

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Obama OKs more US troops in Syria

### Additional 250 will be deployed to help fight against Islamic State group

BY TARA COPP

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Green Berets will likely make up a large portion of an additional 250 troops being deployed to Syria to help in the fight against the Islamic State group, a U.S. defense official told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

President Barack Obama's announcement that the United States would send more troops to Syria comes less than a week after Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced in Baghdad that an additional 217 soldiers, also primarily Green Berets, would be deployed to Iraq to

advise Iraqi Security Forces as they fight to recapture Mosul from Islamic State militants.

"Just as I approved additional support for Iraqi forces against [the Islamic State], I've decided to increase U.S. support for local forces fighting [the Islamic State] in Syria," Obama said Monday in a speech in Hannover.

The Green Berets headed to Syria will be inserted into the north into elements of the Syrian Democratic Forces, a unit of primarily Kurdish fighters.

The additional 250 troops also will include medical and logistical support personnel, and will join 50 operators al-

ready working in Syria.

Obama said he made the decision to support the momentum that local Kurdish and Arab forces have gained in Syria. In recent months, those forces, supported by coalition airstrikes, have recaptured Syria's Tishrin Dam and the Syrian towns of al-Shadadi and al-Hal from the Islamic State group.

The new forces in Iraq bring the number of U.S. troops there to at least 4,087 — not counting up to an additional 1,000 who are only considered rotational forces and are not reflected in the official total. Obama's announcement Monday will bring the number of U.S. forces in

Syria to about 300.

Carter's announcement of another 217 U.S. troops to support Iraqi units included sending Apache attack helicopters to assist the battle for Mosul. Special operations forces operating in Syria will have support from MV-22 Ospreys based in Irbil, Iraq, the defense official told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

Obama said they additional forces "will be essential in providing the training and assisting local forces that continue to drive [the Islamic State] back."

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## Afghan president takes harsh tone after Kabul attack

BY CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — President Ashraf Ghani vowed Monday that the Afghan government would take a harder line with the Taliban after a suicide bomb attack here last week that killed nearly 70 people and left about 350 wounded.

Speaking before a joint session of the two houses of parliament, he promised to execute those involved in terrorism. The "time for unjustified amnesty is over," he said.

The president's harsh tone appeared aimed at capitalizing on public opinion against the Taliban and building support for the country's beleaguered unity government, which has struggled to wipe out the insurgency and improve living conditions.

On April 19, insurgents pulled off a complex attack on the Afghan intelligence agency office in the crowded Puli Mahmood Khan neighborhood, first detonating a truck bomb and then opening fire on security personnel. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the assault.

The Afghan government "has ended its efforts in calling for peace and will now use all its resources to defend the country," he said.

But he stopped short of abandoning the peace process.

The door will remain open for negotiations with Taliban members who are ready to stop the bloodshed, he said, but that opening will not last forever.

Martine van Bijlert, co-director of the Kabul-based Afghanistan Analysts Network, said the speech was meant to project strength to the Afghan

people who were shaken and angered by the attack.

The blast outside the main intelligence agency not far from the presidential palace rattled windows throughout the capital and underscored criticism that the government was not doing enough to improve security.

Ghani's address to parliament was an attempt to portray an Afghan government that's strong and unified, van Bijlert said, rather than besieged and internally dysfunctional. But it's too soon to tell whether that's the case, she said.

Michael Kugelman, a South Asia specialist at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, said the speech was intended for an international as well as a domestic audience: the NATO members on which

Afghanistan relies for funding and support.

While the backlash against the Taliban seems to be hardening Afghan resolve, it has also strained the already frayed relations between Kabul and Islamabad — some Afghan officials suggest the attack was planned in Pakistan, where they say the Taliban are given sanctuary.

In a significant shift, Ghani said Afghanistan would no longer seek Pakistan's help to bring the Taliban to the table, as it had in the past. He called on Islamabad to crack down on terrorist groups such as the Haqqani network, which some Afghan officials have charged was involved in last week's attack.

