

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Gas attack blamed as dozens die in Syria

*The Washington Post*

BEIRUT — Syrian doctors and rescue workers said Sunday that dozens of people had died in an apparent chemical attack on a besieged enclave near Damascus as government forces escalated their offensive to recapture one of the last rebel strongholds near the capital.

At least 40 people were killed Saturday evening in the gas attack in Douma in eastern Ghouta, about 12 miles from Damascus, according to the Syrian-American Medical Society, a Washington-based non-profit group that supports health facilities in the area.

More than 500 people “were brought to local medical centers with symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent,” SAMS said in a joint statement with the opposition-linked Syria Civil Defense, a

group of first responders. The patients showed signs of respiratory distress, with many foaming at the mouth and emitting a “chlorine-like odor,” they said.

President Donald Trump responded to the attack Sunday morning on Twitter.

“Many dead, including women and children, in mindless CHEMICAL attack in Syria,” he said. “Area of atrocity is in lockdown and encircled by Syrian Army, making it completely inaccessible to outside world. President Putin, Russia and Iran are responsible for backing Animal Assad. Big price ...”

Regarding a possible U.S. response, White House homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Thomas Bossert said, “I wouldn’t take anything off the table.”

“We’re looking into the attack,” he said in an interview on ABC’s “This Week” set

to air Sunday.

Syrian state media denied government involvement. Russia’s Foreign Ministry also dismissed claims that Syrian troops were responsible. Russia is a key backer of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The allegations are “without basis” and are “designed to shield the terrorists ... who reject a political settlement,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

Earlier, the State Department singled out the Syrian and Russian governments, saying they “must be held accountable.” Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert described the reports from eastern Douma as “disturbing and “horrifying,” saying they required an “immediate response by the international community.”

## Military weighs needs in Syria, Trump concerns

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon’s mission against Islamic State in Syria remains open-ended despite President Donald Trump’s promise of a quick U.S. withdrawal.

Military leaders are focusing on pushing the once-powerful group out of the small foothold it controls in eastern Syria and ensuring that it cannot plot attacks against the United States, a task defense officials have suggested will require a U.S. presence after the fighting stops.

What remains unclear is how the military will reconcile its vision with that of the president, whose distrust of foreign wars and desire to demonstrate a swift victory were evident in the past week as he vowed that U.S. troops would depart Syria “very soon.”

Public and private comments reveal a gap regarding America’s future role in Syria. Military leaders, mindful of the fleeting nature of earlier military gains in Iraq and Afghanistan, have spoken repeatedly of the need for

a robust post-conflict agenda.

Gen. Joseph Votel, the head of U.S. Central Command, predicted that the “hard part” lies ahead, as Syrian towns and cities now free of ISIS seek to rebuild and ensure that militants cannot return. “Of course there is a military role in this,” he said.

While commanders warn against leaving before the territory is stable enough to prevent an insurgent revival, the president wants other countries to stabilize the area. Meeting with senior national security aides the same day, the president sought to limit U.S. involvement in stabilization activities, but did not press for an immediate withdrawal.

Military officials are trying to address Trump’s concerns even as they race ahead with their plans for what many have described as “finishing the job.”

“The president has actually been very good in not giving us a specific timeline, so that’s a tool that we can use to our effect as we move forward,” Lt. Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, director of the Joint Staff, told reporters last

week.

In an indication of an evolving Pentagon approach, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis suggested Friday that the United States had not decided whether it would continue supporting its main partner in northern Syria after withdrawing troops.

For now, military leaders are centering their efforts on the remaining military mission, which presents a sharp contrast to the one they faced in 2014, when militants controlled a vast swath across central and eastern Syria.

After more than four years of intensive airstrikes and U.S.-supported ground operations, only a tiny fraction of that militant domain remains. Estimates of how many ISIS fighters are in Syria and Iraq range from roughly 1,000 to 3,000, but the message from U.S. commanders is clear: A tactical victory is within reach.

Today, about 2,000 U.S. troops arrayed across northern and eastern Syria conduct a variety of missions. Chief among those is dealing with a small militant

force dug in along the Euphrates River near the city of Bukamal, on Syria’s border with Iraq.

There, U.S. forces advise and support members of the Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, a Kurdish-dominated force that has been the main American military partner against the Islamic State.

After years of steady progress reclaiming militant-held territory, military leaders expressed frustration when the SDF diverted its efforts to defending the northwest city of Afrin from an onslaught by Turkish-backed Syrian forces.

Turkey has supported an aggressive campaign seeking to ensure that Syrian Kurds, whom it considers terrorists, cannot consolidate positions along its border.

In northern Syria, U.S. troops are expanding their activities around the city of Manbij, where the same Kurdish-Turkish tensions have the potential to erupt in greater violence and, U.S. officials fear, to allow ISIS to return.

# Dual missile defenses tested

By WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The Missile Defense Agency on Friday succeeded in its first step to integrate the Army's two linchpin missile defense systems during testing of upgraded software at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

The test demonstrated that the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, and the Patriot weapons systems could communicate as an integrated system, the U.S. Missile Defense Agency said in a statement Friday. The tracking exercise simulated engagement of a live, short-range Lynx missile target, the agency said.

That target was launched from the missile range and was detected and tracked by

THAAD's Army-Navy/Transportable Surveillance Radar Model 2 and by Patriot, MDA said.

