

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Trump address: GOP cheers, Dems grumble

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump gave GOP congressional leaders a rallying cry and even a road map as they try to push through a sweeping and divisive agenda on health care, taxes and more.

In his first address to a joint session of Congress, Trump said largely what GOP leaders were hoping to hear Tuesday night, staying on-message and talking in optimistic tones, even weighing in at one point to settle a brewing dispute over how to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday morning that Trump showed Congress and the nation his “broad shoulders, big heart, reaching out, focusing on the future.” Pence spoke on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.”

House Speaker Paul Ryan declared the speech a “home run,” pointing to Trump’s

embrace for the first time of tax credits — a central element in the Republican plan to replace former President Barack Obama’s health care law.

Those tax credits have sparked a fierce conservative backlash in recent days, imperiling GOP efforts to make good on the party’s long-stated promise to get rid of the health law and put something better in its place. Republicans had been unsure how far Trump would go in backing their plan, and many were elated at what they heard.

It remains to be seen whether Trump’s endorsement of refundable tax credits will be enough to tame rebellious conservatives in the House and Senate who have criticized them as a costly new entitlement.

Trump also addressed taxes, another major issue that is dividing Congress. After weeks of sending mixed signals, he provided hope to House Republican lead-

ers pushing a tax overhaul that would tax imports but not exports. But he stopped short of explicitly endorsing the proposal.

Rewriting health care and overhauling the tax code are the twin pillars of the Republican-run Congress’ legislative platform this year and GOP lawmakers have been eager for guidance from the president on both counts.

Democrats, accustomed to jeering at Trump as he veers off message, advances false claims or resorts to personal insults, argued that in delivering a speech that did none of those things, Trump gave a wrong impression of how he has comported himself as president after five weeks in office.

“President Trump’s speech had an air of unreality because what he said tonight was so different than how he has governed in the first 40 days,” said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

## Trump touts upped DOD spending; some want more

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — In his first address to Congress, President Donald Trump on Tuesday touted his plans to build up the military with more spending, a promise he has pursued since his campaign.

Trump told the gathering of House and Senate lawmakers that his proposed \$54 billion increase unveiled this week would provide the tools that the services need to deter adversaries and win wars, and the announcement follows stark assessments of military readiness from Pentagon leaders.

“I am sending the Congress a budget that rebuilds the military, eliminates the defense sequester, and calls for one of the largest increases in national defense spending in American history,” Trump said during the nighttime address.

But lawmakers in his own party have questioned whether Trump’s proposed \$603 billion base defense budget is enough to reverse years of fiscal belt-tight-

ening and declining readiness.

The Republican chairmen of Congress’ two armed services committees — Sen. John McCain of Arizona and Rep. Mac Thornberry of Texas — are pushing for a \$640 billion base defense budget that they say would shore up overburdened armed forces.

Trump’s proposal would boost the defense budget by \$54 billion over the so-called sequester spending cap of \$549 billion mandated for 2018 by the Budget Control Act, a law passed by Congress six years ago.

Trump’s hike appears large when compared to the potential budget cap but is actually a modest 4 percent increase in the projected Defense Department budget, according to an analysis by Michael O’Hanlon, senior fellow at the liberal-leaning Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

That is because Congress has cut deals in recent years to ensure the department has not faced sequester-level caps since 2013, O’Hanlon said in a Brookings podcast posted before

Trump’s address Tuesday.

“Trump’s not actually increasing by \$54 billion above where we had been or where Obama had projected. He’s increasing by more like \$20 billion relative to where Obama had been or where Obama had projected,” O’Hanlon said in a Brookings podcast. “In other words, it’s not that big of an increase.”

The budget amount is a rough outline of what the White House thinks the military will need and it did not immediately provide specifics on how the money would be spent. Details are expected to be fleshed out as the Defense Department works through the proposal and the president releases a full budget in May.

Trump has proposed major and pricey increases in the size of the military, including bigger Army and Marine Corps combat forces and a 350-ship Navy.

“This is not nearly enough money to do that,” O’Hanlon said. “So, Trump comes in under-funding his own proposal, if you will.”

The Center for a New Ameri-

can Security, a bipartisan think tank, said Trump’s increase is only an “opening move” in negotiations with McCain, Thornberry and other members of Congress, and that the administration is expected to make another supplemental budget request of up to \$30 billion for the current year.

The services’ vice chiefs testified last month that the military is desperately in need of new equipment, maintenance and training after years of flat or declining defense spending. Much of the decreases have been due to the end of large-scale ground operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the caps on federal spending imposed by Congress.

“A plus-up in the defense budget is sorely needed to repair the harmful effects of the [Budget Control Act] on military readiness and modernization,” according to a joint statement by Paul Scharre, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and Adam Routh, a research associate.

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# AF mulls throwback 'light-attack' planes

*The Washington Post*

The U.S. Air Force, faced with a potentially protracted war against the Islamic State group, aging fighter jets and a shrinking force of pilots, is examining the adoption of a new fleet of "light-attack" planes that are both a throwback to earlier U.S. operations and a current staple of militaries in South America and the Middle East.

The aircraft would be able to carry out airstrikes against the Islamic State group and other militants for less money than the F-16 Fighting Falcon or the F/A-18 Super Hornet. Options available could include Embraer's A-29 Super Tucano propeller plane, which the United States has delivered to Afghanistan and other allies, and Beechcraft's AT-6, a version of which the U.S. military already uses in pilot training.