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# F-22s fly to Romania in show of strength

Associated Press

CONSTANTA, Romania — The U.S. Air Force on Monday flew in two F-22 Raptor fighter jets to Romania as a show of strength to deter Russian intervention in Ukraine.

The fighter jets landed at the Mihail Kogalniceanu air base, near the Black Sea port of Constanta in southeast Romania. A U.S. statement said they possess sophisticated sensors allowing the pilot to track, identify, shoot and kill air-to-air threats before being detected. The fighters also have a significant capability to attack surface targets.

Russia-backed separatists have been fighting government troops in Ukraine since April 2014, leaving at least 9,100 dead. The conflict has left many neighboring countries in Central and Eastern Europe

jittery about Russia's intentions in the region.

U.S. Ambassador Hans G. Klemm said the U.S. and Romania, a NATO member since 2004 that has a population of 19 million, were seeking to improve "the defense of Europe, the defense of the North-Atlantic Alliance, to improve the security in South Eastern Europe ... as a result of the aggression by Russia that has brought so much instability to this part of the world over the past two to three years."

Romanian Air Force Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Laurian Anastasof voiced concerns about Russia's presence in the region. He said that if a Russian plane took off from an air base in Crimea and went 62 miles beyond Crimea's borders, "that can trigger worries of the (NATO) alliance."

# Cruz, Kasich camps align in push to defeat Trump

Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Donald Trump's rivals are joining forces to deny him the necessary delegates to win the Republican presidential nomination, the latest display of strife in a convulsive 2016 GOP race.

Ted Cruz and John Kasich issued nearly simultaneous statements Sunday outlining an extraordinary compact that may be unprecedented in modern American politics. Under the arrangement, the Kasich campaign will give Cruz "a clear path in Indiana." In return, the Cruz campaign will "clear the path" for Kasich in Oregon and New Mexico.

The arrangement does not address the five Northeastern states set to vote on Tuesday, where Trump is expected to add to his already overwhelming delegate lead. Kasich and Cruz already had retreated to

Indiana, which holds its primary on May 3. Yet the shift offers increasingly desperate Trump foes a glimmer of hope in their long, frustrating fight to halt the former reality television star's unlikely rise.

"Having Donald Trump at the top of the ticket in November would be a sure disaster for Republicans," Cruz's campaign manager, Jeff Roe, said in a statement explaining the new plans. "Not only would Trump get blown out by [Hillary] Clinton or [Bernie] Sanders, but having him as our nominee would set the party back a generation."

Added Kasich's chief strategist, John Weaver, "Our goal is to have an open convention in Cleveland, where we are confident a candidate capable of uniting the party and winning in November will emerge as the nominee."

# 24 Apaches arrive in Hawaii as unit retools

By Wyatt Olson

Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Two dozen Apache attack helicopters are in Hawaii, part of the Army's two-year aviation restructuring of the 25th Infantry Division.

The Apaches arrived during the weekend via container ship at a commercial port near downtown Honolulu. Maintenance crews spent Saturday preparing them for flight, and by Sunday morning, the helicopters were lined up on a pier ready for a roughly 25-mile trip to Wheeler Army Airfield.

The squadron turned in its 30 Kiowa Warrior helicopters in January 2015.

"Now that we have our Apaches here, we'll start our individual training and working back up to our readiness level to be fully operational and capable by June 2017," said Lt. Col. Aaron Martin, commander of 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Combat Avia-

tion Brigade.

The Apaches were transitioned from units in five states, grouped in California and then shipped from San Diego, said Maj. Jake Johnston, the 25th Infantry Division's executive officer.

However, because there are only eight Apache pilots on hand, moving the 24 helicopters to Wheeler was being done on Sunday and Monday, with pilots shuttling back to the pier in a Black Hawk helicopter.

"Right now, we're in a transitional period of getting a whole lot of new Apache pilots and maintainers and whatnot coming in," Johnston said. "Then we'll integrate them into the squadron, doing progressive training to get up to full use and capability."

Most of that training will take place in Hawaii, with crucial live-fire, aerial-gunnery training slated for this September at the Pohakuloa Training Area, he said.

