

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Syria: Soldiers killed in coalition strike

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A Syrian military official said Friday that an aerial “aggression” by the U.S.-led coalition on a government military position near the border with Jordan the day before killed several soldiers and caused material damage.

The strike was the first such close confrontation between U.S. forces and fighters backing President Bashar Assad, and the development is likely to increase tensions in the war-torn country.

The unnamed official’s comments were carried by Syrian state TV a day after the strike.

The U.S.-led coalition said Thursday that a U.S. airstrike hit pro-Syrian government forces it said posed a threat to American troops and allied rebels operating near the border with Jordan.

The attack comes at a time when the U.S. presence in Syria is becoming more visible, mostly in the northern parts of the country where American troops are backing Kurd-

ish-led forces fighting the Islamic State group.

This “flagrant aggression launched by the international coalition exposes the falsity of its allegation about fighting terrorism and undoubtedly demonstrates the reality of the Zionist-American project in the region,” the Syrian official said.

In Geneva meanwhile, Bashar al-Ja’afari, the head of the Syrian delegation to the peace talks underway in the Swiss city, told reporters there that he discussed the airstrike during a meeting Friday with U.N. Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura, describing the attack as “state terrorism.”

“In every meeting, we remind the attendees that there is terrorism by terrorists and also terrorism by states committed against our country,” al-Ja’afari said.

He was referring not only to Thursday’s strike but also to others carried out by the U.S.-led coalition in recent months that have claimed the lives of civilians in areas held by the Islamic State.

Russia, a main backer of Assad, also denounced the airstrike.

“Whatever the reason for the U.S. strike was, it was illegitimate and marked another flagrant violation of Syria’s sovereignty,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on a trip to Cyprus.

“We are deeply worried about the erosion of the emerging understanding of the need to combine efforts of all those who confront terrorists” such as the Islamic State and al-Qaida’s branch in Syria, Lavrov said.

The coalition said “apparent” Russian attempts to stop pro-Assad forces from moving toward Tanf, as well as warning shots and a show of force, had failed.

American officials and Syrian activists said the strike took place in the desert near the border with Jordan. The Syrian military official said the area attacked was a military position along the Tanf highway in the desert.

The area around Tanf, where the borders of Jordan, Syria and Iraq meet, has been considered a deconflicted zone under an agreement between the U.S. and Russia that went into effect earlier this month.

## Chinese fighters buzz US surveillance plane

The Washington Post

BEIJING — Two Chinese fighter jets have buzzed a U.S. spy plane that sniffs out nuclear radiation while flying over the East China Sea, underlining Beijing’s discomfort with American surveillance in its neighborhood.

The incident, reported Friday, also comes amid disagreement between the two countries on how to confront the nuclear and missile programs of North Korea, which depends on China as its main economic lifeline.

The American plane, a WC-135 Constant Phoenix, collects samples from the air to detect nuclear explosions. The U.S. Air Force said it was on a routine mission in international airspace. An American official told CNN, however, that the plane has been deployed regularly in

Northeast Asia to gather evidence of possible further nuclear tests by North Korea.

The Chinese military has become increasingly unhappy with American surveillance in the East China Sea and in Southeast Asia in the South China Sea, where Beijing claims full sovereignty in an ongoing dispute with U.S. allies in the region such as the Philippines.

Interceptions are not uncommon in both areas. But the latest incident appeared to be an unusually tight encounter.

Two Chinese SU-30 fighters flew close to an American WC-135 on Wednesday, the U.S. Air Force said in a statement, saying the American aircrew had described the intercept as “unprofessional,” based on the Chinese pilot’s maneuvers and the speeds and proximity involved.

“The issue is being addressed with China through appropriate diplomatic and military channels,” said Air Force spokeswoman Lt. Col. Lori Hodge, adding a U.S. military investigation into the interception was underway.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying declined to comment on the specific incident, referring questions to the defense ministry which has not yet commented.

“But as we said before, for a long time, the surveillance activities of U.S. military planes and ships near China’s territory are very likely to lead to misunderstanding, miscalculation, and accidents on the sea or in the air,” she told a regular news conference.

“So we hope the U.S. side can respect China’s reasonable na-

tional security concerns.”

Whether the close encounter was meant to send a signal to the Americans or was merely the action of an overexuberant pilot is not clear, experts said.

The U.S. official told CNN the Chinese jets came within 150 feet of the U.S. plane, with one of the Su-30s flying inverted, directly above the American plane. “U.S. military aircraft routinely transit international airspace throughout the Pacific, including the East China Sea,” Hodge said. “This flight was no exception.”

China also is deeply unhappy about the deployment of a U.S. missile defense system in South Korea that is meant to protect the country against attack from the North but which Beijing fears will also be used to spy on its territory.

# Bomb, insider attack kill 16 in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A roadside bombing killed 11 people in eastern Afghanistan on Friday as they were traveling to a wedding in the country's east, a local official said.

Also Friday, five Afghan policemen were killed in fighting with the Taliban in eastern Kapisa province. Earlier, a policeman turned his rifle on his colleagues as they slept at an outpost in eastern Nangarhar province on Thursday night, killing five.

Those killed by the roadside bomb in Logar province — five women, five children and a man — were all from the same family, said Salim Salleh, the spokesman for the provincial governor of Logar.

