

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Military families plead for housing reforms

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Termites falling from light fixtures. Toxic mold sickening families. Rodent infestations of residences. Asbestos and lead paint exposures.

This is the alarming world of dilapidated military housing today.

On Wednesday, some families who have suffered with these residential nightmares told their stories on Capitol Hill.

“Our military families do not deserve this after all the sacrifices they make,” Janna Driver, the wife of an active-duty Air Force servicemember and mother of five children, told lawmakers during an extensive Senate hearing on military housing problems. “It is crimi-

nal. It is unbelievable the extent of this cover-up.”

Driver joined two other military spouses during the more than three-hour hearing to plead for help as they detailed years of battles with deteriorating housing conditions, subsequent illnesses and extensive bills.

Private military housing executives and top military officials also testified before the joint subpanel hearing for the Senate Armed Services Committee. They said they are now addressing the concerns.

“We let down some of our residents,” said John Picerne, founder and chief executive officer of East Greenwich, R.I.-based Corvis Group, which manages military properties. “I’m sorry and we are going to fix it.”

Military officials followed

suit, saying they are overseeing new military housing improvements that are now underway.

“We must and will do better,” said Robert McMahon, assistant defense secretary for sustainment.

Several witnesses and lawmakers agreed Wednesday that the residential horror stories can be traced back to the 1996 military housing privatization initiative that let contractors take over management of the residences. Previously, the military managed the properties.

“We have a real problem here,” said Rhode Island Sen. Jack Reed, the ranking Democrat for the Armed Services Committee. “Here we are 20 years later, there is a clear disconnect between what has been promised by the companies ... and the reality of what has been

provided to military families.”

A survey released this week found 55 percent of private military housing residents were dissatisfied with where they are living, noted Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

The Military Family Advisory Network, which advocates for servicemembers and their families, received nearly 17,000 responses to their survey on military housing in a week. Forty-five percent said they had a neutral or favorable housing experience.

The senator said the committee will work with the Government Accountability Office as well as the Defense Department Inspector General as they conduct their own investigations of military housing.

## Sexual misconduct reaches ‘crisis’ point at military academies

*The Baltimore Sun*

WASHINGTON — Sexual misconduct at the nation’s three military academies has accelerated at an alarming rate and become a “crisis,” a U.S. House subcommittee chairwoman said Wednesday at a hearing that included testimony from the Naval Academy’s superintendent.

“I’m putting the academies on notice,” said Rep. Jackie Speier, a California Democrat who chairs a House Armed Services subcommittee. “This isn’t a blip, a ‘Me-Too’ bump or some accident. It’s time for us to recognize that this is a crisis, and I intend to watch it like a hawk.”

Vice Adm. Walter E. Carter Jr., the Naval Academy superintendent, told the panel that “we must do better” and said the Annapolis, Md., academy

has embarked on a corrective plan.

“We are not where I want us to be, nor where the Navy needs us to be,” Carter said. “The Naval Academy must produce leaders that not only treat others with dignity and respect, but also demand the same of those they lead.”

A Defense Department survey released last month concluded that incidents of unwanted sexual contact jumped nearly 50 percent at the military service academies since a similar survey two years earlier.

The survey estimated 747 cadets and midshipmen experienced such contact or harassment during the 2017-18 academic year, compared with 507 two years earlier. Women were usually the victims.

Rates increased for men and women at the United States Mil-

itary Academy and for women at the U.S. Air Force Academy, but stayed the same for men and women at the Naval Academy, where some say such incidents are rarely reported.

But witnesses at the hearing of the House Military Personnel Subcommittee said issues persist at all three academies.

At the Naval Academy, for example, 32 percent of women don’t believe senior leadership is making a serious effort to alleviate the problem, said retired Air Force Col. Don Christensen, citing survey results. Christensen is president of Protect our Defenders, a national organization working to end sexual assaults in the military.

Based on the survey results, the Defense Department estimated 254 midshipmen experienced some sort of unwanted sexual contact during the year.

But the Naval Academy received just 32 sexual assault reports in the last academic year — an increase of three reports from the previous year.

“Victims report at their own peril. That is the message being sent,” Speier said. “The number of women attending these academies is only going to grow, and that’s why it’s essential we fix these numbers.”

Carter said he presented the survey’s findings to the “entire brigade” and characterized the response as “one of shock.”

The survey is conducted every other year. It used the term “unwanted sexual conduct” to refer to a range of prohibited offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice — from unwanted touching to forced penetration or oral sex.

The DOD says it is trying to reverse the troubling trend.

# Shanahan: No unilateral Afghanistan pullout

*Associated Press*

BRUSSELS — The U.S. will not reduce its troop presence in Afghanistan on its own, the top Pentagon official said Thursday in pledging that any moves will be fully coordinated with American allies.

“There will be no unilateral troop reductions,” Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan told reporters after his first meeting with NATO defense chiefs. “That was one of the messages: It will be coordinated. We’re together.”

Frustrated with America’s longest war, President Donald Trump has said he wants out of Afghanistan, raising doubts about NATO’s Afghan troop training operation in the strife-torn country. Around 14,000 U.S. troops are in Afghanistan, just over half with NATO and the rest conducting counterterrorism and combat operations.

