

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Reports of civilian deaths in Iraq probed

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The U.S.-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group is investigating reports of an airstrike in a western neighborhood in the Iraqi city of Mosul that allegedly killed more than 100 civilians last week, according to a coalition statement to The Associated Press.

The suspected high toll underscores the difficulties that Iraqi troops face in the weeks-long fight to route the Sunni militant group from the densely urban part of the city, Iraq's second-largest.

Residents of the neighborhood known as Mosul Jidideh told an Associated Press team at the scene that scores of residents are believed to have been killed by a pair of airstrikes that hit a cluster of homes in the area earlier this month.

"Over 137 people were inside. The entire neighborhood was fleeing because of missiles

that hit, so people were taking refuge here," said Ahmed Ahmed, one of the residents of the neighborhood.

One airstrike hit the residential area on March 13, followed by a second strike four days later, the residents said. The coalition statement said "multiple allegations" were being investigated.

AP reporters saw at least 50 bodies being recovered from the wreckage of the buildings. A team of Iraqi rescue engineers worked to recover the bodies on Friday, after being prevented from reaching the site for days due to fierce front-line clashes, according to Safaa Saadi Jawad, one of the engineers.

The coalition has "opened a formal civilian casualty credibility assessment on this allegation," the statement continued, adding that coalition planes "routinely strike" Islamic State targets in this area and that coalition forces "take

all reasonable precautions during the planning and execution of airstrikes to reduce the risk of harm to civilians."

Faced with their toughest fight against the Islamic State group yet, Iraqi and coalition forces have increasingly turned to airstrikes and artillery to clear and hold territory in western Mosul's densely populated western neighborhoods.

Civilians and humanitarian and monitoring officials are warning of increased civilian casualties in western Mosul due to the heavy reliance on airstrikes and artillery.

The United Nations reported on Thursday that more than 1,000 people have been treated for conflict-related trauma near front lines since the fight for western Mosul began Feb. 19.

Front-line medics say the vast majority of civilians they treat say they were hit with Islamic State munitions such as

mortars and sniper fire. The Islamic State group has repeatedly targeted civilians trying to flee amid fierce fighting.

As Iraqi forces push deeper into Mosul's old city, humanitarian officials expect civilian casualty rates to spike; more than 400,000 civilians remain trapped in the city's west. The Tigris divides Mosul into a western and an eastern half. The eastern half was declared liberated from the Islamic State group in January.

The Pentagon, which has yet to release casualty figures from last month's fighting, has acknowledged 220 civilian deaths from coalition airstrikes in Iraq and Syria since the U.S. campaign against the militants began in 2014. Independent monitor groups such as the London-based Airwars, put the casualty figures much higher, at just over 2,700 killed by coalition strikes since 2014.

## Fighters reach Syria dam held by Islamic State

Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed Syrian fighters reached a major dam held by the Islamic State group in northern Syria Friday as Syria's U.N. ambassador said American personnel are "invading my country" and insisted any effort to liberate the city of Raqqa, the de facto capital of the Islamic State group, should be done in coordination with the Damascus government.

The push toward the Tishrin Dam came three days after U.S. aircraft ferried Syrian Kurdish fighters and allies behind Islamic State lines to spearhead a ground assault on the militant-

held town of Tabqa where the dam is located.

Cihan Sheikh Ehmed, the spokeswoman for the Syrian Democratic Forces, said the fighting is ongoing at the entrance of the dam.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said SDF fighters are marching slowly toward the buildings of the Tishrin Dam because of mines and explosives planted by the Islamic State group.

To the east of Raqqa, SDF fighters clashed with Islamic State gunmen inside the village of Karama, according to the Observatory and Mohammed Khedhr of Sound and Picture

Organization, which documents Islamic State violations.

The attacks on Tabqa and Karama were ongoing under the cover of airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition, according to the activists.

In France, the country's defense minister said the campaign by international forces to take back the Islamic State group's de facto capital will start in the coming days. Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Raqqa is a "major objective" for the U.S.-led coalition.

As the coalition advances in its battle to retake the Islamic State stronghold of Mosul in

Iraq, the U.S. has been intensifying involvement in Syria's conflict ahead of the battle for Raqqa.

In Geneva, where peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition resumed Friday, Syria's ambassador to the U.N. Bashar al-Ja'afari insisted that "American warplanes" had bombed a school in the village of Mansourah a day earlier and were responsible for the deaths of 237 civilians among some 500 people fleeing Raqqa.

Al-Ja'afari said any military presence in Syria without government approval was "illegitimate."

# With US carrier back in Gulf, tensions up

Associated Press

ABOARD THE USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH—American sailors watched as the first Revolutionary Guard vessels appeared on the horizon of the Strait of Hormuz, beginning a daylong face-off that has become familiar to Iranian paramilitary and U.S. naval forces that pass through the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf.

But these routine, if tense, encounters soon could grow even more perilous.

President Donald Trump has warned that Iranian forces will be blown out of the water if they challenge U.S. naval vessels, while American commanders describe the Guard as increasingly behaving unprofessionally with rocket launches and provocative actions. Iranian hardliners, still smarting over the nuclear detente with the West, could see a military confrontation as a way to derail moderate President Hassan Rouhani heading into the country's May presidential election.

What happens next could hinge on the Strait of Hormuz, through which passes a third of all oil trade by sea.

