

## How federal shutdown would affect troops

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

Barring a last-minute compromise between Republicans and Democrats in Congress, the federal government will shut down on Oct. 1 and force the nation's service members to report for duty without pay.

The impact of a federal funding lapse on the military could be wide-ranging.

Service members would miss at least one paycheck if a funding deal is not reached by Oct. 15, and certain programs and services would come to a halt, including drills for the National Guard and nonessential travel.

The Defense Department has not released a contingency plan for a potential shutdown but guidelines issued in previous years offer a preview of how troops could be affected.

### Pay

Service members would not be paid unless Congress passed emergency legislation to allow paychecks to continue.

Rep. Jen Kiggans, R-Va., introduced a bipartisan bill this month to protect pay for active-duty troops and reservists on active service, including members of the Coast Guard,

as well as civilians and contractors providing critical troop support.

The measure is unlikely to pass before a shutdown, however, because House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has decided to keep the House out of session until after Oct. 1.

When the government last shut down, for a five-week period that ended in January 2019, paychecks were suspended for tens of thousands of Coast Guard personnel, causing hardship for some military families.

All service members would receive back pay for any missed paychecks once federal funding resumes.

### Health care

Critical medical and dental care in Defense Department medical facilities have been exempted from previous shutdown orders, but elective surgery and other elective procedures could be postponed or canceled. Private health care provided through Tri-care would not be affected.

### Schools and child care

Schools operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity would remain

open, but sports and extracurricular activities will be paused starting Wednesday without enactment of an appropriations bill or a continuing resolution, according to a note that was emailed to parents from DODEA school leaders on Friday.

In the past, Defense Department officials have said access to child care centers would depend on the level of base staffing and demand.

### Housing, commissaries

Housing and food services have been spared from past shutdowns.

Military grocery stores should remain open because Defense Working Capital Fund activities, which include the Defense Commissary Agency, have previously been permitted to operate until their cash reserves ran out.

The Pentagon in previous contingency plans has required overseas commissaries as well as commissaries in remote U.S. locations "where no other sources of food are reasonably available for military personnel" to stay open even after cash reserves are depleted.

## Trump set to attend Hegseth's meeting with generals

*The Washington Post*

President Donald Trump has decided he's going to the last-minute global gathering of the nation's top generals in Quantico, Va., that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered last week.

Trump's appearance not only upstages Hegseth's plans, but adds new security concerns to the massive and nearly unprecedented military event.

"We have confirmation from the White House that POTUS is now attending the speech on Tuesday," a planning document sent Saturday and viewed by The Washington Post states.

Notice went out to offices around the Pentagon that the decision will "significantly change the security posture" of the

speech, set for Tuesday morning.

The addition of the president at Quantico will now put the Secret Service in charge of securing the event. Hundreds of the military's top commanding generals and admirals, ranked one-star and above, along with their senior enlisted leaders were ordered to attend by Hegseth last week. The orders provided no reason for the event and initially raised concern among attendees and military officials that he was gathering the group to inform them of mass firings or demotions.

Last week The Post first reported that Hegseth was ordering all of the generals in command positions to Quantico to hear him speak for less than an

hour about military standards and his vision for a "warrior ethos," but the now expanded visit from the president could change that schedule — and add a more politicized tenor to the gathering.

It is estimated that the cost of flying, lodging and transporting all of the military leaders — some of whom will be traveling from the Middle East, Europe and the Indo-Pacific — will be in the millions of dollars. The event has also raised security concerns about having all the top leadership in one place, particularly given that Tuesday is the end of the fiscal year, and if the government shuts down it could leave key personnel stranded from their units.

The White House did not im-

mediately respond to a request for comment on the president's travel for Tuesday's speech.

Hegseth has committed to reducing the general officer corps by 20% and has fired without cause roughly two dozen senior officers — a disproportionate number of them female general or flag officers — since he was sworn in.

Hegseth is seriously considering reducing the rank of the top commanding generals at several top posts from four to three stars, and proposing a significant consolidation of the combatant commands, several officials familiar with that planning and speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive internal deliberations told The Post.

# N. Korea expert: US faces stark decision

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — North Korea has no intention of surrendering its nuclear weapons, which leaves the United States to either to neutralize a nuclear threat or develop something like a normal relationship with Pyongyang, an expert in international affairs said Friday.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has declared his communist regime a nuclear state “whether the world likes it or not,” Jenny Town, senior fellow at the Stimson Center think tank in Washington, D.C., told reporters at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan in Tokyo.

North Korea in 2022 also declared a right to use a pre-emp-

tive nuclear strike to protect itself.

Rather than court the U.S. and its allies to alleviate sanctions designed to force North Korea to denuclearize, Kim is pursuing economic and strategic partnerships with China and Russia, Town said.

“There’s no more of this constant need to try and justify why they need nuclear weapons,” she told reporters. “Instead, really, the rhetoric has changed to simply accept the idea that they have nuclear weapons; they are a nuclear-armed state.”

