

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Friday, September 23, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## US might add 500 more troops in Iraq

BY TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon could request an additional 500 U.S. troops be sent to Iraq to assist in the fight to defeat the Islamic State group in Mosul, a senior defense official confirmed to Stars and Stripes.

The additional troops, first reported by The Wall Street Journal, would increase the number of U.S. forces in Iraq to more than 5,000, the highest number of American troops sent there since 2011.

The forces “would be phased in as the Iraqis get closer and closer to Mosul,” said a senior

defense official at the Pentagon who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, confirmed this week that the Iraqis will be ready to begin the battle to retake Mosul from the Islamic State group in October.

The number of U.S. troops authorized now to be deployed to Iraq is 4,647. The new request would bring the total to 5,147. However, the count does not include forces on temporary assignment in the country. The Pentagon will not release a figure on how many temporary forces are in Iraq.

The U.S. mission in Iraq has steadily grown since President Barack Obama directed the first 275 troops to deploy to Baghdad to protect U.S. personnel in June 2014 after the Islamic State group made significant territorial gains across northern Iraq.

In August 2014, the White House announced U.S. warplanes had begun conducting airstrikes against the terrorist group. In November 2014, Obama announced another 1,500 U.S. troops would be sent to Iraq to help train the Iraqi army and better prepare it to repel the Islamic State group.

In the past two years, additional U.S. forces have been requested to support a growing mission of training, advising and assisting in Iraq.

Since December 2015, a re-trained and re-equipped Iraqi army, with assistance from U.S. airstrikes and U.S. special operations forces on the ground, has been able to retake much of the territory captured by the Islamic State group. At least two major battles against the terrorist organization remain — the recapture of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria. Both cities have become headquarters for the Islamic State group in those countries.

## Army: 1st ID's commander is focus of investigation

BY ALEX HORTON  
*Stars and Stripes*

SAN ANTONIO — The commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley in Kansas has been suspended

only 13 months after taking command there, the Pentagon announced Friday.

Maj. Gen. Wayne Grigsby was suspended from duties and is “currently the subject of an official investigation,” said Col.

Patrick R. Seiber, an Army spokesman.

Seiber declined to say why Grigsby was pulled from command or the nature of the investigation.

Grigsby took command of the

1st Infantry Division, known as the “Big Red One,” in August 2015. A page on the Fort Riley website listing Grigsby as the commander of the post and detailing his career was still online as of Friday afternoon.

## Dunford confirms militants fired mustard agent at US troops

BY TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — An Islamic State rocket that hit an Iraqi military base used by hundreds of U.S. troops contained mustard agent, Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Thursday.

“We assess it to be a sulfur mustard blister agent,” Dunford said at a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee. “It was a concerning development.”

The rocket exploded midday Tuesday at Qayyarah West

Air Base. A U.S. explosives ordinance team that responded to the strike tested part of the shell and detected a residue on a fragment. Two initial tests gave different results — one positive for mustard agent, the other negative.

Because of the positive result, the explosives team was decontaminated as a precaution. No one was injured, Dunford said.

The base is an airfield that U.S. and Iraqi forces are building into an operations hub for the attack against Islamic State forces in Mosul, a stronghold for

the terrorist group in Iraq. It is regularly targeted by indirect fire, a senior defense official at the Pentagon said.

U.S. forces are aware of the chemical weapons threat posed by the Islamic State group and U.S. and coalition forces have hit more than 30 chemical weapons-related targets in the last year, Dunford said.

“One we struck last week, which was a pharmaceutical plant, which is part of the chemical warfare network that [the Islamic State group] has,” Dunford told lawmakers, referring

to a strike earlier this month against a chemical weapons plant near Mosul.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he is concerned all of the troops taking part in the battle for Mosul — expected to begin in October — do not have adequate chemical-protection gear.

The defense official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said all of the forward-deployed U.S. forces are equipped with protective gear, including masks and suits.

# Army takes soft approach to gun training

Associated Press

FORT JACKSON, S.C. — As gun ownership drops among young Americans and the Army trains a generation more accustomed to blasting out emojis on cellphones than taking aim at targets, drill sergeants are confronting a new challenge: More than half of raw recruits have never held, let alone fired, a weapon.

Young people who form the bulk of the Army's rookie soldiers don't have nearly the exposure to guns as past generations. And the drill sergeants tasked with transforming these men and women into competent marksmen are going back into training to adjust their approach. Many are dropping the tendency to bark out orders and are adopting a more mentor-like, coaching attitude.

"You don't hear any drill sergeants yelling, unless it's a huge safety issue," said Staff Sgt. Randy Fisher, one of about 600 drill sergeants working daily with recruits at South Carolina's Fort Jackson, the Army's largest basic combat training post. "We don't want the soldiers to get all freaked out."

Amid deafening blasts of semi-automatic rifle fire at one of Fort Jackson's 30 ranges, Army drill sergeants paced behind four dozen soldiers aiming M4 rifles at distant targets during a recent practice session. The hard-nosed, barked commands from the first days of basic training were absent. And although real bullets were being used, not one of the young recruits nor any sergeants wore heavy body armor or helmets.

During a lull in the shooting, drill sergeants leaned over to offer guidance in measured tones to soldiers learning to fire.

