



\$1M GRANT WILL HELP FRESNO PD INVESTIGATE SEX CRIMES

November 28, 2018 | David Taub

Tom Laband hopes to bring justice for 694 sexual assault victims. The Fresno police lieutenant, who oversees the sexual assault unit, eagerly anticipates a \$1 million federal grant. The money will help police investigate hundreds of cold cases from lab-tested sexual assault kits. "Our primary goal here is to get justice for the victims. If there is a wrong, we want to right that wrong," Laband said.

The Fresno City Council voted 6-0 Thursday (Nov. 29) to accept a three-year, \$1 million grant from the U.S. Dept. of Justice. According to a staff report, there are 694 sexual assault kits "needing further investigation due to recent DNA hits." That is down from 888 in April 2015.

Cases Go Back Over a Decade

Laband explains that while the kits have been tested at crime labs, including the state facility at Fresno State,

"Our primary goal here is to get justice for the victims. If there is a wrong, we want to right that wrong."

Fresno Police Lt. Tom Laband the results still need to be investigated. "We knew when these kits got sent off that they would come back with returns, information, sometimes a DNA match or a DNA hit. Now we have to follow up

on those," Laband said. The cases go back to the 2000s, Laband said. Cases where the statute of limitations may expire get the first priority. The grant will enable detectives to focus exclusively on cold case hits. Laband says two additional police officers will be hired to backfill the previous duties of the detectives. "It's not a number, it's a person. There are 694 names associated with that number. There are 694 stories," Laband said.

Grant Also Covers Counseling

A portion of the funding, about \$54,000, will go to the Rape Counseling Centers of Fresno for victim advocacy. RCS's services include counseling and therapy. The center's staff also accompanies victims to law enforcement interviews and rape kit examinations. "It allows us to reach out to families that may feel forgotten," RCS ad-

vocate Nadiyah Parks said. "It's a great time to extend those services, reminding victims that you got your kit done; law enforcement is going to do their part. Our role is to provide that emotional support."

Testing Backlog Slows Cases

Laband said that having more cases than the lab could process created the backlog. "There's obviously a capacity issue here. We're fortunate to have a crime lab here in Fresno. They are the gold standard when it comes to tests and what the courts will accept. Un-

fortunately, this lab is servicing a wide area," Laband said. More funding for the labs would help, Laband said. Parks of RCS says that clients have a variety of reactions to the wheels of

know we understand, but to also assure them they were not forgotten. Sometimes, things do take time." — Nadiyah Parks of Rape Counseling Centers of Fresno

"We're there to let them

justice turning slowly. "Some people may feel frustrated. Some people may feel sad. Everyone is going to have different reactions and emotions. We're there to let them know we understand, but to also assure them they were not forgotten. Sometimes, things do take time," Parks said.

Fresno is Sole California Agency Selected

Fresno was the only department in California that the U.S. Dept. of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau granted 2018 National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative funds. In all, 32 different agencies received \$43 million. The grant requires certain training and reporting protocols.

The grant runs through Sept. 30, 2021.



November 28, 2018 | David Taub

Neighbors of a controversial new animal shelter are taking to the courts in an attempt to stop the project. Shortly after the Fresno County Board of Supervisors voted Oct. 23 to set in motion a new animal shelter near a northwest Fresno neighborhood, attorney John Kinsey said legal action was likely. Neighbors are now seeking an injunction against the county.

The supervisors, by a 5-0 vote, allowed a zoning change on a parcel of land on Grantland Avenue west of Highway 99. That vote gave the green light to businessman and philanthropist Derrel Ridenour to construct a shelter for the nonprofit Fresno Humane Animal Services. Neighbors at the meeting vociferously complained about a shelter going in blocks from their homes. Traffic, odor, and stray animals were the chief concerns. In the Nov. 16 court filing, plaintiffs Forgotten Fresno, along with individuals Gonzalo Arias Jr., Roger Day, and Elisa

Bilios, alleged that the county did not conduct a proper environmental review. The plaintiffs are asking the court to issue an injunction to prevent the shelter's construction. The filing describes Forgotten Fresno as a nonprofit. Day is president of the group.

