

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## US carrier sails through disputed waters

Associated Press

ABOARD THE USS RONALD REAGAN, South China Sea — A U.S. aircraft carrier sailed through the disputed South China Sea on Tuesday in the latest show of America's military might amid new territorial flare-ups involving China and three rival claimant states.

The U.S. Navy flew a small group of Philippine generals, officials and journalists to the USS Ronald Reagan, where they watched fighter jets landing and taking off by catapult with thunderous blasts.

The nuclear-powered carrier, carrying about 70 supersonic F/A-18 jets, spy planes and helicopters, was en route to Manila for a port visit. Armed

cruisers kept watch a few miles away from the carrier.

"The motto of this carrier is 'peace through strength,'" Rear Adm. Karl Thomas told journalists. He said the American military presence helps provide security and stability that foster diplomatic talks among rival claimant nations.

He made the comment when asked what message the warship's presence was sending amid new tensions involving China and rival claimants Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines over long-contested territories. "We just think that folks should follow the international law, and our presence allows us to provide that security and stability in the background for these discussions to take

place," Thomas said.

China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have been locked in on-and-off territorial conflicts over the strategic waters, where a bulk of Asian and world commerce transits, for decades.

Tensions rose to new highs when China transformed seven disputed reefs in the Spratly chain into islands and then installed a missile defense system, runways and hangars.

Last month, Washington expressed concerns over China's "repeated provocative actions aimed at the offshore oil and gas development of other claimant states."

Vietnam has demanded that China remove a survey ship from Vanguard Bank, which it

says lies within Vietnam's 200-mile exclusive economic zone. China has had a dispute with Malaysia over Luconia Shoal, and Manila protested after a Chinese fishing vessel hit a fishing boat with 22 Filipinos at Reed Bank and left as it sank at night in June.

The Filipinos were rescued by a Vietnamese fishing vessel.

Greg Poling, director of the Washington-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, which tracks actions by rival states in the disputed waters, said China is using its artificial islands to bolster its vast claims and allow its navy, coast guard and militia vessels "to operate over every inch of the South China Sea in a way they never could before."

## San Diego-based admiral linked to 'Fat Leonard'

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Redacted Navy documents and the command history of Navy Region Southwest Commander Rear Adm. Bette Bolivar indicate she was investigated in connection with the so-called "Fat Leonard" scandal and had received gifts from the contractor in 1998.

A female officer on board the salvage ship *Salvor* accepted gifts in the form of a hotel room, dinner, drinks, entertainment and a golf outing in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, in August 1998, according to a memo signed by Adm. Philip S. Davidson in July 2017.

Although her name was redacted from the documents, Bolivar, a Navy deep sea diver, was the commanding officer of the *Salvor* in 1998 when the offenses occurred. A lieutenant commander at the time, Bolivar

was in charge of the ship from January 1998 through January 2000, Navy records show.

Typically, this class of ship carried six officers. Few officers fit the description Davidson provides in his memo.

Scores of Navy officials were alleged to have attended dinners and accepted gifts from contractor Leonard Glenn "Fat Leonard" Francis. All but a select few of their names were redacted from the Navy's public records.

Bolivar's gender and the relatively small size of the salvage community made her identity apparent from the documents.

Bolivar's spokesman on Monday declined to comment and would not confirm or deny that Bolivar was the subject of the investigation.

The Fat Leonard scandal ensnared a generation of naval officers, as almost everyone

who commanded a ship in the western Pacific had cause to do business with Glenn Defense Marine Asia, Francis' company. GDMA was the Navy's primary ship husbanding service provider in the region for more than a decade.

Despite finding misconduct in the Francis case, Davidson wrote in his memo that the unidentified officer "continued to be a significant contributor and valued leader in the Navy." He recommended she remain in command.

He wrote that he "personally addressed this ... through administrative action and consider this matter closed."

Bolivar — the so-called "Navy Mayor" of San Diego — until recently was the convening authority over two high-profile war crimes prosecutions of Navy SEALs in San Diego, involving Navy SEAL Petty Of-

ficer 1st Class Edward R. Gallagher and Lt. Jacob Portier.

There is no indication of a connection between Bolivar's alleged ties to Francis and the decision to remove her authority over the Gallagher and Portier cases.

Francis was arrested in San Diego in 2013 and pleaded guilty to defrauding the Navy out of at least \$34 million by overcharging ships for fuel and security in western Pacific ports of call. To facilitate his criminal enterprise, Francis threw opulent dinners for scores of naval commanders from the 1990s through the time of his arrest.

Francis remains on house arrest somewhere in San Diego County and is reportedly in ill health. He has not yet been sentenced. Prosecutions in the case are ongoing, as is the Navy's investigation.

# Army halts plans to drop maritime fleet

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army's plan to shutter its watercraft units and auction off boats has been delayed until a study ordered by House lawmakers of the proposal has been completed.

Army spokesman Matt Leonard confirmed Monday that the service "decided to suspend watercraft transformation while we evaluate the overall watercraft requirements needed to support the National Defense Strategy."

