

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Carrier strike group moving toward Korea

BY ERIK SLAVIN

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Carl Vinson strike group is moving toward the Korean peninsula amid heightened concerns that North Korea could soon conduct a major weapons test.

Adm. Harry Harris, head of U.S. Pacific Command, directed the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and its accompanying ships to sail north from Singapore on Saturday instead of heading for planned port visits in Australia, a PACOM statement said.

A U.S. official told Reuters on Saturday the increased presence was necessary given North Korea's recent provocative behavior.

The strike group includes

the destroyers USS Wayne E. Meyer and USS Michael Murphy and the cruiser USS Lake Champlain, along with the carrier and its embarked air wing. An unannounced submarine presence often transits with carrier strike groups as well.

North Korea has continued work on its nuclear program while advancing its short-, medium- and long-range missile capabilities, Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift told reporters Thursday in Tokyo.

"Both of those are very troubling in their own right, but when you combine the two of them, the potential to weaponize from a nuclear perspective ... that's what I hear and see as being the most consequential concern from virtually every country in the region," Swift

said.

North Korea has conducted five atomic tests — one in 2006, 2009 and 2013 and two last year. It also has stepped up its weapons program with the stated goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could target the U.S. mainland.

The communist state has attempted four missile launches this year, including a medium-range test on Wednesday shortly before President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met for a summit.

A South Korean official in March said the North is likely to conduct "high-intensity strategic provocations such as a nuclear test" or an intercontinental ballistic missile on key dates for the nation.

Those might include the

North Korean Supreme People's Assembly on April 12, the birthday of the country's late founder, Kim Il Sung, on April 15, and the anniversary of the founding of the army on April 25.

The San Diego-based Vinson group left for a scheduled Asia-Pacific-region patrol on Jan. 5. The Japan-based aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, the only U.S. carrier homeported overseas, has been undergoing maintenance in recent months.

USS Carl Vinson's patrol is part of a recently employed concept that keeps ships originating from the U.S. Pacific coast under operational control of the 3rd Fleet. Previously, ships that crossed into the Western Pacific came under the Japan-based 7th Fleet's command.

## North Korea condemns US missile strike in Syria

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea lashed out at the U.S. missile strike on a Syrian air base, calling it an "absolutely unpardonable" act that justifies its nuclear weapons program.

The defiant statement came a day after Friday's attack, which was widely seen as a warning to Pyongyang and other rival states that President Donald Trump is not afraid to resort to unilateral military action.

Trump authorized the missile strike after the Syrian regime was blamed for a horrific chemical attack that killed dozens of people, including children. It marked the first time the U.S. has directly targeted government forces in the 6-year-old civil war.

North Korea's state-run news

agency said a Foreign Ministry spokesman called the strike "absolutely unpardonable as it was an undisguised act of aggression against a sovereign state."

"The successive U.S. administrations have perpetrated strikes at those countries which do not have nukes only, styling themselves a superpower and the same is true of the Trump administration," the Korean Central News Agency said in a post on its English-language site.

"We will bolster up in every way our capability for self-defense to cope with the U.S. evermore reckless moves for a war and defend ourselves with our own force," KCNA added.

North Korea is known for its exaggerated, belligerent rhetoric in response to world events. But experts say the communist

state is making progress toward its stated goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could target the U.S. mainland.

The North has conducted five nuclear tests, including two last year, and test-fired nearly 30 ballistic missiles in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions banning it from using the technology.

The timing of the strike during a U.S.-China summit fueled speculation that it also was meant as a signal that Trump could act against North Korea if it doesn't curb its nuclear ambitions.

Trump has not yet unveiled his new North Korea policy but has said he would press China to do more to rein in its communist protégé and would consider unilateral responses if Beijing failed to step up.

China, North Korea's largest

military and trade partner, has shown increasing annoyance with Pyongyang. It signed on to toughened sanctions and suspended coal imports from the North through the end of the year. But Beijing is reluctant to go too far due to its fears that a North Korean regime collapse could lead to a refugee crisis and possibly could bring U.S. forces closer to its borders.

Trump reportedly told Xi about the Syria strikes while they were finishing dinner Thursday at the start of the two-day summit in Florida.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said both sides agreed that the North Korean threat had reached a "very serious stage." He also reiterated that Washington was prepared to take its "own course" if China did not apply more pressure on Pyongyang.

# Woman bites officer near Okinawa base

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
AND CHIYOMI SUMIDA

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A woman was arrested Thursday after authorities said she bit a police officer outside a Marine Corps base on Okinawa — one of three arrests that day near U.S. military installations on the island.

Police declined to release information about the woman, who was charged with obstructing a police officer and causing bodily injury after her arrest at approximately 9:25 a.m. outside Camp Schwab.

The woman bit the officer after an attempt to stop her from running out to the highway near Schwab's Gate 2, a spokesman for the

prefectural police in Nago said. The bite left teeth marks on the officer's arm and will require medical treatment, police said.

Protest groups told Stars and Stripes they did not know if the woman belonged to an organization associated with opposition to bases on the island. Two others also were arrested after police said they crossed property lines following repeated warnings at Schwab and Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in central Okinawa.

Entering U.S. military property without permission is a violation of the Act on Special Measures Concerning Criminal Cases under the bilateral security treaty.

