

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## N. Korea official: Trump declared war

Staff and wire reports

UNITED NATIONS — North Korea's foreign minister said Monday that President Donald Trump's tweet that leader Kim Jong Un "won't be around much longer" was a declaration of war that gives Pyongyang the right to shoot down U.S. planes, even if they are not in the country's airspace.

"The whole world should clearly remember it was the U.S. who first declared war on our country," Ri Yong Ho said, speaking to reporters at a hotel across the street from the United Nations. "Since the United States declared war on our country, we will have every right to make countermeasures, including the right to shoot down United States strategic bombers even when they are not inside the airspace border of our country."

Ri's remarks were the most direct and threatening so far since Trump gave a combative address to the General Assembly last week in which he threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea.

Praising the "great strength and patience" of the U.S., Trump said "if it is forced to defend ourselves or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy

North Korea."

Tensions have escalated almost every day since then. North Korea's leader made a rare TV appearance in which he called Trump "mentally deranged." Trump responded with mockery, calling Kim "little rocket man."

Ri, who said North Korea was prepared to test a hydrogen bomb over the Pacific Ocean, told the United Nations on Friday that Trump's disrespect toward Kim made it "inevitable" that rockets would "visit" the U.S. mainland.

Behind the bellicose rhetoric are rising fears that the U.S. and North Korea are moving closer to military action as punishing sanctions and diplomatic pressure have failed to stop the North's progress toward developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could reach the U.S. mainland.

"In conjunction with our iron-clad alliance with [South] Korea and Japan, we plan on ensuring that all options are on the table to make sure we safeguard our allies, partners and our homeland," Army Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman, said Monday. "If North Korea does not stop their provocative actions, we'll make sure we provide options to the president to deal with North Korea."

With tension rising, American bombers and fighter jets flew near the North Korean coast Saturday to remind the North Koreans of the U.S.'s overwhelming military advantage.

Guam-based B-1B Lancers and Okinawa-based F-15C Eagles flew in international airspace over waters east of the divided peninsula, making the northernmost flight in the area for any such aircraft this century, the Defense Department said.

"We have the right to fly, sail and operate where legally permissible around the globe," Manning said.

Pentagon spokeswoman Dana White said the flyover underscores "the seriousness with which we take (North Korea's) reckless behavior."

"This is a demonstration of U.S. resolve and a clear message that the president has many military options to defeat any threat," she added.

In April 1969, North Korea gets shot down an unarmed U.S. EC-121 surveillance plane on an intelligence-gathering flight over the Sea of Japan, killing 31 Americans. The Pentagon said at the time that the plane was 50 miles off the North Korean coast, but the North Koreans claimed it was "deep into" its airspace.

## Marines have their first female infantry officer

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The first female Marine to complete the Corps' famously grueling Infantry Officer Course graduated Monday and soon will take responsibility for a platoon as the service's first-ever female infantry officer, the Marines announced.

The lieutenant completed the third phase of the 13-week training program last week at the Marines' desert training center at Twentynine Palms, Calif., and graduated Monday alongside 87 men at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., the Marines said. The Marines did not release her name, other identifying information or make her available to the media, saying she had requested privacy.

The Marines' top general said he was

proud of the female Marine and the others who graduated from the course Monday.

"Marines expect and rightfully deserve competent and capable leaders, and these IOC graduates met every training requirement as they prepare for the next challenge of leading infantry Marines, ultimately, in combat," Gen. Robert Neller, the commandant of the Marine Corps, said in a prepared statement.

The female infantry officer soon will report to Camp Pendleton, Calif., where she will be assigned to 1st Marine Division, the Corps said in a statement.

Her historic graduation comes nearly two years after then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter opened all military jobs and units to qualified women, ending the military's long-held tradition of male-only front-line combat units.

Thirty-five women had attempted the course previously, but each ultimately failed. The vast majority of those women could not complete the very first exercise of training — the strenuous Combat Endurance Test, which challenges Marines physically and mentally as they cover miles of terrain and obstacles carrying 80 pounds of gear for more than 14 hours.

Most of them, which included 32 Marine officers, attempted the course between 2012 and 2015 on an experimental basis as the Marines studied the possibility of opening infantry and other combat jobs to women. Their failure formed a portion of the Marines' argument for asking Carter not to open those jobs to women, a request the former defense secretary eventually ignored.

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# Defense bill awaits Congress funding fight

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A push for the largest defense spending plan in several years has overcome a series of congressional hurdles this year, including approval on the Senate floor last week.

But with plenty of competing interests at play, and an uphill battle to exceed spending caps, the National Defense Authorization Act must survive some obstacles before it can be enacted.

“It’s a big increase at a time when it’s not like someone discovered a gigantic pot of untapped money under a bridge somewhere,” said Christopher Preble, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, a Libertarian think tank in Washington. “It doesn’t exist.”

In recent months, the House and the Senate have passed defense plans totaling at or nearly \$700 billion. They are the largest proposals in at least five years and include base budgets well above a spending cap of \$549 billion.

Under the Budget Control Act of 2011, if those limits are surpassed, it would trigger so-called sequestration, or across-the-board budget cuts. And some insiders worry a government shutdown wouldn’t be far behind.

“Automatic cuts could really be devastating,” said Mandy Smithberger, a defense expert for the Project on Government Oversight, a Washington watchdog group.

Now, the two chambers must not only reconcile their different versions of the bill, but also must address how to fund a significant increase in spending. That will require special congressional action to thwart sequestration impacts.

