

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

McConnell rejects Dem push on witnesses

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is rejecting the Democrats' push for fresh impeachment testimony against President Donald Trump and making a last-ditch plea for them to "turn back from the cliff" of Wednesday's expected vote to send the case to the Senate for trial.

McConnell's remarks Tuesday effectively slammed the door shut on negotiations for a deal proposed by the Democratic leader, Sen. Chuck Schumer, who wants to call top White House officials for the Senate trial, which is set to start next year if the House impeaches Trump this week.

"If House Democrats' case is this deficient, this thin, the answer is not for the judge and

jury to cure it here in the Senate," McConnell said. "The answer is that the House should not impeach on this basis in the first place."

Schumer's proposal was the first overture in what were expected to be negotiations between the two leaders over the contours of a weeklong trial. Trump wants a more showy proceeding to not only acquit but vindicate him of the impeachment charges from the House, though he has instructed officials not to appear in the House.

McConnell and most GOP senators prefer a swift trial to move on from impeachment. Many centrist House Democrats have begun to signal that they, too, are ready to vote and move on.

Senate Democrats want to hear from John Bolton, Mick Mulvaney and others as the proceedings push to the chamber for the trial.

"Why is the leader, why is the president so afraid to have these witnesses come testify?" asked Schumer from the Senate floor. "They certainly ought to be heard."

House Democrats are to vote Wednesday to impeach Trump, formally accusing him of abusing his power as president in dealing with Ukraine to help himself politically and then obstructing Congress by blocking the later investigation.

What Democrats once hoped would be a bipartisan act was on track toward a starkly partisan roll call Wednesday.

The House Rules Committee

was meeting Tuesday in what was expected to be a marathon session to set the parameters for Wednesday's debate.

"It's unfortunate that we have to be here today, but the president's actions make it necessary," said Chairman Jim McGovern, D-Mass., as he gaveled the session open. "The evidence is as clear as it is overwhelming."

Trump faces two articles of impeachment brought by Democrats. They say he abused the power of his office by pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden ahead of the 2020 election and obstructed Congress by aggressively trying to block the House investigation from its oversight duties as part of the system of checks and balances.

Late-night curfew permanently lifted for GIs in S. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL
AND MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Gen. Robert Abrams permanently ended the hugely unpopular 1-to-5 a.m. curfew for U.S. service members in South Korea on Tuesday after a six-month suspension proved successful.

The commander of U.S. Forces Korea made the decision after assessing the number and the types of incidents involving troops since the curfew was lifted temporarily on June 17, according to a news release.

Abrams also consulted with other military leaders and unit commanders, who were asked to recommend whether to reimpose the curfew, to continue the suspension or to end it.

"All recommended its termination," he said in the statement

released Tuesday, stressing the need to maintain order and discipline in line with USFK regulations.

"Leaders are responsible for our servicemembers' on-and-off-post conduct; we are ambassadors of USFK, the United States and the U.S.-[South Korea] alliance to the Korean people," he added. "We have a solemn responsibility to keep readiness at its highest levels with a 'fight tonight' posture, approach and mentality."

Abrams first announced a three-month curfew suspension on June 17 as a test for some 28,500 American troops stationed on the divided peninsula. He extended the suspension for three more months on Sept. 17, saying he need more time before making it permanent.

Initially imposed after the 9/11 attacks, the curfew, which requires that troops be on base,

in their residences or in hotel rooms during the specified hours, has long been an unpopular feature of military life for all branches in South Korea.

Troops said it was a morale killer.

"We are already forced to be away from our families. Why restrict us to just our rooms?" Cpl. Andrew Sudler, 22, of Dover, Del., said Saturday while out with friends at a bar near Osan Air Base. "That kind of goes along with the depression problem. They've had problems with suicides here. Why coop us up in our rooms if we are already forced to be away from our family and alone by ourselves?"

Pvt. Lydia Wombacher, 19, of Warrenton, Mo., said she doesn't think that all soldiers should suffer because of the actions of a few bad apples.

"There have been some

problems, but it's a very small minority of people," she said Monday at Camp Humphreys. "I don't think it's fair that those people who do what they're supposed to should be affected by people that don't."

Officials said reported problems during the curfew suspension period mainly involved fistfights between soldiers and some issues with taxis.

"We continue to be disappointed with the actions of a few individuals, mainly soldiers going out and getting into fights at night," provost marshal Col. John Fivian said Monday at USFK headquarters on Camp Humphreys.

He said problems were more noticeable in South Korea because troops who get into trouble are usually turned over to their command; in the U.S. they would be dealt with by local authorities.

Poll: Most S. Koreans support US alliance

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and South Korea began a fourth round of defense cost-sharing talks Tuesday, two weeks before the current contract is due to expire.

A new poll showed that most South Koreans support the alliance with the United States but reject U.S. demands for a five-fold increase in spending.

Negotiators are struggling to bridge the gap. The South balks at U.S. demands for nearly \$5 billion annually in return for stationing some 28,500 troops on the divided peninsula. Last

year Seoul paid about \$920 million.

