

Last living Pearl Harbor vets not at event

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

PEARL HARBOR NATIONAL MEMORIAL, Hawaii — For the first time in 84 years, no survivors of Japan's surprise attack on Oahu were present at the annual remembrance ceremony Sunday, marking a poignant shift for the living memory of Dec. 7, 1941.

In past decades, scores of veterans who endured the deadliest assault on American soil gathered each year to honor the fallen. But the few who remain are now more than 100 years old and no longer able to travel.

Only two — Ken Stevens and Ira Schab — attended last year's ceremony. Schab, 105, had planned to attend this year, but health problems forced him to cancel the trip late last week. Stevens died in March at age 102.

A half-dozen World War II veterans were seated in the ceremony's front row.

Only 12 veterans of the attack are known to be living, according to Kathleen Farley, the California chapter president of Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, who has maintained a tally of survivors for years. The count is not exhaustive because it is based on veterans identified over time by members of the organization.

Roughly 87,000 active-duty service members were stationed on Oahu on the day of the attack, which killed 2,403 Americans, sunk or damaged 19 ships and ravaged more than 300 aircraft.

From four carriers, the Japanese navy had launched a 353-aircraft strike force that decimated the Pacific Fleet's Battleship Row in Pearl Harbor and crippled aircraft fleets at Army and Marine Corps installations on the island.

This year's ceremony carried the theme Building Pathways to

Peace, and speakers focused on generational continuity even as they praised the men and women who waged World War II and have almost all passed away.

"The first stones of that pathway were laid by the veterans, whose stories we carry with us," Tom Leatherman, superintendent of the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, told the audience.

"Yet today, we mark a deeply emotional milestone," he said. "For the first time in the history of this ceremony, no Pearl Harbor survivors were able to join us in person. Their absence is felt profoundly.

"You have carried the torch for so long, and now it is up to us not only to receive it but to ensure that its light never fades," Leatherman said. "We must redouble our efforts to make certain the story of Pearl Harbor is not lost to time."

The commander of Navy Re-

gion Hawaii, Rear Adm. Brad Collins, told the gathering that America's armed forces must return to the lessons of the surprise attack.

"Today, as we remember the attack on Pearl Harbor 84 years ago, we have learned that the pathway to peace must lie in being prepared to defend all that we value," he said.

Suzanne Puanani Vares-Lum, a retired Army major general who now directs the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, aimed her remarks at young people seated in the audience or watching the livestream.

"It is now your turn, young people, to build bridges of understanding, to choose peace over division, to carry forward the spirit of aloha into a new century, because the story of Pearl Harbor is not finished," she said. "It continues with each and every one of you."

Bill seeks to limit reductions of US troops in Europe

By **JOHN VANDIVER**
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Attempts to make big cuts to U.S. troop levels in Europe would require extensive consultations with Congress and NATO allies under an updated policy bill released Sunday, which includes new provisions aimed at preventing the Pentagon from making abrupt force posture changes.

The National Defense Authorization Act for 2026, which could come up for a vote later this week, would prohibit the Defense Department from using funds to make drastic changes to U.S. European Com-

mand before meeting a long list of mandates to justify such a move.

Reducing troop levels in Europe to fewer than 76,000 personnel, transferring any U.S. military facility to a host nation or handing over any big-ticket pieces of military hardware valued at more than \$500,000 are among the moves that wouldn't be allowed under the bill.

The legislation also says the Pentagon can't relinquish U.S. leadership of NATO's top military job, known as Supreme Allied Commander Europe, without first submitting reports to validate such action.

The legislative provisions

come at a time of uncertainty over the future of the U.S. military in Europe, where some allies are anticipating significant changes in troop levels as the Pentagon nears completion of a force posture review that was launched soon after President Donald Trump took office.

While Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth hasn't said major cuts are coming to the European force, he and other Pentagon leaders have emphasized that other NATO members must shoulder more of the security burden in Europe. And the White House's new national security strategy released last week also reinforced that bol-

stering defenses closer to the United States and countering China in the Pacific are the top security concerns.

However, any move to alter the EUCOM mission dramatically likely will face resistance in Congress, which has a history of bipartisan support for military efforts aimed at backing NATO and bolstering defenses to deter Russian aggression on the Continent.

If the Pentagon wants to reduce troop levels, it must detail how that is in the national security interest of the U.S. and how it consulted with all 32 members of the NATO alliance, the NDAA states.

Stryker transfer not tied to Europe plans

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A potential transfer of U.S. Army Stryker vehicles to Poland involves old equipment and isn't tied to military force posture plans in Europe, U.S. Army Europe and Africa said in a statement Monday.

The Army's comments came after reports had emerged about a possible plan that involves the U.S. handing over about 250 Stryker vehicles to the Polish army.

Polish Radio reported last

week that the U.S. had indicated that it wanted to send the Strykers to Poland rather than shipping the vehicles back to the United States as part of a service-wide draw-down on the Continent.

The situation also raised questions about whether the Army has any plans to move soldiers from the Vilseck, Germany-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment, which uses Strykers, back to the United States.

Such a plan existed during President Donald Trump's first term as part of a broader proposal for the reduction of the military's

mission in Germany.