“Even though you have an administration that is more on record on wanting a much larger military, and Republicans in the House and Senate, that doesn’t change the fiscal and political realities,” Preble said. “In order to increase military spending

without increasing the deficit, then you have to find the cuts elsewhere, or raise taxes, which is a nonstarter.”

## Congress’ role in military deterioration

Earlier this year, President Donald Trump signaled interest in boosting defense spending with a proposal that landed at \$668 billion, which is about a 5 percent increase above the previous year’s budget. But in light of a military readiness crisis and ongoing safety concerns, defense hawks said that plan just didn’t go far enough.

In July, the House approved its \$696 billion defense budget, while the Senate’s version was passed last week after hours of debate.

Both plans aim to install pay raises for servicemembers and to fund new ships and aircraft.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, shepherded his chamber’s defense bill. He has said Congress has ignored the military’s growing funding needs to its detriment.

“There is plenty of blame to go around for the deteriorated state of our military, and we cannot ignore Congress’ responsibility,” McCain said Wednesday during a committee hearing addressing a recent string of deadly Navy ship crashes. “Years of budget cuts, continuing resolutions, and sequestration have forced our military to maintain a high operational tempo with limited resources. We know that has come at the cost of training, maintenance, readiness, effectiveness and the lives of too many brave, young Americans.”

## Reconciling House, Senate bills

Experts say the House and Senate versions of the defense bill are broadly similar, setting up fewer fights when it comes to ironing out their policy differences.

The bills also come in at \$696 billion for the House and

\$700 billion for the Senate, so the proposals are also close on their spending totals.

“I don’t see a really big fight” there, said Mark Cancian, senior adviser for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. “There is going to be a much bigger fight between the authorizers and the (funding) appropriators.”

The legislation moves on two tracks. The annual NDAA directs policy changes, sets a top-line expenditure amount for the military and details how that money will be spent. Then an appropriations bill, which is often included in an omnibus government-funding plan, is actually what moves designated money over to defense-spending priorities.

Among the policy differences, the House approved a new plan for the Space Corps, a new military service that would be an arm of the Air Force.

But the idea drew opposition along the way from several key figures in the military, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. The Senate, in its opposition, went as far as including language in their bill prohibiting a Space Corps.

However, it could provide a bargaining chip to the House in its discussions. And it could serve as a launching pad to creating the new service in the future, said MacKenzie Eaglen, a defense analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington.

“I believe the Senate will prevail and there will be no Space Corps, but only this year,” Eaglen said. With the House already in favor of the idea, “supporters will come back stronger and more organized next year.”

Eaglen said it’s also possible that conference committee members will address current war authorizations.

A divided Senate rejected a proposal by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force approved by Congress in 2001 and 2002 for the wars in Af-

ghanistan and Iraq.

However, the House adopted a watered-down version of that effort by Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., that would require the Trump administration to develop a new strategy to defeat terrorist groups, Eaglen said.

That’s “likely acceptable to the Senate,” she said.

## Funding increase on the clock

When a temporary funding measure was approved earlier this month, it gave Congress at least three more months to approve a new overall spending plan for fiscal 2018, which starts Oct. 1.

But that also means a new military budget is on the clock: Congress has until December to come up with a deal to fund its \$700 billion defense proposal or it might have to delay its spending plans again.

Congress has been here before. Former President Barack Obama signed the 2017 defense policy plan on Dec. 23, 2016. But faced with another round of delays, a \$1.1 trillion omnibus government spending bill that included the defense budget wasn’t approved until May. Until then, military operations were kept afloat by a short-term funding bill — as is the case now.

Some experts said a repeat of delays could be seen this year.

Several experts have said that for the defense funding plan to move forward, Democrats will need to be on board to approve the proposal with a required 60 votes on the Senate floor.

And some said that in turn, they will be looking for comparable increases in nondefense spending to surpass existing budget caps.

Still, Cancian argued, the chances are good that a budget deal will be reached.

“That’s been a pattern for quite a while,” he said. “I have fair confidence that they will pass some sort of budget deal in December. That’s the history of these things.”

# US-backed forces say Russia attacked them

Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed forces in eastern Syria say Russia bombed their positions on Monday in a major natural gas field they recently captured from Islamic State militants.

The Syrian Democratic Forces said a Russian airstrike killed one of its fighters and wounded two others in the Conoco gas field in Deir el-Zour province. Russia's Defense Ministry denied the report.

SDF fighters captured Conoco field, Syria's largest, from ISIS militants on Saturday.

The SDF issued a statement later Monday saying that its forces retaliated by shelling the source of fire and positions of "hostile forces."

It was not the first time the SDF has accused Russia of targeting its forces in oil-

and gas-rich Deir el-Zour, where Russian backed Syrian troops are waging a separate offensive against the extremists. The two sides are racing to defeat the militants and snap up oil and gas fields, fueling fears of conflict between the two groups and their superpower sponsors.

Both the U.S. and Russia have embedded special operations forces with their respective partners and are supporting their advances with aggressive air strikes.

The Pentagon accused Russian jets of attacking the SDF last week. Russia in turn said its forces were targeted twice from SDF-held territory.

SDF fighters have been making their way down the east bank of the Euphrates River in Deir el-Zour, while Syrian troops are mainly operating on the western bank. Last week, Syrian troops and allied Shiite militias crossed into parts of the east bank,

where they ran into fierce resistance from ISIS militants.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says 72 pro-government fighters have been killed in battle with the jihadis since crossing the Euphrates last week. At least seven Russian soldiers have been killed, and Russia's Defense Ministry acknowledged that one of its generals was killed in the area Sunday.

