

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Friday, August 21, 2015

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## First women pin on Ranger tabs

Female graduates make history after completing elite Army leadership course

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Under a clear blue southwest Georgia sky, the Army's first female soldiers to earn the coveted Ranger tab were pinned with the black-and-gold half-moon patches Friday morning.

Amid a swarm of well-wishers, media and 94 male graduates, family members of Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver placed the hard-earned tabs on their left shoulders, the culmination of 162 days of often-brutal training in the Army's premier leadership course.

Addressing an overflow crowd that included new Army Chief of Staff Mark Milley and several "Ranger legends," Army Maj. Gen. Austin Miller, the commander of the Maneuver Center of Excellence, called the graduating class "historic for a number of reasons," including the two female soldiers.

Miller turned his speech toward the many naysayers, especially online, who continue to express beliefs that the Army lowered its standards. He invited them to visit Fort Benning "and re-qualify as a Ranger."

"To date we've not had takers who want to come and revalidate their tabs," Miller said. "There was no pressure on me from above to lower any standards. These soldiers graduating today accomplished it with the very same standards of Ranger School as those before them."

Griest, a military police officer stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., and Haver, an Apache pilot at Fort Carson, Colo., stood stoic among their male peers through Friday's ceremony — which included demonstrations of Ranger tactics including fast roping from a helicopter, hand-to-hand combat, explosives and waterborne exercises — at Fort Benning's picturesque

Victory Pond. In their green-gray Army Combat Uniforms, the women did not stand out from their male counterparts.

The women, speaking Thursday, said they struggled at times during the three phases of training that take candidates from the woods of Fort Benning through mountainous north Georgia and the swampland of north Florida.

"I'm just happy to be done with the course," said Griest, who plans to go into civil affairs and hopes to become a Green Beret. "I came here to be a better leader. I feel like I accomplished that."

"We just kind of forced ourselves through," said Haver, an Apache pilot, acknowledging low points along the way. "But the ability to look at my (male) peers and see they were sucking just as bad as I was, that kept me going."

The women are still barred by policy from joining the Rangers.

## North Korea in 'quasi-state of war,' leader says

*From staff and wire reports*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared his front-line troops in a "quasi-state of war" Friday and ordered them to prepare for battle against South Korea in response to an exchange of artillery fire on the border the day before.

With tension rising, U.S. officials said the Americans had suspended their annual military exercise with South Korea, but shortly afterward announced the exercise, known as Ulchi Freedom Guardian, had resumed.

Pentagon officials said the largely computer-simulated exercise had been quietly suspended earlier in the week. The announcement that it was back on track came only hours

after the suspension was first reported.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

"We're concerned by the situation and we are watching it very closely," said David Shear, U.S. assistant secretary of defense for Asian-Pacific security affairs.

Tensions on the Korean peninsula ratcheted up after two South Korean soldiers were maimed on Aug. 4 by land mines planted along the Demilitarized Zone. A U.N. Command investigation determined the mines had been planted by the North along a known South Korean patrol route. Pyongyang has denied involvement.

In response to the attack, South Korea resumed anti-

Pyongyang broadcasts through loudspeakers along the border, and the North retaliated with its own broadcasts. North Korea demanded the broadcasts end by Friday evening.

On Thursday, North Korea fired an artillery round into Yeoncheon near the DMZ. The South responded by firing dozens of shells at the point of origin of the North's round, according to the Ministry of National Defense statements reported by Yonhap News.

While the two Koreas have traded fire several times in recent years, this marked the most serious incident since the North's sinking of the Cheonan warship in 2010, killing 46 sailors, and its shelling of the Yeonpyeong island later that year that left four dead.

In Pyongyang, a North Ko-

rean military official told The Associated Press that senior party and defense officials led by Kim met Thursday night and "reviewed and approved the final attack operation."

He gave no details on what kind of military retaliation North Korea would see as appropriate punishment for South Korea's shelling of its territory on Thursday, according to the AP report.

The U.S. and South Korea have raised alert levels for troops, South Korean sources said Friday. And Seoul has warned that it will respond strongly to any further provocations, according to South Korean media reports.

Approximately 50,000 South Korean and 30,000 U.S. troops are taking part in Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise.

