

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Presidents' DMZ visits messages to North

By KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

Several U.S. presidents have traveled to the 2.5-mile-wide, 150-mile-long Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea. It is just about 35 miles north of Seoul.

A visit to the DMZ has recently become almost routine for visiting senior officials, who are usually photographed standing in front of the concrete berm representing the Military Demarcation Line between the blue buildings in the truce village of Panmunjom.

The area has become a popular tourist destination, with coin-operated binoculars providing a view of North Korea from observatories in the South.

But it's also fraught with danger and symbolism, providing the perfect backdrop for a show of resolve against the North.

Underscoring the dangers, North Korean soldiers frequent-

ly approach as close as possible to film high-level visitors, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in March.

The White House has not said if President Donald Trump will visit the DMZ during his Nov. 7-8 visit to South Korea. It was not on the itinerary outlined in a statement issued Oct. 16 that included a meeting with President Moon Jae-in, visits with U.S. and South Korean troops and a speech to the National Assembly.

The Washington Post reported the administration is divided over whether Trump should go, with some aides worried a visit would stoke high tensions as well as security concerns.

Trump recently has been engaged in an unprecedented war of words with North Korea, which has shown major progress toward its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could target the U.S. mainland.

"It's important for U.S. presi-

dents to show America's resolve by going to the DMZ and seeing the division firsthand and how close the two sides are in proximity," Duyeon Kim, a visiting senior fellow at the Seoul-based Korean Peninsula Future Forum, said in an email. "But the danger and concern is Trump's tendency to go off script and make provocative and bombastic comments."

A look at past presidential visits to the world's most fortified border provides valuable historical context to decades of animosity.

President Ronald Reagan peered at the North through binoculars from a guard post when he became the first sitting president to travel to the DMZ on Nov. 12, 1983.

President Bill Clinton followed suit on July 12, 1993, shaking hands and chatting with U.S. soldiers as he gazed into North Korea from Observation Post Ouellette and walked

on the Bridge of No Return.

Clinton later made a speech and played the saxophone for thousands of soldiers at Camp Casey, which is near the border.

President George W. Bush visited the DMZ on Feb. 20, 2002, also gazing into the North from OP Ouellette about a month after he branded the communist state as part of an "axis of evil," along with Iran and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Bush pledged solidarity with the South and warned that "we must not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons."

President Barack Obama picked up the binoculars to stare into the North from OP Ouellette on March 25, 2012, but bulletproof glass was added.

His visit came just three months after North Korean leader Kim Jong Il died of a heart attack, leaving his son Kim Jong Un in charge.

## North Korea's nuclear tests altering the land

*The Washington Post*

TOKYO — Have North Korea's nuclear tests become so big that they have altered the geological structure of the land? Some analysts now see signs that Mount Mantap, the 7,200-foot-high peak under which North Korea detonates its nuclear bombs, is suffering from "tired mountain syndrome."

The mountain visibly shifted during the last nuclear test, an enormous detonation recorded as a magnitude-6.3 earthquake in North Korea's northeast. Since then, the area, which is not known for natural seismic activity, has had three more quakes.

Chinese scientists already have warned that further nuclear tests could cause the mountain to collapse and release the radiation from the blast.

North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests since 2006, all of them in tunnels burrowed deep under Mount Mantap at a

site known as the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Facility.

After the latest nuclear test, on Sept. 3, Kim Jong Un's regime claimed it had set off a hydrogen bomb.

It registered as an artificial magnitude-6.3 earthquake, so big that it shook houses in northeastern China. Eight minutes later, there was a magnitude-4.1 earthquake that appeared to be a tunnel collapsing at the site.

Images from Airbus, a space technology company that makes Earth-observation satellites, showed the mountain moving during the test. An 85-acre area on the Mount Mantap's peak visibly subsided during the explosion, an indication of both the size of the blast and the weakness of the mountain.

Since that day, there have been three much smaller quakes at the site, in the magnitude-2-to-3 range, each of them prompting fears that North Korea had conducted another

nuclear test that perhaps had gone wrong. But they all turned out to be natural.

That has analysts Frank Pabian and Jack Liu wondering if Mount Mantap is suffering from "tired mountain syndrome," a diagnosis previously applied to the Soviet Union's atomic test sites.

The previous tests took place through the north portal to the underground tunnels, but even if those tunnels had collapsed, North Korea's nuclear scientists might still use tunnel complexes linked to the south and west portals, said Pabian and Liu.

Chinese scientists have warned that another test under the mountain could lead to an environmental disaster. If the whole mountain caved in on itself, radiation could escape and drift across the region, said Wang Naiyan, former chairman of the China Nuclear Society and a senior researcher on China's nuclear weapons program.

# SDF recaptures Syria's largest oil field

Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed fighters captured Syria's largest oil field from Islamic State on Sunday, marking a major advance against the extremists in an area coveted by pro-government forces.

With ISIS in retreat, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and the Syrian government have been in a race to secure parts of the oil-rich Deir al-Zour province along the border with Iraq.

The Al-Omar oil field was a major source of income for the militant group and is considered one of Syria's most productive. The condition of the field, which has been controlled by ISIS for three years, was not clear following intense coalition and Russian airstrikes.

