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Ex-fighter pilots push cancer screenings

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Former Air Force and Navy fighter pilots are calling on the military to begin cancer screenings for aviators as young as 30 because of an increase in deaths from the disease that they suspect may be tied to radiation emitted in the cockpit.

“We are dropping like flies in our 50s from aggressive cancers,” said retired Air Force Col. Eric Nelson, a former F-15E Strike Eagle weapons officer. He cited prostate and esophageal cancers, lymphoma and glioblastomas that have struck fellow pilots he knew, commanded or flew with.

Nelson’s prostate cancer was first detected at age 48, three months after he retired from the Air Force. In his career he has more than 2,600 flying hours, including commanding

the 455th Air Expeditionary Group in Bagram, Afghanistan, and as commander of six squadrons of F-15E fighter jets at the 4th Operations Group at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

Last month McClatchy reported on a new Air Force study that reviewed the risk for prostate cancers among its fighter pilots and new Veterans Health Administration data showing that the rate of reported cases of prostate cancers per year among veterans using the VA health care system across all services has risen almost 16% since fiscal year 2000.

The Air Force study also looked at cockpit exposure, finding that “pilots have greater environmental exposure to ultraviolet and ionizing radiation ... (fighter pilots) have unique intra-cockpit exposures to non-ionizing radiation.”

Retired Navy Cmdr. Mike Crosby served as a radar intercept officer in F-14 fighter jets from 1984 to 1997, accumulating more than 2,000 flight hours. He started Veterans Prostate Cancer Awareness Inc. in 2016 after his own prostate cancer diagnosis at age 55.

“I think there’s been a lot of avoidance in addressing this issue,” he said.

Crosby and other pilots who contacted McClatchy said they suspect the cancers in their community may be linked to prolonged exposure in the cockpit to radiation from the radar systems on their advanced jets, or sources such as from cockpit oxygen generation systems.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that exposure to some types of radiation can cause cancer. However, to date there has been no link established between the

specific radiation emitted from radars on the advanced jets and the illnesses pilots are now seeing.

“When you’re 30 years old you need to start screening for prostate cancer, even if it comes out of your own pocket,” Nelson said. “You need to see a urologist once a year. Not your primary care physician, not your flight doc. Pay the money and stick around for your great-grandkids.”

The military’s health care system, Tricare, currently covers prostate cancer screenings at age 50 for servicemembers with no family history of the disease and as young as age 40 if there is a family history of the disease in two or more family members. The pilots who spoke with McClatchy said they did not have a family history of prostate cancer when they were diagnosed.

US Navy, Coast Guard wrap up joint training with Malaysia

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy finished five days of training with its Malaysian counterparts on Sunday, the 25th year of a regular exercise and the first year the U.S. Coast Guard has taken part.

Maritime Training Activity Malaysia 2019 closed with a ceremony at the Royal Malaysian Naval Base at Lumut on the Strait of Malacca, the Navy said in a news release.

The exercise involved drills to improve maritime security and law enforcement skills and included training in counterpiracy, countersmuggling, port security and maritime interceptions. More than 300 sailors and Coast Guardsmen from both countries took part, according to the Navy.

The Coast Guard contingent trained with its counterparts from the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency.

The Strait of Malacca is an important commercial waterway that links the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea. The United States has worked with friendly nations and allies in the area, from Sri Lanka to Indonesia and Australia, to improve “interoperability,” the ability to work together in the event of a crisis, as well as tend to friendly relationships.

The U.S. Coast Guard commandant, Adm. Karl Schultz, in July told reporters that Malaysia is among several countries in the Indo-Pacific region whose coast guard the United States has helped train. At the time, Schultz said partnering with western Pacific island

nations will help the United States counter assertive action by China to expand its sphere of influence.

“We are collaborating, working very diligently with the Vietnamese,” the admiral said at the time. “We’ve worked with the Malaysians, the Indonesians, helping them build out their capacity, with the Philippines, as I’ve mentioned.”

During the Malaysian exercise last week, the two nations held naval exercises at sea, including tactical drills, replenishment at sea and visit, board, search and seizure drills.

The expeditionary fast transport USNS Millinocket and the replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock practiced with a frigate and corvette from the Malaysian navy and a vessel from the Malaysian coast

guard, according to the Navy.

U.S. and Malaysian helicopter pilots practiced deck landings in the Navy’s MH-60S Seahawk, the Coast Guard’s MH-65 Dolphin and the Royal Malaysian Navy’s Super Lynx.

Onshore portions of the exercise included classroom sessions on damage control, military operations and law, military medicine and aviation maintenance. Sailors from Task Force 73, Destroyer Squadron 7, the littoral combat ship USS Montgomery, the Coast Guard cutter Stratton and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 took part, according to the Navy. All the vessels and units are part of the U.S. 7th Fleet, which is headquartered at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

Marine faces hearing over firearms charges

Associated Press

HONOLULU — A Marine stationed in Hawaii faces a military hearing this week after officials say he tried to enter an Air Force base while off-duty and heavily armed in his home state of Nebraska.

