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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Rand: Russia strong near Baltics

Report says if nations attacked, NATO forces would be overwhelmed

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A Russian offensive on NATO territory in the Baltics would overwhelm underarmed alliance forces in a matter of hours, leaving NATO with a harsh dilemma: launch a long, bloody counteroffensive or concede defeat.

That is the conclusion of a new report by the Rand Corp., which conducted a series of elaborate war games from summer 2014 to spring 2015 with the assistance of numerous American military commands and experts.

"As presently postured, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members," the Rand study says.

The findings are likely to be no surprise to the military's top officers in Europe, who have been warning that sophisticated Russian anti-aircraft systems could deny allies quick military access to the Baltics. Russia has superior numbers of air and ground forces across the border from the vulnerable Baltic states. However, Russia has repeatedly stressed it has no territorial designs on the Baltics.

Policymakers must determine whether the risks of potential Russian aggression are strong enough to demand the kind of reinforcements that could thwart a Russian assault. The costs of placing such a force in the region would be substantial but manageable for a NATO alliance with a collective gross domestic product of more than \$35 trillion, Rand says.

The report was issued just days before the release next week of the Pentagon's 2017 budget, which includes plans to add a brigade's worth of pre-positioned tanks and other heavy equipment in Europe, where the Pentagon now rotates one heavy brigade. The U.S. maintains only two infantry brigades permanently in Europe and no heavy units.

There are about 65,000 troops in total forward stationed. A plan to quadruple investment in the European Reassurance Initiative to \$3.4 billion will add several thousand more rotational troops in a plan to increase operations along NATO's eastern flank, but falls far short of Rand's recommendations.

The minimum force requirement, according to Rand, are seven NATO brigades, including three heavy armored brigades — adequately supported by air power, land-based fire support and troops ready to fight at the onset of hostilities. Adding three U.S. Army armored brigades would come with an up-front price tag of about \$13 billion. The annual operating cost would be roughly \$2.7 billion, Rand says.

The force could not mount a sustained defense of the region, but it would buy allies time to assemble a larger force. The presence of multiple brigades and air power also would "fundamentally change the strategic picture as seen from Moscow," according to Rand.

"While this deterrent posture would not be inexpensive in absolute terms, it is not unaffordable, especially in comparison with the potential costs of failing to defend NATO's most exposed and vulner-

able allies," Rand says.

Still, many NATO allies would likely balk at such a plan. Germany, for example, has long opposed any placement of permanent NATO forces in the Baltics or eastern Europe, which Berlin contends would be an unnecessary provocation to Russia. Moscow contends such a move would violate a 1997 NATO agreement that it says limits the types of forces that can be placed near its border.

Also, there is little evidence that Russia intends to launch a formal attack on a NATO state, which could trigger a collective alliance response under NATO's Article 5 provision that an attack on one member demands a response from all.

"I think it's highly unlikely that [Russian President Vladimir] Putin would contemplate an invasion of the Baltics, be it a traditional conventional invasion or a more covert hybrid invasion of the sort executed in Ukraine," said Robert Person, a Russia expert at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. "It is hard to see what Russia would gain by doing so, as I do not believe that Putin is trying to reassemble the original territory of the Soviet Union."

NATO's collective security pact on its own should give Moscow pause before launching an attack on the U.S.-led NATO alliance, whose \$1 trillion in defense spending dwarfs Russia's.

"My sense is that Putin understands the strategic implications of such an adventure, an understanding that would make him think long and hard about launching a war that he cannot afford and cannot win in the long run," Person said. "In the

short run, however, it is absolutely worth reminding him of the credibility of NATO's deterrent threat."

If NATO sought to establish a force capable of countering a Russian offensive, Moscow could elect to further build up its own regional forces, setting off a race for the upper hand.

At NATO headquarters, officials said they have taken note of the Rand report and pointed to recent alliance actions aimed at improving overall readiness, such as doubling the number of NATO's crisis response forces to 40,000 troops.

"NATO is well-prepared to defend all allies. Our commitment to Article 5 is rock-solid," a NATO official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Strengthening NATO's position in the east will be on the agenda at a defense ministers' meeting in Brussels next week.

