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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

General, more troops arrive in Puerto Rico

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is shifting its response to Hurricane Maria-ravaged Puerto Rico to a land-based operation as it clears airfields and adds communications capabilities, allowing it to flow more troops onto the ailing U.S. island, defense officials said Wednesday.

U.S. Northern Command on Wednesday sent 16 Army helicopters to Puerto Rico and was preparing to deploy a portion of a sustainment brigade — some 1,000 soldiers who specialize in distribution of goods in hostile environments — to deploy to the U.S. territory of 3.4 million

people left devastated by the Category 4 storm that struck the island Sept. 20, Pentagon officials said.

The military's top general Tuesday pledged the U.S. territories in the Caribbean would receive the full support of the Defense Department.

"We're going to do everything we can to help them out," Dunford told senators on Capitol Hill. "We're anticipating what they will need to get ahead of it."

That included tasking an Army brigadier general to take command of the nearly 5,000 active-duty forces operating on the island alongside some 2,500 National Guard members, said Army Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, a

Pentagon spokesman. Brig. Gen. Rich Kim, Army North's deputy commander, arrived in Puerto Rico on Wednesday to establish a land-based command structure, taking over for the USS Kearsarge-based commander who had been leading military response operations.

During the last week, the military has relied primarily on moving relief supplies and launching search-and-rescue operations from the Kearsarge, an amphibious assault ship staged between Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National Guard members along with Marines and sailors from the Kearsarge had cleared runways at 10 of the island's airports by Wednesday, dras-

tically increasing the flow of aircraft flying onto the island, Davis said.

The military aimed to fly about 10 planes per hour into the region Wednesday to provide relief. Only three to six aircraft had been able land each hour previously, Davis said.

Nearly all of Puerto Rico remained without power Wednesday and nearly half of its inhabitants did not have access to drinking water, according to the Pentagon. The military had helped restore some level of power to 59 of the island's 69 hospitals by Wednesday, but most of them remained unable to provide advanced care.

Scope of damage stymies aid efforts

Associated Press

MONTEBELLO, Puerto Rico — Many rural hurricane victims are waiting for help. But the scope of the devastation is so broad, and the relief effort so concentrated in San Juan, that many people from outside the capital say they have received little to no help.

Maribel Valentin Espino, her husband and teenage son live in one such area, Montebello, a 20-minute drive into what used to be lushly forested mountains near the northern coastal municipality of Manati. Hurricane Maria's Category 4 winds stripped the trees bare and scattered them like matchsticks. "It seemed like a monster," she recalled.

The roads are passable now but the community is still isolated. "Nobody has visited, not from the government, not from

the city, no one," said Antonio Velez, 64, who has lived there his entire life.

The same complaint echoed throughout the southeast coastal town of Yabucoa, the first town Maria hit as it barreled across the island with 155 mph winds.

"Nothing, nothing, nothing," said retiree Angel Luis Rodriguez, 58. "I've lost everything, and no one has shown up to see if anyone lives here."

The recovery in the first week since the storm has largely been a do-it-yourself affair. People collect water from wells and streams, clear roads and repair their own homes when they are not waiting in daylong lines for gasoline and diesel. For most, the only visible sign of authority are police officers directing traffic, a critical service because traffic lights are out across the island.

There are several thousand U.S. federal employees in Puerto Rico helping with the recovery effort. They are most visible in San Juan, where officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection have a presence at hotels that before the storm served tourists in the Condado neighborhood or at the convention center that has become a staging ground for relief efforts.

Federal workers supplied diesel to generators at hospitals and delivered desperately needed food and water to hard-hit communities across the island. They have repaired the air traffic control systems and power at the airport, which is far from normal operations with only about a dozen commercial flights per day. U.S. agents have also provided se-

curity across the island and the Coast Guard has worked with local authorities to restore the sea ports, a vital link because Puerto Rico is almost completely dependent on imports.

In addition, teams from the Army Corps of Engineers are helping to repair the electricity grid and to inspect and look for ways to avert the collapse of a dam near the western town of Quebradillas that has developed a crack and that officials have said could potentially fail.

Teams also were scheduled to visit the central mountain town of Aibonito, which was cut off from the rest of the island for five days. Many people began rationing their food and water supplies as they dwindled, uncertain of when they would have contact with the outside world.

Dunford supports transgender troops

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. general told lawmakers Tuesday that he advised President Donald Trump that transgender servicemembers should not be separated from the military based solely on their gender identity.

“I can promise that that will be my advice,” Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, told Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing to consider his reappointment as the military’s top officer. “What I have just articulated is the advice I have provided in private and I just provided in public.”

On July 27, Trump announced on Twitter a ban on transgender men and women serving in the military “in any capacity.” The president wrote he had consulted with generals and military experts before reaching his conclusion. His announcement — made official by a White House memorandum about a month later — cited “tremendous medical costs and disruption” to military units, but it caught top Pentagon officials, including Dunford, by surprise.

