

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Trump's immigrant comments spark outrage

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Friday denied using certain “language” as fury spread over his comments about immigration during a private meeting with lawmakers. But neither he nor the White House denied the most controversial of his comments: using the word “shithole” to describe countries in Africa and saying he would prefer immigrants from countries like Norway instead.

During an Oval Office meeting on Thursday, Trump questioned why the U.S. would accept more immigrants from Haiti and “shithole countries” in Africa as he rejected a bipartisan immigration deal, according to people briefed on the extraordinary Oval Office conversation.

“The language used by me at the DACA meeting was tough, but this was not the language used,” Trump insisted in a series of Friday morning tweets. “What was really tough was the outlandish proposal made — a big setback for DACA.”

But Sen. Dick Durbin, the only Democrat in the room, disputed the president's account.

“He said these hate-filled things and he said them repeatedly,” Durbin said,

Durbin added, “When the question was asked about Haitians ... he said, ‘Haitians? Do we need more Haitians?’”

Trump took particular issue with the characterization of his comments on Haiti.

“Never said anything derogatory about Haitians other than Haiti is, obviously, a very poor and troubled country. Never said ‘take them out.’ Made up by Dems,” Trump wrote. “I have a wonderful relationship

with Haitians. Probably should record future meetings — unfortunately, no trust!”

The Trump administration announced late last year that it would end a temporary residency permit program that allowed nearly 60,000 citizens from Haiti to live and work in the U.S. following a devastating 2010 earthquake. The Washington Post said that during the meeting he said immigrants from Haiti should be left out of any new agreement approved by Congress.

Trump's contemptuous, blanket description of African countries startled lawmakers in the meeting and immediately revived charges that the president is racist. The White House on Thursday did not deny his remark but issued a statement saying Trump supports immigration policies that welcome “those who can contribute to our society.”

Trump's comments came as two senators presented details of a bipartisan compromise that would extend protections against deportation for hundreds of thousands of young immigrants — and also would strengthen border protections, as Trump has insisted.

The lawmakers had hoped Trump would back their accord, an agreement among six senators evenly split among Republicans and Democrats, ending a monthslong bitter dispute over protecting the “dreamers.” But the White House later rejected it, plunging the issue back into uncertainty just eight days before a deadline that threatens a government shutdown.

Durbin, of Illinois, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, explained that as part of that deal, a lottery for visas that has benefited

people from Africa and other nations would be ended, the sources said, though there could be another way for them to apply. Durbin said people who would be allowed to stay in the U.S. included those who had fled here after disasters hit their homes in places such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti.

As for immigrants from Africa, the president suggested that instead, the U.S. should allow more entrants from countries like Norway. Trump met this week with Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg.

Asked about the remarks Thursday, White House spokesman Raj Shah did not deny them.

“Certain Washington politicians choose to fight for foreign countries, but President Trump will always fight for the American people,” he said.

Trump's remarks were remarkable even by the standards of a president who has been accused of racism by his foes and who has routinely smashed through public decorum that his modern predecessors generally have embraced.

Trump has claimed inaccurately that Barack Obama, the nation's first black president, wasn't born in the U.S. He has said Mexican immigrants were “bringing crime” and were “rapists.” He said there were “very fine people on both sides” after violence at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., left one counter-demonstrator dead.

House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, of Maryland, said, “President Trump's comments are racist and a disgrace.”

## Servicemember may have fired on Afghan civilian driver

*The Washington Post*

The U.S. military is investigating a video posted to YouTube that appears to depict a U.S. servicemember opening fire on a civilian driving a truck in Afghanistan, U.S. military officials said.

The video, apparently recorded on a camera attached to a servicemember's helmet, shows a servicemember holding a shotgun as his military vehicle passes the truck. The side window of the truck shat-

ters, though it is not clear that a round from the shotgun was fired.

The clip, first reported by Politico on Wednesday night, has prompted an investigation by U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations across the Middle East and parts of South Asia. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is aware of the case, said Dana White, a spokeswoman for the secretary.

“We actually have very good procedures

for this, as you know,” Marine Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the director of the Pentagon's Joint Staff, told reporters Thursday. “We take these allegations very seriously. ... This is not something we look at lightly, and it'll receive all the serious attention that it deserves.”

CENTCOM said in a statement that the video is not official, is not authorized and does not represent the professionalism of U.S. troops.

# Army's new unit of advisers to go to Afghanistan

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Army will send its new brigade of experienced combat advisers to Afghanistan in the coming months to train and assist Afghan security forces as they launch offensive operations against the Taliban, according to service officials.

The 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, based at Fort Benning, Ga., will deploy this spring to the country where the U.S. has been at war for more than 16 years, the Army said Thursday in a long-anticipated official announcement.

The unit is a first-of-its-kind brigade of specially trained officers and noncommissioned officers designed specifically to train, advise and assist U.S.-backed military forces to fight America's enemies. The 1st SFAB was established in the summer and is participating in predeployment training at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

The unit's commander, Army Col. Scott Jackson, said his brigade was "honored" to deploy as the first of the Army's newly established units.

"I am proud of our advisers'

hard work to build and train this unit, and I am confident in their skills, and ability to get the job done," he said in a statement. "I couldn't ask for a better team to fight alongside."

