

## NATO allies evolving, boosting defenses

*Associated Press*

LONDON — When Donald Trump suggested during the 2016 presidential campaign that he might not honor a U.S. commitment to defend other NATO countries if they were attacked, it triggered alarm throughout the trans-Atlantic alliance.

With Trump's "America First" rhetoric drawing cheers from fervent supporters, the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is once again on the agenda. But this time, European leaders acknowledge the alliance must evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century and say they are ready to shoulder more responsibility for their own defense.

First, Trump's presidency forced Europe to recognize that U.S. military support was no longer guaranteed, then Russia's invasion of Ukraine underscored the threat on its eastern border. Meanwhile, the U.S. has increasingly focused on China's expansion in the Asia-Pacific,

as well as Iran and North Korea.

"Confronted with powers such as Russia and China, and a United States whose pivot to Asia seems inevitable, no matter who wins the next election, we Europeans need to do more to ensure our own security," Josep Borrell, the European Union's foreign policy chief, wrote last weekend in *The Times* of London.

After relying on U.S. leadership of NATO to protect them with overwhelming nuclear and conventional capability for the past 75 years, European nations must take on a larger role in funding and leading the 32-nation alliance because their interests are increasingly diverging from those of the U.S.

"We are talking about a NATO which the United States is still part of, but which the United States is no longer the indispensable leader (of)," said Malcolm Chalmers, deputy director-general of the Royal United Services Institute, a London-

based think tank focused on defense and security. "I mean, that is what J.D. Vance and Donald Trump are talking about. They're talking about a NATO that is transformed and one in which the Europeans take the greatest share of the burden."

NATO grew out of secret talks among U.S. officials after World War II about how to supply military equipment to Western Europe and ensure a coordinated response to any attack by the Soviet Union. The 12 founding members signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949.

NATO's military structure is headed by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who is also the commander-in-chief of American forces in Europe. The U.S. is expected to spend almost twice as much on its military this year as all the other alliance members combined, according to NATO statistics.

Trump's skepticism about NATO was underlined earlier this month when he named

Vance as his running mate. Vance has opposed U.S. support for Ukraine, has criticized European nations for slashing defense spending since the Cold War, and said it's time for "Europe to stand on its own feet."

Europe got another wakeup call on July 21 when President Joe Biden, whose strong support for NATO was cemented during standoffs with the Soviet Union in the 1970s, said he would not seek reelection. Vice President Kamala Harris, the likely Democratic presidential nominee, has backed the administration's position on NATO and aid to Ukraine, but she entered politics long after the Cold War and is better known for her work on domestic issues.

"The question is whether she will have that same strong trans-Atlantic view that's kind of part of her blood in the way that Biden had it," said Armida van Rij, an expert on European security policy at the Chatham House think tank in London.

## US Navy on track to rearm warships at sea in 2-3 years

**BY CAITLYN BURCHETT**

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Navy is one step closer to rearming ships at sea, a capability that would keep warships in the fight rather than forcing them to return to port during combat.

The first successful land-based demonstration of the Transferrable Rearming Mechanism, or TRAM, was announced Wednesday by the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Port Hueneme, Calif. The system will enable Navy destroyers and cruisers to reload missiles into vertical launching systems

while at sea — a task that now must be done pier side.

"No longer will our combatants need to withdraw from combat for extended periods to return for vulnerable in-port reloading of weapon systems.... My intention is to perfect this capability and field it for sustained, persistent forward-strike capacity during wartime," Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro said during a speech at Columbia University in December 2022.

The rearming mechanism uses a crane that can lift and rotate 25-foot missile canisters verti-

cally, then lowers the explosives into the launchers, which are small openings in the ship deck. The system is designed to be used with existing at-sea replenishment ships and will be able to reload vertical launch systems on surface ships in sea states 3 or higher. A sea state 3 means winds of 7-10 knots and 2-foot waves, according to the Beaufort Scale, a measure that estimates wind speed and its effects based on observed sea or land conditions.

Operationally, reloading in the open ocean would allow the U.S. surface fleet to engage ene-

my ships with a "relentless tempo and volume of long-range salvos," Navy officials said Friday. Additionally, it means adversaries won't be able to home in on U.S. ships at friendly ports, widening the area that an adversary must search to target them.

The technology will be tested at sea before the end of 2024 and is on track to be fielded in two to three years, according to Naval Sea Systems Command. In fiscal 2023, the service allocated \$3.9 million in research, test, development and evaluation funds with another \$12.4 million in fiscal 2024.

# Aviano airman who vanished found alive

By BRIAN ERICKSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

AVIANO, Italy — The American airman who went missing from Aviano Air Base was found alive and unhurt Saturday, ending an intensive search in the Alps.

Details of the rescue of Staff Sgt. Joseph Charles Miele were scarce Saturday, but according to Italian news service Ansa, Miele was found by his brother, who had arrived in Italy the day before to help with the search.

