

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, July 12, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## American dies in combat in Afghanistan

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A U.S. servicemember was killed Thursday in eastern Afghanistan during a combat operation alongside Afghan security forces, military officials said.

An Afghan security force member also was killed in the operation and several others were wounded, according to a statement issued by U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

The name of the servicemember was being withheld, pending notification of next of kin, which is Pentagon policy. The death marks the fourth U.S. fatality in Afghanistan this year and the second in recent days.

Army Cpl. Joseph Maciel was killed Saturday in an apparent insider attack in Tirin Kot district in the southern Uruzgan province. Two other soldiers were wounded in the attack. Maciel and the wounded soldiers were assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment.

## Trump: NATO now in better shape

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

BRUSSELS — President Donald Trump declared Thursday that NATO was “much stronger” than when the two-day summit of world leaders began, citing progress toward increased defense spending.

Trump set off a brief commotion at NATO headquarters Thursday when he issued new spending demands on allies, forcing the alliance to convene an emergency session.

When Trump emerged from the session, he said that he remains committed to the 70-year-old alliance despite his harsh rhetoric toward it.

“I told people I would be very unhappy if they didn't up their commitments,” Trump said. “I think that NATO is much stronger now than it was two days ago.”

Trump said all allies have agreed to reach the current NATO benchmark of dedicating 2 percent of gross domestic product to defense and that it would happen in a “relatively short period of years.” Shortly afterward, French President Emmanuel Macron denied that NATO powers had agreed to increase defense spending beyond the previous 2 percent goal by 2024.

Trump appeared to back off of an earlier demand that the spending increases take effect “immediately.” He also said on Twitter on Thursday morning that the eventual goal should be for allies to increase levels to 4 percent of GDP, but he did not issue a deadline.

Despite the political tumult, which included a lot of Trump criticism directed at Germany,

NATO moved forward with several new initiatives during the summit. Allies agreed to set up new headquarters to improve the movements of forces in a crisis and launched a new training mission in Iraq. NATO members also were expected later Thursday to agree to continue funding Afghan security forces and extend the Afghanistan training mission.

Still, there are lingering doubts about Trump's commitment to NATO given the barrage of anti-alliance tweets from the president, as well as his attacks on members' spending commitments and accusations that allies are security free-riders.

Wolfgang Ischinger, a former German ambassador to the U.S., wondered if Trump's repeated descriptions of NATO as “ripping off” the U.S. taxpayer would eventually result in a loss of popular support for the alliance.

“What happens to your voters in your state?” Ischinger asked Republican Sen. Thom Tillis, of North Carolina.

“A concern about NATO never comes up,” Tillis said at a sideline NATO event. “But we need to be clear (that) social media and headlines are not a reflection of the American public.”

Trump's criticisms have caused critics to speculate that he ultimately wants to pull out of NATO. When asked whether he has the authority to make such a decision, Trump said he did.

“I think I probably can, but I think that is unnecessary,” Trump said.

Trump acknowledged the talks were heated, but added, “We made a tremendous amount of progress today. The United States commitment to NATO is very strong, remains very strong.”

## Rededicated USS John S. McCain adds new namesake

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS John S. McCain has a new namesake: Sen. John S. McCain III.

The ship, originally christened in 1992 in honor of the maverick politician's Navy admiral father, “Jack” and grandfather, “Slew,” was rededicated Thursday to also honor the former Republican presidential candidate and Vietnam veteran.

Secretary of the Navy Rich-

ard Spencer and top Navy brass gathered for the ceremony on the deck of a ship still under repair for damage suffered in a collision with an oil tanker near Singapore last fall that cost 10 sailors' lives. The McCain has been undergoing repairs in dry dock at Yokosuka since late last year. Its mast is still covered with scaffolding, and large swaths of steel, red with primer and rust from the port's salty, humid air, cover the area damaged in the crash.

Before the McCain returns to sea, which Spencer said could

happen by early 2019, the rust will be sanded and the steel painted to make the ship look as good as new or better, given the modernization efforts underway alongside the repairs.

The rededication happened 64 years to the day after the first USS John S. McCain, which honored only the senior McCain, was commissioned. Adm. John “Sidney” McCain Sr. served in World Wars I and II, commanding a carrier task force during the battle of Okinawa. He was aboard the USS Missouri when Japan surren-

dered, but died four days later.

Adm. John “Jack” McCain Jr. fought in WWII and the Vietnam War and led the Pacific Command from 1968 to 1972.

McCain III, who has been battling brain cancer for more than a year, was not in attendance Thursday, but Spencer said the senator was given a document announcing the addition of his name and a photograph of the destroyer flying its “Big Bad John” ship flag. “He was very taken by that and, as you know, he never would have asked for this,” Spencer said.

## Texas base has plan to house immigrant kids

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

AUSTIN, Texas — Making room for up to 15,000 immigrant children and support personnel on Goodfellow Air Force Base would have no impact on its operations or protected natural environment, according to an assessment released July 6 by the base's 17th Training Wing.

The draft report calls for building temporary structures to serve as living and sleeping quarters for up to 7,500 children and additional work facilities for up to 7,500 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services employees on 70 acres of the 1,235-acre air base. Shelter operations could last for 180 days after children arrive.