During that tracking, THAAD and Patriot exchanged messages through "tactical data links" and verified their mutual weapons systems, the MDA said. No live interceptors were launched during the test.

"These two weapon systems are vitally important as components of our layered ballistic missile defense system and it is critical that they are able to transmit data and communicate with one another," MDA Director Lt. Gen. Samuel Greaves said in the statement.

Friday's test was overseen by the Ballistic Missile Defense System Operational Test Agen-

cy. Soldiers with the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas, also participated. The soldiers operating the equipment were not privy to the actual target launch time, the MDA said.

The Army plans to tie the systems together within the next two years.

This test was among the requirements of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act for the Army and the MDA to test the integration of the two systems each year, the agency said.

The most crucial need for such an integrated system is in South Korea, where the Army operates both to defend against possible missile attacks by North Korea.

# Group files complaint on Bible display

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A nonprofit group dedicated to safeguarding servicemembers' constitutional right to religious freedom has lodged a formal complaint with the Navy after a Bible was spotted in a POW/MIA "Missing Man" table display at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa.

The complaint was filed Thursday by the New York-based Law Office of Donald Rehkopf Jr. on behalf of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and 26 families on Okinawa.

The complaint — addressed to Navy Medicine West commander Rear Adm. Paul Pearigen — demands the immediate removal of the Bible from the hospital galley display, the immediate removal of accompanying written materials that describe the United States as being "founded as one nation under God," a Japanese translation of those materials and an independent investigation into who put up the display, as well as "appropriate disciplinary measures" for those responsible.

The complainants include sailors, Marines and Department of Defense civilian employees stationed on the island, MRFF founder and president Mikey Weinstein said Friday.

"Why is that Bible there?" Weinstein said. "Can you imagine if somebody put a Quran there, or the book of Satan, or the Book of Mormon? It violates the [First Amendment's Establishment Clause] as well as DOD and Navy regulations."

MRFF officials expect the Navy to comply with the request. If it does not, they plan to file a third-party inspector general complaint and potentially a lawsuit.

A U.S. Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman referred comment requests to a U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa spokesman, who did not respond to messages Friday.

# COLA survey promoted in Japan

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A cost-of-living survey that's about to do the rounds of U.S. bases in Japan could affect allowances that were slashed for servicemembers there earlier this year.

The living pattern survey, which is conducted every three years, asks servicemembers how and where they buy goods and services and helps set COLA rates that compensate personnel for higher prices overseas.

Personnel in Yokosuka and Yokohama will have from April 15 to May 31 to complete the survey. All other military bases in Japan will hold theirs May 1-31.

In 2018, all but two U.S. bases in Japan — Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Camp Fuji — experienced COLA reductions. The largest drops came at Yokosuka, where servicemembers saw rates drop about 45 percent, and at Yokota Air Base, where they fell by about 30 percent.

To get the most accurate information to determine allow-

ances for the next three years it's important that as many people as possible fill out the surveys, Yokosuka spokesman Sean Kelly said.

"If you only have a small fraction of the eligible servicemembers filling out the survey, the data may not be as accurate as it needs to be," he said.

Young troops are less likely to participate than older troops, even though they make up two-thirds of the military population, according to a 2015 Rand Corp. study.

At a Yokosuka town hall event in February, base commander Capt. Jeffrey Kim encouraged families to do the surveys together.

"All our active duty service members — or spouses, though only one survey will be accepted per active duty DoD ID number — are most strongly encouraged to complete this survey to provide the best pool of data to the Defense Travel Management Office, which administers the Overseas COLA entitlement," Kim told Stars and Stripes Friday in an email.

The Navy is promoting the

survey to Yokosuka spouses — not just servicemembers, who are the only ones technically eligible to take it, Kelly said.

"Many of the spouses probably never took the survey [in years past] because it was incumbent on sailors," he said. "We are looking at how can we push this so the spouses who may be doing most of the shopping know when [the survey] starts, when it ends and how to take it."

This year the Navy is making a concerted effort to get the word out with more social media posts and emails, Kelly said.

"If you have eyes, you will probably see this somewhere," he said. "There is always going to be somebody who is going to miss it, but we are doing our best to minimize those somebodies."

Some residents at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni were frustrated when they heard about a recent 14 percent COLA drop.

At Yokosuka, Navy spouse Ellie Jackson posted information about the survey on the 5,500-member "Yokosuka Military Spouses" Facebook group.

# Democrats in GOP country shift to gun restrictions

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Just 18 months after declaring his opposition to banning assault weapons, Nebraska Democrat Brad Ashford has changed his mind.

The former one-term congressman, now trying to win back an Omaha-area seat he lost in 2016, used to consider it futile to push for a ban while Republicans held power on Capitol Hill. But the student activism that has followed the rampage at a school in Parkland, Fla., has changed his thinking in a way that other high-profile shootings, including two in his hometown since 2007, had not.

Ashford's conversion mirrors the one underway in his party. Not long ago, a moderate record on guns would have been considered a plus for a Democratic candidate in the GOP-leaning suburbs and conservative outskirts of Nebraska's largest city. Today, even with Ashford's reversal, it's a vulnerability that his opponent in the May 15 Democratic primary has been quick to exploit.

That contest, along with races

in Virginia, rural Pennsylvania and other places where gun control has been taboo, shows how far the Democratic Party has traveled on this issue. The November elections will test whether Democrats will make room for candidates who don't back all gun control measures.

