

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Gunman kills at least 58 in Las Vegas

More than 500 hurt at festival in deadliest shooting in US history

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A gunman perched on the 32nd floor of a Las Vegas hotel-casino unleashed a hail of bullets on an outdoor country music festival below, killing at least 58 people as tens of thousands of concertgoers screamed and ran for their lives, officials said Monday.

It was the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. At least 515 others were injured in the Sunday night attack, authorities said.

SWAT teams using explosives stormed the gunman's hotel room in the sleek, gold-colored glass skyscraper and found he had killed himself, authorities said. The gunman, identified as Stephen Craig Paddock, 64, a retiree from Mesquite, Nev., had as many as 10 guns with him, including rifles, they said.

Asked about the motive for the attack, Sheriff Joseph Lombardo said, "I can't get into the mind of a psychopath at this point."

The sheriff said a check of federal and state databases showed Paddock was not on law enforcement authorities' radar before the bloodbath.

Aaron Rouse, the FBI agent in charge in Las Vegas, said investigators saw no immediate evidence connecting it to an inter-

national terrorism organization, despite a claim of responsibility from Islamic State.

Country music star Jason Aldean was performing at the end of the three-day Route 91 Harvest Festival in front of a crowd of more than 22,000 when the gunman in the 44-floor Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino apparently used a hammerlike device to smash out windows in his room and opened fire, authorities said.

The crowd, funneled tightly into a wide-open space, had almost no cover and no easy way to escape.

Kodiak Yazzie, 36, said the music stopped temporarily after the first shots, then started up again before a second round of pops sent the performers ducking for cover and fleeing the stage.

"It was the craziest stuff I've ever seen in my entire life," Yazzie said. "You could hear that the noise was coming from west of us, from Mandalay Bay. You could see a flash, flash, flash, flash."

Mayor Carolyn Goodman said the attack was the work of a "crazed lunatic full of hate."

Paddock's brother, Eric Paddock, who lives in Florida, told the Orlando Sentinel: "We are completely dumbfounded. We can't understand what happened."

In an address to the country, President

Donald Trump called the attack "an act of pure evil" and added: "In moments of tragedy and horror, America comes together as one, and it always has." He ordered flags flown at half-staff.

The sheriff said authorities believe it was a "lone wolf" attack but want to talk to Paddock's roommate, a woman Lombardo said was out of the country at the time of the attack.

In its claim of responsibility, ISIS said the gunman was "a soldier" who had converted to Islam months ago, but it provided no evidence.

The U.S. Homeland Security Department said there was no "specific, credible threat" involving other public venues in the U.S.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions offered the support of the FBI and other federal agencies but noted that the investigation is being led by the sheriff in Las Vegas. That was seen as another possible sign the shooting was not believed to be an act of international terrorism.

Las Vegas authorities put out a call for blood donations and set up a hotline to report missing people and speed the identification of the dead and wounded. They also opened a "family reunification center" for people to find loved ones.

Family: 'Nothing secret or strange' about shooter

The Washington Post

Before he opened fire late Sunday — killing at least 58 people at a country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip — the gunman, Stephen Paddock, 64, lived a quiet life for years in a small town outside Las Vegas.

A retired man, Paddock often visited Las Vegas to gamble and take in concerts, his relatives said. Public records show he was a licensed pilot who owned two planes, and he had a hunting license from Alaska.

For several years, he appeared to live in Mesquite, Texas. But property records show he chose to move to another town

named Mesquite in Nevada, where he bought a home in 2013 and has been living ever since.

Paddock's family said there was nothing in his past that would suggest violence.

"We are in complete shock, bewilderment and horror. We have absolutely no idea how in the world Steve did this. Absolutely no concept," said one relative, who spoke anonymously to avoid hurting other relatives. "There was nothing secret or strange about him."

Family members said Paddock spent much of his retirement in recent years staying in hotels in Las Vegas and gambling.

They said he listened to country music

and went to concerts at Vegas hotels.

Las Vegas police said authorities were in the process of searching Paddock's home in Mesquite on Monday morning. Quinn Averett, a spokesman for the Mesquite police in Nevada said Paddock was unknown to local authorities. Mesquite police have no recorded interactions with Paddock.

"We have no investigative information or background associated with this individual that is derogatory," Las Vegas police Sheriff Joseph Lombardo said. "The only thing we can tell is he received a citation several years ago. That citation was handled as a matter of normal practice in the court system."

US servicemember killed in Iraq blast

By CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — One U.S. servicemember was killed and another injured Sunday when their vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in Iraq, a Pentagon official said Monday.

The Pentagon declined to provide specific information about the incident, including where in Iraq it occurred or what unit was attacked, but Defense Department spokesman Eric Pahon confirmed the blast struck American troops.

It marks the eighth U.S. servicemember killed in action fighting Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria in 2017.

The Pentagon by policy withholds identifying information about servicemembers killed in action until 24 hours after their families have been notified.

Thirteen U.S. servicemembers have lost their lives in combat situations since operations against ISIS began in August 2014, according to the Pentagon. More than 50 have been wounded in action.

In late September, a French paratrooper was killed while advising local forces fighting ISIS, though officials did not specify whether the incident was in Iraq or Syria. It was France's first combat fatality since it joined the anti-ISIS fight in September 2014.

Iraqi forces, backed with the coalition's intelligence, equipment, airstrikes and training, are now fighting to retake the ISIS-held town of Hawija, about 140 miles north of Baghdad.