Those plans never came to fruition during Trump's first term or during the Biden presidency, but an ongoing force posture review by the Pentagon has raised questions again about the potential future of the Army in Europe during his second term and beyond.

But Col. Mike Weisman, USA-REUR-AF spokesman, said in a statement on Monday that the "referenced activity concerns legacy equipment involved in a Foreign Military Sales process and is not related to U.S. force posture in Europe."

The Army did not elaborate any further on the nature of the proposed Stryker deal.

Polish media initially reported that the Stryker transfer being considered was to include a symbolic \$1 fee.

Deputy Prime Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz told Polish Radio that the technical condition of the vehicles was now being assessed to determine their potential usefulness to the Polish army.

Strykers are eight-wheeled armored vehicles that are known for their versatility and range.

Photos returning for certain Marine Corps review boards

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

Marines will once again need to keep their uniforms photo-ready, per new guidance that was officially released last week reinstating the use of official photos during certain selection board processes.

Marines may now be evaluated on appearance for boards "pertaining to assignment, training, education, and command," the service announced Thursday.

However, the memo reaffirms that photographs remain prohibited for use in promotion selection boards.

This update rolls back a 2020 policy, issued by then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, that directed all military branches to stop using official photos in promotion and selection processes.

The policy was put in place in an effort to reduce the potential of any appearance-based bias and to help ensure more "equal opportunity for all who serve." At the time, the policy was issued in order to minimize appearance-based discrimination and give "equal opportunity for all who

serve," according to Esper's memo.

Headquarters Marine Corps will have access to Marines' official military personnel file photographs during non-promotion selection boards for both active-duty and reserve components starting April 1. Photos being used during the consideration process must be taken by authorized Marine Corps or Defense Department photography offices within 365 days of the board convening to be considered current.

The Marine Corps' new guidance references a pair of 2025 decisions that were made by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that rescinded the 2020 photo ban, allowing service photos to return for most selection boards while keeping them out of those for promotion. The service noted that restoring limited use of photographs allows board members to assess "the visible expression of discipline."

An initial list of applicable boards that will use photographs was posted Dec. 4 on an official service website, but may be updated as needed, the memo said.

Tokyo calls Chinese jet radar lock 'dangerous'

By ALEX WILSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

Tokyo and Beijing continued to trade barbs Monday over a claim that China locked military radar on Japanese fighter jets over the weekend, an incident two defense experts say is unlikely to spur serious consequences.

Japan on Sunday alleged that a Chinese J-15 launched from the aircraft carrier Liaoning "intermittently illuminated" two Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15s, which scrambled in response to potential airspace violations near Okinawa. A radar lock on a potential target can be the precursor to a missile attack.

"This radar illumination is a dangerous act that goes beyond the range of necessity for safe aircraft flight," Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Monday in Tokyo.

The incident was "extremely regrettable," and Japan has lodged a protest urging China not to repeat it, Kihara said, according to video posted on the Prime Minister's Office website.

Beijing, however, faulted the

Japanese fighters for frequent, close-range reconnaissance of China's "normal military activities," according to a statement Sunday from China's Foreign Ministry.

"China does not accept the so-called protest from the Japanese side and has rejected it on the spot and lodged counter-protests in Beijing and in Tokyo," the statement said.

Last month Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said that Chinese aggression against Taiwan could prompt a Japanese military response.

While the radar incident heightened tensions between the two, it isn't as dramatic as either side makes it out to be, according to Paul Midford, a professor of international studies at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo.

"I do not anticipate significant consequences from this incident," he said Monday. "This radar lock might have been intentional political signaling, it might have been accidental or the result of an inflexible application of the Chinese carrier's standard operating procedures."

Paramount makes bid for Warner Bros.

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Paramount has gone hostile in its bid for Warner Bros. Discovery, challenging Netflix which reached a \$72 billion takeover deal with the company just days ago.

Paramount said Monday that it is going straight to Warner Bros. shareholders with a bid worth about \$74.4 billion, or \$30 per share in cash. Paramount, unlike Netflix, is also offering to buy the cable assets of Warner Bros. and asking shareholders of the company to reject the Netflix bid.

It said its offer is worth about \$18 billion more than the competing bid from Netflix, which it says is based on an “illusory prospective valuation” of those cable assets.

It is the same bid that Warner Brothers rejected in favor of the offer from Netflix in a merger that would alter the U.S. entertainment landscape.

Paramount criticized the Netflix offer, saying it “exposes WBD shareholders to a protracted multi-jurisdictional regulatory clearance process with an uncertain outcome along with a complex and volatile mix of equity and cash.”

Paramount said it had submitted six proposals to Warner Bros. Discovery over a 12-week period.

“We believe our offer will create a stronger Hollywood. It is in the best interests of the creative community, consumers and the movie theater industry,” Paramount Chairman and CEO Da-

vid Ellison said in a statement. “We believe they will benefit from the enhanced competition, higher content spend and theatrical release output and a greater number of movies in theaters as a result of our proposed transaction,”

On Friday Netflix struck a deal to buy Warner Bros. Discovery, the Hollywood giant behind “Harry Potter” and HBO Max. The cash and stock deal is valued at \$27.75 per Warner share, giving it a total enterprise value of \$82.7 billion, including debt. The transaction is expected to close in the next 12 to 18 months, after Warner completes its previously announced separation of its cable operations. Not included in the deal are networks such as CNN and

Discovery.