# Pot operations found at scenes of 8 Ohio slayings

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Marijuana-growing operations were discovered at some of the crime scenes where officials said eight family members were killed in a "pre-planned execution," raising more questions as authorities scrambled to find a suspect or suspects in the slayings in a rural southern Ohio community.

The killings at four homes near the small community of Piketon on Friday were "a sophisticated operation," Attorney General Mike DeWine said at a news conference Sunday. Seven adults and one teenage boy were found shot in

the head; three young children were not harmed.

"This was a pre-planned execution of eight individuals," DeWine said.

Authorities remained tight-lipped Sunday about details of the investigation, any suspects or motives for the crime. They said they found marijuana operations at three of the crime scenes, but didn't say whether the deaths were linked to pot. Autopsies were expected to be completed Monday.

Pike County Sheriff Charles Reader said it was clear the family was targeted, and he's told the victims' relatives to arm themselves.



# Court reinstates Brady's suspension

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady must serve a four-game "Deflategate" suspension imposed by the NFL, a federal appeals court ruled Monday, overturning a lower judge and siding with the league in a battle with the players union.

A three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan ruled 2-to-1 that Commissioner Roger Goodell did not deprive Brady of "fundamental fairness" with his procedural rulings. The split decision may end the legal debate over the scandal that led to months of football fans arguing over air pressure and the reputation of one of the league's top teams.

It is also likely to fuel a fresh round of debate over what role, if any, the quarterback and top NFL star played in using underinflated footballs at the AFC championship game in January 2015. The Patriots won the contest over the Indianapolis Colts, 45-7, and then won the Super Bowl.

The ruling can be appealed to the full 2nd Circuit or to the U.S. Supreme Court, but it would likely be a steep and time-consuming climb even if the courts took the unusual step to consider it.

In a majority opinion written by Judge Barrington D. Parker, the 2nd Circuit said its review of labor arbitration awards "is narrowly circumscribed and highly deferential — indeed, among the most deferential in the law."

"Our role is not to determine for ourselves whether Brady participated in a scheme to deflate footballs or whether the suspension imposed by the Commissioner should have been for three games or five games or none

at all. Nor is it our role to second-guess the arbitrator's procedural rulings," the opinion said. "Our obligation is limited to determining whether the arbitration proceedings and award met the minimum legal standards established by the Labor Management Relations Act."

The 2nd Circuit said the contract between players and the NFL gave the commissioner authority that was "especially broad."

"Even if an arbitrator makes mistakes of fact or law, we may not disturb an award so long as he acted within the bounds of his bargained-for authority," the court said.

In a dissent, Chief Judge Robert Katzmann said Goodell failed to even consider a "highly relevant" alternative penalty.

"I am troubled by the Commissioner's decision to uphold the unprecedented four-game suspension," Katzmann said. "It is ironic that a process designed to ensure fairness to all players has been used unfairly against one player."

The NFL Players Association said in a statement it was disappointed.

"We fought Roger Goodell's suspension of Tom Brady because we know he did not serve as a fair arbitrator and that players' rights were violated under our collective bargaining agreement," the statement said. "Our union will carefully review the decision, consider all of our options and continue to fight for players' rights and for the integrity of the game."

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said the court ruled Goodell acted properly in cases involving the integrity of the game.

"That authority has been recognized by many courts

and has been expressly incorporated into every collective bargaining agreement between the NFL and NFLPA for the past 40 years," McCarthy said.

The appeals ruling follows a September decision by Manhattan Judge Richard Berman that went against the league, letting Brady skip the suspension last season. Goodell insisted the suspension was deserved.

The appeals court settled the issue well before the start of the 2016 season, avoiding the tension built last year when Brady didn't learn until a week before the season that he would be allowed to start in the Patriots' opener.

At oral arguments in March, appeals judges seemed skeptical of arguments on Brady's behalf by the NFL Players Association.

Circuit Judge Denny Chin said evidence of ball tampering was "compelling, if not overwhelming" and there was evidence that Brady "knew about it, consented to it, encouraged it."

The league argued that it was fair for Goodell to severely penalize Brady after he concluded the prize quarterback tarnished the game by impeding the NFL's investigation by destroying a cellphone containing nearly 10,000 messages.

