

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## VP Pence visits DMZ; warns N. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

PANMUNJOM, South Korea — Vice President Mike Pence wasn't expected to go outside during his visit to the so-called Freedom House on Monday, which stands within eyesight of North Korea.

The vice president made remarks to reporters inside the hall, calling the unique border area "the historic frontier of freedom" as he looked out through glass doors onto the blue buildings straddling the demarcation line that divides the peninsula.

But suddenly, American and South Korean soldiers rushed out to form a security cordon, and Pence — accompanied by the commander of U.S. Forces Korea Gen. Vincent Brooks and their entourage — walked out onto the steps.

Two North Korean soldiers filmed the scene from their side of the concrete berm that separates the two sides in the truce village of Panmunjom.

Pence didn't go any farther due to security concerns, but the unscripted move gave him a clear view of the communist state that has emerged as one of the main foreign policy issues facing Trump's administration.

He said his visit to the tense border showed the U.S. resolve and warned the North not to test President Donald Trump.

North Korea tried but failed to launch a missile on Sunday, the day the vice president arrived in South Korea to start his first regional tour since taking office.

Pence hammered home Washington's insistence that it would like to deal with the growing threat from North Korea through peaceful means such as negotiations but is prepared to get tough.

The vice president, whose father was awarded a Bronze

### In Pyongyang, residents seem oblivious to tension

*Associated Press*

PYONGYANG, North Korea — The clouds of war, it might seem, are gathering around the Korean Peninsula.

The North Korean government flaunts an increasingly sophisticated arsenal of intercontinental missiles and launches a midrange version, which apparently fails seconds after takeoff. The U.S. moves an immense warship to the waters off the peninsula in a display of military might. President Donald Trump warns he's ready to "solve North Korea," while North Korea's deputy foreign minister says his country will conduct its next nuclear test whenever it sees fit.

And in Pyongyang, where war would mean untold horrors, where neighborhoods could be reduced to rubble and tens of thousands of civilians could be killed, few people seem to care much at all.

On Sunday, the city's zoo was crowded, playgrounds were full of children and families strolled along down-

town sidewalks speckled with the falling blossoms of apricot trees. At the city's annual Kimilsungia flower show — held to celebrate Saturday's 105th anniversary of the birth of North Korea's founding ruler, Kim Il Sung, and the purple orchid named for him — thousands crowded around the displays, many using cellphones to take photos of friends and family.

In a country where the propaganda is all-encompassing, and where the same family has held power for three generations, every display mixed bright flowers with reminders of Kim Il Sung or the nation that his grandson, Kim Jong Un, now rules. So there were dioramas of Kim Il Sung's birthplace, photos of him meeting foreign leaders, paintings of new housing developments — and models of missiles.

And there was Chong Ok An, a retiree pushing her way through the crowds with her family. "We're not afraid," she said. "As long as we have Marshal Kim Jong Un, we can win any fight."

Star for his service as a soldier in the 1950-53 Korean War, also offered reassurances to South Korea that the U.S. will stand by its ally of nearly seven decades.

"All options are on the table to achieve the objectives and ensure the security of the people of this country and the stability of this region," he said in his remarks to reporters.

"We seek peace, but America has always sought peace

things will change, other than to say that China needs to take more action to rein in its communist ally.

Pence said he was "heartened" by China's recent moves regarding the North but insisted more needed to be done.

"Either China will deal with this problem or the United States and its allies will," he said. "We want to see change. We want to see North Korea abandon its reckless path."

Pence, who arrived at nearby Camp Bonifas by helicopter, also viewed North Korea from the hilltop Observation Point Ouellette.

He later greeted U.S. and South Korean soldiers at a dining facility before rain spurred him to ride in a motorcade back to Seoul for a meeting with South Korea's acting president, Hwang Kyo-ahn.

"Just in the past two weeks, the world witnessed the strength and resolve of our new president in actions taken in Syria and Afghanistan," Pence said later at a joint news conference. "North Korea would do well not to test his resolve or the strength of the armed forces of the United States in this region."

Pence is scheduled to travel Tuesday to Japan, where he will meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Speaking to the national Diet on Monday, Abe called for more pressure on the North Koreans so they will respond seriously to talks.

"Needless to say, diplomatic effort is important to maintain peace," Abe said, according to The Associated Press. "But dialogue for the sake of having dialogue is meaningless."

On Wednesday, Pence is scheduled to speak to sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan at Yokosuka Naval Base.

## Karzai calls US bombing an 'atrocious'

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Monday that the U.S. is using Afghanistan as a weapons testing ground, calling the recent use of the largest-ever non-nuclear bomb “an immense atrocity against the Afghan people.”

Last week, U.S. forces dropped the GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb in eastern Nangarhar province, reportedly killing 95 militants. Karzai, in an interview with The Associated Press, objected to the decision, saying that his country “was used very disrespectfully by the U.S. to test its weapons of mass destruction.”

The office of President Ashraf Ghani said following the bomb’s usage that there was “close coordination” between the U.S. military and the Afghan government over the operation, and they were careful to prevent any civilian casualties.

Karzai harshly criticized the Afghan government for allowing the use of the bomb.

