

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Iraqi Parliament: Expel foreign troops

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq's Parliament called for the expulsion of U.S. forces from the country in reaction to the American drone attack that killed a top Iranian general, raising the prospect of a troop withdrawal that could cripple the battle against the Islamic State and allow a resurgence of the extremists.

Lawmakers approved a resolution asking the Iraqi government to end the agreement under which Washington sent troops more than four years ago to help fight ISIS. The bill is nonbinding and subject to approval by the Iraqi government but has the backing of the departing prime minister.

But the vote was another sign of the blowback from the U.S. airstrike Friday that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and a number of top Iraqi officials at the Baghdad airport.

Soleimani was the architect of Iran's proxy wars across the Mideast and was blamed for the deaths of hundreds of Americans in roadside bombings and other attacks.

Speaking to lawmakers in Parliament, Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi said that after the killing of Soleimani, the government has two choices: End the presence of foreign troops in Iraq or restrict their mission to training Iraqi forces.

"As a prime minister and supreme commander of the armed forces, I call for adopting the first choice," Abdul-Mahdi said.

Abdul-Mahdi resigned last year in response to the anti-government protests that have engulfed Baghdad and the mostly Shiite southern provinces.

Political factions have been unable to agree on a new prime minister, and Abdul-Mahdi con-

tinues in a caretaker capacity.

Asked shortly before the parliamentary vote whether the U.S. would comply with an Iraqi government request for American troops to leave, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo would not answer directly.

"We'll watch. We're following very closely what's taking place in the Iraqi Parliament," he told CBS' "Face the Nation." "It is the United States that is prepared to help the Iraqi people get what it is they deserve and continue our mission there to take down terrorism from ISIS and others in the region."

A pullout of U.S. troops could cripple the fight against the Islamic State and allow it to make a comeback. Militants affiliated with ISIS routinely carry out attacks in northern and western Iraq, hiding out in rugged desert and mountainous areas. Iraqi forces rely on the U.S. for logistics and weapons.

An American withdrawal could also enable Iran to deepen its influence in Iraq, a majority Shiite country like Iran.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said on Fox News that the parliamentary vote is "a bit concerning."

"The Iranian government is trying to basically take over Iraq's political system. Iran is bribing Iraqi politicians. To the Iraqi people, do not allow your politicians to turn Iraq into a proxy of Iran," he said.

The majority of about 180 legislators present in Parliament voted in favor of the troop-removal resolution. It was backed by most Shiite members of parliament, who hold a majority of seats. Many Sunni and Kurdish legislators did not show up for the session, apparently because they oppose abolishing the deal.

## Key base in Kenya used by American forces overrun

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Al-Shabab extremists overran a key military base used by U.S. counterterror forces in Kenya before dawn Sunday, destroying U.S. aircraft and vehicles, Kenyan authorities said. It was the al-Qaida-linked group's first attack against U.S. forces in the East African country, and the military called the security situation "fluid" several hours after the assault.

Five attackers were killed and the assault has been contained, said Kenyan military spokesman Paul Njuguna.

It was not yet clear whether any U.S. or Kenyan forces were killed. A U.S. Africa Command statement, issued after al-Shabab released photos of blazing aircraft, said "an accountability of personnel assessment is underway" and the Manda Bay airfield was "still in the process of being

fully secured." Kenya's military said four attackers were dead.

Al-Shabab, based in neighboring Somalia, claimed responsibility and asserted that combat with U.S. forces resulted in 17 U.S. "casualties," nine Kenyan soldiers killed and seven aircraft destroyed.

The U.S. statement called al-Shabab claims exaggerated.

Kenya is a key base for fighting one of the world's most resilient extremist organizations. A plume of black smoke rose above the airfield Sunday after residents said a car bomb had exploded. Lamu county commissioner Irungu Macharia told The Associated Press that five suspects were arrested and were being interrogated.

An internal Kenyan police report seen by the AP said two fixed-wing aircraft, a U.S. Cessna and a Kenyan one, were destroyed along with two U.S. helicopters and multiple U.S. vehicles at the Manda Bay mili-

tary airstrip. The report said explosions were heard at around 5:30 a.m. from the direction of the airstrip. The scene, now secured, indicated that al-Shabab likely entered "to conduct targeted attacks," the report said.

The U.S. military said only that "initial reports reflect damage to infrastructure and equipment." The Kenya Civil Aviation Authority said the airstrip was closed for all operations.

Al-Shabab's statement included photos of blazing aircraft it asserted were from the attack. A second al-Shabab claim, issued hours later, asserted that "intense close-quarters combat" against U.S. forces continued.

The latest attack comes just over a week after an al-Shabab truck bomb in Somalia's capital killed at least 79 people and U.S. airstrikes killed seven al-Shabab fighters in response.

# US response team flies out to Middle East

Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Being a U.S. soldier in a fast-response force sometimes means being sent halfway across the world within a day, leaving no time to say goodbye to those staying behind.

That's what happened to April Shumard when her husband, a member of the 82 Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, got the call. He was at home, minding the couple's five children while Shumard was at work at Healing Hands day spa when he sent her a text. He had to rush to base. He wasn't sure if it was a drill or a deployment. Then she got another text: "We're leaving tomorrow."

