

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Sex assault risk report release delayed

*USA Today*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is delaying release of a report by the nonpartisan Rand Corp. that rates the risk of sexual assault for troops by military base, according to Defense Department officials.

The report relied on surveys of troops and data from 2014 that have underpinned several previous reports from Rand. It was supposed to have been released months ago.

Military officials say the report is being delayed over concerns about its methodology, while advocates for troops subjected to sexual assault say the Pentagon wants to kill the report because officials do not like its conclusions.

“Estimating risk for a large number of military installations worldwide requires some complex statistical analysis, and Rand’s 2014 military sur-

vey was not designed with this task in mind,” said Air Force Maj. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman. “We are working with Rand to better understand and validate its statistical methods used.”

Jeffrey Hiday, a Rand spokesman, said researchers there stand by their report and its conclusions.

“This is the first time we are hearing this particular critique,” Hiday said. “We have demonstrated that the 2014 data can be used to construct installation level estimates, and the results have cleared rigorous, independent peer review.” He noted that “the entire point of the study is to estimate the risk of sexual assault at installations.”

Don Christensen, an advocate for victims of sexual assault in the military, said that “it’s disturbing the Pentagon would hire a reputable firm like Rand and

then seek to bury the results because the brass know the numbers make them look bad.”

Christensen, president of Protect Our Defenders and the former top prosecutor for the Air Force, added that “it would be nice if leadership was as concerned with finding solutions for the sexual assault crisis and holding offenders accountable as they are with manipulating data in an attempt to hide the scope of the problem.”

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, the New York Democrat who has been critical of the Pentagon’s response to sexual assault, called for the report’s immediate release. “Sen. Gillibrand has requested that the Department of Defense release this Rand report, and our office is currently waiting on a response,” said Alexandria Phillips, a spokeswoman for Gillibrand. “The Department of Defense needs

to be fully transparent with the findings of the report and stop protecting the status quo that harms our servicemembers and protects predators.”

The Pentagon continues to negotiate with the research organization before making it public, Gleason said. Hiday estimated it could be released by the end of August.

“The Department has been engaged with Rand for several months related to the methodology in the report in question,” Gleason said. “We value the innovative approaches that Rand takes to cutting-edge research, and the methodology in the report has merit as a proof-of-concept.”

“We are currently engaged with Rand to ensure the findings reflect methodology validated by the broader scientific community, and Rand is currently addressing our feedback.”

## President’s attacks on NATO weaken alliances

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — Deeply alarmed at President Donald Trump’s attacks on NATO and the transatlantic relationship, European governments are rethinking their reliance on the U.S. as a strategic ally against Russia, but they are unlikely to make regional security arrangements independent of Washington.

Trump has forced the reassessment in recent days by calling the European Union a “foe,” expressing reservations about defending other NATO members, and blasting Germany and other allies — comments he said were aimed at strengthening the U.S.-European alliance but that raised concerns across the continent.

“We can no longer fully rely on the White House,” Heiko Mass, Germany’s foreign minister, said on July 16, a position echoed by other senior European officials and diplomats. “The first clear consequence can only be that we need to align ourselves even more closely in Europe.”

But European allies bewildered by Trump’s seeming hostility toward NATO must confront a sobering reality: They have few good alternatives for protecting themselves against Russia or other potential adversaries.

“I think they have finally come to the conclusion that they have a president of the United States that they cannot count on,” said James Goldgeier, an

American University professor and visiting fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. “But what can they really do? Europe has not developed the kind of capacity it would need to have a more independent defense capability.”

The dominant U.S. role in NATO was by design when the alliance was created in 1949 — to keep Washington engaged in Europe, where it had fought two major wars, to deter Russia by vowing to defend Europe with nuclear weapons, if necessary, and to prevent Germany from re-emerging as a military threat.

Intentionally or not, experts say, Trump is undermining that design. But his actions are not as severe as his rhetoric.

Trump signed an agreement at the July 12 NATO summit in Brussels, for example, that again condemned Russia’s seizure of Crimea and reiterated the alliance’s bedrock mutual defense provision, which says an “attack against one Ally will be regarded as an attack against us all.”

And despite widespread concerns in NATO that Trump would start to remove American troops, he has continued to send regular rotations of U.S. troops to Central Europe, where NATO is reinforcing its defenses.

Trump’s attacks have been “damaging but so far it may not be long-lasting damage,” said Alexander Vershbow, who was NATO’s deputy secretary-general from 2012 to 2016.

# US and allies complete Hawaii portion of the Pacific exercise

By **MARCUS FICHTL**  
*Stars and Stripes*

**POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** — A multinational amphibious force is preparing to leave the wind-swept lava fields of Hawaii's Big Island and board ships for the next phase of the Rim of the Pacific exercise.

Twenty-five nations, more than 45 surface ships and submarines, 17 national land forces, 200-plus aircraft and 25,000 personnel are involved in the drills, which are scheduled to run through Aug. 2 in Hawaii and Southern California.

Brig. Gen. Mark Hashimoto, the senior Marine at RIMPAC, said Wednesday that Big Island training involving 2,000 troops has improved communication with partner nations. Each company from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment has trained with two or three other nations' amphibious forces.

"We learn as much from them as they do from us," he said, stressing the other forces' counterterrorism experience.

Six other marine corps and four other countries whose soldiers routinely operate aboard ship are involved in the drills, Hashimoto added.

