

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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US Marine killed in Iraq rocket attack

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Marine was killed Saturday and several others were wounded in a rocket attack on a base in northern Iraq, U.S. officials said.

“Earlier today a U.S. Marine providing force protection fire support at a recently established coalition fire base near Makhmour in northern Iraq was killed after coming under ISIL rocket fire,” Pentagon press secretary Peter Cook said in a statement. He used an acronym for the Islamic State group.

Several other Marines were wounded and were being treated, Cook said. Further infor-

mation would not be released until after next of kin had been notified.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the servicemembers involved, their families and their coalition teammates who will continue the fight against ISIL with resolve and determination,” Cook said.

The Makhmour base is outside Iraq’s second-largest city, Mosul, which was captured by the Islamic State group in 2014.

The attack was an “indirect fire attack” — specifically, rockets — a defense official told The Associate Press. Other media, citing U.S. officials, re-

ported two rockets were fired at the base, and that one did not cause casualties or damage.

“It was a lucky strike by ISIS,” a defense official told Fox News, using another acronym for the Islamic State group.

It was not immediately clear how many servicemembers were wounded. Fox News, citing a U.S. defense official, said fewer than five were wounded and that they were being flown to a hospital.

The governor of Nineveh province, Nawfal Hamadi, told The Wall Street Journal that his sources had confirmed that one U.S. servicemember had been killed and two others wounded.

The last U.S. servicemember killed in Iraq was Army Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler, who was killed in a firefight in October during a raid on an Islamic State prison. He was the first U.S. servicemember to die in a combat action in Iraq since the U.S. withdrew in 2011.

The U.S.-led coalition has reported an increase in such indirect fire attacks on Makhmour, with the buildup of Iraqi forces there preparing for an assault on Mosul, AP reported.

Officials have said that an offensive to retake Mosul is still months away and may not even happen this year.

news@stripes.com

Fort Bragg’s 18th Airborne Corps to lead fight in Iraq

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

Nearly five years after the 18th Airborne Corps, of Fort Bragg, N.C., helped close out the war in Iraq, the unit’s headquarters will return to the region to head the fight against the Islamic State.

The corps headquarters will deploy to Kuwait this summer to serve as the core of Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve.

The deployment was one of two involving Fort Bragg soldiers announced Friday.

The other will see about 400 soldiers from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division deploy to South Korea as part of a rotation of aviation forces there.

The 18th Airborne Corps will send about 450 soldiers for deployment. They will replace the III Corps from Fort Hood, Texas, Army officials said, and are expected to be deployed for about a year.

The 18th Airborne last deployed in 2014, when it served as the last unit to be International Security Assistance Force Joint Command in Afghanistan, overseeing the day-to-day operations of that war.

Inherent Resolve is the mission to defeat the Islamic State group, also known by the Arabic acronym ISIL or as Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The corps commander, who also leads Fort Bragg, said his troops are prepared for the new mission: “The corps has a long and proud history of answering the calls of our nation,” Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend said. “The soldiers of the 18th Airborne Corps are well-trained and stand ready to support this important mission to degrade and ultimately defeat Daesh and help set conditions for improved regional security.”

While Townsend is deployed, a deputy commander, Maj. Gen. Paul J. LaCamera, who

is currently serving as chief of the Office of Security Cooperation—Iraq, will oversee Fort Bragg.

The 18th Airborne will be based at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, for the deployment, but will also have troops in Baghdad. They will oversee the U.S. military and forces from more than 30 other countries.

Fort Bragg soldiers have played a key role in the Inherent Resolve mission since it was created in 2014. Earlier this month, the 82nd Airborne Division headquarters returned from its own nine-month deployment in support of the efforts.

The division had roughly 400 paratroopers serving as the core of Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command—Iraq.

The 18th Airborne, once deployed, will serve as the higher command for that mission and the barrage of airstrikes against Islamic State targets.

In recent months, the strat-

egy to cripple the Islamic State group through airstrikes while bolstering Iraqi forces has proven to be successful.

Since June 2015, the Islamic State group has lost 40 percent of the territory it had gained in Iraq, including Ramadi and other key cities.

Known as the nation’s Contingency Corps, the 18th Airborne has a long history in and around Iraq. The corps rapidly deployed as the first ground force in Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield in 1990. Months later, the corps was part of the first ground assault into Iraq as part of Desert Storm in 1991.

