

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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US to deploy 900 more GIs to Mideast

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will send another 900 troops to the Middle East in the coming weeks in a move meant to bolster security for U.S. troops in the region amid heightening tensions with Iran, the Defense Department announced Friday.

Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan notified Congress on Friday that he had authorized a request from U.S. Central Command to send the additional forces — an Air Force fighter squadron, an engineering element and combination of manned and unmanned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets — into the Middle East, he said in a statement. The Pentagon will also extend the deployment of some 600 soldiers from a Patriot mis-

sile battalion already serving in the region.

The move was approved Thursday by President Donald Trump following a meeting among top national security officials at the White House. The president, who had initially opposed sending additional forces, announced Friday that he had approved the new deployments as he left the United States en route to Japan.

Senior Pentagon officials said Friday that the move was meant only to protect American troops and assets serving in the region and not to flare tensions with Iran, which they accused of orchestrating a widespread campaign intent on undermining U.S. influence in the Middle East.

“While we do not seek conflict with Iran, we are determined to protect our forces and interests in the region from at-

tack,” Vice Adm. Michael Gilday, director of the Joint Staff, said Friday. “We will remain postured to respond.”

The new deployments come in the weeks after the Pentagon expedited the deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group into the Middle East and added a B-52 bomber strike group and a separate Patriot missile battery into the region. The additional fighter jets would respond in the case an attack against American troops was conducted, Gilday said. The engineers will help bolster physical security in locations where American are serving, including in Iraq and Syria. The Patriot battalion will provide defensive, surface-to-air missile launchers designed to shoot down short-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and aircraft. The drones and manned intelligence, surveillance and

reconnaissance assets would be used to better track Iran’s military and its proxy forces across the Middle East.

The announcement was met with mixed responses from Capitol Hill. Texas Rep. Mac Thornberry, ranking Republican for the House Armed Services Committee, called the move a prudent one to protect U.S. forces and deter Iran.

“The information and warnings we have collected on Iran are not ‘business as usual,’” he said. “It is important that we make clear to Iran, in words and actions, that they cannot attack us with impunity.”

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, rebuked the move. Smith said political leaders from both sides of the aisle have called for de-escalation and, at first blush, Friday’s move does not fit the bill.

Stung by Brexit failures, May to quit as prime minister

The Washington Post

LONDON — Theresa May announced Friday that she will resign as her party’s leader on June 7 and make way for a new British prime minister later this summer.

May became the leader of Britain after the country voted in a June 2016 referendum to leave the European Union. Brexit was her No. 1 job, and she failed to deliver it.

Speaking in front of the official residence at 10 Downing Street, May said she had “done my best” but was unable to sway members of Parliament to back her Brexit vision. She told Britons that compromise was not a dirty word.

“I believe it was right to persevere even when the odds against success seemed high,”

she said. “It is and will always remain a matter of deep regret for me that I have not been able to deliver Brexit.”

Near the end of her brief remarks, May noted that she was Britain’s second female prime minister and promised there would be more women in the highest office. Then her voice became shaky and tears almost came as she said she was departing with “no ill will but with enormous and enduring gratitude to have had the opportunity to serve the country I love.”

May now joins a series of Conservative prime ministers who have fallen over the question of Britain’s relationship with Europe. David Cameron, John Major and Margaret Thatcher, Britain’s only other

female prime minister, were all ousted in part because they could not get their party, let alone the country, to agree on how closely tied Britain and the continent should be.

May spent two years negotiating, in secret, a Brexit withdrawal deal with the EU, only to see it rejected three times by the House of Commons, with many of her own Conservatives refusing to support her. Earlier this week, she was still vowing to push on and offered a tweaked version of her Brexit plan. It was rejected so swiftly and resoundingly by so many lawmakers, including members of her Cabinet, that it became clear she would be ushered out soon.

May set out her departure plans shortly after a Friday

morning meeting with Graham Brady, chairman of the Conservative Party’s powerful backbench “1922 Committee.”

She will step down as party leader on June 7, following a state visit by President Donald Trump and D-Day commemorations. She will then stay on as prime minister until the Conservatives, who will remain in power, select a new leader for their party and the country.

It seems likely they will choose someone who at least pays lip service to the prospect of a no-deal Brexit — leaving the EU without a transition period and adopting a relationship governed by World Trade Organization rules. Economists have predicted that abrupt change would wreak havoc on both sides of the English Channel.

Tech firms vie for military drone contracts

The Washington Post

Hoping to capitalize on an imagined future in which robots are on the front lines of warfare, defense contractors are making new investments in small, portable drone systems that can surveil enemy territory or even neutralize targets.

In March, an Oregon-based thermal imaging company, FLIR Systems, opened a new East Coast headquarters less than a mile from the Pentagon that it hopes will serve as the core of a defense business focused on unmanned systems. Also, on May 7, a pair of California-based technology companies, AeroVironment and Kratos Defense & Security

Solutions, announced they will team up to develop a system of small, unmanned drones that can be launched and controlled from a larger drone.