The rare public dispute has raised concerns about a rift in the longstanding U.S.-South Korean alliance. Meanwhile, tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program are rising amid a breakdown in diplomatic efforts on that front.

The talks in Seoul were scheduled to end Wednesday. Any agreement must be ratified by South Korea's National Assembly.

Many experts predicted a repeat of last year, when the two sides failed to meet the Dec. 31 deadline but continued talks and reached a retroactive agreement.

"If the two countries don't reach an agreement in the defense cost-sharing talks, we can't rule out the possibility of the reduction of U.S. forces in Korea, or their complete withdrawal," James Kim, a researcher at South Korea's Asian Institute for Policy Studies, said Tuesday at a conference in Seoul.

Still, 92% of South Koreans polled last week by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs said they support the alliance, and 74% said they support the long-term stationing of U.S. soldiers in South Korea.

The poll, which was conducted Dec. 9-11 in South Korea, however, showed a clear re-

jection of President Donald Trump's demands for the South to sharply increase spending.

The think tank said 68% of those polled said "South Korea should negotiate a lower cost than the \$4.7 billion request made by the United States." Among those respondents, 60% said the amount should remain below \$1.7 billion.

The survey, which was conducted by Hankook Research in South Korea and funded by a grant from the Korea Foundation, polled a representative national sample of 1,000 South Korean adults and had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%.

Guam to Seattle route aims to reduce travel costs

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department plans to add charter flights between Guam's Andersen Air Force Base and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport starting next spring, officials announced Monday.

The flights, part of a service called the Patriot Express, will begin in March on a bi-weekly, proof-of-concept basis for six months, according to a statement on the Andersen website. The Guam-Seattle route was added to help military families

defray costs associated with changing duty stations and traveling with pets.

A lack of carrier options and restrictions makes it difficult and expensive to ship pets to and from the U.S. island territory. In January, a Navy family turned to online fundraising to help pay the \$11,592 cost of transporting two German shepherds to Guam from Virginia.

"The Patriot Express will provide a much-needed service to the military families on Guam," Cindi Boswell, wife

of the 36th Wing commander, Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell, said in the statement.

The Patriot Express — sometimes referred to as the Rotator or Cat B flight — is a Defense Department-contracted charter that ferries travelers on official duty to U.S. military installations around the globe.

The new route will include a servicing stop in Hawaii, but passengers and cargo will not be permitted to disembark at that time, the statement said.

"Flying back to the states from Guam can be very expen-

sive," Boswell said in the statement. "For our junior Airmen, the cost can sometimes be too high to make a trip home for holidays or special events but with the rotator coming through on a consistent basis, we hope that the increased Space-A travel opportunity will open that door for our Airmen and their families to make it home more easily."

Andersen officials will post flight schedules for the route on the Andersen Passenger Terminal Facebook page.

Campaign raises \$12K for family of sailor hit by vehicles

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

A crowdfunding campaign started by the family of a gravely injured sailor assigned to a base in Japan exceeded its \$10,000 goal in less than 24 hours.

The GoFundMe page identifies the sailor as Janet Castillo, 20, who enlisted in the Navy in September 2018 and has been stationed at Sasebo Naval Base since March. Her rank and hometown were not available

Tuesday.

According to the post, which was started Monday by Castillo's mother, Melissa Rodriguez, the sailor was leaving a Christmas gathering Saturday when she was struck by a motorcycle and then run over by another vehicle.

Task Force 76 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Kristine Volk confirmed Tuesday that Castillo is being treated for injuries suffered in an accident outside Sasebo's main gate just before midnight.

Castillo underwent surgery Tuesday on her right leg and hip, according to the GoFundMe post. She will have surgery again Wednesday on her left leg and hip.

The Navy would not confirm Castillo's injuries, citing privacy concerns.

The funds raised will support her family's stay in Japan while Castillo recovers.

More than \$12,300 had been pledged by more than 180 donors as of Tuesday evening in Japan.

Pensacola victim laid to rest in Ga.

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — One of the young Navy sailors killed in a Saudi gunman's attack at a Florida base had boundless energy and a fierce loyalty to family and friends in Georgia that will make him "the most amazing guardian angel," some of those closest to the slain sailor told hundreds at his funeral Monday.

Roughly 400 people, including dozens of uniformed service members, gathered at Compassion Christian Church in Savannah to remember Airman Apprentice Cameron Scott Walters, 21, of neighboring Richmond Hill. His casket, draped with an American flag, stood at the front of a stage adorned with Christmas trees.

Walters was among three sailors killed Dec. 6 when a gunman opened fire at Naval Air Station Pensacola. Federal authorities said the gunman also wounded eight other

people before a sheriff's deputy killed him.

The slain sailor's father, Shane Walters, has said his son had recently arrived in Florida after completing boot camp and was standing watch at the entrance of a classroom building where the attack occurred.

Hunter Cannon, one of Walters' best friends, spoke through tears during the service as he described Walters as his brother — not by blood, but by choice.

