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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Study: Cost of post-9/11 wars hits \$5.9T

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The price for America's longest wars has surpassed \$5.9 trillion and at least 480,000 lost lives, according to a new study released by the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

The figures highlight the toll of U.S. war operations around the world since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and the study projects the numbers could rise.

"It's important for the American people to understand the true costs of war, both the moral and monetary costs," said Sen. Jack Reed, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, who helped introduce the report Wednesday at a meeting on Capitol Hill. "Our nation continues to finance wars and military operations through borrowing, rather than asking people to contribute to the national defense directly, and the result is a serious fiscal drag that we're not really accounting for or factoring into deliberations about fiscal policy or military policy."

The study's death estimates include

nearly 7,000 U.S. servicemembers, nearly 8,000 U.S. contractors, more than 100,000 military and police members from other countries, more than 244,000 civilians and more than 100,000 opposition fighters.

The \$5.9 trillion U.S. cost includes Pentagon spending through fiscal year 2019, such as direct and indirect spending as well as future war-related costs for post-9/11 war veterans. It represents U.S. spending in the war zones of Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and other locations designated as "overseas contingency operations."

It also includes war-related spending by other agencies, such as the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security, costs of veterans care as well as debt used to pay for the wars.

"Veterans benefits and disability spending, and the cost of interest on borrowing to pay for the wars, will comprise an increasingly large share of the costs," said Neta Crawford, a political science professor at the institute, who authored the study.

The institute's "Costs of War" project, with 35 scholars, legal experts, human rights practitioners and physicians, began

tracking the costs of the post-9/11 wars in 2011 and continues to release updated reports. The group, which does its work through Brown University, said it uses research and public data to facilitate greater transparency of the actual toll of the wars.

Even if the wars were to end by 2023, the United States is on track to spend an additional \$808 billion, bringing the overall tally to at least \$6.7 trillion, according to the study. That doesn't include future interest payments on the spending.

War appropriations for Iraq and Afghanistan are funded by deficit spending and borrowing, and not new taxes or war bonds, the study notes. This adds to interest costs, it concludes.

Those interest payments could shift with the winds of the economy and other factors, with some pundits estimating those fees alone could total trillions.

"The U.S. continues to fund the wars by borrowing, so this is a conservative estimate of the consequences of funding the war as if on a credit card, in which we are only paying interest even as we continue to spend," Crawford said.

Mattis hails border mission as 'good training'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis defended the use of active-duty troops on the U.S.-Mexican border, saying that in some ways it provides good training for war. He argued that it's analogous to a 1916 deployment to counter the Mexican revolutionary Gen. Francisco "Pancho" Villa.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday on his way to visit U.S. troops along the border in south Texas, Mattis declined to provide an estimate of how much the mission will cost. He said cost figures he has received thus far are "not anywhere near right."

He added that he believes that "very quickly we'll know the real cost. So we'll keep you posted as the real costs come in."

In his most extensive remarks about the hastily arranged border mission, Mattis argued that it fits a historical pattern dating to early in the 20th century. He noted that

President Woodrow Wilson deployed tens of thousands of National Guard and active-duty troops to the border in 1916 in response to a Mexican military raid into the U.S.

"That's over a century ago, and the threat then was Pancho Villa's troops — revolutionary raiding across the border into the United States," he said. He noted that more recently, National Guard troops were used in border missions ordered by President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama, although not on the cusp of a midterm election.

The Pentagon chief said that within a week to 10 days the 5,800 troops currently deployed for the border mission will have accomplished all the tasks initially requested by Customs and Border Protection, although additional tasks are now being worked out between the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security.

Mattis did not say when the mission might

end. Current deployments are scheduled to last until Dec. 15, but that could change.

In addition to the 5,800 active-duty troops in the border area, about 2,100 National Guard troops have been providing border support since April.

Critics have questioned the wisdom of using the military on the border where there is no discernible security threat, although President Donald Trump has said that a caravan of Central American migrants traveling northward through Mexico amounts to an "invasion." Since the election, Trump has said little about the matter, and no border threat has yet materialized.

Asked whether he believes there is a security threat at the border that justifies the use of the active-duty military, Mattis said he defers to the judgment of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who joined him at the border Wednesday.

US 'battles' in war games in Poland

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

U.S. troops "battled" enemy armor and motorized infantry units in northern Poland while simultaneously engaging armed civilians probing their positions during this year's Anaconda 18 war games in northern Poland.

The biannual drills at the Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area involve almost 18,000 troops from 10 NATO allies, including the Army's 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, making it the largest exercise so far designed to defend Poland's Eastern border.

Antoni Macierewicz, Poland's former minister of defense, described Anaconda 2018 as a

test of NATO's capabilities to protect the alliance's eastern flank.

The exercise scenario called for participating troops to respond to a number of threats resulting from a mock attack on Poland's eastern border. Those included conventional armor and infantry units as well as hybrid warfare elements such as enemy forces dressed as civilians to scout their positions.

Once the mock battle started, the NATO coalition was expected to repel the fictional invading force and mount a counter attack.

