

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Rare 3-carrier group drills set to kick off

By TYLER HLAVAC

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy is gearing up for its first tri-aircraft-carrier training drills in more than a decade this weekend off the Korean Peninsula.

The four-day exercise involving the USS Ronald Reagan, the USS Nimitz and the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike groups will start Saturday to “demonstrate the U.S. Navy’s unique capability to operate multiple carrier strike groups as a coordinated strike force effort,” a Navy statement said.

The training — which will happen while President Donald Trump is in the Philippines wrapping up his two-week, five-nation tour of Asia — includes air defense drills, sea surveillance, defensive air combat training and close-in coordinated maneuvers, the statement said.

The drills will take place in the sea east of the Korean Peninsula, South Korean Ministry of National Defense spokesman Moon Sang-gyun told reporters Thursday in Seoul. He said there are no plans for his nation’s navy to join the exercise.

Though some have speculated that the presence of three carriers in the region is a direct response to North Korean aggression, Navy officials told Stars and Stripes on Thursday the exercise “is just another example of the Navy’s regular and routine

presence” in the region.

“All three aircraft carriers are conducting routine deployments in multiple areas of operation that happened to converge in the Western Pacific,” said 7th Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss. “This overlap is an opportunity to show a unique capability — one that no other navy has — to operate multiple carrier strike groups close to each other.”

Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Scott Swift said it’s rare for two carriers to cross paths, much less three.

“Multiple carrier strike force operations are very complex, and this exercise in the Western Pacific is a strong testament to the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s unique ability and ironclad commitment to the continued security and stability of the region,” he said in the Navy statement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying addressed the drills during a news conference this week in Beijing, saying the U.S. and North Korea should avoid escalating tensions in the region.

“Currently, the situation on the Korean Peninsula is highly complex and grave,” she said. “All relevant parties should exercise restraint, avoid provoking each other, jointly stay committed to easing the tensions on the peninsula and, meanwhile, make positive efforts to pull the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue back to the track

of seeking settlement through negotiation at an early date.”

The last tri-carrier drills took place in 2007 off the coast of Guam during exercise Valiant Shield. The Navy in recent years has conducted dual-carrier operations in the South China, East China and Philippine seas.

The 3rd Fleet’s Nimitz strike group is on the way to its homeport in Bremerton, Wash., after wrapping up operations in the Middle East, where it has been attacking Islamic State targets during Operation Inherent Resolve. The group is scheduled to make a port visit to an unspecified location before heading home.

The Nimitz’s sister carrier, the Theodore Roosevelt, arrived in the Pacific late last month on a regularly scheduled deployment to the Pacific and the Middle East, the Navy said. The carrier, homeported in San Diego, likely will take over missions previously conducted by the Nimitz.

The 7th Fleet’s Ronald Reagan strike group has been operating in the Pacific on a regular patrol. It stopped in Busan, South Korea, last month after a week of drills in nearby waters. The Yokosuka, Japan-based carrier’s port call came at a time of heightened rhetoric between the U.S. and North Korea over the communist state’s uptick of ballistic-missile and nuclear tests.

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## Officials: US troops may have to cover NATO shortfall

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

American servicemembers could be forced to pick up the slack in Afghanistan if NATO cannot reach its target for troop commitments from its members, officials in Brussels said Thursday.

NATO agreed Thursday to boost force numbers in Afghanistan next year to expand its Resolute Support mission from 13,000 to 16,000 troops. The alliance’s goal is that roughly half the increase will be manned by U.S. allies and partners, NATO’s top official said.

“We are now in the process of increasing the troop level and in the process of force

generations, so it is not possible to draw any final figures,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters. “But I hope and I expect it will be roughly 50-50 in the Resolute Support mission next year.”

However, there are indications that allies in Europe are struggling to meet the U.S. halfway. Diplomats in Brussels told reporters that partner countries would likely be supplying only about 700 more troops.

Although NATO members have known for months about the plan to expand the advisory mission by 3,000 troops, they are still scrambling to fill slots. There has been little enthusiasm for the increase among some key European allies.

President Donald Trump also has de-

manded NATO allies commit to troop increases in Afghanistan that are “in line” with the U.S. NATO, however, was vague Thursday about what commitments it has received thus far.

“We haven’t filled all the positions or the posts that I’ve asked for,” Stoltenberg said. “That is exactly what we are addressing now. ... [W]e still have some gaps we will continue to work on.”

The top commander in Afghanistan, Gen. John Nicholson, said there is concern that the U.S. may need to fill a shortfall.

“We have made it very clear to the allies that we really need their help in filling these billets that we have identified,” Nicholson told Reuters.

# Marine abuse case goes to jury

Associated Press

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — A military jury began deliberating Thursday on whether a Marine Corps drill instructor is guilty of beating, stomping and choking new recruits or whether accounts of his abuse toward Muslim-American military hopefuls were overhyped by young troops.

The eight-man jury at Camp Lejeune will decide whether Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Felix was the furious center of an abusive group of drill instructors at the Parris Island, S.C., boot camp.

Felix was charged after the Marines investigated what drove one of his Muslim trainees at the boot camp to commit suicide in March 2016.

Investigators found unchecked abuse of recruits by junior drill instructors at the training depot. Six drill instructors, including Felix, were charged and the training battal-

ion's commanding officer was fired. A court-martial for Lt. Col. Joshua Kissoon is scheduled for March. Eleven others faced lesser, administrative discipline, said Marine Corps spokesman Capt. Joshua Pena.