Russian and government warplanes stepped up strikes against rebels as well as al-Qaida-linked insurgents in different areas.

Activists and monitoring groups reported airstrikes in Aleppo, Idlib and Hama provinces, as well as clashes between rebels and pro-government forces in northern Syria and on the outskirts of the capital, Damascus.

## Iraqi Kurds vote in referendum amid pressure

By CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

IRBIL, Iraq — A hazy, overcast Monday could be a historic one for many of Iraqi Kurds' long-held dream of statehood, as citizens voted in a referendum on independence from Iraq.

One of many pro-referendum posters hanging from lamp posts in a suburb of the Kurdish capital of Irbil depicted Kurds lined up to drop their ballots into a box, which formed a step in a staircase leading to the sun.

A 21-ray sun is emblazoned on the red-white-and-green Kurdish flag, which has been draped or hung from countless buildings and posts in the city, including at the airport where many U.S. troops are based.

But regional and international powers, including the United States, fear the vote could roil Iraq with ethnic violence and hamper the campaign to defeat Islamic State.

Despite pressure from neighbors in Turkey and Iraq, as well as some allies in the West, Kurdistan opened the polls Monday. Barricades outside several polling places blocked off otherwise busy streets in Irbil. Preliminary results were expected Tuesday.

At the request of the Iraqi parliament, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered troops into contested areas to "protect citizens," local media reported later in the day.

A "yes" vote is widely considered inevitable — an informal referendum in 2005 passed with some 98 percent of the vote — and the region's leaders hope it will give them a strong mandate to negotiate a Kurdish exit from Iraq.

Voters lined up near polling entrances in the heat, emerging with inked forefingers after casting their ballots.

"Yes," said Mardin Kakai, 23, an aid worker, when asked whether he voted for independence. "Yes, of course."

On his shirt was an image of the Kurdish flag in the shape of greater Kurdistan — not just Iraq's autonomous three-province region, but an area traced through parts of neighboring Syria, Turkey and Iran. Those countries fear the referendum could inspire their own sizable Kurdish populations to follow suit.

Standing beside Kakai, his father wore a traditional outfit, and his wife wore a dress with a Kurdish flag draped over her shoulders. Their young daughter's shirt was airbrushed with the flag's colors.

Like many in Kurdistan, the family had outfitted their SUV with flags and decorations indicating their allegiances.

The lead-up to the vote in Irbil resembled a sports championship celebration, with stadium rallies and impromptu parades of flag-waving cars honking horns, revving engines and squealing tires.

Outside Kurdistan, the stakes of the vote, which will not automatically start any formal separation procedures, seem more dire.

It's taken attention from the ISIS campaign, said Army Col. Ryan Dillon, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition that is supporting Iraqi, Kurdish and Syrian forces with training, equipment, intelligence and more.

However, Kurdish forces have agreed to work with the Iraqis, and two simultaneous offensives are continuing — one near Kirkuk in north-central Iraq and another in western Anbar province near the Syrian border, Dillon said. "They're being incredibly successful," he said.

Still, Iraqi troops hinted at tension with the Kurds, especially over Kirkuk, which is home to Arabs and Turkmen in addition to Kurds, but which has been defended by peshmerga

since 2014 and is taking part in the referendum.

In Shirqat, where Iraq's elite Counter Terrorism Service troops readied an operation against ISIS on Friday, the unit's top commander asked a Kurdistan-based reporter how she planned to vote.

"If you vote 'yes,' you have to leave," Lt. Gen. Talib Shaghathi said. Others in the elite U.S.-trained unit had said they'd be willing to fight the Kurds if given the order.

Speaking anonymously, an Iraqi soldier in Makhmour, where U.S. troops are based at Camp Swift inside a larger Iraqi base, said the Iraqis would never let the Kurds keep oil-rich Kirkuk.

Iran and Turkey, which both threatened sanctions against the region, have conducted military drills near Kurdish borders.

Standing beside his son's decked-out SUV, his finger purple after voting for independence, Sami Abbas Kakai, 57, acknowledged the sense of looming repercussions for the Kurds.

"I hope there are no problems," he said. "I hope our neighbors don't make problems for us and we don't make problems for them."

## FBI: Violent crime rose again in '16

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — Violent crime increased in the United States for a second consecutive year in 2016, remaining near historically low levels but pushed upward in part by an uptick in killings in some major cities, according to FBI statistics made public Monday.

The FBI's release of the figures comes as the Trump administration has warned ominously of a dangerous crime wave. In his inaugural address, President Donald Trump described "American carnage" in U.S. cities, while Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said he worried the crime uptick was "the beginning of a trend."

Some analysts have noted crime levels were much higher a quarter-century ago. In some major cities, violence has surged, while in others it has declined. Chicago saw a spike in murders last year; killings have continued to drop in New York. The FBI statistics for 2016 show that the estimated number of violent crimes nationwide increased 4.1 percent over the previous year. The violent crime rate was 386.3 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants, up from 373.7 a year earlier, and the highest figure since 2012. The murder rate increased to 5.3 per 100,000 people, the highest that figure has been since 2008.

Going back to the mid-1980s, the violent crime and murder rates were both consistently higher, particularly in the early 1990s. In 1991, the violent crime rate was 758.2 per 100,000 people and the murder rate was 9.8 per 100,000 people, after which both numbers began to fall.

The FBI considers four crimes — murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery and aggravated assault — to be violent crimes involving force or the threat of force.

The statistics released Monday show that the violent crime rate in 2016 was down 18 percent from 2007, while the murder rate was down 6 percent over the same period.

