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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Adm. Buck chosen to lead Naval Academy

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Rear Adm. Sean S. Buck has been nominated to be the next superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

Navy Secretary Richard Spencer and Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, nominated Buck on Tuesday, according to the academy. Buck would be appointed to the rank of vice admiral if he is confirmed by the Senate.

Buck would be the 63rd superintendent of the Naval Academy, replacing Vice Adm. Walter “Ted” Carter, who is retiring. The change of command is planned for the summer, but the date has not been selected as they wait for the Senate confirmation, according to the academy.

Originally from Indianapolis, Buck is a 1983 graduate of the Naval Academy. In his career as a naval flight officer, Buck has flown the P-3C Orion, an anti-submarine warfare patrol aircraft, and served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, according to his Navy biography. He has also commanded the Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 11 at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida and served as the chief of staff for the plans and policy director for the Joint Staff, according to the announcement.

Buck now serves as the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and the U.S. 4th Fleet at Naval Station Mayport near Jacksonville.

DOD report: Sex assaults on young female troops rose significantly

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Sexual assaults against female troops have increased by 44% since 2016, with the highest increase affecting junior enlisted servicemembers, according to a Pentagon report released Thursday.

“The results of this report are not acceptable by any standard,” Elizabeth Van Winkle, the executive director of the Office of Force Resiliency at the Defense Department, told reporters Thursday at the Pentagon. “We will learn from what our women and men in uniform told us this year and adjust our strategies. I remain optimistic that we will course correct.”

The Defense Department’s 2018 report on sexual assault in the military included results from the 2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active-Duty Members, which found 20,500 servicemembers experienced sexual assault within the past year — an increase of 38% from 14,900 in fiscal year 2016 when the survey was last conducted.

The report found 6.2% of servicewomen experienced sexual assault in 2018, a 44% increase from the rate of 4.3% in fiscal year 2016.

The increase in sexual assault was mostly among female servicemembers between the ages of 17 and 24 and junior enlisted women, “who are already at the highest risk for sexual assault,” according to a Pentagon document highlighting the report’s findings.

“This increase is absolutely unacceptable,” said Rear Adm. Ann Burkhardt, the director of

the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.

According to the Pentagon, the report found most of the perpetrators were in the junior enlisted ranks of E-3 to E-5 and they were often the same rank or just above that of the victim. The report also found that 24% of women and 6% of men experienced sexual harassment in fiscal year 2018, which was a significant increase from 2016, said Ashlea Klahr, director of health and resilience research of the Office of People Analytics at the Pentagon.

But 1 in 3 servicemembers reported their sexual assaults to a Defense Department authority, about the same as in fiscal year 2016, according to the report.

The DOD received 6,053 reports of sexual assault by servicemembers for incidents that occurred during military service. The rate for women reporting decreased from 43% to 37% between fiscal years 2016 and 2018 and the rate for men reporting stayed the same for those years at 17%.

The report findings showed 62% of the “most serious sexual assault situations involved alcohol use by the victim or the alleged offender as reported by the victim.”

The Marines had the highest rate of sexual assault for women at 10.7%. Klahr said 39% of active-duty female servicemembers are younger than 25 years old, which is the most at-risk group for sexual assault. In the Marine Corps, it is 60%.

“So certainly age doesn’t account for all of it, but it is when we’re seeing the largest increases in our youngest folks and the proportion of women in

the Marine Corps are primarily this young group, we believe that that explains at least part of why they might be seeing such a significant increase,” Klahr said.

The Marine Corps released a statement Thursday about the report’s findings that read: “Our Marines have a fundamental right to live and work in an environment free from sexual assault and harassment. The Marine Corps is committed to purging these criminal behaviors from our ranks, taking care of victims, and holding offenders accountable.”

Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Thursday responded to the report’s findings with the actions that the DOD will take to address the sexual assault in the military.

“To put it bluntly, we are not performing to the standards and expectations we have for ourselves or for each other,” he wrote in a memo. “This is unacceptable. We cannot shrink from facing the challenge head on. We must, and will, do better,” he wrote in the memo.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., admonished Pentagon leadership Thursday for its failure to rein in the issue of sexual assault within its ranks, telling a top Army leader the problem was just as bad now as it was five years ago when she began advocating for reforms.

“It is unconscionable,” Gillibrand told Army Gen. James McConville, the service’s vice chief of staff, who was appearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee during a hearing to consider his nomination for chief of staff.

Wolters now atop EUCOM

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Air Force Gen. Tod Wolters assumed command Thursday of U.S. troops in Europe, where the military has expanded its mission in recent years to counter a more aggressive Russia.

During a change of command ceremony at U.S. European Command's Stuttgart headquarters, Wolters said his aim is to build on gains in combat readiness over the past three years.

"We are excited about maintaining this positive campaign trajectory," Wolters said. "We will continue to fortify our stance and stand and push our competitive advantage as high as humanly possible."

Wolters, previously the U.S. Air Force commander in Europe, replaced retiring Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti. On Friday, Wolters also will formally take up his dual position as NATO's supreme allied commander in Europe.

For three years, Scaparrotti led U.S. and NATO forces in a mission that has focused largely on deterring an increasingly assertive Russia. To that end, the U.S. has boosted its presence along the alliance's eastern flank.

