

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Iraq: US troops leaving Syria can't stay

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. troops leaving Syria and heading to neighboring Iraq do not have permission to stay in the country, Iraq's military said Tuesday as American forces continued to pull out of northern Syria after Turkey's invasion of the border region.

The statement appears to contradict U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who has said that under the current plan, all U.S. troops leaving Syria will go to western Iraq and the military would continue to conduct operations against Islamic State to prevent its resurgence in the region.

On Tuesday, Esper said he plans to talk to Iraqi leaders to work out details about the U.S. plan to send American troops withdrawing from Syria to

Iraq, adding that the U.S. has no plans to have those troops stay in Iraq "interminably."

Speaking to reporters at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, Esper said he'll have a discussion with the Iraqi defense minister on Wednesday. He said the aim is to pull U.S. soldiers out and "eventually get them home."

President Donald Trump ordered the bulk of U.S. troops in Syria to withdraw after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made it clear in a phone call that his forces were about to invade Syria to push back Syrian Kurdish fighters whom Turkey considers terrorists.

The pullout largely abandons the Syrian Kurdish allies who have fought ISIS alongside U.S. troops for several years. Between 200 and 300 U.S. troops

will remain at the southern Syrian outpost of Al-Tanf.

Angered at feeling betrayed, some residents in areas populated predominantly by Kurds in both Syria and Iraq have pelted the withdrawing troops. On Monday, a U.S. convoy that was driving down an avenue in the Kurdish-dominated city of Qamishly was pelted with potatoes.

"Like rats, America is running away," one man shouted in Arabic at the vehicles.

Near the Iraqi city of Irbil, a small group of young men threw stones at a convoy of U.S. armored vehicles, shouting obscenities as it drove down a main highway, according to a video circulating online.

In a statement, the Iraqi Kurdish regional government said the positive role played

by U.S.-led coalition forces in northern Iraq, protecting and assisting its residents, should not be confused with an "unpopular political decision" that has been taken — a reference to Trump's sudden move to withdraw troops from Syria.

Earlier this week, Esper did not rule out the idea that U.S. forces would conduct counterterrorism missions from Iraq into Syria. He said those details will be worked out over time.

The statement by the Iraqi military, however, said all American troops who withdrew from Syria have permission to enter northern Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdish region, and then from there to be relocated out of Iraq.

"These forces do not have any approval to remain in Iraq," it said.

US has begun cutting Afghanistan troop strength

The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States has reduced its troop strength in Afghanistan over the past year, the commander of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan announced Monday, despite the abrupt end last month of peace talks with the Taliban that centered on a drawdown of American troops.

"Unbeknownst to the public as part of our optimization ... we reduced our authorized strength by 2,000 here," Gen. Scott Miller said at a news conference in Kabul alongside Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who is visiting Afghanistan for the first time since he took office.

There are around 13,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, accord-

ing to a U.S. military spokesman in Kabul, Army Col. Sonny Leggett. When Miller took command in Afghanistan last year, troop levels were at 15,000.

Much of the reduction came from U.S. command headquarters in Kabul, Leggett said.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly pledged to bring U.S. troops home from "endless wars" abroad. In a draft of a peace deal reached between U.S. and Taliban negotiators, the Trump administration said it was prepared to reduce the number of American troops to 8,600.

Leggett said the reduction was "an aggregate drop since Gen. Miller took command" and not part of the drawdown to 8,600 American troops.

Afghan national security adviser Hamdullah Mohib said

the smaller number of U.S. forces will not have a negative impact on the Afghan military's capabilities.

The role of foreign troops is merely confined to mentoring," said Fawad Aman, a spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry.

Afghanistan's security forces remain heavily reliant on American support and assistance to both hold territory and conduct offensive operations, according to a Pentagon study released in June. As the Pentagon has drawn down from nearly 100,000 troops in the country in 2011, Afghanistan has seen the Taliban steadily expand its control and influence.

The Taliban has welcomed Trump's commitment to reduce U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Shortly after a Trump rally in

Minneapolis earlier this month, Suhail Shaheen, spokesman for the Taliban's political office in Doha, noted the applause after Trump mentioned bringing home troops.

"We consider the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan to be a solution to Afghanistan's problem and it is also in the interest of the American and Afghan people," he tweeted.

Esper praised the reduction at the news conference in Kabul.

"General Miller is doing exactly what I asked all our commanders to do when I entered office," Esper said. "I'm asking them to look where they can free up time, money and manpower" so the Pentagon can focus on countering China and Russia in line with the country's national defense strategy.

S. Korea scrambles jets in Russia encounter

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea scrambled fighter jets after six Russian military planes entered its air defense zone, officials said.

The encounter occurred some three months after South Korea fired flares and warning shots at Russian bombers it said violated its airspace. Moscow said it had performed its first long-range joint regional air patrol with China.

On Tuesday morning, an A-50 early warning aircraft, three SU-27 fighter jets and two TU-95 bombers from Russia entered the Korean Air Defense Identification Zone several times, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The warplanes flew over waters surrounding the Korean Peninsula but did not violate South Korea's territorial airspace, it said, adding it was the 20th such incident this year.

