

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Data detail sexual assaults at US bases

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Newly released Pentagon data show Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, has received the most reports of sexual assaults among U.S. military installations worldwide for the past three years.

The Defense Department for the first time on Friday made public the number of sexual assault reports taken at each of its installations from 2013 through 2016. The new data show a consistency among the installations handling the most sexual assault cases year-to-year, which include some of the military's largest posts.

In addition to Naval Station Norfolk, the Navy's largest base, the Army's Fort Hood, Texas, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Naval Base San Diego and the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Camp Pendleton, Calif., have regularly received the highest tally of

sexual assault reports in recent years.

The Pentagon cautioned that the numbers do not necessarily indicate the reported sexual assaults occurred at those facilities nor do they indicate crimes actually were committed. For example, sexual assaults that occur during an overseas deployment are often reported only after servicemembers have returned to their home installations, the Pentagon's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office wrote in a report detailing the new data.

"One of the features of the department's reporting program is that service members can report allegations of sexual assault at any time and at any place," Nate Galbreath, that office's deputy director, said in a statement. "... This kind of flexibility allows the

department to better meet the department's goals to increase reporting of sexual assault and decrease the occurrence of the crime through prevention."

Pentagon officials for years had declined to provide the information to reporters requesting it through official channels. However, it recently determined it could release the data without harming victims.

Sexual misbehavior has exploded into a major issue throughout American society following a surge in complaints by women against powerful figures in Hollywood, politics and journalism.

Stamping out sexual assault has been among the chief priorities for top Pentagon officials for years. In fiscal 2016, the Pentagon reported that more servicemembers were reporting incidents of sexual assault while the total number of those assaults was believed to have fallen slightly.

Servicemembers reported 6,172 cases of sexual assault in 2016, compared to 6,083 the year before, according to data the Pentagon released in May. However, reported cases in 2016 were less than half of

the DOD-estimated 14,900 incidents among military members last year. The estimated numbers are the result of anonymous surveys taken each year by the force.

Naval Station Norfolk last year received 270 reports of sexual assaults, down from 291 the prior year. Joint Base San Antonio received the second highest number of reports in 2016 with 211, an increase from 198 in fiscal year 2015.

The data also show Army installations took the most reports in each of the last four years. The Army is the largest of the services. In 2016, Army posts received 2,205 sexual assault reports. Navy installations received 1,285, Air Force bases received 1,043 and Marine bases received 825 in 2016. The remainder of cases occurred at joint bases or in combat zones.

Reports of sexual assaults in combat zones have decreased dramatically since 2013, although they increased slightly last year, the data show.

## About 3K more US troops deployed to Afghanistan

By CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. has deployed about 3,000 more troops to Afghanistan to help train and advise local forces, the military said Thursday.

In August, shortly after President Donald Trump authorized the buildup as part of a new strategy for America's longest war, the military said about 11,000 troops were in Afghanistan — thousands more than had been officially disclosed before that.

The "new number" is about 14,000, said Lt. Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, director of the Joint

Staff, speaking to Pentagon reporters.

"We've just completed a force flow into Afghanistan," he said. "Might be a little above that, might be a little below that, as we flex according to the mission."

Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, had lobbied for the additional forces, saying they were necessary to help train and advise local forces struggling to quash the resurgent Taliban and terrorist groups, including an Islamic State offshoot that has gained a foothold since most international combat forces left in 2014.

NATO Secretary-General

Jens Stoltenberg has said the alliance will also help meet Nicholson's requirement to bring the overall number of NATO troops from 13,000 to about 16,000.

At the height of the war during Barack Obama's presidency, U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan numbered about 140,000 troops.

Obama had set timelines for the drawdown of those forces, intending to complete a full withdrawal by the time he left office. By Trump's inauguration, Obama had reduced the official force limit to about 8,400.

Besides boosting troop numbers, Trump's plan did away with withdrawal deadlines, leav-

ing the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan open-ended. The president also vowed a more aggressive fight, promising the military would not forecast its plans for troop levels or future operations.

"Conditions on the ground — not arbitrary timetables — will guide our strategy from now on," Trump said in August. "America's enemies must never know our plans or believe they can wait us out. I will not say when we are going to attack, but attack we will."

McKenzie said the U.S. has nearly 5,300 troops in Iraq and about 500 in Syria helping battle ISIS.

# Senate sends \$700B defense bill to Trump

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — In a quick voice vote, the Senate on Thursday approved a massive defense bill, sending a nearly \$700 billion plan that would enact raises for servicemembers, would increase the size of the military, would fund new ships and aircraft and would authorize new spending on missile defense, to the president's desk ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Though the plan overcame a significant hurdle Thursday, it sets the stage for a new fight on how to fund the major increase in military spending. The plan busts budgetary caps and would need special legislative action to fund all the new priorities.

The 2018 fiscal year plan includes a 2.4 percent pay increase for servicemembers and necessary retention pay and bonuses, and it covers costly repairs for two Navy ships involved recently in deadly crashes.

Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., lauded the effort Thursday.

"Not only will this legislation authorize the resources, capabilities, pay and benefits that our men and women in uniform need to perform their missions, but this year's bill also goes further," he said. The measure "takes a notable step toward authorizing the resources needed to start rebuilding our military and restoring combat readiness. It will help improve our missile defense capabilities and better prepare us to deal with cyberthreats."