# President replaces travel ban with strict new restrictions

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation imposing strict new restrictions on travelers from a handful of countries, including five that were covered by his expiring travel ban. Administration officials say the new measures are required to keep the nation safe.

The indefinite restrictions apply to citizens of Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and North Korea. As part of the presidential proclamation signed Sunday, the U.S. will also bar the entry of certain Venezuelan government officials and their immediate families.

The changes will take effect Oct. 18.

The announcement came the same day that Trump's temporary ban on visitors from six Muslim-majority countries was set to expire, 90 days after it went into effect. That ban had

barred citizens of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen who lacked a "credible claim of a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States" from entering the U.S. Only one of those countries, Sudan, will no longer be subject to travel restrictions.

"Making America Safe is my number one priority. We will not admit those into our country we cannot safely vet," Trump tweeted late Sunday after the new policy was announced.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court canceled arguments set for Oct. 10 in the dispute over the travel ban after Trump rolled out the new policy.

The unsigned order from the justices Monday asks both sides to weigh in by Oct. 5 about what to do with the case.

The court had been ready to hear argument about the legality of a 90-day ban on travelers from six mostly Muslim countries and a 120-day ban on ref-

ugees from around the world.

Unlike the first iteration of Trump's travel ban, which sparked chaos at airports across the country and a flurry of legal challenges after being hastily written with little input outside the White House, officials stressed they had been working for months on the new rules, in collaboration with various agencies and in conversation with foreign governments.

To limit confusion, valid visas would not be revoked as a result of the proclamation. The order also permits, but does not guarantee, case-by-case waivers for citizens of the affected countries.

The restrictions are targeted at countries that the Department of Homeland Security said fail to share sufficient information with the U.S. or haven't taken necessary security precautions.

## Weiner gets 21 months in sexting case

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Former Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., was sentenced Monday to 21 months in prison for sexting with a 15-year-old girl in a case that rocked Hillary Clinton's campaign for the White House in the closing days of the race and may have cost her the presidency.

Weiner, 53, dropped his head into his hand and wept as the sentence was announced by Judge Denise Cote. After the hearing ended and Cote left the bench, he sat in his seat for several minutes, continuing to cry. He said nothing as he left the courthouse and must surrender to prison officials by Nov. 6.

The sentencing completed the sordid downfall of Weiner, whose penchant for exchanging lewd messages and photos with young women online destroyed

his career in Congress in 2011, doomed his bid for mayor of New York in 2013, wrecked his marriage to Clinton's closest aide, Huma Abedin, and became entangled in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Admitting "I have a sickness but I do not have an excuse," Weiner pleaded guilty in May to transferring obscene material to a minor, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, for illicit contact with a North Carolina teenager.

He sought to be spared from prison, tearfully telling Cote on Monday that he was "a very sick man for a very long time." Weiner, weeping as he read from a written statement on a page he held in front of him, called his crime his "rock bottom."

Prosecutors said he sent her porn and got her to take her clothes off and touch herself on

Skype. Assistant U.S. Attorney Amanda Kramer on Monday urged Cote to give Weiner a significant prison sentence to end his "tragic cycle" of sexting.

The FBI was investigating Weiner's contact with the high school student when it came across emails on his laptop between Abedin and Clinton, prompting then-FBI Director James Comey to announce in late October 2016 that he was reopening the probe of Clinton's use of a private computer server.

Weiner's lawyers had argued in court papers that he was undergoing treatment and was profoundly sorry for subjecting the girl to his "deep sickness." They also portrayed her as an instigator, saying she wanted to generate material for a book and possibly influence the presidential election.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police recover stolen RV with dogs still inside

**WA** FEDERAL WAY — Police in western Washington state said they recovered a stolen motor home and reunited its owner with about 10 dogs that were inside.

Authorities told KING-TV that police in Lacey on Saturday also took into custody one person in connection with the case.

Officials said someone stole the Winnebago on Friday evening from the parking lot of a Federal Way sporting goods store about 35 miles from where police in Lacey recovered the vehicle.

Police said surveillance video shows a young man with black hair and a red, white and black backpack stealing the RV.

## Several hurt as car crashes into restaurant

**HI** HONOLULU — A car smashed into a Honolulu restaurant injuring several people including a 3-year-old girl.

Honolulu Fire Department officials said an elderly woman drove the vehicle into the front of Paina Cafe on Saturday afternoon.

Witnesses said the driver was involved in a minor wreck in the parking lot, and then she attempted to pull into a parking spot in front of the restaurant. She apparently lost control of the car as it hit a number of vehicles before plowing into the dining area.

Police said the car pinned two or three people against a soda machine at the back of restaurant.

Three women, two men and the child were transported to the hospital, and the extent of their injuries wasn't known.

A seventh person was in-

jured but refused hospital transportation.

## Police: Dummy helped secure conviction

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas police detectives said they were surprised when they were able to use a decoy mannequin in their search for a suspected killer who had bludgeoned to death two homeless men.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported Metropolitan Police Department officers and a prosecutor described on Sept. 19 how they used a CPR-training mannequin to help convict Shane Schindler.

Although authorities never found enough evidence to charge Schindler in the deaths of two men, they caught him on camera in February attacking the decoy dummy with a hammer. Schindler was sentenced to eight to 20 years in prison for attempted murder for hammering the dummy.

## Marker of Wild West figure found buried

**AZ** PRESCOTT — It turns out the graveyard plaque of the common-law wife of gunfighter John Henry "Doc" Holliday was just 6 inches under, not stolen from the Arizona Pioneers' Home Cemetery in Prescott.

