

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Explosion at Kabul mosque kills 27

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An explosion ripped through a mosque inside an Afghan army base in the country's volatile eastern Khost province as Friday prayers were drawing to a close, killing 27 soldiers and wounding 57, the military said.

The blast may have been set off by a suicide bomber or a remotely detonated bomb but nothing was officially confirmed and details were sketchy. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the explosion.

President Ashraf Ghani condemned the attack in a statement as "anti-Islamic and inhumane." He also wanted to know how the army's security was breached, demanding a swift investigation and the officials responsible held

accountable.

It was the latest in near-daily onslaughts in Afghanistan, where the Taliban regularly target Afghan military and police forces throughout the country.

"There were soldiers lying everywhere and the smoke was so thick, it was difficult to see," said Abdullah, a spokesman at the base. Like most Afghans, he uses only one name.

The dead and wounded were rushed to a clinic within the army base, while the more seriously wounded were taken to a nearby hospital. Sakhi Sardar, head of the hospital in Khost, said most of the wounded were being treated for devastating shrapnel wounds.

The defense ministry deployed four helicopters to the Ismail Khel district, where the

attack occurred, to ferry the worst of the wounded to hospitals in Kabul.

The explosion came just days after a suicide bomber killed 55 religious scholars gathered in the Afghan capital, Kabul, to celebrate the holiday marking the birth of Islam's Prophet Muhammad. The Taliban denied involvement in that bombing, which also wounded 94 people.

After 17 years and billions of dollars spent training and arming Afghanistan's military, it is struggling against an emboldened Taliban insurgency that holds sway in nearly half of the country.

As well as the Taliban, Afghan troops are also battling an audacious Islamic State affiliate which has been particularly brutal in its attacks against Af-

ghanistan's minority Shiites.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan on Friday, hundreds of protesters blocked roads in northern Parwan province to denounce the death of three people who they say were civilians, killed in an operation against the Taliban earlier on Friday. The protesters said the operation by Afghan special forces involved a NATO airstrike in the Jebul Siraj district that killed the three.

However, NATO spokeswoman U.S. Sgt. 1st Class Debra Richardson said no NATO or American activity took place in Parwan in the past three days. The provincial governor's spokeswoman, Wahida Sakhar, said Parwan officials were negotiating with the protesters and promised an investigation.

## Tokyo, US look to boost collaboration in region

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Japan plans to step up training efforts with east African nations, as Tokyo aims to work more closely with the U.S. in a region where China's influence is on the rise.

"Japan is changing its focus from peacekeeping operations to more capacity building," said Lt. Col. Masatoshi Tanso, who was part of a Japanese delegation that met this week with their American counterparts at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

Over two days of talks, U.S. and Japan Self-Defense Forces members based in Djibouti considered ways to boost collaboration around the Horn of Africa.

While the Japanese are re-

stricted from training Africans in combat tactics due to constitutional limitations on their forces, they can provide more support in instruction in disaster response, engineering and humanitarian relief efforts, officials said.

"I'm hoping to gain a better understanding of how the U.S. provides emergency and humanitarian assistance to improve the activities we provide to the Djibouti Armed Forces," said Col. Akira Miyazaki of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, as quoted in a U.S. military statement.

During the past few years, Japan has sought to expand its mission in Djibouti, where China in 2017 set up its first overseas base. Beijing has kept

a large presence in Africa for several years now, investing heavily in ports, infrastructure projects and mining ventures across the continent — and without asking questions about human rights and related issues that sometimes prevent similar Western investment.

In Djibouti, a tiny, impoverished country that borders Somalia but also offers access to important shipping lanes, China spends millions on public works projects. Beijing's military expansion into Africa coincides with its One Belt One Road initiative to build a maritime and land-transport network stretching from the Far East to Europe.

For its part, Japan has been operating out of a small mili-

tary post next to the U.S. military's Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. Japan's Djibouti mission began in 2011 as part of an international effort to curtail a spike in piracy off the coast of Somalia.

But while instances of piracy off Somalia have dropped significantly and no longer pose a serious threat to commercial shipping — 237 incidents in 2011 compared to just nine last year — Japan has gradually increased the size of its base as it attempts to foster ties and gain influence in the region.

U.S. military officials said American efforts around the Horn of Africa are focused on promoting regional stability and developing partnerships with countries like Japan.

# Envoy: US, Russia forces often clash in Syria

BY CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

American and Russian forces have clashed a dozen times in Syria — sometimes with exchanges of fire, sometimes without — a U.S. envoy told Russian journalists in a wide-ranging interview this week.

Ambassador James Jeffrey, U.S. Special Representative for Syria Engagement, offered no specifics about the incidents on Wednesday, speaking to the Russian newspaper *Kommersant* and state-owned news agency RIA Novosti.

Jeffrey had been asked to clarify casualty numbers and details of a February firefight in which U.S. forces reportedly killed up to 200 pro-Syrian regime forces, including

Russian mercenaries, who had mounted a failed attack on a base held by the U.S. and its mostly Kurdish local allies near the town of Deir al-Zour. None of the Americans at the outpost — reportedly about 40 — was killed or injured.

Jeffrey declined to offer specifics on that incident but said it was not the only such confrontation between Americans and Russians.

