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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Sex assault case haunts Air Force moms

Associated Press

To the mothers, the 13-year-old boy appeared largely unsupervised as he roamed among the clusters of townhomes on the U.S. Air Force base on Okinawa.

It would have been unremarkable — the neighborhood was full of kids — except that young girls were starting to report the boy had led them from play and molested them.

“We were like, ‘How is this OK?’” the mother of one 5-year-old girl told The Associated Press, which is granting her anonymity to protect her daughter’s privacy. She locked her kids inside.

The first girl to report had to wait six days for officials on the largest Air Force installation in the Pacific to provide counseling. The mothers didn’t feel much urgency from Air Force criminal investigators either. They told the families they’d waited 13 days to meet the boy’s father.

By then, mothers had identified five girls, ages 2 to 7, who said the boy had taken them to some trees or a playground or his house. Another five kids would allege abuse soon after.

Last August, Congress ordered the Defense Department to overhaul how it handles allegations of sexual assault among the tens of thousands of military kids who live or attend school on U.S. bases worldwide.

Yet the case at Kadena Air Base began unfolding in February — six months after President Donald Trump signed those landmark reforms.

For decades, justice has been elusive on American bases when the children of servicemembers sexually assaulted each other. Help for victims and accountability for offenders was rare in the nearly 700 reports over a decade that an AP investigation documented.

The new law required reforms across the Pentagon. The school system it runs for

servicemembers’ kids had to create new student protections. The Family Advocacy Program, whose social service counselors would turn victims away, must review reports. The Office of the Secretary of Defense will track cases and create policy to handle them.

The reforms are now rolling out, and the rollout has been uneven.

The Air Force has not drafted new guidelines. Instead, it is “reserving decision on adding or amending policy until publication of a Department of Defense policy,” according to spokesman Maj. Nicholas Mercurio.

Like in other armed services, Air Force representatives are helping form that policy. A Pentagon spokeswoman could not say when it will be published.

The Army didn’t wait to follow the Pentagon’s lead. It wrote its own policy.

That March 21 directive mandates both a criminal inves-

tigation and victim assistance through Family Advocacy, which now must inform counterparts on other bases when an offender’s family transfers.

Because military law doesn’t apply to family members, justice must come under civilian law. So cases on Army bases will be referred to state or local district attorneys who, unlike federal prosecutors, have juvenile justice systems.

The Navy and Marines fall between the Army and Air Force.

The Marine Corps is updating its guidelines to include “language and protocols that address problematic sexual behavior in children and youth,” according to Maj. Craig Thomas.

Naval leaders have directed base commanders to work with social services, according to spokesman Lt. Samuel Boyle. The Navy also has issued interim guidance, which it would not share.

US may send 2,000 more troops to Poland

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he is considering moving 2,000 troops from Germany to Poland, a country that had proposed building a “Fort Trump” in hopes of luring a larger American military force.

“It’ll be no additional troops in Europe. We will be moving them from another location in Europe,” said Trump, who singled Germany out as the likely location for a withdrawal.

Trump was in Washington speaking alongside Polish President Andrzej Duda, who has long sought more U.S. troops in his country as protection against potential Russian aggression.

Trump said nothing has been finalized

but added that Poland would be building some type of new military facility to accommodate U.S. troops.

“Poland is going to build a phenomenal facility in a beautiful location,” Trump said at the White House. “The facility itself will be world class.”

Last year, Duda said Poland was willing to spend up to \$2 billion for a U.S. base and suggested calling it “Fort Trump.”

Coinciding with the troop announcement, Trump said Poland has ordered about 35 “brand-new” F-35 fighters from the U.S., a formation of which was set to fly over Washington for Duda’s visit.

“I congratulate you on that (purchase),” Trump told Duda. “It means you have good taste.”

Although details about the looming troop movement in Europe remain unclear,

Trump has criticized Germany for missing a NATO spending benchmark that calls for dedicating 2% of gross domestic product to defense.

“Germany is not living up to what they should be doing, but Poland is paying the max,” Trump said. Trump said the roughly 52,000 troops in Germany have been there “a long, long time.” Official military figures estimate about 35,000 troops in the country.

Trump also criticized Berlin for a natural gas line deal with Russia.

Trump’s comments on how many troops will be headed for Poland are at odds with what administration officials said Tuesday, when a U.S. official told reporters that an additional 1,000 troops would head to Poland.

Shanahan offers military a political reminder

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan told troops and civilian workers Tuesday to avoid political displays while on the job, a reminder that comes after the White House told the Navy to keep the USS John S. McCain out of sight to avoid offending President Donald Trump during a visit to Japan.

In separate memos to civilian and military leaders, Shanahan said their mission to protect and defend the nation should be apolitical.

“Those of us privileged to serve our Nation, in and out of uniform, in the [Depart-

ment of Defense] must be the epitome of American values and ethics,” Shanahan said.

He told military commanders to remind those in uniform that they must avoid actions that imply Pentagon approval of political candidates or causes. In a memo to the civilian workforce, he said personnel may take part in limited political activities, but “they may never engage in such activity while on-duty or in a Federal building.”

