

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Friday, November 30, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Navy patrols near islands in S. China Sea

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy sent one of its guided-missile cruisers through the contentious waters around the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, U.S. Pacific Fleet said.

The USS Chancellorsville sailed Monday by the islands claimed by China in a freedom-of-navigation operation after finishing a port visit in Hong Kong with the USS Ronald Reagan and USS Curtis Wilbur the prior week, Pacific Fleet deputy spokesman Cmdr. Nate Christensen said in a statement.

He said the voyage was “to challenge excessive maritime claims” by China and to “preserve access to the waterways as governed by international law.”

The Hong Kong visit made headlines because it was the first time U.S. vessels vis-

ited China since the country turned away the USS Wasp in September.

The Wasp’s denial came after 10 percent tariffs were levied on \$200 billion of annual Chinese imports and the United States had issued sanctions on China after discovering the country had bought fighter jets from Russia and a surface-to-air missile system.

The U.S. regularly conducts freedom-of-navigation missions in the area and in September sent the USS Decatur through the similarly disputed Spratly islands. During that patrol, a Chinese warship made what was called an “unsafe and unprofessional” move by sailing within 45 yards of the Decatur, forcing the crew of the U.S. ship to veer away to avoid a collision.

CNN reported that an unidentified Navy official said a Chinese vessel followed the Chancellorsville during Monday’s operation, but its conduct was not considered

dangerous.

CNN also reported that two unidentified officials said China “issued a formal diplomatic protest, known as a demarche” after the Chancellorsville’s patrol.

The Chancellorsville sailing came two days before the guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale and the replenishment oiler USNS Pecos sailed through the Taiwan Strait, another area considered sensitive by Chinese leaders.

Both operations came days before President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping were scheduled to meet while in Argentina for the Group of 20 summit.

Trump told The Wall Street Journal this week that he is prepared to implement tariffs on another \$267 billion in trade with China, and that tariffs could increase even more next year.

## Yearly data show escalation in bombs dropped by US in Afghanistan

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States dropped more bombs and other munitions in Afghanistan during the first 10 months of 2018 than in any other full year since documentation began, new Air Force data shows.

Between the start of the year and the end of October, U.S. forces released 5,982 munitions in Afghanistan, said the latest monthly report by U.S. Air Forces Central Command. Coalition aircraft flew nearly 6,600 sorties, about 12 percent of which carried out strikes during that period.

AFCENT didn’t begin publishing munitions data regularly until 2006.

The latest figures surpass the previous annual record of about 5,400 recorded in 2011 at the height of the U.S. troop surge. AFCENT’s figures include both bomb and missile strikes, 105mm shells fired by AC-130 gunships and strafing fire from 20mm cannons and up.

A ramped-up bombing campaign has been part of the Trump administration’s strategy for pushing the Taliban to the negotiating table. But the Kabul government

has been unable to win back territory from the insurgents and the bombing has corresponded with a record number of civilian casualties caused by airstrikes, according to United Nations statistics.

On Wednesday, just a day before the latest Air Force data was released, the military said it was investigating claims that about two dozen civilians were killed by a U.S. strike in southern Helmand province.

In addition to targeting the Taliban and other militant fighters, munitions this year have been used for “terrain denial” strikes — bombings intended to destroy positions and routes used by insurgents — and to target Taliban drug labs, military officials said.

“The challenge is that ultimately this is a ground war, so air power is only useful to the degree that it helps support ground forces,” said Seth Jones, a counterinsurgency expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

U.S. and Afghan air power does appear to be confining insurgent control to rural areas and keeping it away from major population centers, a success touted by the international coalition.

“The airstrikes constrain the Taliban’s

reach in the country, they know they’re not going to be able to take over the major cities, and, therefore, there’s a stalemate,” said Kamran Bokhari, a foreign policy expert at the University of Ottawa.

“I do think it’s a good strategy to increase U.S. airstrikes because there are no other good alternatives,” Bokhari said. “You don’t want the Taliban to feel as if they have the upper hand and then drive a hard bargain at the negotiating table.”

The U.S. and the Taliban have held direct talks this year aimed at promoting a negotiated peace settlement. While both sides say they would like to continue the dialogue, the Taliban have shown no sign that they are serious about ending their insurgency, said Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, who holds a position roughly equivalent to prime minister.

The U.N. attributed just over half of the airstrike casualties to international forces — namely the U.S., which is the only foreign country officially conducting strikes — while Afghan forces were blamed for 38 percent.

# US, Canada and Mexico sign trade pact

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — President Donald Trump joined the leaders of Canada and Mexico at a global meeting in Argentina on Friday to sign a revised North American trade pact, fulfilling a longstanding political promise with a deal he celebrated as a “groundbreaking achievement.”

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement is meant to replace the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement, which Trump has long denigrated as a “disaster.” However, ongoing differences over steel and aluminum tariffs the U.S. has imposed on its northern and southern neighbors encroached on the celebratory moment.

