

STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, March 7, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

China to limit increase in military spending

Associated Press

BEIJING — China will boost defense spending by 7.6 percent in 2016, the smallest increase in six years, reflecting slowing growth in the world's second-largest economy and a drawdown of 300,000 troops as Beijing seeks to build a more streamlined, modern military.

The People's Liberation Army, being trimmed to 2 million troops from 2.3 million, will still be the world's largest standing military. A robust armed forces remains a major priority for China's leaders, who have pushed an increasingly aggressive campaign to assert territorial claims in the South China Sea and East China Sea, raising tensions with its neighbors.

China said last week that spending at all levels of government is being curbed because of a drop in the economic growth rate, which fell to a 25-year low of 6.9 percent in 2015 and is expected to decline this year. For most years since 2000, China posted

double-digit increases in military spending, and this will be only the third time in that period with a single-digit increase, including 2010's increase of 7.5 percent.

The lower increase is a reflection of the "new normal" of more moderate economic growth that President Xi Jinping has been touting for the past two years, said Alexander Neill, a senior fellow for Asia-Pacific security for the International Institute for Strategic Studies based in Singapore.

Still, such spending is "nothing to be sniffed at" compared with much smaller defense budgets and anemic growth in military spending in most developed countries, Neill said.

"It's reflective of China's determination to maintain a robust and modern fighting force," he said.

In announcing the approximate rate of increase, Fu Ying, spokeswoman for China's ceremonial legislature, the National People's Congress, told reporters that

China needs to consider its defense needs, economic development and fiscal position in drafting the defense budget.

With last year's budget standing at \$144 billion, an increase of 7.6 percent will take defense spending for this year to nearly \$155 billion — still less than one-third of what the U.S. is proposing to spend this year.

The defense budget increased 10.1 percent last year, despite falling growth, which raised concerns about whether such spending was sustainable.

China says its military is strictly for defensive purposes, but it takes a broad view of what constitutes threats to its core interests — including protecting maritime territory that is in dispute by neighboring countries.

The smaller increase comes as China is shifting more resources away from its massive land army and toward the navy and air force, along with cyberwarfare and the missile corps.

VA failed to contact many vets seeking health care

BY HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs confirmed it failed to contact at least some of the more than 800,000 veterans who have applications for health care pending, nearly 300,000 of whom died before getting a resolution.

The VA is required by law to notify veterans of incomplete applications but could not verify that had been done in the cases of 545,000 living veterans and 288,000 deceased veterans with pending claims. It was unclear Monday whether the veterans and their families will qualify for compensation.

The findings, which were released Monday, are the result of a monthslong VA analysis published six months after a

report for the Veterans Affairs Department's Office of Inspector General that came up with similar findings.

In the report, the department calls the pending applications incomplete, putting the onus on the veterans to add information to their formal requests for health care.

Scott Davis, the whistleblower who first reported the problem of pending applications, said most of them were erroneously marked as incomplete because they called for an income test or were missing a military service record called DD214, which the VA specifically told applicants not to include.

"When we've done reviews before we have found that a high [number] of these veterans were because of mistakes by the VA, not the veteran," said Davis, a program man-

ager at the Veterans Affairs Department's national enrollment office.

Davis called on the VA to automatically to enroll veterans on the pending list who qualify and said the department is delaying because it could be forced to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation to veterans who were wrongly deprived care.

"It's not because it can't work, it's because they don't want it to because it's going to cost a lot of money," he said.

VA officials did not immediately respond to the criticism Monday but have said in the past they don't have the authority to automatically enroll veterans with pending applications shown to be missing information.

The analysis was part of an effort by VA Secretary Bob

McDonald to reform the VA system, the largest health care system in the country.

The department will contact living veterans on the pending list to explain what is missing from their applications and determine whether they are still interested in enrolling in VA health care, according to a department news release. Veterans will have one year after being contacted to complete their applications, though they can reapply at any time.