"What reason were they to be in an international corridor, other than to harass us?" Rear Adm. Kenneth Whitesell, commander of Carrier Strike Group 2, said of the Iranian actions. "Was today the day they were going to come out and potentially deploy kinetic actions against us?"

Whitesell oversees the strike group that has the USS George H.W. Bush at its heart. The Nimitz-class, nuclear-powered carrier left her homeport of Norfolk, Va., on Jan. 21 — Trump's first full day in office. Its passage through the strait closes a roughly three-month gap in which America had no aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf. A similar gap happened in the fall of 2015.

Its overall mission is providing a base for airstrikes against the Islamic State group. The ship's contingent of F/A-18 combat jets began bombing the extremists in February as the vessel transited through the Mediterranean Sea.

But serving as a counterbalance to Iran and assuring America's Gulf Arab allies in the region also remains vital, Whitesell said. While acknowledging that Trump and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have strong suspicions about Iran, he said there hadn't been any change in his orders in how to deal with the Islamic Republic.

Threats, however, remain. After a Saudi naval vessel came under attack from a purported "drone" boat off the coast of war-torn Yemen, in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea, U.S. vessels in this strike group changed their routine to protect themselves while passing, said Capt. Will Pennington, the commanding officer of the Bush.

"Some of our escort ships arrived in advance of us and

provided security in that Bab al-Mandeb and a few lagged a few days behind so our coverage of that area was extended," Pennington said. "That same threat could exist here in the Strait of Hormuz or any other strait."

Small-vessel attacks include the October 2000 boat-borne bombing by al-Qaida on the USS Cole, which killed 17 U.S. sailors while the ship was refueling in Yemen's Aden harbor.

The worry grows for U.S. officials as the Navy recorded 35 instances of what it describes as "unsafe and/or unprofessional" interactions with Iranian forces in 2016, compared with 23 in 2015. Before this week, there had been six, said Lt. Ian McConnaughey, a spokesman for the U.S. 5th Fleet, based on the nearby island of Bahrain.

Of the incidents last year, the worst involved Iranian forces capturing 10 U.S. sailors and holding them overnight. It became a propaganda coup for Iran's hardliners, as Iranian TV repeatedly aired footage of the Americans on their knees, their hands on their heads.

Iranian forces view the U.S. presence in the Gulf, and especially the Strait of Hormuz, as a provocation by itself. They, in turn, have accused the U.S. Navy of unprofessional behavior.

At dawn on Tuesday, the Bush and its strike force entered the strait, which at its narrowest point is 21 miles wide, in the waters between Iran and Oman.

A Rihanna song playing over

the loudspeaker on the deck was cut off quickly at the first sighting of Iranian vessels.

Iranian authorities demanded the Americans leave the area, though the U.S. Navy and an Omani warship said the strike group was in Omani waters.

The Iranians had speedboats and other craft, several displaying the Kalashnikov-rifle emblem of the Revolutionary Guard. U.S. helicopters circled overhead as some of the Iranians used telephoto lenses and video cameras to film the carrier — while journalists invited aboard the Bush filmed them.

On the bridge, a sailor called out: "There's nine. Reports of weapons being loaded."

But the Iranians merely stood alongside their machine guns, keeping their distance while telling the American forces to leave the area. Hours later, the carrier exited the strait and entered the waters of the Persian Gulf, leaving the Iranians behind.

Still, Whitesell rated the day's danger a 7.5 out of 10, due to fog and other issues compounding the possible threat the Iranian vessels posed. "They had every one of those weapons manned, and we also have video data that they were arming every one of those weapons," he said.

Minutes later, Whitesell excused himself to return to the bridge. More Revolutionary Guard boats had emerged from the fog.

## General to panel: Russia may be supplying Taliban

The Washington Post

The top U.S. general in Europe told lawmakers Thursday Russia and the Taliban are growing close, suggesting the Kremlin might even be supplying the insurgent group.

Army Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, who is also the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, did not elaborate to the Senate Armed Services Committee

on what type of equipment the Taliban might have received.

Any type of material support, however, would be a significant escalation of Russia's involvement with the Taliban; it has said in the past that it maintains only limited communication with the group.

Much to the chagrin of U.S. officials and military officers, Russia has justified its communications with the Taliban

by saying the insurgent group is fighting the Islamic State group in Afghanistan, not the Afghan government.

Army Gen. John Nicholson, the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, has decried Russia's contact with the Taliban, saying it has given cover to a group that has worked to undermine the United States and the government in Kabul.

On Thursday, the district cen-

ter of Sangin in Afghanistan's province of Helmand was overrun by the Taliban after months of heavy fighting with Afghan forces backed by U.S. air support. In recent months, the Taliban have increased control over large swaths of the country, prompting Nicholson to suggest that thousands more troops are needed to help better train the Afghan military and reverse the "stalemate" in the country.



## SIGAR: GIs, civilians stole or wasted \$1B in Afghan rebuilding effort

*The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer*

When the U.S. government spends \$117 billion to rebuild a war-torn country, some of it is bound to be stolen or misspent. And that's what happened in Afghanistan, according to the man responsible for helping find the waste, fraud and abuse.

John Sopko, head of the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, said Thursday evening in a speech at Duke University that his team identified nearly \$1 billion in questionable costs and funds that could be put to better use. An additional \$1 billion has been recovered for U.S. taxpayers in fines, restitution, recoveries and cost savings.

The money was recovered through 105 SIGAR arrests that led to 144 criminal indictments and charges and 109 convictions and guilty pleas.