The cases were sent to the Naha District Public Prosecutor's Office on Friday after-

noon, police said.

Protests over the U.S. military presence on Okinawa are a part of daily life outside U.S. military installations on the island, which is home to roughly 50,000 U.S. troops, Defense Department employees and their families. The island, a short distance from China and North Korea, is strategically valued by the Pentagon.

The U.S. military and its partners in Tokyo have attempted to reduce the burden on Okinawa by consolidating bases and devising plans to ship Marines to Guam and other places. However, many citizens oppose a plan that would close one Marine air base but would expand another elsewhere on the island.

## Marine strike group returns to Okinawa after patrol

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group, complemented by elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, concluded its spring patrol last week, returning to Okinawa's White Beach Naval Facility on Thursday.

The routine patrol began with Marines aboard the USS Green Bay participating in Cobra Gold 2017 in Thailand in early February and ended with training and certification exercises that concluded March 29, Marine officials said in a statement. The patrols are designed to maintain Navy and Marine Corps amphibious operations within the Western Pacific region.

The Marine Corps' only continuously forward-deployed MEU was embarked aboard the Sasebo, Japan-based ships the USS Bonhomme Richard, the USS Green Bay and the USS Ashland during the deployment, the statement said.

An MEU is a combined air and ground unit that sustains itself at sea for the "rapid accomplishment of any mission or to pave the way for follow-on forces," the statement said.

## Veterans of Bataan battle honored

By SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

BATAAN, Philippines — It's been 75 years since Oscar Leonard fought alongside his American and Filipino buddies, affectionately known as the "Battling Bastards of Bataan."

In those desperate days, the allies were low on ammunition and supplies but were ordered to delay the enemy's advance along the Bataan Peninsula for as long as possible.

By the time they surrendered on April 9, 1942, many defenders were too weak to survive a forced march north, and those who lagged were shot or bayoneted by their ruthless captors.

On Sunday, Battle of Bataan survivors, including Leonard, were guests of honor at a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the surrender of the peninsula.

"I was damn lucky that I decided to leave Bataan before the [battle] ended," said Leonard, 98, who escaped the peninsula by swimming to the island of Corregidor while holding onto a floating log.

Representatives of the Philippines, the U.S. and Japan laid wreaths near the summit of Mount Samat, a spot where it's possible to see most of Bataan and the waters surrounding it.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte told veterans, family members and supporters that men and women held their ground there three quarters of a century ago. "We fought shoulder to shoulder with a country that is now the Philippines' only defense treaty ally, the United States of America," he said.

The two nations should move their relationship forward with mutual respect, he said.

Leonard enlisted in the Army in 1939 and qualified as a top marksman. He later requested the Philippines as his first overseas

duty station because his father had served there during the Spanish-American War.

Leonard, then a staff sergeant serving with a coastal artillery unit, was among the troops ordered to evacuate Clark Field in dozens of red buses and to head for Bataan. Japanese A6M Zeros flew overhead but didn't bomb the convoy, he recalled. "That was a big mistake," he said. "Had they kept us from getting onto Bataan, it wouldn't have lasted long."

On the peninsula, the troops were able to use the rugged terrain and rivers crossing it as defensive barriers. Leonard saw front-line action on the banks of one of the rivers, he said.

"We would wait until the [Japanese] got to fighting the current, and we would pick them off with rifle fire," he recalled.

His unit swapped out with another one, and the next day, the Japanese mounted a massive attack on the river that killed everyone defending it, he said.

After escaping to Corregidor, Leonard then made his way to Mindanao with a cargo of dynamite to help organize Filipino insurgents.

He was forced to surrender there after his picture was given to the occupation force by a fifth columnist.

Leonard met Death March survivors during 42 months in POW camps in the Philippines and Japan. The stories they told of atrocities highlighted the enemy's ruthlessness, he said.

"They told us that they would move us to where planes were planning to bomb and our own forces would kill us," he said of his captors.

Leonard has returned to the Philippines several times since the war, and he's a regular at Bataan Memorial Death March events at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

# Tillerson steps into diplomatic spotlight

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Criticized for his low-profile diplomacy, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is emerging from the shadows with a leading public role in shaping and explaining the Trump administration's missile strikes in Syria. He's set for a higher-profile mission, heading to Moscow under the clouds of Russia's alleged U.S. election meddling and its possible support for a Syrian chemical weapons attack.

Since taking office in February, the former Exxon Mobil CEO has shunned the spotlight and the press. Yet, he was surprisingly visible during last week's announcement of the response to the chemical attack, fielding questions from reporters on and off camera, and then being pictured in an

official White House photo seated next to President Donald Trump as they heard the result of the 59 cruise missiles that struck a Syrian military base.

Tillerson was a prominent fixture during the most important foreign policy period in Trump's presidency: a two-day summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping that coincided with the strikes against Syria.

It was Tillerson who delivered the Trump administration's first blistering condemnation of Russia in the hours after the strikes. Standing in a cramped conference room alongside national security adviser H.R. McMaster, Tillerson said Moscow had "failed" to live up to its obligations under a 2013 agreement to strip Syria of its chemical weapons stockpiles.

On Sunday, he made his first network television interview appearances.

