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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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TRAILBLAZERS As women finish Ranger course, military faces new pressure on gender barriers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two women have now passed the Army's grueling Ranger test, and even tougher and more dangerous jobs could lie ahead. The military services are poised to allow women to serve in most front-line combat jobs, including special operations forces, senior officials told The Associated Press.

Based on early talks, officials say the Army, Navy and Air Force likely will not seek exceptions that close any jobs to women. Marine Corps leaders, they say, have expressed concerns about allowing women to serve in infantry jobs and may seek an exception.

The services are wrapping up reviews and must make their recommendations to Defense Secretary Ash Carter this fall.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the internal debate.

Even if Marine leaders object, they are likely to meet resistance from senior Navy and Defense Department officials who want the military to be united on this issue.

Undercutting the Marines' reservations is that Special Operations Command is likely to allow women to compete for the most demanding military commando jobs — including the Navy SEALs and the Army's Delta Force — though with the knowledge that it may be years before women even try to enter those fields.

In addition, Defense News reported that Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert said he believes that if women can pass the SEAL training course, they should be allowed to serve.

"Why shouldn't anybody who can meet these (standards) be accepted? And the answer is, there is no reason," Greenert said told Defense News.

Women have been steadily moving into previously all-male jobs across the military, including as members of the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, best known as the helicopter crews that flew Navy SEALs into Osama bin Laden's compound.

Women are also now serving on Navy submarines

and in Army artillery units.

Friday will mark another milestone as the two women graduate at Fort Benning, Ga., from the Ranger school, a physically and mentally demanding two-month combat leadership course. Completing the course lets the two women wear the coveted Ranger black-and-gold tab, but it does not let them become members of the Ranger regiment.

The women have been identified by various media as 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, Apache helicopter pilot, and Capt. Kristen Griest, a military police officer.

Longer term, the uncertainty of the Marine decision underscores the wrenching debates going on within the military over the changing role of women, and it reflects the individual identities of the services and how they view their warrior ethos.

Only a handful of jobs in the Navy and Air Force are currently closed to women.

Last year the Navy considered seeking an exception that would have prohibited women from serving on older guided missile frigates, mine-countermeasure ships and patrol coast craft. Some argued that those ships, which are due to be phased out in coming years, would need millions of dollars in construction to add facilities for women and it wasn't worth the expense.

But Navy Secretary Ray Mabus withdrew that plan in a memo late last month that was obtained by the AP. Officials said Navy leaders concluded that since women can serve in all the same jobs on other ships no real exclusion existed.

The Army and Marine Corps, however, have thousands of infantry, artillery and armor jobs that are currently closed to women.

There has been a lot of study and debate over whether to open those positions, because they often involve fighting in small units on the front lines, doing physically punishing tasks.

The Marine Corps set up a task force this year to set gender-neutral job standards and determine whether incorporating women into small squads affected unit cohesion or combat readiness. Companies made up of all men and mixes of men and women spent up to three months in California performing a broad range

of unit tasks and going through detailed scientific evaluations to see how they did. Senior leaders are reviewing those results.

Army leaders did similar scientific analysis, reviewing all tasks needed to do the combat jobs and have been creating gender-neutral standards that troops will have to meet in order to qualify. Meanwhile, however, the Army began to slowly open some combat positions, including artillery jobs, to women.

In recent days, officials familiar with the discussions said they believe the Army will allow women to seek infantry and armor jobs as well.

Gen. Ray Odierno, who retired last week as Army chief of staff, hinted at that conclusion.

"In order to best manage your talent, you have to pick the best people who can perform to the standards that we have established," Odierno said. "If you can meet the standards that we've established, then you should be able to perform in that (position). And I think that's where we're headed."

In January 2013 then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey signed an order wiping away generations of limits on women fighting for their country, ordering a quarter-million positions open regardless of gender.

They called for sweeping reviews of the physical requirements for combat jobs and gave the military services until January 2016 to argue if any positions should remain closed to women.

Throughout the process, all the services have made it clear they will not reduce any standards to allow women to qualify for the most demanding jobs. But they reviewed the requirements for the various combat posts to make sure they were directly related to tasks that had to be done as part of the jobs.

During the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, thousands of women served and fought, and about 160 died.