The Army declined to specify how many troops would deploy with the 1st SFAB, citing a recent Pentagon policy not to disclose such information because of security concerns. However, Army officials have said previously the unit includes about 700 soldiers.

The Army intends to establish six SFABs in the coming years. The 2nd Security Force

Assistance Brigade is scheduled to be activated this month at Fort Bragg, N.C.

In Afghanistan, the 1st SFAB is expected to work with Afghan army and police units in a manner similar to how U.S. special operators work with Afghan commandos, Army Gen. John Nicholson, the top American commander in Afghanistan, has said.

That means in addition to training their Afghan partners, the soldiers likely will advise the Afghans closer to the front lines than American forces have operated recently.

## Top NCO vows to kill ISIS 'with extreme prejudice'

BY CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

The Pentagon's top enlisted servicemember has a penchant for hand-to-hand combat, a fact brought to light in recent comments vowing that U.S. troops would defeat its enemies by "shooting them in the face" or in close-quarters combat with shovels.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. John Wayne Troxell, senior enlisted adviser to chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued the warnings to Islamic State on Facebook and Twitter this week, telling them they have two options — surrender or die.

Senior defense officials have issued similar threats to ISIS militants in Iraq and Syria, as well as Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan, but Troxell's evocative language seems to have caused a stir online and in the media.

"If they choose not to surrender, then we will kill them with extreme prejudice, whether that be through security force assistance, by dropping bombs on them, shooting them in the face, or beating them to death with our entrenching tools," Troxell wrote in a Facebook post published Tuesday. "Re-

gardless, they cannot win, so they need to choose how it's going to be."

A photo of what appears to be Troxell holding an entrenching tool with its blade bent to 90 degrees accompanied the post. The photo seems to have been taken at a holiday USO show, where Troxell issued a similarly blunt promise.

On Christmas Eve at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan, Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex, the senior enlisted adviser for 3rd Infantry Division, introduced Troxell with a series of improbable tidbits, not unlike internet memes about martial artist and actor Chuck Norris' prowess.

"He is the only one allowed to talk about 'Fight Club,'" Hendrex said. "He has won the lifetime achievement award — twice."

Moments later, Troxell was pacing on stage in front of Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and Medal of Honor recipient Florent Groberg, when he assured a gathering of hundreds of troops that they were making a difference.

"The Afghan forces are getting stronger every day," Troxell said. "And let there be no doubt, we're going to keep after this enemy until this enemy

is vanquished. We're going to continue to pursue them, we're going to fix that location, and then we're going to annihilate them, period."

He then repeated the promise to bomb, shoot or beat the enemy to death. The crowd roared in response.

Successive U.S. and NATO leaders have vowed to wipe out the insurgents ever since the U.S.-led invasion ousted the Taliban regime in 2001. Although vastly outnumbered by government and coalition forces, the guerrillas have made significant territorial gains in the past two years.

In Iraq and Syria, a U.S.-backed anti-ISIS campaign has successfully wrested back nearly all of the territory ISIS once held. Brig. Gen. Charles Costanza, a U.S. commander in Irbil, Iraq, said the terrorist group has been reduced to about 1,000 fighters in small, disorganized, disconnected cells. The United Nations, however, has warned that the group could re-emerge as a force in some parts of the country.

In Afghanistan, where officials estimate about 1,100 fighters are operating as part of an ISIS offshoot, the group has carried out several high-profile attacks in recent months.

The joint U.S.-Afghan counterterrorism fight in Nangarhar province was the most deadly for U.S. combat troops last year.

In a Twitter message, Troxell told Stars and Stripes he was referring to the Army Field Manual on hand-to-hand combat, which provides instructions for using the entrenching tool as a weapon. He sent an image from the manual.

"Almost all soldiers carry the entrenching tool," he said. "It is a versatile and formidable weapon when used by a soldier with some training."

Troxell said he wasn't aware of reports earlier this week that a British commando reportedly had beheaded an ISIS fighter with a spade after running out of ammunition during a grueling firefight in eastern Afghanistan. The incident was first reported Sunday by the British Daily Star newspaper, which cited anonymous sources who said it happened about six weeks ago.

"I had not heard of that," Troxell said, but he noted that an American servicemember had fought with gallantry using an entrenching tool as a weapon during the Korean War, and received a Medal of Honor.



# Senator questions protecting Florida from offshore drilling

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration may have violated federal law by exempting Florida from a national plan to expand offshore drilling, a Democratic senator charged Thursday.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, of Washington state, said Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's decision to give Florida a last-minute exemption while ignoring at least 10 other states that made similar requests may violate requirements of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, which governs drilling in U.S. coastal waters.

Zinke's action is especially outrageous because Florida — unlike California, Washington and other states — did not expressly oppose the drilling proposal in written comments submitted to the Interior Department, Cantwell said.

While Florida Gov. Rick Scott voiced opposition soon after the plan's Jan. 4 release, a letter submitted by the state Department of Environmental Protection last year did not op-

pose the drilling plan or ask for Florida to be exempted. Instead, the letter warned about the effects of oil and gas activities on the environment and urged that "long-term protection of Florida's sensitive coastal and marine resources should be of paramount concern" in developing a drilling plan.

