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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Syrian cease-fire takes effect at sunset

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A U.S.-Russia brokered cease-fire for Syria went into effect on Monday at sunset, with monitoring groups and state media reporting clashes up until the final minutes and the most powerful rebel groups having yet to commit to the truce.

Syria's military announced at 7 p.m. that it would abide by a cease-fire until Sunday at midnight, while maintaining its right to defend itself against any violations.

The cease-fire marks the latest attempt to end the five-year conflict, which has killed more than 250,000 people and has

driven some 11 million from their homes. The 2011 uprising against President Bashar Assad began with peaceful protests but escalated into a civil war following a brutal government crackdown and the rise of an armed insurgency.

Russia and Western nations hope the truce can lead to the revival of peace talks between Assad's government and the rebels battling to overthrow him and contribute to efforts to defeat the Islamic State group and other extremists in Syria.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said peace talks between opposition groups and the government could resume as early as

next month.

Ahmad al-Masalmeh, an opposition activist in the contested city of Daraa, said calm had prevailed over the city since 4 p.m., but observers elsewhere in the country reported fighting up to and after the start of the cease-fire.

In Aleppo, the northern city that has emerged as the epicenter of the fighting, opposition media activist Mahmoud Raslan said government helicopters dropped crude barrel bombs on a contested neighborhood, while a doctor reported heavy shelling along Castello Road, a key route to besieged, opposition-held areas. He spoke on condition of anonymity for

fear of retribution.

The terms of the agreement permit government forces to target the al-Qaida-linked Jabhat Fatah al-Sham for the first week of the cease-fire. It was unclear whether the group's positions were being targeted after the truce began.

Hours before the cease-fire went into effect, Assad vowed that his government would take back land from "terrorists" and rebuild the country.

Assad spoke during a rare public appearance that included attending prayers for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha in the Damascus suburb of Daraya, where rebels surrendered last month after a four-year siege.

S. Korea: North ready to conduct another nuke test

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea is prepared to conduct another nuclear explosion in an unused tunnel at its main test site, South Korean officials said Monday.

The North carried out its fifth and most powerful nuclear test Friday, the second such blast in eight months. That has raised fears the communist state is accelerating its efforts to develop a nuclear-tipped missile that could reach the U.S. mainland.

South Korean and U.S. intelligence officials believe the North has the ability to detonate another nuclear blast any time, said Ministry of National Defense spokesman Moon Sang-gyun.

"North Korea has a tunnel where it can conduct an additional nuclear test," Moon told reporters without providing details.

There is evidence the North

has finished new test preparations at a previously unused tunnel at the Punggye-ri nuclear complex, South Korea's main news agency, Yonhap, quoted unidentified government officials as saying. The site is where all previous blasts have taken place.

The officials said U.S. and South Korean intelligence agencies have stepped up surveillance of the mountainous area with spy satellites and other means, according to Yonhap.

Friday's blast was the most powerful since North Korea conducted its first nuclear test a decade ago. It also marked the first time the North conducted two nuclear tests in the same year. Previous blasts occurred in 2006, 2009 and 2013.

Pyongyang boasted that it showed that North Korean scientists can now make warheads small enough to fit on a ballistic missile.

The U.S. and its allies have

strongly condemned the test and vowed to tighten economic sanctions against the country. The U.N. Security Council imposed tough new measures against the North in March after the fourth nuclear test and a long-range rocket launch.

On Sunday, North Korea called the latest push for sanctions "highly laughable," and said it would continue to strengthen its nuclear power. It also mocked President Barack Obama's strategic patience approach, saying the policy was "completely worn out."

U.S. Forces in Korea, meanwhile, postponed a flyover of two supersonic bombers — intended as a show of force — due to unfavorable weather conditions. The B-1B Lancers, flanked by South Korean and U.S. fighter jets, had been scheduled to fly over Osan Air Base on Monday morning, according to Yonhap. USFK said it would soon provide information about a possible new date.

Experts say the North is likely years away from developing an effective nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile. But they acknowledge the pace of progress in its weapons programs is troubling.

North Korea is emerging as a major challenge for the next U.S. president.

Six-nation negotiations aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear program in exchange for aid broke down in 2009. The U.S. insists Pyongyang must agree to stop its pursuit of atomic weapons before talks can resume, but that appears increasingly unlikely.

The U.S. special envoy to North Korea met with officials in Seoul on Monday. During a visit to Japan on Sunday, Sung Kim said the U.S. will consider unilateral measures in addition to action at the U.N., according to media reports. He did not elaborate.

Stars and Stripes staffer Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.

Obama, lawmakers meet before funding deadline

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is meeting with the top four leaders of Congress ahead of a month's-end deadline to fund the government or face a shutdown, and with money all but gone to address the worsening Zika crisis.

The White House meeting Monday afternoon is likely to focus on an emerging legislative compromise to address both issues. Long-sought provisions to provide money to deal with Zika look likely to be added to a must-pass spending bill to fund the government through Dec. 9.