Both Shanahan and Trump have distanced themselves from the ship incident, in which an unknown official in the White House military office directed the Navy to

keep the McCain out of sight, presumably to avoid reminding the president of the late Sen. John McCain.

The warship was named for McCain’s father and grandfather and was posthumously rededicated in the name of the senator and former prisoner of war.

The president blamed the order on “well-meaning” staff aware of his dislike of McCain.

Asked about the memos Tuesday, Shanahan said: “What I wanted to do is, after the McCain situation, remind everyone that we’re not going to politicize the military. So it’s just a good healthy reminder.”

Pentagon, Lockheed near massive F-35 deal

The Washington Post

The Pentagon and Lockheed Martin have reached a tentative agreement on procurement of 470 new F-35 fighter jets for the Air Force, Navy and Marines and allied militaries, the Defense Department announced Tuesday. A finalized contract award is expected in August, officials said.

If the massive order for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighters is finalized it will be the largest procurement in the history of the Department of Defense. Its value is estimated at \$34 billion.

The \$34 billion agreement “marks the largest procurement in the history of the Department and provides a best value for our warfighter and taxpayer, incentivizes industry to continuously improve their performance and achieves the lowest F-

35 unit prices per aircraft to date,” F-35 program executive Vice Admiral Mathias Winter said in an email to reporters.

Buying the jets in bulk should allow the Pentagon to decrease the average unit cost of the plane by about 15%, a Pentagon spokeswoman said. It should bring the cost of the most common F-35 variant below \$80 million one year ahead of schedule.

Lockheed Martin program general manager Greg Ulmer touted the company’s cost savings in the most recent contract, which he chalked up to “smart acquisition strategies and a relentless focus on cost reduction.”

“Beating our long-stated goal and delivering an F-35A below \$80 million ... is a testament to our joint government and industry team — and we look forward to working with the Joint Program Office to

finalize the agreement,” Ulmer wrote in an email.

Both Lockheed and the Defense Department are trying to address decades of criticism from congressional war hawks and doves alike who have characterized the F-35 program as too costly.

Almost since its inception, the F-35 has been a lightning rod for criticisms around wasteful defense spending. And it has been a financial bedrock for Lockheed, propelling the Bethesda, Md.-based manufacturer to a dominant position atop the defense contracting hierarchy.

Proponents argue that the plane’s stealthiness, advanced sensors, targeting capabilities and extended flying range would make it an important asset in a war against a so-called “near-peer” competitor such as Russia or China.

Marine is ousted over racist, pro-Nazi tweets

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A Hawaii-based lance corporal is being kicked out of the Marine Corps for advocating a white supremacist ideology, the Marine Corps said Tuesday.

Lance Cpl. Mason Edward Mead will be discharged under other-than-honorable conditions, the service said in a statement.

Mead, of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, is being held in the brig at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, said Capt. Eric Abrams, a Marine Corps spokesman. Mead is being

processed for discharge, pending completion of final administrative and medical requirements, the statement said.

The Marine Corps began investigating Mead after media reports in February alleged he had tweeted racist and pro-Nazi messages, one of which included a photo of TNT cylinders formed into the shape of a swastika.

Another tweet included an image of a man posing in front of Mount Fuji containing the caption “ching chong,” along with a series of emojis that include a Japanese flag, a dog and a knife and fork.

A comment under the post by Mead’s

account said, “excited to try Japanese teriyaki Doberman!!!”

In lieu of a trial, Mead admitted guilt May 7 to an Article 92 charge, which constitutes a failure to obey an order or regulation, in this case the Marine Corps Prohibited Activities and Conduct Prevention and Response Policy, Abrams said.

That policy defines and prohibits activities that are inconsistent with the Marine Corps ethos, he said.

Under the policy, the service prohibits certain dissident and protest activity, including activities related to white supremacy, he said.

Carter shares lessons learned at the Pentagon

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Reining in cost overruns on the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter, planning to defeat Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and responding to Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea were all part of former Defense Secretary Ash Carter's two years at the helm of America's largest enterprise — the Department of Defense.

The backstories behind some of the biggest issues faced by the department during Carter's tenure, from February 2015 to January 2017, are told in "Inside the Five-Sided Box: Lessons from a Lifetime of Leadership in the Pentagon," which he discussed in an interview coinciding with the book's release Tuesday.

A section of the book deals with the F-35, which, at a projected cost of more than \$428 billion, is the Pentagon's most expensive weapons program ever.

The F-35 "was in deep trouble," Carter wrote of problems he started dealing with as undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics in 2009.

The book details the steps he took to improve management of the F-35 program, which included replacing its manager and a threat to manufacturer Lockheed Martin that the department might not buy any of its jets.

The F-35 will almost surely be the last generation of tactical fighter developed, as changes to battlefield technology are expected to make such aircraft increasingly vulnerable in decades to come, Carter says in the book.

