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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Raptors deploy to Qatar amid tensions

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has deployed about a dozen F-22 Raptor stealth fighter jets to the small Persian Gulf nation of Qatar as part of its recent buildup of forces amid tensions with Iran, Pentagon officials said Friday.

The advanced fighters arrived at Al Udeid Air Base just outside the Qatari capital, Doha, on Thursday, according to a U.S. Air Forces Central Command statement. Air Force photos showed the planes nearing and landing at the base, which houses some 10,000 American troops. The U.S. military uses the base to run its air operations across the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The fighter jets were part of a previously announced deployment of new forces into the Middle East, aimed at bolstering

Attempt to limit Trump's Iran war powers rejected in Senate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Political unease over the White House's tough talk against Iran is reviving questions about President Donald Trump's ability to order military strikes without approval from Congress.

The Senate fell short Friday, in a 50-40 vote, on an amendment to a sweeping defense bill that would re-

quire congressional support before Trump acts. It didn't reach the 60-vote threshold needed for passage. But lawmakers said the majority showing sent a strong message that Trump cannot continue relying on the nearly two-decade-old war authorizations Congress approved in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The House is expected to take up the issue next month.

the ability of the United States to protect its forces throughout the region, especially in Iraq and Syria, where U.S. troops operate in close proximity to Iranian-controlled militias, a

defense official said Friday.

American officials have said since last month that credible intelligence showed Iranian forces and proxies could be planning to attack Americans

in the region.

Air Forces Central Command said it was the first time F-22s had been deployed to Qatar.

The United States has blamed Iran for a series of mine attacks on commercial tankers in the Gulf of Oman in recent weeks. Iran also shot down an unarmed American reconnaissance drone last week near the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for the world's oil supply that connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman. American officials said the RQ-4A Global Hawk was shot down in international airspace, but Iran maintains the drone entered its airspace.

President Donald Trump on June 21 said he was minutes away from ordering limited strikes on Iranian missile and radar locations but ultimately canceled the retaliatory strikes after learning some 150 people would likely be killed.

Witness stories in SEAL's murder trial contradicted

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — A Navy SEAL troop commander testified under a grant of immunity Friday, contradicting some witnesses in the ongoing murder trial of Navy SEAL Chief Edward R. Gallagher.

Lt. Cmdr. Robert Breisch, who said he was "close" with Gallagher, was the last witness to offer testimony in the trial. The defense, led by civilian attorney Timothy Parlatore, rested shortly after Breisch stepped down from the witness stand.

Gallagher is charged with premeditated murder, aggravated assault and willful discharge of a firearm in con-

nection to his platoon's 2017 deployment to Mosul, Iraq, to assist the Iraqi army's battle against Islamic State.

In prior testimony, two SEALs from Gallagher's platoon testified that their chief stabbed a wounded teenage ISIS fighter in the neck after rendering medical aid to him. Others testified Gallagher shot indiscriminately at civilians, hitting two of them.

Gallagher denies the charges and has pleaded not guilty.

Breisch testified Friday that although he spent little time with Gallagher's platoon in 2017, his impression was that they were "doing well" and that by the time they returned to San Diego in September of that

year, it had been a successful deployment.

Breisch's story contradicts Miller's, who said on the stand that he notified his chain of command about the alleged stabbing in October 2017.

Cmdr. Jeff Pietrzyk, a prosecutor, pointed out that Breisch's testimony also contradicts another defense witness, SEAL Master Chief Brian Alazzawi.

Alazzawi testified last week that Breisch was aware of the stabbing allegations as early as October 2017.

Alazzawi said that when he learned a group of SEALs were on their way to report the allegations to the commodore, Breisch ordered him to intervene before they could.

Breisch said he notified Gallagher he was launching an investigation on April 5, 2018 — a full day before Breisch said Miller told him about the stabbing.

During cross-examination, Breisch confirmed the dates were accurate and that he ordered the investigation before being informed about the alleged stabbing.

Breisch testified that he had also heard about SEALs taking photos with dead bodies during deployment and had ordered Lt. Jacob Portier to have them deleted. Breisch later said he didn't know what was in the photos.

Closing arguments are expected to commence Monday.

President open to meeting Kim at DMZ

BY KIM GAMEL
AND AARON KIDD
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Donald Trump has offered to meet and shake hands with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during a planned visit to the Demilitarized Zone on Sunday afternoon.

Trump tweeted the comment Saturday morning from Osaka, Japan, where he attended the Group of 20 summit before traveling that afternoon to South Korea.

He landed at Osan Air Base

before heading to Seoul for a dinner with President Moon Jae-in to begin his second visit to South Korea as president.

The two leaders are to hold a summit Sunday to discuss stalled efforts to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Trump is then expected to travel to the heavily fortified border that divides the peninsula, although it remained unclear if Kim planned to be there, too.

“After some very important meetings, including my meeting with President Xi of China,

I will be leaving Japan for South Korea (with President Moon),” the tweet said.

“While there, if Chairman Kim of North Korea sees this, I would meet him at the Border/DMZ just to shake his hand and say Hello (!)”

