

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, December 24, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Acting defense secretary in the spotlight

*The Washington Post*

When Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan faced the Senate Armed Services Committee 17 months ago during his confirmation hearing, Sen. John McCain turned up the heat.

The late Arizona Republican, then the committee chairman, questioned how Shanahan would run day-to-day operations at the Pentagon despite his deep ties to the defense contractor Boeing, and then lit into him for something specific. In prepared answers to questions, Shanahan had said he would review whether the U.S. should send Ukraine weapons to defend itself against Russia-backed separatists. Shanahan amended his response to say that he would support the idea, but McCain still threatened to stop a vote on his confirmation.

“That’s not good enough, Mr. Shanahan,” McCain said. “I’m glad to hear you changed your opinion from what was submitted, but it’s still disturbing to me. It’s still disturb-

ing to me after all these years that you would say that you would have to look at the issue. Have you not been aware of the issue? Have you not been aware of the actions of the Senate Armed Services Committee? Have you not been aware of the thousands of people that have been killed by (Russian President) Vladimir Putin?”

The exchange highlights the difficulties that Shanahan faces now that President Donald Trump abruptly named him Sunday as acting defense secretary, beginning Jan. 1.

The president’s decision, after days of negative news coverage about Defense Secretary Jim Mattis’ resignation over disagreements with Trump, puts a new senior official in charge of the Pentagon two months earlier than expected.

It also thrusts Shanahan into the spotlight amid the president’s plans to withdraw thousands of troops from Syria and Afghanistan, and as the Pentagon is preparing to defend a

\$750 billion budget request to Congress.

Shanahan, 56, will take the helm after a 30-year career at Boeing, during which he became a senior vice president. Unlike Mattis, he has no military experience, no previous government experience and little experience with foreign policy.

At the Pentagon, Shanahan’s primary role as deputy defense secretary has focused on running day-to-day operations inside the building, while Mattis took a more public role and focused on operations and geopolitics.

However, Shanahan, the son of a Vietnam veteran, also has taken a leading role in forming a policy to match Trump’s desire for a Space Force, and he’s been involved in tense internal deliberations about how the Pentagon spends its money.

Shanahan could not be reached for comment Sunday. His spokesman, Army Lt. Col. Joseph Buccino, said he will continue to serve at the pleasure of the president.

## Task force urges larger US presence in Poland

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — A task force led by the former head of U.S. troops in Europe is recommending a beefed-up American military force in Poland, home-porting Navy destroyers in Denmark and other steps to muscle up against a Russian military that has allies outgunned in the east.

Gen. Philip Breedlove, who led U.S. European Command and served as NATO supreme allied commander until retiring in 2016, warned in a new report that alliance “trip-wire” forces in the Baltics and Poland could be overrun if attacked.

“A determined Russian conventional attack, especially if mounted with little warning, could defeat these forward-deployed NATO and U.S. forces in

a relatively short period of time, before reinforcements could be brought to bear,” stated the Atlantic Council report co-authored by Breedlove.

A quick Russian land grab “might present the Alliance with a fait accompli, dividing the Alliance and paralyzing decision-making before reinforcements could arrive,” the December report said.

The report, called “Permanent Deterrence: Enhancements to the U.S. Military Presence in North Central Europe,” lays out a plan to counter such scenarios.

Breedlove, a chief architect of NATO’s buildup in reaction to Russia’s 2014 intervention in Ukraine, sees a larger role for the U.S. military in Poland.

The report comes amid a congressionally mandated military review that is examining

whether the U.S. has sufficient forces in Europe to deter Russia. That review also is taking place as the Pentagon considers a \$2 billion offer from Poland to fund a permanent base in that country.

One recommendation by the Atlantic Council task force is to expand a U.S. Army mission command headquarters in Poznan, Poland, into a division-sized element and make it a permanent mission.

Breedlove also envisions a larger role for the Navy on the continent.

The Pentagon should consider adding a small naval detachment in Gdynia, Poland, to facilitate more Navy visits to Poland and to other Baltic Sea ports, the report said.

The U.S. also should seek to home-port Navy destroyers in Denmark, which would allow

continuous patrols in the Baltic Sea.

“The mission might include anti-submarine warfare, maritime domain awareness, amphibious operations” and assets designed to counter an enemy strategy of denying access to the seas, the report said.

Home-porting ships in Denmark rather than Poland would avoid coming into conflict with the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, which sought to reassure Moscow that allies wouldn’t position large combat formations in former Warsaw Pact nations on a permanent basis.

### No digest Tuesday

Stars and Stripes will not produce a print edition or news digest on Tuesday.

# Cold weather ailments plague military

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY  
*Stars and Stripes*

Nearly 500 troops suffered from chilblains, frostbite, hypothermia and trench foot during the most recently studied annual period, more than in any of the previous three years and a 20 percent increase over the previous year.

The reasons for the jump in preventable injuries during what was a mild winter remain unclear, according to a study this month in the Defense Health Agency's Medical Surveillance Monthly Report. The study covered injuries between July 2017 and July this year.

"Policies and procedures are in place to protect servicemembers against cold weather injuries. Modern cold weather uniforms and equipment provide excellent protection against the cold when used correctly," the study noted. "However, in spite of these safeguards, a significant number of individuals within all military services continue to be affected by cold weather injuries each year."

