

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Ships make historic stop at Vietnam port

BY ERIK SLAVIN

*Stars and Stripes*

The destroyer USS John S. McCain and submarine tender USS Frank Cable this week became the first commissioned Navy ships since the Vietnam War to moor at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam's strategically important South China Sea port.

The ships left Tuesday after technical and goodwill exchanges since Sunday at the port, Navy officials said.

The U.S. controlled more than 25,000 acres of airfield and port facilities around Cam Ranh Bay at the height of the Vietnam War. Following the

war, the Soviet Union and later Russia leased the port for its ships and submarines.

Vietnam spent millions of dollars on upgrades at the port, now called Cam Ranh International Port, following an unveiling earlier this year.

The port lies about 200 miles from parts of the Paracel and Spratly island chains, which remain in dispute among multiple nations in the region.

In recent years, Chinese fishing and coast guard vessels have clashed with Vietnamese boats over rights to waters near the islands, resulting in multiple ramming incidents at sea.

Although the U.S. doesn't

take a position on any of the islands' ultimate sovereignty, it maintains that the international waters surrounding them must remain open to navigation for all. China maintains an ambiguous claim to about 90 percent of the South China Sea, including waters the U.S. considers part of the global commons.

About \$1.2 trillion in U.S. trade passes through the South China Sea annually, according to U.S. government statistics.

Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta called access to the expansive deepwater port, which can accommodate aircraft carriers, a "key component" of U.S.-Vietnam relations,

during a 2012 visit aboard the Military Sealift Command's USNS Richard Byrd.

Subsequent visits by non-combatant, mainly civilian-crewed MSC ships led up to this week's visit. Earlier in the week, the McCain held an exchange with Vietnamese forces at Da Nang, north of Cam Ranh Bay.

Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force ships, along with military ships from France and Singapore, have also used the Cam Ranh port since its reopening this year, according to media reports.

## Many vets support Trump despite his PTSD comments

*The Washington Post*

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's comments Monday about veterans' mental health set off a fiery debate about how post-traumatic stress disorder should be discussed. But many veterans, including some who have suffered from the condition, say they continue to support him.

Speaking to a group of veterans in Herndon, Va., Trump was asked whether he would support boosting the roles of chaplains and faith-based programs to promote mental resiliency among servicemembers and veterans. He indicated he would, and then shifted quickly to opine on problems he sees in the care veterans receive.

"When you talk about the mental health problems, when people come back from war and combat and they see things that maybe a lot of the folks in this room have seen many times over and you're strong and you can handle it," Trump said. "But a lot of people can't

handle it. And they see horror stories. They see events that you couldn't see in a movie. Nobody would believe it."

The comments were greeted by critics as clumsy, at best, and offensive, at worst. Phillip Carter, an Army veteran who previously served in the Obama administration, tweeted that they were "uncaring, unprofessional and unpresidential," and he pointed to some of Trump's previous controversial comments about veterans, including criticizing the Gold Star parents of Army Capt. Humayun Khan, a Muslim soldier who was killed in Iraq.

But Trump's supporters who have served quickly said his remarks were being exaggerated for effect in the media. Former Marine Staff Sgt. Chad Robichaux, a combat veteran who served in Force Reconnaissance units and asked Trump the question, defended him in a statement released to news organizations.

"I think it's sickening that anyone would twist Mr. Trump's

comments to me in order to pursue a political agenda," said Robichaux, who has been diagnosed with PTSD. "I took his comments to be thoughtful and understanding of the struggles many veterans have, and I believe he is committed to helping them."

Others defended him online, saying he was drawing attention to veterans' issues that need to be discussed. Trump, who has polled well with veterans, has often said that 22 veterans commit suicide each day, and he said so again on Monday. That's based on 2013 data from the Department of Veterans Affairs, but new statistics released in July show that 20 veterans are still lost to suicide daily.

Thomas Brennan, a Marine combat veteran who has written about his own PTSD and has misgivings about both Trump and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, said in a Facebook post that he thought Trump was well-intentioned but used some words that show evidence of "ongoing, far-

reaching failures" in discussing mental health.

"When you're struggling you do need support. You don't feel strong. You feel your weakest," Brennan wrote. "On the flip side, the moment you ask for help is when you're at your strongest despite feeling as though you're at your weakest. It just takes time to see that. And because it's incredibly embarrassing most survivors won't talk about it."

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, a Trump adviser, released a statement through the campaign that blamed the media for taking Trump's words out of context "in order to deceive voters and veterans."

Numerous groups supporting veterans challenge the concept that those who seek treatment "can't handle" trauma they have experienced. In fact, it's often now described as an injury that must be treated rather than as a mental disorder, to the point that the "D" in "PTSD" often is dropped.

# Marines seeking fitness instructors

BY TYLER HLAVAC  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Marine Corps is taking applications for its newest military occupational specialty: force fitness instructor.

The service's Training and Education Command is developing a new servicewide fitness program that will "incorporate a positive and holistic approach to physical training" and reflect the latest in sports medicine and modern technology, a Marine Administrative Message said.

The Marine Corps wants its force fitness instructors to be the centerpiece of this initiative, and plans to station the instructors throughout the service, down to the company level.