The plan was approved by a conference committee of Senate and House members last week, sending it to the lower chamber for approval on Tuesday and its subsequent passage in the upper chamber.

"The overwhelming, bipartisan support for this defense budget should serve as a reminder of the troubling state of our military today," said Senate

Armed Services Committee Chair John McCain, R-Ariz., who helped shepherd the bill. "I call upon the president to sign this important legislation into law — and in doing so, acknowledge that this is the level of defense spending necessary to meet current threats, prepare for the challenges of an increasingly dangerous world and keep faith with our men and women in uniform."

## Deal lauded

Congressional conference committee members who negotiated the deal have lauded the plans under the defense bill, also known as the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA. It authorizes funding for the Department of Defense and national security programs through the Department of Energy.

"Unfortunately, as the world has become more dangerous, we have cut the resources for our troops," said House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, in a statement following the bill's House passage Tuesday. "It will take more than one year and more than one bill to rebuild the strength that we have squandered, but the Constitution explicitly tasks the Congress with doing just that. This (bill) is an important start. It begins to rebuild our military strength; it gives our troops a much-needed pay raise; it replaces equipment that is just too broken to keep fixing."

However, the proposal surpasses the budget cap of \$549 billion for defense spending and will require new congressional action to be enacted. Otherwise, the proposed budget could trigger automatic, across-the-board spending cuts.

"Unless we follow the NDAA with an appropriations bill at the same levels, none of this work can begin," Thornberry warned. "Securing those appropriations must be Congress' top priority before the year ends."

The bill comprises a base

budget of more than \$620 billion, with \$66 billion in a warfighting account not subject to budget caps, called the Overseas Contingency Operations fund, and another \$8 billion for other defense activities.

It surpassed President Donald Trump's defense funding request by \$26 billion. Earlier this year, the administration proposed a defense budget of \$668 billion, a 5 percent increase from last year's spending plan. Last week, Trump asked to boost his original military funding request.

The budget also passed on some proposals, declining on a House plan for the creation of a Space Corps, a new military service that would be an arm of the Air Force.

The defense budget directs \$26.2 billion for 14 new ships and \$10.1 billion for the purchase of 90 Joint Strike Fighters, which is 20 more than the administration's request. It directs another \$5.9 billion for Virginia-class submarines, \$5.6 billion for Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, \$4.4 billion for aircraft carriers, \$3.1 billion for Army helicopters and \$1.9 billion for procuring 24 F/A-18 Super Hornets.

## More forces

The plan increases the military force by adding 7,500 soldiers to the Army and another 1,000 to the Marine Corps. It also increases the Army Reserve force by 500 and adds 500 to the Army National Guard.

The plan authorizes \$141.8 billion for military personnel, including the cost of pay, allowances, bonuses, death benefits and change-of-station moves. It authorizes another \$33.7 billion for the Defense Health Program and reauthorizes 30 types of bonuses and payments linked to recruiting.

It streamlines the Pentagon administration and details a new No. 3 position that goes into effect at the Pentagon next year for a chief management officer to direct business reforms. It

also formalizes a first-time auditing process for the department and directs the secretary of defense to address a backlog of 700,000 departmental security clearances.

The bill funds repairs to the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and the USS John S. McCain. Both ships were damaged badly in separate crashes during the summer that left 17 sailors dead.

The overall boost in the military funding request comes in the wake of a deadly year for the U.S. military when it comes to readiness and safety concerns.

McCain said during the bill's previous debate on the Senate floor that 185 servicemembers have died in military accidents in the last three years.

"We are killing more of our own people in training than our enemies are in combat," McCain said during the September debate.

In July, the House approved a \$696 billion defense budget, while the Senate approved a nearly \$700 billion plan in September. Still, many of the efforts must overcome budget caps to move forward.

In September, Congress approved a temporary funding measure that gave Congress at least three months to approve a new overall spending plan for fiscal 2018, which started Oct. 1. But that also meant a new military budget was on the clock: Congress has until December to come up with a deal to fund its \$700 billion defense proposal or it might have to delay its spending plans again.

Congress has been here before. Former President Barack Obama signed the 2017 defense policy plan on Dec. 23, 2016. But faced with another round of delays, a \$1.1 trillion omnibus government spending bill that included the defense budget wasn't approved until May. Until then, military operations were kept afloat by a short-term funding bill — as is the case now.

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# DOD retweets call for Trump to resign

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department's official Twitter account retweeted a call for President Donald Trump to resign Thursday afternoon, a misfire the Pentagon blamed on an errant authorized user.

The tweet's content "would not be endorsed by the Department of Defense," said Army Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman. He added that it was almost immediately deleted once the account's operator realized the error.

The tweet in question, authored by a user with the handle

@ProudResister, called on Trump and high-profile male officials accused in recent days of past sexual misconduct to step down. The user's profile describes the author as a "Proud Member of #TheResistance" and links to a website that sells T-shirts that include lewd remarks about the president. #TheResistance is a reference to an anti-Trump movement.

The tweet, which had been retweeted more than 1,000 times by Thursday afternoon, read: "The solution is simple ... Roy Moore: Step down from the race. Al Franken: Resign from Congress. Donald Trump: Resign from the presidency. GOP:

Stop making sexual assault a partisan issue. It's a crime as is your hypocrisy."

The error comes one day after another top U.S. military command's official Twitter account linked to a local television news report that contained errant information about the military's nuclear capabilities.

