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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy ID's sailors missing after plane crash

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Navy has released the names of three sailors missing after a transport plane crashed earlier this week in the Philippine Sea.

A C-2A Greyhound carrying 11 crewmembers and passengers went down in waters southeast of Okinawa on Wednesday afternoon while en route to the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan.

The Navy on Saturday identified the three sailors lost in the crash on Wednesday as follows: Lt. Steven Combs; Seaman Matthew Chialastri, an aviation boatswain's mate; and Seaman Apprentice Bryan Grosso, an aviation ordnanceman. Combs was embarked aboard the USS Ronald Reagan; Chialastri and Grosso were assigned to the Ronald Reagan.

Combs, from Florida, was assigned to the "Providers" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 30. His previous duty assignments include the "Greyhawks" of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 120, the Center for Security Forces Detachment Kittery Point in Portsmouth, N.H., and

Training Wing 4, in Corpus Christi, Texas. His awards include the National Defense Ribbon and the Navy Battle "E" Ribbon.

Chialastri, of Louisiana, was previously assigned to the USS America, Patrol Squadron Thirty, the "Pro's Nest," in Jacksonville, Fla., and the Center for Security Forces Detachment Kittery Point, in Portsmouth, N.H. His awards include the National Defense Ribbon.

Grosso, a Florida native, was previously stationed at Naval Air Technical Training Center in Pensacola, Fla., and the Naval Recruit Training Center in Great Lakes, Ill. His awards include the National Defense Ribbon.

The Navy called off search-and-rescue efforts on Friday morning, saying U.S. and Japanese ships and aircraft covered nearly 1,000 square nautical miles over two days.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these Sailors," said Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer, commander of U.S. 7th Fleet, in a statement released Saturday. "Their service and sacrifice will be lasting in Seventh Fleet and we will continue to stand

the watch for them, as they did bravely for all of us."

Shortly after Wednesday's crash, eight people were rescued by Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 12 and are in good condition aboard the Ronald Reagan, the Navy said.

The Greyhound was carrying passengers and cargo from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to the Ronald Reagan at the time of the accident. It is assigned to Carrier Air Wing 5, the aviation component of carrier's strike group.

The crash's cause is unknown. The Yokosuka-based Ronald Reagan was conducting an annual bilateral maritime field-training exercise with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force at the time.

The exercise, which was scheduled to run through the weekend, involves 14,000 U.S. personnel, the Navy said. It "is designed to increase the defensive readiness and interoperability of Japanese and American forces through training in air and sea operations."

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US cutting off supply of arms to Kurds in Syria

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — The U.S. will cut off its supply of arms to Kurdish fighters in Syria, a move by President Donald Trump that is sure to please Turkey but also to further alienate Syrian Kurds who bore much of the fight against Islamic State.

In a phone call Friday with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Trump said he'd "given clear instructions" that the Kurds will receive no more weapons — "and that this nonsense should have ended a long time ago," said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu. The White House confirmed the move in a cryptic statement about the phone call that said Trump had informed the Turk of "pending adjustments to the military support provided to our partners on the ground in Syria."

The White House called the move "consistent with our previous policy" and noted the recent fall of Raqqa, once ISIS's self-declared capital but recently liberated by a largely Kurdish force. The Trump admin-

istration announced in May it would start arming the Kurds in anticipation of the fight to retake Raqqa.

"We are progressing into a stabilization phase to ensure that ISIS cannot return," the White House said, using an acronym for the extremist group.

The move could help ease strained tensions between the U.S. and Turkey, two NATO allies that have been sharply at odds about how best to wage the fight against ISIS. Turkey considers the Kurdish Syrian fighters, known by the initials YPG, to be terrorists because of their affiliation to outlawed Kurdish rebels who have waged a three-decade-long insurgency in Turkey. Yet the U.S. chose to partner with the YPG in Syria anyway, arguing that the battle-hardened Kurds were the most effective fighting force available.

Cavusoglu, who said he was in the room with Erdogan during Trump's call, quoted the U.S. president as saying he had given instructions to U.S. generals and to national security adviser H.R. McMaster that

"no weapons would be issued."

"Of course, we were very happy with this," Cavusoglu said.

Yet for the Kurds, it was the latest demoralizing blow to their hopes for greater recognition in the region. Last month, the Kurds in neighboring Iraq saw their recent territorial gains erased by the Iraqi military, which seized the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and other disputed areas from the Kurdish regional government in retaliation for a Kurdish independence referendum that the U.S. ardently opposed.

Trump's decision appeared to catch both the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department off guard. Officials at both agencies, who normally would be informed of changes in U.S. policy toward arming the Syrian Kurds, said they were unaware of any changes. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

It was unclear whether the Trump administration notified the Kurds of the move before telling the Turks.

Experts say ISIS trying to 'rebrand' itself

The Washington Post

The brazen attack on worshippers at an Egyptian mosque early Friday showed the ability of Islamic State's regional affiliates to inflict death and exact revenge for the loss of the group's main enclaves in Iraq and Syria.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack on the Rawda mosque in Egypt's sparsely populated Sinai Peninsula, but there were many reasons to suspect ISIS was responsible.

The Egyptian affiliate, which consists of up to 1,000 members, in recent months has stepped up attacks on Egyptian soldiers and police in the region and laid siege to Coptic Christian churches. Before Friday's attack, the group was best known for its suspected role in the downing of Russia's Metrojet Flight 9268 in 2015, which killed 224 Russian tourists.

