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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Japan says Camp Schwab work to resume

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Japanese government has informed Okinawa Gov. Takeshi Onaga that it plans to resume relocation work at Camp Schwab, a northern U.S. Marine Corps base, after a month of “intensive” talks failed to produce a deal.

The talks, which accompa-

nied a monthlong construction suspension and a site survey by local officials, were aimed at ironing out an agreement with Onaga, who has been very vocal in his opposition to the relocation of aircraft operations from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. Japanese officials have cited safety concerns as the driving force behind the

move. Futenma is in a densely populated urban area in central Okinawa.

Onaga, who prefers moving the operations to mainland Japan, is against a runway being built into Oura Bay at Henoko. The Japanese and U.S. governments have said the move is the only option. In response, Onaga vowed to continue the fight to

block the project.

The temporary work suspension expires Wednesday.

“There was a big gap on how to remove the dangers (posed by Futenma),” Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters after the final round of consultations in Tokyo, Kyodo News reported. “We could not gain the understanding of the prefecture.”

Army cleared of whistleblower retaliation

The Washington Post

The Pentagon’s top watchdog has cleared senior Army officials of retaliating against a Green Beret officer who turned whistleblower over dysfunction he saw in U.S. hostage recovery efforts, but the case remains under scrutiny by Congress.

The Defense Department inspector general closed its reprisal investigation against the Army without finding that the service took any illegal, unfavorable actions against Lt. Col. Jason Amerine, a decorated war hero who testified before Congress that the U.S. government had “failed” hostages held overseas.

Amerine previously coordinated hostage recovery for the Pentagon, but was removed from the job in January after he raised concerns about the efforts with Rep. Duncan Hunter, R.-Calif.

The Army investigation was launched after the FBI complained that Amerine may have disclosed classified information to Hunter, Amerine’s lawyer and a spokesman for Hunter’s office said.

The inspector general found that Lt. Gen. Mary Legere,

Maj. Gen. Ryan Gonsalves and Col. William Thewes did not violate whistleblower protection policies against Amerine in removing him from his job and referring the concerns about him to the Army’s Criminal Investigation Command, according to a two-page Aug. 28 memo from the watchdog’s office to Army Secretary John McHugh.

It was obtained by The Washington Post and verified to be accurate by Army officials.

Amerine alleged in an inspector-general complaint that the three officers acted illegally by taking several actions against him after the FBI raised concerns that he had disclosed classified information to Hunter about U.S. hostage recovery efforts.

Army CID placed him under investigation, and he had his security clearance suspended and his planned military retirement put on hold, he told the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in June.

The inspector general found that Legere, one of the military’s top intelligence officials, and the other officers that Amerine named acted justifiably

considering the circumstances. The cancellation of Amerine’s retirement was carried out following Army procedures because he was referred as the subject of an Army CID investigation, according to the new memo obtained by The Post.

Cynthia Smith, an Army spokeswoman at the Pentagon, said the service believes the inspector general’s memo to McHugh “speaks for itself.”

“We appreciate DOD’s thorough investigation into this issue,” she said, when asked about the document.

The case has generated significant interest in the media and on Capitol Hill, in part because of Amerine’s past service. He led a Special Forces team in the early days of the Afghanistan War in 2001, protecting future Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

He was wounded by an errant American bomb on Dec. 5, 2001, that killed three other U.S. soldiers, and later received the Bronze Star with “V” and the Purple Heart. The Army also labeled him a “Real Hero” in the 2006 version of its popular video game, “America’s Army.”

The case also has drawn con-

cerns because of Amerine’s contention that the United States could have secured a better deal that included other American hostages in its recovery of Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the U.S. soldier who was held captive for five years by militants after going missing from his military base in Afghanistan in 2009.

Bergdahl was recovered in a controversial swap for five Taliban officials in May 2014 and subsequently charged in March with desertion and misbehavior before the enemy.

If convicted, he faces life in prison.

A lawyer for Amerine, Debra Katz, questioned on Thursday how the inspector general could fail to reach a determination on the motivation of senior Army officials who referred the FBI’s concerns to Army criminal investigators.

Her legal team plans to prepare a new complaint for the inspector general next week after they view more documents related to the case, she said.