"Our military urgently dispatched fighter jets to track and monitor the aircraft and broadcast warning messages," the JCS said in a text message.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the planes conducted "planned flights over the neutral waters" in the area, according to the Russian news agency Tass. The bombers "were shadowed" at some stages of the flight route by South Korean and Japanese fighter jets, it said.

"Long-range aviation pilots regularly perform flights in strict compliance with the International Rules of Using the Airspace, without violating the borders of other states," according to Russia's Defense Ministry.

The two countries are due to hold talks this week on plans to open a hotline between their air forces in a bid to reduce the number of such encounters.

Panel: GI spouses' concerns 'an issue of national security'

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Matters that affect military spouses, such as unemployment, need to be part of national security discussions because of how they can undermine the nation's volunteer military force, a panel of experts concluded Monday during a discussion at a Washington think tank.

"If we don't get this right, the cracks in the all-volunteer force model are going to become big chasms. And I think things fall apart," Michael Haynie, executive director at the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, said at the Brookings Institution.

Unemployment is an ongoing problem for military spouses due to the elements that make up military life, such as frequent moves and living far from family and career networks. Those factors can have a negative impact on career op-

portunities for spouses.

In 2017, the most recent year for data, the unemployment rate for civilian military spouses was 24%, according to a Defense Department active-duty spouse survey released in February. The current unemployment rate for the United States is 3.5%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For a military move, many spouses are forced to quit their job and face long periods of unemployment after relocating, according to a 2017 report, "Military Spouses in the Workplace," by the Hiring Our Heroes military spouse program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The report also found spouses with college degrees "face the highest rates of unemployment and the most difficulty finding meaningful work."

Whether military families can make it on one income is a concern as the cost for things such as education and hous-

ing have outpaced inflation, according to Holly Petraeus, the former assistant director for service member affairs at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and an Army spouse for more than 37 years to now-retired Army Gen. David Petraeus.

"I cringe when I see people piling up debt that is going to impact their entire lives," she said.

Though the military often invests money and education into service members, some of them still end up leaving because of the lack of job opportunities for their spouses, said Elizabeth O'Brien, senior director of the Hiring Our Heroes military spouse program.

"It absolutely, by our definition, becomes an issue of national security if after the Army has invested almost over a million dollars in my spouse, that we decide to walk. And now he's gone," she said as an example.

Stars of 'Midway' attend Hawaii premiere

BY WYATT OLSON
Star and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Stars of the World War II epic "Midway" walked the red carpet Sunday at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam's Sharky Theater, where the film premiered before its general release Nov. 8.

Among the actors attending were Woody Harrelson, who portrays Adm. Chester Nimitz, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in 1942; Ed Skrein, who plays dive-bomber squadron commander Lt. Richard Best; Dennis Quaid, who takes on the role of Vice Adm. William "Bull" Halsey; and Patrick Wilson, who depicts Lt. Cmdr. Edwin Layton, an intelligence

officer who brought a near fanatical devotion to the value of code-breaking during World War II.

The Battle of Midway was a decisive clash between the American and Imperial Japanese navies in early June 1942. The Japanese lost four aircraft carriers in the battle, an injury from which they were unable to recover.

The wreckage of one of those vessels, the Akagi, was discovered Sunday resting in nearly 18,000 feet of water more than 1,300 miles northwest of Pearl Harbor. A second Japanese carrier, the Kaga, was confirmed found the previous week.

The new movie begins in the 1930s, well before America declared war on Germany and

Japan after the latter attacked Hawaii's Battleship Row and other military installations on Dec. 7, 1941.

In preparation for filming in Hawaii, director Roland Emmerich toured historic sites on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in 2016, the Navy said. That included the legendary Building I, which housed the code-breakers in the early part of World War II who were instrumental in gleaning enough information on Japanese planning for Adm. Nimitz to dispatch American carriers to Midway and set a trap.

Personnel at the Naval History and Heritage Command reviewed the script for accuracy at several points, the Navy said.

Witnesses: Trump doesn't see Ukraine as ally

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Behind closed doors, President Donald Trump has made his views on Ukraine clear: “They tried to take me down.”

The president, according to people familiar with testimony in the House impeachment investigation, sees the Eastern European ally, not Russia, as responsible for the interference in the 2016 election that was investigated by special counsel Robert Mueller.

It's a view denied by the intelligence community, at odds with U.S. foreign policy and dismissed by many of Trump's fellow Republicans but part of a broader skepticism of Ukraine being shared with Trump by Russian President Vladimir Putin and his key regional ally, Viktor Orban, of Hungary.

Trump's embrace of an alternative view of Ukraine sug-

President likens House inquiry to ‘a lynching’

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump enraged Democrats on Tuesday by comparing their impeachment inquiry to a lynching, assigning the horrors of a deadly and racist chapter in U.S. history to a process laid out in the Constitution.

“That is one word no president ought to apply to himself,” said Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C., Congress' highest-ranking black lawmaker. “That is a word that we ought to be very, very careful about using” he

said.

