

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## 3,500 more troops headed for border

BY ROSE L. THAYER

*Stars and Stripes*

Another 3,500 active-duty troops will deploy to the U.S.-Mexico border, House Armed Services Chairman Adam Smith revealed Thursday in a news release blasting Pentagon officials' unwillingness to discuss openly in Congress the military's involvement along the southern border.

Defense officials were called to a House Armed Services Committee hearing Tuesday to discuss the military's border mission and failed to disclose that additional troops would be sent to the border, Smith wrote Wednesday in a letter to acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan admonishing them for withholding information.

"I am deeply troubled that the witnesses did not disclose the upcoming increase in [National Guard], reserve, and active-duty personnel, even though we asked them multiple times during a two-and-a-half-hour hearing what would happen next on the border," Smith, D-Wash., said in a statement about the letter. "They never men-

tioned it, despite the fact that the secretary of defense was revealing an increase in personnel that same day. This was at best an error in judgment, and at worst flat-out dishonesty."

Minutes before defense officials testified Tuesday to the House committee, Shanahan held a news briefing with Pentagon reporters where he revealed a few thousand more troops would be deployed to the southern border.

"The members of the committee would have been extremely interested in discussing what the 3,500 troops going to the border in response to [the Department of Homeland Security's] latest request will be doing there," Smith said. "This is a violation of the executive branch's obligation to be transparent with Congress, which oversees, authorizes, and funds its operations. It also raises questions about whether the Department thinks the policy of sending additional troops to the border is so unjustified that they cannot defend an increase in public."

On Thursday, a defense official who spoke on the condition of anonymity did

not dispute that an additional 3,500 active-duty troops will deploy to the southern U.S. border. He said they could be there by mid-February.

With the 2,300 active-duty troops already deployed in Texas, California and Arizona, the military will have 5,800 troops along the border within weeks. There are also 2,270 National Guard members deployed to those states as well as New Mexico. All the troops are expected to remain along the border through fiscal year 2019, which ends Sept. 30.

Troops are providing various duties in support of Customs and Border Protection agents on the border. Military engineers at the border have already laid 70 miles of concertina wire along the ports of entry, but are now being asked to place an additional 150 miles on existing barriers between ports of entry in Arizona and California by March 31. Military police have and will continue to serve with Border Patrols agents and protect them should it become necessary. Medical and aviation assets also have been deployed in support of Border Patrol.

## Trump blames Russia as US pulls out of nuclear treaty

BY DEB RIECHMANN,  
ROBERT BURNS AND  
MATTHEW LEE

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Friday it is freeing itself from the constraints of a nuclear arms control treaty with Russia and will begin withdrawing from the pact on Saturday.

President Donald Trump blamed the Russians for the demise of the Cold War-era pact, known as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty.

"For too long," Trump said in a written statement issued by the White House, Russia has violated the treaty "with impunity, covertly developing

and fielding a prohibited missile system that poses a direct threat to our allies and troops abroad."

The INF treaty, signed in 1987, has been a centerpiece of superpower arms control since the Cold War. Some analysts worry its demise could fuel a new arms race.

Trump said that on Saturday the U.S. will "suspend its obligations" under the treaty, meaning it will be freed from its constraints, including the testing and deployment of missiles banned by the pact. At the same time, the U.S. will begin withdrawing from the treaty, which will be effective in six months, he said.

He said the U.S. "has fully

adhered" to the treaty for more than 30 years, "but we will not remain constrained by its terms while Russia misrepresents its actions. We cannot be the only country in the world unilaterally bound by this treaty, or any other."

NATO said that if Moscow failed to destroy all new missile systems that Washington insists violate the treaty, "Russia will bear sole responsibility for the end of the treaty."

Trump said his administration "will move forward with developing our own military response options and will work with NATO and our other allies and partners to deny Russia any military advantage from its unlawful conduct."

An American withdrawal had been expected for months, after years of unresolved dispute over Russian compliance with the pact. It was the first arms control measure to ban an entire class of weapons: ground-launched cruise missiles with a range between 310 miles and 3,400 miles. Russia denies that it has been in violation.

U.S. officials also have expressed worry that China, which is not party to the treaty, is gaining a military advantage in Asia by deploying large numbers of missiles with ranges beyond the treaty's limit. Leaving the treaty would allow the Trump administration to counter the Chinese, but it's unclear how it would do that.

# Senate reaffirms commitment to troops in Syria, Afghanistan

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to troops in Syria and Afghanistan, turning on President Donald Trump's push to withdraw servicemembers from those countries.

The Senate voted 68 to 23 on an amendment proposed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell as part of the larger "Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act" legislative package.

"I offered a straightforward amendment to allow for a straightforward debate about the Senate's continued commitment to ongoing missions in Syria and Afghanistan," McConnell, R-Ky., said from the Senate floor ahead of Thursday's vote. "It is not a partisan amendment. It's not complicated. There is no poison pill. Just an opportunity for senators to go on the record

about what the United States should be doing in Syria and Afghanistan."

The vote captures the widening gulf between Trump's view of foreign policy and the upper chamber. It marks the second time that the Senate has turned on Trump's efforts on the world stage in as many months.

