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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

In first, Marines integrate SC recruits

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps is integrating a female platoon with several male platoons at Marine Corps Depot Parris Island, S.C., for the first time in the history of the service's recruit training.

One female platoon was to begin training with five male platoons in the 3rd Recruit Training Battalion starting Saturday, according to a Marine Corps statement.

The Marine Corps has remained the last service branch not to completely train male and female recruits together. About 60 percent of recruit

training already is integrated, according to Marine Corps Combat Development Command/Combat Development and Integration.

Each training cycle is composed of four phases during three months. Parris Island has four recruit training battalions, of which three are for male recruits and the fourth is for females only.

The 50 women recruits in the platoon is less than they regularly have during a training cycle, according to the statement. The platoons will still be led by drill instructors of the same gender, as their recruits and the Program of Instruction will remain the same.

The decision to integrate the training was made by the Marine Corps leadership "in support of training efficiency," according to the statement. The small number of female recruits this training cycle might have been a factor.

"Based on the number of incoming female recruits, it made sense to find efficiencies and to integrate that platoon into 3rd Battalion," said a Marine Corps official who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "This is not necessarily the model we will use moving forward."

The men and women recruits will be living in the same building, but each platoon will be separated into their own squad

bays, which is normally how they are situated, according to the Marines.

"This training cycle of about 300 recruits will provide Recruit Depot staff a unique opportunity to assess outcomes, achievements and challenges in training, logistics and resource impacts of this company training model," the statement reads.

The first women recruits to train at Parris Island began arriving Feb. 28, 1949, after the passage of The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 allowed women to join as regular servicemembers, according to the base website.

Talks to resume; Trump says shutdown may last years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — White House officials and congressional staffers were continuing negotiations Saturday over the government shutdown, even after President Donald Trump declared he could keep it going for "months or even years."

Trump met Friday with congressional leaders from both parties as the shutdown hit the two-week mark amid an impasse over his demand for billions of dollars for a border wall with Mexico. Democrats emerged from the meeting, which both sides said was contentious at times, to report little if any progress.

Trump has designated Vice President Mike Pence, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and adviser Jared Kushner to work with a congressional delegation at a meeting set for 11 a.m. Saturday.

Trump is framing the up-

coming weekend talks as progress, while Democrats are emphasizing families unable to pay bills.

The standoff has prompted economic jitters and anxiety among some in Trump's own party. But he appeared Friday in the Rose Garden to frame the weekend talks as progress, while making clear he would not reopen the government.

"We won't be opening until it's solved," Trump said. "I don't call it a shutdown. I call it doing what you have to do for the benefit and the safety of our country."

Trump said he could declare a national emergency to build the wall without congressional approval, but would first try a "negotiated process." Trump previously described the situation at the border as a "national emergency" before he dispatched active-duty troops in what critics described as a pre-election stunt.

Trump also said the hun-

dreds of thousands of federal workers who are furloughed or working without pay would want him to "keep going" and fight for border security. Asked how people would manage without a financial safety net, he declared, "The safety net is going to be having a strong border because we're going to be safe."

Democrats called on Trump to reopen the government while negotiations continue. Senate Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "It's very hard to see how progress will be made unless they open up the government."

Friday's White House meeting with Trump included eight congressional leaders — the top two Democrats and Republicans of both chambers. People familiar with the session but not authorized to speak publicly described Trump as holding forth at length on a range of subjects but said he made clear he was firm in his demand for \$5.6 bil-

lion in wall funding and in rejecting the Democrats' request to reopen the government.

Trump confirmed that he privately told Democrats the shutdown could drag on for months or years, though he said he hoped it wouldn't last that long. Said Trump, "I hope it doesn't go on even beyond a few more days."

House Democrats muscled through legislation Thursday night to fund the government but not Trump's proposed wall. However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said those measures are non-starters on his side of the Capitol without the president's support.

A variety of strategies are being floated inside and outside the White House, among them trading wall funding for a deal on immigrants brought to the country as young people and now here illegally, or using a national emergency declaration to build the wall.

Weapons buyer promises less secrecy in Pentagon reports

Bloomberg

Under President Barack Obama, the annual Pentagon report on the \$58 billion Gerald R. Ford class of aircraft carriers openly listed its planned capabilities. That changed under President Donald Trump, when the same information was stamped “For Official Use Only.”

In 2017, the Navy’s stamp on two pages about the troubled program rendered the entire 77-page report on the vessels restricted over information such as the estimated crew size. Adding to the confusion, the Navy removed the restriction on those pages in the carrier report issued last year, only to impose it on data about the contract with Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc. for the second vessel in the class.

The trend toward secrecy has produced complaints in Congress and a pledge toward greater transparency from the Defense Department’s chief weapons buyer.

“I understand the need, the

requirement” for transparency, “and I will put out guidance to make everything open to the public to the degree we can,” Ellen Lord, undersecretary for acquisition and sustainment, told reporters last month. “We do have a bunch of guidelines and internal rules” so “we’re working through that.”