A study of U.S. gun ownership by an independent research group at the University of Chicago reports gun ownership has

declined sharply in recent decades among teens and 20-somethings. This is the same demographic group from which the Army, the largest branch of the U.S. military, draws most of its recruits.

The group, called NORC, said its study — or General Social Survey — found that among 18- to 25-year-olds, gun ownership fell from a 1977 peak of 45 percent to 13 percent in 2014.

The Army is addressing the issue by blending decades-old fundamentals of marksmanship training for recruits with a "back-to-school" refresher course for some of its most battle-hardened drill sergeants.

The drill sergeants say the new course has helped them work with the younger troops.

"At this stage, we want them as relaxed as possible," said Staff Sgt. Marc Dorval, 28. "When they come out here, they have a lot to learn, so we take it one step at a time."

Dorval and Fisher were among the first of the service's 275 drill sergeants to attend an intensive weapons refresher course for drill sergeants set up at Fort Benning, Ga.

A nine-year Army veteran with deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa, Dorval said his refresher course helped him by emphasizing how drill sergeants must become coaches and mentors to teach others to shoot.

"There are a lot of steps that they must accomplish, and we take them one at a time," Dorval said, noting body position, breathing and trigger squeeze are all important to shooting accurately.

Dorval said he sympathizes with those who've never shot a gun. "When I joined at 19, I was just a city boy; I'd never fired a weapon," he said.

Staff Sgt. Harry Lichtenberger, 35, overseeing safety at the "live fire" range, said

those new to guns often become the Army's best shooters.

"We find that those who have fired weapons have quirks, bad habits. Sometimes it's hard for those who've grown up using granddaddy's rifle to admit they've been doing it all wrong," the combat cavalry scout said.

Recruits are handed unloaded M4s soon after arriving at Fort Jackson. Some 45,000 soldiers undergo basic combat training here every year, more than half of the men who enter the Army and about 60 percent of its female soldiers. They spend weeks learning to safely handle, clean and disassemble weapons, toting them most everywhere they go.

"We want them to think of it as their third arm," Fisher explained. After their "live fire" instruction is finished, the soldiers don full combat gear to learn to move with weapons on a battlefield.

And never fear, drill sergeants return to their tough talk, if need be.

Several recruits said the training approach worked.

"I was pulling on the trigger too hard," said Pvt. Chance Thomas, 19, of Whitney, Texas. He'd grown up hunting small game but had to adjust to aiming the semi-automatic rifle.

Pvt. Lorraine Casas, 18, a first-time shooter, said it took practice aiming through the rifle's scope and dealing with recoil. "I'm confident shooting. I'm good at ... steady aiming," said the Fontana, Calif., native.

Lichtenberger said good marksmanship is a requirement to graduate from combat training for all soldiers, no matter if bound for a combat or support unit. "All soldiers are soldiers first. No matter what their job, they have to be able to defend themselves and their comrades," he said.

## Advocacy groups criticize West Point over sombreros

The Washington Post

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., is under scrutiny by Latino advocacy groups after the school published a photograph showing Army cadets wearing sombreros during a game Saturday near the Mexico border.

The Army football team blew out the University of Texas El Paso, or UTEP, 66-14 to run its record to 3-0 for the first time

in 20 years, and the academy posted a photograph on Facebook that showed cadets cheering in the bleachers. One cadet has a sombrero on his head, and another has one in his hand.

The school should apologize for the image and take it down, said Lisa Navarrete, an official with the National Council of La Raza, a nonprofit group in Washington that focuses on immigration and other Latino issues. The use of sombreros to

represent Latino people is an "old-school and dated stereotype" that offends many people, Navarrete said.

"I am a huge sports fan, so I understand that trashing your opponents in silly and not-so-silly ways is part of the game," she said. "But I am also old enough to remember when banana peels were thrown at Georgetown University basketball players. Ugly bigotry is still ugly and offensive, even in

the context of entertainment."

Asked about the photograph, a spokesman for West Point, Lt. Col. Christopher Kasker, said the academy was "honored" to play UTEP and will leave the image online. He called the school a "community rich with Hispanic heritage" and noted that the game occurred during the Army's observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.



# DOD: US-backed efforts killed 12 militant leaders in Afghanistan

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The top 12 leaders of the Islamic State group in Afghanistan have been killed this summer during an American-backed Afghan special operations offensive in the country's eastern region, the top American commander for Afghanistan said.

Yet, the Afghan security forces remained in a stalemate with Taliban forces throughout much of the nation and have sustained high casualties as the fighting season nears its expected end, Army Gen. John "Mick" Nicholson said Friday at the Pentagon.

Still, he said, there are positive signs.

"I am concerned by the high casualties, but thus far, despite the high casualties the Afghan security forces were able to prevent the enemy from accomplishing their goals in 2016," said the general who took command of U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan about seven months ago. "We also see a resilience that the Afghan security forces have been able to continue to fight in spite of these losses."

Nicholson said the Afghan security forces have proved their mettle this year through a three-part operation that successfully fended off Taliban advances on city centers in Kunduz, Helmand and Uruzgan provinces before turning toward an offensive assault on the Islamic State group in Nangarhar Province.

The Afghan special forces

assault on the Islamic State group in that eastern Afghanistan province has left the group — known as Islamic State Khorasan Province — confined to three or four remote villages deep in the southern Nangarhar mountains, Nicholson said.