Transgender people were only approved to serve in the military openly just more than a year ago by then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter, after years of study on the issue.

On Tuesday, Dunford said he agreed

with Gillibrand when she assessed that many transgender servicemembers had served with “honor and valor” and did not deserve to be removed from service simply for identifying themselves as transgender.

“I believe any individual who meets the physical and mental standards and is worldwide deployable and who is currently serving should be afforded the opportunity to continue to serve,” said Dunford, who is expected to be easily confirmed to serve a second term as chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

A bipartisan group of senators, including Gillibrand and Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., have introduced legislation that would protect transgender servicemembers from being removed from the military.

“These men and women across all services and occupations were told by the Department of Defense that they would be allowed to serve openly and continue in their military careers,” Gillibrand said. “Many have worked diligently within their chains of command to meet every requirement put forth by the former administration, and now they have been plunged into a career of uncertainty and their service and sacrifices have been unfairly tarnished.”

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has issued guidance that transgender servicemembers will be allowed to continue receiving Defense Department-approved medical care and can re-enlist in the mili-

tary at least until a panel of senior officials concludes a study on their service due by February.

Mattis has promised transgender servicemembers will not be removed from service until the panel, led by Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan and Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, has completed its study.

Dunford said Tuesday that he has not met with any transgender servicemembers since they were approved to serve openly last year, but promised Gillibrand he would in the near future.

It remains unclear precisely how many transgender people are openly serving in the military. Pentagon officials have declined to provide a specific number, saying there are “hundreds” of servicemembers who have identified themselves as transgender. The Defense Department has declined to release specific information about how many troops are now receiving medical treatment — such as hormone therapy or gender-reassignment surgery — for gender dysphoria.

A Rand Corp. study commissioned last year by the Pentagon to help it determine its transgender policy estimated there were between 1,320 and 6,630 transgender people among about 1.3 million active-duty troops.

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Bergdahl’s request for meeting details denied

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A military judge ruled Wednesday that prosecutors trying Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl don’t have to turn over more information about conversations one of them had with the Trump administration about the case.

Prosecutors have acknowledged that one of them spoke to a lawyer for the National Security Council about efforts to derail the case over President Donald Trump’s criticism of Bergdahl on the campaign trail. But they said

the White House has given them no directions on how to prosecute Bergdahl.

The judge, Army Col. Jeffery R. Nance, said that further information about conversations between lawyers well after Trump’s comments wouldn’t change the court’s conclusion that the criticism won’t sway the case.

Defense attorneys had sought to formally interview Maj. Justin Oshana, a prosecutor, about the conversations and get copies of emails without certain details blacked out.

Navy gives sailors more time to negotiate next assignment

BY JASON BEHNKE

Stars and Stripes

Sailors will gain an additional three months to negotiate their next duty station orders, according to a Navy announcement issued this month.

The extension from a maximum of nine months to 12 months gives sailors more time to communicate with their detailers and a broader range of job options.

Additionally, the new policy allows input from the Navy’s global theater commands and warfare communities, which the service hopes will create

better job fits.

The commands “have a say which orders are filled now with the new system,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Shaneka Cromartie, a Navy career counselor. “They get to look at what’s coming out and who gets to fill the jobs. Before they didn’t.”

Currently, sailors normally begin to negotiate orders seven to nine months prior to their transfer date. They apply for orders within three one-month time frames, view available billets on a website and then apply for jobs.

Afghan airport attacked during Mattis' visit

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — One woman died and at least 11 people were injured after several mortars and rockets slammed into Kabul's international airport and its nearby neighborhoods on Wednesday, while Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and NATO's chief were in town to underscore their commitment to stabilizing Afghanistan.

Afghan officials said several civilians were wounded when a rocket struck a home near the airport. No one was hurt on the airport grounds, authorities said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that they had targeted Mattis' plane. Islamic State also claimed responsibility, *The New York Times* reported.

A standoff with the assailants at the building where they launched their attack was still underway hours later, Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said.

Mattis called the attack a crime during a later news conference.

"This is a classic definition of what the Taliban are up to right now," he said. "It defines their approach to how they see their role here."

Mattis held closed-door talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg in an unannounced trip, his first to Afghanistan since the Trump administration announced a new strategy for conducting America's longest war. Speaking to reporters after the talks, all three men commended the strategy's regional approach, which aims for greater cooper-

ation from countries like India and Pakistan.

While the strategy includes working more with nations in south Asia, plans remain in their formative stages, Mattis said.

"We just rolled the strategy out," Mattis said. "We need to sit down together and talk very openly and frankly about where we're at today, where we've been and where we're going to go."

Mattis visited India before arriving in Kabul. During that trip, Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman vowed to cooperate more with the Afghans but ruled out sending Indian troops to Afghanistan. Many analysts have questioned whether seeking greater support in Afghanistan from India, Pakistan's archrival, is a wise move. Pakistan is said to provide support and shelter to the Afghan Taliban and some fear India's overtures could exacerbate the situation. Pakistan denies supporting the insurgents.