For years, no restrictions were placed on the Selected Acquisition Reports, or “SAR.” That changed with many of the documents submitted as part of the first budget proposed by Trump and former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who favored limiting public information on weapons programs lest Russia and China learn too much.

“For Official Use Only” isn’t a form of classified document like “Top Secret,” but it’s often treated that way by military personnel, congressional staff and civilian employees.

The SAR is used by defense lawmakers and their aides, defense analysts and journalists to track the status of major programs, including original

estimated costs and delivery schedules. It’s one of the few sources of public information for the public to learn about the status of the Pentagon’s 87 major weapons programs valued at a collective \$1.7 trillion.

Lord’s guidance is intended “to make every effort to refrain” from using the “For Official Use Only” designation in the reports, her spokesman, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Mike Andrews, said in an email. “Classification procedures must still be followed in accordance with applicable laws and policies.”

Even when the label must be used, he said, “this doesn’t mean the entirety of the document is FOUO.”

Congress weighed in through the fiscal 2019 defense policy bill, which directed the Defense Department “to avoid labeling Selected Acquisition Reports as ‘For Official Use Only’ unless the specific justification for such restrictive markings is provided to the Congress for each individual report.”

Trial date set for SEAL accused of killing teen

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A decorated Navy SEAL pleaded not guilty Friday to charges of premeditated murder and other crimes in the stabbing death of a teenage Islamic State prisoner in Iraq last year and the shooting of unarmed Iraqi civilians.

Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher will stand trial Feb. 19 before a jury that will be one-third enlisted personnel. Gallagher has been jailed since his arrest on Sept. 11, and a judge said he will determine whether the 19-year Navy veteran should be released before trial.

The case is unusual because of the seriousness of the allegations against an elite special warfare operator and because the prosecutors’ case includes the accounts of fellow Navy SEALs, an extremely tight-knit group even by military standards.

At Friday’s arraignment, prosecutors handed over 1,700 pages of documents, including text messages they say show Gallagher trying to intimidate witnesses.

His attorney, Phil Stackhouse, said Gallagher is being falsely accused by disgruntled SEALs who wanted to get rid of a demanding platoon leader.

Navy prosecutors have painted a picture of a highly trained fighter and medic going off the rails on his eighth deployment, indiscriminately shooting at Iraqi civilians and stabbing to death a captured ISIS fighter estimated to be 15 years old, then posing with the corpse.

Gallagher showed little emotion as he sat in the courtroom in a Navy dress uniform covered in medals. The judge asked defense attorneys to describe the awards at the start of the court-martial. If convicted, Gallagher faces a life sentence.

US deploys forces to Gabon fearing violence

dpa

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Friday the U.S. has deployed 80 military personnel to Liberville, Gabon, to secure U.S. citizens and the American embassy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo amid fears of violence following a recent election.

In a letter to Congress, Trump said the personnel were deployed “in response to the possibility that violent demonstrations may occur” in the wake of the election in the Congo.

Full preliminary election results are expected on Sunday.

Trump’s letter said additional forces may be deployed to the region.

U.S. military personnel “will remain in the region until the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo becomes such that their presence is no longer needed,” the letter added.

The Congo general election was mostly held in a peaceful atmosphere despite incidents of violence, according to a preliminary report by African

election observers.

There were several major problems as millions of Congolese cast their votes, with two polling stations in volatile North Kivu province closed under pressure from armed militia and more than 500 voting machines breaking down.

Three main candidates are vying for the position of president: Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, the ruling party candidate and protege of current president, Joseph Kabila, and opposition leaders Martin Fayulu and Felix Tshisekedi.

New chair of House armed services panel

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Rep. Adam Smith, a Democratic congressman from Washington state, was officially tasked Friday to take over as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee in a move that was widely expected under a change of power for the lower chamber.

Smith, who has already set a template for a Democratic tour de force on defense matters, such as ramping up congressional oversight of military operations, will now take over the House panel that helps shape policy and spending at the Pentagon, such as the annual defense budget.

The House Democratic Con-

ference chose Smith to lead the panel after Smith campaigned openly for the post in recent months. Democrats won control of the House following November's midterm elections, which put all 435 seats in the lower chamber up for grabs. The 100-seat Senate remained under Republican control following the elections.

Smith on Friday reiterated a list of plans for the House Armed Services Committee, such as re-examining defense spending and ensuring an inclusive military as opposed to one that bans transgender personnel from serving, as has been supported by President Donald Trump.

Among his additional concerns, Smith has said he would

spearhead efforts to stop Trump from using military funds or servicemembers to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border by installing such a provision into future defense spending legislation and addressing the military's unrealistic set of demands driving interests for a massive defense budget for fiscal year 2020.

"As chairman, I will work with my colleagues to promote transparency and congressional oversight, enhance military readiness, combat inefficiency and waste at [the Defense Department]," Smith added, as well as "advance green technology in defense and address the threat climate change poses to our national security, fight for

an inclusive military and move towards a responsible approach to nuclear weapons."

