

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## SEAL platoon ordered home for misconduct

By CHAD GARLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

A commander overseeing U.S. special operations troops battling Islamic State in Iraq has ordered a SEAL platoon to return to San Diego early after a “perceived deterioration of good order and discipline,” the military said late Wednesday.

The commander of Special Operations Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve made the order, U.S. Special Operations Command said in a statement.

“The Commander lost confidence in the team’s ability to accomplish the mission,” the statement said.

Commanders have already made efforts to mitigate the operational impact of the redeployment, SOCOM said.

Two defense officials with knowledge of the issue told The Washington Post that SEALs had been drinking alcohol in viola-

tion of General Order No. 1. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The unit, which one of the officials said is part of SEAL Team 7, was under investigation, both defense officials said. It’s not clear whether they could face criminal charges or administrative punishment, the Post reported.

U.S.-backed Iraqi security forces and other paramilitary groups are in the midst of an operation, dubbed “Will of Victory,” to clear remnants of ISIS from an area north of Baghdad and surrounding areas in the Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar provinces.

Iraq declared victory against ISIS in July 2017, but the terrorist group has transformed into an insurgency that continues to conduct deadly attacks in the country.

The apparent breakdown in discipline within the elite Navy team, which the statement said occurred “during non-op-

erational periods,” comes in the wake of the court-martial of SEAL Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, who was acquitted of murder charges in the 2017 killing of a wounded Islamic State captive under his care in Iraq.

The military jury also cleared Gallagher of attempted murder in the shootings of two civilians and all other charges except for posing for photos with the body of the dead captive.

The trial was one of the Navy’s most high-profile war crimes cases and had drawn support for Gallagher from President Donald Trump and dozens of Republican lawmakers.

It was one of several cases in recent months that have drawn scrutiny on the special operations communities that have borne the strain of a high operational tempo over more than 17 years of war in the Middle East.

## North Korea test-fires 2 new ballistic missiles

By KIM GAMEL  
AND YOO KYONG CHANG

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — Upping the ante over stalled nuclear talks, North Korea test-fired two new ballistic missiles into the sea off its eastern coast on Thursday, the South said as it expressed “strong concern.”

It was the first launch since President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un agreed to resume working-level negotiations that the United States hopes will persuade the communist state to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Earlier this month, the North warned it may restart testing in its nuclear weapons program amid its frustration over the deadlock and anger over joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises expected to take place next month.

Kim also was shown inspecting a new submarine in photos released Wednesday on state-run media.

North Korea fired the missiles about 20 minutes apart from the Hodo peninsula north of Wonsan, which has been the site of past launches into the sea, the military

said, adding that the first one flew about 260 miles and the second more than 428 miles.

The missiles, which were presumed to have been launched from a truck known as a transporter erector launcher, both reached an altitude of some 32 miles, according to the South’s Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Details trickled out throughout the day. On Thursday afternoon, President Moon Jae-in’s national security council issued a statement saying its initial analysis shows the projectiles were “a new type of short-range ballistic missile.”

It promised a final judgment after a detailed joint assessment with the United States.

“The committee expressed strong concern that such actions by North Korea are not helpful to the efforts of alleviating military tensions on the Korean Peninsula,” the statement said.

North Korea also fired two short-range missiles along with multiple rocket launcher systems in early May.

Kim agreed to suspend nuclear and long-range missile tests last year as diplomacy gained momentum. He didn’t say anything

about short-range missiles, although all ballistic missile activity is banned under U.N. Security Council resolutions that impose economic sanctions against the North.

Trump expressed little concern about the May launch. He met with Kim about two months later in an impromptu encounter in the truce village on the heavily fortified border that divides the Korean Peninsula.

Trump said the two leaders agreed to resume working-level negotiations to break the deadlock that followed their February summit in Vietnam, which collapsed without an agreement due to sharp differences over sanctions relief.

No date has been set.

Melissa Hanham, deputy director of the Open Nuclear Network program, said the missiles fired Thursday fit the same profile as those launched in May, which appeared to be a version of Russia’s Iskander missile.

The missiles were likely solid-fuel and nuclear-capable and could threaten large populations as well as U.S. forces stationed in South Korea, she said in a telephone interview.

# Another warship transits Taiwan Strait

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy has sent yet another ship through the Taiwan Strait in what so far this year is an almost monthly event, according to Bloomberg News.

The cruiser USS Antietam on Wednesday and Thursday sailed through the 110-mile-wide strait that separates mainland China from the island, which Beijing regards as a breakaway province. The U.S. considers Taiwan's status unsettled but adheres to the "One China" policy, acknowledging that China asserts sovereignty over Taiwan.

Seventh Fleet officials did not respond to requests for comment Thursday.

China regularly protests Taiwan Strait transits and asserts foreign vessels must first ask permission before sailing through, but international law considers the strait an open waterway.

Seventh Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss said in a statement the strait transit "demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," according to the Bloomberg report Thursday.

"The U.S. Navy will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows," he said, according to Bloomberg. The statement is the standard response to

post-transit requests for comment.

