.”

Smith urged his commanders to take action against “a few salty” lance corporals “who think they are in charge.”

Smith was arrested on July 13 in one of those cases, and Smith convened a court-martial against him on Aug. 15. Ortiz’s attorneys immediately filed a motion to quash the case, arguing that the general had strayed from unbiased justice to become a “direct accuser.”

Under military law, generals are barred from convening trials against Marines if they have a direct, personal stake in the case.

The trial judge agreed with the defense attorneys and moved to vacate Ortiz’s case without prejudice, which means that military prosecutors can try him again.

The judge also disqualified Smith from any future role in Ortiz’s case, meaning another general in a different command would have to start the entire process over if the Marine Corps still wanted to prosecute the sergeant.

Prosecutors appealed the decision on Nov. 7.

Smith declined to be interviewed, but his spokesman said his division would continue to go after Marines alleged to have abused their troops.

Military prosecutors have not determined whether they will continue to pursue the case against Ortiz.
USFJ apologizes after another helicopter flies over a Japanese school

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — U.S. Forces Japan has issued an apology after an American military helicopter again flew over the Okinawa elementary school where a window fell from a Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallion onto a playground in December.

A helicopter overflew Futtena Daini Elementary School, which sits next to Marine Corps Air Station Futtena's northern fence line, at about 3:30 p.m. Friday, according to a USFJ statement released over the weekend.

"Although U.S. Forces voluntarily ceased flights over the school to the greatest extent possible, a U.S. helicopter inadvertently overflew the school," the statement said.

In the Dec. 13 incident, a window measuring approximately 3 feet by 3 feet inexplicably separated from a Super Stallion and fell onto a sports field at the school. More than 50 students were on the field at the time, and a boy was slightly injured by a Pebble that flew through the window.

"Every day, U.S. military helicopters and Ospreys fly over our nursery school," Daini Elementary School headmaster Takehiro Kamiya told reporters during a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan on Feb. 14. "There have been no apologies and no explanations of any kind to date."

Last month, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis apologized to his Japanese counterpart, Itsunori Onodera, for a string of recent aircraft mishaps, including the emergency landings of Okinawa-based Marine Corps helicopters.

He also vowed to address the "important" issue of aircraft safety.

During their call, Onodera reportedly asked Maritime Self-Defense Force Marine four-star general — to take additional measures to prevent future mishaps.

"USFJ is working closely with Japanese counterparts at all levels to transparently share information as soon as it becomes available," the command said in the statement.

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BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

VA chief ready to move forward

WASHINGTON — David Shulkin, secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, hasn’t had a good past week.

Or at least that’s how he summed up the past 10 days — rife with ethical scandal and infighting at the VA and marked by the departure of his chief of staff — when speaking Sunday morning at a gathering of veterans at the annual Disabled American Veterans conference in Annapolis, Md.

"So, let me get right to it. This has not been the easiest past week or so for me or my wife," Shulkin opened, drawing laughs from the crowd. "We got a good sense of what Washington is all about."

The secretary learned a lesson in Washington politics, he said, and he’s trying to move past what he described as distractions.

"It’s my job to keep pushing for what’s the right thing for veterans and what’s consistent with the president’s agenda," Shulkin told Stars and Stripes after his speech. "I won’t stop to look behind, but there are efforts to try to politicize what we’re doing, and I’m trying to stay focused on the road ahead and what’s consistent with the things I’m all about.

"It’s about doing the things we’re supposed to be doing. It all comes down to staying focused on the road ahead and what’s consistent with the things I’m all about."
Flexible seating comes to DODEA Europe’s schools

Wobble stools, yoga balls, among choices

By Jennifer H. Swan
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — In Emily Costa’s second-grade classroom, kids are free to wiggle, wobble and rock back and forth in their seats.

For the most part, Costa doesn’t have to worry that fidgeting students will topple over in their chairs.

While a few of her pupils sit in a traditional chair with four legs, some wiggle like they have ants in their pants on a wobble stool, others kneel on pillows at tables low to the floor while others prefer to stand.

Costa plans to soon add scoops rockers, plastic chairs that let kids sit and rock at floor level.

“It’s so tidy,” said second-grader Lucas Paffett of wobble stools. “Regular chairs just stand still. I don’t like those.”

The unconventional seating arrangement at Ramstein Elementary School is called flexible seating, part of a growing trend that’s transforming classrooms.

Seating, part of a growing trend called flexible seating, is becoming more common that’s transforming classrooms in coffee shops or living rooms.

The idea is that allowing students to choose seating that suits their learning style, comfort level and their mood helps them to better concentrate on academics.

Teacher Kelli Keedwell incorporates a variety of flexible seating in her kindergarten classroom, including wobbly stools, that allow students to wiggle and move while doing class work.

“It takes that one thing off their plate of having to figure out how to be comfortable in a chair, when 6-, 7-, 8-year-olds are not necessarily meant to sit all day," Costa said.

At Ramstein Elementary, at least a dozen classrooms in kindergarten, first and second grade — nearly a third of the school — have adopted or are in the process of adding some flexible seating, said principal Emmalie Lee.

The cost varies. Pillows don’t cost much. Standing instead of sitting in the computer lab doesn’t cost anything.

But other choices are pricier. Wobbly stools start at about $70 each. Teacher Sheila Marksberry will be spending about $30 each, teachers said.

“Wobble stools, yoga balls,” she said. “This year, we have ordered more wobble chairs, some scoop rockers.”

Costa said, as well as yoga balls and floor-level chairs with a lap desk.

Kelli Keedwell, a Ramstein Elementary kindergarten teacher, received grant money for flexible seating last year after reading about it on teacher blogs and websites.

“Award was wide-ranging, from science kits and instruments for a string orchestra to hand-held whiteboards and equipment for a secular yoga program.

Two educators, one at Ramstein Elementary and one at Ramstein Intermediate School, received grants for about $2,350 each for flexible seating.

At Ramstein Elementary, the grant awarded to first-grade teacher Sheila Marksberry will be shared, teachers said.

“We have ordered more wobble chairs, some scoop rockers,” Costa said, as well as yoga balls and floor-level chairs with a lap desk.

“Last year, everybody wanted yoga balls,” she said. “This year, everybody wants the wobbly stools. I always tell them, ‘Find a seat you can do good work in.’”

Much of the evidence supporting flexible seating is anecdotal, though the concept is supported by research that shows kids are more engaged in learning when they’re physically active and are involved in creating their environment.

Keedwell said it’s all about the movement.

“Kindergarten is the new first grade, academically," she said. “It’s not the kindergarten that we used to know, where you’re outside playing all the time. We can at least move and get some wiggles out.”

But not too many wiggles.

“They learn if they are being silly or (doing) too much bouncing on the yoga ball, they lose it for the day and then they get to try again the next day,” she said.

Students show off robots, expertise at Aviano tech event

Students show off robots, expertise at Aviano tech event

By Jennifer H. Swan
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Dozens of American and international teenagers showed off their robots and technological knowhow Saturday at the Department of Defense Education Activity-Europe Invitational, a regional qualifier for the FIRST Tech Challenge world championships.

Teams spent months building their robots to perform the tasks of the competition.

They played “redic recovery,” where robots try to gather and stack blocks and maneuver around the playing field, among other requirements.

Robots first performed on their own for 30 seconds using programmed instructions. Students then electronically guided their robots for two minutes.

Newman College’s SPACE team from Breda, Netherlands, earned the inspiration award, which recognized not only success but teamwork, documentation of the project and how the team carried itself during the competition.

The Robo-Lancers from DOEBA’s RAF Lakenheath teamed up with the German EAGles, a team from Ernst-Abbe Gymnasium in Stuttgart, Germany, to win the competition portion of the event.

SPACE and their partner Superfluou’s Apostrophe’s from Ramstein High School came in second.

Nine DOEBA schools participated in the event and fielded 11 of the 20 teams. Other teams came from Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

It’s the second straight year that Aviano hosted the event, which serves as the only regional qualifier in Europe.
Stars and Stripes

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Long before basketball took center court, cheerleaders from across Europe rocked the Clay Kasernen Fitness Center in Wiesbaden on Saturday morning with high-flying stunts, spirited dance moves and rowdy cheers.

Eighteen cheer squads competed in the Department of Defense Education Activity’s 23rd Annual Cheer Tournament of Champions, giving fans who packed the gym early something to cheer for ahead of the European basketball finals.

Results in Division I mirrored 2017: Wiesbaden defended its title, while Stuttgart, Germany, was runner-up and Ramstein, Germany, finished third.

The Wiesbaden Warhriors channeled the energy of their home crowd to put on a performance that capped a season of just as much hard work and dedication as last year, said junior Savannah Fisher, who is on the Wiesbaden squad.

“When you first walk out and see everyone cheering for you, it’s so surreal,” she said.

Nerves were definitely a factor, said Alicia Tate, a sophomore on the Rota, Spain, team that defended its Division II crown, beating Spangdahlem, Germany, and Aviano, Italy.

The best part of the competition, Tate said, was “getting the routine over and done with. I had butterflies.”

Alconbury, England, freshman Victoria Brown was so nervous she doesn’t even remember her school’s Division III winning routine.

“It’s such a blur,” she said.

The Dragons, of Alconbury, toppled Baumholder, Germany, and last year’s champ, Sigonella, Italy.

Each team had to perform for at least two minutes and 15 seconds, and no more than 2½ minutes.

Judges scored them across a range of categories, from difficulty and execution of stunts to how well their cheers engaged and energized the crowd, said Kate Vitulli, a member of the DODEA-Europe cheer staff.

“This is a showcase for them,” Vitulli said. “Normally, it’s all about what they’re doing to support the crowd and a team.”

The tournament “showcases the skills and talent and athleticism” that they have as cheerleaders, she said.

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Clockwise from top: Winning Wiesbaden Warriors cheerleaders do splits in the air during the DODEA-Europe cheer tournament on Saturday in Wiesbaden, Germany; the Aviano, Italy, Saints dance en route to a third-place Division II finish; and Ramstein, Germany, sophomore Samantha Sonka helps her Division 1 team to a third-place finish.

