

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Philippines, US kick off Balikatan training

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP AGUINALDO, Philippines — American and Philippine forces kicked off a muted version of the annual Balikatan military exercise Monday, just months after the country's leader threatened to scrap the drills following U.S. criticism of his drug war.

Five thousand personnel, including about 2,700 U.S. troops — half the number who joined last year's drills — will train to respond to disasters and battle terrorists. The 12-day exercise won't include the usual live-fire exercises geared toward territorial defense or maritime security, officials said.

The changes were made at the behest of Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, who has been at odds with the U.S. and Europe over his extrajudicial killings of suspected drug dealers and users, as well as reluctance to provoke China over disputed territory in the South China Sea.

However, the atmosphere at Balikatan's opening ceremony in Quezon City suggested the U.S.-Philippines relationship has improved since the election of President Donald Trump, who has not publicly criticized the drug war and, last month, invited Duterte to the White House.

Hundreds of U.S. and Filipino troops, Philippines Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim watched a flag unfurl inside the Camp Aguinaldo Commissioned Officers' Club, signaling Balikatan's start.

## Push stalls to address unequal GI Bill for Guard, Reserves

BY ALEX HORTON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Nearly 4,700 reservists and guardsmen have been unfairly barred from earning Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits available to active-duty servicemembers, veterans advocates say, triggering delays that likely will defer their education for years.

The issue lies with the Pentagon's use of Title 10, Section 12304b, a specific deployment authorization used by the Defense Department to increase operational use of reservists and to cut the cost of their benefits. Any reservist who deploys under the authorization is restricted in the ability to accrue GI Bill benefits, pre- and post-deployment health care and other resources during that duty.

Other deployment orders, such as those used for combat tours, allow part-time troops to rack up some benefits at the same rate as active-duty troops. The Department of Veterans Affairs pays out higher percentages of tuition and housing costs under the GI Bill the longer someone serves on active duty.

"The politicians don't look at reservists the same way as active-duty," Sgt. Ross Dewberry, a Marine reservist, said May 1 from Myrtle Creek, Ore. After a seven-month deployment last year to Honduras as a water support technician, he said he was told his active-duty time would not count toward accumulating GI Bill benefits, a reversal of previous guidance.

"When we do the time, we should be treated the same way," he said.

There have been unsuccessful stand-alone proposals to

match education benefits for reservists under 12304b orders to those of active-duty troops.

A solution to 12304b issues was included in a pre-bill draft set for discussion before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs at the end of April. But it was postponed after public disagreements by veterans groups over a proposal to require new recruits to pay \$100 into the Post-9/11 GI Bill every month for two years to help fund 18 new components.

The Reserve Officers Association "would have liked to have a public discussion. Now we don't have a venue to discuss the bills at all. We lost the opportunity," said Susan Lukas, director of legislative and military policy at ROA, a leading advocate group taking on efforts to change 12304b.

About 4,700 reservists and guardsmen have deployed under the use of authority 12304b across all service branches since 2015, when it was first used. Lukas has said the authorization was created on the request of Congress for the Pentagon to increase operational readiness but reduce costs. The Army National Guard was the most frequent contributor, with 2,925 mobilizations, according to data from the National Guard Bureau.

There are about 800,000 troops in the reserve and Guard components compared with 1.3 million active-duty servicemembers, including the Coast Guard, according to service data.

"All service chiefs need to recognize they have [reserve] troops serving right now not receiving benefits they've earned, alongside active-duty

members doing the same job," said Will Hubbard, vice president of government affairs at Student Veterans of America, a national veterans advocacy group that focuses on education policy.

At least one service chief is following the issue. Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, commander of the National Guard Bureau overseeing the Army and Air National Guard, told lawmakers April 26 that he supported parity of benefits within the command, specifically addressing 12304b.

Resolving the issue would be "huge for retention, morale and for maintaining the operational force we're going to have," Lengyel told the Senate.

The promise of education after service is a top reason why troops choose to enlist, including for the Guard and reserve, Hubbard said, which is attractive for people who want to balance service, education and civilian careers.

"Ultimately, seeing this issue fixed would be a clear signal about our commitment to the guard and reserve," Hubbard said. "And it's a national security issue if [the country] doesn't follow through on our promises."

A spokeswoman for the National Guard Bureau pointed to Lengyel's testimony when asked to elaborate on his position on the use and effect of 12304b.

"Previously, you could say most people didn't know about this," Hubbard said of the media focus that ignited awareness and frustration among fellow reservists. "But the fact it hasn't been fixed is more disappointing. Now we're in a state where we know this is a problem and it's still not fixed."

# US reviewing Syria safe zones proposal

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the U.S. owes it to the people of Syria to take a close look at the Russian proposal to create several “safe zones” in Syria. But Mattis also said the plan poses many unanswered questions, including whether it would be effective.

Speaking to reporters traveling with him to Copenhagen, Mattis said the borders of the proposed cease-fire areas are still being worked out, although the general locations are “well understood.” And he suggested that it’s still not yet clear what impact the plan could have on the U.S.-led fight against Islamic State militants.

“It’s all in process right now,”

said Mattis, who was offering some of the first extensive public U.S. comments on the agreement reached Friday by Russia, Turkey and Iran. “Who is going to be ensuring they’re safe? Who is signing up for it? Who is specifically to be kept out of them? All these details are to be worked out and we’re engaged.”