Miele's brother went into the woods on his own and found the airman, then hailed Italian rescuers, Ansa reported.

Miele, 32, is a radar tech assigned to the 606th Air Control Squadron, which specializes in air surveillance, control and communications.

He didn't show up for work Tuesday and was reported missing by his unit that night.

Searchers found Miele's Opel Astra in Andreis, a mountain town north of Aviano. They believe he went hiking on the area

trails with his dog, which was also rescued Saturday.

Italian firefighters heard the dog barking at the bottom of a canyon and airlifted the canine into a helicopter using a special harness, according to Italian news service PordenoneToday.

On Friday, rescuers found a towel belonging to Miele, allowing them to focus their efforts on a specific area of Andreis, Messagero Veneto reported.

"I want to thank the local Italian authorities and our base community for the combined

search and rescue effort to bring Joseph home," Col. Beau Diers, deputy commander of the 31st Fighter Wing, said in a statement. "The unwavering support of the local community has been invaluable during this challenging time."

The wing did not immediately respond Saturday to questions.

Miele was flown to base camp in a helicopter and taken to a local hospital, and his dog was examined by a veterinarian, Italian media reports said.

## Sobriety checks continue at Marine bases in Japan

By BRIAN McELHINEY  
AND KEISHI KOJA  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps will continue outgoing weekend sobriety checks at all its Japan installations indefinitely as the military continues to respond to discontent on Okinawa over recent alleged sexual crimes.

Increased checks and off-base courtesy patrols, which began July 12-13 and continued July 19-20, will continue each Friday and Saturday "until we are told otherwise," Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokeswoman 2nd Lt. Kelsey Enlow said in an email Thursday.

The prospect of dual patrols with Okinawa police received a lukewarm response Thursday from the head of the prefectural police Criminal Affairs Division, who said he was unaware of any plans to field such teams. He also appeared skeptical of U.S. military police exercising authority beyond their gates.

Sobriety checks begin at 8

p.m. Friday and continue through 11:59 p.m. Saturday and include 100% Breathalyzer tests for everyone exiting Marine bases between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.

During the day, breath tests may be randomized if 10 or more cars are in line to exit, Enlow wrote in an email Friday. Average wait times at busy gates were not available Friday, she said.

However, exiting some installations took up to an hour July 12-13, Capt. Brett Dornhege-Lazaroff, another spokesman for the installations command, said July 19.

"Several" people with blood-alcohol content over Japan's 0.03% legal limit were stopped that weekend, he said. The status of those individuals and the results of other weekend checks was not available Friday.

"We have seen that these checks and patrols have been effective, but I do not have any numbers regarding DUIs or specific incidents," Enlow wrote.

## US forces come under attack in Iraq, Syria

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

Bases in the Middle East where U.S. forces are deployed recently came under rocket fire from militants, in one case for the second time in little more than a week.

Two rockets were launched Thursday at al Asad Air Base in western Iraq, while the same day, another was fired in a separate attack at Military Support Site Euphrates in Syria, a U.S. defense official said Friday.

No damage or injuries were reported in any of the three strikes and neither installation was hit, according to the official.

The assaults came after a July 16 attack on al Asad by two drones. Although one was shot down, the other struck the base, causing minimal damage, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said last week.

July has seen a resumption of such attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria after a lull of nearly three months. They are blamed on Iran-backed militant groups, which have sought retaliation following the Oct. 7 start of the Israel-Hamas war.

On April 21 and April 22, there were separate attacks at Rumalyn Landing Zone in Syria and near al Asad, respectively, the Pentagon later said.

There are about 2,500 U.S. troops in Iraq housed at three bases, one in Baghdad and two others in west and north of the country. About 900 American service members are deployed in Syria, Voice of America reported in February.

American forces have remained in the two countries to lead a coalition fighting to prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State in a mission known as Operation Inherent Resolve.

Thursday's rocket attacks came on the heels of meetings between U.S. and Iraqi officials in Washington last week to work out the details of ending the anti-ISIS mission in Iraq.

Iraq wants U.S. troops to begin withdrawing in September, and it seeks to have the coalition's work formally end by September 2025, Reuters reported.

# Harris has raised \$200M for campaign

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign has raised \$200 million since she emerged as the likely Democratic presidential nominee last week, an eyepopping haul in her race against the Republican nominee, former President Donald Trump.

The campaign, which announced its latest fundraising total on Sunday, said the bulk of the donations — 66% — comes from first-time contributors in the 2024 election cycle and were made after President Joe Biden announced his exit from the race and endorsed Harris.

Over 170,000 volunteers have also signed up to help the Harris

campaign with phone banking, canvassing and other get-out-the-vote efforts.

Election Day is 100 days away.

“The momentum and energy for Vice President Harris is real — and so are the fundamentals of this race: this election will be very close and decided by a small number of voters in just a few states,” Michael Tyler, the campaign's communications director, wrote in a memo.

