

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Army: Force size second to readiness

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army would like more soldiers, but only if Congress provides ample funding to train them properly, the service's top general said Wednesday, warning that insufficiently prepared troops would lead to a "hollow Army."

The Army's \$166.1 billion fiscal year 2018 base budget request called for maintaining 476,000 active-duty soldiers authorized by Congress for 2017 because the service is primarily focused on building the combat preparedness of that existing force, Gen. Mark Milley, the Army chief of staff, told the Senate Appropriations subcommittee for defense. The Army expects to reach 476,000 troops by adding about 10,000 soldiers by October.

"In this budget, we have asked to flat line the end strength in the base budget," Milley said. "However, if more money became available and we were able to make sure we could maintain the readiness, we do have an additional request ... which would increase the end strength capacity of the force."

That request, known as an unfunded requirements list, includes an additional \$3.1 billion that would support adding 17,000 soldiers, including 10,000 to the active-duty force.

Unfunded requirements lists are submitted privately to Congress to guide lawmakers on additional needs that were not requested in the president's official budget proposal.

But Milley warned lawmakers that the Army needs to increase its combat readiness more than it needs more soldiers. Only about one-third of the Army's combat units are prepared for war now, he said. The goal is for two-thirds to be prepared at any given time.

The service plans to do that by increasing home-station training and rotations at major training centers, such as the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin in California and Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk in Louisiana.

"A hollow force only puts the Army and the nation's security at risk," Milley said. "Combat is very unforgiving and it is even more unforgiving on armies that are not manned, trained, equipped and well-led."

The Army remains the busiest of the military services, Milley said. There are some 180,000 soldiers deployed in about 140 countries across the world. The Army fills roughly half of all combatant commanders' requests for troops and provides 70 percent of the personnel who respond to unexpected emergencies across the globe, he said.

And that burden could grow.

Milley told Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., that he supported adding additional troops to Afghanistan. The White House is weighing whether to send up to 5,000 more troops to the 8,400 now deployed in support of the 16-year war there. The bulk of additional troops would likely come from the Army.

"The bottom line ... is in the next decade, I see the demands on the Army as more not less," Graham said.

But he and other senators were critical of Trump's budget request, which increased defense spending by about \$54 billion but significantly cut social programs and funding to other departments, including the State Department.

DOD: Missteps before Syria mosque hit in airstrike

BY TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon acknowledged Wednesday that a string of missteps led to a March 16 airstrike in Aleppo, Syria, that targeted al-Qaida members in a mosque complex that should have been on the military's "no strike list."

The strike, which was called in by U.S. special forces, killed dozens of al-Qaida members and potentially one civilian in the building.

On Wednesday, the Pentagon released the findings of the U.S. Central Command investigation into the airstrike and acknowledged that the building had not been properly vetted as a target before F-15 fighter jets and

an MQ-9 drone attacked it. Ten bombs from the F-15s and two missiles from the drone struck the compound.

The target was selected based on information received in the days before the attack that a meeting of al-Qaida leaders was about to take place there.

However, the complex had not been appropriately identified as a mosque on the military's "no strike list," said Army Brig. Gen. Paul Bontrager, deputy director for operations for Central Command.

Being on the list might not have prevented the strike. But it would have required additional inquiry and a higher level of approval to authorize the attack, Bontrager said.

"Most frustrating was that some of the intelligence team did know this was a religious complex but the analysis did not get to the no-strike list nor to the [final targeting officer who called in the airstrike,]" he said.

Bontrager also said the strike cell underwent a shift change before the time of the attack and the needed information was not provided to the team taking over.

More so, the strike cell at the time of the attack "did not have the best mix of people," he said. "We could have had people who were more experienced" calling in the strike.

Bontrager would not say where the strike cell was

located.

However, he said the strike was still legal because it was targeting al-Qaida members. Some human rights groups on the ground in Syria have said no al-Qaida members were at the mosque at the time of the attack.

The Pentagon initially announced the strike in March, when it said the building was a meeting hall and did not believe it was part of the mosque. The Pentagon said Wednesday that the building, which was under construction, was a schoolhouse associated with the mosque, which was across the road and not targeted, but sustained minor damage from the strike.

Intel chiefs refuse to discuss Trump, Russia investigation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's intelligence chiefs, facing questions from Congress one day before former FBI Director James Comey provides his first public account of the events leading up to his firing, declined to describe conversations with President Donald Trump but said they had not been directed to do anything they considered illegal or felt pressured to do so.

Michael Rogers, the National Security Agency director, and national intelligence director Dan Coats largely ducked questions from senators Wednesday about whether the president had tried to influence investigations into Russia's election meddling and possible coordination with the Trump campaign.

"I have never felt pressure to intervene, interfere in any way for shaping intelligence in any way," Coats said at one point.

But he later demurred when asked whether he was prepared

to say that he had never been asked to influence an ongoing investigation, saying, "What I'm not willing to do is to share confidential information that I think ought to be protected in an open hearing."

The questions from the Senate intelligence committee, at a hearing on surveillance law, were in response to news media reports that both Coats and Rogers had been asked by Trump to publicly state that there was no evidence of collusion between Moscow and the Trump campaign. Comey appears before the same committee on Thursday.

