STARS AND STRIPES®

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Iraq War veteran Joseph Hummel is prepped for an electroencephalography with a cap and sensors prior to receiving the magnetic resonance therapy that he says has eased his insomnia and anger.

DAVID WALTER BANKS
The Washington Post

ELECTRIC HEALING

Brain wave technology helps treat veterans with PTSD

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US suspends some counterterrorism efforts in Yemen

BY GREG MILLER AND CRAIG WHITLOCK
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration has been forced to suspend certain counterterrorism operations with Yemen in the aftermath of the collapse of its government, according to U.S. officials, a move that eases pressure on al-Qaida's most dangerous franchise.

Armed drones operated by the CIA and the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command remain deployed for now over southern Yemen, where al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula is based. But some U.S. officials said that the Yemeni security services that provided much of the intelligence that sustained that U.S. air campaign are now controlled by Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, who have seized control of much of the capital.

Even before the disintegration of the government, officials say, the growing chaos in Yemen had resulted in a steady erosion in intelligence-gathering efforts against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and a de facto suspension in raids by Yemeni units trained, equipped and often flown to targeted al-Qaida compounds by U.S. forces.

SEE YEMEN ON PAGE 7

Commandant releases plan to shake up Marine Corps

BY DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

The new top general in the Marine Corps released a 16-page plan on Friday detailing his vision for the service, emphasizing a realignment of troops to meet demands in the Pacific and Africa, better coordination with Special Operations units and new psychological testing to assess resiliency in recruits.

Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford's planning guidance is intended to outline how the Marine Corps "will set the conditions to fight and win against future enemies," he wrote. He took over as the service's top officer on Oct. 17, replacing the retiring Gen. James F. Amos.

Dunford, who previously served as the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said in his planning guidance that the need for Marines is strong, citing recent operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Liberia and South Sudan. He outlined broad changes, including a new plan that will provide each four-star geographic combatant commander with a "properly tailored and effective Marine component."

Dunford

"This will include changes to General Officer assignments and organization/manning of the staffs," Dunford wrote. "The sources realigned to our components will come from other headquarters elements … The desired end state is the effective employment and support of assigned, allocated and apportioned Marine Corps forces."

The service will focus heavily in 2015 and 2016 on preparing to fight from the sea in an "anti-access, area denial" environment. Fighting from the sea has long been considered a Marine Corps mission, but the service did much less of it as it deployed tens of thousands of troops at a time to Iraq and Afghanistan.

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'Let's play two': Remembering Cubs legend Ernie Banks

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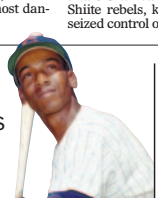

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Troops in West Africa may head home soon as infection rates fall

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100 troops deploying to Mideast to 'survey' rebel training sites

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QUOTE
OF THE DAY

"It's relatively easy now to look at it and say, 'Was it completely necessary given where we are now?' But what I would argue is that, if you look at the history of this epidemic, there were times where it dipped and then came back."

—Lt. Col. Brian DeSantis, spokesman for the U.S. military's anti-Ebola effort in Africa

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MILITARY

Major hopes shooting report brings closure

By Jennifer Hlad
Stars and Stripes

The last soldier to be shot by Spc. Ivan Lopez before the Fort Hood shooter took his own life said he hopes the release of the Army's investigation report on the incident can help victims and families move forward.

"If this can bring some kind of closure to [the victims and their families], then that's great," Maj. Patrick Miller told Stars and Stripes.

The report, released Friday, concludes that there were "no clear warning signs" and that the April 2, 2014, shooting was not preventable.

Miller, who was shot in the stomach but is now "close to 100 percent," said the situation is scary because it was so unpredictable.

"I think we do a really good job of recognizing soldiers with PTSD," of offering help, and of looking out for one another, Miller said. But even with the stressors Lopez was experiencing, he said, "how can you predict that somebody's going to do that?"

After learning on the morning of April 2 that a leave request might not be approved, Lopez went home and got his .45-caliber Smith & Wesson pistol, according to the report. He returned to Fort Hood and argued with superiors about the leave request, then went outside and tried to make a few calls before he returned and began shooting.

Lopez drove to various locations on base, shooting even while he was driving, killing three soldiers and injuring a dozen others before turning the gun on himself.

Miller was working in the 1st Medical Brigade building that afternoon, catching up on emails, when he heard gunshots.

"I just remember how quiet it got," Miller said. "We know what that sound is … but we aren't accustomed to hearing it inside."

Someone asked whether those were gunshots, and then the soldiers heard doors slamming and people running. Miller said he ran from his office out into the larger office, where about 10 soldiers were working, and said, "Everybody get down, hide."

Then, he went out into the hallway.

"It's kind of a fight or flight; you're not really thinking," he said of the few seconds after hearing the gunshots. He wanted to do something to help, he said, and when he looked down the hall, he saw a specialist he didn't know walking toward him.

Miller says he yelled, "Dude, what are you doing? Get out of the hallway!" and the specialist — Lopez — looked up and started running toward him, he said.

"I thought he wanted to come into my office for protection," Miller said.

He didn't see the gun until a split second before Lopez shot him in the stomach.

Miller said his ears were ringing and he was in disbelief, but as Lopez fumbled while trying to reload his gun, Miller pushed him as hard as he could against the wall, closed and locked the door and ran to another door to close it.

As he was running, he called 911 and applied pressure to his wound.

"I didn't know how long I was going to live," Miller said. "If you're hit in the trunk, in the core, it's scary. There's no exit wound."

Photo courtesy of Patrick Miller

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno visited Maj. Patrick Miller while he was recovering in the hospital after he was shot in the stomach by Spc. Ivan Lopez at Fort Hood, Texas, in April 2014.

But he wanted to make sure he locked the other door first, he said. Then he grabbed the soldiers in the office and pulled them into his office so they'd be behind two locked doors. He passed the 911 call off to another soldier and used his gym towel to apply pressure to his stomach.

Miller still felt he was going to die and thought, "what a crappy way to go," as he lay on the floor of his office for about half an hour. But then, he figured if he could still breathe and understand what was going on, he would likely survive.

He said he thought, "I'm going to frickin' live, but I need to get out of this office and get to the hospital."

No ambulances could go to the site because authorities weren't yet sure whether Lopez was dead, so Miller and the other soldiers opened a window and yelled to a military police officer outside. He was getting a little lightheaded, and the injury was starting to hurt as he crawled through the office window, he said. The police put him in the back of a pickup truck and took him to the hospital.

Miller went through two surgeries in less than 24 hours, then spent two weeks in the intensive care unit with pneumonia and multiple infections, he said. He learned the details of the shooting from news reports and from friends and family, and he was upset that he couldn't leave the hospital to see President Barack Obama speak at the memorial service for the fallen soldiers. He did get to meet Obama a few months later, though, he said, and he served as the grand marshal of a parade in his hometown of Allegany, N.Y.

Miller's unit moved back into the building, but bulletproof glass was installed where there was previously an open window.

"We have to think about that stuff now," he said.

Miller moved to Kansas in July for Command and General Staff College and will move to Hawaii for a new assignment after he graduates this summer.

Recovering from the gunshot wound was "the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life," he said, but he is now back to his normal workout routine and ran a half-marathon in October.

"I just have to keep getting stronger," Miller said.

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2 Marines die in Calif. helicopter crash

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — The military says two Marines were killed when their helicopter crashed during a training exercise in Southern California.

The Third Marine Aircraft Wing chopper was carrying just the two when it went down late Friday afternoon at the base in Twentynine Palms.

Both Marines on board died as a result of crash injuries.

The Marine Corps says it's withholding their names for 24 hours to notify relatives.

There was no immediate word on a cause of the crash, which is under investigation.

No other details were available early Saturday.

Navy decommissions USS Rodney Davis

EVERETT, Wash. — The Navy held a decommissioning ceremony Friday at Naval Station Everett for the frigate Rodney Davis. It returned from its final deployment last month, after 28 years of service.

The Navy plans to sell it to a foreign military.

The Navy also recently decommissioned another Everett-based frigate, the Ingraham, which will be scrapped in Bremerton.

From The Associated Press

MILITARY

Fort Lee course teaches troops to handle explosives

By Shelby Mertens
The (Petersburg, Va.) Progress-Index

PETERSBURG, Va. — Ever wondered how explosive devices are handled and destroyed? The students in Fort Lee's Explosive Ordnance Disposal course, part of the post's Ordnance School, learn how to safely identify and dispose of explosive devices in a highly challenging course.

The students do not handle real explosive devices, but they are equipped with the basic knowledge of explosives in the introductory course at Fort Lee that prepares them for advanced training. After students successfully complete phase one, they are then transferred to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida for additional training.

Once students complete the second portion of the training, they then can join EOD units around the world. The unit supports missions for the U.S. Secret Service, the State Department and other federal agencies.

"EOD is really the go-to people for anybody in the Army and of course it's an all-services deal, (serving) Marines, Navy, Air Force, everybody's got EOD," said Sgt. 1st Class Craig Cohen, instructor of the phase one EOD course. "So if you have an explosive, on the battlefield, stateside, wherever it may be, we're the people to call for it (for) any kind of explosive."

Fort Lee's EOD training is 7½ weeks long and students are evaluated in a variety of ways, including written tests, hands-on tests and at the end a combination of both.

"For this course, we have to consider everybody at a zero-level base knowledge so we have to start from the ground up, we have to build some sort of foundation of basic terms, some history, some basic tools and generally the basics of what we do so realistically, this is just the building block of the foundation of the actual job, itself," Cohen said.

The students are issued iPads and are provided with training aids such as identification guides and videos.

For hands-on testing, Cohen said a student must assemble an explosive charge from the point of initiation — the safe area — to the point of detonation, which is at a simulated distance away.

The EOD course has a 50 percent failure rate, one of the highest among military occupational specialties.

"It really is difficult," Cohen said. "Ninety-nine percent of the people are going to have no idea what they're dealing with, so you have to, through testing and the ISAP (student assessment plan), we have to determine who has the best chance at finishing the school completely all the way through Eglin."

Cohen said that while most military training schools require a minimum passage score of 70 percent, the EOD program requires 85 percent.

"It really takes a bright individual to make it," he said.

Second Lt. Sean Swistara, 25, and military specialist Steven Calisti, 28, started the EOD course at Fort Lee five weeks ago. Both are National Guardsmen from the Detroit area who served in the same unit together. Swistara and Calisti both plan to attend the second phase of EOD at Eglin.

Shelby Mertens, The (Petersburg, Va.) Progress-Index/AP

A soldier undergoes training Dec. 9 in the explosive ordnance disposal course at Fort Lee, Va.

Both men used to be combat engineers before joining the EOD program.

Calisti and Swistara said the EOD course is not for everyone.

"It's extremely challenging. We started the course with 33 people and right now we are down to 21, I believe. The class that's behind us started with roughly the same amount and I believe they're down to 12," he said. "Statistically, this is one of the hardest schools in the military to go through."

Calisti said what makes the course difficult is the amount of memorization that is required. However, the students are not responsible for memorizing every type of explosive, as there are "thousands, if not tens of thousands," according to Cohen. Calisti said the main memorization is of general terms, EOD history and explosive identification.

"There's a lot of memorization and not only memorizing, but being able to recall it when you're put into a practical exercise and you have to actually identify a piece of ordnance sitting in front of you," Calisti said. "It's just a lot of studying, honestly. You have to really want to be here."

Despite the challenges, Swistara said the class is a tight-knit group, which makes it enjoyable. He was attracted to the job because of the fact that every day would be different.

"Basically, everything here is problem solving, it's like giant puzzles, so it's kind of like taking brain teasers every day at work, so it's always interesting," Swistara said. "I really like (learning) how everything works and being able to diagnose and all that kind of stuff."

Safety is the number one priority in the EOD classroom.

"The big thing we're trained on here, as well as in Florida, is how to safely approach and identify an ordnance as well as how to render it safe so that we can eventually dispose of it and make sure all the threat goes away," Swistara said.

The class teaches students the importance of ensuring safety and minimizing property damage. Swistara said students in the class learn how to make fast decisions.

"The entire program revolves around safety, so how to in an adrenaline situation, where you're on the clock and something needs to be taken care of, how to stay calm and be able to take whatever means necessary to get the job done," he said.

To destroy an explosive, Cohen said, "Generally we countercharge. So we bring our own explosives, C4 is what we generally use, and we destroy by explosion … so we have control at that point and that's really the safest bet."

Both Swistara and Calisti have past military experience with explosives.

"In our previous MOS, we actually worked with explosives, but it was more along the lines of placement and use, now it's more on how it does this, why it does this and how to actually make it safe, so it expands on what we knew and it's just interesting," Calisti said.

Marines: Dunford calls for more integration with special operations forces

Dani A. Zunun/Courtesy of the U.S. Marines

Marines from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit participate in a live-fire exercise Jan. 18 aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima.

FROM FRONT PAGE

The commandant also signaled a desire to have Marine units work more closely with special operations troops, something Maj. Gen. Joseph Osterman, the top general overseeing Marine Special Operations, also indicated was coming in a recent interview with Checkpoint. Marines and special operations units are "highly complementary," Dunford wrote, making it "only natural" that the service should improve its ability to operate with U.S. Special Operations Command.

"To strengthen interoperability in the future, we will experiment with new concepts and technologies to achieve integrated effects on tomorrow's battlefield through the complementary capabilities of the Marine Corps and SOF," Dunford wrote, using an acronym for special operations forces.

With fewer Navy ships available than there once were, the Marine Corps also will aggressively develop plans to use "alternate platforms," Dunford said. He did not elaborate in the plan released on Friday, but the service has been exploring deploying troops from new, smaller vessels rather than just the amphibious assault ships that traditionally carry Marines.

In particular, Dunford prioritized developing a plan for the deployment of Marines designed to help in times of crisis in Africa and a unit that deploys on a rotational basis each year to Darwin, Australia.

"We will begin to implement a plan in 2015, the results of which will inform subsequent operational deployments, capability development and doctrine for alternative platform employment," Dunford wrote.

Dunford also calls for changes at home. While attending boot camp "changes a person forever," he said, the service should explore adopting new psychological testing for recruits to make sure they are capable of not only becoming Marines, but successfully completing their time in service.

"We will quickly assess the efficacy of available psychological screening tools currently used by special operations forces, law enforcement organizations, and industry," the general said. "The end state is to enhance the quality and resilience of the force — thereby making us more combat ready."

MILITARY

Ryan Wood, the Brain Treatment Center's operations coordinator, prepares former Marine Joseph Hummel for magnetic resonance therapy.

PHOTOS BY DAVID WALTER BANKS
The Washington Post

'BRAIN ZAPPING'

Vets say experimental PTSD treatment has changed their lives

BY RICHARD LEIBY
The Washington Post

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIF. — The headquarters of Oakley, a maker of recreational and military gear, looks as if it belongs in a war zone. It's a massive bunker with exposed-steel pipes, girders and blast walls. Even the dais in the auditorium is armored.

But on a recent afternoon, the talk inside the building, set atop an arid, inland hillside in Orange County, is not about fighting wars but about caring for warriors. Doctors, scientists and veterans approach the podium at a conference to present some of the latest tools to help vets recover from wounds both mental and physical: bionics, virtual reality, magnetic waves.

A session called "Healing the Warrior Brain" features a trim, bleach-blond former Army staff sergeant named Jonathan Warren, who recounts on video his struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder after combat in Iraq. His flashbacks, panic attacks and booze benders were well chronicled: For a year, the Los Angeles Times tracked Warren's efforts to find peace, including via Veterans Affairs therapy.

It didn't work, he says. But now a different Jon Warren is here to say that he is finally free of symptoms, one year after that 2013 story ran. No longer does his worst memory of the Iraq War — failing to rescue his best friend, who nearly burned to death after their Humvee hit a roadside bomb in 2006 — grasp his psyche and inflict guilt.

That's because of a revolutionary new treatment that retuned his brain, he says, and set "my frequencies right." Now he's able to proudly embrace his military service, "to keep the memory, to be able to go there," Warren tells the audience, "and not be controlled by it."

The 32-year-old veteran, who also suffered traumatic brain injury in the blast, credits his recovery to something called magnetic resonance therapy, or MRT — a procedure that pulses energy from magnetic coils into his cortex. He and scores of other combat vets have been drawn by word of mouth to a private clinic here for what some of them call "brain zapping."

The unproven procedure is offered at the Brain Treatment Center, located in an unremarkable office park, free of charge to former servicemembers. The vets exit telling of a miracle cure, a transformation to tranquillity that they, their buddies and families can hardly believe.

"It saved my life," they say, one after another. "I got my husband back," their wives say.

Glowing testimonials also flow from the parents of autistic children treated here, who say they've seen breakthroughs beyond all expectation: children who are truly communicating for the first time, learning normally, behaving like other youngsters instead of dwelling in unknowable private worlds.

Is this a product of science? A matter of faith? Or simply a mystery?

Yes, yes and yes.

Miracles sometimes require all three.

Unexplored frontiers

As doctors take on stubborn, baffling neurological disorders such as PTSD, autism and Alzheimer's disease, they are turning to esoteric treatments that require journeys to unexplored frontiers.

"As humans, we can identify galaxies light-years away, we can study particles smaller than an atom. But we still haven't unlocked the mystery of the three pounds of matter that sits between our ears," President Barack Obama said in launching an initiative to understand and map the brain.

Former Army staff sergeant Jonathan Warren credits magnetic resonance therapy with his recovery from post-traumatic stress disorder.

SEE BRAIN ON PAGE 5

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MILITARY

Brain: Researchers are conducting trials to gain credibility with Pentagon, VA

FROM PAGE 4

The goal of the brain initiative is to harness private, academic and federal research along the lines of the Human Genome Project, this time using experts in physics and medicine to focus on the brain's nearly 100 billion neurons and 100 trillion connections — the circuitry that governs thought, learning and behavior.

Some doctors think the plan is too focused on mapping and not enough on exploring potential cures. One of them is Yi Jin, the Brain Treatment Center's medical director. The affable, Taiwan-born psychiatrist has plowed ahead with MRT for PTSD, autism and other disorders despite limited evidence that it works.

"We are not claiming efficacy, but we are seeing clinical responses that are positive," the doctor said cautiously in an interview, offsetting some bolder testimonials of swift, remarkable improvement in quality of life.

In 2008, the Food and Drug Administration approved the magnetic procedure — applied through what is called transcranial magnetic stimulation — for drug-resistant major depression. Published studies in recent years — one with 20 PTSD patients, another with 30 — reported significant reduction in symptoms in patients receiving this TMS care. The procedure has been shown to be safe and is offered for depression at medical centers including Johns Hopkins in Baltimore.

Jin uses the treatment off-label, customizing it, he said, to realign and synchronize the firing of neurons in each patient's brain depending on the condition: People with Alzheimer's, anxiety, sleep and eating disorders, addiction and tinnitus (ringing in the ears) have gone under the coils that emit the magnetic fields.

He calls it "noninvasive neuromodulation." In May, the clinic became a research affiliate of the University of Southern California's Center for Neurorestoration, whose director touts MRT's potential as "a real game-changer for the treatment of neurological diseases."

More than 100 vets have been through treatment since Jin started offering it in 2013. Many say they had given up on the VA's PTSD approaches — which include behavior therapy, medication and virtual re-exposure to trauma — before finding their way to the clinic.

"One hundred percent responded with very visible change," Jin said.

A pilot program for veterans?

Last spring, Jin and others with the center made the rounds in Washington, briefing officials at the Pentagon and VA and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., on their PTSD findings. They urged a pilot program to give vets immediate access to the treatment, which they said could be simply implemented with a couple of MRT machines, which cost about $50,000 each.

PHOTOS BY DAVID WALTER BANKS/The Washington Post

Above: Ryan Wood holds a paddle-shaped wand over the forehead of Joseph Hummel to administer magnetic resonance therapy.

Left: Electroencephalography equipment hangs at the Brain Treatment Center in Newport Beach, Calif. The energy-pulse procedure is unproved for PTSD, but patients consider the results miraculous.

> **'I felt so extinguished, but now I feel a spark in there that wasn't there. It's a new life for me.'**
>
> **Scott Ralston**
> former Marine sergeant on magnetic resonance therapy

But the VA needs controlled clinical trials. So, striving to gain credibility, the center launched a double-blind trial in October for 48 vets who reported PTSD symptoms at the University of California at San Diego.

"Right now it's like we're selling snake oil," acknowledges Kevin Murphy, a pediatric radiologist and oncologist running the PTSD and autism trials. "It's hard to believe, and if I hadn't had my own son treated, I wouldn't have believed it."

Faith and love

On a recent day at the Brain Treatment Center, a former Marine helicopter crew chief reclines in a medical suite, eyes closed, while a bearded ex-Army squad leader holds a paddle-shaped wand over the forehead of his fellow Iraq combat veteran.

Click-click-click.

For six seconds, a staccato beat ensues from the device. Then 54 seconds of silence before the clicking resumes.

"It's almost like a magnetic massage, a little tickle," said Ryan Wood, the man with the wand, who swears by the PTSD treatment he received here himself. Jin has hired 10 veterans, including Wood, 30, who is the center's operations coordinator, and Jon Warren, 32, who does outreach to fellow veterans.

"It's like waking up from a good nap," said Joseph Hummel, 37, the ex-Marine, who witnessed four comrades die in a fiery helicopter crash at the start of the Iraq War in 2003. "It's like taking a 10-minute snoozer at 2 o'clock, and you feel like you've slept 16 hours."

Hummel, an insurance agent, said his PTSD manifested in chronic insomnia, explosive anger and excessive drinking; he said he was able to sleep normally for the first time in years after his first treatment in March and awoke a far calmer man.

He decided if it worked so immediately for him, it might help his 15-year-old stepson, Andrew, who is autistic.

Andrew used to communicate mainly by reciting random lines from movies, his parents say. Andrew might have thought he was connecting with people, but in fact, his parents say, he never really engaged in two-way conversations, and never started them. He separated himself from the family.

Now the teenager's mother, Joleen Hummel, is sitting in the center's waiting room while Andrew undergoes treatment just a few hours after her husband did. She's recalling what happened after her son's first appointment last year.

"He walked out of the treatment door — he was cracking up and laughing, and he just doesn't do that," she says. "Right away, there was something."

That night, she had an actual conversation with her son.

Better treatment, better diagnosis

On several occasions, Jin has met with Peter Chiarelli, a blunt-spoken retired general who once led efforts to reduce the Army's alarming suicide rate. Now he is chief executive of One Mind, a nonprofit dedicated in part to finding ways to treat what Chiarelli calls post-traumatic stress. (To avoid the stigma attached to mental illness, the group does not use the word "disorder" in referring to PTSD.)

He and Jin say the condition, to be better treated, must be better diagnosed. They are highly critical of the Department of Veterans Affairs' current self-reporting method, a 20-item questionnaire that asks vets to recount, for example, how much were they bothered — on a scale of 1 to 5 — in the past month by "repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience."

"You can't prove it one way or another," said Chiarelli, who was a top commander in Iraq. "I'm here to tell you that 50 percent who say they have PTS — or some percentage of people — do not have PTS."

As disability certifications for PTSD have become easier to obtain in recent years — VA eased documentation requirements in 2010 — and the number of claimants has soared, the agency has been grappling with false benefit claims. While the total number of vets who suffer from the disorder is uncertain — many avoid reporting it — PTSD has clearly climbed in the aftermath of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The disorder is the third-most-common service-connected disability in the past 13 years, VA says. Nearly 250,000 recent veterans have received a disability designation of that sort.

Jin thinks he has found the route to solid diagnoses in the electroencephalography readings of vets, taken before the magnetic treatment and then at regular intervals afterward to measure how neurons are behaving. It's right there: You can monitor the patient's progress, according to Jin.

The retired general agrees that "we need to understand the biology" of the condition — but, again, where is Jin's evidence of success?

What about all those vets at his clinic who tell of marriages saved, suicides averted, careers restored — all by painless half-hours under the coils?

"I know, I know," Chiarelli interjects.

"I can go and find you the same group of men that will tell you hyperbaric oxygen is the answer. I can find you a group of men that will convince you that riding horses is the answer. I can go find you a group of men who will tell you that floating on a river and catching fish is the answer."

Maybe they all are answers. Every vet is different. In the clinic hallway awaiting treatment stands Scott Ralston, 6-foot-6, a former Marine sergeant who survived service in Fallujah. But this warrior will tell you that he could not defeat the uncontrollable anger, the terrible isolation and sense of failure that followed in civilian life. That he spent days of the week prepared to kill himself — until he found the doctor who turned his life around, Jin.

Ralston, 33, has received more than 80 treatments since the end of May. Just being around other vets has helped, sure, Ralston says, but he is certain the zapping does, too.

"I felt so extinguished, but now I feel a spark in there that wasn't there," Ralston said. "It's a new life for me."

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EBOLA OUTBREAK

U.S. troops might soon leave West Africa

Officials considering February return as Ebola crisis wanes

By Steven Beardsley
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — U.S. troops in West Africa turned over their final Ebola treatment center Tuesday and could begin returning home in early February, pending a final decision by U.S. officials.

U.S. officials indicated last month they might send some DOD personnel to another country in the region as infection rates fell in Liberia and continued rising elsewhere. Case numbers still remain high in Sierra Leone and Guinea, but infection rates have fallen in recent weeks, a hopeful sign the region might be turning a corner. The neighboring country of Mali was declared Ebola-free after going 42 days without an infection, another victory for the area.

Task force members handed over the last of 10 Ebola treatment centers under its mandate on Tuesday, this one in the village of Barclayville in the southeast corner of Liberia.

Members finished their other primary mission, training health care workers, at the end of December, said task force spokesman Lt. Col. Brian DeSantis. Some units are still spinning blood samples for Ebola detection, but even that role has been increasingly assumed by other organizations.

The relief charity World Food Programme and the U.S. Agency for International Development, which oversees the entire American response in West Africa, have assumed the military's logistics role.

"They were there as a bridging solution because of what the military can bring," Lt. Col. Mark Cheadle, spokesman for U.S. Africa Command, said of the task force. "Since they've been there, USAID has worked very hard, and they're close to the point where they can assume the mission themselves."

With less to do, military engineers recently repaved a road in Monrovia, the Liberian capital, that had deteriorated with the movement of military supplies.

"Really, what we're looking at right now is whether this manpower is going to be needed somewhere else," DeSantis said.

One remaining question is whether the Liberian government can sustain treatment centers after the military's departure, especially if infection rates rise again.

Announced in September when infection rates were high, Operation United Assistance was meant to bolster a fledgling international response to the outbreak by providing the logistics and engineering support otherwise unavailable in the region.

But infection rates began slowing in late October, according to the WHO, before the military had opened its first treatment center in Monrovia. A plan to spend as much as $1 billion and deploy as many as 3,000 troops to build 17 treatment centers quickly began to change.

The military ultimately built, or contracted, 10 treatment centers, with USAID taking on another five. The final seven centers were built with 50 beds instead of 100, an acknowledgment of the declining need. Some centers have yet to see a single patient, DeSantis said.

As of Jan. 8, the Department of Defense had spent less than $350 million, with troop levels reaching a high point of roughly 2,300. Scores of DOD contractors and civilians have also been part of the mission.

Reasons behind the falling infection rates are still unclear. DeSantis argues the rates remain unpredictable.

"It's relatively easy now to look at it and say, 'Was it completely necessary given where we are now?' But what I would argue is that, if you look at the history of this epidemic, there were times where it dipped and then came back."

Despite the lower infection risk, troops returning from the country will still be quarantined, DeSantis said.

