

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Civilians scatter as Turkish assault goes on

Associated Press

AKCAKALE, Turkey — Turkey pressed its assault against U.S.-allied Kurdish forces in northern Syria on Thursday for a second day, pounding the region with airstrikes and an artillery bombardment that raised columns of black smoke in a border town and sent panicked civilians scrambling to get out.

Residents fled with their belongings loaded into cars, pickup trucks and motorcycle rickshaws, while others escaped on foot. The U.N. refugee agency said tens of thousands were on the move, and aid agencies warned that nearly a half-million people near the border were at risk.

It was a wrenchingly familiar scene for many who fled the militants of Islamic State only a few years ago.

The Turkish air and ground assault was launched three days after President Donald Trump opened the way by pulling U.S. troops from their positions near the border alongside their Kurdish allies.

At a time when Trump faces an impeachment inquiry, the move drew swift criticism from Republicans and Democrats in Congress, along with many national defense experts, who say it has endangered not only the Kurds and regional stability but U.S. credibility as well. The Syrian Kurdish militia was the only U.S. ally in the campaign that brought down ISIS in Syria.

Trump warned Turkey to exercise moderation during its assault and to protect civilians. But the opening barrage showed little sign of holding back. The Turkish Defense

Military said its jets and artillery had struck 181 targets.

More than a dozen columns of thick smoke rose in and around the town of Tel Abyad, one of the offensive's first main targets. Turkish officials said the Kurdish militia has fired dozens of mortars into Turkish border towns the past two days, including Akcakale.

Turkish officials said a 9-month-old and a civil servant were killed by mortars striking towns inside Turkey. On the Syrian side, seven civilians and eight Kurdish fighters have been killed since the operation began, according to activists in Syria.

A Kurdish-led group and Syrian activists said that despite the bombardment, Turkish troops had not made much progress on several fronts they had opened. Their claims could

not be independently verified.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said 109 “terrorists” were killed in the offensive, a reference to the Syrian Kurdish fighters. He did not elaborate, and reports from the area did not indicate anything remotely close to such a large number of casualties.

Erdogan also warned the European Union not to call Ankara's incursion into Syria an “invasion.” He threatened, as he has in the past, to “open the gates” and let Syrian refugees flood into Europe.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the military intends to move 19 miles into northern Syria and that its operation will last until all “terrorists are neutralized.”

Navy's \$7.8B destroyer, USS Zumwalt, now 6 years late

Bloomberg

The first of three new destroyers for the U.S. Navy won't be delivered with full combat capability until the first quarter of next year, another slip in a \$23 billion program that's running six years late.

The previously undisclosed delay for the first ship, the \$7.8 billion USS Zumwalt, was confirmed by Colleen O'Rourke, a Navy spokeswoman, via email. It was supposed to have full combat capability last month, which already was more than five years later than scheduled and 10 years after construction began.

“While combat system testing has made significant progress, Zumwalt continues to work through first-in-class integration and shipboard test challenges,” O'Rourke said in the statement.

The additional delay in final delivery of the destroyer, designated the DDG-1000, could increase doubts the Navy can build, outfit and deliver vessels on time and within cost targets. The service is seeking pub-

lic and congressional support for plans to reach a 355-ship fleet by 2034, up from 290 today. That's a 20-year acceleration over last year's timeline to reach the goal.

The Navy has opted for a phased delivery strategy for the destroyers: initial delivery after completion of the hull and mechanical and engineering installation at General Dynamics Corp.'s Bath Iron Works in Maine and testing on the East Coast, followed by combat system activation in California under the supervision of Raytheon Co. and BAE Systems Plc.

General Dynamics turned over the Zumwalt to the Navy in 2016. Since then, Raytheon and BAE Systems have been completing the vessel's combat systems and the “total computing system environment” needed to operate the vessel.

Under the contract, final delivery occurs when all systems have been installed, tested and deemed working.

The Navy calls the new destroyer class “the largest and most technologically advanced surface combatant in the world.”

The stealthy, multimission Zumwalt started out as a 32-ship program with the primary purpose of providing gun support to troops and Marines ashore, much like battleships during World War II. The Navy assumed it would buy 20,000 “Long-Range Land Attack Projectiles” over the program's life that were to fire 62 nautical miles from its twin 155 mm “Advanced Gun Systems” made by BAE Systems.

The program was reduced to just three vessels, with the Navy planning to buy 2,400 projectiles — raising the estimated cost for each munition to as much as \$566,000, according to the Naval Sea Systems Command.

The destroyer is currently in combat testing before final delivery. It has completed a series of at-sea trials that included evaluating how well the ship handles at sea, refueling while underway, calm weather maneuverability trials, navigation certifications and acoustic tests, according to Navy documents.

Chinese destroyer arrives at Yokosuka

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA, Japan — The Chinese navy guided-missile destroyer Taiyuan anchored at Yokosuka Port on Thursday, less than a mile from Yokosuka Naval Base, home of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

The ship is expected to participate for the first time in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force International Fleet Review on Monday in Sagami Bay.