The SDF, with air support from the U.S.-led coalition, said it captured the field in a "swift and wide military op-

eration." It said some militants have taken cover in oil company houses nearby, where clashes are underway. The U.S.-led coalition confirmed the SDF had retaken the oil field.

After coming under heavy fire from ISIS, pro-government forces retreated from the area around Al-Omar field, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The SDF said government forces were 2 miles away from the fields.

Syrian troops, backed by Russian warplanes and Iranian-sponsored militias, have retaken nearly all of the provincial capital of Deir al-Zour, as well as the town of Mayadeen, another ISIS stronghold, which is across the Euphrates River from the Al-Omar field.

The SDF focused their operations in rural Deir al-Zour on the eastern side of the river and have already seized a major natural gas field and

other smaller oil fields.

ISIS captured Al-Omar in 2014, when the group swept across large areas in Syria and neighboring Iraq. At the time, the field was estimated to produce about 9,000 barrels a day. Its current potential is unknown.

Syria had proven oil reserves of 2.5 billion barrels as of 2015, giving it the largest supply among its neighbors after Iraq. The oil industry was a pillar of the Syrian economy before the civil war began in 2011.

As ISIS advanced in Syria, it seized control of most of Syria's oil fields and made petroleum a major earner for the militant group, which sold it on the black market to other insurgents and the Syrian government.

Since the coalition began operations against ISIS in 2014, the militants' oil production has been reduced from a peak of approximately \$50 million

per month to currently less than \$4 million, the coalition said in a statement to The Associated Press.

The government lost the Al-Omar field to other insurgents in 2013.

Al-Manar TV, operated by Lebanon's Hezbollah, said the fight for Al-Omar was still underway and denied the SDF's claim to have captured it. The militant group fights alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

The official Syrian news agency said troops regained full control of Khosham, a town on the eastern side of the Euphrates River that they lost a day earlier to ISIS. The Observatory said parts of the town remain contested.

It's not clear how Syrian troops will respond to the SDF's seizure of Al-Omar. Assad has vowed to eventually bring all of Syria back under government control.

## After bloody week, Afghan officials look to Ghani

The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — Worried about eroding security, elected officials in Afghanistan sought answers this past weekend from President Ashraf Ghani's administration, asking why more was not done to prevent suicide attacks that have killed nearly 200 people in one of the bloodiest weeks of the year.

"The president gives lectures, and his advisers and ministers are clapping for him," Saleh Mohammad Saljoqi, a parliament member from the western province of Herat, said during a Saturday evening session with security officials, according to local news reports. "Alas, they should see what is going on in this country."

In the past week, Taliban suicide bombers broke through security checkpoints at police and military compounds in Humvees, allowing fighters to storm the gates in commando-style raids that, in one case, nearly wiped out all 60 Afghan National Army soldiers based at a post in the southwestern province of Kandahar. In that attack, 43 soldiers died and nine were wounded.

Other attacks included the bombing of a Shiite mosque in Kabul that killed 54 people and injured 55, and a rocket attack on the NATO compound inside the city's fortified "Green Zone," which caused no injuries.

Early last week, several attempts at suicide attacks in the city were foiled when of-

ficials arrested three people driving in trucks loaded with explosives.

Some elected officials accused Pakistan, which has aided the Taliban in the past, of facilitating the attacks. Pakistan, threatened with sanctions by President Donald Trump for allowing "safe havens" for terrorists near its border with Afghanistan, denies assisting the group.

Other Afghan officials, along with security analysts, believe the attacks are a show of force in reaction to Trump's plan to add 4,000 U.S. troops in the country — bringing the total U.S. presence to about 13,500 — while increasing nighttime raids and aerial bombing of Taliban forces.

On Sunday, Ghani visited

a police compound in Paktia province to offer condolences to the families of about 80 people killed in a Taliban raid on a police compound in the provincial capital last Tuesday. Local police Chief Toryalai Abadani was among those killed in the attack.

Mohammad Radmanesh, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said the government is not sitting idle in the face of the attacks, noting that 270 Taliban fighters were killed in Kandahar in recent days.

"We are resolved to stop them, prevent them and reduce their might and power to zero with the passage of time, with the available resources," Radmanesh said.

# THAAD fully deployed in S. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — A controversial U.S. anti-missile battery has been integrated into air defense systems for South Korea, with its operating unit to be permanently stationed on the divided peninsula.

The Delta Battery, 2nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, deployed to South Korea from Fort Bliss, Texas, in April to begin moving the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System, known as THAAD, into place despite opposition from local activists and China.

The overnight operation occurred nearly a year after Washington and Seoul agreed to position the battery in a remote southeastern area to counter the growing threat from North

Korea.

The Delta Battery was officially realigned with the 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade from the 11th ADA Brigade on Thursday in a reflagging ceremony in THAAD's new home in Seongju.

The Fort Bliss-based Alpha Battery, 4th ADA Regiment, assumed the THAAD mission after initial operating capability was achieved and conditions were set for follow-on operations.

"The transfer of authority allowed D-2 to redeploy stateside to prepare for the unit's return to South Korea on permanent change-of-station orders," the 35th ADA's public affairs office said.

"The 35th ADA Brigade now employs the full complement of the U.S. Army's ADA capabili-

ties in the Republic of Korea, consisting of Avenger, Patriot and THAAD," an Army statement said.

