

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Mattis to Iraqi, Kurd forces: Focus on militants

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Friday urged Iraqi and Kurdish peshmerga forces to focus on defeating Islamic State and not fight each other, as tensions spiked in the disputed region around Kirkuk.

“Everybody stay focused on defeating ISIS,” Mattis said. “We can’t turn on each other right now. We don’t want this to go to a shooting situation.”

Speaking to reporters as he flew back to Washington from a three-day trip to Florida, Mattis said the U.S. is trying to calm the already-fractious relations between the two sides and to figure out a way ahead.

Kurdish forces had taken positions southwest of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk but later withdrew. Iraqi government troops also have been moving around the area.

Tensions between the two sides have been escalating since the Kurds voted for independence from Iraq in a non-binding referendum last month. The peshmerga took control of Kirkuk when Iraqi defenses crumbled in the face of advancing ISIS troops in 2014. Baghdad is demanding the Kurds return the city, which falls outside the autonomous Kurdish zone, to federal authority.

The roiling conflict grew in recent days with the movement of forces on both sides, raising U.S. concerns that as the fight with ISIS begins to wind down, the long-simmering sectarian violence between Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites will erupt once again.

So far, Mattis said, there has been no actual fighting between the Iraqi troops and the peshmerga around Kirkuk.

## 2-star Army general relieved

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The two-star general who heads U.S. Army Africa has been fired and recalled to Washington amid allegations he had an inappropriate relationship with the wife of an enlisted soldier, the Army said Friday.

An Army statement provided to The Associated Press said Maj. Gen. Joseph Harrington was removed from his job due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command. He is one in a string of senior Army officers who have been disciplined for bad behavior, triggering the development earlier this

year of new programs aimed at shaping stronger, more ethical leaders.

Army Col. Patrick Seiber, an Army spokesman, said Friday that Harrington is under investigation for sending inappropriate Facebook messages to the woman, who is married to a soldier on that same base in Vicenza, Italy. Harrington, who also is married, was suspended from his post on Sept. 1 but had stayed in Italy.

Under the latest move, Seiber said Harrington will remain in the Army but will be reassigned to the Pentagon. As is usually done in discipline cases, Harrington will work as a special

assistant to the director of the Army Staff until the investigation is finished.

Earlier this year, the Army began putting together a number of new mental health, counseling and career management programs in order to boost professionalism within the officer corps and get at what may be the root causes of the behavior problems.

Gen. Mark Milley, the Army’s chief of staff, told the AP last month that “we recognized senior executive leaders, with varying amounts of stress, lacked a holistic program that focuses on comprehensive health.”

## 4 airmen accused of defacing SC church

Associated Press

MAYESVILLE, S.C. — Four young members of the Air Force have been arrested after authorities said they spray-painted satanic symbols on a 250-year-old South Carolina church that tends to draw people interested in ghost stories. Now they face charges that could put them in prison.

The four suspects were arrested late Thursday, less than a day after deputies put out surveillance photos of the vandalism at Salem Black River Presbyterian Church, Sumter County sheriff’s spokesman Ken Bell said.

Satanic symbols and phrases were spray-painted on the church’s columns and doors on Sept. 29, causing about \$3,000 in damage. The door to the church’s sanctuary also was kicked in, but deputies don’t think the suspects entered, Bell said.

Investigators aren’t sure why the four airmen from nearby Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter decided to damage the church, which appears on the National Register of Historic Places. But Sheriff Anthony Dennis has said his department has had to deal with other problems caused by people who say the church is haunted.

The suspects are Kayla Eilerman, 18, of Ingleside, Texas; Clayre Savage, 18, of Port Barre, La.; Daveion Green, 19, of Leeland, N.C.; and Brandon Munoz, 20, of Baltimore.

All are charged with trespassing, malicious injury to a house of worship and criminal conspiracy, Bell said. Court records did not indicate if they had lawyers.

The suspects face a minimum of six months in prison if convicted of the malicious injury charge.

Salem Black River Presbyterian Church was founded by

Scotch-Irish settlers in 1759.

The current brick church was built in the 1840s, with a slave gallery in the balcony. After the Civil War, former slaves left and created their own church.

The church was one of about a dozen houses of worship on a list kept by Dylann Roof as he researched where he wanted to commit his racist massacre in 2015. Roof eventually went to Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, killing nine worshippers. He has been sentenced to death.

The Air Force did not say what discipline the suspects could face but said in a statement that their behavior was not representative of their base.

“We feel we are part of this community, are proud to serve here and we are disappointed to hear of this incident,” said 1st Lt. Alannah Staver, spokeswoman for the 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw.

# Kurds waging 'final' battle for Raqqa

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces fighting Islamic State militants in Syria said on Saturday that they are waging the "final" battle to uproot the extremists from the northern city of Raqqa, once the de facto capital of the militant group.

This final battle could take hours or days, said Mustafa Bali, the spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

Losing Raqqa, in many ways the symbol of ISIS' caliphate, would be yet another blow to the militant group and its reign of terror in the region as its strongholds crumble one after another in Iraq and other parts of Syria.

ISIS militants are desperately fighting in a number of neighborhoods in the city, Bali said.

"They are still able to fight

but they will no longer determine the fate of the battle," Bali said. "Our forces are waging the final phase of the battle of the presence of Daesh in Raqqa. We have not decided if this battle will last hours, days or weeks." Daesh is the Arabic term for ISIS.

