

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Tillerson visits Iraq and Afghanistan

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson made an unannounced trip to Iraq on Monday just hours after returning from a similar surprise visit to Afghanistan, meeting the top political leaders in each of the embattled countries.

Cloaked in secrecy, Tillerson flew into Iraq from Qatar. Earlier in the day, he traveled back and forth from the gas-rich Persian Gulf country to Kabul, Afghanistan.

In Baghdad, Tillerson was meeting with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi for the second time in as many days to discuss reconstruction projects after the defeat of Islamic State in major Iraqi cities and towns. The pair also will discuss a re-

surgent Kurdish independence movement in the country's north, where a widely criticized independence referendum last month has sparked tensions within Iraq and with its neighbors.

Tillerson on Sunday said although the United States joined many in opposing the referendum — fearing it would distract from ongoing efforts to oust ISIS from its remaining strongholds — the Kurds have legitimate grievances that should be addressed within the framework of a unified Iraq.

"We did not support the Kurdish independence referendum," he said at a news conference with Qatar's foreign minister in Doha. "We did not believe it was time, given that the battle

to defeat ISIS is still underway. And while there have been significant victories and significant progress in Iraq, that task is not yet complete."

Still, Tillerson said he believed al-Abadi was committed to resolving Kurdish complaints. He called for restraint on all sides.

"We have encouraged the parties strongly to engage in Baghdad to fully implement the Iraqi constitution," he said. "The Kurdish people have a number of unfulfilled expectations, rights that were promised them under the constitution that were never delivered upon, and so there are a number of actions that need to be taken by the parties to fulfill the Iraqi constitution itself."

"We hope the Kurds will engage with Baghdad in a very productive way to see that the constitution is fully implemented," he said. "I think many of the Kurds' concerns will be addressed through that process."

Tillerson spent the weekend making the Trump administration's case for an Arab alliance to blunt Iran's increased influence in the Middle East. He attended the inaugural meeting of the Saudi Arabia-Iraq Coordination Council on Sunday to urge the longtime rivals to set aside past differences.

The administration sees an alignment of Riyadh and Baghdad as key to containing what U.S. officials refer to as "Iran's malign behavior" in the region.

Bergdahl judge: Ruling won't be influenced by Trump

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — The military judge who will sentence Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl expressed concern Monday about a new comment made by President Donald Trump about the former Taliban captive, though he insisted the soldier's punishment would not be influenced by the president.

Trump recently referenced the disparaging comments about Bergdahl that he repeatedly delivered as a candidate when he was questioned Oct. 16 during a White House news conference about the soldier's court-martial.

Army Col. Jeffery Nance said during a presentencing hearing at Fort Bragg, N.C., that the president's remarks could impair the public's perception

of a fair judicial process in the high-profile case.

But he also said the comments won't affect his decision.

"I don't have any doubt whatsoever that I can be fair and impartial in sentencing in this matter," Nance said, adding he was unaware of Trump's new statement until defense attorneys raised it in an 11th-hour motion filed Oct. 17, one day after Bergdahl entered his guilty pleas.

Bergdahl, 31, has pleaded guilty to charges that he deserted his combat post in Afghanistan and endangered his fellow troops by misbehaving before the enemy. He faces a maximum punishment of up to life imprisonment, a reduction in rank to private, forfeiture of all pay and a dishonorable discharge.

Nance is expected to sentence

Bergdahl next week following presentencing proceedings set to begin Wednesday.

Eugene Fidell, Bergdahl's lead attorney, asked Nance on Monday to limit Bergdahl's maximum sentence to no punishment or at the least to no confinement to alleviate any perception the judge — an active-duty Army officer under Trump's command — and other Army officials were influenced by the commander in chief, which would amount to unlawful command influence.

Prosecutors countered that Trump's statement Oct. 16 did not disparage Bergdahl or refer to any particular punishment the soldier should receive, thus Nance had no need to limit the maximum potential punishment.

Nance did not immediately make a decision on the motion.

He is expected to do so before he sentences Bergdahl.

Defense attorneys earlier this year unsuccessfully attempted to have their client's case dismissed over Trump's campaign trail rhetoric. They documented more than 60 instances when Trump referred to Bergdahl, including calling him a "dirty, rotten traitor" and promising to review Bergdahl's case if he was elected president.

Nance in February called Trump's statements "disturbing" and potentially "problematic," but ultimately ruled they did not amount to unlawful command influence because Trump was a private citizen when he made them. Nance told Bergdahl's lawyers that they could revisit the issue if Trump were to raise it while in office.

Jihadi ambush shows new danger in African region

Associated Press

BAMAKO, Mali — The Islamic militants came on motorcycles while toting rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns, killing four American servicemembers after shattering the windows of the unarmored U.S. trucks.

In this remote corner of Niger where the Americans and their local counterparts had been meeting with community leaders, residents said the men who came to kill that day had never been seen there before.

“The attackers spoke Arabic and Tamashek, and were light-skinned,” Baringay Aghali, told The Associated Press by phone from the remote village of Tongo-Tongo.

Who were these men and how did they know the Americans would be there that day?

No extremist group has claimed responsibility for the deadly ambush Oct. 4, and the languages reportedly spoken by the jihadis are used throughout the Sahel including Tamashek, spoken by ethnic Tuaregs.

