

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Mattis defends his Space Force reversal

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil — U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Sunday he is satisfied that creating a Space Force as a separate military service is the right way to reorganize the Pentagon's approach to space.

Mattis, who last year opposed moves in Congress to create a separate space service, said his emphasis then was on establishing a consensus about what the Pentagon's space problem is before recommending a way to fix it.

"I was not against setting up a Space Force," he told reporters flying with him to Brazil to begin his first tour of South

America as defense secretary. "What I was against was rushing to do that before we could define the problem [that needed solving]."

That, he said, is why he pushed back against efforts in Congress to create a Space Force. In a letter to Rep. Mike Turner, an Ohio Republican, in July 2017, Mattis wrote, "I do not wish to add a separate service that would likely present a narrower and even parochial approach to space operations."

Mattis' comments Sunday were his first since Vice President Mike Pence announced on Thursday that the Trump administration would push for creation of the Space Force as a sixth,

separate military service by 2020. The Pentagon first will establish a Space Command to oversee and coordinate space operations and a Space Development Agency to accelerate the development and fielding of space technologies for the military. It also will build up larger numbers of servicemembers with expertise in space operations.

"We're in favor of war-fighting capability organized along the lines of what the president laid out," Mattis said, referring to President Donald Trump's instruction in June that the Pentagon begin the process of creating a Space Force that would be "separate but equal" to the Air Force, which cur-

rently manages most of the military's space operations.

Mattis said he has been discussing that with Trump and Pence since the first month of the administration.

Critics of making space a separate branch of the military say it would entail more bureaucracy and cost. Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said Thursday that the Pentagon does not yet know how much it will cost but that it would be in the billions of dollars.

Shanahan said the Pentagon would submit a legislative proposal for a Space Force early next year as part of its fiscal 2020 budget request.

Officials: Work on future Guam Marine base moving forward

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

DEDEDO, Guam — Driving north on Route 3 toward the site of the yet-to-be-built Marine Corps Base Guam, signs of construction are everywhere. Workers clearing land and signs warning of detours because of unexploded ordnance are common sights.

The U.S. Pacific island territory is undergoing an \$8.7 billion metamorphosis that will see about 4,000 Okinawa-based Marines relocate here in the mid-2020s. About \$3 billion of the cost is being picked by the Japanese government.

While no firm date has been set for the massive project's completion — a fact criticized last year by the Government Accountability Office in Washington — U.S. military leaders on Guam say they've overcome significant challenges to keep things on track since ground was broken.

"It is clearly moving forward," said Capt. Daniel Turner, commander of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas. "We're in the early stages of the main base ... There are a lot of very senior leaders that are, I think, pleased with where we're going because we are showing actual progress with clearing this site, and I think it's gaining momentum ... so it's great to see."

Seeing shovels in the ground has also pleased officials from Japan's Ministry of Defense, Turner said. A nearly \$165 million contract — paid by the Japanese government — for site preparation and utilities was awarded last summer to Granite-Obayashi, a joint venture based in Watsonville, Calif.

Turner said workers are clearing out the jungle and disposing of World War II-era munitions ahead of nearly 60 projects. Construction on unaccompanied barracks, which will

be the first piece built, is about two years away. While the barracks go up, the rest of the site will be cleared and prepped.

There is also steady progress being made on a \$28.5 million contract for power upgrades for the new base. That work is expected to be completed in 2020.

The Marine Corps' Asia-Pacific realignment was born out of massive protests after the 1995 rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan girl by two Marines and a sailor.

Okinawans demanded the closure of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma due to safety concerns in a densely packed urban area and sought a smaller U.S. military footprint on the southern island prefecture.

The prefecture is home to about 30,000 U.S. troops — about half of all American servicemembers based in Japan — despite having about the same land area as Tokyo.

In 2006, some locals bristled when it was decided to keep Futenma's air operations on Okinawa by moving them to Camp Schwab on the remote northern coast.

In an attempt to appease locals, subsequent agreements promised to send an Okinawa-based KC-130 squadron to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, on the Japanese mainland, and move about 4,100 Marines to Guam. An additional 2,700 Okinawa-based Marines are to be sent to Hawaii, 800 to the U.S. mainland and 1,300 on a rotational basis to Australia. U.S. bases on Okinawa also will be consolidated.

Air facilities at Schwab were supposed to be completed by 2014, the GAO reported, but progress has been slowed, most notably by unsuccessful court challenges by Okinawa's anti-base Gov. Takeshi Onaga, who died last week after a bout with pancreatic cancer.

US soldier convicted of attempted rape

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. soldier assigned to a special operations unit in Europe was convicted of attempted rape in Denmark last week, officials said.

The Danish court of Sonderborg on Wednesday sentenced the American to 18 months in prison and banned him from the country for 12 years for the June crime, the local prosecutor's office said in a statement.

U.S. officials in Europe confirmed that a soldier with the Stuttgart, Germany-based Special Operations Command Europe had been convicted in Denmark, but they refused to disclose his name or other details.

"We are cooperating fully with the Danish

authorities," Mark Mackowiak, a European Command spokesman, said in an email.

Maj. Mike Weisman, spokesman for SOCEUR, said the American soldier, 21, was serving in a support role within the command and was not a Green Beret.

For further details, officials deferred to the Danish civilian court system, which has not released the soldier's name.