She said her husband has been in the military since 2010 and has already deployed twice to Afghanistan. But with those prior instances, the family had much more time to prepare and say goodbye.

"The kids kept going, 'When's Dad going to be home?'" said Shumard, 42.

Her husband was among hundreds of U.S. soldiers deployed Saturday from Fort Bragg, N.C., to Kuwait to serve as rein-

forcements in the Middle East amid rising tensions following the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general.

Lt. Col. Mike Burns, a spokesman for the 82nd Airborne Division, told The Associated Press 3,500 members of the division's quick-deployment brigade, known officially as its Immediate Response Force, will have deployed within a few days. The most recent group of service members to deploy will join about 700 who left earlier in the week, Burns said.

A loading ramp at Fort Bragg was filled Saturday morning with combat gear and restless soldiers. Some tried to grab a last-minute nap on wooden benches. Reporters saw others filing onto buses.

The additional troop deployments reflect concerns about potential Iranian retaliatory action in the volatile aftermath of Friday's drone strike that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force who has been blamed for attacks on U.S. troops and American allies going back decades.

President Donald Trump ordered the

airstrike near Baghdad's international airport. Iran has vowed retribution, raising fears of an all-out war, but it's unclear how or when a response might come.

In the gray early morning light Saturday, Army video showed soldiers dressed in camouflage fatigues filing into planes, carrying rucksacks and rifles. Humvees were rolled onto another cargo plane and chained in place for the flight to the Middle East.

Burns said the soldiers within the Immediate Response Force train constantly to be ready to respond quickly to crises abroad. When called by their superiors, they have two hours to get to base with their gear and must maintain a state of readiness so that they can be in the air headed to their next location within 18 hours.

"So whether they were on leave, whether they were home drinking a beer, whether they were, you know, hanging out, throwing the kids up in the yard, you get the call and it's time to go," he said.

He said that soldiers typically keep individual "go-bags" of their personal gear with them at their living quarters.

## Iran abandons nuclear deal as country mourns general

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran said Sunday it would no longer abide by any of the limits of its unraveling 2015 nuclear deal with world powers after a U.S. airstrike killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad, abandoning the accord's key provisions that block Tehran from having enough material to build an atomic weapon.

Iran insisted in a state television broadcast it remained open to negotiations with European partners, who so far have been unable to offer Tehran a way to sell its crude oil abroad despite U.S. sanctions. It also didn't back off of earlier promises that it wouldn't seek a nuclear weapon.

However, the announcement Sunday represents the clearest nuclear proliferation threat yet made by Iran since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord in May 2018. It also further raises regional tensions, as

Iran's longtime foe Israel has promised never to allow Iran to be able to produce an atomic bomb.

The announcement came Sunday night after another Iranian official said it would consider taking even-harsher steps over the U.S. killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani on Friday. Hundreds of thousands of people flooded the streets Sunday in Iran to walk alongside a casket carrying the remains of Soleimani, the former leader of its expeditionary Quds Force that organizes Tehran's proxy forces in the wider Mideast.

The leader of one such proxy, Lebanon's Hezbollah, said Soleimani's killing made U.S. military bases, warships and service members spread across the region fair targets for attacks. A former Revolutionary Guard leader suggested the Israeli city of Haifa and "centers" like Tel Aviv could be targeted.

Iran's state TV cited a statement by President Hassan

Rouhani's administration saying the country will not observe limitations on its enrichment, the amount of stockpiled enriched uranium as well as research and development in its nuclear activities.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has in a statement announced its fifth and final step in reducing Iran's commitments under the JCPOA," a state TV broadcaster said, using an acronym for the deal. "The Islamic Republic of Iran no longer faces any limitations in operations."

It did not elaborate on what levels it would immediately reach in its program.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations watchdog observing Iran's program, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. However, Iran said that its cooperation with the IAEA "will continue as before."

After thousands in Baghdad on Saturday mourned Solei-

mani and others killed in the strike, authorities flew the general's body to the southwestern Iranian city of Ahvaz. An honor guard stood by early Sunday as mourners carried the flag-draped coffins of Soleimani and other Guard members off the tarmac.

The caskets then moved slowly through streets choked with mourners wearing black, beating their chests and carrying posters with Soleimani's portrait.

Authorities then took Soleimani's body to the city of Mashhad later Sunday. State TV estimated that a million mourners came out to the Imam Reza shrine to pay their respects, although that number could not be independently verified. Soleimani's remains will go to Tehran and Qom on Monday for public mourning processions, followed by his hometown of Kerman for burial Tuesday.

# US military retiree banned from bases in South Korea

BY KIM GAMEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — A U.S. military retiree has been banned from bases in South Korea over allegations of buying excessive duty-free goods and black marketing, officials said Friday.

The move came nearly four months after U.S. Forces Korea, the main command on the peninsula, lifted monthly commissary purchase limits and eased other shopping restrictions intended to prevent such infractions.

The retiree, who lives in South Korea but was not otherwise identified, was banned Dec. 10 “from all U.S. military installations and facilities in (South Korea) for 10 years, for excessive purchasing of duty free goods and black market-

ing,” according to a post on the Camp Humphreys Facebook page.

It reminded USFK personnel, including military, civilians, retirees, widows and dependents, that violations of the regulation governing access to duty-free goods may result in a suspension or revocation of the privilege.

