

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, March 17, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Navy's top admiral in Pacific has warning

*The Washington Post*

The Navy's top admiral in the Pacific said Tuesday there is a "palpable sense" in the region that "might makes right" has taken root as a philosophy, and he warned that the chaos in the Middle East, eastern Europe and northern Africa may be an example of what the future could hold.

Adm. Scott Swift, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said at a conference in Australia that both the acceleration of military activities in the region and the lack of transparency about them are concerns, according to a copy of the remarks provided by his staff. He called for Pacific nations to adhere to longstanding rules

in the region that have been a "gold standard" for avoiding conflict.

Swift also underscored the importance of freedom-of-navigation operations, which the United States runs across the world to demonstrate that international waterways are open to all.

In recent months, the Pentagon has carried out two such missions in the South China Sea and encouraged partners in the region to do the same. That has angered China, which has boosted its military presence there with radar, surface-to-air missiles and fighter jets and said that the U.S. should not interfere.

"The reality is, demonstrated from the days of sail, the great

British, French and Spanish armadas, as true today as then, that the canary in the coal mine of regional and global stability and prosperity isn't found in a cave, but on international waters," Swift said Tuesday. "We all have assumed so long these international seas are the domain of all free men. Perhaps now we too easily dismissed these freedom enablers, these guarantors of stability and prosperity, as simply 'freedom of navigation.'"

Swift spoke at Australia National University at a conference focused on maritime security in the Indian Ocean, Pacific and other Asian waterways.

The admiral said that India, which the Pentagon wants to

partner with more closely, and smaller countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar have worked together to resolve disputes peacefully, and called for countries to do the same "east of the Straits of Malacca," an area that includes the South China Sea.

"It's becoming clear that a contest is underway in the vulnerable waters of the Indo-Asia-Pacific," Swift said. "On one side is a potential return of might makes right after more than seventy years of stability. On the other is a continuum of the international rules-based system that has served us all so well, with limitless potential to continue to do so."

## GOP at odds with DOD over military funding

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The military is either dangerously short on funding or getting by OK under a bipartisan budget deal passed by Congress last fall, depending on which side of the Potomac River you are standing.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., ran down a litany of reasons Thursday during a Capitol Hill hearing on the upcoming Pentagon budget on why the military services are billions of dollars short and falling behind against uncharted global risk.

The Pentagon is less alarmed about its pocketbook. Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who came across the river to testify before McCain's Senate Armed Services Committee, said they

are prioritizing spending but can protect the country with the amount of money tagged for defense in 2017.

Despite deep divisions, Congress passed a deal in November that eased spending caps for defense and domestic programs for two years. But McCain and other Republican hawks in the House and Senate are now angling to put more money into the military despite the deal, citing what they describe as an increasingly dangerous world.

"The unfunded requirements of the military services now total nearly \$18 billion," McCain said. "That represents the additional ships, airplanes, helicopters, fighting vehicles, training and other programs that our military leaders say they need simply to carry out our increasingly antiquated defense strategy at an acceptable

level of risk."

The Defense Department chose to put off modernization efforts and some procurement of equipment under the funding set by the budget deal. It has proposed \$524 billion in the base budget for the 2017 fiscal year and a separate overseas war fund of \$59 billion.

McCain said the department claimed last year it was at the "lower ragged edge" of readiness under the current budget. But it is now cutting 24 Black Hawk helicopters, 50 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, five Navy cruisers, and 77 Marine Corps Joint Light Tactical Vehicles, as well as trimming \$1.3 billion in military construction and family housing.

"So now you're satisfied with the level ... it is hard for us to understand, general," McCain said to the joint chiefs chairman.

Dunford said he believes the DOD made the right priorities for the coming year and spent as much as possible on the readiness of the services to fight — and that more funding might not net further immediate improvements in readiness.

Carter put the difference in actual spending between the current budget and the 2017 proposal at \$11 billion. The DOD was able to close some of the gap by changes in oil prices and other reductions in expenses.

He said the department mainly put off investments in newer aircraft such as the F-35, which has become among the most expensive development projects in history, and shipbuilding, but did not terminate any major programs or any multi-year defense contracts.