“How could a government of a country allow the use of a weapon of mass destruction on its own territory? Whatever the reason, whatever the cause, how could they allow that? It just unimaginable,” he said.

The strike was carried out Thursday morning against an Islamic State tunnel complex, carved into a mountain that Afghan forces had tried to assault repeatedly in recent weeks, according to Afghan officials.

U.S. and Afghan forces have been battling the Taliban for more than 15 years. But the U.S. military unveiled the largest conventional bomb in its arsenal against ISIS, which has a far smaller but growing presence in Afghanistan.

“My message to President (Donald) Trump today is that he has committed an immense atrocity against the Afghan people, against fellow human beings,” Karzai said.

# Lockheed Marine Corps helo comes with unpublicized cost

Bloomberg

The Pentagon’s approval for the Marine Corps to start buying Lockheed Martin’s new heavy-lift helicopter came with a hidden surprise: The projected total acquisition cost for the King Stallion program has increased 6.9 percent to \$31 billion.

The updated estimate was provided in an April 4 decision memo by James MacStravic, the Pentagon’s acting weapons buyer, that authorized production of the initial batch of 26 helicopters. The memo, labeled “For Official Use Only,” was obtained by Bloomberg News.

The estimate for the total acquisition cost — which includes everything from research to purchase of the aircraft, including spare parts — climbed to \$31 billion from about \$29 billion that the Navy reported in March 2016. No aircraft were added beyond the 200 planned.

Likewise, the “program acquisition unit cost” estimate, with everything included, in-

creased to \$138.5 million per helicopter from \$131.2 million as of August 2016. The latest projection is a 20 percent increase from the initial goal of about \$115 million established in late 2005, according to data in the memo.

It’s not unusual for cost estimates of major weapons programs to increase at a significant milestone, such as this month’s decision on the Lockheed helicopter, as Pentagon acquisition experts sharpen their pencils to budget for actual expenditures. But the new cost estimate could become a focus of congressional oversight when the Marine Corps’ fiscal 2018 budget is submitted to Congress.

Rep. Niki Tsongas, of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on a House Armed Services subcommittee that oversees the helicopter program, already has questioned the King Stallion’s basic cost as “a heck of a lot of money.”

The aircraft, designated the CH-53K, will be capable of lifting 27,000 pounds. It will be the

same size as its predecessor, the Super Stallion, but will be able to haul triple the cargo, according to Bruce Tanner, Lockheed’s chief financial officer. He said in an interview in March that the new aircraft’s revenue potential was the biggest reason Lockheed bought the Sikorsky helicopter unit from United Technologies Corp. in 2015.

The initial 26 helicopters will provide “a production ramp-up sufficient to lead to full-rate production upon the successful completion of operational testing,” MacStravic wrote in his memo. Full-rate production is the most lucrative phase for a defense contractor.

The decision memo calls for requesting \$756 million in procurement funds in fiscal 2018, up from \$528 million this year. It recommends requesting \$1.2 billion for fiscal 2019 and \$1.5 billion for fiscal 2020.

The Pentagon’s independent cost analysis group “identified additional schedule risk” in developmental testing for the helicopter, according to the memo.

## Militants, local tribes clash in Sinai

Associated Press

EL-ARISH, Egypt — Three people were injured in clashes between militants and local tribes in the Sinai peninsula in a fight that began when militants shot at a truck smuggling cigarettes into the area, Egyptian security officials said Monday.

The officials told The Associated Press that Islamic State militants launched RPG attacks Sunday in their stronghold around the city of Rafah in response to the kidnapping of three ISIS fighters by local tribes.

The unrest started when militants shot at a truck smuggling cigarettes into the area, where they impose a strict version of

Islamic law that prohibits the sale of tobacco, tribal sources said.

The government sources spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to brief the media. The tribal sources requested anonymity for fear of reprisal.

The incident marks an escalation in tension between the two sides over the imposition of Islamic law.

Last month, female teachers commuting from North Sinai’s urban center, El-Arish, to Rafah reported being stopped by militants twice in one week and were asked not to take the road without a male relative in compliance with Islamic law. Locals

said the militants had previously intercepted trucks carrying cigarettes and punished passengers with flogging.

North Sinai residents have been caught in a violent battle between militant groups who have expanded their activity in the Peninsula since the removal of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi in 2013 and security forces waging war against them.

Militants have beheaded locals accused of collaboration with authorities and recently stepped up their attacks against the peninsula’s Coptic Christian minority, forcing hundreds to flee following a string of killings in the city of Arish in February.

## Ohio police: Be on alert for murder suspect in video

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Police in Ohio urged residents in surrounding states on Monday to be on alert for a man who they allege shot and killed an elderly passerby seemingly at random and then posted a gruesome video of the killing on Facebook.

Steve Stephens, 37, was wanted on a charge of aggravated murder in the death of Robert Godwin in Cleveland.

In a statement early Monday, police warned residents of Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana and Michigan to be on the lookout for Stephens.

In the video, which appears shaky, Stephens gets out of his car and appears to randomly target Godwin, 74, who is holding a plastic shopping bag. Stephens says the name of a woman, whom Godwin does not seem to recognize.

"She's the reason that this is about to happen to you," Stephens tells Godwin before pointing a gun at him. Godwin can be seen shielding his face with the shopping bag.