Harris campaigned in Pittsfield, Mass., on Saturday, drawing hundreds to a fundraiser that had been organized when Biden was still at the top of the Democratic ticket.

The fundraiser had originally

been expected to raise \$400,000 but ended bringing in about \$1.4 million, according to the campaign.

Harris quickly coalesced Democratic support after Biden, whose candidacy fizzled following his disastrous June 27 debate performance against Trump, exited the race. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, former House Minority Whip Jim Clyburn, former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were quick to announce their support.

Prodigious Democratic fund-

raisers former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama announced their endorsement on Friday.

Harris at her Saturday fundraiser said she remained the “underdog” in the race but that her campaign was picking up steam.

Future Forward, the largest super PAC in Democratic politics, announced last week it had secured \$150 million in commitments over the first 24 hours from donors after Biden bowed out and endorsed Harris.

Democratic House and Senate candidates say they also have seen a surge in support since Harris emerged as the party's likely nominee.

## Trump, Vance campaign throughout Minnesota

*Associated Press*

ST. CLOUD, Minn. — As the presidential campaign enters a critical final 100 day stretch, Republican nominee Donald Trump and his running mate, J.D. Vance, rallied supporters on Saturday in a state that hasn't backed a GOP candidate for the White House since 1972.

The rally in St. Cloud, Minn., was designed as a sign of the campaign's bullishness about its prospects across the Midwest, particularly when President Joe Biden was showing signs of weakness ahead of his decision to exit the campaign. Trump, who won Michigan and Wisconsin in 2016 only to

lose them four years later, has increasingly focused on Minnesota as a state where he'd like to put Democrats on defense.

The rally is something of a gamble, potentially forcing the likely Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, and Democrats to devote resources in a state they would likely otherwise ignore.

But it could also be a risk for Trump if he spends time in places that might prove to be a reach with Harris leading the ticket when he could otherwise focus on maintaining his support in more traditional battlegrounds.

Trump spoke for more than an hour and a half to cheering crowds holding signs sup-

porting police and calling for the deportation of migrants in the country illegally.

He continued a pattern of escalating attacks against Harris on immigration and crime.

He called her a “crazy liberal” and accused her of wanting to “defund the police,” while he said by contrast, he wants to “overfund the police.”

“She has no clue, she's evil,” Trump said, suggesting Harris had failed at her tasks related to the border as vice president. “Kamala Harris' deadly destruction of America's borders is completely and totally disqualifying for her to be president.”

## DOJ says TikTok culled US views on major issues

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — In a fresh broadside against one of the world's most popular technology companies, the Justice Department is accusing TikTok of harnessing the capability to gather bulk information on users based on views on divisive social issues like gun control, abortion and religion.

Government lawyers wrote in documents filed late Friday to the federal appeals court in Washington that TikTok and its Beijing-based parent company ByteDance used an internal web-suite system called Lark to en-

able TikTok employees to speak directly with ByteDance engineers in China.

TikTok employees used Lark to send sensitive data about U.S. users, information that has wound up being stored on Chinese servers and accessible to ByteDance employees in China, federal officials said.

One of Lark's internal search tools, the filing states, permits ByteDance and TikTok employees in the U.S. and China to gather information on users' content or expressions, including views on sensitive topics, such as abortion or religion. Last year, the

Wall Street Journal reported TikTok had tracked users who watched LGBTQ content through a dashboard the company said it had since deleted.

The new court documents represent the government's first major defense in a consequential legal battle over the future of the popular social media platform, which is used by more than 170 million Americans. Under a law signed by President Joe Biden in April, the company could face a ban in a few months if it doesn't break ties with ByteDance.



# US-Japan talks focus on bolstering cooperation

*Associated Press*

TOKYO — Japanese and U.S. defense chiefs and top diplomats agreed to further bolster their military cooperation by upgrading the command and control of U.S. forces in the East Asian country and strengthening American-licensed missile production there, describing the rising threat from China as “the greatest strategic challenge.”

Japan is home to more than 50,000 U.S. troops, but the commander for the U.S. Forces Japan headquartered in Yokota in

the western suburbs of Tokyo, tasked with managing their bases, has no commanding authority. Instead, instructions come from the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii. The plans will give the USFJ greater capability while still reporting to IN-DOPACOM.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin joined their Japanese counterparts, Yoko Kamikawa and Minoru Kihara, at the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee in Tokyo, known as “2+2” security talks where

they reaffirmed their bilateral alliance following President Joe Biden’s withdrawal from the November presidential race.

“We are standing at a historic turning point as the rules-based, free and open international order is shaken to the core,” Kamikawa said. “Now is a critical phase when our decision today determines our future.”

Austin, in his opening remarks, said China is “engaging in coercive behavior, trying to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, around Taiwan and throughout the re-

gion,” adding that North Korea’s nuclear program and its deepening cooperation with Russia “threaten regional and global security.”

