

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## DOD: No troop pay, possible civilian furloughs if government shuts down

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Troops will not get paychecks and Defense Department civilians could be furloughed if Congress fails to pass a new federal budget and the government shuts down Thursday, according to a DOD memo sent out to personnel.

The department was still holding out hope for a solution on Capitol Hill, according to the Friday memo from Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work. However, if lawmakers do not act by midnight Wednesday, the fallout could be similar to the last government shutdown in 2013, which caused turmoil and temporarily forced about 350,000 Pentagon workers on leave without pay.

“During a government shutdown, all military personnel would continue in a normal duty status. However, they would not be paid until Congress provides funding,” Work wrote.

The DOD has updated its plans to determine which civilians will continue reporting to work and which will be furloughed, he wrote. The letter did not provide any additional details.

“As we saw in 2013, should a shutdown occur, and depending on the length of the shutdown, these determinations may change over time as circumstances evolve,” Work wrote.

The last time the government shut down for more than two weeks — over attempts to defund Obamacare — about 800,000 federal workers were placed on furlough. But the

### House Speaker Boehner resigning from Congress

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, stunned Republicans on Friday when he announced he would resign at the end of October, stepping down from one of the most powerful jobs in Washington in the face of hard-line conservative opposition that threatens an institutional crisis.

Boehner, second in line to succeed the president and into his 13th two-year term, announced his decision in a closed-door session of the Republican caucus. It came one day after a high point of Boehner’s congressional career, a historic speech by Pope Francis to Congress at Boehner’s request.

A constant focus of conservatives’ complaints, Boehner was facing the threat of a floor vote on whether he could stay on as speaker, a formal challenge that hasn’t happened in more than 100 years. That was being pushed by tea partyers convinced Boehner wasn’t fighting hard enough to strip women’s health care provider Planned Parenthood of government funds, even though doing so risked a government shutdown.

“The first job of any speaker is to protect this institution that we all love,” Boehner said in a statement not long after announcing his resignation to his colleagues. “It is my view, however, that prolonged leadership turmoil would do irreparable damage to the institution. To that end, I will resign the speakership and my seat in Congress on Oct. 30.”

Although it’s not certain who will succeed Boehner, the most obvious candidate is the No. 2 House Republican, Kevin McCarthy, a genial Californian who was first elected to Congress in 2006. Regardless, Boehner’s departure ensures a major leadership race in which tea party conservatives would be expected to field a candidate.

DOD was able to bring its civilians back to work after about a week.

Troops and personnel were to be contacted by their chains of command with more details on the shutdown plans.

The clock was ticking on Capitol Hill on Friday, with a glim-

mer of hope for a budget deal in the Senate early next week following a fight over defunding Planned Parenthood, but there was major political upheaval in the House with the announced resignation of Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio.

Senators rejected a tempo-

rary Republican budget Thursday that would have cut all support for the federally subsidized health care provider, in what was seen as an attempt to appease right-wing conservatives in the party.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., was set to introduce a new budget resolution Monday that could fund the government at current levels until December, but his plan does not include the controversial Planned Parenthood measure.

“There are two different roads that we can take. One is to insist that no more money go to Planned Parenthood and cause a government shutdown,” McConnell said after his first budget proposal failed Thursday. “The other is to take a slightly longer-term approach, taking advantage of the fact that we have the attention of the country as probably never before.”

Meanwhile, conservative efforts in the House to defund Planned Parenthood using a federal budget bill were thrown into uncertainty Friday: Boehner stunned Washington by announcing he will resign from Congress in October, a move that was seen as a victory for conservative Republicans in the chamber’s Freedom Caucus who want a more hard-line strategy on Planned Parenthood and other issues.

Boehner’s ouster showed the power of his far-right foes in the party, but it may also open up the possibility of a budget deal since those lawmakers now know he is on the way out.