Air Force generals have discussed the proposal several times in recent weeks, saying that the planes could supplement existing aircraft, including drones, in regions where there is no enemy capable of shooting down U.S. planes.

Gen. David Goldfein, the service's top officer, said the proposal is part of an ongoing dialogue that dates back years and could soon include an experiment in which private companies demonstrate what the planes can do.

"I'm not interested in something that requires a lot of research and development here," Goldfein said during a recent appearance at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "I'm looking for something that I can get at right now, commercial, off the shelf, low-cost, that can operate in an uncontested environment, that can deliver the capabilities that we need, that can also be something that perhaps our allies and partners that are in this fight with us" use.

The experiment will follow related efforts in Iraq and the United States. In the most recent, U.S. Central Command deployed two Vietnam-era, twin-engine OV-10G Broncos on loan from NASA to Iraq in 2015, flying them in missions against the Islamic State group to assess how light-attack planes might help in the air war.

The experiment was described by Navy Capt. Andy Walton in an article last year in *Proceedings Magazine*, a publication of the U.S. Naval Institute. He detailed one mission over Iraq in an OV-10G in which he and a colleague observed militants for hours as they traveled down the Tigris River in canoes, and then fired on them with laser-guided rockets.

The use of the planes was the latest step in a program called Combat Dragon II, which dates back nearly a decade and involves Special Operations Command. Goldfein cited it recently, noting that some testing was carried out when he was commander of Air Forces Central Command from August 2011 to July 2013. One of his bosses at the time was Marine Gen. Jim Mattis, now defense secretary, who supported the program as chief of U.S. Central Command.

Air Force officials estimate that the cost of flying a propeller plane like the A-29 or AT-6 would be a few thousand dollars per hour. In comparison, it costs about \$18,000 per hour to fly the A-10 attack jet.

## Navy, allies carry out humanitarian mission

*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy is joining several allies in offering humanitarian assistance in South Asia and the Western Pacific during the 12th annual Pacific Partnership mission.

First-time participant Sri Lanka joins Malaysia and Vietnam to host the mission, which kicked off Wednesday and includes disaster preparedness drills, civil engineering projects and community health programs, a Navy statement said.

The mission will include about 200 military and civilian personnel embarked aboard the USNS Fall River, an expeditionary fast transport ship led by the deputy commander and staff of Coastal Riverine Group 1. The ship will include workers from the U.S., Australia, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

Pacific Partnership began in response to the 2004 tsunami

that devastated parts of Southeast Asia. It has since turned into an exercise emphasizing partnerships and civil-military exchanges in the region.

The Sri Lankan leg is the first Pacific Partnership mission within South Asia, the statement said.

The U.S. has taken an increasing interest in Indian Ocean operations, with Pacific Command chief Adm. Harry Harris noting during a January speech in New Delhi that the Navy and India were sharing surveillance information on Chinese subs patrolling the region.

China has offered Sri Lanka substantial loans in recent years amid greater use of its ports. A plan that would give China an 80 percent ownership stake in Hambantota port — near the site of some Pacific Partnership projects — has been protested over fears of Sri Lanka losing autonomy, according to a recent *Forbes* report.

## US, South Korea kick off Foal Eagle drills

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis vowed to defeat any attack on the United States or its allies as Washington and Seoul kicked off annual war games that are a major source of tension with the North.

Foal Eagle — a field-training exercise involving ground, air, naval and special operations forces — began Wednesday amid a spike in tensions after North Korea test-fired an intermediate-range missile on Feb. 12. Pyongyang strongly objects to such drills, which it considers a rehearsal for an invasion despite Washington's insistence they are defensive in nature.

U.S. Forces Korea said the exercise, which is expected to last for about two months, demonstrates a commitment to the alliance "and enhances the combat readiness, flexibility, and capa-

bilities of the Alliance." USFK officials did not immediately provide more details.

About 10,000 U.S. service-members are participating in the exercise, including 3,500 who are usually stationed off the divided peninsula, the public affairs office said.

It will coincide with a computer-simulated command post exercise known as Key Resolve, due to begin in mid-March.

Mattis, who made South Korea his first stop on his first trip abroad as defense secretary last month, reiterated the U.S. commitment to the defense of its ally in a phone call Wednesday with his South Korean counterpart, Han Min-koo.

"He further emphasized that any attack on the United States or its allies will be defeated, and any use of nuclear weapons will be met with a response that is effective and overwhelming," Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis said in a readout of the call.



# Army makes history by putting Muslim in charge of 14,000 GIs' spiritual needs

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — In January, Lt. Col. Khallid Shabazz received the call every Army chaplain dreams of, the call that validates years of intense study and hard work toward keeping the U.S. military in good spiritual health.

He was offered the job of chaplain for an entire division, an honor for anyone in his field but a milestone in his case. After a ceremony this summer, Shabazz will become the first Muslim division-level chaplain in the history of the U.S. military — a Muslim spiritual leader for more than 14,000 mostly Christian soldiers.

Shabazz, who's dedicated his life to working across religious lines, found it hard to keep calm as he received the news at his desk on Joint Base Lewis-McChord near Tacoma, Wash.

"I'm on the phone saying, 'Thank you, I appreciate it. I'll serve honorably,' and then I hang up the phone and I'm jumping all around like a little kid," Shabazz, 48, recalled in interviews in February. "I was running around the office saying, al hamdulillah, al hamdulillah, praise be to God!"