It also said South Korea and the United States have moved additional units to Seongju to support daily operations in what has been dubbed "Combined Task Force Defender."

U.S. military officials did not immediately respond to a request for more details.

Missile-defense capabilities have taken on urgency as North Korea has made progress in developing mid- to long range weapons that could target U.S. bases in the region.

The communist state has test-fired more than a dozen missiles this year, including two intercontinental ballistic missiles in July. The most recent test was on Sept. 15.

# USS Reagan makes port call in Busan

BY MARCUS FICHTL

*Stars and Stripes*

BUSAN, South Korea — The USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group of ships, aircraft and sailors made a port call Saturday in Busan, South Korea, after a week of naval drills with that country.

The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, which is based in Yokosuka, Japan, arrived on the divided peninsula during a period of heightened rhetoric between North Korea and Washington over the communist state's nuclear weapons program.

The North has threatened "unimaginable" strikes after the drills as American aircraft carriers, in particular, continue to be a favorite target of Kim Jong Un's propaganda machine. A series of videos earlier this year on North Korea's state-run website showed simulations of missile strikes destroying the aircraft carriers and their fleets.

Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, commander of the Ronald Reagan strike group, said the joint drills were routine and a consequence of a 64-year alliance of mutual defense. "This port visit is the perfect ending to this regularly scheduled exercise with our Republic of Korea Navy counterparts," he said. The five-day drills that ended Friday involved fighter jets, helicopters and 40 naval ships and submarines from the two countries training for potential North Korean aggression. In an apparent show of force against North Korea, the U.S. also sent several of its advanced warplanes, including four F-22 and F-35 fighter jets and two B-1B long-range bombers, for an air show and exhibition in Seoul that began Tuesday.

The Ronald Reagan, which also docked in Busan last October, is the latest in a series of U.S. warships and aircraft to travel to South Korea in a show of military might and commitment to the decades-old alliance between the countries.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

# 1st female 4-star admiral retiring

BY SCOTT WYLAND

*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Adm. Michelle Howard, the first female four-star admiral, relinquished command of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa on Friday and soon will end her long, storied career.

Adm. James Foggo III took the reins from Howard during a change-of-command ceremony Friday. Foggo, who was pro-

moted to full admiral before the ceremony, also took command of Allied Joint Force Command Naples.

This is Foggo's third time in Naples. He commanded U.S. 6th Fleet for almost two years until last year. In an earlier tour, he commanded Submarine Group 8.

Howard plans to retire by January to Colorado, ending a 35-year career marked by

many firsts.

In addition to being the first female four-star admiral, she was also the first black woman to achieve two-star admiral rank and the first female graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy promoted to flag officer.

In 1999, Howard was the first black woman to command a U.S. naval warship when she took the helm of the USS Rushmore, a dock landing vessel.

# USS McCain is diverted to Philippines

BY TYLER HLAVAC

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The collision-damaged USS John S. McCain — en route from Singapore to Japan via a heavy-lift vessel — has been diverted to the Philippines because of new structural issues and a typhoon.

The guided-missile destroyer developed a 4-inch-long crack along its starboard side while transiting to Yokosuka

Naval Base aboard the MV Treasure, 7th Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss told Stars and Stripes on Saturday.

Weather conditions associated with Typhoon Lan had already slowed the McCain's journey back to its homeport in Japan, and the crack's discovery led to the diversion to Subic Bay, Philippines, Doss said.

"Once pierside, experts will inspect the crack and determine if any additional repairs

are needed before continuing to Yokosuka," he said.

The cause of the crack and the extent of the structural issues are unknown, Doss said. The majority of the crew has already returned to Yokosuka, with only about 10 sailors remaining aboard the ship.

The McCain departed Singapore earlier this month after a deadly collision with an oil tanker on Aug. 21 killed 10 crewmembers.

# 5 former presidents call for unity at hurricane aid concert

By WILL WEISSERT  
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — The five living former presidents put aside politics and appeared together for the first time since 2013 at a concert on Saturday to raise money for victims of devastating hurricanes in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Democrats Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter and Republicans George H.W. and George W. Bush gathered in College Station, Texas, home of Texas A&M University, to try to unite the country after the storms.

Texas A&M is home to the presidential library of the elder Bush. At 93, he has a form of Parkinson's disease and appeared in a wheelchair at the event. His wife, Barbara, and George W. Bush's wife, Laura, were in the audience.

Grammy award winner Lady Gaga made a surprise appearance at the concert that also featured country music band Alabama, Rock & Roll Hall of Famer "Soul Man" Sam Moore, gospel legend Yolanda Adams and Texas musicians Lyle Lovett and Robert Earl Keen.

The appeal backed by the ex-presidents has

raised \$31 million since it began on Sept. 7, said Jim McGrath, spokesman for George H.W. Bush.

President Donald Trump offered a video greeting that avoided his past criticism of the former presidents and called them "some of America's finest public servants."

"This wonderful effort reminds us that we truly are one nation under God, all unified by our values and devotion to one another," Trump said in the greeting, played during the concert.

Four of the five former presidents — Obama, George W. Bush, Carter and Clinton — made brief remarks that did not mention Trump. The elder Bush did not speak but smiled and waved to the crowd. They appealed for national unity to help those hurt by the hurricanes.