According to activists in Syria, there already have been skirmishes on the edge of a large cease-fire zone in the northwest portion of the country. Russia, Turkey and Iran agreed to enforce a cease-fire between Syrian government and opposition forces in four locations, but Russia says map details won’t be published until early June.

The plan, however, does

not cover areas controlled by ISIS militants and U.S.-backed Kurdish groups.

That leaves the U.S. and its allies free to continue the campaign to retake ISIS-held territory. It doesn’t, however, prevent Turkish troops and their Syrian allies from clashing or going after the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurds.

“We’ll look at the proposal, see if it can work,” said Mattis, who will attend a meeting of the anti-ISIS coalition in Copenhagen. “Will it affect the fight against ISIS? I think the international community is united in the sense of wanting to see ISIS put on its back foot.”

Mattis was circumspect when asked if the plan had any hope of ending the brutal civil war that has killed some 400,000

people and displaced nearly half of the country’s population since 2011.

“The devil is always in the details, right? So we have to look at the details, see if we can work them out, see if we think they’re going to be effective,” he said.

The U.S. owes it “to the situation there, the people there to at least examine it very, very carefully,” Mattis added. “All wars eventually come to an end. And we’ve been looking, for a long time, how to bring this one to an end.”

The cease-fire is an effort to allow humanitarian aid to access hard-to-reach and besieged areas in Syria, where at least 4.5 million people in need live.

## Former US prisoner oversees Iraqi agency

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Just over 10 years ago, Qasim al-Araji was arrested a second time by American forces in Iraq. The charges were serious: smuggling arms used to attack U.S. troops and involvement in an assassination cell at the height of sectarian violence that engulfed Iraq following the 2003 toppling of Saddam Hussein.

Now, he heads of one of Iraq’s most powerful ministries.

With credentials that include training from Iranian special operators known as the Quds force and time spent as a guerrilla and militia commander, as Iraq’s interior minister, al-Araji is now trumpeting his respect for human rights and support for the U.S.-led coalition in the fight against Islamic State. But the forces he now commands have a history of Shiite domination and abuse, factors that partially contributed to the rise in support for ISIS in Iraq.

Starting in 2007, al-Araji was held by the United States for 23 months. Today, at the head of one of Iraq’s most powerful ministries, al-Araji laughs off

questions about hostility toward U.S. forces.

“That’s life,” he said in a recent interview as he shuttled between meetings at a small Interior Ministry office inside Baghdad’s highly fortified Green Zone. “I was their prisoner, and now I meet with their ambassador.”

Al-Araji’s office confirmed he met with the U.S. ambassador to Iraq within days of taking office to express his support for the U.S. role in the fight against ISIS and to request additional support for his ministry and forces.

Following a March 17 strike in Mosul that killed more than 100 civilians, al-Araji took a rare public position for an Iraqi politician: He defended the U.S.-led coalition and the use of airstrikes in Mosul on the floor of Iraq’s parliament.

“My most important goal is to bring security to Iraq,” al-Araji said, “and [to achieve that] Iraq is in need of the friendship of the Americans.”

Al-Araji, who spent years in exile in Iran, first traveled there as a teenager in the 1980s

and was trained by Iranian special forces as a guerrilla fighter to resist Saddam Hussein’s regime. After the fall of Baghdad in 2003, al-Araji and thousands of other fighters poured across the border into Iraq.

On April 19 that year he was arrested by U.S. forces on suspicion of commanding militia forces, held for 85 days and then released due to insufficient evidence. In 2004, following the fall of Saddam, al-Araji said, he fully transitioned to politics, running for local office in Baghdad’s Wasit province.

But three years later he was arrested again by U.S. forces. A secret cable from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on Jan. 19, 2007, published by WikiLeaks stated that U.S. forces “had good information based on multiple sources,” that al-Araji was “involved in smuggling and distribution” of explosives that were being used to target U.S. forces and that he was “also suspected in involvement in an assassination cell.”

After nearly two years, al-Araji was again released on insufficient evidence.

## Afghan air force pounds ISIS targets

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan’s air force pounded Islamic State targets in an eastern province where an Afghan and U.S. raid last month killed the militant group’s top commander, the government said Monday.

The Interior Ministry said the airstrikes killed at least 34 ISIS fighters over the past 24 hours and destroyed an insurgent-controlled radio station in Nangarhar province. The casualty toll could not be independently confirmed as the area is off-limits to reporters.

The ministry said the radio station had been illegally broadcasting ISIS messages across the eastern province and was therefore a threat to the people and the government.

The government statement came after the Pentagon announced Sunday night that a military raid last month killed Abdul Haseeb Logari, the ISIS chief in Nangarhar. Two U.S. Army Rangers died in the April 27 raid. U.S. officials say they may have been killed as the result of friendly fire.

From The Associated Press



# Revised travel ban goes before court

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — After a series of stinging legal defeats, President Donald Trump's administration hopes to convince a federal appeals court that his travel ban targeting six Muslim-majority countries is motivated by national security, not religion.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday was slated to examine a ruling that blocks the administration from temporarily barring new visas for citizens of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. It's the first time an appeals court will hear arguments on the revised travel ban, which is likely destined for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Pointing to the Republican's promises on the campaign trail to bar Muslims from entering the country, a federal judge in Maryland found in March that the policy appeared to be driven primarily by religious animus.

Attorneys for the U.S. Justice Department say the court shouldn't rely on Trump's statements, but on the text of the policy, which they say is necessary to protect the country from ter-

rorism. The banned countries represent just a fraction of the predominantly Muslim countries worldwide, they note.

