

STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, April 11, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Naval officer in China spy case is ID'd

The Washington Post

A Taiwan-born Navy officer who became a naturalized U.S. citizen faces charges of espionage, attempted espionage and prostitution in a highly secretive case in which he is accused of providing classified information to China, U.S. officials said.

The Navy examined the charges against Lt. Cmdr. Edward C. Lin in a preliminary military justice hearing on Friday. The service did not release his identity, but a U.S. official disclosed it Sunday under the condition of anonymity, citing the sensitivity of the case. Lin's connection to the case was first reported by USNI News.

The Navy, which has not identified Lin by name, said the officer is assigned to the headquarters for the Patrol and Reconnaissance Group, which oversees maritime patrol aircraft such as the P-8A Poseidon

and P-3C Orion spy planes and the MQ-4C Triton surveillance drone.

A heavily redacted charge sheet released by the Navy states that the officer faces two specifications of espionage and three specifications of attempted espionage. He is accused of communicating secret information "with intent or reason to believe it would be used to the advantage of a foreign nation," hiring a prostitute for sex, committing adultery, not disclosing foreign travel to the U.S. government as required, and lying about it after the fact.

It could not be determined who is serving as Lin's legal representation from the charge sheet released by the Navy. The military typically discloses the identity of a servicemember who faces a preliminary Article 32 hearing like the one involved in this case, but the officer's name was redacted

from the charge sheet released afterward "out of consideration for the servicemember's privacy," said Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins, a Navy spokesman.

A U.S. official confirmed that Lin's personal story was highlighted by the Navy in 2008 as he became a naturalized citizen in a ceremony in Honolulu. He and his family came to the U.S. when he was 14 and spoke little English at the time, he said at the ceremony, according to a Navy account of the event.

"I was barely able to spell 'ABC.' The only name that I knew back then as an American name was Eddy," Lin said at the time. "Eddy was the name of my mother's dog ... I was very fortunate that my mother did not name her dog 'Fluffy.'"

At the ceremony, Lin thanked other military servicemembers who also were being naturalized for safeguarding their new nation.

"Extraordinary events made this nation and our military. People like you, men and women who stepped forward when their nation needed them accomplished these extraordinary events. I thank you for your decision to serve," Lin said, according to the account.

The top flag officer overseeing Lin's case as convening authority is Adm. Philip S. Davidson, commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, Va. Lin is being held at the Naval Consolidated Brig in Chesapeake, Va. He was arrested about eight months ago, Newsweek reported Saturday.

The case remains under investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the FBI. Spokesmen for senior Navy officials, including Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, declined to comment Sunday.

Carter visits Indian port, backs ally's naval expansion

By TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

MORMUGAO PORT, India — Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Monday that India could become a key guarantor of security in the Asia Pacific region as it seeks to modernize its naval fleet.

India is planning to increase its naval fleet from 130 to 166 ships, including adding a third aircraft carrier, a senior Indian defense official said in a background briefing with reporters traveling with the defense secretary.

That will allow India to be a "net supplier of security in the region," Carter told reporters aboard the USS Blue Ridge, the flagship of the U.S. 7th Fleet,

after hosting Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar. "That's very compatible with our policy."

Carter spent the morning with Parrikar on board the INS Vikramaditya, one of India's two aircraft carriers.

India is rapidly expanding its naval fleet to be able to expand its role from one that has focused on anti-piracy and near coastal threats to one that now has an eye on China. India wants to be able to respond to "any political, diplomatic or extremist unrest in the world," the senior Indian defense official said.

In the last year, as China has militarized a string of man-made islands in the South China Sea, India has responded

by deploying its ships to the South China Sea six times, the official said.

U.S. ships and aircraft also have passed near the islands in recent months to ensure freedom of navigation, angering China.

In June of last year, India launched its first India-built aircraft carrier, the INS Vikrant, and in 2013 it purchased and refurbished the INS Vikramaditya, a Russian-made carrier named the Admiral Gorshkov.

Carter and Parrikar have been working on technology sharing terms that would help India acquire a third, U.S.-India co-developed carrier.