Jim Cannon, president and chief executive of FLIR, described the new Northern Virginia office as the culmination of a long-planned evolution beyond the company's roots in thermal imaging and sensing. His company now wants to refocus its efforts on the military technology market.

It is acquiring the ownership rights to robotic and unmanned systems that the U.S. military is already buying in the thousands and trying to forge new contacts with Pentagon leadership as military agencies seek

to modernize their operations.

"It's important that we get a center of gravity around the Washington area," Cannon said. "We wanted to show our customers that they are at the center of our strategy, and moving to D.C. is a great way to do that."

The new Northern Virginia presence is underpinned by a series of acquisitions in unmanned military technology. In late January, it spent \$200 million to acquire Aeryon Labs, a Canadian company that makes a small surveillance drone called SkyRanger. The drone is designed to be carried in a rucksack and used for surveillance and controlled through a

handheld tablet.

In 2015, FLIR bought a Norwegian company called Prox Dynamics, which makes a quiet, hand-sized surveillance drone it calls the Black Hornet.

The SkyRanger drones are meant to be operated in hard-to-reach, austere areas where higher-flying drones might have poor visibility. The vice president of product management at Aeryon, of Canada, David Proulx said it has already been put to use by deployed military forces.

Proulx said the company will differentiate itself by finding new ways to orchestrate the drones into complex military operations.

West Point graduating class proof of diversification

Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — The class of cadets preparing to jubilantly toss their caps in the air at the U.S. Military Academy's graduation ceremony Saturday includes 34 black women, a record number that's a sign of concerted efforts to diversify West Point's Long Gray Line.

West Point remains mostly white and mostly male. The 34 women comprise a thin slice of the roughly 1,000 cadets in the Class of 2019.

Sometimes, they're the only women of color in a classroom. Still, cadets said they're proud to be part of a milestone at the historic academy after four

years of testing their limits.

"I just showed myself and those who thought I couldn't do it initially that, yes, I can," said senior cadet Stephanie Riley, of Jacksonville, Fla. "And not just, 'yes, I can.' I can show other little girls that, yes, you can come to West Point. Yes, you can do something that maybe the rest of your peers aren't actually doing. And yes, you can be different from the rest of the group."

Riley was among the black female cadets who recently posed for pre-graduation photos in their gray uniforms, holding out ceremonial sabers. The pictures — part of a tradition

for graduating cadets — were posted widely online and became a symbol of West Point's increasing diversity.

"I was more excited to just take the picture because it means that we're all graduating and it was great to be there with a lot of my sisters who have been there for me in very tough times during summer training and during the academic year," said senior cadet Gabrielle Young, from Hopkins, S.C. "I didn't expect it to have the impact that it did around the country."

While West Point challenges every cadet, experiences can be different for black females.

Riley said people would look

to her for comment during classroom discussions about race or slavery. Young said she's acutely aware of how she carries herself and how she's perceived by different people.

"I feel like in some ways that I do have to prove myself a little bit more, prove that I belong here. And even a classmate told me, I think our freshman year, that I only got in because I was a black female," said Young, one of the few in her class chosen for medical school.

West Point boosted efforts to recruit women and blacks after being told to diversify in 2013 by then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno.

Shanahan tells Naval Academy grads: Change status quo

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan said the new graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy should change the status quo and "set the standard on preventing sexual harassment and assault"

among ranks.

The former Boeing executive delivered the commencement address Friday at the school in Annapolis, Md. He also told graduates they should not be afraid of failure.

More than 1,000 midshipmen

are graduating. Most will be commissioned as either Navy ensigns or second lieutenants in the Marines.

Shanahan served as the Pentagon's No. 2 official since July 2017 until he was appointed the acting secretary of defense

in January. He took over after former secretary, Jim Mattis resigned in December over policy differences with President Donald Trump.

Mattis will be recognized during the ceremony as an honorary member of the class.

Trump gives Barr power over classified info

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has granted Attorney General William Barr new powers to review and potentially release classified information related to the origins of the Russia investigation, a move aimed at accelerating Barr's inquiry into whether U.S. officials improperly surveilled Trump's 2016 campaign.

Trump on Thursday directed the U.S. intelligence community to "quickly and fully cooperate" with Barr's investigation of the origins of the multiyear probe of whether his campaign colluded with Russia.

Former intelligence offi-

cials and Democratic lawmakers criticized Trump's move, which marked an escalation in his efforts to "investigate the investigators" as he works to undermine the findings of special counsel Robert Mueller's probe. Trump's announcement came amid mounting Democratic calls to bring impeachment proceedings against him.

Press secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement that Trump is delegating to Barr the "full and complete authority" to declassify documents relating to the probe, which would ease his efforts to review the sensitive intelligence underpinnings of the investigation. Such

a move could create fresh tensions within the FBI and other intelligence agencies, which have historically resisted such demands.