The hilly, rural area, which is situated between the city of Kirkuk and ISIS strongholds

in western Anbar province, is dotted with villages.

The town has been a bastion for extremists since the U.S.-led 2003 invasion and is one of the last remaining ISIS pockets in Iraq since government forces liberated Mosul, the country's second-largest city, and the town of Tal Afar in northern Nineveh province in the summer.

The United States has stepped up airstrikes in the area in recent weeks in support of the Iraqi offensive. U.S.-led coalition warplanes conducted about 40 strikes last week, Army spokesman Col. Ryan Dillon said Sunday on Twitter.

He said Iraqi forces had liberated 35 villages in the area. The number more than doubled by Monday morning, according to a later tweet.

Late last month, members of the elite Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service were in high spirits as they prepared for an offensive against the group in the area.

One noncommissioned officer claimed ISIS had been broken and could no longer fight.

Iraqi forces are also battling the jihadi group in western Anbar province, near the Syrian border.

Last week, ISIS launched an attack, apparently as a diversion, near the provincial capital of Ramadi, which was declared to be under full government control in February 2016.

The terrorist group has lost control of about 90 percent of the territory it once held in Iraq, the coalition said in August, after Tal Afar and its outskirts were declared liberated.

Pentagon says American Reaper drone shot down in western Yemen

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An American MQ-9 Reaper drone was shot down Sunday in western Yemen, the Pentagon said, where a civil war between Saudi Arabia-backed government forces and Iran-backed Houthi rebels has raged for nearly three years.

The Pentagon has launched an investigation into the incident, Marine Maj. Adrian Rankine-Galloway, a Defense Department spokesman, said Monday. He declined to provide additional information, including who had shot down the aircraft or what mission the drone was supporting at the time.

The MQ-9 is an armed, multi-mission drone that is typically used by the Air Force to conduct airstrikes.

It is also used for surveillance and reconnaissance

operations.

The United States provides support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, including in-air refueling operations and intelligence-sharing to back its war with the Houthis. Rankine-Galloway declined to say whether the United States flies drones in Yemen to collect intelligence on the Houthis. It does fly MQ-9s in Yemen to target al-Qaida fighters, who have taken advantage of the civil war to capture territory to train militants and plan terrorist operations, he said.

Reporting from the Middle East indicated the Houthis had claimed responsibility for shooting down the American drone near Sanaa, the Yemeni capital. The rebel group, which controls Sanaa and much of northern Yemen, claimed it used air defense systems to strike the drone, the group's

news agency SABA reported.

U.S. officials have characterized the conflict in Yemen as a stalemate between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis. The officials have said the Houthis, a Shiite rebel group, are armed by Iran through an illegal smuggling operation and those weapons have been used to target American forces, including a Navy destroyer off Yemen's coast about one year ago.

The war has caused a humanitarian disaster in Yemen, including a widespread cholera outbreak, according to monitoring groups. The United Nations reports some 10,000 people have been killed and nearly 3 million people have been forced from their homes. According to the International Rescue Committee, about two-thirds of Yemen's nearly 26 million people are in danger of starvation.

2 Navy pilots killed in crash

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two Navy pilots were killed late Sunday when their T-45C Goshawk training jet crashed in eastern Tennessee, the service announced.

It remained unclear Monday what caused the jet, which was reported missing on Sunday, to go down near Tellico Plains, Tenn., in the Cherokee National Forest, said Navy Lt. Elizabeth Feaster, a spokeswoman for Naval Air Training.

She said the service was conducting an investigation into the incident.

The pilots, an instructor and trainee assigned to Training Air Wing ONE at Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss., were not immediately identified Monday, pending next-of-kin notification.

Captain blamed in El Faro sinking

Associated Press

A Coast Guard report released Sunday said the primary cause of the 2015 sinking of the cargo ship El Faro, which killed all 33 aboard, was the captain underestimating the strength of a hurricane and overestimating the ship's strength.

The report said Capt. Michael Davidson should have changed the El Faro's route between Jacksonville, Fla., and San Juan, Puerto Rico, to avoid Hurricane Joaquin's 150 mph winds. When the 790-foot vessel got stuck, he should have taken more aggressive measures to save it.

Speaking at a news conference in Jacksonville, Capt. Jason Neubauer also said the Coast Guard would have sought to revoke Davidson's license if he had survived.

Davidson, 53, "was ultimately responsible for the vessel, the crew and its safe navigation,"

said Neubauer, who chaired the investigation.

He said Davidson "misjudged the path of Hurricane Joaquin and overestimated the vessel's heavy weather survivability while also failing to take adequate precautions to monitor and prepare for heavy weather. During critical periods of navigation ... he failed to understand the severity of the situation, even when the watch standards warned him the hurricane was intensifying."

The report also said the ship's owner, TOTE Maritime Inc., had not replaced a safety officer, spreading out those duties among other managers, and had violated regulations regarding crew rest periods and working hours. The Coast Guard said it will seek civil actions against TOTE but no criminal penalties as there was no criminal intent.

TOTE Maritime released a

statement Sunday saying the report "is another piece of this sacred obligation that everyone who works upon the sea must study and embrace. The report details industry practices which need change."

The 40-year-old El Faro went down on Oct. 1, 2015, sinking in 15,000 feet of water to the sea floor near the Bahamas. No bodies were ever recovered. It was the worst maritime disaster for a U.S.-flagged vessel since 1983.

