

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, November 17, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## AFRICOM tracks Islamic State into Libya

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Africa Command is tracking Islamic State fighters who have fled the battle in the coastal Libyan city of Sirte, a possible prelude to more expansive U.S. airstrikes in the country, the top U.S. general for Africa said.

“We have to continue to develop those targets and have certainty of who we are seeing and what the activities are,” AFRICOM’s Gen. Thomas Waldhauser said in an interview with Stars and Stripes late Wednesday.

“We just need to have that level of certainty if we decide to strike outside the limits of

Sirte.”

The move to neutralize Islamic State fighters in other parts of Libya comes amid concerns the group could regroup and threaten the North African nation’s fragile government or infiltrate into neighboring states, Waldhauser said.

More than three months into Operation Odyssey Lightning — the U.S. aerial campaign targeting Islamic State fighters in Sirte — Libyan government forces have backed the insurgents into a corner.

It was estimated last summer that about 4,000 Islamic State fighters were operating in Libya and that the majority had taken root in Sirte, a city the insurgents came to dominate.

Now, about 200 are holed up in a small number of buildings, restricted to a couple of city blocks, Waldhauser said.

It is urban warfare, with Libyan troops clearing out the last remnants of militants, one building at a time.

“Those ISIL fighters who are left are there for one specific reason,” said Waldhauser, using an alternative name for the Islamic State group. “They are going to die there, but they are going to cause as many casualties as they can prior to that happening.”

The remaining fighters have established a network of tunnels, roadside bombs and booby traps, which has complicated efforts to clear them out.

The Islamic State group’s move into Libya gained momentum during the past year as pressure mounted on the organization in its main strongholds in Iraq and Syria. Offensives are now underway in Raqqa, the Islamic State’s de facto capital in Syria, and in Mosul, the last major Iraqi city still under Islamic State control.

Libya has emerged as a focal point for AFRICOM’s efforts on the continent, with nearly 400 airstrikes conducted since operations began in August.

Operation Odyssey Lightning is AFRICOM’s second venture into Libya, where in 2011 the command led the first wave of airstrikes against Moammar Gadhafi’s regime.

## Navy secretary defends changes to rating system

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — The secretary of the Navy assured sailors at an all-hands call here Wednesday that changes in the Navy’s ratings will benefit their lives and careers.

“I understand that there’s a lot of churn about it,” Ray Mabus told several hundred gathered sailors. “I also understand that a lot of the churn is coming from the alumni association, the retired community.”

Mabus ribbed the traditional naysayers by joking that the Navy was “pretty perfect” when he got out in 1972, and “then they went and messed it up.”

“I think if you give the feedback in terms of how we do it, not whether we do it, it’s going to be a way to a more flexible system,” he said. “And when we hear that it’s going against Navy tradition — not so much, not so much. We change rating struc-

tures all the time.”

A petition opposing the proposed rating changes has garnered more than 100,000 signatures. The White House issued a statement Wednesday supporting the new system for the same reasons that Mabus outlined.

The changes would replace traditional Navy ratings such as boatswain’s mate and gunner’s mate with military occupational specialties common to other services.

Mabus’ stop in Hawaii is part of what could be dubbed his legacy tour, which will include New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, as he prepares to retire in January.

“I’m winding down,” he said. “I’ll leave the day the president leaves.” Donald Trump assumes the presidency from Barack Obama on Jan. 20.

The idea of changing the ratings came from the master chief petty officer of the Navy, not from Mabus or the chief of

naval operations, he said. “But we support it.”

Over the course of reviewing the rating system, it was determined to be too rigid, in some cases preventing promotions or getting the next duty station that sailors needed or wanted, Mabus said.

Using the example of aircraft technicians, he explained the benefits of the rating change.

“We have six different ratings for aircraft technician,” he said. “Every one of them is pretty narrow. You’re still going to have that one narrow thing, but while you’re doing that, you can qualify on one or two or all the other five. So if you can’t promote in your narrow specialty, maybe you can promote in one of the others. A lot of times because these specialties are so narrow, you have no next duty station or there’s only one choice. This way, if you can’t get to the next duty station that you want on your primary specialty, maybe you can get it in one of

the others.”

The rating changes are also expected to help sailors ease back into the civilian workforce.

For example, an aircraft mechanic coming out of the Navy today can’t easily get a job at civilian airlines because they need to “start over,” Mabus said.

“We’re going to line up the training and certification with what the [Federal Aviation Administration] has,” he said.

But many particulars about the rating change, which will take place over two years, have yet to be worked out, Mabus said.

One sailor, reminding Mabus of the Navy adage, “Choose your rate, choose your fate,” asked whether sailors would have a chance to “cross rate” under the new scheme.

“It ought to be a lot more,” Mabus said. “It should open up in terms of cross ratings. That’s one of the reasons it was done.”

# US disputes Jordan's claim of shooting cause

Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — The U.S. Embassy in Jordan on Thursday disputed Amman's claim that U.S. trainers sparked a deadly shooting incident at a Jordanian military base this month by disobeying orders from Jordanian soldiers. The shooting killed three Americans.

The three slain Americans were assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) from Fort Campbell, Ky. They were

identified as Staff Sgt. Matthew C. Lewellen, 27, of Lawrence, Kan., Staff Sgt. Kevin J. McEnroe, 30, of Tucson, Ariz., and Staff Sgt. James F. Moriarty, 27, of Kerrville, Texas.