Polling shows there's little disagreement among Democrats on the question of stricter gun laws

A poll last month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 69 percent of those surveyed, including 90 percent of Democrats, think gun laws in the U.S. should be tightened.

There are political risks.

The Omaha district represented by Republican Rep. Don Bacon has a healthy number of gun owners, and that could make Eastman's call for comprehensive gun control a problem for her if she advances to the general election. The GOP-leaning district includes a portion of a rural county south of the city where many active-duty and retired military personnel from Offutt Air Force

Base live.

"I don't think their mindset has changed. If you're pro-gun, you're still pro-gun," said Charlene Ligon, the Democratic chairwoman in rural Sarpy County. "And there are a lot of people with guns around here."

In a northern Virginia swing district, all six Democrats who hope to challenge the Republican incumbent, Rep. Barbara Comstock, want to ban assault rifles and expand background checks for gun buyers. In 2016, Comstock's Democratic opponent endorsed only modest changes.

While Nebraska's Ashford advocated some gun control measures during two terms in the state Legislature, he said during a 2016 debate with Bacon, "I don't think we should ban assault weapons."

The students in Florida and elsewhere who mobilized after the Parkland shooting have changed Ashford's mind. "The Parkland thing, now I just feel reinvigorated, and I would vote for an assault weapons ban today," he said.

## Troops test using robots in breaching exercise

By MARTIN EGNASH

Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Humans took a back seat during a base exercise on Friday in which robots cleared obstacles for manned tanks and fighting vehicles.

U.S. and British troops participated in the Robotic Complex Breach Concept demonstration, during which several remote-controlled vehicles performed a task usually carried out by soldiers.

"We did a robotic breach today, which has never been done before. This is a historic moment," said 1st Lt. Cody Rothschild, an officer with the 1st Infantry Division's 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, currently on rotation in Europe. "This is a great step forward for the Army, and for robotics."

The rotational armor brigade was the main armor element during the exercise. It provided suppressing fire with M1A2 Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles, while remote-controlled U.K. Terrier engineering vehicles cleared a simulated minefield and bridged a tank trench.

Breaching enemy obstacles is one of the most dangerous tasks on a battlefield, said British Warrant Officer Robert Kemp.

"Any breach like this will have enemy weapons trained in on the area," Kemp said. "Robotizing breach operations takes away the risk of life and makes clearing enemy obstacles much safer."

Though troops have been utilizing unmanned vehicles, especially drones, for decades, the use of the robotic systems at the demonstration was new to most of the troops involved.

"When I first came in, I didn't expect to be seeing robots doing (combat operations) like this. Being able to see it, eyes on, shows me what the future is going to be like, and it's pretty good," said 1st Lt. Felix Derosin, a platoon leader with the 2ABCT.

## Rain brings flooding conditions in Northern Calif.

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Up to 6 inches of rain fell over two days as a drenching "Pineapple Express" storm swelled rivers and flooded roads in Northern California, forecasters said Saturday.

The heaviest rain was in the northern Sierra and in coastal counties from San Francisco north to Mendocino during a 48-hour period beginning Thursday afternoon, the National Weather Service said.

Downtown San Francisco saw nearly 2 inches on Friday, making for the fourth-wettest April day since record-keeping

began.

The storm tapered off by late Saturday morning but minor flooding continued along the swollen Truckee River near Lake Tahoe.

Yosemite National Park's Yosemite Valley remained closed Saturday night, but officials said they would assess whether to reopen midday Sunday, depending on conditions.

No major problems were reported, but runoff from melting snow could add to the chance of rapidly rising streams and rivers, forecasters warned.

The wet weather resulted from a strong "atmospheric river" of subtropical moisture

that moved east from Hawaii.

Police rescued a man who became trapped in a rain-swollen drainage channel near Sacramento, where many roads were flooded. The state capital saw more than 1.17 inches of rain on Friday.

San Francisco International Airport reported about 150 canceled flights because of the weather and others were delayed.

To the north, state officials warned that they may have to use the partially rebuilt spillway at Oroville Dam for the first time since repairs began on the badly damaged structure last summer.

## White House wants authority to intercept drone communications

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — Citing a growing threat that terrorists will use drones for surveillance or as weapons, the Trump administration is asking Congress to give the Homeland Security and Justice departments the power to track, reroute or destroy the devices, according to a copy of the legislative proposal obtained by The Washington Post.

The legislation would free safety and security officials from those agencies, and their contractors, from laws against intercepting electronic communications that officials say have hamstrung their ability to protect sensitive facilities from cheap and powerful unmanned aircraft.

It would also give wide discretion to those working for the government, outside observers said. The full picture of which facilities would fall under the new authorities remains unclear. Those facilities would be subject to what the proposed legislation calls a “risk-based assessment” as well as regulations and guidance that would be shielded from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

“Overseas, ISIS, other terrorist groups, and criminal or-

ganizations use commercially available [unmanned aircraft systems] to drop explosive payloads, deliver harmful substances, and conduct reconnaissance,” says a document accompanying the legislative text. “Law enforcement and homeland security professionals are gravely concerned that terrorists and criminals will use the nefarious tactics engineered overseas in the homeland.”

