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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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SIGAR: Errors led to huge maintenance costs

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's effort to maintain vehicles for Afghanistan's military and to train local troops to take care of its fleet has been a failure, a watchdog reported, with the program's cost more than doubling to \$423 million.

Now dozens of unanticipated expenses — incurred largely because the company the Defense Department hired for the job repeatedly violated the terms of its contract but was not required to compensate the government — will be borne by American taxpayers.

They will pay more than \$1 billion over the next five years to take care of Afghan National Army vehicles, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John F. Sopko said in a new report.

Sopko's investigators also discovered payments to the contractor for repairs skyrock-

eted to \$51,395 per vehicle last year from \$1,889 in 2011.

That's because under the contract, the federal government was required to pay based on the total number of vehicles in the fleet, not the number that were repaired.

"The shortcomings of DOD's oversight of contractor performance were so significant in the case of this contract," the watchdog wrote, "that, if not addressed in connection with future maintenance contracts, they could undermine any further efforts to develop the Afghan military's fleet maintenance and supply chain management capabilities."

Investigators also cited the contractor's "failure ... to meet its most basic contract requirements and program objectives" and the Defense Department's inaction to correct the problems as a "waste of U.S. taxpayer funds," but concluded that a new maintenance contract had to be

put in place to help the Afghan military's counterinsurgency campaign against the Taliban.

The Pentagon contracted in 2010 with AISS, a joint venture between a Dubai-based logistics company and a technical services and support services firm, for five years for a fixed price of \$182 million. As part of the United States' reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, the contract was designed to teach the Afghans to maintain their fleet themselves.

Things soon went off track, largely because of poor oversight of the contractor. For part of the time, Taliban-related security concerns sidelined some U.S. staff from being on site.

That doesn't explain the failures, the inspector general said. For example, the U.S. military assumed that the Afghan army would be able to provide spare parts when needed, which turned out not to be the case. And the United States under-

estimated the Afghans' level of training for high-level maintenance tasks, even though it had been clear for years that they were not equipped for the job.

The Defense Department also lacked a rigorous set of expectations to measure the contractor's performance.

AISS was cited 113 times for contract violations and was warned it could lose the contract. The Pentagon did not follow through on the threat, investigators said.

The U.S. government also did not seek repayment from AISS for what the report called "inadequate or nonexistent" service.

These and other problems have left the Afghan military vulnerable and ill-prepared in its fight against the Taliban.

The report said Defense Department officials should consider the challenges the Afghans face in maintaining their fleet and do more to measure the contractor's performance.

Congress stalls fertility benefits for troops

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — This was the year the government was going to start helping injured veterans and military members maintain their ability to start families by offering fertility-preservation programs.

In January, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced the Pentagon soon would launch a pilot program to help active-duty servicemembers freeze their eggs and sperm as a precautionary measure to ensure soldiers who suffer fertility-ending injuries can have children.

Then last month, Congress took agreed to overturn a longtime ban against covering in vitro fertilization treatments for veterans whose ability to have children was compromised by injuries suffered in the line of duty.

But political fights in Congress are now threatening to halt these efforts before they have a chance to begin.

A Senate-passed defense policy bill would zero out funding for the Pentagon program and a spending bill that would expand fertility benefits for veterans is caught up in a fight over how much funding Congress should approve to counter the mosquito-borne Zika epidemic.

"The current policy is outdated, it's wrong, and it's a disservice to the men and women who've sacrificed so much on behalf of our country," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a leading supporter for lifting a longtime ban on covering in vitro treatment for veterans.

She also has been leading the push to ensure the DOD's pilot program is funded.

The subject of fertility coverage for current and former soldiers is tangled up in the politics of both the abortion debate and the budget battles over Pentagon programs.

The treatments that most Democratic and many Republican lawmakers want to

cover for veterans have long been provided for active-duty soldiers and other federal employees. But a 1992 ban has kept the Veterans Affairs Department from following the Pentagon's lead.

Conservative opposition to covering IVF treatments stems from a conviction that discarding unused embryos is effectively abortion. But with procedure becoming common practice, many leading Republicans have come on board, and this coverage was included in a veterans spending bill finalized by House and Senate negotiators earlier this summer.