Trump appeared with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and outgoing Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto at the Group of 20 nations summit in Buenos Aires for the formal signing ceremony. Each country’s legislature must also approve the agreement.

Legislative approval is the next step in

the process, but could prove to be a difficult task in the United States, especially now that Democrats — instead of Trump’s Republicans — will control the House of Representatives come January. Democrats and their allies in the labor movement are already demanding changes to the agreement.

Within hours of the signing, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said that for the deal to get majority support in Congress, it must have stronger labor and environmental protections and “must prove to be a net benefit to middle-class families and working people.”

While Trump hailed the revised trade pact, Trudeau was more measured and used the event to call on Trump to remove the steel and aluminum tariffs the U.S. slapped on Canada and Mexico. Trudeau also referenced recent downsizing by General Motors in North America as a “heavy blow.” Trump did not mention the job losses.

“With hard work, good will and determination I’m confident that we will get there,”

Trudeau said.

Peña Nieto, who will handoff to his successor Saturday, said he was honored to be at the signing on the last day of his administration, saying it is the culmination of a long process “that allow us to overcome differences and to conciliate our visions.”

The signing came at the front end of two days of tough diplomacy for Trump. On the top of his agenda is a Saturday dinner meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, which will determine if the two can ease escalating trade tensions. Before Trump arrived in Argentina he injected additional drama into the proceedings by canceling another high-stakes meeting, with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

On Friday, Trump opened the day with a cordial meeting at the Casa Rosada with Argentine President Mauricio Macri, a longtime business acquaintance. Posing for photos in the gilded Salon Blanco, Trump spoke about their longtime personal relationship and said they would discuss trade, military purchases and other issues.

# Mueller mulls new charges against Manafort

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort may face additional charges after lawyers in the special counsel’s Russia investigation said he lied to them and broke his plea agreement, prosecutors said Friday.

The latest development in Manafort’s case comes at a time of public activity in special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation. Prosecutors obtained a guilty plea from President Donald Trump’s longtime legal fixer on Thursday and appear to be lining up charges against another Trump supporter.

The prospect of new charges adds to the legal peril of Manafort, the onetime political consultant who already faces years in prison after being convicted of financial fraud crimes in Virginia and pleading guilty to conspiracy counts in Washington.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson set a tentative sentencing date of March 5 as prosecutors plan to disclose next week what they believe are the lies Manafort told since pleading guilty in September and agreeing to cooperate with the investigation.

Manafort’s lawyers, who deny that Manafort lied, will have an opportunity to respond and a judge is expected to hear arguments before deciding whether he

breached his plea deal.

Prosecutor Andrew Weissmann told the judge that prosecutors had not yet decided whether to file new charges against Manafort for the alleged lies, saying, “That determination has not been made.”

Trump is facing continued questions about whether he might pardon Manafort. At the same time, he is playing down the significance of the guilty plea of his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, for lying to Congress.

None of the recent moves by Mueller has definitively answered the question of whether Trump or his associates coordinated with Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign. And they don’t directly accuse the president of any criminal wrongdoing or indicate that the president faces legal jeopardy.

But Trump has continually surfaced in Mueller’s investigation, with references to him in Cohen’s plea on Thursday and in a draft plea offer extended to conservative writer and conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi and made public this week.

Trump has expressed sympathy for Manafort, Corsi and his longtime confidant Roger Stone, telling The New York Post this week that they were “very brave” for resisting the Mueller investigation. He said a par-

don for Manafort, who has denied lying to investigators, wasn’t “off the table.”

That prospect of a pardon has drawn criticism, including from Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, who said it would be a “complete abuse of power” and could prompt congressional action against the president.

Manafort faces up to five years in prison on each charge in his plea agreement. He is also set to be sentenced on eight felony counts in a separate case in Virginia in February.

Trump has spent recent weeks casting Mueller’s team as hell-bent on destroying the lives of those in the president’s orbit. Armed with information passed along by Manafort’s attorneys to the president’s legal team, Trump has accused prosecutors of dirty tactics and pressuring witnesses to lie.

Trump’s lawyers’ arrangement with Manafort’s lawyers was unusual because it continued after he pleaded guilty to two felony charges and agreed to cooperate with the prosecutors. Trump’s legal team also has received help from Corsi. He told The Associated Press that while in contact with Mueller’s team, he directed his lawyer to informally share information with Trump’s attorneys, including Jay Sekulow.



# California's flooding recedes

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — After fleeing a wildfire that came dangerously close to his Northern California home earlier this month, Dale Word evacuated again when flash floods inundated roads and trapped motorists and residents.

Swift water teams used boats to make rescues at three homes and officials told people in about 100 vehicles to stay in place. The rain receded late Thursday afternoon, leaving a mess of sticky mud and debris. Downed trees and power poles littered the landscape.

Word, a firmware engineer, waded through thigh-high water to higher ground in his semi-rural Chico neighborhood — stunned by the disasters that have hit Butte County.

The recent fire came within several hundred feet of his home, which is about 140 miles northeast of San Francisco.