Shanahan made clear that if U.S. troop cuts are made, either in connection with peace negotiations with the Taliban or in other circumstances, Washington will consult with NATO to ensure coordination.

“What we talked about was, how do we double down on support for Afghan national defense and security forces to put even more pressure on the Taliban,” Shanahan said.

Were U.S. troops to leave the NATO operation, allies like Germany wouldn’t be able to do their job as they rely on American air support.

“No decision has been taken about any withdrawal. But we strongly support the efforts to reach a political, peaceful settlement,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said before the talks.

The U.S. and NATO troops are mostly advising and training, but when requested

they assist Afghan forces in battles with the Taliban, who carry out near-daily assaults on Afghan soldiers and police. More than 17 years after they were ousted by a U.S.-led coalition, the Taliban control, influence or hold sway over nearly half the country, and the conflict is at a stalemate.

U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad is meeting with the Taliban and others to try to end the conflict. He has briefed NATO ambassadors three times in recent weeks, including just before Thursday’s meeting.

NATO is wary of setting any timeline for a possible withdrawal as the Taliban have been content to wait international forces out in the past.

“NATO allies went in together in Afghanistan. We will make decisions on our future posture in Afghanistan together, based on conditions determined together with the Afghans,” Stoltenberg said.

## US denies Taliban claim of negotiations in Pakistan

*The Washington Post*

ISLAMABAD — A surprise announcement by Afghan Taliban leaders that they are sending a delegation here early next week to meet with American negotiators and Pakistani officials has met with a cautious U.S. denial on Thursday and silence from Pakistan.

If such a visit does take place on Monday, it would upstage the formal resumption of ongoing U.S.-Taliban meetings on Feb. 25 in Qatar and represent the first time the Afghan insurgents have openly met with Pakistani leaders since their five-year regime in Kabul was overthrown in 2001.

Whether the announcement was merely

a trial balloon in the increasingly complex and expanding Afghan peace process or the result of private agreements that will eventually be acknowledged, it appeared to bolster Pakistan’s recent claims under Prime Minister Imran Khan that it wants to play a constructive role in ending the 17-year Afghan conflict.

The Afghan Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said in a statement posted online late Wednesday that the group’s plan to visit to Pakistan stemmed from a “formal invitation” from the Islamabad government, and that its delegates would meet with the Pakistan premier.

“This announcement is surprising but very important,” said Amir Rana, a Paki-

stani conflict analyst. “It shows the Taliban have an increasing level of confidence as an important stakeholder, and that Islamabad can have a key positive role in the peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem.” Rana warned, though, that “sustained efforts” and American “reciprocity” are also crucial.

A spokesman for the U.S. Embassy here said that the Taliban announcement had been “noted” but that “we have not received a formal invitation to any talks ... we are not going to negotiate in public.”

It also said the U.S. government “supports all steps” that would lead to inclusive peace talks and encourages “all countries” to support the process.

## Congress reasserts war-making powers with Yemen vote

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Asserting congressional authority over war-making powers, the House passed a resolution Wednesday that would force the administration to withdraw U.S. troops from involvement in Yemen, a rebuke of President Donald Trump’s alliance with the Saudi-led coalition behind the military intervention.

Lawmakers in both parties are increasingly uneasy over the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and skeptical of the U.S. partner-

ship with that coalition, especially in light of Saudi Arabia’s role in the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of the royal family.

Passage would mark the first time Congress has relied on the decades-old War Powers Resolution to halt military intervention. It also would set up a potential confrontation with the White House, which has threatened a veto. The House voted 248-177 to approve the measure, sending it to the Senate, where a similar resolution passed last year.

“We have helped create, and worsen, the world’s largest humanitarian crisis,” Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., said during the debate. “Our involvement in this war, quite frankly, is shameful.”

The chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., said the vote represents “Congress reclaiming its role in foreign policy.”

Senate approval would set up a showdown with the administration — a veto would be Trump’s first — over the president’s shifting approach on foreign policy.

# Navy submarine joins competition in Japan

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy has sent a Los Angeles-class attack submarine to waters south of Japan to take part in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Submarine Competition that began Wednesday.

Aside from the U.S. submarine, the weeklong competition this year will feature five JMSDF ships, to include the Hyuga-class helicopter destroyer JS Ise, four JMSDF aircraft wings, several JMSDF submarines and an aircraft squadron, according to a Navy statement released Tuesday.

The competition stands as a test for all crews across numerous platforms to gauge

**‘We are very pleased to have a U.S. Navy submarine play a role in this year’s submarine competition.’**

**Capt. Toshiaki Hoshina**

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force deputy chief of staff for operations

proficiency in anti-submarine warfare.

The Navy did not identify the U.S. submarine taking part in the competition.

While the primary purpose of the competition is to assess the ability of Japanese crews in a multitude of anti-submarine warfare scenarios, including a U.S. submarine provides the opportunity for “valuable bilateral cooperation” between the two allied forces, Capt. John

Stafford, Submarine Group 7 deputy chief of staff for operations, said in the statement.