Voice recordings recovered from the ship show an increasingly panicked and stressed crew fighting to save the ship after it lost propulsion as they battled wind, shifting cargo and waves.

Davidson ordered the ship abandoned shortly before it sank but its open air lifeboats likely would have provided insufficient protection, the Coast Guard said.

VW offering compensation at US bases

BY DAN STOUTAMIRE

Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Two years after Volkswagen admitted to doctoring emissions levels during tests for nearly 11 million cars worldwide and a year after it agreed to a \$15 billion settlement in U.S. federal district court, military owners of affected vehicles stationed overseas are finally receiving compensation.

Military AutoSource, a Defense Department-approved vendor associated with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, forged an agreement in the summer with VW under which their locations — on many bases across Europe — can serve as drop-off locations for the buyback program even if a car's owner did not buy the vehicle at MAS. After a customer drops off their car, it will take two to four weeks for the funds to appear in the bank, MAS said. The vendor said it is working to streamline the process.

The October 2016 district court settlement required VW to buy back or fix 475,000 VW and Audi vehicles purchased in the U.S. from model years 2009-15. However, the program required the buybacks to take place at approved dealerships — none of which was in Europe, where the ruling held no legal power.

MAS' buyback program offers the trade-in value of the car from September 2015, plus 20 percent, as well as a restitution payment, which varies by make and model.

The agreement between MAS and VW may ease concerns for servicemembers and military-affiliated civilians stationed in Europe. VW estimated that at least 200 people were affected in Europe as of this past summer.

Customers who choose to keep their cars and to have the emissions systems fixed are still waiting for a resolution.

Servicemembers who return with the vehicles would be unable to permanently register them in the U.S. until they receive modifications approved by the EPA.

US, Filipino troops begin drills

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Marines, sailors and Filipino troops began counterterrorism and disaster-response drills Monday in the Philippines, the U.S. Embassy in Manila said.

The Kamandag "Cooperation of Warriors of the Sea" exercise is being held for the first time this year, the embassy said in a statement.

Kamandag was established after firebrand Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte — at odds with America and Europe over his crackdown on drug dealers last year — called for U.S. special operators to leave Mindanao Island and advocated scrapping future war games with U.S. forces.

However, the special operators have remained to help Filipinos battle Islamic militants, and a scaled-down version of the annual Balikatan exercise between the U.S. and Philippines went ahead in May.

Kamandag replaces PHIBLEX, an annual am-

phibious-landing exercise that involved 1,500 U.S. troops and 500 Filipino servicemembers last year.

Nine hundred Marines and sailors are participating in this year's event at training areas and bases on the island of Luzon, said Molly Koscina, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

Training locations include Colonel Ernesto Ravina Air Base, Basa Air Base, Fort Mag-saysay, Marine Barracks Gregorio Lim, the Naval Education and Training Command and Subic Bay, she said.

It's unclear how close the exercise will be to what went on during PHIBLEX, when Marines assaulted beaches in armored vehicles.

However, Koscina said, "Part of the training incorporates surface movements from ship to shore for the sake of developing counterterrorism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts capabilities."

Kamandag involves Marines and sailors from the

Okinawa-based 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade and will run through Oct. 11, an embassy statement said.

"The exercise will increase overall U.S. and Philippine readiness, improve bilateral responsiveness to crises in the region, and further reinforce our illustrious decades-long alliance," the statement said.

In the lead-up to the exercise, Philippines and U.S. forces completed bilateral humanitarian and civic-assistance projects at schools earlier this month in Casiguran, Aurora, the statement said.

"The goal of KAMANDAG is to increase counterterrorism capabilities through bilateral military exchanges between the [Armed Forces of the Philippines] and U.S. forces focused on enhancing counterterrorism capabilities, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities, and performing humanitarian and civic assistance projects," the statement said.

Trump welcomes Thai junta leader to the White House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump welcomed Thailand's junta leader to the White House on Monday — a rare instance of a military ruler being feted in Washington before even a nominal return to civilian rule.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha was greeted at the South Portico by Trump and first lady Melania Trump as he arrived for talks and a working lunch.

The visit comes three years after Prayuth seized power in a military coup, and days after the elected leader whose government he ousted was sentenced in absentia to five years in prison.

Human rights groups are outraged, but it gives a shot in the arm to U.S. relations with its oldest ally in Asia, which has moved more into China's orbit since Washington scaled back ties

because of the military takeover.

The Trump administration, like the Obama administration before it, maintains that relations with Thailand will be fully restored only when democracy returns. But rolling out the red carpet for Prayuth reflects a shift in U.S. foreign policy priorities. Trump espouses a doctrine of "America First," prioritizing U.S. trade and strategic interests.

He's more willing to engage with anti-democratic leaders and less troubled by their human rights records.

That's not been lost on observers in Thailand, whose diplomatic relations with Washington date to 1833. Deep military ties were forged in the fires of the Vietnam War.

In an editorial, *The Nation*, a Thai newspaper, said the junta views the invitation to Washington "as a nod to legitimacy in the absence of an electoral mandate."

Facebook to turn over ads linked to Russia

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Social media giant Facebook is expected to provide Congress on Monday with more than 3,000 ads that ran about the time of the 2016 presidential election and are linked to a Russian ad agency.

Company officials will meet with the House and Senate intelligence committees and the Senate Judiciary Committee to hand over the ads, a Facebook official said. The official requested anonymity because the meetings are private.

Facebook said last month that it had found thousands of ads linked to Facebook accounts that likely operated out of Russia and pushed divisive social and political issues during the U.S. presidential election.

