

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy concludes 25th year of CARAT drills

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ

Stars and Stripes

A weeklong naval exercise designed to improve the ability of Indonesian and U.S. naval forces to work together has wrapped up its 25th year in Indonesia.

Indonesia has taken part in Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training, or CARAT, a multiphase exercise involving several countries in South and Southeast Asia, since its inception in 1995.

Sri Lanka was the first stop for CARAT this year, which kicked off in April. However, those drills were cut short after a series of terrorist bombings at churches and other public buildings on Easter Sunday killed as many as 250 people.

CARAT's Indonesian leg — which began Aug. 1 and covered seven days of activities at sea and on shore — took place in the Java Sea, just south of the contested South China Sea, where Beijing has built up shallow reefs and islets into militarized outposts.

In December, the South China Morning Post reported that Indonesia had opened a military base in the southern point of the South China Sea as a “deterrent against

any potential security threats, particularly on border areas.”

Indonesia and China have had several maritime run-ins in the resource-rich area, the report said. In 2016, an Indonesian patrol boat seized a Chinese fishing vessel, which was released after a Chinese coast guard boat rammed it.

“No country alone can ensure maritime security,” Lt. David Copeland, the domain awareness expert for Destroyer Squadron 7, said in a Navy statement issued earlier in the CARAT exercise. “It requires coordinated efforts by all regional partner nations and agencies to actively share information in a transparent and timely manner so we can conduct combined maritime security operations, ensuring safe and secure seas for all.”

At sea the U.S. and Indonesian navies worked together on submarine operations; visit, board, search and seizure drills; and dive team training.

The nations also created a Maritime Domain Awareness Information Sharing Center, according to the statement. The hub serves as a tool focused on gathering intelligence about potential maritime threats such as illegal fishing, human

trafficking, weapons smuggling, terrorism, piracy and environmental threats.

During the shore phase of CARAT Indonesia, U.S. Marines deployed to Darwin, Australia, trained for jungle survival alongside Indonesian marines. Both countries' navies also exchanged experts on preventive medicine.

Participating ships and units included littoral combat ship USS Montgomery, expeditionary fast transport USNS Fall River, U.S. Coast Guard cutter Stratton, submarine support ship MV Carolyn Chouest and an anti-submarine warfare P-8 Poseidon aircraft.

Staff from Task Force 73, the Singapore-based logistics command for 7th Fleet, and Destroyer Squadron 7, also of 7th Fleet, took part in the exercise, the statement added.

“Any time we have the opportunity to conduct such extensive and dynamic training, it has an undeniable impact on our ability to effectively integrate forces,” Capt. Ann McCann, deputy commodore of Destroyer Squadron 7, said in the Navy statement.

USS Porter sails into Black Sea as Navy boosts patrol

BY SCOTT WYLAND

Stars and Stripes

The destroyer USS Porter arrived at the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Varna on Friday, marking the sixth time this year the Navy has sent a warship to the region.

“The naval operations we conduct in the Black Sea with our allies and partners maintain the strong relationships that are necessary for regional stability,” Vice Adm. Lisa M. Franchetti, 6th Fleet commander, said in a statement.

The Russian Black Sea Fleet's Smetlivy destroyer is

monitoring the USS Porter's movements, Tass news agency reported, citing the Russian defense ministry.

The increased frequency of U.S. destroyers patrolling Black Sea waters is likely to cause Russian leaders concern because of the ships' firepower and missile-defense capabilities, said Michael Petersen, Naval War College's director of Russia Maritime Studies Institute.

The USS Carney took part in the multinational Sea Breeze naval exercise, hosted by the U.S. and Ukraine, in the region

in July. Prior to that, four U.S. warships conducted Black Sea operations at various times between January and April.

Russia has reinforced its fleet in the Black Sea — perhaps a sign that repeated U.S. patrols there are stressing its regular fleet there, Petersen said.

“Russia continues to view the deployment of U.S. ships to the Black Sea with suspicion,” Petersen said. “They view Crimea, and by extension the Black Sea, as a key strategic bastion for protecting their southern flank.”

The Navy and NATO began increasing their presence in the Black Sea after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Security patrols increased after the Russian navy seized three Ukrainian vessels in the Kerch Strait last November.

Two days before the USS Porter arrived in the region, four Ukrainian soldiers were killed in eastern Ukraine when Russian-backed separatists fired rocket-propelled grenades into their positions, despite a cease-fire between the two sides.

North Korea shows off another missile

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea showed off more missiles Sunday, hours after President Donald Trump said he's not worried about the recent spate of launches and raised hope for new nuclear talks with the communist state.

The North's state-run news agency reported that leader Kim Jong Un supervised the missile launches on Saturday, the country's fifth weapons test in less than three weeks.

"The Supreme Leader expressed great satisfaction, being very pleased that another new weapon intended by the Party came into being," KCNA reported.

It also published photos showing the missiles and Kim watching as a ball of fire rises in the sky.

South Korea's military said it appeared that two short-range ballistic missiles fired by the North flew nearly 250 miles and reached an altitude of nearly 30

miles before splashing into the sea off the eastern coast.