But President Donald Trump said Sunday that the deal struck by Netflix to buy Warner Bros. Discovery “could be a problem” because of the size of the combined market share.

In October, Paramount said it had bought the news and commentary website The Free Press and installed its founder, Bari Weiss, as the editor-in-chief of CBS News, saying it believes the country longs for news that is balanced.

Paramount’s tender offer is set to expire on Jan. 8, 2026, unless it’s extended.

Shares of Warner Bros. and Paramount jumped between 5% and 6% at the opening bell Monday. Shares of Netflix edged lower.

Trump hosts Kennedy Center Honors show

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Sunday hosted the Kennedy Center Honors and praised Sylvester Stallone, Kiss, Gloria Gaynor, Michael Crawford and George Strait, the slate of honorees he helped choose, as being “legendary in so many ways.”

“Billions and billions of people have watched them over the years,” Trump, the first president to command the stage, said to open the show.

The Republican president said the artists, recognized with tribute performances during the show, are “among the greatest artists and actors, performers, musicians, singers, songwriters ever to walk the face of the Earth.”

Since returning to office in January, Trump has made the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, which is named after a Democratic predecessor, a touchstone in a broader attack against what he has lambasted as

“woke” anti-American culture.

Trump said Saturday that he was hosting “at the request of a certain television network.” He predicted the broadcast scheduled for Dec. 23 on CBS and Paramount+, would have its best ratings ever.

Before Trump, presidents watched the show alongside the honorees. Trump skipped the honors altogether during his first term.

Asked how he got ready for the gig, Trump said as he moved along the red carpet with his wife, first lady Melania Trump, that he “didn’t really prepare very much.”

Trump appeared on stage three times, to open and close the show and after intermission. He also talked up each artist in prerecorded videos that played before their tributes.

Since 1978, the honors have recognized stars for their influence on American culture and the arts.

Judge deals setback to effort to seek new Comey indictment

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge has dealt a setback to Justice Department efforts to seek a new indictment against former FBI Director James Comey, temporarily barring prosecutors from using evidence they had relied on when they initially secured criminal charges.

The ruling Saturday night from U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly does not preclude the department from trying again soon to indict Comey.

However it does suggest prosecutors may have to do so without citing communications between Comey and a close friend, Columbia University law professor Daniel Richman.

Comey was charged in September with lying to Congress when he denied having authorized an associate to serve as an anonymous source for media coverage about the FBI.

In pursuing the case, prosecutors cited messages between

Comey and Richman that they said showed Comey approving of Richman interacting with journalists for certain FBI-related coverage.

The case was dismissed last month after a different federal judge ruled that the prosecutor who filed the charges, Lindsey Halligan, was unlawfully appointed by the Trump administration.

But that ruling left open the possibility that the government could try again to seek charges. Comey has pleaded not guilty, denied having made a false statement and accused the Justice Department of a vindictive prosecution.

After the case was thrown out, lawyers for Richman sought a court order to bar prosecutors from continued access to his computer files, which the Justice Department obtained through search warrants in 2019 and 2020 as part of an investigation into media leaks that was later closed without any charges.

Greenland hosting annual talks with US

Associated Press

NUUK, Greenland — Greenland is hosting annual meetings with U.S. officials to discuss bilateral ties at the end of a year in which President Donald Trump ramped up talk of a U.S. takeover of the mineral-rich island that is a semiautonomous territory of Denmark.

The meetings starting Monday will include a bilateral “joint committee” meeting between Greenland and U.S. officials to discuss cooperation “in a number of important areas,”

according to Greenland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Science.

A separate “permanent committee” meeting will involve the Danish government. Similar meetings were held last year in the United States.

Vivian Motzfeldt, who heads the ministry, said Greenland was “pleased” to host the meetings.

“Through these successful meetings, we ensure that the interests of the Greenlanders and the Americans are respected

for the benefit of all parties,” she said, adding the aim was to “develop cooperation in areas of common interest.”

Trump stirred concerns earlier this year in Greenland, Denmark and the European Union, which counts Denmark among its 27 member countries, by reviving talk of a U.S. takeover of Greenland after returning to office for his second term.

The issue had drifted off headlines but then Danish officials summoned the U.S. ambassador in Copenhagen in Au-

gust following a report that at least three people with connections to Trump carried out covert influence operations in Greenland.

Earlier this year, Vice President JD Vance visited a remote U.S. military base on the island and accused Denmark of underinvesting there.

Trump has said Greenland is crucial for U.S. security and hasn’t ruled out taking the island by military force, even though Denmark is a NATO ally of the U.S.

Zelenskyy, European allies meet on US peace plan

Associated Press

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met French, German and British leaders in London on Monday amid what Kyiv’s European allies described as a “decisive time” in the U.S.-led effort to end Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer held talks with Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz at the British leader’s 10 Downing St. residence to try to strengthen Ukraine’s hand amid mounting impatience from President Donald Trump.

