

STARS AND STRIPES®

Wednesday, July 10, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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US ship plays key role in Persian Gulf

The Washington Post

OFF THE COAST OF BAHRAIN — As President Donald Trump and Iran trade threats, ships like the USS Whirlwind are at the front lines of the rising frictions, patrolling the strategic waterways of the Persian Gulf.

Here, American Navy vessels come close to Iranian ships on a daily basis.

“If we see them and they hail us, we’ll just tell them we are a coalition warship. It’s just normal professional dialogue,” said Lt. Cmdr. Yilei Liu, the ship’s commanding officer. “Everybody is just trying to understand what everybody else is doing.”

A 178-foot patrol boat, the Whirlwind is one of 21 forward deployed ships with the U.S. 5th Fleet in Manama, Bahrain, that carry out surveillance and operations such as boarding and searching suspicious vessels. The stated aim of the mission is to ensure freedom of navigation and commerce in one of the world’s most vital waterways.

Last month, when limpet mines blasted two petrochemical tankers in the Gulf of Oman, forcing both crews to abandon ship as thick plumes of black smoke rose into the air, the U.S. Navy responded to the distress calls. Those incidents came after Emirati authorities said four ships had been sabotaged in the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah.

The United States has blamed Iran for the attacks. Iran denies carrying them out.

The Pentagon dispatched about 2,500 additional troops to the Persian Gulf region last month, citing information that Iran was planning to harm U.S. interests. The show of force included the deployment of an aircraft carrier and amphibious assault ship.

Of all its military assets, the Navy is the United States’ most visible deterrent.

Liu would not go into the details of additional force protection put in place in recent months. “We’re basically ready to respond to any kind of regional adversary action,” said Liu, of San Diego, whose command of the Whirlwind is his first after 13 years in the Navy. “We are trained to defend the ship; we are trained to fight and ready to fight. We are postured to take action if necessary in the region against any threats in the region.”

Despite the drama of the past few months, for the sailors patrolling the waterway, it’s been business as usual.

On a searing hot day last week, the Whirlwind cast off from port in Manama to carry out a joint exercise with its sister ship, the USS Hurricane. The Whirlwind clipped along at a speed of 32 knots, passing traditional wooden dhows and oil tankers. One-fifth of the world’s oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, where shipping lanes narrow to just a few miles across.

A large part of the patrol boat’s mission is surveillance, Liu said. “We look at what

people are doing, patterns of life.”

The Whirlwind is one of the smallest vessels in the U.S. Navy, and it’s all hands on deck for the four officers and 26 enlisted sailors on board. Culinary specialist Jonathan Osuna, who ducks below deck to cook spaghetti and meatballs, also drives the ship into port.

“Because we are so small, pretty much everybody does everything,” said Lt. Erik Anastos, operations officer, who is from Arlington, Va.

After the raising of a huge American flag, the crew is ordered to be “ready for adversary action,” manning the weapons stations that include four mounted machine guns and a Griffin missile system. They haul on their helmets and body armor.

“When we man gun quarters, the whole crew is involved in some fashion,” said Lt. Austin Nodolf, weapons officer. “The people who handle the lines, the IT men, basically every kind of rig operates the gun mounts.”

At the back of the ship is a boat deck with a seven-meter rib, which can slide into the water so the crew can board other ships. But the only time it’s been used in recent months was in a goodwill mission in cooperation with the Qatari navy.

The ship will spend a maximum of about 10 days on patrol out of port at a time. In between, the crew carries out routine exercises.

US advances plan for coalition to deter Iran’s threats

Associated Press

JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL, Va. — The United States will move ahead with plans to build a coalition of nations to monitor and deter Iranian threats against commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf area and in a heavily trafficked waterway between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said Tuesday.

Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford said the Pentagon has devel-

oped a specific plan, and that he believes it will be clear within a couple of weeks which nations are willing to join the effort.

Mark Esper, the acting secretary of defense, raised the issue last month with allied officials at NATO headquarters, but no nations were ready to commit to participating. Esper said at the time that the plans would have to be further refined.

Dunford said he discussed the matter Tuesday with Esper and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and that plans are

coming together.

“We’re getting ready now to move out,” Dunford told a small group of reporters at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va. “We have a pretty clear concept of what we want to do.”

He suggested that the project could begin with a small coalition.

“This will be scalable. So, with a small number of contributors we can have a small mission and we’ll expand that as the number of nations that are willing to participate iden-

tify themselves,” he said.

He said the U.S. military’s main role would be to provide “maritime domain awareness” — intelligence and surveillance information — to the ships of coalition partners that would conduct patrols in vulnerable waterways like the Strait of Hormuz, which separates the Persian Gulf from the Gulf of Oman, as well as the Bab el Mandeb, a heavily trafficked strait between Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula and Djibouti and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa.

Fort holds down Naval Forces Japan command

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — U.S. Naval Forces Japan bid farewell to a retiring commander and welcomed a new one Wednesday at a ceremony in Yokosuka's theater.

