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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Hill leaders, Trump to hold border talks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democratic and Republican congressional leaders are expected to attend a briefing on border security at the White House as the government remains partially shut down and President Donald Trump asks in a tweet, “Let’s make a deal?”

The partial government shutdown began Dec. 22. Funding for Trump’s pet project, a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, has been the sticking point in passing budgets for several government departments.

The Wednesday afternoon briefing will be held in the high-security Situation Room at the White House, which is typically used to handle sensitive information. The location means that the conversation will not be televised, unlike

Trump’s sit-down with Democratic leaders last month.

The briefing takes place the day before Democrats are to assume control of the House and end the Republican monopoly on government. The exact agenda, however, was not immediately clear, according to a person with knowledge of the briefing who was not authorized to speak publicly about the issue and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and the top incoming House Republicans — Kevin McCarthy, of California, and Steve Scalise, of Louisiana — planned to attend, according to aides. The departing House speaker, Paul Ryan, was not expected.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, who is expected

to become speaker on Thursday, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer planned to attend. Pelosi said Tuesday that Democrats would take action to “end the Trump Shutdown” by passing legislation Thursday to reopen government.

“We are giving the Republicans the opportunity to take yes for an answer,” she wrote in a letter to colleagues. “Senate Republicans have already supported this legislation, and if they reject it now, they will be fully complicit in chaos and destruction of the President’s third shutdown of his term.”

The White House invitation came Tuesday after House Democrats released their plan to reopen the government without approving money for a border wall — unveiling two bills to fund shuttered government agencies and put hundreds of

thousands of federal workers back on the job.

Responding to the Democratic plan, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders late Tuesday night called it a “nonstarter” and said it won’t reopen the government “because it fails to secure the border and puts the needs of other countries above the needs of our own citizens.”

Trump spent the weekend saying Democrats should return to Washington to negotiate, firing off Twitter taunts. After aides suggested there would not necessarily be a traditional wall as Trump had described, since his presidential campaign, Trump stated that he really still wanted to build a border wall.

Expert: China thinks US military lacks battle resolve

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Too many in China think the United States will cut and run if war breaks out in the Far East, a U.S. defense expert warned Wednesday in response to threats by a Chinese war hawk.

“A far larger number of Chinese believe it than I think is healthy,” said Brad Glosserman, a China expert and visiting professor at Tokyo’s Tama University.

Glosserman was responding to comments by Chinese Rear Adm. Lou Yuan, who told an audience in Shenzhen last month that sinking a pair of U.S. aircraft carriers would settle issues of sovereignty in the South China Sea, according to the News Corp Australia network.

China has strengthened its grip on the disputed territory in recent years, moving military equipment onto artificial islands and harassing aircraft and ships passing through the area.

New anti-ship missiles could take out

America’s largest warships, Yuan — deputy head of the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences — said in his speech Dec. 20 at the Military Industry List summit.

“What the United States fears the most is taking casualties,” he said, noting that 5,000 servicemembers would die on each sunken U.S. carrier.

“We’ll see how frightened America is,” he said, according to the Australian report.

The comments reflect a widespread belief that America lacks resolve to prevail on the battlefield, Glosserman said.

Too many Chinese think “Americans have gone soft ... [they] no longer have an appetite for sacrifice and at the first sign of genuine trouble they will cut and run,” he said.

The issues at play in the South China Sea are a core national interest for China; the U.S. sees them as abstractly important, Glosserman said.

Lack of democracy in China means the

nation’s tolerance for combat losses is likely higher than in the U.S., he added.

Yuan, who holds only an academic military rank and hasn’t commanded Chinese forces, advocated exploiting America’s military, financial system, workforce, electoral system and fear of adversaries, News Corp reported.

“Attack wherever the enemy is afraid of being hit,” he said, “wherever the enemy is weak.”

Yuan said last month that China should invade Taiwan if the U.S. Navy stopped there, according to comments published by the state-run Global Times newspaper.

“Achieving China’s complete unity is a necessary requirement,” he said. “The achievement of the past 40 years of reform and opening-up has given us the capability and confidence to safeguard our sovereignty.”

“Those who are trying to stir up trouble in the South China Sea and Taiwan should be careful about their future,” he added.

STRATCOM deletes tweet, apologizes

The Washington Post

The U.S. military command responsible for the nation's nuclear weapons tweeted a New Year's Eve message Monday afternoon: It is always ready to "drop something much, much bigger" than Manhattan's iconic Time Square ball.

The post and accompanying video went live as the country readied to ring in the new year by watching the famous New York City ball descend at midnight.

The U.S. Strategic Command has since deleted and apologized for the tweet.

"We admittedly erred in connecting it to New Year's Eve festivities, and we apologize," said Meghan M. Liemburg-Archer, a U.S. Strategic Command spokeswoman. "We remain dedicated to the security of

America and our allies."

"#TimesSquare tradition rings in the #NewYear by dropping the big ball ... if ever needed, we are #ready to drop something much, much bigger," the original post read. "Watch to the end! @AFGlobalStrike @Whiteman_AFB #Deterrence #Assurance #CombatReadyForce #PeacelsOurProfession"

The embedded video showed footage of a B-2 stealth bomber. As the words "STEALTH," "READY" and "LETHAL" flashed across the screen, the aircraft releases bombs. They fall to the ground and crash with a fiery explosion.