The study of the plan is expected to be completed by the end of September.

In January, Stars and Stripes reported that the Army was

mulling plans to close out its National Guard and Reserve component watercraft units and their civilian maintenance facilities.

The units employ hundreds of reserve soldiers and civilians whose mission is to support, train and deploy Army mariners throughout the world and maintain dozens of vessels in the Army's fleet.

The fleet, which includes small landing craft, tugboats, barges, cranes and ships able to carry a dozen Abrams tanks, goes back at least to World War I. Many of the boats were old, expensive to repair and outdated, according to government reports.

The Army plan faced push-

back amid warnings about shortfalls in military sealift capabilities.

The National Defense Authorization Act, which passed the House in July, bars funding from being used to inactivate Army mariner units.

A study is being conducted "for the review of the ability of the Army to meet the watercraft requirements of the combatant commanders," and on whether the service is prepared to assist during U.S. natural disasters and emergencies, according to the bill.

Leonard said a formal analysis involving the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Headquarters, other services and

combatant commands began in December 2018.

"Initial analysis identified excess capability beyond existing requirements," Leonard said.

Nearly half of the Army's 130-some watercraft assets were put up for auction last month on the General Services Administration website, according to the maritime and offshore website gCaptain.com.

The Army has since canceled those auctions.

The vessels on the auction block included at least 18 Landing Craft Utility vessels, gCaptain reported.

## Military wants to add sexual misconduct to murder charges

*Associated Press*

NORFOLK, Va. — Military prosecutors in Virginia said Monday that they want to add allegations of sexual misconduct to their murder case against a U.S. Marine and a Navy SEAL who are among those blamed for the 2017 hazing death of a U.S. Green Beret in Africa.

Navy prosecutor Benjamin Garcia made the request at a preliminary hearing at a military court in Norfolk. The lieutenant commander said Marine Mario Madera-Rodriguez and SEAL Tony DeDolph were among four servicemembers who planned to make "sexual contact" against Army Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar as he was hazed on video in his bedroom.

The overall effort to embarrass Melgar ultimately led to his death, according to charging documents. Melgar was bound with duct tape and placed in choke holds to temporarily knock him unconscious before he stopped breathing, the charging documents said.

The sexual misconduct allegation added a new wrinkle to

a case that has pulled back the curtain on misconduct among some of America's most elite servicemembers.

It also follows a letter that was recently written by the top Navy SEAL to commanders that said some in the ranks "have failed to maintain good order and discipline" and that the problem "must be addressed immediately," according to news outlets. The July 25 letter didn't offer specifics.

It comes after a string of high profile incidents involving SEALs. Among them is Melgar's death in Africa, where U.S. special forces have supported and trained local troops in the fight against extremists.

Military prosecutors have charged four men — two SEALs and two Marines — in Melgar's death in Bamako, Mali.

SEAL Adam Matthews and Marine Kevin Maxwell Jr. have already pleaded guilty to lesser charges and were sentenced to military prison. DeDolph, 40, and Madera-Rodriguez, 34, still face charges of murder and the possibility of a life sentence if found guilty.

## Pentagon program seeks to identify serial sex offenders

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has launched a new program that aims to find serial sex offenders in the military by compiling information into a database submitted by sexual assault survivors.

The program, called Catch a Serial Offender, or Catch, allows survivors of sexual assault who are submitting a restricted report to provide information confidentially about the sexual assault as well as the accused offender to military investigators so they can try to identify serial offenders, according to the Pentagon announcement released Monday.

The program was first announced in May by then-acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan in a memo about the Defense Department's actions to address and prevent sexual assault in the military. It came after the release of the Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, which found sexual assaults against female troops have in-

creased by 44% since 2016.

"To put it bluntly, we are not performing to the standards and expectations we have for ourselves or for each other," Shanahan wrote in the memo. "This is unacceptable. We cannot shrink from facing the challenge head on. We must, and will, do better."

"We are constantly looking for new ways to empower victims to participate in the military justice process through our sexual assault prevention and response programs," Elizabeth Van Winkle, executive director of the Pentagon's office of force resiliency, said in Monday's statement announcing the program. "We encourage greater reporting to connect victims with the care they need and as a way to hold offenders appropriately accountable."

A restricted report is for servicemembers, as well as their adult dependents, who want to report a sexual assault without having to initiate a law enforcement investigation or notify their command. That allows them to receive assistance, according to the DOD.

# US warns Turkey against Syria invasion

Associated Press

TOKYO — Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Tuesday that the U.S. intends to prevent any invasion by Turkey into northern Syria, saying any such move by the Turks would be unacceptable.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened an imminent attack in the northeast to push back U.S.-allied Syrian Kurdish Forces. American and Turkish military officials have been

meeting in Ankara to try and negotiate a settlement to avoid the invasion, and Esper said Tuesday that he believes they have made progress on some of the key issues.

U.S. officials have made clear that an invasion is an extremely risky venture that could threaten the safety of U.S. forces working with the SDF and potentially impede the continued defeat of Islamic State militants in the region.