The back-to-back hearings come as the White House grapples with the fallout from Comey's firing, which led to the appointment of a special counsel to take over the Russia investigation in an effort to prevent even the appearance of Oval Office interference.

Questions about Russia's role in the 2016 presidential elec-

tion, and ensuing congressional and FBI investigations into Moscow's ties with Trump associates, have dogged the president since he took office.

Two other witnesses, acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, declined to discuss any aspects of the Russia investigation.

"We have a special counsel who is investigating," Rosenstein said, when asked about a memo he had written that the White House held up as justification for Comey's May 9 firing.

White House officials had weighed trying to block Comey from testifying by arguing that his discussions with the president pertained to national security and that there was an expectation of privacy. However, officials ultimately concluded that the optics of taking that step would be worse than the risk of letting the former FBI director testify freely.

Militants claim attacks in Iran

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Islamic State claimed responsibility Wednesday for a pair of stunning attacks on Iran's parliament and the tomb of its revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which killed at least 12 people and wounded more than 40.

The bloodshed shocked the country and came as emboldened Sunni Arab states—backed by U.S. President Donald Trump—are hardening their stance against Shiite-ruled Iran.

In recent years, Tehran has been heavily involved in conflicts in Syria and Iraq against ISIS, but had remained untouched by its violence.

The violence began in mid-morning when assailants with assault rifles and explosives stormed the parliament complex where a legislative session had been in progress. The siege lasted for hours, and one of the attackers blew himself up inside, according to Iran's state TV.

Shops in the area were closed as gunfire rang out and officials urged people to avoid public transportation. Witnesses said the attackers fired from the parliament building's fourth floor at people in the streets.

As the parliament attack unfolded, gunmen and suicide bombers also struck outside Khomeini's mausoleum on Tehran's southern outskirts. Khomeini led the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled the Western-backed shah to become Iran's first supreme leader until his death in 1989.

The Interior Ministry said six assailants were killed—four at the parliament and two at the tomb. A senior Interior Ministry official told Iran's state TV the male attackers wore women's attire.

Jordanian charged in US troop deaths

Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — A judge presiding over the trial of a Jordanian soldier accused of killing three U.S. military trainers said Wednesday that the case is criminal and not related to terrorism.

The U.S. Army Green Berets were killed when their convoy came under fire at the entrance of an air base in southern Jordan in November.

Jordan, a close U.S. military ally, initially suggested the Americans triggered the shooting by disobeying orders of Jordanian troops at the gate to the base.

The claim was quickly dis-

puted by the U.S. and then withdrawn. Some of the relatives of the slain soldiers sharply criticized Jordan's handling of the case and the investigation.

On Wednesday, the defendant, 1st Sgt. Marik al-Tuwayha, 39, appeared in a military court in the Jordanian capital of Amman. Judge Mohammed al-Afif read the indictment on murder charges and then scheduled the next session for Sunday because the defense attorney had failed to attend.

The judge said he would appoint a lawyer if the soldier's attorney does not appear the next time.

If convicted, the defendant faces life in prison with hard labor, but not the death penalty, said the judge.

Al-Afif told reporters that the defendant "is a criminal but not a terrorist."

He said that the defendant "had no relation to any terror groups or extremist groups, and he did not have an extremist ideology." The judge did not elaborate.

The slain soldiers were Staff Sgt. Matthew C. Lewellen, 27, of Kirksville, Mo.; Staff Sgt. Kevin J. McEnroe, 30, of Tucson, Ariz.; and Staff Sgt. James F. Moriarty, 27, of Kerrville, Texas.

China could house fighter jets on 3 islets

By WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

China will be able to house up to three fighter-jet regiments on three disputed islets it's built up in the South China Sea, according to a Pentagon report released Tuesday.

Focused on building infrastructure on a handful of outposts in the Spratly Islands, China reached milestones in 2016 by landing a military transport plane on Fiery Cross Reef and civilian aircraft on several other man-made islands, said the Defense Department's annual assessment of China's military and security developments over the past year.

"China's actions in the South China Sea in 2016, particularly its construction of airfields and other infrastructure on features in the Spratly Islands, enhanced China's ability to control disputed areas in the South China Sea and caused regional concern over China's long-term in-

attention," said the report, which is submitted to Congress each year and includes input from other U.S. agencies.

The Spratly archipelago lies between the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, all of which have asserted ownership claims in the area.

China claims sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, where \$5 trillion in global trade transits annually.

An international tribunal last year largely ruled against China and invalidated a map line it has used to outline its claims, but China has ignored the ruling.

From 2014 through 2015, it expanded its seven outposts in the Spratlys by 3,200 acres through sand dredging.

"China's Spratly Islands outpost expansion effort is currently focused on building out the land-based capabilities of its three largest outposts — Fiery Cross, Subi, and Mischief reefs — after completion of its four smaller outposts early in 2016,"

the report said.

Major construction features at the largest outposts include airfields with runways at least 8,800 feet long, large port facilities and water and fuel storage, it said.

