

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

2 US troops killed, 5 injured in Iraq

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

IRBIL, Iraq — Two Americans were killed and five others were wounded Sunday while conducting combat operations in northern Iraq, the U.S. military said.

Initial reports indicated the incident was not due to contact with enemy forces, according to a statement by officials with the U.S.-led Operation Inherent

Resolve coalition. It is under investigation.

The statement did not name the slain soldiers.

U.S. troops have been helping support Iraqi forces battling Islamic State — “a truly evil enemy,” in the words of Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the Operation Inherent Resolve commander.

“The entire counter-ISIS coalition sends our deepest condolences to these heroes’

families, friends and teammates,” Townsend said in a statement. “There are no words to describe the respect I have for you and sorrow I have for your loss. I hope there is some small solace in knowing their loss has meaning for our country and all the nations of the coalition.”

After a nine-month battle to oust ISIS from Mosul, Iraqi forces — closely supported by

the U.S.-led coalition — are preparing to retake the ISIS-held town of Tal Afar.

The latest deaths bring to nine the number of Americans killed supporting Operation Inherent Resolve this year, including noncombat deaths.

Nearly 50 Americans have been wounded in action since the anti-ISIS campaign began in August 2014, according to Pentagon data.

White House: Trump condemned supremacist groups

The Washington Post

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. — The White House said in a statement Sunday that when President Donald Trump condemned “all forms of violence, bigotry and hatred” that were on display in Charlottesville, Va., this weekend, “of course that includes white supremacists, KKK, Neo-Nazi and all extremist groups.”

The White House’s clarification stopped far short of what a growing number of Republicans have urged the president to do: directly call out and condemn white supremacy.

Three of Trump’s top advisers appeared on Sunday morning news shows to defend the vague statement that the president delivered the previous afternoon at his private golf club in New Jersey, although their messaging shifted as the morning progressed.

Ivanka Trump, the president’s eldest daughter, who is a top adviser, broke with her father’s messaging Sunday morning to tweet, “There should be no place in society for racism, white supremacy and neo-nazis.”

National security adviser H.R. McMaster said on ABC News that the president was

‘We should call evil by its name. My brother didn’t give his life fighting Hitler for Nazi ideas to go unchallenged here at home.’

Sen. Orrin G.

Hatch

R-Utah

Later in the morning, McMaster added on NBC News that it “ought to be clear to all Americans” that Trump’s comments about bigotry and hatred included white supremacists and neo-Nazis. He also said that he considers the death of a counterprotester in Charlot-

tesville on Saturday an act of terrorism.

CIA Director Mike Pompeo said on CBS News that the president was “specific,” “very clear” and, “frankly, pretty unambiguous” in responding to the violence.

Tom Bossert, Trump’s homeland security adviser, who has been in direct contact with Charlottesville authorities, repeatedly praised the president on CNN for not naming the groups that were involved and instead focusing on an overarching call for Americans to love one another.

Bossert said that people “on both sides” showed up in Charlottesville “looking for trouble” and that he won’t assign blame for the death of a counterprotester on either group, although he said the president would like to see “swift justice” for the victim. After repeated questioning, Bossert did say that he personally condemns “white supremacists and Nazi groups that espouse this sort of terrorism and exclusion.” He did not say whether the president agrees with him on that.

In his statement on Saturday,

Trump said, “We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides.” He then added for emphasis: “On many sides.”

Numerous Republicans and Democrats have criticized the usually blunt-speaking president for reacting to the violence and racism in Charlottesville in such vague terms, for placing equal blame on the counterprotesters and for not specifically condemning the white supremacists involved.

Sens. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Cory Gardner, R-Colo., urged the president to use the words “white supremacists” and to label what happened Saturday as a terrorist attack.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, R-Wis., declared that “white supremacy is a scourge” that “must be confronted and defeated.”

Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, tweeted, “We should call evil by its name. My brother didn’t give his life fighting Hitler for Nazi ideas to go unchallenged here at home.”

Dunford to meet with South Korean leader

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The top U.S. general will meet with South Korea's president on Monday, days after President Donald Trump warned that the U.S. military was "locked and loaded" in the latest salvo of his war of words with the North.

Tensions have skyrocketed since North Korea's army said it would complete a plan to fire missiles into the waters off the U.S. territory of Guam sometime this week.

President Moon Jae-in will discuss the threat from the North and South Korea's long-standing alliance with the United States during the meeting with Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to Yonhap News Agency.

Dunford, who arrived in Seoul on Sunday, also will meet with Defense Minister Song Young-moo and other senior officials during his two-day visit, Yonhap said, citing Moon's office.

He will then travel to China

and Japan during his Asia tour, it added.

Moon, who took office on May 10, has found himself largely sidelined as Trump and North Korea trade threats, raising fears of possible military conflict as the divided peninsula faces its worst crisis in years.

Chinese President Xi Jinping appealed for calm in a phone conversation with Trump on Saturday.

The White House said the two leaders "agreed North Korea must stop its provocative and escalatory behavior," and that they "reiterated their mutual commitment" to the peninsula's denuclearization.

