

## US: 2019 Syria strikes killed civilians

*The Washington Post*

The U.S. military killed dozens of people in Syria, including women and children, in airstrikes conducted during the final days of the war against the Islamic State, but did not disclose its actions for more than two years, defense officials said Sunday.

The attacks on Baghouz, along Syria's border with Iraq, were carried out March 18, 2019, after Syrian forces allied with the United States requested assistance and nearby U.S. troops reported seeing no civilians in the area, Navy Capt. Bill Urban, a U.S. military spokesman, said in a lengthy statement. The U.S. determined that at least 16 ISIS fighters and four civilians were killed, he said.

But the U.S. military was "unable to conclusively characterize the status of more than 60 other casualties," Urban said. That group, Urban said, included "multiple armed women" and "at least one" armed child.

"Likely a majority of those killed were also combatants at the time of the strike, however, it is also highly likely that there were additional civilian casualties," Urban said.

Details of the strike were not disclosed

until Saturday, when the New York Times published a report saying that some U.S. officials — including military and CIA personnel — had questioned the strike's legitimacy, whether it constituted a war crime and if there was a deliberate effort to hide the truth about what happened. The Times reported that military officials sought to conceal the strike, and that multiple investigative reports scrutinizing what had happened were "delayed, sanitized and classified."

A U.S. military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity, said that the units involved — including elite personnel from the Army's 5th Special Forces Group — quickly reported the possibility of civilian casualties internally.

For reasons still unclear, U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in that region, never released any details about the incident, this official said. The military did not explain why the strike was not disclosed until now, nor did it address whether the incident will be reviewed or if there are other similar cases that remain undisclosed.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said in

an email Sunday that the Defense Department and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin take seriously "the obligation to avoid civilian harm" in military operations.

"Without speaking to this specific event or any potential future decisions, Secretary Austin remains focused on making sure we do everything we can to both prevent these tragic outcomes and to be as forthcoming as we can be about them," Kirby said.

A U.S. military investigation concluded the airstrikes were legitimate in defense of the U.S.-backed Syrian fighters on the ground, and proportional because of the lack of smaller bombs or missiles at the time, Urban said. The investigation recommended requiring high-definition video for similar strikes in the future.

An investigating officer determined that no discipline was warranted, Urban said.

"It is important to understand that ISIS decided to put their own families at risk when all avenues of escape were afforded to them," Urban said. "It is also important to note that some women and children, whether through indoctrination or choice, decided to take up arms in this battle and as such could not strictly be classified as civilians."

## US Navy ship that irked Putin sets sail from Black Sea

**By ALISON BATH**

*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — A U.S. Navy command ship that drew Kremlin accusations of saber-rattling amid rising tensions along the Russian-Ukrainian border is leaving the Black Sea after completing operations with NATO members and allies.

USS Mount Whitney, which entered the Black Sea on Nov. 4, began its transit to the Mediterranean Sea on Monday, U.S. 6th Fleet announced on its Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Evidence of a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine and a mi-

grant crisis along the Polish-Belarusian border are causing concern in the United States and Europe. Russia has denied the troop buildup and involvement in the migrant crisis.

Analysts said the U.S. naval presence, along with that of other NATO members and partners, sends an important message to Moscow.

"You're not there to instigate a fight; you're there to deter," said retired Adm. James Foggo III, who led U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Forces Command, Naples and now is the dean of the Center for

Maritime Strategy in Arlington, Va.

Others have argued that U.S. and NATO activity in the Black Sea region is having the opposite effect, particularly as it draws Ukraine closer to NATO.

U.S. 6th Fleet did not comment on two other ships involved in the operations, the destroyer USS Porter and oiler USNS John Lenthall, which appeared to have remained in the Black Sea.

The U.S. naval presence stoked sharp criticism from Moscow, which has complained almost daily since the beginning

of the month, calling it an "aggression."

Mount Whitney caught the attention of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who used its presence as justification to bolster Russia's air defense system during a Nov. 1 meeting with military leaders in Sochi.

But the Navy said Mount Whitney was in the Black Sea for routine NATO operations. It made port calls in Turkey, Georgia and Romania and participated in military maneuvers with NATO members and other allies, including Ukraine and Bulgaria.

## Expert: China uses Cold War past for Indo-Pacific action

By JONATHAN SNYDER  
*Stars and Stripes*

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. and Japanese response to Soviet strategy in the Pacific during the Cold War has lessons today for the allies, who face similar challenges from a more aggressive China, a visiting professor told sailors recently.

Professor Narushige Michishita, vice president of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo, spoke at Sasebo Naval Base on Thursday on behalf of the Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies. His 1 1/2-hour talk, the first by the council at Sasebo Naval Base on Kyushu Island, drew 30 attendees, mostly Japanese with a few American military members and civilians.

"There are a lot of similarities to what America and Japan were doing back in the 1980s and what we are doing today. China is more or less doing what the Soviet Union was doing during the Cold War, and we are taking a similar response to the Chinese activity," Michishita told *Stars and Stripes* on Thursday. "So we can learn lessons from that activity."

