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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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CENTCOM hacked on Twitter, YouTube

Islamic State images uploaded, troops threatened, military contact info released

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Hackers claiming to be with the militant group Islamic State took control of U.S. Central Command's Twitter feed and YouTube channel Monday, posting threats to servicemembers and contact information of military staff and retired brass.

The postings lasted about 30 minutes and included what appeared to be a contact roster for U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., and other commands, the cellphone numbers and home addresses of some retired generals, and maps of North Korea and China. Stars and Stripes could not immediately verify if the

documents were authentic.

On CENTCOM's YouTube channel, the hackers uploaded Islamic State propaganda videos and footage of the group's fighters.

When contacted Monday, a CENTCOM spokeswoman said the command was still gathering information on the hacks.

"We can confirm that the CENTCOM Twitter and YouTube accounts were compromised earlier today," the command said in a released statement. "We are taking appropriate measures to address the matter. We have no further information to provide at this time."

Its Twitter feed was suspended just after 1 p.m. Eastern

time. The YouTube channel was disabled soon after.

"We broke into your networks and personal devices and know everything about you," said one message posted to the Twitter account. "You'll see no mercy, infidels. ISIS is already here, we are in your PCs, in each military base."

The message said the Islamic State group is waging a "cyber jihad" through a "cyber Caliphate," referring to the group's stated goal of creating its own global fundamentalist Muslim state beginning in Iraq and Syria.

"We won't stop! We know everything about you, your wives and children," the posted threat continued. "U.S. soldiers! We're

watching you!"

Subsequent tweets also claimed that the Pentagon's computer networks had been hacked. An uncaptioned photo posted to the Twitter account showed what appeared to be the interior of a military office with desks and two soldiers, one with a dog.

The hack comes after the FBI says North Korea infiltrated Sony Pictures networks in November, releasing private company emails and leaking the unreleased movie "The Interview." The incident raised U.S. concerns over cybercrime and warfare by enemies.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jon Harper contributed to this story.
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US-led airstrike in Syria may have killed 50 civilians

McClatchy Foreign Staff

GAZIANTEP, Turkey — A U.S.-led coalition airstrike killed at least 50 Syrian civilians late last month when it targeted a headquarters of Islamic State extremists in northern Syria, according to a witness and a Syrian opposition human rights organization.

The civilians were being held in a makeshift jail in the town of Al Bab, close to the Turkish border, when the aircraft struck on the evening of Dec. 28, witnesses said. The building, called the Al Saraya, a government center, was leveled in the airstrike. It was days before civil defense workers could dig out the victims' bodies.

U.S. Central Command, which had not announced the airstrike, confirmed the attack Saturday in response to repeat-

ed McClatchy inquiries.

"Coalition aircraft did strike and destroy an ISIL headquarters building in Al Bab on Dec. 28," Col. Patrick S. Ryder wrote in an email, referring to the extremist group by an alternative name. He said a review of the airstrike showed no evidence of civilian casualties but offered to examine any additional information "since we take all allegations seriously."

U.S. officials acknowledged for the first time last week that they are investigating "at least a few" claims of civilian casualties as a result of airstrikes on Syria. "This is something we always take seriously," said Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman. "We are very mindful of trying to mitigate the risk to civilians every time we operate, everywhere

we operate."

A subsequent email from CENTCOM said the Pentagon had received nine reports of civilian deaths in Syria and that determinations were still to be made in four of those. No details of the incidents were provided.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, an independent opposition group that tracks casualties in Syria, said it has documented the deaths of at least 40 civilians in airstrikes in the months between the start of U.S. bombing in Syria Sept. 23 through the Dec. 28 strike on Al Bab. The deaths include 13 people killed in Idlib province on the first day of the strikes. Other deaths include 23 civilians killed in the eastern province of Deir el Zour, two in Raqqa province and two more in Idlib province.

The issue of civilian deaths in U.S. strikes is critical as the United States hopes to win support from Syrians for its campaign against the Islamic State group. The deaths are seen by U.S.-allied moderate rebel commanders as one reason support for their movement has eroded in northern Syria, while support for radical forces such as al-Qaida's Nusra Front and the Islamic State group has risen.

