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Official: 3 US troops slain in Jordan attack

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Three American servicemembers were killed Friday in an attack outside the gate of a military facility in Jordan where U.S. troops have been training local forces from Syria and Iraq to fight the Islamic State group, a U.S. official said.

One of the Americans died during the shootout just outside the base and the two other servicemembers died later at a hospital from wounds sustained during the attack, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the incident publicly.

A Pentagon official initially reported only one American was killed in the attack and two servicemembers were injured. Early local reports out of Jordan said two Americans were killed.

It is not clear what led to the shooting, which occurred shortly after noon, the U.S. official said.

The United States is working with the Jordanian government to gather details about the incident, according to the official.

Jordanian officials said the attack occurred at the al-Jafr air base in southeastern Jordan near the volatile city of Maan, a longtime hotbed of political unrest from homegrown extremists and pro-Islamic State jihadis.

According to Jordanian security, at least half of the estimated 800 Jordanian jihadis who joined the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria came from Maan. The other half were from three other Jordanian cities — Salt and Irbid in the north and Zarqa in the east.

Jordanian security officials said the al-Jafr base appears to have been under surveillance by militants for several days

before the attack.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to be quoted by name.

The two injured servicemembers were transported by helicopter to King Hussein Hospital in Amman, Jordan's capital, where they died, according to the official.

Jordan has been a key ally in the U.S.-led fight against the Islamic State group and a member of the Operation Inherent Resolve coalition. American troops have helped train Jordan's military and use its bases to train indigenous forces fighting the militant group on the ground in Iraq and Syria.

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for several terrorist attacks in Jordan, including two attacks in June that killed 11 Jordanian soldiers near the country's border with Syria.

US, Afghan forces both conducted strikes in Kunduz

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
AND ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan military and the U.S. both conducted airstrikes near the northern city of Kunduz during an operation that ended Thursday morning in which more than 20 civilians may have been killed, officials said.

Afghan forces provided initial air support for a joint raid with NATO troops that targeted top Taliban commanders, but the Afghans requested foreign airstrikes after they were surrounded by enemy fire, Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Dawlat Waziri said Friday.

"The U.S. did conduct air-to-ground engagements in Kunduz in the early-morning hours of Nov. 3 in defense of friendly forces," said Gen. Charles Cleveland, spokesman for U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Two American servicemembers were killed in heavy fighting, and four others were wounded, NATO's mission in Afghanistan said. Three Afghan special forces troops also died, and seven were injured, Waziri said.

U.S. State Department deputy spokesperson Mark Toner said in Washington on Thursday that the incident was under investigation.

"We obviously take any reports or allegations of civilian casualties very seriously. This was, however, an Afghan operation," he said. "We'll work with our Afghan partners in order to investigate this incident thoroughly."

Kunduz provincial police spokesman Hijratullah Akbari said that as of Friday morning, there were 24 civilian fatalities, including women and children. As many as 10 others were injured during the operation, which occurred in the village of Buze Kandahari, a Taliban-dominated area.

"This is not acceptable. We want justice," Haji Mira Jan, a village resident, told Stars and Stripes. "No one has the right to target innocent people and brutally kill them."

Many in the area have been outraged by the killings and appeared to blame them on the U.S. Videos posted online of a demonstration in Kunduz city against the civilian killings show people chanting, "Death to America."

NATO would not provide the identities

of the American casualties until their next of kin were notified. Akbari, of the Kunduz police, said that during the fighting on Wednesday, enemy fighters had taken shelter in the homes of Buze Kandahari residents, using them as human shields.

Gul Agha Amini, a tribal leader in the area, said whoever is responsible for the civilian casualties must be brought to justice.

"Everyone involved in the current fighting is the same for us, whether they are Taliban, Afghan forces or foreign forces, they all kill civilians," he said. "We don't want any apologies or fake promises. We want those people prosecuted who killed innocent women and children."

Fighting across Afghanistan has been particularly intense in recent months, with the Taliban threatening six provincial capitals, including Kunduz.

Last month, Taliban fighters briefly infiltrated parts of Kunduz, Afghanistan's fifth-largest city. Fighting has continued in the city's outskirts and in Kunduz province, where about 100 NATO advisers and an undisclosed number of other troops are assisting the Afghans.

Iraqi forces open new front in Mosul fight

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — Heavy fighting erupted in the eastern neighborhoods of Mosul on Friday as Iraqi special forces launched an assault deeper into the urban areas of the city and swung around to attack Islamic State militants from a second entry point, to the northeast.

Columns of armored vehicles wound through open desert to open the new front, pushing through dirt berms, drawing heavy fire and calling in airstrikes to enter the middle-class neighborhoods of Tahrir and Zahara. The area was once named after former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Lt. Col. Muhanad al-Timimi told The Associated Press that three militants in separate explosives-laden vehicles tried to attack the troops but were destroyed, including a bulldozer that was hit by an airstrike from the U.S.-led coalition supporting the offensive. An officer and two soldiers had been wounded, he added.

At least one of those soldiers was wounded seriously in the first hours of the new advance, which came under heavy fire from mortars, automatic weapons, snipers and anti-tank rockets.

The day's fighting has been the most intense urban combat in Mosul since the offensive to drive the Islamic State group from the city began over two weeks ago.

