

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, December 15, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Ex-Trump nominee a 'Fat Leonard' friend

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A retired two-star admiral and former Trump administration nominee repeatedly solicited and accepted gifts from military contractor Leonard Glenn "Fat Leonard" Francis and used his position as the commodore of Destroyer Squadron 15 to benefit Francis' company, according to a letter of censure released Friday.

The letter, signed by Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer, details events from 2007 to 2009 when Rear Adm. Mark C. Montgomery accepted meals and hotel stays for himself and his family while providing Francis with information about ship movements and the names of other officers he could invite to his lavish dinners.

He also lied to Navy investigators in January when he submitted a written statement denying his involvement with Francis, the letter says.

In June, Montgomery was nominated by President Donald Trump for an administrative position at the U.S. Agency for International Development. That nomination was withdrawn just before the Navy announced his censure.

Although announced in November, the details of Montgomery's graft were made public on Friday only in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from The San Diego Union-Tribune and other media organizations.

According to Navy investigators cited in the letter, Montgomery accepted gifts of meals and hotel stays in excess of \$6,000 and helped Francis plan a lavish \$32,000 dinner at the Pierre II restaurant in Hong Kong. Montgomery even signed a menu commemorating the event, the Navy says.

During the summer of 2007, Montgomery intervened on be-

half of Francis' company and had two Navy vessels accept fuel from Francis' company that they had originally declined.

Minutes after the company, Glenn Defense Marine Asia, was notified of Montgomery's action, someone from the company, whose name was redacted from the letter — perhaps Francis — said of him in a comment: "Top shelf friendship!! Ha Ha!!"

That October, Montgomery provided Francis with advance notice that a Navy ship would be visiting Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, a port Francis controlled. In exchange, he asked Francis to put his family up in a Hong Kong hotel the next month. Francis arranged for an upgraded room, for which GDMA paid \$2,609.

In the spring of 2008, Francis and GDMA paid almost \$2,000 for Montgomery's stay at the Hong Kong Grand Hyatt, the

letter says. Just before his hotel stay, Montgomery gave Francis five months' notice of the Navy's plans to visit Cambodia and Vietnam, the document states.

In December of 2008, Francis and GDMA again paid for a hotel upgrade for Montgomery and his family, this time in Singapore. When offered the \$1,600 upgrade, Montgomery said he would be "thrilled" to take it, Spencer's letter says.

Francis, also known as "Fat Leonard" because of his size, was a Malaysian defense contractor who provided husbanding services for Navy ships in the western Pacific for more than 20 years.

His criminal enterprise ensnared dozens of naval officers. As many as 200 were investigated by the Navy. Beginning with his arrest in a San Diego hotel room in 2013, the Justice Department began unraveling Francis' web, one string at a time.

Haunting icons of 9/11 rise at Marine Corps museum

The Washington Post

Hand over hand, Jorge Pacheco hauled on the gantry chain, and the dented and bent, 1,200-pound hunk of American history slowly became vertical.

When he finished, what stood before him and a team of riggers at the National Museum of the Marine Corps last week looked like a piece of cosmic sculpture, and a remnant of some terrible tragedy.

In a way, it was both.

It was an I-beam salvaged from the World Trade Center after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack there destroyed the twin towers and killed more than 2,500 people in Lower Manhattan.

And it was art, sculpted by

the forces that brought down the buildings and symbolic of the anguish and resilience of the aftermath.

The workers installed the almost-11-foot beam, and a piece of stone cornice that was damaged in the attack on the Pentagon, as part of the "final phase" extension of the state-of-the-art museum in Triangle, Va.

The extension will cover the story of the Marines from 1976 to the present day and will focus on events such as 9/11, terrorism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Still under wraps in the new section are a Marine Corps jet, near the ceiling, that flew patrols following the 2001 terrorist attack; an M60 tank that fought in Operation Desert Storm in

Iraq; and a room full of fiberglass Marines posed in action and waiting to be displayed.

The museum also has a battered wall clock salvaged from the Pentagon.

Its hands are stopped at 9:39 a.m., just about the time one of the four hijacked airliners was crashed into the building, killing all 64 people on the plane and more than 100 people in the Pentagon.

Museum curators also salvaged from a Pentagon office a framed image of helicopters, overlaid with the words, "Current Threat Condition is: Normal."

But last Tuesday morning was dedicated to the World Trade Center and Pentagon artifact installation.

The Pentagon cornice and the I-beam, which the museum has had in a more modest display, were wheeled on dollies into the cavernous extension area, which is still under construction, a little before 9 a.m.

The massive, rust-colored beam still had chunks of concrete clinging to one side, as well as numbers and symbols in white paint that appeared to date from the trade center's construction in the late 1960s and early '70s, the museum said.

The Pentagon cornice was worn and chipped and looked like a relic from antiquity. Both items were acquired by the museum for display, said Jennifer L. Castro, the museum's curator for cultural and material history.

Priebus tapped to join US Navy

The Washington Post

Reince Priebus, a former chief of staff to President Donald Trump and Republican power broker, could join the Navy after a monthslong process in which Defense Secretary Jim Mattis recommended him and a board of officers selected him as a reserve officer, according to defense officials.