For example, the anti-access, area-denial capabilities that China is developing to halt U.S. strike forces approaching Taiwan are similar to the strategy employed by the Soviet Union, he said. The Soviets deployed long-range bombers, surface ships and submarines to prevent the United States from entering the Sea of Okhotsk, Michishita said.

"Now the attendees know what we did, and they learned what we are doing today, and that it's not necessarily new," he said. "For those who are planning strategy, having this big picture in their head when they are operating at sea will help them make good decisions."

Michishita, a specialist in Japanese security and foreign policy as well as security issues on the Korean Peninsula, previously served as senior research fellow at the National Institute for Defense Studies. He is a prior deputy director of the Office of Strategic Studies at the Japanese Ministry of Defense and served as assistant counselor at the Cabinet Secretariat for Security and Crisis Management.

## Ukraine asks NATO to help counter Russia's efforts

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Ukraine's top diplomat urged NATO on Monday to deliver more support to his country as it grapples with a Russian military buildup near its eastern border and a migrant crisis on its northern frontier with Belarus.

"I wish we could consider our northern flank a safe place, but this is not the case," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said following a meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Kuleba said his country is reinforcing its border with Belarus amid an escalating migrant crisis that allies have said is being "weaponized" by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko as retribution for Western sanctions.

Kuleba said the migrant crisis and the Russian troop buildup are part of an overarching effort by Moscow to destabilize the region.

Russia has become the Lukashenko regime's staunch ally as the Belarusian dictator turned to Putin for support following mass uprisings against his rule.

The Kremlin has denied that it is involved with the migrant crisis, which has prompted Poland to move thousands of troops to its border to block people from pushing into the country.

On Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed Western countries for the crisis.

"They were the ones who created conditions where ... hundreds of thousands of people left their homes," Putin said on the state-owned television channel Rossiya-1. "And now they are looking for someone to blame in order to avoid responsibility for what is happening."

Poland, Lithuania and Latvia are reviewing whether to call for an emergency NATO meeting on the matter, citing the alliance's Article 4 provision for crisis talks when a member considers its territory under threat.

Meanwhile, Ukraine, which is not a NATO member, said it is hoping for closer coordination with the alliance over concerns that the Russian troop buildup near its eastern border may be a prelude to a new Kremlin offensive.

## Airmen have more fitness options

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Air Force has released updated scoring charts for its revamped physical fitness test and is giving airmen more options to meet their fitness requirements.

Beginning Jan. 1, airmen performing the cardio portion of the test may choose to run either 1.5 miles on a track or a 20-meter shuttle run set up inside a basketball court, the updated guidelines released Friday said. Speed walking one's way to aerobic fitness, however, is still not an option for most.

Service leaders said the walk would be included as a cardio component when announcing plans for the additional testing options in the summer. Airmen on a medical waiver will still be allowed to do the 2K walk — about 1.25 miles.

In a Facebook post Friday announcing the

updated test components and scoring charts, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass said the walk option was removed "until we are able to standardize the VO2 measurement equipment across every installation."

The Air Force had proposed a 1-mile walk alternative to measure an airman's aerobic capacity, which is also referred to as VO2 max. Scoring would incorporate time to complete the test along with the member's age, weight and heart rate at the time of walk completion, the Air Force said in the summer.

For the strength portion, airmen may opt to do traditional pushups or hand-release pushups.

The alternative fitness components will not apply to the U.S. Space Force, which is developing a service-specific health assessment over the next year, the Air Force said.

# Pfizer vaccine now available for USFK kids

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Children from U.S. military families in South Korea this week will be offered Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, less than a month after the Defense Logistics Agency announced it was ready to ship out doses to families stationed overseas.

U.S. Forces Korea, the command responsible for military personnel in South Korea, announced Monday that Pfizer's BioNTech vaccine is available by appointment for eligible children between the ages of 5 and 11. The vaccine remains volun-

tary for the children of military families and for military spouses not employed by the federal government.

The Food and Drug Administration approved Pfizer's vaccine for emergency use in 5- to 11-year-olds on Oct. 29. The approval followed an independent advisory committee that "overwhelmingly voted in favor" of the measure, according to the FDA.

FDA studies found that age group's immune response to the vaccine was comparable to that of the 16-25 age group. The administration also reported Pfizer's vaccine was 90.7% effective

in preventing the coronavirus among children ages 5 to 11.

"As a mother and a physician, I know that parents, caregivers, school staff and children have been waiting for today's authorization," acting FDA commissioner Janet Woodcock said in an announcement Oct. 29. "Vaccinating younger children against COVID-19 will bring us closer to returning to a sense of normalcy."

Pfizer's vaccine for children is a lower dose than that of older people, according to the FDA. Approximately 39% of positive cases among people younger than 18 years old in the United

States were of children between 5-11. Nearly 700 people under 18 years old died of COVID-19 in the U.S. as of Oct. 17, of which 146 were between 5 and 11 years old.