North Korea issued a fast response that appeared positive but made no immediate commitment.

“We see it as a very interesting suggestion, but we have not received an official proposal in this regard,” Choe Son Hui, the North’s first vice foreign minister, was quoted as saying by the

state-run Korean Central News Agency.

She said that such a meeting, if it takes place, “would serve as another meaningful occasion in further deepening the personal relations between the two leaders and advancing the bilateral relations.”

The meet-and-greet would come just over a year after Trump and Kim first met in a historic summit on June 12, 2018, in Singapore, where they agreed to the general principle of working toward the total denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

US, China halt trade war; talks ‘back on track’

Associated Press

OSAKA, Japan — President Donald Trump and China’s Xi Jinping agreed to a cease-fire Saturday in their nations’ yearlong trade war, averting for now an escalation feared by financial markets, businesses and farmers.

Trump said U.S. tariffs will remain in place against Chinese imports while negotiations continue. Additional trade penalties he has threatened against billions worth of other Chinese goods will not take effect for the “time being,” he said, and the

economic powers will restart stalled talks that have already gone 11 rounds.

“We’re going to work with China where we left off,” Trump said after a lengthy meeting with Xi while the leaders attended the Group of 20 summit in Osaka.

While Trump said relations with China were “right back on track,” doubts persist about the two nations’ willingness to compromise on a long-term solution. Among the sticking points: The U.S. contends that Beijing steals technology and coerces foreign companies into handing over trade

secrets; China denies it engages in such practices.

The United States has imposed 25% import taxes on \$250 billion in Chinese products and is threatening to target an additional \$300 billion, extending the tariffs to virtually everything China ships to America.

China has countered with tariffs on \$110 billion in American goods, focusing on agricultural products in a direct and painful shot at Trump supporters in the U.S. farm belt.

US and Taliban open another round of peace talks

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A fresh round of talks between the U.S. and the Taliban began in Qatar on Saturday, just days after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington is hoping for an Afghan peace agreement before Sept. 1.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed to The Associated Press that negotiations had begun.

Originally scheduled to begin in the morning, the two sides sat down mid-afternoon for the seventh time in a series of direct talks that began last

year following the appointment of U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad.

As in previous talks between Khalilzad and the Taliban, the focus will be on the withdrawal of U.S. troops and Taliban guarantees to prevent Afghanistan from again hosting militants who can stage global attacks.

Both sides say they have come to an understanding on the withdrawal and the guarantees but the details have yet to be worked out.

Both Khalilzad and Pompeo have said that agreements with the Taliban will come hand in hand with agreements on an

intra-Afghan dialogue and a permanent cease-fire.

Until now, the Taliban have refused to meet directly with President Ashraf Ghani’s government but have held several rounds of talks with a collection of Afghan personalities from Kabul, including former President Hamid Karzai, several prominent opposition leaders and government peace council members.

Both those meetings were held in Moscow earlier this year. The Taliban say they will meet with government officials but as ordinary Afghans and not representatives of the gov-

ernment — at least not until an agreement with the U.S. is finalized, saying the U.S. is the final arbiter on the Taliban’s biggest issue of troop withdrawal.

The Taliban have also refused a cease-fire. Taliban officials who have spoken to the AP on condition they not be identified because they are not authorized to speak to the media say they won’t agree to a cease-fire until troop withdrawal is in place because returning Taliban to the battlefield with the same momentum of today if the U.S. reneges on its promises could be difficult.

Local Kazakhstan delicacy gets mixed reactions from soldiers

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

When in Kazakhstan, do as the Kazakhs do, the paraphrased old saying goes. And a big part of that, as soldiers taking part in the U.S.-led Steppe Eagle exercise here discovered, includes drinking horse milk.

Kumis, or fermented milk from a mare, was on the lips — at least in conversation terms — of many of the 400 troops from half a dozen countries who were in Kazakhstan for a U.S.-led exercise in peacekeeping and stability operations.

A traditional drink in this Central Asian country, horse milk is as easy to buy at one of the huts and shops that line local roads as sugary soft drinks are from a food truck in the United States.

At the start of Steppe Eagle, which ran from June 17-27, Sgt. Robert Walisko, a soldier with the British Army's Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment,

bought a liter of horse milk for the equivalent of \$1.50 from a roadside hut near the Illisky Training Area.

One sip and Walisko was sold on the drink. Often during Steppe Eagle, he could be overheard hatching a plan to seek investors so he could bring horse milk to England.

Kumis is made by fermenting raw, unpasteurized mare's milk with yeast over several days. It is traditionally served warm.

Walisko struggled to describe what it tastes like, but had a ready descriptor for the smell: "Like a leftover pickle jar," he said.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony McGee, who also became a fan of horse milk during Steppe Eagle, said it tasted a bit like salted lassi, a yogurt-based drink from South Asia, or melon-flavored kefir "with more of a sour aftertaste."

Other soldiers were not won over by the drink.