Under pressure over impeachment and other issues, the Republican president tweeted Tuesday: “So some day, if a Democrat becomes President and the Republicans win the House, even by a tiny margin, they can impeach the President, without due process or fairness or any legal rights.

“All Republicans must remember what they are witnessing here — a lynching. But we will WIN!”

From The Associated Press

gests the extent to which his approach to Kyiv — including his request, now central to the impeachment inquiry, that the Ukraine president do him a

“favor” and investigate Democrats — was colored by an unproven conspiracy theory.

On Monday, Trump derided the impeachment probe anew

as a “witch hunt,” insisting that he did nothing wrong in his phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. But those testifying in the impeachment inquiry are recalling that Trump's views on Ukraine were seen as a problem by some in the administration.

Some of those testifying recalled a May meeting at the White House when U.S. officials, just back from attending Zelenskyy's inauguration in Kyiv, briefed Trump. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, special envoy Kurt Volker and other witnesses have described Trump as suspicious of Ukraine despite well-established American support for the fledgling democracy there. That's according to publicly released transcripts, as well as people familiar with the private testimony to impeachment investigators who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Hillary Clinton's reemergence makes some Dems wary

Associated Press

Some Democrats are putting up caution signs for Hillary Clinton as she wades back into presidential politics by casting 2020 candidate Tulsi Gabbard as a “Russian asset,” mocking President Donald Trump's dealings with a foreign leader and drawing counterattacks from both.

Bernie Sanders, who lost the 2016 nomination to Clinton and is running again in 2020, took to Twitter with implicit criticisms of his erstwhile rival. “People can disagree on issues,” Sanders wrote Monday, “but it is outrageous for anyone to suggest that Tulsi is a foreign asset.”

Larry Cohen, one of Sanders' top supporters, was more conciliatory but warned in an interview that Clinton could harm the eventual 2020 nominee by weighing in against specific candidates, even a long shot like Gabbard.

The former first lady, U.S. senator and secretary of state has “put a lifetime into the Democratic Party. She deserves to be heard,” said Cohen, a prominent member of the Democratic National Committee who also chairs Our Revolution, the spinoff of Sanders' last presidential campaign. But “in this senior leader role she has,” Cohen said, “it's her job to embrace the range of politics within the party and not polarize within it.”

Her scuffle with Gabbard and other re-

cent headlines she's driven demonstrate that Clinton, 71, remains a political lightning rod, just as she's been through much of the last three decades. The dynamics raise questions about how Clinton and her party can best leverage her strengths and navigate her weaknesses through next November.

For her part, aides say Clinton isn't attempting any calculated play.

“The short of it is that she's on a book tour and is feeling unconstrained about speaking her mind,” said Clinton spokesman Nick Merrill. “It's easy to overascribe a strategy about every word she utters, but it's as simple as that. She's out there telling the truth.”

Yet the results can frustrate those trying to win the office that Clinton twice lost, a reality presidential hopeful Sen. Cory Booker, of New Jersey, observed with a carefully calibrated critique while he campaigned Monday in New Hampshire. “We need to focus on winning this election ... talking about the urgencies that we have before us and not indulging in what I think is, for me, not a relevant story,” he said.

There's no settled playbook for former nominees — or former presidents — in party politics. Sitting senators like Democrat John Kerry and Republican John McCain returned quietly to Capitol Hill. Democrat Al Gore became a leading advo-

cate for climate action. McCain's running mate, Sarah Palin, has made perhaps the biggest recent splash as a conservative media sensation who helped stoke a base that ultimately embraced Trump.

But Clinton “is in her own category,” said Karen Finney, a top aide on her 2016 campaign.

The first woman to win a major party presidential nomination — and the national popular vote leader with almost 3 million more votes than Trump — Clinton remains a popular figure in her party, even after enduring criticism for losing key Midwestern states to Trump. For Republicans, she's an evergreen foil.

The latest fracas started last week when Clinton suggested on a podcast that Russians are “grooming [Gabbard] to be the third-party candidate.” Clinton produced no evidence, but Russian state-owned media and a number of alt-right websites have promoted the congresswoman's Democratic campaign, and the Russian Embassy has defended her on Twitter. A military veteran, Gabbard has carved an unusual political profile, with criticisms of long-held U.S. foreign policy and defenses of Trump.

Gabbard retorted by calling Clinton “the queen of warmongers ... and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party for so long.”

Tornado hits Dallas; 4 killed in Ark. and Okla.

Associated Press

DALLAS — A tornado tossed trees into homes, tore off storefronts and downed power lines but killed no one in a densely populated area of Dallas, leaving Mayor Eric Johnson to declare the city “very fortunate” to be assessing only property damage.

A meteorologist said Monday that people took shelter thanks to early alerts and that it was fortunate the tornado struck Sunday evening, when many people were home.

“Anytime you have a tornado

in a major metropolitan area, the potential for large loss of life is always there,” said Patrick Marsh, the warning coordination meteorologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla. “We were very fortunate that the tornado did not hit the Dallas Cowboys’ stadium or the state fair, where you would have had a lot of people that were exposed.”

