

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Friday, December 27, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## SEALs describe alleged Gallagher war crimes

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

SAN DIEGO — Navy SEALs who were not called to testify in the war crimes trial of Chief Petty Officer Eddie Gallagher told naval criminal investigators about behavior they witnessed, including the alleged stabbing of an Islamic State fighter that led to murder charges against Gallagher.

The two SEALs were granted immunity to testify in the trial this past summer, but were never called to the stand.

Their interviews with criminal investigators were made available for streaming Friday on Hulu, on “The Weekly” from The New York Times. It will be broadcast on FX on Sunday.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service conducted the SEAL interviews more than a year before the San Diego court-martial of Gallagher, who was charged and acquitted of war crimes including murder.

One of those SEALs — Petty Officer 2nd Class Ivan Villanueva — told investigators he witnessed the alleged stabbing of a wounded ISIS fighter.

The Navy has never explained why Villanueva was not called to testify at Gallagher’s court-martial and did not respond to inquiries Thursday.

The case created a national firestorm as President Donald Trump intervened again and again on Gallagher’s behalf — and culminated this week with a visit by Gallagher and his wife, Andrea, with Trump and first lady Melania Trump at the president’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Trump and other supporters say “warfighters” don’t need their actions questioned by bureaucrats in the military.

While the accounts of the witnesses aren’t new — The San Diego Union-Tribune published a summary of their stories on the eve of trial — hearing those

accounts from the witnesses themselves is. The episode, titled “The Gallagher Effect,” presents these SEALs’ stories in their own words and voices, framing their actions as courageously going against the traditional brotherhood of the Navy SEALs.

In separate interviews, the SEALs tell NCIS agents that Gallagher behaved like a “psychopath” during their 2017 deployment to Mosul, Iraq, where the platoon took on ISIS. One by one, his men tell NCIS that their platoon served as Gallagher’s “personal sniper escort” and that the chief was “medal chasing.”

They also describe his actions during the deployment as war crimes.

“I saw Eddie take a shot at probably a 12-year-old kid,” one says.

Three SEALs tell investigators they saw Gallagher stab a wounded ISIS fighter in the

neck.

These interviews led to the murder charges against Gallagher in 2019 — charges the SEAL denied. He was found not guilty in July of murdering the wounded fighter and shooting civilians.

In a written statement sent via his attorney, Gallagher said: “My first reaction to seeing the videos was surprise and disgust that they would make up blatant lies about me, but I quickly realized that they were scared that the truth would come out of how cowardly they acted on deployment. Soon after I got to the brig at Miramar, one of these guys came to visit me and apologize for what they did but that they had to stick with the fake stories or be charged with making false statements.”

According to Gallagher’s attorney, Tim Parlatore, the full videos revealed flawed NCIS interrogations that were key to his trial preparation.

## Japan announces plan to send naval troops to Mideast

*Associated Press*

TOKYO — Japan on Friday approved a contentious plan to send its naval troops to the Middle East to ensure the safety of Japanese ships transporting oil to the energy-poor country that heavily depends on imports from the region.

The Cabinet’s decision reflects tensions that have escalated between Iran and the U.S. since President Donald Trump withdrew from Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal.

“Taking into consideration the escalating tension in the Middle East, it is necessary to strengthen our information gathering effort,” Chief Cab-

net Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference. Citing Japan’s heavy dependence on oil imports from the region, Suga added that “it is extremely important to secure the safe navigation of Japan-affiliated ships.”

Despite being a U.S. ally, Japan’s troop dispatch is not part of a U.S.-led coalition protecting Middle East waterways, apparently an attempt to maintain neutrality in a show of consideration to Iran.

Under the plan, Japan will send about 260 Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel with a destroyer and a pair of P-3C reconnaissance aircraft, mainly for intelligence-gathering in

the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait connecting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

Defense Minister Taro Kono issued an order for the troops to start preparing for the operation, which is planned for one year beginning early next year.

Kono is to visit Djibouti on the eastern coast of Africa and Oman this weekend to discuss Japan’s mission. Japanese troops have been based in Djibouti as part of an international anti-piracy effort off the Somali coast, and a P-3C unit currently in that operation will be shifted to the new mission in January, he said.

Japan will stay away from the Strait of Hormuz, where the U.S.-led coalition is operating.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe explained the plan to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani when he visited Tokyo last week.

Japan, which has friendly ties with both Iran and the U.S., also seeks to serve as a mediator between the two and play a greater role in restoring stability in the region, officials said.

In June, a Japanese-operated tanker was attacked in the Gulf of Oman. Washington said Iran was responsible and urged Japan to join the U.S.-led military initiative.

# ISIS works to reassert its dominance

*The Washington Post*

KULAJO, Iraq — In caves tucked into craggy cliffs and tunnels dug deep beneath the desert, the remnants of a vanquished army are converging for what they hope will be the next chapter in their battle for an Islamic State.

Hundreds and perhaps thousands of ISIS fighters have made their way over recent months into a stretch of sparsely populated territory spanning the disputed border between the Kurdistan region and the rest of Iraq, according to U.S. and Kurdish officials.

Off-limits to Kurdish and Iraqi security forces because of historic disputes over who should control it, this area of twisting river valleys dense with vegetation has attracted the biggest known concentration of ISIS fighters since they lost control of the last village of their once-vast caliphate in eastern Syria in March.