In Kapisa, the Taliban attacked a police checkpoint early Friday morning, killing five officers, according to Qais Qaderi, the spokesman for the provincial governor. He said the assault took place in Tagab district, adding that 10 Taliban fighters also were killed, including two commanders.

In the Thursday night attack, district Gov. Abdul Wahab Momand said the policeman shot his colleagues at an outpost in the district of Ghanikhil.

After the shooting, the attacker, who was identified only by one name, Nasratullah, seized all the victims' firearms and fled the scene, the governor said.

Neither the Taliban nor Islamic State — the two militant groups who operate in the area — immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Nangarhar, a mountainous province

that borders Pakistan.

There also was no claim of responsibility for the attack in Logar, but Salleh accused the Taliban of planting the roadside bomb.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, another roadside bomb targeted a U.S. military convoy in northern Parwan province on Friday, according to the international mission's media officer, Doug High.

The explosion disabled an armored vehicle but caused no injuries.

## Airstrikes fuel Iraqi gains in fight for Mosul

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — Half a dozen units of Islamic State fighters holed up in western Mosul began their morning radio checks just after 4 a.m. It was still dark, and Iraqi forces deployed a few blocks away were listening in as they prepared an advance on the city's al-Rifai neighborhood.

"Thirty, what's new? ... 120, do you read me? What's up?" the ISIS radio operator said, using Iraqi slang.

About 40 minutes later the first U.S.-led coalition airstrike hit as Iraqi forces pushed across a main road and began clearing the neighborhood's narrow streets.

"We're seeing at least two squinters at the impact site," a member of the coalition force radioed to Iraqi troops, using a

slang term for badly wounded ISIS fighters. Moments later the extremists were calling for doctors over their own radio network.

Over the next 12 hours, more than 10 coalition airstrikes hit al-Rifai's eastern edge. Most targeted small teams of two or three ISIS fighters manning sniper rifles or machine guns so Iraq's special forces units could advance on the ground.

Military operations like the one in al-Rifai this week are accelerating in Mosul as part of a drive to retake the handful of districts still under ISIS control before the holy month of Ramadan begins at the end of May.

Advances on the ground continue to be backed by heavy airstrikes and artillery.

Launched in mid-February, the fight for Mosul's western

sector has been marked by some of the most difficult fighting and catastrophic destruction yet in Iraq's war against ISIS.

The brutality of the operation was highlighted by a single incident a month into the operation — a U.S. airstrike on March 17 that killed more than 100 people sheltering in a home, according to residents and other witnesses.

By contrast, Mosul's eastern half was retaken in 100 days of fighting. While front lines stalled at times, the area was less densely populated, neighborhoods had wider streets, allowing tanks and other armored vehicles greater freedom of movement, and the area was never under siege, allowing many ISIS fighters to flee westward.

The number of civilians re-

portedly killed by coalition airstrikes in Iraq and Syria spiked to 1,800 in March, more than three times the number reported a month earlier, according to Airwars, a London-based group that tracks civilian deaths from coalition airstrikes.

Official figures from the Pentagon are far lower: It said last month that it has confirmed coalition airstrikes killed at least 352 civilians in Iraq and Syria since the campaign started in 2014.

The Pentagon is still investigating the March 17 incident but Gen. Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Central Command, said the munitions used by the U.S. that day should not have taken the entire building down, suggesting militants may have gathered civilians there and planted other explosives.

## Released from prison, Manning reveals new look as woman

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Army Pvt. Chelsea Manning revealed her new look as a woman after being freed from a Kansas military prison and a 35-year sentence for leaking classified

materials.

The transgender soldier formerly known as Bradley Manning took to Twitter and Instagram on Thursday, posting a portrait photograph of her with short-cropped hair, bright red

lipstick and a dark outfit with a plunging neckline. The Oklahoma native included the caption, "Okay, so here I am everyone!!"

Manning, 29, was released early Wednesday from confinement at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.,

after having served seven years behind bars for giving classified materials to anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks.

Manning and her attorneys have refused to divulge her post-prison whereabouts or immediate plans.



## President's budget to include paid family leave

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's 2018 budget proposal will require states to provide paid family leave programs, a senior budget official said Thursday.

The official said the budget — set to be released Tuesday — will include a plan to provide six weeks of paid leave to new mothers, fathers and adoptive parents. A departure from Republican orthodoxy, the proposal expands on a campaign pledge to provide paid maternity leave, which Trump adopted at the urging of his daughter, Ivanka.

The official requested anonymity to discuss budget details in advance.

Under the plan, states would be required to provide leave payments through existing unemployment insurance programs and would have to identify cuts or tax hikes, as needed, to cover the costs. The administration said this approach would give states flexibility and stressed that the administration would provide support to state governments to help them determine how to fund the program. States could opt out if they created a different paid leave system.

Still, the approach would put the burden of funding the program on the states. It also could mean that the benefits could vary greatly by location. Democrats have proposed more expansive programs with different funding streams.

Trump's proposal is unlikely to win much Republican support. But the president has been an advocate of paid leave, mentioning it in his first speech to Congress.

Trump's broader budget plan promises a balanced federal ledger in 10 years by relying on rosy economic assumptions and cuts to Medicaid and a variety of other benefit programs — though not Social Security pensions or Medicare benefits.