“This is the kind of anti-submarine exercise our crews train for at home and practice at sea,” he said. “We’re pleased that our boat will have the opportunity to put their training to good use and we look forward to the opportunity to showcase our skills while working with our Japanese counterparts in a forward-deployed environment.”

While the exercise is underway, a U.S. Navy sonar technician with the U.S. Pacific Fleet Navy Data Center will operate alongside the crew of a JMSDF submarine, according to the statement.

“We are very pleased to have a U.S. Navy submarine play a role in this year’s submarine competition,” said JMSDF Capt. Toshiaki Hoshina, deputy chief of staff for operations, Commander, Fleet Submarine Force. “Their participation will significantly improve our interoperability and strengthen the partnership among our forces.”

The crew with the top performance throughout the exercise will be presented with the Japanese Battle Efficiency Award.

## Navy SEAL’s court-martial on Iraq actions postponed

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

The trial of a Navy SEAL charged with war crimes in Iraq, which was scheduled to begin next week, has been delayed until late spring, a Navy spokesman said Wednesday.

Edward R. Gallagher, 39, a chief special warfare operator, faces charges of premeditated murder, aggravated assault and shooting at civilians during an Iraq deployment in 2017.

His defense team Wednesday asked for a continuation until May 28, said Brian O’Rourke, a spokesman for Navy Region Southwest.

Gallagher was in court Tuesday for a motions hearing.

Some members of his platoon have told Navy investigators they saw the SEAL stab a wounded Islamic State fighter in the neck while the fighter was receiving medical treatment. The fighter died and Gallagher is accused of posing for photos with the body and holding a re-enlistment ceremony near the body.

Gallagher has denied the allegations.

Gallagher’s commander, Lt. Jacob Portier, also faces charges related to the incident with the ISIS fighter’s body.

A hearing in his court-martial, scheduled for Friday, also was delayed at the request of his defense team. A new date has not been scheduled, O’Rourke said.

Portier faces charges that he was made aware of complaints against Gallagher but did not report them. He also has been charged with conduct unbecoming an officer for allegedly conducting Gallagher’s re-enlistment ceremony near the Iraqi fighter’s body.

Portier has denied the allegations.

Gallagher’s case has attracted national news coverage and the attention of conservative talk show hosts. Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., asked President Donald Trump to remove the case from the Navy and dismiss the charges.

## Navy petty officer guilty of manslaughter in crash

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — A Navy petty officer whose car plunged off a soaring bridge in San Diego and killed four people below was convicted Wednesday of vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated.

A jury also found Richard Sepolio, 27, guilty of driving under the influence causing injury but acquitted him of the more serious charges of gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. He also was acquitted of reckless driving and driving over the legal alcohol limit causing injury.

Sepolio could be sentenced to up to 18 years in prison.

“This was a great outcome on this case,” prosecutor Cally Bright said out of court. But Bright added, “Nothing will bring back the family members lost that day.”

Prosecutors said Sepolio had been drinking on Oct. 15, 2016, and was arguing with his girlfriend — now his wife

— by cellphone when he tried to speed past another car on the San Diego-Coronado Bridge. He lost control of his pickup truck, which crashed through concrete and plunged 60 feet off the span into a crowd celebrating a motorcycle rally and festival at Chicano Park. The truck crushed vendor booths where people were standing.

Four people died, and seven were hurt.

Sepolio’s pickup was recorded doing 81 mph going onto the bridge, which stretches across San Diego Bay and links San Diego to the Navy town of Coronado, where Sepolio was an aviation electronics technician.

At trial, Sepolio testified that he’d had two drinks earlier in the day but wasn’t drunk and wasn’t on the cellphone call at the time of the crash.

The defense and prosecution disagreed on whether several blood and breath tests given to Sepolio indicated he was impaired.

# Congress set for border security compromise

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress is set to resolve its clattering brawl with President Donald Trump in uncommonly bipartisan fashion as lawmakers prepare to pass a border security compromise providing a mere sliver of the billions he's demanded for a wall with Mexico and averting a rekindled government shutdown this weekend.

With Trump's halfhearted signature widely expected but hardly guaranteed, congressional leaders planned votes Thursday on the sweeping package. Passage first by the Republican-led Senate, then the

Democratic-controlled House, was virtually certain, with sizable numbers of both parties' members set to vote "yes." Bargainers formally completed the accord moments before midnight Wednesday.

"I'm sure it's going to pass. I don't know of any drama," said the House Democrats' chief vote counter, Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C.

Trump's assent would end a raucous legislative saga that commenced before Christmas and was ending, almost fittingly, on Valentine's Day. The low point was the historically long 35-day partial federal shut-

down, which Trump sparked and was in full force when Democrats took control of the House, compelling him to share power for the first time.

Trump yielded on Jan. 25 after public opinion turned against him and congressional Republicans. He'd won not a nickel of the \$5.7 billion he'd demanded for his wall but had caused missed paychecks for legions of federal workers and federal contractors and lost services for countless others. It was a political fiasco for Trump and an early triumph for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

The fight left both parties

dead set against another shutdown. That sentiment weakened Trump's hand and fueled the bipartisan deal, a pact that contrasts with the parties' still-raging differences over health care, taxes and investigations of the president.