“What we’re going to do is

prevent unilateral incursions that would upset, again, these mutual interests that the United States, Turkey and the SDF share with regard to northern Syria,” Esper told reporters traveling with him to Japan.

He said the U.S. is trying to work out an arrangement that addresses Turkey’s concerns, adding, “I’m hopeful we’ll get there.”

He did not provide details on where progress is being made.

The dispute further weak-

ens U.S. relations with NATO ally Turkey, coming closely on the heels of the Trump administration’s decision to remove Ankara from the American-led F-35 fighter aircraft program because it is buying a Russian air defense system that would aid Moscow’s intelligence.

The U.S. government’s concern is that the Russian S-400 system could be used to gather data on the capabilities of the F-35, and that the information could end up in Russian hands.

# North Korea fires 2 missiles to protest drills

BY KIM GAMEL  
AND YOO KYONG CHANG  
STARS AND STRIPES

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired two missiles into the sea on Tuesday, warning that the United States and South Korea will pay a “heavy price” for conducting joint military exercises.

The launch — the fourth in less than two weeks — came a day after the longtime allies began a two-week command post drill that has been scaled back in size from past years.

The North fired two short-range ballistic missiles that

flew more than 270 miles and reached an altitude of about 23 miles before splashing into the sea off its eastern coast, according to South Korea’s military.

“South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities believe that these short-range missiles have similar flight features as the ballistic missiles test-fired by North Korea on July 25,” the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

It added the military was monitoring the situation and maintaining a readiness posture in case of additional launches.

The surge in such activity is a slap against U.S. efforts to re-

sume talks aimed at persuading the North to give up its nuclear weapons.

Many experts believe Pyongyang is trying to raise the pressure on Washington to gain leverage in any new negotiations.

The North fired two missiles July 25 that were believed to be similar to Russia’s Iskander. It called the launch a “solemn warning” to South Korea against joining the military exercises with the United States.

The communist state also conducted two other weapons tests on July 31 and Aug. 2, which it said were from a new

guided multiple rocket launcher system. South Korea called them short-range ballistic missiles.

President Donald Trump has played down concerns about the earlier launches, saying they were “short-range missiles” and “very standard” as his administration struggles to get talks back on track.

But the persistent saber-rattling was testing his patience.

“Chairman Kim does not want to disappoint me with a violation of trust, there is far too much for North Korea to gain,” Trump wrote in a tweet Saturday.

# China vows to counter US midrange arms deployment

Associated Press

BEIJING — China said Tuesday that it “will not stand idly by” and will take countermeasures if the U.S. deploys intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region, which Washington has said it plans to do within months.

The statement from the director of the Foreign Ministry’s Arms Control Department, Fu Cong, follows the U.S.’ withdrawal last week from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a move Fu said would have a “direct negative

impact on the global strategic stability” as well as security in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

Fu said China was particularly concerned about announced plans to develop and test a land-based intermediate-range missile in the Asia-Pacific “sooner rather than later,” in the words of one U.S. official.

“China will not stand idly by and be forced to take countermeasures should the U.S. deploy intermediate-range ground-based missiles in this part of the world,” Fu told reporters at a briefing.

He also advised other nations, particularly South Korea, Japan and Australia, to “exercise prudence” and not allow the U.S. to deploy such weapons on their territory, saying that would “not serve the national security interests of these countries.”

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in Asia over the weekend that he wanted to deploy midrange conventional missiles in the Asia-Pacific within months. Australian officials said Monday that the locations for the bases were not yet known but their country would

not be one of them.

Fu also said China had no intention of joining nuclear weapons reduction talks with the U.S. and Russia, pointing to the huge gap in the size of China’s arsenal compared with those of the other two. China has an estimated 290 nuclear warheads deployed, compared with 1,600 for Russia and 1,750 for the U.S., according to the Federation of American Scientists.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has called for urgent arms control talks to prevent a chaotic arms race following the treaty’s demise.

# Sailor shot dead at Little Creek identified

BY ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

A sailor who was shot and killed by Navy Security Force personnel Friday after he fled a traffic stop at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek in Virginia has been identified as Juan Gerardo Medina-Reynaga, 25, according to a news release Monday from Navy Region Mid-Atlantic.

The Kansas native was an aviation boatswain's mate assigned to the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush. Me-

dina-Reynaga was a petty officer 3rd class, according to The Virginian Pilot.

Security personnel attempted to stop Medina-Reynaga for driving erratically in a 2016 Dodge Charger about 9:50 p.m. Friday, according to the news release.

He attempted to flee the base, so security personnel deployed the automatic barriers at the base's Gate 5.

Medina-Reynaga swerved into the parking lot of a nearby Navy Exchange Mini Mart, where he crashed the car he

was driving into a gas pump about 10:10 p.m.

Medina-Reynaga fled on foot to evade arrest, and officers pursued and attempted to apprehend him. During the altercation, Medina-Reynaga assaulted security personnel and attempted to remove one of the officers' weapons.

