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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Big gains against Calif. wildfire

Associated Press

PHELAN, Calif. — The most successful day yet in fighting a massive and ferocious wildfire in Southern California also came with news of the blaze's destruction.

The blaze was 40 percent contained by the end of Friday, and many evacuees were allowed to return to their homes in the city of Phelan, officials said.

"It's looking very good," said fire spokesman Brad Pitassi, adding that they expected more big gains and more residents returning home on Saturday.

It was revealed, however, that 96 homes and 213 outbuildings were destroyed by the blaze, most of them in its first fierce days on Tuesday and Wednesday.

More damage might still be discovered as firefighters pore through the aftermath of the fire that had burned 58 square miles about 60 miles east of Los Angeles in San Bernardino County.

Johanna Santore was among those left homeless. She was running an errand Tuesday when the fire charged through her neighborhood. She tried to rush home to rescue the family's four dogs, six cats and hamster but was blocked by closed roads.

A group of animal rescue volunteers found the house in smoldering ruins — with no signs of the pets.

"I'm actually feeling numb," said Santore, who fled with her husband and granddaughter to an evacuation center.

A prolonged drought has transformed swaths of California into tinderboxes ready to ignite. Several other wildfires were burning in the state, including a blaze in rural Santa Barbara County that prompted the evacuation of a pair of campgrounds.

In the southern Sierra Nevada, another blaze feeding on dense timber in the Sequoia National Forest forced the evacuation of several tiny hamlets.

Another blaze burned in Santa Barbara County and forced the evacuation of a pair of campgrounds.

In mountains north of San Francisco, a 6-square-mile blaze was 75 percent contained after destroying 299 structures, including 175 homes and eight businesses, in the working-class community of Lower Lake.

At the height of the fire east of Los Angeles, some 82,000 people were under evacuation orders. Many residents have been allowed to return home, but fire officials could not say when all the evacuations would be lifted.

No deaths have been reported.

Volunteers who drove to the Santore house found a moonscape. Some of the neighbors' homes were still standing, seemingly intact. Before the fire roared through, Santore had re-decorated her granddaughter's room in a zebra pattern and added a loft bed.

"We don't plan on rebuilding," she said. "We plan on leaving."

Sailor gets jail time for sub photos

The Hartford (Conn.) Courant

BRIDGEPORT — A U.S. Navy submariner accused of photographing his boat's secret nuclear propulsion system was sentenced to one year in prison followed by six months of home confinement Friday in a case critics say illustrates a double standard in the way high and low government employees are treated for mishandling classified information.

In an argument for leniency, lawyers for machinist mate Kristian Saucier, who served on the Groton, Conn.-based nuclear-powered attack submarine USS Alexandria, pointed to a half-dozen or so government-secrets cases that ended in milder punishment or no punishment at all, including that of Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

Last month, FBI director James Comey questioned Clinton's judgment and accused her of carelessness in her handling of classified and secret email correspondence while secretary of state. But he recommended — and the Justice Department agreed — against prosecution, based on what he said was the absence of evidence that Clinton intentionally transmitted or willfully mishandled classified material.

Federal prosecutors dismissed Saucier's claim about disparate treatment, accusing his lawyers of "grasping at highly imaginative and speculative straws in trying to further draw a comparison to the matter of Secretary Hillary Clinton based upon virtually no understanding and knowledge of the facts involved, the information at issue, not to mention any issues (of) intent and knowledge."

La. residents searching for living, dead

Associated Press

ST. AMANT, La. — Louisiana continues to dig itself out from devastating floods, with search parties going door to door looking for survivors or bodies trapped by flooding so powerful in some cases that it disturbed the dead and sent caskets floating from cemeteries.

At least 13 people died in the flooding that swept through parts of southern Louisiana after torrential rains lashed the region. As the waters have slowly receded in many areas, the hard work of rebuilding lives is just ramping up, with people cleaning out their homes

while others struggle to find a place to stay.

In a uniquely Louisiana problem, some families are also trying to reburial family members whose caskets were unearthed by the floods.