It also tagged the Whiteman Air Force Base and the Air Force Global Strike Command, which is responsible for nuclear and nonnuclear strategic bomber fleets.

The post was deleted within hours and replaced with a subsequent apology from the Strategic Command's official account.

The New Year's Eve post drew confusion and criticism on the social media platform.

Walter Shaub, former director of the Office of Government Ethics, reposted the tweet and asked, "What kind of maniacs are running this country?"

"This post, which has since been deleted, was part of our Year in Review series meant to feature our command priorities: strategic deterrence, decisive response and combat-ready force. It was a repost from earlier in the year, dropping a pair of conventional Massive Ordnance Penetrators (MOP) at a test range in the United States," a U.S. Strategic Command spokesman told *The Washington Post*.

Truman to serve as test for 3D-printed metal part

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — An arm passes across a plate in the big machine, depositing powdered metal before a laser fuses it all together.

Wipe. Zap. Wipe. Zap.

Hour by hour, and layer by painstaking layer, the machine, a 3D metal printer built by 3D Systems, hums away.

"This build has over a thousand layers so it's just slowly making its way through," Dan Hebert, an engineer at New-

port News Shipbuilding said. "It'll take a little over a day. It runs continuously."

A little more than 2 miles from where workers at Newport News Shipbuilding are assembling the future aircraft carriers John F. Kennedy and Enterprise, a new tangent in the future of shipbuilding has been slowly taking shape in a nondescript office in an industrial park.

The shapes on this day were a collection of small cubes and rectangles, about 3 to 6 inches

tall, designed by mechanical engineer and Navy reservist Kyle Wade via 3D modeling software and uploaded to the printer rather than being cast in a foundry. The pieces were being printed to test for strength and quality.

3D printing, also known as additive technology, has been used for years and is common for producing plastic prototypes and medical devices. The Navy has used it for other purposes.

In October, Naval Sea Sys-

tems Command announced that it was upping the ante when it approved a prototype 3D-printed metal drain strainer for installation on the Naval Station Norfolk-based aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman. The part will be installed in coming weeks in the carrier's steam system for a one-year trial.

The part being installed on the Truman took three days to build and was printed at a Newport News Shipbuilding partner, spokesman Duane Bourne said.

Afghan forces use artillery to repel attack on police

The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — At least 21 Afghan police officers were killed in three simultaneous Taliban assaults Monday night in northern Afghanistan.

Despite civilians being nearby, security forces fired artillery rounds to repel the militant advances.

The hourslong attack mostly focused on overtaking oil wells and vehicles near the capital in Sar-e Pol province, officials

said, as the Taliban bid to demonstrate power and undermine government control during peace talks to end the 17-year-old war.

Militants used rifles and rocket-propelled grenades in the assault, which also injured at least 23 police officers, Zabihullah Amani, a spokesman for the provincial governor, told *The Washington Post* on Tuesday.

"The areas are with the government, but they are under range of Taliban fire," Amani

said. "We still have not received any assistance."

Three senior security officials — an intelligence officer and two police commanders — were killed in the attacks, said Mohammad Noor Rahmani, the chief of the provincial council.

Afghan forces fired Soviet-era D-30 howitzers to repel militants on the capital outskirts, Amani said.

The Associated Press reported the barrage forced civilians to flee to safety, though officials

said there were no reports of civilian casualties.

The Taliban, which claimed responsibility for the attack, suffered casualties in their assault, Amani said.

But officials have not said how many militants were killed or wounded.

The assault joins a stream of near-daily Taliban strikes designed in part to exert pressure during peace negotiations between the militants, the United States and regional powers.

Young abusers on bases escape penalties

Associated Press

Despite new rules addressing sexual assault among the children of U.S. servicemembers, the federal government failed to fix a flaw that on many military bases has let alleged juvenile abusers escape accountability or treatment.

New records obtained by The Associated Press underscore how few child-on-child sex assault reports pursued by military investigators are prosecuted. That problem is most serious on U.S. installations overseas, where at least 47,000 children are enrolled in Pentagon-run schools.

Children and teens suspected of sex crimes on U.S. bases overseas often faced no legal consequences, such as court-ordered rehabilitation, records obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show. Those held to account were generally either kicked off base into the civilian world or received modest punishments, the records show.

One, for example, was told to write a 1,000-word essay about “the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching.” Another avoided punishment by enlisting in the Army. A third, who was put on curfew after two girls accused him of sexual assault, was investigated a year later in an alleged rape, a case that also went unprosecuted.

Congress ordered internal investigations and mandated Pentagon reforms last summer after an investigation revealed the problems of juvenile sexual assault on U.S. military bases, including the failure of the Defense and Justice departments to help either victims or offenders.

One proposed reform would have re-

quired federal prosecutors with jurisdiction over civilians on base to transfer child-on-child sex assault cases to counterparts in state juvenile justice systems, which have resources dedicated to rehabilitation. But that requirement did not survive final negotiations over the legislation.

