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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Perks for troops in NDAA draft

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The annual defense budget began to take shape Friday with proposals for a bigger Army, troop pay raises and more time at military hospitals.

The perks were part of an early draft of the National Defense Authorization Act unveiled by the House before the massive policy bill is debated next week. The Senate is expected to hammer out its version of the bill in May.

House Republicans are pushing to bolster the military and put more money into defense despite tight budget caps on federal spending. The reversal of a planned Army troop draw-down and the highest troop pay raise in years is central to the efforts in the \$610 billion legislation, which is being crafted by the House Armed Services Committee.

Reform is also a key theme in the draft bill, according to a briefing by House staff Friday. The military health care system would be required to provide more after-hours access for patients, and commissary stores would be required to try

out a variable pricing system, meaning stores in more expensive locales could charge more for groceries.

The biggest hurdle Republicans face is paying for the bill. The dollar amounts in the defense budget are capped, according to an agreement struck by Congress last fall. But Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said this week that he will find the extra \$18 billion needed by only funding the war against the Islamic State group for seven months, instead of a full year.

However, he acknowledged the move will likely draw a veto threat from President Barack Obama. The NDAA was vetoed last year due to a similar budgeting tactic by Republicans.

Here is a preview of some of what is in the draft NDAA before it is debated — and potentially amended — Wednesday by the Armed Services Committee:

■ **A bigger Army** — The bill blocks the service from culling 15,000 soldiers and adds an additional 5,000. It does not stop but throws up a significant roadblock to the Army's plans to reduce its active-duty force

from 492,000 to 450,000 over three years.

■ **Pay raise** — Troops would get a 2.1 percent increase to base pay, an increase to the 1.3 percent ordered last year by Obama. That would be the highest raise in years and equal an additional \$11 per month for an E4 servicemember.

■ **After-hours health care** — Military hospitals and clinics would be required to stay open beyond normal business hours. The Pentagon would be left to choose precise hours for specific facilities, but treatment facilities would no longer be allowed to close for the day at 4:30 p.m. New urgent care centers would be required to remain open until 11 p.m.

■ **Tricare fee hike in 2018** — If you join the military after Jan. 1, 2018, you and your family would be required to pay new annual Tricare enrollment fees. For basic health insurance, an individual servicemember would pay \$180 and a family would pay \$360. Those fees would double for Tricare coverage that allows beneficiaries to go outside of their network for care.

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N. Korea fires ballistic missile from sub: South

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea apparently launched a ballistic missile from a submarine Saturday, the South Korean military was quoted as saying.

The report by the South Korean news agency Yonhap came amid fears that the North is planning to stage a fifth nuclear test in a show of power ahead of a rare congress of the ruling party next month.

It also came just more than a week after the North tried but failed to launch what was reported to be a midrange ballistic missile that possibly could reach U.S. military installations in Japan and Guam.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea fired what it believes was a submarine-launched ballistic missile in the East Sea at about 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, according to Yonhap. The military did not immediately say whether the launch was a success but stressed it was keeping close tabs on the North and "maintaining its readiness posture."

South Korea said the missile flew for only about 20 miles. Yonhap quoted a separate South Korean government source as saying the missile's engine ignited after it was launched from a 2,000-ton Sinpo-class submarine, "but it only traveled a short distance."

Saturday's missile launch was sure to heighten tensions with the international community over the North's nuclear program. The U.S., South Korea and Japan recently vowed a strong response if Pyongyang continued with nuclear or other weapons tests in defiance of U.N. sanctions.

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Navy accuses Persian Gulf officer of misconduct

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A U.S. Navy officer relieved of commanding a Persian Gulf patrol ship failed to maintain equipment to the point of exposing "his crew to unnecessary risk," interfered with an inquiry into his actions and once slept drunk on a bench at a Dubai port, according to a naval investigation.

The accusations against Lt.

Cmdr. Jeremiah Daley saw the Navy on March 12 remove him from the USS Typhoon, a Manama, Bahrain-based vessel patrolling a region crucial to global oil supplies where American forces routinely have tense encounters with Iranian forces.

Daley, now assigned to Task Force 55, is on leave and was unavailable for comment Thursday, according to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, which is

based in Bahrain and oversees the task force. Later reached by The Associated Press, Daley said he was challenging the report and appealing his punishment, as a "good number of things are 100 percent not true."