Facebook said the suspect did go live on the social media website at one point during the day but not during the killing. Police earlier had said that Stephens had broadcast it on Facebook Live.

The video of the killing was on Facebook for about three hours before it was removed. Stephens' Facebook page also eventually was removed.

In a separate video posted on Facebook, Stephens claimed to have killed more than a dozen other people.

## EUCOM gives 'another look' at planned base closures

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A plan to shut down 15 military sites is under review by U.S. European Command, which is taking a second look at a Pentagon cost-saving initiative to consolidate installations in Britain and Germany.

EUCOM officials say that though they support the Defense Department's 2015 consolidation and closure decisions, a more volatile security environment in Europe means some of those plans require "another look."

"Considering the current European security environment, it is a prudent measure to review some of the decisions under the January 2015 European Infrastructure Consolidation effort," EUCOM said in a statement.

To retain any of these facilities, the command would need Pentagon backing and possibly would require fresh negotiations with host nations where redevelopment planning has been initiated.

In 2015, the Pentagon added 15 facilities to the closure list, including RAF Mildenhall in the United Kingdom, where the U.S. Air Force operates a major air-to-air refueling mission and surveillance aircraft. The various closures are slated to happen during the next couple of years; operations at Mildenhall are not likely to end until 2023.

"These closures were programmed over

a number of fiscal years and, to date, none of these sites have been returned to the host nation, as we are putting the necessary infrastructure in place to facilitate mission and personnel moves necessary," EUCOM said.

Besides Mildenhall, RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth — home to Air Force communication and intelligence operations — are the most prominent facilities on the list. Those operations are expected to move to a separate facility — RAF Croughton.

On the Army side, the largest installations on the chopping block are the Ansbach garrison's Barton Barracks and Wiesbaden garrison's Mainz-Kastel Station, where support missions are carried out.

As the Army's mission in Europe has intensified during the past three years, the service had been pinched for space after decades of drawdown. U.S. Army Europe recently began looking for potential new basing options, visiting sites in northern Germany in case the Pentagon elects to expand the mission.

EUCOM Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti wants to add more ground forces to Europe. He has advocated for a full Army division, including a fire brigade, an engineer brigade and air defense units.

The 2015 European Infrastructure Consolidation initiative that marked the 15 sites for closure was under review for more than two years, with analysis predating Russia's 2014 intervention in Ukraine.

## Okinawa event honors famed war reporter Pyle

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

IE SHIMA, Okinawa — Every year since 1952, Okinawa's American Legion Post 28 has made a solemn pilgrimage to Ie Shima to honor the life of famed World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle.

Pyle — who was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for telling the story of America's troops overseas to an anxious nation back home — was felled by Japanese machine-gun fire on April 18, 1945.

His grave lies alongside the troops he covered in Hawaii's National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

On Easter Sunday, two days before the 72nd anniversary of his death, legionnaires, soldiers, Marines, local officials and Boy Scouts from Troop 112 gathered to discuss Pyle's legacy and the challenges associated with keeping it alive so many years removed from the war.

The road sign above the pristine historical site is faded, as is the board that features information about the acclaimed war correspondent; the plaque on the monument that marks the spot where Pyle fell also is withering.

"He was an inspiration and a voice for the men and women thousands of miles from their homes facing combat," Army

Col. Derek Jansen said, addressing the audience at Sunday's memorial service. The 10th Regional Support Group commander recalled Pyle's suggestion in one of his columns that combat infantrymen receive "fight pay," which Congress granted; such was Pyle's influence.

Pyle was born Aug. 3, 1900, near Dana, Ind. After graduating high school, he joined the Navy Reserve, just in time to see the final months of World War I on active duty. He was discharged with the rank of petty officer 3rd class.

After the war, Pyle studied journalism at Indiana University. He went on to write for newspapers in Indiana and

Washington, but won acclaim writing daily feature columns as a war correspondent for Scripps-Howard newspapers. As his profile grew, his work was featured in a growing number of newspapers, including Stars and Stripes.

Pyle traveled to London in 1940 to report on the German bombs falling from the sky. It wasn't long before he joined the American troops stationed there. He covered the war in North Africa, Italy and finally Normandy, France.

He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1944 for his coverage of the war in Europe.

# Turkish opposition seeks to void vote result, cites irregularities

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey's main opposition party urged the country's electoral board Monday to cancel the results of a landmark referendum that granted sweeping new powers to the nation's president, citing what it called substantial voting irregularities.

Turkey's electoral board confirmed the "yes" victory in the referendum and said the final results would be declared in 11-12 days. The state-run Anadolu Agency said the "yes" side stood at 51.4 percent of the vote, while the "no" vote saw 48.6 percent support.

The margin fell short of the sweeping victory that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had sought. Nevertheless, it could cement his hold on power in Turkey for a decade and is expected to have a huge effect on the country's long-term political future and its interna-

tional relations.

"I suspect the result was narrower than what Erdogan expected," said Howard Eisenstat, associate professor of Middle East History at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y. "Erdogan has ruled with a narrow victory before. He does not see a narrow victory as anything less than a mandate. His tendency has been not to co-opt the opposition but to crush it."