This month Mattis said more than 3,000 additional U.S. troops were on their way to Afghanistan, as part of the new U.S. strategy. There are currently 11,000 there.

However, details of the plan are still unknown. President Donald Trump has said he does not want to discuss military tactics, timetables or troop numbers, a sentiment echoed by Mattis.

"I don't want to tell the enemy exactly what we are doing, but the whole point is to make certain we have a compelling battlefield advantage over anything the Taliban tries to mass against [Afghan] forces," Mattis said.

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Marines practice rescue maneuvers at TRAP training

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A pilot groaned in mock pain from two broken legs after a plane went down last week in the northern recesses of the Okinawan jungle.

A radio in one hand and a plastic pistol in the other, Navy Lt. Saul Burleson crouched over his injured fellow pilot — played by Petty Officer 3rd Class Robin Moss — and tried to coordinate their rescue. The pair could see AH-1Z Cobra attack helicopters circling overhead. Rescue seemed imminent — if the enemy didn't get to them first.

This simulated rescue operation at the Jungle Warfare Training Center was the culmination of weeklong Marine Corps Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel, or TRAP, training, said Marine Capt. Tyler Boring, air officer for 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The goal was sim-

ple: find downed pilots, bring them home and prevent classified information from falling into enemy hands.

"Every Marine who is on any kind of contingency alert" needs to be TRAP proficient, Boring said. "It's something you got to train to and be prepared for at any time."

The biannual TRAP drills are Marine Corps specific; however, part of the personnel recovery training, which includes academic coursework, is performed by all services, Boring said.

The Sept. 21 drill was the first TRAP mission for Burleson — a chaplain — and Moss — a religious program specialist. They were enjoying their roles as downed pilots.

"We're just always out and about having fun, getting out with Marines, boosting morale," Burleson said. "It's good stuff."

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Kurds vote to secede from Iraq as tensions escalate

The Washington Post

IRBIL, Iraq — Kurds voted overwhelmingly to secede from Iraq, with 92.7 percent approving a controversial referendum that was held Monday, according to an official tally released Wednesday.

While Kurds celebrated the result in the streets of their semiautonomous enclave in northern Iraq, the bid for independence continued to roil Iraq's central government and powerful regional neighbors Turkey and Iran and is shaping up to usher in a period of contentious wrangling over its implementation.

Early Wednesday, Iraqi lawmakers authorized Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi to deploy troops to a disputed city in northern Iraq and urged for legal action against Kurdish leaders as a showdown escalated over the vote. The parliament also called for the government to take control of all oil fields in the Kurdish region, bringing them under control of the ministry of oil.

The move toward autonomy, a long cherished dream for millions of Kurds, was vehemently opposed by the United States as well as Turkey and Iran, which have worried about their own restive Kurdish populations.

Moore wins GOP Senate primary in Ala.

Associated Press

HOMEWOOD, Ala. — A firebrand Alabama jurist wrested a U.S. Senate nomination from an appointed incumbent backed by millions of dollars from national Republicans, adding a new chapter Tuesday to an era of outsider politics that ushered Donald Trump into the White House yet leaves his presidency and his party in disarray.

Roy Moore's 9-point victory over Sen. Luther Strange, backed by the White House and Republican leaders on Capitol Hill, ranks as a miscalculation and temporary embarrassment for the president; it's a more consequential rebuke for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who Moore said should step aside as GOP floor chief.

The Kentucky Republican already is struggling to capitalize on his narrow 52-48 majority. He failed this week to deliver a long-promised health care overhaul, with equally perilous fights looming on taxes,

the budget, immigration and the nation's credit limit. Now, McConnell may also face a 2018 midterm election cycle complicated by GOP primary challengers who, like Moore, make the Senate leader an albatross for establishment candidates, including incumbents Dean Heller, of Nevada, and Jeff Flake, of Arizona.

Moore, the famed "Ten Commandments judge" twice removed from elected judicial office for defying federal courts, declared his nomination a message to Washington leaders "that their wall has been cracked and will now fall," though he excepted the president from his ire. "Together we can make America great," he said, echoing Trump's campaign slogan.

Trump and McConnell quickly closed ranks behind Moore after Strange conceded, underscoring their desire to keep the seat in Republican hands. Trump tweeted congratulations to Moore after the win. "Luther Strange started way back & ran a good race. Roy, WIN in Dec!" he said

Three tweets supporting Strange on Monday and Tuesday disappeared from Trump's Twitter account. The White House didn't immediately respond with an explanation. On Wednesday morning Trump sent a tweet praising Moore.

"Spoke to Roy Moore of Alabama last night for the first time. Sounds like a really great guy who ran a fantastic race," said Trump's tweet.

