

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Pentagon: Drone strike kills ISIS leader

BY ROBERT H. REID

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces have killed the leader of the Islamic State's affiliate in Afghanistan, the Pentagon announced Friday.

Abu Sayed, the emir of the self-styled "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria - Khorasan Province," died in a "strike" Tuesday on the group's headquarters in Afghanistan's eastern Kunar province, chief Pentagon spokesperson Dana W. White said in a statement.

She said the attack, which The Washington Post said was carried out by a drone, also killed an unspecified number of ISIS members "and will significantly disrupt the ter-

ror group's plans to expand its presence in Afghanistan."

A U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details about the attack, told The Washington Post the strike targeted a meeting and that U.S. forces had not been tracking Sayed for long.

If confirmed, Sayed's death marks another setback for the terrorist group in Afghanistan.

Abu Sayed was the third leader of ISIS in Afghanistan and neighboring parts of Pakistan to be killed in the past year.

Sayed Khan was killed in July 2016, and Abdul Hasib died in a joint U.S.-Afghan raid in April.

Two U.S. Army Rangers

died in that April raid, along with 35 ISIS fighters and several ISIS commanders.

U.S. and Afghan forces launched a counteroffensive against ISIS last March to push the militants out of their traditional power base in Nangarhar province, which borders Kunar to the south.

The fact that Abu Sayed was killed in Kunar instead of Nangarhar indicates the U.S.-Afghan offensive had achieved some success in forcing ISIS from its former stronghold.

Although most U.S. troops in Afghanistan are involved in training and support missions, U.S. special operators have been carrying out offensive combat operations against ISIS in the east as part of a cam-

paign to eliminate the terror group's presence in Afghanistan by the end of this year.

Last April, the United States dropped the largest non-nuclear bomb in its arsenal — a GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb — on an ISIS cave and tunnel complex in Nangarhar.

Officials said the bomb killed 92 ISIS fighters.

ISIS emerged in Afghanistan in early 2015 as a rival to the Taliban.

The movement, made up largely of defectors from the Taliban and other insurgent groups, is believed to have fielded as many as 3,000 fighters at its height, but its numbers are thought to have dwindled to fewer than 1,000.

## Fontes takes over key post in Afghanistan

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Army Maj. Gen. Robin L. Fontes on Saturday assumed the highest position of any female servicemember in Afghanistan since the war began, taking over command of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

"I promise to give you my full support, my best effort, my respect and my loyalty every day," Fontes told a crowd at a change-of-command ceremony. Fontes took over from outgoing Commander Army Maj. Gen. Richard G. Kaiser.

Fontes, a U.S. Military Academy graduate, has spent 12 years in the region, serving in Afghanistan multiple times, as well as in India, Pakistan and Tajikistan. She speaks three regional languages.

Army Gen. John Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, described Fontes as "the most proficient and competent officer" in the field of security assistance within the military. He said he had

**'I promise to give you my full support, my best effort, my respect and my loyalty every day.'**

**Army Maj. Gen. Robin L. Fontes**  
Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan

to fight to get her the position because she was heavily sought after in Washington.

"There is no officer of any service in the United States military that has more experience in this region than Maj. Gen. Robin Fontes," Nicholson said. "She is the best possible commander for this command. She will take this command to the next level."

In addition to taking control of CSTC-A, Fontes will assume the role of deputy chief of staff, security assistance for Resolute Support

headquarters. CSTC-A is part of NATO's Resolute Support mission aimed at developing Afghan security forces. It provides resources and training in areas such as management and sustainability.

Before relinquishing command, Kaiser, who Nicholson described as "universally respected," told Stars and Stripes that he believed his tenure as CSTC-A commander was productive.

"I always hesitate to use the word success," he said. "We've had many successes, but there are many challenges that remain."

Kaiser said establishing Afghanistan's Anti-corruption Justice Center and implementing measures to identify and prevent so-called "ghost soldiers" were among his biggest successes.

He said issues regarding gender remain one of the biggest challenges, but he believes progress will be made under Fontes.

"I'm confident she'll do a wonderful job," Kaiser said.

# House eyes fast OK of 'Forever' GI Bill

By NIKKI WENTLING  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will hold a hearing Monday about a large expansion of veterans' education benefits with a plan to vote on the measure Wednesday and to have the bill sail through the House in just two weeks, ahead of a monthlong summer recess.

The legislation was introduced Thursday, and in a show of goodwill uncommon in a divided Congress, Republicans and Democrats gathered to exchange compliments at the bill's release. It was a stark contrast to a few months ago, when controversy about how to pay for the estimated \$3 billion expansion of the GI Bill led to the cancelation of a House hearing and caused some veterans advocates to believe the deal was dead.

"In any Congress, especially in recent Congresses, that's usually a death knell," said Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn. "[Rep. Phil Roe] refused to accept that and came back to retool. Because of that, we're going to enhance one of the best programs that has ever come out of this Congress. We continue to prove we can get things done that do matter."

Walz, the ranking Democrat on the veterans affairs committee, and Roe, a Republican from Tennessee who is chairman

of the committee, are co-sponsors of HR 3218, titled the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017. It's named for a past commander of the American Legion who authored the original GI Bill of Rights in 1944.