The tornado crossed over two major interstates. “If that happened at rush hour, I think we’d be talking about a differ-

ent story,” Marsh said.

The National Weather Service said the tornado that ripped through north Dallas was an EF3, which has a maximum wind speed of 140 mph. The agency said another tornado in the suburb of Rowlett was EF1, with maximum wind speeds of 100 mph.

The late night storms spawned tornadoes in several states, killing at least four people in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

In one Dallas neighborhood, Dustin and Lauren Collins said they felt lucky as they cleared debris from the yard of their

largely intact home.

“When other people’s homes are in your front yard, you just realize — just the magnitude of the storm,” said Lauren Collins, 36.

Dustin Collins, 37, said he gathered his family together after receiving the tornado alert.

They climbed into the bathtub and pulled a mattress over top, huddling there with their 8-month-old son.

“We just sat in the bathtub and sang songs, trying to keep everyone calm,” Lauren Collins said.

Canadian PM Trudeau wins a second term

Associated Press

TORONTO — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau won a second term in Canada’s national elections Monday, losing the majority but delivering unexpectedly strong results despite having been weakened by a series of scandals that tarnished his image as a liberal icon.

Trudeau’s Liberal party took the most seats in Parliament, giving it the best chance to form a government. However, falling short of a majority meant the Liberals would have to rely on an opposition party to

pass legislation.

“It’s not quite the same as 2015. It’s not all owing to the leader,” said Robert Bothwell, a professor of Canadian history and international relations at the University of Toronto. “Trudeau is prime minister because the rest of the party was able to pull itself together and prevail. While Trudeau certainly deserves credit for what has happened, he’s really going to have to demonstrate qualities that he hasn’t yet shown.”

Still, the results were a victory for Trudeau, whose clean-cut image took a hit after old

photos of him in blackface and brownface surfaced last month.

“I’m surprised at how well Trudeau has done,” said Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto. “I don’t think anybody expected Trudeau to get a majority, but they are not that far off.”

With results still trickling in early Tuesday, the Liberals had 156 seats — 14 short of the 170 needed for a majority in the 338-seat House of Commons.

“Tonight Canadians rejected division and negativity.

They rejected cuts and austerity. They elected a progressive agenda and strong action on climate change,” Trudeau said early Tuesday.

His address to supporters came, unusually, as his Conservative rival, Andrew Scheer, had just begun speaking to his own supporters, forcing networks to tear away from Scheer’s speech. But the prime minister struck a conciliatory note. “To those who did not vote for us, know that we will work every single day for you, we will govern for everyone,” Trudeau said.

Japan’s emperor ascends Chrysanthemum Throne

Associated Press

TOKYO — Three booming cheers of “Banzai!” rang out Tuesday at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo as Naruhito formally declared his ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne as the nation’s 126th emperor.

As a driving autumn rain briefly gave way to sunshine and 2,000 guests looked on, Naruhito pledged at an elaborate, ritual-laden ceremony to serve as a symbol of the state for his people. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe congratulated him and led the cheers of “Banzai,” which traditionally means “10,000 years.”

The enthronement ceremony is the high point of several succession rituals that

began in May when Naruhito inherited the throne after the abdication of Akihito, his father. Naruhito leads the world’s oldest hereditary monarchy, which historians say goes back 1,500 years.

The short ceremony, which some critics say was largely meant to allow Abe’s ultra-conservative government to win public support, was marked by extraordinary contrasts, from the rhythmic shuffle of dozens of court dignitaries’ long, stiff, antiquated robes as they brushed over mats leading to the throne room to the thunder of cannon salutes reverberating through the palace.

“I hereby proclaim my enthronement to those at home and abroad,” Naruhito said.

“I hereby swear that I will act according to the constitution and fulfill my responsibility as the symbol of the state and of the unity of the people of Japan, while always praying for the happiness of the people and the peace of the world as I stand with the people.”

The ceremony began with the sound of a bell. Naruhito, wearing a formal brownish-orange robe that was dyed in sappanwood and Japanese wax tree bark and a black headdress decorated with an upright tail, then stood perfectly still while a pair of black-robed chamberlains pulled aside and secured the purple curtains surrounding the throne.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Authorities capture runaway emu

MN FOLEY — Authorities in central Minnesota said a missing emu described as a “habitual runaway” was caught after being on the lam for a day.

The Benton County Sheriff’s Office said in a Facebook post Sunday night that the “fugitive emu” was located and released to his owner.

The big bird went missing from the Foley area Saturday night.

3 kids, 245 animals removed from home

FL EDGEWATER — Police said they removed three children and 245 animals from a Florida home following a wellness check.

Edgewater police said in a news release that it was “immediately evident neither the children, nor the animals were being cared for properly” when officers arrived at the home.

Police said the children, ages 8, 9 and 10, were living at the home with three adults. Investigators found rotting food, animal feces and urine throughout the home, and a dead guinea pig in a cage.

The Daytona Beach News-Journal reported the adults will be charged with three counts of child abuse and 66 counts of animal cruelty. State officials placed the children with relatives.