Rear Adm. Brian Fort, a surface warfare, or ship-borne, officer by training, assumed command from Rear Adm. Gregory Fenton, a naval aviator who held the post for two years.

"The Navy got it right when they selected you for this assignment," Fenton told Fort during the ceremony.

Naval Forces Japan works with the Japan Self-Defense Force to develop cooperative defense strategies, among other responsibilities. Its partner organization, Navy Region Japan, is responsible for seven bases across the Indian and western Pacific oceans, including Yokosuka, that support the Navy's operations.

About 48,000 military and civilian personnel work for Naval Forces Japan and Navy Region Japan.

Fort, like Fenton, has responsibility for both organizations.

Fort, of Little Rock, Ark., comes to Yokosuka — headquarters of Naval Forces Japan — after two years commanding Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific. He graduated from the University of Arkansas, the Naval War College and Joint Forces Staff College.

"Your background in installation command matters with Navy Region Hawaii will help set you up for success and further advance the partnership between the United States Navy and [the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force]," Fenton said.

Fenton, of Grand Ledge, Mich., is retiring after 33 years in the Navy. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval Test Pilot and other service schools.

Fenton, being relieved, saluted U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. John Aquilino and recalled his first day on the job in Japan.

"Early in the morning on June 17, 2017, I got my first wake-up on the command cellphone advising me the USS Fitzgerald suffered a collision at sea," he said.

The Fitzgerald, a destroyer, ran into the Philippine-flagged ACX Crystal cargo ship, killing seven sailors. It's still undergoing more than \$300 million in repairs in Pascagoula, Miss.

USMC offers big bonuses for selective reenlistments

BY CHRISTOPHER DENNIS
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is offering up to \$90,000 in retention bonuses for high-demand career fields, including Raiders, reconnaissance and explosive ordnance disposal, as it seeks to retain young Marines with key skills.

The selective reenlistment bonuses for fiscal year 2020 include incentives for aviation maintenance, air traffic controllers, infantry squad leaders and Marines willing to make a lateral move to select specialties such as intelligence and cyberdefense, a command bulletin issued Friday said.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller said in a letter in October that the Corps needed to recruit 38,500 members to fill gaps in the ranks.

The incentives include a bonus for Marines in reenlistment zones between 17 months and 14 years of service who sign up for a four-year stint before Sept. 30. They can gain an additional \$8,000, the statement said.

Marines who move into a select occupation for 72 months will rate a \$40,000 payment in addition to the field's reenlistment bonus, which could range from \$4,500 to \$57,000, depending on the specialty and the Marine's rank.

The bulletin cited an example of a sergeant with between 17 months and six years of active service laterally moving

to counterintelligence/human intelligence specialist for 72 months, who could get a combined bonus of \$90,000.

The lateral move initiative may not be coupled with any of the fiscal year's four "kicker" bonuses, including the early reenlistment incentive.

First-term riflemen, machine gunners, mortar men, assaultmen or anti-tank gunners who accept the terms for transfer into the infantry squad leader specialty as part of the Squad Leader Development Program are also not eligible for the 72-month lateral move bonus. They are eligible for the primary specialty bonus of \$54,000 for corporals and \$57,000 for sergeants and above.

A second program that aims at retaining ground combat Marines to serve as infantry squad leaders offers a \$20,000 kicker for first-term Marine riflemen who reenlist for 48 months and agree to stay at a certain unit for at least 75% of their second term.

Assaultmen in the 0351 specialty, which the Corps is phasing out, are also eligible for the 0311 rifleman specialty's reenlistment bonus — up to \$8,000 — and the \$20,000 kicker.

Marines in some aviation and air traffic control fields with certain qualifications can also earn kickers of up to \$20,000 in addition to any reenlistment bonus offered for their job field, the bulletin said.

Navy honors those who helped save USS McCain after collision

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Fifty USS John S. McCain sailors have been recognized for bravery and damage control efforts two years after the destroyer's deadly collision with a commercial vessel near Singapore.

Seven crew members who attended a ceremony aboard the ship Wednesday were presented with medals by U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. John Aquilino and 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer, a Navy statement said.

"To commemorate on this ship what these men and women did is both notable and fitting, because the memory of their

actions represents the toughness and pride of our Navy," Aquilino said, according to the statement. "It also helps remind the next generation of Sailors the moral character, personal sacrifice, and selfless commitment required to not give up the ship."

Confusion among watch-standers on the night of Aug. 21, 2017, led to a loss of steering control and the ship crossed in front of a commercial tanker, which slammed into a berthing area on the McCain's port side, killing 10 sailors. It was the second of two fatal collisions involving 7th Fleet ships that summer.

The ship spent 11 months in dry dock at Yokosuka undergoing repairs before it moved to the base pier in November.

Wash. growling at Navy over added flights

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Washington state sued the Navy on Tuesday over its expansion of jet operations on an island north of Seattle, saying officials failed to adequately consider the effect that additional noisy flights would have on people or wildlife.