Pfc. Ali Al-Kazahg, 22, is in custody in Hawaii on allegations that he tried to enter Offutt Air Force Base with two semi-automatic rifles, a pistol, a silencer, a bump stock, a vest with body armor and a case of ammunition while on leave. His arrest came a week after he was listed on a law enforcement alert for making threats, The Omaha World-Herald reported.

A preliminary military court hearing at Marine Corps Base Hawaii is scheduled for Wednesday. A hearing officer is expected to recommend whether charges including carrying a concealed weapon, possessing modified firearms, making threats and fraudulent enlistment should go to court-martial.

Al-Kazahg was visiting Nebraska, where he grew up, when guards stopped his pickup May 31 at an Offutt gate after seeing his name on a law enforcement “be on the lookout” bulletin.

The World-Herald, which obtained the bulletin, reported Al-Kazahg was listed because he told another Marine he would “shoot up the battalion,

starting at the barracks” if he were disciplined for certain misconduct.

He also mentioned specific Marines he wanted to target, the newspaper reported. The bulletin said Al-Kazahg didn’t make any threats against anyone in Nebraska.

Al-Kazahg’s sister believes he had “zero intentions” of hurting anyone and said he had most of his belongings, including his guns, in his truck because he’d been staying with friends.

Nedhal Al-Kazahy told The Associated Press from Lincoln, Neb., that her brother went to Offutt to work out at a gym there. She believes her brother, the son of Iraqi refu-

gees, was targeted because of his race. She said other Marines have called him Muslim, even though he’s Christian, and thrown bacon on his bed.

The siblings’ last names are spelled differently because of a birth certificate mix-up, she said.

The Marine Corps denied that the charges were racially motivated and said it doesn’t tolerate racism or bullying.

“We expect all Marines to act in a professional manner to maintain an atmosphere of dignity and respect and ensure an environment free from discrimination, harassment and assault,” Marine spokesman Capt. Eric Abrams said.

USAF base dedicates facility to slain airmen

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A building at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., now bears the name of a former Spangdahlem airman who was murdered last year outside his Louisiana home, one of five Barksdale airmen and civilians to be killed in the last 14 months.

Tech Sgt. Joshua Kidd’s family, including his wife and young son, unveiled the new name — “TSgt Joshua L. Kidd Weapons Load Training Facility” — at a dedication ceremony last week, the Air Force said in a statement.

Kidd was killed by a gunshot to the chest on the morning of Sept. 25, 2018, after he interrupted two youths who prosecutors say were trying to steal items from his car outside his Bossier City home.

Two Louisiana teenagers have been charged as adults in connection with his death.

“I would wish more than anything that Josh could see this,” the Air Force statement quoted

his wife, Alyssa Kidd, as saying at the ceremony Friday. “There are no words to describe what it’s like to see all of you come out and support Joshua. It’s a true testament to how he impacted each and every one of us.”

Final approval for dedicating the building in Kidd’s name came from Gen. Timothy Ray, head of Air Force Global Strike Command, the service said.

Kidd was recognized during the ceremony for his “unwavering leadership and influential legacy,” the Air Force said.

A GoFundMe campaign created last year, which raised nearly \$44,000 for Alyssa Kidd and the couple’s young son, Beckham, said Kidd went out of his way to assist deployed airmen and their families and often mentored younger airmen.

Kidd was one of five members of the Barksdale community to be murdered since June 2018, according to the Air Force.

African militaries work on valuing NCOs as US does

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

GARMISCH, Germany — High-ranking enlisted troops in Africa aren’t always proud of their rank, one senior noncommissioned officer confessed to a room full of his peers from nearly 30 African countries and the U.S., who had gathered in this Bavarian resort town.

“It’s hard to keep motivation up,” the man said during a panel discussion about NCO empowerment here last week. But, he added, “I’m proud to be here.”

The senior enlisted leader’s identity was withheld so he could speak freely during a portion of the third annual African senior enlisted leader conference Stars and Stripes attended. Organized by and for NCOs, the event sought to advance a U.S. Africa Command-backed strategy to bolster enlisted ranks — the military’s “backbone” — throughout the continent.

Designed to be African-led,

the plan is aligned with the African Union’s “Agenda 2063,” which outlines aspirations for a continentwide “renaissance,” including goals for good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and more, AFRICOM officials said.

Strengthening military professionalism across Africa can help stabilize the region and contain violent extremism, they said.

The idea is to “work ourselves out of a job,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Jeremiah Inman, U.S. Army Africa’s top enlisted soldier, and to reduce the likelihood of deploying U.S. combat troops to the region.

The unnamed African NCO’s comments, and those of others at the conference last week, illustrate the challenges officials face in some African militaries, where senior enlisted ranks don’t have the same status as in the U.S. military.

Officers are sometimes wary of them and opportunities for professional development are rare, officials said.

Iran warns US not to target freed tanker

Bloomberg News

LONDON — Iran warned the U.S. against targeting a supertanker carrying the Middle East country's oil as the vessel departed Gibraltar after being seized last month by U.K. forces and held in the British territory.

