

Some Districts Quit Lunch Program

After just one year, some schools around the country are dropping out of the healthier new federal lunch program, complaining that so many students turned up their noses at meals packed with whole grains, fruits and vegetables that the cafeterias were losing money.

Federal officials say they don't have exact numbers but have seen isolated reports of schools cutting ties with the \$11 billion National School Lunch Program, which reimburses schools for meals served and gives them access to lower-priced food.

Districts that rejected the program say the reimbursement was not enough to offset losses from students who began avoiding the lunch line and bringing food from home or, in some cases, going hungry.

"Some of the stuff we had to offer, they wouldn't eat," said Catlin, Ill., Superintendent Gary Lewis, whose district saw a 10 to 12 percent drop in lunch sales, translating to \$30,000 lost under the program last year.

"So you sit there and watch the kids, and you know they're hungry at the end of the day, and that led to some behavior and some lack of attentiveness."

New Photos Released Of Tsarnaev

BOSTON (AP) — Dramatic new photos show the Boston Marathon bombing suspect, his face bloodied, climbing out of a boat in a suburban backyard as heavily armed police officers wait for him to drop to the ground.

The images were among those a state police officer provided last month to Boston Magazine, which published some then and more on Tuesday.

Sgt. Sean Murphy took photos the April night police cornered Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in a dry-docked boat in Watertown, just outside Boston. He wasn't authorized to release the photos but said he was angry about a Rolling Stone magazine cover he felt glamorized Tsarnaev.

The new photos include more shots of Tsarnaev coming out of the boat, his head bloody and a red laser trained on his head. They also show him dropping to the ground, where officers and medical personnel rushed to treat him. Other photos show tense federal, state and local police officials meeting in a command center and SWAT teams gathering in the streets earlier in the day.

The surgeon who treated Tsarnaev after his capture said he had been shot through the face and had a fractured skull, among other injuries. Tsarnaev was wounded during a confrontation with police a day after authorities released photos of him and his older brother as suspects in the deadly April 15 marathon bombing.

Bail At \$3M For Teen In Vet's Beating

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Bail was set at \$3 million Tuesday for a 16-year-old boy who is charged with killing a World War II veteran and contends the man was beaten to death because he shorted the teen and another boy on a sale of crack cocaine.

The allegation was sharply refuted by friends of Delbert Belton, the 88-year-old veteran known as "Shorty."

"Shorty never did no drugs," said Ted Denison, a friend who added that the defendants were "smearing his name."

The drug-dealing claim is in a letter police found after they arrested Kenan Adams-Kinard early Monday morning, Spokane County Deputy Prosecutor Larry Haskell said during Tuesday's court hearing.

Haskell said the letter contends that Adams-Kinard and Demetrius L. Glenn, 16, were buying crack cocaine from Belton when the attack occurred Aug. 21. That notion was scoffed at by family members and friends of Belton, who was known as Shorty because he was little more than 5 feet tall.

Momentum Grows For Western Military Action Against Syria

BY ALBERT AJI AND GREGORY KATZ

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Momentum appeared to build Tuesday for Western military action against Syria, with the U.S. and France saying they are in position for a strike, while the government in Damascus vowed to use all possible measures to repel it.

The prospect of a dramatic U.S.-led intervention into Syria's civil war stemmed from the West's assertion — still not endorsed by U.N. inspectors — that President Bashar Assad's government was responsible for an alleged chemical attack on civilians outside Damascus on Aug. 21 that the group Doctors Without Borders says killed 355 people. Assad denies the claim.

The Arab League also threw its weight behind calls for punitive action, blaming the Syrian government for the attack and calling for those responsible to be brought to justice.

British Prime Minister David Cameron recalled Parliament to hold an emergency vote Thursday on his country's response. It is unlikely that any international military action would begin before then.

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said U.S. military forces stand ready to strike Syria at once if President Barack Obama gives the order, and French President Francois Hollande said France was "ready to punish those who took the heinous decision to gas innocents."



MOHAMMAD ABU GHOSH/XINHUA/ZUMA PRESS/MCT
Syrian protesters rally to condemn the alleged poison gas attack on the suburbs of Damascus, in front of the Syrian embassy in Amman, Jordan.

Obama is weighing a response focused narrowly on punishing Assad for violating international agreements that ban the use of chemical weapons. Officials said the goal was not to drive Assad from power or impact the broader trajectory of Syria's bloody civil war, now in its third year.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Monday the West should be under no illusion that bombing Syrian military targets would help end the violence in Syria, an ally of Moscow, and he pointed to the volatile situations in Iraq and Libya that he said resulted

from foreign military intervention.

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem said his country would use "all means available" to defend itself.

"We have the means to defend ourselves and we will surprise everyone," he said.

At a news conference in Damascus, al-Moallem challenged Washington to present proof to back up its accusations and he also likened the allegations to false American charges in 2003 that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction before the U.S.-led invasion of that country.

Fort Hood Gunman Won't Call Witnesses, Testify

BY MICHAEL GRACZYK
AND NOMAN MERCHANT

Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — The Army psychiatrist who fatally shot 13 people at Fort Hood decided not to present any evidence during his trial's penalty phase on Tuesday even though jurors are deciding whether to sentence him to death.

Maj. Nidal Hasan rested his case without calling witnesses or testifying to counter the emotional testimony from victims' relatives, who talked of eerily quiet homes, lost futures, alcoholism and the unmatched fear of hearing a knock on their front door.

Prosecutors hope the testimony helps convince jurors to hand down a rare military death sentence against Hasan,

who was convicted last week for the 2009 attack that also wounded more than 30 people at the Texas military base.

The judge dismissed jurors after Hasan declined to put up a defense. But she then asked Hasan more than two dozen questions in rapid fire, affirming that he knew what he was doing. His answers were succinct and just as rapid.

"It is my personal decision," he said. "It is free and voluntary."

The judge, Col. Tara Osborn, then read aloud several court opinions to back up her decision not to introduce evidence in Hasan's favor on her own.

"In other words, Maj. Hasan, you are the captain of your own ship," Osborn said.

Closing arguments are scheduled for Wednesday, but

whether jurors will hear from Hasan remains unclear. He has been acting as his own attorney but has put up nearly no defense since his trial began three weeks ago.

The trial's penalty phase, however, is Hasan's last chance to tell jurors what he's spent the last four years telling the military, judges and journalists: that he believes the killing of unarmed American soldiers preparing to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan was necessary to protect Muslim insurgents. He was barred ahead of trial of making such a defense.

Hasan rested his case shortly after more than a dozen widows, mothers, fathers, children and other relatives of those killed, along with soldiers wounded during the shooting rampage, testified

about their lives since Nov. 5, 2009.

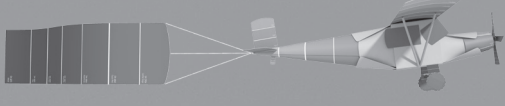
Sheryll Pearson sobbed when shown a photo of her son, Pfc. Michael Pearson, hugging her during his graduation.

"We always wanted to see who he was going to become. Now that was taken away from us," she said.

Teena Nemelka lost the youngest of her four children, Pfc. Aaron Nemelka, whom she called, "my baby." She talked about her frantic searches for information in the moments after learning about the shooting and about her fear of hearing a knock at the front door of her home.

"You just freeze," she said. "You don't want to open that door."

But the knock came, with "the worst news you could ever hear."




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