EUROPE

18 squads rock DODEA cheer tournament

The results

Division I
Division II
1. Rota, 2. Spangdahlem, 3. Aviano
Division III

Spirit Award (given to teams that showed the best combination of athleticism and school spirit during the DODEA-Europe basketball tournament)
Division I — Kaiserslautern
Division II — Rota
Division III — Alconbury

All-Tournament
Division I
Amanda Fuglaar, Stuttgart; Autumn Torres and Kennedy Johnson, Lakenheath, England; Jada Branch and Jordan Green, Kaiserslautern; Katyn Romanowski, Naples, Italy; Lauren Miller, Vicenza, Italy; Lexie Lepheimer, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe; Samantha Sonka and Yesenia Earth, Ramstein; Savannah Fisher and Ta’Nya Thomas, Wiesbaden
Division II
Kaleigh Brown, Spangdahlem; Kendell Demeritt, Madelynn Scopa and Shannon McLaughlin, Rota; Laura Hacker and Zefan Hu, American Overseas School of Rome; Talitha Island and Victoria Taylor, Aviano
Division III
Aaliyah Rawlings, Sigonella; Eve Myers and Kyliee Edwards, Hohenfels, Germany; Grace Baxter and Kaylee Sink, Brussels; Grace Pedigo and Kacie Baldevia, Baumholder; Isabel Black, Alconbury

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER SVAN/Stars and Stripes

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Damascus, suburbs calm after UN cease-fire vote

By Bassem Mroue  
Associated Press

BEIRUT — The Syrian capital and its embattled eastern suburbs were relatively calm Sunday despite some violence that killed at least three people following the U.N. Security Council’s unanimous approval of a resolution demanding a 30-day cease-fire across Syria, opposition activists and residents of Damascus said.

The activists reported low-level clashes on the southern edge of the rebel-held suburbs, known as eastern Ghouta, and two airstrikes late Saturday night. They were not described in detail, but control of the area was adopted. During the day Sunday, more shelling and air strikes were reported by activists based in eastern Ghouta.

The relative calm came after a week of intense air strikes and shelling that killed more than 50 people in eastern Ghouta and left dozens dead or wounded in government-held Damascus, which rebels pellet with mortar shells.

“This has been the calmest night since last Sunday,” said Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, referring to the start of the bombing campaign on Feb. 19.

The Observatory said Sunday’s shelling killed three people and wounded 27 in several areas in eastern Ghouta. The opposition’s Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmets, said the three were killed in the towns of Saqba, Beit Sawa and Hammouriyeh.

State news agency SANA said insurgents began the shelling by firing 15 shells Sunday on government-held areas on the edge of Ghouta.

Ghouta-based opposition activist Anas al-Abdah said the night was calm but wrecked cars and drones were flying over rebel-held areas. He said several explosions were heard Sunday in Ghouta.

Dr. Sadiq al-Dimashqi, a surgeon at a clinic in Ghouta, told The Associated Press that several airlifts in the eastern Ghouta, mostly for people in eastern Ghouta and left dozens dead or wounded in government-held Damascus, which rebels also are contesting.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. The motive for the attack was not immediately clear. A police investigation is underway.

Kabul. Basir Mujahid, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said an Afghan official said a former lawmaker and one of his bodyguards were killed after gunmen opened fire on their vehicle in the capital, Kabul.

Basir Mujahid, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said an Afghan official said a former lawmaker and one of his bodyguards were killed after gunmen opened fire on their vehicle in the capital, Kabul.

Ex-lawmaker, bodyguard shot dead in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan official said a former lawmaker and one of his bodyguards were killed after gunmen opened fire on their vehicle in the capital, Kabul.

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Deadly severe storms sweep across central US

By John Raby
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Severe thunderstorms spawned suspected tornadoes and triggered widespread flooding that left at least three people dead in Kentucky and Arkansas.

The system that stretched from Texas to the Canadian maritime provinces on Sunday had prompted emergency declarations a day earlier in Missouri, Indiana and Illinois.

In south central Kentucky, the body of a male was recovered from a vehicle submerged in floodwaters in a creek near the community of Franklin on Saturday, the Simpson County Sheriff’s Office said in a statement. The victim’s identity was being withheld pending notification of relatives.

About 20 miles away, Dallas June Combs, 79, died when a suspected tornado destroyed her Adairville home earlier Saturday, the Logan County Sheriff’s Office told media outlets. Sheriff officials said Combs was inside the home when it collapsed on her. Combs was pronounced dead at the scene.

Authorities said Combs’ husband was outside putting up plastic to keep rain out of the home when he was blown into the basement area. He sustained minor injuries.

In northeast Arkansas, a man was killed after high winds toppled a trailer home. Clay County Sheriff Terry Miller told KAIT-TV that Albert Foster, 83, died Saturday night after the home was blown into a pond.

About 50 miles away, the National Weather Service said the roof was blown off a hotel in Osceola, about 160 miles north of Memphis, Tenn. Storm-related damage also was reported in Middle Tennessee, where Fox17 in Nashville reported extensive damage to homes and vehicles. Fox17 says at least a dozen homes were damaged in one Montgomery County subdivision.

The National Weather Service said it was sending crews to survey damage in a section of central Tennessee. Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens signed an executive order earlier Saturday declaring a state of emergency ahead of the anticipated storms and flooding in parts of southern Missouri. The order activates the resources of the Missouri National Guard and ensures state resources are available in the event of weather damage.

Other state leaders have issued similar orders. Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb declared a disaster emergency for 11 counties and Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner issued a state disaster proclamation for three counties hit by flooding.

Flood watches and warnings spanned multiple states Sunday morning, from Missouri to central Pennsylvania, while a wind advisory remained in effect for nearly all of Lower Michigan.

The weather service said flooding was expected along the Ohio River in Kentucky and Ohio, including in Cincinnati, where the river was 8 feet above flood stage Sunday.

Transportation officials said parts of Interstate 64 in Louisville, Ky., were closed in both directions Sunday due to high water.
More governors willing to consider gun law changes

By Dan Balz
and Michael Scherer

The Washington Post

A growing number of governors are considering gun laws and school safety measures after the mass shooting in Parkland, Fla., a sign that resulting legislative changes could extend beyond Florida. The impact of the shootings rippled through the winter meeting of the National Governors Association in Washington this past weekend as state leaders expressed willingness to consider new gun ownership and stepped up to address the proliferation of recreational firearms. But most said they were opposed to President Donald Trump’s proposal to arm teachers.

The comments came as students and grieving families continued to push lawmakers to pass new measures to address the murder of 17 students and faculty at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

“I just want to get the word out to the governor of every state that they have to do something today,” Andrew Pollack, whose daughter, Meadow Pollack, was killed at the school, said in an interview on “Fox News Sunday.” “My daughter’s death can’t be in vain.”

Individual governors said they would be open to raising the age limit for the purchase of long guns to 21, as proposed with Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., to expand presale checks for firearms purchases online and at gun shows.

First introduced after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in December 2012, the measure has twice been rejected by the Senate. Toomey’s office said he is seeking to build bipartisan support after the latest shooting.

More likely, the Senate will turn to a bipartisan bill from Sens. John Cornyn, R-Texas and Chris Murphy, D-Conn., to strengthen FBI background checks — a response to a shooting last November in which a gunman killed more than two dozen people at a Texas church.

That bill would penalize federal agencies that don’t properly report required records and reward states that comply by providing them with federal grant preferences. It was drafted after the Air Force acknowledged that it failed to report the Texas gunman’s domestic violence conviction to the National Criminal Information Center database.

No consensus in Congress on guns

By Lisa Mascaro
and Matthew Daly

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After a 10-day break, members of Congress are returning to work under pressure to respond to the outcry over gun violence. But no plan appears ready to take off despite a Texas gun list of proposals, including many from President Donald Trump.

Republican leaders have kept quiet for days as Trump tossed out ideas, including raising the minimum age to purchase assault-style weapons and arming teachers.

Their silence has left little indication whether they are ready to rally behind any one of the president’s ideas, dust off another proposal or do nothing. The most likely option is bolstering the federal background check system for gun purchases, but it’s bogged down after being linked with a measure to expand gun rights.

The halting start reflects firm GOP opposition to any bill that would curtail access to guns and risk antagonizing gun advocates. Before the Feb. 14 shooting at a high school in Parkland, Fla., Republicans had no intention of reviving the politically risky gun debate during an already difficult election year that could endanger their congressional majority.

One of the survivors of the Florida school shooting Saturday as companies cut ties to the gun industry. But it’s bogged down after being linked with a debate over gun insurance and background checks — a reprise of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings.

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One of the survivors of the Florida school shooting Saturday was on scene during shooting.

By Ken Sweet, Damian Troise
and Alexandria Ossorio

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The National Rifle Association, and now the state of Florida, faced a growing backlash Saturday as companies cut ties to the gun industry following the latest school massacre and student survivors called for tourism boycotts of their home state until gun control measures are enacted.

The latest companies to end their ties with the NRA were Delta and United Airlines.

Both Delta and United said Saturday they will no longer offer discount fares to NRA members to attend their annual meetings, and both have asked the gun rights group to remove any references to their permit to purchase a firearm.

The state of Florida also was facing some backlash. One of the survivors of the Florida school shooting suggested Saturday on Twitter that tourists stay away from the state. He got an immediate response.

“Let’s make a deal,” tweeted David Hogg, a Stoneham, Mass., resident who was a student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. “Florida, you have 3 months to limit gun violence. Let’s make a deal: You get to keep your senator and your governor, and we get to keep our school free of guns. Any deal?”

Israel also labeled as “absolutely untrue” reports the depuies waited outside even though children were still up and building needing medical treatment.

Israel and the sheriff’s office have come under scrutiny after last week’s revelation that depuies Scot Peterson did not go in to confront the suspected shooter, Nikolas Cruz, 19, during the Valentine’s Day attack. It is also said they believed there should be better ways for family members of victims to come face-to-face with unstable individuals to a judge and have weapons confiscated.

Fla., sheriff says only 1 deputy was on scene during shooting
Democrats release memo defending FBI surveillance

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK AND CHAD DAY

WASHINGTON — Two weeks after President Donald Trump blocked its full release, the House Intelligence Committee has published a partially blacked-out version of a classified Democratic memo aiming to counter a GOP narrative that the FBI and Justice Department conspired against Trump as they investigated his ties to Russia.

The document’s release Saturday was the latest development in an extraordinary back and forth between Republican and Democrat officials about the credibility of multiple inquiries into links between the Trump campaign and Russia, and the integrity of the top U.S. law enforcement agencies.

The document attempts to undercut and add context to some of the main points from a declassified Republican memo published earlier this month. In that memo, Republicans went after the FBI and the Justice Department over the use of information compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele in obtaining a secret warrant to monitor communications of onetime Trump campaign foreign policy adviser Carter Page.

The GOP memo included the assertion that the FBI obtained a surveillance warrant without disclosing that Steele’s anti-Trump dossier was paid for by Democrat Hillary Clinton’s campaign and the Democratic National Committee.

