

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## US: NATO strike didn't kill Afghan police

BY JOSH SMITH  
AND ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — An airstrike carried out by foreign aircraft may have mistakenly killed at least 11 police in southern Afghanistan, Afghan officials said Monday.

The incident, which involved Afghan counternarcotics police, took place on Sunday night, Helmand provincial governor spokesman Omar Zwak told Stars and Stripes. The deputy interior minister for counternarcotics, Baz Mohammad Ahmadi, told The New York

Times that 11 officers from his agency had been killed and four wounded in an airstrike on a convoy in the Garmsir District of Helmand province.

Col. Brian Tribus, spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said there were no U.S. or NATO airstrikes in Helmand on Sunday, but there was one in Kandahar to “protect the force.” The airstrike in Kandahar was in Maiwand district, which borders Helmand province.

Tribus said U.S. officials are not investigating whether that strike killed Afghan forces. “We are sure that the strike

U.S. forces carried out Sunday night was within the borders of Maiwand district of Kandahar and eliminated threats to the force,” he said.

The New York Times reported that the police convoy was in the middle of an operation to arrest drug smugglers. The newspaper cited a police official in Garmsir District who said the narcotics agents had disguised themselves as Taliban, who often work with drug smugglers. The police official put the death toll at 15 officers.

U.S. aircraft have mistakenly killed Afghan security forces in the past. At least eight Af-

ghan soldiers were killed when an American helicopter opened fire on their position in Logar province in July.

As Afghan forces faced repeated Taliban offensives in recent months, American aircraft increased their operations, especially in southern Afghanistan. U.S. aircraft have dropped bombs or deployed other weapons during more than 200 sorties so far this year, despite the declared end of combat operations for international troops.

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## Obama forces federal contractors to give paid sick leave

*Associated Press*

BOSTON — Courting unions on Labor Day, President Barack Obama denounced Republicans for a “constant attack on working Americans” and said he was using his executive power to force federal contractors to give paid sick leave to their employees.

Obama was met with resounding applause at a major union rally and breakfast in Boston on Monday when he said he had signed the executive order aboard Air Force One as he flew in to mark Labor Day. He said Republicans who claim the mantle of middle-class protectors are talking big, but they “have to walk the walk.”

Obama said opponents of his economic policies “won’t let facts or evidence get in their way.”

“You just wait, you look up at the sky and prosperity will come raining down on us from the top of whatever high-rise in New York City,” he said sarcastically. “But that’s not how

the economy works.” He added that the GOP’s mindset has been “wrecking the economy for a long, long time.”

The Labor Day gesture to workers’ groups came as Obama works to smooth over tensions with the labor movement over his trade agenda. Major unions are opposing Obama’s push for sweeping new trade deals with Asia and Europe, with some threatening to work against Democrats who voted to support those talks in Congress. Unions have warned that the deals could lead to the widespread job elimination. Obama has signed a law providing money to retrain workers if their jobs get shipped overseas.

Under the executive order, employees working on federal contracts gain the right to a minimum of one hour of paid leave for every 30 hours they work. Stretched out over 12 months, that’s up to seven days per year. The order will allow employees to use the leave to care for sick relatives as well, and will affect contracts start-

ing in 2017 — just as Obama leaves office.

But the White House wouldn’t specify the cost to federal contractors to implement the executive order. The Labor Department said any costs would be offset by savings that contractors would see as a result of lower attrition rates and increased worker loyalty, but produced nothing to back that up.

Vice President Joe Biden echoed Obama’s theme in a march with AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who introduced Biden in Pittsburgh as a “brother” and “a champion of working men and working women.” A few along the parade route chanted “run, Biden, run,” in a reference to Biden’s ongoing deliberations about whether to run for president.

In Boston, Obama was flanked by prominent Democrats such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren and a giant banner reading “Workers and Community” in red, white and blue. Labor leaders Randi Wein-

garten and Mary Kay Henry joined Obama for the flight on Air Force One.

Obama chose Labor Day to announce the executive order as he works to enact what workplace policies he can before his presidency ends. The push has reverberated on the 2016 campaign trail, with Democrats seeking a distinction with Republicans on who’s most supportive of the middle class.