Federal prosecutors, under pressure to win big convictions, don’t take juvenile sex assault cases because they can be hard to prove and require extra paperwork, former prosecutors say. Military officials privately bemoan what they see as the Justice Department’s indifference while publicly noting their own limitations.

“We could bar that kid from being on post, or we could move the family from the post, but beyond that, the authorities really reside outside the military,” Army Secretary Mark Esper told senators at a May hearing.

Representatives of the Defense and Justice departments have been meeting for several months to resolve problems that the investigation highlighted.

Officials are “considering a range of options to ensure that these types of cases are effectively addressed,” Justice Department spokesman Wyn Hornbuckle said. The idea is to use state courts when possible, he added. That would not apply to U.S. installations in Europe and Asia, where U.S. officials can be reluctant to involve prosecutors from host nations.

The review of investigative reports in which military officials documented prosecution decisions found that about 1 in 10 on overseas Army, Navy or Marines bases were accepted from 2007 into 2017.

Weak cases don’t explain the lack of

prosecutions. Army criminal investigators concluded that nearly 90 percent of juvenile sex crime allegations on bases were credible, records show. Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents do not routinely record whether they believe allegations, but on the Navy and Marines bases where NCIS works, the AP identified two dozen unprosecuted cases in which an alleged attacker confessed.

The Justice Department refused to share data on the prosecution of juveniles for sex crimes committed overseas. The department added that its lawyers decline to prosecute cases for many reasons.

Congress acted in response to AP stories that identified nearly 700 cases of child-on-child sexual assault or rape on American military installations worldwide over a decade. Military investigators buried some cases, the AP found, while many of those they investigated fell into the legal and bureaucratic netherworld.

Military lawyers cannot prosecute the civilian children of servicemembers and contractors. Given the infrequency of federal prosecution, kids suspected of sexually assaulting other kids rarely get court-supported rehabilitation that research shows will prevent most young offenders from committing another sex crime.

Lawmakers directed the Pentagon’s inspector general and the Government Accountability Office to investigate. They also ordered the Department of Defense Education Activity, which oversees the Pentagon’s network of schools in seven U.S. states and 11 other countries, to create new policies to track and respond to reports of child-on-child sexual assault.

Air Force ‘base in a box’ plan hits delays in Europe

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Poor program management has delayed the development of mobile air base kits in Europe, which means fewer airlift options for U.S. European Command during a crisis, according to a Defense Department Inspector General’s report.

The Air Force has a plan to stand up 24 “Deployable Air Base Kits” as part of a \$797 million program to bolster American air power in Europe. However, EUCOM and U.S. Air Forces Europe efforts have been

hampered by vague deadlines and insufficient oversight, the IG reported in late December.

“As a result, USEUCOM and USAFE will have fewer options for airlift capabilities when rapidly responding to a contingency within the USEUCOM area of responsibility,” the IG said in its Dec. 27 report.

In 2016, EUCOM directed USAFE to develop the requirements for deployable air bases, which include tents, vehicles, medical supplies and airfield repair equipment that enable the Air Force to quickly set up a base.

The idea of a “base in a box,”

which came about in response to concerns about a more aggressive Russia, is that the deployable kits would reduce the time and cost of transporting equipment from either the U.S. or other bases in Europe.

The plan called for enough gear for the first five full kits to be procured in 2018, but USAFE officials told the IG in July that they did not expect to have the equipment procured for the first complete kit until 2020 or 2021.

The lack of a single manager designated by the Air Force to handle oversight and coordination between the various agen-

cies has hindered the effort, the IG said.

EUCOM also did not establish “an end date to have all 24 kits pre-positioned in USEUCOM’s area of responsibility,” the report said. “An end date is critical for USAFE to use to plan the coordination of the construction of storage facilities and procurement of equipment categories.”

EUCOM agreed with the IG’s findings and has provided the IG with a “classified implementation plan” with an end date to pre-position the 24 kits.

USAFE officials also said they now have a goal to have 10 kits ready by 2021.

US officials meet with American held in Russia

From wire reports

U.S. Embassy officials in Moscow on Wednesday were given permission to meet with Paul Whelan, an American arrested last week after being accused of visiting Russia on a “spy mission.”

No details were immediately available of the meeting, which came shortly after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said they expected to have consular access to Whelan — a Marine Corps veteran — “within the next hours.”

A few hours later, the Foreign Ministry told Russian media that access had been granted on Wednesday afternoon in Mos-

cow. It was not clear how long the visit lasted or what his condition is.

“The family received a notification from the State Department today that consular access was granted today,” said a person familiar with the situation, speaking on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the case.

Meanwhile, the Marine Corps said Whelan was convicted in a 2008 court-martial on charges related to larceny.

Whelan’s service record was released Wednesday at the Pentagon and shows he joined the Marine Reserves in 1994 and rose to the rank of staff sergeant in 2004.

Whelan was an administrative clerk and administrative chief and deployed for the war in Iraq for several months in 2004 and 2006.

He was convicted at a special court-martial in January 2008 and given a bad-conduct discharge in December 2008 at the rank of private. Details of the larceny charges were not released.

