

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Armed drones latest challenge in Syria

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Militant groups like Hezbollah and the Islamic State group have learned how to weaponize surveillance drones and use them against each other, adding a new twist to Syria's civil war, a U.S. military official and others say.

A video belonging to an al-Qaida offshoot, Jund al-Aqsa, purportedly shows a drone landing on Syrian military barracks. In another video, small explosives purportedly dropped by the Iran-backed Shiite militant group Hezbollah target the Sunni militant group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, formerly known as the Nusra Front.

In addition, the French newspaper Le Monde reported the Islamic State group used a drone loaded with explosives to strike a Kurdish and French position in northern Iraq earlier this month. That strike outside Irbil killed two Kurdish pesh-

Troops warned to be wary of models, drones

BY TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. troops in Iraq have been issued a new warning this month: Don't touch any model aircraft or drone devices found on the battlefield.

U.S. forces preparing for the upcoming battle to retake Mosul from the Islamic State

were alerted about drones after a device believed to be operated by the terrorist group killed two Kurdish fighters.

In the Oct. 2 incident, Kurdish forces in northern Iraq discovered a Styrofoam airplane on the ground that had been modified, and took it back to their base to examine it, said a U.S. official who spoke on the

condition of anonymity.

The official said U.S. officials believe the device was intended to go off after it had been picked up, and the explosion was set to a timer hidden inside the plane's battery.

Now U.S. troops must follow procedures, the official said.

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merga fighters and wounded two French special operations troops.

A U.S. military official, who spoke anonymously because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly, said the U.S. military is aware of the development.

Commanders have warned troops to take cover if they see what they might have once dismissed as a surveillance drone,

he said.

A number of militant groups in the Middle East, including the Islamic State group, Jund al-Aqsa and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, as well as Hezbollah and Hamas, have all released videos indicating that they have surveillance and reconnaissance drones. Syrian anti-government rebels and militias loyal to President Bashar Assad were also flying cheap quad- and hexacopters as early

as 2014 to spy on each other.

Syrian skies are already bustling with traffic. Coalition forces have launched some 5,400 airstrikes on Islamic State group targets since September 2014. Drones account for only about 7 percent of America's air operations in Iraq and Syria because the U.S. is "stretched really thin" with drone operations in Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan and elsewhere, Woods said.

Saudi airstrikes could put troops at risk

The Washington Post

Airstrikes on a funeral in Yemen on Saturday have inflamed local opinion, and Washington's support for Saudi Arabia's campaign against Houthi rebels has implicated the United States in civilian deaths, according to human rights groups. But there's another potential side effect: It may have prompted the rebels to turn their weapons against U.S. forces.

The strikes killed more than 140 people and wounded hundreds more. Saudi officials have denied they carried out the attack, but two U.S. defense officials, who spoke on the condition

of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said there is little reason to believe that.

The attacks on a funeral for a Houthi rebel commander in Yemen's capital city of Sanaa are the latest in a long line of strikes that have killed more than 4,000 civilians since the Saudis began launching airstrikes against the rebels in March 2015.

Within hours of the airstrike on the funeral, a missile was launched from Houthi-controlled territory over Yemen's northern border into Saudi Arabia and two more were fired at the USS Mason, a Navy destroyer, and the USS Ponce, an am-

phibious staging base, that were in the Red Sea.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters Tuesday that the first missile was launched Sunday about 7 p.m. from a coastal area while the Mason was at least 12 miles offshore in international waters. The ship took undisclosed defensive measures while the first missile was incoming, and the projectile splashed in the sea without causing any damage, he said.

One U.S. defense official said the second missile was fired at the Mason about an hour after the first, and it traveled at least

24 miles as the ship was moving away from the shore. Like the first missile, it landed in the water.

A report from USNI News published Monday said the Mason fired at least three missiles in its own defense: two Standard Missile-2s and an Enhanced Sea Sparrow Missile to intercept the missile. The Mason also fired a Nulka anti-ship missile decoy, the report said.

A spokesman for U.S. Central Command, Army Maj. Josh Jacques, said that at this point, the military has not been directed to change any support in regard to Saudi Arabia.

Duterte halts preparations for US drills with Philippines

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine president says he has instructed his defense chief not to prepare for joint exercises with the U.S. military next year as he moved to realize his threat to remove the highest-profile symbol of his country's treaty alliance with Washington.

President Rodrigo Duterte, however, reiterated Wednesday that he will not abrogate a 1951

Mutual Defense Treaty with the U.S. He has said, however, that he'll chart a foreign policy not dependent on Washington.

Duterte said: "I insist that we realign, that there will be no more exercises next year. 'Do not prepare,' I told Defense Secretary Lorenzana."

Duterte also wants U.S. forces out of the south and has opposed joint patrols with the U.S. Navy in the disputed South China Sea.

Court-martial reveals seamy side of Air Force Academy life

The (Colorado Springs, Colo.) Gazette

An Air Force Academy judge will decide whether a victim who didn't speak still meant "no" in an alleged sexual assault of a female cadet in a campus classroom.

Prosecutors on Tuesday opened the case by claiming the woman was frozen by fear during the 2015 incident with cadet Jackson Spalding. Defense attorneys contend the woman fabricated the rape claim after feeling regret over a consensual incident.