The task force, anchored by the Army's 101st Airborne headquarters, already returned 450 troops last month.

The Minnesota National Guard's 34th Infantry Division is slated to deploy roughly 300 members of its headquarters battalion to Liberia next month to replace the 101st. That deployment has already been pared from original plans, which called for 700 troops.

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'It's relatively easy now to look at it and say, "Was [the mission] completely necessary given where we are now?" But ... if you look at the history of this epidemic, there were times where it dipped and then came back.'

Lt. Col. Brian DeSantis
task force spokesman

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Cpl. James Lembke, a heavy equipment operator for the 36th Engineer Brigade, instructs a Liberian worker at the National Police Training Academy in Paynesville, Liberia. Some U.S. troops could soon return from West Africa now that treatment centers are constructed and health care workers are trained.

Vaccine arriving in record time, but outbreak's turning point past

By Robyn Dixon
Los Angeles Times

JOHANNESBURG — It took so long for the first Ebola vaccination to be shipped to Liberia that the crisis there was waning before British company GlaxoSmithKline announced that 300 doses of an experimental vaccine were on their way to the West African nation on Friday.

In medical research terms, the vaccine was brought to the testing stage at record speed, but it probably comes too late to turn around the outbreak of Ebola: The turning point might have already come.

With testing in West Africa still several weeks away, the new infections in the three worst-hit countries are declining sharply, according to statistics from the World Health Organization. The change is attributed to the isolation of new cases and steps taken to ensure the safe conduct of burials.

The decline in cases raises questions about whether there will be enough patients left in Liberia in several weeks' time to prove the efficacy of the vaccine against the virus.

The rate of new infections in the country is halving every fortnight; the number of confirmed new infections fell to just nine in the eight days ending Jan. 20. When Ebola peaked in Liberia in August and September, there were several hundred new infections a week.

The worst-hit country, Sierra Leone, accounting for just under half of all infections, had 117 new confirmed cases in the week ending Jan. 18, according to WHO, compared with 248 new cases two weeks before that and more than 500 a week last month.

The first people to receive the experimental vaccine in Liberia will be health care workers. Initial testing indicated the vaccine had an acceptable safety profile, according to GlaxoSmithKline in a statement Friday. The next phase of the trial will assess whether the immune response produced by the drug translates into meaningful protection against the disease, according to the company.

"If the candidate vaccine is able to protect these people, as we hope it will, it could significantly contribute to efforts to bring this epidemic under control and prevent future outbreaks," said Dr. Moncef Slaoui, chairman of Global Vaccines at the company, in the statement. He said trials with 200 volunteers in the U.S., Britain, Switzerland and Mali were "encouraging."

The vaccine's future would depend on whether WHO and regulators were satisfied that the drug would protect people from being infected without dangerous side effects, he added.

The Liberian trials will involve 30,000 people, a third of whom will be given the drug. There are plans to eventually expand the trial to Sierra Leone and Guinea, the third country hit hard by the outbreak.

The vaccine uses a chimpanzee cold virus to deliver benign genetic material from the strain of Ebola that has raged across the three West African countries, according to the company.

While WHO cautions against complacency over the deadly virus, the dramatic fall in new infections in the three countries seems to be the first real sign that the virus is coming under control after more than a year. Ebola is believed to have infected at least 21,797 people and killed at least 8,675, according to the latest WHO report released Friday.

WHO said this week that Ebola remains a global health emergency.

Dr. Bruce Aylward, WHO's assistant director general in charge of the Ebola response, told journalists in Geneva on Friday that the situation remained precarious and the approaching rainy season could complicate efforts at control.

"There is no such thing as Ebola control; it has got to drive to zero," he said. "It's still an incredibly dangerous situation."

Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma on Friday lifted travel restrictions designed to prevent the spread of the virus from one region to another. About half the country had been banned from travel, choking the economy.

WAR ON TERRORISM

Yemen: US officials worried turmoil, uncertainty will boost Al-Qaida in Arabian Peninsula

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The agencies we worked with ... are really under the thumb of the Houthis. Our ability to work with them is not there," said a senior U.S. official closely involved in monitoring the situation. In a measure of U.S. concern over the crisis, officials also signaled for the first time a willingness to open talks with Houthi leaders, despite their suspected ties to Iran and antipathy toward the United States.

The developments have unraveled a campaign that President Barack Obama described last year as a model for how the United States should fight terrorist groups, and avoid being drawn more directly into overseas conflicts. The turmoil in Yemen has exposed the risks of that strategy, with U.S. officials now voicing concern that the suspension in operations in Yemen could enable Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula — which has launched a series of plots against the United States and claimed credit for the attacks in Paris this month — to regroup.

"The chaos has aided al-Qaida," said the senior U.S. official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. "There's no question in our mind that al-Qaida has gotten a breather."

The White House disputed that joint efforts against al-Qaida had halted. White House spokesman Alistair Baskey said that "the political instability in Yemen has not forced us to suspend counterterrorism operations" and that "we also continue to partner with Yemeni security forces in this effort."

Asked if those forces were still intact and functional, a senior administration official said, "It is difficult for me to assess what is a very fluid situation on the ground."

Other U.S. officials said that joint operations had been deteriorating since last fall, when Houthi militias began a series of advances toward the capital of Sanaa, but that cooperation had broken down in recent days amid a Houthi assault that culminated with the resignation of Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, a staunch U.S. ally.

Before that development, U.S. military trainers and advisers had continued working closely with Yemeni counterterrorism forces, primarily from al-Anad air base, a Yemeni military installation in the southern part of the country.

A senior military official said that counterterrorism training with Yemeni units has been put "on hold," but that partnered operations between U.S. and Yemeni forces are still ongoing in areas outside of the capital.

The Pentagon has been tight-lipped about how many U.S. troops it has deployed to Yemen, but the senior U.S. official said the total number of trainers and advisers numbered in the "dozens" and that the presence had gradually increased over the past two years. The U.S. advisers could accompany Yemeni units on missions around the country, and even provided helicopter transport during operations, but were precluded from directly engaging in combat.

U.S. officials and analysts have said the most reliable Yemeni units were assigned to the Interior Ministry. Their training and equipment, officials said, were designed exclusively for counterterrorism missions, meaning that they were not capable of fending off the Houthi advances and were never summoned to Sanaa to protect Hadi.

U.S. advisers also spent years training units from the Defense Ministry that until 2012 had served under the command of one of the sons of then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the longstanding leader of Yemen who was forced from office three years ago but is suspected of having colluded with Houthi elements in recent months to oust Hadi.

Some of the U.S.-trained Yemeni troops resisted the Houthis' advance into Sanaa, but others stepped aside or might even have cooperated with the rebels, the senior U.S. official said. The senior U.S. official said that the United States "wouldn't be averse" to talks with the Houthis on subjects including permission to continue operations against Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. "We're not against the Houthi movement."

> **'The chaos has aided al-Qaida. There's no question in our mind that al-Qaida has gotten a breather.'**
>
> **senior U.S. official**

Yemeni military leadership ranks were overhauled in 2012 largely to remove Saleh relatives and loyalists. April Longley Alley, a senior analyst and Yemen expert with International Crisis Group, described the outcome of that effort as "an absolute disaster."

"Some of the moves were good, but collectively they were very damaging," Alley said. "In the transition, some of the elite troops lost privileges. This created angst towards Hadi and the transition. Some even joined the Houthi."

As a result, Alley said, "al-Qaida is gaining strength and the Houthis are at the forefront of fighting them, which creates its own problems and fuels recruiting for al-Qaida."

U.S. officials said they are weighing whether to begin withdrawing military trainers and liaison officers. There is no plan to close the U.S. Embassy, but the senior U.S. official indicated employees from the State Department, CIA and other agencies will probably be withdrawn.

"We will be bringing our numbers down," the official said.

U.S. officials expressed hope that counterterrorism operations could resume if the political conflict in Yemen is resolved.

"It is very hard to say until we see what emerges from the current vacuum," said a senior administration official.

Although Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula claimed credit for the attacks in Paris this month, U.S. officials have said they have not uncovered evidence of direct involvement after one of the gunmen, Cherif Kouachi, returned to France from Yemen after getting training and as much as $20,000 from the organization.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula's plots targeting the United States include a failed attempt to bomb a Detroit-bound airliner on Christmas Day 2009. The group has not been linked to any major attacks outside Yemen in recent years but continues to be regarded as the most immediate terrorism threat to the United States.

Michael Vickers, undersecretary of defense of intelligence, described Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as "the most dangerous of al-Qaida's organizations" in a speech last week.

The United States has sought to counter the Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula threat through a campaign of airstrikes that began in late 2009, involving drones flown from separate bases outside Yemen operated by the U.S. military's elite Joint Special Operations Command and the CIA.

The pace of U.S. airstrikes has tapered off, with no known attack since Dec. 6. With Hadi's departure, the United States might no longer have explicit Yemeni permission for the drone campaign. Regardless, U.S. officials said it could become increasingly difficult to find targets.

"The issue would be whether you have the intelligence you need," the senior U.S. official said. "To a large extent, that was a product of the cooperation we got from the Yemenis."

HANI MOHAMMED/AP

A woman's fist is painted with Yemen's flag and Arabic writing that reads "Yemen is safe" to protest against the Houthi Shiite rebels during a demonstration in Sanaa on Saturday.

Tens of thousands protest in Yemen after president resigns

BY AHMED AL-HAJ
The Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Tens of thousands of Yemenis marched in protest on Saturday against Shiite rebels who hold the capital, amid a power vacuum in a country that is home to what Washington describes as al-Qaida's most dangerous offshoot.

Some 20,000 hit the streets of the capital, Sanaa, where demonstrators converged on the house of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who resigned Thursday along with his Cabinet. It was the largest protest since the rebels, known as Houthis, swept into the capital in September.

Protesters carried banners and chanted slogans denouncing the rebels and demanding the restoration of the president. Scuffles involving knives and batons broke out in one instance in Sanaa when the rebels tried to block one procession, leaving two demonstrators and one Houthi injured.

"Houthi aggressors, out of the capital," went one chant, and "Hadi, Hadi, return. Your people are awake," said another. One slogan accused the Houthis, who adhere to a sect of Shiism, of being clients of mostly Shiite Iran, while another said they were colluding with Hadi's predecessor, longtime autocrat Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Security officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters, said tens of thousands also demonstrated in the cities of Taiz, Ibb and Dhamar with similar demands.

In Dhamar, protesters formed a human chain, demanding the "restoration of the state." Many across the country described the Houthi power grab as a "coup." The Houthis, who say they are fighting corruption, said in a statement Friday night that they would work to bring about a smooth, democratic transfer of power after the resignations.

The Houthis, who captured several cities as they drove south from their northern strongholds last summer, seek greater representation in government ministries and on a committee to rewrite the country's constitution. They now face mounting pressures and internal divisions however, and there have been signs they do not want to rule the country outright and would prefer that Hadi remain as a figurehead president.

Ali al-Bukhaiti, a prominent member of the group's political arm, resigned Friday over what he described as a dangerous political polarization that could turn regional and secular and eventually break up the country. He offered to work as a mediator between the groups.

The national parliament meets Sunday to consider Hadi's resignation. Should it be accepted, or should Hadi simply refuse to rule, law dictates that the job would go to Parliament Speaker Yahia al-Rai — a close Saleh ally.

WAR ON TERRORISM

Report of hostage's death draws skepticism

By Mari Yamaguchi and Elaine Kurtenbach
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said early Sunday that Japan was still working to free two hostages held by the extremist Islamic State group while calling a new online video about their fate "outrageous and unforgiveable."

The purported message claimed one of the Japanese hostages had been killed and demanded a prisoner exchange for the other. But the post was deleted quickly Saturday, and militants on a website affiliated with the Islamic State group disagreed about the message's authenticity.

The Associated Press could not verify the contents of the message, which varied greatly from previous videos released by the Islamic State group, which now holds a third of both Syria and Iraq.

'Such an act of terrorism is outrageous and unforgivable..'

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

Citing the release of the photo purporting to show hostage Haruna Yukawa had been killed, Abe said after a late-night Cabinet meeting: "Such an act of terrorism is outrageous and unforgivable. We feel strong resentment, and strongly condemn the act."

Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said officials were still working to verifying the video and a photo shown on it.

Patrick Ventrell, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said U.S. intelligence officials were working also to confirm whether it was authentic.

"We stand in solidarity with Japan and are coordinating closely," he said, and called for the immediate release of people held by the Islamic State group.

Abe said the government of Japan will not succumb to terrorism and will continue to cooperate with the international community in the fight against terrorism. He said Japan is still taking every possible step to win the release of both hostages and will continue the effort.

The Islamic State group had threatened on Tuesday to behead the men within 72 hours unless it received a $200 million ransom.

Japan has scrambled for a way to secure the release of 47-year-old Kenji Goto, a journalist, and Yukawa, a 42-year-old adventurer fascinated by war. Japanese diplomats had left Syria as the civil war there escalated, adding to the difficulty of contacting the militants holding the hostages.

Abe had a telephone call with Jordanian King Abullah II on Saturday, the state-run Petra news agency reported, without elaborating on what they discussed. He also called the two hostages' families.

One militant on the Islamic State-affiliated website warned that Saturday's new message was fake, while another said that the message was intended only to go to the Japanese journalist's family.

A third militant on the website noted that the video was not issued by al-Furqan, which is one of the media arms of the Islamic State group and has issued past videos involving hostages and beheadings. Saturday's message did not bear al-Furqan's logo.

The militants on the website post comments using pseudonyms, so their identities could not be independently confirmed by the AP. However, their confusion over the video matched that of Japanese officials and outside observers.

Kyodo News agency reported that the same video has been emailed to the wife of one of the hostages.

Japanese officials have not directly said whether they are considering paying any ransom. Japan has joined other major industrial nations in opposing ransom payments. U.S. and British officials said they advised against paying.

Goto's mother, Junko Ishido, told Japanese public broadcaster NHK in a televised interview that Goto, in the purported message, "seemed to be taking seriously about what may be happening to him as well.

Mosul airstrikes are start of new effort against militants

By Lolita C. Baldor
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An uptick in airstrikes in northern Iraq this past week marks the beginning of a broader effort to disrupt Islamic State supply lines ahead of an expected operation later this year to take back the city from militants, U.S. military officials said Friday.

Coalition airstrikes have pounded at least two dozen locations around Mosul, destroying dozens of vehicles, buildings, fighting positions and insurgent units.

The airstrikes, said one senior military official, are the start of a new phase, and military leaders are watching to see how Islamic State militants respond as their supply and communications lines dry up. The official was not authorized to discuss the operations publicly so spoke on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, at the Pentagon Friday Rear Adm. John Kirby said U.S. efforts to train Iraqi forces and moderate Syrian rebels to fight Islamic State militants are moving forward, even as insurgents still control about 21,000 square miles of Iraq.

Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, laid out a flurry of details and data aimed at showing the progress the coalition has made since it began airstrikes against the insurgents in Iraq last August.

Kirby said that about 270 square miles of territory in Iraq has been regained from militants, mostly by Kurdish forces in the north. He cautioned that control of land across the country will continually change over time, and it will be a long struggle.

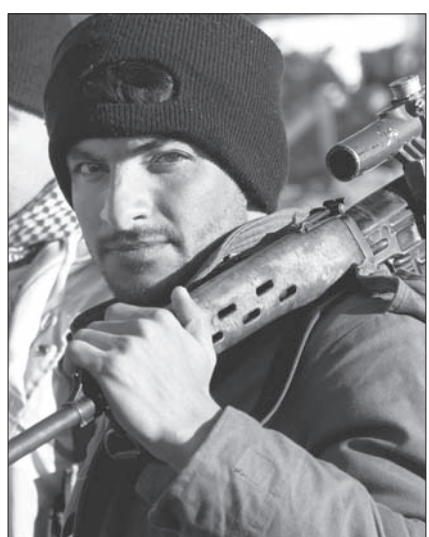
"I think we all recognize that it's a small percentage of the total right now. But we're only six, seven months into this thing, too," said Kirby. "ISIL had a big head start on us, coming into the summer. A pretty aggressive first quarter for those guys."

He added, however, that while it will take time to uproot the Islamic State group, 270 square miles also is not an insignificant amount.

U.S. officials have said the coalition has stalled the momentum of the Islamic State militants, and Kirby said Friday that about 6,000 of the fighters have been killed, according to estimated battle damage assessment of the airstrikes. U.S. officials estimate there were between 20,000 and about 30,000 insurgent fighters, including core Islamic State militants and other aligned militias.

Kirby said the number killed is "not a metric that we're going to hang our hat on when it comes to talking to the success of this strategy … This is not a uniformed army with identification cards and recruiting posters. So, it's hard to say at any given time how many fighters they have in the field."

Instead, he said that more relevant measures of success would be the effect airstrikes and other operations have had on the insurgents' ability to operate and communicate. He said the Islamic State group is more on the defensive, struggling to get supplies and financing and having difficulties replacing destroyed weapons and machinery.



Kurdistan Region Security Council/AP

A Kurdish peshmerga fighter holds his weapon Tuesday while preparing for battle against the Islamic State group in northern Iraq.

US troops headed to Middle East to survey rebel training sites

By Jon Harper
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An advance team of fewer than 100 U.S. troops will arrive in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar in the "coming days" to survey training sites where moderate Syrian rebels will be taught to fight radical groups within Syria, Pentagon press secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby said Friday.

Kirby would not identify which units the contingent belongs to, other than to say that most of them are special operations forces.

The team will be followed in the "next few weeks" by several hundred trainers and enablers, who will begin training the rebels in early spring if everything stays on track, Kirby said.

"Right now, signs are looking good. Things are moving in the right direction," Kirby said.

However, recruiting and vetting of potential Syrian trainees has not yet begun, according to Kirby.

The Pentagon hopes to have U.S.-trained rebels rejoin the battlefield this fall. The goal is to train 5,000 moderate fighters each year for the next few years to take on the Islamic State. Officials have estimated that the group has 20,000 to 30,000 followers.

In Iraq, training of anti-Islamic State fighters is already under way. The training site in Irbil came online Friday, and all four designated training sites in Iraq are now up and running. Kirby said there are 3,600 Iraqi security forces and Kurdish Peshmerga already in the training pipeline, with 600 at Al Asad, 1,600 at Taji, 1,300 at Besmaya, and 100 in Irbil.

The initial training phase for Iraqi troops will last six weeks, Kirby said.

There are currently about 1,550 American troops in Iraq training, advising and assisting Iraqi forces. The U.S. plans to train 12 Iraqi brigades to take on the Islamic State.

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NATION

Health care overshare?

More privacy protection sought for federal website

By Jack Gillum and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Privacy advocates say the Obama administration needs to make more changes to protect consumer privacy on the government's health insurance website.

The administration reversed course Friday and scaled back the release of personal information from HealthCare.gov, after The Associated Press reported that such details as consumers' income and tobacco use were going to private companies with a commercial interest in the data.

The episode could become a blemish on what's otherwise shaping up as a successful open enrollment season for the second year of expanded coverage under President Barack Obama's health care law.

Lawmakers continue to insist on a full explanation.

HealthCare.gov is used by millions to sign up for subsidized private coverage under the law, or to merely browse for insurance plans in their communities.

The latest changes by the administration mean that the website is no longer explicitly sending out such details as age, income, ZIP code, tobacco use and whether a woman is pregnant.

But HealthCare.gov still has embedded connections to a number of outside commercial websites, and it's not clear how or if the administration intends to address that.

An administration spokesman had no comment Friday on the changes, which were verified by the AP's analysis. Earlier, officials had said the sole purpose of the embedded connections to private firms was to monitor the health insurance website and improve performance for consumers.

The AP previously reported that HealthCare.gov was quietly sending consumers' personal data to companies that specialize in advertising and analyzing Internet data for performance and marketing.

Cooper Quintin, a staff technologist with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said the government's changes are "a great first step," but more needs to be done.

For example, the health site should disable third-party tracking for people who enable the "do not track" feature on their web browsers.

"HealthCare.gov should meet good privacy standards for all its users," he said. The foundation is a civil liberties group.

Quintin had verified the AP's initial findings and added more detail, showing that HealthCare.gov was sending personal health information to at least 14 third-part Internet domains.

Privacy advocates say the mere presence of connections to private companies on the government's website — even if they don't explicitly receive personal data — should be examined because of their ability to reveal sensitive information about a user.

Third-party outfits that track website performance are a standard part of e-commerce. It's a lucrative business, helping Google, Facebook and others tailor ads to customers' interests. Because your computer and mobile devices can be assigned an individual signature, profiles of Internet users can be pieced together, generating lists that have commercial value.

The third-parties embedded on HealthCare.gov can't see your name, birth date or Social Security number. But they might be able to correlate the fact that your computer accessed the government website with your other Internet activities.

Have you been researching a chronic illness like coronary artery blockage? Do you shop online for smoking-cessation aids? Are you investigating genetic markers for a certain type of breast cancer? Are you seeking help for financial problems, or for an addiction?

Google told the AP it doesn't allow its systems to target ads based on medical information.

Don Ryan/AP

The Obama administration is reversing itself after an outcry over consumer privacy on HealthCare.gov, the government's health insurance website. The Associated Press confirms that the administration made changes to the website to scale back release of consumers' personal information to private companies.

Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, called the situation "extremely concerning" for consumers. Grassley said Friday it's still unclear how consumers' information is being used and he wants a full explanation.

"People using HealthCare.gov should have the confidence that their information is secure and not being used for sales pitches by outside firms," he said in a statement.

HealthCare.gov is the online gateway to government-subsidized private insurance for people who lack coverage on the job. It serves 37 states, while the remaining states operate their own insurance markets. The privacy concerns surfaced just as the president was calling for stronger Internet safeguards for consumers, in his State of the Union speech.

Christie takes his NJ candor to Iowa

By Thomas Beaumont and Catherine Lucey
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Chris Christie is no stranger to Iowa. Republican audiences have cheered the New Jersey governor's famously frank talk as he's campaigned in the state — officially for others, not himself — during the past five years.

Still, Christie ventured into new Iowa territory on Saturday, speaking to an audience full of the kinds of strict social conservatives who have held sway in the state's leadoff presidential caucuses for a generation.

"He has the opportunity to open some eyes there," says state Rep. Chip Baltimore, a Republican lawmaker who met the governor last week.

Christie is steadily working his way toward a widely expected run for president in 2016. Few would pick him to emerge as the Iowa caucuses' favorite among the state's robust Christian right. The reason was on stage with Christie: Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum, Mike Huckabee, Rick Perry and a few others, each considering a presidential bid and carrying a more natural appeal among evangelical voters.

Yet Christie sees the Iowa Freedom Summit, hosted by conservative Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, as a chance to set himself apart from the likely candidates to whom he's most often compared: former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney. Neither were at the forum, which was expected to draw nearly 100 reporters to Iowa for the first big event of the 2016 GOP campaign.

"If I do run, I'll be myself, and we'll see how Iowans like that," Christie told reporters last week while visiting Iowa for Gov. Terry Branstad's inauguration.

Charlie Neibergall/AP

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie spoke at Saturday's Iowa Freedom Summit. Christie, shown during a visit to Iowa last July, says he'll be himself if he decides to pursue a presidential bid, even in the face of Iowa's strict social conservatism.

While Christie has opposed abortion rights for 20 years and opposes gay marriage, he said in 2011 that his Roman Catholic faith "does not rule who I am." He also has said homosexuality is not a sin and that he believes people who are gay are "born with a predisposition."

Those statements could haunt him in a state where the past two caucus winners, Santorum and Huckabee, closely aligned themselves with Iowa's evangelical pastors and Christian home-school network.

"It's going to be tough for him here," said Justin Arnold, a Republican campaign and policy strategist in Iowa. "There's an image of him as a moderate."

Christie has responded by working over the past five years to build connections with the state's key political players.

Jeb Bush signals focus on middle-class issues

By Michael J. Mishak
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — In his first public event since taking steps toward a presidential run, Jeb Bush on Friday called on political leaders to overhaul the country's immigration and education systems, increase job training programs and ease energy regulations to spur economic growth.

"We're in the fifth, almost sixth year of a recovery, and 60 percent of Americans believe we're still in a recession," Bush told the annual convention of the National Automobile Dealers Association. "They're not dumb. It's because they are in a recession."

While Bush agreed to appear at the convention long before he began exploring a White House bid, his comments offered the most detailed picture yet of what a presidential campaign might look like. He outlined a wide-ranging policy agenda that he said would boost the country's lagging middle class and restore U.S. standing abroad.

Bush, like several of his potential GOP rivals, is hoping to tap a spirit of economic populism amid an uneven recovery. But his remarks also showed how he is trying to appeal to the GOP base without shifting his positions on issues that remain deeply unpopular with conservative voters.

Bush called President Barack Obama's health care law a "monstrosity" and a "job killer." He said the next occupant of the White House should "roll back the things where the president has gone beyond his constitutional authority."

Bush

On energy, Bush won cheers when he called on government to ease regulations on hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," and to open federal lands and waters to energy exploration. Such changes could "reindustrialize" the nation, he said.

On immigration, however, Bush struck a more centrist tone, maintaining his support for a comprehensive overhaul and calling immigrants "an engine of economic vitality."

The former governor has already started laying the groundwork for a potential campaign by hiring staff for his political action committee and reaching out to key GOP leaders in early-voting states.

NATION

Ala. seeks stay of order overturning gay marriage ban

By Kim Chandler
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — The Alabama attorney general is asking a federal judge to stay a ruling that overturned Alabama's ban on gay marriage, as advocates cheer what once seemed an improbable victory in the deeply conservative state.

Attorney General Luther Strange's office asked a federal judge on Friday to put the ruling on hold because the U.S. Supreme Court plans to take up the issue of gay marriage this term, "resolving the issues on a nation-wide basis."

U.S. District Callie V.S. Granade on Friday ruled in favor of two Mobile women who sued to challenge Alabama's refusal to recognize their 2008 marriage performed in California.

The ruling is the latest in a string of wins for advocates of marriage rights. Judges also have struck down bans in several other Southern states, including the Carolinas, Florida, Mississippi and Virginia. The U.S. Supreme Court announced this month that it will take up the issue of whether gay couples have a fundamental right to marry and whether states can ban such unions.

Alabama plaintiffs Cari Searcy and Kimberly McKeand have been a couple for more than 14 years and have a son together who was conceived with the help of a sperm donor. They filed a federal lawsuit after courts refused to let Searcy be recognized as the adoptive parent of their son because they were not spouses under Alabama law.

The couple posted "Love wins!!!!" on their Facebook page Friday.

"They are ecstatic. They are over-the-top happy about the ruling," said Christine Cassie Hernandez, a lawyer representing the couple.

The judge's decision Friday reverberated through the Deep South state, where 81 percent of state voters in 2006 approved inserting a ban on gay marriage into the Alabama Constitution.

"It is outrageous when a single unelected and unaccountable federal judge can overturn the will of millions of Alabamians who stand in firm support of the Sanctity of Marriage Act," Alabama House Speaker Mike Hubbard said.

Calif. bars judges from Boy Scouts membership

By Olga R. Rodriguez
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — California's Supreme Court voted Friday to prohibit state judges from belonging to the Boy Scouts on grounds that the group discriminates against gays.

The court said its seven justices unanimously voted to heed a recommendation by its ethics advisory committee barring judges' affiliation with the organization.

In 1996, the state Supreme Court banned judges from belonging to groups that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, but made an exception for nonprofit youth organizations.

The Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics in February recommended eliminating the exception to enhance public confidence in the judiciary.