The tanker, detained by the British on suspicion of hauling oil to Syria in violation of European sanctions, set sail from Gibraltar after being released late last week and is signaling Greece as its next destination.

"The U.S. surely can't seize the Iranian tanker and, if it does, it would pose a threat to international maritime secu-

rency," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said. Iran warned the U.S. via "diplomatic channels," including Switzerland, against interfering with the tanker, formerly known as Grace 1, in international waters, Mousavi said at a news conference in Tehran. Swiss diplomats serve as interlocutors between the U.S. and Iran.

The ship, renamed the Adrian Darya 1, changed its intended destination Monday to the Greek port of Kalamata from its previous indication of the Mediterranean Sea, according to vessel-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg and data from MarineTraffic.com.

Gibraltar rejected an attempt by the U.S. to block the ship's release Sunday. The territory's Supreme Court last week separately released the tanker over U.S. objections.

Kalamata is itself an unlikely final destination for the vessel. A port mainly serving pleasure craft like sailboats and cruise ships, Kalamata can't handle vessels with drafts greater than 26 feet, Gyannoula Nikolaous, the acting harbor master, said by phone.

The tanker laden with Iranian oil has a maximum draft — a measurement of how low a vessel sits in the water when full — of about 72 feet, according to ship-tracking data com-

plied by Bloomberg.

The waters off Kalamata could be a possible location for ship-to-ship cargo transfers, according to two vessel brokers without specific information about the tanker's plans. Tanker crews enter destinations into ship logs that get picked up by vessel-tracking satellites. The destinations can be altered multiple times on the same journey.

The vessel's status was "under way using engine" with a speed of 7 knots as of 10:30 a.m. Monday in Dubai, according to ship-tracking data. The tanker has an estimated time of arrival at Kalamata of Aug. 25.

Afghan leader vows to crush ISIS safe havens

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's president on Monday vowed to "eliminate" all safe havens of Islamic State as the country marked a subdued 100th Independence Day after a horrific wedding attack claimed by the local ISIS affiliate.

President Ashraf Ghani's comments came as Afghanistan mourns at least 63 people, including children, killed in the Kabul bombing at a wedding hall late Saturday night. Close to 200 others were wounded.

Fresh violence was reported Monday as an Afghan official said at least 66 people were wounded in a series of explosions in the eastern city of Jalalabad. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Many outraged Afghans are asking whether an approaching deal between the United States and the Taliban to end nearly 18 years of fighting will bring peace to long-suffering civilians. The wedding hall bomber detonated his explosives in the middle of a dancing crowd, and the ISIS affiliate later said he

had targeted a gathering of minority Shiites, whom it views as apostates deserving of death.

Both the bride and groom survived, and in an emotional interview with local broadcaster TOLONews the distraught groom, Mirwais Alani, said their lives were devastated within seconds. Even as victims' loved ones mourned, there were fears that funerals and memorials could also be targeted.

A sharply worded Taliban statement questioned why the U.S. failed to identify Sat-

urday's attacker in advance. Another Taliban statement marking the independence day said to "leave Afghanistan to the Afghans."

More than anything in their nearly yearlong negotiations with the U.S., the Taliban want some 20,000 U.S. and allied forces to withdraw from the country. The U.S., for its part, wants Taliban assurances that Afghanistan — which hosted al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden before 9/11 — will not be a launching pad for global terrorist attacks.

Turkey: Airstrikes targeted army convoy in Syria; 3 killed

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Airstrikes targeted a Turkish army convoy inside Syria on Monday, killing three civilians and wounding 12 others, the Turkish Defense Ministry said, but there was no word on Turkish casualties.

The ministry said the convoy was attacked while heading to a Turkish observation post in the rebel-held stronghold of Idlib, where Syrian troops have

been on the offensive since late April.

However, Syria's Foreign Ministry said the convoy of armored vehicles was delivering ammunition to a major rebel-held town, Khan Sheikhoun, which lies on the front line of fighting along the southern edge of the enclave.

The town is a stronghold of the al-Qaida-linked militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the most powerful group in the

rebel-held areas.

The Turkish move into Idlib appears to be a message by Ankara that it will not allow Syrian forces to capture Khan Sheikhoun. Syrian government forces entered its outskirts earlier Monday.

The town's fall would also cut the highway linking Idlib to northern parts of Hama province, home to one of Turkey's 12 observation posts on the edge of Idlib province.

It was not immediately clear whether Syrian government or Russian warplanes had struck near the convoy, but the development marked a sharp escalation in tensions in Idlib.

The Turkish Defense Ministry's brief statement did not provide further details but "strongly condemned" the airstrikes, adding that they were "against existing agreements as well as our cooperation and dialogue with Russia."

White House to end payments of some foreign aid projects

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration will move forward within days with a plan to cancel certain foreign aid payments authorized by Congress, setting up a fight with lawmakers opposed to the move.

A senior administration official confirmed that the so-called rescissions package would be announced early this week.

Some of the funding being zeroed out was for projects like installing solar panels in the Caribbean and creating safe spaces in Ireland for people upset about Brexit, said the

administration official, who declined to be identified discussing plans not yet made public.