## DOD: Test finds mustard gas in militant mortars

By TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

Initial tests on mortar fragments from an Aug. 11 Islamic State attack against Kurdish forces in Iraq have tested positive for the chemical weapon mustard gas, the Pentagon said Friday.

A few days after the attack near Makhmour, the Kurdish peshmerga forces brought fragments from the mortar rounds to U.S. forces. Makhmour is just south of Irbil, where the U.S. has one of its training center sites.

"We were able to take the fragments and do a field test on those fragments, and they showed the presence of HD, or what is known as sulfur mustard. That is a class one chemical agent," said Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Kevin J. Killea, chief of staff, Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve.

Sulfur mustard, commonly known as mustard gas, is a chemical warfare agent that can form large blisters on exposed skin and in the lungs.

The initial tests have to be backed up by full testing, and that could show, among other things, whether the fragments were part of munitions that contained the chemical weapon and were not tampered with. The more extensive tests also could show how much agent was used "and where it came from," he said.

Remnants from a suspected chemical weapon attack in June in Syria also have undergone full testing, but Killea said he did not have the results of that investigation.

Regardless, he said, "we really don't need another reason to hunt down [the Islamic State] and kill them wherever we can."

copp.tara@stripes.com  
Twitter: @TaraCopp

## Bergdahl lawyer: Trump's words threaten fair trial

*Stars and Stripes*

The attorney for Bowe Bergdahl, the Army sergeant accused of deserting his base in Afghanistan before he was taken prisoner by the Taliban, says presidential candidate Donald Trump's criticism of his client threatens Bergdahl's ability to get a fair trial.

In a statement released Thursday, attorney Eugene Fidell said Trump's derision of Bergdahl as a "dirty, rotten traitor" was "contemptible and un-American" and threatened to color the opinions of jurors in a potential court-martial.

"Sergeant Bergdahl is not charged with treason or anything like it," Fidell said, condemning "Mr. Trump's reckless disregard for the truth."

Bergdahl, who is charged with desertion and misbehavior

before the enemy, faces an investigative hearing in September, which will decide whether his case should be referred to trial.

Bergdahl was released by Taliban fighters last year in a controversial prisoner swap that included the release of five Taliban militants held at the military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was captured in 2009 after he abruptly left his base.

Soldiers in Bergdahl's unit said he had no plans to return. Fidell has said Bergdahl was trying to draw attention to problems inside the base.

Bergdahl's attorneys have repeatedly questioned his ability to get a fair trial, several times comparing public attitude toward the soldier to a lynch mob.

## Military court upholds death sentence in '03 Kuwait 'fragging' case

*McClatchy Washington Bureau*

WASHINGTON — The nation's highest military court has affirmed the conviction and death sentence for Hasan K. Akbar, who admitted killing two fellow U.S. soldiers at the start of the Iraq War.

In a closely split decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces rejected claims by Akbar that his original defense team was ineffective.

Akbar argued at trial that he was mentally ill when he killed two and wounded 14 in the March 2003 attack in Kuwait.

"We conclude that if there ever was a case where a military court-martial panel would impose the death penalty, this was it," Judge Kevin A. Ohlson wrote.

The court's 3-2 decision leaves Akbar one of six military men to be facing execution at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Though he had launched a wide-ranging challenge to his conviction and sentence, a big part of the case decided Wednesday dealt with his claim

of ineffective counsel.

Ohlson, a former Army paratrooper and federal prosecutor appointed to the court by President Barack Obama, observed that Akbar was "represented by two experienced military attorneys who devoted more than two years to preparing and presenting the defense in this case."

The two dissenting judges countered that Akbar's trial defense attorneys fell short, with specific mistakes that included providing Akbar's 313-page diary to the court-martial panel.

"These pages included a running diatribe against Caucasians and the United States dating back 12 years, and included repeated references to (his) desire to kill American soldiers 'for Allah' and for 'jihad,'" Judge James E. Baker noted.

Baker, who has since retired, explained that "the defense intended the diary to reflect (Akbar's) descent into mental illness," but that it was "offered without adequate explanation, expert or otherwise."