In recent weeks, they have been stepping up their attacks, focused on an area of northeastern Iraq in the province of Diyala near the border with Iran, carrying out ambushes by night and firing mortars. Grasses taller than men provide cover for snipers who sneak up on checkpoints and outposts. Government neglect and long-standing grievances foster a measure of sympathy among local residents.

“They have good military plans, they attack when you don’t expect them, and they are posing a real threat to people’s lives,” said Maj. Aram Darwani, the commander of Kurdish peshmerga military forces in the area.

## ISIS territories

Across many parts of the vast territory it once controlled, ISIS is scrambling to reassert its presence in a setting that is no longer as welcoming as it once was. Militant fighters who escaped from the battlefield are assembling in ungoverned

spaces such as the no man’s land between areas controlled by Kurdish and Iraqi forces. Others are laying low as so-called sleeping cells in cities such as Raqqa in Syria, waiting for the phone call ordering them to attack.

Recent visits to ISIS’ former capital of Raqqa and the viciously contested frontier town of Kulajo revealed the challenges the militants face as well as the reemerging threat they pose.

So far, this is less a resurgence than a struggle to survive in the wake of the massive defeat inflicted on the last vestige of their territorial caliphate, according to U.S. military officials.

ISIS remains a long way from possessing the capacity to retake territory, said Brig. Gen. William Seely, who commands U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq. “These are people who are hiding out. They only come out at night to harass and take pot shots,” he said. “You can’t run a revolution or create your own caliphate if that’s all you do.”

The group has struggled to reassert itself in its former city strongholds such as Raqqa and Mosul, Iraq, where ISIS attacks have become rare. Memories of its brutal rule and the horrors of the airstrikes used to dislodge the militants deter any desire to see them return, according to Rasha al-Aqeedi, the editor of *Irfaa Sawtak*, an Iraqi newsletter.

## Slow rise

Since U.S.-led forces began to roll back the caliphate more than four years ago, the number of attacks carried out by ISIS in Iraq and Syria has declined, by between 30% and 40% a year since 2016 in Iraq, according to the U.S.-led coalition.

But the militants have already proved adept at infiltrating ungoverned spaces, such as the gap between Kurdish and Iraqi army lines, said Maj. Johnny Walker, spokesman for the U.S.

special operations forces that conduct most of the anti-ISIS operations. “While Daesh is at a serious disadvantage, finding it while it’s hiding in the complex human and physical terrain is a complex task requiring significant resources,” he said, using the Arab acronym for ISIS.

ISIS also appears to be gaining momentum in Syria’s eastern Deir al-Zour province, where the group made its last stand in March and where tribal and ethnic rivalries help sustain support for the militants. Assassinations have been on the rise in recent weeks, in part because the U.S.-allied Syrian Democratic Forces pulled fighters out of the area to confront Turkish troops to the north, according to an employee of a U.S.-backed nongovernmental organization in the province, who was interviewed during a recent trip to the area and spoke on the condition of anonymity due to safety concerns.

## No man’s land

ISIS fighters have also found refuge in the vast, barely populated desert known as Badia that lies across the Euphrates River from where U.S. troops are deployed. The area is nominally under Syrian government control, and there are indications that the militants there have established a measure of command over cells elsewhere in the country, Syrian Kurdish officials say.

For now, fewer people are being killed in ISIS attacks than in the anti-government protests in Iraq and the battles unleashed by Turkey’s invasion of northeastern Syria in October.

But these new conflicts illustrate the danger posed by the group’s residual presence, analysts and military officials say. ISIS owed its conquest of territory to the collapse of state authority over a big part of Syria and the implosion of the Iraqi army in Iraq. Any further deterioration of security in Iraq or Syria would create a new op-

portunity for ISIS fighters hiding out or laying low.

The militants have not gone away and could yet rise again, cautioned Maj. Gen. Eric Hill, who commands U.S. Special Forces in Iraq and Syria.

They are making every effort to do so.

Kulajo, a tiny, drab town of flat-roofed concrete homes, lies along one of Iraq’s most fraught fault lines in the troubled province of Diyala.

In some spots along the disputed Iraq-Kurdistan border, the no man’s land between the two forces is as wide as 20 miles. It is in that space that ISIS fighters lurk, Darwani, the peshmerga commander, said.

Darwani put the number of ISIS fighters in his area at about 300 but said he believed many more people in the area were sympathetic to them. “These were the Arabs supported by Saddam [Hussein] when he was oppressing Kurds. They will join any group that is against us. Even people who say they are with us are secretly with Daesh,” he said.

As many as 3,000 fighters have gathered along the 150-mile length of the no man’s land running between the Iraqi army and the Kurdish peshmerga, according to Gen. Sirwan Barzani, who commands Kurdish forces farther north, in the Qara Chokh mountains. U.S. military officials say they put the number at closer to 500, strung out in remote terrain and operating in groups of around five.

Barzani said the militants are living off the land, shaking down the local villagers for food and money. A local television station, Rudaw, has filmed ISIS fighters clambering down a cliff face in his sector of the no man’s land, stripping naked and bathing in a river.

“I don’t think the strategy of ISIS now is to do big things. They need more time,” he said. “They are reorganizing themselves, getting weapons and arms. They don’t have the power now to do a big attack.”