"I'm very sad," Ridenour said. "Everybody's worked so hard to get to this point. We thought the animals would have a permanent home." Ridenour says that even if the injunction isn't granted, the lawsuit will delay construction that was slated to begin in early 2019. "We're not going to stop," said Brenda Mitchell of FHAS. "We're going to continue with our plans and come out the other end to build our animal shelter." A case management hearing has been set for Jan. 19 in Judge Kristi Culver Kapetan's courtroom. The term "Forgotten Fresno" was used by northwest Fresno resident and former police union...

TJ COX DECLARES VICTORY

November 28, 2018 | David Taub

TJ Cox declared victory in his congressional race to unseat three-term incumbent David Valadao (R-Hanford) in a race that is being watched across the nation. After Wednesday (Nov. 28) vote count updates in Fresno and Kings counties, Cox proclaimed himself the winner. "I am elated to announce that we have won the election for California's 21st Congressional District. I want to thank my wife Kathy and our entire family for their love and support throughout this campaign. I could not have done this without them," Cox wrote in an email statement.

The Democratic candidate in California's 21st district congressional race picked up 52% of the final batch of 1,438 votes in Kings County, which updated at 10:45 a.m. PT. With the latest update, Cox now has a 529-vote lead, picking up 93 net votes (70 in Kings and 23 in Fresno). Kristine Lee, the Kings County clerk, says there are no more votes to count. She must still conduct a 1% manual tally and plans to certify the count by the end of the week. On Fresno's election website, it also...

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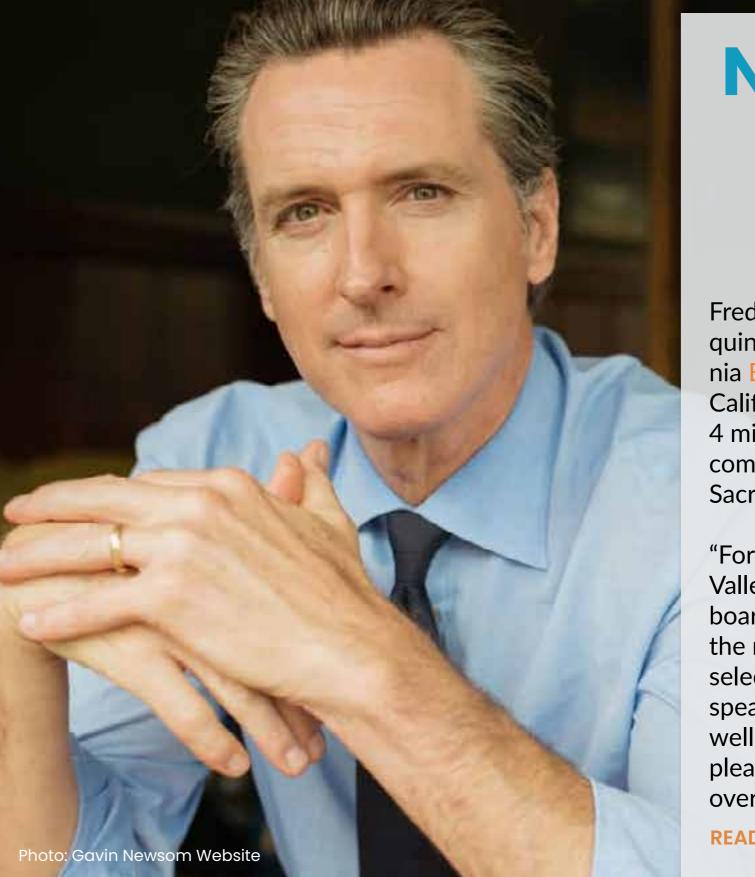


NEWSOM MUST KEEP HIS BIG PROMISE TO THE VALLEY

November 26, 2018 | GV Wire

Fred Ruiz eloquently stated earlier this year why the San Joaquin Valley needs representation on the University of California Board of Regents. "The San Joaquin Valley is the heart of California's fertile agricultural region. It is home to more than 4 million Californians, and to diverse, distinctive and dynamic communities," Ruiz, a former regent, wrote in an op-ed for The Sacramento Bee.