The attack on Friday represented a shocking escalation in the carnage, with Egyptian officials reporting 235 dead. It also represented a new and risky kind of target for ISIS' Egyptian affiliate. For the first time, the Egyptian branch of ISIS appeared to be targeting fellow Sunni Muslim civilians at prayer.

In the wake of the bloodshed, government officials and outside analysts were puzzling over the strategy behind the group's latest horror.

The Sinai chapter is only a part of a larger constellation of regional affiliates, and its high-profile attack could be a sign of a broader power struggle to take up ISIS' leadership mantle now that the group's self-declared caliphate has been destroyed, intelligence officials and terrorism experts said. Several local cells already have begun preparations to continue or even intensify their fight, analysts said.

"The Sinai attack underscores that the elimination of the ISIS caliphate will have little effect on the group's regional affili-

ates, whose success or failure depends on local conditions," said Daniel Benjamin, a former coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department and a professor at Dartmouth College.

The Sinai branch, like most of the regional chapters, existed long before ISIS declared the establishment of its caliphate in 2014.

To other analysts, the timing of the attack, which occurred during Friday prayers, and the choice of target, a Sufi mosque, reflected a new level of desperation and frustration among ISIS' remaining adherents. The group views Sufi Muslims as apostates and has attacked Sufi shrines in northern Africa and Iraq. But ISIS generally has not targeted Sufis in Egypt, where the strain of Sunni Islam has deep roots that date back centuries and broad popular appeal.

"As you get more desperate, you also get internal feuding over who is more puritanical," said Bernard Haykel, a professor at Princeton University who has studied ISIS' religious roots. "Everyone is trying to compete to show they are truer to the cause. They want to cast themselves as the hardest of the hard-liners."

Until recently, ISIS militants in Egypt had made an effort to appeal to disaffected Islamists who had supported the Muslim Brotherhood or opposed Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's tight grip on power. The Rawda mosque attack suggested that the group was almost entirely focused on amassing body counts rather than holding territory or winning new followers.

"On its face, it's a really dumb thing to do," Haykel said. "What do you stand to gain other than the hatred and contempt of Muslims all over the world?"

One purpose of the attack may be to demonstrate that ISIS, despite the collapse of its armies in Iraq and Syria, remains deadly and relevant.

"One way to do that is by turning to increasingly brutal and savage terrorist attacks,"

Death toll in Egypt raised to 305

Associated Press

ISMAILIA, Egypt — Egypt on Saturday said an attack on a mosque by militants in the country's troubled region of northern Sinai has killed 305 worshippers, including 27 children, a dramatic increase in the death toll previously announced, which was 235.

A statement by the country's chief prosecutor, Nabil Sadeq, said the attack Friday left another 128 people wounded.

It said the attackers, estimated to number between 25 and 30, arrived at the mosque close to the small town of Bir al-Abd in five all-terrain vehicles and positioned themselves at the main door and the facility's 12 windows before opening fire. They also torched seven cars parked outside the mosque, which belonged to worshippers inside.

Quoting testimonies given to investigators by survivors, the statement said some of the attackers were masked. Those who were not sported heavy beards and long hair. The militants wore camouflage pants and black T-shirts, it added.

Also on Saturday, Egyptian warplanes were in action over Sinai, according to the military, targeting several vehicles in which some of the culprits of the attack were traveling. All passengers in the vehicles were killed, it added. It was impossible to independently verify the claim since the media is virtually banned from working in Sinai.

The chief prosecutor's statement was the most detailed by authorities on the attack.

The account it gave generally coincided with what witnesses told The Associated Press on Saturday in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia, where some of the wounded are hospitalized.

They spoke of horrific scenes during the approximately 20 minutes it took the militants to kill and maim worshippers. They spoke of some jumping out of windows, a stampede in a corridor leading to the bathrooms and of children screaming in horror.

Some spoke of their narrow escape from a certain death, others of families that lost all or most of their male relatives.

said Shadi Hamid, the author of "Islamic Exceptionalism" and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

U.S. officials have been carefully monitoring some of the more significant affiliates in recent weeks to see how they might be affected by the fall of the core group's capital in Raqqa, Syria. One concern is the possibility that substantial numbers of ISIS fighters — including, perhaps, the senior leadership — could resurface in a new location. Officials also are worried that one of the regional affiliates may seek to launch a

major attack against Western targets as an act of revenge for the deaths of comrades in Iraq and Syria.

"We say that the Islamic State has been defeated, but only as a military force," said a senior U.S. counterterrorism official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss security assessments. "Homegrown insurgencies are going to go on for a while and will be harder to defeat. The hope is that we can get to the point where local forces can contain the threat on their own, without support from the international coalition or U.S. advisers."

General: Evaluate on job done, not on gender

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Sitting in her office at NATO's Resolute Support headquarters one recent afternoon, Army Maj. Gen. Robin Fontes played down the history she made this summer.

"It's interesting, but — whatever," she said while passing a plate of Girl Scout cookies that she called "a good reminder of home."

In July, the Idaho native became one of the most important leaders of NATO's Resolute Support mission — focused on training, advising and assisting Afghan security forces — when she took command of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, or CSTC-A.

She also assumed the highest position of any female servicemember in the 16-year war.

"You know, no pressure," she joked when her status was brought up. A few seconds later, her smile faded and she said, "I don't want people to judge me on that."