"Can you believe her as a witness?" defense attorney Capt. Diane Ingram asked Judge Lt. Col Marvin Tubbs, who is hearing the case without a jury. "Absolutely not."

The female cadet who brought the allegation was on the witness stand for more than three hours of often-tearful testimony describing the incident, which took place on a Friday night in an unused classroom of Fairchild Hall, which houses the academia departments of the school.

"I wanted to get up and go," the woman testified. "My body still wasn't moving."

The Gazette does not routinely name alleged victims of sexual crimes.

Spalding is charged with grabbing the woman's genita-

lia under her clothes, fondling her breasts and forcing her to touch his genitals after inviting her to the classroom to watch a movie.

The trial revealed a seamy side of life at the academy, including cadets testifying that Fairchild Hall is called "Fairchild Hotel" by freshman cadets. Freshmen at the school, as Spalding and the woman were at the time of the alleged crime, have few freedoms but are allowed to venture out of the dorms to study in Fairchild.

Ingram said it's a place where freshmen slip into classrooms for forbidden trysts.

The female cadet testified that she wasn't looking for sexual contact when she agreed to meet Spalding to watch "Star Trek" and was surprised when others didn't join them in the classroom.

She said she was wordless and rigid when Spalding pulled her into a chair and unzipped her flight suit. The woman testified that the incident stopped when she found her voice and refused to give Spalding oral sex.

Defense attorneys repeatedly asked in slightly different forms, "You never said no?" To each of the queries, the woman responded, "No, sir."

Testimony was to continue Wednesday, with Tubbs expected to issue a verdict this week.

Marines ID sailor killed while diving

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps has identified the sailor who died Monday during an apparent diving accident at a popular Okinawan diving spot as Petty Officer 1st Class Jorge NoriegaSuarez.

NoriegaSuarez, a married father of one, was a fleet Marine force corpsman and advance X-ray technician for the 3rd Medical Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, the Marine Corps said in a statement Wednesday.

The "3rd Medical Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, is deeply saddened and shocked by the death of [Petty Officer 1st Class] NoriegaSuarez," 3rd Medical Battalion commander Capt. Jason Darby said in the statement.

"He was a model sailor, a father, and a valued member

of every command he was assigned to."

NoriegaSuarez was from Barranquilla, Colombia, the statement said. He enlisted in the Navy on July 13, 2004. During his career, he received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and was previously stationed at Navy Branch Health Clinic Whiting Field, Pensacola, Fla.; Marine Air Group 26, Camp Lejeune, N.C.; and Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan.

He died about 10 a.m. Monday at Mermaid Grotto in Manzo-Mo, Okinawa. Mermaid Grotto is a popular diving spot for locals and Americans. The interior pools teem with colorful tropical fish and are protected by overarching rock formations.

Marine officials said they continue to investigate the cause of death but believe it to have been an accident.

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Navy probing death of sickened sailor on USS Ronald Reagan

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A sailor died aboard the USS Ronald Reagan on Monday after getting sick, Navy officials said.

Seaman Danyelle Luckey, a personnel specialist on the Yokosuka-based aircraft carrier, died suddenly after a brief illness, Task Force 70 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Aaron Kakiel said in an email to Stars and Stripes. The cause of death is under investigation.

"Her loss comes as a tragic shock to her shipmates," Capt.

Michael Donnelly, the Ronald Reagan's commanding officer, said in a statement Tuesday. "For the crew, our thoughts and prayers are focused on her family during this time."

Luckey, of Pittsburg, Calif., enlisted in May and joined the ship during its recent port visit to Guam after Exercise Valiant Shield.

The Ronald Reagan was her first duty station following basic training and military occupational school.

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NC urges more to flee before flooding

Associated Press

GREENVILLE, N.C. — Police officers and firefighters in eastern North Carolina cruised low-lying areas and shouted a simple message from bullhorns: Get out before the floodwaters from Hurricane Matthew arrive.

Thousands of people were ordered to evacuate, and officials warned that some communities could be cut off by washed-out roads or bridge closures. In the city of Greenville, military trucks rumbled through leafy neighborhoods where orange traffic cones and police tape discouraged people from entering. Police were stationed at the edge of the evacuation zone to monitor who came and went.

Authorities planned to go door-to-door in some areas, telling people to escape to higher ground. The flooding triggered by heavy rain from Matthew — which killed

more than 500 people in Haiti — has left at least 35 dead in the U.S.

“There are a lot of people that are hurting, that are living in shelters and are preparing for major, major flooding,” North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory said Wednesday.

Authorities closed one bridge across the swollen Tar River in Greenville and warned that several other bridges could close, isolating people. The city’s airport was expected to remain closed for another week due to flooding.

Still, Greenville resident John Benson felt confident his house would be OK. His block didn’t take on water during Hurricane Floyd in 1999 and his street is on a steep grade, making a quick getaway possible.

“Police, fire people, came around, bull-horning and talking to us. They let everybody know to get out,” he said.

Flooding conditions in Fayetteville were expected to last until Friday, while the Neuse River in Kinston was expected to peak Saturday.

“We want you to evacuate these low-lying areas absolutely and immediately,” Kinston Mayor BJ Murphy told WITN-TV on Wednesday. “The time to get out is now.”