The proposal comes weeks before the Transportation Department plans to announce which states, communities and companies have been selected as part of an administration push to expand drone use nationwide. The White House announced the drone integration pilot program in October, and groups from Nevada to Virginia have applied. Firms including Google, Uber and Amazon.com have teamed with communities on the effort.

Supporters want the ability to fly drones in ways that generally are not allowed today, such as roaming across a wide area outside the direct view of the operator. Security officials have long raised concerns, and the pilot program and legislation are among efforts to address them.

## Trump: China will ‘take down’ its trade barriers

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is suggesting China will ease trade barriers “because it is the right thing to do” and Washington and Beijing can settle disputes that have rattled financial markets, consumers and businesses.

A new Trump tweet doesn’t explain why he’s optimistic about resolving an escalating trade clash between the world’s two biggest economies.

Trump says he and Chinese President Xi Jinping “will always be friends, no matter what happens with our dispute on trade.”

Trump insists “China will take down its Trade Barriers because it is the right thing to do. Taxes will become Reciprocal & a deal will be made on Intellectual Property. Great future for both countries!”

The U.S. bought more than \$500 billion in goods from China last year and now is planning or considering penalties on some \$150 billion of those imports. The U.S. sold about \$130 billion

in goods to China in 2017 and faces a potentially devastating hit to its market there if China responds in kind.

China has pledged to “counterattack with great strength” if Trump decides to follow through on his latest threat to impose tariffs on an additional \$100 billion in Chinese goods — after an earlier announcement that targeted \$50 billion.

The Trump administration also is pushing for a crackdown on what it says is China’s theft of U.S. intellectual property.

Conflicting messages about the trade fight have come out in recent days from some top members of Trump’s team.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said he was “cautiously optimistic” the U.S. and China could reach an agreement before any tariffs went into place. But he also said “there is the potential of a trade war.”

The new White House economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, has said the U.S. is “not in a trade war” and that “China is the problem. Blame China, not Trump.”

## Pakistan protests crash involving US diplomat

*Associated Press*

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan summoned the American ambassador on Sunday to lodge a formal protest after a road crash involving a U.S. Embassy vehicle killed a Pakistani motorcyclist.

Ambassador David Hale was told that another man riding on the motorcycle was wounded in Saturday’s accident, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It said “justice will take its course” in accordance with local and international laws.

Pakistani TV stations have aired footage showing a white vehicle running a red light and striking a motorcyclist, who can

be seen flying through the air. The family of the motorcyclist, identified by police as Ateeq Baig, 22, has lodged charges against the U.S. diplomat, saying he ran a red light.

Pakistani police briefly detained the diplomat, but did not arrest him as he enjoys diplomatic immunity.

On Sunday, police said they are examining footage of the accident from a surveillance camera.

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal said the diplomat violated traffic laws and that a case has been registered, without providing further details.

The U.S. Embassy issued a statement expressing sympathy for the family of the

motorcyclist and for those injured in what it said was a “tragic traffic accident involving a U.S. Embassy vehicle.”

“Embassy officials are cooperating with local authorities who are investigating the accident,” it said.

Police have identified the U.S. diplomat as Col. Joseph Emanuel Hall, a defense attache, saying he was alone in the car at the time of the crash. Police impounded the embassy car as part of the investigation.

In February 2011, a contractor employed by the U.S. Consulate shot and killed two Pakistanis in Lahore and struck and killed a bicycle rider as he sped from the scene in his vehicle.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Police department adds kitty to lineup

**MI** TROY — The Troy Police Department in suburban Detroit added a cat to the ranks Friday after auditioning five felines from the Michigan Humane Society.

The cat will be used for therapeutic purposes and make public appearances. A Troy officer who has two cats at home is getting a new four-legged partner.

Sgt. Meghan Lehman said the department also wants to promote pet adoptions from area shelters. She said Troy students will be asked to come up with possible names for the kitten. A name will be selected through a vote on Twitter.

### Moose stomps on man's foot after kick

**AK** ANCHORAGE — State officials said a man was injured north of Anchorage after a moose that he had just kicked stomped his foot in return.

KTVA-TV reported the moose injured the man Thursday morning. State Department of Fish and Game spokesman Ken Marsh said the man escaped major injuries.

Marsh said the cow and a calf were on a trail, and the “guy was trying to go through them” when he kicked the mother.

### Rofer faces charges after taking back roof

**LA** MONROE — A Louisiana roofer faces misdemeanor charges after repossessing a roof because he hadn't been paid.

Authorities arrested Andrew Jackson Higdon III, 66, of West Monroe, last week on charges of simple criminal damage to property and criminal trespass.

The arrest warrant said Ouachita Parish deputies responded Dec. 29, 2016, to a property damage complaint. The victim said Higdon verbally agreed to replace her roof in June and wait for payment until her insurance issued a check.

The victim said Higdon started asking for payment around mid-December. She said she could partially pay, but he wanted the full amount. She said he told her if she didn't pay, he would take the roof.

### Man sues after 'pocket dial' costs job

**GA** ATLANTA — A man who lost his job is suing his former boss for listening in on a conversation over the phone after the man accidentally “pocket-dialed” his boss.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported James Stephens was talking to his wife in 2016 about his boss, Georgia Subsequent Injury Trust Fund Director Mike Coan.

At the time, Stephens didn't realize that he had pocket-dialed Coan, who could hear the conversation. Not liking what he had heard, Coan told Stephens he could resign or be fired.

