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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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1st ID takes Inherent Resolve lead on land

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

IRBIL, Iraq — The 1st Infantry Division assumed command of the multinational land component of the U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition on Thursday from the 101st Airborne Division, which had led it since March.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Martin, commanding general of the “Big Red One,” relieved Maj. Gen. Gary J. Volesky, commanding general of the 101st Airborne in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Union III presided over by Operation Inherent Resolve commander Lt. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend.

Townsend praised the 101st for its support of the Iraqi government’s efforts to defeat the

Islamic State group with training, equipment, intelligence, advice and fire support, according to a news release. That support has helped the Iraqi army prepare for and begin the campaign to liberate Mosul, Iraq’s second-largest city, “a battle now fully joined.”

The campaign began a month ago, when Iraqi and Kurdish forces, along with government-backed Shiite and Christian militias, advanced from several directions on the city of roughly 1 million, which the militants have held since 2014.

Supported by thousands of airstrikes, the forces have reclaimed a number of surrounding villages and several outer neighborhoods inside the city.

Fighting has slowed as the

battle has moved from mostly rural areas to built-up neighborhoods where Iraqi forces are fighting street-to-street against militants employing car bombs, improvised explosive devices and snipers.

As of Thursday, the coalition had destroyed more than 60 car bombs since the Mosul campaign began Oct. 17, according to a Twitter post by Air Force Col. John L. Dorrian, spokesman for the Inherent Resolve operation.

Also on Twitter, Martin said the “Fighting First” was ready to take command and to work with the rest of the coalition to defeat the militants.

It’s the division’s second tour in support of Inherent Resolve. The unit, which is the Army’s

longest-tenured division and has been in service since its activation in 1917, was the first to lead the land component in 2014.

“We stand as one team!” Martin tweeted after assuming command of the land component from Volesky.

Besides military support, the land component provides diplomatic, informational, economic and law-enforcement assistance for Iraq’s counter-Islamic State efforts.

“Iraq will be liberated from the threat of terrorism and ISIL’s brutal and tyrannical methods,” Townsend said, using an alternative name for the Islamic State group. “The liberation of Mosul is on the horizon, and you will help our Iraqi brothers to reach it.”

Calif. National Guard might get to keep bonuses

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — California lawmakers in the House and Senate offered legislative proposals Thursday that would allow nearly 10,000 California National Guard soldiers to keep improper enlistment bonuses they were paid during the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan a decade ago.

In a rare sign of bipartisanship on Capitol Hill, Democrats and Republicans argued that congressional action is needed to make sure the Pentagon forgives the soldiers’ debts and closes out an episode that has hurt thousands of veterans, roiled the Pentagon and embarrassed members of Congress.

A version of the bill could be approved as part of a defense authorization package as early as next week, when Congress leaves on Thanksgiving recess,

congressional leaders said.

If approved, the legislation would make it likely that most or all of the roughly 9,700 California Guard soldiers who received inflated enlistment bonuses and student loan payments between 2004 and 2010 would have those debts waived, lawmakers said.

Under the Democrats’ version of the bill, the approximately 1,700 California Guard soldiers who already have repaid all or part of their bonuses to the Pentagon would be given the money back with interest.

The proposed legislation also orders the Pentagon to inform credit agencies that the debt was never valid, meeting a key complaint from soldiers unable to get mortgages or car loans because of poor credit scores.

Credit agencies would be barred from including references to the soldiers’ debts in

credit reports.

The Los Angeles Times/Tribune Washington Bureau reported last month that the Pentagon was demanding repayment of enlistment bonuses that were given to about 9,700 California Guard soldiers to help fill enlistment quotas for the wars. Many of the soldiers served in combat and some returned with severe injuries.

Many of the soldiers were told to repay bonuses of more than \$15,000 years after they had completed their military service.

In response to a public outcry, and at the urging of the White House, Defense Secretary Ash Carter ordered a suspension of the repayment program on Oct. 26 and set up an internal appeals process to review the debts by next July.

Turkish NATO officers seek asylum elsewhere

BRUSSELS — The chief of NATO said Turkish NATO officers have sought asylum in allied countries amid a Turkish government crackdown following a failed military coup.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Friday that “some Turkish officers working in the NATO command structure ... have requested asylum in the countries where they are working.”

Each country will assess the claims individually, Stoltenberg said in Brussels. He did not identify the countries or the numbers involved, nor did he give reasons for the requests.

German media have reported asylum claims in Germany by members of the Turkish military. Turkey has arrested thousands of members of its military following the July coup attempt.

From The Associated Press

Ex-general, 2 lawmakers picked for posts

The Washington Post

President-elect Donald Trump announced Friday that he plans to nominate Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., as attorney general and Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kan., as CIA director, the first selections to his Cabinet as his transition continues to build momentum.

Trump also confirmed that he has selected retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn as his national security adviser, news that had been reported a day earlier.

“The president-elect is a man of action, and we’ve got a great number of men and women with great qualifications look forward to serving in this administration, and I am just humbled to be a part of it,” Vice President-elect Mike Pence told reporters in New York. “Our agency teams arrived in Washington D.C. this morning, and I am very confident it will be a smooth transition that will serve to lead this country forward.”

In a statement, Trump called Sessions one of his most trusted campaign advisers and cited his “world-class legal mind.”

“Jeff is greatly admired by legal scholars and virtually everyone who knows him,” Trump said.