In a possible sign of storm-driven tensions, authorities said a state trooper shot and killed an armed man in Lumberton who became angry with officers carrying out search-and-rescue missions. They released little other information about the shooting.

The full extent of the disaster in North Carolina was still unclear, but it appeared that thousands of homes were damaged. Many likened Matthew to Hurricane Floyd, which did \$3 billion in damage and destroyed 7,000 homes in North Carolina as it skirted the state’s coast 17 years ago.

Amazon launches for-pay streaming music service

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Amazon is launching a paid streaming music service, the latest entry in an increasingly crowded field.

Amazon Music Unlimited is being positioned to compete against existing services such as Spotify and Apple Music. It will cost \$8 per month, or \$80 a year, for members of Amazon’s \$99-a-year Prime loyalty program. Non-Prime members will pay \$10 a month, the same monthly fee charged by Spotify and Apple Music.

Owners of Amazon’s Echo smart speaker will be able to get the unlimited music service on one device for \$4 per month.

The streaming service is one more perk that the Seattle-based company hopes will attract people to its Prime program and thus encourage them to spend more on its flagship site. Amazon already offers Amazon Prime Music for free to Prime members, but that includes about 2 million songs, while the new service boasts a catalog of “tens of millions” of songs.

The service’s launch comes as the way people listen to music is changing. According to Nielsen, during the first half of 2016 digital purchasing of single tracks was down 24 percent and digital albums were down 18 percent while streaming was up 59 percent, compared with the same period a year ago.

“The recorded music industry has been fumbling for a digital business model that really works, and I think streaming has come into its own,” said eMarketer analyst Paul Verna.

In fact, streaming of audio has eclipsed video streaming, according to Nielsen. Audio’s share of streaming is 54 percent as of June 30, compared with 44 percent a year earlier.

It still faces the music industry’s problem of low margins, Verna said.

“There is definitely room to grow the pie simply because more and more music consumers are choosing this way of accessing their music,” he said. “But the potential rewards are not huge and infinite; they’re sort of modest and there are already quite a few players in the space.”

Rights groups: Legalize illicit drug possession

Associated Press

NEW YORK — As Americans debate the expanding campaign to legalize marijuana, two of the nation’s most prominent human rights organizations are urging a far bolder step — the decriminalization of possession and personal use of all illicit drugs.

Human Rights Watch and the American Civil Liberties Union jointly issued the call Wednesday in a detailed report contending that enforcement of drug laws has unjustifiably ruined lives, torn families apart and fueled racial discrimination while failing to curtail rampant drug abuse in the U.S.

“Every 25 seconds someone is funneled into the criminal justice system, accused of nothing more than possessing drugs for personal use,” said Tess Borden, the report’s author. “These wide-scale arrests have destroyed countless lives while doing nothing to help people who struggle with dependence.”

Borden acknowledged that broad decriminalization of drug use, whether by Congress or state-by-state, is unlikely in the near future. She hopes the report will spur action at the state

and federal level to invest more funds in treatment programs and to reclassify drug use and possession as misdemeanors rather than felonies.

The report argues that the decadeslong “war on drugs” has failed, with rates of drug abuse still high. It says criminalization of drugs tends to drive people who use them underground, making it less likely they will get treatment and more likely they will be at risk of disease and overdoses.

However, Michael Ramos, district attorney of San Bernardino County in California, said decriminalization would pose “huge dangers.” He predicted that property crime would increase as drug users carried out thefts to maintain their habits. He also said rehabilitation programs would wither if drug abusers no longer had the threat of incarceration as an incentive to participate.

In compiling their report, Human Rights Watch and the ACLU said they interviewed 149 people prosecuted for using drugs in Louisiana, Texas, Florida and New York, 64 of them in custody.

Trump's words affect campaigning vets

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Military veterans running for office in key races across the country are hoping to clinch a top Election Day prize — control of the Senate — but their campaigns are engulfed by the growing political fallout over Donald Trump's comments about groping women.

Nervous Republican leadership was working to shore up support in these congressional races, including Senate elections in Arizona, Missouri, Nevada and Illinois where veterans are locked in tight competition, while Trump lashed out on Twitter against the many members of his own party who have disavowed the reality television star.

"The very foul mouthed Sen. John McCain begged for my support during his primary (I gave, he won), then dropped me over locker room remarks!" Trump tweeted about McCain, who is running for re-election in Arizona and announced Saturday that he will not support the GOP presidential nominee.

McCain and veterans in at least three other Senate races could determine whether Republicans or Democrats seize a majority in the chamber, giving the winner more power over legislation such as defense budgets and the approval of Supreme Court justices.

To get a majority, Democrats need to win just four additional seats in the Senate and for Hillary Clinton to win the presidency, an outcome that appears increasingly likely.

After months of friction over the GOP nominee's incendiary campaign, Trump's raunchy comments about forcing himself on women and grabbing their genitals — recorded in 2005 — are causing a schism in the Republican Party and uncertainty that could play into Democrats' hands.

House Speaker Paul Ryan on Monday effectively conceded Republicans would lose the presidency and said he would focus on congressional races instead.

"There's nothing good about Trump sliding for Republicans," said Kyle Kondik, the managing

editor of Sabato's Crystal Ball, an election polling website at University of Virginia Center for Politics.

