

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Marines ramp up training under Arctic northern lights

BY MARTIN EGNASH  
*Stars and Stripes*

Marines with Marine Rotational Force-Europe are putting the Corps motto “in every clime and place” to the test as they continue with Arctic exercises amid below-zero temperatures in northern Scandinavia.

About 300 Marines recently finished exercise White Claymore, a cold-weather drill that put Marines on skis to learn to fight in Nordic mountains.

Now, a platoon of those Marines is gearing up for the Joint Reindeer exercise in the same region, beginning next week, while another platoon is headed to conduct similar training in Sweden.

“This is extremely different from all the training I have done in the four and a half years I’ve been in the Marine Corps,” said Sgt. William Mclean, who is training with a rotational force in Norway. “I mean, I remember getting to the fleet Marine Force and immediately getting trained to go to war in the desert, and that’s how we trained. But now we have to adapt, and get back to the ‘any clime and place’ mentality. And this training has definitely prepared me and my Marines for that. Because if you can fight in this environment, you can fight anywhere.”

The Marines have been holding more exercises in northern Europe since the Corps agreed with Norway in 2016 to host a rotational contingent on six-month stints.

The goal is to improve survival techniques, mobility and combat capabilities in cold weather while building on relations with Norwegians and other participating nations, said Staff Sgt. Marcin Platek, a spokesman with Marine Corps Forces-Europe and Africa.

The biggest challenge has

**‘If you can fight in this environment, you can fight anywhere.’**

Sgt. William Mclean  
USMC

been staying warm.

“The cold can make doing the simplest task a bit complicated,” said Cpl. Careaf Henson, with MRF-E.

Most Marine bases are close to the equator — in normally warm places like southern California, North Carolina and Okinawa, Japan.

Though most of the Marines in Norway haven’t seen this much snow before, even those from the West Coast were doing fairly well once they were outfitted in their cold-weather gear.

Their gear includes vapor-barrier boots, field stoves and 15-man tents.

“The cold can be horrible if you don’t properly prepare yourself,” said Henson. “If you are wearing the proper warming layers and keeping yourself busy while outside, the cold isn’t that much of a problem.”

The Marines in Norway are also utilizing some newly issued skis and reinforced pack frames to give them added mobility in the snow.

The exercises have the Marines skiing into fighting positions and sometimes posting watch under the northern lights.

“My personal experience has been pretty great. I never thought that I’d ever be in Norway,” Henson said. “The northern lights have probably been one of the most amazing things I’ve seen.”

## Fla. classes resume amid armed officers

Associated Press

PARKLAND, Fla. — About 50 uniformed officers marched into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School early Wednesday, just one aspect of the heavy security as classes resumed for the first time since 17 students and teachers were killed by a troubled teenager with an AR-15, thrusting them into the center of the nation’s gun debate.

The heavily armed police presence, designed to make the community feel secure, is also disturbing in itself, some students said.

“This is a picture of education in fear in this country. The NRA wants more people just like this, with that exact firearm to scare more people and sell more guns,” said David Hogg, who has become a leading voice in the students’ movement to control assault weapons. “I know one of those bullets could be shredding through me if I was misidentified as a school shooter.”

Grief counselors are on campus as well “to provide a lot of love, a lot of understanding” and help students “ease back” into their school routines, Broward Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie said. Officers with therapy dogs also stood outside.

Volunteers passed out cookies and brownies to students. The students were also greeted by therapy animals including a donkey and two horses. One of the horses had “eagle pride” written on it.

Backpacks were not allowed. Wednesday’s class schedule started with 4th period so students and teachers could return to the people they were with during the shooting. The freshman building where the massacre took place remains

cordoned off.

Casey Sherman, a 17-year-old junior, thinks the schedule was a good idea so kids can “get it over with” and not worry about it all day. Up until 11:30 p.m. working on preparations for the March 14 national school walkout against gun violence, she said she’s not afraid to be returning, “just nervous.”

“We did go through a tragedy,” said Sherman, who walked in holding hands with her boyfriend. “It was terrible but if you let it stop you ... it’s not how you go down; it’s how you get back up.”

A long line of cars circled the school, and dozens of television trucks were camped out nearby as students, parents and staff were ushered through a security cordon, past a “Welcome Eagles” banner and a walkway lined with flowers, photographs and other memorials. Some were returning despite severe gun wounds, but even those who weren’t hit by bullets spoke of emotional trauma.

The victims’ relatives kept up the pressure in Florida’s capital Tuesday, with emotional testimony during a legislative hearing on a bill to raise the age limit to buy long guns from 18 to 21 and create a program allowing teachers to carry concealed weapons in their classrooms if their school district allows it, they get law enforcement training and are deputized by the local sheriff’s office.

The Broward superintendent has spoken out firmly against the idea of arming teachers. Hogg also thinks the idea is misguided.

The House Appropriations Committee’s 23-6 vote in favor of the bill Tuesday followed more than four hours of emotional discussion.



## Tech is focus of new schools on Okinawa

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KADENA AIR BASE, Okinawa — A pair of schools that opened their doors this week at the home of the Air Force's 18th Wing are designed to prepare students for the tech-focused jobs of the future.