## Harried at home, Trump travels

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's maiden international trip, a five-stop marathon across the Middle East and Europe, has long loomed as a crucial first test abroad for the chaos-courting president.

That was before he fired his FBI director — and the chain reaction of scandal that followed.

Now, with the eyes of the world upon him, the president will embark on his big trip carrying the baggage of dire troubles at home. As he tries to calm allies worried about his "America First" message, he'll be followed by fallout from his firing of FBI Director James Comey and the appointment of a special counsel to probe the president's campaign ties with Russia.

"There has never been a president taking his first international trip being dogged by scandal like this," said Larry Sabato, head of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "He's already a president viewed skeptically by much of the world. And while the pictures from the trip may be great, the White House can't change the headlines that will follow him wherever he goes."

Trump's trip always was going to be dramatic. U.S. allies have been rattled by his warnings about pulling back from the world. He is tasked with urging a united front against terror by appealing to some of the same corners of the Muslim world he has tried to keep out of the U.S. with his travel ban. Last week, he added new layers of complication by disclosing classified intelligence to a longtime adversary.

Still, the White House once hoped the trip, wrapped in the pomp and circumstance of diplomatic protocol, could offer a chance at a reset after a tumultuous first four months in office. Trump's advisers saw it as an opportunity for the

U.S. to boldly reassert itself on the world stage and to resume a leadership role that the administration believes was abdicated by President Barack Obama. Trump's powerful senior adviser, son-in-law Jared Kushner, led a West Wing team to craft the agenda, laden with religious symbolism.

Still, Trump hasn't been eager to seize the opportunity. It's been more than a half-century since any president waited as long to take his first foreign trip. The itinerary, which begins Saturday in Saudi Arabia, is a startlingly ambitious excursion for a president who dislikes travel and has displayed a shaky grasp of foreign affairs.

He tweeted Friday morning: "Getting ready for my big foreign trip. Will be strongly protecting American interests — that's what I like to do!"

Each stop comes with high stakes.

In Saudi Arabia, the president — whose campaign was marked by heated anti-Muslim rhetoric and whose administration has tried to enact a travel ban from several Muslim-majority countries — will deliver a speech to the Islamic world meant to be a clear contrast with the vision Obama laid out in his first trip to the region.

In Israel, Trump will meet with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, looking to smooth over fresh tensions. Israel was in an uproar earlier this week after U.S. officials confirmed Trump shared highly classified intelligence about the Islamic State group with senior Russian officials visiting the White House. The information, about an ISIS threat related to the use of laptops on aircraft, came from Israel and there were concerns a valuable Israeli asset could be in danger, a U.S. official said, requesting anonymity to discuss the sensitive material.

## US-Turkey ties tense after Erdogan visit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is facing growing calls for a forceful response to violence on American soil by Turkish presidential guards who were briefly detained this week but then set free. The unseemly incident is adding to U.S.-Turkish tensions compounded by a spat over U.S. war strategy against the Islamic State group in Syria.

The U.S. said Thursday it had summoned Turkey's ambassador to the State Department, where the No. 2-ranked U.S. diplomat raised concerns about the security detail for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's

visit to Washington, after the guards were recorded on video violently breaking up a protest.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the government should "throw their ambassador the hell out" of the U.S.

The calls came as the Trump administration acknowledged it had released two members of Erdogan's detail who were held briefly after the incident, which took place outside the Turkish ambassador's residence in the U.S. capital on Tuesday. Even as officials vowed an investigation, the guards already were safely back in Turkey with Erdogan.

Local police and lawmakers initially speculated that diplo-

matic immunity prevented the U.S. from holding the men. A U.S. official said Thursday that wasn't the case. Instead, Erdogan's guards were released under a globally recognized custom under which nations don't arrest or detain visiting heads of state and members of their delegations, said the official, who requested anonymity.

The guards' release fueled the perception that the U.S. allows Turkey's leader to bring strongman tactics with him when he visits the U.S. capital. Last year, Turkish security officials manhandled several journalists at a Washington think tank where Erdogan was set to speak.

## Swedish prosecutor drops Assange rape investigation

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Sweden's top prosecutor said Friday she's dropping an investigation into a rape claim against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange after almost seven years because there's no possibility of arresting him "in the foreseeable future."

The announcement means the outspoken WikiLeaks leader no longer faces sex crime allegations in Sweden, although British police say he is still wanted for jumping bail in Britain in 2012.

Friday was the deadline for the Swedish prosecution to send a request to Stockholm District Court in the Assange case.

Assange, 45, took refuge in Ecuador's embassy in London in 2012 to escape extradition to Sweden to answer questions about sex-crime allegations from two women. He has been there ever since, fearing that if he was in custody he might be extradited to the U.S. for his role at the helm of WikiLeaks, which has enraged governments by publishing tens of thousands of leaked classified U.S. documents.

It's not known if U.S. officials are seeking Assange's arrest because of a possible sealed indictment. Last month President Donald Trump said he would support any decision by the Justice Department to charge Assange.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority said chief Marianne Ny "has decided to discontinue the investigation," and Ny said she will call back the European arrest warrant on Assange.

Ny told reporters that the WikiLeaks founder had "tried to dodge all attempts at arrest" by British and Swedish authorities. She said prosecutors had been unable to make a full assessment of the case and were not making a finding on whether Assange was guilty of the allegations.

