

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, March 16, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Defense a priority in Trump budget

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unveiled a \$1.15 trillion budget Thursday, a far-reaching overhaul of federal government spending that slashes domestic programs to finance a significant increase in the military and to make a down payment on a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Thursday's scheduled budget release will upend Washington with cuts to campaign targets like foreign aid and the Environmental Protection Agency as well as strong congressional favorites such as medical research, help for homeless veterans and community development grants.

The \$54 billion boost for the military is the largest since President Ronald Reagan's Pentagon buildup in the 1980s, promising immediate money for troop readiness, the fight against Islamic State militants and the procurement of new ships, fighter jets and other weapons. The 10 percent Pentagon boost is financed by \$54 billion in cuts to foreign aid and domestic agencies that had been protected by former President Barack Obama.

The budget eliminates the National Endowment for the Arts, legal aid for the poor, low-income heating assistance and the AmeriCorps national service program established by former President Bill Clinton.

Such programs were the focus of lengthy battles dating to the GOP takeover of Congress in 1995 and have survived prior attempts to eliminate them. Lawmakers will have the final say on Trump's proposal, and many of the cuts will be deemed dead on arrival. White House budget director Mick Mulvaney acknowledged to reporters that passing the cuts could be an uphill struggle and said the administration would negotiate over replacement cuts.

Law enforcement agencies like the FBI would be spared, while the border wall would receive an immediate \$1.4 billion infusion in the ongoing fiscal year, with another \$2.6 billion planned for the 2018 budget year starting Oct. 1.

Trump claimed during the campaign that Mexico would pay for the wall when, in fact, U.S. taxpayers will foot the bill.

## Senator: Punish veterans who advocated rape, harassment

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Furious over a nude-photo scandal involving male Marines who made sexually violent comments online about female Marines, U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said Tuesday that he wanted to explore how to punish non-active-duty and retired personnel who participated.

One idea: stripping any guilty veterans of benefits.

There should be "dire consequence for people stupid enough to do these kinds of things moving forward," said Tillis, who sits on the Senate's Veterans' Affairs and Armed Services committees.

He asked for information about how lawmakers could stop postservice benefits for veterans who had participated. "If there's something we can do to disallow their benefits for bad behavior after they're discharged, those are the sorts of things we have to do," he said.

Marine Corps officials have said they will investigate and prosecute active-duty personnel involved in the scandal under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, but punishment for veterans falls outside those parameters.

Later, Tillis called the photo incident a scandal and an "absolute disgrace" that is not reflective of the vast majority of Marines.

The panel's seven women also were outraged. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, an Iraq War Army veteran, saw a troubling pattern.

"This seems to be service-wide," she said. "This is a cultural problem not just in our military but society at large. ... Hearing that there may not be a way to hold many of the people involved in this accountable — that angers me."

Senators also were angry at a report from Sen. Angus King, a Maine independent, that a veteran who may have been involved posted his discharge papers and taunted investigators.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a retired Air Force colonel, called for an immediate disclosure of the veteran's name.

"Who is that person? Do we know their name? Well, let's make them famous right here. What is their name?" Graham

pressed Tuesday, seemingly addressing his question to no one in particular on the witness panel.

He didn't get an answer, but the committee planned to meet afterward in a private, closed-door session.

"We'll get it later," Graham said. "We'll publicly let the world know who this person is."

A federal investigation of a photo incident by the Department of Defense and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service is ongoing at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller said during Tuesday's hearing that he would go to Camp Lejeune on Wednesday to speak with Marines about the issue. Camp Lejeune is the largest Marine Corps base on the East Coast.

At least one Marine suspected of being involved at Camp Lejeune is no longer on active duty. Marine Corps officials told McClatchy he was due to be honorably discharged under normal circumstances. They didn't give the name of the Marine but confirmed that he had begun the process of being discharged before the Facebook page was discovered.

Investigators think the page was both a platform and conduit to other websites where male Marines posted nude photos of women, including their co-workers, without permission. Some of the photos of female Marines living and working on military bases were taken without their knowledge.

Comments on the photos — written by both active-duty and retired Marines — included some that encouraged sexual assault against the women pictured, harassment of the female Marines and other denigrating activity.

The page was exposed earlier this month by Thomas Brennan, a retired, combat-injured Marine and journalist now working for the War Horse, an investigative news site focused on the U.S. military, war and veterans' issues. His report on "Marines United" was published by the Center for Investigative Reporting and prompted swift responses across the military and federal government.



# Brass weighing relationship with Trump

*The Washington Post*

No president in recent history has worked harder to publicly associate himself with the U.S. military than Donald Trump.

He has filled his Cabinet with retired generals, has met behind the scenes with the top brass at a pace that far exceeds that of his predecessor, and on Thursday unveiled a defense budget that promises a big spending boost for the Pentagon.

But the president's embrace has provoked equal parts excitement and unease among officers still struggling to make sense of an unconventional commander in chief whose "America First" approach to governance seems built in part on shows of strength and military power.

"You want those in uniform ... to trust the president," one retired four-star officer said. "They don't have to like him, but they have to trust him. Right now, there is an uncertain fabric of trust between them."

The uncertainty extends to the president's over-the-top praise. Do his frequent encomiums reflect a respect for the military's discipline and expertise, or could he be using the uniform as a backdrop to bolster his popularity?