Last month, the Senate voted overwhelmingly for legislation that would withdraw U.S. support in the war in Yemen. Senators reintroduced that legislation this week in hopes it could pass in the House this congressional session. Thursday's legislation would also require consideration in the lower chamber.

"I continue to be seriously concerned that precipitously withdrawing U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan will deeply harm American interests and security," Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., said following Thursday's vote and in advance of introducing his own measure.

"The way in which the president announced his Syria withdrawal — with no plan, without consultation with Congress or our allies or consideration of the implications for our partners — is not in our interests."

Menendez said American troops on the ground are on the front line fighting for our interests and also provide leverage to achieve diplomatic success.

Thursday also marks the most stark divide yet between the top Republican in the Senate and the president. McConnell said he had been clear about his views on troop withdrawals in Syria and Afghanistan — which comes weeks after Trump dismissed his former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

"I believe the threats remain. ISIS and al-Qaida have yet to be defeated. And American national security interests require continued commitment to our missions there," McConnell said.

## Levin at ceremony for namesake destroyer

BATH, Maine — Retired Sen. Carl Levin, of Michigan, is going to witness a milestone in construction of the warship that'll bear his name.

Levin, who served as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, attended a keel-laying ceremony Friday at Navy shipbuilder Bath Iron Works for the future USS Carl Levin. Also attending are Navy Secretary Richard Spencer and all four members of Maine's congressional delegation.

The keel-laying ceremony harkens back to the days of sailing vessels when construction began with a keel upon which the ship is built.

Modern warships aren't built that way, so the ceremony marks a milestone in steel fabrication. The 9,500-ton destroyers in the Arleigh Burke class can easily top 30 knots while simultaneously waging war with enemy ships, submarines, missiles and aircraft.

## Warship to bear name of Maine's capital

The next in a class of speedy Navy warships is going to be named in honor of Maine's state capital, Augusta.

Navy Secretary Richard Spencer said Thursday that Maine has been an important part of the U.S. Navy and Marines through every conflict. He said that with the naming of the ship, "Maine is once again proudly ingrained in the annals of American history."

U.S. Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King on Thursday thanked Spencer for "recognizing our state's important contributions to the Navy and to our national security."

Littoral combat ships were designed to meet new threats after the Cold War. They can reach speeds topping 60 mph and can travel into shallower water where traditional warships would bottom out. The future USS Augusta will be built in Mobile, Alabama.

From wire reports

# Army extends paternity leave to 21 days

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Many new fathers now have twice as much paternity leave available to them under a new Army policy designed to give parents more time with their newborns.

The policy, signed last month by Secretary of the Army Mark T. Esper, means that parental leave time will go from 10 to 21 days for fathers or mothers in cases where they are the secondary caregiver of a newborn. The policy also provides more flexibility for mothers as primary caregivers, allowing six weeks convalescence leave after giving birth and another six weeks that can be used at any point within the child's first

year, a statement said.

In the past, mothers were required to use up to 12 weeks of maternity leave immediately after giving birth.

"We want soldiers and their families to take full advantage of this benefit," said Larry Lock, the Army's chief of compensation and entitlements, in the statement.

The Army was required to develop a more flexible policy in connection with provisions in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

The Army said its policy is retroactive to Dec. 23, 2016, which means that soldiers who took only 10 days of paternal leave over the past couple of years can apply to take an ad-

ditional 11 days as a secondary caregiver.

The new policy also permits fathers who are primary caregivers to be granted six weeks of parental leave. But only one parent can be designated as primary caregiver, the Army said.

In the case of retroactive primary caregiver leave, it can be taken up to 18 months from a birth, the Army said.

In 2018, the Air Force, Marines and Navy made similar changes to their parental leave policies.

In June, the Navy and Marines increased leave for secondary caregivers from 10 to 14 days. Like the Army, the Air Force allows secondary caregivers three weeks of leave.

# Midwest waiting to thaw out

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The bitter cold that gripped the Midwest forced commuters to bundle up like polar explorers. By early next week, many of those same people might get by with a light jacket.

Just days after the arctic conditions, forecasts say, the region will seemingly swing into another season, with temperatures climbing by as much as 80 degrees. Experts say the rapid thaw is unprecedented, and it could create problems of its own — bursting pipes, flooding rivers and crumbling roads.

“I don’t think there’s ever been a case where we’ve seen (such a big) shift in temperatures” in the winter, said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the Weather Underground firm. “Past record-cold waves have not dissipated this quickly. ... Here we are going right into spring-like temperatures.”

Although many places remained painfully cold Thurs-

day, the deep freeze eased somewhat, and the system marched east. In western New York, a storm that dumped up to 20 inches of snow gave way to subzero temperatures and face-stinging wind chills. On Friday, the wind chill in some areas was expected to be as low as minus 20 degrees.

In New York City, about 200 firefighters battling a blaze in a commercial building took turns getting warm on buses.

The dangerously cold weather is suspected in at least 17 deaths.

But relief from the bitter Midwestern cold is as close as the weekend. Rockford, Ill., was at a record-breaking minus 31 degrees on Thursday morning but should be around 50 degrees on Monday. Other previously frozen areas could see temperatures of 55 degrees or higher.

