

STARS AND STRIPES®

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Service chiefs launch assault on racism

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Hate and extremism will not be tolerated within the ranks of the U.S. armed forces, top military leaders said after deadly clashes last weekend at a white nationalist rally in Virginia.

By Wednesday, the top generals from the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and National Guard and the Navy's top admiral had individually condemned intolerance following racist violence in Charlottesville on Saturday. Members of the so-called "alt-right" — including white supremacists, neo-Nazis and KKK members — had gathered to protest the removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Antifascist protesters gathered to oppose them.

Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, was the first to issue an unequivocal

statement as events unfolded Saturday. He called the events "shameful ... and unacceptable," and added that they "must not be tolerated." The admiral felt compelled to respond as he monitored the events, a Navy official close to the admiral said. Richardson has a strong connection to Charlottesville, where his daughter attended the University of Virginia.

"The Navy will forever stand against intolerance and hatred," Richardson said in his statement. "For those on our team, we want our Navy to be the safest possible place — a team as strong and tough as we can be, saving violence only for our enemies."

The generals' responses came after President Donald Trump's assertion during a press conference Tuesday that "both sides" were to blame for the clashes. Pentagon officials said the chiefs' statements were

not responses to the president.

Late Tuesday, Gen. Robert Neller, the Marines' commandant, issued his own condemnation of intolerance via social media without directly referencing Charlottesville.

"No place for racial hatred or extremism in [the] USMC," a tweet on his official account read. "Our core values of honor, courage, and commitment frame the way Marines live and act."

Gen. Mark Milley, the Army chief of staff, on Wednesday issued a similar message on his official Twitter account.

"The Army doesn't tolerate racism, extremism, or hatred in our ranks. It's against our values and everything we've stood for since 1775."

The Air Force's chief of staff, Gen. David Goldfein, and the chief of the National Guard Bureau, Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, issued statements

saying they "stand with" their fellow service leaders.

Defense officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they were unaware of any active-duty servicemembers who were under investigation for participating in the demonstrations. However, the Navy was looking into allegations that a reservist may have been involved, a Navy official said.

The man accused of killing a counterprotester and injuring 19 others when he plowed his car into a group as they peacefully demonstrated washed out of Army basic training after four months, according to the Army. James Alex Fields Jr., 20, of Ohio was charged with murder after his arrest Saturday.

Dillon Ulysses Hopper, the leader of one of the groups that participated in the rally, is said to be a Marine veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and later worked as a recruiter.

Trump again blames 'both sides' for violence in Va.

Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Donald Trump defiantly blamed "both sides" for the weekend violence between white supremacists and counterdemonstrators in Virginia, seeking to rebuff the widespread criticism of his handling of the emotionally charged protests while showing sympathy for the fringe group's efforts to preserve Confederate monuments.

In doing so, Trump used the bullhorn of the presidency to give voice to the grievances of white nationalists, and aired some of his own. His remarks Tuesday amounted to a rejection of the Republicans, business leaders and White House advisers who earlier this week had pushed the president to more forcefully and specifical-

ly condemn the KKK members, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who took to the streets of Charlottesville.

The angry exchange with reporters at his skyscraper hotel in New York laid bare a reality of his presidency: Trump cannot be managed by others or steered away from damaging political land mines. His top aides were stunned by his comments, with some — including chief of staff John Kelly — standing by helplessly as the president escalated his rhetoric.

Standing in the lobby of Trump Tower, Trump acknowledged that there were "some very bad people" among those who gathered to protest Saturday. But he added, "You also had people that were very fine people, on both sides."

The rally was organized by

white supremacists and other groups under a "Unite the Right" banner. Organizers said they were initially activated by their objections to the planned removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, but the larger aim was to protest what they saw as an "anti-white" climate in America.

In his remarks, Trump condemned bigoted ideology and called James Alex Fields Jr., who police say drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, killing Heather Heyer, 32, "a disgrace to himself, his family and his country."

But at Tuesday's news conference Trump also expressed support for those seeking to maintain the monument to Lee, equating him with some of the nation's founders who also owned slaves.

"So, this week it's Robert E. Lee," he said. "I noticed that Stonewall Jackson's coming down. I wonder, 'is it George Washington next week and is it Thomas Jefferson the week after?' You really do have to ask yourself, where does it stop?"

White House officials were caught off guard by his remarks. He had signed off on a plan to ignore questions from journalists during an event touting infrastructure policies, according to a White House official not authorized to speak publicly about a private discussion.

As Trump talked, his aides on the sidelines in the lobby stood in silence. Kelly crossed his arms and stared down at his shoes, barely glancing at the president. One young staffer stood with her mouth agape.

Naval lethality is hot topic at symposium

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — Two dozen Navy commanders from around the Pacific gathered in Hawaii this week to swap tips and brainstorm ideas on how to become a more lethal force.

The Pacific Warfighters Symposium, held Monday and Tuesday at the joint base, came as tensions ratcheted up between the United States and North Korea, which had threatened to launch a missile near Guam, a U.S. territory. However, the third annual symposium is not tied to any specific nation or threat, said Cmdr. Guy Snodgrass, the forum's director.

"Nothing is off the table," he

said. "We're talking about everything that has to do with the Asia-Pacific."