Pentagon reports 120 civilian deaths from US strikes in '18

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. military operations killed 120 civilians in 2018, the Pentagon said in a new assessment of noncombatant deaths.

The department, in an annual report to Congress, said that 42 civilians were confirmed to have been killed last year in the U.S.-led operation against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. It said 76 more were killed in operations against the Taliban and other militants in Afghanistan, and two civilians died in operations against al-Shabab in Somalia.

The department found no credible reports of civilian deaths caused by U.S. operations in Libya or Yemen last year.

Outside watchdog groups such as Airwars have put forward much higher death tolls for U.S. counterterrorism strikes. For 2018, despite a significant slowing of the American campaign against ISIS, Airwars found that air and artillery strikes by the U.S.-led coalition killed a minimum of 805 people in Iraq and Syria alone.

The gap underscores the differing approaches that the groups, which typically rely on witness statements and accounts on social media, have taken in piecing together information about U.S. strikes and that of the military, which has slowly begun to incorporate such data into its assessments.

The report comes several months after the Trump administration altered an Obama administration rule requiring a separate, broader annual report on civilian casualties.

The White House argued the change was made to avoid duplication with the congressionally mandated report. But the White House report previously included a tally including accidental deaths caused by military and intelligence operations. Its elimination means the public will no longer have access to information about CIA drone strikes.

CIA strikes are far less frequent than they were under President Barack Obama, but the agency remains authorized to conduct such attacks.

Dan Mahanty, director for the U.S. Program at the Center for Civilians in Conflict, said

the report reflected improved military transparency about its operations overseas. But the lack of information from intelligence agencies "brings the government's inconsistency further into relief and undermines this achievement," he said.

"The report also further validates our instinct that we clearly still have work to do on the degree of effort [the Defense Department] puts into proactively seeking out facts that it doesn't have at its fingertips," Mahanty said.

Last month, President Donald Trump vetoed a measure that would have ended U.S. military support for Saudi Arabia and allied countries battling Houthi rebels in Yemen. The U.S. military does not generally attack Houthi targets, but it has provided arms and refueled planes for the Saudi-led coalition. The U.S. military conducts a separate campaign against al-Qaida in Yemen.

The two deaths referenced in Somalia mark the first time since U.S. Africa Command was created in 2008 that it acknowledged causing civilian loss of life.

China's stealth jet might be ready this year, Brown says

Bloomberg News

NEW YORK — China may declare its first stealth fighter operational this year as it also develops long-range bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons, part of a regional buildup by Beijing that the U.S. is closely monitoring, according to the U.S. Air Force's Pacific commander.

Gen. Charles Brown, the head of Pacific Air Forces, said the stealthy J-20 fighter could "possibly" be operational this year, a move he said would signal "greater threat, greater

capability" for China in the Pacific. He went on to emphasize that U.S. efforts to counter those developments include rising deployments of next-generation F-35 jets and continuing overflights of strategic areas.

"My sense of the way the Chinese operate is [it's] somewhat incremental," Brown said in an interview this week at Bloomberg's headquarters in New York. "They'll continue to push the envelope to figure out does anybody say or do anything — if you don't push back it'll keep coming."

Fielding the J-20 would add to what's already the region's largest air force and world's third-largest, with more than 2,500 total aircraft including 1,700 combat fighters, strategic bombers, tactical bombers and multi-mission tactical and attack aircraft, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said in a report earlier this year. China's J-20 fighter is part of a modernization effort that's been "closing the gap with Western air forces across a broad spectrum of capabilities, such as aircraft performance, command and

control and electronic warfare," the report said.

Brown also said he thinks China is moving to develop dual-use bombers that would be "similar to our bombers" in terms of being able to carry nuclear weapons and nonnuclear precision-guided weapons.

Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said a Chinese long-range bomber "if successful, would make it only one of three nations" to "possess a nuclear triad" of land, sea and air-based nuclear capabilities.

Democrats attack Barr for his no-show

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Attorney General William Barr skipped a House hearing Thursday on special counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia report, escalating an already acrimonious battle between Democrats and President Donald Trump's Justice Department. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggested Barr had already lied to Congress in other testimony and called that a "crime."

Barr's decision to avoid the hearing, made after a disagreement with the House Judiciary Committee over questioning, came the day after the department also missed the committee's deadline to provide it with a full, unredacted version of Mueller's report and its underlying evidence. In all, it's likely to prompt a vote on holding Barr in contempt and possibly the issuance of subpoenas, bringing House Democrats

and the Trump administration closer to a prolonged battle in court.

Democrats convened a short hearing that included an empty chair with a place card set for Barr. Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, of New York, said that if the attorney general doesn't provide the committee "with the information it demands and the respect that it deserves, Mr. Barr's moment of accountability will come soon enough."

Shortly afterward, Pelosi escalated the tensions further. In possible reference to the attorney general's testimony last month, Pelosi said Barr "was not telling the truth to the Congress of the United States — that's a crime."

Barr told senators on April 10 that he didn't know whether Mueller agreed with his conclusions about the report, including Barr's assertion that Mueller hadn't found enough evidence to support a charge of ob-

struction of justice. Democrats have raised questions about that testimony since it was revealed this week that Mueller had written Barr on March 27 complaining that the attorney general had not properly portrayed his findings in a four-page memo summarizing the report's main conclusions.