CENTCOM, on behalf of the Joint Task Force, generally issues reports of airstrikes on the day they occur, but for a while was publishing its reports only three days a week. The Al Bab strike was not included in any of the summaries. CENTCOM spokesman Ryder said the failure to list the Dec. 28 airstrike was an administrative oversight.

France: Terrorism threat still present

The Associated Press

PARIS — France ordered 10,000 troops into the streets Monday to protect sensitive sites after three days of bloodshed as it hunted for the accomplices of the Islamic militants who left 17 people dead as they terrorized the nation.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls said the search is urgent because “the threat is still present” after the attacks that began Wednesday with a massacre at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and ended when the three attackers were killed Fri-

day in two nearly simultaneous clashes with security forces.

“The work on these attacks, on these terrorist and barbaric acts continues ... because we consider that there are most probably some possible accomplices,” Valls told BFM television.

It was not clear exactly how many accomplices French forces were hunting for in addition to Hayat Boumeddiene, the common-law wife of Amedy Coulibaly, who killed four hostages Friday at a kosher grocery in Paris before being killed by security forces. Boumeddiene

was reportedly in Syria with a male travel companion.

France’s defense minister said the country is mobilizing the 10,000 troops to protect its people. Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said the deployment will be fully in place by Tuesday and will focus on the most sensitive locations. By midday Monday, Paris’ Marais — one of the country’s oldest Jewish neighborhoods as well as a major tourist site — was filled with police and soldiers.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said 4,700 security forces would be assigned to

protect France’s 717 Jewish schools.

Boumeddiene crossed into Syria on Thursday, the day after the Charlie Hebdo newspaper massacre that left 12 dead, and the same day her husband shot a French policewoman to death on the outskirts of Paris. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told the state-run Anadolu Agency on Monday that Boumeddiene arrived in Turkey from Madrid on Jan. 2, ahead of the attacks in Paris. She stayed at a hotel in Istanbul with another person before crossing into Syria.

Airman pleads not guilty in AFN case

BY MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Air Force Staff Sgt. Sean Oliver pleaded not guilty to premeditated murder and other charges Monday as his court-martial for the 2013 death of Petty Officer Dmitry Chepusov began.

Defense attorneys and prosecutors wrangled over the admissibility of a deposition and an alleged conversation Oliver had with the witness before Chepusov’s death. Oliver faces the possibility of life in prison if convicted on the main charge: that he strangled his American Forces Network colleague in

the house of another co-worker on Dec. 14, 2013, after a night of drinking.

Oliver, an AFN broadcast technician, was allegedly involved in a romantic relationship with the wife of Chepusov, who worked as a broadcaster for the military public affairs network. Chepusov was found dead in the passenger seat of Oliver’s car during a traffic stop in downtown Kaiserslautern, not far from the apartment where the killing allegedly took place.

Prosecutors submitted more than a dozen paper and plastic bags of physical evidence, which were carried into the courtroom in a plastic bin by two airmen. Among other items, the bin con-

tained samples of blood spatter evidence found at the apartment, various cellphones and a set of bathmats and a towel.

Oliver allegedly told German police that he’d found Chepusov wandering around Kaiserslautern with the bathmats and towel and offered him a ride. An Air Force investigator said at a hearing in November that he didn’t believe that version of events.

After hours of questioning by Air Force investigators, Oliver allegedly acknowledged some sort of involvement in Chepusov’s death, though his defense attorneys have argued that the statement was not a confession.

2 AirAsia black boxes found, 1 retrieved

PANGKALAN BUN, Indonesia — Divers retrieved one black box Monday and located the other from the AirAsia plane that crashed more than two weeks ago, key developments that should help investigators unravel what caused the aircraft to plummet into the Java Sea.

The flight data recorder was pulled from beneath a piece of the aircraft’s wing and brought to the sea’s surface, and the cockpit voice recorder was found hours later, said Suryadi Bambang Supriyadi, operation coordinator for Indonesia’s national search-and-rescue agency.