Also Wednesday, prior to the Antietam's transit, Beijing in a white paper on national defense complained of "the U.S. illegal entry into China's territorial waters and maritime and air spaces near relevant islands and reefs, and wide-range and frequent close-in reconnaissance."

The white paper, published by China's State Council Information Office, referred to U.S. passage through waters claimed by China as "wrong practices and provocative activities." Navy vessels on freedom of navigation operations regularly pass close to island chains claimed by China in the South China Sea.

## Marines reach target strength in Darwin

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

BRISBANE, Australia — The U.S. rotational force in Darwin, growing since the first Marines arrived there in 2012, has reached its target strength, Australia's Defence Ministry announced Thursday.

"The Marine Rotational Force-Darwin reached a major milestone this week with the arrival of additional US Marines in Darwin, bringing the total number of Marines in the Northern Territory to its full

strength of 2,500," the ministry said in a statement.

The number was set by former President Barack Obama when he announced the rotational force's creation during a visit to Darwin in November 2011.

The force, which trains in Australia for six months during the southern hemisphere summer, has built up slowly since an initial contingent of 250 Marines hit the beach there in 2012.

Members of the force have been participating in this

month's Talisman Sabre exercise, which has included 34,000 U.S. and Australian servicemembers.

The Darwin rotation is being boosted by a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, platoon for the first time, 1st Lt. Colin Kennard, a spokesman for the rotational force, said in an email Thursday.

Also added to the rotation is an infantry battalion — 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment — out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii; a detachment of

Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 1 based at Camp Pendleton, Calif.; and a shock trauma platoon from 3rd Medical Battalion out of Okinawa, Japan, Kennard said.

The U.S. military is not necessarily looking to further increase the number of U.S. personnel in Australia, according to Air Force Col. Raymond Powell, a defense attache based in Canberra.

In addition to the rotational force, another 225 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Australia, Powell said.

## US looks to Greece for more Mediterranean troop rotations

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — The United States wants to increase troop rotations into Greece and gain more access to bases that can facilitate missions stretching from the eastern Mediterranean into the Black Sea and Balkans, America's top diplomat in Athens said.

U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt said Washington and Athens are working on updating a long-standing defense cooperation agreement to en-

able a wider range of military missions.

Currently, the U.S. military agreement with Greece is centered on operations at the U.S. Navy's base at Souda Bay. However, there is little room for growth at that long-standing military hub, Pyatt said.

"Souda Bay is pretty much full," Pyatt told Greece's Kathimerini newspaper in an interview published Monday.

Pyatt said Greece has many other military facilities that are "under-utilized" and could play a larger role.

Pyatt's comments coincided

with a visit to Greece on Tuesday by U.S. European Command Gen. Tod Wolters, who held talks with Chief of Defense Gen. Christos Christodoulou on military ties between the two countries.

The push for a new defense cooperation arrangement with Greece comes as Athens seeks closer military ties with the U.S. Last year, Greece's defense minister invited the U.S. military to set up new bases in the country, citing locations in Larissa, Volos and Alexandroupoli.

The Pentagon has not indicated an interest in new bases

or in establishing a large permanent force in Greece. Instead, the emphasis has been on rotations.

Already, the U.S. is operating at sites beyond Souda Bay, including MQ-9 Reaper drones flying from Larissa. Rotational units, including Army combat aviation aircraft, have deployed to other parts of the country.

The collaboration with Greece comes at a time of increased regional tensions, with Athens at odds with Turkey and Russia boosting its military presence in the Mediterranean Sea.



## Fatal blasts rock Afghan capital as Dunford visits

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Three bombs exploded in the Afghan capital Thursday morning, killing at least 11 people, violence that coincided with a visit by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

No U.S. or coalition personnel were hurt in the separate blasts, NATO officials in Afghanistan said.

The attacks killed 11 civilians and wounded at least 45, said Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi, who added that at least one child was among the victims and that the death toll could rise.

At least eight of those killed were Mines and Petroleum Ministry employees, the ministry said in a statement.

A bomb attached to a vehicle carrying the ministry workers exploded, and soon after a suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up at the scene, Rahimi said.

Another suicide bomber detonated a car in eastern Kabul shortly afterward.

The bomb blasts occurred during Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford's visit to the capital, where he consulted with U.S., NATO and Afghan officials, the Pentagon said. His trip comes after the Afghan government called on the U.S. to clarify remarks made by President Donald Trump about the war.

## 16 Marines arrested at Camp Pendleton

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — An investigation has led to the arrest of 16 Marines following an investigation into human smuggling.

The Marine Corps said the arrests at Camp Pendleton, Calif., were carried out during a battalion formation Thursday morning at the base, north of San Diego.

The Marine Corps said in a news release that information gained after two Marines were arrested on human smuggling charges earlier this summer led to the arrests.

Officials say the Marines are accused of various illegal activities ranging from human smuggling to drug-related offenses. Another eight are being questioned about their alleged involvement in drug offense as part of a separate investigation.

The military says none of the Marines were involved in helping to enforce border security.

