

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Deal close on Afghanistan withdrawal

The Washington Post

U.S. negotiators have made significant advances in recent talks with the Taliban, and the two sides are close to announcing an agreement on an initial U.S. troop withdrawal, along with plans to start direct discussions between the militants and the Afghan government, according to American and foreign officials.

President Donald Trump met Friday with Cabinet officials and other senior national security advisers for a briefing by Zalmay Khalilzad, the chief U.S. envoy to the talks. Attendees at the meeting, held at Trump's New Jersey golf resort, included Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Joint

Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joseph Dunford Jr., CIA Director Gina Haspel and White House national security adviser John Bolton.

An initial withdrawal under the proposed deal would include roughly 5,000 of the 14,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. In exchange, the Taliban would agree to renounce al-Qaida and to bar it from activities such as fundraising, recruiting, training and operational planning in areas under Taliban control.

A statement after the meeting offered no details, with Hogan Gidley, the principal deputy White House press secretary, saying only that "discussions centered around our ongoing negotiations and eventual peace and reconciliation agreement with the Taliban and the

government of Afghanistan."

"The meeting went very well," Gidley said.

In an evening tweet, Trump called the meeting "very good" and wrote, "Many on the opposite side of this 19 year war, and us, are looking to make a deal — if possible!"

Earlier, a White House official cautioned that it might not immediately result in a decision or an announcement.

In addition to the withdrawal, the agreement is expected to include a statement of Taliban willingness to sit down with representatives of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's government to develop a political framework for peace, something that has long been a sticking point in the U.S.-Taliban talks.

Earlier this month, as techni-

cal experts wound up the latest round of U.S.-Taliban meetings in Doha, Qatar, Khalilzad traveled to Germany, which is in charge of shepherding the inter-Afghan negotiations, and to Oslo, where those discussions are likely to be held.

Throughout the U.S.-Taliban talks, critics in Kabul and Washington have questioned U.S. willingness to bypass the Afghan government in its eagerness to meet Trump's insistence on withdrawal.

The Taliban has not publicly expressed any change in its refusal to negotiate with Ghani. But U.S. officials have said throughout the months of negotiations that any phased withdrawal agreement would be explicitly linked to the start of inter-Afghan talks.

Iranian tanker to leave Gibraltar despite US pressure

Associated Press

GIBRALTAR — The shipping agent for an Iranian supertanker caught in a diplomatic standoff says the vessel is ready to depart Gibraltar on Sunday or Monday, as the U.S. made a last-minute effort to seize it again.

The head of the company sorting paperwork and procuring for the Grace 1 oil tanker in the British overseas territory said the vessel could be sailing away in the next "24 to 48 hours," once new crews dispatched to the territory take over command of the ship.

"The vessel is ongoing some logistical changes and requirements that have delayed the departure," Astralship managing director Richard De la Rosa told The Associated Press.

De la Rosa's comments came a day after the U.S. obtained a warrant to seize the vessel over violations of U.S. sanctions on Iran. It was unclear if that could happen within a 24-hour time frame as Gibraltar

officials have said any request to seize the vessel would have to make its way through the territory's courts.

He said the new crews were Indian and Ukrainian nationals hired by the Indian managers of the ship and that his company had not been informed about the supertanker's next destination.

The tanker, which carries 2.1 million barrels of Iranian light crude oil, had been detained for over a month in Gibraltar for allegedly attempting to breach European Union sanctions on Syria. The arrest fueled tension between London and Tehran, which seized a British-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz in apparent retaliation.

Analysts had said the release of the Grace 1 by Gibraltar could see Britain's Stena Impero go free.

But late on Friday, a day after the tanker was released from detention, the U.S. obtained a warrant to seize the vessel over violations of U.S. sanctions, money laundering and terrorism statutes. Washington is seeking to take control of the oil tanker,

all of the petroleum aboard and \$995,000, unsealed court documents showed.

The latest turn of events come as tensions continue to rise in the Persian Gulf since President Donald Trump last year unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the 2015 nuclear deal signed by Iran and other world powers. In recent weeks, oil tankers in the region have been the subject of attacks and seizures, dragging among others London and Tehran into a bitter diplomatic row.

The chief minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, had warned the U.S. that a new legal case would need to be examined by the territory's courts following the end of the tanker's detention this week. Picardo said he had been assured in writing by the Iranian government that the tanker wouldn't unload its cargo in Syria.

Richard Wilkinson, a lawyer representing three crew members of the Grace 1 oil tanker, including its Indian captain, said he was "not aware of any reason why the ship won't sail on Sunday, as it is to be planned."

Pelosi: Gun bills ensure domestic peace

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, of California, said Friday that the country's elected officials have a responsibility to "ensure domestic tranquility" and called on the Senate to return to work to vote on the House's bill bolstering background checks for gun purchases.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Pelosi said she's heard "grave concern" from Americans and members of Congress about gun violence and the rise of heated rhetoric, including xenophobia and white supremacy.

"The Senate has to do the job," Pelosi said. "This is simple: They just have to take up the bill and send it to the president."