While the plan does not include a timeline to begin the process, it projects it would take 30 days to complete. After that, children and HHS employees could arrive in weekly waves of 1,000 each.

In late June, the Department of Homeland Security formally requested that the Defense Department find space for up to 12,000 beds on military installations. A month earlier, the HHS Administration for Children and Families had begun eyeing military installations as an alternative to house children since its typical facilities don't have the capacity to handle all those in its care.

HHS has more than 11,800 children, according to its website. That includes minors who crossed the border alone — the population expected to be housed at Goodfellow — and those who were separated from their families during the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy that led to parents being arrested despite seeking asylum.

That separation policy has since ended, and Homeland Security is looking to house detained families together at Fort Bliss near El Paso. A similar assessment is underway there, said Army Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, Defense Department spokesman.

A memorandum for each base is also in the works, he said. Once these are completed, perhaps within the next week, Davis said, the collaborating agencies can sign off on the plans and the process could move forward.

# Troops sent to border remain behind immigration front lines

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Nearly 2,000 National Guard troops have been mobilized in the past three months to help protect the U.S. southern border from a surge in migration from Central America, yet many soldiers have been relegated to behind-the-scenes support roles, far from the front lines of the battle against unlawful crossings into the United States.

President Donald Trump announced in April up to 4,000 National Guard troops would deploy to the southern borders of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California to help guard against unlawful immigration, but less than half of the soldiers are on the ground with U.S. Border Patrol guarding against unauthorized migrants.

When National Guard troops were sent to help bolster border patrols in 2014 under former President Barack Obama, the soldiers were armed and wearing full gear. The day-to-day mission of the Guard deployed this time in Texas is starkly different.

This joint Guard-Border Patrol mission, known as Operation Guardian Support, keeps soldiers back from the border and in stations where they perform tasks such as vehicle maintenance, administrative duties, monitoring of surveillance data collected through cameras and sensors along the border, and clearing vegetation to improve sightlines in the field.

Yet, from the soldiers' behind-the-scenes roles, they have assisted with nearly 8,500 apprehensions and the seizure of more than 11,000 pounds of narcotics in the four southern border states, said Assistant Chief Alfredo Lozano. He leads the Border Patrol side of this new mission within the Rio Grande Valley area of Texas.

Focused mainly on a 320-mile riverfront stretch from Brownsville west to Starr County, the Rio Grande Valley is the busiest section of the U.S. border with Mexico. About half of the drugs seized with the Guard's assistance were found there, and 375 of the 1,950 National Guard soldiers deployed to the U.S. southern border are concentrated in this area. There are about 3,130 Border Patrol agents assigned to the Rio Grande Valley sector.

National Guard commanders and soldiers on this mission would not speak about it with news reporters. There is a Texas National Guard policy that prohibits troops deployed on this border mission from commenting publicly about it.

Operation Guardian Support is authorized for funding through the end of September,

said Army Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, Defense Department spokesman. The estimated cost is \$182 million. It's unclear if it will continue beyond that date.

The closest soldiers get to the border are the troops working in offices at five ports-of-entry in the Rio Grande Valley and the Lakota helicopter crews flying air surveillance missions.

Lozano said one crew recently located a migrant in distress and were able to call in the medical staff needed. Soldiers also built distress call beacons that allow people lost or in trouble in the harsh terrain to call for help.

"All that has a ripple effect on what it allows Border Patrol to do," he said.

The Guard members in Lozano's sector have allowed 50 Border Patrol agents to return to the southern border with Mexico. As the mission continues, he said he expects the number of agents returning to the border to increase.

"From the get-go, our goal has been to return agents back to the border. Not all soldiers are directly replacing an agent, but every soldier contributes to the overall mission," Lozano said.

In the past several weeks, there have been calls to pull the National Guard from the border in response to the Trump administration's new "zero tolerance" policy on immigration that led to the temporary separation of families seeking asylum in the United States. While actual unlawful crossings hadn't increased, this policy increased the number of arrests and charges filed, creating a ripple effect with agencies and operations along the border.

In McAllen, a city of about 142,000, Mayor Jim Darling, a Vietnam-era Air Force veteran, emphasized the soldiers are in the area to augment protection of the border, not to protect the border cities or get involved in any immigration arrests or detentions.

"It's not their fault there's a misconception of their role," he said.

McAllen has become a ground zero for the issue, as the new policy created an overflow of migrants there. Darling said the port-of-entry isn't meant to support this type of traffic in addition to the 8,000 people who cross daily for business and recreation. Since the new policy, people have been turned away at the bridge, some of them choosing to sleep on the Mexican side of the port to stay in line.

Images in the media of children in makeshift detention centers sleeping with metallic space blankets led to the ongoing call by some lawmakers, mostly Democrats, to pull the National Guard from the border in protest

# Court pick Kavanaugh discloses finances

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The vetting of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh is just beginning, but his public financial disclosures make one thing clear: He's not as wealthy as many already on the high court.

Public disclosure forms for 2017 show that the federal judge would come to the nation's highest court with only two investments, including a bank account, together worth a maximum of \$65,000, along with the balance on a loan of \$15,000 or less.

