

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Microsoft throws support behind military

Los Angeles Times

As tech companies such as Google wrestle with employee objections to working with the U.S. military, Microsoft Corp.'s president is throwing his company's support behind the Pentagon.

Microsoft is "going to provide the U.S. military with access to the best technology ... all the technology we create. Full stop," Brad Smith said Saturday during a panel at the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif.

Smith acknowledged that "there is some angst" in some workforces, including Microsoft's, about tech companies' involvement in military contracts.

In June, after thousands of

employees voiced objections to a contract that allowed the military to use Google's artificial intelligence tools to analyze drone footage, Google decided not to renew the contract.

Smith said he wanted to quell such concerns. "We want Silicon Valley to know just how ethical and honorable a tradition the military has," he said.

The future and use of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems have broad implications, he said, and are "of importance to everybody and not just young people who happen to live on the West Coast."

Smith expressed openness to hearing his workers' opinions, saying that Microsoft would "engage to address the ethical issues that new technology is creating."

He recalled an email he

received from an employee who grew up in Belgrade, Serbia — which was bombed by NATO forces in 1999 — that said the employee needed to think through Microsoft's reasoning for working with military contracts. Smith said he understood the employee's background would lead to such hesitation.

But he did not mention Microsoft taking any action or changing any policy as a result.

Other tech industry executives pushed back against the idea that Silicon Valley workers are less inclined to work with the Defense Department solely because of cultural differences or qualms about the moral implications.

"It's much more an economics issue," said Rachel Olney, founder and chief executive of geographic location data start-

up Geosite. "Dealing with the U.S. government is extremely time-consuming" and often doesn't provide the same kind of profits as commercial work," she said.

The DOD has established the Defense Innovation Unit, which is intended to provide capital — without taking an ownership stake — to companies that want to work on prototype projects that help address problems faced by the U.S. military.

Despite the pushback from employees at Google on the Project Maven artificial intelligence contract, Defense Innovation Unit director Michael Brown said his agency has gotten more responses from commercial companies that are interested in working with the U.S. military.

Navy's mission in Middle East gets new leader

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Vice Adm. Jim Malloy, the deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans and strategy, is slated to take command this week of the Navy's mission in the Middle East, leading sailors in Bahrain in the wake of the sudden death of a three-star admiral.

Vice Adm. Scott Stearney, who led U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet, was found dead at his Bahrain home Saturday. A private memorial was being planned on the Navy's base in Bahrain, officials said Monday.

Navy officials declined to comment on reports by CBS News and USNI News, which cited unnamed defense officials stating Stearney died in an apparent suicide.

While Stearney's death is under investigation, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said Saturday no foul play was suspected.

Richardson tapped Malloy — now en route to Bahrain — soon after Stearney's death to assume temporary command.

Meanwhile, 5th Fleet sailors continue to carry out operations in a region where countering Iran and ensuring freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf is one of the command's top priorities.

"Scheduling has not been affected; fleet is continuing operations," said Cmdr. Joshua Frey, spokesman for U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

Gen. Joseph Votel, U.S. Central Command chief, said Sunday he was confident the sailors would carry out their missions,

but that it would be with "heavy hearts."

Stearney, described by Richardson as a "decorated naval warrior" and a "devoted husband and father," assumed command of 5th Fleet in May. Upon taking command, Stearney said he was ready to work with partners "to keep conflict out of the maritime and promote security and stability."

The 5th Fleet area of operations stretches from the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman to the Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The region includes three strategic shipping choke points: the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb, at the southern tip of Yemen.

Stearney earned his commission in 1982 after graduating from the University of Notre

Dame. He graduated from the prestigious Navy Fighter Weapons School, popularly known as TOPGUN, where he later served as an instructor.

Stearney flew the F/A-18 Hornet in multiple squadrons and served aboard the aircraft carriers USS Theodore Roosevelt, USS George Washington and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. He also served in Afghanistan as chief of staff of Joint Task Force 435, which advises Afghan security forces.

His flag assignments included tours as commander, U.S. Transportation Command's Joint Enabling Capabilities Command; commander, Strike Force Training Atlantic; commander, Carrier Strike Group 4; commander, Navy Warfare Development Command; and director of operations, U.S. Central Command.

4th US troop dies of wounds from bombing in Afghanistan

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A fourth soldier has died of wounds from a blast last week in central Afghanistan, raising the toll from the deadliest incident for U.S. troops in the country this year, the Pentagon said Monday.

Sgt. Jason Mitchell McClary, 24, of Export, Pa., died Sunday at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany from injuries he received in the blast, which struck a convoy of U.S. and Afghan forces in Ghazni province's Andar district en route to battle Taliban fighters last Tuesday.

The Pentagon last week identified three other servicemembers killed in the blast as Green Berets Capt. Andrew Patrick Ross and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Michael Emond, both of the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group; and Air Force Staff Sgt. Dylan Elchin, a special tactics combat

controller assigned to the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

McClary was one of three troops who, along with a U.S. contractor, had reportedly been wounded in the blast but had been evacuated for medical treatment. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division in Fort Carson, Colo.