Whelan’s last place of duty was Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

Whelan’s first visit by U.S. Embassy officials came six days after he was arrested, which exceeds the 72-hour time frame laid out in the Vienna Convention.

Trump responds to rebuke from Romney

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Faced with biting public criticism from Republican Sen.-elect Mitt Romney, President Donald Trump pushed back Wednesday, reminding him that “I won big, and he didn’t.”

Days away from joining the Senate’s Republican majority, Romney broadly criticized Trump’s policies and character in a newspaper column, arguing that the president “has not risen to the mantle of the office.”

“With the nation so divided, resentful and angry, presidential leadership in qualities of character is indispensable,” the Utah Republican and 2012 presidential nominee wrote in a Washington Post op-ed posted online Tuesday night. “And it is in this province where the incumbent’s shortfall has been most glaring.”

Trump fired back on Twitter, saying early Wednesday: “Here we go with Mitt Romney, but so fast! Question will be, is he a Flake? I hope not. Would much prefer that Mitt focus on Border Security and so many other things where he can be helpful. ...

“I won big, and he didn’t. He should be

happy for all Republicans. Be a TEAM player & WIN!”

Trump’s warning shot referred to retiring Sen. Jeff Flake, of Arizona, who has been Trump’s most consistent critic among Senate Republicans. As he and other critics leave Congress, it is an open question who — if anyone — will take up the role of publicly criticizing a president who remains popular with Republican voters.

Romney’s biting public assessment came as Trump and Senate Republicans faced a new governing dynamic.

Republicans on Thursday will cede control of the House to Democrats, who were prepared to oppose Trump on a number of policies and promised a slew of investigations into his actions and those of his aides and campaign officials, particularly with regard to Russia’s election meddling.

Romney, a former Massachusetts governor, had criticized Trump before — notably, in a March 2016 speech he called Trump a “fraud” and opposed his bid for the GOP nomination — but later he made peace with the president-elect and even expressed interest in joining his administration.

Romney’s rebuke of Trump drew a cutting reply from Brad Parscale, Trump’s campaign manager.

In a tweet Tuesday night, Parscale said Romney “lacked the ability to save this nation” and contended that Trump “has saved it.”

“Jealously is a drink best served warm and Romney just proved it,” Parscale wrote, adding he wished “everyone had the courage” Trump had.

In the column, Romney offered approval of Trump’s corporate tax policies and efforts to cut regulations, appoint conservative judges and other “policies mainstream Republicans have promoted for years. But policies and appointments are only a part of a presidency.”

While saying Trump’s early administration appointments had been encouraging, Romney added that, “on balance, his conduct over the past two years, particularly his actions this month, is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office.”

Romney will be sworn in as a senator on Thursday.

16 of burning vessel’s 21 crew members rescued in Pacific

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Good Samaritans on nearby merchant vessels rescued 16 members of the crew of a Panamanian car carrier heading from Japan to Hawaii that caught fire in the Pacific Ocean, the U.S. Coast Guard said.

Three of the remaining five crew members of the Sincerity

Ace were found, but they are still in the water because they are unresponsive, the Coast Guard said. The other two crew members haven’t been found, the agency said.

The Serenity Ace caught fire early Monday morning 1,800 nautical miles northwest of Hawaii. The Coast Guard has not said what caused the fire on the

650-foot ship.

The Sincerity Ace is adrift on the high seas, the Coast Guard said. Commercial tugs have been dispatched by the company to salvage the ship, the agency said.

“We are thankful for the assistance the crews of these merchant vessels have given us during this event, significantly

reducing possible response time,” said Lt. Duane Zitta, of the Coast Guard Joint Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu. “Their quick actions provided for the rescue of 16 members of the crew who would otherwise still be in the water and are continuing to aid us.”

The U.S. Navy is helping with search efforts.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fisherman reels in suspected cocaine

FL ISLAMORADA — A Florida Keys fisherman reeled in an unusual catch: 40 to 60 pounds of white powder that authorities suspect is cocaine.

Monroe County Sheriff's Office spokesman Adam Linhardt said a plastic-wrapped bale washed up Saturday morning under a dock in Islamorada.

In an email Sunday, Linhardt said the fisherman spotted the bale and pulled it out of the water. The plastic wrapping was ripped, and when the fisherman cut into one corner, he found white powder inside.

The fisherman called the Coast Guard. Linhardt said the bale containing 25 smaller packages of powder was turned over to federal authorities.

Police: Arrested man had ear bitten off

NC SOUTHERN PINES — A North Carolina man whose ear was largely bitten off in an altercation was arrested.

News outlets cited a Southern Pines police news release that said officers responding to a hangup call found multiple people involved in a fight Friday at an apartment.

Police said Ronnell Tydell Wilson, 35, was in an agitated state, demanding officers shoot him. A large portion of his ear was found on the floor.

Four people, including Wilson, were hospitalized. Wilson is charged with two counts of assault on a female.

Famed diner to end overnight hours

PA PHILADELPHIA — One of Philadelphia's classic diners is ending its overnight shift, reflecting

changes in the way people eat and socialize.

The Penrose Diner is now open from 6 a.m. to midnight. The eatery featured 24-hour service for the last 50 years.