Separate from the disclosure forms, the White House said that between Ka-

vanaugh's retirement account balance of \$400,000 to \$500,000 and the equity in his home in Chevy Chase, Md., he has about an additional \$1 million in wealth.

If confirmed, his relatively modest means would rank Kavanaugh in the lower tier in personal finances among members of court. Some of his potential future colleagues list millions of dollars in investments.

The records also showed that Kavanaugh, a federal appellate judge nominated by President Donald Trump to replace retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy, had between \$45,000 and \$150,000 in credit card

debt in 2016, which was paid off by the following year.

In 2016, he also reported a loan balance between \$15,000 and \$50,000.

The White House said some of Kavanaugh's credit card debt listed on his 2016 financial form was due to buying season tickets to the Washington Nationals for himself and several friends, but officials stressed that he was reimbursed for the friends' tickets in 2017.

The White House did not say how much of the debt came from ticket purchases or name the friends involved in the transactions.

## Lawmakers threaten FBI agent with contempt citation

The Washington Post

Republicans angrily sparred with FBI agent Peter Strzok from the very first question at a hearing Thursday over politically charged investigations, threatening him with a contempt citation amid heated and sometimes chaotic arguments over the ongoing probe of Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Strzok, who was the lead agent on FBI probes into Hillary Clinton and the Trump campaign and is now the subject of an internal misconduct probe, was asked by Rep. Trey

Gowdy, R-S.C., chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, how many individuals he interviewed in the first week of the Russia probe in the summer of 2016.

"I will not, based on direction of the FBI ... answer that question, because it goes to matters which are related to the ongoing investigations being undertaken by the special counsel's office," Strzok replied, at a joint hearing of the Judiciary and Oversight committees.

At that point, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee,

interjected, threatening Strzok with a contempt citation if he did not answer the question.

"Mr. Strzok, you are under subpoena and are required to answer the question," Goodlatte said.

Democrats immediately challenged Goodlatte, accusing him of treating Strzok unfairly and seeking unsuccessfully to adjourn the hearing.

The ranking Democrat on the panel, Jerrold Nadler, of New York, urged Republicans not to use the Strzok hearing to attack special counsel Robert Mueller.

"I know that the majority

wants a fight with Mr. Strzok today," Nadler said. "Leave the special counsel alone to do his job."

Strzok, a deputy assistant director at the FBI who oversaw counterintelligence cases, was removed from the Trump probe by Mueller in July 2017. At that time, investigators for the Justice Department inspector general discovered text messages between him and then-FBI lawyer Lisa Page in which they repeatedly disparaged Trump and expressed a strong desire he not win the election.

## Pompeo calls for Europeans to cut all funds to Iran

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday pressed European nations to get tough on Iran by cutting off all funding the country may use to foment instability in the Middle East and beyond.

Pompeo was meeting with European officials in Brussels following a summit of NATO leaders to make the case for clamping down on Iranian "terrorism and proxy wars." He urged them to join a U.S.-led economic pressure campaign against Tehran that began in

earnest after President Donald Trump withdrew from the landmark Iran nuclear deal in May.

"We ask our allies and partners to join our economic pressure campaign against Iran's regime," Pompeo said in a tweet ahead of his talks. "We must cut off all funding the regime uses to fund terrorism and proxy wars. There's no telling when Iran may try to foment terrorism, violence & instability in one of our countries next."

The tweet was accompanied by a map accusing Iran of sponsoring at least 11 terrorist attacks in Europe since 1978.

In another post, he said "Iran continues to send weapons across the Middle East, in blatant violation of UN Security Council resolutions. Iran's regime wants to start trouble wherever it can. It's our responsibility to stop it."

His comments came as other U.S. officials have fanned out around the globe to warn foreign governments to stop buying oil from Iran or face sanctions and after he accused Iran of using its embassies to plot terrorist attacks in Europe.

"Just this past week there were Iranians arrested in Eu-

rope who were preparing to conduct a terror plot in Paris, France. We have seen this malign behavior in Europe," Pompeo said in an interview Tuesday with Sky News Arabia in Abu Dhabi.

He was referring to the arrest of an Iranian diplomat posted to Vienna who was allegedly involved in the plot to bomb an Iranian opposition group rally in France on June 30. The envoy's arrest in Germany came after a couple with Iranian roots was stopped in Belgium and authorities reported finding powerful explosives in their car.

# US troops assist in Japanese flood recovery

By JAMES BOLINGER  
*Stars and Stripes*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — U.S. servicemembers are working alongside locals to help people affected by devastating floods in western Japan.

More than 50 sailors and Marines joined a volunteer effort organized by Iwakuni's Single Marine Program on Thursday, heading for flood-hit neighborhoods. Torrential waters and landslides have killed more than 170 in recent days.

The troops split into two groups who worked in three-hour shifts alongside local volunteers.

One group spent the morning cleaning flood-damaged homes near the Shinto River in Iwakuni City's Shuto

neighborhood.

One resident, who identified himself only as Manabe, said he awoke early on Saturday to find the lower story of his house underwater.

"I've never faced this kind of disaster in my lifetime," he said as he watched servicemembers carry his belongings to a growing pile of waterlogged items from neighborhood homes. "I went downstairs and everything we owned was floating, and now has to be thrown out."

