

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## US and Russia seal cease-fire in Syria

*Associated Press*

GENEVA — The United States and Russia working in lockstep against the Islamic State group and al-Qaida's affiliate in Syria. A rejuvenated truce that will compel President Bashar Assad's air and ground forces to pull back. New flows of badly needed humanitarian aid.

Those details emerged Saturday as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov capped another long meeting in Geneva to present their latest ambitious push to end Syria's devastating and complex war.

The potential breakthrough deal, which launches a nationwide cessation of hostilities by sundown Monday, will hinge on compliance by Assad's Russian-backed forces and U.S.-supported rebel groups, plus key regional powers such as Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia with hands directly or indirectly in Syria's 5½ years of carnage.

"We believe the plan as it is set forth — if implemented, if

followed — has the ability to provide a turning point, a moment of change," Kerry said as he and Lavrov laid out the contours, but admittedly not too much fine print, of the hard-won accord.

The ultimate hope is to silence the Syrian guns so that the long-stalled peace process under U.N. mediation can resume between Assad's envoys and representatives of the opposition, while the two world powers focus on battling jihadis.

The deal, at least publicly and for now, appears to overcome months of distrust between Russia and the United States that President Barack Obama cited less than a week ago.

Now, the powers are lining up in an unexpected new military partnership targeting Islamic State and al-Qaida-linked militants while trying to prod Assad and opposition groups to end a civil war that has killed up to 500,000 people and displaced millions.

"This is just the beginning of our new relations," Lavrov said

of the U.S.

Washington must persuade Syrian rebels to break ranks with Fath al-Sham, an al-Qaida-linked group previously known as the Nusra Front, which has intermingled with U.S.-backed fighters. Moscow is to pressure Assad's government to halt all offensive operations against the armed opposition in specific areas, which were not detailed.

"The Syrian government has been informed of these arrangements and is ready to fulfill them," Lavrov said at a news conference alongside Kerry after midnight.

Kerry said the arrangement depends on "people's choices. It has the ability to stick, provided the regime and the opposition both meet their obligations, which we — and we expect other supporting countries — will strongly encourage them to do."

He also alluded to the possibility of backsliding that all but doomed a previous U.S.-Russia cease-fire initiative this year, which briefly halted the fighting and paved the way for new

aid convoys before a resurgence of bloodshed.

"No one is building this based on trust," Kerry said. "It is based on a way of providing oversight, and compliance, through mutual interest and other things. If this arrangement holds, then we will see a significant reduction in violence across Syria."

The deal culminates months of frenetic diplomacy that included four meetings between Kerry and Lavrov since Aug. 26, and a lengthy face-to-face in China between Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The military deal would go into effect after both sides abide by the truce for a week and allow unimpeded humanitarian deliveries. Then, the U.S. and Russia would begin intelligence sharing and targeting coordination, while Assad's air and ground forces would no longer be permitted to target Fath al-Sham; they would be restricted to operations against the Islamic State group.

## Flow of foreign fighters to Islamic State group plummets

*The Washington Post*

LONDON — The flow of foreign fighters to the ranks of the Islamic State group — once a mighty current of thousands of radicalized men and women converging on Syrian and Iraqi battlefields from nations across the globe — has been cut to a trickle this year as the group's territory has shrunk and its ambitions have withered.

The decline, officials and experts say, has been dramatic, prolonged and geographically widespread, with the number of Europeans, Americans, North Africans and others joining up to fight and die for the idea of a

revived Islamic caliphate falling as precipitously as the terrorist group's fortunes.

From a peak of 2,000 foreign recruits crossing the Turkey-Syria border each month, the Islamic State and other extremist groups operating in Syria are down to as few as 50, according to U.S. intelligence assessments.

Diminished flows deprive the organization of needed reinforcements and further erode its ability to cast itself as the rebirth of a vast Islamic empire. But they also raise questions about whether the terrorism threat is actually easing or just

morphing into a more dangerous new phase.

"It's a massive falloff," said Peter Neumann, director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London. "And it's basically because Islamic State is a failing entity now. The appeal of Islamic State group rested on its strength and its winning. Now that it's losing, it's no longer attractive."

The sustained decline marks an important milestone in global efforts to defeat the Islamic State group, reflecting measures ranging from a multinational military campaign

to, in at least one nation, rules requiring parental permission slips before young men can leave the country.

But Neumann and others said the decline in Islamic State recruiting figures, which has come almost as quickly as it rose following leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's declaration of a caliphate in June 2014, is hardly an unmitigated success for the United States and its allies. Instead, it may be the beginning of a new stage in which would-be fighters carry out attacks at home rather than travel abroad, and battle-hardened veterans seek out new lands for conflict.

# USAF: Ceremony squabble not about religion

BY DIANNA CAHN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Religious content in a flag-folding speech during a retirement ceremony at Travis Air Force Base had nothing to do with why the speaker was removed from the ceremony, an Air Force investigation has found.

Instead, the inquiry said Oscar Rodriguez was forcibly escorted from the April 3 retirement ceremony for Master Sgt. Charles Roberson because Rodriguez was using an unauthorized flag-folding script and had a history of misconduct that had led the squadron commander to bar him from speaking at the event.

In addition, the report found Rodriguez was perceived by some as “disrupting” the ceremony.

“The preponderance of evidence did not support that Mr. Rodriguez was prohibited from narrating the flag-folding ceremony or subsequently removed from the retirement ceremony because his personalized flag-folding script contained the word ‘God,’” the investigation concluded. “The 749 [Aircraft Maintenance Squadron] members who removed him acted with reasons to maintain good order and discipline, not by motivation to restrict Mr. Ro-

driguez’s constitutional rights of freedom of speech or religion.”