“The individual making excessive purchases from the Commissary/Exchange need not profit from the act for it to be a violation,” it added.

“Duty-free purchase privileges may be revoked or suspended if you or your dependent is involved in black marketing, the wrongful transfer of duty-free goods, or purchases in excess of personal needs,” the garrison said.

Humphreys garrison spokesman Steven Hoover confirmed

the retiree was a man but said he couldn’t immediately provide more details.

Patrons in South Korea had long been required to present ID or ration cards before being allowed to enter base commissaries and exchanges.

The change implemented in mid-September removed the entrance checks, although customers are still required to show IDs to cashiers before purchasing anything.

The new policy also lifted limits on the amount of goods service members and their families could buy each month — previously \$800 for the main sponsor and \$300 for additional family members.

However, restrictions on alcohol sales remained as USFK sought to prevent black market trade of goods sold on base.

## Navy copter airlifts ill cruise ship passenger

BY WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A Navy helicopter airlifted a 69-year-old cruise ship passenger for medical treatment on New Year’s Day.

The male passenger, who was experiencing “abdominal distress,” was hoisted from the Grand Princess, which was about 210 miles northwest of Hawaii Island, the Navy said in a statement Thursday. He was taken to Hilo Medical Center, which was not able to provide the man’s condition on Thursday.

The MH-60R Seahawk helicopter crew conducted the medevac while a Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules airplane provided overhead support. The Navy helicopter is part of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 37, which is based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii on Oahu.

The Coast Guard received a report at about 12:30 p.m. Wednesday that the passenger was experiencing abdominal problems. A Coast Guard flight surgeon consulted with the medical staff aboard the Grand Princess and agreed that the man should be medically evacuated, the statement said.

The Grand Princess diverted toward Hawaii Island as the Seahawk and Hercules aircrews launched their responses.

Upon arriving on the scene, the Hercules aircrew provided communications and cover overhead while the Seahawk crew conducted the hoist.

The Coast Guard requested the assistance of the Navy Seahawk because of its long-range capabilities, the statement said.

“The Coast Guard and the Navy often work together during search and rescue operations in the Pacific,” Petty Officer 3rd Class Craig Howarth, a Coast Guard Sector Honolulu watchstander, said.

## Russian ally Belarus looks at NATO drills

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTT GART, Germany — The top military official in Belarus says his country, a closely tied Russian ally, is open to conducting joint military exercises with NATO.

Belarus defense chief Oleg Belokonev recently told local media his country should be regarded in similar terms as Serbia — a country with close ties to Russia but one with a military training connection to NATO.

“Belarus is ready for joint exercises with NATO. There are talks on possible formats,” Belokonev told *Nasha Niva* newspaper. “But we will agree on this if NATO understands that Russia is our strategic ally.”

Belokonev was responding to a question about whether Belarus’ relationship with NATO should resemble that of Serbia.

The idea of upgraded ties between Minsk and NATO comes amid signs of tension between Russia and Belarus, which serves as a Russian territorial buffer between NATO.

This week, Russia halted oil deliveries to Belarus over contract problems, Russian state media reported Friday. The two countries also have been at odds over payments for weapons systems.

In 2019, Belarus also angered Russia when it refused to play host to a Russian air base in the country.

On Dec. 20, Belarus’ authoritarian leader, Alexander Lukashenko, met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg to discuss deeper economic ties, The Associated Press reported. The meeting drew a rare protest of about 1,000 people in Minsk, who held up signs that said “First Crimea, then Belarus” and

“Stop Annexation!”

Russia annexed Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula in 2014, which has led to continued conflict between the two nations and heightened tensions on NATO’s eastern border.

The U.S. has begun to seek out closer ties with Belarus in the meantime. In August, former Secretary of State John Bolton made a visit to the former Soviet state — the highest-level American official to visit the country in years.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had planned to visit Belarus and other central Asian countries this month but canceled the trip after the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

While Belarus is a member of NATO’s partnership for peace program, to date that has mainly involved smaller activities, such as military officials taking part in courses with NATO members.

# Driver in Italy plows into German tourists

Associated Press

ROME — A drunken driver plowed into a group of young German tourists in northern Italy early Sunday, killing six people and injuring 11 others, Italian authorities said.

The deadly crash occurred in a village near Valle Aurina, near Bolzano in the Alto Adige region, shortly after 1 a.m. as the Germans — who were between the ages of 20-25 — gathered to board their bus.

The largely German-speaking autonomous region of northern Italy, with its ski resorts in the Dolomites and quaint villages around Bolzano, is popular with German tourists.

“The new year begins with

a terrible tragedy,” said the regional president of Alto Adige, Arno Kompatscher. “We are left stunned.”

The driver of the car had a high blood alcohol content and was driving particularly fast, a Carabinieri police official in Brunico told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn’t authorized to give his name. He said police had concluded that the car crash into pedestrians was not an act of terrorism.

The Lutago volunteer fire service said on Facebook that six people were killed at the scene. The 11 injured, four of whom were in critical condition, were taken to several re-

gional hospitals, including two who were airlifted to a hospital in Innsbruck, Austria, said Bolzano Carabinieri Cmdr. Alessandro Coassin.