That includes the South China Sea, a Pacific hot spot where the Navy has been using freedom-of-navigation operations to push back against China's claims over disputed islands there.

The 25 participants came from the breadth of the Pacific Fleet, and this year's group included several commanders of destroyers, two from cruisers and one from a littoral combat ship, Snodgrass said. Others came from aviation — both fighters and surveillance aircraft — explosive ordnance and intelligence.

"We basically want to bring a wide cross section of people who have experience in differ-

ent backgrounds," he said. "I'm a naval aviator; I fly a plane. It's very easy in a 20-year career to only talk to other aviators and only focus on flying planes. That's a big blind spot. And suddenly you find yourself as a Navy captain or beyond and you're being asked to think broadly about a lot of things the Navy does. ... Why would I wait until the moment I walk in the door in that role to start preparing for it?"

Subject matter experts and some senior-level commanders have joined the symposium discussion, a forum Snodgrass described as "by commanders, for commanders." On Monday, Adm. Scott Swift told the group about the challenges he faces as the Pacific Fleet's commander.

The symposium's bottom line, though, is, "How can we be as lethal as possible?" Snodgrass said.

"If you're a destroyer [commanding officer], how can you make your ship and the small group of ships you operate with as lethal as possible, given the resources you're given?" he said.

The "secret sauce" of the symposium is helping bridge the gap between limited resources and the missions at hand and on the horizon, Snodgrass said.

"You're never going to have enough resources to be 100 percent effective with the mission," he said. "You have to find innovative solutions. You have to find ways to maximize the training you get."

Summit focuses on future of sea battles

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, the "SWO boss" who helms Naval Surface Forces, kicked off the Surface Warfare Summit on Tuesday at Naval Base Point Loma, Calif., with a plea for his officers to get smarter and meaner as they train to fight a potential 21st-century sea battle.

The second annual conference gathers more than 200 Navy commanders, defense industry tycoons and academics to three days of talks on how to adapt America's Navy to wage war. Much of the forum is clas-

sified but focuses on what Rowden calls the "T4" — tactical excellence, nimble and savvy talent, cutting-edged tools that sense and then destroy enemy forces and the realistic training that puts all of the other elements together.

"The message I'd want people to take away from this summit is how far we've come over the past few years," Rowden said.

The organizing principle corraling the conference is "distributed lethality," a concept tied to Rowden and evangelized throughout the surface Navy through some of the brightest

junior officers he recruited.

The blueprint for distributed lethality was sketched out at the Rhode Island-based Naval War College but blossomed under Rowden, a career surface warfare officer who came of age during the Cold War and later commanded the destroyer *Milius*, Destroyer Squadron 60 and multiple carrier strike groups.

The detailed tactics and operations that will flesh out the concept are being refined daily, but in general distributive lethality seeks to widely disperse warships to put a potential enemy at risk of destruction

from many different vessels.

Rowden wants the surface fleet to be deployed forward, on the cusp of potential conflict, not only to respond quickly and ruthlessly to challenges at sea but also to be a visible show of American force.

Rowden realizes that if deterrence fails and America must go to war, sailors are going to have to be not only competent at their jobs but also tough — capable of taking a punch from the enemy, repairing the damage and then aggressively hunting down that foe to kill it or drive it from sea battle.

Navy commander latest to plead guilty in bribery scandal

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A Navy commander accused of leaking information to the namesake target of the "Fat Leonard" bribery investigation pleaded guilty Tuesday in San Diego federal court.

Bobby Pitts, 48, of Chesapeake, Va., pleaded guilty to a charge of conspiracy to defraud

the United States.

From 2009 to 2011, Pitts was the officer in charge of the U.S. Navy's Fleet Industrial Supply Command in Singapore, overseeing contracts of husbanding services for the Navy's 7th Fleet.

In his position he was privy to internal briefings and re-

ports from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, which was probing allegations that contractor Leonard Glenn Francis had been overbilling the military throughout Southeast Asia ports.

Pitts admitted to helping Francis cover up the overcharging scheme and sharing inter-

nal Navy information about the ongoing investigation.

For his efforts, Francis bribed Pitts with lavish meals, entertainment and, at least once, the services of a prostitute, according to the indictment.

Pitts was arrested in May 2016 in Virginia. He is set to be sentenced Dec. 1.

No landing gear, no canopy, no problem for A-10 pilot

Stars and Stripes

Without the benefit of landing gear or a canopy, an Air National Guard pilot brought his A-10 Thunderbolt II in for a belly landing in Michigan last month.

"It is believed to be the first time in the roughly 40-year history of the A-10 that a pilot had to land with no canopy and with the landing gear up," according to an Air National Guard press release.

Capt. Brett DeVries landed the A-10 on the runway at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center on July 20. While the attack jet sustained heavy damage, no one was injured, the release said.

"To this day, I really haven't second-guessed anything," DeVries said, according to the release. "In that moment, your training kicks in. The training — that's what saves you and your wingman."

DeVries and four other A-10 pilots assigned to the 107th Fighter Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., were practicing bombing and strafing runs at Grayling Air Gunnery Range when the trouble began, the release said.