To get a sense of what a long shot this might've seemed like to Shabazz, consider the numbers: He's one of only 10 Muslim chaplains in the entire U.S. military; of the Army's 1,400 or so chaplains, just five are Muslim.

With four months until the

ceremony that will make him chaplain of the Army's 7th Infantry Division at Lewis-McChord, Shabazz has plenty of time to think about taking on such a visible role in an age of open anti-Muslim hostility. He'd like to think his transition will be as smooth as those of his Christian peers, but he knows that not everyone will welcome him as warmly as the senior officers who gave him a standing ovation when the news was announced at a meeting on base.

"For me, a regular old guy from Louisiana, I look to the heavens and say, 'Why me?'" Shabazz said. "As the day gets closer, I'm sure I'll have more anxiety and think about it more. I'm extremely proud to have been on this journey for 20 years and never would've imagined that I'd be chosen to be the first."

Shabazz came into the world as Michael Barnes, born into a large Lutheran family in Alexandria, La.

While stationed in Baumholder, Germany, Shabazz worked the motor pool with a Muslim soldier who annoyed other troops with his boasts about the virtues of Islam. Shabazz, who back then was still Christian, grew fed up and decided "to cut him down to size." He challenged the Muslim to a public debate on the merits of their respective religions.

On the afternoon of the showdown, Shabazz recalled, he was ready to pounce, but the Muslim

opponent "kind of blindsided me with some facts," launching into a powerful, persuasive defense of his faith that put Islam in a whole new light.

Shabazz began studying Islam on his own, determined to correct the lack of knowledge revealed in his debate with the Muslim soldier. After two years, Michael Barnes, the devout Christian reared in a Louisiana church, decided to convert to Islam, taking the name Khallid Shabazz to complete his transformation.

Shabazz's switch in faiths didn't exactly go smoothly with the military.

On one of the toughest days, Shabazz was exhausted from a series of 12-hour shifts and hungry because of the lack of pork-free meals. Sitting outside on an M109 howitzer, he felt his frustration spill out in tears.

A passing chaplain noticed Shabazz's distress and stopped. In an hourlong impromptu ministry session, the chaplain let Shabazz pour his heart out about his struggle to carve a space for himself in the military. After listening, Shabazz said, the chaplain mentioned that the Army had recently received its first active-duty Muslim chaplain. Would that kind of path interest Shabazz?

"I'm telling you, it was like a revelation from God," Shabazz recalled. "Once it came out of his mouth, I said, 'That is my calling. That is what I want to do for the rest of my life.'"

# Freeze reaches K-town child care

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Families seeking on-base child care in the Kaiserslautern area — home to the largest U.S. military community overseas — may be soon feeling the pinch of the federal civilian hiring freeze.

Army and Air Force officials said this week they've had to make some adjustments to their child care programs because of the hiring freeze. Officials with U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz said in a statement Tuesday that, effective immediately, the garrison's Child and Youth Services programs had stopped offering hourly care, though existing reservations would still be honored. The garrison has also put an immediate freeze on child care wait lists and will not fill vacant spaces, the garrison's statement said.

The program changes are due to the inability to fill staff vacancies for child care services as a result of the hiring freeze.

President Donald Trump instituted an immediate, 90-day governmentwide hiring freeze on Jan. 23. Though exemptions were later allowed for key positions identified in the military, including child care workers, base installations must request higher-level exemptions for those positions. It's not clear why those waivers are taking so long to get approved.

Two Army bases last week — in Wiesbaden and Fort Knox, Ky. — announced similar reductions in child care services. The Army immediately approved exemptions for a combined 75 positions at those bases, but child care programs were still expected to be short-staffed because of the time needed to hire workers.

# Afghan security forces targeted in attacks

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Suicide bombers struck Afghan security forces in separate attacks in the capital on Wednesday, killing at least 15 people and injuring dozens, officials said.

A car bomb targeting a police station in western Kabul detonated about 12:30 p.m., said Najib Danish, the Interior Ministry's deputy spokesman. He said a separate suicide bomber attacked an office of Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security, in an eastern district about the same time. The bombings were followed by gunfire between attackers and

security forces.

Taliban insurgents claimed responsibility, saying they also hit a military academy and recruitment center in the eastern part of the city.

Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said 15 people were killed and 50 were wounded. Schoolchildren were among the casualties, he said.

"It's just shameful," said Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland, the spokesman for U.S. and NATO forces. "When we see these types of events, it absolutely reaffirms what it is we are here to do."

President Ashraf Ghani also condemned the attacks, saying they were likely conducted to boost morale among Taliban fighters following recent battlefield setbacks.



# Revised ban may exclude Iraq

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's new immigration order will remove Iraq from the list of countries whose citizens face a temporary U.S. travel ban, U.S. officials say, citing the latest draft in circulation. Trump is expected to sign the executive order in the coming days.

Four officials told The Associated Press that the decision followed pressure from the Pentagon and State Department, which had urged the White House to reconsider Iraq's inclusion on the list given its key role in fighting the Islamic State group.

Citizens of six other predominantly Muslim countries — Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — will remain on the travel ban list, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the order before it is signed. Those bans are effective for 90 days.

The new order includes other changes as well. The officials said the 12-page document no

longer singles out Syrian refugees for an indefinite ban and instead includes them as part of a general, 120-day suspension of new refugee admissions.