Felix is accused of maltreating three Muslim recruits. Raheel Siddiqui, 20, a Pakistani-American from Taylor, Mich., committed suicide in March 2016 by jumping off a stairwell after Felix barked at and slapped him, prosecutors said. Siddiqui's family has filed a \$100 million wrongful death lawsuit against the Marine Corps.

Felix also is accused of obstruction of justice for telling recruits not to cooperate with investigators after the suicide. He's also charged with drunk and disorderly conduct and with making false official statements. He pleaded not guilty.

Felix faces the possibility of

time in a military prison, financial penalties and a dishonorable discharge.

In 2015 and 2016, the drill instructor derided Siddiqui and two other Muslim as "terrorists," said prosecutor Lt. Col. John Norman in his closing arguments Wednesday. Felix also ordered former trainee Lance Cpl. Ameer Bourmeche to simulate chopping off the head of a fellow Marine while reciting "God is great" in Arabic, Norman said. Bourmeche said he was ordered into an industrial clothes dryer, which then was turned on as Felix demanded he renounce his Islamic faith.

Eyewitnesses testified Felix slugged recruits in the face and kicked others to the ground, sometimes terrorizing recruits while drunk, Norman said.

Felix was permanently removed from his duties as a drill instructor after the investigation began, Pena said.

# Aviators address concerns

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A panel of senior military aviators told lawmakers Thursday that while progress has been made in readiness efforts, competing priorities are getting in the way.

The officials spoke during a hearing for a subpanel for the House Armed Services Committee, which was revisiting readiness concerns a year after they were raised.

A year ago, top aviation officials for the Army, the Marine Corps, the Navy and the Air Force met with the committee, which found crisis-level readiness issues, said Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness.

"Infrastructure challenges, underfunded spare parts and depot backlogs were a consistent theme," Wilson said at Thursday's hearing. With retention and training deficiencies, "all of these challenges are competing with no lessening of operational demand in the fight against terrorism and with increasingly aging and overused aircraft."

A readiness crisis throughout the military has dominated recent debate on Capitol Hill. Some lawmakers say a spike in deadly accidents is being fueled by years of budget cuts.

On Wednesday, in light of the growing debate, a key panel of House and Senate members announced a deal on a \$700 billion defense budget plan. But the plan faces a major hurdle because it exceeds budget caps.

On Thursday, senior military officials said they have seen gains in readiness, including improvement of flight hours for several of the branches. But plenty of work remains, they said.

"We have made moderate gains in readiness," said Marine Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, deputy commandant for aviation. "But we're not where we want to be."

# Defense bill allows for Space Corps study

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Supporters of the creation of a Space Corps, a new military service that would be an arm of the Air Force, are holding out hope it will take off someday.

On Wednesday, a congressional conference committee announced a deal on a massive \$700 billion defense bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, to raise pay for servicemembers, increase the size of the military, fund new ships and aircraft, and authorize new spending for missile defense.

The bill also allows for a study of the creation of a Space Corps, a positive first step, according to the House members leading the charge on the plan.

"We are pleased the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 takes the first step in fundamentally changing and improving the national security space programs of the

Department of Defense and the U.S. Air Force in particular," said Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., and Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn., the chairman and the ranking member, respectively, of an armed services subcommittee on strategic forces.

Earlier this year, the House approved their plan to install the new military arm to be included in the lower chamber's version of the defense bill. But based on opposition from several key figures, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, the Senate included language in their version of the bill prohibiting a Space Corps.

Now, defense officials will be directed to look farther into the potential new service under Wednesday's negotiated plan.

Rogers and Cooper said their Space Corps effort is part of a systematic push to reform the Department of Defense national security space enterprise, starting with the Air Force.

"After months of thorough

oversight, it became clear that the Department of Defense, and the Air Force in particular, did not prioritize space capabilities even as threats increase, and were not structured in a way to ensure that we are able to deter, defend and, if necessary, fight and win in space," Rogers and Cooper said Wednesday in a prepared joint statement. "No single official could be held accountable for the success or failure of the space enterprise. Too many bureaucrats are empowered to say 'no' when it comes to defending our assets in space, and too few were empowered to say 'yes.'"

National security, space-related reforms in the defense bill approved Wednesday direct the existing Air Force Space Command as the sole authority for organizing, training, and equipping all space forces within the Air Force. This group will report to the secretary of the Air Force, Rogers and Cooper said.



# Surgeon joined Navy after son's death

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Dr. Bill Krissoff is a serious man who quickly becomes warm and friendly in conversation. Refined, with a full head of gray hair, he looks as much like a grandfather as he does an accomplished orthopedic surgeon.

Despite his unassuming appearance, Krissoff and his family are a heroic and selfless example of service in the post-Sept. 11, 2001, war on terrorism.

After losing his son, Marine 1st Lt. Nathan Krissoff, in 2006 to a roadside bomb in Fallujah, Iraq, he joined the Navy medical corps after leveraging a meeting with President George W. Bush to obtain the needed age waiver. He later deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, where he is credited with saving countless lives.

Krissoff is on Okinawa this week as an honored guest of Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, the III Marine Expeditionary Force commander, who led the 5th Marine Regiment in Fallujah when Nathan was killed.