U.S. Strategic Command on Wednesday tweeted a link to the story about the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Kentucky, which inaccurately reported that nuclear weapons could be fired from "secret silos" and that Air Force B-1 bombers "can drop [nuclear weapons] from the air."

The location of the United States' missile silos are unclassified and publicly available. B-1 Lancers are conventional bombers, meaning they are incapable of carrying nuclear weapons. Despite numerous responses pointing out the story's errors, STRATCOM declined to delete its tweet. In a response to Twitter users' questions, the command in charge of the U.S. nuclear capabilities wrote that the story provided "good insight into life" aboard the Kentucky. The tweet added that STRATCOM had asked the news station to correct its error. As of Thursday afternoon, the story had not been corrected.

## Congress debates president's ability to launch nukes

BY STEPHEN CARLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — For the first time in more than 40 years, senators debated whether the president should possess the power to unilaterally launch a nuclear first strike.

Concerns have arisen amid tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program and the escalating war of words between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

A Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing Tuesday addressed the issue and whether Trump could put the U.S. "on the path to WWII," according to Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn.

"A number of members on both sides of the aisle, on and off the committee, have raised questions about the executive's authorities with respect to war-making, the use of nuclear weapons, and from a diplomatic perspective, entering into and terminating agreements with other countries," committee chairman Corker said.

This follows questions at an earlier hearing on the possible use of nuclear weapons in a first strike. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson were asked repeatedly during an Oct. 30 hearing about what safeguards and oversight existed to prevent a potentially unstable president from launching such a strike, triggering a nuclear conflict. Both declined to say whether the U.S. would refuse to launch a first strike if circumstances warranted it.

"Don't tell the enemy in advance what you're not going to do," Mattis said.

The hearings marked the first time since

1976 that nuclear authorization and process has been looked at by Congress, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Corker said Tuesday that the realities of nuclear weapons on high alert and the old Cold War between the U.S. and Russia made it essential for the president to have sole authority over the use of nuclear weapons. A wave of incoming Soviet missiles could strike in minutes and there would be no time for debate.

"But this process means the president has the sole authority to give that order, whether we are responding to a nuclear attack or not," Corker said at Tuesday's hearing.

He denied that the inquiries were solely directed at Trump.

### U.S. nuclear arsenal

The United States possesses about 4,000 nuclear weapons; 1,800 are deployed with 852 of those on alert status, meaning they are capable of being launched in 15 minutes or less upon receiving the order, according to the nuclear watchdog Federation of American Scientists.

The 852 alert warheads — spread between land-based Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles and Ohio-class missile submarines, sailing almost undetectable on underwater patrols — give the president the ability to devastate a continent within 30 minutes.

North Korea is believed to possess over a dozen warheads and possibly thermonuclear models with a much higher yield than the small fission devices it has tested for years. It also has a large number of bal-

listic missiles and has said that it intends to mount nuclear weapons on them for possible strikes against U.S. territory.

The majority of U.S. weapons are aimed at their counterparts in Russia, but could be swiftly retargeted if necessary. The consequences of such a strike in terms of sheer destruction are a staple of post-apocalyptic fiction.

"Once that order is given and verified," Corker said, "there is no way to revoke it."

### Reducing the risk

On Wednesday, House Armed Services Committee ranking member Adam Smith, D-Wash., introduced a bill that would bar the U.S. from being the first to use nuclear weapons. It says, simply: "It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first."

The policy "will increase strategic stability, particularly in a crisis, reducing the risk of miscalculation that could lead to an unintended all-out nuclear war," Smith said in a statement.

"Paired with our reliable, survivable, assured nuclear deterrent, which is second to none, we retain nuclear forces that would inflict devastating retaliation against any nuclear attack against the United States or its allies," he said.

Tim Collina of the arms control group Ploughshares Fund told Stars and Stripes that legislation restricting any first strike by the U.S. would enhance security, since it would reassure other nuclear armed countries that the U.S. would not unilaterally engage them.

# Last ISIS-held Iraq town falls

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi forces backed by the U.S.-led coalition retook on Friday the last town in the country that was held by Islamic State, more than three years after the militants stormed nearly a third of Iraq's territory, the Defense Ministry said.

At dawn, military units and local tribal fighters pushed into the western neighborhoods of Rawah in western Anbar province, and after just five hours of fighting, they retook the town, according to Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool, the ministry's spokesman.

Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi congratulated his forces on retaking Rawah. In a statement released Friday afternoon, Al-Abadi said Iraqi forces liberated Rawah in record time and were continuing operations to retake control of Iraq's western desert and the border area with Syria.

Rawah, 175 miles northwest of Baghdad, lies along the Euphrates River Valley near the border town of Qaim that Iraqi

forces retook from ISIS earlier this month.

U.S.-led coalition forces supported the operations to retake Rawah and Qaim with intelligence, airstrikes and advisers, coalition spokesman Ryan Dillon said.

ISIS blitzed across Iraq's north and west in the summer of 2014, capturing Iraq's second-largest city of Mosul and advancing to the edges of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

Later that year, the United States began a campaign of airstrikes against the militants that fueled Iraqi territorial gains, allowing the military to retake Mosul in July this year.

All that now remains of ISIS-held Iraq are patches of rural territory in the country's vast western desert along the border with Syria.