A group of about 30 visitors and 25 Chinese sailors walked around the Taiyuan's deck from stern to bow about 11 a.m. Thursday.

Chinese navy representatives are conducting "courtesy exchanges with peers from the JMSDF and navies of other countries," according to a Chinese Ministry of National Defense statement Tuesday. They also plan to host "military and cultural exchanges" such as sports competitions and deck receptions "to further enhance mutual understanding, promote traditional Chinese culture and spread peace and friendship."

"All service members will display high spirit, excellent military skills and good image of the [Chinese] sailors and demonstrate the great achievements of [China's] naval modernization," the statement said.

Taiyuan Vice Captain Gong Yuanxin told Chinese state media that the ship's deck would be opened to the public during the fleet review, according to a Tuesday report by the South China Morning Post. Gong also told state media that the visit's goal is to "deepen communication with the navies of other countries and improve mutual understanding, and promote cooperation and mutual trust," according to the newspaper.

Japan holds the international fleet reviews about once every three years. This year South Korea, an ally, was not invited to the event as a consequence of a low point in relations between the two countries.

The event kicked off Sunday with a four-country panel discussion on sea power in the Indo-Pacific region. Experts from the U.S., Australia, India and Japan talked rising Chinese threats and preserving free navigation in the South China Sea, which China views as its own territorial waters.

In April, Japan participated in the Chinese navy's international fleet review, sending the guided-missile destroyer JS Suzutsuki to Qingdao, the JMSDF's first visit to China in seven years.

The U.S. Navy, which is also taking part in Japan's fleet review, was invited to the Chinese fleet review but declined the invitation.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.

Suit: Shipbuilder ignored sub testing procedures

The Washington Post

A whistleblower has accused America's largest shipbuilder of ignoring the Navy's testing and certification requirements, allegedly putting sailors' lives at risk by degrading the stealth capabilities of U.S. nuclear submarines.

The whistleblower, an engineer named Ari Lawrence, held a senior role in Huntington Ingalls' submarine division until October 2017. Lawrence has not requested anonymity and made his allegations in a publicly available complaint filed under the federal False Claims Act.

The complaint accuses his former employer of assigning unqualified individuals to install an important hull coating designed to shield the Navy's Virginia-class nuclear submarines from sonar and falsifying records to cover up their mistakes.

Also last week, in an apparently unrelated incident, a submarine welder at the same company pleaded guilty to falsifying inspection records. That employee was fired in 2016, at which point the matter was reported to authorities. He faces a maximum of five years in prison.

In a letter sent to the company's shipbuilders recently, Newport News Ship-

building President Jennifer Boykin admonished employees to conduct their work in an ethical manner, noting that the incidents had called the company's integrity into question.

"We cannot and will not tolerate a lapse in ethics and integrity at Newport News Shipbuilding. Period," Boykin wrote.

In his first press statement on the matter, the whistleblower expressed admiration for the company's shipbuilders, who he called "true craftsmen" who "want nothing more than to build the finest ships in the world."

He added, however, that he thought the company had made it impossible for him to do his job responsibly.

A spokesman for Huntington Ingalls said the company intends to "vigorously defend" itself, adding that it cooperated fully with an earlier federal investigation. The Justice Department, which declined to comment for this story, decided not to prosecute the case.

Navy spokesman Danny Hernandez declined to comment on the ongoing litigation, but he emphasized that the hull coating problem "does not present a safety concern to the crew or the submarine."

Navy sets changes to help retain sailors

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy is going more digital and making it easier for sailors to access information on their phones as it seeks to attract new recruits and retain sailors, the service's top human resources officer said Thursday.

"The way we're configured now doesn't support how we need to manage talent in the 21st century for high-end warfare," Vice Adm. John Nowell, chief of naval personnel, told sailors at an all-hands call at the Navy's base in Naples.

"We're driving most everything to mobile devices, where most of you live in your personal lives," Nowell said.

The changes are part of the "Sailor 2025" program, which is trumpeted as changing how the Navy recruits, promotes and delivers information to sailors. Several phone apps and websites were developed in the past year, and databases have been con-

solidated on a digital cloud to make them easier for sailors to access, he said.

Before policy changes are made, discussion groups are held with sailors of all ranks, Nowell said. Input from those discussion groups is then used by thousands of people working under Nowell to research and draft new policies.

The end of permanent shaving waivers for sailors suffering razor bumps is a change that arose from the new policymaking method, Nowell said. Eighteen months of research and review confirmed that beards impede breathing devices such as gas masks, and the waivers were scrapped, he said. The Navy has also stepped up efforts to recruit and retain sailors in the past several years as U.S. relations with Russia and China have grown more tense and adversarial, Nowell said. The aim is to build a stronger fighting force in "the great power competition," he told Stars and Stripes before the meeting.

Green Beret to be awarded the Medal of Honor for '08 mission

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army Master Sgt. Matthew O. Williams will receive the Medal of Honor this month for his lifesaving actions in the frozen mountains of eastern Afghanistan's Nuristan province during a 2008 mission to kill or capture a high-value target, the White House announced Thursday.

