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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Remains from N. Korea bound for US

BY KIM GAMEL
AND MARCUS FICHTL

Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — Remains handed over by North Korea last week are likely from American war dead, an official said Wednesday ahead of a repatriation ceremony.

The comments provided the first clues about the identities of the remains inside the 55 boxes returned as part of a promise made by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during his June 12 summit with President Donald Trump.

The caskets lined up in a hangar at Osan were covered with blue United Nations flags pending final identification, symbolic of the fact that 15 other nations fought with the United States in the 1950-53 war.

But a two-day forensic review showed that the remains appear to be human and “are likely to be American,” John Byrd, an anthropologist with the Defense POW/MIA Ac-

counting Agency, told reporters before the formal send-off.

“Our preliminary findings were that the remains are what the [North Korean] officials said they were,” Byrd said, adding that it was one of the largest unilateral turnovers ever received from the North.

“There’s no reason at this point to doubt that they do relate to Korean War losses,” Byrd said.

Byrd said the North Koreans provided enough information about where the remains were found to place them on a battleground in 1950-51.

Byrd, director of scientific analysis for the DPAA, also confirmed a report that a single dog tag was provided with the remains and said the family of that individual has been notified. But, he stressed, it was not known if the soldier’s remains were among those being repatriated as the North Koreans had expressed concern about commingling.

He said other evidence that the boxes contained Ameri-

can remains included military hardware such as helmets, canteens and boots.

Byrd also said scientists were confident that there were no animal bones mixed up with the remains.

Gen. Vincent Brooks, who leads the U.N. Command and U.S. Forces Korea, presided over a ceremony titled “Never Forgotten,” with full honors, including a wreath laying and a rifle salute.

“Our work is not complete until all are accounted for, no matter how long it takes,” Brooks told the audience of hundreds of servicemembers and dignitaries from the other nations that contributed and often also lost troops.

The cases were then loaded three by three to two Air Force planes that were to fly them to Hawaii. One was grounded due to a maintenance safety concern, but the remains on board were transferred to a third aircraft that took off a few hours later, according to the UNC public affairs office.

Vice President Mike Pence, whose father fought in the Korean War, was scheduled to attend an “honorable carry ceremony” at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam to mark the arrival of the remains on U.S. soil.

The remains will undergo a lengthy forensics process at the military lab, which is staffed by more than 30 anthropologists, archaeologists and forensic odontologists.

U.S. officials also are eager to resume searches in North Korea for more remains, an effort that has been stalled for more than a decade due to rising nuclear tensions.

“We do not know if the North Koreans have any additional remains, but I’ll tell you this is a great first step towards bringing a bunch of fallen Americans home,” Rear Adm. Jon Kreitz said during a press conference.

The DPAA has what it calls family reference samples, including DNA, for more than 90 percent of the missing servicemembers.

US-Japan-Australia deal aims to counter China’s influence

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

A Chinese navy ship will dock in Fiji days after the United States, Japan and Australia announced plans for joint investments seen as a counterweight to the communists’ growing influence in the Pacific.

The investment plans announced Monday by the Pacific allies are seen as a counterweight to China’s “Belt and Road” initiative to build roads, railways, ports, pipelines and power plants across Asia.

“This trilateral partnership is in recognition that more support is needed to enhance peace

and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region,” Australia Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said in a statement Tuesday.

The partnership will be run by the U.S.’ Overseas Private Investment Corp., the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation and Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Australian statement didn’t give details about funding but said the partnership would “mobilize investment in infrastructure, such as energy, transportation, tourism, and technology.”

Paul Buchanan, an American security analyst based in Auck-

land, New Zealand, said Australia and New Zealand have already boosted aid funding in response to Chinese efforts in the region.

“In New Zealand’s case the funding is seen as belated and after the cat is out the bag,” he said.

In Tonga, for example, the Chinese are building a new embassy that will serve as a signals intelligence base close to undersea data cables, Buchanan said.

In Fiji — where the People’s Liberation Army Navy hospital ship Daishan Dao is due Thursday for its second visit — Beijing has given the navy a new

“surveillance and hydrographic” ship.

Earlier reports said China had provided Fijian police with training and vehicles, and that police have asked for Chinese surveillance drones.

Brad Glosserman, a visiting professor at Tokyo’s Tama University, said there’s a massive need for infrastructure spending in the Pacific regardless of what China does.

“This [trilateral partnership] is about competition for hearts and minds in the region and the world and to pretend otherwise is silly,” he said.

Construction underway on USS McCool

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

Fabrication began on the Navy's newest amphibious transport dock ship Monday in Pascagoula, Miss.

The first 100 tons of steel has been cut for the future USS Richard M. McCool Jr., which is expected to carry about 720 troops and take on MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, amphibious assault vehicles and "virtually every size of Marine Corps helicopter," a Navy statement said.

The San Antonio-class McCool will be the last of the Navy's LPD-17 Flight I class ships that are expected to "support am-

phibious assault, special operations and expeditionary warfare missions through the first half of the 21st century," the statement said.

"We continue to benefit from the maturity of this program and look forward to achieving future production milestones as we work to deliver this versatile and capable warship to the fleet," Capt. Brian Metcalf, LPD 17 class program manager, said in the statement.