Woman fired for video denied unemployment

PA PHILADELPHIA — A Pennsylvania court has ruled that a woman fired for showing a video of naked men to co-workers isn’t eligible for unemployment compensation.

A Commonwealth Court panel found that while the video was meant as a joke, Sharon Rodriguez violated policies at the Philadelphia-based clothing firm where she worked.

The judges noted Rodriguez was off-duty when she sent the video via text to a co-worker in March 2018, but she discussed the video at work with another colleague and played it for her when asked. The second co-worker reported Rodriguez to a manager, leading to her firing.

An unemployment compensation referee initially sided with Rodriguez but was overruled by the state Unemployment Compensation Board of Review.

Teacher charged with mistreating student

NC STATESVILLE — A North Carolina teacher is accused of putting a disabled student in a trash can.

News outlets reported Robin Johnson, 51, was arrested Thursday on charges of misdemeanor assault on a disabled person. Iredell County deputies said a therapist reported the allegations after speaking with children who accused Johnson of putting them in trash or recycling bins during the past two school years.

A sheriff’s office statement says evidence indicates that Johnson put a disabled Cloverleaf Elementary student in a trash can at least twice.

The Iredell-Statesville School District said Johnson is suspended with pay pending an internal investigation.

Store gets new life after renovation

MD POOLESVILLE — For nearly a decade, Montgomery County’s longest-running general store has sat quiet and empty.

But the 118-year-old store will soon be granted a new life.

After a year of work and \$1 million in historic renovations, plus an accidental archaeological discovery, county officials are searching for a tenant to occupy one of the county’s most historic buildings, known for years as Poole’s General Store.

On Saturday, the general store, now known as the Seneca Store, was open to the public for the first time in nearly a decade.

Freshwater fish given endangered status

TN NASHVILLE — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has granted endangered species status to a Tennessee freshwater fish.

The Center for Biological Diversity said the nearly extinct Barrens topminnow was proposed for endangered species protection four decades ago. The fish is found only in central Tennessee in clear, spring-fed Barrens Plateau streams.

The group said the species used to be found at 18 sites, but now exists at five, with none in good condition. Climate change-induced drought, loss of riparian vegetation to pasture and predation by non-native mosquitofish are threats.

City reaches sandbag goal – just in case

ND JAMESTOWN — The city of Jamestown has reached its sandbag goal.

The south-central North Dakota city began sandbagging after releases from both the Pipestem Dam and Jamestown Reservoir were increased.

Releases will be ramped up this week, causing waters downstream to rise. As a precaution, Jamestown officials set a goal of 65,000 sandbags to

distribute along the river banks to protect homes and property. The city announced Saturday the sandbag goal has been met.

School drops ban on Halloween costumes

MI CHARLOTTE — A Michigan elementary school has lifted its short-lived ban on students wearing costumes to school for Halloween following an outcry by parents.

Galewood Early Elementary School pulled its Halloween ban Friday, less than a week after announcing that classroom parties and costumes wouldn’t be allowed this Halloween.

The school’s Halloween parade was also canceled, but all of the Halloween festivities will now be permitted on Oct. 31 at the school in the mid-Michigan city of Charlotte.

The Lansing State Journal reported several parents complained that the school’s Halloween ban wasn’t consistent with what other district schools planned for this Halloween.

Group text leads to books for students

MS BIGGERSVILLE — What started with a group text is ending with thousands of books for students.

The Daily Corinthian reported that Biggersville Elementary School teacher Andrea Coleman had the idea to seek community sponsorships to help pay for \$1 books from Scholastic Book.

Principal Elizabeth White said the idea spread like wildfire and it quickly expanded from Coleman’s homeroom class to the whole school.

The Literacy for Lions campaign kicked off in late summer and by mid-September had met its goal to raise \$2,700.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Vets relish first Series appearance

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**

Associated Press

What a relief for Houston Astros pitcher Joe Smith that manager AJ Hinch was only joking about his team's makeup for the World Series.

"I would bring (him) in my office and pretend like he's not going to make the roster, just to get a reaction from him, and he wouldn't buy it," Hinch said.

Smith, 35, has waited 13 seasons, playing for six big league teams and overcoming a ruptured left Achilles last winter, for the opportunity to pitch this late in October. He was left off the postseason roster three years ago by the Chicago Cubs, the only other team he has been with that made it to the World Series.

"I'm proud for him. I'm anxious to get him in the game. It will probably be one of the first games he's nervous," Hinch said. "He's hardly ever nervous, but I bet he'll be a tick nervous just because of the stage and the World Series and the excitement of having to endure all that before he gets to throw his first pitch in the World Series."

The right-hander, whose 782 regular-season appearances are the most for an active pitcher without a World Series game, isn't the only player for the Astros and Washing-

ton Nationals that has waited a long, long time before finally making it this far.

Zack Greinke, Houston's big trade-deadline acquisition this season, is scheduled to start Game 3. That will come after 16 seasons and 447 regular-season starts, the most by an active starter without a World Series game.