Military commanders have welcomed Trump's moves to delegate decisions to commanders, but unfilled senior civilian positions and turmoil in the White House have led some officers to ask whether the latitude is a sign of trust or a product of chaos at the highest levels of government.

Even the president's proposed \$54 billion buildup has provoked some questions.

"We're going to load it up. You're going to get a lot of equipment," Trump said of his military buildup, which seems designed more as a show of strength than an effort to deal with any pressing threat.

Concern in the ranks is not unusual in the early days of a new administration. President Bill Clinton roiled the military with a proposal to allow openly gay troops to serve. Then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's

brusque and, at times, dismissive leadership style alienated generals in the early days of George W. Bush's presidency.

But in this case, both the enthusiasm and reticence are more pronounced — a reflection of Trump's heavy military focus and his willingness to flout norms and rules that are intended to keep the military far from politics. More than one dozen senior officers at bases in the United States, the Pentagon and overseas spoke on condition of anonymity to describe their early impressions of the new administration.

In his first few weeks in office, Trump addressed the troops at U.S. Special Operations Command, where in a striking break with protocol, he praised the military for backing him in the election.

"I saw those numbers," he said. "You like me, and I like you."

More recently, he boasted that "my generals are the most respected we've had in decades" and spotlighted the grieving widow of a Navy SEAL who was killed on a mission that Trump ordered in Yemen. Less than 48 hours later, he boarded an aircraft carrier, where he promised a big boost in military spending.

The military has welcomed Trump's promise to increase military spending on new fighter jets, more tanks and a 350-ship Navy that will dwarf the current fleet of fewer than 300 ships.

They have also enjoyed Trump's increased attention, which some officers view as a corrective to the approach of President Barack Obama, who was described by Robert Gates, his defense secretary, as "deeply suspicious" of the brass. "Obama considered time spent with the generals and admirals an obligation," Gates wrote in his memoir "Duty."

Senior military officers describe Trump, who attended a military high school but used a series of draft deferments to avoid service during the Vietnam War, as respectful and trusting of their judgment.

Unlike the bombastic figure

on the campaign trail, they say he listens and asks questions. And enjoys being around them.

In his first month in office, Trump has met with his four-star service chiefs at least three times to discuss the needs of the force, said a senior military officer. The senior service chiefs rarely saw Obama during his last year in office, the officer said.

But the attention also comes with an undercurrent of disquiet. Trump's "America First" doctrine and transactional approach to working with allies has unnerved some senior military officers who view the U.S. military as a relatively selfless guarantor of global security. "If the president views the U.S. as a chump paying more than its fair share, how do I communicate what I am doing in terms of building the capacity to the White House?" one four-star regional commander recently asked his fellow officers.

Recently, a group of 120 former generals and admirals warned against Trump's plan to slash spending on foreign aid, arguing that the efforts promote better governance and help prevent conflicts that require U.S. military intervention.

There is also a broader worry that a relatively unpopular president with few fixed national security beliefs has latched onto the military as a means of boosting his standing.

"He's trading on the military's reputation as the country's most trusted institution," said one Army colonel who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to comment frankly about the commander in chief. "It's capital that he didn't build."

Only a few months ago on the campaign trail, Trump described the generals as "reduced to rubble." Now he is full of praise for them. His sudden swing in opinion left another midlevel Army officer wondering what would happen if a mission went bad or a few generals resigned in protest.

Already since taking office, Trump has appeared to distance

himself from military operations gone awry. After the death of Navy SEAL William "Ryan" Owens in a Jan. 29 operation he approved, Trump said it was his generals who "lost Ryan."

Some officers' concerns turn more on bureaucratic upheaval and its impact on military operations.

In Yemen, the military is now operating with a temporary authority to conduct intensified airstrikes without going through a more stringent White House approval process. The change has allowed U.S. forces to accelerate the pace of on-the-ground operations. Military commanders are working on plans to step up raids against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

But many of those same commanders also worry about the absence of clear direction and support from Washington. In some cases, the lack of a clear administration policy — on issues including the conflicts in Syria and Yemen — has added a new element of difficulty for commanders as they draw up plans for operations.

Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas, the head of U.S. Special Operations Command, complained last month about the "unbelievable turmoil" within senior levels of government.

"I hope they sort it out soon, because we're a nation at war," he said at a conference.

Many positions remain unfilled at the Pentagon, State Department and other agencies as part of a larger tug of war between new Cabinet members and the White House.

Many military officers remain unnerved by the president's loose and, at times, improvisational style on matters of potential war and peace.

One retired general who has worked with Trump said the president's new national security adviser, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, and Cabinet secretaries will have to play a greater role in shaping policy to reflect the president's instincts, rather than adopting a literal reading of his words.



# Judges halt travel ban before it starts

Bloomberg

First in Hawaii, then Maryland — a pair of judges halted President Donald Trump's revised travel ban before it could be enforced, slamming it for discriminating against Muslims and handing the administration another setback on a core campaign issue.

Decisions by federal judges Derrick Watson and Theodore Chuang blocked a 90-day ban on new visa approvals for people from six Muslim-majority nations. After Watson issued a temporary ban Wednesday on the entire order, Chuang reinforced the decision by halting enforcement of a single paragraph aimed at stopping the entry of nationals from Syria,

Iran, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Sudan.