ISIS has steadily been losing ground across the border in Syria, as well, where its so-called "caliphate" has basically crumbled with the loss of the city of Raqqa, the former ISIS capital, which fell to the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in October.

Both the U.S. and Russia have embedded special forces with their respective partners and are supporting their advances with airstrikes. Russia backs the Syrian government forces of President Bashar Assad.

The last urban areas controlled by the militants in Syria are parts of the border town of Boukamal and a patch of territory near the capital, Damascus, and in central Hama province.

Syrian government forces, backed by Russian troops and Iranian-backed militias, pushed ISIS out of Boukamal earlier this month, but the militants retook a large part of the town, mostly its northern neighborhoods, days later. Since then, ISIS has repelled government forces trying to push back into the town.

Meanwhile, U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces also are approaching Boukamal from the eastern side of the Euphrates.

Despite ISIS' significant territorial losses, the group's media arm remains intact, allowing it to still recruit supporters and inspire new attacks.

## Wash. NAS responsible for phallus sky drawing

The (Spokane, Wash.)  
Spokesman-Review

OKANOGAN, Wash. — Look! Up in the sky!

It's a bird.

It's a plane.

No, it's a phallic skydrawing, and a military aircraft may be the culprit.

Okanogan, Wash., residents told The Spokesman-Review that they saw the male genitalia deliberately being drawn in the skies above their town by a jet around noon Thursday.

Images of the drawing were quickly posted to social media, residents said, and sent around town through text message.

According to TV news station KREM 2, the Naval Air Station in Whidbey Island has claimed responsibility for the drawing, telling the station in an email that it finds "this absolutely unacceptable, of zero training value and we are holding the crew accountable."

The Spokesman-Review's attempts to reach the Whidbey Island base's public information officer for further information were unsuccessful.

On Thursday night at The Club Sports Bar and Grill in Okanogan, a central Washington town of just 2,550 residents, locals shared a few laughs about the image they'd seen in the clouds.

Ramone Duran said he was running errands when he looked up and saw what he thought looked like the start of someone trying to draw a male member with jet contrails.

About five minutes later, Duran said, the drawing was complete.

"After it made the circles at the bottom, I knew what it was and started laughing," Duran said. "It was pretty funny to see that. You don't expect to see something like that."

## Report: US strikes in Iraq not all that precise

BY CHAD GARLAND  
Stars and Stripes

U.S. airstrikes in Iraq may be far less precise than officials claim, perhaps killing civilians 31 times more than the military's reports acknowledge, a recent news investigation has found.

Reporters from The New York Times Magazine, examining a sample of nearly 150 coalition airstrikes carried out between August 2014 and December 2016 against Islamic State found that one in five resulted in at least one civilian death.

According to the 18-month investigation, published online on Thursday, the U.S.-led coalition's data show that just 89 of more than 14,000 of its airstrikes in Iraq — about one in

157 strikes — caused a civilian casualty. That figure excludes artillery strikes.

The coalition data are based on post-strike reviews to assess the credibility of civilian casualty reports.

The military has acknowledged that some civilian deaths are unavoidable, such as when a civilian enters a target area after a bomb has been released. It often describes the air campaign as one of the most precise in history.

About one-third of the civilian deaths the reporters investigated were due to instances when civilians were near legitimate ISIS targets.

But for nearly half of them, they could find no ISIS target nearby. Those strikes appeared to be the result of flawed or obsolete intelligence, despite the

coalition's rigorous attempts to avoid such incidents, the Times reported.

The reporters also charge that the coalition failed to conduct proper investigations or lacked the records needed for such investigations.

For example, despite coalition claims to have 100 percent accountability for all its strikes, the reporters uncovered several instances in which the coalition posted video of a strike for which it later said historical logs showed no strike had been conducted or had been conducted elsewhere.

Such discrepancies likely affect the coalition's civilian casualty accounting. It often dismisses civilian casualty reports on the grounds that there is no record of a strike at a given time or place.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Drive-thru becomes squeeze-thru for thief

**MD** COLUMBIA — A McDonald's drive-thru window became a squeeze-thru window for a woman who apparently needed a fast food fix.

A surveillance video shows her worming her way inside, helping herself to a soft drink and making off with a box of items.

The video, posted on the Twitter feed of the Howard County Police in Columbia, Md., shows the break-in early on Nov. 5, when the restaurant was closed. The woman reaches through the window for a soda cup and tries unsuccessfully to fill it from the dispenser. She then manages to squeeze herself into the restaurant through the small window and gets a soft drink. The camera zooms in on her uncovered face. The woman puts a box of unidentified items through the window and leaves.

## 'Men' dropped from governing board name

**MA** BROOKLINE — A Massachusetts town has removed the word "men" from the name of its governing body.

Brookline approved changing the Board of Selectmen to the Select Board at a Town Meeting vote Tuesday. The title "selectman" has been replaced with "select board member."

The Boston Globe reported the measure also requires the use of gender-neutral language in town documents and communications.

Commission member Alex Coleman, a member of the town's Commission for Diversity Inclusion & Community Relations, said the measure is intended to help reflect a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

## Bobcat video shows a healthy population

**VT** WILLISTON — Vermont's top wildlife official said an amateur video of four bobcats frolicking in a suburban neighborhood shows the state's population of the normally elusive animals is healthy.

Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter said bobcats are rarely seen, but their presence in Williston, just outside Burlington, shows they can live among people.