Fort Wainwright, Alaska, had the highest number of cold injuries diagnosed, with 155 reported cases over five years. Second was the combined Vilseck and Grafenwoehr area in Bavaria, Germany, with 117 cases.

"It's an interesting question why. It's definitely not as cold here," said Maj. Luke Mease, a preventive medicine doctor at U.S. Army Medical Department Activity-Bavaria.

But temperature is just one of several factors, he said, including exposure time.

"Cold weather injuries usually occur when it's cold and wet," Mease said, and Bavarian winters are both cold and damp.

He said chilblains, a non-freezing but painful inflammation of small blood vessels in the skin that can cause itching, swelling and blistering, was the most common cold weather injury in Bavaria.

"These cold injury cases tend to come in clusters," he said. "If we have high-volume, high-activity training events, we'll see more cases."

Usually, he said, affected troops have been in the field overnight or longer. Most often, they're young and junior in rank.

"These may be the soldiers that are least likely to speak up," Mease said. "I think it highlights the importance for commanders and line leaders and [noncommissioned officers] to really keep an eye on troops and make sure we're taking care of these young soldiers."

Over the past five years, soldiers under 25 had a far higher rate of cold injuries than older troops, the study showed — 76 per 100,000 "person-years," a term the military uses to include population while factoring in time at risk. By comparison, the rate for soldiers in their early 30s was 38 per 100,000.

The Army overall had the most cases last year of cold weather injuries, at 245, and the highest incident rate at 55 per 100,000 person-years. That was a 26 percent rise over the previous season.

Frostbite, in which skin and

underlying tissues freeze, remained the most common cold weather injury, according to the study. More than 760 soldiers were diagnosed with it over the past five years.

Frostbite is graded in severity like burns are, Mease said. It often requires hospitalization, may require surgery and can lead to lasting damage.

"If somebody has a frostbite injury that affects the nerve, that nerve might not function the way it did before it got frozen," he said. "We really want to prevent any of that from happening."

Hypothermia, a drop in body temperature below 95 degrees Fahrenheit, is the most life-threatening of cold weather injuries. In February 1995, four soldiers in Army Ranger school died of it after spending hours training in chest-deep water in a Florida swamp. Over the past five years, it was diagnosed in soldiers 233 times.

During the same period, the Army reported 217 cases of trench foot, also known as immersion foot, caused by having wet feet for too long.

## Dunford reassures troops on Afghanistan mission

BY J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP DAHLKE WEST, Afghanistan — The mission for troops in Afghanistan continues as planned, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said amid reports of a partial pullout from the country, while speaking in front of hundreds of U.S. troops gathered at a USO celebrity holiday event Monday.

"There's all kinds of rumors swirling around," Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford said. "The mission you have today is the same as the mission you had yesterday."

The Trump administration reportedly ordered the Pentagon late last week to make plans to withdraw some 7,000 troops

from the country, but Army Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, told local media Sunday that orders of a pullout had not yet reached the leadership here.

On Christmas Eve, Dunford told the troops at this austere base about 60 miles south of Kabul that he'd ensure their leaders got word as soon as anything changes.

"When there is something else to tell you, I'll make sure Gen. (Scott) Miller knows in real time what changes may be taking place," he said. "Right now, you're American soldiers, you have a mission; just get after it."

Dunford visited Camp Dahlke West as part of the annual

Chairman's Holiday USO Tour that also included events with soldiers in Norway, Bahrain and on the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis that deployed to the Persian Gulf earlier this month.

Celebrities such as actor Wilmer Valderrama, snowboarder and Olympic gold medalist Shaun White and CrossFit athlete Mat Fraser accompanied him this year.

During the visit, country musician Kellie Pickler climbed into an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter with her husband, Kyle Jacobs.

"This is what I want for Christmas," said Pickler, who later sang with soldiers.

Elsewhere on base, soldiers

made the best of what they had for Christmas festivities.

Plastic Christmas trees stood in various offices and huts, but 1st Lt. Hannah Levine, of Eagle Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, chose not to settle for one of those for the base's operations center.

"I was raised in a family where we don't believe in fake Christmas trees," said Levine, 24, of Sugarloaf, Pa.

She brought a real — if somewhat threadbare — tree to be decorated. It was the only live tree on base. She had chopped it down in the holiday spirit.

"I'm a firm believer in real Christmas trees," Levine said. "I wasn't going to let Afghanistan stop me."

# No sign of urgency to end shutdown seen

*Bloomberg*

As the partial U.S. government shutdown enters a third day, lawmakers have left Washington for the Christmas holiday with no sign of urgency to resolve the fight over President Donald Trump's demand for border wall money.

Unlike shutdowns of the past, Congress and the White House aren't racing to reopen the government. Offices of congressional leaders who are responsible for negotiating with the president are shuttered as Trump remains at the White House after canceling a trip to his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

Previous government closures have put Washington in crisis mode with round-the-clock talks, strategy sessions and public posturing. Not so this time. The next possibility for votes in the House and Senate is Thursday, but Democrats

have indicated the two sides are far from a deal. If there's no agreement, many lawmakers won't return until the new session of Congress starts on Jan. 3, when Democrats take control of the House.

The top Democrat in the House, Nancy Pelosi, of California, made a similar prediction. "Until President Trump can publicly commit to a bipartisan resolution, there will be no agreement before January when the new House Democratic Majority will swiftly pass legislation to re-open government," the California lawmaker said in a letter Saturday to fellow Democrats.