Over the past days, mediation efforts by local tribesmen and the local civil council have secured the release of a number of civilians from Raqqa. A local council official, Omar Alloush of the Raqqa Civilian Council, told The Associated Press on Friday that 100 ISIS fighters surrendered to U.S.-backed forces.

U.S. officials have said that only surrender, not a negotiated withdrawal for ISIS, would be accepted.

Hundreds of terrified civilians have been filmed fleeing toward the Syrian Democratic

Forces from the last remaining neighborhoods held by ISIS in Raqqa ahead of the anticipated final battle for Raqqa. U.S. officials recently said an estimated 4,000 civilians are believed still trapped in the city.

A new video that emerged Friday shows desperate, terrified residents emerging from destroyed districts, some of them collapsing on the ground in exhaustion as they arrive, in haunting scenes reflecting their years-old ordeal.

Militants seized Raqqa in 2014, the first city to fall under the full control of the extremist group. It has since become synonymous with the group's rule of terror in the region, with civilians punished in public killings over the slightest perceived offense — videotaped slayings that have shocked the rest of the world. It was also from Raqqa,

which became a destination for foreign fighters from around the world, that many of ISIS attacks in the West were plotted.

The latest battle for Raqqa began in June, with heavy street-by-street fighting amid intense U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and shelling. The battle has dragged on in the face of stiff resistance from the militants.

On Saturday, the SDF said they seized the al-Nahda neighborhood in Raqqa's western sector. A day earlier, ISIS carried out an offensive on SDF forces near the city's main hospital, an ISIS fortified headquarters.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group with activists on the ground, said negotiations over the fate of foreign fighters who remain in Raqqa have delayed the final push to regain control of the city.

## New air support rules could cause more Afghan civilian deaths

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Ghulam Rabani was in his bathroom, washing for prayer, on a warm afternoon last month when a wall collapsed on him.

An errant U.S. missile, directed at Taliban militants who launched an attack on Kabul's airport as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis was visiting, accidentally hit Rabani's nearby house.

"There was dust everywhere, and for a few seconds, I couldn't see anything. I could only hear my family screaming," said Rabani, a taxi driver.

Strikes like this one are adding to fears that the new U.S. strategy for the Afghan War that loosens restrictions on air support could cause more civilian casualties and could undermine coalition efforts in the country. Meanwhile, newly released United Nations data indicate that the airstrike casualty rate already was headed upward.

In the first nine months of this

year, civilian casualties from U.S. airstrikes rose by about 80 percent, to about 180, from some 100 during the same period last year, the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said in a report released on Thursday.

Fighting the Taliban has become more difficult as the insurgents increasingly operate in residential areas like Rabani's neighborhood, deliberately putting civilians at risk.

During the Taliban's Sept. 27 attack on the airport, the U.S. conducted an airstrike to help Afghan forces battle the insurgents. Rabani's house was hit by a malfunctioning missile. The U.S. military said in a statement it deeply regretted the incident.

"They had to target the attackers. We understand that," said Fardin, Rabani's nephew, who also lived in the house and like many Afghans uses just one name. "But they never met with us afterward to apologize. We heard their comments on TV like everyone else. They should at least come talk to us to see what happened here."

Rabani was invited to speak with officials at NATO's headquarters in Kabul about two weeks after the blast. He said he was optimistic they would provide compensation. When contacted by Stars and Stripes, the NATO mission said it would not discuss compensation out of respect for the family and to protect their safety.

Shortly before the visit, Rabani and Fardin gave a tour of their destroyed home about a week and a half after the missile struck.

Glass, broken concrete and other debris littered every room. In one room, they pointed to a spot where Rabani's nearly 3-year-old granddaughter was found buried under a pile of rubble. In another spot, his 6-year-old grandson was trapped under a piece of furniture.

The boy later walked over to show wounds on his arm before going to a broken desk, where he flipped through a children's book with burned pages. The 3-year-old also survived the strike. Nine members of the

family were injured and taken to the hospital, Rabani said. Three remain there. The family had to move into another relative's house, where space is limited.

Speaking from a second-floor room at his house, now exposed after two walls and the ceiling fell away, Rabani described how his neighbors were angry with the U.S. for not reaching out and providing compensation immediately.

"We don't have money to treat our wounded family members, let alone rebuild this house," he said. "And people are angry about it. People in the community wanted to hold a demonstration and block roads, but I told them to wait and be patient."

Afghan officials said they had given Rabani an undisclosed amount of money, which Rabani said was about \$1,470.

Mounting civilian casualties from airstrikes risk undermining coalition efforts at stabilizing Afghanistan and have been used by the Taliban as a recruiting tool in the past.



# Trump ending subsidies shakes up health industry and politics

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's abrupt move to cut off federal payments to insurers jolted America's health care and political worlds, threatening to hike premiums for millions, disrupt insurance markets and shove Republicans into a renewed civil war over their efforts to shred "Obamacare."

Defiant Democrats, convinced they have important leverage, promised to press for a bipartisan deal to restore the money by year's end. That drive could split the GOP. On one side: pragmatists seeking to avoid political damage from hurting consumers. On the other: conservatives demanding a major weakening of the Affordable Care Act as the price for returning the money.

