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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

91K Marines contacted about housing

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Almost 7,000 Marines requested that their commanders visit their homes as part of a nearly completed outreach effort to address the U.S. military housing crisis.

The Marine Corps has contacted more than 99% of servicemembers and their families about their housing, the service announced Monday. The effort follows an instruction from Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, to commanders on Feb. 22 to contact servicemembers and their families about their housing, including military and off-base civilian rentals, according to a Marine Corps statement.

“I have instructed commanders to publish policies and take actions to ensure our Marines, sailors, and families have the living accommodations they deserve,” Neller said in the statement. “Ultimately, military family housing is a leadership issue.”

More than 91,300 servicemembers were contacted by their command as of Monday, according to the Marine Corps. Of those Marines, 6,964, or 7.6%, requested a home visit by their command and 7,730, or 8.5%, requested a phone call to “explain the process for resolving their concerns,” the

statement reads.

The majority of Marines contacted — 76,139, or 84% — said they did not want additional assistance or a visit by their command for “a variety of reasons,” according to the statement.

In February, military families testified on Capitol Hill about unhealthy living conditions in military housing, including mold and rodent infestations, and problems they were having with their privatized military housing companies.

Senior civilian and military leadership from each service branch were questioned before congressional committees about what was being done to resolve the housing issues raised by the families. Senior military noncommissioned officers and personnel chiefs testified Feb. 27 during a Senate subcommittee hearing that the poor housing conditions were due to a failure in leadership.

Military commanders at installations around the world conducted home visits and hosted town hall meetings to understand the housing conditions of their servicemembers and families.

In the wake of the housing controversy, the Army and Navy have set up initiatives to gather information from servicemembers and their families about problems

they might be experiencing.

The Marine Corps said Monday that its outreach accomplished three goals: raising awareness of the living conditions of servicemembers, identifying maintenance or safety issues and making certain servicemembers and families understood and were aware of processes and programs available to address housing problems.

The home visits that were requested found some of the same concerns that had been identified earlier in the year, such as maintenance not being completed in a timely manner, lack of communication by the private housing company and the Marine Corps to residents, a lack of awareness about existing resolution processes, and dissatisfaction with the housing assignment and acceptance process, according to the Marines statement.

Some of the ways that the Marine Corps is looking to address the issues include having the privatized housing companies maintain a 24-hour hotline for maintenance requests and adding quality assurance personnel to the military housing offices to address the housing assignment and acceptance process, according to the statement. The service is also scheduling a third-party survey to “further identify housing issues.”

US ambassador to Russia, Navy meet amid drills

BY SCOTT WYLAND

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Two aircraft carrier groups operated jointly in the Mediterranean Sea for the first time since 2016, while Navy leaders ashore met with the U.S. ambassador to Russia this week, steps that analysts say are meant to send a message of strength to Moscow.

The USS Abraham Lincoln and USS John C. Stennis strike groups arrived this week to drill with regional partners at a time when Russia has in-

creased its naval activity in the region and engaged in conflict with NATO partner Ukraine at sea.

On Monday, Naval Forces Europe and Africa commander Adm. James Foggo met with Ambassador Jon Huntsman at the U.S. Navy base in Naples, partly to discuss America's tense relations with Moscow.

“We seek a better relationship with Russia, but that can only happen when Russia stops its aggressive behavior and creates space for productive dialogue,” Huntsman said in a statement. “We will continue

to impose cost on Russia when it takes actions aimed at our partners and allies and U.S. national security interests.”

The U.S. military and its NATO allies and partners have ratcheted up activity throughout Eastern Europe in a bid to reassure nations bordering Russia since Moscow's 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine.

More recently, Russia has increased activity in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, culminating in a November incident in which Russia fired on three Ukrainian ships and arrested

sailors transiting between the waterways. A few weeks before that, Navy officials said that a Russian fighter jet made multiple unsafe aerial passes near a Navy surveillance aircraft over international waters in the Black Sea.

Russia's aggressive actions and its intervention in Syria, Libya and elsewhere destabilize these areas, Foggo said in a statement.

“It's crucial that we give our civilian leaders options and the ability to negotiate from a position of strategic strength,” Foggo said.

Mexican troops stop US soldiers at border

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Two American soldiers patrolling along the southern border in Texas were stopped and questioned by a group of Mexican troops who believed they had crossed into Mexico, a U.S. military spokesman said Monday.

The interaction occurred as the Americans were conducting mobile surveillance camera operations about 2 p.m. April 13 near Clint, Texas, said Maj. Mark Lazane, spokesman for U.S. Northern Command.

The U.S. soldiers were approached and questioned by five or six Mexican troops, he said. An inquiry by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Defense Department revealed the Mexican troops believed the U.S. soldiers had crossed the border into Mexico.

“However, the U.S. soldiers were appropriately in U.S. territory. Though they were south of the border fence, U.S. soldiers remained in U.S. territory, north of the actual border,” Lazane said.

After a brief discussion between the soldiers, the Mexi-

can troops left and the U.S. soldiers contacted Border Patrol agents.