Barr said Wednesday his answer was not misleading because he had been in touch with Mueller, rather than members of his team, and that the concerns were mostly about process and not substance. Within minutes of Pelosi's comments, Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec called her words "reckless, irresponsible and false."

As Democrats portrayed Barr as untruthful, they sought to speak to Mueller. Nadler said the panel hoped the special counsel would appear before the committee on May 15 and the panel was "firming up the date."

Slain student praised for stopping gunman

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A North Carolina college student slain while confronting a gunman in his classroom was being given a hero's send-off Thursday as his body is taken back to his hometown with a police escort.

Riley Howell's body was scheduled to depart from a Charlotte funeral home Thursday morning en route to Waynesville in the western part of the state.

Meanwhile, the suspect accused of killing Howell and another student at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, while

wounding four others, was due to appear in the afternoon to face charges including murder and attempted murder.

Howell died in his classroom Tuesday, charging and tackling the suspect who opened fire with a legally obtained pistol, authorities said.

Howell's decision to fight for the lives of others fit his character, said his friend David Belnap, who attended a candlelight vigil Wednesday with a homemade T-shirt with "Riley Howell is a hero" written on the back.

Howell, 21, likely went through the same active shooter drills as countless other stu-

dents of his generation. They were taught to run away if they can, hide if they can't run and if the horrible situation arises where a gunman prevents those two choices — fight for their lives.

Howell knocked the assailant down, buying enough time for the first officer into the classroom to capture Trystan Andrew Terrell, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney said.

"His sacrifice saved lives," the chief said.

Howell was with classmates for end-of-year presentations in an anthropology class when the shooting happened.

Opposition in Venezuela seeks to maintain momentum

The Washington Post

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuela's opposition sought Thursday to maintain pressure on President Nicolas Maduro through further protests as the embattled socialist leader convened a weekend of dialogue to critique his mandate and fine-tune "the revolution."

Following a failed attempt Tuesday to stage a peaceful military revolt and overthrow Maduro, the opposition was facing a limited array of options.

Opposition leader Juan Guaido on Wednesday called on Venezuelans to stage daily protests until Maduro leaves. The

campaign, opposition officials said, included an appeal to public servants to show civil disobedience by wearing blue armbands to work.

After two days of violent protests that left two people dead and dozens wounded, the opposition was banking on a resilient populace to continue the effort — though it remained unclear how exhausted, crisis-battered Venezuelans would respond. Guaido insisted late Wednesday that political change remains within Venezuela's grasp.

"As long as we are mobilized and united, we are very close to achieving our freedom," Guaido said on Fox Business

Network. "Can't tell you a specific date or time. Working on transition. Democracy has always taken time."

At 6 a.m. Thursday, Maduro appeared at a military base in western Caracas alongside Vladimir Padrino Lopez, a member of the president's inner circle who the Trump administration has said was negotiating his ouster.

"The empire is investing in dividing us and say there's a civil war in Venezuela," Maduro said, referring to the U.S. "They say they have to intervene, to weaken our homeland. No matter the circumstance we have to be united, and that's what loyalty is. It has to be a collective strength."

Navy: UFO reports not going to public

The Washington Post

The U.S. Navy has drafted a procedure to investigate and catalog reports of unidentified flying objects coming in from its pilots. But the service doesn't expect to make the information public, citing privileged and classified reporting that is typically included in such files.

Joe Gradisher, a spokesman for the office of the deputy chief of naval operations for information warfare, said in a statement that the Navy expects to keep the information it gathers private for a number of reasons.

"Military aviation safety organizations always retain reporting of hazards to aviation as privileged information in order to preserve the free and honest prioritization and discus-

sion of safety among aircrew," Gradisher said. "Furthermore, any report generated as a result of these investigations will, by necessity, include classified information on military operations."

He added, "Therefore, no release of information to the general public is expected."

The Navy's recent decision to draft formal guidelines for pilots to document encounters with unexplained aerial phenomena comes after the revelation in late 2017 that the Pentagon ran a secret "UFO" office that spent \$22 million over five years to collect and analyze "anomalous aerospace threats." Funding for the office, known as the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program, or AATIP, of-

ficially ended in 2012, though operations continued.

Among other things, the program resulted in the release of footage from the cockpit cameras of military aircraft which appeared to document oval-shape vessels that resemble flying Tic Tacs.

Reports of curious sightings from military aircraft aren't new. During World War II, Allied military pilots witnessed unexplained objects and fireballs that they dubbed "foo fighters." A number of official government investigations looked into such phenomena in the postwar period.

Now, the Navy has agreed to a more formalized process for cataloging and investigating reports from pilots, a decision welcomed by former U.S. of-

ficials who want the military to take the matter seriously and remove the stigma in the armed forces of reporting such incidents.

Even though the Navy indicated that it has no plans in the imminent future to release the data, unclassified portions of the information or broad overviews of the findings could come out, according to Luis Elizondo, an intelligence officer who ran AATIP before leaving the Pentagon.