Sessions, 69, was Trump’s first endorser in the Senate and quickly became the then-candidate’s chief resource on policy, but his hard-line views on immigration are expected to make his nomination controversial among human rights groups and Democrats.

The fourth-term senator has been dogged by accusations of racism throughout his career.

In 1986, he was denied a federal judgeship after former colleagues testified before a Senate committee that he joked about the Ku Klux Klan, saying he thought they were “okay, until he learned that they smoked marijuana.”

“If you have nostalgia for the days when blacks kept quiet, gays were in the closet, immigrants were invisible and women stayed in the kitchen, Senator Jefferson Beauregard Sessions is your man,” Rep. Luis Guterierrez, D-Ill., said in a statement. “No senator has fought harder against the hopes

and aspirations of Latinos, immigrants, and people of color than Sen. Sessions.”

Pompeo, 52, was elected to the House in 2010 as part of the first wave of so-called tea party lawmakers. A U.S. Military Academy and Harvard Law School graduate, he has a varied background. He served as a U.S. Army cavalry officer before founding an aerospace company, serving as president of an oil field equipment-manufacturing firm and — in a brief, little-known chapter of his early career — was an attorney with the Washington mega-law firm Williams and Connolly.

He currently serves on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and is a close ally of Pence.

Flynn, who would hold the most powerful national security position, is a retired three-star general and decorated intelligence officer who established a close relationship with Trump while campaigning at his side this year. His behavior and a string of controversial, dark statements about Islam, among other topics, have alarmed many of his former colleagues.

DOD transition team named; secretary post still open

By **TARA COPP**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump announced the members of his Defense Department transition team Friday in advance of the group’s first visit to the Pentagon.

The announcement was made as Trump also named Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., as his nominee for Attorney General and retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn was picked to serve as Trump’s National Security Adviser. Trump also selected Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kan., as director of the CIA.

Sessions and Flynn had been considered front-runners for Defense Secretary, though Flynn would have required a waiver from Congress to take on the role because of regulations requiring that a former military officer be retired seven years prior to serving as Defense Secretary. Flynn retired in 2014. Trump still must name his choice for defense secretary.

“We will do everything we

can to help ensure a seamless and efficient transition,” Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said Thursday in a statement announcing the transition team’s Friday arrival.

Trump’s team includes six generals and a former assistant secretary of defense, many of whom were instrumental in former President George W. Bush’s administration.

The team:

■ **Mira Ricardel** is a former Boeing executive who focused on international sales development and strategic missile defense. Ricardel was a former assistant Secretary of Defense under President George W. Bush who focused on NATO strategic issues.

■ **Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg** is a former commander of the 82nd Airborne Division. Kellogg retired in 2003 and transitioned to serve as the chief operating officer of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad from November 2003 through March 2004.

■ **Retired Maj. Gen. Thomas Carter** is a former C-141 command pilot who flew special operations missions and airlift missions in the 1980s. Carter served as a mobilization assistant to the secretary of the Air Force until his retirement in 2009. Thomas served former Coalition Provisional Authority Ambassador Paul Bremer in Iraq and Washington.

■ **Michael Duffey** is the executive director of the Republican Party of Wisconsin. Until 2015, Duffey worked in the office of the deputy assistant director of the Secretary of Defense for data analysis and systems engineering. He is also the former Defense Department liaison to the White House for President George W. Bush.

■ **Retired Gen. William Hartzog** served in the Army for 35 years and commanded U.S. Training and Doctrine Command. He retired in 1998 and is the president and chief executive officer of Burdeshaw Associates, a consulting firm.

He is a member of the Defense Science Board.

■ **Justin Johnson** is a senior defense analyst focused on budget issues at The Heritage Foundation, a conservative-leaning Washington think tank. Johnson was a former military legislative assistant for Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Okla.

■ **Retired Maj. Gen. Earl Matthews** is a former director of cyberspace operations for the Air Force. Matthews retired in 2014.

■ **Retired Army Reserve Maj. Gen. Bert Mizusawa**, who earned a Silver Star during the Korean War, was an appointed former professional staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee from 1995 to 1998.

■ **Retired Army Col. Sergio de la Pena**, who worked as a Defense Department liaison in Latin America during his most recent assignment in 2008 as division chief for international affairs for U.S. Northern Command.

Lawmakers urged not to pass short-term DOD spending bill

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chastised Congress on Thursday for considering a short-term spending measure that would put off passing an already overdue defense budget until April to give President-elect Donald Trump an opportunity to help craft the legislation.

Trump has called for a major boost in defense spending beyond levels in the proposed budget.

On Wednesday, McCain also warned Trump not to pursue a reset in relations with Russia. The veteran senator, who will return as the chairman of the Armed Services Committee next year, won re-election after tangling publicly with the president-elect on the campaign trail when Trump questioned whether McCain is a war hero.

Republican House lawmakers on Thursday met with Vice President-elect Mike Pence on Capitol Hill and signaled they will pursue another stopgap

spending measure to fund the federal government through the end of March, meaning military funding will maintain at current levels and the Trump administration will have about two months for input. Congress failed to pass annual defense authorization and spending bills by the end of the fiscal year in September and its current short-term spending legislation expires Dec. 9.

“No incoming president has ever had to inherit a [Defense Department] operating under a continuing resolution, no incoming president. This is not a time for us to break that streak,” said McCain, who called the proposal a “cockamamie” idea.