“Throughout the incident, the U.S. soldiers followed all established procedures and protocols,” Lazane said.

Newsweek obtained a copy of the incident report filed by the soldiers, which offers more details into the brief interaction. The Mexican troops approached the U.S. soldiers with rifles pointed at them and removed a service pistol from the hip of one soldier and tossed it into an unmarked U.S. Border Patrol vehicle. The private and

sergeant involved in the incident were part of 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, Newsweek reported.

This is the first incident of this kind since active-duty U.S. troops deployed to the border in late October, Lazane said. The two soldiers are part of the roughly 1,200 servicemembers conducting mobile surveillance camera operations, a mission that began earlier this year after acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan authorized it in January.

China’s Xi urges closer ties among world’s navies

Associated Press

QINGDAO, China — Chinese President Xi Jinping urged closer ties among the world’s navies on Tuesday, amid tensions over China’s rapid expansion of its naval forces and forceful assertions of territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Xi’s remarks came in an address to foreign naval officers attending a fleet review marking the 70th anniversary of the People’s Liberation Army Navy, an event Beijing is using to showcase its growing ability to exert force far from its

shores.

Following his speech, Xi boarded the destroyer Xining, one of China’s most modern and capable warships, at the northern port of Qingdao to preside at the review, which also featured China’s sole commissioned aircraft carrier, numerous other surface ships and submarines and a display of naval aviation.

State broadcaster CCTV showed Xi standing on the deck in a heavy coat in thick fog as various ships and submarines sailed by, their officers and

crewmembers wearing formal uniforms and giving salutes.

China’s navy will “continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with foreign navies, actively shoulder its international responsibilities, safeguard the security of international waterways and provide more public goods for maritime security,” Xi was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

“Holding high the banner of win-win cooperation, the Chinese military is committed to creating a security environ-

ment featuring equality, mutual trust, fairness and justice, joint participation and shared benefits,” said Xi, who also heads China’s armed forces.

Such rhetoric contrasts starkly with China’s aggressive approach to its territorial claims in the South China Sea, where it has built military installations on man-made islands in the crucial waters, which are also claimed by several other nations.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea, along with rights to its fisheries and seabed resources.

US Coast Guard implementing new strategy in Arctic

The Washington Post

The Coast Guard’s new strategy for the Arctic calls for upgrading ships, aircraft and unmanned systems there, an effort to make sure the United States is “projecting sovereignty” into an increasingly contested region, the service’s top officer said.

Adm. Karl Schultz, the commandant of the Coast Guard, said in an interview that the

shift is a “little bit different,” although existing Arctic efforts will continue.

“Before, it was a peaceful, safe, secure Arctic collaboration,” he said. “None of that goes away. We want the Arctic to be a peaceful place where we work to cross international lines here with partner nations that share interests in a transparent fashion.

“But I think if you’re looking around at what’s going on

in the Arctic, I would say it’s maybe trending in a slightly different direction. This will pivot with a little more focus on projecting.”

The 48-page document is being released amid concerns in Washington about actions by both China and Russia in the Arctic.

It comes as the Defense Department, at the direction of Congress, prepares its own new Arctic strategy that is due

to be provided to lawmakers in June.

China, despite its geography, has declared itself a “near-Arctic state,” has begun building icebreaker ships and has said it wants to build a “Polar Silk Road” in which goods can be delivered from China to Europe through the Arctic Ocean as ice in waterways diminish.

Russia also has increasingly focused on the Arctic.

F-35 to be billions costlier, DOD finds

Bloomberg

Lockheed Martin's F-35 jet, the world's costliest weapons program, just got even costlier.

The estimated total price for research and procurement has increased by \$22 billion in current dollars adjusted for inflation, according to the Pentagon's latest annual cost assessment of major projects. The estimate for operating and supporting the fleet of fighters over more than six decades grew by almost \$73 billion to \$1.196 trillion.

The increase to \$428.4 billion from \$406.2 billion in acquisition costs, about a 5.5 percent increase, isn't due to poor performance, delays or excessive costs for labor or materials, according to the

Defense Department's latest Selected Acquisition Report sent to Congress last week and obtained by Bloomberg News.

Instead, the increase reflects for the first time the current cost estimates for a major set of upgrades planned in coming "Block 4" modifications, according to the report.

"Ensuring our Block 4 efforts are captured in our acquisition baseline and now in our SAR help us to provide full transparency and status on our F-35 modernization progress," the Pentagon's F-35 program office said in an emailed statement.

"The F-35 program remains within all cost, schedule and performance thresholds and continues to make steady progress," the program office said in its statement.

The office "is committed to the delivery of cost-effective warfighting capability across all areas of the program."

But the long-range cost estimate for operating the fleet from 2011 to 2077 was problematic even before the latest independent Pentagon cost projection of an increase to \$1.196 trillion. By contrast, the F-35 program office's latest estimate declined by about \$8.5 billion to \$1 trillion.

The projected increase is likely to be scrutinized by lawmakers, Pentagon acquisition chief Ellen Lord and acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan because they have been pushing the program office and Lockheed to reduce projected operations and support costs.