"As of late 2016, China was constructing 24 fighter-sized hangars, fixed-weapons positions, barracks, administration buildings, and communication facilities at each of the three outposts. Once all these facilities are complete, China will have the capacity to house up to three regiments of fighters in the Spratly Islands," the report said without detailing the exact number of fighters.

China has placed fixed, land-based naval guns on its four smallest Spratly outposts — Johnson, Gaven, Hughes and Cuarteron reefs. The airfields, berthing areas and resupply facilities will allow China to maintain a more flexible and persistent coast guard and military presence in the area, the

report said.

"This would improve China's ability to detect and challenge activities by rival claimants or third parties, widen the range of capabilities available to China, and reduce the time required to deploy them," it said.

The U.S. formally protested China's "unlawful maritime claims through diplomatic channels" in December, the Pentagon report said.

America's most public military response to China's Spratly island-building since 2015 has been through the Navy's freedom-of-navigation operations, by which ships or aircraft challenge violations of international law.

On May 20, the Navy destroyer USS Dewey became the first ship to conduct such an operation under the Trump administration, when it conducted normal operations near Mischief Reef.

Coast Guard, Navy search for missing sailor

Stars and Stripes

Search-and-rescue efforts are underway after a sailor went overboard from the guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy on Tuesday afternoon.

The incident happened about 3 p.m. during a training mission approximately 80 nautical miles off the coast of North Carolina, Lt. Cmdr. Brian Wierzbicki, a Fleet Forces Command spokesman, said in an email.

"Navy surface ships and aircraft are en route to assist Normandy and Coast Guard aircraft that are currently on station supporting the search and rescue operations," he said. "Our thoughts are with the USS Normandy family and we will provide updates as they become available."

The Normandy is based at Norfolk, Va.

Retired Navy commander pleads guilty in 'Fat Leonard' corruption scandal

Associated Press

HONOLULU — A retired U.S. Navy commander in Hawaii charged in a growing corruption scandal pleaded guilty Tuesday to lying about his relationship with a Malaysian defense contractor known by the nickname "Fat Leonard."

As part of a deal with federal prosecutors, David Kapaun entered the plea to a count of fraud and false statements in federal court in Honolulu involving his relationship with Leonard Glenn Francis, who prosecutors describe as "the center of a colossal bribery and fraud scandal."

Kapaun said in court that he omitted Francis from a security clearance update form because he knew "I did have a past association with him that was unfavorable."

He also didn't disclose receiving dinners, hotel stays and prostitutes from Francis, said his defense attorney, Victor Bakke.

Francis has acknowledged bribing Navy officials with cash, prostitutes and other gifts in exchange for classified information to help his company, Singapore-based Glenn Defense Marine Asia. The company provided services such as trash and sewage removal, food, water, security and fuel to U.S. Navy ships, according to

prosecutors. He's awaiting sentencing.

"He played a minor role in the overall scheme that was conducted by Fat Leonard," Bakke said of Kapaun. "He's remorseful. He realizes he should have used better judgment. But just like the number of other Naval officers that are involved in this case, he was seduced by this guy."

Twenty-one current and former Navy officials have been charged so far in the scandal. Kapaun is the 11th to plead guilty.

The allegations prompted Kapaun to resign earlier this year from his civilian position as deputy chief of staff for U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific.

Kapaun could face up to five years in federal prison when he's sentenced on Sept. 11. The terms of his plea agreement will require Kapaun to pay \$50,000 restitution and a \$25,000 fine, Bakke said.

Kapaun retired and was honorably discharged in 2008 after a 25-year Navy career, Bakke said.

"Even though he's retired, they could pull him back to active duty and court-martial him if they wanted to," Bakke said.

Trump names his pick for FBI director

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced his pick for FBI director — a former Justice Department official who served as New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's lawyer during the George Washington Bridge lane-closing investigation.

Trump's early morning two-sentence tweet that he intends to nominate lawyer Christopher Wray came one day before the FBI director that Trump fired last month, James Comey, was to testify in public on Capitol Hill for the first time since his dismissal.

Trump called Wray "a man of impeccable credentials" and offered no more information, ending the tweet by saying, "Details to follow."

Wray served in a leadership role in the

George W. Bush Justice Department, rising to head the criminal division and overseeing investigations into corporate fraud, during the time when Comey was deputy attorney general. Wray took charge of a task force of prosecutors and FBI agents created to investigate the Enron scandal.

With a strong law enforcement background, Wray is a traditional choice for the job. Trump had entertained current and former politicians for the role, including former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman. Though favored by Trump, Lieberman would have faced a challenging confirmation process; he pulled his name from consideration.

Comey, during his appearance before the Senate intelligence committee, is expected to describe his encounters with Trump in the weeks before his firing May 9. Comey could

offer new details regarding discussions with Trump about the federal investigation into Russia's election meddling and possible coordination with the Trump campaign.

The White House and its allies have been looking for ways to offset that potentially damaging testimony and have been working on strategies aimed at undermining Comey's credibility.

Wray works in private practice for the King & Spalding law firm. He represented Christie in the lane-closing investigation, in which two former Christie aides were convicted of plotting to close bridge lanes to punish a Democratic mayor who wouldn't endorse Christie. Christie was not charged. Another ex-Christie ally pleaded guilty.