Erdogan, 63, initially sounded a conciliatory tone, saying the result was a victory not just for those who voted "yes," but for "the whole 80 million, the whole of Turkey."

But his more abrasive style quickly returned. "There are those who are belittling the result. They shouldn't try; it will be in vain," he told supporters in Istanbul. "It's too late now."

Opposition parties still cried foul. Bulent Tezcan, deputy chairman of the Republican

People's Party, or CHP, cited numerous problems in the conduct of the vote.

An unprecedented electoral board decision to accept as valid ballots that didn't bear the official stamp has led to outrage.

Normally, a ballot must bear the official stamp on the back, be put into an envelope that also bears an official stamp and be handed to the voter by an electoral official at a polling station. The system is designed to ensure that only one vote is cast per registered person.

The board announced Sunday, however, it would accept unstamped envelopes as valid after many voters complained about being handed blank envelopes that did not bear the official stamp. The board said the ballot papers would be considered invalid only if it was proven they were fraudulently cast.

# Japan preps for possible Korean crisis

Associated Press

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday that Japan's government is drawing up contingency plans in case a crisis on the Korean Peninsula sends an influx of refugees to Japan.

Abe told a parliamentary session that the government is formulating measures including protecting foreigners, landing procedures, building and operating shelters, and screening asylum-seekers.

Abe's disclosure came in response to a question that had been occasionally asked in the past but is now more realistic than ever with North Korea's missile capability rapidly advancing and tension with the U.S. rising.

The government has also been working on evacuation plans for about 60,000 Japanese from South Korea in case of a crisis.

Later Monday, key ministers of Abe's National Security Council met to analyze the latest development in North Korea and discuss Japanese responses, said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, who attended the meeting, without elaborating further.

On Friday, the National Security Council members discussed how to deal with a possibility that armed North Korean soldiers pretending to be refugees may try to enter Japan, Kyodo News reported.

According to one scenario, a U.S. military action sends a massive number of North Korean refugees to the Japanese coast in boats, but some armed soldiers hiding among them could plot terrorist activities after landing, Kyodo said.

Japan's government is considering dispatching commercial or military aircraft and vessels to South Korea in case Japanese nationals need to be evacuated.

# Ousted South Korean leader indicted on corruption charges

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean prosecutors on Monday indicted ex-President Park Geun-hye on bribery, extortion, abuse of power and other high-profile corruption charges that could potentially send her to jail for life.

Park was impeached in December, officially stripped of power in March and has been in a detention facility near Seoul since being arrested last month on allegations she extorted from businesses, took bribes and committed other wrongdoing, all in collaboration with a longtime confidante.

Prosecutors also indicted Shin Dong-bin, the chairman of Lotte, South Korea's fifth-largest business conglomerate, on a

charge of offering a bribe of \$6 million to Park and her friend Choi Soon-sil in exchange for a lucrative government license to open a new duty free shop.

It is unclear if Park's trial will start before a May 9 special election that will determine her successor.

Park, 65, was elected South Korea's first female president in late 2012. The country will now watch as she is forced to stand in court while handcuffed, bound with rope and possibly dressed in prison garb.

If convicted, her bribery charge carries the biggest punishment, ranging from 10 years in prison to life imprisonment.

Prosecutors charged Park with conspiring with Choi and a presidential adviser to pres-

sure 18 business groups to donate a total of \$68 million for the launch of two nonprofit foundations controlled by Choi.

Park and Choi were also charged with taking bribes from two of the business groups, Samsung and Lotte, and colluding with other top officials to blacklist artists critical of Park's government to deny them state support. Park also faces charges she passed on dozens of documents with sensitive information to Choi via one of her presidential aides.

According to prosecutors, Park and Choi allegedly took about \$26 million in bribes from Samsung in return for a government support for a smooth company leadership transition.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Councilman wants pot facility on his property

**AZ** PRESCOTT — A city council member in the Arizona town of Chino Valley who previously has been critical of pot smokers now wants town officials to allow a medical marijuana research facility to open on his property. The council member says he's had a change of heart on marijuana.

The Daily Courier reported Corey Mendoza asked the town's Planning and Zoning Commission for a conditional-use permit to open the research and development facility.

Commissioners voted to recommend the City Council approve the permit but added several stipulations to Mendoza's application. One requirement is that he abides by equal or greater security for the facility as required by state regulations for marijuana cultivation.

### Police: Dirt bike rider hits 2, carjacks vehicle

**PA** DREXEL HILL — Authorities said a dirt bike rider pursued by police struck a woman and a child in a crosswalk near Philadelphia, then carjacked a vehicle and fled.

Officials said Philadelphia police tried to arrest the rider earlier but he fled into Delaware County, speeding into an Upper Darby area crowded with Easter shoppers and people entering a children's show at the Tower Theater.

Upper Darby police said he hit a woman and a 6-year-old girl, leaving the child in serious condition at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the woman in guarded condition at Penn Presbyterian hospital.

Police said the rider then forced a driver from a car at knifepoint and fled. The car was recovered and a person

was taken into custody, but police said they don't know whether he was involved.

### Suspect IDs self under police Facebook post

**FL** WINTER HAVEN — Florida police say a suspect in a theft at a Wal-Mart identified herself on Facebook after seeing a post offering a reward.