"Fixing the veterans enrollment system is a top priority for VA," VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson said in the news release. "This is an important step forward to regain veterans' trust and improve access to care as we continue the MyVA Transformation."

US to disclose drone casualty count since '09

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration plans to disclose how many people have been killed by U.S. drones and counterterrorism strikes since 2009, the White House said Monday, in a bid to bolster credibility for the controversial programs.

An assessment to be released in the coming weeks will cover both combatants and civilians who the U.S. believes have died as a result of strikes from the skies since President Barack Obama took office. It won't cover areas of "active hostilities" like Iraq and Syria, where U.S. airstrikes are targeting the Islamic State group, or Afghanistan. Instead, the report aims to illustrate the fatal toll of other U.S. actions overseas to go after disparate terrorism

threats.

In recent years, the U.S. has conducted counterterrorism strikes in Pakistan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia, among other places.

Lisa Monaco, Obama's counterterrorism and homeland security adviser, was announcing the decision in a speech Monday at the Council on Foreign Relations. She called the forthcoming report part of Obama's "commitment to transparency" and added that the numbers would be disclosed annually in the future.

"We know that not only is greater transparency the right thing to do, it is the best way to maintain the legitimacy of our counterterrorism actions and the broad support of our allies," Monaco said in excerpts of her speech obtained in advance by The Associated Press.

US destroys al-Shabab terrorist camp in Somalia

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An American airstrike in Somalia over the weekend killed more than 150 al-Qaida-linked terrorists who were preparing to attack United States troops and African peacekeepers, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday.

United States drones and warplanes on Saturday struck al-Shabab's Raso training camp in central Somalia, about 120 miles north of the nation's capital, Mogadishu, in an effort to thwart preparations for a large-scale attack by the militant trainees, said Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Defense Department spokesman.

Davis said the camp was destroyed, but he did not provide specifics about the planned terrorist attack.

"We know [the trainees] were going to be departing the camp

and they posed an imminent threat to U.S. and AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) forces there in Somalia," Davis said. "We're still assessing (the strike). ... It was apparently successful."

Al-Shabab, which translates into "the youth," was formed in the early 2000s with the intent to overthrow Somalia's western-backed government and to implement strict Sharia, or Islamic law. It has since morphed into a jihadi organization.

Davis said Monday that it was not clear whether any senior al-Shabab leaders were present during the airstrike. It was focused primarily on stopping the planned attack, he said.

The United States had watched the terrorist camp for several weeks, Davis added. There were no indications any civilians were at the camp site when it was struck.

US firm made costly errors in Ebola fight

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. company assigned a crucial role in the efforts to battle Ebola in Sierra Leone made a series of costly mistakes during the 2014 outbreak, an Associated Press investigation has found.

Staffers with the San Francisco-based company, Metabiota Inc., not only misread the epidemic, they contributed to botched lab results, undermined partners and put people at risk of the terrifying virus, according to leaked documents and interviews with international health responders.

The company had been tapped by the World Health Organization and the Sierra Leonean government to help fight Ebola. But internal emails from the WHO and other international health agencies obtained by the AP show senior scientists were alarmed at a spate of problems in a lab shared by Metabiota and Tulane University.

"This is a situation that WHO can no longer endorse," WHO outbreak expert Dr. Eric Bertherat wrote in a July 17, 2014, email to colleagues.

Bertherat relayed reports of "total confusion" in the government lab split between Metabiota and Tulane at the Kenema

hospital in Sierra Leone, noting there was "no tracking of the samples" and "absolutely no control on what is being done." He said the flubbed results were particularly dangerous given suspicion among the local population that international workers were spreading Ebola deliberately.

Metabiota chief executive officer and founder Nathan Wolfe said no evidence shows his company was responsible for the lab blunders, that the reported squabbles were overblown and that any predictions made by his employees who were on loan to the Sierra Leonean government didn't reflect the company's position. He said Metabiota doesn't specialize in outbreak response and that his employees performed admirably amid the carnage of the world's biggest-ever Ebola outbreak.