But that bill is now on hold while lawmakers work out bitter differences over how to fund the government's Zika response — an issue that was attached to the legislation.

Until lawmakers can agree on how to pay for Zika prevention efforts, it's unlikely that the changes to the VA's fertility treatment coverage policy can move forward.

Army struggles with hyponatremia

East Bay Times

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — The condition that may have caused the death of a soldier in the Army's Ranger School has dogged the military branch for decades as it's grappled with heat-related illnesses and proper hydration for trainees.

No cause of death has been determined for 2nd Lt. Michael Parros, 21, of Walnut Creek, Calif. But he was hospitalized for hyponatremia on Monday and died Wednesday. The condition can be caused by drinking too much water, which causes the body's level of sodium to become abnormally low.

The number of such cases in the military spiked after guidelines calling for increased fluid intake were issued more than two decades ago to combat heat illnesses during grueling training. Studies on the causes of the condition led to changes in policies to reduce heat-related illnesses and to limit fluid intake; just a week before Parros fell ill, the Army issued a major update of its policy to prevent heat-related deaths that addresses the diagnosis and treatment of hyponatremia and more clearly defines guidelines for fluid consumption based on activity level, temperature and other factors.

Based on the scorching heat Monday, a 103-degree heat index, Parros should have been drinking no more than one quart of water per hour based on the Army's work/rest and water-consumption table, and no more than 12 quarts for the day. Fort Benning officials have said Parros' day of training was not particularly rigor-

ous, but they did not know how much water the West Point graduate drank that day.

In 1990, in an attempt to reduce heat illness in its personnel, the military instituted guidelines requiring soldiers to drink almost two quarts of water every hour when exposed to temperatures above 86 degrees. Military incidents of hyponatremia increased dramatically, with 125 cases between 1989 and 1996, including at least six deaths, according to a 2006 University of Cape Town study.

Forty of those cases occurred at Fort Benning. The U.S. military was alarmed, the Cape Town researchers wrote, and lowered consumption rates to 1 to 1½ quarts per hour and no more than 12 quarts, or 3 gallons, per day.

The changes led to plummeting rates of hyponatremia. The hourly hydration rates have changed and are now set based on the heat and type of activity, but the 12-quart daily maximum remains.

The military cases are directly linked to training.

The Army's new guidelines stress immediate medical evacuation for hyponatremia, mentioning that it can be mistaken for heat stroke.

"This condition most often occurs in initial entry training units, especially during basic combat training/one-station unit training," the Army noted. The condition is associated with prolonged (more than six hours) of physical work, the regulations state, and "arises primarily from fluid overload, underreplacement of sodium losses, or usually a combination of both."

Trump goes after retired general who spoke at DNC

The Washington Post

DENVER — Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Friday called retired Marine Gen. John Allen a "failed general" after the highly respected military veteran delivered a forceful endorsement of Trump's opponent, Hillary Clinton, earlier in the week.

"They had a general named John Allen, and he — I never met him," Trump said during a campaign rally. "And he got up and he started talking about Trump, Trump, Trump. Never met him. And you know who he is? He's a failed general."

Allen is a retired four-star general who served as commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. He was President Barack Obama's top choice to oversee U.S. and NATO operations in Europe but instead he retired to assist his wife with chronic health issues. He came out of retirement in 2014 when the president named him special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in 2014, a position he held for a year.

"He was the general fighting ISIS. I would say he hasn't done so well, right? Not so well," Trump added, referring to the Islamic State terrorist group.

Trump has regularly faulted the foreign policy establishment for failing to contain the Islamic State group. He has also dismissed foreign policy experts on the campaign trail, particularly those who have criticized him.

Allen indirectly attacked Trump during a speech Thursday at the Democratic National Convention, assailing the Republican candidate's support for waterboarding, for which Trump has regularly spoken in favor. Allen also criticized Trump's approach to international relations.

Manning could face punishment for attempting to commit suicide

Associated Press

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — The transgender soldier imprisoned in Kansas for sending classified information to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks now faces possible punishment for offenses stemming from a suicide attempt, a civil rights group said Thursday.

The American Civil Liberties Union said in a statement that Chelsea Manning, 28, received a document from Army officials Thursday saying she's being investigated for "administrative offenses," including "conduct which threatens," related to her July 5 suicide attempt at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, where she's

serving a 35-year sentence.