The new Kadena Elementary School officially debuted with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday. A refurbished Kadena Middle School opened Tuesday. The facilities are part of Department of Defense Education Activity's 21st Century school initiative to build places of learning that might have as much in common with Silicon Valley startups as they do with traditional schools. They feature classrooms without walls called "neighborhoods," collaborative teaching and data-driven instruction.

"We believe the future is here with us already," said DODEA-Pacific spokesman Marc Calero. "If we consider what employers value most today — the ability for employees to absorb, process and make the best possible decisions, combined with the landscape of modern-day offices, production lines or in-the-field consultations — 21st Century schools align our DODEA schools with the 21st century we live in."

Before Wednesday's ribbon-cutting, Kadena Elementary assistant principal Lorri Vallone placed a computer keyboard, a desk telephone with a cord and other items inside a basket that will serve as a time capsule to be opened in 25 years.

Kadena Elementary, which replaces nearby 1950s-era facilities, cost \$75 million, covers 194,000 square feet and caters to 800 pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students, officials said. The new school includes large music rooms, computer labs and two gymnasiums. Spaces in the ceiling and glass windows allow students to see ducts and electrical wiring, with signs explaining how everything works.

The first-grade "neighborhood" includes comfortable couches, bookshelves built into stadium-style seating and rotating walls. Teachers instruct as a team and focus on critical thinking, collaboration and communication, Vallone said. They assess students' grasp of the material and give those who have the toughest time extra instruction.

Some parents expressed reservations about how students who aren't very social or suffer from attention deficit disorder will fit in, but most were willing to give the new school a chance.

"They're excited," Christine Landreth, parent of a fifth-grader, said of the students, adding that she thought the classrooms without walls were interesting.

# Cyber Command head seeks more authority from president

## On Hill, Rogers addresses foreign meddling in elections

By STEPHEN CARLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The leader of U.S. Cyber Command said Tuesday that he needs more authority from the White House to effectively combat foreign interference in American domestic affairs and its elections.

Adm. Mike Rogers, who runs Cyber Command and the National Security Agency, said he would need permission from President Donald Trump to do more to stop meddling from Russia, which has been accused of using cyber tactics to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election through social media and hacking political databases.

"I've never been given specific direction to take additional steps outside my authority. I have taken the steps within my authority, trying to be a good, proactive commander," Rogers told the Senate Armed Services Committee during a hearing on the proposed Cyber Command budget for 2019.

He said he must work within the chain of command at the Department of Defense.

"I'm an operational commander, not a policy maker; that's the challenge for me as a military commander," Rogers said. "I am not going to tell the president what he should or should not do. I'll use my chain of command to make my recommendations to the secretary (of defense)."

Rogers, who took over Cyber Command in April 2014 and is set to retire in the spring, told the committee that he hasn't been ordered by Trump to pursue further options against the Russians and said several times that Cyber Command could be doing more.

**'I've never been given specific direction to take additional steps outside my authority.'**

Adm. Mike Rogers  
Commander of U.S. Cyber Command

"We are not where we need to be," he said.

Rogers did not specify what exactly he'd like to change about U.S. strategy in fighting cyberwarfare, but said, "We have not opted to engage in the behaviors they're engaging in."

Rogers was questioned by several senators from both parties, including Tim Kaine, D-Va., who said, "We've been humiliated as a country."

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., asked Rogers who is in charge in the case of a cyberattack. Rogers said the Department of Homeland Security would take the lead.

"What worries me is whether anyone is in charge," Tillis said.

Rogers also said other departments such as the FBI and the Treasury Department have important roles to play. But he said, so far, the U.S. response hasn't deterred or changed the behavior of the Russians.

"They haven't paid a price," Rogers said. "It certainly hasn't generated the change in behavior that we all know we need."

"State actors have gotten more aggressive, not less aggressive," Rogers said, pointing to Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

## 3 out of hospital after suspicious mail at base near DC

ARLINGTON, Va. — Three Marines who were taken to a hospital after a suspicious piece of mail was opened at a northern Virginia military base have been released.

Leah Rubalcaba, a spokeswoman for Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, said in a news release that the Marines were released Tuesday evening.

Eight other military personnel members said they began to feel ill but were not hospitalized.

Rubalcaba said people on the Marine Corps side of the base began feeling poorly and complaining of sore throats as soon as the mail was opened Tuesday afternoon.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service and FBI are conducting a joint investigation.

The base is across the Potomac River from Washington, bordering Arlington National Cemetery.

From The Associated Press

## Ghani offers cease-fire if Taliban agree to talks

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani urged the Taliban on Wednesday to join peace talks aimed at ending the 16-year war, offering the guerrillas in return a cease-fire and the release of incarcerated insurgents.

Ghani, speaking at the launch of a U.S.-backed peace conference in the Afghan capital, said the group, which is not attending the event, would be recognized as a legitimate political party.

"We are making this offer without preconditions in order to lead to a peace agreement," he said.

He also called for a rapprochement with neighboring Pakistan, which is widely blamed for supporting the Taliban, a claim it denies.