These war games will most likely conclude before Thanksgiving in Drawsko Pomorskie but will continue in other bases around Poland until Dec. 6.

AF instructor pilot killed in crash

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A 28-year-old Air Force instructor pilot was killed when his T-38C Talon jet trainer crashed Tuesday evening at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas, service officials said late Wednesday.

Capt. John Graziano died in the crash about 7:40 p.m. local time on the south Texas installation just outside Del Rio, the Air Force said in a statement.

A second pilot in the aircraft, Capt. Mark Palyok, was released from a local hospital late Wednesday after he was treated for injuries, the service said.

An investigation into the crash was ongoing Thursday, said officials, who declined to say whether the probe had produced any preliminary findings.

Both pilots belonged to

Laughlin's 87th Flying Training Squadron.

"Everybody's hurting. Everybody, including me," Air Force Col. Lee Gentile, the commander of the 47th Flying Training Wing, said in a video posted to Laughlin's official Facebook page. "That's our second loss in the last year."

On Nov. 20, 2017, Air Force Capt. Paul J. Barbour was killed and Capt. Joshua Hammervold was injured when their T-38 jet crashed after it experienced total hydraulic failure, according to an investigation into the crash.

The T-38 is a decades-old supersonic jet used to train pilots to fly fighter and bomber aircraft. Three other Air Force T-38s have crashed in 2018. None of those incidents occurred at Laughlin, and the pilots survived the crashes.

Paratroopers in Italy get a logistical boost

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — The 173rd Airborne Brigade is getting a little help from its friends for the first time in years.

U.S. Army Garrison Italy took over the logistical intricacies of getting hundreds of paratroopers from Caserma Ederle onto planes Wednesday to Aviano Air Base for exercises in southern France.

"The 173rd over the last several years was basically deploying itself," said garrison commander Col. Erik Berdy.

The logistics part is significant and was a distraction from mission imperatives, he said. "The garrison really should be doing that," Berdy said.

The move — aimed to test and improve capabilities along with the brigade for projecting power over distances — comes as the Army focuses anew on whether troops are equipped and trained to deploy quickly and effectively after more than a decade of rotational deployments to battle insurgents Iraq and Afghanistan. "Readiness ebbs and flows. Resources ebb and flow. Priorities ebb and flow," Berdy said.

The 173rd paratroopers were to jump onto an airfield near Caylus, France, on Wednesday and spend several days training with troops assigned to the Airborne Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, a Franco-British quick reaction force created in 2010.

3 S. Korean companies to pay bid-rigging fines

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Three South Korean companies have agreed to plead guilty and pay some \$236 million in criminal and civil penalties for a "decadelong bid-rigging conspiracy" involving contracts to supply fuel to U.S. military bases on the peninsula, the Justice Department said.

The companies — SK Energy Co. Ltd., GS Caltex Corp. and Hanjin Transportation Co. Ltd. — also agreed to pay a total of about \$154 million to the United States for antitrust and false claims violations in separate civil claims, according to a statement.

The Justice Department said the criminal charges were the first to be announced in the investigation, which involved allegations that the petroleum and refinery companies and their agents conspired "to suppress

and eliminate competition" during the bidding process for contracts from 2005 to 2016.

"Such a conspiracy is no less illegal for being hatched in South Korea, and as this case shows, federal law enforcement authorities can bridge the distance," said Benjamin Glassman, U.S. attorney of the southern district of Ohio.

Some 28,500 U.S. service-members are stationed on several bases in South Korea, a staunch ally since the two countries fought together against the communist-backed North in the 1950-53 war that ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

The Defense Logistics Agency and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service are responsible for contracts with South Korean companies to supply fuel to the military bases.

Woman makes strides toward Special Forces

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

A woman has passed Special Forces Assessment and Selection for the first time in the history of the Green Berets.

The unnamed soldier completed the selection process this week, officials said.

Like other Special Forces soldiers, she is not being identified by U.S. Army Special Operations Command or the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, which oversees training for Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations soldiers.

"It is our policy to not release the names of our servicemembers because Special Forces soldiers perform discreet missions upon graduation," said Lt. Col. Loren Bymer, a USASOC spokesman.

Special Forces Assessment and Selection is one of the first steps for a soldier seeking

to earn the coveted Green Beret and is considered one of the most grueling selection processes in the U.S. military. It is followed by the Special Forces Qualification Course, which is also conducted at Fort Bragg.

Bymer said the selection process involves a continual assessment of each candidate by professional cadre throughout a 24-day rigorous test of mental and physical stamina.

In all, training to become a Special Forces soldier can take up to two years, depending on military occupational specialty and foreign language requirements, officials said.

"We're proud of all the candidates who attended and were selected to continue into the qualification course in hopes of earning their Green Beret," Bymer said.

The soldier is expected to attend the Special Forces Qualification Course in the

coming months.

If she completes training to become a Special Forces soldier, she would open one of the last remaining all-male fraternities of the Army — the Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha, or A-team.

Each A-team comprises 12 soldiers with varied specialties.