While the group retains some financial ties to the Islamic State group's parent organization in Syria and Iraq, it wields only limited influence in Afghanistan, the general said.

The United States killed the group's top leader, Hafiz Sayed Khan, in a July 26 airstrike at the height of the Afghan offensive against the Islamic State group. Nicholson did not provide details about the deaths of the other 11 leaders from the group.

The Islamic State group, which once boasted more than 3,000 fighters in Nangarhar, has only about 1,200 to 1,500 left, losing about 25 percent of its force to casualty or desertion since the Afghan offensive began in July. Those operations targeting the Islamic State group will continue into next year, Nicholson said.

The Afghan security forces control about 70 percent of the country, Nicholson said, confirming the evaluation Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, provided the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday. Nicholson agreed with Dunford's characterization of the fight as a stalemate, but he insisted that was not necessarily a negative outcome for the fighting season.

The Taliban, and to lesser

extents other organizations such as the Islamic State group, only control about 10 percent of the country, primarily in rural areas, Nicholson said. The remaining 20 percent remains contested.

"Another way to look at stalemate is that you've reached some sort of equilibrium," Nicholson said Friday. "... This is a positive in the sense that the majority of the population is in the control of the government forces, primarily the population centers."

He said the United States will ramp up its train and assist mission during the final months of 2016 in an effort to help the Afghan forces "regroup and reset" for the 2017 fighting season, when Afghans will work to "gradually increase control" of the contested portions of the country.

Much of that training will focus on improving low-level leadership skills, supply systems and the dependence on checkpoints, Nicholson said. He blamed the checkpoint system for many of the Afghan security forces' casualties, especially the national police.

"I think we have a good plan in place for the Afghans to address the casualty issue going forward."

There are about 9,800 American troops in Afghanistan, but that number will fall to 8,400 by January. Nicholson said he was confident that was the proper number of Americans to help the Afghans continue to improve while also targeting terrorist organizations.

## Soldiers in Alaska can't promote pot

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Alaska-based soldiers have been barred from attending any events involving promotion of the use of marijuana or hemp, including all fairs, festivals and conventions, to clarify the military's position as the state prepares to allow legal pot sales.

The policy, issued by Maj. Gen. Bryan Owens, commander of U.S. Army Alaska, was announced Thursday and took effect immediately. It is punitive, so a violation could mean punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

It's aimed in part at events "promoting the use of marijuana and disseminating information on the growing and processing" of it.

Alaskan voters approved legalized marijuana in November 2015. A legal user must be 21 or older, and use of marijuana is banned in all public spaces, such as schools, businesses, parks and roads. Those of legal age can possess, grow and give away as many as six marijuana plants, but only three of the plants can be mature and flowering at any one time.

The federal government, however, still regards pot as an illegal substance, and the Department of Defense does not allow servicemembers to use it, even in states and municipalities where it is legal.

The new USARAK policy was issued because "we just wanted to make sure folks know the left and right limits when they leave the installation," said spokesman John Pennell.

## Iranian general says US U-2 spy plane warned away

*Associated Press*

TEHRAN, Iran — An Iranian general in charge of the Islamic Republic's air defense says his forces warned off an American U-2 spy plane trying to fly over his country.

Iranian state television broadcast the comments by Gen. Farzad Esmaili on Friday, saying the incident happened "in recent days." Esmaili said the plane flew away, without elaborating on where the aircraft attempted to enter Irani-

an airspace.

The U.S. military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The U-2 spy plane, developed during the Cold War to spy on the Soviet Union, can fly above 70,000 feet. It carries high-

resolution cameras and sensors to gather radio signals and other intelligence.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Navy said Iran threatened two American maritime patrol aircraft flying over the Strait of Hormuz.

# Prosecutors charge Tulsa officer

Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — Less than a week after an unarmed black man was shot dead by a white police officer on a Tulsa street, prosecutors charged the officer with first-degree manslaughter, a decision that may prevent unrest in a city with a long history of tense race relations.

Tulsa officer Betty Shelby “reacted unreasonably” when she fatally shot Terence Crutcher, 40, on Sept. 16, prosecutors wrote in an affidavit filed with the charge on Thursday. Police also acted quickly to provide videos of the shooting to black community leaders and members of Crutcher’s family and then released them to the public.

Shelby was booked into the Tulsa County jail at 1:11 a.m. Friday and was released at 1:31 a.m. after posting \$50,000 bond, according to jail records.

The swift action in Tulsa stood in contrast to Charlotte, N.C., where police refused under mounting pressure

Thursday to publicly release video of the shooting of another black man this week and the National Guard was called in after two nights of violent protests. Demonstrations in Tulsa since Crutcher’s death have been consistently peaceful.

Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett praised the police department for quickly providing evidence to District Attorney Steve Kunzweiler’s office.

“These are important steps to ensure that justice and accountability prevails,” Bartlett said in a statement. “We will continue to be transparent to ensure that justice and accountability prevails.”

Phil Turner, a Chicago-based defense attorney and former federal prosecutor, said the motivation of prosecutors in Tulsa may have been partly to allay outrage and to avoid the kind of violence Charlotte has seen.

“But I don’t think the charge was only to give the crowd some blood. ... No. I think (prosecutors) must have thought charges were warranted,” he said.