An NSF officer shot Medina-Reynaga during the altercation. He was pronounced dead about 10:50 p.m..

The officer responsible for shooting Medina-Reynaga has been removed from law en-

forcement duties and will be placed on administrative duties pending the outcome of the investigation, which is standard operating procedure, according to the news release. Two NSF personnel were hurt during the altercation. They were treated for minor injuries at the scene.

Both the mini mart and the gate have returned to normal operations. Naval Criminal Investigative Service and Navy Region Mid-Atlantic are investigating the incident.

# Taliban say differences resolved in peace talks

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States and the Taliban have resolved differences in peace talks over U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan as well as over insurgent guarantees on cutting ties with other extremist groups, a Taliban official said Tuesday.

The development came during U.S.-Taliban talks over the past two days in the Gulf Arab state of Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office.

The U.S. side did not immediately confirm or provide details of what was resolved but the U.S. envoy reported "excellent progress" in the talks.

The Taliban official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss details of the negotiations.

Technical teams from the two sides were continuing discussions on Tuesday in Doha.

U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who has been tasked with finding a peaceful resolution to the nearly 18-year war, America's longest conflict, has made intra-Afghan talks and a permanent cease-fire among his priorities in the negotiations.

Khalilzad, who later traveled to New Delhi, said in a Twitter post overnight that "we have made excellent progress"

in the discussions.

However, the talks in Qatar have sidelined the government in Kabul. The Taliban refuse to talk directly with government representatives, accusing President Ashraf Ghani's government of being a puppet of the U.S.

The Taliban have kept up a near-daily rate of deadly attacks despite holding several rounds of peace talks with Khalilzad since his appointment as peace envoy almost a year ago. The Taliban now control roughly half of Afghanistan and are at their strongest since 2001.

The U.S. and the Taliban now appear to be closing in

on an agreement under which U.S. forces would withdraw in exchange for guarantees that Afghanistan would not become a haven for other terrorist groups.

Khalilzad has said he is hoping for a final agreement by Sept. 1, which would allow the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops. More than 20,000 U.S. and NATO troops are in Afghanistan, including some 14,000 U.S. forces.

The U.S. and NATO formally concluded their combat mission in 2014, but the American and allied troops continue to train and build the Afghan military.

# Man who sent pipe bombs to Dems sentenced to 20 years

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — A Florida amateur body builder who admitted sending pipe bombs to prominent Democrats and CNN was sentenced to 20 years in prison Monday by a judge who concluded the bombs purposely were not designed to explode.

Cesar Sayoc, 57, wept and crossed himself, appearing relieved, when U.S. District Judge Jed S. Rakoff announced the sentence.

Prosecutors had urged a life prison term for Sayoc, who pleaded guilty earlier this year after mailing 16 pipe bombs days before the midterm elections last fall.

"He hated his victims, he wished them no good, but he was not so lost as to wish them dead, at least not by his own hand," the judge said.

The one-time stripper and pizza delivery man from Aventura, Fla., apologized to his victims, saying he was "so very

sorry for what I did."

His targets included Hillary Clinton, former Vice President Joe Biden, several members of Congress, former President Barack Obama and actor Robert De Niro. Devices were also mailed to CNN offices in New York and Atlanta.

Assistant federal defender Marcus Amelkin said Sayoc was obsessed with President Donald Trump and grew to believe Democrats were to blame for damage to his van, which

was plastered with Trump stickers and images of cross-hairs superimposed over the faces of Trump opponents. Sayoc "looked up to the president as a father figure," the lawyer said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jane Kim said Sayoc "set out to terrorize people" and had not sufficiently shown remorse.

"Politics cannot justify a terrorist attack," she said, while the judge dismissed talk of Trump as a "side show."

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police say teen stole car with kids inside

**MO** ST. LOUIS — St. Louis police said a 13-year-old stole a car with two children inside.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported the car was stolen Saturday after a woman left it running while she went into a business. A 5-year-old and a 6-year-old were let out of the car shortly after.

The newspaper reported that the white Kia Rio was used in a robbery later Saturday. A 19-year-old told police that two teenagers jumped out of a sedan and stole his money and cellphone.

The driver fled from police, then crashed. Police arrested a 14-year-old and turned him over to juvenile court. The car's two other occupants escaped.

## Yorkie's bite disrupts mail in neighborhood

**VA** DANVILLE — A Virginia neighborhood had its mail service disrupted for about three weeks after a Yorkshire terrier bit a postal carrier.

The Danville Register and Bee reported that the neighborhood is one of two in Danville to have mail service disrupted recently because of dog bites. The second neighborhood had service suspended because carriers were being chased by a pit bull.

Home delivery in the neighborhood with the Yorkie resumed when the dog's owner installed a curbside mailbox and put up a fence.

## Plans to restore Cracker Barrel ended

**TN** LEBANON — Restoration plans for the

original Cracker Barrel Old Country Store in Tennessee have been chopped.