The Democratic memo said the Justice Department disclosed the “assessed political motivation of those who hired him” and that Steele was likely hired by someone “looking for information that could be used to discredit” then-candidate Trump’s campaign.

Republicans say that is not enough because the Clinton campaign and the DNC were not named. Trump seized on this in a tweet Saturday evening: “Dem Memo FBI did not disclose who the clients were - the Clinton campaign and the DNC! Wow!”

The White House on Feb. 9 had objected to the Democratic memo’s release, citing national security concerns. That sent the Democrats back to negotiations with the FBI, which approved a version with parts of it blacked out. It was then declassified and released.

Trump had no such concerns about the GOP memo, which he released Feb. 2. He argued that the release of Steele’s dossier would have brought the public to the edge of war with Russia after President Donald Trump released the Republican memo defending the FBI and the Justice Department’s handling of Steele’s dossier, which has now been declassified.

The memo contends that the Justice Department provided “additional information from multiple independent sources that corroborated Steele’s reporting” in the dossier.

Most of the details of the corroborated information are blacked out, but they do appear to reference Page’s meeting with Russian officials.

Feinstein loses endorsement of Calif. Democrats

BY DAVID WEIGEL

California Democrats rebuked Sen. Dianne Feinstein at their annual convention this past weekend, denying her the party’s endorsement in her bid for a fifth term. More than 54 percent of delegates backed state Sen. Kevin de Leon, who entered the race in October and has run to Feinstein’s left on health care, taxes and immigration.

Candidates needed 60 percent of the vote to win the party’s endorsement, making Feinstein the first incumbent senator in recent memory who will run in June’s primary without official backing. “California Democrats are hungry for new leadership that proved to be the dealbreaker,” said clarity campaign manager and DNC. Wow!”

President Donald Trump had objected to the release of the Democrats’ memo defending the FBI, which is now a newsworthy development.

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Motorcade arrives at Graham’s NC library

BY ALLEN G. BREED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Admirers took photos on their phones as firetrucks parked on freeway overpasses and police officers saluted as a motorcade carrying the body of Rev. Billy Graham crossed the evangelist’s beloved home state of North Carolina for four hours Saturday from his mountain chapel to his namesake library in the state’s largest city.

Residents in some of Graham’s most cherished places paid tribute to “America’s Pastor,” starting at the U.S. Capitol and closing out by his evangelistic association in Asheville. The motorcade rolled through Black Mountain, where he shopped and caused jams, and Montreat, where he lived.

Well-wishers lined sidewalks and medians as the motorcade reached Charlotte. Pallbearers, followed by family, carried the coffin into the Billy Graham Library, which will serve as a backdrop for the funeral.

Franklin Graham said he was fulfilling a promise to his father to bring the body to Charlotte. He said he was overwhelmed by “the outpouring of love.”

Leighton Ford, the evangelist’s brother-in-law, said the procession brought a gratitude and a tangible sense of sadness.

“I think he’d say, ‘It’s not about me. It’s about the Lord.’ For me, looking at the Leighton Ford. I remember at his last stadium meeting here in Charlotte, the mayor of Charlotte told us he was going to ride out with Billy, and everybody was cheering, and Billy said: ‘Wait a minute. It’s not about us. It’s about Him.’ ”

Graham, who died Wednesday at his home in North Carolina’s mountains at age 99, reached his beloved state called off the lethal injection.

The execution was botched and that he had argued in court filings since July that lethal injection would be difficult and painful because Hamm’s veins have been severely compromised by lymphoma, hepatitis and prior drug use.

Two execution team members, working on each side of Hamm’s body, tried multiple times to inject the intravenous drug.

Attorneys seek information on aborted Ala. execution

BY KIM CHANDLER
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Execution team members stuck an inmate repeatedly in the lower legs, ankles and groin in an effort to find a usable vein before the state called off the lethal injection, according to a Friday court filing by the inmate’s lawyer.

Army Capt. Bernard Harcourt said he is seeking more information about what happened during the attempted execution of his client, Doyle Lee Hamm, 61, on Thursday night.

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The state prison commissioner was delayed because of “a time issue.”

“I wouldn’t necessarily characterize what we had tonight as a problem,” Harcourt said in a May pre-trial hearing.

He is in pain from yesterday evening, physically, from all of the attempts to access his veins in his lower extremities and his in his groin,” Harcourt told The Associated Press.

Shortly after officials announced the execution has been halted, Dunn said the only obstacle to a successful execution was that the team lacked sufficient time. Harcourt said he didn’t know how long the medical team attempted to connect the line.

The Alabama attorney general’s office didn’t respond to a request for comment.

California parents face new charges in kids’ torture case

BY JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — In a room in the 9/11 museum, there are police captain’s poignant notes and a flashlight that illuminated the way to safety. Nearby, a letter from a trapped man tells his family, “I love you very much. … Do wonderful things in your life.”

The artifacts aren’t from Sept. 11, 2001. They are a remembrance of a terror attack that shadowed it: the deadly World Trade Center bombing 25 years ago Monday.

That shadow fell personally on Lolita Jackson. As a young finance worker, she picked her way down 72 flights of blacked-out stairs on Feb. 26, 1993, and fled the trade center’s south tower alive.

The bombing “tends to be forgotten because, 9/11 was such a cataclysmic event,” she said. But the blast has its own place in the lives and memories of an estimated 50,000 people who were in the twin towers that snowy afternoon.

Hamm killed six people, injured more than 1,000, manifested the growing terror threat from Islamic extremism and led to safety improvements credited with helping some people survive Sept. 11.

It was, in many respects, a precursor to 9/11,” said then-President Clinton.

A bomb exploded in a rented van in a basement parking garage shortly after noon, causing a crater several stories deep and a boom felt by many floors above.

The blast killed visitor John DiGiovanni and five people who worked at the trade center — Robert Kirkpatrick, Stephen Knapp, William Macko, Wilfred Mercado and Monica Rodriguez Smith, who was pregnant.

Power was knocked out and pipes were severed, flooding backup generators. Elevators got stuck, people were trapped for hours on an observation deck. Other people were trapped in the debris-filled garage. Police helicopters plucked nearly two dozen people, some disabled, from rooftops.

Some office workers broke out windows to try to clear smoke while awaiting help. Others made their way down, emerging coated in soot.

Jackson didn’t feel fearful at first. What was terrifying was the 2½-hour trek down the darkened building, trying to figure out what she would see at the bottom.

“You didn’t know what was going to happen,” recalled Jackson, who now works in city government.

Within days, a fragment of the rented van began leading investigators to Muslim extremists who sought to attack the United States for its Middle East policies, especially its aid to Israel, according to prosecutors.
Make me mobile — and keep me on top.

I need to know what’s going on in the world of the U.S. military — that’s why I subscribe to my #1 news source.

Sure, I can access Stripes.com from my desktop. But as often as I’m on the road, I need news that can keep up with me. The iOS app works perfectly on my phone and my tablet — and it’s included in the Digital Access subscription for one low price.
North Korea condemns new sanctions from US

BY GILLIAN WONG
Associated Press

BEIJING — China's ruling Communist Party has proposed scrapping term limits for the country's president, an official news agency said Sunday, appearing to lay the groundwork for a power shift that would allow President Xi Jinping to remain in power.

The party's Central Committee proposed removing a limit of two consecutive terms, the Xinhua News Agency said.

With Xi, 64, cementing his status as the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, who founded communist China, at last year's congress, party representatives insist “Xi Jinping Tho Nhi” is an era of lifetime tenure for heads of state.

What is happening is potentially very dangerous because the reason why Mao Zedong made one mistake after another was because China at the time was a one-man show,” said Willy Lam, a political analyst at the Chinese University in Hong Kong. “For Xi Jinping, whatever he says is the law. There are no longer any checks and balances.”

Xi is coming to the end of his first five-year term as president and is set to be appointed to his second term at an annual meeting of the rubber-stamp parliament that starts March 5. The proposal to end term limits will likely be approved at that meeting.

Term limits on officeholders have been in place since they were included in the 1982 constitution.

Political analysts said the party would likely seek to justify the proposed removal of the presidential term limit by citing Xi’s vision of establishing a prosperous, modern society by 2050.

Hu Xingdou, a Beijing-based political commentator, said while Xi might need an extra five-year term or two to carry out his plans, the country is unlikely to return to an era of lifetime tenure for heads of state.

Xi’s image dominates official propaganda, prompting suggestions that he is trying to build a cult of personality, and evoking memories of the upheaval of Mao’s 1966-76 Cultural Revolution. Party representatives insist Xi is the core of its seven-member Standing Committee, not a lone strongman.

At last year’s party congress, Xi hailed a “new era” under his leadership and laid out his vision of a ruling party that serves as the vanguard for everything from defending national security to providing moral guidance to ordinary Chinese. At the close of the congress, the party elevated five new officials to assist Xi in his second five-year term but stopped short of designating an obvious successor.

Political analysts said the absence of an apparent successor pointed to Xi’s longer-term ambitions.

Sunday’s announcement on term limits was the first since China’s ruling Communist Party proposed removing a limit of two consecutive terms for the president and vice president, which would allow President Xi Jinping to remain in power.
Iceland’s proposal to ban most circumcisions draws opposition

By Egil Bjarnason
Associated Press

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Icelandic lawmakers are considering a law that would ban the circumcision of boys for nonmedical reasons, making it the first European country to do so.

Some religious leaders in Iceland and across Europe have called the bill an attack on religious freedom. It is seen as a particular threat by Jews and Muslims who traditionally embrace the practice.

Under the proposed law, the circumcision of boys — removing the foreskin of the penis, usually when the child is a newborn — would be viewed as equal to female genital mutilation and punishable by up to six years in prison.

“This is fundamentally about not causing unnecessary harm to a child,” said Sjíla Dógg Gunnarsdóttir, lawmaker for the centrist Progressive Party, who introduced the bill this month.

The proposed law calls circumcision a violation of human rights and says it is not able to give an informed consent of an irreversible physical intervention.

Circumcision is not common in Iceland, a small Atlantic Ocean island nation of 340,000 people that is overwhelmingly Lutheran or atheist, with an estimated 100 to 200 Jews and about 1,100 practicing Muslims.

The bill has eight co-sponsors but is considered unlikely to get a majority in the 63-seat Icelandic parliament. It does not have the formal backing of any government ministers but has drawn the support of 422 Icelandic doctors who favor outlawing the 4,000-year-old religious practice.

They issued a joint statement last week saying circumcision violates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the physicians’ Hippocratic Oath that says, “First, do no harm.”

