

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## F-35A is declared ready for combat

BY TARA COPP

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Air Force F-35A Joint Strike Fighter is now operational and ready for combat, Gen. Hawk Carlisle, commander of Air Combat Command, announced Tuesday.

The F-35 is a fifth-generation stealth fighter that the military is counting on to replace its aging fleet of fighter jets and to provide advanced electronic warfare and air-to-ground and air-to-air combat capabilities.

Carlisle said Tuesday that the Air Force's version had met all the criteria to reach "initial operational capability," including its ability to destroy enemy air defenses in a contested environment. He said the service

has the personnel and logistics ready to support an operational squadron of 12 to 24 aircraft.

"The F-35A will be the most dominant aircraft in our inventory because it can go where our legacy aircraft cannot and provide the capabilities our commanders need on the modern battlefield," Carlisle said.

In all, the services plan to field 2,457 of the new jets to eventually replace their aging workhorses, including the Air Force's F-16 and A-10 jets, the Marine Corps' AV-8 Harriers and the Navy and Marine Corps' fleet of F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet fighters.

Carlisle said the F-35 was not being deployed to the Middle East in the near future. He said the schedule was not due to prob-

lems with the aircraft but the requests by combat commanders for specific air capabilities.

Carlisle said the aircraft eventually would be deployed to Europe and the Pacific as well.

The F-35, a \$1.5 trillion, 20-year program, has faced significant criticism over the years for missing production deadlines, for cost overruns and for questions on whether it actually will provide a reliable replacement to the aircraft wearing out faster than expected due to their heavy and nonstop deployments against the Islamic State group.

The Marines declared their vertical-takeoff and -landing variant, the F-35B, operational in 2015 and created its second operational squadron by replacing Harriers in June with

F-35Bs at Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Ariz. While the Marines' variant has been declared ready for combat for more than a year, it has not been deployed. The Navy's variant is not expected to reach the same initial capability until 2019.

The lack of combat for the Marines' variant has led to continued questions by critics whether the Air Force's version of the aircraft is truly ready.

"I do not expect to see it [the Air Force variant] flying combat anytime soon," said Dan Grazier, a former Marine officer who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and who is now a senior defense fellow at the Project on Government Oversight, a non-partisan government watchdog group in Washington.

## 33 servicemembers test positive for Zika

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — At least 33 active-duty servicemembers, including one pregnant woman, have contracted the Zika virus while serving overseas, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday.

Six family members of servicemembers have also contracted the virus outside of the continental United States, said Army Maj. Roger Cabiness, a spokesman for the Defense Department. Those numbers were current as of Friday.

The virus has spread through much of Latin America and the Caribbean since its outbreak in Brazil in May 2015. Its connection to pregnancy defects, confirmed by scientists at the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have led the World Health Organization to declare it a global

emergency. The Defense Department has taken steps to monitor and control the populations of mosquitos capable of carrying the virus, which are found at nearly 200 stateside installations from Texas in the west to Florida and as far north as New York, according to Pentagon information.

"DOD is actively testing mosquitoes for Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases in the U.S. as part of our ongoing integrated vector control and surveillance programs at bases and installations," Cabiness said.

Most people who contract the virus will likely remain asymptomatic, according to the CDC, but "there is now enough evidence to conclude" that Zika can cause pregnancy complications that produce severe fetal abnormalities, including microcephaly, a rare condition that causes unusually small heads

and lack of brain development in children.

There have been at least 1,650 cases of Zika in the United States, according to the CDC. The vast majority have been transmitted outside the continental U.S., though some transmissions have occurred through sexual contact with someone who contracted it while traveling.

However, Florida health officials have determined mosquitoes in a small area of Miami have spread the virus to at least four people, according to the CDC. The Associated Press, citing Florida Gov. Rick Scott, reported Monday up to 14 people had contracted Zika through local mosquitoes in Miami.

There are several DOD installations in and around Miami, but no mosquitos on any of those bases or any others in the United States have tested positive for Zika.

### Health warning issued for women in Miami

MIAMI — In a highly unusual travel warning, health officials advised pregnant women to avoid a part of Miami where mosquitoes are apparently transmitting Zika to humans.