Barr has already asked John Durham, the U.S. attorney in Connecticut, to examine the origins of the Russia investigation to determine whether intelligence and surveillance methods used during the probe were lawful and appropriate. Still, Barr has been directly involved, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to discuss it publicly, and is working with CIA Director Gina Haspel, Director of National Intelligence

Dan Coats and FBI Director Christopher Wray.

Trump has frequently claimed his campaign was the victim of "spying," though the intelligence community has insisted it acted lawfully in following leads in the Russia investigation and conducted surveillance under court order.

Wray vocally opposed the release by Congress last year of details from a secret surveillance warrant obtained by the bureau on a former campaign adviser, Carter Page. The White House had eagerly encouraged Republicans on the House intelligence committee to disclose that information.

Administration proposes to cut protections for transgendered

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration proposed Friday to roll back Obama-era discrimination protections for transgender people in health care, a move LGBT groups warn will unleash a wave of discrimination.

The Health and Human Services Department released a proposed regulation that in effect says "gender identity" is not protected under federal laws that prohibit discrimination in health care.

It is part of a backdrop of administration actions to limit or move back some of the new recognition for LGBT people in areas ranging from military service to housing.

The proposed rule from HHS reverses the Obama administration, which found that the Affordable Care Act's anti-discrimination section does indeed protect transgender people seeking health care services.

Friday's action had been long expected by activists on both sides of the nation's social issues divide. Trump's religious conservative base has argued that the Obama administration stretched the meaning of "sex discrimination" to include gender identity.

US charges WikiLeaks founder with publishing classified material

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a case with significant First Amendment implications, the U.S. filed new charges Thursday against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, accusing him of violating the Espionage Act by publishing secret documents containing the names of confidential military and diplomatic sources.

The Justice Department's 18-count superseding indictment alleges that Assange directed former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in one of the largest compromises of classified information in U.S. history. It says the WikiLeaks founder, currently in custody in London, damaged national security by publishing documents that harmed the U.S. and its allies and aided its adversaries.

The case comes amid a Justice Department crackdown on national security leaks and raised immediate fear among news media advocates that Assange's actions — including soliciting and publishing classified information — are indistinguishable from what traditional journalists do on a daily basis. Those concerns led the Obama administration Justice Department to balk at bringing charges for similar conduct.

Assange's lawyer, Barry Pollack, said Thursday that the "unprecedented charges" against his client imperil "all journalists in their endeavor to inform the public about actions that have been taken by the U.S. government." The Reporters Com-

mittee for Freedom of the Press called the case a "dire threat" to media freedom, and the American Civil Liberties Union said it was the first time in history a publisher was charged for disclosing truthful information.

But Justice Department officials sought to make clear that they believed Assange's actions weren't protected under the law, though they declined to discuss the policy discussions that led to the indictment. The new Espionage Act charges go far beyond an initial indictment against Assange made public last month that accused him simply of conspiring with Manning to crack a Defense Department computer password.

"Julian Assange is no journalist," said Assistant Attorney General John Demers, the Justice Department's top national security official. "No responsible actor, journalist or otherwise, would purposely publish the names of individuals he or she knew to be confidential human sources in war zones, exposing them to the gravest of dangers."

Zachary Terwilliger, the U.S. Attorney in Alexandria, Va., where the case was brought, said Assange was charged with illegally soliciting classified information and not simply publishing it. He said that while the indictment alleges that he published hundreds of thousands of documents, it charges him with disclosing only a "narrow set of documents" related to the identities of confidential sources.

Fierce weather persists for 4th day in parts of Midwest

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — An outbreak of nasty storms in the Midwest spawned tornadoes that razed homes, flattened trees and tossed cars across a dealership lot, injuring about two dozen people in Missouri's capital city and killing at least three others elsewhere in the state.

The National Weather Service confirmed that a large and destructive twister moved over Jefferson City shortly before midnight Wednesday.

Officials said the tornado packed winds of up to 160 miles per hour and cut a path about 3 miles long and a mile wide. Emergency workers reported about two dozen injuries but no fatalities in the city of about 40,000 people.

For the fourth consecutive day, tornadoes strafed the middle of the country Thursday, this time concentrated in sparsely populated panhandles

of Oklahoma and Texas. The weather service received reports of more than a dozen tornadoes, along with numerous reports of large hail and torrential rain.

Storms this week in the central U.S. have left at least seven people dead, including three near Golden City, Mo.

Kenneth Harris, 86, and his wife, Opal, 83, were found dead about 200 yards from their home, and Betty Berg, 56, was killed and her husband, Mark, seriously injured when their mobile home was destroyed, authorities said.

While forecasters said the threat of severe weather would ease Friday and into the weekend, another natural disaster could be imminent in Jefferson City. The swollen Missouri River is projected to top a levee on the north side of the river by Friday, potentially flooding the city's airport, which already has been evacuated.

Many in Jefferson City con-

sidered themselves fortunate to survive the tornado.

Kerry Ann Demetrius locked herself in the bathroom of her Jefferson City apartment as the storm approached.