The dramatic warm-up will offer a respite from the bone-chilling cold that canceled school, closed businesses and halted trains. But potholes will

appear on roads and bridges weakened by the freeze-thaw cycle. The same cycle can crack water mains and homeowners’ pipes. Scores of vehicles will be left with flat tires and bent rims.

In Detroit, where some water mains are almost 150 years old, city workers were dealing with dozens of breaks, said Palencia Mobley, deputy director of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.

Masters, from Weather Underground, said the polar vortex was “rotating up into Canada” and not expected to return in the next couple of weeks. If it does return in late February, “it won’t be as intense.”

Still, memories of the dangerous cold were bound to linger.

In Illinois, at least 144 people visited hospital emergency rooms for cold-related injuries over two days. Most of the injuries were hypothermia or frostbite, according to a spokesman for the state Department of Public Health.

# Trump now says he and intel chiefs in agreement

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A day after he lashed out at U.S. intelligence agency chiefs over their assessments of global threats, President Donald Trump abruptly reversed course and said that he and the intelligence community “are all on the same page.”

Trump met with his director of national intelligence and other top security officials in the Oval Office Thursday and said afterward that they told him their testimony at a Senate hearing had been “mischaracterized” by the news media.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other Democrats had slammed the president for his comments disparaging Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, CIA Director Gina Haspel and other top security officials.

The officials told Congress on Tuesday that North Korea is unlikely to dismantle its nuclear arsenal and that the Iran nuclear deal is working, contrary to what Trump has claimed.

The intelligence agency chiefs “said that they were totally misquoted and ... it was taken out of context,” Trump told reporters at the White House. “They said it was fake news.”

Coats and other officials presented an update to the Senate intelligence committee on Tuesday on their annual assessment of global threats. In a public report and testimony broadcast on C-SPAN, they warned of an increasingly diverse range of security dangers around the globe, from North Korean nuclear weapons to Chinese cyberespionage to Russian campaigns to undermine Western democracies.

Trump said earlier that intelligence officials were wrong about North Korea, Iran and the Islamic State, which they said remains a terrorist and insurgent threat.

# Trump, Pelosi still disagree on border wall

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has declared that there’ll be no “wall money” in any compromise border security deal as she and President Donald Trump signaled that congressional negotiators may never satisfy his demands for his cherished Southwest border proposal.

Trump, who in recent weeks has expressed indifference to whether the term “wall” or something else is used, clung with renewed tenacity to the word that became his campaign mantra, declaring, “A wall is a wall.” Yet in a series of tweets and statements, he issued conflicting messages about what he’d need to declare victory and suggested that merely repairing existing structures along the boundary could be a major component of a triumph.

Amid signs that Trump’s le-

verage in Congress is atrophying, he seemed to aim one tweet at his conservative followers. He wrote that Democrats “are not going to give money to build the DESPERATELY needed WALL. I’ve got you covered. Wall is already being built, I don’t expect much help!”

Pelosi, D-Calif., left the door open for an accord that could finance some barriers, citing what she said was already existing “Normandy fencing” that blocks vehicles.

“If the president wants to call that a wall, he can call that a wall,” she told reporters Thursday. She added: “Is there a place for enhanced fencing? Normandy fencing would work.”

Yet Pelosi’s other remark — “There’s not going to be any wall money in the legislation” — underscored the linguistic battle underway. It also showed

that Democrats see no reason to let Trump claim a win in a cause that stirs his hard-right voters and enrages liberals.

Trump’s political muscle weakened following Democrats’ capture of House control in the November election. It waned further after his surrender last week in ending a record 35-day partial government shutdown without getting a penny of the \$5.7 billion he’d demanded to start building the wall.

In another sign of his flagging hold over lawmakers, the GOP-controlled Senate-backed legislation on a 68-23 vote Thursday that opposes withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan.

He criticized Democrats’ negotiating stance so far, telling reporters in the Oval Office that Pelosi is “just playing games” and saying GOP bargainers are “wasting their time.”

# Venezuela's Guaido: Leave my family alone

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — The Venezuelan opposition leader challenging Nicolas Maduro's claim to the presidency warned officers from a feared state security unit Thursday to stay away from his family after he accused them of showing up at his apartment in a tense brush with the very force he is trying to persuade to switch allegiance and back him.

A visibly flustered but determined Juan Guaido told a crowd gathered at a university that members of a special police unit known for its brutal tactics had gone to his high-rise apartment in a middle-class neighborhood of Caracas while his 20-month-old daughter was inside.

"I hold you responsible for anything that might happen to my baby," the 35-year-

old lawmaker said as his wife stood beside him.

He rushed home and emerged an hour later holding his smiling daughter, named for Francisco de Miranda, a Venezuelan patriot who paved the way for Venezuela's independence, and described how four agents from the police's Special Action Force had arrived at the building and asked security guards stationed there for his wife.

"Children are sacred," he admonished the agents as a crowd of supporters applauded. "Wives are sacred. So don't cross that red line."