“The Navy has an important job, and it’s critical that their pilots and crews have the opportunity to train,” Attorney General Bob Ferguson said in a news release announcing the lawsuit. “That does not relieve the federal government of its obligation to follow the law and

avoid unnecessary harm to our health and natural resources.”

The Navy’s public affairs office said it does not comment on litigation.

The Navy in March authorized the expansion of its Growler program by up to three dozen jets, adding to the 82 already based on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle.

The low-flying jets conduct electronic warfare to jam enemy communications and launch systems, and under the expansion plans crews would perform around 100,000 take-offs and landings a year for the next three decades.

That, Ferguson said, could have serious effects on nearby residents. The state Health Department has outlined how exposure to noise levels similar to those at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island could disrupt children’s learning and cause sleep disturbance, cognitive impairment and cardiovascular disease.

It could also disrupt the feeding and breeding of eagles and marbled murrelets, a type of seabird.

In the news release, Quinault Indian Nation President Fawn Sharp called on the federal government to strike a balance between national security and

environmental preservation.

“Unregulated, unrestrained noise pollution from increased military training operations presents a clear threat to the health and solitude of our state’s fragile ecosystems, treaty-protected resources and endangered species,” she said.

In its decision to approve the expansion plan, the Navy said the number of flights on the island would be comparable to those that occurred from the 1970s through the 1990s. It also said it would continue to invest in technologies to reduce engine and aircraft noise.

DOD spent \$1.2M to support Trump July 4 event on Mall

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — It cost the Pentagon about \$1.2 million to fly aircraft and set up armored vehicles in support of the president’s “Salute to America” event on the National Mall on July Fourth.

The Independence Day celebration raised concerns in the days leading up to the event partly due to its unknown costs to the military and the potential for political remarks by President Donald Trump during his speech.

The funding for the flying demonstrations came from the military services’ own training budgets designated for flying hours, “which are imperative to military readiness,” according to a Pentagon statement released Tuesday.

Aircraft from each military service flew over the event during parts of Trump’s speech in which he spoke of historical events regarding the United States and its armed services. A military band played each service’s song as their aircraft flew over the crowd standing at the Lincoln Memorial.

Additional funding was also used to transport two M1A2

Abrams tanks and two M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles from the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga., which were used as static displays near the memorial.

“The Department of Defense has a long history of showcasing military assets to the country in order to recognize our military’s contributions to the safety and security of the nation, and to assist in recruiting future generations of service-members,” the Pentagon statement says.

The Pentagon also listed similar flyover demonstrations by the military services. The aerial demonstration performances by the Navy’s Blue Angels and the Air Force’s Thunderbirds squadron had the biggest costs on the comparison list. The Blue Angels’ estimated cost was \$36 million in fiscal year 2019, and the Thunderbirds’ estimated cost was \$35 million in 2018.

Several Navy Fleet Week events, which occur at port cities across the country, were also listed as comparison events. The costliest in 2017 were in Los Angeles at \$1.6 million, San Francisco at \$1.8 million and New York at \$2.5 million with the inclusion of fuel costs.

Navy’s Spencer could be next acting defense chief

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Navy Secretary Richard Spencer could become the third acting defense secretary since January if President Donald Trump officially nominates Mark Esper for the top job at the Pentagon, defense officials said Tuesday.

Trump announced June 21 that he intended to nominate Esper, now the acting defense secretary, to be his next defense secretary, sparking questions whether the Senate-confirmed Army secretary could retain his acting role and still be the candidate for the post permanently.

Defense officials told reporters at the Pentagon that Esper can’t do both under the law. Once the Senate receives the Esper nomination, he must immediately step down as acting defense secretary and return to his previously confirmed position as Army secretary as mandated by the Federal Vacancies Act.

The Pentagon has been without a confirmed secretary of defense since its former leader, Jim Mattis, left office in early January. Since then, the De-

fense Department has been developing plans for how it will facilitate the transition of the president’s intended pick into the top role at the Pentagon.

Once Esper steps down, the secretary of the next most senior service after the Army — in this case, Spencer — will step in as acting defense secretary while Esper goes through the Senate confirmation process, said Eric Chewning, chief of staff to Esper. Spencer will stay in that role until the next defense secretary is confirmed.

The Pentagon is expecting and is prepared for the nomination to be submitted “shortly” by the White House to the Senate, Chewning said. In the past two weeks, defense officials have conducted meetings with Spencer to get him prepared for the duties of acting defense secretary, including operational issues and planning.

Chewning said they have been working closely with Senate leadership and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

But Chewning said they “will not presume confirmation” of Esper, although Esper has already started to conduct office calls with senators ahead of his official nomination.

UK diplomat quits after leaked cables

Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's ambassador to the United States resigned Wednesday, just days after diplomatic cables criticizing President Donald Trump caused embarrassment to two countries that often celebrate having a "special relationship."

The resignation of Kim Darroch came after Trump lashed out at him on Twitter, describing the ambassador as "wacky" and a "pompous fool." The criticism followed leaked documents that revealed the envoy's dim view of Trump's administration, which he described as dysfunctional, inept and chaotic.