An owner told The Philadelphia Inquirer that younger people drive less frequently when they go out to clubs, and don't want to take two trips on a car service late at night to stop for food.

Food delivery services also have cut into in-person traffic at diners, and convenience stores such as Wawa offer late-night alternatives.

No jail time for man in deer sausage sting

LA CONVENT — A Louisiana man who authorities said was caught in an illegal deer sausage sting will avoid prison time.

The Advocate cited an arrest report that said Brandon J. Engham, 31, sold 10 pounds of wild deer sausage for \$60 to an undercover state Wildlife and Fisheries agent in March. He fled after the sale, crashing into an agent's car and leading authorities on a chase that reached 95 mph, authorities allege.

A search of his two homes yielded 10 cleaned raccoon carcasses and packages of deer sausage, fish fillets, shrimp and unknown meat.

Engham later told agents he bought the deer meat and raccoons from a Mississippi seller. He also acknowledged trying to sell blue crabs without a license.

Stolen car found with gifts still inside

MA DEDHAM — Police said they have recovered a family's stolen car with their Christmas gifts still inside in Massachusetts.

Lauren and William Ingram

said they packed the car with their 4-year-old daughter's gifts Thursday when someone stole the vehicle as it was warming up in a driveway in Dedham.

The Ingrams said police called Saturday to report they found the car, and it appears the gifts were still inside.

Laura Ingram said good Samaritans donated money to an online fundraiser for the family and donated gifts for their daughter.

Cow gives birth after escaping cattle truck

NJ WANTAGE — A cow that escaped a truck bound for the slaughterhouse in New Jersey has given birth.

Skylands Animal Sanctuary and Rescue in Wantage Township said Brianna gave birth to a healthy female calf named Winter on Saturday.

Brianna fell from the second floor of a trailer near Paterson on Dec. 27 and led authorities on an hourlong chase along Interstate 80 before she was captured.

Brianna and Winter will join another 70 cows at the sanctuary.

Reality TV possible for moose scat crafter

ME SOMERVILLE — Lights, camera, scat.

That's the premise of a potential new reality series featuring a Maine woman who is locally famous for making creations out of moose droppings. The Portland Press Herald reported Mary Winchenbach and her wife, Deb Nicholls, are in discussions with TNT about bringing their brand of poop art to cable television.

A spokeswoman for Turner, the company that owns TNT, confirmed Dec. 27 the cable network is discussing a show about the artists. Winchenbach is

known in Maine as "the Moose Turd Lady," while Nicholls has remained a quiet partner in their business, Tirdy Works.

Passers-by, police rescue dog from water

NY WEST SAYVILLE — Police and passers-by have teamed up to rescue a dog that was clinging to floating debris in chilly water off Long Island.

Suffolk County police said the hound mix, Wilbur, wandered out of his West Sayville yard. Then passer-by Ary McCarthy spotted him struggling in the Great South Bay around 8:15 a.m. Saturday and called police.

While police were responding, McCarthy and onlooker Beth Higbie went into the roughly 41-degree water to get Wilbur.

Officers Ryan McAdam and Dave Verrelli helped bring him to shore and wrap him in towels.

Wilbur was taken to an animal hospital and reunited with his owner.

Snail in 2 states presumed extinct

AR COTTER — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said a small snail native to Arkansas and Missouri is now presumed extinct.

The Ozark pyrg was originally found more than 100 years ago in the White River near Cotter and in the North Fork White River near Norfolk, Ark., extending into Missouri. But officials said the snail hasn't been confirmed in surveys since 1915.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said scientists believe construction of the Norfolk Dam and the Beaver Fork Dam in the 1940s likely played a role in the snail's demise.

From wire reports

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Texas upsets No. 6 Georgia

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Bevo's pregame strategy was to run right at the Bulldogs.

Once the football started, Texas quarterback Sam Ehlinger took the same approach with outstanding results.

Ehlinger ran for three touchdowns, the Texas defense largely held Georgia's offense in check, and the Longhorns earned their first 10-win season since 2009 by beating the Bulldogs 28-21 in the Sugar Bowl on Tuesday night.

"We're back!" Ehlinger shouted to a raucous contingent of Texas fans after winning the game's Most Valuable Player award.

Ehlinger was the star of a gritty win, running for a 2-yard touchdown in the first quarter, a 9-yard score in the second, and a 1-yard TD in the fourth. The 6-foot-3, 230-pound sophomore finished with 64 yards rushing on 21 carries and also threw for 169 yards.

The quarterback's impressive performance came after a startling pregame display from Bevo, the team's huge longhorn steer mascot. About an hour before kickoff, he charged through a barricade and toward Georgia's red sweater-clad bulldog mascot Uga X.

A few people, including photographers, were knocked to the ground, but there were no reported injuries and Bevo was quickly restrained.

No. 14 Texas (10-4) continued its quick rise under coach Tom Herman, capping his second season with a Sugar Bowl win that will surely send expectations soaring after nearly a decade of mostly mediocrity.

During the postgame celebration, some Texas players were making snow angels in the confetti on the field. The different position groups — like receivers and linebackers — stayed on the field to take pictures together as the Longhorns obviously relished every moment.

