

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, June 16, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Nicholson submits Afghanistan assessment

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The new U.S. commander in Afghanistan has submitted his first three-month assessment of the situation in the war-torn country and what it's going to take to defeat the Taliban, a U.S. military official has told The Associated Press.

Although the content of the review by U.S. Army Gen. John W. Nicholson is secret, the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan received a major incentive this month when President Barack Obama decided to expand America's involvement with more airstrikes against insurgents, giving the U.S. military wider latitude to support Afghan forces, both in the air and on the ground.

The report — and Nicholson's deployment to Afghanistan — come at a time of Taliban resurgence, with the group gaining ground in the southern provinces of the Taliban heartland.

After 90 days in the country, Nicholson has now "completed his assessment and submitted it to his chain of command at the Pentagon," said a U.S. military official in Afghanistan, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to discuss the issue.

Since all foreign combat troops pulled out of Afghanistan at the end of 2014, leaving only an advisory and training contingent of international forces behind, the Afghan military has struggled in leading the fight, with its 195,000 soldiers learning as they go.

The 9,800 remaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan are scheduled to drop to 5,500 by the end of this year, but the pace of that decline has yet to be decided. One factor in determining future troop levels is the extent to which NATO allies are willing to remain involved in training and advising the Afghans.

US troop levels are likely to figure prominently in Nicholson's review, which is widely expected to include a recommendation for more U.S. soldiers to boost training.

Nicholson's review is also expected to look at the current threat level from various insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan, assess resources to deal with that threat and look at current and future opera-

tional needs. It's likely to take into account every aspect of the Afghan military's preparedness — from operational capability and training needs at all levels to fundamentals like equipment, facilities, maintenance and logistics, discipline and accountability.

Afghan Army Gen. Shir Mohammad Karimi, the former general staff chief of operations, said that to stem casualties, improve capacity and boost morale, Afghanistan needs close air support, heavy weaponry and, most of all, training.

"Training is a big issue," he said. "It has to be done even on the front line."

Karimi said that ideally, each of the army's more than 100 battalions should have at least one trainer on the ground.

## Orlando gunman on Facebook during attack

*Associated Press*

ORLANDO, Fla. — While his victims texted heartbreaking last words to loved ones from the blood-drenched bathrooms, Omar Mateen apparently went on Facebook to measure the shockwaves his attack on a gay nightclub was generating.

He searched for the terms "Pulse Orlando" and "Shooting," according to a letter released by a Senate committee.

The letter detailing Mateen's Facebook posts and searches in the final hours of his life came to light as grief-stricken Orlando prepared to bury the first of the 49 dead and awaited a visit Thursday from President Barack Obama, who met with victims' families and first responders.

Investigators, meanwhile, are trying to reconstruct Mateen's

movements before the rampage at the Pulse dance club and are taking a close look at his Palestinian-American wife, Noor Salman, 30, and what she may have known about the attack.

"The real Muslims will never accept the filthy ways of the west," Mateen, 29, an American-born Muslim, wrote on one of at least five Facebook accounts believed to be associated with him, according to the letter from Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, of Wisconsin, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee.

The committee sent the letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, asking for help uncovering the trail of hate Mateen left behind in cyberspace. Johnson did not explain how the committee obtained the information about Mateen's Facebook activity.

According to the letter, Ma-

teen made his series of Facebook posts and searches before and during the attack. A person familiar with the situation who was not authorized to speak publicly said the Facebook posts came moments before the attack began.

As he did in his call to 911 during the massacre, Mateen pledged his allegiance on Facebook to the leader of the Islamic State group, and warned in his final post, "in the next few days you will see attacks from the Islamic state in the usa."

CIA Director John Brennan said Thursday that the agency has found no connection between the gunman and any foreign terrorist organization.

Facebook had no immediate comment on the Senate request for help.

The rampage began at 2 a.m. and ended three hours later,

with Mateen being killed by a police SWAT team. The FBI said it is still gathering evidence at Pulse and analyzing cellphone location data to piece together Mateen's activities leading up to the massacre.