Conservative opposition remains but negotiators worked through the weekend on the details. The Zika money has stalled since Obama first requested \$1.9 billion in February, but congressional Republican leaders seem likely to jettison provisions opposed by Democrats restricting any of the money from going to affiliates of Planned Parenthood in Puerto Rico.

It comes as government scientists step up their warnings about the spread of the virus, which can cause devastating

birth defects. More than 670 pregnant women in the states and Washington have the virus, leading to the birth of at least 17 babies with microcephaly so far.

On Friday, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas Frieden said that “we are now essentially out of money” and warned that the country is “about to see a bunch of kids born with microcephaly” in the coming months.

Obama, just back from a trip to Asia, invited the GOP leaders — House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell — and their counterparts — House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid.

The lawmakers have been back from a seven-week summer recess for only a week but already are eager to depart again so vulnerable lawmakers of both parties can campaign for re-election. The government funding bill is the only must-pass piece of legislation ahead of the election and thus has become the vehicle for the Zika provisions.

Car bomb injures 50; Turkey blames Kurds

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Turkish authorities are accusing Kurdish militants of detonating a car bomb that wounded 50 people in front of the ruling party's municipal headquarters Monday in the eastern city of Van.

Van Governor Ibrahim Tasyapan told state-run Anadolu news agency that 46 civilians and four police officers were wounded in the attack at a police check point outside the party offices. He said two of the wounded were in serious condition, but he did not specify if they are officers or civilians.

An earlier statement by the governor's office alleged the bombers were affiliated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Hundreds of people have been killed and injured in Turkey in recent months in attacks the government says were carried out by Kurdish militants or the Islamic State group.

The governor's office said security forces are working to apprehend the perpetrators of the car-bombing.

The attack came a day after

Ankara replaced 28 elected mayors with appointees, mostly in the Kurdish-dominated east. Turkey's pro-Kurdish party, the country's main opposition party and the U.S. all have criticized the move.

Zahir Soganda, chairman of the ruling party's Van office, told Anadolu agency he was aware that threats of such an attack had been made after the mayors were replaced.

The explosion occurred Monday about 10:50 a.m. local time on the first day of Eid al-Adha, an Islamic holiday. Governor Tasyapan said more people could have been hurt had nearby businesses not been closed.

Development Minister Lutfi Elvan condemned the attack, saying the car bombers had disrespected Islam's most important holiday.

“Of course the necessary response is being given to these traitors and will continue being given,” Anadolu quoted Elvan as saying.

Turkey's broadcasting authority, RTUK, imposed a temporary ban on coverage of the attack.

China, Russia launch joint naval war games

Associated Press

BEIJING — The Chinese and Russian navies launched eight days of war games in the South China Sea on Monday in a sign of growing cooperation between their armed forces against the backdrop of regional territorial disputes.

The “Joint Sea-2016” maneuvers include ships, submarines, ship-borne helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, along with amphibious armored vehicles and marines, who will conduct live-firing exercises, according to a Defense Ministry statement Sunday.

Tasks will include defensive and rescue drills, anti-submarine exercises and the simulated seizure of an enemy island by marines from both sides.

The exercise is part of an annual pro-

gram that “aims to consolidate and advance the Sino-Russian comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination and deepen friendly and practical cooperation between the two militaries,” Chinese navy spokesman Liang Yang was quoted as saying.

“It will also improve coordination between the two navies on joint defense operations at sea,” Liang said.

China's South Sea Fleet will make up the bulk of the forces, along with some elements from the North and East Sea fleets, Liang said.

The ministry didn't say exactly where the drills would be held in the South China Sea, the site of heated territorial disputes between China and its Southeast Asian neighbors. However, the official Xinhua News Agency said the Russian ships arrived early

Monday in the Guangdong province port of Zhanjiang, and the exercises would be held off the Guangdong coast, apparently in waters that are not in dispute.

Joint Chinese-Russian drills have become increasingly common in recent years — this week's exercises are the fifth between the two navies since 2012 — with the countries joined in their mutual suspicion of the U.S. and its allies.

Russia has been the only major country to speak out on China's behalf in its demand that the U.S. and other countries stay out of such territorial disputes. That came as an arbitration panel in The Hague, Netherlands, issued a ruling invalidating China's claims to virtually the entire South China Sea, a result that Beijing angrily rejected as null and void.

VA stops sharing data on quality of care despite law

USA Today

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs over the summer quietly stopped sharing data on the quality of care at its facilities with a national database for consumers despite a 2014 law requiring the agency to report more comprehensive statistics to the site so veterans can make informed decisions about where to seek care.

For years, the VA provided data on a number of criteria to the Hospital Compare website run by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in the Department of Health and Human Services. The site includes death and readmission rates and other measures of quality for public and private hospitals around the country, as well as national averages. After the VA scandal, Congress passed the law mandating the VA to submit even more data. But the VA confirmed to USA Today last week that it stopped reporting its information on July 1.

Joe Francis, director of clinical analytics and reporting at the Veterans Health Administration, said lawyers at HHS advised the VA to pull the plug until the two agencies could work out a new deal governing

the sharing of information.

"It's deeply frustrating to us, and it's our commitment to get back online as soon as we can," he said.