"For 12 years I had the honor of representing the San Joaquin Valley on the UC Board. When my term expired last year, the board lost its only member from the Valley. It is vital that when the next round of appointments occurs ... Gov. Jerry Brown selects a representative from our community — one who can speak to the diversity of backgrounds and experiences here, as well as to the distinct needs of our residents." Despite Ruiz's plea, as well as those from many other local leaders, Brown overlooked the Valley when he appointed four regents to the...



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NATURAL DISASTERS WILL BE A PRIORITY FOR INCOMING GOVERNORS

November 26, 2018 | AP News

Governors have a wide range of priorities they want to tackle in the coming year, from tax reform to education. Yet it's a topic that receives less attention on the campaign trail and in their speeches that could determine their success — natural disasters. In the last two years alone, storms and natural disasters have killed scores of people, damaged or destroyed tens of thousands of homes and cost tens of billions of dollars.

Wildfires in the West and hurricanes in the South have

"As California's wildfires, a spate of hurricanes, and unfortunate acts of mass violence have demonstrated, such events can occur at any time, including a governor's first day in office." — Scott Pattison, the nonpartisan association's chief executive

been especially destructive, and scientists say climate change is making this more common. As the severity escalates, governors are finding they have to make disaster planning a priority or risk the consequences of inaction defining their terms and en-

raging voters. Handling disasters and emergencies was a prime topic last week when the National Governors Association held a three-day seminar in Colorado that most of the nation's 19 governors-elect attended.

'New Abnormal' of Natural Disasters

"As California's wildfires, a spate of hurricanes, and unfortunate acts of mass violence have demonstrated, such events can occur at any time," Scott Pattison, the nonpartisan association's chief executive, said in a statement, "including a governor's first day in office." For many Democratic governors especially, the main concern is how climate change appears to be worsening the effects of natural disasters. In California, half of the 10 most destructive wildfires in state history have occurred since 2017, and the costliest have been in each of the past three years, according to the state firefighting agency. The state has spent \$500 million from its emergency firefighting fund just since July 1,

putting this wildfire season on pace to be among the costliest yet. The state is dealing with its most destructive wildfire ever, a Northern California blaze that leveled a town of 27,000 this month, killed at least 80 people and left thousands homeless. That blaze, and another that roared through Malibu at the same time and left at least three dead, are the latest in a string of catastrophic wildfires that have put the state in what seems like a perpetual state of emergency. Outgoing Gov. Jerry Brown has called California's mega fires "the new abnormal" as climate change turns the state warmer and drier.

Passing a Series of Wildfire-Related Bills This Year

The escalating destruction prompted state lawmakers to pass a series of wildfire-related bills this year.

Among other provisions, they provide millions of dollars to cut trees and brush, make it easier for property owners to clear their

- "I'd rather see our National Guard working on those kinds of emergencies than being on the border."
- Gov.-elect Gavin Newsom

land and require the state's utilities to step up their fire-prevention efforts. During his campaign, incoming Gov. Gavin Newsom said wildfire planning would be a priority for his administration and outlined a number of steps he wants to take. Among them is a more aggressive approach to clearing trees and brush, particularly the state's millions of dead trees.

"I'd rather see our National Guard working on those kinds of emergencies than being on the border," Newsom told the nonprofit news organization CALmatters over the summer. He also proposed deploying a network of infrared cameras to detect wildfires early, improving the emergency alert system and boosting funding for fire departments throughout the state. A spokesman, Nathan Click, said Newsom is putting together a comprehensive wildfire strategy as he...

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November 26, 2018 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California Democratic Party Chairman Eric Bauman is resigning following sexual misconduct allegations. Bauman announced his decision Thursday, hours after Governor-elect Gavin Newsom called for him to step aside.