Fontes would rather people focus on her work, which is vital to a mission that she believes is on the verge of unprecedented success despite a history of setbacks.

CSTC-A is the primary organization tasked with building the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, and is responsible for half of Resolute Support's essential functions.

While those functions may not be the most glamorous — budgeting, strengthening rule of law and transparency are some of them — they are critical to the success of America's longest war.

"A lot of it is really making sure the Afghans can sustain this force in the future, cut down on corruption and manage their money — the real big pieces that are going to lead to self-sustainment," Fontes said of CSTC-A's work.

Since becoming commander, Fontes has been on the move, visiting corps and zone commanders in different areas of the country, inspecting U.S. and coalition-funded projects and regularly meeting with senior members of the Afghan government. Much of her effort is spent advising the Afghans on how to use their money to support and sustain their forces.

It has given her significant insight into the war, particularly into how far the Afghans are from standing on their own.

"We've seen what works; now we're just kind of tweaking," she said. "I really think we're on the cusp of making this happen."

Part of that "tweaking" includes doubling the number of elite Afghan special forces and more than doubling the number

of aircraft in the Afghan inventory.

Critics and hope

Critics say current efforts focus too much on force and not enough on proven counter-insurgency tactics — winning hearts and minds — and finding political solutions.

Self-sustainment, they say, will be impossible without a strong government in Kabul, which is currently divided and ineffective.

"What this general is convinced we're on the cusp of creating is an utterly false structure that's entirely unsustainable and inorganic to the Afghan state, and can only be propped up by us indefinitely," said Jason Dempsey, an adjunct senior fellow of the Military, Veterans and Society Program at the nonpartisan Center for a New American Security in Washington.

Another concern is that mounting Afghan security forces casualties could affect recruitment negatively and could lead to a greater number of desertions.

For example, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said in a report last month that the ANDSF was suffering "unsustainable casualty rates."

SIGAR noted in October that the Kabul government controlled less than 57 percent of the country's 407 districts, meaning 3.7 million Afghans — 11.4 percent of the population — live under insurgent rule or influence. That's a 700,000-person increase over six months.

In an interview with Stars and Stripes before the report was released, SIGAR chief John Sopko said he was optimistic about efforts to help Afghan forces become sustainable, partly because of Fontes.

His view, he said, was rooted in the seasoned leadership provided by the CSTC-A commander and others involved in the mission, such as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford and Resolute Support commander Gen. John Nicholson.

"Fontes has had tremendous experience here," Sopko said. "They all understand what worked and what didn't. They are very receptive to being self-critical and saying, 'We're not going to do that again.'"

Fontes first was deployed to Afghanistan just months after the U.S. invaded the country in 2001 and ousted the Taliban from power. She returned in 2006 to command the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan province. From 2011 to 2012, she commanded Regional Support Command-North in Mazar-e-Sharif, part of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan element of CSTC-A.

The West Point graduate also has served in Tajikistan, India and Pakistan and

speaks three regional languages.

"There is no officer of any service in the United States military that has more experience in this region than Maj. Gen. Robin Fontes," Nicholson said in July, when Fontes assumed command of CSTC-A.

Under Fontes' leadership, CSTC-A has seen the delivery of Afghanistan's first UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and its first audit conducted in conjunction with the Finance Ministry to enhance transparency with international donations.

"She's doing a very good job," said Mohammad Radmanish, an Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman. "She seems really focused and wants to get things done quickly."

'Judge me on that'

The clock is running down for Fontes.

A third of her tour is already over. A major criticism of Afghanistan deployments is that officers with valuable experience, such as Fontes, aren't in country long enough to effect change, a criticism voiced by Fontes, herself.

It also makes officers deployed to Afghanistan less accountable for their work, according to Dempsey.

"What you have is this perfect bureaucratic system set up whereby everybody gets to avoid long-term accountability," he said. "How is it that we continue to fail, yet everybody who passes through Afghanistan can say, 'We're making progress and by God, we were on the cusp of success when I left?'"

While the brevity of her tour may be an obstacle, Fontes' gender isn't a problem in a country often described as one of the worst places in the world to be a woman.

Although it's difficult to imagine an Afghan woman reaching Fontes' position, respect for the CSTC-A commander appears to be universal among the male Afghans who know her, Radmanish said.

The same can't be said for those who don't know her.

When Stars and Stripes reported that Fontes was assuming command of CSTC-A in July, the newspaper's Facebook account was flooded with negative comments. Some criticized her fitness and insinuated she didn't have to work as hard as a man to reach her position.

"Unfortunately, I'm not surprised," Fontes said. "But you know what, if I worried about that, I wouldn't have time to do anything else."

"I'm an Army officer," she said. "And I want people to judge me on that."

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After holiday break, Congress must face unfinished business

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The crush of unfinished business facing lawmakers when they return to the Capitol would be daunting even if Washington were functioning at peak efficiency.

It's an agenda whose core items — tax cuts, a potential government shutdown, lots of leftover spending bills — could unravel just as easily as advance amid factionalism, gamesmanship and a toxic political environment.

There's only a four-week window until a Christmas deadline, barely enough time for complicated negotiations even if December stays on the rails. And that's hardly a sure bet in President Donald Trump's capital.

Trump and congressional leaders plan a meeting Tuesday to discuss how to sidestep a shutdown and work through the legislative to-do list.

