

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Do US troops have a future in Iraq?

The Washington Post

During his State of the Union address on Tuesday, President Donald Trump offered a defense of two recent and controversial foreign-policy decisions: his attempt to pull U.S. troops out of Syria and the administration's peace talks with the Taliban, which could lead to a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Great nations do not fight endless wars," he said. Yet, Trump glossed over Iraq, another country where the United States is fighting a seemingly endless war.

Nearly 16 years after the United States invaded Iraq, about 5,200 U.S. troops remain stationed there. When Trump visited them in December, in his first trip to a conflict zone as commander in chief — and shortly after his unexpected announcement that he planned to withdraw troops from Syria

— it was seen as a reinforcement of the U.S. mission in Iraq.

Trump confirmed no immediate plans to withdraw from Iraq. "In fact, we could use this as the base if we wanted to do something in Syria," he said during his stopover. But while the president and his national security team may want U.S. troops to stay, his words and actions seem to be decreasing the country's tolerance for hosting American forces.

That point was highlighted this week after Trump suggested the U.S. presence in Iraq could be used to "watch" Iran. "We might as well keep it. And one of the reasons I want to keep it is because I want to be looking a little bit at Iran, because Iran is a real problem," Trump said in an interview with CBS on Sunday.

As *The Washington Post* reported Monday, Iraqi President Barham Salih rejected the idea outright. "We will not allow

this," he said. "Iraq does not want to be a party or axis to any conflict between multiple countries." The Iraqi president, whose office is mostly symbolic, added that American forces were allowed into the country only to fight terrorism.

The next day, Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi offered his own pushback. "When it is said that the mission of these [U.S. forces] is to fight a neighboring country, like Iran, for example, we reject that notion. The constitution itself prevents us from such approaches," he said, according to the Iraqi Kurdish news site Rudaw.

Although the United States had an extensive military presence in Iraq for years following its invasion in 2003 — troop levels peaked at more than 170,000 in 2007 — the Obama administration withdrew U.S. forces after the United States and Iraq failed to reach an agreement that would govern

American deployments. The last U.S. units left in December 2011. However, after Islamic State spread across Syria and Iraq, seizing large areas of northern Iraq in 2014, Baghdad turned to Washington for help. U.S. forces returned, but strictly for anti-terrorism purposes — a fact U.S. officials have acknowledged.

The two nations have not signed a new Status of Forces Agreement outlining the terms of the U.S. presence, meaning American troops are in Iraq only at Baghdad's request.

For Trump, U.S. bases in Iraq may seem like a logical place from which to watch or counter Iran. But the Iraqi government's calculations are more complicated.

In general, Iraq's new government has tried to avoid being in the middle of a tussle between Washington and Tehran, its much more powerful neighbor.

CNO: Navy missile defenses in Eastern Europe to deter Russia

By SCOTT WYLAND

Stars and Stripes

The Navy's land-based missile defense systems in Eastern Europe are a means to deter a more assertive Russia, the Navy's top officer said less than a week after Washington and Moscow announced they would dissolve a Cold War missile treaty.

"One area where we're doing some new things is with respect to missile defense," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said Wednesday at an Atlantic Council meeting. "We have Aegis Ashore in Romania — I think that that capability makes a tremendous

statement."

Richardson was responding to a question about what the United States and its allies can do to counter potential Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. Citing the Navy's missile defense systems as a deterrent departs from past statements the U.S. and NATO have made saying the systems weren't intended for Russia.

President Donald Trump announced last week that the U.S. would withdraw from the nuclear pact that banned ground-launched intermediate-range missiles, after accusing Russia of violating the accord. Soon after, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that Russia

would follow suit.

The Aegis system in Romania and the one being built in Poland are designed to defend against short- and medium-range missiles. They are part of the larger missile defense system that NATO is developing.

Other components include four Navy guided-missile destroyers based in Rota, Spain; an early warning radar system in Turkey; and a command center at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

The Aegis systems' proximity to Russia's borders has been irksome to Moscow since the U.S. announced plans to build them in 2002. Allied leaders have in the past sought to as-

sure Moscow, claiming that their aim is to defend against missiles launched from Iran and other unspecified countries in the Middle East and western Asia.

But Richardson made it clear that the anti-missile systems will be one way to "push back" against Russia if necessary. The U.S. should also look to "push first," he said.

"I think it would be great if we could get folks, Russians, some of these competitors to respond to our first move," he said. Using a chess metaphor, he added: "There's an advantage every now and then to playing on the white side of the board."

Congress on the border of a funding deal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional bargainers seem close to clinching a border security agreement that would avert a fresh government shutdown, with leaders of both parties voicing optimism and the top GOP negotiator saying he believes President Donald Trump would back the emerging accord.

It could take days to nail down final details and unexpected problems could develop, especially with Trump's penchant for head-snapping changes of mind. Even so, participants said a handshake could come any day on a spending package for physical barriers along the Southwest border and other security measures that would end a confrontation that has dominated the opening weeks of di-

vided government.

"The president was urging me to try to conclude these negotiations and this is the most positive meeting I've had in a long time," lead GOP bargainer Sen. Richard Shelby, of Alabama, told reporters after discussing the parameters of the potential pact with Trump in the Oval Office.