Krissoff, who received an award dedicated to his son from the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, also was to attend Marine Corps birthday balls and to speak to Marines and members of Okinawa's military medical community about his experiences.

"Bill Krissoff is one of my heroes," Nicholson said in a video tribute made by Steven Spielberg that aired at the 2014 Concert for Valor on the National Mall in Washington. "There's no doubt in my mind that because of his presence [down-range], there are Marines alive today."

## 'He wanted to serve'

Krissoff's story starts with Nathan, who was deeply affected by the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"Like many men and women

**'In most families, Dad inspires sons. In our family, sons inspire Dad.'**

**Bill Krissoff**

an orthopedic surgeon who joined the Navy after his son was killed in Iraq

of his generation, he wanted to serve," he said. "He chose the challenge of the Marine Corps to fulfill that."

Nathan entered officer candidate school in June 2003. Upon graduation, he was assigned to 3rd Intelligence Battalion in Okinawa, Japan, as a counter-intelligence specialist. After exercises on mainland Japan and the Philippines, he wanted to deploy and was able to get attached to 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion when it was sent to Fallujah.

Bill Krissoff said things were starting to get "rough" in Anbar province before Nathan arrived in September 2006. As Nathan deployed, his brother, Austin, was preparing to enter officer candidate school, having graduated recently from college.

"Almost five years to the day after September 11, 2001, I have the chance to put my money where my mouth is in terms of service," Nathan wrote in an email to his family, according to the book "For Love of Country" by Howard Schultz and Rajiv Chandrasekaran. "I'm constantly reminded of that famous quote from Tom Hanks' character at the end of Saving Private Ryan: 'Earn this.' Earning it will mean sacrifice, determination, doing my job to the best of my ability. I chose this, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Nathan, then 25, was killed Dec. 9, 2006, when his Humvee drove over explosives that had been buried in a dry riverbed. Sitting in the right rear seat, he took the brunt of the blast.

He was remembered as a natural leader who was dedicated to his Marines and had a talent for collecting information that potentially could save lives.

After his son was laid to rest,

Krissoff got back to work. However, there was a void, something left unfulfilled. He got the idea to join the service after a visit and a conversation about theater medicine with Nathan's battalion commander.

"At that point, I contacted a Navy medical recruiter and expressed my interest [in becoming a battalion surgeon, taking care of wounded and injured Marines]," Krissoff said. "He politely thanked me for my interest but doubted I could get an age waiver since I was 60 at the time."

In August 2007, Bush went to Reno to give a speech. Afterward, he met with families who had lost loved ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the conclusion of an emotional meeting, Bush asked if there was anything that the families needed.

"I asked him directly, 'I'm an orthopedic surgeon and wanted to serve in the Navy medical corps but was told I was too old, and no disrespect sir, I'm younger than you are,'" Krissoff recalled. Bush looked to Krissoff's wife, who was supportive.

"He said, 'No promises, but we'll see what we can do,'" Krissoff said. "Two days later, I got a call from the recruiter. Kind of chuckling, he said, 'Bill, it looks like you got your age waiver.'"

## Raising his hand

Krissoff entered the service as a lieutenant commander in the Navy and joined a reserve unit, the 4th Medical Battalion, based in San Diego.

Intent on deploying, he took every combat medical course available. Then he raised his hand and volunteered.

In February 2009, he arrived in Iraq for a seven-month deployment. The country was

mostly pacified by that time, so the care was predominantly routine, he said. He was able to visit Austin, who was deployed to Iraq with the Marines. Then he returned home.

Back in the States, Krissoff took active-duty orders to Camp Pendleton, Calif. After only a few weeks, he heard that the next rotation of doctors was heading to Afghanistan — and they had an opening. Once again, he volunteered. He hadn't even unpacked his bags from Iraq.

Krissoff arrived at Camp Bastion in southern Afghanistan as the battle for Marjah was kicking off in February 2010. He was resolved to finish what Nathan started and to get Marines back home safely.

"We saw lots of combat injuries," he said. "Probably two-thirds were extremity injuries."

With so many injuries to arms and legs, Krissoff said the goal was to clean the wounds, to stabilize the patients and to move them to more capable medical facilities out of theater.

In his time in Afghanistan, Krissoff served as the primary or assistant surgeon on 225 serious casualties, including countless amputations, according to "For Love of Country."

Marines coming into Bastion with a heartbeat had a 97 percent chance of making it to the next facility alive.

"The results were good, and the care, in my opinion, was second to none," Krissoff said.

He served for six years. He also deployed to Morocco and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

While Krissoff admitted you never find closure after the loss of a loved one, he feels that he did finish what Nathan started.

"In most families, Dad inspires sons. In our family, sons inspire Dad," Krissoff said.

"I was pretty much inspired by both sons who joined the Marines to put the uniform on and to serve ... [Nathan] was a natural leader with a keen wit, wry grin, and he was a joy to us, for sure."

# Pence attends memorial for victims of church massacre

Associated Press

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, Texas — Vice President Mike Pence joined Texas Gov. Greg Abbott at a memorial service for the victims of Sunday's massacre at a small-town Texas church.

Pence told the crowd Wednesday evening that the shooting at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs was the worst mass shooting at a church in American history and called the gunman "deranged."

"Whatever animated the evil that descended on that small church, if the attacker's desire was to silence their testimony of faith, they failed," the vice president added.