Then he heads to Europe to gather with the foreign ministers of the other Group of 7 nations before becoming the first Trump Cabinet member to visit Moscow.

Tillerson arrives in Russia at a fragile point in U.S.-Russia relations, where he will have to confront the Kremlin's anger over the missile strikes in Syria along with suspicion at home that Moscow may have even been complicit in the Syrian government's chemical weapons attack.

At the same time, Tillerson carries to Moscow the weight of FBI and congressional investigations into Russia's alleged interference in last year's presidential election.

## Expert: New social media rules won't halt scandals

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — New rules for servicemembers posting on social media make sense, but they won't stop scandals, according to a technology expert.

The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps are cracking down on things servicemembers might be tempted to post online after a scandal involving shared nude photographs of female comrades on the Marines United Facebook page.

Technology expert and Arizona State University engineering professor Braden Allenby said, "Someone who is going to post revenge porn may be unlikely to care much about the rules, but explicitly establishing them still serves a purpose and provides a basis for taking appropriate personnel action when they are violated," he said.

Allenby predicted there would be more scandals.

In a Navy administrative message last month, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson told sailors that standards of conduct apply "on and off duty and ... in our physical lives and our virtual lives."

Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A.

Milley wrote to soldiers and Army civilians last month to tell them misconduct on social media had deeply affected the military community.

An update to the Air Force's Public Web and Social Communication regulation tells personnel not to post "any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, hateful, racially, ethnically or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material."

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller ordered his officers and senior enlisted leaders to counsel every Marine on social media rules.

Mark Bender, a former Airman who runs Yokotatalk, a public Facebook group associated with Yokota Air Base, headquarters of U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force in Tokyo, said the military doesn't want servicemembers tarnishing its reputation, but at the same time, people don't appreciate losing their freedom.

People have gotten into trouble for things that they posted on the group, Bender said, recalling a case in which a member of the community was described as a "playground Nazi." The person being referred to turned out to be Jewish, he said.

## FBI reviews handling of terrorism-related tips

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI has been reviewing the handling of thousands of terrorism-related tips and leads from the past three years to make sure they were properly investigated, The Associated Press has learned.

The review follows attacks by people who were once on the FBI's radar and who have been accused in the past 12 months of massacring innocents in an Orlando, Fla., and gunning down travelers in a Florida airport. In each case, the suspects had been determined not to warrant continued scrutiny.

The audit is essentially a review of records to ensure proper FBI procedures were followed. It's an acknowledgment of the challenge the FBI has faced in predicting which of the tens of thousands of tips the bureau receives annually might become a viable threat.

The pace of the FBI's counterterrorism work accelerated with the rise of Islamic State, which has used sophisticated propaganda to lure disaffected Westerners. By the summer 2015, FBI Director James Comey has said, the FBI was "strapped" in keeping tabs on the group's American sympathizers and identifying those most inclined

to commit violence.

Social media outreach by ISIS has appealed to people not previously known to the FBI but also enticed some who once had been under scrutiny to get "back in the game," said Seamus Hughes, deputy director of George Washington University's Program on Extremism.

The review covers inquiries the FBI internally classifies as "assessments" — the lowest level stage of a terrorism-related inquiry — and is examining ones from the past three years to make sure all investigative avenues were followed, according to a former federal law enforcement official.

Assessments are routinely opened upon a tip — whether from someone concerned about things such as activity in a neighbor's garage, a co-worker's comments or expressions of support for ISIS propaganda — and are catalogued by the FBI.

The system is meant to ensure a person who has not broken the law does not remain under perpetual scrutiny on a mere hunch that a crime could eventually be committed. But on occasion, and within the past year, it's also meant that people the FBI once looked at but did not find reason to arrest later went on to commit violence.

# Militants claim 2 Egyptian church bombings; 43 dead

Associated Press

TANTA, Egypt — Bombs tore through two Egyptian churches in different cities as worshippers were marking Palm Sunday, killing at least 43 people and wounding about 100 in an assault claimed by Islamic State.

In the first attack, a bomb exploded at the St. George church in the Nile Delta city of Tanta, killing at least 27 people and wounding over 78, officials said.

Later, an explosion hit Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in the coastal city of Alexandria, the historic seat of Christendom in Egypt, killing at least 16 people and wounding 41 just after Pope Tawadros II

finished services. His aides later told local media that he had escaped unharmed.

ISIS claimed the attacks via its Amaq news agency after having recently warned that it would step up attacks on Egypt's Christians.

The blasts came at the start of Holy Week leading up to Easter, and just weeks before Pope Francis is due to visit the Arab world's most populous country.

CBC Television showed footage from inside the church in Tanta, where a large number of people gathered around what appeared to be lifeless, bloody bodies covered with papers. Regional Deputy Health Minister Mohammed Sharshar confirmed the toll.

The bombings add to fears that Islamic extremists who have long been battling security forces in the Sinai Peninsula are shifting their focus to civilians.

An ISIS affiliate claimed a suicide bombing at a Cairo church in December that killed about 30 people, mostly women, as well as a string of killings in the restive northern Sinai that caused hundreds of Christians to flee to safer areas of the country.

The group recently released a video vowing to step up attacks against Christians, who it describes as "infidels" empowering the West against Muslims.