Winter Haven Police posted a video Thursday on Facebook showing a couple pushing a cart out of the store April 7. Police said they hadn't paid for their items.

The post offered a potential reward to tipsters. Ninety minutes later, Elaina West, 29, of Lake Wales, left a comment identifying herself in the video. West wrote: "Ain't no reward I'm coming in."

Police said West surrendered late Thursday. She was held Sunday at the Polk County jail on \$1,000 bond for grand theft. Her husband, Patrick West, 30, was held on \$8,500 bond for grand theft and drug charges.

### Professor sues over 'clean toilets' job title

**MT** BOZEMAN — A Montana State University professor is suing Wal-Mart for libel after he says an employee at the Bozeman store listed his occupation on a fishing license as a toilet cleaner.

Gilbert Kalonde, assistant professor of technology education at MSU, filed the suit in Gallatin County District Court. He is seeking unspecified damages. According to the complaint, Kalonde bought a state fishing license in April 2015, showing the Wal-Mart employee identification of his employment at MSU. The Wal-Mart employee entered "clean toilets" into the state database as Kalonde's occupation.

### Deputy accused of kicking suspect off roof

**CO** DENVER — A sheriff's deputy is accused kicking a fleeing suspect off a roof northeast of Denver, then lying about it in a police report.

The Denver Post reported James Cook, 33, an Adams County deputy, is charged with second-degree assault stemming from the March 21 chase that injured a 24-year-old domestic violence suspect. Investigators said the suspect climbed onto a rooftop in Brighton and fell during a confrontation with Cook.

Witnesses said the deputy forced the man off the building.

According to court documents, Cook said, "Yeah, I slipped and fell. ... I'll go with that" when talking to other officers about the incident. He then wrote in his police report that he lost his footing and slid down into the suspect, who fell about 10 feet and broke his pelvis.

### 2 charged after spat at an Easter egg hunt

**LA** THIBODAUX — A man and woman have been arrested after authorities say a lover's quarrel at an Easter egg hunt led to injuries and a shattered windshield.

News outlets reported Florence Robinson, 25, and Junius Boyd, 33, were each charged Sunday with aggravated battery with a dangerous weapon in Thibodaux. Robinson was also charged with simple criminal damage to property and disturbing the peace.

Police Chief Bryan Zeringue said in a news release that the suspects had broken up earlier that day. Witnesses told police Robinson showed up at the park and confronted Boyd with a shovel.

Zeringue said Robinson

hit Boyd in the arm with the handle after she smashed his windshield. Boyd then took the handle and hit her with it.

### Man patches hundreds of potholes on own

**NE** OMAHA — An Omaha man is taking road repair into his own hands by patching hundreds of potholes near his home during the past several years.

The Omaha World-Herald reported Steve Robinson, 62, lives on a street that is not paved with concrete and makes the driving surface very rough.

Robinson estimated that by summer's end, he will have spent \$10,000 on 10 tons of pothole patch.

The streets are part of an estimated 300 lane miles in Omaha that weren't built to city code, which the city stops maintaining once those roads become too worn down.

### Single-engine plane lands on highway

**OR** EUGENE — Authorities said a single-engine plane made an emergency landing on a highway about 1 mile from the Eugene airport.

The Register-Guard reported that pilot Brandon Wynn landed his Van's RV12 plane on State Highway 99 North on Friday afternoon after experiencing engine trouble.

Wynn said he was giving a flying lesson to Jacob Brands, 22, when he saw the oil pressure had spun to zero.

Wynn said flying back to the runway was his goal, but he had to bring the plane down sooner. Brands helped Wynn make a safe landing on the highway by calling out cars he saw below the plane.

Neither man was injured.

From wire reports

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# James Harden, Rockets blow out Thunder

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Although James Harden is Houston's undisputed star, he can't top Russell Westbrook entirely on his own.

As is so often the case, Patrick Beverley was there for support Sunday night.

Harden scored 37 points to outshine Westbrook as the Rockets pulled away in the third quarter and coasted to a 118-87 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series.

Harden had nine assists and seven rebounds, while Beverley, who had the unenviable task of guarding Westbrook, had a playoff career-best 21 points along with 10 rebounds.

Beverley's performance was nothing new to Harden, who has had a front row seat to his work for years.

"That's the reason we're in the position we're in," Harden said. "He brings it every game. Whether his shot is falling or not, he brings that intensity, that resolve. He was just Pat tonight."

The best-of-seven Western Conference series continues Wednesday night in Houston.

The third-seeded Rockets were up by 20 when Harden came off the bench with about seven minutes remaining. He went right to work — making two three-pointers to power a 10-0 run and push the lead to 110-80 with 4½ minutes left. Harden, who along with Westbrook is a front-runner for MVP, went to the bench, and both teams cleared their benches soon after that.

Westbrook had 22 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists but made just 6 of 23

shots and had nine turnovers for the sixth-seeded Thunder.

"We've got to do a better job starting with myself — got to do a better job of taking care of the basketball and making some shots," Westbrook said.

Beverley refused to take credit for slowing Westbrook down.

"It was a team effort in just trying to show him a lot of bodies," he said.