Stephens filed a lawsuit, arguing Coan knew he'd been inadvertently pocket-dialed but continued to listen to the conversation, violating his privacy.

### Exonerated ex-inmate becomes auxiliary cop

**OH** MAPLE HEIGHTS — A man who hoped to become a police officer after being wrongly imprisoned for 13 years has been sworn in as an auxiliary officer in Ohio.

Cleveland.com reported Michael Green completed peace officer basic training last year at age 52 and was sworn in last week in Maple Heights as an auxiliary officer. That type of

officer helps with traffic control, special events and community activities.

Green was imprisoned for a rape and was exonerated through DNA evidence after he was released in 2001. The actual attacker turned himself in after reading reporting about Green's post-prison life.

### Nooses found on MLK death date at schools

**MD** PASADENA — Nooses were found at two Maryland high schools on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

The Capital reported that Gov. Larry Hogan cited one of those incidents in a tweet Thursday, condemning the actions of a Chesapeake High School student who brought a noose and Confederate flag to school Wednesday. Hogan tweeted that “kind of garbage has no place in Maryland.”

The noose and flag follow a recent series of racial slurs and threats made at the school.

On Maryland's Eastern Shore, Worcester County Public Schools' Carrie Sterrs told The Daily Times a noose was found in the boys bathroom at Stephen Decatur High School.

### Sticky-note robbery fails; man goes to bar

**SC** NORTH MYRTLE BEACH — A masked man armed with a sticky note who was unsuccessful in his attempt to rob a South Carolina gas station then left for the bar next door.

The Sun News of Myrtle Beach reported a man wearing a black ski mask brandished a sticky note reading “I need all the money in register” when he tried to rob Turtle Market in North Myrtle Beach on

Wednesday.

Police said an employee told them that she didn't turn over any money. Police said the man then walked to 39th Avenue Bar and Grill next door. Witnesses said he left on a blue moped.

### Volunteers dig into Santa letters backlog

**AK** NORTH POLE — Keeping the Christmas spirit alive, on the day before Easter, two dozen volunteer “elves” worked to finish Santa Claus' 2017 correspondence.

In responding to children's drawings and toy wish lists, volunteers sent them back a form letter from Santa, apologizing for not responding sooner.

The volunteer elves were working their way through what volunteer Sharon Beeman estimated was more than 11,000 leftover 2017 letters, neatly stacked in U.S. Postal Service boxes.

West Valley High School students will help with the remainder of the letters as a community service project, Beeman said.

### Truck driver unhurt as he falls into sinkhole

**MO** SPRINGFIELD — The driver of a trash truck was unhurt after the vehicle fell into a deep sinkhole in Springfield.

Authorities responded to a call earlier this month and found the truck in a 10-foot-deep sinkhole at an apartment complex in eastern Springfield.

The cause of the sinkhole wasn't immediately clear but Springfield and much of Missouri had seen significant precipitation.

Authorities said the owner of the apartment complex will decide what to do about the hole.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# McIlroy chasing leader Reed

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — The only thunder was on the ground, not in the sky, a series of ear-splitting roars for Patrick Reed and his two eagles, Rory McIlroy and his final birdie, and everyone else who tried desperately to keep up with them in the Masters.

“The roars ... it’s hard not to know what’s going on,” McIlroy said.

By the end of a wet and wild Saturday at Augusta National, Reed helped bring this Masters into focus.

Reed seized control with a pair of eagles on the back nine, two big pars and a 5-under 67 that gave him a three-shot lead over McIlroy as he goes for his first major in the city where he led undermanned Augusta State to two NCAA titles.

His primary challenger is McIlroy, in the final group at the Masters for the first time in seven years, this time with a shot at the career Grand Slam.

This time it’s for a green jacket, not a gold Ryder Cup trophy.

This is for themselves, not for team.

Reed and McIlroy are indelibly linked to that Ryder Cup singles match at Hazeltine some 18 months ago when they traded big putts and up-bercuts until Reed prevailed on the 18th hole.

“It won’t be quite as intense as that Ryder Cup match, I don’t think,” McIlroy said, alluding to the partisan and at times rude nature of cheers

rarely found at Augusta National.

“I think we’ll still be feeling it. It’s the latest round of a major championship. Patrick is going for his first major. And I’m going for ... something else.”

He paused and smiled upon hearing a few chuckles.

That “something else” is something grand. At stake for the McIlroy is the final leg of the career Grand Slam, achieved by only five other players, and completed only once before at the Masters by Gene Sarazen in 1935.

“It’s going to be good fun,” he said.

Rickie Fowler made eagle on the par-5 second and was 5 under through eight holes. He cooled until the end of his round, when a pair of birdies over the last two holes gave him a 65 and left him five shots behind.

Jon Rahm of Spain also chipped in for eagle on No. 8 and saved par on the 13th after hitting into the creek in his round of 65. He was at 8-under 208. Henrik Stenson (70) was seven shots behind.

Tiger Woods had to significantly lower his goal this week. He shot 72, was 18 shots behind and now hopes to finish the tournament under par.

So many others who started the third round with a chance didn’t do nearly enough to stay even remotely close to Reed. Justin Thomas (70), Jordan Spieth (71) and Dustin Johnson (71) all are at least nine shots behind.

# Minnesota Duluth tops Notre Dame for NCAA title

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Karson Kuhlman had a goal and an assist, and Minnesota Duluth beat Notre Dame 2-1 Saturday night to win the school’s second NCAA hockey championship.