The president didn’t mention any of the 2016 candidates by name, but invoked a number of their policies to challenge claims that they care about workers. In a reference to Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, he remarked incredulously that one GOP candidate had “said busting unions prepared him to fight ISIL,” an acronym for the Islamic State group.

Roughly 44 million American private-sector workers don’t get paid sick leave, the administration said. The White House said it couldn’t estimate how many federal contractors don’t offer paid leave.

## Marine special ops to honor slain dog handler

*The Washington Post*

On May 4, 2013, Marine Raider Cpl. David Sonka and his “multipurpose canine,” a Belgian Malinois named Flex, were killed in Farah province, Afghanistan. Sonka was a few months into his second enlistment when an Afghan soldier turned his weapon on Sonka and his dog in an insider attack.

Another Marine also was killed — Staff Sgt. Eric Christian.

On Monday the Marine Corps will honor Sonka when the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command posthumously dedicates its multipurpose canine kennel in his name aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., according to a news release issued Friday.

The ceremony Monday was to also feature the unveiling of a full-size bronze statue of a multipurpose canine, according to Marine spokesman Capt. Barry Morris. In attendance will be Sonka’s family, as well as the commanding general of Marine Special Operations Command, Maj. Gen. Joseph Osterman.

Sonka, a native of Aurora, Colo., started in the Marines as a military policeman, spending his first enlistment stationed at Marine Corps Base Twenty-nine Palms, Calif. During his initial tenure in the service, he

deployed once to Afghanistan, according to a biography provided by the Marine Corps.

In 2012, Sonka tried out for Marine special operations, where he successfully completed the Marine Special Operations Training Course and two phases of the Multi-Purpose Canine Course. He then deployed shortly after to Farah Province as a multipurpose canine handler attached to 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion.

To Marine Sgt. Marc Galvis, a Marine who attended military police school with Sonka at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., the future special operations Marine and multipurpose canine handler always stood out to him as an overachiever.

“He was always talking about being a K-9 handler,” Galvis said. “We had to write an essay about why we wanted to be one and Sonka’s just blew the instructors away.”

Becoming a dog handler in the Marine Corps is extremely competitive, Galvis said, and where many struggled, Sonka excelled.

Sonka was 23 when he was killed and, following his death, his hometown named one of the police department’s working dogs after Flex. Sonka is the recipient of the Purple Heart, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medal, the Good Conduct Medal and a Combat Action Ribbon.

## Aucoin takes 7th Fleet reins

BY TYLER HLAVAC

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Vice Adm. Joseph P. Aucoin assumed command of the 7th Fleet on Monday, relieving Vice Adm. Robert L. Thomas.

Aucoin has experience in the region, having served previously as commander of Carrier Air Wing 5, based at Naval Air Station Atsugi.

“I can’t describe how honored I am to be back in 7th Fleet; this is a storied command,” Aucoin said. “Seventh Fleet is the jewel of our Navy.”

Thomas commanded the 7th Fleet during the Navy’s shift of forces to the Pacific as part of the Obama administration’s rebalancing strategy. He will be assigned as director of Navy staff for the chief of naval operations.

## Ky. clerk appeals jailing in marriage license stalemate

*Associated Press*

LEXINGTON, Ky. — A defiant county clerk is willing to stay in jail for her beliefs, but she’d prefer to be a free woman.

Attorneys for Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis appealed a judge’s decision to put her in jail for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Davis says gay marriage is a sin. She also says it would be a sin for her to issue a marriage license to a same-sex couple.

Davis stopped issuing all marriage licenses in June, the day after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. U.S. District Judge David Bunning ordered her to issue the licenses, and the Supreme Court upheld his ruling.

Thursday, Bunning ruled Davis was in contempt of court

for disobeying his order and sent her to jail. Her deputy clerks then issued marriage licenses Friday.

Mat Staver, one of Davis’ attorneys, said the licenses issued Friday are “not worth the paper they are written on” because Davis refused to authorize them. But Rowan County Attorney Cecil Watkins said they are valid.