Though the Defense Department budget is set for late into 2019, its next spending plan remains a moving target. And with a split Congress angling for different budget priorities next year, it creates a new level of drama for the fiscal year 2020 budget.

The process for building the next budget, which begins Oct. 1, 2019, was thrown into confusion late last year when President Donald Trump suggested a 4.7 percent reduction in spending for the Defense Department, to \$700 billion. It's a figure that's since fluctuated, with several iterations of up to \$750 billion under consideration.

USAF fires top Global Strike Command NCO

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

The top noncommissioned officer of the Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Forces Strategic-Air has been removed for adultery and a sexual relationship with a subordinate at his previous post, the command said Friday. An investigation confirmed these findings and Chief Master Sgt. Thomas

Mazzone has been reassigned pending retirement.

Gen. Timothy Ray, the command's commander, sent an email to personnel letting them know of his decision to relieve Mazzone, based on a command-directed investigation into his behavior at his previous assignment as chief of the Air Force District of Washington. The commander of that district, Maj. Gen. James A. Jacobson,

ordered the investigation.

The investigation was ordered in September, and the report reveals that Mazzone had a sexual relationship with a woman in his chain of command, sent her explicit text messages and bought her a silver heart-shaped ring.

Some interviews in the report indicate the relationship began as early as 2016, though the investigation focused on allegations from June through

November 2017.

Findings from interviews with witnesses show that the two would go to lunch together, meet at the shoppette and exchange gifts by leaving them in each other's vehicles. The woman wrote a song for Mazzone and sent him a video of her singing it. The lyrics included, "it being so wrong but being so right, nights in his truck, his kiss on her lips," the report stated.

Shanahan's status as acting defense chief debated

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration's contention that acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan can stay in his new role "indefinitely" without being nominated as the permanent Pentagon chief could face constitutional challenges, according to legal experts, who were split on whether those protests would go anywhere.

Shanahan took over the job Jan. 1 following the resignation of Jim Mattis and has held the deputy defense secretary job since July 2017. On Friday, a U.S. official told reporters that Shanahan could serve in the acting position indefinitely at Trump's discretion.

The administration's determination that Shanahan could hold his job on a temporary basis in perpetuity is likely based in part on the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which outlines the principles for civilian control of the military.

Arnold Punaro, a retired two-star Marine general who assisted in its creation, said there is no limit under the law on how long a deputy defense secretary who has been confirmed can perform the chief role. However, the law's framers never intended to have someone perform the defense secretary duties indefinitely, he said.

Still, Shanahan staying in the post on a temporary basis indefinitely could face other legal challenges.

Stephen Vladeck, a professor at the Uni-

versity of Texas School of Law, said there is no legal dispute over whether Shanahan can serve as acting defense secretary for a short period because he already was confirmed to the deputy position.

"The harder question is whether the Constitution allows him to serve in that role indefinitely," Vladeck said. "The longer he continues to hold that position, the more likely that someone will seek to litigate that issue in court."

Another legal expert, Anne Joseph O'Connell, of Stanford Law School, agreed that there was no time limit on a deputy secretary serving as an acting secretary, "but the Constitution may impose some limits on acting in the very top jobs."

Many pitch in to keep parks clean

Associated Press

Nonprofits, businesses and state governments nationwide are putting up money and volunteer hours in a battle to keep national parks safe and clean for visitors as the partial U.S. government shutdown lingers.

But such makeshift arrangements haven't prevented some parks from closing and others from being inundated with trash. Support groups say donations of money and time could run short if the budget impasse between President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats lasts much longer. Some are calling for parks to close for the duration of the standoff, which Trump said Friday could last "months or even years."

"Our national parks deserve better than an improvised patchwork of emergency care," Diane Regas, CEO of the Trust for Public Lands, said in a letter to Trump that noted reports of theft, poaching and accumulating piles of garbage and human waste. "They need robust fund-

ing and full-time protection, or they should be closed."

The park service has reached deals with more than 60 partner groups, concessionaires and states to handle trash removal, restroom cleanup and other basic tasks at more than 40 parks — and, in a few cases, to keep park staffers on the job, spokesman Jeremy Barnum said Friday.

The state of New York was footing the bill to operate the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island National Monument, while a private company donated portable toilets at several locations on the National Mall in Washington. The National Park Foundation took charge of repairing and operating the National Christmas Tree.

Another nonprofit donated more than \$50,000 to keep 15 rangers temporarily on the job at Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina.

At Joshua Tree National Park in Southern California, volunteers have hauled away garbage, cleaned restrooms

and restocked them with toilet paper, said John Lauretig, executive director of Friends of Joshua Tree.

"We've been dubbed the 'Toilet Paper Angels,'" he said.

Yosemite National Park in California reported Friday that a man died after falling into a river on Christmas Day, and a spokesman said a statement was not issued more promptly and the investigation is taking longer than usual because of the shutdown.

People living near Yosemite have organized work crews, while businesses in neighboring towns are offering incentives for visitors to remove their rubbish.