The soldier, if she graduates, would be assigned to one of seven Special Forces groups, each orientated to a particular part of the globe and trained to work alongside and through local forces in their areas of expertise.

On Wednesday, the Service Women's Action Network, which has advocated for opening military jobs to women, applauded the news.

"It's very exciting," said Ellen Haring, a retired Army colonel and the organization's CEO.

Icy roads deadly as storm barrels east

Associated Press

BYHALIA, Miss. — A pre-winter storm slammed parts of the South and lower Midwest, causing five deaths on slippery roads and stranding travelers for more than eight hours on an icy Arkansas interstate.

The wintry weather was barreling eastward Thursday, with snow and ice expected from Ohio and the Appalachian Mountains through Washington, New York and New England.

Snow fell as far southeast as central Alabama, which got a dusting. While wintry precipitation is unusual in the Deep South so early in the season, forecasters said the overnight trace missed setting a record for earliest snow by about two weeks.

In Mississippi, a tour bus bound for a casino overturned, leaving two people dead and 44 others injured. And in the Little Rock, Ark., area, three people were killed in separate crashes on icy roads Wednesday night, while Interstate 40 was shut down overnight in the eastern part of the state because of several crashes near the White River bridge. The interstate reopened shortly before daybreak Thursday, but officials said traffic was slow-going because some drivers had fallen asleep.

Witnesses told Mississippi investigators the tour bus driver lost control after crossing an icy overpass and the bus rolled over on its driver's side, coming to rest in the median of Interstate 269 in Byhalia around

12:35 p.m., said Mississippi Highway Patrol spokesman Capt. Johnny Poulos.

"All of a sudden the bus started swerving then it spun around two times, hit the rail and then flipped over," bus passenger Veronica Love told news outlets as she left a hospital after the wreck. "The second spin, it started picking up speed. It was, I mean, what could you do?"

The crash happened about 35 miles southeast of downtown Memphis, Tenn.

Killed were Betty Russell, 70, and Cynthia Hardin, 61, both of Huntsville, Ala., said DeSoto County Coroner Joshua Pounders. The injured were taken to Memphis-area hospitals, with at least three listed in serious condition Wednesday evening.

Report: Couple, homeless man set up scam GoFundMe

Advance Ohio Media

MOUNT HOLLY, N.J. — A couple conspired with a homeless man on a story about him offering the last of his money when the woman's car ran out of gas and then set up a fraudulent GoFundMe account to scam sympathizers, according to a report Wednesday.

According to NBC Philadelphia, a source familiar with the case says Mark D'Amico; his girlfriend, Kate McClure; and Johnny Bobbitt will face charges that include conspiracy and theft by deception. D'Amico and McClure reportedly have surrendered

to Burlington County prosecutors. It's unknown if Bobbitt plans to surrender.

Prosecutors were expected to officially announce charges Thursday, the Camden Courier Post reported.

The story of D'Amico, McClure and Bobbitt went viral in November 2017, according to nj.com. McClure said she ran out of gas in Philadelphia when she encountered Bobbitt, who gave her his final \$20 so she could fill the tank of her vehicle.

The couple then started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for Bobbitt. It drew more than \$400,000 in donations.

In September, Bobbitt sued the couple, accusing them of withholding money from him and instead spending it on themselves. Bobbitt's lawyer says his client received about \$75,000.

D'Amico and McClure said they were rationing the money to keep Bobbitt from using it on "something stupid." Bobbitt lived for a short time on the couple's property in a camper purchased for him but later was told to leave and became homeless again. He admitted he still struggled with drug addiction in April but now says he's clean, the Courier Post reported.

Experts seek ways to curb wildfire deaths

Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — Creating fire buffers between housing and dry brush, burying spark-prone power lines and lighting more controlled burns to keep vegetation in check could give people a better chance of surviving wildfires, according to experts searching for ways to reduce growing death tolls from blazes in California and across the U.S. West.

Western wildfires have grown ever more lethal, a grim reality driven by more housing developments sprawling into the most fire-prone grasslands and brushy canyons, experts say. Many of the ranchers and farmers who once managed those landscapes are gone, leaving terrain thick with vegetation that can explode into flames.

That's set the stage for tragedy, as whipping winds and drought that are characteristic of climate change stoke

wildfires like those raging in Northern and Southern California, killing scores of people in recent days.

Hundreds of thousands of people were told to evacuate ahead of the blazes. Some experts say there has been an over-reliance on evacuation and too little attention paid to making communities safe, plus not enough money for preventive measures.

Search crews found many victims inside or next to their vehicles, killed trying to flee. Survivors of the blaze that nearly obliterated the Northern California town of Paradise spoke of having minutes to escape and narrow roads rendered impassable by flames and traffic jams.

There are "so many ways that can go wrong, in the warning, the modes of getting the message out, the confusion," said Max Moritz, a wildfire specialist with the University

of California Cooperative Extension program.

Moritz urged consideration of the creation of community "retreat zones" where residents can ride out deadly firestorms if escape seems impossible. That could be a community center, built or retrofitted to better withstand wildfires that can top 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and reduce ordinary homes to ash.