In the early morning of June 3, a woman, 19, was returning home from downtown Haderslev on Denmark's southern Jutland peninsula when a man following her pulled her into some containers, the region's police said on Twitter at the time.

He ripped her underwear down and fought with her, but she fought back, kicking her way free, and ran to her parents, police

said.

Her attacker had been described as "Danish of appearance," but the woman told police he spoke English with a clear American accent.

The following day, a U.S. soldier was taken into custody and kept in pretrial detention, the Danish news service Ritzau reported.

He pleaded not guilty and appealed the pretrial detention.

The soldier was in Denmark for training, Ritzau said.

The soldier is appealing the verdict, the local prosecutor's office said on Twitter.

U.S. officials did not respond to questions about any military disciplinary actions he may face.

DOD to return church bells to Philippines

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

Church bells seized by American troops during the Philippine-American War more than a century ago could soon be on their way back to their home country.

"Secretary of Defense (Jim) Mattis has notified Congress that the Department of Defense intends to return the Bells of Balangiga to the Philippines," Molly Koscina, a press attache at the U.S. Embassy in Manila,

told Stars and Stripes.

The bells were said to have rung on Sept. 28, 1902, to signal a surprise attack by Filipino rebels against soldiers of the 9th Infantry Regiment that left 48 Americans dead.

The Philippine government has long insisted on the return of the bells, which belonged to the Roman Catholic church in the town of Balangiga.

But some veterans and Wyoming's members of Congress are against the move, seeing them as a memorial to U.S.

troops. In a statement last November, those groups declared that they "strongly oppose any efforts to deconstruct or disturb this veteran's memorial that honors America's fallen soldiers."

U.S. troops brought two of the bells back to their base in Fort Russell, Wyo. That was later renamed F.E. Warren Air Force Base, and the bells remain there in an arched brick wall.

A third, smaller bell, which was also taken to the United States, now stands in the 2nd

Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud in South Korea.

No date has been chosen for the return of the bells, but the announcement came after years of lobbying from some American veterans and Filipino activists.

Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte has repeatedly called for their return, and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2018 allows for their transfer to the Philippines if Congress does not object.

US advisers, strikes aid Afghans in Ghazni battle

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Four days of ferocious fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban over a key provincial capital has claimed the lives of about 100 Afghan policemen and soldiers and at least 20 civilians, the defense minister said Monday.

The staggering numbers provided by Gen. Tareq Shah Bahrami were the first official casualty toll since the Taliban launched a massive assault on Ghazni, the capital of Ghazni

province, last Friday.

The multipronged assault overwhelmed the city's defenses and allowed insurgents to capture several parts of it. It was a major show of force by the Taliban, who infiltrated deep into the strategic city barely 75 miles from the capital, Kabul.

The United States has sent military advisers to aid Afghan forces. U.S. spokesman Lt. Col. Martin O'Donnell told NBC News that the United States had conducted 24 airstrikes in Ghazni since Friday — 16 on Sunday alone.

The fall of Ghazni, a city of 270,000 people, would mark an important victory for the Taliban.

It would also cut off a key highway linking Kabul to the southern provinces, the Taliban's traditional heartland.

Bahrami, the defense minister, spoke to reporters at a press conference in Kabul on Monday. He said the casualty figures are not yet definite and that the numbers might change. He didn't offer a breakdown of the casualties but Interior Minister Wais Ahmad Barmak

said nearly 70 policemen were among those killed.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is said to be considering a cease-fire offer to the Taliban for the upcoming Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, which starts Aug. 21.

A three-day holiday cease-fire in June brought rare quiet to much of the country, but the insurgents rejected a government request to extend it.

Instead, the Taliban appear intent on seeking a position of strength ahead of expected talks with the United States.

FBI agent is fired over texts

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The FBI fired Agent Peter Strzok, who helped lead the bureau's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election until officials discovered he had been sending anti-Trump texts.

Aitan Goelman, Strzok's lawyer, said FBI Deputy Director David Bowdich ordered the firing on Friday — even though the director of the FBI office that normally handles employee discipline had decided Strzok should face only a demotion and 60-day suspension. Goelman said the move undercuts the FBI's repeated assurances that Strzok would be afforded the normal disciplinary process.

"This isn't the normal process in any way more than name," Goelman said.

The FBI declined to comment.

The termination marks a remarkable downfall for Strzok, a 22-year veteran of the bureau who investigated Russian spies, defense officials accused of selling secrets to China and myriad

other important cases. In the twilight of his career, Strzok was integral to two of the bureau's most high-profile investigations: the Russia case, and the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state.

But when a Justice Department inspector general investigation uncovered politically charged messages that Strzok had exchanged with another FBI official, he was relegated to a position in human resources. Conservatives soon made Strzok the face of their attacks against the special counsel investigation into the president's campaign, and the FBI took steps to remove him from its ranks.

Strzok's position in the bureau had been precarious since last summer, when Inspector General Michael Horowitz told Special Counsel Robert Mueller that the lead agent on his team had been exchanging anti-Trump messages with an FBI lawyer. The next day, Mueller expelled Strzok from the group.

The lawyer, Lisa Page, had also been a part of Mueller's team, though she left a few weeks earlier and no longer works for the FBI. She and Strzok were having an affair.