Bunning indicated Davis will be in jail at least a week. She could stay longer if she continues to not obey the judge’s order.

Kentucky law requires marriage licenses be issued under the authority of the elected county clerk. Davis views issuing the licenses as a stamp of approval of something she believes is a sin.

## Hunter who killed Cecil the lion breaks silence

*Associated Press*

MINNEAPOLIS — The U.S. dentist whose killing of Cecil the lion fueled a global backlash emerged Sunday for an interview in which he disputed some accounts of the hunt, expressed agitation at the animosity directed at those close to him and said he would be back at work within days.

Walter Palmer, who has spent more than a month out of sight after becoming the target of protests and threats, intends to return to his suburban Minneapolis dental practice Tuesday.

In a 25-minute interview conducted jointly by The Associated Press and the Minneapolis Star Tribune that

advisers said would be the only one granted, Palmer said again that he believes he acted legally and that he was stunned to find out his hunting party had killed one of Zimbabwe’s treasured animals.

“If I had known this lion had a name and was important to the country or a study, obviously I wouldn’t have taken it,” Palmer said.

Cecil was a fixture in Hwange National Park and had been fitted with a GPS collar as part of Oxford University research.

An avid sportsman, Palmer shut off several lines of inquiry about the hunt, including how much he paid for it. No videotaping or photographing of the interview was allowed.

# 2nd-year QBs ready to shine

Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — The challenges facing a rookie quarterback in the NFL can be a bit overwhelming.

After spending months following the college season preparing for the draft, the player joins a new team already in the middle of its offseason program. There's a new offense, a new lifestyle, new teammates and coaches.

By the time the season starts, the quarterback is expected to have the playbook mastered, know the habits of the receivers, and prepare to face a different defense each week with more complex schemes than he ever saw in college.

On top of that comes the responsibility of holding the hopes of a franchise that has usually been struggling, or else it wouldn't need a rookie quarterback to play in the first place.

It's no wonder so few quarterbacks succeed right from the start.

"I don't want to say it's like Groundhog Day, but you're just so caught up in it, you don't really have a chance to digest anything. You're just going," Oakland second-year quarterback Derek Carr said. "The grind doesn't stop from training camp until the end of the season."

That's why Carr took time this offseason to watch every game, trying to learn why certain things worked and others didn't, and to figure out how to correct those rookie mistakes going forward.

"Once I finally got to sit back and watch some plays, watch some film of things that I had done during the season, I could say, 'Oh man, I don't even recognize that guy. I don't even know who that is,'" Carr said. "That's a good thing. You want to be able to say, 'I don't recognize that.' But when the good things happen, you want

to be able to say, 'Well, I can go out and do that again.'"

The Raiders are banking on that off-season of learning to lead to significant improvement from Carr, who showed positives with 21 touchdown passes and just 12 interceptions, but also averaged a league-low 5.5 yards per attempt.

Carr was one of three quarterbacks, along with Jacksonville's Blake Bortles and Minnesota's Teddy Bridgewater, who got substantial playing time as rookies last season and are being counted on to take a big step forward in 2015.

Bridgewater said he has a much deeper understanding of coordinator Norv Turner's offense in Year 2 that will prove beneficial this season.

"Having a year under my belt, I can see why he's calling certain plays and where he wants to go with the football," Bridgewater said. "Having an understanding of the coordinator, I think I'm that far ahead this year."

Without a draft to prepare for, Bridgewater was able to put on more weight this offseason that will help him absorb hits he will take and add strength to his arm.

Bortles also used the offseason to his benefit. He worked with quarterback guru Tom House to improve his footwork after completing 59 percent of his passes for 2,908 yards with 11 touchdowns and 17 interceptions as a rookie.

He also has a new offense under coordinator Greg Olson, who worked with Carr in Oakland last season. Bortles said the game has slowed down and he is better equipped to read defenses than he was as a rookie.

"Not that it comes easy, but you've seen more," he said. "You're seeing things before rather than last year you're seeing

stuff for the first time a little bit. And I'll still see things for the first time this year, but you have a little bit more of a memory bank."