## Army mum as Marines take flack over gender integration

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — As the U.S. military ends its long effort to consider how to more fully integrate women into combat roles, a dichotomy has emerged between the two services likely to change the most: The Marine Corps has pressed its case publicly to keep some jobs closed, while the Army has not yet disclosed its research or preferred plans.

Recommendations from each of the branches of service are due to Defense Secretary Ash Carter by the end of September, defense officials said. Following a landmark January 2013 decision, all jobs will be opened to women unless the services seek and effectively convince Carter to keep some closed, citing research they completed.

In the Marines, the story has been dominated recently by the release of a four-page summary of research this month that said a study of a gender-integrated infantry unit found that women are injured more frequently and

shoot less accurately than men. The study has been panned by critics, including Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, for focusing on what an “average” female Marine can do, rather than examining whether high-performing women can meet physical standards set for the job.

Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, the commandant of the Marine Corps, recommended Thursday to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus that the service keep its infantry and at least some of its reconnaissance units closed. But as of Tuesday, the Army would not say whether Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chief of staff of the Army, has had a similar meeting with Army Secretary John McHugh.

“The Service Secretaries are expected to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on all remaining closed [jobs] on or by Sept. 30, 2015,” said Army spokeswoman Cynthia Smith, in an e-mail. “The details of recommendations are unknown at this time.”

## Congress: Did taxpayers cover cost of DOD frivolity?

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — We know Pentagon officials last year racked up \$1 million in personal charges on their government credit cards at casinos and strip clubs.

Now Congress wants to know whether taxpayers paid for it.

In May, the Defense Department inspector general found several instances of troops and civilians swiping their government-issued cards at the aforementioned establishments, but its report did not determine whether they sought reimbursement.

With government charge cards, the cardholder is required to pay out of pocket for transactions deemed for

personal use. But the Senate Armed Services Committee requested a deeper look to see who ultimately footed the bill.

The Pentagon’s internal watchdog announced the new probe in a memo this week. The audit will look at which expenses were submitted for reimbursement, as well as “whether disciplinary actions have been taken in cases of personal use, and if the misuse was reported to the appropriate security.”

In all, more than \$3 million was charged on DOD cards at casinos and strip clubs last year, but the IG determined that only about \$1 million of it was improper. The rest was for official business events like dinners at casino restaurants.

# Russian moves in Syria complicating US-Moscow relations

BY TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

ARLINGTON, Va. — A Pentagon news conference Thursday meant to show a unified front on U.S. assistance to Ukraine highlighted instead how Russia’s entry into Syria has complicated Washington’s relationship with Moscow.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Col. Gen. Stepan Poltorak, who was visiting the Pentagon, said Russia’s recent buildup of forces in Syria, its longtime ally, is possibly an effort to divert attention from its actions in Ukraine. Poltorak said Russia has proved that it can’t be trusted.

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter was quick to reassure his Ukrainian counterpart that discussions regarding Syria “will not in any way take away from our strong condemnation of Russian actions in Ukraine or change our sanctions or security support in response to those destabilizing actions.”

Moscow’s intervention in Ukraine last year has heightened tensions between Russia and the U.S. Washington backs the new government in Kiev, while Moscow has supported pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine’s east. Washington fears that Moscow’s actions in Syria could bolster the regime

of Bashar Assad and could complicate any mutual fight against the extremist Islamic State group.

Russia’s buildup led last week to the first military-to-military phone call between Carter and his Russian counterpart, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin are expected to discuss the issue when they meet next week in New York.

Russia’s intervention in Ukraine prompted former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to end military-to-military communications with Russia.

Before Thursday’s Pentagon news conference, Carter and Poltorak discussed the training and exercises the U.S. and NATO have been conducting to strengthen the alliance’s eastern flank in the wake of Russia’s annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea Peninsula in March 2014.

Washington and the European Union have imposed sanctions on Russia in response to its intervention, while the U.S. and NATO allies have stepped up the pace of exercises and demonstrations of military strength in the member countries along Russia’s periphery.