At the Plainview Cemetery in Denham Springs, relatives gathered to see what had become of their plots, only to find a chaotic mess with some vaults overturned and in other cases only empty outlines of graves remaining.

"This is bad, it's just bad. You can't even come to see people. You don't know where they're at," said Ravonte Thomas, whose relative's casket was

missing.

In southern Louisiana, the water table is so high that people generally cannot be buried 6 feet under. Caskets are often encased in vaults that are partially above ground, said Zeb Johnson, of the Calcasieu Parish coroner's office, who has extensive experience with recovering caskets scattered by flooding or hurricanes.

Johnson said about 10 caskets unearthed in nearby Jefferson Davis Parish will have to be reburied once the water goes down. In East Baton Rouge Parish, at least two cemeteries have reported disruptions, according to the coroner's office.

Turkey pushes for cleric's extradition

BY AYSE WIETING
Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Turkey wants the United States to speed up the extradition of U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom it accuses of orchestrating last month's coup attempt, the country's prime minister said Saturday.

Binali Yildirim was speaking with foreign media in Istanbul days before a delegation of U.S. Justice Department and State Department officials are due to arrive in Turkey to discuss its demand that Gulen be returned to Turkey to face trial for the brutal July 15

coup. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden is also scheduled to visit next week.

Washington has asked for evidence of Gulen's involvement and says the regular extradition process must take its course. Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, has denied knowledge or involvement in the coup attempt that led to over 270 deaths.

Yildirim said Turkey and the United States have an extradition agreement and the process should not be delayed.

"We want the process to be accelerated," Yildirim said. "This man was the leader of

the coup. What are we waiting for?"

"The United States has every kind of information on the incidents this terror organization and its leader have been involved in," he added. "Our request is clear: that he be temporarily detained and then returned."

Yildirim said Turkey sent Washington 84 files on Gulen before the coup and four files after it.

The Turkish government has launched a massive crackdown on Gulen's supporters in the aftermath of the coup, raising concerns among Turkey's allies and human rights groups.

Some 35,000 people have been detained for questioning and more than 17,000 of them have been formally arrested to face trial, including soldiers, police, judges and journalists.

Tens of thousands more people with suspected links to Gulen have been suspended or dismissed from their jobs in the judiciary, media, education, health care, military and local government. Yildirim said the coup has prompted a restructuring of Turkey's intelligence services, adding that both its domestic and foreign intelligence services will be strengthened and placed under one umbrella organization

SEAL has to pay \$6.6M to US over bin Laden raid book

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The former Navy SEAL who wrote a book about his role in the raid that killed Osama bin Laden will pay the government more than \$6.6 million for violating nondisclosure agreements and publishing without getting the document cleared by the Defense Department, according to federal court documents.

Matt Bissonnette, who wrote "No Easy Day" under the pseudonym Mark Owen, will give the U.S. government all profits and royalties from the book or movie rights.

The proceeds already total more than \$6.6 million.

He will have four years to pay the bulk

of that.

The payments were outlined in settlement documents filed in U.S. District Court in Virginia.

According to the settlement, Bissonnette also has 30 days to pay \$100,000 from the proceeds of presentations he gave using slides that were not approved by the department.

The book triggered a Justice Department probe, including claims it contained classified material.

Bissonnette had signed nondisclosure agreements during his service as a SEAL, and he took part in a number of highly secret operations including the bin Laden raid.

Under the agreement, Bissonnette said he would acknowledge he made a mistake

by failing to submit the book for pre-publication review.

And in exchange for the payments, the U.S. government has dismissed other liability claims.

Justice Department spokeswoman Nicole Navas said the agreement doesn't discredit Bissonnette's military service but reinforces that servicemembers comply with the nondisclosure documents they sign.

Bissonnette has written a follow-up — also under the name Owen — detailing his journey as a member of SEAL Team 6. That book, "No Hero: the Evolution of a Navy SEAL," did go through the proper channels and a few sections were redacted.