# USS Boxer is in Bahrain days after drone conflict

BY JOSHUA KARSTEN  
AND CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

MANAMA, Bahrain — The USS Boxer pulled into Bahrain's Khalifa bin Salman Port on Thursday for a visit, days after the amphibious assault ship made headlines for downing at least one Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Boxer's crew, roughly 2,000 sailors and Marines, are expected to rest and relax while in the kingdom, which lies across from Iran in the Persian Gulf. The command has not specified any activities while in port.

The ship reportedly engaged two drones as it transited to the Persian Gulf last week, taking defensive action against a fixed-wing drone that had flown "within a threatening range" on the morning of July 18. President Donald Trump, saying it was an Iranian drone, said it was destroyed after coming within about 1,000 yards of the vessel.

The ship may have taken out a second unmanned aircraft during the incident, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, said to a CBS News reporter aboard the ship before its port call. The two engagements happened about an hour apart, he said, but he was only "confident" that one of the drones was brought down.

The drone was reportedly disabled by Marines of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the Boxer using an electronic

jamming device known as a Light Marine Air Defense Integrated System, or LMA-DIS, as manned and unmanned Iranian aircraft swooped in near the warship.

It is believed to be the first "kill" for the LMADIS, USNI News reported, and likely cost less than alternatives like missiles.

Tehran has disputed Washington's accounts, saying all of its drones in the region landed back at their bases that day. On Wednesday, Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami, head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps called for the U.S. to produce evidence of the downed drone.

Last week, Iranian state media published about six minutes of video surveillance footage purportedly taken by the drones, which it said proved Tehran's version of events. The clips, however, do not show the aircraft returning to base or landing.

The purported splashing of the drone comes about a month after Iranian forces shot down a U.S. military spy drone with a surface-to-air missile. U.S. officials claimed the drone was in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz, while Tehran claimed the drone had ventured into Iranian airspace. A chokepoint at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and a major thoroughfare for oil and other cargo, the narrow waterway has been at the center of tensions with Iran in recent months.

It was not immediately clear how long the Boxer will remain pierside. The Navy's 5th Fleet said only that it was a scheduled port call.

## British navy to escort ships through strait

*The Washington Post*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Britain has begun sending navy ships to accompany vessels traveling through the narrow Strait of Hormuz following the seizure of a British-flagged tanker by Iranian forces.

In a statement, Britain's Department of Defense said that "the Royal Navy has been tasked to accompany British-flagged ships through the Strait of Hormuz, either individually or in groups, should sufficient notice be given of their passage."

The HMS Montrose, a Royal Navy Type 23 frigate, became the first navy ship to offer an escort overnight on Wednesday into Thursday in the narrow waterway, Sky News reported Thursday, citing shipping industry sources.

Britain made the decision just days after the seizure by Iran's Revolutionary Guard

Corps of the Stena Impero, a British-flagged tanker, as it as it passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Friday. The seizure was widely interpreted as a tit-for-tat measure in response to British marines taking part in the seizure of an Iranian-flagged tanker near Gibraltar, a British overseas territory off the coast of Spain.

On Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani appeared to suggest that Tehran would consider releasing the Stena Impero if Britain released the Grace 1.

Britain has previously suggested that seizure of the Iranian tanker needed to be resolved by Gibraltar's courts and called on Iran to provide evidence that the tanker was not en route to Syria.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced Wednesday that the U.S. would also be sending its own escorts for U.S.-flagged ships in the region.

# Puerto Rican governor resigns amid protests

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rossello announced his resignation overnight, ceding power after nearly two weeks of furious protests and political upheaval touched off by a leak of crude and insulting chat messages between him and his top advisers.

A crowd of thousands outside the governor's mansion in Old San Juan erupted in cheers and song after his announcement on Facebook just before midnight on Wednesday.

"Despite expecting to serve the term that the people democratically elected me to, today I feel that continuing in this position represents a threat to the success we have achieved," a shaken looking Rossello said in an address in which he listed his accomplishments before making clear he will step down Aug. 2.

The 40-year-old Democrat and son of a governor, Rossello became the first chief executive to resign in the modern history of Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory of more than 3 million American citizens.

Justice Secretary Wanda Vazquez will assume the post more than halfway through Rossello's four-year term, becoming Puerto Rico's second female governor.

"It's historic, but we have to be cautious," designer Jalil Serrano said. "What will happen beyond this? There are concerns, but there is also hope."

Gesturing to the young crowd outside the mansion, he said. "This belongs to them."

Rossello's announcement — made amid threats of impeachment from lawmakers — came after a bizarre standoff unfolded in Old San Juan as the governor pledged to deliver a message to the people of Puerto Rico, then hour after hour passed in unex-

plained silence while thousands of protesters chanted demands for his resignation.

An announcement was first expected at 5 p.m., then finally came less than a half-hour before midnight. At one point, dozens of officers in full riot gear marched out of the governor's mansion toward protesters.

"We want peace, and they want war!" the crowd yelled.