The U.S. has been expanding its naval presence in the

region, 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin said. Many of the Navy's new systems, including the Zumwalt class DDG-1000 destroyer, will be deployed in the 7th Fleet Area of Responsibility.

"There's a big synergy between our two countries," Aucoin said.

India, one of the world's largest defense importers, has relied on purchases of Russian equipment. More recently, however, New Delhi has been looking to diversify its foreign arms purchases, choosing Lockheed Martin C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft and French Rafale fighters in multibillion-dollar deals.

Militants retake key area from Syrian rebels

The Washington Post

ISTANBUL — Islamic State militants recaptured a key stronghold from Syrian rebels on Turkey's border Monday, activists said, just days after the extremist group was driven out by opposition fighters backed by U.S. and Turkish strikes.

The jihadis seized the Syrian border town of Rai, roughly 2 miles from the Turkish border in Syria's Aleppo province, in a counterassault against rebels fighting under the banner of the Free Syrian Army, according to the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The rebels previously had taken the town from the Islamic State on Thursday in what

was hailed as a boost for U.S. and Turkish efforts to rout the extremists from Syrian territory along Turkey's frontier.

But on Monday, the jihadis "managed to infiltrate" rebel front lines in the town, routing the Free Syrian Army fighters from the area, the Islamic State said in a statement posted online. The militants also claimed to have captured two anti-aircraft guns and stockpiles of weapons left behind by the rebels.

The Syrian rebels had "gathered on the orders of their masters, the Americans and the Turks, and with the support of [U.S. and Turkish] airplanes and artillery, the enemies of God controlled the town of al-Rai," the Islamic State statement said.

"Then, the soldiers of the caliphate — with help only from God — managed to infiltrate the front lines" in Rai, the statement said. "God put fear into their hearts" and forced the rebels to flee, it said.

In 2014, the Islamic State declared a caliphate straddling the Syrian and Iraqi borders, with its capital in the Syrian city of Raqqa. Syria's 500-mile frontier with Turkey has provided the group with crucial supply routes for weapons, fighters and other goods.

Rai is one of the last border crossings controlled by the Islamic State as its militants move to defend its strongholds in both Syria and Iraq. Analysts have said the jihadis are rapidly losing territory.

Kerry's visit to A-bomb blast site 'gut-wrenching'

Associated Press

HIROSHIMA, Japan — An emotional John Kerry said Hiroshima's horrible history should teach humanity to avoid conflict and to strive to eradicate nuclear weapons as he became the first U.S. secretary of state to tread upon the ground of the world's first atomic bombing.

Kerry's visit Monday to the Japanese city included him touring its peace museum with other foreign ministers of the Group of Seven industrialized nations and laying a wreath at the adjoining park's stone-arched monument, with the exposed steel beams of Hiroshima's iconic A-Bomb Dome in the distance.

The U.S. attack on Hiroshima in the final days of World War II killed 140,000 people and scarred a generation of Japanese, while thrusting the world into the dangerous Atomic Age. Kerry hoped his trip would underscore how Washington and Tokyo have forged a deep alliance during the past 71 years and how everyone must ensure that nuclear arms are never used again.

"While we will revisit the past and honor those who per-

ished, this trip is not about the past," he told Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, a Hiroshima native. "It's about the present and the future, particularly, and the strength of the relationship that we have built, the friendship that we share, the strength of our alliance and the strong reminder of the imperative we all have to work for peace for peoples everywhere."

Kerry's appearance, just footsteps away from Ground Zero, completed an evolution for the United States, whose leaders avoided the city for many years because of political sensitivities.

No serving U.S. president has visited the site, and it took 65 years for a U.S. ambassador to attend Hiroshima's annual memorial service. Many Americans believe the dropping of atomic bombs here on Aug. 6, 1945, and on the Japanese city of Nagasaki three days later were justified and hastened the end of the war.

Kerry didn't speak publicly at the ceremony, though he could be seen with his arm around Kishida and whispering in his ear.

Iraqi forces push militant group from key city of Hit

The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — Iraqi security forces pushed Islamic State fighters from the western city of Hit on Monday and raised the Iraqi flag over the local municipal building, dealing another blow to the group's weakening self-proclaimed caliphate, authorities here said.

Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service and Joint Operations Command confirmed that the government was in control of the center of the city, which is on the Euphrates River in Anbar province, about 100 miles west of Baghdad. Fighting reportedly still flared in at

least some neighborhoods.

"I am now inside the government [headquarters] in Hit," Lt. Gen. Abdul Ghani al-Assadi, commander of Iraq's counterterrorism forces, said by telephone. "We defused the booby traps and raised the Iraqi flag. Now I can say, after we've taken this building, that Hit is completely liberated."

Pro-government forces had been fighting since March to retake Hit, which was overrun by Islamic State militants in October 2014.

Assadi said more than 11,000 people were evacuated from Hit but there were still civilians in the city.

2 university students die in shootout at La. party

BATON ROUGE, La. — Two 19-year-old women who were Southern University students and members of the school's athletics program were killed during a shootout early Sunday outside a Baton Rouge apartment complex, police and university officials said.

Police arrested one of two men suspected in the shooting. Ernest Bernard Felton, 22,

of Miami, is facing charges of attempted second-degree murder and illegal use of a weapon in the shooting of a 24-year-old man who was at a hospital with wounds that aren't considered life-threatening.

Investigators were awaiting results of ballistic analysis to determine who is responsible for fatally shooting Lashuntae Benton, of Lake Charles, La., and Annette January, of Gary, Ind., police said.

From The Associated Press

Englishman Willett wins big at Masters

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Jordan Spieth couldn't bear to watch, turning his head before another shot splashed into Rae's Creek. Moments later, Danny Willett looked up at the large leaderboard at the 15th green and couldn't believe what he saw.

This Masters turned into a shocker Sunday, right down to the green jacket ceremony.

Spieth was in Butler Cabin, just like everyone expected when he took a five-shot lead to the back nine at Augusta National. Only he was there to present it to Willett, who seized on Spieth's collapse with a magnificent round that made him a Masters champion.

"You dream about these kind of days and things like that, but for them to happen ... it's still mind-boggling," Willett said.

It was a nightmare for Spieth, especially the par-3 12th hole. Clinging to a one-shot lead, he put two shots into the water and made a quadruple-bogey 7, falling three shots behind and never catching up. Instead of making history with another wire-to-wire victory, he joined a sad list of players who threw the Masters away.

"Big picture? This one will hurt," Spieth said.

It was a comeback that ranks among the most unlikely in the 80 years of the Masters on so many levels.

Willett wasn't even sure he would play

this year because his wife was due — on Sunday, no less — with their first child. She gave birth to Zachariah James on March 30, sending him on his amazing journey to his first major.

"We talk about fate, talk about everything else that goes with it," Willett said. "It's just a crazy, crazy week."

He became the first player from England in a green jacket since Nick Faldo in 1996, and the parallels are bizarre. Faldo shot a bogey-free 67 and overcame a six-shot deficit when Greg Norman collapsed around Amen Corner. Willett also closed with a 5-under 67, with no bogeys on his card, to match the best score of the weekend.

The most compelling images came from the guy who suffered.

Coming off two straight bogeys to start the back nine, Spieth still had the lead when he went at the flag with his 9-iron on the par-3 12th and saw it bounce off the slope into the water. From the drop zone, he hit a wedge so fat that he turned his head and removed his cap, not wanting to look. He got up-and-down from the back bunker, and suddenly faced a three-shot deficit.

"I actually heard everyone grunting and moaning or whatever they do to the scoreboard when the scores go up," Willett said. "He obviously had a terrible run, which basically put it right back in anyone's hands. And fortunately enough, I was able to seize the opportunities."

He finished at 5-under 283 for a three-shot victory over Spieth and Lee Westwood (69).

Spieth was trying to become only the fourth back-to-back winner of the Masters, and the first player in 156 years of championship golf to go wire-to-wire in successive years in a major. And it looked inevitable when he ran off four straight birdies to end the front nine and build a five-shot lead.

This didn't look like one of those Masters that would start on the back nine Sunday.

But it did — quickly.