"It sounded like stuff was being thrown around, everything was just banging together, and then it just went dead silent," she said. She emerged to find the roof had been blown off her apartment building.

The National Weather Service said preliminary information indicates the tornado at Jefferson City was an EF-3, which typically carry winds up to 160 mph.

Floodwaters along the Arkansas River could approach or surpass record levels for about 120 miles from Tulsa, Okla., to Fort Smith, Ark. More than 1,000 homes have been damaged and 35 to 40 highways closed by floodwaters in Oklahoma, Gov. Kevin Stitt told reporters Thursday evening.

N. Korea: No talks unless US changes its stance

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned on Friday that it will not resume nuclear talks unless the United States changes its position, the latest sign of growing frustration over the Trump administration's refusal to ease sanctions against the communist state.

The statement appeared on the state-run Korean Central News Agency on the eve of President Donald Trump's planned visit to Japan. North Korea accused the United States of deliberately derailing the second summit between Trump and leader Kim Jong Un in late February in Vietnam by making impossible demands such as unilateral disarmament.

KCNA noted the North had suspended nuclear and long-range missile tests and returned the remains of American soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War.

"However, the United States did not respond to our goodwill measures in the same manner but deliberately pushed the talks to a rupture by merely claiming the unilateral disarmament," of North Korea, an unnamed foreign ministry spokesperson was quoted as saying.

The spokesperson said the United States could not "move us even an inch" with its current approach, and "the further its mistrust and hostile acts towards [North Korea] grow, the fiercer our reaction will be."

"Unless the United States ... comes forward with a new method of calculation, the [North Korean]-U.S. dialogue will never be resumed and, by extension, the prospect for resolving the nuclear issue will be much gloomier," KCNA added. "The U.S. would be well advised to wake up to reality and learn anew how to have dialogue and negotiation."

GOP lawmaker blocks disaster aid bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A House GOP conservative complaining of Washington's free-spending and opaque ways blocked a long-overdue \$19 billion disaster aid bill on Friday, extending a tempest over hurricane and flood relief that has left the measure meandering for months.

Texas Republican Chip Roy, a former aide to Texas firebrand Sen. Ted Cruz, objected to speeding the measure through a nearly empty chamber, also complaining that it does not contain any of President Donald Trump's \$4.5 billion request for dealing with a migrant refugee crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border.

"It is a bill that that includes nothing to address the interna-

tional emergency and humanitarian crisis we face at our southern border," Roy said.

Democrats said the House will try to again pass the measure next week during a session, like Friday's, that would otherwise be pro forma. If that doesn't succeed, a quick bipartisan vote would come after Congress returns next month from its Memorial Day recess.

The relief measure would deliver money to southern states suffering from last fall's hurricanes, Midwestern states deluged with springtime floods and fire-ravaged rural California, among others. Puerto Rico would also get help for hurricane recovery, ending a monthslong dispute between Trump and powerful Democrats like Senate Minority

Leader Chuck Schumer, of New York.

Trump said Thursday that he will enthusiastically sign the bill, which delivers much-needed help to many areas in the country where he performs well with voters.

The House drama came less than 24 hours after the Senate passed the bill by a sweeping 85-8 vote that represented a brush-back pitch by a chamber weary of Trump's theatrics and where some members are increasingly showing impatience with the lack of legislative action.

Trump said he favored the bill even though \$4 billion-plus to deal with the humanitarian crisis involving Central American migrants at the border had been removed.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Homeless student is class valedictorian

TN MEMPHIS — A homeless student has graduated as his high school's valedictorian and was offered dozens of scholarships totaling \$3 million.

Tupac Moseley said his family fell behind on bills after his father died. They lost their home when it was foreclosed in February. Moseley said his family spent three months living with relatives and in a cabin at a Christian retreat center before securing housing.

Despite the uncertainty and stress, Moseley graduated from Raleigh Egypt High School with a 4.3 GPA.

He's attending Tennessee State University and will be majoring in electrical engineering when he starts this fall. TSU President Glenda Glover said the college will pay for his housing and meal plan so "everything is free."

Deputies foil plans for stocked post-prom party

FL PALM CITY — Sheriff's deputies foiled plans for a post-prom bash at an Airbnb that had been stocked with liquor, pot and stripper poles.

Martin County Sheriff's Lt. Ryan Grimsdale said they heard about the April 12 party just before several hundred West Boca Community High School students were set to get on three buses to head to the three-story Palm City home.

The Sun-Sentinel reported each student paid \$80, which covered the bus ride and party favors, including Jello shots, high-end liquors and mixers and beer. Marijuana joints had been pre-rolled.

Grimsdale said the party would have "rivaled any bar in Martin County that day."

Woman gets car after shared tale of long walk

LA SLIDELL — A cashier at a Walmart outside New Orleans whose tale of walking six miles to work before sunrise was shared widely has been given a new car.

WWL-TV reported that Slidell police officer Bradley Peck saw Anita Singleton walking near Highway 11 at 5:30 a.m. this week. Peck offered Singleton a ride after learning she worked at a Walmart superstore six miles away. During the drive, Singleton said that her job was a blessing, even if it meant a long walk in the dark.