"If it remains strictly within classified channels, then the 'right person' may not actually get the information. The right person doesn't necessarily mean a military leader. It can be a lawmaker. It can be a whole host of different individuals," Elizondo said.

Video Game Hall of Fame welcomes 4 more inductees

Associated Press

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Mortal Kombat, the blood-and-guts arcade game that triggered Congressional hearings and age-level game ratings, was inducted Thursday into the World Video Game Hall of Fame, along with Colossal Cave Adventure, Super Mario Kart and the ubiquitous Solitaire game built into Microsoft Windows.

The 2019 inductees were honored for their impacts on video gaming and pop culture and their popularity over time and across countries.

Mortal Kombat quickly raised alarms when it launched in 1992, with critics taking aim at a feature giving players the gory choice of whether to kill by decapitating an opponent or ripping out their heart.

"Beyond its controversial content and role in triggering debate about the role of violent video games in society, Mortal Kombat's compelling gameplay, iconic characters and many sequels have kept players coming back again and again,"

Digital Games Curator Andrew Borman said in a news release.

Mortal Kombat 11 launched last week.

The World Video Game Hall of Fame is housed at The Strong museum in Rochester and recognizes individual electronic games of all types — arcade, console, computer, hand-held and mobile.

Microsoft Solitaire was honored for helping fuel the growth of today's popular casual gaming market. Since debuting in 1991 on Windows 3.0, the electronic version of the centuries-old card game has been installed on more than 1 billion computers around the world, according to The Strong.

Super Mario Kart was released in 1992 and put the popular Super Mario Bros. characters into go-karts.

The 1974 Colossal Cave Adventure was recognized for laying the foundation for a genre of fantasy and adventure games, despite having no graphics and relying on players typing rudimentary computer commands like "get lamp."

Army resumes decades-old tactics in watercraft drills

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

Artillery rounds blasted from howitzers aboard Army landing craft during a recent training mission, the first time in decades that boats from the service's little-known fleet of watercraft have conducted a fire mission.

Known as Operation Gator, the late April drill at Camp Lejeune, N.C., was believed to mark the first riverine artillery mission since the Vietnam War, and comes as the Army has been mulling plans to shutter its National Guard and Reserve component watercraft units.

The troops were training for the possibility that America's next fight could be against what the military calls a "near-peer" adversary. In such a conflict, the U.S. might not be free to move its forces around as easily as it has in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We're having to relearn some of the tactics for fighting a formidable enemy. It's very different from the asymmetric warfare we've been fighting,"

said Lt. Col. Shawn Talmadge, commander of the Virginia National Guard's Norfolk-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, in a phone interview Tuesday.

Being able to fire from a landing craft, rather than unloading the weapon and setting it up on dry land, can save time and possibly save lives in battle with a closely matched enemy.

Talmadge's National Guardsmen loaded a 105-mm M119A3 howitzer on a landing craft piloted by active-duty soldiers from the 11th Transportation Battalion, 7th Transportation Brigade, based out of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va., said a Virginia National Guard statement this week.

"Today is a proof of concept to say, 'Hey, we can still do this,'" Talmadge said in the statement.

For the artillery regiment, which is part of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, it was the first waterborne fire mission since World War II's D-Day landing, nearly 75 years ago.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman stung by bees as hive falls on head

AZ TEMPE — An Arizona woman is recovering from more than 20 bee stings after heavy winds blew a hive off a tree and it landed on her head.

Firefighters in the Phoenix suburb of Tempe said it happened as the woman picked up her child from day care.

Assistant Chief Andrea Glass said the woman happened to be walking under the tree where the hive was when wind blew it off. Glass said the woman was stung 20 to 30 times on and around her head.

She was evaluated and her husband drove her to a hospital.

Test dummies fall off roller coaster

NJ OCEAN CITY — The operators of a New Jersey shore amusement park said a roller coaster there is safe after a pair of water-filled test dummies fell off during a recent test ride.

The GaleForce roller coaster at Playland's Castaway Cove in Ocean City was undergoing a routine safety check April 20 when the dummies plummeted into a hotel next door, damaging the building's shingles and plywood.

Park officials said the dummies had undetected leaks that made them lose their mass and shape, causing them to fall.

Officials said the coaster has run problem-free since the mishap.

Spanish museum can keep looted painting

CA LOS ANGELES — A federal judge in Los Angeles ruled that a Span-

ish museum that acquired a priceless, Nazi-looted painting in 1992 is the work's rightful owner, not the survivors of the Jewish woman who surrendered it to escape the Holocaust.

U.S. District Judge John F. Walter ruled Tuesday that under Spanish law, Madrid's Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum is entitled to keep the Camille Pissarro painting, "Rue St.-Honore, Apres-Midi, Effet de Pluie."

The oil-on-canvas work has been the subject of a bitter fight between the museum and the Southern California family of Lilly Cassirer since her family discovered it in 1999.

Traveler says moose nuggets are a protest

AK JUNEAU — Politics can stink.

That was the message delivered by a traveler to airport inspectors in Alaska who found moose nuggets inside his carry-on bag.

KTOO Public Media reported the man told agents he collects the droppings and likes to present it "for politicians and their bleep policies."

TSA spokeswoman Lisa Farbstein said the discovery didn't warrant writing a report and the man was sent on his way with the poop.