China signed onto tough new U.N. economic sanctions aimed at punishing North Korea after it test-fired two intercontinental ballistic missiles last month.

The isolated country's military also said it was finalizing plans to fire four missiles into the waters off Guam, a Pacific island that hosts 7,000 military personnel and has a population of about 160,000.

Pompeo says war with N. Korea not imminent

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senior U.S. national security officials said Sunday that a military confrontation with North Korea's is not imminent, but they cautioned that the possibility of war is greater than it was a decade ago.

CIA Director Mike Pompeo and Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, President Trump's national security adviser, tried to provide assurances that a conflict is avoidable while also supporting Trump's tough talk. They said the United States and its allies no longer can afford to stand by as North Korea pushes ahead with the development of a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile.

"We're not closer to war than a week ago, but we are closer to war than we were a decade ago," McMaster said, adding that the Trump administration is prepared to deal militarily with North Korea if necessary.

But he stressed that the U.S. is pursuing "a very determined diplomatic effort" led by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that's coupled with new financial sanctions to dissuade North Korean leader Kim Jong Un from further provocations.

Pompeo said "there's nothing imminent today," in response to a question about how worried should people be over the escalating tensions. He said the U.S. has a "pretty good idea" of North Korea's intentions, but Pompeo declined to provide specifics. The CIA chief described Kim as "rational" and responsive to "adverse circumstances."

"The reaction in North Korea that we are intending to get is an understanding that America is no longer going to have the strategic patience that it's had that has permitted him to continue to develop his weapons program," Pompeo said. "It's that straightforward."

New U.N. sanctions condemning North Korea's rapidly developing nuclear program drew fresh ire and threats from the North. Trump, responding to a report that U.S. intelligence indicates Pyongyang can now put a nuclear warhead on its long-range missiles, vowed to rain down "fire and fury" if challenged.

The North then came out with a threat to lob four intermediate-range "Hwasong-12" missiles near Guam, a tiny U.S. territory some 2,000 miles from the North's capital, Pyongyang.

Trump signs bill that shores up VA Choice Program

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Saturday signed a \$3.9 billion funding deal for the Department of Veterans Affairs that will shore up the nearly bankrupt Veterans Choice Program and allow the VA to open 28 new clinics and implement new hiring programs.

Trump signed the bill in Bedminster, N.J., where he's staying at his golf club on what he's called a 17-day "working vacation." The bill — a compromise created and supported by Dem-

ocrats and Republicans — will provide \$2.1 billion to the Choice program, which allows veterans to seek care outside of the VA. It will also invest \$1.8 billion into hiring health care providers and leasing new clinics.

Without congressional action, the Choice program was expected to be depleted of money by mid-August, which VA leaders said would have led to layoffs and interrupted medical care for thousands of veterans.

VA Secretary David Shulkin and leaders of veterans service organizations joined the president for the bill signing.

Shulkin first warned lawmakers about the unexpected funding shortage in the Choice program in June. He attributed the shortfall to the program's increased popularity. On Saturday, he said the VA has authorized 15 million appointments through its community care programs since the start of the year. The \$2.1 billion is expected to keep it going for the next six months.

During that time, Congress, the VA and veterans service organizations are planning to work on a broad reform of how veterans receive care in the private sector.

With the signing, the VA can now implement a series of provisions to improve hiring for some of the agency's approximately 49,000 vacancies.

Two other VA-related bills are awaiting Trump's signature. On Friday, the House sent Trump a bill to reform the process veterans use to appeal denials of their claims for benefits. The bill aims to shorten the amount of time veterans wait for decisions, which now averages six years.

A large expansion of veterans education benefits — the "Forever GI Bill" — was also sent to Trump's desk Aug. 2.

ISIS claims attack on Iraqi troops outside Karbala

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Islamic State claimed responsibility Sunday for an attack on Iraqi troops outside Karbala that left one dead, according to a statement from the group.

The attack late Saturday came as Iraqi forces prepare an assault on an ISIS-held town west of Mosul after the country's prime minister declared victory over the extremists in the country's second-largest city in July.

The ISIS-claimed suicide car bomb attack late Saturday struck a checkpoint outside Karbala and injured two others, according to Iraqi Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool, spokesman for the Joint Military Command.

The ISIS statement said the attack targeted a cement factory outside Karbala and resulted in dozens of casualties.

Karbala, some 55 miles south of Baghdad, is home to the Imam Hussein Shrine, one of the holiest sites in Shiite Islam.

After nearly nine months of grueling urban combat against ISIS in Mosul, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory there in July. The operation deprived ISIS of its last significant urban foothold in the country.

Now, Iraqi forces closely backed by the U.S.-led coalition are preparing to retake the ISIS-held town of Tal Afar west of Mosul.

ISIS has launched waves of insurgent-style attacks like the Karbala car bombing in the wake of territorial losses in Iraq.

As Iraqi forces close in on the handful of ISIS-held pockets of territory in Iraq, coalition and Iraqi officials have warned that such attacks could increase.

US airstrike kills ISIS leader in Afghanistan

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. airstrike killed several senior members of Islamic State's affiliate operating in eastern Afghanistan, the U.S. military said Sunday.

