

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Guard does border chores amid political debate

*The Washington Post*

YUMA, Ariz. — Staff Sgt. Chris Cazares is panting to catch his breath after slicing down a salt cedar on the banks of the Colorado River with one of those orange-handled saws commonly used in school shop class.

A supervisor at a nursing home, the longtime soldier in the Army National Guard was previously deployed twice to Iraq, where he specialized in neutralizing chemical attacks. Now he is deployed to his hometown on Arizona's border with Mexico. Here, he is neutralizing trees.

Cazares is one of roughly 600 guardsmen serving on the border in Arizona since President Donald Trump dispatched the National Guard last April in support of Customs and Border Protection. Numbering about 2,200 as of early this month, the guardsmen Trump supplied

from across the nation answer to the governor of the state in which they are deployed. The active-duty troops the president sent to the border last fall now number about 4,350; they report to U.S. Northern Command.

Whether Cazares and his fellow guardsmen are needed here on the border has become the subject of a renewed debate that has cleaved along party lines. It has again put the U.S. border with Mexico at the center of national political rancor that escalated after Trump declared a national emergency Friday, bucking Congress to secure more funding for a wall.

In recent days, the newly inaugurated governors of California and New Mexico, both Democrats, ordered the withdrawal of most guardsmen from the border in their states, suggesting Trump had deployed the Guard not because Customs and Border Patrol is facing a crisis but

rather because the president wants to sow fear and appear tough on illegal immigration by showing off uniformed officers in the field.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom called the deployment a “theater of the absurd” upon withdrawing the bulk of the forces from the border in his state and redeploying them to fight fires and target drugs. New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, who retained a handful of guardsmen on the border, said her state would no longer abide “the president’s charade of border fearmongering by misusing our diligent National Guard troops.”

The Republican governors of Arizona and Texas, meanwhile, have kept the full National Guard border deployments in their states. Supporters of the deployment say the back-end assistance from the Guard frees up Border Patrol agents

to deal with threats from drug smugglers and human traffickers. Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, they point out, both deployed the National Guard to the border.

The American military cannot conduct domestic law enforcement activities owing to an 1878 federal law called the Posse Comitatus Act. As a result, the uniformed personnel are helping in the background rather than dealing directly with migrants crossing the border.

In Yuma, about 100 guardsmen are performing ancillary tasks for CBP — clearing brush, fixing machinery, stocking foodstuffs and monitoring surveillance cameras at the sector headquarters.

The idea is to free up border agents previously assigned to those duties so they can instead apprehend and process migrants.

## Trapped ISIS fighters refuse to surrender; ask for an exit

*Associated Press*

AL-OMAR OIL FIELD BASE, Syria — More than 300 Islamic State militants surrounded in a tiny area in eastern Syria are refusing to surrender to U.S.-backed Syrian forces and are trying to negotiate an exit, Syrian activists and a person close to the negotiations said Monday.

The development comes amid ISIS’ last stand in the village of Baghouz, where militants are hiding among hundreds of civilians and preventing them from leaving. It also will likely further delay a declaration on ISIS’ territorial defeat that U.S.-backed Syrian forces were hoping to make last week.

A person familiar with the

negotiations said the militants are asking for a corridor to the rebel-held northwestern province of Idlib, and demand that they be allowed to leave along with the evacuated civilians. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the talks, which he described as taking place indirectly.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group that monitors the civil war in Syria, said another request by ISIS to be evacuated to neighboring Iraq was also rejected. The group said that ISIS released Sunday 10 Syrian Democratic Forces fighters it had been holding, adding that it was not clear what, if anything, the extremists would get

in return.

From a self-proclaimed caliphate that once spread across much of Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group has been knocked back to a speck of land in Baghouz, in Deir el-Zour province, on the countries’ shared border.

In that tiny patch on the banks of the Euphrates River, the militants are holed up in what SDF officials described as a small tented village atop a network of tunnels and caves with the civilians — some of them possibly hostages.

The SDF and the coalition have battled to uproot the militants from villages and towns on the eastern banks of the Euphrates since September.

The capture of the last pocket

of ISIS territory in either Syria or Iraq would mark the end of a four-year global campaign to crush the extremist group’s caliphate. It has been a long and destructive battle.

The DeirEzzor 24, an activist collective in eastern Syria, said several trucks loaded with foodstuff entered ISIS-held areas of Baghouz on Monday morning. The group also reported that ISIS released 10 SDF fighters Sunday. The group didn’t say whether the supplies were in return for the release.

DeirEzzor 24 said the truce reached between ISIS and the SDF last week has been extended for five more days as of Sunday.

# UK close to adding attack drones to arsenal

*The Washington Post*

Swarms of small attack drones that confuse and overwhelm anti-aircraft defenses could soon become an important part of the modern military arsenal, Britain's defense secretary said, something that would mark a major evolution in robot-enabled warfare.

Speaking at the London-based Royal United Services Institute think tank, British Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson said Britain will fund the development of "swarm squadrons of network enabled drones capable of confusing and overwhelming enemy air defenses," noting that such vehicles would complement the British fleet of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters.

He seemed to confirm what

some military experts have said for years: The technology to enable synchronized drone swarms is here, and military leaders are starting to embrace the idea of building it into their operations.