In all, 160 rescue workers and emergency medical personnel responded to the crash, the aftermath of which “looked like a battlefield,” Helmut Abfalterer of the Lutago volunteer fire service told the Tageszeitung Online portal.

Coassin said the driver, identified by Italian media as a 28-year-old man from the nearby town of Chienes, was arrested on suspicion of highway manslaughter and injury and was being treated at the hospital in Brunico.

Kompatscher told a press conference the victims were part of a group of young Germans vacationing in the region. He expressed his condolences to their families and declined to provide further details pending notification of their deaths to their loved ones.

Later Sunday, mourners left candles and flowers at the crash scene, which was located along a two-lane road dotted by hotels and old piles of snow in the mountainous region.

The accident occurred on the final long weekend of the Christmas and New Year’s holiday in Italy, which will be capped by Epiphany on Monday.

## Airstrike destroys Libyan military academy

Associated Press

CAIRO — The death toll from an airstrike that slammed into a military academy in Libya’s capital climbed to at least 30 people, most of them students, health authorities said Sunday, as fighting over control of Tripoli between rival armed groups escalated.

Eastern Libyan forces led by Gen. Khalifa Hifter launched an offensive in April to take the capital from the weak but U.N.-supported government. Libya

is governed by rival authorities in the east and in Tripoli in the west, with each relying on different militias.

The airstrike took place late Saturday in the Hadaba area, just south of the city center, the health ministry of the Tripoli-based government said. Fighting and shelling between the two sides have been raging for months in the area.

The U.N.-supported Libyan government blamed the airstrike on Hifter’s self-styled

Libyan National Army. A spokesman for the LNA did not respond to phone calls seeking comment.

Hifter has declared a “final” and decisive battle for the capital. That followed a military and maritime agreement Tripoli authorities signed with their ally Turkey calling for the deployment of Turkish troops to Libya.

Turkey’s parliament on Thursday authorized sending forces to Libya to support Trip-

oli authorities. Libya’s eastern-based parliament condemned the move along with other regional and world powers.

Ghassan Salame, the U.N. envoy to Libya, said Turkish troops on the ground would further diminish chances for ending the violence.

The U.N. Support Mission in Libya condemned in “the strongest terms” the attack.

It warned in a statement against “growing escalation” in the violence.

## 5 people dead in Pennsylvania Turnpike crash

Associated Press

GREENSBURG, Pa. — A deadly crash involving a passenger bus and multiple other vehicles on the Pennsylvania Turnpike left at least five dead and dozens injured early Sunday, shutting down a large portion of the highway.

Officials said at least 60 people, ranging in age from 7 to 52 years old, were hospitalized after the crash that happened

at 3:40 a.m. in Westmoreland County, around 30 miles east of Pittsburgh.

Photos from the scene show a mangled collision of multiple vehicles including an overturned bus, two tractor-trailers, passenger cars and a smashed FedEx truck that left packages sprawled along the highway.

There were 25 victims transported to Excelsa Frick Hospital in Mount Pleasant, Excelsa Health spokeswoman

Robin Jennings said. Nine of those patients are under the age of 18.

At least one of the 25 victims initially sent to Excelsa was taken to a nearby trauma center and the rest of the patients’ conditions were not known, Jennings said.

Information about what caused the accident was not immediately available, and the National Transportation Safety Board investigators were called

to the scene.

The National Weather Service forecast for Westmoreland County early Sunday listed light precipitation and an air temperature just below freezing.

Pennsylvania Turnpike spokesman Carl DeFebo said it was “premature” to say if weather was a factor in the crash. He added that a portion of the turnpike would likely be closed for the rest of the day.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Man left drugs, gun in designer bags at store

**LA** GALLIANO — Louisiana authorities are perplexed over why a man left apparent designer bags holding drugs, a gun, cash and a digital scale in a convenience store.

The man went into the store and put the Louis Vuitton and Gucci bags on a chair, according to a news release.

"The employee said he offered her \$100 to 'keep his bag,'" Lt. Brennan Matherne, spokesman for Lafourche Parish Sheriff Craig Webre, said in an interview.

A customer later pointed out that one of them held a handgun, which turned out to be stolen from neighboring Terrebonne Parish. It also held cash and a digital scale, while the other bag held the drug Suboxone and suspected methamphetamine, according to the statement.

## Psychic scammed mom, said girl was possessed

**MA** SOMERSET — A psychic stole more than \$70,000 from a client by telling the woman her 10-year-old daughter was possessed by a demon and she needed the money to banish the spirit, police in Massachusetts said.

Tracy Milanovich, 37, of Somerset, is charged with obtaining property by trick, along with larceny and witness intimidation, Somerset police said in a statement.

Police started investigating Dec. 17 when the alleged victim reported that she was tricked by Milanovich into handing over large sums of cash along with household items, including towels and bedding, to battle the demon.

## Man has to move out of renovated mine shaft

**NV** LAS VEGAS — A Nevada man who lived in an abandoned mine shaft for seven years was given 30 days to vacate his renovated, underground home.

Boulder City police delivered the eviction notice to Richard Roman on Dec. 19, The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

Roman, 68, installed two swinging doors at the entrance of the mine shaft. The shaft led to a cavern living area.

Roman had a \$2,000 solar panel that powers several LED lights and batteries.