Health officials last Friday announced that mosquitoes apparently have started spreading Zika on the U.S. mainland, citing four cases they strongly believe were caused by bites. Ten more cases were announced Monday, even though Florida authorities have yet to find any mosquitoes actually carrying the virus.

Of the 14 people infected, two are women and 12 are men. The CDC also said expectant mothers should get tested for the virus if they have visited the neighborhood since mid-June.

From The Associated Press

# Dunford reassures Turkey

*The Washington Post*

ANKARA, Turkey — The visit of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with top Turkish officials Monday was, for the most part, conciliatory, despite growing anti-American sentiment following last month's coup attempt and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's public scolding of U.S. Army Gen. Joseph Votel.

The highest-ranking U.S. official to visit Turkey following the failed coup, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford arrived at the joint U.S.-Turkish air base in Incirlik on Sunday before proceeding to the capital, where he met with Turkish counterpart Gen. Hulusi Akar, chief of the Turkish General Staff; Prime Minister Binali Yildirim; and Ismail Kahram, the speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Dunford said the Turkish general described the night of the coup to him, saying at one point that he was drugged and had a gun held to his head by the plotters.

According to a senior defense official, some of the Turkish military faction behind the attempted overthrow of the government called Dunford's office in Washington from Akar's phone number, but Dunford

was visiting U.S. troops in Afghanistan and did not receive the call.

"The tone in all three meetings was very positive and non-accusatory at all," Dunford said to a small group of reporters accompanying him on the trip, adding that Erdogan's remarks about Votel, the current commander of the U.S. Central Command, did not come up in any of his conversations.

CENTCOM is responsible for overseeing U.S. operations in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

On Thursday, while speaking at a security conference in Aspen, Colo., Votel said that he was worried about the "longer-term" ramifications for joint U.S.-Turkish counterterrorism operations following the failed coup, adding that many of the Turkish generals arrested in the days after had worked with the United States.

Votel's comments drew a sharp rebuke from Erdogan the next day.

The seemingly heated exchange between a high-ranking U.S. general and the president of Turkey is the latest example of what appears to be a growing distrust of the United States in Turkey following the July 15 coup attempt. In the days after the attempt, Turkish authori-

ties cut power to Incirlik, a key U.S. installation in the fight against the Islamic State group, and proceeded to close the airspace over the base as Turkish officials rushed to account for any of their aircraft used in the coup. Although operations resumed relatively quickly, the base was forced to run on generator power until July 22.

Despite the Pentagon's attempt to play down the base's temporary closure, a U.S. official in Iraq, who requested anonymity to discuss the issue, said that combat operations, especially around the Syrian city of Manbij, were significantly affected as the coup unfolded.

"Having Incirlik back open is a major thing," the official said. "To say that Incirlik closing wouldn't have a significant impact on our operations is not a true statement."

In the days since, protests near the front gate of Incirlik have called for the United States to vacate the primarily Turkish facility. Social media campaigns have called for American forces to leave.

Despite the public outcry, Dunford reaffirmed Monday that the American presence at Incirlik will continue with strong support from the Turkish government.

## Dismissal of Bergdahl's case sought

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Attorneys for accused Army deserter Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl asked a military judge on Monday to dismiss charges against the soldier, contending the case has been unfairly influenced by the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Comments made by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., about Bergdahl and the controversial swap that freed him from his Taliban captors have made it impossible for the soldier to receive a fair trial, the defense attorneys argue in the motion filed late Monday. They wrote Judge Col. Jeffrey R. Nance should at least limit Bergdahl's potential sentence to no punishment.

Bergdahl, 30, was captured by Taliban fighters in June 2009 after leaving his post in eastern Afghanistan. He was freed in May 2014 after the White House approved the release of five senior-level Taliban detainees to Qatar from the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

In March 2015, the Army charged Bergdahl with desertion and misbehavior before the enemy. He faces a potential sentence of life in prison if convicted of the more serious misbehavior charge.

Defense attorneys — led by civilian Eugene R. Fidell — cited, among other comments McCain has made, an October statement the senator made to reporters in New Hampshire as "impermissible meddling." The comment was made before Bergdahl's charges were referred to a general court-martial in December.