In the joint statement issued after the talks, the ministers said China’s foreign policy “seeks to reshape the international order for its own benefit at the expense of others” and that “such behavior is a serious concern to the alliance and the entire international community, and represents the greatest strategic challenge in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.”

## US, China air global differences as top diplomats meet

*Associated Press*

VIENTIANE, Laos — The United States and China on Saturday renewed their mutual grievances as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Chinese counterpart held their sixth meeting since last year amid an uncertain political situation in the U.S. and growing concerns about China’s increasing assertiveness in Asia and elsewhere.

Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met for roughly an hour and 20 minutes on the sidelines of an annual Southeast Asian regional security forum in Vientiane, Laos, at which tensions between China and U.S. ally Philippines over disputes in the South China Sea were a prime focus of discussion.

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Blinken and Wang had had “an open and productive” discussion, but had not reached any significant agreements on the issues that divide them most in the Indo-Pacific, Europe and the Americas.

“The United States will continue to take necessary actions to safeguard our interests and values, and those of our allies and partners, including on human rights,” Blinken told Wang, according to Miller.

Blinken “made clear that the United States, together with our allies and partners, will advance our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific,” he said, highlighting recently aggressive Chinese actions toward Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims as part of the mainland and has vowed to reunify by force if necessary.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement that despite regular contacts, “the U.S. has not stopped its containment and suppression of China and has even further intensified it.” The statement said the risks to China-U.S. ties “are still accumulating and the challenges are also rising” and that “it is necessary to constantly calibrate the direction, manage risks, properly handle differences,

eliminate disturbance and promote cooperation.”

Blinken scolded China for “destabilizing actions in the South China Sea” and “affirmed the United States’ support for freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of disputes, consistent with international law,” Miller said.

America’s top diplomat did praise China and the Philippines for concluding an agreement last week that allowed the Philippines on Saturday to make a supply trip to the disputed area without having to confront Beijing’s forces, the first such trip since the deal was concluded.

“We are pleased to take note of the successful resupply today at the Second Thomas Shoal,” Blinken told Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers before his meeting with Wang. “We applaud that and hope and expect to see that it continues going forward.”

## Israeli airstrike kills at least 30 in Gaza, including children

*Associated Press*

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli airstrikes hit a school used by displaced Palestinians in central Gaza on Saturday, killing at least 30 people including several children, as the country’s negotiators prepared to meet international mediators about a proposed cease-fire.

Seven children and seven women were among the dead tak-

en from the girls’ school in Deir al-Balah to Al Aqsa Hospital. Israel’s military said it targeted a Hamas command center used to direct attacks against Israeli troops and store “large quantities of weapons.” Hamas called the military’s claim false.

Civil defense workers in Gaza said thousands had been sheltering in the school, which also contained a medical site. Associated

Press journalists saw a dead toddler in an ambulance and bodies covered with blankets. Shattered walls gaped and classrooms were in ruins. People searched the rubble strewn with pillows and other signs of habitation.

Gaza’s Health Ministry said at least 12 people were killed in other strikes Saturday.

Officials from the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Israel

were scheduled to meet in Italy on Sunday to discuss cease-fire negotiations. CIA Director Bill Burns was expected to meet with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed Bin Abdul Rahman al-Thani, Mossad director David Barnea and Egyptian spy chief Abbas Kamel, according to officials from the U.S. and Egypt who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to discuss the plans.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### North Korean charged in cyberattacks in US

**KS** KANSAS CITY — A North Korean military intelligence operative has been indicted in a conspiracy to hack into American health care providers, NASA, U.S. military bases and international entities, stealing sensitive information and installing ransomware to fund more attacks, federal prosecutors announced.

The indictment of Rim Jong Hyok by a grand jury in Kansas City, Kan., accuses him of laundering the money through a Chinese bank and then using it to buy computer servers and fund more cyberattacks on defense, technology and government entities around the world.

He's accused of targeting 17 entities across 11 U.S. states, including NASA and U.S. military bases, as well as defense and energy companies in China, Taiwan and South Korea.

### College protesters split over charge dismissals

**NY** NEW YORK — More pro-Palestinian protesters at Columbia University and the City University of New York may see charges dismissed by the Manhattan district attorney's office — if they avoid arrest and complete mandatory programming.

Five people arrested at City College, CUNY's Harlem campus, during an April 30 police raid accepted the DA's offers that would drop their burglary cases if they attend a free, three-hour class and stay out of trouble with the law for the next six months — including at any protest or demonstration. The training includes “learning

what constitutes peaceful, legal protesting” and the impact their actions had on CCNY and the surrounding neighborhood, according to Doug Cohen, a spokesman for Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg.

But eight protesters at City College turned down deals passing their cases along to a grand jury for indictment, the DA's office said.

### Uber, Lyft drivers still independent contractors

**CA** SACRAMENTO — The California Supreme Court ruled that app-based ride-hailing and delivery services like Uber and Lyft can continue treating their drivers as independent contractors rather than employees.