The House and the Senate passed versions of a \$602 billion defense authorization bill earlier this year and negotiations on a final version have been ongoing. An appropriations bill also has been delayed.

McCain said the stopgap spending plan will leave the military short about \$12 billion at a time when it is already

weakened by budget constraints and is facing an array of threats abroad, including the ongoing war with the Islamic State group, Afghanistan operations and efforts to bolster support of allies in Europe.

“A continuing resolution would actually cut funds for our troops,” he said.

McCain came out strongly this week against Trump’s proposal to have a closer relationship with Russia and possibly to partner with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Syria. He said a Trump reset would make the U.S. complicit in the “butchery” of Syrian civilians by Putin and the Russian-backed government of President Bashar Assad.

Trump, who has spent the week sequestered in Trump Tower weighing administration appointments, has proposed a massive buildup of the military, including a 350-ship Navy, up from 276; an Army of 540,000, up from 490,000; an increase to 36 Marine Corps battalions from 23, and about 87 more Air Force fighter aircraft.

AFRICOM reassesses manhunt for Kony

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Africa Command is reassessing its 5-year manhunt for the African warlord Joseph Kony, whose ragtag band of fighters has dwindled to almost “insignificant levels,” said AFRICOM’s Gen. Thomas Waldhauser.

“We are at a point in time where we need to transition that mission,” Waldhauser said during a recent interview at his Kelley Barracks headquarters in Stuttgart.

The Pentagon has directed AFRICOM to review the ongoing campaign to counter the Lord’s Resistance Army, which operates in jungle terrain in several central African countries. The LRA, which was notorious for abducting children to serve as soldiers, at one time commanded thousands of troops and posed a threat to Uganda’s government.

Over the years, however, the ranks have been reduced to perhaps a couple of hundred fighters, as many senior-level LRA members have defected from the organization.

The U.S. counter-LRA operation comes with a steep price tag: roughly \$100 million per year.

Waldhauser did not characterize the shape of the future mission in the region, but he signaled that it was likely to change because of the LRA’s diminished capacity.

“The number of fighters in that whole organization has gone way, way down to the point where it is almost (at) insignificant levels,” Waldhauser said.

In 2011, President Barack Obama ordered 100 U.S. special operations forces into central Africa to work alongside African Union troops, who are in charge of the hunt for Kony and other LRA members. The U.S. military has been a key part in that effort.

Trump F-35 doubts cast pall on euphoria

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump’s doubts about the \$379 billion F-35 jet, the Pentagon’s largest weapons program, could cast a pall over the defense industry’s early euphoria that a major boost in spending is coming after the next administration takes office.

The stealthy fighter built by Lockheed Martin Corp. was the only major weapons program Trump questioned during the campaign, even as he espoused the need for a larger Army and more warships. In an October 2015 interview with radio host Hugh Hewitt, Trump criticized the jet’s costs and said he heard “that it’s not very good.

I’m hearing that our existing planes are better.”

He’ll have to decide quickly whether that skepticism still stands.

Soon after taking office in January, Trump will be faced with some key decisions about the F-35 and other weapons systems. Under current plans, the U.S. is scheduled to boost purchases of the jet in the fiscal year 2018 budget to 70 from 63 this year. The number is set to increase further to 80 in fiscal 2019. There’s also a pending “block buy” of 450 aircraft in the coming years as the Pentagon seeks a total fleet of 2,443, including 1,763 for the Air Force.

“While Trump may not be

a big fan of the F-35, he really has very few other options to modernize tactical combat aircraft,” Byron Callan, a defense analyst with Capital Alpha Partners LLC, said in an email.

Messages left with Trump’s transition team about whether the president-elect stands by his earlier comments weren’t immediately returned.

Defense company shares surged on Trump’s election win last week. The Standard & Poor’s 500 Aerospace & Defense Index jumped about 9 percent, more than twice as much as the broader S&P 500, on expectations that defense companies will benefit from a Trump presidency.

Obama urges leaders to work with Trump

Associated Press

BERLIN — President Barack Obama used a meeting with key European leaders Friday to urge them to work with the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump and to discuss steps necessary to resolve the conflicts in Syria and eastern Ukraine, the White House said.

Obama's meeting with the leaders of Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Spain was likely his last in such a setting before he leaves office. The session expands on lengthy talks he held the day before with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Obama didn't speak with reporters before departing for Peru on Air Force One. The White House said Obama thanked his counterparts for their cooperation during his two terms in office. He urged them to work on common challenges with a Trump administration on

the "basis of the core values that define the United States and Europe as open democracies."

Since Obama's arrival on Wednesday on his sixth and last trip to Germany as president, he and Merkel have focused several meetings on issues of globalization and trans-Atlantic cooperation. The talks come largely in the context of what the election of Trump will mean to efforts to seek peace in Ukraine and Syria, the strength of the NATO alliance, trade agreements, efforts to fight climate change, and other pressing matters.

The White House said in a summary of the meeting that the leaders expressed grave concern about the humanitarian situation in Aleppo. They agreed that increased attacks by the Syrian regime and its supporters, including Russia and Iran, should be halted. They also are calling for humanitarian access to the city to be restored.

On Ukraine, the White House said the leaders agreed that sanctions against Russia must remain in place until it meets its commitments to resolving the conflict.

At a news conference with Obama on Thursday, Merkel diplomatically said she was approaching the incoming Trump administration "with an open mind."

