

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, August 12, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Navy goes low-tech with bridge overhaul

BY SCOTT WYLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy is replacing touch-screen throttles and helms on destroyers with hand-held ones after determining that the state-of-the-art controls caused confusion that contributed to the USS McCain's deadly collision in 2017.

Steering and speed controls will revert to manual versions in the next two years on destroyers equipped with the Integrated Bridge and Navigation Systems, according to USNI News.

It's part of a push by the Navy to overhaul bridges in every class to help avoid accidents like the McCain's and USS Fitzgerald's, which together killed 17 sailors. Sailors stated in surveys after the

collisions that they preferred the older, hand-held controls to steer and adjust speed, USNI News said.

One Navy leader appeared to agree that newer technology isn't always better.

Electronic throttles and helms fall in the "just because you can doesn't mean you should category," Vice Adm. William Galinis, head of surface-ship construction, was quoted by USNI News as saying at an industry conference in San Diego last week.

The first destroyer scheduled to undergo the change will be the USS Ramage in the summer of 2020, Navy Sea Systems Command said.

Unfamiliar electronic controls were just one factor when the McCain collided with a tanker in the Singapore Strait.

Some sailors were poorly trained and

unfamiliar with the equipment, the bridge crew had averaged less than five hours of rest in the 24 hours leading up to the collision, and there was a lack of coordination between the commander, deck officers and crew members, a National Transportation Safety Board report said.

An officer's unorthodox request to operate the helms and throttles separately also caused confusion, the NTSB report said.

Sailors increased speed on one side of the destroyer rather than both sides, causing it to veer sharply into the path of the commercial vessel that struck it.

Had the sailors had manual controls instead of touch screens, they would have detected problems immediately and been less likely to conflict with each other, it said.

## Resuming executions unlikely to affect military on death row

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY

*Stars and Stripes*

The Trump administration's plan to begin executing federal death row inmates for the first time in 16 years will have little effect on the four soldiers sentenced to death, military lawyers and the Army said.

They include Ronald Gray, a former cook who was convicted three decades ago of multiple rapes and four murders near Fort Bragg, N.C., and was scheduled to be executed in 2008. The case remains ongoing in Kansas federal district court, with no clear end in sight.

"The case is a procedural morass," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, a nonprofit that provides analysis and information on capital punishment.

Also on death row is former Sgt. Hasan Akbar, convicted in 2005 of killing two officers and wounding 14 other soldiers two years earlier in Kuwait; Timothy Hennis, a master sergeant

convicted in 2010 of the 1985 rape and murder of a woman and murder of her two children; and Nidal Hasan, an Army psychiatrist convicted in 2013 of killing 13 people and wounding numerous others on Fort Hood in 2009.

All "are in various stages of legal action," Army spokesman William Sharp said in an email. When and how those actions might conclude is unknown.

Presidents must approve the execution of those sentenced to death at court-martial, after receiving a recommendation from the secretary of the associated service branch. The Navy has not executed any of its members since 1849.

No military death row inmates have been put to death since 1961 when Pvt. John Bennett was hanged for raping and attempting to kill an 11-year-old girl.

Resuming federal executions could have "a slight impact" on the military system, said retired Lt. Col. Jeffrey Addicott, a St. Mary's University, Texas,

law professor in favor of the death penalty. "But it's more window dressing than anything else. The appellate process in both systems is broken."

President Donald Trump is a death penalty proponent who has called for making more crimes eligible for the sentence.

"President Trump has never given any reason to believe he opposes the death penalty; quite the reverse," Fidell said. "So I don't believe he would veto any military execution unless the accused could point to some act of valor, which I don't believe any of the current crop of military capital convicts can do."

Trump has indicated interest in providing clemency to American military members accused or convicted of war crimes.

In May, he granted a full pardon to former Army 1st Lt. Michael Behenna, who spent five years in prison after being convicted of murdering an Iraqi man in custody in 2008.

Trump has also made statements in support of Maj.

Mathew Golsteyn, a Green Beret charged in the 2010 killing of a Taliban bomb maker.

The plan to resume federal executions comes at a time when public support for the death penalty — at 54% in favor — is at its lowest point in decades, according to the Pew Research Center.

The reasons for the decreasing support include that 156 people have been exonerated from death row since 1973, raising concerns about executing innocent people. Other arguments in opposition include substandard trial lawyers, geographic disparities in its application and disproportionate numbers of minorities sentenced to death.

Thirteen servicemembers condemned to death over the past three decades have been re-sentenced to life in prison, usually after appellate courts found errors conducted in their courts-martial.

# DOD ID's Marine killed in action in Iraq

*Stars and Stripes*

The Department of Defense has identified a Marine killed in action Saturday in Iraq.

Gunnery Sgt. Scott A. Koppenhafer, 35, of Mancos, Colo., died after apparently being hit by enemy small-arms fire in combat, the Pentagon said in a statement late Sunday. This incident is under investigation.

He is survived by his wife and two children, according to information posted with his photo on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

Koppenhafer was assigned to the 2nd

Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Forces Special Operations Command, Camp Lejeune, N.C. He was supporting Operation Inherent Resolve along with Iraqi security forces in Iraq's Nineveh province in the country's north, according to an earlier statement from U.S. Central Command.