Unlike the other two shutdowns this year, the one that started Saturday includes only part of the federal government — nine of 15 departments, representing about a quarter of the \$1.24 trillion in government discretionary spending for

fiscal year 2019. Many of the biggest government functions, including the departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs, have already been fully funded through September.

The partial shutdown — along with Trump declaring Monday, Christmas Eve, a federal holiday — may be contributing to a less-than-urgent approach to the negotiations.

The fight between Democrats and Trump is over \$5 billion for wall construction on the U.S.-Mexico border, a relatively small amount by Washington standards. But both sides have staked out firm positions.

The outcome of the shutdown will set the stage for the next two years of divided government in Washington, with Republicans in control of the White House and Senate and Democrats running the House.

Senate Majority Leader

Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Trump and the Democrats need to resolve the dispute over border funding before he brings up legislation to end the shutdown in the Senate. Even though Republicans hold a majority in the chamber, they need Democratic votes to get to the 60-vote threshold to pass funding measures.

There was a flurry of activity Friday night and Saturday, including a proposal to end the impasse from the White House to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Any ultimate deal will likely depend on what defines "the wall." The White House has opened the door for a compromise by talking about "steel slats" rather than the concrete wall Trump touted in the past. Trump tweeted out a drawing of a barrier made with vertical spike-tipped slats last week.

## Details of absentee ballots in NC released

*Associated Press*

RALEIGH, N.C. — Affidavits released Sunday by North Carolina's elections board allege absentee ballots were collected from voters by the man at the center of vote fraud allegations or those working for him.

These latest documents focus on last month's disputed 9th Congressional District race, the year's only unresolved congressional election. Investigators are looking into whether McCrae Dowless and others working on behalf of GOP candidate Mark Harris ran an illegal operation to collect large numbers of absentee ballots from voters in at least two counties.

In the batch of affidavits released Sunday, registered voter Christopher Eason, of Bladenboro, alleges he gave his signed but otherwise blank mail-in absentee ballot directly to Dowless, who had been hired by the chief strategist for Harris' campaign.

It's illegal for anyone other than a close relative or guard-

ian to take a person's ballot.

"I signed the absentee ballot envelope but left the ballot completely blank. I did not make any selections in any of the contests on the ballot," Eason said in his affidavit signed Dec. 7, adding that Dowless came to his home and asked for his absentee ballot.

Voter Hazel Guyton, of Bladenboro, said in an affidavit that she filled out her absentee ballot and Dowless and a woman stopped by to pick it up. She said he'd been "doing that for me for several years," though she states she suffers no legal disabilities.

Dowless is a "person of interest" in an ongoing criminal investigation into irregularities in the 9th District race. His attorney, Cynthia Adams Singletary, did not answer Sunday calls but has asserted previously that Dowless hasn't broken any campaign laws.

Also released Sunday was an analysis by a Harvard University professor who determined rates of unreturned absentee

ballots in two 9th District counties were "extreme statistical outliers."

Harris, McCready and candidates in a few other local races affected by the absentee ballot probe had until Friday to submit evidence for the board to review in advance of its Jan. 11 hearing.

Neither Harris nor his campaign provided any such evidence or affidavits before the deadline, elections board lawyer Josh Lawson said Sunday. The candidates have until Jan. 6 to submit legal briefs to the board, which could ultimately order a new election or certify the results. The certification delay means no one will be representing the south-central 9th District when the new session of Congress begins Jan. 3.

Other affidavits from local residents provided by McCready's attorneys and released Sunday also alleged that Dowless had held hundreds of absentee ballots unlawfully or "trashed" them as a way to affect election outcomes.

## Court: Ginsburg working after cancer surgery

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is up and working as she recuperates from cancer surgery.

A spokeswoman for the court, Kathy Arberg, also said that Ginsburg remained in New York at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center on Sunday. No information has been released on when Ginsburg might return home.

Ginsburg underwent surgery Friday to remove two malignant growths in her left lung. Doctors say there is no evidence of any remaining disease.

Now 85, the justice has been treated for cancer two other times. Last month she cracked three ribs in a fall at the court.

The court next meets on Jan. 7. Despite her health problems, Ginsburg has never missed arguments.

# Borderline Bar dusts off cowboy boots

*Los Angeles Times*

LOS ANGELES — Borderline Bar and Grill was a place you could go to dance away your worries.

Even after what happened there last month, regulars still wanted to do that together — so they met up and danced in parking lots, in backyards, in a barn, at the mall.

Borderline's brown stucco building has been off limits since Nov. 7, when a local former Marine stormed the Thousand Oaks bar and 13 people, including the shooter, died. The walkway leading up to it has become a giant memorial, with wreaths, American flags, pumpkins, cowboy boots, teddy bears and a Christmas tree with stockings for each victim.

The front door is behind a chain-link fence. The windows people frantically jumped

through to escape are boarded up with plywood.

Owner Brian Hynes says it is too soon to know whether he'll ever reopen. But he did so for one night last week, in a way.

On Thursday, more than a thousand people — including many survivors and parents of some victims — gathered in their cowboy boots for the first night of line dancing Hynes had organized since his bar closed.

The event was held eight miles east in Agoura Hills, in a bar called The Canyon. But as the music played and the room filled, many felt the old Borderline warmth.

Their longtime DJ, Josh Kelly, was up on stage, hyping up the crowd in a bright red Santa hat. Their dance instructor, Candy Sherwin, was leading a two-step. Jerry Sears, 76, a Borderline denizen of

25 years, shuffled across the dance floor as always.