"Everywhere you go you're talking to people who have lost everything and it's just tragic," Word said. He jokingly added, "It feels like the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are going to come riding over the hill any day now."

Thursday's storm brought 1½

inches of rain in an hour, said the National Weather Service.

The sheriff's department ordered evacuations but could not say how many people were affected. The water rescues were in Chico, where many of the fire evacuees from Paradise are staying.

Paradise has been under mandatory evacuation orders for nearly three weeks since the firestorm killed at least 88 people and destroyed nearly 14,000 homes.

Residents could begin returning early next week, but only if the wet weather doesn't hinder efforts to clear roads and restore power, Sheriff Kory Honea said Wednesday.

In Southern California, authorities ordered evacuations in a small Malibu community within a wildfire burn zone where a mudslide blocked streets amid the heavy rains. No major damage was reported by the time flood warnings and watches expired.

The storm knocked out power and flooded roadways across greater Los Angeles. Numerous traffic accidents occurred on slick freeways and most vehicles traveling in the mountains were ordered to put chains on their tires. Mud

and rock slides also closed two mountain highways.

Residents were urged to voluntarily evacuate a string of neighborhoods about 45 miles southeast of Los Angeles along a flank of the Santa Ana Mountains where a fire burned thousands of acres last summer. Mandatory evacuations were ordered for parts of the city of Lake Elsinore beneath charred hillsides where there were heavy debris flows but no significant damage.

West of Los Angeles, no major problems were reported after rain fell heavily at times in vast areas burned by fires this month and last December — an area where there are strong memories of a January downpour that unleashed devastating debris flows through the community of Montecito that killed 21 people and left two missing.

On the coast near Big Sur, the California Department of Transportation closed a 12-mile stretch of Highway 1 because of potential instability.

The weather service also issued a backcountry avalanche warning for most of the central Sierra, including the Lake Tahoe area.

## Mystery ballot could decide race

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — Control of Alaska state government, at least for the next two years, could hinge on a mystery ballot that an election worker found on a table in a Fairbanks voting precinct more than three weeks ago.

The uncounted ballot could break a tie in an Alaska state House race.

A decision on whether to count it is expected Friday. The elections office has said the ballot appeared to be marked for Democrat Kathryn Dodge.

If Republican Bart LeBon wins, the GOP would control the House, Senate and the governor's office. If Dodge wins, it would set off a mad dash between the parties to build a caucus of at least 21 members needed for a majority in the House.

Officials said the ballot was found by an election worker on a precinct table on Election Day in a gray secrecy sleeve. It was not counted at the time and was included among ballot materials that arrived in Juneau last Friday for an election review.

Officials were investigating the ballot before deciding whether to count it. Dodge was tied with LeBon with 2,661 votes apiece heading into a recount Friday.

Dodge attorney Patrick Munson, in a letter to elections director Josie Bahnke, said Alaska law sets a high threshold for disqualifying a ballot. He said there were 366 ballots issued at the precinct on Election Day but just 365 were run through the optical scanner.

He said it's likely this ballot was validly issued and voted and should be counted for Dodge.

He also wants the Division of Elections to count for Dodge a ballot with ovals marked for her and LeBon but with an "X" over the oval next to LeBon's name. That ballot wasn't counted for either candidate.

## Marriott discovers data breach at Starwood hotels

Associated Press

BETHESDA, Md. — The information of as many as 500 million guests at Starwood hotels has been compromised and Marriott said that it's discovered that unauthorized access within its Starwood network has been taking place since 2014.

The company said Friday that credit card numbers and expiration dates of some guests may have been taken. For as many as two-thirds of those affected data exposed could include mailing address, phone number, email address, passport number, Starwood Preferred Guest account infor-

mation, date of birth, gender, arrival and departure information, reservation date and communication preferences. For some guests, the information was limited to name and sometimes other data such as mailing address, email address or other information.

"We fell short of what our guests deserve and what we expect of ourselves," CEO Arne Sorenson said in a prepared statement. "We are doing everything we can to support our guests, and using lessons learned to be better moving forward."

Email notifications to those who may have been affected were to begin rolling out

Friday.

While the breach affected "approximately 500 million guests" who made a reservation at a Starwood hotel, some of those records could belong to people who had multiple stays.

When the two companies announced their merger in November 2015, Marriott had 54 million members of its loyalty program and Starwood had 21 million. Many travelers were members in both programs.

Asked for more details on the 500 million numbers, Marriott spokesman Jeff Flaherty on Friday morning said the company has not finished identifying duplicate information in the database.

# US: Iran violating UN arms export ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Thursday accused Iran of stepping up violations of a United Nations ban on arms exports by sending rockets and other weaponry to rebels in Afghanistan and Yemen.

The new allegations come as the U.S. ramps up pressure on Iran to halt what it calls “malign activities” in the Middle East and elsewhere by reinstating sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal from which President Donald Trump withdrew in May. Iran has denied such ac-

cusations in the past.

In a presentation, the administration displayed weapons and fragments of weapons seized in Afghanistan, Bahrain and Yemen that it said are evidence Iran is a “grave and escalating threat” that must be stopped. The material was added to a collection presented by U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley last December when she laid out a case for pulling out of the nuclear agreement.