The group allows the participation of openly gay boys but continues to prohibit gay and lesbian adults from serving as leaders.

The Boys Scouts of America couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

The proposed rule change was sent out for public comment last year, and the change was supported by the California Judges Association, the court said.

"The only remaining exception to the general rule is membership in a religious organization," said Fourth District Court of Appeal Justice Richard D. Fybel, chair of the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics.

Nevada weighs strict condom rule for porn

LAS VEGAS — Adult film production migrated from California to Nevada after voters in Los Angeles County approved a law requiring condom use on set. Now, a condom-use requirement could follow.

Nevada health officials said Friday that they're considering strict, brothel-style regulations for a booming adult film industry following the announcement last month that two male performers tested positive for HIV following a video shoot in the state.

"The potential exists to require condoms and other barrier options in all sexual contact," state Department of Health and Human Services spokeswoman Mary Woods said in a statement.

From The Associated Press

Photos by Ethan Hyman, The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer/AP

Christine Mumma, director of the North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence, left, and staff attorney Cheryl Sullivan hug Joseph Sledge after a special session of superior court in Whiteville, N.C. on Friday.

Man wrongly convicted 4 decades ago leaves prison

By Jonathan Drew
The Associated Press

WHITEVILLE, N.C. — For the third time in less than six months, a North Carolina inmate was exonerated by DNA evidence and freed after spending decades in prison for a wrongful murder conviction.

This time, Joseph Sledge, 70, was set free on Friday after a three-judge panel found that he was innocent of killing a mother and a daughter in 1976. The hearing was called after an investigation by the state's one-of-a kind investigative panel on innocence.

As three judges listened to closing arguments, Sledge wrote down a few words on a Post-it note: "closure," "please" and "exonerated."

A few hours later, carrying his belongings in plastic bags, Sledge emerged from a North Carolina jail, saying he was looking forward to what most people consider the most mundane of things: "Going home. Relaxing. Sleeping in a real bed. Probably get in a pool of water and swim for a little while."

The lawyer who took his case in 2004, Christine Mumma, said she had been on the verge of closing the case in 2012 when court clerks discovered a misplaced envelope containing hair from the crime scene while cleaning out an evidence vault.

The envelope contained hair, found on the victim and believed to be the attacker's, that turned out to be a key piece of evidence needed to do DNA testing, which wasn't available when Sledge went on trial in 1978.

"I understand those shelves were very high, but there was a ladder in that room," said Mumma, a lawyer for the North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence.

Joseph Sledge, center, talks with his sister, Barbara, and his brother, Oscar, during a break in court in Whiteville, N.C., on Friday.

In 2013, the case was referred to the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission, the only state-run investigative agency of its kind. So far, Sledge is the eighth person exonerated after an investigation by the commission, which started operating in 2007. It has reviewed and closed about 1,500 cases.

Nationwide, The Innocence Project said there have been 325 post-conviction DNA exonerations.

The North Carolina commission found there was enough evidence of Sledge's innocence to refer it to a panel of three judges, who were appointed by the state Supreme Court.

The judges considered the commission's investigative file, and a DNA expert highlighted lab tests in her testimony Friday. Meghan Clement of Cellmark Forensics said none of the evidence collected from the scene — hair, DNA and fingerprints — belonged to Sledge.

The key jailhouse informant, Herman Baker, signed an affidavit in 2013 recanting trial testimony. Baker said he lied at the 1978 trial after being promised leniency in his own drug case and he said he'd been coached by authorities on what to say.

Testimony from another jailhouse informant was inconsistent, according to the commission documents. That informant died in 1991.

The victims, 74-year-old Josephine Davis and her 57-year-old daughter, Aileen, were stabbed to death in September 1976. Aileen also was sexually assaulted.

They were found in their home in Elizabethtown, a day after Sledge had escaped from a prison work farm where he was serving a four-year sentence for larceny.

Sledge was convicted of two counts of second-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

After his release, Sledge was headed to Savannah, Ga., to live with family. He told reporters he never doubted he'd be freed someday despite spending more than half his life in prison.

WORLD

Death toll mounts in Ukraine rocket attack

By Peter Leonard
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Indiscriminate rocket fire slammed into a market, schools and homes Saturday in the eastern Ukrainian city of Mariupol, killing at least 21 people, authorities said. Ukraine's top rebel leader announced that an offensive had begun on the strategically important port.

The report came a day after the rebels rejected a peace deal and said they were going on a multi-prong offensive against the government in Kiev to vastly increase their territory. The move is upending European attempts to mediate an end to the fighting.

Mariupol, which lies on the Azov Sea, is the major city between mainland Russia and the Russia-annexed Crimean Peninsula. Heavy fighting in the region in the autumn raised fears that Russian-backed separatist forces would try to establish a land link between Russia and Crimea.

The RIA Novosti news agency cited eastern Ukrainian rebel leader Alexander Zakharchenko as saying an offensive has begun on Mariupol. He spoke Saturday as he laid a wreath at the site where at least eight civilians died when a bus stop was shelled in Donetsk, the largest rebel-held city in eastern Ukraine.

Rebel forces have positions within six miles of Mariupol's eastern outskirts.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement there were three separate strikes from Grad multiple rocket launchers on Mariupol and surrounding areas.

"The area that came under attack was massive," Mariupol mayor Yuriy Khotlubei said in a video statement. "The shelling was carried out by militants. This is very clearly Russian aggression that has caused terrible losses for the residents of the eastern part of our city."

The Donetsk region prosecutor's office said in a mid-afternoon statement that 21 people had been killed.

Defense and police officials said rockets struck homes, a kindergarten, a market and shops. There was no immediate report of how many people died in various locations.

A Ukrainian military checkpoint on a road leading out of the city toward rebel-held areas was also hit and one serviceman was killed, the Defense Ministry said.

Mariupol city council urged residents not to panic and to ignore rumors that Ukrainian armed forces were planning to withdraw.

"On the contrary, all units are on fully battle-ready. Security measures in the city have been strengthened," the council said in a statement.

No armed separatist units have been noted moving toward the city, the statement added.

The U.N. human rights agency on Friday raised its estimate of the conflict's overall death toll to nearly 5,100 since April.

On Thursday, mortars rained down on the center of the separatist stronghold of Donetsk, hitting a bus and killing several bystanders. Rebel officials said 13 were killed in that attack. Monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe cited city morgue officials as saying they have received eight bodies.

On Jan. 13, a bus parked near an army checkpoint north of Mariupol was hit by a shell, resulting in the death of 13 people. Ukraine blamed the rocket attack on separatists.

The OSCE's special monitoring mission (SMM) in east Ukraine on Saturday expressed concern over the growing number of civilian casualties and called for restraint from all sides.

Clashes are taking place across the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, where separatist insurgencies emerged in April following Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

Fighting has also been intensifying recently for the government-held town of Debaltseve. Main roads to the town lie in separatist control and speculation is mounting that Ukrainian forces stationed there could soon be fully encircled.

Russia insists that it does not support the rebels, but Western military officials say the sheer number of heavy weapons under rebel control belies that claim.

Altaf Qadri/AP

Members of various Left Front political parties are stopped by anti-riot police Saturday as they carry an effigy of U.S. President Barack Obama during a protest march against his visit to India, in New Delhi.

Obama to cut India trip short, pay visit to Saudi Arabia

By Julie Pace
and Ashok Sharma
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will cut short his three-day trip to India and visit Saudi Arabia to pay respects after the death of King Abdullah, U.S. and Indian officials said Saturday.

The schedule change, announced shortly before Obama left for India, means the president will skip plans to see the Taj Mahal, and instead will pay a call on an influential U.S. ally in the volatile Mideast.

The king, who died Friday, was aggressive in trying to check the spreading power of Saudi Arabia's chief rival, Iran. Obama visited the ailing monarch in his desert compound last March.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the president and first lady Michelle Obama would travel to Riyadh on Tuesday and meet with new Saudi King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. Vice President Joe Biden was to lead a U.S. delegation, but Earnest said the White House changed plans after determining that Biden's trip coincided with Obama's departure from India. Biden will remain in Washington.

The more substantive portions of Obama's trip to India appeared unlikely to change.

Obama was due to arrive Sunday for meetings with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then attend Monday's annual Republic Day festivities, which mark the day in 1950 that India's constitution came into force.

Relations between the world's two largest democracies are strengthening after recent tensions. Obama and Modi developed a good rapport during the prime minister's visit in Washington last fall.

While in India, Obama also planned to meet with Modi and attend an economic summit with U.S. and Indian business leaders.

Saudi king not likely to change oil prices, women's rights

By Hannah Allam
and Sean Cockerham
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Barely a day into his reign, every aspect of King Salman's life was under scrutiny as foreign policy analysts attempted to divine how he'll lead Saudi Arabia through domestic pressures, messy regional conflicts and a showdown over plummeting crude oil prices.

Salman took the throne late Thursday upon the death of his half brother, King Abdullah, and within hours reports were flying about the 79-year-old monarch's health (claims of dementia), his family (one son is the first Muslim astronaut; another is a fighter pilot who's flown sorties against jihadists in Syria) and his trajectory (a half-century as governor of Riyadh).

Perhaps to counter the image of yet another septuagenarian shuffling to power in a nation where roughly half the population is younger than 25, one of Salman's first acts as ruler was to use his official Twitter account to ask God to help him maintain stability and to "protect the kingdom from all evils."

The royal tweet might be as groundbreaking as it gets for now. Saudi Arabia watchers say that so far, the new king appears to favor continuity over shaking things up in a region that's already aflame.

Close monitors of the Saudi monarchy note that Salman retained the incumbent oil minister, Ali al-Naimi, likely out of fear of how the markets would react to any perceived instability in the succession. Salman's half-brother Prince Muqrin was chosen as crown prince, and Salman's son Mohammed was named defense minister. Interior Minister Prince Mohammed bin Nayef was made deputy crown prince, according to Saudi state media.

And Salman, himself, doesn't have a sharp learning curve. As the Brookings Institution's Bruce Riedel noted in a commentary Friday, Salman was defense minister, has presided over Cabinet meetings for months and has handled nearly all state travel obligations since he was named heir three years ago.

Analysts don't expect the king's death to change the Saudis' position in the international showdown over oil prices. Saudi Arabia is refusing to cut production despite a worldwide glut that's driven prices down by more than half since the summer. The Saudis are betting they can outlast U.S. shale oil drillers and expensive production in the Gulf of Mexico and the Russian Arctic.

Analyst Kloza suggested the Saudis might eventually decide to dump even more oil on the glutted market.

On the domestic front, too, no dramatic change was expected, at least not while Riyadh is preoccupied with the problems on its borders, including the collapse of the government in Yemen this week and the war in Iraq between Islamic State jihadists and Iranian-backed Iraqi forces.

Saudi Arabia is a favorite target of human rights groups for its lack of a standardized justice system, its marginalization of Shiite Muslim citizens, its policy of treating women as perpetual minors under the law and its harsh punishments for reform-minded activists, among many other rights transgressions.

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OPINION

Saudi Arabia's leadership struggle

By David Ignatius

DAVOS, Switzerland

Saudi watchers have been talking about the transition from King Abdullah for a decade, but now that the moment has arrived, its consequences are as hard to predict as ever.

The death of King Abdullah begins a period of generational change in the oil kingdom that may last for several years. Crown Prince Salman, the new king, is elderly and infirm, and the next in line, Prince Muqrin, is at 69 also an aging figure.

King Salman took a big step in an orderly transition Friday, announcing that the next in line after Muqrin will be Prince Mohammad bin Nayef, the interior minister and the Saudi official with whom the U.S. has the most trust. At 55, he is part of the next generation in the royal family. His elevation is a crucial step toward empowering a younger team of Saudi leaders.

Saudi Arabia's opaque and often repressive political system mystifies outsiders, especially at times like this, when the leadership of the kingdom is a crucial factor in the regional balance of power. Saudi Arabia is the heart, and the pocketbook, of the Sunni Arab world. A leadership vacuum in Riyadh echoes from Yemen to Syria, and all the places in between.

Abdullah's death comes as Saudi Arabia, and the Sunni world it leads, are vexed as never before by the power of Iran and its Shiite Muslim proxies. Iran's allies control four key Arab capitals: Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut and Sanaa. The Saudis have raged against Iranian power, and tried to finance covert operations to counter it, but they have failed everywhere they have tried. Many in the kingdom blame the United States for these reversals, but they should be more self-critical: This has fundamentally been a failure of Sunni, and especially Saudi, leadership.

Abdullah was a reticent monarch, with none of the flamboyant outreach of his predecessor, King Fahd. But within the kingdom, he was deeply respected. He was seen by many Saudi women as their secret champion in a society that rigidly suppresses the rights of women. He was also seen as a modest and pious man who lived by Muslim ideals better than many of his predecessors. He didn't reform Saudi Arabia, but he was able to maintain a measure of stability.

The nightmare for moderate Saudis is that the extremists of the Islamic State have a significant following among young Saudis, say analysts who follow the Arabic Twitter and Facebook platforms. Young Saudis are among the world's most active users of these social media, which indicates the pent-up desire in the kingdom for political and social involvement. Attempts to suppress this activism, in the uncertainty of the leadership transition, could be very dangerous.

The paradox of Saudi Arabia is that the Western-facing kingdom has depended for its legitimacy on a pact with conservative Muslim religious leaders. Frightened now by the power of the Islamic State's extremism, Saudi leaders may be tempted to repeat that bargain — and govern through the repressive power of the Muslim conservatives.

Many Western analysts believe that doubling down now on Muslim conserva-tism would be a mistake. But decades have shown that the West's ability to influence the royal family in moments like this is limited, to put it mildly. With Abdullah's death, Saudi Arabia's princes will be thinking about the survival of the House of Saud. The balance of power in the Middle East will be shaped by their decisions. But in Saudi Arabia, as in most places, politics is local.

David Ignatius is a member of the Washington Post Writers group.

Gas prices drop, gas-guzzlers sell like hotcakes

By Bruce Maiman
The Sacramento Bee

Where is the logic in buying a gas-guzzling SUV just because gas prices are so low?

As gas prices have tumbled, gas-hog sales have soared. November sales of the Cadillac Escalade SUV were up 91.5 percent over November of last year. In December, sales of Lincoln's Navigator rose 90.2 percent. The Dodge Ram and Chevy Silverado each saw sales increase by about a third. These vehicles have an average gas mileage of 16 in the city and about 22 on the highway.

In fairness, higher truck sales are primarily driven by higher housing starts, and construction is up, but buying a gluttonous SUV simply because gas prices have temporarily dipped is about as smart as buying a house without a roof because it's sunny out.

Even the military-style Hummer H1, discontinued by General Motors for its fuel-thirsty ways, is attracting buyers. One local dealer told me he wished he'd bought a Hummer when owners were desperately selling them for $20,000 last fall. At the time we spoke — last month — they were topping 30 grand.

Sacramentans haven't followed suit. SUV sales in the capital region rose just 7.6 percent from 2013 to 2014, according to IHS Automotive. The industry consulting firm notes, though, that for the first time, SUVs overtook sedans in 2014 to become the most popular vehicle style in the country.

Auto industry analysts I spoke with all noted that today's SUVs and trucks are more fuel-efficient than a decade ago. Still, their gas mileage lags decidedly behind smaller vehicles, and their growing numbers have an impact elsewhere. Steadily rising fuel-efficiency rates hit record levels last August — 25.8 miles per gallon — according to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, which tracks mileage trends monthly. By December, it was 25.1 mpg.

Courtesy of Cadillac

The 2015 Cadillac Escalade gets 15 miles per gallon in the city, 21 mpg highway.

Partly that's also due to another puzzling consequence of falling gas prices: falling demand for more fuel-efficient vehicles. The environmental impact is notable. Automobiles account for about half of an average household's emissions, but a big SUV produces about three times the annual greenhouse gas tonnage emitted by a Prius.

"When people are buying an SUV, they probably aren't thinking about carbon emissions or the global economy," Kelley Blue Book's Micah Muzio told me. "People just look at how much gas costs and whether they can afford that. For most consumers, it's that simple."

So simple that our memories are that short? In the early 2000s, with gas prices around $1.50 a gallon, Americans were buying SUVs as if that price would last forever. It didn't. In 2007, when gas started hitting $3 and then $4 a gallon, SUV owners were stuck.

"Seventy-five percent of Americans keep their vehicle for seven years," said Amy Jaffe, executive director of Energy and Sustainability at University of California, Davis. "These cars stay on the road through the used-car market for 14 years. Even if takes two years for prices to rise again, you'll still have the car for another five years, so why would you make a purchase based on a two-year phenomenon?"

Then, once gas prices rise, the same people who bought the vehicles when gas prices fell will be the same ones in the office break room whining that $4 gas is costing them $120 to fill up their extended-cab, four-wheel drive asphalt-eater so they can haul home carrots and a loaf of bread.

As Jaffe noted, purchasing a vehicle is one of the few times you can control what you pay for fuel. You can't control the price of gas, but you can control how much you pay for it by the vehicle you choose to drive.

Just think: Instead of burdening co-workers with your shortsightedness, you can save the gas bucks and use them to pay your kid's college loans, or save for retirement.

"Maybe the smart thing to do rather than buy a gas hog," Muzio said: "Buy a Prius or Chevy Volt as their prices go down. Hold on to it a little bit and when the time is right, you can sell it on the market to people overreacting because gas prices have gone up."

Market forces are market forces. How you benefit from them is up to you.

Bruce Maiman is a former radio host who lives in Rocklin, Calif.

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OPINION

Free expression backed in Paris, but not in US?

By Clark Ross

Like all civilized world citizens, I was outraged by the brutal killings this month in France. Those who first died were the cartoonists and editors of Charlie Hebdo. They were slain in retaliation for their creative satire of the Prophet Muhammad by extreme Islamists who felt the need and the right to impose their own judgment on these talented writers and illustrators. The world was outraged. Why?

First, the killing of individuals by those who are taking "justice" into their own hands without any constitutional or sovereign authority is abhorrent to those of a civilized world. It represents anarchy of sorts with the most powerful being able to impose their own views. The vast majority of the world's population lives in countries that reject this form of oppression. As the lynching of an African-American outraged thinking Americans in the 1920s, the assassination of these professionals outrages us today.

Second, the motivation of the attackers was to silence those espousing views, drawings and opinions that were offensive to them. Millions, from the throngs in Paris to those participating in small rallies at schools like Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., have taken to the streets to express their support of free expression, of a free press and of free thought.

But, wait, do all these people truly believe that? Would a parody of an African-American, or a young, female student, or a homosexual be defended with the same vigor? I doubt it. How can you say that, one might ask? I can sort of prove it.

On too many campuses today, we have speech codes or at least regulations that ban hateful speech. When parodies of African-Americans have been observed, college officials have investigated. A few years ago, when we had a Davidson student write an article that condemned homosexuality as being against Christian practice and faith, many wanted to charge him with "hate speech." Two or three years ago, some students called some other students "faggots;" a major outcry calling for punishment of those who expressed themselves so vulgarly then followed. But, like the parody of Charlie Hebdo, should they not have that right? You might think the parody of Charlie Hebdo is more sophisticated, but that is then making a subjective determination and not upholding a universal principle.

Now, in no way do I find it attractive, amusing, or effective to parody an African-American or to use such epithets. But, if I wish to defend the right of Charlie Hebdo to have a nude caricature of the Prophet Muhammad, to the discomfort of many Muslims, why would I then think we should have speech codes that prohibit derogatory comments aimed at groups, based on race or sexual orientation or gender? And on a college campus, where freedom of expression should flourish, we would least expect such speech controls.

It seems to me that those who are marching to protect the rights of Charlie Hebdo to publish freely (and I will join those marchers) should look close to home at effective action that they can initiate to support their cause of free expression. They can call for a repeal of speech codes. They should learn to tolerate offensive expression, as hard as that might be. For the alternative, that which we saw in Paris, condemns a world to brutality and even greater ignorance.

Christophe Ena/AP

Pallbearers carry the casket of Stephane Charbonnier, also known as Charb, the publishing director of Charlie Hebdo, in Pontoise, outside Paris on Jan. 16.

Clark Ross, is an economics professor at Davidson College in Davidson, N.C. This column first appeared in The Charlotte Observer.

Condemn terrorism, but don't praise offensiveness

By Jibril Hough

Freedom of expression through writing, speaking, dressing, music, art, religion and other forms and beliefs is one of the most cherished rights we have in a free society. Yet it's one of the most abused and is often laced with hypocrisy and double standards. The truth is there is no such thing as free speech.

The words and the seeds we plant have an effect on ourselves and the universe around us. Speech isn't free. It comes at a cost and we should spend it wisely.

The recent terrorist attacks in Paris on the Charlie Hebdo newspaper have spurred a new Je Suis Charlie movement. Millions of people around the world have started chanting and hashtagging Je Suis Charlie. I joined with the millions condemning those terrorist attacks and also supporting freedom of expression, but I can't join in with Je Suis Charlie. There must be room in our society to condemn acts of terror, support free speech and still condemn (or at least not praise) one's use of free speech.

For those who are proudly joining in with Je Suis Charlie, I must ask, would you be praising someone who made a living using the n-word in a racially inflammatory manner? Would you be praising someone and claiming ownership in someone who practiced blatant anti-Semitism?

I think the answer for most people would be no.

Christophe Ena/AP

Pencils, candles, and flowers are set up next to Charlie Hebdo newspaper Wednesday in Paris.

Muslims are not seeking to limit free speech or impose our beliefs on others. We only seek the same treatment and rights that are granted to others in our society. The best limits on ourselves and speech are those we put on ourselves, not by the government or someone's interpretation of what Sharia law is. Our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) practiced mercy and patience with those who mocked him. I don't know of any case of him ordering someone killed because of an insult.

As we look at France, other European countries and America, we see a ton of double standards when it comes to free speech and religion. In many places in Europe, simply questioning the Holocaust and forms of anti-Semitism will get you arrested.

In France, 54 people were arrested a day after their mass free speech rally, and a comic is facing seven years in prison for jokingly identifying with Je Suis Charlie and the terrorists. France just outlawed pro-Palestinian rallies. There have been several attacks on Masjids throughout France, yet most of the focus has been on synagogues. Not too long ago, France even outlawed the veil. So as we stand together in condemning acts of terror and supporting free speech, don't think that France is a bastion of freedom of expression and religion.

As much as I detest those who seek to mock and incite religious people and our great prophets, I still support a society that gives them that right as long there are no double standards. The double standards are just as offensive as (if not more than) the use of the expression. Looking back, my first remembrance of anyone mentioning Muslims was in a Richard Pryor joke about "double Muslims." It planted a seed that helped bring me here. For that I'm thankful and that's no joke or mockery. Je Suis Muslim!

Jibril Hough, is a spokesman for the Islamic Center of Charlotte. This column first appeared in The Charlotte Observer.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officer resigns after peeping accusations

IA DES MOINES — Des Moines police officials say an officer resigned following accusations he was peeping into a women's locker room at the department's gym.

A police spokesman said Tarry Pote resigned Thursday afternoon. Pote had been with the department since 2002. He declined to comment to The Des Moines Register.

Interim Police chief Doug Harvey told the newspaper that department officials are disappointed, upset and disturbed by Pote's suspected actions.

Detectives started an investigation after a dispatcher said last week she saw someone looking through a locker-room window while a female officer was changing inside.

Officials said the gym windows have since been altered so no one can see through them anymore.

Couple delivering hot meal save man, 99

ME WINTHROP — A couple of volunteers for an organization that delivers hot meals to elderly residents of Winthrop is being credited with saving a 99-year-old man's life.

Nelson and Sherry Lavigne, volunteers for Winthrop Hot Meal Kitchen, said they were making a delivery about 5 p.m. Wednesday when they found Gordon Alcott down on his back porch, bleeding from the head.

Nelson Lavigne told the (Augusta) Kennebec Journal he helped Alcott stand, while Sherry Lavigne called police.

Winthrop Police Chief Joe Young said Alcott told them he had been outside for three hours. Temperatures were in the 20s that evening.

Alcott was taken to a hospital and was back home by Thursday.

Officials said Alcott may have frozen to death had he not been found.

Former officer accused of stealing tractors

NC WINSTON-SALEM — A former Winston-Salem police officer has been arrested and accused of stealing three tractors in Stokes County.

Multiple media outlets reported that Matthew Jordan Riggan, 26, of Mount Airy has been charged with three counts of felony larceny and three counts of possession of stolen property.

The tractors were valued at $70,000. The thefts included bush hogs and front-end loader equipment stolen in Stokes and Surry counties.

Investigators have recovered the tractors.

Riggan had joined the police department last year but is no longer an officer.

Woman gets 2 years for pouring grease onto ex

OR PORTLAND — A woman who admitted pouring hot bacon grease onto her ex-boyfriend as he slept on her sofa was sentenced Thursday in Portland to more than two years in prison.

The defense lawyer for Shiree Franklin, 30, said the Portland woman pleaded guilty to attempted domestic violence assault because she worried she might be convicted of a more serious crime with a longer sentence.

The Oregonian reported Franklin let her ex-boyfriend into her apartment and allowed him to sleep on her sofa last July because he had been banging on her windows and door.

She poured hot grease onto his head and neck about 3 a.m., causing burns that required skin grafts.

She told police she did it "because it was time for him to go."

Pig blamed for blaze; no humans, hogs hurt

TX SPICEWOOD — No humans or hogs were hurt in a Central Texas house fire blamed on a pig.

Authorities said the fire broke out Thursday afternoon at a rural home near Spicewood, about 25 miles northwest of Austin.

Lt. Kyle Swarts with the Pedernales Fire Department said the blaze began when a pig belonging to the homeowner chewed through electrical wires.

Firefighters quickly extinguished the blaze, which caused about $30,000 worth of damage to the residence.

The fire left three people displaced.

Burned store robbed with deputy chief inside

OH TOLEDO — Authorities say a deputy fire chief in Ohio and a store owner were held at gunpoint during a robbery that happened just after firefighters put out a fire in the building.

A spokesman for the Toledo fire department said the suspect went inside the store Friday morning not long after most of the firefighters had left the building.

Lt. Matthew Hertzfeld said the suspect walked right past the deputy chief's car, which had its emergency lights flashing, and then held the two men at gunpoint.

No one was injured in the robbery or the fire that heavily damaged the building.

Police were still looking for the suspect.

Man gets probation in fake anthrax threats

IN NEW CASTLE — A central Indiana man has been sentenced to four years of probation after admitting he sent police threatening letters containing a powder the letters claimed was anthrax.

A Henry County judge gave George Alan Kinser, 51, of New Castle, a four-year suspended sentence Thursday after Kinser pleaded guilty to three counts of terrorist mischief.

The (Muncie) Star Press reported Kinser admitted under questioning from his attorney that he sent letters containing talcum power to three Henry County police officers' homes last April.

Kinser told his public defender, Jeffrey Galyen, he regrets sending those letters. The letters claimed the powder was anthrax, a bacteria that's particularly dangerous when inhaled.

Galyen said Kinser is living in a local homeless shelter, but efforts continue to have him placed in a group home.

Landscaper hit in face by airborne tire

FL MELBOURNE — Authorities say a landscaper suffered a fractured skull and a smashed nose when he was struck by an airborne tire as he worked along a central Florida road.

Florida Today reported the accident happened late Wednesday in Melbourne.

The landscaper was stacking wood and branches into his work trailer and had apparently placed a tire in the road in place of a traditional orange traffic cone to warn drivers to slow down.

Police say a vehicle traveling north on the darkened street hit the tire, sending it flying.

A woman who was with the landscaper wasn't hurt.