Tech companies have demonstrated that they can organize drone swarms for complex light shows and other flashy endeavors. Some widely publicized systems tests in the United States have shown how the military can adapt that concept for its own use.

"This idea that was once science fiction, then heresy, is now out there in the discourse and increasingly accepted," said Peter Singer, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation who studies the future of warfare.

Williamson initially said those

systems would be deployed "by the end of the year," a target that experts said is unrealistic. The Ministry of Defense later seemed to retract that timeline, telling the trade publication U.K. Defense Journal that the technology actually "will be developed over a 3-year programme."

Paul Scharre, a senior fellow with the Center for New American Security, said Williamson's plan would place Britain near the forefront of integrating drone swarms into military operations if officials follow through.

"There's been a lot of experimentation and some vision documents, but to date the U.S. has not moved out on building a drone capability that could take down air defenses," Scharre said. "What ends up getting the

most funding is human-inhabited aircraft."

The U.S. military has been exploring different iterations and uses of the drone swarm concept for more than a decade, using research programs bearing names such as CICADA, Gremlins and Valkyrie.

Since 2006 the Naval Research Lab has maintained an exploratory research and development program called Close-in Covert Autonomous Disposable Aircraft, or CICADA for short. It envisions tiny, disposable aircraft that are meant to be deployed in large numbers to "seed" areas with small electronic sensors, something that could allow military surveillance of dense jungle areas without sending a human pilot into enemy territory.

## What's at risk at second US-North Korea summit?

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — Negotiators for President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are discussing a possible deal for their upcoming summit that would include a declaration ending the Korean War in return for verifiable steps to halt Pyongyang's nuclear program, according to current and former U.S. officials.

But those and other contentious issues remain unresolved less than two weeks before Trump and Kim are scheduled to meet Feb. 27-28 in Hanoi, Vietnam, the officials said.

Among the crucial sticking points: whether the United States would ease international sanctions before or after North Korea takes confirmed steps to curb its development and production of nuclear weapons.

The two leaders committed to denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula when they first met last June 12 in Singapore, but they did not set up any step-by-step disarmament schedule.

The uncertainty is raising concerns both in and out of the administration that Trump, in his second attempt to reach a diplomatic breakthrough with Kim, will agree to a headline-grabbing peace declaration and offer other concessions without locking in significant commitments from Pyongyang. The peace declaration under discussion would be a political statement rather than a legally binding peace treaty. A treaty would require approval by all the signatories to the armistice that ended the three-year conflict and might need to be ratified by Congress and the United Nations Security Council.

Analysts say Kim is likely to demand more than a peace declaration and will pressure Trump to ease sanctions unilaterally or scale back the 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea.

"One of the biggest fears of Korea watchers is that Trump will give away a big-ticket item like troop reduction," said Suzanne DiMaggio, a North Korea expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

## McCabe: Comey firing by Trump is a possible crime

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe said in an interview that aired Sunday that a "crime may have been committed" when President Donald Trump fired the head of the FBI and tried to publicly undermine an investigation into his campaign's ties to Russia.

McCabe also said in the interview with "60 Minutes" that the FBI had good reason to open a counterintelligence investigation into whether Trump was in league with Russia, and therefore a possible national security threat, following the May 2017 firing of then-FBI Director James Comey.

"And the idea is, if the president committed obstruction of justice, fired the director of the FBI to negatively impact or to shut down our investigation of Russia's malign activity and possibly in support of his campaign, as a counterintelligence investigator you have to ask yourself, 'Why would a president of the United States

do that?'" McCabe said.

"So all those same sorts of facts cause us to wonder is there an inappropriate relationship, a connection between this president and our most fearsome enemy, the government of Russia?"

Asked whether Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein was onboard with the obstruction and counterintelligence investigations, McCabe replied, "Absolutely."

A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment Sunday night.

McCabe also revealed that when Trump told Rosenstein to put in writing his concerns with Comey — a document the White House initially held up as justification for his firing — the president explicitly asked the Justice Department official to reference Russia in the memo. Rosenstein did not want to, McCabe said, and the memo that was made public upon Comey's dismissal did not mention Russia.

# Linking immigration, police grants barred

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge on Friday permanently blocked the Trump administration from imposing conditions that police departments cooperate with immigration authorities to receive law enforcement grants.

The Department of Justice exceeded its authority and violated the Constitution by requiring grant recipients to allow immigration authorities into jails and provide advance notice before releasing detainees suspected of being in the country illegally, Judge Manuel Real said.

He said he agreed with a related ruling from the 7th U.S.

Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago that said, “The attorney general in this case used the sword of federal funding to conscript state and local authorities to aid in federal civil immigration enforcement.

“But the power of the purse rests with Congress, which authorized the federal funds at issue and did not impose any immigration enforcement conditions on the receipt of such funds,” he said.

As a sanctuary city, Los Angeles does not provide the cooperation required by the grants.

City Attorney Mike Feuer sought the permanent injunction in a lawsuit after Los Angeles didn’t receive Edward

Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants in 2017 for the first time in 20 years. The city had received more than \$1 million each year from the grant that goes toward hiring, equipment, training and other needs.

“We’ve got to stand up for public safety in Los Angeles and against the Trump administration’s efforts to arrogate to itself authority it does not have,” Feuer said in a statement. “No matter who holds the presidency, the Constitution is still the supreme law of land.”