Sgt. 1st Class Charles Hajko's first, and only, experience with kumis involved drinking some of the local delicacy that had been poured out of a soda bottle stored in a warm bag that had been sitting out in the summer heat. A civil affairs soldier at Army Central, Hajko said he tasted the drink because he knew it would be rude to refuse an invitation to partake of someone else's culture.

"I puked everywhere," he recalled. "It was sour, and it was gross. I blew chunks all over."

Capt. Jodine Pfaff, a soldier with the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Infantry Division, described an "explosion of flavor, and not a good explosion" when she took a sip of kumis.

Watching the Americans' reactions to kumis prompted a Kazakh soldier to acknowledge that horse milk is an acquired taste. The Western equivalent for him are potato chips. He can't stand them, he said.

Judge bars Trump from using \$2.5B on the wall

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — A federal judge on Friday prohibited President Donald Trump from tapping \$2.5 billion in military funding to build high-priority segments of his prized border wall in California, Arizona and New Mexico.

Judge Haywood S. Gilliam, Jr. in Oakland acted in two lawsuits filed by California and by activists who contended that the money transfer was unlawful and that building the wall would pose environmental threats.

"All President Trump has succeeded in building is a constitutional crisis, threatening immediate harm to our state," said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who led a 20-state coalition of attorneys general in one lawsuit.

Speaking Saturday at a press conference marking the end of the Group of 20 summit in Osaka, Japan, Trump called the decision "a disgrace."

"So we're immediately appealing it and we think we'll win the appeal," he went on to say. "There was no reason that that should have happened. And a lot of wall is being built."

The decisions are in line with Gilliam's ruling last month that blocked work from beginning on two of the highest-priority projects — one spanning 46 miles in New Mexico and another covering 5 miles in Yuma, Ariz.

But the fight is far from over. The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is expected to take up the same issue of using military money next week.

At issue is President Donald Trump's February declaration of a national emergency so that he could divert \$6.7 billion from military and other sources to begin construction of the wall, which could have begun as early as Monday.

DHS: Border crossings to decrease 25%

Associated Press

YUMA, Ariz. — The acting secretary of Homeland Security said Friday that he expected 25% fewer migrants to cross the border this month, as officials in Yuma unveiled the newest temporary facility meant to detain children and families.

That number of illegal crossings would still be too high, but it was a start, Kevin McAleenan said, crediting Mexico with a concentrated effort to stop Central Americans before they arrived even to Mexico — a push prompted by threats of tariffs from President Donald Trump.

The president has seen numbers of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border skyrocket under his term despite his hardline policies and tough talk. More than 100,000 people,

mostly families from Central America, have crossed the border each month over the past few months. Trump sees the monthly border numbers as a benchmark for success, and in the past when he felt numbers were too high, he threatened to shut down the border.

McAleenan dismissed the idea that a projected decrease in June was due in part to hot summer months, traditionally a time fewer people cross.

"These initiatives are making an impact," he said.

Meanwhile, facilities that house detained migrants are vastly overcrowded and advocates and attorneys have decried conditions inside. Border facilities are meant as temporary holding stations, built to hold a maximum of about 4,000, but have routinely held

as many as 15,000.

Teens and children, detained days or weeks by U.S. border authorities, described frigid cells where flu-stricken children in dirty clothes ran fevers, vomited and cried with no idea when they would get out, according to court documents in a case that governs how children are cared for in government custody.

Congress sent Trump a \$4.6 billion package on Thursday that bolsters care for the tens of thousands of migrants taken into custody. McAleenan praised the move but also cautioned there was much more work to do.

In Yuma, construction on the new 500-person tent facility in the back parking lot of a Border Patrol headquarters began about two weeks ago.

Obama rule on for-profit colleges rescinded

Associated Press

The Trump administration on Friday revoked an Obama-era rule that aimed to terminate federal funding to for-profit college programs that consistently left graduates with high student debt.

Department of Education officials announced that the 2014 gainful employment rule will be rescinded effective July 1, 2020. The announcement said the rule focused too narrowly on graduate earnings and unfairly targeted for-profit colleges.

"The department's rules should be designed to support all students and treat all schools fairly. The previous administration's rule did neither," Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said in a statement. "All schools should be clear and transparent about their outcomes, and all students should have a full range of information available. We're committed to making that happen."

Instead of punishing schools that leave students strapped with debt, DeVos has promised to publish earnings data for all college programs as part of an update of the department's College Scorecard website.

DeVos has said it's a fairer alternative that lets students decide for themselves whether a school meets their standards.

Under the rule, certain vocational programs could be cut off from funding if the average debt ratio of their graduates stayed above a certain limit for two out of three straight years.

It was created under President Barack Obama amid widespread complaints of fraud against for-profit chains including Corinthian Colleges and ITT Technical Institute. Both chains collapsed under pressure from Obama officials.

Avowed white supremacist gets life for car attack, apologizes

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — An avowed white supremacist who deliberately drove his car into a crowd of counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Va., killing a young woman and injuring dozens, apologized to his victims Friday before being sentenced to life in prison on federal hate crime charges.

