

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## White House backs changes in Navy ratings

BY TYLER HLAVAC  
*Stars and Stripes*

The White House is defending the abolition of Navy ratings, saying it will make sailors more flexible and improve their chances of success in post-military careers.

“Organizational changes that require a cultural shift can cause friction during transition periods, but [President Barack Obama] has confidence in the decisions made by U.S. Navy leaders and agrees that the benefits in future years will outweigh growing pains in the next several months,” a White House statement said Wednesday. The administration was responding to a petition with more than 100,000 signatures opposing changes — announced in September — that will replace traditional Navy ratings such as boatswain’s mate and gunner’s mate with military occupational specialties used by other services.

“This administration believes that providing widely recognized credentials will improve servicemembers’ chances of success in the private sector,” the statement said. “Modernizing this system provides many benefits within the Navy, such as increased flexibility in training and assignments.”

The changes come after Navy Secretary Ray Mabus ordered the review of Navy titles in January as part of a plan to open all positions to women.

Enlisted sailors will in the future be addressed only by rank, in the same manner that members of other services are recognized. For example, lower-ranked sailors will be called seamen, midgrade enlisted sailors will be addressed as petty officers and the highest-ranking enlisted sailors will be known as chiefs.

## Ex-Navy captain latest to plead guilty in bribery case

*The Washington Post*

A retired Navy captain who also served as the U.S. naval attache in the Philippines pleaded guilty to corruption in federal court Tuesday, admitting that he secretly worked as an agent for an Asian defense contractor in exchange for gifts, travel and prostitutes.

Michael George Brooks, 57, of Fairfax Station, Va., pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in San Diego to a charge of conspiracy to commit bribery. He faces a sentence of up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In his plea agreement, Brooks acknowledged that he and his family members accepted fine wines, hotel rooms, electronics, luxury watches and prostitutes on dozens of occasions from Leonard Glenn Francis, a Singapore-based contractor known as “Fat Leonard” in Navy circles. Francis’ firm, Glenn

Defense Marine Asia, held contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars to resupply and refuel U.S. Navy ships at ports throughout Asia.

Francis pleaded guilty to bribery charges last year in the case, which has erupted into the worst corruption case in the history of the U.S. Navy. Seventeen people have been charged with crimes in federal court, including an admiral and eight other officers. About two-thirds of those facing charges have pleaded guilty.

Brooks served as the U.S. naval attache in Manila from 2006 to 2008. According to court documents, he acted secretly on behalf of Francis and Glenn Defense by feeding them confidential Navy correspondence and contracting documents. He illicitly secured diplomatic clearance for Glenn Defense so the firm could bring cargo and personnel into the Philippines without being subject to inspec-

tions and customs duties.

In 2007, Brooks also allowed Glenn Defense to ghostwrite its own official Navy performance evaluation in a bid to win more business, according to his plea agreement.

Brooks’ attorney, Nicole Sprinzen of Washington, did not immediately return a phone call or email seeking comment.

According to court papers, Francis exploited the Navy captain’s strong sexual appetite by supplying him with prostitutes on demand. Brooks used code words when sending emails to Francis or other Glenn Defense executives, referring to prostitutes as “shakes,” “chocolate shakes” and “mocha shakes” or indicating his desire for “high tea.”

Brooks retired from the Navy in November 2011. Until recently, he had been employed as a contractor for the Pentagon’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

## In right turn, Trump would ‘load up’ Gitmo

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Never mind closing Guantanamo. It might be getting bigger.

President Barack Obama is running out of time to fulfill his long-standing promise to shutter the prison at the U.S. military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Sixty inmates remain in the facility and only a third are cleared for release.

If Obama can’t close it, his successor likely won’t. Donald Trump has not only pledged to keep Guantanamo open,

in April he said that “we’re gonna load it up with some bad dudes, believe me.” He told The Miami Herald that month that he would support trying U.S. citizens accused of terrorism at the base, though that would require Congress to change federal law and would likely face constitutional challenges.

Opened in 2002 as a make-shift camp to hold men captured in the early fight against al-Qaida, Guantanamo has become a symbol of the strong-handed U.S. response to the 9/11 attacks. Its advocates say

it keeps dangerous terrorists locked up. Opponents say it violates basic human rights, with prisoners held indefinitely without charges. Obama has said it feeds anti-U.S. sentiment worldwide and that the prisoners could be held for less money at facilities in the U.S.

The Obama administration has repatriated or resettled nearly 180 Guantanamo prisoners. But he can’t close the detention center because Congress has blocked it, most crucially with a ban on transferring men to facilities in the U.S.

# Roadblocks on Trump's plan to boost fleet

BY ERIK SLAVIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

There could be a lot more ships in the Navy's future, though it remains unclear where the money will come from and exactly how those ships might be used.

President-elect Donald Trump pledged to boost the fleet to 350 ships, a proposal advocated by an outgoing Virginia congressman reportedly being considered as the next Navy secretary.

"My plan will build the 350-ship Navy we need," Trump said in an Oct. 21 speech, according to his campaign website. "This will be the largest effort at rebuilding our military since Ronald Reagan, and it will require a truly national effort."

The speech provided no additional details. However, U.S. Naval Institute News reported that a source close to Trump attributed the idea to Rep. Randy Forbes, whose southeast Virginia district is part of the Navy's East Coast hub.

The Navy's 272-ship deployable fleet is operating under a 30-year shipbuilding plan that would bring it up to 308 ships.