In a statement on Twitter, Venezuela's police denied that special agents had gone to Guaido's home, dismissing the claim as "totally FALSE."

Guaido is at the center of Venezuela's political upheaval as he presses forward with

establishing a transitional government after swearing himself in as the nation's rightful president in a move denounced by Maduro as a U.S.-backed coup.

In a country where the socialist leader's foes often end up behind bars, Guaido has thus far managed to avoid arrest, but in recent days authorities have let it be known that even as his powerful international support grows Guaido isn't untouchable.

On Tuesday, the government-stacked Supreme Court barred Guaido from leaving the country and froze his bank accounts while chief prosecutor Tarek William Saab, a Maduro ally, conducts an investigation into his anti-government activities.

"Once more they are playing the intimidation game," Guaido said. "They're not going to succeed in intimidating this Venezuelan family."

## 20 charged in Chinese birth tourism crackdown

Associated Press

SANTA ANA, Calif. — Dongyuan Li's business was called "You Win USA," and authorities say she coached pregnant Chinese women on how to get into the United States to deliver babies who would automatically enjoy all the benefits of American citizenship.

Over two years, Li, 41, raked in millions through her business, where mothers-to-be paid between \$40,000 and \$80,000 each to come to California, stay in an upscale apartment and give birth, authorities said.

Li, who was arrested Thursday, is one of 20 people charged in the first federal crackdown on birth tourism businesses that prosecutors said brought hundreds of pregnant women to the United States.

Jing Dong, 42, and Michael Wei Yueh Liu, 53, who allegedly operated "USA Happy Baby," also were arrested.

All three pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges including conspiracy, visa fraud and money laundering, according to Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles.

They go to trial March 26.

More than a dozen others, including the operator of a third

such business, also face charges but are believed to have returned to China, prosecutors said.

While it isn't illegal to visit the United States while pregnant, authorities said, the businesses — which were raided by federal agents in 2015 — touted the benefits of having U.S. citizen babies who could get free public education and, years later, help their parents immigrate.

They also allegedly had women hide their pregnancies while seeking travel visas and lie about their plans, with one You Win USA customer telling consular officials she was going to visit a hotel owned by President Donald Trump in Hawaii.

U.S. authorities said the businesses also posed a national security risk since their customers, some who worked for the Chinese government, secured American citizenship for children who can move back to the United States once they're 21 and then sponsor their parents for green cards.

"I see this as a grave national security concern and vulnerability," said Mark Zito, assistant special agent in charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's homeland security investigations.

## National parks rush to repair shutdown damage

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — National parks across the United States are scrambling to clean up and repair damage that visitors and storms caused during the recent government shutdown while bracing for the possibility of another closure ahead of the busy Presidents Day weekend later this month.

Visitors left human waste, piles of trash, graffiti, used unauthorized trails and damaged Joshua trees at the namesake park in California during the 35-day shutdown. Many of the parks went unstaffed, while others had skeleton crews with local governments and non-profits contributing money and volunteers.

National Park Service spokesman Mike Litterst in Washington, D.C., declined to provide a full accounting of the damage at more than 400 locations, saying it was isolated and most visitors took good care of the land.

But conservationists warn that damage to sensitive lands could take decades to recover. Even before the shutdown, national parks faced an estimated \$12 billion maintenance back-

log that has now grown.

President Donald Trump has said another shutdown could start Feb. 15 if he and Democratic leaders can't agree on funding for a U.S.-Mexico border wall, compounding the pressure the park service faces to catch up on repairs and maintenance.

Hiring seasonal workers who typically start in the spring as rangers, fee collectors and hiking guides also has been delayed.

"We're kind of ready to just have a bit more stability," said Angie Richman, a spokeswoman at Arches National Park in Utah.

Arches visitors left human waste outside a restroom, stomped out five trails in a permit-only area that was supposed to be closed and damaged an entrance gate to allow vehicles to drive on snow-covered roads when the park was closed after a storm, Richman said.

At Joshua Tree National Park in Southern California, one of the iconic twisted-limbed Joshua trees was run over by an off-road vehicle and a juniper tree was cut down, said park superintendent David Smith. Several other Joshua Trees were damaged.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Measure would ban charging 'pet rent'

**OR** PORTLAND—Three Oregon lawmakers are looking to give renters a break by eliminating the special fees landlords charge for pets.

KOIN reported that House Bill 2683 would wipe out the monthly fees and with the exception of a deposit, it would prohibit landlords that allow pets in their units from charging tenants additional rent or fees simply based on possession of pets.

The lawmakers who sponsor the bill said it would also prevent rent prices from going up further than they already are in a tight housing market.

Ron Garcia with the Rental Housing Alliance said he feels the bill is misguided and will hurt the people it's trying to help. He said because those fees are needed to compensate for pet wear and tear, he feels landlords will end up charging more for deposits.

## Police chief arrested, charged with DUI

**GA** CLAYTON — Troopers said a Georgia police chief has been arrested on DUI and open container charges.

News outlets report Dillard police Chief Jeremy James Welch, 35, was stopped at a safety check road block Friday night in Clayton.

A Georgia Public Safety Department report said Welch told the trooper he drank a six-pack of beer within the past two hours.