On Saturday night, hours before the rampage, Mateen visited Disney Springs, an outdoor restaurant, retail and entertainment complex at Walt Disney World, an official told The Associated Press.

The official said it is not clear what Mateen was up to.

Mateen's wife has gone into seclusion. U.S. Attorney Lee Bentley repeatedly refused on Wednesday to say whether charges might be brought against her or anyone else.

Six of the wounded remained in critical condition, and three others were listed in guarded condition.

# US forces arrive to assist Philippines

BY ERIK SLAVIN

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Four Navy E/A-18G Growler aircraft and 120 personnel arrived at Clark Air Base on Wednesday to help the Philippines patrol its sea borders amid heightened tensions over territorial rights in the South China Sea.

The detachment will train Philippine military pilots and “support routine operations that assure access to the air and maritime domains in accordance with international law,” a 7th Fleet statement said Thursday.

The VAQ-138 expedition-

ary squadron detachment from Whidbey Island, Wash., is at least the second temporary group to assist the Philippines since Pacific Command approved a new U.S. air contingent program in April.

The assistance comes amid concerns that China’s artificial island-building in the South China Sea will target Scarborough Shoal, which lies about 140 miles west of the main Philippine island of Luzon. The shoal is little more than a few rocks jutting out of the water at high tide but is claimed by both the Philippines and China.

“I think we see some surface ship activity and those sorts of things, survey type of activity,

going on. That’s an area of concern ... a next possible area of reclamation,” Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson told Reuters in March.

Beijing has dumped more than 3,000 tons of dirt on top of submerged reefs in the South China Sea to build radar stations, military-grade runways and other enhancements, according to Pentagon reports and commercially available satellite photos.

Chinese officials have also mulled imposing an Air Defense Identification Zone over international waters in the South China Sea, a move opposed by the U.S. and several nations in the region.

U.S. officials have discussed helping the Philippines build a “credible minimum deterrent” to defend and monitor its borders. Long focused on internal security, the Philippines needs more ships and aircraft to watch over the waters surrounding its many islands, according to regional security analysts.

In January, the Philippine Supreme Court signed off on the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which will allow the U.S. to send troops on extended rotations to Philippine bases.

The agreement does not allow the U.S. to control its own bases on Philippine soil, as it did with Clark Air Base and Naval Base Subic Bay until the early 1990s.

## Japanese officials form safety patrols

BY AARON KIDD

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Japanese officials are patrolling areas in southwestern Okinawa in an effort to prevent crimes near U.S. military bases and nightlife areas.

The team composed of about 40 staff members from Okinawa government agencies was created after a former Marine working at Kadena Air Base was arrested May 19 in connec-

tion with the death of a 20-year-old Okinawan woman, Japanese broadcaster NHK reported Wednesday.

The patrol vehicles, which use blue rotating lights, are on the streets between 7 and 10 p.m., the report said. The number of police officers patrolling the island prefecture is also expected to increase.

Last week, Japanese police recommended rape and murder charges for Kenneth Frank-

lin Gadson, who goes by his Japanese wife’s family name of Shinzato. Police say he hit Rina Shimabukuro on the head with a stick and stabbed her during an attempted rape.

The incident, along with other crimes in recent weeks involving Americans with ties to the U.S. military, have strained U.S.-Japan relations, particularly on Okinawa, where half of U.S. troops in Japan are based, and fueled anti-base protests.

## Alcohol ban signs removed in Japan

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Army and Air Force Exchange Service says it has taken down signs at stores in Japan that wrongly barred Navy servicemembers’ families from buying alcohol.

The signs state that “all Navy personnel and their families are prohibited from purchasing or consuming any alcohol products.”

However, AAFES spokesman Chris Ward said in an email Thursday the signs were incorrect and had been removed, though some were seen in a shop at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo that afternoon.

“In light of the current climate, the Exchange elected to err on the side of caution regarding the alcohol sales signs,” Ward said. “The signs have since been removed since the instruction does not apply to dependents.”

Last week, the Navy restricted most sailors in Japan to their bases and ordered that they refrain from drinking alcohol following a spate of high-profile arrests of Americans connected to the U.S. military.