The Senate Leadership Fund, a McConnell-aligned political action committee, also pledged to support Moore after spending \$9 million on Strange's behalf.

A West Point graduate and Vietnam veteran, Moore now is the favorite over Democrat Doug Jones in a Dec. 12 special election, though Republicans quietly worry the sometimes controversial Moore could yield an uncomfortably close race to fill the seat previously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Saudi women will be able to drive in the kingdom

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Saudi Arabia's surprise decision to grant women the right to drive in the conservative kingdom marks a significant expansion in women's rights, but activists said Wednesday it is also only the first step in a long list of demands for equality.

Saudi Arabia was the only country in the world to ban women from driving. The royal decree late Tuesday comes into effect next summer, but it comes nearly three decades after women began agitating for the right to drive.

As recently as 2013, dozens of women uploaded videos online of themselves behind the wheel of a car during a campaign launched by Saudi rights activists.

While women in other Muslim countries drove freely, the kingdom's blanket ban attracted negative publicity. Neither Islamic law nor Saudi traffic law explicitly prohibited women from driving, but they were not issued licenses and

were detained if they attempted to drive.

The decision to change course and grant women licenses was praised by the White House, which said President Donald Trump views the change as "a positive step toward promoting the rights and opportunities of women in Saudi Arabia."

The secretary-general of the United Nations Antonio Guterres described it as "an important step in the right direction." British Prime Minister Theresa also hailed the decision, saying the empowerment of women around the world "is key to nations' economic development."

Prince Khaled bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington and the king's son, said that letting women drive is a "huge step forward" and that "society is ready."

"This is the right time to do the right thing," he told reporters in the U.S. Women will be allowed to obtain licenses without the permission of a male relative.

Tennessee senator announces retirement

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., announced Tuesday he will not seek reelection next year, another blow to the Republican establishment on the same day the latest Republican effort to re-vamp the Affordable Care Act failed.

Corker and other Republican leaders in Congress have come under fire from President Donald Trump and his supporters for not delivering in the early days of the new administration.

Once considered an ally of Trump's national security team, Corker and Trump traded insults during the August break amid chatter that staunch conservatives would mount a primary challenge to the Foreign Relations Committee chairman.

Corker's retirement will create what is likely to be a highly contested, ideologically driven Republican primary. It also

creates a vacuum among Senate Republicans for leaders on national security issues.

"After much thought, consideration and family discussion over the past year, Elizabeth and I have decided that I will leave the United States Senate when my term expires at the end of 2018," the Chattanooga Republican said in a statement.

Corker revealed his plans to retire just hours after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced that he would not hold a vote on the latest bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act because it was destined to fail amid defections from moderate Republicans.

Corker's departure will be felt perhaps most acutely in the area of foreign relations, where the Tennessee Republican not only served as his party's top voice in the Senate, but has for years been celebrated as one of the GOP's best bipartisan dealmakers.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

'Fatberg' found in sewer system after overflow

MD BALTIMORE — A massive "fatberg" made up of congealed fat, wet wipes and other waste has been named as the culprit in a sewer overflow in Baltimore.

The overflow discharged about 1.2 million gallons of sewage into the Jones Fall stream last week.

The Baltimore Sun reported Tuesday that the fatberg was discovered in a sewer main near Baltimore Penn Station.

Public works officials said the walls of a century-old 24-inch wide pipe were caked with oils, grease and congealed fats. Up to 85 percent of the pipe was clogged, blocking the flow of sewage.

The fatberg has been mostly scraped off and sent to a landfill.

Postal carrier's alert leads to man's rescue

IN INDIANAPOLIS — State Police say a postal worker who noticed mail accumulating in an elderly man's mailbox alerted two state troopers, who rescued the Indianapolis man days after he fell and severely injured himself in his home.

Police spokesman Sgt. John Perrine said the man is hospitalized and improving.

He was rescued Sept. 20 after U.S. Postal Service carrier Glenn Bass noticed the man had uncharacteristically not retrieved his mail for days.

Bass alerted Trooper Aryaun Smith, who lives nearby. She summoned Sgt. Josh Watson after her efforts to determine if anyone was inside failed despite knocking on doors and checking windows.

When the two troopers learned the man lived alone,

they forced their way inside and found him barely conscious in a bedroom where he'd fallen days before.

Police seize \$1M worth of 'magic' mushrooms

CA BERKELEY — Police say officers responding to a call about a couple fighting found nearly 700 pounds of psilocybin "magic" mushrooms inside a house in Berkeley, alongside a mushrooms cultivation and sales operation.

Police say the drugs have a street value of \$1 million.

The Berkeley Police Department said in a statement police went to the home Saturday night after receiving a call about a domestic disturbance.

A 37-year-old woman and her 35-year-old boyfriend refused to open the door but after a short time exited the house and were detained.

Officers entered and found in plain view psilocybin mushrooms in various stages of cultivation, as well as storage and distribution materials.