“Most western societies, circumcision of healthy boys has no significant health benefits,” the doctors’ statement read, citing a 2013 paper in the American Academy of Pediatrics journal.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said doctors should educate infant boys’ parents about the health benefits of circumcision, which it says reduces the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

During Friday services at a prayer space above a home goods store, Imam Salim Bajmimi warned his multinational congregation about the proposed law.

“Circumcision is harmless if it’s done at a hospital,” he said. “This bill is appealing to people’s emotion, not evidence.”

He said circumcision was important to Muslims but even more so to Jews.

“This is an attack on all religion and especially Judaism,” he said.

Rabbi Avi Feldman, of the Chabad Jewish Center, said he hopes the bill does not become law. In a statement to The Associated Press, he said circumcision is a core Jewish practice that serves as a bedrock of Jewish life. He was hopeful that “the rights for people of all faiths will be preserved and respected.”
**American Roundup**

**Ex-crime lab chemist charged with meth theft**

MISSOULA — A former chemist at Montana’s state crime lab in Missoula is charged with taking meth left over after testing for suspected drugs in criminal cases. Court records say the chemist’s brother-in-law told police the man confessed to using meth taken from the lab.

The chemist told investigators the lab’s drug-testing process does not use the entire sample. The remainder was supposed to be destroyed.

He faces three counts each of felony criminal possession of dangerous drugs, misdemeanor theft and misdemeanor official misconduct. Lab officials are working to determine if any criminal cases have been compromised.

**Officials ask governor to remove sheriff**

JACKSON — Officials in Jackson County are asking Gov. Rick Snyder to remove their sheriff from office over insulting remarks about women and minorities.

A letter was sent Friday by the county’s Board of Commissioners. Chairman Steve Shotwell Jr said Sheriff Steven Rand’s conduct is a “threat to the core values of the community.”

Rand has apologized for the offensive recorded remarks, which were released by an attorney who represents a lieutenant in the sheriff’s department. He said he won’t resign and leave his mess for “other people to clean up.”

**Firefighters help deliver baby boy**

HENRICO COUNTY — Two firefighters in Henrico County helped deliver a healthy baby boy.

WRIC-TV reported that a fractious father pulled up to a Henrico firehouse earlier this month with a woman in labor in the car.

Firefighter Mike Boisseau said the woman “had pretty much delivered on her own, so we just helped the last little bit.”

The 14-year department veteran helped deliver the child with firefighter Matt Daugherty. Both firefighters were trained in child birth, but neither had delivered a baby before.

**Young elephant at zoo dies of viral infection**

ST. LOUIS — A popular Asian elephant at the Saint Louis Zoo has died.

The zoo said 6-year-old Kenzi died of a viral infection — elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus, or EEEV — known to be fatal to elephants.

Zoo officials said Kenzi was diagnosed with the virus Feb. 20 and immediately was given antiviral medication. She died early Saturday morning.

**Police: Woman poops in pants to hide drugs**

CORSICANA — Police said a Texas woman attempted to hide evidence during an arrest by defecating in her pants to conceal drugs.

Officers in Corsicana were investigating a report of a theft at a grocery store Wednesday when they attempted to subdue a female suspect and take her into custody.

Police said they placed Shannen Martin into the back of a police cruiser, where they say she intentionally defecated in her pants, then hid a crack pipe, 2.3 grams of crack cocaine and a Valentine’s Day card in her excrement.

Officers had to sift through the woman’s feces to retrieve the evidence after Martin was booked on charges of tampering with evidence and possession of a controlled substance.

**McDonald’s manager sought in shooting**

CLEVELAND — Police said a McDonald’s late-night manager who fired shots at a car in a Cleveland drive-thru line is wanted for felonious assault.

Cleveland.com reported an arrest warrant was issued Thursday for Mark Fort, 52, after police said he shot at a customer’s car Wednesday.

Police reports say Fort handed three women in a car a smoothie and a woman in the backseat splashed water outside the car as it pulled away. The women told police they heard Fort call them names, followed by two gunshots.

No one was injured.

Police found a bullet hole near one of the car’s taillights.

**Mom, surveillance video clear brothers of crime**

ST. LOUIS — Two St. Louis men are cleared of criminal wrongdoing, thanks to their tenacious mother and surveillance video.

The man who told police that the brothers tried to rob him last summer is now charged as the real culprit. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Patrick John Owens, 29, was charged Wednesday with robbery, assault and other crimes.

Owens told police Jerry Tate, 23, and Christopher Tate, 25, approached his parked car about 3:15 a.m. Aug. 26 and started a fight.

Police initially believed Owens. Court documents say the video cleared the Tates and showed that Owens tried to rob them before shooting Christopher Tate, injuring his hand and face.

**Police: Man drives into water, charged with DUI**

CRANSTON — Authorities said a Massachusetts man who drove his pickup over a seawall and into the water in Rhode Island was charged with driving under the influence.

Police said the truck crashed into the water late Friday near the Rhode Island Yacht Club. Police identified the driver as Tom Moitoso, 42, of Taunton.

Moitoso was taken to the hospital with minor injuries, and his truck was towed from the scene.

**Man sought after shots fired in theater**

GREENVILLE — Police in North Carolina are looking for a man who they said fired shots inside a movie theater.

Greenville police told local media outlets at least one shot was fired into the ceiling of one of the theaters at the AMC Theater late Friday night.

Investigators said the shooting stemmed from an argument over seating. No one was hurt, but the theater was evacuated as a precaution.

**5 taken to hospital after truck hits home**

ST. MARY’S COUNTY — Five people were taken to a hospital after a truck veered off a roadway and smashed into a home in St. Mary’s County.

WBFF-TV reported the tractor-trailer truck crashed into a home on Budds Creek Road around 6 a.m. Saturday.

The sheriff’s office in St. Mary’s said the truck driver and a woman, man and two juveniles inside the splintered home were transported to a hospital.

From wire reports
Mae Whitman enjoys being one of the
‘Good Girls’

Actress splits her long career between onscreen and voiceover roles

BY RICK BENTLEY
Tribune News Service

Television shows and films are filled with male anti-heroes who don’t mind breaking the law if it’s done for a good reason. Having the anti-hero be a suburban mom who spends more time making lunches than planning a heist is something very different. NBC’s new series “Good Girls” features that offbeat concept. Christina Hendricks, Retta and Mae Whitman plays the three partners in crime who see a small robbery as a way of getting out of financial trouble turn into a series of illegal misadventures.

Whitman loved the idea that “Good Girls” immediately jumps into the question of morals and justification systems, what is good and what’s evil. The big question for her was how far a person would go to protect their family. In the case of her character, Annie, involved is a heated battle with her ex-husband over their child, and a few dollars would help even the sides. “I think in every episode there’s a question that comes up of a moral justification or something that we end up giving a little bit more away of the things that we’re able to justify,” Whitman says. “I think that’s going to be a really fun thing for us, to see how far into that we go and how sort of deep into the question of is what they’re doing right or wrong and who are they hurting in the process, and who are they saving in the process. There’s so much. It’s just action packed with emotion and action. All these different issues keep coming up. At least for me, I look forward to reading every single script because there’s something in there that bring up a real question that’s really a debatable situation.”

The way Whitman looks at the project is “Good Girls” is all about women taking back their power, and that makes it very timely. She knows there are a lot of women who feel like they can’t do anything about their life, but the series shows there are ways to make a change. Taking the illegal route isn’t highly recommended, but Whitman says the key is it’s up to each person to find the way to make a change. Even when it comes to Whitman’s acting career — which began when she was 4 — the Los Angeles native has found ways to make changes in the jobs she takes. That has included a long list of jobs as a voice actor in projects such as “Avatar,” The Last Airbender,” “The Cleveland Show,” “Pixie Hollow Games” and “DC Super Hero Girls.” Not many people can say they were the voice of April O’Neil in “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” and Tinker Bell in several direct-to-video films starring Peter Pan’s sidekick.

The process is very different between being onscreen and being a voice actor, but Whitman gets just as much satisfaction from both. She calls those who work in the voice world as being some of the most talented and unsung workers in Hollywood.

Whitman has a little problem being impartial when it comes to voice actors, as her mother, Pat Musick, worked in recording studios for years. She would hang out at the studios with her mother and would be called on when a voice for a character girl was needed.

“To me, voiceover has been such a huge part of my life and I love it so much,” Whitman says. “I tend to play more interesting, outside-the-box characters and it’s great with cartoons that you can say what you want and do whatever you want. I also love wearing sweatpants and not having to wear makeup.”

Whitman is particularly proud of being part of the “DC Super Hero Girls” series because it is about all the female heroes in the DC universe — Wonder Woman, Supergirl, Hawkgirl, Harley Quinn — at a young age. Being the voice of Batgirl is just Whitman’s latest foray into the world of superhero cartoons. Whitman also has provided the voice of Wonder Girl in the “Young Justice” animated series. “I have bounced around in the superhero universe and I like it. I’m going to keep bouncing,” Whitman says with a laugh.

‘Girls Trip’ star to host upcoming MTV Movie & TV Awards

From wire reports

Tiffany Haddish is set to host the 2018 MTV Movie & TV Awards.

The network announced Feb. 22 that the “Girls Trip” breakout star will host the ceremony in Los Angeles on June 18. Haddish also helped announce the Academy Award nominations live on the Oscar stage. Haddish also was released last summer. She’s gone on to perform its “pro-slaughter agenda,” and the original singers of the year’s five nominated songs will reprise their performances live on the Oscar stage.

Oscar-nominated songs will reprise their performances live on the Oscar stage.

Schur, using his Twitter handle @RonSwanson, wrote, “Hi, please take this down. I would prefer you not use a GIF from a show I worked on to promote your pro-slaughter agenda.”

He also included that Poehler, who does not have her own account, texted him asking for him to respond. “She texted me a message: ‘Can you tweet the NRA for me ing for him to respond. “She texted me a message: ‘Can you tweet the NRA for me? I want to tweet the NRA for me’,” Poehler says.

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British comedian Stephen Fry reveals he has prostate cancer

British comedian and actor Stephen Fry has revealed that he is suffering from prostate cancer.

The 60-year-old Fry said Feb. 23 on his Twitter page that he has been fighting the disease for the past two months. He says he had surgery in January to remove the prostate.

“All seemed to go pretty well,” he said, apologizing for his inability to talk about the cancer until now.

“For the last two months I’ve been in the throes of a rather unwelcome and unexpected adventure,” he says.
Warren Buffett says good deals are tough to find

**By Josh Funk**  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Investor Warren Buffett says Wall Street’s lust for deals has prompted CEOs to act like oversized teenagers andvoy for acquisitions, so it has been hard to find deals for Berkshire Hathaway.

