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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Commander relieved over fatal crash

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The commander of All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 at MCAS Iwakuni has been relieved of command, according to a spokesman for the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Lt. Col. James Compton was removed April 22 by Maj. Gen. Thomas Weidley, commander of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Okinawa, due to a “loss of trust and confidence,” according to an email statement Friday from 1st Lt. David Mancilla, of III MEF. Compton held the post just short of a year; he took command of the squadron on May 25.

An F/A-18D Hornet from

the squadron was involved in a fatal midair collision Dec. 6 with a KC-130J from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, also based at MCAS Iwakuni, that killed six Marine aviators.

Compton was fired as a “direct result of decisions made that may have been related to the fatal collision,” according to the Marine Corps Times, which reported Compton’s dismissal Thursday. The newspaper did not identify the source of that statement.

Mancilla, a spokesman for the III Marine Expeditionary Force, the parent unit for 1st Marine Air Wing, would not confirm that statement when queried Friday by Stars and Stripes.

“The investigation into the

mishap in December is still ongoing,” according to Mancilla’s email. “This is an internal Marine Corps personnel matter, and we will not release any further information at this time.”

Lt. Col. Kevin Campbell was named the interim commanding officer of the squadron, Mancilla stated.

The six Marines who died in the crash were Lt. Col. Kevin Herrmann, 38; Maj. James Brophy, 36; Capt. Jahmar Resilard, 28; Staff Sgt. Maximo Alexander Flores, 27; Cpl. William Ross, 21; and Cpl. Daniel Baker, 21. The weapons officer for the Hornet survived the incident and was released from the hospital several days after the crash.

Resilard, the Hornet pilot, was pronounced dead after

being found by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship JS Setoyuki the day of the crash.

The search for the crew of the KC-130 was called off Dec. 11, after ships, planes and special forces from the U.S., Japan and Australia searched 35,000 square nautical miles.

The downed planes, which launched from MCAS Iwakuni, were conducting regularly scheduled training, including aerial refueling, when the accident happened, the Marines said at the time.

In December, the Marine Corps stated that Navy salvage experts had likely found both aircraft. Signals were detected Dec. 19 and 21 at a depth of approximately 9,843 feet.

Coast Guard polar icebreaker project moves ahead

BY SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Navy has awarded a \$746 million contract to a Mississippi shipbuilder for a new heavy polar icebreaker, a move that was nearly sunk last year when its funding was diverted to build a southern U.S. border wall.

VT Halter Marine was announced as the contract winner in a Tuesday announcement after Congress earlier this year restored the funding to build the Coast Guard’s first heavy icebreaker in 40 years.

The company is expected to deliver the new cutter by 2024.

Congressional and Pentagon leaders say boosting the service’s fleet of icebreakers is vital to compete with Russia and China, which are aggressively pursuing inroads into the Arctic as melting ice opens

more passageways for military, commercial and research vessels.

“Against the backdrop of great power competition, the Polar Security Cutter is key to our nation’s presence in the polar regions,” Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz said in a statement Tuesday. “This contract award marks an important step towards building the nation’s full complement of six polar icebreakers to meet the unique mission demands that have emerged from increased commerce, tourism, research, and international activities in the Arctic and Antarctic.”

The new cutter will replace the Coast Guard’s Polar Star, its only working heavy icebreaker, which was commissioned in 1976.

VT Halter’s contract includes options to build two more heavy

icebreakers, with an estimated cost of \$1.94 billion for all three.

The Coast Guard also wants to add three medium polar icebreakers to its current one, the 20-year-old CGC Healy, saying six icebreakers are needed to keep pace with adversaries.

Russia has about 40 icebreakers, 10 of which are nuclear-powered. China has two heavy icebreakers with plans to obtain more.

The Republican-controlled House last year approved diverting \$750 million earmarked for icebreakers toward building a U.S.-Mexico border wall. But most Democrats, who took control of the House after the midterm elections, oppose the wall.

Still, building polar icebreakers has reasonably strong bipartisan support, given the Arctic’s perceived military and

economic value.

The Arctic region is believed to hold an estimated 13% of the world’s untapped oil reserves, 30% of its natural gas and vast mineral resources, according to U.S. Geological Survey estimates.

Meanwhile, Russia and China are strengthening their economic ties in the region, which spans parts of Alaska, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Russia and Sweden.

China has declared itself a “near Arctic state” and aims to build a “polar Silk Road” as a direct trade route to Europe.

Russia, which has 15,000 miles of coastline along Arctic waters, has built three new military bases in the Arctic region, with plans for more.

2 7th Fleet ships swapped out

BY JAMES BOLINGER
AND CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Two ships are leaving the 7th Fleet, but two more are joining the forward-deployed force in Japan, the Navy announced Friday.

The amphibious assault ship USS Wasp, home-ported at Sasebo Naval Base, and the destroyer USS Stethem, at Yokosuka Naval Base, will return to the United States after spending several years in Japan, according to the Navy statement.

Meanwhile, amphibious assault ship the USS America and landing platform dock the USS New Orleans will shift from homeports in the U.S. to Sasebo.