Priebus, 46, will be required to attend two weeks of training in Newport, R.I., and drill once a month as a reservist if commissioned. He would join a list of Navy reserve officers with political connections that include Sean Spicer, Trump's former press secretary, and Robby Mook, Hillary Clinton's former presidential campaign manager. Priebus declined to comment Friday.

In a statement submitted to the Navy and obtained by The Post, Priebus wrote that he has proudly watched his sister serve as a Navy doctor and remembers his father teaching at Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois when he was growing up. He added that he especially felt called to serve after an Oval Office meeting in which Trump met with the wife and children of Senior Chief William "Ryan" Owens, 36, a Navy SEAL who was killed early in the administration in a Special

Operations raid in Yemen.

"At that moment, the gravity of every action we take in the West Wing rushed down upon my shoulders," Priebus wrote. "Everything suddenly became extremely real and raw. As some time passed, a few other senior aides joined me in the Cabinet Room and we discussed the consequences, harsh realities and weight of what we do every day."

A Navy review board reviewed 42 candidates this month and "professionally recommended" Priebus and four others to join the service through a competitive direct-commission program for human resources officers.

Cmdr. Jereal Dorsey, a Navy spokesman, confirmed in a statement Friday evening that Priebus was recently selected and said that Priebus is "currently moving towards earning a commission as an ensign," an entry-level officer.

Anyone over the age of 42 needs a waiver to join as an officer and has to sign an agreement in which they acknowledge potential limitations on their career.

The board selected Priebus after Mattis personally recommended him in a letter over the summer.

Mattis wrote that "Reince's experience, education, and

personality make him an ideal fit to be commissioned into the Navy Reserve." Mattis added that he has "had the privilege and opportunity to work with Mr. Priebus on numerous occasions, including most recently when he served as Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff."

A spokeswoman for Mattis, Dana White, said in a statement that it is customary for Navy Reserve applicants to request letters of recommendation from members of Congress, governors and other high-ranking officials.

"Secretary Mattis agreed to write a letter of recommendation on his behalf," White said. "The letter is consistent with applicable standards."

The letter was seen by some Navy officials as a political favor that complicated consideration of Priebus as a potential officer, said one Navy official, speaking on the condition of anonymity owing to the sensitivity of the situation. A review board decided in September not to recommend Priebus as a reserve intelligence officer, according to a Navy memo.

White did not respond to questions about whether Mattis was concerned that his recommendation could look like a political favor.

Coast Guard issues worry lawmakers

Associated Press

NEW LONDON, Conn. — Members of Connecticut's congressional delegation have met with Coast Guard officials to express their concerns over alleged discrimination and harassment at the service's academy.

Democratic Sens. Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal and Democratic Rep. Joe Courtney requested the meeting, which took place with Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz and his senior staff in Murphy's office on Thursday.

A recent Office of the Inspector General report found Coast Guard officials failed to protect a black female officer who made discrimination and harassment complaints against her superiors, The Day reported. The report was the impetus for the meeting, according to Courtney.

The lawmakers spoke with Schultz about their ongoing request for documents related to allegations of bullying and harassment at the Coast Guard Academy and whether the academy took appropriate action in past cases. They also suggested how to address culture issues there.

Officials declined to detail what the suggestions were.

Schultz said in a statement Thursday that he "welcomed the opportunity" to sit down with the lawmakers.

"The recent IG report has my full attention," he said. "No one in the Coast Guard should ever face bullying, harassment or retaliation for reporting wrongdoing. We will protect whistleblowers."

But Murphy said he's concerned the New London-based academy has not fundamentally changed its culture. "I think there's increasing, not decreasing, concern about what has been happening at the academy," Murphy said by phone Thursday after the meeting.

Soldier from Fort Drum killed in Afghanistan

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—A 19-year-old soldier from Pennsylvania was killed in a non-combat incident on Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan, Pentagon officials said Friday.

Army Pfc. Joshua Mikeasky died in the incident Thursday on the major U.S. base in eastern Afghanistan, the Pentagon said in a statement. Mikeasky was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team,

10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum in New York.

Mikeasky, a health care specialist, was from Johnstown, Penn., about 50 miles east of Pittsburgh, the statement said. He enlisted in the Army in 2017 and joined his unit after completing his initial entrance training, according to the 10th Mountain Division.

His awards and decorations included the National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the NATO Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon.

Pentagon officials on Friday declined to comment on the nature of the incident. They said it was under investigation.

In October, Mikeasky's unit arrived in Afghanistan, where it is supporting NATO's Resolute Support mission and the U.S.-led Operation Freedom's Sentinel training and advising Afghan security forces.

Mikeasky's death marked the 15th American servicemember to die in Afghanistan in 2018.

He is survived by his mother and his father, the Army said.

Shutdown over border wall funding looms

BY LISA MASCARO,
MATTHEW DALY AND
CATHERINE LUCEY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress is racing to avoid a partial government shutdown next Friday over President Donald Trump's border wall. But you wouldn't know it by the schedule, as lawmakers left town waiting for the White House's next move.

