

## In New Orleans, Confederate monuments are gone — Lee last

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — They were among the city's oldest landmarks, as cemented to the landscape of New Orleans as the Superdome and St. Louis Cathedral: a stone obelisk heralding white supremacy and three statues of Confederate stalwarts.

But after decades standing sentinel over this Southern city, the Confederate monuments are gone, amid a controversy that at times hearkened back to the divisiveness of the Civil War they commemorated.

The last of the monuments — a statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee facing defiantly north with his arms crossed — was lifted by a crane from its pedestal late Friday. As air was seen between Lee's statue and the pedestal below it, a cheer went out from the crowd assembled below who recorded the history with their phones and shook hands with each other in congratulations. Many in the crowd had waited all day in anticipation.

Lee's was the last of four monuments to Confederate-era figures to be removed under a 2015 City Council vote on a proposal by Mayor Mitch Landrieu. It caps a nearly two-year-long process that has been railed against by those who feel the monuments are a part of Southern heritage and honor the dead. But removal of the monuments has drawn praise from those who saw them as brutal reminders of slavery and symbols of the historic oppression of black people.

## Appeals court strikes down FAA drone registration rule

WASHINGTON (AP) — An appeals court on Friday struck down a Federal Aviation Administration rule that required owners of drones used for recreation to register their craft.

The ruling was a victory for hobbyists and a setback for the FAA, which cited safety concerns as it tried to tighten regulation of the fast-growing army of drone operators.

Some pilots of commercial airliners have reported close calls with drones flying near airports. About 760,000 hobbyists have



Workers take down the statue of former confederate general Robert E. Lee, which stands over 100 feet tall, in Lee Circle in New Orleans on Friday.

AP Photo/Gerald Herbert

registered more than 1.6 million drones since 2015, and sales have skyrocketed. The FAA estimates that hobbyists will buy 2.3 million drones this year and 13 million by the end of 2020. Commercial operators from photographers to oil pipeline and cellphone tower owners were forecast to buy another 10 million through 2020.

The FAA decided in 2015 to require hobbyists to register their drones, or model aircraft. Violators could be sentenced to prison.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled that a law passed by Congress and signed by President Barack Obama in 2012 barred the FAA from imposing new regulations on model aircraft.

The three-judge panel said that safety was obviously important and making hobbyists register "may well help further that goal to some degree," but it was up to Congress to repeal the ban on FAA rules for model aircraft.

## Colorado governor pardons felon to stave off deportation

DENVER (AP) — Colorado's governor on Friday pardoned a Cuban immigrant for an armed robbery he committed 19 years

ago in an effort stave off the man's deportation after immigration authorities detained him following a judge's ruling that he should no longer be imprisoned.

The pardon from Gov. John Hickenlooper, a Democrat, was the latest twist in the saga of Rene Lima-Marín, 38. He came to the U.S. as a toddler as part of the 1980 Mariel boat lift from Cuba and had legal residency until it was revoked following his 2000 criminal conviction. Lima-Marín was sentenced to 98 years in prison for the robbery. But he was mistakenly paroled from Colorado state prison in 2008.

Lima-Marín married, had a child and got a steady job installing glass before state authorities realized their mistake in 2014 and sent him back for the remainder of his 98-year prison sentence.

A Colorado judge earlier this week ordered Lima-Marín released from state prison, saying it'd be "draconian" to keep him incarcerated. But before he could return to his family, immigration authorities picked him up, citing a still-active deportation order from 2000. His lawyers said a pardon was his only chance to stave off deportation.

Lima-Marín's case became a bipartisan cause celebre this week in Colorado, as 98 members of

the state Assembly, Democrats and Republicans, called on Hickenlooper to pardon him. Though the legal roots of Lima-Marín's deportation order stretch back to actions of the Obama administrations, his detention comes as the Trump administration has moved aggressively to speed up deportations, sometimes sparking clashes with local officials.

## Charges shed light on sea cucumber smuggling in U.S.

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Charges against a father-son partnership for allegedly smuggling more than \$17 million worth of sea cucumbers to the United States and exporting them to Asia sheds light on a growing and lucrative illegal cross-border trade.

David Mayorquin and his father, Ramon Torres Mayorquin, are accused of a scheme to buy the illegally harvested animals from poachers in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, pay for them under fake names and underestimate their weight and value to inspectors at San Diego's Otay Mesa border crossing, across from Tijuana, Mexico. From San Diego, they allegedly shipped the product to

Asia, including China, where they are delicacies in Chinese dishes, prized for medicinal value and considered an aphrodisiac.

Border inspectors have spotted smuggled Mexican sea cucumbers for years, but the charges against the Mayorquins and their family business, Blessings Inc. of Tucson, Arizona, are striking for the multi-ton shipments. Authorities say they sell for \$300 to \$500 a kilogram in Asia, helping explain the draw for poachers and smugglers.

## North Korea vows to strengthen nukes as U.S. increases pressure

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.S. defense chief warned Friday that a military solution to the standoff with North Korea would be "tragic on an unbelievable scale," while the North vowed to rapidly strengthen its nuclear-strike capability as long as it faces a "hostile" U.S. policy.

North Korea tested a longer-range missile last weekend, which experts say was a significant advance for a weapons program that aims at having a nuclear-tipped missile that can strike America. The test triggered a new U.S.-backed push for a fresh round of U.N. sanctions against the North.

At the United Nations, North Korea's deputy ambassador, Kim In Ryong, was defiant. He said North Korea would never abandon its "nuclear deterrence for self-defense and pre-emptive strike capability" even if the U.S. ratchets up sanctions and pressure "to the utmost."

Speaking to reporters, Kim hailed the test launch and said that if the Trump administration wants peace on the divided Korean Peninsula, it should replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War with a peace accord and halt its anti-North Korea policy.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the missile test showed North Korea isn't heeding cautions from the international community. However, he stressed the need for a peaceful resolution by working through the U.N. with countries including China, the North's traditional ally and benefactor.

Matts said North Korea "probably learned a lot" from last weekend's test.

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