

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Friday, August 28, 2015

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Report: Mosul commander was on vacation despite attack warnings

*The Washington Post*

BAGHDAD — The top Iraqi army officer for Mosul remained on vacation last summer despite repeated warnings that Islamic State militants were planning to seize the city, and his units had less than a third of the soldiers they were supposed to have on the day of the battle.

Those were some of the findings outlined in a 114-page Iraqi parliamentary report on why security forces in the city, the largest in northern Iraq, collapsed so rapidly as militants attacked it in June 2014. The report, based on the testimony of at least 92 officials, has not been made public, but The Washington Post obtained a copy.

The account of the attack and the events leading up to it sheds light on a poorly run, underequipped army that the United States spent \$25 billion to train and equip. It describes an armed forces plagued by rivalries and desertions, which officers covered up in order to pocket the salaries and living expenses of the absent soldiers.

The Islamic State group, meanwhile, had been running a highly organized mafia-style operation in the city in the months and years before the attack, extending its grip and boosting its finances. By the time Mosul fell, it was earning \$11 million a month in extortion and racketeering, the report said.

"It was an event that surprised the world," the report said of the fall of Mosul. "But those who were informed about the security situation in the province realized this was going to happen eventually."

There was ample warning. The Islamic State had begun destroying bridges and block-

ing supply routes to the city six months before the attack. Iraqi officials also ignored numerous intelligence reports specifying that a major assault was being planned for the beginning of June, the report said.

Intelligence services had provided the coordinates of Islamic State bases, and an airstrike could have stopped the attack, the report said. But "that strike never happened."

The armed forces lacked command and control, with multiple competing decision-making centers, the report said. Senior commanders who made "grave" mistakes during the assault were appointed for political reasons rather than for their experience.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is attempting to curb corruption in the security forces, and the United States is spending a further \$1.3 billion to arm and train Syrian and Iraqi forces to fight Islamic State militants. But Iraqi commanders concede that the army is still plagued by logistical and leadership challenges. Their efforts to recapture the western city of Ramadi have made little progress, while talk of a counteroffensive for Mosul has long dissipated.

As the date of last year's assault approached, communications from Iraqi intelligence to the armed forces and the prime minister's office became more detailed and urgent. On May 20, 2014, intelligence services warned the army of a large-scale attack in "early June."

After several more cables, Iraqi intelligence on May 28 specified the neighborhood that the militants would use to launch their offensive. Later that day, senior commanders held an emergency meeting.

But Lt. Gen. Mahdi Gharawi, head of the Nineveh Operations Command, was on vacation and did not attend, the report said. He returned to be briefed just hours before the attack began on June 5.

Gharawi is one of 35 officials who have been implicated in the parliamentary investigation. He has since been dismissed and did not respond to requests for comment, but he previously has said he did not order a retreat and fought until the city was overrun.

A decision by Gharawi and Aboud Qanbar, the Defense Ministry's deputy chief of staff, to withdraw from the Nineveh Operations Command headquarters with a convoy of Humvees during the battle sparked panic among soldiers, who thought they were deserting, the report said.

Nouri al-Maliki, Iraq's prime minister at the time, who also held the positions of defense minister, interior minister and head of the armed forces, also was named in the report, which has been handed over to Iraq's judiciary.

"He was the number one person responsible," said Hakimal-Zamili, head of the parliamentary committee that oversaw the investigation. "We lost a third to half of our territory because of Maliki — a huge number of martyrs, equipment, money. It's all because of Maliki; he's the commander in chief."

In his testimony to the committee, al-Maliki said commander in chief of the armed forces is only an "advisory" position and does not involve responsibility for "field work."

Al-Maliki has called the report "worthless" and questioned its objectivity.

## 2 women in Bahrain to serve on Michigan

BY CHRIS CHURCH  
*Stars and Stripes*

Two sailors currently serving in Bahrain are heading out on a deep-sea journey where no female enlisted servicemembers have gone before.

Information Systems Technician 1st Class Jasmine Underwood and Electronics Technician 3rd Class Marcia Morse are two of 38 enlisted women selected for two crews of the USS Michigan, an Ohio-class guided-missile submarine based out of Bangor, Wash.