The weapons presented “irrefutable evidence” that Iran’s destabilizing activity in the region “is a problem that’s not getting better, it’s getting worse,” Brian Hook, the

U.S. special representative for Iran, told journalists after the presentation. Hook added that he hoped the display would rally international support for re-imposed U.S. sanctions on Iran.

“It’s important for all nations to understand that this is a global threat that requires a global response,” Hook said, “it would be an act of negligence for us to be in possession of these arms and not to publicize it.”

The United States’ European allies continue to support the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and are opposed to the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions.

## Fears mount over shaky state of Syria’s cease-fire

Los Angeles Times

AMMAN, Jordan — Fears are rising that Syria will end a cease-fire and restart a Russian-backed offensive that aid groups warn would be a “blood-bath” in a rebel-held northern province.

A peace conference ended Thursday with “no tangible progress” toward ending the eight-year civil war. And earlier in the week, Russia launched airstrikes in Idlib province after a suspected chemical attack on the government-held city of Aleppo. Syria and Russia say rebels in an area covered in a de-escalation agreement lobbed gas-filled mortars that sickened more than 100.

Russia said it had asked the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to investigate. Representatives of the organization, set up by the U.N. to investigate, have yet to arrive. Rebel groups claim the gas attack was a false flag operation meant to give Syria and Russia cover to attack.

Moscow’s airstrikes on Sunday kicked off a round of tit-for-tat attacks that have rocked the fragile 10-week cease-fire in Idlib. It also prompted a spate of diplomatic sparring between Damascus and Russia on one side and the U.S. on the other.

A Pentagon spokesman warned in a statement this week that “it is essential to ensure that the Syrian regime does not seize on false pretexts to undermine this cease-fire and launch an offensive in Idlib.”

Past allegations of chemical weapon attacks in Syria have spurred worldwide condemnation as well as strikes against the government of President Bashar Assad, which has been widely blamed for deploying ordnance filled with chlorine and sarin gas against its rebel adversaries.

In Saturday’s attack, there were no deaths, but 107 people from three neighborhoods of the city were affected, state and pro-government media said.

Doctors interviewed by the state-controlled Syrian Arab News Agency said patients showed symptoms including blurred vision, red eyes and vomiting, thought to be the result of exposure to chlorine.

Nasr Hariri, head of the rebel negotiation team, expressed doubts about allegations of a chemical attack, tweeting that the operation was “an excuse to open up military action in northern Syria and move away from (fulfilling) any entitlements in the political process.”

## Congo’s Ebola outbreak 2nd largest in history

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — Congo’s deadly Ebola outbreak is now the second largest in history, behind the devastating West Africa outbreak that killed thousands a few years ago, the World Health Organization said Thursday.

WHO’s emergencies chief, Dr. Peter Salama, called it a “sad toll” as Congo’s health ministry announced the number of cases has reached 426. That includes 379 confirmed cases and 47 probable ones. So far this outbreak declared on Aug. 1, has 198 confirmed deaths, with another 47 probable ones, Congo’s health ministry said.

Attacks by rebel groups and open hostility by some wary locals have posed serious challenges to health workers that Ebola experts say they’ve never been seen before. Many venture out on critical virus containment missions only accompanied by U.N. peacekeepers in areas where gunfire echoes daily.

Salama this month predicted that the outbreak in northeastern Congo will last at least another six months before it can be contained. West Africa’s Ebola outbreak killed more than 11,000 people from 2014

to 2016.

Day by day, reports by health organizations note one new difficulty after another in this latest outbreak, even as their work sets milestones that have given new hope in the fight against one of the world’s most notorious diseases.

More than 37,000 people have received Ebola vaccinations, and Congo has begun the first-ever trial to test the effectiveness and safety of four experimental Ebola drugs. And yet the risk of Ebola spreading in so-called “red zones”—areas that are virtually inaccessible because of the threat of rebel groups—is a major concern in containing this outbreak.

“This tragic milestone clearly demonstrates the complexity and severity of the outbreak. While the numbers are far from those from West Africa in 2014, we’re witnessing how the dynamics of conflict pose a different kind of threat,” said Michelle Gayer, senior director of emergency health at the International Rescue Committee.

In a major concern for health workers, many new cases have been unconnected to known infections as the insecurity complicates efforts to track contacts of those with the disease.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police: Truck driver impaled, while driving

**NJ** HOLLAND TOWNSHIP — Police in New Jersey said a truck driver who was impaled in the neck by a flying piece of metal is in stable condition.

Holland Township Police Chief John Harris Jr. said the 23-year-old man was driving Tuesday morning when a 5-inch piece of metal was dislodged from the ground by nearby roadwork — propelling it into the man's truck. NJ.com reported the metal piece smashed through a window and construction cage and lodged in the man's neck.

Police say the passenger of the truck threw the vehicle into park and stopped the truck. The passenger then removed the metal and applied pressure to the driver's wound, likely saving his life.