Twitter has said it found postings linked to those same accounts, and the House and Senate intelligence panels have asked both companies, along with Google, to testify publicly in the coming weeks.

None of the companies has said whether they will accept the invitations.

The three committees are investigating Russian meddling in the election and whether there are any links to President Donald Trump's campaign. They recently have focused on the spread of false news stories and propaganda on social media, putting pressure on the companies to turn over more information and to release any Russia-linked ads.

It is unclear whether the ads eventually will be released publicly.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced Sept. 21 that the company would provide the ads to Congress and also would make changes to ensure the political ads on its platform are more transparent. The company is also working with special counsel Bob Mueller's investigation into the Russian meddling.

O.J. to live in Vegas after release

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Officials at a remote Nevada prison where O.J. Simpson was set free after nine years for armed robbery arranged the former football and Hollywood star's dead-of-night departure to avoid public scrutiny.

It worked. Simpson signed release paperwork and disappeared into the darkness early Sunday, minutes into the first day he was eligible for release. Through efforts by prison officials to keep the time and place secret, there were no journalists outside the prison gates to capture the moment.

Though publicity-prone in the past, Simpson apparently took the advice of people in his inner circle that he avoid the spotlight. He was neither heard from nor seen publicly except when a television news crew found him in a car at a gas station on the way to Las Vegas and he declined to be interviewed.

State Division of Parole and Probation Capt. Shawn Arruti told *The Associated Press* that the former football hero and

celebrity criminal defendant plans to live at a home in the Las Vegas area for the foreseeable future. Arruti declined for what he said were security and privacy reasons to disclose the exact location of the house.

Nevada prisons spokeswoman Brooke Keast recorded and released a brief video on social media in which Simpson is told to "come on out" and he responds "OK" after walking through an open door and toward a parking lot bordered by desert scrub brush.

Keast also took photographs showing Simpson — in blue jeans, denim jacket, eyeglasses, ball cap and white sneakers — signing documents about 10 minutes before midnight. He later left the prison with four or five boxes of possessions in the car. Keast said she had no information about where he was going.

Arruti said the only Simpson living arrangement received, investigated and approved was in the Las Vegas area. The parole official said Simpson doesn't have permission to leave Nevada.

Las Vegas is a 450-mile drive south of Lovelock, and a television news crew reported finding Simpson at a gas station near his destination.

Simpson declined to be interviewed, saying he had done nothing since his release but sit in a car for five hours.

Keast acknowledged Nevada prison officials misled the media with word about the timing and location of Simpson's release. They had advised it would be no earlier than Monday and possibly in Las Vegas.

On Sept. 16, 2007, Simpson led five men into a room at the Palace Station casino in Las Vegas in an effort to retrieve items that Simpson insisted were stolen after his acquittal in the 1994 slayings.

Simpson's conviction in October 2008 in Las Vegas came 13 years to the day after he was acquitted of murder charges in October 1995 in Los Angeles. He was accused of killing his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, in 1994.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Poaching of lactating moose investigated

VT WESTMORE — Vermont game wardens want tips on the poaching of a lactating cow moose left to rot on the side of a rural road.

Wardens said Saturday they want to hold someone accountable for the Sept. 23 nighttime poaching of a moose shot from the road in Westmore.

The wardens said poachers shot the moose and then dragged the animal on the road behind their truck more than 11 miles to Orleans. There, the animal rotted in 80-degree heat by the side of a road. The moose was lactating, a sign she had a calf with her.

Residents say monkeys loose in neighborhood

OH LEBANON — Residents of a quiet town in southwest Ohio swear they're not seeing things when they tell people monkeys are on the loose in their neighborhood.

WLWT-TV reported residents in Lebanon, about 30 miles northeast of Cincinnati, have used their phones to capture photos of the monkeys hanging out in trees.

Lebanon police said they're aware of the reported monkey sightings and are investigating. Residents suspect the monkeys were pets at some point.

Rabid deer strikes man in face with antlers

NY TROY — A man said he was attacked by a rabid deer in upstate New York and it nearly stabbed him in the eye with its antlers.

Tony Remillard, 34, of Troy, was in his backyard Sept. 26 when the 10-point buck jumped his fence and attacked him.

The Albany Times-Union reported the encounter left Remillard with a black eye and a facial gash that required eight stitches to close.

Remillard said he was able to escape when a neighbor drove up. The deer ran off and later was found dead by a state Department of Environment and Conservation officer.

A DEC spokesman said the deer carcass tested positive for rabies.

Court: Cheerleaders' Bible verse banners OK

TX BEAUMONT — A Texas appeals court has ruled banners emblazoned with Bible verses by a group of cheerleaders at football games are protected private speech and not government speech that can be regulated by school officials.

In its ruling Thursday, the 9th Court of Appeals in Beaumont said it's "highly unlikely" people would consider the messages on the banners by the Kountze school district cheerleaders to be endorsed by the school.

The district at first said the banners couldn't be displayed but later changed its policy. The cheerleaders sued in 2012.

The Texas Supreme Court last year allowed the lawsuit to continue, sending it back to the lower court.

Sledgehammer-wielding robbery suspect shot

IL CHICAGO — The FBI said the driver of an armored vehicle shot a man who was trying to rob him by hitting him with a sledgehammer.

FBI Spokesman Garrett Croon said the driver for Garda armored car services exited his vehicle with a bag in his hand as he made a delivery to a Chicago currency exchange around 9:30

a.m. Saturday. That's when a man came up to the driver with a sledgehammer and hit him in the back.

