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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Wounded SEAL testifies on Bergdahl

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Special operators risked their lives to try and rescue Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl even though they knew he had deserted because “he had a mom,” a former Navy SEAL seriously wounded during the search testified Wednesday.

Retired Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Jimmy Hatch took the witness stand in a Fort Bragg courtroom and described a quickly planned mission aimed at recovering Bergdahl after his unit received information about

the soldier’s possible location in eastern Afghanistan about a week after his disappearance.

“Somebody’s going to get killed or hurt trying to find this kid,” Hatch recalled telling another member of his SEAL team before boarding helicopters to fly to the location where they believed they might find Bergdahl.

Hatch’s testimony Wednesday opened the sentencing phase of Bergdahl’s court-martial, which could last several days.

Last week, Bergdahl, 31, pleaded guilty to charges of desertion and misbehavior before the enemy, admitting he unlaw-

fully left his post in June 2009, endangering his fellow troops as they launched operations to recover the missing soldier.

Under questioning from the lead prosecutor, Army Maj. Justin C. Oshana, Hatch recalled his uneasy feelings about the mission to retrieve Bergdahl and how hours later he was the one grievously wounded in a fight when an enemy fighter sprayed AK-47 fire at him, hitting him just above the right knee and shattering his femur. Hatch said he nearly bled to death.

Despite his concerns, Hatch said the SEAL team members were willing to take the risk to

recover Bergdahl.

“He’s an American,” Hatch said, adding later, “and he had a mom.”

After his injury, Hatch went through 18 surgeries to repair his leg, but has been left with a permanent limp. He was forced to retire from the SEALs, in which he had served for nearly 26 years.

The judge, Army Col. Jeffery R. Nance, who is expected to sentence Bergdahl next week following additional witness testimony, will likely hear testimony about two additional servicemembers wounded on a mission to rescue Bergdahl.

GIs are not new to firefights in Niger

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. forces operating in Niger have been shot at numerous times during the past two years.

They’ve hit a roadside bomb in a remote northern part of the country. And they’ve gone on reconnaissance patrols, where no enemy contact was expected but violence suddenly flared.

“We’ve had guys in firefights there before as a result of our partners getting in firefights. That happens,” said Donald Bolduc, who commanded special operations forces in Africa until June.

Outside the public eye, troops have suffered minor injuries in connection with those incidents, Bolduc said Wednesday in an interview with Stars and Stripes. One soldier died this year in a vehicle rollover not far from where four U.S. soldiers were killed in an Oct. 4 ambush.

Bolduc recounted such inci-

dents, which all occurred during his 26 months in command at Special Operations Command Africa. During that time, Niger became a major focal point for the military in Africa.

“It is dangerous. Our guys are operating in areas very similar in environment to Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, but not with the same kinds of authorities and resources,” Bolduc said. “We’ve had several, a number of combat casualties there under my command.”

The U.S. military has a growing presence in Niger, where there are now 800 troops supporting a campaign to help local forces battle violent extremist groups. But the ambush of a 12-man U.S. special operations team, on patrol with a Nigerien contingent of 30 troops, shook the political establishment in Washington. Some lawmakers said they were largely unaware of military activities in the region, despite White House letters advising Congress of troop levels.

Much confusion still surrounds the Oct. 4 operation, which is now under military investigation. Authorities are trying to determine what went wrong and how the body of one soldier — Sgt. La David Johnson — wasn’t discovered until nearly 48 hours after fighting began.

Part of a U.S. Africa Command probe into the incident is looking at whether the forces had gone beyond the scope of what was billed as a civil-military reconnaissance mission. Several media reports, citing unnamed military sources, have said the team was directed to extend its patrol to help get information on a high-value target believed to be in the area. In doing so, they may have been entering an operational gray zone.

The U.S. and Nigerien soldiers are believed to have been set up by local villagers, who worked to distract and delay the unit’s departure while militants prepared an ambush.

The possible shift in mission

focus has raised questions about whether U.S. forces violated a policy that restricts soldiers from joining missions where enemy contact is deemed likely.

Determining the likelihood of combat isn’t an exact science, said Bolduc, who said any decision on the ground to hunt down a target for kill or capture would be a clear violation of the rules of engagement.

Any decision to arrange a capture or kill mission in Niger would require not only higher headquarters approval but also a green light from the White House, he said. However, if the decision on the patrol, which began Oct. 3, was to expand the mission to gain intelligence, U.S. forces would still be working within approved authorities if enemy contact was deemed unlikely, Bolduc said.

AFRICOM declined to comment on the decision-making chain of command in Niger, citing security issues.

Misconduct cases rife among senior officials

USA Today

WASHINGTON — Since 2013, military investigators have documented at least 500 cases of serious misconduct among its generals, admirals and senior civilians, almost half of those instances involving personal or ethical lapses, a USA Today investigation has found.

Many cases involve sex scandals, including a promiscuous Army general who led a swinging lifestyle, another who lived rent-free in the home of a defense contractor after his affair fell apart and another who is under investigation for sending steamy Facebook messages to the wife of an enlisted soldier on his post.