President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, have expressed a new openness to gun legislation in the wake of mass shootings this month in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio.

Congress is on summer recess, and McConnell, the Republican leader, has said he won't be calling senators back to session. Instead, he has asked committee chairmen to review possible bills for consideration

when lawmakers return in September.

Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee announced Friday they will be returning early to consider other gun violence legislation.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, of New York, said his panel will gather on Sept. 4 to consider a series of bills, including one that would ban high-capacity magazines of ammunition. The panel will also hold a hearing later in September to examine military-style assault weapons, which many Democrats want to ban.

Pelosi said elected officials

have a responsibility to "ensure domestic tranquility" as outlined in the Constitution.

She said she's heard "concerns about white supremacy, xenophobia, guns" — what she called "an explosive combination" — that need to be addressed.

"In the near, near future — in the immediate future — we must address the issue of gun violence and the attitudes that are making it less safe for some people in our country," Pelosi said. "We have to do much better in that regard, and I would hope that we can do so in a bipartisan way," she said.

Court rules US can reject asylums in certain areas

Associated Press

HOUSTON — A federal appeals court's ruling Friday will allow the Trump administration to begin rejecting asylum at some parts of the U.S.-Mexico border for migrants who arrive after passing through a third country.

The ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals allows President Donald Trump to enforce the policy in New Mexico and Texas, rejecting asylum-seekers who cross from Mexico into either state. Under Friday's ruling, U.S. District Judge Jon Tigar's July 24 order stopping the policy would apply only in California and Arizona, which are covered by the 9th Circuit.

The two busiest areas for unauthorized border crossings are in South Texas' Rio Grande Valley and the region around El Paso, Texas, which includes New Mexico. Nearly 50,000 people in July crossed the U.S. border without permission in those two regions, according to the U.S. Border Patrol.

The policy would deny asylum to anyone who passes through another country on the

way to the U.S. without seeking protection there. Most crossing the southern border are Central Americans, who would largely be ineligible. The policy would also apply to people from Africa, Asia and South America who come to the southern border to request asylum.

If the policy is implemented, ineligible migrants who cross in New Mexico and Texas could be detained and more quickly deported.

Under American law, people can request asylum when they arrive in the U.S. regardless of how they enter. The law makes an exception for those who have come through a country considered to be "safe" pursuant to an agreement between the U.S. and that country. Canada and the U.S. have a "safe third country" agreement.

But the U.S. doesn't have one with Mexico or countries in Central America. The Trump administration has tried to sign one with Guatemala, but the country's incoming president said last week that Guatemala would not be able to uphold a tentative deal reached by his predecessor.

Calif. leads lawsuit over Trump immigration rule

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California and three other states on Friday filed the latest court challenge to new Trump administration rules blocking green cards for many immigrants who use public assistance, including Medicaid, food stamps and housing vouchers.

Nearly half of Americans would be considered a burden if the same standards were applied to U.S. citizens, said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra.

The lawsuit he filed in federal court in San Francisco follows others last week, including those by Washington and 12 other states and by two California counties. Joining California are Maine, Oregon and Pennsylvania, as well as the District of Columbia.

The multiple lawsuits all contest one of the Republican administration's most aggressive moves to restrict legal immigration.

The new rules, set to take effect in October, would broaden a range of programs that can

disqualify immigrants from legal status if they are deemed to be a burden to the United States — what's known as a "public charge."

Becerra said working families across the nation rely on similar safety net programs. The impact is particularly great in California, which has more than 10 million immigrants. Half of the state's children have an immigrant parent, he said.

His lawsuit argues that the rule creates unnecessary new obstacles for immigrants who want to legally live in the United States. It also discourages them from using health, nutrition, housing and other programs for fear it will erode their chances of being granted lawful status.

Many immigrants are ineligible for public benefits because of their immigration status, and an Associated Press analysis found low-income immigrants use Medicaid, food aid, cash assistance and Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, at a lower rate than comparable low-income native-born adults.

Trump has recession worries ahead of 2020

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is warning of an economic crash if he loses reelection, arguing that even voters who personally dislike him should base their ballots on the nation's strong growth and low unemployment rate.

But privately, Trump is growing increasingly worried the economy won't look so good come Election Day.

The financial markets signaled the possibility of a U.S. recession last week, sending a jolt of anxiety to investors, companies and consumers.

That's on top of concerns over Trump's plans to impose punishing tariffs on goods from China and word from the United Kingdom and Germany that their economies are shrinking.

Though a preelection recession here is far from certain, a downturn would be a devastating blow to the president, who has made a strong economy his central argument for a second term. Trump advisers fear a weakened economy would hurt him with moderate Republican and independent voters who have been willing to give him a pass on some of his incendi-

ary policies and rhetoric. And White House economic advisers see few options for reversing course should the economy start to slip.

Trump has taken to blaming others for the recession fears, mostly the Federal Reserve, which he is pushing for further interest rate cuts. Yet much of the uncertainty in the markets stems from his own escalation of a trade war with China, as well as weakened economies in key countries around the world.