The officer was so moved by Singleton that Slidell Police posted the story to Facebook, and local news outlets quickly took notice.

Matt Bowers, the owner of a local car dealership, saw the story and decided to surprise Singleton with a new set of wheels.

Fugitive seeks 'likes' before surrendering

CT TORRINGTON — A police department said a fugitive has agreed to surrender if enough people respond to an online wanted poster on social media.

Torrington police said Jose Simms, 29, who is believed to be somewhere in New York, has seven arrest warrants and is being sought as a fugitive after failing to appear in court.

Lt. Brett Johnson posted on the department's Facebook page on Wednesday that Sims had contacted him through Facebook and agreed to turn himself in if the post containing his poster gets 15,000 'likes.' Johnson said he negotiated Simms down from 20,000 'likes.'

The lieutenant described

the challenge as difficult but doable.

He also suggested that if anyone knows where Simms is hiding, they could let police know and save the department some suspense.

Police say man shot fireworks at people

VT BRATTLEBORO — Police in Vermont have accused a man of shooting fireworks at vehicles and pedestrians, one of which hit a man in the head.

Police said one caller said fireworks were being shot out of a vehicle at other drivers on May 14 on Brattleboro's Main Street. Police also made contact with a man walking who said he was struck by fireworks from a vehicle. He didn't seek medical attention.

Ayble Ford, 21, of Brattleboro, was later cited on fireworks possession and simple assault charges.

Man using torch to kill bugs dead after fire

NV HENDERSON — Authorities said a man died after being pulled from a basement crawl space where he ignited a house fire with a torch he was using to exterminate bugs.

The Clark County coroner on Tuesday identified the dead man as Jeff Long, 63, of Henderson.

Henderson city spokeswoman Kathleen Richards said a woman and a dog escaped unharmed and firefighters quickly doused the fire after arriving a little after 6 p.m. Monday to find light smoke at the one-story house.

Long was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead a short time later.

Investigators determined that Long ignited unspecified

combustible materials with the propane torch in the crawl space.

Damage to the home was estimated at about \$60,000.

Senior prank forces high school to close

NC ROANOKE RAPIDS — Officials in a school system said a senior prank that went too far forced them to cancel classes at a high school that was built nearly a century ago.

Spokesman Les Atkins of the Roanoke Rapids Graded School System said Tuesday that toilet paper was rolled across the courtyard at Roanoke Rapids High School, doors were glued shut, interior doors were spray painted and vegetable oil was spread onto the school's historic hardwood floors.

Police Chief Bobby Martin described it as "a senior prank that went a little bit overboard." He estimated damages at \$7,200, and said investigators are reviewing surveillance video.

Man accused of dragging cops with car

NJ NEWARK — A man is accused of dragging two police officers with his car.

Body camera video captured what happened when the officers approached Jacob Wolski's vehicle early Sunday morning in Newark. The officers said it appeared Wolski was using drugs.

As the officers leaned into the vehicle to get Wolski out, he sped away, dragging the officers.

One officer sustained a hand injury while the other suffered a minor head injury. Wolski, 30, was apprehended a short time later.

From wire reports

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Raptors have Bucks' backs against wall

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Kawhi Leonard arrived in Toronto thinking he could pick up another championship to go with the one he already has.

One more victory and he'll play for another ring. And dominant performances like he put up Thursday night are a big reason why.

Leonard scored 35 points and the Raptors beat the Milwaukee Bucks 105-99 to take a 3-2 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

"I'm not afraid of the moment," Leonard said. "This is what I work out for in the summer. I'm just trying to win. It's a matter of me being aggressive and don't shy away from anything."

Leonard was the NBA Finals MVP when San Antonio won the championship in 2014. And he's capping off his first season in Toronto after requesting a trade from the Spurs with quite a playoff run.

It includes the first buzzer-

beater to win a Game 7 — a shot that took four bounces off the rim to knock out Philadelphia in the conference semifinals. And he has continued to dominate in the conference finals.

Leonard showed no obvious signs of the leg soreness that bothered him in Toronto's victories in the previous two games, hitting the 30-point mark for the fourth time in the series. He had a career-high nine assists, made five three-pointers and grabbed seven rebounds.

Fred VanVleet, whose son was born Monday, scored 21 points, hitting seven threes. Kyle Lowry added 17 as the Raptors put themselves in position to advance to the NBA Finals for the first time. A victory at home Saturday would set up a matchup with two-time defending champion Golden State.

Lowry has 1,126 points in 66 playoff games for Toronto, surpassing DeMar DeRozan (1,117) as the franchise's post-season scoring leader.

The Raptors battled out of

an early 14-point hole, then got 15 points from Leonard in the fourth quarter to send the top-seeded Bucks to their first three-game losing streak of the season.