The product of nearly three weeks of talks, the agreement provides almost \$1.4 billion for new barriers along the boundary. That's less than the \$1.6 billion for border security in a bipartisan Senate bill that Trump spurned months ago, and enough for building just 55 miles of barricades, not the 200-plus miles he'd sought.

# House committee moves to tighten gun laws

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A key House committee approved a bill Wednesday to require background checks for all sales and transfers of firearms, a first step by majority Democrats to tighten gun laws after eight years of Republican rule.

The House Judiciary Committee voted in favor of the bill 23-15, sending it to the House floor. If approved by the full House, the bill would be the most significant gun control legislation approved by either chamber of Congress in at least a decade.

Democrats have pledged additional gun legislation, including restrictions on high-

capacity magazines and a measure to allow temporary removal of guns from people deemed an imminent risk to themselves or others.

Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., called the background checks bill long overdue to address a "national crisis of gun violence" that claimed nearly 40,000 lives in 2017.

"Our country is awash in guns, and we have the shameful death toll to show for it," he said.

The vote on the bill came after a contentious, daylong hearing in which Republicans offered a series of amendments, all of which were blocked by Democrats.

Republicans said they were ready to offer additional amendments when Nadler shut off debate around 8 p.m., 10 hours after the hearing began.

Rep. Doug Collins, of Georgia, the panel's senior Republican, called Nadler's action "disturbing" and said it did not bode well for the two-year congressional session.

Wednesday's vote came a day before the one-year anniversary of the high school shooting in Parkland, Fla., that killed 17 people.

Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla., said that while the bill "can't bring back" any of those killed in Parkland or other shootings, it will help reduce gun violence.

# Powerful storm dumps more rain, snow across West

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Heavy rain again raised the risk of mudslides in Southern California burn areas where evacuations were ordered during a powerful storm that flooded roads, toppled trees and cut power farther north.

The system known as an atmospheric river snaked through southern Oregon, Northern California and western Nevada while feeding on a deep plume of moisture stretching across the Pacific Ocean to near Hawaii, the National Weather Service said.

The tempest followed more than a week of severe weather in the Pacific Northwest and was the latest in a series that has all

but eliminated drought-level dryness in California this winter.

Mandatory evacuations were in effect for areas near a burn scar in the Santa Ana Mountains southeast of Los Angeles where officials said the risk of debris flows was high.

Tim Suber said he has lost count of how many times his hillside neighborhood in Lake Elsinore has been evacuated between last summer's devastating wildfire and this winter's succession of storms.

"I'm not going this time," Suber said Wednesday after Riverside County sheriff's deputies warned him that he could end up trapped if roads flood.

"I've got 35 chickens and a daughter who won't leave them behind. So we're

staying."

The real estate agent said he's confident culverts and washes in the area will handle any runoff after crews removed dozens of truckloads of dirt following the last storm. But just in case, "my car is gassed up and ready to go at a moment's notice," said Suber, 54.

Winter storm warnings were posted in the snow-laden Sierra Nevada, where the forecast said up to 7 feet of new snow could be dumped at elevations above 9,000 feet.

The National Weather Service recorded winds gusting to 132 mph atop the Mount Rose ski resort southwest of Reno, Nev.

A backcountry avalanche warning was issued throughout the Sierra.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Purse lost in 1950s to be returned to owner

**IN** JEFFERSONVILLE — A purse containing a prom invitation, photos and other items from 1950s America will be returned to its owner, now 82, after workers found it while demolishing part of an Indiana school.

Martha Everett lost the black, stitched purse more than six decades ago. Workers found it in January behind science classroom cabinets in the old Jeffersonville High School, where Everett was a senior in 1955.

Greater Clark County Schools spokeswoman Erin Bojorquez said the district was able to track Everett after one of her relatives saw a Facebook post about the purse. The district plans to mail the purse to Everett's home in Florida.

## Police: Murder plot foiled just in time

**TN** HUMBOLDT — Police said they foiled a murder-for-hire plot hours before the killing was to take place.

A statement from the West Tennessee Drug Task Force said agents received information Feb. 6 that Stephen Taylor, 43, of Murfreesboro, had hired Gregory Barnes, 22, to kill a Murfreesboro man who was a potential witness against Taylor in Rutherford County Circuit Court on Feb. 8.

Agents took the intended victim into protective custody, then arrested Taylor and Barnes. Both are charged with conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

Investigators said Taylor and Barnes came up with the plot while serving a weekend sentence at the Gibson County jail.

## Town rethinks teen trick-or-treat penalty

**VA** CHESAPEAKE — A city's penalty of jail time for teenage trick-or-treaters has scared up some ridicule and a possible policy change.

The Chesapeake City Council discussed an amendment Tuesday to a 50-year-old law that threatens teens with up to six months in jail if they go door-to-door in pursuit of candy on Oct. 31. The Virginian-Pilot reported no teens have ever been arrested under the ordinance. But it made news last Halloween when it was parodied on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!"

The amendment would eliminate the jail penalty. Trick-or-treating past the age of 12 would carry fines of up to \$250, as would violating an 8 p.m. curfew.