President Donald Trump will award the nation's highest military honor to the Green Beret in a White House ceremony on Oct. 30, the administration said in a statement. The award will be an upgrade of the Silver Star that Williams initially received for his role in the fight that would become known as the Battle of Shok Valley.

Williams, who remains on active duty with 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C., will be the second soldier to receive the Medal of Honor for his actions during that battle, which took

place April 6, 2008. Retired Army Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer received the medal from Trump on Oct. 1, 2018, which was also an upgrade of the Silver Star that he was initially awarded for his actions in that battle.

Williams continuously braved insurgent rocket-propelled grenade, sniper and machine-gun fire as he and the unit of Green Berets and Afghan commandos faced down a much larger, entrenched enemy force. He helped evacuate casualties from the "near vertical mountainside" and established a fire position that ensured the commando unit could eventually escape.

"Sergeant Williams's actions helped save the lives of four critically wounded soldiers and prevented the lead element of the assault force from being overrun by the enemy," the White House statement read.

Williams is from Boerne, Texas, and he has served in the Army for 14 years, according to the Army.

USMC mulls changes to maternity clothing

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps maternity uniform could potentially see some changes in the future, including adjustable side tabs for the service uniform, according to a Marine Corps document.

The Marines' plan for possible maternity uniform changes were presented in a briefing slide for the September committee meeting of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

The service is looking to add adjustable side tabs to the maternity shirts and tunic for the service uniform. The side tabs make the shirts adjustable throughout pregnancy. The change is still at the concept and development stage, according to the Marines.

The only uniform that now has adjustable tabs is the combat utility uniform, Capt. Joseph Butterfield, a Marine Corps spokesman, said Wednesday.

A commercial nursing undershirt is also in the process of being certified for the maternity combat utility uniform, according to the Marines.

The document states improvements for adding the adjustable side tabs and nursing undershirt will be available in fiscal year 2020. However, Butterfield said the Marine Corps does not have a detailed timeline on when the modifications to the maternity service uniform will be available.

The Marine Corps is also interested in new long- and short-sleeve maternity shirts for their service uniform. The document states they are still waiting to hear the results of a similar Air Force initiative.

Calif. woman fights for marriage to Marine who died to be recognized

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

A California woman is fighting to prove she and a Marine were husband and wife even though he died before completing paperwork for a marriage license.

Jennifer Crowley said she and Master Sgt. Jeff Briar held a wedding ceremony on the beach at Del Mar, Calif., near San Diego, on Sept. 22.

But Briar died not long after the ceremony and before the couple had filed for a marriage license, raising questions as to whether Crowley is entitled to survivor benefits.

After the beach ceremony, Briar went swimming with Crowley's 15-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son and all three were swept out to sea.

Fellow Marines jumped into the water with bodyboards to try to save them but managed to rescue only the children, Crowley said.

"When they reached them, they said, 'My dad's out there;

you have to save him,'" she said. "But they were too late.

"It was supposed to be the happiest day of our lives. He went in the water to play with the kids and never came back."

Proving the couple were married would qualify Crowley and her children for survivor benefits, including health care coverage, Crowley's attorney, Daniel Martorella, said.

Any life insurance payout would go to Briar's mother, Debbie Robinson, he said.

"There is not a huge inheritance and I don't get the impression that (Crowley) is interested in that," Martorella said, regarding any possible insurance money.

Shortly after her son's death, Robinson told the Marine Corps Times that the event on the beach was only a "promise ceremony" because there was no marriage license.

Stars and Stripes could not reach Robinson for comment.

Crowley plans to go to court later this month to prove she and Briar were married, Mar-

torella said.

Photos, eyewitness accounts and documents all show the couple were getting married on the day Briar drowned, the lawyer added.

A GoFundMe page set up by one of Briar's stepchildren, Paige Hare, says the Marine died "on his wedding day."

"He leaves behind a wife and 3 stepchildren," the fundraiser says. "He is and always will be a hero, an amazing Marine and the best husband and father any family could ever ask for!"

Briar was assigned to Headquarters Battalion, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group at the Marine Air Ground Combat Training Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

The command "is a tight family of Marines and Master Sgt. Briar was one of our best," said Col. Matthew Reid, the unit's commander. "We are all saddened by this tragic event but proud of him, and we will never forget him and his service."

White House aides absent amid controversy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They've skipped the high-profile Sunday TV shows and avoided driveway chat sessions with reporters. Few who are typically eager to defend the president have appeared at all on television this month.

White House officials close to President Donald Trump are pulling off a disappearing act, remaining largely absent from public view — in the middle of the storm over impeachment.

"We invited the White House on to answer questions on the

show this morning," CNN's Jake Tapper explained to his viewers on Sunday's "State of the Union." "They did not offer a guest."