However, just getting the service up to 308 would require \$4.5 billion more in annual shipbuilding spending than planned, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Getting to 350 would cost about \$4 billion more annually on top of that, according to a Nov. 9 Congressional Research Service report. That doesn't include several billion dollars more in maintenance, staffing, weapons acquisition and long-term costs.

The large increase in shipbuilding would be paralleled by spending increases in other areas if Congress agrees to Trump's campaign pledges.

Trump called for increasing the active-duty Army by 60,000 soldiers and the Ma-

lines by 20,000 servicemembers, Trump supporter Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., told Defense News last month.

To spend more on shipbuilding and personnel, Congress would likely have to repeal or alter a law that subjects spending above budget caps to across-the-board cuts known as sequestration.

"Well, it would be a need for a spending increase, there is just no doubt about it," Sessions said. "And it is painful for me as a budget person to acknowledge that we can't stay at a sequester-like level. We are just not going to be able to do that."

## Makeup of the fleet

There are several notional plans for what a 350-ship plan would look like, most of which converge in key areas.

As Cold War-era submarines retire, the fast-attack fleet is projected to decrease 25 percent by 2029. Multiple 350-ship plans call for 12 additional fast-attack submarines, which cost about \$2 billion each.

The Navy is dependent on two shipyards to build its submarines. Those same contractors will also likely be working on 12 replacements for the nuclear ballistic-missile sub fleet, which begins retiring in 2027.

"Going from building two Virginia Class submarines per year to four would not be as simple as adding more money to the ship construction account," Jerry Hendrix, senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, wrote this month in support of the 350-ship Navy. "Welders certified to work on nuclear-powered vessels take a year or more to train and certify, and the companies involved cannot cut corners for fear of damaging their reputations and stock prices."

A 350-ship plan could build 16 more ships in the cruiser/

destroyer classes, which would more than double current building plans.

The Navy previously tried to retire some of its older, Ticonderoga-class missile cruisers but met opposition in the House's Seapower subcommittee, which was chaired by Forbes.

"This administration has tried to take out 11 of our cruisers," Forbes said last month, while talking along with Sessions to Defense News. "You have to have those multiple cruisers or destroyers to do that 360-degree flight. It makes good sense to us to continue to modernize our cruisers."

A future frigate planned as a heavier version of the littoral combat ship could also see greater procurement, according to some scenarios.

In all, a Congressional Research Service theoretical 350-ship plan estimates that the Navy would need 45-58 more ships built on top of the 41 it is planning to have built.

## Using the ships

If Congress and the administration can free up funding and the industrial base can build them all, the question remains: What will the additional ships be doing?

The easiest part of that answer is reducing stress on the available ships and their crews.

The Navy had 58 percent of its 272 ships underway as of Nov. 10. The rest are in maintenance or preparing for a deployment.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, combined with commitments in Asia and other priorities, have lengthened ship deployments to eight to 11 months in multiple cases. That in turn has stretched the Navy's maintenance budget and kept families apart far longer than the Navy wants.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson has

stated a goal of reducing average deployments to seven months by the end of this year.

The more difficult part to foresee is what U.S. security needs will be for the next few decades. For now, the Navy remains far ahead of any other nation's navy on a global scale.

However, most potential adversaries only need to win a conflict regionally. Asia-Pacific analysts point to China's growing navy and assertive territorial claims in conflict with U.S. allies.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its naval posturing have raised concerns, though Trump's overtures toward Moscow may change the strategic balance in the shorter term.

Meanwhile, stationing more ships in Italy or Greece, should those countries allow it, could give the U.S. a larger base of operations for Middle East contingencies.

The Congressional Research Service report on bigger fleets suggested that "a key potential reason for increasing the planned size of the Navy ... would be to re-establish a larger U.S. Navy forward-deployed presence in the European theater, and particularly the Mediterranean."

If Forbes' point of view gains sway with Trump, the argument may simply come down to letting the world know that the U.S. isn't going anywhere.

"Presence, the importance of being there, often with very basic, low-end ships that are backed up by the threat of high-end ships, is often enough to uphold American interests," he said.

slavin.erik@stripes.com  
Twitter:@eslavin\_stripes



# Airman receives Silver Star

BY ALEX HORTON  
*Stars and Stripes*

SAN ANTONIO — An Air Force combat controller credited with protecting a 100-man special operations unit with precision airstrikes during an intense Afghanistan firefight received a Silver Star on Wednesday for his actions.

Staff Sgt. Keaton Thiem, 27, an Austin, Texas, native, said during a roundtable with reporters that he was humbled to join a long list of special tactics airmen who have received the award, but noted countless moments of battlefield heroism that went unrecognized.

“There are guys who didn’t get the recognition I’m getting,” said Thiem, who is assigned to the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

Thiem’s Silver Star is the 36th awarded to a special tactics airman since 9/11, which accounts for more than half of Silver Star recipients in the Air Force since 2001, according to Capt. Katrina Cheesman, an Air Force spokeswoman. The Silver Star is the third highest award recognizing battlefield heroism.

The midnight mission given to about 100 Army Special Forces and Afghan commandos team:

secure Pul-e Khumri, the capital of the northeastern Baghlan province. Taliban forces had infiltrated and cut power to swaths of Kabul, igniting unrest and chaos in the capital 144 miles to the south, Thiem said. The team marched about four hours on Feb. 22, toward the objective, weighed down with heavy equipment in cold and wet conditions.

