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INSIDE THE SILENT SERVICE

Aboard a US nuclear sub, a cat-and-mouse game with phantom Chinese foes

BY DAVID S. CLOUD

Tribune Washington Bureau

UNDER THE PACIFIC — America's most advanced nuclear submarine was slicing through the water off Hawaii recently, 400 feet under the surface, when a sonar operator suddenly detected an ominous noise on his headphones.

It was a faint thump ... thump ... thump — the distinctive sound of a spinning, seven-bladed propeller on a Chinese attack submarine called a Shang by the Pentagon and its allies.

A neon green stripe on his sonar screen indicated that the Shang was only a few thousand yards off the U.S. sub's bow.

"Sonar contact!" he yelled to 15 officers and crew in the dimly lit control room. "All stations, analyze!" Within seconds, the 377-foot-long Mississippi banked right and gunned its nuclear-powered propulsion system for one of the Navy's most difficult maneuvers: sneaking up behind another submarine and shadowing it without being detected.

Fortunately, the Mississippi was chasing a phantom, not a real Chinese sub. A digital recording of a Shang's audio signature had been piped through the U.S. sub's sonar system for a training exercise.

But the battle drill seemed urgently real: The mock Shang's course and speed were automatically fed into the Mississippi's targeting computers, the first step in launching one of its 27 torpedoes, something no U.S. sub has done against an adversary since World War II.

This is the largely unseen effect of the Obama administration's decision to send its newest vessels and warplanes to Asia during the past four years, a strategic rebalance intended

in part to reassure Asian allies nervous about China's growing clout.

It has increased cat-and-mouse jockeying between the two largest navies in the Pacific, especially their growing submarine fleets. They track each other and train to fight with the same intensity of U.S. subs that once prepared to battle the Soviet Union.

The Navy recently allowed a Los Angeles Times reporter aboard the black-hulled Mississippi, one of its newest and quietest fast-attack subs, for seven days, providing a rare look at the secretive world of the so-called Silent Service.

Beneath the waves, Cmdr. Eric Rozek and about 130 other officers and crewmembers, all men, did a series of complex training drills, often against an imaginary Chinese foe.

"This is our bread and butter," Rozek said as his sub tracked the mock Shang. "Because if we can do this, we can shift to using our weapons."

The exercise was meant to help the Mississippi, one of 12 Virginia-class fast-attack submarines, prepare for its first operational mission early next year, a six-month patrol in the Western Pacific that probably will include stalking actual Chinese subs and surface warships.

If war between the U.S. and China suddenly seemed probable, the Pentagon would send the Mississippi or its sister subs near the Chinese mainland, according to analysts and Navy officers familiar with Pentagon war plans.

They could launch cruise missiles at anti-ship missile batteries along the coast and try to torpedo Chinese warships before they could attack U.S. air-

craft-carrier battle groups.

China's anti-submarine systems have improved as part of a military modernization effort, and its growing submarine fleet "poses a significant and increasing threat," according to a new study of U.S. and Chinese military capabilities by RAND Corp., a think tank.

But U.S. subs "would likely inflict terrible punishment" if China tried to invade Taiwan, a small island that is a U.S. ally, or launch another major maritime operation, the 389-page study concludes.

The Mississippi was shifted to Pearl Harbor from Groton, Conn., in November as part of the rebalance. The Navy now has 43 of its 71 submarines in the Pacific.

About 20 attack subs, which carry only non-nuclear weapons, now are based at Pearl Harbor, making it the Navy's largest sub base. Four more attack subs operate from Guam, closer to the South China Sea.

The others are based in San Diego and Washington state. They include eight Ohio-class subs, the 560-foot-long "boomers" that carry nuclear-armed Trident II ballistic missiles and hide in the deep ocean in case of nuclear war.

China, in turn, operates at least 62 diesel- and nuclear-powered subs. It could boost that to 78 over the next five years, according to a Pentagon report released in May.