Strzok is the third high-ranking FBI official involved in the Clinton and Russia investigations to be fired amid an intensely political backdrop. President Donald Trump removed James Comey as the bureau's director and said he did so thinking of the Russia case. Attorney General Jeff Sessions later removed Comey's deputy, Andrew McCabe, after the inspector general alleged he lied about a media disclosure related to Clinton.

McCabe — who, unlike Comey, could not be removed at the will of the president — has said his termination was a politically motivated attempt to undermine the Mueller probe. He is currently facing a criminal investigation by prosecutors in the D.C. U.S. Attorney's Office.

Strong quake hits Alaska's North Slope

Associated Press

KAVIK RIVER CAMP, Alaska — Alaska's North Slope was hit Sunday by the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in the region, the state's seismologist said.

At 6:58 a.m. Sunday, the magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck an area 42 miles east of Kavik River Camp and 343 miles northeast of Fairbanks, the state's second-biggest city. The U.S. Geological Survey said the earthquake had a depth of about 6 miles.

State seismologist Mike West told the Anchorage Daily News that the earthquake was the biggest recorded in the North Slope by a substantial amount. "This is a very significant event that will take us some time to understand," he told the Daily News.

The previous most powerful quake in the North Slope was in 1995 at magnitude 5.2, West told the newspaper.

The jump from a 5.2 to Sunday's 6.4 is significant because earthquakes rapidly grow in strength as magnitude rises, he said. A magnitude 6.4 earthquake is 15.8 times bigger and 63.1 times stronger than a 5.2 earthquake, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

"That's why at 6.4 this changes how we think about the region," West said. "It's a little early to say how, but it's safe to say this earthquake will cause a re-evaluation of the seismic potential of that area."

Later Sunday, another magnitude 6.1 earthquake hit at 1:15 p.m. near the city of Kaktovik on Alaska's North Slope, the U.S. Geological Survey said. The epicenter was southwest of Kaktovik, which has about 290 people.

The magnitude 6.4 earthquake that hit Sunday morning was felt by workers at the oil-production facilities in and around Prudhoe Bay, the Daily News reported.

The newspaper said that Alyeska Pipeline said the earthquake did not damage the trans-Alaska pipeline.

White supremacists dwarfed at DC rally

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — White supremacists held a rally in Washington on Sunday, and almost no one but their opponents and the police showed up.

Jason Kessler, one of the organizers of last year's violent and deadly Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Va., wanted to hold an anniversary demonstration there, but the city wouldn't let him.

So he brought his show to Washington, where he hoped 400 supporters would join him for a rally at Lafayette Square, across from the White House. Fewer than 40 turned out.

The group was met by thousands of protesters who filled their half of the leafy, seven-acre park chanting "Go home, Nazis!" "No Trump! No KKK! No fascist USA!" and "Black lives matter!" They drowned

out whatever message Kessler and his small band of followers had hoped to deliver — and that was their goal.

City leaders and law enforcement officials were determined that the event not be a repeat of the mayhem in Charlottesville last year, when city police and Virginia state troopers allowed white supremacists and neo-Nazis to clash in the streets with anti-hate protesters.

Counterprotester Heather Heyer was killed when a man police say identified himself as a Nazi drove a car into a crowd. Two state troopers died when their helicopter crashed following a day of monitoring the civil disturbance.

A massive police presence Sunday kept the two sides separated, and outside of a confrontation between some antifa, or anti-fascist, protesters and

police long after the rally had ended, there were no reports of violence. Police reported that one man was arrested after he punched a man wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat.

Kessler and his supporters arrived a little before 1 p.m. at a Metro subway station in Vienna, Va., where they were accompanied by law enforcement officers onto the rear car of a waiting train.

After disembarking at the Foggy Bottom station in Northwest Washington, a larger police contingent, including officers on bicycles and motorcycles, escorted the group on a walk of several blocks past protesters who shouted and chanted at them.

Once inside Lafayette Square, protesters were kept far away from Kessler's group.

Widow of Texas church shooter speaks out

The Washington Post

On that November morning, Danielle Kelley screamed as her husband, Devin Kelley, strapped her to their bed in their Texas home. Their son, Michael, 2, sobbed as he watched his father tie up his mother with rope, handcuffs and duct tape. Raleigh, their 5-month-old daughter, lay in her crib, Kelley told the San Antonio Express-News.

Wearing a ballistic vest, Devin Kelley left the house with his Ruger AR-556 and two handguns. Less than an hour later, he stormed a small Sutherland Springs, Texas, church and sprayed bullets into the congregation, killing 26 people and injuring 20 others in the worst mass shooting in Texas history.

For the first time since the church massacre, the gunman's wife described that day and the excruciating months that have followed in a series of interviews with the Express-News published Saturday.

After a shootout with a local man who ran to the church barefoot to intervene, Kelley sped away from First Baptist in his Ford SUV, which careened off the road into a ditch. He called his parents, who had since rushed to his house to untie Danielle Kelley from the bed. He spoke to the three of them over a speakerphone.

"He was like, 'I can't. I've killed so many people — so, so many people,'" Danielle Kelley recalled to the Express-News. "He kept saying how sorry he was."

Then Devin Kelley, 26, shot himself in the head. He was dead by the time police arrived.

Kelley was left mourning her husband and the father of her kids. But she also grieved the loss of more than two dozen members of a church community she grew up with, she told the Express-News.