# Russia commissions hypersonic weapon

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia's defense minister reported to President Vladimir Putin that a new hypersonic weapon of intercontinental range became operational Friday following years of tests.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu informed Putin that the first missile unit equipped with the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle entered combat duty, the Defense Ministry said.

"I congratulate you on this landmark event for the military and the entire nation," Shoigu said later during a conference call with the top military brass.

The Strategic Missile Forces chief, Gen. Sergei Karakayev, said during the call that the Avangard was put on duty with a unit in the Orenburg region in the southern Urals Mountains.

Putin unveiled the Avangard among other prospective weapons systems in his state-of-the-nation address in March 2018, noting that its ability to make sharp maneuvers on its way to a target will render missile defense useless.

"It heads to target like a meteorite, like a fireball," he said then.

Putin described the Avangard's creation as a technological breakthrough comparable to the 1957 Soviet launch of the

first satellite.

The Russian leader noted that Avangard is designed using new composite materials to withstand temperatures of up to 3,632 Fahrenheit resulting from a flight through the atmosphere at hypersonic speeds.

Putin has charged that Russia had to develop the Avangard and other prospective weapons systems because of the U.S. efforts to develop a missile defense system that he claimed could erode Russia's nuclear deterrent. Moscow has scoffed at the U.S. claims that its missile shield isn't intended to counter Russia's massive missile arsenals.

Earlier this week, Putin emphasized that Russia is the only country armed with hypersonic weapons. He noted that for the first time in history Russia is now leading the world in developing an entire new class of weapons, unlike in the past when it was catching up with the United States.

The military said that the Avangard is capable of flying 27 times faster than the speed of sound.

In December 2018, the Avangard was launched from the Dombrovskiy missile base in the southern Urals and successfully hit a practice target on the Kura shooting range on Kamchatka, 3,700 miles away.

# 2 guardsmen removed over link with white supremacy

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Two men have been kicked out of the Army National Guard after liberal activists uncovered their membership in a religious group with white supremacist ties.

Brandon Trent East told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that the Alabama National Guard sent him a separation notice on Dec. 14.

A spokeswoman for the Georgia National Guard said Dalton Woodward is no longer a member. She declined to comment on the terms of Woodward's separation.

Woodward didn't respond to a request for comment left with his friend East.

Earlier in 2019, the Atlanta Antifacists group published a report saying East and Woodward were leaders of the Norse pagan group Ravensblood Kindred. The group is part of the Asatru Folk Assembly, which researchers say endorses white supremacy. Haralson County Sheriff Eddie Mixon earlier forced East to resign as a jailer.

When the report was published, Woodward was on active duty in Afghanistan.

Woodward's unit returned from deployment in June and an investigation into his connections with white supremacy concluded in October.

The military has struggled in recent years to root out members of white supremacist organizations or sympathizers with

white power causes.

A spokesman for the Alabama National Guard said East has 45 days to contest the findings. East said the Army recommends a general discharge. That's a step down from a traditional honorable discharge, indicating unacceptable conduct not in accord with military standards.

East contends he is not a racist, and is just interested in worshiping the way his ancestors did centuries ago.

"The whole race thing started with me finding Asatru or Odinism or whatever you want to call it and seeing that as a better option than Christianity as a spirituality," he said.

East and Woodward attended a 2017 speech by white nationalist Richard Spencer at Auburn University. Photos show the men carrying signs.

"The existence of our people is not negotiable," East's sign read. Woodward's sign read, "We have a right to exist."

Both echo the so-called "14 words" motto popular among white supremacists who say non-white groups are displacing whites.

"I just went there because at the time I heard he was talking about the recent removal of Confederate monuments. That's something I wanted to hear," East said. "And it turned into a something a little worse obviously."

# American, Iraqi wounded in attack on Kirkuk base

By CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

IRBIL, Iraq — A U.S. contractor and an Iraqi federal police officer were wounded in a rocket attack that struck a munitions storage facility on a coalition base in northern Iraq on Friday evening, a security official said.

Initially, 10 rockets were thought to have hit the K1 base in Kirkuk, but that number was

likely incorrect, said the official, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak on the issue. Several of the blasts came from the stored munitions.

Iraqi federal police located a burning truck with rockets still attached, the security official said, citing internal coalition reports. The official did not immediately say where the truck was found.

Barzan Sadiq, a journalist for the local outlet Kurdistan24, tweeted shortly before 8 p.m. that two mortars had struck the base.

The U.S.-led coalition did not immediately respond to an inquiry on the matter.

U.S. troops have curtailed some operations in Iraq in recent months over concerns of a heightened threat of attack from Iranian proxy groups who operate in the country.

In early November, a coalition base in Iraq's northern Nineveh province was hit with more than 30 rockets fired from a truck about 1 kilometer from a base used by a Shiite militia group, officials at Qayara Airfield West told Stars and Stripes this week.

In that incident, the U.S. found the source of the attack and fired on it with Howitzers, officials said.

# Courts weigh revenge porn vs. free speech

*The Washington Post*

When Bethany Austin learned that her fiance had been unfaithful in late May 2016, she ended the seven-year relationship and called off their upcoming wedding.

He told the couple's friends that Austin was "crazy." To set the record straight, Austin sent their families a four-page letter that contained text messages between her ex and his lover and nude photos of the woman.