“U.S. forces are legitimately in Syria, supporting local forces in the fight against Da’esh and, as appropriate — and this has occurred about a dozen times in one or another place in Syria — they exercise the right of self-defense when they feel threatened,” Jeffrey said, using an Arabic term for Islamic State. “That’s all we say on that.”

Asked to clarify, he said only that some of the clashes had involved shooting and some had not.

“There have been various engagements, some involving exchange of fire, some not,” he told journalists in remarks confirmed on the U.S. Embassy in Moscow website. “Again, we are continuing our mission there and we are continuing to exercise our right of self-defense.”

Both Russia and Iran back the regime of President Bashar Assad in the country’s civil war, now in its eighth year. The U.S., which Jeffrey said regards Assad as a “disgrace to mankind,” has deployed hundreds of troops and equipment to eastern Syria as part of the coalition to defeat ISIS.

## Trump wants ‘common sense’ from federal judges

BY MARK SHERMAN  
AND JILL COLVIN  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Incensed by a ruling against his migrant asylum policy, President Donald Trump demanded “some common sense” from America’s judges and directed his ire at a liberal-leaning appeals court. He professed respect for Chief Justice John Roberts, with whom he is engaged in a startling public dispute over the independence of the judiciary, yet shrugged off the Republican appointee as someone who “can say what he wants.”

Trump, still seething over Monday’s decision by a President Barack Obama-nominated judge, began his Thanksgiving Day by asserting on Twitter that courts should defer to his administration and law enforcement on border security because judges “know nothing about it and are making our Country unsafe.”

The president, spending the holiday in Florida, later told reporters that law enforcers and military servicemembers he has sent to the U.S.-Mexico border “can’t believe the decisions that are being made by

these judges.”

Trump has gone after federal judges before who have ruled against him, but the current dust-up is the first time that Roberts, the leader of the federal judiciary, has offered even a hint of criticism of the president.

Roberts issued a statement Wednesday defending judicial independence and contradicting Trump’s claim that judges are partisans allied with president who nominated them.

In challenging a co-equal branch of government, Trump complains that his opponents file lawsuits in courts that are part of the liberal-leaning 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. That’s where an appeal of the recent asylum ruling would normally go.

It’s not unusual for those challenging a president’s policies to sue in courts they consider likely to back their claims.

“Everybody files in the 9th Circuit,” he said with exaggeration. “I think we’re going to have to stop that somehow. The judges are going to have to get together or Congress is going to have to get together and stop it because they’re taking advantage of our country.”

## Trump: I would authorize closure of Mexican border

BY TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA  
*Bloomberg*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he signed an order to close the U.S. border with Mexico and authorized troops to use lethal force against migrants who attempt to enter the U.S.

“If they have to,” Trump said at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla., claiming without evidence that at least 500 criminals are among migrants trying to enter the U.S. “So I’m not going to let the military be taken advantage of. I have no choice. Do I want that to happen? Absolutely not. But you’re dealing with rough people.”

He also said he would welcome a partial shutdown of the government over “border security.”

Trump said he signed the order two days earlier and that “I’ve already shut down parts of the border.” He said the entire border might be closed if conflict with migrants escalates.

“If we find that it’s uncontrollable, if we find that it gets to a level where we are going to lose control or people are

going to start getting hurt, we will close entry into the country for a period of time until we can get it under control,” Trump said. “The whole border. I mean the whole border. And Mexico will not be able to sell their cars into the United States, where they make so many cars at great benefit to them, not at great benefit to us.”

The White House hasn’t released such an order, and Trump wasn’t clear about his directive.

Before the midterm elections, in which Republicans lost control of the House, Trump ordered the military to reinforce the southern border, repeatedly warning voters about the caravan of migrants traveling from Central America to the U.S. His critics called the deployment a political stunt.

Next week, Congress returns for its postelection session in which a top priority will be to authorize full fiscal 2019 budgets for several agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, the Internal Revenue Service and the National Park Service. Temporary funding for the agencies expires Dec. 7.

# Bear-hugging midshipman still inspires

BY BROCK VERGAKIS  
*The Virginian-Pilot, Norfolk*

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. Bobby Rashad Jones couldn't help himself. He was the midshipman with the lowest grade-point average in the Naval Academy Class of 2001 — known as the anchor — and was overwhelmed with joy to receive his commission after spending years on academic probation.

President George W. Bush was the commencement speaker in Annapolis, Md., and cordially shook hands with each graduate. But as Jones walked across the stage at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, the crowd roared in support for the “anchor.”

Jones — now a commander — was a football player who was well known on campus, partly because tradition calls for each graduating midshipman to pay the class anchor \$1.

He could've chosen a more glamorous life and played football at a powerhouse program like Florida. Or he could've done without the stress of military life by going to an Ivy League school. And he could've left the academy when it all seemed so overwhelming after his first semester to join friends at the University of North Carolina.

But he stayed because he wanted to be part of something bigger than himself — and he had made it.

As he walked toward Bush, the excitement was too much to contain.

He jumped up and down. His head shook. He pumped his right fist in the air.

A presidential handshake simply wouldn't do.

The former linebacker grabbed Bush's hand, pulled him in and hugged the commander-in-chief. And not just any hug; a bear hug that briefly lifted Bush off the ground as part of what Jones would later describe as an “out-of-body experience.”

“I'm thinking it's not a serious hug, not realizing I just got through playing football. The president is not that heavy. I didn't realize I picked the man

up,” Jones said in an interview this week at his office at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va.