James Alex Fields Jr., of Maumee, Ohio, had pleaded guilty in March to 29 of 30 hate crimes in connection with the 2017 attack that killed Heather Heyer and injured more than two dozen others.

Prosecutors and Fields' lawyers agreed that federal sentencing guidelines called for a life sentence. But his attorneys asked U.S. District Judge Michael Urbanski to consider a sentence of "less than life," hoping he would take into account Fields' troubled childhood and mental health issues.

Just before Urbanski announced his sentence, Fields, 22, accompanied by one of his lawyers, walked to a podium in the courtroom and apologized.

"Every day, I think about

how things could have gone differently and how I regret my actions," he said. "I'm sorry."

His comments came after more than a dozen survivors of and witnesses to the attack delivered emotional testimony about the physical and psychological wounds they had received as a result of the events that day.

"You had a choice to leave Charlottesville, but you did not," said Rosia Parker, a longtime civil rights activist in Charlottesville who said she was standing feet away from Heyer when Heyer was struck by Fields' car. "You could have done anything else but what you did," Parker said, her voice breaking as she stared directly at Fields. "So, yeah, you deserve everything that you get."

Fields appeared stoic and didn't look at Parker or any of the victims as they spoke.

Heyer's mother, Susan Bro, said she wanted Fields to spend his life in prison but also hoped he would get the medication he needed and that one day he would change his views and no longer support white su-

premacry. "I hope he can heal someday and help others heal," Bro said. After the hearing, Bro said she did not believe Fields' apology was sincere but instead was a last-ditch attempt to get a lighter sentence.

Fields drove from his home in Maumee, Ohio, to attend the Aug. 12, 2017, "Unite the Right" rally, which drew hundreds of white nationalists to Charlottesville to protest the planned removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Hundreds of counterprotesters showed up as well.

President Donald Trump sparked controversy when he blamed the violence at the rally on "both sides," a statement that critics saw as a refusal to condemn racism.

After Fields was sentenced, a Department of Justice official condemned his actions. "Hate crimes violate the most fundamental American values of freedom and human dignity," Eric Dreiband, assistant attorney general for the DOJ's Civil Rights Division, said at a news conference with federal prosecutors.

Lawyers: Block evidence of trysts in Hunter case

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Lawyers for California Rep. Duncan Hunter want a federal judge to reject an attempt by prosecutors to introduce evidence that the Republican congressman used campaign funds to finance a string of extramarital relationships, a court filing said Friday.

In the eight-page document, Hunter's lawyers argue that prosecutors are seeking permission "to focus the jury's attention on Mr. Hunter's infidelity" with evidence that isn't necessary for a jury to evaluate the case.

To allow it, they wrote, would

present "substantial risk of unfair prejudice."

"Evidence of Mr. Hunter's 'intimate affairs' is not directly relevant to the ultimate issue in this case, whether Mr. Hunter knowingly converted campaign funds to his personal use," they wrote.

Allegations about the married congressman's affairs were outlined in a government court filing Monday, connected to charges he and his wife illegally spent more than \$250,000 in campaign funds on trips, meals and other personal expenses.

Prosecutors are seeking permission to introduce details of the romantic affairs in U.S.

District Court in San Diego, which they say are necessary to "demonstrate Hunter's ... intent to break the law and to establish his motive to embezzle from his campaign."

Margaret Hunter pleaded guilty this month to one corruption count. Duncan Hunter has said prosecutors have targeted him for political reasons.

The trial is scheduled for September.

In the motion, Hunter's lawyers argued that "whether or not Mr. Hunter has an intimate or strictly platonic relationship with a particular individual does not tend to prove any material point in the government's case."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Python owner ID'd, snake still at large

AL MONTGOMERY — Authorities in Tuscaloosa said they may have identified the owner of the 15-foot yellow python that's been the subject of a weeklong search.

A spokesman for the mayor's office said police zeroed in on a person of interest and have recovered a second python at a "local residence."

News outlets reported authorities are still looking for the first python.

Sightings of the pet snake were first reported last week.

Deputy's rifle missing after left atop vehicle

MI SOUTH BOARDMAN — Authorities are looking for a rifle belonging to a northern Michigan sheriff deputy that went missing after he inadvertently left it atop his patrol vehicle.

The Kalkaska County sheriff's office said the .223-caliber rifle has been missing since mid-May when the deputy put the weapon on the roof while adjusting his vehicle's equipment in the South Boardman area, about 190 miles northwest of Detroit.

The deputy apparently forgot that the rifle was on the vehicle and drove off.

Substitute fired for classroom porn video

TX EL CAMPO — A Texas school district fired a substitute teacher after receiving a tip that she made pornographic videos that included footage recorded in a classroom.

The Victoria Advocate reported investigators believe

the videos were recorded last month at El Campo High School, about 65 miles southwest of Houston. The El Campo School District said the teacher had worked in the district for three months.

Police said no students or other staff members were involved in the videos, portions of which were filmed in a classroom and workroom.

Zoo cited after worker injured by white rhino

FL JACKSONVILLE — A Florida zoo was fined more than \$14,500 after a worker was injured by a 4,000-pound white rhinoceros earlier this year.