Austin was promptly charged with a felony for violating Illinois' revenge porn law, known as "nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images." In return, she argued that the law was an unconstitutional restriction of her freedom of speech.

Legislation criminalizing nonconsensual pornography has gained traction in much of the country. Forty-six states and Washington, D.C., have passed revenge porn laws over

the past decade, and appeals courts across the country are beginning to take up cases involving the constitutionality of "revenge porn" statutes on First Amendment grounds.

The U.S. Supreme Court has yet to hear a case on the issue, but Austin's could be the first.

The Constitution protects freedom of speech, even when it is "offensive or disagreeable." But rules have exceptions; the First Amendment does not protect certain speech, such as threats, obscenity, incitement of violence and public disclosure of private information.

When the government imposes a content-based restriction on a specific statement or image, it must satisfy the strictest, and often insurmountable, level of legal scrutiny. The restriction must serve a "compelling government interest" and must be as minimal as possible.

Many revenge porn laws have survived these legal

challenges.

Appeals courts in Wisconsin and Vermont rejected the First Amendment challenges and ruled that sexually explicit images deserved as much privacy as other forms of sensitive information, such as medical records and financial data.

In 2015, Texas passed a law requiring revenge porn images to have an identifiable victim and the victim to have had a reasonable expectation that the photos would remain private. The legislation was challenged, and the case is pending in the state's highest criminal court.

Two years after Austin's arrest, the Illinois trial court dismissed the charge, but the Illinois Supreme Court, in a 5-to-2 decision handed down in October, reversed its decision and ruled that distributing private sexual images without permission was not constitutionally protected free speech. The state's revenge porn law, it said, was aimed not at prohibit-

ing certain speech, but at protecting privacy.

In strong contrast to the Illinois decision, a Minnesota court of appeals ruled Monday that the state's law against revenge porn was unconstitutional and violated First Amendment rights. The only time the state may punish this behavior, the court said, is when the perpetrator intended to harm his or her victim.

According to Mary Anne Franks, president of the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative who drafted a model that has served as a template in most states, there are many variations of these statutes. Some laws have different words; others have varying penalties. The most significant difference in the statutes is that some states limit revenge porn to situations in which the perpetrator acts with the intent to harm or harass his or her target.

## Election officials' training comes with military twist

*Associated Press*

SPRINGFIELD, Va. — Inside a hotel ballroom near the nation's capital, a U.S. Army officer with battlefield experience told 120 state and local election officials that they may have more in common with military strategists than they might think.

These government officials are on the front lines of a different kind of battlefield — one in which they are helping to defend American democracy by ensuring free and fair elections.

"Everyone in this room is part of a bigger effort, and it's only together are we going to get through this," the officer said.

That officer and other past and present national security leaders had a message to convey to officials from 24 states gathered for a recent training held by a Harvard-affiliated de-

mocracy project: They are the linchpins in efforts to defend U.S. elections from an attack by Russia, China or other threats, and developing a military mindset will help them protect the integrity of the vote.

The need for such training reflects how elections security worries have heightened in the aftermath of the 2016 election, when Russian military agents targeted voting systems across the country as part of a multi-pronged effort to influence the presidential election.

Now local election officials are on the front lines. The federal government will be on high alert, gathering intelligence and scanning systems for suspicious cyber activity as they look to defend the nation's elections. Meanwhile, it will be the state and county officials who will be on the ground charged with identifying and dealing with any hostile acts.

## Intense rain, snow close roads in Southern Calif.

*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — A cold and blustery winter storm unleashed downpours and extensive snowfall on Southern California, triggering a tornado and snarling post-Christmas travel on major routes Thursday.

Snow shut down vital Interstate 5 in Tejon Pass through the mountains north of Los Angeles and stopped traffic on Interstate 15 over Cajon Pass in the inland region to the east. I-15 finally reopened in both directions in the afternoon but then authorities later shut down about 45 miles of the freeway from Baker, Calif., to Primm, Nev., on the way to Las Vegas because of snow and ice.

A truck driver was found unresponsive in a rig stopped along I-5 in Tejon Pass. Kern County firefighters pronounced him dead, according to the California Highway Patrol's online

incident log. It was not immediately known if the death was weather-related.

After being stuck for five hours in Cajon Pass, motorist Johnny Lim wasn't sure he could reach Las Vegas, where he hoped to spend time after Christmas. He worried about driving his car through the pass when it reopens.

"The freeway is full of snow and ice," he said, adding that his car "is not built for conditions like this."

I-5 rises to more than 4,100 feet in Tejon Pass between Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley. Cajon Pass rises to more than 3,700 feet between the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains on I-15, the major connector between Southern California and Las Vegas.

Snow also stopped or slowed traffic on other California roads, including Interstate 8 in eastern San Diego County.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Wheelchair-accessible vans were damaged

**CT** BETHEL — Police in Connecticut are looking for a heartless vandal or vandals who damaged seven wheelchair-accessible vans a nonprofit uses to transport people with disabilities.

The vans had their catalytic converters removed last weekend while they were parked at Ability Beyond's Bethel office, making them undrivable, The News-Times of Danbury reported Tuesday.

The vans are used to transport the nonprofit's clients to and from day and work programs, Ability Beyond's Alisa Picerno said. The damage is estimated at around \$10,000 and repairs will not be completed until the new year, she said.