For the optimistic, it's plain that Democrats and Republi-

cans have reasons to cooperate, particularly on spending increases for the Pentagon and domestic agencies whose budgets otherwise would be frozen. An additional round of hurricane aid should be bipartisan, and efforts to reauthorize a popular health care program for children seem to be on track.

Republicans are advancing their cherished tax cut measure under special rules that mean Senate Democrats cannot use delaying tactics. The measure passed the House just before the Thanksgiving break and moves to the Senate floor this week.

After the Senate GOP's failure on health care this summer, the majority party is under enormous pressure to produce a victory on taxes. Still, GOP deficit hawks such as Sens. Bob Corker, of Tennessee, and Jeff Flake, of Arizona, remain uneasy about the overhaul.

While Democrats are largely sidelined on taxes, they hold leverage over a mix of budget-

related issues. First, there's the need to avert a government shutdown after a temporary spending bill expires on Dec. 8. The most likely scenario, congressional aides say, is for an extension until Christmas.

On a parallel track are talks to raise spending limits that are keeping agency budgets essentially frozen unless those caps are raised. If that happens, negotiations could begin in earnest on a massive catchall spending measure in hopes of having it signed into law by year's end.

Talks on the spending caps are stuck, aides say. A GOP offer to lift the Pentagon budget by over \$54 billion next year and nondefense limits by \$37 billion was rejected by Democrats demanding balance between the two sides of the ledger.

Battles over immigration and Trump's wall along the U.S.-Mexico border are huge obstacles. Many Democrats insist they won't vote for any legislation that includes the wall.

Scientists study drug for PTSD, alcoholism

The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — The link between addiction and mental health disorders may be established in scientific circles, but treatments designed to address them together are uncommon.

Some University of Maryland researchers may be taking a promising step to tackle two such intractable but often related conditions: alcoholism and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Dr. Bankole Johnson, an addiction and brain science expert and professor of psychiatry in the University of Maryland School of Medicine, is leading a team launching a five-year study of the effectiveness of a drug called pregabalin for treating alcoholism and PTSD together.

Known commercially as Lyrica, pregabalin is now used to treat epileptic seizures, nerve pain and anxiety. Past studies also suggested it helps treat alcoholism, but that use has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

"There is a lot of suffering among people with PTSD and people with alcoholism, and they are at extreme risk for harming themselves," Johnson said.

Johnson said doctors use drugs to treat anxiety or to detox a patient, but there is little research into what works for both. Researchers are recruiting people in Baltimore who served in combat roles in the military or were victims of domestic abuse, for example, and turned to alcohol, perhaps to "self-medicate."

Johnson said pregabalin is promising because it modulates over-active neurotransmitters, or chemical signals, from nerve cells that control the drive to use alcohol and the effects of anxiety. Some users say it has Valium-like effects, but Johnson said it's far less addictive.

Any discovery of a medication to treat alcoholism and a severe mental health disorder could help reduce a persistent problem, he said.

Former soldier competes at vets' art fest

Weatherford (Texas) Democrat

WEATHERFORD, Texas — Former U.S. Army Sgt. Taylor Bonham just came back from competing in the 2017 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Buffalo, N.Y., in late October, and he credits his faith, his wife and fellow veterans for his journey.

Bonham, who got out of the Army in 2012, was selected nationally to perform his single "Same Star" after showing off his skills at the Fort Worth VA Medical Center.

With his guitar, plaid shirt and cowboy hat, Bonham looks every bit the country singer, but his struggle is anything but ordinary.

"This is a #22Kill ring. Figured I'd wear it every time I play," Bonham said, sporting a black band on the index finger of his right hand. The honor ring is from a charity named for the estimated number of veterans who commit suicide every day, Bonham said.

In 2013, Bonham was drinking to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder. It took a toll on his liver; he "drank himself into a coma," he said, and doctors gave him six to 12 months to live.

Then, Bonham stopped drinking and started getting better.

Bonham, 46, joined Guitars for Heroes, a Fort Worth program that provides therapeutic activities for veterans.

"I convinced my wife to drive me up there every day or every week, and I would help teach the class," he said. "Along the way, I started getting healthier to where I could walk. I'm still sick; I take 34 different medications a day."

But God had a bigger plan for him, he said.

Bonham wrote the song "Same Star" in October 2016.

He had volunteered to help on a hunting trip for vets in Oklahoma doing dishes and fishing while the others hunted.

"I was out there alone with my guitar. I remembered a time in the Army before cellphones and email when we actually had to write letters to our loved ones back home. I kept looking at this star and wondering if my wife was looking at the same one."

He wrote the song when he got home.

Competing in Buffalo with other vets was great, he said.

Bonham plays around the Weatherford and Dallas-Fort Worth areas for charity fundraisers.

Stars and Stripes contributed to this article.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Firefighters save dog from tortoise tunnel

AZ CHANDLER — A dog wouldn't come out after chasing a cat into a tunnel dug by a giant tortoise in the back yard of a home in a Phoenix suburb, so homeowner Toby Passmore called for help.

Chandler firefighters responded Wednesday with people and shovels and, with the help of a city backhoe, began unearthing the 6-foot-deep tunnel dug by Passmore's tortoise.

That allowed Passmore to squirm head-first into the hole and see that his Scottish Schnauzer "was willfully inside the hole" where it had cornered the cat.

With his ankles held by firefighters, Passmore was able to pull the dog out. It emerged dirty but unharmed.

The rescuers left the hole open to allow the cat to leave.