The legislation combines 18 bills and about 30 provisions and is supported by 40 military, veterans and higher education advocacy groups.

Walz said he and Roe were working with Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., and Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the chairman and the ranking member on the Senate veterans affairs committee, to achieve a similar time frame in the Senate.

In a statement Thursday, Isakson and Tester said they are drafting similar legislation.

The House bill boosts tuition and housing aid for National Guard and Reserve members, as well as for veterans majoring in science, technology, engineering or mathematics fields. It extends the GI Bill to all Purple Heart recipients and fixes a Pentagon deployment authorization that has kept about 5,000 reservists and guardsmen from accumulating education benefits.

The package also addresses veterans' losses when their schools close mid-semester. Last year, when for-profit ITT Technical Institute closed its doors, thousands of veterans who attended the campuses were

unable to recover lost education benefits. The bill calls for the Department of Veterans Affairs to restore tuition costs and to boost living stipends for veterans caught in those situations.

One of the biggest shifts would be to drop the 15-year time limit on veterans to tap into their education benefits after they leave military service. The change would apply only to servicemembers who enlist after the expanded GI Bill takes effect, which is expected to be Jan. 1, 2018.

The legislation also includes a more symbolic change — to drop the "Post-9/11" from the name and use "GI Bill." Advocates with Student Veterans of America, who led the effort to reignite momentum in Congress on the issue, said untying the GI Bill from one conflict could help protect it from future attempts to cut its funding. The group is calling the proposed expansion the "Forever" GI Bill.

After it caused dissension between veterans organizations in April, advocates dropped an idea to pay for the bill by deducting \$100 per month for two years from new enlistees' pay.

Now, lawmakers are proposing a decrease to veterans' living stipends to fall in line with active-duty servicemembers' basic housing allowance. The change would not apply to people currently using the GI Bill.

## Officials finalizing plans to revamp Cyber Command

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — After months of delay, the Trump administration is finalizing plans to revamp the nation's military command for defensive and offensive cyberoperations in hopes of intensifying America's ability to wage cyberwarfare against Islamic State and other foes, according to U.S. officials.

Under the plans, U.S. Cyber Command eventually would be split off from the intelligence-focused National Security Agency.

Details are still being worked out, but officials say they expect a decision and an announcement in the coming weeks. The officials weren't authorized to speak publicly on the matter, so

they requested anonymity.

The goal, they said, is to give U.S. Cyber Command more autonomy, freeing it from any constraints that stem from working alongside the NSA, which is responsible for monitoring and collecting telephone, internet and other intelligence data from around the world — a responsibility that can sometimes clash with military operations against enemy forces.

Putting cyberoperations under an independent military command will put the fight in digital space on the same footing as more traditional realms of battle on land, in the air, at sea and in space. The move reflects the escalating threat of cyberattacks and intrusions from other nation states, terrorist groups and hackers, and

comes as the U.S. faces ever-widening fears about Russian hacking following Moscow's efforts to meddle in the 2016 American election.

The U.S. has long operated quietly in cyberspace, using it to collect information, to disrupt enemy networks and to aid conventional military missions. But as other nations and foes expand their use of cyberspying and attacks, the U.S. is determined to improve its ability to incorporate cyberoperations into its everyday warfighting.

Experts said the command will need time to find its footing.

It's unclear how fast the Cyber Command will break off on its own. Some officials believe the new command isn't battle-ready, given its current

reliance on the NSA's expertise, staff and equipment. That effort will require the department to continue to attract and retain cyberspace experts.

Cyber Command was created in 2009 by the Obama administration to address threats of cyberespionage and other attacks.

Officials originally said the new cyberoperations effort likely would involve hundreds, rather than thousands, of new employees.

Since then, the command has grown to more than 700 military and civilian employees. The military services also have their own cyberoperations units, with a goal of having 133 fully operational teams with as many as 6,200 personnel.

## Deadly fire in Honolulu like 'horror movie'

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Karen Hastings was in her 31st-floor Honolulu apartment when she smelled smoke. She ran out to her balcony, looked down, and saw flames five floors below her.

"The fire just blew up and went flying right out the windows," Hastings, 71, said of the first moments of the high-rise blaze that killed at least three people and injured 12. "And that was like a horror movie. Except it wasn't a horror movie, it was for real."

The fire broke out Friday in a unit on the 26th floor, where all three of the dead were found, Fire Chief Manuel Neves said.

The building, known as the Marco Polo residences, is not required to have fire sprinklers, which would have confined the blaze to the unit where it started, Neves said. The 36-floor building near the tourist mecca of Waikiki was built in 1971, before sprinklers were mandatory in high-rises. It has more than 500 units.

Late into the night, firefighters were searching the damaged areas to make sure no additional people perished.

Hastings said the flames drove her and a neighbor to run down 14 floors until they found a safe stairwell to get some air.

"We actually saw a person laying on a ledge, and I don't know whether he made it not," Hastings said.

The building is vast and wave-shaped, and has several sections. The blaze was mostly confined to a single section, and only the units immediately above it and to the side of it were evacuated, while many residents stayed inside.

The blaze was still burning as the sun set, some four hours after it broke out, but it was down to mostly embers by then, official said.

Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said the city needs to look at passing a law requiring that older buildings be retrofitted with sprinklers.

# Vets await burn pit suit decision

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of veterans and their families who have spent eight years in federal court trying to prove that burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan made U.S. troops sick are worried they'll hit a legal dead end if a Maryland judge decides the company that ran the smoke-belching disposal sites can't be sued because it was working on behalf of the government.

"It's been a living hell, emotionally, financially and physically," said Rosie Torres, whose husband, LeRoy, a former Army Reserve captain, was diagnosed with a debilitating, progressive lung disease after he returned home to Texas following a deployment to Iraq. "It is the war that followed us home."

For Dina McKenna, the case represents hope for long-delayed justice from a military contractor. The widow, who now lives in Tennessee, initially survived on charitable donations until Veterans Affairs benefits kicked in after her husband, former Army Sgt. William McKenna, died in 2010 at 41 from a rare form of T-cell lymphoma. He had served in Iraq.

"What do I want out of this lawsuit? I want the rules changed so soldiers don't go through this again. I want to see money distributed to families who lost their homes because their spouse suffered or is suffering," McKenna said.

Torres and McKenna are among 735 plaintiffs waiting for U.S. District Court Judge Roger W. Titus to decide whether to let a massive lawsuit continue against Houston-based KBR Inc., a defense contractor and former subsidiary of Halliburton that ran burn pits to dispose of waste on U.S. bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

KBR has asked the judge to dismiss the burn pit case — a collection of more than 60 individual suits filed in multiple jurisdictions by military family members, veterans or former KBR employees — arguing that the federal courts lack jurisdiction to rule on a military decision to use the burn pits, and as a military contractor, it should be shielded from litigation. The company released a statement June 29 saying its employees operated burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan "safely and effectively at the direction and under control of the U.S. military."

"The government's best scientific and expert opinions have repeatedly concluded there is no link between any long-term health issues and burn pit emissions," the statement read.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs and the defendant wouldn't comment on the case.

But those suing the company say the smoke from burning millions of pounds of trash in open pits, sometimes around the clock, caused acute and chronic health conditions for those working and living nearby.

KBR burned all kinds of refuse at the sites — some as large as 10 acres — including canvas, wood, paint, batteries, computers, fuel, plastic water bottles, animal carcasses and even human medical waste.

The plaintiffs say they suffer from a range of diseases caused by exposure to the burning: respiratory illnesses, gastrointestinal disorders, neurological problems and cancers. In one Washington class action, a dozen of the plaintiffs have died since the cases were consolidated in October 2009.

Titus, who held a hearing in March, has not said when he will announce his decision on whether the court has jurisdiction.

## Budget deficit projection rises \$99B

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House says worsening tax revenues will cause the budget deficit to jump to \$702 billion this year — a \$99 billion spike from what was predicted less than two months ago.

The report from the Office of Management and Budget comes on the heels of a rival Congressional Budget Office analysis that scuttled White House claims that its May budget, if implemented to the letter, would balance the federal ledger within 10 years. The OMB report doesn't repeat that claim and instead provides just two years' worth of updated

projections.

The White House budget office also said the deficit for the 2018 budget year that starts Oct. 1 will increase by \$149 billion to \$589 billion. But lawmakers already are working on spending bills that promise to boost that number even higher by adding to Trump's Pentagon proposal and ignoring many of Trump's cuts to domestic programs.

Last year's deficit registered \$585 billion.

The White House kept the report to a bare-bones minimum and cast blame on "the failed policies of the previous administration."

"The rising near-term deficits underscore the critical

need to restore fiscal discipline to the nation's finances," said White House budget Director Mick Mulvaney. "Our nation must make substantial changes to the policies and spending priorities of the previous administration if our citizens are to be safe and prosperous in the future."

In late May, Trump released a budget plan proposing jarring cuts to domestic programs and promising to balance the budget within a decade.

CBO says Trump relied on far-too-optimistic predictions of economic growth and that Trump's rosy projections are the chief reason his budget doesn't balance as promised.

# UK, EU will have 'financial settlement' for Brexit

Bloomberg

The United Kingdom acknowledged for the first time in writing that it will have to pay money to the European Union when it withdraws from the bloc, seeking to tamp down a row over the country's so-called Brexit bill.

"We will work with the EU to determine a fair settlement of the U.K.'s rights and obligations as a departing member state," Brexit Secretary David Davis said in a statement to Parliament that referred explicitly to the "financial settlement" with the EU. "The government recognizes that the U.K. has obligations to the EU, and the EU obligations to the U.K., that will survive the U.K.'s withdrawal — and that these need to be resolved."

Britain's divorce bill is one of the thorniest issues in the Brexit negotiations, with media speculation putting the fee as high as 100 billion euros, or \$114 billion. Prime Minister Theresa May needs to come to an accommodation with her EU counterparts on the payment because it's one of three areas, alongside citizens' rights and the border with Ireland, where the bloc is demanding "sufficient progress" before talks can move on to trade.

The government's battles over Brexit are piling up, with opposition parties and the semi-autonomous Scottish and Welsh governments opposing May's approach and threatening to stymie the passage of her planned legislation to implement the split.

She also faces the prospect of

an internal rebellion over Britain's withdrawal from the EU's nuclear oversight treaty.