Yet despite the widespread abuses, the Pentagon does no trend analysis to determine whether the problem is worsening, nor does it regularly announce punishments for generals and admirals — all public figures, USA Today has found. Senior officers found to have been involved in adulterous relationships, a violation of the military's code of justice, have been reassigned with no public notice and allowed to retire quietly, in some cases with full honors.

Industries ranging from tech to finance to Hollywood have been roiled by sexual harassment and assault scandals that have led to the ouster of top executives and calls for reform. The accusations this month against film producer Harvey Weinstein by dozens of women have reportedly prompted criminal investigations in the United States and United Kingdom, along with his removal from the company he founded.

In the military, as with the Weinstein case, sexual harassment by top brass in many cases is considered an open secret, documents show. Yet many stay quiet, and efforts on Capitol Hill to reform the system and call senior officers to account have often failed.

Instead, the military has often closed ranks. The Pentagon doesn't publicly discuss

most cases, though USA Today has identified several, including five since 2016 that have involved senior officers in the Army, Air Force and Navy. Nor does the military seem interested in getting to the root of the problem. In 2014, then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel created an office to investigate ethical problems among senior leaders. It was shuttered two years later without determining the depth of the problem, a task Hagel gave it when he opened the office.

"This is another example of top (Pentagon) officials refusing to demand accountability and sweeping major ethical problems from commanders under the rug to the detriment of the men and women who serve admirably under them," Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, a New York Democrat and member of the Armed Services Committee, told USA Today.

Because the Pentagon obscures the extent of the sexual scandals, problems emerge piecemeal as new cases are ferreted with the aid of whistleblowers. The Army, for example, was unaware that Maj. Gen. Joseph Harrington was sending Facebook Live messages to the wife of a sergeant until USA Today showed them to officials. He was fired on Oct. 13.

Whatever the reasons for the misbehavior, two things are clear: The military hasn't corrected it. Nor has it been able to transform a culture that enables the abuse.

Former Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, who disciplined several senior officers for misconduct, sees organizations with strong hierarchies dominated by men at the heart of the problem.

"At its core, what's behind misconduct among leaders in the military or politics or business sector is a lot of power, a lot of authority, and sometimes that begets bad behavior," James said. "It's a failure of integrity. ... The rash of instances in recent years reveals a group of people who didn't think they'd get caught."

Some did get caught,

including:

■ Former Army Maj. Gen. David Haight, the "swinging general" who had an 11-year affair that featured trysts at sex clubs around the country. He retired as a lieutenant colonel.

■ Army Brig. Gen. Michael Bobeck, who served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was fired last year for having an affair. Bobeck had lived for a time rent-free in the home of a defense contractor, an arrangement the Pentagon inspector general deemed acceptable.

■ Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Harrington, commander of U.S. Army Africa, was suspended and ultimately fired after USA Today revealed that he was under investigation for sending texts to a younger woman who was married to a soldier on their post in Italy. The flirty messages included Harrington's requests to the woman to delete them. She didn't.

Other services are not exempt from scandal.

In February, retired Air Force Gen. Arthur Lichte was docked two stars after an investigation confirmed that he had coerced a junior officer into having sex with him.

Boorish behavior and worse isn't the sole province of the brass. USA Today also reported last month that the spokesman for Adm. John Richardson was fired from his job in August for incidents stemming from a boozy Christmas party inside the Pentagon. Several women complained that the officer, Cmdr. Chris Servello, had slapped one on the buttocks, subjected another to unwanted hugs and pursued another so strenuously an investigator last December labeled it "predatory."

Pentagon leaders, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, declined to respond to questions directly, instead issuing a statement through a spokeswoman.

"Officer misconduct has and will always be taken seriously by Sec. Mattis and our senior officers who are expected to serve as exemplary leaders within the armed forces," Pentagon spokeswoman Laura

Ochoa said.

Gillibrand and others who have taken the military to task in recent years for its efforts to eliminate sexual assault aren't buying the Pentagon's tough talk. "Commanders are not doing their part to end this climate of sexual harassment and sexual assault and devaluing women," Gillibrand said.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. A series of scandals involving top officers, sex and booze earlier in the decade rocked the Pentagon. Leaders vowed to identify the depth of the problem and attack it.

Among the most spectacular has been the Navy's "Fat Leonard" scandal, which takes its name from portly Leonard Glenn Francis, the former chief of Glenn Defense Marine Asia. For years, Francis, who has pleaded guilty to fraud, bribed Navy officers with cash, prostitutes, caviar and champagne in exchange for information he used to gouge the government for servicing its ships in Asian ports.

Hagel, outraged by that and other scandals, created an office, staffed by a two-star admiral, to get answers about military brass who seemed to have lost their ethical compasses.

"We need to find out: Is there a deep, wide problem?" Hagel announced in 2014. "If there is, then what's the scope of that problem? How did this occur?"

Hagel and the Pentagon never found out. The Office of the Senior Adviser for Military Professionalism, run by Rear Adm. Margaret Klein, was shuttered in 2016 without exploring the depth of the Pentagon's problems with bad generals.

In a recent interview, Hagel told USA Today he wanted more from the office.

"If I would have stayed as secretary of defense, we would not have shut that office down as soon as it was shut down," he said.

"You also have to get your arms around the depth, the width, the scope," he said. "Is this just the matter of a few individuals getting in trouble? Is it wider? Is it deeper?"