In his annual letter to shareholders Saturday, Buffett mixed investment advice with details of how Berkshire’s many businesses performed. Buffett blamed his recent acquisition drought on ambitious CEOs who have been encouraged to take on debt to finance deals.

“If Wall Street analysts or board members urge that brand of CEO to consider possible acquisitions, it’s a lot like telling your ripsnorting teenager to be sure to have a normal sex life,” Buffett said.

Berkshire is also facing more competition for acquisitions from private equity firms and other companies, such as privately held Koch Industries.

Buffett, 87, is sitting on $116 billion of cash and bonds because he believes Berkshire has been getting questions from constituents about that.

States are still sorting out what the GOP tax overhaul adopted by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump in December will mean for them, and the answers are coming long after each state’s tax policy is linked to federal law.

In some states, the changes could be immediate; in others, they’re likely to take time.

One of the big changes under the new tax law is the elimination of personal exemptions. A bigger standard deduction, higher child tax credits and lower tax rate will mean fewer federal taxes for most. But the loss of the exemptions in states means more of residents’ income is taxed.

In a handful of states, including Louisiana, the ability to deduct federal taxes paid on state income tax returns is a major factor. Any one paying less in federal taxes can see their state bill rise.

States’ own estimates of the impact run from around $100 million annually in Idaho and Iowa to $800 million in Minnesota. Oregon expects revenue to be down.

Mark Desetti, a lobbyist for the state’s largest teachers union, said that’s why the $505 million expected to come to the state over three years because of the federal tax changes is so welcome.

“It seems to me the wise thing to do would be to take advantage of this so that you don’t have to raise taxes to deal with all of those things, or you can raise them less if you find you need to and see where it goes,” he said.

But that might not be the course followed by the Republicans who control the Legislature.

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**EXCHANGE RATES**

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**INTEREST RATES**

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Round-the-world news for America’s military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

Also available on mobile apps for Android smartphones and as an iOS app for both iPhone and iPad.
Congress needs to take back war powers

In essence, Congress transferred its war powers to the president, sanitizing all levels of military activity without a declaration of war.

By Marc J. Silverstone
Special To The Washington Post

The rush to war. The use of faulty intelligence. A seemingly unending conflict, with few discernible checks on the presidential use of military power.

While these ghosts of Vietnam prefigure elements of America’s wars in South Asia and the Middle East, few understand the global climate then and now is that 50 years ago last week, the U.S. Senate decided to do nothing about a report that in February 1968 on the Tonkin Gulf incidents — the murky events of August 1964 that resulted in the approval of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution — the administration had opened the door to America’s escalation of the conflict.

In essence, Congress transferred its war powers to the president, sanctioning all levels of military activity without a declaration of war.

That fateful move came after Johnson and McNamara reported that 12 Vietnamese torpedo boats had attacked a U.S. destroyer, the USS Maddox, on Aug. 2, 1964, and the destroyer Turner Joy and the USS Cushing on Aug. 4. To them, it suggested that Hanoi was intensifying its war against South Vietnam and its American patron. Having held his fire after the Aug. 2 attack, Johnson responded to the apparent second incident with airstrikes, the first U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

Johnson then used the incident to amass sweeping authority for waging war in Southeast Asia. Maintaining that the Vietnam War was “unprovoked,” the administration introduced into Congress the Southeast Asia Resolution known colloquially as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution — previous attempts to steer the resolution through its nearly unanimous adoption by the Senate.

But questions about what actually happened on Aug. 4, which the Johnson administration knocked down then and thereafter, nagged at Fulbright. Not only were there reports and leakage that in fact North Vietnam had provoked the engagements, there was also suspicion that the Aug. 4 incident had never even occurred. Fulbright was determined to find the person responsible for the escalation in military action and to press the administration to reveal the sources of faulty intelligence from an unimpeachable source.

The administration was furious. As McNamara told Johnson the following day, “Fulbright’s real objective, as well as that of the senators who now voiced similar misgivings, was to prove that they were misled, and had known at the time the facts of the Tonkin Gulf situation, they never would have supported the resolution, and hence, and would not, in any way, be responsible for the escalation in military operations out there that has occurred since then.”

Responsible or not, Fulbright regretted his role in passing the resolution “more than anything I have ever done in my life.” He argued that “misinformation” is one lesson of Vietnam we can all agree on.

Wednesday, February 26, 2018

Monday, February 26, 2018
America needs a universal paid leave program

By Robert E. Rubin

Special To The Washington Post

T

wenty-five years ago, President Bill Clinton supported drafting the Family and Medical Leave Act, designed to help workers address the dual responsibilities of work and family. Two decades later, the act — which gives workers a protected right to take unpaid time off to care for a new child, a sick family member or their own health — is in dire need of modernization. Families need the opportunity to choose how to invest in their loved ones. If the act didn’t still apply to employers, the economically constructive forces of globalization and rapid technological change have left many workers facing wage stagnation and limited opportunity. And, critically, millions of women who should be gainfully employed are not because of participation in the labor market. This hinders growth in the real economy and negatively affects the wellbeing of families and children.

Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn of Cornell University found that the economic accomplishments was the growing number of women entering the workforce. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn of Cornell University found that the rising hours of paid work boosted U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) by 11 percent during the 1990s. The women’s paid work coincided with men dropping out of the labor force, women kept household income from declining.

But the trend has reversed, and women’s participation is unlikely to be said. If cost by 3 percentage points since 2000, with the cost and clinical appropriateness of the Family and Medical Leave Act, designed to help workers address the dual responsibilities of work and family. Two decades later, the act needs to be modified to meet the needs of families and caregivers.

Clinically appropriate criteria. Post-9/11 veterans now qualify for caregiver benefits — which includes a monthly payment to caregivers, if they could support severely injured veterans. The FMLA has been used more than 200 million times by families, with relatively little burden on employers. But the law covers only about 60 percent of workers and only about a fifth of those who take leave are new mothers. It gives them up to 12 weeks of leave, but with no pay — an imposition.

Parents, especially mothers, often return to work within a few weeks — or days — to a child’s birth, with long-term consequences for both mother and child. Others cut back their hours or quit their jobs altogether, which is harmful to families and the U.S. economy alike.

Employer-sponsored paid leave coverage is available to only about 15 percent of U.S. workers. The best models are in California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York and Washington state, plus the District of Columbia. Three states have enacted policies that treat all workers and provide appropriate temporary replacement income for those who need it. There is no national paid leave policy for what a paid family leave program can accomplish. But, as a joint report by the Brookings Institution and American Enterprise Institute concluded, state programs are insufficient.

Studies show paid leave increases the likelihood that workers will return to their original employer and remain in the labor force. It’s time to enact a national paid leave policy that would include the principles laid out by the Washington Center for Equitable Growth’s Bridget Asselmeier. It was the law last fall by the Hamilton Project. Offer at least 12 weeks of leave to men and women for childbirth and adoption, care of a relative’s serious medical condition or a personal medical issue; cover all private-sector workers; and pay those workers a percentage of their high but lower difference in their lives. Doing so would provide an immense benefit to workers and families and be very good for the overall economy.

Experience from the states teaches us that thoughtful interventions can create good outcomes. After California adopted the nation’s first paid leave program, maternal employment expanded. Studies of California, Connecticut and other states show that paid leave increases the likelihood that workers will return to their original employer and remain in the labor force. Workers without paid leave are more likely to postpone needed medical treatments, harming productivity and resulting in costlier care later on. Research shows that workers with access to paid leave are more likely to take advantage of the public benefits such as food stamps, reducing fiscal strain on those programs.

Congress is taking the right step by adding a proposal that BCG finds that paid family leave “can deliver significant rewards that outweigh the costs,” including “improved employee retention, the ability to attract the best talent, reinforced company values, [and] improved employee engagement, morale, and productivity.” And a working paper released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concludes that reducing worker gender gap in labor force participation would strengthen our economy significantly.

In this age of partisanship and polarization, it is notable that progressive Democrats such as Rep. Rosa DeLauro, of Connecticut, conservative Republicans such as Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, and the Trump administration have all recently embraced the concept of paid family leave.

Agreement on a bipartisan, comprehensive paid leave bill is within reach. The federal government can help workers face the dual responsibilities of work and family. It’s time to enact a national paid leave program.

By Tom Philpott

Special to Stars and Stripes

VA, Roe tie caregiver benefit expansion to tightened eligibility

BY ROBERT E. RUBIN

SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

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But the trend has reversed, and women’s participation is unlikely to be said. If cost by 3 percentage points since 2000, with the most notable drop among those with less education and fewer means to absorb the shock of a lost income. The absence of work-family policies such as paid leave explains about a third of that decline, according to research by Cornell University economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn.

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Agreement on a bipartisan, comprehensive paid leave bill is within reach. The federal government can help workers face the dual responsibilities of work and family. It’s time to enact a national paid leave program.

Carlos Fuentes, with Veterans of For- eign Wars, said the bill is well crafted and ideal and he disagreed with Shulkin that current eligibility rules are too loose.

“Veterans certainly don’t mind how many activities of daily living a veteran isn’t able to perform. What matters is if they need the assistance of a caregiver. And there are some veterans who are not able to perform one adl — eating or going to the bathroom or another activity — requires the assistance of a caregiver. And there are some veterans who are not able to perform one adl — eating or going to the bathroom or another activity — requires the assistance of a caregiver.”

“Doctors certainly should receive more guidance as to how to make those determinations,” Fuentes said. “The Senate and House proposals, which states that such options (through cost avoidance) can be achieved by extending eligibility criteria as is.”

Veteran representatives spent much of their time before the House committee knocking down claims by Republicans that assistance to severely injured veterans is widely abused or offers benefits duplicative of other VA programs.

Roe said she supports expanding the caregiver program to older generations but “we must have an honest conversation about how many activities of daily living a veteran isn’t able to perform. What matters is if they need the assistance of a caregiver. And there are some veterans who are not able to perform one adl — eating or going to the bathroom or another activity — requires the assistance of a caregiver.”

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Round-the-world news for America’s military.

