

Aleppo evacuations in heavy snow end brutal war chapter

BEIRUT (AP) — Hundreds of rebel fighters and civilians, including small children swaddled in thick blankets, were bused out of war-ravaged Aleppo in heavy snow on Wednesday as the evacuation of former rebel strongholds entered its final phase.

Scenes of buses slowly driving out of Aleppo in a shroud of white offered an evocative finale to what has been one of the most brutal chapters in Syria's civil war.

The departures from Aleppo pave the way for President Bashar Assad to assume full control there, after more than four years of fighting over Syria's largest city. It marks the most significant victory for Assad since an uprising against his family's four-decade rule swept the country in 2011.

The evacuations were set in motion last week after Syria's opposition agreed to surrender its last footholds in eastern Aleppo. Since then, about 25,000 fighters and civilians have been bused out, according to the United Nations. On Wednesday, buses began evacuating the last rebels and civilians, an estimated 3,000 people.

By nightfall, 25 buses carrying hundreds of people had driven in a rare snow storm from eastern Aleppo to opposition-held areas in the countryside near the city, said opposition activist Ahmad Primo, who was monitoring arrivals at the main drop-off point in the Rashideen district.

The evacuees got off the



Syrians evacuated from the embattled Syrian city of Aleppo during the ceasefire arrive at a refugee camp in Rashidin, near Idlib, Syria, Tuesday.

buses wearing thick jackets and carrying sacks with belongings. One woman dressed in a black robe and face veil carried a small child swaddled in a heavy yellow blanket. A man held a toddler whose face was peeking out from under a blanket shielding him from falling snow.

The opposition's Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Wednesday evening that with the evacuation of the last group of rebels from eastern Aleppo, Assad was in full control, save for a few positions on the western outskirts of the city that were still in rebel hands.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross said patients and all those requiring medical care

had been evacuated from the last hospital in the city's east.

Pro-government forces repeatedly struck medical facilities in rebel-held neighborhoods in their push to expel the opposition from Aleppo this year. In November, the U.N. said it believed there were no more functioning medical facilities in the eastern part of the city.

Wednesday's bus movements came after evacuations had been suspended for 24 hours, one of several snags and delays since the first bus convoys left the city last week.

Frequent disagreements have erupted between the rebels and the government, as well as among rebel groups, over compliance

with a wider deal that also includes evacuations from two rebel-besieged villages, Foua and Kfarya.

The ICRC said about 750 people have been bused out of the villages, leaving hundreds more to be evacuated.

Meanwhile, it was unclear if any U.N. observers were on the ground in eastern Aleppo on Wednesday — two days after a U.N. Security Council resolution approved their urgent deployment.

Deputy U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq said some U.N. staff were present at a Syrian government checkpoint outside Aleppo's eastern sector, but he couldn't say for sure if any observers had been let into the onetime rebel-held area.

17 stolen masterpieces returned to Italy

VERONA, Italy (AP) — Seventeen masterpieces valued at 17 million euros (\$17.7 million) were returned to Italy from Ukraine on Wednesday after being stolen by masked, armed robbers from a Verona art museum last year.

Italian Culture Minister Dario Franceschini, who traveled to Kiev to retrieve the paintings — which included works by Rubens, Tintoretto and Mantegna — said the possibility of ever recovering them once seem remote. Still, the paintings returned with little more than scratches after their long ordeal, according to an art expert.

"It's an important day, because the works are all returning to Verona intact," Franceschini said. "It was an ugly story that became a beautiful story."

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko handed over the paintings to Franceschini in a ceremony in Kiev, saying "the theft of masterpiece paintings is akin to stealing part of the city's heart."

The paintings, wrapped in plastic bags, were recovered in May by Ukrainian border guards who intercepted them on a small island on the Dniester River during an attempt to smuggle them into Moldova.

They were stolen in November 2015 when three armed robbers entered the Castelvecchio Museum, located in a medieval castle, at closing time just before the alarm system was activated. The robbers calmly removed the paintings before escaping in a security guard's car.

A guard at the museum, Pasquale Silvestri Riccardi, was convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to 10 years and eight months in prison earlier this month. Five others were also convicted, including Riccardi's Moldovan girl-



Carabinieri and police officers pose with one of the recovered paintings that were stolen from a Verona museum, at the Verona airport, Italy, Wednesday. Italy's culture minister traveled to Kiev to recover 17 paintings, including works by Tintoretto, Rubens and Mantegna, that were stolen from a Verona museum and recovered by Ukrainian law enforcement more than seven months ago.

friend, who received six years, and his twin brother, who was sentenced to eight months.

Two Moldovans are on trial in their home country for the thefts.

Franceschini credited strong cooperation between law enforcement in the three countries for recovering the paintings and finding the thieves, giving particular praise to Italy's Carabinieri art squad. The culture minister also announced the government would introduce legislation this week making the theft or damage of Italy's cultural heritage specific crimes with elevated penalties.