A Justice Department spokeswoman didn’t immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The ruling applies nationwide and includes another grant program aimed at fighting juvenile gang crime.

In a similar case, Real ruled in the city’s favor in April over a grant program for hiring police officers.

The grant rules were imposed by former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who said cities endangered public safety if they didn’t help enforce immigration laws.

Los Angeles is one of many U.S. cities that have implemented sanctuary laws aimed at focusing law enforcement officers on local crime rather than detaining people suspected of being in the country illegally.

## Sierra Nevada snowpack grows

Los Angeles Times

The snow piling onto the Sierra Nevada could be considered more of a snow pile-on at this point.

That’s because several feet of white powder have accumulated across the range since the beginning of the month, adding to what has become one of the most bountiful winters California has had in a decade.

The entire Sierra snowpack sits at 141 percent of its seasonal average and is already above its April 1 benchmark, which is considered the end of California’s rainy season and when plans for how to allocate the snowmelt to farmers through the summer kicks into high gear.

Heavenly ski resort at Lake Tahoe received 15 inches of snow Saturday and Sunday and more than 9 feet in the past week, the resort said on Twitter.

But it isn’t all glowing news. Not only are several mountain passes across the mountains closed because of poor conditions or visibility or even avalanches, even parked vehicles are at risk.

The Placer County Sheriff’s Office published a video Sun-

day morning showing one of its SUVs crunched under a felled, snow-covered tree.

In Southern California, the California Highway Patrol was forced to pace vehicles traveling the Tejon Pass after this past weekend’s storm dropped snow levels to 2,500 feet, enough to trigger black ice and snow concerns in the Grapevine.

Since Feb. 1, California has received roughly 18 trillion gallons of water, enough to fill up 45 percent of Lake Tahoe, the National Weather Service said.

The winter has also helped keep much of the state out of drought that plagued California for years. A third of the state was considered to be in normal conditions and more than half was considered only abnormally dry as of Thursday. None of the state is considered to be in extreme or exceptional drought, the worst conditions possible.

For perspective, at this point in 2015, only 0.16 percent of California was considered to be under normal conditions and more than 41 percent of the state was considered in exceptional drought, the worst conditions on the federal scale.

## Over 1,500 attend vigil for Ill. plant shooting victims

Associated Press

AURORA, Ill. — More than 1,500 people braved snow and freezing drizzle to attend a prayer vigil for five slain co-workers Sunday, two days after they were fatally shot at a suburban Chicago manufacturing plant by a longtime employee who had been fired moments earlier.

The Rev. Dan Haas told those who gathered near five white crosses erected for the shooting victims outside Henry Pratt Co. in Aurora that Friday’s “senseless killings” left their families brokenhearted in the city about 40 miles west of Chicago.

“All of these were relatively young people — many of them were very young people. We will never know their gifts and talents. Their lives were snuffed out way too short,” he said of the victims, who included a 21-year-old university student on his first day as an intern.

Haas called on God to bring comfort to the families and Aurora. He then read the names and ages of the five shooting victims, prompting waves of sobs and cries from relatives

attending the vigil.

The city of Aurora tweeted that about 1,700 people attended the vigil in a snowy lot outside the industrial valve manufacturer where several ministers and a rabbi called for healing.

Authorities said Gary Martin pulled out a gun and began shooting right after hearing that he was being fired from his job of 15 years at the plant for various workplace violations. Martin, 45, was killed in a shootout with officers, ending his deadly rampage. Five police officers and a sixth plant worker were injured in the shooting and are expected to survive.

Aurora Mayor Richard C. Irvin told the vigil crowd that the city’s residents feel for the victims’ families “with all our hearts.”

“When I thought about the words that I might share with our community and the families of the victims today, I thought to myself that just to simply offer condolences is not enough,” he said. “It doesn’t measure the amount of pain that we feel for the loss that we’ve experienced in this community.”

# Summit canceled after Poles pull out

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's prime minister canceled plans for his country to send a delegation to a meeting in Jerusalem on Monday after the acting Israeli foreign minister said Poles "collaborated with the Nazis" and "sucked anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk."

The Polish pullout triggered the collapse of a planned summit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with leaders of four Central European nations known as the Visegrad Group.

With the Hungarian and Slovak prime ministers already in Israel, bilateral meetings will take place instead, according to announcements by Czech Prime Minister Andrei Babis and Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Emmanuel Nahshon.

Netanyahu had touted the meeting as an important step in his outreach to the countries of Central Europe, which have pro-Israeli governments that he is counting

on to counter the criticism Israel typically faces in international forums.

The developments mark a new low in a bitter conflict between Poland and Israel over how to remember and characterize Polish actions toward Jews during the German occupation of Poland during World War II.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki had already announced Sunday that he was pulling out of the meeting after a comment by Netanyahu last week about Polish cooperation with Nazis.

Morawiecki canceled Polish participation altogether after comments made by Israel's acting foreign minister, Israel Katz, that he denounced as "racist" and "absolutely unacceptable."

Poland's Foreign Ministry also summoned the Israeli ambassador, Anna Azari, to demand a second set of clarifications in recent days.

Monday's development marks a deteriora-

tion of a spat that began Thursday when Netanyahu said, "Poles cooperated with the Nazis."