McClary, an infantryman, was an up-armored vehicle gunner for Attack Company in 1st Battalion, Lt. Col. Christopher Roberts, his regimental commander, said in a statement.

"The Rock battalion expresses its deepest sympathies and condolences to the family and friends tragically affected by the loss of Sgt. Jason McClary," said Roberts, referring to the battalion by its nickname. "He epitomizes what it is to be a professional, a warrior and a soldier."

McClary joined the Army in

January 2014 and deployed to Iraq from May 2016 to January 2017 before being assigned to 1-38th Infantry Regiment in October of last year. He deployed to Afghanistan in April of this year.

McClary's awards and decorations include two Purple Heart Medals; three Army Commendation Medals, including one with Valor and one for combat; a Combat Infantry Badge; and an Air Assault Badge, among others.

The young soldier's wife, Lillie McClary, posted on Facebook Sunday, "Thank you for our sons, thank you for being the best daddy and husband ever and thank you for choosing me to live this life with you and to love you every moment of it."

McClary's death brings to 14 the number of Americans who have died while supporting the U.S. operation in Afghanistan this year — 13 of them from combat.

Marine based on Okinawa to compete in global honors

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An Okinawa-based Marine is up for global honors after being named the first USO Pacific volunteer of the year from the southern Japanese island prefecture.

Lance Cpl. Samuel Jackson-west — who devoted 480 off-duty hours at the Camp Foster USO over the past six months — was honored for his efforts during a Nov. 28 ceremony at the Okinawa Marine base. He was chosen over top volunteers in South Korea, Guam, Hawaii and elsewhere in Japan.

His volunteer work included serving food, cleaning and assisting USO staff with activities.

The Atlanta native will compete against other top volunteers from the United States, Europe and Southwest Asia for the USO global volunteer of the year award.

Phallic drawings found at US base; leader ousted

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Drawings of penises were found on vehicles, inside cockpits, in public restrooms, even outlined in dust, at the base where the 69th Bomb Squadron was deployed for about seven months, an investigation has found.

The squadron's commander at the time, Lt. Col. Paul Goossen, was fired from his job at Minot Air Base, N.D., last week.

The investigation determined that Goossen and other senior leaders did not create or share inappropriate images. But Goossen did not do enough to stop the drawings among his

deployed B-52 aircrews, the report concluded.

"The prevalent phallic drawings ... indicated a poor culture and climate, indicative of a deployed location with a melting pot of unit climates and cultures that accepted those type of indecent drawings," the investigation said, finding Goossen "failed to be above reproach."

The Air Force released a redacted copy of the commander-directed investigation Friday, three days after Goossen was removed for failure to maintain a professional workplace environment.

The investigation began after a CD with the squadron's final roll-call presentation was

discovered during a standard vehicle inspection of an "other country national," according to the report. The slides contained phallic artwork, which Goossen and the rest of the squadron had seen.

Phallic images were widespread on the base, showing up on dusty aircraft exteriors, in dorm rooms and inside the B-52 cockpit, the report said.

Goossen tried to put an end to the rampant penis drawings with a simple message written on a whiteboard: "Stop drawing [penises]."

But because Goossen didn't say to stop drawing inside the aircraft, aircrews continued to do so, the investigating officer concluded.

Between 10 and 25 squadron members were found to have drawn the images inside the deployed B-52s starting in October 2017.

Goossen, who tried to fly with all aircrew members at some point, saw a heart-themed phallic image on one mission but ignored the picture and quickly changed the screen to the map and communications display, he said, according to the report. Goossen stated "he was focused on the mission and recent [redacted] threats." He later expressed his disappointment at the phallic drawing in the cockpit but did not address it further.

Agreement buys time in trade war

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The dinner table diplomacy that President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping conducted over the weekend produced something as vague as it was valuable: an agreement to keep talking.

Forged over grilled sirloin at the Group of 20 summit Saturday in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the ceasefire Trump and Xi agreed to Saturday night illustrated that the leaders of the world's two largest economies can at least find some common ground, however tentative and ill-defined it might be. The truce pulled the United States and China back from an escalating trade war that was threatening world economic growth and had set global investors on edge.

"The prospects for real progress on substantive issues with China are now better than at any point in the Trump administration," said Andy Rothman, investment strategist at Matthews Asia.

What Trump and Xi achieved was the gift of additional time — 90 days, at least — to try to resolve the thorny and complicated issues that divide them. Most important among them, and perhaps the most intractable, is the U.S. argument that Beijing has deployed predatory tactics in a headlong drive to overtake America's global supremacy in high technology.

Yet reaching a permanent peace will hardly be easy. The Trump administration asserts, and many experts agree, that China systematically steals trade secrets and forces the U.S. and other foreign countries to hand over sensitive technology as the price of admission to the vast Chinese market.

Washington also regards Beijing's ambitious long-term development plan, "Made in China 2025," as a scheme to dominate such fields as robotics and electric vehicles by unfairly subsidizing Chinese companies and discriminating against foreign competitors.

This year, Trump imposed an import tax of 25 percent on \$50 billion in products, then hit an additional \$200 billion worth of goods with 10 percent tariffs. Those 10 percent tariffs were scheduled to ratchet up to 25 percent on Jan. 1 if the United States and China failed to reach an agreement to at least postpone that move.