The money goes to companies for lowering out-of-pocket costs such as co-payments and deductibles for low- and middle-income customers. It will cost about \$7 billion this year and help more than 6 million people.

Ending the payments would affect insurers because President Barack Obama's law requires them to reduce their poorer customers' costs. Carriers are likely to recoup the lost money by increasing 2018 premiums for people buying their own health insurance policies.

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners estimates that Trump's move would produce a 12 percent to 15 percent upsurge in premiums, while the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has put the figure at 20 percent. That's on top of premium

increases from growing medical costs.

The scrapping of subsidies would affect millions more consumers in states won by Trump last year than in states won by Democrat Hillary Clinton. Nearly 70 percent of the 6 million who benefit from the cost-sharing subsidies are in states that voted for the Republican.

Trump's move was hailed by conservative groups.

But rallying against it were medical and consumer groups including the American Heart Association, the American College of Physicians and insurance industry behemoths America's Health Insurance Plans and Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

Nineteen Democratic state attorneys general are suing Trump over the stoppage.

## Vegas shooter aimed fire at police and fuel tanks

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The gunman who sprayed more than 1,000 bullets into a Las Vegas country music concert also took shots at jet fuel tanks and targeted police officers responding to the scene, investigators said Friday in portraying a killer who seemed determined to inflict even more carnage than the 58 people he murdered.

Investigators gave more details on the chronology of events surrounding the shooting and pushed back against criticism that they were changing their story. Shifting accounts about when Stephen Paddock fired his first shots in his 32nd floor Mandalay Bay suite have led to questions about whether police could have done more to stop him on Oct. 1.

In a chronology provided Monday, Lombardo had said Paddock started spraying 200 rounds from his suite into the hallway of the Mandalay Bay at 9:59 p.m., wounding an unarmed security guard in the leg. He said Friday that the security guard came to a barricaded stairwell door at 9:59 and wasn't shot until about 10:05 p.m.

About that time, the gunman unleashed a barrage of bullets onto the crowd. Then he killed himself with a shot to the head.

The timeline comes as investigators say they have yet to identify a motive behind the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. The FBI says agents have conducted hundreds of interviews, have chased nearly 2,000 leads, have looked at Paddock's computers and phone, have collected 1,000 pieces of evidence, and have analyzed hours of video footage.

The sheriff became emotional describing gunshot wounds one on-duty officer, Brady Cook, received to the shoulder, bicep, chest and back as he arrived in a police patrol car moments after shooting started.

A visual inspection of Paddock's brain during a coroner's autopsy found "no abnormalities," Lombardo said.

## California communities get glimpse of hope amid wildfire's destruction

Associated Press

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — Even as an unprecedented toll of death and destruction kept mounting, California communities were getting glimpses of heroism, humanity and hope as wildfires burned around them.

While firefighters made major gains against most of the blazes Friday, the Santa Rosa Fire Department released a notice early Saturday morning, ordering residents in Skyhawk, Mountain Hawk and some of Rincon Valley to leave their homes.

The fires have left 35 dead, and destroyed 5,700 homes and businesses, making this the most deadly and destructive series of fires California has seen.

Evacuees at an RV evacuation site at Sonoma Raceway counted their blessings, trying not to think about what they've lost and what they might lose still.

The mood at sunset Friday was upbeat, even cheerful as children and dogs scampered in the twilight. More than 100 campers were parked by the side of a highway. There were portable bathrooms and tables groaning from donated water, stuffed animals and food.

At Sonoma Valley High School, middle school principal Will Deeths supervised volunteers and made sure people had water and a filter mask. He said a little more than 100 people spent Thursday night at the school, which has been converted into a shelter.

He said community response has been phenomenal. Hairdressers from Oakland came to fix people's hair and a young man played guitar to entertain families, he said. They even had a birthday party for a 5-year-old boy, complete with a donated cake.

In all, 17 large fires still burned across the northern part of the state, with more than 9,000 firefighters attacking the flames using air tankers, helicopters and more than 1,000 fire engines.

Two of the largest fires in Napa and Sonoma counties were at least 25 percent contained by Friday, which marked "significant progress," said state fire Chief Ken Pimlott.

Crews have arrived from Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North and South Carolina, Oregon and Arizona. Other teams came from as far away as Canada and Australia.

The influx of outside help offered critical relief to firefighters who have been working with little rest since the blazes started.

# Rescued family's story raises new questions

*The Washington Post*

Pakistani officials described the mission to free an American woman, her Canadian husband and their three children as a harrowing operation and a rare bit of positive news in the troubled relationship between their country and the United States.

Pakistani soldiers, acting on American intelligence, appear to have opened fire Wednesday at the tires of a car carrying Caitlan Coleman, 31, her husband, Joshua Boyle, 34, and their three children not long after it crossed the border from Afghanistan into Pakistan's tribal areas.

A senior Trump administration official, shortly after the family's release, compared their ordeal to "living in a hole for five years."

The family's dramatic rescue has raised as many questions as it has answered. On Friday night, Coleman, Boyle and their children arrived in Toronto after the family, at the husband's insistence, had refused to get on a plane for the United States.

Boyle's father told The New York Times his son did not want to stop at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan, where Americans have been accused of abusing detainees.

