

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Dunford: No change in transgender policy

By COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — There has been no change to the Pentagon's transgender policy, the top U.S. general wrote to senior military leaders Thursday, a day after President Donald Trump announced on Twitter that he would ban transgender people from military service.

"There will be no modifications to the current policy until the president's direction has been received by the secretary of defense and the secretary has issued implementation guidance," Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote in a two-paragraph letter to the military service chiefs, commanders and senior enlisted leaders.

"In the meantime, we will continue to treat all of our personnel with respect," the general also wrote in his letter, which was obtained by Stars

and Stripes.

Trump wrote Wednesday in a three-tweet message that he had consulted with generals and other military experts before his announcement that transgender people no longer would be allowed to serve "in any capacity" in the military. But the president's message caught many officials at the Pentagon off guard. They said top generals, including some members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were not informed of Trump's decision before he tweeted.

"I saw it on the news," Army Gen. Mark Milley, the service's chief of staff, said Thursday of how he learned of the announcement. However, he said he had no expectation he would be alerted before a decision was made public.

Trump's tweet-announced policy shift was met with almost immediate condemnation from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocacy groups as well

as Republican and Democratic lawmakers, including Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"Any American who meets current medical and readiness standards should be allowed to continue serving," McCain said in a statement that called Trump's message "unclear" and criticized his use of Twitter to announce a major policy change.

Kirsten Gillibrand, of New York, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on personnel, called Trump's tweets "an insult" to transgender servicemembers' "brave and honorable service."

However, some lawmakers expressed agreement with Trump's announcement. Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., said the decision would help "restore the warrior culture" to the military.

Defense Secretary Jim Mat-

tis, who is on vacation this week in Washington State, had yet to publicly address the president's announcement as of Thursday morning. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Wednesday that Mattis had been informed Tuesday.

Trump cited "tremendous medical costs and disruption" to the military to justify his decision in his Wednesday tweets. Sanders, speaking to reporters at the White House later Wednesday, said it was solely a "military decision."

"This was about military readiness, this was about unit cohesion, this was about resources within the military," she said. "And nothing more."

Despite the guidance from Dunford, Trump's announced ban has left transgender troops with questions about their future in the service. Defense officials were unable to provide answers Thursday.

## US-backed Syrian fighters control nearly half of Raqqa

*Associated Press*

RAQQA, Syria — U.S.-backed Syrian fighters have captured almost half of Islamic State's de facto capital of Raqqa, but the push into the city in northern Syria has slowed due to stiff resistance and large amounts of explosives planted by the extremists, a spokeswoman for the fighters and monitors said Thursday.

The assault on Raqqa by the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led fighting coalition, began June 6, backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and U.S. troops advising the local forces.

Since then, the SDF has made steady advances from the eastern and western sides of the

city, reaching the walled old quarter.

The fall of Raqqa would be a huge loss for ISIS, which earlier this month lost the Iraqi city of Mosul. But much tougher fighting still lies ahead.

Army Col. Ryan Dillon, the spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition fighting ISIS, said 45 percent of Raqqa is now under the control of the SDF. In a series of tweets, he said the SDF cleared about 9 square miles of terrain this past week fighting against "stiff, sporadic resistance" from ISIS militants entrenched in Raqqa.

Nisreen Abdullah, the Kurdish spokeswoman, said the pace of the advance into Raqqa has slowed because of massive

amounts of explosives laid by ISIS fighters.

As the extremists become more surrounded, they have increased their suicide attacks against fighters of the SDF, she added.

"Raqqa has become a booby-trapped city and this shows their weakness," said Abdullah, speaking from northern Syria. "They are also using civilians as human shields and this is slowing the push as well."

Plumes of smoke could be seen behind buildings in Raqqa a day earlier as the coalition pounded ISIS targets in the city. Syrian children looked on as U.S. armored vehicles drove by. One American soldier on a vehicle made the victory sign.

Mustafa Bali, who heads the SDF media center, confirmed on Thursday that the group now has half of Raqqa and said the most important areas liberated in the past four days were the Nazlet Shehadeh and Panorama Square neighborhoods — both on the southwestern part of the city.

But he said there are ISIS counterattacks, militant sleeper cells and tunnels in the area.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also said SDF fighters control half of Raqqa. The attacks on the city have claimed many casualties among the tens of thousands of civilians who are still trapped in areas controlled by ISIS.

# GIs' abandoned cars plague Honolulu

BY WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Honolulu is hip-deep in vehicles abandoned by departing servicemembers, and a federal law has prevented city officials from scrapping or selling them.

"This is a problem that is affecting the citizens of the city and county, as well as the general police enforcement," said Randy Leong, deputy director of the Department of Customer Services, which administers vehicle registrations on Oahu.

The bureaucratic logjam stems from the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, a federal law meant to protect members of the armed forces from predatory lending practices and other abuses involving rent, legal proceedings and insurance.

The agency is now holding more than 400 vehicles that belong to soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen who abandoned them when they left Hawaii, either because they left the service or were transferred to another duty station.

Without a waiver for the SCRA signed by the owner, the city cannot dispose of the vehicles.

Impound lots used by the

city's towing contractors are full, forcing the city to ask "sister departments" for additional space, Leong said.