In Buenos Aires, they did reach such an accord. Trump agreed to delay the scheduled U.S. tariff increase for 90 days while the two sides negotiate over the administration's technology-related complaints.

In return, China agreed to buy what the White House called a "not yet agreed upon, but very substantial" amount of U.S. products to help narrow America's gaping trade deficit with China.

Synagogue holds lighting at mass shooting site

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Sunday's public lighting of a Menorah outside a Pittsburgh synagogue where 11 people were killed in a mass shooting was an opportunity to honor the dead, mark Hanukkah's theme of survival and allow the community to reinforce its solidarity.

"To me, it's a simple message: The light is the message," Rabbi Jeffrey Myers said, pointing to the Menorah standing at the corner where a makeshift memorial for the 11 victims once stood and was visited by thousands paying their respects.

Five weeks after the massacre — believed to be the deadliest attack on Jews in the U.S. — about 500 people gathered outside Tree of Life to pray, sing songs and witness the lighting of the Menorah.

"We are practicing our Jewish faith publicly and proudly," said Stephen Cohen, co-president of New Light, whose congregation, along with congregants from Dor Hadash and Tree of Life, had gathered at the synagogue when the shooting occurred Oct. 27.

The fact that hundreds of people showed up for the ceremony came as no surprise to officials of the three congregations.

"I don't think there are enough adjectives to describe the community support," said Myers, who was leading Shabbat services at Tree of Life synagogue Oct. 27, when the shooting occurred.

The suspected shooter, Robert Bowers, raged against Jews during and after the shooting, authorities said. He remains jailed without bail, and has pleaded not guilty to numerous murder and hate crime charges.

The Menorah lighting comes less than a week after the end of Shloshim, a 30-day mourning period observed by Jews following a death.

For Trump, low drama on G-20 trip

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — If there has been a constant to President Donald Trump's tumultuous first two years in office, it has been that his foreign trips have tended to be drama-filled affairs — the

ANALYSIS

president barreling through international gatherings like a norm-smashing bull, disrupting alliances and upending long-standing U.S. policies. But at this year's Group of 20 summit, Trump appeared to settle in among his global peers.

A brisk two days in Argentina saw Trump reach a trade ceasefire with China and sign a three-way trade deal with Mexico and Canada. With little public spectacle, he joined the leaders of the other member nations on the traditional group statement. He buddied up with traditional allies and largely avoided controversial strongmen. Faced with Russia's spiking aggression in Ukraine, he canceled his sit-down with Vladimir Putin. And

when former President George H.W. Bush died, Trump gave respectful remarks and canceled what would likely have been a raucous press conference.

All told, for the often-undisciplined leader, the whirlwind trip was an unusual moment of Zen.

Public and private interactions with world leaders over his 48 hours in Argentina demonstrated Trump does have the capacity for restraint.

And other world leaders, for their part, showed grumbling acceptance of Trump's untraditional stylings.

The G-20 joint statement included U.S.-preferred language on reforming the World Trade Organization — something Trump demanded — and made note that the U.S. opposed the Paris climate agreement, which the president has announced plans to exit.

French President Emmanuel Macron called it a victory that the U.S. signed onto the statement at all, given the tensions going into the talks. He said, "With Trump,

we reached an agreement. The U.S. accepted a text."

But Trump, for his part, played the role of gracious victor, proclaiming that he and Trudeau, along with outgoing Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto, were battle-tested friends.

Trump largely kept his distance from Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He made small talk with the two strongmen but toed the line on a Western freeze-out of the pair — the former over Russia's recent seizure of three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews, and the latter over the murder two months ago of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

In previous global summits, the shock factor invariably came from Trump.

This time, the viral moment of the weekend came when Putin and the crown prince, the two relative outcasts of the summit, exchanged an enthusiastic handshake.

Bush makes a final trip to Washington

Associated Press

HOUSTON — George H.W. Bush embarked on his final journey to Washington as the nation salutes the 41st president for his lifetime of public service that began in the Navy during World War II, ended with four years as president and was characterized throughout by what admirers say was decency, generosity and kindness.

A long motorcade accompanied the hearse carrying Bush's remains from a Houston funeral home to nearby Ellington Airport in Texas for the trip to the nation's capital on an aircraft that often serves as Air Force One.

Before that, students, staff and visitors had been flocking to Bush's presidential library

on the campus of Texas A&M University, with thousands of mourners paying their respects at a weekend candlelight vigil at a nearby pond and others contributing to growing flower memorials at Bush statues at both the library and in a park in downtown Houston.

"I think he was one of the kindest, most generous men," said Marge Frazier, who visited the downtown statue on Sunday while showing around friends from California.

A similar outpouring is anticipated in Washington this week during the state funeral for Bush, who died late Friday at his home in Houston. He was 94.

Bush, who was president from 1989 to 1993, will lie in state in the U.S. Capitol rotunda for a

ceremony and public visitation from Monday through Wednesday. An invitation-only funeral service is set for Wednesday at Washington National Cathedral. President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump are to attend. Bush's family has not said who will speak at the service. Former President Jimmy Carter also will be there.