Metabiota's problems mirror the wider mismanagement that hamstrung the world's response to Ebola, which has killed upward of 11,000 people. Previous AP reporting has shown that the WHO resisted sounding the alarm over Ebola for two months on political, religious and economic grounds and failed to put together a decisive response even after the alert was issued.

Joey Feek, of country duo Joey + Rory, dies at 40

Joey Feek, who with her husband, Rory, formed the award-winning country duo Joey + Rory, died March 4 at home in Indiana, said her manager, Aaron Carnahan. Feek had been diagnosed with cancer two years ago.

The brunette singer from Alexandria, Ind., found success when she paired up with her songwriter husband on the Country Music Television singing competition "Can You

Duet?" in 2008.

In 2014, she was diagnosed with cervical cancer, which continued to spread despite treatment.

In a blog post Friday announcing her death, Rory Feek wrote, "My wife's greatest dream came true today. She is in Heaven."

Even after the diagnosis, the couple continued to record, and an album of hymns topped the Billboard Top Country Albums chart in March.

From The Associated Press

Manning changed way we play, watch and think about football

Associated Press

To find the true measure of what Peyton Manning meant to football, don't bother poring over the highlights from his record 186 wins, or re-watching either of his Super Bowl victories, or looking at a single throw he made on his way to a record-setting 71,940 passing yards over 18 seasons.

Instead, simply wait 'til September. When it comes, pick any weekend, turn on any game — pro, college, high school — and watch quarterbacks lining up in the shotgun, changing plays at the line of scrimmage, dissecting defenses at will and rolling up numbers that were once deemed unthinkable.

All those quarterbacks are doing what Manning showed was possible. He created the passing game as we know it in 2016 and, in turn, forced defenses to adapt and disguise and get better. He won as much with his mind as his arm, and put as much work into Monday through Friday as he did when he suited up on Sunday.

"It's not to say audibles didn't exist before Peyton Manning came around, because they did," said Tim Hasselbeck, the former NFL quarterback who is now an analyst for ESPN. "But he'd go to the line of scrimmage with the ability to get to the play that would be best for the defense out there. You look around the league at what other teams were trying to do, and they were trying to emulate what Peyton Manning was doing as a quarterback."

Set on the notion that every defense had a weak spot, the Colts-turned-Broncos quarterback spent hours analyzing them, the way a wealth manager looks at stocks. Then, on Sundays, he tore them apart. His calls of "Omaha, Omaha" — whatever that meant — were as frustrating to the defenses as they were entertaining to those counting along at home.

In short, Manning obliterated the long-held notion in football that the word "pass" automatically had to be associated with "risk."

"You changed the game forever and made everyone around you better," Manning's biggest rival, Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, said in a shout-out to No. 18.

So, the question becomes, where does Manning rate among the all-time greats?

Like almost everything else he touched over nearly two decades in the NFL, Manning has recalibrated this question.

Measured by mere Super Bowl titles, he is beaten — with two fewer than Brady, Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw.

Measured by mere athleticism, he cannot stand up to John Elway's grit or Dan Marino's arm or Steve Young's combination of speed and precision.

He didn't have the common man's, swashbuckling style of Kenny Stabler and Brett Favre, or the ability (or need) to constantly absorb the game's brutality, a la Troy Aikman and Fran Tarkenton.

But pointing out the obvious is selling Manning short, especially considering the brutally difficult comeback he made after four neck surgeries that, in many minds, should have put him out of the game forever.

Starting at Square One, barely able to release the ball from his hand, Manning rebuilt his game and played four years in Denver, leading the Broncos to two Super Bowls, one title, and, in 2013, directing the most prolific offense in NFL history.

The last season, and the last few months, were, in a strange way, the most impressive.

Burdened with a bum foot that sent him to the bench for six weeks, Manning did the grunt work of a rehabilitating backup. Only when the Broncos bogged down in the regular-season finale did he get back in the game. He checked to the right plays, didn't try to do too much and let the defense guide the way. Manning completed only 13 passes and Denver gained only 194 yards in last month's Super Bowl victory over Carolina — the lowest yardage total ever for a winner.

