

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Mattis back in Vietnam to counter China

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — By making a rare second trip this year to Vietnam, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is signaling how intensively the Trump administration is trying to counter China's military assertiveness by cozying up to smaller nations in the region that share American wariness about Chinese intentions.

The visit beginning Tuesday also shows how far U.S.-Vietnamese relations have advanced since the Vietnam War.

Mattis, a retired general who entered the Marine Corps during Vietnam but did not serve there, visited Hanoi in January. By coincidence, that stop came just days before the 50th anniversary of the Tet Offensive in 1968. Tet was a turning point when North Vietnamese fighters attacked an array of key objectives in the South, surprising Washington and feeding anti-war sentiment even though the North's offensive turned out to be a tactical military failure.

Three months after the Mat-

tis visit, a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, the USS Carl Vinson, made a port call at Da Nang. It was the first such visit since the war and a reminder to China that the U.S. is intent on strengthening partnerships in the region as a counterweight to China's growing military might.

The most vivid expression of Chinese assertiveness is its transformation of contested islets and other features in the South China Sea into strategic military outposts. The Trump administration has sharply criticized China for deploying surface-to-air missiles and other weapons on some of those outposts. In June, Mattis said the placement of those weapons is "tied directly to military use for the purposes of intimidation and coercion."

This time Mattis is visiting Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's most populous city and its economic center. Known as Saigon during the period before the communists took over the Republic of South Vietnam in 1975, the city was renamed for the man who led the Vietnam-

ese nationalist movement.

Mattis also plans to visit a Vietnamese air base, Bien Hoa, a major air station for American forces during the war, and meet with the defense minister, Ngo Xuan Lich.

The visit comes amid a leadership transition after the death in September of Vietnam's president, Tran Dai Quang. Earlier this month, Vietnam's ruling Communist Party nominated its general secretary, Nguyen Phu Trong, for the additional post of president. He is expected to be approved by the National Assembly.

Although Vietnam has become a common destination for American secretaries of defense, two visits in one year is unusual, and Ho Chi Minh City is rarely on the itinerary. The last Pentagon chief to visit Ho Chi Minh City was William Cohen in 2000; he was the first U.S. defense secretary to visit Vietnam since the war. Formal diplomatic relations were restored in 1995, and the U.S. lifted its war-era arms embargo in 2016.

The Mattis trip originally

was to include a visit to Beijing, but that stop was canceled amid rising tensions over trade and defense issues. China recently rejected a request for a Hong Kong port visit by an American warship, and last summer Mattis disinvited China from a major maritime exercise in the Pacific.

China in September scrapped a Pentagon visit by its navy chief and demanded that Washington cancel an arms sale to Taiwan. Those tensions have served to accentuate the potential for a stronger U.S. partnership with Vietnam.

Josh Kurlantzick, a senior fellow and Asia specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, said in an interview that Vietnam in recent years has shifted from a foreign and defense policy that carefully balanced relations with China and the United States to one that shades in the direction of Washington.

"Vietnam, leaving aside Singapore, is the country the most skeptical of China's Southeast Asia policy and makes the most natural partner for the U.S.," Kurlantzick said.

## Trump: Putin 'probably' has involvement in assassinations

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump said he believes that Russian President Vladimir Putin "probably" has been involved in assassinations and poisonings, but he appeared to dismiss the gravity of those actions, noting that they have not taken place in the U.S.

"Probably he is, yeah. Probably," Trump told CBS' Lesley Stahl when asked during an interview on "60 Minutes" whether he thinks Putin is involved "in assassinations, in poisonings."

"But I rely on them; it's not in our country," Trump added.

A long line of Russian dissidents, journalists and others critical of Putin have been poisoned or died under mysterious circumstances. In one of the most recent cases, Sergei Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter were poisoned in Britain, and Russian operatives are suspected. Russia denies any involvement in the attack.

Trump's remarks echoed recent comments he made about Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, who is missing. Trump has vowed "severe punishment" for Saudi Arabia if the U.S. determines that Saudi agents killed Khashoggi, but

he also has noted that the columnist's disappearance "took place in Turkey, and to the best of our knowledge, Khashoggi is not a United States citizen."

Trump acknowledged that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential campaign, but he sought to blame other countries, as well.

"They meddled. But I think China meddled, too," he said.

He later ridiculed the notion that his campaign would seek help from Russia.

"Do you really think I'd call Russia to help me with an election? Give me a break," Trump said. "They wouldn't be able to

help me at all. Call Russia. It's so ridiculous."

The interview marks Trump's first appearance on "60 Minutes" as president. He previously was interviewed for the program as president-elect.

Trump declined to say whether he will fire Attorney General Jeff Sessions, saying only that "we'll see what happens come midterms."

He also declined to say that he will not end the Russia investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller, although he said he does not intend to do so.

# Military leaders assess Tyndall damage

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN  
AND MARTIN EGNASH

*Stars and Stripes*

Air Force leaders are optimistic that Florida's Tyndall Air Force Base can be rebuilt despite the catastrophic hurricane damage it sustained last week.

Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth Wright surveyed the damage at Tyndall on Sunday, visiting with the 93 airmen who rode out the storm on the base.