In 2005, the corps deployed for a year to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

They repeated that mission for a 14-month deployment that began in 2008, then deployed for a year starting in 2011 in support of the end of the war as part of Operation New Dawn.

8 sailors hurt on Eisenhower

(Newport News, Va.) Daily Press

Eight sailors on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower were injured Friday afternoon when a heavy cable snapped in the system used to stop landing aircraft, local Navy officials said.

An arresting cable on the Norfolk, Va.-based carrier broke during a routine landing by an E-2C Hawkeye aircraft, according to a Naval Air Force Atlantic official.

"There were no fatalities, and the sailors are listed in stable condition with nonlife-threatening injuries," Cmdr. Mike Kafka said.

The sailors were on the flight deck when they were hurt,

Kafka said.

Dale Gauding, a spokesman from Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, confirmed at least four sailors were flown in by naval helicopter but could not talk about patients' injuries.

Two others were flown to Portsmouth Naval Medical Hospital, and two sailors were treated on the carrier, the commander said.

Names of the injured personnel will not be released, and naval officials are notifying their families, he added.

"This is a very uncommon occurrence," Kafka said. On the East Coast, he could recall only one other cable breaking, on the USS George Washing-

ton, in the early 2000s.

The E-2C Hawkeye was still able to fly and returned safely to its base at Norfolk Naval Station, Chambers Field.

Navy officials said the aircraft was not damaged and none of its crew was injured.

The carrier is off the Virginia coast conducting carrier qualifications for Composite Training Unit and Joint Task Force Exercises to prepare for a deployment to replace the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group this summer.

An investigation is underway to determine what caused Friday's mishap, Kafka said.

Suspect in Paris attack to refuse extradition

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Salah Abdeslam, the top suspect in last year's deadly Paris attacks, was discharged Saturday from a Brussels hospital and quickly made it clear he will fight efforts to ship him to France for trial.

"I can tell you that he is collaborating with Belgian justice and that we will refuse the extradition to France," said Sven Mary, Abdeslam's lawyer.

Mary spoke to journalists after he and Abdeslam met with a Belgian investigating magistrate who will decide whether to issue a formal arrest warrant against the Brussels native accused of playing a key role in the Nov. 13 attacks on a rock concert, cafes and a stadium that killed 130 people.

France's interior minister called Abdeslam's arrest a "major blow" to the Islamic State group in Europe, but also warned the threat of new attacks remains "extremely high."

Belgium's prime minister also said "the fight is not over," and the Belgian government announced the nation's terrorism alert level would remain unchanged at three on a four-point scale.

Abdeslam, 26, was shot in the leg, and his companion also was injured when they were captured by police on Friday. Yvan Mayeur, the Brussels mayor, announced on Twitter that "the two presumed terrorists" had been discharged from CHU St. Pierre hospital Saturday morning.

Abdeslam, a French national, is subject to a European arrest warrant issued by France. His seizure in the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek after four months on the run brought relief to people who have seen his "wanted" poster all over two countries for months.

Ex-manager gets 5 years for Navy scheme

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A former manager of a Singapore-based company servicing U.S. Navy ships has been sentenced to more than five years in prison after pleading guilty to a fraud scheme that overbilled the maritime branch by more than \$34 million.

U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino in San Diego also ordered Alex Wisidagama, 42, to pay \$34.8 million in restitution to the Navy.

The businessman was the global manager of Glenn Defense Marine Asia, or GDMA, and the cousin of its top executive, Leonard Glenn Francis. Francis, nicknamed "Fat Leonard" because of his wide girth, is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty in one of the military's biggest bribery cases.

Ten people, including several Navy officers, have been charged in the case, and all but one has pleaded guilty. Wisidagama is the third defendant to be sentenced.

In his plea agreement, he acknowledged creating false price quotations, invoices and other documents to carry out the scheme involving the sale of goods and fuel. He also inflated port tariff expenses.

His attorney, Knut S. Johnson, said 30 months would have been an appropriate sentence for his client. He said Wisidagama did not receive any of the Navy's money personally and does not have the means to pay back the military.

Suicide bomber attacks busy Istanbul street

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — A suicide attacker detonated a bomb on Istanbul's main pedestrian shopping street on Saturday, killing five people, the city's governor said. Turkey's health minister said 36 people were wounded in the attack including 12 foreign nationals.