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# AF's isolation units developed in response to Ebola crisis in 2014

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa exposed a gaping hole in the U.S. military's ability to respond to a humanitarian crisis involving a highly infectious, contagious virus.

As the United States pledged to send more than 3,000 U.S. troops to build treatment centers and set up mobile labs, the Pentagon didn't have a way to safely evacuate personnel by military plane who might fall ill or be exposed to Ebola or other highly infectious diseases.

Now, the Air Force has at its disposal nearly two dozen portable isolation units that could be used to transport patients who are sick or possibly infected with a communicable, deadly disease.

One of those units made a brief stop this week at Ramstein Air Base, where military medical professionals from various nations are meeting for an aerospace medicine summit.

Set up in the spacious cargo hold of a C-17, the unit was draped in impermeable, transparent plastic sheeting. Two patient modules, each capable of holding up to four patients in litters or chairs, were connected to a decontamination room for in-flight caregivers.

"All this really is is a hospital

room in an airplane," said Col. Nick Conger, an Air Force infectious disease consultant and doctor.

Each module weighs less than 1,500 pounds, about the size of a minivan, according to the Air Force.

The units combine high-tech sophistication and the simple equipment one might use on a camping trip. Negative airflow keeps contaminants inside the chamber, and an air-filtration system circulates clean air in, up to 24 times an hour. Portable chemical toilets — otherwise known as camping toilets — are set up inside for patients, with a makeshift curtain for privacy.

The pods are seamless and airtight, intended to keep pathogens inside and away from the aircrew and aircraft while allowing caregivers to treat patients.

"I hope this is like a nuclear weapon and we never use it, but we have it if we need it," said Brig. Gen. Kory Cornum, Air Mobility Command surgeon, at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

The Air Force and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, with assistance from other agencies, stepped into high gear to develop and test the Transport Isolation System in the summer and fall of 2014, Cornum said.

"When we knew we were going to be sending about 3,500 personnel to Liberia, we realized ... we've got to be able to

take care of them," he said. "Part of taking care of them is getting them home expeditiously to a higher level of care."

At the time, aircraft equipped to safely transport Ebola patients was scarce. A small, Georgia-based air charter company called Phoenix Air, on contract with the U.S. State Department, had ferried several Ebola-stricken American medical workers from West Africa. But the company's aircraft could handle only one patient per flight.

A small company in St. Louis, Production Products Inc., is building 25 of the military isolation units for the Defense Department, a contract worth about \$7 million, Cornum said. About 22 are finished and the Air Force has hand-picked and trained the aeromedical crews that would perform such a mission.

"In four months, we went from an idea to having initial operating capability to be able to move highly infectious patients safely," Cornum said.

The modules, which are staged at several bases state-side, can be outfitted in the back of a C-17 or a C-130 Super Hercules. Using all the units, the Air Force could transport up to 200 patients. However, Cornum said there are only about 18 beds at medical centers in the United States equipped for Ebola patients.

## Personnel are punished for Kunduz hospital attack

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — More than a dozen U.S. military personnel have been disciplined, but face no criminal charges, for errors that led to the aerial attack on a civilian hospital which killed 42 people in northern Afghanistan last year, U.S. defense officials say.

The punishments, which have not been publicly announced, are largely administrative. In some cases the actions, such as letters of reprimand, are tough enough to effectively end chances for further promotion. The military has previously said some personnel were suspended from their duties but has given no further details.

The disciplined include both officers and enlisted personnel, but officials said none are generals.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the disciplinary process is nearly complete. It is derived from a military investigation of the Oct. 3, 2015, attack, the results of which are expected to be made public in a partially redacted form in coming days.

The hospital, run by the medical charity Doctors Without Borders in Kunduz, was attacked by a U.S. Air Force special operations AC-130 gunship.

## Porn, sex charges tied to Army medic's slaying case

*Associated Press*

HONOLULU — The military is considering whether an Army medic charged with conspiring with his lover to kill his wife will be court-martialed for child pornography and prostitution charges.

Sgt. Michael Walker has pleaded not guilty to a murder charge in civilian court in the

killing of Catherine Walker, who was found stabbed to death in November 2014 in the military housing the couple shared in Honolulu.

