

## Navy aims combat chow challenge at sea

BY KAYLYN BARNHART  
BATISTA

*Stars and Stripes*

At a lab in Natick, Mass., a team of Navy civilians and contractors is testing new galley equipment and food recipes with one goal in mind: keeping sailors well-fed, healthy and mission-ready during long deployments at sea.

By combining food science, engineering and frequent feedback from the fleet, the team is working to modernize Navy galleys to extend endurance at sea aboard ships and submarines.

"The long-term goal is to keep the warfighters at sea doing what they have to do," said Rick Watts, a Navy project officer on the Joint Food Service and Engineering Team.

After more than 20 years serving as a Navy culinary spe-

cialist, including time aboard submarines, Watts retired as a master chief and now works to solve everyday challenges in Navy galleys.

His team evaluates commercial kitchen equipment to determine suitability for shipboard use, including space constraints, constant motion, power supply and water requirements.

Smart technologies are being tested to address personnel shortages and training gaps in ship galleys.

Automated tilt skillets, for example, are designed to simplify complex cooking tasks.

With recipes pre-programmed into the system, the skillet guides culinary specialists step by step, producing consistent meals and reducing food waste.

A new deep-fat fryer, devel-

oped over the past year, is also being prepared for testing with the submarine force.

"Our No. 1 challenge is obsolescence," Watts said. "We have older equipment, so we have to find new solutions for those."

Looking further ahead, the Breadbot — an automated bread production system — is being explored for potential shipboard use.

While promising for the future, Watts said it still has some "growing pains" and is not yet ready for implementation on Navy vessels.

Alongside equipment testing, food technologist Brittany Koukoulas works with Navy recipe development on the Functional Food Nutrition Intervention Team.

Her team constantly experiments with ingredients to devel-

op new food recipes that meet the "Go For Green" standards for sailors.

Her team is currently experimenting with freeze-dried ingredients to see if they can help extend ship endurance, allowing vessels to stay at sea longer without running out of food.

Recently, she worked on a strawberry shortbread cookie recipe.

"There is a push on finding out some information about freeze-dried ingredients based on some conversations with the fleet," said Koukoulas, who is currently conducting research and development in the lab.

Watts added that freeze-dried ingredients have been highly successful for the submarine force and now surface vessels are beginning to show more of an interest recently.

## Analysts debate merits of US strikes in Nigeria

*The Washington Post*

Top Nigerian officials said Friday that U.S. attacks in the country on what President Donald Trump called "ISIS Terrorist Scum" could mark the opening salvo in a campaign against militant groups there. But security analysts warned that Trump administration officials appeared to be stepping into a complex, long-running conflict that they might not fully understand.

Trump has in recent months repeatedly warned that he would intervene in Nigeria — which is afflicted by widespread violence — if the killing of Christians does not stop. He made good on that promise Thursday, announcing "numerous perfect strikes" on Christ-

mas night and promising more if the "slaughter of Christians continues."

Western and Nigerian security analysts said the attacks marked the first time in decades the U.S. had launched such strikes in Nigeria, a country of more than 230 million people split about equally between Muslims and Christians. The analysts said that violence, particularly by Islamist militants in the north, has sometimes targeted Christians but that Muslims have also been affected.

Neither Trump nor the U.S. Africa Command specified who was killed in the strikes, which the U.S. and Nigeria's government said were conducted with the approval of Nigeria's government. Daniel Bwala, an ad-

viser to Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, said the strikes marked only the beginning. Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister Yusuf Tuggar said his country provided intelligence to the U.S. for the strikes and that cooperation was ongoing.

"There will be more, I can assure you of that," he said Friday. "This is part of our struggle against insecurity. The operation is going to be an ongoing joint effort at fighting terrorism in Nigeria until we dismantle their cells in Nigeria and around our borders."

Two U.S. officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the strikes were conducted with Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from a Navy vessel.

Much of the recent violence

in Sokoto State — a majority Muslim area where the U.S. officials said the strikes took place — is attributable to a group called Lakurawa, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

Analysts said that U.S. officials seem more focused on their preferred narrative in Washington than on the complex reality on the ground.

Trump's focus on Nigeria had been the result of a months-long pressure campaign on behalf of Nigerian Christians by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and American evangelical leaders, *The Post* previously reported. But the president's Nov. 1 threat to go into Nigeria "guns-a-blazing" surprised even those who had been pressing the issue.

# US military police to resume Okinawa patrols

BY BRIAN McELHINEY  
AND KEISHI KOJA  
*Stars and Stripes*

U.S. military police plan to resume their own street patrols on Okinawa in time for the New Year's holiday, a month after a U.S. civilian was body slammed outside a bar, according to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

U.S. patrols, unaccompanied by local police, may be back in Okinawa's nightlife districts on the final days of 2025, according to a statement by the U.S.-Japan Joint Committee posted on the ministry's website Friday.

USFJ commander Air Force Lt. Gen. Stephen Jost ordered the patrols paused and an investigation into the forceful detain-

ment of Kareem El early on Nov. 22 by a U.S. military policeman who lifted El and slammed him to the pavement outside a bar on Gate 2 Street.