The House is taking an extended five-day weekend, returning Wednesday night. The Senate returns Monday after a three-day absence.

The ball is in Trump's court, both sides say, and the president met Friday with top aides

to discuss his spending strategy. There's an expectation on Capitol Hill he'll reach out soon to offer lawmakers a plan.

The president said this week he'd be "proud" to shut down the government over the \$5 billion he wants for the wall on the southern border, but he has since taken a softer tone, tweeting, "Let's not do a shutdown, Democrats — do what's right for the American People!" But Trump doesn't have the votes from the Republican-controlled Congress to support funding for the wall at the level he wants.

Democratic congressional leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, made a counter offer during a con-

tentious meeting at the White House of no more than \$1.6 billion, as outlined in a bipartisan Senate bill. The money would not go for the wall but for fencing upgrades and other border security. Democrats also offered to simply keep funding at its current level, \$1.3 billion.

Without a resolution, parts of the federal government would shut down at midnight Dec. 21.

Trump met on Friday with legislative affairs director Shahira Knight and budget director Mick Mulvaney to discuss strategy. Some White House aides were startled by Trump's embrace of a shutdown during his meeting with Democratic leaders, though others argued

that it was another example of Trump sticking with his campaign promises.

"The president made it very clear: He does want a border wall. He does want border security. He wants to protect the American people," White House spokesman Hogan Gidley told reporters on Friday.

While Trump has long rallied for the border wall with Mexico, a centerpiece of his 2016 campaign, Republicans on Capitol Hill never fully warmed to the plan, and they are less likely now to round up the votes for it after losing the House majority in the November election.

750 troops sent home from southern border

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — About 750 active-duty servicemembers deployed along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas and Arizona returned to their home bases Wednesday, U.S. Northern Command announced on social media.

In a string of tweets Thursday, USNORTHCOM released updates about the ongoing mission of troops supporting U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents that began Oct. 31 and will end Jan. 31.

"In addition, about 220 replacement troops arrived in Arizona yesterday. The [Defense Department] units remaining on the border, as well as those on alert, are able to meet CBP requirements approved in the signed (Department of Homeland Security)-DoD support agreements," one

tweet reads. Officials have not identified where the replacement troops came from or all the units that returned home.

However, Fort Hood officials confirmed soldiers from 62nd Engineer Battalion and 297th Inland Cargo Transfer Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, returned to the post after completing their portion of the mission. The central Texas base is about a six-hour drive from Weslaco, a city in south Texas where some troops were deployed.

Other Fort Hood units have begun returning home, including soldiers from the 36th Engineer Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command, 89th Military Police Brigade and 1st Cavalry Division.

At the height of the deployment, about 5,900 servicemembers from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines were situated along the border. The original intention

was to "harden" and protect the border as a caravan of Central American migrants traveled through Mexico to seek asylum in the United States.

Now, about 4,200 personnel remain along the southwest border with about 1,700 in Texas, 1,000 in Arizona, and 1,500 in California.

The caravan has trickled into Tijuana, Mexico, near California, but in smaller numbers than anticipated.

The military will continue providing engineering and military police force protection at designated ports-of-entry in California and Arizona, officials posted. Most forces in Texas will redeploy to their home bases in the "next week or so," Army North officials said.

"However, we have the ability to quickly reestablish support operations in Texas if needed," read an emailed statement.

Federal judge rules health care overhaul unconstitutional

BY RICARDO
ALONSO-ZALDIVAR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A conservative federal judge in Texas has ruled the Affordable Care Act "invalid" on the eve of the sign-up deadline for next year. But with appeals certain, even the Trump White House said the law will remain for now.

In a 55-page opinion, U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor ruled Friday that last year's tax cut bill knocked the constitutional foundation from under "Obamacare" by eliminating a penalty for not having coverage. The rest of the law cannot be separated from that provision and is therefore invalid, he wrote.

Supporters of the law immediately said they would appeal. "Today's misguided ruling will not deter us: our coalition will continue to fight in court for the health and well-being of all Americans," said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who is leading a coalition of states defending the ACA.

Congress is unlikely to act

while the case remains in the courts. Numerous high-ranking Republican lawmakers have said they did not intend to also strike down popular provisions such as protection for people with pre-existing medical conditions when they repealed the ACA's fines for people who can afford coverage but remain uninsured.

Mueller: Flynn 'chose to make false statements'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The special counsel's office is pushing back at the suggestion that the FBI acted improperly in its interview of former national security adviser Michael Flynn, saying he "chose to make false statements" and did not need a warning that it was against the law to do so.

The filing from special counsel Robert Mueller on Friday comes four days before Flynn gets sentenced on a charge of lying to the FBI about his conversations with the then-Russian ambassador to the United States. It responds to a sentencing memorandum filed last week by Flynn's lawyers that suggested there were irregularities in how he was interviewed.

The back-and-forth between prosecutors and defense lawyers has created an unusual rupture in an otherwise harmonious relationship as prosecutors had praised

Flynn as a model cooperator and recommended that he receive no prison time at his sentencing.