The push began with artillery and mortar strikes on the Aden, Tahrir, and Quds districts, just west of the special forces' footholds in the Gogjali and Karama neighborhoods, al-Timimi said. Both sides opened up with small-arms and mortar fire after an artillery barrage by the special forces, ahead of their advance.

Later, the regular army's 9th division, which has been following the special forces along their advance, moved into eastern Mosul's Intisar neighborhood, said an officer from the unit who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Islamic State group is fighting to hold Mosul as Iraqi forces and allied Kurdish troops squeeze in from all directions with U.S.-led coalition support, mostly from airstrikes and reconnaissance.

On Tuesday, Iraqi troops entered the city limits for the first time in more than two years.

Now the Iraqi forces are gearing up for urban warfare expected to take weeks, if not months, as they work their way neighborhood by neighborhood, going through a warren of dense buildings prone to booby traps and ambushes.

More than 1 million civilians are stuck in

Tunnels complicate assault

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

KERMLIS, Iraq — Islamic State fighters used an industrial mining machine to dig a maze of massive tunnels under this Christian village near Mosul as they prepared to face an onslaught by the Iraqi army.

The battle for Kermlis, fought by the Iraqi army's 9th Armored Division during its drive toward Mosul last week, could be a taste of what's to come during the struggle for Iraq's second-largest city.

To capture the village, where it's thought Alexander the Great defeated the Persian Emperor Darius III in 331 B.C., Iraqi troops discovered a complex array of tunnels and bunkers that the enemy had two years to prepare.

The tunnels were reminiscent of the underground mazes used so effectively by the Viet Cong to move troops and to shelter them against bombing and shelling by U.S. forces in the Vietnam War.

Destroying the subterranean networks from the air, especially in urban locations, is very difficult and risks causing massive civilian casualties because of the tonnage required to eliminate them.

During the battle for Kermlis, smoke rose from the village as the Iraqi soldiers threw burning tires down holes to smoke out or asphyxiate the enemy.

By Wednesday, the fires were out and the town was quiet, although wary Christian militia members from the Nineveh Protection Unit remained armed and alert in case someone emerged from the ruins of blasted buildings.

The ground beneath Saint Barbara Church, on the side of a large hill near the entrance to the town, contains a rabbit's warren of subterranean passageways. The militia filled the largest hole there with furniture and boarded up another to make sure nobody ambushed them.

A tunnel on the edge of town has a

ramp that would allow small vehicles to drive into it. It looks like it has collapsed, although it's unclear how.

The stench of something dead wafts from a nearby bunker, but it would be dangerous to find out whether it's man or beast. The risk of setting off a booby trap makes it foolish to go too far inside the caverns. Even crawling a short distance into the tunnels leaves visitors with black soot from burned rubber on their clothes and bodies.

The commander of some of the Iraqi army troops in Kermlis, Col. Hussein Jubaya, said 200 to 400 Islamic State fighters had defended the town. Some were killed but most retreated, he said.

"We chased them all the way back to Mosul," he said.

The gap in armaments between the Iraqi forces, equipped with Abrams tanks and supported by U.S. air power and artillery, is clear from homemade weapons that the fleeing militants left on the battlefield at Kermlis. Their armored vehicles were actually Toyota and Jeep SUVs with steel plates bolted on.

Iraqi tankers who captured a row of homes just outside the village found another massive tunnel, along with the machine the militants used to dig it. The car-sized, sled-mounted borer was probably imported from Turkey, Jubaya said.

The tunnel's entrance is hidden inside one of the houses and takes up most of one of the rooms.

One of the tankers, Staff Sgt. Alea Kazam, 35, perched on the edge of a deep hole in the floor and shot photos with his cellphone.

The tunnel leads to a farmhouse half a mile away, and there's another 2-mile-long tunnel leading from there toward Mosul, he said.

"They ran down this hole like giant mice," he said of the fleeing extremists.

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the city, complicating the military's efforts. Islamic State militants have driven thousands deeper into the city's built-up areas, presumably for use as human shields, while hundreds of others have fled toward government-controlled territory.

One of the leading Shiite militias, the Hezbollah Brigades, said on Wednesday that its fighters have gained control of a highway linking Mosul to the Syrian city of Raqqa, the de facto capital of the militants' caliphate.

Guard retracts estimate of reviewed bonuses

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The National Guard late Thursday retracted its estimate that about 20,000-30,000 soldiers outside of California had their re-enlistment and education bonuses flagged for review, a step that could have led to recoupment of money in some cases.

The initial rough estimate was given to Stars and Stripes by a National Guard Bureau spokesman who was reviewing nationwide data on the bonuses, which have come under scrutiny after thousands of California soldiers face repayment.

The estimate was made using incomplete data from state National Guard bureaus and did not indicate how many cases actually led to recoupment efforts, only cases flagged for further

review, Lt. Col. Wes Parmer, a National Guard Bureau spokesman, said.

The service later challenged the estimate, saying it did not have statistics to back it up.

“There is nothing in the National Guard Bureau’s review of the California bonus issue to support the estimate that 20,000 to 30,000 National Guard soldiers outside California have had their bonuses flagged for review and recoupment,” Col. Les Melnyk wrote in an email.

The Pentagon said it has not fully completed a review of bonus cases ordered last week by Defense Secretary Ash Carter and does not yet have accurate numbers to provide. It told Stars and Stripes the instances of fraud and reclamation of bonuses is likely “in the dozens.”