China has expanded conventional sub patrols into the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea as far west as the Horn of Africa. Keeping track of them has added to the Navy's workload, Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., top U.S. commander in the Pacific, said Sept. 17 at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

Off Hawaii, about a dozen of the Mississippi's officers and senior petty officers assembled one recent afternoon in the mess, where the crew eats, to discuss the day's battle drill.

For the purposes of the exercise, war loomed in the Pacific. A nuclear-armed Jin submarine — not a Shang this time — was lurking off an imaginary U.S.-allied nation resembling Japan. The Jin was from "Churia," not China.

The Mississippi had 36 hours to find and, if necessary, destroy the enemy sub, explained Lt. Cmdr. Dennis Milsom, the executive officer.

The other officers listened intently, clustered near an ice-cream machine. Most were serving their first or second sub tours.

Among them was Lt. Ray Wiggin, the sub's weapons officer. His crew handles the Mississippi's torpedoes and dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles. He was told to prepare to launch a salvo of cruise missiles at Churian targets on shore.

Nerves were on edge. War had not broken out. And the mock orders permitted an attack only if the Jin was clearly hostile.

"If they are [attacking] a freighter, we have authority to engage," said Milsom, a ginger-haired graduate of Penn State.

Otherwise, they should track the Jin and await a "strike tasking," an order from the Navy's 7th Fleet commander confirming that war with Churia has begun.

"We're pretty binary," Milsom said. "We're either going to sink them or we're not."

On this day, they did not. The exercise ended without an exchange of fire.

Medical aid group leaving Afghan hospital after strike

BY JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Doctors without Borders on Sunday demanded an impartial, international investigation into a suspected American airstrike on its hospital in Kunduz that killed 22 people, rejecting NATO and U.S. military investigations as “insufficient.”

The international aid organization, which goes by its French initials, MSF, also announced it was closing down the hospital, which was heavily damaged in what MSF officials said was a prolonged aerial bombardment early Saturday. The hospital had treated hundreds of patients since the Taliban seized Kunduz city in a lightning offensive last Monday. Casualties mounted as government forces, aided by U.S. special operations forces advisers and airstrikes, launched a counteroffensive to retake the city.

Both the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan and the U.S. military have launched investigations into the attack on the MSF trauma center. The U.S. military has acknowledged it conducted an airstrike against insurgents who were firing on U.S. troops “in the vicinity” of the hospital, which housed more than 100 patients and about 80 medical staff at the time it was hit.

A U.S. military official said the aircraft involved was an AC-130, a four-engine turboprop favored by special operations forces.

The acting governor of Kunduz province, Hamdullah Danishi, told *The Washington Post*

that the Taliban were using the MSF hospital grounds as a base from which they had been firing rocket-propelled grenades for days. But MSF denied that there were any insurgents in the hospital compound beyond those seeking treatment or that there had been any fighting in the hospital.

MSF, which on Saturday said indications were that the coalition was responsible for the attack on the hospital, said an impartial probe was needed.

“Under the clear presumption that a war crime has been committed, MSF demands that a full and transparent investigation into the event be conducted by an independent international body,” MSF General Director Christopher Stokes said in a statement. “Relying only on an internal investigation by a party to the conflict would be wholly insufficient.”

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also called for a thorough and impartial investigation.

“The secretary-general recalls that hospitals and medical personnel are explicitly protected under international humanitarian law,” a statement from his spokesman said.

The death toll from the attack rose Sunday to 22 — 10 patients, including three children, and 12 staff. More than 30 others were injured. Both Afghan and American forces were operating in the area at the time.

The hospital is “not functional anymore,” said Kate Stegeman, spokeswoman for MSF in Kabul, in explaining the decision to close the only MSF hospital in northern Afghanistan.

Student spared by gunman asked to make a delivery

ROSEBURG, Ore. — The gunman who opened fire at an Oregon college killed some of his victims after telling them to crawl across the classroom floor, and he shot one after saying he would spare her if she begged for her life, according to relatives of students in the classroom.

Christopher Sean Harper-Mercer spared a student to deliver something to authorities, according to the mother of a student who witnessed Thursday’s rampage.