On DeVries' second pass, his gun malfunctioned and the canopy blew off his aircraft. The wind then caught in his helmet and slammed his

head against his seat.

"It was like someone sucker punched me," he said. "I was just dazed for a moment."

The A-10 was then flying at about 150 feet, so DeVries climbed to 2,000 feet and lowered his seat to avoid the wind.

Maj. Shannon Vickers was flying behind DeVries and saw the sudden climb. He flew beneath DeVries' aircraft and noticed that several covers were blown from the jet when the gun malfunctioned. The two "Red Devils" decided to fly to Alpena to land.

When it was time to attempt a landing, Vickers again flew beneath DeVries' aircraft to check the landing gear and saw that the nose gear was hung up because of the damaged gun.

The pilots determined it was best to land without using the gear.

Vickers then guided DeVries in for the landing.

"I flew him down, calling out his altitude," said Vickers, according to the release. "He came in flat; I mean it was a very smooth landing."

The Air Force is investigating the cause of the original malfunction.

"The A-10 is still at Alpena where it is being repaired and will return to the flying inventory at Selfridge," the release said.

5 missing after Black Hawk crash off Hawaii

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Five soldiers went missing late Tuesday after their helicopter went down off the coast of Hawaii, Coast Guard and Army officials said Wednesday.

Coast Guard, Army and Marine Corps aircraft on Wednesday were searching waters off Kaena Point on northwestern Oahu, where a debris field was located about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter carrying five crewmembers lost radio contact with personnel at Wheeler Army Airfield on the island, according to a Coast Guard statement.

The missing aircrew belongs to the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, based at Wheeler, said Dennis Drake, a spokesman for the Army in Hawaii.

The crew was conducting a routine night training flight alongside another Black Hawk late Tuesday when the other aircrew lost visual and radio contact about 9:20 p.m. local time, he said. The Black Hawk crew conducted unsuccessful preliminary searches of the area and alerted the Coast Guard of the missing helicopter.

Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules planes, MH-65 Dolphin helicopters, the Cutter Ahi and a 45-foot response boat were joined by Army Black Hawk helicopters and Honolulu Fire Department boats to search for the missing soldiers, the statement said.

Drake added that Marine Corps helicopters were also part of the search.

The names of the missing soldiers were not immediately released Wednesday.

Raytheon delivers 4,000th Tomahawk Block IV cruise missile to the Navy

The (Tucson) Arizona Daily Star

Tucson-based Raytheon Missile Systems ceremonially delivered its 4,000th Tomahawk Block IV cruise missile to the Navy on Tuesday.

The latest Tomahawk missile is far more capable than the first ones launched in combat during Operation Desert Storm in 1991 — and future versions will add technology to tackle new missions, Raytheon and Navy officials said at a company event marking the delivery milestone.

The satellite-guided Tomahawk already is the "nation's weapon of choice" for striking high-value targets with pinpoint accuracy from long range, with more than 2,300 fired in combat in 15 military operations.

"It is often the weapon that clears the path for the rest of the force, and at times it's the only weapon necessary to meet the mission objectives," Capt. Mark Johnson, the Navy's Tomahawk program manager, said during a private Raytheon event at the UA Tech Park.

Though America's Navy is dispersed around the globe, the Tomahawk allows the nation to project its power when needed through the 141 destroyers, cruisers and submarines that carry the cruise missile, Johnson said.

"When a country sees a U.S. destroyer sitting off its coast, one of the primary reasons they grow concerned is due to the capabilities they know the Tomahawk missile brings," he said.

The Tomahawk Block IV de-

buted in 2004, adding the ability to loiter over targets, transmit images and allow commanders to retarget the missile in midflight.

Raytheon Missile Systems President Taylor Lawrence noted that just a few years ago the Navy was looking to halt Tomahawk production to save money as it sat on an inventory of some 4,000 Tomahawks and looked toward developing a future cruise missile.

But that plan was turned back by Congress and production continued at a minimum sustaining rate, Lawrence said.

The cost of each Tomahawk varies with the version and the number purchased in each production lot, but the most recent average cost is about \$1.09 million apiece, Johnson said.

Firebrand jurist forces Ala. runoff

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama's famed Ten Commandments judge, Roy Moore, has forced a Senate primary runoff with president-backed incumbent Sen. Luther Strange, setting up a September showdown that could be closely watched for clues about Republicans' prospects in 2018 midterm elections.

Moore has twice been stripped of chief justice duties for stands over the Ten Commandments and against gay marriage. He rode a tide of anti-Washington sentiment and his fame as an icon of the culture wars Tuesday to lead the first round of voting and secure a runoff spot in the contentious Republican race for the Senate seat previously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Moore and Strange will meet in a Sept. 26 runoff. The winner will face Democratic nominee Doug Jones in a December election.

Despite being buoyed by millions of dollars in advertising by a super political action committee tied to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Strange was unable to defeat the

firebrand jurist.

The result was not unexpected after polls suggested Moore, with his loyal base, was leading a crowded GOP field in a summer special election where turnout was roughly half that of a normal primary.

While President Donald Trump endorsed Strange, Moore tried to present himself as the better carrier of Trump's outsider appeal.

Strange emphasized his Trump endorsement — delivered first via Twitter and then in recorded phone calls to Alabama voters — in the state where Trump remains deeply popular among GOP voters.