Abbott began the service by praying "for healing and for help."

The governor said Texans come together at times of crisis and tragedy. "It's what we do," Abbott said. People in the crowd responded "amen."

He also proclaimed Tuesday

a statewide day of prayer.

Authorities have reviewed video from inside the church where a gunman killed more than two dozen, including footage that shows the assailant shooting victims in the head during Sunday services, a U.S. official said Wednesday.

The official's account of the video is consistent with statements made by survivors of the attack. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

The same U.S. official confirmed that the attacker's cellphone was an iPhone and that the FBI had not yet asked Apple for help obtaining data from the device.

The church regularly recorded its services, and the footage investigators have seen shows several minutes of the attack because there was "no one to turn it off," according to a law enforcement official who has

seen the video. The official also spoke on condition of anonymity because that person was not authorized to speak publicly about an ongoing investigation.

The law enforcement official was among those who went inside the First Baptist Church after the attack and said several of the pews were overturned, although it was unclear if that was from the attack or from rescue efforts. Bullets had splintered the walls and pews, leaving shards of wood all over the floors.

Pence arrived in Texas on Wednesday, visiting wounded victims at a San Antonio hospital and later meeting families of the dead in Floresville, not far from Sutherland Springs.

Pence went from table to table at a high school library attempting to console devastated family members.

"The whole country is praying over you," he told one man who lost his sister-in-law.

# Elections lift hopes of Dems

Associated Press

Sweeping Democratic victories in Virginia and key gains in other 2017 state legislative races have lifted Democratic hopes of even bigger wins in next year's midterm elections as they seek a greater voice in how political districts will be redrawn for the decade to come.

Democrats won the governors' offices in Virginia and New Jersey on Tuesday, erased a previously dominant Republican majority in the Virginia House of Delegates and won a special election that gave them control of the Washington state Senate.

All told, Democrats flipped about two dozen state legislative seats around the country Tuesday and now have gained at least 30 seats previously held by Republicans since President Donald Trump won election last year.

"In general, this is a rebuke of Republican governance of states," said Jessica Post, executive director of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee. "The other thing it said is we can win all across the country."

The fight for control of legislative chambers matters not only for policies on health care, taxes and education, but also because the legislatures in most states determine how future congressional and state legislative districts are drawn. The next round of redistricting will take place after the 2020 Census, and both parties are focused on controlling as many states as possible by then.

Republicans swept to power in many states in the 2010 elections, just in time to use their new authority during the last round of redistricting.

This year's Democratic victories are "a very small step forward" by comparison and largely have come in "seats, that by all rights, they probably should have had already," said Matt Walter, president of the Republican State Leadership Committee.

# Trump, Xi seek to present united front

Associated Press

BEIJING — President Donald Trump sought to present a united front with Chinese President Xi Jinping following two days of meetings Thursday, despite lingering differences over trade and North Korea.

On trade, Trump criticized the "very one-sided and unfair" trade relationship between the U.S. and China. But he stopped short of castigating Xi, saying he doesn't blame the country for having taken advantage of the U.S. in the past.

Trump said China "must immediately address the unfair trade practices that drive" what he said is a "shockingly" large trade deficit, along with barriers to market access, forced technology transfers and intellectual property theft. "But I don't

blame China," he said. "After all, who can blame a country for being able to take advantage of another country for the benefit of its citizens?"

To applause, Trump said, "I give China great credit."

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson offered a blunter assessment of China's trade surplus with the U.S., which in October widened by 12.2 percent from a year earlier, to \$26.6 billion. The total surplus with the U.S. for the first 10 months of the year was \$223 billion.

"I think the best way to characterize it is that while we appreciate the long hours and the effort that our Chinese counterparts have put into those trade discussions, quite frankly, in the grand scheme of a [\$300 billion] to \$500 billion trade deficit, the things that have been achieved

are pretty small," Tillerson told reporters in Beijing.

He said that, "in terms of really getting at some of the fundamental elements of why this imbalance exists, there is still a lot more work to do."

Tillerson also acknowledged that there were differences on "tactics and the timing and how far to go with pressure" on North Korea. But he insisted that the two countries were on the same page.

Trump's and Tillerson's comments came during Trump's second and final day in China and after lengthy meetings with Xi. The day included announcements that the U.S. and China had signed agreements valued at more than \$250 billion for products including U.S.-made jet engines, auto parts, liquefied natural gas and beef.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Thief doesn't get far in motorized store cart

**AK** FAIRBANKS — A man accused of stealing a motorized shopping cart from an Alaska grocery store didn't get very far or go very fast before his low-speed getaway attempt was foiled by police.

The battery-operated cart with a basket mounted in front of the handlebars has a top speed of 1.9 mph.

Authorities said Rondell Tony Chinuhuk, of Anchorage, is charged with felony theft for allegedly attempting to take the cart early Tuesday from a Safeway store in Fairbanks.

Police said they stopped Chinuhuk while he was crossing a thoroughfare following a 10-minute joyride that consisted mostly of trying to leave the expansive store parking lot.

## Man: Untied shoelace led to Walmart gunfire

**ME** AUGUSTA — A violent struggle inside a Maine Walmart started with a comment over an untied shoelace and ended with gunfire, according to one of the men involved, but police say a death outside the store was unrelated.