“The security environment in the Indo-Pacific requires

that the U.S. Navy station the most capable ships forward,” the Navy said in its statement. “This posture allows the most rapid response times possible for maritime and joint forces and brings our most capable ships with the greatest amount of striking power and operational capability to bear in the timeliest manner.”

The 844-foot Wasp, the first flat-deck amphibious ship to embark the Marine Corps’ F-35B Lightning II, will move to Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia for scheduled maintenance while the Stethem shifts its homeport to San Diego, where it will undergo midlife modernization.

Since joining the 7th Fleet in January 2018, the Wasp has conducted relief operations after Super Typhoon

Mangkhut struck the Northern Mariana Islands, embarked the F-35B and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Force for multiple deployments and exercises, and conducted international operations with allied nations throughout the Pacific.

“We were on station within 12 hours of that typhoon blowing through,” Capt. Jim McGovern, the Amphibious Squadron 11 commander said in a March interview with Stars and Stripes. “The American citizens in Rota were infinitely thankful that we were there to help them. It was a huge morale boost for the crew.”

The Stetham’s move from Yokosuka, where it’s been since 2005, will leave the 7th Fleet with one less destroyer than it had two years ago.

Warship honoring LBJ is christened

Associated Press

BATH, Maine — Former President Lyndon B. Johnson’s daughters christened a stealthy warship bearing his name Saturday, smacking champagne bottles against a metal star symbolizing Texas as a crowd roared in approval.

Champagne sprayed into the air when Lynda Bird Johnson Robb and Luci Baines Johnson simultaneously smashed their bottles as they stood on the ship’s bow. Afterward, red, white and blue streamers shot skyward. Robb said her Texas-born father would be honored to have his name on the futuristic ship because he always looked to the future.

“Daddy would be proud to have a stealthy ship that’s looking forward — not backward at past things that have happened, but forward for the great things” to come, Robb told The Associated Press before Saturday’s ceremony.

The warship’s no-nonsense namesake was praised for his efforts to help the poor and to fight for equality in the civil rights era. Johnson signed the landmark Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act and designed “Great Society” domestic programs that included federally sponsored social welfare programs. But his presidency was dogged by a stalemate in the Vietnam War. He died in 1973.

U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, who attended with Maine’s congressional delegation and other dignitaries, noted that Johnson, a Navy veteran, was thrust into the presidency “in one of our darkest hours” after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The Civil Rights Act, she said, “changed America and helped our nation realize its ideals of justice and equality for all.”

GAO: Poor supply chain keeping F-35 grounded

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A shortage of spare parts and difficulty managing and moving parts around the world kept the F-35 grounded 30% of the time during an eight-month period last year, a new watchdog report found, with some training units unable to fly most of that time.

A backlog of repairs and high rates in some units of “cannibalizing” parts from other planes rather than waiting for parts to arrive also contributed to the fighter jet program’s problems, the Government Accountability Office said in a report released Thursday.

Earlier Thursday, the Pentagon inspector general had cleared acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan of wrongdoing in allegations that he had used his official position to favor his former employer, Boeing Co., including claims that he had “repeatedly dumped” on the F-35 jet and called the Lockheed Martin-produced

aircraft “f---ed up.”

Investigators found his comments were directed at the program and its performance, not the aircraft, “and were consistent with other comments about problems in the F-35 program made by other senior DOD officials,” the IG said.

Beyond supply and repair problems, the GAO report found that while spending billions of dollars on F-35 spare parts, the Defense Department does not have records for all its purchases or know where parts are located or how much the military services paid for them.

Such lack of accountability, the GAO said, will make it more difficult to rein in costs of the Pentagon’s most expensive weapons program, with sustainment costs estimated at \$1.12 trillion for the U.S. alone, the report said.

The GAO bluntly warned the Pentagon that if it doesn’t fix the program’s supply and maintenance challenges, the “F-35 fleet may fall short of the

capability needed to support its critical national defense missions in the future.”

Between May and November 2018, F-35 mission-capable rates worldwide — the percentage of time aircraft with squadrons are safe to fly and able to perform at least one mission — hovered at about 50%, according to data reviewed by the GAO. About 27% were fully mission-capable — able to perform all tasked missions — during the same period, the report said.

Even the system that’s supposed to make F-35 maintenance more efficient is flawed, the GAO found.

Maintainers cited problems with the Autonomic Logistics Information System — a program intended to automate supply functions. One Air Force unit spent an estimated 45,000 man hours a year performing additional tasks and manual workarounds due to system malfunctions, officials told the GAO.

Leaders struggle to make sense of synagogue attack

Associated Press

POWAY, Calif. — After the rabbi who led a service on the last day of Passover suffered a gunshot wound to his hands and two others endured shrapnel wounds, political, civic and religious leaders across the country struggled to make sense of another fatal attack on a house of worship six months after a mass shooting in a Pittsburgh synagogue.

John T. Earnest, 19, surrendered to police after bursting into Chabad of Poway, north of San Diego, on Saturday and opening fire with about 100 people inside, killing Lori Kaye, 60, and injuring Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein; Noya Dahan, 8; and Almog Peretz, 34, authorities said.