The McCool pays tribute to Medal of Honor recipient Richard M. McCool Jr., who helped save a kamikaze-attacked ship and its injured sailors off Okinawa's coast during World War II.

He went on to serve in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

When the ship's name was announced in May, Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer said McCool's "legacy will live on in the future USS Richard M. McCool and his heroic actions will continue to inspire Sailors and Marines for decades to come."

The McCool is being built by Huntington Ingalls Industries, which is also working to repair the guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald after damage suffered in a collision that killed seven sailors last year off Japan.

It's unclear when construction on the McCool will be completed.

Former Marine recruit files lawsuit over food illness

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A former Marine recruit discharged last year after contracting the bacteria *E. coli* during the final phases of training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego filed a lawsuit blaming the company that supplies food to the military base for his illness.

Lawyers representing Vincent Grano filed the lawsuit against Sodexo Inc. on Tuesday in the Southern District Court of California, charging their client suffered permanent brain and kidney damage after contracting *E. coli* from undercooked ground beef served at the company-run facility on the training base, according to court docu-

ments filed by the Marler Clark law firm. The suit seeks "just compensation in a fair and reasonable amount for the damages" that Grano has suffered including large hospital bills, according to court documents.

The lawsuit does not target the Marine Corps, said Bill Marler, a managing partner for the Seattle-based law firm.

Marine Corps officials announced in the fall that they had launched an investigation after more than 300 recruits fell ill in October. Several recruits were diagnosed at that time with *E. coli* infections, though officials said they were not immediately able to identify the source of the illnesses.

Lawyers for Grano said the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined undercooked ground beef was

likely to blame for the outbreak. The attorneys said that in the 10 days before Grano first showed signs of illness he consumed only food from Sodexo.

In a report, CDC officials wrote they had confirmed 62 cases of *E. coli*, 62 probable cases and 120 more patients who they suspected contracted the bacterial infection at the recruit depot in October. They wrote undercooked ground beef was a potential source. However, they also expressed concerns about poor hygiene among the Marine recruits.

Sodexo is a Maryland-based company that runs some 13,000 dining facility operations across North America, including dining facilities at the San Diego recruit depot.

ISIS fighters flee Taliban onslaught, surrender to Afghans

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The allied coalition's battle against Islamic State in Afghanistan received a boost from another enemy Wednesday, when Taliban guerrillas drove ISIS fighters out of northern Jawzjan province.

More than 150 ISIS fighters surrendered to Afghan government forces after the Taliban launched an offensive against them, officials said. U.S. forces have also been conducting airstrikes against ISIS in the area for months.

"These people were surrounded by the Taliban for several days, but last night

they managed to break free and surrender to government forces," Faqir Mohammad Jawzjani, Jawzjan's police chief, told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

The surrender is a major setback for ISIS in Afghanistan, known as ISIS-Khorasan Province. The group emerged in the country's east about four years ago and recently appeared to be growing stronger in the north.

Officials say it is difficult to know exactly how many ISIS fighters are operating in the country, but some put the figure as high as 2,000.

"This was Daesh's last center in the north of Afghanistan," Jawzjani said, using an Arabic acronym for ISIS. "Now we can

say that Daesh is cleared from the north."

The Taliban, who differ ideologically and culturally from ISIS, said more than 150 ISIS fighters were killed during their offensive and that the weapons of the dead were seized. Government officials were not immediately able to confirm the Taliban's claimed death toll.

"The root of Daesh has been taken out of Jawzjan," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement.

In 2017, U.S. military officials in Afghanistan said one of their top goals was to eliminate ISIS in the country by the end of the year. The group has proved resilient in eastern Nangarhar province and continues to carry out indiscriminate attacks in Kabul.

Vet: Ban toxin found in base tap water

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A delay by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in banning a cancer-causing industrial solvent has put at risk the lives of servicemembers, their families and others who live at or near hundreds of military bases, said a Marine veteran who claimed his daughter died as a result of exposure to toxic water at Camp Lejeune.

“What the hell are we waiting on? What is the EPA waiting for?” demanded Jerry Ensminger, who was stationed at the Marine Corps base in North Carolina.

Ensminger, flanked by other families impacted by the toxic water, made his plea Wednesday during a news conference on Capitol Hill to urge the EPA

to ban high-risk uses of the carcinogenic compound known as trichloroethylene, or TCE, which is impacting an estimated 14 million Americans, according to the advocacy and research organization Environmental Working Group, which publicized the findings after studying EPA-mandated tests.

“In 2015, the latest year for which comprehensive data is available, TCE was detected in EPA-mandated tests by 321 public water systems in 36 states,” the environmental group found. “In about half of those systems, average annual levels of TCE were above what some health authorities say is safe for infants and developing fetuses.”

TCE has been found at more than 400 Superfund sites, many of which are at or near military bases such as Camp Lejeune, according to the environmental

group. Some veterans and their families who served or lived there later developed various kinds of cancer and neurological ailments, such as Parkinson’s disease, from drinking water contaminated with TCE or other toxic chemicals, according to the group.

On Wednesday, Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., joined Ensminger and residents from five states who denounced delays to enforce the TCE ban at the Superfund sites, which are lands contaminated by hazardous waste. The impacted residents from New York, North Carolina, Indiana, Arizona and California said TCE exposure has led to illnesses in their families.