Devin Kelley killed members of three generations of the Holcombe family, including a 1-year-old and an unborn child. The victims were families that Danielle Kelley

sat beside at church and whose children she used to babysit. Among the dead was her grandmother, Lou White, who took care of her when she was young.

While it's still not clear exactly why Devin Kelley targeted First Baptist Church, his widow and some authorities speculated it was connected to his troubled relationship with Danielle Kelley's mother, Michelle Shields, who attended the church but was not present when he opened fire on the congregation.

While serving in the Air Force, Devin Kelley was convicted by a general court-martial on two charges of domestic assault and served a year in prison.

"Devin was sick. He lost who he was. Because the real Devin would've never hurt babies. He was a family person. He would never have hurt anybody," Kelley told the Express News. "He lost the touch of reality."

Trump praises boycott of Harley-Davidson

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump on Sunday leveraged the office of the president of the United States against a private American company for seeking to insulate itself from his trade war.

"Great!" he wrote of purported plans by customers of Harley-Davidson to boycott the venerable motorcycle company over its plan to move production of motorcycles sold in Europe to factories outside the U.S. The firm, founded in Milwaukee in 1903, estimated that it would lose \$100 million annually from steel tariffs imposed by the president in March.

Trump tweeted "Many @harleydavidsonowners plan to boycott the company if manufacturing moves overseas. Great! Most other companies are coming in our direction, including Harley competitors. A really bad move! U.S. will soon have a level playing field, or better."

His early morning tweet

followed a meeting Saturday with "Bikers for Trump" at his golf course in Bedminster, N.J. About 180 members of the group chanted "Four more years!" and "USA!" as they entered the ornate ballroom, according to The Associated Press. The president thanked them and praised their rides, calling them "the most beautiful bikes anyone's ever seen."

As recently as last year, Trump extolled the company, saying in a meeting with executives in the Roosevelt Room that he considered Harley-Davidson a "true American icon, one of the greats."

His view changed when the firm's leaders announced this summer that they would use overseas facilities for production of bikes headed for sale in Europe. The company said it would not change its long-standing policy of not selling motorcycles in the U.S. that are made overseas.

After 17 days, orca lets go of dead calf's body

The Washington Post

A grieving orca whale has released the body of her dead calf after carrying it for at least 17 days through the Pacific Ocean in an unprecedented act of mourning, according to researchers.

On Saturday, Tahlequah, as the mother has come to be called, was observed swimming without the body of her calf, according to Center for Whale Research Founder Ken Balcomb.

"Her tour of grief is now over and her behavior is remarkably frisky," read an update on the research center's website.

The center said whale-watchers near Vancouver, British Columbia, had reported seeing Tahlequah without her calf's body last week, but Saturday was the first time researchers were able to confirm those reports.

Tahlequah's mourning had astonished and devastated much of the world. The orca gave birth on July 25 in what should have been a happy milestone for her long-suffering clan.

As Allyson Chiu wrote for The Washington Post, the pod

of killer whales that roams between Vancouver and San Juan Island has dwindled to 75 members over the decades. The cause is no mystery: Humans have netted up the whales' salmon, driven ships through their hunting lanes and polluted their water to the point that researchers fear Tahlequah's generation may be the last of her family.

Last week, the Times wrote, biologists and government officials began working on a plan to save the youngest living member of Tahlequah's pod — a 3-year-old orca that appears to be on the brink of starvation. They are tracking the young whale — Scarlet — in an attempt to feed her antibiotic-laced salmon.

At the same time, Tahlequah's obsession had become gravely concerning to researchers. They worried that the effort of pushing her calf — for about 1,000 miles — would make Tahlequah weak and keep her from finding enough food. Fortunately, that doesn't appear to be the case.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Residents divided in goose dispute

NY BRIGHTWATERS — Residents of a Long Island village are divided over what to do about a glut of goose droppings around town.

Brightwaters Mayor John Valdini told Newsday in a story published Sunday that the village has gotten about a dozen complaints about its Canada goose population in recent months. But the village has also gotten calls from residents who want to protect the birds.

Resident Peter Resing said his home is so coated in goose droppings that he's worried about letting his grandchildren play there. He said "something needs to be done."

Residents discussed goose-control methods with state environmental officials at an informal meeting last week.

WWII museum, ASU create online degree

LA NEW ORLEANS — The National World War II Museum and Arizona State University are starting a new online master's degree program in World War II studies, with classes beginning in January.

A news release described it as offering the nation's only graduate degree in World War II history.

Online material said students must meet assignment deadlines, but the only other schedule requirements are weekly interactions with faculty and student discussion groups.

Students must take 10 three-hour classes.

Construction workers find dinosaur bone

FL CAPE CORAL — Construction workers in

southwest Florida uncovered a mammoth or mastodon bone that could be 2 million years old.

The News-Press in Fort Myers reported that workers found the upper arm bone earlier this summer while digging for a utility extension.

The Florida Museum of Natural History said the bone doesn't have enough characteristics to determine if it was a mammoth or mastodon, elephant-like mammals that roamed the area starting about 2 million years ago until about 12,000 years ago.

Boa constrictor found under hood of car

MA STOUGHTON — One Massachusetts resident popped their car hood to check fluids and found a boa constrictor staring right back.

The Stoughton Police Department said a resident called its office Saturday morning after finding the snake.

The animal was safely captured by Animal Control officers who responded to the scene. No one was injured.