The Florida Times-Union reported that the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited the Jacksonville Zoo with failing to protect workers from recognized hazards when they train and feed the rhinos. It said the zoo also didn't follow the rules of notifying the federal agency within 24 hours of the employee's hospitalization.

Zoo Executive Director Tony Vecchio previously said the 50-year-old rhino, Archie, bumped a female zookeeper with his horn in February. Officials said the worker spent a night in a hospital and has since returned to work.

Man built bomb to warn about alien threat

PA MYERSTOWN — Authorities said a man who allegedly put a bomb in a parking lot behind a Pennsylvania hotel told them he did it to warn police about aliens bent on destroying the planet.

State troopers responding to the Bahney House in Myerstown discovered a suspicious package and David Oxenreider, 29,

A state police bomb squad disabled the package. No one was injured.

Authorities said Oxenreider told police he had an encounter with aliens in 2014. He said they told him that if humans didn't "start being good people," they would destroy the planet with a nuclear laser beam.

Biologists think vehicle hit well-known grizzly

WY JACKSON — Wildlife biologists suspect a vehicle struck a well-known grizzly bear in Wyoming.

Grizzly No. 863 got its name from biologists who fitted her with a tracking collar and are following her movements. This year, she and a cub were spotted often near Togwotee Pass east of Grand Teton National Park.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department officials recently heard that a vehicle had struck the adult grizzly. They tracked her to a spot 3 miles away.

Wildlife managers said the bear's tracking collar was not giving off a mortality signal, leading them to think she's still alive.

2 charged in burglaries of concession stands

NJ MORRISTOWN — A man and a woman were accused of burglarizing more than 40 concession stands at recreation fields across New Jersey.

Bergen County prosecutors said Michael Kaloudis, 31, of Stanhope and Angela Lopez, 34, of Middlesex each face 11 counts of burglary and one theft count.

Authorities said the burglars usually forced in doors or windows at the stands during the overnight or early morning hours and stole cash, food and

beverages, along with concession stand appliances and tools.

20 tons of cannabis seized in 4-day raid

CA SANTA BARBARA — Authorities seized 20 tons of illegal cannabis in a raid that took four days to complete following a two-month investigation.

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's office also said it destroyed 350,000 cannabis plants from the illegal grow outside Buellton, about 140 miles from Los Angeles.

Police said the raid began June 17 and it took officials four days to seize the cannabis.

The sheriff's office said cannabis was grown yearlong and a large amount had been harvested previously.

Officials said they also probed fraudulently obtained state cannabis licenses and the suspected sale of undocumented cannabis.

Snake on a mailbox halts delivery

NC CHARLOTTE — The Postal Service Creed covers rain, snow, heat and gloom of night, but it says nothing about snakes on a mailbox.

One North Carolina postal worker who encountered that very thing said the mail delivery could wait until the snake was delivered elsewhere.

The Charlotte Observer reported the worker found the snake at a home in Mint Hill, near Charlotte.

Jennifer Gordon, of Carolina Waterfowl Rescue, said the non-venomous Dekay's brown snake was living in some ivy below the mailbox and climbed up to get some sun.

From wire reports

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US ousts host France in quarterfinals

Associated Press

PARIS — Controversy didn't drive Megan Rapinoe.

The big moment did.

Rapinoe turned turmoil into triumph Friday night, scoring twice in the much-anticipated clash with host France to send the defending champion United States into the semifinals of the Women's World Cup with a 2-1 victory.

Two days earlier, Rapinoe had been called out on social media by President Donald Trump after video surfaced of her saying she wouldn't visit the White House if the United States won the tournament, and the critics pounced. Rapinoe shrugged them off by facing the crowd with her arms raised in celebration after both her goals.

"I don't really get energized by haters or all that. I feel there are so many more people that love me," she said with a laugh. "I'm more energized by that."

Now the top-ranked Americans are headed to Lyon to face No. 3 England in a semifinal match Tuesday.

France had been vying to become the first nation to simultaneously hold the men's and

women's World Cup trophies but fell well short as their aggressive play, home-field advantage and flag-waving crowd that belted out La Marseillaise failed to faze the ever-confident U.S. team.

Rapinoe, her hair highlighted with a pastel pink, scored on a free kick in the fifth minute that bounced between French players and past goalkeeper Sarah Bouhaddi. She did it again in the 65th minute after blasting a cross from Tobin Heath that Bouhaddi dove for but couldn't stop. It was her fifth goal of the tournament.

Fourth-ranked France pulled back on Wendie Renard's header off Gaetane Thiney's free kick in the 81st. It was the 6-foot-2 defender's fourth World Cup goal and gave the home crowd at the sold out Parc des Princes hope.

"I mean, you have to give it up to the French team. I think they outplayed us for sure with the ball, but we were so good defensively, so strong. We hit them where it hurt. We took our chances," Rapinoe said. "This team — unreal, unreal amount of heart."