Parker said the cellphone destruction raised the stakes "from air in a football to compromising the integrity of a proceeding that the commissioner had convened."

"So why couldn't the commissioner suspend Mr. Brady for that conduct alone?" he asked. Parker added: "With all due respect, Mr. Brady's explanation of that made no sense whatsoever."

## Islanders moving on

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Islanders' long playoff drought is over.

John Tavares tied the score in the final minute of regulation and got the winner at 10:41 of the second overtime, leading the Islanders past the Florida Panthers 2-1 Sunday night and into the second round for the first time since 1993.

"It's time we had to get over this hump and push forward," Tavares said. "I don't think we tried to put too much pressure on ourselves knowing we weren't here for all of that, but certainly a lot of us have been here for a while and it was time for us."

Tavares skated in and fired an initial shot that Roberto Luongo saved, but the New York captain got the rebound, wrapped around the net and stuffed the puck in before the diving goalie could get back. It sent the sellout Barclays Center crowd into a frenzy and he was quickly mobbed by his teammates after ending the longest home game in Islanders history.

"When I got the rebound, I realized how far he came out," Tavares said. "I had a good step and just tried to, not take my time, but really make sure I had control of the puck. And obviously once you get around the net, make sure it goes in."

The Islanders next face Tampa Bay. New York last won a playoff series 23 years ago, when it defeated the then-defending Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins in the Wales Conference semis.

**Capitals 1, Flyers 0:** Nicklas Backstrom scored and Braden Holtby had 26 saves

as visiting Washington beat Philadelphia to advance to the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The Capitals, who won the series in six games, will play the Pittsburgh Penguins, setting up a marquee matchup of Alex Ovechkin vs. Sidney Crosby.

Ovechkin had an assist on Backstrom's second-period goal that was easily enough against the Flyers. Riding the momentum of Michal Neuvirth in net, the Flyers won two straight to force an unlikely trip home. Neuvirth was sensational again but the Flyers were ultimately doomed by a power play they could not cash in against Holtby. The Flyers wasted nearly 2 minutes of a 5-on-3 power play in the second period that made a critical difference.

**Stars 5, Wild 4:** Jason Spezza scored his fourth goal of the series and added three assists as goalie Kari Lehtonen and the Dallas Stars needed every last one of them to hold off host Minnesota to wrap up the first-round series in six games.

Jared Spurgeon scored two of Minnesota's four third-period goals as the Wild came within a fraction of an inch of tying it with 34 seconds remaining when Nino Niederreiter whacked at a loose puck in the crease. Freeze-frame replays showed it in the net, but not quite fully across the goal line as it connected with Lehtonen's right pad, a close call that was upheld by review.

John Klingberg, Patrick Sharp, Jamie Benn and Alex Goligoski also scored for the Stars, who moved on to face the winner of the Chicago-St. Louis series.

## Edwards passes late, wins

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Carl Edwards had been grinding for 30 laps, doing everything he could to catch Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Kyle Busch in a two-way breakaway from the pack at Richmond International Raceway.

When he finally caught him on the last lap Sunday, and in the final turn, he had no time to think about what would be the prudent thing to do. Instead, Edwards focused on the reason they are racing: to win.

Edwards bumped his sometimes-volatile teammate off his racing line in the last turn and passed him to win his second consecutive NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race, and the fourth in a row for the Gibbs racing stable.

NASCAR said it was the first last-lap pass for a victory in the history of the premier series at the track, a span of 120 races.

"I wish it was anybody but my teammate that we had to race like that with, but big picture to me is we've both got some wins, we're in the Chase, and it's fun to have to race your teammate for the win," Edwards said. "If the roles were reversed, I would have expected him to bump me the same way."

Gibbs said there's no game plan for how to handle the next team meeting.

"What you do is you just start out and work your way through it, and that's what we'll do," he said.

Edwards, who had fallen nearly 1.5 seconds behind after a restart with 36 laps to go, gradually ran him down, catch-

ing him on the final lap. Then he slipped underneath Busch, a master blocker in late-race situations, and nudged him just enough to allow Edwards to get inside him for his second consecutive victory. It was also the fourth in a row for the Gibbs stable, and fifth in nine races.