Two videos of El's arrest posted online ignited a social media backlash. USFJ spokesman Air Force Col. John Severns, in a Dec. 12 email to Stars and Stripes, said El was stopped by the patrol, which "approached him solely because they believed he was a U.S. service-member."

The joint committee acknowledged the mistake.

Police "mistakenly detained an American citizen who did not have [status of forces agreement] status," according to the statement. SOFA sets out the

rights and responsibilities of U.S. military personnel, Defense Department civilian employees, contractors and their families in Japan.

Japan's government "recognizes that such patrols are helpful for maintaining order and discipline" within USFJ and "intends to continue to work closely with the U.S. side, while maintaining close communication with local communities," according to a ministry news release Friday.

During the pause, USFJ conducted "additional standardized training ... to reinforce the limited scope of U.S. Forces law enforcement authority outside U.S. Forces Japan facilities and areas permitted by the SO-

FA," according to the statement.

El's detention is still under investigation, Severns said Dec. 12.

U.S. military police began joint patrols with Okinawa Prefectural Police in April in Okinawa city to enforce an order prohibiting service members from drinking alcohol off base between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. The order stemmed in part from a rash of sexual assault allegations that arose in December 2023 and have so far yielded two convictions.

The U.S. military began its own patrols in September in Okinawa city and in November in Chatan town and Naha city, Okinawa's capital.

## Congress fails to undo base name switch

BY SVETLANA  
SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

K. Denise Rucker Krepp was thrilled when her distant Confederate cousin's name was removed from Fort Rucker in 2023 and disheartened when the Trump administration returned the Army base in Alabama to the name, albeit with a different namesake, this summer.

This fall, Rucker Krepp saw a glimmer of hope in Congress: the House and Senate passed versions of an annual defense policy bill with provisions reversing the Pentagon's revival of Confederate-era names that a congressionally mandated commission had ordered stripped from military assets.

Fort Rucker, originally honoring the Confederate Army Col. Edmund W. Rucker from

1942 to 2023, could once again be Fort Novosel, in honor of Chief Warrant Officer Michael J. Novosel, an Army aviator and Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient.

But the provisions were struck from the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act signed by President Donald Trump in December, infuriating lawmakers who had garnered bipartisan support for restoring the commission's work on at least some of the nine Army bases that had been renamed.

"This is an insult to the African-Americans who wear the uniform, and the 40% of enlisted service members who are minorities," said Rep. Marilyn Strickland, D-Wash., the author of the provision in the House's bill, in a statement.

## DOJ pushes states to honor licenses for military families

BY LYDIA GORDON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Justice Department last week issued new explainers about portions of a law that make sure professional licenses held by members of military families are recognized in different states.

Guidance that came out last Monday includes a pair of letters to state authorities and a fact sheet on the revised license portability provision of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

The section of the law covered in the DOJ materials allows service members and their spouses who hold professional licenses to use the authorization in a new state when military orders require relocation.

"Military families are the backbone of American society," Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon said in a state-

ment. "Servicemembers and their spouses often sacrifice the stability of settling in one place during a critical time in their career."

The guidance covers a broad range of state-licensed professions, including health care workers, teachers, attorneys, veterinarians and some skilled trades.

Congress added the license portability provision to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act in 2023 and updated it last year. The intent of the legislation is to help curb military spouse unemployment.

As of 2023, Labor Department data showed that roughly 34% of military spouses work in occupations that require a license. Frequent moves across state lines make it difficult for those spouses to transfer their license and find a new job.

# Big winter storm snarls holiday travel

*Associated Press*

BOSTON — A powerful winter storm was sweeping east from the Plains on Sunday, driven by what meteorologists describe as an intense cyclone, setting off a chain reaction of snow, ice, rain and severe weather expected to affect much of the country.

Snow and strengthening winds spread across the Upper Midwest on Sunday, where the National Weather Service warned of whiteout conditions and possible blizzard conditions that could make travel impossible in some areas.

Snowfall totals were expected to exceed a foot across parts of the upper Great Lakes, with up to 2 feet possible along the

south shore of Lake Superior.

In the South, meteorologists warn of severe thunderstorms expected to signal the arrival of a sharp cold front — sometimes referred to as a “Blue Norther” — bringing a sudden temperature drop and strong north winds that will end days of record warmth across the region.

Over the next 48 hours, the cyclone is expected to produce heavy snow and blizzard conditions in the Midwest and Great Lakes, freezing rain in New England, thunderstorms across the eastern U.S. and South, and widespread strong winds.

The storm is expected to intensify as it moves east, drawing energy from a sharp clash

between frigid air plunging south from Canada and unusually warm air that has lingered across the southern United States, according to the National Weather Service.

It follows thousands of flight delays and cancellations across the Northeast and Great Lakes regions earlier this weekend due to snow, as thousands took to the roads and airports during the busy travel period between Christmas and New Year’s.

In Times Square, workers in red jumpsuits worked to clear the sludge- and powder-coated streets and sidewalks using shovels and snowblowers.

Jennifer Yokley, who was there on a holiday trip from North Carolina, said she was

excited to see snow accumulating as it dusted buildings, trees and signs throughout the city.