The obscenity-laced online messages involving the governor and 11 other men infuriated Puerto Ricans already frustrated with corruption, mismanagement, economic crisis and the sluggish recovery from Hurricane Maria nearly two years ago. In reaction, tens of thousands took to the streets to demand Rossello's resignation in Puerto Rico's biggest demonstrations since the protests that put an end to U.S. Navy training on the island of Vieques more than 15 years ago.

## Board reinstates Naval Academy professor

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A U.S. Naval Academy professor who was removed by the academy after an investigation into his conduct in class was reinstated to his job by a federal board Wednesday.

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board ordered the reinstatement of Bruce Fleming with back pay within 20 days. The English professor was removed in August.

Administrative Judge Mark Syska wrote in the order that the primary witness in the case "had severe credulity issues." He also wrote that the purported victims in the case, who were students, "did not generally

take offense or have any actual issue with the appellant."

"Moreover, much of the charged conduct, as noted by the investigating panel, did not appear to be actual misconduct in the context of free-wheeling classroom discussions," Syska wrote.

Jason Ehrenberg, Fleming's attorney, said academy officials were trying to punish his client for criticizing the academy.

Cmdr. Alana Garas, an academy spokeswoman, said the Navy was reviewing the decision.

Fleming had been a civilian English professor at the academy since 1987.

Accusations against him included allow-

ing students to tell jokes of a sexual nature in class, discussing sexual matters in class, emailing partially clothed photos of himself to his students and touching students on the neck, shoulders and back in class without their consent.

Syska wrote that no one who received the photos appeared particularly offended by them, except for the primary complaining midshipman.

Syska also wrote that he was "hard pressed to find misconduct" in the touching allegations.

Syska described a complaining midshipman as being an 18-year-old who received the first C grade in his life from Fleming.

## Marines say free ride service not competing with taxis

By AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A volunteer program on Okinawa that provides servicemembers with free rides after a weekend night on the town is not meant to compete with local taxi drivers, a base commander said recently.

Created in March by Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Karl to help Marines without cars or a lot of spending money, Fidelis Rides provides free lifts on Friday

and Saturday nights to any servicemember who requests one. American Forces Network and the Social Networking Service Okinawa Facebook page have both publicized the service.

But a pair of local newspapers — the Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times — reported recently that "Y-plate taxi services" were taking business away from local taxi companies.

The all-volunteer service is not a money-making venture and is not meant to compete with local taxi services, said

Col. Vincent Ciuccoli, commander of Camp Foster and Camp Lester.

Marine Corps Installations Pacific in a July 12 Facebook post stated that providing ride-sharing services for money without a taxi license is illegal under Japanese law.

"We are not trying to steal any customers from local taxi drivers," he said. "Those servicemembers who call us don't have money to get a taxi anyway."

Fidelis Rides operates from 5

p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

About 20 regular volunteers in the program spare as many as 10 hours a night for the program. With 100-150 volunteers, Fidelis Rides could cover the entire island more often, Ciuccoli said.

"Currently, we are covering the Kadena, Foster and Futenma areas, but if we get enough volunteers in the future, we may be able to expand the program's hours and areas," he said.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Fair's butter sculpture honors moon landing

**OH** COLUMBUS — Gov. Mike DeWine on Wednesday opened the 166th edition of the Ohio State Fair, which this year is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the moon landing with a life-size butter sculpture.

This year's annual butter display features a life-size sculpture of Wapakoneta native Neil Armstrong saluting the American flag after planting it on the moon's surface as he stands beside the lunar module.

The sculpture also includes the Apollo 11 emblem and life-size sculptures of Armstrong and fellow astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins sitting beside the traditional butter cow and calf.

## Girl tossed in air after bison charges tourists

**WY** YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Yellowstone National Park officials said a bull bison tossed a 9-year-old girl into the air when the animal charged a group of about 50 tourists.

Park officials said the bison rushed the group Monday after some of the tourists approached to within 5 to 10 feet of the animal over at least 20 minutes.

The Odessa, Fla., girl was taken to Old Faithful Lodge by her family for treatment by emergency personnel. She was later taken to a clinic and released.

## Fleeing suspect is caught downstream

**NC** LAKE LURE — A wanted Tiki bar cook tried to flee authorities by swimming away in a North Carolina river but was caught by officers

waiting downstream.

A Lake Lure Police statement said Jesse Lee Boyd, 38, was wanted by the U.S. Marshals Service on warrants accusing him of forgery or counterfeiting in Iowa.

Investigators said they made a plan over the weekend to arrest him at the management office of the Geneva Riverside Tiki Bar. But Boyd was warned as he walked to the office and fled on foot before dashing into the Rocky Broad River.

Officers positioned themselves downstream along the banks, and Boyd eventually gave himself up.

## Uber driver carries sisters 200 miles

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — An Uber driver ferried two sisters 200 miles to their aunt's 100th birthday party in Minnesota.

Kerry Maggard and Deb Eggers were flying from San Antonio to Sioux Falls, S.D., with a connecting flight in Minneapolis. But bad weather forced their flight from San Antonio to land in Madison, Wis., and they missed their connecting flight in Minneapolis.

No other flights were available. So the sisters turned to Uber.

