

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

US confirms civilian deaths in Syria, Iraq

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. airstrikes aimed at Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq killed 20 civilians between September and February, including eight in a single attack on a mortar position used by militants, the U.S. military said Friday.

The 20 deaths nearly doubled the total number of acknowledged civilian deaths since the U.S.-led air campaign began in 2014. The U.S. has conducted nearly 12,000 airstrikes since bombing began in Iraq in August 2014 and in Syria a month later. The air campaign has been a central element of the U.S. strategy for disrupting and eventually defeating the Islamic State group.

In announcing the results of several in-

vestigations stemming from allegations of civilian casualties, U.S. Central Command said it concluded “the preponderance of evidence” indicates 20 civilians were killed and 11 others were injured in nine attacks between Sept. 10, 2015, and Feb. 2, 2016. All were judged to have been the unintended result of attacks on legitimate targets.

Six of the strikes were in Iraq, and three were in Syria. Armed drones were involved in some cases, manned aircraft in others.

A spokesman for the command, Col. Patrick Ryder, told reporters the U.S. regrets the casualties and contends that the campaign is the “the most precise air campaign in the history of warfare.” He said the military takes great care to avoid civilian casualties.

“There is no such thing as an intentional

civilian casualty,” Ryder said. “We are attempting to avoid civilian casualties, but in these cases, unfortunately, we assess that it was likely that civilians had died.” He added, “In this type of armed conflict, particularly with an enemy who hides among the civilian population, there are going to be, unfortunately, civilian casualties at times.”

Since the start of U.S. airstrikes in 2014, the U.S. has acknowledged a total of 41 civilian deaths in Iraq and Syria, including those announced Friday.

The most deadly of the nine investigated airstrikes, in terms of civilian casualties, was an Oct. 5, 2015, attack on an Islamic State mortar position in Atshanah, Iraq. Central Command said eight civilians were killed; it did not elaborate on the circumstances.

Hacking risks discovered in Army's \$12B mobile network

Bloomberg News

A \$12 billion mobile Internet network that the U.S. Army is using in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa has significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities that were found in combat testing.

After a review ordered by the Pentagon's chief weapons buyer, the Army and contractor General Dynamics Corp. are working to improve the systems already in the field and to embed updates into networks that will be deployed through 2028, according to the service.

The assessment conducted by Johns Hopkins University and the Army Research Laboratory “recommended both improvements to user training techniques and procedures and hardware and software enhancements to harden against the cyberthreat,” Army spokesman Paul Mehney said in an email. Citing security concerns, he said he couldn't comment on “specific improvements to op-

erational units.”

The WIN-T Increment 2 network made by General Dynamics is designed for secure, on-the-move voice, data and image transmissions from brigade commanders down to company-level vehicles tearing through terrain. It's already deployed to 11 of the Army's 32 combat brigades. Frank Kendall, the Defense Department's acquisitions chief, approved full production in June.

Kendall directed the independent assessment of the Army's mobile network last year because “cybersecurity vulnerabilities reduced the program's operational capability and could incur growth cost and schedule delays if significant changes are necessary,” the U.S. Government Accountability Office said last month in its annual review of major weapons programs.

The GAO didn't disclose how the system could be broken into or attacked nor how its use has been limited over the risks.

B-52 drops its first bombs on Islamic State group

The Washington Post

The B-52 Stratofortress bomber, designed and first fielded to deliver nuclear strikes on the Soviet Union during the Cold War, has dropped its first bombs on the Islamic State group, the Pentagon announced Wednesday.

A contingent of B-52H Stratofortresses that arrived at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar this month began bombing around the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Monday. It is the bomber's first deployment to the Middle East since the Persian Gulf War. The huge aircraft is an iconic symbol of American air power, and its presence over territory held by the Islamic State group will be a boost for Iraqi and Kurdish forces preparing to take back one of the militant group's biggest strongholds in Iraq.

Before the B-52's arrival in the region, B-1B Lancers served as the primary heavy

bombers tasked with carrying out airstrikes against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. The Lancers returned to the United States earlier this year to receive upgrades to their avionics, leaving a gap between their departure and the B-52's arrival.

The lumbering, eight-engine bombers can carry 70,000 pounds of conventional munitions, including GPS-guided bombs and air-launched cruise missiles.