Payton Baker and Kolby Gray, who were visiting from West Virginia, said the snow was a Christmas surprise for their third anniversary trip.

“Well, it’s very cold, and it was very unexpected,” Baker said, her breath visible in the winter air.

“The city is working pretty well to get all the roads salted and everything, so it’s all right.”

Ahead of the storm, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency for more than half the state.

Acting New Jersey Gov. Tahesha Way also declared a state of emergency for that state.

## Venezuelans sent to El Salvador demand due process after ruling

*Associated Press*

CARACAS, Venezuela — Men who were part of the group of Venezuelan migrants that the United States government transferred earlier this year to a prison in El Salvador demanded justice on Friday, days after a federal judge in Washington ruled that the Trump administration must give them legal due process.

The men told reporters in Venezuela’s capital that they hope legal organizations can push their claims in court. Their press conference was organized by Venezuela’s government, which had previously said it had retained legal services for the immigrants.

On Monday, a federal judge ordered the U.S. government to give legal due process to the 252 Venezuelan men, either by providing court hearings or returning them to the U.S. The ruling opens a path for the men to challenge the Trump administration’s allegation that they are members of the Tren de Aragua

gang and subject to removal under an 18th century wartime law. The men have repeatedly said they were physically and psychologically tortured while at the notorious Salvadoran prison.

“Today, we are here to demand justice before the world for the human rights violations committed against each of us, and to ask for help from international organizations to assist us in our defense so that our human rights are respected and not violated again,” Andry Blanco told reporters in Caracas, where roughly two dozen of the migrants gathered Friday.

Some of the men shared the daily struggles they now face — including fear of leaving their home or encountering law enforcement — as a consequence of what they said were brutal abuses while in prison. The men did not specify what justice should look like in their case, but not all are interested in returning to the U.S.

“I don’t trust them,” Nolberto Aguilar said of the U.S.

## Attorney’s case is latest loss in court for Trump

*The Washington Post*

Since taking office for the second time, President Donald Trump has suffered multiple losses in his efforts to strip security clearances from political opponents and prestigious Washington law firms. With several of those cases working through the courts, the issue could become one of the next Supreme Court fights over presidential power.

The president’s latest loss came last week, when a federal judge in Washington temporarily blocked Trump’s efforts to strip a security clearance from national security attorney Mark Zaid. In 2019, Zaid represented the government whistleblower who accused Trump of trying to pressure Ukraine for damaging information about his political opponents. The accusations led to Trump’s first impeachment.

In his Tuesday order, U.S. District Judge Amir Ali found that Zaid was likely to succeed on his claim that revoking Zaid’s security clearance violated the attor-

ney’s constitutional free speech and due process rights. The order notes that Trump has called Zaid a “sleazeball” and said the lawyer should be sued for treason.

“This case involves the government’s retribution against a lawyer because he represented whistleblowers and other clients who complained about the government,” wrote Ali, who was appointed by President Joe Biden.

The case should not have been difficult, Zaid said in an interview. “But it’s surrounded by all sorts of constitutional analysis because of the assertion by the Trump administration that it has the power to do anything it wants without any oversight whatsoever.”

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The case began with a March 22 presidential memorandum in which Trump revoked the security clearances of Zaid and 14 other individuals, saying it was “no longer in the national interest” for the people to hold the clearances.



# Thailand-Cambodia talks start in China

Associated Press

BEIJING — Top diplomats from Thailand and Cambodia kicked off two days of talks in China on Sunday as Beijing seeks to strengthen its role in mediating the two countries' border dispute, a day after they signed a new ceasefire.

The ceasefire agreement calls for a halt to weeks of fighting along their contested border that has killed more than 100 people and displaced over half a million in both countries.

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuanketkeow and Cam-

bodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn were set to meet in China's southwestern Yunnan province for talks mediated by their Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

China has sought to position itself as a mediator in the crisis, along with the United States and Malaysia.

President Donald Trump, who threatened to withhold trade privileges unless Thailand and Cambodia agreed to a July ceasefire, suggested Sunday that the fighting between Thailand and Cambodia "will

stop momentarily" and boasted that the U.S. "has become the REAL United Nations."

The talks in China aim to ensure a sustained ceasefire and promote lasting peace between the countries, according to a statement that was released by Sihasak's office.

Wang was scheduled to join both bilateral meetings with each of the diplomats and a trilateral talk on Monday.

China has welcomed the ceasefire announcement, which freezes the front lines and allows for displaced civilians to

return to their homes near the border.

The ceasefire agreement comes with a 72-hour observation period, at the end of which Thailand agreed to repatriate 18 Cambodian soldiers it has held as prisoners since earlier fighting in July.

Their release has been a major demand of the Cambodian side.

Prak Sokhonn, in a statement after his meeting with Wang, expressed deep appreciation for China's "vital role" in supporting the ceasefire.

## Snow blamed for fatal 67-car crash in Japan

Associated Press

TOKYO — A massive crash involving 67 vehicles in snowy weather killed two people and injured 26 on an expressway in Japan late on Friday as the

country kicked off its end-of-year holiday season.

