

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Lincoln, Kearsarge hold joint operations

BY JOSHUA KARSTEN

*Stars and Stripes*

MANAMA, Bahrain — The USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group has entered the Arabian Sea and conducted joint drills with U.S. amphibious forces, Navy officials said, as tensions continue to mount following intelligence reports that Iran or its proxy forces planned to harm American troops in the region.

Lincoln joined the USS Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and the embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit for a series of exercises over the last couple days, according to a 5th Fleet statement Sunday.

Rear Adm. John Wade, Lincoln's strike group commander, said the exercises are "aimed towards increasing our lethality and agility to respond to threats, and deterring destabilizing actions in this important region."

The drills included coordination with the Marines, air-to-air training, ship maneuvering and joint communications designed to "rapidly enable a command

and control environment."

Lincoln canceled a port visit to Croatia earlier this month on a scheduled trip around the globe during a homeport swap from Norfolk to San Diego later this year.

The Lincoln's expedited arrival in the region came following White House national security adviser John Bolton's comments on May 5 that a "number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings" came from Iran, adding that any attack on U.S. interests would be met with "unrelenting force."

Iranian officials have denied planning any such attack, while also calling for U.S. forces to leave the Persian Gulf. The U.S. maintains that it has the right to transit the waters under generally accepted international law.

On Friday, the State Department directed all nonessential personnel to evacuate Iraq, according to a security message posted on the embassy website and distributed via email.

Servicemembers and families across the Gulf in Bahrain and Qatar have not received

any direction regarding possible evacuations, but Navy officials said any evacuation orders would be a State Department call. The embassy in Doha released a brief travel advisory Sunday for commercial travel, cautioning U.S. citizens to "exercise normal precaution for Qatar."

Navy official comments remained standard and mission-oriented following Lincoln's arrival.

Kearsarge skipper Capt. Jason Rimmer described the joint exercises as allowing the group "to efficiently traverse any waters uncontested and readily employ our military assets anywhere," according to the U.S. 5th Fleet statement.

U.S. 5th Fleet said the operations "highlight the ability of the U.S. Navy to quickly mobilize assets and aggregate different platforms with a variety of operational capabilities," according to the fleet command's Facebook page.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami, commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, said Iran does

not want war with the United States but added that Washington lacks the will "to fight Tehran."

"The difference between us and them is that they are afraid of war and don't have the will for it," Salami said Sunday, according to the Iranian state-backed Fars news agency.

Former CIA director and retired Gen. David Petraeus said Iran is going to have to be "very careful not to overplay" its hand as tensions with Washington escalate.

"They are going to have to make a decision. ... They are going to have to really tighten their belt and keep tightening, because it's going to get worse," Petraeus told Martha Raddatz during ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" on Sunday.

Saudi Arabian diplomat Adel al-Jubeir, the minister of state for foreign affairs, said Sunday that the kingdom does not want war but will defend itself, amid a recent spike in tensions with archrival Iran, according to The Associated Press.

## F-35B bird strike in Japan causes \$2M in damages

BY SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

A bird strike has caused more than \$2 million damage to a Japan-based Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II fighter, according to a U.S. military spokesman.

"On May 7, 2019, an F-35B with Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing aborted take-off due to a bird strike at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni and safely taxied off the runway," Capt. Marco

Valenzuela, a spokesman for the Iwakuni-based Marine Aircraft Group 12, said in an email Friday.

Valenzuela did not state whether the aircraft was in the air or on the ground when the strike happened. He did not state what type of bird struck the F-35B.

A safety investigation and a complete damage assessment are ongoing, he said.

"An initial assessment estimated the damage to the

aircraft as exceeding the two million dollar threshold, classifying it as a Class A mishap," he said.

Iwakuni, in Yamaguchi prefecture on Japan's largest island, Honshu, has been home to

F-35Bs from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 — the Green Knights — since January 2017.

The short-takeoff, vertical-landing version of the aircraft was designed to replace the

F/A-18 Hornet, AV-8B Harrier and EA-6B Prowler jets.

Japan's military has been searching for a Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-35A stealth fighter and its pilot, based at Misawa Air Base, who crashed off the eastern coast of Japan May 8.

In April 2018 an Iwakuni-based F-35B with a maintenance issue made an emergency landing at the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's Tsuiki Air Base in Fukuoka prefecture.

# Mock armored battle pits Army vs. Marines

BY MARTIN EGNASH  
*Stars and Stripes*

There's always been a fierce rivalry between soldiers and Marines. But seldom do they get to duke it out with armor.

About 200 soldiers from the Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment on Friday completed a two-week exercise in western Finland, during which they engaged in a mock armored vehicle battle against a smaller force of some 100 Marines.

Exercise Arrow began May 6 with cavalrymen fighting in their Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicles alongside Finnish Leopard 2 main battle tanks, against Marine M1A1 Abrams

tanks and LAV-25 light armored vehicles.

The Marines, with the 4th Tank Battalion and 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, played the opposition force against the U.S. and Finnish troops.