Netanyahu's office said he was misquoted.

The Polish government first summoned the Israeli ambassador on Friday but said it was not satisfied with the explanation of the Israeli leader being quoted incorrectly.

Poland was the first occupation of Adolf Hitler's regime and never had a collaborationist government. Members of Poland's resistance and government-in-exile struggled to warn the world about the mass killing of Jews, and thousands of Poles risked their lives to help Jews.

However, Holocaust researchers have collected ample evidence of Polish villagers who murdered Jews fleeing the Nazis or Polish blackmailers who preyed on the Jews for financial gain.

## Japanese PM doesn't confirm, deny reports of Nobel nomination

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declined Monday to say if he had nominated President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, though he also said he did not deny doing so.

Trump's assertion Friday that Abe had nominated him for the honor and sent him a copy of the letter has raised criticism in Japan. Questioned in parliament about Trump's claim that he had done so, Abe said, "In light of the Nobel committee's policy of not disclosing recommenders and nominees for 50 years, I decline to comment."

"I never said I didn't" nominate him, Abe said in response to a follow-up question by Yuichiro Tamaki, a lawmaker for the opposition Democratic Party for the People.

Tamaki said in a tweet Monday that given the lack of progress on various issues with

North Korea, he was concerned such a nomination would "send the wrong message to North Korea and the rest of international society."

Abe praised Trump, saying he "has been decisively responding toward resolving North Korea's nuclear and missile problems, and last year he held historic U.S.-North Korea summit talks."

Abe added that Trump had also passed on to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un Japan's concerns about past abductions of Japanese citizens by the North, saying "he and the entire White House also actively cooperated in resolving the issue."

The Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun reported Sunday, citing unidentified government sources, that Abe had nominated Trump at the U.S. president's request.

## China blasts US while defending tech firm

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's government accused Washington on Monday of trying to block its industrial development after Vice President Mike Pence said tech giant Huawei Technologies Ltd. and other telecom equipment suppliers are a security threat.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman rejected suggestions Beijing might use its companies to gather intelligence about foreign countries.

Growing U.S. pressure on allies to shun Huawei, China's first global tech brand, increasingly threatens its access to global markets for next-generation telecoms technology.

The company, the biggest global maker of switching gear for phone and internet companies, denies accusations it facilitates Chinese spying. Its founder told reporters last month it would reject government demands to disclose confidential information about foreign customers.

Washington is trying to "fab-

ricate an excuse for suppressing the legitimate development" of Chinese enterprises, said the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang.

Geng accused the United States of using "political means" to interfere in economic activity, "which is hypocritical, immoral and unfair bullying."

Pence, speaking Saturday in Germany, urged European allies to take seriously "the threat" he said was posed by Huawei as they look for partners to build fifth-generation wireless infrastructure.

Pence said Huawei and other Chinese telecom equipment makers provide Beijing with "access to any data that touches their network or equipment."

The United States has released no evidence to support its accusations against Huawei and other tech companies. That has prompted some industry analysts to suggest Washington is trying to use security concerns to handicap Chinese competitors.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Manhole fires force evacuation of theaters

**NY** NEW YORK — A series of manhole fires in midtown Manhattan on Saturday forced the evacuation of a theater complex where performances of plays including “Jersey Boys” and “Avenue Q” were underway.

No injuries were reported from the manhole fires about 8 p.m. at West 50th Street near Eighth Avenue. A representative for the theater complex, New World Stages, said patrons were evacuated as a precaution.

Photos posted on social media show flames shooting into the air. Tim Teeman, a senior editor at the Daily Beast, posted on Twitter that he was inside the theater complex when he heard “4 or 5 bangs/explosions” and smelled smoke.

## No peanuts or Cracker Jack at old stadium

**CT** HARTFORD—Kerry Adamowicz hoped that a meeting with Hartford Yard Goats officials might lead to a few peanut-free days or maybe a peanut-free section at the Double-A baseball team’s stadium so her son and other children with food allergies could enjoy a game.

The team decided to go a bit farther. The Double-A affiliate of the Colorado Rockies announced this month it is going completely peanut-free — no more peanuts, Cracker Jacks or any other food that could put kids with the potentially deadly peanut allergy in anaphylactic shock.

The organization Food Allergy Research & Education says one in every 10 adults and one in every 13 children has some sort of food allergy, and up to 2 percent of children have an allergy to peanuts.

## Hundreds take part in dance marathon

**PA** STATE COLLEGE — Hundreds of hardy Penn State students took part in the annual 46-hour dance marathon known as Thon to raise money for pediatric cancer patients.

The Penn State Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, billed as the world’s largest student-run philanthropy, kicked off Friday night and ran through Sunday.

Last year, students raised more than \$10 million for pediatric cancer patients and their families at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.

The event has raised more than \$147 million since 1977.

## Seal pup saved after wandering onto road

**MA** SALISBURY — A seal pup is back in the ocean after being rescued from a road in Massachusetts.

The Seacoast Marine Mammal Rescue Team said it responded to calls Wednesday about a gray seal pup in the middle of Beacon Street, near the beach.

The organization said the pup, which is likely less than 2 months old, apparently followed a beach access path and wound up on the side street.

The organization said it administered some fluids to the pup, tagged a flipper and relocated him to a quiet spot on the beach. It has since returned to the water.

