

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, December 1, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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41st President George H.W. Bush dies at 94

Associated Press

HOUSTON — He was the man who sought a “kinder and gentler nation,” and the one who sternly invited Americans to read his lips — he would not raise taxes. He was the popular leader of a mighty coalition that dislodged Iraq from Kuwait, and was turned out of the presidency after a single term. Blue-blooded and genteel, he was elected in one of the nastiest campaigns in recent history.

George Herbert Walker Bush was many things, including only the second American to see his son follow him into the nation’s highest office. But more than anything else, he was a believer in government service. Few men or women have served America in more capacities than the man known as “Poppy.”

“There is no higher honor than to serve free men and

women, no greater privilege than to labor in government beneath the Great Seal of the United States and the American flag,” he told senior staffers in 1989, days after he took office.

Bush, who died at age 94 — nearly eight months after his wife of 73 years died at their Houston home — was a congressman, an ambassador to the United Nations and envoy to China, chairman of the Republican National Committee, director of the CIA, two-term vice president and, finally, president.

Unlike his son, who joined the Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam era but served only in the U.S., the elder Bush was a bona fide war hero. He joined the Navy on his 18th birthday in 1942 over the objections of his father, Prescott, who wanted him to stay in school. At one point the youngest pilot in the Navy, he flew 58 missions

off the carrier USS San Jacinto.

His wartime exploits won him the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery. He was shot down on Sept. 2, 1944, while completing a bombing run against a Japanese radio tower. Eight others who were shot down in that mission were captured and executed, and several were eaten by their captors. But an American submarine rescued Bush.

Bush was born June 12, 1924, in Milton, Mass. His father, the son of an Ohio steel magnate, had moved east to make his fortune as an investment banker with Brown Brothers, Harriman, and later served 10 years as a senator from Connecticut. His mother, Dorothy Walker Bush, was the daughter of a sportsman who gave golf its Walker’s Cup.

Young Bush attended Greenwich Country Day School and later Phillips Academy at An-

dover, Mass., where he was senior class president and captain of the baseball and soccer teams. It was there, at a dance, that he met Barbara Pierce, daughter of the publisher of McCall’s magazine. George and Barbara would marry when he left the Navy in January 1945. They were together for more than seven decades, becoming the longest-married presidential couple in U.S. history. She died on April 17, 2018.

Bush got his start in politics in the 1960s. A handsome and well-spoken war hero, he was sought as a candidate by both parties. He chose the Republicans.

Barbara and George Bush had four sons and a daughter: John, known as Jeb, the former Florida governor who sought the Republican presidential nomination in 2016; Neil, Marvin and Dorothy; and George, president 43 to his father’s 41.

Pearl Harbor changed everything for Bush

The Washington Post

George H.W. Bush died on Friday, just a week before the country marks the 77th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor — an event that would change his life.

Bush was a high school senior on Dec. 7, 1941. He was walking on the campus of Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., when he heard that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. According to Bush biographer and presidential historian Jon Meacham, Bush wanted to serve immediately.

Bush initially decided he wanted to become a pilot — and fast. He briefly considered enlisting in the Royal Air Force in Canada because, as Bush told Meacham, he “could get through much faster.” But Bush was lured by naval service, inspired by the grandeur of the Navy’s power, and its reputation for camaraderie and purpose. A combination of flying and the

Navy fit just right.

On June 12, 1942, Bush turned 18 and graduated from Andover. After commencement, he left for Boston to be sworn into the Navy. Nearly one year later, Bush became an officer of the U.S. Naval Reserve and earned his wings as a naval aviator.

At dawn on Sept. 2, 1944, Bush was slated to fly in a strike over Chichi Jima, a Japanese island about 500 miles from the mainland. The island was a stronghold for communications and supplies for the Japanese, and it was heavily guarded. Bush’s precise target was a radio tower.

At about 7:15 that morning, Bush took off through clear skies along with William G. White, known as “Ted,” and John “Del” Delaney. Just over an hour later, their plane was hit.

Choking on the smoke, Bush continued to steer the plane, dropping bombs and hitting the radio tower. He told White and

Delaney to parachute out of the plane, then climbed through his open hatch to maneuver out of the cockpit.

As Bush floated in the sky tethered to a parachute, he saw his plane crash into the water and disappear below. Then he hit the waves, fighting his way back up to the surface and kicking off his shoes to lighten his load.

Fifty feet away bobbed a life raft that Bush managed to inflate and flop onto.

“For a while there, I thought I was done,” Bush told Meacham. He was alone, vomiting over the side of the life raft and slowly grasping that White and Delaney were gone. Hours passed.

Bush, who would win the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism under fire, thought he was delirious when, suddenly, a 311-foot submarine rose from the depths to rescue him.

“Welcome aboard, sir,” greeted a torpedoman second class.

Most troops at border staying longer

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

The deployments of most of the active-duty troops now stationed along the U.S.-Mexico border stringing coiled razor-wire barriers and supporting Border Patrol agents have been extended through the end of January, a Defense Department official confirmed Friday.