"The heart of America, without regard to race or religion or political party, is greater than our problems," said Clinton.

The last time the five were together was in 2013, when Obama was still in office, at the dedication of George W. Bush's presidential library in Dallas.

## McConnell awaiting Trump's input on health bill

Associated Press

STERLING, Va. — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Sunday he's willing to bring bipartisan health care legislation to the floor if President Donald Trump makes clear he supports it.

A proposal by two senators — Republican Lamar Alexander, of Tennessee, and Democrat Patty Murray, of Washington — would extend for two years federal insurance payments that Trump has blocked, in an effort to stabilize insurance markets.

But Trump has offered mixed signals, alternately praising and condemning the effort — confusing Democrats and Republicans alike.

Asked whether he would bring the bill to the floor, McConnell said on CNN's "State of the Union" that he was waiting "to hear from President Trump what kind of health care bill he might sign."

"If there's a need for some kind of interim step here to stabilize the market, we need a bill the president will actually sign. And I'm not certain yet what the president is looking for here, but I will be happy to bring a bill to the floor if I know President Trump would sign it," the Republican said.

The plan unveiled last week likely has 60 votes in the Senate, mostly from Democrats, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer on Sunday urged McConnell to bring it to the floor "immediately, this week."

"This is a good compromise," Schumer said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

White House officials said that Trump would only sign an interim bill that also lifts the tax penalties that Obama's health care law imposes on people who don't buy coverage and employers who don't offer plans to employees. The White House also wants provisions making it easier for people to buy low-premium policies with less coverage. Top Senate Democrats reject those demands.

# Fox renewed O'Reilly contract despite knowing of allegations

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The parent company of the Fox News Channel says it knew a news analyst planned to file a sexual harassment lawsuit against Bill O'Reilly when it renewed the popular personality's contract in February.

The New York Times reported Saturday the company renewed O'Reilly's contract after he reached a \$32 million settlement with the analyst, Lis Wiehl.

21st Century Fox defended its decision because it said O'Reilly had settled the matter personally.

The company said O'Reilly's new contract had added protections that allowed Fox to dismiss him if other allegations surfaced.

O'Reilly was ousted months

later when it was revealed Fox had paid five women a total of \$13 million to keep quiet about harassment allegations.

Mark Fabiani, a spokesman for O'Reilly, said in a statement Saturday that after 21st Century Fox fired founding CEO Roger Ailes in 2015 following harassment charges, dozens of women accused scores of male employees at Fox News Channel of harassment.

Fabiani said 21st Century Fox paid out close to \$100 million dollars to settle all the cases.

Wiehl's allegations included repeated harassment, a nonconsensual sexual relationship and the sending of gay pornography and other sexually explicit material to the woman, according to people briefed on the matter who spoke to The New York Times.

As part of the terms of their

agreement, she signed an affidavit, dated Jan. 17 and obtained by the newspaper, stating that the two sides had resolved their dispute and that she had no claims against O'Reilly concerning any of the allegations in the draft complaint. All photos, text messages and other communications between the two would be destroyed, the newspaper reported.

The settlement was the largest of a half-dozen deals made by O'Reilly or the company to settle harassment allegations against the host, according to the newspaper.

It was reached in January. A month later, 21st Century Fox granted O'Reilly a four-year extension on a \$25 million-a-year contract. In April, it fired him.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## University gets top 'green campus' status

**NH** CONCORD — The University of New Hampshire is earning a reputation as one of the greenest campuses in the country.

The university recently received one of the top accolades given to higher education institutions for sustainability, a platinum rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. It is only the third university to achieve the honor, joining Stanford University and Colorado State University.

The rating resulted from the fact the university is powered entirely by renewable energy, gets most of its campus energy from recycled landfill gas, composts thousands of pounds of food each month and is home to the first organic dairy research farm in the country.

## Shop robbed as owner gives flowers to vets

**PA** GREENSBURG — A Pennsylvania florist's shop was robbed as the owner was away handing out free bouquets to veterans at a local health center.

Carrie South said the thief made off with \$1,400 from Bloomin' Genius Exotic Flowers and Gifts in Greensburg earlier this month.

She told the Tribune-Review she was handing out bouquets to veterans outside the Greensburg VA Primary Care Center on Oct. 11 when the theft happened. She was participating in a program called Petal It Forward, where florists give away two bouquets, one for the person to keep, and the other to give away.

When she returned to her shop she noticed her bank en-

velope was missing. Her shop's surveillance camera caught the man in action.

## Exhibit shows holidays at the White House

**IL** SPRINGFIELD — The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is getting ready for the holidays with an exhibit showing how presidents have celebrated Christmas.

"Holidays at the White House" will feature photos and original artifacts from four presidents and their families. They are Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

The exhibit runs from Nov. 17 through Jan. 7.

## Police warning about 'Hitman' texting scam

**PA** WHITEHALL — A police department in the Pittsburgh suburbs is warning people of a "Hitman" text-messaging scam making the rounds.

The scammers send messages to cellphones saying, "Hello. A friend/family of yours paid me to kill you. To spare your life you have 48 hours to pay the sum of \$5,000."

Police in Whitehall said anybody who gets such a text should ignore it, because responding to it just lets the scammers know they've reached a live phone account — and the scam will escalate from there. People can also contact the FBI.