"If it comes out that [Bergdahl] has no punishment, we're going to have a hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee," McCain told a reporter on Oct. 11.

## AFRICOM set for more Libya strikes

BY JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Africa Command is poised to launch more airstrikes in Libya in support of friendly forces conducting an offensive against the Islamic State group, which is holding on to a shrinking coastal stronghold, military officials said.

On Monday, the U.S. mounted two airstrikes in Libya, and Pentagon officials indicated more would be on the way as the U.S. expands its campaign against

the militants holding an enclave around the city of Sirte.

Col. Mark Cheadle, AFRICOM spokesman, said the initial wave of strikes has helped forces aligned with Libya's Government of National Accord advance on the enemy.

"We are supporting a GNA ground operation to liberate Sirte with close air support and we are disrupting Daesh," said Cheadle, using an alternative name for the Islamic State group, which is also known as ISIS or ISIL.

On Tuesday, Italy said it would

consider allowing bases in southern Italy to be used by U.S. forces in the fight against the militants. AFRICOM declined to say whether it has requested such permission or what military assets it intends to bring to bear in the fight in Libya, citing operational security.

"As far as where and when the support would be, we will provide support to GNA-aligned forces, to include key information about the fight in Sirte, and manned and unmanned airstrikes against ISIL-Libya targets inside Sirte," Cheadle said



# Future of wrestling falls to Burroughs

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Jordan Burroughs used his gold-medal moment at the 2012 Olympics in London to emerge as one of wrestling's biggest stars.

A year later, the world's oldest sport turned to Burroughs to help save its future.

"They needed someone who was consistent, who was marketable, who was eloquent enough in their speech and articulate enough to engage with the media, and who was interested in engaging with the fans via social media," Burroughs said. "It was amazing timing for me."

Burroughs' charismatic personality, electric wrestling style and savvy use of social media has made him the face of the sport and one of the biggest

stars the U.S. is sending to the Rio Games.

In fact, he's become the rare wrestler to transcend a sport that in the past often closed itself off to outsiders.

Burroughs has even garnered media attention and endorsements typically reserved for gymnasts, swimmers and track stars — just three years after wrestling briefly was booted from future Olympic games by the IOC in part because it was seen as unappealing to modern viewers.

Burroughs is indeed a whiz online, with over 230,000 followers on Instagram, 170,000 on Facebook and over 140,000 on Twitter attracted in part to his family-friendly persona. The fact that Burroughs always seems to be smiling in a sport where intimidating stares are

ubiquitous has only added to his appeal.

He's especially popular in wrestling-mad Iran, which sent him a traditional Persian blanket after the recent birth of his second child — even though Iranian Hassan Yazdani is one of Burroughs' biggest rivals.

It's a gift that Burroughs keeps on the mantle of his fireplace in Lincoln, Neb.

"We respect his personality, and that's just as important as his athletic skills," United World Wrestling president Nenad Lalovic said. "He became a superstar. He's a great fighter, and he deserves all the plaudits that he gets."

While Burroughs' persona made him a hit outside of wrestling, those within the sport have long been drawn to his perseverance and grit.

Burroughs was a classic underdog, a scrawny high schooler from New Jersey who signed with Nebraska after being overlooked by bigger-name programs.

It took a few years for Burroughs to grow into his body and refine a style highlighted by his "double-leg" takedown, akin to a sack in football.

As a junior, Burroughs hit his stride and cruised to his first NCAA title. He returned two years later, following a serious knee injury, as the best wrestler in the country, going 36-0 while earning universal respect from a wrestling community with a soft spot for kids who emerge from less traditional powers.

Burroughs earned the world's respect just six months later by winning a world championship in his first try.

## Rookie Buescher wins rain-shortened race at Pocono

Associated Press

LONG POND, Pa. — Chris Buescher sat in his Ford, hoping that the fog would stick over Pocono and the cloud over the rookie's middling season would start to lift.

Buescher idled in his car, then stood with his arms folded on pit road.

"I tried not to get my hopes up," he said.

Buescher emerged from the fog to become a surprising winner in Monday's shortened Sprint Cup race at Pocono Raceway. He is now on the verge of being in the mix for NASCAR's championship after not finishing better than 14th all season before Monday.