He said the voice recorder was 66 feet from the data recorder but remained lodged beneath heavy wreckage, and divers were struggling to free it at a depth of 105 feet. Searchers began zeroing in on the location a day earlier after three Indonesian ships picked up intense pings from the area, but they were unable to see the devices due to strong currents and poor visibility.

The two instruments, which emit signals from their beacons, are vital to understanding what brought Flight 8501 down on Dec. 28, killing all 162 people on board.

From The Associated Press

Report: Military wants permanent Spain presence

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military wants to establish a permanent presence of up to 3,000 Marines at a Spanish air base that now serves as a temporary host for a task force of crisis-response troops supporting U.S. Africa Command, a Spanish newspaper said.

In early December, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel issued a letter to Spanish authorities

requesting permission to keep the Moron, Spain-based Marine quick-reaction force in the country, the newspaper El Pais reported last week. According to the paper, the U.S. plan is to maintain a presence of roughly 850 Marines in Moron but allow for a surge of up to 3,000 troops in the event of a crisis.

The unit, a Marine Air-Ground Task Force focused on crisis response, was formed in

2013 in the wake of the attacks on a U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi, Libya. The team is mobilized periodically in connection with potential threats in Africa. The unit has supported U.S. evacuation efforts in South Sudan and Libya and has provided logistical support for U.S. anti-Ebola efforts in western Africa.

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Ducks top Jets in SO

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Sami Vatanen has been waiting months for his first chance in an NHL shootout. After a gritty rally in regulation and five tense rounds, the Finnish defenseman finally got a chance to end a victory for the Anaheim Ducks.

To do it for Teemu just made it sweeter. Vatanen scored in the sixth round of the shootout, and the Ducks rallied from a two-goal deficit in the third period for a 5-4 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Sunday night.

On his first career shootout attempt, Vatanen won it for his fellow Finn. A few hours earlier, both teams watched an emotional pregame ceremony honoring Teemu Selanne, whose No. 8 jersey was retired by the Ducks.

"I have to say I was honored I had the chance," said the 23-year-old Vatanen, who grew up idolizing Selanne. "Maybe I can say to my grandsons someday I made the game-winning goal on Teemu's night."

Blackhawks 4, Wild 1: Marian Hossa, Bryan Bickell and Brad Richards each had a goal and an assist, leading host Chicago over sliding Minnesota.

The weary Wild dropped their fifth consecutive game.

Panthers 4, Oilers 2: Brian Campbell scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, and Florida got two more scores in the third period in Edmonton to win its third straight.

NC State downs No. 2 Duke

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Kyle Washington hopped on a courtside table to celebrate amid a crowd of North Carolina State fans jumping around at midcourt. Anthony "Cat" Barber posed with fans taking selfies amid the chaos.

The Wolfpack had turned No. 2 Duke's latest visit to Raleigh into yet another party — complete with ending the Blue Devils' unbeaten start.

Trevor Lacey scored 21 points and N.C. State shot 55 percent to beat Duke 87-75 on Sunday, knocking off one of the last three undefeated teams in the country.

"Today we just all put it together and we just played as a team," Lacey said. "When we play like this, we're a good team."

N.C. State (12-5, 3-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) knocked down shots all day — some wide open after defensive breakdowns — and made 10 of 16 three-pointers. Defensively, the Wolfpack ran constant double teams at preseason All-American Jahliil Okafor to slow Duke's big man.

The Wolfpack dominated a second-half stretch with seven straight scoring possessions to build a 19-point lead — Duke's biggest deficit all season by far — then turned away the Blue Devils' late comeback.

It marked the second time in three seasons that an unbeaten Duke team visited Raleigh and headed to the locker room as the rowdy home crowd stormed the court to celebrate afterward.

The Blue Devils (14-1, 2-1) were No. 1 and 15-0 when it happened two years

ago. Now top-ranked Kentucky and No. 3 Virginia are the nation's last unbeaten.

"Were we as tough as we needed to be? No," coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "Does that mean we're soft? No. We're a good team. We need to learn to play at that level. You've got to be in these things to learn it."

Okafor finished with 23 points and 12 rebounds, but the Blue Devils shot 37 percent and just couldn't keep up when N.C. State's offense got rolling.