"I feel pretty good about the

future of Tyndall," Wright told reporters. "I know it will be a long, hard road but we have a lot of resilient airmen that are already putting their head down and getting after making it a safe place."

Asked to address speculation that Tyndall might be a total loss, Wilson said the Air Force was bringing in its expeditionary civil engineers to assess the facilities. While roads were cleared, the base was still without water and power Sunday and was not safe for airmen and their families to return, she said.

The situation could improve in as little as two weeks, Wil-

son said. After the initial shock wears off, "I think people will really start to see the future and not just focus on the present," she said.

Tyndall took a direct hit from Hurricane Michael on Wednesday, with winds from the Category 4 storm peaking at 129 mph on the Panama City base, knocking down trees and power lines and blowing off roofs. Wilson said no injuries were reported on base.

Air Force officials have confirmed that some F-22 Raptor jets in maintenance remained at Tyndall during the storm and sustained damage, though the full extent was still being

determined.

Tyndall hosts about 55 Raptors. The New York Times reported that the Air Force sent at least 33 of the jets to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, ahead of the storm.

The jets that remained were intact and looked better than expected, given the damage to the hangars, the three leaders said in a joint statement posted on the Air Force Facebook page late Sunday.

"Damage was less than we feared and preliminary indications are promising," the statement said.

## US base access for S. Koreans in Japan restricted

BY SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. military has ordered extra scrutiny for South Koreans who want to visit friends or attend events on American bases in Japan.

U.S. Forces Japan recently added the longtime American ally to a list of nations whose citizens must undergo additional screening before they can be escorted onto installations.

A copy of the list posted near the entrance to the home of USFJ in western Tokyo now

features South Korea alongside about 50 other nations, including North Korea, China, Russia, Iran and Afghanistan.

"No personnel will escort a designated third country national onto Yokota Air Base," says a sign posted next to the list, which also includes France. "It is the responsibility of the escort sponsor to verify the individual is not from one of the ... designated countries."

USFJ did not provide a reason for the new checks on South Koreans.

People from designated third countries aren't authorized to

enter U.S. bases in Japan without prior coordination of supporting agencies and approval by the installation commander, said Air Force Maj. Genieve White, a USFJ spokeswoman.

Each request is looked at on a case-by-case basis and requires written, detailed information of potential guests to adequately coordinate the request, she said, referring to a past Air Force instruction.

"We are not banning anyone," White added. "This instruction does not apply to immediate family members of a sponsor or a sponsor's spouse that are

citizens of a designated third country."

Screening requirements vary depending on the individual and the purpose of their visit, White said. She recommended that sponsors contact security forces 30 days ahead of a planned visit by someone from one of the designated countries.

Japanese citizens carrying passports can be escorted onto U.S. bases in South Korea without additional checks, according to officials at Osan Air Base, home of the 51st Fighter Wing south of Seoul.

## US eyes military bases for coal, gas exports to Asia

*Associated Press*

BILLINGS, Mont. — The Trump administration is considering using West Coast military bases or other federal properties as transit points for shipments of U.S. coal and natural gas to Asia as officials seek to bolster the domestic energy industry and circumvent environmental opposition to fossil fuel exports, according to Inte-

rior Secretary Ryan Zinke and two Republican lawmakers.

The proposal would advance the administration's agenda of establishing American "energy dominance" on the world stage and underscores a willingness to intervene in markets to make that happen. It's tantamount to an end-run around West Coast officials who have rejected private-sector efforts to build new

coal ports in their states.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Zinke cast the proposal as a matter of national security to ensure allies have access to affordable fuels. The administration also has cited national security as justification for keeping coal-burning power plants online to prevent disruptions of electricity supplies.

It's unclear which sites are under consideration other than one in Alaska. Experts said the possibilities are constrained by the need for a deep water port.

Zinke said the administration is interested in partnering with private entities to ship coal or liquefied natural gas through naval installations or other federal facilities. He added it's still early in the process.

# Air Force activates special training wing

BY JAMES BOLINGER

*Stars and Stripes*

The Air Force has established a new headquarters organization aimed at meeting combatant commanders' growing needs for special operations airmen, Col. James Hughes, the wing's commander, told Stars and Stripes in a telephone interview Friday.

The Special Warfare Training Wing was activated Wednesday at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, according to an Air Force statement issued

Wednesday. Comprising approximately 135 airmen, the wing has assumed command of the Battlefield Airman Training Group, which was activated in June 2016 and recently was re-designated as the Special Warfare Training Group.

The new wing's primary mission is to free training group personnel from higher level administrative tasks so they can focus on preparing the next generation of special operations airmen, Hughes said.

Strategic planning, personnel management and communica-

tion with higher headquarters are ways the wing can take the burden off the instructor cadre, who need to focus on attention to detail and their own training requirements to ensure a safe and effective training environment, he added.

There are seven special operations career fields in the Air Force: pararescue, combat rescue officer, combat control, special tactics officer, special operations weather team, tactical air control party and non-rated air liaison officer.

The SWTW also assumed

control of the BATG's umbrella mission of ensuring future battlefield airmen have a guiding hand that stretches from recruitment to their arrival in the operational Air Force, Special Warfare Recruiting Squadron commander Maj. Heath Kerns said in a telephone interview Friday.

"For all intents and purposes, we are tied [to new recruits] at the hip," Hughes said. "It ensures we are getting the right type of folks in the door and getting them to their unit."