However, about 2,000 of the 5,600 troops working along the southwest border in Texas, Arizona and California will return to their duty stations, the Defense Department official said. A timeline for returning troops home was not addressed; the original end date of the mission was Dec. 15.

The Department of Homeland Security sent a formal request Friday to the Defense Department to keep troops through Jan. 31, according to a news release.

"This request refines support to ensure it remains aligned with the current threat, the nature of the mission and [Customs and Border Protection] operational requirements," Defense Department spokesman Lt. Col. Jamie Davis said in the statement.

The request has yet to be approved by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, The Associated Press reported. But military officials have been working with Homeland Security for weeks to help craft a request that would be accepted by the Pentagon.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, Mattis said staff members of both departments had been working on the request, and final agreements came down to the logistical issues of what was still needed.

As far as continuing temporary barriers, Mattis said the ports of entry were "pretty much done," with only flanks of a couple of them remaining.

The deployment of active-duty troops began in late October with a mission to better secure the border and deter a caravan of Central American migrants from crossing into the U.S. At one point, the caravan swelled beyond 7,000 people, the majority from Honduras, the AP reported.

For the past month, military engineers have laid miles of razor-wire barriers, some of it next to business parking lots and recreational parks along the border.

Some of the tasks assigned to the troops have been completed already. As of Nov. 16, the 2,800 active-duty troops in Texas had finished their mission of "hardening" immigration entry points in the Brownsville area at the state's most southern tip.

At that time, the troops in all three states had installed 2,714 meters of razor-wire obstacles in Arizona and another 4,145 meters of razor wire in California.

In late November, deployed military police, who already carry a weapon as part of their day-to-day assignments, were granted authorization to provide force protection for the CBP agents who they are supporting.

The call for an extension of the troop deployment follows some violence Nov. 25 at the San Ysidro Port of Entry in the San Diego section of the border. Demonstrations along both sides of the border ended with Border Patrol agents firing tear gas into the crowd.

Some 5,000 migrants remain on the Mexican side of the border, camping at a sports complex in Tijuana. Their numbers have decreased as many of them have lost hope of seeking asylum in the United States.

Truck in fatal border crash smuggling people: Agents

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — The pickup involved in the crash that killed three people during a rainy pursuit by U.S. Border Patrol agents had just driven across the international border in a human-smuggling attempt, the federal agency said Friday.

Eleven people were in the Chevrolet Silverado pickup — nine of them in the bed, which had no camper shell — when it crashed along westbound Interstate 8 near Crestwood Road on Thursday afternoon.

Everyone but the driver was thrown from the truck.

The driver was identified Friday as Luis Alberto Virgen, 21, a U.S. citizen who has been living in Tijuana, Mexico, California Highway Patrol officer Travis Garrow said. He was arrested on suspicion of three counts of gross vehicular manslaughter and remains jailed.

Massive quake in Alaska damages Elmendorf-Richardson

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson sustained a major water leak Friday and only necessary personnel are now permitted on the base after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit about 7 miles northwest of Anchorage, Alaska.

Roughly 90 minutes after the earthquake, a post on the base Facebook page stated they had shut off water to the Elmendorf side of the facility due to the leak. The Facebook post also reported all gates at the base

are intact but access onto the base was limited until further notice.

"Servicemembers from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson are accounting for personnel and conducting a damage assessment of installation facilities from today's earthquake, and are preparing to provide emergency support to the base populace and the community if needed," Pacific Air Forces public affairs wrote in an email. "We are not expecting to be impacted by the tsunami, but are trained and prepared. Regular updates will be posted on the Joint Base Elmendorf-

Richardson (JBER) official Facebook page."

The earthquake occurred about 8:30 am Friday local time, according to the Alaska Earthquake Center website. Additional smaller earthquakes have been detected in the region.

The Anchorage Daily News reported power is out in areas throughout the region and some roads have been severely damaged. The newspaper also reported their newsroom suffered damaged to walls and ceiling panels as well as objects thrown off desks.

The National Tsunami

Warning Center for the National Weather Service in Palmer, Alaska reported there is no tsunami danger from the earthquake.

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, which is in Anchorage, is home to more than 13,000 military personnel, nearly 20,000 family members and 3,000 civilian employees, according to its website. Several Army and Air Force units are located there, including the 25th Infantry Division, Army Alaska headquarters, as well as Air Force aircraft including F-22s, C-130 Hercules, and HH 60 Pave Hawks.

3 contractors face fraud-plot charges

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A grand jury charged three businessmen from Virginia with scheming to defraud the U.S. government by routing supplies for a multibillion-dollar contract through Iran, according to an indictment unsealed Thursday.

The indictment alleges that the three men conspired to shave costs off the construction of two warehouses at Bagram Air Field by shipping steel through Iran, a country currently under sanctions by the U.S. government.

All three contractors pleaded not guilty to charges of major fraud, conspiracy, international money laundering and other violations.

The three men indicted were Abul Huda Farouki, of McLean, Va., a former CEO of the company Anham FZCO and donor to prominent U.S. politicians such as the Clintons; his younger brother, Mazen Farouki, of Boyce, Va., who headed Anham's Afghanistan affiliate; and businessman Salah Maarouf, of Fairfax, Va., who ran a

company that bought services for Anham.