"Fortunately for us, we had two golf courses and an old fire station that could accommodate some vehicles, so we are storing just the military-owned vehicles there," Leong said.

In February, the city sat down with officials representing the Army, Navy and Air Force personnel on Oahu and requested help in tracking down the owners of the burgeoning number of vehicles. Leong said that the military representatives said at the time that privacy concerns prevented them from providing their contact information.

Responding to inquiries by Stars and Stripes this week, Navy Region Hawaii and U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii provided similar statements saying they were "committed" to working with the city on "locating individuals still on active duty in order to get signed permission to dispose of vehicles."

Leong said he believes the city would be able to sell or scrap a significant number of cars if the military services would simply inform the city whether and how long a servicemember has

been out of the military.

Servicemembers separated from the military for more than 90 days are no longer covered by the provisions of the SCRA, he said.

Abandoned vehicles are also a problem on military bases.

"Each year dozens of cars are abandoned on base, too, and we are addressing the issue; we want to prevent any vehicles from being abandoned on base or off," the Navy statement said.

The Army garrison's directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation recently began an initiative designed to make it simpler for soldiers to transfer low-value vehicles to the FMWR's Auto Skills center. Beginning Aug. 9, soldiers can transfer vehicles in working order for a \$25 fee, and the cars will later be auctioned.

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam has a Clunker Program, which for a \$10 fee will take a car whether it's running or not.

The city offers free vehicle junking, provided they are left legally parked on a city roadway and include a signed Vehicle Junking Affidavit available at satellite offices of City Hall.

# Part falls from plane on Okinawa

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
AND HANA KUSUMOTO  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Several commercial flights were diverted to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, this week after a part fell from a Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15, prompting Naha Airport officials to shut down the runway.

The incident happened just before the runway was closed at 9:44 a.m. Wednesday, an airport official said. The F-15 was taking off with another jet when an F-15 crewmember saw something fall from the aircraft. A visual check of the aircraft while in the air revealed that a landing light cover had fallen onto the runway.

The JASDF contacted the airport immediately, which investigated and found broken glass on the runway, a JASDF Naha Air Base spokesman said.

The runway was closed from 9:44 a.m. to 10:31 a.m. while the airport workers cleaned up the glass, the official said. It caused a 52-minute delay.

As of 3 p.m. Wednesday, four flights had been canceled and 26 flights were delayed, the airport official said. Three commercial flights were diverted to Kadena and two were diverted to Miyako island airport.

The Okinawa Times reported Thursday morning that eight flights were canceled and Japan Transocean Airline flights from Ishigaki island to Naha and Okayama to Naha were delayed about 4½ hours.

Nine JASDF F-15s also were diverted to Kadena, the JASDF spokesman said.

The F-15 that dropped the landing light cover was still at Kadena as of Thursday morning.

"Once a checkup is completed and confirmed that it is fit to fly, it will return to Naha Air Base," the spokesman said.

The incident's cause is under investigation.

# NCO not guilty in infant's death

BY MARTIN EGNASH  
*Stars and Stripes*

ANSBACH, Germany — An Army staff sergeant is not guilty of murder in the death of his 2-month-old child, a Katterbach Kaserne military jury ruled Thursday.

After an 11-day trial, the panel took less than two hours to deliberate before acquitting Staff Sgt. Brian P. Johnston, 37, in connection with the 2015 death of his son, Lukas.

"For 2½ years we've known the truth of this, that Brian did not cause the death of his son," defense attorney Aaron Meyer said. "Brian loved his son. And

he was heartbroken when he died."

Meyer argued that a heart defect and Down syndrome, combined with an accidental fall, are what caused Lukas' death.

The prosecution accused Johnston of causing abusive head trauma, commonly referred to as shaken baby syndrome. Lukas' symptoms — brain swelling, retinal bleeding and bruises — indicated abusive head trauma caused by Johnston, prosecution medical and forensic experts said. Meyer argued that the prosecution could not specify what act Johnston supposedly committed. Neither shaking nor impact trauma

could have caused Lukas' symptoms, several medical experts testified on Johnston's behalf.

Lauren Johnston, Lukas' mother, maintained her husband's innocence since the start of the investigation.

"Do you think for a second that Lauren would come in here and tell you he's a good dad and stand by his side if she thought he wasn't innocent?" Meyer asked the jury during closing arguments. "They're a family. And they loved their son. Nothing can undo what happened. This has been an absolute tragedy for this family."

## Tear-filled farewell for Marine dog with cancer

Associated Press

MUSKEGON, Mich. — Hundreds of people in Michigan came together to salute and say a tear-filled final goodbye to a cancer-stricken dog who served three tours in Afghanistan with the U.S. Marines.

Cena the black lab received a hero's farewell Wednesday before being euthanized at a museum ship in Muskegon and carried off in a flag-draped coffin. Cena was a bomb-sniffer for the Marines until his retirement in 2014. He then became a service dog for Lance Cpl. Jeff DeYoung, Cena's first wartime partner.

Cena was recently diagnosed with terminal bone cancer after DeYoung noticed he wasn't putting weight on his front left leg.

DeYoung organized the event. He said he wanted to take his dog on one last ride in a topless Jeep before Cena was put down. The Jeep was decorated and named "Cancer Response Team."

## Man admits seeking bribes in war zone

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A 48-year-old central Illinois man who worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan has pleaded guilty to soliciting \$320,000 in bribes from Afghan contractors.