The Rush Creek Lodge in Groveland gave a complimentary coffee, cocktail or dessert to all bringing a full trash bag from the park. Spokeswoman Teri Marshall said the lodge was trying to devise a slogan for the promotion.

"Turning garbage into goodies' is where I think I might be hanging our hat," Marshall said.

Detained Marine vet tried to steal \$10K from US

The Washington Post.

The Marine Corps found Paul Whelan, the American citizen detained by Russia on espionage charges, guilty of attempting to steal more than \$10,000 worth of currency from the U.S. government while deployed to Iraq in 2006 and bouncing nearly \$6,000 worth of checks at about the same time, according to records obtained by The Washington Post.

The details of the charges against Whelan from a special court-martial two years later that resulted in his discharge for bad conduct add to an increasingly complex picture of the former Marine, 48, whom Russian officials have accused of spying. His case grew more perplexing on Friday after Ireland became the fourth nation to acknowledge him as a citizen and seek consular access.

Since his arrest last week in Moscow, Whelan has rocketed onto the public radar, drawing international attention to his complex journey from the Marine Corps Reserve to a detention cell in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison. People who served alongside Whelan said he was learning Russian and traveled to Moscow and St. Petersburg on vacation during the same deployment in which the Marine Corps accused him of attempted larceny.

The Marines have not provided any additional information about the circumstances surrounding Whelan's crimes while serving in the armed forces. Russian authorities have not said what Whelan is accused of doing beyond the relatively broad charge of espionage.

Whelan served as an administrative chief while in the Marines — a job akin to office management that would have given him access to certain sensitive systems.

Impeachment talk stirs controversy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had only been in office for a few hours when a handful of Democrats defied her persistent calls not to begin the new Congress by talking about impeachment.

Just after Pelosi was sworn in Thursday, longtime Democratic Reps. Brad Sherman of California and Al Green of Texas introduced articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. That evening, newly elected Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan riled up a supportive crowd by calling the president a profanity and predicting that he will be removed from office.

Tension over impeachment is likely to be a persistent thorn for Pelosi, who will have to balance between a small, vocal group of the most liberal members of her caucus, who want

to see Trump removed immediately, and the majority of her members who want to wait for special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation to finish. Pelosi purposely avoided — and encouraged most fellow Democrats to avoid — any talk of impeachment during the election, believing there could be backlash from voters.

While eager to paint impeachment as the Democrats' only agenda, Trump has also expressed some worry both publicly and privately at the prospect. He has told confidants that he finds the impeachment talk somewhat unnerving, according to an outside adviser who spoke to him in recent days.

The president, who has long fashioned himself as the ultimate winner, told the confidant that he worried that impeach-

ment, even if he retained office, would be a stain on his legacy. And while he thought the impeachment would rally his own base in the 2020 election it could hurt his standing with foreign leaders as he negotiates trade deals, according to the adviser.

While many Democrats might favor impeachment, those calling for it now are largely outliers. Most Democratic lawmakers listened to Pelosi and campaigned on kitchen table issues such as health care and jobs and prefer to keep them at the forefront of the party's focus.

Still, it will be hard for Pelosi to quiet some on her left flank who see their new majority as a direct challenge to Trump.

"Impeachment is on the table," Sherman said. "You can't take it off the table."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Pringles makes claim it overpaid taxes by \$2M

TN NASHVILLE — Pringles said it erroneously overpaid its Tennessee taxes by \$2.1 million and the company known for its potato chips is suing the state to recoup the money.

Pringles Manufacturing Company sued state Revenue Commissioner David Gerregano last month in Davidson County Chancery Court. The Michigan-based company has a Jackson, Tenn., manufacturing facility.

The lawsuit said Pringles filed a refund claim in December 2016, but Tennessee's Department of Revenue didn't determine the claim during the required six-month window, so it was deemed denied.

NASA sets 2 records, orbits around asteroid

MD LAUREL — ANASA spacecraft is in orbit around an ancient asteroid, setting a pair of records.

The Osiris-Rex spacecraft entered orbit last week around the asteroid Bennu, 70 million miles from Earth. It's the smallest celestial body to be orbited by a spacecraft. Bennu is just 1,600 feet across.

The spacecraft's laps are barely a mile above the asteroid's surface, another record.

The goal is to grab gravel samples in 2020 for return to Earth in 2023.

Man recovering after being nearly brain-dead

NE OMAHA — A man whose family had decided to remove his breathing tubes left an Omaha hospital after weeks of therapy.

Now his family members call

T. Scott Marr — once nearly brain-dead — the “miracle man.”

Marr originally was diagnosed with a stroke on Dec. 12 and placed on a breathing machine in intensive care. His four children agreed the following day to take him off the machine. He was showing no neurological improvement and was not expected to recover. They said their goodbyes.

But they skipped their appointment with a funeral home the next day and went to visit again. He was responsive. He eventually was diagnosed with a rare but treatable condition — posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome.

Plans to extend trial run of pig hunting

HI LIHUE — Hawaii officials are planning to issue additional permits and extend the six-month trial period of pig hunting in a mountain area on Kauai.