CNN reported Saturday that the move would take aim at funding for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as the United Nations for certain peacekeeping operations in the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

The official said that Congress, during the Trump administration, has funded State and USAID at about \$12 billion above the president's budget requests and that the rescission package would return some of that excess back to the budget.

Republican lawmakers who are typically Trump allies, notably Sen. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, last week urged the president to reconsider "in the strongest possible terms" after word of the possible rescissions was reported.

"We share your concern about our mounting national debt, which in itself creates security risks to the country," Graham and Rep. Hal Rogers, of Kentucky, said in a letter to Trump.

"However, it has been reported that this proposal makes sweeping and indiscriminate cuts without regard to national security impacts."

NYPD fires officer in death of Eric Garner

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After five years of investigations and protests, New York City's police commissioner on Monday fired an officer involved in the 2014 chokehold death of an unarmed black man whose dying cries of "I can't breathe" fueled a national debate over race and police use of force.

Police Commissioner James O'Neill announced at a midday news conference that he had fired Officer Daniel Pantaleo, who is white, based on a recent recommendation of a department disciplinary judge. He said it was clear that Pantaleo "can no longer effectively serve as a New York City police officer."

"None of us can take back our decisions," O'Neill said, "especially when they lead to the death of another human being."

O'Neill has been deliberating on whether to accept a disciplinary judge's recommendation to fire Pantaleo for using a banned chokehold on Eric Garner.

The recordings led to years of protests and calls by black activists and liberal politicians for Pantaleo to lose his job.

City officials had long insisted, though, they couldn't take action until criminal investigations were complete.

A state grand jury declined to indict Pantaleo in 2014.

Federal authorities, however, kept a civil rights investigation open for five years before announcing last month they wouldn't bring charges.

Pantaleo's lawyer has insisted the officer used a reasonable amount of force and didn't mean to hurt Garner.

New York City's mayor has declined to say whether he believes Pantaleo should lose his job but has been promising "justice" to the slain man's family.

US, Venezuelan socialist boss secretly meet

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia — The U.S. has made secret contact with Venezuela's socialist party boss as close allies of President Nicolas Maduro's inner circle seek guarantees they won't face prosecution for alleged abuses and crimes if they cede to growing demands to remove him, according to a senior Trump administration official.

Diosdado Cabello, who is considered the most powerful man in Venezuela after Maduro, met last month in Caracas with someone who is in close contact with the Trump administration, the official told The Associated Press. A second meeting is in the works but has not yet taken place.

The AP is withholding the intermediary's name and details of the encounter with Cabello out of concern the person could suffer reprisals. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because they aren't authorized to discuss the talks, which are still preliminary. It's not clear whether the talks have Maduro's approval.

Cabello, 56, is a major power broker inside Venezuela, who has seen his influence in the government and security forces expand as Maduro's grip on power has weakened. But he's also been accused by U.S. officials of being behind massive corruption, drug trafficking and even death threats against a sitting U.S. senator.

The administration official said that under no circumstances is the U.S. looking to prop up Cabello or pave the way for him to substitute Maduro. Instead, the goal of the outreach is to ratchet

up pressure on the regime by contributing to the fight the U.S. believes is taking place behind the scenes among competing circles of power within the ruling party.

Similar contacts exist with other top Venezuelan insiders, the official said, and the U.S. is in a listening mode to hear what it would take for them to betray Maduro and support a transition plan.

But an aide said the U.S. has been increasingly knocking on his door, desperately looking to establish contact. The aide rejected the notion Cabello was somehow betraying Maduro, saying that Cabello would meet with Americans only with the president's permission and if it contributes to lifting sanctions he blames for crippling the oil-dependent economy. The aide spoke on the condition of anonymity because he isn't authorized to discuss political affairs publicly.

A person familiar with the July encounter said Cabello appeared savvy and arrived to the meeting with the U.S.-backed envoy well-prepared, with a clear understanding of Venezuela's political problems. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they aren't authorized to discuss the matter.

As head of the constitutional assembly, Cabello has the power to remove Maduro, a position that could come in handy in any negotiated transition. But to date, he's run the institution, which the U.S. considers illegitimate, as a rubber-stamping foil to the opposition-controlled congress, showing no signs of possible deception.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Airport worker fired for writing 'ugly' note

NY ROCHESTER — An airport security worker in New York has been fired for handing a passenger a handwritten note that said, "You ugly!!!"

The June incident came to light last week after passenger Neal Strassner obtained security video through a public records request and posted it to YouTube.

The video from Greater Rochester International Airport shows the worker handing Strassner the note after he passes through a metal detector. Strassner said he didn't think much of it and continued toward his gate. That's when he said the woman yelled out, "You gonna open the note?"

Strassner said that when he did, the woman burst out laughing. He later complained to her supervisors.

Carbon dioxide tank explodes at wedding

NJ GARFIELD — Authorities said a carbon dioxide tank being used by a disc jockey at a New Jersey wedding exploded, injuring three people on the dance floor.

NorthJersey.com reported that Garfield police said the tank exploded shortly after 11 p.m. Friday at the Venetian.