The man said he's emotionally damaged by the flood.

"I never expected anything like this in my lifetime ... but I know that this will not be the last hardship I will face. I have to stay positive," he said.

The volunteers pulled up, scrubbed and dried floorboards from some homes.

The hope is that they can be reused as residents rebuild their lives.

The effort shows Marines care about their neighbors, said Lance Cpl. Angela Cordone, a military police officer who also volunteers at local schools and orphanages.

Iwakuni local government officials reported two deaths and one minor injury from the flooding, which caused mudslides and road closures in the area. Six homes in Iwakuni were destroyed and hundreds damaged by water, the officials said.

"We have no estimated timeline of how long the recovery efforts will take," an official said.

The Iwakuni volunteers plan to continue their work through Sunday.

Stripes correspondent Hana Kusumoto contributed to this article.

## Japan spends billions on weapons from US

*Bloomberg*

While there's little prospect that Japanese consumers will ever buy enough American cars to please President Donald Trump, the Abe government's record spending on defense is shaping up as a bright spot in bilateral trade for the U.S. president.

Japan's purchases through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales program represent 16 percent of all nonpersonnel costs for the nation's self-defense forces so far this year, more than double the level in 2014, according to calculations by Bloomberg based on government data.

Plans to buy advanced American radars, stealth fighter jets and missile defense systems in coming years will mean billions of dollars for U.S. weapons makers. Japanese companies, already struggling to compete, don't stand to benefit as much because economies of scale have made homegrown technology more expensive and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government wants to get more bang for its buck.

During a visit to Tokyo last November, Trump urged Abe to buy "massive amounts of mili-

tary equipment" from the U.S. Even without the incentive to ease trade friction, Japan was already an enthusiastic consumer as Abe pushed defense spending to a record \$47 billion this fiscal year to counter both a nuclear-armed North Korea and a more assertive China.

To Trump's dismay, Japan bought just \$533 million in new passenger vehicles from the U.S. in 2017 while Americans purchased \$39.8 billion in Japanese cars and trucks. Outside the military sphere, Japan has looked to boost energy purchases such as liquefied natural gas to placate the U.S. The nation's biggest imports from the U.S. in 2017 were agricultural products, chemicals and machinery.

A preference for U.S. equipment helps the two militaries work together more smoothly, but buying complete American weapons systems doesn't generate jobs for local parts makers and will drive them out of business, according to Naohiko Abe, senior vice president of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. It's Japan's biggest defense contractor, making fighter planes, helicopters, ships, missiles and other weapons.

## With Thai boys out safely, rescuers head for home

*Associated Press*

CHIANG RAI, Thailand — The Thai and foreign rescuers of the youth soccer team trapped in a cave for 18 days began heading home Thursday as doctors said the boys they saved so far have not shown any significant ill effects from their ordeal.

Members of the Thai navy SEAL team, who were among the first searchers to penetrate the watery depths of Tham Luang Nang Non cave and the last divers out, flew to their base at Sattahip on the Gulf of Thailand, where they received a heroes' welcome. The ceremony was capped with their commander leading a rousing round of the navy cheer "Hooyah!" that became a trademark of their never-say-die effort to extricate the boys.

Foreign helpers, including some of the world's best cave divers, also began traveling home.

Thai officials have been generous with their praise of foreign volunteers who were essential in the complicated search and rescue operation, including the two British divers who were the first to dis-

cover where the members of the Wild Boar soccer club were sheltering.

One of them, John Volanthen, and another British diver, Jason Mallison, met before they departed with Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who presented each of them with a souvenir medal, a polo shirt and a lacquered, wooden box marked with an official emblem.

"Jason has a 18-month-old baby but he drove to Heathrow airport right away to Thailand after receiving a call from us," Tourism Minister Weerasak Kowsurat told reporters after seeing the two divers off. "We're so thankful that he sacrificed being with his family to be with us."

"For John, the person who first discovered the boys, he has such impressive character," Weerasak said. "He didn't feel that he was a hero. He said he just came to save the kids. We feel so in debt of gratitude for his help this time."

The boys were described as generally being in normal condition in a Chiang Rai hospital Thursday, though their levels of recuperation varied because they were removed from the cave over three days.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Police: Man falsely reported a drowning

**CT** HARTFORD — Police arrested a Connecticut man who falsely reported a drowning in Hartford only days after a teenager died in a city pool.

Authorities said Jeremiah Grant, 34, called 911 to report a child drowning Monday to gauge emergency response times. A witness told police the man wanted to test if authorities would respond to the city's "poor black community."

Grant was charged with falsely reporting an incident, interfering with police and breach of peace.

Police said the man made a similar false call five weeks ago and said armed men were trying to burglarize his home.

Jaevon Whyte, 16, drowned last week after sneaking into a city pool after hours with friends.

### Mom tails man who kidnapped daughter

**MS** MERIDIAN — A Mississippi sheriff said a woman saw her daughter kidnapped at gunpoint and shoved into a car, so she tailed the car until authorities arrived.

Lauderdale County Sheriff Billy Sollie told WTOK-TV that the victim's mother called authorities Monday and said Chad Edward Fuller, 30, had kidnapped her adult daughter, who is the mother of one of his children, and forced her into a car.