Some of Trump's closest advisers have urged him to lower

the temperature of the trade dispute, fearing that further tariffs would only hurt American consumers and rattle the markets further. The president blinked once last week, delaying a set of tariffs in an effort to save Christmas sales.

Aides acknowledge it is unclear what steps the White House could take to stop a downturn. Trump's 2017 tax cut proved so politically unpopular that many Republicans ran away from it during last year's midterms. And a new stimulus spending program could spark intraparty fighting over big deficits.

Liberals worry Warren, Sanders can't beat Trump

Associated Press

BERLIN, N.H. — They want fundamental change: single-payer health care, debt-free college, environmental protections and the end of big money in politics.

But as liberal voters size up the two leading candidates running on those values — Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren — one question is impossible to avoid: Can either one beat President Donald Trump?

Even some of the most passionate liberals are not sure Sanders or Warren is up to

the task, knowing that Trump will use anything he can to tear them down: age, gender, personal background and, of course, their progressive plans to transform health care and the U.S. economy.

The electability question is coloring the high-stakes competition between the dueling New England senators, who are allies on policy but stand in each other's way in the broader fight to unify their party's energized liberal base. And as they struggle for answers, voters must confront a sense of deep uncertainty that has settled

over the party's far-left flank.

Richard Poulin, a 74-year-old gift shop owner, stood in the back of a Sanders rally with a Bernie sticker on his chest. He hosted Sanders' local campaign headquarters four years ago but admitted he was considering abandoning the fiery Vermont senator in favor of Warren.

Why?

"I see her gaining and I like the forward movement," said Poulin, citing Warren's recent rise in the polls. "She has a chance. That's what I like."

Still, he may not vote for ei-

ther one. He said he would reluctantly support the more moderate front-runner, Joe Biden if he ultimately has the best chance to win.

Voters like Poulin are hardly unique.

Democrats of all ideological persuasions consistently say their top priority is defeating Trump. And the Sanders and Warren campaigns are aware that no policy plan or campaign trail promise will matter as much as their ability to convince Democratic voters they can do that.

Sheriff: New York subway suspect has criminal past

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A man suspected of placing two devices that looked like pressure cookers in a New York City subway station on Friday, causing an evacuation and snarling the morning commute, has been apprehended, police said.

Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea tweeted Saturday morning that a man seen in surveillance video holding one of the objects was taken into custody. Police identified the objects as rice cookers and determined

they were not explosives.

Police said the man was located at about 12:45 a.m. Saturday in the Bronx and taken to a hospital for treatment and observation. Police did not specify what, if any, injuries or condition he was being treated for.

A West Virginia sheriff's department identified the man as Larry Kenton Griffin II, of Bruno, W.Va., and said he had a criminal history in the state.

The Logan County, W. Va., Sheriff's Department said it

has arrested Griffin, 26, at least three times in the past eight years, including a 2017 arrest on charges alleging he sent obscene material to a minor.

Griffin's cousin, Tara Brumfield, told a Huntington, W.Va., television station that he is a good person who has been dealing with mental health issues.

Offering a possible explanation for his involvement with the rice cookers, she said Griffin has a habit of picking up items in one place and putting them down in another.

"Whether it's tools or a fishing pole or something like that like, he'll pick up one thing and leave it there and then pick up another and then leave it there," she told the station, WSAZ-TV.

No charges have been announced. New York City police said security cameras captured a man pulling the cookers out of a shopping cart and placing them in the Fulton Street subway station near the World Trade Center. A third cooker of the same make, year and model was found about 2 miles away.

Epstein's death ruled suicide by hanging

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City's medical examiner ruled Jeffrey Epstein's death a suicide Friday, confirming after nearly a week of speculation that the financier faced with sex trafficking charges hanged himself in his jail cell.

Epstein, 66, was found dead at the Metropolitan Correctional Center on Aug. 10, touching off outrage that such a high-profile prisoner could have gone unwatched at the Manhattan federal lockup where infamous inmates Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman and Wall Street swindler Bernard Madoff came and went without incident.

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Barbara Sampson said in a statement that she made the suicide determination "after careful review of all investigative information, including complete autopsy findings."

Sampson's announcement came as a Justice Department official told The Associat-

ed Press that some prison staffers believed to have relevant information aren't cooperating with investigators.

Epstein's lawyers said they were "not satisfied" with Sampson's conclusions and that they would conduct their own investigation, including seeking to obtain any video of the area around Epstein's cell from the time leading to his death.

Epstein, arrested July 6 and jailed since was found dead with a bedsheet around his neck less than 24 hours after more than 2,000 pages of documents were made public from a since-settled lawsuit against an ex-girlfriend alleged to be his aide-de-camp. The documents included graphic allegations against Epstein and a 2016 deposition in which he refused to answer questions to avoid incriminating himself.

At the time of Epstein's death, the Bureau of Prisons said he had apparently killed himself. But that did not squelch conspiracy theories, including one retweeted by

President Donald Trump that speculated Epstein was murdered.

What emerged in the days that followed, however, was not evidence of a sinister plot, but early signs that prison staff failed to properly secure and monitor a prisoner, leading to ferocious criticism by everyone from Attorney General William Barr to Epstein's lawyers.