Around the world, many are looking to Merkel — one of the longest serving leaders of a major world power, leader of Europe's largest economy and one of the biggest U.S. trade partners — for leadership as Obama leaves office.

Obama seemed to underscore that reality as he effusively thanked Merkel for her "deep friendship." He said he couldn't "ask for a steadier or more reliable partner on the world stage," while adding that if she chooses to run again for a fourth term next year, he'd vote for her — if he could.

Joining the two leaders Friday were the heads of countries at the center of many of the European Union's coming challenges.

British Prime Minister Theresa May is preparing her country for negotiations to leave the trade bloc. Spain's Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy faces economic woes in his country that have contributed to financial instability in the EU. Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's already shaky economy has been rocked by tens of thousands of refugees. And French President Francois Hollande's socialist government faces a major challenge from the far-right in elections next year.

Obama said Thursday his hope was that the Brexit negotiations be "conducted in a smooth and orderly and transparent fashion and preserve as closely as possible the economic and political and security relationships between the UK and EU."

McDonald's to expand table service

Associated Press

NEW YORK — McDonald's wants to make its fast-food outlets feel more like restaurants, with plans to eventually expand table service across its U.S. locations.

The world's biggest burger chain says it has been testing the service at about 500 of its more than 14,000 U.S. stores. Customers in those stores order at the counter or at kiosks and sit down and wait for an employee to bring out their food, a change that McDonald's says improves customer satisfaction.

McDonald's says it will expand the offering in Boston; Chicago; San Francisco; Seattle; and Washington, D.C., early next year. Bringing the change to all its stores could take years, as it would require franchisees to invest in remodeling and more training for employees.

The push to offer table service like some fast-casual chains do comes as McDonald's tries to stage a comeback after losing customers in recent years, with executives conceding they failed to keep up with changing tastes. Despite a string of announcements intended to drum up excitement — including the introduction of an all-day breakfast menu — customer visits in the U.S. have not increased, the company said.

CEO Steve Easterbrook said going to McDon-

ald's is supposed to be fun, but "the initial stages of it can be quite stressful." He noted that customers are becoming more demanding, and the company is working on making visits to its restaurants more convenient. Next year, the company also plans to introduce a mobile order and pay option.

Even though McDonald's Corp. gets a majority of its U.S. sales at the drive-thru, the company hopes having table service in restaurants helps improve people's perceptions about the overall experience. Table service and kiosks have already been introduced in other parts of the world, including in the United Kingdom.

The kiosks are also intended to give customers greater flexibility in customizing their orders with different buns and toppings for burgers, while reducing the chances for inaccurate orders. McDonald's has said it is working on reducing inaccurate orders, such as by asking employees to repeat orders back to customers at the drive-thru.

In stores that are remodeled to have the kiosks and table service, the company said it will also be more prominently featuring its McCafe drinks and baked goods. Those are intended to go after the growing snacking habit. Easterbrook said that the traditional three meals are making up less of the opportunity for growth.

Panda twins back in China but struggling

The Washington Post

Two young panda twins born in the United States have returned home to China but are struggling to adapt to the language and food.

The 3-year-old sisters, Mei Lun and Mei Huan, were returned to China Nov. 5.

But the pair still understand English better than Chinese and prefer American crackers to Chinese bread.

Luo Yunhong, a breeder at the Chengdu Giant Panda Research Base, said his main concern is that the pair are so addicted to American crackers that everything they eat has to be mixed with crackers.

The pair respond to their own names and understand some English phrases such as "come here," but they don't understand the Sichuan dialect of Chinese used on the base.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Experts take inventory of 5M-year-old tracks

CA DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK — Paleontologists have completed an inventory of tracks left 5 million years ago by mastodons, camels, horses and big cats in a remote canyon of Death Valley National Park, according to a report.

It is one of the most diverse and well-preserved deposits of prehistoric mammal and bird tracks known to exist, and offers a picture of Death Valley's ecology during the Pliocene Epoch, the Los Angeles Times reported.

The newspaper said the prints tell stories of an adult camel with a newborn following close behind and of a horse slipping in soggy ground and landing on its rear.

Using high-definition cameras and GPS, it took paleontologist Torrey Nyborg four years to inventory the tracks.

Paleontologists matched them with mastodons, a tapir species, 12 species of birds, five species of cats, five species of camels and three species of horse.

Ex-librarian sues city for exploding toilet

FL TARPON SPRINGS — A former librarian for a Florida elementary school is suing for negligence alleging a toilet at the school exploded, hitting her with porcelain shards.

According to the suit, Anne Burson said a maintenance crew was working on the water lines at Tarpon Springs Fundamental Elementary in 2012. A toilet exploded earlier, sending pieces of porcelain across the bathroom stall. Workers cleaned the restroom and told her it was safe to use.

Burson said she returned later in the day to use another toilet and was injured when it

exploded after she flushed it. The Tampa Bay Times reported that the lawsuit said she suffered a leg injury.

Jury convicts man for Cheetos house fire

MA TAUNTON — A Massachusetts man who, according to authorities, attempted to use Cheetos to accelerate a fire at his ex-girlfriend's home while she was inside has been convicted of malicious destruction of property.

The Bristol County District Attorney's Office said a jury convicted Shemroy Williams, 31, on Wednesday. He was sentenced to 2½ years behind bars.