Such fire protection can include sprinklers, fire- and heat-resistant walls and roofs, and barriers to keep sparks out of chimneys and other openings, according to the International Code Council, a nonprofit that helps develop U.S. building codes.

Creating more buffers around housing developments would help stave off wildfires.

They could be parks or irrigated agriculture, like the vineyards that helped keep last year's wildfires in California

wine country from spreading into even more towns.

Also helpful would be burying electric power lines, which can spark and fail in high winds that drive many of California's fiercest fires, said Jon Keeley, a research scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey in California.

Sparks from utility equipment are suspected in the Northern California wildfire that consumed Paradise, destroying thousands of homes.

A proven method to guard against destructive fires is controlled burns. By intentionally lighting fires when conditions are right, property owners remove low-lying trees and brush that otherwise act as fuel.

For 2019, the Forest Service has proposed a \$3 million bump for its wildfire fuels program. At Interior, Zinke proposed a \$29 million cut in fuel management spending.

Death penalty to be sought for 5 in killing of Khashoggi

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi Arabia's top prosecutor said Thursday he's seeking the death penalty for five suspects charged with ordering and carrying out the killing of dissident Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

The disclosures by the prosecution appear aimed at distancing the killers and their operation from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose decision-making powers have thrust him into the center of a global outcry over the killing.

Chief Saudi prosecutor Saud al-Mojeb's decision to seek the death penalty before trial is not unusual in Saudi Arabia.

Facing mounting international pressure, prosecutors also pointed the finger at two men who were part of the crown prince's inner circle but

stopped short of accusing them of ordering a hit on Khashoggi. The two are instead being accused of ordering Khashoggi's forced return in an operation the Saudis allege went awry.

In a press conference later Thursday, Sheikh Shalan al-Shalan, spokesman and deputy attorney general, said the Oct. 2 killing was ordered by one man: the individual responsible for the negotiating team sent to forcibly bring Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia.

He did not disclose that individual's name but said he was part of a 15-man team sent to Turkey comprising three groups: negotiators, intelligence and logistics.

He said the killers drugged and killed the writer inside the consulate before dismembering the body and handing it over for disposal by an unidentified local collaborator. The body has never been found.

South Korea begins to dismantle guard posts

Associated Press

CHEORWON, South Korea — South Korea exploded a front-line guard post Thursday, sending plumes of thick, black smoke into the sky above the border with North Korea in the most dramatic scene to date in the rivals' efforts to reduce animosities that sparked last year's fears of war.

Last week the two Koreas finished withdrawing troops and firearms from some of the guard posts along their border before dismantling them. The steps are part of agreements signed in September during a meeting between their leaders in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital.

On Thursday, South Korea's military invited a group of journalists to watch the destruction of a guard post with dynamite in the central border area of

Cheorwon. The journalists were asked to stay hundreds of yards away as black smoke enveloped the hilly border area. They later watched soldiers and other workers bulldoze another guard post.

While most of the South Korean guard posts are being destroyed with construction equipment for environmental and safety reasons, dynamite was used for the first structure because of its location on a high hill where it was difficult to employ excavators, the Defense Ministry said.

North Korea is demolishing its guard posts with explosives, according to South Korean media.

The guard posts are inside the 155-mile-long, 2.5-mile-wide border called the Demilitarized Zone.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Manager is assaulted over ketchup

CA SANTA ANA — Police are seeking a woman who pushed, punched and choked a McDonald's manager because she wanted ketchup.

Police in Santa Ana said the assault took place around 11 p.m. on Oct. 27 when the drive-thru customer entered the restaurant through an employee door and asked for the condiment. Video released by police shows the woman attack the manager after she was told she could not be in the building.

The footage shows other employees trying to help before a man, who police believe was with the suspect, ran into the restaurant and pulled the woman off the manager. The pair left.

Police: Man stashed meth in his underwear

OH ALLIANCE — Police in Ohio said a man arrested during a traffic stop had 33 grams of meth stashed in his underwear.

Police said the drugs that a 29-year-old Sebring man had hidden in his underwear were intended for sale. Police said a 45-year-old Diamond man was wanted on failure to appear in court.

Both men face multiple felony drug charges.

Woman returns stolen puppy to boy, 12

TN MEMPHIS — A stolen puppy was returned to a 12-year-old boy in Tennessee whose family said he was shoved to the ground in the theft.

WREG-TV reported the Shelby County Sheriff's Office returned the 4-month-old American Bully named Diamond to the boy Tuesday.

John Black said Diamond was stolen last weekend when a car pulled up near his son, who was walking Diamond in their Memphis neighborhood. He said a man got out of the car, shoved his son to the ground and fled with Diamond.

Authorities said a woman surrendered Diamond to Memphis police when she recognized it from news reports.

Man, 91, arrested while visiting his wife

CT FAIRFIELD — Officials at a Connecticut nursing home called the police on a 91-year-old man visiting his wife.

Heinz Vonkuthy said Tuesday he was trying to kiss his wife goodbye at Regal Care when Fairfield police arrived and arrested him. The Connecticut Post reported Vonkuthy was charged with criminal trespass and released on a promise to appear in court.