During Rand's war game scenario, allies had one week to assemble forces to counter an onslaught on the Baltics. The Russian attackers, comprising troops from the Western Military District and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, deploy 27 maneuver battalions in a short-warning attack to occupy Estonia and Latvia. In the scenario, allies were able to mobilize light infantry units in time, but the force proved inadequate, presenting NATO with "a rapid fait accompli."

"The outcome was, bluntly, a disaster for NATO," the Rand report says. "Across multiple plays of the game, Russian forces eliminated or bypassed all resistance and were at the gates of or actually entering Riga, Tallinn, or both, between 36 and 60 hours after the start of hostilities."

House bill would require women to sign up for the draft

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two House Republicans introduced a bill Thursday requiring eligible women in the United States to sign up for the military draft, just days after it was recommended by the Marine Corps and Army.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., a Marine veteran, and Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Minn., a retired Navy SEAL, filed the Draft America's Daughters Act to stoke debate over the military's historic move to fully integrate female troops into all combat roles. If passed, women 18 to 26 years old would for the first time have to join men in registering with the Selective Service program and potentially be forced to fight in future wars.

"If this administration wants to send 18, 20-year-old women into combat, to serve and fight on the front lines, then the American people deserve to have this

discussion through their elected representatives," Hunter said in a released statement.

On Tuesday, Marine Commandant Gen. Robert Neller and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley testified to the Senate that they believe there should no longer be an exemption in the draft for half of the country's population now that the military is all-inclusive.

The Marines and Army, along with the other service branches, were ordered by Defense Secretary Ash Carter to open about 225,000 combat jobs to female candidates — the last remaining occupational specialties that had barred female troops.

The decision was made despite research and reservations from the Marine Corps and special operations community, and without adequate debate among lawmakers, according to the two congressmen sponsoring the bill.

"My daughter is a damn good Navy diver. I know women play an invaluable

role in war. Many times women can gain access to strategic sites that men never could," Zinke said.

"However, this administration's plan to force all front-line combat and Special Forces to integrate women into their units is reckless and dangerous."

The Marines completed a study last summer that found women get injured more often and perform below men in combat.

During an oversight hearing in the Senate on Tuesday, lawmakers repeatedly referenced the study and said they are worried the military could lower standards to accommodate more women in combat occupational specialties.

Zinke said the decision now means the country must contemplate changes to the draft. His bill requires women to register beginning 90 days after it is signed into law.

"This is a very important issue that touches the heart of every family in America, and I believe we need to have

an open and honest discussion about it," Zinke said in a released statement.

Men, who historically filled combat roles, are required to register with Selective Service when they turn 18 years old in case a draft is again needed.

The Supreme Court had in the past backed the exemption for women, but only because they were not expected to fill crucial combat ranks.

Millions of women might now suddenly and unexpectedly be required to register due to the Pentagon decision on combat roles.

Neller, who initially requested exemptions for women in some combat positions, said he thinks it is fair that women now face being called up to wartime service.

"Every American that is physically qualified should register for the draft," said Neller, who had requested but was denied exclusions of women in some Marine combat jobs.

Navy corpsman to be awarded Silver Star

Stars and Stripes

A Navy corpsman with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Regiment, is being awarded the Silver Star for heroic actions during a 2014 deployment to Afghanistan.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Alejandro N. Salabarría will receive the award Friday at a ceremony at U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

According to a Marine Corps statement, Salabarría was with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, Italian Special Forces and Afghan special operations commandos when one of the Afghan commandos began firing at the allied forces in a so-called insider attack. Several U.S. and Afghan personnel were wounded.

Salabarría engaged the rogue commando and dove between

him and a severely wounded fellow corpsman, using his body as a shield to prevent further injuries, the Marine Corps said. Protecting the other corpsman with his body, he engaged and “eliminated” the rogue commando. After securing the area, Salabarría rendered aid to two wounded team members and coordinated their evacuation.

The Marine Corps statement did not say where the incident took place or when in 2014, which was the year that the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan formally ended its combat mission.