## DOD: 80 percent of F-35 fleet has returned to flying

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — More than 80 percent of the U.S. military's F-35 Lightning II fighters have returned to flying, Pentagon officials said Monday after a fleet-wide grounding last week to inspect the stealth jets for a problematic engine part at least partially blamed for a recent crash.

Within about two days, the military completed inspections of its entire operational fleet of F-35s, some 250 aircraft across the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, Pentagon officials said. It was not immediately clear how long jets found to have the bad part — a faulty engine fuel tube — would remain grounded, said Joe DellaVedova, a spokesman for the Pentagon's F-35 Joint Program Office.

Some F-35 aircraft returned to flight status within hours of the ordered grounding, he said.

DellaVedova on Monday declined to provide an exact number of F-35s that returned to flight status or had been found to have the flawed fuel tube, citing security concerns. He said some of all three variants of the planes — each service flies its own — were found to have the bad fuel tube.

The faulty parts were discov-

ered in the initial phases of an investigation into the Sept. 28 crash of a Marine Corps F-35B near Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C. The Marines said the investigation into that crash — the first known wreck of an F-35 since it began flying in 2006 — remained open and an exact cause had not been determined.

But DellaVedova was clear Monday that the inspections ordered were a direct result of that investigation.

"The primary goal following any mishap is the prevention of future incidents," he said in a statement. "We will take every measure to ensure safe operations while we deliver, sustain and modernize the F-35 for the warfighter and our defense partners."

Inspectors believe the problem is isolated to the fuel tube, which is produced by Pratt & Whitney, an American aerospace manufacturer. The company is working quickly to produce enough replacement parts to minimize the time that the affected jets are grounded, DellaVedova said.

The military had enough replacement fuel tubes in its stock to repair about one-half of the affected planes, he said.

## Ban on military injury claims taken to high court

*Kaiser Health News*

More than four years after Navy Lt. Rebekah Daniel bled to death within hours of childbirth at a Washington state military hospital, her husband still doesn't know exactly how — or why — it happened.

Walter Daniel, a former Coast Guard officer, demanded explanations from officials at the Naval Hospital Bremerton, where his wife, known as "Moani," died on March 9, 2014.

He says he got none. No results from a formal review of the incident, no details about how the low-risk pregnancy of a healthy 33-year-old woman — a labor and delivery nurse herself — ended in tragedy, leaving their newborn daughter, Victoria, now 4, without a mother.

"There was no timeline, no records of what steps were taken," recalled Daniel, 39, sitting in his Seattle lawyer's office last month. "I've had no answers."

Daniel, who now lives in Dublin, Calif., filed a wrongful death lawsuit in 2015, but it was dismissed, as were subsequent appeals.

The dismissals were based not on the facts of the case but on what's known as the Feres doctrine, a 68-year-old federal ruling that bars active-duty

military members from suing the federal government for injuries.

Last week, Daniel took his quest for answers to the U.S. Supreme Court. Through his lawyer, he petitioned the high court on Thursday to amend the 1950 ruling, creating an exception that would allow servicemembers to sue for medical malpractice the same way civilians can.

"I don't want this to happen to any other family," Daniel said.

The Supreme Court hasn't considered the Feres doctrine in more than 30 years, since the 1987 case *U.S. v. Johnson*, in which the justices ruled 5-4 to uphold the ruling. That decision drew a scathing dissent from Justice Antonin Scalia, who declared the rule should be scrapped.

Since then, however, the court has refused to accept at least two petitions that would have allowed reconsideration of Feres. And chances are slim now. Of the 7,000 to 8,000 cases submitted to the Supreme Court each term, only about 80 are accepted.

But Daniel and his lawyer, Andrew Hoyal, of the Luvera law firm in Seattle, insist that the circumstances of Moani Daniel's death warrant new scrutiny.

# Infighting as Republicans fight to maintain control of House

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Republicans have begun to concede defeat in the evolving fight to preserve the House majority.

The party's candidates might not go quietly, but from the Arizona mountains to suburban Denver to the cornfields of Iowa, the GOP's most powerful players this midterm season are actively shifting resources away from vulnerable Republican House candidates deemed too far gone and toward those thought to have a better chance of political survival.

As they initiate a painful, strategic triage, the early Republican-on-Republican blame game has begun as well.

GOP operatives connected to several vulnerable candidates complain that the committee responsible for electing House Republicans has failed to deliver on its promise to invest \$62 million in political advertising across 11 states this fall, a promise detailed in a September memo that declared, "The cavalry is coming."

The operatives spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid retribution. Vulnerable Republican candidates still hope to receive additional financial support during the three weeks before Election Day.

But if the cavalry is coming, it's not coming for everyone.

Already, the Republican operatives and spending patterns by both sides indicate GOP defeat in as many as a dozen House races — halfway to the

number Democrats need to seize the House majority this fall. Dozens more seats are in play.

"We're starting to hone in on what are the races we can actually win. Sometime that requires a hard conversation," said House Speaker Paul Ryan's fundraising chief, Spencer Zwick.

Even after a burst of enthusiasm that helped Republican Senate candidates in several states following the recent Supreme Court debate, some Republicans closely following the more complicated House battlefield fear the party already might have lost Congress' lower chamber. With 22 days to go, they're working furiously in an expanding political battlefield to limit their losses.