Police probe damage to 50 mailboxes

MI TALLMADGETOWN-SHIP — Authorities are investigating the malicious destruction of dozens of mailboxes in two western Michigan counties.

Ottawa County sheriff's officials said as many as 50 mailboxes were damaged early Thursday by suspects wielding golf clubs in Ottawa and Kent counties. According to investigators, there was a related incident in Tallmadge Township, where the suspects broke a window of a 2005 Saturn with a club.

Cops: Drunk man hits tree while having sex

WA LA GRANDE — Authorities said a man who was drunk, naked and having sex with a woman while

driving south of Tacoma missed a curve and struck a tree.

Washington State Patrol spokeswoman Brooke Bova said the crash happened at about 6 p.m. Wednesday on Mountain Highway East near La Grande.

Bova said the woman, who was also naked, was hospitalized with broken bones. Bova said the woman's 3-month-old child in the backseat was uninjured.

The News Tribune reported the driver was arrested and taken to Pierce County Jail on suspicion of felony driving under the influence, vehicular assault and child endangerment, according to Bova.

She said the man has three prior DUI convictions.

More than 40 pounds of pot found in luggage

TN NASHVILLE — More than 40 pounds of marijuana were discovered inside luggage at Tennessee's Nashville International Airport.

WZTV-TV reported that an affidavit said airport police seized 44 pounds of marijuana from luggage unclaimed at a carousel Tuesday night. The luggage came from a Delta Air Lines flight from Seattle.

The affidavit said the bags belonged to George Nellans, 43, who was arrested when he arrived at the airport Wednesday afternoon.

Green sea turtle nests hit record numbers

FL FLAGLER BEACH — Green sea turtles nested in record numbers around Florida this year, surpassing previous records statewide.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission documented approximately 39,000 green turtle nests on the 27 index beaches the state

monitors to assess trends in nesting sea turtles.

When the state first began surveying the index beaches nearly 30 years ago, 464 green turtle nests were recorded.

Pot dispensaries offer deals for Black Friday

NV LAS VEGAS — Big-box stores weren't the only ones offering discounts to shoppers in Las Vegas on Black Friday. Marijuana dispensaries were rolling out deals, too.

More than 40 dispensaries in the Sin City area offered discounts on marijuana flower products, edibles and concentrates, the Las Vegas Sun reported. This was the first Black Friday since legal sales of recreation marijuana began in Nevada.

Some dispensaries offered an eighth of an ounce of select flower products for \$35, down from \$53.

Legal sales of recreational marijuana began in the state July 1.

Tree shortage leads to Christmas conundrum

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Utah families looking for a fresh-cut Christmas tree might come up short because fewer conifers are available in the Pacific Northwest this year.

The shortage involves the Great Recession, the Salt Lake Tribune reported Tuesday.

Joe Shadle, owner of J&T Trees in Utah, said it takes up to 10 years to grow a Christmas tree for the market. He said demand for live trees was down during the recession, so Christmas tree farmers opted to grow fewer and replace them with profitable crops.

Shadle said the best quality trees will run as much as \$80 each this year.

Auto museum may save McDonald's museum

IL VOLO — There may be hope for the doomed replica of a historic McDonald's hamburger restaurant after all.

Upon hearing that McDonald's plans to demolish its museum in the Chicago suburb of Des Plaines next month, the Volo Auto Museum in Lake County is exploring the possibility of picking up the entire structure and parking it at the auto museum.

The (Crystal Lake) Northwest Herald reported that the auto museum has reached out to the burger giant to save the replica of the first McDonald's restaurant. Ray Kroc opened it in Des Plaines in 1955 after he franchised the brand from the original owners, Richard and Maurice McDonald.

Man arrested after posing nude on bridge

UT OGDEN — A man was under arrest after, according to police, he was caught posing nude for a woman photographing him on a Utah bridge.

The Standard-Examiner in Ogden reported the couple apparently decided to take advantage of unseasonably warm temperatures and stage a photo shoot on a railroad bridge near Mountain Green on Wednesday.

Union Pacific railroad workers noticed the couple and called police because they thought they were fishing off the bridge.

When Morgan County Sheriff's deputies arrived they discovered the man was posing for the woman. The man was arrested on suspicion of criminal trespass and lewdness. The woman was cited for criminal trespass.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Pittsburgh knocks off No. 2 Miami 24-14

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Miami spent the better part of 13 months putting together the nation's longest winning streak behind a series of comebacks that returned the swagger to "The U" in all of its "Turnover Chain" glory.

Sluggish throughout the first half against Pittsburgh on Friday, the Hurricanes figured they'd come out for the third quarter, hit the gas and survive just the way they've done time and again during their rebirth under second-year coach Mark Richt.

Nope.

Miami's perfect season is over. The second-ranked Hurricanes can only hope their shot at a College Football Playoff berth isn't gone, too.

Freshman quarterback Kenny Pickett ran for two touchdowns and threw for another as the Panthers pulled out a decisive 24-14 stunner that sent Miami reeling into next week's ACC title game showdown with defending national champion Clemson.

"I still think there's an awful

lot to play for," Miami coach Mark Richt said. "We have no idea what's going to happen in the big picture, how many teams lost a game on a Friday and came back and got in the top four? How many teams lost one game and won a conference championship and got right back in it? Who knows? So we don't know."