"Hopefully, we'll get some good news in a short period of time," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. Congress has until Feb. 15 to approve an agreement before the government runs out of money.

Trump, who'd previously called congressional talks a "waste of time," was noncommittal.

"I certainly hear that they are working on something and both sides are moving along.

We'll see what happens," he said. "We need border security. We have to have it, it's not an option."

A senior administration official said the White House is "cautiously optimistic" about getting a deal they could support. The official lacked authorization to discuss the matter publicly and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The agreement seemed sure to produce far less than the \$5.7 billion Trump had demanded to build over 200 miles of the wall, a structure he made a paramount plank of his presidential campaign. It seemed likelier to provide closer to the \$1.6 billion a bipartisan Senate panel approved for fencing last year.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., a negotiator, said it was "unrealistic" to think there

would be no funding for physical barriers. "Like in anything else, it's a trade-off," she said.

Even with a deal, it was possible Trump might try using claims of executive powers to reach for more wall funding, sparking more fights with Congress.

Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., said an accord could be "a good down payment" and added, "There are other ways to do it and I expect the president to go it alone in some fashion." Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney said on Fox News Channel's "Hannity" on Wednesday, "If Congress won't participate or won't go along, we'll figure out a way to do it with executive authority."

Members of both parties have expressed opposition to Trump bypassing Congress.

Transgender former sailor fights to clear her record

The (Annapolis, Md.) Capital

Alexandra Marberry, after graduating from the Naval Academy, became one of the nation's first transgender women allowed to transition while serving in the military.

More than two years later, Marberry is fighting the Navy to clear her record of sexual misconduct she maintains she did not commit. She believes she was targeted for being transgender.

In a GoFundme page posted Saturday, Marberry explains the circumstances surrounding her discharge and asks for help paying back the \$59,621.62 she now owes for failing to complete her service obligation.

In October 2016, Marberry was permitted to transition while on active duty, after spending time in limbo. That year, the Defense Department under former President Barack Obama rolled out a new policy allowing transgender service-

members to transition to their gender identity during service. President Donald Trump rolled back these protections.

From January 2017 to September 2017, Marberry served as a gunnery and ordnance officer on the USS Winston S. Churchill. In June, a commanding officer called her into a meeting and told her she had to be off the ship in an hour, she said. Marberry was forced to resign, she wrote on the GoFundme page after another officer accused her of groping. She denies the accusation.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service launched an investigation, which found no evidence of misconduct and recommended no further action, Marberry wrote.

Her commanding officer held a non-judicial punishment hearing and found her guilty, Marberry said. A superior officer recommended discharging her, Marberry wrote.

GAO: Promotion rates improving for drone pilots

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Air Force fighter pilots continue to be promoted at higher rates than their counterparts who control drones, but the gap is closing as the demand for remotely piloted aircraft increases, a government watchdog said in a new report.

Five years ago, the Air Force was struggling to recruit and retain pilots of unmanned aircraft, but various reforms now mean that in most cases officers of different ranks are advancing at rates similar to pilots of fighters, bombers and mobility aircraft, the Government Accountability Office said Thursday.

In the past, promotions for pilots of unmanned aircraft lagged behind, according to the GAO's data. But this is now changing.

"The Air Force continues to expand the use of RPAs (re-

motely piloted aircraft) in its varied missions of intelligence gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance, and combat operations," the GAO said. "While the overall number of eligible RPA pilots is much smaller compared to other pilots, over the last 5 years, RPA pilots have achieved promotions and nominations to attend developmental education programs at rates that were generally similar in comparison to pilots in other career fields."

In the case of Air Force majors who fly remotely piloted aircraft, 75 percent in 2017 were promoted to lieutenant colonel compared to 83 percent of fighter pilots, 78 percent for bombers and 72 percent for mobility pilots. When it comes to captains being promoted to majors, drone pilots run even with their fighter and bomber flying counterparts at a rate of 94 percent and ahead of mobility pilots.

Whitaker: I have 'not interfered' with probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker insisted on Friday that he has not “interfered in any way” in the special counsel’s Russia investigation as he faced a contentious and partisan congressional hearing in his waning days on the job.

“We have followed the special counsel’s regulations to a T,” Whitaker told the House Judiciary Committee. “There has been no event, no decision, that has required me to take any action, and I have not interfered in any way with the special counsel’s investigation.”

He also said he never discussed with the White House special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into potential coordination between Russia and Donald Trump’s

campaign.

The hearing was the first, and likely only, chance for Democrats in the majority to grill an attorney general they perceive as a Trump loyalist and whose appointment they suspect was aimed at suppressing investigations of the Republican president.

Whitaker vented frustration early on as he repeatedly insisted that he would not discuss his conversations with Trump and tried to shift attention to the conventional work of the Justice Department.

“Mr. Chairman, I see that your five minutes are up,” Whitaker said to the committee’s Democratic leader, Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York. But Nadler, who a day earlier had threatened to subpoena Whitaker to ensure his appearance, left no doubt about his party’s focus.

“You decided that your private interest in overseeing this particular investigation — and perhaps others from which you should have been recused — was more important than the integrity of the department. The question that this Committee must now ask is: Why?”

Whitaker laid the groundwork for a likely tussle with Democrats by saying in his opening statement that while he would address their questions, he would not reveal details of his communications with Trump.