To cap it all, her infrastructure adviser, Andrew Adonis, warned on Friday that quitting the customs union and single market would be an error on the same scale as the British decision to appease Adolf Hitler before World War II.

"If it were to take that position and we were to do a hard Brexit, then I do believe this would be the worst mistake this country has made since 'appeasement' in the 1930s, and it will impoverish millions of working people," Adonis told BBC radio on Friday.

May "completely disagrees with" Adonis, her spokeswoman, Alison Donnelly, told reporters.

## 2 Israeli soldiers killed at shrine in Jerusalem

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Arab assailants struck at ground zero of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Friday, opening fire from inside a major Jerusalem shrine and killing two Israeli policemen before being shot dead.

The attack from within the sacred site, revered by both Muslims and Jews, raised concerns about an escalation of violence.

The attackers were Arab citizens of Israel, also a rarity in Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers that erupted about two years ago, in part over tensions at the holy site.

Jerusalem police Commissioner Yoram Halevy said the attack was well planned: The assailants obtained automatic weapons and stayed at the compound the night before. He said they marked their targets in advance and after shooting them, ran back inside the compound.

After the violence, Israel closed the site — known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as the Temple Mount — for further sweeps to make sure there were no more weapons there.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it would reopen gradually after security evaluations on Sunday.

Jordan, a custodian of the sacred compound, called for its immediate reopening to allow access to Muslim worshippers.

Netanyahu acted quickly to allay Muslim fears, saying that the status quo at the Muslim-administered site "will be preserved."

Jews revere the site, where the two Jewish temples stood in biblical times, as the Temple Mount. It is the holiest site in Judaism, and the nearby Western Wall, a remnant of one of the temples, is the holiest place where Jews can pray.

Muslims regard the same hilltop compound as the Noble Sanctuary. Home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock, it is Islam's third-holiest site after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

## Germany confirms two Germans killed in Egypt knife attack

Associated Press

HURGHADA, Egypt — The German government on Saturday confirmed that two German tourists were killed in a knife attack at a hotel in the popular Egyptian Red Sea resort of Hurghada.

The German Foreign Ministry said it now has the "sad certainty" that two German female tourists died in Friday's attack. It didn't give any other information on the victims.

In a statement, it said: "According to everything that we know, this act was aimed at foreign tourists — a particularly perfidious and criminal act that leaves us sad, dismayed and angry."

Egyptian authorities said the assailant, a man in his 20s, sneaked into the hotel by swimming from a nearby beach. He was arrested after he wounded another four foreign tourists at a neighboring hotel.

The attack on the tourists took place just hours after five policemen were killed in a shooting near some of Egypt's most famous pyramids in the greater Cairo area. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, which bore the hallmarks of a militant group known as Hasm that has been

behind similar attacks in recent months.

Authorities say Hasm is a splinter faction of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group that was outlawed and declared a terrorist organization several months after the military in July 2013 ousted Mohammed Morsi, a senior leader of the Brotherhood who was elected president in 2012.

Friday's attacks are likely to further impact Egypt's tourism industry — a backbone of the country's economy that employs millions of people but that has been decimated by the political turmoil and fragile security roiling the country since the 2011 Arab Spring uprising.

The attacker in Hurghada, one of Egypt's most popular beach resorts and diving centers, stabbed the tourists in the face, neck and feet, according to security officials. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but it appeared to have been inspired by recent calls by the local affiliate of the extremist Islamic State to attack Egypt's minority Christians and foreign tourists.

On Saturday, tight security was in place at the site of the Hurghada attack.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Eels from overturned truck slime cars

**OR** DEPOE BAY — A truck hauling eels overturned on an Oregon highway, turning the coastal road into a slimy mess.

Oregon State Police on Thursday posted a photo on Twitter that showed damaged cars covered by the gooey eels. The agency also posed the question: “What to tell the #drycleaner?”

Meanwhile, the Depoe Bay Fire Department posted a video of workers using a bulldozer to clear the eels from Highway 101.

The fire department said no one was injured in the crash.

## Snake-phobic driver finds reptile in his car

**ME** AUBURN — A Maine driver got the scare of his life when he found a snake slithering in his car.

The unidentified driver called the Auburn police last week, telling a dispatcher that he was afraid of snakes and would rather burn his car than touch the garter snake that was coiled in his car door.

The police, who noted the unusual nature of the call in a Facebook post, sent Officer Travis Barnies to assist the driver. Barnies removed the snake, then got a selfie with it before releasing the footlong snake into the wild.

## Turtles hatch on beach for 1st time in 30 years

**FL** KEY WEST — More than 100 baby loggerhead turtles hatched at a busy Key West beach for the first time in three decades.

Ralph Capone, president and founder of the Key West Sea Turtle Club, said turtles hadn't

hatched successfully at Higgs Beach since the 1980s because there's not enough sand for a turtle to dig and lay eggs — it's mostly coral.

But in May, a turtle dug a hole and laid her eggs near a beach volleyball court. County employees temporarily took down the court and built protective fencing around the nest.

County officials released the news Thursday saying the babies hatched Sunday night, and 104 turtles headed to sea.