The family's refusal to travel to the United States led some former U.S. officials to speculate about the couple's motives in journeying to Afghanistan five years earlier and suggest that they may be trying to avoid tough questions from U.S. intelligence officials. Other U.S. officials played down that explanation.

Shortly after marrying in 2011, Coleman and Boyle visited Central America and then headed off to Russia and Central Asia. Coleman was pregnant with their first child in 2012 when they decided to go hiking in Wardak province, a dangerous region south of Kabul that is dominated by feuding militant groups.

The couple's decision to visit Wardak and Boyle's personal history set off widespread speculation inside the U.S. intelligence community about his motives. Before he

wed Coleman, Boyle had married and divorced the oldest sister of Omar Khadr, a Canadian who was arrested by U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2002 and was alleged to have ties to al-Qaida.

The patriarch of the Khadr family was killed in 2003, along with al-Qaida and Taliban members, in a shootout with Pakistani security forces near the Afghanistan border. Boyle's associations with the family led some U.S. intelligence officials to speculate that the visit to Afghanistan may have been part of a larger effort to link up with Taliban-affiliated militants.

One former U.S. intelligence official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said, "He was never a fighter on the battlefield. But my belief is that he clearly was interested in getting into it."

After they were taken captive, Boyle and Coleman appear to have suffered through a harrowing ordeal. Coleman in a video released in December 2016 described her captivity as a "Kafkaesque nightmare."

## Catalan leader urges unity among separatists

*Associated Press*

BARCELONA, Spain — One of Catalonia's top separatist leaders called for unity Saturday as disputes over strategy threatened to divide those who want the northeastern region to split away from Spain.

Oriol Junqueras, Catalonia's regional vice president, said separatists need to stop bickering and to get behind the last-ditch effort by Catalonia's president to negotiate with Spain's central government.

"We must preserve the unity that is necessary to go all the way on this path to a republic," Junqueras said. "We must reiterate our belief in unity, in unity behind our government and the majority of the parliament."

Fissures have appeared among Catalan separatists ever since regional President Carles Puigdemont announced Tuesday that he was delaying an outright declaration of independence "for a few weeks" in hopes that he could open negotiations with Madrid.

That decision disappointed

many diehard separatists who want the prosperous northeastern region of 7.5 million people to leave Spain. The far-left party CUP and the main grassroots secessionist group, National Catalan Assembly, both have asked Puigdemont not to wait any longer.

Junqueras delivered his message to 200 members of his Republic Left party at its headquarters in Barcelona. The party forms a governing coalition with Puigdemont's conservatives in Catalonia's regional parliament and its allegiance is critical to the secessionist drive.

Spain's conservative government, led by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, is also pressing Puigdemont. It has given him a Monday deadline to clarify his position on independence as well as an ultimatum to fall in line with Spain's laws by Oct. 19 or face losing some or all of the region's autonomous powers.

The European Union supports a united Spain and no foreign country is behind Catalonia's separatists.

## British Isles in front line of latest Atlantic hurricane

*Bloomberg*

This year's Atlantic hurricane season is so fierce that even Ireland and Britain will get a piece of the action.

Ophelia, the 10th straight Atlantic tropical storm to become a hurricane, is moving northeast and will approach Ireland on Monday before moving over Scotland, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. It's set to be the strongest storm in the far eastern Atlantic since Hurricane Ivan in 1980.

"There may be gale-force winds, or even severe gale-force winds, on Monday, possibly Tuesday," said Nicola Maxey, a spokeswoman for the U.K. Met Office, which is based in Exeter, England. The western coasts of Ireland and England probably will be hit worst.

This Atlantic storm season already has racked up the most consecutive hurricanes since the late 19th century and has brought devastation to Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico. Europe had a taste of the stormy conditions early this month from the

remnants of hurricanes Maria and Lee, which helped push U.K. wind-power generation to a record.

Ophelia is likely to cause transportation delays, and there's a slight chance of power outages and damage to tile roofs on buildings Monday, the Met Office said as it issued a wind warning for the day. U.K. wind power generation is forecast to reach a record 9.3 gigawatts on Oct. 19, beating the previous high of 8.9 gigawatts at the start of the month.

Ophelia's maximum sustained winds are now 90 mph, the NHC said in an advisory on the website. That's twice as high as gale-force winds, which top out at 54 mph.

As the storm travels northeast, it'll probably lose intensity as it moves away from the warm water needed to sustain it, said Maxey at the U.K. Met Office.

This year's tally of 15 storms is above the seasonal average of 12, but less than the record 28 in 2005.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Skinny dippers disrupt wedding reception

**MA** SALISBURY — A pair of skinny-dippers gave a wedding reception at a scenic Massachusetts restaurant more of a view than expected.

Zachary Tomko told WHDH-TV he didn't realize there was a restaurant nearby when he and Holly O'Neil jumped naked into the water at Salisbury Beach on Saturday.

Salisbury Police Chief Thomas Fowler told The Boston Globe his department received several calls about the nude swimmers from beachgoers and members of the wedding party.

Police charged Tomko, 29, and O'Neil, 20 of Londonderry, N.H., with disorderly conduct.

## Crowd scrambles for money tossed in the air

**MA** NORTHAMPTON — Some people are a few dollars richer after a Massachusetts carpenter decided to toss his paycheck in the air and let the money float in the wind.