By contrast, the governors of California, Oregon and Washington told the Interior Department they "strongly oppose any new leasing" off their coasts and asked to be removed from the plan.

By exempting Florida but not other states, Zinke showed he is "more concerned with politics than proper process when it comes to making key decisions that affect our coastal communities," said Cantwell, the top Democrat on the Senate Energy Committee.

Carl Tobias, a law professor at the University of Richmond in Virginia, called Zinke's action troubling. Singling out one state for exemption "may well violate federal law" that requires formal notice and comment period before taking regulatory action,

he said.

An Interior spokeswoman declined to comment Thursday. But White House press secretary Sarah Sanders denied the administration gave special treatment to Scott, a Republican and ally of President Donald Trump who is considered a likely Senate candidate later this year.

"I'm not aware of any political favor that that (Florida exemption) would have been part of, so, no," Sanders said.

In announcing the exemption for Florida on Tuesday, Zinke called Scott "a straightforward leader that can be trusted."

Zinke added that he supports Scott's position that "Florida is unique and its coasts are heavily reliant on tourism as an economic driver. As a result of discussion with Governor Scott and his leadership, I am removing Florida from consideration for any new oil and gas platforms."

Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., said Zinke's action "violates the legal standard of arbitrary and capricious agency action."

# House OKs spy program

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's puzzling tweets about a key U.S. spying law threw the House into temporary disarray Thursday, but lawmakers ended up renewing the law — with a new restriction on when the FBI can dig into the communications of Americans swept up in foreign surveillance.

During a hectic morning of House votes and presidential tweets, Trump's national intelligence director also issued new guidance for how officials can find out the names of Americans whose identities are blacked out in classified intelligence reports.

Trump has said previous rules were far too lax and led to damaging leaks about top aides, a claim fiercely contested by Democrats.

The new guidelines on "unmasking" Americans, however, were a sideshow to the House showdown over the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, reauthorizing a collection program set to expire on Jan. 19. The bill passed 256-164 and is now headed to the Senate. It would extend for six years the program, which includes massive monitoring of international communications.

Trump has said he'll sign the renewal, but his first tweets Thursday suggested he had suddenly turned against the program, alarming intelligence officials. In one tweet, Trump linked the program to a dossier that alleges his presidential campaign had ties to Russia.

Trump then spoke by telephone with House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., according to a Republican familiar with the call but not allowed to publicly discuss private conversations.

A short time later, Trump changed his tune. "This vote is about foreign surveillance of foreign bad guys on foreign land," he tweeted. "We need it! Get smart!"

# McSally launches Senate bid in Ariz. contest

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Arizona Republican Congresswoman Martha McSally called on the national GOP to "grow a pair of ovaries" as she launched her bid for the U.S. Senate on Friday, joining the race to replace retiring GOP Sen. Jeff Flake by embracing President Donald Trump and his outsider playbook in one of the nation's premier Senate contests.

Like few others, the Arizona election is expected to showcase the feud between the Republican Party's establishment and its fiery anti-immigration wing in particular — all in a border state that features one of the nation's largest Hispanic

populations.

McSally, a two-term congresswoman already backed by many GOP leaders in Arizona and Washington, described herself as anything but an establishment candidate in a fiery announcement video that touched on border security and Shariah law and featured Trump, himself.

"Like our president, I'm tired of PC politicians and their BS excuses," McSally charged in the video. "I'm a fighter pilot and I talk like one."

"That's why I told Washington Republicans to grow a pair of ovaries and get the job done," she added. "Now, I am running for the Senate to fight the fights that must be won — on national

security, economic security and border security."

Later in the day, McSally, a retired Air Force colonel and the first female fighter pilot to fly a combat mission, plans to fly herself across Arizona to announce her candidacy before voters in Tucson, Phoenix and Prescott.

The election will test the appeal of the Trump political playbook — which emphasizes the dangers of illegal immigration and demands border security above all else — in a state where nearly 1 in 3 residents is Hispanic and roughly 1 million are eligible to vote, according to the Pew Research Center. Trump won Arizona in 2016 by less than 4 points.

# Trump cancels London trip over embassy

Associated Press

LONDON — President Donald Trump has canceled a trip to London, where he had been expected to open the new \$1 billion U.S. embassy, avoiding protests promised by political opponents.

Some British lawmakers questioned whether Trump would be welcome after he retweeted videos from a far-right British group and criticized London Mayor Sadiq Khan following a terrorism attack last year.

But Trump said his decision, announced in a late-night tweet, was due to the president's concerns about the embassy's move from the tony Mayfair district

to a far less fashionable area of London. The move, which ended a 200-year U.S. association with London's Grosvenor Square, was part of American efforts to secure diplomatic staff in compounds — a push tied to terrorism concerns after al-Qaida bombings at two U.S. embassies in East Africa a decade ago.

“Reason I canceled my trip to London is that I am not a big fan of the Obama Administration having sold perhaps the best located and finest embassy in London for ‘peanuts,’ only to build a new one in an off location for 1.2 billion dollars. Bad deal. Wanted me to cut ribbon — NO!” Trump tweeted.