She said the case could be reopened if Assange returns to Sweden before the statute of limitations expires in 2020.

Prosecutors frustrated by Assange's refusal to return to Sweden for questioning came to London to meet with him at the Ecuadorean Embassy last year.

British police said despite Sweden's decision to drop a rape investigation, Assange still faces arrest if he leaves Ecuador's embassy in London. The Metropolitan Police said there is a British warrant for Assange's arrest after he jumped bail in 2012, and the force "is obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the embassy."

But it added that Assange is now wanted for a "much less serious offense" than the original sex crimes claims, and police "will provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offense."

## NYC crash suspect faces murder charge

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A Times Square motorist accused of steering his car onto one of the busiest sidewalks in the U.S. and mowing down pedestrians has been charged with murder and 20 counts of attempted murder, police say.

The New York Police Department said Richard Rojas, 26, of the Bronx, also was charged late Thursday with five counts of aggravated vehicular homicide.

Rojas was arrested Thursday afternoon after he drove his car for three blocks in Times Square, hitting nearly two dozen people before steel security barriers finally stopped him. An 18-year-old tourist from Michigan was killed. Her 13-year-old sister was among the 22 injured, four of them critically.

Rojas was to be arraigned Friday.

Officials say he had served in the U.S. Navy but was discharged following disciplinary problems. After his arrest, he told police he was "hearing voices" and expected to die, two law enforcement officials said.

After the wreck he emerged from his vehicle running, yelling and jumping before being subdued by police and bystand-

ers in a chaotic scene.

"He began screaming, no particular words, but just utter screaming. He was swinging his arms at the same time," said Ken Bradix, a security supervisor at a nearby Planet Hollywood restaurant who tackled Rojas.

Rojas initially tested negative for alcohol, but more detailed drug tests were pending, according to two law enforcement officials who were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity. The officials said Rojas told officers he had been hearing voices.

Rojas' motivation was unclear, but Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio said there was "no indication that this was an act of terrorism."

Rojas enlisted in 2011 and was an electrician's mate fireman apprentice. In 2012, he served aboard the USS Carney, a destroyer.

Navy records show that in 2013 he spent two months at a naval brig in Charleston, S.C. They don't indicate why.

Rojas spent his final months in the Navy at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla., before being discharged in 2014 as the result of a special court-martial, a Navy official said. Details were not immediately available.

## Thai chunky monkey 'Uncle Fat' put on strict diet

Associated Press

BANGKOK — A morbidly obese wild monkey who gorged himself on junk food and soda left behind by tourists has been rescued and placed on a strict diet of lean protein, fruits and vegetables.

Wildlife officials caught the chunky monkey — nicknamed "Uncle Fat" by locals — after photos of the animal started circulating on social media last month.

Wild monkeys roam free in many parts of Thailand, attracting tourists who feed and play with the animals. Most of the monkeys are macaques like Uncle Fat, and they typically weigh about 20 pounds.

Uncle Fat weighs three times that, tipping the scales at about 60 pounds.

"It was not easy to catch him," said Kacha Phukem, the wildlife official who conducted the capture and rescue on April 27. "He was the leader of his pack, and when I tried to go in, I had to fight off a flock of them with sticks."

The subordinate monkeys fed into Uncle Fat's bad habits.

"He had minions and other monkeys bringing food for him but he would also redistribute it to younger monkeys," said Supakarn Kaewchot, a veterinarian in charge of the monkey's diet. "He is now in a criti-

cal condition where there is a high-risk of heart disease and diabetes."

Supakarn said she hopes that within a few months they can consider releasing him.

She said Uncle Fat is an example of why people shouldn't feed monkeys unhealthy food.

"I understand that people feel sorry for the monkeys and want to feed them when they see them," Supakarn said. "But please don't feed them food that people like to eat like snacks and soda. It is very bad for their health and the problem is entirely man-made."



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Woman finds iguana in toilet bowl, calls 911

**FL** MIAMI — What did a South Florida woman do when she lifted the lid on her toilet and found an iguana inside?

She closed it and called 911.

Lt. Scott Mullin, of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Venom One unit, told the Miami Herald it's the first iguana he found in a toilet.

When the call came in Tuesday night, Mullin said, he asked the dispatcher to make sure it was an iguana and not a snake.

He said the woman, her daughter and grandchildren were waiting when he arrived at their home. Mullin said the lizard likely came up through the pipes. Mullin removed the iguana from the bowl, put it in a box and drove it to a wildlife rescue center.

## Ex-judge sought wife's texts for beer, money

**NC** ELIZABETH CITY — A former judge who offered a law enforcement officer beer and money to retrieve his wife's text messages has been sentenced to probation.

U.S. Attorney John Stuart Bruce said former Superior Court Judge Arnold Ogden Jones II was sentenced in federal court Wednesday to two years' probation, fined \$5,000 and ordered to perform 100 hours of community service. Jones pleaded guilty in March to promising and paying gratuities to a public official.

Prosecutors said that between October and November 2015, Jones gave, offered and promised cases of beer and \$100 to a FBI task force officer to compel a cellular provider to produce text messages by Jones' wife. Jones believed the messages would prove his wife was having an affair.