The Navy sought out enlisted applicants for submarine duty earlier this year. Morse and Underwood both jumped at the opportunity.

Morse, 36, joined the Navy in 2012 expressly so she could serve on a submarine.

Underwood, 24, of Brunswick, Ga., began considering the submarine program about a year ago, after she attended an all-hands call with the chief of Naval Personnel. "I was like, 'Man, when they open that up, I'm going for it,'" she said.

The sailors are currently completing online training modules. Before getting to the Michigan, they'll head to Basic Enlisted Submarine School and their respective apprenticeship schools.

"I think we can do the same thing our male counterparts can do," Underwood said. "I think it's great they give us the opportunity to prove ourselves."

Female officers have served on Ohio-class submarines since late 2011. Earlier this year, female officers reported for the first time to smaller, Virginia-class fast-attack subs.

# Carter urged to act in Green Beret's case

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — In a letter urging Secretary of Defense Ash Carter to intervene, a congressman said Wednesday that the Army went too far in reprimanding and initiating actions against a Green Beret who shoved an Afghan police commander after he allegedly admitted raping a young boy.

Sgt. 1st Class Charles Martland faces involuntary separation from the Army by November. Martland, 32, has said he wants to continue serving and is being removed based solely on the September 2011 incident while deployed to Kunduz province. Messages seeking comment from the Army were not immediately returned Thursday.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., a former Marine who sits on the House Armed Services Committee, said the Army rushed to judgment after the incident. In the letter, he asks Carter to “review the details of this case and intervene immediately.”

Martland and his detachment commander shoved Afghan Local Police commander Abdul Rahman after they said he admitted to chaining a 12-year-old boy and repeatedly sexually assaulting

him over several days.

Citing a letter penned by an unnamed Afghan linguist directly familiar with the incident, Hunter said Rahman also beat the child's mother for turning him in and laughed off both incidents when confronted.

In a letter to Carter on Wednesday, Hunter wrote that American officials should “expect each and every one of our warriors and military professionals to intervene in such a situation. ... Martland and his team should be commended for showing any restraint at all.”

Documents cited in the letter say Martland and his team leader were issued “memorandums of reprimand” after the incident, were relieved from their duties in Afghanistan and were redeployed stateside for their actions in “the intentional assault” of Rahman.

Martland — an 11-year veteran who has served in Iraq and Afghanistan and received the Bronze Star with “V” device for valor — has no other disciplinary issues on his Army record, according to Hunter.

Several Green Beret officers and senior noncommissioned officers have supported Martland, who is serving as a Special Forces underwater operations instructor in Key West, Fla., and intends to become a Special Forces medic.

## 200 migrants feared dead in capsizing off Libya coast

ZUWARA, Libya — Libyan authorities were collecting the bodies of migrants who drowned off the coast of Zuwara, with some 200 feared dead on Friday in the latest disaster involving desperate people trying to reach Europe.

An Associated Press photographer at the scene saw workers removing bodies from the water, and pulling a flooded boat containing several victims into the harbor. They were put

into body bags and were lined up on the waterfront.

Hussein Asheini, the head of Libya's Red Crescent in Zuwara, said at least 105 people were killed. Fishermen and the coast guard found the waterlogged vessel at sea and towed it back to Zuwara, where they broke the ship's deck to reach people trapped inside.

There were conflicting casualty figures, and the Red Crescent was still counting the bodies and the survivors, he added.

From The Associated Press

# Pentagon: Islamic State hacker killed by drone

By TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon confirmed Friday that a key cyberoperative for the Islamic State who was responsible for releasing the identities of about 1,300 U.S. military and government employees was killed in a drone strike this week.

Junaid Hussain was killed Aug. 24 during a drone strike in Raqqa, Syria. Hussain, identified by the BBC as a 21-year-old British citizen, was “involved in actively recruiting ISIL sympathizers in the West to carry out lone wolf style attacks,” U.S. Central Command spokesman Col. Pat Ryder said Friday.

News outlets, citing British and U.S. officials, had confirmed Hussain's death, but Friday was the first time the Pentagon had officially acknowledged the successful

strike. Ryder said that Hussain was the only person killed.

