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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Military sees trend of increased suicides

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Military suicides have surged to a record high among active duty troops, continuing a deadly trend that Pentagon officials say is frustrating and they are struggling to counter.

The Army, Navy and Marine Corps saw the rate of suicides go up as well as the overall numbers, with only the Air Force showing a decrease, according to data released by the Pentagon on Thursday. Suicides among members of the Reserves and the National Guard also grew.

The difficulties involved in identifying servicemembers with possible problems and finding ways to prevent suicides were underscored this month when the Navy reported three crew members who served on the USS George H.W. Bush took their lives within a week.

Asked about the deaths in

the crew of the aircraft carrier, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said, “I wish I could tell you we have an answer to prevent further, future suicides in the Armed Services. We don’t. We are caught up in what some call a national epidemic of suicide among our youth.”

The number of suicides across the military increased from 511 in 2017 to 541 in 2018. According to the Pentagon, the most at-risk population is young enlisted men, and at least 60% of the time they chose a gun as their suicide method. Army suicides went from 114 to 139, while the Marines went from 43 to 58 and the Navy went from 65 to 68. The Air Force dipped from 63 to 60.

“Our numbers are not moving in the right direction,” said Elizabeth Van Winkle, director of the Pentagon’s office of force resiliency. She said most of the military rates are comparable

to civilians, but added, “that’s hardly comforting.”

Military and defense leaders expressed dismay and a resolve to do more to increase resilience in the force, train servicemembers how to handle stress better and encourage troops to seek help when they need it. Van Winkle said the military also is looking at increasing efforts to train troops on the safe storage of firearms and medication. She said there are no consistent rules or regulations across the department and the services requiring gun locks or other controls on firearms, but that some states or bases have their own restrictions.

She and Karen Orvis, director of the suicide prevention office, said recognizing servicemembers who may be struggling or at risk of taking their own lives is very difficult, and that sometimes suicide is a sudden, impulsive decision

with little warning.

They said it’s difficult to identify reasons for suicide because there are so many stresses that could contribute.

They also acknowledged that servicemembers are reluctant to come forward and seek help because they worry that it could affect promotions or security clearances. And military leaders said they must all work harder to address those perceived roadblocks.

“Just as we talk about physical fitness, marksmanship, training and education, Marines must also be comfortable discussing life’s struggles, mental wellness and suicide,” said Gen. David Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps.

“We must create a community where seeking help and assistance are simply normal, important decisions Marines and sailors make,” he said.

Report tracks suicides of family members for first time

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — For the first time, the Defense Department has gathered data on military family members who died by suicide — 186 in 2017 — according to a new report released Thursday.

The DOD started to track family members for its first-ever Annual Suicide Report because they are “an integral part of our military community,” said Karin Orvis, director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office at the Pentagon.

Since this is the first year of data on spouses and family members age 12 to 23, the Pentagon is cautious about assessing any trends, Orvis said.

“We don’t know if this is a typical year, if this would be an atypical year; we won’t know until we continue to collect this data annually,” she said.

The rate of dependent suicide, using data from 2017, was 6.8 per 100,000. That is comparable to or lower than the rates of the U.S. population after adjusting for age and gender. Dependents of active-duty servicemembers had the highest rate — 7 per 100,000. The rate for reserve forces was 6.2, and the National Guard rate was 6.5.

In addition to the data on dependents, the report provides the official count and rates of servicemember suicides per calendar year, starting with 2018.

According to the report, 541 servicemembers died by suicide, including active duty, National Guard and reserve members, an increase from 511 in 2017 and 482 in 2016.

On Wednesday, Defense Secretary Mark Esper told reporters he wished he could say that the department had “an answer to prevent further, future suicides.”

“We don’t,” he said. “We are caught up in what some call a national epidemic of suicide among our youth. And not just our youth, but it’s something we continue to wrestle with. I believe we have the means and the resources to get ahead of this and do better than our civilian counterparts.”

Young and enlisted servicemembers and National Guard members were found to have the greatest risk of suicide, according to the report, and the department’s efforts will be focused on them, as well as families.

The Defense Department is working on two pilot programs geared toward those at-risk populations, Orvis said. One is a training program for “foundational skills” early in a servicemember’s career, such as emotion regulation and problem-solving.

The other is geared toward social media communication, including how to understand warning signs in posts and ways to respond.

Patriot battery to deploy to Saudi Arabia

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will deploy a single Patriot missile battery with roughly 200 troops to Saudi Arabia to bolster its defense in the wake of a debilitating attack on two key Saudi oil facilities, which the United States and other nations have blamed on Iran.

The Defense Department announced the deployment Thursday, about one week after the Pentagon's top civilian and military officer announced more troops would be sent to the Middle East as a direct result of the Sept. 14 drone and cruise missile attack on Saudi Arabia. In an unusual televised briefing on the evening of Sept. 20, Defense Secretary Mark Esper called the attacks a "significant escalation of violence"

by Iran.