The instructors, who are to serve as resident experts on physical fitness and sports-related injury prevention, will design training programs tailored to their unit's mission, with the overall goal of increasing unit readiness.

Each instructor will be expected to manage the unit's daily fitness program.

To become a force fitness instructor, Marines must complete a five-week course at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., that will cover topics such as nutrition, injury prevention and sports medicine.

To apply, Marines must be an active-duty sergeant or higher rank, have a physical fitness test score of 250 and a first-class combat fitness score.

Those interested in attending the course should consult their career planner, the message said.

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# Tank brigade headed to Europe

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

A tank brigade out of Fort Carson, Colo., has been tapped as the next unit to rotate to Europe, but Pentagon budget uncertainty could force delays on some efforts to bolster the military's presence in Europe, Army leaders said Monday.

The 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, is expected to begin its rotation to Europe in early 2017, with additional U.S. combat aviation forces set to follow by spring.

The moves are part of the European Reassurance Initiative, which is slated to quadruple to \$3.4 billion in spending in the year ahead. The initiative aims to reassure allies in eastern Europe and send a signal of deterrence to Russia.

"Without ERI there is no de-

terrence (in Europe)," said Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, U.S. Army Europe commander, during a panel talk at the start of a three-day conference of the Association of the U.S. Army in Washington.

Hodges cautioned that budget certainty was key to avoiding delays in plans for troop rotations, the stockpiling of weapons and a more intense training regime in Europe.

Besides rotating forces, a key part of the European Reassurance Initiative is to place a brigade's worth of tanks, combat vehicles and artillery in warehouses around Europe.

It isn't clear whether the budget impasse would curtail the initiative or force the Army to scale back. The combat-ready gear is intended to serve as extra firepower in the event of a crisis. Meanwhile, when the brigade from Fort Carson

deploys to Europe, it will come with its own equipment.

The Pentagon is now without a fiscal 2017 budget, operating instead on a continuing resolution that was passed last week by Congress, which limits spending to levels of the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter said last month that a short-term stop-gap spending package could constrict some efforts in Europe, asserting during Senate testimony that a continuing resolution would undermine the pre-positioning of equipment and war-fighting gear in the countries of NATO allies.

The Fort Carson-based brigade's gear is expected to arrive at the port of Bremerhaven, Germany, in January, when the Army will attempt to rapidly mobilize the force into position.

# Marines told to keep punching during drill

*The (Hilton Head Island, S.C.)  
Island Packet*

The day before Marine Corps recruit Raheel Siddiqui's death, members of his platoon were learning how to throw punches — and being ordered to abuse one another.

Platoon 3042 of 3rd Recruit Training Battalion received Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instruction on March 17 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., according to a heavily redacted copy of the investigation into Siddiqui's death obtained by The Island Packet and Beaufort Gazette through open records requests. That day two individuals — recruits, it appears, one of whom was almost 40 pounds heavier — were paired together for a punching drill.

"The drill instructors told (a recruit, presumably — all names and ranks are blacked out) not to listen for the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor's commands," the

document reads, "but instead 'just to keep punching.'"

The "tan belt" portion of the martial arts course — the Corps calls it "MCMAP" — is a boot camp graduation requirement designed to improve recruits' "self-confidence and survivability in close combat situations," depot spokesman Capt. Greg Carroll wrote Friday afternoon in an email to the newspapers.

The "majority" of drills don't require a partner, he said. And when pairing is required, "recruits are instructed to partner with another recruit of similar size as best as possible."

Recruits are weighed 48 hours before events and their weights are written on their hands. Recruits weighing more than 165 pounds will fight within 15 pounds of another recruit. Recruits under 165 pounds will fight within 10 pounds of each other.

According to the investigation, recruits of Platoon 3042 believed their drill instructors

used MCMAP "as an opportunity to pair small unit leaders or stronger recruits against the weaker or poorly performing recruits in order to punish them."

One recruit was required to punch another "excessively during the exercise, driving him backwards, knocking him to the ground" and bloodying his nose.

Drill instructors supervise MCMAP training along with officers and martial arts instructors, according to Carroll. The martial arts instructors earn an additional military occupational specialty prior to instructing MCMAP, he said.

During body sparring and pugil sticks events, recruits wear mouthpieces, groin protection, and various body, head and neck protection, Carroll said.

It is not clear if Siddiqui, 20, who jumped to his death from the third floor of his barracks March 18, was part of the punching drills the day before.



## Bergdahl trial general to keep authority

WASHINGTON — Gen. Robert Abrams will remain in charge of accused Army deserter Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's court-martial, a military judge ruled, rejecting defense attorneys' claims he should be disqualified.

The judge, Army Col. Jeffery R. Nance, determined that Abrams was not personally involved in efforts to recover the former Taliban captive nor did he destroy any evidence related to the case, according to his ruling filed Friday.

In August, Bergdahl's defense attorneys filed a motion asking Nance to remove Abrams, the chief of Army Forces Command, from his role as convening authority, the top official who oversees court-martial proceedings. The lawyers claimed Abrams could be called as a fact witness in the case because he had been involved in efforts to recover Bergdahl in previous military jobs. They also alleged the general destroyed about 100 letters he received related to the case that could have been admitted to the court as evidence.