The B-52s, along with other aircraft hitting the Islamic State group, will be able to drop their ordnance on targets faster, said Col. Steve Warren, a spokesman for the U.S.-led campaign against the militant group. Changes in the rules of engagement, which were first reported by USA Today, mean U.S. jets and unmanned aircraft will now have a shorter approval process for dropping munitions.

Afghan security fears could delay business development plan

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

HERAT, Afghanistan — The delayed drawdown of international troops and a revitalized insurgency are forcing officials to strike a difficult balance between security and economic growth as they plan to turn several NATO airfields in the country into commercial hubs.

NATO agreed last year to transfer eight military airfields worth some \$10 billion to the Afghans. The Defense Ministry already has taken possession of two airfields — Shindand in Herat province and Shorabak (formerly Bastion) in Helmand province.

Six of the bases are to be turned over to the Afghanistan Airfield Economic Development Commission, which plans to transform them into business zones to attract investors — a move that officials say has the potential to generate billions of dollars in revenue and to create hundreds of thousands of jobs in this economically depressed country.

The timing of that turnover is now in doubt because of the decision to delay the further drawdown of U.S. troops amid recent gains by insurgents.

But some see economic development and security for the country as going hand in hand.

“Providing a sustainable security environment not only requires active initiation of a military nature but also sustainable economic development,” said Daoud Sultanzoy, development commission chairman. “Job creation, employment and economic vitality will prevent those who want to capitalize on the weakest links of a society from doing so. It’s just as important as troops.”

Under the plan, the airfields to be used by the Afghan military also will be used to provide enhanced civilian services,

such as commercial and cargo flights and office space.

Initially, the airfields were to be handed over to the Afghan military and the development commission in the first quarter of this year, when only 5,500 American troops were expected to be stationed in the country. But Washington decided late last year to keep U.S. troop levels at about 10,000 until the beginning of next year, thus delaying the transition.

In light of the situation, national and local leaders say they had begun to explore the option of partial transfers at some of the airfields.

Mohammad Asif Rahimi, the provincial governor of Herat province, called for more clarity during a meeting earlier this month that marked the opening of the development commission’s local chapter.

“We must know what percentage of the airport (military forces) need. When we start to develop, how many meters do we need to accommodate Resolute Support? Until now we don’t know,” he said, speaking at Italian-run Camp Arena, which includes the Herat airfield.

NATO has pledged full support for the initiative.

Herat is likely to become the first economic zone to open. Since July, local officials have been preparing for the handover, and they said they had investors lined up four months ago.

Each airfield is said to offer unique investment opportunities. In Herat, for example, saffron and marble are to be the primary exports, and improved air links could generate additional revenue, leaders say.

New regional officers, or chapters, like the one in Herat are being established so authorities in the capital can better manage the nationwide project. Chapter officials will update Kabul regularly on their activity.

Prince autopsy starts; results to be held

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — An autopsy began Friday to determine what caused the death of the iconic musician Prince, though officials said it could take days or even weeks before results are publicly released.

Prince was found unresponsive Thursday morning in an elevator at his Paisley Park compound in suburban Minneapolis. The local sheriff said deputies responded to a medical call at 9:43 a.m. but that first-responders couldn’t revive the 57-year-old musician. He was pronounced dead at 10:07 a.m.

The Midwest Medical Examiner’s Office was handling the autopsy, but the agency doesn’t plan to release any preliminary information, agency spokes-

woman Martha Weaver said Friday. She said it could take several days or even weeks for tests to be completed and the office will wait to release findings until all the information is in.

Prince earlier this month had canceled concerts at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, which said at the time that the entertainer was suffering from the flu. He performed a makeup concert April 14 in that city, apologizing to the crowd for the earlier cancellation shortly after coming on stage.

While talking to the crowd between songs, he joked about having been “under the weather.” His voice seemed a bit weak at times when he spoke, but he sounded fine when singing during the 80-minute show.

Officials: Obama’s push to hire vets stirs confusion

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — One in three people hired into the federal government is now a veteran, but the Obama administration’s aggressive push to reward those who served is causing confusion and resentment among job applicants and hiring staff.