Since the shooting, it's been difficult for the bar's family to know where to go in Borderline's stead.

Borderline was a laid-back place where it was easy for anyone to fit in. The whole neighborhood was welcome and blended together there: college students, moms, grandparents. Most who stopped by quickly felt at home. It didn't matter if they couldn't dance or didn't know anyone at first.

The shooting instantly shattered that sense of security. It was all confusion, all chaos. Gunfire cracked across the crowded dance floor. People called their moms crying. They smashed windows to flee.

Some who died had worked at the bar; others just liked going there. There was Justin

Meek, 23, the beloved bouncer and bar promoter. Kristina Morissette, 20, the cashier at the front desk who greeted everyone with a big smile. Sean Adler, 48, a father of two who had just opened a local coffee shop called Rivalry Roasters.

Police said the shooter, Ian David Long, 28, had been to Borderline before. But he didn't have ties there. He didn't even have beefs there. The regulars still wonder why their place of all places in the world.

Survivors of the shooting continue to stick together for comfort. They meet up at one another's houses; some have gotten matching bracelets or tattoos.

They've raised money to help victims' families and to try to help Hynes and the more than 40 Borderline employees who lost their jobs when the bar became a crime scene.

## Motels, condoms in demand for Christmas in South Korea

*Los Angeles Times*

SEOUL, South Korea — It's Christmastime in Seoul, the city decked out in festive lights, storefronts adorned with red-and-white decorations and the steady clang of Salvation Army bells echoing through subway stops.

Here, though, it's not the latest popular toys that fly off the shelves this time of year. In hot demand instead are birth control pills, condoms and Christmas-themed lingerie. A reservation at one of Seoul's many rent-by-the-hour motels on Christmas Day? Many book up weeks earlier, even at prices that can be double or more the normal rate.

Christmas, first brought to this nation by American missionaries in the late 19th century and designated a public holiday under U.S. military rule in the 1940s, has since evolved into a very different kind of celebration than the one across the Pacific.

Even though South Korea is about 30 percent Christian, Christmas is widely celebrated as

a secular lover's holiday not unlike Valentine's Day, especially among the younger generation.

And because it's customary for most unmarried young adults to live with their parents, Christmas has become a cherished occasion for couples to seek some privacy. So much so that a few years ago, the convenience store chain 7-Eleven Korea said it sold more condoms on Christmas Day than any other day of the year.

After initially being celebrated as a religious holiday here by a small number of Christians in the early part of the 20th century, Christmas gained popularity in the years after the Korean War truce in 1953. During those years, the typically strictly enforced nighttime curfew was lifted on Christmas Day by the U.S. forces controlling Seoul.

The holiday never took hold as a family celebration because most families already gather during two Korean holidays — the Lunar New Year and the mid-autumn harvest festival.

## Indonesia search for victims continues as death toll rises

*Associated Press*

TANJUNG LESUNG, Indonesia — Efforts to collect hundreds of bodies and save the injured were stepped up in Indonesia on Monday following the country's latest tsunami as scientists collected evidence on how a volcanic eruption triggered the weekend tragedy.

Casualty figures from Saturday night's disaster continued to rise, with at least 373 people confirmed dead and more than 1,400 injured.

The death toll was certain to rise further, with 128 people still missing from the affected areas along the coastlines of western Java and southern Sumatra islands, where hundreds of military personnel and volunteers were conducting their grim search along debris-strewn beaches.

The waves that swept locals and tourists into the sea along the Sunda Strait followed an eruption and apparent landslide on Anak Krakatau, or "Child of Krakatoa," one of the world's

most famous volcanic islands.

It was the second deadly tsunami to hit seismically active Indonesia this year. A powerful earthquake triggered a tsunami that hit Sulawesi island in September, giving residents a brief warning before the waves struck.

On Saturday night, however, the ground did not shake to alert people before the waves ripped buildings from their foundations.

President Joko Widodo, who faces what promises to be a tough re-election campaign next year, responded Monday to the lack of any warning of the disaster with a vow to have all equipment used for detection of tsunamis replaced or repaired.

Gegar Prasetya, co-founder of the Tsunami Research Center Indonesia, said the tsunami was likely caused by a flank collapse — when a big section of a volcano's slope gives way. It's possible for an eruption to trigger a landslide aboveground or beneath the ocean, both capable of producing waves, he said.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Bowlers pay donations forward after fire

**MI** MONROE — A Michigan high school that received more than 200 bowling ball donations after losing some equipment in a bowling alley fire is sharing the generosity.

The Monroe News reported that members of the Monroe High School's boys and girls bowling teams lost equipment when Nortel Lanes burned to the ground Dec. 5.

The Monroe Trojans reached out to the bowling community on social media for equipment donations. Coaches Eric Pillette and Mike Meagher estimate the school has received more than 200 bowling balls, up to 40 pairs of shoes and about 50 bags.

The teams have shared the donations with programs at other schools, as well as other groups that lost equipment in the fire.

### Man is accused of shooting wife's laptop

**TX** FORT WORTH — A North Texas man was arrested after being accused of shooting his wife's laptop computer because she was playing loud music on it.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported that Gary Lykins, 44, was charged with deadly conduct for discharging a firearm. He remained jailed with no bond over the weekend.

Police said they were called to Lykins' Fort Worth home about 2 a.m. Saturday.