“His bold actions ultimately saved the lives of his fellow team members and Afghan commando partners,” the Marine Corps statement said.

Salabarría’s award will be presented by Maj. Gen. Joseph L. Osterman, MARSOC’s commander.

Navy expands capabilities in 5th Fleet with new ship

BY CHRIS CHURCH

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — The USNS Choctaw County is the first auxiliary expeditionary fast transport ship to be forward deployed to the 5th Fleet area of operations, the Navy said Wednesday.

Formerly known as a joint high-speed vessel, the noncombatant ship, operated by a small, civilian crew, can deliver cargo and personnel faster than previous platforms, 5th Fleet spokesman Lt. Ian McConnaughey said.

“The ship has the capability to embark a complement of military personnel and mission configurations for a wide range of missions, including counter-illicit trafficking, theater security cooperation, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and noncombatant evacuation oper-

ations,” McConnaughey said.

The Choctaw County will operate under Commander, Task Force 53, which provides logistical support to the 5th Fleet area of operations, including underway replenishments by Military Sealift Command-operated ships.

“I’m thrilled to have Choctaw County in the 5th Fleet,” said Capt. Edwin D. Kaiser, commanding officer of Commander, Task Force 53. “The ship gives us tremendous capacity and operational flexibility.”

The 5th Fleet’s area of responsibility covers some 2.5 million square miles, including the conflict-prone Persian Gulf. Naval operations in the 5th Fleet aim to ensure the free movement of ships throughout the region, which includes the strait, through which about one-fifth of the world’s oil supply flows.

USS Patriot makes visit to Japan island

BY JAMES KIMBER

Stars and Stripes

OTARU, Japan — The USS Patriot pulled into port on this northern Japanese island on Thursday for a rest-and-recuperation visit.

The mine-countermeasure’s 90-member crew, who arrived a day later than scheduled because of the weather, also plans to visit local schools during the three-day stopover. A second Navy ship, the guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold, is scheduled to arrive Friday with another 200 sailors on board.

It is the Patriot’s third visit to Hokkaido in the last 20 years, but its first port stop in Otaru.

“My crew and I look forward to spending time in Otaru and the surrounding areas,” the Patriot’s commander, Lt. Cmdr. Emily Royse, said. “Many are looking forward to the beautiful Snow Light Path Festival here

as well as the snow festival in Sapporo and, of course, enjoying the fantastic cuisine.”

The visit isn’t without a bit of controversy. City officials said they had received multiple faxes from concerned residents protesting the visit and saying they were worried about an uptick in crime.

A press release published on the city’s website stated the ships cleared their checklist for visitation, but reiterated that Otaru is a commercial port and that military vessels are “undesirable.”

“I think the protesters are just a very, very small fraction of Japan and their attitude to our arrival here,” Royse said. “But based on the warm welcome we have received here as well as other Japanese ports in the past, we’re very confident that we can continue to maintain our strong relationship.”

Twisters hit Army post, multiple counties in Ga.

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — A trail of damage was left at an Army post, schools and businesses were closed for a second day, and a damaged women’s prison was running partly on backup power Wednesday after two days of storms unleashed tornadoes and flooding in the South and dumped heavy snow in the Midwest.

The most recent apparent twister knocked down some trees and damaged vehicles and buildings at Fort Stewart in southeast Georgia on Wednesday evening, spokesman Kevin Larson said. He said the extent of the damage was not immediately known, but there were no

reports of injuries. Fort Stewart is the largest Army post east of the Mississippi River.

The National Weather Service had reports of a tornado moving northeast at about 35 mph, and tornado warnings had been issued for Chatham, Bryan and Effingham counties west of Savannah.

In western Alabama, the administration building at the Federal Correctional Institution Aliceville was running on a generator Wednesday after a tornado struck the low-security lockup housing about 1,850 inmates, the U.S. Department of Justice said in a statement. No employees or inmates were hurt.