Afterward, Bush will be returned to Houston to lie in repose at St. Martin's Episcopal Church before burial Thursday at his family plot on the library grounds. His final resting place will be alongside Barbara Bush, his wife of 73 years who died in April, and Robin Bush, the daughter they lost to leukemia in 1953 at age 3.

Bush's casket was scheduled to arrive in Washington on Mon-

day afternoon aboard the U.S. military airplane. The crew has been tasked by Trump with carrying out "Special Air Mission 41." The number is a reference to Bush's place in the roster of America's presidents.

Former President George W. Bush, the eldest of the four Bush sons, and his wife, Laura, along with brother Neil Bush and his family, accompanied Bush's body to Joint Base Andrews, Md., said family spokesman Jim McGrath. Other Bush family members were expected to be at the base for the arrival.

Trump has ordered the federal government closed Wednesday for a national day of mourning. Flags on public buildings are flying at half-staff for 30 days out of respect for Bush.

Migrant deaths cited at seminar to assist Africa

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The 76 migrants from Libya who drowned in June when their boat capsized in the Mediterranean Sea represent the human trafficking, corruption and political instability in parts of Africa that require international cooperation to overcome, the Navy's top commander in Europe and Africa said Monday.

Human traffickers take advantage of illegal immigration and corrupt African officials who take bribes to look the other way, which is why 117 migrants made a perilous crossing in a faulty boat that sank, said Adm. James Foggo, commander of Naval Forces Europe and Africa, at a seminar on how to strengthen Africa's maritime security.

"They all had tragic stories to tell, particularly the women, about the way they were treated along the way," Foggo said, referring to survivors' stories about their experiences. "The problem is broader than somebody paying money to get on a

boat and try to get safe haven in Europe. It's about the smugglers and traffickers facilitating this."

It's also a failure of their governments to protect them and provide them with a means to feed their families, he said.

The U.S. and its allies must help African nations achieve greater stability, stronger rule of law and economic prosperity to combat the criminal elements, he added.

Delegates from 28 countries are attending the weeklong seminar in Naples, including Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, head of U.S. Africa Command. It opened on Monday.

The seminars used to be every two years but now will take place every 18 months, said Capt. John Perkins, spokesman for Naval Forces Europe and Africa.

The aim of the conferences is to improve partnerships between the U.S., Europe and Africa so they can better police the waters around the continent and tackle problems such as human trafficking and terrorism.

S. Korea's Moon: Trump's view of Kim 'very friendly'

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's president said President Donald Trump told him he has a "very friendly view" of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and wants to grant his wishes if he denuclearizes.

North Korea has sought security guarantees from the U.S. and relief from international sanctions.

President Moon Jae-in's office quoted Moon as saying Trump asked him to convey those messages to the North Korean leader if he visits Seoul this year as he promised. Moon spoke to reporters on Saturday aboard his presidential plane en route to New Zealand from Argentina, where he met Trump on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit.

"President Trump asked me to forward to [Kim] these messages; he has a very friendly view of Chairman Kim Jong Un and likes him," Moon said. "He hopes to fully carry out the remaining agreements (from their June summit in

Singapore) together with him so that he will make Chairman Kim Jong Un get what he wants."

After deriding Kim last year as "little rocket man" and threatening his country with "fire and fury," Trump has bestowed praise on Kim. In September, Trump called Kim "very open" and "terrific" and said he and Kim "fell in love."

Moon said he and Trump agreed during their meeting that Kim's trip to Seoul would play a "very positive role" in U.S.-North Korea nuclear diplomacy. Moon said it's still unclear whether Kim will visit Seoul by the end of this year and that it's up to the North Korean leader. Moon, who has facilitated a series of high-level talks between the U.S. and North Korea, including the Trump-Kim summit, has met Kim three times this year.

After their third meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, in September, Moon said Kim agreed to make a reciprocal visit to Seoul this year. Their two previous summits were held in the DMZ.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Flaming hole found to be intentionally set

AR MIDWAY — A fire that caused a mysterious burning hole in Arkansas in September was intentionally set, authorities say, and not the result of a meteorite or methane.

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported that Baxter County authorities used soil samples to identify various flammable chemicals typically found in paint thinners where a 12-foot-tall fire spurted from a hole in the ground and burned for around 40 minutes.

Authorities said it may have been a prank.

“That seems like the most plausible thing to me, that somebody dumped a quart of paint thinner down there and caught it on fire,” said Wesley Stites, chemistry and biochemistry department chairman at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Couple who lost ring in NYC getting it back

NY NEW YORK — The New York Police Department said an English couple who lost an engagement ring down a Times Square utility grate will be getting it back.

The man and woman had been in Times Square late Friday night, and police said the man dropped the ring during the proposal to his girlfriend.

They asked for help, but police were initially unsuccessful at getting the ring out, and the man and woman left without leaving their names or contact information.

The NYPD posted on social media. Police said the couple, who had returned to England, got in touch and the ring will get back to them.

Players suspended for naked ‘Oreo Run’

IL BYRON — Ten football players at a northern Illinois high school were suspended from the team for three games last month after they ran across a field naked with Oreo cookies wedged between their buttocks.