ARIZONA: McCain, a former Navy pilot who appears to be the Senate front-runner in Arizona, has seen his entire re-election campaign entangled with Trump.

The brash-talking, one-time underdog began his presidential campaign last year by attacking McCain's status as a war hero — McCain spent more than five years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam — and has handed the senator one headache after another.

Trump proposes allying with Russia in Syria while McCain has spent his time as chairman of the Armed Services Committee railing against Russian President Vladimir Putin and that country's increasingly belligerent foreign policy. Then in July, the New York businessman sparred with a Gold Star family whose son was killed while serving in Iraq.

For months, McCain backed Trump's nomination despite the stream of controversial comments about POWs and the Gold Star family, but that ended suddenly over the weekend when the senator withdrew his support.

Now, with the Arizona race entering its final weeks, McCain is trying to unify the Republicans in the state around his re-election. He released an ad reminding voters that he "chose to stay in a prison camp until his fellow soldiers had a chance to go home" and ripping his challenger, Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick, a Democrat with a substantial record on veteran legislation.

Kirkpatrick, an attorney who was elected to the House after losing an earlier election, supports a new war authorization for anti-terrorism operations in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere — something lawmakers have avoided since just after 9/11 — and has backed key moves to improve veteran health care. Kirkpatrick raised the alarm in 2014 over dangerous patient wait times at the Department of Veterans Affairs and was among co-sponsors of a veteran suicide prevention bill, the Clay

Hunt SAV Act, which was widely back by veteran groups, campaign spokesman D.B. Mitchell told Stars and Stripes.

NEVADA: Rep. Joe Heck was among the first in a wave of Republicans who disavowed Trump over the weekend — and immediately received blowback — following the GOP nominee's explosive comments about groping women.

Heck, a physician and brigadier general in the Army Reserve, is running against Catherine Cortez Masto, a Democratic former state attorney general, for the Senate seat being vacated by Minority Leader Harry Reid. It is a tight race and one of the few and best opportunities for Republicans to gain a seat from Democrats.

Heck, a moderate, is running in an increasingly diverse state against a woman who could be the first Latina in the Senate.

He is among the few candidates this election cycle who are still serving in the military.

Cortez Masto hammered Heck through the weekend for his turnabout on Trump, saying the Republican had supported the brash businessman after he praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, suggested reneging on the NATO alliance in Europe and claimed Clinton and President Barack Obama founded the Islamic State group.

Cortez Masto is running on a platform of ridding elections of dark money, protecting Social Security, immigration reform and increasing the minimum wage.

MISSOURI: Jason Kander, Missouri's 35-year-old secretary of state and former Army National Guard captain, became a minor internet sensation in September with a campaign ad on gun regulation.

During a 30-second spot, Kander assembles an AR-15 rifle while blindfolded, touting his military service and advocating for background checks to keep guns from terrorists.

In the wake of the Trump recording, Kander sensed an opportunity and went after his incumbent Republican opponent Sen. Roy Blunt, saying Blunt refused to "put our country before politics" because he

has continued to back Trump despite an exodus of other party members.

Blunt, who never served in the military, is a longtime Republican lawmaker who served in the House and was elected to the Senate in 2010. Blunt's re-election might be closely tied to a Trump victory in the state. Meanwhile, Democrats see the race as an opportunity to take a GOP Senate seat.

Kander enlisted in 2003 and served as an intelligence officer until he left the National Guard in 2011.

Blunt sits on the powerful Appropriations Committee, which helps draft the federal budget. One of his top legislative achievements for the military and veterans was pushing a bill called the Mental-Health Exposure Military Official Record Act, which would have created a Department of Defense system to track traumatic brain injuries among troops, according to Jackson.

However, the bill languished in committee and never passed.

ILLINOIS: Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., a retired Navy Reserve commander known for outspoken and sometimes incendiary comments, tweeted out his reaction within hours of Trump's recorded comments becoming public Friday.

Trump "is a malignant clown -- unprepared and unfit to be president of the United States," wrote Kirk, who in June called the GOP nominee bigoted and racist while campaigning for re-election in a Democratic-leaning state.

Kirk's 23-year Navy career and experience as an intelligence officer would normally be an advantage in his Senate race. But he has struggled against another veteran with a compelling story and service record, Rep. Tammy Duckworth, a Democrat who lost both of her legs in 2004 when the Black Hawk that she was co-piloting was downed by insurgent fire.

Democrats see the Illinois race as another strong opportunity to gain a seat in the Senate from Republicans.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Video of clown clinging to bus prompts probe

MI DETROIT — The Detroit Department of Transportation said it's not entertained by an online video showing a clown clinging to the back of a moving city bus.

The video that was recorded from another vehicle was posted on YouTube. In a statement, the DDOT said the "safety of our riders is DDOT's number one priority." The transit agency said it has video cameras inside and outside its buses and has asked police to review the case.

No one was reported injured and no one was taken into custody. Police are investigating.

Michelle McKinney, who is a regular bus rider, told WDIV-TV that she thought the video was scary.

Woman gives birth in police parking lot

MA DENNIS — A Cape Cod woman and her newborn baby were resting comfortably in the hospital after a dramatic delivery in a car seat in a police station parking lot.

