

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Pentagon IDs Army Ranger killed in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon says a U.S. Army Ranger has died as a result of gunshot wounds suffered during combat in Afghanistan on Jan. 13.

Sgt. Cameron A. Meddock, 26, of Spearman, Texas, died Thursday in Landstuhl, Germany. The attack was in the Jawand District in northwestern Afghanistan.

Meddock was assigned to the 2nd Battalion of the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment. He enlisted in the Army in 2014 and was based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state. He served as a machine gunner, automatic rifleman, gun team leader and most recently as a fire team leader.

His battalion commander, Lt. Col. Rob McChrystal, says Meddock's selfless service represents the best of the United States.

Meddock was on his second deployment to Afghanistan.

Trump, North Korean envoy discuss second summit

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump met with a North Korean envoy today as the two sides worked to resume stalled efforts to end the North's nuclear weapons program by arranging a second summit with leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump and former spy chief Kim Yong Chol were to discuss relations between the two countries and continued progress on what White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said was "North Korea's final, fully verified denuclearization."

Kim Yong Chol earlier held talks with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at a Washington hotel. A State Department spokesman, Robert Palladino, said they had a "good" discussion toward progress on commitments Trump and Kim Jong Un made at their June summit in Singapore.

Several private analysts have published reports detailing continuing North Korean development of nuclear and missile technology.

The talks have stalled over North Korea's refusal to provide a detailed accounting of its nuclear and missile facilities.

Independent analysts are highly skeptical that North Korea will easily abandon a nuclear arsenal constructed in the face of deep poverty and likely seen by Kim as his only guarantee of his government's survival.



Juan Oliphant

Ocean Ramsey swims with a large great white shark off the shore of Oahu.

Researchers come face to face with huge great white shark

HALIEWA, Hawaii — Two shark researchers who came face to face with what could be one of the largest great whites ever recorded are using their encounter as an opportunity to push for legislation that would protect sharks in Hawaii.

Ocean Ramsey, a shark researcher and conservationist, said she encountered the 20-foot shark Tuesday near a dead sperm whale off Oahu.

Her fiancé and business partner, Juan Oliphant, who photographed now-viral

images, said it's unclear if the shark is the famed Deep Blue, believed to be the largest great white ever recorded.

Ramsey said the images of her swimming next to a huge great white shark prove the predators should be protected, not feared.

Still, the veteran shark diver doesn't think the general public should recklessly get into the water with the giants, especially around a food source like a rotting whale carcass.

Judge acquits 3 Chicago officers of McDonald shooting cover-up

CHICAGO — A judge on Thursday acquitted three Chicago officers of trying to cover up the 2014 shooting of Laquan McDonald, dismissing as just one perspective the shocking dashcam video of the black teenager's death that led to protests, a federal investigation of the police department and the rare murder conviction of an officer.

In casting off the prosecution's entire

case, Judge Domenica Stephenson seemed to accept many of the same defense arguments that were rejected in October by jurors who convicted officer Jason Van Dyke of second-degree murder and aggravated battery. He is scheduled to be sentenced today.

The judge said the video showed only one viewpoint of the confrontation and that there was no indication the officers tried to hide evidence.

McDonald's family questioned how the

two cases could produce such different decisions. His great uncle, the Rev. Marvin Hunter, told reporters that the verdict means "that if you are a police officer you can lie, cheat and steal."

The trial was watched closely by law enforcement and critics of the department, which has long had a reputation for condoning police brutality.

Pelosi cancels Afghanistan trip, cites Trump 'leak'

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi today canceled her plans to travel by commercial plane to visit U.S. troops in Afghanistan, saying President Donald Trump had caused a security risk by talking about the trip.

It was the latest twist in what has become a Washington game of brinkmanship between Pelosi and Trump, playing out against the stalled negotiations over how to end the partial government shutdown.

Earlier in the week, Pelosi had asked Trump to reschedule his Jan. 29 State of the Union address, citing security issues at a time when the Homeland Security Department and other agencies remain unfunded.

Trump responded by canceling the military plane that was to have carried Pelosi and a congressional delegation to Afghanistan on the previously undisclosed troop visit. Trump suggested she travel by commercial plane instead.

Denying military aircraft to a senior lawmaker — let alone the speaker, who is second in line to the presidency after the vice president, traveling to a combat region — is very rare.

On the road to make an affordable car, Tesla cuts jobs

Tesla will cut 7 percent of its workforce as it tries to lower prices and break out of the niche-car market to produce an electric vehicle that more people can afford.

Tesla's cheapest model right now is the \$44,000 Model 3, and it needs to broaden its customer base to survive.

"Looking ahead at our mission of accelerating the advent of sustainable transport and energy, which is important for all life on Earth, we face an extremely difficult challenge: making our cars, batteries and solar products cost-competitive with fossil fuels," CEO Elon Musk said in a letter to staff. "While we have made great progress, our products are still too expensive for most people."

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