Jared Thomas also scored, and Hunter Shepard stopped 19 shots for the Bulldogs (25-16-3). UMD also won the 2011 title at the Xcel Energy Center.

Andrew Oglevie scored, and Cale Morris made 33 saves for Notre Dame (28-10-2), winless in two national title games. The Irish lost to Boston College in 2008.

Minnesota Duluth lost to Denver in last year’s championship. The Bulldogs had seven seniors on that team, and then three underclassmen departed early for the NHL, including the starting goaltender.

Five of Minnesota Duluth’s top six defensemen are freshmen, and Shepard, a sophomore, recorded a sub-2.00 goals against average with eight shutouts.

Just getting into the NCAA Tournament looked like a long shot on March 17.

UMD lost its second game in the National Collegiate Hockey Conference tournament that afternoon and needed six conference finals that evening to go their way.

They did, allowing UMD to edge Minnesota by .0001 in the formula used to determine the at-large teams. Notre Dame’s overtime win over Ohio State in the Big Ten title game put the Bulldogs in the tournament.

For the second straight game, the Bulldogs scored two first-period goals and held on. They beat Ohio State 2-1 Thursday.

UMD took advantage of two Irish turnovers.

Pressured by Kuhlman, Notre Dame’s Jordan Gross lost the puck in the neutral zone. Jade Miller poked the puck ahead to Kuhlman at the Irish blue line, and after a brief hesitation in the right circle, the captain beat Morris with a rising shot.

# Nurmagomedov wins 155-pound crown

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Khabib Nurmagomedov wanted an unsanctioned brawl against Conor McGregor in a loading dock. He instead ended his long ride toward a UFC title with a championship belt to bring back to Russia.

Nurmagomedov capped one the rockiest weeks in UFC’s 25-year-history with a dominant outing over a bloodied Al Iaquinta to win the 155-pound championship by unanimous decision in the main event of UFC 223 on Saturday night.

Move aside, McGregor. Nurmagomedov is primed for main events, not just sideshows with dollies and broken glass.

“Where’s Conor? You want to fight this bus?” Nurmagomedov said.

Nurmagomedov won a belt stripped from McGregor this week because the tempestuous Irishman — who ignited a melee when he threw a hand cart and guard railing at a bus full of UFC fighters — had not fought for UFC in 17 months.

He’s now the only fighter who can stake a claim to the lightweight title.

Nurmagomedov improved to 26-0 (10-0 in UFC) in a path to the lightweight championship much more laborious than his five rounds in the ring at Barclays Center. He won 50-43 on two

scorecards and 50-44 on the third.

Nurmagomedov had four fights against interim champ Tony Ferguson fall through — the latest because of a freak knee injury that led to featherweight champ Max Holloway getting the call on six days’ notice to move up in weight. Holloway was ruled medically unfit to compete on Friday, which forced UFC to bump Iaquinta from an undercard bout against Paul Felder to a title fight.

Nurmagomedov was on the bus and said he had to be restrained by security to keep from fighting McGregor in the underbelly of the arena.

Nothing stopped him against Iaquinta.

Rose Namajunas also was a passenger on the bus attacked by McGregor and was left so shaken she flirted with the idea of dropping out of her title fight.

She stuck with it — and kept her title.

Namajunas made it 2-for-2 against Joanna Jedrzejczyk and defended her 115-pound championship with a unanimous decision victory in the co-main event.

Namajunas (9-3) defeated Jedrzejczyk in the first round of their first match in November to win the strawweight championship. The 25-year-old Namajunas had to go the full 25 minutes to win 49-46 on all three scorecards.

“I just kept saying, ‘I’m the best,’” she said.

# McCutchen's three-run homer lifts Giants

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Andrew McCutchen snapped out of a prolonged slump with five hits in six at-bats Saturday night. Midway through his seventh at-bat, he knew it was just a matter of time until he got hit No. 6.

McCutchen hit a three-run homer to cap a 12-pitch at-bat against reliever Wilmer Font, giving him a career-high six hits and the San Francisco Giants a 7-5 victory over Los Angeles on Saturday night.

"You're talking about a great hitter that was having a great night," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "He topped it off really well, didn't he?"

McCutchen fell behind Font 1-2 before fouling off seven pitches. He then turned on a high-and-tight 2-2 fastball and drove it into the seats in left field, scoring Kelby Tomlinson and Joe Panik, who both singled off Font (0-2).

"I was just trying to fight him off, fight him off, until I got comfortable enough to whatever he threw up there I was ready to hit," McCutchen said. "He didn't elevate it

too much there, and I was able to elevate."

McCutchen drove in four runs and raised his batting average from .083 to .258. The 2013 NL MVP got a hearty ovation from Giants fans for the walk-off blast, his first big moment with San Francisco since being acquired from Pittsburgh in an offseason blockbuster.

"Finally showed up today. Finally," McCutchen said. "It's only what, Game 7, but when you're not getting hits, it feels like it's forever. Feels good to show up today and do the job."

Buster Posey also homered for the Giants, who wasted leads of 1-0, 3-1 and 4-3 before winning on McCutchen's shot. Panik added three hits and Austin Jackson had two.

Roberto Gomez retired three batters for his first major league win. The Giants emptied their bullpen by using nine relievers.