Ralston Turner scored 11 of his 16 points after halftime, including two straight 3s to break open a tie game. And BeeJay Anya added a career-high 14 points to lead a strong effort from the Wolfpack's big men, whose development has been a big focus of Mark Gottfried's staff.

"We got the ball inside and our big guys were productive," Gottfried said. "I think any time with any team ... the more productive guys are around the basket, it opens everything up on the perimeter."

Quinn Cook scored 18 points for Duke, which missed 20 of 27 three-pointers and couldn't make it through a pair of in-state ACC road games unscathed this week. The Blue Devils had a tougher-than-expected win at Wake Forest on Wednesday.

"These two games just taught us that we can lose," sophomore Matt Jones said, "if we don't bring our game every day."

Rutgers 67, No. 4 Wisconsin 62: Myles Mack had 19 of his 21 points in the second half and host Rutgers scored its biggest upset in school history, beating banged up No. 4 Wisconsin.

Kadeem Jack added 20 points for the Scarlet Knights (10-7, 2-2 Big Ten), whose

previous biggest upset was a win over No. 6 West Virginia in 1982.

Sam Dekker and Nigel Hayes had 15 points apiece for Wisconsin (15-2, 3-1). The Badgers did not have leading scorer Frank Kaminsky for the game because of a concussion, and they lost guard Traevon Jackson early in the second half with an injury to his right leg.

Oregon State 58, No. 7 Arizona 56: Langston Morris-Walker made a go-ahead layup with 26 seconds left, lifting host Oregon State to its first win over a top-10 team since 2000.

Arizona's T.J. McConnell missed an off-balance shot with 1 second left, and Oregon State fans rushed the court at Gill Coliseum.

Morris-Walker had 12 points and eight rebounds, and Gary Payton II had 10 points and nine rebounds for the Beavers (11-4, 2-1 Pac-12).

McConnell had 13 points and six assists, and Rondae Hollis-Jefferson scored 14 points for the Wildcats (14-2, 2-1).

No. 15 Wichita State 67, Loyola of Chicago 53: Tekele Cotton hit four three-pointers and finished with 16 points to lead the Shockers.

Ron Baker scored 15. Fred VanVleet added 14 points and 10 assists, and the Shockers (14-2, 4-0 Missouri Valley Conference) took control in the second half. They outscored the Ramblers (12-4, 2-2) 44-25 after trailing by five at the break to pick up their 22nd straight league win.

Earl Peterson led Loyola with 13 points and Devon Turk scored 11. The emerging Ramblers hit 10 of 18 three-pointers.

Grizzlies outlast Suns

The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Marc Gasol struggled through regulation and the first overtime before finally getting untracked.

Gasol scored the first seven points of the second overtime, Zach Randolph had 27 points and 17 rebounds and the Memphis Grizzlies outlasted the Phoenix Suns 122-110 on Sunday night.

Gasol was 2-for-10 from the field before the second overtime.

The difference? "The ball went in," Gasol said. Gasol finished with 12 points. Mike Conley added 25 points and eight assists and Courtney Lee had 18 points.

While Gasol didn't elaborate on his play, others provided credit to the center.

"Marc was huge," Conley said. "Early on, it seemed like he wasn't as aggressive, and finally, it clicked. He wanted the ball."

Isaiah Thomas led Phoenix with 20 points, but had a costly turnover trying to get the ball into the front court with the Suns leading late in the first overtime — one of seven turnovers for Thomas.

Trail Blazers 106, Lakers 94: Damian Lillard scored 17 of his 34 points in the fourth quarter, leading visit-

ing Portland.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 15 points and nine rebounds, and Chris Kaman added 12 rebounds and nine assists in his fourth start of the season and second against his former team.

Kobe Bryant was rested by Lakers coach Byron Scott for the sixth time in 11 games and second game in a row.

Kings 103, Cavaliers 84: DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points and 13 rebounds and Sacramento handed Cleveland its seventh loss in eight games with LeBron James out with a strained back and sore left knee.

Hawks 120, Wizards 89: Kyle Korver scored 19 points and DeMarre Carroll had 16 to help Eastern Conference-leading Atlanta beat visiting Washington for its eighth straight victory.