The ambush of U.S. troops in Niger has been the center of controversy in America because President Donald Trump has been criticized in some quarters, including by one grieving family directly, for the way he spoke to the wife of one of the soldiers slain in that operation.

The Niger attack appears to be the work of Islamic State of the Sahel, a splinter group of extremists loyal to Islamic State who are based just across the border in Mali, according to interviews with U.S. officials and authorities here in the vast Sahel region bordering the Sahara Desert. It is led by Adnan Abu Walid, who built ties with various extremists before forming his own group.

Some officials believe Walid’s militants also are holding an American, Jeffery Woodke, who was abducted in Niger a year ago. A rebel leader approached by Nigerien authorities to negotiate for his release confirmed that Walid’s group is holding Woodke, who had spent 25 years

as an aid worker in Niger.

Now Walid’s group is suspected of the attack that killed four American soldiers this month.

The ambush in Niger highlights how extremist groups have shifted and rebranded since the 2013 French-led military operation ousted them from power in northern Mali. Those extremists, including the man suspected of ordering the attack on the Americans, lost Mali’s northern cities but regrouped in the desert.

Walid, 38, also known in some circles as Adnan al-Sahrawi, descends from the Sahrawi people, who are found across southern Morocco, Mauritania and parts of Algeria. He has long been active with Islamic extremists in Mali, at one time serving as the spokesman of the Mali-based group known as MUJAO that controlled the major northern town of Gao during the jihadi occupation in 2012.

That group was loyal to the regional al-Qaida affiliate. But Walid parted ways, and in October 2016 a video circulated on the internet in which he pledged allegiance to ISIS.

Walid’s following now includes numerous members of the Peul ethnic group in the Mali-Niger border areas, who are active in the area near where the attack on the U.S. soldiers took place. Before the attack on the U.S. troops in Niger, Walid’s followers are believed to have staged a series of bloody attacks on military installations in Niger. In February, they were blamed for an assault in Tliwa where a dozen Nigerien soldiers were slain.

Walid’s Islamic State in the Sahel does not yet pose a threat as great as the al-Qaida militants in the region, though that could shift with time, said Ibrahim Maiga, with the Institute for Security Studies in Bamako. Walid clearly appears to have learned from his former colleagues on how to infiltrate and influence locals, he said.

“He has succeeded ... in creating links with local people despite the fact that he is a stranger to the area,” he said.

Bodies of 67 Syrian civilians discovered

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The bodies of at least 67 Syrian civilians, many summarily killed by Islamic State, have been discovered in a central town in Syria that government forces retook from the extremists during the weekend, the Syrian government and activists said Monday.

A senior Syrian official described the attack as a “shocking massacre,” saying the search for and documentation of those killed in the town of Qaryatayn is still underway, and the number of bodies was likely to climb.

Some were shot in the street as ISIS militants retreated from the town because they were suspected of working with the government, according to activists. At least 35 had been shot dead, their bodies dumped into a shaft.

The militants have been retreating across northern and eastern Syria, days after having been defeated in Raqqa, the one-time “capital” of the group’s self-proclaimed caliphate. The killings raise the specter of more revenge attacks by the group while it fights to hang on to its last strongholds in Syria.

An Associated Press video, filmed as Syrian government troops recaptured Qaryatayn, showed several bodies in the streets of the town. In the video, a town resident says ISIS “monsters” killed more than 100 people, including soldiers and civilians.

“These are people who don’t know God, they don’t know anything. They killed children and women with knives, they beat women, broke their arms,” he said, speaking on condition of anonymity, fearing for his safety.

Talal Barazi, the governor of the surrounding Homs province, told The Associated Press on Monday that most of the bodies were of townspeople who were government employees or were affiliated with Syria’s

ruling Baath party. He said the killings went on for the three weeks that ISIS held the town and “terrorized” its residents, adding that at least 13 residents remain missing while six bodies have not been identified.

“It is a shocking massacre,” he said.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it had documented the killings of at least 128 people in Qaryatayn during the last days of ISIS control of the town. The head of the Observatory, Rami Abdurrahman, called it a “massacre.”

Syrian troops and allied militias regained control of the town Saturday. The government-run Syrian Central Military Media at the time said the Syrian army and its allies restored security and stability to Qaryatayn after clearing the town of ISIS fighters.

The activist-run Palmyra Coordination Committee published the names of 67 civilians confirmed killed and said the number was likely to rise. It said at least 35 were found shot and dumped into a deep shaft.

The activist-run group said other bodies also were found in the town streets — apparently of people shot by pro-government forces and suspected of working with ISIS. The Observatory also said it documented at least 12 killed at the hands of pro-government troops after they regained control of the town.

ISIS militants first seized Qaryatayn in August 2015, and relied on the strategically located town to defend another of their bastions, the historic city of Palmyra. At the time, thousands of the town’s Christian residents fled, fearing the extremist group’s brutality.

With Russian backing, Syrian troops regained control of the town in April 2016. But ISIS, facing major setbacks around Syria and Iraq, launched a new attack on the town in late September and recaptured it.

Mattis to laud Philippines for Marawi victory

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis plans to congratulate the Philippines on its progress battling Islamic State militants, he said after arriving in the island nation Monday.

Mattis — who is in the country to meet with defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN — told reporters gathered at the former Clark Air Base he would commend the Philippine military for defeating insurgents in Marawi City on the island of Mindanao.