Cooper tapped to command 7th Fleet's amphibious force

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The 7th Fleet's amphibious force is getting a new commander after a leadership shakeup caused by several accidents involving Navy ships in the Pacific.

Rear Adm. Charles "Brad" Cooper II is replacing Rear Adm. Marc Dalton as commander of the Okinawa-based Task Force 76/Expeditionary Strike Group Seven. The decision was announced Tuesday by Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson.

Dalton left the job last month to take over Task Force 70 when its commander, Rear Adm. Charles Williams, was relieved after 17 sailors were killed in collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain.

Williams and Destroyer Squadron 15 commander Capt. Jeffrey Bennett were both relieved by 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer "due to a loss of confidence in their ability to command," the Navy said last month. Their ouster followed the removal of 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, also due

to loss of confidence.

In January, the USS Antietam ran aground and spilled roughly 1,100 gallons of hydraulic fluid into Tokyo Bay. In May, the USS Lake Champlain collided with a South Korean fishing boat while operating off the east coast of the divided peninsula. In June, a collision between the Fitzgerald and a Philippine-flagged merchant ship killed seven sailors. In August, a collision between the McCain and a civilian merchant vessel killed 10 sailors.

Task Force 76 is the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious force. It is headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa; however, most of its ships are homeported in Sasebo, Japan. Those vessels usually sail from the Japanese mainland to Okinawa where they onload Marines before heading out on patrol.

Cooper, who previously served as commander of Naval Forces Korea, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1989. His previous tours include serving as flag aide to the commander of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, the operations officer on the Fitzgerald and commanding officer on both the USS Russell and USS Gettysburg.

Sheriff: Grambling shooting not random

Associated Press

GRAMBLING, La. — Authorities were searching Wednesday for a gunman who shot and killed a Grambling State University student and his friend after an altercation on the Louisiana college's campus.

Lincoln Parish Sheriff Mike Stone said the suspect and victims knew each other "to some extent" and stressed that the shooting wasn't random or an act of terrorism.

"There are no indicators that this incident bears any resemblance to any of the random acts of violence or domestic terrorism that have been experience around our country in recent weeks," Stone said in a statement.

The suspect remained at large hours after the shooting, but classes at the historically black college were held as usual.

The sheriff's office said the suspect was a black male but didn't immediately release a detailed description of him.

University spokeswoman Kathy Spurlock identified the victims as Grambling senior Earl Andrews and Monquiarious Caldwell, both 23 and from Farmerville, La., about 30 miles from Grambling.

Andrews' brother, Ledarius Heard, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that Andrews and Caldwell were friends from high school.

Lincoln Parish sheriff's spokesman Stephen Williams said detectives joined Grambling State's campus police in investigating the double homicide after getting 911 calls starting at 12:04 a.m. Wednesday.

"It was an altercation that started inside one of the dorm rooms and spilled out into the courtyard," Williams said. "We're interviewing witnesses."

NAACP warns against American Airlines travel

Associated Press

DALLAS — The NAACP is warning blacks that if they fly on American Airlines they could be subject to discrimination or even unsafe conditions.

American's CEO said Wednesday that he was disappointed by the announcement and that American wants to discuss the matter with the civil rights group.

The NAACP said that for several months it has watched a pattern of disturbing incidents reported by black passengers. Among them were separate cases in which an NAACP official and another civil rights activist were kicked off flights.

The NAACP said that and other recent incidents involving blacks "suggest a corporate culture of racial insensitivity and possible racial bias on the part of American Airlines."

American Airlines issued

a statement saying that it has a diverse group of employees and serves customers of all backgrounds.

In a memo to employees, CEO Doug Parker said American endorses the NAACP's mission statement against racial discrimination.

"We do not and will not tolerate discrimination of any kind," Parker wrote. "We have reached out to the NAACP and are eager to meet with them to listen to their issues and concerns."

The NAACP highlighted four recent incidents in which black passengers said they were treated in a discriminatory way.

One involved the head of the North Carolina NAACP, the Rev. William Barber, who sued American after being removed from a flight last year. Barber said police were called and removed him from the plane after he asked a flight attendant to tell a white passenger behind

him to quiet down.

Barber accused the other passenger of making a comment about having a problem with "those people."

An incident last week involved Tamika Mallory, an organizer of the Women's March on Washington in January. Mallory had changed her seat at an airport kiosk, only to be told at the gate that the seat had been assigned to another customer.

Mallory said she was treated disrespectfully by the gate agent — another African-American woman — and was outraged when a white male pilot asked if she could control herself while on the flight.

After being told she was being kicked off the plane, Mallory called the pilot a racist in a profanity-laced exchange. She held a press conference two days later and threatened to take legal action against the airline.

Source: Dems helped fund Trump research

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund political research into President Donald Trump that ultimately produced a dossier of allegations about his ties to Russia, a person familiar with the matter said Tuesday night.

The revelation is likely to fuel complaints by Trump that the dossier, which the president has derided as "phony stuff," is a politically motivated collection of salacious claims.

Yet the FBI has worked to corroborate the document, and in a sign of its ongoing relevance to investigators, special counsel Robert Mueller's team — which is probing potential coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign — weeks ago questioned the former British spy, Christopher Steele, who helped compile the claims in the dossier.