Sollie said the woman followed in her own car and stayed on the phone providing directions until deputies were able to intercept the vehicle. Sollie said Fuller was arrested on kidnapping charges.

### Man charged with trafficking turtles

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — A Pennsylvania man was indicted on charges of trafficking more than 3,500 protected turtles.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania alleged that David Sommers poached diamondback terrapins and their eggs from coastal marshes in New Jersey.

The turtles are protected under New Jersey law and by an international treaty.

The indictment charged Sommers, 62, with smuggling turtles and submitting false records for a package shipped to Canada and four violations of the Lacey Act. The law bans trade in illegally obtained wildlife, fish and plants.

### Officials: Man died riding horse into pond

**IA** OTTUMWA — Authorities said a man died after riding a horse into a southeast Iowa farm pond.

The Ottumwa Courier reported that medics and Wapello County sheriff's deputies were called to the farm Sunday. Wapello County Sheriff Mark Miller said witnesses reported Jose Perez-Ochoa, 40, of Blakesburg had ridden the horse into the pond more than once over the objection of friends also riding.

Miller said the horse rolled backward the last time it was led into the pond, knocking Perez-Ochoa into the water. The horse walked unharmed out of the water, but Perez-Ochoa went under.

### New state law allows sale of beer ice cream

**NY** ALBANY — Move over wine slushies — New Yorkers will soon be

allowed to purchase beer ice cream.

A new state law authorizes the sale of ice cream made with cider or beer.

The measure requires the frozen products to contain no more than 5 percent alcohol and prohibits sales to anyone younger than 21.

New York has allowed the sale of wine ice cream for a decade.

Lawmakers voted earlier this year to add beer and cider ice cream to the list.

### Python is found in hard drive at airport

**FL** MIAMI — A passenger with a python hidden inside an external hard drive was stopped from boarding a Florida plane headed to Barbados.

The Miami Herald reported that officers screening luggage at the Miami International Airport on Sunday found an "organic mass" inside a checked bag. Transportation Security Administration spokeswoman Sari Koshetz said a bomb expert examined the bag and discovered the live snake.

The passenger was fined, and the snake was taken into custody by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services.

### Man accused of stealing 50 crab traps

**DE** ELLENDALE — A Delaware man was accused of stealing 50 crab traps along with some scrap metal and cash from an empty home whose owner was on vacation.

The News Journal of Wilmington reported Eric B. Whitman, 29, was arrested on charges including theft and burglary.

Delaware State Police said an investigation found Whitman

had taken the metal to a scrap yard and signed a receipt indicating he was the owner.

### Lawsuit: Ship's no-slip floor caused injury

**VA** NORFOLK — The owners of a popular dinner cruise ship in Virginia are being sued for \$375,000 in damages by a customer who said the ship's no-skid flooring worked too well.

The lawsuit filed in federal court by Jeffrey Makuch, 66, of New York, accuses the Spirit of Norfolk cruise ship of inappropriately using no-skid flooring on a part of the ship where cruisers play the game cornhole.

Makuch said he took a cruise on the ship in June 2016 and fell while playing cornhole. He said the no-skid floor made it impossible for him to properly shift his weight while stepping to throw a beanbag.

The cruise ship owners have filed a reply denying that their flooring presents a risk.

### Fireworks explosion is ruled accidental

**IN** HEBRON — Police said a fireworks explosion that killed a man and severely injured another man in northwestern Indiana appears to have been accidental.

Hebron Police Chief Joshua Noel said preliminary findings in Saturday night's death of Scott McKee, 37, suggest it was a "tragic accident."

The Porter County coroner said McKee died of blunt force trauma.

Toxicology tests were pending.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# World Cup final is match of contrasts

Associated Press

MOSCOW — A World Cup of surprises concludes with a final of contrasts.

Powered by the dynamism of Kylian Mbappe, France has youthful exuberance in a side packed with some of soccer's highest-value talent. It also has pedigree — winners in 1998 and finalists in 2006.

Croatia has a veteran roster that has been stretched to the limit but continues to win in Russia. The Croats never give in, prevailing in a shootout against Denmark, again on penalties against Russia — after being stung by a late equalizer — and then recovering from conceding early against England.

Just don't suggest Croatia will be weary in Sunday's final when it returns to the Luzhniki Stadium on Sunday.

Croatia's star midfielder Luka Modric

said "we will see who will be tired" was the team ethos going into Wednesday's semifinal, feeling Croatia had been underestimated by the English.

Modric, along with Mario Mandzukic, are the 32-year-olds who have propelled Croatia to its first major soccer final. In the previous four World Cups: Croatia failed to qualify in 2010 and was ousted in the group stage the other three occasions.

Before then, in its World Cup debut in 1998, Croatia did reach the semifinals, where it lost to France.

When Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic visited the team hotel in Moscow on Wednesday that 1998 game was on his mind — even before beating England.

"We might have the chance for the revenge in the finals with the French," Plenkovic said.

Now they get it.

Croatia advanced to its first World Cup final with a 2-1 extra-time win over England on Wednesday night. France beat Belgium 1-0 a night earlier.

