

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

Friday, June 30, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Unreliability of F-35 risks budget strain

Bloomberg

Costs to operate and support Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F-35 will balloon unless the deteriorating reliability of the Pentagon's costliest program improves, according to an assessment from the Defense Department's own testing office.

The aircraft and its parts aren't as reliable as expected, and it's taking longer to repair them than planned, according to the presentation by the director of operational testing for defense officials and congressional aides. About 20 percent of the jets must await spares in depots because suppliers can't keep up with expanding production while fixing returned parts.

Past attention focused on costs and delays in what's now a projected \$379 billion program to acquire the planned fleet of 2,443 fighters for the Air Force, the Navy and the Marine Corps. But operating and maintaining the advanced jets for decades to come presents another set of challenges that may strain Pentagon budgets.

The availability of spare parts for the 203 F-35s already assigned to bases "is getting worse, affecting fly rates" and pilot training, according to the presentation dated May 8 and obtained by Bloomberg News. Reliability metrics linked to "critical failures have worsened over the last year," as improvement "has stagnated."

These trends mean long-term "lifecycle

costs" of the aircraft are "likely to increase significantly" over the current \$1.2 trillion estimate and affect budgets of the services, according to the presentation, which updated the testing office's annual report released in January.

Joe DellaVedova, spokesman for the Defense Department's F-35 program office, said in an email that since 2015, the office's estimate of annual operating expenses, including flying-hour costs, have decreased 2.2 percent for the Air Force version, 3.3 percent for the Marine Corps jet and 4.2 percent for the Navy model.

"These reductions were the result of improved maintainability and sustainability as the weapons systems matures, the design stabilizes and maintenance" becomes more efficient and effective, he said.

President Donald Trump requested 70 F-35s in his fiscal 2018 budget request, up from 63 last year. The two primary House defense committees signaled this week that they want to add as many as 17 more. Negotiations between Lockheed and the Pentagon also are underway for a "block buy" of 445 of the aircraft for the U.S. and allies.

The testing office presentation provides a snapshot of the reliability, maintenance and availability trends that in large part will determine whether the services and allies can afford to buy all the planned aircraft because most costs are absorbed by

long-term operations and support.

"Even if an F-35 squadron can get to where it is needed, what good is it if it can't fly them on missions?" analyst Dan Grazier of the Washington-based Project on Government Oversight said in a March 30 review of the test office's January assessment. "This is one of the most enduring problems of the F-35 program. The fleet has had a notoriously poor reliability track record."

The testing office said in its latest assessment that the trend in aircraft availability for flight test or training missions "has been flat over the past two years" because initiatives to improve reliability "are still not translating into improved availability." Just last week, the Marine Corps temporarily grounded operational jets in Yuma, Ariz., over reliability concerns with the program's key maintenance diagnostic system.

The fleetwide availability of F-35s to fly when needed is 52 percent, short of an interim goal of 60 percent as well as the 80 percent needed to start combat testing next year.

DellaVedova didn't dispute the 52 percent, saying availability rates "are expected to increase as newer F-35s are delivered each month." The 52 percent rating is the combined number of newer and older aircraft, he said, and newer aircraft are showing "significantly better reliability and aircraft availability rates."

Disagreement over how big Army should be in 2018

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers in Congress want to increase the size of the Army in 2018, but the House and the Senate disagree on how many more soldiers the service should add next year.

The House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday approved its \$625 billion version of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018, calling for the Army to add 17,000 soldiers. Yet the Senate Armed Services Committee's \$640 billion version of the bill only adds about 6,000 soldiers to the service. The White House does not want to expand the Army next year, proposing in its \$575 billion budget that

the service stay steady at its 2017 size of about 1,018,000 soldiers across active and reserve components.

The differing proposals could set up a fight over the Army's force strength in the coming months as Congress works to finalize the massive defense policy bill to fund the Pentagon.

The House's addition of 17,000 soldiers — 10,000 to the active force and 7,000 to the National Guard and the Reserves — matches what the Army included in its \$3.1 billion unfunded requirements list submitted privately to Congress to guide lawmakers on additional needs not requested in President Donald Trump's official budget proposal.

Nonetheless, Gen. Mark Milley, the Army

chief of staff, told lawmakers in early June that improving combat readiness across the force was more important in the near future than expanding the size of the service.

Milley said he would want the additional soldiers only if Congress also provides enough funding to ensure they are properly trained and prepared for war.

The general's remarks resonated with the Senate Armed Services Committee, staff officials with that committee said Friday. They described the Senate's moderate addition of 5,000 active-duty soldiers and 1,000 reservists and National Guard members as a "responsible rate" of growth that would allow the service to plug holes in existing units.

Bill targets military force authorization

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — House appropriators set in motion Thursday a repeal of the congressional authorization underpinning the U.S. military effort against Islamic State and recent strikes in Syria, a move that serves as a rebuke of President Donald Trump's foreign policy and a demand that he present Congress with a plan for how he intends to proceed.

The repeal still has to survive a vote by the full House, as well as the Senate, before it becomes law — a set of hurdles the measure may not be able to clear. But the inclusion of a proposal by Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., to strike down the 2001 authorization for use of military force, or AUMF, which she has offered in years past to no avail, marks a potential turning point for Congress in its ongoing struggle with the White House for a say in how the U.S. military fights extremist groups.

Like the Obama administration before it, the Trump administration has claimed legal authority to conduct strikes and support operations against ISIS under the AUMF that Congress

passed after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to greenlight the war against al-Qaida and affiliated groups in Afghanistan. Congress has long been divided on the legal argument — a split that has doomed several previous attempts to build momentum behind a new AUMF for fighting ISIS and its affiliates.