All three second-year quarterbacks will also benefit from an upgrade in talent. Bridgewater gets star running back Adrian Peterson back. The Jaguars beefed up the offensive line and added Pro Bowl tight end Julius Thomas — although Thomas is sidelined with a broken finger. The Raiders giving Carr a new pair of starting receivers in first-round pick Amari Cooper and Michael Crabtree.

They also have the confidence of having earned the No. 1 spot before the offseason even began.

"He's not focused on trying to win the starting job like last year," Raiders left tackle Donald Penn said of Carr. "He's just focused on making this offense as good as it can be. That's a big lift off his shoulders."

Predictably, playing time as a rookie has traditionally led to improvement as a second-year player. Players who started at least eight games at quarterback as rookies since 2000 saw increases in completion percentage, touchdown percentage and yards per attempt the next year, while seeing the rate of interceptions fall.

The biggest improvement came in decision making, with the touchdown-to-interception ratio for the group improving 40 percent over the rookie year.

"You know what to expect," said Christian Ponder, who took the Vikings to the playoffs in his second year, 2012. "Your rookie year is so crazy going from college to the combine to the draft to OTAs and right into the season. The second year the game slows down and you really understand what you're doing."

# WR Jones returning to Packers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Green Bay Packers and receiver James Jones agreed to terms Sunday on a one-year deal, according to a person familiar with the contract talks.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team hasn't announced the deal. NFL.com and ESPN.com first reported that Jones and the Packers agreed to terms. He was cut Saturday by the New York Giants.

The 31-year-old Jones is returning to the team that drafted him in the third round in 2007. He will provide a veteran presence to a receiving corps that lost No. 1 wideout Jordy Nelson to a season-ending right knee injury in the preseason.

Jones played seven years in Green Bay before going to Oakland for the 2014 season.

In other NFL news:

■ The Dallas Cowboys have acquired running back Christine Michael in a trade from Seattle.

Michael was a second-round pick out of Texas A&M in the 2013 draft. He ran for 254 yards over 14 games the past two seasons with the Seahawks after running for 2,791 yards and 34 touchdowns in four seasons for the Aggies.

■ The Denver Broncos waived running back Montee Ball and center Gino Gradkowski on Sunday to make room for two players they were awarded off waivers.

The Broncos bolstered their O-line by claiming center James Ferentz, who was cut by the Houston Texans. And they propped up a thin tight end group by adding Mitchell Henry from the Green Bay Packers.

■ The Browns have given up on running back Terrance West, trading him to the Tennessee Titans for a seventh-round pick in the 2016 draft.

West was a third-round pick in 2014. He rushed for 673 yards and three touchdowns as a rookie, but never fulfilled the Browns' expectations.

## Notre Dame loses RB Folston for season

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Coach Brian Kelly says running back Tarean Folston is out for the season after tearing a ligament in his right knee in No. 11 Notre Dame's 38-3 victory over Texas.

Kelly said Sunday that Folston tore his anterior cruciate ligament and will undergo surgery.

The 5-foot-9, 214-pound junior led the Irish in rushing last season with 889 yards on 175 carries and was expected to get even more chances this season as the only experienced back.

In other college football news:

■ UCLA defensive end Eddie Vanderdoes tore a ligament in his knee during the 13th-ranked Bruins' season-opening victory over Virginia, possibly sidelining him for the rest of the season.

# Edwards rallies to capture first career victory in Southern 500

Associated Press

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Joe Gibbs couldn't help but beam about this team victory: Carl Edwards drove superbly, crew chief Darian Grubb made stellar calls with his car two laps down and the No. 19 crew got the car out of the pits in first when it counted most.

The result was Edwards' first win in the Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway.

"If you drew this one up tonight, I don't think you could draw a bigger victory for us," Gibbs said after Sunday night's race.

Edwards rallied after falling two laps down because of a flat tire, then beat Brad Keselowski off pit road for the lead 12 laps from the end and held on for his first Southern 500 victory Sunday night.

Edwards won the Coca Cola 600 in May and had six top-10s in the past seven races. Still, he was looking for a boost

that would propel his first-year Joe Gibbs Racing program into the playoffs.