The officials also said the order won't include any explicit exemption for religious minorities in the countries targeted by the travel ban. Critics had accused the administration of adding such language to help Christians get into the United States while excluding Muslims.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

Trump signed his original executive order in late January. It sparked immediate confusion, panic and outrage as some travelers were detained in U.S. airports before being sent back overseas and others were barred from boarding flights at foreign airports.

The federal government initially blocked U.S. green card holders before offering those legal residents special permission to come into the country. It finally decided the order didn't apply to them.

The State Department provisionally revoked roughly 60,000 valid visas in all before a federal judge in Washington state blocked the government from carrying out the ban. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that decision.

Under the revised order, officials said, all existing visas will be honored.

In his first address to a joint session of Congress, Trump on Tuesday evening defended his effort.

"We will shortly take new steps to keep our nation safe and to keep out those who would do us harm," he said.

After Trump signed the original order, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi refuted the ban and said he would consider reciprocal measures. Many Iraqi lawmakers urged the government to ban Americans from Iraq in response, despite the potential effects that might have on the anti-Islamic State group fight.

Al-Abadi then met with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in Baghdad this month and underscored the U.S.-Iraqi partnership.

# 2 charged in poisoning in Malaysia

Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Appearing calm and solemn, two young women accused of smearing VX nerve agent on Kim Jong Nam, the estranged half brother of North Korea's leader, were charged with murder Wednesday.

The women, who arrived in court under the protection of masked special forces carrying machine guns, are at the center of a bizarre killing at a busy Kuala Lumpur airport terminal. Many speculate the attack was orchestrated by North Korea, but Pyongyang denies any role.

"I understand but I am not guilty," Vietnamese suspect Doan Thi Huong told the court in English after the murder charge was read. She looked briefly at the public gallery as she was led out and bowed her head.

The other suspect, Indonesian Siti Aisyah, nodded as her translator told her, "You are accused of murdering a North Korean man at the departure hall" of Kuala Lumpur International Airport. She was dressed in a red T-shirt and jeans.

The women did not enter pleas because the magistrate court where they appeared has no jurisdiction over a murder case. Lead prosecutor Iskander Ahmad told the court he will ask for the case to be transferred to a higher court and for both women to be tried together.

Each faces a mandatory death sentence if convicted. Both women were wearing bulletproof vests as they were escorted from the court to Kajang Prison.

Kim Jong Nam was attacked as he waited for his flight home to Macau on Feb. 13. He died shortly after two women went up behind him and wiped something onto his face.

Both women have reportedly said they thought they were part of a prank TV show playing harmless tricks on unsuspecting passengers. Aisyah told authorities she was paid the equivalent of \$90.

# Storms kill 3, move eastward

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A springlike storm system that killed at least three people as it spawned tornadoes and damaged dozens of homes in the central U.S. rumbled eastward Wednesday, putting about 95 million people in its path, forecasters said.

The compact but strong storms, known as supercells, raked parts of Arkansas, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee on Tuesday and Wednesday. Meanwhile, wind-whipped wildfires destroyed homes in Texas.

Forecasters with the Storm Prediction Center said severe thunderstorms that could spawn tornadoes were expected

in parts of Kentucky and Tennessee on Wednesday morning before moving into mid-Atlantic states and southern New England. New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta and Washington could also be affected.

The storm system killed at least two people in Illinois and one in Missouri. In Arkansas, emergency managers said 10 to 15 people were injured in White County, about 45 miles northeast of Little Rock, and minor injuries were reported at a prison in the northeastern part of the state.

In Illinois, state Emergency Management Agency spokeswoman Patti Thompson said a person was killed by a tree that was uprooted by a tornado in

Ottawa, about 70 miles southwest of Chicago. Minor injuries were also reported at a nursing home there. Thompson said it wasn't known how many people were hurt by the storm, but that it was relatively few.

About 225 miles south of Ottawa, near Crossville, Ill., an apparent tornado struck a building near a house, killing a 71-year-old man and injuring his wife, White County Coroner Chris Marsh said.

Another person was killed when a tornado ripped through Perry County, Mo., about 80 miles south of St. Louis. Eight to 10 homes near the small town of Perryville were badly damaged and winds were so strong that several vehicles were blown off of Interstate 55.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Climber pleads guilty to scaling Trump Tower

**NY** NEW YORK — A man who scaled Trump Tower in New York City in August has pleaded guilty to reckless endangerment and disorderly conduct.

A judge told Stephen Rogata, 19, of Great Falls, Va., on Monday that he's prohibited from any contact with President Donald Trump. The Daily News said that includes mail, Facebook and Twitter.

Rogata used suction cups, a harness and ropes to climb from the fifth floor to the 21st floor when Trump was the Republican presidential nominee. Trump lived in Trump Tower but wasn't there at the time.

As part of his plea agreement, Rogata must continue mental health treatment and go to school or work.

## Taco truck offers lunch to stranded drivers

**WA** SEATTLE — A taco truck that became stranded in a massive Seattle traffic jam came to the rescue of hungry drivers by opening up and serving lunch on the interstate.

A tanker truck carrying propane rolled over on Seattle's Interstate 5 on Monday morning, shutting area roads for about eight hours amid concerns about a hazardous materials spill.

While waiting in the jam, Rachel McQuade told the Seattle Times she spotted someone walking back to her car with a to-go box of food. She said she then headed over to the Tacos El Tajin truck herself and ordered two steak and two chicken tacos.