The Gunma prefectural highway police said Saturday that the pileup on the Kan-etsu Expressway started with a colli-

sion between two trucks in the town of Minakami, about 100 miles northwest of Tokyo.

The initial crash blocked parts of the expressway, and cars coming from behind them

were unable to brake.

A fire erupted at the far end of the pileup, spreading to 20 vehicles. The fire was extinguished about seven hours later, police said.

## Ukraine leveraging drones on the cheap

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — The icy ground crackling under their feet, members of an elite Ukrainian drone-hunting team set up for a long night.

Antennas and sensors are clipped to a light stand. Monitors and controls are pulled from hard cases, and a game-changing new weapon is readied for deployment.

The Sting, shaped like a flying thermos, is one of Ukraine's new homegrown interceptors that it is utilizing.

The unit's commander says the interceptors can effectively counter Russia's fast-evolving suicide drones, which are now flying faster and at higher altitudes.

"Every destroyed target is something that did not hit our

homes, our families, our power plants," said the officer, known only by the call sign "Loi," in line with Ukrainian military protocol. "The enemy does not sleep, and neither do we."

Nightly attacks on Ukrainian cities and power infrastructure have forced Kyiv to rewrite the air defense rule book and develop cut-price drone killers costing as little as \$1,000.

Interceptors went from prototype to mass production in just a few months in 2025 and represent the latest shift in modern warfare.

Effective defense in Ukraine depends on mass production, rapid adaptation and layering low-cost systems into existing defenses instead of relying on a few expensive, slow-to-replace weapons.

## Trump reports a 'very productive call' with Putin

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump planned to host his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on Sunday to try to close out a peace agreement that would end nearly four years of war sparked by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Russia intensified its attacks on Ukraine's capital and elsewhere in the days before the meeting.

Trump said he spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday in advance of the meeting. "I just had a good and very productive telephone call with President Putin," he posted on Truth Social. The Kremlin confirmed the call without giving details.

Trump and Zelenskyy were to meet at Mar-a-Lago, Trump's private club in Palm Beach,

where the U.S. president is spending the holidays.

Zelenskyy, who arrived in Miami in the morning, said the two planned to discuss security and economic agreements in their early afternoon meeting.

He said he would discuss "territorial issues" as Moscow and Kyiv remain fiercely at odds over the fate of the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine.

In overnight developments, three guided aerial bombs launched by Russia struck homes in Sloviansk.

The strike came the day after Russia attacked Ukraine's capital with ballistic missiles and drones on Saturday, killing at least one person and wounding 27, a day before planned talks between the leaders of Ukraine and the United States, Ukrainian authorities said.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Rescuers rush into blaze to save elderly

**PA** BRISTOL — Rescuers braved shooting flames falling debris and the threat of more explosions to evacuate dozens of nursing home residents after a blast ripped through a Pennsylvania facility, killing a resident and an employee, and setting off a frantic search of the wreckage.

The police chief of Bristol Township said he'd "never seen such heroism," and a speech therapist working there described feeling the building shake in Tuesday's blast and hurriedly wheeling out a bed-bound resident, bed and all.

"They were running into a building that I could — from 50 feet away — could still smell gas, and walls that looked like they were going to fall down," Police Chief Charles Winik said.

Officials said they didn't yet know the cause of the explosion, even though a utility crew had been on site investigating a reported gas leak.

The blast sent 20 others to hospitals, including one in critical condition. The rest of the 120 residents were transferred to nearby nursing homes, officials said.

### Former Navy pilot puts Irish pub on wheels

**CT** RIDGEFIELD — As a former Navy fighter pilot, Ryan Forsmo knows a large part of that community identity is finding "every Irish pub you can — even the places that shouldn't have an Irish pub."

"I've been to Irish pubs in Spain, Italy, France, Dubai, a

million Irish pubs in the United States," said Forsmo, a Ridgefield resident. "What I've learned over time in that community is the gathering at the Irish pub, is about camaraderie and fellowship."

Forsmo's wife, Lyndsay, who helps behind the scenes with Forsmo's mobile pub, said her husband came up with the idea of putting an Irish pub on wheels in May 2024 while they were attending a friend's birthday party that had a mobile bar.

Thus was born The Shebeen, a term that refers to an unlicensed or illegally operated drinking establishment. His mobile Irish pub doesn't offer food and alcohol yet, instead, Forsmo said he can assemble customers' liquor setups on site and that he offers rental packages that can connect customers to local bartenders who can serve drinks.

### Judge upholds tax on cruise passengers

**HI** HONOLULU — A federal judge's ruling has cleared the way for Hawaii to include cruise ship passengers in a new tourist tax to help cope with climate change, a levy set to go into effect at the start of 2026.

U.S. District Judge Jill A. Otake denied a request that sought to stop officials from enforcing the new law on cruises.

In the nation's first such levy to help cope with a warming planet, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green signed legislation in May that raises tax revenue to deal with eroding shorelines, wildfires and other climate problems. Officials estimate the tax will generate nearly \$100 million an-

nually.

The levy increases rates on hotel room and vacation rental stays but also imposes a new 11% tax on the gross fares paid by a cruise ship's passengers, starting next year, prorated for the number of days the vessels are in Hawaii ports.