Crews responded to a home in March after the woman and her friend reported that Williams was trying to light it on fire. Authorities said an investigation revealed Williams wedged a propane tank against the house while a fire on the porch was burning.

Police say they located Williams in the area with two lighters in his pocket and an empty bag of Cheetos. Investigators determined Williams tried to use Cheetos to accelerate the fire.

Parking violators can pay fines with toys

NV LAS VEGAS — Parking tickets in Las Vegas will be costing drivers in dolls not dollars this holiday season thanks to a new city program.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that the Las Vegas City Council on Wednesday approved a pilot program that will allow people who receive some parking tickets between Nov. 15 and Nov. 30 to donate a toy of equal or greater value as payment.

Toys will be accepted through Dec. 15 as part of the "Toys for

Tickets" program and will be donated to a local domestic violence shelter.

More than a dozen violations are excluded from the program including public safety and handicapped-related violations as well as blocking or facing traffic, double parking and fire hydrant violations.

Deer knocks runner down during 8K race

PA CENTER VALLEY — A cross-country runner finished an NCAA regional race after he was knocked off his feet by a deer at DeSales University in Pennsylvania.

The Nov. 12 incident in Center Valley was captured on video.

Gwynedd Mercy University senior Justin DeLuzio was competing in the 8K race in a field when someone yelled, "watch out for the deer!" A deer struck him in the stomach, and he fell to the ground as more deer ran across the course.

A teammate helped DeLuzio to his feet, and he finished the race. The team said DeLuzio was bruised, but otherwise fine.

New rules at cemetery may delay entrance

VA ARLINGTON — Officials at Arlington National Cemetery are asking visitors to allow extra time to make their way through new security measures being implemented.

In coming weeks, the cemetery expects to begin screening entrants with metal detectors at its visitor center, where nearly all of the 3 million to 4 million annual visitors arrive. Enhanced screening has already begun at secondary entrance points.

Army officials have been working on the enhanced screening for nearly two years.

They say the measures are not prompted by any specific threat but by a general recognition that enhanced security would help.

Best man dislikes bride, runs amok

VT NEWPORT — Police said a best man who disliked the bride disappeared after a Vermont wedding, got drunk, stole a golf cart, crashed it and later showed up covered in blood.

The Caledonian Record reported Travis Bass, 29, of Boston, pleaded guilty to unlawful mischief stemming from the Sept. 11 incident. He's already paid over \$5,000 to the Jay Peak Resort for damage to the six-seat golf cart.

Police said Bass was driving the cart when it crashed on the 11th tee of the golf course.

A police affidavit said Bass was anxious about being best man because he didn't like the bride. He took off with the golf cart. Three hours later, he showed up covered in blood and with a broken hand.

3 tigers seized from woman's backyard

NV LAS VEGAS — Authorities said a woman who asked if it was legal to keep tigers at home in a rural Nevada town was arrested on a Texas warrant after sheriff's deputies found three tigers in her backyard in Pahrump.

The Nye County sheriff's office said Trisha Meyer, 34, was arrested Nov. 7 on a felony burglary and theft warrant issued in Harris County, Texas.

A court official in Pahrump said Tuesday that Meyer wasn't held on local charges. She agreed at a Nov. 9 court appearance not to fight extradition to Houston.

From wire reports

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Cubs' Bryant, Angels' Trout named MVPs

Associated Press

CHICAGO — While the Los Angeles Angels stumbled, Mike Trout soared again.

Just too good to ignore.

Trout won the AL MVP award Thursday for the second time in three years, and Chicago Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant was voted NL MVP in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

"To win it one time, it's hard to do," Trout said. "Twice, I guess you saw my emotions tonight, it was something special."

While the Angels finished fourth in the AL West, Trout was his usual brilliant self. The center fielder batted .315 with 29 homers, 100 RBIs and 30 steals. He scored 17 percent of Los Angeles' runs, the highest percentage for an AL player since Rickey Henderson with the 1985 New York Yankees.

Trout, who was a unanimous winner in 2014, had finished second in three of the past four years. He becomes the first MVP from a losing team since Alex Rodriguez for Texas in 2003 and just the fifth player ever to accomplish the feat, joining Hall of Famers Ernie Banks (1958 and 1959), Andre Dawson (1987) and Cal Ripken (1991).

"At the end of the season a lot of people were asking me about the same question, you know, if your team has a losing record is it going to hurt you in the MVP?" Trout

said. "With this MVP this year, I guess it doesn't matter."

Bryant hit .292 with 39 homers and 102 RBIs in just his second year in the majors, helping the Cubs to their first World Series title since 1908. The No. 2 overall pick from the 2013 draft becomes just the sixth player to win rookie of the year and MVP in one or consecutive seasons.

"This year has certainly been one of the best years of my life," said Bryant, who is set to get married in January. "I mean winning a World Series, now this, it's just icing on the cake."

The Las Vegas native is the first NL MVP from the Cubs since Sammy Sosa in 1998 and the eighth player from the club to win the award since 1935. The once-forlorn franchise enjoying its best run in decades also had two of the top MVP candidates, with first baseman Anthony Rizzo finishing fourth.

Voting by BBWAA members was completed by the start of the playoffs.

"If it wasn't for Anthony and his protection and guidance, I wouldn't have won this award," Bryant said. "I mean he texted me and I said the same thing to him, I said if it wasn't for you I wouldn't have been able to do this."

