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Sailor in Iran video appeals punishment

By TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lt. David Nartker, the commander of two U.S. patrol boats captured in January by Iran, will appeal his punishment for his role in the incident, the Navy confirmed Thursday.

Nartker was the most senior of the 10 sailors seized Jan. 12 along with their riverine command boats after the vessels crossed into Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. During the sailors' overnight detention, Nartker was filmed apologizing for the incident, among other images spread on Twitter and Iranian television for propaganda purposes.

However, the Navy has not said why Nartker is being punished or what punishment he is appealing.

U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaii has 30 days to review Nartker's appeal, a defense official said on the condition of anonymity.

Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Cragg, a spokeswoman for Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, which oversees the riverine boats, said the appeal could alter Nartker's punishment.

"Following (nonjudicial) proceedings, members may appeal the findings to a higher authority. The appeal authority may set aside the punishment, decrease its severity or deny the appeal, but may not increase the severity of the punishment. To comment any further on an ongoing process would be inappropriate," Cragg said.

An investigation by the Navy into the incident was released June 30 and found a string of missteps that led to the seizure, including the crews were not prepared for the mission, had recently failed navigation tests, did not have enough sleep and were using boats with broken equipment such as radios. The nine male sailors and one female sailor aboard the boats were detained overnight and

interrogated by their Iranians captors.

On Aug. 4, Nartker and another sailor, who was not identified, appeared before Rear Adm. Frank Morneau, commander of the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, to hear the charges against them, according to the defense official.

All charges were dropped against the unidentified sailor. However, Nartker was notified he would face punishment, which could include confinement to quarters, forfeiture of pay or a career-ending letter of reprimand.

The appearance before Morneau, known more commonly as a Captain's Mast, is a way to discipline officers or enlisted personnel for minor infractions that would not require a court-martial, according to the Navy.

The fallout from the incident has already resulted in the removal of the commodore and executive officer responsible for the vessels — Capt. Kyle

Moses and Cmdr. Eric Rasch. A third officer in charge of the detachment in Kuwait who was not named was also relieved of command.

Nine Navy personnel were considered for various levels of punishment, Cragg said.

In a statement provided to Stars and Stripes, Naval Expeditionary Combat Command outlined the completed hearings and the punishments levied to date: Four Navy officers went to Admiral's Mast. Two received punitive letters of reprimand for violating Article 90, disobedience of a superior commissioned officer, and Article 92, dereliction in the performance of duties, of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

One Navy officer was found not guilty of violating Article 92, and accountability actions for the fourth Navy officer have not yet been completed.

Two enlisted personnel received a punitive letter of reprimand for violating Article 92.

3 Navy pilots receive medals for valor

The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — Three pilots who saved an E-2C Hawkeye aircraft from crashing into the Atlantic Ocean following a March arresting-cable break on the flight deck of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower have received the Armed Forces Air Medal for valor, the Navy said Thursday.

Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Browning, Lt. Cmdr. Kellen Smith and Lt. Matthew Halliwell were awarded for reacting in time to prevent the loss of the Hawkeye, which is assigned to the Norfolk, Va.-based Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 123, or "Screwtops." The award is presented for heroic actions

or meritorious service while participating in aerial flight.

Halliwell was the pilot of the Hawkeye on March 18 when it attempted an arrested landing on the Ike. The steel cable broke and backlashed, injuring eight sailors on the deck.

Video of the incident shows a harrowing few seconds during which the aircraft disappears below the level of the Ike's deck. The Hawkeye got as close as 10 feet from the water before recovering and flying back to Norfolk Naval Station.

Smith was the Hawkeye's co-pilot and aircraft controller during the incident, the Navy said in a news release Thursday. He has been flying for 12

years.

"It all happened in about eight seconds," Smith said in the release. "While we were decelerating we heard a loud snap. When we would normally be coming to a stop, we weren't. Our years of training kicked in and we reacted on instinct."

The Hawkeye is an turboprop aircraft used for "command and control." It is recognizable by its 24-foot-diameter radar rotodome, a large disc attached to its upper fuselage.