Jesus Florentino didn't realize the length of the trip when he pulled up, but agreed to drive. Uber charged Maggard \$216 for the trip. She tipped Florentino another \$54.

## Camper arrested with LSD-laced biscuits

**AR** HOT SPRINGS — A 25-year-old Louisiana man was arrested in western Arkansas after he was allegedly found with psychedelic mushrooms, LSD-laced dog biscuits and other drugs.

The Sentinel-Records reported Quincy Edward Boudreaux, of Monroe, La., was arrested on multiple felony counts at Lake Ouachita State Park, about 70 miles west of Little Rock.

## Gallons of syrup spill near French Quarter

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — Crews spent a night cleaning syrup from one block of a four-lane street along New Orleans' French Quarter.

Police said a container truck spilled about 1,000 gallons of syrup Monday evening after a rubber shipping bladder broke.

Both eastbound lanes of Rampart Street reopened the next day and police tweeted a #SYRUPDATE that began "We're not waffling."

Police said the trucker was cited for improper loading and size and weight limit violations.

## Heavy church bell stolen from site

**CT** WATERBURY — A roughly 300-pound bronze church bell and a pile of scrap metal were reported stolen from the site of a Russian Orthodox Church slated for demolition in Connecticut.

Project manager Albert Well told the Republican-American that scrap metal and the lightest of three bronze bells that once hung in Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Waterbury were stolen in late June.

Police estimate the bronze and the stolen scrap metal is worth \$500.

## Bear that broke into home euthanized

**VT** UNDERHILL — The Vermont Fish & Wild-

life Department reminded people to avoid attracting bears after a bear that broke into a home in Underhill recently had to be euthanized due to public safety concerns.

Officials said the bear twice entered the home at night through screened windows. It ransacked the kitchen, opened the refrigerator and ate cheese, grapes, maple syrup and bread.

Chief Game Warden Col. Jason Batchelder said a bear that learns to get food from humans will quickly lose its fear of people and become "a potential threat to human safety."

## Fans turn out to see steam engine Big Boy

**WI** ALTOONA — Train fans are turning out in Altoona to see the world's largest operating steam locomotive.

The 133-foot-long Big Boy No. 4014 is part of Union Pacific's tour to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad.

The restored engine is the only operating Big Boy locomotive of the 25 built.

## 31 charged in scheme to smuggle cigarettes

**NC** RALEIGH — Federal prosecutors charged 31 people with running an operation to smuggle cigarettes from North Carolina and sell them in the New York area to avoid taxes.

A news release said that the smugglers would buy thousands of cigarettes from businesses in Fayetteville, then pack them in vans or trucks and drive to New York after stopping in Virginia.

Authorities said the scheme netted at least \$12 million in illicit profits.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Optimism high among Jets as camp gets underway

Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Sam Darnold believes there's something a lot different about the New York Jets these days.

Sure, the start of training camp breeds overwhelming optimism and positive chatter all around the NFL. But the second-year quarterback insists there's more to it than just cliché-filled declarations.

This is real. Darnold can feel it.

"The whole building, you can kind of sense a ... almost a rebirth," Darnold said Wednesday as Jets players reported for training camp.

"I mean, I feel like the whole building is very energized, there's a lot of energy within the building, a lot of good vibes," he added. "For us, it's just feeding off that and that happens naturally. We can already feel it in the building. ... And I feel like as long as you have that good energy, we can win with that."

Well, positive energy is sustained only by winning — something the Jets haven't done very much of lately. They're coming off a 4-12 campaign and haven't made the playoffs since the 2010 season.

But, as far as the Jets are concerned, they aren't far from putting that postseason slump — currently the NFL's third-longest — behind them.

"We're going to play meaningful games in the end of November and December," coach Adam Gase said. "That's what we're going to do."

It wasn't the kind of bold declaration Rex Ryan used to routinely make headlines during his tenure as coach. But Gase has allowed some of his personality to trickle out — unlike the mostly tight-lipped Todd Bowles, who was fired after failing to make the playoffs in his four seasons.

Gase was also briefly unemployed after the season, with the Dolphins moving on after one postseason appearance in three years. The 41-year-old coach has plenty to prove, and is charged with leading a franchise that has remained stuck on one Super Bowl appearance for the last 50 years.

Gase knows the dubious history since the glory days of Joe Namath and understands nothing but bringing home another Lombardi Trophy will be considered a success. He believes this group of Jets players, at the very least, is starting out with the right attitude.

"There's some good juice in our building right now," Gase said. "We're ready. We're

0-0. It's going to be all about how we come together. We all know we're starting at 0-0 and it's time to go to work and see where the chips fall."

Gase and new general manager Joe Douglas, who replaced the fired Mike Maccagnan in May, are working to put together a squad that can consistently be in the mix for a postseason spot.

It all starts with Darnold, of course, and how he develops this season after an up-and-down first year in the NFL. He said he's in the "latter stages" of learning Gase's playbook, and feels "much more comfortable out there" as he prepares for his second training camp.