Police said the nursing home manager told officers Vonkuthy was not allowed to kiss his wife, because they believed he would "pass items to his wife through his mouth."

Police said officers have been called to the nursing home 26 times regarding Vonkuthy.

Police share video of turkey chasing cruiser

MA CHESHIRE — Police in two Massachusetts communities said they've launched a joint investigation into the turkey who tried to chase down a police cruiser this week.

Cheshire Police Officer Dylan Vandoloski took video of the feathered suspect trotting behind his police car while he was on patrol. The Boston Globe reported Pittsfield Police Officer Darren Derby shared the video through his police department's

social media accounts, asking "for help in identifying the subject in the video."

Cab driver rescues injured hawk on road

NY NEW YORK — A New York City cab driver is being hailed for saving an injured red-tailed hawk he found on the side of a major city parkway.

The Wild Bird Fund said the cab driver was driving on FDR Drive when he spotted the bird of prey sitting on the side of the road.

The Daily News reported he scooped up the bird into his car and held it with one hand while driving with the other hand.

The unidentified cab driver drove the hawk to Brooklyn where he flagged down a police officer who transported the hawk to the Wild Bird Fund. The nonprofit rescue service said the hawk is on the mend.

2 guitars suspected stolen from juke joint

AL BESSEMER — The manager of an Alabama man who's been playing from his backyard juke joint for more than 60 years said she believes his guitars have been stolen.

Henry "Gip" Gipson's manager, Diane Guyton, told AL.com two of Gipson's guitars were stolen from Gip's Place, a Bessemer juke joint among the few remaining.

Guyton said the cream 1993 Fender Stratocaster and a Gibson Les Paul Jr. went missing last week but she had thought Gipson misplaced them.

The 98-year-old blues musician's tin-roofed garage has hosted the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards, Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page and others since 1952.

Hamilton descendant loans museum items

PA PHILADELPHIA — The fifth great-grandson of Alexander Hamilton is loaning some family heirlooms to the Museum of the American Revolution.

The items include a Society of the Cincinnati Eagle insignia worn and owned by Hamilton and a gold mourning ring — featuring a lock of his hair set under a glass jewel — worn by his wife after his death.

The heirlooms will be featured as part of the museum's "Year of Hamilton" that includes an exhibit called "Hamilton Was Here: Rising Up in Revolutionary Philadelphia."

Douglas Hamilton, 67, of Ohio said their famous distant relative wasn't something his family focused on. He said a cardboard box containing the heirlooms was quietly passed down from generation to generation.

There is a new king of stone crab eating

FL MARATHON — A new stone crab eating champion was crowned in the Florida Keys.

Christian Gatti, of Big Pine Key, used an ice cream scoop to crack and then consume 25 stone crab claws in 15 minutes and 57 seconds Saturday at the Keys Fisheries Stone Crab Eating Contest. He beat 24 rivals including twice-past champion Juan Mallen of Miami.

Marathon residents Greg D'Agostino and Ryan Beckett claimed their fourth consecutive team championship with a record-breaking time of 6:21.

The Keys are Florida's top regional supplier of stone crab claws.

From wire reports

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QB Mahomes rewriting record books

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Patrick Mahomes walked off the field at Arrowhead Stadium on Sunday with another record on his resume and the Kansas City Chiefs another win toward earning the No. 1 seed in the AFC playoffs.

He didn't have much chance to savor any of it. Mahomes quickly learned that the stepfather of his longtime girlfriend, Brittany Matthews, had died after a medical emergency during the game. Mahomes quickly skipped out on the postgame celebration and joined Matthews, who posted the sobering news on her social media accounts that evening.

"Today is a day I will never forget," she wrote in the caption of a photo. "Directly after this picture I sprinted to the front entrance to see my stepdad passed out! He did not come back from this and he was called to heaven today! I KNOW 100 (percent) he is so happy up there with his kids looking down on us, cheering loud that his Chiefs won today!"

Mahomes is not expected to miss any preparation for Monday night's showdown with the Rams in Los Angeles, though Chiefs coach Andy Reid said he would be fine if it happens.

The Chiefs were off Tuesday and Wednesday, giving Mahomes and his family time to cope.

"We're sorry to hear about what took place," Reid said. "Prayers and blessings are with the family. I talked to Patrick and they're doing well for the circumstances that took place. As they go through this mourning period our thoughts and prayers are with them."

This season has already been a whirlwind for Mahomes, who was thrust into the starting job after the trade of Alex Smith to Washington and whose ability was justifiably questioned.

He was a product of the Texas Tech offensive system. His big arm was tempered by problems with his accuracy. He had leadership abilities, but could they translate from college to the NFL?

Mahomes has answered all those questions every week.

He threw six touchdown passes in a game. He led the Chiefs to tough road wins over the Chargers and Steelers, and went toe-to-toe with Tom Brady in New England. He has thrown so few interceptions that any questions about his decision-making have been left in September.