The Philippine Marine Corps, which is used to fighting Islamic insurgents, is participating for the first time. So is the Sri Lankan Marine Corps, which was formed in February 2017, he said. "These partner nations are here not because they are invited but because they want to be here," Hashimoto said.

Philippine Marine Master Sgt. Rambla Bale said the weather in Hawaii is cooler than he's used to. "We're exchanging ideas ... we're conversing about family and food," he said of the training.

On Thursday, Indonesian Marine Capt. Yeyen Tuhardj

and his buddies fired their 105mm artillery alongside U.S. M777 Howitzers as helicopters buzzed overhead in an air and ground artillery attack.

"This is the first time we've shot over here — I'm really happy," he said. "I hope at the next RIMPAC my artillery gun is shooting here again."

When they weren't training, Tongan troops sang songs and Filipinos cooked traditional food. A spontaneous arm wrestling match sprang up between four nations after Sunday's field dinner.

By Friday, the Marines were preparing to leave their base camp 6,300 feet above sea level and board ships from Task Force 176 commanded by Australian commodore Ivan Ingham. At sea, they'll get ready for an amphibious invasion of nearby Oahu and an air assault of Kauai by the end of the month.

## Commander pleads guilty in drug case

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

A Navy commander with 23 years of military service pleaded guilty to a drug charge Friday in San Diego federal court, admitting that he conspired to buy and sell ecstasy and other drugs on the dark web over at least an 18-month period.

Adolph Garza, 54, faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000 when he's sentenced in December. He pleaded guilty Friday in U.S. District Court to conspiracy to distribute controlled substances by internet.

The San Diego resident admitted using the dark web to make multiple purchases of ecstasy, ketamine, cocaine, amphetamine and other controlled substances over an 18-month period from August 2016 to March of this year.

Garza was arrested during a March 7 raid at his Hillcrest condo, according to Sherri Walker Hobson, an assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California.

## Lawmakers hope to ease tax load on some federal workers

By **CAITLIN DOORNBOS**  
*Stars and Stripes*

Senators have introduced a bill that would lessen the blow of taxes on moving expenses for federal workers — a move some government employers say is necessary to attract top talent.

The Relocation Expense Parity Act, introduced Wednesday, would remedy an issue that arose after the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 eliminated tax deductions on moving costs. Since Jan. 1, federal employees have been liable for taxes on permanent change-of-station expenses that can total thousands of dollars.

Since moving expenses are no longer deductible, additional money or reimbursements employers offer workers to help

with moves are taxable. For federal workers, that means checks they never even see, such as those the government pays to ship and store household goods, are counted as taxable income.

The issue was resolved for many after the General Services Administration released directions in May allowing reimbursement of "substantially all" taxes for federal employees moving to another government job. But the GSA does not have the authority to allow the reimbursements — which come in the form of Withholding Tax Allowance and Relocation Income Tax Allowance payments — to be paid to those entering or leaving federal jobs because of the way the law is written.

A statement released by the

bill's sponsors — Sens. Mark Warner, D-Va.; Tim Kaine, D-Va.; Susan Collins, R-Maine; Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.; and Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii — referred to the issue as a "loophole." It would make new or outgoing employees eligible for such reimbursements, by changing the word "employee" to "individual" throughout the law authorizing RITA and WTA.

"This bipartisan legislation closes a remaining gap that prevents all federal employees from being fairly compensated for their willingness to serve our country," Warner said in a statement. "Civilian federal workers uproot their entire lives and move to distant locations in service to their country. They

shouldn't have to pay a price for their commitment to public service."

The bill would not change the 2017 tax law's elimination of moving expense deductions, which is expected to raise about \$1 billion per year for the national budget, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. Rather, it would allow the federal government to reimburse its employees for tax expenses like private-sector employers can.

The bill is not a fix-all. WTA and RITA payments are considered taxable income themselves, and the payments aren't automatic. Employees must apply for the reimbursements in the year after a move, according to Defense Finance and Accounting Services.

# Trump irked by lack of progress on N. Korea

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — When he emerged from his summit with Kim Jong Un last month, President Donald Trump triumphantly declared that North Korea no longer posed a nuclear threat and that one of the world's most intractable geopolitical crises had been "largely solved."

But in the days and weeks since then, U.S. negotiators have faced stiff resistance from a North Korean team practiced in the art of delay and obfuscation.

Diplomats say the North Koreans have canceled follow-up meetings, demanded more money and failed to maintain basic communications, even as the once-isolated regime's engagements with China and South Korea flourish.

Meanwhile, a missile engine testing facility that Trump said would be destroyed remains intact, and U.S. intelligence officials say Pyongyang is working to conceal key aspects of its nuclear program.

The lack of immediate progress, though predicted by many analysts, has frustrated the president, who has fumed at his aides in private even as he publicly hails the success of the negotiations.

The accounts of internal administration dynamics come from conversations with a half-dozen White House aides, State Department officials and diplomats, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

## 'Strong dose of reality'

Officials say Trump has been captivated by the nuclear talks, asking staffers for daily updates on the status of the negotiations. His frustration with the lack of progress has been coupled with irritation about the media coverage of the joint statement he signed on June 12 in Singapore, a document that contains no timeline or specifics on denuclearization but has reduced tensions between the two countries.

"Trump has been hit with a strong dose of reality of North Korea's negotiating style, which is always hard for Americans to understand," said Duyeon Kim, a Korea expert at the Center for a New American Security.