## Officer resigns after probes into stolen food

**CO** DURANGO — A Colorado law enforcement officer resigned after he was accused of stealing food from a crime scene.

The Durango Herald reported a homeowner who was subject to a marijuana cultivation drug bust last year brought forward surveillance video, showing La Plata County Sheriff's Office Lt. Ryan Engle stealing granola bars.

The video prompted the sheriff's office to conduct an internal investigation and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation to launch a probe.

Christian Champagne, 6th Judicial District attorney, says prosecutors stopped pursuing criminal charges after Engle decided to resign.

## Glider pilot forgets to strap man in

**FL** NORTH PORT — A Florida man spent his first hang-gliding ride dangling precariously from a control bar and the pilot's leg after the pilot forgot to strap him in.

The Orlando Sentinel reported that North Port resident Chris Gursky posted a GoPro video of the wild ride in Switzerland on his YouTube account.

The video shows the trouble began immediately after take-off when Gursky realized he wasn't attached to the craft. He ended up holding the control bar with his left hand and the pilot with his right hand for most of the two-minute-and-14-second flight. The pilot held Gursky's harness with his left hand while steering with his right.

## Police officer rescues chicken from fire

**NY** OSSINING — A police officer who saved a chicken from becoming a roaster is taking a ribbing from his fellow officers.

Body cam video released by the Ossining police shows the officer responding to a shed fire on Saturday. He removed some propane tanks when he discovered the chicken. The bird clucks as the officer carries the bird to safety. He told the owner, "I got your chicken."

The police department said if you ever want to get a hard time from your co-workers, "be a hero ... to a chicken."

## Holiday Express Train begins multistate trip

**MO** KANSAS CITY — A festive holiday train has started its journey through

Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Illinois and Missouri.

After stops in more than 20 cities, The Kansas City Southern Holiday Express Train will end its trip Dec. 14 at Union Station in Kansas City, where the six-car train will remain on display through Dec. 18.

## Police: 13-year-old drove 100 mph during chase

**IA** BLUE GRASS — Authorities said a 13-year-old driver led officers on a chase that hit speeds of 100 mph in eastern Iowa.

She and five other young people in the van were taken into custody Sunday after the van was stopped on the west side of Davenport.

The chase began in Blue Grass when the van was spotted as an officer checked a report of vehicle break-ins. The van was finally stopped after deflation devices punctured all four of its tires.

Authorities say the van was reported stolen in Rock Island, Ill.

## Plane makes emergency landing after striking bird

**MA** BOSTON — An American Airlines flight struck a bird and was forced to make an emergency landing in Boston.

The Boston Globe reported the Boeing 737 aircraft struck the bird at 7:40 a.m. Saturday morning shortly after takeoff from Boston Logan International Airport.

The Federal Aviation Administration told the Globe the plane had been heading to Miami and made an emergency landing without incident.

The plane was being evaluated and FAA officials are investigating. The flight's 172

passengers were being re-booked on different flights.

## Authorities arrest 32 in cockfighting bust

**NE** OMAHA — Nebraska authorities arrested 32 men and seized 186 roosters when they broke up a cockfighting event.

The Omaha World-Herald reported the Nebraska Humane Society raided a farm near Louisville on Saturday after receiving a tip about a cockfighting event there.

Mark Langan with the Nebraska Humane Society said the raid broke up a large, well-organized cockfighting operation.

The men who were arrested range in age between 20 and 67. They all face charges of participating, viewing or promoting cockfighting. Two juveniles were also detained.

## Future of 'Superman' skyscraper up in the air

**RI** PROVIDENCE — There's still no plan for the so-called Superman building in Rhode Island five years after it was left vacant.

WPRI-TV reported that Massachusetts-based High Rock Development bought Providence's Industrial Trust Building in 2008. In 2013, Bank of America moved out. City officials say the value of the state's tallest building has dropped from \$31.3 million to \$14.2 million.

Gov. Gina Raimondo said the 26-story structure is hard to fill because of its age and because of its renovation needs.

It's called the Superman building for its similarity to the Daily Planet headquarters in the old TV show.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news  
updated 24/7 from bases  
around the world.  
Now online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Cowboys stifle Brees, knock off Saints

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Dak Prescott desperately scrambled for a first down in a game of fourth-quarter keepaway, then took three knees starting from the New Orleans 1 to run out the clock by the narrowest possible margin.

Anything to keep Drew Brees and the NFL's highest-scoring offense on the sideline.

Ezekiel Elliott scored the only Dallas touchdown on a 16-yard screen pass and the Cowboys stifled Brees and the Saints, ending New Orleans' 10-game winning streak with a 13-10 victory Thursday night.

The Cowboys (7-5) won their fourth consecutive game and assured they will at least remain tied for the NFC East lead.

The Saints (10-2) were shut out in the first half, had their fewest points in three years and finished with a season-low 176 yards. They missed a chance to perfectly match Dallas from two years ago, when then-rookie sensations Elliott and Prescott won 11 straight after dropping the opener.