It's a well-worn strategy in the Trump White House: Senior officials conveniently manage to be elsewhere when major controversies engulf the building. The frequent absences of Jared Kushner, the Republican president's son-in-law and senior adviser, and presidential daughter Ivanka Trump during moments of consequence have long been a running joke among their detractors. Their

detours included a trip to Florida during the partial government shutdown.

Plenty of others have jumped town during tense moments.

As Trump struggled with mounting Republican defections over his decision to declare a national emergency to pay for the stalled border wall, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney wasn't at the Capitol cajoling his former colleagues or in the West Wing making calls. Instead, he was in Las Vegas for an annual friends and family getaway.

More recently, embattled

national security adviser John Bolton scheduled a trip to Mongolia while Trump became the first sitting U.S. president to set foot in North Korea, a gesture that didn't sit well with Bolton, who would leave the administration a few months later.

Indeed, knowing "when to be out of town" was one of the top nuggets of advice that Kevin Hassett, the president's former top economic adviser, said he'd received from a predecessor and had to offer his successor.

The White House did not respond to questions about the tactic Wednesday.

Millions in Calif. wait for end to blackouts

Associated Press

SONOMA, Calif. — Millions of Californians played a waiting game with the winds Thursday as Pacific Gas & Electric watched the weather before deciding whether to restore power to an enormous portion of the state blacked out on purpose.

The state's largest utility pulled the plug to prevent a repeat of the past two years when wind-blown power lines sparked deadly wildfires that destroyed thousands of homes.

The unpopular move that disrupted daily life — prompted by forecasts calling for dry, gusty weather — came after catastrophic fires sent PG&E into bankruptcy and forced it to take more aggressive steps

to prevent blazes.

The blackouts began Wednesday, hitting more than 500,000 homes and businesses north of San Francisco Bay, in the wine country, the Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada foothills, where a November wildfire blamed on PG&E transmission lines killed 85 people and virtually incinerated the town of Paradise.

Late Wednesday night, after a full day of delays, PG&E began cutting power in the Bay Area, excluding the city of San Francisco.

Overall, about 734,000 customers and as many as 2 million people could be affected. PG&E has warned that they might have to do without power for days after the winds

subside because "every inch" of the power system must be inspected by helicopters and thousands of groundworkers and declared safe before the grid is reactivated.

"It's just kind of scary. It feels worse than Y2K. We don't know how long," Tianna Pasche, of Oakland, said before her area was powered down. "My two kids, their school situation keeps moving every second. It's not clear if we need to pack for a week and go out of town or what to do. So I'm just trying to make sure we have water, food, charging stations and gas."

"For me, this is a major inconvenience in my life as a parent but also, if it saves a life, I'm not going to complain about it," she said.

Giuliani associates indicted on campaign finance charges

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two Florida businessmen tied to President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani have been arrested on campaign finance violations resulting from a \$325,000 donation to a political action committee supporting Trump's reelection.

Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman were arrested on a four-count indictment that includes charges of conspiracy, making false statements to the Federal Election Commission and falsification of records.

Parnas and Fruman were central to Giuliani's efforts to get government officials in Ukraine to investigate business dealings by former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, in the war-torn former Soviet republic.

Records show that Parnas and Fruman used wire transfers from a corporate entity they controlled to make a \$325,000 donation to the America First Action committee in 2018. Wire transfer records that became public through a lawsuit show that the corporate entity reported as making the

transaction was not the true source of the money.

John Dowd, an attorney for the men, hung up on an Associated Press reporter calling about the case.

The men, who were arrested at Dulles International Airport, were expected to appear later Thursday in federal court in Virginia. Two other men were charged in the case.

The indictment says Parnas and Fruman "sought to advance their personal financial interests and the political interests of at least one Ukrainian government official with whom

they were working" and took steps to conceal it from third parties, including creditors. They created a limited liability corporation, Global Energy Producers, and "intentionally caused certain large contributions to be reported in the name of GEP instead of in their own names," according to the indictment.

Prosecutors charge that the two men falsely claimed the contributions came from a liquefied natural gas business. At that point, the company had no income or significant assets, according to the indictment.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Donation box stolen from Catholic church

RI BRISTOL — A Catholic priest said he's sad that someone felt the need to rip a box used to collect donations for the disadvantaged off the church's wall.

The Rev. Henry Zinno, pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Bristol, said the so-called "poor box" was torn from the wall sometime when the church was open as it always is for prayer and reflection.

It's unclear how much money was in the box.

Police: Coach stole from player's wallet

NM CLOVIS — A New Mexico football coach faces charges after authorities said a student used a cellphone to capture the coach on video taking money from a player's wallet.

State Police arrested John D. Roanhaus, 42, following a review of the footage showing the coach entering the school's locker room and grabbing the money. Police said \$40 was taken from the wallet.

Roanhaus has been fired.

Women accused of cheating at Bingo

NJ RUNNEMEDE — Police in New Jersey said a church bingo night went awry after an allegation that two players had taped a called number onto their card to claim a bingo win.