The driver shot the would-be robber at least once before he ran from the scene in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. Witnesses later saw him inside a vehicle. Police said he was taken into custody and then to a hospital.

Firefighters rescue hurt hiker on mountain

AZ PHOENIX — Phoenix and Tempe firefighters hauled a hiker with a broken ankle over the top of Camelback Mountain by using a basket and rope systems to get her to a landing zone where a helicopter then picked her up and flew her to a ground ambulance.

A Phoenix Fire Department spokesman said the rescue Saturday took three hours because of its difficult location and because the primary rescue helicopter normally used by technical rescue teams was unavailable due to maintenance.

Fire Capt. Larry Subervi said the 29-year-old patient was reported in stable condition.

Woman jailed in theft during flood cleanup

MD ELLICOTT CITY — A Maryland woman was sentenced to 30 days in prison for the theft of more than \$6,000 in jewelry from an antiques shop during the cleanup of a 2016 flood.

The Baltimore Sun reported Melissa Lynn Poole, 35, entered an Alford plea Thursday in connection with a theft from Antiques 'n Things in Ellicott City.

The Howard County State's Attorney's Office said in a news release that Poole was employed by Servpro, a disaster

restoration firm, and deployed to the antiques shop between September and October 2016.

The store's owner found that several items were missing, and investigators later discovered that several items had been pawned at Westminster and Frederick pawn shops.

Teacher is suspended, reassigned over slur

GA COLUMBUS — A Georgia teacher accused of using a racial slur in the presence of fourth-graders was suspended without pay for two days and reassigned to a nonclassroom position.

The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer reported a Friday news release from Muscogee County School District Superintendent David Lewis said an investigation concluding Sept. 26 found the teacher had acted inappropriately.

The news release said the teacher received an official reprimand and cultural competency training. It said the teacher was trying to teach a lesson about racial tolerance.

Flushed jumpsuit leaves \$100,000 in damages

NJ TOMS RIVER — Officials said a jumpsuit flushed down a toilet by an inmate caused at least \$100,000 in damage to a justice complex in New Jersey.

Pipes burst, including the main sewer line, damaging courtrooms and the sheriff's office at the Ocean County Justice Complex on Sept. 24. The inmate who flushed the suit has not been identified.

The county plans to spend up to \$2 million to install "low-flow" toilets that will permit an inmate just one flush per hour.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

NFL roundup

Cam Newton, Panthers surprise Patriots

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Some NFL teams might underplay what a win in Week 4 of the regular season could mean for their overall prospects. Not the Carolina Panthers.

A week after being thumped in a 21-point loss to New Orleans, Cam Newton ignited what had been a mostly dormant offense over the first three weeks in a 33-30 win Sunday over the defending Super Bowl champion New England Patriots.

“You build off this kind of momentum. And you have to take it and use it now,” Panthers coach Ron Rivera said. “You can’t waste it.”

The Panthers certainly didn’t leave anything on the field Sunday.

Carolina finished with 444 total yards. It had entered the day ranked 28th in the NFL, averaging just 277 yards per game.

Newton threw for three scores and ran for another to put Carolina in front. Then, after the Patriots tied the game late, the 2015 league MVP then drove his team 46 yards over 10 plays to set up Graham Gano’s winning 48-yard field goal.

This marks just the fifth time that Carolina has started 2-0 on the road. Two of those previous times, 2015 and 2003, they went on to reach the Super Bowl.

Newton scored his 50th touchdown rushing, the only quarterback in NFL history to do so. He pumped his fist to “signify Black Power” after his rushing touchdown, a gesture he said he decided to do to show the joy he has when he plays.

It came on a day when several NFL players chose to abandon taking a knee during the national anthem.

“I pray every night for God to give me a pinnacle to give people hope,” Newton said. “I did it ... to show black pride because I am African-American. But more or less, I want all people to just see when I play I want them to see the joy that I go out there and play with. Win, lose or draw it was a great win for us today.”

While the Panthers felt they discovered something about themselves, the Patriots suddenly have two losses in the first four weeks of the season. Both at home.

It marked the second time since 2012 that quarterback Tom Brady has lost two starts at home in the same season.

Broncos 16, Raiders 10: The Broncos throttled running back Marshawn Lynch and sent quarterback Derek Carr to the sideline with a back injury, then sealed their win on safety Justin Simmons’ inter-

ception of EJ Manuel at the Denver 8 in the closing minutes.

Despite holding Lynch to 12 yards on nine carries, the host Broncos found themselves in danger of frittering away an AFC West showdown they had dominated. Trailing by six, Manuel heaved a high toss to Amari Cooper just after the two-minute warning. Simmons, who won the job from three-time Pro Bowl safety T.J. Ward this summer, came down with the ball just shy of the goal line and took it out to 8. The Broncos ran out the clock to hit their bye week at 3-1.

Seahawks 46, Colts 18: J.D. McKisic took the second carry of his career 30 yards for a touchdown and Bobby Wagner scooped up Marcus Smith’s forced fumble and rumbled 21 yards for a score in a 13-second span late in the third quarter that helped host Seattle.

Cardinals 18, 49ers 12 (OT): Carson Palmer threw 19 yards to Larry Fitzgerald with 32 seconds left in overtime for the game’s only touchdown. The scoring had been limited to nine field goals on an ugly afternoon in the desert before Palmer directed a seven-play, 75-yard drive with 1:52 to play.