Gov. Vasip Sahin said the explosion occurred outside a local government office on Istiklal Street, which is also home to cafes, restaurants and foreign

consulate buildings. Sahin said one of the victims died at a hospital and that the attacker was among the dead.

The private Dogan news agency said at least three of the injured are Israeli nationals, and that the wounded included two children. Also, private NTV said at least one Iranian was among the injured.

The Israeli foreign ministry confirmed Israeli nationals were injured.

Police swiftly sealed off

the area as ambulances and a forensic team rushed to the scene. Normally packed cafes were either closed or empty, with business owners making frantic calls to check in with their loved ones.

Turkey was already on edge following two recent suicide car bomb attacks in the capital, Ankara, which were claimed by a Kurdish militant group, which is an offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Good day for underdogs in NCAA tourney

Associated Press

The NCAA Tournament Friday saw its first true bracket-buster.

No. 15-seed Middle Tennessee State knocked off No. 2-seed Michigan State, which was a trendy pick to win it all. The Blue Raiders became the eighth No. 15 seed to knock off a No. 2 since seeding began in 1985.

It was a great day for the underdog, as No. 14-seed Stephen F. Austin beat No. 3-seed West Virginia, making it a tough two days for the Big 12, after No. 12-seed Yale eliminated No. 5 Baylor on Thursday.

And the buzzer-beating Northern Iowa Panthers did it again to knock out yet another Big 12 team. A half-court shot downed Texas. At almost the same time, Cincinnati looked like it had dunked its way into overtime against Saint Joseph's, but the shot was a hair too late.

And it's just Day 2.

Midwest Regional

No. 15 Middle Tennessee State 90, No. 2 Michigan State 81: At St. Louis, Middle Tennessee State sent the biggest shock yet through the NCAA Tournament on Friday, topping Michigan State in the first round.

Reggie Upshaw scored 21 points to lead the balanced Blue Raiders (25-9), who shut down player-of-the-year candidate Denzel Valentine. Middle Tennessee never trailed the Spartans (29-6) in one of the biggest upsets since the tournament began seeding teams in 1985.

It was the eighth time a No. 2 seed beat a No. 15, and first since Florida Gulf Coast beat Georgetown in 2013. The Eagles went on to reach the Sweet 16.

The Blue Raiders will try to do the same against No. 10 seed Syracuse on Sunday.

No. 10 Syracuse 70, No. 7 Dayton 51: Malachi Richardson scored 21 points, Syracuse stumped Dayton with its trademark zone and the Orange rolled to a victory in their return to the NCAA Tournament.

Tyler Roberson added 10 points and 18 rebounds for the Orange (19-13), banned from the field last season following an NCAA investigation into academic misconduct and improper benefits.

Charles Cooke led the Flyers (25-8) with 14 points, but he was just 2 of 9 from beyond the arc, as the regular-season Atlantic 10 champions shot 32 percent from the field.

No. 2 Oklahoma 82, No. 15 Cal State Bakersfield 68: At Oklahoma City, Buddy Hield scored 27 points to help Oklahoma defeat Cal State Bakersfield.

The senior guard made 8 of 14 shots, including 3 of 6 three-pointers.

Isaiah Cousins scored 16 points and Jordan Woodard added 15 for the Sooners (26-7), who made 11 of 20 three-pointers and shot 50 percent overall.

Aly Ahmed had 16 points and eight rebounds, Kevin Mays had 14 points and eight rebounds and Dedrick Basile added 13 points for Bakersfield (24-9), the Western Athletic Conference Tournament champions.

The Sooners won, despite making just 15 of 25 free throws.

South Regional

No. 13 Hawaii 77, No. 4 California 66: At Spokane, Wash., Hawaii won its first NCAA Tournament game in school history, when the Warriors ended California's tumultuous week with an upset victory.

The Golden Bears' played without popular assistant coach Yann Hufnagel, dismissed amid allegations of sexual harassment, and the loss of leading scorer Tyrone Wallace, who broke his hand Wednesday in practice. As if the Bears (23-11) needed more obstacles, guard Jabari Bird had back spasms during warmups and never played.

Quincy Smith scored a career-high 19 points, Roderick Bobbitt had 17 points and Stefan Jankovic 16 for the champions of the Big West Conference regular season and tournament. Hawaii (28-5) used a strong first half

from Jankovic to lead by as many as 11, then withstood Jankovic's foul trouble in the second half thanks largely to Smith.