Air Force: 4 hurt in chopper crash

LAS VEGAS — The Air Force says a helicopter on a training mission crashed near Las Vegas and four crewmembers were treated for minor injuries.

The HH-60 attached to Nellis Air Force Base went down about 10 p.m. PDT Thursday on the Nevada Test and Train-

ing Range, situated near Las Vegas.

The military says the four crewmembers were taken to a medical facility and treated for minor injuries.

No further information was immediately released on their conditions or on how the crash occurred.

Nellis officials say there is no connection to another crash several hours earlier during which a pilot ejected with

minor injuries.

Submarine, support vessel collide

BANGOR, Wash. — The Navy says a ballistic-missile submarine and a support vessel collided off the coast of Washington state.

There were no injuries from the Thursday evening incident in the Strait of Juan de Fuca in-

volving the USS Louisiana and the offshore support vessel.

In a statement the Navy said the collision occurred during routine operations.

Damage assessments are being conducted and both vessels returned to port under their own power — the support vessel to Port Angeles, Wash., and the submarine to Naval Base Kitsap.

From The Associated Press

Romo, Prescott lead Dallas over Miami

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Tony Romo led a touchdown drive in his preseason debut once the Dallas offense stopped committing holding penalties, rookie backup quarterback Dak Prescott had a strong encore and Ryan Tannehill finally got the Miami Dolphins moving.

Alfred Morris finished the second of Romo's two possessions with a 15-yard scoring run before Prescott ran for two touchdowns and threw for two scores, including another one to Dez Bryant, in the Cowboys' 41-14 exhibition victory Friday night.

Tannehill had two scoring tosses to Kenny Stills.

Dallas (1-1) had three holding penalties in the first five plays of an opening drive that stalled. Then Romo completed all three passes, including a pair to trusty tight end Jason Witten, before the scoring run from Morris, who had 13 carries for 85

yards.

Romo was 4 of 5 for 49 yards, and the Dallas offense had 300 yards at halftime.

"It was a good start. We needed that," Witten said. "It's been a long offseason. We have Tony leading the way. We had a lot of energy."

Tannehill, who played late into the first half with the Dolphins (1-1) trying to move past a rough opener for the first-team offense last week, had scoring passes of 13 and 3 yards to Stills. Tannehill led another drive inside the 5 that ended on downs and finished 12 of 20 for 162 yards.

Prescott has two touchdowns passes in each of the two preseason games and is 22 of 27 for 338 yards without an interception after completing his first eight passes following a 10-of-12 showing in his NFL debut against the Los Angeles Rams last week.

Redskins 22, Jets 18: Even though host Washington rested several key starters, it couldn't avoid injuries in their second preseason game.

With quarterback Kirk Cousins, receiver DeSean Jackson and cornerback Josh Norman watching from the sideline, top running back Matt Jones left in the first quarter of the Redskins' 22-18 victory over the New York Jets with a sprained left shoulder.

"We'll continue to get him checked out, get rehab and hopefully it won't be too long," Redskins coach Jay Gruden said. "It's a little upsetting, but I think he's going to be OK. I don't think it's going to be a long injury."

Chargers 19, Cardinals 3: San Diego didn't score an offensive touchdown and it didn't matter against visiting Arizona on Friday night.

The Chargers forged ahead early and cruised past the Cardinals, 19-3.

With Carson Palmer limited to three series and Philip Rivers not playing, the first half was mostly a competition between veteran backup quarterbacks Kellen Clemens and Drew Stanton.

Astros recover from rough start to top Orioles

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Jose Altuve homered and had five RBIs, and the Houston Astros beat the Baltimore Orioles 15-8 on Friday night despite allowing four home runs in the first inning.

The Orioles became the first team in the modern era (since 1900) to open a game with four home runs before making an out. Adam Jones hit Collin McHugh's first pitch into the seats in left field and Hyun Soo Kim singled before Manny Machado, Chris Davis and Mark Trumbo homered in succession.

Indians 3, Blue Jays 2: Tyler Naquin hit a game-ending inside-the-park homer, sprinting around the bases to cap a two-run rally in the ninth inning as host Cleveland stunned Toronto.