Curator Ettore Napione traveled to retrieve the paintings, studying them carefully with gloved hands before wrapping them for the homeward journey. The works were displayed in simple wooden frames made for them after they were recovered, because the thieves had cut the canvasses from their original frames, which they then discarded.

"They suffered scratches, nothing very serious," Napione said.

The paintings are to be shown together at their home in the Castelvecchio Museum for about a month beginning Friday before undergoing restoration and reframing.

SUPPORT GROUPS

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 21
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 6:30 p.m. Helping Hand, 346 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 7 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 10:30 a.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

OPEN AA MEETING, 12 p.m. Coffee is provided. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton (Ed 541-207-2548).

OPEN AA MEETING, 7 p.m. Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, 73265 Confederated Way, Mission (800-410-5953).

TOPS, 8 a.m. 8:15 a.m. weigh-in, 9 a.m. meeting and program. Oregon Trail Manor, 2430 S.W. Perkins Ave., Pendleton (541-276-6370).

THURSDAY, DEC. 22
CELEBRATE RECOVERY, 6-9 p.m. 6-7 p.m. large group, 6-8 p.m. Celebration Place (children K-5), 7-8 p.m. open share group, 8-9 p.m. Solid Rock Cafe social time (all ages). Christ-centered 12-step program for those with hurts, habits and hangups. Childcare is available for children ages 1-5. First Assembly of God Church, 1911 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton (541-276-6417).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULT WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP, 6-7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Domestic Violence Services. call for location, call for location, Pendleton (541-276-3322).

HEALTHY CHOICES AA MEETING, 5-6:30 p.m. St. Anthony Hospital conference room 1, 2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton (541-207-2548).

LOST AND FOUND YOUTH OUTREACH, 3 p.m. Help for youth 12-18 facing challenges. Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton (Danny or Leslie 541-379-4250 or 541-276-3987).

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 6:30 p.m. Helping Hand, 346 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 10:30 a.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

OPEN AA MEETING, 12 p.m. Coffee is provided. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton (Ed 541-207-2548).

OPEN SUPPORT GROUP, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Bowman Building, 17 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton (541-276-6671 or 541-379-1589).

FRIDAY, DEC. 23
CELEBRATE RECOVERY GROUP, 6 p.m. Salvation Army, 150 S.E. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton (541-276-3369).

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 7 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 10:30 a.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

OPEN AA MEETING, 12 p.m. Coffee is provided. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton (Ed 541-207-2548).

OPEN AA MEETING, 7 p.m. Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, 73265 Confederated Way, Mission (800-410-5953).

SATURDAY, DEC. 24
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 7 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 10:30 a.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

Pilot Rock (Edward D. 541-207-2548).

SUNDAY, DEC. 25
HUNGRY SPIRIT OPEN AA MEETING, 8:30 a.m. Roosters Restaurant, 1515 Southgate, Pendleton (800-410-5953).

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 7 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

OPEN AA MEETING, 12 p.m. Coffee is provided. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton (Ed 541-207-2548).

OPEN AA MEETING, 7 p.m. Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, 73265 Confederated Way, Mission (800-410-5953).

MONDAY, DEC. 26
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 10:30 a.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, 6:30 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton.

OPEN AA MEETING, 12 p.m. Coffee is provided. Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 241 S.E. Second St., Pendleton (Ed 541-207-2548).

OPEN AA MEETING, 6:30 p.m. Echo Community Methodist Church, 21 N. Bonanza St., Echo (541-571-6257 or 800-410-5953).

PUBLIC SAFETY LOG

TUESDAY

8:55 a.m. - Once more, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office responded to the 81300 block of North Golda Road, Hermiston, to deal with a dispute over dogs. This time a man reported "the neighbor's dog is at it again," and he was headed home and would shoot the dog if necessary.

10:16 a.m. - The Heppner office of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reported the finding of a deer carcass missing the back straps and head on Willow Creek Highway. An Oregon State Police trooper found a bullet hole in the remains but no other evidence due to the weather.

11:43 a.m. - Hermiston police received a report of a man wearing a red stocking cap and punching a telephone pole near the Eastside Market, 582 E. Main St. The man also yelled at the top of his lungs and acted "like he was trying to pull off his head."

12:49 p.m. - The manager of Baxter Auto Parts, 336 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton, reported someone stole \$1,800 from the business. He said the crime may have happened Friday. Someone rearmed the alarm system when the store was closed Friday, and the system was disarmed when the store opened Saturday. There also was no surveillance video available.

1:07 p.m. - A caller told Pendleton police a female and three males were fighting in a front yard on Southwest 19th Street.

1:23 p.m. - A Weston caller on South Broad Street reported a dog killed his chicken and he has the dog in his yard.