## Police: Man in funeral crash accused of DUI

**GA** LILBURN — A hearse was struck and flipped several times during a funeral procession in metro Atlanta. Police said the man who hit it is charged with DUI and drug and traffic offenses.

News outlets cite a Lilburn police report as saying Troy Hickey is accused of ignoring officers stopping traffic and slamming into the hearse Feb. 8. Two funeral directors inside were taken to a hospital.

Police said Hickey told an officer he used methadone, a synthetic opioid, three weeks earlier. But the officer said "fresh track marks" or injection wounds were on his arms.

## Police: Pot smokers found tiger in house

**TX** HOUSTON — Houston police said some

people who went into an abandoned home to smoke marijuana found a caged tiger.

They called police on Monday and the major offender animal cruelty unit and animal shelter volunteers arrived on the scene.

Officials told KHOU-TV the tiger was well-fed, but the cage was secured by only a nylon strap and a screwdriver. Officials said it could easily open and the tiger could have gone on a "rampage."

The tiger was taken to an undisclosed animal sanctuary in Texas.

## Handyman accused of blowing up row home

**CO** DENVER — A handyman involved in an argument with tenants intentionally caused an explosion that leveled a brick row house in Denver, injuring nine people including himself, authorities allege.

Todd Perkins, 56, was arrested Monday on suspicion of arson and attempted murder, said Capt. Greg Pixley, a spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Perkins, who lived in a camper on the property near downtown Denver, sparked the Aug. 14 explosion that destroyed the six-unit complex, Pixley said.

## Police: Man with 3 wives is in custody

**OH** COLUMBUS — A Maine man who is accused of being married to three different women in three states is behind bars in Ohio.

A warrant was issued when Michael Middleton, 43, missed a court appearance last Thursday in New Hampshire.

A day later, he was arrested in Ohio.

Charges were brought in New

Hampshire because Middleton married a woman there while also being married to women in Alabama and Georgia.

The New Hampshire wife said Middleton scammed her out of \$20,000.

## Library book 70 years overdue is returned

**MD** SILVER SPRING — A library book more than 70 years overdue has found its way home to a library in Silver Spring.

News outlets reported Mora Gregg, 75, was cleaning her apartment in Toronto last month when she discovered "The Postman," a children's book about the journey of a girl's letter. Stamped inside the yellowed book are the words, "Property of Silver Spring Library."

Gregg said her mother likely checked it out for her when she was a toddler. Gregg sent the book and an apology letter to the library.

## \$4K found inside book donated for charity

**AZ** PHOENIX — Thousands of dollars found inside a donated book have been returned to the former owner.

KPNX-TV reported that volunteer Cathy McAllister was sorting books for a charity book sale in Phoenix when she found \$4,000 in a chamber cut inside "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

McAllister said the former owner also left a letter and an address label inside the book. The man's family was contacted and the money returned.

From wire reports

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# Small players are scoring big

Associated Press

**BUIES CREEK, N.C.** — Campbell's Chris Clemons keeps hitting shots near mid-court logos, dunking in traffic and passing big names on the list of college basketball's best all-time scorers.

The national scoring leader has a fearless game packed into a 5-foot-9 frame, making the senior the headliner of college basketball's crop of big-time undersized scorers — including No. 10 Marquette's Markus Howard and No. 12 Purdue's Carsen Edwards.

They are Mighty Mites in a game that endlessly yearns for bigger, faster and stronger.

"The main thing is confidence," Clemons said in an interview with The Associated Press. "You always want to be confident in knowing you can play with anybody. I think that carries me through mostly anything, defensively and offensively — that I can play just as well as anybody else regardless of size."

That's certainly true of Clemons and several others nationally:

- Clemons averages a national-best 29.8 points, up from around 25 in each of the previous two seasons, and is ninth in Division I history with 2,978 points;

- Howard, a 5-11 junior, is fourth at 25.6 points;

- Edwards, a junior and pre-season AP All-American listed at 6-foot on the NCAA leaderboard but 6-1 by the school, is seventh at 24.6 points;

- There are four other 20-point scorers standing 6 feet or shorter: Hampton junior Jermaine Marrow (6-0, 24.7 points), Texas San Antonio sophomore Jhivvan Jackson (6-0, 22.7), VMI sophomore Bubba Parham (5-11, 20.5) and Northern Illinois junior Eugene German (6-0, 20.5);

- And the season's only two 50-point games came from small scorers: Howard with 53 points against Creighton in January and Furman 5-11 junior Jordan Lyons with 54 against

North Greenville in November, though that was an outlier amid Lyons' 16.3-point average.

"If you've grown up with the ball in your hands your whole life — you've had the ball, you've made decisions, you've had to score, you've had to figure out ways — then you're going to find a way," said Kevin McGeehan, Clemons' coach at Campbell.

Howard entered the week shooting 43.7 percent on three-pointers and hit 10 in his 53-point outing. But he gets to the line, too, where he attempts seven shots per game and shoots 91.6 percent. That alone can turn a good game into a great one, like when he hit 19 of 21 free throws against Kansas State in one of two 45-point showings this season.