He declined to elaborate because he said he was on leave for the birth of his second child, adding that he wanted the appeal process "to take its course."

USNS Choctaw County's capabilities unique

BY CHRIS CHURCH
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — It may not be the prettiest ship in the Navy's inventory, but don't underestimate the unique capabilities of the USNS Choctaw County.

The Choctaw County has been turning heads since it arrived in the 5th Fleet area of operations in February. This shallow-draft, aluminum catamaran with a 22-person civilian crew is fast — traveling an average of 35 knots — and can carry about 600 short tons of military cargo, according to the U.S. Navy's website. It also has a flight deck

for helicopter operations, a well deck to store equipment, and an offload ramp allowing vehicles to drive off the ship quickly.

"It primarily functions as a delivery vehicle for cargo, personnel and modular/tailored forces in response to a wide range of mission demands," 5th Fleet spokesman Lt. Ian McConnaughey said.

Most recently, it's been taking part in the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise, which began in early April across the Middle East region.

One of the exercise's task groups took advantage of the Choctaw County's cargo-delivery and speed capabili-

ties earlier this month to bring personnel and equipment from Bahrain to Kuwait to participate in operations around the country's coastline and in a port, said German navy Lt. Cmdr. Mario Fink, the on-scene commander for the operations around Kuwait. He said it also would be used as a command-and-control platform during the exercise.

The ship is a force multiplier, McConnaughey said. Its skills complement a variety of missions in the area, including countering illicit trafficking, theater security cooperation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and noncombatant evacuation operations.

What the Choctaw County is doing during the exercise only scratches the surface of what the Navy will get out of the ship in the future, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command commander Vice Adm. Kevin Donegan said earlier this month.

"It's not a front-end, combatant ship that you can drive into a combat zone because its not built that way. It's a supporting ship," he said. "But it can help us tremendously from moving equipment from A to B, and also provides a platform to do other things from it."

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Army blimp program faces funding cut

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Republican chairman of the House Armed Services Committee wants to slash nearly all spending for the Pentagon's troubled \$2.7 billion program to use radar-carrying blimps to search for enemy missiles approaching the East Coast.

Budget-related documents made public Friday show Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, wants to authorize only \$2.5 million next year, or 6 percent of the \$45.5 million sought by President Barack Obama to sustain the program, called

JLENS.

If the deep cuts are kept, the program would not have the money Pentagon officials say is necessary for the blimps to resume their mission over Washington and surrounding areas from a base at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

In March, Senate Republican and Democratic leaders refused a request by Defense Secretary Ash Carter to shift \$27.2 million to JLENS from another defense program.

Senate leaders also signaled they were unlikely to approve the president's request for \$45.5

million for JLENS in the next fiscal year.

Congressional support for the Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System has collapsed since a high-profile mishap Oct. 28.

One of the pilotless, 242-foot-long blimps broke loose from a ground mooring and soared north for several hours into Pennsylvania before it came down. The runaway blimp disrupted air traffic, clipped utility lines with its mile-long tether and forced authorities to scramble fighter jets to track it.

Whiteman drone pilots get prestigious title

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. — The Air Force will now recognize drone pilots who conduct remote military strikes from Whiteman Air Force Base as "attack squadrons," a designation with more prestige that could help with retention and recruitment.

The Air Force made the decision last week amid increased national attention to the unique form of stress these pilots face, The Springfield News-Leader reported.

Whitman is home to the 20th Reconnaissance Squadron, which includes technicians, administrators, and pilots who operate the MQ-1 Predator, an unmanned aerial vehicle used for gathering intelligence and conducting deadly strikes. Drone pilots aren't physically on the battlefields in Afghanistan or Iraq, but they conduct deadly strikes on militant fighters abroad and can often see the resulting bloodshed on live video. Under the policy change, the unit now will be called the 20th Attack Squadron.

A study by the Pentagon in 2013 concluded drone pilots have a similar rate of mental health problems to that of regular combat pilots.

From The Associated Press

Rebels target Damascus as peace talks fray

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

DAMASCUS, Syria — At least one civilian was killed and another injured Saturday when rebels fired several mortar rounds into a heavily Christian area of eastern Damascus, the government said.