If convicted, Shelby faces between four years and life in prison.

Crutcher’s twin sister, Tiffany Crutcher, said her family is pleased with the charge, but she and her attorneys want to ensure a vigorous prosecution that leads to a conviction.

Attorney Damario Solomon-Simmons said: “We are happy that charges were brought, but let me clear — the family wants and deserves full justice.

“Not only for this family, not only for Terence, but to be a deterrent for law officers all around this nation to know that you cannot kill unarmed citizens.”

Shelby’s attorney, Scott Wood, did not immediately respond to telephone messages seeking comment on the charges.

Dashcam and aerial footage of the shooting and its aftermath showed Crutcher walking away from Shelby with his arms in the air. The footage does not offer a clear view of when Shelby fired the single shot that killed Crutcher.

# Chicago announces mentoring program

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mayor Rahm Emanuel appealed to Chicago residents for help fighting the troubling rise in city violence, announcing youth mentoring efforts, policing strategies and gun legislation as his plan to fight and prevent crime.

He used the invitation-only speech Thursday to cap off announcements in recent days that the city will add nearly 1,000 police officers, will expand the use of body cameras and will require de-escalation training, reforms that come in the wake of an ongoing U.S. Department of Justice investigation of the police department.

The former White House chief of staff highlighted a new \$36 million public-private mentoring partnership that’ll help over 7,000 youths during the next three years, veering from prepared remarks when describing the struggles young people face in neighborhoods tormented by gangs and violence. “The deck has been stacked against the kids,” he said. “It’s time we reshuffle the deck and put our kids on the top of that deck.”

Inside the Malcolm X College gym on Chicago’s near West Side, security was tight and the reception was friendly with the audience of aldermen, community leaders and Emanuel administration members applauding at least a dozen times during the 40-minute speech. Outside, there were a few protesters calling for scrutiny of police misconduct investigations, a theme that’s rippled for months.

Emanuel, in his second term as mayor, has been trying to rebuild trust in his leadership, particularly after the 2014 death of Laquan McDonald, a black teenager shot 16 times by a white police officer. The officer was charged with murder, but only after a judge ordered the public release of the graphic squad car video last year.

# Curfew in more peaceful Charlotte ends

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A third night of protests over a fatal police shooting in Charlotte gave way to quiet streets as a curfew enacted by the city’s mayor ended early Friday.

The largely peaceful Thursday night demonstrations in the city’s business district, watched over by rifle-toting members of the National Guard, called on police to release video that could resolve wildly different accounts of the shooting of a black man earlier this week. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney said Friday that there is footage from at least one police body camera and one dashboard camera.

The family of Keith Lamont Scott, 43, was shown the footage Thursday of his fatal shooting and demanded that police release it to the public.

Demonstrators chanted “re-

lease the tape” and “we want the tape” Thursday while briefly blocking an intersection near Bank of America headquarters and later climbing the steps to the door of the city government center. Later, several dozen demonstrators walked onto an interstate highway through the city, but they were pushed back by police in riot gear.

Charlotte is the latest U.S. city to be shaken by protests and re-cremations over the death of a black man at the hands of police, a list that includes Baltimore, Milwaukee, Chicago, New York and Ferguson, Missouri. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Thursday, prosecutors charged a white officer with manslaughter for killing an unarmed black man on a city street last week.

Thursday’s protests in Charlotte lacked the violence and property damage of previous nights, and the curfew encour-

aged a stopping point. Local officers’ ranks were augmented by Guard members carrying rifles and guarding office buildings against the threat of property damage.

Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts signed documents Thursday night to be in effect from midnight until 6 a.m. each day that the state of emergency declared by the governor continues.

After the curfew took effect, police allowed the crowd of demonstrators to thin without forcing them off the street. Police Capt. Mike Campagna told reporters that officers would not seek to arrest curfew violators as long as they were peaceful.

So far, police have resisted releasing the footage of Scott’s death. Putney said Friday that releasing it could inflame the situation and damage trust in the community.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## School's mascot is found and restored

**MO** JOPLIN — Brutus the bear is under lock and key at Joplin High School.

The Joplin Globe reported that the sculpture was an official mascot of Joplin's now closed Parkwood High School before disappearing in the 1990s.

An anonymous person returned the bear.

Time hadn't been good to Brutus, who was in two pieces, missing a foot and caked in mud.

Parkwood graduate Randy Branham, who carved the bear in 1976, said he worked to repair the bear every day for about a month. For now Brutus' home is a locked display case.

## THC-laced candies seized from fair booth

**MD** FREDERICK — Frederick County sheriff's deputies said they're awaiting tests on suspected marijuana-based candies seized from a county fair booth.

Sgt. Jason Deater told The Frederick News-Post deputies raided the booth Tuesday after getting complaints the items were being sold.

He said some of the candies field-tested positive for THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. Deater said officers seized about 50 packages of lollipops, chocolate-covered pretzels and gummies for more thorough testing.

He said if those tests are positive, the vendors could be charged with drug crimes.

## Sold: 'Keeping up with the Joneses' mansion

**NY** RHINEBECK — A dilapidated mansion in upstate New York believed to

have inspired the phrase "keeping up with the Joneses" has sold at auction for \$120,000.