## Man in hammock pulls down part of chimney

**MA** AMHERST — A Massachusetts fire chief said a college-age man is "extremely lucky" he wasn't more seriously injured when a roof-top hammock collapsed and pulled down a portion of the chimney to which it was attached.

Amherst Chief Walter "Tim" Nelson said the man was taken to the hospital after concrete cinder blocks from the chimney fell on him just before 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Nelson said the victim "got banged up pretty good" and had injuries consistent with concrete falling on him.

One end of the hammock was attached to the section of the chimney extending from the roof and the other end was attached to a fire escape.

He said three or four people were sitting on the hammock when it came down.

## Dump truck overturns, buries car in stones

**NJ** MANCHESTER — A dump truck overturned and spilled its load of stone on top of a car in New Jersey, and authorities said the driver had to be dug out to be rescued.

Police in Manchester Township said that Andrea Penna, 24, was trapped underneath stone and debris after the roof of her car collapsed on top of her Monday. Penna and her passenger sustained non-life threatening injuries, as did the driver of the dump truck.

The passenger of the car was able to get out on her own. Police said the truck struck Penna's Nissan as she was making a left turn and then overturned onto the car's roof, spilling its load. State police, state department of corrections employees and other motorists dug the

car out.

## Man drives drunk in police academy's lot

**NY** ALBANY — Authorities said a man has been charged with driving drunk in the parking lot of the New York State Police Academy.

State police said an off-duty trooper reported a suspicious person Wednesday in the parking lot at the academy located at state police headquarters in Albany. Troopers said they watched a man exit his vehicle and lay down in a grassy area behind the academy.

Troopers conducted a field sobriety test on the man and then took him to the trooper station at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, where a breath test revealed he had a blood-alcohol content of 0.28 percent. The legal limit for driving in New York is 0.08 percent. The man was ticketed for aggravated driving while intoxicated.

## Route designated Washington Spy Trail

**NY** SETAUKET — New York state is bestowing a special designation upon a stretch of road on Long Island's North Shore that was used by a Revolutionary War spy ring working for George Washington.

Route 25A from Great Neck to Port Jefferson, about a 50-mile stretch, was officially designated Thursday as the Washington Spy Trail.

The Culper spy ring, considered the nation's first espionage group, used the route to slip through British lines and deliver secret messages to Washington during the American Revolution. Washington later used the same route to thank his spies for their contribution to winning the war.

## Grown-ups brawl at school graduation

**TN** MEMPHIS — Graduation caps weren't the only things flying at one high school commencement in Tennessee after some adults in the audience started throwing punches.

Videos posted to social media show a fight between adults breaking out as Arlington High School graduates marched into a Memphis church to the tune of "Pomp & Circumstance" Tuesday. The Memphis Commercial Appeal reported the melee may have been brought on by a dispute over saving seats.

Arlington Community Schools superintendent said "it was unfortunate that a couple of adults in the audience exhibited the behavior they did prior to the ceremony beginning and thus has caused a distraction."

## Woman, 105, receives honorary diploma

**PA** OAKDALE — A Pennsylvania woman who said her only regret in life was not finishing high school has received an honorary diploma — at age 105.

Theresa Brandl donned a cap and gown Wednesday at her Oakdale nursing home to celebrate, surrounded by four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

Brandl attended Stowe High School until she dropped out to care for her mother. The school later merged with a nearby school, forming Sto-Rox High School, which awarded her the diploma.

The diploma was arranged by the Twilight Wish Foundation, which helps fulfill wishes for people over 65, after Brandl was nominated by an administrator at the nursing home.

From wire reports

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# Ducks win in OT, even series at 2-2

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Corey Perry just keeps finding the net in overtime this postseason, and his third goal in extra time helped the Ducks tie the Western Conference finals at 2-2.

Perry's shot deflected in off Nashville defenseman P.K. Subban's stick 10:25 into overtime, and the Ducks snapped the Predators' 10-game home playoff winning streak with a 3-2 victory Thursday night.

"I was just trying to create traffic or create a bounce and create havoc in front," Perry said. "And that's what they say in overtime: You throw it on net, never know what's going to happen."

Perry matched Mel Hill (1939) and Maurice Richard (1951) for the most OT goals in a single postseason in NHL history. Perry also tied Teemu Selanne's franchise record with his eighth winning goal and moved past Selanne for sole possession of second in Ducks' history with his 36th postseason goal.

John Gibson made 32 saves for Anaheim, which was the last team to beat the Predators in Nashville in the playoffs last spring in Game 4 of their first-round series. The Predators had matched the 1997-98 Detroit Red Wings with their 10-game winning streak but missed matching Colorado's 11-0 playoff run in 1996-97.

Rickard Rakell and Nick Ritchie staked the Ducks to a 2-0 lead. But Subban scored with 6:27 left, and Filip Forsberg tied it with 34.5 seconds remaining in regulation with his fourth goal in four games.

Perry ended the second overtime in the series with a goal originally credited to Nate Thompson. Perry stopped the puck as the Predators tried to clear and shot from the right boards at a severe angle. Subban stuck out his stick trying to poke-check the puck away only to re-direct it past goalie Pekka Rinne.

"They caught a lucky bounce tonight on the redirect that ended up being a difference maker," Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said.

The goal finally was credited to Perry after the Ducks appealed to the NHL.