The attack, the first to hit the Syrian capital since the cease-fire between government forces and the rebels went into effect

on Feb. 27, was another sign that the truce may be unraveling. It coincided with a walkout by the main Syrian opposition alliance, the Saudi-backed High Negotiations Committee, from peace talks in Geneva aimed at ending the five-year conflict.

In the past two months, fighting around Damascus has abated significantly, although forces loyal to President Bashar Assad have continued to target militants belonging to the Nusra

Front, an al-Qaida affiliate, and the Islamic State group. Both are considered terrorist groups and are not included in the cease-fire.

Since the cease-fire took effect, each side has repeatedly accused the other of breaching it. But in the past week there has been an uptick in violence around Aleppo, where the rebels have accused government forces and their Russian allies of bombing their positions.

Spread QBs forced to adjust

Associated Press

So, you have a quarterback who played in the spread and never took a snap at the line of scrimmage. And receivers who don't understand route trees.

Not to mention linebackers who rarely played in tight quarters. And blockers who have not gotten into a three-point stance since high school. Or junior high.

Now turn them loose in the NFL? Good luck.

The way the spread offense has taken over college football has made the NFL Draft even more of a crapshoot. In the past, pro scouts had seen college prospects perform in something similar to the NFL. Nowadays, other than rarities such as Stanford's offense or Alabama's defense, few schools are using formations or styles similar to what the players will face in the NFL.

"At the core, you want an athletic guy, a smart guy, a tough guy, and a guy that can pick up what you're teaching him, which is where the value of a personal workout is," says Buccaneers general manager Jason Licht. "You can learn a lot... an hour on the field, three hours in the classroom with a guy. Some guys just can't pick it up, some guys can. Some guys are playing without a playbook in college. Some guys don't know protections. It makes it a little more challenging, but it makes it a little more fun, too."

Fun for whom? Surely not quarterbacks who have worked mostly from the pistol or shotgun, such as Memphis' Paxton Lynch, expected to be one of the top passers picked. Or for offensive linemen who haven't done much traditional run blocking, and have to learn it against NFL defenders much stronger than they faced in college.

Vikings general manager Rick Spielman notes how difficult it is "to teach them how to get into a three-point stance, how to run block" because of the restrictions on practice time under the labor agreement.

Giants OL coach Mike Solari adds there is "a tremendous learning curve as far as technique and fundamentals for young offensive linemen coming into the NFL. There is always a sense of urgency to get them up to speed."

One way of doing so, even before they get to the combine or the draft — which starts Thursday — is at all-star games. The Senior Bowl in Mobile, Ala., features two NFL coaching staffs working with invited players and using pro-style schemes. Players get a week's worth of practices in front of dozens of scouts.

For some collegians, it's the first opportunity to perform in a pro-style system. It can get them on the draft radar, or improve their stock.

"Being at the Senior Bowl can show not only if players have the ability to translate from A to B, but also gives them a head start once they get to a minicamp," says Phil Savage, a former NFL general manager and now executive director of the Senior Bowl. "... I always feel the 110 guys who come to Mobile not only get the transition opportunity on the field, but get some of those personal interviews under their belt. And they at least have an idea what it is going to be like working with a pro coaching staff."

As more college coaches have gone with the spread, certain positions have morphed. Tight ends either are blockers or quasi-wideouts; rarely handling both duties as they may have to in the NFL. Fullbacks are almost nonexistent. Linemen just backpedal and pass block.

Arkansas tight end Hunter Henry is seen as a high pick because he blocked and ran routes in a pro system. Michigan State tackle Jack Conklin also showed he can run block and pass block, moving him ahead of some spread players.

Patriots player personnel director Nick Caserio notes that some teams "throw the ball 75 times a game, and they've never run blocked in their entire life."

But defensive backs have prospered from the proliferation of wide-open offenses.

"The ball is in the air more, they are learning to tackle out more in the open grass," Savage says. "It is a tough job for those college DBs, playing against three and four receivers every snap. Colleges run two receivers deep on one side, they exit the field and two fresh receivers are basically doing the same thing on the next play. The DB is the same guy. He's learning from that."