## Cat found with arrow lodged in its shoulder

**VA** DANVILLE — Police in Virginia said that a cat was wounded after being shot by an arrow.

The Danville Register & Bee reported that someone spotted the cat in the parking lot of a roofing company.

The cat was turned over to the Animal Medical Center in Danville, which removed the plastic arrow from the cat's shoulder.

The projectile had been lodged inches above the feline's heart and lungs.

## Man claims he skinned dogs to make coat

**KY** PRESTONSBURG — A Kentucky man who claimed to have skinned four of his neighbors' dogs to make a "doggy coat" has been charged with animal torture.

Jonathan D. Watkins, 38, was arrested in the Floyd County community of David on Dec. 23 after a neighbor called authorities, news outlets reported.

A state trooper who respond-

ed found Watkins at his home with a knife and what appeared to be blood on his clothing.

When the trooper asked where the blood came from, Watkins replied, "I'm making myself a doggy coat," according to the arrest citation.

## Alaskan volcano erupts, sends up ash cloud

**AK** ANCHORAGE — A volcano in Alaska's Aleutian Islands erupted and sent up an ash cloud, prompting an aircraft advisory.

Shishaldin Volcano shot ash to more than 20,000 feet and possibly 24,000 feet, the Alaska Volcano Observatory reported.

The volcano is 679 miles southwest of Anchorage near the center of Unimak Island, the largest island in the Aleutians and home to False Pass, a village of 40 on the island's east side. The cloud drifted southeast over ocean water.

## Woman dozes, spends night at mattress store

**MO** RICHMOND HEIGHTS — A woman is a little embarrassed but well rested, after falling asleep testing a mattress at a Missouri store and spending the night there.

Richmond Heights Police Officer Allison Brown told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that officers were called to the undisclosed store after a worker found the woman wandering inside the business prior to its opening.

## Authorities: Woman set fire to another woman

**TN** NASHVILLE — A woman is facing charges for setting another woman on fire in Tennessee, authorities

said.

According to the Nashville Fire Department, Leila Dawson, 48, faces charges of attempted criminal homicide, aggravated arson and arson.

Dawson set the woman on fire inside of a duplex, and when firefighters arrived, they found the woman severely burned in the front yard, the fire department said.

## Man leaps off bridge, thought cops after him

**GA** ATLANTA — A driver who mistakenly thought Atlanta police were chasing him as they were pursuing a different speeding motorist crashed his car and jumped 40 feet off a highway bridge to escape.

The driver survived the jump and ran into a wooded area, and now police really are looking for him, news outlets reported.

The chase began when officers attempted to pull over someone else, WSB-TV reported.

## Man and goat taken on drive across 3 states

**OK** SAND SPRINGS — A man stole a pickup truck with a sleeping passenger and a goat inside it and drove it all the way from Missouri to Oklahoma before releasing the terrified victim and animal and eventually being arrested, authorities said.

The suspect, Brandon Kirby, 40, took methamphetamine and pistol-whipped the victim during the 130-mile ordeal.

The Sand Springs Police Department said on Facebook: "OK 2020, it only took you 4.5 hours to get weird. Let's slow down on the carjacking-goat-napping calls for the remainder of the year."

From wire reports

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# Titans upset Pats in wild-card round

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — When the eerie Foxborough fog lifted, it became clear that New England's reign atop the NFL was ending.

Derrick Henry ensured that with the kind of dominating playoff performance usually reserved for Tom Brady and the Patriots.

Henry rushed for 182 yards and a touchdown while Tennessee's defense stymied Brady and perhaps ended his championship-filled New England career with a 20-13 wild-card victory Saturday night.

Brady vows to be back on an NFL field next season, but his contract with the Patriots is done.

"I love the Patriots," the 42-year Brady said, adding about leaving the game after 20 seasons: "I would say it's pretty unlikely, hopefully unlikely. I

love playing football. I don't know what it looks like moving forward."

Doing the most moving forward Saturday night was Henry, who had a total of 184 yards rushing in two playoff games two years ago. He nearly got that against the league's top-ranked defense in boosting the Titans (10-7) into the divisional round at No. 1 seed Baltimore.

"It's a great win against a great team in a hostile environment," Henry said on his 26th birthday.

"We were just locked in. That was our mindset, just coming in here doing what we needed to do in all three phases, stay locked in no matter what happens in the game, and I feel like we did that."

As that dense fog that shrouded Gillette Stadium for the first half dissipated, the Patriots, who made the last three Super

Bowls and won two, stalled repeatedly with the ball. They no longer were the bullies on the block — Henry was.

As for this defeat, the Patriots' fourth as a wild card, Brady noted: "They kind of stopped us in the first half and the second half and we couldn't get the job done."

There had been no scoring in the second half when All-Pro Brett Kern's 58-yard punt that took up 10 of the final 25 seconds rolled down at the New England 1. Brady then was picked by former Patriot Logan Ryan for a 9-yard touchdown to finish off the Patriots (12-5), who at one point were 8-0.

The game's first three possessions wound up as three long scoring drives. A 29-yard screen pass to James White set up Nick Folk's 36-yard field goal, but Tennessee answered with a 75-yard march built around Henry. He had no role

on the touchdown, Tannehill's pass to a Harvard man, tight end Anthony Firkser that made it 7-3.