Manning's lawyers have not detailed how she tried to kill herself.

It's also unclear how the alleged offenses under investigation by the Army relate to the suicide attempt.

The ACLU said if Manning is convicted of the offenses, she could be placed in indefinite solitary confinement.

"It is deeply troubling that Chelsea is now being subjected to an investigation and possible punishment for her attempt to take her life," ACLU staff attorney Chase Strangio said in the statement. "The government has long been aware of Chelsea's distress associated with the de-

nial of medical care related to her gender transition and yet delayed and denied the treatment recognized as necessary."

The ACLU said it hopes the investigation ends immediately and Manning is given "the health care that she needs to recover."

Manning, arrested as Bradley Manning, was convicted in 2013 in military court of six Espionage Act violations and 14 other offenses for leaking more than 700,000 secret military and State Department documents, plus some battlefield video. Manning, who was an intelligence analyst in Iraq at the time, later filed a transgender prisoner rights lawsuit.

Pats' Garoppolo ready to go

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Jimmy Garoppolo spent the first two years of his NFL career firmly in the background of the Tom Brady Show, a role as the understudy least likely to be used.

If he needed any reminder of that status, he got it Thursday when he was greeted by cheers as he walked onto the field for his third NFL training camp. Only the applause was directed at the guy he will be replacing for the first month of the season.

"Brady! Brady! Brady!" fans bellowed as Garoppolo and his teammates trotted on the field.

There was a fleeting moment last season when the spot Garoppolo now finds himself in nearly played itself out.

Brady had just launched a legal challenge of a four-game suspension handed down by the league for what it said was his role in a scheme to illegally deflate footballs used in the 2015 AFC championship game.

Garoppolo arrived at camp prepared to step in as the starter, though that evaporated a week before the regular season when the NFL's punishment was overturned in court. Brady was allowed to play while his case continued to wind through the courts.

A year later the final gavel sounded on "Deflategate" when a federal court reinstated Brady's four-game suspension

and the MVP quarterback reluctantly accepted his ban.

It meant that this time Garoppolo walked onto the field knowing that barring a major development over the next month, he will make his first NFL regular-season start when the Patriots open their 2016 schedule at Arizona.

As dizzying as the last year-plus has been, Garoppolo says he's embracing the excitement of the moment.

"That's why we play the game," he said. "We play to get out there and get your opportunity, and when it comes you've got to be ready for it."

To most Patriots fans, the 24-year-old is still largely a mystery.

Garoppolo has appeared in just 11 games over his first two years, completing 20 passes with one touchdown. It's probably why the packed bleachers at Thursday's practice erupted when he channeled his inner Brady during a drill by threading a pass in the back of the end zone to Rob Gronkowski. His former college coach, Dino Babers, compared Garoppolo's release to that of Hall of Famer Dan Marino.

While he certainly wasn't rooting for Brady to be sidelined, Garoppolo recognizes what is immediately ahead.

"It's a great opportunity. You gotta go out there, take advantage of it," Garoppolo said. "You don't get many opportunities in this league. You might only get one, so you gotta make the best of it."

Gronkowski said the only thing coach

Bill Belichick has said about the quarterback situation is Garoppolo would start the first four games and Brady would take over after that. Gronkowski said that clarity has helped void any uncertainty.

"We're super confident in whoever's in there and that's what practice is for, for everyone to get on the same page," he said.

For now, offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels said the plan during camp is to make sure all three quarterbacks get plenty of reps, with now specified first- or second-team designations. That was the case Thursday, with both Brady and Garoppolo taking snaps with likely starters.

Belichick says he wants all three quarterbacks on the roster to be game-ready, including rookie Jacoby Brissett.

"I think we have a good situation," Belichick said. "We have three players we want to work with. Look, in some other years I've seen teams that probably don't feel like they have anybody, or maybe they have one. ... We'll just see how it plays out."

While it could be just a byproduct of the role he now is in, Garoppolo found a more than normal gaggle of autograph seekers and people wearing his No. 10 jersey as he left the field Thursday. It's big change for a fan base that once had trouble pronouncing or spelling his name.

Will this new spotlight help with that? "It's a tough one," Garoppolo said, "so we'll see."