Newcomers such as running back Le'Veon Bell, linebacker C.J. Mosley, wide receiver Jamison Crowder and offensive lineman Kelechi Osemele highlight a roster that has raised expectations within the Jets' facility.

"A lot of wins," Darnold said when asked what he thought the team could achieve this season.

That might seem laughable to some, especially considering New York has just 14 victories over the last three years. But that was then, and Darnold and the Jets are focused on the now.

"I think there's enough talent on this roster to be a playoff contender," Darnold said. "But for us, it's one-week-at-a-time mentality. We've got to take it like that. If guys are looking too forward in the future, I feel like we could slip up here in the present."

"So you definitely have expectations of making it to the playoffs, and we definitely have the talent to do it. But I think the way that you get there is focusing one week, really, one day at a time."

Safety Jamal Adams, wide receivers Robby Anderson, Quincy Enunwa, tight end Chris Herndon and defensive linemen Leonard Williams and rookie Quinnen Williams are all expected to play major roles for the Jets this season.

It all has Gase giddy about the arrival of training camp — where the team can finally put on the pads and bring all those positive vibes out to the practice field.

"The last couple of days have seemed like forever," Gase said. "Everybody's just ready to get going."

# Chiefs TE Kelce back after surgery

Associated Press

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Travis Kelce was back to catching passes for the Kansas City Chiefs on Wednesday.

If he could do it on the beach, he could do it on a football field.

The two-time All-Pro tight end missed the entire offseason after having surgery to solidify an ankle that had become loose over time. Kelce said he had felt discomfort in it the past couple of years, mainly on Monday and Tuesday, when his entire body was still sore from a Sunday game.

"I mean, it was nothing I was doing," he said. "It was just the misfortune, over the course of my career I rolled my ankle so many times that the ligaments in there were kind of stretched out."

The procedure early this spring essentially tightened up the ankle, and it kept Kelce from doing any running for about three months. That means he spent the team's voluntary summer workouts and its mandatory minicamp on the sidelines, absorbing constant "Coach Kelce" ribbing from teammates.

Kelce insisted he would be ready for the start of camp, but a watershed moment may have come during a recent trip to Turks and Caicos with quarterback Patrick Mahomes and wide receivers Demarcus Robinson and Gehrig Dieter. Mahomes was throwing passes to the other three on the soft, sandy beach, and the instability was a good test to see just how strong Kelce's ankle had become.

"There were times my ankle got caught in an awkward position, just running around," he said, "and I can tell you, last year, two years ago, that thing would have been rolled and I would have been just sitting there, watching guys catch passes on the beach instead of doing it myself."

Rookies, quarterbacks and select veterans reported to Missouri Western State University for the start of camp on Tuesday, and their first workout was on a postcard-perfect Wednesday morning.

Kelce was right in the mix, catching the first couple of passes of 7-on-7 and team drills.

"I'm willing to work. That's the biggest thing," the 29-year-old Kelce said. "It's a little different when you see a guy out here going through the motions, walking the walk. Just being out here, working with the guys, showing them, 'This is how we do it here.' Showing them by example."



# Ledecky, US fall short in 200 relay

Associated Press

GWANGJU, South Korea — The Americans got ailing Katie Ledecky back. They just couldn't overcome a world record by the Australians.

Ledecky returned after two days out of the pool while being sick to swim in the 4x200-meter freestyle relay. She rallied the U.S. to the lead on her second leg, but it wasn't enough to defend the title from 2017.

Australia won in 7 minutes, 41.50 seconds at the world championships on Thursday.

Arianne Titmus, Madison Wilson, Brianna Throssell and Emma McKeon took down the old mark of 7:42.08 set by China at the 2009 worlds in Rome during the height of the rubber suit era.

The United States took silver in 7:41.87, also going under China's old mark. Canada earned bronze.

It was still a big night at the pool for the U.S. team.

The Americans medaled in all five finals, with Caeleb Dressel and Olivia Smoliga winning golds.

After swimming her four-lap leg, Ledecky sat down in a chair behind the blocks. She got up to cheer on Katie McLaughlin during the anchor leg.

Ledecky hadn't competed since preliminaries on Monday. The following day she withdrew

from the 200 free heats and the 1,500 free final because of symptoms that included dehydration and vomiting.

"We don't know exactly what caused this all," she said. "I wouldn't have pulled out if it wasn't serious or if I wasn't concerned and scared and worried about my health."

In the middle of a sleepless night, Ledecky's phone pinged with a text from Michael Phelps. The retired 23-time Olympic gold medalist heard about her illness half a world away and was checking in.

"That meant a lot," Ledecky said. "That gave me a little bit (extra)."

Her meet had gotten off to a rough start when she was upset by Titmus in the 400 free on the first night.

This time, Simone Manuel led off against the 18-year-old Aussie, with Titmus taking it out under world-record pace on the opening lap.

Ledecky put the U.S. in front before handing it off to Melanie Margalis, who led after 600 meters. That's when McLaughlin chased against McKeon, who put the Aussies right back in front for good.

"Just touching the wall and seeing the three others celebrate, it made me so excited," Titmus said. "I wasn't thinking about a world record, that was the key."