Cruise Lines International Association challenged the tax in a lawsuit, along with a Honolulu company that provides supplies and provisions to cruise ships and tour businesses out of Kauai and the Big Island that rely on cruise ship passengers.

### Grand jury declines to indict man in shooting

**KY** FRANKFORT — A grand jury has declined to indict the father of two Kentucky State University students who was charged with murder in an on-campus shooting that killed one student and critically injured another.

Defense attorney Scott Danks said grand jurors decided not to indict his client, Jacob Lee Bard, for the Dec. 9 shooting and he is out of jail. In a previous statement, Bard's attorneys have said that 20 to 30 people had gathered to attack his son and family, and that he was justified in shooting two people who were beating his son.

Bard's attorneys say the family was moving their younger son out, with two armed campus police officers present, after withdrawing both sons from school because of "multiple armed, violent" incidents against them and other students in the days leading up to Dec. 9, some captured on security cameras.

When the family and an offi-

cer reached the dormitory entrance on the move-out day, the group of people in masks and hoods rushed out and began violently assaulting the family and others, including beating the son's head against the pavement, the attorneys said.

In October, the younger son reported a burglary in his dorm room to campus police and received threats of violence afterward, the attorneys said.

### ICE agents shoot 2 in moving vehicle

**MD** GLEN BURNIE — Federal immigration agents shot at a moving vehicle on Wednesday morning during an enforcement and removal action, striking one person and injuring another, officials said.

A spokesperson for the Anne Arundel County Police Department said neither person had life-threatening injuries, and both were taken to the hospital.

Anne Arundel police responded to a report of a shooting involving federal agents at about 10:50 a.m. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were the only officials involved in the shooting, police said.

Preliminarily, police said the agents approached a white van, but the vehicle attempted to run them over. The agents fired at the van, which accelerated until coming to a stop in a wooded area, police said.

Department of Homeland Security officials said both civilians involved in the altercation with ICE are in the U.S. illegally. They did not indicate whether either of the men had been arrested.

-From wire reports

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and Military News

# Ravens lean on Henry, keep hopes alive

*Associated Press*

GREEN BAY, Wis. — With their backs against the wall, the Baltimore Ravens made sure they wouldn't underutilize Derrick Henry again.

The five-time Pro Bowl running back responded by delivering one of the greatest performances of his brilliant career to keep the Ravens' playoff hopes alive.

Henry rushed for a season-high 216 yards — the most ever by a visiting player at Lambeau Field — and matched a career high with four touchdown runs in the Ravens' 41-24 victory over the Green Bay Packers on Saturday night.

"It's one of the greatest performances I've ever seen," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said.

The Ravens (8-8) now must hope the Pittsburgh Steelers lose at Cleveland on Sunday. A Steelers victory in Cleveland would end Baltimore's playoff hopes. If the Browns win that game, the Ravens could win the AFC North by beating the Steelers in Pittsburgh on Jan. 4.

"I'll be watching and praying, for sure," Henry said. "I'm go-

ing to pray as soon as I get on the plane, when I get home, in the morning when I wake up. Hopefully we get blessed with the opportunity to play for something on Week 18."

Green Bay (9-6-1) lost its third straight, enabling the Chicago Bears to clinch the NFC North title. The Packers already clinched a playoff berth on Thursday when the Detroit Lions lost 23-10 at Minnesota.

This was the second straight week in which the Packers lost despite not punting the entire game. Only six other teams have ever gone back-to-back games without punting, and those six teams went a combined 12-0 in those games.

"That was a humbling night," Packers coach Matt LaFleur said. "Give Baltimore a ton of credit. They came in here and were in complete control the whole game."

Henry had three touchdown runs in the first half and scored again on a 25-yard run with 1:56 left in the game. His seventh career 200-yard rushing performance moved him ahead of Adrian Peterson and O.J. Simp-

son for the most in NFL history.

He increased his career rushing total to 12,892 yards to overtake Tony Dorsett for 10th place on the all-time list. Henry now has 122 career touchdown runs to leapfrog Peterson and move into fourth place overall.

Henry's 36 carries represented a career high. That came a week after Henry didn't touch the ball in Baltimore's final two series as the Ravens blew an 11-point, fourth quarter lead in a 28-24 loss to New England that put their playoff hopes on life support.

Henry became the first player to have at least 200 yards rushing and four touchdown runs in a game since San Francisco's Raheem Mostert did it against the Packers in an NFC championship game on Jan. 19, 2020.

Both teams were missing their starting quarterbacks as Baltimore's Lamar Jackson deals with a back injury while Green Bay's Jordan Love is in concussion protocol. The two replacement starters — Baltimore's Tyler Huntley and Green Bay's Malik Willis — were both effective in a game

that featured only one punt.

Willis went 18-for-21 for a career-high 288 yards and one touchdown, and he also rushed for 60 yards and two touchdowns. Huntley was 16 of 20 for 107 yards with one touchdown.

The difference in the game was Green Bay's inability to slow down Henry, who helped the Ravens outrush the Packers 307-79.

Henry's dominance enabled the Ravens to score on their first five possessions and take a 27-14 halftime lead over Green Bay, which hadn't allowed more than 24 points in 14 straight home games.