“I trust that the members of this committee will respect the confidentiality that is necessary to the proper functioning of the presidency — just as we respect the confidentiality necessary to the legislative branch,” Whitaker said.

Supreme Court blocks abortion clinic law in La.

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Chief Justice John Roberts joined with the Supreme Court’s liberals Thursday night to block a Louisiana law that opponents say would close most of the state’s abortion clinics and leave it with only one doctor eligible to perform the procedure.

The justices may yet consider whether the 2014 law — requiring doctors at abortion clinics to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals — unduly burdens a woman’s access to abortion. The Louisiana law has never been enforced, and the Supreme Court in 2016 found a nearly identical Texas law to be unconstitutional.

“The Supreme Court has stepped in under the wire to protect the rights of Louisiana women,” said Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which represented the law’s challengers.

“The three clinics left in Louisiana can stay open while we ask the Supreme Court to hear our case. This should be an easy case — all that’s needed is a straightforward application of the court’s own precedent.”

The court’s four most conservative members would have allowed the law to take effect. Justice Brett Kavanaugh said there was a dispute about whether the doctors could obtain admitting privileges, and that a 45-day grace period would have given time to settle that question.

“The parties have offered, in essence, competing predictions” about whether several doctors can obtain privileges, Kavanaugh wrote.

“If we denied the stay, that question could be readily and quickly answered without disturbing the status quo or causing harm to the parties or the affected women, and without this court’s further involvement.”

But the abortion providers had said just the prospect that the law would go into effect was already affecting services.

“Scheduled medical procedures are being cancelled, physicians and clinic staff are preparing to be out of work, and patients seeking to exercise their constitutional right to abortion are being turned away or sent to other states,” their brief stated.

Dingell, 92, longest serving member of Congress, dies

Associated Press

DETROIT — Dubbed “Big John” for his imposing 6-foot-3 frame and sometimes intimidating manner, former Rep. John Dingell bolstered that reputation with the head of a 500-pound wild boar that greeted visitors to his Washington office. The story behind it also helped: The Michigan Democrat is said to have felled the animal with a pistol as it charged him during a hunting trip in Soviet Georgia.

Yet the congressman — whose nearly six decades in the U.S. House made him the longest-serving member of Congress in American history — was hard to typecast. An avid sportsman and hunter, he loved classical music and ballet.

He mastered legislative deal-making but was fiercely protective of the auto industry back home in Detroit and a longtime supporter of universal health care. Dingell also was a dogged pursuer of government waste and fraud, helping take down two top presidential aides while chairman of a powerful investigative panel.

“He taught me how to shoot a rifle. I remember he said shoot-

ing a rifle is a lot like legislating,” former Ohio Rep. Dennis Eckhart told The Associated Press in 2009. “You have to be very, very sure of your target, and then when you get your chance, don’t miss.”

Dingell, who died Thursday at age 92, served in the House with every president from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Barack Obama.

One of his proudest moments came in 2010 when he sat next to Obama as the historic \$938 billion health care overhaul was signed into law. Taking up his father’s cause, Dingell had introduced a universal health care coverage bill during each of his terms.

“Presidents come and presidents go,” former President Bill Clinton said in 2005 when Dingell celebrated 50 years in Congress. “John Dingell goes on forever.”

Dingell died at his home in Dearborn, said his wife, U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell.

Along with his wife, Dingell is survived by two daughters, two sons, one of whom served 15 years in the Michigan Legislature, and several grandchildren.

Bezos reveals Enquirer's photo threats

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos says he was the target of “extortion and blackmail” by the publisher of the National Enquirer, which he said threatened to publish revealing personal photos of him unless he stopped investigating how the tabloid obtained his private exchanges with his mistress.

Bezos, who is also owner of The Washington Post, detailed his interactions with American Media Inc., or AMI, in an extraordinary blog post Thursday on Medium.com. The billionaire did not say the tabloid was seeking money — instead, he said, the Enquirer wanted him to make a public statement that the tabloid’s coverage was not politically motivated.

Bezos’ accusations add another twist to a high-profile clash between the world’s richest man and the leader of America’s best-known tabloid,

a strong backer of President Donald Trump. Bezos’ investigators have suggested the Enquirer’s coverage of his affair — which included the release of risqué texts — was driven by dirty politics.

“Of course I don’t want personal photos published, but I also won’t participate in their well-known practice of blackmail, political favors, political attacks, and corruption,” Bezos wrote of AMI, in explaining his decision to go public. “I prefer to stand up, roll this log over, and see what crawls out.”

But the company has admitted in the past that it engaged in what’s known as “catch-and-kill” practices to help Trump become president. Trump has been highly critical of Bezos and the Post’s coverage of the White House.

The Bezos affair became public when the Enquirer published a Jan. 9 story about his relationship with Lauren Sanchez, a former TV anchor who

is also married. Bezos then hired a team of private investigators to find out how the tabloid got the texts and photos the two exchanged.

Several days ago, someone at AMI told Bezos’ team that the company’s CEO David Pecker was “apoplectic” about the investigation, Bezos said. AMI later approached Bezos’ representatives with an offer.

“They said they had more of my text messages and photos that they would publish if we didn’t stop our investigation,” Bezos wrote.