Dempsey told reporters during that 2013 news conference that he did not rule out women serving as members of special operations forces, although it might be years before they actually qualified.

"I think we all believe that there will be women who can meet those standards," he said.

US weighs more security, withdrawal option for forces in Sinai

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is quietly reviewing the future of America's three-decade deployment to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, fearful the lightly equipped peacekeepers could be targets of escalating Islamic State-inspired violence. Options range from beefing up their protection to pulling them out altogether, officials told The Associated Press.

The American forces have helped marshal peace in the peninsula since Egypt's 1979 historic peace treaty with Israel. Some 700 members of an Army battalion and logistics support unit are currently there. They mainly monitor and verify compliance, and have little offensive capability. Several other countries also provide personnel.

Egypt has battled militants in northern Sinai for years, but attacks against its military and police have expanded since the July 2013 coup of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi, with the Islamic State affiliate based in Sinai claiming responsibility for several large-scale

assaults. Egypt's army under current President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi is trying to snuff out the insurgency.

For the United States, the fighting is troublesome, centered in the heart of the volatile Middle East near key maritime trading routes and alongside the most durable peace yet established between Israel and an Arab state.

And it risks putting the so-called Multinational Force and Observers in the cross-hairs.

Armed primarily with light weapons, armored personnel carriers and similarly limited materiel, the forces lack the capacity to take on Islamic State or other militants across the sparsely populated, desert territory.

As a result, officials said, the Obama administration has been conducting an "interagency review" of the U.S. posture in the Sinai.

The talks have included an examination of ways to bolster the safety of the Americans there, possibly by bringing in additional equipment to better secure positions, according to senior administration officials familiar with the discussions. But the debate also has encompassed the question of bringing the

U.S. peacekeepers home, said the officials, who weren't authorized to speak publicly on the subject and demanded anonymity.

Although the Camp David Accords, which led to the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, legally mandate the presence of the two American military units, the U.S. can remove them — at least temporarily — if they're in imminent danger. Still, such action could have major political implications. One official said the U.S. does not currently believe there is an imminent threat facing the peacekeepers.

Islamic extremists may claim the U.S. withdrawal as a victory. Regional allies already wearied by a U.S.-led nuclear pact with Iran and America's limited military engagement in Iraq and Syria could see any step away from the Sinai as further evidence that President Barack Obama wants out of the Middle East. And without the U.S. contingent, it is unlikely the Multinational Force and Observers, or MFO, would be able to sustain itself much longer.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the U.S. supports the role being played by the force and was working with Egypt's government to ad-

dress the danger to American and other soldiers.

"The U.S. is concerned over deteriorating security conditions in an area of northeastern Sinai where Egyptian security forces as well as civilian and military elements of the MFO, including the U.S. military forces stationed at the MFO North Camp, are exposed to potential risk," he said.

Given America's close relationships with both Egypt and Israel, one senior official said the U.S. would prefer not to make changes to its posture unilaterally.

Relations between the two U.S. allies have warmed markedly under el-Sissi, and the two have a close security partnership. Israel has waived provisions of the peace treaty several times to allow more Egyptian forces to move into the Sinai to fight extremists, and officials have sometimes lamented that the multinational force is neither trained nor equipped to help take on the threat.

Despite the improved ties, however, the American force is still seen by both sides as an important reassurance.

UK-based airmen target of militant threat

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is taking seriously the latest threats by the Islamic State group against U.S. airmen in the United Kingdom but has not issued any travel restrictions or raised force-protection levels, officials said Wednesday.

A group calling itself the "Islamic State hacking division" has singled out U.S. assets and military and diplomatic personnel serving in the U.K. for apparent retaliation for U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria and

Iraq, according to a report in London's Sunday Times. The group allegedly posted personal information online of more than 1,400 people, including 16 Air Force personnel who have worked at bases in England, the newspaper reported.

"Nothing has changed because of this direct list at this point," said Maj. Sheryll Klinkel, spokeswoman for U.S. Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa. "This does heighten the vigilance a little, but overall we're always looking at what is out there and how we can ensure everyone is safe."

The Times reported Sunday

that homegrown extremists are being urged to carry out "lone wolf" attacks at U.S.-run air bases in the United Kingdom, including RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, RAF Alconbury and RAF Menwith Hill.