"I don't really care at this point as long as it goes in the net," Thompson said.

The Ducks have matched their franchise record with their fourth overtime win this postseason. They are 4-1 with the lone loss in this series opener to Nashville. They went 4-0 in OT on their way to winning the 2007 Stanley Cup.

Game 5 is Saturday night in Anaheim.

"We thought we were outcompeted last game, so it feels good to take care of business and get a split on the road and now it's best out of three," Ducks center Andrew Coglian said.

The Ducks killed off five penalties, including a 5 on 3 in the third.

But the Predators outshot them 11-5 in the third with the late flurry forcing overtime.

Subban scored off a blast from the blue line to revive the standing-room only crowd with Forsberg helping screen Gibson. Forsberg, who started Nashville's comeback win in Game 3, ensured overtime crashing the net with two teammates and smashing the puck across the line.

"Obviously, we're disappointed," Forsberg said. "I don't think we showed up in the first, and then after that we played better. It's tough. They're a good team. We can't give them a two-goal lead like that."

Nashville brought out inaugural American Idol winner Kelly Clarkson as the latest big name to sing the national anthem, and rock group Kings of Leon stirred up the crowd by waving from the bandstand in Music City's latest show of star power. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman also was on hand with a franchise-record 17,423 fans.

# Lukas rooting for former assistant

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — There once was a time when Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas would feel absolutely awful about not having a horse in the Preakness.

Standing outside the stakes barn at Pimlico Race Course on Thursday, his signature cowboy hat planted squarely on his head, the six-time Preakness winner seemed genuinely comfortable with the situation.

"I'd be awful selfish if I was kicking the dirt and saying, 'Damn, I don't have one,' as good as this place has been to me," Lukas said.

Though he doesn't have a horse in the race, he does have a friend in it: Former assistant Todd Pletcher, who will be saddle Kentucky Derby winner and Triple Crown hopeful Always Dreaming on Saturday evening.

"I can relish that and enjoy that, too," Lukas said.

That's what happened at Churchill Downs, when Lukas had no entrant but was overcome with joy while watching Always Dreaming approach the finish line.

"I went crazy when they were at the 5/8 pole," Lukas said. "I was banging and tipping over chairs. My wife said, 'I've never seen you that excited,' and I said, 'That's our guy.'"

Pletcher worked under Lukas for well over half a decade before going out on his own in the winter of 1995.

"We had the strongest stable in the world, probably, and to leave a secure assistant job was a tough decision to make — and an intimidating one," Pletcher recalled. "I didn't really know what to expect. I was just hoping to accumulate enough horses to get going and establish a reputation."

Turns out, Lukas and Pletcher are as successful individually as they were as a team.

Lukas, 81, has won 14 Triple Crown races and owns 20 victories in the Breeder's Cup. Pletcher has captured the Eclipse Award seven times as

Trainer of the Year, won the Kentucky Derby twice and made millions of dollars.

"He's created his own legacy and made some changes that he thought were right," Lukas observed. "I see a lot of our organization in the way he runs his barn. It's pretty obvious he had that discipline."

Lukas knows his hard-working, success-driven protégé was bound to do well regardless of his schooling.

"I don't want to take a lot of credit for his career, frankly," Lukas insisted. "I think he's his own person and he was going to be good if he never met me. And he probably helped me as much as I helped him."

Pletcher isn't so sure.

"If you work for someone for seven years, you certainly learn a lot of things from him," the 49-year-old said. "I always thought one of his many strengths was when he got a horse in form, his ability to maintain them in form for a long time."

Lukas this week is running 3-year-old Aquamarine in the \$200,000 Chick Lang and 3-year-old filly My Sweet Stella in the Hilltop on grass. Both are owned by Zayat Stables, which two years ago won the Preakness with Triple Crown winner American Pharoah.

Though he's well past retirement age, Lukas remains active in the sport and fully expects to mount a horse in the 2018 Preakness.

"My 2-years-old are impressing me," he said. "I think we'll be back here next year, I really do."

Lukas and Pletcher remain close friends and won't hesitate to call upon one another for advice. If Lukas could impress upon Pletcher just one thing, it would be to savor the moment and take it all in.

"I don't think he's enjoying it as much as he should," Lukas said. "That was one of the things I regretted through my career. There were some weekends when we won three or four Grade 1s and I would say, 'What are we going to do next week?'"



# James, Harden headline All-NBA first team

Associated Press

NEW YORK — For Cleveland's LeBron James, there was history.

For Houston's James Harden, there was affirmation.

And for Indiana's Paul George and Utah's Gordon Hayward, a chance at signing contracts exceeding \$200 million this summer is gone.

James and Harden headlined the All-NBA first team that was unveiled by the league on Thursday. James made the first team for a record-tying 11th time, matching the mark set by Kobe Bryant and Karl Malone. And Harden was the only player to be unanimously selected by a global panel of sportswriters and broadcasters as a first-teamer this year, returning to that group for the third time in the last four seasons.

Joining James and Harden on the first team were Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook, San Antonio's Kawhi Leonard and New Orleans' Anthony Davis. Westbrook, Leonard and Davis all are first-teamers for the sec-

ond time.

Harden was not an All-NBA team pick last season, after averaging 29 points, 7.5 rebounds and 6.1 assists, which prompted Rockets general manager Daryl Morey to tweet his reaction.