Jonathan Hoffman, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, said Thursday that the deployment would include four Sentinel radar systems and "support personnel." The additional troops and equipment were designed to help the Saudis defend themselves, he emphasized.

"This deployment will augment the Kingdom's air and missile defense of critical military and civilian infrastructure," Hoffman said in a statement. "This deployment augments an already significant presence of U.S. forces in the region."

There are some 60,000 to 80,000 American troops serving now in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, which includes the Middle East and southwest Asia. That includes about 14,000 troops

in Afghanistan, some 5,200 in Iraq and about 1,000 in Syria, according to defense officials.

A Patriot missile battery typically includes about 100 soldiers who operate six Patriot missile launchers, which shoot defensive surface-to-air missiles designed to protect against short-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and aircraft. The Sentinel is an Army-run, 3-D radar system that detects short-range threats, according to the service.

Pentagon officials on Thursday did not rule out further deployments to the Middle East in response to the Iranian attacks.

Esper also approved a request to place two additional Patriot batteries on prepare-to-deploy orders, Hoffman said. He also approved the potential deployment of a Terminal

High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system, which is another Army-run anti-missile system used to destroy short-, medium-, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles as they near their target.

Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said last week that the new deployments would be "moderate" in size and were unlikely to number in the thousands of troops. Pentagon officials have worked this week to balance a U.S. response to bolster Saudi defenses while also rallying allies to provide troops or equipment to the cause.

Esper in recent days has spoken to his counterparts in the United Kingdom, France and Germany asking them to provide support, a defense official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said Thursday.

Navy names Weis as CIO to fix its cybersecurity ills

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Aaron Weis on Thursday was named the Navy's new chief information officer as the service looks to clamp down on leaks in its cybersecurity following several breaches that resulted in the loss of classified and sensitive information.

The breaches forced Navy Secretary Richard Spencer to order a service cybersecurity review. The results, which were released in March, raised a series of concerns, including how the Navy is organized to respond to cybersecurity issues and threats, and the vulnerabilities to its industrial base, such as its suppliers.

One of his first tasks will be to develop a strategy for the information management of the Navy and to prioritize the biggest risks to the service, ac-

ording to Navy Undersecretary Thomas Modly.

Prior to this, Weis had been the senior adviser to the Defense Department's chief information officer. His work included programs such as the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center and the Enterprise Cloud, according to his Defense Department biography.

Weis was hired by the Navy's leadership because of his "sustained superior performance to lead at the Fortune 500 level with demonstrated results," as well as his work at the Pentagon for more than a year that included helping to "shepherd the DOD CIO Defense Cloud Strategy," a Navy spokesman said Thursday.

Weis also will serve as the principal staff assistant for the Navy secretary on information technology management, digital, data, and cyber strategy.

Hyten confirmed as Joint Chiefs of Staff vice chair

By NEIL FOTRE

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Air Force Gen. John Hyten, who withstood several months of intense scrutiny over claims of sexual assault, was confirmed Thursday by the Senate as the next vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Hyten, 60, has served in the Air Force for 38 years and was most recently in charge of U.S. Strategic Command. He was originally nominated for the position in April by President Donald Trump to replace Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, who retired during the summer.

Hyten was confirmed in a 73-21 vote of the Senate. Six senators did not vote, and opposition to Hyten came from Democrats, except for Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa. Democrats who voted "no" included Sen. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois,

a combat veteran, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Hyten's confirmation to Joint Chiefs vice chairman was delayed by allegations of sexual assault. His former aide, Army Col. Kathryn Spletstoser, accused Hyten of making multiple propositions toward her and trying to forcibly assault her in a hotel.

Hyten has publicly denied the allegations and an Air Force investigation into the accusations uncovered no evidence that the assault happened.

Hyten's nomination was confirmed in July by the Senate Armed Services Committee, including Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., a former Air Force officer.

Army conducts freeze-dried plasma test

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Army is testing airdrops of freeze-dried plasma as a way of getting it closer to the battlefield to help improve the survival rate for wounded soldiers, it said in a statement released this week.

Soldiers from the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 432nd Blood Support Detachment jumped out of a CH-47 Chinook with rehydrated, freeze-dried plasma packed in their rucksacks, said the statement released Monday.

This delivery method, which was deemed infeasible with other blood products, could

help reduce loss of life on the battlefield, where about 40% of combat deaths are caused by hemorrhaging, said the statement, citing the service's Medical Research and Materiel Command out of Fort Detrick, Md.

"Tourniquets helped in enhancing survivability for our warfighters. But it's blood that keeps them alive," the statement quoted Col. Roberto E. Marin, material systems branch chief with the Army Medical Department Board, as saying.

A light yellow liquid containing blood's clotting factors, plasma transports white blood cells, red blood cells and plate-

lets through the body, along with water, salts, enzymes, antibodies and key proteins. Freeze-drying plasma changes it from a liquid to a powder, which makes it possible to store it at room temperature and easier to package it in non-breakable holders, which might be rugged enough to drop from the air.