New allegations surfaced during a military judicial hearing Wednesday. Michael Walker is accused of possessing and viewing child pornography and receiving money in exchange for sex with men, an Army

prosecutor said. His Army defense attorneys declined to comment after the hearing.

Hearing officer Maj. Nancy Lewis will evaluate the allegations and evidence, which include 92 photos and 19 videos, and will make a recommendation about whether he should be court-martialed.

In December, Ailsa Jackson pleaded guilty to murder and

described in a Honolulu federal courtroom how she stabbed Catherine Walker and then waited a half-hour to make sure she was dead.

As part of a plea agreement, Jackson is expected to be sentenced to 30 to 33 years in prison in exchange for testifying against Michael Walker, who is scheduled to go to trial this year in the murder case.

# Michigan rallies past Tulsa

Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Tournament time has become Michigan's time, especially those last few drama-packed seconds. They've finally figured out how to handle them.

Zak Irvin hit a go-ahead three-pointer and a pair of free throws in the closing minute as Michigan rallied at the end yet again on Wednesday night, beating Tulsa 67-62 in the First Four.

The Wolverines (23-12) made the leap from bubble team to the NCAA Tournament by pulling out a couple of close ones. They made a pair of end-game shots for wins in the Big Ten Tournament, including one by Irvin that beat Northwestern.

His three-pointer this time put the Wolverines up 62-60 with 52 seconds to go. Irvin's two free throws with 10 seconds left sent the 11th-seeded Wolverines into a matchup against rival Notre Dame in Brooklyn on Friday night.

And if that one comes down to the final minute, nobody will count them out.

"I'm just proud of how all of us have been able to do this, starting in the Big Ten Tournament," said Irvin, one of four players in double figures with 16 points. "We've just got to keep that going forward."

Tulsa (20-12) got 23 points from Shaquille Harrison, but its senior-laden lineup couldn't keep up at the end. There were five ties and 12 lead changes in the frantic second half. After Irvin's go-ahead three, the Golden Hurricane missed their next two shots and the Wolverines got the rebounds and hit the free throws to close it out.

"Michigan had more breaks than us," Tulsa coach Frank Haith said. "We didn't get the breaks, and that's what usually happens in those types of games."

Tulsa didn't even expect to get to the First Four after losing its opening game in the American Athletic Tournament — Harrison tweeted that the NIT was likely the next destination. The Golden Hurricane had one advantage over

Michigan — much more experience, with four starting seniors.

Michigan has only two seniors, and both are hurt. But the Wolverines' knack for finding a way in the final seconds held up.

"The fact that we won those games in the Big Ten Tournament — we hadn't had any of those games," coach John Beilein said. "That was really a thing we needed to learn."

In the Big Ten Tournament, Irvin hit a jumper with 3.3 seconds left for a 72-70 win over Northwestern in the second round. The Wolverines then upset top-seeded Indiana 72-69 on Kameron Chatman's three from the right corner at the buzzer in the quarterfinals.

Beilein thought his team showed some of the wear of playing a lot of games in a few days.

"But we didn't feel it in those last couple of minutes when we made all the right plays," he said.

The Wolverines had a lot of fans in the stands at UD Arena, a three-hour drive from Ann Arbor. The rest of the crowd booed them loudly when they took the court for warmups and again during introductions, a reminder that they were in Ohio now.

**Holy Cross 59, Southern 55:** Robert Champion scored 19 points, including a key three-pointer in the final minute, to help the Crusaders beat the Jaguars for their first tournament victory in 63 years.

"I think it's fantastic," coach Bill Carmody said. "It's everything we're trying to do at Holy Cross. We're trying to jump-start the program because we realize what an athletic program can do for a school. It's a great first step."

Holy Cross (15-19) was an unlikely NCAA participant, earning its automatic bid by winning four consecutive road games to take the Patriot League Tournament title.

Now, after pulling out a sluggish game in the First Four, the 16th-seeded Crusaders are off to play No. 1 seed Oregon in the West Regional on Friday in Spokane,

Wash.

And they certainly plan to savor the experience.

"We're just enjoying this right now," Champion said. "We're going to hop on a plane and go to Spokane. We're just enjoying it and going for the ride."