Mark E. Miller, of Springfield, waived indictment and pleaded guilty to one count of seeking and receiving bribes. He entered the guilty plea in a federal court on Tuesday.

Among other things, Miller admitted he solicited \$280,000 in bribes as part of the construction of a road from eastern Afghanistan to the Pakistani border. He helped make sure the contract wouldn't be terminated. Miller was in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2012.

He is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 30.

From The Associated Press

# Commander of Pacific Fleet emphasizes civilian control

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — The U.S. Pacific Fleet commander said Thursday he would launch a nuclear strike against China next week if President Donald Trump ordered it, and warned against the military ever shifting its allegiance from its commander in chief.

Adm. Scott Swift was responding to a hypothetical question at an Australian National University security conference following a major joint U.S.- Australian military exercise off the Australian coast. The drills were monitored by a Chinese intelligence-gathering ship off northeast Australia.

Asked by an academic in the audience whether he would make a nuclear attack on China next week if Trump ordered it, Swift replied, "The answer would be: Yes."

"Every member of the U.S. military has sworn an oath to defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic and to obey the officers and the

president of the United States as commander in chief appointed over us," Swift said.

He added: "This is core to the American democracy, and any time you have a military that is moving away from a focus and an allegiance to civilian control, then we really have a significant problem."

Pacific Fleet spokesman Capt. Charlie Brown later said Swift's answer reaffirmed the principle of civilian control over the military. "The admiral was not addressing the premise of the question, he was addressing the principle of civilian authority of the military," Brown said. "The premise of the question was ridiculous."

The biennial Talisman Saber exercise involved 36 warships including the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, 220 aircraft and 33,000 military personnel.

It was monitored by a Chinese People's Liberation Army-Navy Type 815 Dongdiao-class auxiliary general intelligence vessel from within Australia's

200-mile exclusive economic zone.

Swift said China similarly had sent an intelligence ship into the U.S. exclusive economic zone around Hawaii during the Pacific Fleet-hosted multinational naval exercise in 2014.

China had a legal right to enter the American economic zone for military purposes under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which defines the rights and responsibilities of nations sailing the world's oceans, he said. Governments needed to engage with Beijing to understand why the Chinese did not accept that the United States had the same access rights within China's exclusive economic zone, Swift said.

"The dichotomy in my mind is why is there a different ruleset applied with respect to taking advantage of UNCLOS in other EEZs, but there's this perspective that there's a different ruleset that applies within another nation's (China's) EEZ?" Swift said.

## AF: Suspected ordnance near Tokyo harmless

BY LEON COOK  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A U.S. military team investigating possible unexploded ordnance Wednesday at one of its bases in Japan determined the item was a harmless piece of metal, Air Force officials said.

"The item was not [unexploded ordnance] and did not contain any explosives. There was never a threat to any personnel on or near the site," the service said in a statement issued Thursday.

The metal was found around 12:45 p.m. Wednesday at To-

korozawa Communication Site in Saitama prefecture.

Much of the land administered by Yokota is on the sites of older military bases, so unknown or suspicious objects are frequently found, the statement said.

"In the interest of public safety we treat all of those objects as if they present a danger to the surrounding areas until we can conclusively verify they are not a threat," the statement said.

In a separate case of possible unexploded ordnance found at the site last month, the item turned out to be harmless construction material.

Tokorozawa, a small base where only seven military personnel and three Japanese nationals work, relays ground-to-air and ship-to-shore communications for U.S. Forces Japan.

The Japanese government agreed last year to clean up lead contamination at the base after soil testing performed ahead of road construction found 13,000 milligrams of lead per kilogram of soil — about 86 times the standard level — at the site.

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## Scaramucci talks tough about leak crackdown

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After wrongly asserting that someone “leaked” information about his finances, newly appointed White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci is talking tough about cracking down on Trump administration leaks and threatening to get federal investigators involved.

Scaramucci, a Wall Street financier, said Thursday in a television interview that he has a “very good idea who the senior leakers are,” adding that he had talked to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and to his “buddies” in the FBI.

In a tweet about his “leaked” financial documents late Wednesday, Scaramucci conspicuously mentioned the Twitter handle of White House chief of staff Reince Priebus. Scaramucci later deleted that tweet and said he had only mentioned Priebus to show that all senior leaders are taking the leak crackdown seriously.

“In light of the leak of my financial disclosure info which is a felony, I will be contacting @FBI and the @JusticeDept #swamp @Reince45,” his deleted tweet read.

Scaramucci’s financial dis-

closure wasn’t leaked at all. It was released after a public records request by a Politico reporter. Scaramucci had been employed at a senior level by the Export-Import Bank since June 19. After 30 days, the financial forms filed by senior administration officials are subject to public records requests.

The issue of leaks has weighed heavily on President Donald Trump as his administration tries to navigate questions about contacts some Trump campaign associates may have had with Russian government officials.

The recent revelation that Trump’s eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, met with a Russian government lawyer has magnified those questions and fueled Trump’s frustration over leaks to the media.

Scaramucci told CNN’s “New Day” that officials sometimes “leak things to reporters to help shape policy.” But he said he wants to stop what he calls “nefarious, unnecessary, backstabbing, palace intrigue-like leaks.”