Fundraising challenges make it harder.

As of Friday, the National Republican Congressional Committee has spent or reserved \$44.8 million of television advertising in competitive House races since the end of July, according to spending records obtained by The Associated Press. That's significantly less than the \$62 million promised in last month's memo.

A committee spokesman explained it would meet the original spending projection by including polling and online advertising, which is more difficult to track. Meanwhile, the Republican committee is expected to take out a sizable loan to help meet its commitments.

A separate memo, circulat-

ed to donors in recent days by the super PAC associated with Ryan, noted that it's been forced to carry the bulk of this year's financial burden given weak fundraising by the Republican candidates themselves.

Of more than 30 races considered pure toss-ups, the memo states, Ryan's super PAC is the sole spender in 14.

"The GOP is now facing a green wave," wrote Corry Bliss, who leads the group known as the Congressional Leadership Fund. "Democratic candidates are outspending Republican candidates in key races by \$50 million."

Indeed, Democratic candidates have outspent their Republican counterparts \$116 million to \$66 million across almost 80 competitive House districts since July, according to Friday's spending records. The Congressional Leadership Fund has helped make up the difference, having invested \$93 million during the same period, backed by massive donations from Republican megadonor Sheldon Adelson.

"This is going to be a devastating election for Republicans across the ballot," said Republican strategist Terry Sullivan, who called the party's fundraising issues a symptom of the GOP's broader challenge this fall.

"Republican donors are smart folks," he said. "They're not going to give money to a losing cause."

# Snowstorm blankets Wyo., Colo.

Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado and Wyoming residents woke up Sunday to find that an early season snowstorm had blanketed their homes and roadways with up to a foot of snow and sent temperatures plunging overnight.

The storm caused crashes, snarled traffic and temporarily closed some major highways due to icy conditions.

The heaviest snow fell in an area stretching from Boulder, Colo., through Wyoming to Montana's Beartooth Mountains. The National Weather Service reported snowfall measuring between 3 and 13 inches south of Sheridan, Wyo., during the previous 24 hours.

About 3 inches of snow fell in Denver, where the temperature dropped from 60 degrees Fahrenheit on Saturday to 20 degrees Sunday morning.

A winter weather advisory was issued across the region.

Heavy snow was expected to fall in mountainous areas through Monday morning, including up to 12 inches forecast to fall on Pikes Peak near Colorado Springs.

The storm shut down Interstate 25 at the Colorado-Wyoming state line for nearly 11 hours from Saturday night until Sunday morning.

Officials temporarily closed parts of major highways in Wyoming and Colorado, including Interstate 80, Interstate 70, U.S. Highway 287, U.S. Highway 85 and U.S. Highway 87. Most were later reopened or were set to reopen later Sunday.

Transportation officials in Wyoming and Colorado reported several crashes, including one that blocked eastbound lanes on I-80 in southeastern Wyoming.

Hazardous driving conditions would remain in the area after the snow stops coming down Sunday, the National Weather Service said in a statement.

# Mega Millions lottery prize hits \$654M

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — After nearly three months without a winner, the Mega Millions lottery game has climbed to an estimated \$654 million jackpot.

Unfortunately, even as the big prize for Tuesday night's drawing rises to the fourth-

largest in U.S. history, the odds of matching all six numbers and winning the game don't improve. They're stuck at a miserable one in 302.5 million.

The last time anyone won the jackpot was July 24, when a group from California claimed a \$543 million prize.

The estimated \$654 million jackpot refers to the annuity option, paid out over 29 years. The cash option, which is favored by nearly all winners, is \$372 million.

Mega Millions is played in 44 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Someone puts googly eyes on monument

**GA** SAVANNAH — A Georgia city is searching for a vandal who put googly eyes on a historic monument.

A post on the City of Savannah Government Facebook page asks: “Who did this?! ... It may look funny but harming our historic monuments and public property is no laughing matter, in fact, it’s a crime.”

Police spokeswoman Keturah Greene said police are investigating the incident, reported Thursday, involving the Nathanael Greene Monument.

Greene was a major general in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and is buried in Johnson Square near his monument.

## 4 killed in shooting at child’s birthday party

**TX** TAFT — Investigators said a party in South Texas to mark a toddler’s first birthday erupted in gunfire, leaving four men dead and a fifth wounded.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said the shooting happened shortly after 5 p.m. Saturday in Taft, 12 miles north of Corpus Christi. Sgt. Nathan Brandley said an altercation erupted between two families attending the party and escalated into the deadly shooting.

Brandley said two suspects are on the loose.

## 10K illuminated books to pave street for art

**MI** ANN ARBOR — A Michigan street will be temporarily paved with 10,000 illuminated books as part of a one-night public art installation.

The University of Michigan

Institute for the Humanities has invited Spain-based art collective Luzinterruptus to work with university and community groups to create the installation, titled “Literature vs. Traffic.” The event is part of the institute’s 2018-19 theme “Humanities and Environments.”

The installation will take eight days to create. Students and community volunteers will work with the artists in the Ruthven Museums Building to prepare books with LED lights.

The display is planned Oct. 23 from 5-11 p.m.