John Roberts, of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, said he spotted the four bobcats from the window of his office mid-morning Tuesday.

## Man allegedly publicly snaps chicken's neck

**HI** HONOLULU — A man is accused of snapping a chicken's neck in front of a Hawaii Target store after he was asked to leave because he brought a dead, black bird in with him.

Walter Anderson, 56, was arrested Nov. 3, shortly after, according to employees, he killed the chicken that was in a tree near the Kailua Target and then grabbed another chicken from the tree and walked to the bus stop with it, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

Target employees allowed Anderson to purchase the items in his cart despite his waving a dead bird at people, but then asked him to leave. They said that's when he snapped the chicken's neck before walking away, carrying another chicken. An employee told the police that Anderson killed the chicken "for no apparent reason in a cruel and inhumane way." The employee said Anderson was shouting profanities when he killed the bird.

## Small town's election decided by coin toss

**CT** BOLTON — An election for the governing board of a small Connecticut town has been decided by a coin toss.

The Journal-Inquirer reported that Republican Michael Eremita on Tuesday kept his seat on Bolton's five-member Board of Selectmen with a coin-toss win over Democratic challenger Kim Miller.

Each received 718 votes in last week's election.

Under the town charter, tied elections can be decided by a special election or a coin toss. Eremita and Miller agreed on the latter because a special election could have cost up to \$3,000.

Eremita, Miller and Town Clerk Elizabeth Waters all flipped coins. Eremita won because he and Waters both tossed tails. Miller came up heads.

## Bank robber with poor spelling pleads guilty

**MA** BOSTON — A man authorities dubbed the "spelling bee bandit" because of the notes he passed to tellers during multiple bank robberies in the Boston area contained the same spelling error has pleaded guilty.

Federal prosecutors said Jason Englen, 34, pleaded guilty to four counts of bank robbery. He faces up to 20 years in prison.

Authorities said the Chelsea man entered an Arlington bank on Oct. 31, 2016, approached a teller and handed over a note written on a deposit slip indicating a robbery was in progress, except robbery was spelled with just one "B."

During the next few weeks, he robbed banks in Reading, Burlington and Peabody

using notes with the same misspelling. He was arrested in December.

## Man looks to reunite with dance partner

**NJ** BORDENTOWN — A New Jersey man is looking for the woman who busted a move while he danced in a supermarket parking lot.

Melvin Brown, 19, of Bordentown, was captured on video by his sisters dancing to the song "Valid like Salad," a Joo & DJ C-HIM hip-hop song. NJ.com reported he was joined unexpectedly by a passerby getting into her nearby car.

Brown said he's hoping to find the mystery woman, saying he regrets not talking to her and hopes he can see her again.

## Dog training school closes after decades

**CA** LOS ANGELES — A dog training school, which housed and groomed Toto from "The Wizard of Oz;" Lassie, star of one of the longest-running series in television history; and Rin Tin Tin, from the 1950s television series, is closing its doors.

KABC-TV reported the Hollywood Dog Training School is closing after 90 years in operation.

School owner Rick Karl is retiring, thus bringing the school's storied existence to an end. Karl has owned the school, which opened in 1927, for the past 40 years.

Karl said Lassie used to have a limo that would pick her up and take her to the studios.

Lassie was so famous she had her own bedroom.

From wire reports

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# Astros' Altuve, Marlins' Stanton win MVPs

Associated Press

NEW YORK— Jose Altuve and the Houston Astros have grown together, enduring an arduous rebuild and coming out the other side among baseball's best.

These days, nobody is standing taller.

Altuve won the American League MVP award Thursday, towering over New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge by a wide margin and capping Houston's championship season with another piece of hardware.

Giancarlo Stanton won the NL MVP, edging Joey Votto of the Cincinnati Reds in the closest vote since 1979.

The 5-foot-6 Altuve drew 27 of the 30 first-place votes in balloting by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

"I was surprised that I won it," Altuve said. "I wasn't expecting this."

It was a landslide long in the making. Altuve has been in Houston since general manager Jeff Luhnow took a scorched earth approach to developing a winner. The Astros lost 100-plus games in each of Altuve's first three seasons, beginning in 2011.

Houston won its first World Series earlier this month, and it needed its longest-tenured player to get there. Altuve batted a major league-best .346 in the regular season, hit 24 home runs with 81 RBIs, scored

112 times, stole 32 bases and showed a sharp glove at second base. Voting was completed before the postseason began.

It's been over a decade since Altuve signed with Houston from Venezuela — only after he was sent home from one try-out and told he was too short.

"They told me not to come back," Altuve said. "It was something me and my dad, he went with me that day, we were like, 'We have to go again. We have to try again.'"

"It's not a rule that you have to be 6-foot or you have to be really strong to play baseball and become a good player," he added.

Altuve beat out a player who couldn't be more different. The 6-7 Judge won the AL Rookie of the Year award Monday after setting a rookie record with 52 home runs. Judge's moonshot homers dominated the highlights, and his No. 99 jersey was the top seller in baseball. Even Altuve has said he would have voted for Judge.

Judge had 8.2 wins above replacement compared to Altuve's 7.5, per Fangraphs, while baseball-reference.com's WAR metric preferred Altuve 8.3 to 8.1. Yet Judge got only two first-place votes, with the other going to third-place finisher Jose Ramirez of the Indians.