Jail guards on Epstein's unit failed to check on him every half hour, as required, and are suspected of falsifying log entries to show they had, according to several people familiar with the matter. Both were working overtime because of staffing shortages, the people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they lacked authorization to publicly discuss the investigation.

Epstein, who was charged with sexually abusing numerous underage girls over several years, had been placed on suicide watch last month after he was found on his cell floor July 23 with bruises on his neck.

Driver caught playing Pokemon Go on 8 phones

New York Daily News

This Pokemon trainer is doing whatever it takes to "catch 'em all."

Police caught a Washington state driver who pulled over to the side of the road to play Pokemon Go simultaneously on eight phones.

Sgt. Kyle Smith of the Washington State

Patrol spotted the driver parked on the shoulder of State Route 518 in the city of Burien near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Tuesday evening, according to the Seattle Times.

Trooper Rick Johnson posted a photo of the phones, which appear to be pressed into a Styrofoam board, on Twitter.

Johnson said the driver agreed to put the phones in the back seat and "continued his commute with 8 less distractions."

The driver was not issued a citation because the officer didn't see him driving while playing the game, but he was given a warning to not pull over on the shoulder of the road unless there's an emergency.

Beer named after nuclear test site draws criticism

Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam — A Texas-based company is facing criticism for naming a beer after the location of nuclear tests that resulted in the contamination of a Pacific island chain, a report said.

Manhattan Project Beer Company is under scrutiny by Marshall Islanders who were exposed to high levels of radiation by U.S. government research from 1946 to 1958, The Pacific Daily News reported Thursday.

The government and residents of the Republic of the Marshall Islands have objected to the company's beer named Bikini Atoll, an area of the island chain that remains uninhabitable.

The name is insensitive to people still dealing with the impacts of radiation decades later, islanders said.

The company has several beers with nuclear-themed names including Half-life, Plutonium-239, Particles Collide, and 10 Nanoseconds.

"Our beer named Bikini Atoll was not created to mock or trivialize the nuclear testing that took place in the Marshall Islands," the company said in a social media post. The company is "creating awareness of the wider impacts and implications" of U.S. nuclear research programs, the statement said.

The company's website does not mention nuclear testing in a description of Bikini Atoll beer.

Following what it described as "significant harassment and death threats" the company said it will take no further action or make additional statements.

Marshall Islands Health and Human Services Secretary Jack Niedenthal wrote

a letter to Manhattan Project Beer co-founder Misty Sanford Thursday saying she should consider the suffering caused by the nuclear testing.

"The bottom line is your product makes fun of a horrific situation here in the Marshall Islands — a situation that I promise you is still ongoing — to make money for your company," Niedenthal wrote. "This is unacceptable to us."

The beer is not the first commercial product named after the atoll.

In 1946, French designer Louise Reard named his two-piece swimsuit the bikini, four days after the U.S. detonated the first bomb at the atoll in 1946.

The popular animated television series "SpongeBob SquarePants" was set in "Bikini Bottom."

Many people in the Marshall Islands don't know about either connection.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman pulls gator from pants during stop

FL PUNTA GORDA — Officials said a Florida woman who pulled a small alligator from her yoga pants during a traffic stop and illegally possessed numerous other wild animals was sentenced to probation after pleading guilty to four charges.

Florida prosecutors said a Charlotte County sheriff's deputy stopped a pickup in May after it ran a stop sign. The driver, Michael Clemons, 22, told the deputy he and his passenger, Ariel Machan-Le Quire, 25, were collecting frogs and snakes under an overpass. He gave the deputy permission to search the truck.

The deputy found 41 3-stripe turtles, and asked if Machan-Le Quire had anything else. She pulled the 1-foot gator from her pants.

Shark takes bite out of teen's surfboard

HI HONOLULU — A teen surfing off the Hawaii island of Oahu escaped a shark encounter uninjured, but his board didn't.

KHON-TV reported Max Keliikipi, 16, was waiting for a wave near Makaha Beach when he spotted what he thought was a turtle fin. It wasn't.

The teen said the shark chomped down on the front of his board, taking off a chunk bigger than his head.

The shark's impact threw him into the water.

The junior lifeguard made it to land safely.

Suspect arrested for killing two peacocks

CA LOS ANGELES — Police arrested a man on

suspicion of deliberately running over and killing two wild peacocks in northwest Los Angeles.

KABC-TV said Floyd Belton, 61, turned himself in and is facing two counts of animal cruelty. He was being held on \$80,000 bail.

Man invites police to mow lawns in 50 states

AL HUNTSVILLE — An Alabama man who traveled to all 50 states to mow lawns for free said he's traveling cross-country again to bring together police officers and the community.

Rodney Smith Jr. said his "Mowing with Cops" tour started in Apopka, Fla.

Smith said on his website that he wants to mow at least one lawn in each state for the elderly, disabled, single parents or veterans. He inviting police officers to mow with him.

Smith was inspired to begin a free yard mowing service in 2015 after seeing an elderly man cutting his lawn.