"My team got two [vehicle] kills one day against the Marines' LAV's," Staff Sgt. Zachary Brunner, a scout with the regiment, proudly told Stars and Stripes. But the following day, when a Marine LAV-25 took out his Stryker, one of the Marines who mock-perished the previous day jumped out of the armored vehicle to remind him that he "got us this time."

The Army's Strykers are significantly less armored than either of the Marine vehicles, but they utilized their dismounted anti-tank weapons to get the upper hand on the Marines during parts of the exercise.

They mainly used simulated single-shot AT-4 smoothbore weapons but added some FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missiles.

One way the soldiers in their smaller Strykers successfully overcame the much more powerful Marine tanks and LAVs was to hold them off with a 30 mm cannon, which the Army began using last year. Meanwhile, dismounted soldiers moved into position to take out

the tanks on their flanks with shoulder-fired missiles.

"What we bring to the table, unlike the other units that are with us, is our much larger dismounted capability," said Capt. Jimmyn Lee, a troop commander. "The Finnish units are mechanized. They're mostly vehicle oriented, so [Finnish] tanks clashing with [Marine] tanks."

In the final tally, the Army/Finnish team and the Marines each notched a victory against the other.

After the war games, the troops practiced live precision fires with their M4s, 30 mm autocannons and mounted machine guns.

## Mortuary affairs personnel take care of their own

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Master Gunnery Sgt. Michael Williams, a 25-year reservist, is the most senior enlisted Marine in his occupational field — mortuary affairs.

In civilian life a plant manager for a chemical company, Williams, of Georgia, is one of 200 in his unit, the Personnel Retrieval and Processing Company, the only one of its kind in the Marine Corps.

"People ask me why I do it," he told Stars and Stripes on May 8. "The price of doing war is people die, and if it were me, I would want to know that somebody is taking care of me and taking me back home to my family so they could grieve and get some closure."

Williams recently traveled to Okinawa, Japan, to take part in a command-and-control exercise, MEFEX 19, with III Marine Expeditionary Force. Williams was there to educate sailors and Marines about the mission of mortuary affairs and brief commanders on their responsibilities and the support available to them, according to

a Marine Corps statement last week.

Williams' unit, part of 4th Marine Logistics Group, headquartered in New Orleans, is based in Smyrna, Ga., and Quantico, Va. It was formed in 2003 with the intent of Marines caring for their own fallen.

There is "no harder duty, no greater honor," he said.

Mortuary affairs personnel throughout the service branches are tasked with recovering, processing and returning home the remains of fallen servicemembers.

While deployed in 2003 and 2005, Williams and his team came in right behind the combat element headed into Kuwait and into action in Iraq.

"I feel like after 16 years of doing this, it picked me," he said of his military specialty. "For whatever reason, it doesn't really get in my mind."

Strong family support and his faith play a role in helping him cope with the realities of war, which he has seen firsthand.

Williams said finding what the individual fought for helps him, but shock, sadness and a feeling of personal connec-

tion are still emotions that run through him while he's doing his job.

"I don't think it ever gets easy," Williams said. "They've all got a different story, and you'll eventually hear their backstory of why they joined."

Dover Air Force Base in Delaware hosts the largest mortuary in the Department of Defense and is the only one in the U.S. for servicemembers, according to the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations website.

"The goal is to get that Marine back to the family as quickly as possible," Williams said. "It's a 72-hour goal to get them from point of injury back to Dover."

Prior to the Marine Corps creating the mortuary unit, many Marines were placed into mortuary affairs from various occupational roles, such as cooks or administration, leaving many without the willingness, training or mindset capable to handle the job, Williams said.

Now, only Marine reservists serve in this occupational specialty.

These mortuary affairs Ma-

rines work alongside other service branches, of which the Army's Quartermaster Corps has been the lead since before the Civil War, according to the Army's website.

On the battlefield, the process starts with a search and recovery of the fallen Marine, whose remains are taken to a collection point and inspected for any unexploded ordnance or hazards, Williams said.

Items recovered from the body and body markings, head to toe, are logged and entered into a registry system that tracks individual Marine casualties until their remains are returned to their families.

"From the battlefield to home, they are always treated with the utmost respect," said Williams. "When we pick them up, it's feet first, just like they are walking with us."

More intricate mortician practices, such as embalming, are not involved in processing the deceased while in theater, but detailed care is given from the moment the teams recover the remains to how they groom and prepare their uniforms for burial, he said.

# GOP congressman: Trump's conduct is 'impeachable'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Republican congressman from Michigan on Saturday became the first member of President Donald Trump's party on Capitol Hill to accuse him of engaging in "impeachable conduct" stemming from special counsel Robert Mueller's lengthy investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

But Rep. Justin Amash stopped short of calling on Congress to begin impeachment proceedings against Trump — which many Democrats have been agitating for.

Often a lone GOP voice in Congress, Amash sent a series of tweets Saturday faulting both Trump and Attorney General William Barr over Mueller's report.

Mueller wrapped the investigation and submitted his report to Barr in late March. Barr then released a summary of Mueller's "principal conclusions" and released a redacted version of the report in April.