From staff reports

## Petraeus joins vet-focused gun law initiative

BY ALEX HORTON

*Stars and Stripes*

SAN ANTONIO — A group of former senior military officials and veterans, including Gens. David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal, have launched a veteran-focused gun law initiative.

The initiative, Veterans Coalition for Common Sense, is spearheaded by Capt. Mark Kelly, a former Navy combat pilot and astronaut whose wife, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., was

the target of an assassination attempt in 2011.

The couple jointly formed Americans for Responsible Solutions, a gun control advocacy group in the wake of the Newtown, Conn., shootings in 2012 that left 27 dead, most of them children.

The new initiative splinters from that group and mobilizes veterans to urge lawmakers and stringent gun enthusiasts to rethink gun control access for domestic abusers and the mentally ill, in addition to people under

FBI investigation, the group’s spokesman and advisers said Wednesday.

That means advocating for more restrictive laws on gun purchases and expanding state laws similar to California’s gun violence restraining order law, which Kelly points to as a model and allows police or immediate family members to ask a court to put a temporary restriction on gun handling or ownership for someone in imminent danger of harm or self-harm.

# Ichiro surpasses Rose's mark

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — With two hits Wednesday, Ichiro Suzuki raised his career total in the Japanese and North American major leagues to 4,257, passing Pete Rose's record Major League Baseball total.

"This wasn't like a goal of mine to get to this point," Suzuki said through a translator after the Miami Marlins' 6-3 loss to the San Diego Padres.

Suzuki had 1,278 hits for Orix in Japan's Pacific League (1992-00) and has 2,979 with Seattle, the New York Yankees and Marlins. Rose was quoted recently by USA Today as saying: "I'm not trying to take anything away from Ichiro, he's had a Hall of Fame career, but the next thing you know, they'll be counting his high-school hits."

"Obviously, I've heard of Pete Rose's comments, and he wasn't happy about what they are saying about this record," Suzuki said. "To be honest, this wasn't something that I was making out as a goal. It was just kind of a weird situation to be in because of the combined total."

Suzuki's latest milestone has been a really big hit in Japan.

Newspapers published special editions for the morning rush hour, the national broadcaster led with the news, and fans and dignitaries paid tribute Thursday.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe praised Suzuki's mark as "an amazing record."

"A Japanese athlete has once again made a monumental contribution," Abe said, "and I feel tremendous pride."

"He is like a national treasure," office worker Tadahito Inaga said. "It will be fun to watch him go for 3,000."

Japan's national broadcaster NHK reported that Suzuki "broke the record for most hits ever by a Major League ballplayer" while acknowledging the record is unofficial because it spans two professional leagues.

Suzuki, 42, is in his 16th major league season. His first hit Wednesday was on a dribbler in the first. His second was a double into the right-field corner in the ninth.

"For me, it's not about the record," Suzuki said. "It's about my teammates and the fans."

Marlins president David Samson watched while having a sushi dinner in Germany.

"Ichiro gets a hit in the first inning and I loudly cheer. He looks at the TV and says 'Ichiro!' and the first thing he does is put down the tuna and extend his hand, and then he reaches to pull up his white coat like it's Ichiro's jersey and gets into Ichiro's batting stance," Samson said of the chef. "That to me was the most symbolic moment as it relates to Ichiro and his career. He transcends borders and demographics and religion and race. He does something very few people do. He does his job."

Suzuki joined the Marlins ahead of the 2015 season.

"If you could have 25 Ichiros, you would have 25 World Series rings," Samson said. "He is a true, humble professional who works as hard when he's 0-for-5 as when he's 5-for-5. That skill cannot be taught. In a world where sports athlete are rarely role models, Ichiro is a true role model off and on the field."

Suzuki reached on a dribbler up the first-base line in the first. Derek Norris, the catcher, made a sliding attempt to field the ball and throw it in one motion, but Suzuki had already raced past the bag. Suzuki advanced to second on Martin Prado's single and scored on Christian Yelich's RBI single.