"He has been unbelievable in the playoffs with the Spurs as well," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "I can only say that he's been really good. He gets stronger as the fourth wears on. He wants the ball and he wants to make the plays and he seems to be making the right plays. You're almost shocked when he pulls up at 15 feet and it doesn't go in. He's playing at both ends."

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 24 points for Milwaukee hours after being announced as a unanimous first-team, All-NBA selection.

"We're not going to fold," he said. "Come on, man. Best team in the league, man. We're not going to fold. We're going to go in and give it everything we've got. We can't fold. We're going to come back to Milwaukee being (ticked)."

Eric Bledsoe scored 20 and Malcolm Brogdon added 18 points and 11 rebounds in his return to the starting lineup.

Brogdon started all 64 games he played in during the regular season, before missing basically all of the first two rounds because of a heel injury. With Brogdon back, Nikola Mirotic came off the bench.

"It's first to four. We've got to go to Toronto, get a game. I think the group will be ready," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

Brew crew: Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers got sucked into a beer chugging contest, and it didn't go that well for him.

Teammate David Bakhtiari had no trouble downing three cups when he was shown on the video board. The camera panned to Rodgers and he could only finish about half of one, drawing scorn from some fans.

Brewers star Christian Yelich had no trouble chugging one later in the game.

Lillard, Walker biggest winners on All-NBA teams

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Giannis Antetokounmpo and James Harden got the most votes, and Damian Lillard and Kemba Walker also were big winners when the All-NBA teams were announced.

Those guards can cash in with supermax contracts based on their selections to one of the three All-NBA teams that were announced Thursday.

LeBron James also was voted to the third team, tying the NBA record with his 15th All-NBA selection.

Rounding out the first team were Stephen Curry, Paul George and Nikola Jokic, who was Denver's first All-NBA selection since Carmelo Anthony in 2010.

Antetokounmpo and Harden were unanimous selections, receiving all 100 votes from a panel of writers and broad-

casters who had to choose two guards, two forwards and one center for each of the three teams.

Walker was the final selection but all that matters is that he made it. By doing so, he became eligible to receive a five-year contract extension worth about \$221 million from the Hornets if he opts to stay in Charlotte, a reward the NBA put in recently as further incentive to keep players with their current teams.

The Hornets could have offered him about \$30 million less if he wasn't selected and failed to earn the criteria for the largest possible contract.

Lillard, a second-team selection, can get more than \$190 million over four years with a new contract in Portland.

Antetokounmpo will have his chance for a mega deal in Milwaukee after next season. He's

an MVP finalist who was also a first-team All-Defensive selection for a Bucks team that had the best record in the league and trails Toronto 3 games to 2 in the Eastern Conference finals.

"It's a pretty incredible season but he's much more focused on tonight and getting ready to go," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

Golden State's Klay Thompson, Washington's Bradley Beal and Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns were also in position to cash in with those lucrative extensions, but none was an All-NBA selection.

James has been a lock for most of his career, but was no sure thing after an injury-shortened first season in Los Angeles. His streak of 11 consecutive seasons as a first-team player, a record he shared with Karl Malone, came to an end.

He did, however, make his 15th consecutive appearance on the All-NBA roster — joining Kobe Bryant as the only players to make that many teams in consecutive fashion. The 15th All-NBA nod also tied James with Bryant, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Tim Duncan for the most in league history.

The second-longest active streak now belongs to Curry, who's been on each of the past six All-NBA teams.

Philadelphia center Joel Embiid led the second team that along with Lillard included Kevin Durant, Kawhi Leonard and Kyrie Irving. Leonard was also a second-team selection to the All-Defensive team in his first season in Toronto.

James and Walker headlined a third team that featured Russell Westbrook, Blake Griffin and Rudy Gobert.

Bruins' Backes faces former teammates

Associated Press

BOSTON — David Backes waited his entire career to play for the Stanley Cup, and now he's going to have to do it against some of his best friends in hockey.

The former St. Louis captain will face his old team with the NHL title on the line, starting Monday night when the Blues and Bruins open the final in Boston. It's not the ideal situation for the 35-year-old Backes, but after waiting 13 seasons to get to this point, he'll take it.

"It's a binary decision now. It's us or them. One of us is going to win the Cup," he said this week after the Blues beat San Jose in the Western Conference finals.

"That's the position you'd want to be in at the beginning of the year," Backes said. "I wish those guys well up until this point, but now it's all about us and winning this thing. All

our thoughts and all our efforts are in this room."

Backes was an all-star in 2011 and a leader on the Blues who finished in the top seven of the Selke Award voting for five straight seasons before signing a five-year, \$30 million contract with Boston in 2016. St. Louis feared Backes would be a financial burden by the end of the deal.

Backes has indeed slowed, and coach Bruce Cassidy scratched him for three games against Toronto in the first round and twice more against Columbus.

But since he returned to the lineup, the Bruins have won seven in a row to reach the Final for the third time since 2011.

Cassidy said Backes' leadership and experience were factors in getting back in the lineup. And now that the team has advanced, winning a Cup

for Backes has become a motivational cause in the locker room.