Authorities have not disclosed if they received a package from Harper-Mercer, who Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin said Saturday killed himself as officers arrived.

From *The Associated Press*

C-130 crash victims identified by military

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

The military released on Saturday the names of the six airmen killed a day earlier in the crash of a C-130J Super Hercules at Jalalabad Air Field in eastern Afghanistan.

Six crewmembers and five contractors assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing died early Friday when their transport aircraft crashed at takeoff. At least two Afghans on the ground also died in the crash, according to media reports.

The Defense Department identified the victims as:

Capt. Jonathan J. Golden, 33, of Camarillo, Calif.; Capt. Jordan B. Pierson, 28, of Abilene, Texas; Staff Sgt. Ryan D. Hammond, 26, of Moundsville, W.Va.; Senior Airman Quinn L. Johnson-Harris, 21, of Milwaukee, Wis.; Senior Airman Nathan C.

Sartain, 29, of Pensacola, Fla.; Airman 1st Class Kcey E. Ruiz, 21, of McDonough, Ga.

Pierson, Golden, Hammond and Johnson-Harris were deployed from the 317th Airlift Squadron at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. Sartain and Ruiz were from the 66th Security Forces Squadron at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.

The cause of the crash is under investigation. A senior official at the Pentagon said Friday the aircraft hit a ground object as it was ascending, lost control and crashed into a guard tower at the end of the airfield. Afghan civilians in the guard tower were killed in the ensuing fire, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

On Saturday, the wing held a fallen comrade ceremony to honor the victims.

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Historic UN summit ends

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Russian airstrikes launched in Syria during the U.N.’s 70th anniversary gathering of more than 150 world leaders stole the spotlight and highlighted deep divisions on how to end that conflict and manage the many thousands of people fleeing to Europe in search of safety.

There were also some bright spots during the U.N. General Assembly’s nine-day gathering, which ended Saturday.

The 193 member states adopted a sweeping new agenda for the next 15 years to eradicate extreme poverty and preserve the planet. President Barack Obama met Cuban President Raul Castro, another sign of warming relations after decades of hostilities, and Obama shook hands with Iranian For-

eign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, a first following the recent nuclear deal.

Pope Francis tried to set a compassionate tone in the first major address, challenging world leaders to remember the people behind the crises “who live, struggle and suffer.”

Francis closed his speech with a little advice: “If you fight among yourselves, you’ll be devoured by those outside.”

Then, Syria’s crisis became even more complicated.

Russian airstrikes began. Civilian deaths were reported. Reports emerged that mainstream opposition forces had been targeted.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that not cooperating with Syrian President Bashar Assad was “a huge mistake.” Obama warned of a “darker, more disordered world.”

Nationals sweep Mets behind Scherzer's second no-hitter

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Max Scherzer says he can get even better.

Imagine that.

The Washington Nationals ace threw one of the most dominant games in baseball history — pitching his second no-hitter of the season and striking out a team-record 17 — and vowed he wasn't done.

"I still have room for improvement," he said.

Try telling that to the NL East champion New York Mets after Scherzer totally shut them down in a 2-0 win Saturday night that completed a doubleheader sweep.

"He was great, we were bad," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "So when you

pitch as good as he does, it's tough to take good swings. He made all the pitches he had to make. He was very, very good."

Only one batter reached base against Scherzer, and that came when third baseman Yunel Escobar bounced a throw for an error on Kevin Plawecki's leadoff grounder in the sixth inning.

No one came close to a hit, and Scherzer struck out nine straight batters before Curtis Granderson lofted an easy popup to Escobar to end it on his 109th pitch.

The All-Star righty became just the sixth pitcher to throw two no-hitters in a year.

"These things are special," Scherzer said. "To do it twice in one season, my gosh, it doesn't seem possible."

Working quickly on a brisk, blustery night at Citi Field, Scherzer (14-12) added to the no-hitter he threw against

Pittsburgh on June 20, when he came within one strike of a perfect game before hitting Jose Tabata.