That’s what federal officials and advocates for veterans told lawmakers at a House hearing Wednesday on how well the White House’s seven-year effort to push former servicemembers to the head of the long federal hiring queue is working.

The veterans preference program is bringing record numbers of former servicemembers into federal agencies. But experts acknowledged that the hiring process is generating tension and misunderstanding around who is qualified to jump the line.

“The bulk of the problem is a lack of understanding of the

law,” Michael M. Michaud, assistant secretary for the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service at the Labor Department, told a panel of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

“It’s a very complex law,” Michaud said. “Some veterans think that because of veterans preference they will automatically be hired in the federal service. But you could have several very well-qualified candidates and they’re all vets and one gets hired and the others don’t.”

The growing presence in government of men and women with military backgrounds is the biggest federal effort to reward military service since the draft ended in the 1970s. President Barack Obama pushed agencies to increase hiring of veterans starting in 2009, in response to the bleak job prospects many soldiers faced after coming home from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Arrieta tosses second career no-hitter for MLB-best Cubs

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — When he went to the Chicago Cubs as part of a trade that included bonus slots for international players, Jake Arrieta was convinced he'd someday do great things.

Three years later, he's celebrating no-hitter No. 2. And his Cubs are on the rise, too, trading their loser label for the top spot in the majors.

Arrieta allowed only six balls hit out of the infield on Thursday night while no-hitting the Cincinnati Reds 16-0, a gem as clean and as dominating as it gets. It was the first no-hitter of the season in Major League Baseball and his second in 11 regular season starts — he also stymied the Dodgers 2-0 on Aug. 30 as the highlight of his Cy Young season.

"Every time he goes out there, he's got no-hit stuff," Reds outfielder Jay Bruce said. "He's arguably the best pitcher in the game today."

And his Cubs have the best record in the majors at 12-4, which is their best start since 1970. They're building on their wild-card playoff appearance last season with an ace who is doing things that no one except him envisioned when Chicago got him in a trade with Baltimore midway through the 2013 season.

The Cubs sent pitcher Scott Feldman and catcher Steve Clevenger to the Orioles for pitcher Pedro Strop, two international signing bonus slots, and Arrieta, who had a 5.46 career ERA.

"I envisioned pitching like this, even when I had a (5.46 ERA) in Baltimore," Arrieta said. "I expected to get to this

point at some point, regardless of how long it took or what I had to go through to get there."

"I had visualizations of throwing no-hitters or throwing shutouts. So now it's starting to happen for me. I don't take any of it for granted."

He's on one of the best stretches of pitching in Cubs history.

Arrieta has won each of his first four starts, the first Cub to do that since Greg Maddux in 2006. And it goes much farther back.

He won the NL Cy Young by going 22-6 last season — two more wins than he had during his four seasons with Baltimore. On Thursday night, he added to his club record with a 24th straight quality start — he's 19-1 with a 0.86 ERA since June 21.

In his last 16 regular season starts, he's 15-0 with a 0.53 ERA, allowing only seven earned runs in 119 1/3 innings. He hasn't allowed a run in his last 18 2/3 innings.

Arrieta is so good that his latest no-hitter didn't meet his usual standard for the first six innings. He walked three — one more than he had in his three previous starts combined — and threw 85 pitches. Manager Joe Maddon had decided to leave him out there as long as he was working on a no-hitter.

"You never want to interfere with anybody's greatness," Maddon said.

He didn't have to second-guess himself. Sensing that another no-hitter was possible, Arrieta bore down in the last three innings. He finished with six strikeouts and four walks. He finished it with Eugenio Suarez's routine fly to right field on his 119th pitch as thousands of Cubs fans

in the crowd of 16,497 cheered at Great American Ball Park.

"What can I say?" manager Joe Maddon said. "Man, it was spectacular."

The Reds hadn't been held hitless in a regular-season game since 1971, when Rick Wise did it for Philadelphia at Riverfront Stadium. In the 2010 NL playoffs, Roy Halladay of the Phillies pitched a no-hitter against Cincinnati.

Arrieta joins several others who have thrown a pair of no-hitters in the last decade. The 30-year-old righty is on the list with Max Scherzer, Justin Verlander, Tim Lincecum and the Reds' Homer Bailey, who threw the only other no-hitter at Great American Ball Park on July 2, 2013, against the Giants.