The plaque had been reported stolen recently, but the Prescott Daily Courier reported that a voluntary caretaker found the plaque in mud under a hole at the grave of Mary Katherine Horony-Cummings, also known as Big Nose Kate.

Pioneers' Home interim Superintendent Dale Sams said the plaque had sunk into the ground, which had been softened and waterlogged by monsoon rains, and then was covered by flowing mud.

## Ex-police sergeant fined in theft from program

**NE** GERING — A former Gering police sergeant has been fined \$650, plus court costs, after pleading no contest in a case in which officials allege he stole from a program that helps kids purchase gifts at Christmas.

The Scottsbluff Star-Herald reported that Henry Moreno, 40, was fined Friday after entering the plea to one misdemeanor theft count in Scotts Bluff County Court. In exchange for his plea, two other theft counts were dropped.

Prosecutors had said Moreno stole from the Shop with a Cop program on three separate occasions, totaling \$1,300. He resigned from the Gering Police Department in August.

## Humvee rolls free, pins woman at food festival

**NY** BROOKHAVEN — Police on Long Island said a woman was seriously injured when an unoccupied U.S. Army Reserve Humvee on display rolled down an incline and pinned her against a food trailer during a festival.

Suffolk County police said the Humvee came out of gear and rolled about 30 feet, striking Suzette Lamonica, 46, of Brookhaven. It happened just after 5 p.m. Saturday during the Long Island Bacon Bash in Farmingville. Lamonica was being treated for arm and leg injuries at a hospital.

A man inside the trailer, Richard Gherardi, 30, of East Hampton, was burned by cooking oil. He also was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Authorities said two other women suffered minor injuries and declined medical attention at the scene.

The Humvee has been impounded for a safety check.

## Doctor admits signing phony prescriptions

**NJ** CAMDEN — Federal prosecutors say a New Jersey doctor admitted signing prescriptions for patients he never saw as part of a scheme that cheated the state's health benefits programs and other insurers out of nearly \$25 million.

John Gaffney, 55, of Linwood, whose medical practice is in Margate, pleaded guilty Friday to health care fraud. He faces up to 10 years in prison.

Authorities said Gaffney sold phony prescriptions for unnecessary compound medications from January 2015 to April 2016. Authorities said the conspirators persuaded people in New Jersey to obtain the very expensive medications from an out-of-state pharmacy.

Authorities said Gaffney was paid thousands of dollars and received other benefits for helping the scam continue.

## Rangers: Woman fought fire with a frying pan

**ME** BEDDINGTON — Maine forest rangers say the quick actions of a woman armed with a frying pan helped stop a forest fire.

Rangers said Nancy Weeks used a frying pan to carry water back and forth between the flames and a nearby pond in a wooded area near Beddington. WGME-TV reported Weeks kept the fire under control until crews arrived.

Officials said the fire was sparked by an unattended campfire.

Rangers said it's still fire season in the state, and likely will remain so until the first snowfall.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Day to remember around NFL

Associated Press

NEW YORK — For one of those rare times, the focus at NFL stadiums was on what happened before the games. What occurred on the sidelines, or in the tunnels leading to the locker rooms.

After those extraordinary demonstrations of unity by players, coaches, staff and owners, the action Sunday could have been anticlimactic. Instead, the league delivered some scintillating stuff punctuated by fantastic finishes in Detroit, Foxborough, Green Bay, Chicago and Philadelphia.

Following two weeks of, well, blah, the NFL gave us WOW.

“Awesome, awesome, awesome,” Eagles coach Doug Pederson said after Jake Elliott’s 61-yard field goal beat the Giants 27-24 as time expired.

Yep.

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” noted Falcons receiver Mohamed Sanu after Detroit had a go-ahead touchdown with 8 seconds remaining taken away by replay — and the Lions lost any chance for another play because of a relatively obscure rule requiring a 10-second runoff.

Yep.

“You always dream about stuff like that but it never happens, so it was real crazy,” Bears running back Jordan Howard said following his 19-yard TD to beat Pittsburgh in overtime. That came moments after rookie Tarik Cohen sped 73 yards to win it, only to discover his tip-toeing on the sideline wasn’t precise enough.

Crazy, yep, but given what we’d seen thus far in 2017, very welcome.

The NFL tends to have weekends where about the only predictable thing is that they will actually play the games. Exhilaration usually comes deeper into the schedule, when teams have created an identity — then perform directly opposite of that identity.

This year, it came in September. Consider:

- The Jaguars were blown out by Tennessee

in their only game so far in Jacksonville. But they are 2-0 elsewhere after a 44-7 annihilation of previously unbeaten Baltimore in London on Sunday.

■ The J-E-T-S got their initial W-I-N over archrival Miami, which looked more like the rebuilding franchise than did New York.

■ New Orleans’ Swiss cheese defense turned into an opportunistic wall in a 34-13 romp at previously undefeated Carolina.

■ Buffalo, which almost never wins if LeSean McCoy doesn’t run wild, knocked off unbeaten Denver despite McCoy being mediocre.

But for true excitement, the nail-biters at Ford Field, Soldier Field, the Linc, Gillette Stadium and Lambeau couldn’t be beat.

And boy, did the NFL need it.