That Manning was willing to go with the

flow, not fight it, spoke volumes of the kind of quarterback he really was.

His legacy, he said, wasn't about the five MVP awards, the 539 touchdown passes and all the rest of the records.

"For me," he said before the Super Bowl, "it's being a good teammate, having the respect of my teammates, having the respect of the coaches and players."

While changing the game, he also burished a remarkable off-the-field career — showing fans and fellow players that, yes, when the time is right, you can do the commercials, do the funny on "Saturday Night Live," build multimillion-dollar charities and somehow come off like the guy next door.

Too good to be true?

Maybe. The last few months have been checked with reports that linked him to human growth hormone and a rehashing of a sexual harassment claim from his days at the University of Tennessee.

Those stories will play out, and could ultimately harm Manning's legacy.

But for almost anyone who played with him, or coached him, there's not much left to debate.

In an interview three years ago, Manning's college quarterbacks coach, David Cutcliffe, spoke about one of the first plays any Tennessee player had to learn when they arrived in Knoxville in the 1990s. It was a staple of the offense, called "62 Meyer."

During the summer leading into his freshman year, Manning studied the play, then took three pages' worth of his own handwritten questions and gave them to Cutcliffe before fall practice started.

Ultimately, Manning almost always figured out the answers — at Tennessee, then in Indianapolis and, finally, during his four years in Denver.

"He redefined preparation," Cutcliffe said. "He redefined the quality of the work that's expected of the people around him."

Former NFL coach Smith to take over at Illinois

Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Former NFL coach Lovie Smith was hired as the Illinois football coach Monday, two days after the firing of Bill Cubit following a 5-7 season.

Smith, who took the Chicago Bears to the 2006 Super Bowl, was dismissed as coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in January.

Cubit was let go after one season in charge. Smith said he is intent on making the Illini a Big Ten power and was expected to be introduced at a campus news conference Monday afternoon.

Pending approval of university trustees, Smith has a six-year contract worth \$21 million in salary. He will be paid \$2 million a year in each of his first two seasons.

Smith is Illinois' first black head coach in football or men's basketball. The university has sometimes been criticized by state lawmakers and others for never hiring a black coach for either program.

This is the first college head-coaching job for the 58-year-old Smith. He did not hesitate when it was offered by athletic director Josh Whitman.

"Josh approached me about this possibility, and I immediately seized on the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the young men who are part of the program today and in the future," Smith said. "I take this responsibility very seriously and can't wait to get a staff in place to start our move to make Illinois a contender for Big Ten titles. We will play an exciting brand of football that will make our fans, alumni, student body and members of the University community extremely proud."

Whitman said hiring a coach of Smith's stature is first step toward building Illinois football, traditionally one of the weaker Big Ten teams.

"We will build a program that contends annually for Big Ten and national championships," he said. "Lovie's reputation as a coach, and even more so as a person, made it clear it was an awesome opportunity for the University of Illinois."

Smith, whose coaching strength is defense, ran the Buccaneers for two years and had an 8-24 overall record. His Bears team made it to the Super Bowl in 2006, losing to the Indianapolis Colts. The Bears fired Smith after the 2012 season.

His time in Chicago was highlighted by the Super Bowl, the Bears' first appearance since 1985. But fans grew weary of teams that sometimes struggled on offense and missed the playoffs in five of his final six seasons in Chicago. Smith still ranks third on the Bears' wins list behind George Halas and Mike Ditka.

Smith has not worked in college football since serving as defensive backs coach for Ohio State in 1995. He also was an assistant at Tennessee, Kentucky, Arizona State, Wisconsin and Tulsa.

It is not clear yet how the firing of Cubit or the hiring of Smith will affect the recruiting class Cubit assembled this year.

Late pass lifts Keselowski in Las Vegas

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Brad Keselowski spent nearly a full year winless and watching while Team Penske teammate Joey Logano went to Victory Lane five times.