"We have a good opportunity to give them something back for 20 years ago when they reached the final," Croatia defender Dejan Lovren said. "Maybe it's our time to revenge something but it's a tough game and it will be difficult."

A country of 65 million, France has stars like 19-year-old sensation Mbappe, midfielder Paul Pogba and striker Antoine Griezmann.

Croatia is the fourth-smallest country of the 32 World Cup teams with just over 4 million people. It has a chance to be the least-populous nation to win since Uruguay took the title in 1950, when it was a nation of just over 2 million.

## Croatia advances with victory over England

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Croatia's legs seemed heavy, burdened by the accumulated toll of consecutive penalty-kick wins needed to get this far. England had gone ahead with a free kick just five minutes in, dominated play and appeared headed to its first World Cup final since 1966.

Then the second half started and it was as if a different Croatian team had replaced the lethargic one.

Ivan Perisic tied the score in the 68th minute, Mario Mandzukic got the go-ahead goal in the 109th and Croatia shocked England with a 2-1 victory Wednesday that advanced a nation of just over 4 million to a World Cup final against France.

"Mentally strong team," midfielder Ivan Rakitic said. "It's just unbelievable to get back in the game in this way."

When the final whistle blew and they knew they were going to their first World Cup final, the Croatians ran to their jumping and cheering fans in their iconic red-and-white checkered jerseys. Croatia joined an exclusive club of 13 nations that advanced to a World Cup

final, doing it in a tournament where powers Brazil, Germany, Argentina and Spain made early exits.

"They've had an incredible route to the final. They've shown remarkable character," said England coach Gareth Southgate, who for now will be remembered more for a fashionable waistcoat than ending a half-century of hurt.

France, which won its only title at home in 1998, will have an extra day of rest after beating Belgium 1-0 on Tuesday.

Croatia, coming off 360 intense minutes at soccer's highest level, faces its biggest sporting moment since becoming an independent nation in 1991.

"We started slowly, but we've shown our character, just as we did in the previous two knockout rounds when we were one goal down," Perisic said.

Fans back home in Zagreb took to the streets to celebrate, lighting flares and waving flags in a sea of exuberance.

"We are a nation of people who never give in, who are proud and who have character," said coach Zlatko Dalic, who wore a checkered jersey

to his post-match news conference. "There's no weakness in a team that is in the final."

England was not among the top 10 nations in ticket sales before the tournament, but the team's progress caused gallivanting supporters to flock to Moscow.

The front of the stands behind one goal was filled with more than two dozen white banners with a red Cross of St. George, pledging support from many of the island's clubs, from Bradford to Wolverhampton. Back home, a crowd of 30,000 was in London's Hyde Park for a large-screen viewing, the British Beer and Pub Association predicted supporters would buy 10 million extra pints at pubs during the match, and No.1 Court at Wimbledon was less than one-third full for the men's quarterfinal between John Isner and Milos Raonic.

Promise seemed about to be fulfilled when Kieran Trippier curled in a free kick in the fifth minute for his first international goal, above leaping Dejan Lovren and Mandzukic and past the desperate dive of goalkeeper Danijel Subasic. Chorus of "God Save the Queen"

began in England's end.

"We had a couple chances after that to get the second, give ourselves a bit more breathing room," England captain Harry Kane said.

Football will not be coming home to England, and there will be no title to match the 1966 triumph at Wembley Stadium. Kane & Co. will deal with the same disappointment that felled Shearer and Platt, Gazza and Wazza, Beckham and Gerrard. And Southgate, whose penalty-kick failure led to England's previous semifinal loss in a major tournament, in the 1996 European Championship semifinals.

"Impossible to say anything to them that is going to make them feel better at this point," Southgate said after England's fourth straight loss in a major tournament semifinal.

**Card counting:** No players are suspended for the final.

**Boos:** Croatia defender Domagoj Vida was jeered by fans whenever he touched the ball. He received a warning from FIFA for shouting "glory to Ukraine" in a video posted after Croatia beat Russia in the quarterfinals.

# S. Williams earns Wimbledon final berth

Associated Press

LONDON — It's almost as if Serena Williams never left.

Even after more than a year away from the tour, even after a health scare while having a baby a little more than 10 months ago, Williams is still capable of dominance. Especially at Wimbledon, where she's one victory from an eighth championship.

A relatively routine 6-2, 6-4 semifinal victory over 13th-seeded Julia Goerges of Germany on Thursday put Williams into her 10th final at the All England Club and moved her closer to a 24th Grand Slam title, which would equal Margaret Court's record.

"It's crazy. I don't even know how to feel, you know, because literally, I didn't expect to do this well in my fourth tournament back," Williams said. "I just feel like when I don't have

anything to lose, I just can play so free, and that's kind of what I'm doing."

After hitting five aces with a serve that reached 119 mph, delivering 16 winners to only seven unforced errors, and covering the court so well with speed and effort against Goerges, Williams will face another German, 11th-seeded Angelique Kerber, on Saturday.

"Whatever happens, honestly it's an incredible effort from me," the 36-year-old Williams said, "and good motivation to keep going for the rest of my career."

The left-handed Kerber, a former No. 1 and two-time major champion, used a seven-game run to beat 12th-seeded Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-3. Kerber did not dictate much, content to let 2017 French Open champion Ostapenko determine the outcome of nearly every point.