Leaked NSA paper highlights election system flaws

Associated Press

HOUSTON — A leaked intelligence document outlining alleged attempts by Russian military intelligence to hack into U.S. election systems is the latest evidence suggesting a broad and sophisticated foreign attack on the integrity of the nation's elections.

And it underscores the contention of security experts and computer scientists that the highly decentralized, often ramshackle U.S. election system remains profoundly vulnerable to trickery or sabotage.

The document, purportedly produced by the U.S. National Security Agency, does not indicate whether actual vote-tampering occurred. But it adds significant new detail to previous U.S. intelligence assessments that alleged Russia-backed hackers had compromised elements of America's electoral machinery. It also suggests that attackers may also have been laying groundwork for future subversive activity.

Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said Tuesday that hacking into state voting systems ahead of the Nov. 8 vote was more widespread than has been disclosed.

Attempts by Russia to "break into a number of our state voting

Accused leaker posted freely on social media

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Before she was charged with leaking U.S. government secrets to a reporter, Reality Leigh Winner shared sometimes scathing opinions on President Donald Trump and his policies for the whole world to see.

The 25-year-old U.S. government contractor has worked since February in Augusta, Ga., for a federal agency that neither prosecutors nor her defense lawyer will name and where she had

access to sensitive documents. But the secretive nature of her job didn't stop Winner from speaking freely on politics and other topics on social media accounts accessible to anyone.

She posted on Facebook three months ago that climate change is a more important issue than health care "since not poisoning an entire population seems to be more in line with 'health' care, and not the disease care system that people voted for a soulless ginger orangutan to 'fix.'"

Winner's Facebook page mentions reaching out to Sen.

David Perdue, a Georgia Republican, after Trump nominated Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

And in an angry reply to a report that Trump said he wasn't hearing complaints about building the Dakota Access oil pipeline, Winner wrote on Facebook: "I'm losing my mind. If you voted for this piece of (expletive), explain this. He's lying."

Winner was scheduled to appear before a federal judge Thursday for a detention hearing.

processes" was "broad-based," he said, without offering details. In Moscow, a Kremlin spokesman categorically denied Tuesday that Moscow had tried to hack the U.S. elections.

The NSA document said Russian military intelligence first targeted employees of a Florida voting systems supplier in August. Apparently exploiting technical data obtained in that operation, the cyber spies later sent phishing emails to more than 100 local U.S. election officials just days ahead of the Nov.

8 vote, intent on stealing their login credentials and breaking into their systems, the document says.

The emails packed malware into Microsoft Word documents and were forged to give the appearance of being sent by the system vendor, VR Systems of Tallahassee, Fla.

The Department of Homeland Security knew in September that hackers believed to be Russian agents had targeted the voter registration systems of more than 20 states. To date,

no evidence of tampering with vote tallies or registration rolls has emerged.

VR Systems officials did not respond directly to questions emailed by the AP. In a statement, the company said it only knows of a "handful" of customers who received the fraudulent email, adding that it had "no indication" that anyone had clicked on the malware. The NSA document says at least one account was likely compromised.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officers visit wannabe cop's lemonade stand

MO KANSAS CITY — Dozens of thirsty police officers responded to an “emergency” call to visit a lemonade stand run by a 3-year-old aspiring cop in Kansas City.

The Kansas City Star reported that Hannah Pasley set up her lemonade stand last Friday and Saturday to raise money to buy her own police uniform. After buying the uniform Saturday morning, Hannah returned to her stand — wearing a police coat and hat — that afternoon.

When the flow of customers thinned, Hannah's aunt, Ashly Rooks, and her friend, Sierra Moore, took to Facebook to encourage officers to visit. Rooks said the street was soon packed with squad cars. Moore said “50-plus” officers responded, and a police helicopter buzzed overhead. They gave Hannah a Kansas City Police Department patch and a Clay County Junior Deputy badge.

Robber grabs \$13 but drops diamond earring

AR LITTLE ROCK — Police said a man took \$13 in a gas station robbery on the south side of Little Rock but slipped in the parking lot and left behind what appeared to be a diamond-studded golden earring that could be worth much more — or a lot less.

A clerk told police the man entered the station Saturday night as she was giving \$13 in change to a customer. The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette said a police report noted that after the clerk refused to give the man money, he grabbed the \$13 and knocked over store displays. Officers said he fell in the parking lot and dropped the earring and a \$1 bill. He fled in a gray car.

Police rescue bear cub trapped in vehicle

CO WOODLAND PARK — Police in a Colorado town rescued a bear cub that got trapped in a car after likely searching for a snack.

Officers in Woodland Park said a woman called police Friday to report strange noises coming from her car. A responding officer opened the door and ushered the cub back into the wild but not before snapping a few photos. Authorities posted them online with a reminder not to keep food in cars in areas frequented by bears.

Police believe the cub's mother somehow opened the car door. When officers arrived, they could hear an animal rustling in the nearby bushes, but they didn't see the mother bear.

City office reopens after bedbug incident

ME AUGUSTA — A municipal office building in Maine has reopened after officials say a disgruntled man slammed a cup full of bedbugs on the counter, releasing about 100 of the pests.