Authorities said his wife received minor injuries from computer debris after Lykins fired his weapon.

### Officer saves wedding day after car crash

**NY** SHIRLEY — A New York couple whose

Jeep crashed on the way to their wedding got lucky when a police officer responding to the accident gave them a ride to the ceremony.

And he did more, serving as a witness Saturday at the town hall in Lake Grove on Long Island.

Police said the accident was a result of another vehicle making a sudden U-turn on Montauk Highway in Shirley. There were no injuries.

The couple, Joseph DeMichele and Feliece Terwilliger, brought along their children, ages 10 and 5. They arrived in a police car driven by Officer Cody Matthews, who signed the marriage certificate.

### Bus driver leaves boy, 3, alone on bus

**KS** TOPEKA — A Topeka school district's new school bus service is facing criticism after one of its drivers left a boy, 3, alone on a bus for more than two hours when temperatures were in the 30s and 40s.

The Topeka Capital-Journal reported that the incident came near the end of a year in which Topeka Unified School District 501 hired Kansas Central School Bus to replace the accident-plagued Durham School Bus Services.

School district spokeswoman Misty Kruger called the situation unacceptable, adding that the district has taken action to ensure none of its students would ever again ride with the driver involved. The driver's identity hasn't been made public.

### Brawl erupts during basketball game

**MI** SOUTH HAVEN — Authorities are investigating after a massive brawl

broke out during a high school basketball game in western Michigan.

Police said the fight started early in the varsity matchup between South Haven and Paw Paw. Players began shoving each other after a foul, clearing both benches.

Police said bystanders then flooded the court — either to join the fight or try to break it up.

Officers from South Haven, the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department, Michigan State Police and Covert Township were dispatched to quell the violence.

All told, an estimated 70 people were involved, and the game was canceled before the start of the second quarter.

No charges have been filed.

### Councilor wants to aid strip club workers

**RI** PROVIDENCE — An incoming member of the Providence City Council said she wants to help the 200 people left jobless when a city board revoked the license of the Foxy Lady — New England's oldest and most well-known strip club.

Katherine Kerwin, who will represent the district that includes the club, told The Providence Journal on Saturday that she doesn't disagree with the city's decision to shutter the club but hopes the venue will reopen — pointing to those who lose their jobs.

The Rhode Island Supreme Court has declined to intervene after the city revoked all of the club's licenses after three dancers were arrested and charged with prostitution.

Kerwin also told the paper that state lawmakers should consider decriminalizing prostitution in Rhode Island.

### DNA on notes leads to suspect in panty theft

**IN** EVANSVILLE — DNA evidence recovered from notes left on vehicles at the University of Southern Indiana has linked a man, 32, to the theft of 30 pairs of panties in 2014.

The Evansville Courier & Press reported that the Newburgh man is jailed on burglary and theft charges.

The Vanderburgh County sheriff's office said the man was arrested in September after fingerprint DNA was found on the notes.

Authorities said the notes were "quite explicit and written in a manner that led the victims to believe that they were being watched."

### 6 injured when car crashes into church

**OH** COLUMBUS — Authorities in Ohio said a car smashed through a church wall during Sunday morning services, shattering stained glass and injuring six people.

Firefighters said the six who were hurt are being treated for cuts and other injuries and that all are in stable condition.

The church's pastor said members of the Crossroads United Methodist Church were singing a hymn when the car crashed through the wall and fully into the church.

Church members told The Columbus Dispatch that the driver was a 92-year-old congregant.

About 100 people were inside the church at the time.

Rev. Jay Anderson said the wall "just exploded" and that pieces of glass went flying.

From wire reports

On a mission to provide objective reporting to America's military, wherever they serve.  
Read us online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Some win, some lose as playoffs come into focus

Associated Press

The big winners in Week 16 were the Saints, Patriots, Cowboys, Seahawks and Ravens. The big losers were the Steelers, Dolphins, Chiefs and Texans.

But wait. Then the Texans became winners hours later, earning a playoff berth as they headed back to Houston on Sunday following a last-second 32-30 loss at Phila-

## NFC

New Orleans (12-3) secured home-field advantage throughout the conference playoffs by beating Pittsburgh, dropping the Steelers into second place behind Baltimore in the AFC North. The Saints won't be playing outdoors again — the Super Bowl, should they get there, will be inside at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

"Knowing that we've done it, knowing that the road comes through New Orleans, that gives us a lot of confidence," Drew Brees said. "Obviously we love playing in the dome. ... We have goals throughout the season and this is one of them."

Also reaching their goal were the Cowboys, grabbing the NFC East with a 27-20 victory over Tampa Bay. Dallas (9-6) will be the fourth seed and host a wild-card game.

"We can't get comfortable," Ezekiel Elliott said. "We can't afford to take a week off next week. We've got to keep working and make sure we're ready for the playoffs."

Chicago (11-4) needs to be ready next week at Minnesota (9-6). For one, the Bears have a shot at the second overall slot and a first-round bye with a win and a loss by the Rams (12-3), who are at home for San Francisco. For another, they could deny their division rival a postseason spot; a Vikings win gets them a wild card.

But a Vikings loss and an Eagles win at Washington gets the defending champions (8-7) back into the postseason.

Seattle (9-6) appears destined to play at Dallas in the first round. The Seahawks beat the Cowboys in Week 3 for their first win of what was supposed to be a rebuilding year.