The landscaper was taken to a hospital and was in stable condition on Wednesday night.

From wire reports

THE CENSUS

$1.1M

The value of 740 marijuana plants seized by police in Charlotte, N.C. Quang Minh Cao, 56, faces multiple charges, including felony possession of marijuana and trafficking marijuana. Police said the arrest and seizure followed a neighbor's complaint that sparked a monthlong investigation. Officers said they also took equipment worth about $150,000 that was used to cultivate the plants.

SCOTT SOMMERDORF, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE/AP

The long, robotic arm of the law

A bank robbery suspect wearing a motorcycle helmet lies handcuffed on the ground as a bomb squad robot searches his vest Thursday in Salt Lake City. Officers were reportedly struggling with arresting the man on suspicion of robbing a nearby bank when they noticed he was wearing a vest with wires. He was booked on suspicion of aggravated robbery, possessing a hoax weapon, and resisting arrest.

LIFESTYLE

Photos by Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel/TNS

Members of the 132nd Army Band perform during inaugural ceremonies for constitutional officers Jan. 5, 2014, at the state capitol in Madison, Wis.

A symphony of service

National Guard band has a knack for hitting the right note

By Meg Jones
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

The crisp notes of "On Wisconsin" reverberated throughout the crowded Capitol moments after Gov. Scott Walker recited the oath at his recent inauguration, bass drum and tubas setting a brisk beat, trumpets and trombones blasting out the familiar melody.

Among the choirs, ensembles, chamber groups and bands chosen to perform at the inauguration, only one group had sworn to defend the U.S. Constitution. It's also the only music group that regularly goes through weapons training.

The Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band performs at sendoffs and welcome-home ceremonies for deploying guard units, and for inaugurations and change of command ceremonies. Members also spend a couple weeks touring the state each summer as musical ambassadors. The 43-member unit functions as a marching band and a concert band, and also divides up into ensembles including a rock band, brass quintet, flute choir, jazz ensemble, country band and a group of saxophonists who perform as "Soldiers of Sax."

"We're held to the same standards as other soldiers, we just have a different job," said Sgt. Brian Lydeen, 42, of Fond du Lac, Wis., who plays saxophone and clarinet.

For centuries, military bands have lifted soldiers' spirits as they headed into battle, played them to sleep at night and performed somber hymns for fallen heroes. There have been thousands of U.S. Army bands over the years.

Wisconsin has proven a standout, proudly sweeping the the 2014 Army Music Non-Commissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year competition. Lydeen was the junior NCO winner, while Staff Sgt. Tyler Terrell, 39, of De Pere, Wis., was the senior NCO winner and Spc. Micah Lancaster, 25, of Watertown, Wis., won in the soldier category.

Prospective members must first audition for band leader Brad Anderson, a Chief Warrant Officer 3, by showing their range as a musician and ability to sight-read music. If they pass, they see a recruiter and go through the normal process of joining the military, including physical fitness and basic entry tests.

"The bottom line is, you have to be deployable" said Anderson, a trombonist who joined the 132nd in 1994 after five years active duty in an Army band. "If you aren't, you're not an asset."

Once they're in the National Guard, the musicians go through basic training and then a 10-week stint at the Army School of Music. Band members range in age from 18 to 55 and include students, music educators, nurses, insurance sales representatives, a biologist, actuaries and some soldiers who work full time for the guard in the burial honors program.

What makes the band unique among guard units is that everyone enters at least at the rank of specialist instead of private because of the music skills they acquired as civilians.

"When it comes down to it, we're taking someone who has already put in seven years or more of training before they get to us," said Anderson.

Two of the 132nd Band members sport battle patches on their uniforms. Sgt. Andrea Miller, 28, of Madison, and Sgt. Adam Belliveau, 28, of Kenosha, deployed to Iraq in 2009-2010 with the Minnesota National Guard band. Miller was a member of the Minnesota guard at the time while Belliveau, along with three other Wisconsin National Guard band members, volunteered to go to Iraq to fill out the Minnesota band.

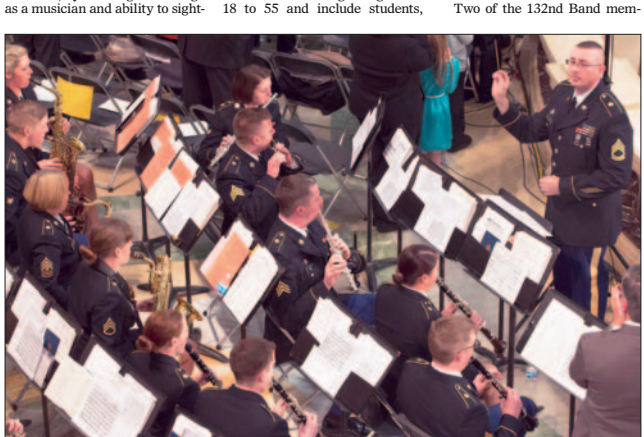
Stationed in Basra in southern Iraq, the band played music wherever soldiers congregated. The band organized an Oktoberfest celebration playing polkas while soldiers drank non-alcoholic beer. At Christmas, they wore Santa hats and traveled in an open truck, playing carols for troops.

"When they sat down at their meals, you'd see the stress leave them," said Miller, who brought both her concert and marching tubas to Iraq.

"There was always some joker who'd yell 'Freebird' — that happened at every" chow hall, said Belliveau, adding that the band didn't actually play the Lynyrd Skynyrd classic.

They played their instruments with M-4 weapons slung over their shoulders. They blew out amps when plugging in electric guitars and basses. They coped with sand and grit clogging instruments and intense heat drying out woodwind reeds.

"It's nearly impossible to tune instruments in that heat," said Belliveau, who plays guitar and trombone. "We'd play in the shade of a motor pool and it was still 120 degrees. I think it drove us a little crazy — but I think none of the soldiers noticed."



Sgt. 1st Class Cyle Coppinger directs the 132nd Army Band.

MUSIC

QUEENS OF ROCK & ROLL

Sleater-Kinney reunite, with many more eyes and ears to entertain

By Dan Deluca
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Way back in 1996, on their second album, "Call the Doctor," Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein of Sleater-Kinney traded vocals on a song called "I Want to Be Your Joey Ramone."

Brownstein took the first verse, talk-singing over the band's distinctive guitar tangle in rhymes about how pop music and personal identity merge: "It's on my wall, it's in my head/ Memorize it till I'm dead."

Then Tucker and her fire-alarm voice took over on the chorus, shouting out the young band's intention to occupy a cherished place in the hearts of fans equal to that of their own heroes: "I want to be your Joey Ramone, pictures of me on your bedroom door," Tucker sang. "Invite you back after the show/ I'm the queen of rock and roll!"

That declaration of ambition is one of the things that set apart Sleater-Kinney from its peers in a DIY punk world full of skinny dudes who stared at the floor as they played, as if embarrassed by the very idea of rocking out.

By contrast, Sleater-Kinney — which kicks off a U.S. tour next month — was three supremely confident women. They emerged from the Evergreen College music scene in Olympia, Wash., the same one that spawned riot-grrrl inventors Bikini Kill, feminist record label Kill Rock Stars, and, more recently, Mackle-more.

Then, as now, Sleater-Kinney musicians were never reticent or apologetic about anything. That was once again made clear in October when the band — which, crucially, also includes powerhouse drummer Janet Weiss — surprised and delighted fans by announcing its reunion. The single "Bury Our Friends," from the band's new album "No Cities to Love," rides a brash, martial rhythm and asserts a determination to remain uncompromising ("Make me a headline, I want to be that bold"), even as the album displays a more accomplished pop sensibility: "We're wild and weary, but we won't give in."

Sleater-Kinney was surely America's greatest punk band for the seven albums of its first existence, with a no-bass-player musical arsenal that included Tucker's caterwauling, clarion-call voice, Weiss' muscular attack, and Brownstein's inventive collection of riffs, plus windmilling Pete Townshend stage moves. Though 2005's "The Woods" contained probably the band's prettiest ballad, the glistening "Modern Girl," its sound had by then started to grow heavy and clotted, too Led Zeppy for its own good. A year later, they went on indefinite hiatus.

Great bands break up all the time, and almost inevitably — save for Led Zep, bless Robert Plant's heart — they get back together years later, in all but rare cases with new material that fails to measure up to the classic catalog.

So what's different about Sleater-Kinney? And why do they get so much attention?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

MUSIC

Sleater-Kinney

No Cities to Love (Sub Pop)

Much of Sleater-Kinney's new album, "No Cities to Love" — the first since the trio called it quits in 2006 — seems dedicated to the question: How did this happen?

The album's existence is a shock, after all, with the band's recording it in secret last year and announcing it after its completion. Singer-guitarist Corin Tucker had her own band. Singer-guitarist Carrie Brownstein and drummer Janet Weiss formed their band Wild Flag when Brownstein had some time off from becoming a counterculture comedy star on IFC's "Portlandia" with pal Fred Armisen. They were all doing well going their separate ways, so what exactly is going on here?

"We win, we lose," they belt in "Surface Envy," which somehow amplifies the Sleater-Kinney sound of jagged guitars and punk drumming to include elements of both Heart and New Order. "Only together do we break the rules." In the charmingly pointy "A New Wave," they confide, "It's not a new wave, it's just you and me."

And on the relentless "Price Tag," they sing, "I was lured by the devil. I was lured by the cause. I was lured by the fear that all we had was lost."

Maybe it's because of the successes they found in their time apart, but Sleater-Kinney sounds more confident and accomplished than ever — a real feat considering their riot grrrl roots. There's a grandeur on "Hey Darling," an early song-of-the-year candidate that covers Brownstein's anxieties about being onstage, showing the trio hasn't been standing still over the past nine years.

And that's good, because way more people are watching now — something very clear in the star-studded video for the title track of "No Cities to Love," which includes everyone from Armisen and Andy Samberg to Norman Reedus of "The Walking Dead" singing along with the song. Luckily, Sleater-Kinney is more than ready.

— Glenn Gamboa/Newsday

FROM PAGE 16

For one thing, many more eyes are now on the band because of "Portlandia," the hit Independent Film Channel sketch-comedy show in which Brownstein stars with "Saturday Night Live" alum Fred Armisen.

All three members of S-K — the band takes its name from a road in Lacy, Wash., that ran by one of their first rehearsal places — were busy while apart.

Tucker, a mother of two, released two albums credited to the Corin Tucker Band.

Weiss recorded and toured with Quasi, her band with ex-husband Sam Coomes, as well as Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks. She was also in Wild Flag, the band fronted by Brownstein and Ex Hex singer Mary Timony, whose self-titled album was one of the strongest of 2011.

But thanks to "Portlandia," S-K now has a celebrity in the band in Brownstein. After S-K split, the indie Renaissance woman also worked in a Portland ad agency and as an NPR music blogger. But her comic skills, as she and Armisen satirize feminist bookstore owners and other Portland stereotypes, have made her such a signifier of cool that she stars in her own American Express commercial.

So with a famous person now in the band, and a generation of music fans who missed out the first time now primed to see what the big deal was, more people are ready to check out Sleater-Kinney's new album than ever paid any mind to such early hot platters as "Dig Me Out" (1996) and "All Hands on the Bad One" (2002).

Which is good, because "No Cities to Love" rewards the attention.

It hurtles out of the gate with "Price Tag," signaling that the album will embrace adult concerns (all three band members have passed their 40th birthdays).

On the surface, it's a song about workaday struggles. "I scramble eggs, for little legs,/ The day's off in a rush," Tucker sings, as the song pushes forward with energy of '60s spy-movie theme. But it could just as easily be about the bill coming due for an expensive war, or an emotional gambit that didn't pay: "We never checked the price tag/When the cost comes in, it's gonna be high."

"No Cities" is a concise, 10-song, 33-minute salvo of continued relevance that is also plenty of fun. Having re-established their connection, Tucker, Weiss and Brownstein lock in immediately, with no time to slow down.

One song is called "No Anthems," but the title is misleading. There are more than a few. What the album is short on is slow songs or ballads.

"Fade," the final track on "No Cities," does take its foot off the gas pedal slightly, but still builds up an enveloping wall of sound while considering the band's time apart, and now back together, and coming to a carpe diem conclusion: "If there's no tomorrow, you better live."

"Surface Envy" raises its fist more emphatically, snapping to attention with a descending guitar riff. "I feel so much stronger now that you're here/We've got so much to do, let me make that clear," Tucker sings, and fists are raised on a shouted-out chorus: "We win, we lose/Only together do we break the rules." Reunited, and it feels so good.

Previous page, from left: Janet Weiss, Carrie Brownstein and Corin Tucker.

Courtesy of Sub Pop Records

Courtesy of Universal Music Group

The Decemberists

What a Terrible World, What a Beautiful World (Capitol)

"We know we belong to you; we know you built your lives around us," Colin Meloy sings at the start of the Decemberists' seventh album, somewhat cheekily addressing the codependent artist-fan relationship on the fittingly titled "The Singer Addresses His Audience." Meloy has put the allegiance of the band's followers to the test by taking a four-year break — during which time the singer wrote three YA novels with his wife, illustrator Carson Ellis — since the folk-rock group's tightly constructed 2010 album, "The King Is Dead." The new one, "Terrible/Beautiful," takes its name from "12-17-12," a grieving ballad written after the school shooting in Newtown, Conn. It's more musically varied and not as concise as "The King Is Dead." But the 12-song set, which features backup vocals by Kelly Hogan and Rachel Flotard on its two catchiest numbers, "Make You Better" and "Cavalry Captain," is a melodically strong, inward-looking effort that broadens the band's tart, country-leaning sound in subtle ways. It's likely to satisfy all but those who pine for the prog-rock side of the band, which stretched out so expansively on such albums as 2006's "The Crane Wife" and 2009's "The Hazards Of Love."

— Dan DeLuca
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Belle & Sebastian

Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance (Matador)

Glaswegian twee-pop purveyors Belle & Sebastian sound refreshed after a five-year breather on "Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance." Leader Stuart Murdoch searches for inspiration at the old-time dance hall on "Everlasting Muse" and takes his poetic preoccupations to the disco on "Enter Sylvia Plath" and "Perfect Couples." The album also has weightier concerns as the band, uncharacteristically, dabbles in political matters on "Nobody's Empire" and "Today (This Army's for Peace)." "Girls" gets personal, too, on the lovely, soul-searching "Ever Had a Little Faith?"

— Dan DeLuca
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Meghan Trainor

Title (Epic)

After the success of her single "Lips Are Movin'," the follow-up to the enormous hit "All About That Bass," Meghan Trainor will never be called a one-hit wonder. Her debut album, "Title," is filled with future hits she cowrote that show off a variety of influences cobbled together into a style she can call her own. Trainor, 21, builds on the combination of girl-group-pop and hip-hop that fuels "Bass" and "Lips." Trainor is at her best, though, on more timeless songs. The classic-sounding soul ballad "Like I'm Gonna Lose You," with John Legend, will stick with Trainor throughout her sure-to-be-long career.

— Glenn Gamboa
Newsday

Various Artists

Another Day, Another Time: Celebrating the Music of 'Inside Llewyn Davis' (Nonesuch)

As a tie-in to "Inside Llewyn Davis," the Coen brothers' film about the New York City folk scene in the early '60s, T Bone Burnett gathered an impressive, multigenerational cast of artists to perform folk songs, old and new, at a concert in NYC in late 2013. The double-album "Another Day, Another Time" documents that event. The live recording suits these acoustic, sparse songs, too, whether it's an old traditional number such as "The Midnight Special" or a newer one such as the Avett Brothers' "All My Mistakes."

— Steve Klinge
The Philadelphia Inquirer

In the town of Bletchley in Buckinghamshire, England, the mansion called Bletchley Park houses an exhibit showing how the home's library would have been used during World War II. Below, a prop from the movie "The Imitation Game," which tells the story of Alan Turing, a computer science pioneer and architect of the effort to crack Nazi Germany's Enigma cipher. The movie is set at Bletchley Park, the real location of the clandestine operation.

PHOTOS BY MATT DUNHAM/AP

SECRETS REVEALED

Real-life 'Imitation Game' site re-creates intrigue of WWII Britain

BY DANICA KIRKA
The Associated Press

As a tourist site, Bletchley Park has been something of a well-kept secret. That's because it was a government secret as well.

But the once-classified home of Britain's World War II code-breakers is finally coming out of the shadows. Though eclipsed by attractions like the British Museum and Stonehenge, the museum at Bletchley Park expects a surge in visitors as a result of "The Imitation Game," a movie about Alan Turing, a computer science pioneer and architect of the effort to crack Nazi Germany's Enigma cipher. The film starring Benedict Cumberbatch was nominated for eight Academy Awards.

"It's absolutely marvelous," said Charlotte Webb, 91, who worked at Bletchley during the war. "Our story has been revived."

During the war, locals just didn't ask questions about what went on at the one-time country estate. The code-breakers were sworn to secrecy and just didn't talk.

The site's importance remained secret until 1974, when wartime intelligence officer F.W. Winterbotham published "The Ultra Secret" about the effort to crack codes once thought unbreakable. It was only when documents about the program were declassified that Turing's contributions became widely known.

His personal story ended tragically. Convicted in 1952 on a charge of "gross indecency" stemming from his relationship with another man, Turing was stripped of his security clearance and forced to take estrogen to neutralize his sex drive. He killed himself in 1954 at age 41.

Turing was pardoned by Queen Elizabeth II in 2013.

The museum opened in 1994 after local historians banded together to prevent it from being bulldozed to build a supermarket. An 8 million-pound ($12.2 million) renovation program completed last year made it possible to see the site as it was during the war — sparking a visit from the Duchess of Cambridge, the former Kate Middleton, whose grandmother and grandmother's twin sister worked at Bletchley during the war.

For most tourists, however, Bletchley Park has remained something of an enigma itself. About 148,000 people visited the site in 2013, compared with 6.7 million for the British Museum and 1.24 million for Stonehenge.

Bletchley's visitor count jumped almost 30 percent last year following the broadcast of "The Bletchley Circle," an ITV series broadcast on PBS in the United States about female code-breakers who investigate crime.

Katherine Lynch, Bletchley's spokeswoman, expects visits to increase with the Oscar-nominated film's success, particularly because the museum is less than an hour from London. The train station is just across the road.

To capitalize on this, the museum has mounted an exhibition celebrating the film. It includes a sportscoat worn by Cumberbatch, the bar used in a party scene and the film's replica of Turing's prototype Bombe machine, developed to help decode messages.

Also nearby is the National Museum of Computing. The museum, which has a separate entrance fee, picks up where "The Imitation Game" ends, linking the ultra-secret efforts of the 1940s to the mainframes of the 1960s and the rise of personal computing in the 1980s. It includes a functioning model of Colossus, the world's first electronic computer, which helped decipher messages between Adolf Hitler and his generals.

"The Imitation Game" introduces Bletchley Park to Cumberbatch fans, computer geeks and war buffs, said Michael Smith, a museum trustee and author of "The Debs of Bletchley Park and Other Stories."

Although he has some quibbles about the details of the film, Smith said he hopes moviegoers who were entertained will be inspired to visit and find out about the code-breakers.

"They will do the learning there," he said.

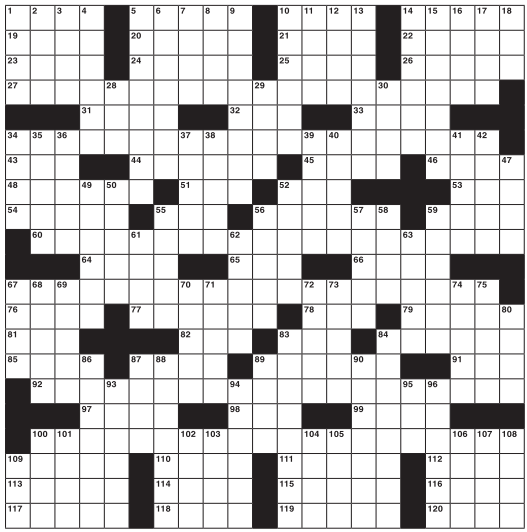
An exterior view of the mansion house at Bletchley Park museum.

CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

CHANGELINGS

BY JOE KROZEL / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ



ACROSS

1 Hirer/firer
5 Iron setting
10 Food processor setting
14 One with accounts, for short
19 Darn, e.g.
20 Jets or chargers starter
21 Doozy
22 Revolutionary patriot Silas
23 Asian cuisine
24 Put in the minimum stake
25 Actress Lena
26 Willing to do
27 *Gigantic sled hauls firewood quite a bit*
31 1970s-'80s TV sheriff
32 Tell a story
33 Grub
34 *Domestic worker claimed shifting beach engulfed basin*
43 Hong Kong, e.g.: Abbr.
44 No-no on gym floors
45 Voting no
46 Band news
48 Put an end to
51 Catastrophic start or end?
52 Word after camper or before Camp's
53 Fused
54 It may go from sea to shining sea
55 Word in many California city names
56 Blue
59 "You wish!"
60 *Friends who have never been to the beach don't walk by the girl so often*
64 Characteristic times
65 Driver's assignment: Abbr.
66 Arrangement of hosing?
67 *Children show their affection for model Kate above all others*
76 Comics canine
77 Energetic sort
78 "That's ___-brainer"
79 Stuffing ingredient
81 "Waking ___ Devine" (1998 movie)
82 Hubbub
83 Solution for some housework
84 Villain
85 [I am shocked!]
87 ___ Romeo
89 Generic
91 Lines around Chicago
92 *Boisterous oaf confused the previous set of actors*
97 Outdoor party
98 Info for a limo driver
99 "Ta-ta"
100 *Mr. Chamberlain intends to top off his gas tank*
109 Capital where snail noodle soup is popular
110 Pew, for one
111 Coquette
112 Sly
113 When prompted
114 Sleeveless item, for short
115 Like some brewing containers
116 Mosque leader
117 Bog accumulations
118 Head of a Tatar group
119 Comics canine
120 Early 1900s gold rush locale

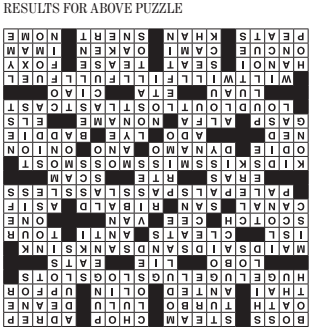
DOWN

1 This and that
2 Home of Hanauma Bay
3 Solo, in a way
4 BP logo shape until 2000
5 QB who led the Cowboys to victories in Super Bowls VI and XII
6 Varnish ingredient
7 Art Deco artist
8 First person to die in the Bible
9 Adjust, as pitch
10 Shut
11 Oceanic body
12 This and that
13 Strong and sharp
14 Majority group
15 Silt, e.g.
16 Whole bunch
17 Nephew of 8-Down
18 As stated in
28 "Was ist ___?"
29 Bombay and Boodles
30 H. H. Munro pseudonym
34 This and that: Abbr.
35 Music grp.
36 Actress Massey
37 Model add-on
38 Composer Camille Saint-___
39 Cars once advertised with the slogan "Find your own road"
40 Record of the year
41 "Necktie"
42 Mila of "That '70s Show"
47 Court V.I.P.'s
49 Literature's Nan or Gay
50 Supply room worker
52 Metaphors for serious headaches
55 Flip
56 "Midnight Cowboy" role
57 Loop around the West?
58 Mil. decorations
59 "Sometimes you feel like a nut" nut
61 Not free
62 Super
63 Pago Pago locale
67 "King ___"
68 Toy company that made Betsy Wetsy
69 Playground comeback
70 Bungle
71 Upset with
72 Quaint contraction
73 "Love Story" co-star
74 The Beach Boys' "Surfer Girl" vis-à-vis "Little Deuce Coupe"
75 Works
80 Egg holder
83 California city where the first Apple computer was built
84 "Hush!"
86 Retreat
87 "There oughta be ___"
88 Comedian who said "Every day starts, my eyes open and I reload the program of misery"
89 Cry of innocence
90 Non-PC person
93 Border payments
94 Kept
95 1960s chess champion Mikhail
96 Halloween prop
100 Die down
101 Early cultivator of potatoes
102 Mrs. Rabin of Israel
103 "Rama ___ Ding Dong" (1961 hit)
104 Show bias
105 Like some lashes and tans
106 Fendi ___ (men's cologne)
107 Activity at a doctor's office
108 Tick-borne affliction
109 Leapfrog

GUNSTON STREET

"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.
STRIPES CENTRAL
ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE DAY
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GADGETS & CHARTS

How 2015 comic-based movies change stories

By Andrew A. Smith
Tribune News Service

Where have all the comic book movies gone?

The past few years, as pained and irritated movie critics have so often reminded us, have been chockablock with big-budget movies based on comics, most of them superhero titles. But in 2015, there are only four comics-based movies on the schedule.

Oh, there's no dearth of genre movies to keep geeks and nerds of all stripes happy, myself included. "Frankenstein," "Jungle Book," "Jurassic World," "Mad Max," James Bond's "Spectre," "Terminator: Genisys" — seriously, there's plenty of science fiction and fantasy to go around. And let's not forget the much-anticipated "Star Wars VII: The Force Awakens" in December!

However, none of those concepts began in comics (although most of them made it there eventually). From the medium that has given us the biggest blockbusters of the past decade, all we have in 2015 is "Ant-Man," "Avengers: Age of Ultron," "Fantastic Four" and "Kingsman: The Secret Service."

"Ant-Man," premiering July 17, is something of a mystery. The narrative Marvel Films established for the Avengers movies negates much of the Marvel Comics character's background, so how they'll play the Master of Many Sizes will be a surprise even to those who know a lot about him.

In the comics, Ant-Man premiered in the early 1960s. Debuting in 1962, Ant-Man was Dr. Henry Pym (the name was a nod to an Edgar Allan Poe story), a multi-tasking sort of scientist who invented not only a shrinking serum but a way to talk to ants. After launching a career as the superhero Ant-Man, Pym recruited his girlfriend, socialite and heiress Janet van Dyne, as The Wasp, giving her the power to shrink and grow tiny wings, plus a compressed-air, wrist-mounted weapon called "The Wasp's Sting." Shortly thereafter, in 1963, the two of them helped found the Avengers, along with Hulk, Iron Man and Thor.

"What's that?" you say. You don't remember Hank and Jan from the "Avengers" movie? Maybe they were too small to see ....

Actually, they were completely left out.

Hank Pym does make it into the "Ant-Man" movie, as an elderly scientist who might have already had a quiet career as Ant-Man (played by Michael Douglas). No character named Janet van Dyne is in the credits. Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) makes the cut, as does Yellowjacket (Corey Stoll).

Pym's invention Ultron, the mass-murdering A.I. with Daddy issues, will also make it to the big screen — only it's not Pym's invention now.

"Avengers: Age of Ultron" (premiering May 2) gives us Ultron as the invention of Tony "Iron Man" Stark. In the comics, Ultron hates the entire human race, and especially his "father," Hank Pym. His greatest ambition is to wipe out us puny humans.

"Age of Ultron" introduces Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch, two characters with long runs in the comic book "Avengers." Pietro and Wanda Maximoff are mutant twins from eastern Europe, the former with the power of super-speed and the latter with the ability to affect the laws of probability.

Interestingly, when Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch joined the Avengers in 1965, many of the founders took leaves of absence, leaving a team of Pietro, Wanda, Hawkeye and Captain America. This could well repeat in the movie.

Meanwhile, on Aug. 8 ... "Fantastic Four" seems to bear only the most superficial resemblance to its source material.