Earnest, who had no previous contact with law enforcement, may be charged with a hate crime in addition to homicide, San Diego County Sheriff William Gore said. Earnest is also being investigated in connection with an arson attack on a mosque in nearby Escondido,

Calif., on March 24.

Goldstein told “Today” in a phone interview he was in the middle of his sermon when he heard loud noises. He turned around and saw he was “face-to-face with this murderer, this terrorist.” He said he put his hands up to protect himself and lost one of his fingers in the shooting.

Shortly after fleeing, Earnest called 911 to report the shooting, San Diego Police Chief David Nisleit said. When an officer reached him on a roadway, “the suspect pulled over, jumped out of his car with his hands up and was immediately taken into custody,” Nisleit said.

A person identifying himself as John Earnest posted an anti-Jewish screed online about an hour before the attack. The poster described himself as a nursing school student and praised the suspects accused of carrying out deadly attacks on mosques in New Zealand last month and at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue Oct. 27.

Trump condemns hate crimes in rally remarks

The Washington Post

GREEN BAY, Wis. — President Donald Trump began his political rally in Wisconsin on Saturday night with a full-throated condemnation of anti-Semitism and hate crimes hours after a fatal shooting at a synagogue in San Diego.

The remarks came after Trump in recent days defended past comments that there were “very fine people” who marched with self-proclaimed neo-Nazis and white supremacists at the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Va.

“We forcefully condemn the evil of anti-Semitism and hate,” Trump told the crowd in Green Bay, Wis. “It must be defeated. We will all get to the bottom of it.”

“We’re going to get to the bottom of a lot of things happening in this country,” he added.

Trump’s response after Charlottesville resurfaced last week when former vice president Joe Biden referenced it in a video launching his presidential campaign. Asked about those comments on Mark Levin’s conservative talk radio show, Trump said, “Now there were a lot of good people in that group,” who only came to protest the removal of the Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee statue. The interview was taped Thursday and aired Fri-

day night.

Trump, who was in his element before a crowd of red-hat-wearing fans, spoke for more than 90 minutes, testing his reelection pitch in a state he narrowly won in 2016, securing him the presidency.

In a relatively tame speech that focused largely on the strength of the economy, Trump still hit all the key points that energize his base from mentioning Hillary Clinton to spur “Lock her up” chants and the late Sen. John McCain’s health care vote to elicit boos.

Trump scheduled the rally in the critical battleground state to counter the White House Correspondent’s Dinner back in Washington, which he has declined to attend since becoming president.

In a riff about immigration, Trump took credit for a plan to bus migrants who cross the border illegally to sanctuary cities, first reported by The Washington Post. “I’m proud to tell you that was actually my sick idea,” he said.

Though the speech was short on politics, being in Wisconsin was not. To win another four years in the White House, Trump needs states such as Wisconsin that flipped for him in 2016.

Oliver North out as NRA president after dispute

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Oliver North announced Saturday that he would not serve a second term as National Rifle Association president, making it clear he had been forced out by the gun lobby’s leadership after his own failed attempt to remove the NRA’s longtime CEO in a burgeoning divide over the group’s finances and media operations.

North, whose one-year term ends Monday, did not show up for the meeting, and his spot on the stage was left empty, his nameplate still in its place. His statement was largely met with silence. Wayne LaPierre, whom North had tried to push out,

later received two standing ovations.

It was a stunning conclusion to a battle between two conservative and Second Amendment titans — North, the retired Marine lieutenant colonel with a ramrod demeanor who was at the center of the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s, and LaPierre, who has been battle-tested in the decades since he took up the mantle of gun rights.

LaPierre pushed back against North, telling members of the NRA’s board of directors that North had threatened to release “damaging” information about him to them and saying it amounted to an “extortion” attempt.

Hundreds of the NRA’s estimated 5 mil-

lion members packed into the convention center in Indianapolis where the group’s annual meetings were being held. Near the end of the two-hour meeting, some members challenged efforts to adjourn and pushed to question the board about controversies involving its financial management, the relationship with its longtime public relations firm and details of what North sought to raise about alleged misspending, sexual harassment and other mismanagement.

But those cries were drowned out as some board members urged such conversations not to be held at such a large public forum, even if the media were eventually discharged from the room.

Crane falls on busy Seattle street; 4 dead

Associated Press

SEATTLE — A construction crane fell from a building on Google's new Seattle campus during a storm that brought strong wind gusts, crashing down onto one of the city's busiest streets and killing four people.

One female and three males had died by the time firefighters arrived Saturday afternoon, fire Chief Harold Scoggins said. Two of the dead were ironworkers who had been inside the crane, while the other two were people who were inside cars, fire department spokesman Lance Garland said.

A 25-year-old mother and

her 4-month-old daughter were in a car that was smashed by the crane on its passenger side and both managed to escape with only minor injuries, Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan said, calling it a miracle. The two were taken to Harborview Medical Center, along with a 28-year-old man. A fourth person was injured and treated at the scene.

The crane collapsed near the often-congested intersection of Mercer and Fairview avenues, just north of downtown in the South Lake Union neighborhood, shortly before 3:30 p.m., Scoggins said.