The North has said other recent launches were to protest U.S.-South Korean military exercises that began last week, but experts say the North also likely is trying to boost its leverage as Washington tries to restart talks aimed at persuading it to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Trump said Kim promised the testing would stop when the exercises end. "I look forward to seeing Kim Jong Un in the not too distant future!" he added.

North Korea has long denounced the annual exercises, which it considers rehearsals for an invasion despite allied assurances that the drills are defensive in nature.

The allies have sharply scaled back the size and scope of the drills since Trump announced he was "stopping the war games" after his first summit with Kim last year. They also tried changing the names.

But North Korea mocked those efforts in a separate report on Sunday, although it fo-

cused on the South and avoided criticizing Trump.

"It is a miscalculation if they think that the very change of the name of the exercise can alter its aggressive nature or that we would make it pass off quietly," KCNA quoted a senior foreign ministry official as saying.

The current command post exercise is aimed at testing the South's capabilities as it hopes to assume operational control of the military from the U.S. should war break out.

By only firing short-range missiles, the North is displaying a threat to South Korea and U.S. bases in the region while maintaining Kim's promise not to test long-range missiles or nuclear weapons.

Trump has signaled that would be a red line, although U.S.-led United Nations Security Council sanctions resolutions ban the North from using any ballistic missile technology.

The North's director-general of the foreign ministry's department of American affairs, Kwon Jong-gun, warned Seoul

that its participation in the exercise and denunciation of the recent missile tests put inter-Korean relations at risk.

He referred to Trump's recent comments, saying that "even the U.S. president made a remark which in effect recognizes the self-defensive rights of a sovereign state, saying that it is a small missile test which a lot of countries do."

"Given that the military exercise clearly puts us as an enemy in its concept ... an inter-Korean contact itself will be difficult to be made unless they put an end to such a military exercise or before they make a plausible excuse" for the drills, Kwon said, according to KCNA.

South Korea's presidential office dismissed the saber-rattling.

"It's our shared understanding among the two Koreas and the United States that resuming the stalled denuclearization negotiations continues to be the top priority," an official told the Yonhap News Agency on Sunday.

One year later, airman recalls Thai cave rescue

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — When a call came last summer for volunteers to don scuba gear, swim into Thailand's flooded Tham Luang cave and help rescue a youth soccer team trapped inside, Tech. Sgt. Kenny O'Brien stepped forward.

The dramatic rescue captivated audiences around the globe. All 12 boys and their coach were freed after being sedated and pulled 2 ½ miles through the floodwaters using ropes and pulleys.

O'Brien, 30, of Bunker Hill, Ind., a section chief with the 353rd Special Operations Group, 320th Special Tactics Squadron, at Okinawa's Kadena Air Base, has been chosen as one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2019. The Air Force-wide selection was announced July 23.

In addition to participating in the Thai cave rescue, O'Brien helped save a Korean national from a tractor crash in South Korea in March 2018. Just a few months later, he

was one of only two airmen on President Donald Trump's security team during his first summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore. He also has three combat deployments to Afghanistan under his belt.

"If someone needs someone to go do something dangerous, I volunteer to go do that," O'Brien recently told Stars and Stripes at Kadena Air Base. "If someone needs to lead something, I volunteer to do that. ... I happened to be in the right place at the right time for multiple big events."

Few events in 2018 were as big or garnered as much international attention as the Thai cave rescue, an ordeal that lasted 18 days in June and July. O'Brien found himself in a front-row seat, spending nine days in the frigid waters of the cave.

The Wild Boar youth soccer team was reported missing from the mountains overlooking their village in Thailand's rural Mae Sai district on June 23, 2018. The boys' bicycles and other belongings were found at the cave entrance.

They were reportedly caught off guard by a flash flood and found themselves stuck on a small rocky shelf, separated from freedom by rising floodwaters.

The Thai government contacted the U.S. Embassy for assistance June 26, said 353rd SOG spokeswoman 1st Lt. Renee Douglas. One day later, a crisis action team made up of 353rd SOG and 18th Wing personnel departed for Chiang Rai and arrived June 28.

O'Brien was among the small group of U.S. airmen who were the farthest inside the cave, he said. They were in Chamber 3 with another team in Chamber 2. O'Brien believes there were nine chambers to get to the boys.

"It was pretty stressful," O'Brien said. "Once we got them all out, you know, everyone was pretty excited."

A married father of two, O'Brien also received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, which is awarded by the Pentagon for outstanding achievement or meritorious service in a noncombat situation.

President calls for background checks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Friday he believes he has the influence to rally Republicans around stronger federal background check laws as Congress and the White House work on a response to last weekend's mass shootings in Texas and Ohio.

At the same time, Trump said he had assured the National Rifle Association that its gun-rights views would be "fully represented and respected." He said he was hopeful the NRA would not be an obstacle to strengthening the nation's gun laws.

Trump has promised to lead on tougher gun control measures before, including after the 2018 Parkland, Fla., school shooting, but little has come of it. His comments in the wake

of the twin massacres marked his most optimistic and supportive words in favor of more stringent gun laws, though he left the details vague and it remained to be seen how much political capital Trump would throw behind marshaling Republicans on the issue.