Mattis' trip to the Philippines and other Asian countries this week will lay the groundwork for President Donald Trump's

tour of Asia next month, said Ralph Cossa, president of the Pacific Forum think tank in Honolulu.

Mattis said he would talk to his ASEAN counterparts about "the regional security crisis caused by the reckless [North Korean] provocations but also discuss our respect for shared values like sovereignty of the states, their territorial integrity, freedom of navigation through historically international waters, and fair and reciprocal trade," Reuters reported.

The U.S. and the Philippines have clashed with China over access to disputed South China Sea waters, where Beijing has been militarizing small, artificial islands.

Last year, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled in the Philip-

pines' favor in a dispute with China over fishing access to Scarborough Shoal, about 130 miles from the Philippine main islands. China has ignored the court's ruling, and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has sidestepped the issue since his election last year in a bid to establish closer relations with Beijing.

On Thursday, Mattis will lead a delegation in Bangkok, Thailand, to attend the Royal Cremation Rites of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The secretary will conclude his trip with a visit to South Korea to co-chair the 49th annual Security Consultative Meeting with his South Korean counterpart, Defense Minister Song Young-moo, defense officials said.

No major damage to American bases in Japan after typhoon

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — U.S. military bases on Japan's Kanto Plain have resumed normal operations in the aftermath of a major typhoon that came ashore early Monday.

Some installations reported minor issues such as power outages and fallen tree limbs after Typhoon Lan pummeled the area. With gale-force winds of 35 mph or greater extending 1,180 miles, Lan tied 1979's Typhoon Tip for the second-largest wind diameter on record. Yokosuka recorded 71 mph winds at one point.

Lan had evolved into a super typhoon but lost steam as it approached mainland Japan and was downgraded to a Category 4-equivalent storm.

Yokosuka, Camp Zama, Yokota Air Base and Naval Air Facility Atsugi suspended most base services Sunday afternoon in preparation for Lan and announced that nonessential personnel would be confined to their homes Monday.

Bases began giving the all-clear starting at 10 a.m. Monday.

Atsugi's official Facebook page reported "widespread power outages across a signifi-

cant portion of the base" about 6 a.m. Power was restored to most facilities by 10 a.m., and only a few commercial businesses on base were still without power, said base spokesman Sam Samuelson.

Camp Zama spokesman Rob Haynes reported no major damage and said base services are expected to resume as usual Tuesday. Yokosuka and Yokota also had no significant damage or flooding to report.

On Okinawa, which was somewhat affected by the storm early Sunday, officials from Kadena Air Base's 18th Wing reported no significant damage.

Off base, four people sustained "minor injuries" over the weekend after being knocked down by strong winds, said a spokesman with the Okinawa Prefectural Government's Disaster Prevention and Crisis Management Division. No property damage was reported.

There were no power outages on Okinawa or its outer islands caused by the typhoon, an Okinawa Electric Power Company spokesman said.

A Naha Airport spokesman said 91 flights had been canceled on Saturday and 84 flights on Sunday because of the storm.

F-22 Raptors return home after trainings in Europe

BY WILLIAM HOWARD
Stars and Stripes

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptors have returned to their home bases in the U.S. after wrapping up a set of exercises in Europe this month.

The six stealth fighter jets from the 27th Fighter Squadron stopped for air training at RAF Lakenheath, England, on Oct. 8 as part of the European Deterrence Initiative after a stint in the Middle East. The rest of the unit returned home after the six-month deployment, during which the Raptors flew missions against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria.

"What I think the F-22 brings to the fight is we have a very wide array of missions that we can do," said Lt. Col. "Habu," commander of the 94th Fighter Squadron, who for operational security gave only his call signal. "Although we're not optimized to do some of the air-to-ground missions that the F-15 Strike Eagle might be, we're still able to create the same effects that the (coalition) is looking for."

Pilots from the 1st Fighter Wing's 94th Squadron, who were not part of the combat deployment, traveled from

Langley Air Force Base, Va., to operate the Raptors that stayed in England.

"The larger objectives are first and foremost to get some good training with the Royal Air Force," the 94th Fighter Squadron's commander said.

"Additionally, we're trying to reassure some of our allies on the NATO side with our presence and training and, thirdly, to deter aggression on the European continent."

Since arriving in the European theater the Raptors have demonstrated their ability to forward-deploy in movements to both Poland and Germany.

F-22 pilot Capt. "Mach" said the history of the airspace had a great impact on him.

The Raptors also flew in Exercise Eastern Zephyr alongside local F-15C Eagles and F-15E Strike Eagles of the 48th Fighter Wing and RAF Eurofighter Typhoons. The exercise involved several missions with as many as 40 aircraft flying over England.

More than 100 members of the 27th Fighter Squadron returned to Langley earlier this month, while airmen of the 94th Fighter Squadron sent to train in England with the F-22 Raptors flew home Thursday.

Soldier's widow angry that Trump didn't know his name

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The widow of a fallen soldier reproached President Donald Trump on Monday over his condolence call last week, saying she was angered by his tone and that he couldn't remember her husband's name. Trump quickly responded on Twitter that he'd been "very respectful" and spoke the name "without hesitation."

Monday's harsh exchange was the latest in an ongoing dispute over how Trump responded to the deaths of four servicemembers in the African nation of Niger.