Heat 104, Clippers 90: Chris Bosh scored 34 points, Hassan Whiteside had career highs of 23 points and 16 rebounds off the bench and Miami beat Los Angeles to end a three-game road skid.

Whiteside was 10-for-13 from the field and 3-for-4 from the line in 28 minutes. Dwyane Wade added 17 points and 10 assists.

Bills announce Ryan hiring

The Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Rex Ryan is officially going from Broadway to Buffalo.

The Bills announced in a news release Monday that Ryan has been hired to take over as coach. The news came a day after the former New York Jets coach tentatively accepted the Bills' contract offer. Ryan replaces Doug Marrone, who stepped down abruptly on Dec. 31.

"Rex brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the position that we feel will be a tremendous benefit to our players and the entire Bills organization," owner Terry Pegula said in a statement released by the team. "He was very impressive during the interview process, as were many of the candidates to which we spoke. And we feel Rex is the best fit for our team."

Ryan will be formally introduced during a press conference scheduled for Wednesday.

Source: Del Rio gets 2nd Raiders interview

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Denver defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio will be the first candidate to have a second interview with the Oakland Raiders for their head coaching job

as the two-week search could be nearing a conclusion.

A person with knowledge of the plans said Monday that Del Rio will interview with Oakland on Tuesday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team is not releasing details on interviews.

Del Rio met with Raiders owner Mark Davis during the Broncos' bye week. With Denver being eliminated from the playoffs on Sunday, Del Rio is available for a second interview and will be able to sit down with general manager Reggie McKenzie as well.

NBA OKs trade sending Green to Grizzlies

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The NBA has approved a five-player trade between Memphis Grizzlies, Boston Celtics and New Orleans Pelicans that includes forward Jeff Green going from Boston to Memphis.

In the trade, the Grizzlies send forward Tayshaun Prince to Boston and forward Quincy Pondexter to New Orleans. The Grizzlies also acquired point guard Russ Smith from New Orleans, and a traded player exception. The Pelicans send Austin Rivers, the 10th overall pick in 2012, to Boston.



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Of four QBs still standing, Luck is only one without a ring

The Associated Press

With Tom Brady, Aaron Rodgers and Russell Wilson headed to the NFL's conference title games, this is the first time in 21 years — and only second time ever — that three of the final four teams are quarterbacked by a Super Bowl champion.

Yes, when it comes to the QBs who'll be involved in Colts-Patriots in the AFC and Packers-Seahawks in the NFC next Sunday, one of these is not like the others: Indianapolis' Andrew Luck is the lone member of the quartet in search of his first ring.

New England's Brady won the 2002, 2004 and 2005 Super Bowls, while Green Bay's Rodgers (2011) and Seattle's Wilson (last year) have won one trophy apiece.

According to STATS, the only other such trio still standing at this stage came at the end of the 1983-84 season, when the Raiders' Jim Plunkett, Redskins' Joe Theismann and 49ers' Joe Montana did it. (The fourth team was the Seahawks; Dave Krieg and Jim Zorn combined for five interceptions in a conference title game loss.)

The 25-year-old Luck led the Colts to this year's AFC finale by throwing for 265 yards and two touchdowns in a changing-of-the-guard 24-13 victory over 38-year-old Peyton Manning's Denver Broncos on Sunday night.

"We're not satisfied," Indianapolis coach Chuck Pagano said. "This is a great, great victory, but we've got an ultimate goal that we're chasing."

A day earlier, Brady threw for three TDs and ran for another as top-seeded New England edged Baltimore 35-31, becoming the first team in NFL history to win a post-season game after twice falling behind by 14 points.

In the NFC, Green Bay eliminated Dallas 26-21 Sunday in a game that will be remembered for a key officiating decision: What appeared to be a "How did he do that?" leaping catch by Cowboys receiver Dez Bryant on fourth down late in the fourth quarter was erased after a replay review.

Top-seeded Seattle advanced Saturday with a 31-17 win over Carolina. Safety Kam Chancellor stole the show with a 90-yard interception return for a touchdown and a pair of vaults over the offensive line on field-goal attempts by the Panthers.