## American soldier killed in operation fighting ISIS

BY CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

An American soldier supporting the U.S. counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan known as Operation Freedom's Sentinel was killed in action in the eastern part of the country late Saturday.

The Special Forces commando was killed while conducting operations against Islamic State's offshoot in Nangarhar province, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan said in a statement.

"On behalf of all of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, I offer our deepest condolences to the family and friends of our fallen comrade," Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said in the statement. "We will always remember our fallen comrades and commit ourselves to deliver on their sacrifice."

American troops have been assisting Afghan forces battling the regional branch of the group known as Islamic State-Khorasan Province since early last year, when the U.S. designated the group a foreign terrorist organization.

The soldier killed Saturday has not been identified. It is the first U.S. combat fatality in Afghanistan this year.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert R. Boniface, 34, of San Luis Obispo, Calif., died March 19 in Logar province in a noncombat incident.

## Separate attacks kill 13 Afghan forces

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Insurgents have killed at least 13 Afghan security forces in separate attacks, officials said Sunday, as the country struggles to contain a long-running Taliban insurgency and combat a growing threat from a local Islamic State affiliate.

Munir Ahmad Farhad, spokesman for the governor of the northern Balkh province,

said a roadside bomb killed nine security forces and wounded several others the night before in the Chimtal district, where they were waging an operation against the Taliban. He said five insurgents have been killed and dozens wounded.

In a separate incident, Islamic State militants attacked the Darzab district headquarters in the neighboring Jawzjan province Saturday night and gunbattles were still underway,

said Mohammad Reza Ghafari, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Four Afghan reinforcements, including a unit commander, were killed in an ambush as they raced to the scene of the clashes, he said.

The Taliban have seized a number of districts across the country, and the fighting is expected to intensify as warmer weather sets in.

## Trump officials: No new US focus on ousting Assad

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chemical weapons attack in Syria that triggered retaliatory American airstrikes hasn't shifted U.S. priorities toward ousting Syrian President Bashar Assad, top Trump administration officials said.

After Tuesday's chemical attack, President Donald Trump said his attitude toward Assad

"has changed very much" and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson even said "steps are underway" to organize a coalition to remove him from power. But in a television interview that aired Sunday, Tillerson said the priority "really hasn't changed."

Defeating Islamic State remains the top focus, Tillerson said. Once that threat "has been reduced or eliminated, I think we can turn our atten-

tion directly to stabilizing the situation in Syria," he told CBS' "Face the Nation."

The hope, he said, is that "we can navigate a political outcome in which the Syrian people, in fact, will determine Bashar al-Assad's fate and his legitimacy."

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said "getting Assad out is not the only priority" and that

countering Iran's influence in Syria was another. Still, Haley said the U.S. didn't see a peaceful future in Syria with Assad in power.

The comments from Tillerson and Haley suggested that the airstrikes Trump ordered punishing Assad for using chemical weapons would not lead to any immediate change in U.S. strategy toward Syria.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Airline changes tune after banning cello

**DC** WASHINGTON — Local news reports said a musician was booted off an American Airlines flight after the crew said his cello posed a safety risk.

John Kaboff, 46, said he was removed from his flight on Tuesday from Reagan National Airport to Chicago O'Hare International Airport after the crew said his cello touched the floor and couldn't be strapped into the extra seat he bought for it. He said he asked for a seat belt extension to better cradle the \$100,000 cello, but was denied.

Kaboff, of Vienna, Va., said ground personnel acknowledged the error and booked him on the next American Airlines flight to Chicago.

## Zoo says polar bear dying of kidney failure

**UT** SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah zoo is bracing for the end of times with its beloved polar bear, Rizzo.

The Hogle Zoo said the 19-year-old female is dying of renal failure.

It's a common condition in older polar bears. The median life expectancy for an animal like Rizzo is about 24 years.

The zoo said it will continue to treat Rizzo to keep her comfortable.

Rizzo has been at the zoo since 2012.

## Hoverboard blamed for apartment fire

**IA** URBANDALE — Fire officials blamed a malfunctioning hoverboard for a fire that damaged an Urbandale apartment.

Des Moines television station

KCCI said the fire was reported about 10:40 a.m. Friday at the Ambassador West Apartments.

Urbandale Fire Chief Jerry Holt said the fire started when the hoverboard started spewing sparks.

Fire officials said the fire was contained to the first floor.

## Brawl prompts brief lockdown of school

**PA** NORTH VER-SAILLES — Authorities in western Pennsylvania said a large fight prompted a brief lockdown of a suburban Pittsburgh school.

The superintendent of the East Allegheny School District in North Versailles said the 12:30 p.m. Friday brawl occurred in the Junior-Senior High School cafeteria. Superintendent Donald MacFann said eight to 10 students, both boys and girls, were involved.

The president of the teachers' union told WPXI-TV that one teacher injured his knee and was punched in the face several times. MacFann said no one was transported to a hospital.

Police and a few other departments responded and the school was placed on lockdown for about 20 minutes as a precaution.

## City mulls dress code for bikini baristas

**WA** EVERETT — A northwest Washington state city is considering a dress code for scantily-clad baristas who officials say sell sex along with lattes.

The Daily Herald reported Saturday that Everett officials said the code is needed because of recurring problems at so-called "sexpresso" stands, where there have been repeated arrests for prostitution and lewd conduct.