The disagreement is unlikely to affect Flynn's chances for probation, but it's attracted the attention of President Donald Trump, who said last week that Flynn did not lie despite having fired him nearly two years ago for just that reason. The matter may also become a point of debate at Tuesday's hearing, especially since the judge, Emmet Sullivan, has asked prosecutors to produce documents related to Flynn's interview.

They did so Friday, as they said "nothing about the way the interview was arranged or conducted caused the defendant to make false statements to the FBI."

Prosecutors said Flynn had committed to a false story weeks before the Jan. 24, 2017, interview with the FBI, having lied several times already to White House of-

ficials about his dialogue with Ambassador Sergey Kislyak and then repeating those falsehoods to federal agents.

Trump ousted him weeks after the FBI interview. White House officials said he had misled Vice President Mike Pence and others about his discussions on sanctions with Kislyak.

Prosecutors said Friday that Flynn voluntarily agreed to meet with the FBI without a lawyer present and had enough experience in government to understand the consequences of lying and "the importance of accurate information to decision making in areas of national security."

"A sitting National Security Advisor, former head of an intelligence agency, retired Lieutenant General, and 33-year veteran of the armed forces knows he should not lie to federal agents," Mueller's prosecutors wrote.

Facebook bug allows apps to access private photos

The Washington Post

Facebook on Friday revealed that a major software bug may have allowed third-party apps to wrongly access the photos of up to 6.8 million users, including images that people began uploading to the site but didn't post publicly.

The mishap, which occurred over a 12-day period in September, adds to Facebook's mounting privacy headaches after a series of incidents earlier this year in which it failed to fully safeguard the personal data of its users.

In general, Facebook allows apps by third-party developers to obtain users' permission and access photos shared on their timeline. Because of the bug, though, roughly 1,500 apps could access "a broad-

er set of photos than usual," Facebook explained in a blog post.

That includes photos that a user may have started to post, but abandoned before actually publishing because Facebook keeps a copy of the draft in the event a user might want to finish uploading it later.

The software bug also may have allowed developers to access photos they weren't supposed to on Marketplace, a Facebook hub for users to buy and sell goods, and some posted in Stories, where users can share a short photo or video updates that appear for 24 hours.

Facebook's latest revelation quickly drew sharp rebukes from privacy advocates. "It's stunning that Facebook has the ability to send user photos to third parties when the user has not fully uploaded the photo," said

Marc Rotenberg, the executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center. "It's like a provider sending draft emails."

In response, Facebook apologized to users on Friday. "Early next week we will be rolling out tools for app developers that will allow them to determine which people using their app might be impacted by this bug," the company said. "We will be working with those developers to delete the photos from impacted users."

Facebook did not detail the exact apps that may have obtained these photos, or what they may have done with them.

The photo mishap could embolden those who believe Facebook and its peers in Silicon Valley should be regulated for the data they collect about their users.

Fla. woman convicted for role in husband's 2000 death

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — After a spell-binding five-day trial that featured tales of infidelity and a multimillion-dollar insurance payout, a jury on Friday convicted a Florida woman of helping mastermind the killing of her husband nearly two decades ago.

Jurors found Denise Williams guilty of three counts including first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder for her role in a case that has recalled the plot of the Hollywood film classic "Double Indemnity." Williams, 48, was found guilty

after testimony by a key witness, the man who shot her husband, Mike Williams, on a cold December morning on a large lake west of Tallahassee.

Jurors deliberated eight hours before reaching a verdict. Williams, who could spend the rest of her life in prison, is to be sentenced at an unspecified date next year.

Mike Williams disappeared nearly 18 years ago to the date of his wife's conviction. He left early on the morning of Dec. 16, 2000, to go duck hunting and, initially, some speculated he had fallen from his boat and that his body had been devoured

by alligators. His disappearance triggered a massive search.

But Brian Winchester, who had been Mike Williams' best friend, said he and Denise Williams were having an affair and that they planned the killing. Denise Williams ultimately received \$1.75 million in life insurance payments, including a \$1 million policy that Winchester himself had sold Mike Williams.

In the film "Double Indemnity," an insurance agent helps his lover kill her husband in order to cash in on a life insurance policy.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

New charges for man impersonating general

NC RALEIGH— A North Carolina man sentenced to prison for impersonating an Army general is now charged with impersonating a law enforcement officer.

An arrest warrant stated Christian Gerald Desgroux, 58, of Raleigh called 911 on Nov. 27 and told a dispatcher he was a federal officer following a white van carrying 10 people with an explosive device inside.

Desgroux was sentenced to six months in prison in July for impersonating a three-star general while landing a chartered helicopter at a corporate campus, saying he was on a mission authorized by the president.

Authorities said his story was meant to impress a woman who worked there.

Boy gets his wish of headstone for friend

MI DETROIT — A 12-year-old Michigan boy who had been working odd jobs to raise money for a gravestone for his best friend is getting his wish.

Funeral home owner David Techner was moved after reading *The Detroit News'* story about Kaleb Klakulak and decided to donate a headstone.

Kaleb had been best friends since second grade with Kenneth "K.J." Gross. K.J. died in May after years of chemotherapy to fight leukemia.