Smith scored 11 points in the second half and keyed Hawaii's surge midway through after California had pulled within one.

No. 5 Maryland 79, No. 12 South Dakota State 74: At Spokane, Wash., Maryland needed a turnover in the closing seconds to ensure it would avoid a place with all the other top seeds that lost in the first round of this topsy-turvy NCAA Tournament, holding off South Dakota State behind a career-high 27 points from Jake Layman.

Deondre Parks fumbled a pass from Keaton Moffitt for the 12th-seeded Jackrabbits (26-8) and Rasheed Sulaimon picked up the ball and stuffed it for the final score. South Dakota State was seeking its first victory in the NCAA Tournament, but was undone by cold shooting in the first half.

No. 7 Iowa 72, No. 10 Temple 70: At New York, Adam Woodberry put back a missed shot at the overtime buzzer to give Iowa a victory over Temple.

With the game tied at 70, Mike Gesell worked his way to the baseline and put up about a 10-foot jumper that missed the rim and went right to Woodberry, who put it in as the red lights around the backboard lit up.

No. 2 Villanova 86, UNC Asheville 56: At New York, Ryan Arcidiacono scored 14 points, including a buzzer-beating three at the end of the first half, and Daniel Ochefu had 17 points inside as Villanova beat UNC Asheville to roll into the second round.

The Wildcats (30-5) are looking to reach the second weekend of the tournament for the first time since their 2009 Final Four run.

East Regional

No. 14 Stephen F. Austin 70, No. 3 West Virginia 56: At New York, Thomas Walkup scored 33 points and Stephen F. Austin faced down West Virginia's full-court pressure with some of its own in-your-face defense, pulling off a rugged first-round upset of the Mountaineers.

The Lumberjacks (28-5) ran the nation's longest winning streak to 21 games and will face six seed Notre Dame on Sunday in the second round.

The Mountaineers (26-9) and Lumberjacks played physical, chest-to-chest defense, contesting not just every shot, but every pass. Neither team shot better than 31 percent.

No. 6 Notre Dame 70, No. 11 Michigan 63: At New York, V.J. Beacham scored 18 points, including the three-pointer that gave Notre Dame the lead for good, and the Fighting Irish beat Michigan.

Notre Dame (22-11) didn't take a lead in the game until Beacham's three with 9:26 left to make it 51-48. From there on there were five lead changes and three ties.

Beacham's three with 4:24 left gave Notre Dame a 62-59 lead, one they never gave up.

No. 7 Wisconsin 47, No. 10 Pittsburgh 43: At St. Louis, Ethan Happ had 15 points and nine rebounds, none bigger than one he pulled down in the closing seconds, as Wisconsin beat Pittsburgh.

Nigel Hayes had 12 points and Vitto Brown scored 11 for the Badgers (21-12), who advanced despite an awful shooting night. Hayes was just 3-for-17 from the field, Bronson Koenig failed to hit a three-pointer for the first time in 44 games and the Badgers finished 4 of 19 from beyond the arc.

It was still enough to knock off the equally cold-shooting Panthers.

Jamel Artis had 13 points to lead Pittsburgh (21-12), which started the season 14-1 before struggling when it hit ACC play.

No. 2 Xavier 71, No. 15 Weber State 53: At St. Louis, James Farr had 18 points and 15 rebounds, fellow big man Jalen Reynolds added 12 points and Xavier pulled away late for a victory over pesky Weber State.

Remy Abell added 11 points and Trevon Bluiett had 10 for the Musketeers (28-5), who never trailed the Big Sky Tournament champs.

Weber State (26-9) was within 54-47 midway through

the second half when Farr and Reynolds, both of them heftier than anybody on the Wildcats' bench, began to impose their will. They managed to power right through Weber State's back line for easy buckets, allowing the Musketeers to slowly draw away.

Joel Bolombo finished with 14 points for the Wildcats. McKay Cannon had 10.

West Regional

No. 1 Oregon 91, No. 16 Holy Cross 52: At Spokane, Wash., carrying the marquee for the underachieving Pac-12, Oregon showed no nerves playing as a top seed and rolled past Holy Cross.

Chris Boucher led Oregon (29-6) with 20 points, while Dillon Brooks and Elgin Cook both added 11 points as the Ducks won their ninth straight and advanced to the round of 32 for the fourth straight season.