A crowd of people gathered at a Northampton intersection on Thursday to scrape up the dollar bills after Paul Vidich, 28, decided to dump his \$389 paycheck.

Vidich had his most recent paycheck taken out in hundreds of \$1 and \$2 bills.

While he describes himself as "ridiculously frugal," Vidich said it felt good to give the money away.

## Man cited for painting over children's mural

**VT** LONDONDERRY — A Vermont man has been cited for unlawful mischief after he painted over a public

mural designed by students.

The Bennington Banner reported that Ed Brown, 74, a restaurateur, said he acted on principle when he painted over the mural.

The mural was of a garden with various flowers designed by first- and second-grade students in the town. The creation of the mural was shepherded by artist Garrison Buxton, who painted it with volunteers in 2014, based on the students' designs.

Brown said he disliked the mural and it detracted from Londonderry's aesthetic.

## Man arrested after random 911 calls

**OH** SEBRING — Police in Ohio said they've arrested a man after receiving random 911 calls for months from his apparently malfunctioning cellphone.

The Review in Alliance reported Sebring police arrested Nathan Hawkins, 33, on Oct. 5 on a felony charge of disrupting public service.

Dispatchers in the northeast Ohio village said they received at least 20 emergency calls from Hawkins' cellphone from January through August.

According to police, Hawkins told them that he sometimes sleeps with the phone in his pocket and it just calls 911.

## TV news report leads man to lottery jackpot

**NY** NEW YORK — A New Jersey man said a television news report led him to check lottery tickets he had stuffed in an old shirt, and one was a \$24 million winner.

Jimmie Smith claimed a \$24.1 million New York lottery jackpot on May 23, two days before the prize would have expired.

The retired security guard

told lottery officials he's been buying lottery tickets in New York and New Jersey since the 1960s but doesn't rush to see whether he's won. He said he'd check them when he had the time.

He chose to receive the payout over 26 years.

## Officer's vehicle stolen from department lot

**MO** HILLSDALE — Police are looking for a brazen thief who stole a suburban St. Louis police officer's personal jeep, with his badge and two guns inside the vehicle, from the police department parking lot.

KTVI-TV reported that the Hillsdale officer's vehicle was recovered Thursday afternoon, but the guns and badges are missing.

The theft happened Wednesday. Hillsdale Police Chief Herb Simmons said the officer was at the gun range and left his personal items and badge in the jeep. Someone broke into the jeep and two police cars. Three bulletproof vests also were stolen.

## Man who hid heroin in Bible gets 6 months

**CT** NORWALK — A Connecticut man who was caught hiding heroin in a Bible while on parole will spend another six months in jail.

The Hour reported Christopher Hayes, 41, of Norwalk, was sentenced Thursday after pleading guilty to possession of narcotics and possession of narcotics with intent to sell.

Hayes had previously been sentenced to three years in prison followed by three years of special parole in 2013 for multiple convictions including larceny.

Prosecutors said police

found cocaine and heroin in Hayes' possession when they responded to reports of a disturbance in a Norwalk parking lot in July.

## Mike Diamond rescues fiancée's trashed ring

**NJ** JERSEY CITY — A New York City woman who accidentally threw her 3-carat diamond engagement ring in the trash has been reunited with it, thanks in large part to her soon-to-be-husband — Mike Diamond.

WCBS-TV reported that Ashlee Palacio mistakenly threw the ring away as she tossed some empty candy wrappers sitting on a nightstand.

Diamond called the sanitation department for help and dug through piles of garbage Wednesday at a waste transfer facility in Jersey City. With help from some of his fiancée's friends, Diamond was able to find their bag containing the ring in about 15 minutes.

## Fight locks down school, then parents brawl

**NY** POUGHKEEPSIE — Authorities said a New York high school had to be placed on lockdown after a fight broke out among students and another brawl erupted when their parents arrived.

Police told the Poughkeepsie Journal that at least 10 officers were sent to Poughkeepsie High School after a fight broke out among students.

According to police, the students' parents later arrived and got into a fight as well.

School district officials said an external threat required administrators to put the high school under a shelter-in-place warning until the threat was contained.

From wire reports

# STARS AND STRIPES

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# Astros top Yankees in Game 1 of ALCS

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Dallas Keuchel faced the New York Yankees in the postseason for the second time and the Houston Astros ace shut them down again.

Keuchel struck out 10 in seven scoreless innings to help Houston to a 2-1 victory on Friday night in the AL Championship Series opener.

"I think it's just pitch execution, and it's just been there more times than it hasn't against the Yankees," Keuchel said.

Keuchel threw six scoreless innings in a 3-0 win over New York in the 2015 AL wild-card game.

He allowed four hits — all singles — and walked one to improve to 8-2 with a 1.09 ERA in eight starts against the Yankees in the regular season and postseason. He joined Nolan Ryan and Mike Scott as the only Astros pitchers to reach double digits in strikeouts in a postseason game.

"Late movement — he moves

the ball and he commands it well," the Yankees' Greg Bird said.

Carlos Correa and Yuli Gurriel hit RBI singles in the fourth off loser Masahiro Tanaka, and left fielder Marwin Gonzalez threw out Bird at the plate trying to score on Aaron Judge's two-out single in the fifth.

"We had a shot," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "If Bird's safe maybe we really get to him in that inning."