Trump's interest in the issue has put a particularly bright spotlight on Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has tried to wring concessions from his counterpart, Kim Yong Chol, a former spy chief viewed by the Trump administration as uncompromising and unable to negotiate outside the most explicit directives from Kim Jong Un.

A low point from the perspective of U.S. officials came during Pompeo's third visit to Pyongyang on July 6 when he pressed North Korean officials for details on their plans to return the remains of U.S. soldiers

killed during the Korean War, as they had agreed to do in Singapore. The issue had been discussed in several meetings and was viewed by the United States as an easy way for North Korea to demonstrate its sincerity.

But when Pompeo arrived in Pyongyang, the North Koreans insisted they were still not ready to commit to specific plans, according to diplomats familiar with the discussions.

The delay angered U.S. officials, who were under pressure to deliver given Trump's premature announcement on June 20 that North Korea had already "sent back" the remains of 200 soldiers.

The sentiment worsened when Kim Jong Un chose not to meet with Pompeo during his stay as had been expected. Pompeo later denied that a meeting was planned, a claim contradicted by diplomats who said the secretary initially intended to see the North Korean leader.

Unable to secure an agreement on remains during his trip, Pompeo scheduled a meeting between the North Koreans and their Pentagon counterparts to discuss the issue at the demilitarized zone on July 12. The North, however, kept U.S. defense officials waiting for three hours before calling to cancel, the diplomats said. The North Koreans then asked for a future meeting with a higher-ranking military official.

## President bristles

But in recent meetings with his aides, Trump bristled about the lack of positive developments in the negotiations. And Friday at the United Nations, his ambassador, Nikki Haley, accused Russia of blocking efforts to discipline North Korea's illegal smuggling.

Trump and his senior team "haven't given up entirely" on the goal of full denuclearization, but they are worried, said one person familiar with the discussions.

Climbing down from earlier soaring rhetoric, Trump told CBS last week that "I'm in no real rush. I mean whatever it takes, it takes," he said.

That more patient approach stands in contrast to earlier Trump administration demands for North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program within a year.

"Trump is too vested to walk away right now," said Victor Cha, a North Korea expert who the Trump administration nearly selected to be the next U.S. ambassador to Seoul. "At least until after the midterms."

U.S. officials lay some of the blame on Kim Yong Chol, who despite being North Korea's chief negotiator has consistently stonewalled discussions by saying he is not empowered to talk about an array of pertinent issues.

That dynamic drew the ire of U.S. officials in an early July meeting in Panmunjom when he refused to discuss the opening of a reliable communications channel or even specific goals of Pompeo's then-upcoming trip to Pyongyang, diplomats briefed on the meetings said.

The U.S. officials in the meeting, led by State Department official Sung Kim and CIA officer Andy Kim, wanted to discuss Pompeo's visit and make progress on returning the fallen soldiers' remains. But Kim Yong Chol said he was authorized only to receive a letter Trump had written to Kim Jong Un.

Unable to make headway, the Americans eventually handed over the letter and ended the meeting after only an hour.

## New negotiator?

Kim Yong Chol's negotiating tactics so frustrated U.S. officials that several expressed hope that he would be replaced as top negotiator by Ri Yong Ho, the North's more agreeable minister of foreign affairs. The swap appeared possible because of the joint statement in Singapore, which explicitly named Pompeo as the top U.S. negotiator but referred to his counterpart only as a "relevant high-level DPRK official."

"I think there is a debate within North Korea over assigning Kim Yong Chol or Ri Yong Ho as the counterpart," said Cha, who is also a scholar at Georgetown University. "Ri knows the issues better and can speak perfect English. Kim is a former spy, not a negotiator."

In the absence of progress on denuclearization, the Trump administration is likely to focus on the war remains.

At a meeting in the demilitarized zone, the two sides agreed to recommence field operations to search for the remains of some 5,300 Americans still missing from the conflict in North Korea.

U.S. officials familiar with the discussions said the North pledged to return 55 sets of remains on July 27, the 65th anniversary of the signing of an armistice that ended the war. But Pentagon officials, who sent transit cases to the demilitarized zone weeks ago, are wary of North Korea's pledges given its previous cancellations.

Given the lack of options outside of the diplomatic realm, some analysts said a tolerant approach still provides the best outlook.

"I worry that Trump might lose patience with the length and complexities of negotiations that are common when dealing with North Korea and walk away and revert back to serious considerations of the military option," said Duyeon Kim, the Korea scholar. "Getting to a nuclear agreement takes a long time, and implementing it will be even harder."

# 1 dead in Calif. shooting, standoff

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A man who shot his grandmother and wounded another woman before leading police on a chase, crashing his car and running into a busy supermarket where he held dozens of people hostage in a tense standoff has been arrested on suspicion of murder, authorities said Sunday.

Gene Evin Atkins, 28, was being held Sunday morning on \$2 million bail, according to Officer Drake Madison, a Los Angeles police spokesman. It wasn't clear if he had an attorney and a message left at a number listed for Atkins in public records wasn't immediately returned.

A woman was shot and killed when Atkins ran into the Trader Joe's supermarket in Los Angeles' Silver Lake section on Saturday, but no hostages were seriously hurt before the man handcuffed himself and surrendered about three hours later, police said.

Authorities have not identified the slain woman or confirmed if her death sparked the arrest on a murder charge.

Atkins' grandmother was hospitalized in critical condition after the shooting and police had no update on her condition Sunday.