Koppenhafer was advising and accompanying the Iraqi security forces on a planned operation, CENTCOM's statement said. Iraqi forces have recently launched new operations in the area to weed out remnants of Islamic State.

The Defense Department in 2014 established a joint task force for Operation In-

herent Resolve to deal with ISIS militants in Iraq and Syria.

Koppenhafer enlisted in 2005 and served 10 years with Special Operations Command. He had completed three previous deployments, including to Afghanistan, as a Marine Raider and was named the critical skills operator of 2018 by the command. He earned two Bronze Stars along with many other commendations.

In addition to his military courses completed, Koppenhafer was a 2005 graduate of Adams State College with a bachelor's degree in business marketing.

## USMC Exchanges to end sale of DVD, Blu-ray discs

By CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

Marine Corps Exchanges are selling off their stocks of DVDs and Blu-ray discs and will end sales of the media in the next few months, an official said.

"We have already liquidated all inventory at most of our stores with the exception of Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, Miramar, and [Twentynine] Palms," exchange spokesman Bryan Driver said in an email, referring to the service's larger bases in California and North Carolina.

Buyers for the Marine exchanges, which are operated separately from both the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and Navy Exchange stores, expect to stop selling the products by the end of January, Driver said last week.

The decision brings the Marine exchanges into line with Navy Exchanges, which ceased the sale of pre-recorded music and movie discs in 2017, and AAFES, which announced last week that it will stop DVD and Blu-ray sales by the end of the year, citing plummeting demand.

Spending on physical media such as discs has halved glob-

ally since 2014, while demand for digital releases has increased by 170%, according to a report released this spring by the Motion Picture Association of America.

Stores on Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy installations will continue to sell some video games on discs or cartridges, officials with all three exchange services said.

Players who use consoles like Xbox or PlayStation — about half of all U.S. gamers — still prefer discs or cartridges, an annual survey released this year by the Nielsen company found.

"There is still a viable business in 'physical disc/cartridge' software across the key platforms where the purchase of physical games remains high," Navy Exchange Service Command spokeswoman Kristine Sturkie said in an email.

As it stops stocking shelves with DVDs and Blu-ray, AAFES has said it will expand its offering of online digital entertainment, including a discount on the streaming service Hulu.

Marine Corps Exchanges do not seem to be following suit

"We do not sell streaming content," Driver said.

## Report: Sailor accused of bringing ecstasy on base

*Stars and Stripes*

A USS Champion sailor from New Jersey has been accused of ordering hundreds of grams of MDMA — also known as ecstasy — and LSD intending to distribute them in San Diego late last year, a newspaper report said.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Daniel van Dijk, an information systems technician assigned to the mine countermeasures ship, faces "multiple drug charges" for allegedly possessing more than 380 grams of ecstasy and 93 tablets of LSD between Nov. 22 and Dec. 3, Navy Times reported July 26.

Prosecutors in charge sheets

accused van Dijk of ordering about half of the ecstasy from New York's Queens borough to be delivered to his personal mailbox at Naval Base San Diego, the report said.

He further brought about 58 grams of ecstasy onto the base to distribute and is accused of having possessed the LSD and the rest of the ecstasy off base in San Diego, according to the newspaper.

Van Dijk is also accused of trying to "wrongfully distribute some amount" of ecstasy in a drug deal Oct. 26 at or near San Diego, the report said. His court-martial is scheduled for Oct. 21.

## Pilot honored for safe landing

*Associated Press*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A Kentucky Air National Guard pilot was honored for an emergency landing officials say saved lives and a \$30 million aircraft.

Lt. Col. John T. Hourigan of the 123rd Airlift Wing received the Distinguished Flying Cross from Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein at the Kentucky Air National Guard

Base on Saturday.

The Guard said Hourigan in July 2016 was a major and commander of a C-130 Hercules aircraft that violently vibrated at low altitude around Owensboro, preventing five crewmembers from communicating or interpreting flight instruments and engine gauges. With the plane decelerating and losing altitude, Hourigan shut down an engine and landed.



# Right-wing extremism frustrates FBI

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — FBI Director Christopher A. Wray assured Congress last month that his agents were aggressively combating domestic terror threats from a broad array of extremist groups.

“The FBI, working with our state and local law enforcement partners,” he said, “is all over this.”

But the bureau is now scrambling to investigate domestic terrorism on two fronts — a mass shooting in Gilroy, Calif., followed days later by a far more deadly attack in El Paso, Texas — that appears to undercut Wray’s assertions and raise questions about whether the FBI is doing enough to identify and stop murderous plots by home-grown fanatics with no ties to foreign terrorist organizations.

Some former law enforcement officials and Democratic lawmakers contend federal agencies have been caught flat-footed by a surge in mass shootings by white supremacists and other extremists targeting minorities, immigrants and religious groups.