Long Island-based Maltz Auctions said the 24-room Wyndclyffe Castle sold Wednesday.

The mansion was built in 1853 in Rhinebeck as the country house of Manhattan socialite Elizabeth Schermerhorn Jones. The property's elegance is said to have prompted owners of nearby Hudson Valley estates to build even bigger mansions, giving birth to the idiom "keeping up with the Joneses."

Wyndclyffe fell into disrepair under various owners and was abandoned in the 1950s. It was put up for sale by its owner.

## Woman flips car when spider falls off mirror

**OR** PORTLAND — Police said a woman freaked out by a falling spider flipped her car in Portland.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office tweeted Wednesday that the spider dropped from the rearview mirror as the woman was driving on a rural road.

Though the car was totaled in the rollover crash, the driver was not hurt.

## Suspect warns on Facebook not to call

**PA** SCRANTON — Police said a drug suspect who dropped his cellphone while running from police took to Facebook to warn his friends not to call that phone number.

Lackawanna County detectives said James Lee Hankins, 25, ran away after police tried to arrest him after an undercover drug deal involving heroin and cocaine on Monday.

Police said a woman who knew Hankins let them search her apartment, and they found him in her basement on a computer that had a page open to

the popular social media site. Detectives said Hankins posted a message telling friends he'd be off Facebook for a while and told them not to call his phone.

## Sword stolen from Joan of Arc statue

**DC** WASHINGTON — Who swiped the sword from the Joan of Arc statue in northwest Washington's Meridian Hill Park?

That's what National Park Service officials are looking to find out after they noticed the statue of France's national heroine had been vandalized.

They said the bronze sword was missing and appeared to have been broken off.

This isn't the first time the statue's sword has vanished. Media outlets reported that it was stolen in the 1970s and wasn't replaced until 2011.

U.S. Park Police are investigating the theft.

## Travel guru to stump for pot ballot question

**MA** BOSTON — Travel guru Rick Steves is set to tour Massachusetts in support of a pro-marijuana ballot question.

Steves is host of the PBS series "Rick Steves' Europe" and a long-time advocate of easing marijuana laws.

Steves plans to make three stops across the state next month to stump for the question, which would legalize the recreational use of marijuana.

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker, Democratic Attorney General Maura Healey and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, a Democrat, oppose the question. They said legalizing pot could be a gateway to harder drugs, including opioids, which have caused a crisis in Massachusetts.

## Wireless signals can detect your feelings

**MA** CAMBRIDGE — What if your computer or smartphone could tell if you're happy or sad?

A new device developed by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology can detect a person's emotions using wireless signals reflecting off a person's body to measure human behavior.

Researchers from MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory said their EQ-Radio device is 87 percent accurate in telling if someone is excited, happy, angry or sad.

They said it could one day be used by film studios and advertising agencies to gauge audience reaction, in homes to adjust temperature based on mood, or in health care.

## Court: Felon hunter didn't break gun laws

**FL** TALLAHASSEE — A Florida Supreme Court ruling is good news for felons who like to hunt.

The court ruled Thursday an appeals court was correct in overturning Christopher Douglas Weeks' conviction for being a felon in possession of a firearm because his rifle was a replica antique weapon.

Weeks and his wife researched the law banning felons from possessing guns and found an exception for antique guns and their replicas. Weeks had a replica of a 1918 .50 caliber, black powder muzzleloader rifle when he was arrested in 2012 by a Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officer.

The high court noted an appeals court judge's comment that Weeks would have been in a "world of hurt" if he had to reload the weapon if a bear charged him.

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# Pats remain unbeaten with win over Texans

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — The more assets the Patriots lose this season, the better they seem to play.

New England entered Week 3 of Tom Brady's four-game "Deflategate" suspension down to just one healthy full-time quarterback following backup Jimmy Garoppolo's shoulder injury last week against Miami.

But not even one of the NFL's top-ranked defenses could slow down a Patriots team that has barely missed a beat in getting off to a 3-0 start.

The latest exhibition was a 27-0 dismantling of the suddenly pedestrian Houston Texans (2-1).

"We really asked a lot out of the team this week — they responded," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "Just really proud of the way our guys competed."

Belichick rolled the dice by not adding another quarterback to the roster during the short week, and the trust he had in rookie Jacoby Brissett proved to be spot on.

Brissett began the season as the third-string quarterback behind Brady and Garoppolo. He trotted out on the field Thursday as the first rookie start for the Patriots since Drew Bledsoe in 1993.

He didn't have a stats-rich game, but was composed and made plays when it counted. He finished the night 11-for-19 for 103 yards, and ran eight times for 48 yards and a touchdown.

"You just always want to be ready and

we have a great team, so players just welcome you no matter who is in the huddle," Brissett said. "At any moment in the game no one wavered, no one flinched, and the results proved themselves with what our team did tonight."

Under Belichick, quarterbacks are 6-0 in their first career start.

The Patriots have 10 days to recuperate, with only a game against Buffalo (0-2) on Oct. 2 before Brady could inexplicably return to a 4-0 team.

Meanwhile a Texans team that looked so promising after wins over Chicago and Kansas City, was lethargic in all three phases.

But Houston coach Bill O'Brien said it's much too early to panic.