"He knows I'm the person in this race who is going to help him make this country great again," Strange said.

Strange, the state's former attorney general, was appointed to the seat in February under Gov. Robert Bentley, who soon resigned in a scandal that bled over to Strange. Strange said he did Bentley no favors, but his challengers questioned the ethics of seeking the appointment while investigating the governor.

Utah mayor wins primary in quest for House seat

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah mayor overcame nearly \$1 million in attacks from out-of-state groups to win a three-way Republican primary in a race to fill a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives vacated by Jason Chaffetz.

Tuesday's win puts Provo Mayor John Curtis on an easy path toward victory in the November special election. Republicans outnumber Democrats 5-to-1 in Utah's 3rd Congressional District. Chaffetz represented the district until he abruptly resigned in June, citing a desire to spend more time with family.

Utah's special election is one of seven this year to fill vacancies in the U.S. House and Senate, five of which opened up when elected officials took posts in President Donald Trump's administration.

Chaffetz, a five-term Republican, carved out a reputation for using the House Oversight committee he chaired to run aggressive investigations of Hillary Clinton before the 2016 presidential elections. He's since taken a role as a Fox News commentator.

His departure opened up a congressional seat in an area that stretches from the Salt Lake City suburbs and several

ski towns southeast to Provo and coal country.

The three Republicans running to replace him carved out nuanced stances toward Trump that were emblematic of the divisions roiling the GOP under the president.

Curtis, who drew support from the GOP's more moderate flank, was the only candidate who didn't vote for Trump, saying he had significant moral concerns about supporting the billionaire businessman.

Tanner Ainge, the Sarah Palin-endorsed son of Boston Celtics president Danny Ainge, said he voted for Trump because he always votes for the Republican candidate in presidential elections.

Chris Herrod, a former state lawmaker backed by Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, was the most vocal supporter of Trump, having spoken at a rally for the president.

However, all three candidates said they support the president's agenda, including plans to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border and repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Unofficial results show Curtis as the victor after his opponents split support from more conservative Republicans.

Court: Ark. can block Planned Parenthood funds

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A federal appeals court panel ruled Wednesday that Arkansas can block Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood over videos secretly recorded by an anti-abortion group.

In a 2-1 ruling, an 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel vacated preliminary injunctions a federal judge issued preventing the state from suspending any Medicaid payments for services rendered to patients from Planned Parenthood. Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson ended the state's Medicaid contract with the organization in 2015 over the videos.

The court ruled the patients did not have the right to challenge the defunding decision.

"Under the Jane Does' vision, while the provider is litigating its qualifications in the state courts, or after the provider unsuccessfully appeals a determination that it is not qualified, individual patients separately could litigate or relitigate the qualifications of the provider in federal court," the court ruled.

U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker initially ordered the state to continue the payments to three patients who had sued over the move and later expanded that order to anyone who seeks or wants to obtain services from the organization's health centers in Arkansas.

The state has said Planned Parenthood received \$51,000 in Medicaid funds in the fiscal year before Hutchinson's decision to

terminate the contract. None of the money paid for abortions.

Republican lawmakers and governors around the country targeted the organization after several videos were released by the anti-abortion Center for Medical Progress.

The center said the videos showed that Planned Parenthood illegally sells fetal tissue for profit. Planned Parenthood said the videos were heavily edited and denied seeking any payments beyond legally permitted reimbursement of costs.

In a dissenting opinion to Wednesday's ruling, Judge Michael Melloy noted that several other federal appeals courts have ruled the opposite way on defunding.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Lawsuit claims rodent was baked into bun

PA PHILADELPHIA — A lawsuit claims a suburban Philadelphia woman got an extra topping in her Chick-fil-A sandwich: a dead rodent.

Ellen Manfalouti sued in Bucks County Court over the tiny rodent she claims was baked into the bottom bun of her chicken sandwich.

The 46-year-old told The Philadelphia Inquirer her co-worker picked up the sandwich at a Langhorne restaurant in November. The two started to eat when she “felt something funny” and thought the bun was burned.

Her co-worker said she knew it was a rodent because she saw the whiskers and tail.

Manfalouti’s lawyer said the franchise owner and store weren’t responsive to their complaints.

Owner Dave Heffernan and the Atlanta-based fast-food chain say they can’t comment on litigation.

Wayward alligator found in motel swimming pool

NJ ATLANTIC CITY — Crews removed a 3-foot alligator that was found in a swimming pool at a motel at the New Jersey shore.

The wayward alligator was discovered Tuesday at the Bayview Inn & Suites in Atlantic City.

Authorities said it’s not clear where the alligator came from, how it got in the pool or how long it had been there. But they note the motel is a short distance from the Lakes Bay nature preserve.

Animal control workers safely lifted the alligator from the pool and took it to an undisclosed site.

Mom, daughter charged after doors kicked out

CT FAIRFIELD — A Connecticut mother and her 12-year-old daughter were charged after police say they kicked out a convenience store’s glass doors because an employee who suspected them of stealing locked them inside.

The girl is also charged with using a stun gun on the 7-Eleven worker.