The element was met with a barrage of machine gun, rifle and RPG fire near their first objective of a walled compound. Insurgent radio traffic intercepted by friendly forces pointed to a complex ambush. Insurgents fired from behind murder holes — small ports knocked through concrete walls to conceal barrel flashes and smoke.

Two elements were immediately pinned down by machine gun fire, and Thiem did something he would repeat several times throughout the firefight that would last 14 hours: he exposed himself to enemy fire to coordinate air support.

Thiem removed himself from cover to gather targeting data for a pair of F-16s overhead. It was a dangerous close-fire mission. Two 500-pound bombs destroyed enemy positions about 35 and 80 yards from friendly forces.

Thiem, while coordinating

precision strikes, orchestrated drone surveillance of the battlefield to locate three of the commandos, who were pinned down and wounded.

He led a recovery team on foot with an AH-64 Apache escorting the movement, calling in runs to rake enemy positions with the Apache’s 30-millimeter chain gun as he held one side of a litter filled by a wounded commando.

The recovery team bounded back 200 meters to the rally point, but there was one commando still missing. Thiem and the recovery team launched one last effort under fire as he coordinated two more Apache gun runs, including eight 2.75-inch rocket strikes pounding enemy sniper positions as they reached the fourth missing commando and brought him back to the exfiltration point.

Thiem continued airstrikes while coordinating medevac support. Fourteen hours after first contact, he coordinated 18 close air support engagements, resulting in 33 dead Taliban troops.

Eight coalition troops were wounded. None were killed.

Thiem’s award citation notes his aggressive targeting is the reason casualties were not worse.

## Questions raised about war crimes in Yemen

*Associated Press*

ABS, Yemen — On an August morning, a taxi driver in northwestern Yemen hugged his kids and jokingly told his family, “Forgive me if I don’t come back.” It was his way of laughing off the danger of driving in a country where airstrikes can hit any road at any time.

In the afternoon, Mohammed al-Khal happened upon just such a strike. Three missiles had hit a highway, leaving bystanders wounded. Al-Khal took one of them, an ice cream vendor, in his car and rushed him to the hospital in the town of Abs, run by the international humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders.

But the warplanes were still hunting. Moments after al-Khal pulled up at the Abs hospital, hell broke loose. A missile struck just outside the hospital entrance. Al-Khal, a father of eight, was incinerated in his car. Nineteen people were killed, along with two civilians killed on the highway.

Rights groups and U.N. officials say the U.S.-backed coalition has often either deliberately or recklessly depended on faulty intelligence, failed to distinguish between civilian and military targets and disregarded the likelihood of civilian casualties.

Experts say some of the strikes amount to war crimes.

Nearly 4,000 civilians have been killed in the war, and an estimated 60 percent of them died in airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition, the U.N. says. The U.S. and its allies have sold billions of dollars in weapons to Saudi Arabia for the campaign. The U.S. military provides it with intelligence, satellite imagery and logistical help.

Washington underlines it does not make targeting decisions and calls on the coalition to investigate reported violations.

## US not supporting Turkish offensive in Syria

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition is not supporting a Turkish-planned offensive to seize a city in northern Syria held by the terrorist group, an American military spokesman said Wednesday.

Syrian rebel fighters backed by Turkish ground and air forces are on the verge of reaching the city limits of Islamic State group-held al-Bab, but the Operation Inherent Resolve coalition has not provided those forces any support because Turkey planned the offensive without coordinating with its allies, said U.S. Air Force Col. John Dorrian, the Baghdad-based spokesman for the coalition.

“We believe that all the operations in Syria against [the Islamic State group] should be coordinated very closely between all the parties that are involved,” Dorrian told reporters Wednesday at the Pentagon. “This is something that [Tur-

key] decided to do independently. What we’d like to do is to continue to work with them to develop a plan where everyone remains focused on [the Islamic State group].”

Turkey expects the operation will be over quickly. The country’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said Wednesday his forces had faced some resistance from the militants, but he did not expect the siege “will last long.”

The U.S.-led coalition had provided air support for prior Turkish-led operations focused on eliminating the Islamic State group from areas just across its southern border with Syria, but concerns about sporadic fighting between the NATO ally and U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces have raised tensions in the region.

The United States had also provided some special operators as advisers to Turkey and its Syrian partners in those operations, but they have since been removed from those groups, Dorrian said



# Turbulence grows in Trump transition team

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The blood-letting in President-elect Donald Trump's transition team that began with last week's ouster of New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie escalated Tuesday with new departures, particularly in the area of national security, as power consolidated within an ever-smaller group of top Trump loyalists.

Former congressman Mike Rogers, R-Mich., announced that he had left his position as the transition's senior national security adviser. Rogers, a former chairman of the House Intelligence Committee and the leading candidate for CIA director, was among at least four transition officials purged this week, apparently because of perceived ties to Christie.

As turbulence within the team grew, some key members of Trump's party began to question his views and the remaining candidates for top positions. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said Trump's efforts to work more closely with Russian President Vladimir Putin amounted to "complicity in [the] butchery of the Syrian people" and "an unacceptable price for a great nation."

Trump met Tuesday with incoming vice president Mike Pence, who replaced Christie at the head of the transition Friday, to discuss Cabinet and White House personnel choices. Little to no information was released by the transition office.