Indeed, the gunman who killed 22 people at a Walmart store in El Paso on Aug. 3

pushed the total number of victims slain in domestic right-wing terrorism since 2002 to 109. That’s more than the 104 people killed on U.S. soil by zealots linked to al-Qaida or other foreign Islamist groups, the chief FBI focus since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

“The FBI has been slow to react to this, to realign resources,” said Daryl Johnson, a former Homeland Security analyst who wrote a controversial 2009 memo warning of the rise of right-wing extremism, sparking a political backlash. His unit was later disbanded and the department’s work on violent right-wing extremism was halted.

A senior FBI counterterrorism official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to brief reporters in May, said the bureau had recorded a “significant” rise in cases involving “racially motivated extremism” since last fall. He declined to provide specifics, or attribute what might be behind the spike.

Overall, FBI agents have arrested more suspects in domestic terrorism investigations in the last three years than in probes with an international nexus — 355 people versus

310. The FBI did not provide a breakdown of charges lodged against the suspects, or the status of their cases.

The FBI currently has about 850 open investigations into domestic terrorism, officials said, although that tally is down slightly from last year.

Outside experts said the FBI needs to do a better job of infiltrating extremist groups and identifying so-called lone wolves, such as the alleged El Paso gunman, who told police he became self-radicalized after reading and posting racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic screeds on social media and the internet.

Just as al-Qaida increasingly relied on sympathizers and supporters acting independently to launch attacks around the globe, right-wing zealots are increasingly acting on their own after reading hate-filled material online. That has made investigations far tougher.

The suspect in the El Paso shooting told investigators he came to his racist views on his own, largely by reading online screeds, and hadn’t joined or been influenced by any group, a law enforcement official said.

Patrick Crusius, who is being held without bail in the case, had posted an online manifesto

shortly before the shooting that said he was acting in response to the Hispanic “invasion” of the United States. He told police that he targeted Mexicans, authorities said.

Suspects sometimes amass a buffet of radical beliefs, which can complicate attributing an attack to a specific ideology. The FBI is conducting a domestic terrorism investigation into the shooting that left four people, including the gunman, dead on July 28 at the Gilroy Garlic Festival, but agents are still unsure of the assailant’s motives.

They said the gunman, Santino William Legan, 19, was exploring competing violent ideologies and had lists of other potential targets, including religious organizations, courthouses, federal buildings and political institutions involving both the Republican and Democratic parties.

The FBI is also assisting in the investigation of the shooting that killed nine people on Aug. 4 in Dayton, Ohio, hours after the El Paso massacre. The FBI is not yet treating the case as an act of domestic terrorism because it is unclear if the shooter, who was killed, had a political or ideological motive.

## No peace deal announced as US-Taliban talks finish

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The latest round of talks between the Taliban and the United States ended early Monday without any sign a peace deal had been reached for Afghanistan, as both sides said they would consult with their leaderships on the next steps.

A Taliban spokesman had said last week that this eighth round of talks would conclude with a deal to end the nearly 18-year war, America’s longest. The two sides have been discussing an agreement under which U.S. forces would withdraw from Afghanistan and the Taliban would guarantee the country would not revert to being a launch pad for global terrorist attacks.

U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said the talks that began on Aug. 3 in the Gulf na-

tion of Qatar were “productive” and that he was heading to Washington for consultations. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid called the discussions “long and useful.” Neither provided details on their outcome.

The Taliban have continued to stage near-daily attacks across Afghanistan despite the months of negotiations with the U.S. The attacks mainly target Afghan forces and government officials but also kill many civilians.

The U.S. has pressed for a cease-fire and a framework for inter-Afghan talks, but so far the insurgents have refused to recognize the Afghan government, dismissing it as a U.S. puppet.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, frustrated at being sidelined, on Sunday rejected foreign interference in Afghan affairs.

He insists that elections planned for Sept. 28 will give the next government a powerful mandate to decide the country’s future. But Khalilzad is seeking a peace deal by Sept. 1, weeks before the vote. The Taliban, who effectively control half the country, have dismissed the election as a sham and warned fellow Afghans to avoid both campaign rallies and the polls.

The Taliban are at their strongest since the U.S.-led invasion toppled their five-year government in 2001 after the group had harbored al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. More than 2,400 U.S. servicemembers have died in Afghanistan since then. The U.S. and NATO formally concluded their combat mission in 2014, but around 20,000 U.S. and allied troops remain in the country.

# Barr rips jail officials over Epstein death

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — Attorney General William Barr on Monday decried what he called a “failure” by federal jail officials to secure registered sex offender and multimillionaire Jeffrey Epstein, who was found hanging in his jail cell over the weekend.

But the country’s top law enforcement official said Epstein’s death would not derail the ongoing investigation into those who might have aided Epstein’s alleged crimes.

“Let me assure you that this case will continue on against anyone who was complicit with Epstein,” Barr said. “Any co-conspirators should not rest easy. The victims deserve justice, and they will get it.”

Speaking to law enforcement officials in New Orleans, Barr said he “was appalled ... and frankly, angry” to learn of

the Metropolitan Correctional Center’s “failure to adequately secure” Epstein, who was awaiting trial on new sex trafficking charges.

“We are now learning of serious irregularities at this facility that are deeply concerning and demand a thorough investigation,” he said.

The attorney general’s comments were noteworthy in that he publicly blamed the Bureau of Prisons, which is part of the Justice Department, for the circumstances surrounding Epstein’s apparent suicide.