Man sentenced for sexual activity in stores

OR BEND — A man was sentenced to three years of probation and two weeks in jail for allegations that he repeatedly masturbated in retail locations around Bend.

The Bend Bulletin reported that David Littlehale, 33, was accused of exposing and touching himself at TJ Maxx, the Regroup Thrift Store, Blockbuster Video and a Dollar Tree store.

Littlehale entered guilty pleas to two counts of public indecency in August as part of a plea deal that dropped four other counts.

Littlehale will be allowed to serve his probation in Arizona where he lives with his wife and 6-month-old son.

Funeral director arrested over corpse pictures

PA EAST STROUDSBURG — A Pennsylvania funeral director was charged with abusing corpses and other crimes for allegedly taking cellphone pictures of the dead to "gross out" her friends and family.

Angelielgha Stewart, 27, is also charged with selling marijuana, after Monroe County detectives found conversations about drug deals when they searched her phone after rumors of the corpse photos surfaced last month.

Stewart, who was arrested Friday, took photos of one corpse during the organ harvesting process, others of a decomposing corpse, and others of unidentified corpses — some in caskets, some not.

Officer interrupts burglary inside his home

MO ST. LOUIS — A man is in custody after allegedly breaking into the home of a rookie St. Louis police officer and shooting at him before leading police on a chase.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Sallie Bradford, 30, faces several charges following the incident early Saturday.

The newspaper reported that the officer had just returned home and found a man inside the home, holding a belt that contained the officer's duty weapon. The suspect allegedly pulled out the gun and shot at the officer, and the officer fired back with his personal weapon, but no one was hit.

The suspect ran to his car and took off. Police pursued the car for about four miles before the suspect's car crashed into a tree.

Hot air balloon blows away during proposal

CA SAN DIEGO — Almost everything went according to plan when Gavin Lodge proposed to his girlfriend of two years, Katrina Smith.

KNSD-TV reported Lodge took Smith on a hot air balloon ride Saturday, during which he planned to ask her to marry him. After Smith said yes, the Scripps Ranch couple planned to land in Carmel Valley, but winds prevented them from landing for about an hour.

The hot air balloon flew close to homes and seemed it would skim the roofs, before it was able to land in an empty park in San Diego.

Soon-to-be grandpa gets ultrasound 'citation'

ND FARGO — A Bismarck police officer teamed up with his friend from the Fargo police force to give his father a surprise he'll likely never forget.

Damien Girodat's dad was expecting a ticket when he was pulled over while driving in Fargo recently with Girodat and his daughter-in-law. The Fargo officer told him something was wrong with his tail light. Then the officer gave Gary Girodat the citation that would change his life.

He was cited for "driving like a grandpa" and along with the ticket was given an ultrasound of his future grandchild. The court date on the ticket was the due date for his grandchild's arrival.

After absorbing the happy news, the officer told grandpa-to-be his tail light was just fine.

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New protesters explain how they 'woke'

Associated Press

Football coaches warn players not to say anything that could wind up on the opposing team's bulletin board.

When he set out to challenge NFL protesters, Donald Trump took the opposite tack. He put up a billboard.

The president essentially called out-of-work quarterback Colin Kaepernick "an SOB" for taking a knee to protest racial injustice during the national anthem.

And any player who followed him?

"Fire 'em!" Trump said.

He may have wound up inspiring them instead.

Almost all of the 200 players who took part in protests during Sunday's games were doing so for the first time. They became "woke." In follow-up interviews, Seattle coach Pete Carroll and linebackers Von Miller of Denver and Lorenzo Alexander of Buffalo discussed why their thinking changed, what they hoped to accomplish and whether they intend to continue protesting.

Not everyone kneeled, a gesture Kaepernick began during the Obama administration, when he still had a job and few followers. This time, there was plenty of support and their defiance ran the gamut, from raising fists to staying seated to

not showing up for the national anthem.

There were loud discussions in some locker rooms before teams arrived at a consensus about what to do. They were greeted by boos in more than one stadium. Some teams issued statements explaining their decisions. Eight owners linked arms with their players. Even Tom Brady got involved.

"We understand why people are upset about it," Carroll said. "It is not about denigration of the flag, the country or anything that stands for. It's not about that at all.

"It's about trying to get your feelings out and your ideas across. Protests, just by the nature of the word, not everybody is going to agree — that's why it's a protest," he added.

Following are lightly edited transcripts:

Pete Carroll, 66, coach, Seattle Seahawks

"This isn't about the kind of salaries they make; they're very fortunate to be where they are and they know it and they have the courage to speak out. ...

"I think it's extraordinary that this is happening and I think it's a moment that we all can learn what we want to learn out of this. I hope we learn about empathy, to listen, to come to an understanding what someone else feels without passing judgment. It doesn't mean you're going to agree. That's OK. That's OK.