Much of the information posted online, however, appears to be out of date, according to the paper, though as many as four airmen on the list may still be in Britain or Europe.

About 8,500 U.S. airmen are currently assigned to the U.K.

The Times, which claims to

have seen the document before it was removed from the Internet, said it warned: "We are extracting confidential data and passing on your personal information to the soldiers of the khilafah [caliphate] who soon, with the permission of Allah, will strike at your necks in your own lands!"

Klinkel would not confirm whether any airmen on the list were still serving in the U.K. or whether any on the list had been notified.

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Ex-Subway spokesman to plead guilty to sex charges

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Long-time Subway pitchman Jared Fogle has agreed to plead guilty to allegations that he paid for sex acts with minors and received child pornography that he knew had been secretly produced by the former director of his charitable foundation, federal prosecutors said in court documents released Wednesday.

The agreement filed ahead of an expected court appearance by Fogle said he agrees to pay \$1.4 million in restitution to 14 minor victims, who will each receive \$100,000. Fogle will also be required to register as a sex offender and undergo treatment for sexual disorders.

The government has agreed not to seek a sentence of more than 12½ years in prison, and Fogle has agreed not to ask for less than five years, according to the documents, which say Fogle, 37, will plead guilty to one count of traveling to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor and one count of distribution and receipt of child pornography.

Islamic State militants behead scholar, hang body in ancient city

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Islamic State militants beheaded a leading Syrian antiquities scholar who spent most of his life looking after the ancient ruins of Palmyra, then hung his body from a pole in a main square of the historic town, Syrian activists and the scholar's relatives said Wednesday.

The killing of Khaled al-Asaad, 81, was the latest atrocity perpetrated by the militant group, which has captured a third of both Syria and neighboring Iraq and declared a self-styled "caliphate" on the territory it controls.

Since the Islamic State overran Palmyra in May, there have been fears the extremists, who have destroyed famed archaeological sites in Iraq, would demolish the 2,000-year-old Roman-era city at the edge of the town — a UNESCO world heritage site and one of the Mideast's most spectacular archaeological sites.

The Sunni extremist group, which has imposed a violent interpretation of Islamic law, or Shariah, believes ancient relics promote idolatry. Islamic State militants claim they are destroying ancient artifacts and archaeological treasures as part of their purge of paganism. The destruction the Islamic State has wreaked adds to the wider, extensive damage it has inflicted on ancient sites, including mosques and churches across Syria and Iraq.

According to Syrian state news agency SANA, al-Asaad was beheaded Tuesday in a square outside the town's museum.

"Al-Asaad was a treasure for Syria and the world," Khalil Hariri, al-Asaad's son-in-law who works at the Palmyra's archaeological department told The Associated Press, speaking over the phone from the central Syrian city of Homs. "Why did they kill him?"

FDA OKs pill for boosting female libido

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration has approved the first prescription drug designed to boost sexual desire in women, a milestone long sought by a pharmaceutical industry eager to replicate the blockbuster success of impotence drugs for men.

But stringent safety measures

on the daily pill called Addyi mean it will probably never achieve the sales of Viagra, which has generated billions of dollars since the late 1990s.

The drug's label will bear a boxed warning — the most serious type — alerting doctors and patients to the risks of dangerously low blood pressure and fainting, especially when the pill

is combined with alcohol. The same problems can occur when taking the drug with other commonly prescribed medications.

Opponents of the drug say it's not worth the side effects, which also include nausea, drowsiness and dizziness. They point out that the FDA rejected the drug twice, in 2010 and 2013, due to those risks.

Royals' Cueto 'emotional' in return to former home field

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Johnny Cueto learned there's more than one reason to enjoy pitching in big ballparks.

Cueto built a reputation as a tireless jogger of stadium steps during his nearly seven years with the Cincinnati Reds. He's maintained the regimen since being traded by the Reds to the Kansas City Royals on July 26, and he was asked during his first visit back to his former home field on Tuesday to compare Kauffman Stadium's steps with those at Great American Ball Park.

"There's a big difference," the right-hander said with catching coach Pedro Grifol interpreting. "This is a small stadium compared to our stadium. Ours is really big — a lot more steps."