Smith and Browning remain with the squadron, which left with the Ike on a seven-month deployment June 1. Halliwell is now working as a Hawkeye instructor, the Navy said.

Carrier Ford's radar system passes test

A radar system onboard the aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford has successfully passed its test, shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls Industries reported Wednesday.

The Precision Aircraft Landing System, or PALS, provides final approach and guidance for aircraft to land on the flight deck. The test required an F-18 Super Hornet with special instruments to fly within about 500 feet of the Ford, which is pierside at HII's Newport News, Va., shipyard. The aircraft made 10 passes to verify the radar system and its subsystems were working properly.

From the wire reports

Clinton seizing opportunities

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hillary Clinton is seizing opportunities presented by a volatile presidential race to expand her base of support heading into the fall, seeking to position the Democratic Party for a sweeping victory in November.

As Donald Trump struggles through a second week of self-inflicted stumbles, the Democratic nominee's campaign has started to push into Republican territory by courting some of the party's core supporters and expanding her campaign's operations into traditionally red states.

"The map favors us and, in a way, the dynamics right now favor us," said Joel Benenson, Clinton's senior strategist. "The more places you can make them play defense, the better off we are."

Throughout his presidential bid, the Republican nominee has used controversy to draw attention back to his campaign. It's a strategy that initially worried some Clinton aides, who feared he would drown out their candidate's general-election message.

But with three months to Election Day, Clinton aides say they see more advantages than liabilities as Trump continues to say the politically unimaginable. Critics slammed Trump this week for appearing to suggest that gun-rights supporters could shoot Clinton to prevent her from appointing federal judges as president, and he drew criticism for standing by a false claim that President Barack Obama founded the Islamic State group.

Trump: 'ISIS founder' claims were sarcasm

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — After days of alleging repeatedly that President Barack Obama literally founded the Islamic State group, Donald Trump abruptly shifted tone on Friday and insisted his widely debunked claim had been sarcastic.

Trump, in an early-morning post on Twitter, blamed CNN for reporting "so seriously" that he had called Obama and Democrat Hillary Clinton the extremist group's founder and most valuable player. He added, in all capital letters: "THEY DON'T GET SARCASM?"

Only hours before, the billionaire businessman had restated the allegation with no mention of sarcasm, telling supporters at a rally in Kissimmee, Fla., that "I've been saying that Barack Obama is the founder." It's a claim that Trump repeated at least a dozen times in three cities since debuting the attack-line Wednesday during a rally outside Fort Lauderdale.

In fact, Trump had refused to clarify that he was being rhetorical or sarcastic when asked about the remark during interviews. On Tuesday, when conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt tried to steer Trump toward explaining he really meant Obama's Mideast policies created conditions that the Islamic State group exploited, Trump wanted none of it.

"No, I meant he's the founder of ISIS. I do," Trump said, using another acronym for the extremist group. Told that

Obama was trying to defeat the militants, Trump added, "I don't care. He was the founder."

The controversy over the Islamic State has dogged the campaign in a week in which he has been trying to highlight his economic proposals. Trump is encountering worrying signs as his campaign moves into the November election. Clinton's lead over Trump in national polls has widened in recent days, while a growing number of fellow Republicans have declared they won't support their own party's nominee.

It wasn't immediately clear why Trump altered course Friday and said the whole notion was sarcastic. But the allegation had elicited fresh concerns about Trump's relationship with the truth and his preparedness to be commander in chief.

Clinton's campaign has cried foul and accused Trump of mimicking Russian President Vladimir Putin's talking points, and the Democratic Party had asked for an apology.

Yet even as he worked to quell one campaign controversy, Trump appeared to spark another late Wednesday when said he was "fine" with trying Americans suspected of terrorism in military tribunals at the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

Federal law generally prohibits U.S. citizens from being prosecuted in military tribunals.

Destroyer to be named after legendary Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A legendary and much honored figure in Marine Corps history is slated to receive another tribute next week at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus planned to visit the base Tuesday to speak about a future destroyer being named after the late Marine Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone. Later that day, he's expected to travel to Treasure Island to announce that an upcoming Navy replenishment oiler will be named for another departed leader — gay rights activist Harvey Milk.