“This is the furthest we’ve got in four years, and we welcome the fact that these talks are con-

tinuing at every level,” said Starmer’s spokesman, Tom Wells, adding: “It isn’t a straight line between conflict and peace.”

He said “intensive work” will continue in the coming days, although “there are still outstanding issues.”

Macron’s office said the session allowed the leaders “to continue joint work on the U.S. plan in order to complement it with European contributions, in close coordination with Ukraine.”

Answering reporters’ questions in a call later Monday via WhatsApp, Zelenskyy said the current U.S. peace plan differs from earlier versions in that it now has 20 points, down from

28, after what he called some “obvious anti-Ukrainian points were removed.”

On security guarantees, Zelenskyy said the main questions to be resolved are: “What if after the end of the war, Russia will start another aggression? What will the partners be ready for? What could Ukraine count on?”

The answers to these questions “must be in the core of the security guarantees for Ukraine,” he said.

In an exchange with reporters on Sunday night, Trump appeared frustrated with Zelenskyy, claiming the Ukrainian leader “hasn’t yet read the proposal.”

Zelenskyy said Monday that Trump “certainly wants to end

the war. ... Surely, he has his own vision. We live here, from within we see details and nuances, we perceive everything much deeper, because this is our motherland.”

Starmer, Macron and Merz took a more supportive stance toward Kyiv in comments before their Monday meeting, which lasted about two hours. The U.K. leader said the push for peace was at a “critical stage,” and stressed the need for “a just and lasting ceasefire.”

Merz, meanwhile, said he was “skeptical” about some details in documents released by the U.S. “We have to talk about it. That’s why we are here,” he said. “The coming days ... could be a decisive time for all of us.”

Quake triggers a tsunami on Japan’s northern coast

Associated Press

TOKYO — A powerful 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck late Monday off northern Japan, triggering a tsunami of up to 27 inches in Pacific coast communities and warnings of potentially higher surges, the Japanese Meteorological Agency said.

Several people were injured, media reports said.

The quake struck at about 11:15 p.m. (1415 GMT) in the Pacific Ocean about 50 miles off the coast of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan’s main Honshu island, the agency said.

A tsunami of 27.5 inches was measured in Kuji port in Iwate prefecture, just south of Aomori, and tsunami levels of up to 20 inches struck

other coastal communities in the region, the agency said.

The agency issued an alert for potential tsunami surges of up to 10 feet in some areas, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara urged residents to immediately head to higher ground or take shelter inside buildings or evacuation centers until the alert is lifted.

Several people were injured at a hotel in the Aomori town of Hachinohe and a man in the town of Tohoku was slightly hurt when his car fell into a hole, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Kihara said nuclear power plants in the region were conducting safety checks and that so far no problems were detected.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Wild cats found on loose in upscale neighborhood

MD BALTIMORE — Two large cats were spotted traipsing through a ritzy residential community in North Baltimore on Friday morning.

Animal Control was alerted to the situation around 8:15 a.m. when someone called describing a large and possibly wild cat on the loose, said Victoria Minka, a Baltimore City Health Department spokesperson. Officers responded and discovered the animal, which they believe was a serval type cat, she said.

After capturing the first cat in an alley using food and a catch pole, animal control officers were informed a second cat was loose. Officers weren't able to locate that cat, Minka said. The department got in contact with the owner who said he recaptured it and that the cat is now back in his home.

Animal Control is investigating, Minka said, as private ownership of wild or hybrid cats is prohibited in the city.

Marker memorializing 1918 lynching on display

GA ATLANTA — A historical marker from the site of a 1918 lynching that was repeatedly vandalized in recent years is now safely on display in Atlanta in an exhibit that opens Monday.

It memorializes an event that some people in rural southern Georgia have tried hard to erase: the killing of Mary Turner by a white mob that was bent on silencing her after she demanded justice for the lynching of her husband, Hayes Turner, and at least 10 other Black

people.

Now each word damaged by bullets is projected on a wall, and visitors hear those words spoken by some of Turner's six generations of descendants.

"I'm glad the memorial was shot up," great-granddaughter Katrina Thomas said after her first look at the exhibit in the National Museum for Civil and Human Rights. "Millions of people are going to learn her story. That her voice is continuing years and years after, it shows history does not disappear. It lives and continues to grow."

Sheriff hunting for last of 3 inmates who escaped

LA OPELOUSAS — Authorities are hunting for the last of three inmates who escaped from a Louisiana jail after removing concrete blocks from a deteriorating wall.

"We would prefer that he surrender himself peaceably," St. Landry Parish Sheriff Bobby J. Guidroz said in a statement, "but we will not rest until he is captured."

Detectives and SWAT officers are following leads in pursuit of Keith Eli, 24, who remains at large after he and two other inmates escaped the parish jail in southwestern Louisiana last week, said Maj. Mark LeBlanc, a spokesman for the sheriff. Eli had been jailed on a charge of second-degree murder.

One of the escapees, Johnathan Jevon Joseph, 24, was captured Friday following a brief chase. The third escapee, Joseph Allen Harrington, 26, killed himself with a hunting rifle Thursday after police found him at a home and used a loudspeaker to urge him to come out,

said Port Barre Police Chief Deon Boudreaux.