With nearly all of the Pac-12 making a quick exit out of the NCAA Tournament, the Ducks used their overwhelming athleticism to quickly build a double-digit lead and never allowed the Crusaders to sniff a potential 16-seed upset. Boucher slammed a trio of lob dunks in the first 12 minutes and the expected blowout quickly developed.

Robert Champion led Holy Cross (15-20) with 22 points off the bench.

No. 8 Saint Joseph's 78, No. 9 Cincinnati 76: At Spokane, Wash., Isaiah Miles sank a three-pointer with 9 seconds left, and a dunk at the buzzer by Cincinnati was waved off to lift Saint Joseph's to a win over the Bearcats.

Octavius Ellis appeared to tie the game with his dunk as time expired, but officials after a lengthy review determined that the shot came too late.

DeAndre Bembry scored 23 points and Miles finished with 19 to lead eighth-seeded Saint Joseph's (28-7).

No. 3 Texas A&M 92, No. 14 Green Bay 65: At Oklahoma City, Danuel House scored 20 points as Texas A&M pulled away in the second half to win its first NCAA Tournament game since 2010 with a first-round victory over Green Bay.

The third-seeded Aggies (27-8) trailed by as many as eight points in the first half before using a 26-9 first-half run to take control on the way to a comfortable victory.

House was 8 of 12 from the field and hit a pair of three-pointers for Texas A&M, which shot 56.1 percent (32 of 57) in the win.

Khalil Small scored a career-high 22 points to lead the Horizon League Tournament champion Phoenix (23-13), who were making their first tournament appearance in 20 years.

No. 11 Northern Iowa 75, No. 6 Texas 72: At Oklahoma City, Paul Jespersion banked in a halfcourt shot at the buzzer to give Northern Iowa a win over Texas.

Northern Iowa passed the ball in under its basket after Isaiah Taylor tied the game on a layup with 2.7 seconds to play. Jespersion caught the ball, took a few dribbles and heaved.

Wes Washpun scored 17 points, Jeremy Morgan scored 16 and Jespersion added 14 for the Panthers (23-12), who claimed their fifth NCAA Tournament win in school history.

Taylor scored 22 points, Eric Davis Jr. scored 13 and Javan Felix added 12 for the Longhorns (20-13).

No. 10 VCU 75, No. 7 Oregon State 67: At Oklahoma City, JeQuan Lewis had 21 points, eight assists and seven rebounds as Virginia Commonwealth won its first NCAA Tournament game since 2013 with a first-round victory over Oregon State.

The tournament appearance is the sixth straight for VCU (25-10), and the experience showed as the Rams led by eight points at halftime and held off a charge by the Beavers in the second half.

Mo Alie-Cox added 20 points and was 7 of 8 from the field in the win, while Melvin Johnson also finished in double figures with 12 points.

Gary Payton II scored 19 points to lead the Beavers (19-13), who were making their first tournament appearance in 26 years, while Derrick Bruce finished with 15 and Drew Eubanks 13.



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Capitals cool off streaking Predators

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When T.J. Oshie didn't hear the goal horn, he second-guessed if he actually scored. The delayed reaction shouldn't have been a surprise since only Oshie saw the no-look pass from Evgeny Kuznetsov behind the net and thought to himself, "How'd he just do that?"

Seeing is believing with Kuznetsov, who had three magnificent assists as the Washington Capitals cooled off the hottest team in the NHL by beating the Nashville Predators 4-1 Friday night. Kuznetsov called it "luck," but that was hardly the explanation for the budding star's three-assist performance that put him in a tie for third in the league in scoring.

"I feel comfortable when we get two points," said Kuznetsov, who has 53 assists and 20 goals for 73 points through 70 games. "I just give the puck to my (line-mates) and they have to score."

Kuznetsov makes that an easy task. He assisted on the first of Daniel Winnik's two goals against Nashville, went behind the back to Oshie and also set up Andre Burakovsky in front.

"Playing with Kuz, that's kind of the stuff you have to expect," Oshie said. "He sees things that maybe only a handful of players in the league can see."

Winnik's goals were his first with the Capitals since they acquired the forward from Toronto at the trade deadline. He had defenseman Dmitry Orlov and Kuznetsov to thank for setting him up.

"I don't think he gets enough recognition around the league, to be honest," Winnik said of Kuznetsov. "I knew he was a good center, but I didn't know he was this good when I came here. He showed all his passing skills tonight, that's for

sure."