For example, in the comics, Johnny "Human Torch" Storm and Susan "Invisible Woman" Storm are biological siblings. That won't be the case in the movie, given that the actor playing Johnny (Michael B. Jordan) is black, and the actress playing Sue (Kate Mara) is white.

In the comics, Victor von Doom is the dictator of Latveria, a small European country, and has mixed science and sorcery to become one of the most deadly human beings on the planet. In the movie, he'll be a disgruntled computer programmer named Victor Domashev (Toby Kebbell).

Lastly there's "Kingsman: The Secret Service," out Feb. 13. It's a standalone story unrelated to any superhero universe, based on a graphic novel by writer Mark Millar and artist Dave Gibbons.

In the graphic novel, Gary "Eggsy" Unwin (Taron Egerton) is a working-class Brit who thinks his Uncle Jack has something to do with investigating credit-card fraud. Imagine his surprise when Uncle Jack reveals himself to be not just a secret agent, but a super secret agent. And he wants to train Gary to join him. The movie looks as if it will follow much the same path.

ON THE COVER: Channing Tatum and Steve Carell star in the Sony Pictures film "Foxcatcher."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTOPHER SIX/Stars and Stripes

Courtesy of Oral-B

The Oral-B PRO 5000 SmartSeries is the world's first available interactive electric toothbrush with Bluetooth connectivity. It connects to an Oral-B app and provides guidance while users brush.

GADGET WATCH

There's now a toothbrush app

By Gregg Ellman
Tribune News Service

Now, brushing our teeth joins the list of things we can get a smartphone app to help with.

The Oral-B PRO 5000 SmartSeries calls itself the world's first available interactive electric toothbrush with Bluetooth (4.0) connectivity.

I will say as a longtime Oral-B electric toothbrush user, this new one is an instant winner.

After downloading the free app and pairing your toothbrush with it, you're set to go.

The app has you brush for the required and dentist-recommended 2 minutes, but also adds extra time for areas that need it.

As you brush, a graphic on your smartphone shows you the time and the area you need to brush to ensure equal cleaning in each quadrant of the mouth.

There's also a pressure sensor to activate when you are brushing too hard, and five different cleaning modes: daily cleaning, deep clean, whitening, gum care and for sensitive teeth and gums.

After your few minutes are complete, the program asks you a few questions including whether you flossed.

There's even a brush available with flossing built in.

A nice travel case is included to protect the brush and charger.

Online: OralB.com; $111.99

The Iris Smart Home Solution series from Lowe's has many products for home safety. The line, which launched in 2012, includes something for your four-legged family member.

The electronic pet door (doggie door) is part of the single-user interface, where you monitor and control just about everything you want. This includes the pet door that stays locked until your pet wants to do its thing. There's a small electronic sensor you put on pet collars and then once he or she approaches the door, the alarm on the pet door shuts off instantly.

After its business is completed, your friend can re-approach the pet door where the alarm again shuts off for the pet to enter. Once Fido either enters or leaves and the door comes to a rest, the alarm is back on.

In addition the door also prevents other animals from entering the electronic pet door since they will not have the sensor to unlock the door.

The door can be built into a wall or door (fits doors 1½ to 2 inches thick) and measures 16 by 11 inches.

An electronic schedule can be set to allow the door to be opened during the hours you want for up to five pets. You can also monitor your pets' ins and outs.

Works on four D-cell batteries (not included).

Online: Lowes.com; $220

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 songs on the iTunes Store for January 21:

1. "Uptown Funk (featuring Bruno Mars)," Mark Ronson
2. "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran
3. "Lips Are Movin," Meghan Trainor
4. "Take Me to Church," Hozier
5. "Sugar," Maroon 5
6. "Blank Space," Taylor Swift
7. "Centuries," Fall Out Boy
8. "All About That Bass", Meghan Trainor
9. "Shake It Off," Taylor Swift
10. "Ghost," Ella Henderson

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify from Jan. 12-18.

1. Mark Ronson, "Uptown Funk"
2. Ed Sheeran, "Thinking Out Loud"
3. Hozier, "Take Me To Church"
4. Sam Smith, "I'm Not The Only One"
5. Nicki Minaj, "Only"
6. Meghan Trainor, "Lips Are Movin"
7. Flo Rida, "GDFR (feat. Sage The Gemini and Lookas)"
8. Big Sean, "I Don't F— With You"
9. Ariana Grande, "Love Me Harder"
10. The Weeknd, "Earned It (Fifty Shades Of Grey) — From The" Fifty Shades Of Grey" Soundtrack"

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Jan. 21:

1. "Lucy"
2. "Gone Girl"
3. "Dracula Untold"
4. "Boyhood"
5. "John Wick"
6. "The Interview"
7. "A Walk Among the Tombstones"
8. "The Drop"
9. "The Equalizer"
10. "Two Night Stand"

— Compiled by TNS

VIDEO GAMES

The editors of Game Informer rank the Top 10 handheld games for January:

1. "Super Smash Bros.," Nintendo 3DS
2. "Persona Q: Shadow of the Labyrinth," Nintendo 3DS
3. "Pokemon Omega Ruby/Alpha Sapphire," Nintendo DS
4. "Velocity 2X," PlayStation Vita
5. "Daganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair," PlayStation Vita
6. "Professor Layton vs. Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney," Nintendo 3DS
7. "Azure Striker Gunvolt," Nintendo 3DS
8. "Xeodrifter," Nintendo 3DS
9. "Metrico," PlayStation Vita
10. "Theatrhythm Final Fantasy Curtain Call," Nintendo 3DS

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new free apps for Jan. 21:

ANDROID

1. Crossy Road
2. GO SMS PRO EMOJI PLUGIN
3. MultiCraft II — Free Miner!
4. Shipwrecked: Volcano Island
5. Words On Tour

Top 5 free apps for Jan. 21:

APPLE

1. Trivia Crack
2. Facebook Messenger
3. Facebook
4. Instagram
5. YouTube

— Compiled by TNS

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Starbucks becoming a mobile payment model

By Sarah Halzack
The Washington Post

Starbucks has been fueling your caffeine habit for years.

Now, the coffee giant is having unusual success brewing a new kind of customer ritual.

The company said last week that, on average, customers pay for a purchase using smartphones 7 million times per week, with mobile payments now accounting for roughly 16 percent of total transactions. With so many payments coming from smartphones, it is clear that Starbucks has managed a feat that perhaps none of its brick-and-mortar counterparts have: They've gotten shoppers accustomed to regularly engaging with them on mobile devices.

Even as mobile Web usage has surged, most retailers have so far struggled to get consumers to make purchases from their phones. During the holiday season, for example, record numbers of shoppers browsed on their phones, but very few actually used their phones to close the deal.

Critical to the success of Starbucks's mobile payment platform is its integration with the My Starbucks Rewards program, which allows shoppers to earn special discounts and freebies. The loyalty program added nearly 900,000 new members in December alone, bringing its total membership to more than 9 million people. In a conference call with investors on Thursday, chief executive Howard Schultz called the program one of Starbucks's most important business drivers, saying, "new members contribute not only short-term increases in revenue and profit, but also long-term loyalty for years to come."

Starbucks has bigger ambitions for mobile shopping in 2015. This year, customers will be able to place orders through their mobile app, a feature that the company believes will cut wait times at the counter.

Further evidence of the company's commitment to Web innovation came Thursday, when it announced that Kevin Johnson, a veteran of Microsoft and Juniper Networks, would become its president and chief operating officer. The appointment appears squarely aimed at helping Starbucks transition into the digital era.

One benefit to Starbucks's mobile transformation is obvious: It generates loyalty among its customers.

But there are plenty of other possible payoffs. Starbucks also is gathering a rich trove of data about its most loyal customers, something it can eventually leverage to shape its marketing tactics, promotions and even store locations.

It should be noted that it's likely easier for Starbucks to cultivate a base of regular app users and a large membership in its loyalty program, because it's a business that often is deeply entwined with its customers' daily routines: Maybe it's their first stop in the morning before they drop the kids off at school, or maybe it's the place they go at 3 p.m. when they need a pick-me-up at the office.

Much like a grocery store, customers go there often and can clearly see the upside of joining the rewards program.

A retailer that gets less frequent visits, such as an electronics or furniture store, is going to have a more difficult time luring customers into its smartphone and loyalty program ecosystem, simply because it has fewer chances to do so.

MARKET WATCH

Jan. 23, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	-141.38	17,672.60
Nasdaq composite	7.48	4,757.88
Standard & Poor's 500	-11.33	2,051.82
Russell 2000	-1.44	1,188.93

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Jan. 26)	$1.1613
Dollar buys (Jan. 26)	€0.8611
British pound (Jan. 26)	$1.54
Japanese yen (Jan. 26)	115.00
South Korean won (Jan. 26)	1,055.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	$1.5005/0.6664
Canada (Dollar)	1.2421
China (Yuan)	6.2304
Denmark (Krone)	6.6207
Egypt (Pound)	7.3999
Euro	$1.1245/0.8893
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7522
Hungary (Forint)	275.60
Israel (Shekel)	4.0033
Japan (Yen)	117.78
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2942
Norway (Krone)	7.7478
Philippines (Peso)	44.04
Poland (Zloty)	3.75
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7584
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3439
South Korea (Won)	1,077.95
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8734
Thailand (Baht)	32.62
Turkey (New Lira)	2.3422

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.12
3-month bill	0.03
30-year bond	2.44

WEATHER OUTLOOK

SUNDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SUNDAY IN EUROPE

MONDAY IN THE PACIFIC

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chattanooga	54	36	PCldy	Fort Wayne	32	8	Snow	Louisville	48	27	Rain	Pocatello	43	22	PCldy	Sioux City	41	29	Cldy
Abilene, Tex	65	37	Clr	Cheyenne	53	36	PCldy	Fresno	62	44	Clr	Lubbock	61	30	Clr	Portland,Maine	29	5	Clr	Sioux Falls	35	28	Cldy
Akron, Ohio	30	15	Snow	Chicago	30	19	Snow	Goodland	57	38	PCldy	Macon	59	40	Clr	Portland,Ore.	57	42	Cldy	South Bend	31	11	Snow
Albany,N.Y.	27	4	PCldy	Cincinnati	40	21	Rain	Grand Junction	44	25	Clr	Madison	25	12	Snow	Providence	36	15	PCldy	Spokane	47	33	Cldy
Albuquerque	53	27	Clr	Cleveland	29	13	Snow	Grand Rapids	25	6	Cldy	Medford	63	40	PCldy	Pueblo	61	27	Clr	Springfield,Ill	40	22	Snow
Allentown, Pa.	35	18	Cldy	Colorado Springs	55	32	Clr	Great Falls	55	42	Clr	Memphis	55	34	Cldy	Raleigh-Durham	54	36	Clr	Springfield,Mo	49	28	Cldy
Amarillo	56	32	Clr	Columbia,S.C.	58	40	Clr	Green Bay	20	9	Snow	Miami Beach	69	54	Clr	Rapid City	51	37	Cldy	Syracuse	20	0	Cldy
Anchorage	3	-6	Clr	Columbus,Ga.	60	39	Clr	Greensboro,N.C.	52	35	PCldy	Midland-Odessa	65	35	PCldy	Reno	60	32	Clr	Tallahassee	65	43	Clr
Asheville	50	34	PCldy	Columbus,Ohio	36	17	Snow	Harrisburg	36	21	Cldy	Milwaukee	26	19	Snow	Richmond	50	35	PCldy	Tampa	64	55	Clr
Atlanta	56	38	Clr	Concord,N.H.	27	3	PCldy	Hartford Spgfld	34	11	PCldy	Mpls-St Paul	25	19	Cldy	Roanoke	48	35	Cldy	Toledo	27	8	Snow
Atlantic City	41	25	PCldy	Corpus Christi	70	47	PCldy	Helena	49	28	Cldy	Missoula	46	24	PCldy	Rochester	17	4	Cldy	Topeka	47	29	Clr
Austin	67	40	Clr	Dallas-Ft Worth	67	40	Clr	Honolulu	78	64	PCldy	Mobile	63	40	Clr	Rockford	29	15	Snow	Tucson	73	51	PCldy
Baltimore	42	27	Cldy	Dayton	35	14	Snow	Houston	67	43	PCldy	Montgomery	61	40	Clr	Sacramento	64	43	Clr	Tulsa	58	32	PCldy
Baton Rouge	64	42	Clr	Daytona Beach	64	48	Clr	Huntsville	54	35	PCldy	Nashville	51	32	Rain	St Louis	44	26	Rain	Tupelo	57	35	PCldy
Billings	52	38	Clr	Denver	55	36	Clr	Indianapolis	37	15	Snow	New Orleans	63	47	Clr	St Petersburg	64	56	Clr	Waco	67	38	Clr
Birmingham	58	37	Clr	Des Moines	35	27	Snow	Jackson,Miss.	63	39	Clr	New York City	37	20	PCldy	St Thomas	84	74	Clr	Washington	44	30	Cldy
Bismarck	39	32	Cldy	Detroit	28	8	Snow	Jacksonville	63	44	Clr	Newark	38	20	PCldy	Salem,Ore.	56	39	Cldy	W. Palm Beach	68	53	Clr
Boise	42	29	Cldy	Duluth	18	15	Cldy	Juneau	40	30	Rain	Norfolk,Va.	52	39	PCldy	Salt Lake City	43	29	Clr	Wichita	52	32	Clr
Boston	34	13	PCldy	El Paso	59	37	PCldy	Kansas City	44	28	Clr	North Platte	52	27	PCldy	San Angelo	69	33	PCldy	Wichita Falls	64	37	Clr
Bridgeport	36	15	PCldy	Elkins	39	32	Rain	Key West	68	62	Cldy	Oklahoma City	62	38	Clr	San Antonio	68	41	PCldy	Wilkes-Barre	31	11	Cldy
Brownsville	70	50	PCldy	Erie	24	11	Cldy	Knoxville	50	34	PCldy	Omaha	39	29	Clr	San Diego	76	58	Clr	Wilmington,Del.	41	26	Cldy
Buffalo	17	6	Cldy	Eugene	51	40	Cldy	Lake Charles	66	43	Clr	Orlando	67	50	Clr	San Francisco	68	49	Clr	Yakima	48	33	Cldy
Burlington,Vt.	15	-4	Cldy	Evansville	45	28	Rain	Lansing	24	6	Cldy	Paducah	49	30	Rain	San Jose	73	44	Clr	Youngstown	29	17	Snow
Caribou,Maine	14	-7	Cldy	Fairbanks	-20	-40	Snow	Las Vegas	72	47	Clr	Pendleton	55	36	Cldy	Santa Fe	50	23	Clr				
Casper	44	29	PCldy	Fargo	29	26	Cldy	Lexington	43	27	Rain	Peoria	36	19	Snow	St Ste Marie	12	-5	PCldy				
Charleston,S.C.	60	41	Clr	Flagstaff	51	26	Clr	Lincoln	42	28	Snow	Philadelphia	40	25	Cldy	Savannah	61	41	Clr				
Charleston,W.Va.	46	35	Rain	Flint	25	8	Cldy	Little Rock	62	35	PCldy	Phoenix	78	55	Clr	Seattle	59	47	Cldy				
Charlotte,N.C.	54	37	Clr	Fort Smith	58	34	PCldy	Los Angeles	82	55	Clr	Pittsburgh	32	22	Snow	Shreveport	66	39	Clr				

National temperature extremes
Hi: Thu., 84, Fort Myers, Fla.
Lo: Thu., -23, Crested Butte, Colo.

SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

College hockey

Friday's scores

EAST
UMass 4, Merrimack 4, OT
Maine 6, New Hampshire 4
Northeastern 3, Notre Dame 2
Boston U. 4, Vermont 2
Providence 7, UMass-Lowell 3
Air Force 2, American International 1, OT
Bentley 2, RIT 1
Robert Morris 4, Holy Cross 3
Mercyhurst 2, Sacred Heart 2, OT
Penn St. 5, N. Michigan 4
Clarkson 6, Brown 0
Dartmouth 2, Colgate 2, OT
Cornell 3, Harvard 2
Neumann 9, Utica 0
St. Lawrence 3, Yale 2, OT
MIDWEST
St. Scholastica 3, Concordia (Wis.) 2
Michigan St. 4, Ohio St. 1
Michigan 7, Wisconsin 4
Minn. St.-(Mankato) 4, Minnesota 2
Bemidji St. 4, Minn.-Duluth 0
Denver 3, Miami (Ohio) 1
North Dakota 2, Colorado College 1
St. Cloud St. 7, W. Michigan 0
Lake Superior St. 3, Bowling Green 1
Michigan Tech 4, Alaska 3, OT

Pro football

NFL playoffs

Wild-card Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 3
Carolina 27, Arizona 16
Baltimore 30, Pittsburgh 17
Sunday, Jan. 4
Indianapolis 26, Cincinnati 10
Dallas 24, Detroit 20
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 10
New England 35, Baltimore 31
Seattle 31, Carolina 17
Sunday, Jan. 11
Green Bay 26, Dallas 21
Indianapolis 24, Denver 13
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 18
Seattle 28, Green Bay 22, OT
New England 45, Indianapolis 7
Pro Bowl
Sunday, Jan. 25
At Glendale, Ariz.
Team Irvin vs. Team Carter
Super Bowl
Sunday, Feb. 1
At Glendale, Ariz.
New England vs. Seattle

NFL injury report

NEW YORK — The updated National Football League injury report, as provided by the league:

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS at SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — PATRIOTS: QUESTIONABLE: CB Brandon Browner (knee), LB Dont'a Hightower (shoulder), DT Chris Jones (elbow), WR Brandon LaFell (shoulder, toe), DT Sealver Siliga (foot), C Bryan Stork (knee). PROBABLE: OB Tom Brady (ankle). **SEAHAWKS:** QUESTIONABLE: S Earl Thomas (shoulder). PROBABLE: DE Michael Bennett (not injury related), T Justin Britt (knee), C Clint Gresham (neck), RB Marshawn Lynch (not injury related), CB Richard Sherman (elbow), G J.R. Sweezy (ankle).

Tennis

Australian Open

Saturday
At Melbourne Park
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: $32.9 million (Grand Slam)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
Men
Third Round
Milos Raonic (8), Canada, def. Benjamin Becker, Germany, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.
Feliciano Lopez (12), Spain, def. Jerzy Janowicz, Poland, 7-6 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3).
Stan Wawrinka (4), Switzerland, def. Jarkko Nieminen, Finland, 6-4, 6-2, 6-4.
Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, Spain, def. Vasek Pospisil, Canada, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4.
Kei Nishikori (5), Japan, def. Steve Johnson, United States, 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-2, 6-3.
Gilles Muller, Luxembourg, def. John Isner (19), United States, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (6), 6-4.
Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Fernando Verdasco (31), Spain, 7-6 (8), 6-3, 6-4.
David Ferrer (9), Spain, def. Gilles Simon (18), France, 6-2, 5-7, 7-5, 7-6 (4).
Women
Third Round
Agnieszka Radwanska (6), Poland, def. Varvara Lepchenko (30), United States, 6-0, 7-5.
Garbine Muguruza (24), Spain, def. Timea Bacsinszky, Switzerland, 6-3, 4-6, 6-0.
Venus Williams (18), United States, def. Camila Giorgi, Italy, 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-1.
Serena Williams (1), United States, def. Elina Svitolina (26), Ukraine, 4-6, 6-2, 6-0.
Dominika Cibulkova (11), Slovakia, def. Alize Cornet (19), France, 7-5, 6-2.
Madison Brengle, United States, def. CoCo Vandeweghe, United States, 6-3, 6-2.
Victoria Azarenka, Belarus, def. Barbora Zahlavova Strycova (25), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-4.
Madison Keys, United States, def. Petra Kvitova (4), Czech Republic, 6-4, 7-5.
Doubles
Men
Second Round
Jonathan Erlich, Israel, and Treat Huey, Philippines, def. Robert Lindstedt, Sweden, and Marcin Matkowski (9), Poland, 6-3, 6-2.
Ivan Dodig, Croatia, and Marcelo Melo (4), Brazil, def. Andrey Golubev, Kazakhstan, and Denis Istomin, Uzbekistan, 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (3).
Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut, France, def. Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah (11), Colombia, 6-3, 6-4.
Alex Bolt and Andrew Whittington, Australia, def. Jeremy Chardy, France, and Lukasz Kubot, Poland, 2-6, 7-5, 7-5.
Julien Benneteau and Edouard Roger-Vasselin (2), France, def. Santiago Giraldo, Colombia, and Joao Sousa, Portugal, 7-5, 6-4.
Eric Butorac, United States, and Sam Groth (12), Australia, def. Pablo Andujar, Spain, and Dustin Brown, Germany, 7-6 (1), 6-4.
Oliver Marach, Austria, and Michael Venus, New Zealand, def. Alexander Peya, Austria, and Bruno Soares (5), Brazil, 6-4, 6-4 (5).
Bob and Mike Bryan (1), United States, def. Carlos Berlocq and Leonardo Mayer, Argentina, 6-7, 6-3, 6-3.
Women
Second Round
Sara Errani and Roberta Vinci (1), Italy, def. Mona Barthel, Germany, and Mandy Minella, Luxembourg, 6-1, 6-2.
Caroline Garcia, France, and Katarina Srebotnik (7), Slovenia, def. Shelby Rogers, United States, and Donna Vekic, Croatia, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.
Kiki Bertens, Netherlands, and Johanna Larsson, Sweden, def. Anabel Medina Garrigues, Spain, and Yaroslava Shvedova (11), Kazakhstan, 3-6, 6-2, 6-4.
Andrea Hlavackova and Lucie Hradecka (9), Czech Republic, def. Monique Adamczak and Olivia Rogowska, Australia, 6-3, 6-2.
Chan Yung-jan, Taiwan, and Zheng Jie (14), China, def. Lara Arruabarrena, Spain, and Irina-Camelia Begu, Romania, 6-4, 6-3.
Bethanie Mattek-Sands, United States, and Lucie Safarova, Czech Republic, def. Timea Babos, Hungary, and Kristina Mladenovic (10), France, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4.
Julia Goerges and Anna-Lena Groenefeld (16), Germany, def. Zarina Diyas, Kazakhstan, and Chanelle Scheepers, South Africa, 7-6 (4), 6-2.
Ekaterina Makarova and Elena Vesnina (3), Russia, def. Dominika Cibulkova, Slovakia, and Kirsten Flipkens, Belgium, 6-4, 5-7, 6-2.
Mixed
First Round
Daria Gavrilova and Luke Saville, Australia, def. Alla Kudryavtseva, Russia, and Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Pakistan, 7-6 (6), 7-6.
Abigail Spears, United States, and Santiago Gonzalez, Mexico, def. Arina Rodionova, Australia, and Max Mirnyi, Belarus, 6-3, 7-5.
Chan Hao-ching, Taiwan, and Jamie Murray, Britain, def. Jarmila Gajdosova, Australia, and Mahesh Bhupathi, India, 4-6, 7-6 (7), 10-8.
Katarina Srebotnik, Slovenia, and Marcelo Melo (2), Brazil, def. Arantxa Parra Santonja and David Marrero, Spain, 6-1, 6-4.
Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, and Pablo Cuevas, Uruguay, def. Yaroslava Shvedova, Kazakhstan, and Nenad Zimonjic (6), Serbia, 6-4, 5-7, 10-4.
Michaella Krajicek, Netherlands, and Florin Mergea, Romania, def. Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, and Raven Klaasen, South Africa, 6-1, 6-3.

Golf

Humana Challenge

PGA Tour
Friday
p-PGA West, Arnold Palmer
Private Course: 6,950; par 72
n-PGA West, Jack Nicklaus
Private Course: 6,924; par 72
q-La Quinta Country Club: 7,060; par 72
La Quinta, Calif.
Purse: $5.7 million
Second Round

Matt Kuchar	65q-64n—129 -15
Michael Putnam	63n-67p—130 -14
Bill Haas	67p-63q—130 -14
Nick Watney	67q-64n—131 -13
Justin Thomas	68q-63n—131 -13
Scott Pinckney	64q-67n—131 -13
Erik Compton	66p-65q—131 -13
Alex Cejka	68q-64n—132 -12
Ryan Palmer	71q-61n—132 -12
Steve Wheatcroft	65p-67q—132 -12
Nick Taylor	66p-67q—133 -11
Jason Kokrak	65n-68p—133 -11
Martin Flores	68p-65q—133 -11
Pat Perez	66q-68n—134 -10
Martin Laird	68n-66p—134 -10
Charley Hoffman	71q-63n—134 -10
J.J. Henry	67n-67p—134 -10
James Hahn	67q-67n—134 -10
Brendon de Jonge	69p-65q—134 -10
John Peterson	64n-70p—134 -10
Steven Alker	68n-66p—134 -10
Brendan Steele	67q-68n—135 -9
Francesco Molinari	64p-71q—135 -9
Patrick Reed	65q-70n—135 -9
Sung Joon Park	68n-67p—135 -9
Scott Verplank	70q-65n—135 -9
Harris English	67n-68p—135 -9
Charles Howell III	67q-68n—135 -9
Sean O'Hair	68q-67n—135 -9
Scott Stallings	68q-67n—135 -9
Tony Finau	71q-65n—136 -8
Brian Davis	67n-69p—136 -8
Webb Simpson	70p-66q—136 -8
Boo Weekley	70p-66q—136 -8
George McNeill	68q-68n—136 -8
Lucas Glover	68n-69p—137 -7
Kevin Na	69p-68q—137 -7
Patrick Rodgers	70q-67n—137 -7
Jerry Kelly	70q-67n—137 -7
Mark Wilson	64n-73p—137 -7
John Huh	69n-68p—137 -7
Billy Hurley III	68q-69n—137 -7
Danny Lee	68q-69n—137 -7
Carl Pettersson	68n-69p—137 -7
Fabian Gomez	69q-68n—137 -7
Phil Mickelson	71q-66n—137 -7
Retief Goosen	68p-70q—138 -6
Brice Garnett	69n-69p—138 -6
Chris Kirk	70p-68q—138 -6
William McGirt	71p-67q—138 -6
Colt Knost	71p-67q—138 -6
Keegan Bradley	68q-70n—138 -6
Brandt Snedeker	71p-67q—138 -6
Daniel Berger	70p-68n—138 -6
Mark Hubbard	69p-69q—138 -6
Zac Blair	72p-66q—138 -6
Graham DeLaet	68n-70p—138 -6
Heath Slocum	66n-72p—138 -6
Billy Horschel	71q-67n—138 -6
Kevin Kisner	68n-71p—139 -5
Scott Piercy	69n-70p—139 -5
Cameron Tringale	69q-70n—139 -5
Paul Casey	70q-69n—139 -5
David Toms	68q-71n—139 -5
Justin Hicks	68n-71p—139 -5
Brian Stuard	67p-72q—139 -5
Spencer Levin	71p-68q—139 -5
John Rollins	71p-68q—139 -5
Jason Bohn	72p-67q—139 -5
Russell Knox	69q-70n—139 -5
D.J. Trahan	68p-71q—139 -5
Nicholas Thompson	72p-67q—139 -5
Zach Johnson	69n-70p—139 -5
Rory Sabbatini	71p-68q—139 -5
Daniel Summerhays	70n-70p—140 -4
Harrison Frazar	67n-73p—140 -4
Alex Prugh	70p-70q—140 -4

Mitsubishi Electric Championship

Championship Tour
Friday
At Hualalai Golf Course
Kaupulehu-Kona, Hawaii
Purse: $1.8 million
Yardages: 7,107; Par 72
First Round