Johnny Vander Meer, who pitched two in a row, Nolan Ryan, Roy Halladay, Virgil Trucks and Allie Reynolds also threw a pair in the same season.

The 17 strikeouts tied Ryan for the most in a no-hitter, STATS said. Overall, the teams combined for 35 strikeouts, a big league record for a nine-inning game — the previous mark was 31 set by Texas and Seattle in 1997.

The Nationals won the opener when Bryce Harper hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the eighth off Addison Reed (3-3). It was Harper's 42nd homer. Rafael Martin (2-0) got one out as the Nationals ended a six-game skid against the Mets.

Ivory, Jets top Dolphins

Associated Press

LONDON — While Chris Ivory and Ryan Fitzpatrick were racking up the yards, the New York Jets' offensive line did much of the hard work by neutralizing Ndamukong Suh.

Ivory ran for a career-high 166 yards and Fitzpatrick threw for 218, one touchdown and one interception to lead the Jets over the Miami Dolphins 27-14 Sunday at Wembley Stadium in the first division game played in London.

Suh, the highest-paid defensive player in league history, had three tackles and no sacks. His first didn't come until the third quarter.

Both teams have byes next week, as usual for teams playing in London. Miami (1-3) will face lots of questions about its poor performances thus far.

Fitzpatrick threw for 172 yards in the first half, including a 58-yard completion to Brandon Marshall on the first play. Marshall had 107 yards receiving by halftime and finished with 128 for the Jets (3-1).

The hard-running Ivory scored the first touchdown from 3 yards to start off his ninth career 100-yard game. Fitzpatrick later completed a 10-yard TD pass to Eric Decker in the second quarter and Zac Stacy rushed in from the 2 in the third.

Nick Folk converted all three extra points and added field goals from 22 and 48 yards. But he missed a 40-yard attempt.

The Jets ended up with 207 yards rushing, including 34 from Fitzpatrick, and 425 total yards on offense. Ivory's 166 yards were the most by a Jet since Thomas Jones ran for 210 in 2009.

Besides controlling Suh, the Jets got some help when Dolphins cornerback Brent Grimes went out with a right knee injury in the first quarter.

The Jets gave the Dolphins some hope, though, with 14 penalties for 163 yards. And Miami's first score, in the second quarter, came with plenty of aid from New York's secondary.

Ryan Tannehill threw deep to Jarvis Landry, and Darrelle Revis was called for a 36-yard pass interference. On the next play, Tannehill threw to Jordan Cameron, but Marcus Gilchrist was whistled for another pass interference, good for 22 yards.

Tannehill found Jake Stoneburner on the next play for 8 yards to make the score 13-7.

Tannehill ended up with 198 yards and two touchdowns on 19-for-44 passing. His second score was a 10-yard pass to Kenny Stills in the fourth quarter.

But the Dolphins failed to come up with the big play, going 0-for-12 on third downs and 0-for-4 on fourth downs.

It was the 12th regular-season NFL game at Wembley Stadium, the home of England's national soccer team. It was also the first of three this season. Buffalo takes on Jacksonville on Oct. 25, and Detroit faces Kansas City on Nov. 1.

It was the first time the Jets played in the NFL's International Series, the third time for the Dolphins. They lost the first game in 2007, 13-10 to the New York Giants. Last year, the Dolphins beat the Oakland Raiders 38-14.

Angels rally to keep playoff bid alive

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — After their biggest rally this season, the Los Angeles Angels are going into the 162nd game still with a chance to reach the playoffs. They need another win, and some help.

"It's almost surreal to come back in that situation," said Johnny Giavotella, whose tiebreaking RBI single capped a five-run ninth inning for the Angels in an 11-10 victory over the playoff-bound Texas Rangers on Saturday. "We never lost faith."

Erick Aybar and Kole Calhoun started the ninth with consecutive homers off Shawn Tolleson, the Rangers closer appearing in his fifth straight game. The Angels then strung together four consecutive two-out singles off Ross Ohlendorf (3-1).

"It's probably the craziest game I've been a part of, with everything we've got on the line," Mike Trout said. "We lose that game, we're in trouble."