A statistical survey by the National Guard in 2010 of about

9,000 bonuses given to soldiers outside California found about 11 percent warranted “additional review for possible contract termination or recoupment action” by the state National Guard bureaus, according to figures supplied by the service. Cases can be reviewed for reasons, including soldiers not fulfilling their agreement, lack of paperwork or fraud.

The National Guard handed out a total of about \$600 million in bonuses and education benefits to 107,000 soldiers in states and territories as of 2010, according to Parmer. There are about 340,000 soldiers in the Army National Guard.

It was unclear Thursday what the states did with those cases.

The National Guard Bureau investigation “didn’t include tracking each state’s actions on recommendations. It’s a state-

centric process,” Parmer wrote in an email.

An effort by the California National Guard to review and reclaim some bonuses from a group of about 10,000 soldiers caused public outcry last week. Carter ordered a temporary halt to the collections, and Congress is eyeing new legislation to forgive the debt for those soldiers.

The National Guard discovered fraud in California bonuses in 2010 and has since started collecting about 2,000 and has yet to process thousands more. It ordered state bureaus to conduct audits in 2010 and took the statistical sample of the total number of cases, Parmer told Stars and Stripes.

Parmer and the Pentagon underscored they do not believe the widespread fraud found in California was a problem elsewhere.

USS Montgomery damaged in Panama Canal

BY TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Littoral Combat Ship USS Montgomery suffered an 18-inch crack to its hull as it transited the Panama Canal, the Navy said Thursday.

The new ship hit one of the locks in the canal while under the control of a local

Panama Canal pilot, said Lt. Loren Terry, a Navy spokesman.

However, the damage was located 8 to 10 feet above the water line, and the Montgomery was able to continue on its mission.

The Montgomery is the eighth and newest Littoral Combat Ship in the 26-ship fleet. The ship operates on a limited crew

of 40, not including any attached aviation squadrons.

Earlier this fall, the ship was also involved in an incident where it was hit by a barge as the two vessels were moving out of the path of Hurricane Matthew.

Terry said there was not an estimate available yet on how much it would cost to repair the Montgomery.

Clinton, Trump break out all they have for election push

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are opening the final weekend of a marathon campaign by pulling out every tool they have to get their supporters to vote. Polls show critical battleground states may still be up for grabs ahead of Tuesday’s election.

Clinton and her allies rushed to shore up support among African-Americans, acknowledging signs of weaker-than-expected turnout in early-voting data.

The Democrat was due to campaign in Pennsylvania and Michigan on Friday. She’s been pounding Trump for his record

on race, accusing him of tacitly encouraging support from white supremacists.

Clinton got a boost Friday in the Labor Department’s monthly jobs report, which showed the unemployment rate declined to 4.9 percent while wages went up in October.

Heading into the final days, both campaigns are presenting the choice as a crossroads for democracy.

For Trump, that means zeroing in on questions about Clinton’s trustworthiness and a new FBI review of an aide’s emails. Trump warned Thursday that never-ending investigations would prevent his Democrat-

ic opponent from governing effectively.

In spite of a close race in national polling, Trump’s path to victory remained narrow. He must win Florida, which polls show remains a neck-and-neck race, to win the White House. Early voting has surged in the state. The number of early voters so far, 5.26 million, already has exceeded the overall early-voting figure for 2012, and voting will continue this weekend. Republicans have a very narrow edge in ballots cast.

North Carolina also has emerged as critical state for Trump — in part because of early signs that African-Amer-

ican turnout there is lagging.

Both campaigns are so focused on the two states, the candidate and allies have been nearly running into each other at airports. Trump tweeted about gazing at Air Force One at the Miami airport Thursday, ripping President Barack Obama for campaigning.

Meanwhile, the FBI and the New York Police Department say they are assessing the credibility of information on a possible al-Qaida attack against the U.S. on the eve of Election Day.

Officials said Friday that the information that mentioned New York, Texas and Virginia as potential targets.

2 ex-Chistie allies guilty in bridge scandal

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Two former aides to Gov. Chris Christie were convicted Friday of creating an epic traffic jam at the George Washington Bridge for what prosecutors say was political revenge, capping a trial that cast doubt on Christie's claims he knew nothing about the scheme.

Bridget Kelly, Christie's former deputy chief of staff, and Bill Baroni, a Christie appointee to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, were found guilty of all counts against them.

The most serious charges carry up to 20 years in prison. Sentencing was scheduled for Feb. 21.

The federal jury took five days to reach a verdict in the scandal that helped sink Christie's Republican campaign for president.

Christie has denied any knowledge of the scheme beforehand or while it was going on and has not been charged.

A message left with Christie's office on Friday wasn't immediately returned.

Prosecutors said Kelly and Baroni plotted with Christie ally David Wildstein to close lanes at

the bridge to create gridlock in September 2013 to punish the Democratic mayor of Fort Lee for not endorsing Christie for re-election. Wildstein, a high-ranking Port Authority official, pleaded guilty to orchestrating the scheme and was the prosecution's star witness.

Kelly and Baroni testified they believed the lane closings were part of a legitimate traffic study because, they said, that was what Wildstein told them.

The defense portrayed Wildstein as a liar and a dirty trickster — “the Bernie Madoff of New Jersey politics” — and argued that Christie and his inner

circle had thrown Kelly, 44, under the bus.