"Everybody knew it. We had to keep the ball away from Brees," Cowboys owner and general manager Jerry Jones said. "We needed to play this kind of game. I must tell you, the defense played beyond my expectations. They played like a championship defense."

Brees had his fewest yards passing in a first half since joining the Saints in 2006 with 39, and couldn't get a potential winning drive going in the final minutes.

Instead, Jourdan Lewis' interception — just the third for Brees while he became the NFL's first with at least 30 TD passes in 10 seasons — gave the Cowboys a chance to run out the clock from the New Orleans 1 after an interference penalty in the end zone.

Brees said he was trying to throw the ball away behind pass-catching back Alvin Kamara, who cut outside just as Brees threw it and Lewis dove forward, barely keeping the ball off the ground.

"As an offense, we think complementary football," Brees said. "Let's put together a drive. Let's keep our defense off the field. Let's control the game, control the clock, control the ball. Just never felt like we really did that as an offense like we've done this year."

The Cowboys spent the fourth quarter trying to protect their three-point lead, with Prescott breaking several tackles on an 11-yard scramble on third-and-10 and Cole Beasley catching a third-down pass and diving for 5 yards on third-and-5.

But Prescott fumbled on his season-high seventh sack with Dallas in position for at least a field goal, giving Brees another chance from his 15 with more than two minutes remaining.

Brees' interception came two plays later, then Marshon Lattimore was called for interference against Amari Cooper in the end zone, giving Dallas a first down at the 1 with 1:58 remaining.

The Cowboys had just enough time to

end the game, with the play clock matching the game clock down to zero after Prescott took a knee for the third time.

Brees was 18-for-28 for 127 yards, actually the second straight game and third overall under 200 yards for the MVP contender. The running game didn't do much, either, with Kamara getting 36 yards rushing while the Saints had 65 as a team after averaging 177 the previous four games.

The only touchdown drive for the Saints was aided by three first downs on Dallas penalties. The biggest was Randy Gregory's roughing-the-punter penalty on Thomas Morstead.

Two plays later, Brees dropped a deep throw to a backpedaling Keith Kirkwood in the end zone for a 30-yard score to get New Orleans within 13-10.

Prescott had 194 of his 248 yards passing while helping the Cowboys to a 13-0 half-time lead — the first scoreless first half for the Saints since 2014, also against the Cowboys, and their first deficit in five games.

Elliott had 136 scrimmage yards with 76 rushing and 60 receiving on six catches.

**Matching Zeke, raising him \$2:** After forcing and recovering a fumble by Cooper in the first half, Lattimore ran to one of the giant red Salvation Army kettles behind an end zone, pulled \$23 out of his uniform and dropped it in. Lattimore is No. 23. In the Thanksgiving game a week earlier, Elliott (No. 21) dropped \$21 into the other kettle on the same end of the field.

## With CB Talib set to return, Rams upbeat

Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — With an extra week to reflect on a Monday night shoot-out in which the Los Angeles Rams allowed 51 points and 546 yards to the Kansas City Chiefs, defensive coordinator Wade Phillips was focused on the positives.

The Rams had three interceptions, recovered two fumbles, scored two defensive touchdowns and were able to add one more win to their record.

"Yeah, we want the five turnovers," Phillips said Thursday. "We don't want all the other stuff. But that's what we're working towards."

After a sterling start to the season that included six consecutive scoreless quarters and allowing Arizona to run one play in Rams territory in a dominant 34-0 win, Los Angeles has allowed 31 or more points in five of its past eight games.

That total includes each of its past three games, but Phillips remains upbeat about the trajectory of his defense.

"The good thing about this team, defensively, is they have been resilient in key situations," Phillips said. "How many times in the last two minutes have they come through and made plays where they cause a turnover? The last game, they

have a great offense and they have already scored 50 points, they get the ball with two minutes left and another time with two minutes left and we get two turnovers."

However, Phillips would like to see improvement in other areas, starting this week against the Detroit Lions when the Rams (10-1) can clinch the NFC West with a win.

It could come with cornerback Aqib Talib on track to play for the first time since sustaining a high ankle sprain that required surgery against the Los Angeles Chargers in Week 3.

Rams coach Sean McVay said Talib made it through

practice Wednesday without any setbacks and expected the veteran defensive back to play against the Lions.

McVay called Talib's impending return a "big boost to our football team," but said the exact nature of his participation would be determined later in the week.

"What does that mean in terms of snap count, what exactly that role is, really it is something that we're going to continue to evaluate based on the way his ankle responds," McVay said. "If things go the way we anticipate, we hope and what we expect, then I think you can expect to see him play."



## MLS playoffs roundup

# Atlanta, Portland advance to MLS Cup

Associated Press

HARRISON, N.J. — Atlanta United advanced to Major League Soccer's championship match in just its second season, losing to the New York Red Bulls 1-0 on Thursday night on a goal in second-half stoppage time but winning the two-match Eastern Conference final by a 3-1 aggregate score.