The criminal investigation of Amerine is ongoing, nearly nine months after it was initiated, Katz said.

Deer devour hemp in Ore.

Associated Press

MURPHY, Ore. — Deer got the munchies at an industrial hemp crop in southern Oregon.

The deer got by barbed-wire fencing a couple weeks ago and went through the hemp plants like high-powered mowers, the Grants Pass Daily Courier reported.

“Generally, I don’t think they like cannabis. They liked ours, though,” said Cliff Thomason, a real estate agent who is the steward of the first industrial hemp crop in Oregon, which was planted by Thomason and his partners with Orhempco. The company planted roughly 1,000 plants in the section the deer got into, and Thomason said there are only 40 left.

Industrial hemp has a low level of THC, the psychoactive property of marijuana. Kit Doyle, another partner in Orhemco, said it’s high in protein and that’s likely why the deer went on a binge.

Only some of the crop is protected by very tall fencing. Doyle said some crops were left vulnerable because of the uncertainty surrounding the program. A bill would have put Orhempco out of business had it passed the Oregon Senate.

US builds Arctic spy network as Russia, China up presence

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — As China and Russia boost their military presence in the resource-rich far north, U.S. intelligence agencies are scrambling to study potential threats in the Arctic for the first time since the Cold War, a sign of the region’s growing strategic importance.

Over the last 14 months, most of the 16 U.S. intelligence agencies have assigned analysts to work full time on the Arctic. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence recently convened a “strategy board” to bring the analysts together to share their findings.

In addition to relying on U.S. spy satellites orbiting overhead and Navy sensors deep in the frigid waters, the analysts process raw intelligence from a recently overhauled Canadian listening post near the North Pole and a Norwegian surveillance ship called the Marjata, which is now being upgraded at a U.S. Navy shipyard in southern Virginia.

The administration’s grow-

ing concern was dramatized last week when the Pentagon confirmed it was tracking five Chinese warships in the Bering Sea, between Alaska and Russia, for the first time. Officials said the Chinese ships were steaming in international waters toward the Aleutian Islands but posed no threat.

The growing focus shows how the United States and other polar powers are adjusting as global warming opens new sea lanes and sets off a scramble for largely untapped reserves of oil, natural gas and minerals. The United States, Russia, Canada, Denmark and Norway are pursuing jurisdiction over the Arctic seabed.

The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency has spent two years drawing new maps and charts of waterways and territories in the vast region.

Some of the transformation is visible on detailed digital maps that the NGA made public last week, while President Barack Obama visited Alaska.

The maps show airstrips, oil drilling areas, ports, maritime

boundaries and sea routes. The NGA plans to make public 3-D maps of all of Alaska by 2016 and the entire Arctic by 2017 to help track melting sea ice and receding glaciers.

The U.S. intelligence focus is chiefly aimed at Russia’s military buildup in the far north under President Vladimir Putin. The country’s Northern Fleet is based above the Arctic Circle at Murmansk.

The Russian government announced plans in March 2014 to reopen 10 former Soviet-era military bases along the Arctic seaboard, including 14 airfields, that were closed after the end of the Cold War. A shipyard in northern Russia also is constructing four nuclear-powered submarines.

To help keep watch, Canada has refurbished a listening post called CFS Alert at the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, about 500 miles from the North Pole. It was once part of the Distant Early Warning line, a system of radar stations that watched for incoming Soviet bombers or missiles.

Study links deployments with preterm deliveries

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

It’s no secret that deployments can be high-stress. But doctors at the home of the nation’s most deployed troops have found the cycle of sending servicemembers overseas has a deeper effect on families than was previously known.

A study of patients at Fort Bragg’s Womack Army Medical Center in North Carolina has shown a correlation between deployments and a higher rate of preterm deliveries and postpartum depression. The study,

published in The Internet Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics and in the September issue of the journal Obstetrics & Gynecology, used more than 300 anonymous surveys of patients at Womack. Using those surveys, researchers compared women whose spouses were deployed during their first pregnancy to those whose spouses were not deployed. The results: Women with deployed spouses were more than twice as likely to give birth early, and their risk of postpartum depression nearly doubled.

Opponent of gay marriage free after 5 days in Ky. jail

Associated Press

GRAYSON, Ky. — The Kentucky county clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses because of her religious beliefs was released from jail Tuesday, where she was held since Thursday on a contempt of court charge.