"Kyle's an amazing teammate and it's like he got really slow there at the end," Edwards said. "Something happened that last lap, it's like his rear tires went off or something, and he went down into (Turn) one and I dove it in and I got to him, and I thought, 'Man, I've got something here.' Then he went to get down to the bottom to park it in three and four and I'd already decided to go down there, so I thought, 'Man, I'm going to give him a little nudge.'"

"We've both got wins. We're racing for fun and getting these trophies. Just an awesome day."

Busch seemed less than amused after being denied his third victory in the last four races.

"We just kind of gave it up a little bit there on the last lap, but I guess that's racing and we move on," he said. "... We had a really great car. ... We were fast, maybe not as good as Carl was on the long runs, but we did everything right, everything we were supposed to do."

Jimmie Johnson finished third, follow by Hendrick Motorsports teammate Kasey Kahne and pole-sitter Kevin Harvick. Gibbs placed all four of its drivers in the top seven, with Denny Hamlin sixth and Matt Kenseth seventh.

The race was the first scheduled for during the day at Richmond since 1997.



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# Cavs advance with sweep of Pistons

Associated Press

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Kyrie Irving made big shots, defended tenaciously and then waved goodbye to the Detroit fans.

The Cleveland Cavaliers are moving on to the second round — and they're looking like a pretty complete team.

Irving scored 20 of his 31 points in the second half, and the Cavs finished off a four-game sweep of the Pistons, holding on for a 100-98 victory on Sunday night. Irving scored 110 points in the series, easily the most on the team.

"For our team, it doesn't matter who is the leading scorer or anything. We just want to get wins," LeBron James said. "But the fact that he was in such a great groove, just throughout this whole series, we rode his coattails, we rode [Kevin Love], and I was able to focus on some other things, especially my rebounding, get guys involved — defensively, just try to lock in on my individual matchup."

James had 22 points, but it was Irving who made the biggest shots all night. His midcourt buzzer beater put the Cavs up 81-78 after the third quarter, and with Cleveland clinging to a one-point lead in the final minute, he sank a three-pointer from the right wing with 42 seconds remaining and then walked over to the bench, calm as could be.

The Pistons still had a chance at the end, but with Irving hounding him, Reggie Jackson's wild shot at the buzzer was off the mark. Irving then started waving goodbye to the fans at the Palace.

Cleveland advances to play either Atlanta or Boston. The Cavs appear to be in better shape than they were in last year's playoffs, when Irving and Love were both injured by the time Golden State took the title by beating Cleveland in the NBA Finals.

Irving fractured his kneecap against the Warriors and needed surgery and months of rehab before coming back.

"I knew that the preparation was for the postseason," Irving said. "I knew that during the regular season, there was going to be peaks and valleys, and I really just had to come to grips with it."

Marcus Morris led Detroit with 24 points, but the Pistons lost to Cleveland for the 12th straight game in the postseason, equaling an NBA record. Detroit has also lost 10 straight playoff games overall. Its most recent postseason appearance before this one was in 2009, and the Pistons were swept by Cleveland in the first round that year, too.

Cleveland shot 43 percent from three-point range in the first three games of this series. The Cavs weren't as sharp Sunday, but they kept putting shots up from long distance, going 13-for-36. J.R. Smith was 5-for-7, including a heave from well behind the line that beat the shot clock buzzer and gave Cleveland a 95-86 lead.

Detroit made one more run, playing a smaller lineup toward the end and earning a chance to win it or force overtime. Jackson missed a three-pointer from near the top of the key, and although he pleaded for a foul, his team's season was

over.

"I just think refs need to have some type of system in line ... fines, suspensions, being fired. Same thing happens to us," Jackson said. "Make bad plays or questionable, you're not really being productive to the sport. Things should have consequences, just like the players."

**Warriors 121, Rockets 94:** Klay Thompson scored 23 points as Golden State set an NBA playoff record with 21 three-pointers to overcome another injury to Stephen Curry and beat host Houston for a 3-1 series lead.