Bezos wrote that this week, the tabloid’s editor, Dylan Howard, emailed an attorney for Bezos’ longtime security consultant to describe photos the Enquirer “obtained during our newsgathering.” The photos include a “below the belt selfie” of Bezos, photos of him in tight boxer-briefs and wearing only a towel, and several revealing photos of Sanchez, according to the emails Bezos released.

According to the emails, an attorney for AMI offered a formal deal Wednesday: The tabloid wouldn’t post the photos if Bezos and his investigators would release a public statement “affirming that they have no knowledge or basis” to suggest the Enquirer’s coverage was “politically motivated or influenced by political forces.”

Bezos said he decided to publish the emails sent to his team “rather than capitulate to extortion and blackmail.” It does not appear that AMI demanded any money from Bezos — only that he call off his investigation and issue the statement.

Bezos’ investigators have been focusing on Sanchez’s brother Michael, a talent manager who is an acquaintance of Trump allies Roger Stone and Carter Page, according to a person familiar with the matter who wasn’t authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Veterinarians in Montana revive nearly frozen cat

Associated Press

KALISPELL, Mont. — Veterinarians in Montana revived a cat named Fluffy that nearly froze to death after being found in a snow bank covered from head to tail in ice and snow.

Dr. Jevon Clark of the Animal Clinic of Kalispell said Thursday that Fluffy was unresponsive and her body temperature didn’t register on the clinic’s thermometers when her owners brought her in a week earlier.

Staff warmed the cat using towels, cage warmers and intravenous fluids. Fluffy is normally a little crabby, so when she began growling after about an hour, Clark knew she would be fine, he said.

“These crabby cats are survivors,” Clark said.

After Clark, Dr. China Corum and their staff picked

the ice off Fluffy’s coat and she started moving around, they sent her to an emergency clinic to help raise her body temperature. The cat was discharged to her owners the same night, and when Clark checked her on Tuesday, she appeared to be back to normal, he said.

The owners came home early last Thursday to find that Fluffy had been crusted onto a hard-packed snowbank, as though she’d been sitting in one spot for a long time while the blowing snow drifted up around her, Clark said.

It wasn’t clear how long the cat had been there. The temperature that afternoon in Kalispell was just below freezing.

Clark said Fluffy is 3 years old and has always lived outdoors. She was living outside the house when new owners moved in within the last couple of years and adopted her.

Spokesman: Cosby’s family hasn’t visited him in prison

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Bill Cosby has been moved to the general population but hasn’t had any visits from family four months after arriving at a Pennsylvania state prison.

Cosby, 81 and legally blind, has been moved out of special housing where he spent time getting acclimated, a prison spokeswoman said. He still has inmates assigned to help him throughout the day, given his age and disability.

Cosby spokesman Andrew Wyatt said he doesn’t expect Camille Cosby or their three surviving daughters to visit the prison, which is about 20 miles from a family estate in the Philadelphia suburbs. Cosby is serving a three- to 10-year term for drugging and molesting a woman there in 2004.

“He doesn’t want to have them in that environment,”

said Wyatt, who visits regularly. “Why put them in that position, to make it turn into some form of a circus?”

Camille Cosby made just one brief appearance at each of her husband’s two criminal trials. She continues to strategize on her husband’s behalf behind the scenes, Wyatt told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Dozens of women have accused Cosby of sexual assault or misconduct over a 50-year span, including five who testified at the retrial. Cosby and his lawyers and agents have repeatedly called the encounters consensual.

Cosby, a Philadelphia native, became known as “America’s Dad” for his portrayal of family man Cliff Huxtable on the top-ranked “Cosby Show” from 1984 to 1992, a show that helped his fortune reach an estimated \$400 million.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fake utility worker tried to get in house

MA PLAINVILLE — Police said a man posing as a water department employee tried to get inside the home of an elderly man in Plainville over the weekend.

Plainville authorities said the attempt is part of a scam targeting elderly people across the state. The Sun Chronicle reported two men arrived at the victim's home Saturday afternoon and claimed to be from the local water department.

Police said the intended victim was immediately suspicious and told one of the men he was going to call the water department. The scammers then fled.

Former armored truck driver indicted in theft

KY LOUISVILLE — A federal grand jury in has indicted a former armored truck driver on charges accusing him of taking more than \$900,000 from the vehicle.

Officials said Mark Nicholas Espinosa, 29, fled from Louisville to Connecticut after the Dec. 5 theft and was found in Connecticut with \$850,000 in cash on Jan. 30.

The U.S. attorney's office announced the indictment Tuesday. It charges Espinosa with theft from a common carrier, bank robbery, interstate transportation of stolen money, monetary transactions involving stolen money and money laundering.

Fire official among 29 charged in drug bust

NY MIDDLETOWN — Police said a city fire official was a ringleader of a cocaine-dealing motorcycle club and another operation that sold pills containing fentanyl in

upstate New York.

State police said Lt. Paul Smith, 48, of the Middletown Fire Department was among 29 people charged in a drug bust Tuesday. Most were arrested in early-morning raids in Orange and Rockland counties. Smith was charged with being a major trafficker.

Police: Candy possibly laced with marijuana

OH CLEVELAND — Police said gummy candies suspected of being laced with marijuana were given to students at an elementary school.