Bauman released a statement that does not specifically address the allegations against him. He says he's come to the realization that resigning is in everyone's best interest "in order for those to whom I may have caused pain to heal," for his own health, and the good of the Democratic Party. Bauman said Wednesday he is seeking treatment for alcohol abuse and other health issues. He narrowly won the party

chairmanship in May 2017. The incoming Democratic governor said in a statement Thursday that he was so troubled by the serious allegations that Bauman should resign even as the investigation continues.

Los Angeles Times Article Cited

Party vice-chairman Daraka Larimore-Hall accused Bauman, the party's first openly gay chairman, of sexual harassment and assault against unnamed victims last week. Newsom cited a subsequent Los Angeles Times article describing allegations of crude comments and inappropriate physical touching by Bauman.

COURT REVERSES RULING AGAINST ASSISTED SUICIDE

November 29, 2018 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — A California appeals court overturned a lower court order that had imperiled the state's assisted suicide law, but a longer legal fight may loom because the ruling skirted the larger issue of whether the legislation was unconstitutional. A three-judge panel of the 4th District Court of Appeals in the city of Riverside on Tuesday did not rule on the merits of the case because it found doctors opposed to the law had no right to sue to block the law. The court said the doctors failed to show they were harmed because they could choose not to help terminally ill patients die.

The End of Life Option Act allows adults to obtain a prescription for life-ending drugs if a doctor finds they have six months or less to live. The ruling reversed Riverside County Superior Court Judge Daniel Ottolia's judgment in May that declared the law unconstitutional because it was adopted during a special legislative session that was supposed to address improving the medical system and health of...

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PATAGONIA GIVES GOP TAX WINDFALL TO ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

November 29, 2018 | AP News

VENTURA — Patagonia, the outdoor gear company, is passing along the \$10 million it saved from tax cuts to nonprofit environmental groups. Corporations received a windfall from the GOP's sweeping overhaul of the U.S. tax code last year, which slashed corporate rates from 35 percent, to 21 percent. The California company said Wednesday that the donation is in addition to 1 percent of sales it gives to environmental groups every year. The donation is being made on the heels of the recent National Climate Assessment, which Patagonia cited in its announcement.

"Our government continues to ignore the seriousness and causes of the climate crisis. It is pure evil," said Yvon Chouinard, Patagonia's founder. "We need to double down on renewable energy solutions. We need an agriculture system that supports small family farms and ranches, not one that rewards chemical companies intent on destroying our planet and...

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VOTERS REJECT NATIONALISM. NOW LET'S DO IMMIGRATION REFORM.

November 21, 2018 | Darius Assemi

Whenever there is an aggressive change in direction away from the principles America was founded upon, our country has a way of coming together to restore them. As it has in the past, this process of renewal played out on election night. With a 3.7 % national unemployment rate, a booming economy, and accelerating wage hikes, you would think the incumbent party would have gained momentum.

But Republicans, and I am one, lost the House by a big margin. The GOP did gain one seat in the Senate (with another likely after Mississippi's runoff later this month), but only because it had half the number of seats to defend as the Democrats.

Americans Want Effective Government

While the loudest voices always dominate the headlines, I believe a majority of Americans truly want our government to function effectively and to adhere to the fundamental values of our great nation. The United States was built on a solid foundation of inclusiveness, opportunity, and respect for the dignity of others. From

From the outset, our founders recognized the inherent advantages of welcoming newcomers to our country.

the outset, our founders recognized the inherent advantages of welcoming newcomers to our country. The beautiful thing about

America is that immigrants assimilate quickly and are welcomed by their local communities. But the drumbeat of anti-immigrant, anti-Hispanic, anti-Muslim rhetoric has been getting louder under the Trump administration, and we saw the response to those themes Nov. 6. More younger voters, especially Democrats, were motivated to go to the polls. The results confirmed that America it is an inclusive country, where we respect human rights and human dignity.