'Winning the peace'

The fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria was another big part of Carter's tenure as defense secretary. He said he never doubted that the group would be defeated — the extremists were ejected from their last stronghold in Syria in March. But he said he still worries about "winning the peace."

To that end, "... the U.S. shouldn't be signaling, either in Iraq or Afghanistan, that it intends to withdraw its influence or its remaining troops," he told Stars and Stripes.

Carter also said he has fond memories of talking to troops on ships at sea or in war zones. The messages he gave them stressed the importance of their missions and let them know "that the country is behind them and the leadership is behind them."

A section in his book on dealing with the media praises The Associated Press, Reuters and some other major newspapers and television networks but takes issue with "would be scandal mongers" in search of stories to sensationalize.

Carter also criticized the lack of reporting by the U.S. media about success in combat, something he said would have made headlines in the past.

Serious challenges

The book also addresses the challenges posed by China, Russia, Iran, North Korea and terrorism.

The rebalance of U.S. military forces to the Pacific, underway during Carter's tenure, has continued, as have Chinese efforts to claim territory in the South China Sea.

There needs to be pressure on Beijing to conform to international norms, not just from the U.S., but from other nations in Asia, he told Stars and Stripes.

Tariffs are one way of confronting China, he said before adding that there are other tools that can be used. Not joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which links several of America's Pacific friends and allies, is a mistake, Carter said.

"It's in our interests to be aligned with that bloc. It was a way to combine with the rest of Asia to create a trading system," he said. "If you don't do that, you leave the battlefield to China and the other nations."

A hawk in his stance on Iran, Carter said he thought the shelved deal to prevent that nation from developing nuclear weapons had been fine if it was obeyed. However, he added that he had told Defense Department leaders not to change their position on Iran because of the deal.

Lessons for managers

Carter's book also covers weapons procurement, manpower, recruitment, retention, pay and benefits. It was written for servicemembers and civilians working for the department and it's dedicated to them, he said.

It also has plenty of lessons for managers, be they in government or the private sector, said Carter, who is now director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

"I hope there are some younger people who read it and decide that public service and especially military service is a noble way to spend their lives," he said.

Ex-Navy worker pleads guilty in child porn case

BALTIMORE — Federal prosecutors said Spencer Steckman, 35, a former employee of the U.S. Navy, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to child pornography offenses. He will be sentenced in November for the production, transportation and possession of child pornography.

The former resident of Silver Spring, Md., was charged last year after being detained by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service while working for the U.S. Navy in Japan.

While living in Maryland, prosecutors say, Steckman enticed two 13-year-old boys to take sexually explicit photos of themselves in exchange for money or videogame redemption codes. Investigators say they later found eight more victims in California.

Steckman has remained in custody since being detained by NCIS in March 2018.

Navy examines site for carrier's nuke reactors

RICHLAND, Wash. — The U.S. Navy is launching a new study to examine whether to dispose of reactor compartments from its first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier at a site in Washington state.

The Tri-City Herald reported Monday that the Navy is considering the Hanford Nuclear Reservation as well as commercial alternatives to dispose of defueled reactor compartments from the decommissioned USS Enterprise.

Under the Hanford option, the partially dismantled ship would be sent to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash.

The reactor compartments would then be sent by barge up the Columbia River to reach the Hanford site.

A public comment period on the scope of the environmental study for the Hanford option is scheduled to last through July 15.

2 divers cited for saving motorist from icy pond

GROTON, Conn. — Two Navy divers were being presented with the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for rescuing a motorist from an icy pond in Maine.

Divers John McLeod, of Wiscasset, Maine, and Thomas Parhiala Jr., of Salem, N.H., were to receive the awards from Vice Adm. Charles "Chas" Richard, commander of submarine forces, on Wednesday at the Navy submarine base in Groton, Conn.

Officials say the two were driving on Route 17 near Rockport, Maine, when a car swerved across the road and went airborne before landing in the partially frozen Chickawausee Pond.

Officials said both jumped into the icy water to save the motorist on March 23, 2018. McLeod brought the unconscious occupant to shore and Parhiala made sure there were no others in the car.

From The Associated Press

Trump Jr., ex-FBI officials to testify on Russia

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats angling to spotlight damning allegations from special counsel Robert Mueller's report were focusing Wednesday on contacts between the Trump 2016 presidential campaign and Russia.

The House Intelligence Committee invited two former FBI senior officials to testify about the counterintelligence implications of Mueller's investigation. Mueller did not find a criminal conspiracy between the campaign and Russia but did detail a series of interactions and outreach that have alarmed Democrats and accelerated calls from some in the party for impeachment proceedings and renewed investigations.

The report details more than 100 con-

tacts between Russia and Trump associates, some in public and others in private, said Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democratic committee chairman. Among them was a June 2016 meeting at which the president's oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., expected to receive dirt from Russia about his father's Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Also Wednesday, Trump Jr. was scheduled to testify behind closed doors before the Senate Intelligence Committee, according to two people familiar with the meeting. Senators want to discuss answers he gave the panel's staff in a 2017 interview and to another Senate panel in a separate interview that year.

President Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen told a House commit-

tee in February that he had briefed Trump Jr. approximately 10 times about a plan to build a Trump Tower in Moscow before the presidential election. Trump Jr. told the Judiciary panel he was only "peripherally aware" of the proposal.

In the House hearing, both ex-FBI officials, Robert Anderson and Stephanie Douglas, retired from the bureau before it launched its investigation into the Trump campaign in summer 2016. By inviting them instead of agents involved in the investigation, Democrats are giving center stage to longtime career officials likely to be seen as more neutral and devoid of the political baggage that accompanies some of the Republican president's more outspoken critics.

Trump, Biden trade barbs in visits to Iowa

Associated Press

DAVENPORT, Iowa — President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden repeatedly laid into each other while traveling in the battleground state of Iowa, unleashing verbal attacks that at times felt more appropriate for the final weeks before Election Day than a lazy summer about 17 months before voters go to the polls.

The back-and-forth on Tuesday laid bare the rising political stakes for each man. Trump has zeroed in on Biden as a threat to his reelection chances and is testing themes to keep him at bay. Biden, meanwhile, is campaigning as a front-runner with near-universal name recognition, rel-

ishing the fight with Trump while trying to ensure he doesn't ignore the demands of the crowded Democratic primary.

"People don't respect him," Trump said of Biden after touring a renewable energy facility in Council Bluffs. "Even the people that he's running against, they're saying: 'Where is he? What happened?'"

With a dose of exaggeration, the Republican president added: "He makes his stance in Iowa once every two weeks and then he mentions my name 74 times in one speech. I don't know. That reminds me of Crooked Hillary. She did the same thing."

He went on to muse that standing for nothing but opposing his policies was the

reason Clinton lost.

At almost the same moment in Mount Pleasant, Biden noted that his staff told him Trump was watching footage of his criticism of the president from early in the day as Air Force One landed in Iowa. "I guess he's really fascinated by me," Biden said. "I find it fascinating."

He started to say more but then stopped himself, quipping: "My mother would say, 'Joey, focus. Don't descend. Stay up.'"

Tuesday evening in Davenport, Biden suggested Trump was an "existential threat to America" and said voters must stop the president's attempts to elevate his office beyond its traditional limits of power.

Single-soldier tours in Europe, Japan extended to 3 years

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Single-soldier tours in Europe and Japan will increase from two to three years in a move designed to save money and boost the combat readiness of overseas units, the Army said Tuesday.

The policy change took effect June 1 and applies to all single soldiers who receive unaccompanied travel orders after June 14, the Army said in a statement. The change will affect 3,000 to 5,000 soldiers each year.

"The Army has no plan to expand this policy to other locations at this time," the service said.

The Army is aiming to reduce turnover and improve unit stability with the move. The change will also relieve pressure on the Army's logistical network, which was overwhelmed with permanent change of station moves that frustrated many military families waiting for household goods shipments.

For single soldiers, longer tours could hurt morale for those uncomfortable abroad or

be an opportunity for soldiers who embrace being overseas.

Sgt. Adam Lee, an engineer with the Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment, said that he would welcome the additional year.

"I think most of my soldiers wouldn't have a problem with it," Lee said from Vilseck, Germany. "That would give you less time back home with your family, but it would give you more time to make connections with your unit and feel at home here in Europe."

The policy revision does not apply to soldiers on accompanied tours, who typically serve

three-year assignments.

The change is expected to reduce the amount of new soldier training that must be conducted by component units, the Army said.

The Navy also extended various tours for similar reasons. In May 2018, standard tours increased by one year for Japan, Guam and Spain. Incoming sailors at those locations are now serving up to four years.

First-term sailors assigned to sea duty in Japan, Guam or Spain also are required to serve up to four years at their new commands.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Girl, 16, gets \$1.2M in scholarship offers

DE DOVER — A 16-year-old Delaware girl was offered \$1.2 million in academic scholarships from more than a dozen universities and colleges.

Delaware State News reported Angelica Malone graduated with honors last month from Early College High School at Delaware State University.

Malone was home-schooled throughout middle school and started high school when she was 12 years old.

Malone is planning to attend Albright College in Reading, Pa., to study psychobiology this fall.

She has already earned 44 college credits and will be a college sophomore when she starts.

Cop gives his shoes to homeless man

IL NILES — A police officer in suburban Chicago took off his shoes and gave them to a homeless man who had tripped because of poor footwear.

The Niles police department said on Facebook that Officer Brian Zagorski gave up his shoes Saturday. He also offered a pack with toiletries and clothing but the man politely declined.

Facebook followers were impressed. Dawn Stenstrom wrote, "Kindness doesn't cost a thing."

Woman finds python in kitchen pantry

MO BALLWIN — A suburban St. Louis woman returned from vacation to find an 18-inch-long python curled up in the corner of a

kitchen cabinet.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that the Ballwin woman reported she found the snake June 2 at her home in the Kensington West apartments.

Officers used a pillow case to capture the snake. Animal control officers identified it as a python and took it away.

The mystery remains about how the reptile got into the cabinet.