Cleveland police said they were called Monday to Anton Grdina Elementary School after some children were given the gummies by other children. Police said one boy said he brought the candy from home.

Police said medics transported nine children to Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital with some complaining of upset stomachs after questioning. The hospital said doctors saw 15 students there and all were released by Monday evening. A police report said a doctor noted one child tested positive for THC — the psychoactive chemical in marijuana.

Horse rescued from creek and own stables

DE DELAWARE CITY — Firefighters have twice been summoned in two days to rescue a 2,000-pound Clydesdale horse from various predicaments.

Owner Pam Collacchi told The News Journal that Bubba "doesn't realize how big he is." On Sunday, Bubba wandered around 25 feet into a creek, becoming mired in near-freezing mud.

Wetsuit-clad rescuers from the Delaware City Fire Com-

pany pulled Bubba closer to the bank. Firefighters tugged hoses strapped around his legs and a truck. Bubba had to be sedated, but was pulled to safety.

He walked back to the stables, to where the Delaware City firefighters were again called Monday. Bubba had wedged himself into a corner and couldn't stand. Collacchi said he was given a roll and a push and spent the rest of the day frolicking outside.

Mayoral hopeful reports art theft at home

TX HOUSTON — A lawyer who's a candidate for mayor of Houston has reported the theft of millions of dollars' worth of art and jewelry from his upscale home.

Tony Buzbee said he awoke Monday to discover a robber in his house. The attorney said he grabbed his gun and fired — but the weapon misfired and the suspect fled. Buzbee wasn't hurt.

Houston police are investigating the reported burglary of Buzbee's River Oaks mansion. Police estimate thieves took several million dollars' worth of property.

Buzbee has successfully represented high-profile figures, including Republican former Texas Gov. Rick Perry in an abuse-of-power case.

Buzbee last year drew attention after alleging a woman, on their first date in December 2017, caused \$300,000 in damage to his art collection.

New Orleans zoo reopens jaguar exhibit

LA NEW ORLEANS — The Audubon Zoo in New Orleans is reopening its jaguar exhibit after months of redesign after the big cat escaped last summer and killed nine animals.

The Audubon Zoo is returning Valerio to display Tuesday after the July 15 escape. Five alpacas, an emu and three foxes died from injuries in the attack.

Zoo officials said the jaguar chewed through a fence of the exhibit. Zoo employees were able to sedate the jaguar and have been caring for the 160-pound cat out of public view since the attack.

Police say mom left twins at hospital

NE KEARNEY — Authorities are trying to find the mother who left her newborn male twins after their birth at a central Nebraska hospital.

Kearney police officers were sent to CHI Good Samaritan hospital Monday afternoon and learned the mother had provided false information to the hospital when she was admitted. The babies were born Saturday.

The twins have been placed in state custody.

Vandals splash paint on monument, cannons

GA DECATUR — Vandals splashed paint on a Confederate monument, a nearby World War I cannon, and another cannon near Atlanta.

A spokeswoman for the city of Decatur told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that the vandalism was discovered Sunday and almost all the paint was cleaned off Monday. The Confederate monument is a 30-foot-tall obelisk. It was splashed with red paint. Blue paint was thrown onto the World War I cannon, on the other side of the Old County Courthouse.

From wire reports

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Late Robinson had career ‘without parallel’

Associated Press

Crowding the plate, fearless and fearless, Frank Robinson hammered his way into the Hall of Fame.

His legacy, however, was cemented that day in 1975 when he stood in the dugout at old Cleveland Stadium — the first black manager in Major League Baseball.

Robinson, the only player to earn the MVP award in both leagues and a Triple Crown winner, died Thursday at 83. He had been in failing health and in hospice care at his home in the Bel Air section of Los Angeles. MLB said he was with family and friends at the time.

“Frank Robinson’s résumé in our game is without parallel, a trailblazer in every sense, whose impact spanned generations,” Commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement.

Robinson hit 586 home runs — he was fourth on the career list behind only Hank Aaron, Babe Ruth and Willie Mays when he retired and now ranks 10th. An MVP with Cincinnati and Baltimore, he led the Orioles to their first World Series championship in 1966.

“Frank Robinson and I were more than baseball buddies. We were friends,” Aaron posted on Twitter.

“Baseball will miss a tremendous human being,” he said.

An All-Star outfielder in 12 seasons and a first-ballot selection to Cooperstown, Robinson also was a Rookie of the Year, a Gold Glove outfielder and a bruising runner.

But his place in the sport’s history extended far beyond the batter’s box and basepaths.

Robinson fulfilled his quest to become the first African-American manager in the big leagues when he was hired by the Cleveland Indians. His impact was immediate and memorable.

The Indians opened at home that year and Robinson, still active, batted himself second as the designated hitter. In the first inning, he homered off Doc Medich and the crowd

went crazy, cheering the whole April afternoon as Cleveland beat the Yankees.

The Reds, Orioles and Indians have retired his No. 20 and honored him with statues at their stadiums.

Robinson later managed San Francisco, Baltimore and Montreal. He became the first manager of the Washington Nationals after the franchise moved from Montreal for the 2005 season — the Nationals put him in their Ring of Honor.

More than half the major league teams have had black managers since his debut with Cleveland.