Myeshia Johnson, La David Johnson's widow, spoke on ABC's "Good Morning America." It was her first interview after a Democratic congresswoman accused Trump of being callous in the call by telling the widow that her husband "knew what he signed up for."

Johnson confirmed Wilson's account, saying the congresswoman was a longtime friend who was with the family in the car when Trump called Tuesday and listened on speakerphone. She said she had asked for the call to be put on speakerphone so relatives with her could hear.

"The president said that he knew what he signed up for but it hurts anyway," Johnson said. She added, "The only way he could remember my husband's name was he told me he had my husband's report in front of him and that's when he actually said La David."

Trump, who had accused Rep. Frederica Wilson of fabricating the statement, fired back on Twitter, saying, "I had a very respectful conversation with the widow of Sgt. La David Johnson, and spoke his name from beginning, without hesitation!"

Johnson offered a different

version.

"I heard him stumbling on trying to remember my husband's name and that's what hurt me the most, because if my husband is out here fighting for our country and he risked his life for our country why can't you remember his name," she said. "And that's what made me upset and cry even more because my husband was an awesome soldier."

The conflict drew criticism from Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who said on "The View" Monday, "We should not be fighting about a brave American who lost his life."

The four U.S. soldiers were killed Oct. 4 in Niger when they were attacked by militants tied to Islamic State. Confusion over what happened has dogged Trump, who was silent about the deaths for more than a week.

Trump not likely to visit Korea's DMZ

Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Donald Trump plans to use his 12-day, five-nation Asia trip to encourage a tougher stance against the threat posed by the regime of Kim Jong Un in North Korea, but he likely will not make the traditional presidential visit to the border between North and South Korea known as the Demilitarized Zone.

The White House said Monday that Trump was invited by Korean president Moon Jae-in to visit Camp Humphreys, a military base about 40 miles south of Seoul, and that time constraints likely would not permit Trump to also travel to the border. In briefing reporters, the White House downplayed suggestions that the decision stemmed from security concerns and suggested that plans still could change.

If Trump doesn't go, he would be breaking from recent presidential custom. All presidents but one since Ronald Reagan made the visit to the heavily-fortified border, known as the DMZ, which has separated the North and South for 64 years.

The trip will begin in Hawaii, where Trump will meet with military leaders at U.S. Pacific Command and will tour Pearl Harbor.

From there, the president will fly to Japan, where he will speak to Japanese and U.S. servicemembers, will visit with the families of Japanese citizens abducted by the North Korean regime and will meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Trump then will travel to South Korea for a state visit. In addition to his visit to Camp Humphreys, Trump is scheduled to visit a military cemetery and to deliver a speech to the national assembly.

On Nov. 8, the one-year anniversary of Trump's stunning election win, the president will visit Beijing for a state visit with Xi, who just consolidated his hold on power during a gathering of the Communist Party Congress.

McCain offers veiled critique of Trump's Vietnam deferments

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican Sen. John McCain, a former Navy pilot and prisoner of war during the Vietnam War, issued a veiled criticism of President Donald Trump's medical deferments that kept him from serving in the U.S. military during the conflict.

In an interview that aired Sunday on C-SPAN, the six-term Arizona lawmaker lamented that the military "drafted the lowest income level of America, and the highest income level found a doctor that would say they had a bone spur."

He declined during an interview Monday on ABC's "The View" to label Trump a draft

dodger, saying his comment was a critique of the system that allowed "certain Americans [to] evade their responsibilities to serve the country."

One of Trump's five draft deferments came as a result of a physician's letter stating he suffered from bone spurs in his feet.

McCain spent 5½ years as a prisoner of war after his plane was shot down over North Vietnam in 1967.

Trump derided McCain's military service in 2015, stating his fellow Republican wasn't a "war hero" and added, "I like people who weren't captured."

The tacit criticism from McCain, 81, reflected the escalating fight between Trump, who

often has assailed McCain, and the GOP senator, who is battling brain cancer and has a reputation for speaking his mind.

Last week, in a speech in Philadelphia, McCain questioned "half-baked, spurious nationalism" in America's foreign policy. Trump lashed out, insisting he would fight back and "it won't be pretty."

During Trump's presidency, McCain has questioned the president's immigration policies and warned him against cozying up to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The senator also criticized Trump in August for saying that both white nationalists and counterprotesters were responsible for violent clashes in Charlottesville, Va.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Robbery suspect hopped into waste bin

KY LEXINGTON — Police said they found a Kentucky robbery suspect hiding in a waste bin.

According to Lexington Police, officers found Raymond J. Jones, 23, in a city waste bin Friday. He's charged with first-degree robbery and giving an officer a false name. There was also an unrelated theft warrant.

Police responded Friday afternoon to an armed robbery at a Metro PCS store. An employee said a masked man with a black backpack pointed a gun at the employee and demanded cellphones and other items. Witnesses told police the man fled on a bicycle.

Police said they found Jones in a waste bin on the curb, and his backpack with the stolen goods was in a recycling bin.

Liquid sprayed at store was fecal matter

SC CHARLESTON — Authorities confirmed that the foul brown liquid sprayed onto produce at a South Carolina grocery store was fecal matter.