Rocco Mediate	33-33—66 -6
Corey Pavin	33-34—67 -5
Tom Watson	33-35—68 -4
Esteban Toledo	34-34—68 -4
Paul Goydos	33-35—68 -4
Bart Bryant	34-34—68 -4
Olin Browne	31-37—68 -4
John Cook	34-34—68 -4
Wes Short, Jr.	32-36—68 -4
Mark Wiebe	34-35—69 -3
Mark O'Meara	32-37—69 -3
Russ Cochran	35-34—69 -3
Scott Dunlap	35-34—69 -3
Miguel A. Jimenez	35-34—69 -3
Kenny Perry	36-33—69 -3
Jay Haas	36-33—69 -3
Craig Stadler	37-33—70 -2
Roger Chapman	34-36—70 -2
Davis Love III	36-34—70 -2
Tom Pernice Jr.	36-34—70 -2
Colin Montgomerie	36-34—70 -2
Brad Faxon	33-38—71 -1
Jeff Maggert	36-35—71 -1
David Frost	35-36—71 -1
Jeff Sluman	37-35—72 E
Nick Price	36-36—72 E
Fred Couples	35-37—72 E
Bernhard Langer	38-34—72 E
Hale Irwin	36-37—73 +1
Joe Daley	34-39—73 +1
Tom Lehman	36-37—73 +1
Michael Allen	37-36—73 +1
Kirk Triplett	37-36—73 +1
Curtis Strange	36-39—75 +3
Peter Jacobsen	35-39—74 +2
John Riegger	38-36—74 +2
Fred Funk	36-38—74 +2
Loren Roberts	37-38—75 +3
Kohki Idoki	39-38—77 +5
Ben Crenshaw	40-45—85 +13

Qatar Masters

PGA European Tour
Friday
At Doha Golf Club Course
Doha, Qatar
Purse: $2.5 million
Yardage: 7,400; Par: 72
Third Round

Marc Warren, Scotland	71-65-67—203
Branden Grace, South Africa	67-68-68—203
Emiliano Grillo, Argentina	67-69-67—203
Bernd Wiesberger, Austria	69-66-68—203
Eddie Pepperell, England	69-71-65—205
Alejandro Cañizares, Spain	67-70-68—205
George Coetzee, South Africa	68-67-70—205
Oliver Fisher, Britain	65-73-69—207
Johan Carlsson, Sweden	74-65-69—208
Gregory Bourdy, France	70-68-70—208
Renato Paratore, Italy	69-69-70—208
Matthew Baldwin, Britain	70-68-70—208
Darren Fichardt, South Africa	67-70-71—207
An Byeong-hun, South Korea	69-69-71—209
Pablo Larrazabal, Spain	71-71-67—209
Thomas Pieters, Belgium	73-68-68—209
Benjamin Hebert, France	72-68-69—209
Mike Lorenzo-Vera, France	70-70-69—209
Andy Sullivan, England	71-68-70—209
Ernie Els, South Africa	67-72-70—209
Also	
Justin Rose, Britain	68-73-69—210
Peter Uihlein, United States	69-73-71—213

College basketball

Friday's men's scores

EAST
Baruch 81, Hunter 43
Brooklyn 84, John Jay 76, OT
Castleton 68, Maine-Farmington 51
Hobart 58, RPI 52
Monmouth (NJ) 69, Niagara 58
NYU 91, Washington (Mo.) 57
Quinnipiac 73, Manhattan 59
Siena 69, Marist 60
Utica 78, Elmira 59
SOUTH
Barton 96, Lees-McRae 80
Brescia 79, Point Park 60
Limestone 88, Southern Wesleyan 70
Mount Olive 87, King (Tenn.) 78
Rhodes 74, Centre 67
MIDWEST
Augustana (SD) 97, Winona St. 68
Bethany Lutheran 78, North Central (Minn.) 65
Cleveland St. 70, Detroit 66
Concordia (St.P.) 71, Sioux Falls 68
Green Bay 51, Valparaiso 50
Minn. Duluth 50, Minot St. 56
Minn. St.-Mankato 95, SW Minnesota St. 78
Minn. St.-Moorhead 69, Minn.-Crookston 42
Northern St. (SD) 81, Bemidji St. 62
Northland 66, Minn.-Morris 63, OT
Northwestern (Minn.) 76, Martin Luther 62
St. Cloud St. 96, Mary 88
St. Scholastica 77, Crown (Minn.) 62
Upper Iowa 76, Wayne (Neb.) 64
VCU 63, Saint Louis 61

AP Men's Top 25 schedule

Sunday's games
No. 2 Virginia at Virginia Tech
No. 4 Villanova vs. Creighton
No. 7 Kansas vs. St. John's at Madison Square Garden
No. 8 Notre Dame at N.C. State
No. 10 Louisville at Pittsburgh
No. 12 Utah vs. Washington
No. 13 Maryland vs. Northwestern
No. 14 Wichita State vs. Drake
No. 20 Northern Iowa at Illinois State
No. 23 Indiana at Ohio State
No. 24 Seton Hall at Butler

Friday's women's scores

EAST
Baruch 64, Hunter 48
Brooklyn 73, John Jay 58
Castleton 67, Maine-Farmington 57
Iona 83, Niagara 72
NYU 64, Washington (Mo.) 58
RPI 49, William Smith 40
Seton Hall 59, Villanova 56
St. John's 74, Georgetown 57
Utica 53, Elmira 52
Yale 79, Brown 69
SOUTH
Barton 66, Lees-McRae 57
Berea 67, Kentucky Christian 65
Limestone 82, Southern Wesleyan 47
Maryville (Tenn.) 77, Meredith 50
Mount Olive 59, King (Tenn.) 57
Point Park 94, Brescia 78
Rhodes 63, Centre 60
Virginia Tech 76, Wake Forest 59
MIDWEST
Augustana (SD) 74, Winona St. 71
Bethany Lutheran 47, North Central (Minn.) 33
Calvin 76, Rochester (Mich.) 53
Concordia (St.P) 76, Sioux Falls 72
DePaul 96, Creighton 71
Drake 72, Indiana St. 65
Minn. Duluth 72, Minot St. 60
Minn.-Crookston 75, Minn. St. (Moorhead) 70, OT
Minn.-Morris 79, Northland 37
Missouri St. 61, S. Illinois 57
N. Iowa 58, Evansville 44
Northern St. (SD) 72, Bemidji St. 44
Northwestern (Minn.) 63, Martin Luther 52
Providence 66, Marquette 58
St. Cloud St. 75, Mary 66
St. Scholastica 61, Crown (Minn.) 49
Wayne (Neb.) 69, Upper Iowa 38
Wichita St. 85, Illinois St. 38
SOUTHWEST
Arlington Baptist 109, McMurry 75
FAR WEST
Arizona St. 70, Oregon 58
California 67, Southern Cal 53
Oregon St. 73, Arizona 55
Stanford 79, UCLA 70
Washington 85, Colorado 82
Washington St. 61, Utah 54
EXHIBITION
Minn. St. (Mankato) 76, SW Minnesota St. 62

AP Women's Top 25 schedule

Sunday's games
No. 2 UConn at Cincinnati
No. 4 Louisville vs. Miami
No. 5 Tennessee vs. No. 22 Georgia
No. 7 Maryland at Indiana
No. 8 Texas vs. Iowa State
No. 9 Oregon State at No. 13 Arizona State
No. 11 Stanford at Southern Cal
No. 12 North Carolina vs. No. 15 Duke
No. 14 Kentucky at Missouri
No. 17 Florida St. vs. Wake Forest
No. 21 Minnesota at No. 25 Rutgers
No. 23 Syracuse vs. N.C. State

Pro baseball

MLB calendar

Feb. 19 — Voluntary reporting date for pitchers, catchers and injured players.
Feb. 1-21 — Salary arbitration hearings, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Deals

Friday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League
HOUSTON ASTROS — Agreed to terms with INF Marwin Gonzalez on a one-year contract.
MINNESOTA TWINS — Agreed to terms with OF Jordan Schafer on a one-year contract.
OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Agreed to terms with INF Eric Sogard on a one-year contract.
TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with INF-DH Mitch Moreland on a one-year contract and with RHP Ross Ohlendorf on a minor-league contract.
National League
ATLANTA BRAVES — Claimed OF Eury Perez off waivers from the New York Yankees.
CHICAGO CUBS — Agreed to terms with OF Dexter Fowler on a one-year contract. Claimed RHP Gonzalez Germen off waivers from the Texas Rangers.
NEW YORK METS — Named Luis Rojas manager of St. Lucie (FSL) and Jose Lege manager of Savannah (SAL).
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Agreed to terms with RHP Ryan Vogelsong on a one-year contract.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
DALLAS COWBOYS — Signed DE Lavar Edwards and S Keelan Johnson to the reserve/future list.
DENVER BRONCOS — Named Bill Kollar defensive line coach.
HOUSTON TEXANS — Promoted Brian Gaine to director of player personnel and Jon Carr to director of scouting operations.
NEW YORK JETS — Named Kacy Rodgers defensive coordinator and Bobby April Jr. special teams coordinator.
OAKLAND RAIDERS — Named Todd Downing offensive backfields coach, Marcus Robertson defensive backs coach, Sal Sunseri linebackers coach and Mike Tice offensive line coach.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed P Brad Wing to a one-year contract extension.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
DALLAS STARS — Signed C Travis Morin to a two-year contract extension.
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
COLUMBUS CREW SC — Signed D Hernan Grana.
FC DALLAS — Named Fabian Bazan the strength and conditioning coach.
NEW YORK CITY FC — Announced the transfer of MF Kwadwo Poku from Atlanta (NASL).
PHILADELPHIA UNION — Agreed to terms with MF Brian Carroll, F Conor Casey and player-coach Fred on one-year contracts.
U.S. Soccer
USS — Named Andreas Herzog coach of the U-15 Under-23 Men's National Team.
COLLEGE
FIU — Named Matt House defensive coordinator.
IOWA STATE — Dismissed sophomore S T.J. Mutcherson for violating team rules. Announced WR Darius Lacey, TE Alex Leslie and OL Duaron Williams' will transfer.
MINNESOTA — Announced women's senior basketball G Rachel Banham was awarded a medical hardship waiver by the NCAA.
THE CITADEL — Named Craig Mosqueda women's volleyball coach.
WISCONSIN — Announced three-year contract extensions for women's soccer coach Paula Wilkins and men's soccer coach John Trask through 2018 and a four-year contract extension for volleyball coach Kelly Sheffield through 2019.

Boxing

Fight schedule

Jan. 26
At Cowboys Dance Hall, San Antonio, Rocky Juarez vs. Robinson Castellanos, 10, featherweights.
Jan. 30
At Foxwoods Resort, Mashantucket, Conn., Karl Dargan vs. Tony Luis, 10, lightweights.
Feb. 6
At Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, Biloxi, Miss., Jermain Taylor vs. Sergio Mora, 12, for Taylor's IBF middleweight title.
Feb. 13
At the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Conn., Boxcino Quarterfinals-Junior Middleweights: Cleotis Pendarvis vs. Ricardo Pinnell; Stanyslav Skorokhod vs. Michael Moore; Brandon Adams vs. Alex Perez; Vito Gasparyan vs. Simeon Hardy.
Feb. 14
At Tepic, Mexico, David Sanchez vs. Juan Alberto Rosas, 12, for the interim WBA super flyweight title.
Feb. 20
At Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona, N.Y., Boxcino Quarterfinals-Heavyweights: Donovan Dennis vs. Steve Vukosa; Razvan Cojano vs. Ed Fountain; Andrew Tabiti vs. Gabe Heaven; Mario Heredia vs. Lenroy Thomas.
Feb. 21
At Monte Carlo, Monaco, Gennady Golovkin vs. Martin Murray, 12, for Golovkin's WBA Super World-WBC World-IBO middleweight titles; Hekkie Budler vs. Jesus Silvestre, 12, for Budler's WBA-IBO minimumweight titles; Lee Haskins vs. Omar Lamiri, 12, for the vacant EBU bantamweight title.
At O2 World Arena, Berlin, Arthur Abraham vs. Paul Smith, 12, for Abraham's WBO super middleweight title.

SPORTS BRIEFS/GOLF

Briefly

World Cup of Hockey set to be held in 2016

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The World Cup of Hockey will be making a long-awaited return in 2016.

The tournament will feature eight teams with the games played in Toronto before NHL training camps open in September.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and NHL Players' Association Executive Director Donald Fehr announced the tournament's return Saturday at a news conference during the league's All-Star Game weekend festivities in Columbus, Ohio. The league also announced the Bruins and Canadiens will play in the Winter Classic next year on Jan. 1 at Gillette Stadium, the home of the New England Patriots football team. It's one of several outdoor games planned for next year.

A new wrinkle will be added to the World Cup format, with two of the teams made up of multinational players. One team will consist of North American-born players under the age of 23. Another will consist of European-born players whose countries aren't represented.

The other six teams will be Canada, the United States, Russia, Sweden, Czech Republic and Finland.

The World Cup and its predecessor, the Canada Cup, have been held seven times since 1976 through 2004.

Jansrud wins shortened World Cup downhill

KITZBUEHEL, Austria — After winning a shortened version of the men's World Cup downhill on the Streif course, Kjetil Jansrud was hugged by a Norwegian teammate who has come short on 10 attempts to win the classic race.

Injured Aksel Lund Svindal, hoping to recover in time from a torn Achilles tendon to compete at next month's world championships, was among the first to congratulate Jansrud, embracing him in the finish area.

With his third downhill victory of the season, Jansrud became the first Norwegian winner on the Streif since Lasse Kjus 11 years ago.

With 45,000 spectators waiting in light snowfall, fog on the upper part of the course forced organizers to delay the race by two hours, and then significantly lower the start gate as conditions failed to improve.

In the shortest downhill in World Cup history, Jansrud clocked 58.16 seconds — half the time usually needed on the 2-mile course — to edge Dominik Paris by 0.02. The Italian won the super-G on the same course Friday.

Guillermo Fayed of France came 0.21 behind in third for his second career podium.

American Steven Nyman, who won the downhill in Val Gardena last month, was 0.41 back in fifth, and Olympic champion Matthias Mayer of Austria trailed Jansrud by 0.47 in 10th.

In other skiing news:

■ Lara Gut of Switzerland won a World Cup downhill on Saturday, while Lindsey Vonn missed a chance to extend her wins record as she almost skied out and finished well behind.

Gut raced down the new Engiadina course in St. Moritz, Switzerland, in 1 minute, 43.82 seconds in the final downhill before the world championships next month.

Anna Fenninger of Austria was 0.32 behind Gut, and now has six runner-up finishes and no victories in defense of her overall World Cup title. Edit Miklos of Hungary got a career-best third-place finish, trailing Gut by 0.58.

Brown in first place after short program

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Jason Brown makes it sound so simple: The stakes of the U.S. Figure Skating Championship don't make for pressure, just a chance to show off for a big crowd.

The 20-year-old Olympian won the short program Friday, setting himself up for his first national title. Brown posted a career-best 93.36 points to lead Joshua Farris by 2.96, while four-time U.S. champ Jeremy Abbott was third, another .47 back.

Brown still doesn't do a quad jump, all but a necessity to contend for medals at major international competitions. But he can still rack up points with the rest of his performance, which proved to be plenty at the U.S. Championships, where Farris and Abbott didn't do a quad, either.

Cuban: NBA should dump fan voting

DALLAS — Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban suggests the NBA should eliminate fan balloting for the All-Star game, saying the leading total of 1.5 million votes for Golden State's Stephen Curry was so low it was "embarrassing."

Cuban says the squads should be expanded to 14 players from the current 12. He said coaches or general managers or both should choose the teams.

The outspoken owner said the low total for Curry was evidence that the "system's broken, absolutely, positively broken."

"And fans are allowed to vote more than once, right?" Cuban asks. "That's embarrassing. To think that we couldn't get people to vote enough times. No one even tried to hack it. That's how bored they are."

Toronto outfielder Jose Bautista led Major League Baseball's All-Star fan voting last year with about 5.9 million ballots.

CHRIS CARLSON/AP

Ryan Palmer reacts after missing an eagle putt on the eighth hole Friday during the second round of the Humana Challenge in La Quinta, Calif. Palmer shot a 61 for the round and sits at 12 under par.

Golf roundup

Palmer misses chance to shoot 59 in Humana

The Associated Press

LA QUINTA, Calif. — Ryan Palmer shot the lowest round in his PGA Tour career. He matched the tour record for the longest eagle-birdie streak. He moved into contention in the Humana Challenge.

The 38-year-old Texan did his best to look at the many positives. It wasn't easy after letting a chance to shoot 59 or lower slip away Friday at PGA West.

"The most important thing now was getting back within striking distance," Palmer said.

After playing an eight-hole stretch in 10 under, Palmer needed to go 3 under on the final eight — with two reachable par 5s left — to shoot 59.

Instead, he bogeyed the next two holes. He made three more birdies, but couldn't get a couple of late putts to fall and settled for an 11-under 61.

"Walking off 10, after I got to 10 under, I was staying calm, trying not to think about anything, just trying to keep my momentum going, my pace with my walk," Palmer said. "It's hard not to think about it."

He tied the birdie-eagle streak record set by Billy Mayfair in the 2001 Buick Open and matched by Briny Baird in the 2003 FUNAI Classic. Mayfair and Baird were 9 under during their runs, making seven birdies and an eagle.

At 9-under 27, Palmer matched the tour record for relation to par for nine holes and was a stroke off the record of 26 set by Corey Pavin on a par-34 nine in Milwaukee in 2006.

Palmer had a 12-under 132 total after opening with a 71 on Thursday at La Quinta Country Club. He was three strokes behind leader Matt Kuchar.

Kuchar, the highest-ranked player in the field at No. 11, had a 64 on the Nicklaus course. He tied for third last week in Hawaii in the Sony Open.

Bill Haas and first-round leader Michael Putnam were a stroke back. Justin Thomas, Nick Watney and Scott Pinckney were 13 under.

PGA European Tour: Branden Grace made a decisive eagle on the 16th to win the Qatar Masters at Doha, Quatar, on Saturday by one stroke and clinch his sixth European Tour title.

The South African shot a final round 6-under 66 for an overall 19-under 269 to hold off runner-up Marc Warren (67) of Scotland.

Bernd Wiesberger's two bogeys on the second and third holes proved costly as the Austrian settled for third place at 17 under.

Going into the final round, Grace and Warren were tied for the lead with Emiliano Grillo of Argentina and Wiesberger. But France's Gregory Bourdy mounted the challenge by firing in six birdies on the first nine holes before he slipped with a bogey on the 15th for a 7-under 65.

Korea's Byeong-Hun An shot 65 but missed a crucial birdie on the last hole to miss out.

Eddie Pepperell's back-nine 32 gave the Englishman fourth place after a 67. An, Bourdy and Grillo (70) were tied for fifth on 15 under.

NHL

All-Star Game features 9 Americans

By Rusty Miller
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Some of the best players in the world — Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and anybody wearing a Detroit Red Wings or Colorado Avalanche jersey — will be absent from the NHL All-Star game on Sunday.

Yet the list of American-born talent at the game is longer than it's ever been.

When the sport's best showcase their talents, there will be nine U.S. born and bred players. It's the largest red, white and blue contingent since the NHL went to this format in 2003.

"That upsurge has been there," said Nashville Predators coach Peter Laviolette, born in Norwood, Mass., who will serve as a head coach in the annual goal-fest held for the first time this year in Ohio's capital city.

"There's good players all over the world, there really is. But the U.S. has definitely made strides and continues to make strides."

The native sons include some of the biggest names in the sport: Chicago right wing Patrick Kane and Columbus left wing Nick Foligno (both from Buffalo, N.Y.), Toronto right wing Phil Kessel and Minnesota defenseman Ryan Suter (both from Madison, Wis.), and others such as Winnipeg defenseman Dustin Byfuglien, St. Louis blue liner Kevin Shattenkirk, Ottawa left wing Bobby Ryan, Tampa Bay center Tyler Johnson and Carolina defenseman Justin Faulk.

"You're seeing a lot of great players start to come up now," said Shattenkirk, one of the game's best young defensemen. "It's been a great few years for U.S. hockey. It's exciting to see that many guys here. We do take a lot of pride in, I don't want to say proving ourselves, but just making sure that American hockey is respected."

Consider that there were only eight American players in each of the past two All-Star games, in 2012 and 2011 (the 2013 game was canceled due to a labor dispute and there was no game last year because of the Winter Olympics). Before that, there were seven U.S. players participating in 2009, three in 2008, five in both 2007 and 2004 and six in 2003.

On one of the NHL's biggest stages, much has been made of those who are not participating.

Crosby and Malkin, both of the Pittsburgh Penguins, are out due to injuries. The Red Wings and Avalanche do not have a representative for the same reason.

Goalies Jimmy Howard of Detroit, Pekka Rinne of Nashville and Sergei Bobrovsky of the host Columbus Blue Jackets are also injured and will miss the game.

AP Hockey Writer John Wawrow contributed.

GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Nationwide Arena will host Sunday's NHL All-Star hockey game in Columbus, Ohio.

Johansen goes No. 1 as captains draft teams

By Rusty Miller
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Phil Kessel was once again dealt for Tyler Seguin, Columbus Blue Jackets center Ryan Johansen was the No. 1 overall pick and superstar Alexander Ovechkin did not get his new car.

In a wild and comic NHL All-Star draft to set the lineups for Sunday's game, almost nothing went the way anyone might have guessed.

The highlight of the evening was Ovechkin, the Washington Capitals' $10-million-a-year goal-scoring superstar, pleading to be taken last in the 17-round draft. Why? To compensate for the embarrassment of being the player no one wanted, the NHL gives the last player standing a new car.

At one point during the evening, a TV interviewer approached Ovechkin backstage and he hid behind a white piece of paper on which he had printed: "I want to be last. Need a car."

Ovechkin, the league's leading goal-scorer last year, came close to getting his wish. He lasted until there were just three players remaining, but then captain Nick Foligno selected him.

Ovechkin slumped in mock dejection in his chair, looked at the ceiling and sighed loudly. Then he looked into the camera and mouthed one word: "WHY?"

Foligno watched Ovechkin slowly walk onto the stage before despondently putting on a black Team Foligno jersey.

"Hey, Ovie, buy a car!" Foligno called out.

As it turned out, Ovechkin barely missed out on a new set of wheels. The two players who went last — Edmonton's Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Nashville rookie Filip Forsberg — each got the keys to a new car in a break from tradition.

"He wanted the car but it seems like he always gets everything he wants," said Rick Nash, one of the assistants to captain Jonathan Toews. "I think the captains had other plans."

Foligno and Toews, chosen last week as team captains for the All-Star teams, revisited history by recreating the 2009 deal. In that trade, which greatly affected two Original Six franchises, the Boston Bruins sent Kessel to the Toronto Maple Leafs for a first-round draft pick that became Seguin.

Midway through the draft, Foligno and Toews huddled at the back of the stage before Foligno leaned into the microphone and said, "I've always wanted to say this: 'I have a trade to announce!'"

Both Kessel, who has flourished through some up and down years in Toronto, and Seguin, now a Dallas Stars scorer who shares the league lead with Nash with 28 goals, laughed at the irony.

"Well, fellas, I've been there before," Kessel said with a grin. "I got traded for the same person and I think it worked out OK for everyone."

Kessel had been grabbed by Team Toews with the second pick — a dramatic difference from the 2011 All-Star draft when he was the last player taken.

After the top two picks, Foligno took Chicago's Duncan Keith and Los Angeles' Anze Kopitar, while Toews picked Nashville's Shea Weber and Philadelphia's Jake Voracek.

The captains were required to take three goalies within the first 10 rounds and six defensemen by the end of the 15th round.

GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Chicago's Jonathan Toews picks his team for Sunday's NHL All-Star Game during the NHL Fantasy Draft in Columbus, Ohio, on Friday.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	48	30	14	4	64	156	127
Detroit	47	27	11	9	63	139	119
Montreal	45	29	13	3	61	123	106
Boston	48	25	16	7	57	126	121
Florida	44	20	14	10	50	107	122
Ottawa	46	19	18	9	47	126	128
Toronto	48	22	23	3	47	142	150
Buffalo	47	14	30	3	31	89	167
Metropolitan Division							
N.Y. Islanders	46	31	14	1	63	151	129
Pittsburgh	46	26	12	8	60	138	117
N.Y. Rangers	44	27	13	4	58	134	106
Washington	46	24	13	9	57	137	120
Philadelphia	48	19	22	7	45	130	146
Columbus	45	20	22	3	43	113	142
New Jersey	47	17	22	8	42	107	134
Carolina	46	16	25	5	37	98	120

Western Conference

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	45	30	10	5	65	137	104
St. Louis	46	29	13	4	62	148	111
Chicago	47	30	15	2	62	148	108
Winnipeg	48	26	14	8	60	135	117
Colorado	48	20	18	10	50	125	137
Dallas	46	21	18	7	49	144	151
Minnesota	46	20	20	6	46	128	137
Pacific Division							
Anaheim	47	31	10	6	68	139	124
San Jose	48	25	17	6	56	131	132
Vancouver	45	26	16	3	55	124	114
Calgary	47	25	19	3	53	136	125
Los Angeles	47	20	15	12	52	129	126
Arizona	46	16	25	5	37	105	156
Edmonton	47	12	26	9	33	109	158

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's games
Edmonton 5, Washington 4, SO
Detroit 5, Minnesota 4, SO
N.Y. Rangers 3, Ottawa 2, OT
Philadelphia 3, Pittsburgh 2, OT
Montreal 2, Nashville 1, OT
Tampa Bay 4, Vancouver 1
Chicago 6, Arizona 1
Boston 3, Dallas 1

Wednesday's games
Chicago 3, Pittsburgh 2, SO
Colorado 3, Boston 2, SO
Ottawa 4, Toronto 3
Winnipeg 4, Columbus 0
Anaheim 6, Calgary 3
San Jose 4, Los Angeles 2

Thursday's games
No games scheduled

Friday's games
No games scheduled

Saturday's games
No games scheduled

Sunday's games
All-Star Game in Columbus, Ohio

Monday's games
No games scheduled

All-Star Game rosters

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Squads for NHL All-Star Game on Jan. 25. A draft on Friday will determine which players will play on which teams:

(x-Voted in by the fans)

Forwards
Ryan Getzlaf, Anaheim Ducks
Patrice Bergeron, Boston Bruins
x-Zemgus Girgensons, Buffalo Sabres
x-Patrick Kane, Chicago Blackhawks
x-Jonathan Toews, Chicago Blackhawks
Nick Foligno, Columbus Blue Jackets
Ryan Johansen, Columbus Blue Jackets
Tyler Seguin, Dallas Stars
Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Edmonton Oilers
Anze Kopitar, Los Angeles Kings
Patrik Elias, New Jersey Devils
John Tavares, New York Islanders
Rick Nash, New York Rangers
Bobby Ryan, Ottawa Senators
Claude Giroux, Philadelphia Flyers
Jakub Voracek, Philadelphia Flyers
Sidney Crosby, Pittsburgh Penguins
Evgeni Malkin, Pittsburgh Penguins
Vladimir Tarasenko, St. Louis Blues
Steven Stamkos, Tampa Bay Lightning
Tyler Johnson, Tampa Bay Lightning
Phil Kessel, Toronto Maple Leafs
Radim Vrbata, Vancouver Canucks
Alex Ovechkin, Washington Capitals

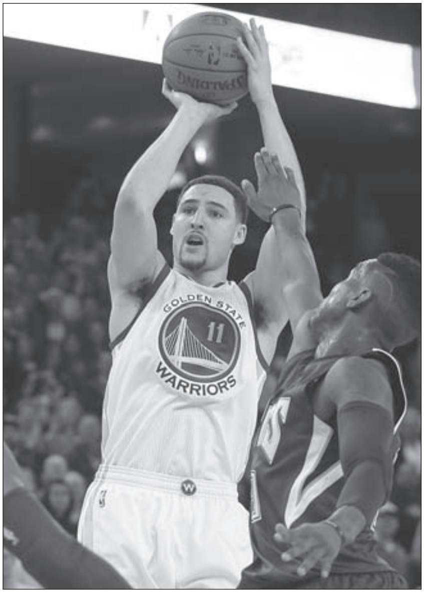
Defensemen
Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Arizona Coyotes
Mark Giordano, Calgary Flames
Justin Faulk, Carolina Hurricanes
x-Duncan Keith, Chicago Blackhawks
x-Brent Seabrook, Chicago Blackhawks
Erik Johnson, Colorado Avalanche
Drew Doughty, Los Angeles Kings
Ryan Suter, Minnesota Wild
Shea Weber, Nashville Predators
Brent Burns, San Jose Sharks
Kevin Shattenkirk, St. Louis Blues
Dustin Byfuglien, Winnipeg Jets

Goaltenders
Sergei Bobrovsky, Columbus Blue Jackets
x-Corey Crawford, Chicago Blackhawks
Jimmy Howard, Detroit Red Wings
Roberto Luongo, Florida Panthers
Carey Price, Montreal Canadiens
Pekka Rinne, Nashville Predators

6 Rookies in Skills Competition
Johnny Gaudreau, Calgary Flames
Aaron Ekblad, Florida Panthers
Tanner Pearson, Los Angeles Kings
Filip Forsberg, Nashville Predators
Mike Hoffman, Ottawa Senators
Jonathan Drouin, Tampa Bay Lightning

— The Associated Press

NBA



Ben Margot/AP

Golden State's Klay Thompson shoots over Sacramento's Ray McCallum during the third quarter of Friday's game in Oakland, Calif. Thompson set a new NBA record, scoring 37 points in the third quarter, the most in a quarter in league history.