The dossier, which circulated in Washington last year and was turned over to the FBI for its review, contends that Russia was engaged in a longstanding effort to aid Trump and had amassed compromising information about him. Trump has repeatedly dismissed the document as false and in recent days has questioned on Twitter whether Democrats or the FBI had helped fund it.

Trump has also attacked the findings of the FBI, NSA and CIA that Russia waged a large-scale influence campaign to interfere in the election. The FBI and the CIA have

said with high confidence that the effort was aimed at hurting Clinton's candidacy and helping Trump.

The dossier created a political firestorm in January when it was revealed that then-FBI Director James Comey had alerted Trump to the existence of allegations about him and Russia. Since then, Trump has repeatedly attacked it and Republicans in Congress have worked to discredit it.

The NSA found the same with "moderate" confidence.

The person familiar with the matter, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential client matters, said the arrangement was brokered by Marc Elias, a lawyer for the Clinton campaign and the DNC, and his law firm of Perkins Coie.

The deal began in the spring of 2016, when the firm was approached by Fusion GPS, the political re-

search firm behind the dossier, and lasted until right before Election Day, according

to the person.

When Fusion approached Elias, it had already been doing research work on Trump for a client during the GOP primary. The identity of the original client has not been revealed.

It's unclear what Fusion GPS had dug up by the time law firm hired it in April 2016. According to a copy of the dossier published by BuzzFeed last year, the earliest report from Steele dates to June 2016, two months later. It was not immediately known how much money Fusion was paid or how many others in the Clinton campaign or DNC were aware that the firm had been retained.

Elias did not immediately return an email seeking comment, and representatives of Fusion GPS declined to comment. The Washington Post first reported the arrangement.

The dossier created a political firestorm in January when it was revealed that then-FBI Director James Comey had alerted Trump to the existence of allegations about him and Russia.

Since then, Trump has repeatedly attacked it and Republicans in Congress have worked to discredit it, even issuing a subpoena to force the disclosure of Fusion GPS' bank records.

The letter, sent Tuesday by the law firm's general counsel to a lawyer for Fusion GPS, was intended to release the research firm from its obligation to keep confidential the identity of its client.

Kaspersky: Uploaded US files were deleted

Associated Press

PARIS — Sometime in 2014, a group of analysts walked into the office of Eugene Kaspersky, the ebullient founder of Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab, to deliver some sobering news. The analysts were in possession of a cache of files belonging to the Equation Group, an extraordinarily powerful band of hackers that would later be exposed as an arm of the U.S. National Security Agency. But the analysts were worried; the files were classified.

"They immediately came to my office," Kaspersky recalled, "and they told me that they have a problem."

According to him, there was no hesitation about what to do

with the cache.

"It must be deleted," Kaspersky said he told them.

The incident, recounted by Kaspersky during a telephone interview on Monday and supplemented by a preliminary timeline provided by company officials, could not be immediately corroborated. It's the first public acknowledgement of a story that has been building for the past three weeks — that Kaspersky's popular anti-virus program uploaded powerful digital espionage tools belonging to the NSA and sent them to servers in Moscow.

The account provides new perspective on the U.S. government's recent move to blacklist Kaspersky from federal com-

puter networks, even if it still leaves important questions unanswered.

Kaspersky's story at least partially matches accounts published in The New York Times, The Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. All three publications recently reported that someone at the NSA's elite hacking unit lost control of some of the agency's powerful surveillance tools after they brought their work home with them, leaving what should have been closely guarded code on a personal computer running Kaspersky's anti-virus software.

Information security experts reading the bits of information dropped by anonymous gov-

ernment officials are still puzzling at whether Kaspersky is suspected of deliberately hunting for confidential data or was merely doing its job by sniffing out suspicious files.

Concerns have been fanned by increasingly explicit warnings from U.S. government officials after tensions with Russia escalated in the wake of the 2016 presidential election.

Kaspersky denied any inappropriate link to the Russian government and said in his interview that any classified documents inadvertently swept up by his software would be destroyed on discovery.

Kaspersky declined to say whether he had alerted U.S. authorities to the incident.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Runaway garbage truck hits A Beautiful Mess

NY HENRIETTA — A runaway garbage truck slammed into the front of a New York gift shop named A Beautiful Mess, causing extensive damage.

Owner Jeri Flack said she received a call from police Monday informing her that a garbage truck rolled away from a gas station in Henrietta, traveled across the street and crashed into Flack's retail store.

WHAM-TV reported that gas station workers said the truck driver parked there to use the bathroom and the truck had rolled away by the time he returned. No one was injured, but the truck's impact caused serious structural damage to the 200-year-old brick building.

6 generations celebrate 103-year-old's birthday

ME LEWISTON — A Lewiston woman said it was great to spend time with her family over the weekend.

In her case, it was six generations.

Irene Chouinard, who turned 103 on Monday, has six children, 25 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren, 38 great-great-grandchildren and one great-great-great-grandson.

The Sun Journal reported that nearly 100 of them gathered Sunday in her honor.

Chouinard told the gathering, "If this is a dream, I don't ever want to wake up."

Man accused of slapping police horse on patrol

FL ORLANDO — Police said a 29-year-old Florida man slapped a police horse on the hindquarters while it was on patrol with an officer.