Man spiked wife's rum with methamphetamine

NC WILMINGTON — A North Carolina sheriff's office charged a man with spiking his wife's rum with methamphetamine after she told him she wanted a divorce.

The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office said that the woman went to a local hospital after drinking the rum and going a day without sleeping. A test showed the woman had meth in her system, and deputies filed charges against Michael Joseph Kirkum, 47.

Sheriff's office spokesman Lt. Jerry Brewer said the woman told deputies that the night of the incident, she had told her husband that she wanted a divorce.

Tanker misses ferry, scaring passengers

TX PORT ARANSAS — A supertanker threw a scare into passengers boarding a ferry in South Texas when it bore down on the docked ferry, sounded its danger horn and narrowly missing the vessel.

The incident happened at the Port Aransas dock of the state ferry, which connects the Mustang Island town with Aransas Pass on the mainland.

A spokesman for the Texas Department of Transportation said the tanker was headed for the Cheniere Energy liquefaction plant in nearby Gregory when its crew closed in on the ferry.

Man found guilty in road rage incident

NJ NEWARK — A New Jersey man faces up to five years in prison for beating a woman because she took too long getting out of a car and held up traffic.

Jurors convicted Jahmil Jasper, 39, of aggravated assault.

Prosecutors said Jasper punched the woman, who had undergone surgery, in the head in December 2018. They said Jasper dragged the 51-year-old into the street and punched her four times as she lay on the ground and kicked her twice in the head.

Woman holds former roomies hostage, dies

FL BRANDON — Authorities said a 24-year-old woman held two former roommates at gunpoint, hit one of them with a baseball bat and bit off part of a child's finger before going into medical distress and dying.

A Hillsborough County

Sheriff's Office incident report said when Kaynesha Rhodes arrived at the apartment, she pointed the gun at her former roommates and kept them from leaving. A fight broke out and officials said Rhodes bit off part of a child's finger.

When deputies arrived, Rhodes was being restrained by someone at the apartment. Deputies handcuffed her and she fell ill.

Man accused of animal abuse; gave cat meth

NM LAS CRUCES — Police in Las Cruces said charges against a man accused of battering his girlfriend and mistreating two pets have been upgraded after his cat tested positive for methamphetamines.

They said Aaron Spaulding, 39, was arrested in June on suspicion of false imprisonment, battery against a household member, interference with communication and two counts of animal cruelty.

A veterinarian told police the car showed signs of neurological deficits and its blood tested positive for meth.

Bidder wins auction for iconic house

MO KANSAS CITY — A bidder from Nebraska paid \$920,000 for a house designed and built by iconic architect Frank Lloyd Wright in Kansas City.

The Kansas City Star reported that Heritage Auctions said the new owner wanted to remain anonymous for now, but the bidder plans to honor the integrity of the Sondern-Adler house that sold at auction.

The home had been on the market for 11 months at \$1.65 million, reports

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Red Sox see playoff hopes fading fast

Associated Press

BOSTON — Red Sox baseball boss Dave Dombrowski gave up on a fourth straight AL East title when he decided not to make a move at the trade deadline.

The players bowed out of the postseason race soon after.

One year after their record-setting run to their fourth World Series in 15 seasons, the Red Sox are on their way toward missing the playoffs for the first time since 2015. After taking five of six leading up to the July 31 deadline from New York and Tampa Bay — the two teams Boston is chasing in the AL East — the defending champions won just three of their next 15 games.

Alex Cora, who led Boston to a franchise-record 108 wins in his first year as a major league manager, acknowledges there's no more time to waste.

"It actually did feel like a playoff game," he said after beating Cleveland this week to slow the slide. "If we want to make it, we've got to start our playoffs before anyone else."

It may already be too late.

The Red Sox are closer to fourth than first, 17 games out in the division and 6½ back in the wild-card race. They have just four more games each against the Yankees and Rays,

and none against Cleveland or Oakland, who are also ahead of Boston in the wild-card standings.

Dombrowski conceded at the deadline that this team wasn't going to catch the Yankees, and he said he didn't want to give up a lot for a spare part that would get them into the one-game wild-card round.

"If we were closer to first place, I would've been more open-minded," he said. "I think if we're going to make it, it's going to be the guys that are in the clubhouse."

The response from the clubhouse: losses in the next six games — eight straight in all — including a four-game sweep by the Yankees that all-but eliminated Boston from the postseason race.

Here are some other things that went wrong this season:

Magic touch

Last year's moves all seemed to work out: Dombrowski acquired J.D. Martinez during spring training, added Steve Pearce in June and, as the deadline approached, Nathan Eovaldi and Ian Kinsler. Martinez finished fourth in AL MVP voting, Pearce was the World Series MVP, and Eovaldi was the Game 3 star who pitched

six innings of relief in an 18-inning loss, a performance widely credited with keeping the rest of the staff fresh for victories in Games 4 and 5.

This year, Eovaldi and Pearce got rewarded as free agents. Pearce batted .180 in just 29 games while spending most of the season on the injured list; Eovaldi missed two months with an elbow injury and was slotted into the bullpen when he came back.