Altuve was the second Houston player to win an MVP — Jeff Bagwell earned the 1994 NL award.

While Altuve is set to defend his title in

Houston, Stanton may be taking a piece of Marlins history elsewhere. He earned the franchise's first MVP in the same week new team executive Derek Jeter said the club is listening to trade offers for Stanton. The 28-year-old outfielder is owed \$295 million over the final decade of his record \$325 million, 13-year contract.

"It's an interesting feeling and situation for me," Stanton said.

Stanton would prefer to stick around and wants the team's pitching situation "to be thoroughly addressed, not just somewhat addressed." He's not convinced the Marlins are ready to do that.

The 6-6 Stanton led the big leagues with 59 home runs, most in the majors since 2001, when Barry Bonds hit a record 73 and Sammy Sosa had 64.

Stanton got 10 first-place votes and 302 points. Votto, who led the majors with a .454 on-base percentage, also got 10 firsts and had 300 points. Arizona's Paul Goldschmidt was third.

The last time an MVP race was so close, Willie Stargell and Keith Hernandez tied for the NL prize in 1979.

Stanton became only the seventh player to win from a losing team. The Marlins were 77-85.

## Top 25 roundup

# Trier scores 28 points as Arizona rolls

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Allonzo Trier made eight of nine shots, including all three three-point attempts, for 28 points and No. 3 Arizona coasted to its third straight victory, 91-59 over Cal State-Bakersfield on Thursday.

Freshman Deandre Ayton added 18 points, 16 in the second half, and grabbed 10 rebounds — his third double-double to start his college career — for Arizona (3-0). Dusan Ristic scored 12 points and Parker Jackson-Cartwright 11 for the Wildcats, who led by as many as 18 in the first half and 38 in the second.

Jarkel Joiner scored 14 points, Moataz Aly 12 and Shon Briggs 11 for the Roadrunners (1-2).

**No. 8 Florida 108, North Florida 68:** Behind a balanced effort and six double-figure scorers, the host Gators dominated.

Junior KeVaughn Allen was Florida's top scorer with 18 points. The balanced scoring helped Florida (2-0) dismantle the Ospreys (0-4) from the beginning, with Keith Stone, Gorkjok Gak and Allen contributing some emphatic dunks along the way.

**No. 11 Miami 90, Florida A&M 59:** Highly touted freshman guard Lonnie Walker IV limped off the court in the first half with a left leg injury, putting a damper on the Hurricanes' (3-0) victory over the visiting Rattlers (0-3).

Walker, who underwent surgery in July for torn meniscus in his right knee, apparently landed wrong after he missed a three-point attempt. He collapsed to the court, pounded it angrily with his fist and immediately went to the locker room with assistance.

**No. 12 Cincinnati 97, Coppin St. 54:** At Highland Heights, Ky., Jarron Cumberland led the Bearcats' opening blitz of 13 made shots.

Cincinnati (3-0) piled up 107 and 102 points while beating Savannah State and Western Carolina, and was trying to reach triple digits in three straight games for the first time in school history.

**No. 13 Notre Dame 105, Chicago St. 66:** Sophomore guard T.J. Gibbs survived a scary second-half fall to score a career-high 23 points for the host Fighting Irish.

Gibbs hit the court hard with 11:59 remaining in the second half but stayed in the game for Notre Dame (3-0). He finished 8-for-11 from the field, including 4-for-7 from beyond the three-point arc.

**No. 15 Xavier 80, Wisconsin 70:** Trevon Bluiett scored 25 points, including back-to-back three-pointers in a decisive run over the final 1:47, to help the visiting Musketeers pull away in one of the Gavitt Tipoff Games.

J.P. Macura added 20 points for Xavier (3-0).

# Pittsburgh routs Titans in prime time

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The end is creeping up on Ben Roethlisberger. There have been times this season when the 35-year-old Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback looks every bit his age, and plays like it, too.

Just not under the lights. Never under the lights.

For all the heaping amounts of “blah” the NFL’s highest-paid offense has provided during a solid if somewhat unspectacular start to the season, something about playing at home at night brings out the best in Roethlisberger.

Fueled by a halftime pep talk from Roethlisberger that stressed enough was enough, a team that’s spent much of the season talking a good game but rarely playing a complete one lived up to its own considerable hype. Roethlisberger threw for 299 yards and four touchdowns, three in the second half, as the Steelers ran away from the mistake-prone Tennessee Titans 40-17 on Thursday night.

“Was it our best game? No,” Roethlisberger said after Pittsburgh (8-2) won its fifth straight. “Was it better? Yeah.”

Much better. Roethlisberger improved to 18-3 in prime-time home games during his career and has 24 touchdowns against just two interceptions in his last seven

prime-time starts at Heinz Field.

“Anytime you play with a guy like Ben in a prime-time setting, you know the playmaking ability is going to be up,” said wide receiver Antonio Brown, who caught 10 passes for 144 yards and three scores. “You know the splash plays are going to be there and it’s going to be a lot of fun.”

A matchup that looked like it could go either way after Marcus Mariota hit Richard Matthews for a 75-yard touchdown on the first play of the second half drew the Titans within 16-14, the Steelers responded with touchdowns on three consecutive drives.

The red zone issues that have dogged them for long stretches vanished. Working out of the no-huddle extensively, Roethlisberger picked apart Tennessee over the final two quarters, completing 20 of 23 passes for 185 yards and three scores in the second half to win going away.