Anham bid for an \$8 billion contract in 2011 to build warehouses at Bagram Air Field to store food for troops, according to the indictment.

The company won the contract with promises to build two warehouses by December 2011. But as the deadline approached, the warehouses were nowhere close to being finished, government prosecutors allege. The first warehouse was just a concrete slab in the ground, and construction on the second warehouse had not even begun.

The company had troubles shipping steel to Bagram through Pakistan in late 2011 when Pakistan temporarily shut its borders to U.S. supplies after an American airstrike mistakenly killed 24 Pakistani soldiers, according to a report by the Wall Street Journal.

Emails cited in the indictment quoted executives at Anham and its affiliated companies discussing whether they should ship their steel by air. The emails suggest that Mazen told his older brother Huda to ship the steel through Iran.

White House officials' tweets violated Hatch Act

The Washington Post.

WASHINGTON — Six White House officials violated a federal law that prohibits public employees from conducting political activity in their official roles when they used their official Twitter accounts to send or display political messages supporting President Donald Trump, according to the federal agency that enforces the law.

The six employees — which included members of the press office — deleted their social media posts once they were told they had violated the Hatch Act, the Office of Special Counsel said Friday. As a result, federal investigators issued warning letters rather than taking disciplinary action and advised that similar social media activity in the future will be considered willful violations of the law that could result in further action, according to Erica Hamrick, deputy chief of the Hatch Act unit.

The White House officials who were reprimanded were principal deputy press secretary Raj Shah; deputy director of communications Jessica Ditto; Madeleine Westerhout, executive assistant to the president; Helen Aguirre Ferre, for-

mer director of media affairs; Alyssa Farah, press secretary for Vice President Pence; and Jacob Wood, deputy communications director for the Office of Management and Budget.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

All six had tweets or Twitter profiles that contained political messages, including the Trump campaign's slogan "Make America Great Again," or the abbreviated hashtag #MAGA.

Because Trump is running for reelection, the Office of Special Counsel — a separate agency from the Justice Department special counsel's office, which is leading the Russia investigation — prohibits federal employees from displaying Trump's 2016 campaign images or using his slogan.

The warnings announced Friday were the latest cases in which Trump administration officials have been found in violation of the Hatch Act.

Earlier this year, the Office of Special Counsel found White House adviser Kellyanne Conway violated the law on two occasions by making public comments about the candidates in a special U.S. Senate election in Alabama last year.

Grand jury: Shooting by Dallas officer was murder

Associated Press

DALLAS — A white former Dallas police officer was indicted on a murder charge Friday, nearly three months after she fatally shot an unarmed black neighbor whose apartment she said she entered by mistake, believing it to be her own.

Amber Guyger told fellow officers that she opened fire when Botham Jean appeared in the darkness.

Jean's relatives joined the district attorney for the announcement of the charge. Jean, 26, a native of the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia, attended college in Arkansas

and had been working in Dallas for accounting and consulting firm PwC.

"I truly believe that she inflicted tremendous evil on my son," Jean's mother, Allison Jean, said after the announcement.

Guyger was arrested on a manslaughter charge three days after the Sept. 6 shooting, prompting criticism that the original charge was too lenient. But Dallas County District Attorney Faith Johnson said at the time that the grand jury could upgrade the charge, which it did Friday.

"When you look at the facts of this case, we thought that it

was murder all along," he said.

After finishing her shift, Guyger told investigators, she returned home in uniform and parked on the fourth floor of her apartment complex's garage, rather than the third floor, where her unit was located, according to an affidavit prepared by the Texas Rangers.

She said she got to what she thought was her apartment — Jean's was directly above hers — and found the door ajar. She opened it to find a figure standing in the darkness. She said she pulled her gun and fired twice after the person ignored her commands.

Guyger, 30, has since been

fired from the department, and Jean's family has filed a lawsuit against Guyger and the city of Dallas. The federal suit argues that Guyger used excessive force in the shooting and contends the department did not give her adequate training.

The circumstances of the shooting sparked outrage and led many to question Guyger's account. Critics, including Jean's family, also wondered why it took three days for Guyger to be charged, why she was not taken into custody immediately after the shooting and whether race played a factor in her decision.

Possible 'breakthrough' after G-20 talks

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — All-night talks at the Group of 20 summit have resulted in a possible "breakthrough" on fixing the global trading system, European diplomats said Saturday as the gathering entered its crucial second and final day in the Argentine capital.

Despite deep divisions going into the summit and resistance from the United States, European Union officials said countries also are making progress on a final statement that will acknowledge problems with the World Trade Organization but commit to reforming it.

U.S. President Donald Trump has criticized the WTO and taken aggressive trade policies targeting China and the EU.

One EU official told reporters that the G-20 summit's final statement is likely to reflect 19 members supporting the Paris climate accord with the U.S. stating its opposition to it.

The official said the U.S. delegation also held up discussion of how to manage refugees and migrants, but that the final statement is expected to mention the need to manage migration on a global level.