## School ends Civil War dress-up activity

**GA** KENNESAW — School officials say there will be no more Civil War-related student dress-up activities at a Georgia elementary

school after its "Civil War Day" sparked conflict.

Big Shanty Elementary School last month invited fifth-graders to dress up as characters from the war.

The mother of a 10-year-old black child said a white student dressed as a plantation owner approached him and said, "You are my slave."

## School rejects photo of student with gun

**ME** STANDISH — A Maine high school rejected a student's submitted yearbook photo because it shows him holding a shotgun.

Wade Gelinis, a senior at Bonny Eagle High School in Standish, said he wanted his picture to feature hunting because it is a family tradition.

Principal Lori Napolitano told WCSH-TV the school does not allow weapons in yearbook photos because they don't want to be forced to decide which images are promoting violence.

## Man sleeping in trash dropped into truck

**MT** HELENA — A man was uninjured but arrested after he was sleeping in a dumpster that was picked up and emptied into the back of a Helena collection truck.

The Independent Record reported that the man was dumped into the cardboard recycling truck Tuesday morning.

Helena police Lt. Corey Bailey said the man was in the truck for only a short amount of time because the driver saw boxes being thrown out and heard him pounding on the wall.

Officers arrested the man after learning he was wanted on a pair of outstanding warrants.

## Man arrested after motorcyclist is struck

**AL** AXIS — An Alabama man was arrested after a hit-and-run in which a motorcycle was pushed down a highway for around 2 miles.

AL.com reported Charles Smith, 34, was booked on a felony charge of leaving the scene of an accident following the Oct. 14 crash that injured motorcyclist Ashley Sanderson.

WKRG-TV reported that Sanderson was ejected at the point of impact. Alabama Law Enforcement Agency spokesman Capt. John Malone said Smith then fled the scene, pushing the motorcycle down U.S. 43.

Sanderson's wife Victoria, said her husband was being treated at USA Medical Center and has been given a good prognosis.

## 1,400-pound pumpkin breaks state's record

**ID** MERIDIAN — The biggest pumpkin ever grown in Idaho is being seen by tens of thousands of Treasure Valley residents this fall.

The pumpkin, which weighs 1,400 pounds, is on display at the Farmstead Corn Maze and Pumpkin Festival in Meridian and it's a whopper.

The previous state record, set in 2012, was 1,219 pounds, and the world record is 2,624 pounds, said D.J. Steffler, who grew the pumpkin in nearby Nampa.

Despite its grandeur, the pumpkin is destined to be smashed to pieces on the Farmstead's last day of business this year. It will be loaded with candy and prizes and dropped by a crane during the festival's annual pumpkin smash.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Houston Astros advance to World Series

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Jose Altuve embraced Justin Verlander as confetti rained down. An improbable thought just a few years ago, the Houston Astros are headed to the World Series.

Charlie Morton and Lance McCullers combined on a three-hitter, Altuve and Evan Gattis homered and the Astros reached the World Series for only the second time by blanking the New York Yankees 4-0 Saturday night in Game 7 of the AL Championship Series.

Next up for the Astros: Game 1 against the Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday night. Los Angeles opened as a narrow favorite, but Verlander, the ALCS MVP, and fellow Houston ace Dallas Keuchel will have plenty of rest before the World Series begins at sweltering Dodger Stadium.

“I love our personality,” Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. “We have the right amount of fun, the right amount of seriousness, the right amount of perspective when we need it. This is a very, very unique group. To win 100 games and still be hungry is pretty remarkable.”

The Astros will try for their first World Series title, thanks in large part to Altuve, the diminutive second baseman who swings a potent bat, and Verlander, who switched teams for the first time in his career to chase a ring.

Four years removed from their third straight 100-loss season in 2013, the Astros shut down the Yankees on consecutive nights after dropping three in a row in the Bronx.

The only previous time the Astros made it this far, they were a National League team when they were swept by the Chicago White Sox in 2005.

Hinch’s club has a chance to win that elusive first crown, while trying to boost a region still recovering from Hurricane Harvey.

“This city, they deserve this,” McCullers said.

Clutch defensive plays by third baseman Alex Breg-

## Verlander named ALCS MVP

Associated Press

HOUSTON — That last-second decision by Justin Verlander has turned out perfectly for the Houston Astros.

An MVP indeed.

Verlander and the Astros are headed to the World Series after the big right-hander beat the New York Yankees twice in the American League Championship Series. Houston won the pennant with a 4-0 victory in Game 7 on Saturday, and Verlander was selected the ALCS MVP a night after he pitched seven scoreless innings and helped extend a series in which he also threw a complete game.

“He chose to come here for games like this and beyond,” manager A.J. Hinch said.

Houston might not even be at this point if Verlander hadn’t given his approval for a trade from the Detroit Tigers — the team for which he had played all 13 of his major league seasons — just before the Aug. 31 deadline to be eligible for the Astros’ postseason roster.

Verlander has won all nine of his games since joining

the Astros, including three postseason starts and his first career relief appearance in the clinching Game 4 of the AL Division Series against Boston.

In Game 2 of the ALCS against the Yankees, Verlander pitched a five-hitter with 13 strikeouts. He walked off the mound in the middle of the ninth after his 124th pitch in a tie game, and the Astros won 2-1 when Jose Altuve dashed home from first base on Carlos Correa’s double in the bottom half.