The move was announced in

2008, before President Barack Obama was elected. At the time, U.S. Ambassador Robert Tuttle said the decision to move to the 5-acre site on the south side of the River Thames came after a “long and careful process.”

While the date of a Trump visit had never been confirmed, speculation suggested the president would formally open the embassy at a ceremony in February. In December, Ambassador Woody Johnson said he was looking forward to welcoming the president when he visited.

Trump's biggest supporters suggested that protests played a role in his decision not to visit.

“He has been to countries all over the world and yet he has

not been to the one with whom he is closest,” former UKIP leader Nigel Farage, a Trump ally, told the BBC. “I would say that it's disappointing. But maybe Sadiq Khan, Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party planning mass protests, maybe those optics he didn't like the look of.”

“It appears that President Trump got the message from the many Londoners who love and admire America and Americans but find his policies and actions the polar opposite of our city's values of inclusion, diversity and tolerance,” Khan said. “His visit next month would without doubt have been met by mass peaceful protests.”

## Post-Maria spike in killings stirs fears in Puerto Rico

Associated Press

CAROLINA, Puerto Rico — Before the sun rose on the first day of 2018, someone called 911 to report the charred, bullet-riddled body of a man with a snake-like tattoo on his left hand, lying beside a road in the Puerto Rican town of Vega Baja.

The next day, two men were found dead with their feet and hands bound in Bayamon, a working-class city southwest of the capital. Another man was shot to death before dawn in nearby Vega Baja while trying to stop thieves from stealing his generator.

Thirty-two people have been slain in Puerto Rico in the first 11 days of the year, double the number killed during the same period in 2017. If the surge proves to

be more than just a temporary blip, January could be the most homicidal month on the island in at least two years, adding a dangerous, new element to the island's recovery from Hurricane Maria, its worst disaster in decades.

While the number of homicides did not immediately spike in the weeks after the hurricane struck Sept. 20, police and independent experts say many killings appear at least partly related to its aftereffects.

The storm plunged much of the island into darkness, increased economic hardship and contributed to a sickout by police, all fueling lawlessness. What's more, officials say a turf war has broken out among drug gangs looking to grab territory after

the storm's disruption.

“Hurricanes affect everyone, including criminals,” said criminologist Jose Raul Cepeda.

Already bankrupt, the island's overwhelmed government has fallen behind with millions of dollars in overtime payments owed to police officers, who have begun calling in sick in big numbers to protest. The sickout has taken about 2,000 police off the street each day in a territory that has 13,600 officers. It has forced more than a dozen police stations to close for several hours to a couple of days during the holiday period because of a lack of officers. No arrests have been made in the 32 killings this year.

## California mudslide kills young, elderly; 5 still missing

Associated Press

MONTECITO, Calif. — The oldest victim swept away in a California mudslide was Jim Mitchell, who had celebrated his 89th birthday the day before. He died with Alice, his wife of more than 50 years.

The youngest, Kailly Benitez, 3, was one of four children killed.

As their names and those of 14 other victims were released Thursday, crews kept digging through the muck and rubble

while looking for more people.

“At this moment, we are still looking for live victims,” Santa Barbara fire Capt. Gary Pitney said. But he confessed, “The likelihood is increasing that we'll be finding bodies, not survivors. You have to start accepting the reality of that.”

The Mitchells were in love with their home in the seaside enclave of Montecito, where they moved in 1995, according to their daughter. They also loved their dog, Gigi, who is

missing.

The other children killed were Peerawat Sutthithepn, 6, Jonathan Benitez, 10, and Sawyer Corey, 12. None of the adult dead shared their last names.

All of the dead were killed by “multiple traumatic injuries due to flash flood with mudslides,” authorities said.

Five people were missing as of early Friday, down from as many as 43 a day earlier, said Amber Anderson, a spokeswoman for Santa Barbara County.

Sheriff Bill Brown gave the larger number Thursday but cautioned that many or most of those people simply could have been unreachable to the family and friends who reported they couldn't find them.

“We were able to find people,” Anderson said, but added that the number could continue to fluctuate greatly. She said some missing-person reports are cleared quickly, but others take time to resolve.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Store employee finds cremated remains

**WA** VANCOUVER — Police said an employee sorting through items donated to a Goodwill store in Vancouver, Wash., found a wooden box containing cremated remains.

The Columbian reported Vancouver police are looking for any family members or people associated with the box, so it can be returned.

Officers were called to the Goodwill store in the northern suburb of Portland, Ore., on Sunday after the trapezoidal box was discovered.

The box has two M's on the front with the name Michelle Miller written on the letters.

Police ask that anyone with information about the box contact the Vancouver Police Department's Evidence Unit.

## Capitol Christmas tree to be part of chalet

**MT** HELENA — The spruce tree destined to serve as the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree was selected carefully from a Montana forest and was hauled across the country in a special truck to preserve its freshness.

The 79-foot-tall tree, which was lit up last month during a ceremony with congressional members, had its own website and social media presence.

Now, some Montana companies hope to keep its fame alive by trucking it back home so it can be used to help rebuild a historic chalet in Glacier National Park that was destroyed in a wildfire last summer.