In the ninth, Suzuki lined a double into the right-field corner against Fernando Rodney, then took off his helmet and waved it to applauding fans. The sparse crowd, announced at 20,037, gave Suzuki a warm ovation as both teams' players applauded for Suzuki, as well.

"Ichiro is a really special player and I love to see him get this and keep his march going toward 3,000 hits," Marlins manager Don Mattingly said. "It says a lot about him as a player, how he prepares every day and his love for playing."

Padres manager Andy Green seconded Mattingly: "He's special. There are people in your life which you're privileged with competing against and you get to manage against. He's as good as there is."

# Brooks anchors defenders

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Before the start of the Copa America, John Brooks likely was best known for coming off the United States bench to score the winning goal against Ghana in the 2014 World Cup.

Two years later, Brooks seems set on becoming known more as a regular starting central defender for the Americans.

The U.S. played in the Copa America quarterfinals on Thursday night against Ecuador largely because Brooks and the rest of his defense were superb in the previous two games, providing solidity to a position that's been in flux for years.

Brooks had a knee injury that caused him to miss World Cup qualifiers against Guatemala in March but he has started the past six games, the last four paired with Geoff Cameron. Yet even with that recent run of stability in the center of the American defense, the U.S. has used 15 different center back combinations in its last 30 games.

"I think John over the last two or three years had his ups and downs, little roller coasters like youngsters in general have, but he stayed very determined, very committed to what he is doing. ... I think he's just now realizing the sky is the limit for him," U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann said. "He's getting calmer. He's becoming more mature communicating with the whole back line. As a center back you need to keep a high level of aggressiveness because you are there to intimidate those strikers. So he does all those little things better and better. Doesn't mean he is perfect, but he is really maturing his game and it's fun for us coaches to watch."

The U.S. and Ecuador met less than a month ago in a pre-Copa America warmup match in Frisco, Texas, a match that was decided on Darlington Nagbe's late goal for a 1-0 U.S. victory, although Ecuador was without some of its top players.

Ecuador last reached the semifinals in 1993, when it was the host country. Meanwhile, The U.S. was trying to reach the semifinals of the Copa America for the second time in its four appearances and do so in soccer-mad Seattle in front of what should be an almost entirely American crowd.

"I think tomorrow has the potential to be one of the best American atmospheres we've seen," U.S. midfielder Michael Bradley said.

Part of the reason the United States not only made it out of the difficult Group A but with the top spot was because of defense that allowed only one goal during the run of play. Both of the goals allowed by the U.S. came in the first half of the opener against Colombia, and one from the penalty spot.

The last time the U.S. posted three straight shutouts came in 2013 when the Americans beat Panama (2-0) and Honduras (1-0) in World Cup qualifying and added a win over Guatemala (6-0) in a friendly. The U.S. hasn't posted three straight clean sheets in competitive matches since the 2011 Gold Cup.

# Mickelson still chasing missing major

Associated Press

OAKMONT, Pa. — One year before Jordan Spieth was born, Phil Mickelson made his professional debut with a 68 in the 1992 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach and was two shots out of the lead. The next day, he shot 81 and missed the cut.

All these years later, Mickelson is still chasing the one major he thought he would have won by now.

He turned 46 on Thursday when the U.S. Open returned to Oakmont for the ninth time, and that adds to the urgency. No one that old has ever won the U.S. Open. Only three players that old have won a major — Julius Boros, Jack Nicklaus and Old Tom Morris.

But the only time Mickelson showed his age is when he flew home to San Diego for the eighth-grade graduation of daughter Sophia.

"It's just important for me to be there for that stuff," Mickelson said Wednesday. "At 46 years old now, come tomorrow, those are the difference that I'll have, where a lot of the young guys in their 20s don't really have to think about it yet. But it's also brought me some of the greatest joy in my life."

The U.S. Open? Not so much.

His six runner-up finishes are a record. His double bogey on the 72nd hole at Winged Foot is the one moment that still eats at him. And it's hard for him to ignore the significance of winning a U.S.

Open, which is all that keeps him from the career Grand Slam.