Ledecky's lone remaining individual event is the 800 free, with prelims on Friday.

"That went a lot better than I expected, so I'd say 95% sure that I'll swim tomorrow," she said.

Watching from the stands was Lilly King, who was disqualified from the morning heats of the 200 breaststroke and lost an appeal to be reinstated.

The American was penalized for not touching the wall with both hands in a simultaneous motion in the first turn of the four-lap race.

It was a big blow for King, the outspoken doping critic aiming for a sweep of the breaststroke titles in Gwangju. She already won the 100 over Russian rival Yulia Efimova, who advanced to the 200 final as the fastest qualifier.

Dressel won swimming's glamour event, the 100 free, for his third gold and fourth medal overall.

"It hurt really bad to be honest," he said. "You don't always get that magical feeling every night but you've just got to shut the brain off and go."

Dressel touched in 46.96 seconds, the only man to dip under 47 seconds in the final. He was only 0.05 seconds off the 10-year-old world record of 46.91 set by Brazil's Cesar Cielo.

"It took 100% effort and I had someone right there on my tail

for me to race," Dressel said. "I kind of shut off thinking about the race so that helped a lot and having Kyle right there."

Olympic champion Kyle Chalmers of Australia settled for silver in 47.08. Vladislav Grinev of Russia took bronze in 47.82.

Dressel tied for quickest off the starting block and held off a challenge from Chalmers in the closing meters to defend the world title he won in 2017.

Dressel hopped on the lane rope, tossing his head back and his legs out in front of him in celebration.

Dressel's other golds came in the 50 butterfly, a non-Olympic event, and the 4x100 free relay. He took silver in the mixed 4x100 medley relay.

The men's 200 individual medley title went to Daiya Seto of Japan. He touched in 1:56.14.

Jeremy Desplanches of Switzerland took silver. Chase Kalisz, the 2017 champion, earned bronze, ending the Americans' streak of winning at eight consecutive worlds.

In the women's 200 butterfly, Boglarka Kapas of Hungary won in 2:06.78. U.S. teammates Hali Flickinger and Katie Drabot took silver and bronze, respectively, after coming in as the top two fastest qualifiers.

## Alaphilippe completes 1 Alpine stage still in yellow

Associated Press

SAINT-MICHEL-DE-MAU-RIENNE, France — One big Alpine stage completed, just two more to go, and Julian Alaphilippe is still in yellow with France yet another step closer to having a first Tour winner since 1985.

Continuing to contribute more than anyone to making this the most exciting Tour de France in decades, the French rider recovered from a moment of weakness on the lunar-landscaped Galibier pass and

sped down treacherous hairpin bends on the other side to preserve his race lead Thursday.

"It was a day of folly," Alaphilippe said.

"I unplugged my brain and I was on the limit on each bend," he said. "I did a crazy descent, where I took risks. I wanted to save my jersey."

Job done.

But it wasn't a perfect day for Alaphilippe. With a decisive, well-placed attack on the slopes of the Galibier — the last of three climbs to above 2,000

meters (6,500 feet) on Stage 18 — Colombian rider Egan Bernal got away from Alaphilippe and ate into his lead.

Bernal vaulted from fifth to second in the overall standings. Having started the day 2 minutes, 2 seconds behind Alaphilippe, Bernal is now just 90 seconds behind him.

"It's very good for the morale. But Julian demonstrated once again that he is very strong," Bernal said. "For now, I'm still behind Julian. Everything is possible. I'm in the mix but to

win the Tour is difficult."

Bernal's teammate, defending champion Geraint Thomas, tried to make it a one-two punch by also attacking on the last hairpins leading to the top of that climb, lined by excited crowds.

But with Alaphilippe starting to wobble on the ascent, Thomas couldn't make the offensive stick. Alaphilippe caught him again on the downhill to the finish. Thomas is still 1:35 behind Alaphilippe, but slipped back to third overall.

# Nats take two from Rockies

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There's little slowing down the Washington Nationals of late. Not a doubleheader, not a rain delay. And on Wednesday, not the Colorado Rockies.

Patrick Corbin pitched six shutout innings for his first victory in nearly a month, and the Washington Nationals completed a day-night doubleheader sweep with a 2-0 win.

Washington won for the 23rd time in its last 32 home games and improved to 36-15 overall since May 24, the best record in the majors in that span.

"We are playing really good baseball all the way around," manager Dave Martinez said. "I talked about this from Day One. The little things are going to matter, and they are doing all of the little things."

The Nationals also posted their fourth straight doubleheader sweep dating to last season. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, the last team to sweep four consecutive doubleheaders was Cleveland from 2003-06.

In the first game, Anthony Rendon homered on the first pitch of the seventh inning to lift Washington to a 3-2 victory.

For a team that started out at 19-31, it's been quite a turnaround.

"I went to college for a little bit," Rendon said. "A lot of people wrote us off and saying we need to make moves already, we need to do this, we need to do that. You don't win the division, you don't win the pennant, whatever you want to call it in the first 50 games of the season. Or the first 100 games of the season. Anything can happen."