## Islamic State destroys ancient Syria monastery

*Associated Press*

DAMASCUS, Syria — The Islamic State group demolished an ancient monastery founded more than 1,500 years ago in central Syria on Friday near a town where the extremists abducted dozens of Christians earlier this month, activists and a Christian priest said.

The extremist group posted photos on social media Friday showing bulldozers destroying

the Saint Elian Monastery near the town of Qaryatain, which Islamic State captured in early August.

A Christian clergyman told The Associated Press in Damascus that Islamic State militants also wrecked a church inside the monastery that dates to the fifth century. The priest, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, said the monastery included an Assyrian Catholic church.

# Griffin III suffers concussion

Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md. — After watching Robert Griffin III get knocked around for three possessions, Washington Redskins coach Jay Gruden sent his starting quarterback back out for a fourth Thursday night. That one ended with consecutive sacks and Griffin leaving with a concussion.

Griffin was hurt early in the second quarter of Washington's 21-17 exhibition victory over the Detroit Lions when he fumbled the ball without contact while scrambling, then got landed on by defensive end Corey Wooton.

Gruden said he had "no idea" how long the 2012 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year would be sidelined. As for who would start Washington's next preseason game, Aug. 29 at Baltimore, Gruden said: "We'll have to see. I would imagine, depending how long he's out, he's still going to be our starter."

Added Gruden: "We'll have to wait, go through the whole process, see how he recovers, see how fast he recovers."

Griffin also got a stinger in his right shoulder, but Gruden said that should be OK. As part of the NFL's concussion rules, Griffin wasn't allowed to speak to reporters after the game. He completed 2 of 5 passes for 8 yards, fumbled twice, was sacked three times and hit hard on other occasions.

Asked why he kept Griffin in for a fourth series despite the pounding the QB was taking, Gruden replied: "We weren't

doing that well on offense. I wanted to try to get something going on offense. A lot of quarterbacks play into the second quarter in a preseason game. Football is a tough sport."

It capped a rough week for Griffin, who caused a national "firestorm," to use his word, with comments in a television interview about striving to be the best quarterback in the NFL. The No. 2 overall pick in the NFL Draft after winning the Heisman Trophy, Griffin has been plagued by injuries in the pros, including tearing knee ligaments as a rookie and dislocating an ankle last year.

After his last play Thursday, Griffin stayed down on the field for about 5 minutes and was tended to by trainers, while some teammates knelt nearby. After Griffin got up, he walked slowly to the sideline, then kept going until he left the field and entered the tunnel that leads to the Redskins' locker room. Griffin gave a thumb's up to spectators as he trudged away.

"It definitely makes you cringe," said Pro Bowl left tackle Trent Williams, who sat out after hurting his right foot in practice this week. "You don't want to see your quarterback get hit at all, in preseason nor regular season. It's definitely not a pleasant feeling."

The other four offensive line starters played, including No. 5 overall draft pick Brandon Scherff at right guard.

Early on, Griffin had one pass batted down by linebacker Tahir Whitehead. The fourth-year quarterback wound up on his

back on a third-down incompleting on Washington's second possession, driven to the turf by linebacker DeAndre Levy on a delayed blitz. Later, Griffin was knocked down hard by defensive end Phillip Hunt, who blew past backup left tackle Willie Smith.

"It felt like we were picking Robert up after every pass play. So we've got to fix that," center Kory Lichtensteiger said. "Exactly what led to that, we don't know, but it's something we've got to address, for sure."

The Redskins have not scored a touchdown with Griffin in the game this preseason — and they didn't last preseason, either.

"I'm not going to lay any blame on the quarterback or the offensive line. We'll just wait and see (the game film)," Gruden said. "But it was not a very good performance by our first-team offense — one first down in four drives and the turnover."

Backup Colt McCoy replaced Griffin in the second quarter and went 5-for-6 for 80 yards and a touchdown pass. The other backup QB, Kirk Cousins, was 8-for-12 for 91 yards and a TD toss. Both McCoy and Cousins started games for Washington last season.

"He did a good job of standing in there," Cousins said about Griffin. "There are a lot of guys who don't make it to this level because they don't stand in there. ... His toughness and his willingness to just keep pushing is really impressive."