Thompson scores NBA-record 37 points in quarter

By Antonio Gonzalez
The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The sellout crowd chanted Klay Thompson's name. Both benches stood, equally stunned at what was taking place. Thompson's teammates continued to get him the ball — and he just kept shooting.

"They just kept wanting to see the show," Thompson said. "That's what they kept telling me."

Thompson set a league record for the most points in a quarter Friday night, a thrilling 37-point third period that powered the Golden State Warriors to a 126-101 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

Thompson finished with a career-high 52 points, pleasing 19,596 fans at rowdy Oracle Arena with a performance that will long be remembered in the basketball-loving Bay Area. The All-Star hopeful made all 13 shots, including a league-record nine from three-point range in a quarter, and hit both of his free throws during a 12-minute span of pure basketball bliss.

"It was kind of a blur. I wish I could go back and enjoy it some more, but moments like that go by really fast," Thompson said.

His streaky shooting stroke helped the Warriors (35-6) erase a sloppy showing in the middle of the game for its franchise-best 18th consecutive home victory. Golden State became the 10th team to win at least 35 games halfway through a season.

Thompson surpassed the 33-point mark set by George Gervin in 1978 and matched by Carmelo Anthony in 2008 for the most points in a quarter. Michael Redd and Joe Johnson shared the previous mark for most threes in a quarter with eight.

Thompson, who signed a four-year, near-maximum contract extension worth about $70 million this summer, couldn't remember ever dominating a game like that.

"Maybe elementary school," he joked.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	28	15	.651	—
Brooklyn	18	25	.419	10
Boston	15	26	.366	12
Philadelphia	8	35	.186	20
New York	8	36	.182	20½
Southeast Division				
Atlanta	36	8	.818	—
Washington	29	14	.674	6½
Miami	19	24	.442	16½
Charlotte	18	26	.409	18
Orlando	15	31	.326	22
Central Division				
Chicago	29	16	.644	—
Cleveland	24	20	.545	4½
Milwaukee	21	21	.500	6½
Detroit	17	26	.395	11
Indiana	15	30	.333	14

Western Conference

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	30	12	.714	—
Houston	30	14	.682	1
Dallas	30	14	.682	1
San Antonio	28	17	.622	3½
New Orleans	22	21	.512	8½
Northwest Division				
Portland	31	13	.705	—
Oklahoma City	22	21	.512	8½
Denver	18	25	.419	12½
Utah	15	28	.349	15½
Minnesota	7	35	.167	23
Pacific Division				
Golden State	35	6	.854	—
L.A. Clippers	29	14	.674	7
Phoenix	26	19	.578	11
Sacramento	16	27	.372	20
L.A. Lakers	12	32	.273	24½

Thursday's games
Chicago 104, San Antonio 81
Utah 101, Milwaukee 99
Boston 90, Portland 89
L.A. Clippers 123, Brooklyn 84

Friday's games
Toronto 91, Philadelphia 86
Atlanta 103, Oklahoma City 93
Miami 89, Indiana 87
Cleveland 129, Charlotte 90
New York 113, Orlando 106
Chicago 102, Dallas 98
New Orleans 92, Minnesota 84
San Antonio 99, L.A. Lakers 85
Houston 113, Phoenix 111
Boston 100, Denver 99
Golden State 126, Sacramento 101

Saturday's games
New York at Charlotte
Detroit at Milwaukee
Philadelphia at Memphis
Brooklyn at Utah
Washington at Portland

Sunday's games
Miami at Chicago
Oklahoma City at Cleveland
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix
Dallas at New Orleans
Minnesota at Atlanta
Indiana at Orlando
Milwaukee at San Antonio
Detroit at Toronto
Boston at Golden State
Washington at Denver
Houston at L.A. Lakers

Friday

Heat 89, Pacers 87

INDIANA — S.Hill 2-9 0-1 4, West 5-14 2-2 12, Hibbert 1-4 2-2 4, Watson 3-6 5-6 13, Miles 3-6 1-1 8, Mahinmi 3-3 2-2 8, Stuckey 4-11 1-1 9, Rudez 0-4 0-0 0, G.Hill 5-10 3-4 13, Scola 5-8 4-4 14, Copeland 0-0 0-0 0, Sloan 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 32-78 20-23 87.

MIAMI — Deng 9-13 2-2 23, Bosh 8-16 3-3 19, Andersen 1-1 2-2 4, Chalmers 3-7 3-3 9, Wade 5-16 3-5 13, Napier 1-5 0-0 3, Haslem 2-2 0-0 4, Williams 3-8 0-0 6, Granger 3-3 0-0 6, Cole 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 36-75 13-15 89.

Indiana	18	19	27	23—87
Miami	26	28	21	14—89

Three-Point Goals—Indiana 3-15 (Watson 2-3, Miles 1-3, G.Hill 0-2, S.Hill 0-3, Rudez 0-4), Miami 4-17 (Deng 3-3, Napier 1-1, Wade 0-2, Cole 0-2, Chalmers 0-2, Williams 0-3, Bosh 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Indiana 47 (West 9), Miami 43 (Andersen 13). Assists—Indiana 14 (Stuckey 3), Miami 20 (Wade 4). Total Fouls—Indiana 22, Miami 25. Technicals—Indiana Coach Vogel. A—19,693 (19,600).

Knicks 113, Magic 106

ORLANDO — Marble 1-2 1-4 4, Frye 5-10 0-0 14, Vucevic 16-22 2-2 34, Payton 3-6 3-4 9, Oladipo 6-20 3-5 15, Harris 4-14 1-1 9, A.Gordon 2-2 1-3 5, O'Quinn 3-4 0-0 6, Fournier 2-4 0-0 5, Ridnour 1-1 0-0 3, B.Gordon 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 44-87 11-19 106.

NEW YORK — Anthony 10-24 2-4 25, Amundson 1-6 0-0 2, Smith 8-18 0-0 19, Calderon 2-5 0-0 4, Galloway 5-10 3-4 15, Hardaway Jr. 2-8 8-9 13, Thomas 8-10 0-0 16, Aldrich 3-3 0-0 6, Prigioni 2-3 4-4 9, Early 0-0 0-0 0, Acy 0-0 0-0 0, Larkin 2-4 0-0 4. Totals 43-91 17-21 113.

Orlando	26	24	28	28—106
New York	20	31	31	31—113

Three-Point Goals—Orlando 7-27 (Frye 4-9, Ridnour 1-1, Marble 1-2, Fournier 1-3, B.Gordon 0-1, Oladipo 0-5, Harris 0-6), New York 10-25 (Smith 3-4, Anthony 3-7, Galloway 2-6, Prigioni 1-2, Hardaway Jr. 1-4, Larkin 0-1, Calderon 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Orlando 47 (Vucevic 18), New York 56 (Aldrich 9). Assists—Orlando 27 (Payton 11), New York 29 (Calderon 7). Total Fouls—Orlando 19, New York 18. A—19,812 (19,763).

Raptors 91, 76ers 86

TORONTO — DeRozan 4-14 0-0 8, A.Johnson 1-5 0-0 2, Valanciunas 3-5 5-7 11, Lowry 5-14 8-8 21, Vasquez 6-11 0-0 12, Williams 3-11 5-6 11, Patterson 6-10 0-1 14, Hansbrough 0-2 1-2 1, Ross 2-5 0-0 5, J.Johnson 3-3 0-0 6. Totals 33-80 19-24 91.

PHILADELPHIA — Mbah a Moute 4-8 1-1 10, Covington 5-15 4-4 18, Noel 5-12 2-2 12, Carter-Williams 4-8 3-4 12, McDaniels 6-13 0-0 14, Thompson 1-3 0-0 3, Sims 4-11 3-3 11, Grant 1-4 2-4 4, Drew II 1-6 0-0 2, Sampson 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 31-81 15-18 86.

Toronto	22	26	15	28—91
Philadelphia	30	11	21	24—86

Three-Point Goals—Toronto 6-24 (Lowry 3-7, Patterson 2-4, Ross 1-3, DeRozan 0-2, Williams 0-4, Vasquez 0-4), Philadelphia 9-29 (Covington 4-11, McDaniels 2-7, Carter-Williams 1-2, Mbah a Moute 1-3, Thompson 1-3, Sims 0-1, Drew II 0-1, Grant 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Toronto 54 (Patterson 13), Philadelphia 51 (Noel 14). Assists—Toronto 19 (Lowry 5), Philadelphia 21 (Carter-Williams 9). Total Fouls—Toronto 17, Philadelphia 19. A—13,640 (20,318).

Rockets 113, Suns 111

HOUSTON — Ariza 5-10 0-0 11, Motiejunas 7-11 1-2 15, Howard 2-2 0-0 5, Beverley 5-13 0-0 14, Harden 8-18 14-17 33, Smith 7-11 0-1 14, Brewer 7-12 0-0 14, Dorsey 2-2 0-0 4, Terry 1-1 0-0 3, Papanikolaou 0-4 0-0 0. Totals 44-84 15-20 113.

PHOENIX — Tucker 2-7 2-2 6, Mark. Morris 9-14 3-4 21, Len 2-3 0-2 4, Bledsoe 8-14 8-10 25, G.Dragic 1-5 0-2 2, Thomas 7-20 4-4 22, Marc.Morris 5-9 0-0 12, Wright 1-4 0-0 2, Green 6-14 0-0 15, Plumlee 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 42-91 17-24 111.

Houston	32	28	27	26—113
Phoenix	24	28	25	34—111

Three-Point Goals—Houston 10-27 (Beverley 4-7, Harden 3-6, Howard 1-1, Terry 1-1, Ariza 1-4, Brewer 0-2, Smith 0-2, Papanikolaou 0-4), Phoenix 10-30 (Thomas 4-9, Green 3-9, Marc.Morris 2-3, Bledsoe 1-4, G.Dragic 0-2, Tucker 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Houston 51 (Ariza, Dorsey, Motiejunas, Harden 6), Phoenix 50 (Len 11). Assists—Houston 24 (Harden 10), Phoenix 21 (Bledsoe 9). Total Fouls—Houston 21, Phoenix 23. Technicals—Houston defensive three second, G.Dragic, Tucker. A—16,701 (18,055).

Celtics 100, Nuggets 99

BOSTON — Crowder 3-3 1-1 9, Sullinger 5-13 4-8 14, Bass 5-12 7-8 17, Turner 5-8 0-2 10, Bradley 7-11 0-0 18, Zeller 5-10 1-2 11, Smart 1-2 1-2 4, Thornton 3-7 0-0 7, Prince 2-5 0-0 4, Wallace 0-0 0-0 0, Pressey 1-4 3-4 6. Totals 37-75 17-27 100.

DENVER — Chandler 5-15 3-4 14, Faried 4-12 3-5 11, Nurkic 3-7 0-0 6, Nelson 9-20 1-2 23, Afflalo 6-13 7-7 20, Hickson 6-8 3-6 15, Gallinari 1-7 2-2 4, Foye 0-2 0-0 0, Arthur 3-5 0-0 6. Totals 37-89 19-26 99.

Boston	20	22	33	25—100
Denver	28	20	26	25— 99

Three-Point Goals—Boston 9-21 (Bradley 4-5, Crowder 2-2, Thornton 1-2, Smart 1-2, Pressey 1-3, Prince 0-1, Turner 0-2, Sullinger 0-4), Denver 6-21 (Nelson 4-7, Afflalo 1-4, Chandler 1-5, Foye 0-2, Gallinari 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Boston 53 (Bass 9), Denver 54 (Hickson, Faried 14). Assists—Boston 20 (Turner 6), Denver 20 (Nelson 7). Total Fouls—Boston 24, Denver 19. A—16,133 (19,155).

Bulls 102, Mavericks 98

CHICAGO — Snell 4-7 0-0 10, Gasol 5-10 3-3 13, Noah 3-8 0-0 6, Rose 7-17 3-3 20, Butler 8-18 4-5 20, Gibson 6-10 3-4 15, Hinrich 2-3 2-2 8, Brooks 1-3 2-3 4, Moore 1-1 0-0 3, Mirotic 1-1 0-0 3. Totals 38-78 17-20 102.

DALLAS — Parsons 8-14 2-2 19, Nowitzki 10-15 2-2 24, Chandler 3-6 4-4 10, Rondo 3-9 0-0 6, Ellis 7-18 3-3 17, Harris 2-6 3-3 9, Powell 0-4 4-4 4, Jefferson 0-1 0-0 0, Barea 4-9 0-0 9. Totals 37-82 18-18 98.

Chicago	30	24	26	22—102
Dallas	21	30	24	23— 98

Three-Point Goals—Chicago 9-16 (Rose 3-5, Hinrich 2-2, Snell 2-4, Moore 1-1, Mirotic 1-1, Brooks 0-1, Butler 0-2), Dallas 6-18 (Harris 2-4, Nowitzki 2-5, Parsons 1-3, Barea 1-3, Jefferson 0-1, Ellis 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Chicago 54 (Gasol 16), Dallas 34 (Chandler 12). Assists—Chicago 22 (Butler 6), Dallas 16 (Rondo, Ellis 4). Total Fouls—Chicago 18, Dallas 16. A—20,408 (19,200).

Pelicans 92, Timberwolves 84

NEW ORLEANS — Cunningham 7-12 0-0 14, Davis 9-23 3-4 21, Asik 2-4 1-2 5, Evans 8-17 0-2 17, Gordon 8-13 2-2 20, Pondexter 2-3 0-0 4, Ajinca 2-4 2-2 6, Wolters 2-4 1-2 5, Babbitt 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 40-80 9-14 92.

MINNESOTA — Hummel 2-5 0-0 4, Young 7-15 0-0 15, Dieng 6-12 2-3 14, Williams 3-10 6-7 12, Wiggins 6-16 1-3 13, Budinger 5-8 0-0 10, Bennett 0-2 0-0 0, Pekovic 5-11 3-4 13, LaVine 1-5 0-0 3. Totals 35-84 12-17 84.

New Orleans	24	21	24	23—92
Minnesota	20	24	19	21—84

Three-Point Goals—New Orleans 3-4 (Gordon 2-3, Evans 1-1), Minnesota 2-9 (LaVine 1-1, Young 1-1, Hummel 0-1, Wiggins 0-2, Williams 0-2, Budinger 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—New Orleans 46 (Davis 12), Minnesota 53 (Dieng 15). Assists—New Orleans 17 (Evans 8), Minnesota 27 (Williams 10). Total Fouls—New Orleans 16, Minnesota 18. A—14,978 (19,356).

Hawks 103, Thunder 93

OKLAHOMA CITY — Durant 8-22 2-4 21, Ibaka 6-16 0-0 13, Adams 4-6 1-2 9, Westbrook 8-16 4-6 22, Roberson 2-2 0-0 6, Waiters 3-8 2-2 8, Jackson 3-8 0-0 7, Perkins 1-3 2-4 4, Morrow 0-4 0-0 0, Jones 0-1 0-0 0, Smith 0-0 0-0 0, Lamb 1-1 0-0 3. Totals 36-87 11-18 93.

ATLANTA — Carroll 5-7 0-0 13, Millsap 9-17 2-2 22, Horford 6-12 1-1 14, Teague 7-13 2-2 17, Korver 2-5 0-0 5, Sefolosha 2-2 0-0 4, Antic 2-6 3-3 8, Schroder 4-11 4-4 13, Scott 1-5 0-0 2, Bazemore 2-5 1-1 5. Totals 40-83 13-13 103.

Oklahoma City	30	17	28	18— 93
Atlanta	23	25	31	24—103

Three-Point Goals—Oklahoma City 10-26 (Durant 3-9, Roberson 2-2, Westbrook 2-4, Lamb 1-1, Ibaka 1-3, Jackson 1-3, Jones 0-1, Waiters 0-1, Morrow 0-2), Atlanta 10-25 (Carroll 3-5, Millsap 2-3, Horford 1-2, Teague 1-2, Korver 1-3, Antic 1-4, Schroder 1-5, Bazemore 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Oklahoma City 47 (Ibaka 10), Atlanta 54 (Horford 12). Assists—Oklahoma City 23 (Westbrook 11), Atlanta 27 (Teague 9). Total Fouls—Oklahoma City 16, Atlanta 13. A—19,203 (18,729).

Cavaliers 129, Hornets 90

CHARLOTTE — Kidd-Gilchrist 5-11 5-8 15, Zeller 2-6 1-2 5, Biyombo 4-6 2-2 10, Walker 3-14 1-1 8, Henderson 2-8 2-2 6, Williams 1-5 0-1 2, Stephenson 5-10 0-2 10, Jefferson 10-16 2-2 22, Neal 1-2 0-0 2, Roberts 1-4 0-0 3, Maxiell 0-0 1-2 1, Hairston 0-4 0-0 0, Taylor 2-3 2-2 6. Totals 36-89 16-24 90.

CLEVELAND — James 9-15 5-6 25, Love 3-7 3-4 9, Mozgov 4-5 6-7 14, Irving 7-12 1-2 18, Smith 7-13 0-0 21, Thompson 2-7 1-2 5, Marion 4-7 0-0 8, Shumpert 3-3 0-0 8, Dellavedova 2-5 1-2 5, Haywood 1-4 1-1 3, Miller 1-4 0-0 3, Jones 2-5 4-4 8, Harris 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 46-89 22-28 129.

Charlotte	13	27	23	27— 90
Cleveland	33	42	28	26—129

Three-Point Goals—Charlotte 2-16 (Roberts 1-3, Walker 1-5, Henderson 0-1, Williams 0-2, Stephenson 0-2, Hairston 0-3), Cleveland 15-28 (Smith 7-11, Irving 3-4, Shumpert 2-2, James 2-4, Miller 1-3, Harris 0-1, Jones 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Charlotte 48 (Jefferson 11), Cleveland 62 (Mozgov, Thompson 10). Assists—Charlotte 27 (Stephenson 9), Cleveland 29 (James 9). Total Fouls—Charlotte 22, Cleveland 19. Technicals—Walker, Irving. Flagrant Fouls—Smith. A—20,562 (20,562).

Spurs 99, Lakers 85

L.A. LAKERS — Kelly 2-4 3-5 7, Hill 4-12 2-2 10, Sacre 2-8 3-4 7, Clarkson 5-9 1-3 11, Ellington 5-12 0-0 11, Boozer 5-10 0-0 10, Johnson 2-8 1-2 6, Young 5-11 4-4 17, Davis 3-5 0-0 6, Price 0-4 0-0 0. Totals 33-83 14-20 85.

SAN ANTONIO — Leonard 6-12 2-3 15, Duncan 5-9 4-5 14, Bonner 2-5 0-0 4, Parker 7-14 2-4 17, D.Green 2-6 2-2 7, Ginobili 6-9 2-2 15, Splitter 0-4 2-4 2, Baynes 3-7 0-0 6, Joseph 2-4 4-5 9, Diaw 1-8 2-2 4, Mills 2-6 0-0 6, Ayres 0-0 0-0 0, J.Green 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 36-84 20-27 99.

L.A. Lakers	15	23	23	24—85
San Antonio	31	25	20	23—99

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 5-13 (Young 3-6, Johnson 1-2, Ellington 1-3, Price 0-2), San Antonio 7-24 (Mills 2-4, Parker 1-1, Joseph 1-1, Ginobili 1-3, Leonard 1-3, D.Green 1-5, Baynes 0-1, Bonner 0-2, Diaw 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—L.A. Lakers 50 (Sacre, Boozer 7), San Antonio 61 (Leonard 14). Assists—L.A. Lakers 18 (Price 6), San Antonio 19 (Parker 4). Total Fouls—L.A. Lakers 21, San Antonio 16. A—18,581 (18,797).

Warriors 126, Kings 101

SACRAMENTO — Gay 0-5 0-0 0, Williams 2-5 5-6 9, Cousins 9-19 10-11 28, Collison 6-13 2-2 15, McLemore 3-9 0-0 7, Stauskas 4-5 2-2 11, Miller 3-8 6-7 13, Casspi 1-2 2-2 4, J.Thompson 1-3 0-0 2, Sessions 0-3 0-0 0, McCallum 3-7 1-2 7, Hollins 2-3 1-2 5. Totals 34-82 29-34 101.

GOLDEN STATE — Barnes 2-7 1-2 5, Green 4-7 0-0 11, Bogut 4-6 0-0 8, Curry 3-11 2-2 10, K.Thompson 16-25 9-10 52, Rush 0-3 0-0 0, Holiday 2-8 0-0 5, Speights 8-13 3-3 19, Lee 2-7 1-1 5, Livingston 3-5 2-2 8, McAdoo 1-2 1-2 3. Totals 45-94 19-22 126.

Sacramento	25	26	22	28—101
Golden State	34	22	41	29—126

Three-Point Goals—Sacramento 4-17 (Stauskas 1-1, Miller 1-3, Collison 1-4, McLemore 1-5, Gay 0-1, McCallum 0-1, Williams 0-2), Golden State 17-40 (K.Thompson 11-15, Green 3-6, Curry 2-7, Holiday 1-5, Rush 0-3, Barnes 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Sacramento 51 (Cousins 11), Golden State 54 (Lee 9). Assists—Sacramento 19 (Gay, Collison 4), Golden State 32 (Curry 11). Total Fouls—Sacramento 17, Golden State 22. Technicals—Gay 2. Ejected—Gay. A—19,596 (19,596).

Calendar

Feb. 13-15 — All-Star weekend, New York.
Feb. 19 — Trade deadline (3 p.m. EST).
April 15 — Last day of regular season.
April 18 — Playoffs begin.

NBA/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

NBA roundup

Hawks top OKC, win 15th straight

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Hawks romped to their 15th straight victory, the longest streak in franchise history.

Don't expect them to savor it for long.

This team is focused firmly on what's in front of them.

Paul Millsap scored 22 points, Jeff Teague added 17 and the Hawks broke the record with a 103-93 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Friday night.

"It's a good accomplishment," Millsap said, sitting in a rather somber locker room. "But it's just another win."

The wins keep piling up for a team that no one expected to be a title contender at the beginning of the season. Before a raucous sellout crowd, the Hawks came out on top for the 29th time in 31 games to extend their Eastern-best record to 36-8.

As usual, pretty much everyone chipped in.

Four starters were in double figures and backup point guard Dennis Schroder led a spurt at the start of the fourth quarter that helped the Hawks pull away. He finished with 13 points and five assists, igniting the arena with a towering finger roll that dropped gently through the net.

"Give me five really good guys," Millsap said, "and I'll go out there and win with 'em."

Russell Westbrook led the Thunder with 22 points, but it wasn't enough to extend their four-game winning streak.

Kevin Durant added 21 points, while Serge Ibaka with 13 was the only other Thunder player in double figures.

The Hawks were much more balanced. Al Horford had 14 points and 12 rebounds, while DeMarre Carroll chipped in with 13 points. Kyle Korver was the only starter who didn't reach double figures, but even he chipped in with a play that had everyone talking: another dunk in the waning seconds of the first half that sent the Hawks to the locker room with a 48-47 lead.

Cavaliers 129, Hornets 90: LeBron James scored 25 points and host Cleveland put on a dominant performance by routing Charlotte for its fifth straight win.

The Cavaliers, with an artful display of shooting and passing, had the home crowd on its feet throughout the game. Cleveland's 75-40 lead at halftime was its biggest in franchise history and the margin reached 49 points in the fourth quarter.

Spurs 99, Lakers 85: Tony Parker scored 17 points and host San Antonio never trailed in rolling over a depleted Los Angeles team that potentially has lost Kobe Bryant for the season.

Kawhi Leonard had 15 points and 14 rebounds, Manu Ginobili scored 15 points and Tim Duncan added 14 points for San Antonio.

Bryant tore his right rotator cuff Wednesday in New Orleans.

Bulls 102, Mavericks 98: Derrick Rose scored 20 points, Jimmy Butler had 14 of his 20 in the second half and visiting Chicago beat Dallas.

Pau Gasol had 13 points and 16 rebounds, and Joakim Noah added six points and seven boards in his return after missing four games with a sprained right ankle.

Rockets 113, Suns 111: James Harden scored 33 points, including a 20-foot jumper as time ran out, to lift visiting Houston over Phoenix.

Harden's 33 points came in the absence of injured star center Dwight Howard for three quarters.

Pelicans 92, Timberwolves 84: Newly minted All-Star starter Anthony Davis had 21 points and 12 rebounds to help visiting New Orleans avoid what would have been another ugly road loss.

Eric Gordon scored 20 points and the Pelicans (22-21) shot 50 percent from the field to move over .500 for the first time since Jan. 2.

Heat 89, Pacers 87: Luol Deng scored 23 points, Chris Bosh added 19 and host Miami survived another second-half struggle at home, hanging on to top Indiana.

Dwyane Wade scored 13 for Miami, which led by 20 late in the third quarter before Indiana ripped off an 11-0 run and got right back into the game. Indiana's hope at overtime went awry when C.J. Watson's open 20-footer from the right corner rimmed out at the buzzer.

Knicks 113, Magic 106: Carmelo Anthony scored 25 points and host New York extended its season-high winning streak to three games.

Jason Smith added a season-best 19 points for the Knicks, who improved to 8-36. Lance Thomas had 16 points, and Langston Galloway 15; both are in the midst of their second 10-day contract.

Raptors 91, 76ers 86: Kyle Lowry scored 17 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter to lead visiting Toronto to a comeback victory.

Patrick Patterson added 14 points and 13 rebounds for the Raptors, who overcame a nine-point deficit with 5½ minutes left.