Cueto, who finished second in the National League Cy Young Award voting after winning 20 games last season, also is making Kansas City's pitcher-friendly

ballpark pay off on the field. He is 2-1 with a 1.80 ERA in four games with the Royals. That includes two home starts in which he's allowed one run with 12 strikeouts and no walks over 17 innings.

"I feel really good," he said. "I feel like I'm at my best."

He also felt proud of making a quick adjustment.

"I've always thought and said that pitching in the American League is tougher than pitching in the National League because of the designated hitter," he said. "You have to concentrate one through nine."

Cueto, 29, said he lobbied Kansas City pitching coach Dave Elland to let him pitch one of the two interleague games in Cincinnati, but the Royals weren't going to risk their new ace on just three days of rest. That was fine by Reds manager Bryan Price, who wasn't emotionally prepared to see Cueto on the mound pitching for another team.

"It's better that way, for sure," Price said. "I'm glad to see he's doing well for them. You always want it to be a win-win for both sides. I'm happy he's performing so well for them and that we're not facing him — for the emotional reason."

Reds right fielder Jay Bruce had mixed feelings about the possibility of facing Cueto.

"When it comes to the competitive side, sure, you want to face him, but at the same time, you know what you're getting into," he said. "We were glad to see him — same old Johnny. I'm glad to see him doing well. I didn't think he wouldn't."

Many in the crowd gave Cueto a standing ovation when a scoreboard camera found the former Reds ace in the visitor's dugout.

Cueto described walking into the visitors' clubhouse as "a little weird."

"I feel a little timid," he said. "It is emotional, coming here and seeing Jay Bruce and the other guys."

Waltrip Racing releases Bowyer

Associated Press

Michael Waltrip's rocky nine-year effort to build a successful race team was on the verge of collapse Wednesday as the organization said it will not run any cars full-time next season.

Clint Bowyer was given a release from his contract to pursue a new job for 2016.

The decisions are the fallout from co-owner Rob Kauffman's recent purchase of an ownership stake in Chip Ganassi Racing. Kauffman bought 50 percent of MWR during its debut 2007 season to keep the team afloat.

Kauffman said in a statement that Bowyer and David Ragan will complete the season for MWR, and the team will "race hard and compete" through the end of the year. But the future plans for the organization were announced Wednesday because the team now has "clarity" after weighing its options.

Bowyer is currently 16th in the Sprint Cup standings and has three races remaining to claim one of the 16 berths in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

Although he could end up at Ganassi with sponsor 5-Hour Energy, Bowyer is more likely looking for a one-year resting place to wait for an opening with one of NASCAR's powerhouse teams in 2017. It's possible he could replace Tony Stewart at Stewart-Haas Racing should the three-time NASCAR champion make 2016 his final season.

Founded by two-time Daytona 500 winner Waltrip in 2007, MWR entered Sprint Cup competition as Toyota's flagship team. But the team was involved in a cheating scandal before its very first Daytona 500 — Waltrip was found to have jet fuel in his engine — and its three cars struggled to qualify for races.

About to collapse midway through that first season, MWR and Waltrip were rescued by Kauffman's investment.

But the gains the organization made were nearly undone in 2013 when MWR was severely sanctioned by NASCAR for manipulating the outcome of the final race of the regular season. The team was accused of having Bowyer intentionally spin late in a race at Richmond to begin a sequence of events that earned MWR driver Martin Truex Jr. a spot in the Chase.

NASCAR kicked Truex out of the field and heavily fined MWR. Longtime sponsor NAPA left the organization at the end of the season, forcing Kauffman to shutter Truex's team and release 16 percent of the MWR workforce.

The team has also had difficulties with its second car, meant to be driven by Brian Vickers. Health issues have sidelined Vickers and the car is currently being driven by David Ragan. Aaron's, another longtime MWR partner, has not renewed for 2016.

A-Rod, Yankees rally past Twins

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before the season began, beleaguered slugger Alex Rodriguez thought the days of being adored by Yankees fans were over.

Returning to New York's lineup after sitting out a yearlong suspension for his involvement in the Biogenesis performance-enhancing drugs scandal, Rodriguez has restored his star status with a big bat.

Having already surpassed the milestones of his 660th home run and 3,000th hit this year, Rodriguez connected for a slump-busting grand slam in the seventh inning Tuesday night as the Yankees rallied from a three-run deficit against a depleted Minnesota bullpen to beat the Twins 8-4.