Iran bill labels all US military as terrorist

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranian lawmakers on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a bill that labels all U.S. military forces as terrorist, state TV reported, a day after Washington ratcheted up pressure on Tehran by announcing that no country would any longer be exempt from U.S. sanctions if it continues to buy Iranian oil.

The bill is a step farther from the one last week, when lawmakers approved la-

beling just U.S. troops in the Middle East as terrorist, in response to the U.S. terrorism designation for Iran's Revolutionary Guard earlier this month.

The Trump administration re-imposed sanctions on Iran, including on its energy sector, last November after pulling America out of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

The U.S. designation against Iran's Revolutionary Guard — the first-ever for an entire division of another government

— added another layer of sanctions to the powerful paramilitary force, making it a crime under U.S. jurisdiction to provide the guard with material support.

On Monday, President Donald Trump decided to do away with waivers as part of the administration's "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran that aims to eliminate all of its revenue from oil exports that the U.S. says funds destabilizing activity throughout the Mideast and beyond.

Another powerful earthquake strikes Philippines

Associated Press

PORAC, Philippines — A new, powerful earthquake hit the central Philippines on Tuesday, a day after a magnitude 6.1 quake rattled the country's north and left at least 16 people dead, including in a collapsed supermarket, where rescuers scrambled to find survivors.

The U.S. Geological Survey put the magnitude of Tuesday's quake at 6.4, while the local seismology agency said it was 6.5. The quake was centered near San Julian town in Eastern Samar province and prompted residents to dash out of houses and office workers to scamper to safety.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage from the new quake.

Classes and office work were suspended in San Julian, where cracks on roads and small buildings and a church were reported. Power was deliberately cut as a pre-

caution in the quake's aftermath, officials said.

Meanwhile, rescuers worked overnight to recover bodies in the rubble of a supermarket that crashed down in Monday's quake, which damaged other buildings and an airport in the northern Philippines.

The bodies of five victims were pulled from Chuzon Supermarket, and seven other villagers died due to collapsed house walls in hard-hit Porac township, in Pampanga province, north of Manila, said Ricardo Jalad, who heads the government's disaster response agency.

An Associated Press photographer saw seven people, including at least one dead, being pulled out by rescuers from the pile of concrete, twisted metal and wood overnight.

Red Cross volunteers, army troops, police and villagers used four cranes, crow bars and sniffer dogs to look for the missing, some of whom were still yelling for

help Monday night.

Authorities inserted a large orange tube into the rubble to blow in oxygen in the hope of helping people still pinned there to breathe. On Tuesday morning, rescuers pulled out a man alive, sparking cheers and applause.

"We're all very happy. Many clapped their hands in relief because we're still finding survivors after several hours," Porac Councilor Maynard Lapid said by phone from the scene, adding that another victim was expected to be pulled out alive soon.

Jalad said at least 15 people died in Pampanga province, including those who perished in Porac. The quake damaged houses, roads, bridges, Roman Catholic churches and a terminal at Clark International Airport, a former American air base, in Pampanga. A state of calamity was declared in Porac to allow contingency funds to be released faster.

Accuser calls Biden's jokes about touching 'disrespectful'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Nevada Democrat who accused Joe Biden of touching her without permission says the former vice president has been “so incredibly disrespectful” by joking about the matter.

Lucy Flores leveled her criticism Monday on Fox News as Biden nears an announcement of his 2020 presidential campaign.

Flores, a former Nevada state legislator, said she wants to force a discussion of how powerful men treat women, even as she affirms that her recollections of a 2014 encounter with Biden don't involve touching of a sexual or violent nature.

“The basis of the behavior that I talked about was something much more serious than just a hug,” Flores said on Fox, referring to her account that during a 2014 political event Biden touched her shoulders from behind, smelled her hair and kissed her head without permission.

“That is unprofessional, inappropriate behavior, no matter who does it,” Flores added, saying that Biden and others have made light of his long history of openly affectionate behavior toward others, particularly women.

“We're talking about the fact that, as women, we have had to endure this kind of inappropriate behavior on behalf of powerful men certainly for as long as I've been alive — you know, forever,” Flores said.

Biden has said he doesn't recall his meeting with Flores the same way that she does, and he has forcefully asserted that he's never touched anyone in a way he believed was inappropriate.

But after accounts from Flores and other women, Biden released a video saying he would be “much more mindful” of personal space.

“Social norms have begun to change,” he said in the video.

Within days, however, Biden was on stage at an electrical workers conference joking that he had “permission” to hug the union leader who introduced him. He later repeated the quip about a boy he invited on stage.

A Biden spokesman did not immediately respond late Monday night to Flores' most recent criticisms.

Sri Lankan official: Easter bombings were retaliatory

Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — A top Sri Lankan official said Tuesday the Easter bombings that killed 321 people were carried out by Islamic fundamentalists in apparent retaliation for the New Zealand mosque massacres last month by a white supremacist, while Islamic State sought to claim responsibility for the suicide blasts.