By the end, Ostapenko had far more winners, 30-10, but also far more unforced errors, 36-7.

Williams vs. Kerber will be a rematch of the 2016 final at Wimbledon. Williams won that for a second consecutive title at the All England Club, then sat out the grass-court tournament last year while pregnant, part of a 16-month gap between majors.

"Seeing her back, it's great," said Kerber, who has lost six of eight previous matches against Williams. "I know that she is always pushing you to the limits to play your best tennis. This is the only chance to beat her."

After giving birth to daughter Olympia last September, Williams dealt with issues including blood clots, and she's been wearing compression leggings this fortnight as a precaution. Her first Grand Slam tournament back was the French

Open, where she won three matches before withdrawing last month because of an injured chest muscle.

All of the time away pushed someone who's spent more than 300 weeks ranked No. 1 down the rankings — she began Wimbledon at 181st, but was seeded 25th on account of her past success — and no one could quite be sure how the American would fare over these two weeks.

Not even Williams knew.

"This is not inevitable for me. I had a really tough delivery, and I had to have multiple surgeries and almost didn't make it, to be honest," Williams said. "I remember I couldn't even walk to my mail box, so it's definitely not normal for me to be in a Wimbledon final. So I'm taking everything as it is and just enjoying every moment."

# Martin wins Stage 6, Van Avermaet keeps yellow jersey

Associated Press

MUR DE BRETAGNE, France — Daniel Martin of Ireland won an uphill finish to claim Stage 6 of the Tour de France on Thursday, while Greg Van Avermaet kept the yellow jersey for a third consecutive day.

Defending champion Chris Froome crossed eight seconds after Martin in 18th. That left the Sky leader 1 minute, 2 seconds off Van Avermaet's overall lead.

Martin broke away at the midway point of the straight 2-kilometer ascent of the Mur de Bretagne, winning the 112-mile leg that started in the western port city of Brest in over four hours.

The UAE Emirates leader counterattacked when Richie Porte jumped ahead and nobody immediately tried to reel him in.

"I saw the moment. I had really good legs and when I went my legs kept coming and com-

ing," Martin said. "I knew if I could get a gap it would be difficult to close from behind."

Pierre Latour crossed the line second followed by Alejandro Valverde in third.

It was Martin's second Tour stage win after his first in 2013.

Van Avermaet, a support rider for Porte, has held the yellow jersey since BMC won the team time trial on Stage 3.

"(Porte) can be confident after this climb," Van Avermaet said. "We use me (as the leader) to ease the pressure off him."

Title hopefuls Tom Dumoulin (Sunweb) and Romain Bardet (AG2R La Mondiale) were the big losers of the day.

Dumoulin, the time trial world champion and 2017 Giro d'Italia winner, was slowed by a tire puncture at the foot of the final ascent and lost 53 seconds. He entered the stage seventh overall and finished it 15th and one second behind Froome.

Bardet was left 1:45 back in

23rd overall after a spoke on his bike broke.

"Then I had to chase and that effort was fatal. It's never good to lose time," said Bardet, who has finished on the podium in the past two Tours. "There are a lot of twists on the Tour and this time luck was not on our side."

Martin was one of several team leaders along with former Tour winner Vincenzo Nibali and two-time runner-up Nairo Quintana who were caught off-guard by an attack by Quick-Step 100 kilometers into the stage during a straightaway that was exposed to crosswinds.

A group of around 40 riders including Froome opened up a gap of over a minute, but Martin and the rest worked to reunite the peloton.

A four-man breakaway earned a seven-minute advantage before being swallowed up late.

Riders twice went up the Mur de Bretagne, or "Wall of Brittany," which the local cycling-

crazed Bretons affectionately refer to as their smaller version of the famous Alpe d'Huez. While that Alp ascent awaiting on Stage 12 rises to 1,850 meters, the Mur de Bretagne tops out at 293 meters.

The course route that took riders along the lovely rolling hills of northwestern France included a pass through the town of Carhaix, which boasts four Breton winners of the Tour, including the great Bernard Hinault.

Froome is trying to join Hinault, Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, and Miguel Indurain as the only riders to win the Tour five times.

This was the first summit finish of this Tour. After the relatively flat first nine days, the race will head south and into the Alps and then the Pyrenees Mountains.

Friday's flat 231-kilometer leg from Fougères to Chartres is the longest stage of this Tour.

# Dodgers ace Maeda pitch perfect in win

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Kenta Maeda's work in the winter is paying off for the Dodgers this summer.

Thanks to his newfound changeup, Maeda pitched effectively into the sixth inning and Matt Kemp, Logan Forsythe and Chris Taylor each delivered an RBI single as Los Angeles beat the San Diego Padres 4-2 on Wednesday night.

The surging Dodgers pulled within a half-game of NL West-leading Arizona with their 34th victory in 50 games.

Maeda (6-5) won for the first time since June 25 as the right-hander allowed a run and four hits over 5<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings. He had nine strikeouts and a walk to help the Dodgers defeat the Padres for the eighth time in 12

meetings this season.