The U.S. team is used to

grabbing attention both on and off the field. Rapinoe was caught up in a controversy this week when a video surfaced of her using an expletive while vowing not to visit the White House. While the interview was from January, it attracted the president's attention and he tweeted: "Megan should never disrespect our Country, the White House, or our Flag, especially since so much has been done for her & the team." Trump also said he would invite the team, win or lose.

A day before the match, Rapinoe said she stood by her comments, except the coarse language. Rapinoe, who also had a pair of goals on penalty kicks in the United States' 2-1 victory over Spain to open the knockout stage, even suggested the uproar might help her team. "I think, if anything, it just fires everybody up a little bit more," she said.

Coach Jill Ellis said Rapinoe's night was typical of the outspoken 33-year-old playing in her third World Cup.

"She's just a big personality on and off the pitch and I think she honestly thrives off these big moments," Ellis said.

The United States went to a five-player backline and repeatedly kept the aggressive French team at bay. Goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher was stellar in the second half, fighting off a flurry of attempts until Renard's header.

"I'm proud of the defense, sliding, blocking shots, denying service, denying crosses coming in," Naeher said. "France's offense is potent and can hurt you in so many ways and I thought our defense held strong all night. It's an honor to be behind them."

The Americans have played the French 24 times, with France winning just three. But the three matches prior to Friday's quarterfinal had tilted toward France, with two wins and a draw.

"The media and fans and everyone bought into this being a final being played as a quarterfinal match. And it was. I feel like it was a great match," U.S. star Alex Morgan said. "I think we have the edge on them in World Cups and major tournaments, but lately they've had the edge on us with friendlies. So I think it was a great match for both of us."

Women's World Cup roundup

Dutch wrap up semifinal berth; Sweden gets by Germany

Associated Press

VALENCIENNES, France — The Oranje procession will roll into a Women's World Cup semifinal for the first time.

The parade of fans, covered head to toe in orange, the brass band — and, of course, the free kick specialists on the field.

In the sweltering afternoon heat of northeast France, the Netherlands relied on a pair of headers off free kicks by Sherida Spitse to beat Italy 2-0 in a quarterfinal game Saturday.

Vivianne Miedema scored off Spitse's delivery from the left side in the 70th minute to claim her 61st goal in 80 appearances for the Netherlands.

"In the end, people expect me to score goals," Miedema said. "That header, I had a good feeling."

So did Stefanie van der Gragt 10 minutes later, powering in a header when Spitse swung in a free kick from the right.

"I had the strength to get the ball in the right place," Spitse said. "Our football, we could also play a little bit more and could score goals but it's nice to score from set pieces as well."

Six of the last eight goals have come from set pieces at this World Cup, only the second time the Dutch women have appeared in the tournament. Four years ago, they only made it to the round of 16 but laid the

foundations to win the European Championship in 2017.

"I didn't expect to be in the semifinals of this World Cup," Miedema said. "We've been complaining that we're not playing the best football but in the end we're in the semis. We've done amazing and we can be really proud."

The Netherlands will play Sweden in the semifinals Wednesday in Lyon, a day after England plays the United States in the same stadium.

Expect an influx of thousands of Dutch fans to central France, just as they have painted towns orange across a tournament that has struggled to attract crowds.

"It's unbelievable, they really help us," Netherlands coach Sarina Wiegman said. "It's very special and it's not something you get used to."

Sweden 2, Germany 1: At Rennes, France, Sofia Jakobsson scored in the 22nd minute to tie it and Stina Blackstenius added another goal early in the second half as Sweden knocked off Germany to earn a berth in the semifinals.

Sweden, which finished second in Group G behind the defending World Cup champion United States, will face the Netherlands Wednesday in Lyon. The winner will face the winner of the England-U.S. semifinal.

Logano: Rules package will 'change everything' for Chicagoland race

Associated Press

JOLIET, Ill. — Joey Logano is making his 11th NASCAR Cup Series start at Chicagoland Speedway, and it's just like his first race all over again.

Like so many other drivers, Logano is looking forward to seeing how the 2019 rules package affects Sunday's stop at the well-worn, 1.5-mile oval.

"I mean it'll change everything, just like it has everywhere else we've gone," Logano said Friday as he relaxed in his trailer after spending some time on the track in preparation for the Xfinity Series race. "Whether it's been a short track or a mile-and-a-half or a super speedway in this case, this rules (package), it's changed the game."

This year's competition package reduced horsepower and increased downforce in an attempt to offer more passing opportunities. The engine has a tapered spacer, and this weekend's cars will have aerodynamic ducts as well.

A modified version debuted at Atlanta's challenging 1.5-mile speedway in February, and Brad Keselowski beat out Martin Truex Jr. for the win. The overhauled competition rules were fully implemented for the first time in Las Vegas in March, and Logano held off Penske teammate Keselowski for his 22nd victory.

Logano said the competition package has turned each track into a new experience.

"We're all starting with a pretty new notebook," he said. "There's some things you can go back and look at, but for the most part, anytime I look back on what I wrote down last year, it's not relevant anymore. It's apples and oranges at this point."