Authorities said Atkins shot his grandmother seven times and injured another woman, who he forced into a car, at a South Los Angeles home around 1:30 p.m., police said. Officers tracked the car, gave chase and exchanged gunfire with the man, who crashed into a pole outside the supermarket and then ran inside, they said. The unidentified woman, who suffered a graze wound earlier, was taken out of the car by police.

Frightened customers and workers dove for cover as police bullets fired at the man shattered the store's glass doors.

Some people inside the supermarket climbed out windows, and others barricaded themselves in rooms as scores of police officers and firefighters and 18 ambulances converged on the scene and prepared for mass casualties.

Heavily armed officers in riot gear stood along the side of the store and used mirrors to look inside as hostage negotiators

tried to coax the man into freeing his 40 to 50 hostages and surrendering.

At around 6:30 p.m., Atkins agreed to handcuff himself and walked out the front door, surrounded by four of the hostages. He was immediately taken into custody.

Mayor Eric Garcetti congratulated police and firefighters for their work and mourned the loss of life at the Trader Joe's, where he and his wife regularly shopped when they lived in the neighborhood.

"The heroism that was shown today was second to none, and the teams that were able to respond, secure the perimeter and engage in conversation with the suspect no doubt saved lives today," he said.

Police Chief Michel Moore said the gunman made a "series of demands" during the standoff but crisis negotiators believed they could persuade him to surrender peacefully.

Fire officials said six people, ranging in age from 12 to 81, were taken to the hospital. None had been shot, and all were in fair condition.

## Lawmakers reject claim that misconduct is confirmed

Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. — President Donald Trump claimed Sunday that newly released documents relating to the wiretapping of his onetime campaign adviser Carter Page "confirm with little doubt" that intelligence agencies misled the courts that approved the warrant. But lawmakers from both parties say the documents don't show wrongdoing.

The documents have been at the center of a political firestorm for months, as some Republicans have suggested that the FBI misrepresented evidence to obtain warrants to monitor Page as they investigated possible collusion between the Russian government and a Trump aide. The documents had remained out of public view until Saturday, when they were released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Visible portions of the heavily redacted documents show the FBI telling the court that Page "has been collaborating and conspiring with the Russian government." The agency also told the court that "the FBI believes Page has been the subject of targeted recruitment by the Russian government."

Trump tweeted Sunday on the documents: "As usual they are ridiculously heavily redacted but confirm with little doubt that the Department of 'Justice' and FBI misled the courts. Witch Hunt Rigged, a Scam!"

Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff, of California, a ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee, said the documents lay out in detail "just why the FBI was so concerned that Carter Page might be acting as an agent of a foreign power."

"It was a solid application and renewals were signed by four different judges appointed by three different Republican presidents," Schiff said on ABC's "This Week."

## Gala kicks off Apollo's anniversary year

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Former NASA astronaut Buzz Aldrin was noticeably absent from a gala kicking off a yearlong celebration of the 50-year anniversary of the first moon landing, even though his nonprofit space education foundation is a sponsor and he typically is the star attraction.

The black-tie Apollo Celebration Gala held under a Saturn V rocket at the Kennedy Space Center on Saturday evening featured a panel discussion by astronauts, an awards ceremony and an auction of space memorabilia.

Hundreds of people attended the sold-out event, including British physicist Brian Cox, who presented Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson with

the ShareSpace Foundation's Innovation award.

Branson, whose company is developing a new generation of commercial spacecraft, said in a recorded video that the Apollo missions influenced his generation.

"Space is still hard, really hard. It still really matters," Branson said. "There would be no Virgin Galactic, no Virgin Orbit and no spaceship company had it not been for Apollo astronauts and the thousands of talented people who made their mission possible." Dr. Carolyn Williams, of the nonprofit From One Hand To AnOTHER, received the foundation's Education award, and former Johnson Space Center director Gerry Griffin, a flight director for all of the crewed Apollo missions, was honored with the Pioneer

award.

"It's very humbling; it kind of came out of the blue," Griffin said. "It is so neat to know that we've passed the torch that will let this next generation take us to this next step."

That next step, Griffin said, is a return of Americans to the Moon and, eventually, Mars — something former Apollo astronauts Walt Cunningham, Harrison Schmitt, Rusty Schweickart and Tom Stafford discussed during a conversation with Cox.

Aldrin's ShareSpace Foundation is one of the sponsors of the annual gala, which raises money for Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics — or STEAM education — and Astronaut Scholarship Foundation scholarships.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Gift to mom: Night in Borden bedroom

**MA** FALL RIVER — A mother and a daughter with a love of the macabre won an online auction to spend a night in the Massachusetts bedroom where Lizzie Borden is thought to have killed her stepmother with an ax.

Sara Love, of Bath, N.Y., told The Herald-News she paid \$425 for a night in the room at the Lizzie Borden Bed & Breakfast in Fall River as a retirement gift for her mom.

Love and her mother, Marie Schinck, of Manchester, N.H., are scheduled to stay in the room the night of Aug. 4, the anniversary of the 1892 ax murders of Andrew and Abby Borden.

## Tractor driver leads cops on slow chase

**CO** DENVER — The Denver Post reported that a man driving a tractor led authorities on a slow-speed chase through the city Friday night before hitting a police vehicle downtown.

The newspaper said it appears more than a dozen squad cars chased the tractor and many other vehicles were hit. The Post said police rammed the tractor with their cars to end the chase.