"I could BS you and tell you I don't think about it," he said. "No, I think about it all the time. This is the tournament I want to win the most to complete the four majors. There's no question. I have to put that out of my head and try to execute and be patient and not think about results."

"You start thinking about results, you'll never play your best golf."

Oakmont is enough to grab everyone's attention. Reputed to be the toughest golf course in America, it has all the traditional elements required for the major billed as the toughest test in golf — tight fairways, thick rough, punishing bunkers, fast greens.

The only hope was from the weather, with thunderstorms in the forecast for the first few days.

"Rain or no rain on this golf course, it's still a very, very hard test of golf," Rory McIlroy said.

Adam Scott showed up at Oakmont a week ago and played in firm, fast conditions. It rained that night, and he returned for a practice round with McIlroy and found a more forgiving course.

"Both of us probably made five or six birdies each that day," Scott said.

If anything makes Mickelson feel relaxed going into this Open, it might be what has transpired off the golf course. He was named in a federal complaint that accused Las Vegas gambler Billy Walters

and a former board member of Dean Foods Co. of making millions of dollars in illicit stock trades.

The government claimed Mickelson only benefited from the misdeeds of others and did not charge him. He agreed to repay the \$931,000 he made in a single trade of Dean Foods in the summer of 2012.

Since then, Mickelson played well at Memorial and was runner-up last week at the St. Jude Classic, which he hopes will give him momentum going into Oakmont.

A coincidence? Maybe.

"It might have something to do with the fact that it's behind me that I've played well the last two weeks, and I feel like I'm playing stress-free and much better golf," he said. "That might have something to do with it. I don't know. But I'm excited that it's behind me. I'm excited I'm at one of my great opportunities."

"I view this week as a great opportunity to complete something that would be historic in my mind in a career."

Mickelson doesn't mind the difficulty of Oakmont, even though he hasn't done well in his two previous U.S. Opens here. He finished 18 shots out of the lead in 1994 and missed the cut in 2007 when he played with a bone bruise from chipping too much out of the rough during a scouting trip.

This time, Mickelson hasn't done a lot of chipping.



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# Werth lifts Nats in 12th

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First, Stephen Strasburg and Jason Hammel dueled to scintillating draw. Then, the Washington Nationals and Chicago Cubs engaged in a back-and-forth drama that stretched into extra innings.

Afterward, both sides agreed: It was a game better suited for late fall than the middle of June.

Jayson Werth singled in the winning run with two outs in the 12th inning, giving the Nationals a 5-4 victory Wednesday before a sellout crowd of 42,000, largest of the season in Washington.

The Nationals won two of three in this showdown between the NL East and NL Central leaders.

"It kind of had a playoff feel, the way it was fought and played, especially at the end," Chicago's Anthony Rizzo said. "It was a fun game, a crazy game, the kind you see in October."

Facing Adam Warren, Werth hit a liner off the wall in center field to score Michael Taylor, who hit an RBI single against Trevor Cahill (0-2) earlier in the

inning.

"It was awesome," Taylor said. "It's the kind of game you want to be a part of."

Addison Russell had given the Cubs the lead in the 12th with a run-scoring single off Yusmeiro Petit (2-0).

"They have a good team. We have a good team," Werth said. "It was a battle, a good series."

Strasburg gave up one run in seven innings for the Nationals, and Hammel did the same for Chicago. After they departed, both teams received shoddy bullpen work.

Pinch-hitter Stephen Drew gave Washington a 2-1 lead with a homer in the eighth off Pedro Strop. It was the Nationals' club-record ninth pinch-hit home run of the season, the third by Drew.

With closer Jonathan Papelbon on the disabled list, Washington manager Dusty Baker summoned Matt Belisle to protect the lead in the ninth. Belisle promptly gave up a leadoff double to Kris Bryant, and Baker turned to Oliver Perez to end it.

Rizzo greeted the left-hander with a two-run shot to right.

Cubs closer Hector Rondon added his name to the list of ineffective relievers in the bottom half. He issued a leadoff walk to Bryce Harper and an RBI single to Wilson Ramos.