The only other Cubs pitcher to throw a pair of no-hitters since 1900 was Ken Holtzman, who did it in 1969 and 1971.

Overlooked was the Cubs' big night at the plate, which included a pair of singles and a walk by Arrieta. Kris Bryant hit a two-run homer and his third career grand slam, leading Chicago's five-homer barrage. Anthony Rizzo added a three-run homer, and Ben Zobrist and catcher David Ross had solo shots.

The 39-year-old catcher has announced it will be his final season. He'd never been behind the plate for a no-hitter. He wound up hugging Arrieta halfway between the plate and the mound after the final out. Afterward, he posed for photos with the pitcher.

"I feel like I didn't do a whole lot," Ross said. "That animal was in control the whole time. He locked it in when he needed to."

Sources: Wizards set to hire ex-OKC coach Brooks

WASHINGTON — Scott Brooks is on his way to Washington, the latest move made by the Wizards that could have the added benefit of enticing Kevin Durant to return home this summer.

The Wizards reached agreement with Brooks to become the team's new coach on Thursday, said two people familiar with the deal. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no announcement had been made. The sides agreed on a five-year deal, one of the people told the AP.

Brooks had a 338-207 record in seven years with the Oklahoma City Thunder. He helped develop Durant and Russell Westbrook into perennial All-Stars and led the Thunder to the NBA Finals in 2012.

He replaces Randy Wittman, whose contract option was not picked up after Washington went 41-41 and finished 10th in the Eastern Conference. The Wizards succumbed to injury and inconsistency in Wittman's final season and were among the league's most disappointing teams after reaching the second round of the playoffs the past two seasons.

In other NBA news:

■ Portland guard CJ McCollum won the NBA's Most Improved Player award Friday, while Stephen Curry finished fourth after winning the MVP award last season.

McCollum more than tripled his scoring average from 2014-15 and helped the Trail Blazers finish fifth in the West after losing four starters last summer. He finished with 20.8 points per game in his third season, a 14-point increase.

Driver council agrees to pay Stewart's fine

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Tony Stewart's peers will pay the \$35,000 fine NASCAR levied against the three-time champion for criticizing the series about a potential safety hazard during races.

The nine-member driver council said in a statement released by Denny Hamlin it agreed to equally pay the fine. The statement was first obtained late Thursday night by NBC Sports. In it, the group said it disagreed with the fine levied against Stewart earlier in the day for warning NASCAR that not policing lug nuts on pit road was a safety hazard.

Some teams are not applying all five lug nuts during tire changes for a faster pit stop. It's led to a rash of loose wheels the last two races.

NBA's Silver: NC must change LGBT law

NEW YORK — Commissioner Adam Silver believes the NBA has been "crystal clear" that the 2017 All-Star Game only stays in Charlotte if a North Carolina law goes.

Political and business leaders he's spoken with in the state believe it will, so he's holding off for now on setting any deadlines for when the NBA might act.

Silver said last week that the law that limits anti-discrimination protections for lesbian, gay and transgender people was "problematic" for the league, but he believed dialogue was more useful than ultimatums at this point, so has continued discussions with North Carolina officials.

From The Associated Press

Cano's 10th-inning HR lifts Mariners

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Robinson Cano's fortunes against Cody Allen changed with one swing.

Cano's three-run homer in the 10th inning lifted the Seattle Mariners over the Cleveland Indians 10-7 on Thursday.

Cano had been hitless in seven previous at-bats against Allen (0-1).

"He is one of the best closers in the league," Cano said. "I wasn't looking for a fastball or anything. This was the one time he left a pitch over the plate for me. I hit it pretty good, so I was hoping it would go out."

Both players were aware of Allen's dominance.

"I knew I had some success against him," Allen said. "He's still very dangerous. I made a bad pitch to a good hitter and he didn't miss it."

Cano had an early single and then an RBI double in the sixth before connecting with two outs for his sixth home run this season.

"Robbie is a special player, we all know

that," Seattle manager Scott Servais said. "Big-time players come through at big times, like he did today."

Rangers 7, Astros 4: Ian Desmond's first homer of the season was good for three runs and A.J. Griffin outpitched 2015 American League Cy Young winner Dallas Keuchel as host Texas completed a three-game sweep.