Walters' funeral followed a somber homecoming Saturday when people holding American flags lined a main street in Walters' hometown as his casket arrived, escorted by motorcycle riders. Similar scenes played out over the weekend in Alabama and Florida as the bodies of Ensign Joshua Kaleb Watson, 23, and Airman Mohammed Shahed Haitham, 19, came home.

Flaw with Lockheed's \$31B Marine helo solved, US says

Bloomberg

Lockheed Martin has solved a major flaw with the U.S. Marine Corps' new King Stallion helicopter that threatened to undercut congressional support for the \$31 billion program.

The Lockheed-led project "has successfully tested a modification to the aircraft's exhaust system" to solve the problem of hot engine exhaust being sucked back into one of the aircraft's three engines, Megan Wasel, a spokeswoman for Naval Air Systems Command, said in an email Monday.

The Democratic chairman and top Republican on the House Armed Services Com-

mittee, Reps. Adam Smith, a Washington Democrat, and Mac Thornberry, a Texas Republican, wrote the Defense Department earlier this year citing the exhaust problem as a key reason to resist the Defense Department's request to shift \$79 million in fiscal 2019 funds to the helicopter program from elsewhere in the budget.

The lawmakers agreed in July to shift the money based on assurances of progress.

The problem has been dealt with early in the program. The Marines want to buy 200 King Stallions. Only 20, including six test aircraft, are currently on contract.

Report: IED threat in Bahrain has grown since 2013

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Militants in Bahrain have obtained sophisticated bomb components like those Iran has allegedly been supplying to Houthi rebels in Yemen, researchers have found.

Security forces in the island kingdom, home to a major U.S. Navy base, have recovered components for radio-controlled improvised explosive devices, infrared sensors used to trigger IEDs, military-grade explosives and more, which suggest increased capabilities and links to Iran-backed supply networks, the London-based Conflict Armament Research said in a report released Tuesday.

"Between 2012 and 2018, the [IED] threat in Bahrain grew significantly as materiel recovered from militant groups illustrated an evolution of capabilities and access to resources," the report states.

The components found were identical or similar to Iranian materiel recovered from the Jihan 1, says the report, referring to a cargo vessel interdicted by U.S. Navy and Yemeni coast guard forces in January 2013.

The cargo ship was allegedly headed for a Houthi stronghold in Yemen and crewed partly by members of Hezbollah and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the report said.

Its cargo included C-4 explosives, small-arms ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, surface-to-air missile systems, IED components, night-vision goggles and electric detonators, the report found.

The materiel recovered in Bahrain was typically concealed among shipments of conventional weapons, the report states. Smugglers often appeared to have tried to hide the materiel's origins by grinding off identifying marks, which

CAR said is a hallmark of IED components found in Yemen.

Both Bahrain and Yemen were convulsed by protests during the Arab Spring in 2011, but while unrest in Yemen escalated to a yearslong civil war, Bahrain has managed to avoid a similar fate.

The kingdom, which has supported the Saudi-led coalition to restore the government in Yemen, is an important U.S. ally in the region, hosting some 7,000 American troops, mostly sailors, and the headquarters of the Navy's 5th Fleet. It has also supported U.S. operations against Islamic State in Syria, but government repression of opposition groups has "presented a policy dilemma for the United States," said a report published by the Congressional Research Service last month.

Teams of CAR investigators went to Bahrain in July 2017 and April 2018 to examine and document the materiel seized from militants.

In 2011 and 2012, the investigators say in the CAR report, militant groups in Bahrain used "crude, domestically manufactured" IEDs. But starting in 2013, there was "a significant change in the sophistication of weapons and related materiel available to militant factions in Bahrain."

The findings come amid growing tensions in the Persian Gulf region after President Donald Trump backed out of the Obama administration's nuclear agreement with the regime in Tehran. Trump has called it a bad deal and has stepped up pressure on Iran to renegotiate the agreement.

Last summer, Tehran and Washington seemed poised for conflict, with drones downed by both sides over the course of several weeks and the Pentagon announcing deployments of thousands more troops to the region, along with aircraft and other equipment.

House votes to pass \$1.4T spending bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Democratic-controlled House voted Tuesday to pass a \$1.4 trillion government-wide spending package, handing President Donald Trump a victory on his U.S.-Mexico border fence while giving Democrats spending increases across a swath of domestic programs.

The hard-fought legislation also funds a record Pentagon budget and is serving as a must-pass legislative locomotive to tow an unusually large haul of unrelated provisions into law, including an expensive repeal of Obama-era taxes on high-cost health plans, help for retired coal miners, and an increase from 18 to 21 in nationwide legal age to buy tobacco products.

The two-bill package, some 2,371 pages long after additional tax provisions were folded in on Tuesday morning, was unveiled Monday afternoon and adopted less than 24 hours later as lawmakers prepared to wrap up reams of unfinished work against a backdrop of Wednesday's vote on impeaching President Donald Trump.

The House first passed a measure funding domestic programs on a 297-120 vote.

But one-third of the Democrats defected on a 280-138 vote on the second bill, which funds the military and the Department of Homeland Security, mostly because it funds Trump's border wall project.