The American Civil Liberties Union and National Immigration Law Center say Trump wants the courts to "blind themselves to the ample, public and uncontested evidence" that the policy targets Muslims.

In an extraordinary move signifying the importance of the case, the 4th Circuit decided to bypass the three-judge panel that typically first hears appeals and go straight to the full-court hearing.

While the 4th Circuit was long considered one of the most conservative appeals courts in the country, it moved to the center under President Barack Obama, who appointed six of the 15 active judges.

Now, nine judges are Democratic appointees and five judges are Republican appointees. Chief Judge Roger Gregory was given a recess appointment to the court by President Bill Clinton and was reappointed by President George W. Bush.

## Officials ID airman killed after fall on Okinawa

KADENA AIR BASE, Okinawa — Japanese officials have identified an airman who died Saturday at Aha Falls, a spot popular for hiking and cliff jumping.

Shannon Purcell, 19, reportedly slipped and fell about 15 feet into the Tanaga Gumui basin about 12:40 p.m., said Shin Inafuku, leader of a rescue team that responded.

The airman was assigned to the 18th Munitions Squadron at Kadena Air Base, an 18th Wing statement said Saturday.

She was one of 11 people from Kadena who arrived at the waterfall about 11 a.m. and began to jump into the basin, said an Okinawa prefectural police spokesman in Nago.

The cause of the accident is still under investigation, but the spokesman, citing witness-

es, said Purcell fell after losing her footing.

Local divers called for help and began searching for Purcell until the 18th Wing's 33rd and 31st Rescue Squadrons responded to the scene about 5 p.m., the statement said.

She was found about 30 minutes later and brought to a hospital where she was pronounced dead, the 18th Wing said.

Purcell was reportedly found on her back at the bottom of the 26-foot-deep basin, Inafuku said. She wore a T-shirt and shorts but no life jacket.

Rescue divers were hampered by increased water volume at the falls and low visibility, said Inafuku, who added the falls are known for frequent water-related accidents.

From staff reports

# Giving to Wounded Warrior Project plummeted in 2016

BY DIANNA CAHN

Stars and Stripes

Donations to the Wounded Warrior Project veterans' charity plummeted in the second half of fiscal 2016, down \$70 million, according to newly released financial records. The drop reflects a charity in crisis after last year's uproar that led to the ouster of the top two executives.

But Chief Executive Officer Mike Linnington says the sharp decline in donor confidence has leveled out. WWP has a long, slow recovery ahead, he said, but it is no longer in freefall.

"We have turned the corner, and donations over the last six months have exceeded the goal we set for ourselves," Linnington told Stars and Stripes, declining to release figures from the last seven months.

Linnington took the helm at WWP in August, six months after CBS News and The New York Times came out with reports that found lavish spending and a toxic organizational culture. The charity — founded after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks — had been growing exponentially for years and offered myriad programs for servicemembers. It came under fire for spending too high of a percentage on fundraising — a criticism that landed it on the watch list of Charity Navigator, which evaluates nonprofits.

That assessment was later debunked by a forensic accounting of WWP's finances, an independent examination by an expert on nonprofits and an investigation by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance. But with donations in a tailspin over spending perceptions in March 2016, the board fired CEO Steve Nardizzi and Chief Operating Officer Al Giordano.

Linnington came in last summer promising to right the ship

and quickly announced a reorganization, cutting 85 of 600 employees and trimming excesses in event spending. The charity also cut a few programs and closed facilities in areas with smaller veterans' populations.

The goal was to "cut deep, cut once, then restore whatever confidence was lost to quickly build programs," he said.

"It was a tough time," Linnington said. "I get a little emotional just thinking about it. Folks were very uncertain."

WWP's tax forms from fiscal 2016 reveal just how quickly the spigot stopped.

Revenue fell \$77 million, from \$398.9 million in 2015 to \$321.8 million — a 19 percent decline in line with what leaders at WWP predicted. Donations during that period dropped nearly \$70 million, from \$372.6 million to \$302.7 million.

According to its Form 990 filing for charities, WWP spent \$213 million on programming in 2016, a drop of \$49.4 million from the prior year.

The biggest cut to expenses was a \$48 million decrease in grants to a trust for members of its Independence Program. With more than 600 warriors enrolled, the Independence Program serves those with severe traumatic brain injury, spinal injury or other severely disabling permanent injuries, enabling them to receive needed services while living at home.

The trust, which serves 278 veterans, ensures that they can remain at home even after their caregiver dies. Not funding the trust could harm the long-term viability of that effort, but did not affect anyone enrolled, WWP Chief Financial Officer Eric Miller said.

In recent months, the BBB report cleared the organization of any wrongdoing, and Charity Navigator and GuideStar raised its rating.



# France's president-elect girds for challenges ahead

Associated Press

PARIS — French President-elect Emmanuel Macron laid the groundwork Monday for his transition to power, announcing a visit to Germany and a name change for his political movement and appearing with his predecessor at a solemn World War II commemoration.

Macron handily defeated far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen in Sunday's presidential runoff, and now must pull together a majority of lawmakers for his year-old political movement to run in the mid-June legislative election.

Leaders in Germany and Britain praised Macron's victory but viewed it through their own electoral challenges.

Macron's party is changing its name to La Republique En Marche (Republic on the Move) as it prepares a list of candidates. Macron has promised that half of those candidates will be new to elected politics, as he was before his victory on Sunday.