Atlanta will host Portland in the MLS Cup on Dec. 8, a chance for the city's second professional sports title and first since the Braves won the 1995 World Series.

New York, one of the league's original teams, had the best regular-season record for the third time in six seasons but remained without an MLS title. The Red Bulls have reached the

conference final five times but advanced for the only time in 2008, when they lost the MLS Cup match to Columbus.

Tim Parker scored the game's only goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time after a poor clearance by Brad Guzan following a corner kick.

With the temperature around 40 and an announced crowd of 22,137 on the late autumn night, Atlanta played with five men back and often 10 behind the ball in a classic "park the bus" defensive strategy. When Atlanta players fell to the ground following challenges, they often remained down for lengthy periods as time ran off the clock. MLS scoring champion Josef Martinez, Franco Escobar and Hector Villalba had goals at home in the first

leg on Sunday.

**Timbers 3, Sporting Kansas City 2 (Timbers advance on 3-2 aggregate):** Diego Valeri scored a pair of goals, including one in stoppage time, and visiting Portland beat Sporting Kansas City to advance to the MLS Cup for the second time in four years.

Sebastian Blanco also scored in the second half for Portland, which didn't even need Valeri's clinching goal. The teams had played to a scoreless draw Sunday in Portland in the first leg of their aggregate-goal Western Conference final, and with road goals being the tiebreaker, the Timbers were assured of playing for a championship even when the score was 2-2.

Valeri's stoppage goal merely allowed the Timbers to begin

celebrating a few minutes early. Daniel Salloi scored in the first half and Gerso Fernandes scored in the 81st minute for Sporting KC.

Blanco's strike in the 52nd minute was followed by Valeri's header off a rebound moments later, a goal that not only silenced the crowd at Children's Mercy Park but led to a rather bizarre scene.

Fans in one corner of the stadium began throwing bottles and other trash at Portland players, and referee Mark Geiger brought both teams to the sideline. Sporting KC manager Peter Vermes then stalked more than halfway across the field to admonish his own club's fans.

## Sports briefs

# Wizards' Howard may miss 3 months after surgery

Wire reports

Washington Wizards center Dwight Howard underwent back surgery Friday morning in Los Angeles to mitigate pain in a lower disc lingering nerve issue, according to a person with knowledge of the situation.

Howard has been dealing with "gluteal soreness," as described by the team, due to a sciatic nerve that has impacted his piriformis muscle and impinged his lower body movement. According to Yahoo! Sports, Howard will miss up to three months in recovery.

The surgical procedure will greatly affect Howard's debut season with the Wizards, which had already been limited from the beginning. Howard has played in only nine games for the Wizards, averaging 12.8 points and 9.2 rebounds.

In July, Howard signed a two-year deal for approximately

\$11 million and a player option for the second year. He missed all of training camp and the preseason and at the time the Wizards described his ailment as back soreness. It wasn't until Howard visited a specialist in New York on Oct. 8 that it was determined that Howard was experiencing piriformis syndrome.

## Agler resigns as coach of Sparks

LOS ANGELES — Brian Agler, who led the Los Angeles Sparks to the WNBA championship in 2016, has resigned as coach after four years.

The team made the announcement Friday without explanation. Executive vice president and general manager Penny Toler thanked Agler for his contributions and wished him the best.

Agler is the all-time win-

ningest coach in U.S. women's professional basketball with 315 regular-season wins. He's the first coach in league history to win titles with two different teams. Agler guided the Seattle Storm to the 2010 WNBA championship.

He had an 85-51 career mark with the Sparks, including 19-15 in the regular season this year before they lost in the second round of the playoffs.

## QB Darnold questionable for Jets against Titans

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Sam Darnold is questionable for the New York Jets' game Sunday at Tennessee, and his status is uncertain.

Meanwhile, Josh McCown was a full participant on Friday after being limited during the week.

Coach Todd Bowles said Friday he has decided who will start at quarterback against the

Titans, but will not reveal that until before the game.

Darnold has missed the past two games with a strain in his right foot.

## Elliott voted NASCAR's most popular driver

LAS VEGAS — Chase Elliott has been voted NASCAR's most popular driver, ending a 15-year run for now-retired superstar Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Earnhardt presented Elliott the award during NASCAR's annual season-ending awards ceremony Thursday at the Wynn Las Vegas.

Earnhardt won the award for 15 consecutive years until his retirement last season. His streak fell one short of the record of 16 set by Chase Elliott's father, Bill Elliott.

The award is based on a fan vote.

## NHL roundup

## Lightning end Sabres' 10-game streak

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The Buffalo Sabres came up just short of a history-making run.

Cedric Paquette broke a tie with 5:41 left and the Tampa Bay Lightning ended the Sabres' franchise-record-tying winning streak at 10 games with a 5-4 victory Thursday night.

"I thought it was great stretch by us, 10 games in a row," Buffalo star Jack Eichel said. "It shows us we can win every night we go out there, and I think that should be our mindset no matter what. That's the confidence you build through a winning streak like that."

Paquette beat Carter Hutton, who had won his previous eight starts, from the top of the left circle.