El Tajin owner Thomas Lopez told the newspaper that he and his employees "are ready to serve food everywhere."

## Driver flees crash, dies in culvert where he hid

**OH** DAYTON — A driver mysteriously died in a drainage culvert where he hid after a crash in rural southeastern Ohio and refused to leave when troopers called out to him, according to the State Highway Patrol.

Investigators aren't sure why Chuck Dickens Jr., 26, fled and hid, how he died or why he was even in Belmont County, the Dayton Daily News reported.

Dickens was from Huber Heights, near Dayton on the opposite side of the state, Lt. James Faunda said. He said Dickens had no criminal history except a traffic violation.

Dickens ran down a steep hill to the culvert after sideswiping a vehicle on Interstate 70 on Sunday morning, according to the patrol. Troopers called out to him and said he initially replied but eventually stopped responding.

A robot sent in with a camera showed him face-down in water, and a dive team removed his body.

## Man accused of killing brother in chore dispute

**MO** ST. LOUIS — A St. Louis man is accused of killing his brother in a dispute over household duties.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Antwain Hyche-El, 48, is charged with first-degree murder in the death of his brother, Larry Barnes, 51.

The shooting happened Sunday. Police said Hyche-El arrived at the home the men shared and they began arguing in the kitchen. Court documents say Hyche-El went to a bedroom, returned and shot Barnes several times.

Hyche-El was arrested at the scene and is jailed without bond.

## Man accused of biting victim's face at mall

**VA** MCLEAN — A northern Virginia man is accused of biting another man's face after uttering anti-Muslim slurs in a parking lot of one of the busiest shopping malls in the region last November.

Fairfax County police said in a statement that Robin McGreer, 35, was arrested Monday and charged with bias-related malicious bodily injury.

Investigators said McGreer approached a 31-year-old man on Nov. 27 in the lot at Tysons Corner Center, started a conversation and threatened him with racial insults.

The two started fighting, and police said McGreer bit the victim in the face before fleeing.

## Bourbon takes lead at this full-course dinner

**CT** STAMFORD — Del Frisco's Grille in Stamford tried something new one evening a few weeks ago: It hosted a full-course bourbon dinner.

About 17 guests paid \$75 for the experience, which began with chicken liver pate paired with a fig sour cocktail (a large one, over ice, in a bucket glass) and ended with a sticky toffee cake served with a snifter of bourbon-laced Kentucky coffee.

But don't presume the guests just drank bourbon throughout the dinner, the way they might wine. They also ate bourbon, because each of the courses was prepared using bourbon at one stage or another.

A good example, as explained later by concept chef Shawn Quinn, was the chicken liver appetizer, which came topped with onion jelly. "There was bourbon in the jelly," Quinn said. "We glazed it with Maker's Mark, so when you were taking a bite, it

was matching the cocktail you were drinking."

## Tomahawk used to defend against intruder

**VT** BARRE — Police said a homeowner in Barre used a tomahawk to fight off a homeless intruder who walked into his home and pointed a rifle at him.

The Times Argues reported that Kenneth Pecor, 70, pleaded not guilty Monday to aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, trespassing and mischief. He told police he had been living in the woods near the home for several days before Sunday's incident.

The homeowner told police Pecor came into the home and threatened him and his wife with the rifle. He said he and Pecor struggled over the rifle and that he hit Pecor several times in the head with the tomahawk.

## Thief breaks into coin machine with track hoe

**IL** O'FALLON — An early morning thief in southwestern Illinois took an 80,000-pound track hoe from a road construction project to break open a coin machine at a car wash.

The Belleville News-Democrat reported that the burglary Sunday netted about \$50 in coins and caused thousands of dollars in damage to the building in O'Fallon.

Easy Street Car Wash owner Bill Spiller said he doesn't know the exact cost of the damage.

The equipment was stolen from David Baxmeyer, president of Baxmeyer Construction. He said the machine was locked and that the person responsible for moving it had to have had a key to operate it.

From wire reports

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# Cubs' Davis adjusts to new role, team

Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — Wade Davis was a promising starting pitcher when he made his major league debut for Joe Maddon and the Tampa Bay Rays almost eight years ago. Then he was a reliever, and then a starter again and then a reliever.

Now he gets the ball from Maddon once again — only this time as the closer for the Chicago Cubs.

Much has changed for Davis over the years, and not much at the same time.

"The only way he's changed is he is a relief pitcher," a chuckling Maddon said. "He was a starter when I first met him. He's the same cat. He's very deliberate in his methods and even conversationally."

That's just fine with Maddon, who is hoping for more of the same from Davis after a dominant run with Kansas City. While the Dodgers, Giants and Yankees spent big money on closers over the winter, the World Series champions acquired Davis in a trade with the Royals for outfielder Jorge Soler.

So far, the transition looks like one of Davis' relief appearances: smooth and efficient.

"It's been pretty easy," said Davis, who will make \$10 million this season in the final year of his contract. "Everybody's been really easy to get along with and get to know and the staff has been really good, so it's been easy to get acclimated to all the stuff."

Davis, a third-round pick in the 2004 draft, was a starter for his first three seasons in Tampa Bay. The Rays used him as a reliever in 2012, and he went 3-0 with a 2.43 ERA in 54 appearances.

But that was his final year with the Rays, who traded the 6-foot-5 right-hander to Kansas City. The Royals put Davis back in the rotation before returning him to the bullpen late in the 2013 season.