Asked what he meant by including Priebus, Scaramucci said, “If Reince wants to explain he’s not the leaker, he can do that.”

## Ride malfunction at Ohio State Fair kills 1

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A man was killed and seven other people were injured when a thrill ride broke apart at the Ohio State Fair on Wednesday.

The fair was scheduled to open Thursday, but the rides won’t be running until they all are deemed safe, officials state.

Video captured by a bystander at the fair Wednesday evening shows the Fire Ball ride swinging back and forth like a pendulum and spinning in the air when it crashes into something and part of the ride flies off. Screams are heard as passengers are thrown to the ground.

“The fair is about the best things in life, and tonight with this accident it becomes a terrible, terrible tragedy,” said Republican Gov. John Kasich.

Officials said the man who was killed was one of several people who were thrown to the ground when the ride malfunctioned. They have not released his name. Ohio State Medical Center said three of the injured were being treated there.

Two of them were in critical condition, the hospital said Thursday.

Officials did not know what caused the ride to break apart, saying the investigation was ongoing.

“Of course we want to get to the bottom of this,” Kasich said, noting that there could be things to be learned that could help other fairs and amusement parks. “Make no mistake about it, it’s a very, very sad night for all of us.”

A Columbus fire official told WKRC-TV that the man killed was 18 and that the seven people injured ranged in age from 13 to 41.

Kaylie Bellomy was in the next group waiting to board the Fire Ball.

“It was going for a minute and it was at its highest point and I saw somebody fall on the ride, and then a minute later, the whole like row of seats fell off and hit the ground,” Bellomy told WCMH-TV.

It was chaos afterward, she said. “Everybody was running. I got ran over trying to get out of the way.”

## GOP moves on to modest ‘Obamacare’ repeal bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They couldn’t pass a repeal of “Obamacare” or find the votes for a White House-backed replacement. So now Senate Republicans are lowering their sights and trying to unite behind a so-called “skinny repeal” that merely would undo just a few of the most unpopular elements of President Barack Obama’s law.

The “skinny bill” is an admittedly lowest-common-denominator approach, and it may not even have the votes to pass, either. But as Republicans search for how to keep their yearslong effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act alive, they’re coming to believe that the “skinny bill” may be the only option left.

“It still keeps it in play,” said Sen. Steve Daines, of Montana. “It’s threading a needle at the moment, trying to get 51 in the United States Senate.”

President Donald Trump urged lawmakers on in a tweet Thursday morning: “Come on Republican Senators, you can do it on Healthcare. After 7 years, this is your chance to shine! Don’t let the American people down!”

The Senate strategy emerged after Republicans barely succeeded earlier this week in opening debate on health legislation in the narrowly divided Senate, winning the procedural vote to do so thanks only to Vice President Mike Pence breaking a 50-50 tie.

Hours of debate followed, as well as a few amendment votes that starkly revealed Republicans’ divisions. On Tuesday, on a 57-43 vote with nine GOP defections, the Senate rejected a wide-ranging proposal by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to erase and replace much of the Affordable Care Act. Then on Wednesday, a straightforward repeal measure failed 55-45 with seven Re-

publicans joining Democrats in voting “no,” even though nearly identical legislation had passed Congress two years earlier.

At that time, Obama was in the White House and vetoed the repeal bill. But now, with Trump sitting in the Oval Office and itching to sign it, Republican senators demonstrated they didn’t have the stomach to go through with passing a measure that would end insurance coverage for more than 30 million Americans over a decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

In the wake of those two telling votes, Republican senators have few options left — and that’s led them to look to the “skinny repeal.” The measure has not been finalized, but senators say it could eliminate Obamacare’s two mandates — for individuals to carry insurance and for employers to offer it — along with an unpopular tax on medical devices, and perhaps could contain a few other provisions.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### King cobras smuggled in potato chip canisters

**CA** LOS ANGELES — U.S. prosecutors say a Southern California man is facing federal smuggling charges after trying to receive three king cobras hidden in potato chip canisters through the mail.

Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles said Rodrigo Franco, 34, was charged Tuesday with illegally importing merchandise.

Prosecutors said Customs and Border Protection officers found the three live king cobra snakes while inspecting a package that was mailed from Hong Kong in March. Each was about 2 feet long.

They said there were also three albino Chinese soft-shelled turtles in the package.

Federal agents searched Franco's home in Monterey Park and found a crocodile and protected turtles.

Prosecutors said Franco admitted receiving 20 king cobras in two other shipments, but said they all died in transit.

### Woman who stole flowers from graves gets jail time

**MI** FLINT — A Michigan woman convicted of stealing flowers from local cemeteries that authorities say she used to decorate her home was sentenced to jail.

A judge in Flint sentenced Lisa Corcoran, 44, of Vienna Township to nine months in jail, with credit for 36 days already served. The Flint Journal reported she pleaded guilty in June to attempted larceny of items valued at between \$1,000 and \$20,000.

Corcoran also will serve three years of probation and perform community service.

She was originally charged with larceny after authorities

said more than 100 items, including a handmade bench as well as flowers, were taken earlier from 24 gravesites at two cemeteries.

### Driver of car with ax in roof faces charges

**NY** WETHERSFIELD — A 21-year-old man faces numerous charges after being stopped driving a car with no doors, no windshield and an ax embedded in the roof as if it were a tree stump.