"We will be ready to start talks with Pakistan and forget the bitter experiences of the past and start a new chapter," Ghani said.

Wednesday's meeting was the second of the so-called Kabul Process, which was launched in June to help foster peace negotiations between the government and insurgents.

NATO's Resolute Support mission expressed optimism about the talks.

"It's key to building on the gains we've made militarily," said Navy Capt. Tom Gresback, a mission spokesman.

Kabul and Washington believe a negotiated settlement with the Taliban is the only way

to end America's longest war.

Representatives from about two dozen countries, including the U.S. and Pakistan, as well as the European Union, United Nations and NATO, attended the meeting, during which Afghan officials said they would present a plan for a better structured peace and security process.

The insurgents have refused to enter any discussions with the government on ending the conflict until international forces halt "their invasion" of the country.

"Experience has shown that there is never a positive outcome from these gatherings because no one ever addresses the invasion," Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told Stars and Stripes. "It's just a conference to trick Afghans."

The only significant previous peace talks with the Taliban broke down in 2015. However, the insurgents have recently expressed an apparent willingness to explore another dialogue.

On Monday, the group said in a statement that it would like to talk directly to American officials about "a peaceful solution to the Afghan quandary," saying increasing violence was not "in the interest of anyone."

In "a letter to the American people," delivered on Feb. 14, the Taliban said again that they would prefer to solve the conflict through a peaceful dialogue. That statement came weeks after similar remarks that criticized President Donald Trump for apparently dismissing a peace process.

## Medic disciplined after Snapchat post of body part

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Military medical officials are imposing new social media guidelines after an Army medic at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany posted an operating room photo of a patient's severed body part.

The incident, which occurred in mid-September but was just confirmed Wednesday, provoked unspecified disciplinary action against the medic and a commandwide warning from the Army's top doctor.

"This type of behavior is unprofessional and violates the trust of those we serve, and the tenets of our profession," Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Nadja West said in an email to medical staff.

The image of "unrecognizable body tissue that had been removed" from a soldier was posted to the social media site Snapchat Story, where images automatically expire after 24 hours. However, personnel learned of the incident and ordered that the picture also be deleted from the staffer's phone, LRMCM officials said.

"Another LRMCM staff member saw the image and reported

it up the chain of command. The person responsible was instructed to delete the photo," said Stacy Sanning, an LRMCM spokeswoman.

No protected health information or personally identifiable information was captured in the photo, the hospital said. Consequently, the patient's privacy was not compromised and the patient wasn't notified of the incident, LRMCM said.

"The person responsible for posting the photo was temporarily removed from patient care, and everyone involved received corrective disciplinary action," Sanning said.

LRMCM did not elaborate on the nature of the injury or where it was suffered, but a medical staffer speaking on condition of anonymity said it occurred in a combat zone.

The soldier's motive for posting the image stemmed from his pride in taking part in the procedure rather than in seeking to embarrass or violate the patient's rights, the source said.

LRMCM Commander Col. Timothy Hudson said Wednesday his staff receives training on protecting patient privacy and ensuring patient trust. He warned that ethical breaches can erode that trust.

## GOP lawmaker: VA should study pot to see if can help vets

BY NIKKI WENTLING  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A Republican lawmaker who is a key leader on veterans' issues in Congress said Tuesday that the Department of Veterans Affairs should research medical marijuana — the first indication that he supported study of the drug.

Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., chair-

man of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, spoke to reporters following an address to hundreds of American Legion members gathered for a conference in Washington. He encouraged the VA to study marijuana and said he will let that support be known to VA Secretary David Shulkin.

"There is so much controversy about cannabis now,"

Roe said. "We need to study that drug, like any other drug. Where there are benefits — if there are any — then we use it for what it's researched for."

The comments come as public support for medical marijuana from individual veterans and major veterans service organizations has grown during the past year. The American Legion has strongly advocated for more

research into marijuana and has urged Congress to remove it from the list of Schedule I drugs, which include heroin, LSD, ecstasy and others designated as having no medical use.

Many veterans view marijuana as an alternative to addictive opioids, and some of them have gone to Capitol Hill in recent months to share their stories.



# Kushner's security clearance downgraded

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The security clearance of White House senior adviser and presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner has been downgraded, significantly reducing his access to classified information, according to two people informed of the decision.

Kushner had been operating with an interim clearance at the “top secret/sensitive compartmented information” level for more than a year. Now he is authorized to access information only at the lower “secret” level, according to a White House official and a person familiar with the decision, both of whom spoke on condition of anonymity. Neither source was authorized to discuss the decision publicly.

Tuesday's news set off rampant speculation among Trump allies that Kushner's days in the White House might be numbered. On the same day, the departure of a third Kushner ally in the West Wing in as many months was announced. And the selection of a Kushner ally to serve as Trump's 2020 campaign manager appeared to suggest the campaign could provide Kushner with a convenient place to land after his White House duties end.

Kushner lost his access to the nation's deepest secrets after chief of staff John Kelly ordered that White House officials with interim clearances pending since before June 1, 2017, be cut off if they hadn't received permanent clearances by last

Friday. A White House official confirmed to The Associated Press that Kelly's order has been implemented.