He said Friday he now is looking for "very meaningful background checks" but is not considering a resurrection of an assault weapons ban. He said he also believes lawmakers will support "red flag" laws that allow guns to be removed from those who may be a danger to themselves and others.

"I see a better feeling right now toward getting something meaningful done," Trump told reporters when asked why the political environment was different now. "I have a greater

influence now over the Senate and the House," he said at the White House.

Democrats and others have been skeptical of Trump's commitment to genuine gun control, judging from past experience. But he said he was behind it.

"The Republicans are going to be great and lead the charge along with the Democrats," he declared, saying he'd spoken with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell whom he proclaimed to be "totally onboard."

But McConnell, thus far, has only committed to a discussion of the issue. Republicans have long opposed expanding background checks — a bill passed by the Democratic-led House is stalled in McConnell's Senate — but they face new pressure after the shootings in El Paso,

Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, that left 31 people dead.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer tweeted in response Friday that McConnell must bring up the House-passed legislation, which Trump had previously threatened to veto.

"To get anything meaningful done to address gun violence, we need his commitment to hold a Senate vote on the House-passed background checks legislation," Schumer said.

As for the NRA, which has contributed millions to help Trump and other Republicans, the gun lobby's Chief Executive Wayne LaPierre said last week that some federal gun control proposals "would make millions of law-abiding Americans less safe and less able to defend themselves and their loved ones."

Epstein's apparent suicide sparks round of conspiracies

Associated Press

Jeffrey Epstein's apparent suicide Saturday morning in a federal jail launched new conspiracy theories online in a saga that has provided fodder for them for years, fueled by Epstein's ties to princes, politicians and other famous and powerful people.

Online theorists Saturday quickly offered unsubstantiated speculation — including some retweeted by President

Donald Trump — that Epstein's death wasn't a suicide, or it was faked.

That chatter picked up on the conjecture that resurged after Epstein's July 6 arrest on allegations that he orchestrated a sex-trafficking ring designed to bring him teenage girls. Some of his accusers have described being sexually abused by the wealthy financier's friends and acquaintances.

The combination created fertile ground for theories and

misinformation to breed on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Epstein, 66, had been denied bail and faced up to 45 years behind bars on federal sex trafficking and conspiracy charges unsealed last month. He had pleaded not guilty and was awaiting trial next year.

His relationships with Trump, former President Bill Clinton and Britain's Prince Andrew were at the center of

those online rumors and theories, many of which question what politicians knew about Epstein's alleged sex crimes.

Meanwhile, a manipulated photo, shared by thousands on Twitter and Facebook, falsely claimed to show Epstein with Trump and a young Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter.

Both Clinton and Trump have denied being privy to Epstein's alleged scheme.

Release of 'Hunt' movie canceled in wake of mass shootings

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Universal Pictures has canceled the planned September release of its controversial social satire, "The Hunt," in the wake of recent mass shootings and amid criticism from President Donald Trump.

The move came several days after the studio suspended the ad campaign for the film, a

gory, R-rated thriller that tells a tale of liberal "elites" hunting people in red states for sport.

In a statement Saturday, Universal said it had decided to take the further step of canceling the film's Sept. 27 release, saying, "We understand that now is not the right time to release this film." Left open was the possibility that the movie could be released in theaters or on streaming at a later date.

Trump criticized the planned movie on Twitter Friday, without mentioning its name, saying it was intended "to inflame and cause chaos."

The president also had harsh words for Hollywood in the tweet, saying "Liberal Hollywood is Racist at the highest level."

Asked if the decision to scrap the release had been impacted by Trump's comments, a per-

son familiar with the decision process, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations, said the cancellation had been under discussion by the studio and filmmaking team well before the comments were made.

The studio paused the ad campaign in the middle of last week in light of the tragic mass shootings in Texas, Ohio and California.

Huge rally against Romanian leaders occurs in its capital

Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania — Thousands of people took part in anti-government protests in Romania, with the largest rally taking place outside government headquarters in Bucharest.

The events on Saturday were held on the anniversary of anti-

corruption protests in which hundreds of people were injured, including two dozen police officers.

Some demonstrators carried signs with slogans like “Corruption kills” while demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Viorica Dancila’s government.

Bucharest resident Mihai Munteanu said: “We want this

government full of incompetents, corrupt people and thieves to go away because we cannot go on like this anymore.”

Dancila has been prime minister since January 2018. The leader of the ruling Social Democratic Party, she is set to run against incumbent President Klaus Iohannis in a November presidential election.

First pride parade held in the Polish city of Plock

Associated Press

PLOCK, Poland — LGBT activists held a central Polish city’s first pride parade with only minor incidents on Saturday amid a deep divide in the country over gay and lesbian rights.

The parade in Plock, about 60 miles west of Warsaw, came three weeks after anti-gay violence marred the first pride march in the eastern city of Bialystok. Far-right radicals attacked march participants with rocks, glass bottles and firecrackers on July 20, causing injuries and riot police to intervene.