The Rockford Register Star reported that the Byron High School players were suspended for indecent exposure but that school administrators concluded they went on the “Oreo Run” at the school’s football field voluntarily and were not victims of hazing.

The paper reported the story after obtaining a letter sent to parents of students who admitted to participating in the run in October.

Woman rescued after 3 days stuck in car

IA FAIRFIELD — A Canadian woman was found by snowmobilers after she spent three days stuck with her car on a muddy rural road in southeast Iowa.

Terry Harnish, 72, of Hubbards, Nova Scotia, was visiting friends on Thanksgiving when she took a wrong turn onto a dirt road outside Fairfield. Her car became mired in mud up to its wheel wells, and she was unable to walk to one of the farmhouses she’d passed.

The Des Moines Register reported that she spent the next three days in her car, surviving on a tea drink and marzipan cake.

A heavy snow brought out two teenage snowmobilers whose attention she attracted with her car lights and horn. Their father used a tractor to take Harnish back into Fairfield.

Radio station nixes ‘It’s Cold Outside’

OH CLEVELAND — A Cleveland radio station said it has stopped playing “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” after listeners said the song heard on countless holiday playlists is inappropriate.

They’re not the first to question the song’s undertones and criticize the duet, in which one singer tries to persuade the other to stay and their exchanges include lyrics such as “What’s in this drink?” and “Baby, don’t hold out.”

WDOK-FM midday host Glenn Anderson said he recognizes that society was different when the song was written in 1944, but he doesn’t think it has a place today, especially in the era of the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment.

Black ice causes rush-hour pileup

IN CARMEL — Authorities said black ice appears to have caused a rush-hour pileup in suburban Indianapolis that collected 30 vehicles.

Fishers Fire Department Capt. John Mehling said the pileup occurred shortly before 7 a.m. Thursday on the 96th Street bridge over the White River in Carmel.

Mehling said four patients were transported to hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries. He said 17 vehicles were towed away by seven different towing agencies.

Teen freed after being stuck in vault at bank

FL HOLLYWOOD — Officials said a teen was freed after spending more than three hours in the vault of an abandoned Florida bank.

News outlets reported that

Hollywood firefighters tried to drill through a wall to break into the vault after the 17-year-old’s friend called 911.

Rescuers were stymied until a worker at the bank’s new branch across the street heard of the predicament. That worker remembered the code and was able to open the vault.

Man fined for importing leopards

KS KANSAS CITY — A Kansas man will pay a \$5,000 fine for unlawfully importing endangered leopard cats.

U.S. Attorney Stephen McAllister announced that Lawrence Payne, 34, of Olathe, was fined after pleading guilty to one count of violating the Endangered Species Act.

The investigation began when Payne applied to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a breeding license for Asian leopard cats.

Chick-fil-A fans brave snow for free food

NY CHEEKTOWAGA — Dozens of hardy souls braved hours of snow and wind for a year’s worth of free Chick-fil-A as the fast food chain opened its first Buffalo-area store.

As part of grand opening festivities, Chick-fil-A promised 52 chicken sandwiches to the first 100 guests in line, prompting some to pitch tents in the parking lot with plans to spend the night despite snow and frigid temperatures.

But with snow piling up, Chick-fil-A announced it would award the winners 12 hours ahead of schedule — at 6 p.m. Wednesday, instead of 6 a.m. Thursday.

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Packers, Rodgers bid McCarthy 'adieu'

Associated Press

There's little argument that Aaron Rodgers' talent is such that his Green Bay Packers probably should have won more than one Super Bowl by now.

For quite some time, there have been those who blamed coach Mike McCarthy for the lack of titles more than credited him for steering the team to that title.

Now the world will find out just what Rodgers and the Packers are capable of without McCarthy, who was fired after a 20-17 loss at home to the lowly Arizona Cardinals on Sunday that dropped Green Bay to 4-7-1, its worst start since 2006. It was an abrupt end for McCarthy — who did win a championship, after all — and rare upheaval for a model franchise that last changed coaches during a season 75

years ago.

It's likely other coaches who are in trouble around the league will get a chance to ride things out through Week 17, but Cincinnati's Marvin Lewis, Jacksonville's Doug Marrone, the Jets' Todd Bowles and Carolina's Ron Rivera all should be wary. When Rivera was asked whether he's concerned about his job security after a 24-17 defeat at Tampa Bay dropped the Panthers to 6-6, this was the reply: "I'm not going to address that question. Do not ask that question again, please."

Alrighty, then.

Rodgers is a two-time NFL MVP, and he was the Super Bowl MVP when the Packers beat the Pittsburgh Steelers in the big game in 2011, all under McCarthy.

Year after year more recently, though,

Green Bay would reach the postseason only to wind up with so-close-but-so-far exits.

"We're just not executing well," Rodgers said, "and it's the same things over and over."

Not long after those words were spoken, team president Mark Murphy released a statement announcing that McCarthy was gone. Offensive coordinator Joe Philbin will fill in.

This season is essentially over; the Packers are a half-game out of last place in the NFC North. Now they can start pondering their future — as can McCarthy.