Imagine a title push that kicks off with Kyle Busch, Jimmie Johnson and little-known Buescher in the field.

"The plan was to always make the Chase," Buescher said. "We're that much closer now."

He's not there yet. Buescher is six points behind David Ragan for 30th to reach the cutoff needed to become eligible for the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

Buescher, who drives for underfunded Front Row Motorsports, was the beneficiary on a rare Monday race postponed a day by rain. With nasty weather punishing the track, NASCAR called the red flag with 22 laps left and parked the cars on pit road. Buescher was as much a spectator in the No. 34 Ford as the few fans left in the stands, though NASCAR let drivers get out of their cars after about 10 minutes as they waited out gloomy conditions.

"I'm a little scared to get out," Buescher said.

No need. He was declared the winner after about an 80-minute delay. He was doused with beer and water in a makeshift Victory Lane celebration inside a garage stall, his Ford covered on rainy pit road instead of bathed in confetti.

Brad Keselowski was second, followed by Regan Smith, Kevin Harvick and Tony Stewart. Jeff Gordon finished 27th driving for the injured Dale Earnhardt Jr.

In order to qualify for the Chase, drivers must rank 30th or better in points. Buescher will need to find a way to climb higher over Ragan in the final five races before the Chase field is set.

Buescher won twice last season in the Xfinity Series and

won the series championship. He will spend 2016 as basically the fourth Jack Roush driver because of a shared technical alliance between the organizations.

He finished 30th or worse 10 times this season. Ragan had Front Row's only victory 118 races ago in fall 2013 at Talladega.

Veteran crew chief Bob Osborne gambled with the decision to keep Buescher on the track while others made pit stops with 28 laps left. Once the cars were halted, Buescher and his crew rooted for the rain and fog to stick around. At one point, the 23-year-old Buescher, a former ARCA champion, rested against a fence and was swarmed by fans and photographers wanting a picture before the race was even called.



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# Lucroy, Bruce among deadline trades

Associated Press

Jonathan Lucroy got a deal he liked, Carlos Beltran joined him in Texas and Jay Bruce and Rich Hill also moved Monday during an 18-swap frenzy at the trade deadline.

Matt Moore, Francisco Liriano and Joe Smith found new homes, too, as playoff contenders stocked up for the stretch.

"That's what we play for. Those are the moments we want to be in," Moore said after NL West-leading San Francisco got the lefty from last-place Tampa Bay. "For someone to reach out and come get me, it's a really good feeling."

Monday was the busiest deadline day since at least 1995, eclipsing the 15 deals made on the final day for non-waiver trades in 2010 and 2015, according to Major League Baseball.

Teams had until 4 p.m. EDT to make trades without waivers. From now, no player can be dealt unless he goes unclaimed by everyone else.

The AL West-leading Rangers made two major moves.

After Lucroy used his lim-

ited no-trade clause to block a deal to Cleveland, the All-Star catcher was sent to Texas.

"Now, moving on to the @Rangers let's take this bad boy to the 'ship! Really excited and can't wait to get after it!" he posted on Twitter.

The 30-year-old Lucroy is batting .299 with 13 homers and 50 RBIs this season.

Texas also got Beltran, a proven postseason star, from the New York Yankees for righty Dillon Tate, the fourth overall pick in the 2015 amateur draft, and two other pitching prospects.

"I think as a player, you know that this moment could happen. But when it happens, it hits you," Beltran said.

Twice before in his career, Beltran was traded in mid-season to a team with playoff hopes. Like the Rangers, Beltran has been to the World Series but never won the crown.

The Yankees kept reworking their roster, trying to turn the best parts of a .500 team into a bright future. They had already traded relief aces Aroldis Chapman and Andrew Miller leading up to the deadline.

"We're kind of in unfamiliar territory with the Yankees," first baseman Mark Teixeira said.

"That's life. I mean, we've had a nice run the last eight years," he said.

As always, relievers were in demand.

The Giants aimed to bolster a shaky bullpen by getting Will Smith from Milwaukee, Boston got Fernando Abad from Minnesota and the NL Central-leading Cubs obtained sidearming righty Joe Smith from the Angels.