Thanks to Kuznetsov's brilliance, NHL-leading Washington picked up its first multi-goal victory since Feb. 16. It was an impressive showing against the Predators, who lost for just the second time in regulation in their past 18 games.

"Just a little slow," Nashville captain Shea Weber said. "They were a little better than us tonight, and we couldn't really get anything going offensively."

Former Capitals prospect Filip Forsberg scored a power-play goal for Nashville, which was unable to gain ground on the defending Stanley Cup-champion Chicago Blackhawks in the Central Division. Backup goaltender Carter Hutton made 26 saves in the second half of back-to-back games.

"Our heart was in the right place," Predators coach Peter Laviolette said. "Our legs were a little bit behind, but in the third period, we kept pushing, we kept trying, we never quit."

Neither did the Capitals. Coach Barry Trotz called the first period perhaps his team's best of the season because Washington shut down Nashville's quick-start, quick-strike attack.

The Capitals allowed the first goal for the sixth time in seven games when Forsberg scored early in the second but roared back. Braden Holtby was solid in stopping 20 of the 21 shots he faced to register his 43rd victory and move another step closer to Martin Brodeur's single-season record.

With two more points, Washington moved closer to clinching the Metropolitan Division, the top seed in the Eastern Conference and the Presidents' Trophy, which comes with home-ice advantage throughout the playoffs.

With such a substantial lead atop the

standings, that all seems inevitable, so Trotz said the Capitals want to start "building" their game for the playoffs.

"Maybe we got a little complacent for a bit with our point situation," Winnik said, "but we know leading down this final 12 games that it's going to be playoff hockey, and we've got to get ourselves prepared for what's going to happen at the end of the regular season."

Blackhawks 4, Jets 0: Scott Darling made 28 saves for his first shutout of the season, Andrew Ladd scored against his former team and Chicago ended a four-game losing streak with a victory over host Winnipeg.

Patrick Kane and Marian Hossa opened the scoring 26 seconds apart late in the second period, and Tomas Fleischmann also had a goal for the Blackhawks. It was Ladd's first appearance in Winnipeg since the former Jets captain was traded to Chicago on Feb. 25.

Darling earned the second shutout of his two-year career with the Blackhawks in his 20th game of the season.

Ondrej Pavelec turned aside 32 shots for Winnipeg, which started a four-game homestand.

Sabres 3, Senators 1: Rookie Sam Reinhart had a goal and an assist and host Buffalo defeated Ottawa.

Nick Deslauriers and Zach Bogosian also scored for Buffalo, and Chad Johnson made 32 saves.

Alex Chiasson scored for the Senators, who got 31 stops from Craig Anderson.

A third consecutive road loss dimmed the Senators' playoff hopes. Having won two straight at home entering Friday, Ottawa remained seven points behind Detroit for the final wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

Oilers 2, Canucks 0: Cam Talbot made 40 saves for his third shutout of the season, leading Edmonton over visiting Vancouver.

Jordan Eberle and Matt Hendricks scored for the Oilers, who have won two in a row and seven of their last 11. Talbot has 11 career shutouts.

Jacob Markstrom stopped 23 of 25 shots for the Canucks, who have lost three in a row.

It appeared Vancouver might have gotten a goal five minutes into the second period as a puck slipped under Talbot while defenseman Darnell Nurse and the Canucks' Brendan Gaunce crashed into the net. It didn't count after a video review showed the incidental contact with Talbot.

Avalanche 4, Flames 3 (SO): Mikkel Boedker scored the only goal of the shootout, lifting Colorado past host Calgary.

As the second shooter for Colorado, Boedker made a nifty deke to beat Joni Ortio. That left it up to goalie Semyon Varlamov, and he ended it with a stop on Sean Monahan. Varlamov made 30 saves.

Erik Johnson, Tyson Barrie and Carl Soderberg scored for Colorado in regulation.

Ducks 4, Bruins 0: Frederik Andersen made 38 saves to earn his fifth career shutout in Anaheim's win over visiting Boston.

Jamie McGinn, Ryan Kesler, Hampus Lindholm and Rickard Rakell scored for Anaheim, which has earned a point in 11 of its last 12 home games.

Jonas Gustavsson stopped 22 shots for the Bruins, who dropped consecutive games for the first time since Jan. 11-13.

Cavaliers top Magic, clinch spot in playoffs

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Kyrie Irving scored 26 points and LeBron James had 18, including a layup and pair of free throws down the stretch to help Cleveland hold off Orlando 109-103 and clinch a playoff spot.