Charleston police also said in a news release that another charge has been filed against the former contractor who's accused of spraying the liquid onto produce at a Harris-Teeter on Oct. 15. Pau Hang now faces one count of malicious tampering with a human drug product or food item in addition to one count each of trespassing after notice and malicious injury to property.

Woman turns couponing into savings for town

NE MCCOOK — An Omaha woman has turned her knack for “ex-

treme couponing” into a way to give back to her hometown of McCook.

The McCook Gazette reported that Hollie Anderson has been hauling her discounted finds to sell in McCook since last year, passing the savings on to people in her hometown. Any items not sold are donated to charities, benefiting the McCook Pantry, Toy Box, Humane Society and a local backpack drive.

She's held four sales in McCook's Memorial Auditorium since the summer of 2016.

Man steals ambulance with patient aboard

OH DAYTON — Police said a man was arrested in southwestern Ohio after an ambulance was stolen with a patient and a medic in the back.

The Dayton Daily News reported that a 44-year-old man is accused of stealing the Dayton Fire Department rescue squad vehicle during a call Friday night. Keys were left in the ambulance's ignition, enabling him to drive off.

Police stopped the ambulance after it traveled more than a mile.

The man was booked into Montgomery County Jail on Friday on felony charges of robbery and kidnapping.

Man posed as social worker to sign girl out

RI PORTSMOUTH — A man has pleaded no contest to a charge alleging he impersonated a social worker while trying to sign out a female student from a Rhode Island high school.

Court records show Armando Hernandez, 26, entered the plea Friday to a misdemeanor charge of impersonating a public officer. He received a year

of probation.

Portsmouth police Lt. Michael Arnold told WPRI-TV Hernandez went to Portsmouth High School on Friday and tried to sign the student out, telling a school employee that he was a social worker with the Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Arnold said Hernandez later admitted he was an Uber driver and that the student had contacted him for a ride.

Pair arrested after long chase by car, on foot

VT STOWE — Vermont state police said it took more than five hours to apprehend a pair of suspects after a traffic stop, a chase, a crash into a cruiser and a 3-mile hike in the woods.

Troopers investigating recent burglaries had been looking for Jerry Savo, 52, and Emily Legacy, 29, since earlier this month. They were pulled over about 2 p.m. Friday in Jericho. Authorities said Savo drove into the side of the officer's cruiser and took off.

The pursuit continued through several towns, with stolen items tossed from the car along the way. Officers later tracked the pair on foot and arrested them about 8 p.m. in Stowe.

Doctors use 3-D models to practice surgery

CT FARMINGTON — Doctors at the University of Connecticut are using 3-D printing technology to help them practice delicate brain surgery.

They have figured out a way to convert blood vessel scans into files that can be read by a printer, creating a three-dimensional model of the arteries and vessels a doctor must

navigate when removing blood clots from stroke patients. The models cost about \$14 to create.

The doctors said this first-of-its-kind procedure provides a cheaper alternative to computer simulators and is much safer than doing the procedure for the first time on an actual patient.

Devils fans assist young national anthem singer

NJ NEWARK — Fans at a New Jersey Devils game gave an assist to a young fan during the national anthem.

The fans jumped in to save the 14-year-old Jersey City girl's performance after she forgot the words midway through the song Friday.

The crowd of more than 14,000 took over from there to sing the anthem together.

Bonus is restored for disciplined jail guard

WI MADISON — A \$2,500 bonus has been restored for a youth prison guard who was disciplined for dragging a teen inmate across a cell floor.

Kyle Hoff is a guard at the Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls, which share a campus north of Wausau.

The prisons have been under a criminal investigation for nearly three years for prisoner abuse and are the subject of multiple lawsuits, including one over Hoff's conduct.

The Journal Sentinel reported that the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commissions ruled in favor Hoff last month, noting that three managers approved the bonus.

Hoff did not respond to a request for comment.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Dodgers-Astros matchup expected to sizzle

Associated Press

Big-time aces Clayton Kershaw and Justin Verlander. Playoff boppers Jose Altuve and Justin Turner.

A pair of 100-win teams for the first time in nearly a half-century. Hollywood Walk of Fame vs. Texans who wear the star. A little extra Magic, plus Nolan back in the fast lane.

This is one hot World Series — the Houston Astros, fresh off a Game 7 victory over the Yankees, taking on the narrowly favored Los Angeles Dodgers, well rested after a romp.

Could be real steamy, too. It's supposed to be almost 100 degrees at Dodger Stadium for the opener Tuesday night, maybe the hottest temperature ever at a World Series game.

"Now we chase the ultimate prize," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "There's two teams standing. It's a race to four wins now. At the start there's a race to 11, we've got seven of them down."

At least the familiar October chill that makes players and fans shiver shouldn't be an issue outdoors in sun-baked California or under the retractable roof at Minute Maid Park.

Not that young stars Cody Bellinger and Carlos Correa would mind, nor would old pros

Carlos Beltran and Chase Utley, nor top starters Dallas Keuchel and Yu Darvish.

Because a chance to win a ring doesn't come very often — these teams that have already played more than 700 games against each other over the years already know that.

The Astros have never won the crown. They're playing for a whole region, with the Houston Strong patches on their uniforms representing an area hit hard by Hurricane Harvey.

"There's a lot of people that are really hurting right now in this city," said Verlander, the ALCS MVP. "And it gives the city something to rally around and gives people something to cheer for that otherwise may not have a lot to be hopeful for."