K.J.'s mother couldn't afford a grave marker, so Kaleb started raking leaves and collecting bottles to raise \$2,500.

Dad left baby alone while he stole alcohol

MO BALLWIN — Authorities said a sub-

urban St. Louis man left his 11-month-old daughter home alone while he stole liquor from a grocery store.

Police in Manchester said Jarek Crowder, 24, was caught Dec. 4 on store security stuffing four small bottles of vodka into a jacket pocket. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that he told security he had left his daughter alone at his apartment in nearby Ballwin.

Officers went to the apartment and found the baby in a crib. Ballwin police say the child didn't appear to be harmed but had a soiled diaper. The baby was placed in the custody of a grandparent.

Officials: Man shoots self in head with nail gun

KS DERBY — Sedgwick County authorities said a man was hospitalized in critical condition after he accidentally shot himself in the head with a nail gun.

Sheriff's Lt. Tim Myers said Wednesday the man walked from a home where he was working to get help from officers who were investigating a traffic accident.

Myers said the man told sheriff's deputies and a Derby police officer that he was renovating a house when he fell off a ladder with the nail gun in his hands.

When he landed, the nail gun hit him in the back of the head and the man inadvertently pulled the trigger.

Brothers charged in man's duct tape death

LA TERRYTOWN — A grand jury handed up an indictment charging two brothers in the death of a Louisiana man who had been wrapped in duct tape and died of asphyxiation.

NOLA.com/The Times-Picayune reported Saleh Omar, 40, and Yazan Omar, 18, were charged Thursday with second-degree murder in the death of Mohamed Mezlini, 19.

Mezlini was a former employee of Saleh Omar, who owned a cellphone business in Terrytown. A detective testified Saleh Omar believed Mezlini wronged him in some financial way. Saleh Omar allegedly lured Mezlini to a vacant store and attacked him. Yazan Omar is accused of holding Mezlini while his brother wrapped his head and body with duct tape.

Man hunted deer from car with crossbow

PA NEW KENSINGTON — State game officials charged a Pittsburgh-area man with hunting deer from his car with a loaded crossbow.

William Fundy was charged by summons last week with offenses including using a vehicle to attempt to hunt game or wildlife.

Fundy allegedly had a loaded crossbow on the front passenger seat and later told police he found deer while driving and attempted to kill them.

Fundy also was charged with drug possession. He is scheduled for a court hearing on Jan. 10.

Inmate mailed escape plot to wrong address

NC BURLINGTON — A sheriff in North Carolina said a man jailed on a first-degree murder charge had an explosive escape plan.

Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson said Sean Damion Castorina, 43, sent a letter from jail containing bomb-making instructions. The sheriff said Castorina wanted two men to place the bomb on

the jail's south side, blowing a hole in the wall and allowing him to escape.

Fortunately for the sheriff, that letter went to the wrong address, and the recipient alerted authorities.

Sheriff deputy accused of stealing from dead

AZ PHOENIX — A Maricopa County sheriff's deputy is accused of stealing cash from a dead person while on duty.

The Sheriff's Office said Gregory Todd Johnson, 39, was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of theft in an Oct. 28 incident in the Mesa area involving a call about a death.

The office said detectives received information about an alleged theft of cash belonging to the dead person and that investigators obtained evidence that included body camera footage and an admission by Johnson.

Gun jams after worker shoots into ceiling

MO COLUMBIA — Authorities said a Missouri Steak 'n Shake employee's weapon jammed after he yelled "I quit" while firing a single shot into the ceiling.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported that Reiss Favinger, 19, was jailed without bond on charges that included armed criminal action and unlawful use of a weapon.

A Columbia police officer wrote in charging documents that Favinger told police he "got angry" and "shot a gun in the air" Sunday after using methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana and Xanax. Officers found a handgun and numerous rounds of ammunition in his backpack.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Pats, Steelers stinging after road losses

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — No pregame talk of a potential playoff rematch by Mike Tomlin.

No real implications for home-field advantage in the AFC.

Not much hype, either, at least not the kind that typically accompanies a meeting between the New England Patriots and Pittsburgh Steelers.

Not with both teams coming off the kind of numbing road losses that can linger for weeks if not handled properly.

Yes, the Patriots (9-4) and Steelers (7-5-1) still lead their divisions, even if it doesn't necessarily feel like it.

Not after New England found itself on the wrong end of the "Miami Miracle" last week while Pittsburgh slipped to a third straight defeat in Oakland, one that left its postseason prospects iffy at best.

"It's not ideal, but we are in (first)," Steelers defensive end Cam Heyward said. "We

haven't won the games we're supposed to and that's on us. ... But there's still a lot on the line."

Particularly for Pittsburgh. The Steelers lead Baltimore by just a half-game in the AFC North. Pittsburgh will reach the playoffs for a fifth consecutive season by winning its final three games. It makes the math pretty easy.

The task itself is considerably harder considering New England's mastery over Pittsburgh for the better part of two decades.

The Patriots have won each of the past five games between the two perennial AFC powers, including a 27-24 victory at Heinz Field last season that included a chaotic fourth quarter featuring a New England rally and an overturned call on a seemingly obvious go-ahead touchdown grab by Steelers tight end Jesse James in the final minute that ultimately led to an NFL rule change.