Deputy Chief Ron Polonkay said the 32- to 34-year-old victims were taken to Hackensack University Medical Center with injuries not considered life-threatening. All were reported in stable condition.

Window-washers saved as lift crashes

CO DENVER — Firefighters rescued two

window-washers after a mechanical lift crashed through a parking garage in Denver's Cherry Creek neighborhood, the Denver Post reported. The crash also ruptured a gas line.

Police told the Post that the incident happened Saturday on Cook Street. Denver Fire Department spokesman Lt. Robbie Turner said two workers were rescued by fire officials and evaluated at Denver Health.

Turner said he did not know if the workers were injured.

Woman thinks she's ill, gives birth to 3

SD STURGIS — A South Dakota woman who recently gave birth to triplets said she didn't find out about her pregnancy until she went to the hospital with what she thought were kidney stones.

KOTA-TV reported that Dannette Giltz, of Sturgis, gave birth to the healthy triplets on Aug. 10.

Giltz said that despite having two other children, she did not know she was 34 weeks pregnant. She said that when she started having pains, she thought it was from kidney stones.

The triplets were born within four minutes. Each weighed about 4 pounds. The babies' names are Blaze, Gypsy and Nikki.

Man in loader dumps dirt on girlfriend

FL CRESTVIEW — Authorities said a Florida man used a front-end loader to dump a large bucket full of dirt on a car with his girlfriend inside.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office said Hunter Mills, 20, was charged with felony criminal mischief.

The sheriff's office said Mills invited his girlfriend to talk with him at a dirt pit in Crestview where he worked.

Officials say the girlfriend arrived in a white sedan owned by someone else, and after he asked her a question, he used a front-end loader to dump a mound of dirt atop the car.

She wasn't hurt.

Man guilty after rap battle leads to murder

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A St. Paul man has been found guilty of fatally stabbing a man earlier this year after they offended each other during a rap battle.

The Star Tribune reported that Quinten Osgood, 29, was convicted Friday of two counts of second-degree murder and one count of first-degree manslaughter for the January killing of Anthony Madison.

Authorities say Osgood was attending a party at Madison's home Jan. 3 and the two started arguing over music. Prosecutors say Madison ordered Osgood to leave, and he damaged a gate as he left.

Madison confronted him outside, and the two fell to the ground fighting. Prosecutors say Osgood stabbed Madison during the fight, killing him. Osgood told jurors he acted in self-defense.

Man sentenced for taking fireman's truck

CA CHICO — One of two men convicted of stealing a firefighter's pickup truck during the deadliest wildfire in California history has been sentenced to 41 days in jail and three years of probation.

The Chico Enterprise-Record reported that Robert Depalma, of Concow, was also ordered to

pay more than \$6,000 in restitution at his sentencing in Butte County Superior Court on Friday.

Prosecutors said Depalma and William Erlbacher stole the truck from a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection station on Nov. 8, when the wildfire broke out and largely leveled the town of Paradise and killed 86 people.

Erlbacher admitted to taking the truck, and Depalma admitted to driving it for several days.

Amusement park to debut new steel ride

OH MASON — A new steel roller coaster is set to debut at one of Ohio's largest amusement parks next year.

"Orion" will open at Kings Island in Mason in spring 2020.

Kings Island officials say it will be the tallest and fastest coaster at the Cincinnati-area amusement park.

The Orion will move at 91 mph and feature a 300-foot drop.

Message in bottle is from Russian navy

AK NOME — A 50-year-old letter in a bottle was discovered by a man on the shores of western Alaska, connecting him with the Russian navy.

KNOM-AM reported Aug. 13 that Tyler Ivanoff found the handwritten Russian letter early this month while gathering firewood near Shishmaref.

Officials said Ivanoff posted photos on Facebook, where Russian speakers translated the message to be a greeting from the Russian navy dated 1969.

From wire reports

On a mission to provide objective reporting to America's military, wherever they serve.
Read us online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Champ Clemson stands alone in ACC

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Reigning national champion Clemson has taken any drama out of the Atlantic Coast Conference race.

At least on paper.

Dabo Swinney's program has risen to the top of college football, not just the ACC, during a multi-year tear. The Tigers enter the 2019 season with four straight ACC championships, the kind of domination last seen when Bobby Bowden's Florida State teams romped through the 1990s with at least a share of nine straight titles.

They're an overwhelming favorite yet again as they contend for a third national title in four seasons.

"Truly, we don't carry everything over," Swinney said, adding: "It's always about what's next. You've got to show up every year with something to prove."

That mission now is becoming the first power conference team to win five consecutive league championship games. The strength will be on an offense led by quarterback Trevor Lawrence — the preseason ACC player of the year and one of 13 Tigers players making up nearly half of the 27-player preseason all-conference team.

With Clemson taking its place alongside Alabama as college football's unquestioned top programs, the Tigers had only one close call last year: a 27-23 home win against Syracuse after Lawrence was knocked from the game days after former starter Kelly Bryant decided to transfer. The Tigers won their other seven ACC regular-season games by an average margin of 40.1 points, beat Pittsburgh 42-10 in the league title game then blew out Notre Dame and Alabama to become college football's first 15-0 team since the 1800s.