The Thursday strike in Kunar province killed Abdul Rahman, who U.S. Forces-Afghanistan in a statement identified as the provincial emir for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan, or ISIS-K, the Central Asian ISIS offshoot.

"The death of Abdul Rahman deals yet another blow to the senior leadership of ISIS-K," Gen. John Nicholson, the commander of U.S. forces in the country, said in the statement. "He found out just like those before him that there are no safe havens in Afghanistan."

Three other unnamed senior members of the group also were killed in the strike, the military said.

U.S. forces have made it a goal to defeat ISIS-K in Afghanistan this year.

"We will hunt them down until they are no longer a threat to the Afghan people and the region," Nicholson said.

U.S. officials said Rahman was a top candidate to become the group's fourth leader, after Abu Sayed was killed in a strike on his headquarters in Kunar last month. Sayed was

the group's third emir to be killed in about a year after U.S. and Afghan forces killed Hafiz Sayed Khan in late July 2016 and Abdul Hasib in late April.

A separate U.S. airstrike in Nangarhar on Thursday killed "a number of militants" loading weapons into a vehicle, the military said, denying allegations that it had caused civilian casualties.

"There was zero chance of civilian casualties," Bob Purتمان, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Afghanistan, said in a statement released Saturday.

Though U.S. and Afghan forces have scored several battlefield successes against the group, ISIS-K has continued to carry out bloody attacks around Afghanistan, including in the country's capital, Kabul, where the militants have attacked a large military hospital and the Iraqi Embassy.

U.S.-backed forces in Iraq continue to battle the group, which still controls several enclaves in the country after government forces drove it from its last major urban stronghold in Mosul in July.

Iraqi forces, backed by the U.S.-led international coalition, are preparing to retake the ISIS-held town of Tal Afar, west of Mosul.

Renegade al-Shabab leader surrenders to government

Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — A renegade leader of Somalia's Islamic extremist insurgents, al-Shabab, has surrendered to the government.

Mukhtar Robow arrived Sunday in the government-controlled town of Hudur in south-western Somalia, said Ahmed Mohamed, a senior government security official. He said Robow was airlifted from the Bakool jungle area where he and hundreds of his militia have been fighting al-Shabab

since early last week.

Robow's surrender comes after the U.S. in June canceled a \$5 million reward offered for his capture. It is the culmination of months of talks between the Somali government, and it is believed the cancellation of the bounty for his capture helped persuade Robow to give himself up to the Somalia government.

Robow, who was the deputy director of al-Shabab, is the highest official ever to have quit the group. Estimated to be in his 50s, Robow is one of

al-Shabab's most experienced leaders, having traveled to Afghanistan and trained alongside al-Qaida in about 2000 after studies in Sudan. He had served as an al-Shabab spokesman, military commander and spiritual leader who planned and executed deadly attacks on Somali government troops and African Union peacekeeping forces, according to the U.S. Rewards for Justice program.

Al-Shabab last year was named the deadliest Islamic extremist group in Africa, with more than 4,200 people killed

in 2016, according to the Washington-based Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

The extremist group has vowed to step up attacks after the recently elected government of President Mohamed Abdullahi "Farmajo" Mohamed launched a new military offensive against it. The group also faces a new military push from the U.S. after President Donald Trump approved expanded operations, including airstrikes. Al-Shabab still controls parts of rural Somalia.

Iran bill raises missile budget

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's parliament voted overwhelmingly Sunday to increase spending on its ballistic missile program and the foreign operations of its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, chanting, "Death to America," in a direct challenge to Washington's newest sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The lawmakers' vote comes amid growing anger in Iran over President Donald Trump's threats to renegotiate the nuclear deal struck with world powers in 2015. While they stressed the bill wouldn't violate the terms of that agreement, it again increases the friction between the two nations that routinely have tense encounters in the Persian Gulf.

In a session Sunday, 240 lawmakers voted for the bill, with

only one abstention from the 247 legislators on hand, Iran's state-run news agency IRNA reported.

The bill now heads to an oversight committee called the Guardian Council, which is expected to approve it. Abbas Araghchi, a deputy foreign minister and senior nuclear negotiator on hand for the vote, said moderate President Hassan Rouhani's government would support the bill.

"The bill has very wisely tried not to violate the [nuclear deal] and also gives no chance to the other party to manipulate it," he said in comments reported by IRNA.

Under terms of the bill, some \$800 million will be put toward several projects, including the Defense Ministry and its intelligence agencies. Among the agencies receiving money

would be the Revolutionary Guards' Quds force, an expeditionary force run by Gen. Qassem Soleimani, who has been in Syria and Iraq.

The guard, separate from Iran's conventional military forces, answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The bill also imposes a visa and travel ban on U.S. military and security organizations and their commanders who have provided financial, intelligence, military, logistical and training support to terrorists in the region, naming Islamic State and the Syrian branch of al-Qaida.

Iranian officials often accuse the U.S. of being involved with both groups. The U.S. is actively involved in a massive military campaign against ISIS and has struck the al-Qaida affiliate, as well.