Basilone already had a warship named in his honor; an older-generation destroyer that was decommissioned in 1977.

Basilone was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism during the World War II Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942. During that fighting, he and his badly depleted unit somehow held the line against waves of Japanese soldiers. When shells ran dangerously low, he stole past enemy lines to replenish critical ammunition supplies until help could arrive. After the fusillade of bullets and hand grenades sputtered to a close, nearly 40 dead enemies lay sprawled

across Lunga Ridge, where Basilone had staked his position. Not long after, he turned up at the medical tent to check on the wounded. Basilone's extraordinary actions helped fend off the enemy long enough on the tiny spit of land called Henderson Field. American reinforcements swooped in, and the Japanese soon retreated.

With control of Guadalcanal and its critical airfield, the Allies were able to gain a foothold within striking distance of the Empire of Japan. Equally important, the victory prevented the Japanese from disrupting the critical supply chain be-

tween Australia and the U.S.

Military brass knew what they had in "Manila" John Basilone: handsome and a ready smile, not yet 26 and so-nicknamed for his constant stories about his time in the Philippines.

Basilone was promoted to gunnery sergeant and summoned stateside. He was asked to serve his country another way: marketing war bonds. Basilone's days were filled with speeches and parades.

He returned to war in 1945, and was killed on Iwo Jima. As a result of his actions there, he received the Navy Cross posthumously.

A-Rod helps Yankees rally past Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Alex Rodriguez drove in a run with a bases-loaded dribbler, capping a three-run rally in the eighth inning that lifted the New York Yankees over the Red Sox 4-2 on Thursday night and sent the booed designated hitter out of Boston with one last victory.

Rodriguez is set to play his final game for the Yankees on Friday night at home against Tampa Bay. The 41-year-old designated hitter will then be released and become an adviser and instructor for the club.

Rodriguez was 0-for-4 and loudly jeered throughout the game that turned in the Yankees' favor on a crucial fielding mistake that allowed them to overcome a 2-1 deficit.

Rodriguez lined out, popped out and struck out before his tapper in front of the plate in the eighth allowed Brett Gardner to score from third and put New York up 4-2.

In 1994, Rodriguez was a teenager with Seattle when he got an infield single at Fenway Park for his first major league hit.

Dellin Betances earned his third save, striking out Dustin Pedroia and Xander Bogaerts with runners at the corners to end it. Luis Cessa (2-0) pitched two scoreless innings. Brad Ziegler (0-3) got the loss.

Cubs 4, Cardinals 3 (11): Anthony Rizzo drew a bases-loaded walk from Zach Duke with two outs in the 11th inning and Chicago beat visiting St. Louis for its 10th consecutive victory.

Pinch-hitters Willson Contreras and Jorge Soler led off with singles against Duke (2-1) and Dexter Fowler walked to load the bases with one out. Kris Bryant struck out before Rizzo took a 3-1 pitch inside to give the Cubs their longest winning streak since getting 12 straight in 2001.

Orioles 9, Athletics 6: Mark Trumbo hit a grand slam for his major league-leading 32nd homer and drove in five runs to help visiting Baltimore beat Oakland.

The Orioles had been shut out for 17 straight innings and lost their lead in the AL East following three consecutive one-

run losses in the series before Trumbo sparked them.

Diamondbacks 9, Mets 0: Last-place Arizona rattled host New York's Noah Syndergaard with four more stolen bases, then broke it open in a six-run sixth inning that included Chris Owings' bases-loaded triple.

Arizona had 13 stolen bases in the series — three more than the Diamondbacks' previous mark for any series and the most in a three-game series against the Mets. Runners have swiped 36 bases in 40 tries against Syndergaard this year and are 51-for-56 against him in his career, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Royals 2, White Sox 1: Danny Duffy pitched his first complete game to win his eighth straight decision, and Cheslor Cuthbert had two hits and drove in a run in Kansas City's victory over visiting Chicago.

Astros 15-10, Twins 7-2: Evan Gattis homered and had four RBIs, Carlos Correa went deep for the third straight game and visiting Houston beat Minnesota in the second game to complete a sweep of a day-night

doubleheader.