Mary Walker told the Cape Cod Times that she wasn't due until Wednesday, but when she started having contractions on Sunday she knew it was time so her mother decided to drive her to the hospital.

Just a few minutes into the roughly 25-minute drive from her Harwich home to Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, it became apparent they weren't going to make it.

So they pulled into the Dennis police station parking lot, where officers Liz Tucker and Krista Wunderlich were waiting.

The officers kept mom comfortable until paramedics ar-

rived at almost the same time that baby Ella arrived.

Cancer patient: I was mistaken for fugitive

ID POST FALLS — A Post Falls breast cancer patient says she was handcuffed and questioned at a Wal-Mart after law enforcement officials mistook her for a wanted teen.

The Coeur d'Alene Press reported that Erin Peters, 35, said she was stopped Friday at the Wal-Mart and questioned for 45 minutes in connection with Whitley Evenson, 18, of Independence, Mo., who is charged with murdering her 6-week-old child last year.

Peters said members of the North Idaho Violent Crimes Task Force believed she was the Missouri fugitive because her hair is very short. She said she shaved her hair because of the cancer treatments.

Evenson was taken into custody later Friday.

Man with knife barks at traffic, is shot by police

CA FRESNO — A knife-wielding man who was threatening people and barking at traffic in Fresno was shot by police.

The Fresno Bee reported that the man was being treated at Community Regional Medical Center after being shot twice by officers on Sunday.

Fresno police Chief Jerry Dyer said the man ignored 15 to 20 commands to drop the knife. The man continued to approach cars in the area despite commands for him to stop. Dyer said the man was about a car length away from the officer when the officer fired twice, striking the man in the abdomen.

The officer involved has been placed on paid administra-

tive leave while the shooting is investigated.

Person shot, wounded during gun club party

NY WAPPINGER — New York State Police said they're investigating the wounding of a person who was shot during a party held at a Hudson Valley gun club.

Troopers said the shooting occurred about 10:30 p.m. Saturday during a private party at the Shadowbrook Gun Club in the Dutchess County town of Wappinger, 60 miles north of New York City.

Police said a person who was attending the event was shot by an unknown assailant. The victim was taken to Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital in Poughkeepsie for treatment of wounds that weren't considered life-threatening.

The victim's name, age and gender haven't been released by police.

Woman drives wrong way for 3 miles on highway

FL TARPON SPRINGS — Police said a woman is facing drunk-driving charges after driving the wrong way for 3 miles down a Florida highway.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that Tarpon Springs police said Anna Marie Sosa, 43, was spotted about 3:45 a.m. Sunday driving north in the southbound lanes of U.S. 19.

Authorities said she caused a minor accident with a southbound car that swerved to avoid a head-on collision.

A police officer spotted Sosa and unsuccessfully tried to stop her using his emergency lights. The officer then passed Sosa's car and used his vehicle to stop her.

Authorities said Sosa is fac-

ing charges of DUI and leaving the scene of an accident with property damage.

Three shot at vigil for police shooting victim

MO ST. LOUIS — Three men were injured when gunfire erupted during a candlelight vigil in St. Louis to remember a black teenager fatally shot by police.

The shooting happened Saturday night during a vigil for VonDerrit Myers Jr., 18. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that just 10 minutes into the vigil, gunfire broke out. Three men in their 20s were shot.

Police said all three of the injuries were minor.

Myers was fatally shot by an off-duty white police officer in October 2014, just weeks after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson.

Fleeing driver hits light pole, trash can, sign

LA SHREVEPORT — Two men were arrested after leading Shreveport police on a chase that ended when their car crashed into a light pole, a metal trash can, a bus stop and a street sign.

The Shreveport Times reported that Darrell W. Turner and J.B. Smart, both 24, were taken into custody following the incident Friday night.

When officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop for erratic driving, police said the driver sped off, passing other vehicles before crashing. No one was injured.

Turner faces charges of careless operation, simple property damage, marijuana possession and flight in a vehicle.

Smart was charged with resisting an officer, hit-and-run driving and marijuana possession.

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Cubs rally from 4 down to oust Giants

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Kris Bryant tossed his glove high in the air, Jake Arrieta jumped over the dugout railing and the rest of the Chicago Cubs rushed to join the celebration.

Pure revelry and a sigh of relief, all at once.

World Series favorites since opening day, the Cubs took another step in their championship chase Tuesday night by rallying for four runs in the ninth inning of Game 4 to beat San Francisco 6-5 and win their NL Division Series.

"You could see it coming. You could see little signs. We've done it before and the guys, we don't quit," Cubs center fielder Dexter Fowler said. "It's a little more special doing it here. They for sure were thinking that they won it. But we play 27 outs and we don't give up until we win."

Javier Baez's tiebreaking single capped the comeback against a beleaguered bullpen that sabotaged the Giants one last time.

Four wins from their first pennant since 1945, the Cubs will open the NL Champion-

ship Series at Wrigley Field on Saturday against the Los Angeles Dodgers or Washington Nationals. That matchup is tied 2-all heading into the deciding Game 5 on Thursday.

Before that, the team with the best regular-season record (103-58) in the majors this year will get a few days of rest. Chicago was swept by the New York Mets in the NLCS last year and is still seeking its first World Series title since 1908.

"Expectations is a good word. Because normally it means that you have something good attached to it at the other side," manager Joe Maddon said.