The academy's sports information department said he was listed as 6-foot-2, 235 pounds when he played football.

“My sister thought I was going to get shot, my mom was trying to take pictures and my dad was like, ‘What the hell is he doing?’”

A lot of people laughed. Navy leadership did not. An officer on stage physically pulled Jones off the president by his uniform.

Images of Jones circulated in newspapers and on cable television broadcasts around the world.

Just days after one of the happiest moments of his life, Jones was called in for a meeting by the academy's leadership to learn there was a price to pay for his jubilation. First, he was yelled at by a Marine general who slammed down a copy of *The Washington Post* with Jones on its front page.

Then he learned his first assignment would no longer be in Annapolis coaching football at the academy's prep school like he planned. He was going straight to Japan.

But first he had to write apology letters to the Navy's top brass, from the secretary of the Navy on down. He wrote letters for days.

“At first, I was mad about it. I was very mad,” said Jones. “But that was the other lesson I learned in the Navy and it stuck with me: accountability.”

Another lesson?  
Perseverance.

## Reaching his potential

Navy leaders never gave up on Jones. Neither did his parents. They saw potential in him even when he didn't see it in himself. He said he never thought about leaving the academy except during Christmas break his plebe year when he spoke with a friend playing college football elsewhere about how vastly different their experiences were.

“My parents didn't give me that option. I knew better. And looking back in retrospect, I'm

kinda glad I stayed there and fought through it,” he said.

He not only managed to graduate after struggling with time management between the classroom, football and military responsibilities but he also bounced back from that rocky start to his career after graduation.

He was one of four graduates singled out by Bush for praise four years later during the Class of 2005's commencement address for serving aboard the dock landing ship USS Germantown while supporting anti-terrorism efforts in the Philippines.

“Bobby was the anchorman of the Class of 2001. He was the guy that gave me that bear hug. Four years later, my ribs still hurt. So don't get any ideas,” Bush told graduates that day.

“Here's what Bobby says: ‘Once I got to my ship after 9/11, it did not matter where I graduated. The expectations of Annapolis graduates never change. And I'm proud to be a part of the elite and unique tradition of the United States Naval Academy.’ I want to thank Bobby for his service and thank Bobby for witnessing your graduation today.”

His reputation had been repaired enough at the academy that he even worked there as a recruiter for awhile before taking on a variety of assignments that included becoming a United Nations peacekeeper in Liberia and working at the Missile Defense Agency in Colorado as its lead war games planner.

He's achieved the rank of commander and is now married with two children. Jones said he's living the American dream and that he owes it all to the Navy. He got a free undergraduate and graduate degree. He married his wife at the Naval Academy chapel. His children were born at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in Virginia. He loves his job.

“Everything I needed to be successful in my adult life — and not just be a citizen but a contributing member of society — the United States Navy has given me,” he said. “I don't know what I'd be doing without this.”

Jones and Bush have kept in touch over the years. He plans to invite Bush to his change of command ceremony in a couple of years when he takes over as the commanding officer of Coastal Riverine Squadron Four. The squadron provides harbor security, escorts high-value assets like submarines and aircraft carriers and conducts maritime and security operations in coastal and inland waterways.

It will be his first tour as a commanding officer. He just reported as the squadron's executive officer a few months ago after a Navy career that included a deployment to the Middle East as the executive officer of the Norfolk, Va.-based guided-missile cruiser USS Anzio and, most recently, as the executive assistant to the commander of Norfolk-based Military Sealift Command.

It's been a good career for someone who wasn't even sure he'd graduate on time until about a week before the ceremony.

But during Jones' graduation, Bush privately told him not to worry about his GPA. After all, Bush said, he had gotten Cs in college and he was the president.

These days, it's Jones offering similar reassurances to midshipmen and younger sailors. He's not ashamed of his GPA — a 2.06 — and uses it to inspire people going through a tough time, possibly for the first time.

“Ever since graduating there, I've always met every year two or three midshipmen that are struggling through the place that they think the world is going to end. And I'm like, ‘Well, let me tell you a story.’ And I tell them my story and I literally show them my grade-point average, and they're like, ‘Oh, my god, you graduated with that?’ I'm like, ‘Yes. Yes, I did.’ So it's not that bad.”

If anyone needs proof, Jones can show his class ring from Annapolis. Each ring has “2.0” emblazoned on it: the GPA required to graduate.

# Dems not looking to impeach Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Whatever happened to trying to impeach President Donald Trump?

As House Democrats begin laying out the vision for their new majority, that item is noticeably missing from the to-do list and firmly on the margins.

The agenda for now includes spending on public works projects, lowering health care costs and increasing oversight of the administration.

It's the balance that Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, of California, is trying to strike in the new Congress between those on her party's left flank who are eager to confront the president and her instinct to prioritize the kitchen-table promises that Democrats made to voters who elected them to office.

"We shouldn't impeach the president for political reasons and we shouldn't not impeach the president for political reasons," Pelosi recently told The Associated Press.

Pelosi, who hopes to lead Democrats as House speaker come January, calls impeachment a "divisive activity" that needs to be approached with bipartisanship.

Those pressing for impeachment acknowledge they don't

expect action on Day One of the new majority, but they do want to see Democrats start laying the groundwork for proceedings.