Officials warn of wild mushrooms poisoning

CA SACRAMENTO — California officials are warning foragers after an outbreak of poisoning linked to wild mushrooms that has killed one adult and caused severe liver damage in several patients, including children.

The state poison control system has identified 21 cases of amatoxin poisoning, likely caused by death cap mushrooms, the health department said Friday. The toxic wild mushrooms are often mistaken for edible ones because of their appearance and taste.

"Death cap mushrooms contain potentially deadly toxins that can lead to liver failure," Erica Pan, director of the California Department of Public Health, said in a statement.

One adult has died and several patients have required intensive care, including one who might need a liver transplant.

Magnitude-7.0 quake hits in remote wilderness

AK JUNEAU — A powerful, magnitude-7.0 earthquake struck in a remote area near the border between Alaska and the Canadian territory of Yukon on Saturday. There was no tsunami warning, and officials said there were no immediate reports of damage or injury.

The U.S. Geological Survey said it struck about 230 miles northwest of Juneau, Alaska, and 155 miles west of Whitehorse, Yukon.

Alison Bird, a seismologist with Natural Resources Canada,

said the part of Yukon most affected by the temblor is mountainous and has few people.

"Mostly people have reported things falling off shelves and walls," Bird said. "It doesn't seem like we've seen anything in terms of structural damage."

\$30M deal eyed after Black teen killed by cop

CA SAN DIEGO — The San Diego city attorney's office has agreed to pay \$30 million to the family of a 16-year-old youth who was fatally shot by police last January in what would be one of the largest settlements of a police-involved killing case in U.S. history.

A resolution authorizing the proposed settlement with the family of Konoa Wilson has been added to the city council's agenda.

"What happened to Konoa was a catastrophic failure of policing," family attorney Nick Rowley said in a statement. "A 16-year-old boy was running for his life. He was not a threat and not a suspect, yet he was shot in the back by a police officer who only saw him for one second before deciding to pull the trigger."

Surveillance and body-worn camera footage from Jan. 28 showed Wilson running away from someone who pulled a gun and fired at him in a downtown train station. As he exited the station, Wilson encountered San Diego Police Officer Daniel Gold. In a lawsuit against the city and Gold, the family alleged the officer "instantly, without any warning," fired two shots at Wilson as he ran by, striking him in the upper body.

— From wire reports

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Hoosiers grab top seed in CFP

Associated Press

Nobody paying attention over the past 24 months would be surprised to see Indiana leading the way into this year's College Football Playoff.

But anyone paying attention over the last 24 hours knew the only sure thing beyond the Hoosiers was the playoff selection committee was destined to get picked apart when it released the pairings for this season's 12-team bracket on Sunday.

Most of that second-guessing came from Notre Dame, which was passed over in favor of Alabama and Miami for two of the bracket's bubble spots.

The Fighting Irish dropped two notches in the CFP rankings over the last two weeks, to No. 11 winning their finale by 29 points and sitting out Saturday.

The Crimson Tide didn't move an inch the CFP rankings despite a 28-7 loss to No. 3 Georgia that looked worse.

No. 10 Miami didn't play, either, but the Hurricanes' 27-24 win over Notre Dame in Week 1 played a role once the teams

were grouped right next to each other after BYU lost its game on Saturday and dropped one spot.

The committee's other key decision was choosing James Madison over Duke for the final spot. The selection left the Atlantic Coast Conference champion out of the mix, but didn't fully exclude the ACC because Miami made it.

The rest of the field includes No. 2 seed Ohio State, No. 3 Georgia and No. 4 Texas Tech, all of which joined Indiana in getting first-round byes.

The Hoosiers moved up to No. 1 with their 13-10 win over the Buckeyes on Saturday — their first Big Ten title since 1967 — and the teams' 1-2 positioning sets up a possible rematch in the national title game Jan. 19.

The playoffs start Dec. 19 with No. 9 Alabama at No. 8 Oklahoma. On Dec. 20, it's No. 10 Miami at No. 7 Texas A&M, No. 11 Tulane at No. 6 Ole Miss and No. 12 James Madison at No. 5 Oregon.

The winners move to the quarterfinals, which will fea-

ture Ohio State in the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Eve, then Texas Tech in the Orange Bowl, Indiana in the Rose Bowl and Georgia in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1.

No luck for Irish

It was a particularly costly and painful snub for the Fighting Irish.

They lost their first two games of the season by a combined four points. They did not play a tough schedule the rest of the way; it was ranked 44th, compared to sixth for Alabama but 45th for Miami. But the Irish won all those games easily.

Yurachek said the committee had not previously considered Miami's Aug. 31 win over Notre Dame because there were always other teams in the mix, namely Alabama and BYU. But when BYU lost, the Irish and Hurricanes ended up right next to each other, which made that Miami win more important.

3-loss Alabama back in

Alabama (10-3) is in despite

three losses. Those who believe the Tide deserve it will look at these factors:

■ An eight-game winning streak after a shocking 14-point, season-opening loss to Florida State that included a 24-21 victory at Georgia for a season split while, for instance, BYU lost both its games against Texas Tech.