"They kept us in the ballgame," McCutchen said.

The Dodgers had taken a 5-4 lead in the top of the 14th when Logan Forsythe singled in Yasiel Puig.

The game lasted 5 hours, 16 minutes

after beginning two hours later than originally scheduled due to heavy rains that forced the postponement of Friday's game. It was the sixth rainout in AT&T Park history and the first since 2006.

Dodgers skipper Dave Roberts was down to one reliever when the game ended. Roberts also used two starting pitchers, Clayton Kershaw and Hyun-Jin Ryu, as pinch hitters.

Chase Utley homered, Corey Seager had two hits and reached base five times, and Cody Bellinger added a pair of singles for Los Angeles.

The Dodgers are 2-6, matching their worst start since 1976.

"We just came up short again," Roberts said. "That's five runs in 14 innings. You have to look at each at-bat and the quality needs to get better. There needs to be a better pitch-to-pitch focus."

Utley homered in the seventh, his first of the season.

Posey's home run off starter Rich Hill was the first of the season for the Giants cleanup hitter and first since Aug. 8, 2017.

## MLB roundup

# Phillies pound Marlins with most runs since '09

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Long counts and long drives helped the Philadelphia Phillies to an easy win.

Maikel Franco and Aaron Altherr each hit a grand slam, Carlos Santana and Jorge Alfaro also went deep and the Phillies routed the Miami Marlins 20-1 Saturday night.

Vince Velasquez (1-1) allowed one run and four hits, striking out six in six innings.

Franco finished with six RBIs after just missing another homer when his two-run double hit high off the left-center field wall. He has driven in 10 runs in the past two games.

Santana's shot to deep right field was his 1,000th career hit.

**Red Sox 10, Rays 3:** Xander Bogaerts hit the first grand slam for host Boston since the end of the 2016 season and drove in a career-best six runs to carry the Red Sox to their seventh straight victory.

**Astros 1, Padres 0 (10):** Four-time Gold Glove first baseman Eric Hosmer overran a towering popup with two outs in the 10th inning, allowing the ball to fall without being touched and giving host Houston a bizarre win.

A single by Brian McCann and a steal by pinch runner Derek Fisher — ruled safe after a video review flipped the call — set up the unusual ending.

**Mets 3, Nationals 2:** Asdrubal Cabrera hit an RBI double and scored the go-ahead run in the seventh inning, helping New York beat host Washington for their fourth straight win despite Bryce Harper's fifth homer.

**Cardinals 5, Diamondbacks 3:** In the coldest home start in Cardinals history, Jose Martinez homered and drove in four runs as host St. Louis stopped Arizona's four-game winning streak.

**Cubs 5, Brewers 2:** Ian

Happ hit a tiebreaking two-run single during visiting Chicago's four-run ninth.

**Reds 7, Pirates 4:** Eugenio Suarez hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the eighth inning, powering visiting Cincinnati to their second win of the season.

**Yankees 8, Orioles 3:** Sonny Gray pitched six effective innings and rookie Miguel Andujar hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly, leading host New York to the win.

**Rangers 5, Blue Jays 1:** Texas' Mike Minor pitched two-hit ball over six innings at home to win a start for the first time since 2014.

**Rockies 3, Braves 2 (10):** Tony Wolters drew a bases-loaded walk off Arodys Vizcaino with two outs in the 10th inning, sending host Colorado to the victory.

**Royals 1, Indians 0:** Lucas Duda homered off Trevor Bauer for the game's only run, and Ian Kennedy pitched six shutout in-

nings for visiting Kansas City.

**Athletics 7, Angels 3:** Marcus Semien had an early two-run single for visiting Oakland, and Andrew Triggs pitched four-hit ball into the sixth inning.

Shohei Ohtani didn't play for the Angels while resting for his home pitching debut Sunday. The two-way Japanese sensation homered in each of Los Angeles' last three games as a designated hitter, including a 449-foot shot Friday against Oakland.

**Mariners 11, Twins 4:** Playing in a Twins-record low of 27 degrees, visiting Seattle got homers from Kyle Seager and Guillermo Heredia in a run-away victory.

**Tigers 6, White Sox 1:** Miguel Cabrera drove in three runs and Michael Fulmer pitched shutout ball into the sixth inning, leading visiting Detroit to a chilly road win.

## NHL roundup

# Avs clinch final spot in West

Associated Press

DENVER — Gabriel Landeskog sat at his locker stall, his skates still laced and most of his gear still on.

The only thing missing was his jersey, which was given to a lucky fan.

Quick, get the captain a new one — the Colorado Avalanche are going to need it where they're going.

Nathan MacKinnon scored his first goal in 10 games, Jonathan Bernier stopped 32 shots and the Avalanche earned the final playoff spot in the Western Conference with a 5-2 win over the St. Louis Blues on Saturday night.

Defensemen Samuel Girard and Tyson Barrie scored, while Landeskog and Matt Nieto added empty-netters for the Avalanche, who won the West's second wild card and head to the postseason for the first time since 2013-14. They will face top-seeded Nashville in the opening round a season after recording a league-low 48 points.

"It's an unbelievable accomplishment," MacKinnon said. "It's got to be one of the best accomplishments in modern sports history."

Landeskog already has a start on his playoff beard.