The rulings are a victory for a group of states, advocacy groups, technology companies and universities that challenged the executive order they said damaged the economy and was at odds with the nation's founding principles. The White House had spent weeks crafting and carefully rolling out its March 6 order after other judges had swiftly rejected the first travel ban, which Trump announced with great fanfare days after taking office and immediately spurred chaos at airports nationwide.

The decision to halt the policy before it could take effect Thursday will almost certainly be appealed — first to the same

San Francisco appellate court that rejected the previous ban — and then to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Once again, a judge cited Trump's remarks on the campaign trail as an indication of his intent to keep Muslims out of the country. Watson, in Honolulu, pointed to the president's plainly worded statements before the election, saying they "betray the executive order's stated secular purpose," while the real motive was "temporarily suspending the entry of Muslims."

Trump, speaking at a rally in Nashville, Tenn., said the travel restrictions were needed to protect Americans from "radical Islamic terrorists" and vowed to take the case all the way to the

Supreme Court.

"This ruling makes us look weak, which by the way we no longer are," Trump said. "We're going to fight this terrible ruling."

The U.S. Justice Department believes Watson's ruling is "flawed both in reasoning and in scope," spokeswoman Sarah Isgur Flores said in an emailed statement before Chuang's second opinion. "The president's executive order falls squarely within his lawful authority in seeking to protect our nation's security."

To block the Trump policy on a longer-term basis, opponents will have to provide more comprehensive evidence that the ban violates the Constitution.

## Deportation blocked for Afghan who aided US

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — A federal appeals court has temporarily blocked the deportation of an Afghan man trying to enter the U.S. on a special visa for people who helped the U.S. military.

A judge on the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia late Wednesday blocked a New Jersey federal judge's decision to allow the deportation.

Judge Jose Linares in Newark, in ruling against an emergency temporary restraining order, said the man was unlikely to succeed in the case against the government because the visa already was revoked.

Government lawyers said the man, who is represented by the International Refugee Assistance Project and the American Civil Liberties Union's state chapter, voluntarily withdrew his application for admission to the U.S. in an interview with a Customs and Border Protection officer after arriving at Liberty International Airport on Monday.

The man's lawyers argued the application withdrawal was involuntary and said he was

held without a lawyer for 36 hours.

The court ruling on Wednesday came hours after a bipartisan group of senators introduced a measure to provide 2,500 more visas for the program.

"We simply cannot win this war without the assistance of the Afghan people who put their lives on the line to help American troops and diplomats serving in harm's way," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said in a statement. "Unfortunately in recent years, Congress has reneged on the promise we made to protect these brave individuals by failing to authorize the appropriate number of Special Immigrant Visas for Afghan translators and interpreters."

The man's lawyers argued that his service to the U.S. military puts his life at risk in Afghanistan. But the government said in a court filing the man "explicitly stated that he has no fear of returning to Afghanistan."

A ruling on the man's case is expected to be expedited, but it's unclear when it will happen.

## Trump mulls tweaks to GOP health care bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As a new president who has vowed to keep his campaign promises, Donald Trump knows he'll be judged on whether he can repeal the so-called Obamacare law and replace it with something new.

Dealing with skepticism from conservatives and moderates alike, the White House is considering changes to the bill that might reassure conservatives, all in an effort to muscle through the GOP-backed health care plan in the House next week. Trump, who is not steeped in policy, has signaled that he's open to negotiation in his first attempt at working with Congress.

"The House has put forward a plan to repeal and replace Obamacare, based on the principles I outlined in my joint address, but let me tell you we're going to arbitrate, we're going to all get together, we're going to get something done," Trump told a Wednesday night rally in Nashville, Tenn., as supporters waved signs that read "Promises Made, Promises Kept."

Trump is focused on deliv-

ering his "repeal and replace" promise and is likely to be flexible on the fine print dividing moderate and conservative Republicans in the policy fight, said a person familiar with the president's thinking, who spoke on condition of anonymity to share private discussions.

The approach reflects a keen awareness within the White House of how much is riding on the effort. Trump made repealing and replacing his predecessor's health care law a core campaign promise, although he has acknowledged he was surprised at how complex the task would be. Failing to pass a bill while his party controls both the House and Senate would be a devastating blow to his party and the premise of his presidency — that he was a dealmaker the country needed.

Still, Trump keeps stressing the legislation is far from finished.

That approach also has made some allies nervous that the transactional president may be more committed to striking a deal than passing the legislation as crafted by House Republican Speaker Paul Ryan.

# Tillerson: N. Korea 'need not fear' US

Associated Press

TOKYO — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called on North Korea on Thursday to abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile programs, saying the isolated nation "need not fear" the U.S.

Tillerson made that declaration after meeting Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo, where they discussed possible new approaches in dealing with Pyongyang. He said 20 years of U.S. diplomatic and other efforts to get North Korea to denuclearize have failed, but gave no specifics about how the Trump administration, which is currently doing a policy review, would tackle the issue. Tillerson described the weapons programs as "dangerous and unlawful."

The former Exxon Mobil CEO is making

his first trip to Asia as the top U.S. diplomat. Tensions are running high on the divided Korean Peninsula, and North Korea last week launched four missiles into seas off Japan and where the U.S. is currently conducting annual military drills with South Korea. Pyongyang views the drills as a rehearsal for invasion.

"North Korea and its people need not fear the United States or their neighbors in the region, who seek only to live in peace with North Korea," the secretary of state told a news conference in Tokyo. "With this in mind, the United States calls on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile programs and refrain from any further provocation."