It's not known if it was the same person, but a man was seen passing out baggies of moose nuggets at the state Capitol on the same day as a protest against the governor's proposed budget.

Honor Flight believed struck by lightning

IL PEORIA — Sun Country Airlines said lightning apparently struck its charter aircraft that was carrying

Greater Peoria Honor Flight veterans from Illinois to Washington, D.C.

The (Peoria) Journal Star reported the airline said flight 8657 "landed safely and without incident" at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on Tuesday morning. Sun Country said in a statement that "after landing, maintenance observed evidence of a lightning strike.

Shipwreck hunters write of discoveries

NY ROCHESTER — Three western New York-based shipwreck hunters who have discovered some of the most significant historic wrecks in the Great Lakes have written a book about their explorations.

"Shipwrecks of Lake Ontario: A Journey of Discovery" was written by Jim Kennard, of Fairport; Roland Stevens, of Pultneyville; and Roger Pawlowski, of Gates.

The trio's book chronicles their discovery of more than two dozen shipwrecks in Lake Ontario.

Firefighter denies going in store nude

MA LYNN — A Massachusetts firefighter who police say walked naked into a Rhode Island convenience store on a dare to buy a soda said it never happened.

Lynnfield fire Capt. John Walsh was charged with disorderly conduct after an employee at the Middletown store reported the nude customer April 3.

Walsh and a woman, both clothed, were pulled over a short time later. The police report said that when asked, Walsh admitted entering the store naked on a dare from his girlfriend.

Walsh told The Daily Item of Lynn "the bulk of the allegation is untrue" and disputes the officer's report.

Police: Man flushed grandparents' ashes

PA MCKEESPORT — Authorities said a western Pennsylvania man flushed his grandparents' ashes down a toilet after his mother kicked him out of her home.

The Tribune-Review reported that Thomas Wells, 33, was arraigned on two counts of abuse of a corpse and a criminal mischief charge.

McKeesport police said the Pittsburgh man had been staying with his mother for a brief time before she asked him to leave in September.

The mother told police in early February that a relative told her Wells had flushed her parents' ashes before he left.

High school's pitchers toss gems same day

NM CARLSBAD — A softball pitcher and baseball pitcher from the same New Mexico high school threw a perfect game and no-hitter, respectively, within 90 minutes of each other.

The Carlsbad Current-Argus reported Carlsbad High School softball pitcher Ashley Hernandez and baseball pitcher T.J. Ruiz tossed their gems on April 18 just a few hundred feet apart.

Hernandez needed 43 pitches against Roswell High School in five innings to record the perfect game as Carlsbad won 11-0 in a run-rule game.

Ruiz threw all seven innings in a 9-0 victory against Clovis High School.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

MLB roundup

Indians' Kluber breaks arm in loss to Marlins

Associated Press

MIAMI — Cleveland ace Corey Kluber broke his right forearm when he was hit by a line drive during the Indians' 4-2 loss to the Miami Marlins on Wednesday night.

Kluber (2-3) was struck by Brian Anderson's comebacker in the fifth inning. The Indians said he will be re-evaluated in Cleveland on Thursday.

The two-time American League Cy Young Award winner allowed eight hits and three runs in 4²/₃ innings, which left his ERA at 5.80.

Caleb Smith (3-0) struck out eight in seven innings, helping Miami stop a four-game slide. He allowed one run on Roberto Perez's third homer in the third inning.

Diamondbacks 3, Yankees 2: Ketel Marte homered, Merrill Kelly won his first start against New York and host Arizona swept a two-game series.

New York dropped to 0-5 this year against teams that currently have winning records and is 17-8 against clubs that started the day under .500.

Kelly (3-2) allowed one run and five hits in 5¹/₃ innings as the Diamondbacks won for the seventh time in nine games. Greg Holland pitched around Cameron Maybin's one-out walk in the ninth to remain perfect in seven save chances.

Cubs 11, Mariners 0: Jon Lester and two relievers combined on a one-hitter, Javier Baez homered and doubled during a six-run second inning, and Chicago won at Seattle for its 13th win in 17 games.

The Cubs handed Seattle starter Marco Gonzales his first loss of the season, thanks to the big second inning when 12 batters came to the plate. Gonzales (5-1) failed to make it out of the inning after giving up five hits and walking two.

Lester (2-1) cruised after the early run support, allowing one hit in seven innings.

Twins 6, Astros 2: Martin Perez pitched eight scoreless innings in his longest start in two seasons, and Jonathan Schoop hit a towering two-run homer to help host Minnesota beat Houston.

Perez (4-0) allowed four hits and two walks while striking out seven, improving to 3-0 with a 2.08 ERA in his first four starts with his new team. He got his first win in relief.

Collin McHugh (3-3) hit Mitch Garver with a pitch to start the third, and Schoop made him pay with his drive into the third deck above left field.

Red Sox 7, Athletics 3: Mitch Moreland homered and drove in another run on a sacrifice fly after a lucky hop off the second

base bag moved the runners along as host Boston completed a three-game sweep.

The Red Sox were seven games under .500 and 7¹/₂ games out of first place on April 16. Boston has won eight of 12 since.

Marcus Walden (4-0) relieved Red Sox starter Hector Velazquez after two innings and pitched three scoreless innings, striking out three and allowing one hit.