Investigators allege Robert Potter, 31, pulled a gun on another customer during an argument Monday night at the Walmart in Augusta. They said the gun went off as the other man tried to disarm him. No one was hit.

Police said a woman apparently witnessed the fight and ran to the parking lot, where she suffered a medical emergency and died.

The other man involved in the fight, Kevin Roberge, told

the Kennebec Journal the dispute started when he told Potter one of his boots was untied.

## Viral photos of student lead to modeling job

**NH** PLYMOUTH — Two photographs of a New Hampshire college student that went viral on social media have led to a modeling job.

Vogue reported that Anok Yai has signed with Next Management just a couple of weeks after a photographer took photos of her for his Instagram account while she was at a homecoming event at Howard University in Washington.

Yai, 19, is a sophomore at Plymouth State University. Anok's family fled South Sudan and has lived in Manchester, N.H., since 2001.

The photos have gotten more than 19,000 likes. Yai said she heard from three modeling agencies.

The biochemistry student said she's always been interested in fashion and art, but modeling was a dream she didn't think would ever happen.

## WWII vet, 93, scores upset election win

**NJ** TINTON FALLS — A 93-year-old World War II veteran upset an incumbent New Jersey mayor who was seeking a second term.

Vito Perillo on Tuesday defeated Tinton Falls Mayor Gerald Turning in the nonpartisan municipal race.

Perillo told the Asbury Park Press he wore out two pairs of shoes campaigning door-to-door.

The U.S. Navy veteran decided to run following a pair of whistleblower lawsuits involving the police department that

cost the borough a reported \$1.1 million in settlements.

## Distillery helps troops go home for holidays

**TN** LYNCHBURG — With the holidays approaching, the Jack Daniel Distillery is working with a military support group to make sure military members and their families can celebrate with relatives.

For the seventh year, the distillery in Tennessee is teaming with the Armed Services YMCA for the "Operation Ride Home" campaign. The effort provides financial assistance to active-duty junior-enlisted military members and their families to travel home for the holidays.

Jack Daniel's donated \$100,000 to kick off the campaign. Officials behind the brand said the distillery is urging donations to help more servicemembers spend the holidays at home.

Since "Operation Ride Home" began, 5,767 people have been assisted. Military members have been able to travel to 47 states.

## Parrot's screams of 'Help!' trigger 911 call

**OR** CLACKAMAS — A UPS deliveryman in Oregon who heard a woman's screams for help had his wife call 911, but when a deputy showed up it turned out the screamer was a parrot, not a woman.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Tuesday that when Clackamas County Sheriff's Deputy Hayden Sanders showed up, all he found was Diego the Parrot.

The green-and-yellow bird

was in good health and no humans were involved.

## Hate crime charge urged in bodily fluids case

**CT** WEST HARTFORD — The Connecticut NAACP wants a felony hate crime charge filed against a white former college student accused of smearing body fluids on her black roommate's belongings.

Former University of Hartford student Brianna Brochu was charged Oct. 28 with misdemeanor criminal mischief and breach of peace. Police said last week they were seeking a hate crime charge, which has not been filed.

Police said Brochu claimed to have tampered with her roommate's belongings, including putting her toothbrush "where the sun doesn't shine" and rubbing used tampons on her backpack.

## Burglary suspects held after fleeing in canoe

**CA** LAKE ELSINORE — Southern California authorities arrested two burglary suspects they say tried to make their getaway in a canoe.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department said a Lake Elsinore resident heard glass breaking at a neighbor's property and saw someone running away.

Police in a sheriff's helicopter spotted two people get into a canoe and use shovels to paddle out into the lake.

When the men realized they'd been spotted, they paddled back to shore, pulled the canoe into some bushes and ran off.

Sheriff's deputies found the two local men and arrested them.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Scandal distracts from promising season

Associated Press

College basketball is better than ever on the floor. Scoring is up, stars players fill every corner of the country and fan support is sky high.

Off the floor, it has an image problem.

A federal probe this summer uncovered the dark underbelly of college basketball, revealing a web of bribes and kickbacks from shoe companies funneled toward recruits. The arrests of 10 people, including assistant coaches at four prominent schools, casts a shadow over the sport heading into the 2017-18 season — and likely beyond.

“It’s a big egg on a lot of our faces,” Utah coach Larry Krystkowiak said. “It kind of speaks for the entire entity, and we’re part of it.”

The federal investigation led to the arrests of assistant coaches from No. 3 Arizona, No. 10 Southern Cal, Oklahoma State and Auburn, along with an Adidas marketing executive. The probe has already taken down No. 16 Louisville coach Rick Pitino and athletic director Tom Jurich, and more could come as the investigation digs deeper.

The teams already in the crosshairs — Miami is also among them — will play with uncertainty; whether its players will remain eligible, if the investigation will reach all the way to the head coach, if NCAA sanctions are on the horizon.

The other major programs, particularly those with high-end recruits, could be looking over their shoulders all season to see if they will become ensnared.

“You have to eliminate the clutter and

understand the class has to be tight,” Arizona coach Sean Miller. “You have to talk to people, but only we know what happens on a daily basis in our program.”

On the court, Miller has the type of team that could end his Final Four-less run. The Wildcats have a solid core of experienced players returning from last year’s Elite Eight team — preseason All-American Allonzo Trier among them — to go with a stellar recruiting class, highlighted by athletic big man Deandre Ayton.