# Cowboys' O-line hit by injuries

Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Cowboys All-Pro guard Zack Martin says he's OK after sustaining a neck stinger in practice earlier this week.

But it's uncertain how many starting Dallas linemen will be available for Sunday's preseason game in San Francisco and that might influence quarterback Tony Romo's playing time.

Martin was injured Tuesday in the second of two joint practices with St. Louis at training camp. The second-year player shouldn't be out long.

The Cowboys are being cautious with left tackle Tyron Smith (right arm muscle strain), left guard Ron Leary (back) and right tackle Doug Free, who recently returned to practice after missing two weeks mostly to rest a sore foot and ankle.

If enough starters sit against the 49ers, Romo might join them.

"I think you certainly have to factor in what is going on with each player individually and figure out what the plan needs to be for that guy, and we certainly do that," coach Jason Garrett said Thursday. "We'll have a plan for those guys as to how much we want them to play or not play in a ballgame."

The Cowboys showed how much the camp roster is in flux with their busiest day of transactions Thursday.

Dallas signed receivers Phil Bates and Edmond Gates and linebacker Dakorey Johnson while waiving running back Lache Seastrunk, receivers Reggie Dunn and Deontay Greenberry and cornerback Brandon Smith. The club also claimed cornerback Rod Sweeting off waivers from Buffalo.

While the Cowboys' injury list has grown to more than 20 players in recent days, easily the scariest moment was Martin crumpling to the ground after throwing a block on a play in 11-on-11 work against the Rams.

Martin, the team's first rookie All-Pro since running back Calvin Hill in 1969, said his head was too low for the block, and it was the first time he had experienced a stinger. He was on the ground for several minutes while the medical staff attended to him before he walked off the field on his own.

"Just a little scare but everything's fine," Martin said. "Burning and then it shoots down your arms. When I got back to the locker room I felt fine."

Undrafted rookie La'el Collins, who was a projected first-round pick when his name surfaced in a police investigation over a woman's death and he wasn't cleared until after the draft, was already getting significant practice time because of Leary's injury. Martin's absence will put more focus on him.

"You can't ever have enough good football players," executive vice president of personnel Stephen Jones said. "You just never know where the injury bug's going to bite."

# Manziel, Manuel show marked improvement

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Johnny Manziel made another strong impression on Cleveland's coaches.

EJ Manuel's was even better for Buffalo.

Manziel threw a touchdown pass and maybe closed the gap on presumed starting quarterback Josh McCown before Manuel rallied the Bills to an 11-10 victory Thursday night.

Manuel, attempting to beat out Matt Cassel and Tyrod Taylor for Buffalo's starting job, threw a 14-yard TD pass to Andre Davis with 1:31 left. He then connected with rookie Bronson Hill for the 2-point conversion to complete a late rally by the Bills (1-1).

Buffalo coach Rex Ryan said his QB competition remains open, and he will not name a starter until just before the season opener against Indianapolis. He doesn't want to give the Colts any edge.

"We don't need to tell them," he said. "Until the league makes us tell them we can go right up there and say we're not going to say anything. We may know. But why would we say any different?"

After Manuel's TD pass and conversion, Manziel had one last chance, but he couldn't pull off any magic as the Browns (0-2) dropped their second straight exhibition at home.

Manziel connected with rookie Shane Wynn on a 21-yard TD pass in the fourth

quarter. Playing against Buffalo's backups, Manziel finished 10 of 18 for 118 yards and made one of those Johnny Football plays — rolling left and completing a 37-yard pass — that made him an electrifying college star.

Following the game, Browns coach Mike Pettine reiterated that McCown, who threw interceptions on Cleveland's first two drives, was firmly the No. 1.

"We'll evaluate both guys," Pettine said. "I'm not going to sit here and talk about trying to start up a quarterback controversy."

Manziel said he's happy to be on the field and he'll leave the number of snaps up to Pettine.

"Would I like to be in there with the ones? Sure," he said. "It's not my call, and if that decision does come, I'll be ready to hop in there. But for now, I'm making the most of the opportunities I'm getting."

McCown did nothing to lock up the starting gig. He has not been named Cleveland's Week 1 starter, and Manziel's performance could further delay any decision.