"It is incredible," Ehlinger said. "We are on the way. This was a stepping stone for Texas to get back to the elite level. This is going to give us great momentum headed into the offseason, and I am really excited for what we are going to do next year."

No. 6 Georgia (11-3) was a 12½-point favorite and claimed it would be ready for the Sugar Bowl despite just missing a spot in the College Football Playoff after a loss in the Southeastern Conference championship game. But a sloppy opening sequence indicated otherwise.

LSU snaps UCF's streak

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Joe Burrow watched the ball land in an opposing player's hands and immediately gave chase. Locked in on preventing a pick six, LSU's quarterback didn't see Joey Connors, Central Florida's 313-pound defensive lineman, bearing down on him.

With a thunderous, blindside collision, Burrow found himself flat on his back, woozy and wondering what happened.

Minutes later, after being helped to his feet, Burrow was back on the field, hitting receivers all over the field.

The nation's longest winning streak was over. So was a second self-proclaimed national championship.

The LSU Tigers were Fiesta Bowl champions, thanks to their gritty junior quarterback.

Burrow shook off the big early hit to throw for 394 yards and four touchdowns, helping No. 11 LSU end No. 7 UCF's 25-game winning streak with a 40-32 victory in the Fiesta Bowl on Tuesday.

"I didn't really think about the hit too much after it happened," said Burrow, who had a cut on his neck from the hit. "It hurt for a second, I got right up and went on to the next play."

LSU (10-3, No. 11 CFP) started its first Fiesta Bowl without several key players on defense and fell into an early 11-point hole against the high-scoring Knights (12-1, No. 8 CFP).

The Tigers came back behind Burrow and a defensive front that made life difficult for UCF quarterback Darriel Mack Jr.

Burrow returned from the early blindside hit to pick apart UCF's secondary, hitting 21 of 34 of passes, including two TDs to Justin Jefferson.

"It looked like the passing game we wanted," LSU coach Ed Orgeron said. "Joe was on the money."

LSU sacked Mack five times and made him rush numerous throws, holding the nation's third-best offense to 250 total yards — 295 below its average — while spoiling the Knights' bid for a second straight self-proclaimed national title.

College bowls roundup

Ohio State holds off Washington

Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — Dwayne Haskins passed for 251 yards and three touchdowns, and Urban Meyer finished his coaching career at Ohio State with a 28-23 victory after the Buckeyes held off Washington's thrilling fourth-quarter comeback in the 105th Rose Bowl on Tuesday.

Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Rashod Berry caught TD passes in the first half for the fifth-ranked Buckeyes (13-1), who took a 25-point lead into the fourth.

But Myles Gaskin threw a touchdown pass and rushed for two more scores for the No. 9 Huskies (10-4), scoring from 2 yards out with 42 seconds left.

The Buckeyes intercepted Jake Browning's pass on the 2-point conversion attempt and then recovered the Huskies' onside kick to wrap up the final game of Meyer's seven-year tenure.

"I'm a very blessed man," Meyer said. "I'm blessed because of my family, (but) this team, this year; I love this group as much as any I've ever had."

The 54-year-old coach is walking away after going 83-9 at Ohio State with one national championship, three Big Ten titles and this Rose Bowl victory, the Buckeyes' eighth overall in the Granddaddy of Them All.

Meyer cited his health last month in his decision to step down. A cyst in Meyer's brain causes severe headaches that are even worse in a high-stress job.

Browning passed for 313 yards and Gaskin rushed for 121 in the final game of the four-year starters' landmark careers at Washington, which has lost three straight New Year's Six bowl games.

Outback Bowl
Iowa 27, No. 18 Mississippi State 22: Safety Jake Gervase made an interception in the

end zone to help preserve a late lead, and ball-hawking Iowa beat Mississippi State.

Gervase also batted down an errant fourth-down pass to end the Bulldogs' final drive at the Iowa 32 with 25 seconds left. Two earlier Mississippi State threats in the fourth quarter led to only three points.

Citrus Bowl
No. 16 Kentucky 27, No. 13 Penn State 24: Benny Snell Jr. ran for 144 yards and two touchdowns to become Kentucky's career rushing leader and help the Wildcats wrap up their best season in more than four decades with a victory over Penn State.

Snell scored on runs of 2 and 12 yards in the second half, then carried for a couple of crucial first downs to help Kentucky (10-3) run out the clock after Trace McSorley of Penn State (9-4) trimmed a 27-7 deficit to three points despite playing with a foot injury.

Sports briefs

Source: Tulowitzki headed to Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees have obtained a low-cost infield replacement, agreeing to a one-year contract with shortstop Troy Tulowitzki for the major league minimum \$555,000, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Wednesday because the agreement, first reported by ESPN, is subject to a successful physical.

Tulowitzki idolized retired Yankees captain Derek Jeter and has worn No. 2 in his honor. A five-time All-Star who turned 34 in October, Tulowitzki has not played in the major leagues since July 2017 and was released by the Toronto Blue Jays last month. He was limited to 66 games in 2017 because of a hamstring and right ankle injury. The ankle required surgery last spring and he missed the entire season.

Yankees shortstop Didi Gregorius had Tommy John surgery on his right elbow on Oct.