"I thought those days were long gone," Rodriguez said. "A grand slam feels pretty awesome and especially to do it late and to help us win a game."

A-Rod extended his major league record for grand slams, hitting the 25th of his career into the Yankees bullpen off J.R. Graham (0-1) to put New York up 5-4.

With a 1-0 count, Rodriguez connected on a 95 mph fastball, snapping an 0-for-18 slump and earning a curtain call from the crowd of 38,007.

Rookie Miguel Sano homered for the second consecutive game, a two-run shot off CC Sabathia, and Shane Robinson had an RBI single against Nick Rumbelow (1-0) in the seventh to give Minnesota a 4-1 lead.

The win was Rumbelow's first major league decision.

Andrew Miller got four outs for his 27th

save.

Pirates 9, Diamondbacks 8 (15): Pedro Florimon tripled home Francisco Cervelli with two outs in the bottom of the 15th to lift host Pittsburgh over Arizona.

Cervelli singled off Keith Hessler (0-1) for his fourth hit and Florimon hit a high flyball to right field that clanged off the wall. Cervelli had little trouble beating the throw to the plate with a tumbling slide, ending Pittsburgh's longest game of the season and earning Florimon a creampie to the face from teammate A.J. Burnett.

Mets 5, Orioles 3: Jacob deGrom took a four-hitter into the eighth inning, Curtis Granderson hit two solo homers and New York beat host Baltimore to snap a three-game losing streak.

Blue Jays 8, Phillies 5: Josh Donaldson hit two homers, and Edwin Encarnacion also went deep as visiting Toronto beat Philadelphia.

Red Sox 9, Indians 1: Travis Shaw went 4-for-4, Mookie Betts drove in three runs with a bases-loaded double and host Boston beat Cleveland, announcing a major front-office shake-up late in the game.

Dave Dombrowski was hired to take over baseball operations for general manager Ben Cherington.

Royals 3, Reds 1 (13): Ben Zobrist tied the game with a homer in the ninth inning, Jarrod Dyson scored the tie-breaking run from first base on pitcher Ryan Mattheus' throwing error and Kansas City went on to a 13-inning victory over host Cincinnati.

Mariners 3, Rangers 2: Hisashi Iwakuma followed his no-hitter by limiting Texas to two runs and five hits over

seven innings as visiting Seattle beat the Rangers.

Marlins 9, Brewers 6: Ichiro Suzuki had his first four-hit game in more than two years, and Cole Gillespie drove in a season-high three runs to lead Miami past host Milwaukee.

Astros 3, Rays 2: Marwin Gonzalez had three hits and his 10th-inning leadoff homer lifted Houston to a victory over visiting Tampa Bay.

Giants 2, Cardinals 0: Ryan Vogelsong pitched six innings of two-hit ball and ace Madison Bumgarner keyed a seventh-inning rally with his first career pinch hit, helping visiting San Francisco beat St. Louis.

Tigers 10, Cubs 8: Ian Kinsler had five hits, including a home run, and visiting Detroit used a three-run eighth inning to rally for the victory.

Nationals 15, Rockies 6: Yunel Escobar homered and drove in four runs to help visiting Washington end a six-game losing streak.

Angels 5, White Sox 3: Los Angeles' Kole Calhoun and Albert Pujols homered in the first inning against John Danks to help lead the Angels past visiting Chicago.

Athletics 5, Dodgers 4: Billy Butler hit an RBI double in the 10th inning and host Oakland outlasted Clayton Kershaw and Los Angeles.

Padres 9, Braves 0: Melvin Upton Jr. hit two two-run home runs against his former team and Yangervis Solarte hit a three-run shot to back James Shields and give host San Diego the win.



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Raiders pin hopes on Murray

Associated Press

NAPA, Calif. — Whether it was because of injuries his first year or a lack of trust from his coaches last season, Latavius Murray has been more of a spectator than a participant since joining the Oakland Raiders.

Murray has played just 15 games and carried the ball 82 times since being drafted in the sixth round back in 2013. That's all about to change this season, with the Raiders counting on Murray to be that bell-cow running back they've been missing in recent seasons.

The spark Murray provided when he finally got to play late last season proved he was worthy of getting a chance at a bigger role.