Police said Dorsey Saunders, 41, of Bridgeport, and her daughter were locked in the Fairfield store by a clerk who said they stole energy drinks. The Connecticut Post reported that they kicked out the glass and ran into the parking lot where the girl used the stun gun.

Saunders and her daughter face several charges including larceny. The mother was charged with impairing the morals of a minor.

Judge orders seawalls removed to help turtles

SC CHARLESTON — A federal judge has ordered the removal of seawalls on two South Carolina beaches to protect sea turtles that are having problems nesting when they run into the plastic structures.

U.S. District Judge David Norton’s order sets aside a decision by state officials to allow the experimental plastic walls at Harbor Island in Beaufort County and the Isle of Palms in Charleston County.

Norton ordered that the walls be removed until the court can consider a federal challenge of state rules allowing the seawalls.

The seawalls are supposed to protect valuable oceanfront hotels, homes and condominium buildings without eroding beaches or hurting the turtles’

nests.

Environmentalists say the walls are blocking the sea turtles’ access to nesting sites.

Adult, 3 kids hurt when big tree falls in park

NY NEW YORK — The Fire Department of New York said an adult and three children were taken to a hospital in serious condition after a tree fell in Central Park.

Rescuers were called mid-morning Tuesday to Central Park West near 62nd Street.

A witness told WABC that a woman briefly lost consciousness and people tried to lift branches off her. The witness said the woman was with two children in a stroller and one in a carrier.

Online images show the large uprooted tree on the ground, blocking the road.

Resident finds time capsule buried in yard

ME WINTHROP — A Maine man digging up his backyard uncovered what appeared to be a sort of time capsule — containing old syringes, containers with white powder inside and an Oct. 2, 1955, edition of the Boston Sunday Globe.

Winthrop resident Randy Hooper was digging a hole for a blueberry plant when he uncovered the metal container that housed the items. The Kennebec Journal reported Hooper opened the container a few days later — finding the old newspaper alongside syringes, needles and the containers of white powder labeled “1/8 Ounce Sulphate of Morphine Poison: Manufactured By Rosengarten & Sons, Philadelphia.”

Hooper contacted Winthrop police, who took the items. Of-

ficials did not respond to a request for more information.

3 teens arrested after stunt seen on YouTube

NY TARRYTOWN — New York police said three teenagers face criminal charges following a YouTube video that shows them trespassing on a Hudson River bridge that’s under construction.

State police announced Monday that it made the arrests between Aug. 6 and Aug. 8.

The Journal News said the July 13 video shows an 18-year-old and two 17-year-olds walking along train tracks, squeezing through a fence hole and roaming around a Tappan Zee Bridge replacement span. The camera shows some dizzying views below. About five minutes into the video, one teen says they’ve been spotted and they run away.

Police cruisers double as ice cream trucks

NH LEBANON — Two police departments in Vermont and New Hampshire are playing it cool this summer, offering ice cream to children to improve community relations.

In Lebanon, N.H., the Ice Cream Patrol includes a cruiser outfitted with a portable freezer and the familiar jingle associated with ice cream trucks. A similar initiative is underway in Hartford, Vt..

The Valley News reported that Lebanon police are visiting neighborhoods at random while Hartford officers are concentrating their efforts in more densely populated areas where they experience high call volume.

Officials said the programs are funded through donations.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

On a mission to provide credible reporting and daily news to America’s military, wherever they serve.

Mobile apps available: www.stripes.com/apps.

New trio helps solidify Nats' bullpen

Associated Press

WASHINGTON— Ryan Madson doesn't pay attention to baseball, so when he couldn't tune out hearing how bad the Nationals' bullpen was he knew it must be a problem with the relief corps.

It was.

Washington had the worst bullpen ERA in baseball at 5.34 and had blown 22 of 36 save opportunities. With the rest of the pieces in place in the lineup and rotation to be a World Series contender, general manager Mike Rizzo acquired Madson and left-handed reliever Sean Doolittle from Oakland on July 16 and All-Star closer Brandon Kintzler from Minnesota on July 31 to shore up the most important part of the bullpen and make games shorter.

So far it has worked almost perfectly. With Kintzler pitching the seventh, Madson the eighth and Doolittle the ninth, the trio has a 1.29 ERA and 0.89 WHIP in 28 innings.

Invoking Yogi Berra's saying

that, "If you ain't got a bullpen, you ain't got nothing," manager Dusty Baker referred to the sign he used to hang in his office that reads: "Nothing's better than good friends and a good bullpen." He has one now.

"You feel a lot more comfortable because you don't necessarily have to mix and match left-right, left-right and run out of your guys in the bullpen," Baker said. "You feel a whole lot more comfortable. On the real good teams I've been on, we had that."

The Nationals have a solid ballclub, with reigning NL Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer as the ace, Stephen Strasburg and Gio Gonzalez as strong second and third starters and a powerful lineup that features 2015 MVP Bryce Harper, Daniel Murphy, Ryan Zimmerman and Anthony Rendon. The strength of that core and organizational depth amid injuries allowed Washington to build a significant lead in the weak NL East, but the woeful bullpen performance threat-

ened to sink any hopes of a long postseason run.