And the big midseason acquisition: Andrew Cashner, who went 1-4 with an 8.01 ERA in six starts after coming from Baltimore early in July; he has since been demoted to the bullpen.

Starters

Cashner was supposed to boost the back end of a star-studded staff that has been the biggest disappointment for the team this year.

Chris Sale (6-11, 4.40 ERA) is headed for the worst season of his career. Rick Porcello (11-9, 5.49 ERA), who won the 2016 AL Cy Young Award, is last in the AL with 85 earned runs allowed. David Price, the 2012 Cy Young winner, is 7-5 with a 4.36 ERA that is his worst in a decade.

"Some guys haven't per-

formed," Dombrowski said in his post trade deadline news conference. "Where are we going to get starting pitchers that are more talented than the group that we have? They're very talented, we just need to pitch better in some cases."

Bullpen

After letting closer Craig Kimbrel and top setup man Joe Kelly leave as free agents, the Red Sox are the worst team in baseball at converting save opportunities, with 22 blown saves in 47 chances through Wednesday. But Dombrowski insists that when the starters provided quality outings, the bullpen was fine.

Leading up to the trade deadline, the rotation turned in six straight outings of six innings or longer. During an eight-game losing streak that knocked them from wild-card contention, only one starter finished the sixth.

"Where most clubs get exposed in their bullpen is when you get short starts. Our club is built to get longer starts than four or five innings," Dombrowski said, explaining why he didn't go all-out to add a reliever. "When we start pitching six innings, I think you could see it."

Army's Toth granted waiver, can pursue NFL career

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A recent graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point has been given a waiver to pursue a professional football career before completing his commitment to serve in the military, according to news reports.

The exception for 2nd Lt. Brett Toth, an offensive lineman and a 2018 West Point graduate, comes after President Donald Trump issued a memo in June to revise a Defense Department policy whereby service academy graduates must serve at least two years

before pursuing professional athletic careers. Typically, service academy graduates must serve five years on active duty and three years in a reserve status to fulfill their military obligation.

Acting Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy on Thursday evening signed the waiver for Toth, according to CNN. On Friday, the Charleston, S.C., native signed a three-year contract with the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles.

In Trump's memo in June, the president directed the defense secretary to develop a policy allowing student athletes from the service academies

and ROTC programs to pursue professional sport opportunities immediately after graduation and to defer their military obligations until after their professional sports career.

"Such cadets and midshipmen have a short window of time to take advantage of their athletic talents during which playing professional sports is realistically possible," Trump wrote in the memo, adding they should still honor their commitment to serve.

Toth, 22, was serving as an engineer officer. The Army is expected to allow him to serve the remaining years of active-

duty service as an instructor of a ROTC program in Philadelphia when he is not at football practice, according to CNN.

"The Army is very excited that he will now have the opportunity to simultaneously pursue his dream as part of the Eagles team while continuing to serve as an active-duty soldier," Cynthia O. Smith, an Army spokeswoman, said Friday in a statement.

Toth was a two-year starter at right tackle for the Black Knights' triple-option offense. He was the first Army player to play in the Senior Bowl.

Yastrzemski's 3 HRs lift Giants in 11

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Mike Yastrzemski never experienced a night like Friday. Not in his months in the major leagues, not in the minor leagues and not in Little League.

"Not even in video games," the 28-year-old Yastrzemski said.

Yastrzemski hit three home runs, including a tiebreaking solo shot in the 11th inning, and the San Francisco Giants recovered after squandering two late leads, beating the Arizona Diamondbacks 10-9.

For just the second time in major league history, teams combined to hit 12 home runs in a game. The Giants and Diamondbacks were one short of the record 13 homers hit by Arizona and Philadelphia on June 10 at Citizens Bank Park. It was a Chase Field record for

the Diamondbacks, who hit five of their six on Friday after the seventh inning.

Yastrzemski also hit a solo homer in the third, and added a two-run blast in the seventh inning. His three-homer game was accomplished in 70 big league games. His Hall of Fame grandfather, Carl Yastrzemski, had one three-homer outing in 3,308 career games. The elder Yastrzemski hit three homers in a game at Tiger Stadium on May 19, 1974.

"Just don't let a good pitch to hit go by," Yastrzemski said of his thought process. "Didn't matter whether it's a fastball, slider, change-up, if it was a good pitch I wasn't going to let it hit the glove."

Kevin Pillar homered twice, with his second long ball giving the Giants a 9-7 lead in the 10th inning.

The Diamondbacks coun-

tered with home runs by Wilmer Flores, his second of the game, and Nick Ahmed off Giants closer Will Smith, sending the game to the 11th inning.

Smith (5-0) picked up the win despite blowing a save chance. He worked 12/3 innings. Trevor Gott got Christian Walker to ground out for the game's final out and earned his first save.

Brandon Belt also homered for the Giants, who have won five of six.

Adam Jones, Ketel Marte and Eduardo Escobar homered for Arizona. Escobar hit his team-leading 28th.