He later met separately with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

In Beijing, a North Korean diplomat

said Thursday that Pyongyang must act in self-defense against the U.S.-South Korea military drills, which he said have brought the region to the brink of nuclear war. He said the drills were aimed at using atomic weapons for a pre-emptive strike against North Korea. Washington says the maneuvers are routine and defensive.

"The United States holds a joint military exercise every year to push the situation on the Korean Peninsula to a serious situation, and that is the source of the super-tough measures we must take," Pak Myong Ho told reporters in a rare briefing at the North Korean Embassy in the Chinese capital. He spoke through a translator.

North Korea has accelerated its weapons development in violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions and despite tough sanctions levied against it.

## F-35 touted at symposium as tie that binds Pacific alliance

By WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — Pacific Air Forces brought more than 100 pilots and allied military officials together this week to discuss how to best operate and manage the newest fighter aircraft in the United States arsenal.

The two-day symposium on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter served as the first loop in a knot "to more quickly mature the airplane" among Pacific allies, Air Force Brig. Gen. Craig Wills, director of strategy, plans and programs for U.S. Pacific Command, said Tuesday.

"What everyone needs to remember is that we are not alone in the Pacific," Wills said. "Look at our incredible alliance with Japan, with the Republic of Korea, with Australia. When their combat capability increases, our combat capability increases."

The symposium included pilots, intelligence officers, logistics professionals and military officials from Japan, South Korea and Australia, the three countries in the region that have purchased F-35s.

F-35 experts from the U.S. Air Force, the Marine Corps and the Navy also attended.

"At the operator level, there's never been anything like this," Wills said of the symposium. "These are the people that are really going to make it happen."

Pacific Air Forces Commander Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy's intent for the meeting was to speed up the process of "tactical lessons learned," Wills said.

For example, the wing commander from

Hill Air Force Base in Utah, which is the Air Force's first operational F-35 wing, told attendees about the bumps to expect in establishing their own wings, he said.

The jet's stealth technology also requires a rethinking about maintenance.

"The maintenance group commander from Hill Air Force Base gave two or three really good examples of things that nations should look at when they are training their maintenance people to do this," Wills said.

Japan received a pair of F-35s in January, the first of the aircraft to be delivered to an overseas ally. Ten of the Marine Corps' F-35s are deployed to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, with six more slated to arrive later this year. Japan has been pushing back on China's assertiveness in the region, and the nation is a linchpin in the United States' goal of maintaining the post-World War II security order in the Pacific.

South Korea will get its first F-35s next year, and Australia has been training pilots in the aircraft in Arizona since 2014. Australians saw the F-35 earlier this year when the jet made its first appearance in the country at the Australian International Airshow.

President Donald Trump, Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain and other prominent critics of the F-35 program have assailed its budget overruns, which have made it the most expensive weapons program in history. The program will now cost upward of \$400 billion, according to congressional estimates. However, Pacific military planners said the aircraft is highly capable and helps with alliance-building, with partner nations purchasing the F-35.

## AF reverses course on rule that blocked re-enlistments

The Air Force is backtracking on a policy that blocked airmen who failed to complete professional military education from re-enlisting.

Effective Wednesday, airmen are no longer required to finish their PME by a 12-month deadline to re-enlist or extend their service, an Air Force statement said.

PME are military educational requirements, such as correspondence or academy courses, that servicemembers often must take before advancing in rank.

Airmen who had received a re-enlistment ineligibility code because of the policy should see it removed from their records, the statement said. PME will still be required for promotion.

The rule, introduced in December 2014, was unpopular and unneeded, said Lt. Gen. Gina Grosso, Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. She approved the change.

Roughly 9,300 airmen had missed the deadline and were ineligible for promotion or re-enlistment since December 2014, according to a report last month from Air Force Times. The change will give squadron commanders more say in retention, the statement said. More than 170 airmen separated from the service between Jan. 1 and March 15 because of the policy, according to internal Air Force public affairs documents posted on a Facebook page.

"Now the commanders who are most familiar with an airman's potential can make the call whether they'll be retained or not," said Master Sgt. Christian Martinez, optometry flight chief for the 374th Medical Group at Yokota Air Base, Japan. "I think it's a great change."

From staff reports



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Former officer faces sex-trafficking charge

**MA** BARNSTABLE — A former Yarmouth police officer is facing sex trafficking and child enticement charges.

The Cape Cod Times reported that Richard Morrison, 68, is free on \$500 bail after pleading not guilty last week to trafficking of a person for sexual servitude, selling or delivering liquor to a person under 21, and two counts of enticing a child under 16.

Yarmouth police confirmed that Morrison was an officer in town from 1971 until 1992.

Police have revoked his license to carry firearms and seized his firearms and ammunition. The state Department of Children and Families has been informed.

## Homicide charged in death after car chase

**MN** BLOOMINGTON — Vehicular homicide charges have been filed against the driver of a car who led police on a chase near the Mall of America that ended with a fatal crash.

Bloomington police began pursuing the driver of a Saturn after he went over a berm and sidewalk near the mall. Authorities say the driver, Nicholas Lowers, 27, of Blaine, lost control after chase speeds reached 90 mph and hit a light pole Saturday. A passenger, Sondra Heger, 24, was seriously injured and died at Hennepin County Medical Center. Lowers was treated at the hospital and then taken to jail.