Ensminger lost his daughter Janey in 1985 to leukemia. Ensminger, who retired in 1984, said Janey, who died at the age of 6, was his only child exposed

to the chemicals, and he’s deeply troubled by the inaction on TCE.

“Is it the EPA or should we call it the EDA, the environmental destruction agency? That’s what it has turned into under this administration. It’s a joke,” Ensminger said.

The concerns come after an Environmental Working Group report last month found widespread TCE water contamination and during a tumultuous time for the EPA, which saw its controversial chief, Scott Pruitt, resign last month.

Exposure to TCE has been linked to birth defects, liver, kidney and neurological damage, as well as leukemia and other cancers, the Environmental Working Group said.

An EPA spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment.

Pence condemns Russian election meddling in 2016

The Washington Post

NEW YORK — Vice President Mike Pence on Tuesday affirmed the U.S. intelligence community’s assessment that Russia sought to influence the 2016 election, stating firmly what President Donald Trump has been reluctant to say.

“While other nations certainly possessed the capability, the fact is Russia meddled in our 2016 elections,” Pence said, speaking at a government cybersecurity conference here hosted by the Department of Homeland Security.

“That is the unambiguous judgment of our intelligence community, and as the President said, we ‘accept the intelligence community’s conclusion,’” Pence said.

With those remarks, included in what was his first speech on cybersecurity, Pence sought to tamp down the controversy fueled by Trump’s reluctance to unambiguously condemn Russia for its interference in American politics.

“Russia’s goal was to sow discord and division and weaken the American people’s faith in our democracy,” Pence said. “And while no actual votes were changed, any attempt to interfere in our elections is an affront to our democracy, and it will not be allowed. The United States of America will not tolerate any foreign interference in our elections from any nation state — not from Russia, China, Iran, North Korea or anyone else. As President Trump said, ‘we’re not going to have it.’”

On Friday, Trump convened the National Security Council, including the heads of the FBI, CIA, National Security Agency, DHS and the Director of National Intelligence, to hear updates on their progress.

The meeting, which lasted less than an hour, was not deeply detailed, and Trump issued no new directives as a result, according to administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to be candid.

Trump ties groceries to voter photo ID debate

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — President Donald Trump wrongly claimed that shoppers need to show photo identification to buy groceries and accused Democrats of obstructing his agenda and his Supreme Court nominee during a raucous rally aimed at bolstering two Florida Republicans ahead of the state’s primary.

Trump, addressing thousands of supporters Tuesday night in one of the nation’s top electoral battlegrounds, also mounted a rigorous defense of his trade agenda, accusing China and others of having “targeted our farmers.”

The freewheeling rally lasted more than an hour and included numerous attacks on the media, as well as one glaring false claim. Trump was railing against the idea of noncitizens voting and advocating stricter voting laws when he claimed that IDs are required for everything else, including shopping.

“If you go out and you want to

buy groceries, you need a picture on a card, you need ID,” he said at the event at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. “You go out and you want to buy anything, you need ID and you need your picture.”

Photo IDs are required only for certain purchases, such as alcohol, cigarettes or cold medicine.

The comment came as Trump waded into Florida Republican politics, picking sides as he embraced U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis in a competitive primary for governor and backed the Senate campaign of his longtime ally, Gov. Rick Scott.

Trump has publicly threatened to shut down the federal government over his push to overhaul the nation’s immigration system and fund his signature border wall, though officials say he has privately assured staff he wouldn’t provoke a fiscal crisis before midterms.

Trump spent much of the rally highlighting strong economic numbers and praising DeSantis as “a tough, brilliant cookie.”

All survive in crash of Mexican plane

Associated Press

DURANGO, Mexico — Passengers and officials say a strong burst of wind hit an Aeromexico jetliner on takeoff, moments before it crashed, leaving those aboard with mere minutes to evacuate the burning plane.

The plane tried to take off from Durango city in a severe storm Tuesday, but smacked down on its belly in a nearby field. With the engines torn off, it began to burn.

“It was really, really ugly,” said Lorenzo Nunez, a passenger from Chicago who fled the plane with his two sons and wife. “It burned in a question of seconds,” he told reporters, snapping his fingers for emphasis.

Survivors said the Embraer 190 plane burst into flames right after it hit the ground.

“We felt the flames coming quickly ...

there was a lot of smoke,” Jaquelin Flores told the newspaper El Sol.

Romulo Campuzano, head of a political party in Durango state who was on the plane, told Foro TV that both wings were on fire as he bolted from the aircraft.

Durango state Gov. Jose Aispuro said a gust of wind hit flight AM2431, which was heading to Mexico City just as it was lifting off the tarmac, forcing the pilot to abort takeoff.

Passengers said they heard a loud noise as the plane’s left wing banged to the ground, and both engines tore loose. The plane stayed upright, though, and the escape slides activated.

All 99 passengers and four crewmembers made it off the plane, but the pilot was severely injured.

About 49 people were hospitalized with in-

juries. Some people had burns on a quarter of their bodies, said Durango state Health Ministry spokesman Fernando Ros.

Aispuro said all were expected to live.

An Illinois priest was on the plane. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago said the Rev. Esequiel Sanchez suffered some injuries but was alert and resting.