The deadly collapse is sure to bring scrutiny about the safety

of the dozens of cranes that dot the city's skyline. With Amazon, Google and other tech companies increasing their hiring in Seattle, the city has more cranes building office towers and apartment buildings than any other in the United States. As of January, there were about 60 construction cranes in Seattle.

Durkan said the city had a good track record with crane safety but that officials would conduct a review.

"It's a horrible day in Seattle when something like this happens. But it's a time when we come together because Seattle is a city that rallies around each other," she said.

Officials do not yet know the cause of the collapse. Police and the state Department of Labor and Industries were investigating, which Durkan said could take months.

Daren Konopaski, the business manager for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302, which represents heavy-equipment operators, told The Seattle Times he understood the crane was being dismantled when high winds moved through the area.

"We don't know, but that's what seems to have happened here," he said. "We are in the process of trying to get information."

Amid fear, Sri Lankans celebrate Mass via TV

Associated Press

AMPARA, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka's Catholics celebrated Mass in their homes via a televised broadcast on Sunday as churches across the island nation shut over fears of militant attacks, a week after the Islamic State-claimed Easter suicide bombings killed more than 250 people.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the archbishop of Colombo, delivered a homily before members of the clergy and the country's leaders in a small chapel at his Colombo residence — an extraordinary

measure underlining the fear still gripping this nation of 21 million people.

"This is a time our hearts are tested by the great destruction that took place last Sunday," Ranjith said. "This is a time questions such as, 'Does God truly love us? Does he have compassion toward us?' can rise in human hearts."

In a rare show of unity, President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and opposition leader Mahinda Rajapaksa attended the Mass. Their political rivalry and government

dysfunction are blamed for a failure to act upon near-specific information received from foreign intelligence agencies that preceded the bombings, which targeted three churches and three luxury hotels.

Police, meanwhile, entered the main mosque of National Towheed Jamaat on Sunday afternoon, just a day after authorities declared it and another organization terrorism groups over the bombings.

Police entered the mosque, located in Kattankudy in eastern Sri Lanka, and stopped an interview among foreign jour-

nalists and mosque officials. Later, a senior police officer dispersed journalists waiting outside, saying authorities were conducting a "cordon and search operation." Police then left, locking up the mosque just before afternoon prayers were to start.

Authorities banned National Towheed Jamaat over its ties to Mohammed Zahran, the alleged mastermind of the Easter attacks. Police also announced the arrests of two of five people wanted in connection with the attacks after their pictures were distributed publicly.

Flooding plagues Mozambique after Cyclone Kenneth

Associated Press

PEMBA, Mozambique — Serious flooding raged on Sunday in parts of northern Mozambique hit by Cyclone Kenneth three days ago, with water waist-high in places, after the government urged people to immediately seek higher ground. Hundreds of thousands of people were at risk with more rain forecast.

"Help us, we are losing everything!" residents in the region's main city, Pemba, shouted at passing cars as the rushing waters flooded their homes and heavy rain fell. Women and girls with buckets and pots tried in vain to scoop away the torrent. The water poured into doorways.

Houses began to collapse and a rescue team was mobilized, United Nations staffers

said. "We are, unfortunately, expecting devastating floods," the U.N. humanitarian agency said in a tweet.

Kenneth arrived just six weeks after Cyclone Idai ripped into central Mozambique and killed more than 600 people with flooding. The new storm's remnants could dump twice as much rain as Idai, the U.N. World Program has said. As much as 9 inches, or about

a quarter of the average annual rainfall for the region, had been forecast over the next few days.

"I have never seen such rains in my life," said one Pemba resident, Michael Fernando, 35. Up to nearly 4 inches were forecast in the next 24 hours for some parts of the region, Mozambique's meteorological institute said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Penalties for killing K-9s are toughened

FL TALLAHASSEE — People who kill or seriously injure police dogs in the state will now face tougher penalties.

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill Friday making that crime a second-degree felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison. It was previously a third-degree felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

Republican Sen. Aaron Bean has said his bill was inspired by the shooting death of a K-9 in Jacksonville last year.

The increased penalties would also apply to anyone who seriously injures or kills a police horse or canines used by fire departments and search and rescue teams.

Retirement home for homeless dogs opens

MO INDEPENDENCE — A new retirement home of sorts gives homeless senior dogs that don't get adopted from shelters a place to romp and roam.

Shep's Place Senior Dog Sanctuary opened this month in the Kansas City suburb of Independence. Founder Russell Clothier said he came up with the idea after he started walking shelter dogs.

The sanctuary is named after a 10-year-old beagle-basset hound mix that Clothier adopted.

Story on high school porn star sparks clash

CA STOCKTON — A high school newspaper in Central California is going ahead with plans to publish a profile of a student who works in the porn industry after clash-

ing with administrators over the content of the story.

The journalism teacher for students who run the Bruin Voice at Bear Creek High in Stockton accused district officials of censorship when they demanded to review the article before publication, scheduled on May 3, and threatened to fire her if she didn't comply.