The Wyoming County Sheriff's Office in western New York said Jared Price, of Java, was stopped in the town of Wethersfield on Monday after a report of a suspicious vehicle. Deputies said he was arrested after failing sobriety tests.

Price was arraigned on various charges including driving while impaired by multiple drugs and driving an unregistered vehicle with no insurance, safety glass or license plates. The sheriff's office gave no explanation for the ax.

### Police: Man ran over wife while driving drunk

**PA** LEVITTOWN — A Pennsylvania man was jailed on charges he ran over his wife after she fell from their vehicle, which police say he was driving erratically while drunk.

Falls Township police said Andrew Ryan, 31, swerved across Lincoln Highway on Monday, causing the woman to fall out an unsecured door of his truck. She was then run over by a landscaping trailer he was pulling.

Police said the Warminster man fled the scene while bystanders tended to his wife, who was critically injured.

Police caught up to Ryan a short time later and he ac-

knowledged they were arguing about finances before he let her fall out of the truck.

### Man gets jail time after cutting pet fish in half

**CT** BRISTOL — A Connecticut man has been sentenced to 120 days in jail after police say he cut a pet fish in half during a domestic dispute.

The Bristol Press reported Juan Vega, 33, pleaded guilty Tuesday to breach of peace. As part of the plea deal, a charge of cruelty to animals was dropped.

Authorities said police responded to a call of a domestic disturbance at a Bristol home April 27. Police said Vega argued with a woman and damaged property at the residence. The woman's 9-year-old son told officers the family's pet betta fish was killed.

### Woman arrested after topless road rage attack

**MA** SANDWICH — Police said a Massachusetts motorist was arrested after getting out of her sport utility vehicle, removing her shirt and charging topless while holding a knife toward another motorist.

The Cape Cod Times reported the other motorist turned out to be an off-duty police officer who called the Sandwich Police Department to report the woman.

Police said on Facebook that they received a call Saturday of an SUV driving erratically. They said the driver attempted to crash into the caller's vehicle before pulling up behind it at a red light.

Police said the woman got out of the SUV, removed her shirt and ran toward the other vehicle while holding a dagger-like knife. The 39-year-old woman

is facing several charges, including assault with a dangerous weapon

### Researcher wants to test earwax, armpits

**NC** DURHAM — North Carolina Central University researcher Julie Horvath has examined the microbes living in our armpits, and now wants to look at earwax. Horvath and other researchers are investigating how modern personal hygiene habits may affect microbes living on our skin.

Horvath and a research partner will be swabbing study participants next week in Raleigh and Durham.

Participants are asked to not clean their ears or use deodorant or anti-perspirant for 48 hours before the test to give the microorganisms an opportunity to flourish. Swabs will be taken from armpits, ears, noses and ankles to compare bacteria and other microorganisms.

### 926-pound shark won't be recognized as record

**NJ** TRENTON — A 926-pound Mako shark caught off the New Jersey coast won't be recognized as a state record because more than one angler helped catch it.

The 12-foot-long shark caught Saturday about 100 miles offshore beats an 880-pound tiger shark caught in 1988. But six fishermen were involved in reeling in the Mako shark.

Regulations posted on the Division of Fish and Wildlife's website note state records "are determined by weight alone." But the agency notes the state record application says the angler seeking the certification must swear the fish was caught without anyone's help.

From wire reports

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# Two-a-days a thing of the past

Associated Press

The two-a-day football practices that coaches once scheduled to toughen up their teams and cram for the start of the season are going the way of tear-away jerseys and the wishbone formation.

As part of its efforts to increase safety, the NCAA approved a plan this year that prevents teams from holding multiple practices with contact in a single day.

The move has forced plenty of schools to alter practice calendars, with many teams opening their preseason as early as this week. Officials don't mind if it causes a few logistical headaches as long as it reduces the head injuries that had become all too common this time of year.

According to the NCAA's Sport Science Institute, 58 percent of the football practice concussions that occur over the course of a year happen during the preseason. Brian Hainline, the NCAA's chief medical officer, says August also is a peak month for catastrophic injuries resulting from conditioning rather than contact, such as heatstroke and cardiac arrest.

"There was just something about that month really stood out," Hainline said. "We couldn't say with statistical certainty if this was because of the two-a-days, but there was enough consensus in the room and enough preliminary data that it looked like it was because of the two-a-days."

Some coaches believe the benefits could go beyond reducing concussions.

"I don't think you're going to have the number of injuries that you had, especially the soft tissue injuries — hamstring pulls, quad pulls, groin pulls," Louisiana Tech coach Skip Holtz said.

Teams still can hold two practices on a given day, but one of those practices can only be a "walkthrough" that includes no contact, helmets, pads or conditioning activities. Three hours of recovery are required between a practice and a walkthrough, though meetings can be held during that period.

"It just makes all the sense in the world," Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh said.

Most programs were trending away from two-a-day practices long before this decision.

More than three-quarters of the 89 Football Bowl Subdivision teams that responded to an Associated Press survey on the subject said they conducted multiple practices on certain days last year. But in the overwhelming majority of cases, teams made sure one of those workouts had limited or no contact.

Those teams won't have to change their approach too much.