The Dodgers haven't been in the World Series since 1988, when Kirk Gibson's bat, Orel Hershiser's arm and Tommy Lasorda's moves outdid Oakland for the crown.

Now with Lakers great Magic Johnson as a part-owner, this LA team that led the majors with 104 wins is hoping to bring back the glory days that began in Brooklyn.

"I just want to win a World Series," Kershaw said after the Dodgers dethroned the Chi-

cago Cubs in Game 5 of the NL Championship Series. "I know more than anybody how hard it is to get there. So, I'm definitely not taking this one for granted."

Said mercurial outfielder Yasiel Puig: "The trophy's coming soon."

The Astros, the major leagues' highest-scoring team this year, have never even won a World Series game. They only time they made it this far was 2005, when a club that included Jeff Bagwell, Craig Biggio, Roger Clemens and Andy Pettitte got swept by the White Sox.

In fact, a World Series prize is the one piece of hardware missing from the trophy case from the Lone Star State. Texas teams have won the Super Bowl and championships in the NBA, NHL, college football and men's and women's basketball, but never in baseball.

Under the leadership of executive Nolan Ryan, the Texas Rangers came within one strike in 2011 before losing to St. Louis. The Ryan Express, who once pitched a no-hitter for Houston against the Dodgers, is currently an Astros exec.

The Astros posted 101 wins this year — not since Baltimore (108) and Cincinnati (102)

in 1970 has the World Series matched teams who reached triple-digits.

These teams last met in 2015, when the Astros swept a three-game series at home. But they'd seen a lot of each other in the past.

Overall, the Dodgers are 388-323 vs. the Astros. Houston debuted as the Colt .45s as a National League expansion team in 1962, beat the Dodgers in a one-game playoff for the NL West championship in 1980 and eventually moved to the AL in 2013.

That first year in the AL, the young Astros got pounded and lost 111 times. But with smart drafts and player development, Houston emerged as a power. Hinch's club capped its rise by beating Boston in the AL Division Series, then stopping the Yankees 4-0 Saturday night in Game 7 of the ALCS.

The Dodgers, with a major league-high \$226 million payroll, won their fifth straight NL West title this year, then 7-1 in the playoffs against the Diamondbacks and Cubs under manager Dave Roberts.

The result? Their first pennant since 1988 — the year Kershaw was born.

Canucks score 3 in second, top Red Wings

Associated Press

DETROIT — Derek Dorsett has helped turn Vancouver's first trip of the season into a successful one.

Dorsett scored his fourth goal of the trip, and the Canucks used a dominant second period to pull away for a 4-1 victory over the Detroit Red Wings on Sunday night.

"He's been amazing for us," teammate Sven Baertschi said. "He's literally doing everything, and it's fun seeing him scoring goals. Right now it's just that feeling, whenever he has the puck and he's going

down and shooting, it's just that feeling that that puck might go in."

Dorsett was coming off a two-goal game Friday night in Buffalo.

"This is obviously a great feeling," Dorsett said. "The boys are enjoying reminding me about what is happening, and that's been fun."

Baertschi scored twice for the Canucks, and Jake Virtanen added a goal. Vancouver scored three times in the second, outshooting the Red Wings 18-6 in the period.

The Canucks started the season with four home games and

went 1-2-1. They're 3-1 so far on this five-game trip.

Anthony Mantha scored the only goal for the Red Wings, tying it at 1 late in the first. Detroit has lost four in a row, and coach Jeff Blashill didn't mince words on a night his team was outshot 37-21.

"It was a brutal effort. I thought it was an embarrassing effort, not even close to the level of competitiveness you have to have," Blashill said. "We should be embarrassed of ourselves, from me at the top all the way on down. We got outcompeted, outworked, outdetained."

Vancouver opened the scor-

ing when Bo Horvat's shot was deflected and trickled right to Baertschi in front of the net. He stickhandled around goalie Jimmy Howard and backhanded the puck in.

Mantha's equalizer came on a wrist shot from the top of the left circle.

Dorsett gave Vancouver the lead back with his fifth goal in the past five games.

Horvat found him in front of the net with a pass, and Dorsett's shot bounced in the air off Howard before coming down behind him and going in the goal.

Patriots rout Falcons in Super rematch

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Last season's Super Bowl teams are heading in very different directions as they approach the halfway point of the 2017 season.

The Patriots (5-2) posted a 23-7 victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Sunday night, their third consecutive win. After weeks of questions, New England is again resembling the team that pulled off the largest comeback win in Super Bowl history.

Meanwhile, the Atlanta Falcons (3-3) look like a team hopelessly stuck in the muck after their third straight loss, unable to find the identity that had them so close to hoisting their first Lombardi trophy eight months ago.

Three weeks ago, the Patriots seemed like a lost team on the defensive side of the ball. They had given up an average of 32 points per game and dropped two home games over the first four games of the season.

Things have turned around dramatically

since then, with New England surrendering an average of just 13 points in three straight victories. The seven points the Falcons scored Sunday were an opponent season low.

"We're excited because we finally see our hard work come into show," Patriots safety Duron Harmon said. "It's not perfect; we still left some plays out there. ... I just feel like the energy we played with, the excitement, how fast and physical we played kind of covered up a lot of the mistakes we made."