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## Pope urges world leaders to protect environment

NEW YORK — Pope Francis declared Friday that there is a “right of the environment” and that mankind has no authority to abuse it, telling more than 100 world leaders and diplomats at the United Nations that urgent action is needed to halt the destruction of God’s creation.

Hoping to spur concrete commitments at upcoming climate

change negotiations in Paris, Francis accused the world’s powerful countries of indulging a “selfish and boundless thirst” for money by ravaging the planet’s natural resources and impoverishing the weak and disadvantaged in the process.

He asserted that the poor have inherent rights to education and what he has termed the “three L’s” — lodging, labor and land.

From The Associated Press

# Giants cruise to first victory

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Early in the fourth quarter, coach Tom Coughlin couldn't help himself after seeing Odell Beckham catch a touchdown pass to give the New York Giants a big lead over the Washington Redskins.

A smile crossed his face for a split second and just as quickly it disappeared.

The relief he was feeling was obvious. The Giants had a 25-6 lead with 13:39 remaining and there was no way they were going to blow it. There was going to be no repeat of the last-minute losses to Dallas and Atlanta.

And there wasn't as Eli Manning added a 41-yard touchdown pass to Rueben Randle in a 32-21 victory that gave New York its fifth straight win over Washington.

This time, New York (1-2) dominated most of the action against the injury-plagued Redskins (1-2), who lost veteran cornerback DeAngelo Hall to a right leg injury that looked serious.

"I'm not saying our games were anything to write home about but, in truth, we could have won two games coming into this one tonight and players need the reinforcement, the confidence that

comes from pushing a thing through to a win," Coughlin said. "I'm hoping that helps in the locker room."

Needing this one desperately, the Giants went out and got it.

Rashad Jennings set the tone early, blocking a punt for a safety. An interception by Prince Amukamara set up a 1-yard TD run by Andre Williams and the Giants were up 9-0 early and never looked back.

Josh Brown kicked three field goals, and Beckham burned Bashaud Breeland on a 30-yard post pattern to settle matters. Randle, who caught all seven passes thrown in his direction for 141 yards scored later, after which Washington's Rashad Ross returned the kickoff 101 yards for the final score.

"Hey, it's a long season, there's a lot of football to play," said Manning, who hit 23 of 32 passes for 279 yards. "Our division, it's too early to know and we can't run away with right now. But hey, you've got to get one win and just keep going. Let's try to get another."

The Redskins, who were coming off an impressive win over the Rams, struggled most of the night.

"It's tough because we felt like there were plays out there that we left out there," said Redskins quarterback Kirk

Cousins, who was 30-for-49 for 316 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions. "Bottom line — we just didn't get it done."

Some things learned in the game:

**Hall's toe:** Hall will have an MRI on his big toe and coach Jay Gruden was not confident that he would return anytime soon, noting that the way that he had to be helped off the field did not inspire confidence of an early return. Hall leads active NFL cornerbacks with 43 interceptions.

**Randle's breakthrough:** Randle had all of four catches for 28 yards through the first two games, and Manning rarely seemed to look for him. That completely changed against Washington, which often single-covered Randle.

He responded with seven receptions on seven targets for 116 yards and the late touchdown.

**Block that punt:** It's rare to see a starting running back on a punt team. Jennings not only participates, he contributes big plays.

When Washington's Tress Way dropped back to punt to end the opening series of the game, Jennings burst through and blocked the kick. It sailed out of the end zone for a safety.

# Kane case takes turn for defense

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The prosecutor overseeing the sexual assault investigation of Chicago Blackhawks star Patrick Kane says the accuser's mother lied about finding an evidence bag in her doorway.

Erie County District Attorney Frank Sedita said during a news conference Friday he's not sure yet how the two-day sideshow of how evidence was handled affects the main case. Sedita said all the evidence, including the rape kit used to examine the accuser, was handled properly and is still in custody of authorities.