Bergdahl, 30, remains on active duty, serving in a clerical position at Joint Base San Antonio. He admitted to Army investigators he walked off his post in Afghanistan in 2009. He has said he had no intention of deserting the Army, but he wanted to cause a disturbance that would place him in front of senior leaders to air complaints about his chain of command.

From staff reports

# Kerry lashes out at Russia after Syrian deal unravels

*The Washington Post*

BRUSSELS — Secretary of State John Kerry lashed out at Russia on Tuesday after a breakdown in efforts to restore a cease-fire in Syria, accusing Moscow of favoring war over diplomacy amid widening rifts with Washington.

Kerry also pushed European leaders to stay united in the face of populism, terrorism and poverty.

In one of Kerry's final tours across the Atlantic, he suggested that the Obama administration may have more confidence in Europe than Europeans themselves, urging them to hold fast to the alliances that they built out of the rubble of World War II even as Britain negotiates a divorce from the European Union.

At a moment when Washington's closest allies face some of the deepest divisions in the postwar era, Kerry said cooperation has helped preserve peace through global instability, including the grinding conflict in Syria.

After months of painstaking U.S.-Russia negotiations over Syria, the State Department on Monday broke off talks amid fury that Russian and Syrian forces have increased their bombardment of the besieged city of Aleppo. The Kremlin

is Syrian President Bashar Assad's most important international backer.

"I have to tell you with a great sense of outrage that Russia has turned a blind eye to Assad's deplorable use of these weapons of war that he has chosen," Kerry said. "Together, the Syrian regime and Russia seem to have rejected diplomacy in the furtherance of trying to pursue a military victory over the broken bodies, the bombed-out hospitals, the traumatized children of a long suffering land."

"People that are serious about pursuing peace behave differently from the way Russia has chosen how to behave," Kerry said.

The suspension of talks "does not come lightly," Kerry said, condemning Russia's alliance with Assad as "irresponsible and profoundly ill-advised."

But he offered no new ideas about how to resolve the conflict, which has stretched more than five years, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives and displacing millions of people.

Watching the violence unspool elsewhere in the world, Kerry pushed European Union leaders hard to preserve as many ties as possible with Britain as the two sides contemplate their split.

"The lesson that we have

to take from this democratic choice is not that we need less Europe, less U.K.," Kerry said. "Rather, we need more of both — more security, more prosperity, more collaboration among the U.S., the U.K. and the EU."

Otherwise, he said, "there are demagogues out there from the left and the right who fan the fears of change and who believe that bluster, often tinged with bigotry, can provide a pathway to their own power." He did not cite any specific political figures, but right-wing parties have gained ground in Germany, France and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Britain and the European Union increasingly appear headed for a tough divorce, as positions harden on both sides ahead of the start of formal negotiations, expected by the end of March.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said Sunday that she would make limiting immigration a priority in the negotiations, a stance that makes it less likely that her country will preserve the full range of economic benefits it currently enjoys as a member of the European Union.

That tough approach will be a challenge for U.S. officials, who have encouraged both sides to preserve as many ties as possible.

## IED explosion kills US servicemember in Afghanistan

BY CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — A U.S. servicemember died Tuesday from wounds sustained when a patrol triggered an improvised explosive device during a larger operation targeting the Islamic State group in eastern Afghanistan, U.S. officials said.

The identity of the slain servicemember is being withheld

pending notification of next of kin, a statement from U.S. Forces-Afghanistan said. An investigation is being conducted, it said.

The group, a "franchise" of the one operating in Iraq and Syria, considers Afghanistan part of a region they call Khorasan province.

"We are heartbroken by this loss and we extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the servicemember,"

said Gen. John W. Nicholson, commander of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. "Despite this tragic event, we remain committed to defeating the terrorists of the Islamic State, Khorasan province and helping our Afghan partners defend their nation."

The Associated Press reported the servicemember killed Tuesday was a commando. It marks the third U.S. combat death this year — the others were members of U.S. special

operations forces, too.

Army Special Forces Staff Sgt. Matthew V. Thompson was killed by an improvised explosive device while he was advising Afghans on patrol in Helmand province in August. Army Special Forces Staff Sgt. Matthew Q. McClintock, also an Army Special Forces staff sergeant, was killed alongside Afghan commandos during a battle in Helmand's Marjah district in January.

## Pound hits 31-year low amid Brexit concerns

Associated Press

LONDON — The British pound has hit a 31-year low against the dollar amid concern the country is willing to break away definitively from the European Union's common market.

But the country's stocks are loving it, with the main index closing in on a record high.

The pound, which traded around \$1.50 on the day of the June 23 vote to leave the EU, was at \$1.2749 on Tuesday, down 0.8 percent on the day, after comments from Prime Minister Theresa May.

That's its lowest level since June 1985, when Margaret Thatcher was British prime minister and London was readying for Live Aid.

The pound's descent means the country is less well-off — any Briton who goes on holiday to the United States or Europe would have less money to spend. As well as falling against the dollar, the pound is also at five-year lows against the euro, according to financial information provider FactSet.

However, the pound's drop is potentially good news for one part of the British economy, its exporters and multinationals, which are heavily represented in the main stock index.

Exporters will see their goods become more cost competitive in international marketplaces, especially while the country remains within the EU. And the money they make abroad will be worth more when it is brought back to the headquarters in the U.K. It's not just the big exporters seeing a rise in their shares this week. Even smaller British companies focused on the local economy are gaining thanks to recent upbeat economic indicators and the central bank's recent move to cut interest rates.