"My mentality is to go out and be that guy," Murray said. "It's about putting a series of carries together and getting comfortable back there. The main thing is I know how to do it. I just need to stay healthy."

That's been a bit of a problem for Murray, who missed his entire rookie season with a foot injury that limited his offseason work before year two and left him on the bench behind the ineffective Maurice

Jones-Drew and Darren McFadden for the first half of last season while he struggled to gain the coaching staff's trust.

With no limitations this offseason, Murray has looked the best he has in his career, showing why the Raiders were so high on him coming out of Central Florida.

"I think he's been holding himself back," general manager Reggie McKenzie said. "Being able to practice all the time and getting away from those nitpicking injuries. This is the first offseason that he didn't have to go through rehab. Coming into training camp he was 100 percent. Last year he just didn't get his opportunity until week 10, 11. That part wasn't his fault. He was ready to play. He was healthy going into the season. Just the offseason leading up to it he was always nicked up. If he can stay healthy I don't think anything is holding him back."

Murray carried the ball just six times the first nine games despite Oakland being on pace to be the worst rushing team in the NFL since 1946.

Murray then got four carries for 43 yards against San Diego on Nov. 16 and burst on the scene last November when he rushed for 112 yards and two touchdowns on four

carries against Kansas City as Oakland got its first win after 10 straight losses to open the season.

Murray missed the next game with a concussion, but had 68 carries for 258 yards the final four weeks to give him confidence he can carry a heavier load this season.

"It helps out a lot," he said. "Just to be a little more comfortable out there and knowing that I was able to make some plays and these people know that I'm capable of doing things like that. Just continue to go out there and do that and get better every day and let that carry over into the season."

With Murray carrying the bulk of the load and an improved offensive line anchored by new center Rodney Hudson, the Raiders hope to show significant improvement in the running game after finishing last in the league in rushing a year ago.

The running game has looked sharp this summer, with Murray using his 6-foot-3, 230-pound size and game-breaking speed to make big plays on the practice field. That carried over into the first exhibition game when Murray had six carries for 35 yards.

Cowboys, Rams get into fights

Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — The Dallas Cowboys and St. Louis Rams cut short the second of two joint practices at training camp Tuesday after several fights broke out, including one in which Dallas receiver Dez Bryant was punched in the face.

The workout at the Cowboys' camp facility ended about 30 minutes earlier than expected after the skirmishes on the field where the St. Louis offense and Dallas defense were scrimmaging.

It was the second time in less than two weeks that a joint practice had to be cut short because of fights. On Aug. 8, Houston and Washington ended the mixed portion of a practice after several fights on both fields.

"I hate it. At the end of the day we know why it happens," said Cowboys executive vice president Stephen Jones, who is on the NFL's competition committee. "I can't imagine that we can't continue to have joint practices and get this right just like we do a lot of things. But we're going to have to continue to emphasize that stuff is not what we want."

Most of the St. Louis defensive players left a drill on the other field when the first fight broke out. The second fight ended with several players in a pile on a fence where fans could reach out and touch them, although no fans appeared to get involved.

The third fight between the Cowboys and Rams included the punch on Bryant and ended the practice, although the Cowboys ran a few more plays with their own players while the Rams huddled with coach Jeff Fisher before walking to their buses.

Dallas cornerback Tyler Patmon, who fought with Bryant earlier in camp, had several red marks on his face.

St. Louis linebacker James Laurinaitis said he was trying to make a defensive call when he noticed several teammates had left his field and run toward the first fight.

"There's a fine line between defending yourself, so to speak, versus instigating it," Laurinaitis said. "You want to defend your teammates, but you never want it to turn into that. I'm just glad nobody got hurt."

Patmon, who threw the first punch in his fight with Bryant on the fourth day of Cowboys camp, said he wasn't thinking about the fact that he joined the fray without a helmet.

"All you're thinking about is having your teammate's back," Patmon said. "And that's all that matters."

Cowboys coach Jason Garrett, who meets with reporters before the afternoon workout most days at camp, declined to comment after practice. He was asked about fighting earlier when the topic was whether the Cowboys had shown enough intensity in the first joint practice Monday.

"The last thing you want when you bring another team in is to have fights," Garrett said. "We make that abundantly clear with our team. That's not why we're bringing another team in here. It's to get great work against a different group of players and coaches."