The strongest challenge could come from Syracuse within the Atlantic Division. The Orange won 10 games in Year 3 under Dino Babers and offer an immediate challenge by hosting the Tigers on Sept. 14. Syracuse is the last ACC team to beat Clemson, that one coming two years ago in the Carrier Dome.

On the other side, the Coastal Division continues to offer a bewildering amount of turnover at the top with a different team winning the title for the past six seasons.

Here are some other things to know about the upcoming ACC football season:

The favorites

Atlantic. Clemson. The Tigers are 34-2 against league teams dating to the 2015 season with 26 wins by double-digit margins. Enough said.

Coastal. Virginia. The only team not to win the Coastal in the past six years is the pre-season favorite Cavaliers, who return nine defensive starters from an eight-win team. "We have as good a chance as anyone on our side of the division to win this league," Virginia coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "I don't think it's a stretch to say that. Now, doing that is the next part."

Top players

Trevor Lawrence, Clemson. The quarterback lived up to the hype as a freshman, throwing for 3,280 yards and 30 touchdowns with four interceptions.

Travis Etienne, Clemson: The junior ran for 1,658 yards and 24 touchdowns, ranking 15th nationally in rushing (110.5 yards per game).

AJ Dillon, Boston College. The junior running back is healthy after playing through an ankle injury last season, though he still ranked 13th nationally (110.8) and joins Etienne in giving the Atlantic

Division the potential for some big rushing totals this fall.

Bryce Perkins, Virginia. The senior's return is a key reason why Virginia is the Coastal favorite. He threw for 2,680 yards and 25 touchdowns while running for 923 yards and nine more scores.

New faces

For the second time in four seasons, the league will have four new head coaches with three in the Coastal Division:

Scott Satterfield, Louisville. The 46-year-old had a strong run at Appalachian State and now must rebuild a Louisville program that abruptly bottomed out under fired coach Bobby Petrino.

Geoff Collins, Georgia Tech. Collins arrives from Temple to replace Paul Johnson, who retired after 11 seasons directing a run-heavy option scheme. Now Collins is trying to reshape the offense while adapting to players recruited to the option scheme.

Manny Diaz, Miami. Diaz had left as Miami's defensive coordinator to become Temple's new coach, only to end up taking over the Hurricanes after Richt's unexpected retirement.

Tigers top AP preseason poll for first time

Associated Press

Cross off another milestone for Clemson, college football's newest superpower.

For the first time, the defending national champion Tigers are No. 1 in The Associated Press preseason Top 25. The Tigers won the program's second national title in three seasons behind freshman quarterback Trevor Lawrence in January. Clemson now can claim equal standing with Alabama at the top of the sport.

The Crimson Tide, coming off a 44-16 loss to Clemson in the College Football Playoff championship, is No. 2. Clemson re-

ceived 52 first-place votes and Alabama received the other 10 from the media. Clemson snaps a record-tying string of three straight years in which Alabama was preseason No. 1.

Georgia, Alabama's Southeastern Conference rival, is No. 3, followed by No. 4 Oklahoma and No. 5 Ohio State.

Clemson's rise under coach Dabo Swinney has been uncommon in college football. The school won the national championship in 1981, but mostly it had resided on a tier well below the traditional national powers. Clemson football was usually good and sometimes excellent, but never this.

Last season's championship made Clemson just the 12th school with at least three AP titles since the poll started in 1936.

The Tigers enter 2019 with a 15-game winning streak and eight straight double-digit victory seasons. Since 2015, when they lost the national championship game to Alabama, the Tigers are 55-4.

Nick Saban's Alabama dynasty, with five national titles in a 10-year span, has finally met its match. The Tide is also 55-4 in the last four seasons.

Clemson and Alabama have split the last four national championships, played in

the last four playoffs and are poised to make it five straight. This will be the third time since 2016 the Tigers and Tide have started the season Nos. 1 and 2 in the Top 25. Beginning with 2015, when Alabama and Clemson occupied the top two spots in the last four AP polls of the season, the Tide and Tigers have been Nos. 1 and 2 in some order 22 times.

Last year's Clemson team was highlighted by a defensive line that had three starters selected in the first round of the NFL Draft, and a fourth taken in round four.

MLB roundup

Cubs crush Pirates in Williamsport

Associated Press

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa.— Jose Quintana pitched seven crisp innings, Anthony Rizzo hit a two-run homer and the Chicago Cubs beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 7-1 on Sunday night in the MLB Little League Classic.

Nicholas Castellanos and Jason Heyward also connected as Chicago earned its second straight win since consecutive heartbreaking losses to the Phillies and Pirates.

The Cubs took two of three in the unusual weekend set and remain in a virtual tie with St. Louis for the top spot in the NL Central.

Starling Marte had three hits for Pittsburgh, including his 21st homer in the ninth. Mitch Keller (1-2) allowed six runs in 4¹/₃ innings.