Streb tied atop PGA field

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, N.J. — In a major championship season of endless theater, the PGA Championship lived up to its end of the bargain Friday.

Robert Streb led the way, even if hardly anyone noticed.

As thousands of fans crammed into the closing holes at Baltusrol to see if Jason Day could finish off his amazing run and Phil Mickelson could make it to the weekend, Streb hit a 6-iron into 20 feet on his final hole at the par-3 ninth for a shot at 63.

He made the birdie putt during a TV commercial break, making him the 28th player to shoot 63 in a major, and the third in the last 16 days.

"It was pretty noisy for the 15 people that were out there," Streb said.

No matter where anyone was at Baltusrol, there was no shortage of entertainment.

Mickelson hit his opening tee shot off the property and onto a side street and made triple bogey, only to rally to make the cut. Rickie Fowler finished birdie-eagle to get back into the picture. Rory McIlroy only needed to birdie the par-5 18th, the easiest hole on the course, to make the cut. From the fairway, he made bogey and was headed home to figure out what was wrong with his putting.

A second round that began in rain with one group given the wrong hole location on No. 10 ended with Streb and Jimmy Walker sharing the lead and becoming the eighth and ninth players to match the 36-hole record in the PGA Championship at 131.

Walker had to settle for a 4-under 66, right when he had the 36-hole record for all majors (130) within his reach with two par 5s remaining. But he hit into the hospitality area well left of the 17th and scrambled for par, and then his tee shot narrowly missed its mark and found the water on the 18th, leading to bogey.

Even so, he was tied at the halfway point of a major.

"It's going to be a new experience, and it will be fun," Walker said. "You still have to go perform. Doesn't matter what tournament it is."

Day dropped to even par with a double bogey on No. 7, and that appeared to wake up the world's No. 1 player. Day went on a tear with seven birdies over his next eight holes, two of them from 18 feet, one of them from 35 feet. Suddenly, he was on the verge of a shot at 63 until he hooked his tee shot to the base of the hospitality area on the 17th, and pushed a driving iron into the right rough on the 18th. He settled for pars at both for a 65.

Day was right where he wanted to be, three shots behind going into the weekend, his name high on the leaderboard for everyone to see. At stake is a chance to join Tiger Woods as the only back-to-back PGA champions since the stroke-play era began in 1958.

Day was joined at 7-under 133 by Emiliano Grillo, the talented young Argentine.

Cardinals' Palmer feeling 'as good as ever'

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Carson Palmer will turn 37 before the coming football season is over and he sure doesn't look or act like someone closing in on the end of his career.

Speaking before the Cardinals' first training camp workout on Friday, Palmer said he feels "as good as I've felt ever."

It helps that he's surrounded by talent on a team he believes should be better than the one that went 13-3, won the NFC West and made it to the NFC championship game last season.

"I love what I see, absolutely," he said. "There's a lot of good football players in that locker room and guys recognize it and I think that's really important because a lot of times you can have young guys that don't quite realize the opportunity. But we have guys that realize that we have something special going on."

Coach Bruce Arians said that when he and Palmer joined the Cardinals in 2013, he figured the quarterback's window of opportunity was five years.

"But now I don't know if there is a window," Arians said. "... What he does physically training-wise is amazing. I've seen him get younger just since his knee injury. All what he did, his core, his entire body, the way he eats and all those things now. He's adding longevity to his career."

Palmer said that, from people he's talk-

ed to, quarterbacks know when the end of a career is coming when the mental grind starts getting to them.

"I still love that stuff," he said. "I love Mondays and Tuesdays, getting game plans and breaking down other teams and watching other quarterbacks. All that stuff is still not work to me."

And there's no sign of a hangover from that awful performance in the blowout loss to Carolina in the NFC title game.

Arians said Palmer dealt with that "just the same way he does from any other adversity, any other interception."

"His preparation from day one after the Carolina game has never changed," Arians said. "If anything, it's stronger. And the guys, they gravitate to him because of his resolve."

Besides, Arians said, Palmer had plenty of company in that ugly loss.

"It was coaches, it was everybody on the field," he said. "He threw an interception, but the fumbles were because somebody didn't block somebody. There were 53 guys that stunk that night, and 25 coaches."

Palmer doesn't think that game will set the tone for what's to come.