News outlets reported Casey Waldner was walking down a street early Sunday when he was accused of slapping Izzy, a 13-year-old horse that has been with the Orlando Police Department for five years. The slap startled Izzy, who spun around.

A police report said Waldner ran, but was caught by a nearby officer. The report said officers searched Waldner and found cocaine.

Waldner was charged with injuring a police horse, resisting arrest without violence and cocaine possession.

Man accused of driving golf cart while drunk

NM LAS CRUCES — A New Mexico man is facing charges after authorities say he drove a golf cart while drunk and crashed it into a fence.

The Dona Ana County Sheriff's Office said Justin Valenzuela was arrested Sunday on charges of aggravated drunken driving following reports of the golf cart accident outside Las Cruces.

According to deputies, Valenzuela was driving the golf cart with three passengers on board when he lost control of it. Deputies say the cart slammed into a fence and flipped over.

Authorities said one passenger was taken to a Las Cruces-area hospital with a serious leg injury.

Valenzuela, 33, reportedly admitted to deputies that he had been drinking earlier in the day.

Mystery train suspected of causing brush fires

NJ GLEN ROCK — Authorities are trying to determine who owns a mystery train hauling rocks on tracks owned by New Jersey Transit that is suspected of causing a

series of brush fires.

Glen Rock Fire Chief Thomas Jennings told NorthJersey.com that witnesses saw the work train causing sparks Saturday and heard a screeching sound before the fire.

He said that New Jersey Transit representatives said the train did not belong to them and they were looking into whose train it was.

Several commuter trains were delayed because of the brush fires.

Parents complain about cotton-picking song

OH TOLEDO — Some parents at a northwest Ohio middle school said they were shocked to hear an eighth-grade choir sing about picking cotton not long after students in the district took photos and videos of themselves with a Confederate flag outside the high school.

The Blade reported "Cotton Needs Pickin'" was performed during the fall concert at Springfield Middle School in Lucas County. Parent Nicole Maulsby posted a video of the performance on Facebook.

Maulsby and online commenters say a song about workers happily picking cotton is a racist reference to slaves toiling in the fields of the South.

Tourist doesn't recall 'Zombie' biker attack

FL KEY WEST — A tourist from Australia told police officers she was drunk and doesn't remember attacking a 68-year-old rider in the annual Zombie Bike Ride in the Florida Keys.

The Miami Herald reported Prue Harvey, 32, was arrested Sunday on a charge of felony battery on someone older than 65. A police report said Harvey shoved Linda Malcolm off her

bike in Key West.

Malcolm's daughter told police Harvey was running between the bikes in the parade and gave one family "dirty looks" before shoving her mother. Malcolm suffered scrapes on her left knee. Her daughter chased Harvey to a church parking lot and called police.

New program helps vets become farmers

NY ALBANY — New York is working to help veterans interested in becoming farmers.

The state announced a new grant program that provides financial assistance to former military servicemembers-turned-farmers. The money can be used to purchase new farm equipment, machinery or supplies or pay for the cost of building or upgrading farm structures.

The initiative is related to a broader \$1 million grant program for new and early stage farmers.

Fisherman's device puts a little 'life' in dead fish

ME PHIPPSBURG — A Maine fisherman says it was a slow day on the water when he started to wonder if there was a way to bring a little life back to the dead fish he was using as bait.

The result was Zombait — a device that is inserted into the throat of a dead fish to make it wiggle back and forth, simulating the movement of live fish and, hopefully, attracting large fish such as tuna, grouper and striped bass.

Phippsburg resident Rink Varian told the Portland Press Herald he started working with Massachusetts-based electrical engineer Matthew Borowski in 2014 to bring the idea to life.

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Kershaw dominates in Series opener

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — No sweat, Clayton Kershaw.

Changing jerseys to beat the 103-degree heat, the Dodgers ace with a checkered playoff history delivered a signature performance, pitching Los Angeles past the Houston Astros 3-1 Tuesday night in the World Series opener.

Boosted by Justin Turner's tiebreaking, two-run homer in the sixth inning off Dallas Keuchel, Kershaw was in complete control against the highest-scoring team in the majors this season.

"Definitely feels good to say it was the World Series, and it feels good to say we're 1-0," Kershaw said.

The left-hander had waited his whole career for this moment. And once he took the mound in his Series debut, he lived up every bit to the legacy of Sandy Koufax, Orel Hershiser and the greatest of Dodgers hurlers.

The three-time Cy Young Award winner struck out 11, gave up just three hits and walked none over seven innings, featuring a sharp breaking ball that often left Houston batters taking awkward swings. His lone blemish was a home run by Alex Bregman in the fourth that made it 1-all.

No matter, with Koufax in the house, Kershaw did his pal proud.

"He was as good as advertised," Keuchel said.

A sweltering, pulsating crowd at Dodger Stadium dotted with Hollywood A-listers was filled with Kershaw jerseys, and he drew loud cheers all evening.

Kershaw got one more ovation when he walked through a corridor to a postgame interview. There, fans applauded a final time.

"I felt good. It's a tough lineup over there," Kershaw said. "The way Keuchel was throwing it was up and down a lot, which was good. It got us into a rhythm a little bit. I think for me personally, it helped out a lot."