Corbin (8-5) hadn't won since June 26, but posted a 2.16 ERA without a decision in four starts in that span.

## MLB roundup

# Tampa Bay's Morton dominates, Boston files protest over lineup

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Charlie Morton struck out 11 over seven innings and the Tampa Bay Rays avoided a three-game sweep by beating David Price and Boston 3-2 in a game that the Red Sox protested on Wednesday.

Confusion reigned in the top of the eighth when a series of defensive changes involving reliever Adam Kolarek prompted Boston manager Alex Cora to protest the game due to the placement of subs into the Rays lineup after the designated hitter was removed.

Kolarek replaced Morton and retired pinch-hitter Sam Travis on a pop fly. The left-hander then shifted to first base when Rays manager Kevin Cash brought in reliever Chaz Roe, who got a fly ball from Mookie Betts.

After Kolarek then returned to the mound and Nate Lowe entered to play first base, Cora met with the umpires, which prompted around a 15-minute stoppage as the umpires discussed the matter.

After the protest was made and the game resumed, Kolarek got a first-pitch grounder from Rafael Devers.

An unhappy Cora again talked with the umpires after the third out, which delayed the start of the bottom of the eighth.

Morton (12-3) allowed two runs and five hits in lowering his AL-best ERA from 2.61 to 2.60. Emilio Pagan pitched the ninth for his seventh save.

Price (7-4) went six innings, giving up three runs, four hits and two walks while striking out eight.

**Angels 3, Dodgers 2:** Kole Calhoun had a homer and two doubles while driving in two runs in his second straight big game at Dodger Stadium, and the Angels swept the Freeway Series for the first time in franchise history.

The Angels (54-49) moved

five games above .500 for the first time all season with their fourth straight victory. Justin Turner homered for the Dodgers, who couldn't overcome the Angels' sturdy defense and resilient pitching to back Calhoun's brilliance.

**Yankees 10, Twins 7:** Didi Gregorius drove in three runs with two of New York's nine extra-base hits in a win at Minnesota.

Aaron Hicks, Gleyber Torres and Edwin Encarnacion each hit solo home runs for the Yankees, who outscored the Twins 30-27 to win this three-game series.

**Cubs 4, Giants 1:** Javier Baez homered in the first inning, Kris Bryant and Albert Almora Jr. also went deep, and Chicago won at San Francisco despite starter Jon Lester being scratched before the game with an illness.

Baez hit his 25th homer and Bryant his 21st to help Chicago avoid a three-game sweep. The Cubs bounced back from a 5-4, 13-inning loss Tuesday night to give manager Joe Maddon his 442nd win with the Cubs, tying Joe McCarthy for fifth in franchise history.

**Astros 4, Athletics 2:** Jose Altuve and George Springer both hit two-run homers to back up another solid start by Justin Verlander and give host Houston a win over Oakland.

The Astros bounced back after Tuesday's 4-3 loss in 11 innings snapped a six-game winning streak and improved to 9-2 against the A's this season.

**Brewers 5, Reds 4:** Ryan Braun and Keston Hiura homered, Yasmani Grandal hit a go-ahead single and Josh Hader made a lights-out relief appearance to lift host Milwaukee over Cincinnati to avoid a three-game sweep.

Josh VanMeter hit his second homer and Joey Votto and Scooter Gennett had RBI hits to help Cincinnati build a 4-2 lead against starter Jhoulys Chacin.

**Phillies 4, Tigers 0:** Vince

Velasquez pitched impressively into the sixth inning and Philadelphia won at Detroit to finish a quick two-game sweep.

J.T. Realmuto and Nick Williams homered for the Phillies, who have won five of six.

**Diamondbacks 5, Orioles 2:** Carson Kelly hit a three-run homer, Taylor Clarke pitched six effective innings and host Arizona beat Baltimore.

The Diamondbacks closed out the series win with Kelly's homer off John Means (8-6) in the fourth inning.

**Mariners 5, Rangers 3:** Mike Leake outpitched Mike Minor in what could be the final start for each before the upcoming trade deadline, Daniel Vogelbach hit a pair of solo home runs, and host Seattle beat Texas.

Leake (9-8) threw seven innings, his only mistake giving up a home run to Rougned Odor.

**Cardinals 14, Pirates 8:** Paul DeJong hit a career-high three home runs, including one during a nine-run second inning, and St. Louis won at Pittsburgh.

**Indians 4, Blue Jays 0:** Shane Bieber pitched a one-hitter, allowing only a double by Eric Sogard in the seventh inning, and Cleveland won at Toronto.

**Royals 2, Braves 0:** Brad Keller allowed four hits in seven innings and added a single for his first career RBI in his Georgia homecoming, and Kansas City beat Julio Teheran to win at Atlanta.

**Marlins 2, White Sox 0:** Rookie Zac Gallen pitched seven innings of two-hit ball for his first major league win and Cesar Puello hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning as Miami won its second straight game at Chicago.

**Padres 7, Mets 2:** Fernando Tatis Jr. got three hits and San Diego beat Noah Syndergaard at New York for its third win in 11 games since the All-Star break.