Ballwin police officer Scott Stephens figures it was someone's pet, but a check of neighbors found no one had lost a python.

Fluids from corpse close restaurant

CT WINDSOR — Fluids leaking from a decomposing body upstairs forced health officials to close a Connecticut restaurant.

WFSB-TV reported Windsor police were called to the Siam Corner Thai Kitchen and Pho restaurant on May 29 for a report of a foul odor and a reddish-brown liquid dripping from the ceiling of the restaurant behind the front counter.

Police said they entered the apartment above the restaurant through an unlocked window and found the tenant's body in his bed.

They said he had been dead for several days.

Police said no foul play is suspected.

Law lets patrons dine with dogs outdoors

TX GALVESTON — Texas restaurants may soon welcome dogs in outdoor dining areas under a new state law that allows patrons to bring their furry friends at a business' discretion.

The Galveston County Daily News reported that Gov. Greg

Abbott signed a bill into law that changed the state's previous stance on dogs in dining areas.

Texas health code previously prohibited dogs from locations where food is served and prepared. Counties and cities would skirt the law by enacting their own rules, such as requiring permits or extra inspections.

School locked down after bear is spotted

RI CRANSTON — A Rhode Island middle school was placed in lockdown when a bear was spotted wandering school grounds.

School officials said Hope Highlands Middle School in Cranston went into lockdown as a precaution about 8:30 a.m. Monday.

Students were already inside for the day, and there were no reports of encounters between the bear and students or staff.

Ray Votto, chief operating officer of Cranston public schools, told The Providence Journal that he's worked in the system a long time and this is the first time a bear has caused a lockdown.

'Blair Witch Project' to get video game

MD BALTIMORE — A video game inspired by the Maryland-based horror film "The Blair Witch Project" is expected to come to PCs and Xboxes in August.

The Baltimore Sun reported the game was announced at a video game conference in Los Angeles. The game, which will draw on events from the 1999 film, has a release date of Aug. 30.

The movie was shot in locations in Maryland, including the town of Burkittsville. The

film follows a group of college students as they create a documentary in the Maryland woods about the legend of the Blair Witch.

The low-budget film became a cult classic that popularized the "found footage" horror genre.

Several artists' pieces stolen at festival

PA PITTSBURGH — Artwork valued in the thousands of dollars was stolen from several artists at Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Arts Festival.

The thefts occurred between Saturday night and Sunday morning. The artists arrived to find their works gone.

The festival has 24-hour security, and it's not clear how some of the larger pieces were stolen without anyone noticing.

Digital billboards to warn of tornados

IL CHAMPAIGN — The National Weather Service and an outdoor advertising company are teaming up to equip nine digital billboards in central Illinois with the ability to display tornado warnings.

Adams Outdoor Advertising said the billboards in Champaign will alert drivers to any tornado warning in effect within 20 miles of each billboard.

General manager Reid Reker said the company is providing the warnings as a donation to the community in the interest of public safety.

When an alert is activated, each billboard will show the tornado warning until it has been lifted.

From wire reports

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Koepka goes after third US Open title

Associated Press

The U.S. Open's return to Pebble Beach coincides with the 100-year anniversary of the course with the most famous coastline in American golf. Where Jack Nicklaus said he would go if he had only one more round to play. Where Tiger Woods delivered his greatest display of dominance.

Not even the vivid scenery of the Monterey Peninsula can remove the pressure that accompanies any U.S. Open, though. For this one, there is plenty to go around.

When the USGA announced nine years ago a return to Pebble Beach, officials had no idea just how much history would be at stake for the 119th U.S. Open.

Brooks Koepka can match a record that has stood for more than a century by winning for the third straight time. Phil Mickelson gets perhaps his best chance — maybe his last

one — to become only the sixth player with the career Grand Slam. Also feeling the pressure is the USGA to end a bad run of complaints and chaos in the U.S. Open.

"If they can't redeem themselves at Pebble Beach, then there could be a problem," said Rory McIlroy, a comment that reflects how players feel about Pebble Beach and how much faith in the USGA has eroded the past few years.

Koepka seems to be the least bothered by the U.S. Open changing its look (Erin Hills) or repeating mistakes (Shinnecock Hills), perhaps because he keeps winning.

"Whatever they're doing, it's working for me," he said.

Go back more than a century to find the last player — the only player — to win the U.S. Open three straight times. Willie Anderson did it from 1903-05, when golf was so young in America that only 78 players

showed up at Myopia Hunt outside Boston when he won his third in a row.

Since then, four other players have tried and failed to match Anderson's mark.

Next up is Koepka, who is on the best run in the majors — he has won four of his last eight — since Woods was at his peak. Adding to the attention on Koepka was his victory last month in the PGA Championship at Bethpage Black, which looked and played like a U.S. Open. Of the four players who had a chance at three straight U.S. Opens, only Ralph Guldahl in 1939 won the previous major (Masters).

"I know what I'm chasing or trying to accomplish," Koepka said. "It's just another golf tournament. You can put some outside pressure on. It's a major championship.