Barr did not specify what irregularities had been found in the aftermath of Epstein’s death.

Epstein, whose case has raised questions about whether he received preferential treatment in the past from Justice Department officials, was found hanging in his jail cell

Saturday morning, according to people familiar with the matter.

His death has prompted investigations by the FBI, Justice Department inspector general, and the New York City medical examiner, and raised a number of questions about conditions inside the federal jail in Manhattan where the 66-year-old millionaire died.

Corrections officers had not checked on Epstein for “several” hours before he was found around 6:30 a.m., a person familiar with the matter said, just one in a series of missteps in the hours leading up to his death.

Officers should have been checking on Epstein, who was being held in a special housing unit of the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City, every 30 minutes, and, under normal circumstances, he also should have had a cell-

mate, according to the person familiar with the matter and union officials representing facility employees.

But a person who had been assigned to share a cell with Epstein was transferred Friday, and — for reasons that investigators are exploring — he did not receive a new cellmate, the person familiar with the matter said Sunday night.

The person familiar with the matter spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the investigation.

Also Sunday, Chief Medical Examiner Barbara Sampson said Epstein’s autopsy was complete, but she had not reached a determination on cause of death “pending further information.” The medical examiner also allowed Michael Baden, a private pathologist, to observe the autopsy at the request of Epstein’s representatives, Sampson said.

## Immigrants using benefits could be denied green cards

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Trump administration rules that could deny green cards to immigrants who use Medicaid, food stamps, housing vouchers or other forms of public assistance are going into effect, one of its most aggressive moves to restrict legal immigration.

Federal law already requires those seeking green cards and legal status to prove they will not be a burden to the U.S., or what’s called a “public charge,” but the new rules, made public Monday, detail a broader range of programs that could disqualify them.

Much of President Donald Trump’s effort to crack down on illegal immigration has been in the spotlight, but this rule change targets people who entered the United States legally and are seeking permanent status. It’s part of a push to move the U.S. to a system that focuses

on immigrants’ skills instead of emphasizing the reunification of families, as it has done.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers will now weigh public assistance along with other factors such as education, household income and health to determine whether to grant legal status.

The rules will take effect in mid-October. They don’t apply to U.S. citizens, even if the U.S. citizen is related to an immigrant who is subject to them.

The acting director of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Ken Cuccinelli, said the rule change fits with the Republican president’s message.

“We want to see people coming to this country who are self-sufficient,” Cuccinelli said. “That’s a core principle of the American Dream. It’s deeply embedded in our history, and particularly our history related to legal immigration.”

## Hong Kong airport shuts down amid huge protests

*Associated Press*

HONG KONG — One of the world’s busiest airports canceled all flights after thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators crowded into Hong Kong’s main terminal Monday, while the central government in Beijing issued an ominous characterization of the protest movement as something approaching “terrorism.”

The extreme action by the largely leaderless movement seemed calculated to prompt a stern response from Beijing, and Communist Party leader Xi Jinping’s administration responded within hours.

No new violence was reported by Monday evening, although the city remained on edge after more than two months of near-daily and increasingly bloody confrontations between protesters and police.

Beijing tends toward a broad definition of terrorism, including in it nonviolent protests of

government policies on the environment or in minority regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet. Such a designation adds to the regime’s descriptions of protesters as clowns, criminals and traitors intent on overthrowing Chinese rule in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong International Airport said in a statement the demonstration “seriously disrupted” airport operations. Only flights that had already started boarding or those cleared for landing were allowed to use runways at the airport.

“All other flights have been canceled for the rest of today,” the airport statement said. It later said flights would resume at 6 a.m. local time Tuesday.

The chief executive of Hong Kong’s Cathay Pacific Airways said there would be “disciplinary consequences” for employees involved in “illegal protests.”



## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Man, 73, dies after he's stung by swarm of bees

**AZ** SAN SIMON — Cochise County authorities said a 73-year-old man died after being stung multiple times by a swarm of bees as he and other people cleaned up scrap piles near San Simon.

According to the sheriff's office, a deputy who encountered a speeding vehicle Friday learned that the man's 43-year-old son was driving with his father in the back seat to get help. The sheriff's office said the deputy was stung by bees in the vehicle and had the son roll down the windows and drive a short distance to a location where they met fire department personnel.

The dead man's son, the third person and the deputy were treated for multiple stings.

### Man takes golf cart on wild ride into Walmart

**FL** GIBSONTON — Authorities said a man took his golf cart on a wild ride through a Walmart store, terrorizing shoppers and ignoring deputies' orders to stop before crashing into a cash register.

Hillsborough County Sheriff's investigators said they were summoned to the store near Tampa on Thursday where they found Michael Dale Hudson, 56, blocking the liquor store entrance with his golf cart. The Tampa Bay Times reported he was demanding to speak to a manager.

As deputies spoke to Hudson, they say he suddenly drove toward the store's main entrance. Customers jumped out of the way as he barreled through the door. He raced toward the checkout area, hitting several customers.

He was jailed on multiple charges, including aggravated battery.