Keselowski had to drive through wind, rain, sand and Logano himself to finally hit it big in Vegas again.

Keselowski passed Kyle Busch with five laps to go Sunday and surged to his second win in three years in the NASCAR race at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway under weird and windy weather conditions.

After getting past Logano and tracking down Busch, whose right front wheel vibrated and struggled down the stretch, Keselowski drove his Ford to his first

Sprint Cup Series victory since Fontana in March 2015.

"For Team Penske, it's our 50th anniversary," Keselowski said. "To get the first win of the year, it feels real good."

Keselowski had to gamble on fuel late, and he thought he had blown the race earlier with a speeding penalty. The risks paid off for the 2012 series champion, who claimed he hadn't been dwelling on his winless skid over the past year.

"It's hard to believe it's been 34 races," Keselowski said. "We've led a lot of races in that time span. Probably deserved to win a few more races than that. ... There was a lot of misfortune, and then there was a lot of self-inflicted things that I could have done better and beyond. But I

can't sit here and dwell on that."

Logano finished second and Jimmie Johnson came in third in the opener of NASCAR's three-week Southwest swing. Busch finished fourth, falling a few laps shy of completing a weekend sweep after dominating the Xfinity Series race Saturday.

Logano fought Keselowski tenaciously for position, but they emerged from the duel smiling.

"It took a long time to get by Joey," Keselowski said. "He put up a heck of a fight. If anyone ever wants to say that your teammates just lay over and give it to you, that's not how we are at Team Penske. We race each other hard but clean. That was really something to see."



Ship's Store official new car program

Exclusive Navy at-sea offers:

www.navyauto.com or nasinfo@navyauto.com

Lakers shock Warriors with 6th loss

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Jordan Clarkson scored 25 points, D'Angelo Russell added 21 as the Los Angeles Lakers stunned the Golden State Warriors 112-95 on Sunday, handing the defending NBA champions just their sixth loss of the season, all on the road.

Kobe Bryant added 12 points in helping the Lakers earn one of the biggest upsets in NBA history and their biggest victory in a dented farewell season for Bryant, who spent the fourth quarter on the bench resting his aching right shoulder.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 18 points on a day when they were awful offensively. Klay Thompson added 15 points but the Splash Brothers were a combined 1 of 18 from three-point range. In all, the Warriors missed 26 of 30 attempts from long range.

Golden State fell to 55-6 and the Lakers improved to 13-51. The loss snapped Golden State's seven-game winning streak and was their first since a 32-point blowout defeat at

Portland on Feb. 19.

Heat 103, 76ers 98: Hassan Whiteside had seven blocked shots, including a pivotal one late as Miami won their fifth in a row, beating visiting Philadelphia.

The Sixers were short-handed and endured their 12th consecutive loss but they were a handful for the Heat. Ish Smith had 21 points and five assists to lead Philadelphia.

Goran Dragic had 23 points, eight rebounds and five assists, and Dwyane Wade also had 23 points for the Heat. Whiteside had 14 points and 13 rebounds off the bench.

Thunder 104, Bucks 96: Kevin Durant had 32 points and 12 rebounds, and Russell Westbrook posted his 10th triple-double of the season as Oklahoma City built a big early lead and held off host Milwaukee.

Westbrook finished with 15 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists for the Thunder, who led by 21 with six minutes left in the third quarter before nearly getting overrun by the Bucks.

Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo picked up his third triple-double of the season with 26 points, 12 re-

bounds and 10 assists.

Rockets 113, Raptors 107: James Harden had 40 points and 14 assists to help Houston end Toronto's franchise-record, 12-game home winning streak.

The Raptors lost at home for the first time since Jan. 3 against the Chicago Bulls.

Nuggets 116, Mavericks 114 (OT): D.J. Augustin scored Denver's last eight points of overtime, including two free throws with 0.9 seconds left as the Nuggets beat visiting Dallas.

Augustin finished with 12 points to help the Nuggets get payback after an overtime loss in Dallas on Feb. 26.