"He's a very popular guy on the team," Cassidy said. "So the guys that won one want to win again, obviously, but there's a little extra pull for sure for a guy like David. He's been a captain in this league, he came to the Bruins with the feeling he'll have an opportunity to win a Cup, and here we are."

And the Blues will be trying just as hard to prevent it.

"I don't think anybody thinks about personalities," St. Louis forward Vladimir Tarasenko said. "Yeah, we spent a lot of time together, but on the ice there is no friends. We are not friends. It's just going to be a hard Final."

Blues defenseman and team captain Alex Pietrangelo said he learned a lot from Backes during their six-plus seasons together. Their families have

also become close.

But he has played against Backes in the Olympics and the NHL regular season, so it's not unfamiliar territory.

"I don't want to dwell on this too much. We've got a bigger thing to deal with," he said. "I sent him a text yesterday to say, 'Thanks, and we'll be friends again in two weeks.' And I never got a message back. I guess they already started."

Backes said Pietrangelo is one of his best friends. Or at least he will be again when this is all over.

"I told him I'm going to love him now, I'm going to love him afterward, but I'm going to hate him for the next three weeks. That's a mutual decision," Backes said. "We'll patch up whatever we need to patch up afterward, but it's all about what's in this room, what our goal is and what we need to do to win these games."

One-shot drivers see Indy 500 as launching pad

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Sage Karam carried the burden of an entire team into his final four-lap qualifying attempt last weekend.

He could extend his season by putting Dennis Reinbold's No. 24 car into the Indianapolis 500 starting grid. Or he could go home and wait 12 months for another chance.

Karam delivered in the last-row shootout, qualifying 31st with a win-or-go-home mentality that has become a theme for the drivers who show up at the track annually with only one or two races on their schedule.

"I think that's why I was so emotional after (qualifying)," Karam said Wednesday. "I was feeling a lot of pressure because I waited a whole year to get back to Indy. I did so much to get ready and I didn't want all this stuff to go for nothing. Also Dennis has never had a car that failed to make the race. I didn't

want to be the first."

The 24-year-old Karam came up clutch with an average speed of 227.740 mph, putting him ahead of 2016 pole-winner and series regular James Hinchcliffe. It also put him ahead of two-time Formula One champion Fernando Alonso, who got bumped out of Sunday's race.

A relieved Karam started screaming into the team radio before crossing the yard of bricks on his final lap and nearly broke down in a post-qualifying news conference.

Not every one-off driver winds up in such a high-stakes situation.

Three-time race winner Helio Castroneves will make his 10th attempt at a record-tying fourth Indy 500 win from the No. 12 starting spot Sunday.

Oriol Servia continues to chase the elusive win that would make him an instant star in his native Spain.

And Karam and teammate

JR Hildebrand are trying to help Reinbold generate enough to transition to running Indy-Cars full time.

The challenges are different, too.

At 31, Hildebrand is the 2011 Indy runner-up who acknowledges he's adjusted his mentality to his new job after previous stints as both a full-time and part-time driver in the series. Hildebrand has competed in only one or two races five of the last six years.

"I think you look at racing in a little different way when you're only racing once," he said before qualifying 21st. "In some ways, it makes it easier because you can have a much more focused approach. But it's also impacted how I think about my aggression level during the race."

Castroneves is a relative newcomer to this form of racing.

A year ago, the popular Brazilian competed only two times in Indy cars — making his sea-

son debut on Indianapolis' road course and his season finale two weeks later on the Brickyard's historic oval. That's the plan Team Penske followed again this year, and it's the intended plan for 2020.

For now, Castroneves finds himself in an ideal situation. He's working with a deep-pocketed team he knows, on a track he loves and with data he understands better than most. Yet it can be tricky, as Castroneves found out last year when he crashed after completing 145 laps and finished a career-worst 27th.

"I'm glad I'm with the same team because I'm comfortable with so many phases of it, starting with the seat and what you have on the steering wheel and the language with the engineer," Castroneves said. "At some point, muscle memory kicks in and the good news is that everyone is running their first oval of the season here so you're not too far behind."

Kiermaier helps Rays put away Indians

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — As he sprinted madly around the bases, Kevin Kiermaier wondered when he'd stop.

He never did.

Kiermaier legged out a three-run, inside-the-park homer when Cleveland outfielders Oscar Mercado and Leonys Martin collided, and Ryan Yarbrough handled the Indians' struggling lineup into the eighth inning of his first start this season to lead the Tampa Bay Rays to a 7-2 win Thursday night.

With the Rays ahead 3-0 in the sixth, Kiermaier hit a sinking liner to left-center. Mercado and Martin converged on the ball before slamming into each other as they each made an all-out attempt at catching it.

Mercado took the worst of the crash as Martin's left knee

drove hard into his right hip. As the two Indians players lay helplessly in the grass, the ball ricocheted toward the left-field corner and Kiermaier easily circled the bases for the first inside-the-parker allowed by Cleveland since 2008.