But Rodriguez’ lawyer at the conservative First Liberty Institute, which argues in defense of religious freedoms, dismissed the investigation’s conclusion as just an attempt by the Air Force to gloss over illegal actions against Rodriguez by violating his constitutional freedoms.

“The Air Force is pulling a cover-up here — a shameless one,” said First Liberty senior counsel Michael Berry. “The Air Force basically declared war on one of its own. If the Air Force thinks it is going to dishonor one of its decorated veterans and declare war like that, it should buckle up.”

The Air Force announced Friday that “as a result of this inquiry and Mr. Rodriguez’ allegations,” the Air Force was loosening its policy regarding a script for flag-folding ceremonies. A script is not required, but language in Air Force regulations limits the option to an official script “when a flag-folding ceremony is desired.” The Air Force has now removed that language.

At the April 3 retirement ceremony, Rodriguez had just stood to speak during the flag-folding portion when he was approached by several noncommissioned officers who removed him from the room. Rodriguez claimed he was removed be-

cause his speech, which he had performed in the past, invokes God and prayer.

But the investigation concluded the squadron commander had prohibited Rodriguez from participating in the ceremony based on a history of misconduct.

Testimony in the investigation indicated Rodriguez retired in 2013 after being removed from his job with the Honor Guard by his commander, who instructed him not to participate in flag-folding ceremonies.

According to the inquiry, Roberson saw Rodriguez perform his flag-folding speech at a retirement ceremony in March and asked Rodriguez to perform the same speech at his retirement in April.

When the squadron commander learned of it, he prohibited Rodriguez from performing, based on his history.

Rodriguez was permitted to attend the event, but not to participate, and when he stood and began speaking, several NCOs approached him and removed him from the room.

The Air Force’s investigation found the commanding officer and the NCOs were acting to maintain decorum after Rodriguez had disrupted the ceremony.

Rodriguez and First Liberty are still evaluating whether they will file a lawsuit against the Air Force, he said.

## Chelsea Manning goes on hunger strike

*Associated Press*

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — A transgender soldier imprisoned in Kansas for leaking classified information to the WikiLeaks website says she is on a hunger strike until her

treatment improves.

Chelsea Manning says she began the hunger strike Friday because her pleas for better treatment at Fort Leavenworth have been ignored. She says she will not voluntarily consume anything except water and pre-

scription medication.

In the statement supplied by her ACLU attorney, Manning says the hunger strike will continue until she receives the “minimum standards of dignity, respect and humanity,” and

she is prepared for the possibility of dying.

Manning, arrested as Bradley Manning, was convicted in 2013 in military court of leaking more than 700,000 secret military and State Department documents.

## Samsung tells Korean customers to stop using Note 7

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — Samsung Electronics on Saturday recommended that South Korean customers stop using the new Galaxy Note 7 smartphones, which the company is recalling worldwide after several dozen of them caught fire.

In a statement posted on its website, the South Korean

technology giant advised local users to visit the company’s service centers to receive rental phones for temporary use. Samsung plans to provide Galaxy Note 7 devices with new batteries in South Korea starting on Sept. 19.

“We again express our sincere apologies to our customers who value our products,” the

company said in a statement.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration on Thursday warned airline passengers not to turn on or charge Galaxy Note 7s during flights and also not to put the smartphones into their checked bags.

Samsung last week announced plans to recall 2.5 million Galaxy Note 7 phones

worldwide after its investigation of the device fires found rechargeable lithium batteries manufactured by one of its suppliers at fault.

The company has confirmed 35 cases of its devices catching fire, most of them occurring while the batteries were being charged. Samsung released the jumbo smartphone on Aug. 19.

# Some survivors of fallen shorted by DOD

*CQ-Roll Call*

WASHINGTON — Every year, dozens of families that lose a breadwinner who is killed in the line of military duty receive hundreds of dollars less in their monthly Pentagon survivor benefit checks than other families, CQ has learned.

The unlucky families get less merely because the deceased soldier happened to fall into the wrong payroll category on the day of his or her death. The surviving spouses, who often have children to support after losing the family's primary earner, are typically unaware they have been receiving the smaller payments, which in some cases can be the difference between affording a mortgage or not.

"A gut punch is exactly what it felt like," said Rhonda Jahns, a widow who learned of the inequity only after the Pentagon told her they had accidentally been paying her too much money and would have to stop. "My kids were only 3 and 5 at the time, so it was hard in lots of different ways."

Few in the U.S. military and on Capitol Hill know about the problem — and those who know have learned about it only in the past few years. The issue has received no previous media attention.

At issue is a requirement that the Pentagon pay the survivors of some members of the National Guard and reserves more than others — sometimes nearly 10 times more. Those reservists who on the day of their deaths were either called to active duty or assigned to so-called active-duty training get much more than those who happen to have been designated on their last day as being in a status called "inactive-duty training."

## Random distinction

But the distinction between active and inactive training status is a bureaucratic, even random, one, experts say. Whether a servicemember is paid through one account or the other is typically a function of which of the two funds has more money on a given day or what kind of duty the servicemember needs to ac-

crue, according to a previously unpublicized Pentagon budget document proposing that the rule be changed.

The distinction has little or nothing to do with the mission being performed. The same reservist, for example, could be considered active one day or inactive the next, even if he or she was performing the exact same task on both days. In fact, two reservists performing the same task on the same day could even be on different duty statuses.