A draft ordinance says near-nude baristas wouldn't be banned, but coffee stands would have to comply with zoning and licensing requirements for adult-entertainment businesses.

## Voters could decide to end ban on duels

**OR** SALEM — In the next general election, Oregon voters may be asked to make an usual change to the state Constitution that harkens to that famous summer day in 1804 when a bitter rivalry between Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton and U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr was settled with a fatal gunshot.

Senate Joint Resolution 44 would repeal Article II, Section 9 from the Oregon Constitution, which says anyone who offers, accepts or knowingly participates in a duel can't hold public office.

Republican Sen. Brian Boquist, its chief sponsor, said it's one of several archaic laws that just don't make sense in modern times.

## Investigators: Toddler, 2, caused house fire

**MO** SPRINGFIELD — Fire department investigators say they believe a 2-year-old child with a lighter started a fire at a Springfield home that caused \$40,000 worth of damage.

Springfield Fire Department spokeswoman Cara Erwin told the Springfield News-Leader that seven people were inside the home when it caught fire Wednesday morning. All occupants escaped uninjured.

Battalion Chief Julie Williams said firefighters battled the blaze from outside until it was controlled about 7 a.m.

## Exhibit of giraffe born at zoo to be delayed

**OH** TOLEDO — A northwest Ohio zoo welcomed a 130-pound bundle of joy that stands 5 feet, 7 inches tall.

The Toledo Zoo said a Masai giraffe gave birth to a female calf named Kipenzi. That means "beloved" or "precious one" in Swahili.

The zoo said the calf, born March 3, and her mother, Elli, won't be on public display until cleared by the zoo's veterinary staff. That could be sometime around Memorial Day.

Much attention has been generated lately by a New York animal park that has had livestream video of its pregnant giraffe waiting to give birth.

Toledo Zoo officials say they won't livestream births or similar events.

## Skater killed, 5 hurt by speeding driver

**NY** NEW YORK — Police said an in-line skater was killed and five people were injured when a speeding driver lost control of his car in Brooklyn.

The crash happened shortly after 8:30 p.m. Saturday in the Brownsville neighborhood.

Police said a man on in-line roller skates was hit by a sedan as he crossed the street. They said the sedan kept going and rear-ended two cars at a stop sign. Then it hit a van and two parked cars.

The driver got out and ran but was arrested a short time later. Charges are pending. His name was not immediately released.

Police said five people from the vehicles that were hit sustained injuries. Their conditions were not immediately available.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# White Sox knock off Twins Not so fast

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Avisail Garcia and White Sox manager Rick Renteria are already excited about the returns from the 25-year-old's offensive adjustment.

The idea is simple: Just make contact, and big hits will follow.

Garcia homered and had three RBIs, Geovany Soto also went deep and Chicago handed the Minnesota Twins their first loss of the season with a 6-2 victory on Saturday.

Garcia was 3-for-4 on the day and is 8-for-16 this season.

"He's not trying to hit homers, he's just trying to have good at-bats," Renteria said. "He's a strong man. When he puts the barrel of the bat on the baseball, it's got a chance to travel. It happened today."

Garcia was a double shy of the cycle. The right fielder had a two-run triple in the sec-

ond inning against starter Adalberto Mejia (0-1), and he and Soto hit back-to-back home runs in the sixth — Soto's third of the season in four games.

"You don't have to do too much," Garcia said. "You just have to see the ball and hit it. The homers will come. I know I have power."

The Twins (4-1) were looking to start 5-0 for the first time since 1968 but lacked the strong pitching that carried them in their first four games.

Mejia lasted just 1<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings in his first MLB start, and Minnesota's bullpen allowed three runs, snapping a 16<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>-inning scoreless streak.

"We talked about having some really clean games in the first four," manager Paul Molitor said. "Today was a different story. We made some mistakes, and they made us pay."

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The scoreboard at Citi Field showed Jacob deGrom hitting 98 mph, and the ballpark buzzed with the Mets star back in top form.

In Seattle, fans surely thought the same when Felix Hernandez's fastball ticked up on opening day. And how about that extra juice from Detroit ace Justin Verlander?

All across the majors, pitchers are ramping up the velocity this season — or at least it seems that way.

Not so fast. They're actually getting a little help: Major League Baseball has changed the way it's recording and reporting pitch speeds, driving up readings all over the league.

After previously using PITCHf/x to provide velocities to broadcasts and ballparks, Major League Baseball Advanced Media is instead supplying numbers from its Statcast system. The key difference is that PITCHf/x calculates velocity at a set point — usually 50 or 55 feet from the back of home plate — while Statcast measures velocity directly out of the pitcher's hand.

Because of that difference, Statcast readings are faster than PITCHf/x by about 0.6 mph on average, according to MLBAM senior data architect Tom Tango.

"We do have the technology to capture the speed right out of the hand now," Tango told The Associated Press. "So that's what we report."

Trouble is, for now, fans and analysts aren't necessarily comparing apples to apples on pitch speeds from last year.

For example, PITCHf/x had deGrom averaging 93.4 mph on his four-seam fastball during an injury plagued 2016 season. On Wednesday, Statcast measured him at 94.2 mph, a bump deGrom noticed during the game.