Town, the director of Stimson’s Korea program and 38 North, a website focused on peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, said the U.S. is

left with only two options.

“I think the bottom line here is that what North Korea is doing is essentially forcing the U.S. and its allies to decide whether they want a relationship with North Korea or whether they just want to neutralize the nuclear threat that North Korea poses,” she said.

If the U.S. decides that a peaceful relationship and normalization of diplomatic ties is the objective, “that goal is possible,” Town said.

However, if Pyongyang perceives attempts at establishing a relationship as just a precursor to denuclearization or the unification of North Korea and South Korea, then “it’s not welcome,” she said.

The U.S. view of North Korea

complicates the question, Town added.

“The U.S. has at times been willing to improve relations with North Korea but really only in the context of denuclearization and disarmament and lowering the threat to our allies,” she said.

A relationship between the U.S. and Pyongyang has “very little perception of intrinsic value” due to North Korea’s small size and lack of resources, she added.

“But the reality is, you know, North Korea can put this challenge out there to the United States and its allies because it simply has no urgency right now to really change the relationship with the U.S. or South Korea,” Town said.

## US base in Bahrain trades out minesweeper for LCS

By SHANNON RENFROE  
*Stars and Stripes*

MANAMA, Bahrain — Sailors at a base home to the Navy’s hub in the Middle East bid farewell Thursday to the last of their wooden-hulled mine hunting ships in a mission handoff to four larger vessels specially outfitted for the mine countermeasures task.

USS Devastator was decommissioned in a ceremony at Naval Support Activity Bahrain’s Mina Salman pier in front of the gathered service members, who waxed nostalgic about the mine countermeasure fleet’s 35 years of usage.

Vice Adm. George Wikoff, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet, praised the Devastator crew.

“It takes a special breed of sailor to serve aboard a minesweeper,” Wikoff said. “Your

very existence is to sail into harm’s way so that others may safely follow.”

With their fiberglass-sheathed wooden hulls and variable-depth sonar, the Avenger-class mine countermeasure ships for years were the preferred method for clearing some of the world’s busiest and most contested waters, including the Strait of Hormuz.

But the four such vessels in Bahrain are being replaced by littoral combat ships equipped with a mine countermeasures package.

Earlier this month, the mine countermeasures ship USS Gladiator was decommissioned at NSA Bahrain, joining USS Sentry and USS Dextrous in being taken out of service.

In May, USS Canberra became the first of four Independence-class littoral combat ships to reach Bahrain.

## Airman aid Fort Hood amid shortage of civilian workers

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Air Force sent a dozen airmen to support Fort Hood’s maintenance staff after a shortage of civilian workers sent outstanding air conditioning requests past 1,000 during the final months of summer.

The central Texas Army base’s facility maintenance crew is about 25% smaller than it was this time one year ago because the Defense Department offered civilian employees the option of buyouts and early retirements, and that was followed by a hiring freeze, according to Brian Dosa, director of Fort Hood’s Directorate of Public Works. With no control over who left, some areas of expertise were hit harder than others.

Getting support from airmen from Joint Base San Antonio in Texas and Joint Base Lewis-

McChord in Washington allowed Fort Hood workers to “keep our head above water,” Dosa said.

The crews brought electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and carpentry experience, helping drop the air conditioning work order backlog from 1,324 on July 15 to 865 on Sept. 16, Dosa said.

“Their performance was outstanding and greatly appreciated during their time at Fort Hood,” he said.

Fort Hood, home to 38,000 troops and more than 14,000 family members, isn’t alone in managing facility maintenance with fewer workers. Across all Army installations, the public works departments lost about 8% of staff authorizations through early retirements and resignations in the buyout program, according to Army Installation Management Command.

# Gunman opens fire at church, killing at least 1

Associated Press

GRAND BLANC, Mich. — A gunman opened fire inside a Michigan church during Sunday services before apparently setting the building ablaze, killing at least one person and injuring nine before police shot him, authorities said.

Hundreds of people were inside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Grand Blanc Township when a 40-year-old man rammed his vehicle

into the front door, then exited the vehicle and started shooting, Police Chief William Renye told reporters.

The suspect is believed to have set the church on fire, Renye said.

Flames and smoke could be seen for hours before the blaze was put out. First responders were then sifting through the wreckage.

"We do believe we will find some additional victims once

we find the area where the fire was," Renye said.

Scott Bennett, supervisor of Grand Blanc Township, said the shooting and fire is "a tragedy that nobody wants to encounter."

The church, circled by a parking lot and a large lawn, is located near residential areas and a Jehovah's Witness church.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said in a statement that her heart is breaking for the

Grand Blanc community. "Violence anywhere especially in a place of worship, is unacceptable," she said.

Some striking nurses at nearby Henry Ford Hospital left the picket line and ran the short distance to the church to help first responders, Teamsters Local 332 President Dan Glass learned about the shooting.

"Human lives matter more than our labor dispute," Glass said.