Panthers keeping it loose

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Cam Newton wearing \$850 Versace gold and zebra-print pants on a cross-country flight. Josh Norman sporting a Mexican wrestling mask with a Panthers logo and calling himself “El Bandido” on Opening Night. Teammates photobombing each other at news conferences and teaching Miss Universe how to “dab.”

Have no fear Ron Rivera, your team has kept its personality during Super Bowl week just as you preached before setting foot on California soil.

“It looks like we’re having fun because we are having fun,” running back Jonathan Stewart said.

You don’t win 14 straight games to start the season and reach the Super Bowl without talent, camaraderie and cohesiveness. The Panthers seem to have it all, a group of starkly different personalities who have bonded together to form a winning team.

Defensive end Jared Allen noticed it when he joined the Panthers four weeks into the season after being traded by the Chicago Bears, saying he walked into a “brotherhood.”

“There are a bunch of guys with their own personalities and everyone has their quirks about them, but it all works together,” Allen said. “No one is trying too hard, no one is trying to be funny or trying to be in the spotlight, if that makes sense. Guys are just being themselves.”

Fullback Mike Tolbert is the loud locker

room deejay. Ryan Kalil is the comical self-proclaimed Star Wars geek. Roman Harper is the gray-haired “grandpa” of the secondary spewing advice on life. Luke Kuechly is the happy-go-lucky humble guy who welcomes new teammates and makes them feel at home.

But Allen said the team seems to take its fun-loving personality from Newton.

“He energizes our team — the youthful spirit, the childlike mentality,” Allen said. “... That’s just like our whole team. We have a lot of personalities and coach (Rivera) is eager to let those show and encourages guys to be themselves.”

Wide receiver Philly Brown compares it with being in college.

“It’s a bunch of people around you that care about you, care about your everyday problems and when you’re this close with people it’s easy to have fun,” Brown said. “The wideouts have fun with the linebackers and the D-line, there’s not a person on this team that I couldn’t hang out with outside of football.”

The Panthers genuinely seem to like each other.

“We’re always together,” Tolbert said. “We’re more than just a football team, we’re an actual family.”

Still, there are some who don’t like this family.

They view the Panthers as brash and cocky because of end zone celebrations, trash talk and players joking around on the sidelines.

But what others call arrogance, Rivera calls personality.

“We’ve kind of crashed the party,” Rivera said of the Super Bowl. “We’re kind of new to the scene. Not a lot of people know who we are, and so to draw a quick conclusion on that based on a couple of things, I think is disappointing.”

Stewart can’t understand why some fans get riled up about the Panthers having fun on the field.

“[Football] is something that you’re always going to be passionate about, something that you’ve always loved, going out there and getting paid for it, so why not enjoy it?” Stewart said.

Stewart looks over in Newton’s direction and says, “His personality is, ‘I’m here, I’m going to do it my way because it’s the right way,’ and we like that. I think as a team we gravitate toward that because it’s the right thing.”

“If you look around at our team, everyone gets along and everyone has fun,” Kuechly said. “I think the culture and the camaraderie in the locker room is really helping us out. What really takes us over the edge is the guys’ ability to embrace each other and pick each other up when things aren’t going well. No one freaks out or has a meltdown.”

Allen is convinced that is because of the culture Rivera has built, insisting the team keep its personality.

“I think he understands from being a former player that guys are playing their best when they are out having fun,” Allen said. “He always reminds us to be no more than who you are and no less than who you are — just be you.”

Castoffs dot both rosters

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Evan Mathis got released by the Eagles because Chip Kelly didn’t want to give the two-time Pro Bowl guard a raise. Kurt Coleman got dumped by Kelly a year earlier.

Things turned out super for both guys. Mathis is blocking for Peyton Manning and the Denver Broncos. Coleman led Carolina with seven interceptions and picked two more passes in the NFC championship game.

As for Kelly, he landed in San Francisco too — after the Eagles fired him and he became the 49ers new coach.

“This is the ultimate dream for a football player to be able to play in the Super Bowl,” Mathis said. “It’s much more valuable (than money).”

Coleman was a seventh-round pick who started 27 games for the Eagles before Kelly arrived in 2013 and made him a backup. The safety played for Kansas City in 2014 and rejuvenated his career with the Panthers.