Duke is the preseason No. 1 for the second straight season with senior Grayson Allen back and the addition of Marvin Bagley III, coach Mike Krzyzewski’s latest one-and-done wonder.

Michigan State’s Tom Izzo always seems to get the most out of his team in March and has plenty to work with this season, playing with a stacked deck bolstered by the return of preseason All-American Miles Bridges.

No. 4 Kansas has reloaded and is gunning for Big 12 title No. 14 in a row. So has No. 5 Kentucky, but you knew that already; Coach Cal is never without a roster full of future NBA players.

Defending national champion North Carolina lost a lot from a year ago, but the return of point guard Joel Berry II was huge for the Tar Heels, even if he will miss the start of the season after breaking his hand punching a door.

Don’t count out the mid majors, who have been major players since Butler reached consecutive Final Fours from 2010-11.

Gonzaga reached the title game a year ago and took the Tar Heels to the wire. The

Zags lost a lot from that team, but came in at No. 18 in the AP preseason poll and coach Mark Few has another talented group.

This year it could be Wichita State. Coach Gregg Marshall, who has spurned offers from other schools to remain in Wichita, has his entire starting five back and a stronger schedule — for NCAA Tournament seeding purposes — after the Shockers’ move to the AAC.

“My job got better in terms of the profile of the league and the opportunity to get in the NCAA Tournament,” Marshall said.

And don’t forget about the freshman. Every year seems to bring bigger, more athletic players straight out of high school, and this season is no exception.

Bagley is 6 feet, 11 inches of do everything, making a good Duke team even better. Same thing with Ayton, though at 7-1, 260 pounds. Kentucky has five high school All-Americans.

The best of the bunch could be Missouri’s Michael Porter Jr. He’s 6-10, can shoot, score off the dribble, is a preseason All-American, the projected No. 1 NBA draft pick and has been compared to a young Kevin Durant. He’s going to get plenty of shots in Columbia, too.

“He’s long and fast and skilled, got tremendous feel, I.Q.” Florida coach Mike White said. “He’s going to be a really good player.”

The 2017-18 season will be filled with them. Whether they’ll be enough to pull the sport from under the dark cloud hanging over it remains to be seen.

## Things to know as new year of college hoops tips off

Associated Press

North Carolina closed out the 2016-17 season by holding off upstart Gonzaga for its sixth national championship.

April seems so long ago now.

College basketball has undergone a major shift since the Tar Heels cut down the nets, with teams losing key players, star freshmen filling their places, and new coaches taking over prominent programs.

To get you ready for the season, here’s a rundown of the top teams, players and coaches for 2017-18:

### Top teams

**Duke:** No. 1 with another one-and-done in Marvin Bagley III joining Grayson Allen.

**Michigan State:** Could be Tom Izzo’s most talented team with Miles Bridges back. He’s gone deep into March with less.

**Arizona:** Allonzo Trier and freshman big man Deandre Ayton headline what could be Sean Miller’s best shot at making the Final Four.

**Kansas:** Rebuild is not in the vocabulary in Lawrence. More like reload.

**Kentucky:** Coach Cal has another batch of budding pros, even if they will be the youngest he’s had in Lexington.

### Top players

**Bridges, Michigan State:** Was one of college basketball’s best last season. Should be better after skipping out on a shot at the NBA.

**Bonzie Colson, Notre Dame:** Double-double machine will carry

the Irish far.

**Trier, Arizona.** One of the nation’s best scorers and clutch players.

**Jalen Brunson, Villanova.** Scores, shoots, dishes, leads. Can’t ask for much more.

**Joel Berry II, North Carolina.** Last season’s Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four will miss the start of the season after punching a wall and breaking his hand.

### Key nonconference games

**No. 1 Duke vs. No. 2 Michigan State, Nov. 14 in Chicago.** A 1-2 matchup this early is a great way to get the season rolling.

**No. 4 Kansas vs. No. 5 Kentucky, Nov. 14 in Chicago.** Talk about a marquee doubleheader nightcap in the Windy City.

**No. 1 Duke at Indiana,**

**Nov. 29.** Blueblood battle in Bloomington.

**No. 14 Notre Dame at No. 2 Michigan State, Nov. 30.** Bonzie Colson vs. Miles Bridges? We’ll take that every day.

**No. 16 Louisville at No. 5 Kentucky, Dec. 29.** Always epic.

### New coaches

**Archie Miller, Indiana:** Looks like the perfect fit to turn the Hoosiers around.

**Cuonzo Martin, Missouri:** Left Cal for Columbia. Addition of Michael Porter Jr. will ease transition.

**Chris Holtman, Ohio State:** Did well at Butler. Takes over in Columbus after Thad Matta retired.

**Brian Dutcher, San Diego State:** Taking over for a legend is never easy, but Dutch was Steve Fisher’s right-hand man for years.



# NFL full of surprises at halfway point

Associated Press

Predicting what's ahead in an NFL season is no easier than forecasting the weather. Given all the variables, it's probably harder.

The team of September, the Chiefs, went mediocre on us in October and early November. Those struggling Patriots who were 2-2 now seem on course for yet another hosting role in the AFC playoffs.

Early-season woes for the Giants that were dismissed as temporary have become chronic. That ugly 0-2 start for the Saints has turned into a beautiful six-game winning streak.

See?