“Everyone came together to make the plays to help us win,” Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski said somewhat breathlessly. Tom Brady had driven New England 75 yards on eight plays and thrown his fifth TD pass of the night, 25 yards to Brandin Cooks, with 23 seconds remaining for the 36-33 victory over Houston. “It just shows how big of a team game this is, NFL football. That was a great NFL football game. After that win I was like, ‘That’s what NFL football is right there.’ You’ve got great players on both sides of the ball, on the defensive side, the offensive side of both teams and everyone fighting to the end.”

It was a singular Sunday, one that won’t and shouldn’t be forgotten. Not only sports lovers were paying attention, but pretty much everyone in America focused on the memorable pregame displays from Philly to Indy, from Music City to the Windy City, from East Rutherford to Southern California. The headlines deserved to emanate from those displays.

And then came the games. If this is the kind of stuff fans can look forward to over the next 3½ months, maybe the action on the field will be drawing those headlines.

# Steelers flop in Chicago

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Chalk it up as another big flop for Big Ben and the Steelers. Once again, they lost to a lesser team.

Jordan Howard scored on a 19-yard run in overtime to lead the Chicago Bears to a 23-17 victory over Pittsburgh on Sunday.

“We faced a lot of adversity today, but most was created by us,” Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. “You got to give credit to those guys. They did a great job today, particularly in running the football. That’s unacceptable for us.”

For the Steelers (2-1), it was just the latest “how-did-that-happen” loss. They’ve had at least one every year going back to 2012, and this one sure fit that description.

Howard’s winning score came two plays after rookie Tarik Cohen broke off an electric run for what appeared to be a 73-yard game-winning touchdown. But he was ruled out at the Pittsburgh 37. Howard took over from there and got a big assist as he ran along the left side. Deonte Thompson might have grabbed Pittsburgh’s Artie Burns while pushing him out of bounds. But no flag was thrown, and the Bears (1-2) came away with a surprising victory.

Chicago won for the first time in nine September games over three seasons under John Fox. The Bears also improved to 13-1 at home against the Steelers.

Pittsburgh’s Ben Roethlisberger threw for 235 yards and a touchdown, and then blamed himself for the loss.

“I think I was off today,” he said. “For whatever reason, I did not make all the throws I normally would and make the plays I normally should.”

Former All-Pro Le’Veon Bell continued to struggle after missing the preseason because of a contract dispute. Bell ran for 61 yards and a touchdown.

# Falcons hold on to beat Lions

Associated Press

DETROIT — The Atlanta Falcons escaped Detroit, holding on for a win thanks in part to an NFL rule that went in their favor.

Matthew Stafford’s pass to Golden Tate was ruled to be just short of the end zone in the final seconds after a review, allowing Atlanta (3-0) to beat the Lions 30-26 on Sunday.

The call on the field was touchdown when Stafford connected with Tate on a slant from the 1 with 8 seconds left,

but it was overturned because the receiver was down before the football reached the goal line. By rule, 10 seconds had to run off the clock and that ended the game because Detroit (2-1) didn’t have any timeouts.

“Had the call on the field been correct initially, the clock would have run out,” FOX analyst Dean Blandino, an ex-NFL officiating chief, explained in a tweet: “That’s the spirit of the rule.”

Lions coach Jim Caldwell agreed that the call was made correctly and the rule was

applied properly. He added, though, that Stafford could have taken another snap if the call on the field was made correctly initially that Tate was down inside the 1.

“Certainly,” Caldwell said. “We practice it all the time.”

Cornerback Desmond Trufant, who extended Detroit’s last drive with two penalties, was unaware of the rule that proved to be favorable for the Falcons.

“I thought we were going to have to play another down,” Trufant acknowledged.

# Banged-up Packers hold off Bengals

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Aaron Rodgers looked around the locker room before Green Bay's game and noticed all the Packers starters sidelined with injuries. Defensive lineman Mike Daniels, receiver Randall Cobb and left tackle David Bakhtiari, just to name a few.

"But we've had a rallying cry at the beginning of the season," Rodgers said. "No excuses."

And no way were they going to lose Sunday after Rodgers figured out the Bengals defense.

He threw for three touchdowns and 313 yards, including a 72-yard pass to Geromimo Allison to set up the winning field goal in overtime over the winless Bengals (0-3).

Reliable veteran Mason Crosby kicked the 27-yarder with 6:26 left in overtime after Allison's big gain came on a free play for Green Bay (2-1).

**Eagles 27, Giants 24:** Jake Elliott kicked a 61-yard field goal as the clock expired for host Philadelphia.

Eli Manning threw three touchdown passes in the fourth quarter, including a 77-yard score to Sterling Shepard, but Philadelphia (2-1) rallied twice.

**Chiefs 24, Chargers 10:** Alex Smith threw two touchdown passes in the first 9½ minutes against what used to be his hometown team, Terrance Mitchell had two interceptions and rookie Kareem Hunt scored on a 69-yard run.

The Chiefs (3-0) beat the Chargers for the seventh straight time and have won 12

straight AFC West games. Los Angeles' Philip Rivers threw three interceptions and the Chargers fell to 0-3 in their first season playing in the 27,000-seat StubHub Center after moving from San Diego.

**Titans 33, Seahawks 27:** Marcus Mariota threw for 225 yards and two touchdowns as the hoar Titans scored 21 straight points in rallying to beat the Seahawks.

Pro Bowl running back DeMarco Murray rushed for 115 yards, including a 75-yard TD run. Ryan Succop also kicked four field goals as Tennessee (2-1) scored at least 30 points for a second straight week.

**Redskins 27, Raiders 10:** Kirk Cousins threw for 365 yards and three touchdowns and Chris Thompson had 188 all-purpose yards and a score as host Washington sacked Derek Carr four times and held Oakland to 128 yards in a dominating victory.