CFC chief lauds missile knowledge of deputy

By Marcus Fichtl

Stars and Stripes

YONGSAN GARRISON, South Korea — Army Gen. Vincent Brooks said Combined Forces Command will rely heavily on its new deputy commander's missile-defense knowledge as tensions continue to rise on the Korean Peninsula.

Gen. Kim Byeong-joo became the CFC's highest-ranking South Korean when he replaced Gen. Leem Ho-young during a ceremony Friday at Yongsan in Seoul. Kim's new role includes leading the CFC's Ground Component Command.

"[Kim's previous] service commanding the South Korean army missile command will be very useful as we develop advanced concepts for striking any threats to the republic," said Brooks, who leads U.S. Forces Korea and U.N. Command in addition to the CFC.

The change comes amid a major reshuffling of senior generals under the administration of new South Korean President Moon Jae-in that includes a South Korean air force general serving as Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman for the first time in 23 years.

Brooks praised Leem for modernizing combat operations on the peninsula by finding a smarter way to fight that will be "much more costly to the North Korean threat and less costly to the alliance."

Brooks said he expects Kim to succeed in Leem's footsteps and to continue to advance the U.S.-South Korean alliance.

"This is an armistice that requires protection and tending every day," Brooks said.

Tensions have shot up on the peninsula after North Korea tested two intercontinental ballistic missiles in July before unveiling a detailed plan to launch a salvo of missiles toward the U.S. territory of Guam.

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White House considering arming Ukraine

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Seeking leverage with Russia, the Trump administration has reopened consideration of long-rejected plans to give Ukraine lethal weapons.

The deliberations put pressure on President Donald Trump, who's fighting perceptions he is soft on the Kremlin amid investigations into whether his campaign colluded with Moscow to interfere in the 2016 U.S. election.

The proposal, endorsed by the Pentagon and the State Department, reflects his administration's growing frustration with Russian intransigence on Ukraine and a broader deterioration in U.S.-Russia ties. The tensions were seen most recently in Russian leader Vladimir Putin's order for America to eliminate more than half its diplomatic personnel in Russia.

Awaiting Trump and his closest advisers is an authorization to provide Ukraine with anti-tank and potentially anti-aircraft capabilities, according to U.S. officials familiar with plan. It's not dramatically differ-

ent from proposals rejected by President Barack Obama, who feared an influx of U.S. weapons could worsen the violence in Ukraine since 2014 and create the possibility of American arms killing Russian soldiers. Such a scenario could theoretically put the nuclear-armed nations closer to direct conflict.

While Obama was still in office, Trump's campaign also rejected the idea of arming Ukraine.

Now, however, it's under discussion by Trump's senior national security aides, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. While there is no deadline for a decision and one is not expected imminently, the debate is going on as U.S. and Russian diplomats prepare to meet as early as this week to explore ways to pacify eastern Ukraine, where Russia-backed separatists have fought the central government for three years.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson noted his recent appointment of a special representative for Ukraine, Kurt Volker, who will coordinate with Russia and

European countries to give "full visibility to all the parties that we're not trying to cut some kind of a deal on the side that excludes their interests in any way."

Russia hawks in the U.S. and uneasy American allies have feared such a prospect since Trump took office after a campaign in which he questioned NATO's viability and repeatedly expressed his wish for a new U.S.-Russian partnership.

Volker has proposed a meeting with his Russian counterpart, Putin ally Vladislav Surkov, before the end of the month. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said after his talks with Tillerson that the meeting would be in Moscow. U.S. officials say no venue has been determined.

Volker, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO who is known as a Russia hawk, supports arming Ukraine. Such action, he says, would boost the U.S. negotiating position in the east and offer Kiev the means to defend itself against any future aggression.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Chief decries leaving guns in unlocked cars

NC WILMINGTON — A frustrated police chief in North Carolina has a message for gun owners: Stop leaving your weapons in unlocked vehicles.

Wilmington Police Chief Ralph Evangelous held a news conference Friday to tell gun owners their carelessness is aiding local crime. He said more than 30 guns have been stolen this year from vehicles left unlocked overnight, which means they're "now in the hands of criminals."

He pleaded with gun owners to "be responsible" and at least "take your guns in your house."

SUV driver with stuck gas pedal calls 911

WA MERCER ISLAND — Authorities in northwestern Washington state said a woman driving an SUV called 911 to report a stuck accelerator as she careened past stop signs and traffic lights.

Mercer Island police told KOMO-TV that the 54-year-old woman reported using the brake and the parking brake on the Nissan Xterra, but they became less effective as they heated up.

Police said the vehicle reached speeds of about 45 mph before 911 operators told the woman to turn off the SUV's ignition and she rolled to a stop.

WWII plane pulled from Austrian lake to fly

ID CALDWELL — A World War II fighter plane that spent 60 years at the bottom of a lake in Austria has been restored and will be unveiled and flown publicly later

this month in southwest Idaho.

The Idaho Press-Tribune reported that the P-47 Thunderbolt known as Dottie Mae will fly Aug. 26 and 27 at the 2017 Warbird Roundup at the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa.