Here are some of the top topics looking ahead to the AFC and NFC championship games:

You again?: Seattle and New England each opened as a touchdown favorite, perhaps because these will be rematches of lopsided regular-season games. The Seahawks beat the Packers 36-16 in the NFL opener; Seattle accumulated more than 200 yards on the ground, including Marshawn Lynch's 110 yards and two scores, while Rodgers avoided throwing in the direction of cornerback Richard Sherman. The Patriots defeated the Colts 42-20 in Week 11; running back Jonas Gray accounted for 201 yards and four TDs, but he's been pretty much invisible since and was inactive

against the Ravens.

Rodgers' calf: No muscle will be as heavily scrutinized over the next week as the 2011 NFL MVP's left calf. Despite that leg injury, Rodgers managed to pass for 316 yards and three TDs against Dallas, closing with 10 consecutive completions. "I think," Rodgers said, "I got 120 minutes left in me" — a reference to wanting to win two more games this season.

Trying to repeat: Wilson's Seahawks are attempting to put an end to the longest drought without a repeat champion in nearly 50 years of Super Bowls. Brady's Patriots of a decade ago were the last team to go back-to-back.

Trickeration: What will Patriots coach Bill Belichick devise as an encore? New England fooled Baltimore by using four offensive linemen during one scoring drive — "The league will look at that type of thing, and I'm sure that they'll make some adjustments," Ravens coach John Harbaugh huffed — and by having receiver Julian Edelman (a quarterback in college) complete a 51-yard TD toss on a double-pass play.

Trouble against the best: The Colts went 0-4 during the regular season against division champions, 11-1 against everyone else. That might not appear to bode well for facing the AFC East-winning Patriots. Then again, Indianapolis lost to the Broncos, too, when it mattered less than now

Luck, Colts oust Broncos

The Associated Press

DENVER — Everyone pretty much figured Peyton Manning would have his way with an Indianapolis defense that got carved up earlier this season by Ben Roethlisberger.

All the Colts really wanted to do was throw Manning a little bit off rhythm, enough to get Andrew Luck on the field with a chance to do his thing.

They did that and plenty more. Starting with a sack and forced fumble of Manning that led to the go-ahead touchdown, the Colts baffled the Denver quarterback during a 24-13 win Sunday in an AFC divisional playoff game.

Now, Indy's headed to New England to face the Patriots with a chance to make it back to the Super Bowl for the first time since Manning led them there after the 2009 season.

The turning point of the game was early in the second quarter when Jonathan Newsome stripped Manning of the football and Jerrell Freeman recovered it at the Denver 41.

A few plays later, Luck hit tight end Dwayne Allen on a short TD pass to put Indy up 14-7 — a lead the defense protected the rest of the way.

"Once we got into Manning's head — that was the biggest thing," defensive lineman Ricky Jean Francois said. "You never know Peyton to overthrow guys. He usually puts the ball right on the number and when he kept overthrowing it, we knew we had him."

So maybe the Colts aren't just all about Luck, after all.

"We want some of that glory, too. Show us some love," safety Mike Adams said, smiling. "As a defense, we want our own identity. We want to go out there and represent. We want to go out there and do our thing."

What the Colts did was confuse Manning by showing one look and backing off into another version. They constantly had pressure on him as well, sacking him twice and making him unsettled in the pocket.

Manning tried everything to get his team on track, even throwing long several times. But Indy's secondary didn't blink, making it difficult for Manning to locate Demaryius Thomas (five catches, 59 yards, one score) and Emmanuel Sanders (seven catches, 46 yards).

Manning's future murky after playoff loss

DENVER — A few minutes after Denver's 24-13 loss to Indianapolis in the AFC divisional playoffs Sunday, quarterback Peyton Manning, 38, was noncommittal about returning for the 2015 season, which would be his fourth in the Mile High City.

Asked in his postgame news conference where his mindset is for next season, Manning reiterated what he had said earlier to Broncos play-by-play voice Dave Logan: "I didn't have a great answer for him."

Asked again, directly, if he could say "I'm coming back," Manning didn't budge, saying he was more focused on the disappointment of the loss to his former team.