She emerged Tuesday afternoon to hundreds of supporters outside the jail. They sang “Amazing Grace” and “God Bless America” as her lawyer spoke to the crowd and news outlets gathered outside.

The federal judge who ordered Rowan County clerk Kim Davis jailed five days earlier granted her release Tuesday and warned her not to interfere as deputy clerks in her office issue the licenses.

Davis refused to issue marriage licenses after the Supreme Court effectively legalized gay marriage nationwide. Davis repeatedly defied court orders to grant the licenses. She cited “God’s authority” and her deeply held religious beliefs that gay marriage is a sin.

No. 1 Buckeyes down Hokies

Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Braxton Miller has clearly found a new home at wide receiver, and No. 1 Ohio State has found another dangerous weapon.

Not what the rest of the college football world wanted to hear.

Miller scored two touchdowns — one on a 54-yard catch-and-run where he had to tip-toe down the sideline, the other on an electrifying 53-yard run — and the star-studded Buckeyes began their title defense with a 42-24 victory over Virginia Tech on Monday night.

"I really would have preferred that third quarterback be over competing for a quarterback job rather than out there as an athlete," Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer said as the Hokies fell to 0-9 against teams ranked No. 1. "I thought he was pretty special."

Miller made a diving 24-yard reception for his first catch since moving to wide receiver, and he only got better as the night wore on. His touchdowns came after the Hokies had taken a 17-14 lead into halftime, the long run including a spin move that left defenders falling down.

Wide receiver Michael Thomas watched it happen, and said he thought: "There he goes. That's Braxton."

Miller said he set the defenders up for the spin move, which allowed him to run free to the end zone.

"I definitely did. I set them up," he said. "I acted like I was looking straight but I

seen them out of the corner of my eye."

And Miller wasn't alone in turning heads. Cardale Jones picked up where he left off last season by throwing for two touchdowns and running for a third, and tailback Ezekiel Elliott was virtually untouched in breaking off an 80-yard run and gained 122 yards on just 11 carries.

But it was Miller who stood out most. The Big Ten offensive player of the year as a quarterback in 2012 and 2013, Miller missed last season with an injury to his right throwing shoulder. When he was slow to heal, he removed himself from the three-way quarterback battle.

"This kid's all about the right stuff and I'm honored to coach him again for a fourth year. I love this guy," coach Urban Meyer said.

The Buckeyes avenged a 35-21 home loss to Virginia Tech last season and earned their 14th straight win overall. The Hokies, meanwhile, lost more than the game, with quarterback Michael Brewer shelved by a broken left collarbone that stalled any hope of a comeback.

Trainer Mike Goforth said Brewer will have surgery Tuesday and set the recovery time at "four to six weeks, maybe as many as eight."

The Hokies trailed 21-17 and had driven into Buckeyes territory when Brewer went down, but had trouble moving the ball after Brenden Motley took over behind center. Motley did lead one late touchdown drive, hitting Isaiah Ford from 17 yards, but by then it was long over.

"I feel for Michael," Beamer said. "You're talking about a guy who puts so much into it ... and then after one play he's done for a while."

And the Hokies just couldn't stop Miller and Co. in the second half.

Miller first had the 54-yard touchdown reception where he nearly stepped out of bounds and tight-roped along the sideline, erasing a 17-14 halftime deficit. Then he had the spin move that Jones said let him know, "he's back." The run made it 28-17 with 2:05 left in the third.

"I love that spin move," Meyer said.

Jones added a 10-yard TD run in the fourth, and Barrett, who started for Ohio State until he was injured late in the season last year, threw a 26-yard touchdown pass to a wide-open Thomas with 8:14 remaining.

The Buckeyes got off to a fast start, but the Hokies battled back.

Curtis Samuel made a great adjustment to haul in a 24-yard touchdown reception from Jones, and Elliott's run made it 14-0.

Virginia Tech responded with 17 straight points. Sam Rogers took a short pass from Brewer 51 yards for the Hokies' first touchdown. Virginia Tech then used an interception to set up a field goal and a fumbled punt to set up a go-ahead touchdown 15 seconds before halftime on Brewer's second touchdown pass.