Bird homered off Ken Giles with two outs in the ninth, and the closer struck out pinch-hitter Jacoby Ellsbury. Giles, who threw a season-high 37 pitches, escaped a two-out jam in the eighth by striking out Didi Gregorius.

Greeted by MVP chants each time to the plate, Jose Altuve had three more hits and at 11-for-19 (.579) has the most hits in a team's first five postseason games since Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki in 2001.

Houston is in the Championship Series for the first time since beating St. Louis in 2005.

The Yankees, who overcame a 2-0 deficit to beat Cleveland in the Division Series, lost their sixth straight ALCS game since 2010.

After the Astros totaled eight runs in the first innings of their four AL Division Series games, Japanese starter Tanaka kept the Astros hitless until Altuve's infield single rolled through the pitcher's legs in the fourth. Altuve swiped second before scoring on Correa's single. Gurriel followed with a two-out single, his 10th hit of the postseason.

Bird singled to start the fifth and Matt Holliday, making his first appearance of the postseason, reached when Altuve dropped his slow bouncer to second for an error. Judge singled with two outs and Gonzalez, throwing with such force that he fell to the ground, made a 97 mph one-hop throw to catcher Brian McCann, who tagged the sliding Bird.

"That was their best moment in the game, (I needed) to stop the momentum," Gonzalez said. "All I was thinking was to go

get the ball as fast as I could."

Primarily an infielder, Gonzalez had just two outfield assists in the regular season. He beat his hand into his glove three times in celebration after watching McCann make the tag.

"It's one of the best throws I've ever seen from an outfielder," Correa said.

Gonzalez threw out Boston's Mitch Moreland at the plate in the Division Series finale and is the first outfielder with assists in consecutive postseason games since Jim Rice in the 1986 World Series. He joined Lance Berkman as the only players in franchise history to have two outfield assists in one postseason.

After controversially failing to challenge a call in Game 2 of the Division Series, Girardi didn't hesitate to ask for a review.

"We thought he was out," he said. "But God knows I'm not doing that again."

## Tanaka's impressive outing overshadowed by loss

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Another solid postseason outing for Japan's Masahiro Tanaka, an impressive two-out hit for Aaron Judge and yet still another loss in Major League Baseball's American League Championship Series for the New York Yankees.

New York was stifled again by nemesis Dallas Keuchel, but at least this defeat to the Astros wasn't a one-and-done playoff game like two years ago.

The Yankees dropped their sixth straight ALCS game Friday night, this time 2-1 at Houston in Game 1.

"We get down early in games or gotten down early in series. ... Nothing changes. The mindset is still the same," Judge said. "Go out there and keep competing and having quality at-bats, and we will be where

we want to be in this series."

Houston did all of its damage against Tanaka in a four-batter span during the fourth inning, when the Astros got three of their four hits off the Japanese right-hander and scored both of their runs.

"Other than that, he was pounding the strike zone, he was working his pitches well," Judge said. "We weren't able to get any support for him."

New York's best chance of scoring off Keuchel came with two on and two outs in the fifth when slugging rookie Judge — already with a walk and his 17th strikeout in the playoffs — came back from a 1-2 count and lined a full-count pitch into left field. It was only Judge's fourth hit in 27 at-bats this postseason.

But Greg Bird, trying to score from second, was out on

a perfect throw from left fielder Marwin Gonzalez to Brian McCann, the catcher who was with the Yankees two years ago when they lost at home to Keuchel in the 2015 AL wild-card game.

"If Bird's safe maybe we really get to him in that inning, but he wasn't," manager Joe Girardi said.

At least there will be no second-guessing Girardi this time. The manager did ask for a replay challenge, though Bird was still out after the review.

"Well, we thought he was out," Girardi said. "But God knows I'm not doing that again."

In Game 2 of the AL Division Series against Cleveland a week ago, when the Yankees were leading by five runs, Girardi opted against asking for a replay challenge of a pivotal hit-by-pitch call prior to a grand

slam that trimmed the margin to 8-7 in the sixth inning. Cleveland won 9-8 in 13 innings, putting New York down 2-0 in that best-of-five series.

Keuchel struck out 10 while allowing four singles in his seven innings, improving to 6-2 with a 1.06 ERA in eight career starts against the Yankees when counting the postseason.

Bird did score in the ninth with his third postseason homer, pulling a two-out shot down the right-field line off closer Ken Giles.

The Yankees were swept in their previous ALCS by Detroit in 2012. Their last championship series victory came in Game 5 against Texas in 2010 before the Rangers clinched the pennant in the next game.

Tanaka went six innings and was solid aside from the fourth.



# Syracuse knocks off No. 2 Clemson

Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — As the celebration in the Syracuse locker room reverberated through the walls of the Carrier Dome, Clemson coach Dabo Swinney winced a little bit, dreams of a perfect season lost in a sea of orange.

Eric Dungey threw for 278 yards and three touchdowns, Cole Murphy kicked a tiebreaking field goal in the fourth quarter, and Syracuse stunned No. 2 Clemson 27-24 on Friday night to put a damper on the Tigers' chances to repeat as national champions.

Down maybe, but not completely out. The Tigers (6-1, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) won the national championship last year despite a loss during the season to Pittsburgh.

"Every goal is there for this team," Swinney said. "We've got to get better from this, have the type of season we want to have."