Spieth made bogey from the bunker on No. 10. A tee shot into the trees on the 11th, missing an 8-foot par putt. He still had a two-shot lead and only needed to get past the dangerous par-3 12th to settle himself, especially with two par 5s in front of him. But he couldn't. Not even close.

"It was a lack of discipline to hit it over the bunker coming off two bogeys, instead of recognizing I was still leading the Masters," Spieth said.

The turnaround left him dazed.

Spieth was five shots ahead on the 10th tee and three shots behind when he walked to the 13th tee.

"It was a really tough 30 minutes for me that hopefully I never experience again," Spieth said.

Willett poured it on with a shot into the 14th to about 4 feet, and a tee shot

on the par-3 16th to 7 feet for a birdie that stretched his lead. Spieth still had a chance when he birdied both par 5s to get within two shots, and then hit his tee shot to 8 feet behind the hole on the 16th. But he missed the birdie putt, and when he hit into a bunker and failed to save par on the 17th, it was over.

Spieth had led after seven straight rounds at the Masters, a streak that ended in a most cruel fashion. He shot 41 on the back nine for a 73, and was runner-up for the second time in three years.

Westwood, playing with Willett, made eagle on the 15th hole to get within one shot of the lead, and then three-putted the 16th hole to fall away.

Dustin Johnson also had an outside chance, even after four putts for a double bogey on the fifth hole. He missed eagle putts from 15 feet and 20 feet on the par 5s on the back nine, and then took double bogey on the 17th. Johnson closed with a 71 and tied for fourth with Paul Casey (67) and J.B. Holmes (68).

Smylie Kaufman, one shot out of the lead in his Masters debut, closed with an 81.

Willett moves to No. 9 in the world. He returns home to England with a gift like no other for his infant son.

"People were saying, 'Try to bring the jacket home for little man.' I think it's a little bit big," Willett said. "But I'm sure in a few years' time he'll grow into it."

Spieth faces task of shaking off collapse

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Where does Jordan Spieth go from here?

He could have been sailing along on the second act to one of the greatest years in golf history. Instead, the young Texan left Augusta shaking his head, and trying to figure out how to shake off one of the most epic collapses in the history of the game.

It won't be easy.

"Big picture, this one will hurt," Spieth said, still sounding in a bit of shock outside the Augusta National clubhouse Sunday evening after it all slipped away. "It will take a while."

Not only will Spieth have to erase the memory of his splashdown on No. 12 — a quadruple-bogey 7 that included two water balls and turned a one-time five-shot lead into a three-shot deficit to the eventual champion, Danny Willett.

Spieth will also have to clear all the bad thoughts out of his head. Over the weekend, he played 31 holes of good-to-great golf and put himself in position for a second green jacket at the tender age of 22. Those other five holes were 17 and 18 on Saturday, then 10, 11 and 12 on Sunday. He went a cumulative 9 over on those and had bad swing thoughts that he simply couldn't overcome.

"The wheels kind of came off the last ... holes on Saturday," said Spieth, who brought his coach, Cameron McCormick, back into Augusta for a quick tuneup before tee time in the final round.

It helped. For a while.

My confidence going into the first hole was fantastic," said Spieth, who made four straight birdies to hit the turn at 7 under, in the lead by five strokes. "But listen, I had my 'B-minus' game tee to green. Ultimately, you have to have your 'A' game every single part, and I just didn't have those iron swings, as it showed on the back nine."

All of which set up an awkward award presentation in Butler Cabin, which was then replicated on the practice green in front of the clubhouse.

First, Spieth had to present the green jacket to Willett in front of the television cameras.

Then, he had to do it again for the patrons.

Willett earned the honor by shooting a bogey-free round of 67 that left him three ahead of Spieth and Lee Westwood. Willett finished at 5-under 283.

Still looking a bit shocked, Spieth managed to muddle through.

"I can't imagine that was fun for anyone to experience," he said, "other than maybe Danny's team and those who are fans of him."

He fully expected to be taking home his own green jacket for another year, as is the custom for the Masters champion.

"I can't think of anybody else who may have had a tougher ceremony to experience," said Spieth, who now has to leave his jacket at the club.

Westwood, still 0-for-the-majors, chipped in for an eagle on 15 to get within one shot of the lead, only to miss a 4-

footer to save par at the 16th — right after Willett had drained a longer birdie putt.