The spending legislation would forestall a government shutdown this weekend and give Trump steady funding for his U.S.-Mexico border fence, a move that frustrated Hispanic Democrats and party liberals.

The year-end package is anchored by a \$1.4 trillion spending measure that caps a difficult, monthslong battle over spending priorities.

The mammoth measure made public Monday takes a split-the-differences approach

that's a product of divided power in Washington, offering lawmakers of all stripes plenty to vote for — and against. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., was a driving force, along with administration pragmatists such as Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who negotiated the summertime budget deal that it implements.

The White House said Tuesday that Trump will sign the measure.

"The president is poised to sign it and to keep the government open," said top White House adviser Kellyanne Conway.

The bill would also increase the age nationwide for purchasing tobacco products from 18 to 21, and offers business-friendly provisions on export financing, flood insurance and immigrant workers.

The roster of add-ons grew over the weekend to include permanent repeal of a tax on high-cost "Cadillac" health insurance benefits and a hard-won provision to finance health care and pension benefits for about 100,000 retired union coal miners threatened by the insolvency of their pension fund. A tax on medical devices and health insurance plans would also be repealed permanently.

The deficit tab for the package grew as well with the addition of \$428 billion in tax cuts over 10 years to repeal the three so-called "Obamacare" taxes and extend expiring tax breaks.

Republicans maintained the status quo on several abortion-related battles and on funding for Trump's border wall.

Democrats controlling the House succeeded in winning a 3.1% raise for federal civilian employees and the first installment of funding on gun violence research after more than two decades of gun lobby opposition.

Powerful storm front batters Deep South

Associated Press

Three people are confirmed dead and a dozen more injured as a powerful storm front packing suspected tornadoes smashed into buildings, downed trees and left a trail of destruction around the Deep South on Monday, authorities said.

One person was reported killed in a suspected tornado strike on a Louisiana home, and two others were reported dead after another storm hit around a community about 55 miles west of the north Alabama city of Huntsville.

Lawrence County Coroner Scott Norwood in Alabama said the two people killed were husband and wife. Authorities said the injured people included a 7-year-old child who was taken to a hospital in Birmingham. Authorities did not release names of the victims.

The area was filled with debris and downed trees when first responders arrived.

"It was total chaos," Norwood told reporters. "We had to make do the best we could."

The storms prompted numerous tornado watches and warnings Monday. Some cities

opened shelters as a cold front collided with warmer air over northern Gulf Coast states and temperatures were expected to plunge. The National Weather Service said the severe weather threat could last into Tuesday.

The Louisiana death was attributed to an apparent tornado that struck a residential area in Vernon Parish. Details were not immediately available, said Chief Deputy Calvin Turner. He said authorities feared others could be hurt since crews were still trying to reach hard-hit areas.

In nearby Alexandria, La., about 200 miles northwest of New Orleans, crews cleared roads and restored power late into the night, working in a chilly mist.

Children in a church school were moved to the church before the tornado ripped off the school's roof, said Cpl. Wade Bourgeois, spokesman for the Alexandria Police Department. Among the hardest-hit spots was the Johnny Downs Sports Complex. The complex includes five full-sized soccer fields, more than 10 smaller ones and eight baseball diamonds.

Pakistan sentences former ruler Musharraf to death

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani court Tuesday sentenced the country's former military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to death in a treason case related to the state of emergency he imposed in 2007 while in power, officials said.

It's the first time in Pakistan's history that a former army chief and ruler of the country has been sentenced to death. Musharraf, who was sentenced in absentia, has been out of the country since 2016, when he was allowed to leave on bail to seek medical treatment abroad.

He has been living in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, and is said to be very ill and unlikely to travel home to face the sentence. Pakistan and the UAE have no extradition treaty and Emirati authorities are unlikely to arrest Musharraf. If he were to return, however, Musharraf would have the right to challenge his conviction and sentence in court.

The ruling Tuesday by a three-judge panel was not unanimous, and one of the judges had opposed the death sentence, according to Akhtar Shah, one of Musharraf's lawyers. Shah said he would appeal the sentence.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Waitress surprised by \$1,200 cash tip

NJ PATERSON — Nearly a dozen people surprised a New Jersey waitress with a \$1,200 cash tip as an early holiday gift.

Zellie Thomas told NJ.com that he and a group of his friends left the tip with a waitress at an IHOP restaurant in Paterson on Saturday. Each person brought \$100 to the restaurant.

The waitress was so shocked that she tried to return the money at first, said Thomas.

Thomas, who is an activist and teacher, said he hopes the tip inspires others to do good deeds for strangers.

150 pounds of meat taken from restaurant

VA NORFOLK — The owner of a Mexican restaurant in Virginia said a pair of thieves broke into the business' cooler and stole 150 pounds of beef and chicken.

Jorge Romero, owner of Jessy's Taco Bistro in Norfolk, found the emptied-out meat locker Friday, The Virginian-Pilot reported. Surveillance video shows a man and a woman carrying cases and bags full of meat.

Romero said he alerted police. He said he kept his business open following the meat heist by bringing chicken and beef from one of his family's other restaurants.