The report said the trooper smelled alcohol inside Welch's pickup truck and saw a Bud Light can in the center console. It said Welch refused to give a blood sample.

## Longtime lumberyard destroyed by fire

**WI** CRIVITZ — A nearly 100-year-old lumberyard has been destroyed by fire in northern Wisconsin.

Fire officials said Crivitz Lumber and Rental is a total loss. The fire Tuesday night proved to be challenging for firefighters dealing with sub-zero temperatures. Eleven fire departments in and around Crivitz worked through the night.

WLUK-TV reported Fire Chief Lukas Deschane calls the fire one of the worst in the village and the extreme temperatures made a bad situation even worse. Firefighters rotated throughout the night to stay safe in the extreme weather.

Deschane said the building's materials, size and location made fighting it difficult. The business opened in 1920. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

## 11 charged in prison drug smuggling plot

**OH** CLEVELAND — The government said 11 people have been charged in a plot to smuggle synthetic drugs into federal prisons by soaking papers in drugs.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Cleveland said drug-infused papers were sneaked into prisons disguised as mail, including fake legal documents and Harry Potter coloring books.

The charges announced Tuesday allege prisoners receiving the mail sold the papers to other inmates for \$500 a page. The pages could be cut into strips and smoked.

Prosecutors allege the smuggling happened between 2015 through 2018 in prisons that weren't identified by authorities.

The indictment said inmates

paid the defendants through a Bureau of Prisons payment system, money orders, wire transfers and other means.

## Human-raised deer gets aggressive

**SC** AIKEN — South Carolina authorities killed a deer that had been hand-raised by humans after the animal became aggressive and attacked several people in Aiken.

Department of Natural Resources biologist Charles Ruth said the 1-year-old male deer had lost its natural fear of humans and become more aggressive around people.

The DNR said the first attack was reported Jan. 16. Days later, Aiken police were called to the scene of an ongoing deer attack and found a scratched and bruised woman.

The DNR said officers found the deer nearby and killed it with a single shot. It said the fur of the well-fed and healthy deer indicated it had worn a collar for some time.

## Man sentenced for attack with shovel

**MA** BARNSTABLE — A man who attacked a woman with a shovel, breaking her jaw, has been sentenced to up to six years in prison.

The Cape Cod Times reported that Kern Birkett, 35, pleaded guilty to charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, vandalizing property, witness intimidation, assault and battery causing serious bodily injury and assault and battery on a household member.

The Brockton man was also sentenced to three years of probation.

Prosecutors said Birkett was in a relationship with the victim and caused her a lifetime of

damage after attacking her in Hyannis last July.

## Voters may decide on Sunday liquor sales

**SC** COLUMBIA — South Carolina lawmakers are a step closer to approving legislation to allow voters to decide on Sunday liquor sales.

Members of a House subcommittee voted for a bill Thursday to allow for an ordinance or referendum by local jurisdictions to allow liquor to be sold on Sundays. The bill said 10 tourist counties that generate at least \$1 million in accommodation taxes revenue could qualify for a permit to sell liquor between noon and 7 p.m. Current law prohibits the sale of spirits on Sunday.

## Firefighter charged in home arson case

**WV** BRAMWELL — A West Virginia firefighter has been charged with intentionally setting fire to a home in December.

The West Virginia fire marshal's office said Tuesday that Aaron B. Burkett, 26, was charged with first-degree arson and conspiracy in connection with a Dec. 7 fire at a home in Bramwell in Mercer County.

Burkett was arraigned in Mercer County Magistrate Court and released on bond. There was no phone listed in his name online.

The fire marshal's office said the investigation is unrelated to recent arson arrests in McDowell County. In that case, four firefighters were charged with first-degree arson and conspiracy in connection with a series of blazes set over a two-month period last year.

From wire reports

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# Rams' Phillips bridges generation gap

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Wade Phillips doesn't understand why everybody is so impressed by his ability to bridge generations of people and football knowledge with equal aplomb.

The Los Angeles Rams' 71-year-old defensive coordinator sees nothing unusual in his ability to quote lyrics from a month-old Future song right after walking off the team plane at the Super Bowl wearing his 10-gallon cowboy hat and an ancient, iconic sheepskin coat once owned by Bum Phillips, his late, great father.

And though he eagerly makes granddad jokes about his advancing age and his millennial boss, Sean McVay, Phillips is undeniably still at the peak of his profession.

The Rams (15-3) are coming off two outstanding defensive postseason performances as they get ready to face New England and Tom Brady, who had one of the worst outings of his playoff career against Phillips' defense.

During 41 seasons in the NFL, Phillips has survived multiple firings and several unsuccessful head coaching stints to become a well-traveled defensive mastermind. He isn't the type to lecture youngsters on his accumulated wisdom, but a few simple truths underline his life's work.

"You have to be able to adjust," Phillips

said. "You have to learn and grow and get better. That's what coaching is about. Life, too. The game isn't waiting around for you. It's going into the future."