As he had during the campaign, Trump appeared to be uncomfortable with outsiders and suspicious of those considered part of what one insider called the "bicoastal elite," who are perceived as trying to "insinuate" themselves into positions of power.

Those in the inner circle reportedly were winnowed to loyalists who had stuck with Trump throughout the campaign and helped devise his winning strategy. They include Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., former Breitbart News head Stephen Bannon, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn and members of Trump's family, including son-in-law Jared Kushner.

Increasingly, among the

## Duterte expects good relationship with Trump

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine president, who has lashed out at President Barack Obama for criticizing his deadly crackdown on drugs, said his ties with the United States are likely to improve under Donald Trump, but that he is also excited to meet Russian leader Vladimir Putin at an upcoming Asia-Pacific summit.

President Rodrigo Duterte made upbeat remarks about both the president-elect and Putin at a news conference late Tuesday in Manila.

Asked whether his ties with America can improve under Trump, Duterte replied: "I'm sure, we have no quarrel. I can always be a friend to anybody, especially to a ... president, chief executive of another country."

Duterte, who has been compared to Trump because of his irreverence toward rivals and critics, said he

trusted the U.S. president-elect's judgment and expected him to be fair in dealing with people living in the U.S. illegally.

Duterte, 71, has had a frosty relationship with Obama and the U.S. government since U.S. officials expressed reservations about his anti-drug war, which is thought to have left more than 4,000 people dead since July.

Duterte said he is looking forward to meeting with Putin at this month's Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru, and wants the two countries to have stronger ties.

Also on Tuesday, Portugal's state-run RTP television channel reported that Syrian President Bashar Assad identified Trump as a possible "natural ally," if he turned out to be "genuine" about his commitment to fighting terrorism in Syria.

shards are more mainline Republicans in the national security field. In an angry Twitter post Tuesday, Eliot Cohen, a leading voice of opposition to Trump during the campaign who had advised those interested in administration jobs to take them, abruptly changed his mind, saying the transition "will be ugly."

After responding to a transition insider seeking names of possible appointees, Cohen said, he received what he described as an "unhinged" email from the same person saying "YOU LOST" and accusing Trump critics of trying to infiltrate the administration's ranks.

"It became clear to me that they view jobs as lollipops, things you give out to good boys and girls, instead of the sense that actually what you're trying to do is recruit the best possible talent to fill the most important, demanding, lowest-paying executive jobs in the world,"

Cohen said.

Rogers's departure coincided with word from Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whose possible selection as secretary of state comforted more mainline Republicans, that he was unlikely to be chosen.

The two names most prominently mentioned for the diplomatic job — former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani and John Bolton, an undersecretary of state and one-year ambassador to the United Nations during the George W. Bush administration — are both Trump loyalists. But both could be problematic.

Giuliani, thought to be an early choice for attorney general, was said by a person close to the transition team to have personally appealed to Trump for the diplomatic job. He has virtually no diplomatic experience or knowledge of the State Department bureaucracy.

Bolton, a national security hawk who got his U.N. job through a recess appointment after the Senate refused to confirm him, was a leading advocate for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, contradicting Trump's campaign position.

The shortlist for defense secretary is said to include Sessions, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., and Flynn. Although Sessions serves on the Armed Services Committee, his main issue there has been immigration. Cotton is a Harvard Law graduate who just seven years ago was a first lieutenant in the Army.

Senate confirmation of Flynn, who has also voiced interest in serving as director of national intelligence, could be difficult, said the person close to the transition team. He was forced out as director of the Defense Intelligence Agency after two years over concerns about his leadership, and he has potentially problematic connections to foreign governments.

Flynn has admitted that he accepted money for appearing at a lavish gala with Putin in Moscow last year. He recently criticized the Obama administration's treatment of Turkey in an opinion column, without disclosing to the Trump campaign that his consulting firm has financial ties to that country, said the person close to the transition, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Another possible barrier for Flynn, who retired as a three-star general after leaving the DIA in 2014, is the statutory requirement that the defense secretary be at least seven years removed from active duty.

But Flynn's influence in the transition remains high, and several sources inside the transition or with ties to Christie said Flynn and Kushner had seized control of the national security posts in the new administration and engineered the purges in what they described as political score-settling.

Former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean Sr. said in an interview that Kushner was widely seen as unhappy with Christie's handling of the transition. There was "some shock" within Christie's circle at their abrupt dismissal.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Repaired carillon rings out at Athens concert

**WV** ATHENS — West Virginia's only traditional bronze-bell carillon rang out again in Athens after undergoing repairs.

The Bluefield Daily Telegraph reported the 48-bell assembly atop Marsh Hall at Concord University was played during a free concert Monday evening.

The carillon was recently renovated after the bell tower was struck by lightning in 2011, damaging its computer system.

The carillon was dedicated in 1997. The largest bell weighs 4,310 pounds and is roughly 59 inches in diameter.

## Man beats deputies with baton, dies in custody

**SC** LADSON — Authorities said a man who beat two South Carolina sheriff's deputies with their own baton died after he was taken into custody with the help of bystanders.

Several news outlets quoted Charleston County sheriff's Major Eric Watson as saying the incident began Sunday afternoon with a barefoot man blocking traffic as he walked on a highway near Ladson. Watson said the man fought with deputies, taking a baton from one of them and hitting them both in the head. He said the officers used a Taser, which didn't appear to work.

Watson said up to 10 people nearby then helped restrain the man, who died at the hospital.