Henry totaled 15 carries in Baltimore's first two series and capped each of them with touchdown runs, from 3 yards and 1 yard away. He was the first player to have at least 15 carries in his team's first two offensive series since Denver's Olandis Gary against Green Bay in 1999.

He added another 3-yard touchdown with 10 seconds left in the second quarter.

"In those critical moments when we needed a stop, we didn't get it done," LaFleur said.

## Texans beat Chargers, clinch 3rd straight playoff berth

*Associated Press*

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The Houston Texans are riding a wave of momentum as the playoffs near. They're still alive in the race for the AFC South, a division they've won multiple times, and bolstered by the NFL's best defense, they're taking aim at earning their first berth in the AFC Championship Game.

C.J. Stroud threw for two long touchdowns on Houston's first two drives, and the Texans went on to beat the Los Angeles Chargers 20-16 on Saturday to clinch a third consecutive playoff berth for the first time in franchise history.

The Texans (11-5) won their eighth in a row, their longest such streak since winning nine straight in 2018.

The Chargers (11-5) had their four-game winning streak snapped and handed the AFC West title to idle Denver. The Chargers got knocked out of the playoffs in a wild-card loss to Houston last season.

Stroud's two explosive TDs stunned the Chargers and gave Houston a 14-0 lead. On his first pass of the game, he hit rookie Jayden Higgins for a 75-yard score against busted coverage. Stroud wasn't pressured when he threw a 43-yard TD to Noel, who wasn't covered.

The Chargers had allowed just one TD pass of 40 or more yards in their last 15 games.

Stroud completed his first six throws of the game. He finished 16-for-28 for 244 yards and two interceptions.

Houston's defense forced third-down sacks of Justin Herbert on the Chargers' first two possessions. They were three-and-out on three of their first four possessions.

The Chargers were just 2-for-5 in the red zone.

Playing his third game with a broken left (non-throwing) hand, Herbert was 21-for-32 for 236 yards, with one touchdown and one interception.

James intercepted Stroud in the second quarter, but the Chargers managed only a 27-yard field goal by Cameron Dicker to trail 14-3.

Herbert was intercepted by Azeez Al-Shaair at the Houston 1-yard line. The ball popped off Oronde Gadsden's hands and Al-Shaair came down with it for his second interception of the season. Gadsden held his face in his hands on the bench.

The Chargers closed to 17-10 after a wild drive in which Herbert was sacked twice and threw two incompletions before finding Gadsden in the back of the end zone for a 1-yard TD in the third.



# Magic hold off Nuggets, Jokic's triple-double

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Anthony Black scored a career-high 38 points, Desmond Bane made two free throws with 6.9 seconds left and the Orlando Magic overcame another huge triple-double by Nikola Jokic to beat the Denver Nuggets 127-126 on Saturday night.

Jokic had 34 points, 21 rebounds and 12 assists, his 180th triple-double and 16th of the season. Two nights after finishing with 56 points, 16 rebounds and 15 assists in a Christmas overtime victory over Minnesota, he pulled within one of Oscar Robertson for second on the NBA's career triple-doubles list.

It was Jokic's eighth career 30-20-10 game, second-most behind Wilt Chamberlain's 16.

Jamal Murray scored 24 points for Denver, but missed a long jump shot at the horn after Bane's free throws completed Orlando's comeback from a 17-point deficit.

Bane scored 15 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter for Orlando, which shot 67.4% in the second half.

Wendell Carter Jr. had 18 points and seven rebounds for the Magic before fouling out with 11.9 seconds left after a replay reversal put Jokic on the line for the Nuggets' final points.

**Kings 113, Mavericks 107:** Russell Westbrook scored 21 points and moved past Magic Johnson for seventh place on the NBA's career assists list while leading host Sacramento over Dallas.

Westbrook grabbed five rebounds, and his nine assists gave him 10,149 — eight more than Johnson.

The 37-year-old Westbrook also moved within nine points of tying Dominique Wilkins for 19th on the NBA's scoring chart while propelling the Kings to their third victory in 13 games.

The Mavericks got within 111-107 with nine seconds re-

maining before DeMar DeRozan made two free throws to seal it.

**Suns 123, Pelicans 114:** Devin Booker scored 20 points, including two clutch jumpers down the stretch, and visiting Phoenix beat New Orleans for a two-game sweep of their back-to-back set.

Booker led seven Suns in double figures. Dillon Brooks had 18 points, Collin Gillespie scored 17, Jordan Goodwin added 16 and Royce O'Neale finished with 15.

Trey Murphy III had 24 points for the Pelicans, and Zion Williamson scored 22 off the bench on 8-for-11 shooting. Rookie center Derik Queen had 21 points and 11 rebounds, while Jeremiah Fears scored 18 and Saddiq Bey finished with 17.

The game got chippy in the third quarter after New Orleans went on a 12-2 run to cut the deficit to 73-71. Following a whistle, Pelicans guard Jose Alvarado and Phoenix center Mark Williams exchanged punches. Both were ejected.