But members are finding new common ground in their disdain for the Trump administration's latest argument: that recent strikes against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad also are covered under the 2001 AUMF.

"That to me is going way — that's something that has to be addressed, legally, by Congress," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Corker is among lawmakers who have supported the administration's argument that the president has the power under the 2001 authorization to conduct strikes against extremist groups but who now also say the authorization does not permit operations against the Syrian government.

Corker added that he also was uncomfortable with the idea of

scrapping the existing authorization with nothing in hand to replace it.

"If you were to do away with the '01 AUMF and not have one relative to ISIS — then you're naked; there is no authority," Corker said. "You have to deal with it simultaneously."

Most proposals on a new AUMF for fighting ISIS do away with the 2001 AUMF and seek to replace it with language more closely tailored to Islamic State, as well as al-Qaida and the Taliban. Two of the better-known ideas — a proposal from Sens. Tim Kaine, D-Va., and Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and another from Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif. — would sunset that new authorization after a few years.

Lee's proposal would give the administration eight months to come up with a new AUMF before the repeal goes into effect — "sufficient time," Lee argued, "to decide what measure would replace it."

There were indications Thursday that Lee's provision could be snuffed out before it even hits the House floor. Committee on Rules Chairman Pete Sessions, R-Texas, said the provision could run afoul of House

rules prohibiting policymaking in spending bills.

"This is by and large policy on an appropriations bill, but it's an idea we need to understand," he said, adding that Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Edward Royce, R-Calif., would be a "co-decision-maker" in evaluating the provision.

Lawmakers in both houses of Congress have argued that to pass an AUMF, the administration must approach Congress with a proposal, however unsatisfactory it may be. The Trump administration has not approached Congress with a proposal, but Corker said he expects Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to at least speak to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee soon about the administration's "global ISIS strategy."

Kaine said Thursday he thinks the Foreign Relations Committee may take up his and Flake's AUMF proposal as soon as next month.

Lee stressed, however, that as long as Congress lets the 2001 AUMF linger, Trump has little or no incentive to seek new legal approval for any military action he orders.

Judge won't drop rare misbehavior charge against Bergdahl

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army judge overseeing Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's court-martial declined to drop the rare misbehavior charge that could land the former Taliban captive in prison for the rest of his life.

That judge, Col. Jeffery R. Nance, ruled Thursday against a motion by defense attorneys to drop the rarely tried misbehavior before the enemy charge that asserts he endangered the soldiers in his unit by leaving his combat outpost in eastern Afghanistan in June 2009. Bergdahl's lawyers had argued that prosecutors failed to name a specific offense in the misbehavior charge and wrongly used

it to seek a more serious punishment than a desertion charge carries.

Nance wrote in his decision that the charge does state an offense and added that Bergdahl would have known he would be punished for leaving his post in a war zone without authorization.

"There is simply no way the accused could not reasonably have understood that his conduct was proscribed," Nance wrote. "The government avers that the accused left his combat outpost intentionally, without authority and for the purpose of causing search and recovery operations, which he ultimately did cause. ... How could such alleged conduct be characterized as anything other than miscon-

duct under any definition of the word?"

Bergdahl, 31, has admitted to Army investigators that he intentionally left Observation Post Mest to cause a disturbance that he hoped would ultimately place him in front of military brass. He said he hoped to air grievances to high-ranking officers about his unit's commanders and had no intention of deserting the Army.

The soldier was captured by Taliban fighters within hours of leaving the post and transferred to the terrorist Haqqani network, which held him in Pakistan for five years. In May 2014, Bergdahl was released in a controversial exchange for five senior Taliban commanders who

had been held in the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

The Army charged Bergdahl with "misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place" and "desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty" in March 2015. The desertion charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, while the misbehavior charge carries a possible life sentence.

Bergdahl has yet to enter a plea to those charges. He remains on active duty in a clerical job at Joint Base San Antonio and has not been held in pretrial confinement. His court-martial is set to begin Oct. 23 at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

Suit: Mass. denies vets bonuses over 'bad paper'

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two Army veterans, with the help of Harvard Law School, filed a class-action lawsuit Thursday against the Massachusetts treasury, claiming it was wrongly denying “welcome home” bonuses to them and other veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.

The Massachusetts legislature created the “Welcome Home Bonus” in 2005 for post-9/11 servicemembers. Under the program, those who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan — and lived in Massachusetts for a period of at least six months before enlisting — are eligible to apply for a one-time, tax-free, \$1,000 bonus.

The program, run by the state treasury, is for veterans with honorable discharges. The two veterans named in the lawsuit enlisted multiple times, and they’re arguing that the honorable discharges they received before their later, other-than-honorable discharges should make them eligible.

“Both of these members deployed and were honorably discharged and re-enlisted. From a plain reading of the statute, they should be eligible,” said Dana Montalto, the senior fellow at Harvard Law School’s Veterans Legal Clinic working on the case.

Chandra Allard, a spokeswoman for Massachusetts Treasurer Deborah Goldberg, said Thursday the office could not comment on pending legal matters.

The Veterans Legal Clinic estimates there are 4,000 veterans in Massachusetts who met the criteria for the bonus but ended their service with other-than-honorable discharges.

Though the case centers on several thousand veterans in Massachusetts, Montalto contended it was characteristic of a broader trend of veterans with “bad paper” being denied benefits.