Military bases in Europe are also planning to receive the vaccine for children. Around 28,800 doses were already pre-ordered by international military facilities, the DLA said in a news release Oct. 27.

Less than 1% of USFK active-duty service members are confirmed positive and over 85% of the community is fully vaccinated, the command reported in its last update on Nov. 9.

## Border Patrol data shows lag in vaccine compliance

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — Twenty percent of U.S. Border Patrol agents and employees have not complied with President Joe Biden's coronavirus vaccine mandate or requested an exemption from the requirement, according to internal data obtained by The Washington Post.

Of the agency's 21,393 employees, 77% were fully vaccinated as of Nov. 10, and an additional 3% were partially vaccinated, the figures show. Another 15.5% of agents and employees have sought a religious or medical exemption, while 3.4% have not responded to the internal reporting requirement and 1.1% listed their status as unvaccinated, without seeking an exemption.

The roughly 4,000 Border Patrol agents and employees who remain unvaccinated could face disciplinary action if their exemption requests are denied or if they remain out of compliance with the president's requirement for all federal workers and contractors to be immunized by Nov. 22.

Most of the 2.1 million federal

employees should have received their last dose of the vaccine no later than Nov. 8 to meet that deadline. In most cases, employees who fail to comply risk an escalating series of disciplinary actions that include suspensions and possible termination.

The Border Patrol appears to have one of the highest refusal rates among the federal workforce, but the share of employees getting shots or fulfilling notification requirements has risen rapidly over the past several days.

Nearly 30% of the agency's workers were at risk of noncompliance at the beginning of last week, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data. The drop in that percentage over recent days suggests thousands of agents and employees waited until the last minute to get shots or report their status.

CBP officials have attributed some of the delays to agents busy with patrol duties at a time of high migrant apprehensions levels, saying those employees may not be spending time in front of computers and checking work email.

## US vaccination mandate for troops survives legal battle

*Bloomberg News*

The Biden administration's push for vaccine mandates, under fire in courts around the nation, has survived a legal challenge headed by former Trump campaign lawyer Sidney Powell over vaccines in the military.

Powell, who tried to flip the result of the 2020 presidential election with a series of failed lawsuits based on conspiracy theories, lost a request to temporarily block the Pentagon's COVID-19 vaccine mandate. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of disgruntled service members.

The suit didn't come close to meeting the high bar for winning a preliminary injunction, U.S. District Judge Allen Winsor ruled Friday in Pensacola, Fla.

The ruling is a crucial early victory for the U.S. Defense Department.

A ruling against the United States also would have been a blow to President Joe Biden, whose broader vaccine mandate for companies with at least 100 employees was temporarily

blocked a week earlier by a federal appeals court in a suit by Republican-led states.

The suit, which also names the Food and Drug Administration, was filed in October by Powell's Dallas-based nonprofit group Defending the Republic. Powell had requested a court order not only blocking implementation of the mandate, but also undoing the FDA's full approval of the Pfizer Inc.-BioNTech SE vaccine.

The judge ruled the plaintiffs were unlikely to succeed in their claim that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's Aug. 24 requirement is invalid because it wasn't vetted by mandatory public comment. The Pentagon issued the rule a day after the FDA granted full approval for the Pfizer vaccine, supplementing an earlier emergency use authorization.

The service members who sued — from states across the U.S. including Alaska and Florida — accused the FDA of approving the vaccine only to appease Biden, who has made mandates central to the fight to end the pandemic.



# UK police: Taxi blast was terrorist attack

Associated Press

LONDON — British authorities raised the country's threat level to its second-highest rung on Monday after police said a blast in a taxi outside a Liverpool hospital was caused by a homemade bomb.

Investigators said they were treating Sunday's explosion — which killed the suspected bombmaker and injured the cab driver — as a terrorist incident, but that the motive was unclear.

The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre raised the U.K. threat level from substantial — meaning an attack is likely — to se-

vere, meaning it is highly likely, following the United Kingdom's second fatal incident in a month. Conservative lawmaker David Amess was stabbed to death in October in what police said was an act of terrorism.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned the "sickening attack" at Liverpool Women's Hospital and told reporters that the British people "will never be cowed by terrorism."

"We will never give in to those who seek to divide us with senseless acts of violence," he said.

The male passenger in a taxi

was killed and the driver injured when a blast ripped through the vehicle as it pulled up outside the hospital on Sunday morning. Russ Jackson, the head of Counterterrorism Policing in north-west England, said the explosion was caused by "the ignition of an explosive device" that was brought into the vehicle by the passenger.

Three men in their 20s were arrested elsewhere in the city Sunday under the Terrorism Act and a fourth was detained on Monday. All are believed to be "associates" of the dead passenger, police said.

Police said they had identified the suspected attacker, but they did not release his name. Britain's Press Association news agency and other media reported that he had not been on the radar of the security services.

Suspicious about a motive for the explosion have been aroused by the timing — just before 11 a.m. on Remembrance Sunday, the moment when people across Britain hold services in memory of those killed in wars.