"Hopefully, like I said, the compassion part will come about in the proper manner and there will be action taken and there will be movement made, and we'll come to an understanding. It's hard. It's hard, but it's good. ...

"Sports has always been the uniter. It has never been the divider, it's been the uniter. And to make it something other than that is a terrible mistake because it's an institution in our culture and in others around the world. ... It demonstrates all of the beautiful things about culture and all of the beautiful things about bringing people together from different backgrounds and all and rallying for common goals."

Von Miller, 28, linebacker Denver Broncos

"Me and my teammates, we felt like President Trump's speech was an assault on our most cherished right, freedom of speech. Collectively, we felt like we had to do something for this game, if not any other game, if not in the past, in the future. At this moment in time, we felt like, as a team, we had to do something. We couldn't just let things go.

"I have a huge respect for the military, our protective services and everything. I've been to Afghanistan; I've met real-life superheroes. It wasn't any disrespect to them, it was for our brothers that have been attacked for things that they do during the game, and I felt like I had to join them on it. ...

"I felt like it was an attack on the National Football League, as well. You know, he went on and talked

about ratings. This is my life, and I love everything about the National Football League. From the commissioner, all the way down to the field tech guys and the chefs in the kitchen. ... I try to keep out any politics or social issues and just try to play ball. But I feel like it was an attack on us.

"If I'm not going to do anything in the future, if I haven't done anything in the past, I feel like this was the time to do something."

Lorenzo Alexander, 34, linebacker, Buffalo Bills

"Me taking a knee doesn't change the fact that I support our military. I'm a patriot and I love my country. But I also recognize there are some social injustices in this country. I wanted to take a knee in support of my brothers who have been doing it.

"I won't continue to do it, but I just wanted to show them that I was with them — especially in the backdrop of our president making the comments about our players, about their mothers. And then you put that in conjunction with how he tried to gray-area neo-Nazism and KKK members as being fine people, I had to take a knee.

"And I was very emotional about it all day. It wasn't like a knee-jerk reaction. I really had to think about what I wanted to do today. ... People always say words never hurt, but words are very divisive, and it creates a lot of issues domestically and internationally. He needs to really control himself."

Kaepernick's original intent has become something else

Associated Press

What began more than a year ago with an NFL quarterback protesting police brutality against minorities by kneeling silently during the national anthem before games has grown into a roar with hundreds of players sitting, kneeling, locking arms or remaining in locker rooms — their reasons for demonstrating as varied as their methods.

Yet people rallying to defend players or decry the protests

aren't talking about police brutality, or the fact that former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick is no longer employed by an NFL team. Especially after President Donald Trump weighed in repeatedly to say that players should stand for the anthem or be fired for their defiance.

Before NFL games began Sunday, the discourse had morphed into a debate over the First Amendment, Trump's insults, how much the NFL has been paid by the U.S. gov-

ernment for its displays of patriotism and the overall state of race relations in America. Support and criticism came from fields well beyond the gridiron, including NASCAR, the NBA, MLB, activists, journalists, entertainers and politicians.

Some worry that the expanded reasoning for the protests — fanned by the president's incendiary stance — could dilute the passion and the permanence of its original cause, drawing attention to interactions between police and minorities.

More than 200 NFL players and owners — even anthem performers — found ways to show dissent during pro football games over the weekend. Raised fists and other gestures came after Trump's comments at a Friday night rally in Huntsville, Ala., where he mused to the crowd: "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a bitch off the field right now! Out! He's fired. Fired!'"

Pitino out as Louisville hoops coach

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville has placed coach Rick Pitino and athletic director Tom Jurich on administrative leave amid a federal bribery investigation.

Interim university President Greg Postel said at a news conference Wednesday that Jurich is on paid leave, while Pitino is on unpaid leave. The coach's attorney, Steve Spence, told the Courier-Journal that Louisville has "effectively fired" Pitino.

Neither Pitino nor Jurich attended the news conference.

"I'm more angry than embarrassed," Postel said. "We will be looking for someone with integrity. There's no reason this team can't have a good season."

"It is vital for this university to strictly adhere to the NCAA rules and of course federal law. Failure to do that would be a tacit endorsement of criminal behavior."

Pitino's exit comes after the school acknowledged on Tuesday that the men's program is part of a federal investigation into alleged bribery of recruits. The 65-year-old coach was not named in the indictment that resulted in the arrest of 10 people including four assistant coaches at other schools and an Adidas executive.

It is the latest black eye for the Cardinals program. Pitino

and Louisville are in the middle of appealing NCAA sanctions handed out in June following an escort scandal that unfolded nearly two years ago, which could cost the school its 2013 national title.

Jurich has supported Pitino through his transgressions during the athletic director's nearly 20-year tenure at the university.

Pitino was 416-143 over 16 years at Louisville, including that 2013 NCAA championship.

In the latest investigation, federal prosecutors say at least three top high school recruits were promised payments of as much as \$150,000, using money supplied by Adidas, to attend two universities sponsored by the athletic shoe company. Court papers didn't name the schools but contained enough details to identify one of them as Louisville.