Currently, there's no method to supply front-line troops with blood products already in wide use elsewhere because of how they're packaged and stored, officials said.

Fresh frozen blood comes in glass tubes that could break in an airdrop or parachute jump and must be kept at cold tem-

peratures. That limits storage options to "role 2" medical facilities, which are somewhat removed from the battlefield, the medical research command said.

Frozen blood also takes about 30 minutes to thaw before it can be used in surgeries, said Capt. Robert Crochet, a primary medical test officer with the AMEDD Board, who oversaw the Chinook jump.

Freeze-dried plasma, on the other hand, "takes roughly one to six minutes to rehydrate and become ready to administer to the casualty," Crochet said.

"Those (saved) minutes can be the difference in life or death."

Prosecutor: Soldier sought government's overthrow

Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. — A prosecutor alleged in federal court Thursday that an Army infantry soldier charged with distributing information about building bombs is a Satanist who plotted to overthrow the U.S. government, while his attorney said he's only an internet troll caught "spouting off" online.

Jarrett William Smith, 24, a private first class stationed at Fort Riley, Kan., is accused of providing information about

explosives last week to an FBI undercover agent on the encrypted messaging service Telegram. He also is accused of threatening to burn down the house of a far-left-leaning "antifa" member.

Smith pleaded not guilty Thursday to two charges in a grand jury indictment of distributing explosives information and a third charge of making a threatening interstate communication.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Angel Mitchell ordered him detained until his trial. The threat

against the activist, listed in the indictment only as "D.H.," was transmitted from Kansas to Michigan, although it wasn't clear where the house is located.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Mattivi said during the court hearing that Smith planned to overthrow the government, with attacking a news organization as a first step. An FBI affidavit said Smith suggested to the undercover agent targeting an unidentified major news organization with a car bomb, and CNN reported

that it was the target, citing two sources familiar with the investigation.

The affidavit said Smith told another FBI agent before his arrest last week that his goal was to create "chaos." Mattivi said Smith told the agent he distributed explosives information "for the glory of his Satanist religion" — something prosecutors have not said previously.

"Mr. Smith has thought through a very specific plan for overthrowing the government," Mattivi said in court.

Voters in Afghanistan torn between fear, sense of duty

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Torn between fear, frustration and a sense of duty, Ahmad is undecided about defying Taliban warnings not to vote in this weekend's Afghan presidential election.

He has good reason to think twice: Part of his index finger was chopped off by Taliban members after he voted in the presidential election five years ago.

The Taliban have relentlessly issued threats of violence against Saturday's vote. The insurgent group has sent suicide bombers to rallies and election offices, killing dozens and warning they will kill more.

"I know for the love of my country I should vote, but I look at the candidates and I think none of them are worth the risk," Ahmad said.

Ahmad asked that his fam-

ily name and other details about his identity not be published for fear of retaliation by Taliban insurgents, who have greater control in his district than the government of President Ashraf Ghani, one of two front-runners in the race.

Afghan officials say security preparations have been elaborate.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Minister of Interior Masoud Andarabi out-

lined an election security plan that he said has been more than eight months in the making.

Outside each of the 4,942 polling centers across the country, three distinct cordons of security will be set up. The first two security rings closest to each polling center will be manned by police and intelligence officers.

Afghan National Army personnel will be deployed to the third and most distant cordon.

Lawyers directed sealing of transcript

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House on Friday confirmed a key detail in the intelligence whistleblower's complaint alleging that President Donald Trump abused the power of his office.

A senior administration official acknowledged that the rough transcript of Trump's July 25 phone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy was moved to a highly classified system maintained by the National Security Council at the direction of attorneys. The motivation and timing of the move remained unclear.

The whistleblower complaint, which is at the center of House Democrats' impeachment inquiry, said the move to "lock down" details of the call suggested that "White House officials understood the gravity of what had transpired in the call." Trump has argued everything was "appropriate."

White House attorneys were made aware of concerns about Trump's comments on the call before the intelligence community whistleblower sent his allegations to the in-

spector general.

The official was granted anonymity Friday to discuss sensitive matters.

Confirmation of the detail came as Trump stepped up his campaign against the anonymous whistleblower and the unnamed "White House officials" cited in the complaint, drawing a warning from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi against retaliation.

The complaint alleges that Trump abused the power of his office to "solicit interference from a foreign country" in next year's U.S. election. In a July 25 phone call, days after ordering a freeze on some military assistance for Ukraine, Trump prodded new President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden and volunteered the assistance of both his personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, and Attorney General William Barr.

Late Thursday, Trump denounced people who might have talked to the whistleblower as "close to a spy" and suggested they engaged in treason, an act punishable by death. Then on Friday, he targeted

the complainant, a CIA officer, tweeting, "Sounding more and more like the so-called Whistleblower isn't a Whistleblower at all."

He also alleged without evidence that information in the complaint has been "proved to be so inaccurate," though none of the allegations have been demonstrated to be incorrect.

Meanwhile, Republicans were straining under the uncertainty of being swept up in the most serious test yet of their alliance with the Trump White House.