"I'll be up for it, I know that. I enjoy a tough test of golf, and that's what you're going to get

at a U.S. Open.

"I know the odds are against me to win it," he said. "You just need to go out and take care of business. And if you don't, hey, I gave it my all."

At least he has his name on the silver trophy — twice.

Mickelson would love nothing more than to win just one U.S. Open, the major that has teased him over the last 20 years and now keeps him from his place in history with the career Grand Slam and in the most elite group in golf. Woods, Nicklaus, Gary Player, Ben Hogan and Gene Sarazen are the only players who have won all four majors.

"You have to look at those guys differently," Mickelson said. "And if I ever join that crowd — and the only way to do that is to win a U.S. Open — it would redefine my career."

This is Mickelson's fifth crack at completing the slam.

NBA Finals make last trip to Oakland's Oracle Arena

Associated Press

TORONTO — The NBA Finals are making one last trip to Oracle Arena.

For the Toronto Raptors, it's a second shot at a first championship.

For the Golden State Warriors, it'll be a night to play for a fallen teammate and the fans they're leaving behind.

Game 6 is Thursday and the stakes could hardly be higher.

"We owe our fans one more game in Oracle," Warriors guard Klay Thompson said.

There have been so many already during Golden State's stretch of five straight trips to the NBA Finals, the second-longest run in NBA history. But few had all the drama and emotion that will fill the Oakland air Thursday.

Toronto will bring a 3-2 lead into the building and try again to win a title that seemed so close in Game 5. The Raptors had a six-point lead with

less than 3 minutes remaining Monday, poised to put an end to a Golden era in the NBA. Then Thompson and Stephen Curry rallied Golden State to a 106-105 victory, fueled by three straight three-pointers.

Now the Raptors have to do things a little bit better, for a little bit longer.

"Come out and do the same thing. Just be mentally focused, try to limit our mistakes, and be the aggressor," Kawhi Leonard said. "Just play hard 48 minutes and see what happens."

It's the last game in the arena before the Warriors move to the new Chase Center in San Francisco, and the first one for Golden State with the knowledge that Kevin Durant won't be back this season. The two-time defending champions began the series hoping he could return from a strained right calf, but not long after he did he was lost in the second quarter of Game 5 with an

Achilles tendon injury.

Center Kevon Looney also went out again, so the Warriors are nowhere near full strength as they make their final stand.

They can't worry about that now.

"It's not like we're the only team battling," Draymond Green said. "They're battling as well. Everybody is facing fatigue at this point. No one cares who is tired or if you're facing a little fatigue. You've got to do what you came here to do anyway."

The Warriors are trying to become the 12th team to come back from a 3-1 deficit and only the second in the NBA Finals, after the Cleveland Cavaliers did it against them in 2016. Being back home Thursday is a luxury but certainly no guarantee, not after Toronto won Games 3 and 4 at Oracle Arena to go along with its victory there in the regular season.

So the Raptors won't be rat-

ted by having to go back there, even though they nearly avoided it.

"We came into this series expecting a long series and we put ourselves in a good position," guard Fred VanVleet said.

A loss Thursday sends the Warriors into a summer they won't be eager to face. Durant can become a free agent and will have to decide where he wants to play — whenever he can play. Thompson's contract also expires, so these could be the final days of a dynasty.

But until then, the Warriors are showing they can win with skill or will. They've beaten teams for so long just because of their talent advantages, but getting this title would require much more.

"We made a lot of different statements over the course of these five years," Curry said. "Win or lose, I don't feel like we need to prove anything anymore. It's just about can we get the job done or not."

US routs Thailand in opener

Associated Press

REIMS, France — Thailand was never a real threat to the U.S. national team. Even so, the three-time Women's World Cup champions had no desire to go easy on a lesser opponent in their opening game.

Goals matter in the group stage.

And statements matter in soccer's biggest tournament.

"Obviously we have the utmost respect for everyone we play, but it's the World Cup," said captain Megan Rapinoe.

Alex Morgan tied the tournament record with five goals and the United States opened with a historic 13-0 rout of Thailand on Tuesday night. Samantha Mewis and Rose Lavelle each added a pair of goals for the United States, which broke the record for goals and margin of victory in a World Cup game.

Rapinoe, Lindsey Horan, Mallory Pugh and Carli Lloyd also scored. The previous record margin was Germany's 11-0 victory over Argentina in 2007.

Morgan tied Michelle Akers' record for World Cup goals, set in the quarterfinals against Taiwan in 1991. The team's seven different scorers also set a tournament record.

Lloyd, 36, became the oldest American woman to score at a World Cup and joined Germany's Birgit Prinz as the only players to score in five straight World Cup games.

The United States faced criticism over its relentless attack. The Americans led 3-0 at the break and then broke the match open in the second half, with the players celebrating goal after goal.

The Americans meant no disrespect, said Morgan, but they simply wanted to position themselves for a run at a second consecutive title.

"We really just came into the game really wanting to showcase ourselves," Morgan said. "Every goal matters in this tournament and that's what we were working on."