Mueller found no criminal conspiracy between Trump's presidential campaign and Russia but left open the question of

whether Trump acted in ways that were meant to obstruct the investigation. Barr later said there was insufficient evidence to bring obstruction charges against Trump.

The president, who has compared the investigation to a "witch hunt," claimed complete exoneration from Mueller's report.

Amash said he reached four conclusions after carefully reading the redacted version of Mueller's report, including that "President Trump has engaged in impeachable conduct."

"Contrary to Barr's portrayal, Mueller's report reveals that President Trump engaged in specific actions and a pattern of behavior that meet the threshold for impeachment," the congressman tweeted. He said the report "identifies multiple examples of conduct satisfying all the elements of obstruction of justice, and undoubtedly, any person who is not the president of the United States would be indicted based on such evidence."

The Justice Department, which Barr leads, operates under guidelines that discourage the indictment of a sitting president.

## Sources: Former CIA chief Brennan to brief Dems on situation in Iran

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats will hear from former CIA Director John Brennan about the situation in Iran, inviting him to speak this week amid heightened concerns over the Trump administration's sudden moves in the region.

Brennan, an outspoken critic of President Donald Trump, is scheduled to talk to House Democrats at a private weekly caucus meeting Tuesday, according to a Democratic aide and another person familiar with the private meeting. Both were granted anonymity to discuss the meeting.

The invitation to Brennan and Wendy Sherman, a former State Department official and top negotiator of the Iran nuclear deal, offers counter-programming to the Trump administration's closed-door briefing for lawmakers also planned for Tuesday on Capitol Hill. Democratic lawmakers are likely to attend both sessions.

The Trump administration recently sent an aircraft carrier and other military resources to the Persian Gulf region and withdrew nonessential personnel from Iraq, raising alarm among Democrats and some Republicans on Capitol Hill over the possibility of a confrontation with Iran.

Trump in recent days has downplayed any potential for conflict. But questions remain about what prompted the actions, and many lawmakers have demanded more information.

Trump and Brennan have clashed openly, particularly over the issues surrounding the special counsel's probe of Russian interference in the 2016 election. Brennan stepped down from the CIA in 2017.

The president last year said he was revoking the former spy chief's security credentials after Brennan was critical of Trump's interactions with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a summit in Helsinki.

Top national security officials often retain their clearance after they have left an agency as a way to provide counsel to their successors. It's unclear if Brennan actually lost his clearance.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had been asking the administration for a briefing for all lawmakers on the situation in Iran, but she said the request was initially rebuffed. The administration provided a classified briefing for leaders of both parties last week.

## White House: Migrant care costs higher than expected

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has told lawmakers that it probably will cost more to care for migrants crossing into the United States from Mexico than the \$2.9 billion in emergency money requested just two weeks ago.

In a White House letter released Saturday, acting budget chief Russell Vought said "the situation has continued to deteriorate and is exceeding previous high-end estimates."

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said in a separate letter that needs for the unaccompanied children account "could grow further and be closer to the worst-case scenario HHS had proposed be the basis for the supplemental request, which was \$1.4 billion higher."

The notice comes as lawmakers are trying to put the final touches on legislation, at \$19 billion and growing, for hurricane and flooding relief and other disaster needs.

Democrats also have offered money to

care for the influx of immigrants from Central America, though they say they will deny President Donald Trump's request for additional immigration agents.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., wants to get the long-overdue measure completed by the end of this week. Negotiations are going better of late, but it's not clear when a deal may be reached.

Talks are focusing on conditions that Democrats want to place on the border assistance.

# Tornadoes rake Southern Plains

Associated Press

DALLAS — A spate of tornadoes raked across the Southern Plains, leaving damage and causing few injuries, and parts of the region were bracing for more severe thunderstorms and possible flooding.

The National Weather Service confirmed an EF2 twister Saturday morning with winds up to 130 mph that destroyed at least two homes and left one person with minor injuries in southwestern Oklahoma.

A suspected tornado caused roof damage to “numerous” homes in northwestern Arkansas, a state official said, and severe winds downed trees and power lines across a highway, blocking all lanes.

Energy companies in Oklahoma and Arkansas reported tens of thousands of customers were without power Saturday afternoon.

Tornadoes touched down Friday in Kansas and rural parts of Nebraska, tearing up trees and power lines, and damaging some homes and

farm buildings, according to the National Weather Service.

In Abilene, Texas, a city 150 miles west of Fort Worth, strong winds prompted the evacuation of a nursing home and left numerous homes and businesses damaged, according to the Abilene Reporter-News. A spokeswoman for the city said no deaths or serious injuries were reported.

Forecasters warned of heavy rain, lightning, pingpong ball-sized hail and flooding as a line of storms moves west to east through afternoon, covering an area from south of Killeen, Texas, to north of the Oklahoma state line.

In Oklahoma City, thunderstorms prevented workers from securing and removing glass from Devon Tower, which was damaged Wednesday when a scaffolding holding two window washers banged against the building, The Oklahoman reported.

Officials said the rain and winds blew broken glass from the tower and compromised the integrity of other panes.

## Md. man pleads guilty in alleged Ponzi scheme

The Washington Post

The second of three defendants in an alleged \$550 million Ponzi scheme pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court in Baltimore after signing an agreement with federal prosecutors.

Kevin Merrill, 53, of Towson, Md., pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of wire fraud, each of which carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a maximum fine of \$500,000 or twice the gross gain. He pleaded not guilty to 13 other counts.

The plea agreement comes just six weeks after Cameron Jezierski, Merrill’s Texas-based co-defendant, pleaded guilty to similar charges. The third co-defendant, Jay Ledford, also of Texas, is awaiting trial. All three still face Securities and Exchange Commission charges.

According to the plea agreement, Merrill and Ledford met in 1999 through a customer of the radiology supply company where Merrill worked as a sales representative. The two became friends and gambling partners, federal attorneys said. At Thursday’s hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Joyce McDonald explained how the two men allegedly created fake tax returns and other financial documents to mislead investors.

“This relationship developed as they went after more sophisticated investors who demanded more due diligence,” McDonald said.

According to federal prosecutors, the three men offered more than 400 investors in numerous states the chance to profit from consumer debt portfolios — mostly student loans or credit card debt that had been defaulted on — that were owned by Ledford. Rather than invest the money given to them by investors, the three men pocketed much of it, prosecutors said and used some to pay off earlier investors and keep the scheme going.

## Miss. flooding disrupts farm shipments

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Normally this time of year, huge barges can be seen chugging up the Mississippi River, carrying millions of tons of grain to market and bringing agriculture-related products to farmers in the Midwest for the new growing season. But there’s not much barge traffic this year.

That’s because historic spring flooding that swamped and tainted farmland, also left parts of the Mississippi closed for business.

The river, which runs nearly 2,350 miles from Minnesota’s Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico, is a main conduit of shipping everything from agriculture products and construction material to petroleum and coal. The troubles on the Mississippi also have affected shipping on the waterways that feed into it, including the Missouri River.

The interruption is hitting an agriculture industry that’s already suffering from a plethora of ills, including the Trump administration’s trade disputes that have helped drive down commodity prices.

“You’ve got a perfect storm here,” said Kenneth Hartman

Jr., who grows corn, soybeans and wheat just south of Waterloo, Ill. “It looks bad for us.”

Like other farmers in more than a dozen states in the Mississippi River basin, Hartman would normally be sending soybeans, corn and other grain harvested last fall down the river, where it would eventually be exported — likely to China. Meanwhile, shipments of fertilizer that normally travel up the river to communities from St. Louis to St. Paul, Minn., haven’t made it through.

The inability to get the grain down the river has exacerbated a shortage of space for those products.

“You have elevators that aren’t even taking grain right now,” Hartman said. “So that’s causing issues as far as selling our grain in a timely manner.”

Many of the locks and dams on the Mississippi that closed due to flooding that started in March have reopened, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers doesn’t expect the river to be fully unimpeded until possibly June.

Even if the locks were open, “many of these barges wouldn’t be able to get here anyway,” said Sam Heilig, a Corps spokeswoman at Rock Island, Ill. “Because

the water’s so high, there’s not enough clearance to get under some of the bridges.”

For now, it’s impossible to put a number on how much the interruption has cost shippers, farmers and manufacturers. But Debra Calhoun, spokeswoman for the Washington-based advocacy group Waterways Council, said there’s no doubt it’s having an impact.

On average, nearly 31 tons of goods and commodities are shipped on the upper Mississippi River from March through May, according to a five-year average gauged by the Corps’ Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center. The biggest slice of that, at nearly 11 million tons, is grain, followed by coal, sand and gravel and chemicals and petroleum products.

The interruption in river traffic has a domino effect on other industries, particularly in transportation. The National Waterways Foundation estimates that one 15-barge tow on the Mississippi River can ship as much as six locomotives pulling 216 railcars, or as much as 1,050 large semitrailers. It also costs less to ship via the river, because barges can hold so much more and be moved using less fuel.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Jury awards \$3M to black strippers

**MS** JACKSON — A jury has awarded more than \$3 million to five African American strippers after a federal judge found the women worked under worse conditions than their white colleagues.

The judge ruled in the discrimination case last year, and jurors decided Wednesday how much the women should receive.

The attorney for Danny's Downtown Cabaret, Bill Walter, said Friday he will ask the judge to reduce the award.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission sued Danny's years ago, and said the Jackson club limited when black women could work, while white women had flexible schedules.

It also said a Danny's manager used racial slurs against a black dancer, and Danny's owners forced black women to work at another club they owned called Black Diamonds, where conditions and security were worse.

## Man sets himself on fire outside Walmart

**AL** ATHENS — A man who set himself on fire outside a Walmart store was reported in stable condition Friday at a Tennessee hospital.

After the incident happened about 6:30 p.m. Thursday, the man was taken to a hospital in Athens and then sent by helicopter ambulance to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, The Athens News Courier reported.

VUMC spokeswoman Kristin Smart confirmed the man was alive and in stable condition as of Friday morning. Athens Fire Chief Floyd Johnson told news

outlets that the man doused himself with gasoline and ran into the store before coming outside and setting himself ablaze. Police were using fire extinguishers from their patrol cars to extinguish the flames when fire crews arrived.

## Kids at slumber party fight off nude intruder

**CA** CLOVIS — Two 10-year-old girls having a slumber party fought off a naked man who broke into the California home through a window and sexually assaulted them. A suspect was arrested, police said Thursday.

Police Chief Matt Basgall in the Fresno suburb of Clovis commended the girls.

"They did everything right," he said.

The girl who lives in the home and the friend she invited over woke up Sunday as the intruder touched them inappropriately, Basgall said.

After fighting him off, they immediately went to a parent and called 911. Timothy Jay Picard, 26, was arrested Wednesday after investigators interviewed witnesses and gathered evidence, Basgall said.

## Feds want stolen Hamilton letter back

**MA** BOSTON — A letter written by Alexander Hamilton in 1780 to the Marquis de Lafayette that was stolen from the state archives decades ago has been found, and now an effort is underway to return it.

The U.S. attorney's office in Boston on Wednesday filed a forfeiture complaint in federal court asking a judge to order the Revolutionary War-era letter returned to its rightful owner.

Hamilton's letter was stolen by an archives employee sometime between 1937 and 1945, according to the government.

"The theft, which also involved original papers of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere and Benedict Arnold, among others, was not discovered for several years," the federal complaint said.

The stolen items were sold to rare documents and book dealers throughout the U.S. The employee was eventually arrested in 1950.

## Texting while driving now a primary offense

**FL** TALLAHASSEE — Florida will become one of the last states to make texting while driving a primary traffic offense under a bill signed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis on Friday.

The new law will also ban the use of any handheld wireless communications devices in school and construction zones.

Under current law, officers can only cite drivers for texting if they are pulled over for another violation.

The new law allows officers to stop motorists simply for texting alone.

"Studies have shown that texting while driving is one of the worst of all driving distractions and a recent study ranked Florida as the second-worst state for distracted driving," DeSantis said. "It's my hope that by taking action to address distracted drivers today, that we will be able to make our roads safer and hopefully prevent some of these crashes that we've seen, injuries and, unfortunately, some of the deaths that we've seen."

DeSantis said that in 2016, Florida had nearly 50,000 accidents caused by distracted driving resulting in 233 deaths.

## Thief must pay to fix 'General Lee' Sno-Cat

**CO** EAGLE. — A Colorado man has been ordered to pay more than \$28,000 to cover damages after he pleaded guilty to stealing a Sno-Cat painted to look like the "General Lee" car featured in the TV series "The Dukes of Hazzard."

The Vail Daily reported the owners of the Sno-Cat said Jason Cuervo damaged the tracks, axles and electrical system after stealing it last year.

Authorities said Cuervo hitched a trailer holding the Sno-Cat to his pickup truck in Minturn and hauled it along Interstate 70 to Grand Junction.

## Teen finds prehistoric jawbone of mastodon

**IA** IOWA CITY — A teen searching for arrowheads in southern Iowa found something much bigger: the prehistoric jawbone of a mastodon.

The Iowa City Press-Citizen reported that the 30-inch bone belonged to a juvenile mastodon, an elephant-like animal believed to have roamed Iowa some 34,000 years ago.

Officials with the University of Iowa Paleontology Repository, which now has possession of the bone found last week, said the mastodon might have stood around 7-feet tall.

The farmers who donated the jaw and related bones to the repository did so anonymously, saying they didn't want to encourage people to trespass on their property looking for fossils.

There likely are more fossils on the land, as the owners found other mastodon remains there decades ago.

From wire reports

# STARS AND STRIPES

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# War of Will wins Preakness

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Mark Casse completed a lifelong quest two weeks after the scare of a lifetime. And he did so in a race featuring a riderless horse that threw his jockey out of the gate and kept running.

Since he was a child, Casse wanted to win a Triple Crown race, and the well-respected trainer got that victory when War of Will bounced back from a bumpy ride in the Kentucky Derby to win the Preakness on Saturday.

Casse, 58, was more relieved than anything that his prized 3-year-old colt didn't go down in the Derby, which could've been a multihorse catastrophe, and could finally take a deep breath following the Preakness.

"This is even I think probably more special given everything that we've been through," Casse said. "I'm not even calling it redemption. I didn't feel like he got his fair shot, and that's all I wanted — a fair shot. And he showed what he had today."

War of Will was unfazed

starting from the inside No. 1 post position for the second consecutive race, even though that contributed to his rough run at Churchill Downs. Rising star jockey Tyler Gaffalione guided the horse along the rail in the Preakness and made a move into the lead around the final curve, holding off hard-charging late addition Everfast, who was a nose ahead of Owendale for second.

All the while, Bodexpress — after ejecting Hall of Fame jockey John Velazquez — kept running around the Pimlico track and did an extra lap. An outrider tried to swoop in at the top of the stretch and corral Bodexpress, but the horse sped up and passed a few competitors near the finish line and kept going. Technically, Bodexpress gets a did-not-finish.

"He wasn't behaving well," said Velazquez, who added he's fine and would not seek medical attention. "When the doors opened, I was off right from the start and he kind of jumped sideways, and I had my feet out sideways and I lost my balance

and went out."

It was yet another bizarre scene in a Triple Crown season full of it.

Two weeks ago at the Kentucky Derby, apparent winner Maximum Security was disqualified for interfering with War of Will, and Country House elevated to first in the only on-track disqualification in the race's 145-year history. Casse was just thankful War of Will was healthy and decided to take his shot in the Preakness even though Maximum Security and Country House didn't run.

It was the first Preakness run without the Kentucky Derby winner since 1996, but the 13-horse field was the largest since 2011. Go back to 1951 for the last time the Preakness was run without the top four finishers from the Derby.

Bob Baffert-trained Improbable was in it as the 5-2 favorite and finished a disappointing sixth. The Kentucky Derby and Preakness are the only races of Improbable's career that he didn't finish first or second.

# Koepka on course for repeat

Associated Press

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. — Brooks Koepka is on the cusp of elite company at the PGA Championship — in the record book, not on the leaderboard.

He is all alone on Bethpage Black, the public course he has turned into his private playground.

Koepka wasn't at his best, particularly with his putter, on the toughest scoring day of the championship, and he still kept everyone far enough behind to make the final round feel more like a victory lap.

With an even-par 70 that featured a pair of three-putt bogeys, he kept a seven-shot lead and earned another entry in the record book with the largest lead since the PGA Championship switched to stroke play in 1958.

No one has ever lost a seven-shot lead in the final round at any major, or even a PGA Tour event.

That leaves Koepka 18 holes away from joining Tiger Woods as the only back-to-back winners of the PGA in stroke play. He is one round from becoming the first player to hold back-to-back titles in two majors at the same time. He won the past two U.S. Opens as well and will defend that championship next month.

And a third straight year winning a major? Woods and Phil Mickelson are the only players to have done that in the past 30 years. Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer are the only others to win majors in three straight years dating to 1960.

Koepka was at 12-under 198, the first time this week he did not set or tie a scoring record.

"I think we're all playing for second," said Luke List, one of four players tied for second.

Dustin Johnson tried to make a run with six birdies, only to stall with five bogeys in his round of 69.

# Wilder takes care of Breazeale easily

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Deontay Wilder believes they are coming, the mega-matchup with Anthony Joshua and the rematch with Tyson Fury.

Until then, he moved onto some business with Dominic Breazeale.

He took care of it quickly and emphatically.

Wilder got back into the win column Saturday night, knocking out Breazeale with an overpowering right hand in the first round to defend his heavyweight title.

"There's been a lot of animosity and a lot of words that were said and it just came out of me tonight," Wilder said.

Wilder hurt Breazeale with a right to the head early in their fight at Barclays Center, but the challenger had recovered from that early onslaught. But there was no coming back from the right later in the round that immediately dropped Breazeale, who was trying to get up as referee Harvey Dock counted him out at 2:17 of the round.

"When I hit him with the right hand the first time, his body language changed," Wilder said.

And with the last one, Breazeale's body lan-

guage crumpled.

Wilder (41-0-1, 40 KOs) was coming off his draw against Fury in December, the first fight of his pro career that wasn't a victory. He wanted a rematch with Fury or a unification match with fellow champion Joshua, but settled for a mandatory defense of his WBC title when those couldn't be made.

He ended it quickly, finishing off Breazeale (20-2) after being pushed hard in each of his last two fights.

Wilder weighed in at a little more than 223 pounds, a gain from the 209 he was at for the Fury fight, but still well below the 245 he set as a goal after feeling he was too small in that bout, in which he dropped Fury with a huge combination in the 12th round but had to settle for the draw when the challenger was able to get up and finish.

An immediate rematch was expected before Fury surprisingly went another route.

"I understand what Tyson Fury did. When you get dropped on the canvas like that, I understand you have to get yourself back together," Wilder said.

## MLB roundup

## Astros start fast and win 10th in a row

Associated Press

BOSTON — Tyler White's two-run double capped a five-run first inning, Josh Reddick hit a solo homer and the Houston Astros kept rolling, beating the Boston Red Sox 7-3 Saturday night for their 10th straight victory.

Michael Brantley had three hits and an RBI for Houston (31-15), which matched the best start in franchise history after 46 games.

"I feel like this is the team to beat," Reddick said. "We have the target on us, even though we didn't make it all the way last year."

Christian Vázquez hit a solo homer for the Red Sox, who had won six of eight.

Josh James (1-0) got the victory with three innings of hitless relief after starter Corbin Martin went four, giving up three runs, two earned, in his second major league start.

**Cardinals 8, Rangers 2:** Paul DeJong homered and had a season-high four RBIs and Matt Carpenter's opposite-field double off the very top of the outfield wall ignited a decisive inning for St. Louis, which got its first victory over host Texas since the 2011 World Series.

Carpenter was initially given a two-run homer in the fifth after his drive hit the wide pad atop the 14-foot left field wall, bounced up and then came back down into the field of play. That was changed to an

RBI double on replay review after the Rangers challenged. It was the first run in a five-run outburst.

**Rays 2, Yankees 1 (11):** Austin Meadows homered off Luis Cessa in the 11th inning for visiting Tampa Bay, which regained the AL East lead after dropping behind New York for a day.

New York's bullpen retired 13 in a row before Meadows lined a slider from Cessa (0-1) into the right-field seats for his ninth homer.

**Athletics 4, Tigers 1:** Daniel Mengden pitched seven impressive innings and Nick Hundley and Chad Pinder homered to lift Oakland to its 15th straight win over host Detroit.

Mengden (1-1) allowed a run and three hits. Lou Trivino worked the eighth inning, and Blake Treinen pitched the ninth for his seventh save in nine chances.

**Reds 4, Dodgers 0:** Jesse Winker's homer ended a Los Angeles stretch of scoreless pitching and Yasiel Puig singled home a pair of runs as host Cincinnati snapped the Dodgers' four-game winning streak.

The Reds beat the Dodgers for the first time in five games this season, including LA's three-game sweep in April. The Dodgers are 34-23 at Great American Ball Park, the second-best mark by an NL team behind the Mets.

Tyler Mahle (1-5) got his first win in his ninth start, allowing

four singles and a pair of walks in five innings.

**Indians 4, Orioles 1:** Adam Plutko, making his first appearance of the season, allowed one run in six innings — a solo homer by Trey Mancini for Baltimore's only hit to lead host Cleveland.

**Nationals 5, Cubs 2:** Stephen Strasburg allowed two runs in eight innings and struck out seven, and Juan Soto had two hits and drove in three runs to lead host Washington.

Cubs manager Joe Maddon protested the loss after twice coming out to complain about the delivery of Nationals closer Sean Doolittle, who pitched the ninth for his eighth save.

**Braves 4, Brewers 3 (10):** Freddie Freeman led off the 10th with a home run into the right-field seats to give host Atlanta its fourth straight win after Luke Jackson blew a 3-2 lead in the ninth.

Freeman pulled a fastball from Josh Hader (0-3) for his 10th homer. Jacob Webb (2-0) pitched a perfect 10th for the Braves.

**White Sox 4, Blue Jays 1 (4½):** Lucas Giolito threw five solid innings, Leury Garcia homered and host Chicago won a game that was stopped because of rain.

Giolito (5-1) struck out the side in the top of the fifth before play was halted. The game was called after a wait of three hours. Giolito gave up a run and three hits and was credited

with his first career complete game.

**Marlins 2, Mets 0:** Miami starter Pablo Lopez gave up a double on his first pitch, then combined with the Marlins' bullpen to hold visiting New York hitless the rest of the way.

The Marlins beat the Mets for the second straight day after entering the series with a seven-game losing streak. The Mets lost their fourth in a row.

**Phillies 2, Rockies 1:** Bryce Harper homered over the batter's eye in center field in the first inning, a drive estimated at 466 feet, and Aaron Nola tied his career high with 12 strikeouts while pitching into the seventh inning to lead NL East-leading Philadelphia to a win at home.

**Pirates 7, Padres 2:** Josh Bell homered twice and drove in four runs, and rookie Bryan Reynolds connected for the second straight night for visiting Pittsburgh.

**Twins 18, Mariners 4:** C.J. Cron and Jonathan Schoop each hit two home runs and Byron Buxton had a grand slam as part of visiting Minnesota's best offensive output of the season.

**Giants 8, Diamondbacks 5:** Pablo Sandoval and Brandon Belt hit solo home runs to lead San Francisco to a win at Arizona.

## Trout's milestone homer is a mammoth shot

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Mike Trout's 250th home run was memorable in more ways than one.

Trout's solo shot to left-center traveled 473 feet and made him the sixth AL player to reach 250 homers before his 28th birthday as the Los Angeles Angels beat the Kansas City Royals 6-3 on Saturday night.

The first-inning blast off Royals starter Jakob Junis (3-5) was also his second-longest

since Statcast began measuring them in 2015 and the third-longest in the majors this season.

"I didn't see it land. I stopped watching," Angels manager Brad Ausmus said. "As soon as he hit it, I knew it was gone."

Shohei Ohtani also went deep and Griffin Canning pitched seven shutout innings as the Angels got their fourth win in five games this season against the Royals.

Ohtani's two-run homer to right in the

sixth was his second of the season. Last season's AL Rookie of the Year missed the first 34 games following Tommy John surgery.

After going hitless in first seven at-bats, Ohtani has gone 12-for-35 with two home runs and has a six-game hitting streak.

Canning (2-1) is only the second Angels starter to go at least seven innings, which is worst in the majors. The rookie right-hander retired the first 12 Royals he faced.

# Green lifts Warriors to 3-0 series lead

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — With Kevin Durant out, Draymond Green has taken it upon himself to boost Golden State.

And boy, has he.

Green had 20 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists, and the Warriors beat the Portland Trail Blazers 110-99 on Saturday night for a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference finals.