Righty Matt Albers, who has revitalized his career with a 2.03 ERA, and lefty Oliver Perez are still trustworthy relievers, but the Nationals could also lean on Kintzler-Madson-Doolittle for just about every important inning in October. The relievers say their transition, together, has been seamless in part because Baker has used them in consistent roles and also because they felt appreciated and welcome in the clubhouse.

Madson and Doolittle left last-place Oakland, and Minnesota was seven games back at the time of the trade. Pitching in meaningful games has also gone a long way.

"You're trying to prove yourself to a new team every time out, so you really stay focused," Kintzler said. "Every game means something. We're trying to win a division and get ready for the playoffs. For me coming in, obviously I need to prove myself to them so they keep putting me in the role."

So far Doolittle, who converted three of four save chances this season for the Athletics, has filled the closer's role, even though Baker hasn't anointed him as the closer. Kintzler converted 28 of his 32 save chances with the Twins but has been OK with not pitching in the ninth since going to Washington.

A fan of round-number milestones, Baker wants to get Kintzler two more saves for 30 on the season but isn't about to juggle his late-game rotation while things are going smoothly.

"You've got three All-Star closers," Baker said. "You've got to settle on somebody. But the roles couldn't be interchangeable. ... I don't like to anticipate problems before there's problems."

The Nationals' biggest problem right now is what Rizzo called a "significant" bone bruise in Harper's left knee. The bullpen has gone from a weakness to a strength, and Madson is glad he gets to "help plug a little leak for a great ship."

West Point grad Rowley adjusting to fame

Associated Press

TORONTO — Trying to maintain his throwing arm in the midst of a 30-month stint with the U.S. Army often proved challenging for Toronto Blue Jays right-hander Chris Rowley. Fortunately, his company medic was willing to cooperate.

The first West Point graduate to reach the major leagues, Rowley pitched one-run ball over 5¹/₃ innings to beat the Pittsburgh Pirates in his debut Saturday, leaving the field to a standing ovation.

"It still feels pretty surreal," Rowley said Sunday. "I'm slowly processing it. I'm still in that initial surge. My phone is getting blown up, I have all these interviews. Twenty-four hours ago, relatively nobody knew my name. Now all of a sudden this has blown up. I'm trying to handle the surreal aspect of it."

Working off a major league mound wasn't an option for Rowley in the summer of 2015, when he was stationed in Bulgaria and Romania as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, aimed at reassuring NATO's European allies in light of Russia's invasion in Ukraine. A first lieutenant, his job as a fire support officer in the field artillery branch

was the priority, but Rowley and his medic still found time for the occasional game of catch.

"It was unusual," Rowley said. "He played infield in high school so he wasn't a catcher, but he did a fine job. I was just trying to keep the arm moving and do something to not lose anything."

Those sessions proved helpful once Rowley left the Army in January 2016, having received an exception to the remainder of his service. While he remains on individual ready reserve, he was free to return to the Blue Jays, rejoining the organization at spring training.

"I felt fine, I felt like I was getting guys out and competing," Rowley said of his comeback after missing all of 2014 and 2015. "I think I got away with a lot more then. I was tossing in 87 mph heaters and hoping nobody would hit them. I felt like I was pretty comfortable coming back but it might have been a little bit unfounded."

Blue Jays catcher Mike Ohlman teamed with Rowley at Triple-A and also was behind the plate for the final inning and a third of Saturday's start.

"All the respect to him for the service he

did for our our country and putting that first and foremost, before a baseball career," Ohlman said. "He throws a lot of strikes, fills up the zone, gets a lot of ground balls, and he's got two really good pitches he can throw at any time. The sinker is number one and he just developed his cutter, a cutter/slider that he'll mix back and forth. It's a really good combination."

Rowley's paternal grandfather enlisted in the Army and served in Korea, while his maternal grandfather was a noncommissioned officer in the Air Force. Even so, the idea of service never appealed to Rowley until a West Point recruiter offered him the chance to be a starting pitcher for the Black Knights.

"I wanted to play baseball at the next level," Rowley said. "It wasn't like I had this calling. The desire to serve with my brothers and sisters in arms, that came later. It was kind of a maturation process for me."

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons, the son of an Air Force colonel, said Saturday he was impressed with Rowley's confidence on the mound, and credited the rookie's military background for his composure.

Beckham putting on a show in camp

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — After a miserable end to the 2016 season and the brouhaha about his desire to be the NFL's highest-paid player, Odell Beckham Jr. is having a great time at training camp with the New York Giants.

The 24-year-old wide receiver, social rock star and fan favorite is putting on a show every time he steps on the field.

The entertainment this week has been either a couple of one-handed catches, dancing to the music between segments of practice or playing up to the fans running down the sideline after a catch.

His smile is as bright as his gold cleats and his mood reflects that. Walking in the team's indoor field house after practice Monday, Beckham leap-frogged a stunned reporter, jumped over an upside-down garbage can and then turned to safety Landon Collins and quipped 'that something was you,' referring to the can.

Entering his fourth season, Beckham said he is very comfortable in coach Ben McAdoo's offense.

"Personally, the way that I feel mentally, physically, spiritually right now, I am just in a better place," Beckham said. "I'm in a real good place. Things are flowing; just continually pushing them in the right direction."

The three-time Pro Bowler credits the change to life, getting older and growing after some unfortunate incidents.