And after finishing off the resilient Giants, the Cubs should have their rotation all lined up for the NLCS.

"Pressure, expectations — I want our guys to thrive on those two words for the years to come. I want the organization to. In the end that means there's a lot expected of you. Good. There should be. We should all have a lot expected of us," Maddon added. "So all those things I want to have us channel in a positive direction."

Held to two hits over eight in-

nings by Matt Moore, the Cubs trailed 5-2 heading to the ninth.

No matter. One big rally ended San Francisco's 10-game winning streak when facing postseason elimination.

Pinch-hitter Willson Contreras tied it with a two-run single with none out. Baez singled in the go-ahead run two batters later, and the Cubs capitalized on Gold Glove shortstop Brandon Crawford's second costly error and more untimely blunders by the Giants' once-reliable relief staff.

One day after getting tagged in the eighth inning, Aroldis Chapman closed this one out by striking out the side in order. When he set down Brandon Belt to end it, Chapman's teammates rushed to the mound to hug him and begin their celebration.

Maddon has his confident, power-hitting Cubs on an October roll. They already beat All-Star Johnny Cueto and ex-Cubs pitcher Jeff Samardzija, then waited until Moore's stellar outing was done to pounce.

"With this team, the big thing is we never give up, we never quit," said lefty Jon Lester, who figures to start the NLCS open-

er. "We always feel like we have a chance, whether it's the first inning or the ninth inning."

Soon-to-retire David Ross homered to start the third, hit a sacrifice fly in the fifth and threw out Denard Span trying to steal.

Downright unflappable for years in these pressure-packed situations, the Giants won World Series championships in 2010, '12 and '14. This was the club's first postseason series defeat in the last 12.

"We don't think we're going to win the World Series every even year. I mean, it took 50-something years to get one here," quipped manager Bruce Bochy, whose bullpen management was scrutinized throughout a disappointing second half.

The orange towel-waving sellout crowd of 43,166, perhaps spoiled this decade by the every-other-year title success, had been counting on a few more games by the bay this October.

Moore, acquired from Tampa Bay at the Aug. 1 trade deadline for games of this magnitude, struck out 10 as his former Rays manager — Maddon — watched from the other dugout.

Utley helps Dodgers force Game 5 vs. Nats

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Clayton Kershaw was out of the game, his head down in the dugout, the Los Angeles bullpen faltering and the season slipping away.

Chase Utley plucked the Dodgers from the brink, singling home the tiebreaking run with two outs in the eighth inning.

Suddenly, Game 5 was on the horizon.

One more chance to pursue the club's first World Series appearance in 28 years.

"There is no quit in this team," closer Kenley Jansen said.

The Dodgers avoided elimination Tuesday with a 6-5 victory over the Washington Nationals that forced a deciding game in their NL playoff series.

Jansen worked the ninth for a save, one day after giving up four late runs during Los Angeles' loss in Game 3.

"I got out there and focused and fought," he said.

The finale is Thursday in Washington, with 20-game winner Max Scherzer set to

pitch for the Nationals.

"Man, this is going to be a heck of a ballgame," he said. "The effort from both sides over the first four games has been incredible. Great pitching, great hitting, defense, everything."

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said he will use left-hander Rich Hill and rookie Julio Urias, but did not announce which one will start. Hill is expected to get the ball first.

"If anyone gives up on this team, they haven't seen us play a whole lot this year," Roberts said, "and it starts with what Clayton did — short rest and leaving it all out there. Everyone fed off that."

Adrian Gonzalez hit a two-run homer for the Dodgers, who turned to Kershaw on three days' rest to salvage their season.

The score was tied 5-all with two outs in the eighth when Andrew Toles got hit by a pitch from loser Blake Treinen. Andre Ethier followed with a single to left and Utley singled to right, scoring Toles from second.

"I didn't make a bad pitch," Treinen said of the down-and-in slider that Utley smacked. "He just made a really good swing. We got a groundball. It just wasn't where we wanted it. Tip your cap."

"The emotion here is so high," Scherzer said. "This is such a competitive series, and both sides are playing extremely well. Every little thing matters. Everything can go to one pitch, one play, one call. That's why the postseason is the best. Everything matters."

Trailing 5-2 in the seventh, the Nats had runners on first and second against Kershaw with two outs. The crowd chanted Kershaw's name as he and Bryce Harper battled through eight pitches before Harper drew a walk.

"Man, that's what baseball is all about right there — a matter of will," Nats manager Dusty Baker said. "Kershaw was on empty. We knew it. They knew it. Everybody knew it."

Francona makes right moves for Tribe

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Drenched after his players joyfully doused him with champagne and beer, Indians manager Terry Francona stood at the center of the visitor's clubhouse in Fenway Park, a ballpark where he had been in the middle of so many similar celebrations.

Francona didn't get a hit, steal a base or record an out as Cleveland surprisingly swept Boston in the AL Division Series.

He did just about everything else.

As he removed his glasses to wipe the sudsy shower from his face, Francona could finally relax — for a night. His moves pushed the Indians deeper into October.

The bubble gum-chomping, drought-busting motivator is Cleveland's MVP.