The officials spoke on condition of ano-

nymity to discuss the ongoing closed-door discussions.

Saturday will also see a highly anticipated meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, whose nations have been embroiled in an escalating trade war with new U.S. tariffs on China goods set to take effect a month from now.

The divisions among the world's leading economies were evident from the moment Argentina's president opened the summit Friday with a call for international cooperation to solve the planet's problems.

Trump sought to use the gathering to make his own trade deals, signing a pact with Mexico and Canada to replace the North American Trade Agreement. Meanwhile, two men under heavy criticism from the West lately — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — appeared to seek refuge in each other, bonding with a tough-guy hand grab as the leaders sat down around a huge round table for talks.

Laura Jaitman, the Argentine Treasury official shepherding the G-20's financing talks, said leaders had made progress on finance and trade and was hopeful a joint

statement would be possible.

"There's a very positive message of how trade has been an engine of growth for the next decades and how it will continue in the future providing benefits for all citizens," Jaitman said.

Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie said final communique does not require the signature of presidents.

Argentine President Mauricio Macri kicked off the summit by acknowledging divisions within the G-20 while urging world leaders to have a "sense of urgency" and take actions "based on shared interests."

Also Friday, European Council President Donald Tusk urged G-20 leaders to discuss "trade wars, the tragic situation in Syria and Yemen, and Russian aggression in Ukraine." He said the European Union is expected to extend sanctions on Moscow over its "totally unacceptable" seizure of Ukrainian ships and their crews near the Crimean Peninsula.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame over the incident — which Trump cited in canceling a much-awaited meeting with Putin at the G-20. Russia's foreign minister regretted the move, but said "love can't be forced."

Ukraine denies entry to about 100 Russians

Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's border service says that around 100 Russian citizens have been denied entry into the country since an entry ban for adult Russian males was announced.

Border guards' spokesman Andrei Demchenko has told Ukrainian television Saturday that "the vast majority of [them] couldn't confirm the purpose of their trip to Ukraine."

He said that "some of them didn't have the necessary doc-

uments to enter Ukraine and others had exceeded the period of stay in our country."

President Petro Poroshenko announced Friday that all Russian males aged 16 to 60 would be banned from entering Ukraine during a 30-day

period of martial law approved Monday.

Poroshenko said the move was intended to prevent undercover Russian military units from entering the country after Russia seized three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews.

State media: Iran launches domestically made destroyer

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran on Saturday launched a domestically built destroyer in the Persian Gulf capable of traveling some five months without refueling, state TV reported.

The 1,300-ton vessel named Sahand — after a mountain in northern Iran — took six years to build, according to the report. TV showed a ceremony marking the inauguration with a three-gun salute at the southern port of Bandar Abbas, at the mouth of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the passageway for nearly a third of all oil traded by sea.

The Sahand has a helicopter landing pad, is 105 yards long and can cruise at 25 knots.

It is equipped with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles as well as anti-aircraft batteries and sophisticated radar and radar evading capabilities, the report said.

Since 1992, Iran has been working to build a self-sufficient military, reportedly producing its own jet fighters, tanks, missiles and light submarines as well as torpedoes.

Iran added the first domestically made destroyer to its fleet in 2010 in the Per-

sian Gulf. Reportedly Iran has five other destroyers.

On Thursday, Iran's navy announced the acquisition of two mini-submarines designed for operation in shallow waters such as the Persian Gulf, including one new sub and an overhauled one.

The announcements are likely intended to boost Iran's military image amid rising tensions with the United States, which in November reimposed all sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers. The Trump administration pulled America out of the deal in May.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

THC gummies sicken 6 middle schoolers

FL MULBERRY — Six middle school students were treated at a hospital after eating THC-infused gummy candies while in gym class.

The Lakeland Ledger reported that a 12-year-old had the gummies and shared them with friends on Thursday.

Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said five students were taken to the hospital via ambulance and one was taken by their parents.

Detectives are investigating how the seventh grader acquired the candies.

Group rents Santa's lap for holiday photos

LA HOUMA — A south Louisiana fundraiser rented Santa's lap instead of selling photos of kids with the jolly old elf.

The Courier reported that the Kiwanis Club of Houma is keeping up with the digital times.

Member Joan Malbrough said in a news release that the group used to sell photo prints to raise money, but most people now want to take their own digital pictures.

She said, "We're switching to renting out Santa's lap to help fund all the good things our club does for the community."

Tracks in snow lead to car break-in suspect

VT ST. ALBANS — Police said a man accused of breaking into dozens of cars left footprints in the snow that led officers to his location.

According to officers, a man dressed in all black was seen trying to break into parked cars in St. Albans. MyNBC5 reported

responding police were able to back-track the suspect's route for over a mile — leading them directly to the 26-year-old suspect's apartment.

The man was arrested early Wednesday and charged with 33 counts of larceny, attempted larceny and unlawful trespass. He is scheduled to appear in court on Dec. 31.