The newspaper said the driver of the tractor suffered multiple police dog bites and was hit with a stun gun before he was arrested.

## Horse takes carriage on wild driverless ride

**TN** MEMPHIS — Authorities and eyewitnesses said a horse went on a wild carriage ride without its driver in a tourist area in Memphis, injuring at least one person.

The Commercial Appeal re-

ported the horse was eventually brought under control Friday night in an area near Beale Street and was uninjured.

James Freeman, a visitor from St. Louis, said the carriage driver was trying to get into the carriage when the horse started moving. Freeman said the driver ran after the horse but couldn't get back into the carriage.

## Sheriff: Drugs sprayed on mail to inmates

**FL** PANAMA CITY — Florida authorities charged more than two dozen people as part of a sophisticated drug-smuggling operation that consisted of spraying synthetic drugs on mail sent to inmates.

Bay County Sheriff Tommy Ford on Friday announced that 27 people had been arrested as part of a yearlong investigation called "You've Got Mail." It began when authorities found a drug called Suboxone on a strip of plastic placed between pieces of a card sent to a county jail inmate.

Investigators say two inmates at the center of the operation had family members and associates mail synthetic-drug laced paper to themselves and others. The two inmates cut the paper into squares and sold it.

## Groom rushes to help at nearby crash scene

**MD** EASTON — The newly married couple was posing for sunset photos recently at an inn on Maryland's Eastern Shore when the dreamy atmosphere was broken by the unmistakable screeching of a car crash.

"I heard the squeal of the brakes and a crash, and realized what it was," Marine Capt. Andrew Cruz, 30, said. He left the side of his bride, Cara Neufeld, and sped toward the sound.

Cruz and others from the wedding discovered an SUV flipped onto its passenger side.

The side curtain air bag had deployed, so they could only see the driver's legs and there was no response when they knocked on the windows, Cruz said.

Cruz's brother-in-law, Brandon Neufeld, said Cruz climbed atop the SUV and used his elbow to break the window. Cruz then spoke to an OnStar operator and as the driver regained consciousness, emergency workers arrived.

## Couple buys their own island for \$60K

**WV** MONTGOMERY — An Ohio couple purchased a West Virginia island for \$60,000.

News outlets reported James Ballor, of Columbus, Ohio, and his wife, Laura, made the winning bid for Eastern Wheeler Island in the Kanawha River at an auction Thursday in Montgomery. Bidding for the 17-acre island that was once a private airstrip started at \$40,000.

The Ballors recently became intrigued by the idea of owning an island when they found it on Craigslist.

## Paper problem has tickets reading 2019

**NY** MASSAPEQUA — It's back to the future on the Long Island Rail Road.

The nation's largest commuter train system said Friday it's printing next month's tickets on paper marked for 2016 and 2019 due to a problem with its usual supply.

Riders who get monthly tickets by mail will see a big "19" instead of "18" on the one for August.

Month tickets sold at ticket machines and offices are being made with green ticket stock from 2016.

## Residents question sighting in the sky

**OR** PENDLETON — Many Pendleton residents are questioning what it was they saw in the skies over the town.

The East Oregonian reported residents spotted a small white object Wednesday floating above the south area of Pendleton for the better part of an hour.

Some thought the object was a kite or plastic shopping bag.

Construction worker Virgil Bates Jr. used his smartphone to zoom in and take photos and video of the object.

Bates said the situation grew stranger when a second similar object came into view and drifted down beside the first. Then one object zipped off in a straight line over McKay Creek drainage east of Pendleton.

## Man leads police on chase in 2 trucks

**WY** GILLETTE — Wyoming police said a man twice led them in a chase — once in a pickup and then in a concrete mixer truck.

Gillette Police Lt. Brent Wasson said the incident began about 11:15 p.m. Wednesday when police tried to stop a pickup on the Interstate 90 on-ramp.

The Gillette News Record reported the driver fled, reaching speeds up to 100 mph and forcing police to stop active pursuit.

The pickup later crashed into a ditch, and the driver fled on foot into a nearby construction business where he commandeered the concrete mixer.

Wasson said that at some point the truck's brakes locked and caught fire, disabling the truck. Wasson said a 32-year-old man was taken into custody pending formal charges.

From wire reports

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# Amid declining interest, drivers pushing NASCAR for changes

Associated Press

LOUDON, N.H. — NASCAR has been reluctant to make more than modest tweaks to its schedule. That hasn't stopped its drivers this summer from wondering about possibilities in hopes of luring more fans:

- A Cup race on Eldora dirt.
- More races at short tracks.

- No more multiple races at the same track.

- Try Iowa; go back to Rockingham.

The idea of blowing up a schedule that has largely remained unchanged for most of the last decade is hardly a novel idea, and drivers have long lobbied NASCAR to try something new and mix things up over the staid summer months.

Denny Hamlin, a 31-time Cup winner, mulled over a few potential schedule shake-ups until he splashed cold water on the campaigning.

"None of this is ever going to happen," Hamlin said. "Not until these tracks and NASCAR get together and are willing to make changes."

That seems unlikely in the immediate future for a variety of reasons — from sanctioning agreements with tracks that run through 2020 to safety upgrades and even the threat of litigation should a track lose a race.

The sport has resisted even such fan-friendly schedule changes, like running week-night races or rotating the site of All-Star weekend.

"It's going to have to take someone way high up saying, 'We're making changes and this is what we're going to do,' for it to happen," Hamlin said. "But it definitely won't happen in the next few years until that contract's over with."