“It did feel great today to show what we’re capable of and put up 40 points,” said Brown. “That was a pretty good feeling.”

**Messy Mariota:** Tennessee’s shot at its first five-game winning streak since 2009 ended under a tidal wave of sacks and interceptions. Quarterback Marcus Mariota threw for a touchdown and ran for another but was also picked off a career-high four

times as the Titans (6-4) fell a half-game behind Jacksonville in the AFC South.

“If you throw four interceptions, it’s tough to win,” said Mariota, who was also sacked five times.

**Look Ma, one hand:** Brown’s second career three-touchdown game highlighted the unique skills that made him the fastest player in NFL history to reach 700 receptions.

He leapt between two defenders in the first quarter to haul in a 41-yard rainbow from Roethlisberger. In the third he dropped a difficult pass between two Titans in the end zone but atoned minutes later when he jumped to pull in a 5-yard score.

Brown’s best grab of the night and probably the season came in the fourth quarter when he briefly pinned a Roethlisberger pass to his helmet before securing it.

Rookie teammate JuJu Smith-Schuster dropped to his knees to bow to Brown, even though the sight of Brown making the unlikely likely has become commonplace.

“Greatness,” Martavis Bryant said of Brown. “I mean, 84 is going to be 84 regardless of who he is going against or what he’s doing. He handles himself like that. He carries himself like that. He had a great game.”

# No. 23 South Florida holds off Tulsa

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — No. 23 South Florida can finally look ahead to a much-anticipated showdown with No. 14 UCF.

Quinton Flowers threw two touchdown passes and the Bulls remained in contention for a berth in the American Athletic Conference championship game by holding off Tulsa 27-20 on Thursday night.

Flowers, one of the nation’s top dual-threat quarterbacks, ran for 119 yards while also throwing for 142 to send USF (9-1, 6-1) into next week’s regular-season finale against unbeaten UCF with the league’s East Division title on the line.

“We’ve got one more,” coach Charlie Strong said. “Our guys understand what’s at stake.”

Coming off a bye, Strong cautioned his players about not looking past Tulsa (2-9, 1-6), which has lost four straight since beating Houston, the only team that’s beaten USF.

“Everybody thinks because of their record that they’re not very good,” Strong said. “They beat Houston and Houston beat

us. ... You have to give them some credit.”

Flowers and USF’s high-powered offense weren’t as sharp as usual, however. First-quarter TD throws of 25 yards to Tyre McCants and 35 yards to Darnell Salomon helped USF to an early 21-7 lead.

Luke Skipper scored on first-half runs of 12 and 9 yards for Tulsa (2-9, 1-6), which blocked a punt to set up a 38-yard field goal that trimmed a 10-point deficit to 27-20 with 4:18 remaining.

The Golden Hurricane got the ball one more time, with backup quarterback Chad President — filling in for Skipper, who left in the second half with a possible concussion — leading a drive from his own 25 to the USF 30 before turning the ball over on downs.

“I think we’re a better team than our record shows. This is our fifth game like this. We’ve lost three on the last play of the game,” Tulsa coach Philip Montgomery said. “We had an opportunity in this one and an opportunity in another one. I don’t think our record is a great indication of the type of team we are.”

D’Angelo Brewer ran for 163 yards for

Tulsa, becoming the Golden Hurricane’s career rushing leader with 3,662 yards. The senior also broke the AAC career mark of 3,609 set by former USF running back Marlon Mack.

“D’Angelo has been the workhorse for us all year long,” Montgomery said. “Nobody knows, but he got injured last week and hadn’t practiced a day and was able to come out and put on this performance tonight.”

## The takeaway

**Tulsa:** Despite having just two victories, the Golden Hurricane feel there’s still plenty to accomplish over the last two weeks of the season. Coach Philip Montgomery said the goal is to show continued progress. Playing USF tougher than expected is a step in the right direction.

**South Florida:** Since losing to Houston, the Bulls have delivered one of their best offensive performances of the season — finishing with 602 yards against UConn — and one of the sloppiest Thursday night. Flowers lost a second-quarter fumble and an end-zone interception stopped another promising drive.

## NBA roundup

# Celtics' streak improves to 14

Associated Press

BOSTON — Hours before the Celtics took the court Thursday night to protect their winning streak against the defending NBA champion Golden State Warriors, Jaylen Brown was walking around in a fog.

Boston's second-year forward was not even thinking about basketball after learning about the sudden death of his childhood best friend, Trevin Steede, on Wednesday night.

"It was tough to kind of accept it," Brown said. "Everybody was kind of in shock."

But after talking to his family and having conversations with Celtics coach Brad Stevens, Brown looked to the basketball court to find solace. The 21-year-old ended up playing one of the best games of his young career.

Brown had 22 points and seven rebounds, Kyrie Irving had 11 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter, including two free throws that put Boston ahead in the closing seconds, and the Celtics beat the Warriors 92-88 on Thursday night for their 14th straight victory.

"He inspired me to come out and play and I played in his spirit," Brown said about Steede.

They met after Brown transferred to Joseph Wheeler High School in Marietta, Georgia.

"I remember I didn't have any friends," Brown said. "The first few days I sat at the lunch table by myself — I'm super quiet and didn't know anybody."

Steede noticed Brown sitting alone one day and told him he could sit with him.