**Rockets 117, Cavaliers 100:** Kevin Durant scored 30 points in three quarters to lead host Houston to an easy win over Cleveland.

The Rockets won their second straight after they lost four of their previous five games.

The Cavaliers cut the lead to 12 on a basket by Darius Garland with about seven minutes left in the third quarter before Houston used a 15-0 run to make it 85-58 about two minutes later. After a dunk by Durant in that stretch, Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson received a technical for yelling at the officials and Durant made the free throw.

Reserve Jaylon Tyson had 23 points and a career-high 14 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who dropped a second straight game and their fifth in the last seven games. Donovan Mitchell added 16 points on 7-for-17 shooting.

**Bucks 112, Bulls 103:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points in his return from an eight-game absence, and visiting Milwaukee snapped Chicago's five-game winning streak.

The two-time MVP, who was sidelined by a right calf strain, added eight rebounds in his first game since Dec. 3. He played 25 minutes, with coach Doc Rivers saying before the game that the forward would have his minutes restricted.

Ryan Rollins scored 20 points and Bobby Portis added 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, who had dropped six of eight.

Nikola Vucevic and Coby White each scored 16 points and Josh Giddey added 13 for the Bulls.

**Jazz 127, Spurs 114:** Lauri Markkanen had 29 points, Keyonte George added 28 points and visiting Utah held on to snap San Antonio's league-high eight-game winning streak.

San Antonio center Victor Wembanyama marked his return to the starting lineup with 32 points, seven rebounds, five blocks and three assists in 27 minutes and 42 seconds. It was Wembanyama's first start since Nov. 14 against Golden State, when he suffered a strained left calf that led to a 12-game absence.

Walter Clayton Jr. scored 17 points and Jusuf Nurkic added 16 for the Jazz.

Keldon Johnson added 27 points and 10 rebounds for the Spurs.

**Knicks 128, Hawks 125:** Karl-Anthony Towns scored a season-high 36 points with 16 rebounds, Jalen Brunson had 34 points and visiting New York survived Atlanta's late comeback attempt to beat the Hawks.

Atlanta lost its sixth straight to wrap up a crushing 0-5 homestand. The Hawks are 5-11 overall at home.

Towns made 17 of 18 free throws while helping the Knicks take a dominant 56-38 advantage in rebounds.

Onyeka Okongwu led Atlanta with 31 points and 14 rebounds. Jalen Johnson recorded his 13th consecutive double-double with 20 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds before fouling out in the final minute.

**Heat 142, Pacers 116:** Andrew Wiggins and Jaime Jaquez Jr. each scored 28 points, and host Miami ran away in the fourth quarter to Indiana.

Norman Powell scored 23 for the Heat, who won for the second consecutive night. Miami outscored the Pacers 44-22 in the final quarter, after leading 98-94 going into the last 12 minutes.

Nikola Jovic scored 19 for the Heat, as they outscored Indiana by 35 points in his 25 minutes. Miami scored at least 140 points for the sixth time this season and seventh time in 2025, after reaching 140 points seven times — combined — from 1988 through 2024.

The Pacers' Aaron Nesmith returned after missing 19 games with a shoulder injury. He scored nine points in 19 minutes.

**Nets 123, Timberwolves 107:** Cam Thomas scored 30 points in his return after missing 20 games with a left hamstring strain, and visiting Brooklyn beat Minnesota.

Michael Porter Jr. added 27 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who had six players score in double figures. Brooklyn (10-19) has won four of five and five of seven.

The Nets, who improved to 7-3 in December, are allowing an NBA-low 103.1 points per game this month.

Anthony Edwards led the Timberwolves (20-12) with 28 points, but they dropped back-to-back games for the third time this season. Minnesota lost 142-138 in overtime Thursday at Denver.

# Sabres top Bruins for 8th consecutive win

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Mattias Samuelsson had a goal and two assists as the Buffalo Sabres beat the Boston Bruins 4-1 on Saturday night for their eighth straight victory.

Samuelsson's three-point night came together in a three-goal second period with assists on goals by Ryan McLeod and Peyton Krebs.

Josh Norris added an empty-netter late and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 21 saves for Buffalo.

The Sabres' win streak is their longest since they won 10 in a row in November 2018.

David Pastrnak scored in the first period for the Bruins, who have lost five in a row and six of their last seven games. Joonas Korpisalo made 30 saves.

**Islanders 2, Rangers 0:** David Rittich made 27 saves for his ninth career shutout, Anders Lee scored less than a minute into the game, and host New York Islanders blanked the New York Rangers.

The Islanders' Bo Horvat returned to the lineup after missing the previous five games with a lower-body injury.

Igor Shesterkin finished with 24 saves but the Rangers were shut out for the seventh time this season.

**Lightning 4, Panthers 2:** Pontus Holmberg scored with 7.3 seconds left in the first period to put the Lightning on top for good, Nikita Kucherov scored twice and visiting Tampa Bay beat Florida Panthers in another penalty-filled matchup between the Sunshine State rivals.

Jake Guentzel also scored for Tampa Bay, which has won three straight. Kucherov sealed it with an empty-netter with 56 seconds left.