### Heavily tattooed man convicted in 2 murders

**LA** BATON ROUGE — A heavily tattooed man, who feared his facial art might affect his chances at a fair trial, has been convicted of two slayings.

News outlets reported that an East Baton Rouge Parish jury found William Bottoms Jr., 29, guilty Friday of two counts of second-degree murder in a 2017 double shooting of Muhammad Hussain, 29, and Detric Williams, 23. St. Helena Parish sheriff's deputies found the men in a vehicle abandoned in a field.

Authorities were able to tie Bottoms to the killings after dashcam footage showed a deputy helping him when his vehicle ran out of gas. It's believed the video was taken shortly before the shootings occurred.

### Teacher accused of stealing book fair funds

**IA** STORM LAKE — A northwestern Iowa school librarian and art teacher has been accused of stealing more than \$2,000 from two school fundraising events.

The Sioux City Journal reported that Susan Slagle-Boyd, 50, of Storm Lake, was arrested Thursday on suspicion of theft. Police said officers were called to St. Mary's Catholic School on Thursday after school officials discovered money collected from two book fairs missing.

Police said Slagle-Boyd is accused of spending \$630 from a fall book fair and \$1,500 raised from a spring book fair for her personal use. The money was supposed to go to the school system for curriculum supplies.

Slagle-Boyd was booked into the Buena Vista County Jail and her bond set at \$5,000.

### Hotel mistaken for store that posted signs

**NM** MAYHILL — The manager of a southern New Mexico hotel said it's being wrongly identified as a convenience store that shares a similar name and has posted signs against immigrants and former President Barack Obama.

The Alamogordo Daily News reported that Mayhill Cafe & Hotel manager Tammy Varbel said the case of mistaken identity has led to bad business reviews and online threats.

The convenience store is located near the hotel and got national attention after its owner erected the signs on store windows.

One sign read that immigrants in the country illegally were not welcome to shop.

### Drunk flight attendant removed and charged

**IN** SOUTH BEND — A flight attendant on a Chicago-to-South Bend flight has been charged with public intoxication.

Julianne March, 49, of Waukesha, Wis., faces an Aug. 29 initial hearing after being charged Thursday.

Court documents say March was part of an Air Wisconsin crew working an Aug. 2 United Express flight when passengers became "scared for their lives" due to her apparent condition after departing Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

When the plane landed in South Bend, officers removed March from the plane. Court documents say she smelled of alcohol and had a blood-alcohol content of 0.20%.

The South Bend Tribune reports Air Wisconsin Airlines says that it's "fully cooperating with the local authorities."

### Driver jumps out of RV before canyon plunge

**AZ** BLACK CANYON CITY — Arizona authorities said the driver of a recreational vehicle is OK after jumping out of the vehicle traveling on a rural highway before it went off a cliff and down into a canyon where it burst into flames.

The state Department of Public Safety said the driver was the only person in the RV and wasn't injured in the incident Friday in a mountainous area along Interstate 17.

The DPS duty office said Saturday no additional information was available on the circumstances leading to the vehicle going off the southbound lanes and down a canyon wall about 300 feet.

The incident occurred about 50 miles north of Phoenix.

### Person bitten by bat treated for rabies

**WY** MOOSE — A person bitten by a bat in western Wyoming underwent treatment for rabies.

Grand Teton National Park officials said the unidentified person recently visited Jenny Lake as part of an organized group. The bat fell from a tree onto the person's shoulder. The person was bitten while trying to brush the bat away.

The leader of the group captured the bat in a plastic bag and contacted park rangers. The Jackson Hole News & Guide reported that tests at the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory showed the bat had rabies, a disease that's fatal if not treated.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News



# Harvick pulls away for second victory

Associated Press

BROOKLYN, Mich. — Kevin Harvick is so confident in his talent and team he doesn't get excited when he wins.

"It's more of an expectation," Harvick said.

He raced to the 47th NASCAR Cup victory of his career and his second in less than a month Sunday, pulling away from the pack to win at Michigan International Speedway for the second straight year.

With just three races before the playoffs, the timing of his latest strong performance may help him win a second championship.

"Hopefully, we're peaking at the right time," he said.

Late in the race, the Stewart-Haas Racing driver created a cushion between his Ford and the competition and finished more than a second ahead of Denny Hamlin.

"Nothing I could really do," said Hamlin, who drove a Toyota-powered car for Joe Gibbs Racing. "Didn't have enough speed."

Kyle Larson was third, more than 16 seconds behind Harvick. He was followed by Martin Truex Jr., Daniel Suarez and points-leader Kyle Busch.

Seven-time champion Jimmie Johnson will have to close the regular season strong to extend his streak of earning a spot in every postseason since the format was created 15 years ago. He started the race tied for the 16th and final spot in the playoffs and slipped to 18th. Johnson had an early setback, making contact with a wall on Lap 15 that damaged his right rear quarter panel and tire, and finished 34th.

Johnson was several laps back for much of the race, but got a break potentially in the playoff race when Clint Bowyer was knocked out of the race after Paul Menard appeared to bump him. Bowyer began the day 15th in the playoff standings and finished 37th at MIS,

putting him in 16th in the race for the final spot.