The unanimous decision by the state's top court is a big win for tech giants. It also ends a yearslong legal battle between labor unions and tech companies over a law dictating the status of app-based service workers in the state.

The ruling upholds a 2020 voter-approved law that said drivers for companies like Uber and Lyft are independent contractors and are not entitled to benefits like overtime pay, paid sick leave and unemployment insurance. Opponents said the law was illegal in part because it limited the Legislature's authority to change the law or pass laws about workers' compensation programs.

### Chemical company OKs \$160M settlement

**WA** SEATTLE — Ending an eight-year legal battle, chemical giant Monsanto has agreed to a \$160-million settlement with Seattle

for its part in polluting a river that runs through the heart of the city with toxins that posed a threat to humans, fish and wildlife, the city attorney's office said.

The Duwamish River cuts through Seattle, emptying into Puget Sound just south of downtown. Water samples collected from the Lower Duwamish detected polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, which are man-made chemical compounds manufactured by Monsanto, according to the city's lawsuit.

Although Monsanto stopped manufacturing PCBs in 1977, the chemicals continued to exist in paints, caulking and sealants on buildings, City Attorney Ann Davison said.

### Ban on carrying arms while fishing dropped

**WI** MADISON — People fishing in Wisconsin will soon be able to carry firearms after a rule banning them was rescinded by the state following a lawsuit brought by gun rights advocates.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources agreed to rescind the rule barring anglers from carrying firearms. The lawsuit challenging the ban as a violation of the constitutional right to bear arms was brought by the conservative Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty.

The DNR agreed to rescind the rule, enacted in 1999, and both sides submitted a joint motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

WILL had argued that the rule was overly broad and would limit all firearms along waterways in the state, not just those which could be used to

harvest a fish.

### New Baltimore bridge set to be 24% taller

**MD** BALTIMORE — The new Francis Scott Key Bridge is expected to be longer and taller than its fallen predecessor, but not steeper.

A 143-page Maryland Transportation Authority document seeking a “categorical exclusion” — meaning the rebuild won't require a yearslong process analyzing alternative bridge possibilities — was approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

The document says the new bridge would have 230 feet of vertical clearance, as opposed to the old bridge's 185 feet, and a 1,400-foot main span length, compared with 1,200 feet.

### 'Jeopardy!' champ faces charges of child porn

**NY** NEW YORK — A former Brooklyn math teacher and “Jeopardy!” champion was arrested in connection to charges involving child pornography after he allegedly posed as a fellow student on Snapchat.

Winston Nguyen, 37, of Harlem, surrendered to Brooklyn prosecutors after a monthlong investigation into accusations he lured teens into sending him nude or sexually explicit videos and images.

Nguyen — who in 2014 took home \$10,000 as a winner on “Jeopardy!” — reportedly preyed on six students from various schools, including Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn Heights, where he used to work.

— From wire reports

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# Dressel wins his eighth gold medal

*Associated Press*

NANTERRE, France — Caeleb Dressel touched the wall and shouted in triumph. He threw his fists to the air and high-fived U.S. fans during a victory lap. Then, finally, he found his family and gave his wife and baby boy celebratory hugs and kisses.

Dressel only knows the top of an Olympic podium in a decorated career.

As the veteran on a youthful U.S. men's swim team, Dressel added another relay victory to his long list Saturday night, anchoring the winning 4x100-meter freestyle foursome as the Americans beat out the rival Australians and scrutinized Chinese.

"Relays are a little more special, to be honest," Dressel said. "So doing it with these guys has been awesome. It takes me back to my first gold. It really doesn't get old. Really special standing

on the podium with these guys watching the flag go up. I'm extremely proud of them. It made my job easy."

Yes, former Ohio State star Hunter Armstrong swam a sensational third leg — his split clocked in at 46.75 seconds — to set up Dressel's grand finale sprint to the wall.

"I definitely didn't expect it," Armstrong said of seeing his time. "I just went in, I will give my entire body and soul up for these boys. I knew I had to give Caeleb everything I had, so I was glad I was able to get my job done."

An emotional Dressel screamed from the water and then again out of it. He pumped both fists high in the air in delight before even stepping up to accept the latest gold medal placed around his neck. He held teammate Hunter Armstrong in a prolonged embrace after Armstrong swam the fastest leg

to give Dressel some wiggle room coming home, then Dressel raised his arm in rhythm to chants of "U-S-A!"

He now has eight golds and five of those in relay events — plenty to celebrate less than a month before his 28th birthday Aug. 16.

The Americans took a lap around Paris La Defense Arena offering high-fives with fans and hugs.

And Dressel quickly made his way to find wife Meghan and 5-month-old son August Wilder, finally spotting them and sprinting over for a hug and kiss before taking the baby in oversized headphones into his arms.

"It's really special. Making the team in front of him and then winning a gold in front of him, just checking little boxes that I never would have thought to create throughout my career," Dressel said. "So that was

a really special one tonight."