Officials said the aircraft took part in missions during WWII and crashed into Traunsee lake on May 8, 1945, and sank to the bottom as the pilot was rescued.

Workers in 2005 found the wreck 230 feet deep and brought it to the surface.

Woman finds naked parolee in shower

CA SAN DIEGO — San Diego County authorities said a wanted parolee was arrested after he turned up naked in a woman's shower.

Sheriff's officials said a Valley Center woman came home Friday morning and heard the shower running.

When she investigated, the shower door swung open and there was the naked intruder.

The woman ran away, screaming for her husband, who was in a workshop outside.

Authorities said that by the time the couple returned to the bathroom, the man was gone and the woman's watch had been stolen.

She ran outside, spotted the man — who by then was dressed — and followed him until sheriff's deputies arrested Jerald Harris, 47, a convicted burglar wanted for eluding parole supervision.

2 men charged with stealing sea turtle eggs

FL FORT PIERCE — Two men are accused of stealing hundreds of protected sea turtle eggs from nests on a Florida beach.

Federal court records show

Carl Cobb, 60, and Raymond Saunders, 50, are suspected of taking more than 650 sea turtle eggs from nests on Hutchinson Island, which is north of West Palm Beach, intending to sell them. Each could face more than five years behind bars if convicted.

The recovered eggs were turned over to marine biologists, who placed them back into the turtle nests.

Bank robbery suspect arrested after river dip

OH FRANKLIN — Police said a man who robbed a bank, fled and then jumped into a river was pulled from the water and taken into custody in southwestern Ohio.

A Franklin police statement said the man is suspected of robbing a Huntington National Bank branch Friday afternoon in the city about 40 miles north of Cincinnati.

Police said the suspect fled the bank and was located on the edge of the Great Miami River. They said he then jumped into the river. Police said the suspect floated about a mile down the river before a rescue team picked him out of the water and took him into custody.

Hospital ER reopens after mystery odor

NH EXETER — A hospital emergency department in New Hampshire is open again, one day after an unknown odor sickened 19 workers.

The staff members at Exeter Hospital were evaluated after some complained of dizziness and nausea on Friday morning. Officials said all had recovered by Friday evening.

The hospital shut down an inpatient operation room and the emergency room directly

above it. Authorities said an investigation by the state hazmat team and the National Guard was completed Friday night, but officials weren't able to determine the cause.

Man pleads not guilty to mutilating dogs

CA VISTA — A Southern California man accused of slashing his neighbors' tires and mutilating their dogs in what a prosecutor called "a war of terror" has pleaded not guilty to animal cruelty and other crimes.

David Herbert, 36, a Navy veteran, entered pleas Friday and could face 16 years in prison if convicted.

Authorities said that earlier this year Herbert went to his next-door neighbors' home, threw acid onto their two huskies and gouged one animal's eye so badly it had to be removed.

After that family moved out and new tenants moved in, he was accused of stealing two dogs from the new tenants and is suspected of having killed one.

Kittens found inside tractor are rescued

UT SPANISH FORK — Seven kittens have been saved in Utah after getting stuck in a construction tractor.

Green Forest Landscaping employees heard meows coming from under their tractor on Wednesday. When they peeked inside they saw the kittens.

Workers used tools to remove the cab from the tractor. The group freed six 3-week-old kittens and, after failing to find their owner in the neighborhood, they took them to a local PetSmart. A seventh kitten was discovered still inside the tractor the next day.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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Oakland Raiders' Lynch sits out anthem

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Arizona — In his first game in an Oakland Raider uniform, Marshawn Lynch didn't play a down.

Yet he provided the most vivid image of the night, sitting for the national anthem before the Raiders' 20-10 preseason loss to the Arizona Cardinals on Saturday.

The ex-Seattle running back, who came out of retirement to sign with his hometown Raiders, sat on an orange cooler with his arms resting on his knees, while others around him stood.

Although he rarely talks to the media, Lynch has voiced support for quarterback Colin Kaepernick's decision to kneel during the anthem last season to protest what he saw as a pattern of police mistreatment of people of color.

Lynch was gone from the locker room by the time reporters arrived.

Coach Jack Del Rio said he spoke to him about the issue after the game.

"He said, 'This is something I've done for

11 years. It's not a form of anything other than me being myself,'" Del Rio said.

The coach said that he told Lynch "just so you understand how I feel, I very strongly believe in standing for the national anthem but I'm going to respect you as a man. You do your thing."

"So that's a non-issue for me," Del Rio said.

Quarterback E.J. Manuel said he didn't know Lynch hadn't stood for the anthem.

"Obviously, we all support Marshawn because he's part of our team, but I think that is more of a personal thing," Manuel said. "I can't really comment on it too much."

Arizona dominated the game in the first half, building a 17-3 lead.

Carson Palmer threw a 12-yard touchdown pass to Brittan Golden to cap his brief preseason debut, while Oakland quarterback Derek Carr watched the game from the sideline.

Palmer, at age 37 beginning his 15th NFL season, directed Arizona on a 12-play,

70-yard touchdown drive to start the game. It looked as if the Cardinals were headed for a short field goal, but the Raiders were called for covering the snapper on the kick, giving Arizona a first down and setting up its opening TD.