Popular Yellowstone wolf killed by hunter

WY JACKSON — A Montana hunter has legally killed a wolf that was popular with photographers and wolf watchers in Yellowstone National Park.

Abby Nelson, of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department, said everything was legitimate about the way the wolf known as 926F was taken last Saturday near Cooke City, Mont., outside the park.

But she told the Jackson Hole News & Guide that it may a little bit harder for people to accept because the pack the wolf belonged to had showed signs of habituation.

The wolf had been the alpha female of the Lamar Canyon Pack until ceding the role to her daughter recently.

Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have established wolf hunting seasons to help control their numbers. No wolf hunting is allowed inside Yellowstone.

Marriage stalled over 'foreign' ID card

NM LAS CRUCES — A District of Columbia clerk refused to accept a New Mexico man's state driver's license for a marriage license because she and her supervisor believed New Mexico was a foreign country.

Gavin Clarkson told the Las Cruces Sun-News it happened

Nov. 20 at the District of Columbia Courts Marriage Bureau as he tried to apply for a marriage license.

Clarkson says the clerk told him he needed an international passport to get the marriage license.

The clerk finally concluded New Mexico was a state after Clarkson objected three times and granted the license to Clarkson and his fiancée.

Teacher tells students Santa Claus isn't real

NJ MONTVILLE — A school district is apologizing for a substitute teacher who told first-grade students that Santa Claus isn't real.

Cedar Hill School Principal Michael Raj sent a letter to parents following the incident Thursday at the school in Montville. Raj noted that as a parent himself, he understands the "sensitive nature" of the topic.

Montville Schools Superintendent Rene Rovtar said in a statement that she was "troubled and disheartened by this incident." Rovtar explained that "childhood wonder associated with all holidays and traditions" is special to her.

2 brothers win lottery in the same year

SD PIERRE — Luck seems to run in one family. Brothers Patrick and Bill Rose have both hit the lottery jackpot in the past year. The South Dakota Lottery says Patrick Rose, of Pierre, claimed a Dakota Cash jackpot of \$86,450 last week. That comes 11 months after brother Bill Rose, from Fort Pierre, won a \$390,000 Lucky for Life prize.

Patrick Rose said he buys lotto tickets every day, but was in disbelief when he saw that

he won the Nov. 21 jackpot. He says he'll pay off some bills and visit his daughters in Texas.

Wawa and brewery partner to create beer

PA CHADDS FORD — The convenience store franchise Wawa said it is partnering with a suburban Philadelphia brewery to create a limited edition beer.

Wawa's Winter Reserve Coffee Stout, brewed by 2SP Brewing Co., blends Wawa's Winter Blend coffee into a stout beer. The beer will be launched on Dec. 6 at a Wawa store in Chadds Ford — the only Wawa in Pennsylvania that sells beer.

The beer will be available for purchase during the week of Dec. 10 through Origlio Beverage, which distributes to neighborhood bars and bottle shops in southeastern Pennsylvania. Only 1,000 cases of the brew will be available.

Man steals calf from program to pay bill

IN BUNKER HILL — Authorities said a man stole a 1,095-pound calf from an educational program that he volunteered with in northern Indiana and sold it to pay a bill.

The Kokomo Tribune reported Todd Burns, 47, checked on cattle on weekends for the Maconaquah School Corp.'s Maconaquah Cattle Co. program in Miami County. The newspaper said a teacher told investigators Burns called him Nov. 17 to report that cows had escaped a pen and Burns was rounding them up.

Three days later, the teacher noticed a feeder calf worth more than \$800 was missing. Burns allegedly sold the calf. He was arrested Tuesday on a theft charge.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Rivers, Roethlisberger renew their rivalry

Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — The Chargers' Philip Rivers and Pittsburgh's Ben Roethlisberger are playing some of the best football of their 15-year careers.

On Sunday, the two meet at Heinz Field in a prime-time game that could serve as a playoff preview.

If the postseason began this week, the Chargers would be facing the Steelers in a first-round game. Los Angeles (8-3) has a two-game lead for the AFC's first wild-card spot while Pittsburgh (7-3-1) leads the AFC North and would be the fourth seed.

It is the sixth time the two members of the 2004 draft class have met but the first time since 2012, when the Chargers defeated the Steelers 34-24 in Pittsburgh. Roethlisberger, though, has a 3-2 edge in the series.

"We're probably similar in a lot of ways," Rivers said. "We both like to stand in there, don't mind holding on 'til the

last second to make a throw, take a hit, all those things. It's always awesome going against those teams led by those types of guys."

Both have been in the league for 15 seasons, but Rivers acknowledged that he doesn't know Roethlisberger very well. However, there is a mutual admiration between the two.

"He's an MVP-caliber player, and he's playing at a MVP level right now," said Roethlisberger of Rivers.

Chargers offensive coordinator Ken Whisenhunt was Roethlisberger's offensive coordinator when he was drafted in 2004 and spent three seasons with him.

Whisenhunt has been Rivers' coach for four seasons in two different stints and said he has been fortunate to see both at different stages of their careers.

"Got two different guys that have managed to be successful. The one trait they both have is how competitive they are," Whisenhunt said.