New England coach Bill Belichick has had to make some minor tweaks to the defense in recent weeks, including inserting Johnson Bademosi into the starting lineup for injured cornerback Stephon Gilmore (concussion/ankle), as well veteran David Harris at linebacker in place of injured Elandon Roberts (ankle) on Sunday.

Belichick said he was pleased with the progress. New England held Atlanta to just 343 total yards. It also held a quarterback under 300 yards passing for the first time

this season.

"It's all improving," Belichick said.

Atlanta fell into a 23-0 hole on Sunday night, as the offense struggled to capitalize on its red zone opportunities. It was just 1-for-4 on those chances for the game.

And combined with the 20 straight points the Falcons gave up to Miami in last week's loss, Atlanta was outscored 43-0 over five quarters before narrowly avoiding a shut-out thanks Matt Ryan's 1-yard touchdown pass to Julio Jones with 4:13 left.

The problems on offense are a sudden issue for an Atlanta team that had scored 81 of its 121 points in the first half entering the game.

"Every year is different. I know that," quarterback Matt Ryan said. "From a player's standpoint it comes down to missed opportunities ... I sound like a bit of a broken record from the first couple of weeks of the season, but when we got our chances we have to make plays, and we haven't done a good job of that."

NFL roundup

Surging Saints get by Rodgers-less Packers

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Another road game, another good win for the New Orleans Saints.

They can draw upon the 26-17 victory on Sunday over the Green Bay Packers for a shot of confidence in tough situations later this season and, if they keep this up, in the playoffs, too.

Drew Brees bounced back from two first-quarter interceptions to throw for a touchdown and run for another, and Mark Ingram rushed for a score to help the Saints (4-2) win their third straight road game and fourth overall.

"At halftime, you could have, against this team, easily have been down 14, 21 points," coach Sean Payton said.

But they only trailed 14-7 at the half to the Packers, who didn't convert the turnovers into points. They also didn't have the ultimate closer on the field in quarterback Aaron Rodgers, so backup Brett Hundley made his first NFL start.

Will Lutz kicked two second-half field goals, including a 44-yarder to put New Orleans up for good 19-17 with 10:21 left in the game. Brees' 1-yard sneak gave the Saints a two-score lead with 4:55 left.

Brees finished 27 of 38 for 331 yards, while Ingram ran for 105 yards on 22 carries.

Steelers 29, Bengals 14: Ben Roethlisberger threw for 224 yards and two touchdowns, Le'Veon Bell added 192 total yards, and host Pittsburgh's defense dominated Cincinnati in the second half.

Cowboys 40, 49ers 10: Ezekiel Elliott gained 219 yards from scrimmage and tied a career high with three touchdowns just days after a legal reprieve put his suspension on hold. Elliott matched his season total of rushing touchdowns with two in the first quarter.

Chargers 21, Broncos 0: Travis Benjamin returned a first-quarter punt 65 yards for a touchdown and caught a 42-yard TD pass in the fourth, and the Chargers played a domi-

nant defensive game in the first home victory of their relocation season.

Seahawks 24, Giants 7: Russell Wilson threw three second-half touchdown passes and the Seahawks limited host New York's receiver-depleted offense to 177 yards.

Titans 12, Browns 9 (OT): Ryan Succop's fourth field goal, a 47-yarder with 1:55 left in overtime, extended his NFL record for makes inside 50 yards to 55 straight and sent Tennessee to an ugly win.

Cleveland (0-7) lost durable Pro Bowl tackle Joe Thomas with an injury.

Rams 33, Cardinals 0: Jared Goff ran for a touchdown and threw for another and Greg Zuerlein made four field goals as the Rams won for the first time in three appearances in Britain.

Bills 30, Buccaneers 27: Rookie cornerback Tre'Davious White forced and recovered a fumble to set up Stephen Hauschka's 30-yard field goal with 14 seconds remaining for host

Buffalo.

Dolphins 31, Jets 28: Matt Moore replaced an injured Jay Cutler and threw two touchdown passes in the final 12 minutes, and the host Dolphins pulled off another comeback win by erasing a 14-point fourth-quarter deficit.

Bears 17, Panthers 3: Rookie safety Eddie Jackson became the first NFL player to score multiple defensive touchdowns of 75 yards or more in a game. Jackson ran back a fumble recovery 75 yards on the game's opening possession and returned an interception of Cam Newton 76 yards.

Vikings 24, Ravens 16: Latavius Murray rushed for 113 yards and a touchdown and Kai Forbath kicked six field goals.

Jaguars 27, Colts 0: Blake Bortles threw for a season-high 330 yards and one touchdown, and T.J. Yeldon scored on a 58-yard run. By ending a four-game losing streak at Lucas Oil Stadium, the Jaguars (4-3) remained atop the AFC South.

NBA roundup

Wiggins lifts T-wolves over OKC

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Andrew Wiggins didn't have time to get near the basket for a final shot.

Just inside halfcourt was close enough.

Wiggins' desperation heave banked in as time expired to give the Minnesota Timberwolves a 115-113 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Sunday night.

"I could see how much time was left," Wiggins said. "I got as close as I could and let it go."

Carmelo Anthony had hit a three-pointer with about five seconds left to give the Thunder the lead. The Timberwolves were out of timeouts, so they had to scramble. Taj Gibson inbounded to Wiggins, who rushed up the court and got free with help from a crushing pick by Karl-Anthony Towns before pulling up for the winner.