Robinson later spent several years working as an executive for MLB and for a time oversaw the annual Civil Rights Game. He advocated for more minorities throughout baseball and worked with former Commissioner Bud Selig to develop the Selig Rule, directing teams to interview at least one minority candidate before hiring a new manager.

For all he did on and off the field, Robinson was presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George W. Bush in 2005.

“Frank Robinson’s wife, Barbara Ann Cole, once said, ‘He believes in rules and he respects the game. He reveres the game,’” Bush said in a statement. “When I presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005, I noted that ‘Baseball fans across America will tell you the feeling is returned. In the game we love, few names will ever command as much respect and esteem as the name of Frank Robinson.’”

Brooks Robinson, a fellow first-ballot Hall of Famer, said he spoke to his Baltimore teammate and longtime friend a few days ago.

“He was the best player I ever played with,” he said.

Hall of Fame manager Joe Torre played against and worked with Frank Robinson for years.

“He was a tough nut,” Torre recalled at the owners’ meetings in Orlando, Florida. “He never lost that feistiness, which

puts a smile on your face ... He was always that guy that commanded a lot of respect and he had a presence about him.”

Born Aug. 21, 1935, in Beaumont, Texas, Robinson attended McClymonds High School in Oakland, Calif., and was a basketball teammate of future NBA great Bill Russell.

But it was on the diamond, rather than the court, where fame awaited Robinson.

“We all know we lost one of the Greats,” Russell tweeted.

Starting out in an era when Mays, Aaron, Mickey Mantle and Ted Williams were the big hitters, Robinson more than held his own over 21 seasons — if anything, many who watched Robinson felt he never got his full due as an all-time great. He finished with 1,812 RBIs and hit .294 — he played in the World Series five times, and homered in each of them.

Robinson was the only player to hit a ball completely out of old Memorial Stadium in Baltimore and once connected for grand slams in consecutive innings of a game. But he didn’t just slug away, as evidenced by a .389 on-base average boosted by 1,420 walks against 1,532 strikeouts. Extremely alert on the bases, he had 204 steals.

Robinson played the game with grace, yet was known as fierce competitor who combined hard work with natural talent. He planted himself near the plate, yielding to no pitcher, and didn’t seem to care about being brushed back or getting hit by a pitch 198 times.

And opposing pitchers noticed.

“Frank Robinson might have been the best I ever saw at turning his anger into runs. He challenged you physically as soon as he stepped into the batter’s box, with half his body hanging over the plate,” Hall ace Bob Gibson once wrote. “As a rule, I’m reluctant to express admiration for hitters, but I make an exception for Frank Robinson.”

Robinson broke in with a bang as a 20-year-old big leaguer. He tied the first-year record with 38 home runs for Cincinnati in 1956, scored a

league-high 122 times and was voted NL Rookie of the Year.

Robinson was the 1961 NL MVP after batting .323 with 37 homers and 124 RBIs for the pennant-winning Reds, and reached career highs in runs (134) and RBIs (136) in 1962.

Robinson was an All-Star, too, in 1965, but Reds owner Bill DeWitt decided Robinson was an old-ish 30 and that it was time to make a move.

That December, Robinson was the centerpiece in what would ultimately be one of the most lopsided trades in baseball history, going to Baltimore for pitchers Milt Pappas and Jack Baldschun and outfielder Dick Simpson.

Robinson became an instant hit with the Orioles in 1966 as the unanimous AL MVP and a Triple Crown winner.

Robinson batted .316 with 49 home runs and 122 RBIs during his first season in Birdland. He then homered in the first inning of the 1966 World Series opener at Dodger Stadium and capped off the four-game sweep of Los Angeles with another homer off Don Drysdale in a 1-0 win in Game 4.

Robinson hit two home runs against Rose and the Reds to help win another crown for the Orioles in 1970.

All told, Robinson was an All-Star in five of his six seasons with Baltimore, reaching the World Series four times and batting .300 with 179 home runs. The cap on his Cooperstown plaque carries an O’s logo.

Robinson was traded to the Dodgers before the 1972 season. He played for the California Angels in 1973 and was dealt to Cleveland late in the 1974 season.

His managerial debut came 28 years after Jackie Robinson broke the MLB color barrier as a player.

“Every time I put on this uniform, I think of Jackie Robinson,” Frank Robinson said as he began his new role.

Survivors include his wife, Barbara, and daughter Nichelle.

College basketball roundup

No. 4 Gonzaga rolls past San Francisco

Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Fourth-ranked Gonzaga was clinging to a three-point lead over San Francisco late in the first half Thursday when someone flipped the switch on guard Zach Norvell Jr.

Norvell scored 13 consecutive points for the Bulldogs and launched them toward a 92-62 win over San Francisco.

"We got stagnant on offense," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said of the first half lull. "We made some real, real silly turnovers in the first half. We needed

those shots to get us going,"

Norvell's streak seemed to ignite the Zags, who outscored San Francisco 49-32 in the second half to post their 13th consecutive victory.

"Things were going back and forth early on," Norvell said. "In the second half we were able to open things up. And we got stops in the end."

Brandon Clarke had 20 points, 16 rebounds and five blocks for Gonzaga.

No. 12 Houston 77, UCF 68: Corey Davis Jr. scored 26 points on 8-for-13 shooting and

Houston had another strong defensive effort to beat the host Knights.