"We don't need motivation," he said. "This is a group that loves football. You talk about the group of guys in the locker room being special. It's a group that loves to work. It's a group that enjoys the game. It's not pulling teeth."

He must get accustomed to a rebuilt offensive line, with a new center (A.Q. Shipley), right guard (Evan Mathis) and right tackle (D.J. Humphries). But every player at the skill positions — wide receivers, tight ends, running backs — is back.

After an offseason of work, they return better than ever, Palmer said.

"We've grown leaps and bounds," he said. "We've taken big steps and strides. It's the same guys and, yeah, a bunch of guys have caught touchdowns and run touchdowns and all those things, but we're a totally different unit just because of our knowledge within the system."

Palmer is entering his 14th NFL season. The former No. 1 draft pick spent a lot of those years on mediocre teams, racking up big numbers but not victories. Last season, coming back from major knee surgery, he set personal bests in yards passing (4,671), touchdown passes (35) and passer rating (104.6), breaking the Cardinals' franchise record in all three categories.

"It doesn't matter how good you play individually, if you lose it makes for a long week," he said. "But winning 13 games and being on streaks and being in a locker room after a win, coming into work on a Monday after a win, showing up on Sunday at an opposing team's stadium when you've won a bunch of games in a row and you know you've got them kind of in a mental pace that's to your advantage, is fun."



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Historic triple play leads Nats

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The Washington Nationals made history by turning the first 3-3-5 triple play ever in the major leagues then watched as third baseman Anthony Rendon tossed the ball from the milestone moment into the crowd at AT&T Park.

Getting a second straight win over the Giants and securing their hold on the second-best record in baseball was far more important than the souvenir to manager Dusty Baker and his ballclub.

Washington turned the first triple play in its 12-season history, holding on in the eighth inning to help preserve a strong outing by Max Scherzer and beat San Francisco 4-1 on Friday night.

"Crazy," Zimmerman said. "Couldn't have happened at a better time for us. Great job by Sammy (Solis) coming in and getting two pitches and three outs."

The Giants loaded the bases in the eighth with two walks sandwiched around a single. Brandon Crawford then lined an 0-1 pitch from Sammy Solis to first baseman Ryan Zimmerman, who had entered the game moments earlier as a part of a double switch.

Zimmerman quickly stepped on first base for the second out then threw to third baseman Anthony Rendon to catch Denard Span to complete the triple play.

"Once I caught it I knew I had the double play," said Zimmerman, who was moved a few steps back before Crawford swung. "Then Tony was jumping up and down with a smile on his face so I just tossed the ball over to him. Got out of a jam just like that."

It was the first 3-3-5 triple play in history, according to Sabr.org, and also the first Baker has ever seen as a player or manager.

"There was one other one but I went to

the bathroom and missed it," Baker said.

Scherzer (11-6) had lost four of his five career starts against the Giants and a no-decision in Game 4 of the 2012 World Series before holding San Francisco to one run over seven innings.

The four-time All-Star retired 14 of the final 16 batters he faced and finished with six strikeouts and two walks.

Jayson Werth had two hits for the Nationals to extend his on-base streak to 32 games, tied with Boston's Dustin Pedroia for the longest active streak in the majors, and Ben Revere hit a tiebreaking single in the fifth.

Daniel Murphy added an RBI triple while Wilson Ramos doubled and scored to help the Nationals win their second straight in this four-game series between division leaders.

All of Washington's runs came off Giants starter Jeff Samardzija (9-7).

US men grind out ugly win

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Moments after his successful return to Chicago with the U.S. national team, Jimmy Butler pulled on a T-shirt with a picture of Brazilian soccer star Pelé on the front.

Yup, it's almost time. Kyrie Irving scored 13 points, DeMarcus Cousins powered a dominant performance in the paint, and the United States pulled away from Venezuela for an ugly 80-45 exhibition victory Friday night.

Coming off three straight flashy victories in Las Vegas and California, the United States used a strong fourth quarter to shoot 42.4 percent from the field in by far its worst offensive performance of its five-city tour in preparation for the Rio Olympics. But the Americans used their superior athleticism to limit Venezuela to 24 percent shooting and owned the interior with a 54-29 rebounding advantage.