Howie Kendrick, 36, who became MVP of the NL Championship Series, was expected to be Washington's designated hitter in the opener Tuesday night in Houston. He is finally on a World Series team in his eighth postseason appearance over 14 major league seasons, this being his third team to reach the playoffs.

"This is a dream come true," said Kendrick, who has 43 postseason games to his credit. "Been in the playoffs many times, and this is truly special."

Same goes for first baseman Ryan Zimmerman, the first guy ever drafted by the Nationals in 2005 and the only player to wear their uniform in each of their 15 seasons.

"This has obviously been an unbelievable ride, and I'm just trying to soak it all in," said Zimmerman, 35.

There also is Game 2 starter Stephen Strasburg, the right-hander who was Washington's first pick in the 2009 draft, and made his big league debut the next season.

Like Smith, Nationals infielder Asdrubal Cabrera is in his 13th season with his sixth team before getting to the World Series. Cabrera rejoined Washington in early August after being released by Texas.

Four-time All-Star outfielder Michael Brantley signed a two-year deal with Houston last offseason after 10 seasons in Cleveland. He didn't get to play in the 2016 World Series with the Indians because of a right shoulder injury that limited him to 11 games that season.

"This is not guaranteed to anybody," Brantley said Monday. "I didn't get to play in the last one. ... I'm just going to enjoy the experience. I don't take for granted how hard it is to get here, so I just really want to enjoy the moment and stay in the moment."

One of the first people Brantley called after signing with Houston was Smith, his teammate twice in Cleveland — from 2009-13 and after a trade to the back to the Indians midway through the 2017 season.

"I'm beyond happy for him," said Brantley, one of the first to find out about Smith's Achilles injury. "I just told him make sure he works hard to get back because I want to play with you again, and he promised he would. ... A big weapon in our bullpen, he's a great teammate and a great friend for me for a long time."

Verlander, Greinke to pitch Games 2, 3 for Houston

From wire reports

Justin Verlander will start Game 2 of the World Series for the Houston Astros against the Washington Nationals on Wednesday.

Zack Greinke will start for the Astros on Friday when the Series resumes at Nationals Park.

"Greinke gets to hit. That's going to be fun for him," Astros manager AJ Hinch said Monday.

Greinke has a .225 batting average with nine homers, including three this season for Arizona before he was traded to Houston on July 31.

Houston plans a bullpen game for Game 4 on Saturday.

The Nationals will counter with Stephen Strasburg against Verlander in Game 2. Washington manager Dave Martinez has not indicated the order in which he will use starters Patrick Corbin and Anibal Sanchez in Games 3 and 4.

'Who is this guy?'

Ryan Zimmerman, the longtime "face of the franchise" for the Nationals, remembers the first time he saw the 5-foot-6 player who has grown into that role with the Astros.

Jose Altuve made his big league debut with the Astros on July 20, 2011, in a home game against the Nationals, who they will host in Game 1 of the World Series on Tuesday night.

"He was in the hotel, and I remember seeing him and you look at him and like what everyone used to do, 'Who is this guy?'" Zimmerman said. "I remember watching him. He had some good at-bats. ... He's obviously incredible to watch."

Altuve went 1-for-5 with a strikeout in that game eight years ago. Houston's second baseman has since become the 2017 American League MVP, and a six-time All-Star with three batting titles. Altuve was the MVP of the AL Championship

Series that ended Saturday night with his two-run, pennant-clinching home run in the bottom of the ninth inning against the New York Yankees.

Cole no stranger to the Fall Classic

Before playing in the World Series, Gerrit Cole attended the Fall Classic as a fan in 2001, 2002, 2012 and 2017. The 2001 matchup of Arizona and the New York Yankees went seven games, and the Diamondbacks won when Luis Gonzalez singled in the ninth inning off Mariano Rivera.

"That was just a really special World Series I think for the whole country," Cole said. "It was probably the only time most people felt some empathy for the Yankees. (after 9/11) And then Gonzo just ripped it right out."

Patriots pound Jets to stay perfect

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Tom Brady set the tone and the New England Patriots' blitz-happy defense took over from there.

Bill Belichick's bunch is still undefeated after another absolutely dominant performance.

Brady threw a TD pass to Phillip Dorsett, Sony Michel ran for three scores and New England forced Sam Darnold into five turnovers while cruising to a 33-0 victory over the New York Jets on Monday night.

"We were able to make some plays early in the game," Belichick said, "and play pretty solid for 60 minutes."

The Patriots improved to 7-0 for the third time in franchise history, and first since 2015. They also swept the two-game season series against their AFC East rivals for the fourth consecutive year, outscoring the Jets (1-5) 63-14 in the two meetings this year.

The top-ranked Patriots defense was a big reason in this one.

"They're just playing great football," Brady said. "They cover the rush. They stop the run. Make critical plays. It's awesome to watch."

Darnold was the AFC offensive player of the week after leading New York to a 24-22 victory over Dallas on Oct. 14 in his

return from missing three games with mononucleosis.