Jackson said investigators had not found a link to remembrance events, "but it is a line of inquiry we are pursuing."

## Philippine leader runs for senate after promise to retire

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday filed his candidacy for a senate seat in next year's elections, walking back on his vow that he would retire from politics when his term ends and prompting rights groups to say the leader is working to evade accountability for his deadly anti-drug campaign while in office.

A lawyer of the 76-year-old Duterte filed his senatorial candidacy at the Commission on Elections before the deadline for last-minute contenders in May's nationwide elections.

Duterte announced early last month that he was retiring from politics after dropping plans to run for vice president due to what he said was widespread public sentiment

against the move. His initial plan to seek the vice presidency outraged activists, who have described him as a human rights calamity in an Asian bastion of democracy.

"Duterte's run for the Senate is yet another attempt of the tyrant to evade accountability from the International Criminal Court and other accountability mechanisms," said Cristina Palabay of Karapatan, a left-wing alliance of human rights groups.

Duterte, a longtime city mayor known for his extra-tough approach to criminality and illegal drugs, launched an anti-drugs crackdown after winning the presidency in 2016 that has left more than 6,000 mostly petty suspects dead and alarmed Western governments and human rights groups. The International Criminal Court has begun an

investigation of the killings, but Duterte has vowed never to cooperate with the inquiry and allow ICC investigators into the country.

Over the weekend, Duterte said that he planned to register Monday his candidacy for the vice presidency. Legal experts said, however, that could have contravened Philippine law which limits presidents to a single six-year term, as the vice president replaces the elected president if the latter dies or gets incapacitated for any reason, according to the country's constitution.

More than 18,000 government posts will be contested in the May 9 elections, including the presidency, vice presidency, half of the 24-member Senate, more than 300 seats in the House of Representatives, as well as many provincial and local offices.

## EU to add airlines to Belarus sanctions as tensions mount

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union on Monday ratcheted up pressure on Belarus by agreeing to slap sanctions on airlines accused of helping President Alexander Lukashenko to wage a "hybrid attack" against the bloc using migrants, as tensions mounted on the Polish border.

Up to 4,000 migrants are stuck in makeshift camps in freezing weather after Poland reinforced

its border with Belarus with 15,000 soldiers, in addition to border guards and police. At least nine migrants have died. Many of them want to head further west, often to Germany.

The 27-country EU has already imposed four sets of sanctions on the Belarus authorities and senior officials over the disputed election in August last year that returned Lukashenko to office and the security crack-

down on peaceful protesters that followed.

The EU is preparing a fifth lot, and on Monday the bloc's foreign ministers extended the scope of those measures to add airlines, travel agents and others accused of helping to bring migrants to Minsk.

EU headquarters said the bloc "will now be able to target individuals and entities organizing or contributing to activities by

the Lukashenko regime that facilitate illegal crossing of the EU's external borders." A list of those to be hit by the asset freezes and travel bans is expected to be finalized in coming days.

Lukashenko brushed aside the threat of fresh EU measures.

"We will defend ourselves. That's it, there's nowhere to retreat further," he was quoted as saying by the state news agency Belta.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Scammer missed court because he's dead

**CT** MILFORD — A man charged with running a scam that cheated a woman out of more than \$80,000 missed a recent court date and was supposed to be rearrested, but his attorney said that will be impossible because his client has been dead for months.

Johnny Masesa's attorney told the state's attorneys in June that he received a death certificate saying his client died from complications of malaria in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he has family. The Connecticut Post reported police and federal authorities have been unable to confirm the authenticity of the death certificate.

Masesa and others are charged with scamming a Connecticut woman out of \$83,000 by posing as representatives of the Publisher's Clearing House sweepstakes. The woman told authorities someone called her and said she was in the running for a prize but needed to transfer money in order to claim it. Some of the money wound up in an account under Masesa's name, according to authorities.

## Woman sues for online game payout refusal

**NJ** ATLANTIC CITY — A Pennsylvania woman is suing the manufacturer of a popular online slots game, claiming it wrongly refused to pay her a \$100,000 jackpot due to "a bug" in the product.

New Jersey regulators revealed that 14 gamblers, including Lisa Piluso of Yardley, Pa., have filed the same complaint

against the company, saying they were told they won far more than the manufacturer said they were actually entitled to.

Piluso said Las Vegas-based American Gaming Systems offered her only \$280, but later upped the offer to \$1,000.

The New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement investigated the matter, and wrote to Piluso on Aug. 27 revealing that AGS "had discovered an issue/bug within the game" that wrongly failed to clear bonus symbols from previous rounds from a player's screen.

## Woman accused of firing shots inside home

**DE** MAGNOLIA — A Delaware woman has been accused of firing multiple gunshots inside her home after fighting with a male acquaintance, Delaware State Police said.

When troopers arrived, they learned that Tamia Richardson, 25, had been in a fight with a 21-year-old man inside the home. During the fight, Richardson fired multiple shots, the news release said. A 44-year-old man and two children, ages 1 and 4, were also inside the home when the shots were fired, police said.