“This individual was very dangerous; he had significant technical skills and he'd expressed a strong desire to kill Americans and recruit others to kill Americans,” he said.

CENTCOM would not provide details on Hussain's hacking of U.S. servicemembers' information, other than to say it had affected about 1,300 personnel.

“He was responsible for releasing personally identifying information on approximately 1,300 U.S. military and government employees and specifically sought to direct violence against U.S. servicemembers and government employees,” Ryder said.

The strike was conducted after coordination with U.S. government agencies and was approved by CENTCOM commander Gen. Lloyd Austin, Ryder said.

# Journalists' on-air killer was 'professional victim'

*Associated Press*

ROANOKE, Va. — Vester Flanagan constantly saw himself as the target in his conflicts with WDBJ-TV colleagues, leading his former boss to describe him as a “professional victim.”

When the station tried to persuade Flanagan to get along better with his co-workers, he accused them of discrimination.

“He was victimized by everything and everyone and could never quite grasp the fact that he was the common denominator in all of these really sometimes serious interpersonal conflicts,” said Dan Dennison, the former news director at WDBJ in Virginia.

Flanagan killed two of his ex-colleagues on Wednesday during a live broadcast and

later died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

On the day he was fired in 2013, Flanagan pressed a wooden cross into Dennison's hand and said, “You'll need this,” as two police officers escorted him out. Flanagan's departure was filmed by Adam Ward, the cameraman who was killed along with reporter Alison Parker.

Parker and Ward died of gunshot wounds to the head and body, the medical examiner's office said Friday. The woman Parker was interviewing, Vicki Gardner, was shot in the back and was in good condition at a hospital.

Dennison said WDBJ had no idea of Flanagan's shortcomings before he was hired there, and he had received positive recommendations.

# It's difficult to protect zone-read QBs

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — If Chip Kelly, Pete Carroll and other NFL coaches want to run zone-read plays, their quarterbacks are fair game — even when they don't have the ball.

The league's competition committee has made it clear quarterbacks won't get special protection until they establish a passing posture. The rules aren't changing this year despite concerns that arose after Terrell Suggs was penalized for tackling Sam Bradford's knees on a handoff in a Ravens-Eagles game last Saturday.

Dean Blandino, the league's vice president of officiating, declared Suggs' hit was legal because Bradford was considered a runner until he clearly didn't have the football or positioned himself to pass.

On a zone-read play, the quarterback sticks the ball in a running back's stomach and either gives it to him or pulls it back and runs depending on the defense's reaction. Suggs was assigned the quarterback on the play, so he ignored ball carrier Darren Sproles and went straight for Bradford.

Kelly argued it was a simple handoff

and shouldn't have been treated like an option play because Bradford — playing in his first game after a knee injury last season — didn't try to carry out a fake.

The problem is that defensive players and referees cannot always identify the difference between a zone-read play and a handoff.

"Not every shotgun run is a zone-read play," Kelly said. "We don't run as much zone-read as everybody thinks we do."

Bradford was not injured on the Suggs hit. He says there is a "gray area" when it comes to defining a zone-read play.

"We have a lot of plays in our offense where there are absolutely no reads for us, it's an automatic give," he said. "I think the league is probably just going to have to clarify what a zone-read is."

But clarification isn't so easy.

"We have had discussions about these types of plays in our meetings over the past couple years as the zone-read has become more prevalent," said New York Giants co-owner John Mara, a member of the competition committee, which is in charge of rule changes. "As long as the quarterback is a threat as a runner with these plays, I don't know how you make the distinction from him being

a runner or passer. And how is a defender supposed to distinguish between a zone-read and a regular handoff from the shotgun?"

Mike Pereira, who held Blandino's job before becoming a rules analyst at Fox Sports, doesn't get all the confusion.

"I don't think the refs are in a tough spot," he said. "(The quarterback) is either in a passing posture or he is not."

Carroll is monitoring the situation closely because the Seattle Seahawks run plenty of option plays with Russell Wilson.

"You can force this thing about they're a runner, when they don't have the ball in their hands, and the ball is already handed off and gone, guys need to make good decisions hopefully," Carroll said. "So we'll be very much a part of that discussion if things continue like it's going, because it's not right."