## Owner of rogue piglet found in traffic sought

**ME** AUGUSTA — Police in Maine’s capital city are looking for the owner of a 50-pound piglet that wore itself out while dodging traffic Saturday evening after presumably escaping.

The Portland Press Herald reported that Augusta police went door to door looking for the animal’s owner without any luck.

They said the pig is being cared for by a person familiar with farm animals until the owner can be found.

## Intruders set dogs against each other

**AR** HELENA-WEST HELENA — Officials said intruders broke into an eastern Arkansas animal shelter and set several dogs against each other in what a shelter volunteer called “a bloodbath.”

The incident happened Wednesday night at the Humane Society of the Delta in Helena-West Helena.

Human Society official Beth Florek said she got a call about 2 a.m. Thursday from someone who reported noisy dogs. She

said two dogs tore life-threatening abdominal, jaw and ear wounds in a third.

Florek said four dogs were injured and that it was the third time in four years that someone had broken in and injured animals.

## Naked man arrested at theme park

**VA** WILLIAMSBURG — Police in Virginia said they arrested an intoxicated man who was running around a theme park parking lot naked, trying to enter vehicles.

James City County Deputy Police Chief Steve Rubino told the Daily Press that bystanders at Busch Gardens corralled the man, who is a member of the Navy, until an officer arrived Friday night.

He said the man, 21, fought the officer and bystanders and attempted to run away. Rubino said the officer used a stun gun on the man, who was taken to a hospital because he was intoxicated.

The man, who wasn’t immediately identified, has five arrest warrants pending, including a charge of felony assault on a law enforcement officer. Rubino said the man is stationed in Norfolk.

## Man accused of killing girlfriend

**AZ** PHOENIX — A Phoenix man is accused of fatally shooting his girlfriend and putting her body in a gun safe that he welded shut and buried in the desert.

Paul Palandri, 59, was jailed following his arrest Thursday on suspicion of second-degree murder in the 2016 killing of Jana Van Sickle, 51. Police said Van Sickle told a friend that Palandri was bad for her and that she planned to break up with

him.

Van Sickle’s body was found on the Gila River Indian Community after the gun safe was spotted after being partially exposed by wild animals digging.

Police said Palandri denied killing Van Sickle but a witness recently reported hearing him say he’d killed her.

## Deputy crashes into house during chase

**CA** BODEGA BAY — Authorities said a deputy’s patrol car slammed into a house and burst into flames during a chase that reached speeds of 100 mph in Northern California.

The Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office said the deputy is expected to recover from injuries sustained in the fiery crash before dawn Sunday in Bodega Bay.

The Santa Rosa Press Democrat reported that flames engulfed the car and the house. The deputy was able to free himself, and he and another deputy got everyone safely out of the house.

## Projects designed to aid brown pelicans

**LA** BATON ROUGE, — Officials in the Pelican State are designing two projects to shore up coastal islands, aiming to improve nesting grounds for its namesake brown pelicans.

The Advocate reported Louisiana got \$148 million following 2010’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill to improve coastal rookeries.

The projects would aid Rabbit Island in southwest Louisiana’s Cameron Parish and fill an area around Queen Bess Island in Barataria Bay that’s turned to open water.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Patriots prevail in showdown with Chiefs

Associated Press

Anyone who missed the Game of the Season — Tom Brady and the New England Patriots 43, Pat Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs 40 — can take solace in knowing there very well could be a rematch a little more than three months away.

And no one, except for players on other AFC teams, would be disappointed if Jan. 20 brings the world Patriots vs. Chiefs II, with a conference title and Super Bowl berth at stake.

“I’m sure,” Patriots linebacker Dont’a Hightower said about Mahomes, “we’ll probably see him down the road.”

Brady’s take on the KC QB who gave coach Bill Belichick’s defense all it could handle?

“Big play after big play.”

That’s an apt description of the whole contest Sunday night.

“It was a spectacle, that’s for sure,” Patriots receiver Josh Gordon said.

Just the sort of thing the NFL wants nowadays.

Supremacy of offense.

All attention on the passers and their targets.

Plenty of points and ever-increasing fantasy numbers.

Brady was 24-for-35 for 340 yards, one TD pass, one TD run, and a 39-yard completion to tight end Rob Gronkowski, whose 500th catch in the league set up Stephen Gostkowski’s go-ahead field goal on the final play. That came after Mahomes — 23-for-36 for 352 yards, four touchdown passes, a pair of picks — found Tyreek Hill for a

tying 75-yard score.

The Chiefs (5-1) came back after trailing 24-9 at halftime.

The Patriots (4-2 and winners of three in a row) kept responding to every score Mahomes generated down the stretch.

The teams combined for 30 points in the fourth quarter alone.

It was back-and-forth. It was electrifying. It was memorable.

It was the 200th career regular-season victory for the 41-year-old Brady, a record for a starting quarterback.

It was the first career loss as an NFL starter for the 23-year-old Mahomes, who suddenly has become a bona fide star.

“He’s young,” said Hightower, who had an early interception, “but he definitely doesn’t show it.”

Young quarterbacks have always had a tough time winning in Gillette Stadium during the Belichick and Brady era.

Mahomes was no different — quarterbacks under 25 years old are now 0-24 all-time in Foxborough during the regular-season against the Patriots.