Investigators said Teresa Davis, 71, and Keasha Brockington, 38, of Camden, said they had the winning card carrying a prize of nearly \$200 at Saint Maria Goretti Church Hall, but a church volunteer noticed that one of the winning numbers

had been taped over the number on the card.

The women were charged with improper behavior.

Police ID restaurant patron shot by officer

NE LINCOLN — Police have released the name of a man who was fatally shot by a uniformed railroad officer after the man rammed his truck into a Nebraska restaurant.

The Lincoln Police Department identified the man as Joseph Cimino, 48.

Police and witnesses say chaos erupted after a man later identified as Cimino began complaining about his sandwich at a Chick-fil-A. He screamed profanities, threw food and punched other customers before being hustled out by another patron.

Witnesses said he got into his pickup and backed it into the restaurant but injured no one.

Lincoln Police Chief Jeff Bliemeister said Cimino was wielding a stun gun as he approached the officer, Christopher Hall.

Police find suspected cockfighting ring

PA PHILADELPHIA — Police serving a warrant at a Philadelphia home unexpectedly found more than three dozen roosters that authorities believe were used for cockfighting.

Most of the 43 roosters were discovered in several cages in an upstairs room, while other roosters were found in the basement of a neighboring home.

Authorities said the warrant that was being served at the first home involved an unrelated matter.

Funeral home fined over cheaper caskets

MS RIPLEY — A Mississippi funeral home was fined \$10,000 for what authorities said was an illegal practice of burying people in cheaper caskets than planned before their deaths.

News outlets reported Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann issued a statement detailing the practice by Ripley Funeral Services LLC.

The statement said the Ripley funeral home substituted plastic burial containers for concrete ones eight times between 2017 and 2018. It said the parlor also substituted different color caskets than what policy owners chose about 20 times between 2016 and 2018.

Woman sentenced for animal abuse

MD EDEN — A woman accused of keeping 310 dogs in awful conditions at a Maryland puppy mill was sentenced to 60 days in jail.

News outlets reported Susan Murphy, 70, of Eden pleaded guilty to 26 animal cruelty offenses. Murphy and her husband were both indicted in January 2017 on 96 animal cruelty charges after authorities raided the couple's home and found the dogs, most of which were Pomeranians.

Murphy also was sentenced to 10 months' home detention followed by probation.

Ice cream flavor back in production

OH CINCINNATI — A weeklong ice cream flavor shortage came to a sweet end.

Cincinnati-based Graeter's Ice Cream announced that it

will resume producing its most popular ice cream flavor, Black Raspberry Chip.

The shortage stemmed from an ice cream processor that suddenly stopped working last month. It has been replaced.

Company apologizes to man kicked off bus

TX FORT WORTH — Greyhound Lines apologized to a Texas man who sued the company after a driver forced him off a bus at a station in Kansas at night, accusing him of being unruly and uncooperative.

Mohammad Reza Sardari was traveling from Dallas to Kansas City, Mo., in November 2017 when he was kicked off a Greyhound bus at a station in Wichita, Kan. Sardari, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas-Arlington, was heading to a national conference in Kansas City.

Greyhound said it had investigated the incident and found that Sardari was removed because he refused to show his ticket when he was asked.

In a statement last month, Greyhound retracted its previous claims that Sardari had been unruly.

Woman is bitten by raccoon in garden

CT HAMDEN — An 84-year-old Connecticut woman received medical treatment after being bitten by a raccoon.

Hamden Police said the unnamed woman's daughter contacted them, reporting her mother had been "attacked" by a raccoon and bitten on the hand while gardening. Police say the daughter intervened and protected her mother from further injury.

From wire reports

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Nationals eliminate Dodgers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Howie Kendrick and the Washington Nationals got down again but were never out — and they finally ended their streak of playoff series futility in grand fashion.

Kendrick hit a tiebreaking grand slam in the 10th inning and the Nationals, boosted by a lightning rally against Clayton Kershaw, beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 7-3 Wednesday night in Game 5. They advanced to the NL Championship Series starting Friday at St. Louis.

“I was hoping for any moment,” said Kendrick, a 36-year-old veteran who was hitless in his first four at-bats.

In their first season since star slugger Bryce Harper left as a free agent, the Nationals became the first team in history to rally from three or more runs down twice in elimination games during the same postseason.

“It’s not just one player, it’s a team,” left fielder Juan Soto said.

The wild-card Nationals won

a playoff series for the first time since the team moved to Washington ahead of the 2005 season, and the franchise reached the NLCS for the second time in 51 seasons. The Nationals overcame a 19-31 start, finished 93-69 and then rallied from a 3-1, eighth-inning deficit to beat Milwaukee 4-3 in the NL wild-card game.

Then they bounced back from down 2-1 in the series against the Dodgers, who set a team record with 106 regular-season wins.

“Oh, man, keep fighting,” Anthony Rendon said. “I think that’s the story of maybe this organization.”