"They are both great leaders.

I remember in Pittsburgh telling (then defensive coordinator) Dick Lebeau how special Ben could be. With Philip it is hard for opposing defenses to fool him because he sees so much and has great anticipation for what is coming."

Rivers comes into this game after having the most accurate passing performance in league history last week against Arizona, going 28-for-29 for 239 yards and three touchdowns in three quarters. He completed his first 25, which tied the league mark for consecutive completions and broke the record for the most to start a game.

The performance drew plenty of plaudits from throughout the league, including Roethlisberger.

"What he did last week was pretty spectacular — 25 in a row. It's hard to follow all of the games on the west so much, but it's easy because he's a quarterback to kind of keep track of how he's doing," he said.

Rivers is third in the league with a 115.7 passer rating and

is averaging 9.1 yards per completion, which is fourth. He has thrown for two or more touchdowns in every game this season, becoming just the fourth in league history to do that in the first 11 games in a season.

His biggest improvement though is in not taking risks. He has 26 touchdowns against six interceptions, and his 69.5 percent completion rate ties a career best. Rivers has said often this year it has been one of his goals to have a completion rate of 70 percent or more in a season.

Roethlisberger though is also getting better with age. He has thrown for 3,664 yards, which is his most of his career through the Steelers' first 11 games, and the 24 touchdowns are tied with his 2014 season.

"Obviously he does a great job extending plays and is hard to bring down. He probably has made a lot more plays on the move than I have over the years," Rivers said.

College basketball roundup

Radford stuns Texas for first-ever win over ranked foe

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Big school schedulers are probably second-guessing themselves for calling tiny Radford for a game.

If the head coaches weren't such good friends, Texas would probably rather never see the Highlanders ever again.

Carlik Jones made a spinning, scoop layup, then followed it with a free throw with 24.5 seconds left, sending Radford to a 62-59 upset of the No. 17 Longhorns on Friday night, earning the Highlanders the program's first ever win over a ranked opponent.

Radford already beat Notre Dame this season and with road games at Clemson and Maryland still on the schedule

in December, it's a sure bet those schools will be scouting the Highlanders from the Big South Conference harder than they ever thought they'd have to.

"The stretch we have right now is suicidal," Radford coach Mike Jones said. "At the end of the day, these games don't matter as much as our league does ... The statement is if we are locked in for 40 minutes ... we can (win)."

The smaller Highlanders (6-1) matched Texas' 44 rebounds, turned the ball over just eight times against Texas full- and half-court pressure defense and got stop after stop on defense even when their own shots weren't going down in the second half.

No. 22 Wisconsin 72, No.

14 Iowa 66: D'Mitrik Trice scored 20 points, including a crucial three with 20 seconds left, and the visiting Badgers held off the Hawkeyes in the Big Ten opener for both teams.

Ethan Happ had 13 points, seven boards and five assists for the Badgers (7-1), who handed the Hawkeyes their first loss of the season in a back-and-forth affair.

No. 9 Michigan State 78, Rutgers 69: Cassius Winston scored 22 points and Nick Ward had 20 points to lead the Spartans past the host Scarlet Knights in the Big Ten opener.

After a back-and-forth first half, where Rutgers led much of the first 10 minutes, Winston hit a three-pointer to give Michigan State (5-2) the 39-37 lead over the Scarlet Knights

(5-2) at the break.

No. 21 Buffalo 96, Milwaukee 77: At Belfast, Northern Ireland, Jeremy Harris scored 21 points, Nick Perkins added 20 with nine rebounds, and the Bulls beat the Panthers in the Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Classic.

CJ Massinburg added 16 points as Buffalo improved to 6-0 for the first time since the 1930-31 season.

No. 25 Mississippi State 65, Dayton 58: Nick Weatherpoon hit a pair of three-pointers in the closing minutes, and the visiting Bulldogs trailed most of the game before rallying to beat the Flyers.

The Bulldogs (6-1) salvaged their first true road game by hitting late threes after missing 15 of their first 19 tries.

Huskies edge Utes in Pac-12 title game

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — On a night when neither offense could do much of anything, it was only fitting that a pass that bounced off a receiver's hands and leg turned into the winning play.

Byron Murphy returned a deflected interception 66 yards for the game's only touchdown to lead No. 10 Washington to a 10-3 victory over No. 17 Utah in the Pac-12 championship game Friday night and a berth in the Rose Bowl.

"You know, life isn't easy. A Pac-12 championship, is not going to be easy," coach Chris Petersen said. "It's not reality. If it happens, go buy lottery tickets because it's not going to be like that. That's just luck. It is a grind, it's hard."

The matchup between the two stingiest defenses in the conference lived up to the billing with Washington (10-3, No. 11 CFP) holding Utah (9-4, No. 17 CFP) to 188 yards and both offenses limited to just one field goal apiece all game.

That's why it was up to the defense to come up with the score for the Huskies.

Jason Shelley's pass hit Siao-si Mariner in the hands inside the Washington 35. But Mariner couldn't hold onto the pass and it ricocheted off his leg and into the hands of Murphy, who raced 66 yards for the score that made it 10-3.