The state had issued permits to 39 hunters, resulting in 13 feral pigs being harvested from Nounou Mountain during the trial hunt that ran through November, The Garden Island reported.

The extended hunting period is expected to begin in mid-January, Sheri Mann, branch manager of the Kauai Division of Forestry and Wildlife said. The state will continue to allow only hunting by bow and arrow.

The trial hunt was the start of a feral pig eradication plan, testing if archery hunters could be effective at reducing the pig population in the area.

Latrine accidentally built on private land

MT BILLINGS — The Montana parks department said it inadvertently

built a public latrine on private land, and it might be cheaper to buy the land than to move the facility.

The Billings Gazette reported that Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks built the \$15,000 latrine for a public fishing access site on the Madison River at Ennis.

The department is looking into buying about 8 acres of private land where the latrine was built. The price was expected to be about \$18,000.

Teenage boy arrested on a murder charge

TX HOUSTON — A 14-year-old boy who authorities said was driving an SUV that caused a fatal car accident was arrested on a murder charge.

The Harris County Sheriff's Office said the SUV was filled with teens who were throwing eggs at other cars when another driver began chasing them. The department said the 14-year-old driver then ran a red light and crashed into a pickup truck, killing Silvia Zavala, 45.

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said the 14-year-old was booked in a juvenile detention center on a murder charge.

Puppies rescued from fire at a pet store

CT DANBURY — Firefighters were joined by passers-by to rescue nearly 100 puppies from Connecticut pet store threatened by a fire.

The fire in a building at the rear of Puppy Love in Danbury was reported at about 9 p.m. Thursday. Responders were on the scene within minutes and firefighters immediately began working to rescue 86 puppies.

Civilian volunteers broke into the burning building to carry out dog cages.

Fire officials said all the puppies were removed safely and no injuries were reported.

Motto removed after officials butt heads

WV PARKERSBURG — A West Virginia mayor removed a sign from city council chambers bearing a motto of cooperation because he said officials are too divisive.

Parkersburg Mayor Tom Joyce told The News and Sentinel that he doesn't think City Council members are living up to the motto adopted two years ago, so he took it down and stopped streaming meetings live on YouTube.

The motto reads: “We are a community, and we will cooperate when possible, compromise when necessary. Confrontation is not an option.”

The newspaper reported some council members have butted heads during recent meetings.

Man accused of having daughter steal package

MD BEL AIR — Authorities said a man accused of directing his 5-year-old daughter to steal a package from the porch of a Maryland home was arrested.

The Harford County Sheriff's Office announced Friday that Gary Smith, 46, of Abingdon was arrested Thursday.

Officials said Smith directed his daughter to steal the package from the porch of a Bel Air home on Nov. 30. A pair of boots was inside.

Smith was charged with theft under \$100, conspiracy and contributing to the condition of a child.

From wire reports

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Commentary

NFL's officiating once again in crosshairs

Associated Press

Mike Pereira was in his customary spot next to Troy Aikman in the Fox Sports broadcast booth for the Bears-Vikings game on the final week of the regular season, ready to chime in when needed on any close calls on the field.

Instead, he got one in the booth when Aikman declared the officiating for the game to be “nauseating.”

“I turned away because I didn’t know if he was going to throw up on me or not,” the former NFL officiating guru-turned-TV analyst said with a laugh.

The weekend before, New York Jets coach Todd Bowles wasn’t laughing after his team was flagged 16 times for a team-record 172 yards in an overtime loss to the Packers.

Bowles, who was fired the next week, got a parting gift from the NFL in the form of a \$25,000 fine for angrily blasting the officiating after the

game — which featured a penalty about every five snaps.

“I thought we were playing two teams,” Bowles said. “I thought we were playing the Packers — and the striped shirts.”

Nothing terribly new about that. Complaining about officials is a time-honored tradition that goes back to the days coaches — and fans — saw things only as they actually happened, without the benefit of super slow-motion replays that at times get more study than the Zapruder tapes of the Kennedy assassination.

Never mind that NFL officiating crews get it right a lot more than they get it wrong — the NFL said that in 2017 officials made the correct call between 95 and 97 percent of the time. The wrong calls get magnified by incessant replays, and they get discussed long after the whistle blows a play dead.

That was the case more often than the league may want to admit during the just-conclud-

ed regular season, when players sometimes got just as angry as coaches about calls on the field.

Consider:

■ The reaction by Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins last month after teammate Kamu Grugier-Hill emerged from a pileup on the opening kickoff against the Cowboys with the football and the only other players in the pile were Eagles.

Somehow, though, the ball went to the Cowboys after replay officials ruled there was “no clear recovery” of the football. Dallas went on to win a crucial late-season division matchup, 29-23 in overtime.

“Whoever is watching that in New York should stay off the bottle,” Jenkins said.

It didn’t take long for Jenkins to be fined for insinuating replay officials at league headquarters were drinking.

■ A season that began with Packers linebacker Clay Matthews accusing the NFL of “going soft” after getting a

string of roughing-the-passer penalties — one on a sack that some coaches around the league called “textbook — ended with a string of calls that were both confusing and, at times, maddening.