Aispuro said it was too soon to speculate on the cause of the crash. Mechanical failure and human error could be factors, but certainly the weather wasn’t favorable. Strong wind and heavy rain with marble-sized hail lashed Durango city, even damaging hangars at the airport.

“The most important thing in the seriousness that is an accident of this nature is that there were no deaths — that’s what is most encouraging for us,” Aispuro said at a news conference.

US cyclists killed had quit jobs to bike around world

The Washington Post

Two Americans who quit their office jobs last year to bike around the world were killed Sunday during an attack on bicyclists in Tajikistan that Islamic State claimed to have carried out.

Jay Austin and Lauren Geoghegan, both of Washington, were among four people killed during the assault, which would have been ISIS’ first deadly attack in former Soviet Central Asia.

Authorities in Tajikistan did not accept the claim, instead blaming a banned political party for the attack.

The assault occurred in the countryside south of the capital, Dushanbe, when assailants rammed a car into the cyclists before pouncing on them with knives. Rene Wokke, from the Netherlands, and Markus Hummel, from Switzerland, were also

killed, Tajik authorities said.

Austin and Geoghegan, both 29, were a couple who described themselves on their blog, “Simply Cycling,” as “two Americans biking around the world.” Geoghegan, who had not spent much time on a bicycle before 2013, and Austin, who traveled little growing up, said they decided to travel the world on wheels “because life is short and the world is big and we want to make the most out of our youth and good health before they’re gone.”

A spokesman for the State Department condemned the “senseless attack on civilian cyclists,” adding that Washington was ready to assist with an international investigation into the attack.

The Interior Ministry in Tajikistan said it had killed four men suspected of being involved in the attack.

Tajik officials said the attack’s mastermind was the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, a peaceful opposition party whose leaders fled the country since the ruling government banned their party three years ago. But, according to photos released by the Tajik Interior Ministry, the men in the ISIS video are those killed by Tajik security forces.

“There is strong evidence that was an ISIS-inspired attack — the first such attack on foreigners by ISIS in the region, and it is therefore crucially important that Tajik authorities credibly, carefully and professionally conduct their investigation,” said Steve Swerdlow, Central Asia researcher for Human Rights Watch. “The government’s narrative blaming the IRPT for the attack simply doesn’t add up. It’s just simply shooting itself in the foot.”

Thieves escape in speedboat with Sweden’s crown jewels

The Washington Post

Sweden’s royal family still regularly captures Europe’s attention with glamour, gossip and the shiny crown jewels that are put on public display whenever the occasion merits it.

That particular part of the century-old tradition will become much more difficult now after at least some of the price-

less Swedish crown jewels are no longer in the hands of the royal family. On Tuesday, two thieves stole one 17th-century golden orb and two crowns from a cathedral near Stockholm where they had been on display in an alarm-locked glass box, then escaped by speedboat into the Mälaren lake that spans 74 miles and is filled with hundreds of small islands.

Even though the royal family appears to have insurance covering the jewels, officials stressed that their value could hardly be measured or replaced. “It is not possible to put an economic value on this; it is invaluable items of national interest,” police spokesman Thomas Agnëvik said.

The subsequent manhunt has not yet resulted in any arrests,

and authorities appear to have few indications as to where the men may have escaped.

Sweden’s crown jewels haven’t been worn since the early 20th century and are mainly used for display purposes these days. But all those displays, in addition to catching the eyes of thousands of visitors, seem to also have caught the attention of a number of thieves.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man accused of hammer attack on 2

OR KLAMATH FALLS — Police arrested a Klamath Falls man accused of striking people with a hammer and nearly running over another person with a vehicle.

Klamath Falls police alleged in a news release that William Aune, 60, broke into his ex-girlfriend's house Saturday night and struck the woman and her brother with a hammer. Both were seriously hurt.

He then is accused of stealing a vehicle from one of the victims and trying to hit someone standing in the street. He continued driving to another house, where he tried to hit another person with the hammer, police alleged.

Police arrested Aune on that block. He was booked into jail on charges of attempted murder, assault and other crimes.

Woman hurt in crash of stolen ambulance

TX HOUSTON — Police said a woman suspected of stealing an unoccupied ambulance parked at a Houston hospital was seriously hurt after rolling the emergency vehicle.

Houston police are trying to determine why the woman got into the Acute Medical Services ambulance early Monday and drove away from Ben Taub Hospital. Police spokeswoman Jodi Silva said investigators don't believe the woman was a patient.

The ambulance wrecked on a Houston freeway about 45 minutes after being reported stolen.

Silva said the suspect, who was trapped under the vehicle, suffered severe injuries and was transported back to Ben Taub Hospital.

Baseball fans get tattoos, free tickets

MI BATTLE CREEK — Fans of the Battle Creek Bombers lined up overnight to get a free Bombers tattoo — and free tickets for life to watch the baseball team.

The Battle Creek Enquirer reported the tattoos were part of a Bombers Tattoo Day promotion for the southern Michigan team that plays in the Northwoods League and features top college players. They were inked to mark the team's 12th year in Battle Creek.

Pairs of lifelong tickets went to the first 12 fans to participate.

Dig for British Colonial artifacts is planned

ME BRISTOL — Archaeologists will be excavating part of a state historic site in Maine to try to uncover artifacts related to British Colonial forts.