"Obviously there has been an effort to create a hoax," Sedita said. "I gotta figure out who was in on that, why they would do that and what it means vis-a-vis all the other evidence."

Sedita said the mother was given the bag at a hospital when her daughter was examined, but it never contained a rape kit. The examining nurse gave the mother the bag after learning the accuser changed her top before going to the hospital, Sedita said. The mother was to put the top in the bag and turn it into authorities, but never did, Sedita said.

Questions about the bag were raised publicly by the accuser's former attorney on Wednesday, who abruptly quit the case Thursday night and said he no longer believed the story about how the folded up paper bag was found. Thomas Eoannou said he was still confident in the woman's allegations against Kane. The accuser, in her 20s, says Kane sexually assaulted her in her 20s at his waterfront mansion outside of Buffalo on Aug. 2.

Kane has not been charged.

Sedita said that the mother denied ever taking possession of the bag. He said he thought the suspicions were odd when Eoannou raised them because rape kits are stored in boxes, not bags. At his news conference, Sedita showed reporters surveillance video of the rape kit being stored in an evidence room.

"It's a bizarre hoax," Sedita said. "And it's a dog and pony show."

The woman's mother declined an interview request Thursday night after Eoannou said he was quitting the case. She referred to a statement the family released to reporters that said they were disappointed the attorney was withdrawing.

"We have every intention of pursuing this case to a just conclusion," the statement said. "It must be emphasized that there exists no evidence or allegation that the accuser herself had any knowledge of the evidence bag until it was brought to Mr. Eoannou's office."

The AP doesn't identify people who may have been sexually assaulted unless they have come forward and voluntarily identified themselves.

Hamburg police chief Gregory Wickett said Friday that an officer who went the mother's home the day she went to the hospital saw the bag, but didn't take it and put the top in his own bag instead.

Sedita said he doesn't think the mother did anything illegal because she was not under oath and it's not illegal to lie to her daughter's lawyer.

# Peterson recalls record-setting day

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Halfway into his rookie season, Adrian Peterson had passed the 200-yard mark for a second time. Midway through the fourth quarter, the Minnesota Vikings held a four-point lead over the San Diego Chargers.

This was an entertaining afternoon for a couple of teams from opposite conferences toting mediocre records. As a bonus, San Diego's Antonio Cromartie returned a failed field goal 109 yards for a touchdown right before halftime.

Oh, but the excitement had only begun. Minnesota regained possession after a 42-yard punt return. Offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell ordered, of course, a run for Peterson.

"G-Boss," Peterson said this week, recalling the name from the playbook. "To the right."

Peterson took the handoff from Brooks Bollinger, moved patiently enough to let his blockers seal the edge and then raced around the corner for a 46-yard touchdown. A handful of runs later, Peterson had the NFL single-game rushing record with 296 yards.

San Diego will play at Minnesota Sunday for the first time since that game Nov. 4, 2007. Current Vikings offensive coordinator Norv Turner was head coach of the Chargers then.

"I remember running by him a couple times on the sideline," Peterson said.

Including that 46-yarder that helped put him in position for the record.

Bevell's call actually didn't go over well with some of the other assistants, despite the way Peterson was running and

how staunchly and confidently the linemen and tight ends were blocking.

"When I called it, they were like 'Oh no,'" said Bevell, now the offensive coordinator for Seattle.

Running backs coach Eric Bieniemy, who harped on Peterson often, was chiding him for cutting inside on that outside zone play and settling for 4 or 5 yards.

"EB got on me, got me straight, and we kept gutting them," Peterson said.

Turner quickly recalled another one of the three touchdowns Peterson had that day, a 64-yard scamper off left tackle on third-and-2 that tied the game early in the third quarter.

"It all broke loose then," Turner said. "We couldn't get him on the ground, and he looked like a guy that was possessed."

Turner took those Chargers to the AFC championship game after a six-game winning streak to finish the regular season at 11-5. The defense was actually fifth in the league that year with 17.8 points allowed per game. Excluding the nightmare in Minnesota, San Diego gave up an average of 88.9 yards rushing over the other 15 games. That mark would've ranked third in the NFL.