Macron won the presidency with 66 percent of votes cast for a candidate but the vote saw a high number of blank or spoiled votes and unusually low turnout.

Le Pen said she will lead the

opposition to Macron.

On Monday, a French national holiday, Macron joined President Francois Hollande in a commemoration of the formal German defeat in World War II.

It was the first time the men had appeared in public together since Macron resigned in August 2016 as Hollande's economy minister to run for president — a decision that was received coldly by the French leader at the time.

On Monday, though, Hollande gripped Macron's arm before the two men walked side by side and then announced the transfer of power would take place on Sunday.

Monday also marked decades of peace in Western Europe, something Macron made a cornerstone of his campaign against Le Pen's brand of nationalist populism. Le Pen had called for France to leave the 28-nation European Union and to drop the shared euro currency in favor of reinstating the French franc.

Sylvie Goulard, a French deputy to the European Parliament, said Macron would make Berlin his first official visit, with perhaps a stop to see French troops stationed abroad

as well.

The National Front also geared up for a name change — if not a makeover of its ideas — after Le Pen's decisive loss. In interviews Monday, National Front officials said the party founded by her father would get a new name to try to draw in a broader spectrum of supporters.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whom Le Pen derisively said last week would be France's de facto leader under a Macron presidency, welcomed his win but appeared cautious about proposals to support his economic plans either by relaxing European spending rules or with a dedicated stimulus fund.

"German support can't replace French policies," she said.

In Britain, Prime Minister Theresa May said Macron's win makes it even more important for British voters to back her Conservatives and to strengthen Britain's hand in EU exit talks. May has called an early election for June 8, arguing that her Conservatives need a bigger majority in order to stand firm against — and to strike deals with — the EU.

## Claims by N. Korea raise question

Associated Press

TOKYO — After arresting two American university instructors and laying out what it says was an elaborate, CIA-backed plot to assassinate Kim Jong Un, North Korea is claiming to be the victim of state-sponsored terrorism — from the White House.

But the vitriolic outrage over the alleged plan to assassinate Kim last month is also being doled out with an unusually big dollop of retaliation threats, raising a familiar question: What on Earth is going on in Pyongyang?

North Korea's state-run media announced Sunday that an ethnic Korean man with U.S. citizenship was "intercepted" two days ago by authorities for unspecified hostile acts against the country. He was identified as Kim Hak Song, an employee of the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology.

That came just days after the North announced the detention of an accounting instructor at the same university, Kim Sang Dok, also a U.S. citizen, for "acts of hostility aimed to overturn" the country.

The reported arrest of another "Mr. Kim" — the North Korean man allegedly at the center of the assassination plot — is more ominous.

According to state media reports that began Friday, he is a Pyongyang resident who was "ideologically corrupted and bribed" by the CIA and South Korea's National Intelligence Service while working in the timber industry in Siberia in 2014.

They allege Kim was in frequent contact through satellite communications with the "murderous demons" of the NIS and CIA, who instructed him to use a biochemical substance that is the "know-how of the CIA" and that the hardware, supplies and funds would be borne by the South Korean side.

The initial reports of the plot called it "state-sponsored terrorism."

## Nepal looks to limit Everest climbing age

Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Family and supporters on Sunday honored an 85-year-old Nepali man who died trying to regain his title as the oldest person to climb Mount Everest, while officials stressed the need to limit the age for such a daunting physical challenge.

The death of Min Bahadur Sherchan has revived concerns about allowing elderly people to attempt to scale peaks where the conditions are harsh and oxygen level low.

Nepali law requires Everest climbers to be at least 16 but there's no upper age limit.

"It is very necessary to immediately bring that age limit law. If there had been a limit, the loss of life could have been prevented," said Ang

Tshering, head of the Nepal Mountaineering Association.

The association is planning to push the government to limit the age of climbers to at least 76, he said.

Sherchan died Saturday evening at the Everest base camp. Another Nepali man, Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya, died in 2011 at age 82 while attempting to scale Everest.

Dinesh Bhattarai, who heads the Tourism Department, said that the government is seriously discussing an upper age limit.

Sherchan had first scaled Everest in May 2008 when he was 76 — at the time becoming the oldest climber to reach the top. His record was broken in 2013 by 80-year-old Japanese climber Yuichiro Miura.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Lost cellphone tracked to garbage dump

**NJ** CAMDEN — A boy's lost cellphone ended up in a New Jersey garbage dump and lived to tell about it.

Ethan Roncace's phone was thrown away at a high school in Haddon Township on May 1.

His father, Craig, told WCAU-TV in Philadelphia he used an app to track the phone and saw it was on the move. The signal led the family to the Covanta waste-to-energy facility in Camden. He suited up and started digging through a mountain of trash. He recovered the phone in 30 minutes and it still worked.

## Foul water floods Penn Station concourse

**NY** NEW YORK — Morning commuters were holding their noses when foul-smelling water rained from the ceiling into the railroad concourse at New York's Penn Station.

Witness video Wednesday showed water overflowing from trash receptacles arranged in a roped-off area in the Long Island Railroad concourse. Workers outside a restaurant feverishly mopped against the encroaching flood.

WNBC reported the liquid contained sewage from a skyscraper above the station. The management company said a pipe had leaked and the situation was under control in the afternoon.