Troopers ordered Richardson to come out of the home. She was taken into custody without incident. Police said the 21-year-old man had left the home before they arrived. No injuries were reported.

## Python hitches sailboat ride for nearly 100 miles

**FL** MARCO ISLAND — A python looking for a joyride snuck aboard a sailboat

in the Florida Keys and ended up staying until the boat finished its nearly 100-mile voyage, police said.

The crew found the 7-foot snake in the boat's shower after docking in Marco Island on southwest Florida's Gulf Coast after the trip from Indian Key, a distance of about 95 miles around the southern tip of the peninsula.

Police quickly responded and transferred the invasive snake after its joyride to a local wildlife handler, according to a police news release.

## Police: Bar owner hit by car on purpose, killed

**MO** ST. LOUIS — Authorities said a driver intentionally struck and killed a St. Louis bar owner after a fight that began inside his establishment spilled outside.

William Warden, 26, of Imperial, was charged with first-degree murder, armed criminal action and assault in the death of James Wors, 54, of Oakville.

Police said the collision that killed Wors also injured a second person. The car that hit the two was abandoned a short distance away.

Police said Warden turned himself in to authorities. Three other suspects were also taken into custody.

## Project documents over 300 WWI memorials

**IL** CHICAGO — A new online database has cataloged more than 300 historic World War I monuments and memorials in Illinois, from doughboy statues to public spaces honoring people who

served in the Great War.

The database is the product of a yearslong effort by Landmarks Illinois, a historic preservation group. Along with the survey, the group provided grants to communities that wanted to preserve or recover their WWI monuments.

The database documents 311 memorials in 158 Illinois communities. Among them is the Goldstar Memorial in the suburban Chicago community of Riverside. The community received a grant from Landmarks Illinois to help with restoration at the memorial, which was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1921.

The Pritzker Military Foundation provided Landmarks Illinois a \$100,000 grant for the database, survey and grant program.

## Woman wanted again for lion exhibit trespassing

**NY** NEW YORK — A woman who was charged two years ago with trespassing near the lion exhibit and taunting the animals at the Bronx Zoo is wanted again for doing the same this past week, New York City police said.

Police asked for the public's help in locating Myah Autry, 32, who is accused of trespassing in a fenced-in area near the lion exhibit, authorities said.

Cellphone video obtained by WNBC-TV shows a woman wearing a red dress and leopard-print shawl standing across a moat from a lion and talking to it, holding roses and tossing money.

Police said Autry fled the scene and is being sought on a new trespassing charge.

— From wire reports

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# Mahomes passes Chiefs past Raiders

*Associated Press*

LAS VEGAS — Patrick Mahomes scrambled away from pressure as he ran toward the line of scrimmage and launched a deep ball that turned a seemingly broken play into a touchdown.

The Mahomes of old was back Sunday night and the Kansas City Chiefs are back at their usual spot atop the division.

Mahomes threw five touchdown passes and returned to his usual form after a surprisingly shaky stretch this season, and the Chiefs raced past the Las Vegas Raiders 41-14 on Sunday night.

"We've done it before," Mahomes said. "We've done it these last few seasons we were doing at the beginning of this season. We were moving the ball and making a lot of stuff happen. We were just turning the ball over. Then we kind of went through a little spell where we weren't making these drives and we were still finding ways to win. I knew that we're going to click back into it."

Mahomes and Kansas City (6-4) showed little resemblance to the team that overpowered the AFC the past three seasons over the first nine weeks, raising questions about whether they could make it back to a third straight Super Bowl.

But the Chiefs used a dominant perform-

ance over the Raiders (5-4) on a day everyone else in the division lost to return to the top of the standings.

Mahomes completed three short TD passes before flashing his playmaking brilliance early in the fourth quarter after Kansas City converted a fake punt on a 16-yard pass from Tommy Townsend to Marcus Kemp.

Two plays later, Mahomes scrambled and lofted a deep pass across his body that Darrel Williams caught for a 38-yard TD that made it 34-14. He almost decided to run or throw a shorter pass before he saw the chance to the big play.

"Out of peripheral I saw Darrel," Mahomes said. "I actually underthrew it a little bit. He tells me he catches, Darrel does. I guess I see that he can. So he made a pretty big-time play."

Mahomes added a 22-yarder to Byron Pringle and finished 35 for 50 for 406 yards. He also connected on an 8-yarder to Tyreek Hill in the first quarter and then 1-yarders to Hill and rookie tight end Noah Gray.

"He's a guy that never gets comfortable," Hill said about Mahomes. "He's always trying to get better. He's always trying to find ways to improve himself, the team. Because without him, we go nowhere. He knows

that."

The Raiders have dropped back-to-back games after a promising start to the season as poor execution and off-field issues have done them in.

They won two straight games after coach Jon Gruden resigned following the publication of his old offensive emails but haven't looked the same the past two weeks. Both losses followed the release of Henry Ruggs III, who was charged with felonies in a DUI crash that killed a 23-year-old woman.