"Losing is horrible. I mean it's absolutely horrible," he said. "There is nothing really in my mind that comes out good, but what I will say is that there is a resilient team in that locker room. These guys work hard. ... There is a lot of season left. We haven't even played a division game."

**Gronk's day:** Rob Gronkowski finally made his 2016 debut after sitting out the first two weeks of the season nursing a sore hamstring. He wasn't his normal self by any means. He played 14 snaps and was targeted just one time. It was the first time he appeared in a regular-season game and went without a catch.

"I got to get my feet wet," he said. "It felt great just to get out there. I blocked the whole time, but it feels great just playing football again."

**Watt's up?** J.J. Watt was a non-factor one

week after he had 1½ sacks and seemed to be on his way back to the form that won him the NFL Defensive Player of the Year award last season. Watt assisted on just two tackles in the game, and the Texans were only able to sack Brissett once in the game, for a loss of 6 yards.

"They never really put him in a situation where he had to be throwing the ball too much," Watt said. "They did a great job at the run game, and did a great job all around and he played well being in a tough situation."

Watt is 0-5 (including one playoff game) against the Patriots, recording only a half sack in those contests.

**Very special teams:** Belichick has always been a stickler about special teams. It paid off big time on Thursday. New England forced and recovered two fumbles on Texans kickoffs that led to 14 points. Brandon Bolden forced the first one in the first quarter, which was scooped up by Duron Harmon on Houston's 22 to set up Brissett's touchdown run. Later in the third quarter Nate Ebner forced another fumble that was recovered by Jordan Richards on the Texans' 21. It set up a 1-yard score by LeGarrette Blount.

**Ground game:** Blount has scored touchdowns in all three games this season. He ran 24 times for 105 yards and two touchdowns, including the 41-yarder in the fourth quarter to give New England a 27-0 lead Thursday. It's the third time in his career he has had back-to-back 100-yard games, and the first time since 2011. Blount also had a 1-yard TD run in the third quarter.

## Backup QB Brissett does what it takes in 1st career start

BY JIMMY GOLEN

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Maybe the Texans thought Jacoby Brissett would run out of bounds at the 5 in the first quarter of his first NFL start.

After all, with Tom Brady suspended and Jimmy Garoppolo injured, the Patriots didn't have any other quarterbacks on the roster to call upon if the 23-year-old rookie got hurt.

But when Brissett broke free around the right side from the Houston 27, he appeared to be cornered by safety Andre Hal inside the 10. Heading for the sideline, Brissett stutter-stepped and let the defender cut in front of him, then slipped through his grasp before diving

for the end zone.

"I'm just running until I get stopped," Brissett said after leading the Patriots to a 27-0 victory over the Houston Texans on Thursday night. "It went just how we planned it was going to work out. I just had to make one guy miss."

As the third-string, third-round draft pick celebrated with his teammates, the stadium public address blasted out The Doors singing, "Hello, I love you, won't you tell me your name."

"I got a headache from all the head bopping," Brissett said.

The Patriots were lucky that's all that happened to the only quarterback active for the game. (Receiver Julian Edel-

man, who played QB at Kent State, was believed to be the emergency option if something happened to Brissett).

Asked if he was instructed to be extra careful — to slide or go out of bounds to avoid a big hit — Brissett said, "It's 'Take care of yourself.' So ..."

Coach Bill Belichick said there were no special instructions for the rookie to be cautious. "Like on the touchdown run?" he said dismissively.

Belichick said Brissett made an instantaneous decision, just as all players do on every play.

"That's why we win games, because players make good decisions," said Belichick, who tied Curly Lambeau for fourth on the NFL's all-time regular-

season win list with his 226th career victory. "That's what we ask them to do."

Brissett went on to complete 11 of 19 passes for 103 yards, and ran for 48 yards on eight carries as the Patriots took advantage of three Houston turnovers. The 27-yard touchdown run was the longest for a Patriots quarterback since 1976.

"He's a running quarterback. We expected it," Hal said. "I was trying to hold him out of there, and he cut back on me. He's a big guy, and he runs well."

New England improved to 3-0 without Brady, who has one game remaining on his "Deflategate" suspension.



# No. 5 Clemson runs over Georgia Tech

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The halftime stats were almost comical. Clemson looked as though it was going against the scout team, not a fellow Atlantic Coast Conference school.

Finally, the sort of performance everyone has been expecting from the No. 5 Tigers.

Deshaun Watson threw for 304 yards, including a pair of touchdowns during a dominant first half that carried Clemson to a 26-7 victory over Georgia Tech on Thursday night.

After sluggish wins over Auburn and Troy, and a practice-like rout of FCS school South Carolina State that meant nothing, the Tigers (4-0, 1-0 ACC) won at Georgia Tech for the first time since 2003 to set up a huge showdown with No. 3 Louisville.

“We came in focused that

first half,” Watson said. “We just wanted to finish the deal.”

Watson threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to Mike Williams and a 9-yarder to Jordan Leggett with just 4 seconds left before halftime to complete a stunningly lopsided showing that wasn't entirely reflected in the 23-0 lead. Wayne Gallman added a 1-yard TD run.

At halftime, Clemson was up 347-22 lead in total yards and 19-3 in first downs, having run 56 plays to only 21 for the home team. Georgia Tech (3-1, 1-1) was outgained 442-124 overall.

“It's been a long time since we've won here,” Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said. “We'll take it.”