■ Ignoring the above, there was the "you can't lose ground for playing in the title game" argument. Last year, Alabama had three losses and was passed over for SMU, which was coming off a loss in the ACC title game.

Duke's bid falls short

Duke tried to make a compelling argument that its seven wins over Power Four teams, including the victory over Virginia in the ACC title game, made it more deserving than James Madison for that fifth and final automatic spot for conference champs.

But the Blue Devils had five losses.

Peterson recovers to lead No. 21 Kansas past Mizzou

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Kansas has proven over the past month that it can hang with the nation's best without Darryn Peterson on the floor.

The Jayhawks showed Sunday they are capable of beating anybody when he's out there.

The potential No. 1 pick in the NBA draft, Peterson returned from a lingering hamstring injury to score 17 points in 23 minutes against Missouri, leading the No. 21 Jayhawks to an 80-60 rout of their biggest rival in the latest edition of the Border War.

The high-scoring guard did it while battling flu-like symptoms that had developed over the previous couple of days. He played

17 minutes in the first half but just six in the second, when the Jayhawks had already built a sizeable lead.

Tre White led the Jayhawks (7-3) with 20 points and 13 rebounds. Flory Bidunga added 10 points and 11 boards.

Mark Mitchell had 21 points for the Tigers (8-2), who were still missing guard Jayden Stone to a hand injury.

Missouri has lost six of its last seven games in the Border War to the Jayhawks.

The latest showdown between ex-Big 12 rivals began before a sleepy crowd inside T-Mobile Center, where Jayhawks fans provided a big advantage in what was designated as a Kansas home

game.

No. 11 Gonzaga 109, North Florida 58: Braden Huff scored 24 points and host Gonzaga gave coach Mark Few his 750th career victory, routing North Florida.

Few is the second-fastest to 750, reaching the mark in 904 games.

No. 12 Alabama 97, UTSA 55: Jalil Bethea scored 21 points to lead host Alabama past UTSA. Labaron Philon Jr. had 20 points, seven rebounds and six assists, and London Jemison also scored 20 for the Crimson Tide (7-2).

Jamir Simpson led the Roadrunners (4-5) with 20 points, and Dorian Hayes chipped in 12 points.

No. 16 North Carolina 81,

Georgetown 61: Caleb Wilson and Henry Veasar both collected double-doubles as host North Carolina pulled away from visiting Georgetown in the second half to win.

Wilson tallied 20 points and 14 rebounds for the Tar Heels (8-1).

No. 19 Texas Tech 82, LSU 58: Christian Anderson had 27 points, eight assists and five rebounds and host Texas Tech handed LSU its first loss, blowing out the Tigers.

J.T. Toppin added 11 points and 15 rebounds while LeJuan Watts had 15 points and 10 boards for the Red Raiders (7-2) in front of a decidedly pro-Texas Tech crowd on a neutral court at Dickies Arena.

Bills rally past Bengals in snowy thriller

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Josh Allen threw for three touchdowns and ran for one, Christian Benford scored the go-ahead TD on a 63-yard interception return, and the Buffalo Bills rallied from a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit to beat the Cincinnati Bengals 39-34 on Sunday.

Allen scored on a 40-yard rush, breaking his record of 36 for the longest by a Bills quarterback, and Buffalo flipped the game with big defensive plays on a snowy afternoon in western New York. Benford and defensive end A.J. Epenesa intercepted Joe Burrow on consecutive plays from scrimmage, leading to the Bills scoring three touchdowns in a span of 4:20 in the fourth quarter.

Benford's interception — the cornerback leaped to snag Burrow's lob intended for Ja'Marr Chase — gave Buffalo its first lead with 5:25 remaining.

The Bills then went up 39-28 after Epenesa's interception, which he caught after Burrow's pass was tipped by defensive tackle Jordan Phillips. On fourth-and-goal from the 3, Allen found tight end Jackson Hawes for a touchdown.

The Bills (9-4) have won two straight for the first time in a month, and they kept pace in a tightly packed AFC race.

Steelers 27, Ravens 22: Aaron Rodgers threw for 284 yards and a touchdown and even ran for TD in perhaps his best game with the Steelers, and visiting Pittsburgh took sole possession of first place in the AFC North, holding on for a win over the Ravens when a Baltimore touchdown with 2:43 remaining was overturned by a replay review.

Isaiah Likely secured a pass from Lamar Jackson with two hands in the end zone, and both his feet came down, but as he was about to complete another step with his right foot, Joey Porter Jr. of the Steelers knocked

the ball free. It was initially called a touchdown but then changed to incomplete. The Ravens eventually turned the ball over on downs.

Rams 45, Cardinals 17: Matthew Stafford threw for 281 yards and three touchdowns, Puka Nacua and Blake Corum both scored twice and visiting Los Angeles rolled past Arizona to stay tied for the NFC West lead.

The Rams (10-3) scored 35 unanswered points to bounce back from last week's turnover-filled loss to the Panthers and win for the seventh time in eight games. They are tied with the Seahawks atop the division, one game ahead of the 49ers.