President Donald Trump could have reversed Kelly's decision and offered Kushner a clearance, but deferred to Kelly. Kushner is one of dozens of White House aides who have been working without permanent security clearances for the better part of a year. His attorney told the AP that Kushner's ability to do his job won't be affected by any change to his clearance.

Kushner's portfolio once included the U.S. relationships with China and Japan and a host of domestic priorities, including infrastructure, trade and economic development. But his freewheel-

ing reach in the foreign policy space — which was viewed as undermining Secretary of State Rex Tillerson — already had been curtailed somewhat under Kelly.

Still, Kushner is reportedly said to have reviewed the highly secret presidential daily brief and has been in the room for some of Trump's most consequential domestic and foreign policy decisions.

The Washington Post reported Tuesday that officials in at least four countries had privately discussed ways they could manipulate Kushner by taking advantage of his complex business arrangements, financial difficulties and lack of foreign policy experience.

## Hicks acknowledges 'white lies' for Trump, but not on Russia

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — White House communications director Hope Hicks acknowledged to a House intelligence panel that she has occasionally told “white lies” for President Donald Trump but has not lied about anything relevant to the Russia investigation, according to those present for Hicks' closed-door testimony.

Hicks was interviewed for nine hours Tuesday by the panel investigating Russia interference in the 2016 election and contact between Trump's campaign and Russia. One of Trump's closest aides, Hicks was his spokeswoman during the 2016 presidential campaign.

The top Democrat on the intelligence panel, California Rep. Adam Schiff, said after the meeting that Hicks answered questions about her role in Trump's campaign and answered some questions about the transition period between the election and the inauguration. But she would not answer any questions about events since Trump took the oath of office, similar to some other

White House officials who have spoken to the committee. Schiff said Hicks did not assert executive privilege, but just said she had been advised not to answer.

Hicks did answer a question about whether she had ever lied for her boss, saying she had told “white lies” for Trump on occasion, according to a person familiar with the testimony. The person, who declined to be named because the committee's interviews are not public, said Hicks told the panel she had not lied about anything substantive.

Republican Rep. Tom Rooney, of Florida, a member of the intelligence panel who was in the interview, said Hicks' answer was completely unrelated to the Russia investigation.

“When specifically asked whether or not she was instructed to lie by the president, or the candidate, with regard to Russia, the investigation or our investigation, the answer to that question was no,” Rooney said. “And that's our jurisdiction. Not whether or not he asked her to cancel a meeting for him, or something like that.”

## EU prods Britain as it releases Brexit details

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Concerned that time is fast running out, the European Union moved Wednesday to force Britain's hand in Brexit negotiations by publishing a draft text that provocatively distills into legal language what they have — and what they have not — agreed on so far about Britain's departure.

Britain officially leaves the EU on March 29 next year, but Brexit talks must conclude this fall so parliaments have time to ratify the final withdrawal agreement. The new text summarizes all aspects of the talks so far but takes a tough line on issues where British input is lacking.

“If we want to succeed in these negotiations — and I want to succeed — we must accelerate,” EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said Wednesday as he unveiled the document. “In 13 months the U.K. will no longer be a member of the European Union. That's what it wanted.”

While rumors about the document's content has already angered some on the other side of the English Channel, Barnier told reporters that “this draft text contains no surprises for our

British friends.”

EU leaders have been pushing Prime Minister Theresa May to provide more details about how she sees the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland operating, how long a transition period should last to help ease Britain out from next year, and to explain her government's vision of their future relations. They have been frustrated by the lack of feedback, with negotiations essentially at the half-way mark. By translating progress, or the lack of it, into a legal text, the EU is ramping up pressure on May, whose government is creaking amid divisions from within and growing pressure from across the aisle in parliament.

By far the most contentious section of the 120-page text — which is a draft and likely to be significantly altered — concerns the transit of goods, services and people across the border between EU member state Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom.

Britain and the EU agreed in December that the all-but-invisible border would remain open after Brexit in 2019, but they left it unclear how that would happen in practice.



## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Motorists offered treat as relief from potholes

**MI** FRANKLIN — A suburban Detroit business is offering a treat for those who have had their driving disrupted by potholes in recent weeks.

The Detroit Free Press reported Farmhouse Coffee & Ice Cream in Franklin is offering a free scoop of Ashby Sterling Ice Cream's "Michigan Pothole" for those who have replaced a tire or fixed other damage due to a pothole.

The newspaper said that to get a scoop, bring in a receipt from Feb. 1 and beyond detailing the repair. The promotion runs until March 25. The ice cream flavor is described as "thick black tar fudge and chocolate ice cream with chunky chocolate cookie asphalt pieces."

### School sorry for player using bat as fake gun

**TX** VICTORIA — A South Texas school district apologized for the actions of a baseball player who used a bat as a fake gun to simulate a sniper shooting at opposing players from the dugout.

Victoria Independent School District Athletic Director Leonard McAngus said that the player's behavior during a game last week was "inappropriate."