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SATURDAY's mens's scores

EAST

Albany (NY) 8, Maine 7
Boston U. 9, Hartford 7
Brown 80, Rensselaer 74, OT
Buffalo 108, Ohio 82
Columbia 75, Penn 73
Cornell 65, Princeton 63
Davidson 71, Duquesne 65
Drexel 83, Hofstra 75
Fairfield 76, Monmouth (NJ) 65
Fordham 72, St. Bonaventure 62
George Washington 71, Virginia 67
Hofstra 72, Marist 65
Holy Cross 77, Bryant 63
Howard 83, Morgan State 65
Lehigh 72, Lafayette 62
Long Island 86, Niagara 69, Marist 81
Miami (OH) 78, Eastern Michigan 53
Richmond 49, George Washington 36
Stetson 70, Holy Cross 65
Syracuse 71, Maryland 65
Temple 71, Cincinnati 65
UConn 75, Storrs 65
Virginia Commonwealth 67, Duquesne 64
Virginia 75, Virginia Tech 63
Wagner 71, St. Francis (PA) 65
Washington 69, California 51
Western Oregon 80, Montana State 70

Saturday's women's scores

Army 48, Boston U. 47
Butler 86, Bucknell 57, American U. 52
Colgate 74, Binghamton 66
Drexel 79, St. John's (NY) 74, OT
Fairleigh Dickinson 76, St. Francis (PA) 74
George Washington 72, Holy Cross 67
Holy Cross 77, Colgate 62
Lehigh 72, Lafayette 62
Mercer 71, VMI 65
Richmond 49, George Washington 36
Robert Morris 70, Slippery Rock 60
Syracuse 75, Maryland 64
Temple 72, Robert Morris 69
Villa Maria 71, Assumption 60
William & Mary 78, Drexel 63
Youngstown St. 70, Sacred Heart 66

College basketball

SATURDAY's scores

EAST

Arkansas 80, LSU 70
Boston College 66, Rider 63
Boston University 75, URI 73, 2OT
Brown 68, Harvard 64
Central Connecticut State 65, Merrimack 60
Columbia 89, Manhattan 66
Cornell 79, Harvard 67
Davidson 95, Elon 76
George Washington 80, Howard 58
Lehigh 77, Lafayette 67
Navy 78, Holy Cross 68
Penn State 75, St. Francis (PA) 70
Pennsylvania 74, Le Moyne 66
Seton Hall 84, St. Peter's 68
Syracuse 97, St. John's (NY) 48
Villanova 76, Rider 65
Virginia Tech 78, Georgia Tech 54
Virginia 75, Virginia Tech 63
Wofford 79, South Carolina 67
Youngstown St. 70, Sacred Heart 66

Golf

HONDA CLASSIC

At PGA National, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Saturday: 740 Par 70 Third Round

Lake List 71-66-69—206
Barnett 71-66-69—206
Bryan 71-68-66—205
Reavie 71-68-66—205
Levine Simpson 72-66-69—207
Parrish 72-66-69—207
Rydell 72-67-67—206
Charl Schwartzel 72-67-67—206
Byong Hun An 72-67-69—208
Beau Hossler 73-67-67—207
Otaegui 73-67-69—209

College baseball

SATURDAY's scores

EAST

Bucknell 10, Holy Cross 5
Columbia 9, Dartmouth 6
Dartmouth 8, Cornell 6
George Washington 7, George Mason 5
Hofstra 6, St. Francis (PA) 5, OT
Johns Hopkins 6, St. John's 5
Lehigh 7, Lafayette 6
Long Island 12, Bryant 7
Marist 11, St. Francis (PA) 2
Maryland 7, Towson 5
Miami (OH) 7, Buffalo 6
Mercer 10, VMI 5
New Hampshire 6, New Hampshire 5
North Carolina 7, Davidson 6
Penn State 5, Penn State 5
Pennsylvania 9, Lehigh 3
Richmond 5, George Washington 4
Syracuse 8, Providence 7
Temple 10, St. John's 6
Virginia 8, Virginia Tech 4
Youngstown St. 9, Central Connecticut State 7

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Pennsylvania 9, Lehigh 3
Richmond 5, George Washington 4
Syracuse 8, Providence 7
Temple 10, St. John's 6
Virginia 8, Virginia Tech 4
Youngstown St. 9, Central Connecticut State 7

Tennis

OPEN 13 Provence

At Jockey Club Brasiliero

Purse: $1.75 million (WTMD)

Singles

Diogo Schwartzman (6), Argentina, vs. No. 19 Roberto Bautista Agut (Spain)
David Ferrer (11), Spain, vs. No. 16 Fernando Verdasco (Spain)

Doubles

David Marrero and Fernando Verdasco of Spain, vs. No. 19 Marcelo Demol and Alexander Peya of Austria, 5-7, 7-5, 10-8

Concerts

Delray Beach International Tennis Center

Singles

Frances Tiafoe, United States, def. Chung Hyeon (8), South Korea, 7-6, 6-7, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4

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David Ferrer (11), Spain, vs. No. 16 Fernando Verdasco (Spain)

Doubles

David Marrero and Fernando Verdasco of Spain, vs. No. 19 Marcelo Demol and Alexander Peya of Austria, 5-7, 7-5, 10-8

Concerts

Delray Beach International Tennis Center

Singles

Frances Tiafoe, United States, def. Chung Hyeon (8), South Korea, 7-6, 6-7, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4

Tennis
Amid FBI probe business as usual for fans

By David Ginsburg
Associated Press

Arenas were packed, fans were cheering and schools were competing. It was mostly business as usual in college basketball.

Wichita State guard Fred VanVleet, now a sophomore, talked about his brother, now a student at Belgrade High School in Montana, who he said was "not going to lose any focus at all. I didn't know my family didn't do anything."

There were no issues with his eligibility. Carter has said he didn't know if Dawkins had anything to do with it. The school was not aware of the investigation, so no action was taken.

from his first scoreless game in more than three years with 24 points, including two huge 3-pointers late in the closing minutes, and host Florida beat Auburn. No. 13 Wichita State 84, Smu 75: Balanced attack to pick up its second straight win. No. 19 Tennessee 73, Mizzou 62: Missouri's big man, who is arguably the best player in the country, was held in check by Tennessee's defense. No. 18 Providence 87, St. John's 68: Frierson was 1-for-6 from the field in the first half, 2-for-2 in the second half, and finally delivered when it counted. No. 14 Middle Tennessee 79, UAB 54: Nick King scored 22 points, Giddy Potts had 17 and host Middle Tennessee celebrated its first victory of the season.

Navy 62, Loyola (MD) 56: Cameron Jefferson had 19 points and 12 rebounds. No. 21 West Virginia 85, Iowa State 70: Jevon Carter scored 20 points, including four 3-pointers. No. 8 Kansas 74, No. 6 Texas 59: Kansas did what it does best, dominated physically, and got the win it needed. No. 7 Virginia 79, No. 15 Villanova 70: Jay Huff, who had been struggling, scored 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Virginia made the big plays when it needed them. No. 5 Duke 60, Syracuse 44: Marvin Bagley III had 19 points and 10 rebounds, and Duke dominated the paint. No. 4 Arizona 87, Colorado 73: Arizona had its best night in a while, with Deandre Ayton and Mark Tollefsen scoring 20 points each. No. 2 Kentucky 92, Missouri 72: Wenyen Gabriel scored 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Kentucky dominated the boards.

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The Yanke Report played it safe with their gambling advice. The bookies had the Wildcats as a slight favorite, and the fans were already cheering for them.

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Ramstein boys earn fourth straight title

By DAN STOUTAMIRE
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — The Ramstein Royals maintained their status at the top of the power curve in the Kaiser- lautern Military Community with a thrilling, come-from-behind 46-45 win Saturday over crossover rival Kaiserslautern.

Ramstein coach Andrew O’Connor said, “That’s all we ever stress is compete, compete, compete, and we were fortunate to come out with a victory against an amazing Kaiserslautern team.”

Joshua Gedeon was the hero for the Royals, nailing a go-ahead three-pointer with fifteen seconds left. With Kaiserslautern forced to foul after a turnover on the follow- ing possession, Ramstein was able to limit the Raiders to a last-second desperation three-pointer from Tre Dotson, who was smothered by defenders.

“It’s so surreal, it’s crazy — I was off all game, and I just hit the biggest shot of my high school career,” Gedeon said. “I just happened to get the ball, and converted.”

After one half, it seemed the Raiders were on route to a dominant win, hanging on to a 10-point lead at the interval and looking every inch the better team. The recipe they had succeeded with all tour- nament was bearing fruit — they were en route to a comfortable win, hanging on to a 10-point lead at the interval and were on their way to a Division III championship.

O’Connor said that he couldn’t predict if his team would be able to break Ramstein’s run next season. Congratulations to Ramstein, they earned it, it was a great job by them.”

“The Falcons were able to ride their de- fense early on, stymying the Admirals with a full court press, featuring center Kaden Proctor in a sort of centerfield- role, and a zone defense so well-executed all five players seemed to move as one.

“It’s really nice to put in the work we can with the limited time we have and see it executed on the floor so well,” Priest said.

However, Ramstein was able to adjust, figur- ing out ways to break the press and getting the ball inside to top scorer Drake, who, once in his favored position in the paint, is a constant threat with his vision, passing ability and footwork.

There were several lead changes in the closing minutes as both teams looked to put some daylight between themselves and their opponents, but neither team seemed willing to concede an inch.

“I thought we played really resiliently tonight, we didn’t give up,” coach Anderson said. “They would go on runs, but we would just keep bouncing back.”

The Royals also displayed impres- sive depth with substitute Cameron Wilson coming off the bench with starter L.J. Chester in foul trouble.

“He did a fantastic job, especially on defense,” Anderson said of Wilson. “He changed the momentum of the game by really pressuring Dillon Priest.”

That, and the play of teammates Drake, Joseph Perches and Antonio White wasn’t enough to overcome Priest and the Fal- cons, who received a strong performance inside from their own big man, Proctor.

BFA will have bragging rights over their Spain-based rivals for at least another year, but given these teams’ recent history, next year’s tournament will likely feature both prominently.

Ramstein boys come from behind to get past Raiders in D-I

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Sigonella repeats as D3 champs

By Gregory Broome
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Sigonella won its second consecutive DODEA Europe Division III girls basketball championship Saturday at Clay Kaserne Fitness Center, beating Ansbach 27-18 and retaining their title at the end of a six-game, four-day odyssey through the small-school bracket.

The teams met in the final two years ago, a two-otvertime battle that Ansbach won 34-30. That extended a string of overtime title-game heartbreaks for the Jaguars, who now have an ongoing streak of a more positive nature. Sigonella beat Baumholder 14-11 in last year’s divisional championship game.

The Jaguars weren’t shy about embracing their status as the division’s firmly established standard-bearer.