Curry returned after missing two games with a sprained right ankle but did not play in the second half after spraining his right knee.

He slid awkwardly to the court while defending on the last play before halftime and immediately grabbed his knee. He got up and looked to have trouble putting weight on it before jogging with a limp to the locker room. He came out with the team after halftime but sat on the bench for most of the warmup time. After talking with coaches, he returned to the locker room.

Golden State was just fine without him thanks to three-point shooting that led to a 41-point third quarter. The Warriors beat the NBA record they shared for threes in a playoff game when Brandon Rush made one from the top of the key with about 2½ minutes left.

Golden State hosts Game 5 on Wednesday.

**Spurs 116, Grizzlies 95:** Kawhi Leonard scored 21 points as San Antonio

routed Memphis to sweep the best-of-seven series and advance to the Western Conference semifinals.

The Spurs finished off their ninth sweep of a postseason series in franchise history, their third against the Grizzlies. San Antonio also swept Memphis in the 2004 first round and the 2013 Western Conference finals.

The only thing that delayed the Spurs advancing was a power surge that knocked out the lights, stopping the game for about 20 minutes in the second quarter.

San Antonio now awaits the winner of Oklahoma City-Dallas, a best-of-seven series that the Thunder lead 3-1.

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 15 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Spurs. Tony Parker added 16 points. David West had 11.

Lance Stephenson scored 26 points off the bench for the Grizzlies. Zach Randolph and Matt Barnes each had 15 points and Vince Carter 14.

**Celtics 104, Hawks 95 (OT):** Isaiah Thomas scored 28 points, hitting a corner three-pointer with 30 seconds left in overtime and then adding a pair of clinching free throws, as host Boston sent its first-round playoff series back to Atlanta tied at two games apiece.

Paul Millsap scored 45 for the Hawks — a career playoff high and one off his all-time best — and added 13 rebounds.

Marcus Smart scored 20 points — including 11 straight for Boston in the fourth quarter — and Jonas Jerebko had 16 points and 10 rebounds.

Game 5 is Tuesday night in Atlanta.

# Nats edge Twins in wild 16 innings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — During a career that has spanned five decades, Dusty Baker was pressed to remember a baseball game as zany at this one.

"I feel like I just came out of 'The Twilight Zone,'" the Nationals' first-year manager said Sunday night after Washington spent nearly six hours crafting a 6-5, 16-inning victory over the Minnesota Twins.

Bryce Harper tied it with a pinch-hit home run in the ninth inning, pitcher Oliver Perez put down a bunt in the 15th that kept the game going and Chris Heisey homered in the 16th to end it.

At 5 hours, 56 minutes, it was the longest regular-season game in Nationals' history. By far one of the wildest, too.

"We've seen thousands of games. They always say, go to the ballpark and you may see something you haven't seen before," Baker said. "Well this, I certainly haven't seen anything like this. This was crazy."

Harper was supposed to have a day off, but stepped up to lead off the ninth with Washington trailing 4-3 and connected for the first pinch-hit homer of his career.

"[Baker] came up to me at the beginning of the game and said, if we have an opportunity to pinch hit you, if you can hit a homer, that would be great," Harper said.

The Nationals were down 5-4 in the 15th when Danny Espinosa drew a two-out walk and stole second. With no one else left to hit, Perez (1-0) batted for the first time since 2010 and bunted down the third base line. Catcher John Ryan Murphy picked up the ball but threw it wildly past first, allowing Espinosa to score.

"There was a lot of screaming and hollering," Nationals starting pitcher Stephen

Strasburg said. "It's just kind of disbelief at the same time that he dropped a drag bunt and forced the catcher to throw it away."

Heisey then homered off Michael Tonkin (1-1) to complete a three-game sweep.

Strasburg struck out 10, walked none and allowed seven hits in 7 1/3 innings. It was his 23rd career outing with at least 10 strikeouts.

**Pirates 12, Diamondbacks 10 (13):** Sean Rodriguez lined a double over the head of host Arizona left fielder Shelby Miller to drive in the go-ahead run.