To date, the U.S. has spent more than \$117 billion for the Afghanistan reconstruction effort and has promised another \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year through 2020. That figure, more than the U.S. spent on the entire Marshall Plan after World War II, doesn't include any cost of fighting the war, Sopko said.

One of Sopko's agents is stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., and works with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Raleigh. That partnership has resulted in the convictions of 12 military members based in North Carolina on charges including bribery, conspiracy, theft and bulk cash smuggling. Sentences for those convicted have ranged from 10 months to 15 years in prison.

The arrests include the discovery of four military members responsible for creating 114 false requests for fuel-supply missions and selling the gas on the black market, racking up about \$10 million in losses, according to documents provided by SIGAR spokeswoman Jennifer George-Nichol.

SIGAR investigators also revealed two Special Forces members skimmed nearly \$215,000 by inflating construction bids and altering receipts between November 2009 and December 2010. The men took the extra money and sent it via postal money orders to their spouses in the U.S., documents show.

With all of the U.S. spending, its efficacy in Afghanistan remains unclear, Sopko said in his prepared remarks.

"While we know we built a lot of schools and hospitals, it's less clear whether and how they're currently being used," he said.

## Defense: Rape accuser jealous of SEAL's wife

*The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot*

NORFOLK, Va. — Attorneys for a Virginia Beach, Va.-based Navy SEAL charged with raping a member of his unit in their hotel while they were on a training mission in Kentucky said Tuesday that the woman making the accusations was simply seeking revenge because she was jealous that he wouldn't leave his wife for her.

Prosecutors say Chief Petty Officer Stephen Varanko III refused to let the woman leave his hotel room and assaulted her after he learned she had slept with another man.

Attorneys for both sides said during the opening day of Varanko's general court-martial at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., that Varanko and the woman had been carrying on a consensual relationship for nearly two years before the night in question. They painted a picture of a complicated relationship that the two largely had tried to keep secret as the SEAL and the analyst worked side by side in Afghanistan, at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Norfolk and on training trips.

Varanko is charged with four counts of rape, four counts of sexual assault and one count each of aggravated assault and battery. He also is charged with violating a general regulation and with making a false official statement.

The Virginian-Pilot does not identify reputed victims of sexual assaults.

If convicted, Varanko could face a life sentence without parole.

The question of Varanko's guilt or innocence will reside with military Judge Cmdr. Heather Partridge. The general court-martial was scheduled to last through Friday.

Defense attorneys noted during questioning that the woman had sent a text message to Varanko the night of the suspected assault while they were at a

strip club with other members of Special Reconnaissance Team Two, saying she wanted to have sex with him.

During questioning, she said she had hoped that Varanko would leave his girlfriend, who he eventually married. The two had exchanged thousands of explicit text messages and said they loved each other.

The woman said that she had planned to have consensual sex with Varanko in Kentucky, but things turned sour after he discovered a text message from another man she briefly dated eight months earlier indicating that she had sex with him.

The woman said they started out having a conversation in Varanko's hotel room about that text message when Varanko became violent, strangling her, throwing her against a wall and placing in her in a submission hold.

She said Varanko had on a "fake, evil smile" as he placed his forehead against hers, squeezed her cheeks and called her degrading names. In an interview with Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents, Varanko acknowledged he pushed her on the bed and held her.

The woman said Varanko wouldn't let her leave and eventually had sex with her on two occasions before they fell asleep. Varanko would later write to the woman that he was "embarrassed and ashamed" about what happened between them.

"What I did to you terrifies my very existence," he wrote.

Varanko also is accused of sexually harassing the woman on the same training trip and after they returned to Virginia. During cross-examination, Lt. Cmdr. Mike Hanzel, one of Varanko's attorneys, questioned whether the text messages, notes and gifts Varanko had sent to the woman after the night in Kentucky were unwelcome because she had done likewise.

## Airman's mom: Daughter died loading bomb onto a plane in Jordan

*Associated Press*

DANSVILLE, N.Y. — The Pentagon said an airman from western New York has died while on duty in the Middle East.

The Department of Defense

announced Thursday that Staff Sgt. Alexandria Mae Morrow, 25, of Dansville, died Wednesday in Southwest Asia while performing maintenance duties in support of combat operations. Details of her death haven't been released.

The Pentagon said the incident is under investigation.

Morrow was assigned to the 366th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho.

She grew up in Dansville, 40 miles south of Rochester.

Her mother told WHEC-TV in Rochester that her daughter died in Jordan while loading a bomb onto a plane.

Morrow was the married mother of two children, ages 2 and 4.

## Trump's former campaign chair offers to talk to panel on Russia

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's former campaign manager, a key figure in investigations into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia, has volunteered to be questioned by lawmakers as part of a House probe of the Kremlin's suspected meddling in the 2016 election.

Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., chairman of the House intelligence committee, told reporters on Friday that Paul Manafort's counsel contacted the panel on Thursday to offer lawmakers the opportunity to interview him. He said the scope and setting of that questioning hasn't yet been determined.

Manafort volunteered to be interviewed by the committee the same week that The Associated Press reported that a decade ago he worked for a Russian billionaire. Manafort wrote in a strategy memo obtained by the AP that he would work to "benefit the Putin Government."

At the same time, Nunes said a previously scheduled public hearing with former Obama administration officials would not take place Tuesday as planned.