## 7 inmates in solitary for more than decade

**NC** CHARLOTTE — State prison officials said seven inmates have been held for more than a decade in solitary confinement, a prac-

tice human rights advocates say amounts to torture.

The Charlotte Observer reported that a prison spokesman rejected the newspaper's request for those inmates' names, citing a court ruling.

The Observer identified two prisoners through other means. One is Jason Swain, who suffers from bipolar depression and has been in solitary confinement for more than 13 years. Another, Shawn Minnich, recently wrote to an Observer reporter to say he's been in solitary for 13 straight years. State prison officials said Minnich is an extreme escape risk with a history of assaulting staff members.

## Teen accidentally backs over, kills grandmother

**NY** NEW YORK — A Queens woman was killed over the weekend when her teenage grandson accidentally backed over her while preparing to take his relatives to church.

Police said Chandravti Lakhan, 75, died Sunday after she stepped into the path of her 17-year-old grandson's Toyota Sequoia as he was reversing to make it easier for her to get in.

Officers arrived on the scene to find Lakhan unconscious and suffering from body trauma. She was rushed from the family's Floral Park home to the Long Island Jewish Medical Center, where she was later pronounced dead.

## Man receives offensive letters citing Trump win

**MA** NATICK — Police in Massachusetts said a man reported receiving threatening letters that demanded he not bring black people to visit his neighborhood and referenced the election of Donald Trump.

Natick police Lt. Cara Rossi

confirmed the man reported receiving one letter on Nov. 10 and another on Nov. 11. Police are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime.

The Boston Globe reported one letter said, "We have reclaimed our country by selecting Trump and you are now messing up every thing."

## Man reports theft from car, leaves pot inside

**PA** TREXLERTOWN — Police said a Michigan man who reported money stolen from his car while it was being serviced at a Pennsylvania shop committed a crime of his own: marijuana possession.

Upper Macungie Township police said they found an ounce of marijuana and a pipe in Daniel Young's vehicle after they were called to investigate his theft report.

Young, 26, of Whitmore Lake, Mich., told police he thought someone stole \$20 from his car while it was being worked on last week. When police arrived to search the vehicle, they allegedly found the pot that Young forgot he left inside the car.

## Alamo mission church closed to public events

**TX** SAN ANTONIO — Alamo officials say ceremonies and other events no longer will be held in the mission church because of concerns with its deteriorating condition.

The 250-year-old church is the most recognizable part of the Alamo, which attracts more than 2.5 million visitors annually.

The San Antonio Express-News reported that the Alamo's chief operations officer, Ian Oldaker, acknowledged in a letter to groups that have requested to gather in the church that they'll find the decision disappointing. He asks them to support efforts

to "preserve and protect these historic treasures."

Groups can still hold gatherings elsewhere on the 4.2-acre state-owned Alamo grounds.

## Special rifle will mark state's 150th birthday

**NE** LINCOLN — A special \$3,195 rifle is being designed to mark Nebraska's 150th birthday.

The Lincoln Journal Star reported that 150 of the Henry Big Boy .45-caliber colt rifles will be sold.

The rifles will feature 24-karat gold and polished nickel engravings of images associated with Nebraska. The engraving will include a sod house, the state capitol, chimney rock and the state bird and tree.

All the rifles commissioned for Nebraska's Sesquicentennial will come with a display case.

## Fire destroys city hall under construction

**MN** LAKELAND — Fire destroyed a city hall under construction east of the Twin Cities, a building project that had divided public opinion.

Washington County sheriff's officials said firefighters were called to the construction site in Lakeland about 11:30 p.m. Sunday and found the partially-completed structure fully involved.

The new city hall had been debated in the community of about 1,800 for more than a year before the City Council decided to go ahead with construction.

The project was also an issue in the mayor's race. Mayor-elect Richard Glasgow wanted to preserve the historic city hall while his opponent, incumbent Amy Williams, favored the new construction.

From wire reports

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# Ohio St. joins top four in CFP rankings

Associated Press

Ohio State moved into second in the College Football Playoff rankings behind Alabama, with Michigan and Clemson still in the top four after losing for the first time this season.

Louisville was fifth and Washington dropped from fourth to sixth after its first loss.

"The margin of separation between teams two and six was very small," selection committee chairman Kirby Hocutt, who is also the athletic director at Texas Tech, said.

Clemson, Michigan and Washington — the Nos. 2, 3 and 4 teams in last week's rankings — all lost to unranked teams on Saturday. The Wolverines, who have three victories against teams in the selection committee's top 10, did not move after losing to Iowa. The Tigers ended up dropping two spots to No. 4 after losing to Pittsburgh.

Wisconsin was seventh and Penn State eighth, giving the Big Ten four teams in the top 10. Oklahoma was the highest rated Big 12 team at nine. Colorado was 10th.

**The Ohio State problem:** Michigan's loss to Iowa created a potential predicament for the selection committee with the Buckeyes. Because Ohio State lost at eighth-ranked Penn State, the Nittany Lions would win a tiebreaker for the Big Ten East if both finish 8-1 in the conference, shutting out the

Buckeyes from the conference championship game.

In two years of the playoff, all the participants have been conference champions and the committee is instructed to give some preference to league champs and head-to-head results when teams are similar.

There is little question that Ohio State would have the best overall résumé in the Big Ten, and maybe one of the best résumés in the country, if it wins out. But would not winning the conference keep the Buckeyes out the way it did last season?

"We do not look forward and anticipate what may happen in the future," Hocutt said.