### Man robs bank then throws cash in the air

**CO** COLORADO SPRINGS — A 65-year-old Colorado man is in jail after witnesses said he robbed a bank in Colorado Springs, walked outside and threw money out of the bag and then said "Merry Christmas."

The man walked to the coffee shop next door, "sat down and waited for the cops," witness Dion Pascale told KKTU.

Bystanders picked up the money and gave it back to the bank teller, Pascale said.

### Neighborhood plagued by 3 sewer main breaks

**FL** FORT LAUDERDALE — A South Florida neighborhood has been plagued with a toxic and smelly odor for almost two weeks due to three back-to-back sewer main breaks.

Sewage flowed for nine days in the Rio Vista neighborhood

of Fort Lauderdale during the first break earlier this month. Two days after a repair, the 54-inch pipe ruptured in another spot a block away.

The South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported the break sent sludge into the Tarpon River, streets and a park. A third break occurred in the same sewer line the next day.

Crews were working around the clock to make repairs needed to funnel the toxic sludge back into the system.

### Teen shot and killed in argument over shoes

**MO** GRANDVIEW — Authorities said a man has been shot and killed in an apparent fight over shoes in suburban Kansas City.

Grandview police said an officer responded Sunday night to a shooting call and found Jaylen Blackmon, 20, of Kansas City, dead on a sidewalk. Witnesses told police the shooting appeared to have stemmed from an altercation over a transaction for shoes.

Blackmon's family described his death as "senseless" in a statement to KSHB-TV. The family said Blackmon and his girlfriend went to meet a teenage boy outside the house to buy some shoes. They said Blackmon realized the shoes might be fakes, but when he tried to get his money back the boy shot and killed him.

### Big Apple's top '18 baby names: Liam, Emma

**NY** NEW YORK — The most popular baby names in New York City last year were Liam and Emma, according to data released by city health officials Monday.

Of the babies born in the city in 2018, there were 779 Liams and 501 Emmas, according to the city's Department of

Health and Mental Hygiene's birth certificate records.

The number of births in the city decreased from 117,013 in 2017 to 114,296 in 2018, according to the city's data.

Liam has been the top name for boys since 2016, and Emma has been the top name for girls since 2017.

### Man accused in theft of school band instruments

**LA** MANDEVILLE — A Louisiana man is accused of stealing two saxophones and a trombone from a high school in a New Orleans suburb.

Waylin Leon, 40, of Mandeville was arrested Monday on charges of burglary, theft, criminal damage to property and criminal trespassing, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office said.

The theft was discovered Dec. 13, when administrators at a Mandeville-area high school found that the glass door to the band room had been shattered and the three instruments had been taken, said Capt. Scott Lee, a police spokesman.

### Diner offers free Christmas dinners

**TN** ASHLAND CITY — A Tennessee diner serves up a free Christmas Day meal to anyone who walks into the restaurant and it delivers to those who otherwise can't make the trek.

O'Brien's Southern Diner owner Candice O'Brien Beasley knows what it's like to go without food or to have nothing in the house on holidays, she said. So she started the tradition as soon as she opened her restaurant.

Local businesses and community members now donate most of the hams, turkeys and side dishes for the meals

— which also feature mashed potatoes, green beans, pies and some of Beasley's homemade caramel cake.

### Semitrailer plows into closed historic inn

**FL** YEEHAW JUNCTION — A semitrailer plowed into a historic inn south of Orlando early Sunday, causing major damage but no apparent injuries.

Photos show that the truck ran through the wall of the Desert Inn and a portion of the building collapsed around it. The inn closed last year and the Florida Highway Patrol said no one was seriously hurt.

Lt. Kim Montes said Mareo Cawley, 50, of Chicago, was hauling orange juice when he didn't realize he had left the road before he smashed into the building.

According to a 2013 article in the Orlando Sentinel, the Desert Inn dates to 1889 when it was a barroom and brothel for cowboys and lumberjacks.

### Satanists, live Nativity share space in town

**DE** GEORGETOWN — Two weekend events recently brought a group of Satanists and hundreds of Christian worshippers together in the middle of a Delaware town.

Hundreds of people attended a live nativity Saturday night in Georgetown, while a group of Satanists held a quiet vigil nearby, The News Journal reported.

The Satanist organizers said their vigil marked the winter solstice and celebrated religious diversity and equal rights during the holiday season.

"Everybody has the right to celebrate whatever they celebrate," Georgetown resident Katie Rohlring said.

From wire reports

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## Miami fires offensive coordinator Enos

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Miami fired offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Dan Enos on Friday, one day after the Hurricanes were shut out by Louisiana Tech in the Independence Bowl and finished with a 6-7 record.

Enos was with Miami for only one season, and to say it didn't go to plan would be an understatement. The Hurricanes finished the year on a three-game losing streak, endured wildly inconsistent quarterback play and ranked 129th — out of 130 teams — in third-down conversion percentage.

Only winless Akron's 26.4% was worse than Miami's 27.2% in that department.

The Hurricanes announced the decision with a one-sentence statement: "The University of Miami football program announced Friday that Dan Enos has been relieved of his duties as offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach."

## Quinn, Dimitroff to remain with Falcons

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Falcons are keeping coach Dan Quinn for another year despite a second straight losing record.