Postel also said Wednesday that one student-athlete has been informed he will not practice or play for the university until the investigation is resolved.

"This decision will protect the interests of both the student and the University of Louisville," Postel said.

Though Pitino is not named in the federal documents, the school acknowledged it is under investigation by the FBI.

"These allegations come as

a complete shock to me," the coach said in a statement Tuesday night. "If true, I agree with the U.S. Attorney's Office that these third-party schemes, initiated by a few bad actors, operated to commit a fraud on the impacted universities and their basketball programs, including the University of Louisville. Our fans and supporters deserve better and I am committed to taking whatever steps are needed to ensure those responsible are held accountable."

Louisville was already reeling from the sex scandal. The program has been ordered to vacate up to 123 victories in which ineligible players received improper benefits — a period that includes the 2013 title, its third — along with the 2012 Final Four appearance. The NCAA also placed the school on four years' probation and ordered the return of money received through conference revenue sharing. McGee received a 10-year, show-cause penalty.

Pitino was ordered to miss five unspecified Atlantic Coast Conference games this season.

The NCAA noted that Cardinal players and recruits had received improper benefits and called the activities in the dorm "repugnant" in its decision.

Pitino is 770-271 over a 32-year coaching career with stops at Hawaii, Boston, Providence and Kentucky, where he won the 1996 NCAA title. He has

also coached in the NBA with the Boston Celtics and New York Knicks.

But that success has been overshadowed by a recent series of embarrassing episodes that began nearly two years ago with escort Katina Powell's book allegations that former Cardinals staffer Andre McGee hired her and other dancers for sex parties with players and recruits in the team's dormitory.

Powell wrote in "Breaking Cardinal Rules: Basketball and the Escort Queen" that former Cardinals men's basketball staffer Andre McGee hired her and other dancers to strip and have sex with players and recruits from 2010-14. Powell said McGee paid her \$10,000 for 22 shows with most occurring in the team's Billy Minardi Hall dormitory named for Pitino's brother-in-law, who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

Pitino denied knowledge of the activities described in Powell's book and criticized McGee for his actions.

Before the sex scandal case, Pitino had to testify in 2010 in a federal extortion trial for the wife of the school's equipment manager, when he acknowledged under oath to having an extramarital affair with her in a Louisville restaurant.

More teams to feel impact of bribery case

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — University of Arizona assistant basketball coach Emanuel Richardson entered the federal court wearing the same clothes he was arrested in earlier in the day, there to face charges of accepting bribes and paying at least one recruit to attend the school.

Across the country, nine other people, including three more assistant coaches, were arrested after a federal probe revealed hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes to influence star athletes' choice of schools, shoe sponsors, agents, even tailors.

The arrests will have an immediate — and potentially long-lasting — impact

on the programs involved. As the tentacles of the probe reach deeper into college basketball, more schools could come into the crosshairs.

"The picture of college basketball painted by the charges is not a pretty one," acting U.S. Attorney Joon H. Kim said.

Richardson, along with fellow assistant coaches Chuck Person of Auburn, Southern California's Tony Bland and Oklahoma State's Lamont Evans were all suspended after charges against them were announced.

James Gatto, director of global sports marketing for basketball at Adidas, Rashaan Michel, a maker of custom suits for some of the NBA's biggest stars, and various fi-

nancial advisers and managers also were charged.

Federal prosecutors said at least three top high school recruits were promised payments of as much as \$150,000, using money supplied by Adidas, to attend two universities sponsored by the athletic shoe company. Court papers didn't name the schools but contained enough details to identify them as Louisville and Miami.

NCAA President Mark Emmert condemned the alleged misconduct, saying, "Coaches hold a unique position of trust with student-athletes and their families, and these bribery allegations, if true, suggest an extraordinary and despicable breach of that trust."

Twins on brink of earning playoff berth

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — When Brian Dozier's home run cleared the right-field wall, Minnesota's dugout burst into joyous celebration with players excitedly bouncing off each other.

The turn-around Twins are just one win from the playoffs.

Dozier's three-run homer in the eighth inning pushed Minnesota to the brink of the postseason as the Twins, with manager Paul Molitor using a club record 10 pitchers, rallied for an 8-6 victory over Cleveland on Tuesday night, handing the Indians just their third loss in 32 games.

Dozier connected for his 33rd homer against Bryan Shaw (4-6) as the Twins, a 103-loss team in 2016, lowered their magic number for clinching a playoff berth to one.

As he rounded first, Dozier pumped his fist following a hit that resounded back to the Twin Cities.

"I couldn't wait until I could get back to the dugout and cel-

ebrate with my brothers," Dozier said.

Minnesota's 38th come-from-behind win was symbolic of the club's stunning role reversal.