Ryan Newman, who started the day tied with Johnson in the playoff standings, was 12th in the 38-car field and that was good enough to move him up to 15th.

Pole-sitter Brad Keselowski was 19th, extending his winless streak to 21 at the track about 70 miles from his hometown in suburban Detroit. Keselowski got off to a strong start and led for a race-high 66 laps, but a flat tire during the second stage set off sparks behind him and was a setback he couldn't overcome.

"Someone once told me faith isn't believing when everything is going your way, it's believing when nothing is going your way," Keselowski posted on Twitter. "Today was a test of faith. We will return and win here, just not today."

Joey Logano won at Michigan in June, helping Ford win four straight at the track and bragging rights over Chevrolet and Toyota in a state where the manufactures have a big presence.

"We want to win every race, but definitely here," said Mark Rushbrook, global director for Ford Performance.

## Who's hot

Harvick also won at New Hampshire Motor Speedway last month, giving him two wins in a four-race stretch. He finished sixth and seventh between the victories.

"We still have to get a lot better, but we're in better shape than we were," crew chief Rodney Childers said.

## Who's not

Johnson finished 30th or worse for the third time in five races and in the other two, he was 15th and 19th, putting his postseason chances in peril.

Johnson's last Cup victory was on June 4, 2017 at Dover International Speedway.

# Blue Jays have bright future behind trio of retired stars' children

Associated Press

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is just part of an exciting group of Toronto rookies.

Bo Bichette was called up from the minors late last month, and in just 14 games, he already has 13 extra-base hits. He began his career with an 11-game hitting streak and also set a major league record with nine straight games with a double. Bichette plays shortstop, which differentiates him a bit from his father, Dante, an outfielder who hit 274 home runs in his big league career.

The Blue Jays are 23 games under .500, but they have the makings of an exciting young infield with Guerrero at third, Bichette at shortstop and Cavan Biggio at second. All three rookies are the sons of prominent major leaguers. Biggio's father, Craig, had a Hall of Fame career with Houston.

The 20-year-old Guerrero came into the season with the highest expectations among that trio. He's hitting .274 with an OPS of .805. Those are somewhat ordinary numbers, but there's still a sense that Guerrero is a star in the making. In a 1-0 loss to the Yankees on Sunday, Guerrero battled Aroldis Chapman for 13 pitches, finally hitting into a double play but earning plenty of respect from the New York closer.

In terms of prospect cachet, Bichette hasn't been too far behind Guerrero. A second-round draft pick in 2016, Bichette rolled through the minor leagues, batting .362 at Class A in 2017 and hitting 43 doubles at Double-A the following year.

Bichette had an .806 OPS with Triple-A Buffalo this year before joining the big leagues.

**All the way back:** When the New York Mets lost at San Francisco on July 21 — their third extra-inning defeat in four games — they were 45-54. They've won 16 of 19 since then to pull back into the postseason race. The Mets are now one game behind the second wild

card in the National League after taking two of three from Washington.

The Nationals let those two games against the Mets slip away, but they've turned their season around in similar fashion after a 19-31 start. Washington is currently positioned for the first wild card.

Over in the American League, it's Cleveland that's come storming back after a disappointing start. The Indians were 11½ games behind first-place Minnesota before they beat the Twins on June 4. That was the start of a 42-17 stretch for Cleveland, which is now tied with Minnesota atop the AL Central after Carlos Santana's 10th-inning grand slam against the Twins on Sunday.

**Highlight:** The Twins turned their second 5-4-3 triple play in a three-week span Wednesday — and both were with Martin Perez on the mound.

This one came against Atlanta in the third inning. Tyler Flowers hit a bases-loaded grounder to third baseman Miguel Sano. He stepped on third and threw to second baseman Jonathan Schoop, who relayed to first baseman C.J. Cron.

Sano was the first baseman when Minnesota pulled off a similar triple play July 22 against the Yankees. Schoop also made the turn at second on that one.

**Honorable mentions:** It's been a big year for three-homer games, and this past week was no exception. Cincinnati rookie Aristides Aquino homered in his first three at-bats of Saturday night's game against the Chicago Cubs. That gave him seven homers in his first 10 games with the Reds. The same night, rookie Yordan Alvarez hit three of Houston's six home runs in a 23-2 rout of Baltimore.

# Tribe top Twins to tie for division lead

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — After watching their All-Star closer lose a two-run lead in the bottom of the ninth inning, the Cleveland Indians bounced right back to win their four-game series in Minnesota and forge another tie for the AL Central lead.

The three-time defending division champions have made a remarkable summer rebound, setting up a tense race with the Twins for the final stretch.

Carlos Santana hit a grand slam in the 10th, after Tyler Naquin and Francisco Lindor teamed up to throw out what would have been the winning run for the Twins in the ninth, and Cleveland beat Minnesota 7-3 on Sunday.

"It's nice whenever your

teammates can pick you up," Naquin said. "That's what the team is all about."

After Eddie Rosario's second double of the afternoon started the four-hit ninth inning against Brad Hand (5-3), the Twins used a single by Luis Arraez and a double by Marwin Gonzalez to tie the game. But as pinch-runner Ehire Adrianza tried to score from first base, Naquin grabbed the ball off the bounce from the left-field wall and zipped a throw to the shortstop Lindor, whose relay home was in perfect position for catcher Kevin Plawecki to tag Adrianza with ease for the second out.