The Tennessean reported the company announced Friday the building is too deteriorated to be successfully restored. The company will instead salvage some pieces to use in future endeavors like a heritage project that could include a museum connected to a Lebanon store.

The building was saved from demolition last month and moved to the Wilson County fairgrounds.

## Beach littered in forgotten hotel towels

**SC** HILTON HEAD ISLAND — Clumps of hotel towels dot the shores of Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, cluttering the surf and creating hazards for wildlife.

The Island Packet reported wildlife activists say the towels invade the shores each year, but this season's piles gained so much attention that town officials intervened.

The newspaper said photos of the piles posted online prompted the town to announce it has contacted officials from every major beachfront resort about the problem.

## Replica building's fate upsets history buffs

**AZ** TOMBSTONE — The demolition of a decades-old structure built as a replica of one that existed more than 100 years ago near the O.K. Corral gunfight has stirred up a dust-up in the town known for its Wild West days.

At issue is whether the replica was old enough and historic enough to merit preservation.

The Arizona Daily Star reported some history buffs are angry at the small city for de-

molishing the replica last year.

Gary McLelland said Tombstone officials made "a historic mistake" when they tore down a narrow, one-story building that was put up in the late 1950s in a campaign to rebuild the corral as a tourist attraction.

## 3 charged with acts against pregnant teen

**WV** BARTLEY — Three people have been charged in the case of a sexually abused teen forced to drink turpentine in an attempt to end her pregnancy.

A state police criminal complaint said authorities learned last month that a 15-year-old girl was a possible abuse victim. Daniel Atwell, 24, was living with the girl and her mother, who told police she gave Atwell permission to abuse her daughter.

The woman said she bought the girl a morning-after pill to end the pregnancy but it didn't work. The teen told police that her aunt, Sherry Kirk, then forced her to drink turpentine.

Atwell and the girl's mother were arrested on sexual assault charges. Kirk was charged with attempt to kill or injure by poison.

## Bank robber's note includes his name

**OH** CLEVELAND — Investigators said a Cleveland bank robber made their job much easier because his note demanding money was written on the back side of a document bearing his name and address.

FBI Special Agent Vicki Anderson told WJW-TV the stunned teller who was handed the note last Monday looked at both sides and realized it was a document from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Anderson said

the teller addressed the man by his first name, gave him the money and notified police.

Authorities used surveillance footage and the information from the document to identify the 54-year-old suspect and issued a warrant for his arrest.

## Marker noting 1903 lynching is stolen

**DE** WILMINGTON — Police in Delaware are investigating the theft of a historical marker that memorializes the 1903 lynching of a black man accused of raping and killing a white girl.

New Castle County police said a concerned citizen noticed on Thursday that the state historical marker erected in June to commemorate the lynching of George White was missing.

County Executive Matt Meyer called on whoever is responsible for the theft to "do the right thing and return the marker to us."

White, an ex-convict, was accused of killing 17-year-old Helen Bishop. In June 1903, a mob stormed a workhouse where White was being held, dragged him to the scene of the assault on Bishop, then burned him to death.

## Bald eagle found dead had been electrocuted

**CA** MILPITAS — Authorities said a bald eagle found dead last month in Silicon Valley was electrocuted by a power line.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife said that no bullet fragments were found in the eagle's body, indicating it wasn't the victim of a poacher as feared.

An examination concluded that the juvenile bird flew into a high voltage line in Milpitas.

From wire reports

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# McCaffrey expecting heavier workload

Associated Press

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — The Panthers hope less means more for Christian McCaffrey in 2019.

Offensive coordinator Norv Turner wants to increase McCaffrey's touches this season while reducing the number of plays he's on the field after the running back racked up a franchise-record 1,965 yards from scrimmage.

"He told me he was going to give me the ball more and that's music to my ears. I got excited," McCaffrey said.

The 23-year-old McCaffrey had 1,098 yards rushing on 219 carries and 867 yards receiving on 107 receptions in 2018 — the most ever in a single season by an NFL running back — and earned second-team All-Pro honors.

It came during a season where McCaffrey rarely left the field when the Panthers had the ball.

He played a ridiculous 91.3

percent of Carolina's offensive snaps in 2018 despite playing only 10 snaps in a meaningless Week 17 game against the Saints.

That's by far the most of any running back in the league. McCaffrey's 965 offensive snaps outpaced the Cowboys' Ezekiel Elliott (890), the Giants' Saquon Barkley (853) and the Rams' Todd Gurley (825).

All other NFL running backs played fewer than 750 snaps.

But too often the Panthers felt McCaffrey was needlessly used as a decoy when he could have benefited from taking a few plays off and been fresher and even more explosive when he touched the football.

"We want the ball in Christian's hands," Rivera said. "When he's on the field, there's no reason for him to be a decoy or be a swing guy. ... What we want to do is take away the excess plays that he doesn't have to be out there."

McCaffrey's 326 touches aren't even in the same league

as some of the previous running backs Turner has coached.

Emmitt Smith and Ricky Williams each had two seasons where they had more than 400 touches under Turner, while LaDainian Tomlinson had one season with 398 touches and another with 375.