While Steelers quarterback

Ben Roethlisberger shrugged off his team's spotty record when facing Tom Brady — who is 11-2 all-time against Pittsburgh — by pointing out "we are not the only team that has issues with them" — he's well aware his club's margin for error has vanished.

"I don't think confidence, there isn't a loss in it, (but) an understanding of what we need to do," Roethlisberger said. "We need to face adversity in the face and just kind of (get) ready for maybe one of the biggest challenges we had all year."

New England's playoff position isn't nearly as perilous, even after allowing the Dolphins to turn a double-lateral on the final snap into a stunning 69-yard touchdown, a play that ended with tight end Rob Gronkowski working at deep safety and futilely diving at Kenyan Drake as the Miami running back crossed the goal line.

"It happened, we wish it hadn't, we've watched it, we've corrected it as a staff, we've corrected it with the team, and really honestly, we've got to move on to Pittsburgh," Patriots linebackers coach Brian Flores said. "So, if that situation kind of shows up again, I think we'll handle it better."

The Patriots can win a staggering 10th consecutive AFC East title with a victory and a loss by the Dolphins in Minnesota. Not that they're particularly concerned about what happens in other stadiums. Going against a team desperate to get things right is a big enough task.

"They're going to come out and give us their best shot," New England running back James White said. "They're going to throw everything they have at us. We've just got to be prepared to execute and see what their game plan is for us and kind of adjust from there."

There's still plenty on the line for Colts, Cowboys

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Jason Garrett and Frank Reich understand the high stakes of Sunday's game.

If Dallas wins, it clinches the NFC East. If Indianapolis wins, it stays in the hunt for the AFC's final playoff spot and possibly even a division crown.

The two coaches and their players will get one more precious late-season chance to see how they stack up against another postseason contender and what can be done to keep playing into January.

"Most people call this the dash for cash," Colts tight end Eric Ebron said. "So you just try to win."

Few teams have done more lately than the Colts (7-6) or Cowboys (8-5).

Rather than folding after starting 1-5, Andrew Luck & Co. turned things around with six wins in seven games and

tying Baltimore, Miami and Tennessee for the No. 6 seed in the AFC playoff chase.

Luck's comeback has happened during perhaps the best season of his career with 34 touchdown passes, second in the league and six short of his career high, a career-best completion rate of 67.7 percent and he is 241 yards away from the fourth 4,000-yard season of this career.

This time, Luck also is working with an improved defense that has allowed 17.1 points over the past seven weeks and ranks among the league's top third in sacks and negative plays.

The combination has upped the ante for the Colts' opponents.

"They attack you a lot of different ways," Garrett said. "It's aggressive, it's attacking and it's a balanced offense. You have to be ready for a lot of different things."

Dallas also made a dramatic

midseason turn. After starting 3-5, the Cowboys made a deal for receiver Amari Cooper and everything suddenly changed.

Running back Ezekiel Elliott has charged back into the NFL rushing lead and quarterback Dak Prescott started making more potent plays.

Tackling stars: While much of the focus this weekend will be on high-profile offensive stars such as Luck and Prescott, rookie linebackers Darius Leonard and Leighton Vander Esch will play big roles, too.

The league's official stats show Leonard leading the league with 135 tackles despite missing one game with an injury.

Vander Esch has played well, too. The Cowboys credit him with 136 tackles, tied for the franchise's rookie record, league stats show Vander Esch with 108 — tied for No. 6 overall and second among rookies

to Leonard.

Line dance: While Colts starting center Ryan Kelly could return after missing three straight games with a sprained medial collateral ligament in his left knee, Cowboys right guard Zack Martin could miss the first game of his career in his first trip to his hometown.

Martin, a four-time Pro Bowler and 2014 All-Pro, sprained the MCL in his left knee during the preseason and left both games against defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia after aggravating the injury. He returned to the first Philadelphia game, but didn't come back in last week's victory.

Kelly, meanwhile, was limited in practice Wednesday. He said he hopes to play through the pain with a brace.

Before he was injured, the Colts allowed one sack in six games. Indy has given up six sacks in the three games he missed.

MLB briefs

White Sox acquire Alonso from Indians

Associated Press

CHICAGO — First baseman Yonder Alonso was traded to the Chicago White Sox by the Cleveland Indians on Friday in a deal between AL Central rivals that could have broad implications for both teams the rest of the offseason.

A person familiar with the trade confirmed it on condition of anonymity because the clubs had not yet announced the swap. Stadium first reported Alonso was headed to the White Sox.

Chicago sent minor league outfielder Alex Call to Cleveland for Alonso, who hit .250 with 23 homers and 83 RBIs in 145 games this year during his only season with the Indians.

Cleveland reacquired first baseman and designated hitter Carlos Santana from Philadelphia in a three-team trade on Thursday, making Alonso expendable. The White Sox deal moves Alonso's \$8 million salary for 2019 off the Indians' payroll, giving them more flexibility if they want to keep their deep rotation intact.