"Last year, it felt like all I could do to get to 93 or 94," deGrom said.

On Wednesday, he got there no problem, but that 0.8 mph uptick might be mostly because of the new readings. The same may be true for Hernandez (up 0.6 mph on four-seamers from 2016's PITCHf/x to 2017's Statcast data), Verlander (up 0.8 mph) and Stephen Strasburg (up 0.9 mph). Conversely, Arizona's Zack Greinke (down 0.1 mph) might not be holding as steady as it seems.

What does all that mean? For the average fan, perhaps a few more triple-digit fastballs at the stadium, but likely not much else.

For the sabermetric community, it's an effort to get everyone using the same data.

"We're standardizing so we all see the same," Tango said.

## Unbeaten O's rally past Yanks

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Hyun Soo Kim hit a tiebreaking RBI single off Dellin Betances in the seventh inning after a rare stolen base by slugger Mark Trumbo, and Baltimore remained the only unbeaten team in the majors by rallying to a 5-4 victory over New York.

One day after making up a four-run deficit, the Orioles came back from being down 4-1 and improved this season to 4-0.

It was the 23rd career stolen base for Trumbo in 553 games. It was also the second steal of the day for Baltimore, which had only 19 all last year.

**Cubs 11, Brewers 6:** NL MVP Kris Bryant broke out of his early slump by driving in his first three runs of the season and Chicago overcame a shaky start by Kyle Hendricks to beat host Milwaukee.

Bryant had managed a mere single in 16 at-bats this year before going 3-for-6.

**Angels 5, Mariners 4:** At Anaheim, Calif., Mike Trout hit a tiebreaking homer in the seventh inning and Andrelton Simmons made a spectacular tag at third base to complete a double play during Los Angeles' fourth victory in five games.

**Diamondbacks 11, Indians 2:** David Peralta hit a go-ahead solo homer in the sixth inning and host Arizona came from behind again before pulling away late.

**Phillies 17, Nationals 3:** Howie Kendrick had a bases-loaded triple while Philadelphia scored 12 runs for the biggest first inning in team history, and the Phillies routed visiting Washington.

**Athletics 6, Rangers 1:** Kendall Graveman held host Texas hitless until Mike Napoli homered with two outs in the seventh

inning, and Oakland beat the Rangers.

**Rockies 4, Dodgers 2:** Clayton Kershaw surrendered back-to-back homers for the first time in his career, with Mark Reynolds and Gerardo Parra going deep in the sixth to help host Colorado beat Los Angeles.

**Padres 2, Giants 1:** Rookie Manuel Margot doubled twice off Madison Bumgarner, Jhoulys Chacin and two relievers held San Francisco to five hits and visiting San Diego beat the Giants.

**Royals 7, Astros 3:** Cheslor Cuthbert hit a solo homer early and Eric Hosmer and Salvador Perez both went deep during a six-run eighth inning, helping Kansas City rally over host Houston.

**Marlins 8, Mets 1:** Marcell Ozuna hit a mammoth home run and Adam Conley allowed one hit through five innings to lead visiting Miami over New York.

**Rays 3, Blue Jays 2:** At St. Petersburg, Florida, Toronto reliever Casey Lawrence made his major league debut and wound up walking home the winning run with two outs in the 11th inning.

**Cardinals 10, Reds 4:** Aledmys Diaz hit two home runs, Michael Wacha allowed one run over six innings and host St. Louis beat Cincinnati to spoil Bronson Arroyo's return to the majors.

**Pirates 6, Braves 4:** Gregory Polanco had no trouble with R.A. Dickey's knuckleball, getting three of his four hits and driving in a run off the starter to lead Pittsburgh over visiting Atlanta.

**Tigers 4, Red Sox 1:** Jordan Zimmermann pitched six solid innings, and Jose Iglesias and James McCann homered in host Detroit's victory over Boston.

# Cormier submits Johnson to retain belt

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — With a vicious choke, Daniel Cormier forced Anthony Johnson into submission and retirement.

Cormier's next title challenger?

Pick a fighter outside of the cage.

Cormier easily defeated "Rumble" Johnson for the second time in two years, using a rear naked choke to retain the light heavy-weight championship in the main event of UFC 210 on Saturday night.

With tears in his eyes, Johnson announced his retirement inside the octagon, saying "it's time for me to do something else."

It's time for Cormier to figure out what's next — and he has options for a major fight later this year.

Cormier jawed with No. 4 ranked contender Jimi Manuwa immediately after the bout and then talked trash with perhaps the class — and considered the uncrowned champ — of the division, Jon Jones.

"Jimi Manuwa, you don't want any of this," Cormier said. "Jon Jones, as a fighter, I respect you, but we don't see eye to eye."

Jones looked on from cageside and stretched his arms in approval as the sell-out crowd of 17,110 went wild for the former champion. Three months from completing a yearlong doping ban, Jones said he was focused on reclaiming the light heavyweight title he's lost twice due to suspensions.

Cormier wanted nothing to do with Jones' posturing, saying, "don't talk to me about

a guy who's ineligible. When you get your (act) together, I'll be here waiting to fight."

Cormier was awarded the light heavy-weight belt only after Jones was stripped of it in early 2015, when he was suspended by the UFC following his involvement in a hit-and-run accident.