But it has been a full four months since Atlanta, and Cup drivers have much more to go

on than they did in the beginning. Logano pointed to Auto Club Speedway in California when asked for a place that could shed some light on how the package might work at Chicagoland.

"I know it's a half-mile longer, but I think that track probably is the closest to this track," he said.

Logano finished second at Fontana in March, losing to Kyle Busch. Keselowski was third, followed by Kevin Harvick and Ryan Blaney.

The new rules package was put into place after Logano won the Cup Series title at Homestead in November. Busch, Harvick and Truex combined to win 20 of 36 races last season, prompting NASCAR to go in a different direction in an effort to make the racing more enjoyable for fans.

While there are some signs that the changes are having the desired effect, the names on top of the standings are the usual suspects.

Logano has two wins and leads Busch by one point heading into the Camping World 400. Busch and Truex have four wins apiece, and Keselowski has won three times.

The 29-year-old Logano had a more substantial advantage in the series standings before he had battery problems last weekend and finished 23rd on the road course at Sonoma Raceway. Truex and Busch finished 1-2, continuing a strong start to the season for Joe Gibbs Racing.

"If we just ran (23rd) ... If that's where we just ran without any issues, I'd be pretty dejected after that. I'd be pretty mad," Logano said. "But having something like that happen when you had a car that I look at as maybe the third- to fourth-best car on the racetrack, that doesn't really knock your confidence down that much."

Yankees, Red Sox land across pond

Associated Press

LONDON — An array of retired All-Stars and Hall of Famers conducted a youth clinic. Workers put final touches on new clubhouses, batting cages and bullpens.

No ducks on the pond quite yet — not so soon after flying across it. Having landed in London, the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox relaxed, saw a few sights and tried to give Major League Baseball some buzz ahead of the first regular-season games in Europe this weekend.

"More important than the two games is what continues to happen here in England after we're gone," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Thursday at the clinic in north London's Finchley Park, not far from Tottenham. "It's programs like this that provide kids with playing opportunities that are so crucial to the growth of our game."

Mariano Rivera, Reggie Jackson, Alex Rodriguez, Andy Pettitte, Hideki Matsui, Carlos Beltran, Nick Swisher and Aaron Boone worked with players ages 8-15 and then joined Yankees owner Hal Steinbrenner to present a truck of baseball equipment to the London Mets youth club.

There was a cloudless sky and the temperature was in the mid-70s on a day when London had no resemblance to its Big Smoke nickname.

"I like the way that it's different to other sports," 8-year-old Milo Mandolini said. "I like batting, I find that quite fun."

The Yankees learned about the youth baseball organization from Premier League champion Manchester City, the baseball team's partner in Major League Soccer's New York City team.

"You're making this game grow," Steinbrenner said at the clinic. "You're getting people interested that maybe thought they wouldn't be interested in baseball,"

In a land dominated by Pre-

mier League football — soccer to novices back in the States — baseball wants to make inroads. Olympic Stadium, home of the West Ham soccer club, has been reconfigured for baseball, an artificial turf surface imported and foul poles installed. Red cards have been replaced by lineup cards, rituals on display for young fans to emulate.

"There's no doubt this country's about soccer," Beltran said. "There's some kids here that they hope and wish one day to become ballplayers."

Major League Baseball is billing this as "Old rivalry. New ground." Many of the regular fans are making the 3,500-mile or so journey. Red Sox season ticket holders purchased an average of 5,831 seats per game and Yankees buyers 4,752 during the presale, ready to mind the gap and take the Jubilee or Central line to the Queen Elizabeth Park rather than the No. 4 to the Bronx or the Green line to Kenmore Square.

Still, the majority of fans will be local. The baseball will vastly outdraw the Cricket World Cup, which includes Australia vs. New Zealand on Saturday at Lords and England vs India on Sunday at Edgbaston in Birmingham.

"We certainly hope to pick up some fans while we're over there," said Ron Bumgarner, Boston's executive vice president of ticketing, events and concerts.

Boone and Red Sox manager Alex Cora had never been to London before — the only European city Boone had visited was Barcelona, Spain. Players are creatures of routine, but Cora had no patience for gripes.

"Someone mentioned it's a long trip, I said: 'How about this one? You can be in Double-A right now on a bus ride, bad hotels and bad meals,'" he recalled. "Let's put everything in perspective. It's not that bad."

Gurriel homers in 10th to lift Astros

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Houston entered Friday night with losses in nine of its last 11 games and in need of a momentum shift.

Josh Reddick and Yuli Gurriel used two big swings to answer the call.

Gurriel hit a game-ending home run in the 10th inning after Reddick's tying shot in the eighth, and the Astros beat the Seattle Mariners 2-1.

"We've had a couple tough games here, and to win gives us a lot of confidence moving forward," Gurriel said through a translator.

Gurriel hit a 2-2 pitch from Matt Festa (0-2) off the facade in left field for his eighth homer. The home run was Gurriel's first career game-ending homer and second career

game-ending hit.

"I didn't feel great my previous at-bats, but in that at-bat, I remained focused, locked in," Gurriel said. "I hit a foul ball. I knew I could hit a fastball, and then I got the next one. Hit it out."