With Houston facing elimination for the first time this postseason, Verlander struck out eight Friday in a 7-1 victory.

While the Astros are going to the World Series for only the second time, this will be Verlander’s third. Both are still looking for their first rings — and their first World Series victories.

Verlander went to the World Series as a rookie with the Tigers in 2006, and lost both of his starts as St. Louis won in five games. He also lost the opener in the 2012 when he gave up five runs in four innings against San Francisco, which swept

man and center fielder George Springer helped Houston improve to 6-0 at Minute Maid Park in these playoffs and become the fifth team in major league history to capture a seven-game postseason series by winning all four of its home games.

Morton bounced back from a loss in Game 3 to allow two hits over five scoreless innings. Starter-turned-postseason reliever McCullers limited the Yankees to just one hit while fanning six over the next four. A noted curveballer, McCullers finished up with 24 straight breaking pitches to earn his first major league save.

Combined, they throttled the wild-card Yankees one last time in Houston. New York totaled just three runs in the four road games.

“I know people are going to talk about how we didn’t win many games on the road. There were some other teams that haven’t won many games on the road, either. We just happened to run into a very good team that just beat us,” Yankees manager Joe Girardi said.

The Astros also eliminated New York in the 2015 postseason, with Keuchel winning the AL wild-card game at Yankee Stadium. CC Sabathia entered

10-0 with a 1.69 ERA in 13 starts this season after a Yankees loss. But he struggled with command and was gone with one out in the fourth inning.

Houston was up 2-0 in fifth when former Yankees star Brian McCann came through for the second straight game by hitting a two-run double. He snapped an 0-for-20 skid with an ground-rule RBI double to give Houston its first run on Friday night in a 7-1 win.

The Yankees, trying to reach the World Series for the first time since 2009, lost an elimination game for the first time this season after winning their first four in these playoffs. New York went 1-6 on the road this postseason.

After going 0-for-5 with runners in scoring position through the first three innings, the Astros got on the board with no outs in the fourth with the 405-foot shot by Gattis.

Altuve launched a ball off Tommy Kahnle into the seats in right field with one out in the fifth for his fifth homer this postseason. It took a while for him to see that it was going to get out, and held onto his bat until he was halfway to first base before flipping it and trotting around the bases as chants of “MVP” rained down on him.

Altuve finished 8-for-25 with two homers and four RBIs in the ALCS after hitting .533 with three homers and four RBIs in the ALDS against Boston.

Carlos Correa and Yuli Gurriel hit consecutive singles before Kahnle struck out Gattis. McCann’s two-strike double, which rolled into the corner of right field, cleared the bases to push the lead to 4-0. Gurriel slid to avoid the tag and remained on his belly in a swimming pose at the plate for a few seconds after he was called safe.

It was just the second Game 7 in franchise history for the Astros, who lost to the Cardinals in the 2004 NLCS exactly 13 years earlier.

## NHL roundup

# Stamkos, Kucherov extend streaks as Lightning rout Pens

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Steven Stamkos and Nikita Kucherov extended their season-opening points streaks to nine games and the Lightning beat the two-time Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh 7-1 on Saturday.

Stamkos had a goal and three assists, and Kucherov had two goals and an assist. They are the first teammates to start the season with nine-game streaks since St. Louis' Pavol Demitra and Doug Weight in 2001-02.

Andrei Vasilevskiy, coming off a 43-save blanking of Columbus on Thursday night, lost his bid for second straight shut-out bid on Jake Guentzel's goal with 1:42 to play. Vasilevskiy finished with 28 saves.

Yanni Gourde, Brayden Point Anton Stralman and Mikhail Sergachev also scored to help the Lightning improve to 7-1-1.

Penguins star Sidney Crosby received both minor and misconduct penalties during the opening 1:36 of the game.

Pittsburgh is 5-2 over its last seven games, with both losses against Tampa Bay.

**Golden Knights 3, Blues 2 (OT):** William Karlsson scored at 4:36 of overtime to help host Las Vegas win for the sixth time in seven games.

Malcolm Subban stopped 37 shots before being helped to the dressing room by two trainers with 9:10 remaining in regulation after stretching out on a wide shot by Jaden Schwartz. Oscar Dansk stopped 10 of the 11 shots he faced in his NHL debut, making key stops at the end of regulation and in overtime.

**Kings 6, Blue Jackets 4:** Anze Kopitar broke a tie with 2:14 left with his second goal of the game and visiting Los Angeles beat Columbus to remain the only NHL team unbeaten in regulation.

At 6-0-1, Los Angeles is off to the best start in franchise

history.

**Blackhawks 4, Coyotes 2:** Lance Bouma scored on a rebound with 4:4 left in the third period, Corey Crawford topped 27 shots and Chicago kept host Arizona winless.

Patrick Kane and Richard Panik each scored and Jonathan Toews had a pair of assists for Chicago, which had lost three of four.

**Rangers 4, Predators 2:** Kevin Hayes and Jimmy Vesey each had a goal and an assist and New York beat visiting Nashville to snap a five-game skid.

Henrik Lundqvist made 23 saves for his 407th NHL win. He's now tied with Glenn Hall for ninth place.