Bruce Ward, with Choose Outdoors, the Denver-based nonprofit that organized the effort to bring the tree to Washington, got in on the idea after SmartLam, a Montana wood products company, contacted him about doing something con-

structive with the tree.

A few phone calls and goodwill gestures later, plans call for the tree to be cut into segments and trucked 2,300 miles back to Montana starting as early as next week. It was removed from the Capitol lawn Tuesday morning, officials said.

Organizers asked Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., for his support, and he wrote to Capitol officials asking the tree to be released to Montana for use in the chalet.

Tester said, "I can think of no better use for some of the Montana lumber in our Capitol Christmas Tree to assist" in rebuilding the chalet.

## Bear attacks man letting his dog out

**FL** NAPLES — A man said he was letting his dog outside in Florida when a large bear attacked him.

Andrew Meunier told news outlets he let his dog out of his home about 11 p.m. Tuesday and spotted the 4-foot bear standing next to him when he stepped outside.

Meunier said he struggled to get away and managed to get back through his front door.

A 911 call revealed that Meunier suffered a minor facial laceration from the bear attack. He sought treatment at a local hospital and received 41 stitches.

"I'm just happy to be alive," Meunier said. "It could've been a totally different story."

## Teenager skates on frozen sand, surf

**ME** YORK — Beachgoers in Maine caught an unusual sight — an ice skater gliding over frozen sand and surf.

Grant Long celebrated his 18th birthday Saturday by skating on the newfound patch of ice

after record-low temperatures caused Long Sands Beach to freeze over.

Long's mother said her son got his skates for Christmas and felt as if the ice was a "birthday bonus."

Onlookers at the beach captured a video of Long skating and posted it to Facebook on Monday. The video has gathered more than 170,000 views, with commenters saying they have never witnessed such a sight.

## Young chefs spar in grilled cheese contest

**ME** AUGUSTA — A trio of young Maine chefs faced off against one another in the first Augusta Agricultural Trades Show gourmet grilled cheese sandwich contest.

The "get Real. get Maine." cooking contest took place Wednesday, with Jade Eastman, 10, taking the top prize with her grilled cheese. The Portland Press Herald reported the trio of competitors were given 30 minutes to prepare a grilled cheese sandwich, and they were given no advance warning on what they'd be cooking.

Jade received a gift bag from Hannaford Bros. supermarkets for her win. Runners-up Chase Daigle and Ethan Hobart, both 12, got to keep their competition aprons and chef hats, as did Jade.

## Over 100 artworks donated to museums

**NY** NEW YORK — An art collector said the Museum of Modern Art and the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York collectively will receive more than 100 works of contemporary Latin American art.

MoMA trustee Patricia Phelps de Cisneros said

Wednesday her personal organization, Coleccion Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, will be donating 90 works to MoMA and 12 to the Bronx Museum. Cisneros said her program aims to integrate more Latin American art into museums worldwide.

In 2016, Cisneros' program contributed more than 100 works to MoMA. Museum director Glenn Lowery said Cisneros has been a catalyst in transforming the way his museum thinks about Latin American art.

The 2017 donation is an eclectic mix of contemporary pieces from countries including Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

## State might revive the electric chair

**SC** COLUMBIA — South Carolina lawmakers are considering allowing inmates to be electrocuted when they face execution.

Lawmakers discussed two proposals Wednesday to allow the state to resume executions after its supply of lethal injection drugs expired in 2013.

Senators discussed one proposal to keep secret the names of companies that provide drugs for executions. Companies that make the drugs have refused to sell them because of fears of legal challengers, protests and bad publicity.

South Carolina last used electrocution in 2008 for the execution of James Earl Reed, who had been convicted in 1996 of killing his ex-girlfriend's parents.

The state has not conducted any executions since 2011, in part because of no available drugs.

Currently, inmates can only be electrocuted if they request that method.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Falcons' Jones pushes through injuries

Associated Press

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — Even Julio Jones was caught off guard when someone mentioned all the various body parts he's had to nurse back to health this season.

Ribs. Thumb. Knee. Hip. Back. Ankle.

The ankle twice, in fact.

"Whew! All that?" he asked, sounding a bit incredulous.

Then, with a slight smile and shaking his head, Jones added, "Long season, man. Long season."

He's got a routine to cope with all the aches and pains.

During the week, Jones is often limited in practice or doesn't even take the field. But by the time the game rolls around, he's always ready to go.

"He has a real process to do that," coach Dan Quinn said. "We're fortunate that he's played with injuries and kind of knows the routine of how to do it."

That will be the case again for Saturday's NFC divisional playoff game against the top-seeded Philadelphia Eagles.

After sitting out two days of

practice with a sore ankle and going through a limited routine Thursday at the final full workout before the game, the star receiver will be in the starting lineup for the 18th consecutive time this season.

"The thing with being injured, it's really just blocking it out," Jones said. "Don't use it as an excuse."

Quinn noted that the Falcons usually have an extensive walk-through before each practice, and that's a session that Jones rarely misses no matter how much he's hurting. He uses the time to get familiar with the game plan, run some routes and hone his timing with quarterback Matt Ryan.

If Jones is limited during the actual practice, he focuses on plays in which he'll likely be the primary receiver.