Houston had 16 hits after a season-high 19 in a afternoon victory. The doubleheader was necessitated by a rainout Wednesday night, a game Minnesota led 5-0 in the third before the storms hit.

Rockies 12, Rangers 9: Pinch-hitter Carlos Gonzalez had a bases-clearing double in a five-run, eighth-inning rally and visiting Colorado held on to end AL West-leading Texas' winning streak at five games.

Indians 14, Angels 4: Mike Napoli was 4-for-4 with a homer and four RBIs, Lonnie Chisenhall drove in four and host Cleveland routed Los Angeles in game delayed by rain in the fourth and seventh innings.

Pirates 4, Padres 0: Rookie Jameson Taillon pitched three-hit ball for eight innings, David Freese drove in two runs and Pittsburgh beat visiting San Diego.

Brewers 11, Braves 3: Matt Garza won his third straight start, and Chris Carter, Scooter Gennett and Hernan Perez homered in host Milwaukee's victory over Atlanta.

Sanchez makes his case to win starting job in Denver

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mark Sanchez made a strong opening argument for the Denver Broncos' starting quarterback job, throwing for 99 yards and a touchdown in the first quarter, and the defending Super Bowl champions beat the Chicago Bears 22-0 in the preseason opener on Thursday night.

Sanchez came through with just the sort of performance he needed if he's going to beat out Trevor Siemian.

He completed 10 of 13 passes

in the first quarter and led a game-opening 76-yard touchdown drive. He was intercepted on the Broncos' second possession when Jerrell Freeman picked off a tipped pass.

But overall? Not bad.

Sanchez maintained his cool against Chicago's pressure and kept the opening drive going by completing three third-down passes — including a 32-yard TD to a wide open Demaryius Thomas along the right side.

Patriots 34, Saints 22: At Foxborough, Mass., Jimmy

Garoppolo made his preseason debut, spreading the ball around for 168 yards, and Jamie Collins added a 43-yard interception return for a touchdown as New England beat New Orleans.

Jets 17, Jaguars 13: At East Rutherford, N.J., Blake Bortles led Jacksonville on two scoring drives, the second capped by Chris Ivory's 1-yard run against his former team, in a loss to the New York Jets in the preseason opener for both teams.

Ravens 22, Panthers 19:

Cam Newton directed a 68-yard drive in his only series, then stepped aside as visiting Carolina lost to Baltimore.

Eagles 17, Buccaneers 9: Host Philadelphia needed 97 seconds to score its only touchdowns in beating sloppy Tampa Bay in the preseason opener for both teams.

Falcons 23, Redskins 17: Making a successful return to his first NFL home, Matt Schaub passed for 179 yards, leading three scoring drives, and host Atlanta beat Washington.



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Simone Biles stakes claim to greatness

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Simone Biles and Aly Raisman stood side by side in Rio Olympic Arena, clutching each other while waiting for the inevitable coronation.

When the floor exercise judges validated what Raisman and every other gymnast has known for years — that Biles is the greatest of her generation and perhaps of all time — the U.S. Olympic team captain let her good friend go.

Suddenly Biles was alone in the spotlight, the normally giggly teenager fighting back tears as she waved to the family that raised her, the coaches that molded her and the sport she is redefining.

The secret is out. The pressure is gone. Biles belongs to the world now.

And history too.

Dynamic on vault. Effortless on beam. Jaw-dropping on floor. Brilliant as ever. And now, finally, an Olympic champion.

Biles soared to the all-around title on Thursday night, putting the gap between herself and everyone else on full display for the whole world to see. Her total of 62.198 was well clear of Raisman, who finished her remarkable comeback with a sil-

ver medal, and Russia's Aliya Mustafina.

"It doesn't even feel real," Biles said. "To me I'm just the same Simone ... But I feel the same. I just feel like I did my job tonight."

One that she does better than anyone else.

Biles became the fourth straight American woman to capture the all-around and fifth overall. She and Raisman joined Nastia Liukin and Shawn Johnson in 2008 as the only U.S. gymnasts to win gold and silver in the same Olympic final.