Las Vegas has turned the ball over five times the past two weeks, matching the total from the first seven games, and the improved defense was unable to slow down Mahomes.

Derek Carr threw two TD passes but also had his third interception in the past two weeks as the offense struggled to get going.

The Raiders were held to 82 yards in the first half, their fewest in a home game in eight years, and went 1 for 9 on third downs to fall down double digits in the first half for the fifth time this season.

"We got in a hole and against this team that's hard," Carr said. "They just play soft coverage. They get a big lead, play soft coverage, blitz here and there and make you throw in front. It's a hard way to do it."

## Jones leads Pats with 3 TD passes; Mayfield hurt

*Associated Press*

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — A month ago, the New England Patriots were 2-4 and appeared headed for a second straight season of irrelevance.

Four games later, they are back in a familiar spot as a playoff contender in the AFC.

Mac Jones threw three touchdown passes, rookie Rhamondre Stevenson rushed for a career-high 100 yards and two scores, and the Patriots rolled to a 45-7 victory over Cleveland Sunday as the Browns lost quarterback Baker Mayfield to a knee injury.

Cleveland (5-5) has dropped four of its last six and hasn't won at New England since 1992, when Bill Belichick was their coach.

Jones finished 19 of 23 for 198

yards passing. Hunter Henry added a pair of TD receptions as the Patriots (6-4) went 7-for-9 on third down.

"That's how you want to play the game of football," Jones said. "It's just a three-level game and when we click on all cylinders, we can be pretty good."

Playing without star running back Nick Chubb, who missed the game after a positive COVID-19 test, the Browns was held to 217 total yards and was 1-of-11 on third down.

"They outplayed us, outcoached us," Cleveland coach Kevin Stefanski said. "Mac Jones in particular, but their offense played really well. We could not get them off on third down."

Mayfield limped off the field after taking a pair of hits in the

third quarter.

Edge rusher Deatrich Wise Jr. drove Mayfield into the turf and was penalized for roughing the passer. Two plays later, linebacker Matt Judon crunched into Mayfield's midsection, and the QB was slow to get up.

A few minutes later, he left the game and was replaced by Case Keenum, who was sacked on back-to-back plays. Mayfield visited the sideline medical tent and later limped out. He remained on the sideline for the rest of the game.

Mayfield was 11-for-21 for 73 yards, one touchdown and an interception. Stefanski said Mayfield could have gone back into the game and said the QB wanted to return.

Mayfield said an X-ray after the game showed no structural

damage. He said he expects to play next week.

"Gotta find a way to get as healthy as possible," Mayfield said. "Pretty beat up right now. It was just an awkward hit and landing. So, we'll see. Day by day."

New England's offense did just fine without running back Damien Harris (concussion), scoring on all four possessions in the first half to take a 24-7 lead.

The Browns got on the scoreboard first via a 2-yard TD from Mayfield to Austin Hooper.

The Patriots responded with a 15-play, 83-yard drive on which Jones went 6-for-6 for 55 yards. The drive took 9:39 off the clock, concluding when Jones tossed a 3-yard touchdown to Hunter Henry, his sixth TD catch in seven games.



# Newton returns, leads Panthers over Cards

Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Cam Newton took the snap on third down and it was like he'd never left the Carolina Panthers. The quarterback got moving in a hurry in his blue, black and silver jersey, barreled into the end zone for a 2-yard touchdown, ripped off his helmet and screamed "I'm back!" as his teammates celebrated around him.

Superman may be a few years older, but he's still got a flair for the dramatic.

"I'm just floating at an all-time high frequency," Newton said. "It's almost scary."

The 32-year-old provided a flashback to his MVP days in his second debut with the Panthers, throwing for one touchdown, running for another and sparking Carolina to a 34-10 win over the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday.

Newton — the 2015 NFL MVP who was signed by the quarterback-thin Panthers earlier in the week — made his presence felt on his first play of the game, entering on third down, running for the touchdown and immediately giving Carolina a 7-0 advantage.

On the Panthers' next drive, Newton threw a 2-yard TD pass to Robby Anderson as Carolina (5-5) built a stunning 17-0 lead in

the first quarter and a 23-0 advantage by halftime.

"Today was a good example of the team we can be," running back Christian McCaffrey said.

The Cardinals (8-2) had the best record in the NFL coming into the game but looked discombobulated from the beginning.

Backup Colt McCoy, who was playing a second straight game for the injured Kyler Murray, coughed up a fumble after being sacked on the third play of the game. It gave the Panthers great field position that it eventually converted into Newton's touchdown run and a 7-0 lead.

It only got worse for Arizona.

"I thought they played harder, they played faster and had a great plan in all three phases and just really beat us up," Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury said.

Arizona which was also missing top receiver DeAndre Hopkins — managed 169 total yards and could never mount a response after Carolina's opening onslaught. McCoy finished 11-for-20 for 107 yards and an interception.