Smart move.

Davis, Kelvin Herrera and Greg Holland combined for an overwhelming relief presence as Kansas City made consecutive World Series appearances, winning it all with Davis on the mound in 2015. Davis went 19-4 with 47 saves and 1.18 ERA

over his final three seasons with the Royals.

"He's got about three plus-plus pitches in his fastball, his cutter and his curveball," Cleveland second baseman Jason Kipnis said. "He's that guy. And it's a down angle because he's coming from a tall slot. He's a competitor. It's weird. He's a great mix between never giving in and coming straight at you. He's not going to walk you. ... His ability to literally live on the outer black of the plate makes it very hard to get any good swings off him."

Davis uses his starter's repertoire to his advantage in the bullpen. He also gained confidence through his experience in multiple roles.

"I think it helps your mind, knowing that no matter what the situation is, you know, if that's what you're asked to do, that's what you've got to do and you've done it before," he said. "So it's not new to you."

The 31-year-old Davis went 2-1 with a 1.87 ERA and 27 saves last season, but he was limited to 43<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings because of a forearm injury. The Cubs sent

one of their trainers to examine him before the trade with the Royals was completed in December. They also signed Koji Uehara to a \$6 million, one-year contract.

With Hector Rondon also in the fold, the Cubs have some options should Davis experience any health issues. But Davis said he feels good.

"Everything has gone really smoothly (in) spring training," he said. "Bullpens been really good, progressing well, so I think those are all good things."

Davis came back to pitch for Kansas City in September, going 1-0 with six saves and a 1.04 ERA in his final nine appearances. The Royals also missed the playoffs for the first time since 2013, giving Davis more time to train.

"I think you make adjustments every year," he said. "Your body changes every year just in general. ... Took advantage of the extra month that I had this winter and got back to where I wanted to be strength-wise and confidence-wise physically, so that's a big deal."

## Mariners ace Hernandez focuses on fastball in debut

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Felix Hernandez pitching in February is an aberration.

But there was the Seattle ace on Tuesday, making his spring debut as the Mariners beat the Chicago White Sox split squad 8-1.

Hernandez gave up one run and three hits in two innings. He threw 33 pitches, walked one and struck out none, and also got a pair of groundball double plays.

The Mariners normally hold Hernandez out of early spring training games. He did not make his initial appearance last year until March 14. It was March 10 in 2015.

But with the World Baseball Classic looming and Hernandez joining the Venezuelan

team Monday, there is a sense of urgency to get him ready sooner.

"I feel real strong," Hernandez said after his outing. "I feel real good. I feel healthy and I'm happy."

Hernandez is scheduled to make one more start for the Mariners on Sunday against Oakland.

"The next one is going to be different," Hernandez said. "I'll probably throw more pitches and just be ready for my first start in Mexico."

Venezuela's first game is March 10 against Puerto Rico.

Hernandez focused on fastball command against the White Sox.

"I've got to command my fastball a little bit more," he said. "I was throwing a four-

seamer and a two-seamer. I was falling behind a couple of times in the second inning and I got hit.

"I threw a lot of fastballs today and it looks pretty good. The results tell me that it works fine. I was 100 percent. I was throwing everything. The slider was really good. It was sharp. The curve was good, too. The changeup... I still have to work on it."

Hernandez, who turns 31 in April, missed six weeks last season with a right calf strain, his first time on the disabled list since 2008. His 25 starts and 153<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings were career lows, and he went 11-8 with a 3.82 ERA.

Most alarming is his diminishing fastball velocity. His fastball average was 90.54 last

season. In his 2010 Cy Young season, it was 94.13 and in 2015 he averaged 92.1.

He intensified his offseason workout schedule and added 17 pounds of muscle. He said he was happy with his velocity against the White Sox.

"I thought Felix looked good," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "He threw a lot of fastballs today, which was good to see. The velocity was good, 90 to 92."

"I thought he was more aggressive with the fastball in trying to get that going. We all know his secondary stuff is really good. But I was happy to see it. I think he felt good about it. The ball was coming out good," he said. "A step in the right direction."

# Players trying to hone combine skills

Associated Press

PHOENIX — UCLA's Eddie Vanderdoes barrels toward the orange cone, plants his left foot outside it to make a cut, then slides his right foot to the inside before finishing the drill.

Two of his workout partners notice the gaffe and chuckle, though Vanderdoes doesn't seem to notice, his focus more on trying to catch his breath.

Vanderdoes takes his second turn on the agility course and again slips his right foot inside instead of planting it around the orange marker. This time everyone notices, the laughing and trash talking starting even before the 6-foot-3, 320-pound defensive lineman crosses the finish line.

"That's what you call athletic ability right there, fellas," Vanderdoes says in his own defense.

That part's true, but it's still not right.

"Do that at the combine and you'll have to do it over again," EXOS trainer Victor Hall tells

Vanderdoes. "You'll need to work on your stamina, not your footwork, 'cause they'll keep making you do it until you get it right."

Players who earn invites to the NFL Combine are the elite of college players, finely tuned athletes accustomed to pushing themselves to the edge in the weight room and on the field. The pre-combine workouts at the EXOS performance center in north Phoenix are nothing like even they have encountered before.

To get ready for the combine, the players go through very specific movements designed to enhance their performance in front of NFL executives and coaches at next week's combine in Indianapolis. They work on footwork, technique, strength, speed, explosiveness — all with an eye on the different events of the combine.