"Quite frankly, I'm very pleased about tonight because you don't just want to just hit 17 threes and not work hard," U.S. coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "We had to work real hard tonight."

Butler, a two-time All-Star with the Bulls, had four points and eight rebounds in 21½ minutes in his first start with Team USA. He was cheered every time he was announced at the United Center.

"This is like home for me now," Butler said. "I'm glad that I got to play here for USA in front of my hometown crowd. They've embraced me since Day 1. I hope they continue to do so. I want to win with the Bulls. I want to win with USA and bring a championship with the Bulls and a gold medal here."

Butler had one of the few electric plays for the U.S. when he ran out on the break and dunked Kyle Lowry's tip pass in the fourth quarter. DeAndre Jordan also had a vicious dunk off a lob from Kevin Durant, and DeMar DeRozan drew chants of "USA! USA!" with a windmill jam in the final minutes.

Klay Thompson also scored 13 points, and Cousins finished with seven points and 12 rebounds. Durant had nine points on 3-for-9 shooting for the U.S., which plays one more exhibition on Monday against Nigeria before departing for Brazil.

"We just kept fighting defensively, and we were great (in that area)," Durant said. "And in the second half, we made some shots."

John Cox scored 14 points for Venezuela, which will play the U.S. again on Aug. 8 in the Olympics. Nestor Colmenares pulled down 10 rebounds.

"Their defense is so good because they can switch everything because of their length and athleticism," Cox said. "So there's not really another team in the Olympics that can do that."

Before Butler's introduction drew the most applause of the night, former Chicago coach Tom Thibodeau received a thunderous ovation when he was announced with the U.S. coaching staff. Thibodeau took a year off after he was fired by the Bulls in May 2015, and then was hired as Minnesota's coach and president of basketball operations in April.

"He's the best as far as preparation and team player and whatever, and the fans appreciate it," said Krzyzewski, a Chicago native. "It was great. I love the fact that my town gave a guy who gave them his heart and soul for the number of years he's been here, and acknowledged that. That's a great, great thing."

Porcello's 5-hitter carries BoSox

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Rick Porcello gave the Boston Red Sox just what they needed.

Porcello pitched a five-hitter for his first complete game since 2014, Xander Bogaerts homered and drove in three runs, and the Red Sox beat the Los Angeles Angels 6-2 on Friday night, snapping a four-game losing streak.

"Twenty-four hours ago, we were probably in a much different place mentally," Red Sox manager John Farrell said. "He's our stopper."

Porcello (14-2) struck out three while winning his sixth straight start — also for the first time since 2014 — and eighth consecutive decision. He became the majors' fourth 14-game winner, joining Baltimore's Chris Tillman, the Chicago White Sox's Chris Sale, and Washington's Stephen Strasburg.

"He had just very good command the entire night," Farrell said. "He stayed ahead in the count, pitched to all quadrants of the strike zone, he used his four-seamer in to some powerful right hitters in that lineup. ... He just continued to pitch at a very good pace throughout the game tonight and a very strong effort on his part."

Porcello hasn't lost since May 17 and he's pitched five or more innings in 29 straight starts dating back to last Aug. 26. His timing and command have allowed him to establish consistency this season.

"It's what I've been trying to do," Porcello said. "I think getting ahead of hitters has been the biggest thing and tonight, that was probably one of my better games of establishing strike one and going from there. Limiting baserunners and not giving free passes is huge and that's what I have to do to give us a chance."

Jackie Bradley Jr. also homered for the 17th time this season.

Tim Lincecum (3-4) continued to struggle in his comeback attempt, giving up four earned runs and five hits with four walks. He was removed after giving up Bradley's homer — his 16th — leading off the sixth.

Lincecum has surrendered four or more runs in five of eight starts this season but the Angels will continue to give him a chance to fix what ails him as Los Angeles manager Mike Scioscia said his spot in the rotation is safe.

Jhoulys Chacin relieved Lincecum and gave up two earned runs through four innings as the Angels snapped a season-high seven-game home winning streak.

Dodgers 9, Diamondbacks 7: Yasmani Grandal's RBI single capped a five-run, seventh-inning rally that carried host Los Angeles to a wild win over Arizona.