## Dog helps residents escape burning house

**MN** RED WING — Authorities said a Red Wing family was able to escape a house fire when they were awakened by barking from the family dog.

KARE-TV reported that it took firefighters two hours to extinguish the early Saturday morning blaze that damaged the garage, attic and both levels of the home. All of the residents made it out of the house safely. The Red Wing Police Department posted a video on its website of firefighters administering oxygen to the family cat.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

## Hundreds of leopard sharks dying in Bay

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — Biologists are trying to figure out why hundreds of leopard sharks are dying in the San Francisco Bay this year.

Researchers told the San Francisco Chronicle huge numbers of dead sharks have been found since mid-March along the shorelines of Redwood City, Foster City, Alameda, Hayward, Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco. It is the largest die-off in six years of the striped fish, which is the bay's most abundant shark.

Pelagic Shark Research Foundation executive director Sean Van Sommeran believes the number of dead and dying sharks in the bay could be in the thousands. Experts believe the sharks are picking up toxins in stagnant water.

## Grandmother, 72, graduates from college

**TN** NASHVILLE — Fifty-five years after she cut short her college education when she fell in love, Darlene Mullins has finally graduated.

Tennessee State University said Mullins, 72, a grandmother of four, participated in the school's undergraduate commencement ceremony Saturday. Mullins was a TSU student and a budding track star in

1962 when she met John Mullins. A courtship developed, and they married. John graduated in 1964.

Mullins moved from college student to caring for their home and raising a family. In 2013, she went back to TSU to pursue a degree in interdisciplinary studies. She graduated summa cum laude.

## Man accused of raping friend, holding hostages

**IN** ELKHART — Court documents say a northern Indiana man raped a female friend and held her and two other women captive for as long as five days because he was angry that the friend was telling others that he had shot at someone.

Derrick Glass, 31, of Elkhart faces one count of rape, three counts of criminal confinement, two counts of battery, all while armed with a deadly weapon, plus four counts of pointing a loaded firearm at someone. He remained held Saturday on \$1 million bond.

The Elkhart Truth reported Glass is accused of drugging, raping and assaulting the friend and forcing her to sleep naked on the floor next to him from April 28 through May 2. One other woman also was held five days and one for one day.

## Stolen statue of Ronald McDonald recovered

**NJ** CLINTON — A life-size Ronald McDonald statue stolen from a McDonald's in New Jersey last month has been found.

Authorities are keeping mum about where it was found and who took it.

Hunterdon County prosecutors said the 250-pound fiberglass statue of the clown character sitting on a bench was taken from the McDonald's in

Clinton. They announced Friday that it had been found but declined further comment.

The couple who own the restaurant said the statue wasn't damaged. They plan to move it to a secure location and will have it refurbished and repainted as part of ongoing restaurant renovations.

## 3 rescued off coast after boat capsizes

**CA** MARINA DEL REY — The U.S. Coast Guard says three people were rescued off Southern California's coast after their boat capsized.

It says its Los Angeles-Long Beach sector received a call Saturday afternoon about a 27-foot pleasure boat in distress eight miles west of Marina Del Rey. The Coast Guard said it dispatched a helicopter crew and a boat crew to assist the Los Angeles County Fire Department in the rescue.

The Los Angeles Fire Department said a Los Angeles County Lifeguards boat transported to safety two of those rescued. A private boat transported the other person. None needed medical attention.

## Man is accused of inciting church brawl

**GA** MACON — A man has been arrested in a brawl that broke out at a Georgia church last week.

The Telegraph reported that Julian DeWayne Coker, 36, was charged Friday with inciting a riot after deputies reviewed footage of the May 2 fight at Greater Bellevue Baptist Church in Macon.

The brawl broke out after 150 members of the congregation convened to vote on the Rev. David Stephens' future at the church.

From wire reports

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# Predators reach West final

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Nashville Predators may have been the last team in the Western Conference this postseason. Now they're the NHL's first team to reach a conference final.

And the Predators believe they're only halfway through.

"The expectation is the Stanley Cup," Nashville defenseman P.K. Subban said. "I think we took a big step (Sunday) and, obviously, for this organization and this city, but that's not our ultimate goal. Our ultimate goal is to win a Stanley Cup. We worked really hard to put ourselves in a good position. There's still a lot of hockey left to be played."

The eighth-seeded team in the West, the Predators followed up a stunning sweep of the Chicago Blackhawks by ousting the St. Louis Blues in six games with a 3-1 victory Sunday. This is their first trip to the conference finals after fall-

ing short in the second round in their first three attempts, including a year ago to San Jose after pushing the Sharks to seven games.

"Right now, it means everything," Nashville goalie Pekka Rinne said. "We haven't gotten further than this before. Obviously, it's a great feeling. There's a lot of work left. After this second round, there are only four teams left. We all know that we have what it takes and everything is in our hands. It's a good feeling. This is why you play this game. Right now, I'm pretty happy."

The Predators, who began play in 1998, now are the NHL's only undefeated team at home this postseason with a nine-game winning streak dating to last season. Grammy winners Lady Antebellum sang the national anthem, the latest country stars to handle the honor.

"It's obviously a tough building," Blues goalie Jake Allen said. "So whoever they play next is going to have their

hands full."

The Predators also are a league-best 8-2 with Rinne posting a 1.37 goals against average and .951 save percentage. He helped Nashville give up only one goal per game on home ice to St. Louis in this series. Rinne even posted his third assist of the postseason on Calle Jarnkrok's empty netter with a minute left that clinched their series against St. Louis.