Augusta officials told the Kennebec Journal that exterminators are confident all the bedbugs were killed before the City Center building reopened Monday.

City development director Matt Nazar said a man came into the city's General Assistance office on Friday seeking help with bedbugs at his apartment. Nazar said the apartment already was being sprayed and that the man didn't qualify for assistance in finding other housing. Nazar said the man told police he wanted the government workers to experience what he was experiencing. Nazar called it “an extraordinary bit of misdirected anger.”

Police have not said if the man will be charged.

Mom pulls boy's teeth in Wal-Mart restroom

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Authorities said a Utah woman pulled two of her son's teeth in a Wal-Mart restroom.

Prosecutors said Monday that the 47-year-old woman bought hand sanitizer and needle-nosed pliers from the store on April 2, then took them into the restroom and pulled two of her 7-year-old son's teeth.

Police in American Fork said the boy's older brother heard the child screaming and got him out of the restroom.

Charging documents say the boy told his brother that one tooth was loose but the other one was only slightly loose. Prosecutors said the woman didn't use any kind of anesthetic.

The woman was charged with felony child abuse. The Associated Press is not naming her to avoid identifying the child.

Man who choked bride after wedding is jailed

PA JOHNSTOWN — A Pennsylvania man has been jailed on charges he choked his new bride when they fought over cash gifts received at their wedding.

Johnstown police said John Delozier, 31, attacked the woman after they returned home from their wedding on Saturday.

WJAC-TV reported that Delozier accused the victim of only caring about money before he allegedly attacked her.

Delozier remained in the Cambria County jail Tuesday on charges of simple assault, harassment and strangulation — a new felony charge designed to address alleged choking offenses during domestic

disputes.

A preliminary hearing was scheduled on Thursday.

After Wawa complains, Dawa to change name

NJ PATERSON — A New Jersey convenience store called Dawa has agreed to change its name after a lawsuit from Wawa, according to recently filed court documents.

The stores agreed that the Paterson-based store would change its name, though the filing doesn't specify what it will be called, according to a proposed order filed in U.S. District Court.

Pennsylvania-based Wawa has more than 700 convenience stores in six states and filed a trademark infringement lawsuit this year against Dawa, saying it's taking advantage of Wawa's hard-earned reputation.

Woman let snake bite baby as chance to learn

FL SEBRING — A Florida woman is under investigation after apparently posting a video on Facebook showing a red rat snake biting her 1-year-old daughter.

The woman told Tampa's ABC Action News that she has no regrets for “introducing” the girl to the snake, which she found in the driveway of her home near Sebring. The station reported that the Highlands County Sheriff's Office is investigating.

The woman, who wasn't identified because she hasn't been charged, said “people are too sensitive.” She has deleted the Facebook video.

She said the snake bit her and her son several times and “didn't leave a mark,” and that it's important to teach her kids how to handle wildlife and what to avoid.

From wire reports

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Scooter ties MLB record with 4 HRs

Associated Press

CINCINNATI—Kluszewski. Robinson. Bench. Perez. Junior. All of them can just scooter on down the list of great Cincinnati slugfests.

A diminutive infielder has done all of them one better.

Scooter Gennett put on the greatest home run show in franchise history and ended the night grinning at the sheer improbability of it. The Cincinnati native hit four homers — only the 17th to do it in major league history — and matched the Reds record by driving in 10 runs during a 13-1 victory over the shell-shocked St. Louis Cardinals on Tuesday night.

“I was kind of laughing, to be honest with you,” Gennett said. “For a guy like me to do that is crazy — a little short of a miracle.”

With homers in his last four at-bats, Scooter became a slugger. Baseball’s Hall of Fame called, wanting his uniform from the historic night. He stripped from his cap to his cleats, which were still wet from a celebratory on-field soaking by teammates.

“It’s surreal, man, it really is,” Gennett said, wearing backup clothes after the others were whisked away. “I’m truly

blessed. I’m from here, born here. Watching all those guys play when I was little. And to do something that’s never been done — I can’t put words on it.”

Try one: Unmatched.

No major leaguer had ever gotten five hits, four homers and 10 RBIs in a game, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Gennett’s 17 total bases also were a club record.

“He had a career night, a great night,” said Adam Wainwright (6-4), who gave up Gennett’s second career grand slam. “Guys do that now and then. He almost beat us by himself tonight.”

Sure did. And he was the most unlikely player on the roster to power his way into history.

The 5-foot-10, 185-pound infielder was claimed off waivers from Milwaukee during spring training for a utility role. Some seasons, he barely hit four homers at all — he reached double-digits only once and had 38 career heading into the game.

And then, there was Tuesday.

The 27-year-old Gennett joined the Cardinals’ Mark Whiten as the only players with a grand slam among four homers in a game, according

to Elias. Whiten did it in 1993 at the Reds’ old riverfront ballpark, driving in 12 runs that stand as the major league record.

Josh Hamilton was the last player to hit four home runs in one game, for Texas against Baltimore in May 2012. The last National League player to hit four home runs in one game was Shawn Green for the Los Angeles Dodgers against Milwaukee in May 2002.