As for the Stanfords and Alabamas and Iowas that use pro-style schemes, Savage believes that's an edge. Not necessarily for the 32 NFL teams as much as for the schools.

"I would say overall, you can't grade schools, you have to grade individual prospects," Savage says. "But when you go to Iowa or Alabama or Stanford, when scouts are watching the tapes, they are at least seeing what the players will be asked to do at the NFL level."

"... I have always theorized the prospects that come out of some of these 'NFL-like programs' are probably getting half a round of elevation of grade in the draft. Because when that scout walks out of that school, he can better project what this player can do than for some other players who don't have that background."

Harvick gets pole due to rain

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Rain washed out qualifying at Richmond International Raceway on Friday, giving Kevin Harvick the pole position Sunday for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race based on being the fastest in an abbreviated morning practice session.

Harvick won the pole with a speed of 129.069 mph, edging Joey Logano for the top spot. Logano's speed was 128.694. The top five also includes Jimmie Johnson, Carl Edwards and hometown favorite Denny Hamlin.

The race, which traditionally has been run on Saturday night, was moved to Sunday afternoon this year and will be the second in a row in the spring at Richmond run on a Sunday. Last year's race was rained out on Saturday night, and Harvick and Stewart-Haas Racing teammate Kurt Busch battled for the victory, with Busch prevailing. Harvick would love to see a repeat this time, with one modification.

"From the way it finished last year, I hope it finishes the same way," Harvick said. "Kurt and I ran very well and had good finishes, obviously. He won the race. Hopefully, we can start building off of where we started and ended last year and try to adapt that to the things we have learned with this style of car this year and have a good day."

Harvick ran only nine laps in practice before the rain came.

Logano turned 35 laps and credited his team with playing the weather just right.

"We went out there and made our qualifying run off the truck and then focused in on race trim thinking that we weren't going to qualify anyway," he said. "The plan was executed perfectly besides second instead of first."

Logano's Penske Racing teammate, Brad Keselowski, qualified sixth, followed by Busch, Kasey Kahne, Kyle Busch and AJ Allmendinger.

"A lot of times you think about how this race runs and it is similar to Martinsville and having track position allows you to be more conservative with your car and tires," Logano said. "If you are in the back you don't have the opportunity to save anything. It is nice to start towards the front and get a good pit stall and hit this race hard and see what happens."

Stewart returns: Tony Stewart will make his season debut Sunday after missing the first eight races while recovering from a back injury. He made 38 laps in practice, the most of anyone, and will start 18th on Sunday. Stewart has won three times in his career at Richmond.

By the numbers: Among active drivers, Kyle Busch leads with four victories at Richmond. Hamlin has led the most laps, 1,404, and Harvick has led the most races, 16.

In other racing news:

■ Oriol Servia will drive the third car for Schmidt Peterson Motorsports in the Indianapolis 500.

The team announced Saturday at Barber Motorsports Park the addition of Servia in the Marotti Racing No. 77 car.

Lester leads Cubs in rout of Cincinnati

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Anthony Rizzo homered for the third consecutive game on Friday night, and Jon Lester gave a fitting follow-up to Jake Arrieta's no-hitter by going seven innings and leading the Chicago Cubs to an 8-1 victory over the Cincinnati Reds.

The Cubs improved to 13-4, the best record in the majors and one of the best starts in the last 100 years. They also opened 13-4 in 1908 — the last time they won the World Series — and in 1970. The 1907 team went 14-3 on its way to a Series title.

Rizzo hit a solo shot — his team-high sixth — off Jon Moscot (0-1).

White Sox 5, Rangers 0: Chicago pulled off its first triple play in nearly 10 years to secure Jose Quintana's scoreless outing and beat visiting Texas.

Rockies 7, Dodgers 5: Brandon Barnes hit a tie-breaking two-run triple in the eighth inning, lifting host Colorado past Los Angeles.

Red Sox 6, Astros 2: Steven Wright pitched into the seventh inning, and Mookie Betts finished a home run shy of the cycle for visiting Boston.

Pirates 8, Diamondbacks 7: Sean Rodriguez, Gregory Polanco and Jordy Mercer homered and Pittsburgh held on to beat host Arizona and snap its five-game winning streak.