"Since the leak of official documents ... there has been a great deal of speculation surrounding my position and the duration

of my remaining term as ambassador," Darroch said in his resignation letter. "I want to put an end to that speculation. The current situation is making it impossible for me to carry out my role as I would like."

Prime Minister Theresa May said the resignation was "a matter of regret," underlining that "good government depends on public servants being able to give full and frank advice."

Darroch had been set to retire at the end of the year. It's unclear whether May will have time to replace Darroch before she leaves office later this month.

Though the matter had been brewing for days, Darroch made his decision the morning after a debate between the two contenders to replace May as party leader and

prime minister, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt.

Hunt, who is Britain's foreign secretary, had vowed to keep Darroch in the post, but Johnson pointedly did not.

"I think it's very important we should have a close partnership, a close friendship with the United States," Johnson said.

Darroch's forthright, unfiltered views on the U.S. administration — meant for a limited audience and discreet review — appeared in leaked diplomatic documents that were published in Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper.

British officials are hunting for the culprit behind the leak, which was both an embarrassment to May's government and a major breach of diplomatic security.

Nev. death may be linked to Calif. quake

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A powerful July 4 earthquake in the Southern California desert may have killed a man in neighboring Nevada, authorities said Tuesday.

It would be the first death linked to the magnitude 6.4 quake near Ridgecrest that was felt far and wide.

The Nye County Sheriff's Department said deputies on Tuesday found a 56-year-old man pinned under a Jeep in

Pahrump, about 150 miles from the quake's epicenter.

The man was last seen alive at a local gas station the day before the earthquake.

It is believed the man was working on the Jeep, which apparently fell off of its jacks when the quake hit, Sgt. Adam Tippetts said.

The man's name wasn't immediately released.

No other deaths or serious injuries have been linked to the quake or to a magnitude 7.1

temblor that struck the same Mojave Desert area on Friday.

The quakes buckled highways, cracked buildings and ruptured gas lines that sparked several house fires.

A sprawling Navy base near Ridgecrest remained closed to nonessential personnel Tuesday as the military worked to determine damage.

Teams had so far surveyed just 10% of the 1,200 facilities at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, spokeswoman

Margo Allen said. It was unclear when personnel and their families will be able to return.

Water and gas service had been restored at the base, but engineers were ensuring buildings were safe to enter. The shaking cracked walls in a chapel and school and brought down commissary shelves, Allen said.

"Everything came off the walls. There's a lot of cleaning up that still has to happen," she said.

China urges US to scrap Taiwan arms sale

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

China is demanding that the United States scrap a plan to sell more than \$2 billion worth of military hardware, including M1A2 Abrams tanks and Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, to Taiwan.

Such a deal violates international law, norms of international relations and the "One China" policy and interferes in China's internal affairs, undermining the nation's sovereignty and security, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters Tuesday, according to the state-run Global Times newspaper.

Under "One China," the U.S. acknowledges Beijing's view that it has sovereignty

over Taiwan but considers its status as unsettled. The island split from the mainland in 1949 and is self-governing.

"The Chinese side is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to the U.S. plan to sell arms to Taiwan," Geng said. "We have lodged stern representations with the U.S. side on this."

He called on the U.S. to "immediately cancel" the deal before it harms the countries' ties and peace and stability in the region.

The sale could include 254 Stingers, 108 Abrams tanks and hundreds of machine guns, ammunition and other equipment, according to statements by the Pentagon's Defense Security and Cooperation Agency

announcing the State Department's assent to the deal Monday. It is worth more than \$2 billion.

The move comes as the U.S. and China clash over trade and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

The U.S. supports peaceful reunification of the island with the mainland but is committed to helping Taiwan defend itself if it is attacked, according to Carl Baker, executive director of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii.

U.S. Navy ships have transited the Taiwan Strait eight times in the past year, moves that draw strong protests from Beijing. France and Canada have also sent ships through the strait.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mayflower replica to help mark anniversary

MA BOSTON — A replica of the Mayflower will be sailing to Boston as part of the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing in Massachusetts.

Organizers said the Mayflower II will be on display at the Charlestown Navy Yard on May 14-19 and visitors will have an opportunity to board the ship for free.

The vessel has been undergoing an \$11.2 million restoration at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut since 2016.

The full-scale replica ship was built in England in the 1950s.

Circus dog found safe after vanishing

DE SMYRNA — A circus dog that vanished during a Fourth of July performance in Delaware was found safe and returned to its owners.

Delaware State News reported 3-year-old Pierre was found near the Smyrna park where he disappeared.

Zebrini Family Circus spokeswoman Margaret Valencia said Pierre isn't one to wander, and he wouldn't have been scared off by loud noises or large crowds.

The circus had to move on before Pierre was found, but he was reunited with it in Massachusetts.

Police: Woman threw snake in carjacking

SC GREENVILLE — Police said a woman stole a vehicle after throwing a nonpoisonous snake at the driver, then crashed through barriers

set up for a pole vaulting exhibition in a South Carolina city.