Kathi Duffel told the San Francisco Chronicle she refused, citing the students' rights to free speech. She got district officials to agree to let an attorney independently review the story.

Judge tells woman to wear charm bracelet

ID BOISE — Judges have a lot of discretion when it comes to handing out sentences to criminal defendants, but some experts said a recent case where a woman was ordered to wear a charm bracelet is particularly unusual.

Jennifer Fanopoulos was sentenced in Boise's U.S. District Court earlier this month for using fraud to obtain illegal drugs from the hospital where she worked. U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge sentenced her to three years of probation and added an extra requirement: He ordered her to wear a charm bracelet bearing pictures of her children to deter her from using drugs or alcohol.

Invasion suspects caught after returning

NC ROBERSONVILLE — Four men suspected in a home invasion were in custody after sheriff's deputies in North Carolina said they went back to the house.

WITN-TV in Greenville reported Martin County sheriff's deputies said that as they were beginning their investigation

into Thursday night's incident the four suspects drove by. The sheriff's office said the deputies stopped their vehicle and arrested them.

Police said one of the invasion victims was hit with a pipe but didn't need medical treatment.

All four suspects were charged with first-degree burglary, and two of them were also charged with assault with a deadly weapon. One suspect was charged with assault on a female. The four are jailed on \$25,000 bond each.

Man smoking meth attacks mattress

FL FORT WALTON BEACH — An apparently hallucinating man used a bedpost to attack a mattress where he thought a man was hiding.

In a Facebook post, The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office quoted the girlfriend of Felipe Oquendo, 37, as saying Oquendo thought she was cheating on him with a man he thought he saw in the mattress at their home.

She said Oquendo hit the mattress with a bed post, ripped it apart and locked the bedroom door. She was able to escape and call police. The sheriff's office said Oquendo later admitted to having smoked meth.

School changes name to Love Elementary

CA ALAMEDA — A public school in the San Francisco Bay Area named after a California governor who espoused racist views and opposed giving minorities the right to vote will change its name to Love Elementary.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported the school in Alameda is named after Henry H. Haight, who in his 1867 guber-

natorial inauguration address said he opposed giving Asian Americans and blacks the right to vote.

School officials let the community vote on the change and pick a new name. In November, they voted to name the school Love Elementary.

Puppy stolen from pet store found unharmed

PA WILKES-BARRE — Authorities said a Rottweiler puppy stolen from a Pennsylvania pet store by a man armed with a gun has been found safe.

The 9-week-old dog named Remus was found Thursday on a Wilkes-Barre street. It had been taken Wednesday by a man who allegedly displayed a gun tucked in his waistband.

The store's owner said a microchip implanted in the puppy confirmed it was the dog that had been stolen.

Man is accused of stealing saxophone

VA RICHMOND — Authorities said Alex Robert Sheaffer, 29, was arrested Friday night and charged with stealing a high-end saxophone during a reception at the Science Museum of Virginia.

Sheaffer was being held Saturday on charges of grand larceny, buying or receiving stolen goods and obtaining money through false pretenses.

Police allege that Sheaffer stole a \$5,000 alto sax from a musician who was helping provide entertainment for a reception on April 13.

Investigators allege Sheaffer, a member of a catering crew, took the saxophone to a local pawn shop, where he used it to secure a \$300 loan.

From wire reports

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Sanchez slam lifts Yankees over Giants

BY MICHAEL WAGAMAN

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Gary Sanchez spent the past few days tinkering at the plate trying to get his swing right after spending nearly two weeks recovering from a strained left calf. When he connected for one of the longest home runs of his career, Sanchez smacked his hands together emphatically, confident that he's getting close.

Sanchez hit his first career grand slam in a five-run fifth inning for his first hit since coming off the injured list, and New York beat the San Francisco Giants 6-4 on Saturday for its 10th win in 12 games.

"The past couple games I've had, I've been off at the plate," Sanchez said through a translator. "When you're able to connect like that, you're going to feel happy and show some emotions."

Sanchez had been 0-for-9 with seven strikeouts since returning Wednesday. His batting average down to .220, he crushed a high sinker from Derek Holland (1-4). The ball left the bat 111 mph and traveled 467

feet into the left-field seats, nearly clearing the bleachers and giving New York a 6-0 lead. Sanchez has seven home runs and 15 RBIs.

"That's one that kind of sucks the life out of the building," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "I have to walk down the steps and let out a yell because that fires you up, when you see one of our dudes really step on one. I enjoy that."

Pitcher J.A. Happ scored on Sanchez's home run after reaching base when he bunted into a forceout.

"I was at third base and I felt like he was going to maybe hit one foul through my chest at about 110 mph," Happ said.

Happ (1-2) had his best outing this season, allowing five hits in seven scoreless innings and mixing 37 changeups with 38 fastballs among 95 pitches. He ended a streak of seven straight starts in which he allowed a home run.

New York, despite 13 players on the injured list, improved to 5-1 on a nine-game trip and a season-high five games over .500.

Sanchez's slam was a sign that healthy

help is finally on the way.