Pocket passers such as Tom Brady and Peyton Manning aren't susceptible to the same hits as quarterbacks that run a lot of option plays, including Ryan Tannehill of the Dolphins and rookie Marcus Mariota of the Titans.

"As a quarterback, you hate to see another guy get a shot taken at his knees

like that literally just after he handed the ball off," Tannehill said. "You can see a guy like Peyton Manning doing the exact same handoff and no one is taking a shot at his knees."

Mariota ran plenty of zone-read plays at Oregon and understands that defensive players are in a tough spot.

"There are certain plays where it does look like a zone-read option, but it's not a zone read," he said. "That just kind of depends on your scheme. That's going to be up to the coaches to decide how much we use it. But I can see where, as a defensive player, it's tough."

Even defensive players on the Eagles agree that consistently hitting quarterbacks who run zone-read options is the main way to prevent teams from using that play.

"As a defender, my way of scaring you out of that run concept is hit your quarterback," Philadelphia safety Malcolm Jenkins said. "If I'm playing the Patriots, everybody knows that Tom Brady's not running the zone-read. So it'll get called different than an offense where 50 percent of our snaps are zone-read. So I think there's a little bit of discretion in there."

## Saints recall role in Katrina recovery

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Coming off a career-threatening injury, Drew Brees had little choice but to sign with a downtrodden franchise in a disaster zone. Sean Payton became coach of the Saints only after being passed over for the job he really wanted in Green Bay.

Receiver Marques Colston and linemen Jahri Evans and Zach Strief all arrived via the 2006 draft, wondering what they were getting into as New Orleans struggled to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

In the decade since the August 2005 storm, the Saints helped the region find something to celebrate, and the longtime Saints are humbled and proud to have been part of the recovery.

"I think the city's had such a renaissance, and the growth is kind of exploding right now," said Strief, who played at Northwestern. "It's fun to be a part of it, and it's fun to see that city you feel like you kind of grew up with expand and get so much respect."

The 10-year anniversary of one of the most devastating hurricanes in U.S. history is a time of reflection for many connected to the Saints, whose return to New Orleans in 2006, following one season of displacement to San Antonio, became one of the biggest feel-good stories in NFL history. Rebuilding residents, who'd been worried they might lose the team for good, widely credited the club's triumphant return for lifting spirits at a time when life was particularly hard.

"It just felt good to see those people happy. What happened was you saw people come together, you saw the city come

together. It made us as a team want to do something great for them," said Evans, who helped out on Habitat for Humanity projects in flood-ravaged neighborhoods where many residents otherwise couldn't afford to rebuild. "To see the people of New Orleans happy when we have success, just by doing what we love."

Payton was hired to his first head coaching job in New Orleans about five months after Katrina, when some traffic lights at what had been busy intersections still didn't work, and lines were long at the few pharmacies which had reopened. Children were relatively scarce, with many finishing the school year in the communities they had evacuated to, while local neighborhoods and schools remained in various states of ruin.

"There were still so many questions with the infrastructure, the schooling, hospitals," Payton said. "You recognized very quickly that it was much bigger than football."

His first team wasn't his best, but arguably was his most extraordinary. Not only was Payton a rookie coach, but he'd replaced more than half the roster of a team that had gone 3-13 a season earlier.

New Orleans improved to 10-6, earning the No. 2 seed in the NFC and winning a playoff game against Philadelphia to advance to the franchise's first NFC Championship game.

The 2006 season began with two road victories, followed by an emotional 23-3 homecoming win over rival Atlanta at the Superdome — which had undergone fast-tracked repairs in less than one year to replace its storm-damaged roof and mitigate mold infestations caused

by water leaks. The stadium, which had been used as a storm shelter, also had to be sanitized because tens of thousands of evacuees were stranded in sweltering conditions there without electricity or plumbing for nearly a week.

Renovations weren't entirely finished, but enough was done to host football when the Saints thrashed rival Atlanta, 23-3, on Sept. 25, 2006.

Strief still vividly remembers looking into the faces of Saints fans as he savored a celebratory walk to the tunnel.