## Former swimming coach is jailed in sex assault

**IA** FORT DODGE — A former swimming coach

accused of sexually assaulting a teenage student in Fort Dodge has been sentenced to five years in prison.

Court records say Aaron Poldervaart, 22, pleaded guilty Tuesday in Webster County District Court to sexual exploitation by a school employee. Prosecutors dropped two counts of sexual assault in exchange for Poldervaart's plea. He'll have to register as a sex offender.

Poldervaart worked for the Fort Dodge Community School District during the 2015-16 season as an assistant boys and girls swim coach, and he volunteered to help the teams after he quit to take another coaching job.

## Detroit school board to sue to prevent closures

**MI** DETROIT — Detroit's board of education has voted to sue the state to prevent any school closures after more than two dozen schools in the city were identified for potential shutdown.

The Detroit Free Press reported the board unanimously decided late Tuesday to greenlight a lawsuit that it could file later this week. Board Vice President Sonya Mays said the move keeps all options open.

Thirty-eight chronically low-performing schools in Detroit and seven other Michigan cities have been identified for possible closure, though state officials are pondering what to do. It appears most if not all of the closings won't happen anytime soon, and school superintendents will get more chances for improvement.

## Sixth-grade student takes gun to school

**FL** PALM BAY — Palm Bay police say a sixth-grade student brought a

handgun to Port Malabar Elementary School and showed it off to his classmates.

Lt. Mike Bandish told Florida Today that police responded to the school about 9 a.m. Tuesday. Teachers told officers that a classmate had reported the gun, which was a 9 mm Glock.

Police charged the boy with possession of a firearm on school campus. Officers found no ammunition on the boy or in the gun.

Brevard Public Schools officials said parents were notified Tuesday about the incident.

## High school student, 17, runs for town mayor

**OH** LANCASTER — A teenager who hasn't finished high school is hoping to become the next mayor of a small central Ohio city.

Clayton Lunsford, 17, told The Eagle-Gazette he'll pursue online schooling during the first year in office if he's elected as mayor of Lancaster.

His petition for candidacy in the mayoral race was confirmed by the Board of Elections on March 2, and no one else has submitted a petition. The deadline is Aug. 14.

Lunsford, a junior at Lancaster High School who will be 18 in August, said he'd also put off college if he wins office.

## Fire crews find human skull in brush fire

**CA** LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles coroner's investigators will search for more body parts at the scene of a small brush fire where crews discovered a human skull down a steep ravine in Sherman Oaks.

The skull was found Saturday by firefighters battling a four-acre blaze on a hillside behind a school.

Coroner's Lt. Larry Dietz

said officials have yet to determine gender, age or time of death.

Crews using water-dropping helicopters doused the flames quickly. No injuries were reported.

## 'Plump' woman found to have 140-pound tumor

**PA** ALLENTOWN — Mary Clancey said she was resigned to being a plump old lady. Over 15 years she kept getting bigger despite dieting. But with her health deteriorating, her son persuaded her to go to the hospital.

What doctors found astounded them: A cyst in one of her ovaries had grown into a 140-pound tumor.

Doctors at Lehigh Valley Health Network in Allentown removed the cancerous mass in a five-hour operation.

Going in, Clancey, 71, of St. Clair, Pa., weighed 365 pounds. After five hours in surgery, she lost 180 pounds of tumor and tissue, about half her weight, the doctors said.

## Police say 2 pounds of cocaine seized in bust

**MS** TUPELO — Authorities say a man was arrested on drug and weapons charges in northeast Mississippi.

Tupelo Police Department and the Lee County Sheriff's Office told local news media Tuesday that Rico Morris, 32, was arrested after investigators searched his home March 10. They found nearly two pounds of powder cocaine and more than \$20,000 in cash.

Morris is charged with trafficking more than 30 grams of cocaine and possession of a firearm by a felon. He's being held at the Lee County Jail on \$50,000 bond.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news  
updated 24/7 from bases  
around the world.  
Now online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Villanova looks to beat odds with repeat

Associated Press

VILLANOVA, Pa. — Kris Jenkins buried the three-pointer that sparked book deals, red carpet photo ops, a White House trip, a handful of award banquets and hundreds of perks that come with winning a national championship.

But the national title did come with a tinge of pressure that lingered into this season — can Villanova beat the odds and become the first back-to-back national champion in 10 years?

“Everybody expects you to do it again,” coach Jay Wright said. “That’s part of the challenge. When people say it’s hard to repeat, that’s part of why it’s hard to repeat, is because you have to deal with those expectations all the time, those constant reminders of last year.”

The reminders of April were impossible to ignore this season.

So were the warnings for the rest of the NCAA Tournament bracket that this season’s Wildcats just might be better than last year’s edition.

“I don’t know if we’re better,” Big East player of the year Josh Hart said. “I just know that we’re playing just as well at the end of the season.”

Duke, Kansas and North Carolina are championship favorites at the Las Vegas casinos. But the shot at basketball history has helped drive the Wildcats (31-3) toward becoming the first repeat champs since Florida in 2006 and 2007.

Led by coach Billy Donovan, the Gators were loaded with NBA talent and the five starters from the ‘06 team bypassed the pros for a chance to repeat. Joakim Noah,

Al Horford and Corey Brewer sacrificed NBA riches and helped the Gators breeze through the regular season and earn the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament. Florida beat Ohio State in the title game and became the first program since Duke in 1992 to repeat.