Cardinals 5, Nationals 1: Miles Mikolas outpitched Max Scherzer, Marcell Ozuna had three hits and St. Louis won at Washington.

Jose Martinez drove in two runs for the Cardinals, who have won five straight and 10 of 11.

The Nationals have lost the first three games of the series and six of their last seven overall, and fell to 12-17.

The Cardinals touched up Scherzer (1-4) for three runs in the first.

Pirates 7, Rangers 5: Rookie Bryan Reynolds hit a three-run double as Pittsburgh completed a two-game sweep at Texas.

A day after his first career home run put the Pirates ahead in the 11th inning of a 6-4 win that ended an eight-game losing streak, Reynolds extended his career-opening hitting streak to nine games with a liner over left fielder Joey Gallo in the fourth.

Phillies 7, Tigers 3: Maikel Franco hit a bases-clearing double in the seventh, Rhys Hoskins homered and host Philadelphia beat Detroit.

Aaron Nola pitched 5²/₃ innings of one-run ball, helping the Phillies earn a split of the two-game series. The ace right-hander allowed seven hits and struck out six.

Philadelphia tagged Detroit's bullpen for six runs in two innings.

Braves 5, Padres 1: Max Fried gave up one run in seven innings, Dansby Swanson homered and host Atlanta spoiled Cal Quantrill's major league debut.

The Braves led 2-1 before scoring three runs in the seventh off Luis Perdomo, including Swanson's two-run homer.

Fried (4-1) allowed four hits. He had seven strikeouts and gave up a fourth-inning homer to Machado.

Royals 3-8, Rays 2-2: Kelvin Gutierrez hit his first big league homer and his team pounded AL Cy Young winner Blake Snell for the second time in a week to complete Kansas City's first doubleheader sweep since July 7, 2015, also against Tampa Bay.

In the opener, Adalberto Mondesi hit a two-run homer in a three-run first inning for Kansas City, and Jacob Junis (3-2) and the bullpen held on.

Snell was easily outpitched by Glenn Sparkman (1-1), who was recalled from

Triple-A Omaha and earned his first career win.

Orioles 5-6, White Sox 4-7: Jonathan Villar hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the eighth Kelvin Herrera (0-1) after Richie Martin's leadoff triple, and Baltimore won a doubleheader opener at Chicago to stop a four-game losing streak.

Branden Kline (1-0) pitched two scoreless innings, and Mychal Givens got four outs for his second save, striking out Jose Abreu with a runner on first to end the game.

Yonder Alonso hit a two-run single with two out in the ninth inning of the nightcap, and the White Sox salvaged a split.

Reds 1, Mets 0: Jose Iglesias homered off Edwin Diaz in the ninth inning to give Cincinnati a win at New York.

Mets ace Jacob deGrom rediscovered his Cy Young form, throwing seven shut-out innings of three-hit ball after losing his previous three starts. But as was often the case last season, his teammates didn't provide much support.

It was the second time in three nights that Diaz (0-2) gave up a tiebreaking homer to the Reds in the ninth. Jesse Winker connected against the All-Star closer in the series opener Monday to give Cincinnati a 5-4 victory.

Rockies 11, Brewers 4: Nolan Arenado homered twice and drove in four runs, and Colorado won at Milwaukee to stop a three-game slide.

Trevor Story also connected in Colorado's highest-scoring game of the season. Tony Wolters added two RBIs on a tiebreaking single in the sixth inning and a sacrifice fly in the eighth.

Giants 2, Dodgers 1: Buster Posey hit a game-ending single with two outs in the ninth inning to send host San Francisco to a victory over Los Angeles.

Steven Duggar and Gerardo Parra started the winning rally with back-to-back, one-out singles against Julio Urias (2-2). Pedro Baez then came in with two outs and runners on first and second and Posey hit a line drive to left field. Chris Taylor fielded the ball on one hop and threw on the fly to home, but Duggar slid in safely before Russell Martin could get the tag down on a high throw to give the Giants the series win.

Angels 6, Blue Jays 3: Mike Trout hit a three-run double and Albert Pujols added his 1,998th career RBI as host Los Angeles won its fifth game in its past six.

Trout's bases-clearing drive in the fourth chased Marcus Stroman (1-4) and punctuated the strong game by the Angels.

Blazers top Nuggets, even series at 1-1

Associated Press

DENVER — After giving up 39 points to Damian Lillard in the opener, the Denver Nuggets were determined to make sure Portland's role players would have to bear the burden of evening up the series.

His teammates were up to the task on a night when Lillard, who came in averaging 34.8 points in the playoffs, was held to 14 points on 5-for-17 shooting.

CJ McCollum led six Trail Blazers in double figures with 20 points in a 97-90 victory at the Pepsi Center on Wednesday night that evened their series 1-1.

"It's very important," said Enes Kanter, who chipped in 15 points for Portland. "Teams can't guard him with one man. They were sending double-teams, triple-teams. That's when I said, 'He's making himself better, but at the same time

he's making everybody else better around him.' He was passing the ball, really active on defense. He's been unbelievable, man."

The series shifts to Portland for Game 3 Friday night, and Lillard's hoping a return to the Moda Center will help him find his long-range rhythm after he misfired on 14 of 19 three-pointers in Denver.