They died after the convoy they were in came under fire as it entered the al-Jafr air base in southern Jordan on Nov. 4. The Americans were in Jordan on a training mission.

Embassy spokesman Eric Barbee told The Associated Press on Thursday that U.S. in-

vestigators are considering all possible motives and "have not yet ruled out terrorism."

After the shooting, Jordan's state news agency Petra reported that the slain American military trainers had disobeyed direct orders from Jordanian troops, which led to a deadly exchange of small-arms fire.

Barbee said there's "absolutely no credible evidence" for the claim. Jordan later issued a different statement removing the claim.

A fourth American soldier was wounded in the incident, as well as the Jordanian soldier who opened fire, and has not yet been identified.

Brett McGurk, the White House envoy to the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State group, said Jordan's King Abdullah II expressed condolences over the deaths of the Americans. McGurk also said an investigation is ongoing and praised Jordan's role in the fight against the Islamic State group.

## UK: Chagos islanders evicted for US base may not return home

Associated Press

LONDON — Indian Ocean islanders who were forced from their homes decades ago to make way for a U.S. military base will not be allowed to return, the British government has announced.

Britain evicted about 2,000 people from the tropical Chagos archipelago, a British colony, in the 1960s and 1970s so the U.S. military could build an air base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the islands.

Chagossians have fought in British courts for years to return to the other islands. In June, the Supreme Court rejected their most recent appeal.

The British government announced Wednesday that it will continue to lease Diego Garcia to the U.S. until 2036.

It said it has decided against letting the islanders return "on the grounds of feasibility, defense and security interests, and cost to the British taxpayer."

Foreign Office Minister Joyce Anelay said it would be impractical to set up "a small, remote community on low-lying islands."

Conservative lawmaker Andrew Rosindell said Thursday that the decision had caused "shock, anger and dismay" among islanders.

"These are British subjects, and they are entitled to the same rights and freedoms and self-determination that all British citizens should have," Rosindell told lawmakers in the House of Commons.

The government promised \$50 million in compensation to the displaced islanders.

The eviction of the islanders from their home halfway between Africa and Southeast Asia has long been controversial for Britain.

U.K. authorities have expressed regret for the treatment of the islanders, but successive governments have blocked their attempts to return.

The key obstacle is the strategically important Diego Garcia base, which has supported U.S. military operations from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2008, the U.S. acknowledged it also had been used for clandestine rendition flights of terrorist suspects.

## VA worker resigns, blames retaliation

Associated Press

DENVER — A Department of Veterans Affairs employee who told Congress the agency was using unauthorized wait lists for mental health care in Colorado has resigned, saying he was subjected to retaliation for speaking out.

Brian Smothers told The Associated Press on Wednesday the VA had opened two separate inquiries into his actions and tried to get him to sign a statement saying he had broken VA rules.

Smothers also said the VA reassigned him to an office with no computer access, no significant duties and no social contact.

He called the VA's actions punitive and his working conditions intolerable. He said he resigned as of Tuesday.

VA officials had no immediate comment on Smothers' claim but said the agency does not tolerate retaliation. They said previously they take any allegation about unauthorized wait lists seriously and were cooperating with an inquiry.

Smothers alleges that VA facilities in Denver and suburban Golden used wait lists for mental health services from 2012 until last September. He said the lists hid how long it takes

for veterans to get treatment and made the demand for mental health care appear lower than it really was.

Smothers estimated the lists contained 3,500 entries but did not know how many individual veterans were on them because some names appeared multiple times.

Smothers was a peer support specialist on the VA's post-traumatic stress disorder clinical support team in Denver.

Smothers went to Republican Sens. Ron Johnson, of Wisconsin, and Cory Gardner, of Colorado, in September, saying he had uncovered the lists on spreadsheets in the VA computer system. He also said a veteran had taken his own life while waiting for PTSD treatment at a Colorado Springs VA clinic.

Smothers told the AP he had emailed copies of the spreadsheets to himself so he could provide them as evidence.

Smothers said that after he contacted the senators, the VA investigated whether his actions had violated agency rules and concluded they had not. He said the VA opened a second inquiry after discovering he had offered the lists on Amazon. That inquiry was still underway when he resigned, he said.

## Abe looks to charm Trump

*Bloomberg News*

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is set to turn on the charm when he becomes the first world leader to meet U.S. President-elect Donald Trump since the election.

Before Thursday's meeting, Abe lauded the real estate mogul's "extraordinary talents" in a congratulatory message, and canceled a speaking engagement in Peru to stop off in New York to hold talks with the president-elect. Abe said he'll seek to work "hand-in-hand" with the next commander-in-chief, part of his efforts to deter Trump from pursuing the trade and security policies he espoused in his election campaign.

Trump has vowed to drop a Pacific trade deal and has accused Japan of manipulating its currency. The president-elect also has stirred unease in Tokyo by threatening to pull U.S. troops out of the country unless it pays more for their upkeep, and has suggested Japan might have to develop its own nuclear weapons.

Abe met with then-rival Hillary Clinton during a September trip to New York, but not with Trump. But their relationship appeared to warm during their first phone call last week.