One of the few fun additions over the last decade came when NASCAR added a Truck Series race on the half-mile Eldora Speedway dirt track in Ohio. The series made its an-

nual stop on the dirt this week for the only time this season. Retired NASCAR champion Tony Stewart owns the track and used his forum to push for the sport to at least bring the second-tier Xfinity Series to the dirt.

Like most issues facing NASCAR, few agree on any topic. Kyle Larson, a noted sprint car racer, said NASCAR should stay above the muck.

"I wouldn't like to see Cup on dirt," he said. "Cup belongs on pavement and real road course tracks. If we went to Eldora, yeah, I mean I would be excited because I would be really fast and I feel like I would definitely have the best shot to win. But at the same time, I think we are fine not going there."

The race winner at Eldora is awarded a Golden Shovel, which seems fitting because these days everyone is piling on NASCAR.

How low can they go? The ratings reports could win a limbo contest with the regular bottoming out of all-time lows or decade-worst for most races. Kentucky had 2.3 million viewers Saturday on NBC Sports Network and Sportsmediawatch.com reported it was the 15th of 17 Cup races this season that had its ratings decline double-digits to multiyear lows.

It's no longer jarring to see empty swaths of grandstands at the track and longtime corporate giants such as Lowe's and 5-hour Energy that have helped fund championship drivers are set to sever its ties with NASCAR at the end of the season.

Kentucky was once NASCAR's shiny new toy when the Cup series moved there in 2011. The first race was a sell-out, though it was marred by traffic jams that turned thousands away from the track. Last week, plenty of good seats were still available for a ho-hum race. The luster had worn off just as it has at Indianapolis

Motor Speedway — which had its date moved this season from July to early September and the final "regular season" race.

The competition has been reduced to three dominant drivers. Martin Truex Jr., Kevin Harvick and Kyle Busch have combined to win 14 of 19 races. Clint Bowyer is the only other driver to win a non-restrictor plate race this season.

No surprise, Truex, Harvick and Busch went 1-2-3 on the leaderboard in the final Cup practice Saturday at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.

The real fun in NASCAR comes in 280-character bursts on social media instead of 200 mph speeds on an oval.

Dale Earnhardt Jr., the 15-time most popular driver-turned NBC analyst, posed this question to consider, and it had nothing to do with who can beat the Big Three at New Hampshire:

"Can a driver wear his own throwback gear? I always get weird wearing stuff with my own image or name on it. But it gets murky when it's a 20 year old throwback. Opinions please?" he tweeted.

More than 1,500 replies later — including a few from active NASCAR drivers — Earnhardt still wasn't sure if he should throw on his own throwback.

With little buzz at the track, the tremor on a mobile device of a tweet notification from a driver might be the best part of a race weekend for fans.

Tracks are trying anything to replicate that instant gratification. New Hampshire — which lost its fall race to Las Vegas — launched a "College Corner" this weekend "where the racing is loud and the party is lit!"

Cool. But don't expect those 20-somethings to easily vote in any Twitter fashion polls — the track doesn't have WiFi.

It's up to NASCAR to repair its lost connection with a fading fan base.

## Bell wins 2nd straight Xfinity race

Associated Press

LOUDON, N.H. — Christopher Bell has cracked the Cup supremacy in Xfinity.

The 23-year-old Bell held off hard-charging 2012 Cup champion Brad Keselowski over the final 18 laps at New Hampshire Motor Speedway to win his second straight Xfinity Series race.

Bell pulled off the towering achievement of winning two straight Xfinity races against former champs from NASCAR's top-tier series who moonlight on Saturdays. Bell topped 2015 Cup champion Kyle Busch to win last week's race at Kentucky Speedway and he followed up Saturday in the No. 20 Toyota by keeping Keselowski at bay down the stretch for his third win this season.

"You hope to race those guys at one point, so I'm thankful that I get the opportunity here in the Xfinity Series to race with them and proud that I'm able to compete with them, let alone beat them," Bell said.

Keselowski had won the pole Saturday but was dropped to the rear of the field because he was late to the mandatory drivers meeting. It proved to be nothing more than a mild inconvenience for Keselowski in the No. 22 Ford. He stormed past the second-tier regulars and had his fourth straight Xfinity win in sight.

Bell, who drives for Joe Gibbs Racing, had the fresh tires that Keselowski needed and that was enough to ring in a victory lane celebration. Bell gave his checkered flag to a young fan in the stands.

"I hope it means a lot more to that kid than it is to me," he said. "You know, we get trophies, we get all sorts of trophies, so hopefully it means a lot to that kid."

JGR fields cars for Busch and Bell, one reason it's continued to have success in Xfinity.

"They've won before me, they're going to win after me," Bell said. "It's my job to make sure they win with me."

# Springer's slam sends Astros past Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Justin Verlander hadn't earned a win in the past six starts of his All-Star season. George Springer hadn't homered or contributed many game-changing hits in the last month.

Those are the closest things to crises in the charmed world of the Houston Astros, and the two stars dramatically ended their droughts in another blowout.

Springer hit a grand slam while the Astros batted around in the sixth inning, and Verlander ended his winless skid with 11 strikeouts over six dominant innings in Houston's 7-0 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Saturday night.

Just about everything clicked for the defending World Series champions in their fourth win in five games, extending the

second-best start in franchise history to 66-35. Houston earned its 10th shutout victory of the season, matching Boston for the AL lead.