## College finds Cezanne practice painting

**VA** WILLIAMSBURG — The College of William & Mary has discovered a practice work by the late French painter Paul Cezanne.

The university in Williamsburg said the painting dates to the 1860s when the post-impressionist was in an early experimental period.

Cezanne copied “The Miracle of the Slave,” which was painted in 1548 by Italian Renaissance artist Jacopo “Tintoretto” Robusti. It depicts St. Mark saving a slave.

The museum bought the painting at an auction in Austria in 2013.

## Suspect falls through ceiling trying to escape

**FL** WINTER HAVEN — Police were able to nab a fleeing suspect after he reportedly fell through the ceiling of an apartment complex into a neighbor's shower.

Winter Haven Police officers were searching for Demario Webster, 32, for an outstanding warrant on probation violations. They chased him through an apartment complex where a K-9 dog led them to Chequita Alexander's door.

The Ledger of Lakeland, Fla., reported she told police Webster

was not inside, and they would have to return with a search warrant to enter. Meanwhile, police said, Webster was inside the apartment and crawled into her attic and the attic space above three other apartments.

A neighbor alerted police a few minutes later that Webster had fallen through the ceiling into their shower. He was arrested and charged with resisting arrest and unarmed burglary.

## Zoo's baby hippo named honorary deputy sheriff

**OH** CINCINNATI — A popular baby hippo at the Cincinnati Zoo has been deputized.

Hamilton County's sheriff and several deputies last week presented Fiona and her team of caretakers with a certificate naming her honorary deputy sheriff.

The zoo said Fiona was underweight when she born on Jan. 24, coming in at 29 pounds. She overcame health scares and now weighs nearly 375 pounds. Her parents weigh about 10 times that.

## Driver arrested for towing kids in wagon

**OR** SPRINGFIELD — An Oregon mother has been accused of endangering her two young children by towing them behind her car in a little red wagon.

Springfield police said Alana Donahue, 27, was arrested after at least four motorists reported seeing the car pulling the plastic wagon.

Drivers said the woman waved at vehicles to pass as she slowly drove in circles in a roundabout.

Lt. Scott McKee told The Register-Guard that the woman told officers she just

wanted to show the kids a good time and didn't understand the problem. He said she was not intoxicated.

## Grievance filed over school's mowing goats

**MI** KALAMAZOO — A union filed a grievance in response to Western Michigan University's hiring of goats to clear 15 acres of woodland on campus.

Kathi Babbit is the chief steward of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees local union. She wrote in a July newsletter that the grievance had been filed in relation to subcontracting and the unreported use of goats, the Kalamazoo Gazette reported.

The university hired the team of goats after a half-acre trial run last year. Officials of goat rental company Munchers on Hooves said the animal consumes 3 to 5 pounds of vegetation per day and leaves behind natural fertilizer.

University spokeswoman Cheryl Roland said no school workers have been laid off by the goat project.

## 8-hour tree standoff ends peacefully

**SD** SIOUX FALLS — A standoff between Sioux Falls police and a robbery suspect who holed up in a tree ended peacefully after more than eight hours.

The 41-year-suspect climbed into the tree shortly before 1 p.m. Thursday when officers acting on a tip went to a residence to arrest him.

The man refused to cooperate with authorities until finally surrendering without incident about 9 p.m. He was taken into custody on an outstanding warrant.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Muguruza claims first Wimbledon title

Associated Press

LONDON — Garbine Muguruza already knew what it's like to lose to a Williams in the Wimbledon final. Now she knows how it feels to beat one for a championship at the All England Club.

Muguruza powered her way to her first title at Wimbledon and second at a Grand Slam tournament Saturday, beating a fading Venus Williams 7-5, 6-0 by claiming the final's last nine games.

At 37, Williams was bidding for her sixth championship at the grass-court major, 17 years after her first. And she was so close to gaining the upper hand against Muguruza, holding two set points at 5-4 in the opener. But Muguruza fought those off and did not drop a game the rest of the way.

"She's such an incredible player," the 23-year-old Muguruza said about Williams during the trophy ceremony, then drew a laugh from spectators by adding: "I grew up watching her play."

In 2015, in her first Grand Slam final, Muguruza lost to Williams' younger sister,

Serena.

"She told me one day I was going to maybe win," Muguruza said. "So two years after, here I am."

Muguruza defeated Serena in last year's French Open title match and, by adding this victory over Venus, the Spaniard becomes the first player to win a Grand Slam final against each member of the greatest Sister Act in sports.

With the Centre Court roof closed because of rain earlier in the day, creating echoes with each thwack of racket strings against ball by the two big hitters, Muguruza was too good down the stretch.

Williams began the proceedings with an ace to a corner at 109 mph, but Muguruza quickly showed she would neither be overwhelmed by such booming serves nor the occasion. Williams is accustomed to parlaying that stroke into easy points, but Muguruza got back one serve at 113 mph on the match's second point, and another at 114 mph in the third game — and wound up winning the ensuing exchanges both times.

Still, Williams twice was a

point away from winning the opening set, ahead 5-4 while Muguruza served at 15-40. On the first chance, a 20-stroke point ended when Williams blinked first, putting a forehand into the net. On the second set point, Williams sent a return long, and Muguruza pumped her fist.