Bryant was a runaway winner, grabbing 29 of 30 first-place votes and 415 points. Nationals second baseman Dan-

iel Murphy, who batted .347 for the NL East champions, was the runner-up with the other first-place vote and 245 points. Dodgers shortstop Corey Seager was third after he was the unanimous winner of the NL Rookie of the Year award on Monday.

Seager will look to follow in Bryant's footsteps next year.

Bryant was the unanimous NL Rookie of the Year after he hit .275 with 26 homers and 99 RBIs last season. Bryant joins Dustin Pedroia (2007-08), Ryan Howard (2005-06) and Cal Ripken (1982-83) as the only players to go Rookie of the Year-MVP in consecutive seasons. Ichiro Suzuki (2001) and Fred Lynn (1975) are the only players to win the awards in the same year.

"Kris is just an impressive young man in every aspect," Cubs owner Tom Ricketts said. "(He) is very mature, professional, light-hearted, but serious at the same time. He's just kind of a dream player for any organization."

Trout received 19 first-place votes and 356 points. Mookie Betts, who batted .318 with 31 homers, 113 RBIs and 26 steals in 158 games for the Boston Red Sox, was second with 311 points, and AL batting champion Jose Altuve of Houston was third. Retiring Red Sox slugger David Ortiz got one first-place vote and finished sixth in his final year in the majors.

Panthers hold off down-on-their-luck Saints

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — If the New Orleans Saints hope to make a run at the playoffs they'll first need to figure out how to kick the football through the uprights.

Seems pretty simple, right?

And yet for the second straight week, disaster struck when rookie kicker Wil Lutz walked on the field.

With the Saints looking to cut Carolina's lead to seven in the second quarter, Vernon Butler blocked a 38-yard, field-goal attempt and Luke Kuechly returned it 73 yards to set up a Carolina touchdown before halftime. Kuechly actually scored on the return, but the Panthers were flagged for a block in the back. It didn't matter as Cam Newton found Ted

Ginn Jr. for a 40-yard TD strike on the next play from scrimmage and the Panthers went on to a 23-20 win.

It wasn't quite as dramatic as four days earlier when Lutz's potential game-winning extra point was blocked by Justin Simmons and returned for a defensive 2-point conversion in a 25-23 loss to the Denver Broncos, but the 10-point swing was just as costly.

"It's two weeks in a row that we've had a blocked kick that's resulted in pretty catastrophic results," Saints quarterback Drew Brees said. "So I think we're doing a lot of good things, but unfortunately there's a couple critical things that need to be fixed in order for us to win and be successful."

Some other things to know from the game:

Sacks are coming in bunches: The Panthers defense is bringing the heat with 18 sacks in their last four games.

"Their front's playing well," said Saints coach Sean Payton, whose team has lost four of its past five games at Carolina. "It forces you to come underneath. ... You have to win inside or separate inside. We forced one on the one pick down the field, but it was obviously a more patient approach."

Brees threw for 465 yards in a victory against Carolina earlier this season. On Thursday night, he threw for 285 in a loss.

Playoff hopes: Despite close losses and losing records, both the Panthers and Saints have optimism going into the season's stretch run, in pursuit of first-place Atlanta. The Falcons lead the NFC South at 6-4, but

all three teams behind them are two games or fewer behind.

"Of course we have our hopes high," said Newton, who passed for 192 yards and a touchdown on Thursday. "We still have our sights to everything that we want, but it's still right in front of our eyes. It's going to be up to us to focus in, hone in, and we're going to mend up for the next couple of days and get ready for Oakland."

Brees, whose team plays at home against Los Angeles and Detroit next, sees a similar path for the Saints. New Orleans has two games against Tampa Bay and one against Atlanta to come.

"I know there's a lot of football left to be played," Brees said. "Nothing has been determined at this point."

Houston embarrasses No. 3 Louisville

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Louisville coach Bobby Petrino was blunt.

“We blew it,” he said.

Duke Catalon scored three touchdowns and Houston hurried and harassed Heisman favorite Lamar Jackson all night to propel the Cougars to a stunning 36-10 victory over the Cardinals on Thursday night that dashed the third-ranked team’s playoff hopes.

Louisville (9-2) entered the game ranked fifth in the College Football Playoff rankings, but was outdone by a Houston team that saw its own playoff hopes foiled by two losses to unranked teams after a 5-0 start.

“We lost,” Jackson said. “Can’t do nothing about it.”

The Cardinals were unhappy they weren’t ranked higher in this week’s CFP rankings after losses by several top teams last week, and some players thought they let that angst affect their play on Thursday.

“I think we let that get to us too much. I think we paid too much attention to the rankings instead of playing our

game,” safety Dee Smith said. “We were just trying to do too much.”

Things went wrong quickly for the mistake-prone Cardinals when they fumbled the opening kickoff to Houston (9-2). Greg Ward threw his first touchdown pass on the next play to make it 7-0. Brandon Radcliff lost a fumble later in the first and Houston added a field goal on the ensuing drive to make it 10-0.

Jackson threw for 211 yards and a touchdown, but it didn’t come until the second half.

Houston then scored touchdowns on three straight possessions in the second quarter to push the lead to 31-0 at halftime. Catalon caught a touchdown pass, ran for another score and Houston got the third score in that span on a 50-yard pass by receiver Linell Bonner after a lateral.