Nationals 8, Twins 4: Jayson Werth hit a home run and robbed one in left field and Gio Gonzalez pitched six-plus innings for host Washington.

Mets 6, Braves 3: Curtis Granderson homered twice, including a grand slam, to drive in five runs and Matt Harvey got his first win of the season for visiting New York.

Royals 4, Orioles 2: Chris Young struck out 10 in six innings, Mike Moustakas homered, doubled twice and drove in three runs for host Kansas City.

Phillies 5, Brewers 2: Maikel Franco homered twice and Aaron Nola pitched seven strong innings as visiting Philadelphia defeated Milwaukee.

Yankees 6, Rays 3: Jacoby Ellsbury stole home, a daring dash that seemed to

startle most everyone at Yankee Stadium and helped New York rush past Tampa Bay.

Athletics 8, Blue Jays 5: Chris Coghlan hit a three-run home run, Stephen Vogt had three hits and visiting Oakland won its sixth straight.

Indians 2, Tigers 1: At Detroit, Carlos Santana and Marlon Byrd homered off Justin Verlander, lifting Cleveland to a win.

Mariners 5, Angels 2: Pinch-hitter Franklin Gutierrez came through with a tiebreaking RBI single in the 10th inning and Nelson Cruz added a two-run homer for visiting Seattle.

Giants 8, Marlins 1: Jeff Samardzija struck out five over 7 2/3 innings and drove in a career-high three runs with a double to win in a memorable home debut as host San Francisco snapped a five-game losing streak.

Padres 4, Cardinals 1: Wil Myers had a solo homer among his three hits and drove in three runs, and Andrew Cashner threw six strong innings for host San Diego.



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Cavs one win away from sweep

Associated Press

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — In their second postseason together, LeBron James, Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love might finally be hitting their stride as a group.

At the very least, Cleveland's trio of stars looks awfully comfortable, and the Cavaliers are closing in on a first-round sweep.

James had 20 points and 13 rebounds, and Irving made a pair of big three-pointers down the stretch to help the Cavs beat the Detroit Pistons 101-91 on Friday night. Cleveland now leads the series 3-0, with Game 4 coming up Sunday night.

Love scored 20 points of his own for the Cavs, and so far this feels like a far cry from last year, when injuries to Irving and Love forced James to carry Cleveland in its NBA Finals loss to Golden State.

"I think right now we're in a great flow as far as us three," James said. "When we're on the floor we understand what we want individually and as a team. Guys are picking their spots."

Irving scored 26 points for Cleveland, which overcame a gritty effort by the Pistons in Detroit's first home playoff game since 2009. Andre Drummond scored 17 points for the Pistons, but Detroit fell behind toward the end of the third quarter, and a late rally came up short.

The Pistons have now lost 11 straight playoff games against Cleveland, and they've lost nine in a row overall in the postseason.

Down by nine in the fourth, Detroit went on an 8-0 run, forcing the Cavs to call a timeout. Irving responded with a three-pointer, and J.R. Smith added one of his own to make it 95-90. Irving made it an eight-point game with a three-pointer in the final minute.

Detroit coach Stan Van Gundy was exasperated by the fact that Cleveland out-rebounded his team 46-32.

"Rebounding's been one of our strengths all year. It's been terrible in this series," Van Gundy said.

Love had 12 rebounds and Tristan Thompson had 10, including eight at the offensive end. The Cavs also had three players score at least 20 points — the third time that's happened in this series.

A raucous, towel-waving crowd tried to give Detroit a boost. Pistons fans booed James early and often, although the Cleveland star threw down a two-handed dunk on his team's first offensive possession.

Detroit rookie Stanley Johnson, who seemed eager to get into a verbal battle with James and the Cavs after Game 2, scored nine points in a fearless first half Friday, but James had the final word before halftime, making a jumper with less than a second left in the second quarter to give Cleveland a 54-53 lead.

Cleveland methodically built a 79-73 lead after three quarters, and after a three-point play and a three-pointer by James early in the fourth, the Cavs were up by nine. It was 87-86 after Detroit's run, but the threes by Irving and Smith helped Cleveland hold on.

With 1:34 remaining, the public address announcer at the Palace announced the results of a replay review with his popular "Deeeeeeeetroit Basketball" call, but it turned out he was mistaken and had to correct himself. Officials were giving the ball to the Cavs.