"Pekks was unbelievable again," defenseman Roman Josi said. "Probably every game, he was our best player and he was our best player again."

Paul Stastny gave St. Louis a 1-0 lead scoring just 2:04 into Sunday's game. They wouldn't score again as Rinne finished with 23 saves.

The teams wound up tied at 1-1 after 40 minutes thanks to Josi scoring 35 seconds into the second period. That was the ninth goal by a Nashville defenseman this postseason, a franchise record.

## Stenhouse gets first win with last-lap pass

Associated Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — It's been a long journey for Ricky Stenhouse Jr. to make his way to Victory Lane.

When he finally got there, in his 158th career NASCAR Cup start, his team owner and famous girlfriend were waiting.

His father? Well, he was a little late to the party.

A last-lap pass of Kyle Busch in overtime Sunday got Stenhouse the win at Talladega, which was the first for resurgent Roush Fenway Racing since 2014. Danica Patrick, who had wrecked out of the race, was in street clothes and able to lean into the car to give her boyfriend a congratulatory kiss.

"Pulling into Victory Lane and seeing Jack and Danica standing there together, they're the same height, it was super special," he said. "She's been so supportive and knows how hard that I've worked, and to have her there was really awesome."

Ricky Stenhouse Sr. needed a police escort.

The elder Stenhouse tried to climb a fence along the Talladega backstretch and cross the track to find his way to the celebration. Security picked him up, placed him in a car and questioned him. Finally vetted, he was driven to Victory Lane to meet his son.

"My dad has done so much for me in my career," Stenhouse said. "Everything that I've learned is from him, and you know, making sure that you have the right people around you is one of the things that he's all about, making sure that you have people that respect you, that will do anything for you, and man, he sacrificed a lot for me and my career."

"Everything that I know about racing I learned from him, and I'm glad that he was able to be here in Victory Lane."

It shouldn't have gone any other way for Stenhouse, a winner at nearly every level who has struggled mightily in Cup because of Roush's rebuilding phase.

# Draisaitl leads Oilers romp

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The Edmonton Oilers bounced back from a tough loss in the last game with a resounding win, and put the pressure on the Anaheim Ducks.

Leon Draisaitl had three goals and two assists, Mark Letestu added two goals and two assists, and the Oilers cruised to a 7-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks on Sunday night, forcing a decisive Game 7 in their NHL Western Conference semifinal series.

"Obviously, the season was on the line and we all had to step it up a notch and the whole group did," Draisaitl said.

Game 7 is Wednesday at Anaheim, with the winner advancing to face the Nashville Predators in the conference finals.

"The big test is coming up," Oilers coach Todd McLellan said. "We're going to have to

park this one quickly and get ready for a big battle down there."

The Ducks will head back to southern California looking to end a trend of having lost a Game 7 at home in four straight years. Anaheim was eliminated in the first round of 2013 (Detroit) and 2016 (Nashville), the second round in 2014 (Los Angeles), and the conference finals in 2015 (Chicago) in Game 7s at the Honda Center. The Ducks led each of those series 3-2 before back-to-back losses ended their seasons.

"Half of the guys in here haven't been here for that stuff," Ducks captain Ryan Getzlaf said. "We're going back with the preparation to be ready for a big game. It doesn't really matter what the situation is. It is still win or go home."

The Oilers won twice in Anaheim to open this series and narrowly lost Game 5 there in

double overtime.

Zach Kassian and Anton Slepyshev also scored and Cam Talbot stopped 34 shots for the Oilers, who led 5-0 after the first period.

Rickard Rakell scored midway through the second period for Anaheim. Ducks goalie John Gibson was pulled after giving up three goals on six shots less than 8½ minutes into the game. Jonathan Bernier came on and finished with 25 saves.

"I wasn't very good," Gibson said. "I have to come up with a couple of saves and maybe it's different, maybe it's not. As it went on they kind of took it to us, it wasn't our best. I wasn't as good as I wanted to be and I kind of let them down."

Slepyshev extended the Oilers' lead to 6-0 in the opening minute of the second period before Rakell got the Ducks on the scoreboard just shy of the 9-minute mark.



# Cavaliers finish off Raptors

Associated Press

TORONTO — LeBron James and the Cavaliers are headed back to a familiar place after sweeping aside another out-classed opponent.

James scored 35 points and Kyrie Irving 27 as Cleveland swept Toronto, beating the Raptors 109-102 on Sunday to give James his seventh consecutive trip to the NBA Eastern Conference finals.

"It's rewarding when you can advance," James said. "It's not just given to you, you have to go out and earn it. Once again I'm part of a team that's been able to advance to the Eastern Conference Finals. It's going to be my ninth time in 14 years. I'll take those numbers."

Kyle Korver scored 18 points to help the Cavaliers become the first team to win eight straight playoff games the year following a title, and the first team to win eight straight in

consecutive postseasons.

"The fact that we play our best basketball in the postseason lets us know that we're up for the challenge," said James, who had nine rebounds and six assists.

Channing Frye scored 10 points, and Irving had nine assists for Cleveland. The Cavs were 16-for-41 from three-point range.

"When LeBron is shooting the three ball the way he is, at the rate he's shooting it, they're difficult," Toronto coach Dwane Casey said. "It's going to take a Herculean effort to beat them."

Serge Ibaka scored 23 points and DeMar DeRozan had 22 for Toronto. The Raptors took their first fourth-quarter lead of the series but couldn't avoid their fourth straight loss.