It is the first blemish of the season for the Chiefs (5-1) and for Mahomes, who started the game slowly before rallying his team from a 15-point, first-half deficit to take a late lead.

He threw a pair of early interceptions, but regained confidence down the stretch leading touchdown drives with the same improbable plays he’s been pulling off all season. He kept quieting a nervous New England crowd.

The Chiefs tied the game at 40 via Mahomes’ 75-yard TD pass to Hill. But they left too much time on the clock for Brady, who marched his team down the field to set up the eventual winning kick.

“They had a good game plan,” Mahomes said. “They threw a lot of pressure at us, a lot of different, and I just tried to stay within myself.”

The Patriots had their best offensive night of the 2018 season, amassing 500 total yards while getting another clutch performance from Brady, their surefire Hall of Fame quarterback.

Brady passed for 340 yards and touchdown while running for another score.

New England’s third straight win was Brady’s 200th victory as a starting quarter, tops all-time. He also passed former teammate Adam Vinatieri for most career wins in the regular season and playoffs combined with 227.

The Patriots have now won three straight games since starting the season 1-2. And, at least offensively, they seem to be finding a groove following a slow start that included lopsided losses to Jacksonville and Detroit.

New England now has scored 30 or more points in three consecutive games, and seem to have found a jewel in rookie running back Sony Michel.

Michel rushed for 106 yards and two touchdowns in Sunday’s win, his second 100-yard game this season. He also had 98 yards in New England’s win over Indianapolis, and scored a rushing touchdown in three straight games.

# Cowboys turn focus to road after routing Jags

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Ezekiel Elliott had a quiet 100-yard game by his standards in the Dallas Cowboys’ rout of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The star running back spoke the loudest after the 40-7 win on the home-road discrepancy for a .500 team that’s perfect at AT&T Stadium and winless with three mostly anemic offensive showings on the road.

Up next before Dallas’ open week: a trip to NFC East-leading Washington (3-2), a half-game ahead of the Cowboys and defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia, tied at 3-3.

“Obviously it’s something we can do, but we need to do it,” Elliott, emphasizing “need,” said Sunday after rushing for 106 yards and a touchdown. “If we keep not winning on the road, we’re not going to make the playoffs.”

Dallas has three touchdowns on the road — one in each game. The Cowboys are averaging nearly 100 yards per game more at home than on the road, and the numbers are particularly stark in the first half.

At home, the Cowboys have a 210-125 edge in yardage before halftime compared with a 221-103 deficit at the break on the road. It’s not exactly the formula for taking a crowd out of the game.

“We’ve been a good road team in the past,” coach Jason Garrett said. “We have a young team. We have to understand how to handle the conditions on the road.”

After some pregame pumping up for Dallas from UFC star Conor McGregor, Cole Beasley had his first two touchdown catches of the season against the Jaguars.

Dak Prescott threw for 151 of his 183 yards before halftime and had 82 yards rushing, the second-best total for a quarterback in franchise history behind Roger

Staubach’s 90 yards in 1971.

Prescott had two other career numbers: his longest run, a 28-yarder after escaping a sack, and his longest scoring run — from 17 yards after a fake to Elliott for Dallas’ first TD.

The 2016 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year didn’t have to throw in the second half, so the team’s 30th-ranked passing game coming in couldn’t really be judged by another sub-200-yard game.

“I was talking to Dak the other day and we talked about how this game could set us up for the rest of the season,” said receiver Allen Hurns, who didn’t have a catch despite five targets. “We’ve still got to focus on trying to win on the road.”

Things to consider after the Jaguars (3-3) had season lows in total offense (204 yards) and yards rushing (65) while running just 47 plays to 72 for the Cowboys:

# Rams' Gurley runs over reeling Broncos

Associated Press

DENVER — Not the wintry weather nor the Denver Broncos' spongy defense could slow down Todd Gurley.

The Rams running back rumbled for a career-high 208 yards and two touchdowns on 28 carries and Los Angeles celebrated defensive coordinator Wade Phillips' homecoming Sunday with a 23-20 win over the reeling Denver Broncos.

"I wouldn't be able to do it without those guys up front," said Gurley, whose previous high was 159 yards at Green Bay in 2015. "It was kind of easy for me, honestly, because those guys did such a great job."

And Denver's defense succumbed again.

A week after allowing 323 yards rushing in a loss to the Jets, including 219 by Isaiah Crowell, the Broncos were gashed for 270 yards on the ground.

"We knew we were going to be a little bit leaky in the run today because the pass was our focus," Von Miller said. "But 270 yards is just, you know, ridiculous."

"We didn't tackle well. We didn't fit well," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said. "That's two weeks in a row — unacceptable."

The Rams, who had surrendered 31 points in back-to-back games, improved to 6-0 in sending the Broncos (2-4) to their fourth straight loss.

The Broncos pulled to 23-20 on Case Keenum's 1-yard dart to Demaryius Thomas with 1:22 remaining, but Rams receiver Robert Woods knocked Brandon McManus' onside kick out of bounds, and the Rams ran out the clock with Keenum's one-time understudy Jared Goff (14-for-28 for 201 yards on his 24th birthday) twice taking a knee.