A chance to put together the program's first unbeaten regular season since 2002 vanished at chilly but hardly cold Heinz Field. Malik Rosier completed just 15 of 34 passes for 187 yards and two touchdowns and was briefly pulled in the fourth quarter. The Hurricanes (10-1, 7-1 ACC, CFP No. 2) managed just 232 yards, a season-low, and spotted Pitt a 10-7 halftime lead.

The Panthers put together a pair of long touchdown drives engineered by Pickett and the emphatic response from Miami never materialized.

"There's multiple times where we play lackadaisical in the first half and in the second half we come out and explode and it just didn't happen," Ros-

ier said. "That's something I've got to fix. I've got to motivate those guys in the first half so the second half doesn't have to be some type of miracle second half."

Miami stressed it had learned an important lesson after spotting Virginia a two-touchdown lead last week before recovering to extend the nation's longest winning streak to 15 games. Yet the Hurricanes walked onto the Heinz Field turf in a weird spot.

The ACC Coastal Division champions are well aware their meeting with No. 4 Clemson next Saturday will serve as the ultimate arbiter on whether the Hurricanes are worthy of consideration for the College Football Playoff. The loss to Pittsburgh might not matter as long as they beat the defending national champions.

Time to put the theory to the test.

"We want to focus on Clemson and if we win and we get in, great," Rosier said. "If we win and we don't, that's just something we have to live with. It was our play that got us to

where we're at."

Pickett's charge

The Panthers may have finally found a quarterback in Pickett, whose 22-yard naked bootleg with 2:54 left gave the Panthers all the cushion they would need to beat a No. 2 team at home for the first time in program history.

"You don't think your first start is going to come against the No. 2 team in the country and you upset them at home. It's an unbelievable feeling and I'm real happy we got it done for the seniors," Pickett said.

The last touchdown came on a fourth-and-6 at the Miami 22. Pickett pulled the ball away from running back Qadree Ollison and sprinted for the pylon. Only Pickett, Narduzzi and offensive coordinator Shawn Watson knew Pickett would run it. Everyone else had no clue.

"I was just going to get the first down and get down, but I turned the corner and when I looked, no one was there," Pickett said.

College football Top 25 roundup

UCF holds off USF, finishes regular season unbeaten

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Central Florida has gone from winless to unbeaten in 729 days.

Less than two years after finishing 0-12, the 12th-ranked Knights completed the first unbeaten regular season in program history on Friday with a wild 49-42 victory over No. 19 South Florida.

Not only does the victory give UCF one of the most remarkable turnarounds in Football Bowl Subdivision history, but it also clinched the American Athletic Conference's East Division title. The Knights (11-0, 8-0 AAC, CFP No. 15) will host Memphis in the conference title game on Dec. 2.

"This place is really special and tonight I saw a glimpse of what it could be," said UCF coach Scott Frost, who inherited a team that finished winless in 2015. "We started at the bottom two years ago. I knew we could be good but not that it could happen this fast."

"I got to be honest: if you told me at the beginning of the year that I would be sitting here at 11-0, I would have called you crazy."

In a game with 1,186 yards of offense — including a school-record 605 from South Florida quarterback Quinton Flowers — it ended up being special teams that made the difference.

No. 10 TCU 45, Baylor 22: Kenny Hill threw touchdown passes to three receivers and ran 3 yards for another score to help the host Horned Frogs wrap up a spot in the Big 12 championship game.

TCU (10-2, 7-2 Big 12, CFP No. 12) will play No. 3 Oklahoma for the Big 12 title on Dec. 2. That will come three weeks after the Horned Frogs' 38-20 loss to the Sooners.

Baylor (1-11, 1-8) jumped out to a 9-0 lead in the first 2 minutes, including a safety when Hill was sacked and fumbled in the end zone. But TCU was ahead for good after Hill's 7-yard TD pass to Jarrison Stewart made it 14-9 with 26 seconds left in the first quarter.

No. 24 Virginia Tech 10, Virginia 0: Josh Jackson threw a touchdown pass and the visiting Hokies beat the Cavaliers for the 14th consecutive time.

Virginia Tech (9-3, 5-3 Atlantic Coast Conference) limited Virginia to 5 rushing yards and 191 overall in posting its third shutout of the season.

Virginia (6-6, 3-5) had two golden opportunities for touchdowns, but Juan Thornhill slipped after intercepting a pass with nothing but green grass in front of him, and speedy wide receiver Olamide Zaccheaus caught a slant pattern that looked like it might go 89 yards, but he was caught from behind by Deon Newsome after just 28.

No. 1 Duke rallies to beat Texas in OT

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski calls Marvin Bagley III a treasure.

The freshman big man had a career-high 34 points and added 15 rebounds, and No. 1 Duke rallied to defeat Texas 85-78 in overtime on Friday in the semifinals of the PK80 Invitational.

"I believe ultimately in this kid. I knew he was going to be good, but coaching him every day, he's a treasure, really," Krzyzewski said. "Because he wants to be really good. All of his teammates love him because he's as hard of a worker as we have."

Gary Trent Jr. added 17 points for the Blue Devils (7-0), who trailed by 16 points in the second half and were forced to play five freshmen once senior Grayson Allen fouled out.

Duke advanced to Sunday's title game against No. 7 Florida, which beat No. 17 Gonzaga 111-105 in double overtime.

Dylan Osetkowski had 19

points and seven rebounds for Texas (4-1), which fell short of its first-ever victory over a top-ranked team.