2:05 p.m. - A customer at the Hermiston Wal-Mart told police an older man knocked on her car window and told her he was going to park, and when she gets out of the store there will be damage to her vehicle. She asked police to meet her at her car.

2:48 p.m. - Pendleton police received a request from a man to check on his children, who could be living in unsafe conditions. Six minutes later, the man called back and again said he was concerned for his children's welfare and would drive by their residence and call back with the address.

3:19 p.m. - One man punched another in the face at the Umatilla Liquor Store, 1508 S. Sixth St., Umatilla.

6:41 p.m. - A Weston woman called 9-1-1 and reported a man she knows spit in her face.

7:14 p.m. - Tenants damaged the feminine dispenser near the pool and stole the money at Comfort Inn & Suites, 77514 S. Highway 207, Hermiston.

7:39 p.m. - Staff at the birthing center at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, told police a female called "who sounded like she was freaked out, told them she was at a party and someone cut her belly open [and took the baby out.]" The hospital tried called back, and a female said her daughter must have made it, though she sounded like the original caller.

7:59 p.m. - A resident at Sunshine Court Apartments, 690 S.W. Ninth St., Hermiston, told police someone broke into her shed and stole a rack of CDs, then tried to come in the front door.

11:27 p.m. - Someone broke into a vehicle at Village East Apartments, 230 E. Dogwood Ave., Hermiston, and stole \$200

11:39 p.m. - A man at Eldorado Apartments, 245 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston, reported there was a "drug deal going on in his apartment," he wanted to speak to police about someone threatening to kill him, and he added he drank one beer.

DEATH NOTICES

Kerrie Shawn DeVore

Pasco

Dec. 24, 1956-Dec. 20, 2016

Kerrie Shawn DeVore, 59, died Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2016, at her home in Pasco. She was born Dec. 24, 1956, to Garry Lee and Donna "Sharon" (Davis) DeVore in Walla Walla. At her request, there will be no services held. Arrangements are with Burns Mortuary in Hermiston. Write condolences at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com

UPCOMING SERVICES

THURSDAY, DEC. 22

ANDREWS, SHIRLEY — Graveside service at 1 p.m. at the Hermiston Cemetery.

FRIDAY, DEC. 23

MARTUSCELLI, JOLENE — Memorial service at 11 a.m. at the Irrigon Seventh-day Adventist Church, 205 Tumbleweed Blvd.

SATURDAY, DEC. 24

no services scheduled

SUNDAY, DEC. 25

no services scheduled

MONDAY, DEC. 26

MCCALL, JIM — Celebration of life service at 11:30 a.m. at the Church of Christ, 215 E. Fourth Ave., Kennewick, Wash.

OBITUARY POLICY

The East Oregonian publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries and notices can be submitted online at www.eastoregonian.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@eastoregonian.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the East Oregonian office. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, ext. 221.

MEETINGS

THURSDAY, DEC. 22
SALVATION ARMY ADVISORY BOARD, 12 p.m., Salvation Army, 150 S.E. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. (Susan Lamb 541-276-3369)

UMATILLA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 6:30 p.m., Umatilla County Justice Center, 4700 N.W. Pioneer Place, Pendleton. (541-278-6252)

FRIDAY, DEC. 23

No meetings scheduled

MONDAY, DEC. 26

HERMISTON CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., Hermiston City Hall council chambers, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston. (541-567-5521)

MORROW COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT, 7 p.m., Pioneer Memorial Clinic base-

ment, 130 Thompson St., Hep-

pner. (541-676-9133)

MILTON-FREEWATER CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., Milton-Freewater Public Library Alliance Room, 8 S.W. Elgth Ave., Milton-Freewater. (541-938-5531)

LOTTERY

Tuesday, Dec. 20

Mega Millions

1-12-14-48-65

Mega Ball: 2

Megaplier: 5

Estimated jackpot: \$67 million

Lucky Lines

2-7-12-15-19-23-26-32

Estimated jackpot: \$59,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 6-4-4-8

4 p.m.: 5-7-6-4


7 p.m.: 0-8-7-7

10 p.m.: 2-6-3-7

Wednesday, Dec. 21

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 5-5-7-3



WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO

12/22

Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie

12/28 12:00

THE SECRET OF NIMH

Rogue One (PG13)
2D 1:00* 7:00
ED 4:00 10:00

Assassins Creed (PG13)
2D 12:30* 3:40* 6:40
ED 9:30

Sing (PG)
2D 11:20* 2:20* 6:50 9:40
ED 4:20

Passengers PG13
2D 11:30* 4:50 7:20 9:50
ED 1:50*

Collateral Beauty (PG13)
12:20* 2:30* 4:40 7:10 9:20

Credit & Debit cards accepted
Cineplex gift cards available
* Matinee Pricing
wildhorseresort.com
541-966-1850
Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216