Hainline said he didn't know exactly how many programs were still holding multiple contact workouts on certain days before the NCAA ruling, but he said it was more common in the Division II ranks than among FBS schools.

Coaches say that because players are on campus working out all year, there's no need to work them quite as hard once preseason practices

begin.

"Back in the day, we used two-a-days to get in shape," Florida State coach Jimbo Fisher said. "You weren't there all summer. You didn't come until the second half. They didn't train from January until June like they do now."

Marshall athletic director Mike Hamrick, a member of the Division I football oversight committee, agrees that times have changed. As an example, he cites the grueling workouts Paul "Bear" Bryant held at Texas A&M during the 1950s, which were chronicled in the book and ESPN movie "Junction Boys."

"There ain't no 'Junction Boys' anymore because the players are in tip-top shape when we start football practice," Hamrick said.

Even so, some players say they'll miss the grind.

"Going through a two-a-day is tough, and that's a big part of football," Kansas State offensive lineman Dalton Risner said. "That builds you for the season. I wish that could go back to what we used to do."

While two-a-days already were going out of fashion, this new rule is still forcing teams to adapt in other respects.

Although the NCAA is preventing multiple full-scale workouts on the same day, teams are still permitted to hold 29 total preseason practice sessions, the same as before. That creates a dilemma for coaches trying to hold that many practices without the benefit of two-a-days. Chris Ash of Rutgers is concerned increasing the length of training camp conflicts with new NCAA rules about time demands placed on athletes and could end up increasing the overall amount of contact practices.

"We've got to manage five weeks of training camp very carefully," Ash said.

Division I schools received a blanket waiver for this season allowing them to start practice one week earlier than usual. Nearly two-thirds of the FBS programs that responded to the AP survey are starting practice in July rather than in August, as is customary.

Those early starting dates led to scheduling complications for some programs. Hamrick said Marshall will still have nearly two weeks remaining in its current summer school session when it starts practice Friday.

"If I were to take the full 29 days of practice, we would have to go back into summer school, and our players would not have a chance ever to get home after summer school and summer program," Kansas State coach Bill Snyder said.

That raises the question of whether the NCAA should continue allowing 29 practice sessions. Further complicating the matter, the oversight committee would like to find a way to have every FBS team have 14 weeks to play 12 regular-season games.

"Do we need 29 practices? Probably not," North Carolina coach Larry Fedora asked. "We can get away with less than that."

# Earnhardt defends his crew chief in final season

Associated Press

DOVER, Del. — Dale Earnhardt Jr. has long reigned as NASCAR's most popular driver. But he thinks too many of his fans have started airing in 140-character bursts a most unpopular opinion — that crew chief Greg Ives should take the blame for the No. 88's struggles this season.

Not so fast.

"We've had a difficult year and there's just been a little rumbling in the background from fans," Earnhardt said Tuesday. "They just love to target the crew chief. Our struggles are no one individual's responsibility. I think me and my crew chief, we have such a very passionate fan base, very large fan base, it's a challenging position for anybody. I've seen that, with all the guys that I've worked with. They've all had to deal with criticism."

Ives, in his third season with Earnhardt, was criticized during the Brickyard 400 for his decision to send the No. 88 to the pits even though it was good on fuel before the end of the second stage. Had Earnhardt stayed out, he would have come off a restart inside the top five. Instead, he was 24th and soon wrecked out of the race when he connected with Trevor Bayne. Earnhardt's crew also struggled with lug nuts on one pit stop that cost him several spots in the field.

Earnhardt, who is retiring after the season, shut down criticism of the team on Twitter, where he has 2.1 million followers, writing, "He never gave up on me. We're a tight group and will finish together."

Earnhardt's final season at Hendrick Motorsports has been more dud than dominant, and Indy was the fifth time this season he has crashed out of a race. Earnhardt has just four top-10 finishes and is 22nd in the standings — his worst full-season performance since 2009.

# Morris' late gold lifts US to Gold Cup

JANIE McCAULEY  
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — As the victorious American players bounced so hard the podium shook, medals round their necks, a beaming Bruce Arena in the back raised his arms to the air right along with them as gold confetti began to fall.

The U.S. resurgence is off to an impressive start since Arena returned late last year. Another CONCACAF Gold Cup crown, and now on to more important business: qualifying for next year's World Cup.

Former Stanford star Jordan Morris scored a tiebreaking goal in the 88th minute, and the United States beat Jamaica 2-1 on Wednesday night for its sixth Gold Cup title and first since 2013.

Zoey Altidore's goal on a 28-yard free kick in the 45th minute beat backup goalkeeper Dwayne Miller after Jamaica captain Andre Blake left early with a hand injury.

Je-Vaughn Watson tied the score when he got away from Morris for a 4-yard volley off Kemar Lawrence's 50th-minute corner kick.

Morris, who left nearby Stanford in his junior year, won the 2015 NCAA title, the 2016 MLS championship with Seattle and now the 2017 Gold Cup. He got the breakthrough goal with a 14-yard right-footed shot after Gyasi Zardes crossed. Jermaine Taylor tried to clear

with a header and the ball was knocked by Clint Dempsey with a leg back to Morris.

"I was nervous. It was my guy that scored on the goal, so I was trying to make up for it any way that I could," Morris said. "Obviously, I take responsibility for that. But luckily I could put one in the back of the net."