Detroit's chances were all but extinguished when Irving sank a three-pointer from the right corner with 43 seconds remaining, and James ran back to midcourt for a celebratory chest bump.

Celtics 111, Hawks 103: Isaiah

Thomas scored a career-high 42 points, and host Boston held on to beat Atlanta in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference first-round series.

Evan Turner, inserted into the starting lineup, had 17 points and seven assists. Amir Johnson added 15 points and seven rebounds as the Celtics closed to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

Playing by far their best first half of the series, Boston led by as many as 20 points before seeing that mostly erased by a 12-0 run by the Hawks in the third quarter.

The Celtics then survived a frenetic fourth quarter that featured three ties and a pair of lead changes, finally getting separation with five straight points for a 104-98 lead.

Jeff Teague had 23 points for Atlanta. Kent Bazemore and Dennis Schroder each finished with 20.

Game 4 is Sunday in Boston.

Spurs 96, Grizzlies 87: Kawhi Leonard scored 32 points, and visiting San Antonio beat Memphis to take a 3-0 lead in their Western Conference first-round series.

The Spurs are a win away from their ninth postseason series sweep and third against Memphis. They finished the game on a 13-6 run in the final 3:41, and Leonard, the two-time Defensive Player of the Year, scored 13 points in the quarter as he shot 11-for-22 for the game and 6-for-9 from three-point range.

LaMarcus Aldridge added 16 points and 10 rebounds. Danny Green and Manu Ginobili each added 11 points for San Antonio.

Zach Randolph led Memphis with 20 points and 11 rebounds on 6 of 21 shooting. Matt Barnes added 17 points and 11 rebounds, while Vince Carter had 11 and JaMychal Green was 5 of 5 for 10 points.

Game 4 is Sunday.

CB Norman finds new home with Washington

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Josh Norman posed for photos with a pen and his new contract and smiled ear-to-ear alongside Washington Redskins general manager Scot McCloughan and family members decked out in fresh team gear.

Two days after being cast off by the Carolina Panthers, Norman found a place he was wanted, signing with the Redskins on Friday.

One of the NFL's top cornerbacks, Norman held out for a long-term deal but never got it from the Panthers, who rescinded the franchise tag that would have paid him \$13.9 million next season.

The 28-year-old had a career-high four interceptions, 16 passes defensed and 56 tackles last season for NFC champion Carolina.

Norman posted the hashtag "Hail" with several emojis on his verified Twitter account to announce he'd picked the Redskins over other suitors, and several new teammates congratulated him and welcomed him to Washington.

"Let me be the first to say Welcome to the Family," defensive back DeAngelo Hall tweeted.

Earlier in the afternoon and Thursday, Washington players used Twitter to try to convince Norman to sign. It only took one visit to make that happen.

"Hell of a job by @Redskins front office," defensive lineman Ricky Jean-Francois tweeted.

Norman visited the Redskins' facility in Ashburn, Va., on Friday and left with a new deal. Joining the Redskins was a much happier occasion for Norman than getting shown the door by the Panthers, who wished him well in a terse statement earlier in the week.

"After a number of conversations with Josh's agent we realized that a long-term deal was not attainable," Panthers general manager Dave Gettleman said in a release. "We have decided to rescind the franchise tag freeing Josh to immediately become a UFA."

Norman's signing fills a major need for the Redskins, who had Bashaud Breeland and Will Blackmon and don't know what they'll get from Chris Culliver, who tore the ACL in his right knee last season and is still recovering.

During training camp in 2015, Norman got into a scuffle with Carolina quarterback Cam Newton and also got into one during a game with Odell Beckham Jr., which eventually led to the New York Giants receiver being suspended.

Norman bothered opposing quarterbacks, too. According to STATS, he held opponents to the lowest QB rating in the league.

His departure leaves a void for Carolina, which could receive 2017 draft-pick compensation.

Coming off an NFC East title and playoff appearance in coach Jay Gruden's second season, the Redskins own the 21st overall pick in this year's draft, which starts Thursday night in Chicago.