The comments in Parliament by Ruwan Wijewardene, the state minister of defense, came shortly before ISIS asserted it was responsible for the bombings in and outside of Colombo, although the group gave no evidence to support its claims. Sri Lankan authorities previously blamed the attack on National Towheed Jamaar, a lit-

tle-known Islamic extremist group.

Wijewardene also blamed “weakness” within Sri Lanka's security apparatus for failing to prevent the nine bombings.

“By now, it has been established that the intelligence units were aware of this attack and a group of responsible people were informed about the impending attack,” he said. “However, this information has been circulated among only a few officials.”

He said the government had evidence that the bombings were carried out “by an Islamic fundamentalist group” in retaliation for the mosque shootings on March 15 in Christchurch, New Zealand, that killed 50 people, although he did not disclose what the evidence was.

2020 Dems clash over impeachment

Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. — California Sen. Kamala Harris joined the call for President Donald Trump's impeachment as five leading Democratic presidential contenders clashed in a series of prime-time town hall meetings that exposed deep divisions in a party desperate to end the Trump presidency.

Harris' support for impeachment follows Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren's push for Congress to begin the process to remove the Republican president following the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's redacted report — a plan all but certain to fail without significant Republican support.

“There is no political inconvenience exception to the United States Constitution,” Warren said. “If any other human being in this country had done what's documented in the Mueller report, they would be arrested and put in jail.”

The impeachment debate, which is raging among Democrats nationwide, played out on national television Monday as five 2020 hopefuls representing different wings of the party addressed young voters in New Hampshire. While they took turns on stage, the forum, hosted by CNN, marked the first time in this young presidential primary season in which multiple candidates appeared on national television for the same event.

A central question faced candidates throughout the night: Who is best positioned to deny Trump a second term?

Bernie Sanders, a front-runner in the crowded Democratic field who has pushed much of his party to the left in recent years, was asked to defend his decision to embrace democratic socialism.

“It's a radical idea,” he said. “Maybe not everyone agrees. But I happen to believe we ought to have a government that represents working families and not just the 1 percent.”

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who has cast herself as a Midwestern pragmatist well-positioned to appeal to the middle of the country, refused to embrace “Medicare for All,” free college or Trump's impeachment.

“I wish I could staple a free college diploma to every one of your chairs,” Klobuchar told the audience of college students. “I have to be straight with you and tell you the truth.”

The Republicans tasked with helping Trump win reelection paid close attention to the Democrats' answers, seeking political ammunition to tear them down. GOP Chair Ronna McDaniel pounced on Sanders' call to restore the voting rights of felons, including people like the Boston Marathon bomber, who killed three people and injured hundreds in 2013 with a pair of pressure-cooker bombers and was sentenced to death.

McDaniel said on social media: “If you had any doubt about how radical the Democrat Party has become, their 2020 front-runner wants to let terrorists convicted of murdering American citizens vote from prison. It's beyond extreme.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Vulture causes crash that kills veteran, wife

KS MEDICINE LODGE — Authorities said a vulture caused a crash that killed an Army veteran and his wife as they rode a motorcycle in southern Kansas.

The Kansas Highway Patrol said the bird came out of a ditch Saturday afternoon and struck Brandon Husband, 42, of Fowler, in the head on a rural road near Medicine Lodge. The motorcycle went off the road, struck a barbed wire fence and overturned.

The patrol said neither Husband nor his wife, Jennifer Lynn Husband, 43, was wearing a helmet.

Brandon Husband's obituary says he served one tour in Kosovo, three in Afghanistan and was part of an Iraqi soldier training mission on the Iraq-Jordan border.

Snake blamed for hotel power outage

NJ MAWHAH — Authorities said they found an unlikely culprit for a power outage at a New Jersey hotel last week — a snake.

The North Jersey Record reported that a 3-foot-long snake got into an underground electrical box on the property of the Sheraton Mahwah on April 15.

Orange & Rockland spokeswoman Sophia Salas said the snake triggered an outage shortly after 11 a.m. Power was restored at 3:25 p.m.,

Salas said the snake did not survive.

Mustang birth control program is revived

NV RENO — Nevada horse advocates are

looking forward to getting back to their work in the field after the state agreed to resume a birth control project for a herd of free-roaming mustangs near Reno.

The Reno Gazette-Journal reported the volunteers are returning to the field in large part because Assembly Minority Leader Jim Wheeler, R-Gardnerville, persuaded Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak to restore a program to enable volunteer darters to work with the Nevada Department of Agriculture. Darters use air rifles that fire darts with birth control into female horses' haunches.

The project fell apart on Oct. 25, 2017, when Nevada Department of Agriculture officials terminated a privately funded agreement.

Ruling favors ballet dancers fired for pics

NY NEW YORK — An arbitrator has ordered the New York City Ballet to reinstate two male dancers who were fired for sharing nude photos of women and sexually explicit texts.

The arbitrator ruled Friday that the company should not have fired Amar Ramasar and Zachary Catazaro in September. They were named in a lawsuit by a former student at the company's affiliated school.