The Chargers have one defensive player left from that season, safety Eric Weddle. He was a rookie then.

"I didn't play much that game. If I was on the field it might have been a little different," Weddle said, jokingly.

He had a good view of history being made, at least.

"I remember that bobbing head up the sideline," Weddle said.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Peterson's performance was how many

more yards were there for the taking.

Peterson had a modest total of 43 yards in the first half. He had a 17-yard run in the second quarter erased by a holding penalty. He was tackled three times for a 2-yard loss in and twice for no gain. So over the 26 carries he took past the line of scrimmage, he netted 321 yards, an average of more than 12 yards per try.

Chester Taylor chalked up 60 yards on nine attempts himself, including four straight rushes for 41 yards that took the Vikings into the end zone with 4:33 left in the game to stretch their lead to 18 points.

"I'm not going to lie to you. I do look back and was like, 'Man, I could have been the first person to go for 300.' Four yards!" Peterson said. "But at the end of the day I guess it wasn't meant to happen, because it didn't happen. I can say this: If I get close to 296 or 300 again, I'll be asking for it for this time."

So can this feat ever be topped again, considering the recent evolution of the NFL into a pass-first league?

Of the 15 others who've posted single-game totals within 50 yards of Peterson's record, only four of them (Jerome Harrison in 2009, Jamaal Charles in 2010, DeMarco Murray in 2011 and Doug Martin in 2012) did so after he set the standard. Only Harrison, with 286 yards for Cleveland, actually came that close.

"It still can happen," Peterson said. "Anything is possible. Just got to get on a roll, and it's got to be one of those days."

AP Sports Writers Tim Booth in Renton, Wash., and Bernie Wilson in San Diego contributed to this report.



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# Kansas City celebrates first division crown in thirty years

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — No unexpected wild-card ride into October this year. The Kansas City Royals are division champs for the first time in three decades — and they want a whole lot more.

Johnny Cueto earned his first win in nearly six weeks and the Royals clinched the AL Central crown Thursday night with a 10-4 victory over the Seattle Mariners.

"I've felt all along we would win this division. I've got my eyes on a much bigger prize," manager Ned Yost said. "This is the first step of it."

The defending AL champions, who made a remarkable run through the postseason as a surprise wild card last year, came charging out of the dugout following the final out.

Back in the clubhouse, they sprayed champagne during a happy celebration that included Royals Hall of Famer George Brett and owner David Glass.

Moments later, players returned to the field at the urging of outfielder Jarrod Dyson to salute about 5,000 fans who were still in the stadium.

Dyson climbed on top of the Royals' dugout and shook hands with several of them.

It is Kansas City's first division title since 1985, when Brett led the Royals to the AL West crown en route to their only World Series championship.

"It's a huge accomplishment," said Ben Zobrist, who had two doubles and scored three runs. "It hasn't been done here for

a long time. There's a lot of guys in this clubhouse I've talked to that have toiled for years to get to this point, to win the division. For them to do it, you can see the kind of sigh of relief, the excitement in the organization."

The victory over Seattle, coupled with Minnesota's 6-3 loss to Cleveland, wrapped up the AL Central for a Royals team that has dominated the division this season. Kansas City led by as many as 14 games and ended Detroit's four-year reign atop the division.

The Kauffman Stadium crowd of 32,244 cheered when the Twins' final score was shown on the scoreboard in the top of the ninth.

Yost was caught on camera dancing in the dugout.

"I don't know what I was doing there," he said. "I saw it and I said, 'Who, what and where was that?' I don't remember doing it, but I felt pretty good at that time."

Kansas City became the first team to lock up a division title this year. St. Louis and Pittsburgh have secured playoff berths in the NL.

Last season, the Royals captured a wild card and surged all the way to Game 7 of the World Series before losing to San Francisco.