The Angels, who won the AL West last season, went into Sunday a game behind Houston for the AL's second wild card after the Astros won in Arizona Saturday.

To force a tiebreaker for the final playoff spot, the Angels have to win their series finale at Texas and Houston has to lose in Arizona.

The Rangers clinch their first division title since 2011 with a win Sunday, or a loss by Houston.

Dodgers 2, Padres 1: Zack Greinke places no emphasis on individual statistics and is loath to consider his potential place among baseball's greatest pitchers. He leaves that to others. But the right-hander sure has given everyone a lot to think about this season.

Greinke earned the NL ERA title, helping host Los Angeles beat San Diego and clinching home-field advantage for their upcoming playoff series against the Mets.

Greinke (19-3) allowed one run and four hits in eight innings to conclude the

regular season with a 1.66 ERA, beating out Cubs ace Jake Arrieta, who finished at 1.77. Arrieta tossed a no-hitter against the Dodgers in August.

Greinke earned the second ERA title of his career; his first was with Kansas City in 2009, when he won the AL Cy Young Award. He had the lowest ERA by a qualifying pitcher since Greg Maddux's mark of 1.63 for Atlanta in 1995. It is the lowest for a Dodgers pitcher since Rube Marquard's 1.58 in 1916.

The Dodgers' win combined with Washington's doubleheader sweep of the Mets (89-72) ensured Los Angeles (91-70) will open the NL Division Series at home Friday against New York starter Jacob deGrom.

Astros 6, Diamondbacks 2: Collin McHugh earned his 19th victory, Colby Rasmus homered twice and visiting Houston clinched at least a tie for the American League's second wild card.

Rays 4, Blue Jays 3: Tim Lincecum had a two-run single with two outs in the bottom of the ninth for host Tampa Bay.

Royals 5, Twins 1: Host Minnesota was eliminated from the AL playoff race when it was stifled by Jordano Ventura for seven innings in a loss to Kansas City.

Ventura (13-8) carried a no-hitter into the fifth and struck out 11 to win his third straight decision for Kansas City, which took a one-game lead over Toronto, which lost to Tampa Bay, for home-field advantage throughout the postseason.

Orioles 4, 9; Yankees 3, 2: Visiting New York failed to clinch home field in the AL wild-card game, getting swept by Baltimore in a day-night doubleheader.

Only needing one win to host Tuesday's one-game playoff, reliever Dellin Betances allowed the go-ahead run in the second game to score on a wild pitch in the eighth inning. The Orioles roughed up Ivan Nova in the opener.

Reds 3, Pirates 1: A.J. Burnett was

outpitched by a rookie in the final regular-season start of his career, and Cincinnati prevented host Pittsburgh from clinching home-field advantage in the NL wild-card game by snapping a 13-game skid.

Pittsburgh still needed a win Sunday or a loss by the Chicago Cubs to host the one-game playoff Wednesday night. If the Cubs beat Milwaukee — and the Pirates lose to Cincinnati again — the wild-card showdown would be played at Wrigley Field.

Cubs 1, Brewers 0: Kyle Hendricks allowed one hit and struck out eight in six innings, and visiting Chicago kept alive its hopes to host to the NL wild card game.

Indians 2, Red Sox 0: Corey Kluber pitched eight innings while Carlos Santana and Ryan Raburn homered for host Cleveland.

Kluber (9-16) ended his rocky season with a strong performance, allowing three hits and striking out nine. The right-hander, who won the AL Cy Young Award last season, recorded his first victory since Aug. 14.

White Sox 4, Tigers 3: Leury Garcia singled home the winning run in the ninth as host Chicago avoided finishing last in the AL Central.

Giants 3, Rockies 2: Jake Peavy pitched five innings for his fifth consecutive win, and rookie Kelby Tomlinson hit an inside-the-park home run during host San Francisco's victory over Colorado.

Marlins 5, 7; Phillies 2, Phillies 6: Dee Gordon got his 200th hit of the season in the opener, and Christian Yelich tied a club record with hits in eight straight at-bats as visiting Miami swept a doubleheader.