EXOS also works with the players on nutrition, flexibility, recovery, media training and the mental side of the combine, including preparation for the

Wonderlic test.

Football players are used to position-specific drills during the season. At EXOS, they prepare specifically for the drills of the combine.

"It's been intense. A lot of the stuff they do here, I've never done before," Washington defensive tackle Elijah Qualls said. "The work is different, the lifting, the endurance drills. Just how much technique matters, in lifting, running, drills, technique on your technique. It's insane, but it makes a big difference. I can feel it, see it whenever we watch film. It's huge."

The eight-week program — shorter for players whose seasons ran long — includes two to three workouts a day, six days a week. The workouts are typically broken up into upper and lower body sessions, both in the weight room and on-the-field drills.

The players do get position-specific workouts with professional coaches a couple times a week, but for the most part

the workouts are the same for every group, with only the weights varying.

That's because everyone is training for the same thing.

On the football field, every position has its own specific needs, and the drills reflect that. Every player at the combine goes through the same drills, so the EXOS workouts are designed specifically for those, with particular focus on the two money makers: the 40-yard dash and bench press.

"We're not playing football anymore, we're training for the combine so it's just different," Clemson All-America receiver Mike Williams said. "It does make a big difference."

The primary focus at EXOS is three-fold: technique, power and body composition.

The technique aspects cover everything from footwork on cuts to proper form on the bench press, allowing the already-tuned-in athletes to get the most of their speed and strength.

## Capitals down Rangers in Shattenkirk's first game

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After getting off to a slow start, the NHL-best Washington Capitals picked up their play and pulled away for a big win against a division rival.

Marcus Johansson had two goals and an assist to help Washington beat the New York Rangers 4-1 on Tuesday night in Kevin Shattenkirk's first game with the Capitals. Brett Connolly and Nicklas Backstrom also scored and Braden Holtby stopped 29 shots.

"I knew that we didn't play particularly quick and hard," Washington coach Barry Trotz said about the first period. "We were hustling 'easy' as we use the term. I just thought with our urgency on the puck [after that], our battles got better."

"We started getting a little more of a rhythm and found our game in the second and we

just pounded the rock. I thought it wore them out a little bit, and we just stayed with it."

Evgeny Kuznetsov and Matt Niskanen had two assists each. Shattenkirk, acquired from St. Louis on Monday night, had four shots on goal in 17:57 of ice time.

Trotz got his 700th career victory — including his 143rd since joining the Capitals before the 2014-15 season.

"It means I've been around a long time and I've been blessed to coach a lot of great players," said Trotz.

**Canadiens 1, Blue Jackets 0 (OT):** Alex Galchenyuk scored in overtime for the second straight night while Carey Price made 26 saves as host Montreal extended its winning streak to three games.

**Wild 6, Jets 5:** Jason Zucker scored with 2:10 left in the

third period to lift Minnesota over host Winnipeg.

**Sharks 3, Maple Leafs 1:** Tomas Hertl scored the tie-breaking goal with 1:24 remaining as host San Jose beat Toronto for the ninth straight time.

**Stars 3, Penguins 2:** Antoine Roussel capped Dallas' three-goal third period as the host Stars rallied for a win over Pittsburgh.

**Bruins 4, Coyotes 1:** Riley Nash scored a short-handed goal after Colin Miller was ejected for a bone-rattling hit that sent Arizona's Alexander Burmistrov to the hospital as host Boston pulled away with a three-goal second period.

**Oilers 2, Blues 1:** Milan Lucic and Mark Letestu scored and Cam Talbot made 25 saves to lead Edmonton over host St. Louis.

**Flames 2, Kings 1 (OT):** TJ Brodie scored on a breakaway 1:47 into overtime, lifting host Calgary in goalie Ben Bishop's first game with Los Angeles.

**Flyers 4, Avalanche 0:** Wayne Simmonds scored a pair of first-period goals and Steve Mason made 33 saves as host Philadelphia beat Colorado.

**Panthers 3, Hurricanes 2 (SO):** Aleksander Barkov and Jonathan Huberdeau scored in the shootout as host Florida got a much-needed win over Carolina.

**Red Wings 3, Canucks 2 (OT):** Justin Abdelkader scored 2:31 into overtime as Detroit beat host Vancouver.

**Predators 5, Sabres 4 (OT):** Filip Forsberg scored his second goal of the game 2:45 into overtime as Nashville came back to beat host Buffalo for its fourth straight win.



# Durant is out indefinitely

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Golden State Warriors star Kevin Durant will be out indefinitely after he sprained the medial collateral ligament in his left knee and bruised a bone in his leg during a game in Washington on Tuesday.

The team said Wednesday that its medical staff hasn't ruled him out to return before the end of the regular season.

The All-Star forward hyperextended his knee early in the Warriors' 112-108 loss to the Wizards and later underwent an MRI, which revealed a Grade 2, or moderate, sprain in the knee and a bruised tibia.

Durant is scheduled to be re-evaluated in four weeks, so if he were fully healthy then, that would leave about two weeks remaining in the regular season. The Warriors have clinched a playoff berth and are now focused on locking up the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference.

Durant leads the Warriors in scoring and rebounding with 25.3 points and 8.2 boards in his first season with Golden State.

ESPN.com reported that Golden State would sign veteran swingman Matt Barnes.