"We're for impeachment. We're not for get-sworn-in-on-Jan.-1-and-start-taking-votes," said Kevin Mack, the lead strategist for billionaire Tom Steyer's Need to Impeach campaign. "Our argument is the Constitution outlines a process to remove a lawless president."

In a new ad, Steyer says Democrats "just need the will" to act. He says he's calling on Americans to join the 6 million who have already signed on to his group to "give Congress the courage to act."

"The American people are tired of being told to wait," Mack said. "Our argument to Congress is you are a co-equal branch of government. It's time to do what is morally correct."

Twice over the past two years since Trump was elected, Democrats have tried to force votes on impeachment proceedings, winning a high-water mark of more than 60 supporters, far from the 218 needed.

Republicans are counting on impeachment fervor to overtake Democrats, leading them astray from campaign promises or dealmaking with Trump.

# Separatists attack leaves 7 people dead in Pakistan

Associated Press

KARACHI, Pakistan — Armed separatists stormed the Chinese Consulate in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi on Friday, triggering an intense hour-long shootout during which two Pakistani civilians, two police officers and all three assailants were killed, Pakistani officials said.

The killed Pakistani civilians were a father and a son who had come to the consulate to pick up their visas to China, police said.

The brazen assault, claimed by a militant group from the southwestern province of Baluchistan, reflected the separatists' attempt to strike at the heart of Pakistan's close ties with major ally China, which has invested heavily into road and transportation projects in the country, including in Baluchistan.

All the Chinese diplomats and staff at the consulate were safe and were not harmed during the attack or the shootout, senior police official Ameer Ahmad Sheikh said. They were evacuated from the area shortly after and taken to a safe place.

Following the attack, China asked Pakistan to beef up security at the mission. In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said that China would not waver in its latest big project in Pakistan — the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor — and expressed confidence that Pakistan could ensure security.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan condemned the attack, describing it as part of a conspiracy against Pakistan and China's economic and strategic cooperation. Khan lauded the Karachi police and the paramilitary rangers, saying they showed exceptional courage in defending the consulate and that the "nation salutes the martyrs."

He also ordered an investigation and vowed that such incidents would never be able to undermine relations with China, which are "mightier than the Himalayas and deeper than the Arabian Sea."

The attackers stormed the consulate shortly after 9 a.m., during business hours. They first opened fire at consulate guards and hurled grenades, then managed to breach the main gate and enter the building, said Mohammad Ashfaq, a local police chief.

Pakistani security forces quickly surrounded the area. Local TV stations broadcast images showing smoke rising from the building, which also serves as the residence of Chinese diplomats and other staff.

Multiple blasts were heard soon afterward but Sheikh could not say what they were. The shootout lasted for about an hour.

"Because of a quick response of the guards and police, the terrorists could not" reach the diplomats, Sheikh said after the fighting ended. "We have completed the operation."

# Comey resists closed-door congressional interview on FBI actions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former FBI chief James Comey said Thursday he will resist a subpoena to appear before a congressional committee Dec. 3 unless that happens publicly because House Republicans will distort anything he says behind closed doors.

"I'm still happy to sit in the light and answer all questions,"

he tweeted.

The House Judiciary Committee chairman, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, of Virginia, subpoenaed Comey as part of an investigation into FBI decisions made during the 2016 election, when Democrat Hillary Clinton was cleared in a probe into her email use and agents opened an investigation into Donald Trump's campaign and Russia.

Some Republicans have argued that Justice officials were conspiring against Trump's election when Comey ran the bureau, and they have interviewed multiple current and former Justice officials behind closed doors in an effort to prove their point.

Democrats say Republicans are trying to discredit special counsel Robert Mueller's Rus-

sia investigation before they lose control of the House in January.

Comey, who was fired by Trump, tweeted of House Republicans: "I've seen enough of their selective leaking and distortion. Let's have a hearing and invite everyone to see."

His lawyer, David Kelley, said in a statement that Comey "will resist in court this abuse of process."

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Fight breaks out in court after sentencing

**WI** MILWAUKEE — A brawl broke out in a packed Milwaukee courtroom after a former daycare owner was sentenced in the death of a 7-week-old baby.

The fight erupted Wednesday shortly after Claudette Mitchell, 37, was led away in handcuffs after being sentenced to 3½ years in prison.

Mitchell was charged in the death of Savaiyah Reid, who was fatally injured at her daycare in August 2017.

After sentencing, an altercation broke out involving about 50 members of the defendant's and victim's families and friends. The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department said additional deputies and DA investigators were called to restore order.

## Fan's sign leads to kidney donation

**PA** PITTSBURGH — One lucky Pittsburgh Penguins fan has a new kidney thanks to the help of social media.

The Tribune-Review reported Kelly Sowatsky had been on the organ transplant waiting list since 2015. Desperate for a new kidney, she attended the team's hockey game in March with a sign telling potential donors to give her a call.

The Penguins posted a photo of Sowatsky's sign on Twitter, which caught the eye of fellow fan Jeff Lynd who lived nearly 300 miles away in Delaware.

The two were a match and they underwent a successful surgery Nov. 6.

## Bedazzled pigeon reunited with owners

**AZ** PEORIA — A pigeon that had flown the

coop with only its bedazzled vest is nesting back home in Phoenix.