Brandon Morrow worked a perfect eighth and Kenley Jansen breezed through the Astros in the ninth for a save in a combined three-hitter. The Dodgers' dominant relievers have tossed 25 straight scoreless innings this postseason.

With both aces throwing well, the opener zipped by in 2 hours, 28 minutes — fastest in the World Series since Game 4 in 1992 between Toronto and Atlanta. Jimmy Key and the Blue Jays won that one 2-1 in 2:21.

It certainly was unusual for

this postseason, when nine-inning games had been averaging 3 hours, 32 minutes — up 18 minutes from two years ago.

Chris Taylor gave the Dodgers an immediate jolt in their first Series game since 1988 when he hit a no-doubt home run on Keuchel's very first pitch. Taylor was co-MVP of the NL Championship Series with Turner, and they both kept swinging away against the Astros.

"Just getting that momentum early is huge," Kershaw said. "And let the crowd kind of feed off that. It was definitely as good a start as we could have hoped for."

The loss left the Astros still without a single World Series win in their 56-season history. In their only other Series appearance, they were swept by the White Sox in 2005.

Game 2 is Wednesday evening, with AL Championship Series MVP Justin Verlander starting against Dodgers lefty Rich Hill.

Kershaw has almost every imaginable individual accolade on his resume — five ERA titles, an MVP trophy, a no-hitter and seven All-Star selections — but also was dogged by a shaky October past.

He began this outing in the twilight with a 6-7 career play-

off record and an unsightly 4.40 ERA. He improved to 3-0 in four starts this postseason.

"I don't know if you can decipher between a postseason start and a World Series start. The adrenaline, I feel like every game is so much more magnified," Kershaw said.

Facing a team that had the fewest strikeouts in the majors this year, Kershaw fanned more Houston hitters than any starter this season. And he helped the Dodgers, who led the majors with 104 wins and a \$240 million payroll, improve to 8-1 this postseason.

"Tonight is about Kershaw," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said.

It was 1-all when Taylor drew a two-out walk in the sixth. Turner followed with his drive off the bearded Keuchel.

"Keuchel was really good tonight. He was just a pitch or two less than Kershaw," Hinch said.

While it was sticky, the conditions didn't seem to affect either side.

Kershaw, as always, wore his bright blue Dodgers jacket walking to the bullpen to get ready.

"It was hot warming up. But once the game started, the sun went down, it didn't feel that hot," Kershaw said.

TNT help Dodgers blast Astros in Game 1

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — TNT proved dynamite again for the Dodgers.

Chris Taylor and Justin Turner, co-MVPs of the NL Championship Series, produced all Los Angeles' runs on homers in the Dodgers' 3-1 victory over the Houston Astros in the World Series opener Tuesday night.

Taylor wasted no time leading off against Astros ace Dallas Keuchel, stroking an 88 mph fastball on Keuchel's first pitch into left field for a 1-0 lead.

Turner followed suit, lofting a two-run shot in the sixth that put the Dodgers ahead 3-1. Taylor drew a two-out walk to set up Turner's blast.

It was just the latest big October show from the Dodgers' robust reclamation

projects.

Taylor and Turner shared the NLCS MVP award after Los Angeles beat the defending World Series champion Cubs in five games. Taylor batted .316 (6-for-19) with two homers, and Turner hit .333 (6-for-18) while going deep twice, including the game-ending three-run homer to win Game 2.

"I never could have predicted this," Taylor said. "The goal coming into this year was to hit for more power and get the ball in the air, but I didn't think it would be this drastic of an improvement."

Taylor's path to baseball's biggest stage has mimicked Turner's — from the fringes to the spotlight with a swing overhaul. Turner was non-tendered by the Mets after the 2013 season before beginning to add

loft to his cuts. He only signed with Los Angeles after then-bench coach Tim Wallach saw him and his revamped swing at a Cal State Fullerton alumni baseball game.

Taylor made a similar adjustment early this year. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said Taylor was considered a "fringy, 4-A player" with his old approach. His new one has helped put the \$240 million Dodgers three wins from their first title since 1988.

Taylor became the fourth player in Game 1 history to homer leading off and first since Kansas City's Alcides Escobar legged out an inside-the-park homer against the Mets in 2015.

"He's the spark plug," Turner said of Taylor. "He's been so much fun to hit behind and watching him become a star, really, on this team."

Broncos coach sticks with QB Siemian

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Trevor Siemian is keeping his starting job as the Denver Broncos try to emerge from a prolonged offensive funk that has plunged them to depths not reached in a quarter century.

Coach Vance Joseph said Monday that benching Siemian isn't the solution for the team's myriad problems that have resulted in just one touchdown in their last 35 possessions.

The Broncos (3-3) were blanked 21-0 by the Chargers on Sunday, snapping their 394-game scoring streak that dated to Nov. 30, 1992. It was the longest active streak in the NFL and second-longest in league history.

Denver has now managed just 16, 10, 16 and 0 points in its last four games.

Joseph said the blame for the monthlong funk falls on coaches, linemen, receivers, tight ends, running backs and even poor special teams decisions that are putting Siemian in precarious positions.