Athletics 7, Yankees 3: Khris Davis and Coco Crisp homered on consecutive pitches, backing Rich Hill's six strong innings, and visiting Oakland completed a three-game sweep.

Royals 4, Tigers 0: Edinson Volquez tossed seven sharp innings, Mike Moustakas went deep and host Kansas City pounded Mike Pelfrey and Detroit.

Diamondbacks 6, Giants 2: Yasmani Tomas hit a go-ahead home run in the fourth, Paul Goldschmidt drove in two runs, and visiting Arizona beat San Francisco for a four-game sweep.

Pirates 11, Padres 1: Gerrit Cole pitched six impressive innings for his first win this season and Pittsburgh beat host San Diego to avoid a three-game sweep.

Orioles 3, Blue Jays 2: Manny Machado doubled in the tiebreaking run in the eighth inning, and host Baltimore rallied.

Angels 3, White Sox 2: Mike Trout hit a two-run homer and reached base four times, helping back Jered Weaver as Los Angeles beat Chicago to close a 10-game road trip.

Dodgers 2, Braves 1 (10): Yasmani Grandal doubled in the go-ahead run in the 10th inning and visiting Los Angeles overcame a not-quite-overpowering performance by Clayton Kershaw.

Twins 8, Brewers 1: Ricky Nolasco struck out seven and allowed five hits over six-plus innings, and Minnesota snapped a season-opening, seven-game road losing streak.

Rays 12, Red Sox 8: Evan Longoria and Curt Casali homered off David Price, and visiting Tampa Bay chased its ex- teammate in the fourth inning.

Marlins 5, Nationals 1: Ichiro Suzuki had two hits, scored twice and made two sliding catches in right field for host Miami, which used a makeshift lineup to beat Max Scherzer and Washington.



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Durant, Thunder down Dallas

Associated Press

DALLAS — Kevin Durant rattled the rim early with a reverse dunk and pulled up from well behind the three-point line for another of his first-half baskets.

The Oklahoma City star was intent on putting aside the worst shooting game of his playoff career.

Durant scored 20 of his 34 points in the first half, Russell Westbrook had 20 of his 26 in the second and the Thunder retook control of their first-round series with a 131-102 victory over the Dallas Mavericks in Game 3 on Thursday night.

The 2014 MVP had seven field goals mid-way through the second quarter on nine shots after he needed 33 to get there in a Game 2 loss that followed a 38-point win in the opener. The Thunder took a 2-1 series lead with Game 4 on Saturday night in Dallas.

"When I play well, I don't throw a party for myself afterward," Durant said after his 34th career 30-point postseason game. "If I play terrible, I'm not going to go out and change anything up. I'm going to go out there and do the same thing I've been doing."

Dirk Nowitzki played despite a right knee bruise and scored 16 points but the Mavericks let Oklahoma City dictate the pace and couldn't keep up, never leading while missing 10 of their first 12 shots from three-point range.

"The way we won Game 2 was it was a slower-paced game for us, kind of grind it out," Nowitzki said of the 85-84 win. "It's going to be tough for us win a game if they score 131 points. I don't think we can score 131 right now with the team we roll out there, the injuries."

Westbrook answered the best Dallas run of the second half with alternating three-pointers and assists on four straight possessions to help push a 10-point lead back to 18. He finished with 15 assists, one off his playoff career high.

The NBA leader in triple-doubles during the regular season had an oddity with no rebounds.

"I don't know the last time I did that," Westbrook said with a smile. "But maybe next time, I'll get one."

Raptors 101, Pacers 85: DeMar DeRozan rebounded from his postseason shooting slump, scoring 21 points, and Kyle Lowry also added 21 to help visiting Toronto roll past Indiana.

The Raptors lead the best-of-seven first-round series 2-1 and have reclaimed the home-court advantage they squandered by losing the series opener last weekend.

Indiana was led by Paul George, who had 25 points, 10 rebounds and six assists. Rookie Myles Turner scored 11 of 17 points in the second half.

But after the opening minutes, the game was never close.

DeRozan's early scoring flurry spurred a

13-4 first-quarter run, which gave Toronto a 21-13 lead. The Raptors never trailed again.