The Victoria East High School player, who was not in uniform, used athletic tape and items resembling a cartridge and gun handles to make the bat resemble a rifle.

### Casino worker arrested in lobster tails theft

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Police in Las Vegas said an employee of the Bellagio casino-resort was arrested for stealing 25 lobster tails.

Authorities said cook Alex

Hernandez, 49, was detained by hotel security Sunday after he was caught putting the lobster in his backpack and walking out a back door.

The lobster tails were worth about \$1,900.

Police said he is facing one count of embezzlement.

### Substance brought by inmate sickens officers

**OH** MECHANICSBURG — Authorities are investigating a suspicious substance brought by an inmate to an Ohio jail where five officers then fell ill with symptoms including nausea and vomiting.

The Springfield News-Sun reported three sheriff's deputies and two corrections officers became sick Monday shortly after the woman was booked into the Tri County Regional Jail in Mechanicsburg, about 30 miles northwest of Columbus. The officers were taken to hospitals for treatment.

Jail officials were monitoring the inmate, who didn't show similar symptoms.

Investigators didn't immediately identify the substance or share details about it.

### City bans single-use plastic straws, cutlery

**CA** MALIBU — Malibu has banned single-use plastic straws, stirrers and cutlery.

The City Council voted Monday to approve an ordinance prohibiting the sale, distribution and use of the plastic items starting June 1. Mayor Rick Mullen said it's an effort to stop plastic pollution at the source so it doesn't reach Malibu's beaches and the ocean.

Businesses will have to switch from plastic to single-use straws and cutlery made from materials such as paper, wood and bamboo.

### Official responds to \$100K bathroom news

**MA** BOSTON — Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack has issued a statement saying the agency will be "more careful" in the future after an investigation revealed transportation officials authorized a no-bid contract for a small \$100,000 bathroom.

The 115-square-foot bathroom and adjoining kitchenette were installed last year at the State Transportation Building inside the new state Transportation Department and MBTA board room. The project was fast-tracked and not put up to bid, which is usually done to make contractors compete and keep costs down.

A spokesman for the department previously said the bathroom was needed because board members are sometimes followed to a nearby public restroom by reporters during public meetings.

### Police: Suspect drives off during traffic stop

**CT** GROTON — Police said a Connecticut man sped away from a traffic stop and drove for about a mile with a police officer hanging partially out of the car.

Groton police said Officer Tyler DeAngelo struggled with the driver, Taj Dickerson, as Dickerson allegedly put the vehicle in drive and sped off with the driver's side door still open.

Police say the officer had to grab the steering wheel when the suspect appeared to be driving toward a telephone pole. DeAngelo then fell from the car onto the road.

Police said Dickerson was about to be arrested on drug charges early Monday when he drove off. He was stopped and

arrested in New London. He faces charges including assault on a police officer.

### County mulls beer, wine at salons, barbershops

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Clark County Commissioners are considering an ordinance that would allow customers at salons and barbershops to buy beer or wine while getting their haircut.

The Las Vegas Sun reported Commissioner Lawrence Weekly said the Clark County proposal was pushed by industry, with business owners saying many customers asked if they offered drinks. The National Conference of State Legislators said at least seven states have approved alcohol service at salons, barbershops and spas. California approved its law allowing free beer or wine in 2016, with similar laws on the books in Maryland, Mississippi, Utah, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia.

### Man survives being shot 9 times in home robbery

**TX** KATY — A 29-year-old suburban Houston man survived being shot nine times in a robbery outside his home.

Janie Davis said she found her son, Chris Daniels, lying in the driveway and covered with blood outside their home in Katy. She told Houston television station KPRC that Daniels told her he was smoking outside the home's garage when two men walked up and demanded his wallet. He was shot during the ensuing struggle.

Daniels, a father of three who works as a diesel mechanic, was hospitalized with leg and arm wounds. Doctors also had to remove his spleen and one of his kidneys.

From wire reports

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# Corruption rocks college basketball

Associated Press

The cracked facade of NCAA hoops appears to be crumbling and while LeBron James, John Calipari and many agree that college basketball should be overhauled, there's no consensus on how to repair the system.

A federal investigation has alleged hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes and kickbacks being funneled to influence recruits, an FBI probe that many fans believe reveals just a tiny slice of potential corruption in college sports.

In September, the Justice Department arrested 10 people, including four assistant coaches from Arizona, Southern California, Auburn and Oklahoma State. Payments of up to \$150,000, supplied by Adidas, were promised to at least three top high school recruits to attend two schools sponsored by the shoe company, according to federal prosecutors.

A report last week by Yahoo! Sports revealed documents showing dozens of prominent players, coaches and schools could be involved in — while likely not criminal behavior — breaking NCAA rules. All this looms over college basketball as March begins, the month when championship tournaments and brackets take center stage across America. The cash cow of college sports that brings in hundreds of millions of dollars to the NCAA annually.

The NCAA has already announced the formation of the commission on college basketball, headed by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, to recommend changes.

"I don't know if there's any fixing the NCAA. I don't think there is," said James, who never played in college, jumping from high school to the NBA at a time when that had not yet been prohibited by the league.