17 and is not expected to return until summer. New York also has been talking with Manny Machado, one of the top available free agents. Tulowitzki could slot in at shortstop, allowing Gleyber Torres to remain at second baseman and Miguel Andujar to stay at third.

Tulowitzki was taken by Colorado with the seventh overall pick in the 2005 amateur draft, became a star with the Rockies and agreed after the 2010 season to a \$157.75 million, 10-year contract that added \$132 million over seven seasons. Colorado dealt him in July 2015 to Toronto in a deal that brought shortstop Jose Reyes to the Rockies.

In other baseball news:

■ The Toronto Blue Jays acquired left-handed pitcher Clayton Richard and cash considerations from the San Diego Padres on Sunday for Canadian outfielder Connor Panas.

The 35-year-old Richard was 7-11 with a 5.33 earned-run average in 27 starts for San Diego last season. He is 68-79 with a 4.46 ERA in 10 seasons in the

majors with the Padres and Chicago White Sox and Cubs, with a National League-best 60.3 ground-ball percentage over the last four years.

Vlhova beats Shiffrin, wins parallel slalom

OSLO, Norway — Petra Vlhova of Slovakia beat overall World Cup leader Mikaela Shiffrin in both runs of the final to win a parallel slalom city event Tuesday.

In the men's race, Austria's Marco Schwarz claimed the first World Cup victory of his career when British opponent Dave Ryding missed a gate.

Ryding was attempting to become the first British skier — man or woman — in the history of the 51-year-old World Cup to win a race.

He eliminated overall World Cup leader Marcel Hirscher in the quarterfinals when Hirscher straddled a gate as he attempted to erase a first-run deficit.

Valhova's victory was the sixth of her career.

Ex-USC coach Bland to plead guilty

NEW YORK — Former University of Southern California assistant basketball coach Tony Bland is expected to plead guilty in a criminal case in which prosecutors said bribes were paid to steer top athletes to certain schools.

Bland's lawyer, Jeffrey Lichtman, said Bland is set to enter the plea to a single conspiracy count on Wednesday in Manhattan federal court.

Bland was among four assistant coaches charged in the September 2017 crackdown on college basketball recruiting corruption.

Prosecutors say the coaches teamed up with a top Adidas executive and others to trade hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes to influence star athletes' choice of schools, shoe sponsors, agents and even tailors.

Bland was scheduled to go to trial in April.

NHL roundup

Bruins hold off Blackhawks in outdoor Winter Classic

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — David Pastrnak had a goal and an assist, Tuukka Rask made 36 saves and the Boston Bruins beat the Chicago Blackhawks 4-2 on Tuesday in the Winter Classic at Notre Dame.

Patrice Bergeron, Sean Kuraly and Brad Marchand also scored as Boston won for the second time in three appearances in the NHL's annual outdoor game on New Year's Day. The Bruins went 2-for-5 with the man advantage and killed off each of the Blackhawks' four power plays.

Backed by most of the sell-out crowd of 76,126 in perfect

conditions for outdoor hockey — the game-time temperature was 35.5 degrees, and a gray, overcast sky took the sun out of the equation — Chicago pushed hard for the tying score in the closing minutes, but came up empty.

Brendan Perlini and Dominik Kahun scored for the Blackhawks (15-21-6), and Cam Ward made 32 stops.

Chicago had won five of six, but it remained winless in an NHL-high fourth appearance in the Winter Classic. It also dropped to 1-5 in six outdoor games — also tops in the league.

Predators 4, Flyers 0: Viktor Arvidsson scored twice, Juuse

Saros made 32 saves and host Nashville beat Philadelphia.

Craig Smith and Rocco Grimaldi also scored for Nashville, which has won two straight.

Michal Neuvirth made 26 saves for the Flyers, who have lost four in a row.

The shutout was Saros' second of the season and the sixth of his career.

Making his first start since Dec. 15, Saros was busy early, stopping 13 shots in the first period. He made 12 saves in the second and seven in the third period.

Golden Knights 2, Kings 0: Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 17 shots for his league-leading

sixth shutout and host Vegas blanked Los Angeles.

Brandon Pirri continued his amazing scoring run for the Golden Knights in the third period. He jumped on a loose puck at the right faceoff dot and sniped his sixth goal and eighth point in seven games this season. Pirri has nine goals in nine games since joining Vegas last season.

Fleury, who improved to 7-0-3 in his last 10 appearances dating to Dec. 9, got his 23rd win in his 37th start — both league bests.

Alex Tuch added an empty-netter in the final minute.

NBA roundup

Leonard scores 45 as Raptors top Jazz

Associated Press

TORONTO — Kawhi Leonard was so good Tuesday night, Raptors coach Nick Nurse just wanted to enjoy the show.

Leonard scored a career-high 45 points, Pascal Siakam had a career-best 28 points with 10 rebounds, and Toronto beat the Utah Jazz 122-116.

“That’s good, we all got to witness that live and in person,” Nurse said of Leonard’s outburst. “He was phenomenal. I’ve kind of been waiting for one of these nights where he makes them all.”

Norman Powell scored a season-high 14 points, and the Raptors won their fourth straight at home despite playing without All-Star guard Kyle Lowry (sore back) and center Jonas Valanciunas (dislocated left thumb).