"We owe people to take it seriously," said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., a onetime Trump rival who is now a member of the intelligence committee.

Legal experts said that by following proper procedures and filing a complaint with the government rather than disclosing the information to the media, the person is without question regarded as a whistleblower entitled to protections against being fired or criminally prosecuted.

Vaping illnesses increase to 805; deaths climb to 13

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Hundreds more Americans have been reported to have a vaping-related breathing illness, and the death toll has risen to 13, health officials said Thursday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 805 confirmed and probable cases have been reported, up 52% from the 530 reported a week ago. At this point, illnesses have occurred in almost every state.

The confirmed deaths include two in California, two in Kansas, two in Oregon and one each in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Mississippi and Missouri. The Mississippi death was announced by officials in that state Thursday, and the second Oregon death was revealed by authorities later in the day.

Over the summer, health officials in a few states began noticing reports of people developing

severe breathing illnesses, with the lungs apparently reacting to a caustic substance. The only common factor in the illnesses was that the patients had all recently vaped.

As a national investigation started and broadened, reports have increased dramatically.

It's not clear how many of the 275 added cases occurred in the last week and how many are being logged long after they happened.

The agency's count includes only illnesses that have met certain criteria. Other illnesses are also being investigated.

Most patients have said they vaped products containing THC, the ingredient that produces a high in marijuana. The investigation has been increasingly focused on products containing THC, with some attention on ingredients added to marijuana oil.

But some patients have said they vaped only nicotine.

Biden's Democratic rivals avoid rush to defend him

Associated Press

Democratic presidential candidates are united in condemning President Donald Trump for seeking a foreign country's help to trash a domestic political rival. But when it comes to defending the president's target, former Vice President Joe Biden, it's more complicated.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren suggested she'd consider barring her vice president's children from serving on the boards of foreign companies, the very kind of business arrangement Trump has used in unfounded attacks accusing Biden and his son, Hunter, of corruption.

When asked whether Trump's attacks reflect on Biden's "campaign or his character," California Sen. Kamala Harris said, "I'll leave that up to the pundits. I don't have a comment on that." And Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders sidestepped whether the Biden controversy makes

him a weaker candidate.

Even as Biden's leading competitors for the Democratic presidential nomination accuse Trump of abusing the power of his office, they have been willing to let Biden navigate the situation on his own.

It fell to candidates largely outside the top tier to offer strong defenses of Biden.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg, of South Bend, Ind., on CNN rejected questions about Biden, calling that "whataboutism" that allows Republicans to avoid scrutiny on "an extraordinary, perhaps unprecedented, breach of the oath of office by the American president."

When Trump tweeted this week that he expected "transparency" from the Bidens, New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker answered him: "Well, we found one thing that's transparent: your deception. We're not going to let you do this again to another patriot."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspected shoplifter forced to strip

NJ SALEM — Authorities said a store clerk at a gas station pointed a gun at a suspected shoplifter and forced him to strip naked.

Amit Saraswat is charged with aggravated assault, making terroristic threats and two weapons charges.

The counts against him stem from an incident that occurred Monday night. Surveillance video shows Saraswat pointing an Airsoft gun at the man and forcing him to strip naked. Police said the man left the store unharmed but later returned to grab his clothes after he realized the clerk didn't have a real gun.

Authorities haven't charged the man or determined if he stole anything from the store.

Officer dashes onto interstate to save dog

FL PINELLAS PARK — A police officer is getting praise for darting into a busy interstate to rescue a dog that had just been hit by a car.

Pinellas Park police Officer Joseph Puglia tells ABC Action News in Tampa his heart "really sank until I started seeing him breathing." The dog wandered onto Interstate 275 in Tampa on Monday.

Video from Puglia's dash cam showed him stop and get out within seconds of the dog getting hit. Puglia said he wrapped the dog in an emergency blanket, put him in his SUV and called dispatch.

The dog survived with minor cuts and bruises. Puglia said they nicknamed the dog, who ended up in the county's animal shelter, Lucky. If no one claims Lucky, he said family members are ready to take him.

Referee hit in face by cannon blast

ME CASTINE — A referee who was hit in the face by a cannon blast during a Maine Maritime Academy football game is recovering from his injuries.

The referee was taken to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries Saturday.

The Hancock County Sheriff's Department told WCSH-TV that an academy alumnus brought the cannon to the game in Castine. The alumnus reportedly loaded the cannon with black powder and a substance that had been made into a wad. It is tradition for a cannon to be fired with a blank shotgun shell when the academy scores.

Lineup set for cartoon and comic festival

OH COLUMBUS — The creators of the "Rhymes With Orange" and "Jump Start" comic strips are among the participants in an annual cartoon and comic strip festival in Ohio's capital city.

Cartoon Crossroads Columbus is running Thursday through Sunday at various locations, including Ohio State, the Columbus Art Museum and the Columbus College of Art and Design.

The festival highlights Columbus' growing reputation as a hub for cartoonists and features creators of comic strips, political cartoons and graphic novels, among others.