The department joked on Facebook that brave officers, "without having ever gone to snake charming school," headed out to capture this "fire-breathing dragon."

Animal control will keep custody of the snake for the time being. There is no information about how the boa constrictor got under the car hood.

Shelters helping 91 dogs found in home

IL BENTON — Animal shelters across Illinois are pitching in to care for 91 dogs found in a home authorities describe as having "deplorable" conditions.

The Southern Illinoisan re-

ported the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and Animal Control discovered the dogs after responding to a complaint of cruel treatment of animals at a home in the southern Illinois community of Macedonia. Animal Control Officer Paris Dunk said some dogs were emaciated or blind. Officers believe the animals never left the home.

A woman and her two adult sons were charged with animal cruelty.

Sighting of rare hawk draws eager birders

ME BIDDEFORD — Bird lovers were driving from hundreds of miles away for a rare chance to see a species of non-native hawk in southern Maine.

Maine Audubon naturalist Doug Hitchcox said the great black hawk might be the most unusual bird identified in the state in decades. It was seen in Biddeford on Thursday. The bird is native to Central and South America.

The hawk stands about 2 feet tall. Hitchcox said it's unclear how it got to Maine. One was seen in Texas earlier this year.

Man swallows heroin during raid, then dies

WI MILWAUKEE — Authorities said a 60-year-old man died after he and others apparently swallowed packets of heroin during a federal drug bust on homes on Milwaukee's north side.

Authorities said James Coleman died Thursday while in custody at the Waukesha County Jail.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported the FBI, Milwaukee police and other law enforcement agencies raided several homes early Wednesday as part of a bust targeting a

gang with Chicago connections that was moving kilograms of heroin in Milwaukee.

Cops escort son of hurt officer to school

FL ORLANDO — A group of Florida police officers escorted the son of their wounded comrade to his first day of kindergarten.

Caleb Valencia's father, Officer Kevin Valencia, was shot in the face in June while responding to a domestic violence call in which the suspect killed four children before taking his own life. Valencia is in a coma and is being treated in Atlanta.

Orlando Police Chief John Mina said members of Valencia's squad took Caleb and his mother to school Friday.

Mina said it was an emotional day, but the boy was excited to show off his Lego Batman book bag.

Beaver that attacked man, daughter rabid

PA BIGLERVILLE — Authorities said a beaver that attacked a man and his daughter during a kayak trip in Pennsylvania was rabid.

State health officials said that the beaver tested positive for the virus after it was sent for testing by the state game commission.

Dan Wherley and his daughter, Layla, 7, were kayaking Sunday on the Conewago Creek with their dog when the beaver relentlessly gnawed on his paddle and eventually swam right for his daughter. He fought off the animal while his daughter made it to land.

Wherley said he initially intended to retreat and not harm the beaver, but he eventually killed it to protect himself and his child.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Koepka captures PGA title

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The roars were unlike anything Brooks Koepka had ever heard, and he knew exactly what they meant.

They got louder for each birdie by Tiger Woods that moved him closer to the lead Sunday in the PGA Championship, and Koepka could hear a ripple effect of noise. First, real time. Seconds later, another burst from patrons watching on TV in chalets. Then, distant cheers from every corner of Bellerive when the score was posted.

“We knew what was going on,” he said. “It’s pretty obvious when Tiger makes a birdie. Everybody on the golf course cheers for him.”

Amid relentless pandemonium, Koepka ran off three straight birdies to end the front nine and seize control. When he was tied with Adam Scott through 14 holes, with Woods one shot behind, he delivered back-to-back birdies.

The last one was a laser of a 4-iron from 248 yards that settled 6 feet away, sending him to a dream finish of a year that began with the 28-year-old Floridian wondering if a wrist injury that kept him out four months would ever allow him to compete again.

“That will probably go down as probably one of the best shots I’ve ever hit under pressure,” he said.

He closed with a 4-under 66 for a two-shot victory over Woods and took his place among the elite in golf. Koepka became the fifth player to win the U.S. Open and PGA Championship in the same year, joining Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan and Gene Sarazen.

It will be impossible to overlook him now, not with the Wanamaker Trophy to go with his back-to-back U.S. Open titles. Koepka won two of the three majors he played this year, and three of his last six. Not since Woods won four in a row through the 2001 Masters has anyone won majors at such an alarming rate.

And yet it still felt — and certainly sounded — as though he played second billing to Woods.

The crowd was enormous, louder than anything in golf this side of Augusta National or a Ryder Cup, and Woods looked closer than ever to capping his comeback from four back surgeries with another major.

Even with two bogeys, Woods shot 64 for his lowest final round in a major. He finished at 266, beating by three shots his best 72-hole score in a major.

At this major, it wasn’t enough.

“I played hard,” Woods said. “I made a bit of a run. It looks like I’m going to come up a little short.”

Koepka was responsible for that.

After wasting one chance to put it away by missing consecutive birdie chances from 7 feet, Koepka kept attacking flags and ran in birdie putts of 10 feet on No. 15 and 7 feet on No. 16 to end the drama. He tapped in for par on the final hole to set the PGA Championship scoring record at 264. It also tied the major championship record that Henrik Stenson set at Royal Troon two years ago in the British Open.

He also joined Jordan Spieth, Woods, Nicklaus and Tom Watson as the only players with three majors before turning 30 since World War II.

“Three majors at 28 — it’s a cool feeling,” said Koepka, who five years ago was toiling in Europe’s minor leagues.