Nunes' focus for people to interview was primarily current and former government officials with insight into the investigation. When asked about whether he would call Trump associates, he has said people can volunteer to be interviewed if they want to.

"We're not going to get into a neo-McCarthyism era here where we just start bringing in Americans because they were mentioned in a press story," Nunes said. "I'm highly concerned about that. Now, if people want to come in freely, we will do that."

The top Democrat on the committee, Adam Schiff, said he disagreed with the chairman's decision to cancel the public hearing. The former directors of national intelligence and the CIA and the former acting attorney general had agreed to testify publicly on March 28.

"I think this is a serious mistake," Schiff said Friday.

He said the committee's hearing on Monday demonstrates how important it is that these inquiries be conducted publicly. During that hearing, FBI Director James Comey confirmed there was an ongoing counterintelligence investigation into whether Trump associates coordinated with the Russians to influence the 2016 election.

"That, of course, is very significant information for the public," Schiff said.

## More arrested in London

Associated Press

LONDON — Police are combing through "massive amounts of computer data" and have contacted thousands of witnesses as they look for clues about why a British-born man launched a deadly attack on Parliament, a senior police official said Friday.

As the fast-moving investigation led to more arrests and searches, police revealed the attacker, Khalid Masood, was born Adrian Russell Ajao in England in 1964.

In a briefing outside Scotland Yard, London's top counterterrorism officer, Mark Rowley, said two more "significant" arrests had been made, bringing to nine the number of people in custody over Wednesday's attack.

Detectives have searched 21 properties in London, Birmingham and Wales.

Masood, 52, drove his car into crowds of people on Westminster Bridge on Wednesday afternoon before fatally stabbing a police officer at the Houses of Parliament. He was shot dead by police.

An American man from Utah, a British man and a British woman were killed on the bridge, and police Officer Keith Palmer died at Parliament, police said.

The latest victim, who died in a hospital on Thursday, was identified as Leslie Rhodes, 75, from South London.

Over 50 people were injured; 31 re-

quired hospital treatment.

"Those affected include a real cross-section of ages from at least 12 nationalities," Rowley said. "It's a poignant reminder, I think, that the impact of this attack on the capital will reach around the world."

Rowley said two police officers targeted in the attack have significant injuries. Two other people also remain in critical condition, one with life-threatening injuries.

The attacker was born in southeastern England and had most recently been living in Birmingham, where police have searched several properties.

Police said Masood used several aliases and had a string of convictions between 1983 and 2003 for offenses including assault and possession of an offensive weapon.

Prime Minister Theresa May said Thursday that Masood was "investigated in relation to concerns about violent extremism" some years ago, but she called him "a peripheral figure."

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for Wednesday's attack. Police believe Masood acted alone, but Rowley said police are investigating whether he "acted totally alone inspired by terrorist propaganda or if others have encouraged, supported or directed him."

Nine people remain in custody on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts.

## Pentagon reviewing Flynn work linked to firm with Turkey ties

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's ousted national security adviser did not seek permission from the U.S. government to work as a paid foreign agent for Turkish interests, U.S. defense officials said, raising the possibility that the Pentagon could dock the retirement pay of Michael Flynn.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said the Defense Department is reviewing the issue. It arose after Flynn, a retired Army lieutenant general, registered retroactively this month with the Justice Department as a foreign agent for work his company, Flynn Intel Group, carried out on behalf of Inovo BV, a Netherlands-based company. It is owned by Ekim Alptekin, a Turkish businessman who has links to the Turkish government.

The Inovo assignment centered on researching Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric whom Ankara blames for fomenting a coup attempt last summer and wants extradited from the United States, where he lives in exile. That led Flynn's company to conclude the work "could be construed to have principally benefited the Republic of Turkey," according to a letter Flynn's attorney, Robert K. Kelner, sent to the Justice Department, along with the filing.

Flynn Intel Group received a total of \$530,000 in three payments between September and November from Inovo BV before discontinuing the arrangement after Trump was elected president, according to Flynn's filings. It is unclear how much Flynn personally profited from the deal, but he is the majority owner and chief executive officer of the firm.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Someone swaps out city speed limit signs

**OH** CLEVELAND — A Cleveland councilman who has unsuccessfully pushed to lower speed limits on a heavily traveled road says someone took the matter into his own hands and replaced about two dozen speed signs without city permission.

Councilman Matt Zone told WEWS-TV that an unidentified man in a hard hat and a reflective vest was recently photographed while replacing 35 mph signs with 25 mph signs. City workers took down the incorrect signs. That left a 2-mile section of road without speed limit signs and raised safety concerns for some residents.

There was no immediate word on when new signs with the proper limit might be installed. That project could cost taxpayers \$2,000.

## Experts remove cannon balls from museum

**VA** PETERSBURG — Bomb disposal experts removed four Civil War-era artillery rounds from Virginia's Siege Museum after X-rays showed several artillery rounds stored there were capable of exploding.

News outlets reported that two cannon balls and two Parrott artillery shells were removed Wednesday from storage at the museum, which depicts how residents of Petersburg lived before, during and after the Civil War. A military bomb squad had been called in after a Virginia State Police bomb technician determined Tuesday night that the artillery rounds were potentially lethal.

Petersburg city spokesman Clay Hamner said the artillery rounds did not have fuses in them and were not going to explode unless someone lit them.