No matter. Here are some things to look for as we move through November and December:

**More QB injuries:** This has been the overriding story of the season, with Aaron Rodgers, Carson Palmer, sensational rookie Deshaun Watson and Sam Bradford all going down. Ryan Tannehill didn't even make it out of the preseason, and Andrew Luck's shoulder didn't heal enough after winter surgery for him to suit up.

Speculating who might be

the next quarterback or three who will suffer a major injury is ghoulish. Consider, though, that nine teams (Tampa Bay, Minnesota, Green Bay, Arizona, Tennessee, Oakland, Houston, Miami and Baltimore) have had to go to backups because of injured starters.

**Officiating controversy:** This one is unavoidable, and will occur weekly. Seems as if no weekend goes by without a pool reporter being sent to talk to game officials about a decision.

As video replay becomes more refined — we can just about count the blades of grass under a receiver's hands as he cradles (or doesn't) a pass — and the NFL rulebook remains far too complex, officiating will continue to play a huge role in outcomes of games.

One request: no more reversals like what we saw in Falcons-Lions and Patriots-Jets that fans will be questioning into the new year.

**Hotter seats:** Other than Hue Jackson in Cleveland, the fire figures to burn very hot under the Buccaneers' Dirk Koetter; the Giants' Ben McAdoo; the Bengals' Marvin Lewis, whose contract is up this year; the Colts' Chuck Pagano, who could

get a pass because he's had no, ahem, luck with his passer; and possibly the Lions' Jim Caldwell. New York and Detroit are among the league's biggest underachievers, and that likely won't change in 2017.

**Passion if not skill:** It would be difficult to find a club that would trade its roster for what the Jets or Bears have. It also would be tough to point out any teams that play with more passion and dedication.

There's no reason to believe either of them will stop giving their all for 60 minutes. New York is 4-5 in a year some projected it wouldn't win a game and was tanking for the top overall draft pick. With any finishing power, the Jets would be in the playoff hunt.

Chicago is 3-5 despite an inept passing game, and has beaten Pittsburgh and Carolina. The Bears simply don't go away. Maybe they aren't the Monsters of the Midway, but they sure are pesky.

Give tremendous credit to coaches Todd Bowles and John Fox. And expect more of the same from both teams the rest of the way.

**A tie or two:** One thing we've learned from the reduced over-

time period (from 15 minutes to 10) is that a tie is hardly unlikely. Indeed, getting more than one possession in OT can be problematic.

So expect at least one deadlock down the stretch, and let's hope it won't figure into playoff tiebreakers.

**Early clinchings:** With two highly regarded divisions, the AFC West and North, turning soft, watch for the Steelers and Chiefs to be selling playoff tickets by mid-December. Same for the Patriots, but that's a yearly occurrence in the mediocre AFC East.

Barring a stunning turnaround, the Eagles, at 8-1 the league's top team, will be making postseason plans about a month from now. The Saints, too, if their defense remains stout.

**Win for San Francisco. And Cleveland:** Just kidding.

Actually, the 49ers beating the Giants this Sunday hardly is farfetched, though the odds would be much shorter if Jimmy Garoppolo was ready.

You decide which team — if either — has a better shot at a victory.

## Notre Dame-Miami: Strengths intersect

Associated Press

For Notre Dame and Miami, it is strength versus strength.

Notre Dame has one of the nation's best rushing offenses and nearly twice as many touchdowns on the ground as it did last season. Miami's undefeated start and re-emergence in the national picture has been fueled by a defensive front seven that likes to describe itself as violent.

So when No. 3 Notre Dame (8-1) visits No. 7 Miami (8-0) for a nationally televised showdown between longtime rival programs on Saturday night, that matchup will likely tell the tale of who emerges with its national-title hopes still looking realistic.

"It's an outstanding front four," Notre Dame coach Brian Kelly said about Miami. "The linebackers run and tackle as well as any group that we've played. ... They can play a number of different coverages by

keeping three linebackers on the field and that's pretty hard to do today in college football. A unique skill-set in that group."

Kelly spent much of his weekly news conference Tuesday raving about the Hurricanes' defense. In Coral Gables, Miami's Mark Richt offered similar sentiments about the Irish offense.

"Their offensive line, probably the best in America," Richt said. "I don't think very many people would argue that. ... Very experienced but very, very talented. They're paving the way, over 300 yards per game rushing and this isn't triple-option football. This is just line up and physically move people off the ball, a kick-your-tail type offensive line and great runners."

Notre Dame has rushed for at least 318 yards in each of its past five games. The Irish already have nearly 1,000 more yards on the ground this season through nine

games than they did in all of last season. Only one team has slowed the Irish ground game in 2017 — and it was Georgia, Richt's former school.

His current school now has to figure out a way to do what the Bulldogs did. If the Hurricanes succeed on that front and extend the nation's longest current winning streak to 14 games, there will be a bit of symmetry that will put all of 2016's disappointments to rest for good.

Miami's defense has bent from time to time this season against the run, but rarely breaks. The Hurricanes are giving up 3.9 yards per carry, yet have yielded only four rushing touchdowns — tied for fourth-fewest in the nation. Notre Dame leads the nation at 7.0 yards per carry, and its 34 rushing TDs is tied for second-most among FBS teams (one behind Florida Atlantic).