In a news release, Greenville Police identified the suspect as Hilmary Moreno-Berrios, 29.

Authorities allege Moreno-Berrios demanded a woman's keys and threw a live black snake at her. They said she then drove the stolen SUV into barriers set up for the Liberty Bridge Jump-Off.

Moreno-Berrios was charged with carjacking, malicious damage to property and five traffic violations.

Sheriff's K-9 spooked by fireworks is found

NC CONCORD — A North Carolina sheriff's office said one of its K-9s that ran from its handler when some fireworks went off nearby was found safe.

The Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office said Igor was outside with his handler and without a leash. Chief Deputy James Bailey said that at the time some fireworks went off near the handler's home and Igor ran away despite the handler's verbal commands.

The sheriff's office said on its Facebook page that a person going to work in Concord found the dog about a mile away from where he ran off.

Naked man injured in jump from pickup

CT WILTON — Police in Connecticut said a naked man was seriously injured when he jumped out of the back of a moving pickup.

Wilton police said John Rodas, 34, of Gardiner, N.Y., was taken to a hospital with a life-threatening head injury after the incident. His condition was not released.

The pickup driver told offi-

cers a naked man jumped into the back of his truck after unsuccessfully trying to open the locked doors. Police said the man later jumped out of the truck while it was moving.

Police trying to find peacock's owner

NH NEWTON — Anyone missing a pet peacock?

Police in Newton said they found the peacock Sunday. He was walking around residents' yards and perched on their porches or railings in town and in neighboring Plaistow.

Police said some people called and said they felt trapped inside their homes, so an animal control officer brought him in.

A tongue-in-cheek Facebook post said the peacock was "terrorizing" residents.

Man accused of biting off woman's finger

AL HUNTSVILLE — An Alabama man was arrested after police said he bit off a woman's finger during a fight.

News outlets reported that Shay Michael Thome, 48, of Huntsville was arrested and charged with first-degree assault.

Police said the victim knows Thome's wife. Some men tackled Thome after the woman was bitten.

Police probe violent Disneyland fight

CA LOS ANGELES — A video capturing a family's violent fight at Disneyland has prompted police to reopen their investigation into the brawl and may result in charges.

Anaheim Police Sgt. Daron

Wyatt said officers were called to the theme park to help break up the melee, which began between a brother and sister and quickly involved other family members.

Wyatt said the family members declined to cooperate with authorities and were escorted off Disneyland property. Police are working with the city attorney's office to see if any charges should be filed.

Authorities: Crash sends pig parts flying

IL GENEVA — Authorities said an intersection in an unincorporated area of northern Illinois was closed for eight hours after a crash involving two semi-trucks sent pig carcasses across the road.

Kane County Undersheriff Pat Gengler told The (Crystal Lake) Northwest Herald that the crash happened in unincorporated Plato Township, which is roughly 50 miles outside Chicago.

He said there were about 14,000 pounds of pig parts across Route 47 at Plank Road.

Police: Boy, 9, stole car and crashed

NE GRAND ISLAND — Police cited a 9-year-old boy who officers said stole a car, lost control of it and crashed into a Grand Island house.

A neighbor reported the car stolen. Police spotted it but didn't start a chase. The car went out of control and ran through several yards before hitting the house.

Police said the boy wasn't hurt and refused to get out of the car. Officers who broke in and took him out said he spit on them and used racial slurs.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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Pitchers dominate MLB All-Star Game

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — For one night, the pitchers took back the power.

Hours after an awesome Home Run Derby got everyone buzzing even louder about monster shots and juiced balls, only a couple flew out of Progressive Field on Tuesday.

Instead, Justin Verlander blazed 97 mph heat, Shane Bieber and Aroldis Chapman each struck out the side and the American League slowed a loaded NL lineup 4-3 for its seventh straight win in the All-Star Game.

"I know it's the year of the home run, but pitching dominated today," Colorado slugger Nolan Arenado said.

Sure did — at least until play resumes Thursday.

Facing Christian Yelich, Cody Bellinger and a bunch of boppers, the AL staff combined to strike out 16.

"Baseball is a funny game," said Bieber, a most unlikely MVP after being added late to the roster.

With fans hoping to see a replay of Monday's jaw-dropping aerial show when 312 homers

cleared the walls, this became the Arm-Star Game up until the late innings.

Derby champ Pete Alonso of the Mets grounded a two-out, two-run single past Gleyber Torres in the eighth to close the NL's gap. After a double steal put runners at second and third against Cleveland reliever Brad Hand, White Sox catcher James McCann made a tumbling catch on Mike Moustakas' twisting foul pop to end the inning.

Chapman closed to give the AL its 19th win in 22 games, with a tie stuck in there. He got a little encouragement with two outs — Yankees teammate CC Sabathia, honored this week for his contributions on and off the field, strolled to the mound to talk to the flamethrower.

Chapman then struck out Yasmani Grandal for a save, giving the AL an overall 45-43-2 lead in the Midsummer Classic.