## Trump says he will send troops to Oregon

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — President Donald Trump said Saturday that he will send troops to Portland, "authorizing Full Force, if necessary" to handle "domestic terrorists" as he expands his deployments to more American cities.

Oregon Democratic Gov. Tina Kotek responded by saying Trump is abusing his authority by ordering troops into a city that she said is doing "just fine" on its own. She was joined by other government, police and business leaders who all said soldiers are not needed and Trump is presenting a patently false picture of the city.

Trump made his announcement on social media, writing that he was directing the Department of Defense to "provide all necessary Troops to protect War ravaged Portland." Trump said the decision was necessary to protect U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, which he alleged are "under siege from attack by Antifa."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for details on Trump's announcement, such as a timeline for the deployment or what troops would be involved.

In an afternoon news conference, Kotek said she directly told Trump and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem earlier in the day that troops are not needed and she believes he does not have the authority to deploy the military there.

"We can manage our own local public safety needs. There is no insurrection. There is no threat to national security," Kotek told reporters.

Kotek said the president did not give a timetable for troops arriving. She said she told him the Oregon National Guard is not needed and she does not plan to call it up.

Trump, however, previously deployed guard soldiers and active duty Marines in Los Angeles even though California Gov. Gavin Newsom opposed it. The federal government is appealing a ruling that Trump's use of the guard was illegal.

Kotek urged the public to stay calm, saying any kind of property damage or violence will not be tolerated.

Earlier Saturday, there was no sign of any federal presence downtown, where people jogged along the Willamette River, relaxed by a riverside fountain or rode bikes on a sunny fall day.

## Trump to meet with congressional leaders

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump plans to meet with the top four congressional leaders at the White House on Monday, one day before the deadline to fund the federal government or face a shutdown.

The meeting involving House Speaker Mike Johnson and Senate Majority Leader John Thune as well as House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer was confirmed Saturday by a White House official and two other people familiar with the planning.

"President Trump has once again agreed to a meeting in the Oval Office. As we have repeatedly said, Democrats will meet anywhere, at any time and with anyone to negotiate a bipartisan spending agreement that meets the needs of the American people," Schumer and Jeffries said in a joint statement on Saturday night. "We are resolute in our determination to avoid a government shutdown and address the Republican healthcare crisis. Time is running out."

The parties have been in a standoff for days as Democrats, namely in the Senate, have refused to offer the necessary votes to pass a funding measure

that would keep the government open beyond Tuesday.

Absent any action, a shutdown would begin at 12:01 a.m. ET on Wednesday.

Democrats had secured a meeting with Trump until Republican leaders intervened and the president called it off.

But Schumer spoke privately with Thune on Friday, pushing the majority leader to get a meeting with Trump scheduled because of the approaching funding deadline, according to a Schumer aide.

"As rank-and-file Democrats begin to question their leadership's unsustainable position, Sen. Schumer is clearly getting nervous," Ryan Wrasse, a spokesman for Thune, responded Saturday night. "There's an easy way out, and they'll get a chance to take it next week."

Democrats, believing they have leverage, have insisted on key health care provisions in exchange for their votes. They want an extension of subsidies that help low- and middle-income earners purchase insurance through the Affordable Care Act. Democrats are also insisting on reversing cuts to Medicaid that were included the GOP's signature tax measure earlier this year.



# Documents reveal deepening Russia-China military ties

*The Washington Post*

Russia has agreed to equip and train a Chinese airborne battalion and share its expertise in airdropping armored vehicles that analysts say could boost Beijing's capacity to seize Taiwan, according to newly obtained documents that show the two nations' deepening military cooperation.

The agreements allow Beijing to access training and technology in one of the few areas where Russian capabilities still surpass those of the Chinese military: Russia's more experienced airborne troops, military analysts said.

Moscow has become increasingly dependent on China for dual use items to prop up its sanctions-hit military industry and sustain its war in Ukraine, but the deals show how Beijing is simultaneously tapping its partner's battlefield expertise to further Chinese leader Xi Jinping's drive to build a mod-

ern military with capabilities that match or surpass those of the United States.

The accords are an example of the two militaries moving beyond symbolic joint drills and public statements to develop interoperable systems and shared combat experience in areas that China considers critical for winning a battle over Taiwan, the self-governing island of 23 million that Beijing claims as its territory.

The documents — details of which have been independently verified by the Royal United Services Institute, a British think tank — appear to demonstrate the deepening alliance as Russia seeks to forge a new global order to counter the West and disrupt the status quo.

The intricate level of cooperation between Russia and China also underscores a weakness in Pentagon efforts to divert re-

sources from defending Ukraine and Europe and to focus instead on countering China in the Asia-Pacific region, analysts said.

"It is a very good example of how the Russians have become an enabler for the Chinese," making the security challenges of the two countries almost impossible to separate, said Jack Watling, senior research fellow for Land Warfare at RUSI.

In a future war over Taiwan, Moscow's supply of oil, gas and other natural resources — and its large defense industry — could become "strategic backup for China," added Watling, who co-authored a report published Friday by RUSI on the documents.