This was a virtual repeat of last year's meeting at Clemson, where the Tigers raced to a 33-10 halftime lead on the way to a 43-24 victory.

“They've done it to us two

years in a row up front,” Georgia Tech coach Paul Johnson said. “They kicked our butts.”

Clemson backed off over the final two quarters, and the Yellow Jackets avoided their first home shutout since 1957 when Dedrick Mills scored on a 2-yard run with 13:21 remaining.

Even when Georgia Tech came up with a big play, it wound up costing points. Lance Austin intercepted a pass in the end zone and tried to bring it out — only to be whacked inadvertently by teammate Corey Griffin, knocking the ball loose.

Austin fell on it in the end zone, but that was a safety for Clemson. It was a far cry from a prime-time game last season, when the defensive back returned a blocked field goal 78 yards for a touchdown on the final play to give Georgia Tech a stunning victory over Florida State.

## The takeaway

**Clemson:** Don't read too much into the sluggish showing in the second half. It was only natural that the Tigers let down a bit after dominating the first two quarters. For sure, this was just the sort of confidence-boosting performance that Clemson needed heading into their game against Louisville.

**Georgia Tech:** After opening with three straight wins over mediocre opposition, the Yellow Jackets don't seem to have made much improvement over last year's 3-9 debacle. Johnson's triple-option offense was totally manhandled and increasingly looks like a gimmick that other teams have figured out. Poor recruiting seems to have caught up with the Yellow Jackets when they face elite competition.

# Michigan State, Wisconsin set for Big Ten showdown

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan State-Wisconsin rivalry was just getting good when the matchup disappeared from the Big Ten schedule for a bit.

In 2011, the Spartans beat the Badgers on a Hail Mary on the final play, but Wisconsin won a thrilling rematch in the Big Ten championship game. Michigan State beat the Badgers in overtime in 2012, but the teams haven't faced each other since.

The eighth-ranked Spartans finally renew their series with 11th-ranked Wisconsin on Saturday — their first meeting in East Lansing since that Hail Mary. Both teams already have notable wins this season — Michigan State over Notre Dame and Wisconsin over LSU.

“Wisconsin is a lot like us in a lot of ways — big game against LSU. We've had very exciting games with them,” Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio said. “Both programs have been

very successful I think in the last number of years.”

Forget Michigan, Nebraska and even Ohio State. Over the past six seasons, it's been Michigan State and Wisconsin that have won most of the Big Ten titles in football. The Spartans and Badgers each have three conference championships since 2010, the year they both tied for the title.

Ohio State's Big Ten title in 2014 was the only time in that six-year span that neither Michigan State nor Wisconsin won at least a share of the championship.

No matter who wins Saturday, this year's Big Ten race is just getting started. The Badgers are beginning a brutal five-game stretch that includes games against Michigan State, Michigan, Ohio State, Iowa and Nebraska.

“We did a great job of putting ourselves in this position, handling our business,” Wisconsin tight end Troy Fumagalli said. “This is why you play here, you want to play in these games

against great opponents from here on out, really. Just embrace it, enjoy it.”

Here are a few things to watch on Saturday:

**QB decision:** Alex Hornibrook will start for Wisconsin at quarterback after Bart Houston started the first three games. Hornibrook, a redshirt freshman, helped jump-start the offense in the second half last week in a 23-17 win over Georgia State. He relieved Houston midway through the third quarter and led three scoring drives.

**Shaky secondaries:** Wisconsin's front seven leads one of the nation's top defenses, with LBs T.J. Watt and Vince Biegel powering the pass rush off the edge. But keep an eye on the secondary, which is adjusting to the loss of CB Natrell Jamerison to a leg injury.

Michigan State has issues of its own in the secondary after Notre Dame had success throwing deep in last weekend's game.

**On the ground:** Wisconsin

RBs Corey Clement (left ankle) and Taiwan Deal (right ankle) are listed as questionable for Saturday's game. Clement missed last week's win after getting hurt in Week 2 against Akron.

The Spartans totaled 260 yards rushing last weekend behind LJ Scott and Gerald Holmes.

**Depth:** Michigan State LB Jon Reschke had a forced fumble and an interception against Notre Dame. His emergence has made it easier for the Spartans to bring LB Ed Davis back slowly. Davis missed all of last season with a knee injury, and it wasn't until earlier this month that the NCAA granted him an extra year of eligibility for 2016.

**Honoring Sadler:** Mike Sadler, the former Michigan State punter who died in a car crash in late July, is part of an eight-member class entering the school's athletics Hall of Fame this year. The incoming class will be recognized during Saturday's game.

# Red Sox complete 4-game sweep of O's

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — As the Boston Red Sox steamroll their way toward the AL East crown, the Baltimore Orioles have turned their full attention toward the wild card race.

David Price won his eighth straight decision, Hanley Ramirez homered and the Red Sox completed a four-game sweep of the sinking Orioles with a 5-3 victory Thursday night.

Boston has won eight straight to open a 5½-game lead over idle Toronto in the AL East. With 13 victories in their last 16 games, the Red Sox have a magic number of five to clinch the division crown.

"That's the Red Sox," Ramirez said. "They know that you can chase something, want something, and we'll go right after it. The good thing about this team is just every-

body's together, and we've got everything."