“I was a guy that was not as fast or may not have been as tall or strong or whatever it may be,” Coleman said. “If you believe it in your heart, you can achieve it.”

Both Super Bowl teams have rejects from other clubs playing prominent roles for them. Finding players on the waiver wire has helped the Panthers overcome injuries.

“We watch film and we work at it,” Carolina general manager Dave Gettleman said. “Mark Koncz, our pro scouting director, does a terrific job. He’s very thorough and a big part of it is finding guys that fit what we do.”

Here are more castoffs who will be playing in the Super Bowl:

Ted Ginn Jr.: A top-10 pick by Miami in 2007, Ginn never lived up to his potential. The wide receiver also played three seasons for San Francisco, spent 2013 with Carolina and was released by Arizona after one year. Ginn returned to the Panthers and led the team with 10 touchdown receptions.

Robert McClain: The Patriots cut the cornerback in training camp and he didn’t play all season until Carolina signed him in December. He’s now a starter because of injuries to other players.

Shiloh Keo: He was unemployed when he tweeted Broncos defensive coordinator Wade Phillips asking for a chance. Denver signed him after a rash of injuries to their safeties and he intercepted the pass that led to the game-winning drive in Week 17. The Broncos would’ve been a sixth seed if they lost that game.

Michael Oher: He was cut by Tennessee one year into a \$20-million, four-year contract. Cam Newton reached out to him so he signed with the Panthers and the left tackle had a solid season protecting the quarterback’s blind side.

Alabama, Michigan rack up recruits

Associated Press

Signing day went much like this past season: Alabama dominated and Jim Harbaugh had everybody talking about Michigan.

For a sixth consecutive year, Alabama landed the nation’s top signing class according to composite rankings of recruiting websites compiled by 247Sports. The reigning national champions soared to the top of the standings thanks to Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban’s customary strong finish.

“Saban isn’t even recruiting anymore — he’s selecting,” said Barton Simmons, the national scouting director for 247Sports.

Alabama entered Wednesday ranked behind LSU and Ole Miss within its own conference in the 247Sports Composite standings, but the Crimson Tide closed with a flurry that featured the addition of five-star linebackers Ben Davis and Lyndell Wilson as well as top-100 defensive end Terrell Hall.

“Nick Saban is working on a whole different plane than everybody else in the country,” Simmons said. “It’s not even about recruiting anymore. It’s about figuring out a way to make the numbers work to get the guys you want. That’s become the challenge for Saban.”

The biggest announcement of the

day came when Rashan Gary, a defensive tackle from Paramus, N.J., selected Michigan over Clemson. Gary is the consensus pick as the nation’s top No. 1 overall recruit.

Gary’s decision delighted a festive Signing Day celebration on Michigan’s campus that included New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady and New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter among others. Brady played for the Wolverines before going to the NFL and Jeter grew up in Michigan.

Here were some other major stories to develop Wednesday as prospects across the country made their college choices official.

Signing Day decisions: Seven of the top 15 players in the 247Sports Composite were uncommitted heading into signing day. That list was headlined by Gary. Other top-15 prospects to make their announcements Wednesday included the Alabama duo of Davis and Wilson plus defensive tackle Derrick Brown (Auburn), linebacker Mique Juarez (UCLA) and athlete Mecole Hardman Jr. (Georgia). Wide receiver Demetris Robertson of Savannah, Ga., still hasn’t announced his college choice and has said he planned to wait a couple extra days. He’s the guy whose home received a visit from Notre Dame’s equipment truck last week as the

Fighting Irish pursued him.

Like father, like son: Family connections played a role in a couple of Wednesday’s big commitments. Davis’ father is Wayne Davis, Alabama’s all-time leading tackler. Davis announced his commitment to Alabama by wearing a houndstooth hat like the one made famous by former Tide coach Paul “Bear” Bryant. Safety Nigel Warrior, a consensus top-100 recruit, announced he was following his father to Tennessee. Warrior is the son of Dale Carter, a former Tennessee and NFL defensive back.