With two more TD passes against the Cardinals, he broke the franchise single-season re-

cord of 30 that Hall of Fame quarterback Len Dawson set during the 1964 season — with six games to go.

"Pat is just a competitor," Chiefs running back Kareem Hunt said, "and a great guy and he's always trying to win. We needed all 31 of those touchdowns and he got them."

Well, the Chiefs probably didn't need all of them.

The Chiefs have scored 353 points through their first 10 games, the most in club history, and have been held to fewer than 30 only twice. Three times they've scored more than 40, including their 43-40 loss to the Patriots that remains the only blemish on their record.

To put into perspective just how good Mahomes has been this season, consider this: He threw for 249 yards against the Cardinals for a passer rating of 125.4, the eighth time this season he's been over 100.0 — the third most in a single season in franchise history.

Yet some people considered the end of his streak of eight consecutive 300-yard passing games to be a relative disappointment, as if he failed to live up to some otherworldly expectation.

His teammates certainly weren't in that camp.

"That's something I'd do on 'Madden,'" wide receiver Tyreek Hill said of Mahomes' TD record. "For him to come in and do that, that's amazing. A lot of people doubted him, saying he wasn't going to do this or wasn't going to do that. He's shutting a lot of people up right now and I'm proud of him. He's just got to continue to move forward and stay humble. He'll be all right."

Odds makers in Las Vegas have made the 23-year-old Mahomes the front-runner to win the league's MVP award, ahead of Saints quarterback Drew Brees and Rams running back Todd Gurley. And if he keeps going at his current rate, he will no doubt continue to rewrite the Chiefs record book.

Maybe even the page that lists the Chiefs' rather unimpressive postseason history.

"Listen, he's had a heck of a year," Reid said. "Comes out every day bringing energy and he makes sure that he has his things in order. When he does that, and he's got a lot on his plate as far as responsibility goes to run that offense, and he takes care of that. He's in a position where he can make everyone better around him, and he's doing that. I'm proud of him."

3 straight wins are building Colts' hopes

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis Colts' season looked lost in early October.

At 1-5, they were better positioned for the draft than the playoffs. A defense that showed so much promise in the first three weeks gave up 37 or more points over the next three. Andrew Luck's short, quick throws created debate over whether his surgically repaired right shoulder was — or ever would be — back to full strength.

Three straight wins have changed a lot.

Suddenly, the Colts trail division leader Houston by just two games, have slowly moved back into the wild-card chase, and face only one more team with more than five wins at home against Houston (6-3) on Dec. 9. With momentum and hope restored in Indy, there's no telling how this might end.

"That's not a good question to ask a perfectionist," coach Frank Reich said Monday when asked if the offense could play more efficiently.

"It's never good enough. But it's been pretty good. It's funny how we're wired in this business. This business can humble you in a second and the moment we think we can throw it out there and score 30 points in a minute is the time we get embarrassed."

Reich's comments explain why he refused to panic when many things — including his decision to go for the win in an overtime loss to Houston — seemed to backfire.

It's also the reason he views Sunday's 29-26 victory over Jacksonville with mixed feelings.

He was thrilled to see Luck finding open receivers throughout the first half as Indy

scored on four of its first six possessions and was excited to look at a stat sheet that showed the Colts' defense limited the Jaguars' usually strong ground game to just 91 yards and 2.7 yards per carry.

Still, he understands Indy (4-5) must continue improving to continue winning.

Perhaps most important, Indy's rebuilt offensive line has kept Luck upright. He's been sacked 10 times in nine starts after going down 156 times in his first 70 games, and Luck's streak of four straight games and 184 consecutive sacks are the longest of his pro career.

They've played well enough that Reich is expanding the play calls.

"It gives us a lot of confidence to call anything we want, to call stuff down the field," he said. "There's not a play that gets called that we don't think protection first."

DeGrom, Snell win Cy Young awards

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After a season marred by narrow defeats, Jacob deGrom became a runaway winner.

The New York Mets ace easily won the National League Cy Young Award on Wednesday night, a reward for a historically fruitless season in Flushing. The right-hander had just 10 victories, the fewest ever by a Cy Young-winning starter.

The AL prize also reflected a change in voters' values, with Blake Snell, of the Tampa Bay Rays, narrowly beating out past winners Justin Verlander and Corey Kluber for his first Cy Young. Snell pitched just 180²/₃ innings, fewest ever by a Cy Young-winning starter. Over full seasons, Snell is the second starter to win the award with fewer than 200 innings after Clayton Kershaw logged 198¹/₃ in 2014.

"I definitely think the game has changed in that aspect," deGrom said.

"I feel like it's just turning more into quality of work and what did you accomplish in those innings," Snell said. "I think that's just the way it's going."

DeGrom easily beat out Washington's Max Scherzer, who was seeking a third straight Cy Young and fourth overall. DeGrom got 29 first-place votes and 207 points from members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Scherzer had the other first-place vote.

DeGrom cut down hitters from start to finish despite little help from teammates. He had a 1.70 ERA, the lowest in the NL since Zack Greinke's 1.66 mark in 2015. Yet the 30-year-old right-hander went 10-9, eclipsing the low bar among starters

of 13 victories set by the Dodgers' Fernando Valenzuela in 1981 and matched by Seattle's Felix Hernandez in 2010.