Cousins was a spectacular 25-for-30, including TD passes to Thompson, Vernon Davis and a 52-yarder to Josh Doctson.

**Bills 26, Broncos 16:** Tyrod Taylor threw two touchdowns and the host Bills intercepted Trevor Siemian twice in the final 19 minutes.

Taylor went 20 of 26 for 213 yards with a 2-yard touchdown to Andre Holmes and a 6-yarder to Charles Clay. Taylor got lucky on the touchdown pass to Holmes, as the ball deflected off the hands of Zay Jones just inside the goal line and bounced directly to Holmes in the back of the end zone.

**Jets 20, Dolphins 6:** Josh McCown threw a 69-yard touchdown pass to Robby Anderson, Bilal Powell ran for a score, and the Jets' defense dominated Jay Cutler and

the visiting Dolphins.

**Vikings 34, Buccaneers 17:** Case Keenum gave host Minnesota a brilliant performance in relief of Sam Bradford, passing for three touchdowns and a career-high 369 yards without a turnover.

Stefon Diggs had 173 yards receiving and caught two of Keenum's throws for scores, one short and one long.

**Colts 31, Browns 28:** Jacoby Brissett ran for two touchdowns, threw for another and the host Colts held off Cleveland's late charge.

Brissett, acquired in a trade with New England earlier this month, looked much more comfortable in his second start, going 17-for-24 with 259 yards and running five times for 14 yards. Indy (1-2) avoided its first 0-3 start in six years.

**Saints 34, Panthers 13:** Drew Brees shredded the league's top-ranked defense, throwing for three touchdowns and 220 yards. Brees led six scoring drives and threw TD passes to Michael Thomas, Brandon Coleman and ex-Panthers wide receiver Ted Ginn Jr. as the Saints avoided an 0-3 start. Rookie Alvin Kamara put the game away with a 25-yard TD run with 4:42 left.

**Patriots 36, Texans 33:** Tom Brady connected with Brandin Cooks for a 25-yard touchdown pass with 23 seconds left, his fifth TD throw of the game, and host New England rallied to beat Houston.

Brady finished 25-for-35 for 378 yards as New England won its fifth straight regular-season meeting with Houston and seventh of eight overall.

## Busch rolls to playoff win at New Hampshire

Associated Press

LOUDON, N.H. — Kyle Busch saw little but billowing, white smoke that engulfed the track and blinded enough drivers that it caused a tremendous wreck that sank his toughest competition.

In his No. 18 Toyota, the driver nicknamed "Rowdy" knew there was only one thing to do: Drive through it!

Busch slinked through the smoke clouds formed in the multiple-car crash on the backstretch and dominated the rest of the way to win Sunday at New Hampshire Motorspeedway.

"That was pretty intense," Busch said. "That was some 'Days of Thunder' stuff over there. You couldn't see anything."

He held on and saw a victory lane celebration for the third time this season. Busch earned a berth in the second round

of NASCAR's playoffs and took his customary bow on the track. He even stuck a bag of M&M's on the claws of Loudon the Lobster, the 18-pound crustacean given to the race winner.

Busch, who won from the pole, put together a complete effort once the wreck derailed race leader and fellow Toyota driver Martin Truex Jr. Truex, who won the playoff opener at Chicagoland, and Busch both earned automatic spots in the second round. Kyle Larson and Brad Keselowski advanced on points.

Truex led 112 laps until his run ended in the accident, though he rallied to finish fifth.

The playoff standings were shaken up in the wake of the massive multi-car wreck that sent playoff drivers Kurt Busch and Kevin Harvick to the garage. Harvick's car

was hit by Austin Dillon on the last lap of the second stage. Harvick spun and smoke billowed over the track, leaving drivers almost blinded to the traffic ahead. Busch, Harvick's teammate at Stewart-Haas Racing, slammed into Harvick. Truex backed up to straighten himself out and instead suffered left-rear damage when he smacked another car.

Kurt Busch, the Daytona 500 champion, will likely have to win next week at Dover to advance to the second round.

Harvick, the 2014 series champion, had accumulated enough playoff points that one DNF shouldn't cost him a spot in the top 12.

"I couldn't really tell where I was with all the smoke and everything that was happening, but just got hit from behind and spun out," Harvick said.

## Roundup

# D-Backs wrap up playoff spot

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Of course it was J.D. Martinez who got the hit that secured home-field advantage in the wild-card game for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

He's been getting big hit after big hit ever since coming over from Detroit before Major League Baseball's July 31 trade deadline.

But, as he pointed out, the quest for a championship is only just beginning for the Diamondbacks.

"This isn't it," Martinez said. "They only get bigger from here. In my opinion we are not in the playoffs yet. If we win that wild card then we are in it."

Martinez lined a two-out RBI single to deep left field with the bases loaded in the ninth inning, lifting Arizona over the Miami Marlins 3-2 on Sunday to clinch the top wild card in the National League.

"J.D.'s been unbelievable," first-year manager Torey Lovullo said. "How fitting that the guy you pick up in a big midseason push gets the big hit today. It makes everything very special."

The Diamondbacks, who won only 69 games a year ago but are 90-66 this season, were already assured a playoff berth earlier in the day when St. Louis lost at Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee lost at home to the Chicago Cubs.

The comeback victory over Miami ensured Arizona will host the NL wild-card game Oct. 4.

The Diamondbacks think they're ready for the tension of that elimination game.

"It's one thing I'm going to keep saying: We just really get along, man," said Archie Bradley, the bearded late-inning reliever and free spirit who has become a fan favorite. "We really do care for each other. We really do believe in each other. Something special's going on here."