And when DeRozan went to the bench at the start of the second quarter, the onslaught continued. Toronto opened the quarter on an 18-7 spurt, extending the lead to 42-24 and Indiana never got closer than 12 points again.

Rockets 97, Warriors 96: James Harden scored 35 points, including the game-winner with 2.7 seconds left, and host Houston took advantage of Stephen Curry's absence to beat Golden State in Game 3 of their first-round playoff series.

The victory cuts Houston's deficit to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series. Game 4 is Sunday in Houston.

Shaun Livingston stole a pass from Trevor Ariza and Ian Clark's layup put Golden State up by one with 10.6 seconds left. Harden then took it to the other end and stepped back for the jump shot to win it.

Golden State had a chance to win it after that, but Draymond Green dribbled the inbounds pass off his foot and out of bounds.

Marreese Speights came off the bench to lead the Warriors with 22 points and Klay Thompson had 17.

Dwight Howard added 13 points, 13 rebounds and had two blocks for Houston.

Bike lane collapses in Brazil

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — At the flame-lighting in the ruins of Ancient Olympia, Brazil's sport minister, Ricardo Leyser, tried to assure the world about the troubled Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Hours later on Thursday back in Rio, a 150-foot section of a bike path built high above the sea — opened just three months ago as a legacy project for the games — crashed into the water below with at least two dead.

It's another black mark for Rio. And it comes on a day rich with Olympic ritual, and also in a week when Olympic sports federations said they were concerned about the work remaining with the games opening in 3½ months.

"It will be a big party and people will forget the other problems and just focus on the games," Leyser said.

Carlos Nuzman, who heads the Rio organizing committee, said in Greece the Olympics "can and will unite our dear Brazil."

This will not be easy.

The bike path will not host Olympic events. But it was built along a winding road that's part of the route for road cycling and links Ipanema and Copacabana beaches to the western suburb of Barra da Tijuca, site of the Olympic Park.

At the opening earlier this year, Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes called it "the most beautiful bike path in the world." A city hall document described it as an Olympic legacy project.

The collapse raises questions about building standards, adding to a long list of other worries. It also resembles an overpass that collapsed and killed two in Belo Horizonte, located 280 miles northwest of Rio de Janeiro, during the 2014 World Cup. It was also part of readying the city for the World Cup.

"Our thoughts and sympathies are with the people and their families and friends affected by the tragic accident," the Rio organizing committee said in a statement.

Organizers say 98 percent of the construction for the games is completed.

However, this week a top gymnastics official said power outages disrupted a recent test event. Francesco Ricci Bitti, the head of a body representing Olympic sports federations, said Rio organizers "miss some very important details in each field of play."

Several other venues are behind schedule, including the velodrome for indoor cycling.

The biggest laggard is the extension of the subway line, the largest project to ready the city for South America's first games.

Transportation officials said last week they had completed excavation work linking two tunnels. Sidney Levy, the CEO of the organizing committee, said the subway would have a "soft opening" a month before the games open.

Some of the largest problems are away from venues.

Brazil is in its deepest recession in decades, unemployment is 10 percent and President Dilma Rousseff is fighting impeachment and is likely to be removed from office when the games open, a major embarrassment for the International Olympic Committee.

Brazil is also at the epicenter of the Zika virus, organizers have cut \$500 million in spending — eliminating 20,000 volunteers — and only 60 percent of tickets have been sold.

Blackhawks stave off elimination in 2OT

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The Chicago Blackhawks finally got a goal from one of their top stars. Patrick Kane's first of the playoffs saved the defending Stanley Cup champions' season.

Kane scored on a backhand early in the second overtime and the Blackhawks avoided first-round elimination with a 4-3 victory over the St. Louis Blues early Friday.

"We've played in a lot of overtimes with this team and had some long stretches here in playoff runs, so when you get those opportunities sometimes you come up big," Kane said. "Sometimes you get lucky, too."

Kane's fifth career overtime playoff goal, tied for third on the career list, was his first of the series and fellow stand-out Jonathan Toews still has none. Both assisted on Artemi Panarin's goal in the final second of the second period for a 3-1 lead.

"I don't think I was very good in that first overtime or very good at all tonight," Kane said. "It's one of those things I tried to tell myself just to get confidence going into that fifth period and try to make some plays."