Goodell wants to keep hand in discipline

Associated Press

NEW YORK — NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is willing to lessen his role in the player discipline process, but he's still reluctant to give up final say.

Goodell told ESPN Radio on Tuesday morning the league resists third-party arbitration. The players union wants disciplinary power now held by Goodell to be handled by a neutral arbitrator.

Goodell said he's "very open" to changing his role and called it "extremely time consuming," adding he has discussed this matter with several owners the past couple years. After a federal judge overturned Tom Brady's four-game suspension in the "Deflategate" scandal last week, Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank suggested it may be time to revisit the system that makes Goodell the sole arbiter of cases.

But Goodell indicated any change would come within the initial discipline process, not with the way appeals are handled.

"We believe that the standards of the NFL are important to uphold," Goodell told the network. "We believe that you don't delegate that responsibility or those standards. We think that somebody with a deep knowledge of the game, our policies and our rules are important particularly when it relates to competitive violations. Those are important to have. There's got to be a system in there somewhere."

Goodell said he spoke to union chief DeMaurice Smith before Brady's decision came down about making changes to the collective bargaining agreement.

"We want to get to a better discipline system," Goodell said. "We've had several discussions with the union about how to do that. We have done that on the field over the last several years and I think we've got a better system. We've done that in our drug and steroid program and I think we have a better system than we did before those changes."

As for losing another high-profile case against the NFLPA, Goodell isn't conceding yet. He cited the league's victory in an appeal ruling in Maurice Clarett's eligibility case a decade ago. After U.S. District Judge Richard Berman erased Brady's suspension, the NFL promptly appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Success sometimes when you're having litigation, you lose in the initial phases and you get to the right places when you have that long-term view, which is what we do and there are many cases like that," Goodell said.

But he also added: "You also have to understand you're not going to win them all."

In other NFL news:

■ Quarterback Matt Cassel is back with the Buffalo Bills, and he's taking over the No. 2 job behind Tyrod Taylor.

The Bills re-signed the 11-year journeyman Tuesday, three days after Cassel was among the final players cut by the team.

ACC teams hit hard by injuries

Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — For everyone in the Atlantic Coast Conference, this weekend was the start of the season.

For plenty of big names, it was also the end.

Pittsburgh running back James Conner and Syracuse quarterback Terrel Hunt won't play again in 2015, Clemson receiver Mike Williams may have endured the same fate and Virginia Tech quarterback Michael Brewer told ESPN that he's going to have surgery Tuesday for a broken collarbone — meaning he'll have, at minimum, the next few weeks off.

Conference play hasn't even started, but the ACC's complexion changed big-time over the course of the opening weekend.

"Just a shame. ... Just vicious this early in the season," Syracuse coach Scott Shafer said.

That's what he told Cuse.com when talking about Hunt's torn Achilles' — but it essentially was the sentiment shared in plenty of places around the ACC, regarding a number of players.

When Hunt went down, the early sense was that it was bad.

When Conner went down, it seemed almost innocuous. Turns out, it was anything but, and the Panthers delivered the news Monday that he tore a knee

ligament. It's possible that Conner — who broke Tony Dorsett's school record with 26 touchdowns last season — has played his last game for Pitt, since he would figure to be a strong NFL Draft candidate.

"This is a temporary setback and I'm going to work even harder to bounce back," Conner said in a statement. "Even though I won't be able to play this season, I'm going to be right beside my teammates and help them every way I can to have a great season."

Brewer led Virginia Tech to a 17-14 halftime lead against No. 1 Ohio State on Monday night, then left after taking a clean hit from the Buckeyes' Adolphus Washington. Brewer immediately began writhing in pain and grabbed at the shoulder, then was walked into the locker room for examination which included an X-ray that told the story.

He eventually came back to the sideline, albeit with a huge ice pack and a sling. When he went down, the Hokies' upset chances soon vanished and Ohio State rolled to a 42-24 win. Brewer told ESPN sideline reporter Heather Cox that he would have surgery Tuesday, but did not indicate that his season is over.

"The team is going to rally around me," said the Hokies' Brenden Motley, who replaced Brewer. "We're still a great team."

Clemson isn't sure if Williams will return in 2015, after he broke a bone in his neck.