DeGrom allowed three runs or fewer in 29 consecutive starts to close the season, breaking Leslie "King" Cole's 108-year-old record of 26 such outings. Yet the Mets were 11-18 in those games and 14-18 overall with deGrom on the mound.

Snell got 17 first-place votes and 169 points to 13 first-place votes and 154 points for Verlander. Kluber had 71 points, followed by Boston's Chris Sale and Houston's Gerrit Cole.

Snell had a 1.89 ERA, third best in the AL since the DH was introduced, trailing only Ron Guidry (1.74) in 1978 and Pedro Martinez (1.74) in 2000. The 25-year-old pitched 33¹/₃ fewer innings than Verlander, but his dominance was enough

to sway the electorate.

The lefty nicknamed Snelzilla wreaked havoc against the AL's top lineups. He was 3-0 with a 1.08 ERA in four starts against the World Series champion Red Sox, and 2-0 in two starts each against the Astros and Indians. The Yankees roughed Snell up twice, but he got through five scoreless innings in a victory Aug. 16. That came during a late-season run of nine consecutive wins for Snell, including a victory against every team in the AL East. He also made five starts against former Cy Young winners and went 3-0.

Snell was the first player 25-or-younger to win 21 games since Barry Zito in 2002. He was highly regarded as a minor leaguer for his electric arsenal, but subpar control led to struggles during his first two major league seasons.

Top 25 college basketball roundup

Michigan cruises in title game rematch

Associated Press

VILLANOVA, Pa. — Charles Matthews set the tone with a slam and celebrated by flexing to the crowd.

Quickly, the rematch turned into a rout.

Matthews scored 19 points, Ignas Brazdeikis had 18 and No. 18 Michigan beat No. 8 Villanova 73-46 Wednesday night in their first meeting since last season's national championship game.

Villanova captured its second title in three years with a 79-62 victory over Michigan in April but was completely overmatched in the second game at its newly renovated Pavilion.

"I don't think when I'm out there," Matthews said, explaining his emotional reaction to a basket less than 90 seconds into the game. "It was a fun, exciting game. I got the dunk and I screamed."

Eric Paschall scored 10 points and Phil Booth had nine for the Wildcats (2-1).

Neither team looked like the two squads who met in San Antonio seven months ago.

Villanova lost four players who were drafted in the first 33 picks of the NBA draft. AP Player of the Year Jalen Brunson plays for the Dallas Mavericks. Omari Spellman is with the Atlanta Hawks. Mikal Bridges landed in Phoenix after a draft-night trade with the 76ers, and Donte DiVincenzo — who scored 31 points in the title game — is with the Milwaukee Bucks.

Michigan lost three of its top four scorers. Moe Wagner, the star big man, was drafted by the Lakers in the first round and is playing in Germany.

Duncan Robinson and Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman graduated.

No. 1 Duke 84, Eastern Michigan 46: Zion Williamson scored 21 points, fellow freshman RJ Barrett added 20 and the No. 1 Blue Devils routed the visiting Eagles in their first game this season as the nation's top-ranked team.

Javin DeLaurier and Jack White added 10 points apiece for the Blue Devils (3-0).

No. 9 Auburn 103, Mississippi College 52: Austin Wiley scored 18 points and the host Tigers scored 35 consecutive points during a second-half stretch in a victory over the Choctaws.

Bryce Brown added 16 points for No. 9 Auburn (3-0), which went on a scoring tear of dunks, three-pointers and fast-break baskets after Division II Mississippi College (1-2) briefly threatened to make it close.

No. 10 Kentucky 96, North Dakota 58: PJ Washington set

a career high with 25 points and grabbed a season-best seven rebounds, Tyler Herro added 18 points and the host Wildcats rolled over the Fighting Hawks.

No. 11 Michigan State 80, Louisiana-Monroe 59: Cassius Winston scored 14 of his 23 points in the opening minutes of the second half, bouncing back from a rough start to help the Spartans beat the visiting Warhawks.

No. 19 Clemson 74, Sam Houston State 59: Marcquise Reed had a season-high 26 points and the host Tigers used a second-half surge to put away the pesky Bearcats.

Indiana 96, No. 24 Marquette 73: At Bloomington, Ind., Romeo Langford scored 22 points, Evan Fitzner added 16 and the Hoosiers locked down on defense to beat the Golden Eagles.

NBA roundup

James passes Wilt on career scoring list

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A floating jumper, a foul and a free throw in the fourth quarter of a tight game.

With a gorgeous three-point play, the King jumped over the Big Dipper.

LeBron James' inimitable presence has already been felt in his first few weeks in Hollywood. His most impressive game yet for the Lakers included a bit of history when he passed Wilt Chamberlain on the NBA's career scoring list.

The superstar with no shortage of historic achievements was more excited about leading his surging new team to yet another win.

James had a season-high 44 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, roaring past Chamberlain for fifth place on the scoring chart and leading the Lakers to a 126-117 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Wednesday night.