Champion, a junior guard, also made two key free throws with 14 seconds left to seal the victory in a sloppy game that didn't get tight until well into the second half. He connected on as many threes as the entire Southern team, which was 3-for-20 from beyond the arc.

The Crusaders had lost nine consecutive NCAA Tournament games since defeating Navy and Wake Forest in 1953 — six years after Holy Cross won the national championship.

Holy Cross led by as many as 12 in the first half thanks to a smothering 1-3-1 zone defense that Southern struggled to solve, but a 9-0 run allowed the Jaguars to cut the lead to 27-22 at halftime.

Southern started the second half with 7-0 spurt and eventually tied it with 1:24 left, but Champion hit his big 3 to put Holy Cross ahead to stay.

"A dream come true," Champion said. "Everybody dreams of making that shot."

Southern coach Roman Banks said Holy Cross set the tone early.

"I thought they came out of the gates with a lot of energy and executed very well," Banks said. "I think it took us a little time to find our rhythm in the zone, that 1-3-1 that they play."

Southern (22-13), a historically black school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was ineligible for postseason play the past two years because of a problem with its academic reports to the NCAA. It earned an automatic bid when it beat Jackson State 54-53 in the championship game of the Southwestern Athletic Conference Tournament.

Anthony Thompson added 12 points for Holy Cross, and Karl Charles had eight.

Adrian Rodgers led Southern with 14 points, and Shawn Prudhomme scored 10.

# Hokies win NIT opener

Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Zach LeDay had a career-high 29 points and 11 rebounds and Virginia Tech beat Princeton 86-81 in overtime on Wednesday night in the NIT first round for the Hokies' first post-season victory since 2011.

Seth Allen made two free throws for Virginia Tech with 32.3 seconds left in regulation to tie it at 68-all. Princeton called a timeout with 16.7 seconds left to set up a final play. Devin Cannady missed a long three-pointer and Alec Brennan's tip-in was off the mark at the buzzer.

Spencer Weisz pulled Princeton to 76-75 with 1:35 left in overtime. After the teams traded two made free throws apiece, Jalen Hudson converted a three-point play to give Virginia Tech an 81-77 lead with 40 seconds left. The Hokies then made 5 of 6 free throws the rest of the way to seal it.

**Wagner 79, St. Bonaventure 75:** Romone Saunders scored 21 points with four three-pointers and eighth-seeded Wagner beat host No. 1 seed St. Bonaventure.

The Bonnies got within two before Saunders sank a three-pointer from the wing for a 74-69 lead with 1:45 left.

**George Washington 82, Hofstra 80:** Alex Mitola's 12-foot runner with 4 seconds remaining lifted host George Washington past Hofstra.

The Colonials will play at Monmouth, a No. 1 seed, on Monday.

**Monmouth 90, Bucknell 80:** Justin Robinson scored 23 points and Monmouth, snubbed by the NCAA Tournament, opened the NIT with a win over visiting Bucknell.

Monmouth (28-7), the regular-season champion of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference was left out of the NCAAs after losing to Iona in the MAAC title game.

**Georgia 93, Belmont 84:** Yante Maten scored a career-high 33 points and Charles Mann added 23 points to help Georgia beat visiting Belmont.

The Bulldogs (20-13) have won six of their last seven and will visit Saint Mary's on Sunday.

**Georgia Tech 81, Houston 62:** Adam Smith scored 20 points and Georgia Tech pulled away in the second half to beat visiting Houston.

Marcus Georges-Hunt had 19 points and Charles Mitchell had 12 for Georgia Tech (20-14), which will play at South Carolina in the second round on Monday night.

**BYU 97, UAB 79:** Chase Fischer scored 27 points with seven three-pointers, Kyle Collinsworth posted his 12th career triple-double with 19 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists, and host BYU beat UAB in the first round.

It was the sixth time this season Collinsworth achieved the feat, equaling last season's total.

# Terrapins aren't carrying any momentum

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Maryland needs a solid performance in the NCAA Tournament to avoid the stigma of being an underachieving squad that failed to capitalize on an abundance of talent.

After adding three solid starters to a team that finished second in the Big Ten last season, the Terrapins raced to a 22-3 start and were ranked No. 2 in the second week of February.