Surgery won't be required, but the Tigers don't know how long it will take the bone to heal on its own. One good sign for the Tigers: Williams was the first one to report to the 6:30 a.m. receivers' meeting on Monday.

Among the other notable ACC injury developments, Virginia coach Mike London said offensive linemen Jake Fielier and Eric Tetlow had season-ending surgeries and Louisville wide receiver James Quick will miss at least one game — quite possibly more — with a right ankle injury.

Miami lost wide receivers Braxton Berrios and Stacy Coley on the opening series of the Hurricanes' win against Bethune-Cookman on Saturday. The Hurricanes (who lost running back Gus Edwards for the season because of foot injury during training camp) dodged major issues, however — while neither is expected to play against Florida Atlantic on Friday night, both are likely to return before long.

Berrios got hurt on a play where he tried to reach back for a ball thrown slightly behind him.

"When I threw the pass, I said ... I just got my best friend hurt," Miami quarterback Brad Kaaya said Monday. "I was feeling pretty bad, but now it's a sense of relief for me and the offense ... just glad it's not anything worse."



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Mets get key win over Nats

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — David Wright raced around the bases, slid home ahead of Wilson Ramos' tag, made the "safe" sign toward the umpire and pumped his fist in celebration.

The New York Mets had broken away in a game their manager called the biggest of the season.

Yoenis Cespedes homered and doubled twice, Wright hit a go-ahead single and scored to cap a three-run seventh inning, and the Mets ended Washington's five-game winning streak, beating the Nationals 8-5 Monday to open a key NL East series.

"Throughout the last couple years, that emotion hasn't quite been there," said Wright, the team captain who spent most of this season on the disabled list. "You miss that emotion and that passion, and you get a chance to play in a game like this, that's a lot of fun."

Michael Conforto and Kelly Johnson also homered and Curtis Granderson doubled twice for the Mets, who increased their division lead to five games over the Nats with 25 remaining. New York last made the postseason in 2006.

Washington star Bryce Harper wasn't happy with some Nationals fans who exited early.

"They left in the seventh, that's pretty brutal," Harper said. "Playoffs is totally different. Our fans are going crazy."

After losing two of three at Miami over the weekend while

speculation swirled around a potential innings limit for starter Matt Harvey, New York's lead could've dwindled to three games after it was 6½ on Sept. 2.

"They came out today, in the biggest game I think of our entire season thus far, fall behind and then came back and held on," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "It was a great win."

Dario Alvarez (1-0), pitching in the majors for the first time this season, faced only one batter — Harper — and struck him out to get his first major league win.

Five Mets relievers combined for 5²/₃ scoreless innings. Jeury Familia struck out the side for his 37th save, including Harper.

Wilson Ramos hit a grand slam for Washington, the second of his career, off Jonathon Niese, who gave up five runs in 3¹/₃ innings.

Nationals ace Max Scherzer allowed five runs over six innings on seven hits — three homers and four doubles. He's been tagged for 11 home runs in his last six starts, and exited with a season-high 3.03 ERA.

Cespedes hit his 31st home run this season, and 13th in 34 games since being traded from Detroit to the Mets, to help build an early 3-0 lead. His three extra-base hit game was his third this season since the trade, tying a Mets season record.

The Nationals scored five times in the fourth to take a 5-3 lead, and it was tied when Blake Treinen (2-3) took over for Scherzer to begin the seventh. The Mets wound up scoring three times against four Washington relievers.

Murray ousted in 4th round

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Andy Murray watched a 130 mph ace zoom by to create a two-set deficit at the U.S. Open, and then sat in his changeover chair and cursed at himself, over and over and over.

A little later, Murray cracked his racket against the court once, breaking the frame, and went to the sideline and mangled his equipment even more, before meandering over to hand it to someone in the stands.

Often able to spur himself by letting out some anger, the two-time Grand Slam title winner only briefly managed to get into this match. The third-seeded Murray lost before the quarterfinals at a major for the first time since 2010, beaten 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-7 (2), 7-6 (0) by 15th-seeded Kevin Anderson of South Africa in the fourth round at Flushing Meadows on Monday.

"Disappointing to lose because of that," Murray said about his earlier-than-usual exit. "Obviously that's many years' work that's gone into building that sort of consistency."