Rendon and Soto homered on consecutive pitches to overcome a 3-1 deficit in the eighth against Kershaw, a three-time Cy Young Award winner. Soto had started the comeback from a 3-0 hole with an RBI single in the sixth off starter Walker Buehler and then hit a 449-foot drive halfway up the right-field pavilion off Kershaw, the longest home run of the 20-year-old’s big league career.

Adam Eaton walked against Joe Kelly leading off the 10th,

Rendon doubled on a drive that lodged in the left-field wall and Soto was intentionally walked.

Kendrick was 4-for-19 with one RBI in the series and had made a pair of errors at first base in the Game 1 loss. He fouled off a pitch and then hit a 97 mph fastball over the wall in dead center for his second career slam. The other was a game-ending, 11th-inning drive against San Francisco in August 2017. Cody Bellinger chased the ball all the way to the wall, putting his arms up against the fence as he ran out of room.

“It was electric. Probably the best moment of my career,” said Kendrick, a 14-year big league veteran who played for the Dodgers and Los Angeles Angels. “We never gave up. The city had faith in us. The fans had faith in us. We believed in ourselves. Everybody came through for us.”

The seven-time defending NL West champion Dodgers remain without a World Series title since 1988.

“Disappointing is probably an understatement,” manager Dave Roberts said.

Kapler out in Philadelphia

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Gabe Kapler took the fall for the Philadelphia Phillies.

He was fired Thursday, nearly two weeks after a disappointing finish to a season of big expectations highlighted by Bryce Harper’s arrival.

Kapler went 161-163 in two years, his team unable to deliver following its offseason spending spree. Philadelphia finished 81-81, its first nonlosing season since 2012.

“Several years ago, I promised our loyal fans that I would do everything in my power to bring a world championship team to our city. I will never waver from that commitment,” Phillies managing partner John Middleton said in a statement.

“I have decided that some changes are necessary to achieve our ultimate objective. Consequently, we will replace our manager. I am indebted to Gabe for the steadfast effort, energy and enthusiasm that he brought to our club, and we are unquestionably a better team and organization as a result of his contributions.”

The Phillies were only two games behind in the NL wild-card standings after beating Atlanta on Sept. 18 but lost eight of the next nine, including a five-game sweep at Washington. They finished eight games behind Milwaukee for the second wild card and 16 behind the first-place Braves in the NL East.

Last year, the Phillies had a one-game lead in the division on Aug. 11 before going 15-31 the rest of the way.

“When we hired Kap, it was our goal to develop a positive, forward-thinking and collaborative culture throughout the organization that would allow us to compete with the best teams in the league year in and year out,” general manager Matt Klentak said. “While we have fallen short in the win column for the last two years, I can confidently say that Kap’s efforts have established a strong and sustainable foundation for this organization moving forward.”

Cardinals rout Braves in Game 5

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The St. Louis Cardinals turned the diamond into a giant pinball machine, dinging hits all over SunTrust Park.

By the time the Atlanta Braves finally got the third out, the Cardinals’ 10 runs had already made it the most productive first inning in postseason history.

St. Louis dealt Atlanta another playoff heartbreak, routing the Braves 13-1 in decisive Game 5 of the NL Division Series on Wednesday.

“That was crazy,” said Marcell Ozuna, one of five players who batted twice in the stunning outburst. “We got a good opportunity — and we took it.”

Before many fans had

reached their seats, the Cardinals were already booking plans for the NL Championship Series, where they will face Washington in a best-of-seven set beginning Friday at Busch Stadium. The wild-card Nationals knocked off the favored Los Angeles Dodgers 7-3 in their own Game 5, getting a grand slam from Howie Kendrick in the 10th inning.

It will be St. Louis’ first NLCS trip since 2014.

“We know we can beat anyone at this point,” Kolten Wong said.

For the Braves, it might take a while to get over this debacle.

After pitching seven scoreless innings in a Game 2 win, Mike Foltynewicz retired only one hitter before getting yanked. First baseman Fred-

die Freeman booted a potential double-play ball that might have limited the damage. The Cardinals scored their final run of the inning on a strikeout — a wild pitch in the dirt that skipped away from catcher Brian McCann, who announced his retirement after the game.

“We just strung together a bunch of great at-bats,” Wong said.

It was Atlanta’s 10th straight postseason round loss since its last victory 18 years ago, tying the mark set by the Chicago Cubs between 1908 and 2003.

“It was more of a shock than anything,” said Josh Donaldson, whose homer provided the lone Atlanta run. “You don’t expect something like that to happen, especially with how well we played all season.”

Howard emerges as elite back for Philly

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jordan Howard does everything quietly except when he has the ball.

The soft-spoken running back keeps going forward, doesn't shy away from contact and will even dish it out. He's a punishing runner with a knack for reaching the end zone.

Howard leads the Philadelphia Eagles (3-2) with 248 yards rushing, an average of 4.7 yards per carry and five touchdowns (four rushing, one receiving). He has split time with rookie Miles Sanders, but is earning a featured role.

"He's kind of the guy that you kind of settle down in the run game and give him those touches," Eagles coach Doug Pederson said. "He's a between-the-tackles guy. He's big and powerful. He has good vision.