“We were banged up. We were beat up. We were tired. We were exhausted in the month of October,” Houston coach Tom Herman said. “That’s not an excuse. That’s reality. And our guys fought through it and they fought through that adversity and they never wavered ... and

when you get the band back together and you get everybody healthy and everybody fresh and everybody doing their job ... we can play with anybody in the country. And we proved that again tonight.”

The Cougars were in Jackson’s face constantly, sacking him a season-high 11 times and keeping him from hurting them with his feet. He ran for a season-low 33 yards after piling up 338 yards rushing combined in the last two games.

After Jackson was sacked for the 10th time he threw up his hands and two of his linemen looked to be yelling at each other about who was to blame for his latest takedown.

Petrino said he saw frustration build in Jackson as the sacks piled up.

“Oh yeah, there was frustration there,” he said. “There was frustration on the protection and frustration on himself — missing a few throws. That’s one of the things on the sideline there definitely was frustration and it grew.”

Ward threw for 233 yards and two touchdowns to help the Cougars to the victory that left Cougars fans storming the field

to celebrate.

Arkansas State 35, No. 25 Troy 3: Chris Humes caught a 31-yard pass on a fake punt and recovered a fumble in the end zone to help the visiting Red Wolves upset the Trojans.

Arkansas State (6-4, 6-0 Sun Belt Conference) gained the inside track for a fifth league title in six years after starting the season 0-4.

Four days earlier, Troy (8-2, 5-1) had become the first ranked Sun Belt team after winning seven straight games. But the league’s top-scoring offense committed five turnovers and couldn’t reach the end zone. Arkansas State remains the team to beat, having won 15 straight conference games.

Humes had a big role in two straight touchdowns. Arkansas State turned a well-executed fake punt into a 7-3 halftime lead. Cam Echols-Luper took the punt snap and hit a wide open Humes, who raced down the left sideline to inside Troy’s 10. Three plays later, Justice Hansen hit a leaping Kendall Sanders in the back of the end zone for a 9-yard touchdown.

No. 11 Xavier survives overtime game with Missouri

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The play J.P. Macura made with 1.7 seconds left won’t show up in any box score, and certainly won’t appear in any highlight video.

But it helped No. 11 Xavier escape and remain unbeaten.

Edmond Sumner’s free throw with 0.3 seconds left in overtime gave the Musketeers an 83-82 win over Missouri in the opening round of the Tire Pros Invitational on Thursday. He was fouled after Xavier inbounded near midcourt, after a heady timeout that Macura called to give his team a chance to set something up at the end.

“He understands time and score and puts himself in positions to make hustle plays and

plays that determine the outcome of a game,” Xavier coach Chris Mack said. “It doesn’t surprise me that he had presence of mind to call timeout that quickly.”

Sumner was fouled by Missouri’s Terrence Phillips as both went for the ball along the sideline on the deciding play. He missed the first one short, then rattled in the second for the win.

“I decided to call timeout because I didn’t want us to just fire up a halfcourt shot,” Macura said. “I thought we’d have better chances of making a shot if we got a timeout.”

He was right, and the Musketeers — who won a tournament at the Disney complex last year — are now in the semifinals

of this event. Sumner and Macura each scored 19 points for Xavier, which got 13 apiece from Trevon Bluiett and Sean O’Mara.

Frankie Hughes scored 24 points for Missouri (1-1), and Kevin Puryear finished with 22 points and 10 rebounds. Phillips scored seven of his 21 points in overtime for Missouri, which never got off a desperation shot after Sumner’s deciding free throw.

No. 3 Villanova 76, Western Michigan 65: At Charleston, S.C., Eric Paschall had 17 points, including a three-pointer with 2:50 to go, to help rally the Wildcats past the Broncos at the Charleston Classic on Thursday.

No. 4 Oregon 76, Valpara-

iso 54: Chris Boucher had 25 points and nine rebounds to lead the Ducks to their 27th consecutive home victory.

No. 9 Wisconsin 69, Chicago St. 51: Vitto Brown scored 12 points and Khalil Iverson added 11 for the host Badgers.

No. 12 Louisville 88, Long Beach St. 56: Jaylen Johnson had 14 points and 11 rebounds and Deng Adel added 11 points for the host Cardinals.

No. 16 UCLA 88, San Diego 68: At Los Angeles, T.J. Leaf had 26 points and 10 rebounds and fellow freshman Lonzo Ball added 13 points for the Bruins.

No. 23 Texas 85, E. Washington 52: Tevin Mack scored 19 points and the host Longhorns rolled to an easy victory.

Dubnyk's shutout helps Wild top Bruins

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A bounce went the right way at a key time for Mikael Granlund and the Minnesota Wild.

Granlund scored with 44.5 seconds left, Devan Dubnyk stopped 25 shots for his league-leading fourth shutout, and the Wild beat the Boston Bruins 1-0 Thursday night.

Granlund took a pass from Jonas Brodin, circled below the end line and came out to the right of Tuukka Rask. His centering pass went off Adam McQuaid, then off Rask and into the Boston net.

"That's why I always pass," joked Granlund, who missed an open net in the second period.

Dubnyk has had to carry the Wild lately as Minnesota's offense has mustered just 10 goals in its past seven games, yet won three. He has allowed nine goals in his last nine games, stopping 274 of 283 shots in that span to account for a .965 save

percentage. For the season, his goals-against average (1.48) and save percentage (.952) are league bests.