## Suspect in liquor store robbery found sleeping

**MA** PITTSFIELD — Police in Pittsfield didn't have to look far for a suspect in the robbery of a liquor store.

Authorities said Melissa Holden was found asleep in the hallway of a nearby building a short time later — with a knife and bottles of vodka and Gatorade — the very items reported stolen. She was wearing clothing similar to the suspect seen in store surveillance video.

The Berkshire Eagle reported that Holden, 40, was held on \$3,000 bail after pleading not guilty at her arraignment Tuesday. Her attorney said Holden had no recollection of any robbery.

Police said the suspect entered the store, grabbed a Gatorade from a cooler, asked for two pints of vodka and pulled a knife when the clerk asked for payment.

## State issues 'atheist' license plate to driver

**IN** ELKHART — A man who was denied an Indiana license plate reading "ATHEIST" now has the personalized plate.

The Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles denied Chris Bontrager's first request in February without citing a specific reason. The bureau's denial letter to Bontrager noted that the agency could refuse a personalized plate if it had a connotation offensive to good taste or decency, was misleading or deemed improper.

Bontrager believed the decision was religiously motivated, and he filed an appeal with the state. He said the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana helped the appeal process move quickly. The Elkhart Truth reported. The effort cul-

minated in him receiving the new license plate on Monday.

## Mom beat girl over incorrect Bible verses

**PA** MIDDLETOWN — Police said a Pennsylvania woman severely beat her daughter, tried to strangle her and kicked her out of the house for incorrectly reciting Bible verses.

Pennlive.com reported that Rhonda Kemp Shoffner, 41, faces charges including aggravated assault.

The victim is under 13. Police said she was forced to kneel on the bathroom floor and repeat Bible verses. According to police, each time she made a mistake, the mother slammed the girl's head into the wall. They allege she then bit the child and attempted to strangle her.

Police said the girl fought off Shoffner, who told her to leave and never return. They said the girl called her father, who drove her to a police station.

## City joining effort to save singer's birthplace

**TN** MEMPHIS — A lawyer said the city of Memphis is putting together a working group to help figure out the future of the dilapidated house where soul singer Aretha Franklin was born.

Alan Crone, special counsel to Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland, told a judge Thursday that a group of people from the mayor's office and some community volunteers plan to work with other stakeholders concerned about the historic home. Lawyers, community leaders and Shelby County Environmental Court Judge Larry Potter have been trying to find ways to save the house. Potter had ordered the house to be demolished, but he put that order on hold last year after volunteers stabilized

the crumbling structure.

Franklin was born in the house in 1942.

## JFK's post-WWII diary going up for auction

**MA** BOSTON — A diary kept by a young John F. Kennedy during his brief stint as a journalist after World War II is being auctioned.

The 61-page diary was written in 1945 when Kennedy was a correspondent for Hearst newspapers, rubbing shoulders with the powerful and traveling through a devastated Europe. The diary provides insights into Kennedy's thoughts on leaders of the era.

Boston-based RR Auction said it's expected to fetch about \$200,000 on April 26.

In it, Kennedy reflects on Adolf Hitler's legacy, presages the future of the United Nations and the Western power struggle with the Soviet Union, a central conflict during his presidency 16 years later. The diary was given by Kennedy to Deirdre Henderson, a research assistant in his campaign office in the late 1950s.

## Turkey flies through windshield, dies

**NH** LONDONDERRY — New Hampshire Fish and Game officials said a tractor-trailer driver suffered minor injuries after a 19-pound turkey crashed through his windshield on Interstate 93.

Conservation officer Chris McKee said the adult turkey ended up in the cab of the trailer on Tuesday in Londonderry. The turkey had been trying to fly across the highway.

McKee said the truck driver called for help. The turkey died of its injuries on the way to a rehabilitation center.

From wire reports

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# 1-seed Jayhawks blow out Boilermakers

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Purdue coach Matt Painter stopped short of calling Kansas invincible on Thursday night.

Not by much.

After watching the top-seeded Jayhawks run roughshod over his overmatched Boilermakers in the Midwest Regional semifinals, Painter was asked whether anybody can stop Kansas — a team that has won its first three NCAA Tournament games by an average of 30 points.

He hemmed and hawed a bit, warning the rest of the field to keep the Jayhawks from getting into transition, before conceding: “If they keep getting those types of opportunities and shoot like that, they can’t be stopped.”

Oregon will try to keep Kansas from the Final Four.

The Jayhawks’ 98-66 victory over the Boilermakers was led by 26 points apiece from their dynamic backcourt of Frank Mason III and Devonte Graham, and buoyed by a boisterous crowd packed inside the Sprint Center — a mere 40-minute drive from their campus in Lawrence.

It was the fourth-biggest blowout in Sweet 16 history, dating to 1975. It was the third straight game Kansas has scored at least 90 points, the first team to accomplish the feat in the NCAA Tournament since UConn in 1995. And it was the most comprehensive performance of the year for the Jayhawks when judged by none other than their hard-to-please coach, Bill Self.

“The second half,” he said, “was about as complete as we’ve played.”

So, the question remains:

Are there any places where the Jayhawks are vulnerable?

Perhaps their interior depth.

Freshman center Udoka Azubuike was lost early in the season to a wrist injury, trimming Self’s rotation to seven guys. And when starting center Landen Lucas has been in foul trouble, opponents have been able to attack backups Carlton Bragg Jr. and Dwight Coleby with a bit more success.