Wait. Shelby Miller, the Diamondbacks' No. 2 starter, out in left late in a game?

Sure was. And that was only a small part of the wackiness at Chase Field on Sunday.

A game that started like a blowout quickly devolved into a what-will-happen-next series of blown leads, clutch hits and desperation.

The Pirates led by five runs after three innings and blew two-run leads in the ninth and 12th, setting up a back-and-forth of bizarre-but-necessary moves involving pitchers.

Zack Greinke, Arizona's starter on Monday, came in to pinch hit and lined a single during Arizona's 12th inning rally. He was replaced by Miller, who scored a run as a pinch-runner.

Miller had to stay in the game after shortstop Nick Ahmed was ejected for arguing a called third strike, becoming the first Diamondbacks pitcher to play a position and first major leaguer since Jason Gurka played right field for the Colorado Rockies on Sept. 15, according to STATS.

Miller had a hard time tracking down Rodriguez's double off Evan Marshall (0-1) in the 13th, though the run was going to

score anyway.

Pittsburgh turned to a pitcher after Rodriguez's hit, sending out Jonathon Niese, scheduled starter Wednesday against Colorado. He came through, too, battling through a nine-pitch at-bat to line a run-scoring single to left that gave the Pirates a two-run lead.

The game ended with Arquimedes Caminero striking Patrick Corbin, another starting pitcher-turned-pinch-hitter, and Miller for his first career save.

**Red Sox 7, Astros 5 (12):** Jackie Bradley Jr. lined a tie-breaking RBI single in the 12th inning after Houston's Colby Rasmus hit a tying two-run homer off closer Craig Kimbrel in the ninth, and Boston beat the host Astros.

**Cubs 9, Reds 0:** Anthony Rizzo homered and drove in four runs, Jason Hammel pitched six sharp innings and visiting Chicago routed Cincinnati.

**Mets 3, Braves 2:** Jacob deGrom made a successful return to the mound after tending to his ill infant son and an injury, pitching New York to a three-game sweep. Host Atlanta has lost five in a row.

Back in the rotation after healing from a sore right lat muscle and seeing his son recover from a health concern, deGrom (2-0) gave up one run and eight hits in 5 2/3 innings.

**Dodgers 12, Rockies 10:** Chase Utley drove in the go-ahead run with a double during Los Angeles' five-run ninth to rally at Colorado.

**Marlins 5, Giants 4:** J.T. Realmuto matched his career high with four hits, including a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning as visiting Miami avoided a three-game sweep.

Giancarlo Stanton also homered and

reached base four times for the Marlins.

**Cardinals 8, Padres 5:** Jedd Gyorko homered, tripled and singled, and rookie Aledmys Diaz had a homer among his three hits as visiting St. Louis rallied.

Gyorko, traded from San Diego to the Cardinals in December, had two chances to complete the cycle but flied out and grounded out.

**Brewers 8, Phillies 5:** Scooter Gennett and Alex Presley homered in a six-run sixth inning, backing an encouraging outing by struggling starter Wily Peralta as host Milwaukee beat Philadelphia.

**Rays 8, Yankees 1:** Steven Souza Jr. homered twice on his 27th birthday and visiting Tampa Bay went deep five times in all, finally giving Drew Smyly some run support.

**Indians 6, Tigers 3:** Francisco Lindor got three hits and visiting Cleveland overcame an early injury to starting pitcher Carlos Carrasco. The Indians completed a three-game sweep. Detroit has lost four in a row.

**Blue Jays 6, Athletics 3:** Jose Bautista hit a two-run homer, Ezequiel Carrera added a solo shot and host Toronto beat Oakland.

**Royals 8, Orioles 1:** Yordano Ventura settled down after a shaky first inning, Eric Hosmer and Alex Gordon homered and host Kansas City beat Baltimore.

**Mariners 9, Angels 4:** Wade Miley overcame a shaky first inning that included a home by slumping Albert Pujols to post his first victory in a Seattle uniform.

**White Sox 4, Rangers 1:** Mat Latos pitched six solid innings for his fourth consecutive win and host Chicago swept Texas.