They've rebuilt so quickly that Pete Carroll is in the running for Coach of the Year.

"It's not complicated," Russell Wilson said after the 38-31 victory against the Chiefs. "It's hard work, it's having faith. We knew we had to battle throughout the season, it's a journey and we're still not done yet."

delphia that handed the AFC's No. 2 seed behind Kansas City to the Patriots — as if they need any help when the playoffs arrive. Houston sneaked in when Pittsburgh lost 31-28 at New Orleans, though the Texans still could wind up a wild card in the, well, wild AFC South.

Here's a road map as we head into the final week of the schedule:

## AFC

For a decade now, the New England Patriots have owned the AFC East, and they had a huge weekend.

The Patriots clinched their 10th straight division title when they beat Buffalo 24-12. They got an added bonus when Houston fell to drop out of the second seed in the conference, which New England grabbed — with a shot at the top spot.

They are 7-0 in Foxborough — the league's only undefeated team in its own building — and 3-5 on the road.

"We didn't have our best day in the passing game," Tom Brady said. "But it felt good to win."

Baltimore (9-6), fresh off its victory at the Chargers on Saturday night, has a half-game lead on Pittsburgh (8-6-1), which has lost four of five. The Ravens will take the North with a home win against Cleveland next week. The Steelers host Cincinnati and need help to get into the postseason from their hated enemy, the Browns.

"We're playing pretty good football, but it might not matter," Ben Roethlisberger said. "We have to take care of business next week."

The game of tiebreakers also shows that should the Colts and Titans deadlock in the prime-time game to end the season, and the Steelers win, Pittsburgh edges both of them for the final wild card, all at 9-6-1.

In the South, Houston (10-5) is leading Indianapolis and Tennessee by a game. The Texans host Jacksonville (5-10) and could wind up a wild card with a loss and a non-tie in Nashville.

The Chiefs (11-4) and Chargers (11-4) already are in from the West. That takes up one wild card. But Kansas City could plummet from top overall seed to wild card if it flops vs. Oakland next week and LA beats Denver.

Miami fell out of the mix with a 17-7 home loss to lowly Jacksonville. What's clear is that there's no overwhelming favorite. And while a wild-card team hasn't won the title since Green Bay in the 2010 season, betting against the likes of the Chargers, Seahawks or Eagles should they get in would be foolish.

# Steelers fall to Brees, Saints

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Drew Brees found a receiver who hadn't played most of the season to sustain a late touchdown drive. The Saints' defense found a way to force two fumbles in the fourth quarter. And New Orleans' punt-return unit stopped a fake punt less than a yard short of a conversion that might have helped Pittsburgh protect a late lead.

Combine that with some good fortune on decisions by the officials, and it added up to a third straight fourth-quarter comeback for these charmed 2018 Saints, who'll finish the regular season as the best team in the NFC.

Brees capped a 326-yard passing performance with a 2-yard touchdown toss to Michael Thomas with 1:25 left, Sheldon Rankins stripped JuJu Smith-Schuster in the final minute, and the Saints clinched the top seed in the NFC playoffs with a 31-28 victory over the Steelers that dealt a significant blow to Pittsburgh's playoff hopes.

"That's one thing these guys have done a good job with, coming up with plays when we needed it. We've won a lot of different ways this year," Saints coach Sean Payton said after New Orleans (13-2) reached 13 victories for the third time since he became coach in 2006. "I'm proud of this team. Man, they've showed a great resolve — dealt with injuries, dealt with all the adversity you might have in a long season."

Pittsburgh drove into potential tying field-goal range on its final drive, but Smith-Schuster fumbled while landing on Rankins after a short reception and linebacker Demario Davis recovered.

"One thing you know about this team is we're resilient," Rankins said.

Alvin Kamara gained 105 yards from scrimmage and ran for two touchdowns for New Orleans. Receiver Tedd Ginn Jr., playing for the first time since Week 4, caught a 25-yard pass on third-and-20 during the Saints' go-ahead series.

The Steelers briefly preserved their four-point lead when L.J. Fort blocked Wil Lutz's 50-yard field goal attempt with 6:16 left. But New Orleans quickly forced a fourth-and-5 and then stopped upback Roosevelt Nix a yard short of a first down when he took the snap on a fake punt with a little more than four minutes to go.

"I just wanted to be aggressive," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "I like the play."

Ben Roethlisberger passed for 380 yards and three touchdowns for the Steelers (8-6-1), connecting 14 times with Antonio Brown for 185 yards and two touchdowns. Pittsburgh fell into second in the AFC North behind Baltimore and out of playoff position.

# Eagles beat Texans 32-30 to stay alive

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Nick Foles ran back onto the field after a hard shot knocked him out for a play and the crowd roared, seemingly knowing he was about to do it again.

Jake Elliott kicked a 35-yard field goal as time expired after Foles led the offense into position and the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Houston Texans 32-30 Sunday to keep their playoff hopes alive.

“Foles was so confident and everyone was so calm,” said Zach Ertz, who set a single-season record for most receptions for tight ends. “No one flinched. Guys stuck together.”

Foles threw for a franchise-record 471 yards.

The defending Super Bowl champion Eagles (8-7) need a win at Washington (7-8) next week and for Minnesota (8-6-1) to

lose at home to Chicago (11-4) to get a wild-card berth.