A Penn State loss in the next couple of weeks would clear things up, but the Nittany Lions play Rutgers on Saturday and finish at home against Michigan State. They will be heavy favorites in both games.

A possible solution for the Buckeyes and the selection committee: If Oklahoma wins the Big 12 and Wisconsin wins the Big Ten, the Buckeyes would have a victory over both. Problem solved.

If Penn State wins the Big Ten and the other Power Five conferences have champions with one loss or less, we'll see just how much that conference championship is worth.

**The Louisville problem:** The Cardinals' hurdle could be even more difficult to clear than the Buckeyes'. Without a Clemson loss at Wake Forest on Saturday, Louisville can't

get to the ACC championship game because of its loss to the Tigers in early October.

Unlike the Buckeyes, who could have wins over Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Michigan, Louisville will put forth a résumé that would include one marquee victory: a demolition of Florida State in September that might have been the most impressive performance of any team this season.

And having the likely Heisman Trophy winner in quarterback Lamar Jackson doesn't provide Louisville any bonus points from the committee.

A possible path for the Cardinals: The Pac-12 picks itself apart and produces a champion with at least two losses and the Big 12 does the same. Even then Louisville might have to make a case against a Wisconsin team with a Big Ten championship.

**Group of five:** No. 20 Boise State moved ahead of No. 21 Western Michigan in the rankings for the first time.

It is becoming fairly apparent that if there are no upsets in the next couple of weeks in the Mountain West, a championship game between two 11-1 teams, Boise State and San Diego State, could produce the team that earns the Cotton Bowl bid that will go to the best champion out of the Group of Five no matter what Western Michigan does.

If the Broncos stay unbeaten they would have a better chance to edge past the Aztecs, but they are not going to bump the Broncos from Boise.

# Costa Rica routs US in World Cup qualifier

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica — The United States put itself in a deep hole in World Cup qualifying with one of its worst performances in decades.

Taking advantage of defensive mistakes, Costa Rica routed the U.S. 4-0 Tuesday night to drop the Americans to 0-2 for the first time in the final round of the North and Central American and Caribbean region.

"A very, very bitter moment for us. There's no doubt about it," U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann said. "We didn't imagine going into the hexagonal with two defeats right at the beginning."

Johan Venegas scored in the 43rd minute, Cristian Bolanos doubled the lead in the 69th and second-half substitute Joel Campbell beat beleaguered goalkeeper Brad Guzan in the 74th and 77th minutes in the worst margin of defeat for the U.S. in a qualifier since a 5-1 defeat at Mexico

in November 1980. It was the biggest losing shutout margin in a qualifier since the U.S. fell 6-0 at Mexico in 1957.

Combined with Friday's 2-1 loss to Mexico at Columbus, Ohio, the U.S. finds itself in a quick deficit in the hexagonal, which resumes in March.

"I'm very disappointed, obviously," U.S. Soccer Federation President Sunil Gulati said. "There's obviously some concern. Mexico qualified with 12 points. There's a lot of points left on the board — 24 to be exact."

Ticos fans sounded air horns at the end of a match that reignited questioning of Klinsmann's tactics. The U.S. fell to 0-9-1 in qualifiers at Costa Rica.

Klinsmann is still confident he's the right person to lead the team, but understands the scrutiny.

"When you lose two games and obviously two World Cup qualifiers right after each other, there will be a lot of comments," he said.

The Americans, who had had not lost a home qualifier in 15 years before last week, figure they will win their four remaining home games and pick up points on the road.

The top three teams qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, and the No. 4 finisher advances to a playoff against Asia's fifth-place nation.

"There's going to need to be some urgency," U.S. captain Michael Bradley said. "We're going to have to look collectively real hard in the mirror at ourselves and understand it's not been a good start but the reality of this hexagonal format is that nothing is lost yet, not even close. So anybody who thinks that is sorely mistaken."

Central defenders John Brooks and Omar Gonzalez, and right back Timmy Chandler had particularly poor games. Geoff Cameron, who usually starts alongside Brooks, missed both qualifiers this month after hyperextending a knee playing in a Premier League match on Oct. 22.



# Roberts, Francona voted top managers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Long before they were honored for guiding teams with depleted rosters to first-place finishes, Dave Roberts and Terry Francona were forever linked.

Fans in Boston and beyond will always remember that signature stolen base.

It was Roberts' daring swipe as a pinch-runner in the bottom of the ninth inning that helped the Red Sox — managed by Francona — rally from the brink of being swept in the 2004 AL Championship Series and sped them toward ending their 86-year World Series curse.

Francona went on to win two titles with Boston, and on Tuesday he earned his second AL Manager of the Year award with Cleveland.

But what if Roberts had been thrown out, could that have al-

tered a path that might someday land Francona in the Hall of Fame?

"The truth of it is, it probably would've been completely different," Francona said on a conference call.

The 44-year-old Roberts won the NL Manager of the Year honor in his first season as a skipper, leading the Los Angeles Dodgers to the NL West crown.

Members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America voted at the end of the regular season.

Roberts got 16 first-place votes to top Joe Maddon, whose Cubs won the World Series. Maddon, who earned the award last year, was picked first on eight ballots.

Washington's Dusty Baker was third and got four firsts. Terry Collins of the New York

Mets had the other two firsts.

Roberts was the lone NL manager chosen on every ballot. This marked the third straight year a first-time manager has been honored, following Texas' Jeff Banister and Washington's Matt Williams.