"The NCAA is corrupt — we know that," the Cleveland Cavaliers superstar said.

Fingers point in several directions about the reasons for the problems, including the

NCAA itself, the age limit to enter the NBA, paying college athletes. Here is a more in-depth look at some of them:

## Schools are the NCAA

**Currently:** The most common misconception about college sports' governing body is that it is an independent organization that governs the schools. The NCAA is a voluntary association of the schools and that membership ultimately determines the rules — like what payments to an athlete or his family members are allowable. NCAA President Mark Emmert is the face and voice of the association, but — unlike a commissioner of a professional league — he has very limited power beyond being a potential catalyst for change. Or protector of the status quo.

**The talk:** There are 351 schools that play Division I basketball from powerhouse Kentucky to tiny St. Francis College in Brooklyn, N.Y. Priorities range far and wide and what an Atlantic Coast Conference school sees as a potential fix to the system, an Atlantic Sun school could see as a threat to what little competitive balance exists in D-I. The result is many of the potential remedies floated for corruption in college sports don't actually involve NCAA changes.

## One-and-done

**Currently:** The NBA instituted a rule 12 years ago that prohibited players from entering the draft before they were at least 19 and a year removed from high school. The NCAA has no control over this rule. The NFL rule — which requires players be three years removed from high school — is also problematic, but high school-aged football players are not generally as close as basketball players to being pro-ready.

**The talk:** There is much buzz about change. One option would be to let pro-ready high school seniors enter the NBA Draft and make players who chose to attend college stay at least two

years. The rule only impacts the top players. Since 2006, 66 one-and-done players have been NBA Draft lottery picks — and that's after a record 11 in last year's draft.

And while age is a hot-button issue, several players who played two or more college seasons were listed in probe documents as potentially accepting impermissible payments, according to Yahoo.

When Pistons coach Stan Van Gundy slammed the NCAA recently as "maybe the worst organization in sports," he pivoted to point blame at the league where he works, even suggesting the one-and-done rule was racist in how it limits black athletes.

"I don't get it. You can get out of high school, you can turn 18, let's say, and go to work anywhere else," Van Gundy said.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said during the recent All-Star break his league is "conflicted" about one-and-done. The players' union and teams both benefit from players using a year of college to develop skills, mature and grow name recognition before they enter the NBA and start pressuring veteran players.

## Paying players

**Currently:** Nixing the one-and-done rule would still leave some college players with value to agents, coaches and shoe companies. And the NCAA has no means to compensate players at full value. But facing pressure from antitrust lawsuits, NCAA schools changed rules in 2015 to allow athletic scholarships to include a cost-of-attendance stipend. Those payments range from about \$2,000 to \$5,000 per year.

**The talk:** Paying athletes something akin to a salary is a nonstarter for those in college sports, problematic because of tax issues and federal Title IX requirements. More importantly, schools could never pay an elite athlete enough to eliminate the potential for corruption.

## Compensation

**Currently:** The NCAA not only doesn't allow schools to pay players beyond the value of a scholarship, but also prohibits others from paying athletes for being athletes. This could be where a realistic solution lies. A federal judge ruled in 2014 the NCAA used the names, images and likenesses for athletes for years without proper compensation for things such as video games and merchandise.

**The talk:** "There may be something similar to the Olympic model," Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "It used to be the Olympians couldn't make a dime. Now you see Michael Phelps or Lindsay Vonn in commercials. They're still in the Olympics. Still doing great. People loved the Olympics. So, there's a way."

## Agents

**Currently:** The NCAA's five wealthiest conferences — the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern Conference — recently passed legislation allowing college hockey players to be represented by an agent before entering school. Similar allowances were already available to baseball players. In both those sports, major professional leagues draft high schoolers.

**The talk:** If the NCAA allowed athletes to have financial agreements and business dealings with agents and companies that wanted to capitalize on their fame and long-term earning potential, the current scandal might not be a scandal at all.

Calipari, whose Kentucky program has embraced and thrived with a foundation of NBA-bound players, said the NCAA needs to consider some way to provide advisers to basketball players. And as for providing money, the coach suggested the NBA Players' Association as a possible solution.

"Let their family get a loan from the Players Association," Calipari said.

## NBA roundup

## James' triple-double powers Cavaliers

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — LeBron James had quite a February, and continues a one-of-a-kind career.

He finished the month averaging a triple-double for the first time in his career after having 31 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists on Tuesday night in the Cleveland Cavaliers' 129-123 win over the Nets. James has 12 triple-doubles this season and 67 in his career.

"Scoring has always been last for me," James said. "I've never looked at myself as a scorer. But to know the history of the game and seeing the guys that put up triple-doubles on a regular (basis) from Jason Kidd to Magic Johnson to Oscar Robertson to Russell Westbrook, you can throw my name in there as well."

His 11th assist on Tuesday came late in the game and gave him 8,000 in his career. He's the first player in NBA history with 30,000 points, 8,000 re-

bounds and 8,000 assists.

"With the long list of so many great players that have come through this league, in the history of this league, for me to be the only (person) in a category, I think it's pretty cool," James said. "It's pretty cool."