It's certainly a lot better than the end of last season.

Forget?

The Giants were blown out by the Packers 31-13 in Green Bay in the opening round of the playoffs and Beckham had a miserable game, catching four of 11 passes thrown his way and dropping an early sure touchdown pass. After the game, he allegedly punched a hole in a wall outside the Giants' locker room. It capped a week in which he was criticized for making an ill-advised trip

to Florida on an off-day leading up to the wild-card game to go out on a party boat with some fellow receivers.

Beckham said the pain after last season, which included a stern request from general manager Jerry Reese that he start growing up, got him moving in the right direction.

So did the disappointment of losing in the playoffs.

"You have no idea," Beckham said of the level of his disappointment. "I really thought about it and I'm thinking about it, even growing up, the Giants — historical team. The Packers — historical team. Lambeau Field, ice cold, perfect conditions, everything that you can dream of and [I] wasn't able to capture the moment. And [I] did it in a horrible way and a way that, you know, I woke up out of my sleep to. But I used that pain, I used that pain and I turn it into positive energy."

Since camp opened late last month, Beckham has excited fans with one big play after another.

During a two-minute drill on Sunday, he beat cornerback Eli Apple and went up with his right hand, caught Eli Manning's touchdown pass, tucking it to his body without the help of his left hand. He then slowly jogged back to the huddle, hoping the coaches might forget that he should have used two hands.

"Get the job done, that's just where I am at," Beckham said. "Get the job done however you can. Whether I have to fight or scrap for it, whatever I have to do to come up with it, it's just got to be mine. There's no other way to put it."

Beckham has done that better than any Giants receiver in his first three seasons. In 43 regular-season games, he has 288 receptions, 4,122 yards, and 35 touchdowns — all team records for a player in his first three seasons.

Veteran receiver Brandon Marshall, who signed with the Giants in the offseason, called Beckham the best player in the NFL.

Harbaugh undaunted by Ravens' escalating injuries

Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Baltimore Ravens coach John Harbaugh's steely resolve is being tested with nine players already lost for the season because of injuries, suspension or retirement.

Nonetheless, Harbaugh contends the Ravens have enough depth to overcome those challenges.

Several players will get a chance to bolster that optimism in the second preseason game Thursday night against the Miami Dolphins. Harbaugh is hoping his short-handed team can build off a solid performance in last week's 23-3 victory over the Washington Redskins.

"You're talking about the ability to stack performances," Harbaugh said. "You prove it's not a one-time deal in a game.

You come back the next week and have success again. Then, the third week, you do it again and that's how you establish yourself as a guy who can win in this league.

"Going down to Miami, you're on the road for the first time with the young guys playing a very good team. Probably be hot down there, I guess. It will be hot or it will be raining, one of the two, probably both. It will be good for us and I am looking forward to seeing how those guys do."

Seven players are out for the season because of injuries, including potential starters Dennis Pitta and Crockett Gillmore both at tight end, cornerback Tavon Young and left guard Alex Lewis.

John Urschel, who was expected to compete for the starting job at center, decided to

retire just hours before the first full-squad practice of training camp. And, Darren Waller, a sixth-round pick in 2015, is suspended without pay for one year for also violating the NFL's substance abuse policy for the second time.

Baltimore has struggled with continuity on the offensive line because coaches have been consistently forced to shuffle players.

Starting left tackle Ronnie Stanley has missed three practices this week with an undisclosed injury and is likely out against Miami. Six-time Pro Bowl guard Marshal Yanda had offseason shoulder surgery and is easing his way back into the lineup.

Compounding the problem, quarterback Joe Flacco has still not practiced because of a back injury. Baltimore did sign

veteran Austin Howard on Aug. 4 to help stabilize the offensive line and he could be available to play in Miami.

Ravens offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg said there is still time for the offense to get in sync leading up to the regular-season opener Sept. 10 against the Cincinnati Bengals.

"It looks like we are going to have just enough time there to get (Flacco) ready as long as he keeps progressing, and by all accounts, he is progressing pretty well," Mornhinweg said.

On the other side of the ball, the Ravens have shown solid depth, especially with their defensive ends and tackles. Baltimore held Washington to just 138 total yards, including 39 on the ground, and had three sacks in the preseason opener. That defense has been a boost to the Ravens' overall confidence.

Gonzalez, Nats end Angels' win streak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Gio Gonzalez didn't have much time to worry about an infield single ending another no-hit bid. Not with Mike Trout and Albert Pujols due up.

Gonzalez shook off a single up the middle by Trout, walked Pujols and was saved by Daniel Murphy's leaping catch at second base. Six innings of two-hit baseball from Gonzalez was more than enough for the Washington Nationals to snap the Los Angeles Angels' winning streak at six with a 3-1 victory Tuesday night.

For the second time in three starts, Gonzalez (11-5) flirted with a no-hitter. He had one

through eight innings July 31 in Miami, and against the Angels he lowered his home ERA to a major league-best 1.79 while striking out four and walking three.

"He has been giving us the opportunity to win games because he gets outs when he needs them," said outfielder Howie Kendrick, who hit two solo home runs two days after a walkoff grand slam against San Francisco. "Ground balls, double plays and he has been commanding the ball really well. Making pitches that he needed, striking guys out, I mean that's what you need from your starters."