It was the fifth international goal for the 22-year-old Morris, who tied 16-year-old Canadian Alphonso Davies for the tournament lead with three goals.

"That was like a dagger in the heart," Jamaica coach Theodore Whitmore said.

Arena took a moment after the final whistle to congratulate Morris for the pretty shot but also for how he answered from a mistake.

The U.S. extended its unbeaten streak to 14 games (9-0-5) under Arena, who became the first coach to win three Gold Cup titles.

"Bruce brought in a new energy," goalkeeper Tim Howard said. "He just gave us a tremendous lift."

The Americans had a chance to go ahead in the 19th minute when Altidore's swerving 30-yard shot was parried by Blake, who dived left and then beat Kellyn Acosta to the rebound at the 6-yard box. Acosta collided with Blake and appeared to kick the keeper's right hand before Jamaica's Damion Lowe cleared. Blake's hand was wrapped but he couldn't continue and was replaced by Miller

four minutes later. As Blake left the field, he acknowledged the cheering fans with a wave of his left hand, then later emerged for the medal ceremony with his hand bandaged after receiving seven stitches that will be in for 10 days. Nothing was broken.

"It was a pretty bad cut, I knew I wasn't able to continue," Blake said. "It happens sometimes."

Altidore put the U.S. ahead with a curling shot past Miller's outstretched right hand into the upper corner of the net just beneath the crossbar, his 39th goal in 108 appearances.

Lawrence, who scored in a 1-0 semifinal win Sunday against Mexico, took another corner kick in the 75th minute moments after Alvas Powell's shot from close range deflected off Graham Zusi — a sequence that had Howard yelling at his defense.

U.S. captain Michael Bradley earned the Golden Ball at the tournament's top player.

Using a lineup with about half its regular starters — the rest are in preseason with European clubs — the U.S. reached its record 10th final. The Reggae Boyz were a surprising final opponent after they stunned Mexico in a semifinal Sunday to reach the title match for a second straight time.

With 18 of 22 starters from Major League Soccer, this was a rematch of the 2015 Gold Cup semifinal won 2-1 by Jamaica at Atlanta. For the first time since replacing Jurgen Klinsmann

in November, Arena kept his lineup unchanged. He inserted the 34-year-old Dempsey in the 55th minute.

Chunks of turf came loose yet again at Levi's Stadium, the \$1.2 billion, 3-year-old home of the NFL San Francisco 49ers. The field has been an ongoing issue.

The Americans hope for momentum built during this run as they prepare to resume World Cup qualifying. The U.S. faces Costa Rica in a rematch of the Gold Cup semifinal on Sept. 1 at Harrison, New Jersey, and play four days later at Honduras. The hex concludes against Panama on Oct. 6 in Orlando, Florida, and at Trinidad and Tobago four days after.

"We're not worried one bit about World Cup qualifying today. I can promise you that," Bradley said. "This was about a group of guys winning a trophy and that's been the only goal."

Arena already was looking ahead.

"We're a long way from qualifying for a World Cup, and that's the objective, for sure," he said.

Serious? You bet. But he also had a little fun with his players as the bubbly flowed.

"I told the players if anyone sprays champagne on me they will not be considered for the next World Cup qualifier and also the World Cup if we reach the World Cup," Arena said. "So I'm dry right now. It's surprising, isn't it?"

## New US swimming stars emerge at worlds

Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Caeleb Dressel put the United States back on top in swimming's glamour event.

Chase Kalisz proved to be a worthy successor to Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte. Call it a changing of the guard.

The 20-year-old Dressel emerged as his country's newest sprinting star with a victory in the 100-meter freestyle, holding off longtime U.S. stalwart Nathan Adrian at the world championships Thursday.

Dressel got off to a blistering start and

won in a relative rout in the down-and-back race, touching in 47.17 seconds. Adrian surged from behind over the final strokes to claim the silver in 47.87, edging France's Mehdy Metella — the fastest qualifier from the semifinals and swimming between the two Americans — by just two-hundredths of a second.

Dressel climbed up on a lane rope and pounded the water with both fists.

Adrian glided quickly from two lanes over to embrace the new world champion.

"I'm very excited about that," Dres-

sel said. "But more importantly, Americans went 1-2. I think that's more exciting than any time that could be shown on that board."

It was the biggest U.S. triumph in the 100 free since Adrian won gold at the 2012 London Olympics.

Kalisz, meanwhile, extended American rule of the 200-meter individual medley, rallying to claim his first major international championship. The Americans have won the event at eight straight world championships, not to mention at the last four Olympics.

# Hot Arrieta, Cubs knock off White Sox

Associated Press

CHICAGO — One after another, the starting pitchers for the Chicago Cubs are delivering every night.

It was Jake Arrieta's turn on Wednesday.

Arrieta pitched two-hit ball into the seventh inning, and the Cubs beat the Chicago White Sox 8-3 to move into first in the NL Central.

After a disappointing start to the season, the Cubs (53-47) are roaring again. The reigning World Series champions moved a season-high six games over .500 and a half-game ahead of Milwaukee after trailing the Brewers by 5½ games just two weeks ago.

"We expect to remain in first place throughout the remainder of the way," Arrieta said. "We know it's going to be a tough task, but that's kind of what you deal with at the highest level of sports."