With S. Korean leader, Trump decries North’s ‘brutal’ regime

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Friday denounced the “reckless and brutal” regime in North Korea and demanded that Pyongyang choose “a better path” to de-escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula over its nuclear weapons program.

Appearing in the Rose Garden with new South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Trump pledged a “determined response” to the threat and renewed calls for regional allies and powers to implement stronger economic sanctions on Pyongyang, a day after his administration sanctioned a Chinese bank over allegations that it laundered money for North Korean companies.

“Our goal is peace, stability and prosperity for the region,” Trump said in a prepared statement. “But the United States will defend itself, always will defend itself — always. And we will always defend our allies.”

The show of solidarity between the leaders of two allied nations comes after Moon swept to power in the wake of the resignation of his predecessor, Park Geun-hye, who was undone by a financial scandal. Moon had campaigned on

a platform of greater engagement with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, whose bellicose rhetoric and ballistic missile tests have drawn rebukes from the White House. Moon also has questioned the need for the U.S.-backed THAAD missile defense system being installed on the peninsula that has been opposed by China and Pyongyang.

Trump and Moon, who met for a working dinner on Thursday and follow-up meetings Friday, touted a warm personal relationship, but Trump made clear that he had demands for Seoul, including the renegotiation of a bilateral trade deal, negotiated by the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama and ratified by Congress in 2011.

Trump called on South Korea to allow greater market access for American automakers.

“We talked last night and today about some tough trade issues like autos and steel,” Trump said. “I was encouraged by President Moon’s assurances that he is working to create a level playing field so American workers and businesses and especially automakers have a fair shake.”

Neither president offered a specific path forward on dealing with North Korea.

Trump, Putin face high-stakes meeting

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Meeting face-to-face with Russian President Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump’s “America First” policy will be put to the test if he opts to confront Russia over intelligence that Moscow meddled in the 2016 presidential election.

National security adviser H.R. McMaster said Thursday that Trump will meet with Putin along the sidelines of the annual Group of 20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, part of an itinerary that will include meetings with several world leaders.

Trump will face the challenge of working with Russia toward common goals in Syria and Ukraine, while also potentially broaching allegations about Moscow’s interference in the U.S. elections and accusations that some of his associates may have had contact with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign and the transition.

All 17 U.S. intelligence agencies have agreed that Russia was behind last year’s hacking of the Democratic Party’s email systems and tried to influence the 2016 election to benefit Trump.

Trump will be under pressure to side with the U.S. intelligence agencies and to press Putin on the issue of election meddling, something he has thus far been reluctant to do. Trump’s promise of closer cooperation with Russia has prompted concerns that the U.S. will have diminished leverage over global issues and he could be more sympathetic to Russia.

Trump has denied staunchly that he had any contacts with Russia during his campaign. Russian officials have denied any meddling in the 2016 election.

“Putin is all about optics and symbolism,” said Julianne Smith, a National Security Council and Defense Department official under President

Barack Obama. “He wants the meeting and the photo more than the discussion.”

Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian news agencies after the White House’s announcement that Putin is expecting to meet with Trump in Hamburg. They “will meet at the summit in one way or another. We have said it before,” he told state-owned RIA Novosti news agency.

McMaster and White House economic adviser Gary Cohn would not say whether the president intends to address accusations that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election, saying the agenda is “not finalized” for this or any other meeting.

“Our relationship with Russia is not different from that with any other country in terms of us communicating to them really what our concerns are, where we see problems with the relationship but also opportunities,” McMaster said.

Watchdog: Sarin used in April Syria attack

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — An investigation by the international chemical weapons watchdog confirmed Friday that sarin nerve gas was used in a deadly April 4 attack on a Syrian town.

The attack on Khan Sheikhou, in Syria's Idlib province, left more than 90 people dead, including women and children, and sparked outrage around the world as photos and video of the aftermath, including quivering children dying on camera, were widely broadcast.

"I strongly condemn this atrocity, which wholly contradicts the norms enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Con-

vention," Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu said in a statement. "The perpetrators of this horrific attack must be held accountable for their crimes."

The investigation did not apportion blame. Its findings will be used by a joint United Nations-OPCW investigation team to assess who was responsible.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement issued Thursday night after the report was circulated to OPCW member states that "the facts reflect a despicable and highly dangerous record of chemical weapons use by the Assad regime."

President Donald Trump

cited images of the aftermath of the Khan Sheikhou attack when he launched a punitive strike days later, firing cruise missiles on a Syrian government-controlled air base from which U.S. officials said the Syrian military had launched the chemical attack.

It was the first direct American assault on the Syrian government and Trump's most dramatic military order since becoming president months before.

Syrian President Bashar Assad has denied using chemical weapons. His staunch ally, Russian President Vladimir Putin, said last month that he believed the attack was "a provocation" staged "by people who

wanted to blame him (Assad) for that."

Both the U.S. and the OPCW were at pains to defend the probe's methodology.

Investigators did not visit the scene of the attack, deeming it too dangerous, but analyzed samples from victims and survivors as well as interviewing witnesses.

The Syrian government joined the OPCW in 2013 after it was blamed for a deadly poison gas attack in a Damascus suburb. As it joined, Assad's government declared some 1,300 tons of chemical weapons and precursor chemicals which were subsequently destroyed in an unprecedented international operation.

Iraqi forces push into Mosul's Old City

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — Iraqi troops were clearing up a key neighborhood in Mosul on Friday, commanders said, a day after making significant gains against Islamic State militants in the city and after the country's prime minister declared an end to the group's self-proclaimed caliphate.