## Experts: Fireball in night sky a meteor

**FL** MELBOURNE — Experts said a fireball streaking across the night sky over central Florida last week

was a large meteor.

Spalding Allsky Camera Network Director Dwayne Free said the meteor was up to a foot wide and exploded over the Atlantic Ocean with a force equal to 100 tons of TNT.

Florida Today reported the fireball was seen about 2 a.m. Feb. 12 along Florida’s Space Coast from Titusville to Palm Bay.

The bright, greenish light was recorded by surveillance cameras and a camera feeding data to the Spalding Allsky Camera Network, which provides data to NASA’s Planetary Defense Office’s Asteroid Threat Assessment Project in California.

The meteor also was confirmed by the Air Force’s 45th Weather Squadron.

## Man gets month in jail in shooting of dog

**MS** NATCHEZ — A southwest Mississippi man was sentenced to 30 days in jail after pleading guilty to the shooting death of at least one dog.

The Natchez Democrat reported that Elijah Theodore Gatlin, 69, pleaded guilty to animal cruelty Thursday in Adams County Justice Court.

Gatlin’s sister-in-law, Carie Gatlin, said she was feeding scraps to her five pit bulls when two began fighting, leading Elijah Gatlin to shoot one dog and throw it into a creek.

Carie Gatlin told deputies that Elijah Gatlin later claimed he killed other dogs while she was gone, but deputies couldn’t find them.

## Dog taped, thrown into ditch goes home

**MO** BARNHART — A dog found in an eastern Missouri ditch with

electrical and duct tape around his mouth and legs has been reunited with his owner.

Authorities believe the dog was in a ditch in cold temperatures for about 12 hours before a Jefferson County sheriff’s deputy found him Saturday. He was dubbed “Jimmy” while he recovered.

The sheriff’s office said the dog — whose name is Flick — had “an emotional” reunion with his owner Friday and was headed home. An area funeral home paid for the dog’s care.

Jefferson County Sheriff Dave Marshak said Thursday that Paul Garcia, 39, of Barnhart, was charged with felony animal abuse and armed criminal action.

Marshak said investigators believe Barnhart taped the dog and threw him out a window.

## Fatal shooting occurs after road encounter

**AZ** PHOENIX — Phoenix police said a man who allegedly “took offense” about a traffic encounter was arrested in the fatal shooting of a teenager who was a passenger in the other vehicle.

Sgt. Tommy Thompson said Friday the encounter led to the arrest of Edward Rodriguez Madera, 19, on suspicion of first-degree murder in the killing of Mohamed Shah Bin Salim, 16, on Feb. 12.

Thompson said investigators determined that the incident began when the other vehicle drove in front of Madera’s car at a convenience store.

According to police, Madera is accused of following the other vehicle for about 2 miles and then shooting at it before driving away.

From wire reports

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# Hamlin races to 2nd Daytona 500 win

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Denny Hamlin came to the Daytona 500 determined to honor his late car owner with a victory.

He delivered with a storybook tribute for Joe Gibbs Racing.

Hamlin won NASCAR's biggest race for the second time in four years Sunday, leading JGR in a 1-2-3 sweep of the podium in overtime. The race and the season have been dedicated to J.D. Gibbs, Joe Gibbs' eldest son who died last month after battling a degenerative neurological disease.

J.D. Gibbs helped his father start the race team, ran it while Joe Gibbs was coaching the Washington Redskins, was a tire changer on the team's first Daytona 500 victory and the one who discovered Hamlin during a test session at Hickory Motor Speedway in North Carolina. Hamlin was hired to drive the No. 11 — the number J.D. Gibbs used when he played football — and J.D. Gibbs' name is on the Toyota.

When Hamlin stopped his car along the front stretch to collect the checkered flag, he immediately credited J.D. Gibbs.

"The whole family, they did so much for me over the course of my career, and this one is for J.D.," Hamlin said. "We are desperately going to miss him the rest of our lives. His legacy still lives on through Joe Gibbs Racing and proud to do this for them."

Hamlin was met in victory lane by the entire Gibbs family, including J.D.'s widow and four sons.

"He meant a lot to me and it's hard for me not getting choked up because I've been choked up about 100 times about it," Hamlin said. "Just to have Melissa (Gibbs) and all the kids here, it's just crazy."

Joe Gibbs, the Hall of Fame NFL coach

with three Super Bowl victories, ranked the tribute win to his son first in his career accomplishments. J.D. Gibbs encouraged his father to move the team from a crowded-Chevrolet camp to become Toyota's flagship team in 2008 and the Daytona 500 victory was the 100th for JGR in a Camry.

"It is the most emotional and biggest win I've ever had in my life, in anything," Gibbs said. "It was the most important night in my occupational life. I know J.D. and everybody in my family was emotional."

Kyle Busch and Erik Jones finished second and third as JGR became the second team in NASCAR history to sweep the Daytona 500 podium. Hendrick Motorsports did it in 1997 with Jeff Gordon, Terry Labonte and Ricky Craven.

Busch, now winless in 14 Daytona 500s, was initially openly disappointed in falling short.

"He's got two, I've got none, and that's just the way it goes sometimes," Busch said.

But he reiterated the JGR and Toyota goal of working together to win the race and noted he didn't have much of a shot at beating Hamlin because the field had been decimated by a flurry of late accidents.