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry says the digging will last until Aug. 10 at Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site. Three British Colonial forts were built on the site between the 1670s and the 1720s.

Last year's dig uncovered a piece of a centuries-old cannon and other items.

Longtime lighthouse caretaker moving on

NY MONTAUK — After 31 years of living in a lighthouse for free, Margaret Winski is giving up the best view on Long Island and moving to Maine.

The New York Times reported the 62-year-old known as Marge has been living in the 222-year-old Montauk Light-

house since April 1987, when the U.S. Coast Guard moved out of the property on the island's eastern end and turned it over to the Montauk Historical Society.

She lived at the lighthouse for free but the caretaker's job came with no pay, so she worked during the day at the local post office for 30 years.

She's being replaced by Joseph Gaviola, 63, a Montauk businessman and member of the lighthouse board.

Custodian finds WWII letter, returns it

IL ELGIN — A Post Office custodian in suburban Chicago returned a World War II letter he recently found while moving storage cabinets to the son of the soldier who wrote it in 1944 from France.

Elgin's Courier-News reported Army veteran Edward Gathman kept the letter as a memento while working at the Post Office. He left the Elgin job in 1973 and died in 2007 at age 95.

Custodian Thomas Caulfield said it fell out when a cabinet's doors popped open. He used social media to locate Gathman's son, Bruce Gathman, in South Carolina.

The letter is addressed to Gathman's wife and son.

Snorkeler finds ring missing 23 years

FL PORT ST. LUCIE — A snorkeler swimming off Florida's Atlantic coast found a college ring that had been missing for more than two decades and returned it to its owner.

Amateur treasure hunter Stephen Zabrauskas found the 1995 Florida State University ring in July while snorkeling off Hutchison Island. The ring

had the name of Elizabeth Engel engraved on it.

A friend heard about the snorkeling discovery and contacted the ring's owner, now known as Elizabeth Engel-Petric.

On Friday, Engel-Petric, Zabrauskas and their families met at a doughnut shop in Port St. Lucie where the snorkeler gave the ring to its owner.

Airport adds giant maple jugs display

VT BURLINGTON — Burlington International Airport has added a display of 7-foot-tall maple syrup jugs to remind travelers they can purchase the Vermont staple online instead of losing it at airport security.

The jugs will be accompanied by a 7-foot-long block of cheddar cheese.

Dakin Farms and Cabot Creamery sponsored the replicas. The companies are promoting an online website where people can have Vermont food shipped to their home in hopes that fewer travelers will have their maple syrup taken by airport security for being larger than the allotted 3.4 ounces.

Police: Man stole car from dealership

NH MERRIMACK — Police in New Hampshire accused a man of breaking into an auto dealership, defecating on the floor and stealing a car.

Christopher Rosati, 26, was arrested on charges of burglary, theft, criminal mischief and breach of bail conditions.

Police said Rosati defecated on the floor and had tried to gain entry into the safe before getting into a car and driving away. As he made his getaway, he struck other cars in the lot.

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Homework helps Arenado boost game

Associated Press

DENVER — Nolan Arenado spends a fair amount of time watching film. Mostly Quentin Tarantino-directed movies these days, but over lunch Arenado is carving out moments to study the tendencies of a starting pitcher.

Never really huge into that in the past, the Colorado Rockies All-Star third baseman made the adjustment to take his game to another level.

He's certainly putting on quite a show: An MVP-caliber season, with Arenado leading the National League in homers (28) and third in RBIs (79). He's also hitting .306 and playing stellar defense at the hot corner that could lead to a sixth straight Gold Glove.

On top of all that, the Rockies (54-47) are in contention. After years of missing the postseason, the team made it to the playoffs in 2017 as an NL wild card. One

game — a loss in Arizona.

Still, it changed everything for Arenado.

"I had that little taste of October," the 27-year-old said. "It tasted way better than I thought. It was the best time of my life. I want that again and again."

In late May, the Rockies started a 4-13 skid that saw them tumble from first in the NL West to fourth. It ate him up.

"I hate losing. I hate the way we were losing," said Arenado, a second-round pick in 2009. "People are saying, 'It's early. It's early.' I hate that. Every game counts. I get it, first half. There are not a lot of must-wins in the first half. But you don't want to put yourself in a hole."

Steadily, the Rockies dug themselves out — winning 17 of their last 22 to close the gap on Arizona and Los Angeles. Now that's more along the lines of what Arenado signed up for as the team tries to make back-to-

back postseason appearances for the first time in franchise history.

His \$29.5 million, two-year deal is up after this season. He's eligible for arbitration this winter before hitting free agency after the 2019 season.

That is, if a long-term deal isn't reached. His worth could be directly impacted through deals reached for Bryce Harper and Manny Machado, two of the headliners in the free-agency class this offseason.

Arenado's desire is no secret — play for an organization that contends year in and out. The Rockies have never won the NL West.

"I didn't say I never wanted to be here. That's never came out of my mouth once," Arenado said. "People like to make a story. I don't like losing. I don't like to lose. I want to win. That is the truth. If there's any story, that's the main story. I want to

win. I don't want to be part of a losing team."

A lifetime .292 hitter, Arenado has raised his game another notch this season by doing more homework, which includes understanding how pitchers might attack him.

Hence, his film preparation.