Los Angeles fell into an early 7-0 hole but rallied for a 24-10 lead by halftime, scoring just before the break on a beautiful 28-yard throw over the middle from Stafford to Nacua, who had six catches for 136 yards in the first half. The Rams also scored touchdowns on a pair of 2-yard runs — one each by Kyren Williams and Corum.

Packers 28, Bears 21: Keisean Nixon intercepted Caleb Williams' pass in the end zone with 22 seconds remaining to preserve host Green Bay's victory over Chicago that moved the Packers into first place in the NFC North.

The Bears were facing fourth-and-1 from Green Bay's 14-yard line when Williams faked a handoff and rolled to his left. Tight end Cole Kmet had gotten behind Nixon in the end zone, but Nixon made a leaping catch of the underthrown pass.

Josh Jacobs scored the tie-breaking touchdown on a 2-yard run with 3:32 remaining as the Packers (9-3-1) won their fourth straight and snapped a five-game winning streak by the Bears (9-4).

Saints 24, Buccaneers 20: Rookie quarterback Tyler Shough ran for two touchdowns and visiting New Orleans upset

Tampa Bay to tighten the NFC South race.

The four-time defending division champion Bucs lost for the fourth time in five games and fell into a first-place tie with Carolina. The Bucs and Panthers face off twice in the final three games.

Titans 31, Browns 29: Tony Pollard rushed for a career-high 161 yards and two touchdowns, Cam Ward passed for two scores and visiting Tennessee held off Cleveland to snap a seven-game skid.

Cleveland's Shedeur Sanders passed for 364 yards and three touchdowns in his third start, and he also ran for a score in a matchup of rookie quarterbacks. However, Sanders threw a costly interception in the third quarter that led to Tennessee's go-ahead TD.

Seahawks 37, Falcons 9: Rashid Shaheed returned the second-half kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown, Seattle's defense came up with three turnovers and the visiting Seahawks won for the seventh time in eight games, beating hapless Atlanta.

Sam Darnold threw for 249 yards and three touchdowns, including a pair of scores to Jaxon Smith-Njigba and one to Cooper Kupp. The Seahawks (10-3) broke away from a 6-6 tie at halftime with a 31-point beatdown of the Falcons over the final two quarters.

Broncos 24, Raiders 17: Bo Nix passed for 212 yards and rushed for a touchdown, and visiting Denver didn't fall behind for the first time this season and defeated Las Vegas.

The Broncos (11-2) appear to be on the verge of ending Kansas City's nine-year reign in the AFC West, and they tied idle New England for the top seed in the conference. Denver owns the tiebreaker because of its 6-0 record against common opponents; the Patriots lost to the Raiders.

Jaguars 36, Colts 19: Trevor

Lawrence threw two touchdown passes, Travis Etienne ran for two scores and host Jacksonville moved atop the AFC South with a victory against rival Indianapolis.

Colts quarterback Daniel Jones injured his right Achilles tendon in the second quarter and could be out for the season. The injury often includes a nine-month rehab, meaning Jones could be one-and-done in Indy and the Colts could be looking for a starting quarterback in March.

Dolphins 34, Jets 10: Tua Tagovailoa remained unbeaten against the New York Jets and put his cold weather woes on ice, and visiting Miami had three rushing touchdowns to run away with a victory.

De'Von Achane ran for 92 yards and a touchdown before leaving in the second quarter with a rib injury. Jaylen Wright filled in and had a career-high 107 yards and a score.

Vikings 31, Commanders 0: J.J. McCarthy threw a career-high three touchdown passes in his first turnover-free game, returning from his latest injury absence in prime form for host Minnesota in a victory that sent Washington to its eighth straight loss.

Jayden Daniels was forced out midway through the third quarter when he was blocked during an interception return and landed hard on the left elbow he dislocated last month to require a three-game absence.

Texans 20, Chiefs 10: C.J. Stroud threw for 203 yards and a touchdown, the Texans leaned on the NFL's top-ranked defense to shut down Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs, and Houston came away from Arrowhead Stadium with a victory.

Nico Collins contributed four catches for 121 yards, and Dare Ogunbowale added a go-ahead touchdown run in the fourth quarter as the Texans (8-5) won their fifth straight overall.

Nuggets beat Hornets for 3rd straight win

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Jamal Murray scored 34 points, Nikola Jokic finished with 28 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds and the Denver Nuggets held on to defeat the Charlotte Hornets 115-106 on Sunday night to extend their franchise record to road winning streak to 10 games.

Tim Hardaway Jr. had 14 points off the bench for the Nuggets (17-6), who are off to their best start in franchise history.

Miles Bridges finished with 24 points while Brandon Miller added 16 for the Hornets, who played without six players due to injuries including their top two point guards, LaMelo Ball and Collin Sexton. Rookie Liam McNeeley added a boost off the bench with a career-high 13 points for the Hornets, making 4 of 5 shots from 3-point range.

Murray, who had 52 points on 10 3-pointers last week's 135-120 win over Indiana, erupted for 23 points in the first quarter Sunday but the Nuggets still trailed 58-57 at halftime.

That all changed in the second half Jokic began to take over, using his versatility to score and create for the his teammates.