**Sabres 5, Bruins 4 (OT):** Ryan O'Reilly scored 2:59 into overtime to give Buffalo the win over host Boston, capping a comeback from a pair of three-goal deficits.

**Panthers 4, Capitals 1:** James Reimer stopped 41 shots filling in for the injured Roberto Luongo to help Florida end a three-game losing streak with a win over host Washington.

**Islanders 5, Sharks 3:** Anders Lee had two goals and an assist to lead New York past visiting San Jose.

**Flyers 2, Oilers 1:** Wayne Simmonds scored on a feed from Valtteri Filppula with 2:15 left and Philadelphia held off visiting Edmonton.

**Senators 6, Maple Leafs 3:** Derick Brassard and Mark Stone each had two goals and an assist, Erik Karlsson had three assists and host Ottawa beat Toronto.

**Stars 4, Hurricanes 3:** Tyler Pitlick scored two goals for the first time in his career, leading host Dallas past Carolina.

**Wild 4, Flames 2:** Ryan Suter had a goal and two assists to rally Minnesota past host Calgary.

## NBA roundup

# Magic surprise Cavs

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Nikola Vucevic scored 23 points and the Orlando Magic snapped a 17-game losing streak against the Cleveland Cavaliers, routing the defending Eastern Conference champions 114-93 on Saturday night.

Orlando's first win over Cleveland since Nov. 23, 2012, came in convincing fashion. The Magic never trailed, taking their biggest lead, 106-69, midway through the fourth quarter when both teams cleared their benches.

LeBron James scored 14 points in the first quarter and finished with 22 as the Cavaliers lost for the first time in three games.

**Grizzlies 111, Warriors 101:** Marc Gasol had 34 points and 14 rebounds, and host Memphis built a 19-point third-quarter lead over Golden State.

James Ennis III added 13 points, and Tyreke Evans had 12 as Memphis shot 47 percent compared to 39 percent for Golden State. The Warriors shot 12 of 38 from three-point range.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 37 points, and Kevin Durant added 29 points and 13 rebounds. But both were ejected with 43.6 seconds left after arguing with officials.

**Jazz 96, Thunder 87:** Rudy Gobert had 16 points and 13 rebounds to lead Utah past visiting Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City's All-Star trio of Russell Westbrook, Paul George and Carmelo Anthony were bottled up in the first half by an active Utah defense. By the time George and Anthony got going, the come-from-behind climb was too steep. Anthony scored a game-high 26 and George added 22.

Westbrook was held to six points on 2-for-11 shooting. He was held to single digits just twice in the two previous regular seasons.

**Bucks 113, Trail Blazers 110:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 17 of his career-high

44 points in the fourth quarter, and he gave host Milwaukee the lead for good on a dunk with 11 seconds left.

With Portland leading 110-109, the Trail Blazers lost the ball and Antetokounmpo's thunderous dunk put the Bucks ahead. After a timeout, Damian Lillard found Jusef Nurkic running down the lane, but Antetokounmpo blocked his shot at the basket, sending the 7-foot center crashing to the floor.

Khris Middleton was fouled and made both free throws to close the scoring.

**Rockets 107, Mavericks 91:** James Harden scored 29 points and Houston beat Dallas in its their home opener.

Houston improved to 3-0 for the first time since the 2014-15 season when it started 6-0. Dallas fell to 0-3 for the first time since the 2011-12 season, which followed their NBA title run in 2010-11.

**Pistons 111, Knicks 107:** Tobias Harris scored 22 of his 31 points in the second half, and visiting Detroit erased a 21-point deficit to beat New York.

**Heat 112, Pacers 108:** Goran Dragic scored 23 points, Dion Waiters added 19 and Miami opened its home schedule with a victory over Indiana.

**Raptors 128, 76ers 94:** DeMar DeRozan scored 30 points, Serge Ibaka had 21 and Toronto won its 10th straight home game over Philadelphia.

**Nuggets 96, Kings 79:** Paul Millsap had 18 points and nine rebounds in his first home game with Denver, Gary Harris scored 17 points and the Nuggets used a strong defensive effort to beat Sacramento.

**Spurs 87, Bulls 77:** LaMarcus Aldridge had 28 points and 10 rebounds and the San Antonio beat Chicago in the Bulls' home opener.

**Clippers 130, Suns 88:** Blake Griffin had 29 points and eight rebounds, Patrick Beverley added 15 points and six steals, and host Los Angeles cruised past Phoenix.

## Academies

# No. 20 UCF beats Navy to start 6-0

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Central Florida finally had been tested in a tight game, and someone wondered if coach Scott Frost enjoyed seeing how his team reacted to the situation.

“Heck no. I lost a year off my life tonight,” Frost said Saturday after the Knights’ 31-21 victory over Navy. “(...) It was stressful.”

Adrian Killins ran for 122 yards and two touchdowns, McKenzie Milton passed for 233 yards and the 20th-ranked Knights pulled out a victory to improve to 6-0 for the first time in school history.

“We knew we were in for a battle,” Frost said. “We’re glad and lucky to get out of here with a win.”

The Midshipmen (5-2, 3-2) kept it close, but their upset chances dwindled after quarterback Zach Abey was forced from the game in the third quarter. Abey was dazed from a hit to the helmet at the end of a run and had to be helped off the field.