Scott hung around by making big putts, just like he hoped, and was tied for the lead until Koepka’s birdies. Scott missed a 6-foot birdie putt on the par-5 17th that would have pulled him to within one shot — right after Koepka missed from the same range — and then made bogey on the 18th for a 67 to finish alone in third.

The only knock on Koepka is that he doesn’t win enough elsewhere — the Phoenix Open on the PGA Tour, the Turkish Airlines Open on the European Tour, and two victories at the Dunlop Phoenix on the Japan Golf Tour.

“He’s won three majors now, so he’s definitely winning the right ones,” Scott said. “If I was him, I wouldn’t change much at

the moment. I’d just keep doing what he’s doing because he’s showing up at the right moments in the biggest events. There’s something inside his brain that makes him believe that that’s what he’s destined to do.”

The St. Louis fans waited 17 years to see Woods — he last was at Bellerive when the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks canceled a World Golf Championship — and he delivered a performance that took golf back in time.

Thomas Bjorn might have seen it coming. Earlier in the week, as he was cleaning out his locker after withdrawing with an injury, he thought back to Woods getting into contention at Carnoustie last month at the British Open. “He recognized who that guy was that day,” Bjorn said.

Woods was relentless, pumping fists, raising the putter in his left hand, making birdies and charging toward a finish that caused pure pandemonium among one of the largest and noisiest crowds at a major.

Without hitting a fairway on the front nine, Woods cut the four-shot deficit to two.

Dialed in on the back nine, he dropped an approach into 4 feet on No. 12, got within one shot with a 10-foot birdie on the par-3 13th and, after a bad drive led to bogey, he answered with another approach that hit a foot from the hole.

That was as good as it got.

Facing the most important drive of the day on the par-5 17th, Woods sent it sailing to the right and it embedded in a hazard along the banks of a creek. He did well to advance it, but had to save par from a bunker. Behind him, Koepka holed his two birdie putts.

Woods and Koepka played nine holes of a practice round Wednesday, and the 14-time major champion knew what he was up against.

“It’s tough to beat when the guy hits it 340 down the middle,” Woods said. “What he did at Shinnecock, just bombing it, and then he’s doing the same thing here. ... And when a guy’s doing that and hitting it straight, and as good a putter as he is, it’s tough to beat.”

Woods’ bid falls short

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The ball rested on the edge of the cup, its logo peeking into the hole for what felt like forever.

Back in the day, that ball dropped for Tiger Woods. On Sunday, it wouldn’t budge.

Yes, Woods finished second by two strokes to Brooks Koepka at the PGA Championship to extend his drought without a major for at least eight more months. But after the scrambling, club-slamming, fist-pumping, electrifying show he put on over a round of 6-under 64 — his best closing round at a major — who can argue that golf isn’t more fun when Tiger’s in the mix?

“There’s nothing like it,” said Gary Woodland, who was in the twosome with the world’s best-known player. “The energy in that place was unbelievable.”

Even after the excruciating miss on No. 11 — one that looked a lot like his teetering, toppling chip on No. 16 at the Masters in 2005, except that one went in — Woods would not quit.

On No. 18, Woods offered one final flourish. He drained his longest putt of the tournament, a 19-footer for birdie, and pumped his fist to celebrate.

Back in the day, that fist pump on the 18th green would’ve been to celebrate a win.

On this day, he was celebrating the grind — and the fact that he simply would not go away.

In many ways, this felt like old times for the 42-year-old — he of the multiple back surgeries who couldn’t swing a club 11 months ago, but has now contended on the back nine in consecutive majors, only to come up short, more agonizingly so this time than at Carnoustie three weeks ago.

Woods said he hadn’t felt this good at a tournament he didn’t win in a long time.

“I had to kind of figure this out on my own and it’s been really hard — a lot harder than people think,” he said. “And I’m just very pleased at what I’ve done so far ... going from where I’ve come from, to now over the last year, it’s been pretty cool.”

Harvick wins Cup-high seventh race

Associated Press

BROOKLYN, Mich. — Kevin Harvick capped off his father-son weekend by dominating a race and putting 6-year-old son Keelan in the passenger seat to hold the flapping, checkered flag out of the window.

“That was definitely way up there on the bucket list,” Harvick said.

Harvick broke a tie atop NASCAR’s Big 3 by easily winning at Michigan International Speedway for his Cup-high seventh victory of the season.

His No. 4 Ford finished 3-plus seconds ahead of Brad Keselowski’s No. 2 Ford on Sunday in the Consumers Energy 400.

Points leader Kyle Busch finished third in his No. 18 Toyota — more than 4 seconds behind Harvick.

“I was front of him for about 5 laps,” Busch joked.

Busch has won six races this year and Martin Truex Jr. has won four times. The rest of the field has combined to win just six of 23 races.

Truex Jr., the third driver in NASCAR’s Big 3 with Harvick and Busch, was 14th in the 40-car field in his No. 78 Toyota.

Keselowski said he couldn’t be more aggressive late in the 200-lap race because Harvick was simply so far ahead.

Austin Dillon, in the No. 3 Chevrolet, was fourth followed by Ryan Blaney’s No. 12 Ford.

Denny Hamlin led the field to the green flag for the second straight week, but his No. 11 Toyota could not stay ahead. He ended up eighth at MIS after finishing 13th in last week’s race at Watkins Glen.