"Ever since then we've been best friends. ... He's been my brother," Brown said.

Kevin Durant had 24 points for Golden State. The Warriors had won seven in a row.

**Rockets 142, Suns 116:** James Harden had 23 of his 48 points in the second quarter while visiting Houston scored 90 points in the first half en route to a win over Phoenix.

Houston dominated with Chris Paul back in the lineup after missing 14 games with a knee injury. The Rockets made 61 percent of their first-half shots to get the second-most points in a first half in NBA history.

Houston came up 14 points shy of the franchise record for points in a game. Ryan Anderson added 24 points for the Rockets, who have won seven of eight.

Troy Daniels tied a Suns franchise record with six threes in the second quarter and led Phoenix with 23 points. Devin Booker added 18 points and 10 assists.

## NHL roundup

# Tampa steamrolls Dallas

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Steven Stamkos had two goals and two assists, Andrei Vasilevskiy made 27 saves to beat mentor Ben Bishop, and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Dallas Stars 6-1 on Thursday night.

Vasilevskiy was Bishop's backup in Tampa Bay for parts of three seasons until Bishop was dealt to Los Angeles last February. Bishop holds the Lightning career wins record with 131, while Vasilevskiy has gone 26-5-3 since taking over the starting role. It was Bishop's first game against Tampa Bay since the trade.

Stamkos has 10 goals and an NHL-best 35 points after missing most of last season with a lateral meniscus tear. Mikhail Sergachev, Brayden Point, Jake Dotchin and Nikita Kucherov also scored for the Lightning, who have the NHL's best record at 15-2-2.

Radek Faksa scored for Dallas, and Bishop stopped 22 shots.

**Coyotes 5, Canadiens 4:** Derek Stepan and Christian Fischer scored power-play goals in the third period and visiting Arizona rallied to beat Montreal for its first regulation victory of the season.

Brad Richardson, Christian Dvorak and Tobias Rieder also scored for the Coyotes, and Antti Raanta made 33 saves. Arizona snapped a five-game losing streak to improve to 3-15-3.

**Maple Leafs 1, Devils 0 (OT):** William Nylander scored with 2.2 seconds left in overtime and Frederik Andersen made 42 saves in host Toronto's victory over New Jersey. The Maple Leafs have won five straight to improve to 13-7-0.

Corey Schneider stopped 24 shots for New Jersey. The Devils dropped to 11-4-3.

Toronto star center Auston Matthews was on the ice for the optional morning skate, but sat out his fourth straight game with an upper-body injury.

**Islanders 6, Hurricanes 4:** Johnny Boychuk scored the tiebreaking goal on a slap shot with 4:25 remaining and host New York rallied to beat Carolina.

Mathew Barzal had a goal and two assists, and Nick Leddy, Josh Bailey and Cal Clutterbuck each had a goal and an assist to help the Islanders remain one of two NHL teams without a regulation loss at home this season at 6-0-2. Jordan Eberle added an empty-netter, and Thomas Greiss finished with 28 saves.

**Penguins 3, Senators 1:** Patric Hornqvist and Jake Guentzel each scored in the second period and visiting Pittsburgh held on to beat Ottawa.

Riley Sheahan added an empty-net goal, and Matt Murray made 21 saves.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored in the third period for Ottawa.

**Golden Knights 5, Canucks 2:** Erik Haula scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and visiting Vegas beat Vancouver.

Haula, David Perron, Jonathan Marchessault and William Karlsson each had a goal and an assist, and Reilly Smith added an empty-netter. Vegas improved to 11-6-1 in its debut season. Maxime Lagace had 19 saves.

**Jets 3, Flyers 2 (SO):** Bryan Little scored the deciding goal in a shootout and host Winnipeg rallied from a two-goal deficit to beat Philadelphia.

Mark Scheifele tied it 2-all when he scored with 49 seconds left in the third period with Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck pulled for an extra attacker.

Mathieu Perreault, back on the ice after missing 12 games with a lower-body injury, also scored for Winnipeg. Jakub Voracek and Sean Couturier had first-period goals for the Flyers.

**Bruins 2, Kings 1:** Zdeno Chara scored the tiebreaking goal in the second period and visiting Boston made it stand to snap a four-game losing streak.

Charlie McAvoy also scored for the Bruins, who won on the road for only the second time this season. Drew Doughty had the goal for Los Angeles, which has dropped four straight after opening 11-2-2.

**Avalanche 6, Capitals 2:** Gabriel Landeskog scored three goals — one on a penalty shot — for his first career hat trick, Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and four assists and host Colorado beat Washington.

Mikko Rantanen added a goal and three assists, Colin Wilson also scored and Semyon Varlamov had 28 saves for the Avalanche. Brett Connolly and Evgeny Kuznetsov scored for the Capitals.

**Wild 6, Predators 4:** Jason Zucker scored with 2:55 left and host Minnesota scored four goals in less than six minutes in the third period to beat Nashville.

Jared Spurgeon, Eric Staal, Ryan Suter, Matt Dumba and Nino Niederreiter also scored. Minnesota has won four in a row.

**Panthers 2, Sharks 0:** Roberto Luongo made 35 saves for his 74th career shutout and visiting Florida blanked San Jose on goals by Colton Sceviour and Nick Bjugstad.

**Blues 4, Oilers 1:** Brayden Schenn had two goals and an assist to help visiting St. Louis beat Edmonton.