Robb Armstrong's "Jump Start" focuses on Philadelphia police officer Joe Cobb, and his wife, Marcy, a hospital nurse.

Hilary Price has been drawing the award-winning "Rhymes With Orange" strip since 1995.

Python sneaks into AC unit, surprises worker

MS GULFPORT — A heating, ventilation and air conditioning technician found a slithering surprise while repairing an outdoor unit at a home.

WLOX-TV reported that what started as a typical day for technician Conner Smith quickly turned into an episode on National Geographic after Smith found a ball python inside the HVAC unit.

Homeowner Steve Ramos said he heard Smith say "whoa," but he thought Smith was shocked by the repair work.

Smith told Ramos he found the homeowner's snake. But Ramos doesn't own a ball python.

Man charged with setting grass fires

CA SAN JOSE — Authorities said a Missouri man is suspected of flying to California and lighting multiple fires by throwing flaming pieces of paper from his rental car onto grassy foothills in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The East Bay Times reported Wednesday that Freddie Graham, 68, allegedly ignited more than a dozen fires in a 24-hour span last weekend near Milpitas.

Santa Clara County prosecutors said the man was arrested while returning the car at San Jose airport thanks to a witness who wrote down the license plate.

Museum returning artifacts to Australia

IL SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois State Museum has agreed to return 42 cul-

turally significant objects to Australia. The gesture comes nearly a century after they were brought to the United States.

The museum said in a news release that it's the first institution in the world to repatriate artifacts as part of the Australian government's Return of Cultural Heritage Project. It's an attempt to bring back indigenous materials taken from the country.

Boomerangs, necklaces, spears and other items that will be returned were collected in Australia between 1929 and 1931 by University of Chicago linguistic anthropologist Gerhard Laves. They were transferred by the university to the state museum in 1942 for incorporation into its rotating exhibit on international cultures.

Naked man discovered on airport tarmac

AL BIRMINGHAM — Police in Alabama have taken a naked man discovered on an airport tarmac into custody.

Photos and videos shared with news outlets show the unclothed man sitting on the ground Thursday morning at Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport.

Birmingham police Sgt. Johnny Williams said the man told authorities he'd been robbed in the area.

He then walked onto airport property. Passenger Stephen Reeves told AL.com a worker at the airport got a blanket to cover the man.

Police didn't release the man's name but said he had an outstanding felony probation violation warrant in Shelby County. It's unclear whether he was arrested or charged.

From wire reports

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and Military News

Undrafted CB makes crucial play as Eagles beat Packers

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Craig James was on the practice squad at the beginning of the week.

The short-handed Philadelphia Eagles promoted the second-year undrafted cornerback to the active roster two days before the prime-time matchup in Green Bay. James responded by making the game-winning play in the 34-27 win over the Packers on Thursday night.

With 25 seconds left, James jumped a quick slant by Marquez Valdes-Scantling and tipped Aaron Rodgers' pass into the end zone, where Nigel Bradham collected it and sealed the victory.

"I'm a no-name out there, so when somebody that doesn't get a lot of playing time gets in the game, that's the target," James said. "That's the game plan. Coaches tell you, 'Go at him. That's the weak link.' But as the weak link, I still have to be as prepared as the starters."

Jordan Howard gashed Green Bay for his second career three-touchdown game as the Eagles (2-2) ended a two-game skid.

Howard finished with 87 yards on 15 carries and two touchdowns rushing and one receiving, Carson Wentz went 16-for-27 for 160 yards, three scores and no turnovers, and the Eagles rebounded after losing consecutive games by a combined seven points.

"We already were confident," Howard said. "We already believed in ourselves. It probably reassured everybody else."

Rodgers started 10-for-10 and finished 34-for-53 for 422 yards, two touchdowns and a fumble that set up a short Philadelphia scoring drive.

Davante Adams had a career-high 180 yards on 10 catches for Green Bay, but he wasn't on the field for the Packers (3-1) on the last drive because of a toe injury.

"Obviously, having him out

there would have been for the better, but we had a lot of chances down the stretch," Rodgers said. "We moved the ball well all day long. We just struggled in the red zone."

Adams was hurt after making a catch in the fourth quarter that gave the Packers first-and-goal at the 8. Avonte Maddox was called for pass interference on the next play while teammate Andrew Sendejo collided with him.

Maddox was carted off the field on a stretcher late in the fourth quarter, which forced coach Doug Pederson to turn to James.

Rodgers had first and goal from the 1 after the delay and threw four straight incompletions.

"Credit the defense, man, it was twice down there," Pederson said. "... Any time you can keep an Aaron Rodgers team out of the end zone, it's a positive thing."

After punting on its first two drives and falling behind 10-0, Philadelphia scored on four straight possessions against a defense that had only given up 35 points through the first three games.

Sacked six times in the previous two games, Wentz managed to stay upright. Zach Ertz had a team-high seven catches for 65 yards, and Alshon Jeffery, who missed all but six snaps over the past two weeks with a calf injury, finished with 38 yards and a touchdown on three catches.