The Arizona Republic reported Marlette Fernando and her husband were reunited Tuesday with their pet pigeon Olive. The bird was brought to Fallen Feathers bird rescue center in Peoria more than a week ago.

Center director Jody Kieran said she knew the pigeon had to be someone's feathered friend when she saw the rhinestone-studded vest.

## Seized clay artifacts returned to Mexico

**WA** SEATTLE — The Seattle Police Department returned several clay artifacts to Mexico after seizing them last year.

The department said it was tipped off in November 2017 that the hollow clay figurines were being sold at an estate sale. Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History verified they were genuine historical artifacts called Nayarit Figures, some of them dating to before Spanish settlement.

The police department returned the items during a ceremony at the Mexican consulate in Seattle on Tuesday.

## Woman sleeping along road is hit by pickup

**VA** MATTAPONI — Police said a woman was hit by a pickup while sleeping in a sleeping bag along a Virginia highway.

Virginia State Police said in a statement that the crash happened early Wednesday on northbound U.S. Route 1 in the Mattaponi area of Caroline County.

Police said the preliminary investigation shows the woman wrapped in a blanket and sleeping bag was sleeping on the

paved part of the right side of the road when she was hit by a Ford F350.

Police said the woman was flown to a hospital with life-threatening injuries.

## Man who hid pot in fake boulders guilty

**OR** PORTLAND — A Springfield man who prosecutors said tried to overnight more than 100 pounds of marijuana to Oklahoma concealed in fake boulders pleaded guilty to a federal drug charge.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Curran Manzer, 37, on Tuesday pleaded guilty to marijuana possession with intent to distribute.

Court records show police began investigating Manzer in September 2017, when workers at United Parcel Service reported packages he had shipped to Oklahoma City smelled like marijuana.

Court documents said packages containing up to \$50,000 cash also were shipped by UPS to Manzer's Springfield home.

After he dropped off packages Nov. 10, police with a search warrant opened them and found six large Styrofoam rocks that contained a total of 143 pounds of marijuana.

## Man stores stolen gear with dead alligators

**FL** FORT PIERCE — Police in Florida said a man inadvertently showed officers two dead alligators stored in the trunk of his car when he went to surrender stolen fishing gear.

News outlets reported a Fort Pierce police report said Christian Thomas Elmore, 25, was seen leaving a Walmart with the stolen gear. It said the store's loss prevention officer confronted him and asked him to return to the store.

It said police officers then arrived and Elmore agreed to return the gear. It said they walked to Elmore's car and he opened the trunk, revealing the stolen gear and dead alligators.

Elmore was arrested and charged with theft and killing or possessing alligators.

## Woman accused of biting off man's ear

**IL** AURORA — Authorities said a suburban Chicago woman has been arrested after allegedly biting off an ear of a man in her home.

Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahan charged Nelida Mendoza, 59, of Aurora, with aggravated domestic battery following the attack.

Aurora Police said Mendoza and the victim were watching television when a dispute arose and Mendoza then bit off the victim's right ear. Police were notified after the victim went to a hospital.

## No mail for residents after boxes smashed

**MD** FROSTBURG — About a dozen apartment complex residents say they haven't received mail since an alleged drunken driver knocked over their mailboxes six months ago.

Frostburg Apartments manager Bill McKenzie told the Cumberland Times-News his complex has a lot of elderly and handicapped tenants, and the post office won't drop the mail off at his office to distribute.

Residents petitioned U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin's office to try to get the problem that began in May resolved. U.S. Postal Service spokeswoman Freda Sauter said Tuesday new boxes are scheduled to be installed in the next two or three weeks.

From wire reports

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# Fagan, Air Force feast on Colorado St.

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Cole Fagan's Thanksgiving feast consisted of yards and carries.

Turns out, the junior fullback had quite the appetite.

Fagan rushed for 260 yards, the third-most in Air Force history, and linebacker Kyle Floyd thwarted a late drive with an interception to help the Falcons hold off Colorado State 27-19 on Thursday.

Fagan gouged the Colorado State defense with run after run up the middle, including an early 3-yard score. He finished 15 yards shy of the school record set by Chad Hall in 2007.

In all, Fagan carried the ball 34 times, averaging 7.6 per carry. His longest run was a 56-yard gallop.

"I still look at the numbers and don't believe it," Fagan said.

The Rams tried to adjust to Fagan by overloading one side. And when they did, the Falcons countered by sending him the other way.

"We couldn't stop him," Colorado State coach Mike Bobo said. "When you can't stop the fullback in the option, you can't stop the option."

Kadin Remsberg sealed the win with a late score as the Falcons (5-7, 3-5 Mountain West) won their third straight over Colorado State (3-9, 2-6).

Rams receiver Preston Williams turned in a big afternoon with 12 catches for 248 yards and three scores. His third TD brought the Rams to within 20-19 with 9:53 remaining, but Wyatt Bryan's game-tying extra point was blocked by defensive lineman Ben Harris. Bryan also missed an extra point earlier in the game.

The Falcons went on a time-consuming,

11-play drive that culminated in Remsberg's score, giving Air Force a 27-19 lead.

Colorado State was on the move when Floyd stepped in front of a K.J. Carta-Samuels pass and allowed Air Force to secure the Ram-Falcon Trophy.

"Huge for me, but I think it was even bigger for the team," Floyd said.