Armoni Brooks added 14 points for the Cougars (22-1, 9-1 American Athletic) and Galen Robinson Jr. had 12 points.

No. 20 Iowa 77, Indiana 72: Jordan Bohannon matched his season high with 25 points and scored the last 11 for visiting Iowa as the Hawkeyes held on to beat Indiana.

Tyler Cook added 21 points as Iowa won its second straight. The Hawkeyes (18-5, 7-5 Big Ten) also ended a three-game

losing streak in the series and won at Assembly Hall for the first time since 2015.

No. 25 Cincinnati 69, Memphis 64: Jarron Cumberland scored 17 points and keyed a late rally as Cincinnati overcame a poor shooting night to beat host Memphis.

Justin Jenifer scored 14 and Tre Scott finished with 13 points and nine rebounds as Cincinnati (20-3, 9-1 American Athletic Conference), which moved into the Top 25 this week, won its eighth straight.

NHL roundup

Kuznetsov's overtime goal lifts Caps over Avalanche

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The 48 seconds in overtime remaining on the clock in the visiting dressing room served as a reminder of how close the Colorado Avalanche got.

But close isn't much consolation after a 4-3 loss to the Washington Capitals on Thursday night extended their skid to five games. And neither was the point the Avalanche salvaged because the defeats keep piling up as their season snowballs out of control.

"It's a big point," captain Gabriel Landeskog said. "But at this point, we're looking for wins, not points."

Colorado has lost 10 of 12 and is the NHL's worst team since Dec. 7. Colorado is 5-15-4 in that time, going from tied for the most points in the Western Conference to out of a playoff position.

Colin Wilson's tying goal with 2:07 left was worth a single point to get the Avalanche to 14 since Dec. 7, still the lowest total in the league. When Evgeny Kuznetsov was left all alone for a breakaway and scored on Semyon Varlamov with 48 sec-

onds left, Colorado fell to 1-8 in overtime this season.

"Again the OT, I don't know what's wrong with us," said top-line winger Mikko Rantanen, who scored his 24th goal of the season. "Always we give up one breakaway and usually it's in the back of the net. I don't know. It's tough to say right after the loss what's the problem."

There are a lot of problems right now for the Avalanche, who have allowed 24 goals during their five-game skid. Varlamov struggled to control rebounds and loose pucks all night against his former team, allowing four goals on 42 shots.

Varlamov and teammate Philipp Grubauer have the two worst save percentages in the NHL over the past two months.

Washington's Pheonix Copley allowed soft goals to Nathan MacKinnon and Wilson, but won his first start since Jan. 15 by making 34 saves. Andre Burakovsky, Kuznetsov and Matt Niskanen scored in regulation for the defending Stanley Cup champion Capitals, who have won two in a row since losing eight of nine.

Kings 3, Flyers 2 (SO): Tyler Toffoli scored the deciding goal

in a shootout and visiting Los Angeles ended Philadelphia's winning streak at eight games.

Blackhawks 4, Canucks 3 (OT): Jonathan Toews scored 3:21 into overtime to lift host Chicago past Vancouver for its season-high sixth straight victory.

Sharks 5, Flames 2: Evander Kane scored twice and added an assist in visiting San Jose's victory over Calgary.

Canadiens 5, Jets 2: Jonathan Drouin had two goals and two assists for his first four-point game and host Montreal beat Winnipeg for its third straight victory.

Panthers 3, Penguins 2 (OT): Mike Matheson scored 4:14 into overtime to lift host Florida past Pittsburgh.

Islanders 2, Devils 1 (SO): Josh Bailey scored in the fourth round of the shootout, Thomas Greiss made 30 saves and visiting New York beat New Jersey to sweep the four-game season series.

Hurricanes 6, Sabres 5 (OT): Teuvo Teravainen scored his second goal of the game 3:25 into overtime, and Curtis McElhinney stopped 34 shots to help visiting Carolina beat

Buffalo.

Blues 1, Lightning 0 (OT): Brayden Schenn scored with 58.2 seconds left in overtime and rookie Jordan Binnington made 32 saves to help visiting St. Louis beat Tampa Bay for its fourth straight victory.

Predators 3, Stars 2 (OT): Ryan Johansen scored 43 seconds into overtime and host Nashville beat Dallas.

Oilers 4, Wild 1: Darnell Nurse gave his reeling team an early boost by scoring 2:15 into the first period, and visiting Edmonton stopped a six-game losing streak with a victory over Minnesota.

Golden Knights 4, Red Wings 3: Jonathan Marchessault scored twice in a three-goal second period in visiting Vegas' victory over Detroit.

Senators 4, Ducks 0: Anders Nilsson stopped 45 shots for his first shutout of the season, Matt Duchene had two goals and host Ottawa beat Anaheim to snap a five-game losing streak.

Blue Jackets 4, Coyotes 2: Boone Jenner and Josh Anderson each had a goal and an assist, leading visiting Columbus past Arizona.

NBA East teams make deadline deals

Associated Press

Toronto, Milwaukee and Philadelphia made their moves. Anthony Davis will have to wait until the summer for his.

The New Orleans Pelicans held onto Davis but dealt Nikola Mirotic to the Bucks, one of the Eastern Conference contenders who fortified their teams Thursday before the NBA trade deadline.