Eagles 26, Chargers 24: Carson Wentz passed for 242 yards, LeGarrette Blount rushed for 136 and the visiting Eagles extended their promising start to the season.

Rookie Jake Elliott kicked four field goals for the Eagles (3-1), who had thousands of roaring fans in the Chargers’ temporary stadium while they hung on to win on the road for the second time in 10 tries.

Buccaneers 25, Giants 23: Jameis Winston threw for 332 and three touchdowns without an interception, and Nick Folk kicked a 34-yard field goal as time expired in Tampa.

Folk redeemed himself after missing two field goals and an extra point earlier in the day, booting the winner after Winston answered Eli Manning’s second TD pass of the day with an impressive drive that began at his 25.

The Giants (0-4) lost on a last-second field goal for the second straight week. They took a 23-22 lead on Rhett Ellison’s 2-yard TD reception with 3:16 remaining. Manning threw to Odell Beckham Jr., in the rear of the end zone for a 2-point conversion that was disallowed because the receiver had stepped out of bounds before making the catch.

Bills 23, Falcons 17: Stephen Hauschka kicked a tiebreaking, 56-yard field goal with less than five minutes remaining and

visiting Buffalo made a last-minute defensive stand.

Steelers 26, Ravens 9: Le’Veon Bell rushed for 144 yards and two touchdowns to seize first place in the AFC North.

Though held to a touchdown over the final 30 minutes, Pittsburgh (3-1) mounted enough of an attack before halftime to earn its first win in Baltimore since 2012. Ben Roethlisberger went 18 for 30 for 216 yards and a touchdown.

Bell did more than his share, carrying the ball 35 times to help the Steelers amass 381 yards on offense.

The Ravens (2-2), meanwhile, looked every bit like the 32nd-ranked offense in the NFL. Baltimore trailed 19-0 at halftime, generated only 154 yards through three quarters and stumbled through a second straight game with only one touchdown.

Joe Flacco completed 31 of 49 passes for 235 yards, was sacked four times and intercepted twice.

Texans 57, Titans 14: Rookie Deshaun Watson threw for four touchdowns and ran for another as the host Texans scored the most points in franchise history.

Watson, the 12th pick in this year’s draft, became the first rookie to throw four touchdowns and run for another one since Fran Tarkenton in 1961, and tied an NFL record for most TDs by a rookie quarterback.

Lions 14, Vikings 7: Anthony Zettel led a ferocious performance by Detroit’s defense with two sacks, four hurries and a fumble recovery, as the Lions forced three turnovers while holding host Minnesota scoreless in the second half.

Jets 23, Jaguars 20 (OT): Chandler Catanzaro kicked a 41-yard field goal with 28 seconds left in overtime, lifting the host Jets to a wacky win.

After Catanzaro split the uprights, he and his teammates celebrated wildly in the middle of the field — but then had to wait because there was a penalty flag on the field. The officials ruled there actually was no penalty on the play, giving the Jets the victory.

Bengals 31, Browns 7: Andy Dalton threw three of his four touchdown passes in the first half and visiting Cincinnati’s offense found the perfect opponent to work out some early season struggles.

Dalton only missed on one of 18 throws in the first half as the Bengals (1-3) built a 21-0 lead.

Rams knock off Cowboys for 3-1 start

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Greg The Leg didn't need any long kicks to beat the Dallas Cowboys. Just seven steady swings.

Now the Los Angeles Rams will see if they can build on a 3-1 start after failing badly at it a year ago.

Greg Zuerlein kicked a career-high seven field goals — all from 49 yards or closer — and Todd Gurley had a 53-yard catch-and-run touchdown among 215 total yards in a 35-30 victory on Sunday.

One of just two kickers with two field goals of 60 yards or longer in his career, Zuerlein didn't need one beyond 43 yards to help the Rams score on five straight possessions in the second half after trailing by 11 points in the second quarter.

The sixth-year pro, with a career success rate of 81 percent, matched his season total coming in and has made all 14 kicks this season.

"He's Mr. Automatic," coach Sean McVay said.

And that's something second-year quarterback Jared Goff is thinking about as the Rams approach the goal line. After last year's No. 1 overall pick lost the first seven starts of his career to finish last season,

Goff has seven touchdowns with one interception this year.

Settling for field goals was good enough to put the Rams in position for the lead on Gurley's long TD catch. And it was good enough in the fourth quarter, when Zuerlein hit his final three and the Rams stopped the Cowboys in the final minute when Dallas had to get a touchdown.

"For the most part when we get inside the 30, the first thing I think about is that I got points," said Goff, who threw for 255 yards and two touchdowns. "I got points. Don't be careless with it. Greg is absolute nails."

The Rams started 3-1 last year but went 1-11 the rest of the way as coach Jeff Fisher was fired.

McVay's offense is showing some staying power, with 121 yards rushing and 94 receiving from Gurley and the same kind of balance Dallas showed while going 13-3 for the top seed in the NFC last season.

Seattle, with three NFC West titles the past four years, visits Los Angeles on Sunday after two straight road wins by the Rams.

"Big. To finish this quarter 3-1 and having them be with big road wins with our defense on the field needing to make a stop and they do," Goff said. "It's been a lot of

fun so far and we look to continue it."

Things to consider as the Rams kept the Cowboys from winning a series-best fourth straight against them:

Dual-threat gurley: Gurley joined Hall of Famers Jim Brown (1958, 1963) and Emmitt Smith (1995) as the only NFL players with at least 575 scrimmage yards and seven touchdowns in the first four games. Gurley is up to 596 total yards and seven touchdowns.