"If you get killed in the line of duty, that should count enough, no matter what kind of status you're in," said Jahns. "That's the ultimate sacrifice."

The Pentagon agrees. It wants to change the law that covers the so-called Survivor Benefit Program. An average of 67 families are shortchanged every year because of the discrepancy, according to the Defense Department budget documents.

"Every day, teams of active and reserve component airmen work together to accomplish the Air Force mission," said Gabe Camarillo, the Air Force's assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs, in a statement for CQ. "If something should happen, causing an airman to make the ultimate sacrifice, that airman and his or her family should be properly cared for. The survivor benefits the airman's family receives should not depend on the duty status in which the airman was serving."

## Small price

Now, key members of Congress appear willing to change the law. If they fail, it appears it will only be because of the cost of doing so, even though that is infinitesimal in the scheme of the annual national defense budget: less than \$2 million of a \$600 billion-plus total.

The problem was exemplified by a fatal Black Hawk helicopter crash on March 10, 2015. Eleven U.S. military service personnel died that day when their chopper went down amid heavy fog off the coast of the Florida Panhandle near Pensacola. Seven of those who died were Marines. The other four were members of the Louisiana Army Nation-

al Guard; three were fathers, while the fourth had a baby on the way.

After the accident, the Pentagon provided the families of the fallen guardsmen considerably less in survivor payments than the Marines' families got — not because the guardsmen were reservists but merely because they were reservists who were officially designated on that particular day as being on inactive-duty training, an Army National Guard spokesman confirmed.

Likewise, Arlington Cemetery rules do not permit soldiers slain while on inactive duty to be buried there. The family of Staff Sgt. Thomas C. Florich III, one of the guardsmen who died in the Florida Black Hawk crash last year, had wanted him buried at Arlington. (Florich was eventually allowed to be buried there only after the Army secretary, under pressure over the ban, relented and granted a waiver.)

## Disparate treatment

The Black Hawk crash was hardly the only example of the disparate treatment of those killed in the line of duty. In some cases, two reservists have died on the same day, in the same incident, performing the same mission — but under different duty status designations. As a result, their families received widely disparate benefits.

That was the case on April 2, 2004, when Judson B. Brinson and Thomas L. Moore were both killed after their T-6A Texan II turbprop training plane crashed at an airport in Georgia. Both men were Air Force Reserve captains who had served as flight instructors. One pilot had been designated as inactive that day and the other as active, according to the Pentagon budget documents. So the inactive captain's family received a far smaller survivor's check each month.

Outside of Defense Department human resources offices, the unequal payments based on an administrative categorization were virtually unknown for several years. Then, a relative handful of people in the U.S. military became aware of the

discrepancy after hearing of it due to a clerical error.

Air Force Reserve Maj. Peter Jahns, who was Rhonda Jahns' husband, died in 2003 when his T-38 Talon training jet crashed on a runway in Texas. But it wasn't until 2012 that the Pentagon informed Jahns' widow and 94 other surviving spouses that they had netted too much in survivor benefits. Officials hadn't noticed the decedents had been listed as inactive on their last day.

## 'Overpaid'

"This means you have been overpaid since you began receiving your annuity in March 2003," wrote Thomas McKenna, head of the survivors program for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, in a January 2012 letter. "Therefore, beginning with your next scheduled payment on February 1, 2012, your payment will stop."

The letter is memorialized at 95letters.com, a website created by Todd Ernst, an Air Force Reserve veteran who served with Peter Jahns.

"I hate it when people say, 'The military takes care of its own,'" said Ernst. "The military family takes care of its own, but if we rely on the military to take care of us, they'll never do it."

Even today, many families of deceased reservists who died on inactive status are still unaware they are eligible for less than other survivors.

"I don't know of any benefits withheld," said Stephen Florich, the father of Staff Sgt. Thomas C. Florich III, the guardsman buried at Arlington whose survivors were entitled to less because he died on inactive-duty status.

The survivors of reservists who die on inactive duty are not only entitled to less money but their children cannot receive it.

"The Guard and reserve have incurred the same risks and made the same contributions as the active forces, and they must not be treated as second-class soldiers," said Jeff Phillips, a retired two-star general who is executive director of the Reserve Officers Association, which advocates for reservists.

# Clinton takes tough stance on North Korea

*The Washington Post*

NEW YORK — Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton suggested Friday that she would adopt a tougher stance against North Korea that could approximate the global ring of sanctions and pressure she credits with drawing Iran to the nuclear negotiating table.

“It’s clear that the increasing threat posed by North Korea requires not only a rethinking of the strategy but an urgent effort to convince the neighbors, most particularly China, that this is not just a U.S. issue,” Clinton said.

She did not dispute that the current policy of sanctions on North Korea and pressure on its ally and protector, China, has failed to stop North Korean aggression, including the country’s fifth nuclear test Friday.

“I think we have an opening here that we haven’t had in the

last several years that I intend to do everything I can to take advantage of,” Clinton said of the test and the international dismay it caused.

The remarks put Clinton on record seeking a tougher line on North Korea than has been pursued by President Barack Obama, whom she served as secretary of state.

Three presidents, beginning with Bill Clinton, have sought without lasting success to prevent or curb nuclear ambitions by North Korea.

In her remarks, Clinton pledged help for U.S. allies in the region — principally Japan and South Korea — in the form of U.S. missile defense systems.