Immigration is fully woven into the fabric of our nation. Whether fleeing tyranny and oppression or seek-

ing greater prosperity, immigrants have contributed immensely to the economic, cultural, and intellectual achievements that have made America the greatest nation on Earth. Yet the dominant issue in the weeks leading up to Election Day was about stopping the Central American "migrant caravan" moving slowly through Mexico toward the U.S border. These desperate individuals, mostly women and children, are fleeing oppressive and dangerous conditions in their home countries. In the end, what distinguishes them from refugees fleeing oppression and death in Syria or anywhere else?

'Crisis' Reaction to Immigration

It is the lack of cohesive immigration policy and sensible reform that has resulted in a crisis reaction every time a migration or refugee challenge arises. The family separation debacle and the stalemate over DACA are recent examples of the consequence of this failure to act. Having no solid policy for immigration means we follow the whim and bias of whoever has the power. One of the many consequences, then, is that those with legitimate claims to asylum do not receive it. Meanwhile, dangerous people who know how to exploit the weaknesses of our borders are able to get in. In addition, would-be immigrants with the skillsets and/or financial means America needs are not invited to emigrate to the U.S.

Risks For Those Seeking Common Ground

Further, this highly-charged environment damages

those who attempt to find common ground. For instance, Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Turlock) was fully in-

Having no solid policy for immigration means we follow the whim and bias of whoever has the power.

vested in accomplishing the immigration policy reform that is long overdue. This well-known, hardworking, and dedicated representative was defeated. His opponents were able to convince voters that a vote for Denham was a vote for President Donald Trump and his harsh views and policies on immigration...

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November 28, 2018 | GV Wire

WASHINGTON — Nancy Pelosi was nominated by fellow House Democrats to be speaker on Wednesday, but she still faces a showdown vote when the full House convenes in January. Pelosi entered the closed-door caucus election in an unusual position — running unopposed despite the clamor by some Democrats for new leadership. Votes were still being counted, but she was assured of victory.

"Are there dissenters? Yes," the California Democrat told reporters as voting was underway. "But I expect to have a powerful vote going forward." The New York Times is report-

ing that the count was 203-32 for Pelosi. Pelosi was nominated as her party's choice for speaker by Rep. Joe Kennedy of Massachusetts, with no fewer than eight colleagues set to second the choice, including Rep. John Lewis of Georgia, the civil rights leader, and three newly elected lawmakers.

As House Democrats met in private in the Capitol, they faced a simple "yes" or "no" choice on the ballots. A sign of the party's mood emerged early as the House Democrats elected Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York as caucus chairman, elevating the charismatic 48-year-old from the...

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SUPREME COURT RESTRICTS THE REACH OF ENDANGERED SPECIES

November 27, 2018 | AP News + GV Wire

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court, on an 8-0 vote, ordered a lower court to take a new look at a federal agency's designation of Louisiana timberland as a critical habitat for an endangered frog found only in Mississippi. The court ruled Tuesday in a case involving a 1,500-acre tract owned by the Weyerhaeuser Co. and others that has been identified as the only potential breeding ground outside Mississippi for dusky gopher frogs.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the court that judges must consider the definition of the term habitat in the Endangered Species Act and whether it includes areas like the Louisiana tract that might have to be modified for the frog to thrive there. In essence, the court ruled that the government can designate a protected "habitat" only in areas where a threatened animal could currently live. The 100 or so...