Elaborate announcements: Safety Brandon Burton announced his college selection Tuesday night by putting out a video in which he and some friends played a game of paintball that ended with him capturing a flag of UCLA, the school he had chosen. Hardman’s press conference setup included a table that featured six cakes topped with banners of different schools. Hardman didn’t pick any of those programs and instead announced his choice by running through a banner wearing a Georgia hat and jersey. Safety Deontay Anderson may have topped them all by skydiving in a video that revealed his choice of Ole Miss. Once he hit ground, he opened his jacket to reveal a T-shirt with “Hotty Toddy,” a frequent Ole Miss cheer.



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Curry's 51 boosts Warriors

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Following one of his worst offensive games this season, reigning NBA MVP Stephen Curry stopped thinking about basketball and recalibrated his mind. It worked out just fine.

Curry was all systems go Wednesday night as he made 11 three-pointers and scored 51 points to lead the Golden State Warriors past the Washington Wizards 134-121 for their eighth straight victory, which came in spite of a monster performance from John Wall.

Wall scored a season-best 41 points in the shadows as Curry shot 13-for-14 for 36 points in the best first half of his career. After scoring just 13 points Sunday at New York, Curry was in a zone, tying Gilbert Arenas and Michael Jordan for the Verizon Center record and reaching 50 for the second time this season.

Curry looked human when he missed seven of 10 shots during the third quarter but was dominant most of the night as the Warriors (45-4) matched the 1966-67 Philadelphia 76ers for the best 49-game start in NBA history.

Thunder 117, Magic 114: Kevin Durant hit a three-pointer with just a half-second on the clock to give host Oklahoma City a wild win over Orlando.

Durant's buzzer-beater capped his 37-point outing for Oklahoma City, which has won five straight and 12 of its last 13.

Oklahoma City's other superstar, Russell Westbrook, posted his third straight triple-double with 24 points, a career-high

19 rebounds and 14 assists. He has eight triple-doubles this season, five coming in the last 11 games. It was the 27th triple-double of his career, moving him into a tie with Rajon Rondo for second place among active players, behind only LeBron James with 39.

Spurs 110, Pelicans 97: LaMarcus Aldridge scored 36 points and San Antonio improved to 27-0 at home this season by beating New Orleans.

The Spurs have won 36 in a row at home overall, dating to last season.

Hornets 106, Cavaliers 97: Jeremy Lin scored 24 points and host Charlotte ended Cleveland's five-game winning streak.

Michael Kidd-Gilchrist had 11 points and 13 rebounds for the Hornets, who overcame a nine-point halftime deficit.

Kyrie Irving had 26 points and LeBron James added 23 for the Cavaliers.

Heat 93, Mavericks 90: Chris Bosh scored 20 points, Dwyane Wade bounced back with 18 after matching the worst shooting half of his career and visiting Miami beat Dallas.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 28 for Dallas.

Celtics 102, Pistons 95: Isaiah Thomas had 17 points and seven assists to help Boston beat Detroit.

Avery Bradley had 15 points for the Celtics, who have won six straight home games and seven of eight overall.

Pacers 114, Nets 100: C.J. Miles had 27 points, Paul George scored 17 and Indiana sent host Brooklyn to its fifth straight loss.

Brook Lopez had 21 points and Joe Johnson had 20 points and nine assists for the Nets.

Hawks 124, 76ers 86: Tim Hardaway Jr. and Mike Scott each had 13 points and Atlanta coasted past host Philadelphia.

All 13 of the Hawks' players scored.

Nik Stauskas had 17 points for the 76ers, who dropped to 7-42.

Jazz 85, Nuggets 81: Derrick Favors had 16 points, 10 rebounds and six blocked shots to power host Utah over Denver, extending its season-best winning streak to four games.

Danilo Gallinari scored 24 points for Denver.

Bulls 107, Kings 102: E'Twaun Moore scored a career-high 24 points while starting in place of injured Jimmy Butler, and Chicago overcame a sloppy finish to beat host Sacramento.