For the 6-foot-8 Anderson, known mainly for a booming serve but terrific off the ground in this 4-hour, 18-minute victory, it marked a breakthrough: He entered with an 0-7 record in fourth-round matches at majors, including when he had a two-set lead against Novak Djokovic before losing at Wimbledon two months ago.

This time, Anderson held it together, with the help of 25 aces and 81 total winners.

"I'm a little lost for words right now," said Anderson, who will face two-time major champion Stan Wawrinka in the quarterfinals. "I just managed to keep my composure throughout."

Murray, meanwhile, reached at least the quarters at his previous 18 Grand Slam tournaments, a streak that included championships at the U.S. Open in 2012 and Wimbledon in 2013, along with four runner-up finishes. His last loss this soon also happened in New York, in the third round five years ago.

Roger Federer also pulled off a shutout in a tiebreaker Monday, doing so in a 7-6 (0), 7-6 (6), 7-5 victory against big-serving No. 13 John Isner. According to the ATP, Isner had never been beaten 7-0 in 428 previous official, tour-level tiebreakers.

With Isner gone, and 68th-ranked American Donald Young eliminated 6-4, 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 by Wawrinka earlier Monday, it's the 16th Grand Slam tournament in a row with zero men from the U.S. in the quarterfinals.

Federer's quarterfinal opponent will be No. 12 Richard Gasquet, who got past No. 6 Tomas Berdych 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

Two women's quarterfinals will be No. 2 Simona Halep against No. 20 Victoria Azarenka, and No. 5 Petra Kvitova against No. 26 Flavia Pennetta.

Azarenka has won two Australian Open titles and twice was the runner-up at the U.S. Open. Kvitova has won Wimbledon twice. Halep was the runner-up at last year's French Open. And Pennetta? Well, she is into her sixth U.S. Open quarterfinal in the last seven years after a 6-4, 6-4 victory against 2011 champion Sam Stosur, the last woman to beat Serena Williams at Flushing Meadows.

Adept at comebacks — in the second round, he recorded his eighth victory in a match after dropping the opening two sets — Murray did push Anderson to a fourth set, but that was the extent of the rally this time.

Bird's HR boosts Yankees past Orioles

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Greg Bird watched Baltimore manager Buck Showalter take the ball from Jorge Rondon and signal to the bullpen for the left-hander.

While Brian Matusz trotted in with two on, no outs and the score 5-all, Bird darted into the video room behind the Yankees dugout and asked for video coordinator Anthony Flynn and baseball operations assistant Brett Weber to show him a fast-ball and slider from the reliever.

Bird wanted to see "just kind of I guess what it's sort of going to look like," he explained. "Scouting reports don't necessarily do it justice. I'm big on seeing and feeling what it's like in the box."

Less than 2½ minutes later, Bird was in the batter's box. Three pitches later, he was the Yankees' Big Bird, hitting a three-run homer that bounced off the back of New York's bullpen in right-center.

Dellin Betances and Andrew Miller held on for an 8-6 Labor Day win Monday that pulled the Yankees within a half-game of AL East-leading Toronto, which lost for just the eighth time in 36 games, 11-4 at Boston.

Alex Rodriguez and John Ryan Murphy also homered for the Yankees (77-59), who overcame a 4-1 deficit. With his 29th homer this season, A-Rod got his 3,054th career hit and passed Rod Carew for sole possession of 22nd place.

A 22-year-old who made his big league debut on Aug. 13, Bird is hitting .263 with five homers and 17 RBIs. He has become the Yankees' primary first baseman since Mark Teixeira fouled a ball off his right lower leg Aug. 17.

A fifth-round draft pick in 2011, Bird was the organization's 2013 minor league player of the year and MVP of last year's Arizona Fall League.

"It never seems like he's overwhelmed or never seems like any moment is too big for him," New York outfielder Brett Gardner said. "It seems like he's really got a knack for just being able to stay composed under pressure and come through in a big way. ... He plays like he's much older than 22."

Dodgers 7, Angels 5: After a game featuring 12 runs, 14 relievers, 23 runners left on base, 27 hits and nearly four hours of baseball, the streaking Los Angeles Dodgers finally staggered back to their clubhouse with another win.