"The amount of emotion in those people — and those were the ones you could see, so you've got to imagine it was behind them as well — it was so evident," Strief recalled. "Who's emotional after becoming 3-0 — like really emotional? And I think in that moment you realized, man, this is so much more."

Three seasons later, in 2009-10, came the Saints' only Super Bowl title, which set off raucous block parties rivaling anything seen during Mardi Gras.

The MVP of that Super Bowl was Brees, whose success was hardly assured when he first landed in New Orleans because of the surgery required to repair the torn labrum in his right shoulder.

"As confident as a person as I was, I knew the severity of that deal," Brees said. "I was like tricking myself into believing that I was going to come back, and it was kind of like, 'Fake it 'til you make it.'"

"I needed somebody to believe in me, and Sean was that person, the Saints were that organization and the City of New Orleans was that place," Brees said.

## Bridgewater comfortable as a leader

Associated Press

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — An easy smile, slender build and soft, self-effacing voice. They seem to bely Teddy Bridgewater's status with the Minnesota Vikings.

From the inner-city playgrounds of his native Miami to his college campus in Kentucky to his professional home in Minnesota, he's been in front.

"I just happened to be one of the most talented guys growing up," Bridgewater said, pausing to interject in case he suddenly sounded cocky: "I say that with the most humility."

Kids typically look up to the talented guy, after all.

Bridgewater doesn't have a rocket arm, though the addition of Mike Wallace and the emergence of Charles Johnson ought to help the Vikings go deep more often. Concerns have surfaced about his accuracy, though he rebounded from an infamously shaky pro day workout at Louisville — without his usual gloves — to finish with the third-highest completion percentage by a rookie in NFL history at 64.4.

But his skill set is balanced. He has the mentality, approach and demeanor to succeed. Now he appears ready to come into his own.

"You can tell that this is more of his team as we continue to go," coach Mike Zimmer said.



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# World-record holder Merritt races to bronze at worlds

Associated Press

BEIJING — On a night when the United States was looking for five medals in the two sprint hurdle races at the world championships, only Aries Merritt delivered — a bronze for the kidney patient that should feel like gold.

The world-record holder will be flying home for a kidney transplant next week but he still outperformed his teammates in the 110-meter hurdles final, challenging Sergei Shubenkov to the end but finishing behind the Russian and silver medalist Hansle Parchment of Jamaica.

"It means the world to me," Merritt said.

Defending champion David Oliver banged hard into two early hurdles and finished seventh.

In the women's 100 hurdles, the American team was thinking of a sweep. In the end, they were swept off the podium, with 2008 Olympic champion Dawn Harper-Nelson crashing in her heat and Kendra Harrison disqualified after a false start in the semifinals.

In the final, defending champion Brianna Rollins banged into the first hurdle and

never recovered. Danielle Williams gave Jamaica gold.

In the marquee event at the Bird's Nest on Friday, Dafne Schippers ran the fourth-fastest time in history to win the 200 and completed an incredible switch from heptathlete to sprinter. Her victory denied Jamaica its fourth gold medal in the two fastest races on the track.

"When I looked and saw the time," Schippers said, "I thought the clock was broken."

Two years after winning bronze in the punishing seven-event discipline, the Dutchwoman edged Jamaican sprinters Elaine Thompson and Veronica Campbell-Brown with a perfect dip for the line to add gold to the silver she won in the 100.

After overtaking three runners down the finishing straight, Schippers crossed in 21.63 seconds to beat the 28-year-old championship record by .11 seconds.

"It was a fight. Only in the final meters did I know it was possible," said Schippers, who drew from her experience in the heptathlon. "It helped me because when my body doesn't feel good, your mind is strong."

Ashton Eaton excelled just as much in

the decathlon as he returned following a two-year absence. In the last event of a superlative first day, he finished the 400 in 45.00 seconds, slashing .68 seconds off the world decathlon mark he shared with 1968 Olympic champion Bill Toomey.

"It was all about having fun," said Eaton, who won the opening 100 in a championship record 10.23 seconds.

Eaton leads after five events with 4,703 points, 173 points more than Damian Warner of Canada.