Video shows police pepper-spray cat

GA ALPHARETTA — Body camera video shows police in Georgia joking about shooting a cat that was reportedly acting aggressive

and then pepper-spraying the crying creature.

Alpharetta police were called to the scene by a security guard who said the cat was chasing customers and employees in a parking lot, WXIA-TV reported.

Video shows the responding officers approaching the cat and exchanging ideas on how to handle it. The cat is seen running from officers and rubbing itself against the rear of a nearby car before calmly walking toward the officers, who begin to back away.

Officers were attempting to stun the cat while waiting for animal control to respond and remove it, according to a police statement cited by the news station.

Officers said the cat was nowhere to be found when animal control arrived.

Thief works hard to steal a Pepsi

FL MULBERRY — Surveillance video from a convenience store shows just how badly a Florida thief wanted a Pepsi.

The Polk County Sheriff's Office released a video that shows Gabriel Tillman, 49, walk into the store last week, grab a Pepsi and try to leave without paying. The cashier quickly locked the door to prevent Tillman from leaving.

The video shows Tillman hip check and push the door several times. Then he steps back and charges it a few times. When that doesn't work, he grabs a fire extinguisher and slams it against the door several times to no avail.

The glass door didn't break but the fire extinguisher did. The cashier finally opened the door.

A deputy spotted Gabriel two blocks away and arrested him.

Man arrested in theft of fire vehicle, chase

AL BIRMINGHAM — An Alabama man was accused of stealing a fire chief's vehicle and running from police in a high-speed chase.

News media reported that the Etowah County Sheriff's Office arrested Logan Cale Norton on Dec. 11. Glencoe fire chief Richard Johnson said firefighters were answering a call when Norton jumped into Johnson's marked vehicle and took off, with the emergency lights still on.

According to the sheriff's office, Norton was traveling on the wrong side of the road and attempted to hit another patrol vehicle during a chase with police. He eventually surrendered without resistance after stopping at the main fire hall.

Norton can be heard on the dash camera in the stolen vehicle narrating the pursuit as he was running from law enforcement, officials said.

Suit: Paternity test gave false reading

MD BALTIMORE — A Baltimore man is suing over a take-home paternity test he says incorrectly indicated he was the father of a 1-year-old girl.

Nnanaka Nwofor wants the Ohio company that conducted the DNA test to pay \$75,000 for the cost of supporting the child and her mother and the pain of learning he wasn't the father, The Daily Record reported.

DNA Diagnostics Center Inc. said Nwofor's take-home paternity test indicated he was "99.999999995%" likely to be the girl's biological father.

Months after that May test, Nwofor took another DNA Diagnostics Center test at the

prompting of an associate. That test found he was not the biological father, according to the lawsuit.

Babe's 500th home run bat fetches \$1M

CA LAGUNA NIGUEL — The bat used by legendary baseball player Babe Ruth to hit his 500th home run was auctioned Saturday for more than \$1 million.

SCP Auctions didn't identify the buyer.

Ruth hit his 500th homer on Aug. 11, 1929, against the Cleveland Indians.

He gave the autographed bat to his friend, former Suffern, N.Y., Mayor Jim Rice, in the 1940s. It's been in the family since then.

Man makes 3 calls confessing to police

GA BOSTON — A man apparently felt so bad about breaking the law that he called police three times to confess, according to police in Georgia.

Lt. Tim Watkins, of the Thomas County Sheriff's Office, told the Thomasville Times-Enterprise a man called at 5 a.m. Friday to say he had stolen a car in Thomasville and was about 12 miles away in the smaller town of Boston. A Boston police officer went looking for the Chevrolet Impala and Quent Rashed Lankford but could find neither.

Lankford, 29, called back again, and finally called a third time to say he had broken into a convenience store and was drinking beer.

That was enough for Boston police to track down and arrest Lankford.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

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

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Brees breaks mark for career TD passes

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Drew Brees became the NFL's career leader in touchdown passes, throwing for four scores to lead the New Orleans Saints to a 34-7 victory over the Indianapolis Colts on Monday night.

The scoring strike that broke Peyton Manning's record of 539 career touchdown passes came in the third quarter, when Brees hit tight end Josh Hill for a 5-yard score. Brees' next pass in the game was the 541st scoring toss of his career, a 28-yard TD to reserve QB and utility player Tayson Hill that put the Saints up 34-0.

"It was special, everything about the night," Brees said. "It just kind of makes your whole life and career flash before your eyes, because I never thought I'd have a chance to be part of something like this."

The 40-year-old Brees came into the game already holding NFL records for completions with 6,792 and yards passing with 72,577 — and built on those numbers

by also setting a record for completion percentage in a game.

He completed 29 of 30 passes — 96.7% — for 307 yards before being relieved by Teddy Bridgewater in the fourth quarter. That broke the mark Philip Rivers had held since completing 28 of 29 (96.6%) against Arizona last season.

"He had a hot hand, obviously," coach Sean Payton said. "Guys were making plays, but that's awfully difficult to do."