From there, things went sour. A surprising home loss to Wisconsin launched a horrid run of five defeats in eight games — including an embarrassment at Minnesota and an 18-point drubbing by Indiana.

Now, coming off a 64-61 setback against Michigan State in the semifinals of the Big Ten Tournament, 18th-ranked Maryland

enters the NCAA Tournament as a fifth seed, looking to fulfill the grand expectations it carried into the season four months ago.

The quest begins Friday against South Dakota State.

"We played in a really tough league, we had a tough schedule and we lost ourselves for a little bit but we're ready to play," coach Mark Turgeon said Tuesday after running the team through a vigorous practice. "We're 25-8 and we feel really good about ourselves. We got a lot better last week, we've gotten a lot better this week. By Friday, we're going to be a lot better than we are right now. We're in a good spot. We're a really good team."

That's certainly how it looked on paper in November. Sophomore guard Melo Trimble and senior Jake Layman, who received NCAA Tournament experience

last season, were joined by 6-foot-11 freshman Diamond Stone and transfers Rasheed Sulaimon and Robert Carter Jr.

When they're working in unison, the Terps are tough to beat. Lately, though, they've been exceedingly average. The hope is that a strong showing in the second half against the Spartans last weekend was the start of something big.

"We continue to have great practices and you see it all coming together," Turgeon said. "The Michigan State game gave us a lot of confidence. Shot 35 percent and lost by three. I would like to think the guys are excited and feel good about what lies ahead."

Trimble, the Big Ten preseason player of the year, went 2-for-15 from the floor in that game. But he was wearing a big smile Tuesday.



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# Hornets beat Magic, close homestand 6-1

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Charlotte Hornets have proven they're a good NBA team at home.

Now they want to show they can win big games on the road, beginning Thursday night against the Miami Heat.

The Hornets closed out a 6-1 homestand by beating the Orlando Magic 107-99 on Wednesday behind 26 points apiece from Marvin Williams and Nicolas Batum.

"The homestand was huge," Williams said. "Guys were really looking forward to it. We've got to take this show back on the road and hopefully we can play with the same intensity."

The Hornets (38-29) have 15 games left, but only five at home. So they'll have to be solid on the road if they plan to clinch a second playoff berth in three seasons.

Charlotte is 26-10 at home this season and would like to land home-court advantage for a playoff series.

The Hornets are one game behind Miami for the fourth-best record in the Eastern Conference. Miami holds a 2-1 series lead, so there are potential tiebreaker implications at stake.

"If you look at the last 10 years, 75 percent of the home teams win in the first round," Hornets coach Steve Clifford said. "The only seeding that's not where the home team didn't win the most was the 4-5. ... We have to concentrate. That to me is the carrot."

Williams added nine rebounds and four three-pointers, while Batum had nine assists and seven rebounds for the Hornets, who have won 14 of their last 17. Cody Zeller had his fourth double-double of the season with 13 points and 13 rebounds.

Kemba Walker chipped in with 16 points and eight rebounds.

**Cavaliers 99, Mavericks 98:** Kyrie Irving scored 33 points and made a key steal in the closing seconds, leading host Cleveland — without resting LeBron James — to a win over Dallas.

James was given the night off by coach Tyrone Lue as part of his plans to keep Cleveland's starters fresh for the playoffs. The Cavs hardly missed their star until the Mavericks stormed back from an 18-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

Dallas had several chances to take the lead, but the Mavericks missed two open 3-pointers and had a costly turnover before Irving swiped a pass intended for Dirk Nowitzki with 2.9 seconds left.

**Warriors 121, Knicks 85:** Stephen Curry scored 34 points as Golden State extended its record regular-season home winning streak to 50 games with a victory over New York.

Curry shot 8-for-13 from long range and 12 of 20 from the floor overall before sitting out the fourth quarter with his team up big. The reigning MVP hit three-pointers on three straight possessions late in the first quarter and on two in a row at the end of the third as the Warriors improved

to 32-0 at Oracle Arena this season.

**Wizards 117, Bulls 96:** Finally playing as if their chance at a playoff berth was on the line, which it is, host Washington picked up its second consecutive lopsided victory over a team just ahead of them in the standings, beating Derrick Rose's Chicago behind John Wall's triple-double.