Pistons 123, Trail Blazers 103: Reggie Jackson scored 30 points in another big game against Portland as host Detroit beat the Trail Blazers.

Suns 109, Grizzlies 100: Devin Booker had 27 points and nine assists, Alex Len added 19 points and 16 rebounds as Phoenix beat host Memphis.

No. 12 Indiana routs Maryland

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana's Kevin "Yogi" Ferrell closed his Assembly Hall career out perfectly.

He reveled in the trophy presentation and the net-cutting ceremony. He savored the reverberating chants of his name during the game's final minutes. Most importantly, he got to celebrate by going unbeaten at home.

The senior guard scored 17 points, had four rebounds and added four more assists to his school record, while Troy Williams matched his career high with 23 points to lead No. 12 Indiana past No. 14 Maryland 80-62.

"I feel like this has been the most fun year for me," Ferrell told the crowd after Indiana wrapped up its first perfect season at home since 2006-07. "I just want to thank my team for making this last year as special as it can be. Hopefully, we're not done."

Hoosiers fans are hoping Ferrell's not finished yet, either.

The sellout crowd hooted and hollered Sunday as Ferrell dribbled past and around Maryland defenders and oohed and aahed when Ferrell dazzled them those magical ball skills one more time.

But, unlike three years ago when the

Hoosiers also celebrated an outright Big Ten crown despite a Senior Day loss, there were no regrets this time.

Indiana (25-6, 15-3) took the only lead it needed during a 14-3 first-half run, seized control by scoring the last nine points of the first half to make it 41-28 and never allowed the Terrapins (24-7, 12-6) to get closer than nine in the second half.

Maryland was led by Melo Trimble, who had 17 points, and Robert Carter, who had four points and seven rebounds.

No. 15 Purdue 91, Wisconsin 80: Freshman Caleb Swanigan scored a career-high 27 points and sophomore P.J. Thompson also set a career best with 22, leading the host Boilermakers into a four-way tie for third place in the Big Ten with Maryland, Iowa and Wisconsin.

A.J. Hammons added 16 points and Vince Edwards had 11 for Purdue (24-7, 12-6), which earned the No. 4 seed in the Big Ten Tournament and will play in Friday's second semifinal against an opponent to be determined.

Cincinnati 61, No. 24 SMU 54: Troy Caupain scored 14 points despite missing all six of his shots from beyond the arc, and the host Bearcats overcame poor shooting to bolster their NCAA Tournament chances while ending the Mustangs' season.

Cincinnati (22-9, 12-6 American Athletic) held on despite shooting 29.5 percent from the field overall, including 1-for-19 from beyond the arc.

It was a final disappointment for SMU (25-5, 13-5), which is banned from post-season play because of NCAA rules violations. Players embraced on the court after the final buzzer.

UConn 67, UCF 46: Daniel Hamilton scored all 12 of his points in the second half and the host Huskies picked up a much-needed victory in the season finale to stay in contention for an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Sterling Gibbs added 10 points for UConn (21-10, 11-7 American Athletic), which is the No. 5 seed in the conference tournament.

Temple 64, Tulane 56: At New Orleans, Obi Enechionya scored 18 points and Quenton DeCosey had 15 to lead Temple.

Jaylen Bond added 10 points and 16 rebounds for the Owls (20-10, 14-4), who won the American Athletic Conference title outright.

Holy Cross 60, Army 38: Robert Champion scored 15 points and visiting Holy Cross routed Army in a Patriot League Tournament semifinal.

No. 4 seed Army (19-13) scored a season-low, with 12 points in the second half and was 12-for-53 from the field overall.

Islanders top Rangers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Cal Clutterbuck scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:28 remaining in the third period as the New York Islanders defeated the New York Rangers 6-4 on Sunday.

Johnny Boychuk had two goals for the Islanders, Kyle Okposo had a goal and an assist, Brock Nelson also scored and defenseman Nick Leddy had two assists. Frans Nielsen added an empty-netter with 1:01 remaining.