Athletics 9, White Sox 0:

Kendall Graveman (9-8) faced one batter over the minimum while throwing a two-hitter, Kris Davis hit his 31st home run and visiting Oakland beat Chicago to hand James Shields (5-15) his latest loss.

Rangers 6, Rays 2: Adrian Beltre led off consecutive innings with home runs and Cole Hamels (13-4) didn't give up a hit until the sixth in visiting Texas' victory over Tampa Bay.

Yankees 7, Angels 0: New York hit four solo home runs and Masahiro Tanaka (10-4) allowed five hits in 7²/₃ innings in their win over host Los Angeles.

Reds 9, Dodgers 2: Joey Votto hit a three-run homer, relief pitcher Michael Lorenzen also had a three-run shot, and host Cincinnati beat Los Angeles for the first time in 10 games.

Cardinals 4, Phillies 3 (11): Randal Grichuk homered early,

then hit an RBI double in the 11th inning that sent visiting St. Louis past Philadelphia for its fifth straight victory.

Marlins 6, Pirates 5: Robert Andino hit a tiebreaking single in the top of the ninth inning, then visiting Miami got Pittsburgh's Andrew McCutchen to ground into a game-ending double play with the bases loaded.

Red Sox 10, Tigers 2: David Ortiz homered and Rick Porcello (17-3) pitched seven innings in his return to Comerica Park in Boston's victory over Detroit.

Nationals 7, Braves 6: Clint Robinson hit a tiebreaking single with two outs in the ninth and host Washington beat Atlanta after giving up a three-run lead.

Rockies 7, Cubs 6 (11): Ryan Raburn hit an RBI double and continued home when Chi-

cago threw away the relay, capping host Colorado's two-run rally in the 11th inning against Aroldis Chapman (0-1).

Giants 8, Mets 1: Johnny Cueto (14-3) pitched seven effective innings and ended his six-start winless streak, and host San Francisco broke away late.

Padres 7, Diamondbacks 4: Ryan Schimpf's second homer of the game was a three-run shot in the 10th inning that boosted host San Diego.

Mariners 7, Brewers 6: Kyle Seager got Seattle started with a solo home run and Robinson Cano added a two-run shot.

Royals 5, Twins 4 (11): Eric Hosmer hit a game-ending single in the 11th inning and host Kansas City matched a season high with its sixth straight win.



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Bolt anchors relay, wins 3rd gold medal

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Usain Bolt knelt down and gave the track one final kiss, then flattened his hand, reached to the ground and slapped the white number “3” painted at the finish line.

Three Olympics, three races at each, three gold medals every time.

He could have just as easily slapped the number “1.” That would need no explanation.

The man who transcended track and became a world-class celebrity bid a blazing-fast farewell to the Rio de Janeiro Games — and, he insists, the Olympics altogether — Friday night with yet another anchor leg for the ages. He turned a close 4x100 relay race against Japan and the United States into a typical, Bolt-like runaway, helping Jamaica cross the line in 37.27 seconds.

“There you go,” he said. “I am the greatest.”

Japan won the silver medal, finishing .33 seconds behind.

The U.S. finished the race third but endured yet another relay debacle — disqualified because leadoff runner Mike Rodgers was ruled to have

passed the baton to Justin Gatlin before the start of the first exchange zone. That promoted Canada to the bronze medal. The Americans were protesting the ruling, and as Saturday approached in Brazil, there was no word on the outcome.

“It was the twilight zone. It was a nightmare,” said Gatlin, who, along with his teammates, found out about the DQ while parading the U.S. flag around the track. “You work so hard with your teammates, guys you compete against almost all year long. All that hard work just crumbles.”

If the ruling stands, it will mark the ninth time since 1995 the U.S. men have been disqualified or failed to get the baton around at the Olympics or world championships. (They blew a 10th medal, the silver at the London Games, after Tyson Gay’s doping positive.)

The disqualification will cause more hand-wringing in the States.

In Jamaica, they’ll party.