Who’s hot. Harvick won each of three stages and led 108 laps, more than four times more than anyone else on the 2-mile oval. His seven victories have helped Ford earn 10 Cup victories, matching its total from last year and pulling within one of Toyota’s total.

Who’s not. Jimmie Johnson has not finished better than 10th in his last nine races and sits 14th in the standings. The seven-time Cup champion was running in the top 15 late in the race when a loose wheel led to an unscheduled pit stop and a 28th-place finish a week after he was 30th at Watkins Glen.

Rough day. Truex was running with the leaders during the second stage before running out of gas and going into the pits,

which were closed. He also was penalized for an uncontrollable tire and pushed to the back of the 40-car field.

Soon after a restart early in the race, rookie William Byron’s No. 24 Chevrolet got loose and made side-by-side contact with Truex to bring out another caution flag.

“Anything that could have went wrong did,” Truex said. “We got wrecked by a rookie mistake underneath us, and then ran out of gas. We could’ve won the second stage. We just didn’t have enough gas. The car was fast. We just couldn’t catch a break all day.”

Close Kes. Keselowski, who is from suburban Detroit, is still desperately seeking his first win in Michigan. The Penske Racing driver finished second in a Cup race for the second time at MIS, where he also has a trio of third-place finishes in 19 career starts.

“The last three weeks we’ve had some big struggles,” Keselowski said. “It’s nice to be able to have a mostly clean race and get the finish we deserve.”

“We want to break through and win (here). We’re not where we need to be.”

Furyk undecided on Woods for Ryder Cup

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The upside to Jim Furyk finishing so early at the PGA Championship was being able to watch the final round on television, partly as a player but mostly as the Ryder Cup captain.

And that meant seeing plenty of Tiger Woods.

“I really wanted to see kind of how Tiger was playing, and I only got to see ... I don’t know, like every shot he hit for the rest of the day,” Furyk said Monday with a laugh. “It was great theater, really.”

Ultimately, nothing really changed.

Woods was as dynamic as he has been all year, shot 6-under 64 for the lowest final round of his career in the majors, had his lowest 72-hole score in the majors, captivated one of the largest and loudest galleries in golf and was runner-up to Brooks Koepka by two shots.

As for the Ryder Cup, Furyk ended up with the same eight players who started the week atop the U.S. standings.

The PGA Championship was the final event for eight players to earn automatic spots. Furyk will choose three captain’s picks next month after the second FedEx Cup playoff event, with the last pick Sept. 10 after the third playoff.

Koepka, who won three of the eight majors during the qualifying period, overtook Dustin Johnson to lead the points list, and the next six players stayed the same — Justin Thomas, Patrick Reed, Bubba Watson, Jordan Spieth, Rickie Fowler and Webb Simpson.

Woods, who started the year with zero points, moved from No. 20 to No. 11 on the strength of his tie for sixth at the British Open, where he briefly led during the final round, and his runner-up at Bellerive.

Furyk was not willing to say

what appears certain for everyone else: Woods will be in France with golf clubs for the Sept. 28-30 matches.

“We want the players who are going to help us be successful,” Furyk said. “He’s playing very well. I think there’s a lot of folks out there who probably think he can help us. Really, what we wanted to talk about today was the top eight players. I realize Tiger is a story. I realize he’s playing very well, and I’m excited to see that.”

Woods was appointed a vice captain in late February, and he has said he would like to serve two roles. He also said that when he was appointed a vice captain for the Presidents Cup for the 2017 matches, and no one took him all that seriously.

They do now, and Woods made it clear he wants to compete in his first Ryder Cup since 2012.

“I do want to be there as a player,” he said Sunday. “Our

captain has some decisions to make. We’ll all sit down and give him our input, who can contribute. Hopefully, my name will be part of that process.”

Furyk has other decisions to make.

Phil Mickelson failed to qualify for the Ryder Cup for the first time since 1993, his first full season on the PGA Tour. He was 10th in the standings and missed the cut at a PGA Championship that was ripe for scoring. Mickelson has one victory over the last five years, a playoff win over Thomas in the Mexico Championship. He was not a factor in any of the majors.

Bryson DeChambeau was at No. 9 and missed the cut. Xander Schauffele is at No. 12. Right behind him is Matt Kuchar, who has played in every Ryder Cup since 2010 but who has only four top 10s this year and missed the cut in two majors.

Bote's slam in 9th lifts Cubs over Nats

BY ANDREW SELIGMAN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — The celebration was under way by the time David Bote flung his helmet high into the air on his way home.

Teammates were already jumping up and down, ready to mob him at the plate. The fans were in a frenzy, too.

Nothing like a game-ending grand slam to get the festivities started.

A pinch-hitting Bote smashed one against Ryan Madson with two outs in the ninth inning to lift the Chicago Cubs to a 4-3 victory over the Washington Nationals on Sunday night.

Bote's long drive to center field came after dominant starts by Washington's Max Scherzer and Chicago's Cole Hamels.

Madson (2-5) entered with a

3-0 lead to start the ninth and quickly ran into trouble.

He gave up an infield single to Jason Heyward with one out and hit Albert Almora with a pitch. Madson then retired Kyle Schwarber on a foul pop before hitting Willson Contreras to load the bases.

With a 2-2 count, Bote drove a knee-high fastball well beyond the center-field wall, setting off quite a scene.