The Kremlin did not respond to a request for comment on the deal. Similarly, neither China's Ministry of Defense nor state-owned defense contractors involved in the deals responded to requests for comment.

## Vietnam prepares for typhoon

*Associated Press*

HANOI, Vietnam — Vietnam evacuated thousands of people from central and northern provinces Sunday as Typhoon Bualoi raced toward the country faster than expected with landfall forecast later in the day.

Bualoi had left at least 20 people dead in the central Philippines since Friday, mostly from drownings and falling trees, and knocked out power in several towns and cities, officials said. The storm forced about 23,000 families to evacuate to more than 1,400 emergency shelters.

The typhoon was expected to bring winds of up to 83 mph, storm surges of more than 3.2 feet and heavy rains that could trigger flash floods and landslides.

The eye of the typhoon was nearing the coast Sunday night and forecast to make landfall before midnight, before moving inland toward Nghe An province.

Authorities grounded fishing boats in northern and central regions and ordered evacuations. State media reported Da Nang planned to relocate more than 210,000 people, while Hue prepared to move more than 32,000 coastal residents to safer ground.

The Civil Aviation Authority said operations were suspended at four coastal airports, including Danang International Airport, with several flights rescheduled.

Heavy rains have drenched central provinces since Saturday night. In Hue, floods swamped low-lying streets, storms ripped off roofs and at least one person was reported missing after being swept away by floodwaters.

In neighboring Quang Tri province, a fishing boat sank and another was stranded while seeking shelter.

## US agencies scramble to stop new hacking campaign blamed on China

*The Washington Post*

Federal agencies are racing to contain a new wave of sophisticated hacking by suspected Chinese attackers that took advantage of previously undiscovered flaws in widely used security software from networking company Cisco.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued a rare emergency directive on Thursday, ordering all civilian agencies to test Cisco firewall equipment before midnight Friday to see if it had been breached. Agencies must immediately disconnect devices that have been compromised, the directive said.

The CISA said that hundreds of potentially vulnerable devices were installed in federal networks and that some operated by private firms were used to protect critical infrastructure.

Because firewall equipment polices traffic entering a computer network, hackers who control it can monitor, change or misdirect communications or allow additional unauthorized access. Cisco previously said the group involved behaved as if it were backed by a national government.

Security experts warned that other spies and criminals now have enough information about the attack to use the same meth-

od and would act quickly.

CISA officials did not say who is behind the attacks, but security experts, including researchers at computer security firm Palo Alto Networks, said the hackers were based in China.

Officials from the United States, Britain and other allies also urged private companies to check equipment running Cisco Adaptive Security Appliances software.

"We strongly urge them to adopt the measures" the CISA provided, said Chris Butera, acting deputy executive assistant director for cybersecurity at the agency. "The threat campaign is widespread."

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Shooting survivors refile suit after IG cites Army

**ME** PORTLAND — The survivors and family members of victims of the deadliest mass shooting in Maine history have refiled their lawsuit against the U.S. government following a new Department of Defense watchdog report that faults the Army for a high rate of failure to report violent threats by service members.

Eighteen people were killed in Lewiston in October 2023 when Robert Card opened fire at a bowling alley and a bar and grill. Dozens of survivors and relatives sued the federal government earlier this month on grounds that the Army could have stopped Card, a reservist, from carrying out the shootings.

Lawyers for the group filed their amended lawsuit on Tuesday. It cites a report issued by the inspector general for the Defense Department this month that concludes the Army failed to make mandatory reports of violent threats almost half the time.

Military law enforcement is required to report violent threats to the service's military criminal investigative organization.

The review found the Army did not consistently follow that policy in 32 of 67 violent threat investigations in 2023.

### 'Very mean squirrel' sends 2 people to ER

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — Residents of a San Francisco Bay Area city are on the lookout for an aggressive

squirrel that has sent at least two people to the emergency room for medical treatment.

Joan Heblack told ABC affiliate KGO-TV that she was walking in the Lucas Valley neighborhood of San Rafael when a squirrel seemingly came out of nowhere and attacked her leg, clawing and biting.

"It clamped onto my leg. The tail was flying up here. I was like, 'Get it off me, get off me!,'" Heblack said.

Isabel Campoy also said she was attacked while walking in the same area.

The squirrel launched itself from the ground to her face and wound up on her arm, leaving it bloody, she said.

Both women went to the emergency room, the TV station reported in its Sept. 22 story.

### Woman sues park over injuries from coaster

**FL** ORLANDO — A woman is suing Universal Orlando Resort, claiming she was injured on a roller coaster at its newest theme park. The lawsuit, filed Wednesday, comes a week after a man died from blunt impact injuries after going on the same ride.

Sandi Streets filed the negligence lawsuit in state court in Orlando, days after the death of 32-year-old Kevin Rodriguez Zavala in a separate incident.