Clemson had won 12 consecutive games on the opponent's home field, the longest streak in Clemson history and tied for the second-longest active streak in the nation. Clemson also had won 11 consecutive games overall, the longest active winning streak in the nation, and 12 straight away from home against ACC teams.

"It wasn't our night tonight. They were better than us," Swinney said. "There's nothing we're going to fix now. We're not going to be 12-0, that's for sure. That's not going to happen. This is going to hurt, but you move forward."

The Orange (4-3, 2-1) are 3-6 against the previous year's national champion, also beating Penn State in 1987 and Michigan in 1998. This was the program's first win in 13 tries against the No. 2 team in the nation.

"This is truly one of the moments that you coach for. This is really special," said Syracuse coach Dino Babers, in his second year with the Orange. "This is big."

The Tigers took a big blow when quarterback Kelly Bryant suffered a concussion in the final minute of the first half. He was knocked down hard by defensive tackle Chris Slayton and lay on the turf for a couple of minutes before being helped to the locker room. Slowed after spraining his left ankle last week against Wake Forest, Bryant passed for 116 yards and ran for minus-8 yards.

"They came ready to play," Clemson defensive end Clelin Ferrell said. "They came out, they saw blood, they saw they had a definite chance to win the

game and we just didn't capitalize on the opportunities we had to make a comeback."

Bryant, who watched the second half from the sideline, entered the game averaging 277 yards of total offense, but noticeably favored an injured ankle as Syracuse gained a surprising 17-14 halftime lead.

Zerrick Cooper replaced Bryant to start the second half and guided the Tigers to a tying field goal.

The Tigers tried a trick play with time winding down, but Will Spiers threw an incomplete on a fake punt.

The Syracuse defense limited the Tigers to 2 of 11 on third down, none more critical than Cooper's overthrow on third down before the fake.

Syracuse used big plays to stun the Tigers, hitting six for 20 yards or more as the Orange outgained Clemson 440-317. Dungey hit Dontae Strickland for a 23-yard score to open the game and also hit Ervin Phillips for 66 yards in the first quarter and Steve Ishmael for 30 in the third to break a 17-17 tie.

"Quick show of hands. Who thought we were going to win tonight?" Dungey asked in the postgame interviews. "That's exactly what we've been saying. It's just us. Nobody believes in us except us."

The Orange defense took a page out of Clemson's playbook. The Tigers were among just three teams in the nation averaging at least 230 yards rushing and 230 yards passing (Ohio State and Oregon are the others). The Tigers managed just 39 yards rushing in the first half and 113 total and finished with 204 passing.

No wonder the hometown fans stormed the field afterward.

"It was kind of surreal," Syracuse linebacker Parris Bennett said.

## The takeaway

**Clemson:** If the Tigers hope to keep in the hunt for the playoffs, either Cooper or freshman Hunter Johnson will have to assume the load at quarterback if Bryant has to sit. Clemson also needs to find consistency in the kicking game. Alex Spence missed a 35-yard field goal in the first quarter and a 38-yarder in the third.

**Syracuse:** The Orange once again proved that they can play with the big boys. Syracuse upset No. 17 Virginia Tech last October. Dungey needs to stay healthy, though. He had to sit out a play in the second quarter after a hard hit near the goal line and the Orange had to settle for a 22-yard field goal by Murphy.

# Bowers leads Cal to rout of No. 8 Washington State

Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — Ross Bowers found a way to overshadow California's opportunistic defense that forced seven turnovers and had nine sacks.

An acrobatic flip into the end zone will do just that.

Bowers scored on the touchdown leap and the Golden Bears used a dominant defensive performance to stun No. 8 Washington State 37-3 Friday night for their first win in 14 years against a top 10 team.

"I didn't think I could go left or right so why not over the

top," Bowers said. "Luckily I was able enough to land safely and all that stuff."

Camryn Bynum had two of California's five interceptions against Luke Falk, and the Bears (4-3, 1-3 Pac-12) overwhelmed the Cougars (6-1, 3-1) for a signature win under first-year coach Justin Wilcox.

Cal was just 1-52-1 against top 10 teams since 1978 with the only win coming over No. 3 Southern California in 2003 before breaking through against mistake-prone Washington State.

The Bears used short fields

on their first four scoring drives before Bowers delivered the highlight of the night with his touchdown run early in the fourth that left the crowd gasping in amazement.

Bowers scrambled and then bounded off two feet from just outside the 2. He did a front flip over Justus Rogers and fell in the end zone following the 7-yard run that made it 27-3.

"That was 11 out of 10," Bynum said. "That was really nice. That's crazy."

Bowers, whose mother used to be the gymnastics coach at Washington, had scored on a

similar flip in a high school game, and his mother once again was hoping for even more.

"She said the same thing to me after the game: 'Why didn't you do a double,'" Bowers said. "It was the same thing. It's like déjà vu. It keeps her coming to the games."

The game was played in smoky conditions because of the wine country fires that had killed at least 35 people and destroyed at least 5,700 homes and businesses about 50 miles north of Cal's campus.

# Woods adds sweetness to Denver's 'D'

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Denver's dominant defense had one fatal flaw last season. It was too predictable.

"I feel like last year you probably could've guessed what we were going to run our first five plays of the game," cornerback Aqib Talib said this week as the refreshed Broncos (3-1) prepared to face the depleted New York Giants (0-5) on Sunday night.