"This is what we needed," Edwards said. "We really needed a shot in the arm."

Keselowski was second and Denny Hamlin finished third. Joey Logano was fourth, followed by Kevin Harvick and the Busch brothers, Kurt and Kyle.

Things we learned:

**JGR drivers love Darlington:** Edwards' win Sunday night meant that all four drivers at Joe Gibbs Racing have taken races at Darlington. Kyle Busch won in 2008 when it was known as the Dodge Charger 500. Denny Hamlin won two years later after the race was rechristened the Southern 500 and Matt Kenseth won here at 2013. Edwards was the only one of the quartet to win the race on Labor Day weekend.

**Throwbacks are fun:** The 1970s retro weekend was a hit with fans, drivers, race teams and almost anyone who remembers

what it was like four decades ago. There were 35 race teams who participated in some sort of '70s paint scheme for the Southern 500. Kyle Larson may have taken the prize for his Kyle Petty-style mustache and curly wig while driving a Mello Yello machine. Larson ran among the leaders most of the race and finished 10th.

**Low downforce package:** Drivers couldn't say enough good things about the low downforce package used at Darlington for the Southern 500. Dale Earnhardt Jr. said on Twitter, "That was some fun!! I loved the new low downforce package."

The consensus is that the softer tires and low downforce package give drivers the chance to manage their cars and makes moves when necessary. That was apparent with 24 green-flag passes for the lead, which NASCAR Stats said was the second high total at Darlington since the inception of loop data in 2005.



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# Venus up next for Serena at US Open

Associated Press

NEW YORK — No reason for any extra practice after this performance by Serena Williams.

Plus, it's not as if she needs to study too hard to figure out how to deal with her next opponent.

Playing the best she has during this U.S. Open as she chases a calendar-year Grand Slam, Williams set up a quarterfinal against older sister Venus by making only six unforced errors in a 6-3, 6-3 victory over 19th-seeded Madison Keys on Sunday.

Looking ahead, No. 1 Serena described No. 23 Venus this way: "It's like playing a mirror."

Serena took only 68 minutes to dismiss Keys, a 20-year-old American with formidable serves and forehands who simply was outplayed.

Already a winner of the past four major tournaments, including last year's U.S. Open, Serena is trying to become the first tennis player to win all four in the same season since Steffi Graf in 1988.

Asked why it's been so long since anyone else pulled off a true Grand Slam, Serena paused for effect, smiled and answered: "I

don't know why it took me so long."

Standing in the way at the moment is Venus. This will be the 27th all-Williams match over their long and successful careers, and Serena leads 15-11, including 8-5 at majors. Each has beaten the other twice at the U.S. Open, with Venus winning the 2001 final and Serena the 2002 final.

"It's about, of course, forgetting that she's playing Venus," said Serena's coach, Patrick Mouratoglou.

Venus, at 35 the oldest woman in the tournament, was on court even less time than her sibling on Sunday, overwhelming 19-year-old qualifier Anett Kontaveit of Estonia 6-2, 6-1 in 50 minutes.

Venus, of course, knows full well the challenge that awaits Tuesday.

"What else can you do, except try to win the point and hope she doesn't hit an ace?" said Venus, who lost in the third round or earlier at each of the past four U.S. Opens.

The sisters' mother, Oracene Price, said she wouldn't attend the quarterfinal.

As for whether Venus will be in a tough spot — hoping to win, yet also well aware of what her sibling is pursuing — Price said: "I know it's going to be hard, be-

cause I know [Venus] wants [Serena] to get it."

Another women's fourth-round match scheduled for Sunday was scratched when 25th-seeded Eugenie Bouchard withdrew with a concussion, two days after slipping and falling in the locker room. That allowed Roberta Vinci of Italy to advance to the quarterfinals against Kristina Mladenovic.