Alexandra Waterbury said City Ballet tolerated a "fraternity-like atmosphere" where male dancers understood that "they could degrade, demean, mistreat and abuse, assault and batter women without consequence."

Sergeant is suspended after police gear sold

FL JACKSONVILLE — A sheriff's sergeant in Florida has been suspended for

45 days after authorities said he sold police-issued gear on eBay.

The Florida Times-Union cited an internal affairs report in reporting that Jacksonville Sheriff's Sgt. Richard E. Vercruysse made \$60.50 in the sale of a gun belt, a double magazine holder and a badge wallet.

The report said Vercruysse admitted to investigators that selling the items was a dumb move.

Man indicted in theft of 135 firearms

IL WOOD RIVER — A Madison County man has been charged with stealing 135 firearms from a sporting goods store in southwestern Illinois.

Federal prosecutors said Bradley Boswell, 30, of Wood River, was indicted by a grand jury Thursday. Boswell is accused of stealing shotguns, a grenade launcher and more in February from Benbow City Sports in Wood River.

Officers from Wood River police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System conducted a pre-dawn raid in February at an address that neighbors had raised concerns about, prosecutors said.

Two people were taken into custody.

Boswell was later arrested at another location, police said.

Officials: Avalanche duds could explode

CO DURANGO — Transportation officials are warning people in southwestern Colorado's San Juan Mountains that some explosives used in avalanche mitigation this past winter were duds and could still go off.

The Durango Herald reported more than 630 explosives were dropped from helicopters or shot in the Colorado Department of Transportation's southwest and south-central regions. Of those, 13 didn't explode.

CDOT spokeswoman Lisa Schwantes said most were aimed at rugged and remote terrain in areas not accessed by the average hiker.

People who come across unexploded bombs should stay away from them and call law enforcement.

Shots from a howitzer resemble a huge bullet, and rounds from CDOT's "ava-launcher" look more like a torpedo and are usually orange or yellow.

Rescuers save couple and dog on icy lake

NH CANAAN — Police in New Hampshire came to the aid of a man and his dog who fell through ice on a lake, and his wife, who tried to reach them by canoe and became trapped.

Canaan police said the dog wandered about 75 feet out onto thin ice on Canaan Street Lake on the evening of April 16 and fell through. The 67-year-old man tried to rescue the dog, before falling through, too.

Following his 61-year-old wife's attempt, a neighbor heard screaming and called 911.

Rescuers deployed a sled and personnel in cold-water survival suits. They reached the man and his dog, who were in the water for about 45 minutes, then helped his wife.

The man was treated for hypothermia. The dog was taken to an emergency veterinarian and was expected to make a full recovery.

From wire reports

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Reporting
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and Military News

Bucks advance past Pistons

Associated Press

DETROIT — Giannis Antetokounmpo drove to the basket and drew yet another foul, this one a hard hack on the arm by Blake Griffin.

Griffin fouled out and headed to the bench, and the home crowd gave him a standing ovation. Then many fans headed toward the exits.

Antetokounmpo and the Milwaukee Bucks were on their way to another rout against Detroit.

Antetokounmpo scored 41 points, and the Bucks beat Detroit 127-104 on Monday night, completing a four-game sweep of the Pistons and advancing to the second round of the playoffs for the first time since 2001. The last time Milwaukee won a postseason series, the Bucks made it all the way to the conference finals. This year's team isn't there yet, but so far Milwaukee looks the part of the top seed in the East.

"I remember our first playoff series (in 2015)," Antetokounmpo said. "Chicago, the last game, Game 6, they beat us by 50 or something insane. But where we were and where we are right now, it's been an un-

believable journey."

Milwaukee closed the third quarter with a 17-3 run, taking a 10-point lead into the fourth after the Pistons had led much of the way. Detroit set an NBA record with its 14th consecutive playoff loss, a skid that began in 2008.

The Bucks will face Boston in the second round. The Celtics are coming off a sweep of their own against Indiana.

"I think it's important that we take a second tonight. Enjoy it," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "It's a good night for Milwaukee. It's a good night for the Bucks."

Reggie Jackson scored 20 of his 26 points in the first half for Detroit. Griffin fouled out with 7:06 remaining after scoring 22. Griffin missed the first two games of the series with knee problems.

"Blake played his heart out with basically one leg," said Pistons coach Dwane Casey, whose voice was hoarse at his postgame news conference. "He fought through a lot of pain, swelling."

Griffin was on the bench for much of Milwaukee's crucial run. He sat for the final 4:35

of the third. Antetokounmpo scored 16 points in that quarter, half of which came on free throws.

Detroit led 20-8 early on after a dunk by Griffin. The Pistons were up 62-56 at halftime but still couldn't prevent a fourth straight blowout at the hands of the team that had the NBA's best regular-season record. Milwaukee won the four games by a total of 95 points, and no game was closer than 16.

Milwaukee went 31-for-41 on free throws, while Detroit was only 9-for-12. Casey was called for a technical foul in the third, and the fans weren't at all pleased with the officiating.