The Texans (10-5) missed an opportunity to clinch the AFC South and also allowed New England (10-5) to take control of the No. 2 seed. But when Pittsburgh lost to New Orleans, Houston earned at least a wild-card berth.

The Texans would secure the division title with a victory against Jacksonville next week. They’d get a first-round bye with a win and if the Patriots lose or tie.

“I’ll put that on my shoulders,” J.J. Watt said. “The offense did a great job giving us a chance, and we just didn’t get a stop at the end.”

Filling in for the injured Carson Wentz for the second straight week, Foles again played like the Super Bowl MVP who led Philadelphia to a victory over New England.

“We stuck together through the ups and downs,” said Foles, who choked up when

asked about possibly playing his last game in Philadelphia.

Deshaun Watson had two TD passes and ran for two scores.

Watson threw a 35-yard touchdown pass to Vyncint Smith with 2:04 remaining as Houston rallied from a 13-point deficit.

But Foles brought Philadelphia back.

Foles was injured on a late hit by Jadeveon Clowney while completing a 19-yard pass to Alshon Jeffery to the Texans 30 on third-and-10. Nate Sudfeld came in and threw an incomplete pass, but Foles returned on the next play. His 20-yard pass to Ertz on third-and-10 put Philadelphia at the Houston 35.

The Eagles ran the clock down and Elliott made the kick to make up for missing an extra point earlier in the quarter.

“When it ends a game, you get to enjoy it a little bit longer,” Elliott said.

## NFL roundup

# Baker’s 3 TDs carry Browns over Bengals

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — No awkward hug. No cold handshake. No holiday greeting.

Baker Mayfield’s only interaction with former coach Hue Jackson was an icy stare.

Mayfield threw three touchdown passes to thrill a sellout, holiday-spirited crowd that came out to boo Jackson, and rookie Nick Chubb ran for 112 yard as the Cleveland Browns beat the Cincinnati Bengals 26-18 on Sunday to sweep their southern Ohio neighbors for the first time since 2002.

“Quite honestly, I couldn’t care about what happened in the past,” Mayfield said. “It is about this year and we won. We are moving forward.”

The No. 1 pick in this year’s draft continued his stellar rookie season, one that took off after Jackson was fired by the Browns on Oct. 29. Mayfield has thrown 24 TD passes, third most in NFL history by a rookie and just two shy of the record shared by Peyton Manning and Russell Wilson.

With their fifth win in six

games, the Browns (7-7-1) improved to 5-2 under interim coach Gregg Williams, who has gone from long shot to legitimate candidate to become Cleveland’s next coach. It’s only the second time since 2007 that the Browns have won at least seven games.

The Bengals (6-9), on the other hand, are disintegrating under coach Marvin Lewis. They lost for the sixth time in seven games and are assured of finishing last in the AFC North, a spot the Browns have occupied every season since 2011.

**Patriots 24, Bills 12:** The host Patriots earned their 10th straight AFC East title with Sony Michel running for 116 yards and a touchdown.

With the Eagles win over the Texans, the Patriots are back in the No. 2 spot in the AFC. A Patriots win over the Jets next week would give New England a first-round bye in the playoffs.

**Cowboys 27, Buccaneers 20:** The host Cowboys wrapped up the NFC East title when Dak Prescott accounted

for two touchdowns and Jaylon Smith returned a fumble 69 yards for a score.

**Seahawks 38, Chiefs 31:** Russell Wilson threw a 2-yard pass to Ed Dickson with 7:31 left for his third touchdown strike, Chris Carson rushed for two scores, and host Seattle beat Kansas City to clinch an NFC wild-card berth.

Wilson got the better of Kansas City’s Patrick Mahomes and helped lead Seattle back to the postseason after missing the playoffs a year ago.

**Rams 31, Cardinals 9:** C.J. Anderson, playing five days after he was signed by visiting Los Angeles, rushed for 167 yards — one shy of his career high.

**Colts 28, Giants 27:** Andrew Luck hooked up with Chester Rogers for a 1-yard TD pass with 55 seconds left to give the host Colts (9-6) their only lead of the game.

**Vikings 27, Lions 9:** Kirk Cousins threw a 44-yard Hail Mary to Kyle Rudolph as time expired in the first half to put the visiting Vikings ahead, moving a step closer to playing in the postseason.

**Bears 14, 49ers 9:** Mitchell Trubisky threw one touchdown pass, Jordan Howard ran for another score and the visiting Bears survived a fight and a late fumble to earn their eighth win in nine games.

**Jaguars 17, Dolphins 7:** Blake Bortles came off the bench late in the third quarter with the score tied and provided a spark, helping the Jaguars eliminate the host Dolphins from the AFC playoff race.

**Packers 44, Jets 38 (OT):** Aaron Rodgers threw a 16-yard touchdown pass to Davante Adams with 6:23 left in overtime. The victory was the Packers’ first on the road this season — snapping a nine-game skid away from Lambeau Field dating to last season — and it prevented them from becoming the first Green Bay squad since 1958 to go an entire season without a win away from home.

**Falcons 24, Panthers 10:** Matt Ryan threw for 239 yards and three touchdowns, and the Falcons handed the host Panthers their seventh straight loss.

## NBA roundup

## Curry boosts Warriors with late layup

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Steph Curry made a layup with 0.5 seconds left and the Golden State Warriors outlasted the Los Angeles Clippers 129-127 in an emotionally charged game Sunday night.