That's a marked change from earlier this summer, when domestically focused companies were seeing their shares dive on concern about the economic outlook.

## Duterte: Obama 'can go to hell'

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte told his U.S. ally, U.S. President Barack Obama, "You can go to hell" in a speech Tuesday that was his latest tirade against the U.S. over its criticism of his deadly anti-drug campaign.

He also lashed out anew at the European Union, saying the 28-nation bloc, which has also criticized his brutal crackdown, "better choose purgatory. Hell is filled up."

Duterte, who took office in June, has been hypersensitive to criticism over his crackdown, which has left an estimated 3,000 suspected drug dealers and pushers dead in just three months, alarming the United

Nations, the EU, the U.S. and human rights watchdogs.

The tough-talking former city mayor, who describes himself as a left-leaning leader, has had an uneasy relationship with the U.S. and with Obama and has declared intentions to bolster relations with China and Russia as he revamps the country's foreign policy, which has long leaned on Washington.

In a speech before a local convention attended by officials and business executives, Duterte outlined his disappointments with the U.S., which has asked his government to stop the widespread killings under his anti-drug campaign and has questioned whether human rights are being violated. He also described Washington as an unreliable ally, saying Fili-

pino forces have not benefited from joint combat exercises with U.S. troops.

"Instead of helping us, the first to criticize is this State Department, so you can go to hell, Mr. Obama, you can go to hell," Duterte said. Then, addressing the EU, he said: "Better choose purgatory. Hell is filled up."

Angered by U.S. criticism, Duterte has made a series of public pronouncements that he could scale back the activities and presence of visiting U.S. troops in the country. He said he wanted them out of the volatile south, saying their presence has inflamed restiveness among minority Muslims, which could complicate efforts to forge a peace accord with Muslim insurgents.

## US scolded over Saudi airstrikes

The Washington Post

Reservations are growing within the Obama administration about American military involvement in Saudi Arabia's air campaign in Yemen, as some lawmakers and human rights groups charge the United States with responsibility for Saudi attacks that have killed large numbers of civilians.

Civilian casualties have spiked in Yemen since the collapse of peace talks last month, the United Nations reported recently, bringing the total number of civilians killed since March 2015, when a coalition led by Saudi Arabia launched its operation against Houthi rebels there, to more than 4,000.

While both sides have been blamed for violence against civilians, the Obama administration now faces increasing pressure to reconsider its military support for a campaign that was supposed to be a short operation focused on defending the Saudi border but has evolved into an open-ended, offensive war.

"It's that offensive warfare that raises a lot of questions in policymakers' minds," said a senior State Department of-

ficial who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak freely. "Does an ally have to give you a blank check for everything you're doing in a war?"

Despite repeated strikes on schools and hospitals, officials see little choice for now but continued support given the intense desire to shore up a bilateral relationship rocked by President Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran and new legislation linked to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The Yemen campaign illustrates the sometimes uncomfortable collision of American interests in the Middle East and their consequences — in this case, a perception of U.S. indifference to lost lives. Some officials also say the campaign sets a worrisome precedent in which the U.S. military is actively enabling an operation into which it has limited visibility and even less control.

"When we see civilian casualties, it puts us in an extremely awkward position because Saudi Arabia is a close ally," another U.S. official said.

Close to two years after Houthi rebels took over the

capital, Sanaa, aid groups say humanitarian conditions have grown desperate in this already poor nation. Some 20 million people are in need of food, medicine, fuel and other basic items.

While the Houthis are accused of abuses of their own, aid groups have put forward a long list of alleged attacks by the Saudi-led coalition on civilian facilities.

One reason for high civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure, aid and rights groups say, is that the fighting is concentrated in dense urban areas.

Officials in the Sunni Muslim kingdom say the campaign is necessary to beat back regional rival Iran and its Shiite allies in Yemen, who have made incursions into Saudi territory and continue to lob missiles over the border.

Saudi Arabia, with U.S. support, has set up a board to investigate allegations of civilian casualties, but rights groups said its findings were not credible.

Since the spring of 2015, U.S. planes have flown over 1,000 refueling sorties and offloaded tens of thousands of pounds of fuel to Saudi aircraft. Officials have also provided advice.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Teen asks clown to kill one of her teachers

**VA** HAMPTON — Authorities say a 13-year-old Hampton girl asked a person posing as a clown on social media to kill one of her teachers.

Hampton police said in a news release Monday that the teenager asked the person running an online clown account to kill a teacher at Davis Middle School.

The Daily Press reported that the request came only a few days after social media threats involving clowns caused police to beef up security at schools in Newport News and Hampton. Investigators said they did not consider the threats credible, but they still patrolled the schools as a precaution.

The girl has been arrested and charged with one count of threatening to kill by electronic message. Her arrest comes amid reports of clown sightings that have scared people in several states.

## Would-be thief crashes large yacht, then flees

**FL** MIAMI BEACH — Police said an 80-foot yacht was left listing in the water after a would-be thief crashed it into several boats and a Miami Beach Marina dock late Sunday.