Collin Hill started the game for the Rams and threw two TD passes. After an interception in the third quarter, he was checked out by the doctors and the team elected to keep him out. Carta-Samuels took over.

Colorado State's defense came up with a goal-line stand in the third quarter. Hill and the offense took over at the 1 and had a promising drive going until Air Force safety Jeremy Fejedelem picked off a pass. The Falcons turned it into a 39-yard field goal that extended their lead to 20-13.

## Michigan QB Patterson could be 'Game'-changer

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Shea Patterson's parents took him out for a sushi dinner and to see the movie "Overlord," hoping to get Michigan's quarterback away from his relentless preparation for the biggest game of his life.

"We didn't talk about football," Sean Patterson said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "It was just nice to see him sitting with his mom and eating popcorn. We wanted to give him a break from studying film."

No. 10 Ohio State has been watching some film, too, watching what Patterson has done with the fourth-ranked Wolverines this season. The Buckeyes see a dual-threat quarterback who looks nothing like the players Jim Harbaugh had under center the previous three years — all Ohio State wins.

"In past years, they haven't had a running quarterback like him," Buckeyes defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones said. "He creates his own new dynamic we have to worry about."

The Wolverines are favored to win Saturday in the Horseshoe — where they haven't won since 2000 — at least in part

because of an offseason victory that made Patterson eligible to play right away. He decided to transfer from Ole Miss nearly a year ago to Michigan, but he had to wait until April to find out the NCAA was granting his request to play this season instead of sitting out a year.

"It was a scary and anxious time," Sean Patterson recalled. "I think going through what he did made him a tougher and stronger person and it makes him appreciate every moment with the winged helmet even more."

With the help of attorney Tom Mars, the appeal was won for Patterson — and the Wolverines.

"The best part of the experience for me was getting to know Shea and his family," Mars wrote in a text message. "And, then watching what Shea's accomplished with his teammates this season — game after game. I haven't missed any of them, and I'll be in the stands in Columbus on Saturday."

Patterson, a former five-star recruit from Toledo, Ohio, decided to transfer from Ole Miss after the NCAA penalized the football program with sanctions for rules violations under

former coach Hugh Freeze. The penalties included a bowl ban for the 2018 season. Patterson and other players argued they were misled during their recruitment by Ole Miss coaches and staffers about the nature of the NCAA's investigation.

Patterson insisted he doesn't think much about the appeal process these days, but acknowledged being thankful to win it.

"Just was so fortunate to get this opportunity to play for the team," he said.

Harbaugh was fortunate, too. In his fourth year in charge of college football's winningest team, he desperately needed a difference-making quarterback for a change.

Patterson has delivered. He is one of five finalists for the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award and may be mentioned as a Heisman Trophy candidate if he can help Michigan beat Ohio State for just the second time in 15 years.

Patterson has completed 66 percent of his passes for 2,177 yards with 18 touchdowns and just four interceptions. He can throw from the pocket or on the move, running the play called or one he improvises.

"I can't say we rehearsed some of the things that come about in a game, especially the times when you see him scramble and make that throw across the body and across the field," said Pep Hamilton, Michigan's assistant head coach. "I pretty much cringe every time that happens, but he seems to come out on the right side of it."

Patterson has run for 255 yards and two scores, keeping the ball after faking handoffs in read-option plays that have become increasingly more effective.

"You need him to make a play, he makes it," Harbaugh said. "Whether it's throwing or running or not turning a bad play into a worse play. He's got a great feel, talent and energy for the game. Love his focus. Love his intensity."

Harbaugh has said Patterson will be an NFL quarterback.

"That's completely false," Sean Patterson told The Associated Press of a report suggesting Patterson will enter the NFL Draft after the season. "We have not spoken about him entering the draft at all. ... The only thing he's focused on competing for right now is a Big Ten championship."

# Mississippi State wallops Ole Miss

Associated Press

OXFORD, Miss. — Nick Fitzgerald's previous Egg Bowl included a career-altering injury and a crushing loss on his home field.

One year later, Mississippi State's senior quarterback earned redemption.

Fitzgerald ran for two touchdowns and threw for another score to lead No. 22 Mississippi State over Mississippi 35-3 on Thursday in a rivalry game marred by a fight that led to four ejections in the second half.

The wild brawl was what got most of the attention in the immediate aftermath. All Fitzgerald cared about was a win that felt so good after last year's loss, which happened after the quarterback dislocated his ankle during the first quarter — a gruesome injury that required several months of rehab.

"It felt amazing to know the people who kind of caused it, you get to go to their house, you get to dominate them on their field in front of their fans," Fitzgerald said.

Mississippi State looked as though it would cruise to a fairly uneventful win before Ole Miss receiver A.J. Brown appeared to score a touchdown at the end of the third quarter. Players immediately started shoving, and the fight spilled into the end zone while both benches emptied onto the field.

Mississippi State's Cameron Dantzler, Jamal Peters and Willie Gay Jr. were ejected, along with Ole Miss' C.J. Moore. Every player on both teams received an unsportsmanlike penalty. Gay was ejected because he already had one unsportsmanlike penalty earlier in the game.

Brown's touchdown was called back because time had expired in the third quarter before the play began. The Rebels didn't seriously threaten again.

Mississippi State first-year coach Joe Moorhead said the fight didn't take away from the win.