"The willingness to never give up, never stop fighting, always competing in at-bats, that's been our identity all year," said center fielder Byron Buxton, who made a diving catch in the eighth. "Just because we're so close to the playoffs, we didn't go out there and try to be something we're not."

The Twins' first trip to the postseason since 2010 will have to wait at least one more day as the Los Angeles Angels beat the Chicago White Sox 9-3.

One-out singles in the eighth by Jason Castro and Robbie Grossman set the table for Dozier, who drove an 0-1 pitch over the wall in right, touching off a manic celebration in Minnesota's dugout.

"That was probably as explosive as our dugout's been all year," Molitor said. "That was quite a moment."

Edwin Encarnacion hit his

38th homer and drove in four runs for the Indians, whose 29-3 mark over 32 games is the best in the majors since the 1947 New York Yankees did it.

After recently reeling off a record 22 straight wins, the Indians (98-59) are trying to hold onto the league's best record as well as catch the Los Angeles Dodgers for the best overall mark.

Eddie Rosario homered and had three RBIs for the Twins, who won just 59 games last season and now are just a win away from extending a remarkable turnaround season.

"We're proving people wrong," catcher Chris Gimenez said. "We're better than people think we are."

Taylor Rogers (7-3), one of nine relievers Molitor had to use after starter Bartolo Colon got sick, got two outs in the seventh and Matt Belisle worked the ninth for his eighth save.

Minnesota is on the cusp of unexpected history.

In addition to making the postseason for the first time since 2010, the Twins are close

to becoming the first team to lose 100 games and make the playoffs the following year. Granted, the second wild-card berth has made that more of a possibility, but it doesn't diminish the accomplishment.

Minnesota is also seeking to become the 13th team, and first since the 2009 Seattle Mariners, to go from 100-plus losses to a winning record the following season.

To (not) catch a thief: Buxton set a club record with his 23rd straight stolen base.

Buxton swiped second with a headfirst dive in the sixth. He began his streak on May 24 and he's been successful in 28 of 29 attempts, a .966 percentage that leads the majors. He broke the Twins' mark of 22 straight successful steals shared by Chuck Knoblauch and Matt Lawton.

"It's something to cherish," Buxton said.

Homer happy: The Twins have 201 homers, third-most in franchise history. Minnesota hit 225 homers in 1963, and 221 in 1964.

MLB roundup

Rockies maintain slim lead for second wild-card spot

Associated Press

DENVER — Tyler Anderson has a deceptive leg kick to go with an even more misleading array of pitches.

It all added up to a frustrating night for Miami and a fruitful one for Colorado.

Anderson allowed four hits over seven superb innings, Trevor Story hit a three-run homer and the Rockies beat the Marlins 6-0 on Tuesday to maintain their slim lead for the second NL wild card.

Yankees 6, Rays 1: Aaron Hicks robbed Wilson Ramos of a first-inning grand slam in the outfielder's return from the disabled list, and the host Yankees clinched home-field advantage if they end up in the AL wild-

card game next week.

Dodgers 9, Padres 2: Adrian Gonzalez hit his third home run of an injury-plagued season and host Los Angeles beat San Diego to clinch home-field advantage throughout the NL playoffs.

Angels 9, White Sox 3: Mike Trout hit his 31st homer, Albert Pujols joined Alex Rodriguez as the only players with 100 RBIs in 14 seasons, and the fading Angels won on the road.

Blue Jays 9, Red Sox 4: Red Sox ace Chris Sale matched a career worst by giving up four home runs in a playoff tuneup at home, including a pair to Josh Donaldson.

Pirates 10, Orioles 1: Andrew McCutchen hit his first career grand slam and drove in

eight runs, powering host Pittsburgh to the victory.

Astros 14, Rangers 3: Carlos Correa, Brian McCann and Cameron Maybin each drove in three runs, and visiting Houston clinched no worse than the second-best record in the American League.

Cardinals 8, Cubs 7: Tommy Pham and Randal Grichuk homered, and the host Cardinals denied the Cubs a chance at clinching the NL Central title.

Brewers 7, Reds 6: Domingo Santana hit a three-run homer in Milwaukee's four-run first, and the host Brewers held on for the win.

Diamondbacks 11, Giants 4: J.D. Martinez hit a grand slam and drove in six runs, leading

host Arizona and its lineup of regulars over San Francisco.

Phillies 4, Nationals 1: Jake Thompson pitched four-hit ball into the sixth inning, and host Philadelphia spoiled Bryce Harper's return from a knee injury.

Mariners 6, Athletics 3: Danny Valencia hit a three-run homer against his former team and fellow ex-Oakland slugger Yonder Alonso added a two-run shot for host Oakland.

Mets 4, Braves 3: Travis Taijeron hit a game-ending RBI single in the ninth, sending the host Mets to the win.

Royals 2, Tigers 1: Jason Vargas moved into a tie for the major league lead with his 18th victory, leading the host Royals over the struggling Tigers.