"That was definitely a September

game," Dodgers manager Don Mattingly said.

And with their ever-expanding NL West lead, the Dodgers can nearly look ahead to October.

Scott Van Slyke had four hits and drove in four runs, and Zack Greinke pitched six innings of seven-hit ball before the Dodgers' bullpen hung on for a marathon victory.

Pinch-hitter Justin Ruggiano had a two-run double as the Dodgers opened the Freeway Series with their seventh straight victory over their Orange County rivals. The Dodgers have won 12 of 14 overall to take a commanding 8½-game lead over slumping San Francisco in the NL West.

"We've been playing really good, and we already have a lead," Greinke said. "So if we continue playing like we are now, everything is going to be good."

Although Greinke (16-3) saw his majors-best ERA rise to 1.68 after giving up homers to C.J. Cron and Kole Calhoun, the right-hander still earned his 11th win in 13 starts.

After he left, things went a bit haywire: The Dodgers used four relievers in the seventh alone while yielding two runs. Kenley Jansen then gave up Calhoun's infield single leading off the ninth, but struck out Mike Trout and Albert Pujols on the way to his 30th save.

"It was a really long game," said Joc Pederson, who matched his career high with three hits. "It felt like a winter ball game, especially with the pitching changes."

Red Sox 11, Blue Jays 4: Jackie Bradley Jr. had four hits with a two-run home run and four RBIs, Rick Porcello pitched into the eighth inning as host Boston outslugged AL East-leading Toronto.

The Blue Jays lost for just the fourth time in 16 games. They had their lead atop the East sliced to a half game over the New York Yankees.

Cubs 9, Cardinals 0: Dexter Fowler had a leadoff home run and two-run double in the first two innings and Dan Haren worked seven innings for visiting Chicago in a win over St. Louis.

The NL Central-leading Cardinals maintained a 5½-game lead over Pittsburgh. The Cubs are 7½ games back.

Indians 3, White Sox 2: Ryan Raburn hit a pair of solo home runs and Trevor Bauer pitched two-hit ball for seven innings as visiting Cleveland ended Chicago's four-

game winning streak.

Raburn has eight multihomer games in his career, four of them against the White Sox. He connected both times against Chris Sale (12-8) and is 10 for 33 with four home runs lifetime versus the lefty ace.

Brewers 9, Marlins 1: Hernan Perez had three hits and three RBIs and Zach Davies earned his first major league win as Milwaukee beat host Miami.

Reds 3, Pirates 1: Anthony DeSclafani pitched effectively into the eighth inning as host Cincinnati took advantage of porous Pittsburgh defense to knock off the wild card leader in the opening of a three-game series.

Tigers 5, Rays 4: Rajai Davis homered twice in a game for the second time in his career as host Detroit beat Tampa Bay.

Athletics 10, Astros 9: Pinch-hitter Coco Crisp hit a go-ahead two-run double in the sixth after host Oakland chased Mike Fiers as the Athletics beat division-leading Houston to end a five-game losing streak.

Fiers (2-1) allowed consecutive walks to start the inning before giving way to Josh Fields, who gave up Billy Butler's single to load the bases for Crisp.

Rockies 6, Padres 4: Kyle Kendrick pitched five innings and hit his first major league home run for visiting Colorado.

Kendrick (5-12) allowed three runs, seven hits and two walks as the Rockies won for the first time in seven games at Petco Park.

Diamondbacks 6, Giants 1: Patrick Corbin threw six scoreless innings, Phil Gosselin and A.J. Pollock homered as host Arizona ended a four-game losing streak.

Rangers 3, Mariners 0: Adrian Beltre lined a two-run, bases-loaded single in the sixth inning as visiting Texas ended Seattle's season-best five-game winning streak.

Braves 7, Phillies 2: Visiting Atlanta ended its 12-game losing streak behind the hitting of Hector Olivera and the pitching of Williams Perez.

The smallest crowd in the 12-year history of Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park — 15,125 — saw the Braves stop their worst skid since 1988.

Olivera homered, doubled and drove in four runs. Perez (5-6) threw seven strong innings.

Twins 6, Royals 2: Tommy Milone pitched seven innings and Eduardo Escobar reached base four times and drove in three runs for visiting Minnesota.