So Turner isn't afraid to lean heavily on his No. 1 back.

McCaffrey has worked hard this offseason on his stamina in anticipation of a greater workload. He's added plenty of muscle in his upper and lower body, although he downplayed it by shrugging his shoulders and saying it's "only one or two pounds."

He said he's been more focused on improving his speed.

"I prepare so that I can be in the whole game," McCaffrey said. "I felt great all last year, felt great all offseason, and I feel really good right now. The goal for me is be ready to play, be ready to get the ball as many times as possible."

Rivera has no doubt McCaf-

frey is ready for what's ahead this season.

"He constantly tells me, 'Coach, if we play 1,000 plays, I want to play 1,000 plays,'" Rivera said. "He does not want to leave the field. But for his own well-being as a football player, we have to be smart and be judicious as to when he's out there."

Turner said that means finding someone else to give McCaffrey a breather, something he hopes to accomplish in the upcoming preseason games.

Cameron Artis-Payne returns for this fifth season with the Panthers and is the odds-on favorite to be McCaffrey's primary backup. Reggie Bonnafon is an intriguing player with a similar skill set to McCaffrey, and the team also drafted Jordan Scarlett and signed undrafted rookie Elijah Holyfield, the son of former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield.

"We have a good mix of guys and we have to find the answers," Rivera said.

## Cowboys' Prescott, Cooper shrug off money talk

Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott pretends he can't hear questions about a new contract, while receiver Amari Cooper steadfastly says he simply doesn't think about his negotiations.

Both reported to training camp on time as they prepare for the final year of their deals, unlike running back Ezekiel Elliott. The two-time rushing champion has been holding out for more than a week, seeking a new contract with two years left on the existing one.

"Different strokes for different folks," Cooper said. "Everybody's situation is different."

By that, Cooper means he's about to make \$10 million more than Elliott (\$13.9 million to \$3.9 million). But Cooper also talks to Melvin Gordon, the San Diego running back who also is

holding out.

"I have a fifth-year option coming up to where I get paid a significant amount of money if I play on that," Cooper said. "But the running back position, you know Melvin is one of my good friends, and he tells me the contract he would play on this year isn't even ... it's nothing. It's peanuts to an elephant."

Cooper was the fourth overall pick of the draft in 2015, a year before Elliott went with the same choice. Elliott's salary is supposed to jump to \$9.1 million next year. Gordon was drafted 11 spots behind Cooper, putting his fifth-year salary at \$5.6 million this season.

All three of those players surpass the \$2 million base salary for Prescott, drafted 131 spots behind Elliott in the fourth round before winning NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year honors in 2016 after Tony

Romo got hurt. The Cowboys have two NFC East titles and a 32-16 record with Prescott.

But there was never talk about Prescott staying away from California. He acknowledged during the offseason that "generational money" was coming (his deal could surpass \$30 million annually) and he had faith an agreement could be reached.

"I'm not here to talk about my contract and that stuff," Prescott said early in camp. "For me it's to come out here and focus on this, not be distracted by any of that stuff, any of that conversation, just focus on being better, just being the best player I can be and making sure everyone around me is, as well."

After that answer, Prescott started responding with various versions of, "I couldn't hear you." He got the idea from

owner Jerry Jones, who opened camp by pretending he couldn't hear a reporter asking about what it would take for Jason Garrett to get another contract. The coach's five-year deal is expiring this year, as well.

Jones and executive vice president of personnel Stephen Jones, his son, face the daunting task of getting their three offensive stars signed with deals and a pair of emerging linebackers in Jaylon Smith and Leighton Vander Esch looming in coming years.

Stephen Jones says the club tries to sell players on taking less money because of what they can make through the visibility of the Cowboys, although that argument could use a boost from a trip past the divisional round of the playoffs. Dallas hasn't done that in almost 25 years.

# Popovich finally gets shot at top spot

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Gregg Popovich walked into USA Basketball's first team meeting in advance of World Cup training camp, and it seemed to some in the room that he was having a little difficulty keeping his emotions in check.

He talked about tradition, about what it means to play for your country, about expectations, about sacrifice, about playing the right way, about respect for opponents.

The only downside was that when he was done speaking, the first practice was still about 18 hours away.

"Shoot, from the get-go, I think everybody was ready to play a game or run through a brick wall for him after that talk," Brooklyn guard Joe Harris said.

With that, Camp Pop had arrived.

Popovich's first training camp practice as coach of the U.S. men's national team went into the books Monday, less than a month before the Americans will begin play at the FIBA World Cup in China. The U.S. has won the last two

World Cup gold medals, both won under now-former coach Mike Krzyzewski, and now it's Popovich's turn to lead the red, white and blue.

"It's been on my mind every day, what I want to do and what needs to be done," said Popovich, the longtime San Antonio Spurs coach who was picked as Krzyzewski's successor nearly four years ago. "It's been like thinking about two teams at the same time for that period. But Coach K did that for 12 years. So I think I can probably try to do the same."