Hammel remained 9-0 lifetime against the Nationals after giving up five hits, striking out four and walking nine. He ended his outing by getting Anthony Rondon to ground out with a runner on third.

Strasburg struck out eight, allowing six hits and a walk. He wasn't involved in the decision, so he's 10-0 with a 2.90 ERA after 14 starts this season.

Ben Zobrist opened the game by hitting a 1-2 pitch from Strasburg over the wall in right. Jason Heyward followed with a double and was cut down trying to steal third.

The Nationals got a first-inning run when Ben Revere singled and scored on a wild pitch. After Ramos led off the Washington second with a single, Hammel retired 13 straight.

# Chants seek more success at CWS

Associated Press

Anthony Marks has seen Coastal Carolina prevail in the face of dire circumstances at North Carolina State and LSU. So the Chanticleers outfielder has no doubt the team can have more success on college baseball's biggest stage.

"Check out our schedule, we're battle-tested," Marks said Wednesday.

They are ready to take on top-seeded Florida and other blue-blood baseball programs at the College World Series starting Saturday.

"Playing these teams is nothing we haven't seen," Marks said. "This team is ready to show everybody in the world we can play with the big boys."

Well, they already have. Coastal Carolina (49-16) has played defending national champion Virginia this season, along with nine NCAA Tournament teams.

After not being selected as a regional host despite a 44-15 record, winning the Big South conference title and a strong national RPI ranking (No. 12), the Chants quickly refocused to win the Raleigh Regional. The clinching game was delayed in the top of the ninth with North Carolina State ahead 5-3 and Coastal Carolina down to its final two outs. That evening, Marks recalled he and teammate Alex Cunningham were smiling and joking in their room because they were certain a dramatic comeback was ahead.

The next day, the Chanticleers rallied for four runs to win 7-5 and advance to the third super regional in school history. Again, they were given little chance of knocking off No. 8 national seed LSU on the road. Once more, Coastal rose to the challenge. Marks scored the winning run in the bottom of the ninth for a 4-3 victory that wrapped up the best-of-three series.

Coastal Carolina coach Gary Gilmore, leading the Chants the past 21 years, called the win destiny in his postgame remarks.

Destiny built over two decades. Gilmore remembers telling his first team back in 1996 that one day the Chants would reach the CWS in Omaha, Neb.

Slowly, Gilmore built a big-time program at the small school. The Chants have made 14 NCAA Tournament trips since he took over and lost their two previous super regionals, to North Carolina in 2008 and South Carolina two years later.

# Braves' Freeman hits for cycle in win

Associated Press

ATLANTA — On a night of rarities for the Braves, Freddie Freeman hit for the cycle and a two-run deficit in extra innings didn't mean the team with the worst record in the majors was going to lose yet again.

Chase d'Arnaud had a bases-loaded single in the 13th inning to cap a three-run rally and Atlanta beat the Cincinnati Reds 9-8 on Wednesday night.

The Braves snapped a four-game losing streak in a game even Reds manager Bryan Price had to appreciate.

"For entertainment value, that had to have been one of the great games of the season," Price said.

Alfredo Simon (2-7) gave up five hits and a walk in the 13th. Adonis Garcia and Nick Markakis opened the inning with singles, Jace Peterson hit a run-scoring double and Tyler Flowers added a tying single. An intentional walk to Erick Aybar loaded the bases before d'Arnaud's fly ball fell in center field.

Freeman became the first Brave to hit for the cycle since Mark Kotsay against the Cubs on Aug. 14, 2008. He is also the first to do it in the majors this season.

**Padres 6, Marlins 3:** Melvin Upton Jr. homered and had two RBIs and Derek Norris had a go-ahead, two-run single for

host San Diego.

Ichiro Suzuki had two hits for Miami to raise his total in the Japanese and North American major leagues to 4,257, passing Pete Rose's record MLB total.

**Dodgers 3, Diamondbacks 2:** Clayton Kershaw (10-1) allowed two runs and five hits in 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings, striking out 11 and walking one in Los Angeles' win over host Arizona. He has 133 strikeouts and seven walks this season.