"We needed that, we needed to be tested throughout 48-minute games," Irving said. "One of

the hardest things to do is sweep teams. We understand how important it is to come in and get a win and get rest."

Making his second start in place of injured point guard Kyle Lowry, Cory Joseph had 20 points and 12 assists for Toronto, which lost in six games against Cleveland last year in the Conference Finals. P.J. Tucker had 14 points and 12 assists in his first career playoff start.

Toronto posted back-to-back 50-win seasons for the first time in franchise history and reached the playoffs for the fourth straight year. Beefed-up by late-season deals for Ibaka and Tucker, Toronto expected to push Cleveland a little harder this year, but showed they still couldn't handle the Cavs.

"It's on us to let this sink in and understand we gotta come back better, individual and team-wise," DeRozan said.

# Rockets rout Spurs to tie series

Associated Press

HOUSTON — After fighting through a terrible chest cold for the last few days, James Harden finally felt like himself on Sunday night.

"I can finally breathe," Harden said.

And the Houston Rockets can, too, after his performance helped them rebound from consecutive losses to beat the San Antonio Spurs 125-104 and tie their NBA Western Conference semifinal at 2-2.

Harden scored 28 points and Eric Gordon added 22 as the Rockets never trailed and used hot three-point shooting to pull away in the third quarter.

"I think our energy was just up no matter what," Harden said. "They went on runs. They cut the deficit down ... but no matter, we just stayed with it."

Game 5 is Tuesday night in San Antonio.

Jonathon Simmons had 17 points for the Spurs, and Kawhi Leonard and LaMarcus Aldridge added 16 apiece.

Houston made 22 three-pointers in a blowout win in Game 1, but had struggled from long-range in its two losses. The Rockets' three-point shooting, a hallmark of their success in the regular season, got back on track Sunday when they made 19 of 43, led by six from Gordon.

The Rockets led by 15 entering the fourth quarter and immediately padded the lead when Gordon made a three-pointer to open the period. Simmons made a three on the other end before Gordon struck again with his sixth three-pointer to leave the Rockets up 97-79.

San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich pointed to one big reason to explain why his team struggled Sunday night.

"Our bible begins with transition defense, and if it's not there, then we're just not ready to go," he said. "If you had seen clips of our transition D (Sunday), you would trade all the players and fire me by the end of the game. It was that bad."

# Wizards' 26-0 run dooms Celtics

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It wasn't enough for the Washington Wizards to force turnover after turnover and make baskets every time down the floor to take a lead over the Boston Celtics.

They wanted to blow them out.

The Wizards did just that in a 121-102 rout in Game 5 on Sunday night thanks to a 26-0 third-quarter run that featured big-time contributions from John Wall, Bradley Beal, Markieff Morris and Otto Porter.

That six-minute stretch busted the game open and Washington tied the NBA second-round series at two games apiece. Game 5 is Wednesday in Boston.

"We're capable of those type of runs every game," said Morris, who finished with 16 points and 10 rebounds. "Keep pressing them, go up 50 if we can. That's the mindset I felt like all of us had."

Washington never led by 50, but after trailing 53-48 early

in the third it was 74-53 by the time Porter made a layup with 5 minutes left in the quarter. Wall had seven of his 27 points and three of his 12 assists during the run as the Celtics committed eight turnovers — including back-to-back shot-clock violations — and went 0-for-5.

Coach Scott Brooks called it the Wizards' best stretch this season, crediting defense for making it all happen.

"It is our defense," said Beal, who had a game-high 29 points. "That's why we're able to get out in transition and get open shots, get open layups. We were just having fun."

It wasn't so fun for the Celtics, who couldn't get Isaiah Thomas going after he opened with five consecutive three-pointers and 17 points in the first 15 minutes and finished with 19. Thomas was annoyed that referees allowed the Wizards to get away with holding and grabbing him but acknowledged the 26-0 run — not the officiating — decided the game.

From Boston's perspective it wasn't pretty, even as coach Brad Stevens credited the Wizards, who have had 26-0, 22-0 and 16-0 runs in this series.

"If you turn the ball over against these guys, you'd prefer to drop kick it into the stands so that at least you can set your defense," Stevens said. "Their attack in transition killed us."

Beal, who was 11-for-16 from the floor, said the conversation at halftime revolved around knowing the defense wasn't up to Washington's standards.

"We're able to force a lot of turnovers," Beal said. "We're one of the best teams in the league at converting off turnovers."

Being a shot away from splitting in Boston gives the Wizards confidence they can win there.

"We feel like we're in control," Wall said. "We feel like we can win there, we know we can. We've just got to do a better job of taking those leads we get and just playing smart basketball down the stretch."

# Let's play 2: Yankees top Cubs in 18th

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Aaron Hicks slid across home plate, hopped up and flexed his arms in jubilation.

No Monday morning blues for Hicks and the New York Yankees.

Hicks scored on Starlin Castro's ground-er in the 18th inning, and the rolling Yankees beat the Chicago Cubs 5-4 in the majors' longest interleague game ever by innings.

"We're going to grind out games," Hicks said. "We're going to fight to the end."

The teams combined for a major league-record 48 strikeouts in baseball's longest game of the season by innings, wrapping up in a tidy 6 hours, 5 minutes, and ending after 1 a.m.

"I know we lost, but you've got to try to have fun with it," Cubs slugger Anthony Rizzo said.