Florida was a champ in 2006, relying on size, shooting and maybe some obscurity to win its first national title. The Gators took a far different path a season later, playing with lofty expectations, mounting pressure and the highest of profiles.

They received more media attention, causing some players to believe every loss was magnified and every ho-hum win was expected.

“I felt like once we got to the tournament, I could sense that our guys felt pressure,” Donovan said. “It was a little bit different with that team. I think they felt pressured during the tournament. I think once they got to the Final Four, actually, I think some of the pressure subsided, which you would have thought would be the opposite.”

Florida made a second straight title look easy — creating an aura of invincibility.

“Anytime you win like that, and you have your whole starting team come back, the expectations change, and in a lot of ways, you get critiqued under a microscope, and sometimes, that can take the joy out of it,” Donovan said. “It’s like, you win, but you didn’t win by enough. You lost, but you shouldn’t. All those things get factored in.”

The Wildcats had some of the same scrutiny, but in a major sports market like Philadelphia, the biggest victories or toughest losses never seem to reach the same level of feverish fan reaction as the Eagles, Phil-

lies, Flyers and even the 76ers.

Villanova spent eight weeks at No. 1 in the AP Top 25, were joined by Kansas as the only teams who spent the entire season in the top 10, and won Big East season and tournament titles. The Wildcats are the first defending champion to earn the tournament’s overall top seed since, yup, Florida in 2007. The Wildcats also have the fewest losses entering the NCAA Tournament by a defending national champion since Duke lost three times in 2001-02.

That’s the résumé of a program primed for a repeat.

Wright, who also led Villanova to the 2009 Final Four, has refused to let the season become defined by a championship.

“I think when you’re a one seed to fans and media, it would look like a failure,” he said. “We’re not afraid of failure, we’re not afraid of people defining us as failures. As long as we play hard for each other, we’re good.”

The Wildcats, a No. 2 seed last season, aren’t as stacked with potential first-rounders as those Gators. But Hart, Jenkins and Jalen Brunson lead the returning starters that are tournament tested and have the championship experience that can only help them survive potential early tests against Wisconsin, Virginia, Florida and maybe Duke just to reach the Final Four.

After winning the conference title in New York, the Wildcats knew the hard part had just started.

“A lot of them said, ‘We’re not done yet,’” Wright said.

## Blazers top Spurs, spoil Aldridge’s return

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Damian Lillard scored 36 points as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the San Antonio Spurs 110-106 on Wednesday night, spoiling LaMarcus Aldridge’s return from a health scare.

Aldridge had 19 points and seven rebounds after missing two games with a minor heart arrhythmia. He was cleared Wednesday morning and does not have any playing restrictions. Aldridge finished 9-for-24 from the field and played 32 minutes.

**Grizzlies 98, Bulls 91:** Mike Conley and Marc Gasol each scored 27 points to lead Memphis past host Chicago, which lost Dwyane Wade to a sprained elbow.

**Pacers 98, Hornets 77:** Paul George made six three-pointers and finished with 39 points to lead Indiana past visiting Charlotte.

**Heat 120, Pelicans 112:** Goran Dragic played through a black eye and bloodied mouth to score 33 points, and Hassan Whiteside had 20 points and 17 rebounds in Miami’s victory over visiting New Orleans.

**Kings 107, Suns 101:** Rookie Skal Labissiere scored 21 of his career-high 32 points in the fourth quarter, a breakout performance that lifted Sacramento over host Phoenix.

**Mavericks 112, Wizards 107:** Dirk Nowitzki scored 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter, Harrison Barnes finished with 22 and Dallas boosted its slim playoff hopes with a win over host Washington.

**Celtics 117, Timberwolves 104:** Isaiah Thomas scored 27 points to lead Boston past visiting Minnesota.

**Rockets 139, Lakers 100:** Lou Williams scored 30 points against his former team and James Harden had his 17th triple-double of the season to lead host Houston over Los Angeles.

**Jazz 97, Pistons 83:** Gordon Hayward scored 25 points and George Hill added 17 and visiting Utah beat Detroit.

**Bucks 97, Clippers 96:** Giannis Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton each scored 16 points to lead six Milwaukee players in double figures as the Bucks held off host Los Angeles.



# USC ousts Providence with late rally

Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Beaten by Providence by one point in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament last year, Southern Cal exacted revenge in a rematch Wednesday night.

Bennie Boatwright scored a career-high 24 points as the Trojans rallied from a 17-point deficit in the second half to beat Providence 75-71 in a First Four game.

"It does feel good getting payback from last year, because that was a tough loss," Boatwright said.

Southern Cal, the No. 11 seed, moves on to play No. 6 seed SMU in Tulsa, Okla., on Friday. It will be the second meeting of the season for the teams after USC prevailed 78-73 on Nov. 25. Southern Cal is 5-1 all-time against SMU.

After Providence (20-13) led by 15 points at halftime and went up by 17 to start the second half, Southern Cal (25-9) mounted a furious rally. The Trojans closed it to five points at the 10-minute mark, and

went up 61-60 on a jumper by Chimezie Metu off a turnover with 6:46 left.

Metu hit both ends of a 1-and-1 to put Southern Cal up 71-64 with 1:23 remaining and kept Providence from getting momentum down the stretch.