It was as if getting out of that jam freed up Muguruza — and failing to capitalize on the opportunity deflated Williams. That began the match-closing nine-game run for Muguruza.

Williams began faltering, spraying shots to unintended spots — long, wide, into the net — while the younger, less-experienced Muguruza stayed steady, pounding groundstrokes with all her force. By the latter stages, with the ultimate outcome apparent, the only question was how lopsided the score would be.

Williams finished with 25 unforced errors, 14 more than Muguruza made. It ended when Williams hit a shot that landed long, but was ruled in. Muguruza challenged the call, and after a bit of a delay, the review showed the ball was, indeed,

out. Made to wait to celebrate, Muguruza eventually could enjoy the moment, dropping to her knees and covering her face as tears arrived.

Soon enough, Muguruza was being shown her name on the list of champions in the stadium's lobby — "Finally!" she said — and being greeted by former King Juan Carlos of Spain.

It was an anticlimactic conclusion to the fortnight for Williams, who was the oldest Wimbledon finalist since 1994. She hadn't made it this far at the All England Club since 2009, hadn't won the title since a year earlier.

"A lot of beautiful moments in the last couple of weeks," the American said.

Diagnosed in 2011 with Sjogren's syndrome, an energy-sapping autoimmune disease, she learned to deal with that condition by turning to a plant-based diet and altering other routines. It took a while for her to get back to her best tennis. Her resurgence began in earnest at Wimbledon a year ago, when she made it to the semifinals.

## 14 years later, Federer loses shot at eighth crown

Associated Press

LONDON — Much has changed for Roger Federer since he played in, and won, his first Grand Slam final at Wimbledon in 2003.

First of all, as he reminded everyone after moving into his 11th title match at the All England Club — with a shot at his eighth championship, more than any man in history — he favored a ponytail and some scruff on his cheeks way back then. Nowadays, his hair is short, his face clean-shaven.

Another significant difference for Federer, whose 36th birthday is Aug. 8, making him the oldest men's finalist at Wimbledon since 1974?

"I didn't have kids running around, potentially wak-

ing me up at night," he said. "Today, we've got to, like, close down the doors. Say, 'Daddy is sleeping.'"

He's a father of four: twin boys, 3; twin girls, 8 soon.

On the court, there are ways in which the Federer who faces Marin Cilic on Sunday is not the same as the Federer who beat Mark Philippoussis 14 years ago. The larger racket, for example, or the increased willingness to hit over the top on his backhand.

In truth, though, what's most important is this: Federer is still as capable as ever of beating everyone who stands in his way.

"This guy doesn't really seem (to be) getting any older or anything like that," said Tomas

Berdych, who lost to Federer in the semifinals, "or slowing down at all."

That's certainly the case.

Federer is 30-2 and tied for the tour lead with four titles in 2017, including at the Australian Open in January.

During Wimbledon, he has not lost a set through six matches; the last man to earn the title without ceding a set was Bjorn Borg, 31 years ago. He's only been broken four times, saving 16 of 20 break points along the way.

"Roger is playing maybe (some) of his best tennis of his career at the moment," said Cilic, the No. 7-seeded Croatian who hit 25 aces and returned quite well during his semifinal victory over Sam Querrey. "It's going to be a huge challenge."

They have played each other seven times previously, with Federer winning six, including in last year's Wimbledon quarterfinals. Cilic took the first two sets and even was one point from victory, before Federer came back.

The lone head-to-head win for Cilic came in one of the most significant matches of his career: 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals of the 2014 U.S. Open, where he went on to earn his only Grand Slam title.

"He knows he absolutely destroyed Roger," said Jonas Bjorkman, one of Cilic's two coaches.

That knowledge is key for this match, according to Bjorkman. So, too, is the past experience of participating in, and winning, a major final.

## Summer league roundup

# Warriors' Ennis drops 35 in Vegas

Associated Press

Dylan Ennis went undrafted last month, but the Oregon product was the recipient of "MVP" chants from the crowd in Las Vegas on Friday. Ennis was nearly unstoppable as he scored 35 points during the Golden State Warriors' 109-100 NBA Summer League victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

"Being undrafted, you take it personal," Ennis told NBA TV.

Teammates waved towels at the end of the game to cool down Ennis, whose career high at Oregon was 22 points.

Ennis, who played for the Thunder in the Orlando Summer League before joining the Warriors in Las Vegas, poured in 23 points in 12 first-half minutes, including six of his eight three-pointers. He previously had 21 points over five games in Las Vegas.

"Just don't think about it," Ennis said. "It touches your hand, you put it up and the rim looks like the ocean. ... I'll probably never hear (the 'MVP' chants) again in my career."

Ennis' three-pointer with 1:11 remaining gave the Warriors a 105-97 lead that put the game away. Bryce Alford, undrafted out of UCLA, finished with 16 points.

Jaron Johnson scored 18 for the Clippers while 2016 first-round pick Brice Johnson and Jawun Evans had 17 apiece.

Teams still alive in tournament play had Friday off. The quarterfinal round began Saturday with Portland playing San Antonio, Miami facing Memphis, Dallas against Boston and the Lakers meeting Brooklyn.