"The things that stopped us were my mistakes," said McCown, who went 7 of 10 for 57 yards and two interceptions.

Following the game, McCown underwent X-rays on his right ring finger. McCown said initial tests were negative, but that he may need more.

**Johnny be good:** With the score tied 3-3, the Browns were backed up at their

own 4 before Manziel, who played the entire second half, drove them to their go-ahead score. He completed 6 of 7 passes on the drive, highlighted by his 37-yard strike to rookie Darius Jennings.

**Bills QBs:** Taylor started and went 7-for-10 for 65 yards. He added 41 yards rushing before giving way to Manuel, who finished 9-for-14 for 111 yards.

**Other injuries:** Bills, Already missing Watkins, Percy Harvin and Robert Woods, Chris Hogan was carted off with an ankle injury in the first quarter, further depleting Buffalo's receiving corps. Hogan covered his head with towel and placed his hands on his as he was driven to the locker room; Browns, DB Jordan Poyer sustained a concussion while making a tackle. He briefly wandered into Buffalo's offensive huddle before the Browns sent him for an evaluation.

**Rookie watch:** Bills, A second-round pick from Florida State, CB Ronald Darby showed solid ball-hawking skills by intercepting two of McCown's passes. He's listed as a backup on the depth chart behind Leodis McKelvin, who is on the non-football injury list and expected to miss the start of the season.

Browns, Wynn, an undrafted free agent from Indiana, continued to impress. In addition to his TD, he had a 58-yard punt return that was brought back by a holding call. Also, DT Xavier Cooper had two sacks and massive DT Danny Shelton plugged the middle.



## Ship's Store official new car program

Exclusive Navy at-sea offers:

[www.navyauto.com](http://www.navyauto.com) or [nasinfo@navyauto.com](mailto:nasinfo@navyauto.com)

# Bolt makes return to Beijing

Associated Press

They burst onto the sports scene together, seven summers ago.

In their own ways, the Bird's Nest and Usain Bolt redefined what was possible at the Olympics.

A stadium could be a star. The \$450 million, 91,000-seat Bird's Nest, latticed with steel beams, was the centerpiece of the Beijing Games, and it shined in a spectacular opening ceremony that featured a skywalking gymnast, fireworks and a cast and crew of more than 15,000.

Then came Bolt.

The 6-foot-5 Jamaican raced in three events. Won gold medals and set world records in all. He returns to the Bird's Nest Saturday for the start of world championships — helping the largely underused stadium brush off some cobwebs while possibly shedding some positive light on a sport that has been dogged, yet again, by ugly news on the doping front.

Since departing the Bird's Nest the night of Aug. 22, 2008, Bolt has improved on his records, which stand at 9.58 seconds for the 100, 19.19 for the 200 and 36.84 for the 4x100 relay. He has won three more Olympic golds, and dealt, on and off, with a variety of injuries, new challengers and even a couple of car accidents.

Through it all, he has remained the man to beat with the next Olympics less than a year away. But he will turn 30 on the day of the closing ceremony in Rio de Janeiro.

It doesn't all come so easily anymore.

Fewer parties. More vegetables.

"I have to be real careful, have to be aware of everything around me to make sure I'm on point," said Bolt, who made Chicken McNuggets his dinner, and lunch, of choice at the 2008 Olympics.

He will use his next appearance at the stadium where he became a true, bona fide superstar as something between a tune-up for next year and the real thing. This is, after all, the biggest event he'll race in until he gets to Brazil.

But this summer, Bolt has been beset by leg injuries, not running his best, rounding into form. He ran his top time of the season, 9.87 seconds, July 24 at a meet in London — at the other Olympic stadium where he has ruled. He called it an appearance that was "all about getting race ready."

How ready he is in Beijing this time around is almost beside the point. He will be the headliner, and will provide a respite for his sport when he appears at the nine-day meet, where he's scheduled to run in the 100, 200 and 4x100 relay — the usual. The integrity of track which has been battered this year under a doping cloud as thick and persistent as the haze that hovers over China's capital.

In June, The Associated Press learned the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency launched an investigation into allegations that famed track coach Alberto Salazar encouraged Olympic silver medalist Galen Rupp and

others in his stable of elite runners to skirt anti-doping rules.