"Was trying to make sure one of us gets to victory lane, first and foremost," Busch said. "There wasn't enough cars out there running at the end. I don't know how it would have played out."

The Cup Series slogged through three uninspiring exhibition races during Speedweeks to cause concern over a potentially disappointing main event. Jim France, who took over as chairman of NASCAR last August, used the pre-race driver meeting to ask the drivers to liven up the activity. Hamlin and Chase Elliott were the rare

drivers to use the bottom lane in the exhibition races while the rest of the field ran single-file along the top.

"I hope a few of you drivers out there will get down on the bottom with Denny and Chase and put on a good show today," France told the field.

The drivers obeyed and delivered an action-packed and wreck-filled running of "The Great American Race." There was an accident on pit road, a 21-car crash, 12 cautions and five wrecks in the final 20 laps of regulation. The race was stopped twice for cleanup totaling nearly 40 minutes in the final stretch. During the second red-flag, a NASCAR track-drying truck broke down while cleaning oil off the racing surface.

Hamlin and Busch alternated as the leaders during the handful of late restarts, and the final rush to the checkered flag was a push to hold off Ford driver and reigning NASCAR champion Joey Logano. The Ford camp went 1-2-3 in both of Thursday's qualifying races and was favored to win the Daytona 500.

Logano, who started his career at JGR, settled for fourth and also took a moment to honor J.D. Gibbs.

"I'm not a Gibbs driver but for what J.D. has done for my career is the reason why I'm sitting here today," Logano said. "As bad as I want to win it, it is pretty cool to think that the first race after his passing, to see those guys one, two, three, it just says he's up there watching and maybe gave (those) guys a little extra boost there at the end."

Michael McDowell was fifth in a Ford but aggravated Logano by not working with him in the overtime sprint to the finish.

"I just told him that my team doesn't pay me to push Joey Logano to a win," he said.

## Chastain part of bumper crop of Daytona rookies

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Ross Chastain always has watermelons around victory lane, a nod to his roots in the family fruit farming business.

He may not spend much time on the Florida farm these days, but with good reason — the eighth-generation watermelon farmer was a 10th-place finisher in the Daytona 500. Chastain, 26, was part of a bumper crop of Daytona 500 rookies that made stout runs down the stretch in a "The Great American Race" won by Denny Hamlin.

Chastain finished 10th Sunday and completed a weekend sweep of survival by dodging wreckage to finish all three NASCAR races without much more than a few scrapes. He was third in the Truck Series and 13th in the Xfinity Series race to go 438 for 438 in total laps.

"It's luck, for sure," Chastain said. "I said this morning, we're going to use all our luck up this weekend. I might come back here for five years and crash. You just don't know."

Chastain's entire ride to Daytona was full of luck, some of it bad. He lost his ride for Chip

Ganassi Racing's Xfinity team following an FBI raid on the program's primary sponsor, DC Solar. He has patched together a deal to race this season for an Xfinity title and is scheduled to race a full Cup ride in the No. 15 Chevrolet for Premium Motorsports. Chastain drove in 34 races last season for Premium — but not Daytona.

The watermelon farmer-turned-racer wanted to persuade owner Jay Robinson to drive all 36 races this season.

"If we get way behind on our budget and we tear up a bunch of stuff and get below our bot-

tom line, then you do what you've got to do," Chastain said. "I'll use this to my advantage as much as I can."

Chastain put on a heck of a show in Daytona and kept his Chevy out of danger most of the night. He was one of eight Daytona 500 rookies in the field — and one of two in the top 10. Ryan Preece, who built his résumé on the modified circuit, was eighth in the No. 47 Chevrolet for JTG Daugherty Racing.

"How could you be upset with a top 10 and my first Daytona finish in my first Daytona 500," Preece asked.

# Team LeBron rallies past Team Giannis

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — LeBron James was trading lob passes with Dwyane Wade again, one last time. Catching lobs from former teammate Kyrie Irving once again, too. And after making a stepback three-pointer late, he stared down Joel Embiid to send a message without saying a word.

Oh, this mattered to James — and Team LeBron as well.

Team LeBron, down by 20 in the second half, finally got firing and went on to beat Team Giannis 178-164 in the All-Star Game on Sunday night. MVP Kevin Durant scored 31 points for Team LeBron, the one that James drafted and led to victory in the captain's-choice format for a second consecutive season.

"You put me on the floor, I love to compete," James said in the postgame interview room. "I'm a competitor, no matter what it is."

Klay Thompson scored 20 points, and James and Kawhi Leonard each had 19 for the winners.

"It's all sweet to me," Durant said after getting his second All-Star MVP award, to go with the one he claimed in 2012. "It's hard to rank because everything's special. But it's cool to be out there with some of the best players to ever play the game. And to win MVP in front of my family and friends is pretty sweet."

Giannis Antetokounmpo — the first-time captain — led everybody with 38 points on 17 for 23 shooting for the club he drafted. Paul George and Khris Middleton each scored 20 points for Team Giannis, which got 17 apiece from Stephen Curry and Russell Westbrook.

As is typically the case, the game was not a defensive showcase.

Team Giannis set an All-Star record with 23 field goals

in the first quarter, topping the mark of 22 set on four other occasions — by both the West and the East in the first quarter of the 2017 game, and by the West in both the second and third quarters of the 2016 game.