In Plock on Saturday, about 2,500 parade participants, many carrying rainbow flags, walked through the city. They were surrounded by a large number of police officers, a sign authorities were determined to prevent a repetition of last month’s violence.

The police tried to separate parade marchers and protesters, who held signs including “Enough of LGBT propaganda sponsored from abroad.” Some minor skirmishes occurred, and police said officers detained two people.

The pride events took place amid a backlash against an LGBT movement that is growing more visible in the predominantly Catholic country.

Poland’s right-wing ruling party has focused on LGBT issues ahead of an October general election, depicting gay men and lesbians as threats to Polish society and families.

The powerful Catholic Church has also described gay people as a threat, with a top church official recently denouncing what he called a “rainbow plague.”

Members of Hungary’s ruling party also have recently expressed opposition to LGBT rights, voicing anger at Coca-Cola advertisements that featured gay couples.

Moscow protest attracts thousands

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Tens of thousands of people rallied Saturday against the exclusion of some city council candidates from Moscow’s upcoming election, turning out for one of the Russian capital’s biggest political protests in years.

After the rally, which was officially sanctioned, hundreds of participants streamed to an area near the presidential administration building to continue with an unauthorized demonstration. They were confronted by phalanxes of riot police, and the arrest-monitoring group OVD-Info said 136 people were detained.

The rally was the fourth consecutive weekend demonstration in Moscow over the local election. The determined opposition has prompted protests in other cities, reflecting widespread frustration with Russia’s tightly controlled politics.

The protest attracted some 50,000 people, said Bely Schetchik, an organization that counts pub-

lic meeting attendance.

OVD-Info said 86 people were arrested Saturday in St. Petersburg at an unsanctioned demonstration in support of the Moscow protests.

Unlike the previous two Moscow rallies, where police harshly dispersed the crowds and detained thousands of demonstrators, Saturday’s gathering in a neighborhood with relatively few passersby was officially sanctioned. It was held on a street flanked by high buildings and sandwiched between two busy thoroughfares.

Lyubov Sobol, one of the city council candidates denied a place on the ballot and a spearhead of the election protest, was among those detained in Moscow on Saturday.

A video on Sobol’s Twitter feed showed officers breaking into her office as she demanded an explanation from them. Small related protests also were reported in several Siberian cities on Saturday.

Syrian troops capture key Idlib village

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syrian government forces captured an important village in the northwestern province of Idlib on Sunday, drawing close to a major town in the last rebel stronghold in the country, state media and opposition activists said.

The capture of Habeet opens up an approach to southern regions of Idlib, which is home to some 3 million people, many of them displaced by fighting

in other parts of the country. Habeet is also close to the town of Khan Sheikhoun, which has been held by rebels since 2012, and to parts of the highway linking the capital, Damascus, with the northern city of Aleppo, Syria’s largest.

Syrian troops have been attacking Idlib and a stretch of land around it since April 30. The three-month campaign of airstrikes and shelling has killed more than 2,000 people on both sides and displaced some 400,000.

The government-controlled Syrian Central Military Media said the Syrian army captured the village after fierce fighting with al-Qaida-linked militants.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition-linked war monitor, described the capture of Habeet as “the most important advance” by government forces since April 30.

It said the overnight fighting left 18 insurgents and nine pro-government gunmen dead.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Boy, 8, gets city to post 'Turtle Xing' signs

IN WEST LAFAYETTE — The city has installed "Turtle Xing" signs along a road after an 8-year-old boy warned the mayor that motorists were running over turtles on the move.

Jack Wietbrock wrote West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis a letter asking him to install a sign advising motorists to keep watch for turtles along Cherry Lane.

The second-grader wrote that "there are turtles crossing the road and they need our help." He included a hand-drawing of a car stopped and someone carrying a turtle, captioning that image with, "We saved a baby turtle."

City ends 101-year-old farming tradition

SC YORK — A 101-year-old farming and fellowship tradition won't continue this year and may be over for good.

The Herald of Rock Hill reported the annual Hopewell Day where people in western York County gather to eat beef hash and listen to gospel music and political speeches won't take place in 2019.

Organizer Melvin Howell said attendance is dwindling and they don't have enough volunteers.

State fair will have ice skating rink

MS JACKSON — Ice skating will be available this year at the Mississippi State Fair.

State Agriculture Commissioner Andy Gipson said a temporary ice rink will be installed inside the Mississippi Coliseum on the fairgrounds in Jackson.

Gipson said a Florida-based company called Magic Ice USA will build and manage the 8,000-square-foot rink.

Stolen vehicles used to steal bank's ATM

LA WESTLAKE — Authorities are looking for people who used a stolen forklift, truck and trailer to steal an ATM. The Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office said three people may have been involved.

The ATM was stolen from a bank in Westlake, and a trailer and forklift stolen from two businesses were left in the bank's parking lot.

Later that day, a burning truck was reported in Sulphur. It turned out to be the truck stolen with the trailer. The ATM was found along with it. The sheriff's office did not say whether money was in the machine.