Part of Phillips' future is Future, the Atlanta rapper who gets played in the Rams' training complex. Phillips says he picked up a few bars from "Rocket Ship" this month and then dropped a verse — "I've been poppin' since my demo" — on a disbelieving Aqib Talib for a team video Monday.

But Phillips also carries the accumulated wisdom of his past into this late-career renaissance.

After making the Super Bowl once in his first 37 seasons of NFL coaching, Phillips is back in the big game for the second time in four seasons. He won his first championship ring with the Denver Broncos just three years ago.

"We try to let the guys know you have to appreciate this opportunity," Phillips said. "You don't know if it'll ever happen for you, and they're getting it now. Even if you're a younger player, you can understand that, I think. So we just remind them."

Phillips' clever expeditions into another generation's culture happen too often to be just a goof. He is genuinely interested in learning about his players' experiences,

just as much as he was in the late 1970s as a 30-year-old assistant under his father with the Houston Oilers.

While Phillips listens to whatever music is playing at the Rams' training complex, he prefers Drake and likes Migos. He plays video games with his grandson, and he showed up at training camp last July with a "Fortnite Legend" T-shirt, claiming his squad would probably win a Battle Royale if he tried.

Unsurprisingly, Phillips is universally popular with his Rams. Talib agreed to move from Denver to Los Angeles partly because he would be reunited with Phillips, and he joked that his eventual retirement plan is to "just chill with Wade."

Phillips' defenses historically have struggled against New England — just like almost everybody else's defenses — but his Denver Broncos thoroughly stifled the Patriots three years ago to reach the Super Bowl. Phillips isn't promising a repeat with the Rams.

"Coach Wade always has something to show them," Talib said. "He's always planning, always thinking."

When told about Talib's faith, Phillips replied: "Oh, he knows I don't think a whole lot."

## Develin is 'the hammer' that powers Pats' run game

Associated Press

ATLANTA — James Develin will reach into his past every now and then by pulling out one of his notebooks from his junior and senior years at Brown University.

The New England Patriots fullback flips through a few pages, shakes his head and can barely recognize what he scribbled on them on his way to earning a degree in mechanical engineering in 2010.

"It's just like looking at a whole different language," Develin said with a big smile at the Patriots' team hotel Wednesday. "I have no idea the stuff I did."

That's because Develin, 30, has been fully focused on football the past nine years. More specifically, as the bruising, bulldozing fullback who smashes holes through defensive lines and powers the way for the Pa-

triotics' running game.

"You've just got to be tough, got to be nasty, got to be physical," running back James White said. "And he's all of that."

Develin is a bit of an anomaly in today's NFL, playing a position that doesn't even exist on many teams. Only 14 of 32 squads regularly lined up a fullback — something that would have been unheard of up until a handful of years ago as two-back sets were common for decades.

With a shift to faster, spread-out offenses, the need for a big bopper in the backfield has dwindled.

Except in places such as New England, which has used Develin on 68 snaps this postseason — a number that could represent a whole regular season's worth for some of today's fullbacks.

"I think the fullback posi-

tion has always kind of got the moniker that it's a dying breed, that it's kind of on its way out, but I think football is such a matchup game and things work so cyclically," Develin said. "As defenses get smaller and try to stop the passing attack, it kind of leaves them susceptible to, with lighter, faster guys on the field, for a power running game."

"I think there's always going to be a legitimate use for a fullback and I'm just happy to be out there doing what I do."

What Develin, who can squat 670 pounds and bench press 500, does isn't always seen in the game stats. Taking on defensive linemen and blitzing linebackers looking to blow up plays in the backfield is the fullback's responsibility.

For Develin, that means bursting open holes for the likes of White, Sony Michel

and Rex Burkhead. He thinks of himself as the "bodyguard" for the running backs.

On the AFC championship-clinching 2-yard TD run by Burkhead, it was Develin who made a terrific block to clear things in front of him.

"I want to be the hammer," Develin said. "Not the nail."

That's how it is during most games for the 6-foot-3, 255-pound bruiser. He has 13 career regular-season carries for 23 yards and five touchdowns, including four this season. Develin also set a career best with 12 catches for 61 yards.

He has two rushes for 5 yards in the playoffs this year, and a 9-yard catch, all while setting the tone for a Patriots running game that has averaged 165.5 yards this postseason — second only to New England's Super Bowl opponent, the Los Angeles Rams (175.0).

# Knicks deal Porzingis to Mavs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Knicks were having their doubts, wondering if Kristaps Porzingis truly wanted to be part of the franchise.

On Thursday, they say he made it clear he didn't.

Once that happened, they decided to trade the All-Star forward who was thought to be one of the key players for their future.

"When he came in today, it was clear to us that it was time to pull the trigger on something," Knicks President Steve Mills said.

That was a seven-player swap with the Dallas Mavericks that also netted New York two future first-round draft picks and possibly enough room to afford two top free agents this summer.

Porzingis has been sidelined for nearly a year after tearing his left ACL. The Knicks said recently he would undergo testing during the middle of February that could have determined if he would be able to return this season.

If it does, it will be in Dallas, where he can form an intriguing international frontcourt with rookie Luka Doncic. Both played professionally in Spain before coming to the NBA as top-five picks.