Whether masterfully maneuvering his bullpen in Game 1, playing a hunch with his lineup in Game 2, using platoon players or daring to pitch to slugger David Ortiz in Game 3 as Boston fans roared, Francona had the perfect touch as the

Indians won three straight and advanced to face Toronto in the AL Championship Series.

Francona, affectionately known as Tito — his dad's name — refused to take credit and turned the attention on his players.

"I've done it before," said Francona, who led the Red Sox to World Series titles in 2004 and '07. "You know what? What it meant to me is to celebrate with the Indians and our crew. I don't care where it is. I respect that we beat a heck of a team, but to celebrate with our guys, that's what was meaningful for me."

The Indians have been defying odds — and baseball logic — for months. Despite a slew of injuries to key players, losing two starting pitchers for the postseason, and being given little chance to win the AL Central, they overpowered Detroit and Kansas City before dismissing the Red Sox, who led the majors in scoring but managed just seven runs in the playoffs.

The obstacles have only empowered the Indians. Francona made sure they were never

knocked off track. He did more than manage games, massaging egos and making everyone believe.

His rotation close to shambles, Francona understood the importance of winning the opener against Boston.

After Trevor Bauer, who began the season in the bullpen, got him into the fifth inning, Francona brought in tall left-hander Andrew Miller — normally used in the seventh and eighth — and Cleveland's relievers closed out the 5-4 win.

Despite Boston lefty David Price being on the mound in Game 2, Francona went against the book and started left-handed hitter Lonnie Chisenhall, who batted just .217 against lefties during the regular season. Chisenhall was in more for his defense but hit a three-run homer — his first off a lefty all year — in the second inning of Cleveland's 6-0 win in Game 2.

"Sometimes," Francona said afterward, "good players make you look smarter than you probably are."

He trusted his gut after Game 3 was postponed a day, sticking

with Josh Tomlin as his starter. The right-hander, who had nearly a 12.00 ERA in August and was briefly bumped from the rotation, held the Red Sox to one run through five innings.

Francona sent him back out in the sixth before again turning to Miller, who gave up a sacrifice fly to Ortiz and then struck out Hanley Ramirez with a runner at second.

Everything Francona did in the series worked.

He's firm but fair and he prides himself on keeping his door open. A few weeks ago, Oklahoma City Thunder coach Billy Donovan visited the Indians and when he walked by the manager's office, Francona was playing cards with Tomlin.

"That was the day we took him out of the rotation," Francona said. "I was explaining that to Billy. I said, 'Two hours earlier we had taken him out of the rotation,' and he was back there playing cribbage with me. That to me, shows that we can get through anything."

And if Francona keeps playing his cards right, the Indians can go anywhere.

49ers bench Gabbert, give QB job back to Kaepernick

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers are putting their future back into Colin Kaepernick's hands.

Coach Chip Kelly announced the decision Tuesday to bench Blaine Gabbert and to give back the starting job that Kaepernick lost midway through last season. Kaepernick has played only briefly in the opener but has generated attention with his refusal to stand for the national anthem as a form of protest.

"We were very analytical and sat down as a staff and watched tape and went over everything," said Kelly. "We've had a couple days to digest everything where we are. I think offensively, we just need to be

better and we just need to make a move."

Gabbert has struggled this season for San Francisco (1-4). He is last in the NFL in yards per attempt (5.9) and has the second-worst passer rating (69.6) in the league.

"It's not Blaine's fault," said Kelly. "I think as a group, offensively we need to be better in a lot of ways. So we're going to see what we can do and make a move here. It's really one of the only maneuvers we can make based on our depth."

Kelly said Kaepernick's ongoing protest had no bearing on his decision.

After leading the Niners to the Super Bowl following the 2012 season and the NFC title game the following year, Kaepernick has struggled. He lost

his job to Gabbert midway through last season and then had three operations that limited his work in the offseason.

"I'm ready to play," Kaepernick said Tuesday. "It's been about a year since live-game action. So I'm itching to get back out there."

Kaepernick said looking at the offense, "There's just small things here and there that we need to clean up, we need to correct, as a whole."

"Hopefully, those are things that we progress on this week and show Sunday," he said.

Kaepernick confirmed there have been discussions with the team about restructuring his six-year contract extension, but he said he feels "no pressure" to get the deal done before Sunday's game.

The 49ers have lost consecutive home games to the Cowboys and Cardinals while both teams started backup quarterbacks the last two weeks. Gabbert threw three interceptions and two touchdown passes combined.

He shouldered the responsibility for the most recent loss to Arizona on Thursday, when two of his interceptions on the 49ers' side of the field led to 10 points for the Cardinals.

Gabbert expressed his displeasure with the demotion Tuesday.

"I don't like it," he said. "I don't like not playing. I'm very forward about that. But at the same time, I'm going to come into work the same way I've always come into work the three years that I've been here."

NHL goalies' gear under scrutiny again

Associated Press

Goaltenders have gotten bigger, better and more athletic in recent years and hockey is trying to keep up.

Under new NHL rules intended to boost scoring, goalies will have sleeker, more form-fitting pants beginning this season and will also get more compact chest protectors not long after. Those charged with keeping the puck out of the net just want to make sure they're not more vulnerable to injuries.