"The ball came up and I just knew I had to make a play," Murphy said. "The opportunity

was there. I just had to make sure I took it."

Jordan Miller intercepted another pass from Shelley on the following drive and Murphy got his second interception of the game the next time Utah had the ball. The Huskies sealed the victory with a fourth-down stop in the final minute to earn a trip to Pasadena.

"They play the kind of game we want to play," linebacker Ben Burr-Kirven said. "They play a physical brand of football. They want to run the ball down our throats and I think we're built to play that kind of game."

Murphy broke up the final pass on a throw to Mariner that the Utes thought should have been called pass interference.

"Everybody's hurt," Shelley said. "We were that close. We played that bad and we still lost by only seven points."

The Huskies had four drives of at least 10 plays but got only one field goal out of those. They were stopped on a fourth-and-6 from the Utah 23 on the opening drive, threw an interception in Utah territory on the third drive and had a field goal blocked in the fourth quarter.

The one score came on Peyton Henry's 29-yard field goal late in the first half.

"It's really hard to describe because we're so excited about our defense out there and in some ways frustrated on the other side," Petersen said. "We just couldn't get things done like we needed to."

That Utes tied it with a score

on the opening possession of the third quarter when Matt Gay's 53-yard field goal just cleared the cross bar but couldn't get anything else.

The takeaway

Utah: The Utes made it to the title game despite losing quarterback Tyler Huntley and running back Zack Moss to injuries in a four-day span in early November. They then lost leading receiver Britain Covey to what appears to be a serious knee injury in this game.

Shelley and Armand Shyne stepped in and let the Utes to three straight wins and a spot in this game but they weren't good enough against the Huskies. Shelley's three interceptions were his first turnovers as a starter. He threw for just 137 yards. Shyne ran for 37 yards on 11 carries.

Washington: The Huskies came into the season with playoff hopes but a season-opening loss to Auburn and then a pair of losses to Oregon and California in October ended that quest. But Washington still managed to win the conference and will go to the Rose Bowl for the first time since the 2000 season.

Illinois extends Smith's contract

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Illinois extended the contract of coach Lovie Smith for two years through 2023 after the Illini finished his third season with four victories.

Athletic director Josh Whitman said Sunday the extension demonstrates his belief in Smith, his staff and the plan they have going forward. Whitman hired Smith, the former NFL head coach who led the Bears to the Super Bowl, soon after he was named AD in 2016.

"I have studied our program extensively, and I see steady progress, both in the development of our current players and the talent we are adding to our roster," Whitman said. "To date, we have remained one of the youngest teams in college football, with only nine seniors and nearly 80 freshmen and sophomores. As our players grow in strength, skill, and experience, more wins will follow."

Smith's original deal was for six years and \$21 million. Terms of the extension were being finalized.

Smith is 9-27 in three seasons and 4-23 in the Big Ten, but there were signs of improvement this season. The Illini were 2-10 and winless in the Big Ten in 2017.

"Those of us around the program see the progress being made each and every day, and we expect to be competing for championships very soon," Smith said. "Our incredible fans and everyone on our campus deserve nothing less."

Whitman said the school is committed to building a program that has had one winning season since 2007.

Childers' 4 TD passes help NIU rally past Buffalo

Associated Press

DETROIT — Marcus Childers threw a touchdown pass — his fourth of the game — to D.J. Brown with 1:09 to go and Northern Illinois rallied from a 19-point, second-half deficit to take a 30-29 victory over Buffalo in the Mid-American Conference championship game on Friday.

The 35-yard TD pass came

on the eighth play of a 70-yard drive that took a little more than two minutes following a punt forced by Sutton Smith's sack of Bulls quarterback Tyree Jackson.

NIU's two-point conversion failed and the Bulls (10-3) reached the Huskies' 41-yard line before an incomplete pass on fourth down with 21 seconds left ended Buffalo's hopes.

The Huskies' touchdown

completed a comeback from a 29-10 deficit in the third quarter. Childers threw a 28-yard score to Brown near the end of the third quarter and a 32-yarder to Spencer Tears with under 13 minutes left in the fourth. Childers also had a 13-yard TD pass to Tears in the first half. Childers completed 21 of 33 passes for 300 yards with an interception and led the team with 58 yards rushing.

Jackson was 18-for-35 passing for 252 yards and two touchdown passes to Anthony Johnson, who had 124 yards receiving on seven catches. Kevin Marks and Jaret Patterson ran for touchdowns. Buffalo missed a PAT after their second TD.

The Bulls are 0-12 against NIU (8-5) in MAC play since joining the league in 1999. A lone win over the Huskies came in 1968.

NBA roundup

Westbrook leads Thunder past Hawks

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook fell a rebound short of a triple-double, finishing with 23 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds in the Oklahoma City Thunder's 124-109 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Friday night.

Alex Abrines scored 21 points on seven three-pointers, Paul George had 20 points and Dennis Schroder added 18. Oklahoma City shot 52.3 percent from the field, hitting a season-high 18 three-pointers.