Streets said she was invited to Universal's Epic Universe theme park just a few weeks before it officially opened to the public in May and went on the dual-launch coaster, which reaches speeds up to 62 mph.

On the ride, her head shook violently and slammed into her

seat's headrest, giving her permanent injuries, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit says Streets has suffered disability, medical care expenses, loss of the ability to work and an exacerbation of a preexisting condition since going on the ride.

The ride failed to properly restrain her head, and the theme park failed to adequately warn her of "the unsafe and unreasonably dangerous condition" of the roller coaster, the lawsuit says.

### Man guilty in string of shootings that killed 8

**AZ** PHOENIX — An Arizona man was convicted Thursday on eight murder charges for a string of fatal shootings that targeted random victims and his own mother and stepfather over a three-week span.

The crimes in late 2017 happened during a time of unease in metro Phoenix when people were scared to go out at night or drive on freeways because of two other serial shooting cases in the summer of 2015.

While details trickled out on those cases, the killings Cleophus Cooksey Jr. was accused of generated no publicity until his arrest in 2018 — a surprising development given that the public hadn't been told about investigators trying to find a serial killer.

Cooksey, 43, is now facing the death penalty when he is sentenced Monday on murder convictions, as well as on kidnapping, sexual assault and armed robbery in a trial that has spanned months.

Cooksey, an aspiring musi-

cian, knew some of the victims but wasn't acquainted with others, police said. Authorities never offered a motive.

### Ex-sheriff pleads guilty to stealing from police fund

**SC** COLUMBIA — A former sheriff in South Carolina agreed to plead guilty Thursday to stealing money from the force's benevolence fund and taking pain pills that were supposed to be destroyed as part of a narcotics take-back program.

Former Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright took money one time from the fund set aside for deputies facing financial difficulties by saying he was paying for expenses to send an officer to Washington to honor a deputy killed in the line of duty but instead put the cash in his own pocket, according to court records.

In addition to the painkillers he took from the take-back program, Wright also got a blank check from the benevolence fund and used it to pay for oxycodone and hydrocodone pills, writing it out his dealer, prosecutors said.

Two other former sheriff's office employees were charged and agreed to plead guilty Thursday.

Former sheriff's office chaplain Amos Durham helped Wright take more than \$28,000 out of the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office Chaplain's Benevolence Fund, prosecutors said.

Lawson Watson was hired by Wright as a deputy and paid more than \$200,000 over four years for work he never did, investigators said.

— From wire reports

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# Guardians' historic revival leads to playoff spot

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Guardians manager Stephen Vogt said in the midst of Cleveland's 10-game losing streak in early July that there was light at the end of the tunnel and things would turn around.

Vogt ended up selling his team a little short, as the Guardians made one of the biggest turnarounds in baseball history.

Cleveland clinched a postseason spot in fittingly improbable fashion. C.J. Kayfus was hit on the arm by a fastball from Texas Rangers reliever Robert Garcia with two outs and the bases loaded in the ninth inning Saturday night, scoring Petey Halpin with the winning run to give the Guardians a 3-2 victory that put them in the playoffs.

According to the Elias Sports Bureau, it was the first time since at least 1920 that a team won on a walk-off hit-by-pitch to clinch a postseason spot.

"When they walked (Gabriel) Arias (to load the bases), I knew I had a job to do. I knew I was going to get that job done one way or another, but I definitely didn't think it was going to be like that,"

said Kayfus, who was called up from the minors in early August.

Cleveland (86-74) became the fourth major league team and first in the American League to reach the postseason after having a 10-game losing streak, joining the 2017 Los Angeles Dodgers, 1982 Atlanta Braves and 1951 New York Giants.

"It's exactly us. Of course we're going to get in on a walk-off hit-by-pitch" a champagne-soaked Vogt said in the clubhouse as his team was celebrating. "Just to stop and think about where we came from to get here, there's no words. I couldn't be more proud of these guys. They've earned every bit of this."

According to FanGraphs, the Guardians had a 2.9% chance to make the postseason and a 0.2% chance to win the AL Central on Sept. 1.

Going into the last day of the regular season, Cleveland remained tied with the Tigers for the division lead after Detroit also wrapped up a postseason spot Saturday with a 2-1 victory over the Boston Red Sox.

If the Guardians and Tigers

ended up tied after Sunday's games, Cleveland would win the AL Central due to an 8-5 advantage in the season series. It would host a Wild Card Series starting Tuesday.

Even though Steven Kwan and José Ramírez have been the Guardians' offensive stalwarts all year, others have picked up the slack in September.

Johnathan Rodríguez, called up Wednesday after David Fry was hit in the face by a pitch Tuesday night, batted cleanup and hit a two-run homer in the first inning to put Cleveland up 2-1. It was the first at-bat for Rodríguez, who had a .167 batting average in 29 big league games, since he was called up for his third stint this season.

"They showed me the lineup last night and I showed it to my wife. She said just to play like you did at Triple-A," Rodríguez said.