Dressel will still try to defend his golds from the Tokyo Olympics in the 100 butterfly and 50 freestyle. He also won the 100 free and 4x100 medley relay three years ago. Dressel captured golds in the two relays at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games, too.

The emerging, younger American stars could certainly understand the magnitude of the moment Saturday. They also won the first U.S. gold of the Paris Games.

Jack Alexy and Chris Guilian were the other two on the team thrilled to be part of Dressel's amazing night after their 3-minute, 9.28-second finish — shy of the world record they'd so dearly sought.

"Truly honored to be part of this relay and watching Caeleb finish that off for us and making Team USA proud," said Alexy, who swam the opening leg.

## Australia's Titmus hands Ledecy loss in 400 free

*Associated Press*

NANTERRE, France — It was billed as one of the most anticipated races of the Paris Olympics.

Ariarne Titmus turned it into a blowout.

Titmus left Katie Ledecy in her wake on a raucous opening night at La Defense Arena, leading from start to finish to win the 400-meter freestyle Saturday.

Titmus, the Australian star known as "Terminator," handed Ledecy a second straight Olympic defeat in an event the American won at Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

With her fingernails painted Aussie yellow, Titmus strolled on deck with the confidence of a reigning champion, flashing a big smile and waving to the fans.

Titmus knew she was the swimmer to the beat, even with one of the greatest ever in the

lane next to her.

Then she went out and proved it.

Titmus actually faced her stiffest challenge from Canadian 17-year-old phenom Summer McIntosh but won comfortably in 3 minutes, 57.49 seconds.

McIntosh claimed the silver in 3:58.37. Ledecy wasn't even close, settling for bronze in 4:00.86.

"My legs are a bit tired, but I'm just relieved more than anything," Titmus said. "I probably felt the expectation and pressure for this race more than anything in my life, to be honest, and I'm pretty good at handling the pressure of it."

Ledecy, 27, remains at six individual gold medals in her brilliant career, still the most of any female swimmer in Olympic history.

But she couldn't find the speed to chase down Titmus.

"I just didn't have it on the last 200 or 250 that way I wanted to," Ledecy said. "I felt like my first 150 was pretty good. I went out with the field and felt like I was within striking distance. I just couldn't kick in into that next gear that I would have wanted to finish it out."

The Australian women also claimed their fourth straight gold medal in the women's 4x100 freestyle relay to gain an early edge on their American rivals, but the United States capped the night on a high when Caeleb Dressel anchored the men's team to victory in the 4x100 free relay.

Titmus, 23, now has three individual Olympic victories on her growing résumé. She swept the 200 and 400 free in Tokyo and is favored to pull off the

same double in Paris.

Ledecy isn't done yet, either. She skipped a chance to face Titmus again in the 200 free, but the American is favored to take gold in both the 800 and 1,500.

And McIntosh? She's going to be a familiar face in the coming week as well. She's the world-record holder in the 400 individual medley and had two races on opening night, returning to swim on Canada's relay team that finished fourth.

In the women's 4x100 free relay, the Australian quartet of Mollie O'Callaghan, Shayna Jack, Emma McKeon and Meg Harris set an Olympic record of 3:28.92.

The Americans — Kate Douglass, Gretchen Walsh, Torri Huske and Simone Manuel — rallied to take silver in 3:30.20. They edged China by a tenth of a second.



# Army's Maddalena makes air rifle final

By MATT WAGNER

*Stars and Stripes*

CHATEAUROUX, France — Army Sgt. Sagen Maddalena stood with her coach and USA Shooting staff, looks of consternation on their faces as they stared at the screens Sunday displaying the live results in the women's Olympic 10-meter air rifle qualification round.

After finishing her first 60 shots Sunday, she was hovering near the cutoff line for Monday morning's finals. The top eight shooters qualify.

She was nowhere near the first to complete her rounds, but Maddalena still had to wait. With the final pop of the rifle, she sighed in relief and smiled about her seventh-place finish.

Her 631.4 points were the same as Kazakhstan's Alexandra Le, who had won a bronze medal in the team event Saturday.

"I was happy, because I did the work and I shot well, performed really well," Maddalena said. "But then at the same

time, I was really anxious to see if I got a ticket to the dance, made the final."

After the second series, things weren't looking good for Maddalena. The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit member had a rough 10 shots, recording a 104.2. She put together four shots of 10.6 points but was hurt by a 10.1 and 10.2, dropping into 20th place in the live results.

Maddalena switched gears after that and hit her stride. She started off the third series with a 10.8, one of five the rest of the way. She recorded six overall. The 30-year-old sharpshooter also hit a 10.9 with her 44th shot.

Over the final four series, Maddalena averaged 105.56 points per 10 shots. She posted a 104.8 and 104.2 in the first two.

"I was just slow a little or too quick on a little," Maddalena said of the first two series. "Just that timing was a touch off, and I ended up telling myself, 'Hey, next shot. Focus on the next shot, not that last shot.' And

that's kind of what got me back into that calm, cool and collected mindset."