Asked about the lopsided score, U.S. coach Jill Ellis wondered if a 10-0 victory in a men's World Cup would elicit the same questions.

"This is a world championship, so every team here has been fantastic to get to this point. And I think that to be respectful to opponents is to play hard against opponents, and as Alex said, it's a tournament where goal differential is important," Ellis said.

The two teams were the last to kick off in the group stage for the monthlong tournament. Host France opened the World Cup before a sellout crowd in Paris on Friday night with a 4-0 victory over South Korea.

Ranked No. 1 in the world, the Americans had dropped only one match in their previous 38, a loss to France in Le Havre in January. The team was 7-1-2 overall this year, with six straight wins going into the World Cup.

The last time the Americans played in the sport's top tournament, Lloyd had a hat trick in the first 16 minutes and the United States beat Japan 5-2 in Canada for the trophy.

The U.S. pounced early against Thailand, too, on Morgan's header in the 13th minute off Kelley O'Hara's precisely placed cross. Mewis, Lavelle and Horan were all making their World Cup debuts.

"When you get a deluge of goals like that, it's a good feeling," Ellis said. "It builds confidence."

Thailand, ranked No. 34 in the world, was clearly outmatched even though the team has shown progress on the world stage. Making its World Cup debut in 2015, Thailand finished third in its group but earned its first win, a 3-2 victory over Ivory Coast.

At the final whistle, Lloyd and Christen Press were seen consoling the Thailand goalkeeper. Morgan put her arm around Thailand's Miranda Nild, who was wiping away tears on the field. Nild and Morgan both

played college soccer for the California Golden Bears.

"They were disappointed, of course. They intended to make an impression in this first match and they were disappointed," coach Nuengrutai Srathongvian said through a translator. "Yes, they are all athletes and they will be resilient. We've got two more games to play and we need to bounce back."

Srathongvian said soccer in Thailand is still growing and there is a limited pool of players to draw from.

Ellis made some lineup moves for the match in the absence of defender Becky Sauerbrunn, whom the team said was held out as a precaution with a minor quad injury. Julie Ertz was moved to the backline and Mewis got the start in the midfield.

Morgan, U.S. Soccer's 2018 Player of the Year, now has 106 international goals. Playing in her third World Cup, she was named player of the match.

It came close to the team's biggest rout ever. The U.S. beat the Dominican Republic 14-0 in a 2012 Olympic qualifier.

Up next for the U.S. is World Cup newcomer Chile on Sunday in Paris. In the final group match before the knockout round, the Americans will travel to Le Havre to face nemesis Sweden, who they've been grouped with six times in World Cup play.

In the last meeting between the teams, Sweden ousted the United States in the quarterfinals at the 2016 Olympics. Afterward, former U.S. goalkeeper Hole Solo called Sweden "cowards" for bunkering on defense. Alyssa Naeher has since replaced Solo, who was dismissed from the team.

Sweden defeated Chile 2-0 earlier on Tuesday in Rennes, a match that featured a 40-minute weather delay.

Attack on Ortiz was organized

Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — Dominican prosecutors say witnesses and security camera footage show that the attempt to kill former Red Sox star David Ortiz was carried out by two men on a motorcycle and two other groups of people in cars, indicating a new level of sophistication in the attack.

The details were contained in a court document obtained by The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Oliver Moises Mirabal Acosta, who was captured Tuesday night in the town of Mao in the northern Dominican Republic, was driving a grey Hyundai Accent before mounting the bike driven by Eddy Vladimir Feliz Garcia, 25, the document said.

The document also said the two men were seen on security camera footage talking with other people in the Accent and another Hyundai in a nearby street before the shooting at 9:20 p.m. Sunday.

"In one of the videos it was possible to observe both the accused and the shooter planning the commission of the incident right on Octavio Mejia Ricard Street, which is parallel to the place where the event took place," prosecutors said.

The document also reveals ineptitude, saying the driver was captured after he skidded and fell off his bike as the pair tried to flee.

Feliz Garcia's lawyer said his client is an innocent motorcycle taxi driver who had no idea his passenger was going to commit a crime.

Ortiz is recovering from his wounds in intensive care in Boston.

Alvarez helps Astros hold off Brewers

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Yordan Alvarez's teammates told the slugger they'd fine him if he didn't homer in his first game for the Houston Astros.

After he connected in his debut they warned him that the fine would double if he didn't knock one out of the park in Game 2.

So far, Alvarez isn't out a dime.

Alvarez hit one of Houston's four home runs to become the first player in franchise history to homer in his first two major league games and lead the Astros to a 10-8 win over the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday night.

"It's something incredible and emotional. I can barely describe it, to be able to hit

two home runs in my first two games in the big leagues," Alvarez said through a translator.

Yuli Gurriel, Robinson Chirinos and Tyler White also homered for the Astros, who won for the fourth time in five games.

Houston led by one in the fifth when Michael Brantley hit a run-scoring triple to chase Freddy Peralta (3-3). He was replaced by Matt Albers, who was greeted with a single by Gurriel which pushed the lead to 6-3. Alvarez then knocked a changeup by Albers into the right-field seats to extend the lead to 8-3.

The 21-year-old Alvarez, who led the Pacific Coast League with 23 homers, also had a two-run shot in his debut on Sunday. He is the first player since Trevor Story in 2016 to homer for the first two hits of

his career.

Manager AJ Hinch was impressed with how Alvarez bounced back with his homer after striking out in his first two at-bats on Tuesday night.

"I haven't been around him enough to see how he really responds to the success or failure," Hinch said. "But after the couple of punchouts, he stays on the ball, he's got tremendous strength ... it was a nice swing. We needed as many runs as we could get tonight."

Travis Shaw hit a solo homer for the Brewers in the seventh before a two-run home run by Chirinos in the bottom of the inning extended Houston's lead to 10-4.

The Brewers added a run on a bases-loaded walk in the eighth and got within two on Yasmani Grandal's three-run

homer off Chris Devenski with two outs in the ninth. But Devenski struck out Eric Thames to end it.

Houston starter Brad Peacock (6-3) yielded seven hits and four runs in 6¹/₃ innings for the win.

Peralta took the loss by giving up eight hits and six runs in four-plus innings.

"I thought some of the pitches were good, ... sometimes that's concerning too, just because they're hitting your good pitches, that's trouble," manager Craig Counsell said. "He threw strikes again. He attacked. That part I liked. Obviously, the home runs and the driven balls got him."

Christian Yelich hit his MLB-leading 25th home run and finished a triple shy of the cycle.

MLB Roundup

Pence homers inside the park as Rangers top Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Hunter Pence hit a stand-up, inside-the-park home run and the Texas Rangers beat the Boston Red Sox 9-5 Tuesday night after both managers were ejected.

Ariel Jurado (4-2) struck out six while pitching six innings of three-run ball, and Pence, Asdrubal Cabrera and Ronald Guzman each had two RBIs for the Rangers. Texas has won four of five, including Monday night's extra-innings victory at Fenway Park.

Xander Bogaerts and Mookie Betts homered for Boston, which has lost three straight and five of six.

The Red Sox dropped to 34-34 on a night filled with frustrations. Andrew Benintendi was ejected in the fifth, and manager Alex Cora was also tossed defending his outfielder.

Darwinzon Hernandez (0-1) made his first major league start and struck out seven, but he struggled with his control

and allowed four runs — three earned — on three hits and five walks.

Yankees 12-4, Mets 5-10: Pete Alonso hit a three-run homer in the first inning off an ineffective James Paxton (3-3), J.D. Davis and Carlos Gomez also went deep, and the visiting Mets won the second game of a day-night doubleheader to earn a split with the Yankees.

Luke Voit hit a three-run homer off Zack Wheeler (5-4) in a five-run fourth inning as the Yankees overcame a three-run deficit to win the opener.

Cardinals 7, Marlins 1: Rookie Dakota Hudson (5-3) allowed one run in a career-high seven innings, and visiting St. Louis handed Miami its sixth consecutive defeat.

Phillies 7, Diamondbacks 4: Scott Kingery hit a three-run homer, Jake Arrieta (6-5) threw six effective innings and host Philadelphia beat Arizona.

Orioles 4, Blue Jays 2: Rookie John Means (6-4) tied a season high with seven strikeouts

and host Baltimore took the series opener from Toronto.

Athletics 4, Rays 3: Mike Fiers (6-3) pitched six effective innings, Matt Olson and Khris Davis hit consecutive homers, and visiting Oakland beat Tampa Bay.

Indians 2, Reds 1 (10): Rookie Oscar Mercado hit a bases-loaded single with one out in the 10th inning, leading host Cleveland past Cincinnati in the intrastate matchup.

Royals 3, Tigers 2: Jorge Soler had the tying RBI double in the eighth inning and Cheshlor Cuthbert followed with the go-ahead run-scoring single to lead host Kansas City over Detroit.

Twins 6, Mariners 5: Jorge Polanco scored the tying run on a wild pitch and Marwin Gonzalez hit the go-ahead RBI single during host Minnesota's three-run rally in the eighth inning.

White Sox 7, Nationals 5: Wellington Castillo hit a grand slam and top rookie Eloy Ji-

menez homered at home for the first time, powering host Chicago.

Rockies 10, Cubs 3: Rookie Peter Lambert (2-0) went five strong innings and baffled Chicago for a second time in five days as host Colorado won its 10th straight at home.

Braves 7, Pirates 5 (8): Brian McCann hit one of his team's four homers in the second inning and took Pittsburgh starter Chris Archer deep again with a tiebreaking, three-run shot in the sixth to lead host Atlanta.

Giants 6, Padres 5: Evan Longoria hit a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh inning and made a stellar defensive play in the ninth as host San Francisco rallied past San Diego.

Angels 5, Dodgers 3: Shohei Ohtani and Justin Bour homered off Kenta Maeda (7-3) in a five-run first inning, and the host Angels hung on to sweep the two-game Freeway Series over the Dodgers.