On Wednesday, the Guardians became the first major league team to overcome a deficit of 15½ games and take the lead in either division or league play with a 5-1 win over Detroit. Cleveland was 40-48 and also 6½

games out of a wild-card spot on July 6 after a 7-2 loss in 10 innings to the Tigers extended the losing streak to 10.

Since July 7, the Guardians are an AL-best 47-26.

The 1914 Boston Braves were 15 games back in the National League on July 4 and rallied to win by 10½ games, according to Elias. Since baseball went to division play in 1969, the biggest deficit overcome was 14 games by the 1978 New York Yankees to win the AL East.

On Sept. 4, Cleveland was 69-70 and 11 games behind Detroit before going 15-1, including a 10-game winning streak that included a three-game sweep of the Tigers. It is the largest September lead overcome to tie or take the lead in the division or league, according to Elias. The previous mark was 8½ games by the 1964 St. Louis Cardinals and 1964 Cincinnati Reds.

"I give our players and coaches and staff and (Vogt) a ton of credit because it was a really hard mountain to climb to make this a reality," Guardians president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti said.

## Tigers avert late collapse to clinch postseason berth

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston clinch party moved across the diamond.

Less than 24 hours after the Red Sox drenched the home clubhouse at Fenway Park to celebrate their postseason berth, Detroit was spraying Champagne in the visitors' locker room Saturday after beating Boston to earn a spot in the American League playoffs.

"They didn't forget to celebrate, I'll tell you that," Tigers manager A.J. Hinch told reporters as he ducked into a hallway to try to get away from the postgame mayhem. "We're having a good time because we've earned it. But it's very rewarding to get to the postseason, no matter how you do it."

After blowing a 14-game lead in the AL Central and an eighth-inning lead Friday night that would have secured their spot a day earlier, Detroit beat the Red Sox 2-1 on

Saturday. Assured at least a wild card, the Tigers were still in position to win the division and host a first-round playoff series with a victory Sunday at Boston and a Cleveland loss to Texas.

The victory with one game to play averted a collapse that would have been among the biggest in baseball history. The Guardians, who were in fourth place and 15½ games out of first July 8, were in position to complete the biggest comeback ever with a win Sunday or a Detroit loss. Cleveland topped the Rangers 3-2 on Saturday night and holds the head-to-head tiebreaker over the Tigers after winning their season series.

"We'll be watching and paying attention to what's going on around the league," said Hinch, who saved ace Tarik Skubal for the Wild Card Series opener Tuesday instead of using him to try to win the division Sunday.

"Our guys earned this celebration,"

Hinch added, "and because of how good we were for the majority of the season, we were able to withstand a really tough stretch and finish with a couple of wins."

Will Vest retired Carlos Narvárez on a groundout to third for the final out, pumping his fist in celebration before his teammates joined him at the mound. Before returning to the raucous clubhouse, Detroit donned blue "October Baseball" T-shirts — just like the red ones the Red Sox wore the night before.

"I absolutely hated it" watching Boston celebrate the night before, designated hitter Jahmai Jones said. "I hate losing. So when you feel like it's going to happen on night one, and it didn't, everybody kind of understood the kind of taste that left in our mouth."

"But we knew that we had a great opportunity the next day," he said. "And we really focused today on trying to get that win."



# Cubs secure top NL wild-card spot

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Michael Busch homered twice and drove in four runs, and the Chicago Cubs clinched the top NL wild card with a 7-3 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals on Saturday.

Pete Crow-Armstrong and Seiya Suzuki also connected for Chicago in its third win in four games. Jameson Taillon (11-7) pitched six effective innings.

The Cubs (91-70) will host San Diego in the first round of the playoffs. Game 1 of the best-of-three series is Tuesday.

It's the first postseason appearance for Chicago since 2020.

Nolan Arenado and Jordan Walker homered for St. Louis (78-83) in its third consecutive loss. Michael McGreevy (8-4) permitted three runs and six hits in 4½ innings.

Busch drove McGreevy's first pitch deep to right-center for his fifth career leadoff homer. He doubled in the third and connected for a tiebreaking two-run shot in the fifth for his team-leading 34th homer. He added a run-scoring triple in the seventh before he was walked intentionally in the eighth.

**Mets 5, Marlins 0:** Pete Alonso homered and drilled an RBI double, Clay Holmes combined with three relievers on a one-

hitter and visiting New York beat Miami to push its playoff fate to the final day of the regular season.

The Mets remained tied with Cincinnati for the last National League wild card at 83-78. The Reds beat the NL Central champion Brewers 7-4.

Because Cincinnati holds the head-to-head tiebreaker, New York needed the Reds to lose their final game against Milwaukee to have a chance to reach the postseason.

Holmes (12-8) allowed one hit in six innings with three walks and a strikeout. Brooks Raley and Tyler Rogers each worked a perfect inning before Edwin Díaz got three outs to end it.

Alonso put the Mets ahead 1-0 with his NL-leading 41st double in the first inning.