Part of Abe's goal in meeting with Trump will be to reassure his own electorate.

Two-thirds of respondents to a poll published by Fuji News Network on Monday said Trump's election wouldn't be good for U.S.-Japan relations, compared with about 17 percent who took the opposite stance. A separate poll by the Yomiuri newspaper on Tuesday found 58 percent saw Trump as bad for the economy — the same proportion that views him as bad for national security.

"The U.S.-Japan alliance is the foundation of our security and our economy, so I want to have candid talks and build a relationship of trust," Abe told parliament Monday.

# Expert: Trump unlikely to pull US forces from overseas bases

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — A U.S. political-financial expert predicted Thursday that President-elect Donald Trump won't follow through on his campaign threat to withdraw American forces from overseas bases and could negotiate a bilateral trade pact with Japan to partially replace the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, which he opposes.

Nomi Prins, author of "All the President's Bankers: The Hidden Alliances that Drive American Power," told the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan that she doesn't foresee changes to America's overseas military presence.

Trump said during the election campaign that he would consider withdrawing U.S. forces from overseas bases if allies failed to contribute more toward the costs of keeping them there. That has raised worries in Japan and South Korea, where tens of thousands of U.S. troops are stationed at dozens of bases.

Prins compared Trump's

threat to his vow to build a border wall with Mexico. The president-elect recently told CBS' "60 Minutes" that parts of the wall actually could be a fence.

Trump's plan to increase the military budget and the desire of other Washington power players to retain an overseas presence mean U.S. forces won't be removed from Japan, Prins said.

"Taking real troops out of real places where there have been alliances since [World War II] is something that doesn't really fly with Washington," she said. "My guess is that it is not really going to happen."

U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Jerry Martinez told reporters at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni last week that the U.S.-Japan alliance would remain strong.

Japan "will see absolutely no degradation in the alliance and the friendship" between the two countries, he said, according to Kyodo News.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was due to meet Trump on Thursday in New

York, seeking reassurance about the U.S.-Japan alliance and trying to sway his views on the TPP.

Abe and Trump talked by telephone last week and confirmed the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance and their commitment for cooperation, The Associated Press reported.

Trump also spoke by phone with South Korean President Park Geun-hye, telling her the U.S. would be "steadfast and strong" in defending against North Korea, according to the Yonhap news agency.

"We are with you all the way and we will not waver," he said, according to Park's office. "We will all be safe together."

On trade, Prins said Trump might be open to a bilateral deal between Japan and the U.S., but that it would cost him too much political capital to reverse course on the TPP, which aims to link a dozen Pacific nations in a massive free-trade zone. The AP reported Malaysia has asked Abe to push Trump for support of the TPP.

## Trump looms over Asia-Pacific summit

*Associated Press*

LIMA, Peru — Donald Trump will be on the minds of world leaders as they gather for an Asia-Pacific trade summit.

The president-elect has made it clear that he is hostile to the kind of free trade deals that tend to be the focus of the annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, taking place this year in Peru's capital. He's also singled out group members China and Mexico in a populist campaign standing up for displaced American workers.

That likely has changed the tone and the agenda of a meeting that was expected to be part of a valedictory tour for President Barack Obama. It will be

his last international summit before he leaves office Jan. 20. Those in attendance are to include Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Instead of promoting a now-all-but-dead trade deal known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, economic experts expect Obama will field uncomfortable questions about Trump's pledges to overhaul U.S. trade policy, to crack down on illegal immigration from Mexico and to withdraw from a global agreement to fight climate change.

"World leaders, like everyone else, are hoping he will be more moderate in office than he was on the campaign trail,"

said Fred Bergsten, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. "But they are going to be worried."

APEC's 21 member nations constitute more than a third of the world's population and half of global trade. It was established three decades ago to accelerate economic growth by removing trade barriers and helping integrate global supply chains.

The group's annual summits also deal with current international challenges such as security following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and in Paris last year or the global economic crisis of 2008. This year, the big issue is Trump.

## Prosecutor: Suspect in killings like 'Jaws' shark

Associated Press

SANTA ANA, Calif. — A convicted sex offender charged with raping and killing four Southern California women while he wore an electronic monitor was a predator like the shark in the movie "Jaws," the prosecution said.

In his opening statement during the trial's first day Wednesday, Orange County Deputy District Attorney Larry Yellin said GPS and mobile phone data was used to track down Steven Dean Gordon and another man, comparing it to the hunt for the killer shark.

"'Jaws' is about a predator," Larry Yellin told jurors. "This case is about two. You are about to see the hunt."

Gordon, 47, who is acting as his own attorney, declined to make an opening statement.

He and another sex offender, Franc Cano, 30, were wearing GPS tracking devices for prior offenses when they worked to-

gether to randomly target the women in 2013 and 2014, authorities said.

One body was found at a recycling plant while the remains of three other women haven't been found.

Gordon and Cano have pleaded not guilty to rape and murder with special circumstances. Cano's separate trial hasn't started. Both could face the death penalty if convicted.

Gordon confessed during grand jury proceedings, giving graphic details about picking up the women in his car with another registered sex offender, raping them behind an Anaheim paint and body shop where the men camped, and killing them, authorities said.

But the confession won't be allowed at trial. The judge excluded it because Gordon told police he didn't want to talk before launching into the elaborate account of the killings, Yellin has said.