"I think we just got out-toughed in the second half," Providence guard Jalen Lindsey said. "We weren't playing with the same passion we were in the first half, and it showed. And they executed their game plan and we kind of faltered back."

Jordan McLaughlin scored 18 points for Southern Cal, and Metu added 15 on 9-for-12 free-throw shooting.

Emmitt Holt led Providence with 18 points and 11 rebounds. Lindsey and Rodney Bullock added 17 each.

The comeback was Southern Cal's 12th this season of at least 10 points, the most in the nation.

Providence outshot Southern Cal 49 percent to 42 percent, but the Trojans outscored them in the second half 46-27.

"I thought we got lazy defensively in the second half, and I was really shocked at that given the time and score of this game," Providence coach Ed Cooley said.

**Big picture: Providence:** Had the game well in hand but went cold in the second half and let Southern Cal muscle back into it.

**Southern Cal:** An energetic second-half comeback gives the Trojans some buoyancy and momentum as they move into the field of 64. And they know they can beat SMU.

**Looking to Tulsa:** USC coach Andy Enfield saw enough of SMU in November to know the Trojans have their work cut out for them on Friday.

"They're a terrific basketball team," he said of the Mustangs, who have won 16 straight. "They have five guys in their starting lineup that are similar to Providence. They're big, they're long, they're very skilled."

McLaughlin said Southern Cal showed it belongs in the tournament.

"Our coaches, they have confidence in us, we have confidence in ourselves," he said. "And we know when we're playing like we did the second half that we're able to compete with anybody. And it's just a matter of us just bringing the energy and knocking down shots and just competing all the way to the end."

**Blowout alert:** The game looked like a rout in the making at halftime. Providence took a 44-29 lead on the strength of a 15-0 run punctuated by two three-pointers by Bullock and another from Lindsey, who had 15 points in the first half. The Friars were 8-for-15 from three-point range in the first half.

Southern Cal had just three field goals in the last 11 minutes of the half, and went without one in the last 4½ minutes of the frame with Providence ripping off a 12-3 run in that span.

The second-half comeback included two 8-0 runs by the Trojans.

## UC Davis earns trip to face No. 1 Kansas

Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — UC Davis overcame 18 turnovers and rallied in the second half to win its first-ever NCAA Tournament game, beating a North Carolina Central team whose poor shooting ensured it would be one-and-done.

Chima Moneke had 18 points and 12 rebounds as 16th-seeded UC Davis (25-9) won 67-63 in a First Four game on Wednesday night to earn a trip to Tulsa, Okla., to play No. 1 seed Kansas on Friday.

"I feel like I'm a confident player, and I got it going early," Moneke said. "And I like the matchup that I had. And you know, my teammates were doing a great job of moving the ball, and I felt that if we continued to do that, I would put us in a successful position to score most of the time."

Down by three points at halftime, the Aggies went on an 11-2 run to start the second half, and led by as many as nine before streaky North Carolina Central (25-9) forced some turnovers and chipped away at the lead.

The Eagles pulled within 64-63 with 1:49

left in the game on a three-pointer by Dajuan Graf. They got the ball back with 37 seconds left, but another three-point try by Graf was off the mark. Graf had to foul Lawrence White, who made two free throws with 16 seconds remaining to give the Eagles some breathing room. Brynton Lemar hit a foul shot with 4 seconds left to put it away.

"We had guys, mentally they just weren't there," North Carolina Central coach LeVelle Moton said. "And they got in their feelings and their emotions a little bit, and they busted us in the mouth. And I think we gathered ourselves and obviously we made the switch to the 1-3-1 and caused some turnovers and got us back in."

Lemar scored 15 points and White added 14 for UC Davis, which had earned a trip to the tournament by winning the Big West Conference Tournament.

UC Davis came out and grabbed momentum on two rim-rattling dunks by Moneke and led by as many as nine points in the first half before N.C. Central could get its feet. The Eagles stormed back with a 16-3 run and led 34-31 at halftime, thanks in

part to nine UC Davis turnovers.

UC Davis had an 11-2 run in the second half, and North Carolina Central was just 1-for-9 from the field during that stretch.

"Our guys grew up as little hoopers dreaming about playing and having this opportunity," UC Davis coach Jim Les said. "And so it's special to be here. And we're just going to continue to fight, to keep this story going."

**Big picture: UC Davis:** Won despite some sloppy ball-handling. The turnover-prone Aggies will have to tighten it up to have a chance against Kansas.

**North Carolina Central:** Poor shooting doomed the Eagles, especially when the game got close down the stretch.

**Brick City:** North Carolina Central shot only 36 percent for the game, and was just 10-for-35 in the second half. The Eagles converted only 5 of 26 three-point attempts.

"We missed too many layups," Moton said. "And I told the guys at the beginning of the season: Your season is going to come down to one possession. And you got to capitalize when you get that opportunity."

# Homers lift US over Venezuela in WBC

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — On a night when well-hit balls died on the warning track, Petco Park finally yielded to a hometown favorite and the All-Star Game MVP.

Adam Jones hit a tying home run leading off the eighth inning and Eric Hosmer added a two-run shot three batters later as the United States rallied to beat Venezuela 4-2 on Wednesday night in the second round of the World Baseball Classic.

Jones played at Morse High about 8 miles east of Petco Park. His father and brother both served in the military.