Miami Beach police spokesman Ernesto Rodriguez told the Miami Herald that the first crash happened at about 11:30 p.m. when a stream of callers to 911 complained of a large boat crashing into other boats at the marina. He said another boat theft was later discovered at the marina.

Hernandez said they found the yacht crashed into the dock with “substantial damage to numerous docked boats.” Witnesses told investigators the

thief jumped into the water. Divers searched but didn’t find him.

## Pilot escapes injury in scary landing at airport

**ND** MANDAN — A Flasher man escaped injury when the small airplane he was piloting caught on fire after a scary landing at the Mandan airport.

The highway patrol said the plane landed short of a runway and a wheel deflated at about 4 p.m. Sunday. The plane skidded on its belly along the runway and then caught fire after coming to rest. The pilot, Rodney Ritz, 73, exited the plane before it caught on fire and wasn’t hurt. The plane was destroyed.

The patrol and the Federal Aviation Administration are investigating.

## County sued again over death of a jail inmate

**MI** DETROIT — A suburban Detroit county is facing another lawsuit over the death of a jail inmate.

Lawyers for Jennifer Meyers’ estate said she died in the Macomb County Jail in July 2013, less than two weeks into a 30-day sentence. The cause was sepsis, an infection that destroys organs.

A lawsuit filed last week in federal court accuses the jail and a private medical company of violating Meyers’ constitutional rights. Attorney Harold Perakis said some evidence for the lawsuit comes from information collected by the county during its review of the death.

Perakis said Meyers, 37, was never taken to a hospital despite her poor condition.

Macomb County is also being sued over the 2014 death of another inmate.

## House being moved gets stuck on city’s street

**TX** AUSTIN — A Texas duplex home being transported was affixed with a yellow “wide load” banner — but it still turned out to be a little too wide.

The house on a truck remained in the middle of East Live Oak Street in Austin on Monday after workers moving it from one lot to another got stuck over the weekend.

The roof and part of the home’s side became wedged between tree branches. The moving company spent hours attempting to cut through the foliage and free it but couldn’t.

Austin city officials said the moving company didn’t have a permit to move the home and could be fined.

## Balloon Fiesta pilots grounded after crash

**NM** ALBUQUERQUE — Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta officials grounded balloons a day after two balloons hit power lines.

Authorities canceled the morning launch Monday due to high winds. The National Weather Service said parts of New Mexico are under a wind advisory.

On Sunday, two balloons struck power lines along busy Albuquerque streets. The “Outlander” alien balloon hit a power line near the Paseo del Norte and Jefferson intersection, knocking out power for about 1,200 residents. The crash sparked a small explosion, and Public Service Company of New Mexico crews had to cut the gondola from the balloon to rescue the pilot and passengers. No one was injured.

Just south of that crash, officials say a balloon landed on another power line. Officials

said one person was injured during that rescue.

## Former TV personalities sentenced in drug case

**AZ** TUCSON — Two former Arizona TV personalities have been sentenced to a year of probation and suspended 30-day jail terms after cocaine was found in their baby’s system.

Krystin Rae Lisaius and her husband, Somchai Lisaius, former Tucson TV station reporters, were sentenced Monday after pleading guilty to endangerment on Aug. 31.

Police said the baby was taken to a hospital May 15 after being breastfed and appearing to be in distress. Tests found cocaine in the 4-month-old baby’s body, and police learned the couple had a party the night before. After leaving the hospital, the child was staying with a grandparent as of August.

## Condo complex sinks; residents forced out

**VA** ALEXANDRIA — Several dozen people still cannot return to their Alexandria homes over fears that their condominium building could collapse.

The building, part of River Towers Condominiums, was evacuated Sunday afternoon after officials said significant water damage to some of the building’s columns caused the building to lower 2 to 3 inches.

A resident had called Fairfax County firefighters upon feeling the building shake and noticing cracks in a few columns.

About 400 residents were initially evacuated, but all were allowed to return to their homes after a few hours except for those who live in the 32 apartments above the affected columns.

From wire reports

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# Giants find way back into playoffs

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Pitcher Jake Peavy grabbed the microphone and promised a sellout crowd more special October baseball, and who could doubt him given the Giants' recent history of even-year World Series success?

Ace right-hander Johnny Cueto tossed a baseball into the seats in celebration Sunday, then expressed his thanks to a higher power for putting him in another winning situation this season after last fall's World Series victory in Kansas City.

"That energy's back," Peavy said. "This isn't the last game we're playing at AT&T ballpark, there's no chance."

Yet the way the Giants played in the second half, when nearly everything seemed to go wrong at some point and the old reliable bullpen blew it over and over again, manager Bruce Bochy couldn't help but wonder if his team could pull it off in the end. With all that talent and depth, San Francisco nearly squandered a big chance.

Bochy never counted on the Giants getting any help to reach the playoffs, either.

On Sunday, he knew his club would have to get there on its own — and that's exactly what San Francisco did on the season's last day.

"It's a tough group. I kept saying, 'They've been through it, they're battle-tested,'" he said. "We stayed in it a lot longer than I thought. When they needed to answer the bell, they did it."

The Giants owned the best record at the All-Star break at 57-33, sputtered for months then all but needed to sweep the division champion Dodgers to return to the postseason. They did just that to wrap up the second wild card and headed East on Monday ahead of Wednesday night's game against the New York Mets for a spot in the Division Series against the Chicago Cubs.