But even Coleby has played well during the NCAA Tournament — heck, who from the Jayhawks hasn’t? — and that’s given Self and everyone else on the Kansas bench more confidence. Besides, 6-foot-8 freshman guard Josh Jackson is athletic enough to match up with anyone, as evidenced by the defensive job he did on Purdue center Caleb Swanigan.

Everyone thought the Boilermakers would be able to

lean on Swanigan and 7-foot-2 Isaac Haas to create a mismatch problem for Kansas. But the Jayhawks, with their four-guard lineup, brashly turned up the tempo and wore the big fellas down. So if size doesn’t seem to matter much against Kansas, maybe another guard-oriented team such as Oregon stands a better chance. The third-seeded Ducks beat Michigan on Thursday night to earn a date with the Jayhawks on Saturday night for a spot in the Final Four.

“This stretch, yeah, I think this is the best we’ve played all season,” the standout freshman said Thursday night, in a quiet corner of an otherwise boisterous locker room. “But I think we can get a lot better. I think there’s another step we can take.”

Good luck, Oregon. You’ve got next.

## Oregon heading back to Elite Eight

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Tyler Dorsey’s teammates call him “Mr. March.”

Yeah, that fits.

Dorsey scored 20 points and made the go-ahead layup with 1:08 left, and third-seeded Oregon held on to end No. 7 Michigan’s dramatic postseason run with a 69-68 victory in a Midwest Regional semifinal on Thursday night.

“We lean on him right now,” the Ducks’ Dylan Ennis said. “He’s playing his best basketball, and it’s coming at the right time.”

Dorsey’s recent surge has been timely, for sure. He’s scored 20 or more points in six straight games, a stretch that has seen Pac-12 player of the year Dillon Brooks struggle with his shot.

Oregon didn’t have the win secured until Derrick Walton Jr., who had carried the Wolverines the last three weeks, was off with his long jumper just before the buzzer.

For the Ducks (32-5), it’s on to the Elite Eight for the second straight year.

For the Wolverines (26-12), it was the end of a wild ride.

“The kids fought their hearts out this whole season,” Michigan coach John Beilein said, “but particularly this last six weeks to be more than a story. It was

a great team. They were becoming a great team before the story. We weren’t sharp as we would have liked to have been today, but you have to credit Oregon with that.”

Jordan Bell had a double-double for the Ducks, with 16 points and 13 rebounds. Brooks added 12 points and Ennis had 10.

Walton led the Wolverines with 20 points, eight assists and five rebounds. Zak Irvin had 14 of his 19 points in the second half and DJ Wilson had 12 points.

The Ducks’ run to the regional final has come without big man Chris Boucher, who went out in the Pac-12 Tournament semifinals with a season-ending knee injury. Oregon had plenty of inside game without Boucher, outscoring the Wolverines 34-16 in the paint and outrebounding them 36-31.

Its biggest play in the post came after Walton had made a jumper to give Michigan a 68-65 lead. Ennis got fouled and went to the line for a 1-and-1. He missed, and Bell swooped in for the offensive rebound and put it in to make it a one-point game.

“We have a play that we practice on, if one of us misses a free throw. We executed it perfectly,” Bell said.

After Walton missed a layup on the other end, Dorsey gave the Ducks the lead.

Ennis missed another free throw with

15 seconds left, giving Michigan one more chance. Oregon had two fouls to give and wanted to use them so Michigan would have to inbound the ball. The Ducks couldn’t get it done, though, and Walton was able to put up one more shot.

“We were supposed to foul,” Oregon coach Dana Altman said. “Dylan Ennis had an opportunity there. I was a little upset that he didn’t. Fortunately, the ball didn’t go in.”

**Woe is Moe:** Michigan’s Moe Wagner scored a career-high 26 points in Sunday’s win over No. 2 seed Louisville. But he missed six of his first seven shots against the Ducks and finished with seven points after going 3-for-10.

### Big Picture

**Michigan:** The Wolverines have gone through a lot, with their plane skidding off the runway as they tried to fly to the Big Ten Tournament and advancing to the Sweet 16 as a No. 7 seed. Ultimately, fatigue might have caught up to them. They shot just 39.3 percent against the Ducks and didn’t seem to have that special ingredient they showed last week.

**Oregon:** The Ducks set the school record with their 32nd win and are off to the Elite Eight for the second straight year thanks to a big-time performance from Dorsey.



# Surprising Xavier knocks off Arizona

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Not long after losing to Arizona's Sean Miller at the 2015 NCAA Tournament, Xavier coach Chris Mack jokingly said his friend should let him win the next one.

This was no gift between former colleagues.

The Musketeers earned this one and now they're headed to the Elite Eight for the first time in a decade.

Trevon Bluiett kept Xavier close with a big first half and the Musketeers made the clutch plays down the stretch against the West Region's No. 2 seed, upsetting Arizona 73-71 on Thursday night.

"I personally have so much respect for Sean and his staff," Mack said. "I know it's heart-breaking for them because they

had a special year, a special season and I know it's tough. But today is a Xavier day."

Xavier (30-13) fought through a string of injuries and a late losing streak to reach the NCAA Tournament, then opened with a pair of upsets. The Musketeers passed their biggest test to date with confident performance against one of college basketball's storied programs.

Bluiett scored 18 of his 25 points in the first half to help Xavier keep up with the athletic Wildcats. The Musketeers tracked Arizona after it tried to pull away in the second half, getting a late basket inside by Sean O'Mara while shutting down one of the nation's best offensive teams down the stretch.