Alonso was selected by Cincinnati in the first round of the 2008 amateur draft and broke into the majors with the Reds in 2010. He is a .265 hitter with

90 homers and 389 RBIs in 951 games with Cincinnati, San Diego, Oakland, Seattle and Cleveland.

Also:

■ The Chicago White Sox answered one of their off-season questions on Friday, agreeing to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract with catcher James McCann.

The 28-year-old McCann hit .220 with eight homers and 39 RBIs in 118 games last season with Detroit. The rebuilding Tigers didn't offer him a contract for the 2019 season, making him a free agent.

Chapman has surgery

OAKLAND, Calif. — Oakland Athletics third baseman Matt Chapman had surgery Friday on his left shoulder, his second operation this offseason.

Dr. William Workman performed a distal clavicle resection procedure on Chapman's shoulder, the team said Friday. The Gold Glove Award winner is expected to begin swinging a bat in six weeks.

The team said Chapman felt discomfort in the shoulder during offseason workouts. Chapman also had surgery on his right thumb Oct. 16 and was expected to recover fully

from that operation by spring training.

Chapman batted .278 with 24 home runs in a breakout season. He won his first Gold Glove and finished seventh in AL MVP voting.

Nelson joins Brewers

MILWAUKEE — Right-hander Jimmy Nelson agreed to a \$3.7 million, one-year contract with the Milwaukee Brewers after missing all of the 2018 while recovering from surgery on his pitching shoulder.

The 29-year-old was 12-6 with a 3.49 ERA and 199 strikeouts in 29 starts in 2017, finishing tied for ninth in NL Cy Young Award voting. He was hurt Sept. 8 when sliding back to first base following a hit at Chicago's Wrigley Field, and Dr. Neil ElAttrache operated 11 days later in Los Angeles to repair a partial tear of his anterior labrum and a rotator cuff strain.

Nelson avoided arbitration by agreeing to the same salary he had in 2018. He would earn an additional \$50,000 for winning the comeback player of the year award, \$100,000 for Cy Young, \$75,000 for second and \$50,000 for third.

He would get \$50,000 each

for making the All-Star team, winning World Series MVP or the Hoffman/Rivera reliever of the year award. He would get \$25,000 apiece for Gold Glove or League Championship Series MVP.

Orioles hire Hyde

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Orioles hired Brandon Hyde to be their new manager Friday, hoping his experience as Cubs bench coach will help the team move forward while in rebuilding mode.

Hyde takes over for Buck Showalter, who was fired after Baltimore finished 47-115 — the worst record in the majors. This will be Hyde's first stint as a major league manager.

The 45-year-old Hyde was selected by general manager Mike Elias, who began an extensive search for Showalter's replacement after being hired last month to replace Dan Duquette.

Hyde worked as Chicago's bench coach this year under manager Joe Maddon. He was in the second of three seasons as Cubs first base coach when the team won the World Series in 2016.

Jokic plays peacemaker as Nuggets hold off Thunder

Associated Press

DENVER — For all his offensive contributions and rebounding, Nikola Jokic's most important role in the end was peacemaker.

Jokic scored 24 points, Jamal Murray had 19 and the Denver Nuggets beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 109-98 on Friday night after Murray and Russell Westbrook had a heated exchange.

Westbrook and Murray pushed each other and argued after lining up next to each other for a jump ball in the

final seconds. Jokic tried to get between them, and Westbrook threatened to beat up Jokic while being restrained. No blows were exchanged, but the final moments played out amid heightened tensions.

Asked what Westbrook said to him, Jokic said he didn't remember and dismissed the dustup as "nothing."

"He's a competitive guy," Jokic said. "He didn't want to lose. All is good. I just wanted to separate them."

Westbrook said there was a reason behind his initial shove

of Murray.

"He was in my way," Westbrook explained.

Murray said he hadn't done anything to provoke the incident.

"He tried to move me out of the way," Murray said. "He shoved me first. It is what it is. I didn't do anything."

Jokic also had 15 rebounds and nine assists, just shy of a third triple-double this season. Nick Young, signed as a free agent Monday, scored six points in his Nuggets debut, including a key three-pointer in

the fourth quarter.

Paul George had 32 points to lead the Thunder, who lost their fourth in a row to the Nuggets. Steven Adams scored 26 points, while Jerami Grant and Westbrook finished with 13 apiece. Westbrook and Adams had 14 rebounds each.

Trailing by 10 late in the third quarter, Oklahoma City got a layup and a three-pointer from George in the final minute to pull to 82-76.

The Nuggets took a 60-52 lead at halftime, boosted by Torrey Craig's perimeter shooting.

NBA roundup

Celtics top Hawks for 8th straight win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Kyrie Irving credits Boston's defense for an offensive resurgence that has the Celtics riding the longest winning streak in the NBA.

Irving scored 24 points in just three quarters, then rested in the fourth as the Celtics finished off a 129-108 rout of Atlanta on Friday night for their eighth straight victory.

"We're just pushing the pace," said Irving, who also had five assists, five rebounds and four steals. "I think our identity is on the defensive end. We just try to pressure them and use that to our advantage and create opportunities on the offensive end."