Firefighter rescues child locked in hot car

NY NEW YORK — Authorities said a firefighter rescued a crying child locked in a car on a hot summer day in New York City.

The 5-year-old boy was safe after the city firefighter smashed a car window to get him out.

Firefighter Matthew Clinton found the boy at a shopping center in Queens, in a car seat, sweating and crying that it was hot inside.

His father, Geremie Ram, faces charges including endangering the welfare of a child.

Bear falls on patrol car on highway

CA HOOPA — They probably don't train

people for this at the Sheriff's Academy.

A patrol car was struck by a falling bear in Northern California.

Authorities said a Humboldt County sheriff's deputy was driving on State Route 96, answering a report of a drug overdose in the community of Orleans, when the bear fell or jumped onto the car, apparently from a steep embankment.

The bear smashed the hood and windshield. The patrol car hit an embankment, rolled onto its side and burst into flames. The bear fled the scene.

Homeowner says gun stolen during sex party

FL DELTONA — A Florida homeowner said someone stole a 9 mm Glock handgun from his bedroom during a weekend sex party.

But Volusia County Sheriff's Sgt. Todd Smith told The Daytona Beach News-Journal the homeowner couldn't give detectives the names of possible suspects because the 20 or so people attending the orgy wore masks.

The homeowner said the party was advertised on social media and guests were encouraged to bring friends and to use fictitious names or no name at all.

Orphaned fawn gets home in wildlife park

AZ PHOENIX — A deer fawn whose mother was hit by a car in Safford has found a home in a wildlife park.

Arizona Game and Fish Department officials said Friday the 3-week-old fawn was placed at the 160-acre Bearizona Wildlife Park in Williams.

According to the agency, the white-tailed fawn became dependent on people and couldn't be released back into the wild.

Police: Headstones toppled at cemetery

MI SOUTH LYON — Police said vandalism is blamed for the toppling of 15-20 headstones at a suburban Detroit cemetery.

WDIV-TV reported police in South Lyon got a call about the vandalism at South Lyon Cemetery. Police are looking for the person or people responsible for the vandalism.

'The Watcher' house sells for a discount

NJ WESTFIELD — A New Jersey house whose current owners were scared off the property by a creepy letter writer known as "The Watcher" has sold for \$400,000 less than the owners paid.

Derek and Maria Broaddus bought the Westfield home for \$1,355,657 in 2014, but they didn't move in after receiving the first of four letters from the anonymous stalker.

NJ.com reported Andrew and Allison Carr purchased it for \$959,360.

Judge: Iguana thrower not allowed to brag

OH PAINESVILLE — An Ohio judge told a man who threw an iguana at a restaurant manager that he's not allowed to brag about the crime.

Arnold Teeter, 49, pleaded guilty to cruelty to animals and resisting arrest.

Painesville Municipal Judge Michael Cicconetti sentenced Teeter to two years of probation.

In April, authorities said Teeter pulled the 2-foot-long iguana from under his sweatshirt, swung it around by its tail and threw it at a Perkins Restaurant manager but missed.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Astronomical! Houston routs O's 23-2

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Houston manager A. J. Hinch was simply awestruck by his team's extraordinary display of power.

The Astros aren't showing any type of weakness heading into the final stretch of the season.

Rookie Yordan Alvarez hit three of Houston's six homers and drove in a career-high seven runs to help the Astros to the highest scoring game in franchise history with a 23-2 rout of the Baltimore Orioles on Saturday night.

"It was obviously a pretty explosive night from the beginning," Hinch said. "From top to bottom just incredible at-bats, productive at-bats, explosive at-bats and ultimately a comfortable win."

The victory was the eighth straight for the Astros, who became the latest team to feast on the reeling Orioles. Baltimore has allowed a major league-leading 240 homers and lost five straight.

It was the second 20-run game in Astros history. Hous-

ton also beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 21-5 on Oct. 2, 2015. The 13 extra-base hits set a franchise record.

Alex Bregman, who went 3-for-3, and Alvarez set the tone with back-to-back homers in the first inning. Alvarez added the grand slam in the seventh and a two-run shot in the ninth.

Jose Altuve hit his fourth home run in his last seven games in the second. Carlos Correa hit another home run an inning later with a 474-foot shot that cleared the bullpens in straightaway center. It was the longest home run at Camden Yards since Statcast began tracking in 2015, surpassing Manny Machado's 465-foot blast June 2, 2017, and sailed over both of Oriole Park's bullpens in left-center field, bouncing into Legends Park.

"It's really hard to explain what happened today," Altuve said. "A great game for us. A lot of good at-bats put together."

Yuli Gurriel tied a career-high with four hits for Houston.

Aaron Sanchez (5-14) made

his second start for the Astros after being acquired from Toronto on July 31. He allowed one run and three hits with six strikeouts and three walks over five innings.

The Orioles are coming off a series where they tied an MLB record by allowing 16 home runs in three games against the Yankees. Baltimore did not allow multiple homers for the first time in 12 games in the opener against Houston.

However, the Astros had a power surge the following night.