"Happy @James Harden was able to bounce back from his tough 29/8/6 performance last season to prove again he is one of the 15 best NBA players," Morey wrote.

James and Westbrook were on 99 first-team ballots, and second-team on the lone other. Leonard was a first-teamer on 96 ballots, second-team on three and third-team on one.

Perhaps as significant a story as who made the team was who did not.

George and Hayward fell well short of making any of the three All-NBA teams, which means they will not be eligible to get the "supermax" extensions from Indiana and Utah this summer and now will face more questions about their futures in their respective cities. George is under contract

to the Pacers for next season, while Hayward is likely to elect to become a free agent this summer.

"These opportunities don't come around very much," Hayward said earlier this month. "That's why you hire an agent, to deal with this type of stuff."

All three teams have two guards, two forwards and one center.

Harden and Westbrook were runaway choices at guard, James and Leonard were easy picks at forward. Davis barely held off Utah's Rudy Gobert for the first-team center spot, finishing with 343 points to Gobert's 339.

Davis appeared on 95 of the 100 ballots; Gobert appeared on 91.

Other second-team picks along with Gobert were Golden State's Stephen Curry and Boston's Isaiah Thomas at guard, and Golden State's Kevin Durant and Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo at forward.

"So many great players, so many players had great sea-

sons," Durant said. "It's kind of hard to put guys on the first, second, third teams. So many guys played well this year. Just grateful to be a part of the list. Obviously I feel like I should be a first-team player, but it is what it is."

Third-team selections were Washington's John Wall and Toronto's DeMar DeRozan at guard, Golden State's Draymond Green and Chicago's Jimmy Butler at forward, and DeAndre Jordan of the Los Angeles Clippers at center. Jordan edged Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns for the final center spot by four points in the balloting.

Finalists for other awards, including MVP, rookie of the year, defensive player of the year, sixth man, most improved player and coach of the year will be announced Friday night.

All those awards will be announced in New York on June 26, and complete voting results will be released at that time.

## West becomes reliable asset for Golden State

Associated Press

OAKLAND, California — For all the years David West yearned to be part of the great San Antonio Spurs franchise, he finally got that chance last season. Now, he is facing them from the other side with Golden State and doing his part to chase a championship. His old coach, Gregg Popovich, believes West has found a perfect fit in the Bay Area alongside Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant and the others, as hard as it is for Pop to see him in another uniform.

"We've got a lot of experience and guys who have seen just about every sort of mix you can find in the NBA, so that's been the joy, also just sort of figuring out what works for us defensively with all the different moving parts we have," said West, a 14-year veteran who returns to San Antonio for

Saturday's Game 3 of the Western Conference finals with his new team up 2-0.

"Personally, I expected us to take a little bit longer. That was a surprise just how well we all sort of meshed."

The 36-year-old West is a big reason why. He has experienced a special two-year stretch deep into his successful NBA career, finding an important role with the Warriors' second unit that strives to take the pressure off while maintaining the high level of the starters.

"Ah, man, one of the best teammates I've ever had," forward Draymond Green said after Thursday's practice. "He's a special person. I didn't know he could pass as well as he does, he's as smart as he is, on and off the court, just a brilliant person, someone who always has your back. Anybody on the team, he's riding for

you. It's just been great having D-West here."

West always wanted to play for Popovich in San Antonio, then once he'd done so decided to move on to Golden State. It seemed like the next intriguing move to be part of the Warriors' roster of superstars.

Still, the Spurs miss him.

"He was wonderful. He's a class act. He's a contemplative guy. He thinks about things," Popovich said. "Beyond basketball, it's fun to be around him to talk about social situations. We'd share that sort of thing. As a player, he's in the perfect system. They've got the big guys out on the court and passing and everybody's running splits and back door and slipping, and he's a good passer. If you get off, he can shoot the shot. So I'm happy for him in that situation. We hated to lose him."

West has been a steady con-

tributor, initially surprising many teammates with just how spot-on a passer he is and how he immediately makes things happen while providing much-needed boosts during important stretches.

West dished out a season-best seven assists in Game 1 against Utah the last round, his most in a playoff game since getting eight three years ago with Indiana. He notched six assists in just 15 minutes last month against Minnesota, five during a short second-quarter stretch.

Golden State is fortunate to use three distinct centers: starter Zaza Pachulia, dunk master JaVale McGee and West.

Durant left Oklahoma City to join the Warriors last July 4 then West signed only five days later.

# Rangers stretch their winning streak to 9

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — A clean sweep at home for the Texas Rangers, who are suddenly scoring plenty of runs for all of their pitchers and now have the longest winning streak in the majors this season.

Ryan Rua hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the fifth, Martin Perez finally got some run support and the Rangers stretched their winning streak to nine games with an 8-4 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies on Thursday.

"We don't change. We stay aggressive, on the mound, at the plate, on the basepaths, defensively," Rua said. "We're playing pretty good right now."

The Rangers swept through an eight-game home stand against three teams, only their second time in franchise history to do that. Their overall winning streak, which started with an 11-0 win at San Diego on May 9, is the longest in the majors this season.

"We win a couple of games and I think that momentum carried over, and you keep winning and winning and you don't want to lose," shortstop Elvis Andrus said. "It's always great when you keep finding a way."