"He's big, he can shoot, he can rebound. He can do a lot of things," said Doncic, who was with the Mavericks at their game in Detroit. "I think he can be one of the best players in this league."

The Knicks acquired Dennis Smith Jr., DeAndre Jordan and Wesley Matthews in the deal, while also sending guards Tim Hardaway Jr., Trey Burke and Courtney Lee to Dallas. New York general manager Scott Perry said the

Knicks would get an unprotected pick in 2021 and the other pick would be in 2023.

"We feel like we did the right thing," Mills said. "When you're trying to think about how you want to build your team for the long term, you don't want to commit a max (contract) to a player who clearly says to you he doesn't want to be here," Mills said.

The most valuable player in the deal from the Knicks' standpoint is likely Smith, the point guard they passed on with the No. 8 pick in 2017 when they instead took Frank Ntilikina. The Mavericks took Smith one pick later, and he posted the second triple-double of his career Wednesday when Dallas won at Madison Square Garden.

Jordan is a former U.S. Olympian and top defensive center. The Knicks said they wanted to keep Jordan and Matthews, believing they could help their younger players.

The 7-foot-3 Porzingis was the No. 4 pick in 2015 and averaged 17.8 points and 7.1 rebounds in New York, where he was expected to be the Knicks' franchise player for years. But they declined to give him a contract extension before this season — they say he was in agreement with that decision — and now by trading him and Hardaway seem instead to be gearing up to pursue players in free agency, with nearly \$70 million in cap space.

New York (10-40) has the worst record in the NBA and is headed toward landing a high pick in the draft. Then the Knicks will be set up to be big spenders in a free agent market that could include Kevin Durant, Kawhi Leonard, Kyrie Irving and more.

## Davis picked as All-Star reserve; four first-timers in

Associated Press

New Orleans has an All-Star for the sixth straight year.

That is, unless he gets traded first.

Pelicans standout Anthony Davis — only three days removed from having his trade request made known publicly — was one of the 14 players announced Thursday as reserves for the All-Star Game in Charlotte. Davis wants to be swapped out of New Orleans by the Feb. 7 trade deadline, so it remains unclear if his uniform for the All-Star contest on Feb. 17 will bear a Pelicans logo or not.

It's the sixth consecutive All-Star nod for Davis. The Pelicans aren't sure if he'll play for them again, though there's also no guarantee that he gets traded by next week either.

The other Western Conference reserves were Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook, Denver's Nikola Jokic, Portland's Damian Lillard, Golden State's Klay Thompson, San Antonio's LaMarcus Aldridge and Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns.

Indiana's Victor Oladipo was selected as one of the Eastern Conference reserves, even though his season is over because of injury. The other reserves from the East were Toronto's Kyle Lowry, Milwaukee's Khris Middleton, Philadelphia's Ben Simmons, Washington's Bradley Beal, Detroit's Blake Griffin and Orlando's Nikola Vucevic — the first Magic player to make the game since Dwight Howard in 2012.

Jokic, Middleton, Simmons and Vucevic are the first-time All-Stars. Vucevic's teammates were as happy as he was to get the word.

"To see somebody be rewarded for their hard work, that's great," Orlando's Terrence Ross said.

Fans, media and players collaborated on the voting for the starters. The reserves were picked by NBA coaches.

## Roundup

### Lebron leads Lakers to OT win in return

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James had 24 points and 14 rebounds in his return from a 17-game injury absence, and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Clippers 123-120 in overtime Thursday night after blowing a 14-point, fourth-quarter lead.

James came up one assist shy of a triple-double. He made 5 of 7 free throws and had no fouls in 40 minutes of his first game since Christmas at Golden State when he strained his left groin. The Lakers were 6-11 during the longest absence of his 16-year career.

Tied 118-all, James scored the go-ahead basket in overtime. Lance Stephenson drove for a flailing layup, hitting Boban Marjanovic in the nose with his left elbow while getting fouled. He completed the three-point play that kept the Lakers ahead 123-118.

Avery Bradley and Lou Williams missed on the same possession, and Williams missed a free throw when Stephenson got called for a technical in a tussle with Bradley.

**76ers 113, Warriors 104:** Joel Embiid had 26 points and 20 rebounds to spoil DeMarcus Cousins' home debut with the Warriors, and visiting Philadelphia snapped Golden State's NBA-best 11-game winning streak.

**Bucks 105, Raptors 92:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 19 points, Khris Middleton had 18 and Milwaukee ended host Toronto's season-best home winning streak at 10 games.

**Pistons 93, Mavericks 89:** At Detroit, Andre Drummond had 24 points and 20 rebounds as the Pistons rallied from a nine-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat undermanned Dallas.

**Spurs 117, Nets 114:** Derrick White scored a career-high 26 points and San Antonio rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Brooklyn for its 16th straight home victory over the Nets.

**Magic 107, Pacers 100:** Terrence Ross scored 13 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter and Orlando beat visiting Indiana, handing the Pacers their fourth consecutive loss.

## Top 25 roundup

# Houston tops Temple, avenges only loss

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Corey Davis Jr. wasn't keeping it a secret: Houston came into this rematch with a chip on its shoulder.