More recently, reports from German broadcaster ARD and The Sunday Times newspaper in Britain examined results of 12,000 blood tests involving 5,000 athletes from 2001 to 2012. The reports concluded that 146 Olympic and world-championship medals in middle- and long-distance races — including 55 gold — were won by athletes who have recorded suspicious tests.

The IAAF has responded with a detailed denunciation of the reports and an equally robust defense of its own anti-doping measures, backed by none other than Sebastian Coe, the middle-distance great who is running against pole vaulting icon Sergei Bubka for president of the IAAF.

The winner will oversee a sport with only one true, worldwide star. It's Bolt, who has steered clear of all the doping troubles, even as sanctions have been leveled against luminaries in his own track-crazy country, including former world record holder Asafa Powell and Olympic relay gold medalist Sherone Simpson.

"It definitely does upset me," Bolt said of the doping stories that tarnish his sport. "Because then it starts with pointing fingers again and speculating. It doesn't help the sport in any way, so at times, I do get frustrated and angry."

# Woods sharp at Wyndham

Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — The first day of the Wyndham Championship was full of bests.

Tiger Woods had his best day in two years.

Tom Hoge, William McGirt and Erik Compton were even better.

Woods shot a 6-under 64 on Thursday in his first competitive round at Sedgefield Country Club while Hoge, McGirt and Compton — a two-time heart transplant recipient — shot 62s to share the lead after one round.

Morgan Hoffman, Jim Herman and Derek Ernst followed at 63, and Martin Kaymer, Davis Love III and Carl Pettersson joined Woods at 64.

It was Woods' lowest score on the PGA Tour since a 61 in the second round of the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational in 2013.

He and the others took advantage of a low-scoring day at what he called a "tricky" Donald Ross-designed course that gave up bunches of birdies after morning showers softened the fairways and greens.

"When it's like this," Woods said, "you've got to throw darts and go low."

And while Compton, McGirt and Hoge threatened the tournament record, the clear story of the day was Woods.

That low score couldn't have come at a better time for the biggest name in the sport.

He set the tone by holing a 54-foot chip shot on his first hole, the par-4 10th, for the first of his seven birdies.

"Finally," he said, "I got something out of my round."

Woods arrived insisting he was playing better than his recent results might indicate.

He had missed the cut in three straight majors and had not finished better than a tie for 17th at the Masters. He's at No. 187 on the FedEx Cup points list and probably needs a win to move into the top 125 and earn a playoff spot.

Yet he said after last week's early exit from the PGA Championship that those results belied the improvement he was making in his game.

"I know it's crazy to say, but I wasn't playing that poorly at PGA," Woods said. "Any borderline shot (at Whistling Straits) I never got away with it, and that's the way it goes. I felt like I was hitting the ball good enough and just kept progressing, and today was just a continuation of it."

Especially on that first hole.

His shot from the left side of the green landed inside of 10 feet from the cup and rolled in.

"I went for the shot, and instead of playing something more conservative, the greens were hard and fast, and I wanted to play something long," Woods said. "I got aggressive with it, and I went for it, and I pulled it off. ... I could see it going in."

Hoge, playing in the day's final grouping, made a late charge up the leaderboard, closing his round by sinking a 5-foot birdie putt on the 18th.

Compton, who started on the back nine, finished with a 29 on the front nine with seven birdies in that span.

"Any time you can break 30 in nine holes, you're obviously doing something really cool," Compton said.

It's the latest positive for a 35-year-old who earned his tour card in 2012 — four years after his second heart transplant.

# Rays' Archer tosses one-hit shutout

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Tampa Bay's Chris Archer gained a pair of young fans at this year's All-Star game and gave them a shout-out after pitching a one-hitter in a 1-0 win over their father's team on Thursday night.

"I was motivated by Haley and Kaitlin, A.J. Hinch's two daughters, who ever since we took a selfie together at the All-Star game, they've adored me," Archer said before flashing a huge grin. "So I wanted to — I was in their hometown and I wanted to perform well for two of my biggest fans."

Archer allowed only a fifth-inning single by Colby Rasmus and struck out 11 to lead the Tampa Bay Rays over the Houston Astros.