No need, either, for the experimental rule that was set to go into effect: If the game went into extras, each team would've started the 10th with an automatic runner on second base.

Major League Baseball is on a record-shattering pace for homers this season, but no one came close to clearing the walls until Charlie Blackmon connected in the NL sixth to make it 2-1. Texas' Joey Gallo countered with a solo drive in a two-run seventh.

Still, it was a far cry from last year's All-Star Game that featured a record 10 home runs.

"I kind of expected it, to be honest," former NL MVP Kris Bryant said. "You only see them once, so they have the advantage."

"There are a lot of hard throwers and great pitchers over there. Unless you've seen them before, it's a difficult matchup," he said.

Cleveland favorite Michael Brantley had an early RBI double off losing pitcher Clayton Kershaw. Jorge Polanco drove in a run with an infield single for a 2-0 edge in the fifth and another scored on a double-play grounder.

"I wanted to swing the bat early. I had some nervous jitters I wanted to get out," Brantley said.

Winning pitcher Masahiro

Tanaka, Lucas Giolito and Shane Greene did their parts to protect the lead with scoreless innings.

Bieber dazzled in front of a chanting home crowd, striking out Willson Contreras, Ketel Marte and Ronald Acuna Jr. in the fifth with a 1-0 lead.

"It was electric out there, the fans got in it and it was fun," AL manager Alex Cora of the Red Sox said. "And I'm glad that he got the MVP. He plays at this level. He's really good."

The biggest misplay of the night might have been on the scoreboard. NL All-Stars David Dahl of Colorado and Willson Contreras of the Cubs had their names misspelled — "Davis Dahl" and "Wilson Contreras" — on the outfield videoboard. Jeff McNeil was spelled correctly, but the photo accompanying it was of Mets teammate Jacob deGrom.

"That was tough, to see deGrom's picture up there," McNeil said. "I didn't really like that. I wanted to see my picture up there. I know my family did, too. What are you going to do, I guess, but I don't think that should happen."

Carrasco, MVP Bieber help host Cleveland shine

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Michael Brantley came back, took a well-deserved bow and delivered like always. Shane Bieber pitched a perfect inning and took home an MVP trophy and a shiny new pickup truck.

Carlos Carrasco stood up to cancer.

On an idyllic night for baseball, Cleveland connections shined brightest at the All-Star Game.

Even Sandy Alomar Jr., whose storybook home run the last time the game was played at Progressive Field in 1997 made him an MVP and local legend, enjoyed another moment on the star-studded stage.

And then Bieber matched him, winning MVP honors

after striking out the side in the fifth as the AL staff combined for 16 strikeouts in a 4-3 win over the NL and returned pitching to prominence a night after Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Pete Alonso and Joc Pederson knocked balls over Progressive Field's walls with stunning ease.

"It's an incredible feeling now, now that it's kind of sinking in," Bieber said. "Just to be able to do it in front of the home crowd and my first All-Star Game is definitely not something I expected, especially being added to the game four or five days ago."

Bieber was a late All-Star injury replacement, only added Friday to give the Indians four representatives.

The 23-year-old, who soared through Cleveland's minor league system and won 11 games as a rookie in 2018, showed a veteran's poise in the fifth when he fanned Chicago's Willson Contreras, Arizona's Ketel Marte and Atlanta's Ronald Acuna Jr. in succession while protecting a 1-0 lead.

The crowd chanted "Let's Go Bieber," during his performance, and it's an anthem that will likely be heard each time he takes the mound going forward.

"Kind of stepped off the back of the mound after one of the pitches and wasn't totally able to look up and see everything, just because there was so much going on, but I heard everything and really soaked it all

in," Bieber said. "I can't really thank the fans enough for creating that moment for me and making it really special."

While Bieber's unexpected MVP put a perfect cap on Cleveland's magical night — in fact, he donated his hat to the Hall of Fame — Carrasco's appearance served as the most poignant moment.

The 32-year-old was recently diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia, and during Major League Baseball's "Stand Up to Cancer" campaign, Carrasco stood in the third-base coach's box, flanked by his teammates and Indians manager Terry Francona.

Carrasco held a sign that read "I Stand" while Lindor's said: "Cookie," the pitcher's nickname.

Federer, Nadal to meet in Wimbledon semis

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Novak Djokovic used a 10-game run to transform what was shaping up as an even, entertaining Wimbledon quarterfinal into a lopsided romp.

“I felt,” Djokovic would say later, “like I managed to dismantle his game.”

That’s a pretty accurate description of what happened Wednesday at Centre Court.

Down an early break, the defending champion grabbed control midway through the opening set Wednesday and never let go, overwhelming the 21st-seeded David Goffin 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 to reach his ninth semifinal at the All England Club.

“He was everywhere,” Goffin said.

On Friday, the No. 1-seeded Djokovic will face No. 23 Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain, a first-time Grand Slam semifinalist.