He would like to have played more than one series.

"I thought I was going to get the first quarter," Palmer said. "That's what [coach Bruce Arians] said last night at the team meeting. I missed a couple. I missed a long one to Jaron (Brown) and wanted to kind of redeem myself. I didn't get that chance. I've got to wait until next week."

Two of the Raiders' top defensive players, All-Pro defensive end Khalil Mack and linebacker Bruce Irvin, joined Carr and Lynch as spectators.

While it was the preseason opener for Oakland, it was Arizona's second outing. The Cardinals starters did not play in the team's 20-18 loss to Dallas in the Hall of Fame Game.

WR Watson excited for fresh start in LA

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Sammy Watkins was thrilled when the Buffalo Bills threw to him repeatedly in the opening minutes of their exhibition opener earlier this week.

Only later did the Los Angeles Rams' top new receiver realize what else might have been going on.

"I just thought I was catching it hot," Watkins said with a grin Saturday. "I mean, they were targeting me pretty quick, and after the game, I was [thinking], 'Oh, I probably was out there auditioning.'"

If his last game for Buffalo was indeed a tryout for potential employers, the Rams clearly thought he passed.

Los Angeles traded a second-round draft pick and cornerback E.J. Gaines to the Bills for a sixth-rounder and Watkins, who immediately becomes the top target for Jared Goff on the Rams' long-struggling offense.

Watkins, the fourth overall pick in the 2014 draft, had only been to Los Angeles a couple of times before getting traded. He traveled from western New York to California on Saturday, landing on a gorgeous 85-degree day to check out the Coliseum.

"Just being in LA can help me out," Watkins said. "Nice city. Nice weather. And just to be in this city with the players, just trying to chase a goal and win a championship and go to the playoffs. It's a blessing to be here, to be on real grass eight or nine games out of the year."

Watkins' occasionally injured legs will benefit from the Coliseum grass, and the Rams intend to benefit greatly from Watkins' speed and skill. He is expected to provide the deep threat that was among many things lacking for Los Angeles last season, when the Rams had the NFL's worst offense for the second straight year.

Niners rookies shine in exhibition opener

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — San Francisco's rookie class made a positive first impression.

Led by first-round defensive standouts Solomon Thomas and Reuben Foster, the 49ers had to be pleased with what they saw from a strong draft class and a few undrafted free agents in a 27-17 exhibition opener victory over the Kansas City Chiefs on Friday.

"I was excited for a lot of those guys," coach Kyle Shanahan said Saturday. "That's really what this preseason is for."

Thomas, picked third overall, looked like he did when he dominated the defensive line in college at Stanford.

He applied the pressure that led to an early interception by Rashard Robinson, added a second pressure, a quarterback hit and made two tackles in the run game.

Foster, picked 31st, broke up a pass in the end zone and teamed

with NaVorro Bowman to tackle Spencer Ware short of the end zone. Foster, who had no interceptions in high school or college, has had several so far on the practice field and was upset that he missed the one in the end zone against Alex Smith.

"I think I had something to prove," Foster said. "A lot of guys were teasing me about the pass breakup. I could have caught a pick."

Thomas and Foster were far from the only rookies to make an impact, including third-round quarterback C.J. Beathard, who went 7-for-11 for 101 yards and two touchdowns.

Third-round cornerback Ahkello Witherspoon was not targeted once on 19 coverage snaps, according to Pro Football Focus; fourth-round running back Joe Williams had seven carries for 60 yards and fifth-round receiver Trent Taylor caught all three targets for 33 yards.

Kisner survives wild end for PGA lead

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Even after his shot bounced high off a concrete bridge over a creek, Kevin Kisner wasn't in the clear at the PGA Championship.

His golf ball was buried in thick grass on a hill above the water. As he looked across to the 18th green at Quail Hollow, wondering how he could even keep it on the green, a leaderboard reminded him of how many players were suddenly in the mix at the final major of the year.

Kisner managed to keep the damage to a minimum in a calamity-filled final hour Saturday.

More importantly, he managed to keep the lead.

Two holes after hitting into the water on No. 16 to lose a two-shot lead, Kisner chopped out of the cabbage-like lie to the other side of the 18th green, then navigated a super slick 45-foot putt to close range to escape with bogey and a 1-over 72, giving him a one-shot lead over Hideki Matsuyama and Chris Stroud.

"I'm happy I'm in the position I'm in," Kisner said. "I had a chance to run away from guys and take people out of the tour-

ament that were four or five, six back. And I didn't do it. Now I'm in a dogfight tomorrow, and I have to be prepared for that."

If the closing stretch taught him something, it was to prepare for anything.

Jason Day can attest to that. He wasted a remarkable rally with a peculiar decision to hit a shot from behind a tree. His feet slipped on the pine straw and the ball wound up in a waist-high flower bed. What followed was a penalty drop, a shot to the rough, another short of the green and a quadruple-bogey 8 that most likely ended his chances. He shot 77 and was in no mood to discuss the round.