“They want that mother of four to take the fall for them. Cowards. Cowards,” Kelly attorney Michael Critchley said in a thundering closing argument.

One of the most damning pieces of evidence was an email in which Kelly wrote: “Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee.” Then, as the four days of gridlock unfolded and Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich complained about children unable to get to school, she texted: “Is it wrong that I am smiling?”

Car bombing in Turkey kills 9

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish authorities on Friday detained 12 pro-Kurdish members of Parliament for questioning in terror-related probes, drawing expressions of concern from Europe and the U.S., while a car bomb attack in the largest Kurdish city, reportedly claimed by Kurdish militants, killed nine people.

Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag, the co-chairs of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party, or HDP, were among those rounded up in the early hours. They were later ordered held in custody pending trial on terror-related charges along with three other legislators. The courts meanwhile, released three other lawmakers on condition that they report regularly to authorities.

The detentions provoked worried reactions from outside Turkey. The European Union's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, expressed concern on Twitter, saying the EU was in contact with authorities and adding that she had called a meeting of EU ambassadors in Ankara.

Tom Malinowski, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, tweeted that he was “deeply troubled” by the detentions, adding: “When taking legal action against elected reps, democracies have higher duty to justify actions & preserve confidence in justice.”

Hours after the arrests, there was a large explosion in the city of Diyarbakir, near the riot police building. Two police officers and seven civilians were killed, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said up to 100 people were wounded, though most were released after treatment.

Yildirim also said one of the assailants was “caught dead,” but did not provide details.

The Diyarbakir governor's office said the PKK claimed the attack, which Anadolu said was carried out with a minibus laden with a ton of explosives.

The blast caused a large crater near the police building and damaged several buildings and businesses nearby. Television footage showed people walking among glass and other debris near buildings with windows blown out. Authorities imposed a temporary news blackout after the explosion, barring reports that could lead to public “fear, panic or chaos” and images showing the explosion and its aftermath.

Turkey has been plagued by a series of deadly bomb attacks in the past 18 months, carried out by Kurdish militants or Islamic State group extremists.

The PKK has waged a three-decade-long insurgency against the Turkish state and is considered a terror organization by Turkey and its allies. A fragile cease-fire collapsed in 2015 and at least 700 state security personnel and thousands of Kurdish militants have been killed since then, according to Anadolu.

It was not immediately known if the attack was in direct response to the legislators' detentions.

Officials said the lawmakers were detained for not appearing in court to testify in ongoing terrorism-related investigations.

An Interior Ministry statement said a total of 15 detention warrants were issued by the chief public prosecutors in five mainly Kurdish provinces. Two of the legislators were determined to be abroad, and authorities are still searching for one.

S. Korean leader takes blame for power scandal

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean President Park Geun-hye took sole blame Friday for a “heartbreaking” scandal amid rising suspicion that she allowed a mysterious confidante to manipulate power from the shadows.

Park also vowed to accept a direct investigation into her actions, but the opposition, sensing weakness, immediately threatened to push for her ouster if she doesn't distance herself from domestic affairs and accept a prime minister chosen by the parliament.

“I feel a huge responsibility (for the scandal) deep in my heart,” Park said, her voice shaking during the televised address. “It is all my fault and mistake.”

Park's comments included a frank assessment of her relationship with the woman at the heart of the scandal, Choi Soon-sil, the daughter of a cult leader and a longtime friend of Park's.

“I put too much faith in a personal relationship and didn't look carefully at what was happening,” Park said. “Sad thoughts trouble my sleep at night. I realize that whatever I do, it will be difficult to mend the hearts of the people, and then I feel a sense of shame and ask myself, ‘Is this the reason I became president?’”

Park denied media speculation that she had “fallen into worshipping cult religions or that shamanistic rituals were held at the presidential Blue House.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mother charged with giving her kids heroin

WA TACOMA — A Washington state mother is charged with giving her three small children heroin after a boy told investigators his mother used a needle to inject him and his sisters with “feel-good medicine” to help them sleep.

State Child Protective Services investigators became involved after receiving a report of heroin use at the home Ashlee Hutt, 24, shared with the children’s father, Mac Leroy McIver. The children, ages 6, 4 and 2, were removed from the home last year.

The Pierce County Prosecutor’s Office said Hutt was charged Monday with unlawful delivery of a controlled substance to a child, criminal mistreatment and child assault. McIver was charged with the same crimes in September.

Roommate is beaten, dies after beer stolen

PA BRENTWOOD — A western Pennsylvania man suspected of beating his roommate for stealing some beer has been jailed on an aggravated assault charge and soon could be charged with homicide.

Allegheny County police are waiting for results of an autopsy on the victim, Charles Parker, before deciding whether to add the homicide charge against Justin Vankirk, 34.

Vankirk reportedly told police his roommate died Tuesday, but police said his version of how he found the victim’s body and other details varied. Under further questioning, Vankirk acknowledged punching and beating Parker before going to bed Monday night, according to police. Investigators also reportedly found a picture of the beaten victim on

Vankirk’s cellphone.

Fatal traffic wreck case gets 17 delays

TX HOUSTON — Two years after a Houston-area woman died in a traffic crash, the victim’s family is waiting for the case to be resolved even though the driver of the other vehicle has pleaded guilty to intoxication manslaughter.