Thunder coach Billy Donovan raved about Beverley.

"He played a very, very good game," Donovan said. "I thought he impacted the game way, way more with his energy, his effort, his hustle, his loose balls, his offensive rebounding, keeping balls alive. That's where he really did a great job."

## Wall leads Wiz to win over Hawks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After John Wall told Markieff Morris what to expect in his NBA playoff debut, the Washington Wizards' All-Star guard showed everyone his postseason best.

Wall scored a playoff career-high 32 points and dished out 14 assists and Morris added 21 points as the Wizards rebounded from a rough second quarter to beat the Atlanta Hawks 114-107 Sunday in Game 1 of their first-round series. Feeding off Morris' hot start to the second half, Wall scored 15 points in the third quarter alone as Washington pulled away to take the series lead.

"John can take over games, he can take over quarters, he can take over plays," coach Scott Brooks said. "He's a tremendous competitor and he plays with toughness and he gets shots — 32 and 14, that's high level All-Star game."

Wall hadn't forgotten the five fractures in his left hand and wrist that cost him three games against Atlanta two years ago, a series Washington

lost as a result. Conscious that he couldn't do it all himself, Wall embraced the role as defensive stopper and facilitator on Sunday.

Seconds after feeding Morris for a dunk in his monster third quarter, Wall pointed to the court to deliver the message: "This is my house."

"I play with a lot of energy, a lot of intensity," Wall said. "When I'm not being aggressive like that and into it, I'm not a great player. But when I'm into it like that, if I'm scoring or my teammates are scoring, I'm always going to be hyped."

Even as each team shot 28 percent from three-point territory, scoring wasn't a problem. Wizards guard Bradley Beal didn't let a 3-for-10 start stunt his confidence, and he finished 6 of 11 for 22 points.

"He's like, just reboot the computer every miss and just focus on making the next shot," Brooks said.

That offense from Wall, Beal and Morris was enough to offset 25 points from Atlanta's Dennis Schroder and 19 from Paul Millsap.

## Durant shines in Warriors' victory

Associated Press

OAKLAND, California — Kevin Durant patted his chest after two big baskets in the fourth quarter and let everybody know "I got this!" Stephen Curry knocked down a timely baseline three-pointer, reached his hand high and gestured to further ignite a raucous sellout crowd.

On a day Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum put on a dazzling display of shot-making for Portland, the NBA's top-seeded team of superstars found its touch down the stretch and defended with purpose.

Durant had 32 points and 10 rebounds in his Golden State playoff debut while Curry scored 29 points as the Warriors withstood a sensational day by the Trail Blazers' dynamic backcourt duo to win Game 1 of the first-round series 121-109 on Sunday.

McCollum scored a playoff career-best 41 points and Lillard had 34 but the Warriors made the crucial big plays on both ends down the stretch with Portland missing injured center Jusuf Nurkic.

"When they got it going, they're hitting tough shots in the first half, some you've just got to live with, we played great defense," Curry said. "They were just able to finish, but over the course of 48 you just try to wear them down."

Draymond Green had 19 points, 12 rebounds, nine assists, five blocked shots and three steals to help last season's second-place team take the first step in what it is counting on to be a championship run.

Durant shot 12-for-20, showing no issues with a recent left knee injury that sidelined him 19 games before he returned for the final three regular-season contests with the NBA-best Warriors.

The opener in a rematch of last season's Western Conference semifinals won in five games by Golden State didn't disappoint featuring two of the NBA's best backcourt duos.

"The game ratchets up when you get into the playoffs," Durant said. "I definitely felt good out there."

# Chicago outlasts top-seeded Celts

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Chicago Bulls waited until the final night of the regular season to cement their spot in the post-season. Jimmy Butler made sure the wait for a playoff victory was a short one.

Butler had 30 points and nine rebounds and the Bulls outlasted top-seeded Boston 106-102 in Game 1 on Sunday on an emotional night for grieving Celtics star Isaiah Thomas.

Playing a day after 22-year-old sister Chyna Thomas was killed in a car accident in their home state of Washington, Thomas led the Celtics with 33 points. But Butler overcame a united Garden crowd and led Chicago to the victory, scoring 23 points in the second half.

"We were so locked in all week," Butler said. "We knew their stuff, just like they knew ours. But we executed extremely well. We haven't done that all season, but this is the right time to do it."

He also got a big lift from the Bulls' young reserves, who outscored their Boston counterparts 35-22.

Bobby Portis finished with 19 for the Bulls.

Chicago coach Fred Hoiberg lauded his team's defensive effort, particularly how it rebounded Boston 53-36. He also had praise for the job Butler did defending Thomas late, after Rajon Rondo picked up his fifth foul.

"Jimmy is obviously our best defender," he said. "Jimmy is going to have his turn to guard him."

Rondo said they wanted to be aggressive.

"I told the guys coming out it was going to be physical and we wanted to throw the first punch," he said.

Al Horford had 19 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for the Celtics. He was active throughout, coming up with several big baskets and assists to keep his team in the game.

Game 2 in the first-round series is Tuesday night in Boston.

Neither team had more than a two-possession lead until Butler made three free throws with 4 minutes to play to make it 95-88. Butler scored 10 straight points to put the Bulls back in front early in the fourth, the first of three lead changes in the fourth quarter.