Pau Gasol added 16 points, 13 rebounds and made two free throws with 4.3 seconds remaining to help the Bulls to their first win in Sacramento since December 2011.

DeMarcus Cousins had 30 points and 11 rebounds in his return to Sacramento's lineup.

Timberwolves 108, Clippers 102: Andrew Wiggins scored 31 points, Zach LaVine added 17 and Minnesota ended a 14-game road skid against its opponent with its first win over Los Angeles at Staples Center in nearly four years.

Chris Paul scored 22 points and Jamal Crawford added 21 off the bench for the Clippers.

Lightning get leg up on Detroit

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The All-Star break did nothing to cool the surging Tampa Bay Lightning.

Ben Bishop made 24 saves to get his 100th win with Tampa Bay, Nikita Kucherov scored his 21st goal, and the Lightning beat the Detroit Red Wings 3-1 on Wednesday night.

"You never know how things are going to go," Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said. "They had quite a long break, a little longer than ours. To come out with a win, especially against a good team you're battling with, it's big for us."

The Lightning moved two points ahead of Detroit for second place in the Atlantic Division. The Red Wings won two earlier meetings between the teams this season in Detroit.

J.T. Brown and Tyler Johnson also scored for the Lightning, who have won nine of 10.

Gustav Nyquist had Detroit's lone goal. Petr Mrazek stopped 20 shots and had his seven-game road winning streak end.

Sabres 4, Canadiens 2: Jamie McGinn, Johan Larsson and Brian Gionta all scored in their team's big third period and visiting Buffalo rallied for a comeback victory over slumping Montreal.

Marcus Foligno also scored for Buffalo, which played its first game since the All-Star break and led 2-1 heading into the final period. The Sabres, last in the Atlantic Division, are 6-4-0 in their last 10 games.

Flames 4, Hurricanes 1: Sean Monahan had a goal and three assists to lead host Calgary to a victory over Carolina.

Calgary broke a 1-1 tie midway through the second period when Monahan set up goals 38 seconds apart by All-Stars Mark Giordano and Johnny Gaudreau. Dougie Hamilton also scored for Calgary, which snapped a three-game losing streak.

Elias Lindholm had the lone goal for Carolina, which opened a three-game road trip and started the night 7-2-1 in its last 10.

Flames' Wideman to sit for 20 games

NEWYORK — The NHL suspended Calgary Flames defenseman Dennis Wideman 20 games on Wednesday for cross-checking a linesman last week during a game, the second-longest suspension in NHL history for abusing an official.

Wideman was suspended for violating the league rule on physical abuse of officials after he struck linesman Don Henderson and knocked him down during the Flames' game against Nashville on Jan. 27.

The 32-year-old will forfeit \$564,516 in salary as a result of the suspension. Only Gordie Dwyer of the Tampa Bay Lightning, who was suspended 23 games in part for abuse of officials during an exhibition game in 2000, was suspended longer for such a violation.

In other hockey news:

■ Jack Riley, a former Army hockey coach who won guided the U.S. team to its first Olympic gold medal in 1960, has died. He was 95.

The U.S. Military Academy announced in a statement that Riley died Wednesday in Massachusetts. No cause of death was provided.

From The Associated Press

No. 4 Terps shake off Nebraska

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Maryland found itself in yet another close game, and once again the Terrapins hung on to win.

Freshman Diamond Stone had 16 points, 10 rebounds and a season-high eight blocks in the fourth-ranked Terrapins' 70-65 victory over Nebraska on Wednesday night.

Melo Trimble had 14 of his 20 points in the second half as the Terps overcame a slew of turnovers to improve to a national-best 19-2 in games decided by six points or less over the past two seasons.

The win allowed the Terps (20-3, 9-2 Big Ten) to remain a half-game behind conference co-leaders Indiana and Iowa.

Stone dunked off an assist from Trimble to give the Terps the lead for good, 60-58, and he dunked again after rebounding Jake Layman's missed free throw to make it 66-61 with 2 minutes to play. The Huskers were within three points when Trimble put the game away with two free throws with 8.2 seconds left.