Athletics 7, Mariners 5 (13): Marcus Semien hit a two-run homer in the 13th for visiting Oakland.



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Navy passes Air Force led by Reynolds; Army falls to Penn

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Keenan Reynolds is determined to bring the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy back to the Naval Academy.

The dynamic quarterback moved his team one step closer to that goal with a dominant performance against Air Force.

Reynolds ran for 117 of his 183 yards in the first half and the Midshipmen took a 33-11 victory over the Falcons on Saturday.

Reynolds completed 4 of 10 passes for 117 yards with a touchdown on a wet, windy day. Chris Swain, a 6-foot-1, 245-pound fullback, had a pair of short-yardage scores for the Midshipmen (4-0).

"This was a huge win," Reynolds said. "We started preparing for this in the spring and then this was an intense week. It feels awesome to win at home. What really made us successful was not turning the ball over."

Air Force (2-2) committed a season-high four turnovers, all in Navy territory. Karson Roberts, 5-for-12 for 73 yards with

an interception, ran for his team's lone touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Now in its 44th year, the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy is presented annually to the winner of the football games among the three major service academies — Army, Navy and Air Force. The Falcons won the trophy last season after beating Navy 30-21 and Army 23-6.

Reynolds ran for 54 yards on Navy's first play from scrimmage to set up the first score. Swain finished the drive with a 2-yard run. The Midshipmen defense came up big on Air Force's ensuing possession, stuffing fullback Shayne Davern on fourth-and-goal from the 1.

Penn State 20, Army 14: As A.J. Schurr marched Army's offense down a mushy field, junior linebacker Jeremy Timpf jumped up and down on the sideline, screaming through the drone of host Penn State fans.

That drone got louder and Timpf stopped jumping as Schurr was brought down for a sack on fourth-and-5 by Penn State linebacker Jason Cabinda. The sack sealed Penn State's win.

Nick Scott ran for a touchdown, Mike Gesicki caught one and Joey Julius kicked two field goals for the Nittany Lions (4-1). Schurr ran for two touchdowns for the Black Knights (1-4) but seven fumbles — three lost — kept Army's triple-option offense grounded.

Army outgained the Nittany Lions in total yardage 293-264, but Schurr's mishandling of the snap on the first play would be an ominous foreshadowing.

After Garrett Sickels recovered the opening fumble, Penn State chipped away at the short field and Mark Allen scored from 11 yards out on an inside run. Schurr lost the ball again late in the second quarter and Julius kicked a 37-yard field goal seven plays later to give Penn State a 10-0 halftime lead.

Army's secondary made Penn State quarterback Christian Hackenberg's job tough all afternoon. The junior completed just 10 of 19 passes for 156 yards but connected on back-to-back throws in the third quarter, the second good for the winning points.

Farrell returning to BoSox for 2016

CLEVELAND — A second straight troubling season for the Boston Red Sox is ending on an uplifting note — manager John Farrell is expected back next season after undergoing cancer treatment.

Boston announced Farrell's return before the season finale against Cleveland on Sunday. The 53-year-old left the Red Sox on Aug. 14 after being diagnosed with Stage 1 lymphoma, detected when he had surgery to repair a hernia.

Farrell completed chemotherapy treatments in Boston this past week, and barring any medical complications, the club is expecting him to be back in the dugout next season.

Farrell was hired as Boston's manager in October 2012 and led the Red Sox to a World Series title in his first season. He signed a two-year contract extension in February through the 2017 season with the club holding an option for 2018.

Farrell has a 246-243 (.503) record with the Red Sox.

Torey Lovullo has served as interim manager while Farrell was on medical leave. The Red Sox have signed Lovullo to a two-year extension through 2017 and said he will return to his role as bench coach in 2016.

Cormier keeps UFC light heavyweight title

HOUSTON — Daniel Cormier outpointed Alexander Gustafsson in a split decision Saturday night at UFC 192 to retain the light heavyweight championship.