Channing Frye came off the bench to make four three-pointers and score 14 against his old team as the Cavs beat the Magic for the 14th consecutive time. A rested James returned to the lineup after taking off Wednesday's home victory over Dallas and finished 6-of-15 shooting with eight assists and seven rebounds.

Victor Oladipo had a career-high 45 points for Orlando, but only scored six in the fourth quarter. The last of his six three-pointers trimmed Cleveland's lead to 107-103 before James made two free throws to put it away.

Thunder 111, 76ers 97: Russell Westbrook recorded his league-leading 13th triple-double with 20 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists, and Kevin Durant had 26 points and 13 boards to lead Oklahoma City to a victory over host Philadelphia.

Westbrook's 13 triple-doubles tie Grant Hill (1996-97) and Jason Kidd (2007-08) for most in a season over the last 25 years. Westbrook, appropriately, reached the triple-double by assisting Durant on a layup with 4:14 left in the game.

Warriors 130, Mavericks 112: Stephen Curry had several dazzling plays on his way to 31 points, fellow Splash Brother Klay Thompson scored 39 and visiting Golden State tuned up for Saturday's showdown in San Antonio with a victory over Dallas.

Raptors 105, Celtics 91: Kyle Lowry scored 32 points, Luis Scola had all of his 17 in the first quarter and host Toronto beat Boston.

Pistons 115, Kings 108: Marcus Morris scored 20 of his 24 points in the first half, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope made a couple big three-pointers in the fourth quarter to lift Detroit over visiting Sacramento.

Trail Blazers 117, Pelicans 112: Damian Lillard scored 33 points, getting up from a vicious Kendrick Perkins forearm to help visiting Portland recover from a blown 20-point lead and finish off a feisty New Orleans squad.

Rockets 116, Timberwolves 111: James Harden had 29 points and 14 assists as Houston bounced back from an ugly loss to beat visiting Minnesota.

Suns 95, Lakers 90: Brandon Knight scored nine of his 22 points in the fourth quarter after Phoenix nearly blew a 19-point lead, and the Suns hung on to beat host Los Angeles.

Ravens' Walker dies from injuries sustained in crash

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Baltimore Ravens cornerback Tray Walker, who played one season in the NFL, died Friday of injuries from a dirt bike crash in Miami.

His godmother confirmed the 23-year-old Walker's death, according to the Ravens.

Walker was riding a Honda dirt bike with no lights and wearing dark clothing when he collided with a Ford Escape on Thursday night, Miami-Dade Police said. He had been in Jackson Memorial Hospital in critical condition.

A fourth-round 2015 draft pick, Walker played in eight games last season, mostly on special teams.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh wrote a heart-felt letter to his players Friday before Walker died. Later, in a statement, Harbaugh said, "Tray was a young man with a good and kind heart. He was humble and loved everything about being part of the Ravens' team. He loved his teammates — the practice and the preparation — and that showed every day. ... I'll never forget that smile."

General manager Ozzie Newsome, who drafted Walker, said, "Tray was one of the most humble persons we brought in for a pre-draft visit. That was striking. After we drafted him, he and his family were so excited to receive the call that he was about to become a Raven. It was one of the calls I will always remember. There

was such joy for Tray and his family."

Walker made only one tackle with Baltimore, but he made a lasting impression on those around him.

"Tray was a young man who was full of energy and promise," quarterback Joe Flacco said. "This is very hard to wrap my head around, and I am devastated."

Walker played high school football at Miami Northwestern High School before enjoying a four-year career with Texas Southern. He was second-team All-Southwestern Athletic Conference in 2014.

"Tray had a hard shell," Ravens cornerback Jimmy Smith said, "but once you broke through that, you found a person who was learning how to become a man and was so eager to be a great person and professional. I am heartbroken for his family."

In other NFL news:

■ Two people with knowledge of the agreement say the Dallas Cowboys have signed defensive end Benson Mayowa, a restricted free agent, to an offer sheet.

The Oakland Raiders have five days to match the three-year, \$8.55 million deal reached Friday.

■ The Buffalo Bills have signed safety Robert Blanton, who spent the past four seasons with the Minnesota Vikings.

■ The New England Patriots announced the signings of veteran running back Donald Brown, defensive end Chris Long and linebacker Shea McClellin on Friday.