The Diamondbacks lost their third straight and fell below 500 at 61-62. The Giants, 2½ games out of the second wild-card spot in the National League, have taken the first two games of the four-game set.

"It just shows how gritty this team is," Yastrzemski said.

"Guys want to win and they want to be here and they want to play, and that's what makes it so fun to be part of a team like this."

Jones' first homer in more than two months tied the game at 7 in the eighth inning, as the Diamondbacks battled back from a 7-2 deficit. Jones hit a three-run shot as a pinch-hitter with two outs.

"We slugged it out and ran out of outs," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "You feel like it was one of those games you want to keep playing the rest of the night until you come out of the right side of it."

Arizona got the tying run on base when Marte singled to start the bottom of the 11th. But Smith struck out David Peralta and got Escobar to pop out before Gott entered and closed out the game.

MLB roundup

Bellinger, Dodgers use homers to get past Braves

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Cody Bellinger hit his 41st home run, Max Muncy and Justin Turner connected against reliever Sean Newcomb in the seventh inning, and the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Atlanta Braves 8-3 Friday night in a matchup of NL division leaders.

It was nothing new for the powerful Dodgers, who set a major league record with 22 homers in a five-game span when Will Smith launched a two-run shot off Jerry Blevins in the eighth.

The Dodgers improved to 18-6 against Atlanta since 2016, using Muncy's three-run homer and Turner's solo shot to lead 6-3 after Newcomb (5-3) relieved starter Mike Soroka.

Muncy's go-ahead homer sailed into the seats in right-center. Turner followed with a drive to the same part of the ballpark, the 14th time the Dodgers have gone back-to-

back this season.

Adam Kolarek (5-3) earned the win as the NL West leaders improved to 13-3 since July 30.

Yankees 3, Indians 2: Masahiro Tanaka (9-6) pitched effectively into the seventh inning, Aaron Judge broke out of his slump with two hits and two runs, and host New York rebounded from its worst home loss of the season.

Phillies 8, Padres 4: Bryce Harper homered for the third straight game, Roman Quinn and J.T. Realmuto also went deep as host Philadelphia beat San Diego.

Nationals 2, Brewers 1: Anthony Rendon hit a tiebreaking RBI double in the eighth inning, and host Washington beat Milwaukee.

Tigers 2, Rays 0: Daniel Norris, Drew VerHagen (2-2) and Joe Jimenez combined on a five-hitter to outpitch Charlie Morton (13-5), and visiting Detroit beat Tampa Bay.

Red Sox 9, Orioles 1: Boston's Andrew Benintendi and Mitch Moreland each hit RBI triples in the fourth inning, and Rick Porcello (11-9) held visiting Baltimore to one run over six innings.

Blue Jays 7, Mariners 3: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Randal Grichuk hit back-to-back home runs, Jacob Waguespack (4-1) won his third straight decision and host Toronto beat Seattle.

Pirates 3, Cubs 2: Pinch-hitter Cole Tucker drew a bases-loaded walk and Kevin Newman hit an RBI single, all with two out in the ninth inning, as host Pittsburgh rallied to beat Chicago.

White Sox 7, Angels 2: Lucas Giolito (13-6) struck out 11 over six innings, James McCann hit his second grand slam in three games and visiting Chicago beat Los Angeles.

Cardinals 13, Reds 4: Dexter Fowler hit a three-run

homer and drove in four runs, Paul DeJong and Paul Goldschmidt added two-run shots and visiting St. Louis rocked Luis Castillo (11-5) in a romp over Cincinnati.

Rockies 3, Marlins 0: Jon Gray (10-8) struck out seven in eight strong innings and Nolan Arenado and Ryan McMahon homered for the second straight game, leading host Colorado over Miami.

Twins 4, Rangers 3: Max Kepler and Jonathan Schoop hit two-run home runs and visiting Minnesota beat Texas.

Royals 4, Mets 1: Mike Montgomery (3-5) outpitched Noah Syndergaard (8-6), and host Kansas City ended its 22-inning scoreless drought in a win over New York.

Athletics 3, Astros 2 (13): Robbie Grossman singled home the winning run with two outs in the 13th inning to give host Oakland the victory over Houston.

Newton-less Panthers fall to Bills, Allen

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — After winning the coin toss, Josh Allen quickly asked for the ball.

He was eager and ready to go — and it showed.

Allen shook off some first-game jitters and completed 9 of 11 passes for 102 yards and led two scoring drives, Kevin Johnson returned an interception 71 yards for a touchdown, and the Buffalo Bills beat the Carolina Panthers 27-14 on Friday night in the second preseason game for both teams.

“We won the coin toss, and from that point on we were ready to go,” Allen said.

Allen is looking to build confidence after going 5-6 as a rookie starter last season. He took a step forward against the Panthers, leading a 13-play, 63-yard drive that culminated in a field goal, and a touchdown drive capped by a 1-yard run by LeSean McCoy to put Buffalo (2-0) up 10-0 early before exiting the game. His only regret is getting to play just two possessions.

Allen continued to develop his chemistry with recently signed free-agent wide receiver Cole Beasley, connecting on five passes for 54 yards.