Two judges gave the fight to Cormier (17-1) with 49-46 and 48-47 scores, and the third had it 48-47 for Gustafsson (16-4).

It was Cormier's first title defense. He sees this fight as one that helped him grow.

"These are the ones you dream about when you start doing this," he said. "You don't dream about them as you want to be involved. You want to be involved and you want to win it. I was tired in the fifth round but I just kept punching and punching and punching."

Cormier's wrestling skill paid off immediately with a first-round takedown when he lifted and flipped the challenger to the ground.

However, Cormier was cut above the right eye in the second round and Gustafsson responded with two rare takedowns on the champion. The takedowns had little impact and Cormier stayed on the offensive.

The swing was in the third round. After Cormier's suppercut bloodied Gustafsson's nose, Gustafsson hit Cormier in the chin with a knee and the champion wobbled to the ground, although he quickly popped back up.

Steelers cut veteran kicker Josh Scobee

PITTSBURGH — Josh Scobee's miserable fourth quarter against the Baltimore Ravens cost him his job.

The Steelers cut the veteran kicker on Saturday, less than 48 hours after a pair of late missed field goals by Scobee helped the Ravens rally for a 23-20 overtime victory.

Pittsburgh replaced Scobee on the roster with Chris Boswell, who has spent time with the Houston Texans and New York Giants but has never kicked in a regular season game.

The Steelers acquired Scobee from Jacksonville on Aug. 31 in exchange for a sixth pick in the 2016 draft following injuries to Shaun Suisham and Garrett Hartley in the preseason. Scobee, the leading scorer in Jacksonville history, made just 6 of 10 field goals and also missed an extra point.

— The Associated Press

How the AP College Football Top 25 fared

1 Ohio State (5-0) beat Indiana 34-27. At Bloomington, Ind., Ezekiel Elliott had an electrifying second half with touchdown runs of 55, 65 and 75 yards and finished with a career-best 274 yards to help the Buckeyes narrowly win their 18th in a row.

Next: vs. Maryland, Saturday.

2 Michigan State (5-0) beat Purdue 24-21. At East Lansing, Mich., LJ Scott ran for 146 yards and two touchdowns, and Michigan State held on through a lackluster second half.

Next: at Rutgers, Saturday.

3 Mississippi (4-1) lost to No. 25 Florida 38-10. At Gainesville, Fla., Rebels quarterback Chad Kelly finished 26 of 40 for 259 yards, with four sacks, two fumbles and an interception.

Next: vs. New Mexico State, Saturday.

4 TCU (5-0) beat Texas 50-7. At Fort Worth, Texas, Trevone Boykin threw five touchdown passes, including four to freshman KaVontae Turpin.

Next: at Kansas State, Saturday.

5 Baylor (4-0) beat Texas Tech 63-35. At Arlington, Texas, Seth Russell passed for 286 yards and four touchdowns and ran for two more scores and Shock Linwood ran for a career-high 221 yards and two touchdowns.

Next: at Kansas, Saturday.

6 Notre Dame (4-1) lost to No. 12 Clemson 24-22. At Clemson, S.C., the Irish got off to a slow start, then turned the ball over four times in the second half. Quarterback DeShone Kizer gave them a chance to win before he was stopped on a two-point conversion run with seven seconds left.

Next: vs. Navy, Saturday.

7 UCLA (4-1) lost to Arizona State 38-23. At Pasadena, Calif., Mike Bercovici passed for 273 yards and two touchdowns and ran for another score and the Sun Devils got their season back on track.

Next: at No. 18 Stanford, Oct. 15.

8 Georgia (4-1) lost to No. 13 Alabama 38-10. At Athens, Ga., on the Bulldogs' first offensive play of the second half, backup Brice Ramsey threw an interception that was returned 50 yards for a touchdown, sealing the victory for Alabama.

Next: at Tennessee, Saturday.

9 LSU (4-0) beat Eastern Michigan 44-22. At Baton Rouge, La., Leonard Fournette had 233 yards and three touchdowns on 26 carries to remain among the top contenders for the Heisman Trophy.