Also, Tianna Bartoletta won her second long jump world title, 10 years after her first. The American took the lead for the first time in the final on her last attempt when she jumped 7.14 meters.

In the morning, China finally earned its first gold medal of the competition with Liu Hong leading a 1-2 finish ahead of teammate Lu Xiuzhi in the 20-kilometer walk.

Despite the early start, tens of thousands of fans packed the stands at the Bird's Nest to welcome home the walkers and cheer their first victory as the championships headed into the final weekend.

# Pearland earns berth in title game

Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — The title round at the Little League World Series is flush with second chances.

Pearland, Texas, hit a pair of homers in the bottom of the eighth inning Thursday night for a 9-7 victory over Bonita, Calif., and a berth in the U.S. championship game against what amounts to the tournament's home team.

After Bonita pulled ahead 7-6 in the top of the second extra inning, starting pitcher Ben Gottfried hit a tying solo shot and Caleb Low ended it with a two-run homer.

Pearland will play undefeated Lewisberry, Pa., for the U.S. championship on Saturday. The winner will face the International bracket champion on Sunday for the World Series title.

Lewisberry beat Pearland 3-0 on Wednesday night to earn a berth in the title game in front of an estimated 35,000 fans, most of them cheering for the Pennsylvania team, which is only a two-hour drive away.

"It's going to be crazy," Pearland manager Andrew Solomon said. "It was crazy out there last night. It's going to be fun, though."

At least they know what to expect from the crowd the second time around.

"They sounded like my mom when she's mad," Gottfried said about the Lewisberry fans, adding, "I probably shouldn't have said that."

Low was replaced by a pinch-hitter in his previous at-bat. He didn't give his manager a chance to call for a pinch-hitter again in the eighth, sprinting out of the dugout with bat in hand when his turn came up.

"To be quite honest, Caleb ran out of the dugout so fast we didn't have a choice," Solomon said. "That's the honest truth."

Really, Caleb? "Kind of," he said. "I felt more confident tonight."

Mexicali Baja California, Mexico, didn't need any drama to beat Barquisimeto, Venezuela, 11-0 earlier Thursday and advance to the International title game. Mexicali gets a rematch with Tokyo, which won their earlier matchup 3-1.

The international game ended not with a dramatic homer, but with a swing-and-a-miss. Mexicali players ran from their positions to a spot between the mound and the plate, celebrating their berth in the International championship game.

One player was missing. The last one to arrive was Daniel Zaragoza, who had to run all the way from right field — his position for the final out. It was the only time all day that No. 18 wasn't wasn't right in the middle of everything.

The left-hander who patterns himself after Fernando Valenzuela gave up only three hits, leading Mexicali to the win. He also had a two-run double that got it started.

Peering over his tan-and-black glove to get signs from the catcher and then delivering the ball with a deliberate motion, Zaragoza looked a little bit like the famous Mexican pitcher — also a lefty — who sparked Fernandomania with the Dodgers in 1981. Asked for his favorite player, Zaragoza quickly answered: "Fernando."

Why? Because of his screwball. Can he throw one, too?

"No," Zaragoza said. "It's hard."

Tokyo's 3-1 win over Mexicali early in the tournament puts a little extra on the line. "Baseball gives you revenge," said manager Jorge Joel Armenta, who has a tattoo of a rosary and No. 69 — his number as a player — on his right forearm. "We want to play Japan."

# Mets get past Phillies in 13th

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Daniel Murphy's offense and defense helped the New York Mets remain on a roll.

Murphy hit a go-ahead, two-run double in the 13th inning after making a spectacular defensive play to end the 10th, leading New York to its seventh straight victory, 9-5 over the Philadelphia Phillies on Thursday night.

Reliever Carlos Torres led off the 13th with a single to center, went to second on Curtis Granderson's single to left and they both scored on Murphy's opposite-field hit off Hector Neris (2-2). Helped by two errors by Neris, the Mets scored two more runs in the inning.

"(Murphy) can stinkin' hit, flat hit," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "When he's swinging good, we're dangerous."

Murphy's defense also shined.