"When you get a chance to bring in four runs, it could be just 300 feet and I'll take it," Sanchez said. "The last two swings I felt more confident. That's what you want. Now we have to try to keep that consistency going."

Gio Urshela doubled twice and had three hits, and Cameron Maybin singled and scored in his second game with the Yankees. Luke Voit was hit by a pitch to extend his on-base streak to 38 games for the Yankees, the longest active streak in the majors.

San Francisco, which has lost six of nine, was shut out until the ninth, when Yanger-vis Solarte hit a three-run homer off Luis Cessa and Erik Kratz hit a solo drive. Aroldis Chapman struck out Pablo Sandoval on a checked swing for his fifth save in six chances.

Holland dropped to 1-8 against the Yankees, giving up six runs, six hits and three walks in five innings.

"This is on me," Holland said. "The big thing is that I just lit one side of the plate more than I have in the past."

MLB roundup

Yelich, Hader lead Brewers to win over Mets

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After Christian Yelich helped put Milwaukee ahead, Josh Hader prevented the Mets from coming back.

Yelich hit his major league-leading 14th home run, tying the record for most before May 1, and Hader needed just 20 pitches to retire six batters Saturday night and close out the Brewers' 8-6 win over the New York.

Yelich's fourth-inning homer off Noah Syndergaard (1-3) was the first on the road this season for the reigning NL MVP. His 14 homers matched Albert Pujols (2006) and Alex Rodriguez (2007) for the most through the first full month of the season.

"That's pretty cool. Obviously, those guys are pretty good baseball players," Yelich said. "To be up there with those guys is definitely an honor."

Yelich finished with three

hits, a walk and two RBIs, raising his average to .350, and he stole the 100th base of his big league career. He is batting .362 with 39 homers, 101 RBIs and 16 stolen bases in 93 games since last season's All-Star break.

Rays 2, Red Sox 1: At Boston, Yandy Diaz hit the second pitch from David Price (1-2) over the Green Monster and Mike Zunino added a fourth-inning RBI single for the AL East-leading Rays.

Twins 9, Orioles 2: Minnesota hit five home runs off visiting Baltimore for the second straight day, including a pair by Max Kepler.

Cardinals 6, Reds 3: Marcell Ozuna hit a three-run homer and drove in five runs and host St. Louis beat Cincinnati.

Blue Jays 7, Athletics 1: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. went 1-for-4 with two strikeouts in his second big league game, Brandon Drury had three hits a day

after his winning ninth-inning home run and host Toronto improved to 5-0 against Oakland this season. Randal Grichuk and three hits and two RBIs.

Astros 4, Indians 3 (10): At Houston, pinch-hitter Tony Kemp had a 10th-inning homer off Adam Cimber (2-2) that traveled just inside the right-field foul pole.

Padres 8, Nationals 3 (10): Greg Garcia hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in a six-run 10th inning as visiting San Diego extended its winning streak to five.

Phillies 12, Marlins 9: Rhys Hoskins, Nick Williams and Andrew McCutchen homered as host Philadelphia took a 10-1 lead into the sixth and held on.

Royals 9, Angels 4: At Kansas City, Mo., Hunter Dozier had four hits, including a pair of two-run triples, and set a career high with four RBIs. Kelvin Gutierrez drove in two runs in his big league debut.

Rockies 9, Braves 5: Charlie Blackmon hit a go-ahead, two-run double off A.J. Minter (0-3) and Trevor Story followed with a three-run homer during a ninth-inning rally as visiting Colorado won for the 10th time in 12 games.

Cubs 9, Diamondbacks 1: Yu Darvish (2-3) struck out eight in six innings in his best performance this season, David Bote homered twice and drove in five runs, and visiting Chicago hammered Arizona.

Dodgers 3, Pirates 1: Clayton Kershaw delivered a vintage outing for his first win of the season, allowing one run over seven innings to help host Los Angeles beat Pittsburgh.

Rangers 15, Mariners 1: Mike Minor struck out a career-high 13 in seven innings, and visiting Texas pounded Seattle to stop a five-game losing streak.

Columbus evens series with 2OT win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Sergei Bobrovsky stopped Patrice Bergeron at point-blank range in overtime. He also made an acrobatic save to stop a 90-foot dump-in that took a bad hop straight toward the net.

Whatever the shot, the Blue Jackets goalie was ready.

“There’s not many goalies (who) stop that puck,” said Matt Duchene, who scored at 3:42 of the second overtime to give the Blue Jackets a 3-2 victory over the Boston Bruins early Sunday morning and tie the series at one game apiece.

“It should’ve been over right there. Honestly, on a dump-in, which is insane,” Duchene said. “That guy — anything’s possible. He’s something else.”

Bobrovsky stopped 29 shots — 10 of them to hold off the Bruins in a frantic first overtime — and Artemi Panarin had two goals and an assist on the game-winner for Columbus, which fell behind twice.

Matt Grzelcyk and David Pastrnak scored for Boston, which won the opener 3-2 — also in overtime. Tuukka Rask made 36 saves.

“We’re so evenly matched, I find, with the way we both play and there’s not much room out there. There’s no one really taking over the game,” Duchene said. “It’s such a stalemate out there and I’m not surprised it

went to overtime back-to-back games.”