Ten of the Sabres' last 11 games have decided by one goal, including seven that needed extra time.

Buffalo also had 10 consecutive victories in January 1984 and October 2006.

Dan Girardi, Alex Killorn, Nikita Kucherov and Steven Stamkos also scored for the Lightning, and Luis Domingue

made 18 saves.

"I thought there was a lot of momentum in that game," Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said. "Both teams coughed up leads. There was a ton of swings in that game. I'm pretty sure if you're a fan of hockey and were in the building tonight you would have enjoyed that one."

**Jets 6, Blackhawks 5:** Nikolaj Ehlers had a hat trick, Patrik Laine scored twice and became the fourth-youngest player in NHL history to reach 100 goals, and host Winnipeg beat Chicago.

Laine scored his 100th and 101st goals in his 178th game at the age of 20 years, 224 days. Wayne Gretzky did it the fastest in 20 years, 40 days. Jimmy Carson and Brian Bellows also accomplished the feat faster than Laine. The Finnish forward has an NHL-leading 21 goals this season, 18 of them November.

**Bruins 2, Islanders 1 (SO):** Ryan Donato scored the decisive shootout goal in his NHL return, Tuukka Rask made 28 saves and host Boston outlasted New York.

Donato, recalled Wednesday

after a demotion to Providence of the AHL, tucked the winner past Robin Lehner on the Bruins' fourth attempt. Boston has earned at least one point in five of its past six games.

**Blue Jackets 4, Wild 2:** Riley Nash had a goal and an assist, Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 23 shots and host Columbus beat Minnesota to move ahead of Washington for the Metropolitan Division lead.

Nash, who signed as a free agent last summer, got his first goal in 29 games — and first as a Blue Jacket — in the second period and assisted on Markus Hannikainen's first-period tally. Columbus has won two in a row and six out of eight. Cam Atkinson and Artemi Panarin also scored.

**Coyotes 3, Predators 0:** Nick Schmaltz had a goal and an assist, Adin Hill made 29 saves for his first NHL shutout and visiting Arizona beat Nashville.

Schmaltz's two points were his first since being acquired Sunday in a trade with the Chicago Blackhawks. Clayton Keller and Brad Richardson also scored.

**Golden Knights 4, Canucks 3:** Max Pacioretty scored twice to lead visiting Vegas past struggling Vancouver for its fifth straight victory.

William Karlsson's short-handed goal with 6:25 remaining snapped a 3-all tie. William Carrier also scored for the Golden Knights, and Marc-Andre Fleury made 33 saves.

**Oilers 3, Kings 2:** Oscar Klefbom scored his second straight winning goal and added an assist to help host Edmonton beat Los Angeles to improve to 3-1-1 under new coach Ken Hitchcock.

Klefbom broke a 2-all tie with 2:20 remaining on his power-play drive from the point. Jesse Puljujarvi and Alex Chiasson also scored, and Mikko Koskinen stopped 30 shots.

**Senators 3, Rangers 0:** Craig Anderson stopped 27 shots for his first shutout of the season and 41st overall, leading host Ottawa past New York.

Matt Duchene had a goal and an assist, and Drake Batherson and Magnus Paajarvi also scored.

Henrik Lundqvist made 31 saves for New York.

## NBA roundup

## Leonard leads red-hot Raptors past Warriors in OT

Associated Press

TORONTO — Not even a dominant Kevin Durant and the Golden State Warriors could slow down the red-hot Toronto Raptors.

Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 37 points, Pascal Siakam added a career-high 26 and the Raptors overcame a 51-point performance from Durant to beat the Warriors 131-128 in overtime on Thursday night, extending their winning streak to seven.

"We were able to make shots, we were able to get some stops

in overtime," Leonard said. "It's a building block for us, and I'm happy we got the win."

Kyle Lowry had 10 points and 12 assists, Serge Ibaka scored 20 points and Danny Green had 13 as the Raptors snapped an eight-game losing streak against Golden State and won a contest billed as a potential NBA Finals preview.

"What a game," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "An incredible basketball game for the fans to watch. We came up just short."

**Lakers 104, Pacers 96:**

LeBron James scored 12 of his 38 points in the final five minutes, and Los Angeles rebounded from its first back-to-back losses in a month with a victory over Indiana.

Brandon Ingram scored 14 points and Josh Hart added 13 for the Lakers, who blew an early 24-point lead before James carried them down the stretch to their 10th win in 14 games.

Domantas Sabonis had 20 points and 15 rebounds as the Pacers lost for the first time in three stops on their four-game

West Coast trip.

**Clippers 133, Kings 121:** Tobias Harris scored 28 points, Montrezl Harrell added 24 and Los Angeles beat Sacramento.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 17 points, and Avery Bradley and Danilo Gallinari had 16 apiece as the Clippers won their ninth in 10 games. Los Angeles extended its streak in Sacramento to 12 games.

Bogdan Bogdanovic scored a career-high 26 for Sacramento. Marvin Bagley III added 18 points and 10 rebounds.