Wall, an All-Star point guard, produced 29 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds, outplaying Rose, who returned after missing two games with a strained left groin and finished with 16 points and four assists.

Wall received plenty of help, including 20 points from Bradley Beal and 15 from reserve Garrett Temple, all in the first half, when he shot 5-for-5 on three-pointers.

**Thunder 130, Celtics 109:** Kevin Durant had 28 points, nine assists and seven rebounds in just over three quarters, helping Oklahoma City cruise past host Boston.

Russell Westbrook scored 24 points and Enes Kanter had 17 points and 12 rebounds for the Thunder, who had lost six of their last 10 games.

**Clippers 122, Rockets 106:** DeAndre Jordan had 23 points and 14 rebounds, and visiting Los Angeles opened up a large halftime lead and never relented en route to a victory over Houston.

Jordan finished 8 of 8 from the floor, with six dunks. JJ Redick added 25 points, including 14 in the first quarter, going 5 of 9 from the three-point line.

**Timberwolves 114, Grizzlies 108:**

Zach LaVine scored 28 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and 10 rebounds as Minnesota beat short-handed host Memphis. Memphis pulled within 108-104 with 1:12 remaining but then Towns scored four straight points to stop the rally. Anthony Wiggins had 16 points for the Timberwolves, while Gorgui Dieng and Ricky Rubio added 15 points each. Rubio added 11 assists.

**Hawks 118, Pistons 114:** Jeff Teague scored 22 points, including two crucial free throws with 17.9 seconds left, as visiting Atlanta held off Detroit for its sixth win in seven games.

Atlanta went on a 10-0 run late in the fourth quarter to take a 113-104 lead, then let the Pistons back in the game. Marcus Morris cut the lead to two with a three-point play with 18 seconds remaining, but Teague's pair of free throws made it 118-114, and neither team scored after that.

**Pelicans 123, Kings 108:** Anthony Davis had 27 points and 14 rebounds and Ryan Anderson scored 21 of his 29 points in the second quarter as New Orleans beat host Sacramento to end a four-game losing streak. The Pelicans set a season high with 74 points in the first half while completing a four-game sweep of the Kings this season.

Jrue Holiday added 17 points, Tony Douglas scored 11 and newly signed Tim Frazier had a career-high 14 points with nine assists.

## Rangers edge Ducks

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Kevin Klein's turnover in the opening minutes led to the Anaheim Ducks' opening goal.

The veteran Rangers defenseman sure came up with an improbable way to make up for it.

Klein had the first two-goal game of his 11-year NHL career, scoring the tiebreaker with 6:41 to play in New York's 2-1 victory Wednesday night.

The veteran defenseman played 555 regular-season games and 67 playoff games with Nashville and New York before his first two-goal performance. He won it for New York by driving the net — another unlikely development for a stay-at-home defenseman — and directing a sharp pass from J.T. Miller for the go-ahead goal.

"It's nice, but the two points is the big thing," Klein said. "Just to chip in, I'm happy about that."

Klein also scored the tying goal in the second period as the Rangers got off to an auspicious start on their three-game California road trip, ending Anaheim's two month-long home points streak.

Klein's teammates were a bit more excited than he was about the unlikely source of their offense. They even awarded him the Broadway Hat — the unsightly black fedora worn proudly by the Rangers' top night star.

"He's such a heart-and-soul guy," forward Dominic Moore said. "It's really great to see him be the hero tonight."

Antti Raanta made 22 saves in the Rangers' second victory over Anaheim this season. New York also played a penalty-free game, leaving the Ducks without a power play for the first time since Dec. 19.

Brandon Pirri made his debut for Anaheim, slotting in on the Ducks' top line with captain Ryan Getzlaf and fellow midseason acquisition David Perron. Anaheim grabbed Pirri from the Florida

Panthers at the trade deadline, but had to wait 2½ weeks while he recovered from a nasty ankle injury that kept him off the ice for a full month.

**Flyers 3, Blackhawks 2:** Defenseman Radko Gudas scored on a deflected shot in the third period, helping surging Philadelphia beat host Chicago to move into position for a wild-card playoff spot.