He likely will get another chance elsewhere. Presumably, Rodgers will be given some input on Green Bay's choice of a new coach. He turned 35 on Sunday, and the opportunities to win a second Lombardi Trophy are fading.

Division-leading Texans win ninth straight game

Associated Press

HOUSTON — After the Houston Texans extended their franchise record with a ninth straight win on Sunday, J.J. Watt was asked to reflect on how far the team has come in the past year.

"I was on the couch a year ago so this is a lot better," said Watt, who missed the last 11 games of Houston's 4-12 2017 season with a broken leg. "I was in a lot of pain. So it's good for us to be winning ... this is what it's supposed to feel like. Honestly this is how you dream it up."

Deshaun Watson threw a touchdown pass and the Texans intercepted rookie Baker Mayfield three times, returning one for a score, to get the 29-13 victory over the Cleveland Browns on Sunday that extended the streak.

The Texans (9-3), who opened the season 0-3, haven't lost since Sept. 23 to take a commanding lead atop the AFC South. While they appreciate what they've done to turn things around, they're quick to note that they still have plenty of work left to do.

"It means a lot especially

from where we came from 0-3 ... but it's not the Super Bowl so we're still fighting," receiver DeAndre Hopkins said.

Houston raced out to a 23-0 halftime lead and added two second-half field goals by Ka'imi Fairbairn to give him five on Sunday.

Mayfield, the top overall pick in this year's draft, had his worst game of the season, throwing three interceptions for the first time since he was a freshman at Texas Tech in 2013. He entered the game having thrown nine touchdown passes with just one interception in the past three games as the Browns (4-7-1) won consecutive games for the first time since 2014.

Mayfield lamented the mistakes he made in this one.

"(If) I would've taken care of the ball, this game would've been very close," he said.

He finished with 397 yards passing and had a touchdown pass in the fourth quarter after throwing a career-best four in a win over the Bengals last week. Houston's fearsome pass rush, led by Watt and Jadeveon Clowney didn't sack Mayfield, but they hurried and harassed him for much of the day.

Mahomes throws 4 TDs, Chiefs get past Raiders

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs still had plenty of firepower on offense even without star running back Kareem Hunt.

Mahomes threw four touchdown passes Sunday to join Peyton Manning and Tom Brady as the only QBs to reach the 40 TD mark through 12 games, sending the Chiefs to a 40-33 win over the Oakland Raiders in the first game since releasing Hunt.

"The mindset of this team is whenever you get your opportunity, you make the most of it," Mahomes said. "I think every single game someone else steps up. We kept our mind on that and just playing football, a game we love."

The Chiefs (10-2) cut ties with Hunt after a months-old video surfaced on TMZ on Friday, showing him shoving and kicking a woman. No charges have been filed in the case from February, but the Chiefs let Hunt go because he misled them about the incident.

Spencer Ware replaced Hunt as starter and scored on a direct snap on fourth-and-goal from the 1 in the third quarter.

"That's my brother," Ware said about Hunt. "It's a tough situation. But like I said, the men in this circle, the men in our locker room, the organization, Chiefs kingdom — we got one goal to win the Super Bowl. We got to stay distraction free. I don't have anything else to say about that."

Mahomes did most of the rest of the damage against the Raiders (2-10) with his arm.

Mahomes has 41 TD passes on the season, joining Manning (44 in 2004, 41 in '13) and Brady (41 in 2007) as the only QBs with at least 40 in the first 12 games of a season.

Travis Kelce had 12 catches for 168 yards, topping the 1,000-yard mark for the third straight season.

Derek Carr threw three TD passes for the Raiders, but Oakland lost three fumbles that led to three scores for the Chiefs and reached double-digit losses for the 12th time in 16 seasons.

"It's disappointing," said running back Doug Martin, who lost one of the fumbles. "I don't think it should have been that close. We should have been on top. The turnovers really, really hurt us."

Chargers rally to beat Steelers

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Philip Rivers watched Ben Roethlisberger do what the Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback so often does — lead a game-tying drive late in the fourth quarter — and decided it was time for the Los Angeles Chargers to do something they so rarely do: win a big one on the road against a team with Super Bowl aspirations of its own.

So the longtime Los Angeles quarterback gathered his teammates around him and delivered a very blunt message.

“It was ‘Let’s go win it,’” Rivers said. “Let’s make this the last drive and win it.”

Done and done. Rivers drove the Chargers 64 yards in 11 plays to set up Michael Badgley’s 29-yard field goal on the final snap as the Los Angeles rallied for a 33-30 victory on Sunday night.

Badgley’s initial 39-yard attempt sailed wide left, but the Steelers were called for offsides. Badgley’s ensuing 34-yard attempt was blocked, but Pittsburgh’s celebration was cut short when the Steelers were again flagged for crossing the line of scrimmage early. The Steelers jumped once more on Badgley’s 29-yarder, but the Chargers gleefully declined the penalty as they spilled onto the field.

“There was no worry or doubt,” Badgley said. “It’s just one of those things where you stay tough. It’s a situation you never really plan out there where you get three in a row like that. You just have to go do what you know how to do.”