■ The Chargers were the beneficiaries of two false start calls at Cleveland and Pittsburgh that, well, weren’t called. Both led to touchdowns.

After fourth-year down judge Hugo Cruz was fired by the league in October for a series of errors, including not calling the false start in the Cleveland game, Chargers coach Anthony Lynn said: “I think that’s the first time I’ve seen an official get fired during the season. Maybe it’s happened before and I just don’t know, but they have jobs to do. We have jobs to do. Coaches get fired during the season and players get fired during the season. That’s accountability — it happens.”

30 years after Fog Bowl, Eagles, Bears meet again

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Buddy Ryan’s feud with Mike Ditka dominated headlines when the Philadelphia Eagles returned to the playoffs following a six-year absence to play the Chicago Bears on New Year’s Eve 1988.

Then weather stole the show.

Late in the second quarter with the Bears leading 17-6, things got weird. A dense fog rolled in off Lake Michigan and seeped into Soldier Field.

“I remember looking to the left side of the field and we thought the stadium was on fire because it was that thick and it was billowing over the side of the wall,” former Eagles middle linebacker Mike Reichenbach recalled this week. “It was like a horror movie. It kind of engulfed the

stadium in no time.”

CBS play-by-play announcer Verne Lundquist and analyst Terry Bradshaw couldn’t see the field from the booth. Fans in the stands had no idea what was happening.

“It’s eerie,” Lundquist said on the broadcast before Bradshaw explained how warm weather — the temperature was in the mid-30s — mixed with cold water from the lake created the fog.

The fog grew thicker after halftime and it became more difficult for players and fans at the game to see anything. Viewers couldn’t see the action on television even though CBS switched to its sideline cameras.

Reichenbach said he had to run over to Ryan on the sideline to get the defensive calls

before going back to relay it in the huddle. But the game continued despite poor visibility.

When the officials met for a discussion in the end zone, Ryan sent Reichenbach over to find out what they were thinking.

“They were looking to see the goal posts so we can play,” Reichenbach said. “They said: ‘Yeah, we can see it.’ I couldn’t see 20 yards. It was very dense. There was all kinds of stuff going on in the trenches, holding, punching. It got physical.”

Eagles running back Keith Byars wasn’t sure what the officials were seeing.

“I couldn’t see past the left tackle,” said Byars, who caught nine passes for 103 yards.

Longtime Eagles play-by-play radio announcer Merrill Reese compares calling the

game in the fog to staring at a white wall.

“We saw absolutely nothing,” Reese said.

Somehow, Eagles quarterback Randall Cunningham racked up 407 yards passing, but he threw three interceptions and the offense could only manage four field goals in a 20-12 loss.

Many Philadelphia players insist the outcome would’ve been different if it wasn’t for the fog. Byars said the Eagles would have gone on to win the Super Bowl. The San Francisco 49ers ended up defeating the Cincinnati Bengals for the championship.

“I couldn’t see 15 yards past the line of scrimmage,” Cunningham said afterward. “We had to go to short passes. The Bears knew that, and they jumped all over it.”

NHL roundup

Penguins blank Jets, win 8th straight

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Olli Maatta and Matt Cullen scored 11 seconds apart in the first period, Matt Murray stopped 33 shots and the surging Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Winnipeg Jets 4-0 on Friday night for their eighth straight victory.

Maatta got his first goal since last March when his shot on the power play beat Connor Hellebuyck with 5:41 left in the first period. Cullen added his fourth when Zach Aston-Reese's centering pass went airborne and caromed off Cullen's left shoulder and into the net. Dominik Simon also scored for Pittsburgh, picking up his sixth of the season when what appeared to be a spectacular save by Hellebuyck was overturned on replay.

Murray made the lead stand up to extend his personal winning streak to seven, tying a career best. One point out of the Eastern Conference cellar in

mid-November, the Penguins have won 10 of 11 overall to close in on defending Stanley Cup champion Washington in the competitive Metropolitan Division.

Hellebuyck finished with 29 saves but the Jets remained winless in Pittsburgh since moving from Atlanta in 2007.

Hurricanes 4, Blue Jackets 2: Greg McKegg had a goal and an assist in his Carolina debut and helped his new team beat visiting Columbus.

McKegg was recalled from Charlotte of the AHL on an emergency basis earlier in the day after Carolina placed Jordan Staal on injured reserve. Playing in his first NHL game since November 2017, the journeyman center had an assist in the first period and scored the decisive goal in the second to lift the Hurricanes to their third straight win.

Red Wings 4, Predators 3 (OT): Dylan Larkin scored with

24.9 seconds left in overtime as visiting Detroit won for the first time in seven games.

Andreas Athanasiou, Thomas Vanek and Tyler Bertuzzi also scored for Detroit, which had gone 0-4-2 in its last six games. Jimmy Howard stopped 27 shots.

Avalanche 6, Rangers 1: At Denver, Nathan MacKinnon and Mikko Rantanen scored power-play goals in the first period, helping Colorado end a six-game slide.