In between watching Tarantino movies — Arenado's latest was "Django Unchained" — he studies up on hurlers to analyze their stuff. About 10 to 15 minutes between bites of lunch.

"There are times in years past, I'd strike out on a pitch and be like, 'I didn't know he had that,'" said Arenado, whose younger brother, Jonah, is a third baseman in the Giants' organization and his cousin, Josh Fuentes, is an infielder in the Rockies' system. "Now, I'm not letting that happen anymore. If I strike out, it's just because he beat me. I don't want to be lost up there."

Dozier, Archer among trades at deadline

Associated Press

For Brian Dozier, getting traded meant a dash to the airport and a long trip to Dodger Stadium. For Jake Diekmann, it was a lot easier — he simply rode the bullpen cart from one clubhouse to the other at Chase Field.

Chris Archer, Jonathan Schoop and a bunch of relievers moved on deadline day, a flurry of 15 swaps Tuesday before time ran out to make deals without waivers.

The trade market kept spinning at a dizzying pace. Every team except San Francisco made at least one deal since the All-Star Game, with Tampa Bay swinging seven.

Archer, a two-time All-Star, hugged teammates at Tropicana Field before heading to Pittsburgh. He is 3-5 with a 4.31 ERA in 17 starts this season, and joins a Pirates club that has pushed back into the playoff race even after trading away Gerrit Cole and Andrew McCutchen in the offseason.

"They're super-hot right now, and they want me," Archer said. "I'm excited to be part of the organization that wants me, part of a rich baseball history, a hard-working community. I can't wait to get there."

The Rays sent former All-Star catcher Wilson Ramos to NL East-leading Philadelphia, while Leonys Martin, Kevin Gaus-

man and Cameron Maybin also switched sides as contenders tweaked their rosters.

And why not? All but four National League teams began the day within 5½ games of a playoff spot. The American League is more spread out — division leaders Boston, Cleveland and Houston have been busy.

Manny Machado, Cole Hamels, Zach Britton, Mike Moustakas and Ian Kinsler were among the big names that moved earlier this month.

Bryce Harper, Jacob deGrom, J.T. Realmuto and McCutchen had been mentioned in trade speculation, but stayed put.

"I think whenever you hear your name or see your name on stuff, you always wonder. But I think that's just the business side of the game," Harper said. "It's part of the game."

One of Harper's teammates packed up. Exactly a year after getting traded from Minnesota to Washington, reliever Brandon Kintzler was part of another deadline deal. This time, the Nationals sent him to the NL Central-leading Chicago Cubs.

"I thought they were joking. I figured it's not April's Fools. They called me in, I said, 'Am I traded?' They said yeah," Kintzler said.

An All-Star last year, Kintzler turns 34

on Wednesday.

"Birthday again tomorrow, so I'm traveling on my birthday again, so that's great. It is what it is," he said.

Dozier had been a fixture in Minnesota's lineup for years. But the Twins dipped this season, and they sent the power-hitting second baseman to the NL West-leading Los Angeles Dodgers for infielder Logan Forsythe and two minor leaguers.

Rather than starting at Target Field in Minneapolis, the 31-year-old Dozier hustled to join his new club as it hosted Milwaukee. He's now part of a revamped infield for the defending NL West champion Dodgers, who added Machado two weeks ago.

Diekmann definitely was on the go.

The 31-year-old lefty struck out two while pitching for Texas on Monday night in a win at Arizona. The Diamondbacks reacquired reliever Brad Ziegler from Miami early Tuesday, then boosted their bullpen by getting Diekmann from the Rangers.

Wanting to make Diekmann's move easy, the Diamondbacks offered the services of the bullpen cart used to ferry relievers into the game.

"They asked and I was like, 'Yeah, I don't want to carry all of my stuff,'" Diekmann said.

Arizona takes over first in NL West

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks got two pieces to bolster their bullpen just before the non-waiver trade deadline, a big-time start from Zack Godley and reclaimed their spot atop the NL West on Tuesday.

It was a fantastic day until the very end — when some injury news on third baseman Jake Lamb gave it a sour twist.

Godley matched a career high with 10 strikeouts, leading the Diamondbacks over the Texas Rangers 6-0 to leap ahead of the Los Angeles Dodgers for first place.

After the game, manager Torey Lovullo announced that Lamb might need surgery to repair his injured left shoulder. Lamb is already on the 10-day disabled list. He met with specialists in Los Angeles, who found fraying in his rotator cuff.

“We’re going to huddle up over the next 48 hours and figure out what the best plan is,” Lovullo said. “There’s a conservative route and there’s also a surgical route. If surgery is the option, I think he would be out for the year.”

Lamb was an All-Star in 2017 but is hitting just .222 with six home runs and 31 RBIs this season.

The Diamondbacks, though, appear covered at third should they lose Lamb for an extended period. They traded with Minnesota for Eduardo Escobar last week. Escobar has four hits in his first three games with his new team.

Arizona (60-49) overtook the Dodgers (59-49) for first place when Los Angeles fell 1-0 to Milwaukee. That came hours after the Diamondbacks added relievers Brad Ziegler and Jake Diekman via trades. Diekman was acquired from the Rangers and was driven from one club-

house to another by Arizona’s bullpen cart.