Francona drew 22 first-place votes and was the only manager chosen on all 30 ballots.

Banister was second and got four firsts. Baltimore's Buck Showalter, who was third, and Boston's John Farrell both drew a pair of firsts.

The Dodgers put 28 different players on the disabled list, more than any team in the last 30 years. An injury to ace Clayton Kershaw was among the reasons they employed a franchise record-tying 55 players, including 31 pitchers.

Among the Dodgers who managed to stay healthy: short-

stop Corey Seager, chosen NL Rookie of the Year on Monday.

Roberts said he was particularly proud of "the way our guys battled adversity all year."

The 57-year-old Francona guided the Indians to the AL Central title at 94-67. They overtook the defending champion Royals and high-spending Tigers despite losing starters Danny Salazar and Carlos Carrasco, All-Star outfielder Michael Brantley and catcher Yan Gomes to injuries and outfielders Marlon Byrd and Abraham Almonte to drug suspensions.

Cleveland came close to winning its first World Series title since 1948, but the Cubs rallied from a 3-1 deficit.

It's already been a busy off-season for Francona. The Indians picked up options for his contract in 2019 and 2020.

# Mason, No. 7 Kansas knock off top-ranked Duke

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kansas had already gone through a tough loss this season, falling in overtime to Indiana in Honolulu.

On Tuesday night the Jayhawks went from looking like easy winners to facing another excruciating loss. But a short jumper by Frank Mason III with 1.8 seconds to go gave the Jayhawks a 77-75 victory over top-ranked Duke in the State Farm Champions Classic at Madison Square Garden.

"The play was to iso (isolate) me, and my teammates did a good job of spacing the floor," Mason said. "It felt good when it left my hand."

A long three at the buzzer by Duke's Frank Jackson was off line.

The Jayhawks (1-1) beat a top-ranked team for the eighth time.

**No. 2 Kentucky 69, No. 13 Michigan State 48:** At New York, freshman Malik Monk scored 23 points on 7-for-11 shooting from three-point

range, and Isaiah Briscoe added 21 to lead the Wildcats to a victory over the Spartans in the State Farm Champions Classic.

Kentucky (3-0) averaged 90 points in its first two games but this time it was defense that did it as Michigan State (0-2) shot 32.8 percent from the field (20-for-61), including 5-for-26 (19.2 percent) from beyond the arc.

**Baylor 66, No. 4 Oregon 49:** Johnathan Motley scored 17 points in his season debut and the host Bears got a big, early season victory over a Ducks team playing without its preseason All-American.

Oregon (1-1) is missing Dillon Brooks, its 6-foot-7 junior forward who was its leading scorer last season but is still recovering from foot surgery during the offseason.

**No. 5 North Carolina 93, Long Beach State 67:** Joel Berry II scored 23 points and the host Tar Heels shot 53 percent to the 49ers.

Kennedy Meeks added 15 points for North Carolina (3-0),

which scored the game's first 14 points and led by 23 points by halftime. That dominating start was enough to erase any doubt about the outcome, though Hall of Fame coach Roy Williams was aggravated enough at one sloppy second-half stretch that he angrily punched a clipboard to the court during a timeout.

**No. 8 Virginia 72, St. Francis Brooklyn 32:** Memphis transfer Austin Nichols scored 11 points in his debut with his new team and the host Cavaliers beat the Terriers.

Virginia (2-0) held St. Francis of Brooklyn scoreless for a stretch of more than 10 minutes in the first half and scored 20 consecutive points to open a 35-11 lead.

**No. 22 Creighton 79, No. 9 Wisconsin 67:** At Omaha, Neb., Khyri Thomas scored 15 of his 18 points in the second half, breaking open a close game with a three-point play and three-pointer on consecutive possessions, and the Bluejays defeated the Badgers.

Maurice Watson Jr. had 17

points and 10 assists and Marcus Foster added 15 points for the Bluejays (2-0).

**No. 10 Arizona 78, Cal State Bakersfield 66:** Freshman Lauri Markkanen scored 26 points and the host Wildcats held off a furious second-half rally by the Roadrunners.

Jaylin Airington scored 31 for Cal State Bakersfield (1-1) and led a 17-0 run that cut Arizona's lead to four with 9:04 to play. But Markkanen, a 7-footer from Finland, sank a three-pointer, converted a three-point play and made a short jumper to lead the Wildcats out of trouble.

**No. 18 Syracuse 90, Holy Cross 46:** Andrew White scored 19 points, Tyler Lydon had 17, and the host Orange went on a 14-0 run in the first half to take control and overpower the Crusaders.

Syracuse (2-0) shot 61 percent from the field and was 13-for-23 on three-pointers. White, a fifth-year transfer from Nebraska, went 5-for-12 from beyond the arc.

# Cavs match best start in team history

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The Cavaliers are far more focused on how they'll finish. They are not complaining about their start, though.

With Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson sitting courtside, LeBron James came up one rebound shy of a triple-double and Kyrie Irving scored 24 points to lead Cleveland to a 121-117 win over the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday night, making the Cavs 9-1 to match their best start after 10 games.

James had 28 points and 14 assists as the Cavs improved to 2-0 this season against the Raptors, the team they beat in last season's Eastern Conference finals and the one they could meet there again in 2017.

The Cavs last went 9-1 in 1976-77.

"I don't really pay attention

to the records," said James. "But I do pay attention to the teams we're playing, and what they bring to the table."