The Nuggets trimmed a 17-point, third-quarter deficit to 95-90 in the final minute thanks to an astonishing 14 offensive rebounds in the fourth quarter and a 19-9 run before Rodney Hood's two free throws with 17 seconds left iced it.

"The good news is they had all of those offensive rebounds but they didn't convert a lot," Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "They were 8-for-24 on second-chance points. We were fortunate we came away not hurt as badly as we could have

been on the offensive boards."

Denver's Nikola Jokic had 16 points and 14 boards but got off to a slow start and wasn't nearly the take-control force he was in Game 1, when he scored 37 points.

"The last quarter we missed a lot of put-backs, but 23 offensive rebounds is a big number," Jokic said. "The first half we had open shots but we didn't make any of those."

With Jokic taking — and missing — just one shot in the first quarter and scoring six points in the first half, the Nuggets trailed 50-35 at halftime after the franchise's worst quarter ever at home in the playoffs, one in which they made just 5 of 23 shots and missed all 10 of their three-pointers.

Nuggets coach Michael Malone said he admonished his team at halftime, telling his players, "If you're not making shots, maybe attack the bas-

ket, maybe get to the foul line, maybe get to the rim."

The Nuggets started doing that after halftime, but the Blazers answered time after time, getting 15 points from Hood, 11 from Al-Farouq Aminu and 10 from Zach Collins.

Banged up: Denver sparkplug forward Torrey Craig's nose was bloodied after he was knocked down and slammed into teammate Monte Morris' foot early in the second quarter. Moments after Craig hobbled off, leaving a trail of blood, Maurice Harkless rolled his right ankle and also left the game.

Harkless didn't return but Craig came back in the second half.

Jamal Murray spent part of the fourth quarter on the stationary bike trying to loosen up his tight right thigh. He missed 12 of 18 shots.

Ky. Derby favorite Omaha Beach scratched

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Suddenly, the Kentucky Derby is wide open.

Favorite Omaha Beach was scratched because of a breathing problem Wednesday night, leaving a pair of Hall of Famers on the sideline — trainer Richard Mandella and jockey Mike Smith.

Churchill Downs oddsmaker Mike Battaglia revised the morning line to make Game Winner the 9-2 favorite for the 1¼-mile race Saturday.

Improbable and Roadster were installed as the co-second choices at 5-1, giving five-time Derby-winning trainer Bob Baffert the top three choices in the 20-horse field.

Mandella told The Associated Press that Omaha Beach developed a cough and a subsequent veterinary exam showed the colt has an entrapped epiglottis. It's generally not life- or career-threatening and is typically corrected with minor surgery.

"It's been a devastating thing, but we have to do what's right for the horse," said Mandella, who has never won the Derby with six previous starters.

The trainer said Omaha Beach will have surgery in Kentucky in the next few

days and will be sidelined for two to three weeks. The ordeal will knock him off the Triple Crown trail.

"It's such a disappointment, but we'll fight again," Mandella told the AP. "We won't be out a long time."

The scratch was another blow to cancer survivor Rick Porter, the colt's 78-year-old owner. He has twice finished second in the Derby, in 2007 with Hard Spun and the following year with filly Eight Belles, who broke her ankles past the finish line and had to be euthanized.

"He's a great sport," Mandella said. "I've got very good support."

Omaha Beach had been the 4-1 early favorite.

Mandella's dry sense of humor came out when he said, "My wife has my leg tied down so I can't jump out of the window."

Smith had chosen to ride Omaha Beach instead of Roadster and now he won't have a chance to win the Derby for the second straight year. He rode Justify to victory last year.

"I'm a little bummed out, but the horse is OK and we're going to be all right," Smith told the AP by phone. "The good news is it

wasn't anything that is life-threatening."

Smith has three mounts on Friday's card at Churchill Downs and five Saturday.

"I'll be rooting for Roadster's connections big-time," he said. "I'll be a glorified cheerleader."

Omaha Beach galloped Wednesday morning without problem and Mandella said everything was fine. But that changed by late afternoon when the exam showed the cough was more than a minor irritation.

The condition can indicate the start of a virus, a sore throat or a sore somewhere in the horse's soft palate.

Omaha Beach's scratch moves Bodexpress into the field in the No. 20 post.

Mandella said he would likely return to Southern California before the Derby.

"I didn't lose interest," he said, "but I don't want to be here and watch it."

It's not the first time the Derby has lost a favorite leading up to the race.

In 2009, I Want Revenge became the first morning-line favorite to scratch on race day because of a hot spot on his ankle.

Stars even series behind lineup shake-up

Associated Press

DALLAS — The first-year coach for the Dallas Stars switched up his top two lines, a move that put rookie Roope Hintz skating with captain Jamie Benn and Alexander Radulov.

Tyler Seguin, the top-line center who had Benn and Radulov on his side, instead started with Jason Dickinson and Mats Zuccarello.

Hintz scored his fifth goal of the playoffs while Seguin, Radulov and Zuccarello each had two assists as the Stars beat the St. Louis Blues 4-2 on Wednesday night to even the second-round series at two games each.