Godley was the star on Tuesday, though. He allowed only two hits and improved to 12-6, striking out the leadoff batter in each of his seven innings.

“I felt good in locating my pitches really well and getting some weak contact, which is awesome,” Godley said. “I just had a good feel for all my pitches.”

Nick Ahmed hit a two-run double as part of a three-run fourth inning to give Godley more than enough support.

Rangers starter Bartolo Colon (5-10) was knocked around for five runs and seven hits in five innings. Colon was bidding for career win No. 246, which would have given him the most career wins for a pitcher from Latin America, but came up short in his fifth attempt at the record.

“It didn’t happen. The most important thing is I feel good

and healthy,” Colon said in Spanish. “When it comes, it will come. I don’t want to put more pressure on myself because it will be worse for me if I think about it.”

A.J. Pollock’s first-inning homer cleared the high wall in center field, his 15th of the year and the 24th that Colon has allowed.

Arizona took a 2-0 lead on Paul Goldschmidt’s two-out double to drive in Jon Jay in the third inning, then Ahmed made it 4-0 in the fourth when he lined his double into the left-field corner to score Steven Souza Jr. and Daniel Descalso.

“I got down 0-2 and was able to battle to 3-2 to get one more over the plate to drive,” Ahmed said.

Jay singled in Ahmed before the inning ended, and Ahmed raced home on a wild pitch in the sixth to make it 6-0.

The Rangers’ four-game winning streak came to an end.

MLB roundup

Nationals set team scoring record in rout of Mets

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the highest-scoring game in franchise history, Daniel Murphy hit two early home runs and the Washington Nationals kept pouring it on against emergency reliever Jose Reyes and the New York Mets in a 25-4 rout Tuesday night.

Trea Turner, who apologized before the game to his teammates for homophobic and racially insensitive tweets he sent several years ago, had four of Washington’s 26 hits. Pitcher Tanner Roark (5-12) hit a three-run double during a seven-run first inning.

The Nationals set the team scoring mark dating to their days as the Montreal Expos in 1969. It was the Mets’ most-lopsided loss in their 57-season history, worse than a 26-7 pounding by Philadelphia in 1985.

Pirates 5, Cubs 4: Gregory Polanco hit his team-leading 19th home run, Francisco Cervelli added his 10th of the season and host Pittsburgh finished off a frantic trade deadline day with a victory over Chicago.

Yankees 6, Orioles 3: Masahiro Tanaka (9-2) pitched six scoreless innings to extend his unbeaten streak to 13 starts, Miguel Andujar hit a three-run homer and host New York beat Baltimore.

Phillies 3, Red Sox 1: Jake Arrieta (9-6) struck out seven in seven strong innings and visiting Philadelphia snapped a four-game slide by beating Boston.

Indians 6, Twins 2: Jose Ramirez and Edwin Encarnacion combined to drive in five runs and Trevor Bauer (10-6) earned his 10th win as visiting Cleveland topped Minnesota.

Braves 11, Marlins 6: Kolby

Allard, supported by a 19-hit attack that included three home runs, won his major league debut for host Atlanta.

Giants 3, Padres 2 (10): Brandon Crawford singled in the go-ahead run with two outs in the 10th inning and visiting San Francisco got seven strong innings from rookie right-hander Dereck Rodriguez to give San Diego its seventh straight loss.

Tigers 2, Reds 1: Matthew Boyd (6-9) allowed four hits in eight scoreless innings, and Niko Goodrum homered in the fourth to lift host Detroit over Cincinnati.

Rockies 6, Cardinals 3: Charlie Blackmon and Carlos Gonzalez each went deep, Jon Gray (9-7) pitched into the eighth inning and visiting Colorado beat St. Louis.

Rays 10, Angels 6: After making a series of trades just before the non-waiver trade

deadline, host Tampa Bay broke through with a seven-run inning and beat Los Angeles despite Mike Trout’s 30th home run.

Royals 4, White Sox 2: Ryan O’Hearn hit a two-run homer in his major league debut, helping Danny Duffy and visiting Kansas City beat Chicago.

Brewers 1, Dodgers 0: Wade Miley remained undefeated at Dodger Stadium, delivering seven scoreless innings in Milwaukee’s win over Los Angeles.

Astros 5, Mariners 2: Evan Gattis hit a two-run home run to put his team ahead, Josh Reddick capped it with a two-run shot in the ninth inning, and visiting Houston halted a five-game skid.

Athletics 6, Blue Jays 2: Khris Davis homered among his three hits and Matt Olson had two RBIs to lead host Oakland past Toronto.

Gruden relying on Raiders veterans

Associated Press

NAPA, Calif. — Since Jon Gruden last coached in the NFL a decade ago, the league has undergone a youth movement.

Thanks to a collective bargaining agreement that limits salaries for players in their first four years and a more spread out game that places a greater premium on speed, teams have relied more than ever on young players.

Gruden still is showing the same kind of preference for experience that he did when he first took over the Raiders back in 1998, signing 11 players this offseason who are already in their 30s.

“We’ve added a veteran presence,” Gruden said. “Some people don’t like it, but I like Derrick Johnson, I like Marcus Gilchrist, I like guys that know what the heck is going on.”

That’s the opposite direction most teams have gone since Gruden last coached in Tampa Bay in 2008.