## Obama advises Trump to stand up to Russia

Associated Press

BERLIN — Offering some pointed foreign policy advice to his successor, President Barack Obama expressed hope Thursday that President-elect Donald Trump would stand up to Russia when it deviates from U.S. "values and international norms."

Obama, in a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during his final presidential visit to Germany, said that while he does not expect Trump to "follow exactly our blueprint or our approach," he is hopeful that Trump will pursue constructive policies that defend democratic values and the rule of law.

He said Trump shouldn't "simply take a realpolitik approach and suggest that if we just cut some deals with Russia, even if it hurts people, or even if

it violates international norms, or even if it leaves smaller countries vulnerable or creates long-term problems in regions like Syria, that we just do whatever's convenient at the time."

Obama began his presidency with a goal to "reset" ties with Russia, but they eventually plunged to the lowest point since the Cold War over conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

Trump has spoken favorably of Russian President Vladimir Putin. But he has outlined few specifics as to how he would go about recalibrating ties with the country.

Merkel, for her part, said she was approaching the incoming Trump administration with "an open mind" and was encouraged that the presidential process in the U.S. was "working smoothly" so far.

## Clinton to backers: 'Never, ever give up'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hillary Clinton reflected on her devastating defeat on Wednesday evening, acknowledging the difficulty of her loss for her supporters and urging them to persevere through the Donald Trump era.

In remarks that were equal parts pep talk and funeral dirge, Clinton encouraged her backers to "never, ever give up."

"I know this isn't easy. I know that over the past week a lot of people have asked themselves whether America is the country we thought it was," Clinton said at the annual gala of the Children's Defense Fund, the child advocacy organization where she started her legal career. "But please listen to me when I say this: America is worth it."

She added, "It's up to each and every one of us to keep working to make America better and stronger and fairer."

Clinton never cited the president-elect by name in her remarks, making only an oblique reference to the contro-

versial policies that fueled his rise to the White House.

Instead, she focused on the future, asking her backers to "stay engaged on every level."

"We need you. America needs your energy," she said.

Clinton's surprising loss threw her party into a period of intense soul-searching, with an ascendant liberal wing blaming Clinton's campaign for failing to embrace a more populist economic message. In private calls with donors and Democratic officials, Clinton has largely attributed her defeat to the decision by the FBI to re-examine her use of a private server as secretary of state.

In her remarks, Clinton offered no accounting for any failures she may have made during her presidential campaign, though she admitted that the past week hasn't been easy.

"There have been a few times this past week when all I wanted to do was just to curl up with a good book or our dogs and never leave the house again," she ruefully admitted.

## Weather stalls Mosul effort but deadly attacks continue

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — Poor weather and cloudy skies stalled an advance by Iraqi special forces into the northern city of Mosul, although they still faced deadly attacks by Islamic State militants that killed seven civilians and two soldiers.

The civilians were killed and 35 others were wounded when militants fired mortar rounds on government-controlled areas of eastern Mosul, said army medic Bashir Jabar, who is in charge of a field clinic run by the special forces.

One soldier was killed and three were wounded when a car packed with explosives

sped from its hiding spot in a school complex in the eastern Tahrir neighborhood, rammed Iraqi troops' position and exploded in a ball of fire, according to two officers who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters.

Another soldier was shot and killed by a sniper in the Bakir neighborhood.

Clouds over Iraq's second-largest city obscured the visibility of drones and warplanes, but the troops were using the pause to secure areas they had seized, to set up checkpoints and to sweep for explosives, said Brig. Gen. Haider Fadhil.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### \$60M plan proposed to elevate structures

**RI** PROVIDENCE — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed a nearly \$60 million plan to lift up 341 private structures along four Rhode Island coastal towns in an attempt to reduce potential damage from flooding caused by storm surges.

The Providence Journal reported the plan would cover homes and some businesses around barrier beaches and salt ponds along 28 miles of shoreline in Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown and Narragansett.

The plan is the result of a federally funded study launched in the wake of Superstorm Sandy.

### Police say woman, 61, falsely claimed attack

**PA** LEBANON — Police said a 61-year-old Pennsylvania woman who claimed she was attacked and robbed by a man had actually just fallen over.

Lebanon police said they planned to charge the woman with making a false report about the incident. The Associated Press isn't reporting the woman's name because court records show police have yet to file the false report charge.

Police said the woman claimed a man came up from behind her and hit her in the leg with a small souvenir-sized baseball bat. She said that caused her to turn around quickly and fall over, enabling the man to take the money she kept on her walker.

### Arcade owner sues to stop police action

**HI** HILO — A Hilo arcade owner whose business has twice been the subject of

police gambling raids has filed a lawsuit in hopes of stopping future search and seizures.

The Hawaii Tribune-Herald reported that Triple 7 Amusement owner Lance Yamada filed a lawsuit against Hawaii Police Chief Harry Kubojiri and prosecuting attorney Mitch Roth seeking a court order stopping the seizure of computers used to operate games at the arcade.

Police executed search warrants in July 2012 and March of this year, seizing what was described as suspected illegal gambling machines. Yamada was not charged as a result of either raid.