Houston TV station KHOU reported a Harris County court has delayed the case 17 times.

Prosecutor Allison Bainbridge said while some cases can be wrapped up in a year, a two-year wait to get through the court system is not unusual.

In the case involving the October 2014 death of Heather Rankel, Bainbridge said many of the delays have been due to a change in defense lawyers.

Richie Rankel, whose wife was killed, said families become victims, and the case needs to become final.

Man angry he had no warrants is jailed

PA EBENSBURG — Police said a Pennsylvania man who became angry when told there were no outstanding warrants for his arrest has been jailed.

Cambria Township police said Mervin Sollenberger, 40, arrived at the Cambria County jail late Tuesday to surrender on outstanding arrest warrants. But police told him there were no warrants for his arrest.

WJAC-TV reported that’s when the Duncansville man became enraged, threatening to assault the jail’s guards and kicking a steel cage door at the lockup.

Sollenberger has been charged with making terroristic threats and disorderly conduct. He remained jailed

Thursday after failing to post 10 percent of his \$20,000 bail.

Trump supporter changes road sign

VA LAKE RIDGE — Authorities are investigating after someone reportedly changed an electronic road sign in Virginia to display disparaging remarks about Hillary Clinton and to encourage people to vote for Donald Trump.

Police said the sign in Prince William County flashed three messages Tuesday: “CROOKED HILARY” — followed by a profanity and “VOTE TRUMP.”

The sign initially was placed at the Tackett’s Mill commuter lot to encourage people to vote.

County elections office spokesman Winston Forrest said a box holding a computer on the side of the sign appears to have been left unlocked. That seems to be how the message was tampered with.

Officials said locks have been placed on the remaining voting road signs.

Man sues over lack of knife after choking

MS GULFPORT — A Mississippi attorney is suing Popeyes after he allegedly choked while eating fried chicken with his hands because a knife wasn’t included in his order.

Paul Newton Jr. said the only utensil he was given during his November 2015 visit to the fast-food restaurant was a spork.

The lawsuit states that because Newton didn’t receive a plastic knife, his only option was to hold the chicken breast with his hands and to tear off pieces with his teeth, causing him to choke.

The lawsuit said Newton underwent surgery to remove the piece of chicken from his throat.

Along with knives for all drive-thru customers’ orders, Newton is also seeking financial compensation and punitive damages.

University executive under fire for hunt

NM GALLUP — The head of the University of New Mexico’s Gallup campus is under fire for spending money on Bigfoot-related pursuits.

KRQE-TV reported that UNM Gallup’s Executive Director Christopher Dyer organized a two-day, on-campus Bigfoot conference in February followed by a Bigfoot expedition, costing taxpayers about \$7,000.

Dyer is an avid Bigfoot hunter in his free time and said he only pursues the mythical creature when he isn’t on the job. He said the conference was the most well-attended event in the Gallup campus’s history.

UNM President Robert Frank said such an expedition is not appropriate and Dyer needs to be more thoughtful about how he pursues his hobbies.

Man wins big lottery for second time

MN ROSEVILLE — A Minnesota lottery player has gotten lucky twice in just over a year.

Anthony Fusaro, 46, of Plymouth, hit a Gopher 5 jackpot last week worth nearly \$875,000.

It was the second major lottery prize Fusaro has claimed in less than 17 months. He won \$1 million playing Mega Millions last year.

Fusaro said in a statement that it’s just “pure luck” that he scored two big lottery wins. But he said he “always believed it would happen again.”

From wire reports

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Falcons win, retain control over NFC South

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — There's no letup in Matt Ryan and the Atlanta Falcons.

The NFC South leaders tightened their grip on first place in the division with a 43-28 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, with Ryan throwing for 344 yards, four touchdowns and no interceptions on Thursday night.

The victory avenged a 7-point home loss to Tampa Bay in the season opener. It also reiterated how much the Falcons (6-3) have progressed as a team since the earlier meeting.

"First game of the year, they played a little better than we did that day," Ryan said after tossing scoring passes to four different targets. "I felt like we have continued to improve from that time of year. For me, that's like the best thing from a confidence standpoint — that we continue to get better week in and week out."

Julio Jones had another big game, with eight receptions for 111 yards. In 10 career meetings against Tampa Bay, he's averaged 110.6 yards per game with eight touchdowns.

It was the receiver's fifth 100-yard game of the season, 33rd of his career.

"The amount of guys that get involved in the game is a big topic for us," Atlanta

coach Dan Quinn said.

Levine Toilolo, Patrick DiMarco and Austin Hooper also caught TD passes from Ryan, who leads the NFL with 2,980 yards and 23 touchdowns vs. four interceptions.

Receiver Taylor Gabriel scored on a 9-yard run.

Jameis Winston threw for 261 yards and three touchdowns for the Bucs (3-5), including scoring passes of 3 and 24 yards to Mike Evans, who had 11 receptions for 150 yards.

Both of Tampa Bay's young stars finished the game on the sideline, with Evans being evaluated for a possible concussion and Winston limping off after being shaken up when he was tackled trying to score on a two-point conversion play with just under seven minutes remaining.

Winston was tackled around the ankle by Atlanta's Brooks Reed and also hit by cornerback Jalen Collins. He said he was fine and didn't leave the game because he was injured.