Bautista Agut is supposed to be on the island of Ibiza right now, having a bachelor party with a half-dozen pals ahead of his November wedding, but instead he will play on after beating No. 26 Guido Pella of Argentina 7-5, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

“Well,” the 31-year-old Bautista Agut said, “it feels better to be here in London.”

Djokovic is seeking his fifth

Wimbledon championship and 17th Grand Slam trophy overall.

In the quarterfinals on the other side of the draw, Roger Federer won his 100th match at Wimbledon, and it put the eight-time champion into his 13th semifinal at the All England Club.

Federer was broken in his opening service game but didn’t have much trouble after that, beating eighth-seeded Kei Nishikori 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

Federer is the first player to win 100 matches at one Grand Slam tournament. His overall record at the grass-court Grand Slam in 100-12.

In the semifinals, Federer will face Rafael Nadal for the first time since their classic 2008 Wimbledon final.

Nadal set up a much-anticipated rematch by beating Sam Querrey 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 in the quarterfinals.

Federer and Nadal met in three straight finals between 2006-08, with Federer winning the first two before Nadal triumphed in a five-set epic widely considered one of the best matches of all time.

Against Querrey, Nadal was broken when serving for the first set at 5-4. But he converted his fourth break point in the next game, then saved three break points at 6-5 before

finally clinching the set. The next two sets weren’t nearly as competitive as Nadal broke twice in each and converted his first match point with a forehand winner.

Goffin started well enough against Djokovic on an afternoon that was humid and sunny, with the temperature in the mid-70s.

Hoping to reach his first major semifinal, Goffin claimed three of the first four points that lasted at least 10 strokes. He won the pair’s most recent encounter, on clay in 2017, and this looked a bit like it was being contested on that slower surface, too.

Goffin was able to hang in there at the baseline and his on-the-run passing shots were dialed in. He nosed ahead after 33 minutes by breaking to go up 4-3, then jogged to the sideline with a raised fist.

Until then, Goffin was playing crisply and cleanly. He hadn’t faced so much as one break point against Djokovic, generally considered the top returner in the game.

“He was dictating the play from the baseline,” Djokovic said afterward. “Most of the rallies went his way.”

But that’s when everything changed.

Djokovic did to Goffin exactly what he does to so many men

on so many surfaces and at so many tournaments: He takes their best shot, deals with it and then wears them down.

“I sincerely hope that my opponent feels like he’s got to work twice as (hard as) against any other opponent to win a point,” Djokovic said.

Serving at 30-love in the very next game, Goffin double-faulted. Then he flubbed a forehand. After limiting himself to three unforced errors through the match’s initial 49 points, the Belgian made two in a row. The next point was an odd one involving a late line call and a challenge by Goffin, who lost it and faced his first break point.

Djokovic couldn’t convert that one, but moments later, Goffin sent a forehand wide to set up a second. This time, Djokovic ended a 20-stroke exchange with a drop volley winner. And soon enough, he was on his way, sliding or doing the splits along the baseline to get to balls few others would, bending his body this way and that to repeatedly force Goffin to hit an extra shot.

It’s a dispiriting brand of tennis, and it was too much for Goffin. He would wind up going about 50 minutes until he managed to win another game.

Daly out of British Open with medical issue

Associated Press

John Daly is free to ride a cart during the week of the British Open — just not at Royal Portrush.

Daly’s manager said Tuesday he is likely to play the Barbasol Championship next week in Kentucky, and the two-time major champion with osteoarthritis in his right knee already has been granted a cart to use in the PGA Tour event.

Andy Pazder, the chief tournaments and competition officer for the PGA Tour, said Daly late last year was approved to use a cart through 2019 at PGA Tour events and PGA Tour Champions events that require walking.

Daly, who has not played a regular PGA

Tour event since The Greenbrier last summer, also is contemplating the Barracuda Championship in Reno, Nev., the following week.

The R&A announced Tuesday that Daly had withdrawn from the British Open “due to a medical condition.”

The nature of that condition — be it his arthritic knee or a spider bite — was not entirely clear.

Daly has been dealing with arthritis in his knee, and he says he also was diagnosed as diabetic. That led him to request a cart for the PGA Championship at Bethpage Black under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which the PGA of America approved after Daly submitted the required

medical information.

The R&A rejected his request for a cart over the weekend, saying it felt walking was an integral part of the tournament. “We must also ensure, as far as possible, the challenge is the same for all players in the field,” it said.

Pulling out of the British Open, however, might also be linked to a social media post from Daly on Sunday.

In a Twitter note, Daly said he was on vacation in England last week when he was bitten by a spider without realizing it. He was taken to an emergency room on Friday and taken straight into surgery to remove a major infection in his abdominal area. He says he also was treated for early sepsis from a brown recluse.

Silver seeks changes to NBA Draft trades

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wants the hat game fixed.

Mindful that it was awkward for draft picks this year who were selected by one team and had already been traded to another — but because of league rules, were unable to be introduced by their actual franchise for more than two weeks — Silver said a discussion at the league's board of governors meeting Tuesday was about how to change that going forward.