In other action:

**Hawks 92, Rockets 86:** Trent Lockett scored 17 points on 50 percent shooting, and Atlanta outscored Houston 34-22 in the fourth quarter to rally. Maryland product Diamond Stone and

Bryce Cotton added 12 points apiece off the bench.

**Timberwolves 80, Wizards 73:** Matt Costello blocked a would-be dunk by Michael Young with 59.9 seconds remaining to seal Minnesota's comeback win over Washington.

Costello, who was undrafted out of Michigan State in 2016 and played in the D-League, had a team-high 14 points and 11 rebounds.

**Jazz 97, Bucks 76:** Tony Bradley scored 19 points and Utah easily won the first game of the Las Vegas session after four straight losses.

Bradley, Utah's No. 28 overall pick from North Carolina, added eight rebounds and two blocks in his best game of the summer.

**Nuggets 96, Pelicans 91:** New Orleans (1-5) was held to just four points over the final 3:30 of a game that featured 15 lead changes. Denver improved to 2-4.

Denver second-round pick Monte Morris scored a team-high 17 points and six assists.

**Bulls 99, 76ers 82:** Brady Heslip drained eight three-pointers en route to 28 points and Chicago (2-3) victory. Chicago never trailed after the first quarter.

Denzel Valentine, the 2016 No. 14 pick, had 21 points, six assists and five rebounds in the victory, and Ryan Arcidiacono totaled 16 points.

**Kings 93, Suns 87:** Naz Mitrou-Long hit a three-pointer with 28.4 seconds left to give Sacramento (2-3) a four-point lead, capping a fourth-quarter rally that brought Sacramento back after trailing since the first.

Suns (2-4) guard Mike James missed multiple three-pointers down the stretch.

**Cavaliers 78, Raptors 75 (OT):** Cleveland (4-1) survived a Toronto fourth-quarter comeback and won in overtime thanks to Sir'Dominic Pointer's layup in traffic with 35.6 seconds left to take a 77-75 lead. Toronto (3-2) air-balled two three-pointers in the final seconds of overtime.

# Froome back into first place

Associated Press

RODEZ, France — Fabio Aru was dropped in the last 500 meters of Stage 14 of the Tour de France won by Michael Matthews and relinquished the yellow jersey to Chris Froome on Saturday.

Aru lost touch with the leaders in the final short, sharp ascent of the Cote de Saint Pierre in the town of Rodez and crossed the line 25 seconds behind Matthews.

Froome, who trailed Aru by six seconds at the start of the stage in Blagnac, was well positioned at the front and had no problem tackling the final climb.

He finished hot on the heels of Matthews and leads Aru by 18 seconds overall.

"It's a beautiful surprise today," said Froome, who lost his jersey in the Pyrenees after enduring a bad day on the road to the ski station of Peyragudes.

"I need to say thank you to my teammates who rode at the front in the final 10 kilometers. In the final climb we made a big difference on other favorites. Every second counts at this Tour."

Frenchman Romain Bardet lost four seconds to Froome, crossing the line five seconds behind the winner. He was third overall, 23 seconds back.

Matthews said he'd targeted the stage win all year, and trained specifically for the last climb.

He described his emotions crossing the line as "disbelief." He was so assured of victory that he sat up at the end and cruised over the line.

"I've been dreaming of winning like that since I started cycling," he said. "I could sit up and enjoy the win in the Tour de France. It's not every day that can happen."

While the Team Sky train hit the front in the final kilometers, Aru was at the back and could not make it to the front before the peloton split in the climb.

# Knicks promote Mills, hire Perry

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Scott Perry is with his third NBA franchise in three months, and is inheriting a massive challenge in New York.

Perry's hiring as the Knicks' general manager was announced Friday, along with Steve Mills' promotion to another stint as president of the team. It's all part of the upheaval for the Knicks created by the departure of former president Phil Jackson after three mis-

erable seasons, and completes a whirlwind three months for Perry.

He was fired from his assistant GM role by Orlando in April, then hired as executive vice president in Sacramento, and now is off to New York. The Knicks technically traded for Perry, sending the Kings a future second-round pick and cash considerations.

"I will work tirelessly to develop a culture that demands results, commitment and pride

from everyone fortunate enough to be associated with our team — from our staff to our players," Perry said in a statement released by the Knicks. "Nothing comes close to Madison Square Garden for basketball and it is our right and responsibility to showcase that tradition of excellence, day and night. I can't wait to get started."

Mills returns to the role he held briefly before Jackson was hired in March 2014 and Mills was made general manager.

# Gonzalez, Nationals blank Cincinnati

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Gio Gonzalez was tired after throwing eight shutout innings on a hot and muggy evening. His manager wanted him to face one more batter, and the left-hander took it as a compliment.

Gonzalez pitched four-hit ball into the ninth inning, retired Joey Votto to open the inning on his 113th pitch, and let the bullpen finish off the Washington Nationals' 5-0 victory over the Cincinnati Reds on Friday night.

Bryce Harper extended his mid-July tear with two homers as the Nationals got rolling out of the All-Star break with a solid all-around win.

"Just a good way to start the second half," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez (8-4) snapped his streak of three straight tough-

luck losses. He allowed a double and three infield singles before leaving. Matt Albers gave up three singles, and Matt Grace escaped the bases-loaded threat for his first save.