Down 23-7 at the half, the Chargers (9-3) be-

came the first visiting team to win in Pittsburgh after trailing by 16. The Steelers (7-4-1) had been 174-0-1 when up by that much at home. Now Pittsburgh heads into the final quarter of the season having its once comfortable lead in the AFC North trimmed to just a half-game over surging Baltimore (7-5).

“Don’t need to panic,” Roethlisberger said. “Don’t need to worry.”

Might be time to start. The Steelers have dropped two straight for the first time this season and seemingly had no answer for the Chargers in the second half.

Rivers completed 26 of 36 passes for 299 yards and two touchdowns for Los Angeles. Keenan Allen caught 14 passes for 148 yards and a score and Justin Jackson ran for 63 yards and a touchdown in place of injured starter Melvin Gordon. Desmond King added a 73-yard punt return for a score as the Chargers bolstered their postseason chances by winning in Pittsburgh for just the fourth time in 19 tries.

“These guys, they believe,” Chargers head coach Anthony Lynn said. “When you believe in something strongly, you can will it to happen.”

Suddenly, a team that looked capable of making the Super Bowl appears to be in a bit of a tight spot with a somewhat daunting final month ahead that includes games against New England and New Orleans.

“There’s a quarter left of football,” Pittsburgh receiver Antonio Brown said. “We’ve got to continue to figure out a way to win and get ourselves to the dance.”

Sports briefs

Bulls fire Hoiberg

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The skidding Chicago Bulls fired coach Fred Hoiberg on Monday and promoted associate head coach Jim Boylen in hopes of lifting the team from the bottom of the standings.

The Bulls have been hit hard by injuries this season, but at 5-19 only two teams have worse records.

“Decisions like this one are never easy to make, however I felt this was the right choice for our organization at this time,” said Jim Paxson, the team’s executive vice president of basketball operations. “After a thorough evaluation, I elected to make this move with the overall development of our team in mind.”

Boylen is a veteran but this will be his first time as an NBA head coach; he spent four years as the head coach at the University of Utah. Over 20 years in the NBA, he also has been an assistant in Houston, Golden State, Milwaukee, Indiana and San Antonio.

Panthers’ Rivera takes over defensive calls

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Panthers coach Ron Rivera will take over defensive play calls from coordinator Eric Washington following the team’s four-game losing streak.

The Panthers also fired defensive line coach Brady Hoke and assistant secondary/cornerbacks coach Jeff Imamura. The moves were announced after Rivera met with new owner David Tepper and general manager Marty Hurney on Monday morning.

Washington will remain defensive coordinator but will now oversee the front seven. He was the team’s defensive line coach before being promoted to coordinator this past offseason.

Sam Mills III will lead the defensive line and Rivera will work with Richard Rodgers in the secondary.

Giants stun Bears in overtime

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Giants finally have a signature win to carry them through the rest of the season and maybe beyond.

While beating the NFC North-leading Bears wasn’t pretty and involved blowing up a 10-point lead in the final 1:13, the Giants showed character in a wild game in the rain highlighted by trick plays — and a reminder of William “The Fridge” Perry.

The Giants (4-8) won for the seventh time in 28 games over the past two seasons as Aldrick Rosas kicked a 44-yard field goal in overtime in a 30-27 win Sunday, snapping the Bears’ five-game winning streak.

“The takeaway is, and I told the team this, some people are fond of talented people, some

people are fond of smart people. I’m fond of tough, resilient people,” Giants coach Pat Shurmur said. “When you are trying to flip culture and when you are trying to build something, you have to dig in on that. There was some toughness and resiliency when they came back to tie things up.”

Rosas’ third field goal of the game came on the opening series of overtime. It was set up by a 29-yard run by rookie Saquon Barkley, who finished with 125 yards on 24 carries.

“It speaks to the resiliency of the guys,” Giants left tackle Nate Solder said after the team refused to fold following the Bears’ late heroics. “It speaks about the type of guys we have in the locker room and we just got to keep doing it and moving forward and believing in each

other and doing it together.”

The Giants didn’t nail down the win until Janoris Jenkins knocked away a deep fourth-down pass to Taylor Gabriel after quarterback Chase Daniel fumbled on consecutive plays on the rainy afternoon to set up a fourth-and-8.

Chicago (8-4) forced overtime by getting a 21-yard field goal by Cody Parkey and a 1-yard touchdown pass from halfback Tarik Cohen to Anthony Miller as time expired in the fourth quarter.

“I’m proud of them for fighting to the end. Not every team will do that,” Bears coach Matt Nagy said. “We’ve got a bunch of high-character guys that will fight till the end and that’s a credit to them. We’ve got to figure out how to learn from this. This is part of that callus that goes on.”

NBA roundup

Jordan helps Mavs past former team

Associated Press

DALLAS — DeAndre Jordan said he didn't have any extra incentive Sunday night in his first meeting against his former team. His 23 rebounds might indicate otherwise.

Jordan scored 16 points to go with his season-high rebound total, and Harrison Barnes had 30 points to help the Dallas Mavericks beat the Los Angeles Clippers 114-110.