Baltimore fell seven games out and dropped below Detroit for the second AL wild card. It was the first time since 2002 that the Orioles were swept at home by Boston in a four-game series.

"I think you've got to be realistic about where we are at this point after losing four," closer Zach Britton said. "It's kind of time to light a fire under our butt because those other teams playing for the wild card are right there."

Britton pitched the ninth for the Orioles, but never had a save opportunity during the four-game series.

"We should be playing better ball than what we showed," he said. "But give them credit, too. When they've got everything rolling they're a tough team to beat — just like we are. But

right now everything's not really clicking for us."

Price (17-8) gave up three runs and six hits in seven innings, walking two and striking out five. The Red Sox have won each of his last nine starts since Aug. 7.

"That was a big win," the left-hander said. "We've played good baseball, and this is the time of the year when you want your team to get on a roll the way we have, and that's what we've done."

Koji Uehara worked the eighth, and Craig Kimbrel got three straight outs for his 29th save in 31 chances.

Baltimore trailed 3-0 before Trey Mancini, starting his second major league game, hit a tying three-run homer in the third inning. It was his second home run in six at-bats.

"At the moment, it's just an unbelievable experience," the

rookie said. "But on the flip side, after a loss like that, you don't really think about the home run so much. It really doesn't matter."

Boston used a walk, a wild pitch and Andrew Benintendi's two-out RBI single off Vance Worley (2-2) to move back in front in the fifth.

Ramirez hit his 29th homer in the seventh to make it 5-3 and send the Red Sox to their eighth straight win over an AL East foe, their longest such run since 1990.

Orioles starter Chris Tillman gave up three runs, five hits and walked three in 1⅔ innings, his shortest outing since June 2015.

Boston got a first-inning RBI single from Ramirez and added two runs in the second, the last on a bases-loaded walk to David Ortiz that ended Tillman's outing.

# Mets win in 11th inning on walk-off, three-run HR

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Reyes hit a tying two-run homer in the ninth inning and Asdrubal Cabrera hit a three-run drive in an 11th-inning comeback to lift the New York Mets to a dramatic 9-8 win over the Philadelphia Phillies on Thursday night that kept them tied for the NL wild-card lead.

New York trailed 6-4 when pinch-hitter Brandon Nimmo singled off Jeanmar Gomez leading off the ninth and Reyes homered to right with one out.

Philadelphia went ahead 8-6 in the 11th when A.J. Ellis hit an RBI single off Jeury's Familia and Jim Henderson (2-2) walked Maikel Franco with the bases loaded.

Pinch-hitter Michael Conforto walked against Edubray Ramos (1-3) with one out in the bottom half, Reyes singled and Cabrera, who has been playing on an injured knee, homered to right, setting off a wild celebration. The Mets had been 0-63 this year when trailing after

eight innings.

New York, which stopped a three-game skid, is tied with San Francisco for the NL wild-card lead.

**Indians 5, Royals 2:** Carlos Santana's three-run homer pushed host Cleveland over Kansas City and closer to its first AL Central championship since 2007.

Santana's shot in the sixth inning off Dillon Gee (7-9) snapped a 2-2 tie as the Indians lowered their magic number to three and improved to 9-1 against the Royals this season.

Kansas City's chances of making the postseason took another blow. The defending World Series champions began the night behind six teams in the wild-card chase.

**Tigers 9-4, Twins 2-2:** Justin Verlander tied a season-high with 11 strikeouts and visiting Detroit moved into the second AL wild-card spot by beating Minnesota to sweep a day-night doubleheader.

Erick Aybar drove in two runs for Detroit, which moved

a half-game ahead of Baltimore for the second wild card and trails Toronto by one game. The Tigers went 9-0 at Minnesota this year.

**Dodgers 7, Rockies 4:** Yasmani Grandal homered twice, including a grand slam in the seventh inning, to rally host Los Angeles past Colorado.

The victory reduced the Dodgers' magic number for clinching their record fourth consecutive NL West title to four.

**Giants 2, Padres 1:** Angel Pagan's single broke a scoreless tie in the eighth and Jeff Samardzija struck out nine in seven innings for visiting San Francisco, which beat San Diego to keep pace with the Mets for the NL wild-card lead.

The Mets and Giants took a half-game lead over the idle St. Louis Cardinals in the wild-card race.

**Angels 2, Astros 0:** Albert Pujols hit a two-run homer in the first inning and Ricky Nolasco pitched seven solid

innings, helping Los Angeles hinder host Houston's wild-card hopes.

The Angels ended an 11-game skid and pushed Houston 1½ games behind the Tigers for the second AL wild card.

**Rays 2, Yankees 0:** Blake Snell and Tampa Bay's bullpen combined to strand 11 runners in a win that prevented a much-needed three-game sweep by visiting New York.

The Yankees are three games behind Detroit for the second AL wild-card spot and also trail Baltimore, Houston and Seattle.

**Pirates 3, Brewers 1:** Chris Carter hit his 37th home run, matching his career high and Scooter Gennett sliced an opposite-field, two-run homer to help Milwaukee avoid another sweep at Miller Park.

**Braves 6, Marlins 3:** Matt Kemp hit two home runs to power Atlanta over host Miami.

Atlanta's Josh Collmenter (3-0) pitched seven innings and allowed two runs.