"We try to feature him on plays that are unique for him and Matt to be at full speed," Quinn said. "When he goes, it's these full-speed, aggressive routes. So that helps him as far as the timing goes."

Jones has been on the injury report eight of the last 10 weeks, along with two other

weeks early in the season.

None of the injuries were serious enough to keep him from playing, but they did require plenty of tender loving care to make sure there were no setbacks. That's why, over the course of the last four months, the injury report has listed him as limited or out of practice more times than he's fully participated.

Game day is a different story.

"If you say you're gonna go, go. Don't bring it up in the middle of the game," he said. "We know it hurts. Don't let your mind be negative. Just stay positive. If something's hurting or anything like that, I never relay it back to (the sideline). I know it hurts. You don't want to talk about it and bring that stuff up during the game. If I suit up, I'm going. I'm not saying anything about it."

A turning point in Jones' pain threshold came during his sophomore season at Alabama. He broke his left hand in a game, had surgery the next day and was cleared to play the following week.

He wasn't at his best.

"I was a little timid to catch just because of the pain," Jones recalled. "It was messing with me mentally."

Since then, he's learned to block out his various injuries.

"It's gonna hurt," Jones said. "But I'm out here. I made the decision to be out here. I don't care about it hurting."

Jones' production dipped this season, part of a wider drop-off under first-year offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian, and there have been a few more drops than previous seasons — most notably, what should have been an easy 39-yard touchdown catch in a November loss at Carolina.

But, overall, it's been another huge season for Jones. He had 88 catches for 1,444 yards — an average of 90.3 per game — and earned second-team honors on The Associated Press All-Pro team.

He's usually even better in the playoffs.

Last week, he had nine catches for 94 yards and a touchdown with just under 6 minutes remaining that finished off a 26-13 upset of the Los Angeles Rams in the wild-card round.

## Patriots face unique challenge in containing Mariota

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Safety Duron Harmon and his buddies on the New England defense know they have to deal with Marcus Mariota's "unique skill" set when the Tennessee Titans visit the Patriots for Saturday night's AFC divisional playoff game.

"He actually knows when to run and when to pass the ball when scrambling," Harmon said Wednesday.

"It's a very unique skill because a lot of guys once they get scrambling, they're not even looking downfield anymore, they're just looking to run. But he always has his eyes downfield — always knows when to run, when to throw the pass. I would say his touch on the ball,

too, that gets people open when he's scrambling."

The Patriots have had their troubles with mobile quarterbacks this season — and there have even been not-so-mobile quarterbacks that have picked up yards on the ground against the defending champions.

Cam Newton and the Panthers beat them.

So did Kansas City's Alex Smith, though Smith didn't hurt them with his legs.

They beat rookie Deshaun Watson and the Texans, but Houston scored 33 points and Watson gained 41 yards on the ground.

The Patriots beat Tyrod Taylor and the Buffalo Bills twice and defeated Jameis Winston and Tampa Bay.

Mariota, who had an 87-yard touchdown run in 2015, his rookie season, ran for 60 yards on 10 carries in the regular-season finale. He picked up 46 yards on eight attempts in the playoff win over the Chiefs last Saturday.

Mariota had two touchdown passes in the wild-card game, one actually to himself as he caught a pass batted down by Darrelle Revis and took it into the end zone.

He finished off the comeback with a 22-yard TD pass to Eric Decker, but the pass/catch touchdown was enough to make Harmon think.

"It looked like it was meant for them to win," Harmon said. "That was ... first of all, that's a very, very hard play to make

and that shows you his skill set, his athletic ability — to be able to throw the ball, have it knocked down and be able to catch it where he caught it, and go in and run (on) a scoring dive, it shows his athletic ability. It shows that any time he touches the ball, he's dangerous."

Fellow safety Devin McCourty sees the same attributes in Mariota.

"It's not like if he stays in the pocket he can't make throws, but when he escapes outside the pocket and he has the ability to run and throw, you honestly really don't have a shot to stop him, I think," McCourty said.

Mariota was sixth in the NFL in third-down passer rating this season, a list headed by the Patriots' Tom Brady.



# Army challenging name of Vegas team

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The U.S. Army has filed a challenge opposing the application of the NHL's newest franchise to register the trademark "Vegas Golden Knights."

In a claim filed Wednesday with the U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board in suburban Washington, D.C., the Army claims it will be damaged if the trademark is registered and says it has acquired exclusive rights to it that predate any rights claimed by the NHL team.

The Army says it has used the Golden Knights nickname since the late 1960s for its parachute team, public relations and recruiting, and claims it owns "common law rights" for the color schemes that combine

black and gold and yellow and white.

The challenge by the U.S. Army was first reported by Sportslogos.net.

The filing also says the NHL team's choice of black-and-gold and yellow-and-white color schemes for its uniforms, advertising and marketing adds "to the likelihood of confusion of the public" because the same colors are used on the uniforms worn by West Point's hockey team and the paint scheme on the building where they play their home games, Tate Rink.

The action by the Army is not associated with West Point. Vegas owner Bill Foley is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and a significant donor.

The team issued a statement Thursday in response.