“It’s amazing, especially since he’s not an everyday player for us,” manager Bryan Price said. “He’s got power, but four homers in one game? I don’t know what to tell you.

“It’s very emotional. It was an honor to witness that.”

Adding to the surprise: Gennett had just ended an 0-for-19 slump with a double on Monday night. By going 5-for-5 on Tuesday, he raised his batting average 32 points to .302.

Gennett got his big night started with an RBI single off Wainwright, who brought a long scoreless streak into the game but couldn’t handle a team that has hit him like no other. He lasted only 3 2/3 innings and gave up nine runs for just the third time in his

career.

The last time? Also against Cincinnati in 2013.

Gennett’s grand slam in his next at-bat was the first Wainwright had allowed since 2012. Gennett then connected for a solo shot and a two-run homer off John Gant.

With the crowd of 18,620 on its feet in the eighth inning, Gennett hit a two-run shot off John Brebbia for a place in history and his second curtain call.

“My teammates were awesome the whole time,” Gennett said. “They made me know exactly what I needed to do and exactly how many homers I had at each point.”

Tim Adleman (4-2) gave up one run — on Stephen Piscotty’s homer — in seven innings, sending the Cardinals to their season-high fifth loss in a row. They’ve dropped eight of their last 10 overall.

Home history: Gennett is the seventh player to hit homers in four consecutive at-bats during a game, joining American Leaguers Carlos Delgado, Mike Cameron, Rocky Colavito and Lou Gehrig along with National Leaguers Mike Schmidt and Robert Lowe from 1894.

Grad transfer, Pitt at odds over move to UNC

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Former Pittsburgh guard Cameron Johnson wants to play immediately at North Carolina as a graduate transfer. The Panthers aren’t going along with that plan.

Pitt believes the 6-foot-8 Johnson should sit out a year if he goes to another Atlantic Coast Conference school instead of playing immediately as a graduate transfer with two seasons of eligibility. Johnson said Tuesday he has committed to play for the reigning national champion Tar Heels in Chapel Hill and issued an open letter saying Pitt is wrong to stand in his way.

In an interview with The Associated Press, his father said Tuesday he doesn’t know how the situation will turn out.

“I am optimistic, but I don’t know what to expect,” said Gil Johnson, himself a former

Pitt basketball player from 1988-90. UNC coach Roy Williams “and his staff seem very confident and comfortable with the procedures, so I am optimistic. And hopefully these adults will do the right thing by Cam.”

NCAA rules allow transfers who have earned their degrees to play immediately. However, schools and conferences can have their own policies for granting a release from a year-to-year scholarship agreement. In this case, Pitt has cited an internal policy regarding immediate eligibility for transfers within the conference or to a team on the next year’s schedule.

“The University of Pittsburgh followed the NCAA processes and our institutional policies as they are written,” the school’s athletics department said in a statement Tuesday night. “The NCAA is currently

evaluating the graduate transfer rule and its application to this situation. We are awaiting their response.”

UNC cannot comment on players yet to formally sign with the school.

If Johnson doesn’t gain his release and remains committed to play at UNC, he would lose one of his remaining seasons of eligibility. Gil Johnson said his son picked UNC over programs such as Kentucky, Arizona, UCLA and Oregon.

There is no ACC rule barring a graduate transfer from being immediately eligible after moving within the league. In fact, there are recent examples, such as UNC receiver T.J. Thorpe playing football for Virginia in 2015 and former Virginia Tech guard Adam Smith playing his final basketball season at Georgia Tech in 2015-16 — though both were one-year cases.

OU downs Florida, defends WCWS title

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Even as defending champions, it seemed for most of the season that Oklahoma was unlikely to repeat.

The Sooners earned just a No. 10 seed in the NCAA Tournament. They lost their NCAA opener to North Dakota State before rallying, then had to go to Auburn and win a super regional.

Even when they recovered at the Women's College World Series and reached the championship round, they faced No. 1 seed Florida and its two All-American pitchers.

In the end, Oklahoma found a way, including a 17-inning win in Game 1. On Tuesday night, Shay Knighten hit a three-run double in the second inning, and the Sooners defeated Florida 5-4 to win it all again.

The Sooners (61-9) took both games from Florida in the best-

of-three series to earn their third NCAA title in five years.

"I still cannot believe that this happened, with where we started and where we finished," Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso said.

"There's so many stories. The journey was unbelievable. I think if you looked at us in February and March, even parts of April, you would never imagine us sitting here right now with trophies in front of us."

Knighten, who hit a three-run homer in the 17th inning on Monday, was selected the World Series' Most Outstanding Player.

Oklahoma freshman Mariah Lopez (18-1) got the win in relief of Paige Parker. Though Parker has an 8-0 career World Series record, she struggled on Tuesday and lasted just 1²/₃ innings. She threw 108 pitches in the 5¹/₂-hour game on Monday night.

"I think Paige probably could

tell you she didn't have her best stuff, but she is the reason why we're sitting here right now, and she knows that. I know she knows that," Gasso said.

"To be able to give Mariah (Lopez) the ball, a freshman who's been waiting patiently, and for her to step up and do what we asked her to do in that setting was another reason why we're sitting here with a trophy. It's another reason why we're here, period."