“That is not something that North Korea or the Chinese or the Russians in the region are particularly pleased about, but what is the alternative?” she said.

“We are not going to let

anyone who is a treaty ally or partner of ours be threatened, and we are not going to let North Korea pursue a nuclear weapon with a ballistic-missile capacity to deliver it to the United States’ territory. That is absolutely the bottom line,” Clinton said.

Clinton spoke after a meeting she called of former national security officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations. The main subject of the session was terrorism and the threat posed by the Islamic State group, which Clinton said is not unlike the persistent threat from North Korea.

North Korea appeared to take a key step toward its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the mainland United States with an underground nuclear test the country said was a “nuclear warhead explosion.” It appeared to be North Korea’s

biggest yet.

More U.S. sanctions on North Korea are appropriate, but so too are negotiations toward the kind of international agreement that led to United Nations and other international sanctions and penalties on Iran over its nuclear program, Clinton said.

U.S. sanctions alone did not stop Iran from moving closer to being able to field a nuclear weapon, Clinton said.

Iran denies seeking one but after extensive international negotiations has entered an international agreement limiting its nuclear activity in exchange for relief from sanctions and other concessions.

“Our sanctions despite our best efforts, were not enough,” Clinton said. “And although we have international sanctions against North Korea, some of which I helped to negotiate when I was there, they aren’t enough, either.”

## Trump: Iranian boats making improper ‘gestures’ to be shot

*The Washington Post*

PENSACOLA, Fla. — In a wide-ranging speech on Friday night, Donald Trump said that as president, he would shoot Iranian boats out of the water if they make improper “gestures” toward American vessels, that Hillary Clinton is so protected that she could murder someone in front of 20,000 witnesses and not face prosecution and that voters need to be “very, very vigilant” on Election Day.

Ever since he installed new campaign leadership about three weeks ago, Trump has softened his tone on the campaign trail and mostly stuck to prepared rally speeches loaded onto teleprompters. That discipline seemed to fade during a rally in the Florida panhandle on Friday night.

As Trump shared his plans to dramatically grow the “depleted military” and grow the number of Navy ships to 350,

he brought up Iran, a country he has frequently said takes advantage of the United States’ generosity.

“And, by the way, with Iran, when they circle our beautiful destroyers with their little boats, and they make gestures at our people, that they shouldn’t be allowed to make, they will be shot out of the water,” Trump said to thunderous applause.

The crowd began to chant: “USA! USA! USA!”

Trump also continued his attack on Clinton, saying that she has escaped punishment for using a private email server while serving as secretary of state.

“She is being so protected, she could walk into this arena right now and shoot somebody with 20,000 people watching ... and she wouldn’t be prosecuted, OK?” Trump said, exaggerating the capacity of the Pensacola Bay Center which can hold only 12,000.

“That’s what’s happened. That is what’s happened to our country. I never thought I’d see the day where this is happening to our country,” he said.

Later, Trump said Clinton could not be trusted to make military decisions.

“Her policies have produced only death, destruction and not diplomacy,” Trump said. “She’s trigger-happy, and now she’s trying to say like she’s this — let me tell you, folks, personally? Personally? I think she’s an unstable person. OK? She is trigger-happy.”

The crowd cheered Trump’s personal take and a few women in the crowd started chanting: “Lock her up! Lock her up!”

Trump also defended his campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again,” which former President Bill Clinton has suggested is a coded message to white Southerners because “the good old days ... weren’t all that good in many ways.”

Trump praised the media for pointing out Clinton said the same words, “make America great again,” while campaigning for president.

“‘Make America great again — racist, racist!’ Except he used it. A lot,” Trump said. “Surprised. I thought it was just ours. It’s just one more Clinton lie. And even the media reported it as a big, fat, juicy lie. Thank you very much, fellas. Finally. Finally!”

And Trump once again suggested that he might lose the election because of voter fraud, telling his crowd: “Be very, very vigilant on November 8. Watch what’s happening. Watch what’s happening.”

Trump was only interrupted once by protesters during his hourlong speech. The group was quickly escorted out of the arena by security — along with a large group of bikers who support Trump.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Triathletes swim with Wessie the anaconda

**ME** WESTBROOK—Organizers of a triathlon didn't let a giant snake keep athletes out of the water.

The swimming portion of Saturday's Major League Triathlon in Westbrook, Maine, was held in the Presumpscot River, where a large snake was spotted earlier this summer.

Organizers decided to keep the swimming in the river after consulting with city officials.

The snake was dubbed "Wessie" after it was seen swimming across the river in June.

Major League Triathlon offered a "SWIMWITHWESSIE" discount promo code for athletes who want to participate.

## Giant Holstein vies for 'tallest bovine' title

**CA** EUREKA—Holy cow! A giant, one-ton Holstein steer is vying for the title of tallest bovine in the world.

The Eureka Times Standard reported Wednesday the Holstein, named Danniel, measures 6 feet, 4 inches, a smidge taller than the current record holder.

A veterinarian and his keepers at the Sequoia Park Zoo in Eureka, Calif., measured Danniel Tuesday, but Guinness World Records has yet to verify the measurement.

According to the Guinness website, the tallest bovine was Blossom, a cow from Orangeville, Ill., that measured 6 feet, 2 inches.

Owner Ann Farley said Danniel loves bread and trots over to whoever calls his name.

## Hungry goats clear space at arboretum

**MA** BOSTON—Officials at Harvard University's

Arnold Arboretum have gotten creative with their effort to clear space for new plants.