General manager Scot McCloughan also has one choice each in Rounds 2-6, and two in Round 7, for a total of eight selections over the draft's three days. But for all the subterfuge employed by NFL front-office types at this time of year, Washington's GM is not at all shy about making one thing plain: McCloughan likes to accumulate as many picks as he can.

Islanders edge Panthers in 2OT

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Alan Quine's power-play goal at exactly 16 minutes of the second overtime gave the New York Islanders a 2-1 victory over the Florida Panthers early Saturday in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference quarterfinal series.

Thomas Greiss stopped 47 shots for the Islanders. They lead the series 3-2 and can wrap it up with a win in Game 6 in New York on Sunday.

Roberto Luongo made 40 saves for Florida, which missed a penalty shot in the first overtime and was whistled for two penalties in the second overtime. The game ended at 12:16 a.m.

The Islanders' second overtime power play came when Derek Mackenzie was called for slashing at 14:31, and that was the break New York needed. Quine's blast from the right side beat Luongo, and the Islanders swarmed the ice in celebration.

Frans Nielsen scored in the first period for the Islanders, and Aleksander Barkov tied it early in the third for the Panthers. The Islanders' Calvin De Haan was called for closing his hand on the puck in the crease 7:19 into overtime, giving Barkov a chance to win it on a penalty shot — just the third in NHL playoff history. But his backhand was easily handled by Greiss.

It was the seventh consecutive playoff overtime loss for Florida, a streak beginning with the final game of the 1996 Stanley Cup Final against Colorado.

Sharks 6, Kings 3: Joonas Donskoi broke a tie with his second goal early in the third period, and visiting San Jose blew a

three-goal lead before rallying to wrap up its first-round playoff series.

Chris Tierney and Matt Nieto scored early goals and Joe Pavelski got another late score for the Sharks, who stared down the demons of their past playoff failures against Los Angeles and advanced to the second round for just the second time since 2011.

San Jose led 3-0 early in the second period before the Kings scored three goals in nine electric minutes. But after Donskoi broke the tie with the second playoff goal of his rookie season, Pavelski added his fifth goal of the series.

Martin Jones made 19 saves and Melker Karlsson added an empty-net goal for the Sharks, who will next face the winner of the Anaheim Ducks' series with the Nashville Predators. The clubs are even heading to Game 5 in Anaheim on Saturday.

Flyers 2, Capitals 0: Michal Neuvirth made a playoff career-high 44 saves and visiting Philadelphia beat Washington in Game 5 to stay alive in the first-round series.

Neuvirth was dominant, carrying the team on his shoulders and blunting Alex Ovechkin and the Capitals' every charge to cut the series deficit to 3-2 and send it back to Philadelphia for Game 6 on Sunday. Ryan White scored the lone goal for the Flyers against Braden Holtby, with the puck deflecting in off Washington defenseman Taylor Chorney and past the goalie.

Chris VandeVelde added an empty-netter.

Holtby was barely tested in making 10 saves, while Neuvirth set a franchise record for saves in a playoff shutout and saves in a regulation playoff game. It's the first time a team won a Stanley Cup playoff game with 11 shots since the Capitals beat Ottawa in 1998, and that total is the fewest shots for the Flyers history in the regular season and playoffs.

The pressure is now on the Presidents' Trophy-winning Capitals, who led the series 3-0 before Neuvirth replaced Steve Mason in goal for Philadelphia. Washington lost back-to-back games in regulation for the first time all season.

Wild 5, Stars 4 (OT): Mikko Koivu redirected Ryan Suter's shot from the left point 4:55 into overtime and visiting Minnesota beat Dallas in Game 5 to stay alive in the first-round series.

Koivu also forced the overtime, going top shelf for the tying goal with 3:09 left in regulation.

The Wild cut their series deficit to 3-2. Game 6 is Sunday in Minnesota.

Jason Spezza and Alex Goligoski scored 28 seconds apart almost midway through the third period to give the Stars their first lead of the game.

Devan Dubnyk made 37 saves for Minnesota. Antti Niemi stopped 19 of 24 shots in his second consecutive start in the series for Dallas after Kari Lehtonen was in goal for the first three games.

Nino Niederreiter, Mikael Granlund and Jordan Schroeder also scored for Minnesota. Jamie Benn and Johnny Oduya added goals for Dallas.