Back in court: Ezekiel Elliott, last year's NFL rushing leader, had his third straight sub-100 game with 85 yards on 21 carries but did have two touchdowns. He matched the longest such drought from his rookie season and now waits to see what happens Monday, when a federal appeals court hears arguments over the NFL's emergency request to lift the injunction that blocked his six-game suspension.

Goff's growth: The throw to Gurley on the 53-yard score was perfect, and he led a clock-killing drive to Zuerlein's final field goal after the Cowboys scored quickly to get within 32-30 midway through the fourth quarter. "His blood pressure never raises and I think he's a special player," McVay said.

Busch wins 2nd straight

Associated Press

DOVER, Del. — Chase Elliott rubbed his head and leaned against his car, crestfallen as he replayed the final laps in his mind. Jimmie Johnson, his champion teammate, walked over to offer some encouragement and let Elliott vent.

"I anticipated them being cuss words," Johnson said, "and they were."

Elliott had it, the first win in 70 career Cup starts in his sight, the white flag about to drop.

But the son of a NASCAR Hall of Fame driver simply could not find his way out of a thicket of traffic and Kyle Busch was ready to pounce. Busch spoiled Elliott's bid at his first career NASCAR Cup Series victory, taking the lead with two laps left to win Sunday at Dover International Speedway.

Elliott, largely expected to lead NASCAR's next genera-

tion of stars, was in stunned disbelief that he let the lead slip away.

"I'm just so disappointed in myself," Elliott said. "Golly. I couldn't have had it any easier. I gave it away."

Busch, the 2015 Cup champion, went high on the concrete track and zipped past Elliott to win for the second straight week. He won for the fourth time in the No. 18 Toyota and is streaking at the right time as NASCAR's playoffs head into the second round. Busch is 24 points behind fellow Toyota driver Martin Truex Jr. for the points lead and was already safely in the field of 12.

Ryan Newman, Austin Dillon, Daytona 500 champion Kurt Busch and Brickyard 400 winner Kasey Kahne were eliminated as the playoff field was cut from 16 drivers.

Elliott was second, followed by Johnson, Truex and Kyle Larson.

Americans roll to victory

Associated Press

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — President Donald Trump showed up about an hour after the final match was underway Sunday at the Presidents Cup. Had he shown up much later, he might have missed the start of a long celebration for an American team that rarely had it this easy.

This really was over before it started.

"Honestly, it was really weird being out there today, knowing there was no chance of losing," Dustin Johnson said after going unbeaten in five matches. "I don't know how to explain it, but it was like playing golf with my buddies. We were going to win no matter what."

The Americans so thoroughly defeated and demoralized the International team that they needed just one point from 12 singles matches to win the gold trophy. Daniel Berger delivered the cup-clinching moment in the fourth match.

Charley Hoffman, one of five Americans who had never experienced cup competition as a pro, chased after Berger and sprayed him with champagne, and then Berger grabbed the bottle for a guzzle before passing it to U.S. captain Steve Stricker.

The final score was 19-11, the seventh straight victory for the Americans. They extended their dominance to 10-1-1 in this contest.

"This is a juggernaut of a U.S. team," said Nick Price, in his third and final stint of the International captain, all of them losses. "They're an overpowering team that played some phenomenal golf. It was tough to watch, especially being on the receiving end."

The only consolation was keeping the Americans from a record rout.

"They came in here riding a ton of momentum and a ton of confidence," Stricker said. "It was about getting out of their way."

The MLB postseason — from A to Z

Associated Press

All those home runs by Aaron Judge, all those wins by the Los Angeles Dodgers, nicely done. Except none of that matters now — a sinker that bounces to the backstop, a liner that hooks barely foul, the whole script flips.

October has a way of doing that.

The Major League Baseball playoffs start Tuesday night at Yankee Stadium when New York hosts the Minnesota Twins in the AL wild-card game. A look at the 2017 postseason, from A to Z:

A: Altuve's Astros — Generously listed at 5-foot-6, Jose Altuve is baseball's little big man. The do-everything second baseman won his third AL batting title and aims to lead the Astros to their first World Series crown. With the Houston area recovering from Hurricane Harvey, they're the sentimental favorites.

B: Bullpens — Kenley Jansen and Arldis Chapman going long, Andrew Miller entering early, Clayton Kershaw as a closer. The old rules were out last October when it came to relief roles. We'll see what pops up in the 'pens this year.

C: Cubs vs. Cleveland — Kris Bryant, Anthony Rizzo, Corey Kluber & Crew, once more? It's been a while since a World Series rematch, when Reggie Jackson led the Yanks over the Dodgers in 1977-78. But, it's already been a ripe year for repeats — Warriors vs. Cavaliers, Alabama vs. Clemson.

D: Debuts — Strikeout king Chris Sale makes his first playoff appearance when Boston starts at Houston on Thursday in the best-of-five AL Division Series. Rockies bopper Nolan Arenado and Twins slugger Brian Dozier are postseason newbies, too. So is Nationals backup Adam Lind, after 12 years and more than 1,300 games.

E: Extra — Hmmm, anyone remember the last time a postseason game went to extra innings? Hard to top the Cubs' 10-inning, rain-delayed, 8-7 thriller over Cleveland in Game 7. The Red Sox are the experts of extras this year — they're 15-3, including seven straight wins.