"My whole life, I've played above my age," said Howard, who had 38 points in Saturday's win against reigning national champion Villanova. "I always played three and four years older than what I was. I played against guys that were older than me, stronger than me, taller than me. ... So when I got into college, it was something I wasn't really not used to seeing."

Amid that college success, it's unclear how their games might translate in the NBA.

Jay Williams, a former AP national college player of the year at Duke and NBA player, said they will need to find the right fit — maybe a roster seeking scoring or playmaking off the bench — while overcoming defensive concerns.

"You have a lot of guards who are just taller, stronger, athletic and who have post games," said Williams, now an ESPN analyst. "I think that's always the problem when you have smaller guys that come in. ... There's the disadvantage because a team will run the same scheme relentlessly until you stop it."

"This is not me saying that Chris Clemons can't do it or Markus Howard can't do it. But we don't see them being guarded by guys who are 6-6, 6-7" in college.

So far, Clemons is thriving against just about anyone.

With a strong 180-pound frame and a quick release, Clemons comes around screens and elevates for three-pointers even with a defender on his hip. He's always ready for the big shot, including when he raced upcourt to bury a 30-footer at the horn to finish with 39 points and win at Big South Conference-leading Radford.

He's also got hops. Just watch his move against Presbyterian as an example, when he came around a perimeter screen past two defenders and took off from the edge of the paint to throw down a heavy dunk.

"When it's time to put on a show, I'm going to put on a show," Clemons said afterward. "I love to give the fans what they came to see."

Clemons, whose favorite player is former Georgetown and NBA star Allen Iverson, had a season-high 45 points against those Hoyas in a December loss and earned high praise from Hoyas coach Patrick Ewing.

"He shoots the three like Steph (Curry) all the way out past the NBA three-point line," the longtime NBA great said. "He gets to the hole and he knocks down free throws. He's a great player."

Clemons' only other offers out of high school in Raleigh came from Gardner-Webb and UNC Greensboro. Yet he's scored more points than Duke's J.J. Redick, Indiana State's Larry Bird, North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough and Houston's Elvin Hayes in his climb up the NCAA list.

With 48 points on Wednesday, he passed Kansas' Danny Manning (2,951) and Cincinnati's Oscar Robertson (2,973). He's closing in on becoming the ninth player to score 3,000 career points.

And he's on pace to become the best scorer shorter than 6-0. That mark is held by Saint Peter's Keydren Clark, who at 5-9 scored 3,058 points (25.9 career average) from 2002-06 before an overseas pro career.

## Murray State's Morant rising up draft charts

Associated Press

Ja Morant is finding ways to stay grounded following his ascension to the bright lights of college hoops' national stage.

The high-flying Murray State point guard is off social media to the dismay of 141,000 followers on his verified Twitter account. He is not listening to lofty projections of being a top-three NBA Draft pick if he leaves after this season.

And until Morant's injured right ankle heals, he's being careful with his highlight-reel dunks that turned him into an overnight sensation.

"There's still a little bit of pain in it," said Morant, who turned the ankle in the early minutes against Belmont on Jan. 24. "I'm playing under the rim now, so ..."

Nonetheless, his sophomore season has been over the top.

The 6-foot-3 guard became a sensation with his acrobatic dunks, rivaling those by his former AAU teammate — Duke's Zion Williamson.

All the attention has taken some getting used to.

"Honestly, it surprised me," said Morant, who also leads Murray State with 5.6 rebounds per game. "I didn't think I would be here right now in this position I'm in."

If the draft projections play out, Morant could be selected right after Williamson. Their AAU team — the South Carolina Hornets — also featured guard Devontae Shuler, who now plays at Mississippi.

After a solid freshman season, averaging 12.4 points, 6.6 rebounds and 6.4 assists, Morant has taken his game to another level, averaging 23.9 points and leading the nation in assists at 10.4 per game. He wants to become the first player to finish averaging those lofty numbers since assists became an official NCAA statistic in 1985-86.

Morant could be Murray State's highest NBA Draft selection, and would follow Racers standouts Cameron Payne (first-round, 2015) and Isaiah Canaan (second, 2013) into the NBA.

# Shiffrin earns bronze in GS at worlds

Associated Press

ARE, Sweden — Mikaela Shiffrin's careful planning didn't pay off in the giant slalom at the world championships as the American had to settle for a bronze medal behind winner Petra Vlhova of Slovakia.

Vlhova, who is emerging as Shiffrin's big rival, finished 0.14 seconds ahead of Germany's Viktoria Rebensburg for her first gold at a major championship. It added to a silver that Vlhova won in the Alpine combined on Friday.

Shiffrin chose to skip the combined to preserve energy for the giant slalom and

slalom, her best events, having already won the super-G on the opening day of competition.

Shiffrin was 0.38 seconds behind Vlhova in third place, earning her a sixth world championship medal — just two off the American record held by Lindsey Vonn.

Vlhova put her hands to her head when Rebensburg, who was last down in the second leg, crossed the line with the second-best time. Rebensburg, the 2010 Olympic champion in giant slalom, was 0.40 seconds ahead at the third checkpoint only to lose 0.54 seconds in the bottom section.