Bagley had consecutive dunks to give the five-time NCAA champion Blue Devils a 78-73 lead in overtime. Andrew Jones' layup pulled Texas within 78-77 with 1:20 left. Wendell Carter's put-back dunk pushed Duke's lead to 82-78 and Trent's free throws with 11 seconds left sealed the win.

"The game kind of slowed down and my teammates found me in the right spots. Coaches, they called plays for me and they believed in me to keep attacking and going to the rim, just trying to create something," said Bagley, who had 21 points in the second half and overtime.

Bagley tied the Blue Devils' freshman scoring record set by J.J. Reddick on Jan. 15, 2003, against Virginia.

"He has it," Krzyzewski said of the 6-foot-11 forward, who became the first Duke fresh-

man to have five double-doubles over his first seven games. "He just has to keep developing it."

Duke trailed by as many as 16 points in the second half, but Bagley's short jumper tied it at 70 and put the Duke fans in the crowd on their feet. Allen fouled out with 2 minutes left in regulation and Kerwin Roach II dunked to put Texas back in front 72-70.

Trent made a layup and his free throw gave Duke a 73-72 lead with 32.8 seconds left. Matt Coleman made a free throw on the other end to re-tie it but missed the second and the game went to overtime.

It was the sixth biggest comeback in Duke history.

The Blue Devils struggled throughout the game from the perimeter and at times from the free-throw line. Duke made just three of 18 three-point attempts for the game and finished with 22 of 36 free throws.

Carter finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds.

Mohamad Bamba, the Long-

horns' 6-11 freshman with a 7-9 wingspan, finished with nine points and 10 rebounds but fouled out with 32.8 seconds left in regulation. Bamba had two blocks.

"We showed how good we can be, but obviously there's a lot of things we have to grow on and get better from. And we have to understand the game is 40 minutes long, or in this case, 45 minutes long," Texas coach Shaka Smart said.

The three-day tournament, which is nicknamed the PK80, celebrates Nike co-founder Phil Knight's 80th birthday. The event takes a break on Saturday before resuming on Sunday.

Roach beat three defenders for a decisive dunk that gave Texas a 42-29 lead and the Longhorns led 43-31 at the break. Roach hit two decisive dunks in the first half, mugging for the courtside cameras.

It was the fifth meeting between the teams and Duke has won all of them.

College basketball Top 25 roundup

No. 2 Arizona suffers third loss in as many days

Associated Press

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — Dakota Mathias scored 24 points to help Purdue win the seventh-place game at the Battle 4 Atlantis 89-64, sending Arizona home with three losses in three days.

Freshman Deandre Ayton had 22 points before fouling out for the Wildcats (3-3), while junior Allonzo Trier — who came in averaging 27.8 points — finished with just eight on 3-for-10 shooting.

No. 3 Kansas 102, Oakland 59: Udoka Azubuike had a career-high 21 points and 10 rebounds and seven players finished in double figures for the host Jayhawks.

No. 4 Michigan St. 77, UConn 57: Cassius Winston scored 12 of his career-high 28

points during a 4-minute span late in the second half to help the Spartans reach the championship game of the PK80 Invitational in Portland, Ore.

No. 5 Villanova 64, Northern Iowa 50: At Paradise Island, Bahamas, Mikal Bridges scored 18 points and the Wildcats pulled away in the Battle 4 Atlantis championship game.

No. 7 Florida 111, No. 17 Gonzaga 105 (2 OT): The Gators' Jalen Hudson had a career-high 35 points, including eight three-pointers, at the PK80 Invitational in Portland, Ore.

No. 9 North Carolina 87, Arkansas 68: At Portland, Ore., Luke Maye had career highs with 28 points and 16 rebounds and Kenny Williams had 16 of his 19 points in the second half for the Tar Heels in the semifi-

nals of the PK80 Invitational.

No. 14 Minnesota 69, Massachusetts 51: Jordan Murphy scored 16 points and grabbed nine rebounds to spark the Gophers in the Barclays Center Classic in New York.

Arizona St. 102, No. 15 Xavier 86: Tra Holder scored a career-high 40 points to lead the Sun Devils in the championship game of the Las Vegas Invitational.

No. 16 Texas A&M 81, Pepperdine 65: DJ Hogg scored 18 points and Tyler Davis had seven of his 15 in a key second-half stretch to lead the host Aggies.

No. 19 Louisville 84, Saint Francis (Pa.) 72: Ray Spalding had 19 points and a career-high 13 rebounds before leaving midway through the second half with an injury as host Lou-

isville held off the Red Flash.

No. 20 Seton Hall 72, Vanderbilt 59: At New York, Desi Rodriguez scored a season-high 27 points for the Pirates in the consolation game of the NIT Season Tip-Off at Barclays Center.

Washington St. 84, No. 21 Saint Mary's 79: Malachi Flynn scored 26 points and Washington State held off Saint Mary's to reach the title game of the Wooden Legacy.

No. 23 West Virginia 83, UCF 45: At Lake Buena Vista, Fla., James Bolden scored 17 points and Jevon Carter had 16 for the Mountaineers in a semifinal at the Advocare Invitational in Fullerton, Calif.

No. 25 Alabama 71, BYU 59: John Petty scored 16 points to lead the Tide in the Barclays Center Classic in New York.

NBA roundup

OKC blows major lead in loss to Detroit

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Another second-half collapse, another round of questions about Oklahoma City's finishing power.