“The way he’s playing right now is really big for our team with a lot of guys out,” Powell said of Leonard.

Leonard shot 16-for-22 over-

all, missing all three attempts from three-point range, and went 13-for-17 at the free-throw line. He said he wasn’t aware of his scoring achievement until after the game.

“I try to stay in the moment and keep competing every possession and not worry about myself, just try to get a team win,” Leonard said.

It was the third 40-point game of Leonard’s career, including a 43-point effort against Memphis in Game 4 of the first round in April 2017.

Bucks 121, Pistons 98: Brook Lopez had 25 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo threw down a spectacular one-handed dunk and host Milwaukee cruised past Detroit.

Khris Middleton had 22 points and Eric Bledsoe had 18 for Milwaukee. Antetokounmpo had just 15 points, but his slam over Jon Leuer was the highlight of the night. Antetokounmpo blew past Andre Drummond, jumped and reached his right arm over a

leaping Leuer for the slam during the first quarter.

Milwaukee has won four straight and eight of nine. The Bucks are an NBA-best 26-10.

Nuggets 115, Knicks 108: Nikola Jokic had 19 points, 14 rebounds and 15 assists, including a late no-look pass to wrap things up, as host Denver picked up its ninth straight home victory.

Reserve Malik Beasley added a career-high 23 points for the Western Conference-leading Nuggets, who have now knocked off the Knicks 11 straight times at the Pepsi Center. It was far from easy, though, with the Nuggets needing a big three-pointer from Jokic with 2:55 remaining to finally gain some separation. The struggling Knicks have lost eight in a row.

Trail Blazers 113, Kings 108 (OT): Damian Lillard shook off a sluggish night shooting to score five of his 25 points in overtime, and visiting Portland rallied after blowing a

14-point halftime lead.

Jusuf Nurkic had 24 points and a career-high 23 rebounds to help Portland to its fourth straight win over Sacramento. CJ McCollum added 16 points, and Maurice Harkless had 11 points and nine rebounds.

76ers 119, Clippers 113: Joel Embiid notched his NBA-leading 32nd double-double of the season in his return and Philadelphia withstood a furious fourth-quarter rally by Los Angeles.

Embiid was a game-time decision after missing one game because of a sore left knee. He didn’t appear hindered while recording 28 points and 19 rebounds. He scored 15 points in the first quarter, including 10 of the Sixers’ final 16.

Former Clipper JJ Redick added 18 points and Jimmy Butler scored 16 before being ejected to help Philadelphia improve to 8-11 on the road. Ben Simmons just missed a triple-double with 14 points, nine rebounds and eight assists.

College basketball roundup

St. John’s rebounds from first loss, routs Marquette

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The best player in the building was Shamorie Ponds — by far.

Ponds scored 20 of his 26 points in the first half, dominating a matchup between two of the nation’s top guards, and St. John’s rebounded impressively from its first loss by routing No. 16 Marquette 89-69 on Tuesday night.

Marvin Clark II had 22 points for the Red Storm (13-1, 1-1 Big East), who snapped Marquette’s eight-game winning streak with an eye-opening performance on campus at Carnesecca Arena. Mustapha Heron scored 16, all after halftime, as every St. John’s starter

reached double figures.

“Offensively, they’re a juggernaut,” Marquette coach Steve Wojciechowski said. “You’re looking at one of the top 20 teams in the country.”

With leading scorer Markus Howard held to a season-low eight points on 2-for-15 shooting, the Golden Eagles (11-3, 0-1) got blown out in their conference opener. Howard entered averaging 25.1 points per game, best in the Big East and ranked fifth in the nation.

Joey Hauser had 15 points to pace Marquette, which went 6-for-21 from three-point range (28.6 percent).

“I just didn’t make shots,” Howard said. “I didn’t play good at all. That was on me.”

The anticipated matchup between Howard and Ponds was no contest from the start. Ponds came out sizzling and scored eight points in the first 2:37, matching his total on 2-for-13 shooting in Saturday night’s excruciating loss at Seton Hall.

No. 9 Florida State 87, Winthrop 76: Terrance Mann scored a season-high 22 points, Phil Cofer added 14 and the host Seminoles beat Winthrop for their seventh straight victory.

Florida State improved to 12-1 for the fourth time in school history.

Mann shot 10-for-11 from the floor, scoring 14 second-half points and grabbing seven rebounds. Cofer made four of his five shots in the first half but

missed all three in the second.

No. 10 Virginia Tech 81, Notre Dame 66: Ty Outlaw hit three three-pointers in a 22-9 second-half run and the host Hokies beat the Fighting Irish.

Kerry Blackshear Jr. led the way with 21 points, Nickeil Alexander-Walker and Ahmed Hill scored 17 apiece and Outlaw finished with 14 for the Hokies (12-1, 1-0 Atlantic Coast Conference). Virginia Tech led just 49-44 before Alexander-Walker sparked the run with a pair of driving baskets.

T.J. Gibbs scored 19 points, 13 in the second half, as Notre Dame (10-4, 0-1) had its four-game winning streak snapped. D.J. Harvey added 16 and Nate Laszewski 14.