"It was actually perfect. I don't know if you could do it any better," Indians manager Terry Francona said.

It was Naquin's 10th outfield assist, moving into a tie for third in the majors, but the Twins expressed no regret about the aggressive approach by third base coach Tony Diaz to send Adrianza after Arraez scored. Diaz said he thought Adrianza had a nice read off the bat, almost reaching second when the ball went over Naquin.

"Pushing the envelope a little bit," Diaz said. "Two perfect throws required."

Jonathan Schoop grounded out on the next play, and Twins closer Taylor Rogers (2-3) took over in the 10th inning. He allowed a single, a walk and another single on a bunt by Greg Allen to load the bases with none out for Santana, who quickly erased the late-inning drama with one big swing.

The All-Star first baseman has reached base at least once in 53 of his last 57 games since June 4, the exact date when the Indians began the surge. They're 42-17 during that span, the best record in the majors.

"It's great," said Santana, who has four career grand slams. "We're fighting."

Now the Twins, who had sole possession of first place from April 27 until Friday before bypassing the Indians again Saturday with a 4-1 victory, are in a tie for the second time in three days. Their lead was as big as 11½ games on June 3 and still 7½ games on July 13. The Twins and Indians play six more times, all in September.

"When we see them again," Berrios said, "we're going to battle again."

## MLB roundup

# Day after drubbing, O's end Astros' 8-game streak

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Rio Ruiz hit a two-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning to lift Baltimore over Houston 8-7 Sunday, ending the Astros' eight-game winning streak in stunning fashion.

Houston scored three runs in the top of the ninth to go up 7-5 before the Orioles answered in the bottom half against Roberto Osuna (3-3). After Chris Davis hit a sacrifice fly, Chance Sisco was at first base when Ruiz launched a 2-2 pitch over the right-field wall.

"I knew that I got it," Ruiz said. "I kind of looked in the dugout, saw everybody going crazy and I went crazy. Pretty awesome feeling."

Coming off a 23-2 defeat less than 24 hours earlier, Baltimore took the lead in the fifth against 2011 Cy Young Award winner Justin Verlander, blew the advantage and then mounted an improbable rally to end a five-game skid.

**Nationals 7, Mets 4:** As-

drubal Cabrera hit a tiebreaking two-run double against his former team, and visiting Washington stopped New York's eight-game win streak.

Nationals star Juan Soto was injured on Cabrera's bases-loaded hit in the seventh inning. Soto went from first to third but sprained his right ankle after getting a late stop sign from third base coach Bob Henley. The team said he is day to day.

**Yankees 1, Blue Jays 0:** At Toronto, Masahiro Tanaka and Aroldis Chapman combined on a four-hitter for New York.

Tanaka (8-6) allowed three hits, struck out four and walked none. The right-hander was pulled after Brandon Drury singled to begin the ninth.

Chapman came on to face pinch-hitter Vladimir Guerrero Jr., who fell behind 0-2, worked back to a full count, hit a foul ball off the fifth deck and finally grounded into a double play to end the 13-pitch encounter.

**Dodgers 9, Diamondbacks 3:** Justin Turner hit two of host

Los Angeles' four homers and Hyun-Jin Ryu pitched seven scoreless innings of five-hit ball.

**Cubs 6, Reds 3:** Kris Bryant capped Chicago's four-run seventh with a three-run homer, and the visiting Cubs split their four-game series with Cincinnati.

**Braves 5, Marlins 4:** At Miami, Ronald Acuna Jr. hit his 33rd homer and sixth in as many games, helping Atlanta to the win.

**Rangers 1, Brewers 0:** Mike Minor struck out 11 in eight innings, and visiting Texas avoided a series sweep.

**Cardinals 11, Pirates 9:** Lane Thomas hit a go-ahead grand slam for host St. Louis in the seventh inning.

**Rays 1, Mariners 0:** At Seattle, Tampa Bay's Ryan Yarbrough came within an out of his first career shutout.

**Athletics 2, White Sox 0:** Chris Bassitt threw seven sharp innings and Matt Olson homered, leading visiting Oak-

land to the victory.

**Angels 5, Red Sox 4 (10):** Anthony Bemboom hit a go-ahead single in the 10th inning after Kole Calhoun's solo homer tied it in the eighth as visiting Los Angeles split the four-game series.

**Rockies 8, Padres 3:** At San Diego, Yonder Alonso hit his 100th career homer during Colorado's four-run sixth inning, and the Rockies snapped a five-game losing streak.

**Royals 10, Tigers 2:** Hunter Dozier and Jorge Soler each homered twice, and visiting Kansas City earned a split of the four-game series between the worst teams in the AL Central.

**Giants 9, Phillies 6:** Kevin Pillar hit a tiebreaking triple that scored Evan Longoria with two out in the bottom of the eighth inning, closer Will Smith followed with a two-run single in his first career at-bat and host San Francisco rallied to beat Philadelphia.