A throwing error by reliever Justin Nicolino (2-3) on Christopher Negron's sacrifice bunt helped load the bases with no

outs in the Arizona ninth. Ketel Marte and Paul Goldschmidt each hit into a forceout at home. That brought up Martinez, who has been spectacular since joining the Diamondbacks. He sent Javy Guerra's pitch on a line shot over the head of left fielder Marcell Ozuna to win it.

**Rockies 8, Padres 4:** At San Diego, Gerardo Parra hit a tie-breaking single in a two-run third inning, Pat Valaika and Charlie Blackmon hit consecutive home runs in the ninth and Colorado opened a two-game lead over Milwaukee for the second NL wild card.

**Cubs 5, Brewers 0:** Jose Quintana (7-3) pitched a three-hitter and struck out 10 in his second big league shutout as visiting Chicago opened a 5½-game lead over second-place Milwaukee in the NL Central.

**Pirates 4, Cardinals 1:** Seung Hwan Oh (1-6) allowed a go-ahead, two-run homer in the fifth to Starling Marte and rookie Jordan Luplow also went deep for host Pittsburgh as St. Louis fell 2½ games behind the Rockies.

**Blue Jays 9, Yankees 5:** Jose Bautista had two hits and a walk in what was likely his final game in Toronto, leaving to a standing ovation during the ninth inning. Bautista, who turns 37 next month, is hitting .203 with 22 homers and 62 RBIs, and the Blue Jays appear unlikely to exercise its half of a \$17 million mutual option.

**Red Sox 5, Reds 4:** At Cincinnati, Mookie Betts hit a tying three-run double in the eighth off Raisel Iglesias (3-3) and dashed home from second base on Rafael Devers' infield single as Boston won for the 14th time in 17 games.

**Dodgers 3, Giants 1:** At Los Angeles, Clayton Kershaw (18-4) became the NL's first 18-game winner, pitching shut-out ball until Mac Williamson's home run in the eighth, his final inning.

**Indians 4, Mariners 2:** At Seattle, Corey Kluber (18-4) won his sixth straight start and

struck out 10 in becoming the AL's first 18-game winner, allowing Ben Gamel's tying two-run homer in the fifth, which stopped his scoreless streak at 26<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings.

**Twins 10, Tigers 4:** Jorge Polanco hit a solo homer in the first off Buck Farmer (4-5), Eduardo Escobar welcomed Victor Alcantara with a three-run drive in the sixth and visiting Minnesota completed a four-game sweep, outscoring Detroit 39-12.

**Angels 7, Astros 5:** Luis Valbuena hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the seventh and Justin Upton tacked on an insurance run with a solo homer in the eighth, helping visiting Los Angeles snap a six-game skid.

**White Sox 8, Royals 1:** Lucas Giolito (3-3) allowed one run in seven innings, Avisail Garcia drove in three runs with his 18th homer and host Chicago dropped Kansas City 5½ games behind the Twins.

**Athletics 8, Rangers 1:** Khris Davis hit his 41st home run, a drive off Martin Perez (12-12) in a five-run fifth inning, as host Oakland extended its winning streak to a season-high seven.

**Orioles 9, Rays 4:** J.J. Hardy hitting a crowd-pleasing, go-ahead two-run homer off Chris Archer (9-12) in what was likely his last home game with Baltimore. Rookie Chance Sisco also homered for the Orioles, who earned a split of the four-game series to finish 46-35 at home.

**Nationals 3, Mets 2:** Max Scherzer (16-6) struck out 10 and allowed three hits in six innings as visiting Washington clinched home-field advantage in the NL Division Series.

**Phillies 2, Braves 0:** Nick Pivetta (7-10) allowed five hits in six innings to outpitch Luiz Gohara (1-3) in a matchup of rookies, and Mikael Franco hit a tiebreaking home run in the fifth as Atlanta finished 37-44 in its first season at SunTrust Park.

## Chicago gives Wade a buyout

Associated Press

MIAMI — Dwyane Wade is about to become a free agent, and he's hoping that doesn't last for long.

Wade and the Chicago Bulls agreed to terms on a buyout agreement Sunday, a person with direct knowledge of the talks told The Associated Press. Wade is considering several options, including a potential return to Miami or a reunion with longtime friend LeBron James in Cleveland, according to the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because the buyout has not been formally announced.

Wade will have other suitors, as well. ESPN reported San Antonio is a possible landing spot, and Oklahoma City — which added Paul George this summer and will formally complete the trade with New York for Carmelo Anthony on Monday — would also seem to make sense as well.

Wade, speaking to the AP on Sunday night, indicated he wants to get his next deal done quickly.

"I'm going to take tonight and some of tomorrow and speak to the teams or players that are on my list and go from there," Wade said. "My decision is a pure basketball decision and I'll make the one that fits me best at this point in my career, and with what I feel I have to offer a team that needs what I have to offer."

Here's what he has to offer: Even at 35, he's still a scorer, and as a three-time champion, he's a proven winner. Wade averaged 18.3 points for Chicago last season and returned from injury down the stretch to help the Bulls get into the playoffs.

Miami has a \$4.3 million exception available if they choose to pursue Wade. Cleveland or Oklahoma City would only be able to offer about half that, and the Cavaliers — even if they got Wade for \$2.5 million — would likely be adding several million more on what could be an enormous luxury tax bill after the season. But the Cavs have James and three straight Eastern Conference titles, two facts that will surely appeal to Wade.