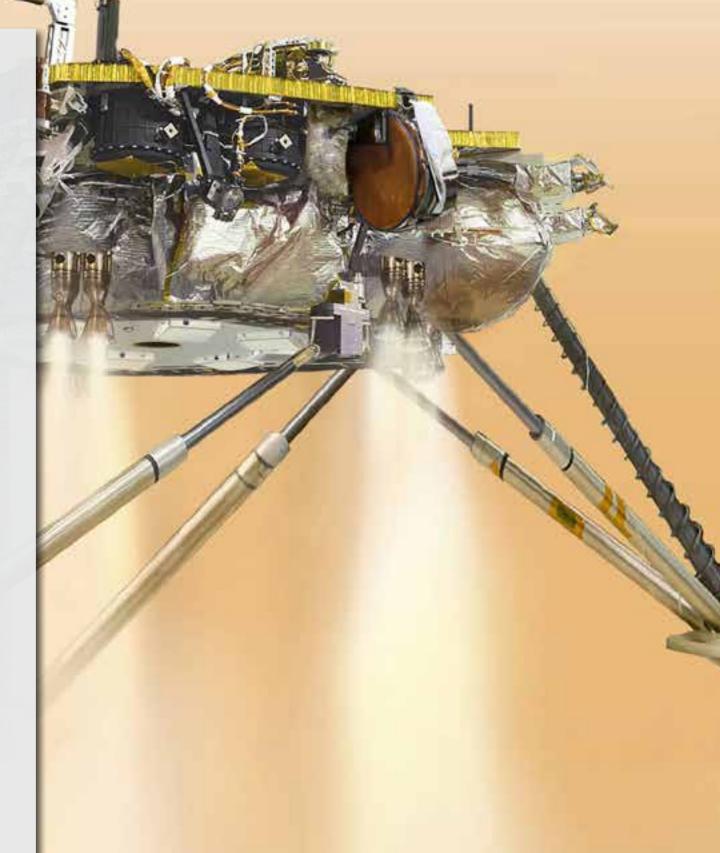
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'FLAWLESS': NASA CRAFT **LANDS ON MARS AFTER**

November 26, 2018 | GV Wire

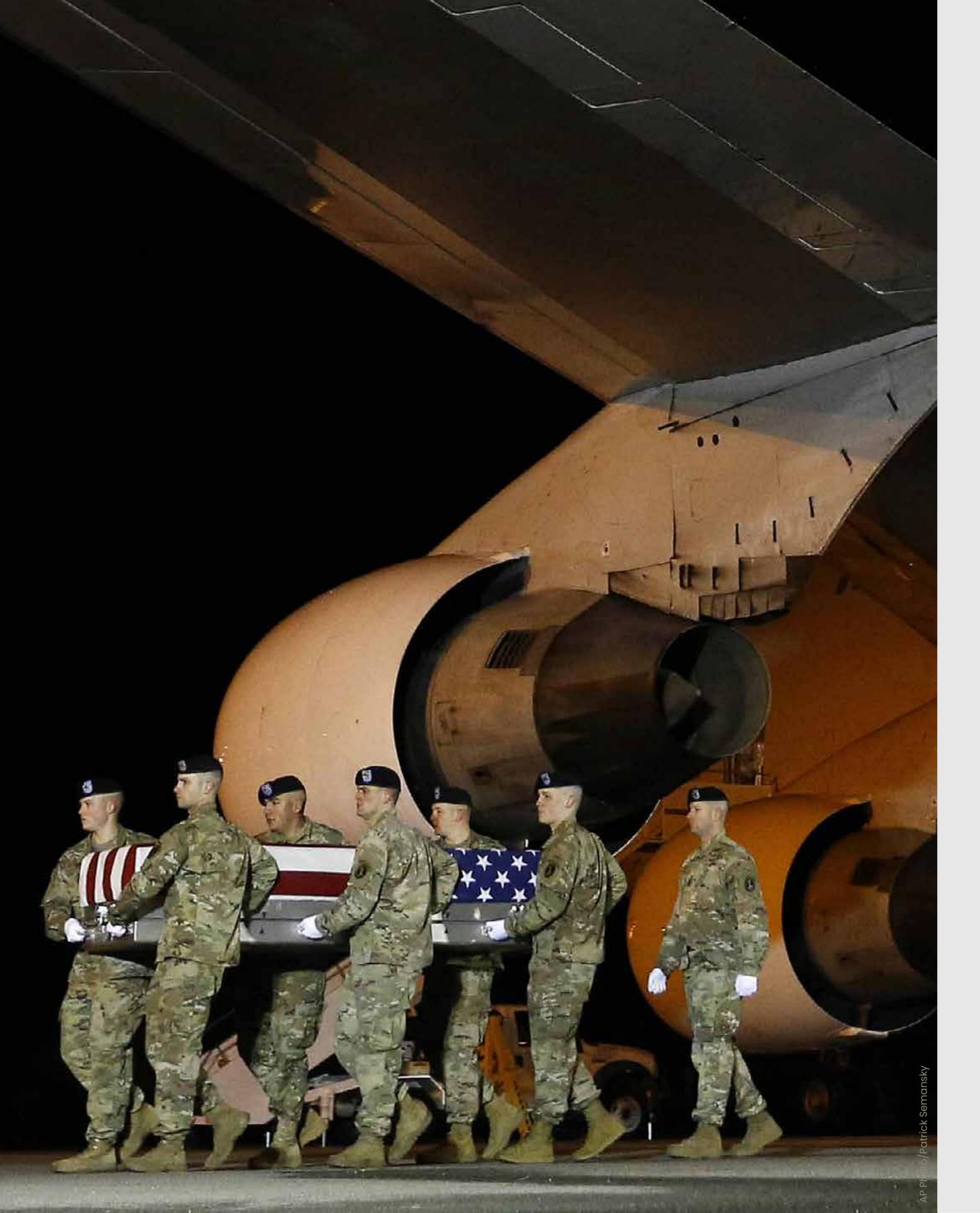
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A NASA spacecraft designed to drill down into Mars' interior landed on the planet Monday after a perilous, supersonic plunge through its red skies, setting off jubilation among scientists who had waited in white-knuckle suspense for confirmation to arrive across