Rodgers and Adams connected on a 58-yard completion on the opening drive. It was the longest play of the season for Green Bay, which scored a touchdown on its opening drive for the third consecutive game. Aaron Jones scored from 3 yards out two plays later to give the Packers the early lead.

Mason Crosby added a field goal in the beginning of the second quarter to make it 10-0.

The Eagles finally got a little momentum on a 67-yard return by Miles Sanders on the ensu-

ing kickoff. The return set up a 6-yard score by Jeffery.

Green Bay added another field goal to take a 13-7 lead.

Wentz found tight end Dallas Goedert for a 3-yard touchdown strike to give the Eagles a 14-13 lead just before the two-minute warning.

Rodgers fumbled on the following drive after a strip-sack by Derek Barnett. The Eagles capitalized with 1-yard score by Howard. Howard's touchdown made it 21-13 with 54 seconds to go.

Rodgers needed just 50 seconds to lead the Packers 70 yards. The two-time MVP found Geronimo Allison for a 19-yard touchdown to make it 21-20 at the half.

The Eagles opened the second half with a 20-yard score from Wentz to Howard. After a failed two-point conversion, Philadelphia led 27-20.

Jimmy Graham got his first catch and score since Week 1. Graham had six catches for 61 yards and a 14-yard touchdown that tied the game at 27-27 with 3:16 to go in the third.

Howard scored his third touchdown on a 2-yard run that made it 34-27 at the start of the fourth.

Injuries

Eagles: CB Sidney Jones suffered a hamstring injury and did not return. That leaves Philadelphia with only two healthy cornerbacks — Rasul Douglas and James — on the roster.

Packers: RB Jamaal Williams was carted off the field on the first play from scrimmage. He did not return. CB Tony Brown suffered a hamstring injury and did not return. RT Bryan Bulaga left with a shoulder injury and also did not return. S Will Redmond was being evaluated for a concussion. CB Kevin King suffered a groin injury. Adams suffered an injured toe.

Ga. Tech gets postseason ban, 4 years of probation

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia Tech coach Josh Pastner still has the support of his athletic director, even after the Yellow Jackets basketball team was slapped with NCAA sanctions Thursday, including a ban on postseason play for the upcoming season.

Dealing a major blow to Pastner's efforts at rebuilding the struggling ACC program, the NCAA hit Georgia Tech with four years of probation for major recruiting violations committed by Pastner's former assistant coach Darryl LaBarrie, and an ex-friend.

The sanctions handed down by the NCAA also included a reduction in scholarships, limits on recruiting and a fine of \$5,000 plus 2% of the program's budget.

Pastner was not directly named in the NCAA's findings and was largely cleared in Georgia Tech's own investigation.

"I continue to support Josh as our men's basketball coach," athletic director Todd Stansbury said.

The recruiting restrictions for each year of probation include:

- The loss of one scholarship.

- An eight-week ban on unofficial visits and a three-visit reduction from the number of official visits.

- An eight-week ban on recruiting communications.

- A reduction of 19 recruiting-person days from the allowed number.

Two former players, Josh Okogie and Tadic Jackson, were suspended for six and three games, respectively, for accepting benefits including apparel, meals and transportation.

The NCAA ruled that Georgia Tech must also vacate all wins in which ineligible players were used. The school was given 14 days to provide that information to the governing body.

Memphis hands Midshipmen first loss

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Midway through the second quarter Thursday night, everything was going Navy's way.

As usual, the Midshipmen were controlling the ball, their defense was living up to its new reputation as a stingy unit and Memphis was struggling on both sides of the ball with Navy holding a 20-7 lead.

"They looked tired on defense," Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo said. "We felt like we had them right in our wheelhouse."

Things were so bad early in the third quarter, the Memphis fans were booing quarterback Brady White.

Then things changed.

White led a second-half rally, finishing the game with 196 yards passing and three touchdowns as Memphis used big plays to defeat Navy 35-23.

Kenneth Gainwell rushed for 104 yards, including a 75-yard touchdown on the Tigers' opening play from scrimmage as Memphis (4-0, 1-0 American Athletic Conference) knocked Navy from the unbeaten ranks.

"That game is a game — we talked about it all week long — that is a program-defining game," Memphis coach Mike Norvell said. "The reason being because of who we went against. That's a good Navy football team."

Malcolm Perry led the Midshipmen (2-1, 1-1) with 82 yards passing and 91 yards rushing. He ran for two touchdowns and threw for another. Keoni Makekau rushed for 101 yards for Navy.

The game was a contrast in styles with Navy grinding out yards and maintaining possession, while Memphis capitalized on big plays. The Tigers scored on long runs, a 99-yard kickoff return by Gabriel Rogers and the trio of touchdown passes from White, who was booed by Tigers fans early in the second half as the offense struggled under his leadership.

"You worry about that at times as a coach," Norvell said.

"When there's a lot of outside influence that might not be positive all the time, you've got to truly believe in yourself, be true to who you are and trust your training. That's what he did."