The two-shot swing finished off Westwood, who at least showed he's still got game at age 42 after enduring a winless 2015, when his focus was clearly distracted by a divorce and a move back to his native England to be closer to his kids.

"Obviously, I must be doing something right," Westwood said.

Dustin Johnson, another extremely talented player who has dealt with personal issues, also got within a shot of the lead but couldn't pull out his first major title.

For Johnson, it was a familiar story — plenty of good shots, but some shaky putting and mistakes at the most inopportune times. He double-bogeyed the fifth and was all done after another double-bogey at the 17th. He finished in a tie for fourth with J.B. Holmes and Paul Casey, four shots back.

"I think my game's exactly where it needs to be," Johnson said, not looking at it as another one he let get away. "I feel like I've got control of my game. I'm looking forward to the year for sure."

For Spieth, the next major can't come soon enough.

But he has to wait two painful months for the U.S. Open at Oakmont.

Time to clear his head, and try to move past the one he gave away.

"I'm very confident in the way that we play the game of golf," Spieth said. "I think that when we're on, I believe we're the best in the world."

Reynolds, Stewart win AAU awards

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Navy quarterback Keenan Reynolds and UConn forward Breanna Stewart won the AAU James E Sullivan Award on Sunday as the most outstanding U.S. amateur athletes who also demonstrate premier leadership, character and sportsmanship.

Reynolds led Navy to a school-record 11 wins against two losses and the academy's best end-of-season ranking in more than 50 years at No. 18. He finished his career as the FBS leader in touchdowns (88) and rushing yards by a quarterback (4,559).

From The Associated Press

Flyers founder Snider dies of cancer at 83

PHILADELPHIA — Ed Snider, the Philadelphia Flyers founder whose "Broad Street Bullies" became the first expansion team to win the Stanley Cup, has died after a two-year battle with cancer. He was 83.

His family issued a statement that said Snider "was loved and admired for his big heart, generosity of spirit, and dedication to his family."

From The Associated Press



Ship's Store official new car program

Exclusive Navy at-sea offers:

www.navyauto.com or nasinfo@navyauto.com

Rockies' Story hits 7th homer

Associated Press

DENVER — Rookie Trevor Story kept reporters milling around his locker for about an hour Sunday while doing what a team spokesman described as his first big “monster workout” of the week.

So, he hit seven homers in his first six major league games without pumping any real iron.

Story isn't your typical buffed slugger with the six-pack abs and the bulging biceps.

The 6-foot-1, 180-pound shortstop generates his tremendous bat speed and powerful punch at the plate with a strong core and terrific technique honed through five minor league seasons.

Story capped his amazing first week in the majors by hitting his seventh home run Sunday and helping the Rockies beat the San Diego Padres 6-3.

“It has been fun so far,” a winded Story said.

Story's homer was one of five solo shots by the Rockies. Carlos Gonzalez went deep twice and Nolan Arenado and Ryan Raburn also connected for Colorado, which salvaged the finale of its three-game series.

Story, whose home run streak ended Friday night after he had become the first player in the majors to homer in the first four games of his career, sent a pitch from Brandon Maurer 425 feet into the left field bleachers leading off the bottom of the eighth.

The shortstop now has 12 RBIs through six games.

Cardinals 12, Braves 7: Brandon Moss and Matt Carpenter hit three-run homers and St. Louis kept host Atlanta as the only NL team without a win.

The Braves (0-5) also lost right-hander Dan Winkler, who suffered a fractured right elbow while throwing a pitch in the seventh. He left the mound in obvious pain after throwing a pitch behind Randal

Grichuk.

Orioles 5, Rays 3: Manny Machado went 4-for-4 with a two-run homer, helping Baltimore beat visiting Tampa Bay to remain the only undefeated team in the majors.

The 5-0 start matches the 1970 team for the best in Orioles history. After sweeping Minnesota in three games to open the season, Baltimore completed the homestand by taking two from Tampa Bay in a rain-abbreviated series.

Cubs 7, Diamondbacks 3: Jake Arrieta homered and pitched seven innings, helping Chicago finish off an impressive first week by beating host Arizona.