The Boston Globe reported four hungry goats have been contracted to eat weeds and other unwanted vegetation at the school's arboretum in Boston.

Officials said the goats are being kept at the arboretum in a small enclosure that allows them to work on one area at a time. The enclosure will be moved around the preserve during the next few weeks.

A statement released by the arboretum said the goats have helped minimize chemical control, and the program may be expanded if it proves successful.

## No love from adult hotel's neighbors

**GA** CUMMING—Residents in Atlanta's far northern suburbs are objecting to a developer's plans for an adults-only hotel that would be built near a Baptist church.

Travis Bridgeman, pastor at Antioch Baptist Church told WSB-TV that he worries about the message it sends to the community. He said that when people come to the hotel, "we know what's on their mind."

Ethan Underwood, an attorney for Ohio-based hotelier Belamere Suites, said the business hosts everything from marriage encounters to church groups. The hotel's website states its mission has been to create a place for a romantic retreat. Neighbors gathered more than 2,000 petitions opposing the project. WSB reported the land is zoned for commercial projects, and it won't require approval from the Forsyth County Commission.

## Man steals money from woman's bra

**NY** NEW YORK—Surveillance cameras at

a New York City store captured video of a man stealing cash from a 93-year-old woman's bra as she sat in a wheelchair.

Police said the theft happened Wednesday afternoon at a clothing store in Manhattan's East Harlem neighborhood.

The Daily News reported the woman had just cashed her Social Security check and was shopping for sandals. She told the newspaper that she had put hundreds of dollars in an envelope and concealed it inside her blouse.

The video showed a man approaching the woman from behind, grabbing the envelope and walking away.

The woman's caretaker tried to alert the store's staff about what had happened, but the man fled.

Police are searching for the man, estimated to be about 35 years old.

## 'Freedom Bell' to ring at museum dedication

**VA** WILLIAMSBURG—A bell from a Virginia church founded by slaves is being shipped to the nation's capital so it can be rung Sept. 24 at the National Museum of African American History and Culture's dedication.

The bell of First Baptist Church of Williamsburg had been silent since the era of segregation until it was restored last year by the church and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

The church unveiled it in February to mark its 240th anniversary. People were invited to toll the bell for justice, peace and racial healing. The bell has since been called the "Freedom Bell."

President Barack Obama is scheduled to be at the dedication.

## Tall Ship added to list of official things

**DE** WILMINGTON—Delaware's long list of official state things continues to grow.

Delaware already has, among other things, a state dog, a state bird, a state fossil, a state soil, a state macroinvertebrate, and a state dessert.

Now, with legislation signed Friday by Gov. Jack Markell, it is getting an official Tall Ship.

That would be the Kalmar Nyckel, a replica of a vessel that sailed from Sweden in 1638, carrying the first permanent European settlers in the Delaware Valley.

If you're wondering about those others, they're the golden retriever, the blue hen chicken, the belemnite, Greenwich loam, the stonefly, and peach pie.

## British soldiers near end of canoe voyage

**NY** NEW YORK—A group of British soldiers is nearing the end of a 340-mile expedition that started in Montreal and was to end in New York City.

Sixteen soldiers from the Royal Regiment of Scotland set out in eight canoes in Quebec on Aug. 30 and began paddling south along a route that took them down Lake Champlain and Lake George to the upper Hudson River.

They made stops along the way at historic sites to visit places where Scottish regiments fought during the French and Indian War, and the American Revolution.

The Scots planned to arrive Friday in Yonkers. From there they'll receive an NYPD marine unit escort on Saturday to their destination: the USS Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum on Manhattan's West Side.

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# Redskins' Norman out to prove worth

Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — Josh Norman rattles off the names like they're members of a rock band: Star, K.K., Charles and Kony.

A year ago, he and those Carolina pass rushers jammed their way to the Super Bowl. The Panthers' defense made a number of hits with the brash All-Pro cornerback and sack masters Star Lotulelei, Kawann Short, Charles Johnson and Kony Ealy.

But the Panthers decided to remove the \$13.9 million franchise tag from Norman when they couldn't agree on a long-term deal. The Washington Redskins jumped at the chance to acquire Norman, signing him to a \$75 million, five-year contract.

Now it's on Norman to show he's more than just the product of a prolific pass rush.

"Those guys are great, man; they are a great pass rush," Norman said during the Redskins' minicamp in June. "It's not that I came from a great defensive line that made me who I am. I am (who I am) because I am the guy you see on the field every week trying to be the best and better in my craft, and I got edge rushers like that out here."

The spotlight on Norman is glaring. He will match up against Antonio Brown of the Pittsburgh Steelers on Monday night, Dez Bryant of the Dallas Cowboys in Week 2 and rival Odell Beckham Jr. of the New York Giants in Week 3. Those wide receivers present three substantial tests for the 28-year-old who said he's "no longer the underdog."

After initially walking on at Coastal Carolina and being drafted in the fifth round in 2012, Norman thrives while channeling the underdog mentality. But, after fighting Panthers quarterback Cam Newton in practice, intercepting four passes last season and calling himself the "best cornerback on Earth," the 28-year-old has become a target.

"Now I am the guy that has to take on a new face, has to take on a new mask and be somebody that is always going to be the standard and looked at as, 'OK, well then we've got to go after him, we've got to see where that's like,'" Norman said. "That's in a new realm for me."

That realm is a Washington defense that has playmakers in outside linebackers Ryan Kerrigan and Preston Smith and

safety DeAngelo Hall, but this wasn't a defense that looked at all like Carolina's did last season.