Jones had successfully defended his title eight times through 2013. But he's fought just three times in the past four years.

Cormier's lone loss in a 19-fight MMA career came against Jones in 2015.

Cormier beat Johnson at UFC 187 in 2015 by submission, and he won with a rear naked choke in the second round on Saturday.

Johnson, 33, said he was moving on an unspecified non-MMA venture.

"I'm tired of getting punched," he said.

Gegard Mousasi stopped Chris Weidman by TKO in the second round of a confusing conclusion to a middleweight bout.

Mousasi connected with two knees to the right side of Weidman's head that stunned the former champion and led to a stoppage. Mousasi had lifted Weidman and delivered one right knee to the head, a seemingly clean blow that clearly did some damage. Mousasi's second knee caused some of the confusion.

Referee Dan Miragliotta gave Weidman, who suffered his third straight loss, a 5-minute recovery period because he thought the fighter had both hands on the canvas, which would make the second knee illegal.

Fighters can't deliver those knees when the opponent has two hands down.

Mousasi's first knee was clearly legal, though replays seemed inconclusive on Weidman's hand placement on the second knee. After an extended break and plenty of commotion, doctors checked on Weidman and the fight was stopped as a packed KeyBank Center drowned out the decision with boos.

Weidman yelled profanities as he looked at replays on the screen and believed he should have been won because of illegal kicks.

Charles Oliveira, sent back to the 155-pound division because of a checkered history of missing weight in the 145-pound class, choked out Will Brooks at just 2:30 of the first round in the first bout of the main card. He made quick work in his first light-weight bout since 2011 of Brooks.

Thiago Alves used a stunning left hook in the first round and battered Patrick Cote's face to point where it was bathed in blood in a unanimous decision victory. Cote (23-11) dropped his gloves and retired in the wake of the punishing defeat.

Cynthia Calvillo earned a submission win in a fight that was nearly scrapped over Pearl Gonzalez's breast implants. The state athletic commission cleared Gonzalez to fight after talking to her physician. Gonzalez might have wished the fight was called off when she gave up late in the third.

# Garcia, Rose move atop Masters field

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Justin Rose had a back-nine charge so common at Augusta National. Sergio Garcia finally caught a good break in a major. Jordan Spieth got his name high on those famous white leaderboards, the only spot he has ever occupied on the weekend at the Masters.

Saturday had something for everyone at the Masters, including the promise of more to come.

"Saturday's gone and now Sunday's coming — a very exciting Sunday," Garcia said after making a 7-foot par putt on the final hole for a 2-under 70 to share the lead with Rose. "Just make sure we have a good chance coming into the last five or six holes, and see what

happens."

Garcia, the most vexed player without a major in his generation, hung his head when a 4-iron from the first cut of rough on the par-5 13th came out soft and disappeared into the tributary of Rae's Creek in front of the green. Just his luck, the ball bounced softly off the bank and stayed up, and from there the Spaniard hit a tough chip to tap-in range to turn potential bogey into a birdie.

Rose was an afterthought, five shots behind, when his tee shot to a left pin on the par-3 12th dropped in 5 feet from the hole for the first of five birdies on the back nine. He took care of the par 5s and then finished with a 20-foot birdie on the 17th and a 12-foot birdie on the 18th for a Saturday-best 67.

Rose has a share of the 54-

hole lead for the first time in a major. He also has a U.S. Open title from Merion and an Olympic gold medal from Rio. And when he surveyed the landscape, he's not sure any of that matters.

There is too much golf left. There are too many capable players. Too much can happen around this place.

"A one-shot lead starting the day doesn't mean much," Rose said. "You're going to have to go out and play a good round of golf, and I think there's going to be four or five guys pretty much with the same mindset tomorrow."

Rose and Garcia were at 6-under 210, and that one-shot lead they share was over Rickie Fowler, who has never been this close to the lead in a major going into the final round. Fowler also

has never felt better about his game or his chances.

He didn't do anything special except to birdie all the par 5s to offset a few miscues in his round of 71.

"I don't think anyone is going to put themselves far enough out front where they can cruise in," Fowler said.

Spieth was tied with Ryan Moore (69) and Charley Hoffman, who led for much of the day until he put his tee shot into the water on the par-3 16th and made double bogey. Hoffman battled for par on the last hole to stay just two shots behind.

Only 10 players remained under par, all of them separated by five shots. That group included former Masters champions Adam Scott (69) and Charl Schwartzel (68).

# Lillard scores 59 as Blazers rout Jazz

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Damian Lillard scored a franchise-record 59 points and matched his career high with nine three-pointers to help the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Utah Jazz 101-86 on Saturday night.

Lillard surpassed Damon Stoudamire's previous record of 54 points with a step-back three-pointer. The crowd on its feet, he raised his arms in celebration then pounded his chest.

The win kept the Blazers ahead of the Denver Nuggets for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference with just two games left.

**Warriors 123, Pelicans 101:** Kevin Durant's first touch after missing 19 games with a knee injury? Just a driving baseline reverse and emphatic one-handed slam, and KD triumphantly returned to finish

with 16 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for host Golden State.