Arrieta (2-0) allowed three runs and eight hits, striking out six. The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner gave himself a boost with a two-out, two-run homer in the second inning off Shelby Miller (0-1).

Arrieta hit two home runs in 2015 and has three in his career.

Giants 9, Dodgers 6: Joe Panik hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the sixth inning and host San Francisco homered three times to overcome an early five-run deficit and beat Los Angeles.

Phillies 5, Mets 2: Odubel Herrera hit a two-run homer off Matt Harvey in the first appearance at Citi Field for the Mets ace since he failed to close out Game 5 of last year's World Series, and Philadelphia beat New York.

Royals 4, Twins 3 (10): Speedy pinch runner Terrance Gore streaked home on a wild pitch with two outs in the 10th inning, scoring with a headfirst slide to lift host Kansas City over winless Minnesota.

The World Series champion Royals rallied for two runs in the ninth to tie it, then dropped the Twins to 0-6. This is Minnesota's worst start since the Washington Senators moved to the Twin Cities in 1961.

Athletics 2, Mariners 1 (10): Coco Crisp hit a two-out homer in the 10th

inning to help Oakland overcome a dominant outing from Seattle ace Felix Hernandez and sweep the three-game series in Seattle.

Hernandez struck out 10 over seven scoreless innings, allowing three hits and two walks.

Blue Jays 3, Red Sox 0: Marco Estrada pitched seven shutout innings, Josh Donaldson hit a solo home run and host Toronto beat Boston, avoiding a three-game sweep.

Activated off the 15-day disabled list before the game after missing the start of the season with a sore lower back, Estrada (1-0) gave up five hits, walked two and struck out eight, helping Toronto win for the first time in five games.

Reds 2, Pirates 1: Jay Bruce hit an RBI triple in the ninth inning and host Cincinnati capped a strong season-opening homestand, beating Pittsburgh.

The Reds took two of three from the Pirates and are off to a 5-1 start.

Angels 3, Rangers 1: Jered Weaver pitched six effective innings in his injury-delayed season debut, and host Los Angeles beat Texas to earn a split of the four-game series.

Mike Trout got his first two RBIs of the season and Albert Pujols also singled home a run for Los Angeles, which bounced back after losing two in a row.

Brewers 3, Astros 2: Jimmy Nelson struck out nine in six-plus innings, and host Milwaukee took advantage of early wildness by Houston ace Dallas Keuchel in a win.

Nationals 4, Marlins 2: Jayson Werth had an RBI single for his first hit of the season and Joe Ross allowed a run in seven innings to help host Washington to a victory over Miami.

Bryce Harper hit the 99th and 100th doubles of his career and drove in the Nationals' first run as Washington split a two-game series after Saturday's postponement because of cold weather.

Warriors tie mark with 72nd victory

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The Golden State Warriors got a momentous victory in the one place they hadn't won in nearly two decades.

Now, they're one victory away from topping Michael Jordan and the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls.

Stephen Curry had 37 points and the Warriors beat the San Antonio Spurs 92-86 on Sunday night for their 72nd victory, tying Jordan's Bulls for the season record.

“We can get to 73,” forward Draymond Green said. “That's the significance for me of 72.”

The defending champions will finish the regular season at home against Memphis on Wednesday night.

“Obviously, we're in the moment, enjoying the ride,” Curry said. “The goal is to win a championship. That's the goal. But we put ourselves in a great position to end the season with a win and do something no team has done in the history. That's an amazing accomplishment.”

The Warriors got No. 72 by doing what nobody else had this season — beating the Spurs in San Antonio.

The Spurs had won 48 consecutive regular-season games at home, including an NBA-record 39 straight to this season. Golden State also ended a 33-game skid in San Antonio that dated to 1997.

Pacers 129, Nets 105: Myles Turner had 28 points and 10 rebounds and host Indianapolis beat Brooklyn to clinch a playoff berth.

Clippers 98, Mavericks 91: Jamal Crawford scored 22 points and host Los Angeles beat Dallas, snapping the Mavericks' six-game winning streak and preventing them from clinching a playoff berth.