This year, quarterbacks will have to choose whether to throw at Norman or Bashaud Bree-land, the Redskins' other starting cornerback. Washington's pass rushers expect Norman to make their job easier.

"I know what type of pass rush Carolina has, but I also have seen Josh and I've watched Josh play and he helped that pass rush out just as much as that pass rush helped him out," nose tackle Kedric Golston said. "You're going to always have your critics, but from what I know about Josh and the professional that he's been and coming in here working hard and doing everything the coaches have asked him to do and doing it at a super-high level, that's all you can ask for. Hopefully, we can get our pass rush to a level to where they can say that about all our corners."

While the Panthers were sixth in the NFL with 44 sacks last season, the Redskins lagged in the middle of the pack. They harassed Aaron Rodgers early in a wild-card playoff game, but once they could no longer reach him, the Green Bay Packers

rolled to a victory.

Getting back to the disruption from the first quarter of the Packers game is Washington's goal, and defensive coordinator Joe Barry sees Norman as a substantial piece of that.

"When you have a great individual player or a great secondary in general, that obviously helps a pass rush," Barry said Thursday. When a "quarterback holds on (to) the ball because he can't throw a pass because no one's open, that buys time for the rush."

If the Redskins' front seven leaves Norman one-on-one against top receivers, he'll have time to shine. Hall knows a quarterback choosing to not throw in the direction of a defensive back is the ultimate sign of respect, and being patient and waiting for opportunities to prove his worth is another big challenge for the often-impatient Norman.

"I welcome it," he said. "If you throw the ball (at me), you're only feeding the beast. I enjoy those challenges because I get excited. I'm playing the game. Sitting over there and not playing the game is boring. I don't like it. ... Not throwing the ball, I've got to find something else to do."

## More than a few players are on the rise this season

Associated Press

Derek Carr's impressive sophomore season was only a first step. The Oakland Raiders are a fashionable pick to make the playoffs and even win the AFC West thanks to a quarterback who appears on the verge of becoming an upper-tier player for the next decade.

Carr threw for 3,987 yards, 32 touchdowns and posted a 91.1 passer rating in 2015, helping the Raiders improve from 3-13 in 2014 to 7-9. He's been on the rise and could get better as he continues to master coordinator Bill Musgrave's system and develops more continuity with a supporting cast that features wide receiver Amari Cooper.

Here are other players who

could be trending upward in 2016:

David Johnson, RB, Cardinals (above): After getting only 32 carries in the first 11 games, Johnson took over as the starter following an injury to Chris Johnson and put together a fantastic three-game stretch: 378 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 11 catches, 94 yards receiving. There's plenty of hype surrounding the dynamic runner as he enters his second season. He's big, strong, fast and shouldn't disappoint.

Mike Evans, WR, Buccaneers: Evans caught more passes for more yards but had far fewer TDs in 2015 (three) than he did his rookie season (12). He also led the team in dropped passes. But Evans should thrive in new

coach Dirk Koetter's system, which helped Roddy White and Julio Jones become superstars in Atlanta. Evans and quarterback Jameis Winston have a year together so expect them to develop into one of the top QB-WR tandems in the league.

La'el Collins, LG, Cowboys: Collins lost millions when he went from being a projected first-round pick in 2015 to an undrafted free agent because of off-field issues. Dallas gambled on his talent and Collins started 11 games his rookie season. He can eventually make up that lost money by playing like a guy whose name is called by Commissioner Roger Goodell.

Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, S, Packers: He led the team with 100

tackles and added three sacks and two interceptions in his second season after a strong rookie year in 2014. Clinton-Dix should take the next step forward this season and earn a trip to Orlando for his first Pro Bowl.

Ryan Shazier, ILB, Steelers (below left): Staying healthy was Shazier's biggest challenge his first two seasons. He missed the first four games last year after missing parts or all of nine of the final 14 games his rookie year in 2014. When he's on the field, he's outstanding. Shazier had 13 tackles, forced two fumbles and recovered one in a playoff win over Cincinnati last January. He should become the next dominant force for the Steel Curtain.

# Djokovic tops Monfils, moves into final

Associated Press

NEW YORK — For quite a while, Novak Djokovic's opponent in the U.S. Open semifinals, Gael Monfils, looked as if he didn't want to win — or even be there at all.

That premeditated “great strategy” of hoping to lull the No. 1 seed and defending champion into complacency and mistakes, as Monfils described it later, worked briefly, yet did not prevent a two-set deficit. So he transformed back into his entertaining, athletic self. A sweat-soaked Djokovic sought help from a trainer for aches in both shoulders, and what was no contest suddenly became one.

Monfils forced a fourth set, and Djokovic ripped off his white shirt angrily a la “The Incredible Hulk.”

The ultimate outcome was only briefly in the balance, though. Djokovic regained the upper hand, as he so often does, reaching his 21st Grand Slam final and seventh at the U.S. Open with an eventful and, at times, bizarre 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 victory over Monfils on Friday.

“Well, it was a strange match,” said Djokovic, who will face No. 3 Stan Wawrinka in Sunday's final, “as it always is, I guess, when you play Gael, who is a very unpredictable player.”

Never more so than on this muggy afternoon, with the temperature at 90 degrees and the humidity above 50 percent. Monfils, now 0-13 against Djokovic, spent most of his news conference defending his unusual approach and said he knew beforehand he might try it.