## NBA roundup

## Celtics top Lakers for 10th straight win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Aron Baynes matched his career high with 21 points, Kyrie Irving scored 19 and the Boston Celtics beat the Los Angeles Lakers 107-96 on Wednesday night for their 10th straight victory.

Baynes also had eight rebounds and three assists, and Boston improved to 10-2 even as Al Horford sat out after being placed in concussion protocol earlier in the day. The Celtics also lost rookie forward Jayson Tatum late in the second quarter, when he went to the locker room with a sore right ankle.

Brandon Ingram and Jordan Clarkson led the Lakers with 18 points apiece. Julius Randle had 16 points and 12 rebounds. Celtics fans gave rookie Lonzo Ball an icy welcome in his first trip to TD Garden. They booed the No. 2 overall pick throughout the night whenever he touched the ball. He finished

with nine points, six assists and five rebounds, making just 4 of 15 from the field.

**Warriors 125, Timberwolves 101:** Klay Thompson scored 28 points with six three-pointers, Stephen Curry had 22 points, eight assists and eight rebounds, and Golden State beat visiting Minnesota for its fifth straight win.

Even without injured Kevin Durant, the defending champs began to look like their dominant old selves.

Draymond Green posted another all-round balanced performance with seven points, six rebounds, six assists and two blocks for the Warriors, who played without NBA Finals MVP Durant as he nursed a bruised left thigh. Andre Iguodala started in place of Durant, and the 2015 Finals MVP scored a season-high 11 points.

Andrew Wiggins scored 17 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 16 points and 12

rebounds as the Timberwolves had their five-game winning streak snapped.

**Pistons 114, Pacers 97:** Tobias Harris scored 23 points and host Detroit won for the sixth time in seven games, beating Indiana.

Andre Drummond added 14 points and 21 rebounds for the first-place Pistons. They lead Cleveland by three games in the Central Division. Indiana lost its fourth straight.

Victor Oladipo led the Pacers with 21 points, but Indiana has allowed at least 100 points in 10 of 12 games this season. The Pacers were without injured big man Domantas Sabonis (bruised right calf).

**Magic 112, Knicks 99:** Nikola Vucevic scored 24 points and Evan Fournier added 23 to help Orlando beat visiting New York.

Jonathon Simmons scored 15 of his 16 points in the second half. He had 11 straight points

early in the fourth quarter to push the Magic's lead back to double figures.

The Magic, benefiting from the return of starting point guard Elfrid Payton, snapped a two-game losing streak. New York, playing without Kristaps Porzingis (ankle and elbow injuries), had its three-game winning streak come to an end. Tim Hardaway Jr. led New York with 26 points.

**Heat 126, Suns 115:** Former Phoenix guard Goran Dragic scored a season-high 29 points in visiting Miami's victory over the Suns on Wednesday night.

The Heat made 12 three-pointers, shot 53.1 percent overall and never trailed. Hassan Whiteside added 23 points, 10 rebounds and four blocked shots for Miami.

Devin Booker led Phoenix with 30 points. The Suns have lost four straight.

## NHL roundup

## Anderson saves Maple Leafs against Wild

Associated Press

TORONTO — Minnesota coach Bruce Boudreau pointed to Toronto goalie Frederik Andersen.

"He won them the game," Boudreau said.

Anderson made 35 saves to help the Maple Leafs beat the Wild 4-2 on Wednesday night.

Nazem Kadri, Patrick Marleau, Connor Carrick and Connor Brown scored for Toronto. Playing with star center Auston Matthews out day to day with an upper-body injury, Toronto improved to 10-7-0.

Jason Zucker scored twice for Minnesota, and Devan Dubnyk stopped 15 shots. The Wild have lost three in a row to fall to 5-7-2.

"It's unfortunate we didn't get the result we wanted," Boudreau said. "I thought we played a pretty complete game for the most part."

Toronto coach Mike Babcock shifted

Marleau to the middle with Matthews out.

"I don't want Patty to play in the middle but right now we need him and I thought he stepped up tonight," Babcock said.

Matthews was scratched for the first time since being drafted in 2016, playing in 98 straight games including all 82 last year in his Calder Trophy winning campaign.

The Leafs caught a break with 9:37 to play in regulation when Andersen appeared to tweak his right arm and was in discomfort, but he stayed in the game after taking a TV timeout to speak with the training staff at the bench.

**Rangers 4, Bruins 2:** Jimmy Vesey scored two first-period goals 29 seconds apart, Henrik Lundqvist made 31 saves and host New York beat Boston for its fifth straight victory.

Pavel Buchnevich and Rick Nash also scored for the resurgent Rangers. They improved to 8-7-2 after losing seven of their first eight games.

"We're moving in the right direction," Lundqvist said after his seventh win this season and the 412th of his career. "We're back in the race."

**Lightning 5, Sharks 1:** Vladislav Namestnikov had two goals, Nikita Kucherov scored his 15th of the season and visiting Tampa Bay ended San Jose's four-game winning streak.

Jake Dotchin got his first career goal and Slater Koekkoek also scored for the Lightning (12-2-2), who lead the NHL standings with 26 points.

Steven Stamkos had three assists for Tampa Bay.

Kucherov added two and Namestnikov had one as all three players finished with three points. Stamkos (28 points) and Kucherov (26) rank 1-2 in the league in scoring.

Joonas Donskoi scored 25 seconds in for the Sharks, who allowed five goals for the third time this season.