### Girl, 11, paid \$6,500 for speech, workshop

**NY** POUGHKEEPSIE — A New York school district paid an 11-year-old child advocate \$6,500 plus expenses for serving as keynote speaker for staff and hosting a student workshop last week.

The Poughkeepsie Journal reported the Poughkeepsie City School District hired Marley Dias, of West Orange, N.J., to speak during the superintendent's conference day.

The board voted 3-1 to retroactively approve Marley's consultant agreement at its Nov. 9 meeting.

Marley created the popular #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign to draw attention to the lack of racial diversity in children's literature. She gave an hourlong speech to staff before leading a workshop for 50 students.

### State driver's licenses are getting an overhaul

**NM** SANTA FE — New Mexico driver's licenses are getting an overhaul to comply with tougher federal identification requirements and so the state can continue grant-

ing driving privileges to people who are in the country illegally.

The state's Motor Vehicle Division on Monday began issuing two kinds of identification for drivers and other residents.

One is a driver's license that meets new federal security rules aimed at better safeguarding commercial airlines and federal facilities such as military bases. The other is a driving authorization card geared toward immigrants unable to provide paperwork proving they are the U.S. legally.

Existing driver's licenses will continue to be valid for boarding flights and accessing certain federal facilities until October 2020.

### Officials: 10 sickened by medical supplies

**NJ** ATLANTIC CITY — State health officials said at least 10 people in Atlantic County and three in Ocean County have contracted a bacterial infection stemming from the use of contaminated medical supplies.

The Press of Atlantic City reported New Jersey has seen 52 cases of B. cepacia infection directly linked to a multistate outbreak currently under investigation by state and federal health officials.

The New Jersey Department of Health issued warnings to long-term health care facilities last month regarding possible contamination from saline flush syringes made by Texas-based supplier Nurse Assist.

### Plain-language forms adopted for divorces

**TN** NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Supreme Court has adopted plain-language forms and instructions that couples with children can use for uncontested divorces.

The Administrative Office of

the Courts says the forms are intended to simplify divorce proceedings for people with children. The forms are for use by people who agree on child support and other issues of the divorce, don't own any real estate and don't have retirement accounts.

The new forms go into effect Jan. 1 and will be available at no cost at [TNCourts.gov](http://TNCourts.gov) and [TNJusticeForAll.com](http://TNJusticeForAll.com).

### Ninja burglar sought in katana sword theft

**AK** ANCHORAGE — A katana sword is missing from an Alaska card shop after a burglar in a ninja outfit broke in.

KTVA-TV reported that security cameras filmed the costumed suspect entering the Anchorage business sometime after it closed Nov. 11 and leaving with what looked to be the Japanese-style, curved sword.

### Inmate's wife sues to keep jail video private

**SC** GREENWOOD — The wife of an inmate who died in custody at the Greenwood County jail has sued the local newspaper, sheriff and coroner to prevent officials from releasing video footage of the last hour of his life.

The Index-Journal of Greenwood requested the video under the Freedom of Information Act shortly after Demetric Cowan died in custody on March 13.

The lawsuit says releasing the video would be an invasion of privacy because it would show Cowan's last moments and reveal private medical information.

Authorities said Cowan died from a drug overdose about six hours after he was arrested on charges of drug possession and resisting arrest.

From wire reports

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# Scherzer, Porcello win Cy Young awards

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Max Scherzer celebrated aboard a boat off the British Virgin Islands, doused by college pals on a floating party.

Rick Porcello enjoyed the moment at his parents' home in New Jersey, surrounded by family, friends and a few bottles of wine.

As for Justin Verlander, well, fuming supermodel Kate Upton brought the heat for her fiancé.

Rotation mates for five seasons in Detroit, the three right-handers topped the Cy Young Award talk Wednesday: Scherzer easily won the NL prize, Porcello edged out Verlander for the AL honor.

"That's just the weird thing about these," said Scherzer, who ruled the majors with 284 strikeouts and topped the NL with 20 wins for Washington. "It's the voting."

Porcello led baseball with 22 wins for Boston, and had a 3.15 ERA.

Porcello won despite getting just eight of the 30 first-place votes from members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America — this was the first time the AL Cy winner didn't get the most firsts.

Verlander went 16-9 with a 2.40 ERA while leading the AL in strikeouts and other categories. He got 14 first-place votes, but didn't draw as much support across the board — he was left off two ballots, too.

Overall, Porcello won 137-132 in the sec-

ond-closest vote since 1970 (Verlander lost by four points to David Price in 2012).

Voters list their five picks in order. A first-place vote is worth seven points, four for second, three for third, two for fourth and one for fifth. Verlander needed to pick up five more points to match Porcello.

Upton fired off three tweets, one of them rather saucy, telling Porcello "you didn't win."

Asked whether he was bothered by the brouhaha, Porcello simply said, "No, I honestly don't care."

"I'm not the one who made the decision," he said on a conference call.

Porcello got a \$100,000 bonus for winning the Cy. Verlander, who won the 2011 award, would've gotten \$500,000 for this win.

Porcello bounced back from going 9-15 in his first season with the Red Sox, finishing 22-4 for the AL East champs.

He shared this last win of 2016 with those who "never wavered" in their support, admitting, "It was hard not to start bawling and crying."

Cleveland's Corey Kluber was third and got three first-place votes. Baltimore reliever Zach Britton, who went 47 for 47 on save chances with a 0.54 ERA, had five first-place votes and was fourth.