Stroud three-putted the last two holes for bogey, one from off the 17th green. He managed a 71 and was in the final group Sunday, not bad for a guy who wasn't even eligible for the PGA Championship until he won his first PGA Tour event six days ago.

"It's just a dream come true to be here," he said.

Kisner had the lead going into the final round, a great spot to pursue his first major championship. He just doesn't like what he sees in his rear-

view mirror, where the players are a lot closer than they once appeared.

Matsuyama made only one birdie and wasted two good scoring chances on the back nine. He had a dull finish, which on this day allowed him to make up ground. With five straight pars at the end, he had a 73 and was one shot behind in his bid to deliver Japan its first major.

"I'm disappointed the way I played today," Matsuyama said. "However, I'm happy to just to be one stroke back and still have a chance."

Justin Thomas, the son of a PGA professional, had the right formula. He didn't drop a shot over the last 12 shots and finished with 69, just two shots behind along with Louis Oosthuizen, who saved par on the 18th with a bold shot for a 71.

It was everyone else in the hunt that fell apart.

Rickie Fowler, quietly lurking with four birdies in an eight-hole stretch, failed to birdie the par-5 15th — the easiest hole at Quail Hollow — and followed with a three-putt bogey on the 16th, an 8-iron into the water for double bogey on the 17th, and a three-putt bogey from

just over 20 feet on the 18th. That gave him a 73, and after getting within three shots, he trailed by six.

Paul Casey also was in position until his shot on 18 missed by a fraction and settled in the rough above the hole. His chip ran off the green, and he made double bogey. Casey played the final three holes in 4 over and shot 74. He was seven behind.

The shocker was Day, the former No. 1 player in the world and a PGA champion two years ago. He looked more like Jean Van de Velde, famous for his collapse in the 1999 British Open, except that Day was standing amid bushes of flowers instead of knee deep in the burn at Carnoustie.

Of the 15 players who remained under par, Oosthuizen is the only one who has won a major, and that was seven years ago. The South African had his own problems. His right arm tightened up on the front nine and he required a therapist to work on it. Then he hit a root on a shot with an 8-iron and bent the club, meaning he couldn't use it when he needed it late in his round.

Bolt pulls up in final relay race of career

Associated Press

LONDON — Usain Bolt was ramping into warp speed when suddenly, stunningly, the sprint turned into a somersault.

Fifteen steps into the final homestretch of his final race, something gave in his left hamstring. The World's Fastest Man skittered to a stop — hopping, skipping, jumping, then finally dropping to the ground and tumbling forward before coming to a rest.

While the winning team from Britain crossed the finish line, Bolt was writhing on the track, where he eventually wound up chest down with his face pressed into Lane 5. He was certainly every bit as stunned as any of the 60,000-plus who packed the stadium Saturday, or the millions watching one of the world's most entertaining showmen make his final curtain call in the 4x100-meter relay at world championships.

There was no celebration. No gold, no sil-

ver, not even a consolation bronze, the likes of which Bolt received a week earlier in his final 100-meter race.

Jamaica closed the night with "DNF" by its name: Did Not Finish. Dead last. Bolt was helped into a wheelchair, but eventually got to his feet and, assisted by his teammates, limped gingerly across the finish line. He gave a few waves to the crowd, then left for the trainer's room, and with that, presumably left track and field forever.

"Injuries are part of our sport and, always, of course, it's sad to see," said Wallace Spearmon, the American sprinter who has been close with Bolt for years and was on hand helping the U.S. team. "So, yeah, it's tragic."

The Jamaican team doctor, Kevin Jones, diagnosed the injury that brought a strange end to Bolt's career as, simply, a cramp in the champion's left hamstring.

"But a lot of pain is from disappointment from losing the race," Jones said. "The last three weeks have been hard for him, you know. We hope for the best for him."

Watching track's No. 1 sprinter and celebrity dropping to the ground was nothing short of jaw-dropping — so much so that the fact that Britain won the race, outrunning a United States team that, somewhat amazingly, didn't drop the baton, almost seemed like an afterthought.

Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake held off U.S. anchorman Christian Coleman down the stretch and the Brits won their first-ever world title in the 4x100 in 37.47 seconds.

Afterward, there was plenty of second-guessing. Most of it came at the expense of the IAAF, which made the sprinters wait about 40 minutes from the time they were summoned from the warm-up room to the time the starting gun went off.

First West Point grad in MLB gets win

Associated Press

TORONTO — Walking off the mound to a standing ovation from a crowd that included his parents and sister, Chris Rowley started to become aware of the magnitude of his achievement.

Rowley became the first West Point graduate to reach the major leagues, pitching one-run ball for 5¹/₃ innings to win his debut Saturday and lead the Toronto Blue Jays over the Pittsburgh Pirates 7-2.

A 26-year-old right-hander, Rowley is a 2013 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. Bypassed in the amateur draft, he signed with Toronto and went 4-0 with the Gulf Coast Blue Jays that year. A first lieutenant, Rowley missed the 2014 and 2015 minor league seasons while on active service, which included a stint in Bulgaria.