**Royals 9, Indians 4:** Salvador Perez homered for the second straight night and Ian Kennedy kept Cleveland quiet while host Kansas City finished off a three-game sweep.

**White Sox 5, Tigers 3:** Chris Sale allowed three runs in seven innings to become the first 11-game winner in the majors as host Chicago topped Detroit.

**Rays 3, Mariners 2 (13):** Mike Montgomery walked Logan Morrison with the bases loaded in the 13th inning to bring in the winning run for host Tampa Bay.

**Rockies 6, Yankees 3:** Nolan Arenado tied for the major league lead with his 20th homer as host Colorado completed a two-game sweep and extended New York's losing streak to four.

**Giants 10, Brewers 1:** Johnny Cueto (10-1) won his seventh consecutive decision, striking out nine in seven innings,

as host San Francisco (41-26) won its fifth straight and moved a season-high 15 games over .500.

**Mets 11, Pirates 2:** Noah Syndergaard (7-2) struck out 11, gave up five hits and took a shutout into the ninth. Wilmer Flores homered and drove in four runs, and host New York piled up a season-high 19 hits.

**Blue Jays 7, Phillies 2:** Marco Estrada (5-2) allowed two runs and four hits, striking out five in 6<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings, and Edwin Encarnacion and Josh Donaldson hit solo homers in visiting Toronto's win.

**Red Sox 6, Orioles 4:** Hanley Ramirez hit his first homer since May 10 and knuckleballer Steven Wright, backed by a five-run third, allowed three runs and six hits in 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings for host Boston.

**Astros 4, Cardinals 1:** George Springer hit a go-ahead, two-run homer off Kevin Siegrist (4-2) in the eighth, and visiting Houston completed a two-game sweep.

**Angels 10, Twins 2:** C.J. Cron and Jett Bandy drove in three runs apiece and Hector Santiago pitched six strong innings in host Los Angeles' victory.

**Rangers 7, Athletics 5:** Robinson Chirinos and Rougned Odor both homered twice as visiting Texas rallied from a five-run deficit to defeat Oakland.

# Rested teams put on better show at NBA Finals

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — If it seems like these NBA Finals have lasted awhile, there's a reason for that.

They have. A variety of factors led the NBA to build some extra days of rest into the schedule for this title series between the Golden State Warriors and Cleveland Cavaliers. If a Game 7 is needed on Sunday, this series would need 18 days to go from start to finish — and that would match the 1978 NBA Finals for the longest championship round in major U.S. sports history.

Even the 1989 World Series, which was

interrupted by an earthquake for more than a week, didn't take that long.

"It's been beneficial for me for sure," Cavaliers guard Kyrie Irving said. "I hope my teammates can say the same. That four-and-a-half-hour, four-hour flight coming from the west coast and getting adjusted to the time, it can take a toll on your body. But I love the extra day. ... I know the NBA and I know the fans would like to see all of us at our best, and that extra day is beneficial."

So the Cavs aren't complaining. But the Warriors aren't exactly thrilled.

"With our team it's 'strength in numbers,'" Golden State's Andre Iguodala said, with a nod to the team's motto that

touts how deep the Warriors are compared to other clubs. "So I don't know if it goes against us being that the other team can get rest and they don't use as many bodies. The schedule is what it is and you just better be ready to play."

When Game 6 rolls around Thursday, it will be the 15th day of the series — which is how long the last seven-game finals took in 2013, between Miami and San Antonio.

The only instance of teams having one day between games was for Games 3 and 4 on June 8 and June 10. Every other game in the series is being preceded by two off days.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr says he'd

prefer playing every other day.

"I understand we're doing this to stretch it out and have more media sessions or whatever," Kerr said. "But I just think every other day is the way it should be."

This series is already assured of matching the longest in the NBA since the 1984 Finals, which went 17 days and had two long early breaks before going to an every-other-day format later in the series. The first 10 days of that series between the Boston Celtics and Los Angeles Lakers saw only three games played, while four games and three cross-country flights were squeezed into the final seven days.