If their starting pitchers continue their recent roll, they should be in great shape

at the end of the season. The rotation of Arrieta, Jon Lester, Jose Quintana, John Lackey and Kyle Hendricks is 9-0 with a 2.50 ERA in the last 12 games.

"I just want to be able to have all my pitches available regardless of the situation," Arrieta said, "and that's kind of how tonight worked out."

Anthony Rizzo had three hits and four RBIs, helping the Cubs improve to 10-2 since the All-Star break. Jon Jay drove in a run and robbed Melky Cabrera of a hit with an outstanding diving catch in left-center.

After finishing their series against the last-place White Sox on Thursday night, the Cubs visit Milwaukee for a three-game set this weekend.

Top prospect Yoan Moncada hit his first career homer and Alen Hanson also went deep, but the White Sox lost for the 11th time in 12 games. Moncada came over from Boston in the Chris Sale trade.

"It means a lot because it's the first one of many that are coming. I'm happy."

Moncada said through a translator.

Third baseman Yolmer Sanchez committed a costly error for the South Siders, and James Shields (2-3) lasted just four-plus innings.

The White Sox (39-59) played without All-Star outfielder Avisail Garcia, who is expected to miss a couple weeks after an MRI revealed a strained ligament in his right thumb. He went 0-for-5 in Tuesday's 7-2 loss to the Cubs.

"It's been like this one week and getting worse, worse, worse," he said. "So that's why I decided to stop because my swing is not the same and I don't want to keep playing like this. Try to get this thing better and try to get back on the field soon."

Arrieta (10-7) departed after Moncada's solo shot made it 6-2 with two out in the seventh. The 2015 NL Cy Young Award winner struck out five and walked two while improving to 3-1 with a 2.25 ERA in five July starts.

## Roundup

# Red Sox ace Sale fans 11 in victory

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Chris Sale pitched seven innings of three-hit ball, 20-year-old Rafael Devers became the youngest Boston player to hit a home run since Tony Conigliaro in 1965 and the Red Sox beat the Seattle Mariners 4-0 on Wednesday to stop a four-game losing streak.

Sale (13-4) struck out 11, reaching double digits for the 14th time this season.

A day after his big league debut, Devers homered in the third off Andrew Moore (1-3) for his first major league hit. Sandy Leon hit a two-run homer off Moore in the fourth.

**Rays 5, Orioles 1:** At St. Petersburg, Fla., Evan Longoria and Steven Souza Jr. homered, and Alex Cobb (9-6) gave up one run and four hits in seven innings.

**Giants 2, Pirates 1:** At San Francisco, Brandon Belt hit a tiebreaking double in the seventh against Tony Watson (5-3)

on a routine fly that left fielder Starling Marte had trouble seeing because sun and wind.

Jeff Samardzija (5-11) allowed one run and four hits in seven innings, and Sam Dyson worked the ninth for his sixth save.

**Diamondbacks 10, Braves 3:** J.D. Martinez homered twice and Ketel Marte hit an inside-the-park, two-run homer for host Arizona.

Martinez has homered three times in three days, his first home runs since he was acquired from Detroit.

**Cardinals 10, Rockies 5:** At St. Louis, Mo., Paul DeJong hit his eighth home run in July, a two-run drive in the first off Jeff Hoffman (6-3).

Randal Grichuk had a career-high four hits and Harrison Bader had three hits in his second major league game.

**Nationals 8, Brewers 5:** At Washington, Bryce Harper extended his hitting streak to a career-high 18 games, then was ejected for arguing with

plate umpire Chris Segal after striking out in the eighth inning with runners at the corners.

**Yankees 9, Reds 5:** Luis Severino (7-4) struck out nine over seven innings, allowing a pair of unearned runs and three hits as host New York completed a two-game sweep.

**Blue Jays 3, Athletics 2:** Justin Smoak hit a tying two-run homer in the ninth off Santiago Casilla (2-5) and Kendrys Morales homered on the next pitch. Host Toronto has hit consecutive homers six times this year, the last three occasions involving Smoak and Morales.

**Phillies 9, Astros 0:** At Philadelphia, Pa., Aaron Nola (8-6) struck out a career-high 10 over six innings, allowing four hits. He is 5-1 with a 1.49 ERA over his last seven starts.

**Royals 16, Tigers 2:** Eric Hosmer matched his career high with five hits, including his first major league grand slam, and had six RBIs and four runs for visiting Kansas City.

**Indians 10, Angels 4:** Rook-

ie Bradley Zimmer homered and drove in the go-ahead run with a seventh-inning double as host Cleveland won its sixth in a row, matching a season high.

**Marlins 22, Rangers 10:** Dee Gordon homered on the first pitch thrown by Yu Darvish (6-9) and visiting Miami set a franchise scoring record, topping a 20-1 win over Atlanta on July 1, 2003.

**Padres 6, Mets 3:** Luis Torrens had three RBIs, Manuel Margot homered to lead host San Diego's offense, and Jhoulys Chacin (10-7) gave up two runs and four hits in 5⅓ innings.

**Dodgers 6, Twins 5:** Justin Turner hit a game-ending single with two outs in the ninth off All-Star closer Brandon Kintzler (2-2) as host Los Angeles rallied from a 5-0 fourth-inning deficit to win their fifth straight and improve the major leagues' best record to 71-31.