Now, ace left-hander Madison Bumgarner will take the ball just as the 2014 World Series MVP did two years ago at Pittsburgh with the season on the line. Noah Syndergaard will oppose Bumgarner, whose '14 postseason was among the best by a pitcher.

"It comes down to that one game, all the work we've put in comes down to that," Bumgarner said. "... Early in the season things were looking real promising for us, then we went through a pretty good stretch when it wasn't looking too promising at all."

The Giants have momentum again. Things are clicking at the plate, with the

pitching and on defense.

"This game is hard to explain sometimes," Bochy said. "We just got in a funk between we were missing a couple guys and then we were sputtering offensively, we were trying to get this bullpen in order. For us to get there, and how we got there, I said earlier I felt we had to win out in this series. We couldn't count on somebody helping us. It was up to us to take care of business and these guys took care of business in a great way. Five runs the first two innings, they were on a mission."

The Giants (87-75) finished the regular season with their first four-game winning streak of the second half.

They have a chance to follow up those every-other-year championships the franchise has captured this decade: in 2010, '12 and '14. Many of the same faces have been around for them all.

"It's always fun to go to the postseason, especially with the core group of guys we have, some experience with the wild card and with the postseason," shortstop Brandon Crawford said. "It's going to be fun. We've done a good job of maintaining that belief that we would get here. Hopefully we can just keep it rolling. We've been playing good baseball the last few days."

## Nationals' Turner among rookies to watch

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Trea Turner knows things will speed up during the postseason. He has the wheels to match.

Since bursting into the majors in June, the Washington Nationals rookie has hit .342 with 14 doubles, eight triples, 13 home runs and 33 stolen bases in 73 games. That's the highest batting average by a rookie with 300 at-bats since Ichiro Suzuki in 2001, and Turner has the ability to turn his level up as the situation dictates.

"This guy is phenomenal," Nationals closer Mark Melancon said. "And he's just so even-keel, it's not like he's on a hot streak or something. That's his game. He's got five tools and he uses them, he's level-headed, he's a smart player. He's way beyond his years, and it's impressive to watch him."

Baseball lifer Dusty Baker likes the combination of speed

and power Turner brings, as the 23-year-old can flash those tools at the plate and in center field. Turner often doesn't stop at first, but his speed on the base paths is something that Baker said "changes the equation."

"When he's on the bases, he creates tension," said Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, who was with San Diego when the Padres had him in spring training. "He turns doubles into triples, singles into doubles."

Roberts' Dodgers will be tasked with stopping Turner in the NL Division Series, which begins with Game 1 on Friday at Nationals Park.

Already, major league pitching has something of a book on Turner, and he knows it's on him to make the most of his key at-bats.

Pitchers "adjust and it's whether or not you have the

approach or fundamentals, whatever you want to call it, to either continue to do what you're doing or to adjust back to them," Turner said. "Postseason will be no different. There's just more eyes watching."

Turner is just one rookie to keep an eye on in the playoffs. Here are a few more:

**Corey Seager, Dodgers:** The All-Star shortstop is a big reason Los Angeles won the NL West, hitting 26 home runs and putting up 72 RBIs as a 22-year-old. Seager has long been a top prospect since going in the first round in 2012, and he's primed to improve on his .235 average from the 2015 playoffs when he was a major league newcomer.

**T.J. Rivera, Mets:** A season-ending injury to Wilmer Flores could have been another dent in New York's wild-card hopes, but Rivera stepped into the lineup and looked like a

veteran. Rivera hit .359 with three homers since becoming the Mets' full-time second baseman during an impressive September.

**Tyler Naquin, Indians:** Naquin made Cleveland's roster out of spring training and hit .296 with 14 home runs and 43 RBIs. Like Turner, Naquin has power and speed, as he became the first Indians player to hit a walk-off inside-the-park home run in 100 years. Red Sox pitching will be a major test for him.

**Kenta Maeda, Dodgers:** The Japanese right-hander is set to be Los Angeles' starter for Game 3 of the NLDS, which will be his first career game against Washington. The 28-year-old went 16-11 with a 3.48 ERA and 179 strikeouts in his first 32 major league starts. Opponents are hitting .171 off his slider, which he mixes with a four-seam fastball.



# Heels carry momentum of close wins

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Apparently, North Carolina is quite comfortable in the frenetic final seconds of a close game.

The No. 17 Tar Heels have won their past two games with scores in the last 5 seconds, marking the fifth time in three seasons that they've erased a deficit and won a game with a final-minute score. It's a confidence-building run of success entering Saturday's visit from No. 25 Virginia Tech in a key matchup for the Tar Heels in their bid to repeat as the Atlantic Coast Conference's Coastal Division champion.

"I think you just see what this team's made of," quarterback Mitch Trubisky said Monday. "We keep going back to the word 'grit.' I think that's a good word to describe this team and ... and how we're never really out of the fight — just keep battling to the last second."

"It's been working out for us and to just keep coming away with wins has been really exciting."

The Tar Heels (4-1, 2-0 ACC) re-entered the AP Top 25 after a 37-35 win at then-No. 12 Florida State, a game that saw them blow a 21-point lead and fall behind with 23 seconds left. But, armed with two timeouts, the Tar Heels got in position to set up Nick Weiler's 54-yard field goal at the horn to win.