The Astros took an early 3-0 lead off Orioles starter Aaron Brooks (2-6) on a two-run homer by Bergman followed by Alvarez's solo shot. It was the ninth time Houston has hit back-to-back home runs this season.

Houston pulled away with five runs in the second. Josh Reddick started the barrage with an RBI single followed by a two-run homer by Altuve. Bregman had an RBI double and scored on a balk by Brooks. Correa's solo shot in the third

extended the lead to 9-1.

Brooks allowed a career-high nine runs and four homers over just three innings.

"Just ran into a good offense, didn't execute pitches and had a few things not go my way," Brooks said.

Rio Ruiz managed his first career pinch-hit home run for the Orioles in the seventh. Baltimore outfielder Stevie Wilkerson made his fourth appearance this season as a reliever, allowing three runs in 1 1/3 innings.

"By the third inning, probably I was planning how was I going to finish this game, and somehow we finished it," Orioles manager Brandon Hyde said.

Alvarez has 51 RBIs through his first 45 career games, the most in major league history over that stretch, surpassing Ted Williams' record of 47 RBIs in his first 45 games in 1939.

For the 62nd time, the Orioles allowed multiple home runs, a major league record for a team's first 116 games.

Reds rookie Aquino racks up 3 homers in rout of Cubs

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Rookie Aristides Aquino isn't keeping mementos from his prodigious power display, the one reminding everyone of another Reds outfielder who wore No. 44 and slashed homers with a whiplash swing.

After taking so long to get this far, the thrills are enough.

Aquino homered in his first three at-bats, tied a major league record for homers by a newcomer, and matched Eric Davis' rookie mark Saturday night during a 10-1 victory over the mesmerized Chicago Cubs, who have watched him wallop everything thrown his way.

"Is it him or is it Eric Davis?" Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "I don't know. Same number. He used to do that kind of stuff. Give him credit. He didn't miss anything. He hasn't missed anything this series."

The 25-year-old outfielder got his chance when fan favorite Yasiel Puig was traded to the Indians on July 31. He's become an overnight sensation in Cincinnati.

"I could go on and on about him," manager David Bell said. "We knew he'd have success, but not like this."

Aquino connected in the second and third innings off Kyle Hendricks (8-9) and again in the fourth off Dillon Maples, becoming the first major league rookie to homer in three consecutive innings in one game. His seven homers in his first major league 10 games ties Trevor Story's record with the Rockies in 2016.

He joined Davis — the Reds' center fielder on their 1990 World Series title team — as the only Cincinnati rookies to homer in four straight games. Davis did it in 1984.

"I'm enjoying the moment," Aquino said. So are Reds fans who have a new, unexpected rooting interest. Aquino spent six years at rookie or Single-A ball struggling to hit, but a change that opened his stance helped him become an International League All-Star in line for his promotion.

His third homer brought a curtain call and a standing ovation when he returned to the field. The 39,866 fans had one of the most revered records in mind in his last

two plate appearances.

Eighteen players have hit four homers in a game, a feat that's never been achieved by a rookie. J.D. Martinez was the last to homer four times, on Sept. 4, 2017, for Arizona. Scooter Gennett homered four times for the Reds at Great American Ball Park on June 6, 2017.

Fans booed as Alec Mills walked him in the sixth, throwing a breaking ball on a 3-0 count. Mills fanned Aquino on a low breaking ball to end the seventh, but the outfielder got another round of applause as he returned to the dugout.

"That's why I'm out there, for the fans to enjoy the game," Aquino said.

The Reds hit six home runs overall and piled up 18 hits while moving six games behind the NL Central-leading Cubs. Eugenio Suarez hit his 32nd and Nick Senzel and Kyle Farmer also connected. Sonny Gray (6-6) allowed two hits in six innings and singled home a pair of runs.

MLB roundup

Trout hits 1st Fenway HR in rout of Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Mike Trout hit the first home run of his career at Fenway Park and the Los Angeles Angels snapped an eight-game losing streak with a 12-4 rout of the Boston Red Sox on Saturday.

Justin Upton added a three-run homer in the first inning.

With his 428-foot drive over the Green Monster in the sixth inning, Trout has now homered in every American League ballpark. He had played 21 games in Boston without connecting.

Trout was replaced in the seventh, having been hit in his shoulder by a pitcher earlier in the game.

The Angels added seven runs in a sloppy seventh inning by Boston in which it issued two walks, hit two batters and gave up four singles. The Red Sox also had an error and a passed ball.

Mets 4, Nationals 3: Luis Guillorme hit his first big league homer — a tying shot leading off the eighth — J.D. Davis added a go-ahead sacrifice fly and host New York beat Washington for its eighth straight victory.

The Mets have won 15 of 16 and are on their best roll since a 16-1 run in 1990. They pulled within a half-game of Washington for the first NL wild card.

Juan Soto put Washington ahead with his second home run of the game in the eighth inning, but Guillorme countered against Fernando Rodney with his homer in the bottom of the inning.

Giants 3, Phillies 1: Jeff Samardzija pitched eight innings of two-hit ball, Evan Longoria and Kevin Pillar homered, and host San Francisco beat Philadelphia.