"It's been a game-changer for Kenta and it just keeps the hitters more honest with the change," Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said. "He can throw that pitch and present it as a strike and the bottom falls out. It's been a huge weapon for him."

It was Maeda's second start since coming off the paternity list and once again he was in control as the Padres had but one hit over his final three-plus innings of work. In his last nine starts, Maeda has a 1.97 ERA with 61 strikeouts in 50<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings.

"I've been able to use [the changeup] effectively and I've been able to get a lot of punch-outs with it," Maeda said through a translator. "Last year I wasn't able to use it at all. But because of the changeup this year, it's making my other pitches look bet-

ter today, and maybe my repertoire look even better."

Taylor's single scored Chase Utley, who was aboard on a pinch-hit double, for a 4-2 advantage in the eighth. Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth and overcame a leadoff walk to Wil Myers for his 25th save.

San Diego cut its deficit to one in the seventh when rookie Christian Villanueva hit his 18th homer off reliever Daniel Hudson.

Los Angeles jumped ahead in the third as it parlayed four hits and an error into a three-run inning.

For the fourth consecutive start, Maeda had nine strikeouts.

"It seems like nine is the number I keep stopping at," he said. "I was hoping for another one today. I have to work harder."

## MLB roundup

# Ramirez homers twice as Indians rattle Reds

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jose Ramirez is skipping the Home Run Derby. He's not missing much else right now.

Ramirez homered twice to match Albert Belle's club record for home runs before the All-Star break (27) and the Cleveland Indians took out some frustrations following a brutal loss with a 19-4 thumping of the Cincinnati Reds on Wednesday.

Ramirez hit a two-run homer in the first inning off Tyler Mahle (7-7) and connected for a three-run shot in Cleveland's nine-run third. With the Indians up 17-0, the All-Star third baseman was replaced in the fifth inning by manager Terry Francona before he could inflict further damage.

"He's a monster," Francona said of Ramirez. "And he's getting better."

Ramirez was invited to participate in Monday's home-run contest, but the 25-year-old declined a chance to take his cuts against Bryce Harper and others next week in Washington — he's got bigger swings to make.

"I sat down with the team and we made a decision, all of us to-

gether, and we just decided it wasn't the best thing for me to do at this time," Ramirez said through an interpreter. "It's a long season. I'm a player that plays every day and I need to save energy for the second half and, God willing, the playoffs as well."

**Rockies 19, Diamondbacks 2:** Colorado right-hander German Marquez homered against Arizona infielder Daniel Descalso, helping the Rockies pound the Diamondbacks 19-2 on Wednesday night.

Marquez (8-8) pitched six innings of two-run ball. His drive to center was the first homer by a pitcher off a position player since Mike LaCoss went deep for the Giants against San Diego's Dane Iorg on June 23, 1986, according to STATS.

**Red Sox 4, Rangers 2:** Chris Sale struck out 12 in seven innings of shutout ball in his final start before the All-Star Game, and major league batting leader Mookie Betts had two more hits to lead host Boston to its ninth straight victory over Texas.

Sale (10-4) allowed six hits and walked one to win his fifth straight decision and move the Red Sox 36 games above .500 for the first time since the New

York Yankees' Bucky Dent homered into the net above the Green Monster in a one-game playoff to settle the 1978 AL East title.

**Marlins 5, Brewers 4 (12):** Milwaukee slugger Jesus Aguilar was added to the NL All-Star team and then validated the selection with three hits and three RBIs, but the visiting Brewers went 3-for-16 with runners in scoring position.

**Pirates 2, Nationals 0:** Starling Marte hit a two-run homer for host Pittsburgh, and Trevor Williams combined with four relievers on a five-hitter.

**Twins 8, Royals 5:** Brian Dozier hit a two-run homer, going deep for the second straight game to give Minnesota a boost on its way to a win over visiting Kansas City.

**Rays 4, Tigers 2:** C.J. Cron's three-run home run in the seventh inning carried host Tampa Bay to its fifth straight win, a victory over Detroit.

**Giants 5, Cubs 4 (13):** Buster Posey singled off the right-field wall in the 13th inning for his fifth career game-ending hit, sending San Francisco past visiting Chicago.

**Yankees 9, Orioles 0:** Greg Bird hit his first career grand

slam to back a dominating pitching performance by Sonny Gray, and visiting New York beat Baltimore for a split of the four-game series.

**Mets 3, Phillies 0 (10):** Pinch-hitter Brandon Nimmo launched a three-run homer in the bottom of the 10th inning and host New York got another dominant outing from All-Star Jacob deGrom.

**White Sox 4, Cardinals 0:** Carlos Rodon pitched three-hit, shutout ball into the eighth inning to outduel Luke Weaver and lead Chicago to a victory over visiting St. Louis.

**Braves 9, Blue Jays 5:** Ozzie Albies snapped host Atlanta's power drought with two homers, and the Braves beat Toronto to move back into a tie for the NL East lead.

**Athletics 8, Astros 3:** Chad Pinder hit a three-run homer and Khris Davis added three RBIs as visiting Oakland jumped on Lance McCullers Jr. early and cruised to a win.

**Mariners 3, Angels 0:** Marco Gonzalez pitched seven sharp innings, David Freitas hit his first major league home run and Seattle defeated host Los Angeles.