"I never saw the ball — at all," said Kiermaier, who feared he'd get thrown out. "I was just running to run. At the time, I didn't know what was going on. I was so confused running the bases. I don't know what the heck happened."

Once he rounded third, Kiermaier stopped worrying. But even back in the dugout, he was puzzled.

"I asked my teammates, 'Is that a homer? What just happened?'" he said.

Tommy Pham, Avisail Garcia and Willy Adames hit solo homers off Adam Plutko (1-1) as the Rays improved baseball's best

road record to 16-7.

Yarbrough (3-1), recalled before the game after a stint at Triple-A Durham, allowed two runs and four hits in a career-high 7¹/₃ innings. The left-hander began the year in Tampa Bay's bullpen, but struggled and was sent down April 24 to work on his mechanics.

He looked fine-tuned against the Indians, who dropped their fourth straight and nearly lost two more players to injury on the freakish play in the sixth.

The collision between Mercado and Martin sums up the Indians lately. Nothing is going right.

Mercado was down for several minutes before getting to a crouch and finally standing. He did some jogging as manager Terry Francona looked on and remained in the game only to be further tested in the inning as he had to race in to catch a

short fly and a line drive.

"It couldn't have been placed any (more) perfectly," Mercado said. "We both went at it full speed and it's just one of those things where it's tough to call, because you don't know if you're going to get to it and it's just, like, a last-minute — we both reacted and dove. Unfortunately, it resulted in that, but it's a learning experience."

Mercado singled in the sixth before being lifted for a pinch-hitter. Martin jammed his knee, but stayed in.

Kiermaier hoped both Mercado and Martin were OK.

"It's not fun," he said. "After watching the replay, they hit really good. I hit that ball in a perfect spot. Both of them could not make the play, but they ran into each other. As an outfielder, that's never what you want to do."

MLB roundup

Twins tie franchise record with 8 homers, rip Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Miguel Sano and Jonathan Schoop each hit two of Minnesota's franchise record-tying eight home runs and the Twins hammered Matt Harvey and the Los Angeles Angels 16-7 Thursday.

C.J. Cron homered, doubled twice and singled twice for the Twins. Max Kepler, Jorge Polanco and Eddie Rosario also homered for Minnesota.

It was the third time in franchise history — dating to their days as the Washington Senators — and second time this season the Twins homered eight times. Before doing it April 20 against Baltimore, the last time it happened was in 1963 against Washington.

Schoop drove in four runs and Sano three as the Twins won six of seven on their trip that began in Seattle and wound up with their first sweep in Anaheim since 1996.

There were a total of 11 home

runs in this game, which was originally set for Wednesday but postponed due to unplayable field conditions following a pre-game storm.

The eight home runs also tied the Angels mark for most allowed. It previously happened in 2005 against Texas and 1996 vs. Oakland.

Yankees 6, Orioles 5: Mychal Givens (0-2) walked Aaron Hicks with the bases loaded to force in the tiebreaking run in the ninth inning, and visiting New York completed a four-game sweep of Baltimore.

Clint Frazier and Luke Voit homered for the Yankees, who went deep 13 times in the series.

Mets 6, Nationals 4: Carlos Gomez hit a go-ahead, three-run homer in the eighth inning that helped host New York overcome its opponent's comeback that started after Washington manager Dave Martinez's heated ejection.

Gomez's first homer of the season came off Wander Suero (1-4) as the Mets completed a four-game sweep.

Pirates 14, Rockies 6: Josh Bell, Bryan Reynolds and Starling Marte homered in the seventh inning to lead host Pittsburgh past Colorado.

The Pirates jumped on Rockies starter Antonio Senzatela (3-4) for eight runs over 3¹/₃ innings, but Colorado stormed back in the sixth, plating six runs that were charged to Pittsburgh starter Jordan Lyles (5-1).

Marlins 5, Tigers 2: Garrett Cooper hit a grand slam with two outs in the ninth inning and visiting Miami extended its winning streak to six games by beating Detroit.

The Marlins extended the longest active winning streak in the big leagues.

Phillies 9, Cubs 7: Jean Segura and J.T. Realmuto homered off Jon Lester (3-3),

and visiting Philadelphia beat Chicago for a split of the four-game series between division leaders.

Braves 5, Giants 4 (13): Austin Riley hit a game-tying home run in the eighth inning and then drove in the go-ahead run in the 13th with a two-out single off Reyes Moronta (1-4), lifting visiting Atlanta past San Francisco.

Red Sox 8, Blue Jays 2: Ryan Weber (1-0) pitched six innings to earn his first career win as a starter, Steve Pearce homered and had three RBIs and visiting Boston beat Toronto.

Pearce went 3-for-5. He singled in the fourth and sixth innings and hit a two-run shot off Ryan Feierabend in the ninth.

White Sox 4, Astros 0: Lucas Giolito (6-1) pitched a four-hitter for his first major league shutout, rookie Eloy Jimenez hit his third homer in two games and visiting Chicago beat Houston.