That mentality moved her up the 13 spots she needed to advance to an Olympic final round for the second time. At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which were held in 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, she took fifth in the 50-meter rifle three-position competition.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks alumna is looking to get onto the podium this time. She's chasing South Korea's Hyo-jin Ban, who broke the Olympic qualifying round record with 634.5 points, and Norway's Jeanette Hegg Duestad, who previously held the high mark and eclipsed it herself Sunday with a 633.2.

To prepare for the final, Maddalena said she just needs to take care of herself and get good rest.

"I can't get too caught up in it's got to be perfect," Maddalena said. "If that happens, I'll

just get stressed out and anxious."

Maddalena's teammate during the 10-meter air rifle mixed team Saturday, Army Sgt. Ivan Roe, also competed in the qualification round in the men's 10-meter air rifle. He placed 34th out of 49 shooters with a 626.3, failing to qualify for the final.

Roe started off strong with 105.0 points in the first series and ended strong with 105.0 and 105.4 points in the final two series. But he struggled in the second through fourth series, unable to eclipse 104 points in those rounds.

"There was definitely a lot of improvement," Roe said. "A lot less nervousness at the start, I focused in a lot more at the end, and I think I settled down."

Roe still has one more event, the men's 50-meter rifle three-position. He called it his better event.

"We're going into an event that I'm most looking forward to," Roe said. "So I'm ready to go."

# LeBron, American men cruise past Serbia in opener

*Associated Press*

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, France — LeBron James made his Olympic return after a 12-year absence. Kevin Durant played for the first time this summer.

And the two most-experienced Olympians on this U.S. team opened the Paris Games — not to mention a bid for a fifth consecutive gold medal for the Americans — with a near-perfect show.

Durant made his first eight shots on the way to 23 points in less than 17 minutes, James added 21 points, nine rebounds and seven assists and the U.S. rolled to a 110-84 win over Serbia in the Olympic opener for both teams on Saturday.

They were a combined 18-

for-22 from the field — 8-for-9 for Durant, 9-for-13 for James — as the U.S. had no trouble with the reigning World Cup silver medalists from last summer in the Philippines. Jrue Holiday scored 15, Devin Booker had 12 and Anthony Edwards and Stephen Curry each added 11 for the U.S.

Three-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic scored 20 points for Serbia, while Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 14.

Both teams return to action on Tuesday, with the U.S. taking on upstart South Sudan — a rematch of a 101-100 escape win for the Americans in an exhibition in London earlier this month — and Serbia meeting Puerto Rico in what could essentially be an elimination

game for both teams.

Before the tournament started, Serbia coach Svetislav Pesic — who coached against the 1992 Olympic "Dream Team" from the U.S. — said this version of the American squad was even better than that first NBA-star-filled bunch that took the world by storm at the Barcelona Games. And when told of that comment a couple of weeks back, U.S. coach Steve Kerr laughed it off.

"When Chuck Daly coached the Dream Team, he never called timeout," Kerr said.

It took all of 2 minutes, 41 seconds of these Olympics for Kerr to call one. Serbia jumped out to a 10-2 lead, putting the Americans into a quick hole. Kerr subbed Joel Embiid out for An-

thony Davis after that first stoppage and things changed in a hurry; a three-point play by James midway through the first gave the U.S. its first lead and a lob from James to Edwards put the Americans up 25-20 after one.

By then, the Durant show was underway.

He finished his 8-for-8 first-half showing with a fadeaway, falling to the court, that beat the halftime buzzer for a 58-49 lead. And the lead steadily grew from there: Edwards shook free of Serbia's Nikola Jovic for a nifty baseline score to make it 84-65 after three, a play so good that Curry was dancing in delight and mimicking using a video-game controller on the sideline.

# Braves top Mets to end six-game slide

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Spencer Schwellenbach struck out a career-best 11 over seven dominant innings of two-hit ball, and the Atlanta Braves stopped a six-game losing streak Saturday with a 4-0 victory against the New York Mets.

"I'm a confident person. I expect to throw good every time I get the ball and I think that's why I've had success. I'm not surprised by it," Schwellenbach said. "That was needed more than ever and I kind of dug a little bit deeper today."

Marcell Ozuna and Matt Olson hit back-to-back homers in the fourth after Mets starter Tylor Megill retired the first 11 batters in his return from the minors. Orlando Arcia added an RBI single in the fifth after a leadoff walk to catcher Sean Murphy, and Eddie Rosario went deep against Megill (2-5) leading off the seventh.

Atlanta moved back ahead of the Mets for second place in the NL East and the league's top wild card. The banged-up Braves halted their longest skid since a six-game slide in September 2017 — the final week of Brian Snitker's first full season as manager. They haven't dropped seven in a row since August 2016.

"Probably an understatement that we needed a win today," Snitker said.

Schwellenbach (4-5) completely shut down a red-hot Mets lineup as the Braves ended New York's five-game winning streak. He walked none and threw 62 of 89 pitches for strikes in his 10th major league start.