And now the Blue Jackets are heading back to Columbus, where they have already finished off the No. 1 team in the NHL this season. Games 3 and 4 are Tuesday and Thursday nights.

“I hope they have a ball tonight,” Columbus coach John Tortorella said. “And they should, they should feel really good about themselves.”

Panarin’s second goal made it 2-2 with 12 minutes left in the second period, and it stayed that way through a scoreless third and a first overtime in which the Bruins killed off one penalty. But when Bergeron was sent off for tripping in the second OT, the Blue Jackets made them pay.

Less than a minute later, Duchene kicked the puck onto his stick and slid it through Rask’s legs. As the Columbus players celebrated against the boards, the Bruins filed off the ice and many fans threw the give-away yellow towels onto the ice.

“You work hard to put yourself in a good position. Tie game. It’s on me, obviously,” Bergeron said. “The stick got caught. It’s one of those plays that you make many times and it’s not going to happen, but my stick shouldn’t be there at this point in the game.”

The Bruins took the lead about eight minutes into the game with a power-play

goal by Grzelcyk. It was still 1-0 at the end of the first, when Brad Marchand was called for cross-checking after the first-period buzzer.

Sixty-three seconds into the power play to begin the second period, Panarin tied it on a one-timer from Seth Jones. But less than a minute later, Game 1 hero Charlie Coyle went behind the Columbus net and backhanded it off Pastrnak’s skate into the net.

Then things started getting really physical.

Bruins defenseman Zdeno Chara was off for cross-checking when Columbus forward Josh Anderson, whose interference penalty led to the first Boston goal, was called for a high stick that left a bleeding gash under Sean Kuraly’s left eye.

Anderson was given a four-minute minor, but there was still a minute left on Chara’s penalty and during the four-on-four Panarin tied it with a perfectly aimed, top-shelf wrist shot from the right side.

“Their best player, Panarin, basically beat us twice on a power play. That shouldn’t happen,” Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy said. “That’s one thing we wanted to take away.”

Columbus then killed off the last three minutes of the Boston power play.

Stars’ goalie Bishop stymies Blues

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Dallas goalie Ben Bishop rebounded — at his hometown team’s expense.

Bishop made 32 saves, Roope Hintz scored twice and the Stars beat the St. Louis Blues 4-2 in Game 2 to even the Western Conference semifinal series.

Bishop grew up in St. Louis and often attended Blues games. He recalled chanting Chicago Blackhawks goalie Ed Belfour’s name as a teenager in the stands. St. Louis fans did the same thing to Bishop on Saturday, screaming his name to try and throw him off his game.

“It’s pretty crazy,” Bishop said. “I was that kid screaming Belfour’s name and then you’re on the ice and they’re screaming your name. Never in a million years when I was watching playoff games as a kid here that I’d be in the net playing against the Blues. Obviously, it’s kind of cool.”

Miro Heiskanen and Mattias Janmark also scored for the Stars.

Jaden Schwartz and Colton Parayko scored for St. Louis, and Jordan Binnington made 31 saves. The Blues had won three straight.

Game 3 is Monday night in Dallas.

Bishop bounced back after allowing three goals on 20 shots in a 3-2 loss in Game 1 on Thursday night.

“It’s a long season, there’s going to be shots you want to have back,” Bishop said. “Every game is a new game, that’s the way I’ve done it in my career.”

Dallas scored three times in the opening 14:51 before Bishop took over.

Hintz, who added an empty-net-net goal with 3 seconds left, converted on a pass from Mats Zuccarello at 7:11. Heiskanen scored on a give-and-go with Hintz just over six minutes later.

The Blues answered 46 seconds later on Parayko’s drive from the top of the circle.

Dallas needed just 26 seconds to restore the two-goal lead, with Janmark scoring off Jason Dickinson’s pass.

Schwartz tipped in a shot from Parayko just 1:48 into the third. Schwartz has a team-high five goals in the first two rounds.

Bishop improved to 11-3 when coming off a loss in the playoffs.

“I’ve been pulled, I’ve given up six (goals), it happens,” Bishop said. “That’s the cool thing about the playoffs. You forget and move on.”

Bishop made big saves on Ryan O’Reilly and Oskar Sundqvist in the third period. Bishop used his arm to clear a shot from David Perron that hit the boards and bounced behind him in the second.

“We knew Bishop would be great,” Dallas coach Jim Montgomery said. “He’s been great for us all year and he’s a Vezina (Trophy) finalist because of it. He’s our brick wall back there.”

Hintz scored nine goals in 58 regular-season games before his breakout performance.

Leonard's 45 lifts Raptors in Game 1

Associated Press

Kawhi Leonard wasn't interested in putting up a career-high point total against the Philadelphia 76ers. Even as history beckoned, Toronto's understated star was hoping he could take a seat on the bench.

Leonard scored a career playoff-high 45 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, Pascal Siakam added 29 points and the Raptors beat the 76ers 108-95 in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series on Saturday night.