Abey, the key figure in Navy’s triple option, carried 25 times for 126 yards and a touchdown — his school-record eighth straight 100-yard game. He also threw a touchdown pass.

**Army 31, Temple 28 (OT):** Thrust into the spotlight for the first time, sophomore quarterback Kelvin Hopkins keyed the host Black Knights to a most improbable victory.

Trailing by seven points against Temple with time winding down in the fourth quarter, Hopkins guided the Black Knights on a 14-play, 79-yard scoring drive in the final 91 seconds of regulation. He completed five passes for 67 yards, hitting Jermaine Adams in the left corner of the end zone with a perfectly thrown 16-yard strike with one second left in regulation, and Blake Wilson kicked a 29-yard field goal in the first overtime to give Army a dramatic victory.

# No. 2 Penn St. blasts Michigan

Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — The whiteout at Penn State is one of the most mesmerizing scenes in college football. With more than 100,000 fans dressed in white, Beaver Stadium virtually glows as night falls in Happy Valley.

Penn State coach James Franklin tells his players to drink in the spectacle when they take the field.

“Run out of that tunnel. Look around for 30 seconds and then don’t ever look again and then get back to focusing on the game and controlling what we can control,” Franklin said.

What No. 2 Penn State controlled on Saturday night was Michigan. The Nittany Lions turned their whiteout into a knockout of the 19th-ranked Wolverines.

Saquon Barkley and Trace McSorley cut through one of the nation’s stingiest defenses, each scoring three touchdowns, as Penn State emphatically avenged its last regular-season loss with a 42-13 victory.

Barkley set the tone the first time he touched the ball. He took a direct snap on the second play of the game and blazed 69 yards for a touchdown. He finished with 161 yards from scrimmage, a nice addition to his Heisman Trophy bid.

“Obviously we knew they were very aggressive. They’re a great defense, got a great defensive coordinator,” Barkley said. “Sometimes it seems like a heavyweight fight. They’re going to get some and we’re going to get ours. When you

got your opportunity, you got to score.”

McSorley ran for a career-high three touchdowns for Penn State (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten), including a darting 13-yarder in the third quarter that made it 28-13 and led the record-breaking crowd of 110,823 to sing along to “Sweet Caroline.”

Early in the fourth quarter, McSorley and Barkley combined for the shot that put Michigan away. Barkley burned linebacker Mike McCray and made a juggling over-shoulder catch for a 42-yard TD that made it 35-13.

Michigan came in allowing 223 yards per game and 3.68 yards per play. Nittany Lions went for 506 yards and 8.3 per play, adding a few new looks to its offense, like the wildcat formation Barkley broke for the first touchdown.

“Instead of lining up and sending the quarterback out wide we shifted to it at the last minute so they couldn’t go to a wildcat check,” Franklin said. “We had some wrinkles in there.”

Penn State has not lost in the regular season since getting trounced 49-10 by Michigan (5-2, 2-2) last season. That seems like a lifetime ago. One day short of the last whiteout, a season-changing upset of Ohio State, the defending Big Ten champion Nittany Lions look even better than last year. They’ve outscored opponents 90-0 in the first quarter, making it the only FBS team that has not allowed a first-quarter point.

“When you have an explosive offense like we do and you’re playing really good first quarter defense and you can get a lead, it changes how people have to play,” Franklin said.

# No. 13 Notre Dame routs No. 11 USC

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Coach Brian Kelly expected 13th-ranked Notre Dame to win big against No. 11 Southern California. He even wrote it down on a piece of paper in the locker room before the game.

“I said if we didn’t win really big, I would be disappointed,” he said.

He wasn’t disappointed, and neither were his players who doused their coach with water following a dominating 49-14 victory over the rival Trojans on Saturday night.

Brandon Wimbush passed for two touchdowns and ran for two more, Josh Adams added three touchdown runs and the Irish took advantage of three USC turnovers in what was a surprisingly easy win in the storied series that dates to 1926.

It gave the Irish (6-1) their first victory against USC (6-2) when the Trojans were ranked since 1995.

Wimbush credited the Irish defense with getting the offense going.

“When they take away the ball, you just get so excited, and (offensive coordinator Chip) Long wants to be aggressive and call a play, usually,” said Wimbush, who was coming back after missing a game with a right foot injury.

The turnovers came on a fumble and interception by Sam Darnold and a dropped punt by Jack Jones.

“We helped them by mistakes,” USC coach Clay Helton said.

Adams had an 84-yard touchdown run and finished with 191 yards on 19 carries. Wimbush ran for 106 yards on 14 carries

as the Irish amassed 377 yards on the ground. Notre Dame led 28-0 at the half.

“The turnovers were key for us in the first half and being opportunistic, which really we’ve been all year offensively,” Kelly said.

Kelly was asked about Adams possibly not getting the attention he deserves nationally.

“He’s one of the best players in the country,” Kelly said. “I’ll let others make that decision. Here’s what I know. We’re going to play some really good football teams the rest of the year. Maybe everyone should just wait until the end of the year and vote for the Heisman.”

It was the fifth 100-yard rushing game of the season for Adams, quickest to 2,000 rushing yards in Notre Dame history at 316 carries. It took George Gipp 323 carries to set