"He can't play well if he's

not being protected in certain spots," Joseph said. "Now, he hasn't been perfect, either. He can play better, absolutely. But it's not a Trevor problem; it's a unit problem."

Joseph reiterated that the formula that works for Denver is to establish the run and get a lead, something the Broncos haven't been able to do.

So, Brock Osweiler isn't the answer.

"It doesn't matter who the quarterback is if he's not being protected or the run game is not effective," Joseph said.

The rookie coach said he's puzzled by how the Broncos can prepare so well during the week and play so poorly on game day.

"We have to coach and play better," he said. "Something is not clicking with our players as far as doing things right. So we have to coach differently. We have to do more walk-throughs and spend more time on the field so we can get this thing rectified."

Joseph said the Broncos' poor play is "puzzling because we're having great weeks of

work. I watched the coaches install all three phases and it's so detailed. We're blowing basic concepts in all three phases, not just one phase. It's puzzling. We have to revamp how we're teaching these players and get more positive play out of some guys."

General manager John Elway fortified his offensive line after watching Siemian get sacked 31 times last year. But Siemian is on pace to get sacked 58 times this season behind an injury-ravaged, mistake-prone line that includes first-round draft pick Garrett Bolles at left tackle and a revolving door on the right side.

Ten-year veteran guard Allen Barbre started at right tackle Sunday after the Broncos lost three tackles to injury last week.

Both Bolles and Barbre were manhandled by Melvin Ingram and Joey Bosa.

The Broncos fell behind early and offensive coordinator Mike McCoy stayed with his heavy diet of three wide-receiver sets that provided no blocking help for either of the struggling

tackles.

It's not just pass protection that's the problem, though.

"It's the running game," Joseph said when asked to pinpoint what's missing on offense.

The Broncos have averaged 153 yards rushing and a TD in their victories. In their losses, they've averaged just 75 yards on the ground and have just one TD in three games.

Joseph is also sticking with running back C.J. Anderson as his starter even though he's averaging just 30 yards over the last two weeks.

"Again, it's not just C.J. We have three backs playing and I thought the backs ran the ball hard yesterday," Joseph said. "When there was space to make yardage they did. When there wasn't they didn't. I'm not down on C.J."

Joseph said he's not concerned the offensive woes will fissure the locker room as they did last year.

"Absolutely not. We're a team and we have a strong locker room," he said.

Overachieving Dolphins still winning close games

Associated Press

DAVIE, Fla. — Coming from Cleveland, Cody Parkey has a unique perspective on the Miami Dolphins' finishing touch.

Last season Parkey had a chance to beat Miami with a 46-yard field goal for the woe-begone Browns at the end of regulation, but he pulled the kick wide left, and the Dolphins won in overtime.

This season Parkey's 8-for-8 on field-goal attempts with Miami, including late kicks in three narrow victories.

"It's crazy. This team finds a way to win," Parkey said. "Last year, when I was on the Browns, that was kind of where we lacked. We couldn't find a way to win in the third and fourth quarter. This team just

seems to."

The Dolphins are off to their best start since 2003, and it's because of the way they finish. At some point it's no longer a fluke: In games decided by seven points or fewer, Miami has won 12 in a row going back to September 2016. That's two shy of the NFL record set by the Indianapolis Colts when their quarterback was Peyton Manning.

The Dolphins' streak includes three quarterbacks, none a future Hall of Famer. Ryan Tannehill, Jay Cutler and Matt Moore have helped win close games, which underscores the collective nature of the achievement.

A different star seems to emerge every time the Dolphins (4-2) pull out a victory, and they'll try to do it again

Thursday at Baltimore. Mindful that Miami is at its best with a game on the line, coach Adam Gase had T-shirts made for the team saying, "We r not normal."

"A lot of it has to do with the personality of the players," Gase said Tuesday. "Guys around here seem to embrace it more than worrying about failing. They enjoy being in that moment, and when they get opportunities, somebody seems to step up and make the play."

The streak began three games into Gase's tenure, and includes last week's 31-28 victory over the New York Jets, when Miami erased a 14-point deficit in the final 12 minutes. Moore came off the bench to replace an injured Cutler and spark the rally, throwing two late touchdown passes in his

first game of the season.

The week before, the Dolphins overcame a 17-point deficit in the second half to win at Atlanta, 20-17.

"I don't know if I can explain it, but these guys just keep going," Moore said. "They keep fighting."

The Dolphins were overachievers last season when they won 10 games and reached the playoffs for the first time since 2008 despite being outscored and outgained.

They've been outscored and outgained again this season, but only one NFL team has fewer losses.

"Stressful, but it's cool," guard Jermon Bushrod said. "We like to make it interesting for everyone out there. It doesn't really help my heart much."

NBA roundup

James' 34 points lead Cavs past Bulls

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — LeBron James scored 34 points in a rare start at point guard and the Cleveland Cavaliers, using another early season lineup, awakened after a sluggish first half and beat the Chicago Bulls 119-112 on Tuesday night.

Although he often handles the ball and runs Cleveland's offense, James had not officially been listed as a guard since 2012 with Miami. He added 13 assists, including a no-look, behind-the-back dish to Jae Crowder for a three-pointer during Cleveland's 15-3 spurt in the third quarter.