The Rangers have their longest winning streak since 12 in a row in July 2011. The only time they have won more was their team-record 14 straight in May 1991, and their only

other eight-game undefeated home stand was in May 2005.

Philadelphia led 2-0 before Robinson Chirinos and Rougned Odor had consecutive two-out RBI singles off reliever Joely Rodriguez (1-2) in the fifth. Rua followed with his third homer, lining a shot that just cleared the 8-foot wall in right field.

Perez (2-5) struck out eight with no walks in seven innings. The Rangers had scored two or fewer runs for the lefty in his previous six starts.

With a 9-3 win Wednesday night, when Texas scored all nine runs for first-time winner Andrew Casher after only six runs in his first six starts.

On his 28th birthday Thursday, a day after a four-hit game

with his first career homer, Jared Hoyer had a bunt single to start the sixth. He eventually scored on Andrus' double before Nomar Mazara's two-run single chased Rodriguez, who retired only two of the 10 batters he faced.

Maikel Franco's solo homer in the fifth put the Phillies up 2-0, after his earlier sacrifice fly that followed Michael Saunders' triple. Tommy Joseph hit a two-run homer in the ninth in Philadelphia's 15th loss in 18 games.

"We need to step it up. We're better than what we're going through right now," manager Pete Mackanin said. "I can't make excuses. We just got to hit better and pitch better."

## Twins blank Rockies, salvage split of doubleheader

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Jose Berrios allowed two hits and struck out 11 over 7<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings as the Minnesota Twins beat the Colorado Rockies 2-0 and salvaged a split of an interleague doubleheader between the first-place teams in the AL Central and NL West.

The Twins scored just three runs in the doubleheader, but Berrios (2-0) made his scant support in the nightcap hold up with the best outing of his young career. Brandon Kintzler worked a scoreless ninth for his 11th save in 12 chances.

In Game 1, Nolan Arenado homered and Mark Reynolds drove in two runs to lead the Rockies to a 5-1 victory.

**Blue Jays 9, Braves 0:** Marcus Stroman threw 5<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> strong innings and hit the second homer by a pitcher in Toronto history to lead the Jays over Julio Teheran and host Atlanta.

Teheran hit Jose Bautista with a pitch in the first inning, a day after Bautista's bat flip following a home run drew criticism from the Braves.

Atlanta, which scored eight

or more runs in three straight wins over Toronto with Freddie Freeman in the lineup, saw their offense disappear after learning the first baseman will miss about 10 weeks with a fractured left wrist.

**Tigers 6, Orioles 5:** Victor Martinez hit a two-run homer off Dylan Bundy to put his team ahead in the fifth inning, and host Detroit went on to beat Baltimore.

J.D. Martinez hit a three-run shot in the third for the Tigers, who ended a streak of eight straight solid starts by Bundy (5-2) to start the season.

**Dodgers 7, Marlins 2:** Justin Turner left in the seventh inning after injuring his right hamstring, curbing the celebration for Los Angeles after a victory over visiting Miami.

Turner was hurt running from second base to home in the seventh inning. He appeared to injure the leg while rounding third base. He grabbed the back of his leg and hobbled off the field with a trainer and manager Dave Roberts.

**Cubs 9, Reds 5:** Javier Baez hit a grand slam and Kris Bryant homered as Chicago beat

visiting Cincinnati to complete a three-game sweep.

The Cubs outscored the Reds 25-15 in the series and have 23 wins in their last 28 games against the Reds.

**Royals 5, Yankees 1:** Danny Duffy tossed seven innings of three-hit ball and Mike Moustakas hit a three-run homer to help host Kansas City beat New York and avoid a three-game sweep.

Duffy (3-3) struck out a season-best 10 while walking two and earning his first win since April 14, against the Angels. Duffy had been 0-3 with two no-decisions in his last five starts.

**Brewers 4, Padres 2:** Eric Sogard had his second four-hit game in three days and drove in three runs, leading Milwaukee over host San Diego.

Sogard is hitting .476 (10-for-21) with two homers since he was called up from Triple-A Colorado Springs on Friday. He went 9-for-15 in the four-game series, including an RBI single in the fourth and a two-run single in the seventh on the 12th pitch of an at-bat against Kevin Quackenbush (0-1).

**Pirates 10, Nationals 4:** Adam Frazier had a career-high four RBIs while Josh Bell and John Jaso homered as Pittsburgh rolled past visiting Washington.

Frazier hit a two-run double in the sixth inning and a two-run single in the seventh to help the Pirates pull away after Jaso's solo home run in the fifth broke a 4-4 tie.

**Mariners 5, White Sox 4:** Pinch-hitter Guillermo Heredia's two-out single in the ninth inning scored Jarrod Dyson from second base to give host Seattle a win over Chicago.

The Mariners' Jean Segura matched the longest hitting streak in baseball this season at 17 games with a three-run homer early in the game and Dyson added a solo shot.

**Athletics 8, Red Sox 3:** Jed Lowrie and Khris Davis hit first-inning homers to spoil Hector Velazquez's major league debut as Oakland beat visiting Boston.

Chad Pinder added a homer in the fourth inning against Velazquez (0-1), who had a rough first start after spending his first seven years as a pro in the Mexican League.