The Raptors bring a lot, and are one of the only teams in the East capable of going to toe-to-toe with the defending NBA champions. However, Toronto came up short against Cleveland just as it did in last year's playoffs.

"I'm not encouraged by any loss," said Raptors guard Kyle Lowry, who finished with 28 points and nine assists. "We want to win every single game. Every time we touch the floor we want to win games."

Channing Frye's three-pointer from the top of the key with 59 seconds left put the Cavs up by one. Cleveland then buckled down on defense, holding the Raptors scoreless until letting Lowry make a layup with 2.8 seconds left.

Kevin Love added 19 points and 13 rebounds for the Cavs.

"We're one of the teams at the top that's going to get every team's best shot," Love said. "That's a team we have history with. They're well-coached. They know how to play and you saw them fight back tonight. That's the kind of tension in playing those type of teams early that's going to be good for us. We've had certain lapses in our first 10 games that we need to clean up. But we're getting teams' best shots home or away and we'll be a better team for it."

**Hawks 93, Heat 90:** Dennis Schroder scored 18 points, Paul Millsap and Tim Hardaway Jr. each scored 15 and visiting Atlanta pushed its winning streak to five games.

**Hornets 115, Timberwolves 108:** Kemba Walker scored 30 points and Charlotte blitzed

host Minnesota in the third quarter.

**Bulls 113, Trail Blazers 88:** Jimmy Butler had 27 points and 12 rebounds, and Chicago opened a six-game road trip with a victory over Portland.

Dwyane Wade had 19 points for Chicago, which extended its modest winning streak to three games. Former Blazers center Robin Lopez added 13 points and 11 rebounds.

**Lakers 125, Nets 118:** D'Angelo Russell scored 32 points and Julius Randle added 17 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists for his second career triple-double in surprising Los Angeles' victory over visiting Brooklyn.

Timofey Mozgov had 20 points and six rebounds for the Lakers, who maintained a steady lead down the stretch of their fourth win in five games at Staples Center this season.

# Hellebuyck leads Jets in shutout of Blackhawks

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Connor Hellebuyck finally made the statement he was looking for all season.

Hellebuyck made 27 saves for his first shutout of the season, rookie Patrik Laine scored his NHL-leading 12th goal and the Winnipeg Jets beat the division-leading Chicago Blackhawks 4-0 on Tuesday night.

"I've been chasing it for a while and now I got the monkey off my back," Hellebuyck said.

The second-year player got his third NHL shutout in a pivotal win for the second-place Jets.

"The statement," he said, "was that we've figured it out and now we know how to play and now we know we can play it."

Rookie defenseman Josh Morrissey scored his first career goal, while forwards Chris Thorburn and Nic Petan got their first scores of the season for the Jets.

Nikolaj Ehlers had two as-

sists, helping Winnipeg stretch its points streak to five games.

Chicago goalie Corey Crawford was replaced by Scott Darling after letting in four goals on 22 shots. Darling made two saves.

It was the first of five games between the Central Division foes this season.

The Blackhawks had points in each of their previous 11 games. It was their first game in a season-high seven-game road trip.

Morrissey beat Crawford at 6:26 of the first period when his one-timer from the high slot went through the goalie's legs.

"You dream of that one in the driveway, basement and the outdoor rink," Morrissey said. "To finally be able to get that and see it go in was something special."

It was only the 11th even-strength goal Crawford had allowed this season.

**Lightning 4, Red Wings 3:** Nikita Kucherov scored his second goal of the game with

1:10 left to give visiting Tampa Bay a win over Detroit.

**Rangers 7, Canucks 2:** Kevin Hayes and J.T. Miller scored two goals each, Henrik Lundqvist made 36 saves and visiting New York beat Vancouver.

**Maple Leafs 6, Predators 2:** James van Riemsdyk scored three goals and Tyler Bozak had four assists, helping host Toronto beat Nashville.

**Ducks 4, Oilers 1:** John Gibson made 33 saves, Cam Fowler and Ryan Kesler had goals and host Anaheim gave Edmonton its fourth straight loss.

**Panthers 4, Canadiens 3 (OT):** Aaron Ekblad broke his stick on an awkward slap shot that sneaked by goalie Carey Price in overtime, helping visiting Florida beat NHL-leading Montreal.

**Senators 3, Flyers 2 (SO):** Erik Karlsson scored the only goal of the shootout to lift visiting Ottawa over Philadelphia.

**Devils 2, Stars 1 (OT):** Adam Henrique scored 44 sec-

onds into overtime to give visiting New Jersey a victory over Dallas.

**Blues 4, Sabres 1:** Jaden Schwartz and Kyle Brodziak scored early in the third period to lead host St. Louis over Buffalo.

**Hurricanes 1, Sharks 0:** Joakim Nordstrom scored with 9:12 left, Cam Ward made 22 saves in his first shutout in over a year and host Carolina beat San Jose.

**Blue Jackets 2, Capitals 1 (OT):** Cam Atkinson scored 37 seconds into overtime as host Columbus rallied to beat Washington.

**Avalanche 4, Kings 1:** Semyon Varlamov had 32 saves, Patrick Wiercioch and Rene Bourque scored 22 seconds apart and host Colorado beat Los Angeles.

**Flames 1, Wild 0:** Johnny Gaudreau's goal early in the first period held up and Chad Johnson stopped 27 Minnesota shots for visiting Calgary's first shutout of the season.