Kane, who led the NHL in scoring with 106 points, circled the net to corral his own shot that slowly slid wide, and poked it past Brian Elliott at 3:07 to send a standing-room crowd of 19,956 home unhappy.

"I tried to make a move around a guy who was maybe trying to block my shot," Kane said. "Made a move, saw the puck and tried to get one on net there. Fortunately enough, it kind of squeaked out to the other side."

Elliott's stick got tangled up with defenseman Jay Bouwmeester's skate on the play, so he was late crossing the crease.

"The plane's at 3. Let's get playing," St. Louis coach Ken Hitchcock said.

David Backes, who got the winning goal in the Blues' 1-0 overtime victory in Game 1, tied it on a deflection that slipped past

Corey Crawford with 5:10 to play. Rookie Robby Fabbri and Jaden Schwartz also scored for St. Louis.

"I thought we played one of our better games," said defenseman Alex Pietrangelo, who assisted on all three goals. "It's going to be a tough place to win. We won the last two there, though."

Marian Hossa and Artem Anisimov also scored for Chicago, which takes the series back home for Game 6 Saturday night.

"Tough to give up another lead like that, but we didn't crack," Crawford said. "We stuck with our game and we're excited to go back home now."

Chicago won despite being outshot 46-35, and helped road teams improve to 19-15 in these playoffs.

"I don't know if that's the way we drew it up," said defenseman Duncan Keith, who led all skaters with 42 minutes of ice time. "It would have been nice to just hang on to that lead but Kaner came through."

The Blackhawks have won three of the last six Cups, but also are trying to avoid first-round elimination for the third time in six seasons.

Kane and Toews were paired on the top line for Game 5 and both assisted on Panarin's seemingly back-breaking goal with 0.4 seconds left in the second period for a two-goal cushion.

The Blues are trying to end a string of three consecutive first-round playoff exits. In 2014 they had a 2-0 lead on Chicago and then lost four straight.

"I don't think our mind-set changes at all," Fabbri said. "A tough one to end here, but we're going to let this one go."

Chicago stayed alive without Andrew Shaw, suspended for one game for making a homophobic slur at the end of Game 4.

Lightning 1, Red Wings 0: Ben Bishop stopped 34 shots, Alex Killorn scored with less than two minutes remaining and host Tampa Bay advanced to the second round of the playoffs with a shutout of Detroit.

Killorn's second winning goal of the series was set up by Ryan Callahan, who

retrieved goalie Petr Mrazek's bad pass behind the Detroit net and centered the puck in the crease for Killorn's backhand-er at 18:17 of the third period.

Tampa Bay eliminated the Red Wings in the first round for the second straight year. Detroit pushed the defending Eastern Conference champions to seven games a year ago, but could only beat them once in five attempts this time, with Killorn, Tyler Johnson and Nikita Kucherov picking up the offensive slack for Tampa Bay with star Steven Stamkos injured.

Penguins 5, Rangers 0: Evgeni Malkin scored two goals and set up two others and visiting Pittsburgh pushed New York to the brink of playoff elimination.

Malkin, whose four points tied his single-game high in the postseason, assisted on two of the Penguins' three first-period goals in helping Pittsburgh dominate the Rangers for the second consecutive game and take a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven, first-round series. Sidney Crosby, who added two assists, and the red-hot Penguins can wrap up things in Game 5 in Pittsburgh on Saturday.

Rookie goaltender Matt Murray, who returned to the lineup for Game 3, made 31 saves in posting his first playoff shut-out. Eric Fehr, Patric Hornqvist and Conor Sheary also scored as the Penguins tallied four times on 18 shots against Henrik Lundqvist, who was lifted early in the second period.

Ducks 4, Predators 1: Nate Thompson and Jamie McGinn scored nearly two minutes apart late in the second period, and visiting Anaheim beat Nashville to even the first-round series at 2-2.

Ryan Getzlaf and Andrew Coglian also scored as the road team stayed perfect in this best-of-seven series. Goalie Frederik Andersen picked up his second straight win by making 30 saves and setting a career shutout streak of 91 minutes, 26 seconds.

Mike Fisher scored his first goal of the series for Nashville.

Game 5 is Saturday in Anaheim.