Leonard's previous postseason high was 43, with San Antonio against Memphis on April 22, 2017. He matched that by making a pair of free throws with 4:45 remaining, then topped it by draining a jump shot on Toronto's next possession.

Although he appeared focused on reaching the mark, the opposite was actually true.

"I was trying to get out of the game before it got to that point," Leonard said. "We were up 20 points with probably like five minutes left and I was already looking at the bench, trying to get them to take me out of the game."

Leonard matched his career-best scoring total for any game, set Jan. 1 against Utah. He made 16 of 22 shots, going 3-for-6 from three-point range, and 10-for-11 at the free-throw line.

Raptors coach Nick Nurse said Leonard was "fun to watch."

"A big-time performance at both ends," Nurse said. "I just like the force he's playing with at both ends."

Philadelphia coach Brett Brown said Leonard is "leaps and bounds" ahead of

the player he once coached as an assistant with San Antonio.

"The variety of ways that he scored and could get his shot off on some pretty good defensive players and big athletes was incredibly impressive," Brown said.

Leonard received a standing ovation when he checked out with 3:14 to play and the Raptors up 107-88. He's just the second player in Raptors history to eclipse 40 points in a playoff game. The other was Vince Carter, who scored 50 against Philadelphia in Game 3 of the second round on May 11, 2001.

"Kawhi was just in the zone," Toronto's Kyle Lowry said. "He probably could've had more, but he facilitated some and made some shots."

Philadelphia's JJ Redick called Leonard "a spectacular player."

He's as good as there is in the NBA at generating his own shot, and then making tough shots," Redick said. "Clearly we need to figure out what we're doing with him and Siakam."

Lowry had nine points and eight assists as the Raptors led by as many as 20 en route to their fifth straight postseason victory, extending a franchise record.

Toronto won its 14th consecutive home meeting with Philadelphia and improved to 22-3 against the 76ers since the start of the 2013-14 season. No other opponent has beaten Philadelphia more often over the past five seasons.

Tobias Harris had 14 points and 15 rebounds, and Redick scored 17 points for the 76ers, whose four-game playoff winning streak was snapped.

"We're not going home, we're not going away," Brown said. "We will dig in and come back better in Game 2."

Joel Embiid scored 16 points and Ben Simmons had 14. Jimmy Butler scored 10 points and shot 4 for 12.

Embiid missed nine of his 13 shots in the first half. He finished 5 for 18.

Toronto improved to 3-14 in the first game of a playoff series, winning an opener for the first time since a first-round victory against Washington on April 14, 2018.

The only other time Toronto won a playoff series opener was 2001, when Carter's Raptors won Game 1 of the second round at Philadelphia. Toronto lost that series in seven games.

On Saturday, hot starts from Leonard and Siakam put Toronto in control early, and Lowry fuelled a pivotal 10-0 run in the third quarter that kept the Raptors comfortable.

Toronto's first bench points came on Serge Ibaka's jump shot with 1:57 left in the third, a basket that put Toronto up 89-70. The Raptors finished with 10 bench points, seven from Ibaka and three from Fred VanVleet.

Leonard and Siakam both shot 7 of 9 and scored 17 points as Toronto jumped out to a 14-point lead in the first quarter. Down 7-2 early, the Raptors immediately reclaimed the lead with a 9-0 run and went almost eight minutes without missing a shot, hitting on 13 straight from the field. Toronto was up 39-31 after one.

Nuggets, Jokic top Spurs in Game 7

Associated Press

DENVER — Nikola Jokic had a triple-double, Jamal Murray hit a clutch floater with 36.8 seconds remaining and the Denver Nuggets held off the San Antonio Spurs 90-86 in Game 7 on Saturday night to advance in the postseason for the first time in a decade.

In a matchup between a Denver team with the youngest playoff roster in the West and the savvy Spurs, the second-seeded Nuggets built a 17-point lead in the third quarter only to see it whittled down to two with

52 seconds remaining.

Jokic finished with 21 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists, with no pass bigger than the one to set up Murray's floater. DeMar DeRozan had a chance to slice into the deficit but was blocked by Torrey Craig. Then, the Spurs didn't foul and the Nuggets were able to essentially run out the clock.

Since making the Western Conference finals in 2009, the Nuggets have bowed out in the first round on four occasions. This was their first playoff appearance in six seasons.

Denver will host third-seeded Portland in a series that begins Monday.

Murray added 23 points for the Nuggets, who captured a Game 7 for the first time since May 3, 1978, when David Thompson had 37 in a win over the Milwaukee Bucks.

"I've learned over the years you take your accomplishments and you celebrate them. Tonight, celebrate," Nuggets forward Paul Millsap said. "This is a big accomplishment for this team, big accomplishment for this organization. You've got

to celebrate it. A lot of people didn't give us a chance to win."

Rudy Gay had 21 points for San Antonio, while DeRozan and Bryn Forbes each added 19. The Spurs fell to 3-4 in Games 7s under Gregg Popovich.

Jokic turned in another monster game. Jokic showed off his arsenal of shots, even throwing in a sky hook. Jokic also had a triple-double in Game 1.

Denver went an NBA-best 34-7 at home in the regular season and rode the energy of the crowd.