"I told her before today, I want you to win and I want second," Raisman said. "(...) I knew going into tonight I was going to get the silver medal because I was going to hit four events."

That's because gold has been out of reach for everyone but Biles for three years and counting. She arrived in Brazil with 14 world championship medals — 10 of them gold — with routines astonishing in their mix of ambition and precision.

One last test awaited in Rio, a contest not so much between Biles and the rest of the field but between herself and the outsized expectations her dominance has created.

Anything less than head-

ing back to her family's home in Spring, Texas, with a fistful of golds would be seen as a disappointment. Biles earned the first one on Tuesday while serving as the exclamation point to retiring national team coordinator Martha Karolyi's going away party.

While Biles insisted she's never looked ahead during her long run at the top, that's not exactly true.

A portion of her floor exercise routine — the one that includes her signature tumbling pass — is set to Brazilian music that would fit right at home in the street right outside Olympic Park. It's not a coincidence.

The girl adopted along with her younger sister by their grandparents as toddlers and discovered by coach Aimee Boorman's mother during a field trip to the gym is a wonder, even if it always didn't seem that way.

Biles' talent is unmistakable, but it took time to harness. At one point Boorman pulled Biles aside and gave her a choice. Biles could continue to work out 20 hours a week, attend high school and eventually become a college gymnast or she could explore the elite level, a move that included more intensive training and being home

schooled.

Boorman asked more than once. And every time the answer came back the same: let's go for it.

"I wanted to see how far I could go in this sport," she said.

A decision that led to years of sacrifices and ultimately, the biggest night of her life.

Though Mustafina led through two rotations, it was a mirage. Balance beam and floor exercise — where Biles is the defending world champion — lay in wait. She went back in front with a 15.433 on beam — and capped it with a 15.933 on floor that national team coordinator Martha Karolyi called "very close to perfection."

Only the judges don't hand out perfect scores anymore. Maybe one day Biles will make them reconsider. She'll have her chance next week when she can add three more golds during the event finals.

Five trips to the top of the podium in one games is something gymnastics has never seen.

Then again, doing things gymnastics has never seen is what Biles does best.

Harrison successfully defends judo title

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — An Olympic champion yet again, Kayla Harrison now has a chance to become an even bigger star.

Harrison earned her second straight gold medal in judo on Thursday, winning the 78-kilogram category at the Rio de Janeiro Games. After the bout, she was asked about turning her attention to a professional career in mixed martial arts.

She wouldn't say.

"I'm just going to focus on being two-time Olympic champion and decide about punching people in the face at a later date," said Harrison, a friend of

MMA star Ronda Rousey.

Harrison said she has received multiple offers from various organizations asking her to fight in MMA competitions but has so far turned them all down. Her coach, Jimmy Pedro, said he doubted that she would turn pro, adding she was "too nice of a person" to do mixed martial arts.

After Harrison won the Olympic title in London, she vowed to retire from the competitive grind of the Japanese martial art. She wanted to focus on other things, like becoming a firefighter.

That goal, however, "kind of dissolved" after the last games,

she said. She is now planning to spend more time working on her foundation, Fearless, which aims to help victims of sexual abuse. Harrison herself endured years of sexual abuse by a previous judo coach.

Harrison became the first American to defend an Olympic judo title when she forced Audrey Tcheumeo of France to tap out in the final.

With just six seconds left in an otherwise scoreless final, Harrison trapped Tcheumeo in a move that threatened to break her arm, forcing her to submit and handing the American an automatic ippon victory.

Tcheumeo advanced to the

final by beating Myra Aguiar of Brazil. Harrison and Aguiar had been expected to meet in the final.

"Judo is a sport where the margin of error is slim to none," Pedro said. "For Kayla to (defend her title), really is epic."

Aguiar and Anamari Velensek won bronze medals.

In the men's 100-kilogram division, Lukas Krpalek of the Czech Republic won the country's first judo gold after defeating Elmar Gasimov of Azerbaijan.

The men's bronze medals were won by Cyrille Maret of France and Ryunosuke Haga of Japan.