"It's a different kind of feeling," Yost said. "It's something I've expected from the first day of spring training. It's kind of like, this is what's supposed to happen."

"Last year we were going tooth-and-nail every game. I just had a real confidence in this group from Day 1 of spring training on that we were going to win this division

and get back to the playoffs."

Cueto (3-6), acquired in a July 26 trade with Cincinnati, allowed three runs and seven hits in seven innings while striking out five and walking two. He was 0-5 in his previous six starts since an Aug. 15 victory.

"Johnny was awesome. A good change-up, good breaking stuff, kept his fastball down," Yost said.

Mike Moustakas went 3-for-3 with a home run, three RBIs and three runs. He also walked twice.

Lorenzo Cain's two-run single with two outs in the sixth inning broke a 3-all tie. Cain's grounder into to left field scored Alex Gordon, who walked, and Zobrist.

"My eyes are burning, but I'll definitely take this feeling right now," Cain said during the champagne celebration in the clubhouse. "We understand that we're not done. We've got a lot of unfinished business to take care of."

Moustakas led off the second with his 21st homer, a career high. He drove in two more runs with a single in the eighth.

Eric Hosmer hit a solo shot to center in the fifth to tie the score at 3.

The Mariners used seven pitchers, with Logan Kensing (1-1) taking the loss.

The Royals padded their lead with two more runs in the seventh behind RBIs from Alex Rios and Alcides Escobar.

Mark Trumbo hit a two-run double in the fourth for the Mariners. Brad Miller doubled home Trumbo in the second for the Mariners' first run.

Logan Morrison led off the Mariners' ninth with his 17th home run.

# Army in search of first win

Associated Press

YPSILANTI, Mich. — Army has been close in all three games this season but still doesn't have a victory to show for it.

The Black Knights get another chance Saturday.

Army visits Eastern Michigan on Saturday after losing its first three games by a combined 10 points, including last weekend's 17-14 loss to visiting Wake Forest on a field goal as time expired.

"Whenever you feel the way that we do with the frustration and disappointment, all you want to do is go out and play again so you can get rid of that feeling," coach Jeff Monken said. "This weekend is an opportunity."

Army's option-based offense has struggled at times during the opening losing streak, but Monken said the Black Knights' problems extend beyond when they have the ball.

"What we need is for our guys to make more plays, to finish blocks and to finish runs. We've missed a lot of tackles in each of the first three games. We're not breaking as many tackles as we're missing," he said. "There aren't a bunch of other plays that we have hidden away, we threw everything we had at (Wake Forest)."

"We've been very successful running this offense, and I'm confident that as we continue to get better fundamentally, we'll do a better job."

Quarterback Ahmad Bradshaw leads Army with 333 yards on 57 tries, averaging better than 5 yards per carry.

The Eagles (1-2) dropped last weekend's Mid-American Conference opener to visiting Ball State, 28-17, but sophomore running back Darius Jackson already has six touchdowns this season.

Eastern Michigan hasn't had a winning season since 1987, but second-year coach Chris Creighton has pepped up an offense that struggled under predecessor Ron English.

Like the Black Knights, Eastern Michigan has also been very close in its losses; it has had double-digit leads in both setbacks, including a 17-0 advantage in the loss to Ball State.

"We've definitely been there in all three games," second-year coach Chris Creighton said. "Army has lost three extremely close games and I think you're going to have two teams that have lost close games and are trying to prove themselves."

Here are a few things to watch when Eastern Michigan hosts Army:

**Fullback woes:** The Black Knights have struggled to get production from their fullbacks, but the option-based offense could catch a break Saturday against an EMU defense that allowed Ball State to amass 278 yards on the ground.

**Difference of styles:** Army generates more than two thirds of its offense on the ground, while Eastern Michigan's offensive totals are almost evenly divided between running and passing.

**Quarterback matchup:** EMU sophomore Brogan Roback has thrown for 597 yards with three touchdowns and three interceptions this season. Bradshaw has completed just nine of his 20 passes for 166 yards and two touchdowns.