He was miserable against New England, finishing 11-for-32 for 86 yards and a 3.6 quarterback rating. ESPN had Darnold wear a microphone during the game, and he was caught on the sideline saying, "I'm seeing ghosts."

"It was a rough night out there," Darnold said. "And obviously, I've got to be better and learn from the mistakes, but we will get better."

Belichick blitzed Darnold often, giving the second-year quarterback little time and forcing him into bad — and often ugly — throws. Devin McCourty, Duron Harmon, Stephon Gilmore and Terrence Brooks had interceptions.

"I don't know, man," a smiling McCourty said when asked if there were "ghosts" on the field. "We were just locked in tonight as a defensive unit."

"When you get a lot of time to prepare for a game, you start going over everything over and over again. I think it showed for us tonight as a defensive unit."

Darnold also lost a fumble on a sack, and later knocked an errant snap out of the back of the end zone for a safety.

"Obviously, that was brutal," Jets coach Adam Gase said. "We couldn't do anything right. All three phases, we were bad. It was just a bad performance."

Brady was 31 of 45 for 249 yards with a TD and an interception before leaving with 2:55 left to chants of "Brady! Brady!" from the Patriots fans who stayed until the end at MetLife Stadium.

Gase said Darnold injured a toe during the game, but the doctors wrapped it up and he went back in.

The coach also acknowledged he thought about pulling Darnold and putting in back-up David Fales, but decided to leave him in to try to get some positive momentum.

It never came, especially since New England took control from the start.

"I didn't expect that at all," Gase said. "Nothing went right early and we couldn't regroup."

Michel's 3-yard touchdown run capped an efficient drive by Brady to open the game.

The Patriots went 16 plays and 78 yards while eating up 8:47, and converted four third downs along the way. The last came on third-and-2 when Brady pitched it to Michel, who easily zipped into the end zone.

"Our guys were ready to go today," Belichick said.

"We got off to a good start. That was a great opening drive. It took up most of the first quarter."

NHL roundup

Tarasenko helps Blues top Avs, end 4-game skid

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Vladimir Tarasenko had a goal and two assists to help the St. Louis Blues beat the Colorado Avalanche 3-1 Monday night, snapping a four-game losing streak.

Brayden Schenn and David Perron also scored for the defending Stanley Cup champions, who came in with their longest skid since March 30-April 4, 2018. Jordan Binnington finished with 17 saves as the Blues improved to 8-1-0 in the past nine home games against Colorado.

"We played for 60 minutes and it was a pretty good effort by everybody," Tarasenko said.

Nathan MacKinnon scored for Colorado, which was the

only team in the NHL without a regulation loss and fell to 7-1-1. Philipp Grubauer stopped 22 shots.

MacKinnon has scored at least one point in each of Colorado's first nine games, becoming the first player in Avalanche history to do it in consecutive seasons. He also became the fifth player in NHL history with a season-opening point streak of at least nine games in consecutive seasons, joining Wayne Gretzky, Charlie Simmer, Guy Lafleur and Rod Gilbert.

Blue Jackets 4, Maple Leafs 3 (OT): Gustav Nyquist scored on a penalty shot 1:57 into overtime for visiting Columbus past Toronto.

Riley Nash, Pierre-Luc Du-

bois and Alexander Wennberg scored in regulation for the Blue Jackets.

Auston Matthews had a goal and an assist, and Frederik Andersen finished with 34 saves for Toronto.

Andersen stopped Dubois on a breakaway seconds into overtime. He then robbed Wennberg, before Nyquist was hooked by Mitch Marner on another 1-on-1 chance at the end of a long shift for the Maple Leafs. With fans inside Scotiabank Arena voicing their displeasure, Nyquist moved in and beat Andersen under the glove for his second goal of the season.

Flyers 6, Golden Knights 2: Kevin Hayes, Michael Raffl,

Matt Niskanen and Oskar Lindblom all scored in the second period as host Philadelphia snapped a four-game losing streak.

Travis Konecny scored a power-play goal just 4:15 into the game before the Flyers' first four-goal period since March 15, 2019 against Toronto.

Stars 2, Senators 1: Joe Pavelski scored a power-play goal midway through the second period, and host Dallas won its second straight.

Radek Faksa also scored for Dallas, and Anton Khudobin made 19 saves for his first win in four games this season.

The Stars won for the first time in four home games.

100 no longer magic number for NBA win

Associated Press

MIAMI — Getting to 100 points in the NBA used to almost certainly guarantee victory.

These days, it's the baseline for even having a chance.

NBA teams that scored 100 or more points lost more often last season than at any time in nearly 35 years — simply a by-product of the offensive explosion across the league a year ago, and the continuation of a trend that probably won't be changing anytime soon.

Scoring 100 or more only led to wins 58% of the time in 2018-19, according to a statistical analysis by The Associated Press. That was down from 62% the year before, 70% in 2014-15 and 75% in 2011-12.

"I think you have to evolve your thinking, your approach," Phoenix coach Monty Williams said. "My rookie year we played a game against Cleveland and the game was in the 70s and that was deemed a really good

defensive hard-nosed game. The climate has changed and you have to change with it."