"Everything worked perfectly," Wiggins said. "Taj found me. KAT had a great screen. When it left my hands, the release felt amazing."

Gibson said the Timberwolves practice those kinds of plays regularly.

"We practice it six times in practice every day," Gibson said. "Once I got the ball, my job is to take the ball out, be patient, look for the open man, look for the guy running the baseline. I was trying to get Jeff (Teague), but Wig was

wide open. KAT did what he was supposed to do, backscreen, and the rest is history."

Thunder forward Paul George got knocked down on Towns' screen, and it freed up Wiggins.

Wiggins scored 27 points and Towns had 27 points and 12 rebounds for Minnesota (2-1).

Russell Westbrook scored 15 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter for the Thunder (1-2), who were coming off a loss at Utah on Saturday night. Anthony scored 23 points and Steven Adams had 17 points and 13 rebounds.

Pelicans 119, Lakers 112: Anthony Davis scored 27 points, DeMarcus Cousins had 20 and New Orleans withstood a furious rally to beat host Los Angeles for its first victory of the season.

The Pelicans led by 22 points in the second quarter and were still up by double figures heading into the final period, but the Lakers made a charge to take the lead despite a poor shooting night from rookie Lonzo Ball.

Nets 116, Hawks 104: Allen Crabbe scored 20 points to help host Brooklyn beat Atlanta.

DeMarre Carroll added 17 points and Caris LeVert and D'Angelo Russell each had 16 points. The Nets improved to 2-1 with their second straight victory.

Marco Belinelli had 19 points for Atlanta. The Hawks have lost two in a row to drop to 1-2.

Suns fire Watson

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Phoenix Suns have fired coach Earl Watson just three games into the NBA season.

The Suns announced the firing Sunday night after hours of meetings at the team's headquarters.

Assistant coach Jay Triano, a former head coach of the Toronto Raptors, was named interim coach.

Watson was promoted from assistant to interim coach of the Suns after Jeff Hornacek was fired Feb. 1, 2016. The interim tag was removed on April 19 of that year. With an extremely young team, the Suns struggled under Watson. He compiled a 33-85 record. Watson's only full season was 2016-17, when the team went 24-58.

The 38-year-old Watson played collegiately at UCLA and in the NBA for 10 seasons. He often spoke of his long talks with John Wooden, emphasized togetherness and a family atmosphere to nurture the young squad but wins were hard to come by.

And owner Robert Sarver apparently didn't like what he saw. Phoenix is 0-3 and two of the losses were especially ugly. The Suns were blown out 124-76 by the Portland in their season opener Wednesday night, the most one-sided loss in franchise history and the most one-sided season opener for any NBA team.

Phoenix was routed by the Clippers in Los Angeles 130-88 on Saturday night.

"I Don't wanna be here," point guard Eric Bledsoe tweeted Sunday, just as the news of Watson's firing surfaced in an ESPN report. The tweet by Bledsoe, a former Clipper, was followed by one from the Clippers' DeAndre Jordan saying "Come back home bro."

Bledsoe has been rumored in possible trades for months.

Watson's dismissal is the first NBA coaching change in well over a year.

Truex overcomes errors for Kansas win

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Martin Truex Jr. didn't feel a sense of urgency to win Sunday's race at Kansas Speedway because of its playoff implications, not with his spot in the next round safe following a victory at Charlotte.

No, the sense of urgency was much more personal.

Truex learned overnight that one of the Furniture Row Racing team's crew members, Jim Watson, died of a heart attack while in town for the race. So with a heavy heart, Truex climbed into his No. 78 Toyota and overcame two early mistakes to win a wild playoff elimination race.

"We were racing for Jim today," Truex said after emerging from his car. "He was a heck of a guy."

Kurt Busch finished second before a wave of playoff contenders headed by Ryan Blaney, whose car failed post-qualifying inspection and was sent to

the back. He quickly worked his way through the field and finished third, easily making it within the cutoff line.

Chase Elliott was fourth and Denny Hamlin fifth to punch their tickets to the next round. Kevin Harvick finished eighth to stay alive heading to Martinsville, while Kyle Busch finished 10th and Jimmie Johnson 11th — both of them also making the cutoff line.

Brad Keselowski was 13th after his victory last week at Talladega sent him to the next round.

Kyle Larson blew his engine to spoil his chances of advancing, while Matt Kenseth's championship hopes were ended by a penalty for having too many crew members over the pit wall following a wreck.

Jamie McMurray and Ricky Stenhouse Jr. also were eliminated from the playoffs.

"It's a disappointing way to finish our race and probably our season," said Larson, who

had a 33-point buffer coming into the race. "I guess it's sinking in as the seconds pass."

Truex dominated at Kansas for years before finally breaking through with a victory in the spring. He had nothing to lose Sunday, but there was still a sense that Truex wanted to win his seventh race this season for his late crew member and the rest of their team.

"Still pretty surreal at this point," crew chief Cole Pearn said. "We were all focused on what we had to do today. That was the best we could do for Jim. He was a true racer in the purest form."

Truex is the first driver in series history with four consecutive victories on 1½-mile tracks.

"I can't say enough about all these guys," he said. "Just really proud of them, and definitely we were racing with a heavy heart. Jim was a great worker and put a lot of speed in these Toyotas."