Durant left only 93 seconds into the first quarter. On a Wizards possession under their

basket less than a minute into the game, Washington center Marcin Gortat tossed Golden State's Zaza Pachulia aside. Pachulia stumbled and fell into Durant's left leg.

Durant immediately clutched at his left knee, then hobbled around a bit. He stayed in for a few more possessions before limping off toward the locker room when Golden State called timeout. Washington led by as many as 19 points in the first quarter, which ended with the host ahead 40-26.

Stephen Curry missed a potential go-ahead three-pointer late, and the Wizards got a career high-tying 19 assists from John Wall.

# Westbrook lifts OKC

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook scored 12 of his 43 points in the final 2:05 to help the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Utah Jazz 109-106 on Tuesday night.

Westbrook also had 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his 30th triple-double of the season and 67th of his career. It was his fourth straight triple-double, and the team's fourth consecutive win.

Doug McDermott scored 16 points and Enes Kanter added 15 points and nine rebounds for the Thunder, who trimmed Utah's Central Division lead to two games.

Westbrook scored and was fouled on a transition layup with 15.5 seconds to play. He completed the three-point play to give the Thunder a 108-106 lead. After Jerami Grant hit one of two free throws with a second left, Gordon Hayward missed a three-pointer at the buzzer that could have forced overtime.

**Nuggets 125, Bulls 107:** Nikola Jokic had 19 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists for his third triple-double of the season, and visiting Denver rode a second-half surge to beat Chicago.

Danilo Gallinari scored 22 points and Wilson Chandler added 20.

**Pistons 120, Trail Blazers 113 (OT):** Marcus Morris scored a career-high 37 points, including Detroit's first seven in overtime, and the Pistons rallied from a 13-point, third-quarter deficit to beat visiting Portland.

**Grizzlies 130, Suns 112:** Mike Conley scored 29 points and Marc Gasol added 28 while making all five of his three-point shots to lead host Memphis past Phoenix.

**Hornets 109, Lakers 104:** Kemba Walker scored 30 points and hit the go-ahead three-pointer with 1:55 to play, and visiting Charlotte rallied late for a victory over struggling Los Angeles.

# Duke holds off No. 15 Florida State

Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — Freshman Frank Jackson scored a season-best 22 points and No. 17 Duke beat No. 15 Florida State 75-70 on Tuesday night.

Amile Jefferson, playing in his final game at Cameron Indoor Stadium, added 14 points and 11 rebounds while Luke Kennard finished with 17 points for the Blue Devils (23-7, 11-6 Atlantic Coast Conference).

Jayson Tatum added 15 points for Duke, which held Florida State 14 points below its scoring average to snap a two-game losing streak that cost the Blue Devils a top-10 ranking.

Dwayne Bacon scored 19 points and Xavier Rathan-Mayes had 15 for the Seminoles (23-7, 11-6), who had their two-game winning streak snapped.

Florida State pulled to 71-63 on Bacon's free throw with 2:23 to play before Tatum countered with a jumper to put Duke up by 10 points.

Jackson then rebounded Jonathan Isaac's missed three-pointer and Duke went to work on the clock, with Tatum grabbing a key rebound of his own miss to help the Blue Devils keep the ball away from the Seminoles until there were

about 50 seconds remaining.

**No. 9 Kentucky 73, Vanderbilt 63:** Malik Monk scored 20 points in the second half, including 10 in the final 3:40, as the host Wildcats rallied from a 13-point deficit and held off Vanderbilt to clinch a share of the Southeastern Conference regular season title.

After trailing by as many as 19 points in the first half, Kentucky, which overcame the largest deficit under John Calipari, was still down 47-34 with 13:51 remaining.

Monk made a go-ahead three with 3:40 left before adding another long-range shot with 49 seconds left for a 69-62 lead.

**No. 16 Purdue 86, Indiana 75:** Dakota Mathias scored 17 of his 19 points in the first half and Caleb Swanigan added 17 of his 21 in the second as the host Boilermakers clinched a share of the Big Ten title.

Purdue (24-6, 13-4) has won seven of eight and has clinched the top seed in the Big Ten Tournament.

**No. 24 Iowa St. 86, Oklahoma St. 83:** Senior Matt Thomas scored 25 points and host Iowa State held off a furious challenge from Oklahoma State for its sixth straight win.

Monte Morris added 12 points,

11 assists and nine rebounds for the Cyclones (20-9, 12-5 Big 12), who clinched their sixth consecutive 20-win season.

**Creighton 82, St. John's 68:** Khyri Thomas nearly had a triple-double, Marcus Foster had 18 points and host Creighton beat St. John's in its first game since falling out of the Top 25.

**Maryland 79, Rutgers 59:** Damonte Dodd scored six points inside in a 17-6 spurt to start the second half and visiting Maryland avoided its first four-game losing streak since the 2004-05 season.

The Terrapins (23-7, 11-6 Big Ten) won for only the third time in eight games. The skid took them out of the Top 25.

**South Carolina 63, Mississippi State 57:** Sindarius Thornwell scored 17 of his 22 points in the second half and Duane Notice hit a foul shot with 3:11 left that put host South Carolina ahead for good.

**Army 74, American 58:** Jordan Fox scored 23 points and host Army (13-18) hit six three-pointers in the second half to fuel a run that saw the Black Knights outscore American by 15 points over the final 20 minutes to win a first-round game in the Patriot League tournament.