Scherzer breezed, drawing 25 first-place votes to beat out Chicago Cubs teammates Jon Lester and Kyle Hendricks.

Scherzer became the sixth pitcher to earn the Cy Young in both leagues. After earning the AL honor in 2013 with the Tigers, Scherzer joined Roger Clemens, Randy Johnson, Pedro Martinez, Gaylord Perry and Roy Halladay as winners in both leagues.

This award, Scherzer said, meant even more than the first one.

"It just verifies everything I try to achieve," he said.

Scherzer posted a record-tying 20-strikeout performance for the NL East champion Nationals, a year after he threw two no-hitters in his first season with Washington.

"I want to find a way to be better," he said.

Scherzer is the first pitcher from a Washington franchise to win a Cy Young. The award was first presented in 1956.

Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw got three first-place votes and finished fifth. Jose Fernandez, the Miami star killed in a boating accident in September, was seventh.

The final major postseason awards will be presented Thursday when the MVP honors are announced.

Cubs slugger Kris Bryant, Washington's Daniel Murphy and newly presented Rookie of the Year Corey Seager of the Dodgers are up for the NL award. Mike Trout of the Angels, Mookie Betts of the Red Sox and Jose Altuve of the Astros are the AL contestants.

## Jackson's job secure with winless Browns

Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — There's one loss Browns coach Hue Jackson doesn't have to fear this season: his job.

Despite an 0-10 record and the prospect of going winless in his first year with Cleveland, Jackson has the support of owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam, who believe they hired the right coach to turn around their floundering franchise.

"We are not focused on 0-16," said Sashi Brown, the team's vice president of football operations. "Hue is going to be here as our head coach. We talked about continuity being one of the core premises of what we wanted accomplished going out in January. We know that we have a head coach that can be successful here and lead us

to a lot of victories and a lot of winning."

That appears to be a long way off for the young Browns, whose progress this season has been muted by the worst start in team history and some key injuries.

To his credit, Jackson has kept the Browns playing hard and he feigned some surprise when he was told that Brown had acknowledged he will be back for a second season.

"I never thought I was going anywhere," he said with a smile. "I know that's been part of the plan since Day 1, before I took the job. I felt very comfortable. I know there has been a lot of mudslinging going around, but I get it. That's part of it when you have the record that we do, I expect things to be said. But we are comfortable and we know

exactly what we're trying to do.

"I think it's a tremendous plan. We all support it. It's not where we want it to be, but we do have a plan in place that we feel very strongly that we're going to get things headed in the right direction as soon as we can."

Brown, whose promotion from team general counsel and salary-cap expert to the top spot in Cleveland's front office preceded Jackson's hiring by 10 days, met with media members for the first time this season. Brown understands that Browns fans are frustrated at the lack of significant progress, but said the team has no regrets about any decisions to this point and intends to exercise patience in seeing the plan through.

"It's hard to look at this other than wins and losses," he said.

"I'm disappointed for our fans and the folks here working in the office. We don't want to be here. But we also think we're on the way to a much brighter future."

There's no easy fix for the Browns, who host rival Pittsburgh on Sunday, when thousands of noisy Steelers fans will make Cleveland's FirstEnergy Stadium feel like Heinz Field.

Both Brown and Jackson acknowledged the losing has many in the organization on edge. But they each rejected a report that said the coach's decision to bench rookie Cody Kessler in the second half of Thursday night's loss at Baltimore has created tension between the front office and coaching staff.

"I do have a tension headache," Jackson joked. "My head hurts."

# Indiana starts slow, then pulls away

Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — When Indiana tipped off its regular-season home opener, it looked like the sixth-ranked Hoosiers returned from Honolulu empty-handed.

Just five days removed from defeating then-No. 3 Kansas in the Armed Forces Classic, Indiana started Wednesday night's game flat on offense, slow on defense, and for much of the first 10 minutes, played mediocre basketball. The Hoosiers looked tired, searching for the momentum that carried them past Kansas.

"When you're coming off a great win like we had, you think the (next) game is going to be easier, but it's not," Indiana coach Tom Crean said, adding that it felt like his team hit a wall.

James Blackmon Jr. got Indiana (2-0) over that wall. Blackmon made five three-pointers, scored 23 points and grabbed seven rebounds in a 100-78 victory over UMass Lowell.

The River Hawks led three times during the first 10 minutes and by as many as five points. But with 8:24 remaining, Indiana found its niche behind the savvy scoring of Blackmon, who had 20 points in the first half.

Indiana outscored UMass Lowell (1-2) 32-15 during the

final 8 minutes of the first half. The Hoosiers went into halftime having shot 60 percent from the field (21-for-35). Once Indiana returned true to form, resembling the same team that kicked off the season with a big win in Hawaii, the Hoosiers dominated for the remainder of the game. The Hoosiers had an assist on 23 field goals.

Big men OG Anunoby and Thomas Bryant contributed to Indiana's onslaught. Anunoby scored 15 points and Bryant added nine and the two combined for nine rebounds. The Hoosiers outrebounded UMass Lowell 46-24. Of the 46 rebounds, 19 were on the offensive end, leading to 15 second-chance points.