The Cubs previously got lefties Chapman and Mike Montgomery for their bullpen.

"That was an area we thought we could make some changes," general manager Jed Hoyer said. "Adding a closer, a left-hander and then adding a guy like Smith who can be a right-handed specialist, we felt like those were areas that would improve our team and improve the mix of our bullpen."

The banged-up Mets acquired Bruce, the All-Star outfielder who leads the NL with 80 RBIs, from Cincinnati for

infielder Dilson Herrera and minor league lefty Max Wotell.

The Mets also got pitcher Jon Niese, who spent his first eight years in New York, from Pittsburgh for reliever Antonio Bastardo.

The contending Los Angeles Dodgers fortified their rotation by getting Rich Hill along with outfielder Josh Reddick from Oakland for three pitching prospects.

Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw is on the disabled list with back trouble, and they don't know when he'll be back. The 36-year-old Hill is 9-3 with a 2.25 ERA in 14 starts and on the DL because of a blister on the middle finger of his throwing hand that hasn't healed.

Toronto was busy, making three deals. A day after falling out of the AL East lead, they got Liriano from Pittsburgh.

"Where he's been and what he's accomplished his entire career, we feel like gives us a chance to have someone who could be pitching in Game 2, 3 or 4 of a World Series run," Blue Jays general manager Ross Atkins said.

## Royals' Duffy fans 16, allows just one hit

The Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Danny Duffy pitched eight innings of one-hit ball and had a franchise-record 16 strikeouts to lead the Kansas City Royals to a 3-0 win over the Tampa Bay Rays on Monday night.

Duffy (7-1) flirted with the Royals' first no-hitter in nearly 25 years before giving up a line-drive double to Desmond Jennings leading off the Tampa Bay eighth.

Jennings came off the disabled list Monday after missing all of July with a strained hamstring.

Kendrys Morales' 18th home run, a towering shot over the center field wall off Rays starter Chris Archer (5-15), got the Royals on the scoreboard in the seventh. Kelvin Herrera pitched the ninth for his second save.

Alcides Escobar and Lorenzo Cain drove in runs in the eighth for the Royals, who won for only the second time in 10 games.

**Yankees 6, Mets 5, (10):** Starlin Castro hit a sacrifice fly in the 10th inning and the

Yankees hardly resembled a team resigned to fading away after selling off their stars at the trade deadline, rallying past the Mets in their Subway Series opener.

Didi Gregorius hit a tying single with two outs in the eighth and new closer Dellin Betances worked out of a major jam for his first save this season. Hours after trading slugger Carlos Beltran and pitcher Ivan Nova before the non-waiver deadline, the Yankees snapped a four-game slide.

**Twins 12, Indians 5:** Rookie Max Kepler had three two-run homers and six RBIs, leading visiting Minnesota over Cleveland.

The German-born Kepler homered off All-Star Danny Salazar in the first and third innings and hit another off Cody Anderson in the sixth. Kepler became the first Twin to homer three times in a game since Justin Morneau in 2007. He also had a single.

**Cubs 5, Marlins 0:** Kyle Hendricks scattered just seven hits in his second career shutout, providing host Chicago's bullpen a needed breather.

After a wild, 12-inning win a night ear-

lier in which manager Joe Maddon used 22 players, Hendricks (10-7) threw 123 pitches and lowered his ERA to 2.22.

**Astros 2, Blue Jays 1 (14):** Carlos Correa hit an RBI double in the bottom of the 14th inning off Scott Feldman hours after Feldman was traded to Toronto.

Jose Altuve, who homered earlier in the game, opened the 14th with a single to shallow left field off Feldman (5-4), and Correa followed with his hit off the fence in right-center field.

**Red Sox 2, Mariners 1:** Mookie Betts homered to lead off the ninth inning, Craig Kimbrel got his 18th save in his return from knee surgery for visiting Boston.

**Nationals 14, Diamondbacks 1:** At Phoenix, Anthony Rendon drove in three runs, Daniel Murphy went 3-for-3 and Stephen Strasburg got his major league-leading 15th win.

**Padres 7, Brewers 3:** Yangervis Solarte drove in two runs, Travis Jankowski had three hits and two walks and host San Diego beat Milwaukee.