At one point, Milwaukee had a 32-8 edge in free throw attempts. A stat showing that was put on

"Giannis shooting eight more free throws than our entire team — you're not going to win a game like that," Griffin said. "And their team shooting 41 — you're not going to win a game like that. ... Some of that's on us."

The Bucks move on to face the Celtics, who knocked Milwaukee out of the playoffs in seven games last year.

NBA briefs

Walton sued for assault

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — New Sacramento Kings coach Luke Walton has been accused of sexual assault in a lawsuit by a former sports reporter.

Kelli Tennant filed the suit in Los Angeles County Superior Court on Monday, contending Walton assaulted her in a hotel room in Santa Monica while he was an assistant coach for the Golden State Warriors. TMZ first reported the lawsuit.

Walton's attorney, Mark Baute, called the allegations "baseless."

According to the suit, Tennant had considered Walton to be a friend and mentor, and she was friendly with his wife. Walton also wrote the forward to her book. She said she went to give him a copy during a Warriors road trip to Los Angeles.

Tennant said Walton invited her back to his hotel room. After discussing the book, Tennant said Walton suddenly pinned her to the bed and forcibly kissed and groped her. She said Walton used his full body weight to keep her on the bed and laughed when she yelled "stop!"

Tennant said she confided with people at the time but never filed charges. She said Walton continued to harass her after he became coach of the Lakers and she was working as a broadcaster in Los Angeles for Spectrum SportsNet and SportsNet LA. She now does a wellness podcast.

Suns fire Kokoskov

PHOENIX — One season was not enough for Igor Kokoskov to convince the Phoenix Suns that he was the man to lead the franchise into the future.

The Suns fired Kokoskov Monday night, ending the tenure of the NBA's first European-born coach after one disappointing season.

The Suns finished 19-63 in Kokoskov's only season in the desert, worst in the Western Conference.

Mitchell, Jazz avoid elimination

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Donovan Mitchell turned a rough start into a fantastic finish.

Mitchell dominated in the fourth quarter, rallying the Utah Jazz to a 107-91 victory over the Houston Rockets in Game 4 of their Western Conference series on Monday night.

Mitchell scored 19 of his 31 points in the final quarter to help the Jazz pull away for their first win in the series.

Utah staved off elimination and forced a Game 5 on Wednesday.

Mitchell's late-game performance helped the second-year guard make up for struggles earlier. He turned the ball over twice in the first two minutes and shot just 36 percent from the field in the first three quarters before going 6-for-12 in the fourth.

Mitchell never lost confidence that he could turn it around.

"My teammates have had my back with every mistake, everything I've done well," Mitchell

said. "When you have that support system in the locker room every day, it makes it easier when you start the game with two straight turnovers."

Jae Crowder scored 23 points. Ricky Rubio chipped in 18 points and 11 assists and Derrick Favors finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds.

James Harden scored 30 points to lead Houston. Chris Paul added 23 points, eight rebounds and seven assists.

Utah's offense got a major boost from Crowder and Rubio in the first quarter. The duo combined for 25 points on 9-for-11 shooting in the period to help the Jazz carve out a double-digit lead.

Then the Jazz opened the fourth quarter with a 15-1 run and outscored the Rockets 31-12 during the period.

"Of course, we wanted to end it tonight," Harden said. "We had plenty of opportunities. They made some plays in that fourth quarter and we didn't."

Mitchell scored 13 points in three minutes to fuel the run after totaling just 12 points in the first three quarters.

Arenado's HR, double play rally Rockies

Associated Press

DENVER — No. 1,000 was nothing new for Nolan Arenado.

Arenado hit a tiebreaking homer for his 1,000th career hit and the Colorado Rockies rallied to beat the Washington Nationals 7-5 Monday night.

Arenado also doubled twice and drove in two to help the Rockies win for the seventh time in eight games. He is the ninth Rockies player to reach 1,000 hits, getting there with a solo shot off Wander Suero (1-2) in the seventh to make it 6-5.

"I'm just thankful I was able to put the team ahead there and have a good quality at bat against a guy throwing hard and throwing really good cutters," Arenado said. "I just tried to hit the ball hard there."

Washington manager Dave Martinez said Suero's pitch to Arenado went over the middle of the plate.

"With a guy like Arenado you've got to make a better pitch than that," Martinez said. "He's a really good hitter. He's one of the premier players in the game and you've got to make your pitches."

The Rockies located the home run ball, convincing the fan who caught it to give it up in exchange for balls autographed by Trevor Story and Charlie Blackmon. Clubhouse manager Mike Pontarelli put the ball in a case and presented it to Arenado after the game.

"This is real cool," Arenado said with a smile.

Mark Reynolds and pinch-hitter Raimel Tapia also homered for Colorado, and Trevor Story singled twice and drove in a run to extend his hitting streak to 11 games.

Brian Dozier had a three-run home run for the Nationals, who could not hold two- and three-run leads.

Wade Davis got three outs for his second save, capping a strong showing by Rockies relievers, who picked up faltering starter Tyler Anderson by not allowing a run in six innings. Chad Bettis stabilized the game for the Rockies by working three innings and Seunghwan Oh (1-0) worked a hitless seventh.