The victory kept the Saints (11-3), who'd already won the NFC South, in the running with San Francisco (11-3) and Green Bay (11-3) for one of the top two seeds in the NFC playoffs. The Colts (6-8) were eliminated from playoff contention after losing their fourth straight and sixth out of seven.

"There's a lot at stake right now relative to these games when you look at the top of the NFC," Payton said. "It's about winning and winning and winning and trying to give yourself the best chance in the

postseason."

Jacoby Brissett struggled at times with accuracy and finished 18-for-34 for 165 yards against a Saints defense looking for redemption after allowing 48 points in a loss to the 49ers a week earlier.

Meanwhile, Colts defenders had no answer for Michael Thomas, who caught 12 passes for 128 yards, including a 15-yard touchdown. Thomas' eighth game this season with at least 10 catches gives him 133 for the season, which is also the fourth-highest single-season total in NFL history.

With four more catches, Thomas will pass Antonio Brown and Julio Jones for second-most in a season and needs 11 to eclipse Marvin Harrison's record of 143 from 2002.

Tre'Quan Smith caught a 21-yard touchdown pass for New Orleans.

Jordan Wilkins scored the Colts' lone TD on a 1-yard run in the fourth quarter.

LSU, Ohio State dominate AP All-America football

Associated Press

No. 1 LSU and No. 2 Ohio State each placed three players on The Associated Press All-America first team released Monday.

Heisman Trophy winner Joe Burrow of LSU highlights the first-team offense and Heisman finalist Chase Young of Ohio State leads the defense on the team that was chosen by a panel of 15 college football poll voters.

The top-ranked Tigers also placed receiver Ja'Marr Chase and cornerback Derek Stingley on the first team. Young was joined on the first team by Ohio State by teammates Wyatt Davis, a guard, and Jeff Okudah, a cornerback. No. 3 Clemson's only first-team All-American was linebacker Isaiah Simmons. No. 4 Oklahoma was represented on the first team by receiver CeeDee Lamb.

No. 5 Georgia and No. 11 Wisconsin were the other teams with multiple first-team selections. Georgia placed tackle

Andrew Thomas and safety J.R. Reed on the All-America team.

Wisconsin running back Jonathan Taylor is the only player to repeat as a first-team All-American this season. Badgers center Tyler Biadasz also made the first-team.

Ohio State led all teams with seven players selected to the three All-America teams, including quarterback Justin Fields, who made the second team.

Ed Orgeron of LSU is The Associated Press Coach of the Year after leading the top-ranked Tigers to a Southeastern Conference championship and their first College Football Playoff appearance.

Orgeron received 33 of 56 first-place votes from Top 25 poll voters and a total of 130 points for the award.

Baylor's Matt Rhule, who led the Bears to an 11-2 record and an appearance in the Big 12 championship game, finished second with 14 first-place votes (86 points).

NFL suspends Seahawks' Gordon for drug violation

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — The troubles that have followed Josh Gordon throughout his career continued Monday as the Seahawks wide receiver was suspended indefinitely by the NFL for violating the league's drug policy again.

Gordon tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs and "substances of abuse," the league said in a statement.

Gordon was reinstated by the NFL in August after having been suspended indefinitely in December 2018, missing the final three games of last season for violations of the league's substance abuse policy.

"My heart goes out to Josh having to face this again. The fact that he is up against it and all, it poses a great challenge to him," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "Fortunately, he'll have the great benefit of all of the league's resources to support him and help him and we'll wish him the very best in taking care of business. It's really unfortunate."

Gordon signed with New England and was among the leading receivers for the Patriots, with 20 catches for 287 yards and a touchdown through six games. But he was placed on injured reserve with knee and ankle injuries and was released in late October.

Seattle stepped in and claimed the oft-troubled receiver off waivers. His first game came in Week 10 against San Francisco when Gordon made a pair of key catches late in Seattle's 27-24 overtime win. Gordon had seven receptions over five games with the Seahawks. All seven had some significance, including his 58-yard catch in Sunday's win over Carolina.

"He had impact to some extent it seemed like in every game," Carroll said. "This isn't about that. This is about Josh getting well and taking care of business."

Gordon's stint with Seattle likely finished with 11 targets, 139 yards receiving and one incomplete pass attempt.

Coyotes get former MVP Hall from Devils

Associated Press

John Chayka looked at the Arizona Coyotes roster and their spot atop the Pacific Division and wondered.

The Coyotes haven't made the playoffs since 2012, and 2018 NHL MVP Taylor Hall was available. The cost was two draft picks and three prospects but no players from the current roster, so he went for it.

Arizona, after acquiring Hall, is a legitimate contender in the Western Conference.

"We want to take a run at things here," Chayka said. "We ask our questions here internally like, 'Why not us?' We've got a good group. We've got a chance to contend. You can always look to future years and say, 'What if?' But when we've got a chance right now, we wanted to take our shot."

The Coyotes haven't had this good a shot at contending, not just for a playoff spot, but the Stanley Cup, in almost a decade. They prevented Western

rivals such as the Colorado Avalanche and defending champion St. Louis Blues from getting Hall and bolstered a blue-collar roster by adding a 28-year-old wing in his prime.