The Raptors are getting former All-Star center Marc Gasol from Memphis. The 76ers, a day after acquiring forward Tobias Harris from the Clippers, sent Markelle Fultz to Orlando and will hope Jonathan Simmons can provide some production where the former No. 1 pick couldn't.

"Those teams were already really good. And the assumption would only be that they'd only benefit from those moves," Boston coach Brad Stevens said. "It will be quite a challenge. As we knew it would be."

A busy swap season that included Dallas' acquisition of Kristaps Porzingis from New York ended without a move for Davis, the player who dominated the discussion in recent weeks. The Pelicans didn't find

a deal for Davis, who had requested a trade and informed the team he wouldn't sign a contract extension this summer.

But the Lakers couldn't put together a strong enough package to the Pelicans' liking for the All-Star forward, who will go back into the trade market after the season ends. There will be other marquee names available then with a free agent class that could be highlighted by players such as Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving and Kawhi Leonard.

Boston didn't jump into the trading deadline fray but may try to get involved in the summer.

For now, the Celtics appear to feel they have enough to win the East.

The other conference contenders looked for upgrades — and went out and got some that likely will fit well.

Milwaukee (40-13) already has the NBA's best record and Mirotic's outside-shooting ability for a big man would appear to fit perfectly in a lineup around superstar Giannis Antetokounmpo.

"He is a skilled, two-way player who fits extremely well

into our system," Bucks general manager Jon Horst said in a statement. "He shoots at a high percentage from beyond the arc, rebounds and defends at his position and provides depth to our frontcourt."

Two games back of the Bucks, the Raptors sent center Jonas Valanciunas to Memphis to acquire Gasol. Valanciunas had been coming off the bench and Toronto coach Nick Nurse will have to decide whether he uses Gasol in the same manner, or returns to a traditional bigger lineup with the former defensive player of the year in the middle.

"(Gasol) is one of the best fives in the league for a long time now, perennial All-Star, Defensive Player of the Year," Raptors guard Fred VanVleet said. "Just really excited to see how we can acclimate him to what we do and see how much he can give us a boost. Obviously we're very excited about that."

The 76ers have made two major trades during the season, previously getting Jimmy Butler from Minnesota before the deal to bring in Harris, Boban Marjanovic and forward Mike

Scott.

"We understand the team invested a lot in us," Harris said. "It was a big move. It was a win-now move. That means a lot. This is already a winning culture and we look to bring our games to it and help as best we can."

All of those clubs feel they improved their chances to be the first East team to reach the NBA Finals without LeBron James since 2010.

Things were quieter in the West, where there were no upgrades by teams currently in playoff position. The Clippers currently hold the eighth and final spot but appear willing to give it up in favor of positioning themselves for the summer, with their moves designed to help them pursue two top free agents in July.

But the Golden State Warriors or teams pursuing them can still bolster their squads by adding players who are free agents. Players on rosters of another team must be waived by March 1 in order to sign with another team and be eligible to appear in the postseason.

NBA roundup

Rondo's 20-foot buzzer beater lifts Lakers over Celtics

Associated Press

BOSTON — Rajon Rondo hit a 20-foot jumper as time expired to lift the Los Angeles Lakers over the Boston Celtics, 129-128 on Thursday night.

LeBron James had 28 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists. Kyle Kuzma added 25 points and Rondo had 17 points and 10 assists to help Los Angeles bounce back after a 42-point loss at Indiana on Tuesday.

Rondo was in the right place at the right time for his final shot against the team he won an NBA title with in 2008. Brandon Ingram had his layup attempt blocked by Al Horford, but Horford whiffed on the re-

bound and the ball bounced into Rondo's hands.

Kyrie Irving led Boston with 24 points and eight assists. Jayson Tatum added 22 points and 10 rebounds. Daniel Theis has 20 points off the bench but the Celtics had a five-game winning streak snapped.

Thunder 117, Grizzlies 95: Russell Westbrook had his eighth straight triple-double, and host Oklahoma City rolled past depleted Memphis.

Westbrook finished with 15 points, 15 assists and 13 rebounds. He now has the longest triple-double streak of his career.

Raptors 119, Hawks 101:

Pascal Siakam scored a career-high 33 points, Fred VanVleet added a career-best 30 and visiting Toronto rallied after trailing by 17 points in the first half to beat Atlanta.

The Raptors used only nine players and relied heavily on Siakam, who also had 13 rebounds, and VanVleet with All-Star Kawhi Leonard resting.

Trail Blazers 127, Spurs 118: CJ McCollum had 30 points, including seven three-pointers, and host Portland handed San Antonio its third straight loss.

Damian Lillard added 24 points and nine assists for the Blazers, who were coming off a

loss at home to Miami.

Pacers 116, Clippers 92: Bojan Bogdanovic had 29 points and seven rebounds to lead host Indiana over short-handed Los Angeles.

Myles Turner had 17 points and six blocked shots, while Thaddeus Young and Darren Collison each scored 14 points for the Pacers, who won their fourth consecutive game.

Magic 122, Timberwolves 112: Terrence Ross scored 32 points and came up with a big defensive play to help host Orlando beat Minnesota.

Ross came off the bench to make six three-pointers and 13 of 23 shots overall.