"I knew what the coverage was, what we were trying to do," McCoy said. "It was just the timing and rhythm of it all. It just never

clicked. The run game never could get going and you change your plan a little bit when you are down 17 points in the first half."

The Panthers' struggling offense looked reborn with Newton in the mix. The majority of snaps went to P.J. Walker, who completed 22 of 29 passes for 167 yards, and Newton was saved for mostly short-yardage situations. McCaffrey also had a big day in the backfield, running for 95 yards and catching 10 passes for 66 yards.

Newton admitted he didn't know much of the playbook after having three days to prepare, joking that his knowledge was "two touchdowns' worth."

Carolina's defense also helped, coming up with an early fumble recovery, an interception and a fourth-down stop that gave the Panthers good field position.

Newton's teammates enjoyed every minute of the much-needed win.

"It was a blast out there," Walker said.

Newton's \$10 million deal includes \$4.5 million fully guaranteed and a \$1.5 million roster bonus, The Associated Press has reported. The QB spent the best years of his career with the Panthers before signing with the Patriots before the 2020 season and being released prior to this season.

# Brady picked off twice in Bucs' loss to WFT

Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md. — An exasperated Tom Brady put his hands on his knees and looked down at the field after his second interception in the first quarter.

Hours later, the defense couldn't get off the field late in the fourth with the chance to dig the defending champions out of another hole.

Brady was picked off twice in his first six passes, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers surrendered a clock-killing, 19-play drive that sealed a 29-19 upset by Washington on Sunday.

It's their second consecutive loss on either side of the bye week, a performance coach Bruce Arians called embarrassing.

The quarterback several Washington players referred to as the "G.O.A.T." was one of the goats in the worst way as the

Buccaneers fell to 6-3.

"Not a great day of football for us," said Brady, who finished 23 of 34 for 220 yards and two touchdown passes but threw two interceptions just like during the loss at New Orleans two weeks ago. "We just never really played on our terms. We played from behind the whole game, and they played a good game."

Tampa Bay was dealt an extra blow in the last minute when nose tackle Vita Vea was carted off with an injury on the final play of the 80-yard drive over 10:26 that finished things off for Washington (3-6). Arians did not have an update, but said Vea felt something in one of his knees — and the concern was real afterward.

"You just hate to see him keep going down," linebacker Devin White said. "If we got him, great. If we don't, man, I'm gonna miss playing with him for the

rest of the season."

Washington lost reigning NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year Chase Young to a right knee injury in the first half. Young gave a halftime speech to teammates and was back on the sideline later on crutches. "There's some concern," coach Ron Rivera said. "We'll have him evaluated tomorrow. Potentially an ACL, but we're not sure yet."

The Buccaneers (6-3) couldn't find much of a rhythm on either side of the ball in a rematch of their wild-card victory at Washington from January.

Brady's interceptions — one off the hands of rookie Jaelon Darden and another inexplicable toss that was caught by Washington safety Bobby McCain — disjointed the NFL's best scoring and passing offense, which did not have a first-half touchdown for just the fifth time in the past two seasons.

McCain said Washington took offense to Tampa Bay opting to start with the ball after winning the coin toss and later deciding to go for it on fourth-and-short in its own territory.

Flustered all afternoon by Washington's defense, Brady bounced back in the second half to throw touchdown passes to Cameron Brate and Mike Evans. But Tampa Bay's defense could not stop Washington's offense on the final, clock-draining drive. Rivera lived up to his "Riverboat Ron" nickname by going for it on fourth-and-goal from the Tampa Bay 1-yard line with 31 seconds to go, and Antonio Gibson's second touchdown run of the day put the game away.

"They beat us," Bucs linebacker Lavonte David said. "We had an opportunity to get off the field, and we didn't."

# Rozier, Hornets put a halt to Warriors' 7-game streak

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Terry Rozier had a big jump-ball win and made two late free throws to help the Charlotte Hornets snap the Golden State Warriors' winning streak at seven, 106-102 on Sunday night.

Draymond Green tied up Rozier at midcourt with 17 seconds left, forcing a jump ball at midcourt. The 6-foot-1 Rozier outleaped the 6-foot-6 Green and the Hornets controlled the jump, bringing the crowd to its feet.

The Warriors were forced to foul and Rozier made both free throws with 12.7 seconds to make it a two-possession game. Golden State missed its final two shots.

Rozier finished with 20 points, Miles Bridges had 22, LaMelo Ball added 21 and Cody Martin had 12 points and eight rebounds. Charlotte has won three straight after a five-game skid.

Andrew Wiggins scored 28 points for Golden State, and Stephen Curry added 24 points and 10 assists in his annual homecoming game. Coming off an eight-game home-stand, the Warriors dropped to 11-2.

**Lakers 114, Spurs 106:** Anthony Davis had 34 points and 15 rebounds, and host Los Angeles beat San Antonio.

Talen Horton-Tucker scored 17 points in his season debut for the Lakers, and Carmelo Anthony and Wayne Ellington each had 15 points.