"We strongly dispute the Army's allegations that confusion is likely between the Army Golden Knights parachute team and the Vegas Golden Knights major-league hockey team," the team said. "Indeed, the two entities have been coexisting without any issues for over a year (along with several other Golden Knights trademark owners) and we are not aware of a single complaint from anyone attending our games that they were expecting to see the parachute team and not a professional hockey game."

The team said it would have no further comment until the matter is resolved.

An email seeking comment from NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly was not immediately returned.

The NHL expansion fran-

chise introduced its name and logos in November 2016, and the Army first expressed its opposition last September. The new filing was made on the last day of an extension that had been granted.

The College of Saint Rose in Albany, N.Y., is also opposed to the filing. The school, which trademarked the nickname "Golden Knights" in 2004, has been granted an extension to file its claim, according to Sportslogos.net.

The Vegas Golden Knights have given the NHL a nice boost, and not only because they lead the NHL's Pacific Division and have the second-best record in the 30-team league. The franchise conducted a stirring tribute to the victims of the mass shooting in Las Vegas prior to their home opener.

## NHL roundup

# Hurricanes outlast Capitals on day of sale

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On a historically significant day for the franchise, the Carolina Hurricanes picked up an important regulation victory that helped them move up the standings.

Victor Rask scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and Scott Darling made 26 saves as the Hurricanes beat the Metropolitan Division-leading Washington Capitals 3-1 on Thursday night, hours after the team's sale to Dallas billionaire Tom Dundon was finalized. The two points helped Carolina leapfrog the idle Philadelphia Flyers and Pittsburgh Penguins to move into a playoff position after 43 games.

"Two points in regulation is the only way you can really make up any ground," coach Bill Peters said. "You better make hay when the sun shines, and it was a nice day here in Washington today."

It'll be an even nicer day Friday in Raleigh when Dundon, Commissioner Gary Bettman and previous majority owner Peter Karmanos discuss the sale that should at least temporarily quiet relocation speculation. The NHL on Thursday announced Dundon had completed his purchase of the Hurricanes, who are expected

to stay put for the foreseeable future.

"It's exciting," said Darling, who won for the first time since Dec. 16 in a rare start. "We all had a chance to meet him. He seems like a great guy. He has a lot of big plans, and we're excited to see it all unfold."

Co-captain Jordan Staal scored a short-handed goal and Sebastian Aho added an empty-netter for Carolina, which improved to 9-7-8 in one-goal games. Winger Justin Williams, who left Washington after two seasons, said the difference between the first-place Capitals and the Hurricanes was the disparity in their performances in tight games.

The Capitals fell to 12-3-3 in one-goal games and had their five-game winning streak and league-best 10-game home winning streak snapped.

Lars Eller scored for the third consecutive game and Braden Holtby made 30 saves for Washington, which lost at home for the first time since Nov. 30. "They had been on a pretty good run here at home, and they're a tough team to play against," Aho said. "But so are we."

**Flames 5, Lightning 1:** Johnny Gaudreau had a goal and an assist, Mike Smith made 33 saves, and Calgary beat NHL-

leading Tampa Bay for its fifth straight victory.

Micheal Ferland, Sam Bennett, Mark Jankowski and Matthew Tkachuk also scored to help the Flames improve to 11-5-4 on the road. Gaudreau has nine assists and 10 points during a five-game points streak.

Brayden Point scored for Tampa Bay. The Lightning lost All-Star defenseman Victor Hedman midway through the second with a lower-body injury. Hedman was hit on side of his left knee during a collision with Calgary's Garnet Hathaway and needed assistance to the locker room.

**Sabres 3, Blue Jackets 1:** Kyle Okposo had a goal and assist and host Buffalo beat Columbus to snap a five-game skid.

Benoit Pouliot and Jack Eichel also scored, and Linus Ullmark made 44 saves in his first NHL game of the season. Ullmark stopped the first 39 shots he faced before having his shutout bid foiled on Artemi Panarin's power-play goal with 6:15 remaining.

The Sabres ended an 0-4-1 skid and won in regulation for the first time in nine games. Buffalo's last victory was a 4-2 win over Philadelphia on Dec. 22.

## NBA roundup

# Toronto blows out James, Cavaliers

Associated Press

TORONTO — LeBron James isn't enjoying the view lately, watching the end of blowout losses from the Cleveland Cavaliers' bench.

James and his struggling Cavaliers absorbed their most-lopsided rout of the season, overwhelmed by the Toronto Raptors 133-99 on Thursday night.

The Cavaliers have dropped six of eight dating to a Christmas Day defeat at defending champion Golden State. James scored 26 points in this loss while Isaiah Thomas missed his first 11 shots.

"I don't know where it kind of went wrong or what happened," James said. "We've got to try to pick it back up and find it."

After losing to Minnesota 127-99 on Monday, the Cavaliers fell by an even bigger margin. Toronto's 133 points were the most by any Cavaliers opponent this season, and marked the third straight game that Cleveland has allowed at least 127.

Fred VanVleet scored a career-high 22 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points and a season-high 18 rebounds and the Raptors overcame the absences of two starters.

**Celtics 114, 76ers 103:** At London, Kyrie Irving had 20 points, seven assists and six rebounds and Boston overcame a 22-point deficit to beat Philadelphia in the eighth NBA game played in England.