"Coach took me out," Winston said.

Some things to know about the Falcons and Buccaneers:

Moving forward: The Falcons are positioned well in the division, but don't want to get ahead of themselves. "One of the things I do like about our team is we're able to stay on the present moment and

focus on the team that is at hand. ... Our focus this week was on us and how well we could attack, so we're going to stay right in that window." Tampa Bay has lost two straight on the heels of a two-game winning streak that got them back in the division race. "We're 3-5 at the halfway point, and that's what we earned. There's half a season left. I've got to figure out a way to help this team play up to its potential because right now they're not," Bucs coach Dirk Kotter said. "And that's on me."

Dependable Jones: Jones started slowly, before the Falcons finally got him involved. The All-Pro receiver had half his production coming during a two-minute stretch of the second quarter. Early in the second half with the Falcons only leading 20-14, Jones caught passes from Matt Ryan on four consecutive plays, all for first downs, during an 86-yard touchdown drive. "His play kind of got us going," Ryan said.

The Bucs stop here: Falcons DT Grady Jarrett stopped a promising Tampa Bay drive with sacks on successive plays late in the first half. The Falcons finished with three sacks, hiking their season total to 21 in nine games. They had 19 last season, fewest in the NFL.

Raiders return to Sunday night spotlight

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Playing in high-profile games is old hat for the Denver Broncos after two trips to the Super Bowl the past three seasons and plenty of other opportunities to play on the NFL's biggest stages.

It's a new experience for the Oakland Raiders, who have spent more than a decade at the bottom of the standings and far from the limelight of hyped primetime games.

For the first time since 2006, the Raiders (6-2) have an opportunity to play on the NFL's premier Sunday night stage when they host the Broncos (6-2) on Sunday night in an AFC West showdown.

"I think what we recognize as an organization is as you become relevant, as you play good football, you're going to have more of these opportunities," coach Jack Del Rio said.

"This is the natural progression in building a good football team. We should expect to be in these games. We're going to expect to win these games. Then we're going to move forward and have more of these kinds of games."

The game offers an intriguing matchup with Derek Carr and Oakland's high-powered offense that is coming off a record-setting performance in last week's 30-24 overtime win at Tampa Bay facing Von Miller and the league's most dominant defense.

Here are some other things to watch this week:

Luxury Carr: In his third season as a pro, Carr has made significant strides and is now considered one of the top quarterbacks in the league. Carr threw for a franchise-record 513 yards last week and joined Y.A. Tittle and Ben Roethlis-

berger as the only players to throw for at least 500 yards and four touchdowns in a game without an interception.

Turn it over: The Broncos are tied for the NFL lead with 16 takeaways this season, leading to a league-high 80 points on the ensuing drives. Denver has won 27 straight games when winning the turnover battle, including last year in Oakland when Chris Harris' 74-yard interception return in the fourth quarter turned a possible go-ahead drive for the Raiders into a win for the Broncos.

Mack attack: Raiders edge rusher Khalil Mack had his best game ever the previous time he faced the Broncos. Mack had five sacks that game, including one in the end zone against Brock Osweiler that led to a safety in Oakland's 15-12 win. Osweiler is no longer in Denver and the Broncos have two new tackles in Russell

Okung and Donald Stephenson. Mack is hitting his stride with four sacks the past three games after recording just one the first five weeks.

C&C catch factory: The Raiders have one of the league's most dynamic receiving duos in Amari Cooper and Michael Crabtree. Cooper is third in the league with 52 catches and 787 yards receiving, while Crabtree is tied for the league lead with six TD catches and ranks fifth with 47 catches. The Broncos counter with the league's top secondary, led by cornerbacks Aqib Talib, Chris Harris Jr. and Bradley Roby.

"I feel like they have two good receivers. I don't feel they have two elite receivers," Ward said. "So, we have two elite corners. We have three elite corners, and that's their job. So, I think we'll be all right."

Durant, Warriors embarrass Thunder

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Golden State's Kevin Durant thoroughly embarrassed his old Oklahoma City teammates by sinking seven three-pointers and scoring 39 points as the Warriors strolled to a 122-96 win against the Thunder on Thursday.

Defeat for the Thunder left Cleveland as the NBA's last unbeaten team, as LeBron James led the Cavaliers past Boston.

The highly anticipated clash of last year's Western Conference finals revolved around Durant, who had made the big-money move to the Warriors, and he rose to the occasion, with his seven three-pointers matching a career high.

Russell Westbrook was eager

to show he could lead Oklahoma City without Durant, but was held to just 20 points; 17.8 points below his season average.

Golden State's Stephen Curry added 21 points while Klay Thompson rediscovered his three-point form and hit four long shots as the Warriors notched a fourth straight win.

Cavaliers 128, Celtics 122: LeBron James scored a season-high 30 points and reigning NBA champion Cleveland stayed undefeated, beating visiting Boston.

James moved within two points of passing Hakeem Olajuwon for 10th place on the NBA's all-time scoring list. Olajuwon had 26,946 points, a total James will likely surpass Saturday night in Philadelphia.

Bucks 125, Pacers 106: Giannis Antetokounmpo and Jabari Parker each had 27 points to lead host Milwaukee past Indiana.

Paul George scored 23 points, reserve C.J. Miles added 19, Jeff Teague had 16 and Myles Turner 15, but it wasn't enough as the Pacers slipped to 0-3 on the road.