“The road to a championship leads through Sigonella,” Stars and Stripes coach Darryl Chandler said. “If you can’t get through Sigonella, you can’t be a D-III champion.”

Senior Kristiana Wyrick, Sigonella’s only senior, has experienced both disappointment and triumph in her four-year career with the Jaguars. But the ending was pure jubilation as she was subbed out in the final minutes of Saturday’s rout to a rousing ovation from the considerable crowd in the gym.

Wyrick said she was determined to prevent another potential title-game letdown like those she lived through her four years with the Jaguars.

“Come on, let’s just make this one easy,” Wyrick said. “We were trying to beat them by 20 points.”

That proved the decisive blow, keeping the beat for the duration.

Ally Taylor described the impromptu meeting as “a conversation about what we needed to do.”

In fact, the Panthers talked amongst themselves at halftime independent of head coach Robin Hess and hatched a plan to put the game out of reach. Senior post Ally Taylor described the impromptu meeting as “a conversation about what we needed to do.”

Then Stuttgart went out and did it.

The Jaguars held Naples to a single basket in the third quarter and poured in 10 points of their own for a substantial 24-12 lead entering the final eight minutes. That proved the decisive blow, as the Jaguars cut the deficit no lower than eight until an inconsequential late free throw.

“Pure determination,” Hess said. “These girls wanted it. Naples simply didn’t want it enough to point to his team’s failure to hold its early lead and struggles against Stuttgart’s core of interior players as reasons for his team’s loss. But more than anything, the Wildcats suffered one key shortcoming Saturday.

“We just couldn’t shoot,” Smith said.

Naples entered the tournament as an undefeated No. 1 seed. While some previous regional powerhouses had faltered against the consolidated competition found at the tournament, the Wildcats came into Wiesbaden with the look of a legitimate contender, thanks in part to December wins over Stuttgart and Vilseck, both eventual elimination-round participants, in neutral-court December meetings at Vicenza.

Smith considers the tournament a success regardless of Saturday’s outcome.

“Our kids have really done a great job,” Smith said. “We wanted to win this, of course, but we had a great season.”

Stuttgart cruised through the 2016-17 regular season and postseason without a loss, culminating with a 36-8 throttling of rival Ramstein. Success did not come so readily this winter, as regular-season losses to Naples and Ramstein dropped the Panthers to the second tournament seed and the more difficult pool. But Stuttgart rounded into championship form in Wiesbaden, rolling through the preliminary round and gutting out a 25-21 semifinal defeat of Vilseck.

For Stuttgart, that 39-35 loss to Naples on Dec. 9 proved a defining moment in its season.

“It was a huge motivator for our entire team,” Taylor said. “We really cracked down and worked really hard. I think that allowed us to progress.”

Taylor led all scorers Saturday with 12 points, while Troiano added seven. Grace Wettstone and Broome.gregory@stripes.com

Stuttgart holds off Naples

By Gregory Broome
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Stuttgart successfully defended its DODEA Europe Division I girls basketball championship Saturday, using an overwhelming run out of halftime to knock off top-seeded Naples 31-25. Stuttgart belted it immediately to start the game, but gradually clawed back and eventually got ahead.

The Jaguars were a heavy favorite entering Saturday against a Falcons team optimized for their third straight Division II championship.

The title game presented a challenge for the underdog Sentinels but also the competitive Falcons. Sigonella coach Cindy Kennedy said.

“We’re going to come into this game with humility, and we’re going to respect the team, and we’re going to just try to play our ball,” Kennedy said.

The Falcons’ projected dominance kicked in eventually. BFA didn’t manage a field goal until the final minute of the first quarter. But a jumper by Becca Losey, followed quickly by a three-pointer from Katie Greathouse, broke the seal on the BFA hoop and gave the defending champs a 7-0 lead by quarter’s end. The Falcons then settled into an offensive rhythm and kept the beat for the duration.

Spangdahlem went scoreless in the first half, but finally broke its 16-minute dry spell on an Amadi Bradshaw free throw in the opening minute of the third quarter that mercifully dismissed the looming spectre of a championship-game shutout. Bradshaw, the team’s only senior, also delivered her team’s first field goal, a hard-earned putback layup with under four minutes to play in the third quarter.

The Spangdahlem program, known until this season as the Birburg Barbarians and still adorned in jerseys labeled “Lady Barons,” made its fourth consecutive championship appearance on Saturday. But this year’s squad lacked the overall talent or experience of the accomplished Barons that beat BFA for the 2015 title and pushed the Falcons in 2016 and 2017 title games.

Rather, the seventh-seeded Sentinels, by their own admission, were quite literally happy just to be there Saturday, and even surprised by their own achievement in advancing so far after a 3-8 regular season. On Friday, following Spangdahlem’s 23-18 semifinal defeat of Marymount, coach Chris Howard coined the term “rebuild to remarkable” to describe the young Sentinels’ growth at the tournament.

That growth spurt erupted Saturday against a Falcons team optimized for tournament success.

The Falcons were a heavy favorite entering the tournament. They chewed through three preliminary opponents, feisty but overmatched semifinalist Bahrain and finally a lesser version of its old rival. In the process, the Falcons won their five tournament games by a combined 163 points.

Kennedy Wilbanks headlined the BFA offensive Saturday with 10 points, while Losey added seven. Grace Wettstone and Greathouse added six points apiece.

BFA dominant in defending D-II crown

By Gregory Broome
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — The Black Forest Academy Falcons completed one of the most dominant postseason runs in DODEA Europe girls basketball history Saturday, routing Sigonella 46-16 to make it three straight championship games.

Sigonella’s Averi Chandler takes a jump shot during the Division III championship game on Saturday. Chandler had a game-high 12 points for the Jaguars.

A deliberately paced Ansbach offense produced a few open looks but couldn’t convert them to anything in the first points in the first quarter. Spry Sigonella seized the opportunity with eight unanswered points over the first eight minutes, and built its lead to 13-0 before Kaylinn Patterson deposited Ansbach’s first basket nearly three minutes into the second quarter.

“I just think we really gave it our all,” Wyrick said. “We hustled, we were aggressive.”

Freshman Averi Chandler scored a game-high 12 points for the Jaguars, including six in the first quarter. Alikah Munson led Ansbach with nine points off of three-pointers in each of the second, third and fourth quarters.

The outcome brought a decisive end to an evenly-matched tournament that placed the division’s six teams in round-robin competition over three days, with the top two advancing straight to Saturday’s final. No team survived that unscathed, including the finalists: Sigonella’s Averi Chandler takes a jump shot during the Division III championship game on Saturday. Chandler had a game-high 12 points for the Jaguars.

Sigonella won its second consecutive title.

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The Los Angeles Lakers’ Brandon Ingram comes up with a loose ball in front of the Kings’ Buddy Hield on Saturday, in Sacramento, Calif.

The Game 112, Knicks 112

BOSTON — Horford 5-13 0-0 24, Tatum 7-13 2-3 18, Edwards 2-8 0-0 5, Brown 9-16 3-6 21, Gill 0-4 0-0 0, Daniel 4-10 1-2 9, Rozier 4-10 4-4 8, O’Neill 2-3 0-0 4, Theis 6-10 0-0 12, Tatum 9-16 3-3 25. Totals 43-88 12-21 107.

PHILADELPHIA — Simmons 7-11 3-4 19, Embiid 10-17 7-10 28, Harris 5-13 2-3 15, Thomas 6-17 3-6 15, Horford 5-13 0-0 12, Embiid 10-17 7-10 28, Harris 5-13 2-3 15, Thomas 6-17 3-6 15, Horford 5-13 0-0 12. Totals 38-78 12-22 90.

Saturday’s games

PORTLAND — Harkless 3-5-2-9, Aminu 2-3-2-6, Enes 3-3-2-9, Lillard 5-5-2-14, Crabbe 3-8-1-12, J. Collins 1-1-0-2, Collins 1-1-0-2, rim 0-2-0-0. Totals 21-36-2-13.

PHOENIX — Warren 8-7-3-19, Bender 2-9-0-12, Johnson 2-9-0-12, Booker 6-10-1-17, McFarland 3-9-0-8, Frank 2-6-0-6, Ingram 1-0-0-1, Davis 4-5-0-19. Totals 22-46-3-55.

Blazers 106, Suns 104

SAN ANTONIO — Aldridge 10-16 1-2 25, Millsap 4-7 2-2 10, Parker 9-15 0-0 29, Millsap 4-7 2-2 10, Parker 9-15 0-0 29. Totals 42-70 5-9 106.

SAN DIEGO — Paul 2-5 0-0 4, McCollum 2-5 1-3 6, Mi- les 1-3 0-0 2, Green 3-5 1-2 9, Thompson 1-2 0-0 2, Collins 3-6 0-0 6, Lillard 5-8 1-2 15, Oladipo 3-6 1-2 9, Vucevic 2-3 2-2 6, Singler 0-2 0-0 0, Smith Jr. 0-0 0-0 0, Collins 0-1 0-0 0, Vucevic 1-2 1-1 4, Vucevic 1-2 1-1 4, Vucevic 1-2 1-1 4. Totals 29-43 5-18 104.

Three-Point Goals—Dallas 10-35 (McCollum 3-6, Nowitzki 3-6, Vucevic 2-3, Lillard 2-2, Smith Jr. 2-2, Williams 1-1, Babbitt 0-2, J. Johnson 0-2, Biyombo 0-2, J.Johnson 0-2, Harrison 0-1, Harrison 0-1). Dallas 10-35 (McCollum 3-6, Nowitzki 3-6, Vucevic 2-3, Lillard 2-2, Smith Jr. 2-2, Williams 1-1, Babbitt 0-2, J. Johnson 0-2, Biyombo 0-2, J.Johnson 0-2, Harrison 0-1, Harrison 0-1).

Roundup

Durant, Warriors blow out Thunder

OAKLAND, Calif.—Kevin Durant scored 29 points for Golden State while avenging an embarrassing loss to his former Oklahoma City team earlier this season and another on the road in November, leading the Warriors past the Thunder 112-80 on Saturday night.

Stephen Curry added 21 points, nine rebounds, six assists and five steals as Golden State put on the kind of defensive performance coach Steve Kerr has been seeking from the defending champs.

Russell Westbrook had 15 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists for Oklahoma City, which failed to reach 100 points for the first time in the last five games. The Thunder had scored at least 111 points in 14 of their last 16.

Timberwolves 122, Bulls 104

CHICAGO — Washington 6-9 2-4 14, Markkanen 3-7 5-12 11, Portis 5-8 3-12 14, Lopez 4-9 2-6 10, Dunn 2-6 2-2 6, Houlier 1-2 0-0 2, Payne 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 22-46 13-24 65.