"I'm happy as a lark right

now," he explained. "Certainly you don't want to see that stuff. I really can't comment on everything that happened because I didn't see it and I was trying to keep guys on the sideline. We'll look at the film and see what happened."

As for the game, Mississippi State (8-4, 4-4 SEC) won by sticking to what it's done best all year: running the ball effectively and playing terrific defense. The Bulldogs gained 122 yards rushing in the first quarter to set the tone and built a 14-0 lead by early in the second quarter.

Fitzgerald ran for 117 yards on 18 carries. Kylin Hill added 108 yards rushing.

Ole Miss (5-7, 1-7) ended the season on a five-game losing streak. The Rebels' passing offense — which has been among the best in the SEC this season — never got going against the Bulldogs.

Jordan Ta'amu completed just 8 of 17 passes for 87 yards and one touchdown. The Rebels were 0-for-10 on third-down conversion opportunities and managed just 189 total yards. It was the first time all season they didn't score a touchdown.

Ole Miss coach Matt Luke said his team's turnovers and dropped passes were too much to overcome. Luke echoed Moorhead's statement that the fight was unfortunate.

"Hate for our seniors to go out this way because they have been through so much," he said. "But I'm really, really grateful to them."

**The takeaway: Mississippi State:** It was a vintage performance from the Bulldogs, who were fantastic on defense and did just enough on offense. It's been an up-and-down regular season for Mississippi State, but back-to-back big wins over Arkansas and Ole Miss make it look better.

**Ole Miss:** It was an ugly end to the season for the Rebels. Now, Ole Miss will try to prepare for the 2019 season without several of their main offensive stars, including Ta'amu.

## NFL roundup

# Cowboys beat 'Skins, pull even in division

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Ezekiel Elliott made the \$21 donation after his touchdown. Amari Cooper took the freebie following the first of his two scores.

The bonus for the Dallas Cowboys: They're all the way back in the NFC East race.

Cooper had a 90-yard touchdown after celebrating with a free throw following his first scoring catch, Elliott ran for 121 yards with his TD and the Cowboys pulled even with Washington atop the division with a 31-23 Thanksgiving win over the Redskins on Thursday.

The Cowboys (6-5) won their third straight game since the first home loss, to Tennessee in the Dallas debut of Cooper following a trade, dropped them two games under .500.

Dallas' eighth win in nine Thanksgiving games against Washington, and second in three seasons, earned a season split.

The Redskins (6-5) lost for the third time in four games in Colt McCoy's first start in four years coming off Alex Smith's season-ending leg injury.

The former Texas Longhorns star threw three interceptions to offset two touchdown passes. McCoy won his two previous starts at the home of the Cowboys, one for the 2009 Big 12 championship and the other his most recent NFL victory with the Redskins in 2014.

Cooper, the former Oakland receiver, had much more fun in his second home game, finishing with a Dallas Thanksgiving-best 180 yards receiving — 105 of those coming after the catch on his two touchdowns.

**Saints 31, Falcons 17:** Drew Brees threw four touchdown passes to inexperienced receivers and host New Orleans won its 10th straight game and eliminated Atlanta from contention in the NFC South.

Tommy Lee Lewis and Austin Carr each caught their second

career touchdown pass, and rookie tight end Dan Arnold grabbed his first, as did rookie receiver Keith Kirkwood. All four entered the NFL as undrafted free agents within the past three years and had combined for zero touchdowns this season before Carr caught the first of his career last Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Falcons (4-7) lost three fumbles inside the Saints 20 — something no team facing streaking New Orleans (10-1) can afford this season.

Atlanta's Matt Ryan was stripped by safety Marcus Williams on a third-and-2 from the Saints 3 and Williams recovered to end Atlanta's opening drive. Julio Jones was stripped by linebacker Alex Anzalone after a catch on the New Orleans 17, and safety Vonn Bell recovered in the final minute of the second quarter to preserve a 17-3 lead going into halftime.

The Saints' defense, which had a season-high six sacks, continued to come up with big plays in the second half, with Anzalone breaking up a fourth-down pass in the third quarter and linebacker A.J. Klein intercepting a pass tipped by defensive tackle Tyeler Davison in the fourth. The interception gave the Saints possession on the Atlanta 22, setting up Kirkwood's diving 4-yard TD catch.

**Bears 23, Lions 16:** Chase Daniel made the most of his chance to fill in for Mitchell Trubisky, having the best day of his journeyman career.

Daniel set career highs with 230 yards passing and two touchdowns to keep visiting Chicago rolling with a win over Detroit.

The NFC North-leading Bears (8-3) sealed their fifth straight victory with Kyle Fuller's interception in the end zone with a little more than a minute left.

Detroit (4-7) has lost four of five, plummeting to last place in the division.

# Texas knocks off No. 7 North Carolina

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Kerwin Roach II blended aggression and good decision making, just how coach Shaka Smart drew it up.

Roach scored a career-best 32 points and helped Texas hold off a late charge to beat No. 7 North Carolina 92-89 on Thursday and advance to the final of the Las Vegas Invitational.

“I just played the game the right way and didn’t want to force anything,” said Roach, who also had seven assists and six steals. “(My teammates) did a nice job creating shots. We have a blue-collar team. We have to fight to win. Last year when we lost a game to Duke like this, it was tears of sadness. Tonight, there are tears of happiness.”