Popovich was all over the floor in his first practice, pulling some guys aside for 1-on-1 chats during a scrimmage and other times gathering the entire team around him to discuss the nuance of proper box-out technique.

"You can't help but teach here and there," Popovich said.

Popovich calls it "a huge responsibility" to both represent the country and continue the program's long tradition of winning. He and his assistants have been meeting for weeks, going over every possible detail.

There is also some pressure, of course.

When the Americans start World Cup play in Shanghai on Sept. 1 against the Czech Republic, it'll be exactly 13 years since the national team program lost a game at the world championships, now known as the World Cup, or in Olympic competition.

On Sept. 1, 2006, the U.S. lost to Greece in the world championships semifinals. Since then, the Americans are 76-0 — a run that started with the bronze medal game in the 2006 worlds followed by gold-medal runs in the 2007 FIBA Americas tournament, the 2008 Olympics, the 2010 world championships, the 2012 Olympics, the 2014 World Cup and finally the 2016 Olympics.

USA Basketball has lost at times since 2006, including twice during the 12-game World Cup qualifying run.

But none of the defeats came against the full-fledged U.S. varsity, the level that Popovich is now overseeing.

"He's taken on the challenge of leading the USA team and he's taking on the challenge with seriousness," said Atlanta coach Lloyd Pierce, a Popovich assistant this sum-

mer. "The first conversation I had with him, he said that we would enjoy this and we would have fun. But when we meet as coaches, you walk into the room and there are tables full of notes and easels full of notes already. He's not taking this for granted."

There are some natural, and coincidental, parallels with Popovich following Krzyzewski as national team coach.

Both were military and service academy men: Krzyzewski graduated from West Point in 1969, Popovich from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1970. The Army put Krzyzewski into its Hall of Fame; the Air Force Academy did the same for Popovich. Krzyzewski has five NCAA titles; Popovich has five NBA titles.

In 2016, Krzyzewski called the pending coaching change "succession" — another term heard often in military circles when talking about the transfer of leadership. "I have the unit right now," Krzyzewski said in 2016. "He's going to take command of the unit."

That day has arrived, and it was a long time coming for Popovich.

## Carter returning to Hawks to play 22nd NBA season

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Vince Carter is putting off retirement for at least one more season.

With that, he'll claim the longest career in NBA history all to himself.

A person familiar with the situation confirmed that Carter has agreed to terms on a one-year contract to return to the Atlanta Hawks for his record 22nd season. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal has not been announced.

The 42-year-old Carter never wavered in his desire to play with someone this season. He is tied with Robert Parish, Kevin Garnett, Kevin Willis and recently retired Dirk Nowitzki

— all of whom played for 21 seasons — for the longest career in NBA history.

"Just waiting for the right opportunity," he said on a recent conference call to discuss the upcoming Jr. NBA Global Championship, when questioned by a reporter from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "Nothing has changed as far as that goal and that dream of mine."

The deal was first reported by ESPN.

Essentially an extra coach during his first season with the Hawks, Carter served as a mentor to some of the NBA's most promising young talent, including point guard Trae Young and forward John Collins.

This year, the Hawks added first-round picks D'Andre Hunter and Cam Reddish, giving the team two more players who will surely benefit from Carter's experience and leadership.

Carter also showed last season that he's still got some hoop skills. He was a valuable member of the playing rotation on a rebuilding team, playing in 76 games with nine starts, averaging 17.5 minutes and 7.4 points per contest.

While Carter is likely to get less playing time after the additions of Hunter and Reddish, the Hawks wanted him back and finish off what is expected to be a 14-man roster this season.

Carter entered the league in 1998 — the same year Young was born — as the fifth overall pick out of North Carolina. He sparked a wave of "Vinsanity" in Toronto, where his high-flying style made him one of the league's top players. He began a run of 10 straight seasons where he was selected to the All-Star Game appearances and averaged more than 20 points a game.

Carter was dealt to New Jersey in a blockbuster trade early in the 2004-05 and spent nearly five seasons with the Nets. Since then, he bounced around to Orlando, Phoenix, Dallas, Memphis and Sacramento before landing in Atlanta last season.

# Sano's pinch-hit home run lifts Twins

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — After sitting four powerful right-handed bats against Atlanta All-Star starter Mike Soroka, Minnesota Twins manager Rocco Baldelli had plenty of pinch-hitting options late in another close game against a likely playoff team.

Baldelli chose wisely with the surging Miguel Sano and Minnesota came up with another meaningful win.

Sano's pinch-hit, two-run homer in the ninth inning gave Minnesota a 5-3 victory over the Braves on Monday night. The home run came after working with assistant hitting coach

Rudy Hernandez inside during the game.

"I felt when the game got tied, I told Rudy, if nobody does anything, I'm going to take care of it," Sano said. "When you've got something in your heart and you feel it, that's one of the biggest things. When I went out and hit, I was just thinking, one swing and come back to the dugout. It's unbelievable."