"Those guys have been doing a great job for us all year," Reynolds said. "Bettis came in and threw three innings, really good work, then Oh and (Scott) Oberg and Wade. They haven't had too many leads to pitch with this year, but when they do have the lead, they tend to hold it and keep us in games."

Arenado helped defensively in the ninth, snaring pinch-hitter Kurt Suzuki's sharply hit grounder to third, stepping on the bag for the force before going to first for a game-ending double play.

Roundup

Pirates' Burdi injures arm in D-backs' win

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Nick Burdi's combination of grit and resilience — oh and a fastball that can touch triple digits — helped the Pittsburgh Pirates reliever carve out a spot in the big leagues less than two years removed from Tommy John surgery on his right arm.

One innocent-looking pitch to Arizona's Jarrod Dyson on Monday night likely signaled another abrupt turn in Burdi's roller coaster career and the Diamondbacks' 12-4 comeback victory.

The 26-year-old, a former touted prospect in Minnesota who found traction in Pittsburgh, threw a 96 mph fastball to Dyson in the eighth inning then crumpled to the ground before clutching his right arm while tears filled his eyes. He wept while teammates tried to console him on the mound.

Pirates director of sports medicine Todd Tomczyk said Burdi was dealing with pain in his biceps and elbow, but it was too early for a diagnosis.

"It just takes the breath right out of you," said Pittsburgh manager Clint Hurdle.

Burdi had struck out 17 in

8¹/₃ innings prior to Monday after making the Pirates out of spring training. Christian Walker touched him for a two-run home run in Arizona's seven-run seventh inning and Burdi gave up three straight singles to start the eighth before his second pitch to Dyson altered the trajectory of Burdi's season, if not his career.

"It's awful," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "We're competitors up until something like that happens. We're all in the same family. You hate to see anything like that happen. The way he went down, you're just hoping for the absolute best."

Yankees 4, Angels 3 (14): Gio Urshela singled home Gleyber Torres in the 14th with his second extra-inning RBI of the night, and visiting New York blew a 12th-inning lead before rallying for its fourth consecutive win.

Torres reached base on catcher Jonathan Lucroy's throwing error after striking out leading off the 14th, and he advanced on a wild pitch by Luke Bard (0-1) and stole third before he was driven home by Urshela.

Jonathan Holder (1-0) pitched

the final two innings for the injury-plagued Yankees.

Rays 6, Royals 3: Mike Zunino returned from the paternity list and hit his first home run for host Tampa Bay, a two-run shot that helped stop a season-high four-game skid with a win over Kansas City.

Yandy Diaz, Brandon Lowe and Daniel Robertson also drove in runs for the AL East leaders, who scored three times in the seventh to come from behind against Brad Keller (2-2).

Mets 5, Phillies 1: Steven Matz atoned for a dismal start last week in Philadelphia by pitching six fine innings, and Jeff McNeil homered as host New York dealt the Phillies their fourth loss in five games.

Phillies slugger Bryce Harper was ejected for yelling from the dugout four batters after being called out on strikes.

White Sox 12, Orioles 2: Jose Abreu homered and drove in five runs, James McCann had a homer and four RBIs and visiting Chicago beat stumbling Baltimore.

McCann's three-run drive off David Hess (1-4) highlighted a four-run fifth inning, and Abreu's shot with a man

on sparked a four-run seventh against Tanner Scott.

Cardinals 13, Brewers 5: Dexter Fowler had a four-hit game with his first home run this season and four RBIs to lead host St. Louis over Milwaukee.

Paul Goldschmidt hit his ninth home run and had three hits and three RBIs for the Cardinals.

Twins 9, Astros 5: Jorge Polanco had four hits, including a two-run homer, and drove in four runs to lead Minnesota over host Houston for its fourth straight win.

Max Kepler and Nelson Cruz had RBI singles around Polanco's two-run single in a four-run sixth as the Twins built a 7-1 lead. Polanco homered in the eighth.

Athletics 6, Rangers 1: Stephen Piscotty homered and drove in three to back Chris Bassitt's winning season debut, and host Oakland ended a three-game skid with a win over Texas.

Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus left in the seventh inning as a precaution after being hit by a pitch in the first and bruising his right hand.

Hurricanes force Game 7 with Caps

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Justin Williams earned another chance to live up to his nickname.

The rest of the Carolina Hurricanes aren't yet ready to end their first playoff appearance in a decade.

Jordan Staal scored the go-ahead goal and added an assist in the third period, and the Hurricanes beat the Washington Capitals 5-2 on Monday night to force Game 7 in their first-round playoff series.

"We didn't have a tomorrow," coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

Williams scored an insurance goal seconds after the Capitals had the tying goal disallowed, Warren Foegele and Teuvo Teravainen also scored, Dougie Hamilton added an empty-netter and Petr Mrazek made 23 saves.

The Hurricanes scored three third-period goals in bouncing back from a 6-0 beatdown in Game 5 and prolonging their first playoff appearance in a decade by one game at least.