**Reds 7, Brewers 4:** Sal Stewart homered and hit an RBI single, Miguel Andujar went 3-for-5 and visiting Cincinnati moved a step closer to its first postseason berth since 2020 by beating Milwaukee.

The Reds could earn the National League's third and final wild-card playoff spot if they beat the Brewers or the Mets lost to the Marlins on Sunday. A Cincinnati loss and New York win would send the Mets to the playoffs instead.

Jackson Chourio homered for Milwaukee, which clinched the best regular-season record in the majors and home-field advantage throughout the postseason thanks to Philadelphia's 5-0 loss to Minnesota.

The Reds broke a scoreless tie with a six-run third inning that included four hits, two errors and a pair of walks.

Cincinnati starter Andrew Abbott (10-7) allowed three runs over 5½ innings. Emilio Pagan, pitching for a fourth straight day, retired the side in order in the ninth for his 32nd save in 38 opportunities.

**Blue Jays 5, Rays 1:** Trey Yessavage (1-0) struck out five in five shutout innings for his first major league win, Alejandro Kirk homered and host Toronto stayed atop the AL East heading into the final game of the season by beating Tampa Bay.

The Blue Jays could clinch the division title and the best record in the AL by matching or beating the Yankees' outcome against the Orioles in Sunday's regular season finale.

Toronto came into Saturday tied with New York in the East. The Blue Jays hold the tiebreaker after winning eight of 13 meetings.

Toronto took a 3-0 lead in the second inning on a two-run dou-

ble from Ernie Clement and an RBI single from Andrés Giménez.

**Yankees 6, Orioles 1:** Aaron Judge, Giancarlo Stanton and Ryan McMahon hit early home runs off Tomoyuki Sugano, and host New York beat Baltimore to maintain at least a share of the AL East lead heading into the regular season's final day.

Th Yankees (93-68) have won seven straight and 10 of 11, and are assured of at least a wild card. New York began the day tied with Toronto, which beat Tampa Bay later Saturday.

Cam Schlichter (4-3) struck out a career-high nine in seven scoreless innings of two-hit ball. The 24-year-old rookie right-hander had a 2.96 ERA in 14 starts.

The Yankees' Jazz Chisholm Jr. left after he was hit on the left arm by a 96.8 mph pitch from Grant Wolfram in the fifth. New York said X-rays were negative and he will have a CT scan.

**Astros 6, Angels 1:** Christian Walker homered twice and visiting Houston beat Los Angeles, a couple of hours after getting eliminated from playoff contention.

Zach Cole and Jesús Sánchez also went deep for the Astros, who will miss the postseason for the first time since 2016.

# Horvath, Tecza help Navy run over Rice to reach 4-0

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Quarterback Blake Horvath ran for 110 yards and two touchdowns, Alex Tecza added 104 yards and Navy turned back Rice 21-13 on Saturday.

The Midshipmen have won seven-straight games and started 4-0 in back-to-back seasons for the first time since 1978-79.

MarcAnthony Parker's 13 tackles sparked a Navy defense that held the Owls to 234 total yards, which included a pair of

scoring drives in the fourth quarter that totaled 115 yards.

Horvath scored on an 8-yard run in the second quarter and a 2-yard run in the fourth. Wide receiver Luke Hutchinson scored on a 2-yard reverse in to open the scoring.

The Midshipmen piled up 283 yards on the ground and Horvath was 8-for-13 passing for 172 yards with an interception. Navy (4-0, 3-0 American Athletic Conference) finished with 455 total yards.

Rice (3-2, 1-1) intercepted Horvath late in the third quarter and turned that into a 35-yard field goal by Enoch Gota. Chase Jenkins threw a 3-yard touchdown pass to Drayden Dickmann midway through the fourth quarter and Gota capped the scoring with a 44-yarder.

**Hawaii 44, Air Force 35:** Micah Alejado threw for a season-high 457 yards and three touchdowns, Jackson Harris had seven receptions for 144 yards and the visiting Rainbow Warriors

took down the Falcons.

Hawaii (4-2, 1-1 Mountain West) took the lead for good with a 24-yard scoring grab from Brandon White in the first quarter. Air Force (1-3, 0-3) rallied back with three fourth-quarter touchdowns, but the Rainbow Warriors answered each time.

The teams scored a combined 41 points in the fourth quarter and 24 in the last six minutes. They scored within a minute of each other three times.

# Oregon beats Penn State in double OT

Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Dillon Thieneman intercepted Drew Allar's pass in the second overtime and No. 6 Oregon outlasted No. 3 Penn State 30-24 on Saturday night.

On the first play of the second overtime, Ducks quarterback Dante Moore hit Gary Bryant Jr. for a quick 25-yard score. Oregon failed on the two-point conversion, but Thieneman's interception made the score hold up.

Jamari Johnson ran for a touchdown in overtime, Dierre Hill Jr. caught a touchdown pass, Jordan Davison ran for another score and Atticus Sappington kicked a field goal for the Ducks (5-0, 2-0 Big Ten) who won their FBS-leading 23rd straight regular-season game.