"This ranks up high," said Jones, the Baltimore Orioles slugger. "I've been in the post-season a couple of times but never won it. To do this with Team USA, it's a big difference. This is country versus country,

and to do it in front of a massive military city, I really don't have words for it."

After being shut down for the first five innings by Seattle Mariners ace Felix Hernandez, the Americans broke through against Venezuela's bullpen in the Pool F opener for both teams.

Hosmer, the MVP of the 2016 All-Star Game at Petco Park, singled leading off the seventh and scored on Jonathan Lucroy's sacrifice fly.

Hector Rondon (0-1) started the eighth for Venezuela and Jones homered to left-center to tie it at 2. Christian Yelich singled and Nolan Arenado flied out before Hosmer muscled a shot an estimated 418 feet to right-center for the lead.

"After Jones hit that homer, the energy in the dugout picked up and gave a spark to our club," Hosmer said.

Then he connected, and the crowd chanted as he circled the bases.

Hosmer hit a solid drive in his second at-bat, "and it went to the warning track. And I knew I got this one better. I knew it had a chance," he said.

Hosmer hit a solo homer and an RBI single in the American League's 4-2 win at the 2016 All-Star Game in San Diego.

"The All-Star Game is something that, for me, it was my first time experiencing it," Hosmer said. "But this tournament is different. It's a sense of pride throughout the whole entire team, throughout the whole entire country, because it only happens very seldom."

Luke Gregerson of the Houston Astros, who played his first five big league seasons with the San Diego Padres, pitched the ninth for the save.

Pat Neshek (1-0), who had a brief stint with the Padres in 2011, worked the eighth for the win.

Hernandez scattered three singles, struck out three and walked none.

King Felix made it through two heart-stopping moments in the first. He appeared to tweak something in his right leg while fielding Jones' swinging bunt and throwing him out for the second out. After being checked by a trainer and throwing two warmup pitches, Hernandez stayed in the game. Yelich then hit a comebacker that knocked Hernandez's glove off. With a befuddled look on his face, the pitcher picked up the ball and threw out Yelich to end the inning.

Venezuela manager Omar Vizquel said Hernandez had a cramp in his upper right leg.

## Marchand, Bruins end Flames' 10-game winning streak

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — Brad Marchand scored his NHL-leading 36th goal, David Backes put Boston ahead after returning from an injury and the Bruins ended Calgary's 10-game winning streak Wednesday night with a 5-2 victory over the Flames.

Marchand is also tied with Chicago's Patrick Kane and Edmonton's Connor McDavid for tops in the league with 76 points.

Backes got tied up with Flames defenseman Mark Giordano and was taken into the corner boards 12 minutes into the game. Backes was favoring his leg as he was helped off the ice.

But he returned seven minutes into the second period and on his second shift back he broke a 2-all tie. Backes took a pass from David Krejci on a 3-on-2 and from 30 feet whipped a wrist shot over the glove of Chad Johnson.

David Pastrnak scored twice, and Matt Beleskey also scored

for Boston. The Bruins' fourth straight win moved them within three points of second-place Ottawa in the Atlantic Division.

Alex Chiasson and Dougie Hamilton scored for the Flames.

**Flyers 4, Penguins 0:** Wayne Simmonds scored the 200th goal of his career and Steve Mason made 23 saves to lead host Philadelphia over Pittsburgh.

Sean Couturier, Claude Giroux and Dale Weise also scored for the Flyers, who closed within five points of the idle New York Islanders for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. Making the postseason remains a long shot for the Flyers with just 13 games left and four teams to pass.

Philadelphia snapped a three-game losing streak while handing the defending Stanley Cup champions their fourth shutout of the season.

The road-weary Penguins completed an eight-day, five-game road trip that took them through four time zones as they traveled 4,763 miles. The jour-

ney got longer due to Tuesday's snowstorm in the Northeast, which caused the Penguins to fly home from Calgary late Monday night rather than directly to Philadelphia. Pittsburgh arrived in Philadelphia late Wednesday morning.

With 95 points, Pittsburgh remained two behind idle Washington for first place in the Metropolitan Division and the best record in the NHL.

Mason posted his third shutout of the season and the 33rd of his career.

**Ducks 2, Blues 1:** Rickard Rakell scored his 30th goal of the season and Ryan Getzlaf added a short-handed goal as host Anaheim defeated St. Louis.

Jonathan Bernier made 26 saves for his fourth straight win as Anaheim passed Calgary for second place in the Pacific Division.

Ivan Barbashev scored his third career goal and Jake Allen made 20 saves, but the Blues' five-game winning streak was stopped.

St. Louis missed out on its

chance to pass Nashville for third place in the Central Division. The Blues still hold the second wild card in the Western Conference, four points ahead of Los Angeles.

Rakell hit the 30-goal mark for the first time in his five-year career by putting the Ducks ahead 5:32 into the first period.

**Avalanche 3, Red Wings 1:** J.T. Compher scored his first NHL goal and Calvin Pickard stopped 27 shots in host Colorado's win over Detroit.

Matt Duchene scored his first goal in 12 games and Carl Soderberg added his first in 18 games as the NHL-worst Avalanche won at home for the third time in four tries. They are 11-22-2 at the Pepsi Center this season.

Andreas Athanasiou scored for the Red Wings, who, like their once-hated rival, are well out of the playoff hunt.

Jimmy Howard made 26 saves in his second start since returning from a knee injury that had kept him out since Dec. 20.