Fisher said his team got in good work "for a day and three quarters."

"There's no excuse for it. You can't blame it on anybody," Fisher said. "It's unfortunate about the end. Not going to minimize it, because we're not going to focus on it. We're going to correct it."

MWR releases Bowyer

Associated Press

Michael Waltrip's rocky nine-year effort to build a successful race team was on the verge of collapse Wednesday as the organization said it will not run any cars full-time next season.

Clint Bowyer was given a release from his contract to pursue a new job for 2016.

The decisions are the fallout from co-owner Rob Kauffman's recent purchase of an ownership stake in Chip Ganassi Racing. Kauffman bought 50 percent of MWR during its debut 2007 season to keep the team afloat.

Kauffman said in a statement that Bowyer and David Ragan will complete the season for MWR, and the team will "race hard and compete" through the end of the year. But the future plans for the organization were announced Wednesday because the team now has "clarity" after weighing its options.

"I want to thank all of our staff, partners, sponsors and fans for all their effort and support over the years," Kauffman said. "Clint Bowyer has done a lot for MWR since joining us in 2012 and we appreciate the energy and effort he has given the organization."

"After many discussions, Clint and I agreed we would go our separate ways at the end of the season and I wish him well in whatever direction he pursues."

Bowyer is currently 16th in the Sprint Cup standings and has three races remaining to claim one of the 16 berths in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

Although he could end up at Ganassi with sponsor 5-Hour Energy, Bowyer is more likely looking for a one-year resting place to wait for an opening with one of NASCAR's powerhouse teams in 2017. It's possible he could replace Tony Stewart at Stewart-Haas Racing should the three-time NASCAR champion make 2016 his final season.

"After extensive discussions with Rob and MWR, we came to the point that we mutually agreed our paths in the future just didn't align," Bowyer said. "But I think we all agreed on the next steps in a very professional manner."

"I am looking forward to what future opportunities may come but for now we have a championship to pursue in 2015 and we owe it to every one of our sponsors, partners, employees and fans to deliver on and off the track."

Founded by two-time Daytona 500 winner Waltrip in 2007, MWR entered Sprint Cup competition as Toyota's flagship team. But the team was involved in a cheating scandal before its very first Daytona 500 — Waltrip was found to have jet fuel in his engine — and its three cars struggled to qualify for races.

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The team has also had difficulties with its second car, meant to be driven by Brian Vickers. Health issues have sidelined Vickers and the car is currently being driven by David Ragan. Aaron's, another longtime MWR partner, has not renewed for 2016.

Toyota has also failed to renew its manufacture contract with Waltrip as the automaker has been courting Truex's new team, Furniture Row Racing.

Waltrip, who is also an analyst for Fox, was nostalgic Wednesday over his efforts to grow a team from the backyard of his North Carolina home into a viable competitor that competed for the Sprint Cup title in 2012 with Bowyer.

"I am proud of what we accomplished," Waltrip said.

Miller feeling switch to WR in both legs

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — As Braxton Miller makes the switch from quarterback to receiver for Ohio State, he is feeling it in his legs.

The two-time Big Ten player of the year at quarterback said he's been monitored running 4 miles during a practice.

"Oh my God," he said Sunday during Ohio State media day. "I can barely run a mile playing quarterback."

Coach Urban Meyer said Miller will have to adjust to the wear and tear on his ankles and knees from not just running but making quick starts, stops and cuts.

"As a receiver you line up and you run for two hours," Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said. "As a quarterback you don't run. You run for maybe four or five minutes at practice and you're doing other things."

Miller underwent a second surgery on his throwing shoulder nearly a year ago and redshirted the 2014 season when the Buckeyes won the national championship.

His decision to switch positions narrowed Ohio State's quarterback competition to two: J.T. Barrett and Cardale Jones, who helped Ohio State win its final three games after Barrett broke his ankle in the season finale against Michigan.

Miller said his torn labrum is still not 100 percent and his shoulder just can't stand up to the rigors of playing quarterback. But Miller was one of the best running quarterbacks in college football and his speed and elusiveness should make him a good fit at H-back.

He said he's been lining up all over the field in practice. Meyer talked about the double-pass play the Buckeyes were practicing with Miller.

"It's just like playing a video game," Miller said. "They just put anybody anywhere."