Texas (5-0) played in the championship game Friday against No. 11 Michigan State. North Carolina played No. 17 UCLA.

Roach also had six rebounds and was 12-for-15 from the field, including 3-for-3 from deep. The senior topped his previous best of 26 points with an emphatic dunk with 8:27 left for a 73-65 lead.

“The best thing about him tonight was he really took the right shots and made the right reads,” Smart said. “He really got us going after a slow start. They were coming at us. They’re not going to stop shooting lights out unless we make them.”

Roach and North Carolina freshman Coby White went back and forth all game. White had 33 points, but he missed a

three-pointer that would have put the Tar Heels (5-1) ahead with 1:01 left. He was 7-for-10 from three-point range.

White had the most points by a UNC freshman since Harrison Barnes’ 40 in 2011 against Clemson at the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament.

Matt Coleman III had 16 points for Texas, and Jaxson Hayes had 15 points and nine rebounds. Dylan Osetkowski had 14 points, including a buzzer-beating three that put Texas up 43-42 at halftime.

“Our guys did a nice job managing the game against their trap defense,” Smart said. “I told the guys at halftime, we have to be the more blue-collar team. We have to be gritty. It’s not going to be beautiful basketball out there. We have to find a way to go and get those

loose balls.”

Cameron Johnson had 16 points for the Tar Heels. Luke Maye had 11 points and nine rebounds, while Nassir Little had 11 points and six rebounds.

“In the first half, we took four free throws and we started taking three-point shots and threw the ball out of bounds,” North Carolina coach Roy Williams said. “In the second half, I think our guys competed much harder.”

The Longhorns pulled away after halftime and led by 11 with 11:08 left. North Carolina responded by cutting it to 80-78 with 5:44 left.

The Longhorns have had success against the Tar Heels, leading 8-3 in the all-time series. They also won the previous meeting in December 2015 at Austin, Texas.

## College basketball roundup

### Winston helps Michigan State to easy win over UCLA

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Cassius Winston had 19 points and seven assists to help No. 11 Michigan State cruise past No. 17 UCLA 87-67 on Thursday to reach the final of the Las Vegas Invitational.

“It was one of those weird times my assistants did a good job, my players did a good job,” said Michigan State coach Tom Izzo, whose team shot 52 percent. “And when you make shots, you look better than you are.”

Nick Ward scored 16 points, Joshua Langford had 14 and Josh McQuaid had 11 for Michigan State (4-1).

Kris Wilkes had 15 points to lead UCLA (4-1). Jaylen Hands and Chris Smith each had 11 points for the Bruins, who shot 36 percent from the field.

**No. 4 Virginia 66, Dayton 59:** At Paradise Island, Bahamas, De’Andre Hunter matched his career high with 23 points to help the Cavaliers hold off the Flyers in the Battle

4 Atlantis semifinals.

Hunter made a three-pointer with 53.1 seconds left and Virginia protecting a 60-56 lead. It turned out to provide just enough cushion to keep the Cavaliers (5-0) in control and send them into the championship game Friday against No. 25 Wisconsin.

Ty Jerome added 15 points for Virginia, and Kyle Guy had 14.

Josh Cunningham led Dayton (4-1) with 15 points. Dayton will face Oklahoma on Friday in the third-place game.

**No. 6 Nevada 96, Tulsa 86:** At Las Vegas, Jordan Carolline had 25 points and 11 rebounds and the Wolf Pack beat the Golden Hurricane in the third round of the Las Vegas Invitational.

Nevada (5-0) faced Massachusetts in the championship game Friday night. Massachusetts beat Southern Illinois 84-62.

Caleb Martin added 21 points for Nevada, making all 10 of his

free throws. Jazz Johnson had 20 points on 5-for-7 shooting from three-point range.

Sterling Taplin led Tulsa (4-1) with 22 points, and Martins Igbanu had 14.

**No. 14 Florida State 81, UAB 63:** At Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Terance Mann scored 17 points and the Seminoles advanced to the AdvoCare Invitational semifinals with a victory over the Blazers.

Unbeaten Florida State (4-0) played No. 19 LSU on Friday night for a spot in Sunday’s championship game.

Defending national champion Villanova and Oklahoma State squared off in the other semifinal.

Christ Koumadje had 12 points and nine rebounds for Florida State. Mfiondu Kabengele, the nephew of former NBA All-Star center Dikembe Mutombo, added 10 points.

Tyreek Scott-Grayson scored 16 for UAB (3-1).

**No. 19 LSU 67, College of Charleston 55:** At Lake Buena

Vista, Fla, Emmitt Williams had 14 points and nine rebounds and the Tigers beat the Cougars to reach the AdvoCare Invitational semifinals.

Skylar Mays added 12 points for LSU (5-0).

Jarrell Brantley had a season-high 27 points and nine rebounds for College of Charleston (3-2).

**No. 25 Wisconsin 78, Oklahoma 58:** At Paradise Island, Bahamas, D’Mitrik Trice set career highs with 25 points and a tournament-record seven three-pointers to help the Badgers beat the Sooners in the Battle 4 Atlantis.

Trice started 7-for-7 from behind the arc, the last coming when he pump-faked a defender and stepped to his right to bury the shot for a 66-47 lead with 6:22 left. He finally missed a three less than a minute later to finish 7-for-8 for the Badgers (5-0).

Christian James scored 18 points for the Sooners (4-1).