Hall is a free agent after this season. He could sign long term with the Coyotes.

The closest the Coyotes have come to the Cup is a five-game Western Conference finals loss to Los Angeles in 2012. Adding Hall to a core including young leading scorers Clayton Keller

and Nick Schmaltz, wing Phil Kessel, defenseman Oliver Ekman-Larsson and goaltenders Darcy Keumper and Antti Raanta should ratchet up the expectations in the desert.

"I'm joining a team with some young studs, a lot of really good defensemen and obviously two goalies that have played amazing this year. You mention those things and that's really what you need in a contender and that's what it looks like the Coyotes are," Hall said after the trade from New Jersey.

NHL roundup

Atkinson's two goals help Blue Jackets stop Capitals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fresh off sweeping a four-game road trip, the NHL-leading Washington Capitals fell flat in a 5-2 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets on Monday night that snapped their winning streak at six.

Washington hadn't lost in regulation since Nov. 20. The Capitals had their seven-game point streak end two days before facing the Boston Bruins in a showdown of the league's top two teams.

Goaltender Braden Holtby made 19 first-period saves but allowed four goals on 37 shots. Alex Ovechkin scored his 21st of the season early in the third period, and Tom Wilson added a 6-on-5 goal in the waning minutes.

Cam Atkinson scored twice, including an empty-netter, and looks to be heating up after a rough first quarter of the season. Atkinson has three goals in three games after just four in his first 27.

Scoring struggles by Atkinson and other top Blue Jackets players are a large reason for the team's struggles this season after the departures of Artemi Panarin, Sergei Bobrovsky and Matt Duchene. Coach John Tortorella lamented taking ice

time away from Atkinson and said the six-time 20-goal scorer needs to make some adjustments to get out of his funk.

"I think Cam's got to realize he's got to help himself a little," Tortorella said. "This team is looking for some scoring desperately and the guys that we've been counting on just have not been there. It's really put us into a jam here the first 30 games, and (Atkinson) is one of them."

Ryan Murray, Riley Nash and Oliver Bjorkstrand also scored for Columbus, which snapped its four-game skid. The Blue Jackets won for just the third time in nine games.

Blues 5, Avalanche 2: David Perron scored three times for his fifth career hat trick, powering host St. Louis to the victory.

Predators 5, Rangers 2: Roman Josi had two goals and an assist, leading Nashville to a win in New York.

Oilers 2, Stars 1: Leon Draisaitl scored another power-play goal for Edmonton, and Mikko Koskinen made 34 saves in a win at Dallas.

Panthers 6, Senators 1: Noel Acciari scored three times for his first career hat trick, and host Florida snapped a three-game losing streak.

Porcello stays close to home, joins Mets

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rick Porcello's \$10 million deal with the New York Mets shows the fruits of free agency as much as Gerrit Cole's \$324 million contract across town with the Yankees.

While Cole set a record, location was among Porcello's primary concerns.

"I live about an hour away from Citi Field," he said Monday after the Mets announced his contract. "That opportunity of having the hometown comfort, the ability for my father and family and friends to be able to come and see these games in person and get to experience it a little bit more live, were pretty deciding factors for me."

Porcello lives in Morristown, N.J., and was at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange when Detroit selected him with the 27th overall pick of the 2007 amateur draft. He was traded to Boston after the 2014 season and was guaranteed \$95 million by the Red Sox over the next five seasons. He won the AL Cy Young Award with a 22-4 record in 2016 and was 17-7 in 2018, when he earned a World Series ring.

"This is a big deal for me," he said. "I grew up a lifelong Mets fan as a kid, and now to

get the opportunity to play for the organization that I cheered on for so many years is a huge honor."

New York was the first team to contact Porcello during free agency and former Mets pitcher Al Leiter, now a New York baseball operations adviser, helped recruit him. Porcello remembered going to a game when Mike Piazza went deep.

"Watching him in person be able to hit a home run at Shea Stadium was a huge thrill for me," Porcello recalled, adding the 2000 NL pennant and Subway Series against the Yankees was another thrill.

A right-hander who turns 31 on Dec. 27, Porcello joins a rotation that includes Jacob deGrom and Noah Syndergaard plus fellow New York-area natives Marcus Stroman and Steven Matz, who grew up on Long Island.

Porcello was 14-12 with a 5.52 ERA in 32 starts last season.

"There's kind of a long list of things, honestly, from the offseason leading into spring training, and then certain things that kind of happened throughout the course this season that I think contributed to some of the struggles that I had," he said.

NBA roundup

Mavs end Bucks' streak at 18 games

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Bucks have little time to reflect on the end of their 18-game winning streak.

Milwaukee's impressive run was halted Monday night when Seth Curry and Kristaps Porzingis each scored 26 points to help the Dallas Mavericks hang on for a 120-116 victory even without star guard Luka Doncic.

The Bucks, who dropped to 24-4 with their first loss since a 103-100 setback Nov. 8 at Utah, next host LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers (24-3) on Thursday in a matchup of conference leaders.