The 53 points tied a one-quarter All-Star record as well, matching the total by the West in the third quarter of the 2016 game and by the East in the first quarter of the 2017 game. But when it was time to get competitive, things tightened up considerably, at least by All-Star standards.

And the All-Star farewells for Miami's Wade and Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki — the adds to the game by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, in honor of their career bodies of work — were festive, as everyone wanted.

Nowitzki entered the game late in the first quarter and made his first three shots — all of them three-pointers — before heading back to the bench. Wade checked in not long after Nowitzki took the floor, then started the second half and achieved his primary missions for his last All-Star Game as a player.

He got an alley-oop lob from James.

And he threw an alley-oop lob to James.

Wade dunked, James dunked, and the close friends who entered the NBA together in 2003 and won championships with Miami in 2012 and 2013 got a couple more moments to savor in their final night as on-court teammates.

"Thank you to the commissioner and the NBA for allowing us to both be on this stage again," Nowitzki said.

"Exactly what Dirk said," Wade said as he took the microphone. "We're very thankful for this opportunity. ... The game is in great hands. It's easy to walk away right now."

## Top 25 roundup

# Davis leads Houston to 10th straight win

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Corey Davis Jr. made eight three-pointers and scored 26 points to help No. 9 Houston beat Tulane 85-50 on Sunday for its 10th straight victory.

Armoni Brooks made six threes on his way to 24 points, and Houston (25-1, 12-1 American Athletic) went 17-for-35 from long range.

The Cougars opened with a 22-5 run. Tulane closed to 37-28 at halftime, and Sampson felt his team did too much performing and not enough competing in the first half.

"We had a lot of family and friends in the stands and we put on a performance for them in the first half. In the second half we competed and got back to who we are."

The Green Wave twice got within eight early in the second half, but Davis made three three-pointers during a 17-0 run that made it 58-33 lead.

Caleb Daniels scored 13 points for Tulane (4-20, 0-12). The Green Wave have lost 14 consecutive games, their longest losing streak in 55 years.

**No. 11 Michigan State 62, Ohio State 44:** Kenny Goins had 10 points and 10 rebounds and the host Spartans closed with a 20-2 run.

Michigan State (21-5, 12-3) pulled into a first-place tie with Michigan atop the Big Ten, holding Ohio State to 13 points in the second half.

Kaleb Wesson scored 12 points for Ohio State (16-9, 6-8).

**St. John's 71, No. 13 Villanova 65:** LJ Figueroa scored 22 points and the host Red Storm overcame a 14-point deficit in the second half to beat the Wildcats.

St. John's (19-7, 7-6 Big East) was down 48-34 with 12:30 left but scored 20 of the next 25 points, taking its first lead on Figueroa's three-pointer from the corner that brought the sell-out crowd at Madison Square Garden to its feet.

"It was as loud as I can remember, maybe louder," St. John's coach Chris Mullin said. "I'm happy for them they got to experience that, too. There's nothing like that. There are some great places to play college basketball, but when you get a full Madison Square Garden against a championship team like Villanova there's nothing like that. It's awesome. It helped us. It kept us in the game and took us to another level."

Joe Cremonesi led Villanova (20-6, 11-2) with 14 points.

**Cincinnati 72, Wichita State 62:** Jarron Cumberland scored 27 points, matching his career high with six three-pointers, and the host Bearcats swept their season series with the Shockers.

Cincinnati (21-4, 10-2 American Athletic) took control with a late first-half run led by Cumberland, who scored 14 in the opening half. He hit the big baskets as Cincinnati stayed ahead the rest of the way.

Dexter Dennis had 14 points to lead the Shockers (12-12, 5-7), who had their winning streak snapped at a season-high four games.

**Quinnipiac 107, Siena 100, 30T:** Cameron Young had a record-setting game in scoring 55 points to lead visiting Quinnipiac over Siena.

Young set the NCAA single-game high mark this season, a Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference record and a program high for the Bobcats (14-11, 9-5) at the Division I level.

It's the most points by a Division I player since North Dakota State's Ben Woodside scored 60 against Stephen F. Austin in triple-overtime on Dec. 12, 2008.

Young was 15-for-24 shooting from the field, including 9-for-13 from three-point range, 16-for-20 from the foul line and collected 10 rebounds.

Meanwhile, Siena's Jalen Pickett scored 46 points shooting 14-for-26.

## NHL roundup

# Barkov's hat trick helps lift Panthers

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Aleksander Barkov finally scored the goal he's been dreaming about.

Barkov got his second career hat trick and the Florida Panthers beat the Montreal Canadiens 6-3 on Sunday night.

Barkov's second goal gave the Panthers a 4-3 lead on a spectacular shot with 2:11 left in the second. Barkov skated in on goalie Carey Price, then, with a defenseman on his back, shot from between and behind his legs in front of the crease, flipping the puck high into the net.

"I've seen those (types of goals) in the YouTube and in highlights, and I was just dreaming about maybe one day I can score that kind of goal," Barkov said. "I think I've tried that like 17 times in my career. It worked (for) the first time. I'm happy, but, of course, more importantly we got the two points."

Barkov also had an assist to give him his third four-point game of his career.