# Biles soars to 6th US gymnastics title

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The choice was entirely hers. Only there really wasn't much of one for Simone Biles to make.

Sure, she could have taken her triple-twisting double-flip (aka "the triple-double") out of her floor exercise routine during the final night of the U.S. women's gymnastics championships Sunday. She surely didn't need it to assure herself of another national title.

Still, even as her coach Laurent Landi left the option up to her after the Olympic champion's bid to become the first woman to complete the triple-double in competition came up a bit short on Friday, he knew the answer.

Spend enough time in the gym around the 22-year-old who is redefining what's possible in her sport one exhilarating routine at a time and it quickly becomes evident that sidestepping a challenge isn't really her thing.

So she threw it at the end of her first tumbling pass, fueled by adrenaline, ambition and otherworldly skill. When the dizzying combination ended with her feet firmly on the floor — if barely in bounds — the jolt through the packed arena was

palpable. The smile on her face unmistakable. And the competition — just like it has been for six years and counting whenever Biles is involved — was over.

The triple-double served as the exclamation point on her sixth national championship. Her two-day total of 118.500 was nearly five points clear of 16-year-old Sunisa Lee in second and almost seven points ahead of third-place finisher Grace McCallum.

Yet Biles doesn't pay too much attention to the margin or her scores for that matter. She's been a fixture atop the podium for six years and counting. Attempting to find the boundaries of her immense talent is what drives her.

It's why she got so angry after putting both hands down as she tried to land the triple-double on Friday. It's why she never thought about ditching it on Sunday. And it's why she sneaked a peek at her phone while rotating from floor to balance beam, typically a no-no during a meet. Well, at least for anyone not named Simone Biles.

"I wanted to see how it looked," she said.

Here's a word: historic.

"It's like she hit a hole in one

and we were all there," USA Gymnastics high performance director Tom Forster said. "It's a big deal and we all know it. No one in the world has done it before in the women and actually, she does it better than most of the men who have done it. She should be super excited about that."

She was. When Biles finished off a two-hour showcase that highlighted how wide the gulf between herself and the rest of the world has become by drilling her dismount on uneven bars: she danced.

Well, sort of. Biles gave Landi a relieved high-five before sticking out her tongue and waving her arms as she ran to hug the rest of competitors in her rotation.

The anger of Friday night — when she openly seethed after shorting the triple-double and making a bit of a mess on bars — was gone.

"I was a lot happier today," Biles said. "I feel I haven't been as confident on bars this year as I was last year. To finally do a good routine like I can do it, I was really happy. I was very happy and the last event, so I was like, 'Thank God we're done.'"

For now anyway. Biles is two months away from a trip to the

world championships — where her 20 medals are tied for the most by a female gymnast — and a year away from a return to the Olympics. She was a sensation in 2016, cementing her status as one of the best ever with two weeks of gymnastics that came as close to perfection as the sport allows.

A year to go before a return trip to the games, Biles is even better. And really, it's not close.

"She's a freaking beast," said MyKayla Skinner, an alternate on the 2016 Olympic team who clinched a spot on the national team by finishing eighth. "Like, I don't even understand. I always ask her, 'Do you realize how good you are?' And she's like 'Yeah, but I don't know.' It just comes so naturally, it's amazing."

In a sport that sometimes forces athletes to choose between skill and execution, Biles doesn't have to. She not only puts together the most difficult routines in the world, she does them better than anyone else. Biles won floor, balance beam and vault and finished third on bars even with her "meh" set on Friday.

"She does stuff that I never thought people could do," Lee said.

## Americans protest on Pan Am medals stand

Associated Press

LIMA, Peru — Two Americans used their medal-winning moments at the Pan American Games to draw attention to social issues back home that they feel are spiraling out of control.

During their medals ceremonies at the multi-sport event in Lima, fencer Race Imboden took a knee and hammer thrower Gwen Berry raised her fist. Both athletes could represent the U.S. less than a year from now at the Tokyo Olympics, where similar protests would be seen by a much wider audience.

"Racism, gun control, mis-

treatment of immigrants, and a president who spreads hate are at the top of a long list" of America's problems, Imboden said in a tweet sent after his team's foil medals ceremony. "I chose to sacrifice my moment today at the top of the podium to call attention to issues that I believe need to be addressed.

"I encourage others to please use your platforms for empowerment and change."

Berry raised her fist as America's national anthem was played to honor her win in the hammer throw. She called out injustice in America "and a president who's making it worse."

"It's too important to not say something," Berry told USA Today. "Something has to be said. If nothing is said, nothing will be done, and nothing will be fixed, and nothing will be changed."

The history of high-profile protests at the Olympics dates to the 1968 Games in Mexico City, when sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists during the medals ceremony for the 200-meter dash.

The issues haven't changed all that much in the ensuing 50 years.

Quarterback Colin Kaepernick has been out of a job since

shortly after he started kneeling during the national anthem before 49ers games in 2016 to protest police brutality and social injustice in America.

Since then, athletes representing the U.S. have faced scrutiny about what, if any, signs of protest they might show if they land on the podium at an Olympics or other major event.

The actions by Berry and Imboden will test the Pan Am Sports Organization and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee's resolve to enforce rules that restrict political protests.