Firkser is the first player from Harvard to score a play-off TD.

New England counter-punched with its own 75-yard drive, taking temporary control of the game by victimizing Tennessee's defense on the outside. The Titans looked slow trying to protect the flanks as Sony Michel broke off a 25-yard run and White had a 14-yarder.

Julian Edelman finished it with the first rushing touchdown of his 11 pro seasons, a 5-yard dash to the unprotected left side of the Tennessee D.

New England appeared primed for another touchdown after Mohamed Sanu's 14-yard punt return set up the Patriots at the Titans 47, and they steadily drove to first-and-goal at the 1.

# Texans roar by Bills for OT wild-card win

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Deshaun Watson's teammates talked all week about how they never feel as if they're out of any game when No. 4 is on the field.

On Saturday, Watson showed why the Houston Texans have so much trust in him, when the quarterback's dazzling performance late after a tough start led them to a playoff victory.

Watson spun out of a would-be sack and coolly completed a pass that set up the winning field goal in overtime as the Texans rallied from a double-digit second-half deficit for a 22-19 victory over the Buffalo Bills in the first round of the playoffs.

DeAndre Hopkins was asked to describe Watson's play on Saturday to somebody who might have missed the game.

"I hope everyone watched this today, but he's amazing," Hopkins said. "You can't put too many words on it."

Both teams punted on their first possessions of overtime — the first extra period in an AFC wild-card game since January 2012. On Houston's next drive, Watson evaded a sack by wriggling away from one defender and bouncing off another before rolling out to find Taiwan Jones for a 34-yard reception to set up first-and-goal.

Watson flexed both arms as the crowd at NRG Stadium went wild — knowing their team was in position to pull off another comeback win to Houston's playoff history.

"I told myself to stay up. I mean, it's do-or-die now. I just had to make the play," Watson said.

Ka'imi Fairbairn then kicked a 28-yard field goal to lift Houston to the victory.

The Texans (11-6) advance to the divisional round of the playoffs next Sunday, where they will play at Baltimore.

The Texans got a boost from the return of J.J. Watt, who had a sack that helped spark his team. Houston scored 19 straight points to take the lead before Stephen Hauschka's 47-yard field goal tied it with 5 seconds left to force overtime.

"We never quit, regardless," Watson said. "Whatever it takes to get the win. I mean, we're going to keep fighting."

Watt was wowed by the play of Watson. "The play he made at the end of the game — nobody makes that play," Watt said. "The guy's unbelievable. I'm very thankful and lucky to have him as my quarterback. That's why you play the whole game."

It was Watt's first game after sitting out since October with a torn pectoral muscle. "This is why you come back," Watt said.

"I don't know if I meant to come back for these many plays or this much extra time, but these feelings, these emotions, these fans, these players, Deshaun Watson and all the guys on this team, this is why you come back."

The win gives the Texans their first playoff victory since the 2016 season and extends Buffalo's postseason losing streak to six games, with their most recent playoff win coming in 1995. It's the first wild-card overtime game since the Broncos beat the Steelers 29-23 in the 2011 season.

The last time teams from Houston and Buffalo met in the playoffs it was in a game that is known as "The Comeback." The Bills set an NFL record for the largest comeback in NFL history by rallying from a 32-point deficit for a 41-38 overtime win against the Houston Oilers in a wild-card game in 1993.

This time Josh Allen and the Bills (10-7) used a dominant first half to build a 13-point lead and were up 16-0 in the third quarter.

Watson had 247 yards passing and ran for 55 yards and Hopkins had 90 yards receiving. Watson led the Texans to the victory despite being sacked seven times, led by three from Jerry Hughes.

## NBA roundup

## Grizzlies rout George-less Clippers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Jae Crowder scored 27 points and the Memphis Grizzlies took advantage of Los Angeles star Paul George's absence to rout the Clippers 140-114 on Saturday.

Jaren Jackson Jr. added 24 points, and Ja Morant and Dillon Brooks had 22 points each to help Memphis improve to 7-10 on the road with its highest scoring game of the season.

Montrezl Harrell led the Clippers with 28 points, and Kawhi Leonard and Lou Williams added 24 points each. The team appeared out of sorts from the start without George. He sat out with left hamstring tightness and Los Angeles

clearly missed his defense.

**Bucks 127, Spurs 118:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 19 of his 32 points in the third quarter to help NBA-leading Milwaukee beat visiting San Antonio.

Antetokounmpo repeatedly was fouled on his drives to the hoop and converted all 12 of his free-throw attempts in the second half.

**Raptors 121, Nets 102:** Fred VanVleet had 29 points and 11 assists, Kyle Lowry scored 26 points and Toronto bounced back from its worst offensive performance of the season to win at slumping Brooklyn.

**Celtics 111, Bulls 104:** Jayson Tatum scored 28 points, Gordon Hayward added 24 and

host Boston beat Chicago.

**Hornets 123, Mavericks 120, (OT):** Terry Rozier scored 29 points, including the go-ahead three-pointer in overtime after his tying basket in regulation, and Charlotte won at Dallas.

**Wizards 129, Nuggets 114:** Ish Smith scored a career-high 32 points and Troy Brown added 25 and a career-high 14 rebounds in host Washington's victory over Denver.