James also became the first frontcourt player and the 11th overall in league history to reach 8,000 assists.

Rodney Hood's three-point play with 40 seconds remaining gave Cleveland a 123-121 lead. James and George Hill hit two free throws each in the final 16 seconds to seal the win.

**Heat 102, 76ers 101** Dwyane Wade scored a season-high 27 points, the last of those coming on a jumper that gave his team its only lead of the fourth quarter with 5.9 seconds left, and host Miami rallied to beat Philadelphia.

Wade had 15 of his points in the fourth quarter, and the Heat won a game where they never led by more than three.

Joel Embiid scored 23 points

for Philadelphia, which got 21 from Dario Saric. The 76ers led by as many as 10 in the fourth and had a chance to win at the buzzer, but JJ Redick's wide-open three-point try bounced off the rim.

**Hornets 118, Bulls 103:** Kemba Walker scored 31 points and Dwight Howard added 24 after returning from a first-quarter back injury as host Charlotte knocked off Chicago to win its season-best fifth game in a row.

Zach LaVine led seven Bulls players in double-digits with 21 points as Chicago (20-41) dropped its fifth consecutive game.

**Wizards 107, Bucks 104:** Bradley Beal scored 21 points, hitting a clutch three-pointer and a free throw down the stretch to help visiting Washington hang on for a victory over Milwaukee.

Otto Porter Jr. added 17 points and Markieff Morris 14 for Washington, which stayed hot after snapping Philadel-

phia's seven-game winning streak Sunday.

**Clippers 122, Nuggets 120:** Lou Williams scored 25 points and Boban Marjanovic added a season-high 18 as visiting Los Angeles overcame a 19-point deficit in the third quarter to beat Denver.

Austin Rivers added 17 points and Montrezl Harrell had 15 for the Clippers, whose bench outscored Denver's reserves 54-4 in the second half.

**Trail Blazers 116, Kings 99:** Damian Lillard had 26 points and 12 assists, and host Portland won its fourth straight with a victory over Sacramento.

Jusuf Nurkic added 17 points and nine rebounds for Portland, which sits in fifth place in the Western Conference — a game back of San Antonio — after winning five of its last six games. The current four-game winning streak matched the team's longest of the season.

Zach Randolph had 20 points for the Kings, who lost their fifth straight overall.

## College basketball roundup

## Newton's buzzer-beater lifts Miami over North Carolina

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Miami had just seen the last of its 16-point lead vanish with only a few seconds left when Ja'Quan Newton took an inbounds pass and sprinted upcourt.

Time for one more shot, he thought.

And what a remarkable shot it was.

Newton hit a running three-pointer from a few steps across midcourt at the horn, lifting Miami to a 91-88 upset of No. 9 North Carolina in a wild finish Tuesday night.

"I've made a buzzer-beater before but not at this type of level," Newton said. "This is one thing I've always dreamed

about. ... For me to actually do it right now at this moment, out there against North Carolina, that's something I will remember forever."

UNC's Joel Berry II had just hit a tough three of his own with 4.1 seconds left, tying the game to complete the Tar Heels' big second-half comeback. But Newton cut across the lane to take the inbounds pass in stride from Anthony Lawrence II, then launched the shot off his left foot over Berry from beyond 30 feet.

**Arkansas 91, No. 14 Auburn 82:** Daniel Gafford had 21 points and 10 rebounds to lead Arkansas to its sixth win in seven games.

**No. 16 Tennessee 76, Mis-**

**issippi State 54:** Admiral Schofield had 24 points and Lamonte Turner added 12 for the visiting Volunteers, who pulled away in the second half.

**Saint Joseph's 78, No. 17 Rhode Island 48:** James Demery scored 21 points and Taylor Funk had 17 for Saint Joseph's.

**Loyola (Md.) 82, Army 79:** Andrew Kostecka scored 20 points and Andre Walker added 19 with six assists to help Loyola (Md.) beat Army in the first round of the Patriot League tournament in Baltimore.

**TCU 66, Kansas State 59:** Kenrich Williams and the Horned Frogs are rolling toward their first NCAA Tournament berth in two decades, unlike a year ago when a late

slide in the regular season led to their NIT championship.

**Baylor 87, Oklahoma 64:** Terry Maston scored 23 points and host Baylor beat cold-shooting Oklahoma.

**St. Bonaventure 117, Davidson 113 (30T):** Jaylen Adams, Courtney Stockard and Matt Mobley combined to score 96 points and hit all 14 of host St. Bonaventure's three-pointers.

**Missouri 74, Vanderbilt 66:** Jontay Porter ended his shooting slump and visiting Missouri ended its three-game losing streak.

**Vermont 74, Maine 62:** Trae Bell-Haynes scored 16 points, Ernie Duncan and Drew Urquhart each added 14 points and Vermont earned its 10th straight road victory.



# What will Astros' Altuve do for encore?

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — After winning American League MVP last season with another great performance in a stellar young career, many wonder what Jose Altuve will do for an encore.

The Astros aren't among those with questions.

"We joke with him that he's going to be good because he's Jose Altuve," manager A.J. Hinch said.