Phillips was the Broncos' beloved bandmaster when they were celebrating their Super Bowl 50 triumph, but his contract wasn't renewed after the 2016 season and he joined Sean McVay in sunny Southern

California.

After an overnight snowstorm, the game-time temperature of 25 degrees marked the second-coldest in Denver prior to November in franchise history.

The cold did nothing to slow down Gurley, who scored his 10th and 11th touchdowns of the season.

One was on a 10-yard run on fourth down that gave the Rams a 13-3 halftime lead, the other, a 1-yard run that made it 20-3.

**Costly foul:** Gurley's first score came after a boneheaded move by Broncos receiver Emmanuel Sanders, who thought he had a 44-yard TD catch and jabbed a finger in cornerback Troy Hill's face, drawing a taunting foul.

Upon review, Sanders was ruled down at the 1, and the unsportsmanlike 15-yard penalty pushed the Broncos back to the 16.

Instead of an extra point to give Denver a 7-6 lead, McManus ended up kicking a 28-yard field goal.

Sanders, who had a 22-yard TD catch in the second half, blamed himself for the loss.

"Me, honestly, I feel like the league is getting soft," Sanders said. "I'm having fun. I didn't do anything crazy to the guy besides say, 'Hey, I got you on that play.' I pointed my finger at him. And they threw the flag."

He said he's done that his whole career.

"It was a great throw by Case. I came down with it. Emotions are high. It's not like I walked up to him and head-butted him or something," Sanders said. "But it cost my team. I guess this loss is on me."

**Still the same:** Joseph promised changes this week but those alterations were either cosmetic or schematic — and, ultimately, fruitless.

Max Garcia replaced right guard Connor McGovern, but McGovern rotated back in and Garcia moved over when left guard Ronald Leary (ankle) got hurt in the third quarter.

# Steelers rally to win over Bengals, again

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Joe Mixon scored on a 4-yard run and dashed toward the stands in celebration of Cincinnati's go-ahead touchdown. On the Steelers sideline, Ben Roethlisberger looked at the clock, saw there was 1:18 left, and told his linemen not to fret.

"They gave us too much time," Big Ben said confidently.

Somehow, the Steelers never run out of time at Paul Brown Stadium.

Antonio Brown turned a short catch into a 31-yard touchdown with 10 seconds left Sunday, sending the Steelers to a 28-21 victory over the Bengals. They've now won seven straight against Cincinnati, a streak that includes highly improbable — and totally predictable — wins.

The Steelers (3-2-1) sure saw it coming.

"On the sideline before I went out, I told the guys, 'This is what legacies are made of for all of us. Let's go take care of business,'" Roethlisberger said.

On the decisive play, Roethlisberger saw the Bengals (4-2) were set for an all-out blitz with no safeties guarding the end zone. He knew it would be a touchdown if he got the ball quickly to Brown, who caught it in stride, cut behind Justin Hunter's block and ran untouched to the end zone.

"We've been in that situation a lot, and I knew we were going to do it," said Brown, who had five catches for 105 yards.

During their seven-game winning streak, the Steelers have pulled them out at Paul Brown Stadium with 14 seconds, no seconds, and 10 seconds to go.

They rallied to win a first-round playoff game in 2015 — aided by Vontaze Burfict hitting Brown in the head for a costly penalty — on Chris Boswell's field goal with 14 seconds left. Last December, they

overcame a 17-point deficit and won on Boswell's field goal as time ran out.

Now, this stunner.

"We're better than them," Bengals cornerback Dre Kirkpatrick insisted. "They're not better than us."

The statistics say otherwise. The Steelers have won 10 of 11 and 15 of 18 in the lopsided series.

Some takeaways from Paul Brown Stadium:

**It's a race:** The Bengals got an early cushion in the division by knocking off the Ravens and opening 4-1, their best start since they won the division in 2015. The Steelers got off to a ragged start at 1-2-1, but wins over the Falcons and Bengals have evened up the division. The Bengals finish the season at Heinz Field.

**Shocking numbers:** The Steelers are 16-2 at Paul Brown Stadium during Marvin Lewis' 16 seasons as the Bengals' head coach, including playoff victories in 2005 and 2015. Steelers coach Mike Tomlin is 20-5 against the Bengals. Andy Dalton is 3-12, missing that 2015 playoff meltdown with a broken thumb.

**Conner's history:** James Conner ran for 111 yards and a pair of touchdowns, his second straight 100-yard game. Conner joined Hall of Famers Franco Harris (1976) and Jerome Bettis (2004) as the only Steelers to run for seven touchdowns in the first six games of a season, excelling as Le'Veon Bell's replacement.

Bell reportedly will end his holdout this week during Pittsburgh's bye.

"What a great game," Roethlisberger said. "Now I know it's his last game for us, so we're glad he did well in his last one."

Roethlisberger laughed, clarifying that he was going entirely off media reports and speculation about what happens when Bell returns.

# Red Sox get even with Astros in ALCS

Associated Press

BOSTON — David Price went home a winner in a postseason start for the first time in his career.

That, he insisted, is all he ever cared about.

“This is bigger than David Price,” he said on Sunday night. “This isn’t about me. This is about the Boston Red Sox.”

Price was good enough, the Red Sox relievers were even better, and Jackie Bradley Jr. delivered a go-ahead, three-run double off the Green Monster to lead Boston to a 7-5 victory over the Houston Astros and tie the AL Championship Series at one game apiece.