The Islanders, who led 3-0 and 4-2 before the Rangers rallied to tie it on Derick Brassard's goal with about 8½ minutes to go, ended their season-high seven-game road trip at 6-1-0.

Eric Staal had a goal and an assist for his first points with the Rangers in his fourth game since being acquired in a trade from Carolina just before the deadline.

Penguins 6, Devils 1: Evgeni Malkin scored two goals as the Pittsburgh Penguins took advantage of a couple of defensive lapses by host New Jersey.

Matt Cullen, Nick Bonino, Bryan Rust and Scott Wilson also scored. Backup Matt Murray made 17 saves as the Penguins rebounded from a dismal performance against Calgary 24 hours earlier.

Blackhawks 4, Red Wings 1: Patrick Kane scored his 38th goal on the first shot of the game and Corey Crawford made 33 saves to help host Chicago.

Artem Anisimov and Duncan Keith each had a power-play goal as Chicago won for the third time in four games, including a 5-2 victory at Detroit on Wednesday.

Stars 2, Senators 1: Antoine Roussel scored the go-ahead goal late in the third period to lead visiting Dallas.

Jason Spezza also scored for the Stars while Kari Lehtonen made 23 saves.

Oilers 2, Jets 1: Lauri Korpikoski scored the go-ahead goal late in the second period and Cam Talbot made 39 saves as visiting Edmonton edged Winnipeg.

Patrick Maroon also scored for Edmonton, which moved out of last place in the Western Conference — one point ahead of Calgary and tied with Winnipeg.

Blues 4, Wild 2: Jori Lehtera scored in his return to the lineup and St. Louis held on to beat host Minnesota.

Lehtera was back from a three-game absence after being hit in the face by a puck. Ryan Reaves, Patrik Berglund and Robby Fabbri also scored for St. Louis.

Timbers open season with victory

Associated Press

The 21st MLS season kicked off with an attacking flourish Sunday, with a record 36 goals being scored on a frantic opening day.

The Portland Timbers unveiled the championship banner they won last season then promptly reminded everyone why they will be a force again this year by beating the Columbus Crew 2-1 in a rematch of last year's MLS Cup final.

Nigerian striker Fanendo Adi scored the winner in the 79th minute after the Crew's Argentine-born forward Federico Higuain had equalized with a bicycle kick goal.

"It's good to get off to a good start. Three points. The sooner the better," Timbers coach Caleb Porter said.

"Now we've got to get three points in the next one. I'm looking forward to being

with these guys for the next 11 months, and 33 more games. There's going to be ups and downs, but if we play like we did today, there will be more ups than downs."

Real Salt Lake 2, Orlando City 2: Cyle Larin and Adrian Winter scored in the final 30 seconds of stoppage time to give the Lions a dramatic tie at home with Real Salt Lake before an opening-day-record crowd of 60,147.

LA Galaxy 4, DC United 1: Halftime substitute Mike Magee had two goals and an assist for host Los Angeles.

Toronto FC 2, Red Bulls 0: Sebastian Giovinco, the reigning MVP, scored on a penalty kick and had an assist in the second half, and visiting Toronto won.

Sporting KC 1, Sounders 0: Nuno Andre Coelho scored in the 73rd minute and goalkeeper Tim Melia came up with

saves on three dangerous Seattle chances to help visiting Kansas City.

NYCFC 4, Chicago 3: Mix Diskerud scored the winner in the 63rd minute and NYCFC beat host Chicago in a wild affair.

Revolution 3, Dynamo 3: Daigo Kobayashi scored on a header in the final seconds of second-half stoppage time and visiting New England tied Houston.

FC Dallas 2, Philadelphia Union 0: Mauro Diaz assisted on goals by Fabian Castillo and Maximiliano Urruti and FC Dallas topped host Philadelphia.

Earthquakes 1, Rapids 0: Chris Wondolowski scored in the opening seconds of the second half and host San Jose edged Colorado.

Impact 3, Whitecaps 2: Ignacio Piatti scored twice as Montreal beat host Vancouver.