The Panthers (1-1) struggled mightily on offense without Cam Newton, who didn't play for the second straight week.

Buffalo's defense held Carolina to 132 yards in the first half after spending two days facing the Panthers in joint practices earlier this week. The Panthers didn't help themselves with five holding penalties before halftime.

Panthers coach Ron Rivera said he was disappointed in his team's performance.

“We had a lot of young guys out there that need to turn the corner,” Rivera said. “The first two games were really about the young guys getting chances. Quite frankly, from perspective, I don't think some of the young guys stepped up when they had the chances.”

Giants cruise against Bears

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Eli Manning pulled out a page from the Daniel Jones playbook. He was perfect in a game in which the heir apparent faced adversity for the first time.

The 38-year-old, two-time Super Bowl MVP threw a touchdown pass in a flawless series and the New York Giants had their way with the Chicago Bears' backups in a 32-13 preseason victory on Friday night.

Jones also threw a touchdown pass, but the sixth pick overall in the draft finally looked like a rookie, losing two fumbles.

Manning's performance came days after co-owner John Mara said a perfect season would be Jones not taking a snap, which would mean Manning and the Giants were doing well.

“John owns the team,” coach Pat Shurmur. “We are on the same page. Well, you heard it from the owner and I think I have been saying that all along.”

Free-agent rookie Jon Hilliman scored on a 10-yard run, Kyle Lauletta threw a 10-yard TD to Garrett Dickerson, Aldrick Rosas kicked a 47-yard field goal and New York (2-0) got a safety on a botched shotgun snap.

Chicago coach Matt Nagy rested many key starters in falling to 0-2.

Rookie Kerrith Whyte Jr., who had a 103-yard kickoff return in the second quarter nullified by a late holding penalty, scored on a 1-yard run. Eddy Pineiro kicked field goals of 41 and 27 yards for the undermanned Bears.

Much like the preseason

opener against the Jets, the focus for Giants fans was on Jones, the sixth pick overall in the draft and a young man many think will lead the team back to respectability.

Jones looked good throwing the ball, hitting 11 of 14 for 161 yards, including a 15-yard touchdown to TJ Jones. The Duke product also showed some flaws, turning over the ball twice on fumbles. He failed to handle a snap at the Bears 19 and coughed up the ball when sacked by James Vaughters.

“That's the way the game goes sometimes,” Daniel Jones said. “You have to try to bounce back and try to score some points.”

Manning was very solid, leading the Giants on a 10-play, 79-yard drive that was capped with an 8-yard toss to Bennie Fowler III. He was 4 of 4 for 42 yards.

Rosen gets start in Dolphins' loss to Bucs

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Miami coach Brian Flores gave second-year quarterback Josh Rosen a shot against Tampa Bay's first defensive unit and liked what he saw.

Rosen was a surprise starter and went 10-for-18 for 102 yards during the first half in the Dolphins' 16-14 loss to the Buccaneers on Friday night.

“I thought he played well, made some good decisions out there,” Flores said. “He was into the game. He was ready to go. I thought he did a good job in the huddle, getting the play calls in. I thought he played well from that standpoint.”

Rosen, battling with 15-year veteran Ryan Fitzpatrick for the Dolphins' starting job, helped Miami to a pair of field goals and a 6-3 halftime lead. He was sacked three times.

“I would like to not see him take as many sacks,” Flores said. “But I thought he threw the ball well, had some drops. That didn't help him.”

Fitzpatrick, who spent the

previous two seasons with Tampa Bay, entered to start the second half and completed 3 of 9 passes for 20 yards before being replaced by Jake Rudock five minutes into the fourth quarter.

Fitzpatrick is expected to start next week's game against Jacksonville.

Tampa Bay rookie Matt Gay had two field goals, including a go-ahead 48-yarder with 6 seconds to play.

Buccaneers quarterback Jameis Winston played one series for the second consecutive week, completing 2 of 4 passes for 24 yards. He is in the final year of his rookie contract at a salary of nearly \$21 million.

The Dolphins got within 13-12 on an 8-yard strike from Rudock to Patrick Laird with 34 seconds remaining in the fourth period. Rudock then put the Dolphins up 14-13 by hitting Trenton Irwin for the 2-point conversion.

“Most teams, when you give up that touchdown and 2-point conversion, you go in the tank,” Bucs coach Bruce Arians said.

“Offensive guys had a plan, they were ready to go. They went and won the game. Winning is fun in this league.”

The Buccaneers had a no-pass-interference call overturned after a video review with 3:36 left in the fourth that led to a tiebreaking touchdown. After the penalty on Tyler Patmon for interfering Justin Watson put the ball on the Miami 4, Ryan Griffin connected with Tanner Hudson for a 13-6 lead on the next play.

Arians opted to have his regulars play less than they might normally in a second preseason game because of the work done during joint practices with the Dolphins on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Miami's Jason Sanders made second-period field goals from 45 and 49 yards, the final one coming with 1 second remaining.

Gay kicked a 32-yard field goal in the second quarter. Cairo Santos tied it at 6 with a 23-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter.