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'Avoidable losses' Families of sailors who died in Navy collisions hope for answers in court

BY DIANNA CAHN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Families of some of the 17 sailors killed in two U.S. Navy collisions in Asia last summer say the courts-martial beginning this week probably won't give them closure. What they really want is answers.

How is it possible that two months after the USS Fitzgerald collided with a merchant container ship off the coast of Japan on June 17, 2017, killing seven sailors, another destroyer, the USS John S. McCain, collided with a commercial tanker in the Straits of Singapore, killing 10 more?

Why were the Navy crews allowed to get so tired they couldn't perform, so undermanned and overtasked that they were working 100-hour weeks and given no time for training? How could the Navy let readiness erode, allowing so many things to go wrong — twice in a row, following at least two nonfatal mishaps in 2017 in the Japan-based 7th Fleet?

"Ten died, five injured, and we are blaming two people?" said Rachel Eckels, referring to those aboard the McCain, where her son, Petty Officer 1st Class Timothy Eckels, died.

"These things should not be happening in peacetime. They shouldn't be sailing in the ocean blue, crashing into things," she said. "It happened in January. It happened in June. It happened in August. And nobody is answering how this happened."

Reports have been filed and some punishments doled out. But when the first scheduled court proceeding opens at the Washington Navy Yard on Tuesday, the Navy will publicly begin hashing out what went wrong and who should be held accountable. An unnamed junior officer aboard the Fitzgerald is expected to offer a plea Tuesday. An

Article 32 preliminary hearing will be conducted Wednesday to determine whether to proceed with charges against two other unnamed junior officers from the Fitzgerald.

The destroyer's former commanding officer, Cmdr. Bryce Benson, is slated for an Article 32 hearing May 21. He faces charges that include negligent homicide, hazarding a ship and dereliction of duty.

A date has not been finalized for an Article 32 for the relieved commanding officer of the McCain, Cmdr. Alfredo Sanchez, who is facing similar charges for the Aug. 21, 2017, collision.

Stretched too thin

In the months since the deadly collisions, the Navy has acknowledged that its forward-deployed 7th Fleet in Japan had been stretched too thin. Reports about the collisions point to mistakes by the crew and commanders, calling the deadly mishaps "avoidable" and caused by human error. The reports showed that errors on both ships were compounded, and opportunities to recognize and avoid grave danger were squandered.

Since then, emerging reports have revealed an exhausted fleet conducting so many operations that training fell through the cracks, ship maintenance was deferred and basic seamanship skills were neglected. A Navy review reiterated what had been ignored in earlier warnings: The fleet was undermanned and overworked; readiness was eroding because of a culture that demanded getting the job done no matter the obstacle.

"I think the main culprit for these collisions was that we allowed the training of our surface warriors to atrophy," retired Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, who was fired as commander

of 7th Fleet, wrote in an article last month in the U.S. Naval Institute magazine *Proceedings*. Aucoin accepted responsibility for his decisions but expressed concern that the Navy might not be learning needed lessons.

"I made clear to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, of the impact of increased operational demand on training and maintenance" well before the guided-missile destroyers' collisions, he wrote. "Despite these explicitly stated concerns, the direction we received was to execute the mission."

Like many of the family members, Eckels knows that holding the ship's commander accountable won't bring her son back. Still, she wants to look him in the eye at the proceedings.

"He needs to see the anguish on our faces, the hurt, the pain," she said.

At the same time, she and other parents say the fix has to be bigger than blaming a few people.

"It is a Navy problem, period," said Darrold Martin, whose only son, Xavier, was a chief petty officer onboard the Fitzgerald.

"This whole blame game — come on," he said. "This is not one seaman's fault."

Grief, anger

The collisions left Navy families reeling with grief and fuming.

"I would have felt more comfortable if he had been in a car accident," Martin said. "This should never have happened."

Martin raised his son as a single parent after a bitter divorce 15 years ago, and the two were inseparable.

Loved ones have been asked to give impact statements for the court.

Darrold Martin describes one piece of his grief as follows: A parent falls in love with their

child and drives home each day with the emotional anticipation of seeing his love. But when he gets there, that love is gone, and he has no forwarding address. He's been abandoned.

"I am in a glass prison," he said. "It's like wearing dirty glasses. Nothing is as crisp as it used to be."

The collisions finally sparked change — after years of warnings and two nonfatal incidents earlier in 2017 had failed to spur action.

Navy investigations into a ship running aground in Tokyo Bay in January 2017 and a minor collision between another Navy ship and a fishing vessel in the Sea of Japan in May last year led to similar findings of faulty seamanship, bad decision-making and human errors.

A Government Accountability Office report from 2015 laid out the risks of rolling back manning while ramping up demand on the Navy's forward-deployed fleet. Training, maintenance and certifications were neglected; readiness eroded even as the pace of operations escalated. But those warnings were ignored.

After the collisions, Navy reviews concluded that its "can-do" culture was putting sailors and operations at risk. But how to fix that in a performance-based hierarchy, when officers and commanders are trying to perform admirably, is a difficult question.

In January, the Navy created an oversight council to shepherd implementation of 111 recommendations — mostly improving manning and training, with a focus on seamanship and navigation, improved systems and equipment, and readiness of the force and the fleet. The Navy says 29 have been fully implemented and more than 75 percent of the recommendations are expected to be implemented by the end of September.

US, S. Korea: Troop reduction not on table

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. and South Korean presidents will meet before Donald Trump's summit with the North, officials said, as the allies insisted American troops won't be on the table in upcoming nuclear negotiations.

The White House said the May 22 summit between Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Washington "affirms the enduring strength" of the alliance between the two countries.

Trump said Friday he won't use the linchpin of that alliance — the U.S. military presence on the divided peninsula — as a bargaining chip in his talks with the North.

"Troops are not on the table," he told reporters Friday at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland.

But he didn't rule out the eventual removal of some troops, suggesting the issue could come up in separate cost-sharing negotiations with the South.

"Now, I have to tell you, at some point into the future, I would like to save the money," he said. "You know, we have 32,000 troops there."

Trump also said the White House and

Pyongyang had settled on a date and a location for their first summit. He didn't reveal those details but previously has said the meeting would be held later this month or in early June.

The New York Times reported Thursday that Trump has ordered the Pentagon to prepare options for drawing down American troops in South Korea, citing several people briefed on the deliberations.

The officials declined to say if Trump was seeking options for a full or partial reduction but stressed that rethinking the size and configuration of the force was overdue, according to the Times.

National Security Adviser John Bolton called the report "utter nonsense."

Pentagon spokesman Marine Lt. Col. Christopher Logan also denied the report, saying there are no plans to change the American force posture and mission in South Korea.

"The president has not asked the Pentagon to provide options for reducing American forces stationed in South Korea," he said.

South Korean national security chief Chung Eui-yong, who met with Bolton recently in Washington, said speculation about removing troops was "unacceptable."

The U.S. military presence in South Korea has been a source of contention with the North and its benefactor China since the 1950-53 war on the peninsula ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Officials said Kim didn't raise the issue in his recent summit with Moon and isn't expected to do so with Trump.

But the rapidly evolving peace process has raised questions about whether U.S. troops would be needed if a formal treaty is signed.

Retired Lt. Col. Daniel Davis, who served as an adviser to the South Korean military in the 1990s, noted the United States has troops elsewhere in the region, including 50,000 in Japan.

"The South Korean military is very powerful and certainly capable of defending themselves against any absurd attack that the North may do," he said.

"So we don't lose anything strategically," he said. "We don't lose any ability to respond anywhere in Asia or on the seas or in the air that we have right now if we take those out of South Korea."

Moon and Kim agreed to work toward a peace treaty by the end of the year and to seek the "complete denuclearization" of the peninsula.

N. Korea: Don't mistake intentions for 'weakness'

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned the United States against continued pressure and military threats Sunday ahead of a planned summit between Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump.

The comments reported by the state-run Korean Central News Agency were a reminder of simmering tensions despite the recent diplomatic gains that have raised hopes for a peaceful resolution over the North's nuclear weapons program.

"It would not be conducive to addressing the issue if the U.S. miscalculates the peace-loving intention of [North Korea] as a sign of 'weakness' and contin-

ues to pursue its pressure and military threats against the latter," KCNA quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying.

Both sides have toned down their rhetoric since Kim Jong Un agreed to have his nation compete in the Winter Olympics and to begin talks with the South.

That led to a March 27 summit with South Korean leader Moon Jae-in in which Kim agreed to attempt a permanent peace and to "completely denuclearize" the peninsula.

Trump and Kim are due to hold a meeting in coming weeks, although the date and venue have not been announced.

The North's comments could be seen as trying to strengthen

its hand in the negotiations with Trump, who has demanded that it agree to the complete and verifiable dismantling of its nuclear weapons program.

The report accused the U.S. of aggravating the situation by continuing to declare it won't ease sanctions and pressure until the North gives up its nuclear weapons.

It also criticized the deployment of strategic assets on the divided peninsula, apparently referring to several U.S. F-22 stealth fighters reportedly sent last week for joint combat training with the South.

KCNA also said Washington was "misleading the public opinion" by arguing that the North's turn toward diplomacy was due to international eco-

nomics sanctions.

Trump has vowed to maintain his "maximum pressure" campaign of punishing economic measures and diplomatic isolation until the North agrees to abandon its nuclear weapons.

"The U.S. is deliberately provoking [North Korea] at the time when the situation on the Korean Peninsula is moving toward peace and reconciliation," KCNA said, adding it was a "dangerous attempt" to ruin the hard-won atmosphere of dialogue.

Trump and Moon plan to hold a separate summit on May 22 in Washington as the allies have vowed close cooperation in preparing for talks with the North.

Some PCS reimbursements now taxable

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

Some civilian federal employees are facing hefty tax burdens after a revision included in the new tax reform law removed exemptions on moving expenses, officials say.

The change, which went into effect Jan. 1 as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, essentially redefined employer-paid and reimbursed moving expenses as taxable income — except in the cases of active-duty servicemembers.

But for civilians moving on military orders, much of the thousands of dollars the government pays for their permanent

change of station moves is now considered taxable income.

The government typically pays for employee moving expenses, such as lodging and travel to the new location and shipment and storage of household goods.

For an approximate idea of the costs, a 2015 Government Accountability Office report studying active-duty moves estimated the average price of overseas PCS moves was more than \$13,000, while stateside moves averaged about \$10,000. The study did not report costs for civilian moves.

Approximately 25,000 civilian federal workers — from military civilian employees to

law enforcement and veterinarians — move each year.

Last month, nine federal employee associations submitted a letter to the U.S. General Services Administration seeking relief from the code.

The letter said many federal employees are already being issued “exorbitantly large bills for taxes owed” because of the change, noting that some “are so large as to essentially negate the total value of one or multiple employee paychecks.”

The federal employee associations that drafted the letter argued the tax change is disproportionately affecting federal employees who work in national and homeland security due to

the often nomadic nature of their jobs.

Bill Valdez, president of the Senior Executive Association — one of the nine groups that submitted the letter — said “it is sadly ironic” that federal employees hurt by the tax code include those “who have already sacrificially uprooted their entire lives and relocated in the name of public service.”

The GSA is still working with the Treasury Department and the IRS on the best way to implement taxation on moving expenses, but some federal agencies have already begun to take the taxes out of employees’ checks absent official guidance, according to the letter.

Giuliani: Trump could invoke Fifth Amendment

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump would not have to comply with a subpoena issued by the special counsel investigating Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and could invoke the Fifth Amendment if he does sit down with him, one of his lawyers said Sunday.

“We don’t have to” comply with a subpoena, Rudy Giuliani, the former New York mayor who recently joined Trump’s legal team, said in a televised interview. “He’s the president of the United States. We can assert the same privileges other presidents have.”

Giuliani’s claims comes less than a week after The Washington Post reported that special counsel Robert Mueller III, who is seeking to interview Trump, had raised the

possibility of subpoenaing the president during a meeting this year. Trump has shaken up his legal team in recent days, seeking to take a more aggressive response to the probe that has engulfed much of his presidency.

During an interview on ABC News’ “This Week,” Giuliani repeatedly assailed Mueller’s probe, questioning why he would “walk (Trump) into a prosecution for perjury” by letting him sit for an interview. Trump has publicly said he would speak to Mueller, but Giuliani said he was not prepared so far to make that happen.

“Not after the way they acted,” Giuliani said. “I came into this case with the desire to do that; they keep convincing me not to do that.”

The uncertainty regarding whether

Trump will sit for an interview with Mueller, which has played out both in public comments made by the president and his legal team as well as behind-the-scenes wrangling, could ultimately make its way to the Supreme Court if it is not resolved.

Giuliani acknowledged that Trump may well wind up testifying. When asked whether he is confident that Trump will not invoke his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination, Giuliani said, “How can I be confident in that?”

Trump last week said he “would love to speak” to Mueller’s team.

“Nothing I want to do more, because we did nothing wrong,” Trump told reporters Friday. But, he added: “I have to find that we’re going to be treated fairly. ... Right now, it’s a pure witch hunt.”

Special counsel’s team questions friend of president

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Investigators working for special counsel Robert Mueller have interviewed one of President Donald Trump’s closest friends and confidants, California real estate investor Tom Barrack, The Associated Press has learned.

Barrack was interviewed as part of the federal investigation of possible coordination

between the Trump campaign and Russia in the 2016 election, according to three people familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

The specific topics covered in questions from Mueller’s team were not immediately clear.

One of the people who spoke to the AP said the questioning focused entirely on two officials from Trump’s campaign who

have been indicted by Mueller: Trump’s former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, and Manafort’s longtime deputy, Rick Gates. Gates agreed to plead guilty to federal conspiracy and false-statement charges in February and began cooperating with investigators.

That person said Barrack was interviewed “months ago” and was asked a few questions about Gates’ work on Trump’s

inaugural committee, which Barrack chaired, but there were no questions about the money raised by that committee.

A second person with knowledge of the Barrack interview said the questioning was broader and did include financial matters about the campaign, the transition and Trump’s inauguration in January 2017.

Barrack’s spokeswoman, Lisa Baker, declined to comment.

Afghan bombing kills at least 14

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A bomb blast inside a mosque in eastern Afghanistan that was being used as a voter registration center killed at least 14 people and wounded 33, officials said.

Habib Shah Ansari, the provincial head of public health, confirmed the toll from the attack, which took place in the city of Khost, the capital of the province of the same name.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and a local Islamic State affiliate reject democratic elections and have targeted them in the past. ISIS is not known to have a presence

in Khost but has expanded its footprint into other areas in recent years.

Last month, an ISIS suicide bomber attacked a voter registration center in Kabul, killing 60 people and wounding at least 130 others.

Afghanistan plans to hold elections in October, the first since 2014.

The Taliban and ISIS have launched a relentless wave of attacks since the start of the year, killing scores of civilians in the capital, Kabul, and elsewhere. Afghan security forces have struggled to combat the groups since the U.S. and NATO concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014, switching to a counterterrorism and support

role.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, a vehicle carrying shopkeepers on their way to a market struck a roadside bomb in Afghanistan's northern Faryab province, killing seven of them. Police spokesman Karim Yuresh said another civilian was wounded in Sunday's attack, in an area where both the Taliban and ISIS are active.

In the eastern Paktia province, a car bomb killed two people and wounded another three. Abdullah Hsart, the provincial governor's spokesman, said the attack late Saturday targeted Hazart Mohammad Rodwal, a district chief, who was among the wounded. The Taliban claimed the attack.

Scientists wary as lava vents quiet down

Associated Press

PAHOA, Hawaii — The number of homes destroyed by lava shooting out of openings in the ground created by Hawaii's Kilauea volcano climbed to five as some of the more than 1,700 people who evacuated prepared for the possibility they may not return for quite some time.

"I have no idea how soon we can get back," said Todd Corrigan, who left his home in Leilani Estates with his wife on Friday as lava burst through the ground three or four blocks from their home. They spent the night on the beach in their car and began looking for a vacation rental.

The Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory said eight vents, each several hundred yards long, opened in the neighborhood since Thursday. By late Saturday the fissures had quieted down and were releasing only steam and gas.

Scientists said Kilauea was likely to release more lava through additional vents but they were unable to predict exactly where. Leilani Estates, a subdivision in the mostly rural district of Puna, is at greatest risk. Authorities ordered more than 1,700 residents to evacuate from there and nearby Lanipuna Gardens.

Hundreds of small earthquakes continued to rumble through the area Saturday, one day after a magnitude 6.9 temblor hit — the largest earthquake to hit Hawaii in more than 40 years. Magma moving through Kilauea set off the earthquakes, said geologists, who warned of aftershocks.

Authorities cautioned that sulfuric gas pouring out of the vents also posed dangers, particularly to the elderly and people with respiratory problems.

Kilauea has been continuously erupting since 1983 and is one of the world's most active volcanoes.

Businesses await Trump Iran decision

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — From airplanes to oilfields, billions of dollars are on the line for corporations as President Donald Trump weighs whether to pull the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal.

Regardless of where they are headquartered, virtually all multinational corporations do business or banking in the U.S., meaning any return to pre-deal sanctions could torpedo deals made after the 2015 agreement came into force.

That threat alone has been enough to scare risk-averse firms, like Boeing Co., into slow-walking deals agreed to months ago. A complete pullout by the U.S. would wreak further havoc and likely frighten off those considering making the plunge.

"I absolutely think those on the fence will not jump in," said Richard Nephew, a former sanctions expert at the U.S. State Department who worked on the nuclear deal and now is at New York's Columbia University. "The only ones who will, will be those who see tremendous monetary benefit and no U.S. risk."

The 2015 Iran nuclear deal lifted crippling economic sanctions that had locked Iran out of international banking and the global oil trade. In return, Tehran limited its enrichment of uranium, reconfigured a heavy-water reactor so it couldn't produce plutonium and reduced its uranium stockpile and supply of centrifuges.

For Western businesses, the deal meant access to Iran's untapped market of 80 million people. Most prominently, airplane manufacturers rushed in to replace the country's dangerously dilapidated civilian fleet.

In December 2016, Airbus Group signed a deal

with Iran's national carrier, IranAir, to sell it 100 airplanes for around \$19 billion at list prices. Boeing later struck its own deal with IranAir for 80 aircraft with a list price of some \$17 billion, promising that deliveries would begin in 2017 and run until 2025.

Boeing separately struck another 30-airplane deal with Iran's Aseman Airlines for \$3 billion at list prices. But Boeing has yet to deliver a single aircraft to Iran. The Chicago-based company's CEO recently stressed it understands the "risks and implications around the Iranian aircraft deal," which would be the biggest business agreement between an American company and Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and U.S. Embassy takeover.

Airbus, a European airline consortium based in Toulouse, France, likewise continues its sales at the discretion of the American government. At least 10 percent of its aircraft components are of American origin, meaning it requires permission from the U.S. Treasury for its sales to Iran. Airbus has already delivered two A330-200s and one A321 to Iran.

Nuclear deal co-signers Britain, France and Germany, which have urged Trump to preserve the deal, may seek exemptions to protect their companies if the U.S. snaps back sanctions, said Ellie Geranmayeh, a senior policy fellow studying Iran at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned Trump of the consequences of pulling out of the deal.

"If (the U.S.) opts to pull out of the nuclear deal, it will soon realize that this decision will become a historic regret for them," Rouhani said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Couple awakens to stranger on couch

OH RITTMAN — Authorities said a couple in Ohio was startled to find a stranger who had helped himself to leftover Easter candy and then fell asleep on their couch.

Rittman police said a 36-year-old man climbed through an unlocked window, got his sugar fix and fell asleep overnight Friday in the couple's living room. A male resident of the home called 911 around 6 a.m. to report that "some random guy" wouldn't wake up.

The man did leave and was arrested nearby. Officers found prescription medication and two knives on him. Police charged the man with aggravated burglary.

Men rescued after bad Yellowstone directions

WY CHEYENNE — Sheriff's officers in Wyoming said two men drove around at least two road-closed signs due to faulty navigation device information while trying to get to Yellowstone National Park and had to be rescued from deep snow.

Park County authorities said Thursday that John Ray Elmore Jr., 60, of Los Angeles and his father, John M. Elmore Sr., 85, of Nashville, Ind., likely won't be cited for using the road.

The road has been closed and unplowed since last fall. Snow still covers much of the route, but the men said their navigation device showed it was open.

Benedict Arnold's hair to be displayed at fort

NY ALBANY — A lock of American traitor Benedict Arnold's hair will

be exhibited at the New York fort he helped capture in the Revolutionary War's opening weeks.

Officials at Fort Ticonderoga announced Wednesday that locks of hair from Arnold and his first wife, Margaret, would be displayed this past weekend when the privately owned historic site and tourist attraction opened for the season.

Curators said the hair was recently rediscovered among the museum's collection of 18th-century military artifacts.

Officer rescues child left alone in car

MD SUITLAND — A man has been charged with reckless endangerment and leaving a child unattended after police in Maryland said they found his toddler daughter strapped into a car seat alone in an SUV that had been left running.

The Washington Post reported Thursday that a Prince George's County police officer found a man lying in grass near an apartment complex earlier in the week. The man appeared to be under the influence and couldn't speak. He was taken to a hospital.

The officer, Cpl. Darryl Wormuth, said that after his shift ended, he was drawn back to the apartment complex. He came across the SUV with the toddler inside. The girl was unharmed.

Hungry bear breaks into home, has snacks

CA NORTH LAKE TAHOE — A hungry bear broke into a California home and snacked on bread and fruit before sheriff's deputies chased it away.

The Placer County Sheriff's Office posted a video of the

bear inside the house on its Twitter account Thursday.

Bears are coming out of hibernation, and deputies said this bear broke into a house at Northstar in North Lake Tahoe for food.

The homeowners called for help. In the video, the bear can be seen on a kitchen island.

Man trips up armed suspect near library

OH COLUMBUS — Police in Ohio's capital city said fancy footwork outside a library tripped up an armed suspect's efforts to flee from police.

WCMH-TV reported a man identified by Columbus police as "Bill" is seen in a video April 3 sticking out his leg and sending a man with a handgun tumbled in his waistband tumbling. Bill was alerted by police sirens while waiting for his granddaughter outside the library.

Columbus police said Bill's intervention may have saved the suspect's life, allowing officers to catch up and arrest him without shots being fired.

The suspect's handgun fell to the ground and was recovered by police.

Fossilized footprints tell tale of sloth hunt

NM WHITE SANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT — Researchers studying fossilized footprints on a New Mexico salt flat said a trail of tracks told the story of Ice Age hunters stalking a huge sloth.

Park naturalist David Bustos said the tracks found at White Sands National Monument show someone deliberately followed a now-extinct giant ground sloth.

The team studying the prints

detailed their findings in the journal *Science Advances*. They said the sloth was 7 to 8 feet tall and had long, strong arms and razor-like claws.

The researchers estimate the footprints are at least 11,700 years old.

Young otter thrives after being rescued

FL ORANGE PARK — A baby otter that took refuge in a Florida woman's garage is thriving.

The Florida Times-Union reported Friday that Daisy had taken refuge in the garage of the Orange Park woman who called Clay County Animal Service.

Veterinarian Kali Gennette said Daisy might not have survived if she hadn't been found. She was dehydrated and undernourished.

The otter perked up after being given fluids and diluted formula at the clinic and was taken to the Wildlife Rescue Coalition of Northeast Florida.

Man eats 30,000th Big Mac hamburger

WI FOND DU LAC — A retired Wisconsin prison guard has eaten his 30,000th Big Mac, nearly 46 years after eating his first.

WBAY-TV reported that Don Gorske, 64, of Fond du Lac, recorded the milestone at a local McDonald's on Friday.

Gorske said he's eaten at least one Big Mac almost every day since May 17, 1972. He has kept most of the boxes or receipts or has made specific notes in calendars.

Guinness World Records has recognized Gorske for the most Big Macs consumed since 2016, when his tally was 28,788.

From wire reports

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Justify races to sloppy Kentucky Derby win

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — If you want to bust a racing curse, call Bob Baffert.

The white-haired trainer smashed a jinx that stood for 136 years when Justify splashed through the slop to win the Kentucky Derby by 2½ lengths on Saturday.

Not since Apollo in 1882 had a colt won the roses without racing as a 2-year-old.

Now, Baffert is in position to make another run at the Triple Crown. Three years ago, he trained American Pharoah to the sport's first sweep of the Derby, Preakness and Belmont in 37 years and just the 12th ever.

Records and streaks are made to be a broken and Baffert is certainly on a tear.

The Derby record for most wins by a trainer is within Baffert's grasp, too. With his fifth victory, the 65-year-old snapped a tie for second and trails only Ben Jones with six.

Justify is just as impressive. The imposing chestnut colt with the blaze running from his eyes to the tip of his nose improved to 4-0 — winning his races by a combined 21½ lengths. The favorite won for the sixth year in a row, the longest such run since the 1970s.

Mike Smith earned his second Derby victory, becoming at 52 the second-oldest winning jockey. Bill Shoemaker was 54 when he won with Ferdinand in 1986.

Smith crossed the finish line at Churchill Downs with only a few specks of mud on his white and green silks in the raini-

est Derby in the race's 144-year history. Nearly 3 inches fell on the crowd of 157,813 throughout the day.

"Amazing horse," Smith said. "He's got that 'it' factor. He is so above average, he's got unbelievable talent and he's got a mind to go with it. He was loving this stuff."

Smith's silks were nearly spotless after he kept 5-2 favorite Justify near the lead throughout the race. He gunned Justify out of the No. 7 spot in the starting gate — something Baffert said had to happen — and the colt's early speed helped hook leader Promises Fulfilled from the start.

"When he got away clean, then I thought we had a chance," Baffert said. "We had to get away. Then Mike took his time."

They set a blistering pace through the muck, going a half-mile in 45.77 seconds.

"It was an unbelievable performance by the winner, on this track, going that fast," Derby trainer Dale Romans said. "He never stopped. He may be a super horse."

Entering the final turn, Justify took the lead and kept on going to the finish under Smith's left-handed whip.

Justify ran 1½ miles in 2:04.20. He paid \$7.80, \$6 and \$4.40.

"I was just in awe of the performance," Baffert said. "He just put himself up there with the greats."

Good Magic returned \$9.20 and \$6.60, while Audible was another head back in third and paid \$5.80 to show. Audible was the best of trainer Todd Pletcher's four entries.

Good Magic — last year's 2-year-old champion and Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner — was the only horse to have a serious shot at Justify turning for home. Good Magic, under Jose Ortiz, drifted out while Justify and Smith kept a clear and straight inside path.

"Justify looked like a big monster," said Chad Brown, who trains Good Magic. "We thought he was the horse to beat and it was true."

Justify won his career debut on Feb. 18 at Santa Anita under 23-year-old Drayden Van Dyke. Baffert, sensing he had a special horse, knew he needed a rider who could handle the pressure of the Triple Crown trail and reached out to Smith.

They teamed to win Justify's second race on March 11 in the mud, foretelling his ability to handle what he would face at Churchill Downs on the first Saturday in May.

Justify announced his presence nationally last month in the Santa Anita Derby, with a front-running, three-length victory over Bolt d'Oro, who ended up 12th on Saturday.

"He's the most beautiful horse," Baffert said. "He has that presence about him. Every day at Santa Anita everybody says, 'Who is that?'"

They'll be talking about him leading up to the Preakness in Baltimore on May 19.

"The winner was brilliant," Derby trainer Steve Asmussen said. "It'll be exciting to see Justify go on."

Golovkin KOs Martirosyan in second round

Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — Gennady Golovkin said his second-round knockout of Vanes Martirosyan wasn't intended to send a message to Canelo Alvarez.

Instead, it was the last-minute replacement for Alvarez who verbally tagged the Mexican superstar on Cinco de Mayo.

"I see why he's eating that kind of meat. I see why he's trying to get that extra edge," said Martirosyan, referencing Alvarez's failed drug test in March.

Golovkin won his 20th consecutive middleweight title defense by sending Martirosyan down at 1:53 of the second round on Saturday night.

Showing he has not lost any of his devastating power after his previous two fights ended in decisions, Golovkin (38-0-1, 34 KOs) tied Bernard Hopkins' record for middleweight title defenses with staggering fury.

After being tagged with a strong three-punch combination from Martirosyan (36-4-1) late in the first round, Golovkin responded with a devastating charge in the second. He started the eight-punch onslaught with a short left and pounced on the damaged Martirosyan, finally dropping him with two powerful lefts.

Martirosyan compared the sequence to being hit by a truck immediately after the fight, then likened Golovkin's punch-

es to being hit by a train in the press conference.

"Every punch was the same power and that surprised me," Martirosyan said. "Thirty-six years old, and he's still fighting like that. He is the real deal."

The fight came together in hectic fashion after Golovkin's rematch with Alvarez fell apart. Golovkin and Alvarez fought to a draw last September and were set to meet again in Las Vegas on the Mexican holiday before Alvarez was suspended for six months by the Nevada Athletic Commission in April after testing positive for clenbuterol.

Alvarez has blamed the positive test on tainted Mexican beef, which led to Martirosy-

an's quip.

The card also featured the first women's fight on HBO in the cable network's 45-year history of broadcasting boxing, as undisputed welterweight champion Cecilia Braekhus (33-0) remained undefeated with a unanimous decision over Kali Reis (13-7-1).

Braekhus won 97-92, 96-93 and 96-93 on the three scorecards despite being knocked down to one knee by a hard right from Reis in the seventh round. Reis nearly dropped Braekhus again in the eighth with another hard right, and the crowd booed when the result was announced after Reis' late charge.

NBA playoffs

LeBron's buzzer-beater sinks Raptors

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The moment required brilliance. LeBron James delivered again.

James banked in a running one-hander at the buzzer, giving the Cleveland Cavaliers a 105-103 win over Toronto on Saturday night in Game 3 and shoving the Raptors to the edge of their most devastating playoff exit.

After the Raptors tied it on rookie OG Anunoby's three-pointer with eight seconds left, James took the inbound pass, dribbled the length of the court and rose off the floor on the left side of the basket just feet from Toronto's bench.

Glass. Bucket. Bedlam.

"Tie game, down one," James said. "I live for those moments."

As the noise level in Quicken Loans Arena rose to jet-engine levels, the Cavs sprinted from the other end of the court and mobbed James. After some tight hugs, he was back atop

the scorer's table — just like he was after a last-second three-pointer to win Game 5 against Indiana — and celebrated a win that was up for grabs.

"I've been doing that since I was like six, seven, eight years old," James said. "Maybe even before that. There's a picture floating around of me beside a Little Tikes hoop with a saggy Pamper on and I was doing it back then and all the way up until now, at 33.

"Things that you dream about, that you get those opportunities and I've been fortunate enough to get a handful of those in some of the biggest moments in my career."

James finished with 38 points, Kevin Love added 21 and 16 rebounds and Kyle Korver scored 18 for the Cavs, who have won nine straight postseason games over the Raptors and may sweep them for the second straight year.

The difference in the two teams is simple: One has James, the other doesn't.

"I ran out of words a while ago," said Korver, struggling to describe James' latest heroics. "I've seen him shoot that shot, that game-winner, countless times when he's messing around in shootaround and practice. It's always like, why would he shoot a shot like that — to win a playoff game?"

"Unbelievable play. He did it again. He's been so huge in those moments for us all year."

It was the fifth career postseason buzzer-beater for James, the second of these playoffs, and this one had maybe the highest degree of difficulty of them all.

"It is very difficult," James said, smiling. "Don't try it at home."

Kyle Lowry scored 27 for Toronto, which played much more physically and clawed back in the fourth quarter while All-Star DeMar DeRozan was on the bench. DeRozan, despondent at not being able to do more or help when it mattered most, went just 3-for-12 from the field

and scored eight points.

Celtics 101, 76ers 98: Al Horford scored the go-ahead basket for visiting Boston late in overtime in a wild Game 3 where Philadelphia gave away the basketball and the confetti.

The Celtics go for the sweep on Monday.

The ending to regulation was about as wild as it gets for both teams. JJ Redick threw away the basketball on an errant pass to no one that was scooped by Terry Rozier who threw to Jaylen Brown for the basket and an 89-87 lead.

Seconds later, Marco Belinelli stunned everyone with a falling 22-footer in front of the 76ers bench as time expired that sent the game into overtime — and confetti mistakenly blasted from the cannon. There was about a seven-minute delay while team employees scrambled to clean up the mess on the court. Some players even scooped up confetti as everyone waited for the start of overtime.

NHL playoffs roundup

Vrana helps Capitals take 3-2 lead on Pens

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Jakub Vrana came to the rink expecting to play on the Capitals' third line again. He left as a top-liner on top of the world.

Vrana made the most of his promotion to the top line alongside Alex Ovechkin and Evgeny Kuznetsov, setting up the tying goal and scoring the Game 5 winner as Washington beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 6-3 Saturday night to take a 3-2 lead in the second-round series and put the back-to-back defending Stanley Cup champions on the brink of elimination.

After replacing an ineffective Devante Smith-Pelly on the top line, the 22-year-old rookie sprung Kuznetsov on the breakaway that tied the score early in the third period and took a pass from Ovechkin and scored the go-ahead goal with 4:38 left to send a fired-up crowd into a frenzy. Vrana made

Barry Trotz look like a genius for bumping him up the lineup but wasn't expecting to be his coach's plan B.

"That's just how the game rolls," said Vrana, who also assisted on Brett Connolly's first-period goal to give him three points. "Sometimes you're gonna make changes. Today we did. We were all ready. I felt comfortable out there. Ready for next game."

That next game, Monday night in Pittsburgh, is the Capitals' chance to advance to the Eastern Conference finals for the first time in the Ovechkin era and for the first time overall since 1998 when they lost in the Cup Final. They may have to do it without star center Nicklas Backstrom, who left in the third period with an upper-body injury that Trotz said the team will have more information on Sunday.

With Backstrom unable to play the final 13 minutes, Lars Eller double-shifted and

Vrana looked like a perfect fit with Ovechkin and Kuznetsov. The Capitals are on the verge of beating Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and the Penguins for the first time in four playoff series dating to 2009 on the strength of top-end scoring and goaltending from Braden Holtby, who stopped 36 of the 39 shots he faced.

Jets 6, Predators 2: Kyle Connor scored two goals and had an assist as Winnipeg pushed the Presidents' Trophy winners to the brink of elimination.

Now the Jets, who just won their first playoff series in the first round, will have a chance to clinch a spot in their first Western Conference final Monday night in Game 6 back in Winnipeg.

Connor Hellebuyck made 38 saves for the Jets.

Dustin Byfuglien and Mark Scheifele each had a goal and an assist, and Paul Stastny and Mathieu Perrault also scored.

A.J. Pollock's single lifts Diamondbacks

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A.J. Pollock got the pitch he was looking for, and while his game-winning hit wasn't a long line drive, it got the job done.

Pollock singled off the glove of third baseman Alex Bregman with the bases loaded in the ninth inning, lifting the Arizona Diamondbacks over the Houston Astros 4-3 on Saturday night to end their longest skid of the season at three.

Pollock delivered off reliever Brad Peacock on the first pitch after Chris Devenski (1-1) had walked the previous two hitters to load the bases. Brad Boxberger (1-2) got the win in relief.

"We came up with a good plan. I was going to sit on it," Pollock said of a pre-at-bat conversation with hitting coach Dave Magadan. "Just kind of feeling the game out. It wasn't pretty ... but it was what we needed."

Astros reliever Collin McHugh became the first pitcher to enter a regular-season game in the Diamondbacks' shiny new bullpen cart. McHugh replaced starter Charlie Morton in the sixth inning.

Brian McCann doubled with two outs

in the eighth inning off Yoshihisa Hirano to pull Houston to one run down, and then pinch-hitter Derek Fisher scored McCann with a double to tie it at 3.

In a dramatic ninth, the Diamondbacks had Deven Marrero on second base with one out when David Peralta, who homered earlier in the game, was called out on a check-swing appeal. Reliever Archie Bradley was ejected for arguing with third base umpire Dan Iassogna from the dugout.

Pollock's hit bounced into shallow left field to score Marrero.

"I made a good pitch, broke his bat but it just found a hole," Peacock said.

Bradley did his part with 1¹/₃ innings scoreless innings, retiring the Astros' star trio of George Springer, Jose Altuve and Carlos Correa in the seventh.

"Emotions got the best of me," he said. "Just part of the game."

The Diamondbacks' Zack Greinke held the World Series champions to a run on five hits over 5²/₃ innings. He struck out five and walked two.

Morton worked five innings and only allowed three hits, but gave up three runs and walked four. Morton uncharacteristi-

cally walked the first three batters he faced and four total in the first but only gave up one run.

"It was a good recovery. He is almost out of the game in the first or second inning," Astros manager AJ Hinch said.

Pollock's sacrifice fly with the bases loaded gave Arizona a 1-0 lead, but the Diamondbacks couldn't add on despite loading the bases again in the inning. Morton came into the game with 13 walks this season.

With two outs in the second inning, Peralta ripped a hanging curveball into the seats in right field, his sixth home run of the season.

The Diamondbacks have had the bullpen cart ready for use since opening day, but no reliever opted to take it over Arizona's first 17 home games.

McHugh changed that by hitching a ride around the warning track to begin the sixth inning. He was dropped off just outside Houston's dugout, then walked the rest of the way to the rubber. All that saved energy proved useful — McHugh pitched 1¹/₃ scoreless innings.

MLB roundup

Boston's Kimbrel quickest to 300 saves

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas—Craig Kimbrel needed only 11 pitches in a perfect ninth to close out Boston's latest victory, and become the quickest pitcher ever to reach 300 career saves.

Kimbrel struck out two for his ninth save in 10 chances this season as the Red Sox won 6-5 at Texas on Saturday night. They had scored the go-ahead run in the top of the ninth, after Joe Kelly struck out the only two batters he faced when the Rangers had the bases loaded in the eighth.

"It feels like forever, and also feels like it's flown by," Kimbrel said. "Eight years ago today, I got called up for the first time. It's neat to be able to get my 300th save on the same day. I've been a part of a lot of great teams. There's a lot of save opportunities, a lot of chances. If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't be talking today."

Kimbrel's 300th save overall came in his 494th career appearance and 330th save opportunity, and about three weeks before his 30th birthday. He had 186 saves for Atlanta from 2010-14, and 39 in his only season for San Diego before 75 since joining the Red Sox in 2016.

Padres 7, Dodgers 4: San Diego rebounded nicely from Los Angeles' combined no-hitter, using two-run homers by Eric Hosmer and Raffy Lopez to beat the Dodgers in the first major league series in Mexico since 1999.

Yankees 5, Indians 2: Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor's double error led to a pair of runs in a four-run fifth inning off previously unhittable Trevor Bauer, and the host Yankees won for the 14th time in 15 games.

Cardinals 8, Cubs 6 (10): Kolten Wong hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning, lifting host St. Louis to its fourth

straight victory.

Phillies 3, Nationals 1: Rhys Hoskins hit a two-run homer, Vince Velasquez pitched five effective innings and Philadelphia snapped host Washington's six-game win streak.

Tigers 3, Royals 2: Jordan Zimmermann pitched five scoreless innings and Nicholas Castellanos had three extra-base hits, leading visiting Detroit to the win.

Mariners 9, Angels 8 (11): Ryon Healy scored Kyle Seager in the 11th inning with a single just fair down the left-field line and host Seattle rallied twice in extra innings to beat Los Angeles.

Rockies 2, Mets 0: Chad Bettis pitched seven smooth innings, Nolan Arenado homered early off the big apple at Citi Field, and the Rockies shut down the slumping Mets.

Brewers 5, Pirates 3: Ryan Braun hit a tiebreaking two-

run double in the eighth inning, helping host Milwaukee.

Giants 11, Braves 2: Buster Posey and Andrew McCutchen each had three of San Francisco's 18 hits, leading the visiting Giants to their third straight victory.

Marlins 6, Reds 0: Starlin Castro drove in three runs with a homer and a double, backing another strong performance by Miami's Caleb Smith.

Rays 5, Blue Jays 3: Denard Span drove in his team-leading 24th run to help surging host Tampa Bay beat Toronto.

Athletics 2, Orioles 0 (12): Khris Davis homered in the 12th inning, lifting host Oakland to the win.

Twins 8, White Sox 4: Eddie Rosario homered and drove in five runs, Lance Lynn earned his first AL win, and the visiting Twins posted back-to-back victories from the first time since April 12.