And I really think Miles is learning from Jordan running the ball, which is a positive. I think as we go, Jordan has been the lead back the last couple of games for sure."

Howard had 3,370 yards rushing and 24 touchdowns in three seasons with the Bears. A fifth-round pick in 2016, he went to the Pro Bowl as a rookie. But he lost some touches to Tarik Cohen in 2017-18 and was traded to the Eagles for a conditional sixth-round pick in March.

"I pretty much knew what was happening," Howard said. "I just didn't know where I was going. Coming to a winning team pumped me up."

Sanders, a second-round pick, had an impressive preseason, but is averaging only 3.6 yards per carry. Sanders has been more effective as a receiver, catching 10 passes for 133 yards, including three long gains. He's also solid in pass protection.

"Our relationship has been great," Howard said. "I know he's young and hungry and ready to prove himself. I remember being like that my rookie year. He's a smart kid and he's picked up on a lot of things very fast. We also have a great coach, Duce Staley, so he keeps him up to speed as well."

Howard, who turns 25 on Nov. 2, is in the final year of his rookie contract. He could earn a lucrative deal if he puts up big numbers. But the Eagles like to spread the ball around, mix up their backs and their offense is centered around Carson Wentz's throwing arm.

Howard is fine with that.

"Just having a lot of options, a lot of talent, as many guys that touch the ball, it'll make it that much harder to stop us, so I'm all for it," he said.

Thigh injury keeps Rams' Gurley from team practice

Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Todd Gurley missed practice Wednesday with a bruised left thigh, and the Los Angeles Rams don't know whether their star running back will play against the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday.

Coach Sean McVay says Gurley's injury "caught us all off guard" when Los Angeles went back to work following several days without practice. The Rams (3-2) haven't played since last Thursday, when they lost 30-29 at Seattle.

A difficult matchup for the Rams would be even tougher without Gurley, their top ball carrier for five seasons. Since McVay took over in 2017, Gurley is the NFL's leader in yards rushing (2,826), yards from scrimmage (4,262) and rushing touchdowns (35).

McVay refused to predict whether Gurley will face the Niners at the Coliseum.

"He's so tough and he plays through so many different things," McVay said. "But there's still so much time (before Sunday). Even though we

did play on a Thursday, we want to be smart with him."

The team initially thought Gurley's thigh problem was typical postgame soreness, but the Rams held him out of practice along with cornerback Aqib Talib, who has bruised ribs. Being without either veteran would be a significant setback to the Rams' hopes of ending their two-game losing streak — just their second skid of McVay's career.

Ever since Gurley missed playing time down the stretch of Los Angeles' Super Bowl run last season with a balky left knee, the running back's health has been a constant source of conversation around the defending NFC champions.

That's much to the dismay of Gurley, who has grown increasingly curt about the knee woes that could be the Rams' primary motivation for his decreased workload.

Gurley is a quiet 18th in the NFL this season with 270 yards rushing. He also has 14 receptions, but his overall touches are down significantly after he was in the NFL's top five in each of the past three seasons.

Sacks don't tell story of Clowney's impact

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Five games into Jadeveon Clowney's tenure with Seattle, the defensive end who was supposed to help solve the Seahawks' pass rush problems has only one sack.

That might not seem like the kind of return Seattle was expecting to get when it traded for the former No. 1 overall pick before the start of the regular season. But the reviews of Clowney's performance with the Seahawks through the first third of the season are entirely positive.

"You can just feel it's coming alive," coach Pete Carroll said.

The combination of Clowney, Ziggy Ansah and the rest of Seattle's defensive linemen has yet to pop the way it was expected when the deal was made on Aug. 31.

The Seahawks have only 10 sacks, which ranks 23rd in the league, and their 18 quarterback hits are 30th overall. But so far, those numbers haven't mattered because the Seahawks are heading to Cleve-

land on Sunday with a chance to reach 5-1 for only the third time in franchise history.

Clowney has found ways to be disruptive. His best game to date may have been last Thursday against the Los Angeles Rams, where he came away with three tackles, two quarterback hits, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery.

Beyond those stats, he was consistently causing problems in both the pass and run game and did so with Seattle playing a different defensive alignment to try to shut down Todd Gurley.

Throw in his interception return for a touchdown a week earlier against Arizona and the Seahawks are clearly getting the kind of play they hoped for from Clowney. Carroll still views Clowney as being in the infancy of the season.

"I think he would've just had the benefit of all of the work offseason-wise with his hands and feet and the things that we do technically. I think he would've been further along," Carroll said.

China silences NBA in preseason game

Associated Press

In response to the NBA defending Daryl Morey's freedom of speech, Chinese officials took it away from the Los Angeles Lakers and Brooklyn Nets.

All of the usual media sessions surrounding the Lakers-Nets preseason game in Shanghai on Thursday — including a scheduled news conference from NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and postgame news conferences with the teams — were canceled. It was the latest salvo in the rift between the league and China stemming from a since-deleted tweet posted last week by Morey, the general manager of the Houston Rockets.