Gonzalez has developed consistency that was lacking earlier

in his career this season throwing to catcher Matt Wieters and could give the Nationals an underappreciated third starter in the playoffs behind Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg. Manager Dusty Baker doesn't want the left-hander thinking that far ahead, and he isn't because he came close to unraveling in the sixth.

"I think that's just letting Murphy talk to you and then letting Murphy make the play," Gonzalez said. "If it wasn't for his play, it's a different ballgame. We wouldn't be talking with so much smiling. We'd be talking with more 'Got to make a better pitch.'"

Gonzalez and relievers Matt Albers, Brandon Kintzler and

Sean Doolittle made enough good pitches to hand the Angels their first loss since Aug. 7. Lefty Tyler Skaggs (1-3) allowed the two home runs to Kendrick among his seven hits in five innings and struck out six, while Cliff Pennington hit a home run in the eighth — the first run Kintzler has allowed since a trade from Minnesota to Washington.

After climbing into the second AL wild-card spot with the winning streak, the Angels hope they can maintain their winning ways in a crowded group of teams.

"It's one game," Skaggs said. "Definitely you want to go out there and keep the ball rolling."

Roundup

Stanton hits 44th home run in Marlins' loss to Giants

Associated Press

MIAMI — All eyes are on Giancarlo Stanton and he keeps delivering.

Baseball's \$325 million man homered in his sixth consecutive game to give him a major league-leading 44, but the Miami Marlins fell 9-4 to the San Francisco Giants on Tuesday night.

"Obviously very dangerous right now," Marlins manager Don Mattingly said.

Stanton hit a solo shot to deep left-center field off Madison Bumgarner (3-5) in the third inning, tying the game at 2.

"It was a matchup a lot of baseball fans and us in the game look forward to," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "Bumgarner won't back down but (Stanton) got him."

Stanton has 11 homers in his last 12 games, and 23 in the last 35. Only Sammy Sosa (25 in 1998) and Barry Bonds (24 in 2001) have hit more in that span, according to Elias.

"I've never even heard anything like this before with what he's doing," Marlins catcher A.J. Ellis said. "And the fact

to be able to see it, it's a great moment for all of us. ... The fact that he's delivering when the expectations are there speaks to how locked in he is and how dedicated he is to find the right pitches. It's pretty special to watch and we all hope it keeps going."

He is two games from tying the major league record of hitting a home run in eight straight set by Dale Long (1956), Mattingly (1987) and Ken Griffey Jr. (1993).

"I'd like to see him beat it actually," Mattingly said. "It would be good. ... We're trying to win games and the last thing I'm going to do is root against him hitting homers. So I'm all for it."

Dodgers 6, White Sox 1: Joc Pederson got hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to force in the go-ahead run in a five-run eighth inning that lifted host Los Angeles over Chicago.

The victory pushed the major league-leading Dodgers (84-34) to 50 games above .500.

Red Sox 10, Cardinals 4: Xander Bogaerts had three hits, Hanley Ramirez, Sandy Leon and Jackie Bradley Jr. all

added two RBIs and host Boston beat St. Louis.

Indians 8, Twins 1: Carlos Santana hit two of his team's five home runs and Danny Salazar (5-5) continued his strong second-half stretch in visiting Cleveland's victory over Minnesota.

Yankees 5, Mets 4: Sonny Gray (7-7) outpitched Jacob deGrom (13-6), Jacoby Ellsbury and Gary Sanchez homered, and the Yankees held off the Mets to sweep both Subway Series games in the Bronx.

Braves 4, Rockies 3: Brandon Phillips scored the go-ahead run on a rare error by Nolan Arenado, and visiting Atlanta beat Colorado.

Rangers 10, Tigers 4: Joey Gallo and Mike Napoli hit back-to-back homers and host Texas beat Detroit to end Justin Verlander's (8-8) three-game winning streak.

Reds 2, Cubs 1: Scooter Gennett's sacrifice fly drove in Joey Votto to break a scoreless tie in the eighth, and Billy Hamilton singled in a run in the ninth and visiting Cincinnati edged Chicago.

Astros 9, Diamondbacks

4: Visiting Houston had six extra-base hits in the first four innings, building a big enough lead to top Arizona.

Rays 6, Blue Jays 4: Lucas Duda hit a two-run homer, Wilson Ramos added a solo shot and visiting Tampa Bay beat Toronto, snapping a four-game skid.

Brewers 3, Pirates 1: Keon Broxton hit a pinch-hit home run, Manny Piña drove in two runs, Zach Davies (14-6) pitched into the seventh and host Milwaukee beat Pittsburgh.

Mariners 3, Orioles 1: Andrew Albers (1-0) earned his first major league win in four years, pitching five effective innings as host Seattle beat Baltimore to snap a five-game losing streak.

Athletics 10, Royals 8: Matt Joyce hit a three-run double to cap a six-run eighth inning and host Oakland rallied past Kansas City.

Padres 8, Phillies 4: Cory Spangenberg homered and had a career-high four RBIs to back seven strong innings from Dinelson Lamet (7-4) in host San Diego's victory over Philadelphia.