After dominating defending NBA champion Golden State from start to finish two days earlier, the Thunder wasted a big lead in a 99-98 loss to the Detroit Pistons on Friday night.

Oklahoma City had a 10-point lead at the half and was up 15 midway through the third quarter before the Pistons stormed back, led by center Andre Drummond and bench players Ish Smith and Langston Galloway.

Detroit grabbed the lead for good midway through the fourth quarter and the Thunder missed 14 of their last 20 shots, including a final 27-footer by Russell Westbrook in the final

three seconds that left Oklahoma City a point short.

"We're going to live and die with Russ taking that shot," Oklahoma City's Paul George said. "He had a good look but it just didn't go in."

Westbrook had his sixth triple-double of the season for Oklahoma City with 27 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds. He missed a long three-point attempt on the final possession to finish 1-for-10 from three-point range and 10-for-29 from the field.

Carmelo Anthony had 20 points for the Thunder. George had 16.

Warriors 143, Chicago 94: Stephen Curry put on a thrilling display with 33 points to lead host Golden State past Chicago on a night both Kevin Durant and Draymond Green were out.

Celtics 118, Magic 103: Kyrie Irving scored 17 of his 30 points in a blistering first half and Boston routed visiting Orlando.

Cavaliers 100, Hornets 99: LeBron James had 27 points, 16 rebounds and 13 assists, J.R. Smith made the tiebreaking free throw with 48 seconds left, and host Cleveland extended its winning streak to seven with a victory over Charlotte.

Heat 109, Timberwolves 97: Wayne Ellington scored 21 points and made six three-pointers off the bench, Goran Dragic added 20 points and Miami had a season-best performance from behind the arc to beat visiting Minnesota.

Hawks 116, Knicks 104: Dennis Schroder scored 26 points and host Atlanta used a 30-point third quarter to snap a three-game losing streak and

beat New York.

Pelicans 115, Suns 91: Anthony Davis had 23 points and nine rebounds, DeMarcus Cousins added 19 points and 10 boards and visiting New Orleans routed Phoenix.

Nuggets 104, Grizzlies 92: Nikola Jokic scored 14 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter and had 13 rebounds and eight assists to help Denver beat visiting Memphis.

Pacers 107, Raptors 104: Victor Oladipo scored 21 points, Bojan Bogdanovic added 19 and host Indiana beat Toronto.

Trail Blazers 127, Nets 125: Damian Lillard scored 34 points, Jusuf Nurkic had 29 and visiting Portland overcame a late six-point deficit to beat Brooklyn.

NHL roundup

Boyle's second-period goal helps Devils beat Canucks

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Brian Boyle scored one of the most meaningful goals of his career to help the New Jersey Devils beat the Vancouver Canucks 3-2 on Friday night.

The Devils were marking "Hockey Fights Cancer Night," a battle especially meaningful to Boyle, who was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia during training camp and missed the first 10 games of the season while undergoing treatment.

The Prudential Center erupted with cheers when Boyle, set up by a beautiful drop pass from Will Butcher, scored at 10:17 of the second period to snap a 1-1 tie.

Taylor Hall got the second assist as part of his big night. The Devils' leading scorer had a goal and two assists as the

Devils picked up points in a third straight game (2-0-1).

Damon Severson also scored for New Jersey and Cory Schneider made 23 saves to improve to 6-1-2 against the team that made him a first-round draft pick in 2004.

Predators 2, Blues 0: Ryan Johansen had a goal and an assist, and Pekka Rinne earned his second shutout of the season as visiting Nashville beat St. Louis.

Capitals 3, Lightning 1: Alex Ovechkin and Devante Smith-Pelly each scored a goal, Philipp Grubauer stopped 25 shots for his first victory of the season and Washington ended Tampa Bay's six-game road winning streak.

Coyotes 3, Kings 2 (OT): Christian Fischer scored on a rebound with 2:17 left in overtime to lift host Arizona past Los Angeles.

Stars 6, Flames 4: Tyler Seguin scored two of his three goals in the third period, and host Dallas rallied to beat Calgary.

Blue Jackets 5, Senators 2: Cam Atkinson scored twice to lift host Columbus over Ottawa and extend his team's league-high winning streak to six games.

Sabres 3, Oilers 1: Robin Lehner stopped 29 shots and host Buffalo snapped a seven-game skid with a win over Edmonton.

Maple Leafs 5, Hurricanes 4: James Van Riemsdyk had a goal and an assist to help visiting Toronto beat Carolina.

Golden Knights 5, Sharks 4 (OT): Jonathan Marchessault took a pass from Shea Theodore and poked the puck past Aaron Dell to give host Vegas an overtime victory over San Jose.

Rangers 2, Red Wings 1

(OT): Mats Zuccarello scored 37 seconds into overtime to give host New York the victory over Detroit.

Bruins 4, Penguins 3: Matt Grzelcyk scored his first career goal, David Krejci had a goal and an assist and host Boston stretched its season-long winning streak to four straight with a win over Pittsburgh.

Islanders 5, Flyers 4 (OT): Defenseman Nick Leddy snapped a shot past Philadelphia goalie Brian Elliott 2:44 into overtime to give visiting New York the victory.

Jets 4, Ducks 1: Nikolaj Ehlers scored two goals in the game's first 5 minutes, and streaking Winnipeg went on to beat host Anaheim.

Wild 3, Avalanche 2 (SO): Charlie Coyle and Chris Stewart scored in the shootout to give host Minnesota the victory over Colorado.