They also improved to 12-0 in regular-season Big Ten play and did so in one of college football's most hostile environments, winning the rematch of last season's conference championship game. They did so despite

111,015 fans — most of them clad in all white — trying to lift the Nittany Lions in the final minutes.

Trailing 17-10, Penn State got the ball with 7:07 left to play. An offense that had managed just 189 yards to that point drove down the field where Allar hooked up with Devonte Ross for a 7-yard touchdown to force overtime.

Ross caught a 35-yarder from Allar earlier in the fourth, but it wasn't enough to keep the Nittany Lions from falling to 4-21 against AP Top 10 teams since James Franklin became coach.

Kaytron Allen scored the opening touchdown for Penn State in overtime before Johnson equaled it.

After enduring a sluggish, back-and-forth first half, Oregon took control in the third quarter.

Led by Moore, the Ducks drove to the Nittany Lions 9 where Penn State defensive end Chaz Coleman appeared to punch the football out of Noah

Wittington's grasp. Safety Zakee Wheatley recovered and returned it to midfield before a review overturned the fumble.

Oregon went up 10-7 on the next play when Moore threw an 8-yard pass to Hill, who bulled his way over the goal line with 3:16 left in the third.

The Nittany Lions were booed off the field after their next possession — a three-and-out that featured two incompletions and a 1-yard catch.

The Ducks took a 14-point lead with its ensuing possession, a 10-play, 75-yard drive that ended when Davison burst up the middle on fourth-and-1 for an 8-yard touchdown with 12:25 left to play.

They changed their tune when Allar found Ross running wide open to the corner of that end zone for a 35-yard touchdown pass that cut Oregon's lead to 17-10.

Allar went back to work on Penn State's next possession, steering his offense 62 yards and finding Ross with a pass that

turned into a 7-yard touchdown and tied it 17-17 with 30 seconds left.

Both teams' defenses starred in the first half.

The Ducks kept Allar from getting into a rhythm while holding Nittany Lion tailbacks Allen and Nicholas Singleton to 18 rushing yards over the first two quarters.

Meanwhile, Penn State's defense was just as tough. The Nittany Lions forced a punt, a turnover on downs and a missed field goal before Sappington nailed a 42-yarder to tie it 3:42 before halftime.

## The takeaway

**Oregon:** The Ducks came into one of college football's most hostile environments and did what they needed to do to get a win.

**Penn State:** The Nittany Lions believe they have the pieces to make another deep run in the College Football Playoff, but they need to do some soul-searching after this one.

# No. 17 Alabama hands No. 5 Georgia rare home loss

Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Ty Simpson passed for 276 yards and two touchdowns and ran for a score as No. 17 Alabama held on late to beat No. 5 Georgia 24-21 on Saturday night and hand the Bulldogs their first home loss in six years.

The Crimson Tide (3-1, 1-0 Southeastern Conference) have won three straight since opening the season with a 31-17 loss at Florida State.

"It's another step in the right direction for our team," coach Kalen DeBoer said. "They're already talking, you know, they're not done with their improvement, and we've been really focusing on that ... not getting caught up in anything else other than what we could control. And

I'm super proud of them for that."

Georgia (3-1, 1-1) fell behind 17-7 in the first half and never led. The Bulldogs fell to 1-7 against Alabama under coach Kirby Smart, the Crimson Tide's former defensive coordinator.

Alabama ended Georgia's home winning streak at 33. It was the longest active streak among FBS schools and included 10 wins against Top 25 teams. With the Crimson Tide leading 24-21 early in the fourth quarter, defensive lineman LT Overton dropped Bulldogs running back Cash Jones for a 2-yard loss on a fourth-and-1 run from the Alabama 8.

After forcing a punt on Georgia's final possession, the

Crimson Tide held the ball for the final 3 minutes, 19 seconds.

The Bulldogs trailed 21-7 at halftime of their 44-41 overtime win at Tennessee last week. After falling behind 17-7 against Alabama, Georgia couldn't complete another comeback.

Freshman Chauncey Bowens, who had 12 carries for 119 yards and a touchdown, took over as the Bulldogs' go-to running back after starter Nate Frazier's lost fumble in the second quarter.

Bowens and Dillon Bell each had 43-yard runs as Georgia ran for 227 yards but passed for only 130.

## Streak ends

The 33-game home winning streak was a Bulldogs school record. Georgia's last home loss

came on Oct. 12, 2019, a 20-17 loss to South Carolina in double overtime.

## The takeaway

**Alabama:** Following their third consecutive win, the Crimson Tide will likely make a big move up in the AP Top 25. Led by Simpson, Alabama won the game on third downs on both sides of the ball. The offense converted 12 of 19 third downs while holding the Bulldogs to only two successful conversions on eight attempts.

**Georgia:** The home loss could send the Bulldogs down at least a few spots in the next Top 25. Georgia struggled again with missed tackles in its first game after giving up 496 yards at Tennessee.