The Nuggets built a 13-point lead in the fourth quarter, but the Hornets (7-17) clawed back to within seven after Miller knocked down a 3 from the wing plus the and-1 free throw to cut the lead to seven. But the Hornets weren't able to build on that momentum.

Thunder 131, Jazz 101: Chet Holmgren and Jalen Williams each scored 25 points and the defending champion visiting Oklahoma City improved to 23-1 with their 15th straight victory, routing Utah.

Holmgren added nine rebounds, and Williams had eight assists. Aaron Wiggins scored 19 points, while Brandon Carlson had a season-high 13 points.

Knicks 106, Magic 100: Jalen Brunson had 30 points and nine assists, Josh Hart added 17 points and 12 rebounds, and host New York beat Orlando.

OG Anunoby had 21 points and seven rebounds, and Mikal Bridges finished with 12 points, seven rebounds and six assists. The Knicks (16-7) improved to 13-1 at home, and defeated the Magic for the first time in three meetings, despite playing without center Karl-Anthony Towns (left calf tightness).

Celtics 121, Raptors 113: Jaylen Brown scored 30 points, Derrick White scored 14 of his 27 in the first quarter and visiting Boston beat Toronto, holding on late after blowing a 23-

point lead in the second half.

Payton Pritchard scored 15 points and Anfernee Simons had 12 as the Celtics won their fifth straight and seventh of eight.

Grizzlies 119, Trail Blazers 96: Santi Aldama scored 22 points, Jaylen Wells and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 17 each and Memphis built a big first-half lead in a home victory over Portland.

Jock Landale finished with 15 points to help Memphis win for the seventh time in nine games.

Warriors 123, Bulls 91: Brandin Podziemski scored 21 points off the bench, Jimmy Butler added 19 in his return to the lineup and the injury-depleted visiting Golden State beat Chicago to extend the longest active losing streak in the NBA. The Bulls have lost seven in a row, their most since an eight-game skid in the 2019-20 season.

Avalanche defeat Flyers to pad their points lead

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Valeri Nichushkin scored the eventual game-winner early in the second period, Nathan MacKinnon had an assist to add to his NHL-leading points total and the Colorado Avalanche hung on for a 3-2 win over the Philadelphia Flyers on Sunday.

Brent Burns and Brock Nelson also scored for Colorado, which improved to 21-2-6 with a league-leading 48 points. The Avalanche were playing their third game in four days while Philadelphia had the last three days off.

Sean Couturier and Travis Konecny had the goals for Philadelphia, which lost for just the third time in the last nine games.

Burns netted the first of three straight Avalanche goals on a wrist shot midway through the first period. Nelson put Colorado ahead 2-1 with 52 seconds remaining in the period when he scored on a power play on a scrum in front. MacKinnon was

awarded the primary assist. He now has 49 points.

Nichushkin finished a 2-on-1 by beating Samuel Ersson on the blocker side on a wrist shot from the circle to make it 3-1 with 18:13 to play in the second. Ersson made 25 saves.

Golden Knights 3, Rangers 2 (OT): Jack Eichel scored at 4:52 of overtime and visiting Vegas beat New York for their fourth straight win.

Brett Howden and Tomas Hertl also scored, and Mark Stone had two assists for the Golden Knights, who improved to 6-2-2 in their last 10 games.

Mika Zibanejad and Alexis Lafreniere scored for the Rangers, who lost in overtime at home for the second straight day to fall to 3-8-3 at Madison Square Garden.

Stars 3, Penguins 2 (SO): Mikko Rantanen's final-round score was the only goal of the shootout and Jake Oettinger made 27 saves as host Dallas beat Pittsburgh.

After Rantanen beat Tristan Jarry stick side, Oettinger stopped Kris Letang to end the game and record his league-high 14th win.

Blues 4, Canadiens 3: Brayden Schenn had two goals and an assist and visiting St. Louis beat Montreal to complete a three-game trip with their second victory in two nights.

Panthers 4, Islanders 1: Carter Verhaeghe stayed red-hot with his sixth goal in his last six games, Seth Jones scored for the second consecutive game and host Florida closed out a homestand by topping New York.

Florida wrapped up a stretch where it played 11 out of 12 games at home, going 5-5-1 in those home contests.

Sharks 4, Hurricanes 1: Macklin Celebrini set up San Jose's first two goals to tie for the NHL assists lead and added an empty-netter, helping the Sharks beat Carolina for their first road victory over the Hurricanes

since 2018.

The Sharks had lost six in a row in Raleigh since a 3-1 victory since 2018.

The Hurricanes dropped to 3-3-0 with a game left on their homestand.

Capitals 2, Blue Jackets 0: Logan Thompson made 39 saves to record his 100th career victory and seventh career shutout, and host Washington defeated Columbus.

Thompson reached the century milestone in his 167th game, making him the 17th goalie in NHL history to do so in 170 games or fewer.

Ducks 7, Blackhawks 1: Leo Carlsson scored two goals and rookie Beckett Sennecke had a goal and an assist in Anaheim's home victory over road-weary Chicago.

Jacob Trouba, Mason McTavish, Alex Killorn and Frank Vatrano also scored for the Pacific Division-leading Ducks, who have won three of four.