Los Angeles led by 14 points in the second half, then held on improve to 3-3 since LeBron James was sidelined Nov. 4 because of an abdominal strain. The Lakers have won four overall games this season without James.

Davis had the big game two days after Los Angeles was humbled by 24 points in a home loss to Minnesota, with the All-Star forward saying afterward the performance was "embarrassing" and that the team lacked effort in a deciding third quarter.

Dejounte Murray had a triple-double for the Spurs with 22 points with 10 rebounds and 10 assists. Keldon Johnson scored 24 points.

**Nets 120, Thunder 96:** Kevin Durant scored 33 points to help Brooklyn win at Oklahoma City.

Durant played eight seasons for the Thunder, winning four scoring titles and an MVP award and leading the team to the NBA Finals once before joining Golden State in

2016. He was booed during pregame warmups and whenever he touched the ball early.

Patty Mills scored 29 points and made a career-high nine three-pointers, and James Harden added 16 points and 13 assists. The Nets have won eight of nine.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 23 points for the Thunder.

**Hawks 120, Bucks 100:** Trae Young scored a season-best 42 points and host Atlanta snapped a six-game losing streak, beating Milwaukee in an Eastern Conference final rematch.

Young just missed a triple-double, finishing with 10 assists and eight rebounds to push the Hawks to a much-needed victory.

Despite the return of two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, the NBA champion Bucks lost for the seventh time in 10 games. Antetokounmpo scored 26 points in his return to the lineup after missing a game with a sprained right ankle. Jrue Holiday had 19 points.

**Suns 115, Rockets 89:** Devin Booker had 26 points and six assists and visiting Phoenix won its eighth straight game, handing Houston its 11th loss in a row.

Booker had 16 points in the first quarter and finished 9-for-23 from the field. JaVale McGee added 19 points and 14 rebounds, Chris Paul had 15 points and seven steals, and Mikal Bridges had 14 points and six rebounds.

Christian Wood had 17 points and eight rebounds for the Rockets, who are an NBA-worst 1-12.

**Bulls 100, Clippers 90:** DeMar DeRozan scored 35 points, Zach LaVine added 29 and visiting Chicago ended Los Angeles' winning streak at seven.

Lonzo Ball had 10 points for the Bulls, who used generous amounts of Los Angeles-area talent to earn the victory. DeRozan went to USC, while LaVine and Ball attended UCLA.

**Nuggets 124, Trail Blazers 95:** Nikola Jokic just missed out on his third straight triple-double, finishing with 28 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, and Denver spoiled Chauncey Billups' hometown return as Portland's coach.

Billups, a Denver native who had two playing stints with the Nuggets, lost his head coaching debut in his hometown with star Damian Lillard out with what the team called a lower abdominal tendinopathy.

# Kreider scores shootout winner for NY Rangers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chris Kreider scored the deciding goal in the seventh round of the shootout and the New York Rangers beat the New Jersey Devils 4-3 Sunday night.

Kaapo Kaako had a goal and an assist, and Adam Fox and Alexis Lafreniere also scored to help the Rangers win their third straight and beat the Devils for the seventh straight time. Alexandar Georgiev made 24 saves.

Pavel Zacha and Jesper Bratt each had a goal and an assist, and Dougie Hamilton also scored for New Jersey. Mackenzie Blackwood had 30 saves before leaving in the third period and entering concussion protocol. Jonathan Bernier made eight saves in relief of Blackwood.

Kaako, Artemi Panarin and Ryan Strome also scored for New York in the shootout, and Bratt, Hamilton and Andreas Johnsson scored for the Devils.

**Ducks 5, Canucks 1:** Trevor Zegras had two goals and an assist and Troy Terry extended his scoring streak to 14 games in host Anaheim's seventh straight victory — this one over Vancouver.

John Gibson made 26 saves for the Ducks, who have earned a point in nine straight games and scored at least three goals in a franchise-record 11 consecutive games.

**Capitals 6, Penguins 1:** Garnet Hathaway scored his third goal in two games, Alex Ovechkin added two assists and host Washington spoiled Sidney Crosby's return, routing Pittsburgh.

Martin Fehervary, Daniel Sprong, Conor Sheary, Evgeny Kuznetsov and Tom Wilson also scored for the Capitals.

**Oilers 5, Blues 4:** Kailer Yamamoto scored in the final minute as visiting Edmonton beat St. Louis.

Connor McDavid, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Leon Draisaitl and Ryan McLeod also scored for the Oilers, who won in St. Louis for the first time since Dec. 5, 2018.

**Bruins 5, Canadiens 2:** Charlie Coyle had an attempted clearing pass carom into the net off his head for his first of two goals, Charlie McAvoy also scored twice, and host Boston beat Montreal in the 750th meeting between the longtime rivals.

**Flames 4, Senators 0:** Dan Vladar made 27 saves for his first career shutout and Elias Lindholm had a goal and an assist as visiting Calgary snapped a three-game losing streak by beating Ottawa.