Later, Thomas had a scary moment when he was hit on his left hand on a three-point attempt before landing awkwardly on it. After a quick visit to the trainer, he calmly made all three free throws.

It was part of a stretch in which he scored seven straight points.

Celtics fans rallied behind Thomas, showering him with a deafening cheer when he was introduced.

Still, Thomas appeared to be a little emotional at the start of the game, badly missing his first free throw short off the front rim. He wasn't the only Boston player a little off their game in the first half. Boston's second unit started the second quarter 1-for-7 from the field and was outscored 10-0 to surrender the Celtics' first-quarter lead.

Horford acknowledged afterward that emotions were tough for not just Thomas, but the entire team.

"We're never going to make excuses, but this is hard," Horford said. "This was difficult, and I felt like our guys really dealt with it best. We knew (Thomas) was hurting... we have a lot of respect for him that he was able to come out."

The Celtics held a pregame moment of silence for Thomas' sister, part of an emotional pregame introduction for him. He looked toward the Garden rafters just before tip-off and wrote several messages to his sister on his sneakers. Visible were "Chyna," "RIP Lil Sis" and "I love you."

# Penguins up 3-0 after overtime win

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — With help from Sidney Crosby, Jake Guentzel and the defending champion Pittsburgh Penguins are on the verge of sweeping their opening playoff series against Columbus.

Crosby played keep-away with three Blue Jackets players behind the net before passing the puck to a perfectly positioned Guentzel in front during overtime on Sunday night.

The 22-year-old rookie capped his hat trick by slipping it past Sergei Bobrovsky at 13:10 of the extra period for a 5-4 win and a 3-0 advantage for Pittsburgh in the playoff series.

The Penguins will try to finish off Columbus on Tuesday night.

The loss was deflating for the Blue Jackets, who scored 11 seconds into the game and jumped out to a 3-1 lead after the first period only to let the Penguins climb back in, as veteran goalie Marc-Andre Fleury regained the form that frustrated Columbus in the two previous games.

Fleury, forced into action for the injured Matt Murray, had 33 saves in another wild and hard-hitting matchup between the Metropolitan Division rivals.

The biggest save might have been a shot by Brandon Dubinsky that Fleury took off his mask seven minutes into the overtime.

Guentzel earned the first playoff hat trick for a Pittsburgh rookie. The accomplishment was still sinking in after the win.

"I don't even know yet," he said. "It's a pretty unique night."

Bryan Rust and Evgeni Malkin added goals for the Penguins. Malkin and Crosby each had two assists.

**Canadiens 3, Rangers 1:**

Alexander Radulov had a goal and an assist to lead visiting Montreal, giving the Canadiens a 2-1 lead in the first-round playoff series.

Artturi Lehkonen and Shea Weber scored power-play goals for Montreal and Carey Price stopped 20 shots.

Radulov, who got the overtime winner in Game 2 on Friday night after Tomas Plekanec tied it with 18 seconds left in regulation, has two goals and three assists in the past two games.

Brady Skjei spoiled Price's shutout bid with 2:56 remaining for his first career playoff goal.

Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, coming off a playoff career-high 54 saves in Game 2, stopped 26 shots in this one.

**Oilers 1, Sharks 0:** Zack Kassian scored midway through the third period and Cam Talbot made 23 saves in his second straight shutout as visiting Edmonton won Game 3.

The Oilers bounced back from an overtime loss in their first playoff game in 11 years to post consecutive shutouts and take a 2-1 series lead over the defending Western Conference champions. Game 4 is Tuesday in San Jose.

**Blues 3, Wild 1:** Jaden Schwartz scored the go-ahead goal in the second period and Jake Allen made 40 saves to lead host St. Louis to a 3-0 series lead.

Colton Parayko also scored for the Blues and Alexander Steen added an empty-netter for St. Louis, which will try to sweep the series Wednesday in St. Louis.

Charlie Coyle scored for Minnesota, which got 28 saves from Devan Dubnyk.

Schwartz had a power-play goal at 15:19 of the second period to put the Blues one win away from the second round.

# Orioles' Mancini sets rookie HR mark

Associated Press

TORONTO — Don't be surprised if all the Baltimore Orioles are soon swinging the same style of bat used by rookie Trey Mancini.

Mancini hit two home runs, Dylan Bundy pitched six shutout innings and the Orioles beat the struggling Toronto Blue Jays 11-4 on Sunday.

Mancini connected twice for the second time in three games. He also hit two homers in a win at Boston on Wednesday. In this one, he hit a three-run blast off Ryan Tepera in the sixth, then added a solo drive off Matt Dermody in the eighth.

Mancini, who finished 3-for-5 with four RBIs, matched the major league record for home runs in the first 12 games of a career

with seven, joining Trevor Story and Dino Restelli. He hit three homers in five games last September.

"It's humbling to hear that, especially with how many legends have played the game," Mancini said. "To make your mark in any way is really neat."

Using bats borrowed from Mancini's locker — he uses a Louisville Slugger C243 — Manny Machado and Craig Gentry also homered for Baltimore. They each hit a two-run shot off Dermody as the Orioles piled on late against their slumping AL East foes.