Hawks guard Trae Young had nine points and eight assists on 4-for-15 shooting in his return to his home state. Young was an All-American at Oklahoma last season.

Grizzlies 131, Nets 125 (2OT): Mike Conley scored 13 of his team's 14 points in the second overtime and finished with 37 points and 10 rebounds, and Memphis beat host

Brooklyn.

Rookie Jaren Jackson Jr. had a career-high 36 points for Memphis.

Conley kept Memphis' hopes alive in regulation when he blocked Spencer Dinwiddie's potential winning basket and then scored on a floater to tie it at 117 with nine seconds left in the first overtime.

Rockets 136, Spurs 105: Clint Capela had 27 points and 12 rebounds, James Harden added 23 points and 10 assists and Houston handed host San Antonio its second straight lopsided loss.

Chris Paul added 14 points and 10 assists for Houston.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 20 points for the Spurs. Coming off a 39-point loss at Minnesota, San Antonio (10-12) fell two games below .500 for the first time since it was 4-6 on Nov. 20, 2009.

Celtics 128, Cavaliers 95: Kyrie Irving scored 29 points

in the first three quarters and Boston topped its season scoring high for the second straight game, routing visiting Cleveland.

Marcus Morris added 15 points, Jayson Tatum had 13 and Aron Baynes finished with 10 points and nine rebounds.

Heat 106, Pelicans 101: Josh Richardson scored 20 points, Dwyane Wade added 18 and Miami wasted most of a 31-point lead before hanging on to beat visiting New Orleans.

The Heat led by 31 points in the second quarter, then saw the lead cut to three in the final moments before escaping to snap a six-game home losing streak.

Jazz 119, Hornets 111: Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points, Robert Gobert had 20 points and 17 rebounds and visiting Utah scored 54 points off three-pointers to hold off Charlotte.

Magic 99, Suns 85: Nikola

Vucevic had 25 points and 15 rebounds and Orlando beat host Phoenix.

76ers 123, Wizards 98: Joel Embiid had 16 points and 15 rebounds, Ben Simmons added 13 points and 10 assists and both Philadelphia stars sat for the final quarter and a half in their victory over visiting Washington.

Pistons 107, Bulls 88: Andre Drummond had 19 points and 19 rebounds and Blake Griffin added 20 points and 10 rebounds to help host Detroit rout Chicago for its fourth straight victory.

Lakers 114, Mavericks 103: LeBron James scored 28 points, Brandon Ingram added 19 and host Los Angeles won its second game in as many nights.

Nuggets 113, Trail Blazers 112: Gary Harris scored 27 points as visiting Denver edged Portland for its fifth straight win.

NHL roundup

Wilson scores, gets ejected, but Caps win 7th straight

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Tom Wilson got back on the score sheet and put himself back under the microscope that has become a part of his existence in the NHL.

Wilson scored again before being ejected for a questionable hit and Nicklas Backstrom had a hat trick and four points in the Washington Capitals' 6-3 victory over the New Jersey Devils on Friday night that extended the defending Stanley Cup champions' winning streak to seven games. Wilson had a short-handed goal and showed some of his best attributes as a power forward and penalty killer before getting kicked out of the game for a polarizing hit on Brett Seney that earned him

a match penalty and at least another look from the league's department of player safety.

"He's huge for our team," center Evgeny Kuznetsov said of Wilson. "You can see he's playing well and he scored the goals, he make those dirty plays when you've got to battle for the puck, when you go in the corner. It's not easy to play there, and he play unbelievable for us. That's why he's such a big piece for us."

Wilson now has seven goals and 13 points in nine games since coming back from a lengthy suspension. He extended his career-best goal streak to five games and point streak to seven games and at the same time raised questions about whether he's headed toward further discipline.

Panthers 3, Sabres 2 (OT): Aleksander Barkov scored at 2:26 of overtime for host Florida to hand Buffalo its second loss in two nights following a 10-game winning streak.

Jared McCann and Evgenii Dadonov also scored, and James Reimer stopped 20 shots.

Sam Reinhart had a goal and an assist and Jeff Skinner also scored for Buffalo. The Sabres were coming off a 5-4 loss at Tampa Bay.

Blues 3, Avalanche 2 (OT): Colton Parayko scored 1:34 into overtime to lift visiting St. Louis past Colorado.

Vladimir Tarasenko and Alexander Steen scored in regulation, and Jake Allen stopped 27 shots.

Nikita Zadorov and Mikko

Rantanen scored for the Avalanche.

Flames 4, Kings 1: Mikael Backlund had two goals and an assist in host Calgary's victory over Los Angeles.

Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan also scored, and Mike Smith made 13 saves for the Pacific Division-leading Flames.

Adrian Kempe scored for the Kings, coming off a 3-2 loss at Edmonton on Thursday night.

Ducks 2, Hurricanes 1 (OT): Ryan Getzlaf scored 1:15 into overtime to lift visiting Anaheim past Carolina.

Pontus Aberg scored the tying goal with 3:50 left in regulation. John Gibson stopped 33 shots to help the Ducks win their third straight and for the fifth time in six games.