Paige Lowary stepped in and threw two innings of perfect relief for her nation-leading 11th save. With a one-run lead, she retired Florida's Nos. 2-4 hitters in order in the seventh.

On Monday night, ESPN announcers said one of her pitches reached 75 mph on the radar gun.

"Paige Lowary came in, and she was hot," Gasso said. "She was ready. I don't know how hard she was throwing, but it looked like 100 miles an hour.

The adrenaline was there and she was hitting her spots just so confident."

Florida (58-10) did not allow an earned run in three games to reach the championship series, but the Sooners were able to break through against what statistically was the nation's best pitching staff.

Florida pitcher Kelly Barnhill, USA Softball's National Collegiate Player of the Year, did not play Tuesday. Florida coach Tim Walton went with No. 3 pitcher Alesia Ocasio (8-2), and she got the loss.

"It just wasn't our tournament," Walton said. "You look at the statistics, it's eerie how close the games were statistically. So I think that you've got two evenly matched teams. One just found a way to hit the ball over the fence more than we did, and give them a lot of credit."

Sixth-seeded Thiem ousts defending champ Djokovic

Associated Press

PARIS — His French Open title defense nearing an end, Novak Djokovic stumbled and tumbled to his knees on the red clay, his racket flying from his right hand as his opponent's backhand zipped past.

Even Djokovic found it hard to fathom how far he's fallen, only a year removed from leaving Roland Garros as a player nonpareil, the first man in nearly a half-century to win four consecutive Grand Slam titles.

That he departed this time with a surprisingly lopsided 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-0 quarterfinal loss to sixth-seeded Dominic Thiem of Austria on Wednesday left everyone, including Djokovic, pondering the answers to difficult questions.

Did he give up in the last set? What has happened to his once-impervious play? Can he summon that again? Does he need a break from the grind of the

tour?

"It's a fact that I'm not playing close to my best, and I know that," Djokovic said after his first straight-set loss at a major since the 2013 Wimbledon final. "For me, it's a whole new situation that I'm facing."

Since completing his career Grand Slam at the French Open 12 months ago, Djokovic has participated in four majors in a row without earning a trophy. He also lost his No. 1 ranking to Andy Murray.

Djokovic was runner-up at the U.S. Open but lost in the third round at Wimbledon, the first round at the Rio Olympics and the second round at the Australian Open.

"The win here last year has brought a lot of different emotions. Obviously, it was a thrill and complete fulfillment, I guess," Djokovic said during an expansive and frank news conference. "I have lived on that wave of excitement, I guess, 'til the U.S. Open or so. And at the

U.S. Open, I just was emotionally very flat and found myself in a situation that I hadn't faced before in (my) professional tennis career."

The 23-year-old Thiem next faces nine-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal, who advanced when No. 20 Pablo Carreno Busta stopped while trailing 6-2, 2-0 after injuring an abdominal muscle late in the first set.

"I mean, it's a joke how tough it is to win a Slam," said Thiem, the only player who beat Nadal in one of his 23 clay-court matches this season. "Now I beat Novak. On Friday, (it's) Nadal. In the finals, there is another top star."

On the other half of the draw, 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka reached his third major semifinal in a row by eliminating Marin Cilic 6-3, 6-3, 6-1.

In women's matches, Simona Halep and Karolina Pliskova reached the semifinals. Halep came all the way back from a

set and 5-1 down in the second to defeat Elina Svitolina 3-6, 7-6 (6), 6-0. Pliskova beat Caroline Garcia 7-6 (3), 6-4.

With the wind whipping at more than 15 mph, and the temperature in the low 50s, Djokovic was out of sorts in so many ways even before that 20-minute third set in which he won only 8 of 34 points. It's only the second time Djokovic lost a final set by the score of 6-0 in his 937 career tour-level matches.

"It's hard to comment (on) the third set. Obviously, nothing was going my way and everything his way," Djokovic said. "Just pretty bad set."

But both men thought the match was decided in the first set, when Djokovic held two set points at 5-4, 15-40 on Thiem's serve. Thiem erased the first with a forehand volley and the other with a service winner that prompted Djokovic to roll his eyes.

Royals end Astros' streak at 11 games

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Mike Moustakas' no-doubt homer ended the Kansas City Royals' unlikely comeback against baseball's best team.

Moustakas hit a two-run shot with two outs in the ninth inning after Kansas City rallied from a six-run deficit, and the Royals snapped the Houston Astros' 11-game winning streak with a 9-7 victory Tuesday night.

Moustakas drove an 0-1 slider from Ken Giles (1-2) out to right with Salvador Perez aboard. Moustakas had four hits and three RBIs.

"He threw a fastball, first pitch, middle in and the guy throws hard," Moustakas said. "I fouled it off and was kind of looking for something out over the plate. Got a slider out there and put a good swing on it."

Kansas City trailed 7-1 in the fourth inning but completed its comeback with a four-run eighth. Whit Merrifield hit a three-run double with two outs in the inning to tie it at 7.

Merrifield drove a 1-2 offering from Giles to left field, scoring Moustakas, Cheslor Cuthbert and Alex Gordon.