Green had his seventh career postseason triple-double and Stephen Curry scored 36 points for Golden State, which moved a win away from a fifth straight trip to the NBA finals with Game 4 set for Monday.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr said it was one of the best games he's seen Green play.

"I don't even know what to say about Draymond," Kerr said. "He was a wrecking ball, destroying everything in his path."

Durant, the two-time NBA Finals MVP who was averaging more than 34 points during the playoffs, remains out with a sore right calf and his return is uncertain.

"When Kevin is not on the floor, I know I have to be more aggressive. So whether that's attacking the basket, putting more pressure on the defense, I understand that," said Green, who has had a triple double in each of the rounds during the playoffs — all on the road.

CJ McCollum had 23 points for the Trail Blazers, who led by 18 during the second quarter. Damian Lillard added 19 points, but Portland was hurt at the line, making just 20 of 33 attempts.

Golden State's Andre Iguodala left in the third quarter with a sore lower leg. Kerr said he will have an MRI on Sunday. Iguodala played 17 minutes and had nine points.

After trailing 66-53 at the half, the Warriors mounted a third-quarter comeback to lead 82-79 going into the fourth. Jonas Jerebko's jumper pushed the lead to 90-82 with 7:26 left.

Curry's three-pointer made it 98-87 with just under five minutes to go, and Portland

struggled to catch up — similar to their fourth-quarter fade in Game 2.

Game 3 was the first conference finals game in Portland since 2000. The Blazers lost that series to the eventual champion Los Angeles Lakers in seven games.

No team has ever come back from an 0-3 deficit to win in the playoffs. Only three series have gone to a seventh game after one team opened with a 3-0 lead.

"We're going to give it our best effort on Monday. That's all that matters," Blazers coach Terry Stotts said. "We're going to give it our best effort and whatever happens, happens."

Portland was boosted by the home crowd at the start, going up by 10 points in the first quarter. Seth Curry's jumper made it 60-42 with 2:28 left until halftime.

The Warriors roared back, closing within 76-75 on Alfonzo McKinnie's basket and pulling ahead on Looney's layup to cap a 10-0 run. Golden State outscored the Blazers 22-6 to close out the third quarter.

## Auto racing

# Alonso fails on first day of Indy qualifying

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Fernando Alonso and McLaren are in serious danger of missing the Indianapolis 500 after a rocky first day of qualifying.

Alonso needed four attempts to crack the top 30 that would have locked him into the field for the May 26 race. But Graham Rahal made a final qualifying effort at the buzzer Saturday and knocked Alonso out of the field.

Alonso and five other drivers will have one chance Sunday to snag the final three spots in the 33-driver field.

"We didn't have the speed," the Spaniard said. "If we don't make it, it is because we don't deserve it."

Alonso will be joined in the "Last Row Shootout" by James Hinchcliffe, who last year was bumped out of the race when qualifying was just one day. Hinchcliffe crashed on his first qualifying attempt and couldn't get his backup to the speed

needed.

Pippa Mann, the second driver along with Hinchcliffe bumped from last year's race, cemented her spot when Rahal knocked Alonso out of the top 30. She will be the only woman in the field and was in tears when Rahal crossed the line.

IndyCar's new qualifying format this year locked 30 drivers into the field Saturday. The fastest nine are scheduled to qualify again Sunday for the pole, and the slowest six will try for the final three spots.

Spencer Pigot of Ed Carpenter Racing led a Chevrolet sweep and posted a four-lap average of 230.083 mph to top the speed chart. The Team Penske contingent of Will Power, Simon Pagenaud and Josef Newgarden followed.

Colton Herta, a rookie with one series victory already this year, cracked the top nine on his first qualifying lap but wasn't satisfied and made a second run later in the day. It was risky because he could

have dropped outside the Fast 9, but he instead jumped to fifth with the fastest Honda.

The rest of the Fast 9 is Pigot's teammates Ed Jones and Ed Carpenter in Chevys, then Alexander Rossi and Sebastien Bourdais in Hondas.

Indianapolis Motor Speedway is supposed to be hit by a lengthy day of rain Sunday, and if cars can't get on track, the field will be set by the current speeds and Pigot will be the pole-sitter for "The Great American Race."

## Larson wins NASCAR All-Star Race

CONCORD, N.C. — Kyle Larson got a push to the front from Kevin Harvick in the final stage, then held off the defending champion to win the NASCAR All-Star Race on Saturday night.

Larson wasn't part of the elite field when the day began, racing his way in by winning the

Monster Energy Open earlier at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Now, he's got \$1 million for the win and plenty to celebrate in a season where he's had only three top 10s.

"It feels amazing," Larson said. "I came close to winning a couple of years ago. It feels good to close it out."

Larson did it with a decisive shove through the pack by Harvick, a two-time All-Star champion who was eager for a third. Larson was sixth in the next-to-last restart with 12 laps left when he found enough space to squeeze between Kyle Busch and Joey Logano. Harvick was second, Busch was third and Logano fourth.

Soon after Larson took the checkered flag, pole sitter Clint Bowyer ran to Ryan Newman's car and began raining punches through the window before the two were separated.

Newman said Bowyer "chopped" him on the track and hit him once more later in the race.