Brad Marchand and Eetu Luostarinen scored for the Panthers, who lost for just the second time in their last seven games. Florida was 1 for 11 on the power play.

**Capitals 4, Devils 3 (OT):** De-

fenseman Jakob Chychrun scored in overtime and Logan Thompson made 35 saves as visiting Washington beat New Jersey.

The visitors led 2-1 entering the third period before the Devils scored twice in a 32-second span to move ahead. Ovechkin then tied the game at 3 with his 15th goal, the NHL-record 912th of this career at 9:17.

Jesper Bratt — who had just one goal since Nov. 6 — scored twice for New Jersey. Cody Glass also scored for the Devils, who have lost 13 of their last 20 games.

**Hurricanes 5, Red Wings 2:** Shayne Gostisbehere and Andrei Svechnikov each had a goal and two assists and host Carolina snapped a season-worst three-game skid with a win over Detroit in a matchup of divisional leaders.

Jackson Blake and Eric Robinson scored during the Hurricanes' three-goal second period. Jordan Martinook, who missed the three previous games with an injury, scored his 100th career goal with an empty-netter with 1:21 to play. Brandon Bussi made 18 saves and boosted his record to 12-1-1.

Michael Rasmussen and Andrew Copp scored for the Atlantic Division-leading Red Wings. John Gibson stopped 33 shots and lost for the first time in nine December outings.

**Maple Leafs 7, Senators 5:** Captain Auston Matthews shook off a slump with a goal and two assists, and Matthew Knies scored twice to lead Toronto to a home win against the Ottawa.

Matthews, who had gone four games without a point, got his first three-point outing of the season. He set up William Nylander on the power play to open the scoring, assisted on Bobby McMann's go-ahead goal early in the second period, and scored on his next shift for a 4-2 Toronto advantage.

The Senators pulled to within a goal twice, but Knies' second

with 14:07 remaining stood up as the winner.

The Maple Leafs jumped out to a 2-0 lead after a power-play goal by Knies. But Ottawa's Nick Cousins scored late in the first period, and Ridly Greig pulled his team even 18 seconds into the second period.

**Wild 4, Jets 3 (OT):** Matt Boldy scored two goals, including the winner just 39 seconds into overtime, to lead visiting Minnesota to a come-from-behind victory over the Winnipeg.

Mats Zuccarello and Kirill Kaprizov also scored for Minnesota. Quinn Hughes added three assists.

Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor had a goal and an assist each, and Josh Morrissey also scored for Winnipeg.

**Blues 3, Predators 2:** Pavel Buchnevich scored twice, Brayden Schenn had a goal for his 700th career point, and host St. Louis beat the Nashville.

Tyson Jost and Fedor Svechnikov scored for the Predators and Jussi Saros made 17 saves. The loss snapped Nashville's three-game winning streak.

**Blackhawks 4, Stars 3 (SO):** Rookie Nick Lardis scored in the fourth round of the shootout to give Chicago a road win over Dallas.

The Blackhawks, last in the overall NHL standings, snapped a six-game losing streak. The Stars, second in the overall standings, lost a second consecutive game after regulation following a four-game winning streak.

Mikko Rantanen had a goal and two assists, and Nils Lundkvist and Justin Hrychowian also scored for the Stars. Jake Oettinger stopped 30 shots.

**Kings 6, Ducks 1:** Alex Laferriere scored three times and Los Angeles finally found their offense in a home win over Anaheim.

Quinton Byfield had a goal and an assist, Drew Doughty and Trevor Moore also scored, and Anze Kopitar added three

assists as the Kings tied their season high for goals. Anton Forsberg made 24 saves.

Mason McTavish had a power-play goal and Lukas Dostal stopped 24 shots for the Ducks, who have dropped four of five.

**Avalanche 6, Golden Knights 5 (SO):** Martin Necas scored two goals in regulation and another during the shootout and visiting Colorado beat Vegas.

Colorado is the only team in the NHL with at least 60 points, sitting atop the Central Division with 63.

Vegas has now lost four of its last five, having split the first two of a four-game homestand. In earning a point for the 10th time in 12 games, the Knights took sole possession of first place in the Pacific Division with 45 points, one point ahead of both Anaheim and Edmonton.

**Flames 3, Oilers 2:** Blake Coleman scored his 11th goal of the season with 7:29 to play and host Calgary edged Edmonton.

Yegor Sharangovich and Ryan Lomberg also scored for Calgary, while Dustin Wolf made 29 saves for Calgary in his 100th NHL game.

Evan Bouchard and Connor McDavid scored for Edmonton. McDavid's goal extended his scoring streak to 12 games (13 goals, 19 assists), which has carried him into top spot in league scoring. Connor Ingram also had 29 saves in suffering his first loss.

**Sharks 6, Canucks 3:** Macklin Celebrini had a goal and an assist in a return to his hometown, powering visiting San Jose past Vancouver.

The 19-year-old center extended his point streak to seven games, with five goals and nine assists during that stretch.

Igor Chernyshov scored his first NHL goal and added an assist for the Sharks. Ryan Reaves, John Klingberg, William Eklund and Collin Graf each had a goal. Yaroslav Askarov stopped 24 shots as San Jose snapped a three-game skid.