With gusts buffeting the skiers — it was so windy that organizers removed the banner above the finishing line — Vlhova's power helped her negate a 0.19 deficit to Rebensburg after the first run. She also overcame crashing into a gate in between the second and third checkpoints, which saw her briefly lose control.

Shiffrin had been in fourth place, 0.44 off the lead, after the first leg and had acknowledged she struggled to get a "response from the surface."

The slalom is on Saturday, where Shiffrin is an even bigger favorite.

## Garcia apologizes for tantrum in Saudi Arabia

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Sergio Garcia apologized in a statement and in person to the players in his group when he damaged five greens at the Saudi International. He apologized in a social media post and in an interview at his locker Wednesday at Riviera.

That has been the easy part. He has had plenty of experience over the years.

Garcia said the challenge now is to make sure it does not happen again, knowing that the scrutiny of his behavior will be greater than ever.

"I'm sure I'm going to hear it throughout the year," Garcia said in his first interview since he was disqualified Feb. 2 for the damage he did to five greens out of frustration early in the third round.

"My job is to make sure I deal with it the best way possible, and show them that I can grow, that I can move forward and I can be who I am in the right way," he said. "I want to face my mistakes head on. My job is to go out there and enjoy my game and show everyone that no matter what, I can be the best behaved guy in the classroom. ... I just hope I can maintain their respect."

The Genesis Open is his first event since he lost his head early in the third round at the Saudi International, which he

attributed to a personal issue that put him in a bad frame of mind at the start of the week and greens at Royal Greens in Saudi Arabia that were new, grainy and slow.

He did not disclose the personal matter and said it was no excuse, and that he knew immediately he had done wrong.

"It hit me like on the 10th hole. I started thinking: 'What am I doing? Get your head back on top of your shoulders,'" Garcia said. "I know I lost it."

The 39-year-old Spaniard has put his emotions on full display since he turned pro in 1999 at age 19, challenged Tiger Woods in the 1999 PGA Championship at Medinah and played in the first of nine Ryder Cups.

There was great passion when he won the Masters in 2017 for his first major. But the explosive, petulant variety has been seen far more often over the years, whether it was kicking a shoe that nearly struck an official at Wentworth in 2000, blaming a European Tour rules official for a two-shot penalty in Australia or accusing Woods of disturbing the gallery at the TPC Sawgrass, a rift that ended with Garcia making a racially insensitive comment about him.

Garcia's DQ ended a streak of seven straight top 10s worldwide, which began when he was picked for the Ryder Cup in France. He went 3-1-0 for the week at Le Golf National.

## NHL roundup

# Boyle gets shutout, Murray gets first win

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Kevin Boyle made 35 saves in his first career start and the Anaheim Ducks beat the Vancouver Canucks 1-0 Wednesday night in general manager Bob Murray's first game as interim coach.

Jakob Silfverberg scored to help the Ducks end a seven-game losing streak, a skid that prompted Murray to fire coach Randy Carlyle on Sunday and take over for the rest of the season.

Jacob Markstrom made 21 saves for the Canucks, who have lost four straight road games.

The 64-year-old Murray had never coached professionally at any level but got the response he had been looking for, with Silfverberg scoring 6:30 into the first period to give the Ducks their first lead since getting the opening goal in a 5-1 loss at St. Louis on Jan. 23.

Anaheim maintained a feisty edge throughout the increasingly chippy game, with veteran forwards Ryan Kesler and Ryan Getzlaf each getting into fights.

However, the Ducks could not address all of the issues that had caused them to lose 19 of their previous 21 games and plummet into last place in the

Western Conference.

The Canucks had a 35-22 advantage in shots, forcing Boyle to make several difficult saves.

Boyle, a 26-year-old undrafted rookie, joined John Gibson as the second Ducks goalie to record a shutout in his first NHL start.

Vancouver rookie Elias Pettersson also hit the crossbar with a powerful slap shot during a power play in the first period.

Ducks defender Cam Fowler played in his 595th game for Anaheim, passing Ruslan Salei for most appearances by a defenseman in team history. Gibson was placed on injured reserve because of back, neck and head injuries.

**Penguins 3, Oilers 1:** Matt Murray robbed Connor McDavid on a penalty shot for one of his 38 saves as host Pittsburgh beat struggling Edmonton.

Bryan Rust, Teddy Blueger and Jared McCann all scored as Pittsburgh picked up two vital points despite playing without suspended center Evgeni Malkin, forced to sit while serving a one-game suspension for an illegal high stick. Penguins captain Sidney Crosby finished with one assist and spent large portions of the night going head to head with McDavid.

## NBA roundup

# Blazers win testy battle with Warriors

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — With a drama-filled victory over the Warriors that included the ejection of Golden State coach Steve Kerr, the Portland Trail Blazers got a confidence boost heading into the All-Star break.

Damian Lillard scored 29 points and the Blazers snapped Golden State's five-game winning streak with a 129-107 win Wednesday night. Jake Layman added 17 points off the bench for the Blazers, who rebounded after a two-game skid.

"It's really important when you can collect yourself and come home against the best team in the league right now, and just get it done," Lillard said. "I thought that said a lot about our team, our growth."

Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry each had 32 points for the Warriors, who rested DeMarcus Cousins following a victory at home over Utah the night before. Despite the loss,

which ended an 11-game winning streak on the road, Golden State goes into the break with the best record in the Western Conference.

After a tight three quarters, Layman's long jumper gave Portland a 104-101 lead in the final period before Zach Collins blocked Damion Lee's layup on the other end.

Collins and Klay Thompson exchanged words, and the frustration spilled over to players from both sides. The two players were given offsetting technical fouls.

Portland led 110-103 before Draymond Green was called for a flagrant foul on Collins with 3:54 left. Kerr reacted angrily, throwing his clipboard to the court and yelling at the officials before he was ejected.

Green praised Kerr for standing up for him: "That was amazing, he was great. I enjoyed that."

**Timberwolves 121, Rockets 111:** Jeff Teague scored 27 points, Karl-Anthony Towns

had 25 and host Minnesota overcame James Harden's 42 points.

Harden had his 31st consecutive game with 30 or more points, tying Wilt Chamberlain for the second-longest streak in league history.

**Nets 148, Cavaliers 139 (3OT):** D'Angelo Russell scored 14 of his 36 points in the third overtime and Brooklyn outlasted host Cleveland.

**Raptors 129, Wizards 120:** Pascal Siakam scored a career-high 44 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, OG Anunoby scored a career-best 22 points, and host Toronto beat Washington for its sixth straight win.

**Nuggets 120, Kings 118:** Nikola Jokic tipped in a basket with less than a second remaining, Isaiah Thomas hit two big three-pointers in his long-awaited Denver debut and the Nuggets held off Sacramento.

**76ers 126, Knicks 111:** Joel Embiid had 26 points, 14 rebounds and one flying leap over award-winning actress

Regina King into the crowd, and Philadelphia handed host New York its 18th straight loss.

**Bucks 106, Pacers 97:** Giannis Antetokounmpo started fast and finished strong, picking up a triple-double to help visiting Milwaukee rally late for a victory over Indiana.

**Heat 112, Mavericks 101:** Dwyane Wade scored 22 points in what figures to be his final game on the court where he won his first championship, helping Miami beat host Dallas.

**Celtics 118, Pistons 110:** Jayson Tatum scored 19 points and Gordon Hayward finished with 18 to help host Boston.

**Bulls 122, Grizzlies 110:** Otto Porter Jr. scored a career-high 37 points on 16-for-20 shooting, Robin Lopez added season-high 25 points, and host Chicago beat Memphis.

**Clippers 134, Suns 107:** Lou Williams scored 30 points, Danilo Gallinari added 20 and host Los Angeles routed Phoenix.

## College basketball roundup

# No. 1 Tennessee extends winning streak to 19 games

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Admiral Schofield had 21 points and 10 rebounds as No. 1 Tennessee defeated South Carolina 85-73 on Wednesday for its school-record 19th consecutive victory.

Tennessee owns the longest active winning streak of any active Division I team and is 11-0 in Southeastern Conference competition for the first time in school history.

The Volunteers (23-1, 11-0 SEC) also earned their 23rd straight home win. Tennessee's last home loss was a 94-84 setback against Auburn on Jan. 2, 2018.

South Carolina (12-12, 7-4)

made a season-high 14 three-point baskets and shot 60.9 percent from beyond the arc. Tennessee was 9-for-20 on three-point attempts.

Jordan Bowden scored 16 points for Tennessee. Kyle Alexander, Jordan Bone and Lamonte' Turner added 10 points each.

Tre Campbell had 19 points for South Carolina. Chris Silva provided 17 points and 15 rebounds, while Hassani Gravett added 15 points.

**No. 13 Villanova 85, Providence 67:** Eric Paschall scored 20 of his 25 points in the second half and the host Wildcats rebounded from their first Big East loss by running away from the Friars.

**No. 15 Texas Tech 78, Oklahoma State 50:** Jarrett Culver scored 19 points, and the visiting Red Raiders eased past the Cowboys.

**No. 17 Florida State 88, Wake Forest 66:** Senior Christ Koumadje recorded his first career double-double with 20 points and 12 rebounds to help the host Seminoles beat the Demon Deacons.

**No. 22 Virginia Tech 76, Georgia Tech 68:** Ty Outlaw scored 20 points and the host Hokies rallied past the Yellow Jackets.

### Service academies

**Army 71, Boston University 61:** Matt Wilson tallied 15 points and 11 rebounds to help

lift the host Black Knights beat the Terriers.

Tommy Funk had 17 points for Army (12-14, 7-6 Patriot League), which snapped its four-game losing streak. Alex King added 10 points. Lonnie Grayson had 10 points for the home team.

**Lafayette 80, Navy 74:** Justin Jaworski had 19 points to lead four of his teammates in double figures as the visiting Leopards got past the Midshipmen.

Paulius Zalys added 15 points for Lafayette (8-16, 5-8 Patriot League).

Cam Davis had 18 points and six rebounds for Navy (8-16, 5-8). John Carter Jr. added 14 points and eight rebounds.