With grinning Little Leaguers dressed in their uniforms filling the stands at BB&T Ballpark, Quintana (11-7) allowed five hits and walked none. The left-hander improved to 7-0 in nine starts since his last loss June 22.

Braves 5, Dodgers 3: With All-Star outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr. benched for not hustling, Rafael Ortega stepped up with a sixth-inning grand slam to lift host Atlanta over Los Angeles.

Acuna was pulled before the fifth after failing to run out a drive off the right field wall in the third. The ball bounced off the wall for a long single. The 21-year-old Acuna likely would have had an easy double if he had hustled from home plate.

Braves manager Brian Snitker followed Acuna into the tunnel for an apparent conversation during the fourth inning before

Adam Duvall entered the game in left field in the fifth, with Ortega moving from left to center.

Mets 11, Royals 5: Pete Alonso hit his 40th home run to break the National League rookie record, capping a late outburst by New York in a win at Kansas City. Michael Conforto launched a long homer in the first inning and drove in four runs. Amed Rosario put the Mets ahead 6-4 with a two-run single in the seventh, and Alonso went deep in the ninth. He snapped a tie with Cody Bellinger, who hit 39 home runs for the Dodgers in 2017 on the way to winning Rookie of the Year honors.

Indians 8, Yankees 4: Mike Clevinger struck out 10 in five shutout innings to win his seventh straight decision, Mike Freeman had three extra-base hits and Cleveland won at New York for a four-game split between AL pennant contenders.

Freeman hit a three-run homer and a pair of doubles. Oscar Mercado homered and drove in three runs, and Francisco Lindor also connected for the Indians.

Red Sox 13, Orioles 7: Rafael Devers went 4-for-5 with a homer, two doubles and four RBIs as host Boston rallied from an early six-run deficit to complete a three-game sweep of Baltimore.

Cardinals 5, Reds 4: Paul Goldschmidt hit a two-run homer, Tommy Edman added a solo shot among his three hits and St. Louis won at Cincinnati to split their four-game series.

Rays 5, Tigers 4: Ji-Man Choi's two-run single in the bottom of the ninth completed a rally from a late three-run deficit, and host Tampa Bay kept itself in the AL's second wild-card spot and avoided a series

loss to Detroit.

Nationals 16, Brewers 8: Juan Soto hit two of Washington's team record-tying eight homers in a 16-8 rout of visiting Milwaukee.

Twins 6, Rangers 3: Jorge Polanco cleared the bases with a tiebreaking triple in the eighth inning, helping visiting Minnesota to its first-ever four-game sweep of Texas.

Mariners 7, Blue Jays 0: Yusei Kikuchi pitched his first shutout in the majors, throwing a two-hitter that led Seattle to a win at Toronto. Kikuchi (5-8) struck out eight, walked one and retired the final 14 batters in his first win since beating Baltimore on June 23. It was his 26th start for the Mariners.

Padres 3, Phillies 2: Austin Hedges had four hits, including a tiebreaking homer in the seventh, and Joey Lucchesi pitched six strong innings to lead San Diego to a win at Philadelphia.

Rockies 7, Marlins 6 (10): Garrett Hampson hit a bases-loaded single in the bottom of the 10th inning, and host Colorado rallied to complete a three-game sweep of Miami.

Diamondbacks 6, Giants 1: Wilmer Flores and David Peralta homered, Merrill Kelly held San Francisco to one run in 5²/₃ innings, and host Arizona avoided a four-game sweep.

Angels 9, White Sox 2: Shohei Ohtani, Kole Calhoun, Matt Thaiss and Anthony Bemboom all homered to lead host Los Angeles over Chicago.

Greinke gets 200th win to stop Astros' skid

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — After earning his 200th win, Zack Greinke hopes he's on his way to even bigger achievements with the Houston Astros this season.

Greinke reached the milestone with seven smooth innings Sunday, pitching the first-place Astros past the Oakland Athletics 4-1 to avoid a four-game sweep.

Alex Bregman had a three-run homer among his four hits to back Greinke, who won his third straight start since joining Houston from the Arizona Diamondbacks at the July 31 trade deadline to make the Astros a World Series favorite.

"Wins are good. You look back at the end of the year and the team wins a lot and you win a lot, you can't ask for much more than that," Greinke said. "I wouldn't say there's many

pitchers that would say that that's the No. 1 most important stat for them, but if you and the team are winning, it's the most important. It doesn't necessarily say you're pitching the best, but it's the most important."

Greinke (13-4) went nine up, nine down on 25 pitches to start the game before giving up Marcus Semien's 21st homer — two days after Semien doubled to break up a perfect game bid by Justin Verlander.

Greinke allowed four hits with three walks and six strikeouts to help the Astros stop a five-game losing streak. He became the 115th pitcher in major league history to reach 200 career wins, and the second in Houston's rotation along with Verlander.

"Yuli Gurriel added an RBI double in the sixth for undermanned Houston, which had a two-man bench.

3-shot win puts Thomas ahead at next event

Associated Press

MEDINAH, Ill. — Staked to a six-shot lead, Justin Thomas spent more time Sunday worrying about what could go wrong than ending 12 months without winning.