Lt. Gen. Abdul Wahab al-Saadi and Lt. Col. Salam Hussein told The Associated Press that their forces were moving into territory previously held by ISIS in the Old City after capturing the hugely symbolic al-Nuri Mosque on Thursday following a dawn push into the Mosul neighborhood.

Al-Saadi said his forces were continuing to push forward from the Old City and on Friday reached within 766 yards of the Tigris River, which divides Mosul roughly into an eastern and western half.

The mosque and its 12th-century minaret were blown up by ISIS last week — an indication, the Iraqi government said, of the militants' imminent loss of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city.

Later Thursday, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the full liberation of the city is near, and Iraq's "brave forces will bring victory."

The operation to retake Mosul was launched in October, with the Iraqi government initially pledging the city would be liberated in 2016.

Instead, it has been a long and deadly fight — eight months on, ISIS holds less than a square mile of the city. Clashes have displaced more than 850,000 people, according to the International Organization for Migration.

The Old City, with its tightly packed houses and narrow alleys, has seen some of the most difficult urban combat. Damaged and destroyed houses dot the areas retaken by Iraqi forces, and the stench of bodies rises from collapsed buildings.

While ISIS has not confirmed any Mosul loss-

es, its media arm, the Amaq News Agency, carried reports of fierce fighting Friday on the city's outskirts and in the neighborhoods of Bab Jadid, al-Mashahda and Bab al-Beidh, claiming ISIS fighters killed more than 50 Iraqi soldiers there.

Though ISIS claims often are exaggerated, the fact that the reports made no mention of the Old City was significant and could be interpreted as indirect confirmation of losses there.

Another ISIS media outlet, the weekly al-Nabaa, on Thursday cited an unnamed commander of the militants as saying the battle for Mosul is a fight "either to achieve victory or die as a martyr."

Some 300 ISIS fighters are thought to remain holed up inside the last Mosul districts, along with an estimated 50,000 civilians, according to the United Nations.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tweeted his congratulations Friday to the city's residents and all the Iraqi people on the "breeze of freedom in Mosul after three years of occupation, violence and killing."

The al-Nuri Mosque, taken Thursday, was a symbolic win — the site is where ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi made his only public appearance in July 2014, declaring the self-styled Islamic "caliphate" encompassing territories then held by ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

But ISIS destroyed the mosque and its iconic leaning minaret last week, Iraqi and coalition officials said. ISIS blamed a U.S. airstrike for the blasts, a claim rejected by a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition who said coalition planes "did not conduct strikes in that area at that time."

Al-Baghdadi's fate remains unknown. Last month, Moscow announced that he may have been killed in a Russian airstrike in late May on the outskirts of the Syrian city of Raqqa.

Taliban attack kills 6 police in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban stormed an Afghan security post in the western Farah province, killing at least six policemen and wounding three, officials said on Friday, while a pickup truck hit a roadside bomb in a remote eastern district, killing seven villagers.

The roadside explosion took place in the eastern Nangarhar province's Achin district on Friday. The seven dead included two children and two women, said Ismail Shinwari, the district governor.

Earlier, Abdul Marouf Foad, the provincial chief of police in western Farah province, said the Taliban on Thursday night attacked a security post in the north of the provincial capital, also called Farah.

A gunbattle followed, lasting for three hours, he said, and added that nine Taliban fighters also were killed. The Taliban fled the scene after seizing ammunition and guns from the police, Foad also said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Strangers buy car for restaurant worker

TX ROCKWALL — A Texas man's 3-mile daily walk to work has inspired a group of strangers to collect enough money to buy him a car.

Andy Mitchell spotted Justin Korva, 20, walking to the suburban Dallas taco restaurant where he works and offered him a ride. KDFW-TV reported Korva told Mitchell he was trying to better himself and saving up for a car.

Korva's story inspired Mitchell and some of his friends to set up a donation box at a local restaurant.

The group recently surprised Korva with a used Toyota Camry, and the worker's overwhelmed reaction was caught on video by Mitchell's wife.

Enough money was left over to pay for a year's worth of insurance, two years of oil changes and a \$500 gas card.

Abandoned kangaroo raised by zoo staff

FL VIERA — An abandoned baby kangaroo is back with her mob after being hand-raised by the staff at a Florida zoo.

Brevard Zoo officials said in a news release that Lilly, who was born in August, was found abandoned on the floor of the zoo's habitat Jan. 23. Zookeepers believe stress caused by a severe storm the night before likely caused her mother to eject the baby from her pouch.

Florida Today reported zookeepers weren't able to reunite the pair, so the staff started taking care of Lilly.

Zoo collection manager Lauren Hinson became Lilly's primary caretaker, bottle-feeding her six times a day, taking her

home at night and wearing a fabric pouch to carry her.

Lilly's been making supervised visits to the zoo, and this week officials felt it safe to leave her there.

Former police chief charged in robbery

SC SIMPSONVILLE — A former police chief in South Carolina has been charged with robbing a bank.

News outlets reported Richard Inman is charged with robbing a bank in Simpsonville on Saturday. Investigators said a man handed a teller a note demanding money and saying he was armed.

Inman was arrested Sunday in Franklin County, Ga.

He had been the police chief in Williamston until he resigned in 2011.

Suspect takes joyride on street sweeper

NJ PATERSON — Police in New Jersey are looking for a suspect who stole a street sweeper and went on a brief joyride before crashing it.

Paterson police said the theft happened around 2 a.m. Wednesday as a worker was changing a garbage bag on the vehicle.