That came a week after Trubisky connected with Bug Howard for a 2-yard score with 2 seconds left in a 37-36 win against Pittsburgh, a throw that capped a 17-play drive and a comeback from 13 down in the last 6 minutes.

It's the first time UNC has won consecutive games by two points or fewer since 1985.

"It shows that they know how to win," Hokies running back Sam Rogers said. "They know how to pull close victories like

that one and down to the wire. It's a team that's never going to feel like they're out of a game. So you can never let up on any team, especially North Carolina."

The roots of that success started in the 2014 season. Current senior T.J. Logan scored a 2-yard touchdown run with 11 seconds left to cap a 75-yard drive in a 48-43 win against Georgia Tech, then scored a 1-yard TD with 50 seconds left in a 40-35 win against Pittsburgh later that year.

Last November, the Tar Heels edged the Hokies 30-27 with a final-play touchdown pass in overtime to clinch the Coastal title in the final home game for longtime Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer.

The Tar Heels trailed in all of those before the final score. Throw in a 74-yard TD punt return by current Cincinnati Bengals running back Gio Bernard with 13 seconds left to break a

tie and beat rival North Carolina State in 2012, and the Tar Heels have six wins on final-minute scores under fifth-year coach Larry Fedora.

Fedora can point to at least one reason for the success: the Tar Heels run a fast-paced, spread offense that doesn't have to change anything in how it operates when time gets tight. And that unit practices plenty of end-game scenarios to get ready.

"Our guys think it's just make the routine plays," Fedora said. "We haven't had to make any acrobatic flipping catches or anything. They know on Wednesday we're going to go against our defense and we're going to have a different situation they have to come up with. I'm going to give it to them right before they go and then they've got to figure it out."

"I've got a new one now: 23 seconds on the clock and two timeouts."

## Pedersen tries to keep Washington focused on Oregon

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Even as Washington is reaching heights not seen in more than a decade, climbing to No. 5 in this week's AP Top 25, there is another number taking precedence this week.

Twelve. And no, that has nothing to do with the Seattle Seahawks.

It's the number of Washington's consecutive losses to Oregon, one that has grown each year since 2003 and will continue to linger over the Huskies football program until its losing streak to the Ducks is finally snapped.

So will it be brought up this week by Washington coach Chris Petersen? Don't even think about it.

"I don't know why I'd do that. No," Petersen said Monday.

From the time he left Boise State to accept the job at Washington, the question of when Petersen would end the Huskies'

losing ways has followed him everywhere. It's the biggest topic among fans and alumni, more so than anything related to in-state rival Washington State.

This week presents what could be Washington's best chance to end the losing skid against the Ducks. The Huskies are coming off a thorough dismantling of Stanford 44-6 on Friday night — one of their most impressive victories in years — while the Ducks are wounded, having lost three straight after an 18-point loss at Washington State.

There may not be a better time for Washington to end the losing skid. But even in the simplest of ways, the Huskies are avoiding talk about the skid. Washington's game notes mentions Oregon has "had the edge of late, winning 17 of the last 21," but doesn't mention having lost 12 straight.

"You hear that a lot. So we

get it. We know it's important. But all these games are important," Petersen said. "I mean, I want our guys to just do what they've been doing, just preparing hard and staying focused on the right things and showing up on Saturday with great energy and playing as a team. You can't tell them, 'OK, now we're going to prepare really hard.' That's ludicrous. That doesn't make any sense. These guys have been giving everything they can possibly give, so we just need to stick to that and stay focused and not pay attention to all the stuff that doesn't really matter."

Still it's a different week around the Huskies program and not simply because they have their highest ranking in the AP poll since finishing No. 3 following a Rose Bowl victory at the end of the 2000 season. There is a buzz about Washington different from any other time during Petersen's tenure

or under his predecessor Steve Sarkisian.

The win over Stanford validated the hype surrounding Washington. It also kicked all that attention into overdrive.

"We're kind of burying our head in the sand. I think they have done a good job of just paying attention to what's important and practicing hard and all those type of things," Petersen said. "I do think it's important that we pay attention to it as coaches and talk about those things, because it can be distracting, there's no question about it. It's distracting to me to have to sit here and talk to you."

Because of that, Petersen has made players off-limits for interviews this week for the third time since arriving at Washington. He said it's not specifically because of the opponent, but more to give his players a break with classes having started last week.

# Minnesota frustrates Giants

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Odell Beckham Jr. and the potent New York Giants passing attack never found a rhythm on another frustrating night for the volatile wide receiver.

The Minnesota Vikings have been making a habit of sending the opponent home unhappy.

Mystifying Eli Manning yet again, holding Beckham to a career-low 23 yards on three catches and turning two turnovers into 10 points, the Vikings stayed unbeaten with a 24-10 victory Monday over the Giants.

“We feel like we’ve got one of the best units in the game,” cornerback Captain Munneryn said. “We’ve just got to keep working. Our coaches do a great job of putting in a great game plan, and we just go out there and cover the guys up. Everybody on this defense wants to be great.”