Magic 102, Kings 94: Evan Fournier scored 29 points and Serge Ibaka added 17 to lead Orlando to a victory over visiting Sacramento.

In one of their better offensive games this season, the Magic had five players score in double figures with Aaron Gordon contributing a double-double with 13 points and 10 rebounds, while reserve Jeff

Green scored 15 points.

Nuggets 102, Timberwolves 99: Danilo Gallinari scored 19 points and Jusuf Nurkic added 18 to help Denver outlast host Minnesota.

Wilson Chandler added 19 points to lead an impressive performance by Denver's second unit to erase a 15-point second-quarter deficit. The Nuggets outscored Minnesota 45-23 off the bench and shot 48 percent for their second win of the season.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 32 points and 14 rebounds and Andrew Wiggins scored 25 for the Timberwolves, who gave away a lead of at least 15 points for the third time in four games this season.

Bruins outlast Lightning in shootout

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Jimmy Hayes scored in the 10th round of the shootout, Tuukka Rask won his sixth straight game to start the season and the Boston Bruins beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3 on Thursday night.

Tampa Bay's Brayden Point and Boston's Riley Nash both scored in the fourth round, but Rask and Andrei Vasilevskiy were strong during the shootout as Boston won 2-1.

Brandon Carlo, Ryan Spooner and David Pastrnak scored in regulation for the Bruins, who finished a 3-1 road trip.

The Lightning got two goals from Tyler Johnson. Victor Hedman had the other Tampa Bay goal in the team's first home game since a 3-3 trip.

Capitals 4, Jets 3 (OT): Alex Ovechkin scored his second goal of the game in overtime, and host Washington blew a three-goal lead in the third period but regrouped to beat Winnipeg for its fourth straight win.

The Capitals took a 3-0 lead on goals by Nicklas Backstrom, Ovechkin and T.J. Oshie, only to see it evaporate.

Tobias Enstrom, Adam Lowry and Marko Dano scored in a 9-minute span for the Jets to tie it.

Rangers 5, Oilers 3: Rick Nash scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:21 remaining to lead host New York over Western Conference-leading Edmonton.

Nick Holden took a shot from the point that was blocked by Edmonton's Milan

Lucic. Nash corralled the loose puck in front of the net and fired it past Oilers goalie Cam Talbot.

Blackhawks 4, Avalanche 0: Corey Crawford made 38 saves for his second shutout in three games, leading host Chicago past Colorado for its fourth straight victory.

Marian Hossa had two goals, Jonathan Toews also scored and the Blackhawks killed off three more penalties to run their streak to 12 after an awful start to the season for their penalty-killers.

Stars 6, Blues 2: Tyler Seguin assisted on host Dallas' first four goals against St. Louis.

Seguin's four assists tied his career high. He had scored three of Dallas' six goals in the previous five games.

Maple Leafs 2, Sabres 1: Mitchell Marner scored two goals and visiting Toronto defeated Buffalo for its first road victory of the season.

Frederik Andersen made 42 saves for the Maple Leafs, who have won two straight and improved to 1-3-3 on the road. They also ended an eight-game winless streak in Buffalo.

Flyers 3, Islanders 2 (SO): Claude Giroux scored the only goal in the shootout to lift visiting Philadelphia over New York.

Travis Konecny and Matt Read had goals for the Flyers, who improved to 6-5-1 with their third straight victory.

Panthers 4, Devils 3 (OT): Vincent Trocheck scored two goals, including the game-

winner in overtime, to give host Florida a victory over New Jersey.

Trocheck poked in a rebound past Cory Schneider with 43.4 seconds left in OT.

Senators 1, Canucks 0: Mike Condon made 27 saves in his Ottawa debut, and visiting Vancouver was shut out for the fourth time in five games.

Jacob Markstrom made 23 saves for the Canucks, who have lost seven straight (0-6-1).

Kings 3, Penguins 2 (OT): Nic Dowd scored 2:37 into overtime, and host Los Angeles snapped a three-game skid with a victory over Pittsburgh.

Trevor Lewis and Matt Greene scored slump-busting goals and Peter Budaj made 21 saves in a strong bounce-back effort for the Kings.

Flames 3, Sharks 2: Matthew Tkachuk had his first two-goal game, including the game-winner with 4:21 to play, and Calgary handed San Jose its first home loss.

Troy Brouwer and Tkachuk scored in a 93-second span late in the second period as the Flames ended a two-game slide.

Coyotes 3, Predators 2 (SO): Anthony Duclair and Radim Vrbata scored in the shootout, and Louis Domingue stopped 35 shots plus two more in the tiebreaker to lead host Arizona over Nashville.

Duclair and rookie Christian Dvorak scored in regulation for the Coyotes, who won for the third time in four games after a 1-5 start.

Mayfield, Sooners hold off Iowa State

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Baker Mayfield threw four more touchdown passes for the streaking Oklahoma Sooners.

Mayfield completed 25 of 34 passes for 328 yards and 12th-ranked Oklahoma held off Iowa State 34-24 on Thursday night for its sixth straight victory.

Dede Westbrook caught seven passes for 131 yards and a score for the Sooners (7-2, 6-0 Big 12). They beat the Cyclones (1-8, 0-6) for the 18th time in a row and the 74th time in 81 meetings.