"It was pretty fun and pretty cool that they both hit home runs," Mancini said. "I might need an extra shipment here soon."

Orioles manager Buck Showalter was both amused and amazed at the productive

bat-sharing.

"I have never seen that before," Showalter said. "I just went, 'Really?'"

Toronto lost for the eighth time in nine games and dropped to 2-10 overall. The Blue Jays have scored 34 total runs, the fewest in the majors.

"We're all concerned," manager John Gibbons said. "We all expected to play better."

Toronto lost left-hander J.A. Happ (0-3) to a sore elbow in the fifth inning, another blow to a suddenly thin starting rotation.

"Last pitch of the fourth inning I felt kind of a pull, a tug in my elbow," Happ said. "Then I went back out there for the fifth and it got progressively worse."

Happ was to undergo an MRI on Monday, an off day.

# Bird ends slump as Yankees pound Cards

Associated Press

NEW YORK — While the rest of the Yankees were off to a flying start at home, Greg Bird was still grounded in the batter's box.

He finally joined in the fun Sunday.

Bird busted out of his slump with a long home run that began a perfect night at the plate, and Michael Pineda pitched New York past the staggering St. Louis Cardinals 9-3 for its seventh straight victory.

"That's the Bird I know," teammate Aaron Judge said. "That's what he did in spring training."

Aaron Hicks also hit a homer and Judge was robbed of one by a fan in the bleachers, forcing the young Yankees bopper to settle for an RBI triple. New York chased Adam Wainwright (0-3) in the fifth and finished a three-game sweep that left St. Louis at 3-9, the worst record in the National League and its poorest start since 1988.

"It's an incredibly frustrating start to the season," the 35-year-old Wainwright said after his first career outing against the Yankees. "I know Cardinal Nation is ready for me to get my act together, and I am, too."

His cap cocked to the side, Pineda (2-1) permitted two runs over seven innings in a

solid follow-up to his dominant outing last Monday. The right-hander retired his first 20 batters during New York's home opener and struck out 11 over 7<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings for an 8-1 victory against Tampa Bay.

The strong encore Sunday was particularly encouraging to the Yankees, yearning for a steady season from a talented pitcher who has been maddeningly inconsistent throughout his tenure with the team.

"It's important because you want him to keep going, and get some momentum," manager Joe Girardi said. "He had a hard time doing that last year."

**Nationals 6, Phillies 4:** Bryce Harper hit a two-run homer in the third inning and a game-ending, three-run drive with two outs in the ninth to lead host Washington.

**Pirates 6, Cubs 1:** Adam Frazier homered and visiting Pittsburgh scored six runs in the final two innings to complete a three-game sweep of the World Series champions. The Pirates went just 4-14 against the Cubs last year, including 1-8 at Wrigley Field.

**Braves 9, Padres 2:** Bartolo Colon (1-1) allowed one hit over seven innings in the Atlanta home debut for the 43-year-old: Ryan Schimpf's second-inning homer.

**Marlins 4, Mets 2:** Rookie J.T. Riddle hit a two-run homer against Addison Reed (0-1) with two outs in the ninth for host Miami.

Marlins starter Dan Straily and three relievers didn't allow a hit until Neil Walker singled with two outs in the eighth. Miami won the final three of a four-game series.

**Tigers 4, Indians 1:** Matthew Boyd (2-1) allowed one run in six innings and Alex Avila hit a two-run homer for visiting Detroit.

Carlos Carrasco (1-1) made his first appearance against Detroit since his right hand was broken by Ian Kinsler's line drive in September.

**Brewers 4, Reds 2:** Ryan Braun hit a go-ahead, two-run homer and Eric Thames added a solo shot for his fifth home run of the series as visiting Milwaukee won for the fifth time in six games.

Sal Romano (0-1) started in place of injured Rookie Davis and lasted three innings in his major league debut. The 23-year-old right-hander allowed four walks, three hits and three runs.

**Red Sox 7, Rays 5:** Mitch Moreland hit a go-ahead, two-run single in the seventh off left-hander Xavier Cedeno

after host Boston, trailing 5-4, loading the bases against Danny Farquhar (0-1),

**Royals 1, Angels 0:** Alcides Escobar hit an RBI single in the ninth off Cam Bedrosian after Salvador Perez's leading single against Blake Parker (0-1) to give host Kansas City the win.

**Rockies 4, Giants 3:** Rookie Antonio Senzatela (2-0) settled down after a rough first inning, holding San Francisco scoreless on four hits over the next six to win his second straight start.

**White Sox 3, Twins 1:** Avisail Garcia had a career-high four hits, including an opposite-field, two-run homer to right off Ryan Pressly (0-2) in the 10th inning for visiting Chicago.

**Diamondbacks 3, Dodgers 1:** Taijuan Walker (2-1) struck out seven and allowed a run and four hits over five innings for visiting Arizona.

**Mariners 8, Rangers 7:** Nelson Cruz singled in the tie-breaking run to cap a two-run, ninth-inning rally as host Seattle overcame a 6-1 deficit to complete a three-game sweep.

Nomar Mazara gave Texas a 7-6 lead when he led off the ninth against Edwin Diaz (1-1) with his fourth homer.