He sent the game to the 11th with a tremendous defensive play. Jeff Francoeur's hard liner deflected off Torres' leg toward first base. Murphy made a diving stop before flipping a no-look toss toward the bag that was caught by a hustling Torres, who beat Francoeur by a half-step.

"You'll see it tonight if you turn on your TV," Collins said. "It will be shown many times."

Murphy credited Torres for staying with the play.

"I wasn't sure who was going to be there, but I flipped it anyway," he said.

Torres said extending his leg and running to cover the bag were just natural reactions.

"It just happened to hit my foot," he said. "I'm happy (Murphy) stayed at home."

Torres (5-5) pitched 2 1/3 scoreless innings, allowing one hit and striking out one.

Yoenis Cespedes, Kelly Johnson and Travis d'Arnaud homered for the Mets, who thrilled the large contingent of New York fans by sweeping the four-game

series to give them nine straight wins over Philadelphia. New York remained 6 1/2 games ahead of Washington, a 4-2 winner over San Diego, in the NL East.

"The signs were pointing for us to win this game," Collins said.

New York has averaged 10.4 runs during its winning streak. The Mets outscored the Phillies 40-21 the series.

"I'm happy they're leaving town," Phillies interim manager Pete Mackanin said.

**Giants 9, Cubs 1:** Kelby Tomlinson hit a grand slam for his first career home run and Marlon Byrd added a three-run shot, leading Madison Bumgarner and host San Francisco over Chicago.

The Giants moved within 5 1/2 games of the Cubs for the second NL wild-card spot.

Bumgarner (16-6) struck out 12 in six innings, giving up one run and two hits. He won his fifth straight start and matched the Cubs' Jake Arrieta for most victories in the majors.

Dan Haren (8-9) took the loss.

Later, the Cubs acquired struggling reliever Fernando Rodney from Seattle for cash.

**Nationals 4, Padres 2:** Jayson Werth and Ryan Zimmerman homered, and starter Joe Ross allowed only a bunt single in six innings as Washington beat visiting San Diego.

Zimmerman's RBI single in the fifth gave the Nationals the lead for good at 2-1. He drove in eight runs during the three-game series.

**Dodgers 1, Reds 0:** Zack Greinke and two relievers combined on a four-hitter and Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep of reeling host Cincinnati.

Greinke (14-3) lowered his major league-best ERA to 1.61 and allowed four hits over seven innings, striking out nine.

**Pirates 2, Marlins 1:** Gerrit Cole snapped the longest winless drought of his career, Pedro Alvarez homered and

Pittsburgh held off Miami.

Cole (15-7) allowed one run and five hits in 7 1/3 innings, striking out four and walking none. He hadn't gotten the win in any of his previous five starts.

**Rangers 4, Blue Jays 1:** Yovani Gallardo earned his 100th career victory, Delino DeShields had a part in all of his team's runs even without an RBI and Texas stopped visiting Toronto's five-game winning streak.

The Rangers averted a sweep by the AL East leaders and moved a half-game ahead of Minnesota for the second AL wild-card spot.

**Royals 5, Orioles 3:** Yordano Ventura struck out a career-high 11 in just six innings, Paulo Orlando homered and Kansas City beat visiting Baltimore.

Orioles star center fielder Adam Jones ran into the wall chasing a fly ball in the first. He left soon after that with whiplash, and X-rays on his neck and wrist were negative.

**Cardinals 5, Diamondbacks 3:** Brandon Moss hit his first home run with his new team and Tony Cruz hit his first of the season to lead visiting St. Louis to a four-game sweep.

It was the Cardinals' fifth straight win overall and they finished 7-0 against the Diamondbacks this season.

**Rays 5, Twins 4:** Relievers Brandon Gomes, Alex Colome and Brad Boxberger combined for 42/3 scoreless innings and host Tampa Bay stopped Minnesota's six-game winning streak.

**Angels 2, Tigers 0:** Matt Shoemaker pitched one-hit ball into the eighth inning in his hometown ballpark, Albert Pujols drove in one run and scored another and visiting Los Angeles beat Detroit.

**White Sox 4, Mariners 2:** Carlos Rodon took a shutout into the seventh inning, Adam Eaton had three hits and scored three runs and host Chicago beat Seattle.