MINNEAPOLIS — Bjelica 3-9 2-8 10, Gibson 1-6 0-0 2, Towns 4-5 0-0 10, Nunn 4-13 2-5 14, Teague 3-9 2-3 10, Embiid 5-11 0-1 10, Harrison 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 19-37 5-8 42.

Heat 115, Grizzlies 89

MIAMI — Hassan 7-7 0-0 14, Caldwell-Pope 17-19 5-8 40, Wade 3-7 0-0 6, Ellington 5-11 0-0 11, Vonleh 3-4 1-0 8, Portis 6-13 2-2 15, New York 2-4 0-0 4, Payne 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 28-48 10-13 64.

MEMPHIS — Givony 3-4 0-0 12, Hollis-Jefferson 2-9 0-0 4, Ewing 4-9 0-0 8, Johnson 1-2 1-2 3, Bridges 3-7 2-2 8, Bridges 3-7 2-2 8. Totals 10-22 3-6 23.

Heat 115, Grizzlies 89

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WASHINGTON—On the night Alex Ovechkin reached one milestone, his goal-scoring prowess moved him closer to another.

Ovechkin added to his NHL lead with two goals while tying the Washington record for most games played, and the Capitals beat the Buffalo Sabres 5-1 on Saturday.

“In this day and age, there are not a lot of players with the same team. Those days are probably past a little bit,” Capitals coach Barry Trotz said. “He’s durable. Those two consecutive games have had a big impact on the franchise for a long time now.”

Evgeny Kuznetsov scored 50 seconds into the game and had two assists. Andre Burakovsky and Lars Eller also had goals for Washington, which leapfrogged Pittsburgh and moved back into first place in the Metropolitan Division. The Capitals had lost two in a row and five of seven.

Ovechkin’s 37th goal came on the power play with 9:47 remaining after Buffalo closed to 2-1 on Sam Reinhart’s goal 14 seconds earlier. Ovechkin’s 37th goal came on the power play with 9:47 remaining after Buffalo closed to 2-1 on Sam Reinhart’s goal 14 seconds earlier.

When you get closer, you want to pass it. Hoping in a couple of games I will have it done and we move forward.”

Ovechkin, born in Moscow, began his NHL career as a 19-year-old in 2005 with the Capitals. His father, Yuri, is a former Soviet internationally-acclaimed player who is now working on Ovechkin’s staff.

The 32-year-old Ovechkin moved into 10th place on the Capitals’ all-time goals list with 379, and out of a tie with John Erskine for 10th place on the Capitals’ career goals list.

Ovechkin tied Hall of Famer Ted Lindsay on Feb. 23 for the most career goals in his 983rd NHL game, one short of tying Hall of Famer Gordie Howe for second all-time.

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Norway’s Marit Bjørgen celebrates after winning the gold medal in the women’s 30K cross-country skiing competition on Sunday.

Bjørgen took the lead after 2 kilometers and continued to stretch it. With 7 kilometers remaining, she was so far ahead of the rest of the field that she left the hammer in place. When she couldn’t keep the Swedes from scoring three points and opening a 7-2 lead, she attacked to score three points and take a 5-2 lead.

**Scoreboard**

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**Medals table**

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<td>Canada’s Dasha Bandstra</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sunday’s medals**

**BOBSLED**

Men’s Four-Man

1. Germany 1 (Oliver Klassen, Thorsten Margis, Martin Gallauf, Guido Pederzini), 1:22:07.7
2. Germany 2 (Rudi Koller, Thorsten Margis, Martin Gallauf, Oliver Klassen), 1:22:08.1

**WOMEN’S CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING**

Women’s 30km Mass Start Classic

1. Norway 1 (Kari Gaza, Aase Berline, Maiken Caspersen Falla, Heidi Weng), 1:22:07.7
2. Norway 2 (Ingvild Flugstad Østberg, Therese Johaug, Blomme, Therese Johaug), 1:22:08.1

**US medals**

**GOLD (9)**

Women’s Alpine Skiing: Mikaela Shiffrin, United States
Women’s Cross-Country Skiing: Kikkan Randall, Jessica Diggins, United States
Women’s Curling: United States
Women’s Freestyle Skiing: Alena Zavarzina, Sofia Shokhina, Maria Komissarova, Russia
Men’s Freestyle Skiing: Blake Mullen, United States

**SILVER (8)**

Women’s Alpine Skiing: Sofia Shokhina, Russia
Women’s Curling: United States
Women’s Freestyle Skiing: Alix Boulanger, United States
Men’s Freestyle Skiing: Nick Grover, United States

**BRONZE (6)**

Women’s Alpine Skiing: Lindsey Vonn, United States
Women’s Cross Country Skiing: Norway
Women’s Curling: Korea
Women’s Freestyle Skiing: China
Men’s Freestyle Skiing: Austria

**Close:**

The ceremony ‘handed off’ Winter Games to 2022 host Beijing.

FROM BACK PAGE

It was all an extraordinary bookend to an extraordinary Olympics that featured athletic excellence, surprises and unexpected lurche

As part of the ceremony, the Winter Games were ‘handed off’ to Beijing, which will host them in 2022 after staging the 2008 Summer Olympics.

What followed was a strong dose of athletic diplomacy: two weeks of global exposure for the Korean team, particularly the women’s hockey squad, which trained for weeks with North and South side by side side by side getting along, talking selves and learning about each other.

That wasn’t all when it came to the Games of new horizons.

Two more Russian athletes tested positive in Pyeongchang in the past two weeks. Let’s not forget Russia — or, we should say, “Olympic Athletes from Russia,” the shame-laced moniker they inherited after a doping brou

What’s next for the Games? Tokyo in Summer 2020, then Beijing — Summer host in 2022 — staging an encore, this time for a Winter Games.

**Russian Paralympians:**

Kirsty Wigglesworth/AP

**Did you know**

Four of eight Olympics between 2008 and 2022 will have taken place on the Asian continent. Not bad for a region that hosted only four games in the 112 years of modern Olympic history before that — Tokyo in 1964, Sapporo in 1972, Seoul in 1988 and Nagano in 1998.

SOURCE: Associated Press
**WINTER OLYMPICS**

**GERmans sweep bobseled**

Friedrich adds four-man gold to two-man win; US ninth

**By Tim Reynolds**

Associated Press

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — Shut out in Sochi, the German bobsled program swept every other nation away in Pyeongchang.

Francesco Friedrich drove to the four-man bobseled gold medal Sunday, capping an absolutely dominant showing by the Germans on the sliding track at the Pyeongchang Olympics.

Friedrich and his team of Candy Bauer, Martin Grothkopp and Thorsten Margis left no doubt, finishing their four runs in 3 minutes, 15.85 seconds to win by more than a half-second. The Korean sled driven by Won Yunjong and the German sled driven by Nico Walther shared the silver; the second sliding medal tie in these Games after they finished in 3:16.38.

The Germans came to Pyeongchang set to prove that what happened in Sochi was merely an aberration, and delivered. The Sochi Games were the first in 50 years where Germany didn’t win a single medal in bobseblling, and what they did in Pyeongchang more than made up for that series of disappointments from 2014.

“It was frustrating in Sochi,” Friedrich said. “Winning a medal was our big target and making sure we didn’t make the same mistakes. We did it.”

Codie Bascue and his team of Evan Wonrock, Steve Langton and Sam McLaughlin led the U.S. with a ninth-place finish.

Friedrich has a 21-race winless drought in four-man World Cup starts, but when the stakes are highest he seems to find a way. He has five gold medals from two- and four-man races at the world championships, drove to the world four-man title last season, and added this Olympic gold to the one in two-man that he shared with Canada’s Justin Kripps.

“Once you get ahead, it’s easier to stay ahead,” said Langton, 21, who was on his 23rd run. “I was just thinking to stay aggressive and high-sticking. I was so happy with the results. We won our first gold medal. The dream Russia couldn’t reach with NHL stars finally happened with Kaprizov scoring the winner on the power play 9-40 into overtime as Patrick Reimer sat in the penalty box for a high-sticking infraction.

A silver medal gave Germany its best finish at the Olympics after capturing bronze in 1932 and 1976.

“We all thought we would be playing in the final on the couch at home, but here we are,” Germany coach Marco Sturm said. “The boys are going to bring silver home, and they should be very proud.”

Beating Germany, which stunned eventual bronze-medalist Canada, gave Finns their first Olympic gold in the event since 1992 and 1976.

“We thought we would be sitting at home watching that final on the couch at home,” said Finland’s Juho Vesanto. “It is not easy to get to an Olympic medal game last year and now to be here and win is incredible.”

**Russia gets past Germany for gold in OT thriller**

This Olympic title meant so much to Russia, the champion Russians in their non-neutral flag with the NHL opting to stay home after participating in the past five Olympics.

“The medal is the same with or without the NHL,” said defense- man Slava Voynov, who scored the opening goal with 0.5 seconds left in the first period. “Maybe the tournament was a little different, but the emotions and happiness are the same.”

Winning this gold medal at his home Games in 2018 was no such disappointment this time as the Russians triumphed in the tournament they were favored
Fond farewell?
Politics-heavy Games close with potential path to peace

By Ted Anthony
Associated Press
PYEONGCHANG, South Korea
The overtly political 2018 Winter Olympics closed Sunday night very much as they began, with humanity’s finest athletes marching exuberantly across the world stage as three nations with decades of war and suspicion among them shared a VIP box — and a potential path away from conflict.

Senior North Korean official Kim Yong Chol, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. presidential adviser and first daughter Ivanka Trump sat in two rows of seats behind the Olympic rings, meant to represent a competition of peace and international unity. In close proximity — though with no apparent communication between Trump and Kim — they watched a spirited, elaborate show that concluded the Pyeongchang Games.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, just before declaring the Games closed, addressed the two Koreas’ cooperation at the closing ceremony, saying, “The Olympic Games are an homage to the past and an act of faith for the future.”

“With your joint march you have shared your faith in a peaceful future with all of us,” Bach said. “You have shown our sport brings people together in our very fragile world. You have shown how sport builds bridges.”

SEE CLOSE ON PAGE 30

Rams, Falcons prevail in title thrillers

Above: The United States’ Lindsey Vonn is carried on the shoulders of teammate Nick Baumgartner into the stadium during the closing ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, on Sunday. Right: Ivanka Trump, daughter of U.S. President Donald Trump, applauds during the closing ceremony on Sunday. To her right is Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of North Korea’s ruling Workers’ Party Central Committee.