The youth movement hit high gear after the 2011 collective bargaining agreement, and the average age for players fell to 26.46 years last season, according to Football Outsiders, the lowest since the website began

tracking that number in 2006.

But Gruden is bucking that trend, signing players like Johnson, Jordy Nelson, Frostee Rucker and Leon Hall.

“Heck, yeah, that’s a positive,” tight end Jared Cook said. “It helps the maturity of this team. When you got young guys, especially nowadays, these young guys just don’t get what the NFL is about. Even something as simple as veteran presence and veteran leadership, they don’t understand that. Veteran respect, they don’t necessarily get that. So, having vets in the locker room and having vets around you that know the role, know how things go and that hold other people accountable ... is huge. You can’t buy that anywhere, because vets know how it’s supposed to be done, and they’re going to get it done the right way it’s supposed to be.”

Gruden took a similar tack in his first stint in Oakland, bringing in players such as Eric Allen, Jerry Rice, Rich Gannon, Andre Rison, William Thomas, Trace Armstrong and Anthony Newman to help turn the Raiders from a losing team into a playoff participant his final two seasons.

Several of the older players have ties to either defensive

coordinator Paul Guenther or special teams coordinator Rich Bisaccia, giving the coaching staff some proven players who are able to help teach the new systems.

“It’s very important,” Guenther said. “I always say this, but it’s a player’s game. So when you have guys that really understand the details of everything... Obviously, we haven’t been through a season with some of the guys who were here last year. Some of the things that come up, whether it be in the locker room or in the meeting room. I may say, ‘Hey, remember when this happened two years ago against Atlanta?’ We recall those things. So it’s very helpful to have guys that are in the infantry line there to help us out.”

The Raiders made an effort to add players like that in every position group on defense with Rucker on the defensive line, Emmanuel Lamur at linebacker, and Reggie Nelson and Leon Hall in the secondary all familiar with Guenther’s defense and able to serve as sounding boards for their teammates.

Rashaan Melvin said he frequently turns to Hall, who spent nine seasons in Cincinnati when Guenther was a defensive assistant or coordinator.

“Any time we’re putting in a new defensive scheme or whatever it might be, he’s been in the system for a long time,” Melvin said. “If it’s a nickel position, he knows it. If it’s the corner position, he knows it. So, whatever questions we might have to ask or to ask coach, he’s like another coach for us in the room.”

But as much as the older players were brought in for their knowledge, it won’t matter at all if they still can’t play at a high level. They need to be much more than unofficial coaches on the field.

The next few weeks will show what these veterans still have left. The 33-year-old Nelson, who has already impressed his coaches and teammates, is trying to prove that his dropoff last season had more to do with Aaron Rodgers’ injury than his advancing age.

“The thing that you hear about that he can’t run anymore, that’s false,” quarterback Derek Carr said. “I can tell you, he’s one of the fastest skill guys that we have still. He can run. You see that by his route running. If he can win on underneath routes that means DB’s are scared about what he can do over the top. He’s still Jordy Nelson, that’s for sure.”

QB Fitzpatrick ready to fill in for Winston

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — As a veteran quarterback accustomed to ever-changing roles, there’s little Ryan Fitzpatrick hasn’t experienced during a 14-year NFL career.

He’s been a starter and a backup — several times.

Now, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers are counting on him to help them weather Jameis Winston’s three-game suspension for violating the league’s personal conduct policy.

And then head back to the bench.

“I thought I had seen and been through it all,” said Fitzpatrick, who’s entering his second season with his seventh pro team. “But another year, another different situation.”

Not that the 35-year-old is complaining.

Fitzpatrick signed with Tampa Bay before last season, knowing coach Dirk Koetter sought him purely as a backup.

“I’ve learned that you view it as a one-

game-at-a-time opportunity. That’s just the way it is in this league,” Fitzpatrick said.

“In 2015, when I played with the (New York) Jets, I was a backup and ended up [playing] the whole year with the situation there,” he added. “In 2016, I was a starter and I ended up getting benched three times. Every year is different. You have to take it game by game and just go from there.”

Fitzpatrick, who turns 36 in November, entered the NFL as a seventh-round draft pick of the St. Louis Rams in 2005.

In addition to the Bucs and Jets, he’s also played for the Cincinnati Bengals, Buffalo Bills, Tennessee Titans and Houston Texans, completing nearly 60 percent of his passes for 26,991 yards, 173 touchdowns and 136 interceptions.

He’s one of just four players in NFL history — along with Vinny Testaverde, Gus Frerotte and Chris Chandler — to throw TD passes with seven teams.

Winston, suspended following the league’s investigation of an allegation that he groped a female Uber driver during a ride in March 2016, will miss games against New Orleans, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

“The season hasn’t even started yet. ... It’s a cliché, but it’s one game at a time. You have to look at it that way,” Fitzpatrick said. “Not even based off last year, talent-wise, looking at the team we have out here, I’m in the huddle on offense, and it’s a pretty exciting huddle to be in as a quarterback looking at some of those guys.”

With Winston missing three games and portions of two others because of injury, Fitzpatrick went 2-1 as a starter a year ago. Three seasons ago, he threw for a career-best 3,905 yards and 31 TDs with the Jets.

Koetter noted that Fitzpatrick has 119 career starts and said he has total confidence in the veteran’s ability to handle the offense.