Four batters after Josh Reddick homered to lead off the sixth, Springer delivered his fifth career grand slam on a full count against reliever Noe Ramirez. Springer had driven in only five runs in his previous 24 games.

Verlander (10-5) yielded five hits while getting ample support in his third win over Los Angeles already this season. He has thrown 23 consecutive scoreless innings over his last three starts at Angel Stadium, including a five-hit shutout on May 16.

Verlander leaned heavily on his fastball, including a 99-mph dart in the fourth to strike out Ian Kinsler, his longtime teammate in Detroit, with two runners

on. Kinsler is impressed by the continuing excellence of his fellow 30-something veteran.

"He's been pretty fastball-dominant this year, and he's got a good fastball and he uses it well," Kinsler said.

Verlander hadn't won since June 14 despite setting career bests for strikeouts, ERA and opponents' batting average before the break. The All-Star right-hander walked two and allowed just one runner to reach third base.

Shohei Ohtani had two doubles as the Angels (49-50) dropped below .500 for the first time since the season opener. Los Angeles has scored one run in the first 18 innings after the break in what's looking like yet another lost season for a franchise that hasn't won a playoff game since 2009.

## Roundup

### Shreve unlikely hero for Yanks in Subway Series win

Associated Press

NEW YORK—Aroldis Chapman had flamed out, throwing three of 19 pitches for strikes and enabling the Mets to cut a four-run, ninth-inning deficit in half.

Chasen Shreve to the rescue. Yes, Chasen Shreve.

Maligned last month, Shreve entered with the bases loaded, got Devin Mesoraco to hit into a run-scoring, double-play grounder and retired Wilmer Flores on a slow roller in front of the mound.

With his second big league save and first since August 2016, Shreve preserved a 7-6 Subway Series victory Saturday that enabled Sonny Gray (7-7) to win consecutive starts for the first time since the Yankees acquired him last summer.

On another tumult-filled day for the last-place Mets, closer Jeurys Familia was traded to Oakland for a pair of minor leaguers and slugging outfielder Yoenis Cespedes was out of the lineup because of body soreness, one game after returning from a two-month absence. Cespedes said Friday night he may need surgery on

both heels that would require an eight-to-10-month recovery.

Aaron Judge homered for the Yankees, who trailed after Michael Conforto's second-inning solo homer but rallied against Steven Matz (4-8) with a four-run fourth inning.

**Athletics 4, Giants 3 (11):** Jonathan Lucroy singled home Matt Chapman with two outs in the 11th inning to give Oakland a victory over San Francisco in front of the largest crowd to watch a baseball game at the Coliseum.

The A's improved to a major league-best 22-7 since June 16 with their third win in five games against their Northern California rivals.

**Cubs 7, 3; Cardinals 2, 6:** Matt Carpenter homered for the sixth consecutive game and Paul DeJong hit a tiebreaking double in St. Louis' three-run ninth inning, helping the Cardinals beat host Chicago to split their day-night doubleheader.

The Cubs won the first game behind Tyler Chatwood (4-5), who earned his first win since May 11 in the makeup of an April 16 rainout.

**Tigers 5, Red Sox 0:** Jose Iglesias homered and drove in four runs, and Mike Fiers

pitched impressively into the seventh inning to lead Detroit over visiting Boston.

The major league-leading Red Sox lost for just the second time in 15 games, and their AL East lead over the New York Yankees slipped to 4½ games.

**Rockies 6, Diamondbacks 5:** Tom Murphy's two-out, pinch-hit solo home run in the eighth inning lifted Colorado over host Arizona.

The Rockies overcame an early three-run deficit for their season-high seventh straight win. Colorado moved past Arizona into second place in the NL West and clinched its sixth consecutive series win, the first time the Rockies have accomplished that since 2014.

**Brewers 4, Dodgers 2:** Christian Yelich hit a tying homer off Clayton Kershaw in a three-run sixth inning, and host Milwaukee snapped a seven-game losing streak with a win over Los Angeles.

**Indians 16, Rangers 3:** Yonder Alonso homered twice, Carlos Carrasco pitched into the seventh inning, and Cleveland scored in each of the last five innings of a win over host Texas.

**White Sox 5, Mariners 0:**

Dylan Covey allowing two hits in 8⅓ innings against baffled Seattle hitters, Avisail Garcia hit a three-run homer in his return off the disabled list, and visiting Chicago beat the Mariners.

**Pirates 6, Reds 2:** Corey Dickerson hit two first-pitch home runs, rookie Nick Kingham overcame another Cincinnati rain delay to pitch six shutout innings and drive in two runs, and visiting Pittsburgh beat the Reds for its season-high eighth straight win.

**Royals 4, Twins 2:** Salvador Perez homered, reliever Brian Flynn picked up the win with three scoreless innings and host Kansas City beat Minnesota.

The Royals won back-to-back games for the first time since May 29-30.

**Marlins 3, Rays 2:** Rookie Pablo Lopez gave up three hits in six innings, Cameron Maybin homered and visiting Miami beat Tampa Bay.

**Blue Jays 4, Orioles 1:** Marcus Stroman pitched seven sharp innings, Aledmys Diaz had two hits and host Toronto beat struggling Baltimore for the sixth straight time.

# Dane claims 15th stage at Tour

Associated Press

CARCASSONNE, France — Magnus Cort Nielsen, of Denmark, sprinted away from two other challengers to win Stage 15 of the Tour de France on Sunday while Geraint Thomas had no trouble holding the overall lead for a fourth consecutive day.