After Navy took a 20-7 lead, Memphis scored three unanswered touchdowns to pull away in the second half. The run started after the Navy touchdown — Perry's second 1-yard run — put the Midshipmen up. Rogers took the ensuing kickoff and returned it 99 yards for the touchdown, pulling Memphis within 20-14 at the break.

"That took so much wind out of us," Niumatalolo said of Rogers' return.

Five things to know

USC-Washington, UVA-ND headline Week 5 schedule

Associated Press

Notre Dame tries to bounce back from a painful loss and Southern California tries to build on the momentum of a surprising win in the two most notable college football matchups this week.

The 21st-ranked Trojans visit No. 17 Washington on Saturday, while the 10th-ranked Fighting Irish host No. 18 Virginia. Those are the week's only two matchups pitting ranked foes against each other.

USC is coming off a victory over Utah that dropped the Utes from 10th to 19th. Notre Dame suffered its first loss of the season last week when it fell 23-17 at No. 3 Georgia.

Here are some things that merit watching in college football this week:

Game of the week

No. 21 Southern California at No. 17 Washington

USC is in the midst of a huge three-game stretch that could define its season. The Trojans visit Washington and Notre Dame in their next two games. Win both and the Tro-

jans become a potential playoff contender. Lose both and the calls for coach Clay Helton's removal grow even louder. USC quarterback Matt Fink replaced an injured Kedon Slovis against Utah and is likely to start Saturday with Slovis in concussion protocol.

Heisman watch

Wisconsin running back Jonathan Taylor led all Football Bowl Subdivision players in rushing last year and ranks third this season with 146.7 yards per game. His 203-yard performance in the eighth-ranked Badgers' 35-14 victory over No. 20 Michigan marked the ninth time he's reached the 200-yard mark in 30 career games.

Taylor next faces Northwestern, one of the few teams to hold him in check. In two games against the Wildcats, Taylor has yet to have a 100-yard game, totaling 126 yards and averaging 4.2 yards per carry.

Numbers to know

8 — Number of victories by Mountain West Conference schools over Power Five teams this season. No other Group of Five conference has more than five wins over Power

Five teams.

300 — No. 9 Florida has thrown for at least 300 yards in four of Dan Mullen's first 17 games as coach, including each of the last three. Before Mullen arrived, Florida threw for 300-plus yards just six times in a 101-game stretch from 2010-17.

440 — The number of carries by Mississippi State running backs since the last time one of them fumbled. The last time a Mississippi State running back fumbled was on Nov. 18, 2017.

900 — Nebraska earned its 900th win in school history Saturday by beating Illinois 42-38. The Cornhuskers now face No. 5 Ohio State, which has 915 wins. No. 6 Oklahoma and Notre Dame look to become the sixth and seventh FBS programs to collect 900 wins as measured by the NCAA when the Sooners host Texas Tech and the Irish host Virginia on Saturday. Other FBS schools with at least 900 wins include Michigan, Texas and Alabama. Notre Dame actually has won 920 games but had to vacate 21 of those victories from 2012 and 2013.

Under the radar

Wake Forest (4-0, 0-0 ACC) at Boston College (3-1, 1-0):

Wake Forest's fast start has garnered so little attention that the unbeaten Demon Deacons remain unranked, though they are 24th in the coaches' poll. The Deacons seek their first 5-0 start since 2006 when they visit Boston College, which won 41-34 at Wake Forest last season.

Coastal Carolina (3-1, 0-0 Sun Belt) at Appalachian State (3-0, 0-0): The undefeated Mountaineers begin their Sun Belt title defense by hosting Coastal Carolina, which owns a three-game winning streak that includes a victory at Kansas. Appalachian State has won all five of the previous games in this series.

Hot seat watch

Arkansas has gone 4-12 under Chad Morris, a record that includes a 2-3 mark against Group of Five teams, including last week's especially embarrassing loss to perennial Mountain West cellar dweller San Jose State. Two of Morris' four wins at Arkansas were against Football Championship Subdivision programs.

Arkansas plays its annual rivalry game against Texas A&M on Saturday at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

Hernandez says farewell in loss to A's

Associated Press

SEATTLE — When the time finally arrived for Felix Hernandez to say goodbye to Seattle and all the history of 15 seasons with one franchise, his manager had a message as he walked off the mound.

"You will always be the king in this town," Scott Servais said to Hernandez.

With tears in his eyes, the emotional Hernandez walked off the mound as a Mariner probably for the last time in his career on Wednesday night. He was the losing pitcher in a 3-1 loss to Oakland as the Athletics moved to the brink of clinching an AL wild-card berth.

It was his final start in his final year under contract with Seattle, the only place he's

called home as a professional. Both sides seem ready for a separation, which turned the night into a farewell and thank you all wrapped into one.

He wasn't the "King Felix" of his dominant years on this night. He was a 33-year-old pitcher looking for one more magical outing to thrill the thousands of fans who turned out for his farewell.