Following 30 months in the U.S. Army, he received an exception to the remainder of his service in January 2016 but remains

on Individual Ready Reserve. He went 10-3 last year at Class A Dunedin, started this season 3-2 with a 1.73 ERA at Double-A New Hampshire, then was promoted to Triple-A Buffalo in mid-June and went 3-4 with a 2.82 ERA in five starts and 12 relief appearances.

Rowley (1-0) allowed five hits against the Pirates, struck out three and walked one.

"I thought he looked very confident out there," Toronto manager John Gibbons said.

Asked whether the military background helped, Gibbons replied: "There's no doubt. That's just how they groom 'em. He's been through some things."

Pittsburgh's only run off him came when Josh Bell hit a leadoff triple in the second and tied the score on Jordy Mercer's two-out single.

"He kept people off balance, he moved the ball around the zone," said Tom Prince, the Pirates' acting manager this weekend

while Clint Hurdle attended Don Baylor's funeral.

Rowley left after Josh Harrison singled with one out in the sixth and Bell walked. The crowd of 46,179 showed its appreciation.

"Walking off and all those people standing, that was something really special for me," Rowley said. "I don't think anybody really expects to experience that in their life."

One day after star outfielder Andrew McCutchen limped off with a sore left knee, the Pirates lost another outfielder when Gregory Polanco pulled up with a sore left hamstring while chasing Josh Donaldson's bloop single in the fifth. Polanco is day to day.

Donaldson restored Toronto's lead with a bases-loaded walk in the second off Trevor Williams (5-5), who allowed four runs, four hits and four walks in six innings.

MLB roundup

Harper out indefinitely after injuring knee

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bryce Harper sustained what appeared to be a serious left knee injury when he slipped on a wet first base and his left leg buckled while running out a grounder early in the Washington Nationals' 3-1 victory over the San Francisco Giants on Saturday.

Harper clutched at his knee while on the wet field and put no weight on his left leg as he was helped off. The 2015 NL MVP left the game immediately.

The team said Sunday that Harper has a "significant" bone bruise in his left knee but no ligament damage, and general manager Mike Rizzo is hopeful the star outfielder will be back this season.

The result of the game meant little for Washington, which leads the NL East by 14½ games.

Red Sox 10, Yankees 5: Rookie Andrew Benintendi rocketed a pair of three-run homers off All-Star Luis Severino as visiting Boston bounced back from a tough loss to rough

up New York.

A day after blowing a late lead, the AL East leaders battered Severino for a career-worst 10 runs.

Indians 3, Rays 0: Jay Bruce drove in his first two runs for visiting Cleveland and Mike Clevinger struck out nine.

Bruce, acquired in a trade from the New York Mets on Wednesday, drove in the first run with a two-out fly ball that dropped for a double between left fielder Corey Dickerson and third baseman Trevor Plouffe in the first inning.

Dodgers 6, Padres 3: Corey Seager's bases-loaded single led to three runs while Cody Bellinger and Chris Taylor added solo homers as host Los Angeles rallied from a sixth-inning deficit to beat San Diego.

Rangers 8, Astros 3: Adrian Beltre had three hits with three RBIs after new Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez acknowledged his 3,000-hit milestone as host Texas handed AL-leading Houston a season-high fifth straight loss.

Angels 6, Mariners 3: Luis Valbuena's two-run homer in

the seventh inning pulled visiting Los Angeles even before Albert Pujols added a two-run double in the eighth and the Angels rallied.

Tigers 12, Twins 11: Justin Upton hit a two-run homer off Matt Belisle in the ninth inning to give host Detroit a win after the Tigers wasted a five-run lead and then overcame a five-run deficit.

Marlins 4, Rockies 3: Giancarlo Stanton continued his power surge with his 41st homer and drove in three runs in Miami's victory over visiting Colorado.

Royals 5, White Sox 4: Melky Cabrera hit a go-ahead, two-run homer against his former team in the eighth inning as visiting Kansas City beat Chicago to stop a five-game losing streak.

Orioles 12, Athletics 5: Tim Beckham hit a two-run double in his second plate appearance of the first inning as visiting Baltimore matched its biggest frame of the season with a seven-run first inning.

Diamondbacks 6, Cubs 2: At Phoenix, Patrick Corbin

pitched 6²/₃ scoreless innings and David Peralta hit an inside-the-park home run as Arizona cut Chicago's NL Central lead over St. Louis to a percentage point.

Phillies 3, Mets 1: Aaron Nola held an opponent to two runs or fewer for his 10th straight start and Freddy Galvis had a go-ahead single during a fifth-inning rally as host Philadelphia beat veteran-shedding New York.

Brewers 6, Reds 5 (10): Eric Sogard scampered home with the winning run on a wild pitch in the bottom of the 10th inning as host Milwaukee snapped a six-game losing streak.

Cardinals 6, Braves 5: Randal Grichuk and Paul DeJong homered and host St. Louis stretched its winning streak to eight games.

Carlos Martinez (9-9) tossed six solid innings and also drove in a run for the Cardinals, who moved within ½ game of the first-place Chicago Cubs in the NL Central.

DeJong led off the seventh with his team-high 17th home run.