**Blue Jays 7, Rangers 3:** Kevin Gausman pitched a four-hitter for his third complete game in 280 major league starts,

Daulton Varsho had four RBIs that included a three-run homer and host Toronto beat Texas.

Gausman (9-8) won his third straight start and joined Atlanta's Max Fried as the only pitchers with two complete games this season. Gausman, who pitched a five-hit shutout at Oakland on June 8, struck out eight, walked three and threw 118 pitches, his most since 2016. He threw 81 pitches for strikes.

**Padres 9, Orioles 4:** Michael King (9-6) struck out nine in 6⅓ shutout innings, Manny Machado hit a three-run homer in his old ballpark and visiting San Diego extended its winning streak to seven games with a rout of sloppy Baltimore.

**Rays 4, Reds 0:** Alex Jackson and Yandy Díaz hit consecutive home runs in a three-run fifth inning to back Zack Littell, and host Tampa Bay beat Cincinnati to stop its three-game winning streak.

**Phillies 8, Guardians 0:** Tyler Phillips tossed a four-hit shutout in his third big league start, and the right-hander from South Jersey who grew up a die-hard Philadelphia fan pitched his team to a win over visiting Cleveland.

**Tigers 7, Twins 2:** Tarik Skubal (12-3) gave up five hits and two runs in seven strong innings in his last start before the trade deadline and host Detroit rallied to beat Minnesota.

**Giants 4-5, Rockies 1-0:** Blake Snell struck out a career-high 15 in six innings in host San Francisco's opening victory over Colorado, and Hayden Birdsong fanned eight over five innings in a win in the second game for a doubleheader sweep.

Patrick Bailey hit a tiebreaking, two-run

double in the seventh inning in the opener. In the second game, Tyler Fitzgerald hit his eighth homer in 10 games.

**Cubs 9, Royals 4:** Patrick Wisdom hit a grand slam as a pinch hitter in the seventh inning, Seiya Suzuki also homered and visiting Chicago beat Kansas City.

**Marlins 7, Brewers 3:** Josh Bell hit a three-run homer to cap a five-run rally in the seventh inning that lifted visiting Miami to a comeback victory over Milwaukee.

**Mariners 6, White Sox 3:** Jorge Polanco hit two solo homers and added an RBI single to help visiting Seattle beat Chicago.

**Astros 7, Dodgers 6:** Alex Bregman hit a game-ending homer off Blake Treinen in the ninth inning that sailed over the left-field train tracks, and host Houston overcame Shohei Ohtani's NL-leading 32nd home run to beat Los Angeles.

**Diamondbacks 9, Pirates 5:** Ketel Marte homered and had three RBIs, pinch hitter Joc Pederson hit a two-run triple and host Arizona stretched its winning streak to four games with a victory over Pittsburgh.

**Yankees 11, Red Sox 8 (10):** Gleyber Torres' two-run double capped a three-run 10th inning, Aaron Judge hit his 37th homer as he reached base a career-high six times and visiting New York rallied past Boston.

**Athletics 3, Angels 1:** Shea Langeliers hit a three-run homer in the first inning as visiting Oakland continued its recent power surge with a win over Los Angeles.

**Nationals 14, Cardinals 3:** Keibert Ruiz hit a three-run home run to cap visiting Washington's seven-run outburst in the sixth inning as it beat St. Louis.

## Mets pitcher Senga likely to miss rest of regular season

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kodai Senga's season is over almost as soon as it started.

The New York Mets pitcher is expected to miss the remainder of the regular season after straining his left calf Friday night in the sixth inning of his 2024 debut against Atlanta. The team's projected No. 1 starter this year, Senga had been sidelined by a shoulder injury since early in spring training.

Senga hurt his lower leg when he bolted away from the mound to make way for teammate Pete Alonso to catch a popup. Mets manager Carlos Mendoza said Satur-

day an MRI showed a "high-grade strain."

"I think it's fair to say that he's pretty much done for the regular season," Mendoza said.

It's devastating news for Senga and the streaking Mets, who began the day holding the top National League wild card even after waiting almost four months for Senga to pitch.

Mendoza did not rule out a return for Senga this year if the Mets make the playoffs.

"It's a huge blow. But at the same time like you say, we got to this point without him," Mendoza said. "It sucks for him, for all of us. The way I see it is, we've been

through a lot, and if we get to see him pitch again this year that means we're in a good spot. So hopefully that's the case."

Senga was sharp in his first outing, striking out nine in 5⅓ innings of two-run ball to earn the win in an 8-4 victory over the Braves. The 31-year-old right-hander allowed just two hits and retired his final 10 batters.

Senga was 12-7 with a 2.98 ERA in 29 starts last season, his first in the majors after leaving Japan and signing a \$75 million, five-year contract with the Mets. He was runner-up for NL Rookie of the Year and finished seventh in Cy Young Award voting.