Hinch had talked about the affinity his daughters had for Archer all week and said they weren't allowed to root for him against the Astros. Archer, who sent over signed copies of the Baseball America he's on the cover of to the girls, laughed when told of Hinch's comments.

"I'd like to have them ... at least watching every game I throw from here on out because the outcome is good when they're watching," Archer said.

It was Archer's third career shutout and second against the Astros, having also blanked them in 2013. Archer's complete game ends a streak of 154 games without one for the Rays, which was the longest span in the AL. Their last one came when Drew Smyly did it against the Blue Jays on August 22, 2014.

Archer (11-9) retired the final 15 batters, fanning five. Rasmus led off the fifth with a groundball single and was the last runner for the AL West leaders.

"His pitches were low, he was extremely efficient," manager Kevin Cash said. "He was efficient even with the high strikeouts. It was going to be his ballgame."

It was the ninth start this year Archer

hadn't allowed a run, which tops the AL.

**Tigers 4, Rangers 0:** Alfredo Simon threw a one-hitter in his first career complete game and host Detroit topped Texas in a matchup of AL wild-card contenders.

The Rangers' only hit came with two outs in the fifth when Rougned Odor doubled.

Simon (11-7) walked two and struck out five. He threw 116 pitches, three short of his career high.

**Cubs 7, Braves 1:** Jake Arrieta pitched six scoreless innings for his major league-leading 15th win, and Anthony Rizzo and Addison Russell homered to lead host Chicago over Atlanta.

Chicago snapped a three-game losing streak after winning nine straight and 15 of 16.

**Indians 3, Yankees 2:** Josh Tomlin had his second impressive start since returning from shoulder surgery, Cody Allen worked out of his own jam in the ninth inning and visiting Cleveland held off AL East-leading New York.

Tomlin (1-1) only allowed Alex Rodriguez's 680th career home run leading off the fourth and a double to Chase Headley in seven deliberate innings.

**Royals 4, Red Sox 1:** Wade Miley pitched into the eighth inning and Ryan Hanigan drove in two runs as host Boston ended Kansas City's five-game winning streak.

Miley (10-9) helped the Red Sox improve to 5-2 under bench coach Torey Lovullo, who took over when manager John Farrell announced that is being treated for cancer. Mookie Betts, Travis Shaw and Xander Bogaerts had two hits apiece for Boston.

**Pirates 4, Giants 0:** Charlie Morton combined with two relievers on a six-hitter and Neil Walker hit a two-run homer, leading Pittsburgh over visiting San Francisco.

Pittsburgh has won seven of eight.

**Rockies 3, Nationals 2:** Yohan Flande pitched seven strong innings and singled twice, driving in a run and scoring one to lead host Colorado over Washington.

Flande (3-1) allowed two runs and three hits as the Rockies avoided a series sweep.

Ben Paulsen singled in the seventh to drive in the tiebreaking run.

**Diamondbacks 5, Reds 4:** A.J. Pollock drove in two runs with a bases-loaded single in the eighth inning and visiting Arizona rallied to send Cincinnati to its sixth straight loss.

Chris Owings homered and drove in two runs as Arizona overcome a 4-0 deficit.

**Marlins 9, Phillies 7:** Martin Prado homered and drove in three runs, Marcell Ozuna had a two-run homer and host Miami beat Philadelphia.

Adeiny Hechavarria had two hits to extend his career-best hitting streak to 13 games for the Marlins, who have won four of five while scoring at least six runs in all five games.

**Twins 15, Orioles 2:** Rookie Tyler Duffey took a shutout into the eighth inning, and Minnesota beat struggling Miguel Gonzalez and Baltimore on a soggy night at Camden Yards.

Kurt Suzuki and Eddie Rosario each had three hits and two RBIs, and Miguel Sano and Eduardo Escobar contributed home runs in helping Minnesota end a three-game skid.

**White Sox 8, Angels 2:** Jose Abreu capped a five-run fifth inning with a two-run double and visiting Chicago avoided a four-game sweep by Los Angeles.

Jose Quintana (7-10) allowed two runs and eight hits over six innings. The left-hander struck out three and walked two — marking the 15th consecutive start in which he gave up fewer than three bases on balls.