Gonzalez thought he was done after the eighth inning, but manager Dusty Baker wanted him to face Cincinnati's most dangerous hitter leading off the ninth before taking the night off.

"I got some work in today, definitely," said Gonzalez, who had not gone eight innings this season. "It was good to see that (Baker) let me go out there in the ninth. I was told to go out there in the ninth and pitch, and I felt good enough to keep pitching."

The Reds were shut out for only the second time this season. Four of their seven hits were infield singles.

Harper had a two-run shot and a solo homer off Tim Adleman (5-7) as the NL's top offense got right back in form after the All-Star break. Harper has 22 homers overall, four during his nine-game hitting streak.

Baker had offered Harper a day off if he needed one after the All-Star Game, but the outfielder turned it down.

"I want to stay in the lineup, and every single day I'm in there to do some damage," Harper said.

The Nationals lead the league in most categories on offense and featured three starting position players in the All-Star Game — Harper, Ryan Zimmerman and Daniel Murphy. Murphy got a planned day off on Friday, and the rest of the offense carried on without him.

Anthony Rendon extended his hitting streak to eight

games with an RBI single. Stephen Drew also drove in a run with a single off Adleman, who lasted only 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings — his season low for a start that didn't involve an injury.

Gonzalez had lost his last three starts despite allowing a total of five runs, getting little help from his offense or the bullpen. Everything fell into place to end the streak.

"We weren't able to get any pressure on Gio," Reds manager Bryan Price said. "We didn't have any push at all to get back into the game until the ninth inning. I think we only had six baserunners. That was a dominant performance."

The Reds got only two runners as far as second base against Gonzalez, who walked two and struck out six.

# Down to last strike, Puig homers to win it for Dodgers

Associated Press

MIAMI — Yasiel Puig sent his bat flying with a celebratory shovel pass, which freed both hands so he could slap his chest as he slowly began to jog.

No rush — the Los Angeles Dodgers slugger beat the Miami Marlins with one strike to spare.

Puig hit his second homer of the game on a 1-2 pitch with two out in the ninth inning Friday night, and the three-run shot helped the Dodgers beat Miami 6-4 for their seventh win in a row.

Puig increased his homer total to 18, one shy of his career high in 2013.

"I am trying to get to 20 and break all my personal records," he said. "But the most important thing is to help my team win and reach the World Series."

Corey Seager also homered for the Dodgers (62-29), who were one strike from defeat three times before winning for the 27th time in the past 31 games. Starting the season's

second half, they climbed to 33 games above .500 for the first time this year.

The Marlins led 4-3 when Joc Pederson singled on a 1-2 pitch with two out in the ninth against A.J. Ramos (2-4). It was the first hit by the Dodgers since the fifth inning.

**Red Sox 5, Yankees 4:** Ardlis Chapman (2-1) walked home the winning run without getting an out in the ninth inning, handing host Boston a victory over New York.

**Cubs 9, Orioles 8:** Addison Russell hit a go-ahead solo homer in the ninth inning as visiting Chicago edged Baltimore after squandering an eight-run lead.

**Astros 10, Twins 5:** Brian McCann hit a three-run homer to cap an eight-run second inning and Marwin Gonzalez had a solo shot as host Houston opened the second half of the season with a win over Minnesota.

**Brewers 9, Phillies 6:** Ryan Braun hit a grand slam off the scoreboard in center field and

Orlando Arcia added a three-run shot during an eight-run second inning, helping host Milwaukee beat Philadelphia.

**Braves 4, Diamondbacks 3:** Freddie Freeman and host Atlanta topped baseball's comeback kings at their own game, scoring two runs in the eighth inning to beat Arizona.

**Pirates 5, Cardinals 2:** Josh Bell hit a three-run homer off Seung Hwan Oh (1-5) with one out in the ninth inning to give host Pittsburgh a dramatic win over St. Louis.

**Mets 14, Rockies 2:** Jacob deGrom (10-3) came out dealing once again, striking out 11 and winning his sixth straight start as host New York began what could be a last-chance homestand by routing Colorado.

**Blue Jays 7, Tigers 2:** Aaron Sanchez (1-2) pitched six strong innings for his first win of the season as visiting Toronto beat Detroit.

**Mariners 4, White Sox 2:** Robinson Cano hit a three-run drive on his first swing since connecting for the winning

homer in the All-Star Game, helping James Paxton and visiting Seattle beat Chicago.

**Rangers 5, Royals 3:** Adrian Beltre hit a three-run homer while pinch-hitter Mike Napoli had a go-ahead, two-run shot as visiting Texas rallied to defeat Kansas City.

**Rays 2, Angels 1 (10):** Mike Trout went 1-for-5 in his return from a 39-game injury absence, and Brad Miller had an RBI double in the 10th inning of visiting Tampa Bay's victory over Los Angeles.

**Athletics 5, Indians 0:** Sonny Gray (5-4) and three relievers combined on a four-hitter as host Oakland spoiled the return of Cleveland manager Terry Francona.

**Giants 5, Padres 4:** Denard Span singled home the go-ahead run in the sixth and Buster Posey homered an inning later for visiting San Francisco, which held on to beat San Diego in a matchup between two of the worst teams in baseball.