Crean praised his squad for establishing physicality and speed, rather than attempting to establish their jump shots, or an offensive presence. And in doing so, it led to a defensive effort that contributed largely to the turning point of the game. Robert Johnson echoed his coach's sentiments.

"I think it all starts on defense," Johnson said. "Once we get stops, defensive rebounds, we can get out in transition and play."

Johnson scored 16 points, grabbed five rebounds and had five assists for Indiana. The Hoosiers led by as many as 29 points halfway through the sec-

ond half.

Jahad Thomas finished with 16 points and Tyler Livingston had 14 for the River Hawks.

**No. 17 Saint Mary's 110, Prairie View A&M 72:** At Moraga, Calif., Emmett Naar had 16 points and 11 assists to pace seven scorers in double figures for the Gaels.

Naar, an All-West Coast Conference pick as a sophomore last season who was held to six points in Saint Mary's season-opener, shot 7-for-9 from the field. He scored eight points in the first 5 minutes of the second half, including two three-pointers as part of a 15-4 run.

Jock Landale added 13 points and eight rebounds while Stefan Gonzalez had 14 points for Saint Mary's (2-0).

L.J. Westbrook had 13 points for Prairie View A&M (1-2), which was coming off a win over defending Mountain West champ Fresno State.

**No. 21 Rhode Island 79, Brown 72:** Jared Terrell scored 18 points and E.C. Matthews added 17 as the Rams won in Round Two of the Basketball Hall of Fame Tip-Off.

Hassan Martin added 12 points and Kuran Iverson had 11 as Rhode Island (3-0) defeated the Bears (1-2) for the 19th time in their last 21 meetings.

The Rams built a 36-21 lead late in the first half but Steven Spieth keyed a rally that en-

abled Brown to pull within 41-33 at halftime.

The Rams scored 20 points off 13 Brown turnovers which offset the fact the Bears outrebounded Rhode Island 38-31.

Brandon Anderson had 16 points for Brown while Tavon Blackmon and Travis Fuller chipped in with 11 apiece.

**No. 25 California 75, UC Irvine 65 (OT):** Charlie Moore scored 38 points to break Sha-reef Abdur-Rahim's freshman record of 33 set in November 1995 and Stephen Domingo hit a go-ahead three-pointer with 3:10 left in overtime for the short-handed host Golden Bears.

Kameron Rooks' tip-in with 23 seconds left in regulation tied the game and Jaron Martin failed to get off a shot for the Anteaters (1-2). Rooks scored a career-high 15 points to go with eight rebounds as Cal extended its home winning streak at Haas Pavilion to 21.

Martin scored a career-best 26 points with three key baskets over the final 6:11 of regulation.

Cal (2-0) missed three starters because of injuries: pre-season All-America Ivan Rabb (toe), Jabari Bird (back) and Columbia transfer Grant Mullins (neck strain).

## OU-WVU finally gives Big 12 a Top 10 matchup

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Finally, the Big 12 has its Top 10 matchup.

No. 8 Oklahoma heads to No. 10 West Virginia on Saturday night and the Sooners can wrap up the Big 12 championship if it gets some help earlier in the day from TCU, which hosts second-place Oklahoma State.

The Big 12 has been devoid of marquee games this season. Oklahoma started out ranked No. 3 and lost its opener to Houston. Baylor advanced to

No. 8 in late October before losing three straight.

West Virginia has moved up after beginning unranked and forecast to finish seventh in the league. The Mountaineers haven't come close to a Big 12 title since joining the league in 2012.

There may not be this much riding on one game in Morgantown since West Virginia lost to rival Pittsburgh in 2007, costing the Mountaineers a berth in the national championship game.

"We've been off the radar for a long time, and we're OK with that," West Virginia coach Dana Holgorsen said Monday. "We use that as motivation. Whether they're talking good about us or bad about us, we don't really pay attention to it."

On Saturday, it will be the league's top scoring defense at West Virginia against the conference's best offense.

"It's exciting but challenging, though, because they have a raucous crowd," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said.

Oklahoma hash a 14-game conference winning streak.

"They're playing lights out," Holgorsen said. "Known for an offensive league, they're the ones that got it going on more than anyone. I know it's one that our guys are looking forward to."

An Oklahoma win coupled with a loss by No. 13 Oklahoma State on Saturday would give the Sooners (8-2, 7-0) their 10th Big 12 title and render moot the teams' Dec. 3 Bedlam meeting in Norman, Okla.

# Westbrook, Thunder hold off Rockets

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — As Russell Westbrook took off, he saw Clint Capela as a mere obstacle to victory rather than an athletic 6-foot-10 shot blocker.

In the blink of an eye, Westbrook uncorked a vicious left-handed hammer dunk over Capela in the closing seconds to help the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Houston Rockets 105-103 on Wednesday night.

Oklahoma City led by three when the 6-3 Westbrook threw it down with 5.5 seconds left to put the Thunder up five.

Westbrook said Capela's reputation — he had already blocked three shots on the night and ranks among the league's leaders — didn't deter him.

"It don't matter, man," Westbrook said. "Game on the line. If you get blocked, or you make a dunk — it's one or the other. Fortunately, it went in and it closed the game for us."

Oklahoma City center Steven Adams, who isn't easily impressed, cracked a smile when asked about Westbrook's jam.