Gurriel was hitless in four at-bats prior to the home run.

"Yuli, who had not had a good night at all — he popped up to the infield every time — fouls a couple balls off and gets a fastball he can handle and we walk off winners," Houston manager AJ Hinch said. "Really an emotional win for us in a game where it felt like we were in so many positions to win and we needed the win."

Reddick hit a solo home run to right in the eighth to tie it at 1. That snapped a streak of 17 scoreless innings for the

Astros.

"It felt like one of our biggest hits in the last week and a half," Reddick said. "That's the swing we've been waiting on to pick up not only ourselves, the team, the ballpark. It was a completely different atmosphere when I came across the plate and saw our dugout going crazy. It felt good. Luckily, I hit it."

Austin Nola put the Mariners ahead 1-0 in the third with his first career home run.

"I thought I needed to go a little bit more to the left to make it into the little grandstand there," Nola said. "So, I didn't know."

Will Harris (2-1) pitched around a single in the 10th for the win.

Houston missed a chance to get on the board in the sev-

enth, with Myles Straw forced to hold at third after he missed the base on a single by Jake Marisnick. After Austin Adams walked George Springer to load the bases with one out, Adams got Jose Altuve to ground to third, with Tim Beckham nailing Straw at the plate. Adams struck out Alex Bregman to end the inning.

After Matt Carasiti pitched a scoreless first, Tommy Milone threw five scoreless innings, scattering three hits.

"You come in here you know you have to score more than one run to beat this club," Seattle manager Scott Servais said. "We just weren't able to do it offensively tonight. Our pitching continues to throw the ball really well, just didn't do a whole lot against their pitching."

MLB roundup

Valaika, Dahl help Rockies end skid against Dodgers

Associated Press

DENVER — Pinch-hitter Pat Valaika and David Dahl homered in an eight-run fifth inning, Nolan Arenado had four hits, including a home run, and the Colorado Rockies beat Los Angeles 13-9 on Friday night, snapping a 12-game losing streak to the Dodgers.

The Rockies withstood a three-run homer by Max Muncy and a two-run drive by Alex Verdugo to record their first win over the Dodgers since Sept. 8. The skid was the second-longest losing streak to one team in Rockies history, eclipsed only by a run of 16 consecutive losses to the Atlanta Braves from 1993-94.

Orioles 13, Indians 0: Baltimore took the luster off Mike Clevinger's return from the injured list, scoring seven early runs off the right-hander.

Chance Sisco homered and had a career-high five RBIs for the host Orioles, who built an 8-0 lead in the second inning and cruised to only their second

win in 15 games.

Braves 6, Mets 2: Rookie Mike Soroka outpitched Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom, and visiting Atlanta got a two-run homer from fellow youngster Austin Riley in a win over New York.

Rookie slugger Pete Alonso hit his 28th home run for the Mets, who lost their sixth straight and fell a season-worst nine games under .500 at 37-46.

Marlins 6, Phillies 2: Brian Anderson drove in three runs with a double and his 11th homer, and host Miami snapped Philadelphia's four-game winning streak.

Last-place Miami beat Philadelphia for the fourth time in a row, including a three-game sweep last weekend.

Rangers 5, Rays 0: Lance Lynn struck out 10 over eight innings of three-hit ball, and visiting Texas beat Tampa Bay for its season-best sixth straight win.

Jose Leclerc completed a

three-hitter for the Rangers, who moved into a tie for the first AL wild card with the Rays at 46-36.

Blue Jays 6, Royals 2: Eric Sogard hit a tiebreaking home run in the seventh inning, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. homered twice for his second straight multi-homer game and host Toronto snapped a three-game losing streak with a win over Kansas City.

Randal Grichuk added a two-run homer for Toronto, which won its second straight at home following a seven-game losing streak.

Nationals 3, Tigers 1: Anibal Sanchez beat his former team for his third win in four starts, Juan Soto hit his 14th home run of the season and visiting Washington beat Detroit.

Reds 6, Cubs 3: Cole Hamels left after only one inning because of discomfort in his side and Cincinnati snapped a four-game skid by beating visiting Chicago.

White Sox 6, Twins 4: Ross

Detwiler earned his first win in nearly three years and host Chicago snapped a seven-game losing streak against Minnesota.

Pirates 3, Brewers 2: Kevin Newman homered and extended his hitting streak to 18 games, and visiting Pittsburgh rallied with two late runs to beat Milwaukee.

Padres 3, Cardinals 1: Rookie Fernando Tatis Jr. and Eric Hosmer hit consecutive homers in the sixth off Michael Wacha and host San Diego beat St. Louis for its third straight win.

Giants 6, Diamondbacks 3 — Buster Posey had a pair of RBI hits and Alex Dickerson homered and drove in two runs to lead host San Francisco past Arizona.

Athletics 7, Angels 2: Matt Olson hit two home runs, Mike Fiers remained unbeaten in his last 10 starts and visiting Oakland defeated Los Angeles.

It is Olson's first multihomer game this season.