Flight controllers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, leapt out of their chairs, screaming, dancing and hugging, upon learning that InSight's had safely arrived on Mars, the graveyard for a multitude of previous missions. "Touchdown confirmed!" a flight controller called out, touching off a celebration that was a complete turnaround from the nail-biting anxiety that gripped the control room as the spacecraft made its six-minute descent. Confirmation came minutes later from a pair of tiny satellites that had been trailing InSight throughout the six-month...



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RISE IN US DEATHS IN AFGHANISTAN CLOUDS OUTLOOK FOR PEACE

November 28, 2018 | GV Wire

WASHINGTON — A rash of American combat deaths in Afghanistan is putting a spotlight on a stalemated 17-year war that is testing President Donald Trump's commitment to pursuing peace with the Taliban. Trump has acknowledged that his original instinct was to withdraw from Afghanistan, but last week he suggested he is willing to stick it out, asserting that the U.S. is in "very strong negotiations" — an apparent reference to U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad's efforts to get the Taliban

The human cost of the conflict rarely makes headlines in the U.S., leaving Trump with political room to maneuver. But that might be changing.

to agree to peace talks.
On the other hand, Trump indicated he had little confidence the talks are going to succeed. "Maybe they're not. Probably

they're not," he said. The human cost of the conflict rarely makes headlines in the U.S., leaving Trump with political room to maneuver. But that might be changing.

Death Toll Now Exceeds 2,400

In early November, Brent Taylor, the mayor of North Ogden, Utah, and a major in the Utah National Guard, was killed by an Afghan soldier in Kabul. Last Saturday, Sgt. Leandro Jasso, a 25-year-old Army Ranger from Leavenworth, Washington, was mortally wounded in southern Afghanistan. On Tuesday, U.S. officials said they had determined that Jasso probably was accidentally shot by an Afghan soldier during battle with an al-Qaida fighter. The U.S. military headquarters in Kabul announced Tuesday that three U.S. servicemembers were killed and three wounded by a roadside bomb in Ghazni province, south of Kabul, where the Taliban has been resurgent. It was the deadliest attack on U.S. forces in Afghanistan this year. The Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan before U.S. forces invaded in October 2001, carry out near-daily attacks on Afghan army and police forces, and in August the insurgents overran parts of Ghazni, leading to days of intense fighting before they were driven out. Ghazni was the only one of Afghanistan's 34 provinces where parliamentary elections could not be held in October because of security worries. Voting there has been postponed for a year. Stephen Biddle, a professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University who has closely tracked the war from its beginning, said little that has happened in Afghanistan in recent years has grabbed the American public's attention, including a death toll since 2001 that now exceeds 2,400.