Jaylen Brown added 21 points, and Marcus Morris had 19 points and eight rebounds to help the Eastern Conference-leading Celtics extend their winning streak to seven games.

JJ Redick had 22 points and hit five three-pointers for Philadelphia, but the 76ers were unable to take advantage of their fast start as the Celtics' NBA-best defense tightened at O2 Arena.

Joel Embiid had 16 points, and fellow All-Star hopeful Ben Simmons added 15 for the 76ers.

**Lakers 93, Spurs 81:** Brandon Ingram scored 26 points, Lonzo Ball added 18 and host Los Angeles beat short-handed San Antonio for its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Larry Nance Jr. had 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers, who blew an early 19-point lead before running away in the fourth quarter. Ball contributed 10 rebounds and six assists as Los Angeles snapped a seven-game losing streak to the Spurs at Staples Center since April 2013, the last time the Lakers made the playoffs.

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 15 of his 20 points in the first half for the Spurs, who committed 21 turnovers while playing without injured starters Kawhi Leonard, Tony Parker and Danny Green.

**Clippers 121, Kings 115:** Tyrone Wallace intercepted a pass at midcourt and drove in for a dunk with 10.9 seconds left, moments after what looked like a costly turnover by Lou Williams, and Los Angeles held off Sacramento after blowing a 14-point lead in the fourth quarter.

The Clippers, who lost DeAndre Jordan to a sprained left ankle in the second quarter, won their third straight over the Kings this season and their 11th in a row at Sacramento.

Williams finished with 30 points and six assists, one night after scoring a career-high 50 against defending champion Golden State. Blake Griffin had 18 points, 12 rebounds and six assists in his return to the Clippers after missing two games with a concussion, and Montrezl Harrell scored a season-best 25 — including 16 in the second quarter when Los Angeles put up 43 points.

## College basketball roundup

# Missed FTs costly for No. 19 Clemson

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — North Carolina State seemed headed for overtime, quite possibly destined for its first agonizing collapse under new coach Kevin Keatts.

Then Gabe DeVoe missed the game's most important free throw — and the Wolfpack escaped with a second straight Top 25 upset.

Omer Yurtseven scored a career-high 29 points, and N.C. State held on to beat No. 19 Clemson 78-77 on Thursday night after DeVoe missed the third of three free throws with 0.2 seconds left that would have forced OT.

"Listen, DeVoe's a great player, and he missed a free throw," Keatts said. "I'm excited that he did, but it certainly won't define what type of player he is. ... I'm glad it didn't go in."

Allerik Freeman finished with 14 points for the short-handed Wolfpack (12-5, 2-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), who blew nearly all of a 12-point lead with less than 90 seconds remaining but held on to claim their second home win over a ranked team in six nights after knocking off then-No. 2 Duke on Saturday night.

"Could N.C. State win another good game after coming off a big game against Duke?" Keatts asked. "I thought we answered the bell."

Marcquise Reed scored 17 points, Donte Grantham added 16 and Mark Donnal finished with a season-high 13 for Clemson (14-2, 3-1), which had its 10-game winning streak end.

DeVoe scored four points in the final couple of seconds — but the Tigers needed a fifth one to get it to overtime.

They were down by three points twice in the final minute, the last coming after DeVoe's layup with 1.3 seconds remaining. Clemson got the ball back after the officials ruled Torin Dorn's ensuing inbounds pass to Braxton Beverly bounced off

the end line.

Sam Hunt then fouled DeVoe as he flung up a three-pointer from the corner. DeVoe hit the first two free throws, and after Keatts called a timeout to ice him, the Clemson guard bounced his last attempt off the left iron.

**Wichita State 95, East Carolina 60:** Rauno Nurger scored 14 points and fifth-ranked Wichita State shook off a slow start to roll past East Carolina 95-60 on Thursday night.

**Oregon 76, No. 11 Arizona State 72:** Payton Pritchard scored 18 points and hit two free throws with 13.8 seconds left for the visiting Ducks.

**No. 15 Gonzaga 103, Portland 57:** Silas Melson scored a career-high 23 points, making seven three-pointers, for the host Bulldogs.

**No. 17 Arizona 62, Oregon State 53:** Allonzo Trier scored 15 of his 21 points in the second half and the host Wildcats pulled away from a sluggish, close game in the final 7½ minutes.

**Army 81, Lafayette 71:** Jordan Fox scored 18 points and the host Black Knights rallied from a 19-point deficit in the second half to defeat the Leopards.

Trailing 43-26 after Lafayette had its biggest half of the season, the Army responded with its biggest half, outscoring the Leopards 55-28 after the break.

Matt Wilson added 15 points for Army (10-6, 3-2 Patriot League) and John Emezie and Alex King had 12 apiece.

**Navy 61, Holy Cross 56 (OT):** George Kiernan scored 13 points and Hasan Abdullah and Bryce Dulin each scored 10 and the host Midshipmen defeated the Crusaders in overtime.

Tom Lacey grabbed 12 rebounds for Navy (12-6, 3-2 Patriot League). The Midshipmen distributed 13 assists but were just 18-for-46 shooting (39 percent) from the field.