The suspect drove the vehicle for about a half-mile and crashed into several cars before running away.

Man jailed for selling fake Disney tickets

FL ORLANDO — A Florida man is accused of selling 13 fraudulent Walt Disney World tickets to a family of tourists.

The Volusia County Sheriff's Office told the Orlando Sentinel that Branden Bullerin, 19,

posted the tickets for sale on Craigslist.

An arrest affidavit said a woman from Tampa contacted Bullerin on June 18, wanting to buy the tickets. She met with him and bought the tickets for \$1,000.

According to officials, when the woman and her family arrived at the park, they were told the tickets were expired.

Bullerin is charged with grand theft and possession of a fraudulent admission ticket.

Man to be buried in motorcycle sidecar

PA STEEL CITY — A Pennsylvania man who loved motorcycles in life is taking one last ride.

Family members said Arthur Werner Sr., 89, of Steel City, made plans way ahead of his death from cancer Sunday to be buried in the sidecar of his 1990 Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail.

LehighValleyLive.com reported he found a funeral home run by motorcycle enthusiasts who were more than able to comply. Heintzelman Funeral Home has three motorcycle hearses in its fleet.

Werner was in the sidecar for Thursday's viewing and was to be buried in it Friday.

He bought the Harley with his retirement bonus after working 42 years as a Bethlehem Steel welder.

Venue hopes couples will wed during eclipse

SC BELTON — A South Carolina wedding venue is trying to attract couples to tie the knot during the upcoming solar eclipse.

The Greenville News reported that on Aug. 21, a total solar eclipse will follow a line

of totality across the continental U.S. from Oregon to South Carolina. Certain areas in South Carolina are projected to be great viewing locations for the phenomenon. Blue Jar Barn in Belton is promising to host eclipse weddings during the event.

The venue said it will facilitate marriage ceremonies in the roughly two-and-a-half minutes of darkness during the eclipse. The barn will provide a minister and photography, and concessions will be sold. The cost for an eclipse wedding is \$300.

Those looking to view the eclipse from the venue sans wedding can do so for \$10.

Probation for owner of crash-causing bull

VT RUTLAND — The owner of a bull that wandered out on a road and caused a fatal car crash in Vermont has been sentenced to probation.

Craig Mosher was sentenced Wednesday to 6 to 12 months of probation and 50 hours of community service for the crash that killed Jon Michael Bellis, 62, in 2015.

Mosher previously was charged with involuntary manslaughter, which carried a sentence of up to 15 years in prison. He instead pleaded guilty to a charge of reckless endangerment.

Farmers feared Mosher's prosecution would set a precedent that would impact the state's farming economy. Rutland County State's Attorney Rose Kennedy says the verdict is not an attack on all farmers and that Mosher was negligent in maintaining his fence.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news
updated 24/7 from bases
around the world.
Now online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

All-Star rosters face tough calls

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Time to pick players for the All-Star Game and make those close calls.

Yankees rookie Aaron Judge and Washington slugger Bryce Harper are among the big names who have undoubtedly secured their spots in Miami on July 11. But there's a logjam at the corners in the National League, and both rosters are smaller now that the Midsummer Classic no longer determines where the World Series begins.

"I'm OK with this," Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "When you're combining the attempt to play everybody and win the game for the sake of the National League so you get home-field advantage, there's a lot going on."

Online voting for the starters ended at midnight Thursday, so let's take a swing at sorting it all out — ignoring fan and player balloting. Simply our choices.

Both teams get 32 players, including 12 pitchers. That's down from 34 last year, with at least 13 pitchers. But all 30 clubs still must be represented, and that's where it really gets tricky.

For the purpose of these selections, we eliminated players expected to remain on the disabled list through Sunday, when the rosters will be revealed. That means stars like Mike Trout and Dallas Keuchel were left out because it's unclear if they'll be healthy enough to participate.

Maddon will manage the NL squad after guiding the Cubs to a World Series title last season. Cleveland's Terry Francona runs the American League team.

American League

First base — The stunning starter is Toronto switch-hitter Justin Smoak, followed closely by another unexpected newcomer: Tampa Bay's Logan Morrison. Yonder Alonso represents last-place Oakland.

Second base — Little big man Jose Altuve is a huge reason Houston has been the best team in baseball most of the year. His backups are Baltimore's Jonathan Schoop and Seattle star Robinson Cano.

Shortstop — Carlos Correa makes it an all-Astros double-play combination. Smooth-fielding Andrelton Simmons of the Angels is on the bench.

Third base — More surprises here, with Cleveland up-and-comer Jose Ramirez getting the start over Minnesota bopper Miguel Sano.

Catcher — Steady backstop Salvador Perez of the Royals receives his fifth straight nod. Young slugger Gary Sanchez from the Yankees gets his first.

Outfield — Leading off, instant power from George Springer of the Astros. He starts in center field, with Judge in right and Chicago first-timer Avisail Garcia shifting to left. The reserves are Boston's Mookie Betts, Detroit's Justin Upton and Kansas City's Lorenzo Cain.

Designated hitter — Corey Dickerson of the Rays hits his way to a surprising spot in the line-

up. The Mariners' Nelson Cruz also gets a call.

Starting pitchers — Chris Sale claims starting honors in his debut season with the Red Sox. The other lefty is Jason Vargas, enjoying quite a comeback with the Royals. Dealing from the right side are Houston first-timer Lance McCullers Jr., Minnesota veteran Ervin Santana, Texas ace Yu Darvish, reigning Rookie of the Year Michael Fulmer from Detroit, and Cleveland teammates Corey Kluber and Carlos Carrasco. Toronto right-hander Marcus Stroman was a tough omission.