The hard-nosed defensive game Williams speaks of — at least in the sense of what used to be considered that sort of game — no longer exists.

Minnesota scored 140 points in a non-overtime game against Golden State on Jan. 16 and lost, becoming the first team in 27 years to score that many in a regulation contest and not win. The lowest winning score in the league last year was 89, by Memphis against Denver.

Last season, there were an NBA-record 845 instances of a team scoring 100 or more points in a loss. Teams that didn't score 100 points went 64-385.

"All the rules in today's NBA favor offense," Denver coach Michael Malone said. "It's becoming harder and harder to guard teams and individuals. But the bottom line is if you want to be a championship-caliber team you have to be able

to defend and defend at a high level. The Toronto Raptors won the championship last year — I think they were fifth in defensive efficiency. You have to find a way. You have to get players to buy in and commit."

There were only 64 instances last season out of 1,230 regular-season games where the winning score was below 100.

Teams won 14% of the time when being held to 99 or less — compared with how they would win 35% of the time seven years ago. Some teams last season simply couldn't win unless they scored 100: Philadelphia was 0-7 when held to 99 or less, Golden State and New Orleans were both 0-8, Boston and the Los Angeles Clippers were 0-9.

Memphis was perhaps the "best" team at winning with fewer than 100 — the Grizzlies were 9-28 in those games.

"The pace of the game and the level of skill, everything has gone up," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said. "You're looking at it with respect to how much

you score. The inverse side of that is what you can do to limit the opponent. And that's a big part of it. The more you limit the opponent and get stops, the greater your chances will be offensively."

The scoring boom that went on last year — fueled by a seventh consecutive year of record-setting three-point numbers, faster pace leading to more possessions and the NBA's crack-down to ensure proper freedom of movement on the offensive end — isn't likely to be a one-year thing. A year ago, 20 teams averaged at least 110 points per game. The year before that, only six averaged that much.

Consider: Just seven years ago, teams averaged 96 points per game. Last year, it was a smidge over 111 — the highest number the NBA had seen in nearly 50 years.

"This is crazy," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "This game is changing. You've got to adapt to it."

Gimmick defenses rare, but can be effective

Associated Press

Atlanta guard Kevin Huerter saw gimmick defenses throughout high school and college. Box-and-ones, triangle-and-twos and variations thereof, they weren't exactly uncommon for opponents to try.

In the NBA, they're a rarity.

And Huerter says the reason is simple.

"I honestly just think players are too good," he said.

Coaches may agree. The Toronto Raptors famously and effectively slapped a box-and-one against Golden State's Stephen Curry late in the fourth quarter of Game 2 in last season's NBA Finals, though that was in a situation where the Warriors' other elite scorers from that team — Kevin Durant and Klay Thompson — were both out of the game at the time with injuries.

So in that situation, the gimmick seemed apropos.

But in most situations, coach-

es probably wouldn't dare go with one.

"That worked when there wasn't Kevin Durant and Klay Thompson," Houston coach Mike D'Antoni said. "Gimmicks are gimmicks. You go into a game, especially with us or Golden State or any of about eight teams now in the West ... you're going to throw a gimmick to beat somebody? I'm not going to do that. I'll trust my guys."

Some teams play zone more than others now, mostly a 2-3, sometimes a 3-2. Those are fairly normal to see now, but the gimmicks aren't forgotten.

San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich has dabbled with triangle-and-two defenses — a box-and-one is a four-player zone with one defender playing tight man-to-man, a triangle-and-two is a three-player zone with two man defenders — in recent years. He opened a game in February at Utah in the gimmick. It worked for a little bit;

the Spurs led 24-19 after nine minutes, then got outscored 106-81 the rest of the way and lost by 20.

"They were working," Spurs guard Bryn Forbes said of the zones. "And then they didn't work as well."

Miami coach Erik Spoelstra is a fan of zone defenses, at times, and thinks those schemes will get used more this season. He lauded Raptors coach Nick Nurse for going with it — on the game's biggest stage, no less.

"That was a really gutsy call," Spoelstra said. "I think it took extreme circumstances for that to even be a discussion."

The gimmicks have advocates. Steve Dagostino, who was a Division II first-team All-American and now works with high school, college and NBA players as a shooting and development coach, thinks the gimmick defense might be effective in late-game situations.

"What we saw in the NBA Finals was interesting because

the gimmick defenses Nurse ran served two purposes," Dagostino said. "First, it surprised them and changed the rhythm of the Warriors. Secondly, it allowed the Raptors to effectively choose who shot the ball for the Warriors. By playing these defenses they left open certain shooters."

During that stretch where the Raptors had Fred VanVleet guarding Curry, plenty of Warriors — DeMarcus Cousins, Draymond Green, Quinn Cook among them — passed up open shots. The Warriors wound up winning the game, but the gimmick defense that Curry famously called "janky" after the game had left its mark.

"Moving forward, I wouldn't be surprised if more teams use these gimmick defenses in late-game situations or the playoffs," Dagostino said. "The added pressure seems to benefit this style."