Joc Pederson and Chase Utley each hit two-run home runs in the deciding rally as the Dodgers erased a 7-3 deficit and improved to 17-9 since June 26.

Three batters after Corey Seager doubled against Zac Curtis (0-1), Grandal hit a 2-1 pitch from Randall Delgado into center field, scoring Seager from third with the tiebreaking run.

Los Angeles pulled one game behind the division-leading Giants, the closest the Dodgers have been to first place since May 15.

Los Angeles sent 10 men to the plate in the bottom of the seventh, a half-inning after the Diamondbacks sent 11 men to the plate and scored seven runs.

Paul Goldschmidt capped a three-hit night with a bases-loaded double off Pedro Baez (3-2) that finished off the Diamondbacks' rally.

Cubs 12, Mariners 1: Jon Lester recovered from a rut of bad starts, pitching six shutout innings to help host Chicago rout Seattle for its third straight victory.

Jason Heyward and David Ross homered and the NL Central leaders improved to 10-5 since a 1-9 slump.

Cardinals 11, Marlins 6: Tommy Pham homered and drove in three runs in St. Louis' victory over host Miami.

The Cardinals have won four of five and lead the Marlins by a game in the NL wild-card standings.

Marlins outfielder Ichiro Suzuki went 0-for-4 to remain at 2,998 career hits.

Blue Jays 6, Orioles 5: Jose Bautista, Edwin Encarnacion and Troy Tulowitzki hit solo home runs in the first inning, Marco Estrada snapped a four-start winless streak and Toronto beat visiting Baltimore.

Encarnacion reached base three times and scored twice to help the Blue Jays win the opener of a three-game series between the top two teams in the AL East.

Rockies 6, Mets 1: Tyler Chatwood kept winning on the road, Carlos Gonzalez homered and drove in four runs and Colorado beat host New York for its fourth straight victory.

Mark Reynolds also homered for the surging Rockies. They are 11-4 since the All-Star break and have moved within four games of Miami for the second NL wild-card spot.

Rangers 8, Royals 3: Rougned Odor

homered twice, and A.J. Griffin pitched into the sixth inning in Texas' victory over visiting Kansas City.

Brewers 3, Pirates 1: Junior Guerra limited Pittsburgh to four hits over 8²/₃ innings, and Chris Carter hit a two-run home run in host Milwaukee's victory.

Indians 5, Athletics 3: Abraham Almonte scored the go-ahead run on a wild pitch in his team's four-run seventh inning in Cleveland's comeback victory over visiting Oakland.

Cleveland erased a 3-1 deficit after being held to four hits through six innings. Jason Kipnis' bases-loaded single tied it, and Almonte scored from third on Ryan Dull's wild pitch one batter later.

Tigers 14, Astros 6: Tyler Collins and Justin Upton each hit a three-run homer, helping host Detroit beat Houston for its fourth straight victory.

James McCann added a solo shot in the eighth and Cameron Maybin had three hits and scored three times.

Rays 5, Yankees 1: Jake Odorizzi pitched masterfully into the seventh inning, Logan Forsythe and Corey Dickerson hit solo homers in the first, and Tampa Bay cooled off visiting New York.

The Yankees had won eight of 11 to close within 3½ games of Boston for the second AL wild card.

Twins 2, White Sox 1 (12): Pinch-hitter Joe Mauer drew a bases-loaded walk with one out in the bottom of the 12th inning to lift host Minnesota over Chicago.

Dan Jennings (4-3) hit Eddie Rosario with a full-count pitch to lead off the 12th. One out later, Byron Buxton walked. Reliever Tommy Kahnle then came on and walked Brian Dozier and Mauer to push across the winning run. Trevor May (2-2) pitched a perfect 12th.

Braves 2, Phillies 1: Tyrell Jenkins earned his first career victory, pitching six innings and helping Atlanta beat visiting Philadelphia.

Jenkins, acquired in the November 2014 trade that sent Jason Heyward to St. Louis, allowed one unearned run on four hits and four walks. He struck out four.

Reds 6, Padres 0: Eugenio Suarez tied a career-high with four RBIs and Brandon Finnegan pitched six scoreless innings as Cincinnati beat host San Diego.

Suarez had a run-scoring double and single to pace the Reds to their third victory in four games as the Padres were blanked for the 12th time this season, tops in the majors.