Teammates ripped off his jersey at the plate. He also had a cooler emptied on him as he gave an interview on the field while fans chanted "Bote! Bote!"

"It's magical," he said. "It's incredible. It's an unbelievable feeling. It couldn't happen to a better team, a better group of people in that clubhouse. And I'm so blessed and honored to be part of it."

There was more after he finished his postgame interview with reporters. As he walked back into the clubhouse, he got a quick hug from noted Cubs fan Bill Murray, who asked, "Is this the hero?"

Bote has made quite an impression while bouncing back and forth between the minors as a rookie. He is batting .329 with three homers in 34 games for the Cubs, with Kris Bryant battling injuries this season.

His big slam helped Chicago take two of three in the first meeting between these teams since the Cubs beat Washington in the NL Division Series. It also made a winner of Justin Wilson (4-3), who got the final two outs in the ninth.

Madson said a recurring back issue flared up when he was warming up, causing pain going down his right leg.

"Sometimes it will shoot, sometimes it won't," he said. "That's really the truth of the matter. Just trying to fight through it. Not everybody feels 100 percent all the time, but this one's pretty big. So I'll lose basically position, control over the ball."

Scherzer tossed three-hit ball for seven innings. The three-time Cy Young Award winner struck out 11 and walked one.

But the Nationals managed just three hits — one off Hamels. He gave up one run in seven innings, struck out nine and walked one in his third start since Chicago acquired him from Texas.

The only hit he allowed was Daniel Murphy's single in the second to put runners on first and third. Mark Reynolds then drove in Ryan Zimmerman with a sacrifice fly.

Iannetta draws walk for Rockies' winning run

Associated Press

DENVER — Chris Iannetta flung the bat aside as if he got all of the pitch.

In a way, he did — a walk's just as good as a hit, especially with the bases loaded in the ninth.

Iannetta brought in the winning run by drawing a five-pitch walk, and the Colorado Rockies beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 4-3 after squandering a late lead Sunday.

"I like my chances against a guy in that situation — someone with their back against the wall and has to make pitches over the plate," the Rockies catcher said.

It was the second walk-off win in as many days for Colorado. Ryan McMahon lined a three-run homer in the ninth on Saturday.

The Rockies took three of four for their first home series win against the Dodgers since April 7-9, 2017.

It was the third straight game a Dodgers bullpen without Kenley Jansen — who's sidelined with an irregular heartbeat — was tagged with the loss.

Red Sox 4, Orioles 1: Chris Sale celebrated his return from the disabled list by striking out 12 in five dominant innings, and visiting Boston moved 50 games over .500 by completing a sweep of lowly Baltimore.

Sale (12-4) allowed just one hit, a clean third-inning single to left field by Renato Nunez.

Mariners 4, Astros 3 (10): Ryon Healy hit a tying homer with two outs in the ninth inning, Mitch Haniger delivered an RBI double in the 10th and visiting Seattle swept a four-game series from AL West-leading Houston.

The third-place Mariners pulled within four games of the Astros.

Yankees 7, Rangers 2: CC Sabathia threw six shutout innings, Giancarlo Stanton homered again and host New York won for the sixth time in seven games.

Cardinals 8, Royals 2: Yadier Molina hit a tiebreaking two-run single in the seventh inning, and visiting St. Louis matched a season high with its fifth consecutive win.

The Cardinals moved eight games above .500, equaling

their season high set on June 11, and improved to a National League-best 12-4 since July 27.

Braves 8, Brewers 7: Ozzie Albies led off the seventh inning with a tiebreaking homer, one of three for host Atlanta, and the Braves overcame 19 hits by Milwaukee.

Ronald Acuna Jr. and Dansby Swanson each hit a two-run homer for Atlanta, which took two of three.

Athletics 8, Angels 7: Jed Lowrie homered and moved over 1,000 hits for his career, and visiting Oakland held on for its ninth win in 11 games.

The A's, currently in the second AL wild-card spot, moved within 2½ games of first-place Houston in the AL West.

Diamondbacks 9, Reds 2: At Cincinnati, Paul Goldschmidt hit two of Arizona's five homers, and the Diamondbacks avoided a sweep.

Daniel Descalso, Eduardo Escobar and David Peralta also connected for Arizona.

Padres 9, Phillies 3: Freddy Galvis hit a grand slam and Travis Jankowski stole four bases and scored three times for host San Diego.

Last-place San Diego won for the fifth time in seven games, including two of three against NL East-leading Philadelphia.

Indians 9, White Sox 7: Carlos Carrasco struck out nine in seven innings, and visiting Cleveland held on for the win.

Giants 4, Pirates 3: Dereck Rodriguez pitched seven innings of two-hit ball for host San Francisco, continuing his sparkling rookie season.

Rodriguez (6-1) allowed one run, struck out four and walked one.

Tigers 4, Twins 2: Matthew Boyd pitched six strong innings and Detroit won on Jack Morris Day at Comerica Park.

The game started 20 minutes late because of the ceremony to retire Morris' No. 47 jersey.

Mets 4, Marlins 3: Jose Reyes hit a two-run homer and Noah Syndergaard struck out seven in seven innings, leading visiting New York to the victory.

Blue Jays 2, Rays 1: Kevin Pillar scored the tiebreaking run on an infield grounder in the sixth inning, helping host Toronto avert a three-game series sweep.