"There will be no media availabilities for tonight's game between the Brooklyn Nets and Los Angeles Lakers," the NBA said in a statement Thursday, released a few hours before the game.

The game was held as scheduled, though Kyrie Irving flew halfway around the world to play for 66 seconds.

Irving aggravated his facial fracture shortly after tip-off

in his preseason debut for the Brooklyn Nets, who beat the Los Angeles Lakers 114-111.

Spencer Dinwiddie, who replaced Irving, led the Nets with 20 points and Taurean Prince finished with 18 for Brooklyn.

LeBron James scored 20 points for the Lakers, who got 18 from Rajon Rondo and 16 from Anthony Davis.

James walked off with his arms held high, acknowledging cheers from the crowd. He flicked his wristbands toward fans clamoring for a souvenir and tossed his headband into the seats before entering the walkway leading to the Lakers' locker room.

He was seen and not heard, just like everyone else on the rosters.

"I understand that there are consequences from that exercise of, in essence, his freedom of speech," Silver said at a news conference in Tokyo earlier this week. "We will have to live with those consequences."

And this move was one of those consequences.

The game itself was normal, unlike the rest of the trip to China.

The U.S. and Chinese national anthems were not played before the game.

The Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said it was not going to show the Lakers-Nets games on Thursday or in Shenzhen on Saturday. NBA broadcast partner Tencent also said it was changing its coverage plans for the league.

But fans came in droves, as nearly every seat in the 18,000-seat arena appeared filled and they cheered for James loudest of all — as usual. James has made almost-annual visits to China during his NBA career to promote the game and his personal brand, and his popularity there is enormous.

Given fan reaction to James there this week, including being mobbed by well-wishers who chanted and snapped countless pictures with their phones as he walked through a Shanghai mall on Wednesday, not even the politically charged unrest between China and the NBA could dampen how revered he is in the world's most populous country.

It was a topic again in Tokyo

on Thursday, where Houston and Toronto finished their two-game series. The Rockets, of course, have been at the forefront of the rift between China and the league because of Morey's tweet.

"You know what? It's a tough situation," Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni said after Houston's 118-111 win over the reigning NBA champion Raptors. "Very difficult. Adam Silver speaks for the NBA. I work for the NBA. I go with Adam. Commissioner Silver will do the right thing."

Irving tried to play through his left-side facial fracture, an injury that occurred in a pickup game last month. He was wearing a clear mask in an effort to protect his face, but bumped into Rondo while playing defense just 1:06 into the contest.

Irving's face made contact with Rondo's upper arm.

If that wasn't concern enough, the Nets lost their other starting guard just 22 seconds later. Caris LeVert left with 10:32 remaining in the first quarter after being poked in the eye and didn't return.

NHL roundup

Johansson propels Sabres to OT win over Canadiens

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Sabres newcomer Marcus Johansson has quickly gained an appreciation of how captain Jack Eichel can take over a game.

The offseason free-agent addition was wowed by Eichel's two second-period goals, including one on an individual rush against three Montreal defenders. And then Eichel had a hand in setting up Johansson scoring 1:30 into overtime of a 5-4 win over the Canadiens on Wednesday night.

"He can be so dominant. He can take over the game," Johansson said of Eichel. "What he can do with the puck with the size he's got, it's impressive

to watch. It's fun to watch up close."

The two-goal, two-assist outing was the least Eichel said he could do in sweeping away the frustrations from an off night in a 4-3 overtime loss at Columbus on Monday.

"The other night was frustrating for a lot of us, especially myself," Eichel said. "So it was important for our group to come back and play well at home."

Eichel particularly wowed the crowd by putting Buffalo ahead 3-2 late in the second period.

Circling with the puck inside his zone, Eichel eluded Tomas Tatar's check at his own blue line and then built up a head of

steam driving through the neutral zone. With Ben Chiarot and Jeff Petry backing up, Eichel fired a low hard shot that snuck in under goalie Keith Kincaid.

Flyers 4, Devils 0: Carter Hart stopped 25 shots for his first career shutout to lift Philadelphia past New Jersey.

Ivan Provorov scored for the Flyers, and so did Kevin Hayes, Sean Couturier and Travis Konen as part of a three-goal third period in their home opener.

Hart shined in the Philly debut of new coach Alain Vigneault, securing the shutout in his 33rd NHL game.

Hart became the youngest goaltender in Flyers history to

record a shutout, at the age of 21 years, 57 days. He topped Dominic Roussel, who shut out Calgary on Feb. 27, 1992, at the age of 22 years, five days.

Canucks 8, Kings 2: J.T. Miller had a goal and three assists to lead host Vancouver past Los Angeles.

Miller finished the Canucks' home opener with a career-high four points, while Brandon Sutter had two goals and an assist and Chris Tanev added a goal and an assist.

Elias Pettersson, Josh Leivo and Alex Edler also scored for Vancouver. Rookie defenseman Quinn Hughes scored his first NHL goal.