Djokovic had three set points while serving at 5-1, 40-love, and Monfils transitioned into something that at first blush appeared to be “tanking” — losing on purpose, for who knows what reason — but which he explained afterward was the tennis equivalent of Muhammad Ali's boxing “rope-a-dope,” absorbing someone else's best shots and pretending to not be interested in attacking.

Somehow, the tactic was effective, for a short while, anyway.

“I was completely caught off-guard,” Djokovic acknowledged.

Miscue after miscue arrived from Djokovic, and Monfils won three games in a row, before eventually dropping a set for the first time all tournament.

“I thought, at times, that he was maybe behaving a little bit — for some terms and judgments — unacceptable,” Djokovic said. “But I guess that was part of his tactics. If he said

that you have to believe him, I guess.”

Djokovic will try for his third U.S. Open championship and 13th major trophy overall against Wawrinka, whose first final at Flushing Meadows came via a 4-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-2 victory over No. 6 Kei Nishikori that lasted more than 3 hours and finished with the roof shut. Djokovic has won 19 of 23 previous meetings, but Wawrinka did win their 2015 French Open final for his second Grand Slam title.

Wawrinka was down a set and a break against Nishikori, who eventually faded in the heat and mugginess. Wawrinka got so sweaty his racket flew out of his hand on one point, but he seemed to grow sturdier as the match wore on.

At the start, Wawrinka said, Nishikori “was always dictating. I was feeling uncomfortable on the court. He was coming at the net. ... I just tried to, little by little, play a little bit better, a little bit faster, a little bit heavier. I tried to make him run.”

Wawrinka has spent nearly twice as long on court as Djokovic has so far: a little under 18 hours vs. a little under 9 hours.

That's because Djokovic enjoyed the easiest path to a major

semifinal in the nearly half-century of the Open era: Three of his first five foes pulled out because of injuries. Then came this 2½-hour miniseries, topping them all for oddness.

In the second set, Monfils lost five consecutive games, and limped afterward. Soon, Djokovic led 2-0 in the third, breaking on a double-fault that drew boos and whistles. All over but the shouting, right? Nope. In a blink, Monfils awoke.

Hours before the match, Djokovic clutched at his back during a practice session in Ashe. Behind 5-2 in the third, Djokovic got his left shoulder massaged. Later, it was time for help with the right shoulder. Asked what health worries he might have, Djokovic replied, “Thankfully, it's behind me. So I don't have any concerns.”

In the late going, Monfils was leaning on his racket between points. More examples of playing possum? Perhaps. But Djokovic showed his own signs of distress in the tough conditions.

After all of that, Djokovic plays Sunday for his third Grand Slam championship of 2016. He won the Australian Open in January, and the French Open in June — when the theatrics were at a relative minimum by Friday's standards..

## No. 13 Louisville has easy time disposing of Syracuse

Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — After falling behind early, Syracuse was trying to rally in the third quarter against No. 13 Louisville and the Carrier Dome crowd was alive as the Cardinals faced a third-and-18.

Lamar Jackson then did what he does best.

The Cardinals' elusive sophomore quarterback ripped off a 33-yard run to again stun the Orange on a night of big plays. Louisville didn't extend its lead, but in the end it didn't matter.

Jackson ran for four touchdowns and threw for another,

and the Cardinals routed Syracuse 62-28 on Friday night in the Atlantic Coast Conference opener for both teams.

“He had a great game,” Louisville coach Bobby Petrino said. “What I was most pleased with was how well he prepared for the game. He worked extremely hard all week. He did a great job executing. He threw the ball around and ran real well. He did a great job of everything we asked him to do.”

Jackson, the national offensive player of the week for his performance in the opener against Charlotte, a 70-14 victory, picked up right where he left

off. He hit a wide-open James Quick for a 72-yard score on the game's first play from scrimmage to put the Orange defense on its heels, and it stayed there during a first-quarter blitz by Jackson and company.

The elusive Jackson followed with a dazzling 72-yard touchdown run and also hit Jaylen Smith for 61 yards and Jamari Staples for 55 in the opening spree.

“I'm not sure anybody could catch him,” Syracuse coach Dino Babers said. “You get mad because they couldn't catch the guy. He's the fastest guy on the football field. He got into space.

I saw him outrun contain with three guys who were exactly where they were supposed to be. He should have got tackled for a 2-yard loss and he runs all the way to the other sideline and steps out of bounds.”

Jackson, who was rarely pressured by a Syracuse defense that was content to lay back, also scored on runs of 7, 72 and 13 yards to give Louisville a 28-7 lead after one quarter. He had 108 yards rushing and 207 yards passing as the Cardinals (2-0) outgained the Orange 352-98 in the period, then tacked on a 9-yard scoring run in the second.

# Bosox's Porcello first to 20 wins

Associated Press

TORONTO — A milestone win for Rick Porcello gave the Boston Red Sox some breathing room atop the AL East.

Porcello pitched seven innings to become the first 20-game winner in the majors, Hanley Ramirez hit a three-run homer and the Red Sox increased their AL East lead to two games by routing the Toronto Blue Jays 13-3 on Friday night.

Xander Bogaerts homered and Dustin Pedroia had three hits and four RBIs as the Red Sox used 18 hits to rough up the sloppy, slumping Blue Jays in the opener of a pivotal three-game series between the division's top two teams.

Porcello (20-3) allowed two runs and six hits to become Boston's first 20-game winner since Josh Beckett in 2007.

"It's definitely a huge honor," Porcello said. "It's hard to win one game in the big leagues, let alone 20. I'm definitely very proud of that."