After being called for a charge at the end of a loss to Temple last month, Davis helped seal a 73-66 victory over the Owls on Thursday night.

Davis scored 24 points, DeJon Jarreau added 14 points and 12 rebounds, and No. 13 Houston avenged its only loss this season.

"We came in this whole entire week very focused," Davis said. "We were ready to go, and I think that played into us playing as well as we did."

Jarreau had 10 points in the second half, and Davis finished 12-for-13 from the free-throw line as the Cougars (21-1, 8-1 American Athletic Conference) shot 43 percent from the field. Breanon Brady had 13 points and six rebounds.

Quinton Rose scored 26 points and Alani Moore II added nine points for the Owls (15-6, 5-3), who have lost three of four.

Temple shot 34 percent from the field.

**No. 4 Gonzaga 93, BYU 63:** Brandon Clarke scored 23 points and Rui Hachimura added 20 to lead the visiting Bulldogs (20-2, 7-0 West Coast Conference) over the Cougars (13-10, 5-3).

**No. 17 Purdue 99, Penn State 90 (OT):** Carsen Edwards scored 38 points, including 20 in the first half and a four-point play in overtime, to lead the Boilermakers (15-6, 7-2 Big Ten) past the Nittany Lions (7-14, 0-10).

## NHL roundup

# Flyers beat Bruins for sixth straight victory

Associated Press

BOSTON — Travis Sanheim scored a power-play goal 2:56 into overtime as the Philadelphia Flyers beat the Boston Bruins 3-2 on Thursday night to extend their season-best winning streak to six.

Sanheim assisted on Oskar Lindblom's tying goal with 9:24 left in the third period, then beat Tuukka Rask with a long wrist shot in the final seconds of a power play after Brad Marchand was sent off for tripping.

Claude Giroux also scored for Philadelphia, and Jakub Voracek had two assists. Carter Hart made 23 saves for the resurgent Flyers. They have won seven of eight to improve to 22-23-6 and took the season series against the Bruins 2-1.

David Pastrnak scored both goals for the Bruins. Rask, out with a concussion since Jan. 19, stopped 38 shots in his return. The Bruins lost their third straight.

**Rangers 4, Devils 3:** Mika Zibanejad capped his second career hat trick with the winning goal with 4:36 to play as visiting New York rallied from an early two-goal deficit to beat New Jersey.

Zibanejad also had an as-

sist on Chris Kreider's goal, and linemate Mats Zuccarello had three assists, including the backhand pass that set up Zibanejad's backhand winner. The line had eight points.

Henrik Lundqvist made 19 saves, including a stop on a tip by Brian Boyle after the Devils pulled goalie Keith Kinkaid. Nico Hischier, Marcus Johansson and Egor Yakovlev scored for New Jersey.

**Jets 4, Blue Jackets 3:** Kyle Connor scored with 1:14 remaining to lift host Winnipeg over Columbus.

Winnipeg won its sixth consecutive home game and handed the Blue Jackets their fourth straight loss overall.

Mark Scheifele scored his team-leading 26th goal of the season for the Jets, with captain Blake Wheeler getting his 54th assist. Mason Appleton and Jack Roslovic also scored, and Jacob Trouba had two assists. Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves in the opener of a three-game homestand.

Artemi Panarin got his 20th goal and added an assist for Columbus. Josh Anderson had a power-play goal and Oliver Bjorkstrand also scored.

## MLB briefs

# Rockies avoid arbitration, sign Arenado to \$26M deal

Associated Press

DENVER — Nolan Arenado produces big numbers whether he steps into the batter's box or up to the negotiating table.

The All-Star third baseman and the Colorado Rockies agreed to a \$26 million deal to avoid arbitration on Thursday, the largest one-year salary for an arbitration-eligible player.

"It's a great number. Very happy," Arenado wrote in a message to The Associated Press.

He and his side met with Rockies owner Dick Monfort and general manager Jeff Bridich to hammer out the historic deal.

Josh Donaldson set the previous mark at \$23 million with Toronto last season. Arenado, 27, was set to pass that record even if he went to arbitration.

## Ohtani cleared for strength training

AL Rookie of the Year Shohei Ohtani has been cleared to resume full strength training on his right arm following Tommy John surgery, although he will not be ready to hit for the Los Angeles Angels by opening day.

The Angels expect Ohtani, who had surgery Oct. 1, to be their designated hitter at some point in 2019, but he will not be active when the Angels open the regular season in late March, general manager Billy Eppler said Thursday.

## Miley, Astros agree to \$4.5M, 1-year deal

HOUSTON — The Astros filled an opening in their rotation, agreeing to a \$4.5 million, one-year contract with left-hander Wade Miley.

Miley, 32, could earn \$500,000 in performance bonuses.

## Holland, Diamondbacks finalize deal

PHOENIX — Right-handed reliever Greg Holland and the Arizona Diamondbacks have finalized their \$3.25 million, one-year contract.

Holland, 33, was 2-2 with a 4.66 ERA with St. Louis and Washington last season, when he earned \$14 million. He has a 2.83 ERA in eight major league seasons.