Kevin Love had 20 points and 12 rebounds, and Dwyane Wade, who asked Cavs coach Tyronn Lue to take him out of the starting lineup, came off the bench and added 11 points.

Justin Holiday scored 25 and rookie Lauri Markkanen 19 for Chicago, which made a season-high 17 three-pointers. The

7-foot Markkanen became the first player in NBA history to make 10 three-pointers in his first three career games.

Celtics 110, Knicks 89: Jaylen Brown scored 23 points, Jayson Tatum added 22 and host Boston beat New York.

Kyrie Irving added 20 points and seven assists. Al Horford finished with 13 points and 13 rebounds.

After dropping their first two games to open the season, the Celtics have won two straight. The Knicks remain winless through their first three games.

Pacers 130, Timberwolves 107: Victor Oladipo scored 28 points and Cory Joseph added 21 to lead hot-shooting Indiana past host Minnesota.

Darren Collison had 15 points and 16 assists, Bojan Bogdanovic scored 19 points and Domantas Sabonis had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Pacers, who shot 67 percent from the floor.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 28 points and seven rebounds for the Timberwolves, who came out flat after a thrilling last-second win at Oklahoma City on Sunday.

Magic 125, Nets 121: Aaron Gordon scored a career-high 41 points, including the go-ahead three-pointer with 35 seconds remaining, and grabbed 12 rebounds to lead host Orlando over Brooklyn.

Evan Fournier added 28 points in a game that went back and forth late in the fourth quarter. He finished the scoring with two free throws with 15.5 seconds to play.

D'Angelo Russell scored 27 points for the Nets, while DeMarre Carroll had 19 and Rondae Hollis-Jefferson 18.

Trail Blazers 103, Pelicans 93: CJ McCollum scored 23 points and host Portland extended its NBA-record winning streak in home openers to 17 games by beating New Orleans.

Damian Lillard and Evan Turner each added 13 points for Portland, which is off to a 3-1 start for the first time since the 2011-12 season.

DeMarcus Cousins had 39 points and 13 rebounds for his fourth straight double-double to start the season. The Pelicans were hurt when Anthony Davis departed with a left knee injury in the first quarter.

Clippers 102, Jazz 84: Blake Griffin scored 22 points, Patrick Beverley added 19 and unbeaten Los Angeles beat visiting Utah.

All five starters for the Clippers (3-0) finished in double figures. Austin Rivers had 16 points, Danilo Gallinari 14 and DeAndre Jordan added 11 points and 18 rebounds.

Rookie Donovan Mitchell led the Jazz (2-2) with 19 points, with Rudy Gobert adding 12 points and seven rebounds. Thabo Sefolosha finished with 11 points and 12 rebounds off the bench.

NHL roundup

Penguins' Kessel upstages teammate Crosby, McDavid

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Phil Kessel found a way to upstage Sidney Crosby and Connor McDavid.

The Pittsburgh forward raced down the slot and beat goalie Cam Talbot 42 seconds into overtime to give the Penguins a 2-1 victory over the Edmonton Oilers on Tuesday night.

Ian Cole scored his first goal of the season for the Penguins, and Matt Murray stopped 29 shots. Crosby was held without a point in his showdown with McDavid, but the Penguins rode their depth to keep the struggling Oilers in check.

McDavid forced the extra period with his first goal in

seven games, a wrist shot with 2:53 left in regulation that tied it. Talbot played brilliantly at times while making 42 saves but couldn't get a handle on Kessel's winner.

The central figures in the biannual meeting between the best players of their respective generations tried to downplay the hype.

Lightning 5, Hurricanes 1: Tyler Johnson had a power-play goal and an assist, and visiting Tampa Bay pulled away to beat Carolina.

Ducks 6, Flyers 2: Ondrej Kase had two goals, Anaheim scored three times in the second period and host Philadelphia lost No. 2 overall draft pick Nolan Patrick to an undisclosed injury during the loss.

Islanders 5, Coyotes 3: John Tavares completed his hat trick with a tiebreaking goal in the third period, lifting host New York over winless Arizona.

Canadiens 5, Panthers 1: Shea Weber scored twice, helping host Montreal end its seven-game skid with a win over Florida.

Sabres 1, Red Wings 0: Benoit Pouliot scored for the second straight game and Robin Lehner made 32 saves in a shutout as host Buffalo beat struggling Detroit.

Kings 3, Senators 2 (SO): Adrian Kempe scored the shootout winner to help visiting Los Angeles beat Ottawa.

Canucks 1, Wild 0: Jake Virtanen broke a scoreless tie midway through the third period,

Anders Nilsson made 29 saves for his fourth career shutout and visiting Vancouver beat Minnesota.

Flames 3, Predators 2 (SO): Sean Monahan and Matthew Tkachuk scored in the shootout to give visiting Calgary a win over Nashville.

Avalanche 5, Stars 3: Matt Nieto capped off his first career hat trick on an empty-netter in the closing seconds, Semyon Varlamov stopped 34 shots and injury-riddled Colorado ended a three-game skid with a victory over visiting Dallas.

Golden Knights 4, Blackhawks 2: Oscar Dansk stopped 29 shots for his second career win in two appearances, and host Vegas beat Chicago for its fourth straight victory.