The team also announced Friday that general manager Thomas Dimitroff will remain in his current role.

Owner Arthur Blank made the decision two days before the Falcons (6-9) close the season with a game at Tampa Bay.

The Falcons will go through an organizational restructuring, restoring team president and CEO Rich McKay to a bigger role in the football operations. In addition, former Tampa Bay coach Raheem Morris will take over from Quinn as defensive coordinator.

In other NFL news:

■ Falcons rookie cornerback Jordan Miller was suspended for four games without pay Thursday for violating the NFL's policy on performance-enhancing substances.

Miller, a fifth-round draft pick out of Washington, will miss Sunday's season finale at Tampa Bay and the first three games of 2020.

— Associated Press

# Playoff semifinal QBs Lawrence, Fields are 'future of the NFL'

Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Justin Fields and Trevor Lawrence went to high school about 20 miles from each other in the suburbs northwest of Atlanta.

They have worked out since middle school with the same quarterback trainer, a former Pac-12 QB and full-time firefighter who is more well-respected than well-known in the business.

Lawrence and Fields were the Nos. 1 and 1a recruits in the class of 2018, competed at the same Elite 11 camp and have been linked for most of their young lives despite never playing in the same football game.

The rivalry becomes real Saturday when Fields and No. 2 Ohio State take on Lawrence and No. 3 Clemson in the College Football Playoff semifinal at the Fiesta Bowl. It could be the start of something big.

"This is the future of the NFL playing in this game," said Ohio State defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley, who spent seven years as an NFL assistant. "For the next 10 years you have, God willing they both stay healthy, you have these two guys leading the way."

Fields, who went to Harrison High School in Kennesaw, Ga., and Lawrence, who attended Cartersville High School, are more friendly than close friends.

"It's funny we have to come across the country to finally play each other," Lawrence said Thursday at Fiesta Bowl media day.

The first connection between Fields and Lawrence is Ron Veal, who played quarterback at Arizona in the late 1980s and now lives in the Atlanta area.

Veal started working with young quarterbacks in 2002. He is now part of a group of trainers called the Quarterback Collective and he trains up-and-coming passers of all kinds as a side gig to firefighting.

Veal began working with Fields when he was in sixth grade and Lawrence when he was in seventh. Mostly, their sessions were one-on-one with Veal, but at least once Lawrence came to Fields' high school for a joint session before both went off to college.

"They work like nobody's business," Veal said. "You know, when they came to a session there was really no talking between me and the kid. It was self-correction and correction. They put in the work to get where they are and then the natural ability and a natural talent surfaced. But they just work at it."

"They wanted to be different," Veal added.

Lawrence was the more advanced of the two heading into high school. Veal attributed that to Fields spending a lot of time playing youth baseball.

Lawrence was a four-year starter at Cartersville, a 3A high school. Clemson quarterback coach Brandon Streeter got his first look at Law-

rence after the quarterback's freshman season and could hardly believe what he saw.

"No flaws that I could see," Streeter said. "You knew at that moment that this kid had something special."

While Lawrence was drawing interest from Clemson, Fields' first offers came from North Carolina, Duke and Wake Forest. Fields said going to camps with players like Lawrence motivated him to want more.

"He has an offer. How come I don't have an offer? I think we're the same in talent," Fields said. "I kind of always had a chip on my shoulder."

Fields broke out his junior season at Harrison, a 6A high school in Georgia's second-largest classification.

By the summer heading into their senior seasons, Lawrence and Fields had become the top two quarterback recruits in the country. They were selected for Elite 11, a camp where top prospects train and compete on the field, spend time in the film room and are taught how to become a leader.

Lawrence and Fields weren't just the top two players in their Elite 11 class but two of the most impressive in the 22-year history of the competition.

"When they showed up, they had a factor we hadn't seen very often," said Yogi Roth, an analyst with the Pac-12 Network who has been working with Elite 11 for 12 years. "They were meticulous in their commitment to the craft."

Fields left Elite 11 with the MVP award.

Lawrence committed to Clemson before his junior season and never wavered. Fields committed first to Penn State, then changed his mind and landed at Georgia.

The 6-foot-6, 220-pound Lawrence immediately lived up to his billing, leading Clemson to the national championship as a freshman last year. Meanwhile, the 6-3, 225-pound Fields spent last season backing up Jake Fromm at Georgia.

"Facing that adversity and just going through that I think it just helped me a lot as a person and also as a football player," Fields said.

Fields transferred to Ohio State and this season he, too, has proved worthy of all the hype, throwing 40 touchdown passes and only one interception.

Fields and Lawrence each have at least one more season of college football left, but it's not hard to see where this could lead.

They will head into next season as Heisman Trophy front-runners and then — if they both skip their senior seasons for the NFL — into draft season competing to be the first quarterback and maybe even first player selected.

It is not far-fetched to envision Lawrence and Fields leading NFL teams for more than a decade as two of the league's biggest stars.

"I don't think that's an oversell," Roth said. "I think that's real."

## Quick Lane Bowl

# Pitt rallies late, tops Eastern Michigan

Associated Press

DETROIT — Pittsburgh players took punches, and one was hit with spit, and the Panthers still kept their cool in critical moments to win a bowl game for the first time in five appearances under coach Pat Narduzzi.