Next up is their first Elite

Eight since 2008 and third overall, a showdown with No. 1 seed Gonzaga on Saturday.

"We're all tough guys. We stuck together," said Xavier's J.P. Macura, who had 14 points.

Arizona (32-5) appeared to be in control after Allonzo Trier scored 15 straight points to push the Wildcats' lead to six. Arizona stalled out on offense, though, failing to score over the final 2:52 as Xavier closed with a 9-0 run.

Trier had a final shot, but missed a three-pointer with 8 seconds left and the Wildcats were unable to track down Malcolm Bernard as he dribbled out the clock.

Trier scored 15 of his 19 points in the second half and Dusan Ristic had 17 for Arizona.

"We weren't able to get good

looks down the stretch and that's on me," Miller said.

Xavier made an improbable run to its fourth Sweet 16 in eight years under Mack, overcoming a late six-game losing streak and the loss of point guard Edmond Sumner to a torn left ACL.

## Off the Markkanen

Lauri Markkanen was Arizona's leading scorer through the first two games of the tournament, but did not have much of an impact against Xavier. He finished with nine points on 3-for-9 shooting, including 1-for-6 from three-point range. He did grab eight rebounds, including five on the offensive glass.

The Finnish forward is expected to leave for the NBA, but said after the game that he has yet to make a decision.

# Top seed Gonzaga holds on, advances to Elite Eight

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Jevon Carter fired up two potential tying three-pointers only to see them go off-target and Gonzaga didn't allow West Virginia to get off a third.

A defensive stop was a fitting way for this offensively challenged Sweet 16 matchup to end.

Jordan Mathews hit the go-ahead three-pointer with under a minute to play and top-seeded Gonzaga survived a rough shooting night all around to beat No. 4 seed West Virginia 61-58 Thursday night to advance to the West Regional final.

"All year we've been banking on our defense, our defense, our defense," coach Mark Few said. "Our defense stepped up and got it done there at the end. So we are absolutely elated to continue to be playing. We're 40 minutes away from a Final Four."

The Bulldogs (35-1) needed that defense to make their third Elite Eight in school history on a night that featured 51

fouls and only 34 made baskets. They also needed someone to make a key shot and Mathews delivered with the three-pointer that made it 60-58.

"We had never come across that throughout the season. It wasn't frustration. It was more like, I don't know, confusion, trying to figure it out," Mathews said of the shooting woes. "But just staying the course and just rallying around our guys and just thinking about the defensive end, helped my offense in the end."

West Virginia (29-8) had three shots to tie the game but Tarik Phillip missed a shot from the lane and Jevon Carter missed two three-pointers after Silas Melson made one foul shot. The Mountaineers rebounded both misses but couldn't get another shot off in the final 13 seconds.

"To know you were so close and you gave everything you had and to come up sort, it hurts," said Carter, who had a game-high 21 points.

Despite shooting 26.7 percent for the game, West Virgin-

ia stayed close and took a 58-55 lead on a 3-pointer by Carter with 1:47 to play. But the Mountaineers didn't score again and went down to a crushing loss.

Nigel Williams-Goss answered with two free throws. After Daxter Miles Jr. missed two fouls shots and Nathan Adrian was blocked by Josh Perkins on the putback, Williams-Goss found Mathews in the corner for the open 3-pointer that proved the game-winner.

"You tell me another team in the country who can shoot 26 percent from the field against a No. 1 seed, 21 percent from 3 and still could have, should have won the game," coach Bob Huggins said. "That says a lot about what kind of guys we have."

Mathews, Przemek Karnowski and Johnathan Williams all had 13 points to lead the Bulldogs.

## Monkey around

Gonzaga has made it to its third regional final to go along with eight Sweet 16 trips and 19 straight tournament appear-

ances. All that's missing is a trip to the Final Four.

"I don't know that I have a monkey on my back. I certainly don't wake up with one or walk around with one," Few said. "I don't think these guys think I have one. I don't think my wife thinks I have one or anybody in my family, close friends. Fishing buddies never talk about it. So those are the only people that really matter to me."

## Inadvertent whistle

Carter's go-ahead shot came after a lengthy replay review that gave West Virginia a second chance. Adrian appeared to go out of bounds under the basket in transition but the officials reviewed the play and determined that there was an inadvertent whistle.

## Ugly start

The first half was far from an aesthetic masterpiece with 27 fouls and just 16 baskets. The teams combined for 29 percent shooting, including 2 for 16 from 3-point range as the game went into the break tied at 30.

# Oshie, Caps outlast Columbus in SO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — T.J. Sochi was back for one night only.

Reprising his memorable performance at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, T.J. Oshie again beat Sergei Bobrovsky in a shootout as the Washington Capitals came back to defeat the Columbus Blue Jackets 2-1 Thursday night.

After beating Bobrovsky four times in six chances in the United States-Russia Olympic showdown, Oshie only needed to score once in the shootout this time to give his team an important victory with the playoffs not far away.

"I thought about it for 5 seconds maybe," Oshie said of his shootout dominance of Bobrovsky three years ago. "I was going to come in and do something else and saw something different and decided to go five-hole. It worked out."

Overcoming a monster performance by Bobrovsky in stopping 44 of 45 shots in regulation and overtime, the Capitals reached 104 points and padded their lead atop the Metropolitan Division and NHL standings. Pittsburgh is two back after its shootout loss in Ottawa, while Columbus is three back.