Relievers — Boston flame-thrower Craig Kimbrel anchors a bullpen that also features Indians lefty Andrew Miller, Blue Jays closer Roberto Osuna and Houston setup man Chris Devenski.

National League

First base — So many sluggers to choose from. In the end, Arizona's Paul Goldschmidt gets the starting nod over Cincinnati's Joey Votto, Chicago's Anthony Rizzo and Washington's resurgent Ryan Zimmerman. Seems unfair to have to deny Rockies savior Mark Reynolds, putting up magnificent numbers and never an All-Star in 10 previous big league seasons.

Second base — Daniel Murphy is one of six Nationals selected, most of any team. Pirates dynamo Josh Harrison is the backup.

Shortstop — The starter is 2016 Rookie of the Year Corey Seager from the Dodgers. He edges out Reds first-timer Zack Cozart.

Third base — Another position overloaded with deserving candidates. Colorado's Nolan Arenado wins the start, beating out Washington's Anthony Rendon and reigning MVP Kris Bryant from the Cubs. Somehow, there's no room for underrated Jake Lamb of the Diamondbacks or Milwaukee newcomer Travis Shaw.

Catcher — Giants star Buster Posey is a no-brainer. The Cardinals' Yadier Molina snags second string, a career achievement award at a thin position.

Outfield — Bearded wonder Charlie Blackmon of the Rockies plays center field, flanked by Harper in right and Marcell Ozuna from the hometown Marlins in left. Miami bopper Giancarlo Stanton can start at DH, with New York's Jay Bruce, Atlanta's Ender Inciarte and Los Angeles rookie Cody Bellinger on the bench.

Starting pitchers — Nats ace Max Scherzer, last year's NL Cy Young Award winner, gets the ball to start. He's joined by teammate Gio Gonzalez and two other lefties: Clayton Kershaw (Dodgers) and Robbie Ray (Diamondbacks). The right-handers besides Scherzer are St. Louis' Carlos Martinez, Pittsburgh's Ivan Nova and Arizona's Zack Greinke. Washington's Stephen Strasburg has the star power and the strikeouts, but not the ERA. Los Angeles lefty Alex Wood is only short on innings.

Relievers — Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen headlines a group that includes Colorado newcomer Greg Holland, Milwaukee's Corey Knebel, Padres lefty Brad Hand and Phillies sidearm Pat Neshek.

Nationals' Turner out indefinitely

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The best offense in the National League is going to need a different sparkplug.

Trea Turner has a broken right wrist after being hit by a pitch Thursday, and it's unclear when the Washington Nationals will get their speedy shortstop and leadoff hitter back in the lineup.

Turner was hit by Pedro Strop's 2-1 fastball in the seventh inning of Washington's 5-4 loss to the Chicago Cubs. Turner stayed in the game until Stephen Drew entered as a defensive replacement in the ninth.

Turner went for X-rays after the game. The Nationals did not provide a timetable for his return.

"I didn't know because I had tape on my wrist, so initially it didn't really feel that bad," the second-year standout said. "Didn't feel good, but it didn't feel that bad. I went out there and tried throwing. It hurt to lob the ball, but it felt fine when I threw it basically as hard as I could or almost full speed, so that's why I stayed in there for a little bit."

"After a little while, it started stiffening up on me, so I figured I'd get out of there."

Turner stole two bases, bumping his total to seven in the four-game series and 35 on the season. He entered the day tied for the NL lead with Cincinnati's Billy Hamilton. He is batting .279 with seven homers and 32 RBIs after finishing second in voting for 2016 NL Rookie of the Year.

With Turner atop the lineup, Washington entered Thursday leading the NL in batting (.279) and runs (442).

Turner, who turns 24 Friday, said he previously broke a bone in his hand when he was 12.

"It sucks," Turner said. "Trying to have a good at-bat right there. You wish it hit you in the back or the arm or something. Not in the hand or the wrist, which is never fun."

Roundup

Kershaw earns MLB-best 12th win

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Freeway Series got feisty in the eighth inning when both benches and bullpens emptied after Brandon Morrow's fastball hit Yunel Escobar in the shoulder. The pitch clearly wasn't intentional despite Escobar's furor, and no fights actually broke out.

One ill-advised pitch from Morrow wasn't nearly as important as all the vicious pitches Clayton Kershaw threw on purpose in another dominant win for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Kershaw struck out 12 to become the majors' first 12-game winner, Joc Pederson hit a three-run homer and the Dodgers salvaged a split of the interleague rivalry series with a 6-2 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Thursday night.

Kershaw (12-2) yielded three hits and one unearned run over seven dominant innings, posting his fifth double-digit strikeout total of the season. He got ample support from the homer-happy NL leaders, who have won 18 of 21.

White Sox 4, Yankees 3: Following a frightening moment for New York outfielder Dustin Fowler in the first inning of his major league debut, Melky Cabrera and David Robertson combined to foil Aaron Judge and beat the visiting Yankees.

Cabrera robbed Judge of what would have been his major league-leading 28th homer in the fifth inning.

Cubs 5, Nationals 4: Jon Jay hit a go-ahead, two-run double during a three-run, ninth-inning rally against Blake Treinen, lifting visiting Chicago over Washington.

Red Sox 6, Twins 3: David Price won for the second time in three starts, Mookie Betts and Hanley Ramirez hit solo home runs, and host Boston rallied from a three-run deficit to beat Minnesota.