Two men's matchups in the round of eight are set: No. 1 Novak Djokovic vs. No. 18 Feliciano Lopez, and defending champion Marin Cilic vs. No. 19 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Djokovic lost a set for the first time this tournament — and responded by stomping on a racket while it leaned on his red bag next to a changeover chair, earning a warning from the chair umpire. But he reached the quarterfinals at a 26th consecutive major by beating 23rd-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Serena acknowledged having a bout with the jitters entering her second-round match, when she wound up double-faulting 10 times and made another two dozen unforced errors against a qualifier ranked 110th. Afterward, she took pointers from Mouratoglou and went to the

practice court right away.

In the third round, against someone ranked 101st, Serena dropped the first set and was two games from defeat in the second before turning things around. Again, she put in more work to fix things.

"I was like, 'Serena, it's now or never. You've got to get that serve together,'" she said after winning 22 of 28 first-serve points and never facing a break point against Keys.

And what about heading back out for a training session with Mouratoglou?

"No, not today," Serena said. "I'm going to take the rest of the day off and relax and just enjoy it."

Keys played well, too, at the outset, and appeared relaxed, managing to smile after miscues. But at the first moment of any real tension, down 15-30 on her serve while trailing 4-3, Keys blinked, double-faulting twice.

Some terrific returning by Serena in the second set kept the heat on Keys.

"I think I served pretty well. I think she returned better," Keys said. "To beat Serena when she's playing well, you have to do a lot of things great."

## Jays rout slumping Orioles

Associated Press

TORONTO — The Toronto Blue Jays have slugged their way to baseball's biggest turnaround in years.

Troy Tulowitzki, Jose Bautista and Kevin Pillar homered against Chris Tillman, and the Blue Jays beat the Baltimore Orioles 10-4 on Sunday.

AL East-leading Toronto improved to 78-58, becoming the first team since the 2004 Astros to reach 20 games above .500 after having a losing record following the All Star break.

Toronto was 50-51 following a loss to Philadelphia on July 28, the day after the Blue Jays acquired Tulowitzki from Colorado. Two days later, Toronto added left-hander David Price in a deal with Detroit.

"We've been playing great," Blue Jays manager John Gibbons said. "The winning all started after [General Manager Alex Anthopoulos] made those trades."

Tulowitzki and Bautista each had a two-run shot, and Pillar belted a solo drive. Josh Donaldson drove in two runs for the Blue Jays, raising his major league-leading total to 114 RBIs.

Toronto leads the majors with 189 homers and 746 runs. It has scored 10 or more 22 times this season, a club record.

Marco Estrada (12-8) pitched five innings for his first win in three starts. He allowed two runs and two hits, struck out four and walked four.

The slumping Orioles lost for the 14th time in 17 games.

Tillman is 0-4 with a 15.50 ERA in five starts against Toronto this season and has given up nine home runs. He has fared even worse in three starts north of the border, allowing 19 runs. His ERA at Rogers Centre this season is 19.73.

"It's not something they're doing as much as where Chris is getting the ball," Orioles manager Buck Showalter said. "He's trying to go down and away and the ball leaks middle in and you're going to pay that price every time."

In 21 starts against other opponents

this season, Tillman is 9-7 with a 3.66 ERA, allowing nine home runs. He is 4-10 with a 6.02 ERA in 19 career starts against the Blue Jays.

**Yankees 6, Rays 4:** Brian McCann and Alex Rodriguez hit back-to-back homers off All-Star Chris Archer that sent host New York past Tampa Bay.

Ivan Nova (6-7) pitched six solid innings to stop a three-start losing streak and help the Yankees take two of three in the series.

**Marlins 4, Mets 3:** Martin Prado hit a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the ninth inning to give host Miami a victory over New York.

New York's lead in the NL East was shaved to four games over the Nationals heading into a pivotal three-game series between the teams.

**Nationals 8, Braves 4:** Bryce Harper homered for the third straight day as host Washington beat lowly Atlanta to finish a four-game sweep.

Jayson Werth hit a three-run homer in Washington's five-run second inning, helping the Nationals to their fifth straight win and seventh in nine games overall.

**Cubs 6, Diamondbacks 4:** Kris Bryant homered high off the left-field video board to equal a club rookie record for RBIs, and Miguel Montero hit a grand slam as Chicago defeated visiting Arizona to complete a three-game sweep.