Gabriel Landeskog added a goal off his right skate, Alexander Kerfoot tipped in a shot, Rantanen deflected in yet another and Ryan Graves closed out the scoring with his first career NHL goal as a struggling Avalanche squad won for the first time since Dec. 19.

Golden Knights 3, Ducks 2: Max Pacioretty scored in his return to the lineup and visiting Vegas won its fifth straight. Tomas Nosek had a goal and

an assist, and Nate Schmidt also scored to help the Golden Knights improve to 6-0-2 in their last eight games. Marc Andre-Fleury made 25 saves.

Devils 3, Coyotes 2 (SO): Keith Kinkaid stopped 21 shots and had two saves in a shootout, lifting visiting New Jersey to its fourth win in six games.

Kinkaid, who entered after MacKenzie Blackwood left with a lower-body injury in the first period, stopped Alex Galchenyuk and Nick Cousins in the shootout. Kyle Palmeiri and Drew Stafford scored in the tiebreaker for the Devils.

Stars 2, Capitals 1 (OT): Tyler Seguin's second goal of the game 3:37 into overtime lifted host Dallas past Washington.

Anton Khudobin made 36 saves, including the stop of a backhand by T.J. Oshie 1½ minutes into overtime, to help Dallas complete a 3-0-1 homestand.

Shiffrin wins seventh World Cup slalom in a row

Associated Press

ZAGREB, Croatia — Mikaela Shiffrin dominated the first women's World Cup slalom of 2019 on Saturday to match her personal best winning streak in the discipline with seven straight victories.

The American two-time overall champion built on a big first-run lead of more than a second to beat Petra Vlhova of Slovakia by 1.25 on the icy Crveni Spust course. Wendy Holdener of Switzerland was 1.75 seconds behind in third.

It was Shiffrin's fourth triumph in the race on the outskirts of Croatian capital Zagreb, after winning it in 2013, 2015 and last year.

"It's a great atmosphere and it's a really great track," Shiffrin said about the Sljeme hill. "It's the perfect track to be aggressive. I just tried to do my

best and the surface was perfect so it was easier to be really aggressive."

Shiffrin has won 12 of the last 13, and 28 of the last 34 World Cup slaloms she competed in.

Last week, the American set the all-time women's World Cup record of 36 slalom victories. Saturday's win leaves her three short of Ingemar Stenmark's total of 40. The Swedish great is the only skier to have won more races than Shiffrin in the discipline.

At a night event in Austria on Tuesday, Shiffrin can match the all-time record of eight consecutive slalom wins, set by Vreni Schneider of Switzerland in 1989 and repeated by Janica Kostelic of Croatia in 2001.

"I am not sure, I haven't had a lot of trainings," Shiffrin said about her winning series. "I've had a good feeling and I tried to go with that. I know how to

do it."

In all five classic slalom races this season Shiffrin and Vlhova went 1-2, but the Slovakian turned the tables in a parallel event in Oslo on New Year's Day, when she beat her rival in the final.

Four days later, however, Shiffrin won in impressive style.

She was challenged by a furious final run of Vlhova, who posted the fastest second-run time on a course set by her coach, Livio Magoni. The Slovakian is the only skier beside Shiffrin to have won a women's World Cup slalom since the start of last season.

Carrying a lead of 1.34 over Vlhova from the opening run, Shiffrin started fast in her final run but briefly lost control, a mistake which reduced her advantage by a half-second.

Shiffrin quickly regained

her rhythm and, even though it looked like she avoided taking further risks, she extended her lead again to well over a second.

The American had already awed her rivals by taking a big opening-run lead, as she used an attacking yet flawless run to finish more than a second ahead of her nearest competitors.

Racing sixth, Shiffrin crushed the times of earlier starters, and beat then-leader Holdener by 1.15 seconds.

Sitting in the leader box, the Swiss skier looked to the video wall with a smile of disbelief and a brief shake of the head when Shiffrin crossed the finish.

Holdener has racked up 19 podiums in her slalom career but is yet to win a race in the discipline. No racer, male or female, has had more podiums without winning a race.

NBA roundup

Oladipo's three lifts Pacers over Bulls

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Victor Oladipo made a three-pointer from just above the top of the arc with 0.3 seconds left in overtime and Indiana beat host Chicago 119-116 for its sixth straight victory.

Oladipo had 36 points and seven rebounds, and Domantas Sabonis added 23 points and 12 rebounds in the first game of a five-game trip.

Chicago's Zach LaVine hit a three-pointer from the corner, but after time ran out in the extra period.

LaVine led Chicago with 31 points. He made two three-pointers in the closing moments of regulation to tie it at 105 and send it to overtime. He hit the first three with 17.3 seconds left from outside the left side of the arc, then knotted it with 3.9 seconds remaining from almost the same spot.

Bucks 144, Hawks 112: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 16 points, eight rebounds and 10 assists in just 19 minutes,

and Milwaukee's starters got plenty of rest in a victory over visiting Atlanta.