The Astana rider claimed his first career win at the Tour after staying ahead of Ion Izagirre and Bauke Mollema in a sprint over the final 200 meters. Cort Nielsen finished the hilly 112.7-mile leg from Millau that ended in a long descent to Carcassonne in 4 hours, 25 minutes.

"I always kept a little back so I was able to respond if they attack," said Cort Nielsen, 25, who won two stages of the Spanish Vuelta in 2016.

Thomas in the yellow jersey, second-placed Chris Froome, and the rest of the overall contenders arrived at Carcassonne and its medieval city walls 13 minutes after the stage winner.

Thomas kept his advantage of 1 minute, 39 seconds over teammate and defending champion Froome before the race's second rest day on Monday.

"We were always in control," Thomas said. "We were always in the right place, and it's a good day to get done."

That pause precedes three mountain stages in the Pyrenees, followed by the individual time trial on the penultimate day of the race.

"There are three big, big days left, and then the time trial, so (I) just take each day as it comes and we will see what happens," Thomas said.

It was a placid ride for Thomas before the decisive final week.

The only serious attack by a top-10 rider in the overall standings came from Daniel Martin, the UAE Emirates leader, who tried a getaway while going up the Pic de Nore but was reeled in on the way down.

A breakaway group of 29 riders — none of whom posed a threat to Thomas' overall lead — got away early.

Cort Nielsen, Izagirre and Mollema dropped the five other remaining escapees before disputing the stage win among themselves. With all three riders sizing one another up, Cort Nielsen stayed in front when they finally broke into a sprint.

The racing returns on Tues-

day with Stage 16, a 135.5-mile mountain trek from Carcassonne to Bagnères-de-Luchon.

Spectators continue to taunt Chris Froome along the roads of the Tour de France after the four-time champion was cleared of doping.

Prior to the start of the stage, one spectator leaned over the barriers toward Froome and made a gesture like he was injecting his arm.

Throughout the race, spectators have voiced their disapproval of the Team Sky rider.

A cloud had hung over Froome after a urine sample taken during the Spanish Vuelta in September showed a concentration of the asthma drug salbutamol that was twice the permitted level.

Tour organizers had informed Froome that he wasn't welcome at this year's race until the International Cycling Union announced five days before the event started that Froome's result did not represent an adverse finding.

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

Briefly

## Vikings assistant Sparano dies at 56

Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings say offensive line coach Tony Sparano has died at the age of 56.

The Vikings say Sparano died early Sunday but did not give a cause of death. He had been the Vikings' offensive line coach since 2016.

Sparano began his NFL coaching career in 1999 and had stints as a head coach with the Miami Dolphins and Oakland Raiders.

He was the Dolphins' head coach from 2008-11 and went 29-32. He went 11-5 and won the AFC East in his first season with the Dolphins. Sparano also spent time with the Browns, Redskins, Jaguars, Cowboys and 49ers.

Sparano is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter and four grandchildren.

## Lincicome misses cut at PGA Tour event

NICHOLASVILLE, Ky. — Brittany Lincicome walked off the 18th green after her first PGA Tour event to applause before stopping on the way to the clubhouse to sign autographs and acknowledge spectators' warm wishes.

The LPGA Tour player made sure to savor every moment of a historic weekend she wished could have lasted longer.

"I would've liked to have shot better [Thursday]," said Lincicome, who missed the cut at the Barbasol Championship after shooting a 1-under 71 on Saturday, failing in her bid to become the first female player since 1945 to make the cut in a PGA Tour event.

"Obviously, today was a pretty nice day, so I guess ending with today's round is a good way to leave."

# Woods creates buzz at Carnoustie

Associated Press

CARNOUSTIE, Scotland — Jordan Spieth has a share of the lead in the British Open and a big edge in experience. Still only 24, he already has won three majors and his name is the last one etched on the base of the silver claret jug.

One name in the mix makes it all feel so new.

"I've always wanted to battle it out in a major with Tiger. Who hasn't?" Spieth said after seizing upon a calm Carnoustie for a 6-under 65 to tie for the lead with Kevin Kisner and Xander Schauffele. "It's kind of a dream come true just to have the opportunity."

Never in the mix at the Masters, gone by the weekend at the U.S. Open, the 14-time major champion surged into contention Saturday with a 66, his lowest round on weekend at a major in eight years.

He didn't have the best score. He was four shots behind.

But he's Tiger Woods, and it felt like that again to thousands of fans who crammed along the fairways and behind the greens as Woods ran off three

straight birdies around the turn and then two-putted for birdie on the par-5 14th to work his way into a tie for the lead, even if that lasted for only 20 minutes.

"I've shown that I've been there close enough with a chance to win this year," Woods said. "Given what happened the last few years, I didn't know if that would ever happen again. But here I am with a chance coming Sunday in a major championship. It's going to be fun."

It was every bit of that on Saturday, a rare day when Carnoustie had little defense.

Justin Rose, who made the cut on the number with a birdie on his final hole, matched the Carnoustie record for the Open with a 64. Spieth set the tone in the afternoon when he decided on the way to the first tee to hit driver on the 396-yard hole. He sent it bouncing and rolling along the firm turf, down a hill and onto the green to about 10 feet away for an eagle.

Moments later, Woods began his charge to get into contention at a major for the first time in five years.