The league's fourth-ranked defense in 2016 surrendered nine opening-drive scores, including seven touchdowns.

All too often, that put the Broncos' run-of-the-mill offense in catch-up mode and

rendered Denver's strengths — Von Miller and the "No Fly Zone" secondary — mere window dressing.

Enter Joe Woods, who pledged upon succeeding his mentor, Wade Phillips, as defensive coordinator to keep the foundation but "sprinkle a little sugar on it."

He sweetened his unit by adding an air of mystery.

"Joe does a good job of switching it up and keeping guys off balance," Talib said. "We're not just coming out running one defense and running one or two defenses for the first 10 plays of the game. Joe is doing a good job switching it up and it's definitely working for us."

The Broncos have forced punts on all four of their opponents' opening drives so far and on all eight of their opponents' possessions in the first quarter. They've outscored other teams 27-0 while yielding just two first downs in the first quarter.

"We're definitely going to do things that teams aren't prepared for offensively," Woods said. "We always try to add a few curveballs early in the game to give them something they haven't prepared for. And then, we always try to save something for the second half. So far this season, we've done a good job in the first series of the game and first series of the second half getting off the

field."

Added coach Vance Joseph: "If you give a team something different in the first couple of series and force them to adjust, that's a problem for most offenses. If you give them the same thing they practice all week, that's a problem for you."

"It's really Joe and his staff's game plans to throw out our curveballs the first couple series," Joseph said. "Even in the second half, to save a curveball for the second half of the football game. Give them something different and make them readjust."

Those saved curveballs have also been effective.

## NHL roundup

# Backstrom has big night, leads Capitals past Devils

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The Washington Capitals have been the best regular-season team in the Eastern Conference the past two years, and they showed the surprising New Jersey Devils why.

Nicklas Backstrom had a goal and three assists and the Capitals knocked the upstart Devils from the unbeaten ranks with a 5-2 victory Friday night.

"Everybody pitched in," coach Barry Trotz said after the Capitals ended a 0-1-1 slide. "There were some great things that happened. We did a great job of managing their speed and limited them to not a lot of great chances. We had some good responses."

The Capitals got big games from all their stars.

T.J. Oshie had two goals and an assist, and Alex Ovechkin scored his ninth of the season and set up Backstrom's power-play tally to help Washington hand New Jersey its first loss in four games.

Jacob Vrana also scored for the Capitals, and Braden Holtby had 21 saves. Washington

is 8-0-1 in its last nine games against New Jersey.

"The whole team played good tonight," said Backstrom, who has eight assists in his last four games. "We had better structure and we kept it together and played better defensively. When we play quick, it's hard for other teams to create chances."

Backstrom had a big game despite being hit in the head by a puck in pregame warm-ups.

"Maybe someone should hit me with a puck before every game, Backstrom quipped.

Taylor Hall and Kyle Palmieri scored for the Devils, who had surprised many with their quick 3-0 start after finishing in the basement of the Eastern Conference last season.

**Red Wings 6, Golden Knights 3:** Gustav Nyquist scored twice and visiting Detroit had four goals in the third period to beat Las Vegas, handing the NHL's newest franchise its first loss. Vegas (3-1-0) is the first NHL expansion team to win its first three games.

Anthony Mantha, Frans Nielson and Luke Glendening also scored in the third period for Detroit, and Henrik Zetterberg

had a goal in the second.

James Neal scored his sixth goal for Vegas. Jonathan Marchessault and Erik Haula also scored.

Petr Mrazek made 24 saves for the Red Wings, while Marc-Andre Fleury had 21 saves for Vegas.

**Blue Jackets 3, Rangers 1:** Artemi Panarin and Seth Jones scored to rally host Columbus past New York.

Panarin, acquired from Chicago in the offseason, had his first goal with the Blue Jackets. He snaked through the defense and beat goalie Henrik Lundqvist between the pads 7:25 into the third for a 2-1 lead.

Lukas Sedlak added an empty-net goal, and Zach Werenski had two assists.

Sergei Bobrovsky made 37 saves for Columbus, allowing only Kevin Hayes' first-period goal.

**Avalanche 3, Ducks 1:** Tyson Barrie broke a tie late in the third period, and Gabriel Landeskog and Nikita Zadorov also scored to help host Colorado beat Anaheim.

Jonathan Bernier had 17 saves against his former team,

and Mikko Rantanen and Sven Andrighetto had two assists each for the Avalanche. Colorado (4-1) is off to its best start after five games since 2013-14.

Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon left with a right eye injury in the first period. MacKinnon was hurt when Anaheim's Derek Grant got his stick under MacKinnon's visor.

Brandon Montour scored for Anaheim.

**Senators 6, Flames 0:** Craig Anderson made 25 saves for his first shutout of the season and 39th overall in visiting Ottawa's victory over Calgary.

Cody Ceci, Mark Stone and Derrick Brassard each had a goal and an assist, Mike Hoffman, Ryan Dzingel and Chris Wideman also scored, and Kyle Turris had three assists.

Mike Smith was pulled from Calgary's net after giving up five goals on 22 shots in 47:48. Eddie Lack mopped up the final eight minutes, giving up Wideman's goal. The Flames were shut out for the second time this season. After being blanked 3-0 in Edmonton in their opener, they had won three straight.