Dmitry Orlov scored for the Capitals and Seth Jones for the Blue Jackets as Washington outshot Columbus 45-30 in regulation and overtime. That ratcheted up the pressure on Bobrovsky, but Alex Ovechkin

knows his Russian countryman embraces these kinds of situations.

"When he's in his game it's very hard to score on him," Ovechkin said. "He likes the big moments, he likes pressure. His worth ethic is unbelievable. ... In my opinion he's one of the best goalies in the league right now."

Bobrovsky was undoubtedly the best player on the ice in the loss Thursday.

"It is what it is," Bobrovsky said. "I don't think someone hid or backed off and wanted to make mistakes. I thought everybody worked hard."

**Blackhawks 3, Stars 2 (SO):** Patrick Kane scored his team-leading 33rd goal in regulation and connected again in the shootout as host Chicago beat Dallas to open an eight-point lead for first place in the Central Division.

Artemi Panarin also scored in the shootout as Chicago rode a 42-save effort by Corey Crawford through overtime to improve to 6-0-1 in its last seven. It was also the Blackhawks' 18th win in their last 22 games.

**Senators 2, Penguins 1 (SO):** Kyle Turris and Bobby Ryan scored in the shootout to lift host Ottawa over Pittsburgh.

**Lightning 6, Bruins 3:** Nikita Kucherov had his third career hat trick to lead visiting Tampa Bay past Boston and snap its three-game losing streak.

**Panthers 3, Coyotes 1:** Jonathan Marchessault scored two goals and James Reimer made 22 saves to lift host Florida over Arizona.

**Hurricanes 4, Canadiens 1:** Lee Stempniak scored twice and visiting Carolina defeated Montreal to extend its point streak to nine games and keep its playoff hopes alive.

**Maple Leafs 4, Devils 2:** Auston Matthews had two assists and William Nylander had a goal and an assist as host Toronto topped New Jersey for its seventh win in nine games.

**Blues 4, Canucks 1:** Magnus Paajarvi scored twice to lead host St. Louis past Vancouver.

**Predators 3, Flames 1:** Pekka Rinne made 24 saves to lead host Nashville over Calgary.

**Flyers 3, Wild 1:** Matt Read scored the tiebreaking goal in the second period, Steve Mason stopped 24 shots and visiting Philadelphia beat Minnesota.

**Oilers 7, Avalanche 4:** Drake Caggiula and Jordan Eberle scored 1:10 apart to break a tie late in the third period, and visiting Edmonton rallied to beat Colorado.

**Kings 5, Jets 2:** Drew Doughty, Marian Gaborik and Anze Kopitar each scored a power-play goal, and host Los Angeles kept its slim playoff hopes alive with a victory over Winnipeg.

# DeRozan leads Raptors in rally over Heat

Associated Press

MIAMI — DeMar DeRozan scored 40 points, marking the first time he's had that many in consecutive games, and the Toronto Raptors pulled off their 19th double-digit comeback of the season to beat the Miami Heat 101-84 on Thursday night.

DeRozan shot 14-for-25 from the field and 12-for-13 from the line. He needed 38 shots to score 42 against Chicago on Tuesday.

Norman Powell scored 14 and Delon Wright added 13 for Toronto, which never led until midway through the third quarter. The Raptors allowed 33 points in the first quarter, then held Miami to 35 points over the next 27 minutes.

Playing with 13 stitches in his right hand, Hassan Whiteside scored 16 points and grabbed

14 rebounds for Miami. Rodney McGruder and Goran Dragic each had 13 points for the Heat, with Dragic shooting just 5-for-18.

**Spurs 97, Grizzlies 90:** LaMarcus Aldridge scored 23 points, Kawhi Leonard added 19 and San Antonio beat visiting Memphis in a possible first-round playoff preview.

San Antonio opened a four-game homestand by moving two games behind idle Golden State for the league's best record. The Spurs (55-16) close the homestand against the Warriors (57-14) next Wednesday.

Memphis (40-32) is seventh in the Western Conference, facing a potential first-round matchup with San Antonio.

**Mavericks 97, Clippers 95:** Harrison Barnes made the go-

ahead basket, then stole the ball from Blake Griffin with 3.9 seconds left as host Dallas beat Los Angeles.

Barnes made a 14-foot jumper with 1:06 remaining for the game's 11th lead change, making it 96-95. After he stripped Griffin, Wesley Matthews made a free throw with 0.9 seconds to play before J.J. Redick missed a three-point attempt that would have won it at the buzzer.

**Nets 126, Suns 98:** Brook Lopez scored 19 points, K.J. McDaniels had a season-high 16 and Brooklyn beat visiting Phoenix to post consecutive victories for the first time this season.

Trevor Booker added 14 points as one of six reserves in double figures for the league-worst Nets, who beat Detroit on

Tuesday.

Devin Booker scored 28 points and Marquese Chriss had 21 points and 10 rebounds for the Suns. Alex Len had 11 points and 11 rebounds.

**Trail Blazers 110, Knicks 95:** Damian Lillard scored 30 points and Portland never trailed in a victory over visiting New York.

Lillard had 15 in the first quarter as Portland opened a 14-point lead. The Blazers led by as much as 23 and moved within a game of the Denver Nuggets for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Lillard entered Thursday's game averaging 31.2 points since the All-Star break and didn't cool off. He has scored 25 or more in eight straight games, a career-best streak.