"Just happy it's not me," he said. "That's pretty much like

the only thing is 'Thank goodness he's on my team.' That was crazy. Honestly, he did a good job, Capela. Nice little bit of defense, honestly. Verticality, avoided the foul, and obviously, he's (Westbrook) just a really athletic dude. Just caught him."

Westbrook finished with 30 points, nine assists and seven rebounds. Victor Oladipo added season highs of 29 points and 10 rebounds for the Thunder, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

James Harden, the league's assist leader and No. 4 scorer heading into the night, finished with 13 points, 13 assists and seven rebounds. He made just 4 of 16 shots while being harassed by Andre Roberson.

"Dre did an amazing job, like he's been doing all season," Westbrook said. "James is a tough player, obviously, and he (Roberson) did a great job of making him shoot over his length. He needs to get credit for what he's been doing defensively all year."

Capela added 13 points and 14 rebounds for the Rockets, who went scoreless for more

than six minutes in the fourth quarter to help the Thunder position themselves for the win.

Oklahoma City led 65-63 at halftime as Westbrook had 20 points and Oladipo 17. The Thunder shot 61 percent before the break. The Rockets' offense worked, despite just five points from Harden on 1-for-6 shooting.

The Rockets started strong after the break, and a 14-5 binge put Houston up 77-70 and led to an Oklahoma City timeout. The Rockets stretched their lead to 11, but the Thunder pulled to 90-85 by the end of the period.

**Warriors 127, Raptors 121:** Stephen Curry had 35 points, Kevin Durant added 30 and Golden State beat host Toronto for its fifth straight victory.

**Grizzlies 111, Clippers 107:** Marc Gasol hit a go-ahead three-pointer from the left corner with 14 seconds left, and visiting Memphis snapped Los Angeles' seven-game winning streak.

**Pacers 103, Cavaliers 93:** Paul George scored 21 points and host Indiana took advantage off the resting LeBron James' absence to beat Cleveland.

**Knicks 105, Pistons 102:** Kristaps Porzingis scored a career-high 35 points and New York held off visiting Detroit.

**Hawks 107, Bucks 100:** Paul Millsap scored 21 points, Mike Muscala added 16 and host Atlanta won its sixth straight game, beating Milwaukee.

**Celtics 90, Mavericks 83:** Isaiah Thomas scored 22 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter in Boston's victory over visiting Dallas.

**Nuggets 120, Suns 104:** Wilson Chandler scored a season-high 28 points and Denver won for the first time at home this season, beating Phoenix.

**Magic 89, Pelicans 82:** Serge Ibaka scored 16 points and Nikola Vucevic broke out of his slump with 10 points and 14 rebounds in Orlando's victory over visiting New Orleans.

**76ers 109, Wizards 102:** Jahlil Okafor scored 19 points on 8-for-11 shooting to lead host Philadelphia past struggling Washington.

**Spurs 110, Kings 105:** Pau Gasol had 24 points and nine rebounds to lead visiting San Antonio to its fourth straight win.

## Oshie, Backstrom lead Capitals in rout of Penguins

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Determined to get out of their recent funk and motivated to measure up to the defending Stanley Cup champions, the Washington Capitals took out their frustrations in a 7-1 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Wednesday night.

The score was indicative of just how lopsided the game was as the Capitals got two goals and three assists from Nicklas Backstrom and two goals and two assists from T.J. Oshie. They scored short-handed, at even strength and on the power play and skated the Penguins out of the building in the rivals' second meeting of the season.

"We played really quick tonight, we got on their D-men,"

said Backstrom, who tied his career high with five points. "We were hungry out there and we won battles and obviously we scored on our chances, too. That's huge."

Washington had lost two in a row and three of four and didn't look at all like a team that lost in overtime Tuesday night at Columbus. Alex Ovechkin ended his four-game point drought with his eighth goal of the season, and Dmitry Orlov and Justin Williams also scored.

Ovechkin got a scare when he was taken down by Kris Letang in the second period, leaving the ice briefly before returning a few minutes later. He said his arm went numb but that he was healthy enough to come back and contribute to the blowout.

"It's nice to see when we play

like that, we stick together and we don't give them anything or much," Ovechkin said. "It's a good sign."

It's a bad sign for the Penguins to put up that kind of effort despite being rested. Pittsburgh allowed a short-handed goal to Oshie early and took nine minor penalties as things fell apart.

"These games are humbling," Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan said. "We were embarrassed out there tonight, all of us."

Cup-winning goaltender Matt Murray left the game late in the first period after teammate Evgeni Malkin accidentally hit him in the head when he was trying to shove Capitals defenseman Karl Alzner. Murray said he went through the

NHL's concussion protocol and was medically cleared to return, but Sullivan opted to stick with Marc-Andre Fleury out of an abundance of caution.

**Flames 2, Coyotes 1 (OT):** Michael Frolik scored 49 seconds into overtime to lift host Calgary past Arizona.

Frolik stole the puck from Brad Richardson after a faceoff in the Flames' end and skated in at top speed and ripped a shot inside the post on Coyotes goalie Mike Smith.

Matthew Tkachuk scored in regulation for Calgary, which snapped a three-game home skid. Chad Johnson started for the second straight night and finished with 20 saves.

Tobias Rieder scored for Arizona and Smith stopped 22 shots.