Khris Middleton scored 19 points while hitting all four of his three-point attempts. Malcolm Brogdon also scored 19 and point guard Eric Bledsoe added 14 points and eight assists for the Bucks, who led 43-14 after 12 minutes.

Celtics 114, Mavericks 93: Gordon Hayward had 16 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists, Jaylen Brown scored 21 points and short-handed Boston beat visiting Dallas.

Dirk Nowitzki, who received two standing ovations, was scoreless and had two rebounds for Dallas. Celtics fans chanted "Dirk! Dirk!" in the final minute, hoping he would make a shot in what might have been his final appearance in Boston.

Thunder 111, Trail Blazers 109: Paul George scored 37 points and Oklahoma City snapped a six-game losing streak to Portland.

Russell Westbrook added 31

points for the Thunder, who had also lost eight straight games at the Moda Center dating to February 2014.

Heat 115, Wizards 109: Hassan Whiteside had 21 points and 18 rebounds and Miami beat visiting Washington to move over the .500 mark for the first time since late October.

The Heat have won 12 of 17 to improve to 19-18. Josh Richardson added 18 points, James Johnson had 17 and Dwyane Wade scored 14. The Heat had lost each of their last four games in which they could have gotten over .500, where they last were on Oct. 27 at 3-2.

Nets 109, Grizzlies 100: D'Angelo Russell had 23 points and 10 assists, DeMarre Carroll added 20 points, including a season-high five three-pointers, and Brooklyn beat host Memphis.

The Nets won for the 11th time in 14 games and avenged a 131-125 double-overtime loss to Memphis on Nov. 30.

Timberwolves 120, Magic

103: Karl-Anthony Towns had 29 points and 15 rebounds, and Jeff Teague added 23 points and 10 assists in his return to the lineup in Minnesota's comeback victory over visiting Orlando.

Jazz 117, Cavaliers 91: Donovan Mitchell scored 18 points and Utah dominated the second half, sending host Cleveland to its eighth straight loss.

Clippers 121, Suns 111: Danilo Gallinari and Lou Williams scored 21 points apiece and visiting Los Angeles extended its dominance over Phoenix.

Knicks 119, Lakers 112: Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 22 points, Trey Burke added 16 and visiting New York snapped its eight-game losing streak with a victory over Los Angeles.

Emmanuel Mudiay had 15 points and seven rebounds for the Knicks, who blew an early 17-point lead before rallying from a six-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

No. 20 Buffalo routs E. Michigan to open MAC play

Associated Press

YPSILANTI, Mich. — Nick Perkins has a good idea how the rest of the Mid-American Conference feels about facing Buffalo this season.

"When you've got a national ranking, everybody wants to beat you," the 6-foot-8 senior said.

The 20th-ranked Bulls were ready for their first MAC test of 2018-19. Montell McRae scored a career-high 18 points and Perkins added 15 to lift Buffalo to an easy 74-58 win over Eastern Michigan on Friday night.

CJ Massinburg added 12 points for Buffalo. McRae scored 12 of his points in the first half, helping the Bulls (13-1, 1-0) through a sluggish start against the EMU zone defense.

Buffalo trailed 15-11 before

going on a 19-4 run. It was 33-23 at halftime.

McRae's first-half scoring came on three dunks and a pair of three-pointers. The 6-foot-10 senior finished 8-for-9 from the field and surpassed his previous career high of 13 points.

"Somebody needed to find a spark, and I guess it was me tonight," McRae said. "I got us rolling."

Elijah Minnie led EMU (6-8, 0-1) with 21 points.

"We were more excited playing Buffalo than when we played Duke, in my opinion," said EMU's James Thompson IV, who had 11 points and 12 rebounds. "We've got the crowd, everybody was hyped. We didn't look at Buffalo like they were No. 20. We looked at them like we play them every year."

Massinburg had a quiet game offensively, but he did sink a couple late three-pointers in the first half, including one in the final seconds that gave the Bulls a 10-point lead.

Big picture: Buffalo: EMU was the type of team that can give the Bulls trouble, especially on the offensive glass. The Eagles had 20 offensive rebounds, but they didn't lead to that many easy baskets. EMU finished with only an 18-16 edge in second-chance points.

"What it did is it didn't allow us to get into our transition like we wanted to," Buffalo coach Nate Oats said. "We didn't have nearly as many fast-break points as we typically would, just because we couldn't rebound the ball. Even if they weren't scoring on it all the

time, we've got to get rebounds and get out in transition."

EMU: The Eagles defended well at times, but they couldn't overcome their 7-for-26 shooting from three-point range. EMU came into the game shooting 26 percent from beyond the arc — one of the worst marks in Division I — and during one stretch, the Eagles missed 12 attempts in a row from long distance.

"You have to make sure when you get an opportunity, Division I players have to make open shots," EMU coach Rob Murphy said. "We didn't make open shots. I thought that was the difference in the game."

Homecoming: Perkins is an Ypsilanti native, and Oats spent 11 years as head coach at Romulus High School, about 16 miles away.