It should make this week interesting at Broncos headquarters, where executive vice president John Elway will be meeting with everyone, figuring out whether he needs to go to the "Plan B" that he readily admitted he didn't have when he threw all his chips in with Manning in the 2012 offseason.

From The Associated Press

Rodgers, replay send Pack to title game

The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Slowed by injury but perfect in the clutch, Aaron Rodgers used his accurate arm to help the Packers move one step closer to the Super Bowl.

An officiating call that went Green Bay's way also helped in a 26-21 victory Sunday over the Dallas Cowboys.

More stationary than usual because of a left calf injury, Rodgers went 9-for-9 in the fourth quarter, including a laser-like 13-yard touchdown pass to Richard Rodgers for the go-ahead score with 9:10 left of the fourth quarter.

It was the second of two touchdown passes that rallied the Packers from an eight-point deficit.

The fourth quarter also featured the officials overturning what was initially ruled a brilliant catch by Dallas' Dez Bryant.

On fourth-and-2 from the Packers 32 with 4:42 left and the Packers leading 26-21, Tony Romo threw a deep pass left. Cornerback Sam Shields had solid coverage. The 6-foot-2 Bryant jumped high over Shields for a 31-yard grab to the Packers 1. But Packers coach Mike McCarthy challenged the call, and it was ruled incomplete on replay review.

The NFL rule states the receiver must maintain control all the way to the ground. Replays showed Bryant bobbled the ball as he rolled into the end zone, with part of it touching the field.

"Some people think throwing the red flag is fun," Packers coach Mike McCarthy said. "It was such an impactful play, you had to challenge. It was a confident challenge. And a hopeful one, too."

Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said he thought Bryant got his feet down, then made a move common to the game.

"Dez reached out to the goal line like he's done so many times," Garrett said. "It's a signature play for him. He maintained possession of it throughout, in my opinion."

Referee Gene Steratore said a couple camera angles showed the ball hitting the ground, then Bryant losing possession.

"At the time he lands and the ball hits the ground, it comes loose as it hits the ground, which would make that incomplete," Steratore said. "Although he repossesses it, it does contact the ground when he reaches, so the repossession is irrelevant."

Hours after the game, Bryant tweeted: "as I went to the ground I rolled over and I tipped the ball to gain better control. We lost and I accept it, but please change that rule."

The Cowboys were stunned. After going 8-0 away from home in the regular season, Dallas' road winning streak came to a stunning end.

"This is really, seriously one of the more disappointing times I've had on a personal basis," owner Jerry Jones said.

All wasn't lost after the overturned call. The Cowboys could have seized another chance with the ball if their defense had stopped the Packers on two third-down plays with less than 3 minutes left.

The Packers (13-4) converted both times and the Cowboys (13-5) started their offseason. While almost every Cowboys fan will remember this game for the reversed call, Garrett said the loss didn't

come down to officiating.

"We had 60 minutes," Garrett said. "That play was big in the game, but there were plenty of other plays in the ballgame and unfortunately we didn't do things necessary to win the ballgame in the end."

Rodgers, bothered by a left calf he injured in Game 15, lost much of his trademark elusiveness as the game wore on.

"A little bit worse, yeah," Rodgers said of how his calf felt as the game progressed. "Hard to say, see how it feels in the morning."

Regardless, he was on-target for a short pass to Davante Adams that turned into the 41-yard score to make it 21-20 with 1:41 left in the third quarter.

Then came the decisive fourth-quarter series on which Rodgers went 7-for-7.

He sharply guided the Packers 80 yards to the winning points, a 13-yard bullet to backup tight end Rodgers in the back of the end zone.

He finished 24-for-35 for 316 yards and extended his record string without a home interception to 442 attempts. He has 39 TD passes in that span.

The Packers went undefeated at Lambeau Field this season. They head to Seattle for the NFC title game.

The Seahawks (13-4) beat Green Bay in the season opener, 36-16.

"Going up to Seattle, they've got some guys that can get after the passer. We know it's going to be a challenge," guard T.J. Lang said. "We know everything starts with us up front as far as the run game and taking care of Aaron."