Celtics 100, Nuggets 99: Avery Bradley scored 18 points, including a go-ahead three-pointer with 1:24 left, and visiting Boston hung on to send Denver to its fifth loss in a row.

The Nuggets played without star guard Ty Lawson, who was away from the team for what the club said were personal reasons following his arrest earlier Friday on suspicion of driving under the influence.

JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Virginia Commonwealth's Mo Alie-Cox, left, falls as he passes the ball around Saint Louis' Davell Roby during the second half of Friday's game in St. Louis. VCU won 63-61, it's 11th straight victory.

No. 16 VCU edges Saint Louis, wins 11th in a row

BY R.B. FALLSTROM
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The winning play was simple: Get the ball to Treveon Graham and step aside.

Graham threw the inbounds pass, got it right back and then drove the distance for a tiebreaking layup with 0.9 seconds left, and No. 16 Virginia Commonwealth held off Saint Louis 63-61 on Friday night for its 11th consecutive victory.

"I always want the ball in those types of situations," Graham said. "I'm either going to make a shot or find my teammates."

Graham didn't worry about beating the clock, just about beating the defense to the rim. He missed most of the practice week with an ankle injury but played 32 minutes.

"Tre's a terrific player and he made a big-time play," VCU coach Shaka Smart said. "When he got the ball back you could just see the look in his eye."

Saint Louis knew what was coming, and couldn't do anything about it.

"Obviously not good defense if you give up a layup," coach Jim Crews said. "So that was misplayed by us, but Graham's a really good player."

Graham had 21 points and Briante Weber scored 15 for VCU (16-3, 6-0 Atlantic 10). Graham twice missed a pair at the line in the second half, helping the Billikens (9-10, 1-5) stay close.

"We could have been in a little better position," Smart said. "The rest of our team shot much better from the foul line, and he obviously made the shot he had to make."

The Rams are 6-0 in conference play for the first time since 2006-07, when the school was in the Colonial Athletic Association. Saint Louis has lost six of seven and is 0-2 against ranked foes, but fared much better than early December when it lost by 29 at Wichita State.

"I think we moved it down another mile marker, so that's good," Crews said. "We're not real pleased we got beat at all. Not whatsoever. Not happy about that."

Milik Yarbrough had 15 points and six rebounds for Saint Louis. Austin McBroom scored 12, the last two on a hanging shot in the lane for a 60-58 lead with 39 seconds to go. Marcus Bartley added eight points and seven rebounds.

Ash Yacoubou made the second of two free throws to tie it at 61 with 7 seconds to go after Jordan Burgess' first three-pointer of the game put the Rams up with 19.6 seconds left.

"Coach always says if you're a shooter, just keep shooting," Burgess said. "My teammates had faith in me."

Saint Louis got two chances to break the tie, the last with 0.2 seconds to go, but couldn't get off a shot.

The Rams won the first 10 games in their streak by an average of nearly 14 points per game.

VCU leads an exceptionally tight series 4-3, outscoring Saint Louis by just 349-340, and had lost the last two in St. Louis against teams that won consecutive A-10 titles. Crews is rebuilding with five new starters.

MLB

Briefly

P Vogelsong, Giants agree to terms on 1-year deal

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Ryan Vogelsong visited the Houston Astros this week and had an uncomfortable feeling about how he might fit in, and he had discussions with other teams during the course of this offseason.

Each time, everything pointed him back to the Bay Area and the Giants. His wife, Nicole, loves it, too, and he said she kept "chirping in my ear every two seconds."

Vogelsong just needed some patience as the Giants figured out their roster. The free agent right-hander finalized a $4 million, one-year contract Friday to stay with San Francisco, a deal that includes an additional $3 million in performance bonuses.

Vogelsong passed a physical and reached the deal three days after general manager Brian Sabean said the pitcher was close to joining another team. Vogelsong met with Houston manager A.J. Hinch, but wouldn't be specific about what went wrong.

"Some things happened I just wasn't comfortable with. Negotiations kind of broke down after that," Vogelsong said. "Time to move on."

Vogelsong went 8-13 with a 4.00 ERA in 32 starts last season. The 37-year-old adds depth to a rotation that features ace Madison Bumgarner, Jake Peavy, Tim Hudson, Tim Lincecum and Matt Cain, who is working back from elbow surgery that ended his season in July.

A's, Sogard agree on contract

OAKLAND, Calif. — Infielder Eric Sogard has reached a $1,075,000, one-year contract with the Oakland Athletics to avoid salary arbitration, and left-hander Fernando Abad also agreed to a one-year deal Friday.

Sogard, who earned $510,000 last year, asked for $1,425,000, while the A's offered $900,000.

Abad will earn $1,087,500. He had a 1.57 ERA over a career-high 69 appearances in his first full season in the majors last year with Oakland, when he made $525,900.

Also:

■ Oakland closer Sean Doolittle is unlikely to be ready for the start of the season because of a slight tear to the rotator cuff in his left shoulder along with considerable inflammation and irritation in the area.

Doolittle had a platelet-rich plasma injection last Friday in an attempt to decrease the inflammation and irritation before he begins rehabilitation. There is no timetable for Doolittle's return, though doctors believe the left-hander will recover to pitch without needing surgery.

Ichiro set to join Marlins

MIAMI — Ichiro Suzuki has decided to play for the Miami Marlins.

Suzuki and the team have agreed to a $2 million, one-year contract, pending a physical, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press.

The 10-time All-Star batted .284 last year for the New York Yankees. He topped the 200-hit mark in his first 10 major league seasons and has 2,844 MLB hits in his 14 seasons with the Yankees and Seattle Mariners.

M. SPENCER GREEN/AP

In this March 24, 2014, file photo Chicago Cubs Hall of Fame slugger Ernie Banks smiles after an interview at the Cubs offices in Chicago. The Cubs announced Friday night that Banks had died. He was 83.

Cubs' legend Banks dies at 83

Hall of Famer, two-time MVP 'Mr. Cub' was known for optimism

BY MIKE FITZPATRICK
The Associated Press

Even as the Chicago Cubs lost one game after another, Ernie Banks never lost hope.

That was the charm of "Mr. Cub."

Banks, the Hall of Fame slugger and two-time MVP who always maintained his boundless enthusiasm for baseball despite decades of playing on miserable teams, died Friday night. He was 83.

The Cubs announced Banks' death, but did not provide a cause.

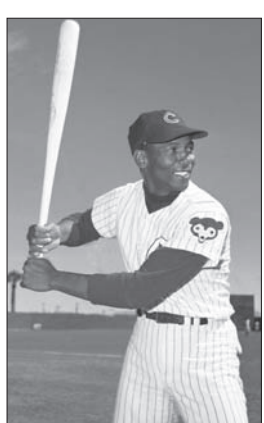
Banks hit 512 home runs during his 19-year career and was fond of saying, "It's a great day for baseball. Let's play two." In fact, that sunny finish to his famous catchphrase adorns his statue outside Wrigley Field.

And on a cold winter night Friday in Chicago, the ballpark marquee carried the sad news for the entire town to see: Ernie Banks. "Mr. Cub." 1931-2015.

"Words cannot express how important Ernie Banks will always be to the Chicago Cubs, the city of Chicago and Major League Baseball. He was one of the greatest players of all time," Cubs chairman Tom Ricketts said in a statement. "He was a pioneer in the major leagues. And more importantly, he was the warmest and most sincere person I've ever known."

"Approachable, ever optimistic and kind hearted, Ernie Banks is and always will be Mr. Cub. My family and I grieve the loss of such a great and good-hearted man, but we look forward to celebrating Ernie's life in the days ahead."

In a statement Saturday, President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama expressed their condolences "to the family of Ernie Banks, and to every Chicagoan and baseball fan who loved him." The president said Banks became known as much for his optimism and love of the game as his home runs and back-to-back National League MVPs.



AP Photo

The Cubs' Ernie Banks poses with a baseball bat in 1968. The Chicago icon died Friday at the age of 83.

"As a Hall-of-Famer, Ernie was an incredible ambassador for baseball, and for the city of Chicago," President Obama said. "He was beloved by baseball fans everywhere, including Michelle, who, when she was a girl, used to sit with her dad and watch him play on TV. And in 2013, it was my honor to present Ernie with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"Somewhere, the sun is shining, the air is fresh, his team's behind him, and Mr. Class — "Mr. Cub" — is ready to play two."

Though he was an 11-time All-Star from 1953-71, Banks never reached the postseason. The Cubs, who haven't won the World Series since 1908, finished below .500 in all but six of his seasons and remain without a pennant since 1945.

Still, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1977, the first year he was eligible, and was selected to baseball's All-Century team in 1999.

Banks' infectious smile and non-stop good humor despite his team's dismal record endeared him to Chicago fans, who voted him the best player in franchise history. One famous admirer, actor Bill Murray, named his son Homer Banks Murray.

In 2013, Banks was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom — by a noted Chicago White Sox fan, President Barack Obama. The award is one of the nation's highest civilian honors.

"Ernie Banks was more than a baseball player. He was one of Chicago's greatest ambassadors. He loved this city as much as he loved — and lived for — the game of baseball," Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. "This year, during every Cubs game, you can bet that No. 14 will be watching over his team. And if we're lucky, it'll be a beautiful day for not just one ballgame, but two."

NFL

NFL putting squeeze on kickers at Pro Bowl

Goal posts will be narrowed for All-Pro exhibition

By Bob Baum
The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Kickers Adam Vinatieri and Cody Parkey are going to have to narrow their focus and kick a little harder to convert an extra point in Sunday's Pro Bowl.

The NFL will narrow the goal posts from the current 18.6 feet to 14 feet. In addition, the kick will be moved back to the 15-yard line, making it about a 33-yard field goal.

Vinatieri, at 42 the oldest Pro Bowl member, doesn't like the idea.

"Other people might enjoy that," he said. "For me, I'm a traditionalist. Don't change it unless it needs to be changed. The league has never been more successful. The fan base has never been greater. But the deciding powers are way above me."

The NFL is experimenting with making the PAT more difficult because they are virtually automatic now.

Over the past five seasons, Indianapolis' Vinatieri hasn't missed one in five years, going 196 for 196. Parkey, a rookie for Philadelphia, made all 54 of his attempts.

"I don't prefer it but it is what it is," Parkey said after the team practiced at Scottsdale Community College on Friday. "It's going to be way harder. It's the kind of situation where there are so many good kickers in the league that I guess made it look easy. They've got to find other ways to make it harder. No matter what it is, we'll accept the challenge."

David J. Phillip/AP

The New York Jets' Nick Mangold poses for a picture after a Pro Bowl practice session at Luke Air Force Base on Thursday in Glendale, Ariz.

For field goals, the posts will expand to their normal width.

Broncos praise: Bronco players Ryan Clady and Aqib Talib said they didn't see coach John Fox leaving after their season ended.

"It was definitely a shock," Clady said. "But (John) Elway wanted to bring in his own guy. I'm happy for the coach to find a job so quickly.

After Fox parted ways with the Broncos, he quickly was hired as the head coach of the Chicago Bears. Elway hired Gary Kubiak to coach the Broncos.

Both Broncos had effusive praise for the coaching of Fox.

Talib called him "a dream coach."

"All his players loved him," Talib said. "You could talk to any of his former players, all the guys love him, including myself."

Clady, in a separate interview, had the same sort of words.

"As an actual person, he's one of the coolest coaches I've been around," Clady said. "You can just walk up and talk to him. He chats it up in the locker room, chats it up with the guys. He's a real player's coach."

Goodwill players: As football practices go, the workouts for Team Irvin and Team Carter are about as basic, low-key and uninspired as you'll ever see.

As exhibitions of goodwill, they have made a lot of friends.

When the team practiced at Luke Air Force Base on Thursday, military personnel and their families were allowed to watch, and hundreds showed up. After the practice, the players stayed for a long while signing autographs and posing for pictures.

On Friday, the practice shifted to Scottsdale Community College, where children from the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Ronald McDonald House were allowed on the field after the workouts to get autographs, while the players stooped down to the kids' level to pose for photos.

"The platform we have as athletes in this game," Indianapolis quarterback Andrew Luck said, "if we can make a positive influence on someone, it's great. It's very rewarding."

Pro Bowl rosters

TEAM IRVIN
Offense

QB: Tony Romo, Dallas; Matt Ryan, Atlanta; Matthew Stafford, Detroit.
RB: C.J. Anderson, Denver; Mark Ingram, New Orleans, DeMarco Murray, Dallas.
WR: Odell Beckham Jr., New York Giants; Golden Tate, Detroit; Emmanuel Sanders, Denver; Randall Cobb, Green Bay.
TE: Jimmy Graham, New Orleans; Jason Witten, Dallas.
FB: Marcel Reece, Oakland.
T: Joe Thomas, Cleveland; Tyron Smith, Dallas; Trent Williams, Washington.
G: Kyle Long, Chicago; Zack Martin, Dallas; Marshal Yanda, Baltimore.
C: Travis Frederick, Dallas; Nick Mangold, New York Jets.

Defense

DE: Robert Quinn, St. Louis; Cameron Wake, Miami; DeMarcus Ware, Denver.
DT: Geno Atkins, Cincinnati; Aaron Donald, St. Louis; Sheldon Richardson, NY Jets.
OLB: Elvis Dumervil, Baltimore; Clay Matthews, Green Bay; Von Miller, Denver.
ILB: Luke Kuechly, Carolina; D'Qwell Jackson, Indianapolis.
CB: Vontae Davis, Indianapolis; Brent Grimes, Miami; Joe Haden, Cleveland; Chris Harris Jr., Denver.
S: Eric Weddle, San Diego, Mike Adams, Indianapolis; T.J. Ward, Denver.

Special teams

P: Kevin Huber, Cincinnati.
PK: Adam Vinatieri, Indianapolis.
Return specialist: Darren Sproles, Philadelphia.
Special-teamer: Darrell Stuckey, San Diego.
Long-snapper: L.P. Ladouceur, Dallas

TEAM CARTER
Offense

QB: Andrew Luck, Indianapolis; Drew Brees, New Orleans; Andy Dalton, Cincinnati.
RB: Jamaal Charles, Kansas City; Justin Forsett, Baltimore; Alfred Morris, Washington.
WR: A.J. Green, Cincinnati; T.Y. Hilton, Indianapolis; Jordy Nelson, Green Bay; Antonio Brown, Pittsburgh.
TE: Martellus Bennett, Chicago; Greg Olsen, Carolina.
FB: John Kuhn, Green Bay.
T: Joe Staley, San Francisco; Duane Brown, Houston; Ryan Clady, Denver.
G: Evan Mathis, Philadelphia; Mike Pouncey, Miami; Josh Sitton, Green Bay.
C: Jason Kelce, Philadelphia; Maurkice Pouncey, Pittsburgh.

Defense

DE: J.J. Watt, Houston; Mario Williams, Buffalo; Calais Campbell, Arizona.
DT: Marcell Dareus, Buffalo; Dontari Poe, Kansas City; Kyle Williams, Buffalo.
OLB: Justin Houston, Kansas City; Connor Barwin, Philadelphia; Tamba Hali, Kansas City.
ILB: C.J. Mosley, Baltimore; Lawrence Timmons, Pittsburgh.
CB: Patrick Peterson, Arizona; Aqib Talib, Denver; Antonio Cromartie, Arizona; Sam Shields, Green Bay.
S: Antoine Bethea, San Francisco; Glover Quin, Detroit; Donte Whitner, Cleveland.

Special teams

P: Pat McAfee, Indianapolis.
PK: Cody Parkey, Philadelphia.
Return specialist: Devin Hester, Atlanta.
Special-teamer: Justin Bethel, Arizona.
Long-snapper: Jon Dorenbos, Philadelphia.

No conclusions yet on Patriots' deflated footballs

By Howard Ulman
The Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — The NFL said Friday it has interviewed dozens of people and collected physical evidence but has no conclusions yet on how the New England Patriots used underinflated balls in their last game, offering no timetable for resolving the cheating accusations with the Super Bowl nine days away.

The league said evidence shows the Patriots used underinflated footballs during the first half of the AFC championship game Sunday night against the Indianapolis Colts.

It issued a statement that the Patriots have pledged full cooperation and have given the league information it requested and made personnel available upon request. Quarterback Tom Brady said Thursday afternoon he had not been contacted at that point.

The NFL said it began its investigation Sunday night and expects cooperation from other clubs. It hired an investigatory company to help review electronic and video information.

Patriots owner Robert Kraft said investigators were in Foxborough for three days this week after he received a letter from the league Monday informing him of the probe.

Charles Krupa/AP

The NFL said Friday that evidence shows the Patriots used underinflated footballs during the first half of the AFC championship game. The investigation is still ongoing, with no conclusions and no timetable for resolving the cheating accusations.

"We provided access to every full- and part-time employee the league's representatives requested to speak with and produced every communication device that they requested to search," he said. "I very much support the league's desire to conduct a complete investigation."

The Patriots are preparing to meet the defending champion Seattle Seahawks in the Super Bowl on Feb. 1 in Glendale, Ariz.

The league said its conclusions will be quickly shared when reached.

"Over the past several days, nearly 40 interviews have been conducted, including of Patriots personnel, game officials, and third parties with relevant information and expertise," the statement said.

NFL Executive Vice President Jeff Pash and Ted Wells of the law firm of Paul Weiss are leading the probe.

Wells was the investigator in the Miami Dolphins bullying scandal. His report detailed widespread harassment in the team's locker room that extended beyond the two players at the center of the probe. It said guard John Jerry and center Mike Pouncey followed Richie Incognito's lead in harassing offensive lineman Jonathan Martin.

The NFL requires game balls to be inflated to between 12½ and 13½ pounds per square inch.

It wants to find out why footballs were underinflated during the first half and whether "deliberate action" caused it.

"We have not made any judgments on these points and will not do so until we have concluded our investigation and considered all of the relevant evidence," the league said.

The balls were properly inflated for the second half and remained properly inflated after the game, the statement said.

A former NFL ball boy said it's easy to remove air from a ball discreetly with a small pin that fits in the palm of a hand.

"This isn't a big deal. Everyone does it because each quarterback likes a different grip," said Nader Kawash, a Philadelphia Eagles ball boy from 1996-2000. "I'm not saying a ball boy or equipment guy did anything on purpose to cheat. Sometimes the balls are overinflated so it's easy to take some air out on the sideline without the referees noticing. You can use a helmet pin. Players can stand around in a circle. Anybody can do it."

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

LEE JIN-MAN/AP

Serena Williams hits a forehand return to Ukraine's Elina Svitolina during their third-round match Saturday at the Melbourne, Australia.

At a glance

Saturday

MELBOURNE, Australia — A look at the Australian Open on Saturday:

Weather: Sunny, high of 79 degrees.

Attendance: day: 53,259; Night: 27,772; Total: 81,031.

Men's seeded winners: No. 1 Novak Djokovic, No. 4 Stan Wawrinka, No. 5 Kei Nishikori, No. 8 Milos Raonic, No. 9 David Ferrer, No. 12 Feliciano Lopez.

Men's seeded losers: No. 18 Gilles Simon, No. 19 John Isner, No. 31 Fernando Verdasco.

Women's seeded winners: No. 1 Serena Williams, No. 6 Agnieszka Radwanska, No. 11 Dominika Cibulkova, No. 18 Venus Williams, No. 24 Garbine Muguruza.

Women's seeded losers: No. 4 Petra Kvitova, No. 19 Alize Cornet, No. 25 Barbora Zahlavova Strycova, No. 26 Elina Svitolina, No. 30 Varvara Lepchenko.

Stat of the day: 13 — number of Grand Slam tournaments it took seven-time champion Venus Williams to return to the second week of a major since her last appearance in the fourth round at Wimbledon 2011.

Quote of the day: "Well, this old cat has a few tricks left" — 34-year-old Venus after her win over Camila Giorgi.

Featured matches Sunday: No. 2 Maria Sharapova vs. No. 21 Peng Shuai, No.3 Rafael Nadal vs. Kevin Anderson, No. 3 Simona Halep vs. Yanina Wickmayer, No. 6 Andy Murray vs. Grigor Dimitrov, No. 7 Eugenie Bouchard vs. Irina-Camelia Begu, No. 7 Tomas Berdych vs. Bernard Tomic.

Forecast for Sunday: chance of morning rain, high of 72.

— The Associated Press

Djokovic, Williams sisters move on

Two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova ousted

BY JOHN PYE
The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Novak Djokovic fine-tuned his voice and his game at the Australian Open on Saturday, advancing to the fourth round with a straight-sets win over Fernando Verdasco and then urging the crowd of 15,000 to sing Happy Birthday to his mother back home.

After his 7-6 (8), 6-3, 6-4 win, the four-time Australian champion had a lengthy on-court interview with Jim Courier discussing a range of topics including his childhood memories of tennis, when "I was constructing little trophies out of plastic and pretending I was a Wimbledon champion."

The flashback jogged his memory. It was Jan. 24, his mother Dijana's birthday.

"It's my mom's birthday, can you sing happy birthday?" he asked the crowd, before singing the whole song live on camera.

The Williams sisters had their own celebration of sorts, progressing together to the fourth round of a Grand Slam tournament for the first time since Wimbledon in 2011. Two other Americans joined them, with 19-year-old Madison Keys upsetting two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova with a 6-4, 7-5 victory and Madison Brengle beating Coco Vandeweghe 6-3, 6-2 in an all-U.S. match. The two Madisons will meet in the fourth round, meaning one will become a first-time major quarterfinalist.

When 18-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams noticed that older sister Venus was advancing to the second week, it inspired her own 4-6, 6-2, 6-0 win over No. 26-ranked Elina Svitolina.

When top-ranked Serena walked onto Rod Laver Arena, Venus was already down a set and a break on Margaret Court Arena. Venus, who was diagnosed with an auto-immune condition called Sjogren's syndrome in 2011 and has struggled at the highest level ever since, rallied for a 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-1 win over Camila Giorgi, and that inspired her younger sister.

She'll have to be at the top of her game in the next round when she meets No. 24 Garbine Muguruza, who beat her in the second round at the French Open last year. Muguruza defeated Timea Bacsinszky 6-3, 4-6, 6-0.

In the other fourth-round match in that quarter, two-time champion Victoria Azarenka will meet 2014 finalist Dominika Cibulkova.

Azarenka had a 6-4, 6-4 win over No. 25 Barbora Zahlavova Strycova. Cibulkova beat No. 19 Alize Cornet 7-5, 6-2.

On the men's side, defending champion Stan Wawrinka had a 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 win over Jarkko Nieminen and will have a score to settle in the next round against Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, who beat Vasek Pospisil in straight sets.

Wawrinka lost to Garcia-Lopez in the first round of the French Open last year, making him the first first-time major winner in 12 years to lose in the first round of his next Grand Slam event.

No. 8 Milos Raonic fired 22 aces in a 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 win over Benjamin Becker and will next play No. 12 Feliciano Lopez, who had a 7-6 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3) win over Jerzy Janowicz.

No. 5 Kei Nishikori, the U.S. Open finalist, beat Steve Johnson 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 and will next meet former French Open finalist David Ferrer, who struggled to finish off No. 18 Gilles Simon in four sets.

Gilles Muller beat No. 19 John Isner 7-6 (4), 7-6 (6), 6-4 to set up a fourth-round clash with Djokovic.

LEE JIN-MAN/AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic beat Spain's Fernando Verdasco, then led the crowd in singing "Happy birthday" to his mother.

SPORTS

In Memoriam

Ernie Banks

"Mr. Cub"

1931-2015

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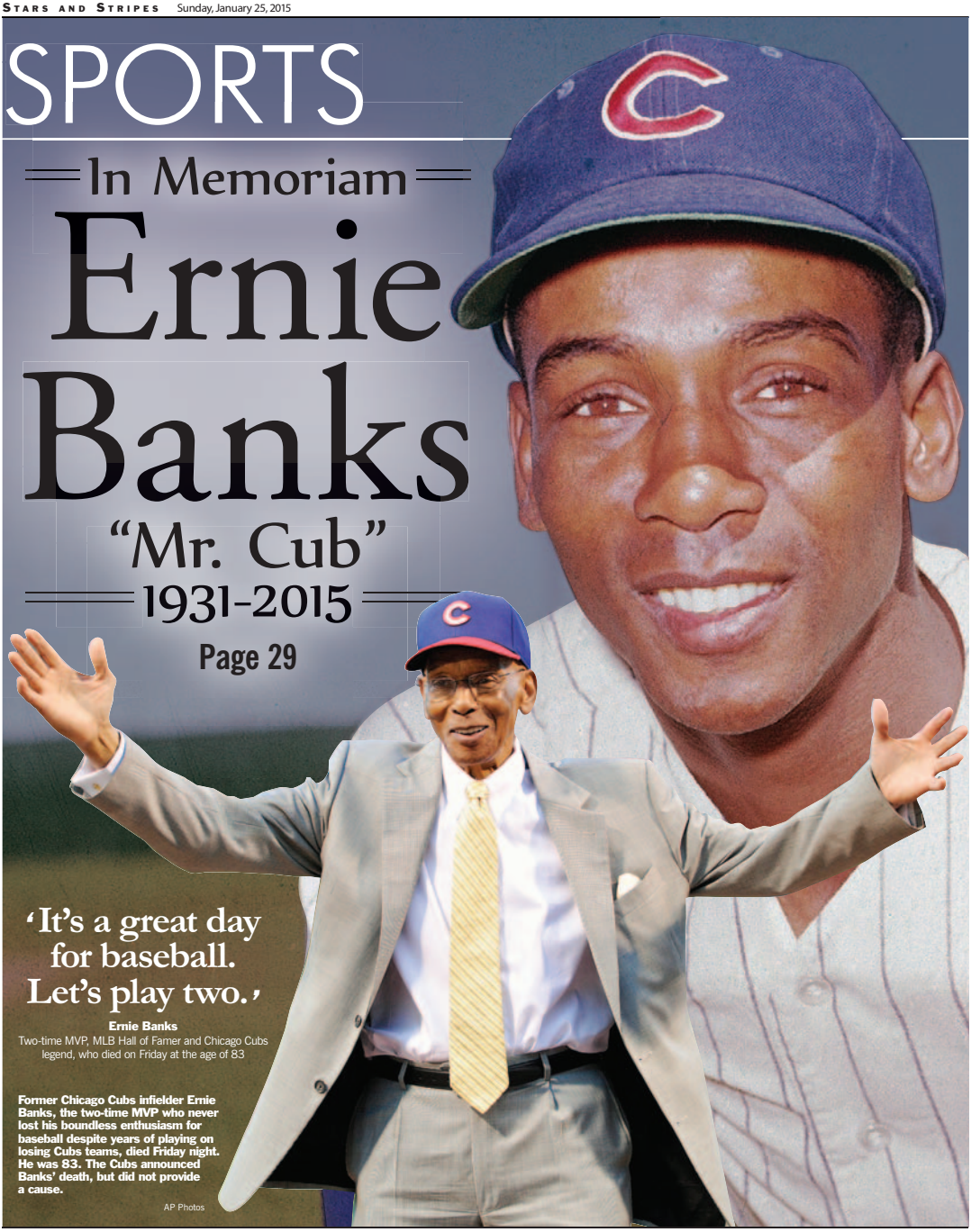

'It's a great day for baseball. Let's play two.'

Ernie Banks
Two-time MVP, MLB Hall of Famer and Chicago Cubs legend, who died on Friday at the age of 83

Former Chicago Cubs infielder Ernie Banks, the two-time MVP who never lost his boundless enthusiasm for baseball despite years of playing on losing Cubs teams, died Friday night. He was 83. The Cubs announced Banks' death, but did not provide a cause.

AP Photos

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