Mayfield threw TD passes to Westbrook and Dimitri Flowers in the final 4:16 of the first half, extending his streak of games with at least four touchdown tosses to an FBS-high four games.

Mayfield has 31 scoring passes, good for second nationally, with just six interceptions.

"That was a big jolt. They didn't have the lead but for 10 seconds," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said about the 65-yard TD reception by Westbrook that came immediately after Iowa State jumped ahead 17-

14. "Dede and Baker have been doing that a bunch."

Oklahoma's defense stiffened after some early struggles, allowing just seven points in the second half to help the injury-depleted Sooners survive on the road.

"We're short a few guys. But we had some young guys step in and take full control of the game," Westbrook said.

Jacob Park passed for 160 yards and two touchdowns for the Cyclones in his first career start. They've dropped five straight.

Iowa State played without rushing leader Mike Warren. He sprained an ankle last week in a loss to Kansas State.

"I just think knowing that the front we were going to face, we had to throw the football a little bit, and Jacob gave us the best opportunity to start the football game," Iowa State coach Matt Campbell said.

No. 21 Colorado 20, UCLA 10: Isaiah Oliver returned a punt 68 yards for a score with 5:27 remaining and the host Buffaloes overcame eight personal-foul penalties to beat the Bruins.

"You're going to have a game like that every once in a while," coach Mike MacIntyre said. "But not with the selfish penalties we had. We'll fix that."

Oliver caught the punt on the right side of the field, cut back to the left and went untouched for the decisive score. It was the first punt return for a TD in 11 years for Colorado (7-2, 5-1 Pac-12, No. 15 CFP) and came on a night when the Buffaloes struggled to get much going.

The game featured a combined 25 penalties for 224 yards, two blocked kicks and five turnovers — four by Colorado. UCLA (3-6, 1-5) has dropped four straight.

"Couldn't get anything going on offense and had some trouble on special teams. That's a good team and when that happens it's tough to win," UCLA coach Jim Mora said.

The Buffaloes struggled to control their temper and were called for taunting, roughing the passer, unsportsmanlike conduct and a targeting call that led to the ejection of outside linebacker Jimmie Gilbert early in the first quarter.

MacIntyre vowed to make

his team run laps for all those personal fouls.

Really, though, the team gets the message.

"If you want to be Pac-12 championship team you can't be doing that stuff," senior QB Sefo Liufau said. "As a group, as a team, we can't let other people get under our skin. Ultimately, we'll end up hurting ourselves and hurting our chances."

UCLA quarterback Mike Faful stepped in with Josh Rosen sidelined by a shoulder injury. He finished 15-for-29 for 185 yards and one TD. He also threw an interception.

"Colorado has a great defense," Faful said.

Liufau went a school-record 152 attempts without throwing an interception before tossing two in a span of six passes. Later, the senior fumbled on a big hit by Takkarist McKinley and was helped off the field. Freshman Steven Montez briefly took over.

Colorado finished with 304 yards of offense but struggled to put points on the board for a second straight game.

Alabama, LSU know they'll have to use passing games

Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Danny Etling has figured it out in his relatively short time in the Southeastern Conference.

"In order to beat Alabama," the LSU quarterback said, "you can't be one-dimensional."

Same goes for beating LSU. The top-ranked Crimson Tide bring the nation's best run defense into Saturday night's showdown with the 15th-ranked Tigers, who aren't much kinder to opposing runners.

In a game featuring an impressive collection of running backs led by LSU's Leonard Fournette, the quarterbacks and wide receivers are going to have to produce, too.

Brandon Harris and LSU couldn't do it consistently last

season against 'Bama, and Fournette found scant running room against a defense that was able to load up on the run. This famously physical game won't all be about muscle.

Neither team has a receiver ranked among the Top 10 in the SEC, but NFL prospects abound like LSU's Travin Dural and Malachi Dupre and Alabama's Calvin Ridley, Ar-Darius Stewart and tight end O.J. Howard.

The quarterbacks are both making their debuts in the SEC West rivalry.

Etling has had more passing success since interim coach Ed Orgeron took over in late September and brought in offensive coordinator Steve Ensminger. The Purdue transfer has had three straight 200-yard games

and helped LSU set a school record for an SEC game with 634 total yards against Missouri.

It's no coincidence that Tide coach Nick Saban believes the Tigers' play action and vertical passing game have been more effective lately.

"And they've made a lot more explosive plays," Saban said.

Alabama freshman Jalen Hurts has made his share, too, both running and passing. While he's shown remarkable poise for an 18-year-old, Hurts has had some downfield misfires.

Saban said working on the timing for the passing game was a priority during the open date before this game. He figures LSU's secondary is as athletic as any Alabama has faced.

Ridley said Hurts throws at least five deep balls to receivers after practice, whatever routes he wants to work on. Ridley's numbers are down from a huge freshman season, but he still has 39 catches for 477 yards and four touchdowns.

"I catch a lot of balls after every practice," Ridley said. "I guess that's going to help us."

The game certainly will feature an abundance of handoffs. Fournette and Derrius Guice are two of the SEC's top runners. Alabama counters with a deep stable of tailbacks led by Damien Harris and Hurts, the team's No. 2 rusher.

Neither team topped 200 passing yards in Alabama's victory last season, but the Tide's Jake Coker was far more efficient than Harris.