And right when it started to go wrong, Thomas delivered his biggest shots in the BMW Championship.

In a span of three holes around the turn at Medinah, his six-shot lead shrunk to two. Thomas answered with two clutch wedge shots, two big putts and sailed to a 4-under 68 to secure a three-shot victory over Patrick Cantlay, who gave him a battle to the end with a 65.

“Patrick played unbelievably, put a lot of heat on me,” Thomas said. “In the end, it could have been good for me. It kept me focused, kept my head down. ... I was really nervous going into today. I remembered that it’s really hard to win a golf tournament, and I’m glad that I was able to do so.”

The timing was ideal.

His first victory since the World Golf Championship at Firestone last year moved him to the top of the FedEx Cup going into the Tour Championship, where he will start the tournament at 10-under par with a two-shot lead under the new scoring format as the final 30 players chase a \$15 million first prize.

“I can certainly say I never slept on a Wednesday lead,” Thomas said.

Cantlay, who made four straight birdies around the turn, secured the No. 2 position and will start at 8 under. Brooks Koepka will be 7 under, a staggered start all the way down to even par for the final five players.

That includes Lucas Glover, who went bogey-double bogey until finishing with a two-putt par from 40 feet to secure his first trip to the Tour Championship in 10 years.

It will not include Masters champion Tiger Woods, the defending champion.

Woods was a long shot going into the final

round to crack the top 30, and he closed with a 72. East Lake was his first victory in five years, capping his return from four back surgeries, a special moment replaced by his Masters victory.

“It’s disappointing,” Woods said. “Last year culminated in a pretty special moment for me and would have been nice to go back there.”

Only seven players dating to 1928 had ever lost a six-shot lead on the PGA Tour. Thomas didn’t want to be the next.

That’s why he shut off his phone on his way to the course. It seemed everyone but him had already declared him the winner, and he found no refuge in the locker room.

“Guys giving me advice in the locker room how to finish off a tournament,” Thomas said. “I was like, ‘I’ve done this a couple times guys but, thank you.’ That’s what I was saying on the way over here. It’s a lot of the outside noise.”

Briefly

Raiders GM tells Brown: It’s time ‘to be all-in or all out’

Associated Press

Oakland Raiders general manager Mike Mayock told disgruntled receiver Antonio Brown it’s time to decide whether he’s “all-in or all out” about playing this season after losing a fight with the NFL and NFLPA over his helmet.

Mayock issued a statement to reporters that the Raiders released in a video on Twitter expressing his frustration Brown didn’t participate in practice Sunday despite being healed from the frostbitten feet that have sidelined him for most of training camp.

“You all know that A.B. is not here today. So here’s the bottom line. He’s upset about the helmet issue. We have supported that. We appreciate that,” Mayock said. “But at this point, we’ve pretty much exhausted all avenues of relief. So from our perspective, it’s time for him to be all-in or all out. So we’re hoping he’s back soon. We’ve got 89 guys busting their tails. We are really excited

about where this franchise is going and we hope A.B. is going to be a big part of it starting Week 1 against Denver. End of story. No questions.”

Brown has been upset that the NFL and NFLPA won’t allow him to use the same Schutt Air Advantage that he has used throughout his career. Brown filed a grievance over the issue that he lost on Aug. 12 and then set out to find a newer version of the helmet that was less than 10 years old to get approved.

Veteran sportscaster Whitaker dies at 95

Jack Whitaker, who announced the first Super Bowl for CBS Sports among other milestone events during a decades-long career, has died at 95.

The longtime broadcaster died in his sleep Sunday in Devon, Pa., according to CBS News.

Whitaker spent more than two decades working for CBS Sports, where his coverage in-

cluded football, golf, boxing, soccer, baseball and horse racing. He worked on each of the first 21 Super Bowls, as well as the four PGA majors and Triple Crown races.

Power wins shortened Pocono IndyCar race

LONG POND, Pa. — Will Power won the shortened race Sunday at Pocono Raceway, the 13th straight season he’s won an IndyCar race. The race was called with 72 laps left because of lightning and severe weather in the area.

Lightning strikes at Pocono after a rain-shortened NASCAR race killed one fan in 2012.

Power was in the right position to a win a race marred by yet another horrific wreck that collected five drivers on the first lap and sent Chip Ganassi Racing driver Felix Rosenqvist to the hospital.

IndyCar at Pocono has turned into perhaps the scariest race day in motor sports,

500 miles of danger for drivers on the 2½-mile track and white knuckles and clasped hands for anyone watching the event.

Justin Wilson died in 2015 from a head injury after being struck by debris from another car. Robert Wickens was paralyzed in an early-lap accident last year. His car shot into a fence, leaving the promising IndyCar driver paralyzed from the waist down.

Ex-Cavs coach Blatt diagnosed with MS

PIRAEUS, Greece — Former Cleveland Cavaliers coach David Blatt has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

In a statement posted Monday on the website of Greek club Olympiakos, Blatt said he was diagnosed with the condition, which attacks the central nervous system, “a few months ago” and has experienced fatigue, weakness in his legs and balance problems.