Jazz 100, Nuggets 84: Trey Lyles scored a career-high 22 points in an unexpected start, Gordon Hayward helped fuel a 24-0 third-quarter run and visiting Utah beat Denver to maintain its one-game lead over Houston for the last Western Conference playoff spot.

Rockets 130, Lakers 110: James Harden scored 20 of his 40 points in the fourth quarter, and host Houston kept its playoff hopes alive with a victory over Los Angeles.

Kobe Bryant, who has just two games left before his retirement, had 35 points for Los Angeles.

Raptors 93, Knicks 89: DeMar DeRozan converted a tiebreaking three-point play with 1:05 left on a night he became Toronto's No. 2 career scorer, and the Raptors beat host New York to stay alive for the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Wizards 113, Hornets 98: Marcin Gortat had 21 points and 13 rebounds and host Washington beat Charlotte, damaging the Hornets' chances to secure home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

Heat 118, Magic 96: Luol Deng scored 20 points, Hassan Whiteside added 18 points and 15 rebounds in his first start since Jan. 20, and Miami beat visiting Orlando.

Bucks 109, 76ers 108 (OT): Khris Middleton scored 36 points and John Henson had 18 points and 10 rebounds to lead Milwaukee past host Philadelphia.

Rangers open vs. Penguins, again

Associated Press

The New York Islanders will open the playoffs at the Florida Panthers, and that means Henrik Lundqvist and the New York Rangers will face Sidney Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins for the third consecutive year.

The Eastern Conference playoffs were settled Sunday night with the Islanders' 5-2 loss to Philadelphia. The Islanders are seeded seventh and will take on the Atlantic Division champion Panthers starting Thursday night. The Rangers stayed in third in the Metropolitan Division, and will face the second-place Penguins on Wednesday night.

In the Western Conference, the Anaheim Ducks vaulted ahead of Los Angeles to clinch their fourth consecutive Pacific Division title with a 2-0 win at Washington. The Ducks will open the postseason on Friday night against seventh-seeded Nashville. The Kings dropped to second in the Pacific and will face third-place San Jose in a series starting Thursday night.

Alex Ovechkin and the Presidents' Trophy-winning Capitals will open against Philadelphia on Thursday. The Flyers closed the season with a 15-6-2 run in which they passed four teams in the standings and clinched their playoff berth with a 3-1 win over Pittsburgh on Saturday.

The East's other matchup has the Atlantic Division's second-place Tampa

Ducks blank Caps, clinch Pacific Division

WASHINGTON — Corey Perry and Nick Ritchie scored, Frederik Andersen stopped all 24 shots he faced, and the Anaheim Ducks clinched the Pacific Division on the final day of the regular season by beating the Washington Capitals 2-0 on Sunday night.

Andersen faced little resistance from a Capitals team that rested star forwards Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom and defensemen John Carlson and Brooks Orpik.

The Capitals also sat goaltender

Braden Holtby after he tied Martin Brodeur's single-season wins record.

Flyers 5, Islanders 2: Michael Raffl scored the tiebreaking goal early in the second period and added two assists to lead Philadelphia past host New York.

Michal Neuvirth stopped 15 shots in the teams' season finale that was a game rescheduled from Jan. 23 due to a blizzard.

The Associated Press

Bay Lightning facing third-place Detroit starting on Wednesday in a rematch of an opening-round series last year. The Lightning rallied from a 3-2 series deficit to beat the Red Wings en route to reaching the Stanley Cup Final, which they lost to Chicago.

In the West, the top-seeded Dallas Stars will open against the Minnesota Wild. It marks the first time the Stars, who relocated to Dallas from Minnesota in 1993, will face the Wild in the postseason.

The other West matchup features the Central Division's second-place St. Louis

Blues facing the defending Stanley Cup champion Chicago Blackhawks starting Wednesday. It marks the 12th meeting between the two franchises, with Chicago having won eight times.

The Panthers set a franchise record with 47 wins to earn their fifth playoff berth and second in the past 15 seasons. They have never met the Islanders in the postseason.

The Islanders are seeking to end a first-round playoff drought. New York hasn't won a playoff series since a second-round matchup against Pittsburgh in 1993.