"It's going to be a test for us," said Giannis Antetokounmpo, who led Milwaukee with 48 points and 14 rebounds. "The Lakers are one of the best teams in the league. We've got to play good basketball. We've got to move the ball. Obviously, as a team, we don't want to lose two in a row."

The winning streak was the Bucks' longest since a franchise-record 20 consecutive victories by the 1970-71 championship team that featured Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, then known as Lew Alcindor, and Oscar Robertson.

Dallas led comfortably for most of the fourth quarter until the final half-minute. Tim Hardaway Jr. hit the second of

two free throws to make it 119-114 with 7.6 seconds left. Antetokounmpo scored on a layup and was fouled, but missed the free throw. Sterling Brown grabbed the offensive rebound, but his putback was blocked by Porzingis.

"I'm proud of the way the guys fought to the very last second tonight," Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer said. "To find a way to be close in the fourth quarter and have an offensive rebound and give ourselves a chance, I think it's just a sign of the competitive nature of this group."

Doncic sat out with a sprained right ankle, while the Bucks were missing injured point guard Eric Bledsoe.

Milwaukee trailed 86-76 entering the fourth quarter and pulled to 99-92 before Porzingis hit back-to-back three-pointers.

The Mavs were 16-for-41 from three-point range, including four threes each by Curry and Porzingis. Milwaukee went 11-for-41 from beyond the arc.

"I hit those two deep threes but even then, Giannis was right there in front of me," Porzingis said. "They know we are a pretty good shooting team. But we have so many weapons and anybody on any given night can score 20-plus points. That's the dangerous thing about us. Tonight, Seth played great. It's kind of hard

to play against a team that has so many options."

Rockets 109, Spurs 107: Russell Westbrook scored 31 points, James Harden had 28 and host Houston set a franchise record by overcoming a 25-point deficit to beat San Antonio.

The comeback eclipsed the 23-point deficit Houston faced in a 110-107 victory against Portland on Jan. 22, 1977.

Thunder 109, Bulls 106: — Chris Paul hit five three-pointers in the fourth quarter and host Oklahoma City erased a 26-point second-quarter deficit to rally past Chicago.

Paul took over in the fourth, going 5-for-5 from deep and scoring 19 of his 30 points. His fourth three of the period put the Thunder up 101-100, their first lead since the opening seconds. Paul also had nine rebounds and 10 assists.

Grizzlies 118, Heat 111: Rookie guard Ja Morant had 20 points and 10 assists to lead host Memphis over Miami.

Jonas Valanciunas finished with 21 points and 10 rebounds as the Grizzlies won for the fourth time in five games.

Raptors 133, Cavaliers 113: Pascal Siakam scored 33 points, Kyle Lowry had 20 points and 11 assists, and host Toronto topped struggling Cleveland.

Norman Powell scored 26 points, Serge Ibaka had 14 and

OG Anunoby added 12 as the Raptors won for the 11th time in 14 home games. The defending NBA champions have won back-to-back at home after losing three straight on their own court.

Wizards 133, Pistons 119: Bradley Beal scored 15 of his 35 points in the first quarter, and Washington took control with some torrid shooting before winning at Detroit.

The Pistons played without injured stars Blake Griffin and Andre Drummond, and the Wizards shot 81% (17-for-21) from the field in the first quarter. They also made all three of their three-point attempts and all six of their free throws in the opening period, building a 43-31 lead.

Trail Blazers 111, Suns 110: Damian Lillard scored 27 points, including a crucial three-point play with 26 seconds left, and Portland bounced back from a 16-point deficit in the first half to win at Phoenix.

With the Blazers trailing 110-108, Lillard drove straight through the lane and made a layup while crashing into Aron Baynes, who was called for a blocking foul. Lillard hit the free throw to make it 111-110, and the Suns couldn't score on their final possession as Ricky Rubio's three-point attempt bounced off the rim with two seconds left.

No. 24 Texas Tech rallies past Southern Mississippi

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — Texas Tech is back in the AP Top 25 after the school's first win over a No. 1 team.

The 24th-ranked Red Raiders did just enough to stay there against a team that had already been blown out twice by ranked opponents this season.

Terrence Shannon Jr. scored 18 points and Texas Tech ral-

lied in the second half for a 71-65 victory over Southern Miss on Monday night.

Davide Moretti scored 17 points and hit a punctuating three-pointer on an otherwise rough shooting night as the Red Raiders (7-3) extended the nation's second-longest active home nonconference winning streak to 52 games.

"I think a lot of times when

we sit around and feel sorry for ourselves, we're disrespecting the opponent," coach Chris Beard said. "They played harder than us in a lot of stretches of the game and we don't really say that about our team as much but that's exactly what happened."

Texas Tech, which lost to Virginia in overtime in the national championship game last season, had dropped from 12th

all the way out of the Top 25 with two straight losses, then lost again at DePaul.

The Red Raiders returned to the poll following a two-week absence with a 70-57 victory over then-No. 1 Louisville at Madison Square Garden in New York last Tuesday.

But the Golden Eagles (3-9) led well into the second half and were within two points in the final three minutes.