Jayson Tatum had 22 points for Boston, Marcus Morris added 20, Gordon Hayward had 19 points and five assists, Daniel Theis scored 18 points and rookie Robert Williams III blocked five shots.

"We've been playing well over the past couple of games,

just coming out with some pace and some attitude and just setting the tempo," said Morris, who made six of Boston's 19 three-pointers.

Kevin Huerter led Atlanta with 19 points, and John Collins had 11 points and 14 rebounds. The Hawks, losers of six of seven, had nine of their 24 turnovers in the first quarter.

"The hole that we put ourselves in was a big issue," Atlanta coach Lloyd Pierce said. "We just have a way of getting off to slow starts. For some reason, we don't have that urgency."

Atlanta regrouped in the second quarter and pulled to 49-45, but Boston pushed the lead back up to 11 at halftime and continued pulling away in the second half with an opening 13-2 run.

"We've got to do a better job of not putting ourselves in a hole at the start of the third," Collins said. "We give a team like that opportunities, they're going to take them."

Tatum's three-point play with 2:04 left in the third pushed the Celtics over 100 points at 101-79. A technical on Bazemore after the call led to another free throw, followed by another Ton Atlanta coach Lloyd Pierce 5 seconds later. Boston led 108-82 after three and let its reserves take over in the fourth quarter.

Warriors 130, Kings 125: Klay Thompson made a go-ahead three-pointer with 38.5 seconds left, Stephen Curry added four free throws down the stretch and Golden State ended the game on a big run after a sluggish start to the fourth quarter, beating host Sacramento.

Trail Blazers 128, Raptors 122: Damian Lillard had 24 points and Portland stopped a two-game slide with a confidence-boosting victory at home over NBA-leading Toronto.

Bucks 114, Cavaliers 102: Giannis Antetokounmpo matched his career high with 44 points and Milwaukee beat

host Cleveland despite missing two starters.

Pacers 113, 76ers 101: Thaddeus Young had 26 points and 10 rebounds against his former team, and visiting Indiana overcame Joel Embiid's 40-point night to beat Philadelphia.

Knicks 126, Hornets 124 (OT): At Charlotte, N.C., Emmanuel Mudiay had 34 points and eight assists and short-handed New York overcame a 21-point deficit to snap a five-game skid.

Nets 125, Wizards 118: Spencer Dinwiddie scored 27 points in his first game since signing a three-year contract extension, and Brooklyn beat visiting Washington for its season-best fourth straight victory.

Heat 100, Grizzlies 97: Josh Richardson and Kelly Olynyk scored 18 points each and Miami beat host Memphis to snapped a two-game losing streak.

NHL roundup

Ovechkin nets another hat trick, Caps win shootout

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Alex Ovechkin had his second consecutive hat trick and Jakub Vrana scored in the sixth round of a shootout to lead the Washington Capitals past the Carolina Hurricanes 6-5 on Friday night.

Ovechkin's three goals gave him an NHL-best 28 this season and nine in his last five games. His 13-game point streak matched his career high set in 2006-07.

Tom Wilson and Travis Boyd also scored for the defending Stanley Cup champions, who have won 11 of 13. The Metropolitan Division leaders got three goals in a 5:42 span of the second to tie it at 4, a burst

capped when Boyd redirected in John Carlson's shot with 1:41 left in the period.

Penguins 5, Bruins 3: Jake Guentzel tipped in Kris Letang's shot midway through the third period to fend off a rally by visiting Boston, and Pittsburgh goaltender Casey DeSmith made it stand up.

DeSmith finished with a career-high 48 saves as the Penguins ended the Bruins' three-game winning streak.

Devils 5, Golden Knights 4 (OT): Nico Hischier scored 41 seconds into overtime to cap host New Jersey's comeback from three goals down against Vegas.

William Karlsson had two goals, and Alex Tuch and Wil-

liam Carrier also scored for the Golden Knights, who lost for just the third time in their last 12 games.

Coyotes 4, Rangers 3 (OT): Derek Stepan scored against his former team with 32 seconds left on the clock in overtime and visiting Arizona rallied from a three-goal deficit to defeat New York, snapping a four-game losing streak.

Jordan Oesterle, Josh Archibald and Oliver Ekman-Larsson also scored for the Coyotes.

Oilers 4, Flyers 1: Connor McDavid had two goals and an assist, Leon Draisaitl added three assists and resurgent Edmonton beat visiting Philadelphia.

Alex Chiasson and Adam Larsson also scored for the Oilers (18-12-3), who improved to 9-2-2 under new coach Ken Hitchcock.

Jets 4, Blackhawks 3 (OT): Mark Scheifele scored twice, including 50 seconds into overtime, and Winnipeg edged host Chicago for its fourth consecutive victory.

Blues 4, Avalanche 3 (OT): Ryan O'Reilly scored a short-handed goal 2:05 into overtime to give St. Louis a victory over visiting Colorado.

Senators 4, Red Wings 2: Mark Stone scored midway through the third period and Chris Tierney's second goal went into an empty net, lifting visiting Ottawa over Detroit.