Less pressure when you know you’re the fastest man out there.

“As soon as I got the baton, I knew I was going to win this one,” Bolt said.

His record in Olympic finals improved to nine victories over nine events.

Nobody’s done that before, and nobody’s on the horizon to do it again soon.

Along for Bolt’s final trip down the track were Nickel Ashmeade, training partner Yohan Blake and the Jamaican elder statesman, former world-record holder Asafa Powell.

When Bolt received the yellow baton from Ashmeade for his final run down the straightaway, he was even, or maybe a step behind Aska Cambridge of Japan and Trayvon Bromell of the United States.

That lasted about four steps.

With 70 meters to go, it was over. Bolt looked at the clock — same as he did when he won the 200 the night before. No world record, but he still has a piece of that one, too — it’s 36.84 seconds, set four years ago at the London Games. He also owns the records in the 100 (9.58) and 200 (19.19).

“I am just relieved. It’s happened. I am just happy, proud of myself. It’s come true,” said Bolt, who overcame a hamstring injury earlier in the summer, then shined throughout a seven-day, seven-race stint

in Rio, counting all the heats. “The pressure is real. I look at it as an accomplishment.”

Musical selection for Bolt’s final parade around the track: Bob Marley’s “Jammin’.”

With most of the other debates over about greatest this, greatest that, a new one might be whether Bolt has surpassed Marley as the most famous person from the country known for sea, sun and sprints.

“Usain has done so much,” Powell said. “It’s hard to explain. He’s just a great athlete. He’s a legend.”

Counting all the preliminaries, finals and his approximately nine-second blast down the stretch in Friday’s final race, Bolt has spent 325 seconds — a tad less than 5½ minutes — sprinting on the track at the Olympics since he made his debut in Beijing eight years ago.

Every tick of the clock has been a treasure. And while he may not close things out with 23 golds, the number Michael Phelps left Rio with earlier this week, it’s hard to argue there is anybody more successful or electric — or important to his sport, and the Olympics themselves.

US men’s basketball outlasts Spain, advances to final

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Gone was the all-offense, all-action play that turned the last two gold-medal games into classics.

To get by Spain again, the U.S. Olympic men’s basketball team would have to win ugly, so unusual it’s practically un-American.

“It was just a real different game today,” coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Same result, though.

The U.S. advanced to its third straight gold-medal game with an 82-76 victory Friday, another tight matchup between the teams that met in the last two championship games.

Klay Thompson scored 22 points for the Americans, who will play Serbia on Sunday for their third consecutive Olympic title. Serbia beat Australia 87-61 in the second semifinal.

“This is where we wanted to be,” Kevin Durant said. “We talked about it all summer and to be here for the final game, to win the gold, for all the marbles, we like our chances.”

The Americans pulled away to win 118-107 in 2008 and held on for a 107-100 victory in London, but the defenses made their mark in this one. The U.S. was just good enough again against Spain, with bodies falling more than shots and several technical fouls keeping the teams from finding an of-

fensive flow.

It certainly wasn’t pretty, but Olympic gold never loses its luster.

“It’s an amazing feeling now,” center DeAndre Jordan said. “We really want to accomplish this.”

It was the lowest-scoring game for the Americans in the Olympics since the 2004 semifinals, when they managed 81 in a loss to Argentina.

But Jordan made his presence felt in the middle with 16 rebounds and four blocked shots to go with his nine points.

Durant added 14 points on the day he moved past LeBron James into second place on the U.S. Olympic career scoring list.

Kyrie Irving had 13 for the U.S.

Pau Gasol scored 23 points for Spain, which made it tough on the Americans for the third straight Olympics, but again had to settle for coming close against the world’s No. 1 team.

“I think the key of the game was their defense,” Spain coach Sergio Scariolo said. “Their athleticism, their size, they made our offense get difficult during most of the possessions.”

Gasol said after he believed Spain missed its best chance to beat the U.S.

Spain shot just 39 percent and couldn’t get any consistent option other than Gasol, who played with a wrap covering his sore right calf.