Kenny Pickett threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to Taysir Mack with 47 seconds left and the Panthers held on to beat Eastern Michigan 34-30 in the Quick Lane Bowl on Thursday night.

“Our kids held their composure,” Narduzzi said.

After taking its first lead of the game in the final minute, Pittsburgh (8-5) forced Eastern Michigan to turn it over on downs from its 40 to seal its first bowl victory since winning in Detroit six years ago with former coach Paul Chryst.

The Eagles (6-7) came up just short in a closely contested game just as they did in three previous bowls with coach Chris Creighton and the usually disciplined team unraveled at times.

Eastern Michigan quarterback Mike Glass was ejected with 10 seconds left after

throwing punches at two players and inadvertently grazing an official, who was trying to keep players separated. Eagles cornerback Kevin McGill was ejected earlier for unsportsmanlike conduct. Creighton said officials told him McGill spit on an opponent.

“There’s absolutely no excuse for any of that,” Creighton said. “They’re embarrassed by it. They apologized to the team. I’m embarrassed. I apologize to anybody’s who’s watching.”

Glass was 28-for-50 for 311 yards with two touchdowns and an interception. The senior also ran for 83 yards and a score.

He was not made available for comment after the game, but was contrite on Twitter.

“I let God and my family down!” Glass posted on his account.

Pickett completed 27 of 39 passes for 361 yards and three scores, including a school-record, 96-yard TD pass to Maurice Ffrench that tied the game in the second quarter. Ffrench finished with 12 catches for 165 yards.

“They had some explosive plays that were the difference in the game,” Creighton said.

### The takeaway

**Pitt:** Coaching continuity with offensive coordinator Mark Whipple returning for a second season should help the program. The offense showed some signs of life in the bowl game after scoring 20 or fewer points in eight games this season.

**Eastern Michigan:** The program is on solid footing, earning consecutive bowl bids for the first time and three in four years after previously doing it only once as a Division I team. The Eagles will just have to hope they can keep Creighton away from Power Five conference schools.

### Record books

Ffrench had 96 receptions this season, breaking Larry Fitzgerald’s school record of 92 set in 2003.

“That’s with missing a couple games,” Narduzzi said. “He fought back with that broken jaw.”

Glass surpassed Charlie Batch’s single-season records of 3,390 yards of total offense and 23 touchdown passes set in 1997.

### Crowd support

The game drew a lot of green-and-white clad fans and cheering for the Eagles, whose campus is about 30 miles from Ford Field. The attendance was 34,765, the largest crowd to watch a Quick Lane Bowl since it was created in 2014.

“Awesome,” Creighton said. “Six years ago, the vision was to try to make the football program a source of pride for the athletic department, for the university, for Ypsilanti (Michigan) and even the region.”

### Up next

**Pitt:** Hosts Miami of Ohio on Sept. 5. The Panthers will have a chance to be very good on defense if defensive lineman Jaylen Twyman, Patrick Jones and safety Paris Ford all choose to stay in college instead of entering the NFL Draft.

**Eastern Michigan:** Plays at Kentucky on Sept. 5. The Eagles will be breaking in a new quarterback, attempting to replace Glass. Preston Hutchinson and Jairus Grissom gained some experience in 2019 and will likely have a shot to start next season.

## Independence Bowl

# Louisiana Tech blanks Miami for bowl’s first shutout

Associated Press

SHREVEPORT, La. — J’Mar Smith threw a touchdown pass and had a late scoring run to help Louisiana Tech beat Miami 14-0 on Thursday night in the only shutout in the Independence Bowl’s 44-game history.

Louisiana Tech (10-3) reached double-digit victories for the first time since 1984 and ran its postseason winning streak to six — the longest current streak in the country.

“To have the 10-win season

and to beat a Power 5 team in a bowl game, I can’t put into words my feelings and my emotions for what these players have accomplished,” coach Skip Holtz said.

Miami (6-7) completed its second losing season in 12 years. The Hurricanes have lost nine of 10 bowl games.

According to Stats Inc., the Bulldogs became the first Group of 5 program to shut out a Power 5 school in a bowl game since the beginning of the BCS/College Football Playoff era in 1998.

“I can’t fault the efforts of our players. I’m certainly proud of the way we played defensively — they had their backs against the wall all night,” Hurricanes coach Manny Diaz said. “Our inability to sustain drives on offense gave us no chance to win this football game.”

Smith connected with Israel Tucker on a 26-yard touchdown strike on a screen pass in the second quarter, capping a 13-play, 91-yard drive. Smith added an 8-yard scoring run with 1:15 left.

Bulldogs running back Justin Henderson was selected the Most Outstanding Offensive Player after rushing for 95 yards on 22 carries. Smith completed 13 of 28 passes for 163 yards with one interception.

Miami entered the game with the nation’s worst third-down conversion percentage, and going 5-for-14 on Thursday won’t help that much. The Hurricanes finished the year with three straight losses and averaging only 25.7 points per game.

## NBA roundup

# Doncic gets 24 points, Mavs beat Spurs

Associated Press

DALLAS — Luka Doncic returned to the Dallas lineup after missing four games due to injury and scored 24 points, helping the Mavericks beat the San Antonio Spurs 102-98 on Thursday night.

Doncic finished with 10 rebounds and eight assists and barely missed adding to his NBA-leading total of eight triple-doubles. He last played on Dec. 14 against Miami, when he sprained his right ankle.