"As a goalie, the only thing you want is to be protected," Pekka Rinne of the Nashville Predators said. "There's room to take off and room to kind of taper those shoulder pads and pants and whatnot. But, hopefully, I'm sure they'll make everything protective enough that goalies are not going to get hurt."

The evolution of goalie equipment from the thin, brown pads that prevailed through the 1980s to the Michelin Man-style monstrosities of the 1990s to now has been a roller-coaster ride. Over the past decade or so, the NHL and NHL Players

Association have taken incremental steps to shave down padding, giving skaters a better chance to find the net when they shoot the puck.

Stick technology has evolved, too, so even though the average goalie is now 6-foot-2, the league can't just shrink equipment back to levels from 30 years ago and watch the red lights and goal horns go off like crazy. Toronto Maple Leafs coach Mike Babcock complains that goalies are too good now and "there's no space because the goalies are bigger than the nets."

But it's not an easy fix.

"It's complex because no two goalies are exactly the same size," NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "We want them to be safe, and we want them to be protected, but the equipment doesn't have to be so big that it protects the net against the puck."

Scoring has hovered around 5.3 goals a game for a few seasons, down from the peak of over seven in 1992 and over six in 2005-06, when new rules were introduced to spark more offense. Criticism about coach-

ing and defenses clogging up play and contributing to that is warranted.

It's also one reason why goalies don't believe smaller equipment necessarily will lead to more goals.

"If guys are giving up goals leaking through their arms that are kind of ugly goals and that increases scoring, is that a good thing? I suppose," said Cory Schneider, of the New Jersey Devils. "But if you're still only getting 20 shots a night each way, then I don't think smaller gear is really going to make a difference. I think it's a two-fold issue. You want to create goal-scoring by creating a better flow and more shots."

NHLPA executive director Don Fehr said goalie equipment is a topic his entire constituency votes on because it affects so much about the sport. The goaltending fraternity is generally in favor of streamlined equipment because it evens the playing field around the league. Former NHL goalie Chris Mason was once questioned by a general manager he played for about why he wore

smaller equipment than his counterparts, and he's glad the league is cracking down.

"You got some skinny guys in there that look absolutely massive, and you have other guys that are wearing it the way you're supposed to wear it," Mason said. "It does make a difference because some guys are trying to get every advantage they can get."

Most goalies don't want any advantage other than sufficient protection against shots that can come at 100 mph or more.

Boston Bruins starter Tuukka Rask is a bit tired that the answer to every goal-scoring question is to resize goalies' equipment. But he respects the process the league and players are going through.

"I think it's a great thing what they're trying to accomplish and as long as they keep goalies involved in discussions I think it's good," Rask said. "At some point somebody has to say, 'Enough's enough. We have to try to figure something else out than just make the equipment smaller.' I'm sure there's room for good discussion there."

Pair of big contracts signed as teams finalize rosters

Associated Press

The Buffalo Sabres signed defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen and the Tampa Bay Lightning signed forward Nikita Kucherov as NHL teams made final roster moves Tuesday on the eve of the regular season.

Ristolainen signed a six-year \$32.4 million contract, while Kucherov signed a three-year deal that averages \$4.766 million a year. Both were restricted free agents whose rights were retained by their respective teams in June.

For Buffalo, the signing means the Sabres will have their top defenseman ready for their opener against Montreal on Thursday.

The Lightning, meanwhile, have their nucleus intact in preparing to open their season by

hosting Detroit on Thursday. Kucherov led the Lightning with 30 goals and 66 points in the regular season, and led them again in the playoffs with 11 goals and 19 points.

Their signings left three prominent restricted free agents still without contracts, including Winnipeg defenseman Jacob Trouba, who has asked to be traded. Also unsigned are Anaheim Ducks defenseman Hampus Lindholm and forward Rickard Rakell.

In another move Tuesday, veteran forward Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau was claimed by the New Jersey Devils a day after being placed on waivers by the New York Islanders. New Jersey freed up roster space by placing defenseman Seth Helgeson on waivers.

Elsewhere:

■ Ruslan Fedotenko announced he is retiring after 12 NHL seasons split among five teams. Fedotenko is a two-time Stanley Cup champion who spent the past two seasons playing for Iowa of the American Hockey League. He had 173 goals and 193 assists for 366 points in 863 NHL games.

■ Los Angeles kept forward Devin Setoguchi. The veteran played his way onto the roster after nearly two years out of the NHL, during which he dealt with an alcohol problem. The Kings also sent veteran defenseman Rob Scuderi, a two-time Stanley Cup champion, to the minors after he cleared waivers.

■ Calgary signed free-agent forward Kris Versteeg to a one-year contract. Versteeg is a nine-year NHL veteran and

a two-time Stanley Cup champion, who split last season with Carolina and Los Angeles.

■ Pittsburgh claimed Montreal goalie Mike Condon; Minnesota claimed Detroit forward Teemu Pulkkinen; Toronto claimed Boston forward Seth Griffith; and Carolina claimed Phoenix defenseman Klas Dahlbeck.

■ The New York Rangers placed forward Nathan Gerbe on waivers with the intention of terminating his contract.

■ The Hurricanes acquired forward Connor Brickley from the Florida Panthers for forward Brody Sutter in a swap of prospects. Sutter is the 25-year-old son of former Panthers coach Duane Sutter and had no points in 12 games over two seasons with the Hurricanes.