Michal Neuvirth made 24 saves as Philadelphia improved to 8-1-1 in its last 10 games and leapfrogged idle Detroit for the eighth spot in the Eastern Conference. The Flyers beat the Red Wings 4-3 at home on Tuesday night.

**Canadiens 3, Sabres 2 (OT):** Paul Byron scored at 3:15 of overtime to lead visiting Montreal over Buffalo.

Andrei Markov and Greg Pateryn scored in regulation and Ben Scrivens made a season-high 41 saves for the Canadiens, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

**Oilers 6, Blues 4:** Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Mark Letestu each scored twice and host Edmonton defeated St. Louis.

Taylor Hall and Leon Draisaitl also scored for the Oilers, who have won six of their last 10 games, but had lost their last two.

**Avalanche 3, Canucks 1:** Mikkel Boedker scored twice as Colorado moved back into playoff position with a win over host Vancouver.

Andreas Martinsen also scored for the Avalanche, who have 76 points — one ahead of idle Minnesota for the last wild-card spot in the Western Conference.

**Flames 4, Jets 1:** Michael Frolik had a goal and two assists and host Calgary scored three times in the first period before cruising past Winnipeg.

Joe Colborne had a goal and an assist and Mikael Backlund, the third member of that line, added two assists as the Flames won consecutive games on home ice for the first time since December.

## Pats trade for TE Bennett

Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — The New England Patriots have acquired Martellus Bennett from the Chicago Bears, giving them another talented tight end to pair with All-Pro Rob Gronkowski.

New England also gets Chicago's sixth-round pick in this year's draft in exchange for the Patriots' fourth-rounder in the deal announced on Thursday.

The 29-year-old Bennett has spent eight seasons in the NFL, the past three in Chicago. He made the Pro Bowl in 2014 and has 3,586 yards with 23 touchdowns in his career.

He goes from a rebuilding team to a perennial championship contender under coach Bill Belichick and quarterback Tom Brady. He also joins Gronkowski in what could be the NFL's most productive tight end tandem, and the Patriots will be banking on all that to help keep him in line after he rubbed the Bears the wrong way.

A free spirit who describes himself as a "black unicorn" and writes children's books, Bennett missed voluntary off-season workouts a year ago because he wanted a contract extension even though he had two seasons remaining on his contract.

That forced him to play catch-up trying to learn a new offense under coordinator Adam Gase, who left after the season to become the Miami Dolphins' head coach. It didn't exactly endear him to new coach John Fox and general manager Ryan Pace.

Bennett made the Pro Bowl in 2014 with 90 receptions for 916 yards and six touchdowns. But his production slipped last season and he started to question his role as Chicago began to feature tight end Zach Miller. Bennett caught 53 passes for 439 yards over 11 games before going on injured reserve with a rib injury.

The Patriots are the fourth team for Bennett, who spent four years in Dallas

and one with the New York Giants.

The trade was announced after the Bears retained a pair of tight ends on Monday, agreeing to a two-year contract with Miller and a one-year deal with Rob Housler.

In other NFL news:

■ The offseason overhaul of the Minnesota Vikings offensive line continued on Thursday with the addition of free agent tackle Andre Smith.

Smith agreed to terms on a one-year deal three days after visiting the Twin Cities, and his addition bolsters a group that struggled to protect young quarterback Teddy Bridgewater last season.

Smith visited Minnesota on Sunday and Monday, dining with Vikings brass and touring the new stadium that is set to open in August. But he left without a deal and also visited the Arizona Cardinals before ultimately choosing the Vikings. Smith tweeted a picture of his new Vikings nameplate for his locker in announcing his decision.

Smith is expected to compete with Phil Loadholt, who is returning from a torn Achilles tendon, and T.J. Clemmings, who was the starter as a rookie when Loadholt went down, for the starting right tackle spot.

■ The Cleveland Browns have signed safety Rahim Moore to a one-year contract.

Moore spent last season with Houston before being released by the Texans earlier this month. He signed a three-year, \$12 million deal last year but was benched midway through the season. He was inactive for the team's final nine regular-season games.

Moore is expected to compete for a starting job with Jordan Poyer. The Browns need a safety following the departure of 2014 Pro Bowler Tashaun Gipson to Jacksonville.