**Series at a glance:** This is the seventh meeting and Eastern Michigan has won just once, a 48-38 home victory in 2012. The Black Knights won the most recent meeting 50-25 in 2013 at West Point.

# O's complete sweep of Nats

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Jonathan Schoop and Matt Wieters hit two-run homers and the Baltimore Orioles completed a three-game sweep of the Washington Nationals with a 5-4 victory.

Baltimore entered Thursday four games out of the second AL wild-card spot, while Washington began the day 6½ games behind the NL East-leading New York Mets.

**Mets 6, Reds 4:** Daniel Murphy had three hits, including a tiebreaking triple in the seventh inning, as visiting New York closed in on its first playoff appearance in nine years.

The win, combined with Washington's loss to Baltimore, reduced the Mets' magic number for clinching the NL East title to three.

**Yankees 3, White Sox 2:** Carlos Beltran hit a three-run homer off visiting Chicago ace Chris Sale to lead New York in its push for a playoff spot.

After a tribute before their first home game since Yogi Berra died, the Yankees closed within three games of idle Toronto in the AL East. New York cut its magic number to six for clinching at least a wild-card slot.

**Cardinals 7, Brewers 3:** Johnny Peralta and Stephen Piscotty hit back-to-back homers and combined for seven RBIs to power host St. Louis.

The Cardinals have won five straight and hold a four-game lead over Pittsburgh for

the NL Central lead.

**Rangers 8, Athletics 1:** Cole Hamels pitched six innings to earn his fifth consecutive win and Prince Fielder hit his 22nd homer as visiting Texas completed a three-game sweep.

The Rangers moved a season-high 14 games over .500 and extended their lead to 3½ games over the idle Houston Astros in the AL West.

**Pirates 5, Rockies 4:** Pedro Alvarez hit a go-ahead, three-run homer in the eighth inning, and visiting Pittsburgh earned its 10,000th win since joining the National League.

Starling Marte collected four singles and finished 13-for-20 in the four-game sweep. It's the most hits in a four-game series for a Pirates player since Pie Traynor had 13 in 1928.

**Dodgers 6, Diamondbacks 3:** Chris Heisey hit a grand slam in a six-run fifth inning and host Los Angeles trimmed its magic number to four for the NL West.

Rookie Brandon Drury homered off Kershaw, and Paul Goldschmidt got his 19th RBI in his last 19 games against the Dodgers. Arizona would have to win its final nine games to avoid its fourth consecutive non-winning season.

**Indians 6, Twins 3:** Jason Kipnis hit a leadoff homer and Carlos Santana connected for a three-run shot as visiting Cleveland helped its slim playoff chances.

Francisco Lindor had three hits for Cleveland, which is four games behind Houston in the race for the second AL wild card with 11 to play. But the Twins, Angels and Orioles are between the Indians and Astros in the standings.

The Twins and Angels are 1½ games behind Houston. Baltimore is 3½ back.

**Padres 5, Giants 4:** Pinch-hitter Alexi Amarista's RBI single in the ninth inning lifted host San Diego.

Matt Duffy had three hits for San Francisco, which fell eight games behind NL West-leading Los Angeles with 10 games left.

**Rays 4, Red Sox 2:** Erasmo Ramirez pitched seven solid innings, and Evan Longoria's solo home run sparked a three-run sixth for visiting Tampa Bay.

Boston's David Ortiz hit his 36th homer — a two-run shot — and increased his RBI total to 101, reaching the century mark for the ninth season with the Red Sox to tie Hall of Famer Ted Williams for most times in club history.

**Marlins 1, Phillies 0:** J.T. Realmuto's RBI triple in the seventh inning broke a scoreless tie and host Miami held on.

It was the seventh triple of the season for the Marlins catcher, the most by a major league catcher with a minimum of 80 games caught since Darrell Porter of the Kansas City Royals had 10 in 1979, according to STATS.