Samardzija (9-9) gave up one run, struck out five and walked none. He retired 20 straight after giving up a solo homer to Corey Dickerson with two outs in the top of the first inning.

Blue Jays 5, Yankees 4: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a go-ahead, two-run triple in the seventh inning and host Toronto dealt New York its second straight loss following a season-high nine game winning streak.

Gary Sanchez returned from the injured list and hit a solo home run for the Yankees and Gio Urshela added a two-run drive.

The Blue Jays trailed 4-3 in the seventh when Bo Bichette drew a one-out walk, Cavan Biggio singled and Guerrero grounded the ball down the first base line and into foul territory. Right fielder Aaron Judge initially mishandled the ball against a side wall, and Guerrero slid in safely for the first triple of his career.

Royals 7, Tigers 0: Mike Montgomery struck out a career-high 12 in seven innings and Kansas City won at Detroit.

Jorge Soler homered and scored twice for the Royals, who had lost six of seven.

The Tigers were trying to win three straight games for the first time since May 28-31, against the Orioles and Braves.

Marlins 7, Braves 6 (10): Martin Prado hit a sacrifice fly that scored Harold Ramirez in the bottom of the 10th inning as host Miami rallied past Atlanta.

Playing in front of a season-high home crowd of 29,720, the Marlins erased a 6-2 deficit by scoring four in the bottom of the ninth. Ramirez led off the 10th with a single off Atlanta reliever Sean Newcomb (5-2). Ramirez advanced two bases on an errant pickoff throw by Newcomb. Prado lifted a fly ball deep to left field that scored Ramirez with the winning run.

Cardinals 3, Pirates 1: Adam Wainwright gave up a home run on the first pitch of the game and host St. Louis held on to beat Pittsburgh.

The contending Cardinals won their second in a row after ending a five-game losing streak.

Brewers 3, Rangers 2: Adrian Houser struck out a career-high 10 and rookie Keston Hiura hit his 14th home run as host Milwaukee beat Texas and extended its winning streak to five games.

Houser (5-5) limited the Rangers to one run, a solo homer by Danny Santana in the sixth inning. He allowed three hits and a walk over six innings.

White Sox 3, Athletics 2: Reynaldo Lopez pitched shut-out ball into the seventh inning, Eloy Jimenez homered on his bobblehead night and host Chicago beat Tanner Roark and Oakland.

Lopez (7-9) allowed six hits,

struck out three and walked three in his second straight win.

Dodgers 4, Diamondbacks 0: Kenta Maeda allowed three hits over seven innings, Max Muncy homered and host Los Angeles bounced back from an extra-inning loss with a win over Arizona.

Maeda (8-8) struck out six as he picked up his first victory since May 31. He also helped his cause at the plate with a pair of sacrifice bunts.

Padres 8, Rockies 5: Manuel Margot hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the eighth inning and Hunter Renfroe had a homer among his three hits and scored four runs as host San Diego beat Colorado.

Wil Myers added a pinch-hit homer in the eighth and rookie Fernando Tatis Jr. hit a triple to extend his hitting streak to a career-best 14 games for the Padres, who have won the first three games of this four-game series.

Twins 4, Indians 1: Max Kepler and Marwin Gonzalez homered, Jake Odorizzi earned his career-high 13th victory and host Minnesota broke a tie with Cleveland atop the AL Central while snapping a four-game losing streak.

Rays 5, Mariners 4: Mike Zunino hit a three-run homer, Kevin Kiermaier and Avisail Garcia also went deep and Tampa Bay won at Seattle.

Mikulak earns his 6th national men's gymnastics title

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Samuel Mikulak doesn't show off the stash of medals he's earned from the U.S. men's gymnastics championships through the years. They sit in relatively anonymity in the basement of the place he shares with his girlfriend back in Colorado.

It's not that Mikulak doesn't appreciate what he's accomplished. It's just that two-time Olympian's standard is no longer measured by what he does on home soil.

So while Mikulak pumped his fists in joy after clinching his modern era-record sixth national title on Saturday night by topping runner-up Yul Moldauer by a staggering

5.550 points, Mikulak remains equal parts perfectionist and realist.

"I guess it is just a weird place for the US right now," Mikulak said. "You could probably make the argument that maybe this is the easiest time period for USA Gymnastics for a guy like me and so it doesn't quite hold as much to it right now."

Ohio State defense seeks to buck slide

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Ohio State defense seemed to hit rock bottom in a confounding loss to unranked Purdue in the eighth game last season.

But the weaknesses that led to the 49-20 blowout by the Boilermakers on Oct. 21 were on display most of the season, masked by a high-scoring Buckeyes offense.

Many players from that much-maligned 2018 Ohio State defense are back. But with a new head coach, defensive coordinator, scheme, position coaches and resolve, they're determined things will change.

"I'd say the attitude right now is redemption," cornerback Jeffrey Okudah said on the first day of practice last week.

The Purdue game was ugly for Ohio State. D.J. Knox ran for 128 yards and quarterback David Blough torched the No. 2 Buckeyes for 378 yards and three touchdowns.