Curry had 42 points to tie his second-highest scoring output of the season. He also got the last laugh after he exchanged heated words with Clippers guard Patrick Beverley in the first quarter.

The Clippers' Avery Bradley tied it at 127 with a dunk with 20.6 seconds remaining. On the next possession, Curry had Montrezl Harrell on him at the top of the key, drove down the middle of the lane and converted the layup off the glass for the winner.

Tobias Harris missed a shot as time expired, giving the Warriors their eighth victory in 10 games.

Kevin Durant added 35 points for Golden State to help offset the Clippers' 78-percent (18 of 23) three-point shooting. Harris led Los Angeles with 32 points,

and Lou Williams added 25.

**Celtics 119, Hornets 103:** Kyrie Irving scored 25 points, Jayson Tatum had 17 and host Boston beat Charlotte to end a three-game skid.

Al Horford returned after missing seven games with a sore left knee and had 10 points and six rebounds in 19 minutes.

Boston was coming off a 120-107 loss at home to Milwaukee on Friday, which prompted a closed-door meeting in the locker room. The Celtics came out Sunday looking much more like the team that had won eight straight before the skid.

**Grizzlies 107, Lakers 99:** Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 27 points and visiting Memphis beat Los Angeles to end a five-game losing streak.

Marc Gasol had 17 points, nine rebounds and eight assists for the Grizzlies, who had lost four straight road games.

LeBron James had 22 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists for the Lakers. They have dropped three of their last four.

**Timberwolves 114, Thunder 112:** Andrew Wiggins scored

30 points and hit the go-ahead layup with 14 seconds left in visiting Minnesota's victory over Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City's Paul George scored 31 points, but missed a three-pointer at the buzzer that would have won it. Russell Westbrook had 23 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists.

**Nets 111, Suns 103:** Spencer Dinwiddie scored 24 points, D'Angelo Russell had 18 points, eight assists and six rebounds, and host Brooklyn beat weary Phoenix.

The Suns, with a short turnaround after a 149-146 triple-overtime loss in Washington a night earlier, dropped their second straight after a four-game winning streak.

**Trail Blazers 121, Mavericks 118 (OT):** Damian Lillard scored 33 points and host Portland handed Dallas its sixth straight loss.

Jusuf Nurkic added 10 points and 12 rebounds to help Portland win for the fourth time in five games.

**Kings 122, Pelicans 117:** Willie Cauley-Stein had 22 points and a career-high 17

rebounds, Buddy Hield scored 28 points and host Sacramento overcame an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

Anthony Davis had 26 points and 17 rebounds for the Pelicans.

**Pacers 105, Wizards 89:** Myles Turner had 18 points and 17 rebounds and host Indiana beat sluggish Washington.

The Wizards were coming off a triple-overtime victory over Phoenix in Washington the previous night. They shot a season-low 36.8 percent.

**Hawks 98, Pistons 95:** Alex Len had 15 points and a season-high 17 rebounds, Vince Carter had a season-best 18 points, and visiting Atlanta held off Detroit for its third straight victory.

**Heat 115, Magic 91:** Tyler Johnson scored 20 of his 25 points in the third quarter and visiting Miami beat Orlando to give Erik Spoelstra his 500th coaching victory.

**Bulls 112, Cavaliers 92:** Lauri Markkanen scored 31 points and Chicago won consecutive games for the first time this season, beating host Cleveland.

## NHL roundup

## Aho, Teravainen push Hurricanes past Bruins

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Carolina Hurricanes brought back the Hartford Whalers for a night, and two of their younger stars kept "Brass Bonanza" seemingly playing on repeat.

Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen each had two goals and two assists and the Hurricanes beat the Boston Bruins 5-3 on Sunday while wearing Whalers uniforms for the first time since moving 21 years ago.

Aho, a 21-year-old who was born three months after the Whalers' final game, had his fourth career four-point night and his second in five games, while it was the third for his linemate Teravainen. They assisted on each other's two goals.

"Obviously, when you're scoring, you get more confidence. That's how it goes," Aho said. "It's maybe a little bit easier to score when you get a couple of goals. I'm feeling pretty good right now, but it's not just me. My linemates are helping me out a lot."

The Hurricanes scored four straight goals to erase an early 2-0 deficit and snap a two-game losing streak that had left them two points out of last place.

**Maple Leafs 5, Red Wings 4 (OT):** Kasperi Kapanen scored his second goal of the game at 1:53 of overtime and host Toronto beat Detroit.

**Kings 4, Golden Knights 3 (OT):** Tyler Toffoli scored 1:40 into overtime to lift Los Angeles past host Vegas.

**Coyotes 4, Sharks 3 (SO):** Alex Galchenyuk ended a slump by scoring twice

and had the only goal in the shootout to lift Arizona over host San Jose.

**Islanders 3, Stars 1:** Anders Lee scored a tiebreaking power-play goal with 10:10 to play and New York beat host Dallas.

**Panthers 6, Blackhawks 3:** Jayce Hawryluk scored his first two NHL goals, Mike Hoffman and Jared McCann had goals in a 31-second span in the second period and Florida beat host Chicago.

**Blue Jackets 3, Devils 0:** Sergei Bobrovsky made 39 saves, Artemi Panarin had a goal and an assist, and Columbus beat New host Jersey.

**Flyers 3, Rangers 2 (SO):** Nolan Patrick scored the lone goal in a shootout that lasted four rounds and visiting Philadelphia beat scuffling New York.