"We answered the bell," said Williams — known as "Mr. Game 7" for his NHL-record 14 points in those games, plus his record-tying seven goals and his teams' 7-1 record in them.

"I said at the start of the series that if they're going to knock us out, we're not going to do it easy," he added. "We're not going to let it be easy on them. Let's go play another game."

Game 7 is Wednesday night in Washington. The winner will play the New York Islanders in the second round.

Alex Ovechkin scored for the third straight game, Brett Connolly also scored and Braden Holtby stopped 31 shots.

Washington — which won 10 road games a year ago on its run to the first Stanley Cup title in club history — went 0-3 on the road in this series after winning both regular-season meetings in Raleigh.

Staal gave the Hurricanes their first lead of the game at 3:51 of the third period, following a scramble in front of Holtby. Justin Faulk uncorked

a shot from the point and Brock McGinn and Staal both poked at it, with Staal ultimately slipping it past the Capitals goalie to make it 3-2.

"I was just trying to track the puck, and honestly, try to get a piece of it," Staal said. "And it was fortunate to go in."

Then came the key momentum swing of this one — the waved-off goal that Washington thought should have counted.

As Evgeny Kuznetsov tried to tuck the puck under Mrazek's pads with 9:26 remaining, Ovechkin crashed into the goalie. The officials waved it off, ruling that the Capitals' captain interfered with Mrazek by pushing his pad.

Washington coach Todd Reirden said he felt the play was "worth a challenge" after consulting with his video review staffers.

"That's not how the league or the referees saw it," he said.

Williams then put Carolina up by two goals 84 seconds later by tipping Brett Pesce's shot past Holtby and Hamil-

ton extended the lead with his empty-netter with 3:06 left.

By that point, the Capitals' frustrations hit their breaking point, with Ovechkin receiving a slashing penalty and a game misconduct with 1:08 remaining.

"I don't want to be a bad guy or something, but it was not fun," Ovechkin said.

It helped the Hurricanes that they got a bit healthier, with one of the three forwards injured during this series returning to the lineup. Jordan Martinook was back after leaving Game 4 with a lower body injury.

Another theme of the series was upended: At no point during the first five games of this series did the road team ever lead. Connolly ended that pesky bit of trivia by scoring at 5:06 of the first to make it 1-0. And Ovechkin's fourth goal of the series — and his third in three games — put the Capitals up 2-1 with 4:48 left in the first.

But they didn't score again — and the Hurricanes kept pushing back.

Klingberg's goal helps Stars advance

Associated Press

DALLAS — With a chance to clinch a playoff series at home for the first time in 11 years, the Dallas Stars needed overtime again. They didn't need quite as many this time and won't have to go back to Music City.

John Klingberg scored from the left circle 17:02 into overtime after a cross-ice pass from Alexander Radulov, and the Stars beat the Nashville Predators 2-1 to wrap up their first-round Western Conference playoff series in six games.

"We wanted to close it out today and don't have to deal with going back there," said Klingberg, whose first goal of the playoffs came after five assists in the series. "We treated it like a Game 7."

The last time the Stars clinched a playoff series on

home ice was in 2008, when they needed four overtimes for a 2-1 win over San Jose in a second-round series.

"To do it in overtime in that fashion, what an exciting time for our fans," Stars captain Jamie Benn said. "They were loud and brought a lot of extra energy for us in overtime."

The Stars, with rookie coach Jim Montgomery, won three consecutive games to close out the Predators. Dallas will play St. Louis in the second round of the playoffs, just like its previous postseason appearance three years ago. The Blues, who have home-ice advantage this time, won that 2016 series with a Game 7 win in Dallas.

Ben Bishop, Vezina Trophy finalist, had a playoff career-high 47 saves for the Stars.

"Obviously our best player once again is Bish. He's just keeping us in the game," Kling-

berg said.

"We slowly, second period, third period and overtime got better and better," Montgomery said. "Obviously our best player was Bish. He was incredible."

Pekka Rinne, who won the Vezina Trophy last year as the NHL's top goalie, also set a career best by stopping 49 shots in his 89th career playoff game. That included an impressive pad save on Benn's shot just more than five minutes into the overtime period, when the Stars had a 14-8 advantage on shots.

"It's tough. It's a tough pill to swallow," Predators defenseman P.K. Subban said. "We came in here obviously wanting to take the series back to Nashville, and I thought we gave ourselves a great opportunity to do that."

Blake Comeau scored his first playoff goal for the Stars,

tying the game at 1-1 in the second period. But he also had a tripping penalty with 1:53 left in regulation that put Nashville on the power play.

The Predators stuck to the series script and didn't score a goal. They didn't even get a shot on goal before the third period ended, or when finishing the final seconds with a man advantage to start overtime.

They were 0-for-4 on the power play in Game 6, and finished 0 for 15 in the series. They were the only one of the 16 teams that made the playoffs that didn't have a power-play goal in the postseason.

"I don't have that answer right now," coach Peter Laviolette said.

"Even tonight, we had a lot of chances on the power play," defenseman Roman Josi said. "If we get a goal there, it's a different game."