Several ideas are under discussion, including changing the rules about how and when draft-night trades can be announced. It could be earlier next season and not necessarily attached to the early July end to the moratorium on trades and certain signings.

"We've got to fix that," Silver said.

First-round draft picks were issued hats to wear on stage at the draft, corresponding with the team that chose them. De'Andre Hunter went No. 4

overall, taken by the Los Angeles Lakers. His rights had been traded twice — first to New Orleans as part of the Anthony Davis deal, then to Atlanta. But since neither of those trades could be closed before July 6, Hunter wore a Lakers cap on stage.

"We talk about being fan-friendly, and that isn't fan-friendly," Silver said.

There are plenty of changes that will be under consideration in the next few months, including one about the rules regarding the start to the negotiating period for free agents. Silver said that was also a topic among the board of governors on Tuesday.

For the draft-night-traded players, it's about more than the hats. Because some draftees couldn't be part of their franchises before July 6, they were assured of missing the start of NBA Summer League. It cost a few players the chance to play in summer league at all, which disappointed many of them.

That won't be an issue next year, with Summer League in Las Vegas scheduled to begin

on July 10, 2020, and long after the NBA's new league year is likely to begin. So any draft pick that gets traded on draft night should, in theory, be with their actual team in plenty of time to take part in summer contests.

But this year, it was an issue. "I was really disappointed," Phoenix rookie Ty Jerome said.

Former North Carolina forward Cam Johnson wound up with Phoenix after being drafted No. 11 by Minnesota. By the time the draft could be executed, the Suns felt it was too late to put Johnson and Jerome — the No. 24 pick whose rights were traded twice on his way to Phoenix — on the floor for summer league.

So they remained in a very cautious state of limbo for a couple of weeks, because an injury could have potentially derailed any trades.

"The one thing I was told was just to lay low," Johnson said. "As much as I wanted to go out there, I wanted to play pickup, I was back at Carolina for a week and there were alumni games

and all that I didn't really take part in because I was told to lay low — which I did. A lot of court workouts, a little one-on-one every now and then, a lot of lifting, staying under the radar but continuing to work."

Atlanta general manager Travis Schlenk said he thought this year was an outlier on the picks-being-traded front, simply because of how many teams found themselves in situations where moves were possible.

The Hawks introduced their draft picks, Hunter and Bruno Fernando, in Las Vegas over this past weekend instead of in Atlanta, because both were draft picks whose rights were held up in trades until the moratorium was lifted and swaps could be finalized.

"It's a hard situation, because you don't have their rights even though everyone kind of knows it," Schlenk said. "I'm sure the league will look into it to see what they can do. They take, obviously, tampering and salary-cap circumvention and trying to get around it very seriously, so I'm sure they will take a look at it."

Fans cheer World Cup champs as leaders on, off field

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Adoring fans lined New York City's Canyon of Heroes on Wednesday to praise the World Cup-winning U.S. women's national soccer team as athletic leaders on the field — and as advocates for pay equity off it.

Construction workers sounded air horns above crowds chanting "USA! USA!" as the hourlong parade moved up a stretch of lower Broadway that has long hosted so-called ticker tape parades for world leaders, veterans and hometown sports stars.

Co-captain Megan Rapinoe and her teammates shared a float with Mayor Bill de Blasio and U.S. Soccer Federation president Carlos Cordeiro. Rapinoe struck her now-fa-

mous victory pose, took a swig of Champagne and handed the bottle to a fan. Goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher held the World Cup trophy aloft.

Aly Hoover, 12, of Glen Ridge, N.J., stood at the sidelines with a poster of the face of Alex Morgan, another team star. "I just want to be like them," she said.

Garret Prather brought his newborn son "to celebrate how the American women made us proud on and off the field."

The team sealed its second consecutive tournament win by beating the Netherlands 2-0 on Sunday. It will get \$4 million for winning the World Cup from FIFA, the international soccer governing body. The men's French team got \$38 million for winning last year.

The U.S. women's team has

sued the U.S. Soccer Federation for gender and pay discrimination. The women will get bonuses about five times less from the USSF than the men would have earned for winning the World Cup. The case is currently in mediation.

Kate Lane, who watched the parade, called the pay gap "massive" for the soccer players and "across the board" for most women.

"Especially in male-dominated professions," said Lane, of Limerick, Ireland. "Women put just as much commitment into their work as their male counterparts."

She's hopeful the younger generation is soaking up the message from the women's team, noting a girl about 7 years old wearing an "Equal Pay" T-shirt.

Earlier Wednesday, team members joined New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, as he signed a law expanding gender pay equality in the state. He said women's soccer players should be paid the same as male players.

Sen. Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat, introduced a bill Tuesday that would bar federal funding for the men's 2026 World Cup until the U.S. Soccer Federation provides equal pay to the women's and men's teams.

At the rally, Rapinoe noted the diversity of the team: "We have pink hair and purple hair, we have tattoos and dreadlocks, we have white girls and black girls and everything in between. Straight girls and gay girls."