"It's not my job to score. It's my job to work with the guys and defend. I have zero complaints with how the guys have been defending for me and playing," Dubnyk said. "I got no question in here that these guys can put the puck in the net. Sometimes it takes something like that to turn it around."

Minnesota has allowed an NHL-low 29 total goals in 16 games this season, including 10 in its last nine games, dating back to a 5-0 shutout Oct. 25 in Boston.

Dubnyk kept the game scoreless 6 minutes into the third coming out of the crease and diving to poke the puck away from Matt Beleskey, who was in alone after a turnover by Matt Dumba.

Rask stopped 28 shots. He is 4-1-0 in his past five games, with a 0.80 goals-against aver-

age and .947 save percentage.

His best save came late in the second, getting his glove up quick to stifle Jason Pominville, who was alone in front and had a second to move the puck to his forehand.

"He's been unbelievable, carrying us and bailing us out when we made mistakes," David Backes said. "We need to find a way to beat the other goaltender."

Lightning 4, Sabres 1: Alex Killorn had a goal and assist and visiting Tampa Bay won its first game without captain Steven Stamkos.

Ducks 3, Devils 2: Ryan Kesler scored the tiebreaking goal on a rush to the net with 3:40 to play, and host Anaheim snapped New Jersey's five-game winning streak.

Canucks 3, Coyotes 2 (OT): Ben Hutton scored on a penalty shot at 2:34 of overtime to lift host Vancouver over Arizona.

Blues 3, Sharks 2: Jaden Schwartz scored twice and

David Perron added the game-winner to lift host St. Louis past San Jose.

Stars 3, Avalanche 2: Patrick Eaves capped his team's three-goal first period and host Dallas held off Colorado.

Kings 4, Oilers 2: Jeff Carter scored the tiebreaking, short-handed goal midway through the second period to lead host Los Angeles past Edmonton.

Flyers 5, Jets 2: Michael Raffl and Sean Couturier scored 34 seconds apart in the first period on their team's initial two shots, and host Philadelphia went on to beat Winnipeg.

Predators 5, Senators 1: Ryan Ellis scored the tiebreaking goal late in the first period and Pekka Rinne stopped 30 shots to lead visiting Nashville past Ottawa.

Maple Leafs 6, Panthers 1: Connor Brown had two goals and two assists to lead help spoiling James Reimer's first start against his old team since leaving host Toronto.

Harden's triple-double powers Houston past Portland

Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden had 26 points, 14 assists and 12 rebounds for his third triple-double of the season to help the Houston Rockets beat the Portland Trail Blazers 126-109 on Thursday night.

Harden completed the triple-double in the third quarter. The Rockets rebounded a night after scoring just three points in the final 6 minutes in a 105-103 loss in Oklahoma City.

C.J. McCollum led Portland with 26 points, Maurice Harkless had 19, and Damian Lillard 18, his second-lowest output of the season.

Rockets starting point guard Patrick Beverley made his season debut after missing the first 11 games following arthroscopic surgery on his left knee. Limited to 25 minutes, Beverley had 11 points, three assists and three blocks.

Heat 96, Bucks 73: Dion

Walters scored 23 points and host Miami beat Milwaukee to end a six-game losing streak.

Josh Richardson added 18 points, and Hassan Whiteside had 12 points, 17 rebounds, and eight blocks. The losing streak was the Heat's longest since 2008.

Point guard Goran Dragic returned for the Heat after missing three games with a sprained left ankle. He had 16 points in 36 minutes.

Giannis Antetokounmpo and Tony Snell each had 14 points for the Bucks. They have lost four of five.

Richardson hit a corner three, Whiteside blocked a layup attempt by Antetokounmpo, and Dragic hit a three in a flurry of big plays to give Miami an 80-69 lead with 7 minutes left. Miami outscored Milwaukee 29-11 in the fourth quarter.

Timberwolves 110, 76ers 86: Andrew Wiggins had 35 points, 10 rebounds and four

assists to lead Minnesota past visiting Philadelphia.

Karl-Anthony Towns added 25 points and 10 rebounds, and Gorgui Dieng had 12 points and 10 boards.

Joel Embiid had 10 points and 10 rebounds in 23 minutes after sitting out the front end of Philadelphia's back-to-back on Wednesday night. Dario Saric led the way with 16 points, but the 76ers lost their 21st straight road game.

Wizards 119, Knicks 112: John Wall had 23 points and 11 assists and host Washington beat New York for its third victory in 11 games this season.

New York trailed 108-86 with 4:33 play before scoring 12 straight points. Wall hit two late baskets and four free throws to secure the win.

Otto Porter added 21 points for the Wizards. Derrick Rose led New York with 27, Carmelo Anthony had 16, and Kristaps Porzingis 16.

Bulls 85, Jazz 77: Jimmy Butler scored 20 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as Chicago defeated host Utah.

The Bulls have won four straight, including three on the road. Chicago used 9-0 runs to start the third and fourth quarters that Utah never recovered from. Nikola Mirotic had a dunk, a steal and an assist during the fourth-quarter run that put the Bulls up 75-58.

The Jazz cut the lead to 80-75 late, but Dwyane Wade and Butler hit jumpers to put the game away.

Wade scored 18 points for the Bulls and Robin Lopez posted his second double-double of the season with 10 points and 12 rebounds.

Rudy Gobert finished with 16 points, 13 rebounds and three blocks for the Jazz as Gordon Hayward added eight points and 12 rebounds.