Keeping Troops There Because Experts Said So

"The war hasn't produced torch-lit marches on the Pentagon or for that matter any meaningful effect on any election campaign," Biddle said. "What (the uptick in casualties) could do is change the mind of Donald Trump. At a minimum, he is erratic and clearly doesn't like the war." In a Washington Post interview Tuesday, Trump called the latest deaths "very sad" and said he was keeping troops there only because "experts" told him it was necessary.

In Geneva on Wednesday, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani urged a gathering of U.S., Russian and other dip-

lomats to continue support for his government, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed hope for an "end to this fratricidal war." In Ghani's absence, Kabul, the Afghan capital, was hit Wednesday by a coordinated insurgent attack against security forces, and in the

"The war hasn't produced torch-lit marches on the Pentagon or for that matter any meaningful effect on any election campaign. What (the uptick in casualties) could do is change the mind of Donald Trump. At a minimum, he is erratic and clearly doesn't like the war." — Stephen Biddle, a professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University

southern province of Helmand, local officials said at least 30 civilians and 16 Taliban fighters were killed in overnight fighting. Trump's predecessor, Barack...

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HAILING THE FUTURE TAXI: DRONE-CAR MASHUP TAKES FLIGHT

November 27, 2018 | AP News

AMSTERDAM — A scale model of a flying drone-car drove and hovered across an Amsterdam exhibition hall Tuesday, providing a glimpse of what could be the future of urban mobility. The "Pop.Up Next" prototype drone, being developed by aviation giant Airbus, automaker Audi and the Italdesign design house is made up of three separate modules — a chassis with wheels, a two-seat capsule for passengers and a four-rotor drone. The concept has been shown before, but a one-quarter-size scale model made its maiden public flight at the Amsterdam Drone Week convention.

First, the drone flew across the hall and landed on a black parking spot. Then a small car drove itself underneath the drone and its passenger capsule was lifted up to latch onto the underside of the drone. Once the two were docked, the drone lifted off again and flew back to its starting point, where the capsule was lowered onto another set of wheels...

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STEER TOO BEEFY TO BECOME BURGERS WILL BURGERS WILL LIVE HIS LIFE ON FARM

November 28, 2018 | GV Wire

LAKE PRESTON, Australia — Knickers the steer is huge on the internet — for being huge.

The black-and-white Holstein Friesian won social media fame and many proclamations of "Holy Cow!" after photos surfaced of the 6-foot-4-inch steer standing head and shoulders above a herd of brown wagyu cattle in Western Australia state.

Owner Geoff Pearson said Knickers was too heavy to go to the slaughterhouse. "We have a high turnover of cattle, and he was lucky enough to stay behind," Pearson said. Australian media say Knickers is believed to be the tallest steer in the country and weighs about 1.4 tons.

Instead of becoming steaks and burgers, 7-year-old Knickers will get to live out his life in Pearson's fields in Lake Preston, southwest of Perth.

CHINA HALTS WORK BY TEAM ON GENE-EDITED BABIES

November 29, 2018 | AP News

HONG KONG — China's government ordered a halt Thursday to work by a medical team that claimed to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies, as a group of leading scientists declared that it's still too soon to try to make permanent changes to DNA that can be inherited by future generations.

Chinese Vice Minister of Science and Technology Xu Nanping told state broadcaster CCTV that his ministry is strongly opposed to the efforts that reportedly produced twin girls born earlier this month. Xu called the team's actions illegal and unacceptable and said an investigation had been ordered, but made no mention of specific actions taken. Researcher He Jiankui claims to have altered the DNA of the twins to try to make them resistant to infection with the AIDS virus. Mainstream scientists have condemned the experiment, and universities and government groups are investigating. He's...

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