Andrew White III had 19 points and nine rebounds to lead Nebraska (12-11, 4-6). Shavon Shields was just 4 of 17 from the field and finished with 11 points and seven rebounds.

No. 3 Villanova 83, Creighton 58: Kris Jenkins scored 22 points, Jalen Brunson had 16 and host Villanova rolled past Creighton.

Josh Hart added 13 points and nine rebounds for the Wildcats (19-3, 9-1 Big East), who have won 11 of 12. The Wildcats shot 16-for-29 (55 percent) from three-point range with Brunson and Jenkins each shooting 4-for-6.

No. 5 Iowa 73, Penn St. 49: Jarrod Uthoff scored 14 points and Adam Woodbury had a career-high 15 rebounds

for Iowa.

Peter Jok scored 12 points and Anthony Clemmons had 12 points, six rebounds and four assists for the Hawkeyes (18-4, 9-1 Big Ten), who won their 15th straight home game.

No. 6 Xavier 90, St. John's 83: Trevon Bluiett had his fifth double-double of the season, and host Xavier overcame poor shooting to hand St. John's its 13th straight loss.

Bluiett had 15 points and 13 rebounds as Xavier (20-2, 8-2 Big East) got its 20th win faster than any team in school history.

No. 7 Kansas 77, Kansas State 59: Perry Ellis scored 19 points, and Svi Mykhailiuk and Devonte Graham added 10 points apiece, to bail out host Kansas (18-4, 6-3 Big 12) on a night it was dominated on the glass.

Kansas managed two offensive rebounds while getting outrebounded 36-21 by an undersized opponent.

Stephen Hurt had 14 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Wildcats, who have not won at Kansas since 2006 — three coaches ago. Wesley Iwundu added 15 points but also had six turnovers.

No. 9 Virginia 61, Boston College 47: Malcolm Brogdon scored 27 points and host Virginia stretched its winning streak to five games by keeping Boston College winless in ACC play.

Anthony Gill added 10 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers (18-4, 7-3 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won their 16th straight at home and for the 31st time in their last 32 home games against ACC competition.

No. 17 Miami 79, Notre Dame 70: Anthony Lawrence Jr. scored a season-high 18 points on just six shots and Angel Rodriguez added 12 points for host Miami.

Ja'Quan Newton and Sheldon McClellan had 12 points apiece for the Hurricanes (17-4, 6-3 Atlantic Coast Conference).

No. 21 Wichita St. 76, Southern Illinois 55: Fred VanVleet had 12 points and 11 assists to lead host Wichita State.

Shaquille Morris had a season-high 13 points and Anton Grady added 10 for Wichita State (17-5, 11-0 Missouri Valley), which won its 12th straight.

No. 23 Arizona 79, Washington St. 64: Ryan Anderson scored a career-high 31 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to lead visiting Arizona.

Gabe Marks added 14 points and Mark Tollefsen had 12 for the Wildcats (18-5, 6-4 Pac-12).

Army 84, Lafayette 81 (OT): Tanner Plomb scored 22 points including a pair of jumpers in overtime that helped Army edge host Lafayette and snap a four-game slide.

Army (13-10, 4-7 Patriot) trailed 77-75 in overtime when Plomb hit back-to-back jumpers to give his team a 79-77 edge with 1:39 to play. Dylan Cox followed with a three-point play to extend the lead to 82-79 with 50 seconds left and Army led the rest of the way.

Boston University 83, Navy 72: John Papale scored 18 points and Kyle Foreman 17 for visiting Boston University.

Eric Fanning added 15 points for the Terriers (13-11, 6-5), who have won three straight and avenged an 83-76 loss at home to Navy on Jan. 6. Blaise Mbargorba blocked five shots.

VCU 88, LaSalle 70: Melvin Johnson scored 30 points and made 8 of 13 three-pointers and visiting VCU (17-5, 9-0 Atlantic 10) won its 12th straight game.

Jonathan Williams scored a career-high 14 points, Justin Tillman added 13 and the Rams shot 53 percent from the floor and made 11 of 27 three-pointers.