Indians 5, Rangers 1: Corey Kluber (7-2) allowed three hits and struck out 12 in eight innings, tying a franchise record held by Bob Feller with four consecutive games with double-digit strikeouts in host Cleveland's win over Texas.

Brewers 11, Reds 3: Ryan Braun started his team's six-homer barrage, hitting the first of three off Homer Bailey, and host Milwaukee beat Cincinnati, salvaging the final game of their series.

Tigers 7, Royals 3: At Detroit, Michael Fulmer (7-6) came within one out of a shutout, but Ramon Torres and Jorge Bonifacio singled, then Drew Butera drove them in with a double.

Astros 6, Athletics 1: Carlos Correa homered twice off rookie Daniel Gossett (1-3) and drove in four runs as AL West-leading Houston improved to 10-2 against visiting Oakland this season.

Mets 6, Marlins 3: Jay Bruce had a pair of RBI hits and scored twice, and New York took the rubber game of its series against host Miami to finish 5-5 on a road trip that started badly.

Cardinals 10, Diamondbacks 4: At Phoenix, Randal Grichuk hit a go-ahead, three-run homer in the seventh inning and drove in five runs for visiting St. Louis.

Orioles 2, Blue Jays 0: Ubaldo Jimenez (3-3) pitched two-hit ball over eight innings, and Jonathan Schoop had two hits and sacrifice fly as Baltimore has won consecutive road series after going more than two months without one.

Padres 6, Braves 0: Rookie Dinelson Lamet allowed four hits over seven innings, and Wil Myers and Hunter Renfroe hit two-run homers as host San Diego beat Atlanta.

Pirates 4, Rays 0: Jameson Taillon scattered seven hits over 6¹/₃ innings, Gregory Polanco and John Jaso hit solo home runs and host Pittsburgh beat Tampa Bay.

Police: Tennis star caused fatal crash

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Tennis star Venus Williams caused a car crash earlier this month that led to the death of a passenger in another vehicle, according to a police report released Thursday.

Palm Beach Gardens police say witnesses told investigators that Williams ran a red light in her 2010 Toyota Sequoia SUV, causing a June 9 crash that injured 78-year-old Jerome Barson, who died two weeks later.

The report says a 2016 Hyundai Accent driven by Barson's wife, Linda, crashed into the side of Williams' SUV. Linda Barson told investigators that she was approaching the intersection when her light turned green and that she was unable to stop in time. Linda Barson suffered unspecified moderate injuries. Williams, 37, was not hurt.

She told investigators she had entered the six-lane intersection on a green light but had been forced to stop midpoint by traffic ahead of her. She said she did not see the Barsons' car when she crossed into their lanes.

Palm Beach Gardens Maj. Paul Rogers says the crash remains under investigation. Williams, who has a residence in Palm Beach Gardens, has not been cited or charged. The report says she was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Venus Williams, the older sister of tennis star Serena Williams, has won seven Grand Slam titles, including five at Wimbledon.

She revealed in 2011 that she'd been diagnosed with the autoimmune disease Sjogren's syndrome.

Her ranking fell outside the top 100 as she coped with her illness and injuries, and from 2011 to 2014 she only advanced past the third round at a major once.

Early round losses continued to mount and questions about retirement came up time and again. Those questions are still asked, but she had a career renaissance, and in January reached the finals of the Australian Open, where she lost to her sister.

Yanks' Fowler injured in season debut

Associated Press

CHICAGO — New York Yankees outfielder Dustin Fowler had season-ending surgery on his right knee Thursday night following a crash into a wall in the first inning of his major league debut.

The 22-year-old Fowler started in right field in New York's 4-3 loss to the Chicago White Sox. He slammed into the short sidewall near the corner trying to catch Jose Abreu's foul ball with one out. Fowler calmly tried to stand and walk after hitting the wall, but his right leg buckled twice before he sat

down on the warning track and waited for help.

Fowler had an open rupture of the patellar tendon in his right knee, the Yankees said, and had surgery at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Fowler was set to lead off the second inning for his first big league plate appearance.

"When you rupture a patellar tendon, you're looking at at least six months," manager Joe Girardi said. "He's was really down and probably scared."

"He's been a pretty healthy player and he plays really

hard."

The training staff attended to Fowler with Girardi and distraught teammates looking on. After speaking briefly with Fowler, a dismayed Girardi leaned back and put both hands on his face, then called for a cart.

"It's one of the worst things I've seen on a baseball field," left fielder Brett Gardner said. "I just can't imagine a worse scenario for him."

"It's heartbreaking. He's a good kid and a really, really good player with a bright future."

Some NBA players might be on the move

Associated Press

MIAMI — Drama is never in short supply during NBA free agency.

This year will be no exception.

Case in point: A Utah fan has been lobbying Gordon Hayward to stay with the Jazz, citing a story this week about how the Massachusetts Legislature is aiming to raise taxes on those who make more than \$1 million a year. That fan happens to be U.S. Congressional hopeful Tanner Ainge, the son of Boston Celtics President Danny Ainge.

So even family ties get crossed during free agency, which starts Saturday at 12:01 a.m. Eastern, the moment when players like Hayward, Kyle Lowry, Blake Griffin, Paul Millsap and many more can start officially taking meetings and hearing pitches that will ultimately help them decide where to play next season.

"You never know what's going to happen in free agency," Miami Heat President Pat

Riley said. "We'll see what happens on July the 1st. It's always a pretty exciting time."