James scored 28 points in the second half and vaulted past Chamberlain's 31,419 points on

that three-point play with 3:55 to go. LeBron finished a memorable night with 31,425 points, and fell just short of his 75th triple-double during his most impressive effort since joining the Lakers.

Afterward, James praised Chamberlain as "One of the most dominant forces we ever had in our game, along with Shaq. One of the greatest Lakers to ever play the game. A 100-point scorer. One of the greatest scorer-rebounders to ever play this game."

James already has moved from seventh to fifth on the career scoring list during his first 14 games with Los Angeles, passing Dirk Nowitzki and Chamberlain. Five of the top six scorers in NBA history have suited up for the Lakers.

Grizzlies 116, Bucks 113: Marc Gasol scored 29 points, Mike Conley added 26 and Memphis used a late 15-2 run to hand Milwaukee its first home loss of the season.

After losing a 15-point lead in the third quarter, Memphis surged ahead again late

and held on with key baskets from Conley. With the shot clock winding down, Conley hit a turnaround jumper in the middle of the lane for a 113-109 lead with 26 seconds left.

Magic 111, 76ers 106: Jimmy Butler had 14 points in his debut with Philadelphia, but the 76ers collapsed late and lost to host Orlando after Terrence Ross hit a tiebreaking three-pointer with 8.7 seconds.

Butler played 33 minutes and shot 6-for-12 from the field.

Timberwolves 107, Pelicans 100: Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points and 16 rebounds, Andrew Wiggins scored 23 points and Minnesota beat visiting New Orleans to improve to 2-0 since trading Jimmy Butler.

Mavericks 118, Jazz 68: Harrison Barnes scored 19 points and host Dallas handed the Jazz their worst loss since moving to Utah.

While in New Orleans, the Jazz lost to Milwaukee by 56, 158-102 on March 14, 1979.

Thunder 128, Knicks 103: Paul George scored a season-high 35 points to help Oklahoma

City rout visiting New York.

Celtics 111, Bulls 82: Kyrie Irving had 17 points and seven assists and host Boston routed Chicago.

Wizards 119, Cavaliers 95: Bradley Beal scored 20 points, Otto Porter added 15 and Washington beat undermanned Cleveland for its third straight victory.

Suns 116, Spurs 96: T.J. Warren scored 16 of his 27 points in the first half and host Phoenix built a big lead, almost lost it and then pulled away to beat San Antonio. The Suns ended a four-game losing streak to improve to 3-11.

Heat 120, Nets 107: Tyler Johnson scored a season-high 24 points, Goran Dragic had 21 and visiting Miami beat Brooklyn to snap a three-game losing streak.

Pistons 106, Raptors 104: Reggie Bullock made the winning shot as time expired and visiting Detroit rallied from a 19-point deficit to beat Toronto Raptors, giving coach Dwane Casey a victory over his former team.

NHL roundup

Crawford, Blackhawks blank Blues, end 8-game skid

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Jeremy Colliton got his first win as an NHL coach when Corey Crawford made 28 saves to help the Chicago Blackhawks beat the St. Louis Blues 1-0 on Wednesday night, stopping an eight-game losing streak.

Chicago's slide began with a 7-3 loss at St. Louis on Oct. 27, and Colliton took over after Joel Quenneville was fired on Nov. 6. The Blackhawks then dropped his first three games behind the bench before shutting down the Blues in the opener of a three-game homestand.

It was Crawford's first shut-

out in more than a year and No. 24 for his career. He missed most of last year and the start of this season because of a concussion.

Chicago got the game's only goal when it caught a break after St. Louis star Vladimir Tarasenko was penalized for hooking in the second period. Jonathan Toews set up Brent Seabrook for an open look that was stopped by Jake Allen, but Blues defenseman Jay Bouwmeester kicked it into the net at 4:05.

Jets 3, Capitals 1: Ben Chiarot scored the tiebreaking goal with 7:09 left in the third period to lead host Winnipeg.

Mark Scheifele had a power-play score for Winnipeg, and Kyle Connor added an empty-netter to seal the victory. Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves for the Jets, who've won three straight in their four-game homestand.

Avalanche 6, Bruins 3: Nathan MacKinnon scored the tiebreaking goal with 10:58 remaining, Semyon Varlamov made 20 saves and host Colorado rallied past Boston.

MacKinnon sent a wrist shot by Jaroslav Halak after receiving a pass from Mikko Rantanen as the Avalanche rallied from a two-goal, second-period deficit. Colorado scored four

goals in the third, with Tyson Jost and Alexander Kerfoot also scoring after Matt Calvert tied it earlier in the period.

Golden Knights 5, Ducks 0: Cody Eakin scored twice, Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots for his third shutout of the season, and visiting Vegas matched its season-high scoring total.

Alex Tuch and Nick Holden each had a goal and an assist, Tomas Hyka also scored and Max Pacioretty added two assists for the Golden Knights. Fleury got his 412th career victory and 51st career shutout, moving into a tie with four others for 24th all-time.