Altuve led the majors with a career-high .346 average and finished with 204 hits for his fourth straight 200-hit season to become the first Astro to win the MVP since Jeff Bagwell won the NL award in 1994. His heroics continued in the playoffs when he had an MLB-best seven homers, with 14 RBIs and a .310 average to lead the Astros to their first World Series title.

For the 5-foot-6 former underdog who was told repeatedly that he was too small to play in the majors, the honor was something that he always dreamed of.

"You feel like you did something to help your team," he

said. "When they gave me the MVP, it was like: 'OK, I was part of this. I love it.' That makes you keep working hard and trying to get better."

It's hard to imagine how Altuve can be much better than he was last season when he was third in the AL with 32 steals and hit 39 doubles to go with his other gaudy numbers. But he and Hinch don't believe the 28-year-old has hit his ceiling yet and are excited to see what he'll do in 2018.

"He's the first one to tell you that he's got things to work on," Hinch said. "Which for most of us brings a smile to our face, to me brings a smile to my face because I love the fact that he's driven like that."

When asked exactly what he needs to work on, Altuve quickly rattled off a list of things he's focusing on to elevate his game.

"Plenty of things like baserunning and defense. Hitting too," he said. "I can go out there and walk more. I can get on base more. I can make little things on a daily basis better. Be consistent on a daily basis, that's what I want to do."

Entering his eighth major league season, Altuve still approaches each day with the exuberance of a rookie. He's so thankful to have been a part of Houston's turnaround after being one of only a handful of players around when the Astros rebuilding process left them with the worst team in baseball for years.

"I don't know how my teammates feel about the World Series, but I can tell you the way I feel," he said. "I was here when we lost 300 games in three seasons and I was kind of, like, a little depressed when that happened. You want to win. But I think that gave me the opportunity to keep playing, keep getting better and stay here when our team became World Series champions."

Staying positive during those three straight 100-loss seasons from 2011-13 was no easy task, but Altuve said believing in the vision of Houston's front office helped ease the pain of losing night after night.

"I don't know why, but I felt in those times that, OK, we're going to be good," he said. "I believed in (owner) Jim Crane,

I believed in (general manager) Jeff Luhnow. I believed in what they were doing, so I definitely wanted to be part of this when we get there."

Altuve, who has won the AL batting title in three of the last four seasons, doesn't set number goals for himself, but believes that if he helps the team contend for a title again this season, it will mean he's done his job.

"Hopefully I can go out there and help my team," he said. "If I can do that, for me, that's getting better."

Hinch loves Altuve's attitude and smiles broadly when asked what the second baseman's presence does for his teammates.

"When one of your best players or your best player is your best examples, it's something to hold onto and something to treasure as a coach or a manager," he said. "I don't have to worry about guys playing hard. I don't have to worry about energy. I don't have to worry about attention to detail primarily because there's guys like Jose that are built that way."

## NHL roundup

### Devils halt Penguins' 11-game home winning streak

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Taylor Hall equaled the Devils' franchise record with points in 15 straight games, Stefan Noesen scored the only goal of the third period and New Jersey beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 3-2 on Tuesday night.

Noesen, playing in his 100th NHL game, broke a 2-2 tie with his ninth of the season five minutes into the third. He tipped Andy Greene's attempt from the side boards behind Penguins goaltender Casey DeSmith.

Hall equaled a career high with his 27th goal and had an assist. Hall, who missed three games with a hand injury, has

points in the last 22 games in which he's played, scoring 15 goals and 32 points during that span. He's the fifth player in the last 25 years with at least one point in 22 consecutive appearances.

Sidney Crosby scored his 21st goal and Matt Hunwick tallied his fourth for the Penguins, whose 11-game home win streak ended.

**Wild 8, Blues 3:** Eric Staal had three goals and two assists to combine with linemates Mikael Granlund and Jason Zucker for 14 points and propel surging Minnesota over host St. Louis.

**Stars 2, Flames 0:** Ben Bishop made 38 saves and host

Dallas blanked Calgary for his 24th career shutout.

Bishop's shutout was his fifth this season.

**Capitals 3, Senators 2:** Evgeny Kuznetsov scored his 18th and 19th goals of the season to lead host Washington past Ottawa.

**Predators 6, Jets 5:** Roman Josi had five assists, Craig Smith scored twice and Ryan Hartman redirected in the winning goal during his debut with his new team, sending streaking Nashville over host Winnipeg.

**Bruins 4, Hurricanes 3 (OT):** Charlie McAvoy scored 1:08 into overtime and Rick Nash had a goal in his home debut

as host Boston rallied past Carolina.

**Panthers 3, Maple Leafs 2 (OT):** Jared McCann scored at 3:47 of overtime and host Florida beat Toronto.

**Kings 4, Golden Knights 1:** Anze Kopitar scored his 27th goal of the season, Jack Campbell made 41 saves in his second career start and visiting Los Angeles defeated Vegas.

**Sharks 5, Oilers 2:** Evander Kane made an immediate impact in his debut with his new team by assisting on two goals during a four-goal second period and delivering a few big hits that helped host San Jose beat Edmonton.