Porcello has worked at least seven innings and held opponents to three earned runs or fewer in nine consecutive starts, the longest streak by a Red Sox pitcher since Pedro Martinez did it in 11 straight in 2000.

"Just a model of consistency," Red Sox manager John Farrell said. "He keeps rolling along and we play with a lot of confidence. His execution has been outstanding. He's pitching with average velocity but his location is tremendous."

Porcello came in 6-7 with a 5.27 ERA in 15 career games against Toronto but kept the Blue Jays in check.

The Red Sox broke it open by scoring six runs in a 10-batter seventh. Bogaerts hit a leadoff drive off Scott Feldman, his 18th. Three batters later, Ramirez connected off Feldman, his 22nd. Pedroia capped the rally with a two-run single off Ryan Tepera.

Boston (79-61) surpassed its win total from a last-place finish in 2015, when it went 78-84.

# Iverson, Shaq lead Hall class

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — When Shaquille O'Neal was 10 years old, his father made a prediction.

Friday night when his son became a Hall of Famer, it was realized.

Shaq and Allen Iverson headlined the 10-member Class of 2016 enshrined into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. One of the most star-packed classes in recent memory, it also featured international star Yao Ming, WNBA great Sheryl Swoopes, coach Tom Izzo, and owner Jerry Reinsdorf, an architect in the Michael Jordan-led Chicago Bulls championship teams of the 1990s.

Posthumous honorees were: 27-year NBA referee Darell Garretson; John McLendon, the first African-American coach in a professional league; Zelmo Beaty, the former NBA and ABA star who led Prairie View to an NAIA title in 1962; and Cumberland Posey, who is also a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Fighting tears throughout his speech, Iverson thanked former Georgetown coach John Thompson "for saving my life."

The 7-foot-6 Yao's arrival from China to the NBA in 2002 instantly helped bring the game to a broader international audience.

Yao thanked his early mentors in China, former NBA Commissioner David Stern for his vision in wanting Yao to play in the league, as well his first teammates on the Houston Rockets.

Izzo has become the face of the blue-collar Michigan State team while leading it to seven Final Fours and the NCAA championship in 2000.

Reinsdorf, the longtime Bulls owner, chronicled what led him to purchase the Bulls in 1984. It was a move he said New York Yankees coach George Steinbrenner panned, telling him he'd never make any money.

He enjoyed proving him wrong.

# Giants outlast D'backs in 12 innings

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Giants manager Bruce Bochy has confidence in Kelby Tomlinson, even though the 25-year-old infielder was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento only last week.

Tomlinson made Bochy look good late Friday night when his pinch-hit single with one out in the 12th inning drove in the go-ahead run and helped San Francisco outlast the Arizona Diamondbacks for a 7-6 victory.

Brandon Belt drew a leadoff walk from Dominic Leone (0-1) in the 12th before Joe Panik singled.

San Francisco maintained its half-game lead over the Mets for the top NL wild card, with St. Louis just a half-game behind New York.

Arizona used 26 players, including 12 pitchers — both franchise records.

**Cubs 2, Astros 0:** Kris Bryant hit a two-run homer, Jon Lester threw seven scoreless innings and Hector Rondon and Aroldis Chapman finished off Chicago's victory over host Houston.

Lester (16-4) allowed seven hits and struck out seven for his seventh straight win.

**Marlins 4, Dodgers 1:** Jose Fernandez tied a career high

with 14 strikeouts, overshadowing Clayton Kershaw's return from injury in Miami's victory over visiting Los Angeles.

**Yankees 7, Rays 5:** Mark Teixeira broke open the game with a fourth-inning grand slam, and New York beat visiting Tampa Bay on a soggy night to extend its winning streak to six.

**Indians 5, Twins 4:** Mike Napoli hit a mammoth home run on the first pitch of the fifth inning to give his team the lead, and Cleveland beat host Minnesota to maintain its six-game lead in the AL Central.

**Tigers 4, Orioles 3:** Victor Martinez hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning, and host Detroit won to pull even with Baltimore for the American League's second wild card.

**Mets 6, Braves 4:** Kelly Johnson had a pinch-hit double to drive in the go-ahead run in his team's four-run eighth inning, and visiting New York overcame a four-run deficit to beat Atlanta for its sixth straight win.

The surging Mets lead St. Louis by a half-game for the second NL wild card.

**Nationals 5, Phillies 4:** Trea Turner hit his second home run of the game with two outs in the ninth, a solo shot that lifted host

Washington past Philadelphia.

**Cardinals 4, Brewers 3:** Matt Carpenter and Stephen Piscotty hit two-run homers in the fourth, Carlos Martinez pitched seven solid innings and St. Louis beat visiting Milwaukee.

**White Sox 7, Royals 2:** Carlos Rodon struck out a season-high nine over six innings, Adam Eaton doubled twice and scored two runs and Chicago beat visiting Kansas City.

**Reds 4, Pirates 3:** Jose Peraza's sacrifice fly snapped a ninth-inning tie and lifted his team past host Pittsburgh, ending Cincinnati's five-game losing streak.

**Rangers 2, Angels 1:** Adrian Beltre broke an eighth-inning tie with his 440th home run, and Texas topped host Los Angeles for its second victory in six games.

**Mariners 3, Athletics 2:** Hisashi Iwakuma pitched into the seventh inning to match his career high with 15 wins as Seattle beat host Oakland.

**Rockies 4, Padres 1:** Tyler Chatwood had two important hits, including a two-run triple, while pitching Colorado past host San Diego.