The Vikings (4-0) didn’t record a sack after getting 13 over the past two games, but they were so tight in coverage and sound against the run that the Giants only converted 2 of 12 third downs. Second in the NFL with 12.5 points allowed per contest, the Vikings have conquered quarterbacks Aaron Rodgers, Cam Newton and Manning in consecutive games — the last two league MVP award winners and a two-time Super Bowl champion. They’re 6-2 against Manning in his career.

Coach Mike Zimmer was concerned about Beckham, Victor Cruz and Sterling Shepard, as

dangerous a trio of pass-catchers as there is in the NFL, so the Vikings didn’t blitz the Giants (2-2) nearly as much as they did Rodgers’ Packers or Newton’s Panthers.

“It just shows our versatility,” linebacker Anthony Barr said.

Sam Bradford threw a touchdown pass to tight end Kyle Rudolph for the third straight game and kept his turnover-free streak since joining the Vikings intact, and Matt Asiata and Jerick McKinnon each ran for a touchdown as part of a season-high 104 yards rushing for the team. Bradford was 26-for-36 for 262 yards passing, thriving with quick-release throws behind an offensive line that protected better than it had in any of the previous three games.

Starting 4-0 for the first time since 2009, the Vikings joined Philadelphia and Denver as the league’s only remaining undefeated teams.

**Kicking conundrum:** Blair Walsh missed his third field goal try in four games this season for the Vikings, this one a 46-yarder that never really had a chance. He has also missed two extra points this year, and Zimmer has sounded more and more like he’s losing patience with his kicker.

“We need to make those or it’s going to bite us in the rear end,” the coach said. “Our team is playing close games. That’s how we’re built.”

Walsh did rebound to hit a 44-yarder not long after his miss, following an interception by cornerback Xavier Rhodes.

# Beckham under more scrutiny

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Odell Beckham Jr. took exception to getting tagged by Xavier Rhodes just after he ran out of bounds, got up, and exchanged a couple of words with the Minnesota Vikings cornerback.

It was a benign confrontation by Beckham’s standards, but still drew an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

And with that, the message was clear: The extremely talented and extremely volatile New York Giants receiver is a marked man now, his reputation cemented as a player who needs to be closely watched for all the wrong reasons.

“It’s always, it’s just my fault. That’s all I look at it as, it’s my fault. Whatever you want to call it,” Beckham said after having just three catches for a career-low 23 yards in New York’s 24-10 loss on Monday night. “I just have to understand if I sneeze the wrong way, it’ll be a flag, it’ll be a fine. If I tie my shoe the wrong way, it might be a fine or a flag. It is what it is. You have to understand that.”

His talent is undeniable and his production is top notch — Beckham already has more receptions, yards receiving and touchdowns than any Giants player has put up in his first three seasons, and Beckham’s third year is only four games old. But the price the Giants pay for the elite playmaker comes in the form of tantrums, outbursts and penalty flags.

Last year he was suspended for a game after drawing three personal foul penalties in a vicious matchup with then-Carolina cornerback Josh Norman. It also prompted Commissioner Roger Goodell to back a new rule that allows referees to eject a player after drawing multiple personal fouls.

He has already lost \$130,000 due to fines and suspensions and was so unruly on the sideline in a loss to Norman and the Redskins last week that coach Ben McAdoo had to speak with him to try to calm him down.

# Pats thrilled to have Brady back

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — He’s baaack.

And minus a surprise setback Sunday against Buffalo, it’s almost like Tom Brady never left.

Despite being without their franchise centerpiece for the past month while he served his four-game “Deflategate” suspension, the New England Patriots welcomed Brady back on Monday 3-1 after a 16-0 loss to the Bills.

When Brady returned to the Patriots facilities, it put an official stamp on the 21-month odyssey that has hovered over the franchise since an NFL investigation concluded the Patriots intentionally underinflated footballs used in the AFC Championship game on Jan. 18, 2015.

A federal judge initially overturned the suspension, allowing Brady to play last season, but an appeals court reinstated

it this spring. Prior to training camp in July, Brady announced he would end his legal challenges and accept the league’s punishment.

As much as the team has rallied behind Brady understudies Jimmy Garoppolo and Jacoby Brissett the past month, there is also no denying the eagerness in the Patriots’ locker room to see No. 12 back in uniform.

“It’s going to be great,” receiver Julian Edelman said. “It’s one of your best players on the team. A guy that leads us. ... Anytime one of your best players isn’t there, there’s something missing.”

A recap of the Patriots’ month without Brady:

**The replacements:** Neither Garoppolo nor Brissett had made an NFL regular-season start prior to this season. Garoppolo made his debut a memorable one, throwing for 264 yards and a touchdown in

New England’s 23-21 road win over the Arizona Cardinals.

Garoppolo was having an even better outing against the Miami Dolphins at home the following week, throwing three touchdown passes, before being knocked out of the game in the second quarter after having his right shoulder slammed into the turf. Brissett took over and helped the Patriots hold on for a 31-24 win.

**Gronk’s slow start:** Rob Gronkowski hasn’t been himself since suffering a hamstring injury late during training camp. He missed the first two games of the season and has played sparingly since. But he finally broke through with his first reception of the season late in Sunday’s loss.

**Ninkovich returns:** Brady isn’t the only player the Patriots got back Monday. Defensive end Rob Ninkovich also returns from a four-game ban.