The Buckeyes went on to win a Big Ten title, but the debacle at West Lafayette, Ind., kept them outside looking in for the College Football Playoff.

The Ohio State defense finished No. 9 statistically out the 14 teams in the Big Ten. The unit surrendered more than 400

yards per game, settling in at 93rd in the nation in that category, 105th in passing defense and 76th against the run. Not up to standard at Ohio State, which has sent a dozen defensive players to the NFL in the last three seasons.

"We definitely don't dwell on last season," said defensive end Chase Young, who likely will be in an NFL training camp this time next year. "We had a coaching change, so we put last year in the past and we're just facing forward, and we're just trying to move the train."

New coach Ryan Day, who replaced the retiring Urban Meyer, fired Greg Schiano and brought in Greg Mattison as his defensive coordinator. A former NFL coordinator, Mattison lately was the defensive line coach at Michigan, which was among the nation's defensive leaders. Day also poached linebacker coach Al Washington from the rival Wolverines.

The biggest change is the installation of a hybrid linebacker-safety position known as the "bullet." Brendon White, a 6-foot-2, 215-pound safety who was outstanding in the last five games of 2018, is a leading candidate for that spot.

The scheme will be simplified for line-

backers, who struggled as a unit. They won't be expected to make as many reads, freeing them up to react and play faster.

The three starting linebackers return. Tuf Borland, who had battled an injury, is healthy and starts in the middle. He'll be flanked by Malik Harrison and Pete Werner. Harrison, a senior, played well down the stretch last season.

"They're a hungry group now," Day said. "They've read things. They're ready to go, and they're hungry, which is fun to be around. There are not a lot of smiles on our faces right now, which you like as a coach."

All the defensive players heard the criticism last year.

"I got a (Twitter message) one time that said I need to go back to high school and pick a different sport," laughed cornerback Damon Arnette. "I was like, damn!"

A fifth-year senior, Arnette considered trying to make a fresh start in the NFL but was talked out of entering the draft. He'll be in the main cornerback rotation with Okudah and Shaun Wade.

"I think this year, hit the reset button for real," he said. "Especially with me, it's my last year so it's all or nothing."

Browns' rookie LB Wilson puts on impressive show

Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — Rookie linebacker Mack Wilson is trending in a positive direction at Browns training camp and on social media.

The fifth-round pick from Alabama was the only NFL player with two interceptions in the opening week of the pre-season — returning one for a touchdown — and is building a reputation as a ballhawk with four picks over the first 12 camp practices.

Wilson doesn't have the star power of teammates Baker Mayfield, Odell Beckham Jr. or Jarvis Landry, but is making a surprising impact for the No. 155 overall selection in the draft.

"Look at Big Al, he struggled early in camp, but just kept working and kept his head down, and he continues to get better," Cleveland coach Freddie Kitchens said Saturday after practice. "Having problems right away is not some-

thing you want to go through, but if you come through the other side, you're a better player than you were before."

Kitchens has a natural affinity for Wilson, giving him a nickname that refers to their bond as Crimson Tide alumni. Browns fans have taken to him, as well, because of his expressions of love toward Cleveland on Twitter and Instagram.

The 6-foot-1, 233-pounder proclaimed himself "the best linebacker in the draft" after falling to the fifth. He played like it Thursday in the Browns' 30-10 win over Washington, then left FirstEnergy Stadium wearing the jersey of Cavaliers guard Collin Sexton.

Wilson returned a short pass by Dwayne Haskins 40 yards for a pick-six in the second quarter and snared a downfield throw by Josh Woodrum in the fourth, just as he had predicted to roommate Sione Takitaki the night before.

"I was like, 'Taki, I'm going

to catch two interceptions. I'm going to crib one and I might just catch one,'" Wilson said.

"It's crazy. It's unbelievable. I can't really put it into words. I'm just thankful for having these guys as teammates and helping me get interceptions."

Third-round pick Takitaki, who is playing alongside Wilson on the second-team defense, confirmed the story. Kitchens indicated that both linebackers are likely to take reps with the ones later in camp.

"Mack is a confident kid and sometimes I'm like, 'Yeah, we'll see,' but I think I'm going to start believing him now," Takitaki said, laughing. "He told me the same thing before warmups, that he was going to get two. After the second one, I was like, 'Dang, you made it happen.'"

Wilson credits playing quarterback, running back and wide receiver at Montgomery (Alabama) Carver High for giving him a "nose for the ball,"

but admits "it's hard to explain why. It's just something I have, I guess."

"I had a good game, but there's always room for improvement," he continued. "My mindset is to continue to keep that chip on my shoulder until we win a Super Bowl."

Browns general manager John Dorsey feels strongly that Wilson will be successful in the NFL, but he and Kitchens aren't forcing him into the fire.

Veterans Christian Kirksey, Joe Schobert and Ray-Ray Armstrong sit atop the linebacker depth chart and provide a level of consistency that the first-year coach has yet to see from his flashing rookie.

"Just because Mack makes two splash plays, you didn't see the busted assignments," Kitchens said. "He has busted assignments out here on the practice field. Not to take anything away from his play, but I want to see him coming back from those bad plays."