Hicks struck out four times, but he came up with a huge play in the final inning. He led off with a bunt single against Pedro Strop (0-2) and advanced to second when catcher Willson Contreras threw the ball into right field for an error.

With one out and Hicks on third, Castro hit a bouncer up the middle. Shortstop Addison Russell tried to throw home, but it was wide and Hicks scored easily.

Chasen Shreve (1-0) pitched three scoreless innings, striking out pinch-hitting pitcher Kyle Hendricks with runners on first and second for the final out in New York's fifth straight win. The Yankees (20-9) improved to 19-5 since they opened the season with four losses in five games. They also matched their high-water mark from last season at 11 games over .500.

"It's just a crazy game," manager Joe Girardi said.

Chicago trailed 4-1 before it rallied in the ninth against Aroldis Chapman, who helped the Cubs win the World Series last year for the first time since 1908. Albert Almora Jr. and Javier Baez each singled in a run before Chapman hit slumping slugger Anthony Rizzo on his left forearm with the bases loaded on his 36th pitch, forcing home the tying run.

Rizzo got an X-ray on his arm and it came back negative.

"Thank my parents I drank my milk

when I was a kid," Rizzo said. "Decent bones."

Tyler Clippard then came in and got Ben Zobrist to bounce to second for the final out. It was Chapman's first blown save since Game 7 at Cleveland.

"I felt normal. It just wasn't my night to-night," Chapman said through a translator.

Before Hicks scampered home with the winning run, the biggest highlight of extra innings belonged to Cubs slugger Kyle Schwarber. The left fielder went into the stands in foul territory for an outstanding catch on Chase Headley's foul popup in the 12th.

"Tremendous play," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said.

What was left of the crowd also sung along when the Cubs showed a tape of Harry Caray singing "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" for the second seventh-inning stretch in the 14th.

Jacoby Ellsbury hit a two-run homer for New York, and Aaron Judge had a run-scoring triple. Ellsbury went 2-for-6 in his first start since he bruised a nerve in his left elbow last Monday.

## Orioles' Tillman returns to complete sweep

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Pitching for the first time in the big leagues since last October, Chris Tillman began his long-awaited appearance by throwing seven straight pitches outside the strike zone.

Once he finally found his groove, the Orioles right-hander powered through the Chicago White Sox lineup over five innings in a 4-0 victory Sunday that provided Baltimore with a three-game sweep.

Sidelined since March with right shoulder bursitis, Tillman came off the disabled list to join an unstable rotation in need of another arm. After walking the first two batters and working out of a bases-loaded jam in the first, Tillman bounced back nicely in his first appearance since the 2016 AL wild-card game.

"It was a real testament to his pitchability," Orioles manager Buck Showalter said, "searching for something he could survive with early where he could

get in step a little bit."

Tillman (1-0) gave up three singles, walked three and struck out four. He was lifted after throwing 93 pitches, but not before proving he's still got the stuff that enabled him to go 16-6 last season.

**Marlins 7, Mets 0:** Shortly after scheduled starter Matt Harvey was suspended by host New York, Giancarlo Stanton hit two more monstrous home runs off fill-in Adam Wilk that led Miami to an emphatic victory.

Harvey was suspended for three days without pay for an undisclosed violation of team rules. General manager Sandy Alderson announced the punishment in a brief statement before the game. Multiple media reports indicated the penalty stemmed from the pitcher failing to show up at the ballpark Saturday.

**Red Sox 17, Twins 6:** Sandy Leon hit a pair of two-run homers and Chris Sale struck out 10 as Boston romped out of town with a big victory over host Minnesota fueled by a season-

high five homers and which finished with a 10-run ninth inning.

**Indians 1, Royals 0:** Mike Clevinger and four relievers combined on a one-hitter as Cleveland edged host Kansas City.

**Brewers 6, Pirates 2:** Eric Thames broke out of his slump with a home run and three hits to send Milwaukee past host Pittsburgh.

**Blue Jays 2, Rays 1:** Joe Biagini and four relievers combined on a three-hitter and Darwin Barney hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning to help Toronto beat host Tampa Bay.

**Cardinals 6, Braves 4 (14):** Tommy Pham hit two homers, including a two-run drive in the 14th inning as host St. Louis recovered after blowing a four-run lead to complete a three-game sweep of Atlanta.

**Phillies 6, Nationals 5 (10):** Freddy Galvis hit a sacrifice fly in the 10th inning to give host Philadelphia a comeback win over Washington.

**Astros 5, Angels 3:** Jose Altuve hit a three-run homer during Houston's four-run third inning, and Evan Gattis also went deep against host Los Angeles.

**Reds 4, Giants 0:** Scott Feldman pitched a four-hitter and Scott Schebler and Zack Cozart homered off Johnny Cueto as host Cincinnati beat San Francisco for its season-high fifth straight win.

**Rockies 5, Diamondbacks 2:** Tyler Chatwood pitched two-hit ball into the eighth inning before exiting after deflecting a drive with his pitching hand, while Mark Reynolds homered for a third straight game in host Colorado's rain-delayed victory.

**Athletics 8, Tigers 6:** Ryon Healy hit a two-run homer to cap a three-run ninth inning against Detroit's Francisco Rodriguez as host Oakland rallied for the second straight day.

**Mariners 4, Rangers 3:** Kyle Seager hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning as host Seattle rallied late to defeat Texas.