Game No. 82 for these two boiled down to a winner-take-all scenario. Although, there was one caveat — the Avalanche couldn't allow the game to go to overtime since the Blues held the tiebreaker. St. Louis pulled out all the stops late in the third: Taking out goalie Jake Allen with around 4:35 remaining. Landeskog and Nieto sealed the win with empty-net tallies that sent the raucous crowd into full celebration mode.

Colorado finished with 95 points to become first NHL team to post a 40-point gain over an 82-game season since the Pittsburgh Penguins jumped 47 from 2005-06 (58) to 2006-07 (105).

**Bruins 5, Senators 2:** David Pastrnak and Tommy Wingels

scored 51 seconds apart in the second period, and host Boston preserved their chances for the No. 1 playoff seed in the Eastern Conference.

**Flyers 5, Rangers 0:** Claude Giroux earned his first career hat trick in the regular season and Philadelphia clinched a playoff berth in its final regular-season game.

Giroux finished with 34 goals and 102 points. He extended his career highs in points and goals while becoming the sixth player in franchise history to reach 100 points in a season.

**Hurricanes 3, Lightning 2 (OT):** Elias Lindholm scored 49 seconds into overtime, and host Carolina prevented Tampa Bay from clinching the top spot in the Eastern Conference.

**Maple Leafs 4, Canadiens 2:** Frederik Andersen made 31 saves to set a franchise mark with his 38th win of the season to lead Toronto.

**Ducks 3, Coyotes 0:** Rickard Rakell had a goal and assist, and Ryan Miller made 31 saves to lead visiting Anaheim.

**Panthers 4, Sabres 3:** Hours after Florida was eliminated from playoff contention, Vincent Trocheck scored late in the third period to help the host Panthers hold off Buffalo.

The Panthers' slim playoff hopes ended when Philadelphia beat the New York Rangers 5-0 earlier in the day.

**Predators 4, Blue Jackets 2:** Filip Forsberg scored three goals, and host Nashville finished off the best regular season in franchise history.

The Predators accepted their first Presidents' Trophy before the game from NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly.

**Islanders 4, Red Wings 3 (OT):** John Tavares scored 3:16 into overtime as visiting New York rallied for a win in the season finale.

Tavares, set to be a free agent in the offseason, snapped a wrist shot past Red Wings goalie Jared Coreau on the stick side.

**Jets 4, Blackhawks 1:** An-

drew Copp scored twice and host Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck set an NHL record for most wins in a season by an American goalie.

Hellebuyck made 30 saves to pick up his 44th win, surpassing Tom Barrasso's 1992-93 run with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

**Capitals 5, Devils 3:** Alex Ovechkin scored twice to make it an NHL-leading 49 goals as host Washington beat New Jersey.

Serenaded by chants of "We want 50," Ovechkin wrapped up his seventh Maurice "Rocket" Richard Trophy as the league's top goal-scorer and came one short of his eighth 50-goal season. Ovechkin scored for the third consecutive game and is the oldest player to lead the NHL in goals since Phil Esposito in 1974-75.

**Wild 6, Sharks 3:** Jason Zucker scored twice in the second period, Eric Staal matched the franchise record for goals in a season and visiting Minnesota denied San Jose home-ice advantage in the first round.

**Stars 4, Kings 2:** Jamie Benn had a natural hat trick in the first period to lead Dallas past host Los Angeles.

It was Benn's second hat trick in three games and the fourth of his career. Benn has seven goals during a three-game scoring streak.

**Flames 7, Golden Knights 1:** Mark Jankowski had four goals, including his first NHL hat trick, and host Calgary beat Vegas to finish a disappointing season.

**Oilers 3, Canucks 2 (SO):** Leon Draisaitl scored in regulation and added the shootout winner to help host Edmonton spoil the final game for Vancouver's Daniel and Henrik Sedin.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also scored for the Oilers, who won their final two games in a disappointing season that saw them miss the playoffs.

## NBA roundup

# OKC stops Houston

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Russell Westbrook and Paul George each scored 24 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder used a timely fourth-quarter run to pull away for a 108-102 win over the Houston Rockets on Saturday night.

The Thunder were down one with about seven minutes left before scoring the next 11 points.

Oklahoma City is vying with several teams for the final playoff spots in the loaded Western Conference. The victory gives the Thunder a 2-1 win in the season series and snaps the Rockets' 20-game home winning streak.

James Harden had 26 points for Houston, and Chris Paul added 17.

**Nuggets 134, Clippers 115:** Will Barton scored 31 points, Nikola Jokic had 23 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists, and visiting Denver earned its fifth consecutive victory.

Denver (45-35) pulled into a tie with Minnesota for eighth in the Western Conference with two games to play.

**Pelicans 126, Warriors 120:** Anthony Davis had 34 points, 12 rebounds and four blocked shots, and New Orleans snapped a 10-game losing streak to host Golden State.

**Spurs 116, Trail Blazers 105:** LaMarcus Aldridge scored 28 points to help host San Antonio stop a two-game losing streak.

The Spurs (46-34) are tied with Oklahoma City and New Orleans for fifth in the Western Conference, a half-game back of idle Utah.

**Bucks 115, Knicks 102:** Eric Bledsoe had 22 points and 10 assists, and visiting Milwaukee moved into a tie for sixth place in the Eastern Conference.

**Nets 124, Bulls 96:** Quincy Acy scored 21 points, and Brooklyn set a franchise record by making 24 three-pointers.