F: Free agents — Sure, 20 teams are done. But their fans can always dream. Cubs righty Jake Arrieta, Royals third baseman Mike Moustakas and Rays thumper Logan Morrison are on the list of who'll soon be available. The most intriguing possibility might be Shohei Otani, a star pitcher and hitter in Japan.

G: Good to see ya — Rockies outfielder Carlos Gonzalez returns to the playoffs for the first time since 2009, when he was 10-for-17. Twins star Joe Mauer has been absent since 2010. And Nationals ace Stephen Strasburg has pitched just once in Washington's three trips, heading into this matchup with the Cubs.

H: Home field — World Series home-field advantages go to the team with the best record. Thankfully, it's no longer based on who wins the All-Star Game. That means the Dodgers (104 wins) get first dibs, followed by Cleveland (102), Houston (101), Washington (97), Boston (93) and the Cubs (92).

I: Injuries — Nationals ace Max Scherzer tweaked his hamstring, teammate Bryce Harper is getting over a bad knee. Banged-up All-Stars Miguel Sano of the Twins and Michael Brantley of the Indians might be able contribute this week. Might not.

J: Joe Maddon — A cool cat, he keeps his Cubs loose. He reveled in last year's rallying cry: "Try Not to Suck." The skipper became the toast of Chicago, ending that century-old drought. Funny, all those warm-and-fuzzy Wrigley Field feelings are gone now, at least beyond the Friendly Confines.

K: Kershaw — He tied for the major league lead in wins and won his fifth ERA title. He's a three-time Cy Young Award winner and seven-time All-Star. But will anyone get more scrutiny in the postseason than Clayton Kershaw? Probably not, because the LA lefty is 4-7 with a 4.55 ERA in the postseason.

L: Lousy weather — Too bad, the temperature is often better suited for snowballs than baseballs. It was in the low 40s at Wrigley last year, and just imagine how it might feel in Denver or Minneapolis. If you want clear conditions, root for Arizona vs. Houston and their retractable roofs.

M: Managers — Twin Cities native Paul Molitor, Torey Lovullo of the Diamondbacks and Bud Black of the Rockies are first-time skippers in the playoffs. Washington's Dusty Baker is back for his ninth try, still seeking that elusive first World Series championship.

N: Netting — Fan safety has drawn special focus ever since a 1-year-old girl was recently hit by Todd Frazier's 105 mph foul ball at Yankee Stadium. Of the teams in these playoffs, three already had extended the netting to screen spectators: Houston, Washington and Minnesota. The Yankees say they'll have it next year.

O: October — Because of course. Although if the World Series goes to Game 7, they'll go beyond Halloween and play on Nov. 1.

P: Puerto Rico — Carlos Beltran, Francisco Lindor and Carlos Correa are among the many players from Puerto Rico trying to raise money and awareness for the damage done to their island by Hurricane Maria. Look for messages on caps and shoes over the next few weeks.

Q: Quick? — Extra mound conferences, longer TV commercials, more pitching changes, they all contribute to slowing down the pace in the playoffs. MLB wants

to speed up the action and avoid a repeat from last year, when postseason games averaged almost 3½ hours. Unfortunately, regular-season games this year averaged over 3 hours, 5 minutes, the longest ever.

R: Rookies — Yankees behemoth Aaron Judge broke the major league record with 52 home runs by a rookie, Dodgers surprise Cody Bellinger set the NL mark with 39. Other newcomers who could make an impact: Red Sox outfielder Andrew Benintendi, Cubs outfielder/infielder Ian Happ and 33-year-old Astros first baseman Yuli Gurriel.

S: Streaks — Jose Ramirez and the Indians set an AL record by winning 22 straight, the Dodgers dropped 11 in a row for their worst skid since moving from Brooklyn. A year after winning its first six postseason games, and in this season of streaks, Cleveland hopes to do it again.

T: Trades — Justin Verlander (5-0, 1.06 ERA for Houston), J.D. Martinez (29 homers in 62 games for Arizona) and Jose Quintana (7-3, 3.74 for the Cubs) are some of the stars who were acquired in midseason trades. Yu Darvish, David Robertson and Eduardo Nunez also gave their new teams a boost.

U: Umpires — It won't be long before some team is hollering about an ump's strike zone. Those calls can't be contested, but others can. Some teams are very good at getting them overturned (Joe Girardi and the Yankees won 72 percent of their challenges). Others, not so much (the Nationals were right only 36 percent).

V: Voting — All ballots for MVP, Cy Young and other major awards must be sent before the playoffs begin. These honors will generate plenty of debate before the winners are announced in November. Altuve or Judge, Kluber or Sale?

W: Wild cards — Madison Bumgarner and the 2014 Giants are the only wild-card team to win the World Series since MLB went to a one-and-done format in 2012. Before that, five wild cards took the title: Cardinals (2011), Red Sox (2004), Marlins (2003, 1997) and Angels (2002).

X: Xander Bogaerts — Perhaps the Boston shortstop might be the next infielder to really break out in postseason. Think Javier Baez, Daniel Murphy, Ben Zobrist and Alcides Escobar in recent years.

Y: Yankee Stadium — The playoffs begin the Bronx, with Yankees youngster Luis Severino starting the AL wild-card game, taking on Ervin Santana and the Twins.

Z: Zack Greinke — The Arizona ace is set to throw the first pitch in Wednesday's NL wild-card game at home against a familiar opponent. He's 2-1 in five starts vs. Colorado this year.