Price fell one out short of qualifying for the win, which would have been his first in 11 postseason starts. But it was the first time his team had won a playoff game he started, snapping a record run of October futility.

“It’s baby steps,” said Price, who entered the night 0-9 in 10 career playoff starts. “I expect myself to be great in big moments, and I haven’t done that thus far in my career. But I came here to win, period. I came here to win a World Series, and to do it multiple times. And that’s what I’m about.”

Game 3 is Tuesday in Houston, followed by two more at Minute Maid Park

and a chance for the defending World Series champions to clinch a second straight AL pennant at home. Marwin Gonzalez homered for the Astros, who had won five straight postseason games dating to Game 7 of the 2017 Series.

“We came here and won a game, and they played well tonight,” Houston third baseman Alex Bregman said. “It’s going to be a fun series, so we’re looking forward to going back home.”

Price was spotted a two-run lead in the first inning and then fell behind 4-2 before Bradley clanged one off the left-field wall that Gonzalez chased helplessly as it bounced back toward the infield.

Price left leading 5-4 with two on with two out in the fifth before Matt Barnes struck out Gonzalez to end the inning and then pitched a perfect sixth to earn the victory. Ryan Brasier pitched a scoreless inning and erstwhile starter Rick Porcello set the Astros down 1-2-3 in the eighth.

Closer Craig Kimbrel gave up Jose Altuve’s RBI single with two outs in the ninth before Bregman launched a high fly to left that Andrew Benintendi caught a step in front of the Monster.

“I knew I missed it,” Bregman said. “If I got it, it would have been on the street behind Fenway Park.”

Gerrit Cole, who was so dominant in his Division Series start against Cleveland, gave up a double to Mookie Betts — the first batter of the game — as Boston sent eight batters to the plate in the first and scored twice.

The AL West champs tied it in the second on George Springer’s two-run double down the right-field line. And when Gonzalez cleared the Monster — and the seats above them — with a two-run homer in the third, it looked like Price was headed for another loss (he has won two postseason games in relief.)

But Boston, which won the AL East and a franchise-record 108 games, came back in the bottom half, starting with Xander Bogaerts’ one-out single and then a double by Steve Pearce that sent Gonzalez crashing back-first into the metal scoreboard on the left-field wall. He fell to the warning track, but after the training staff and manger AJ Hinch went out to check on him he stayed in the game.

Cole walked Devers on four pitches to load the bases and struck out Ian Kinsler on three before Bradley lofted one down the left-field line and off the Monster. As the ball bounced back toward the infield, it hopped on the padding along the side wall, just out of Gonzalez’s reach.

## NHL roundup

### Palmieri rallies Devils

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Auston Matthews of the Toronto Maple Leafs isn’t the only goal-scorer lighting it up in the NHL. Take a look at Kyle Palmieri of the New Jersey Devils.

Palmieri scored two goals for the third straight game and the Devils rallied from their first deficits of the season to beat the San Jose Sharks 3-2 on Sunday.

Palmieri has six goals in three games, just four behind Matthews, who has 10 in six contests.

“Whatever he’s doing, he’s got to keep doing it. Two goals a game every night,” Devils goaltender Keith Kinkaid joked after make 37 saves to help New Jersey open the season with three straight wins for the second year in a row.

Palmieri had 24 goals last season but he didn’t get his sixth until just before Christmas in large part because he missed 19 games with injuries.

This year everything he shoots seemingly is finding twine.

“Getting some bounces. A couple have been pretty lucky,” said Palmieri, who is the first Devil to score two goals in each of the first three games.

**Ducks 3, Blues 2:** Ben Street and Andrew Cogliano scored third-period goals, and Ryan Miller made 29 saves in Anaheim’s comeback victory over host St. Louis.

**Jets 3, Hurricanes 1:** Bryan Little broke a tie with 2:09 left and host Winnipeg beat Carolina to open a six-game homestand.

## Almirola moving on

Associated Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Aric Almirola capped an absolute Stewart-Haas Racing rout at Talladega Superspeedway with an overtime victory that earned him an automatic berth into the third round of NASCAR’s playoffs.

Almirola was part of the four-car SHR contingent that was untouchable all weekend at Talladega. The four Fords swept qualifying, won every stage of Sunday’s race and used teamwork to pull away from the field.

SHR had the race in control until a caution with three laps remaining sent the race into overtime. Then the fuel pressure light on Kurt Busch’s car began to flicker, and Kevin Harvick’s light followed. As the field roared to the green flag, Harvick forfeited a shot at vic-

tory by pulling off the track to get enough gas to make it to the finish.

Busch stayed out as the leader with Almirola and Clint Bowyer looking for a slot to slip past him for the victory. Then Busch ran out of gas headed to the checkered flag and Almirola zipped past him for his first victory of the season, first since joining SHR this year as the replacement for Danica Patrick.

Almirola thought he had last week’s race at Dover won until a caution triggered by teammate Bowyer ruined his shot at the victory. A week later, he got his checkered flag and his stamp into the round of eight into the playoffs.

Bowyer finished second, followed by Ricky Stenhouse Jr. in a Ford from Roush Fenway Racing.

Busch faded to 14th and Harvick wound up 28th.