Dorian Finney-Smith tipped in a rebound with 35 seconds remaining to give Dallas the lead for good.

Jordan, who played 10 seasons with Los Angeles before signing with Dallas as a free agent this offseason, downplayed the motivation to beat his former team. He talked instead about setting a tone for his own team with his rebounding. Dallas won the rebound battle 64-44 on Sunday.

"I know it's demoralizing to

other teams — playing defense and then having us get offensive rebounds," Jordan said. "That sucks the life out of a team, little by little."

The game featured two loose-ball scraps between the Mavs' Dennis Smith Jr. and the Clippers' Patrick Beverley — the first resulting in Smith losing part of a tooth, and the second in Beverley's ejection after a technical foul.

Montrezl Harrell scored 23 points to lead the Clippers, and Danilo Gallinari and Lou Williams each had 21.

"It was a game we should have won," Williams said. "We didn't do a lot of things in our style of play."

Williams gave the Clippers just their second lead of the second half at 110-109 with a three-pointer with 46.9 seconds left, before Barnes drove the lane and missed — but Finney-Smith was there for a tip-in.

Jordan then stole the ball from Williams and made one of two free throws for a 112-110 lead with 27.3 seconds to play. Smith blocked Tobias Harris' shot, gathered the ball and made the clinching free throws with 9.2 seconds left.

"That's winning stuff right there," Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said of Smith's play.

Lakers 120, Suns 96: Kyle Kuzma scored 23 points and LeBron James had 22 before both sat out the fourth quarter of Los Angeles' third home victory in four days.

Brandon Ingram scored 15 points and JaVale McGee had 14 points and eight rebounds in three quarters of work for the Lakers.

76ers 103, Grizzlies 95: Jimmy Butler continued his run as Philadelphia's stretch-run shooter, scoring 13 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter

against visiting Memphis.

Ben Simmons, who had 19 points and 12 rebounds, ran up from behind on MarShon Brooks and poked the ball free for a steal. That led to a pair of free throws for Butler that made it 95-89. Butler buried a turnaround jumper for a 97-89 lead that sealed the win.

Spurs 131, Trail Blazers 118: DeMar DeRozan had a season-high 36 points and host San Antonio overcame a big game by Damian Lillard, rebounding from a pair of lopsided losses to beat Portland.

Pelicans 119, Hornets 109: Anthony Davis had 36 points, 19 rebounds and eight assists to help New Orleans beat host Charlotte.

Heat 102, Jazz 100: Dwyane Wade made a pair of free throws with 3.2 seconds left, and host Miami rallied from down 19 early to beat Utah.

NHL roundup

Ducks rally for five to top Capitals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pontus Aberg scored twice in the third period, giving Anaheim the lead with 5:05 remaining, and the Ducks stopped Washington's seven-game winning streak with a 6-5 victory Sunday.

The Ducks trailed 5-1 in the second before rallying for their fourth consecutive victory. Ryan Getzlaf had a goal and two assists and Rickard Rakell had a goal and an assist in the finale of a five-game trip.

Evgeny Kuznetsov and Chandler Stephenson each had a goal and an assist for Washington, which chased John Gibson after scoring three times in the first part of the first period.

Jets 4, Rangers 3 (SO): Mark Scheifele started Winnipeg's third-period comeback and scored the deciding goal in the shootout against host New York.

Jack Roslovic and Bryan Little also scored in the third as the Jets erased a 3-0 deficit and won their third straight.

Flames 3, Blackhawks 2: Sean Monahan and Elias Lindholm each had a goal and an assist and visiting Calgary beat Chicago to take the Pacific Division lead.

Avalanche 2, Red Wings 0: Semyon Varlamov made 24 saves for his 24th career shutout and first of the season and Colorado beat host Detroit to stretch its points streak to 11 games at 9-0-2.

Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and an assist, and Gabriel Landeskog also scored.

Sharks 3, Canadiens 1: Martin Jones made 40 saves and visiting San Jose beat Montreal to snap a four-game skid.

Justin Braun, Brent Burns and Joe Pavelski scored to help San Jose improve to 13-10-5.

Kings 2, Hurricanes 0: Alec Martinez scored with 2:13 left, Jonathan Quick stopped 34 shots for his 50th career shutout and host Los Angeles defeated Carolina.

Top 25 roundup

Volunteers rout Islanders

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Admiral Schofield scored 16 points, Kyle Alexander had 12 points and 10 rebounds and No. 6 Tennessee breezed to a 79-51 victory over Texas A&M-Corpus Christi on Sunday.

Grant Williams added 14 points and nine rebounds for the Volunteers (6-1) in their last tuneup before a Dec. 9 showdown with No. 1 Gonzaga in the Jerry Colangelo Classic in Phoenix.

Myles Smith scored 16 points for the Islanders (4-4).

No. 16 Ohio State 79, Minnesota 59: Andre Wesson scored 16 points, Kaleb Wesson had 15 and Ohio State beat Minnesota in the Big Ten opener for both teams.

C.J. Jackson and Musa Jallow each added 11 points, and Duane Washington Jr. and Kyle Young had 10 apiece to help the Buckeyes improve to 7-1.