"That was the prettiest goal I've seen all season," Panthers coach Bob Boughner said of Barkov's second goal. "That was nuts, and he stopped hard at the end before he did his move. We just looked at it on the bench with disbelief that he could pull that off with that kind of speed."

Riley Sheahan, Frank Vatrano and Denis Malgin also scored for the Panthers, and Keith Yandle had two assists. James Reimer stopped 28 shots in his second straight start.

The Panthers have won eight of their past 12 games, while Montreal lost its fourth straight.

"We're going through a tough stretch right now," Canadiens coach Claude Julien said.

**Blues 4, Wild 0:** Jordan Binnington made 31 saves and the visiting Blues posted their third straight shutout to earn their 10th straight victory.

Binnington made 21 saves to blank Arizona on Thursday night, and Jake Allen stopped 32 shots in a 3-0 victory at Colorado on Saturday. St. Louis hasn't allowed a goal in 187:16, since late in an 8-3 victory over New Jersey on Tuesday night.

**Penguins 6, Rangers 5:** Evgeni Malkin and Kris Letang each had two goals and host Pittsburgh beat New York to climb back into playoff position.

Defensemen Marcus Pettersson and Brian Dumoulin also scored and Sidney Crosby had three assists to help the Penguins pass Carolina for the second Eastern Conference wild-card spot.

**Ducks 5, Capitals 2:** Adam Henrique and Jakob Silfverberg each had two goals and host Anaheim's Ryan Miller became the all-time leader in wins by a U.S.-born goaltender.

Miller, who missed 24 games due to a knee injury, made 23 saves in his first start since Dec. 9. He got his 375th victory, breaking a tie with John Vanbiesbrouck.

Alex Ovechkin scored his 40th goal of the season for the Capitals to become the fourth player in NHL history with 10 or more 40-goal seasons. John Carlson also scored for Washington and Braden Holtby made 34 saves.

**Flyers 3, Red Wings 1:** Ivan Provorov broke a tie early in the third period and Oskar Lindblom had two goals in Philadelphia's victory over host Detroit.

**Devils 4, Sabres 1:** Kyle Palmieri had a goal and two assists and Cory Schneider made 34 saves to lead host New Jersey past Buffalo.

# Holmes rallies to win on long final day at Riviera

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A marathon finish was only part of the challenge facing J.B. Holmes. He also had to contend with a four-shot deficit against Justin Thomas on greens that were increasingly bumpy with so many footprints over nine hours, and wind that made Riviera tougher than ever.

With one good break, two big putts and plenty of help from Thomas on the back nine, Holmes won the Genesis Open on Sunday for his first PGA Tour title in nearly three years that earned him a trip back to the Masters.

So difficult was the final round of a 34-hole day that Holmes didn't make a birdie on the last eight holes and closed with a 1-under 70.

"I knew it was going to be very difficult to shoot a low score," Holmes said. "I needed some help from Justin."

Thomas shot a 65 in the morning to complete the third round with a four-shot lead. Holmes says his caddie, Brandon Parsons, asked him at one point if he thought Thomas would get to 20-under par, a score only two other players have reached at Riviera.

"I was like, 'You mean this round?' He was playing unbelievable there that third round," Holmes said.

Thomas played a big part in Holmes' victory, however.

He took 19 putts in a wild back nine that featured three two-shot swings because of putting.

Thomas, who closed with a 75, three-putted from long range on the 10th as Holmes made birdie for his first lead of the week. Holmes returned the favor on the next hole when he turned birdie into a shocker of a bogey, three-putting from 3 feet.

And then it was back to Thomas, and what turned out to be the decisive moment.

Holmes missed the 13th green to the right and chipped to 12 feet. Thomas was some 65 feet away and lagged his putt to 8 feet. Holmes made the par

putt, and not only did Thomas miss his putt for par, he lipped out the next one for a double bogey.

That took Thomas from one ahead to one behind, and he never caught up.

Holmes delivered another dagger with a 12-foot par save on the 16th right before Thomas made birdie to avoid another two-shot swing, and Thomas couldn't convert birdie chances from 6 feet and 20 feet on the last two holes.

"To take two steps back with a double is huge because it was so hard to make birdies, especially with 14, 15, 16 coming up, three holes dead into the teeth," Thomas said, alluding to the wind. "I'm sure he would say that was probably the biggest turning point of the round for him, and that putt on 16."

Thomas said he struggled putting in the wind and it "showed a flaw in my game."

"J.B. won. He played great," Thomas said of his fellow Kentuckian, whom he has known since he was a kid. "It's always a bummer to hand a tournament. I feel like I should have won that thing."

Holmes, who finished at 14-under 270, moved up from No. 100 to No. 42 in the world, making him eligible for the World Golf Championships in Mexico City next week. But it's been a long stretch, and he decided not to play. As for that invitation to the Masters?

"Let me think about it," he said with a grin. "No, it's always good to go back."

Tiger Woods shot 65 to finish his morning third round, though he was never in range of winning. Woods closed with a 72 in the afternoon, and tied for 15th.

"I got tired," Woods said. "I don't know if I'm the only one, but I definitely felt it today. Wind, cold. I was at 10 [under] and I slipped four shots coming in. That's the way it goes."

He said he wouldn't touch his clubs on Monday as he goes from cold air at sea level to Mexico City next week.