With Chris Paul already traded to Houston, and since free-agents-to-be Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry are widely believed as locks to stay with NBA champion Golden State, Hayward could be considered the top available player in free agency. He'll meet Saturday with the Heat, a team that will have around \$35 million to spend once they officially part ways with Chris Bosh and get relief from the remainder of his contract.

No deals can be executed until July 6, but it's likely that agreements adding up to \$2 billion or more will be in place by when the moratorium ends. Everyone is chasing Golden State, and Houston has fired the first big salvo.

"We're going all-in," Houston general manager Daryl Morey said.

That's evident, given how the Rockets pulled off a series of six trades to acquire Paul from

the Los Angeles Clippers this week. Houston is looking to add even more firepower to pair with Paul and MVP runner-up James Harden, potentially by getting Paul George (who has told Indiana he will play elsewhere in 2018, if not before).

George isn't a free agent, and neither is Carmelo Anthony. But both could be on the move now; the Pacers will likely have to trade George now to ensure that they don't lose him for nothing next summer, and Anthony could be freed by New York after the Knicks decided this week to part ways with Phil Jackson after three futile, playoff-free, turbulence-filled seasons.

Minnesota has already made a splash, getting Jimmy Butler on draft night. Butler says he's recruiting more players to join him, Andrew Wiggins and Karl-Anthony Towns.

There's a market for point guards, with Lowry, George Hill and former NBA MVP Derrick Rose all set for new deals. J.J. Redick, Kyle Kor-

ver and Dion Waiters will be among the shooting guards likely to get the most interest. Miami will aim to keep James Johnson out of a small-forward class that includes Andre Iguodala, the coming-off-an-injury Rudy Gay and Danilo Gallinari (along with Durant and Hayward).

Griffin has declared himself a free agent, meaning he potentially could leave the Clippers. He headlines a power-forward group that has Millsap, Serge Ibaka, Taj Gibson and others. And at center, perhaps the most interesting name out there could be JaVale McGee — who likely resurrected his career after a strong year with the Warriors.

There's so much money out there to spend, thanks to the salary structure that skyrocketed when the league's \$24 billion television deal began filling the NBA coffers. It led to some huge, eye-raising deals last summer — and teams might be more cautious this summer.

NHL free agency brings busts as well as booms

Associated Press

When the puck drops for NHL free agency Saturday, some teams will pay whatever it takes to land the top free agents available.

Some will hit. Some will miss.

It happens every summer.

The Edmonton Oilers signed Milan Lucic to a seven-season, \$42 million contract a year ago and he panned out, helping the franchise reach the playoffs for the first time since 2006 and advance to the second round. The Vancouver Canucks, meanwhile, didn't get a good return on their \$36 million, six-year investment in Loui Eriksson.

With a relatively weak crop of free agents, teams in the league have to weigh the risk and reward of signing one of the top players available such as defen-

seman Kevin Shattenkirk and forward Alexander Radulov.

Here's a look back at some booms and busts in NHL free agency since the salary-cap era began in 2005:

Lucic: The Oilers were looking for a veteran to improve Connor McDavid's surrounding cast and found him last summer. Lucic played in every game, ranked fourth on the team with 23 goals and 50 points on a second line that gave opponents something to respect other than McDavid.

Eriksson: The Canucks, clinging to hopes of winning with Henrik and Daniel Sedin, made an aggressive move to add Eriksson, and it backfired. Coming off his 30-goal, 33-assist season in Boston, he had just 24 points — his lowest total in a decade — and Vancouver missed out on the postseason for the third time in four years.

Zdeno Chara: It's not easy to remember the huge defenseman playing for a team other than the Boston Bruins. They signed him as a free agent in 2006 after he spent his first eight seasons with

the New York Islanders and Ottawa. Chara helped Boston hoist the Stanley Cup in 2011 and won the Norris Trophy in 2009.

David Clarkson: Toronto had more hits than misses in free agency during an 11-season stretch that included only one playoff appearance. One of their busts was Clarkson, who was given a seven-year deal in 2013 worth more than \$5 million per season. He had just 11 points in his first season with the Maple Leafs, who traded him the next year to Columbus for Nathan Horton, whose back injury made him a bust with the Blue Jackets after signing a seven-year, \$37 million contract in 2013.

Anton Stralman: It isn't easy to land an offensive defenseman in free agency, but the Tampa Bay Lightning did in 2014 with Stralman. He had a career-high 39 points in his first season with the Lightning, and helped them reach the Stanley Cup Final. He has averaged 33 points for the franchise, earning the \$4.5 million he's making per season as part of his five-year deal.

Dave Bolland: The Florida Panthers gave Bolland, one of the top free agents

in 2014, a five-year deal that averaged \$5.5 million a season. It didn't take them long to recognize the move was a mistake. After Bolland had just 23 points in an injury-shortened season with them and just 25 games into his second season, they traded him to Arizona, and he hasn't played another game in the NHL.

Marian Hossa: The high-scoring winger has announced he won't play next season because of side effects from medication to treat a skin disorder. The Blackhawks don't regret signing him to a 12-year, \$63-million deal in 2009 because he was a key player who helped the franchise win the Cup three times in a six-season stretch.

Stephen Weiss: Detroit didn't make the playoffs this year for the first time since 1990 in part because they haven't had many hits in free agency. Weiss, without a doubt, was a miss. He signed a five-year deal worth nearly \$5 million a season in 2013. Injuries limited him to 78 games and 29 points over two seasons before the Red Wings bought out the last three years of his deal, and he hasn't played in another NHL game.