"Giles is kind of a go-get-em from the get go," Merrifield said. "He throws a hundred with a banger slider. Just try to see the ball as early as you can and hope for a mistake. He made one on me, and I was able to put the bat on it and find a good spot."

Merrifield has hit safely in 20 of his last 21 games. Giles blew his second save in 18 opportunities.

"I let my team down," Giles said. "It's all on me. In my eyes,

this team won today. My failure shouldn't overshadow what these guys did today. They did exactly what they needed to do. This is going to hurt for a little bit, all night."

The Astros' winning streak was the longest in the majors this season. They dropped to a major league-best 42-17 this season.

Mike Minor (3-1) pitched a scoreless inning for the Royals.

Moustakas also singled in a run during the eighth.

Carlos Beltran hit his 429th career home run in the Astros' four-run fourth, giving them the six-run advantage. Josh Reddick, who had three hits, and Carlos Correa had the other run-scoring hits in the inning.

Houston rookie starter David Paulino gave up three runs and

eight hits over 5²/₃ innings and left with a 7-3 lead.

Yuli Gurriel, who had three hits, contributed a two-run single in the Astros' third, giving him 12 RBIs during a seven-game hitting streak. Jose Altuve's sacrifice fly scored George Springer with the first run of the game. Springer extended his hitting streak to 11 games with a double and single. He has nine multi-hit games and 23 hits total in his streak.

"They won almost every critical moment," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "When you do enough of those, they're going to come with a big inning and they did. Certainly they deserve a lot of credit for their at-bats. The walk in there with two outs (to Gordon) kept the inning alive. Then a few too many sliders."

Scherzer strikes out 14 as Nationals edge Dodgers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Max Scherzer knows exactly what he is. At age 32 and in his 10th major league season, he has absolutely no doubt.

"I'm a strikeout pitcher," Scherzer said. "That's just who I am."

No one had to convince the Los Angeles Dodgers after Scherzer struck out a season-high 14, outpitching Brandon McCarthy to lead the Washington Nationals to a 2-1 victory that ended with a testy exchange Tuesday night.

With a runner on second base, Koda Glover fanned Yasiel Puig for the final out and shouted in the direction of home plate. Not pleased, Puig walked toward the mound and twice appeared to ask Glover what he said.

Glover took off his cap and tossed aside his glove as players from both teams quickly intervened to keep the two separated. Nationals first baseman Ryan Zimmerman pulled Glover away, and nothing escalated before the squads headed off the field.

"Tempers flared a little bit," Glover said. "It is what it is. I don't have any hard feelings towards him. He was staring at me and I didn't like it."

Both starting pitchers went seven innings and allowed only three hits. The first 11 outs for Scherzer (7-3) came on strikeouts.

For the second consecutive night, a scuffling Nationals bullpen came through. Oliver Perez held the Dodgers scoreless in the eighth and Glover worked the ninth to earn his eighth save in nine tries.

"He knows what he wants to do," Scherzer said. "He's a closer. He wants the ball. He's not afraid of anybody. He's going to attack the zone. He has unbelievable stuff. He has the attitude to go out there with a chip on his shoulder."

Rockies 11, Indians 3: Rookie pitcher Antonio Senzuela hit a three-run double and Mark Reynolds homered twice to drive in five runs for host Colorado.

Orioles 6, Pirates 5 (10): Jonathan Schoop tied it in the

ninth inning with his second home run of the game and Mark Trumbo singled home a run in the 10th to rally host Baltimore past Pittsburgh.

Red Sox 5, Yankees 4: Mitch Moreland and Hanley Ramirez hit back-to-back home runs and Andrew Benintendi later connected off struggling Masahiro Tanaka, powering visiting Boston over New York.

Cubs 10, Marlins 2: Jake Arrieta pitched two-hit ball into the seventh inning, Anthony Rizzo drove in four runs and surging Chicago beat visiting Miami for its season-high fifth straight win.

White Sox 4, Rays 2: Avisail Garcia, Volmer Sanchez and Todd Frazier homered to help visiting Chicago stop a five-game losing streak with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Angels 5, Tigers 3: Kole Calhoun and C.J. Cron homered as visiting Los Angeles beat Detroit.

Rangers 10, Mets 7: Joey Gallo hit a towering two-run homer that put his team ahead to stay, and host Texas ended a

four-game losing streak with a victory over New York.

Brewers 5, Giants 2: Chase Anderson pitched 7²/₃ shutout innings, drove in a run and won his third straight game for host Milwaukee.

Phillies 3, Braves 1: Aaron Nola allowed a run over eight innings, Odubel Herrera doubled in the go-ahead run in the sixth and visiting Philadelphia survived a ninth-inning scare to beat Atlanta.

Athletics 4, Blue Jays 1: Jesse Hahn allowed an unearned run over six innings in his return from the disabled list, pitching host Oakland past Toronto.

Diamondbacks 10, Padres 2: Robbie Ray struck out 11 in 6²/₃ innings and Chris Owings hit a three-run homer to help host Arizona cruise past San Diego.

Mariners 12, Twins 3: Robinson Cano and Kyle Seager each hit a three-run homer, and James Paxton was effective enough for five innings to help host Seattle defeat Minnesota.