San Antonio rallied from a 102-85 deficit by scoring the game's final 13 points. After Doncic missed two free throws, the Spurs' Derrick White missed a three-point attempt with six seconds left and Doncic got the rebound.

The Mavericks (20-10) pulled within half a game of idle first-place Houston in the Southwest Division.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 17 points, Kristaps Porzingis and

Dorian Finney-Smith each had 13, and Delon Wright added 12 off the bench. Dwight Powell's 11 points all came in the first half.

DeMar DeRozan led San Antonio with 21 points, 16 in the second half. Rudy Gay scored 18, LaMarcus Aldridge had 17 and White finished with 10.

**Pistons 132, Wizards 102:** Blake Griffin had 14 points and a season-high 11 rebounds and host Detroit routed Washington in a matchup of short-handed teams.

The Pistons were missing Reggie Jackson (back) and Luke Kennard (knee), while Griffin, Bruce Brown and Derrick Rose played through injuries.

John Wall, Davis Bertans, Isaiah Thomas, Thomas Bryant and Rui Hachimura sat out for Washington.

**Grizzlies 110, Thunder 97:** Jonas Valanciunas scored 21 points, Jaren Jackson Jr. added 20 and visiting Memphis held

on to the lead this time against Oklahoma City in the second meeting between the teams in eight days.

Tyus Jones added 15 points on 6-for-7 shooting for Memphis, which blew a 24-point third-quarter lead during its last visit to Oklahoma City on Dec. 18 and lost 126-122.

That started a stretch in which the Grizzlies dropped three out of four games.

**Jazz 121, Trail Blazers 115:** Donovan Mitchell scored 28 of his 35 points in the second half to power host Utah over Portland.

Rudy Gobert, who had 16 points and 15 rebounds, forced Carmelo Anthony into an air ball with 22.4 seconds remaining and blocked Damon Lillard's driving shot with 5.2 seconds left to quell the Trail Blazers' furious fourth-quarter rally.

Lillard scored 34 points, including a pair of 30-foot contested three-pointers in the

final minutes, and CJ McCollum tallied 17 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter for the Blazers (14-18), who have dropped two straight after winning four in a row.

**Timberwolves 105, Kings 104 (2OT):** Andrew Wiggins scored the first basket of the second overtime and then fed Robert Covington for another score, and visiting Minnesota ended its 11-game losing streak by beating Sacramento.

Wiggins finished with 18 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists. Gorgui Dieng had 21 points and 15 rebounds, and Covington scored 19 for the Timberwolves.

Minnesota hadn't won since Nov. 27 before limiting Sacramento to 11 points in the fourth quarter and then outlasting the Kings in two overtimes. The Wolves did it without Karl-Anthony Towns, who missed his fifth straight game with a left knee sprain.

## Randle, Knicks win by holding Nets to 26.9% shooting

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A local rivalry was supposed to go national Thursday, with the Knicks and Nets scheduled to play on TNT before the game was recently replaced.

That turned out to be a wise decision because it was anything but must-see TV.

Julius Randle had 33 points and eight rebounds, and New York forced Brooklyn into the worst shooting performance in the NBA this season in a 94-82 victory.

Brooklyn finished 21-for-78 (26.9%) from the field. Chicago had the previous worst shooting game this season when it hit 29.9% against Toronto exactly two months earlier.

"They just outplayed us. Plain and simple," Nets coach Kenny Atkinson said. "You could sit

there and write and talk about missed shots — we did miss lots of open shots — but give them the credit. They simply were the better team tonight."

Marcus Morris added 22 points and eight rebounds for the Knicks, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Elfrid Payton scored 13 points as New York won for the first time in three meetings with Brooklyn this season.

"We were just sharp. To hold that team to 82 points, 14 points in the paint, is just really, really sharp," Randle said. "We grinded the whole way, played a complete basketball game and we got the win."

The Nets' eight two-point field goals were the fewest in an NBA game since 1950, when the Lakers and Pistons each made four shots from the field in a game with a final score

of 19-18, according to Elias Sports.

Spencer Dinwiddie scored 25 points but was only 5-for-15 for the Nets, who were held to their lowest point total of the season.

The game even lacked the usual energy of a matchup between the city rivals, when there's almost always noise because both teams have plenty of fans in the building. This time, there were simply too many long spells when there was nothing to cheer from the sellout crowd of 17,732.

The Nets hadn't played since Saturday and couldn't shake off their holiday rust. Randle scored 12 points in the first quarter, when his five baskets were as many as the Nets. Brooklyn shot 21% for the period and the Knicks led 24-15.

That wasn't the Nets' only bad quarter. After they had

cut it to 46-41 at halftime, they came out for the third and took more than eight minutes to make a basket. That allowed the Knicks to break it open with an 18-4 burst that extended an eight-point lead to 71-49 on Payton's layup.

Payton said he could sense the frustration in the Nets' body language during that third quarter, when the Knicks outscored them 33-20.

"You could feel it, you could see it," he said. "And credit to us that we made some plays to kind of, like, seal the game."

Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot finally gave the Nets their first basket with a three-pointer with 3:52 to play in the period, and he hit another later in the quarter, finishing with half of Brooklyn's baskets in the period as it went 4-for-12.