**Jazz 109, Magic 96:** Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points and Georges Niang added 15 off the bench to help Utah win at Orlando for its fifth straight victory.

**Thunder 121, Cavaliers 106:** Dennis Schroder scored 22 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alex-

ander had 20 and Oklahoma City won at Cleveland to run its winning streak to five.

**Pistons 111, Warriors 104:** Andre Drummond had 14 points and 18 rebounds before fouling out late, Derrick Rose scored 22 points off the bench and Detroit won at Golden State to snap a three-game losing streak.

**Hawks 116, Pacers 111:** Trae Young scored 30 of his 41 points in the first half, Kevin Huerter added a season-high 26 points and host Atlanta beat Indiana after blowing a 22-point lead.

**Pelicans 117, Kings 115:** JJ Redick's driving layup with 1.1 seconds remaining lifted New Orleans to a win at Sacramento.

## NHL roundup

## Golden Knights rally to defeat Blues in overtime

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — It's no secret the Vegas Golden Knights haven't fared well against teams with better records this season.

Saturday, with sheer resiliency, the Pacific Division leaders proved they can beat one of the league's best.

Chandler Stephenson scored in overtime and the Golden Knights rallied from an early three-goal deficit to beat the St. Louis Blues 5-4.

Vegas, which improved to 15-6-3 since Nov. 17 and leads the NHL with 33 points in that span, has laid the groundwork since dipping to sixth in the division, but had spent most of the season dominating subpar teams.

While the Golden Knights are 16-6-2 against teams currently outside the playoff picture, they entered Saturday 2-6-1 against the seven teams above them in

the standings while being outscored 35-21.

**Oilers 4, Bruins 1:** Darnell Nurse and Gaetan Haas each had a second-period goal off poor Boston plays, and Connor McDavid added an insurance score for visiting Edmonton in the third after being stopped twice by Jaroslav Halak.

David Pastrnak scored his NHL-leading 31st goal for the Bruins, who have won just four times in their past 10 games.

**Wild 3, Jets 2 (OT):** Eric Staal poked home a rebound after a scramble in front of the Winnipeg goal, sending host Minnesota to a win.

Marcus Foligno and Luke Kunin also scored for the Wild, who put up a season-high 44 shots on goal.

**Sharks 3, Blue Jackets 2:** Aaron Dell stopped 21 shots, and Barclay Goodrow, Evander Kane and Kevin Labanc scored for visiting San Jose. The Sharks won their second

straight and are 3-1-1 in their past five.

**Lightning 5, Senators 3:** Tyler Johnson scored with 1:30 left in regulation, and visiting Tampa Bay got its sixth straight win.

**Penguins 3, Canadiens 2 (OT):** Brandon Tanev scored in overtime and visiting Pittsburgh rallied to beat Montreal.

Bryan Rust tied it with a goal in the third period and Zach Aston-Reese also scored for the Penguins.

**Canucks 2, Rangers 1:** Tyler Myers scored with 1:29 left in the third period and host Vancouver got its seventh straight win.

Bo Horvat fed Myers a pass and he scored on a floating shot from just inside the blue line.

**Avalanche 5, Devils 2:** Mikko Rantanen scored three goals, Nathan MacKinnon had two assists and visiting Colorado beat New Jersey.

Ian Cole and Pierre-Edouard

Bellemare each had a goal and an assist for the Avalanche.

Blake Coleman and Jesper Boqvist scored for the Devils, who ended a season-best three-game winning streak.

**Maple Leafs 3, Islanders 0:** Michael Hutchinson stopped 33 shots for his first shutout in nearly a year, and host Toronto pushed its point streak to 10 games.

**Coyotes 6, Flyers 2:** Clayton Keller scored twice, including one during a three-goal first period by host Arizona in a romp over Philadelphia.

**Predators 4, Kings 1:** Rocco Grimaldi and Craig Smith each had a goal and an assist to help visiting Nashville end a three-game losing streak.

**Sabres 3, Panthers 2:** Sam Reinhart had a goal and an assist, and Conor Sheary and Henri Jokiharju also scored for host Buffalo in its second straight win.

# Kansas rallies in defeat of West Virginia

*The Kansas City Star*

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Kansas' basketball team, for the 29th straight season, has opened conference play with a victory.

Udoka Azubuike scored 17 points and grabbed 11 rebounds (with six blocks) and Devon Dotson added 16 points with four steals as the No. 3-

ranked Jayhawks rallied from a 10-point first-half deficit to defeat No. 16 West Virginia, 60-53, on Saturday afternoon at Allen Fieldhouse.

Marcus Garrett contributed 12 points with six assists for Kansas (11-2), Ochai Agbaji had seven points and Christian Braun, who started and played the entire second half, tallied six points with five boards as

Kansas stretched its winning streak in Big 12 (and before that Big Eight) openers to 29 games. The Jayhawks' last loss in a league opener was 88-82 at Oklahoma on Jan. 8, 1991.

Freshman big man Oscar Tshiebwe scored 17 points with 17 rebounds for the Mountaineers — he had 15 points and 10 boards the first half. A week ago West Virginia (11-2) defeated

No. 2 Ohio State in Cleveland.

The Jayhawks went 19-for-30 from the line and missed 14 of 17 threes; WVU was 12-for-22 from the line and 3-for-14 from three-point range.