With Mitch Garver, C.J. Cron and Jonathan Schoop all available, Sano entered and hit the first pitch he saw for his 19th home run of the season and the first pinch-hit, walkoff home run for the Twins since Mi-

chael Cuddyer against the Los Angeles Angels in 2006 at the Metrodome.

Sano's homer went an estimated 443 feet off reliever Chris Martin, hitting high off the wall in center field. Martin (0-3) was making his second appearance for Atlanta since being acquired at the trade deadline. He got two quick outs before allowing a single to Luis Arraez in front of Sano.

"He's got long arms," Martin said. "He's got leverage. I've faced him a lot. I kind of attack him the same way every time. I think he finally figured it out and he got good wood on it."

Trevor May (5-3) pitched two innings with one hit allowed for the Twins, who have won four in a row to stretch their lead over Cleveland in the AL Central to four games. They've won nine of their past 11 games.

The Braves have lost three of four and are 12-11 since the All-Star break.

"It's just been some tough games late," Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said. "Well-played, just having a hard time bunching anything to get a really big inning going or something like that. It's kind of what we need to get us off the mat a little bit."

## MLB roundup

### Porcello helps Red Sox end eight-game losing streak

Associated Press

BOSTON — The music was blaring in the clubhouse and Boston utility player Brock Holt was holding a microphone, acting like a DJ.

The defending World Series champion Red Sox were clearly ready to relax and have fun again.

Rick Porcello pitched six innings of one-run ball, Sam Travis hit a two-run homer and the Red Sox halted their eight-game losing streak with a 7-5 victory over the struggling Kansas City Royals on Monday night.

"That's kind of where we need to be in general," Porcello said. "Some pressure when you start losing, especially with the talented team we have. That's kind of how we need to be every day, kind of relaxed and focus on the task in hand."

Rafael Devers added a solo shot for the Red Sox. Travis' gave Boston a homer in a club-record 18 straight games in Fenway Park. The old mark was set in 1969.

Bubba Starling, Meibrys Vioria and Cheslor Cuthbert each went deep for Kansas City, with Vioria's his first homer

in the majors and Starling's a three-run shot.

It was the seventh straight loss for the Royals, who had a 10-game skid in the season's first two weeks.

Porcello (10-8), who smashed a pair of TV monitors in the Fenway dugout in frustration in his last start, gave up four hits, walked two and struck out five.

The only thing he broke this time was the defending World Series champions' losing streak. It was their first win since beating the rival Yankees at home on July 27 and moved them 5½ games behind Tampa Bay for the AL's second wildcard spot.

The longest skid for a defending champ is 11 games, done by both the 1998 then-Florida Marlins (twice) and the 1986 Royals.

**Yankees 9, Orioles 6:** New York hit five more home runs at Camden Yards, including two by Mike Tauchman, to set a major league record and win its 13th straight game in Baltimore.

**Blue Jays 2, Rays 0:** Rookie Bo Bichette homered and scored both runs, Jacob Waguespack (3-1) pitched six

impressive innings and visiting Toronto ended Tampa Bay's six-game winning streak.

**Rangers 1, Indians 0:** All-Star Mike Minor (10-6) struck out seven over seven innings, Nomar Mazara drove in Elvis Andrus with a sacrifice fly in the fourth and visiting Texas beat Cleveland.

**Mets 6-5, Marlins 2-4:** J.D. Davis, Michael Conforto and Pete Alonso homered in a seventh-inning rally, lifting host New York over Miami for a doubleheader sweep that moved them above .500 for the first time since early May.

New York won the opener as Jeff McNeil welcomed Robert Dugger to the major leagues with a home run on his first pitch, Amed Rosario broke a 1-1 tie with a third-inning homer and Jacob deGrom gave himself a three-run cushion with a two-run single.

**Reds 7, Angels 4:** Luis Castillo struck out a career-high 13 and host Cincinnati scored five runs in the first innings on the way to a win over Los Angeles.

**Brewers 9, Pirates 7:** Christian Yelich hit two home runs and took over the major league lead with 39, powering visiting

Milwaukee past Pittsburgh.

**White Sox 7, Tigers 4:** All-Star Lucas Giolito (12-5) ended a five-start winless streak, Tim Anderson had three hits and scored twice, and visiting Chicago beat Detroit.

**Cubs 6, Athletics 5:** Javier Baez hit two of his team's four homers and the Chicago bullpen barely held on without Craig Kimbrel in beating visiting Oakland.

**Phillies 7, Diamondbacks 3:** Vince Velasquez (4-6) allowed two runs in a season-high seven innings and Scott Kingery homered in his hometown ballpark, leading visiting Philadelphia over Arizona.

**Nationals 4, Giants 0:** Erick Fedde (2-2) pitched six innings to win for the first time in eight starts and Anthony Rendon's early run-scoring single held up as visiting Washington beat San Francisco.

**Dodgers 8, Cardinals 0:** Cody Bellinger hit a three-run homer and rookie Tony Gonsolin (1-1) pitched six stellar innings of two-hit ball to earn his first major league victory as host Los Angeles beat St. Louis.