"I didn't want to just give up five runs in five innings. I wanted to go out there and do my job and just give the team a chance to win," Hernandez said. "That was a fun night."

Unfortunately for Hernandez (1-8), the A's have something to play for and weren't willing to go along with the festivities. Oakland is chasing one of two AL wild-card spots.

MLB roundup

Brewers top Reds, stretch winning streak to seven

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Orlando Arcia doubled with the bases loaded, and the Milwaukee Brewers shook off the fizz from their playoffs-clinching celebration to close on the NL Central lead Thursday, beating the Cincinnati Reds 5-3 for their seventh straight victory.

The Brewers earned at least a wild card with a 9-2 win on Wednesday night, dousing each other with champagne and beer in the clubhouse afterward.

Milwaukee moved within one game of the idle Cardinals for the NL Central lead heading into the final weekend, the same status as a year ago when they also were a game out with three to play.

Milwaukee concludes with three games in Colorado against the team it swept in the playoffs before losing to the Dodgers in the NL Championship Series. The Cardinals host the Cubs.

Chase Anderson (8-4) allowed Aristides Aquino's solo homer in five innings, then turned it over to a bullpen that's the team's strength. Josh Hader escaped a bases-loaded threat in the eighth and got the last four outs for his 37th save in 43 chances.

Twins 10, Tigers 4: Jonathan Schoop hit his team's record 300th home run, Willians Astudillo also went deep and AL Central champion Minnesota rallied past host Detroit, mov-

ing within one victory of giving the major leagues four 100-win teams for the first time.

Minnesota was tied with the New York Yankees for the big league lead with 299 homers coming in. With the Twins ahead 6-4 in the seventh, Schoop lofted Jose Cisneros's slider to deep left. Astudillo connected off Zac Reininger in the eighth.

White Sox 8, Indians 0: Rookie Aaron Civale (3-4) gave up home runs on consecutive pitches in the fourth inning and visiting Cleveland fell into a perilous position in the playoff race, losing to Chicago.

The Indians dropped two games behind idle Tampa Bay for the second AL wild-card spot. Both teams have three games left — Cleveland visits playoff-bound Washington while the Rays are at Toronto, which is 29 games below .500.

Nationals 6, Phillies 3: Stephen Strasburg (18-6) was dominant in his final regular-season start and host Washington held its lead in the NL wild-card chase, sweeping a five-game series against Philadelphia.

The Nationals remained one game ahead of Milwaukee atop the wild-card race.

Giants 8, Rockies 3: Tyler Beede struck out seven in 3¹/₃ hitless innings before leaving due to an injury, and host San Francisco beat Colorado.

Mike Yastrzemski and Mau-

ricio Dubon homered for the Giants, at 77-82 assured of their third straight losing season.

Dodgers 1, Padres 0: Clayton Kershaw (16-5) shut down San Diego for six innings and Chris Taylor scored from first base on Max Muncy's single in the sixth to lead visiting Los Angeles to a three-game sweep.

The Dodgers have won four straight and nine of 12 heading into their final regular-season series at San Francisco.

Rangers 7, Red Sox 5: Mike Minor (14-10) reached 200 strikeouts in a season for the first time after his team purposely let a foul pop drop, Danny Santana hit a grand slam and host Texas beat Boston to avoid a three-game sweep.

Minor started the day needing nine strikeouts to reach 200, and he struck out six of his first 11 batters. He got another in the fifth but didn't get his eighth until Sam Travis ending the seventh on his 117th pitch, which matched his career high. In the ninth, Sandy Leon flied out before Chris Owings popped up a 1-1 pitch. First baseman Ronald Guzman was coming in to make the catch but then heard Minor and catcher Jose Trevino shouting at him to let the ball drop to the ground. Owings took a called third strike on the 126th and final pitch by Minor.

Pirates 9, Cubs 5: Joe Musgrove (11-12) pitched three-hit

ball through six innings as host Pittsburgh extended Chicago's losing streak to nine games.

Musgrove was charged with three runs, two earned, while striking out eight and walking two as the Pirates recorded a three-game sweep. Musgrove won his final three outings.

Marlins 4, Mets 2: Curtis Granderson, Tyler Heineman and Austin Dean hit late home runs and visiting Miami rallied against Zack Wheeler to beat New York.

Wheeler (11-8), who helped himself with an RBI single, had allowed only two hits until Harold Ramirez led off the eighth with a double and Heineman connected with one out for his first major league home run, tying it at 2. Granderson followed with his fourth pinch-hit homer of the season.

Angels 4, Astros 3 (12): Kaleb Cowart scored when Kyle Tucker made an error on Andrelton Simmons' two-out grounder in the 12th inning, and host Los Angeles prevented Houston from clinching home-field advantage throughout the AL playoffs.

Cowart drew a walk from Joe Biagini (3-2) leading off the 12th for Los Angeles. He stole second without sliding and advanced on a groundout before Tucker failed to handle Simmons' hot grounder to first, ending the Angels' fourth walkoff win of the season.