With two-time reigning MVP Stephen Curry sidelined by a bruised left knee, Durant shined in 31 minutes and the balanced Warriors won their 14th straight game — the longest unbeaten run in the NBA this season.

Durant hadn't played since getting hurt Feb. 28 at Washington, then resumed full practice Friday.

**Nets 107, Bulls 106:** Dwyane Wade returned but visiting Chicago sustained a potentially costly loss to Brooklyn.

Wade started and played 25 minutes, scoring 14 points. He had been expected to miss the remainder of the regular season when he sprained his right elbow on March 15.

The loss dropped Chicago into a tie with Miami for eighth in the Eastern Conference.

**Clippers 98, Spurs 87:** Chris Paul had

19 points and Los Angeles beat host San Antonio for its fifth straight victory.

**Celtics 121, Hornets 114:** Isaiah Thomas scored 32 points, and visiting Boston remained in contention for the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs with a victory over Charlotte.

**Heat 106, Wizards 103:** Hassan Whiteside scored 30 points and James Johnson hit a layup with 11 seconds left to give Miami a victory over host Washington.

**Bucks 90, 76ers 82:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 20 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and visiting Milwaukee beat Philadelphia to clinch a playoff berth.

**Pacers 127, Magic 112:** Paul George scored 37 points and Myles Turner added 23 points and 10 rebounds to help Indiana move a step closer to a playoff berth with a victory over host Orlando.

# Maple Leafs clinch first playoffs since 2013

Associated Press

TORONTO — At about this point last year Leo Komarov had his bags packed and plane ticket home to Finland almost ready to go, his Toronto Maple Leafs wrapping up a 30th-place season.

Even Komarov, one of the longer-serving Leafs, didn't expect his team to leap back in the postseason so soon — clinching their first such berth in four years and second since 2004 with a 5-3 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday night.

"If I'm really honest, maybe not," Komarov said. "But the thing when we started playing, when you see the young kids, you see they've got a lot of skills and when we start winning you think we've got a pretty good chance. The closer we get the bigger chance we have so you kind of start of thinking 'Maybe, we've got a chance to get in here.'"

The playoff berth is really a tale of two turnarounds — from last season, and from three years before that when a vastly different Toronto entity last cracked the postseason.

It was Auston Matthews,

Mitch Marner, William Nylander and the emergence of a historic rookie class that truly catapulted the Leafs from last season's dull misery into the postseason. The mostly steady goaltending of Frederik Andersen — who was injured against Pittsburgh — helped, as did career years from Nazem Kadri, Jake Gardiner and Tyler Bozak. But it was the instantaneous contributions of the rookies that made the biggest difference from one year to the other along with Babcock behind the bench.

Matthews became only the fourth rookie under 20 in NHL history to score 40 goals, his 40th into an empty net sealing the Leafs' wild playoff-clinching win over Pittsburgh. That goal paled in importance to fellow rookie Connor Brown, whose 20th of the season Saturday gave the Leafs a late regulation lead over the Penguins.

**Capitals 3, Bruins 1:** Kevin Shattenkirk scored the go-ahead goal 56 seconds after the Bruins tied it in the second period, and the NHL-leading Capitals sent host Boston to a regular season-ending loss that set up a potential first-round playoff matchup between the

teams.

**Senators 3, Rangers 1:** Host Ottawa beat New York to wrap up second place in the Atlantic Division and home-ice advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

**Wild 3, Coyotes 1:** Darcy Kuemper stopped 20 shots, Martin Hanzal scored in his return to the desert and Minnesota set a franchise record with their 49th win.

**Islanders 4, Devils 2:** Jaroslav Halak made 37 saves and Anders Lee scored twice, but visiting New York was eliminated from playoff contention despite running its winning streak to five games.

**Jets 2, Predators 1:** Blake Wheeler scored a short-handed goal with 45 seconds left in regulation to lift host Winnipeg to a franchise-record seventh straight victory.

**Flyers 4, Blue Jackets 2:** Steve Mason made 20 saves to help host Philadelphia beat reeling Columbus.

The Flyers will miss the playoffs for the third time in five years.

**Kings 3, Blackhawks 2 (OT):** Drew Doughty scored 27 seconds into overtime, leading host Los Angeles over Chicago.

Dustin Brown scored with 55 seconds remaining to send it to overtime and Tyler Toffoli added a power-play goal for the Kings. Jonathan Quick made 25 saves.

**Canadiens 3, Red Wings 2 (OT):** Alex Galchenyuk scored 1:42 into overtime, giving visiting Montreal the victory.

**Blues 5, Hurricanes 4 (SO):** Vladimir Tarasenko scored in the fourth round of the shootout, and St. Louis beat host Carolina.

**Panthers 3, Sabres 0:** Jonathan Huberdeau scored twice and James Reimer made saves to help Florida beat Buffalo in the Panthers' home finale.

**Stars 4, Avalanche 3 (SO):** Tyler Seguin scored the only goal in the shootout, and host Dallas beat Colorado.

**Oilers 3, Canucks 2:** Mark Letestu scored the go-ahead goal on a power play in the third period and visiting Edmonton clinched at least second place in the Pacific Division.

**Sharks 3, Flames 1:** Chris Tierney scored one goal and set up Mikkel Boedker for another in the second period to help banged-up San Jose finish the regular season by beating visiting Calgary.