"We'll get a lot better," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "We've got to get a lot better. It'll be more fun getting better with this under our belt," he added.

## Top 25 roundup

# Tillie helps No. 1 Gonzaga slip past Pepperdine

*Associated Press*

SPOKANE, Wash. — Top-ranked Gonzaga went undefeated through the West Coast Conference last season, but the road looks a little tougher this year.

For the second league game in a row, Gonzaga needed to come back to beat a league rival nestled near the bottom of the standings.

Killian Tillie scored 20 points and blocked a potential tying shot in the closing seconds to help Gonzaga beat Pepperdine 75-70 for its 32nd consecutive home win.

Filip Petrusev scored 16 points and Joel Ayayi had 12 for Gonzaga (16-1, 2-0 West Coast). The Bulldogs have the longest home winning streak in the country. They have won eight consecutive overall since losing to Michigan.

But coach Mark Few was mostly full of criticism for his team after the game.

"We turned the ball over way, way too much," Few said about his team's 17 turnovers. "That was the story tonight."

"We were trying too hard on the offensive end," Few added, after his team shot 49% for the game and made just five of 18 from three-point range.

But he praised Tillie for "an unbelievably courageous effort. He really helped us tonight with his energy."

Tillie hit nine of 16 from the floor and added four rebounds and four assists, plus that key blocked shot on Pepperdine leading scorer Colbey Ross.

**No. 2 Duke 95, Miami 62:** Vernon Carey Jr. scored 24 points in 25 minutes playing against his hometown team for the first time, and the Blue Devils shot a season-high 60% to win at the Hurricanes.

It was Miami's most lopsided home loss in Jim Larranaga's nine seasons as coach.

Carey shot 11-for-14, and every basket

drew cheers from a substantial portion of the less-than-capacity crowd.

**No. 4 Oregon 69, Utah 64:** Payton Pritchard scored 19 points for the visiting Ducks, and Will Richardson and Chris Duarte each had 14.

Pritchard drew most of the defensive attention as usual so Oregon ended up moving the ball to Shakur Juiston and Chandler Lawson. They each had a pair of layups to erase the Utes' late lead and clinch the game for Oregon (12-3, 1-1 Pac-12).

**No. 6 Baylor 59, Texas 44:** MaCio Teague matched his season high with 21 points, and the host earned their 10th straight win.

After building a 36-23 halftime lead, Baylor (11-1, 1-0 Big 12) missed 18 of its first 20 shots in the second half before Matthew Mayer's short jumper that made it 47-37 with 7½ minutes left.

**No. 18 Florida State 78, No. 7 Louisville 65:** M.J. Walker scored 23 points to help the Seminoles to the road win.

FSU (13-2, 3-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) also got a strong performance from Trent Forrest, who had 20 points on 9-of-11 shooting. Devin Vassell scored 14, and Malik Osborne finished with seven points and nine rebounds.

**No. 8 Auburn 80, Mississippi State 68:** J'Von McCormick scored a career-high 28 points to help the Tigers win on the road in the Southeastern Conference opener for both teams. Samir Doughty had 15 points for the Tigers (13-0, 1-0), and Isaac Okoro finished with 14. McCormick went 9-for-17 from the field and 8-for-11 at the line.

**Georgia 65, No. 9 Memphis 62:** Rayshaun Hammonds scored 15 points, Anthony Edwards had 13 and the visiting Bulldogs stopped the Tigers' 10-game winning streak.

**Marquette 71, No. 10 Villanova 60:** Markus Howard scored 29 points, Koby McEwen had 22 and the Golden Eagles snapped Villanova's six-game win streak.

**No. 11 Butler 71, Creighton 57:** Kamar Baldwin scored each of his 20 points in the second half, and the host Bulldogs earned their fifth straight win.

**No. 13 San Diego State 77, Utah State 68:** Malachi Flynn scored 22 points, Matt Mitchell added 19 and the visiting Aztecs beat the Aggies to improve to 15-0.

**No. 15 Maryland 75, Indiana 59:** Jalen Smith scored 19 points to help the host Terapins return to form.

**No. 17 Kentucky 71, Missouri 59:** Immanuel Quickley scored a career-high 23 points, Nick Richards had 21 and the host Wildcats beat the Tigers in the Southeastern Conference opener for both schools.

**No. 19 Virginia 65, Virginia Tech 39:** Kihei Clark scored a career-best 18 points, Braxton Key also had 18 and the host Cavaliers dominated with defense.

**No. 21 Penn State 89, No. 23 Iowa 86:** Izaiah Brockington scored 23 points to lead the Nittany Lions to their fifth straight win. Lamar Stevens and Myreon Jones scored 16 points for Penn State (12-2, 2-1 Big Ten).

**No. 22 Texas Tech 85, Oklahoma State 50:** Freshman Jahmi'us Ramsey made four three-pointers and scored 18 points, helping the host Red Raiders pulled away for the win in their Big 12 opener.

**No. 24 Wichita State 74, Mississippi 54:** Erik Stevenson scored a career-high 29 points to lead the host Shockers.

**No. 25 Arizona 75, Arizona State 47:** Zeke Nnaji had 17 points and 11 rebounds, helping the host Wildcats open the Pac-12 season with an overpowering win over the rival Sun Devils.