Next: vs. South Carolina, Saturday.

10 Utah (4-0) did not play. At Salt Lake City, the Utes focused on their next opponent, No. 24 California, during their bye week. The Golden Bears, No. 17 USC and No. 7 UCLA are the ranked teams left on Utah's schedule.

Next: vs. No. 24 California, Saturday.

11 Florida State (4-0) beat Wake Forest 24-16. At Winston-Salem, N.C., Dalvin Cook had a 94-yard touchdown run before leaving with a left leg injury and Johnathan Vickers added a 9-yard touchdown run.

Next: vs. Miami, Saturday.

12 Clemson (4-0) beat No. 6 Notre Dame 24-22. At Clemson, S.C., Deshaun Watson threw two touchdown passes and ran for a score and Tigers linebacker B.J. Goodson had an interception and a fumble recovery to halt two drives by the Fighting Irish.

Next: vs. Georgia Tech, Saturday.

13 Alabama (4-1) beat No. 8 Georgia 38-10. At Athens, Ga., Jake Coker completed 11 of 16 for 190 yards, passed for one touchdown and ran for another.

Next: vs. Arkansas, Saturday.

14 Texas A&M (5-0) beat No. 21 Mississippi State 30-17. At College Station, Texas, Kyle Allen threw for 322 yards and two touchdowns to help Texas A&M remain undefeated.

Next: vs. No. 13 Alabama, Oct. 17.

15 Oklahoma (4-0) beat No. 23 West Virginia 44-24. At Norman, Okla., Baker Mayfield passed for 320 yards and three touchdowns in the Big 12 opener for both teams.

Next: vs. Texas at Dallas, Saturday.

16 Northwestern (5-0) beat Minnesota 27-0. At Evanston, Ill., Clayton Thorson scored two touchdowns, Justin Jackson ran for 120 yards and the Northwestern defense turned in another dominant performance.

Next: at No. 22 Michigan, Saturday.

17 Southern Cal (3-1) did not play. At

Los Angeles, starting CB Kevon Seymour was doing more work in practice and looks likely to return from a knee injury for the next game.

Next: vs. Washington, Thursday.

18 Stanford (4-1) beat Arizona 55-17. At Stanford, Calif., Christian McCaffrey ran for 156 yards and a touchdown and Remound Wright scored three times.

Next: vs. No. 7 UCLA, Oct. 15.

19 Wisconsin (3-2) lost to Iowa 10-6. At Madison, Wis., Jordan Canzeri ran for 125 yards and Iowa took advantage of four turnovers by quarterback Joel Stave.

Next: at Nebraska, Saturday.

20 Oklahoma State (5-0) beat Kansas State 36-34. At Stillwater, Okla., Ben Grogan made a 37-yard field goal with 32 seconds remaining to lift the Cowboys past K-State.

Next: at No. 23 West Virginia, Saturday.

21 Mississippi St. (3-2) lost to No. 14 Texas A&M 30-17. At College Station, Texas, Fred Ross had 11 receptions for 103 yards for his third career 100-yard receiving game.

Next: vs. Troy, Saturday.

22 Michigan (4-1) beat Maryland 28-0. At College Park, Md., in winning its first Big Ten opener under Jim Harbaugh, Michigan picked off three passes and limited Maryland to 105 yards.

Next: vs. No. 16 Northwestern, Saturday.

23 West Virginia (3-1) lost to No. 15 Oklahoma 44-24. At Norman, Okla., quarterback Skyler Howard was sacked seven times, and he lost two fumbles.

Next: vs. No. 20 Oklahoma State, Saturday.

24 California (5-0) beat Washington State 34-28. At Berkeley, Calif., Jared Goff got off to a shaky start and still threw for 390 yards and four touchdowns.

Next: at No. 10 Utah, Saturday.

25 Florida (5-0) beat No. 3 Mississippi 38-10. At Gainesville, Fla., Will Grier threw four touchdown passes to four receivers — all in the first half. The freshman completed 24 of 29 passes for 271 yards against the Rebels.

Next: at Missouri, Saturday.