“It’s one of those things where when it happens it looks great, but if nothing happens tonight, then nobody even says anything about it,” Dickinson said. “I think what it comes down to is personally guys elevating their game. If it took shaking up the lines to get guys to do that, then that’s a great move by the coach.”

Rookie coach Jim Montgomery told his team from the beginning of the season that he liked to switch lines. The latest switches sure worked in a crucial game for the Stars.

“They all rolled with it. And now because we’ve done it all year, they easily just assimilate with whoever they’re playing with,” Montgomery said.

The Western Conference semifinal series returns to St. Louis for Game 5 on Friday night, and then back to Dallas for Game 6 on Sunday.

Dickinson had an early tying goal after St. Louis went ahead 1-0 only five minutes into the game. Jason Spezza and John Klingberg also scored for the Stars.

“They were desperate and we didn’t match that desperation in the first two periods,” Blues coach Craig Berube said.

Vladimir Tarasenko had a power-play goal for the Blues, who lost for the first time in their five road games this postseason.

Dallas went up 4-1 late in the second period when Radulov and Benn assisted Hintz’s third goal of the series.

About halfway through the second period, Dickinson forced a turnover at center ice. Zuccarello got the puck to Seguin, who made a cross-ice pass to Klingberg, whose sniper shot whizzed to the left of rookie goalie Jordan Binnington and into the net.

“They came out hard. That’s going to happen. We just have to stay in control,” Binnington said. “They switched up their

lines a bit. That’s expected. Whatever is thrown at you, you’ve got to handle it.”

Binnington stopped 27 shots, including a backhander by Andrew Cogliano, a breakaway by Miro Heiskanen and another charge by the Dickinson-Seguín line on shifts before Klingberg’s second goal of the playoffs — he had the overtime winner in Game 6 against Nashville.

Ben Bishop, who had 27 saves, didn’t stop Tarasenko’s fifth goal of the playoffs that glanced off the Dallas goalie’s left arm.

Dallas tied it at 1 with 8:38 left in the first period. Zuccarello took a shot that went left of the net and ricocheted off the board. Seguin kept the puck free, and got it to Dickinson, who was falling down in the crease when he scored his third goal of the playoffs. Dickinson, who had only six goals during the regular season, was then on his belly when he celebrated with his arms motioning in what looked like a reverse snow angel.

“This is exactly where we’re supposed to be at this point, right? Supposed to be 2-2. Now it’s a three-game series,” Dickinson said. “The only thing I think we can take from that is confidence. I don’t think we can read too much into how the last series went because it’s a whole new thing now.”

Hurricanes storm past Islanders, lead 3-0

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Carolina Hurricanes put an old goalie in net and welcomed back their teenage draft pick. With the game tied, another young star set up their graying captain’s go-ahead goal.

That blend of young and old has the surging Hurricanes on the verge of a sweep.

Sebastian Aho assisted on Justin Williams’ key goal with 9:45 remaining, and Carolina beat the New York Islanders 5-2 on Wednesday night to take a 3-0 lead in their second-round series.

Teuvo Teravainen had two goals, including an empty-netter with 57.1 seconds remaining, Justin Faulk also scored and Aho added another empty-net goal with 4.8 seconds to play.

The wild-card Hurricanes — in the playoffs for the first time in a decade — moved within a

victory of a berth in the Eastern Conference finals and took a 3-0 series lead for just the second time since they moved to North Carolina in 1997.

After losing the first two games of its first-round series with Washington, Carolina has won seven of eight and will try for the sweep Friday night.

“The next game’s always the toughest,” coach Rod Brind’Amour said. “They’re not going to go away. We know that. These games have all been tight — one-goal games, essentially, and it’s going to be like that on Friday.”

Josh Bailey had a goal and an assist and Devon Toews scored on the power play to spark a dormant Islanders offense. New York had scored one goal in the first two games of this series and its average of 2½ goals in its previous six postseason games was the lowest among the eight teams that are still

playing.

But it wasn’t enough to keep them from a precarious spot. After sweeping Pittsburgh in the first round, the Islanders are in danger of being swept. Only four teams in NHL history have won a series after losing the first three games.

“It’s a big mountain, but we’ve dug in many times this year when people doubted us,” coach Barry Trotz said. “So we’re just going to have to dig in. ... We have to earn the right to keep playing.”

Curtis McElhinney — who at 35 years and 343 days old became the oldest goalie in NHL history to make his first playoff start — stopped 28 shots in place of Petr Mrazek, who is day to day with a lower body injury. After McElhinney made two bang-bang saves in the second period while doing the splits, the crowd chanted his first name.

“It’s one of those timely saves that you need to come up with at certain points of the game,” McElhinney said, “and tonight, it was there for me.”

Robin Lehner stopped 34 shots for the Islanders, but his career record against the Hurricanes fell to 0-7 with four losses in the regular season and three more in this series.

It took an impressive individual effort for Aho to put the Hurricanes ahead to stay.

After Nino Niederreiter dumped the puck in, Lehner played it behind the net — only to have Aho snatch it in the corner and pass to Williams, who chipped it past the Islanders goalie.

New York couldn’t get Lehner off the ice for an extra attacker until about 90 seconds remained, and if Teravainen didn’t ice it with his empty-netter in the final minute, Aho certainly did with his.