**Astros 8, Twins 5:** Jed Lowrie hit a grand slam in a five-run seventh inning and Dallas Keuchel became the American League's first 17-game winner as host Houston rallied past Minnesota.

The Astros trailed by 1 when Lowrie hit his second career grand slam and his first since 2009 into the second row in right field off Trevor May (8-9) to make it 5-2.

**Angels 7, Rangers 0:** Mike Trout ended a career-worst 27-game home run drought and Hector Santiago pitched six innings of one-hit ball for his first victory in seven weeks as host Los Angeles beat Texas to give manager Mike Scioscia his 1,400th regular-season win.

**White Sox 7, Royals 5:** Adam Eaton homered and scored three times as Chicago beat host Kansas City for its fourth straight win.

**Dodgers 5, Padres 1:** A.J. Ellis had an RBI single and Los Angeles capitalized on some sloppy defense as the Dodgers beat host San Diego.

**Giants 7, Rockies 4:** Buster Posey connected for his 100th career home run and Matt Duffy hit a tiebreaking two-run triple in a five-run fifth, backing a gritty effort from Madison Bumgarner as San Francisco beat host Colorado.

Bumgarner (17-7) went six innings and allowed four runs and nine hits, twice working out of bases-loaded situations and escaping with marginal damage.

**Indians 4, Tigers 0:** Cody Anderson threw seven innings of two-hit ball to outpitch Justin Verlander as visiting Cleveland beat slumping Detroit.

**Reds 6, Brewers 3:** Jay Bruce homered and drove in three runs and Michael Lorenzen won for the first time in more than two months as host Cincinnati beat Milwaukee to avoid a sweep.

**Red Sox 6, Phillies 2:** David Ortiz hit his 497th home run to get Boston's offense started, and Eduardo Rodriguez pitched seven solid innings as the Red Sox completed a three-game sweep of visiting Philadelphia.

It was Big Papi's 200th career homer in Fenway Park. The 39-year-old slugger is looking to become the 27th player to reach the 500-homer mark. A day after he posted his club-record ninth season with 30 homers, Ortiz connected off rookie Jerad Eickhoff (1-3). Ortiz left in the fifth because of right calf tightness.

Rodriguez (9-5) gave up one run and eight hits, striking out seven.

**Mariners 3, Athletics 2:** Hisashi Iwakuma won for the fifth time in six starts as Seattle earned its fifth straight victory, completing a three-game sweep of host Oakland.

Kyle Seager and Ktel Marte each drove in a run, and Brad Miller collected two hits for the Mariners.

## Cole hurls Pirates past Cards

Associated Press

Gerrit Cole grew up in Southern California admiring John Lackey. A native of Orange County, Cole was 12 when he rooted Lackey on to victory in Game 7 of the 2002 World Series at Angel Stadium.

Cole (16-8) got his first chance to face Lackey on Sunday night and could not have been much better. The 24-year-old righty gave up two hits in seven scoreless innings, and the Pittsburgh Pirates used home runs from Aramis Ramirez, Sean Rodriguez and Starling Marte to beat the St. Louis Cardinals 7-1.

"I watched him growing up and everybody knows what a competitor he is and we knew we were in for a fist fight when we saw he was penciled in," Cole said.

The second-place Pirates cut the Cardinals' lead in the NL Central to 5½ games and earned their first series victory at Busch Stadium since April 2013. The teams are 8-8 against each other with one series to play at Pittsburgh in the final week of the season.

Even the 37-year-old Lackey was impressed with Cole, who threw a 99 mph fastball on his 94th pitch.

"He's a great pitcher right now," Lackey said. "He's got great stuff and pitched really well."

Asked how it felt to know now that Cole was pulling for him in the World Series against the San Francisco Giants, Lackey said: "I guess I've been around a while. I knew he went to UCLA so he probably grew up an Angels fan. That's cool."

Lackey (11-9) pitched well, too, allowing three runs and 10 hits in 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings while extending his streak of quality starts at home to 15.

Cole also drove in his first run of the season with a two-out single in the seventh.