HHS declined to provide answers to a list of questions from USA Today but issued a statement from CMS spokesman Aaron Albright saying the agency is committed to providing additional health care information to consumers.

"We are working closely with the VA to finalize an interagency agreement and expect to sign the final agreement very shortly," Albright said.

In a separate move, the VA also took down its own site in February that provided side-by-side quality comparisons of its hospitals. That page, hospitalcompare.va.gov, is now blank. Francis said the VA took it down because it didn't meet accessibility requirements — using colors, for example, such as red, green and yellow to indicate how well a VA medical center was performing was not accessible to visually impaired people.

There are still VA web pages where users can download 140 different spreadsheets of health statistics or see ratings for VA facilities in a ZIP code or region, but neither shows comparisons with the private sector.

Report: US spent \$5T on Iraq, Afghan wars

By ALEX HORTON

Stars and Stripes

SAN ANTONIO — The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost U.S. taxpayers nearly \$5 trillion dollars and counting, according to an independent analysis conducted by a political science professor at Brown University.

The calculations by Neta Crawford extend beyond the typical accounting of overseas contingency operations for the Defense and State departments. Those amount to \$1.7 trillion through 2016, according to her report issued late last week.

Crawford also tabulated base and future budgets for the Defense Department, along with war-related Department of Homeland Security and Department of Veterans Affairs spending, which ballooned as the wars escalated and troops rotated home with injuries.

The estimate includes budget requests in 2017 for operations in Afghanistan, and in Syria and Iraq.

Crawford cites a \$1 trillion price tag for VA costs through 2053 as the agency continues to

add younger veterans seeking care despite a dip in the overall veteran population.

VA "had not anticipated the number nor the complexity of the new veterans' medical needs," the report stated, alluding to combinations of traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and complex blast injuries such as amputations, which were less survivable in earlier conflicts and require expensive lifetime care.

Crawford also noted a looming cost for the wars: interest on borrowed funds, which will reach \$7.9 trillion by 2053 "unless the U.S. changes the way it pays for the wars," she wrote.

Irene Triplett, 86, the daughter of a Civil War veteran, still collects her father's pension of \$73.13 a month, according to VA spokesman Randy Noller. That war ended in 1865.

If the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which began in 2001 and 2003, respectively, were to end today, a similar benefit could be paid out to a survivor of those conflicts — in the year 2167.

After 'overheated' moment, Clinton's health returns as issue

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hillary Clinton's stumbles as she left a 9/11 memorial ceremony put her health at the forefront of a presidential campaign in which the two major party nominees are among the oldest ever and have disclosed a limited amount of information about their medical history.

The Democratic presidential nominee "felt overheated" Sunday and left the ground zero ceremony after about 90 minutes, her campaign said. A video of her departure shows Clinton appearing to stumble as three staff members hold her up and help her into a van. Clinton's doctor said later she

had been diagnosed with pneumonia and had been prescribed antibiotics.

While the former secretary of state later emerged from her daughter's nearby apartment, saying she was "feeling great," the episode focused attention on Clinton's health with eight weeks remaining in a contentious election in which Republican rival Donald Trump has sought to sow doubts about her health and fitness to serve.

Trump repeatedly has questioned Clinton's health, telling supporters last month she "lacks the mental and physical stamina" to serve as president and fight Islamic State militants. Trump also attended Sunday's memorial and said,

"I don't know anything," when asked about Clinton. He said Monday on "Fox & Friends" he hopes Clinton gets well soon.

It's an accusation that Clinton has sought to play off as a "wacky strategy" from Trump and evidence that he embraces an "alternative reality." She poked fun at the idea during an appearance on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" last month, jokingly opening a pickle jar as proof of her vigor.

Despite the intense focus on Clinton falling ill Sunday, Arthur Caplan, a bioethicist at New York University Langone Medical Center, said the moment told voters little about Clinton's physical fitness.

"There are plenty of people

who may stumble around on a hot humid day for lots of reasons," Caplan said. "Without examining, without having the history ... you don't have a basis to say anything."

In 2008, Republican nominee John McCain made public more than 1,000 pages of his medical history to show he was cancer-free and fit to serve as president at age 71.

Neither Clinton nor Trump has released anything approaching that level of detail.

At 69, Ronald Reagan was the oldest person to be elected president when he won in 1980. Trump turned 70 in June, while Clinton will have just turned 69 if she wins the White House.

Arson hits mosque attended by Orlando nightclub shooter

Associated Press

FORT PIERCE, Fla. — Someone set fire to the mosque attended by Omar Mateen, who opened fire at an Orlando, Fla., nightclub in the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history, authorities said Monday. No one was injured.

The blaze happened a day after Americans commemorated the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and also coincided with the beginning of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha.

Maj. David Thompson, of the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, declined to speculate on whether the arson was tied to the 9/11 anniversary.

The sheriff's office said on its official Facebook page that surveillance video shows someone approaching the Islamic Center of Fort Pierce around 12:30 a.m. Monday, moments before a flash was seen and the fire started. The fire was put out, but there was no word on how much damage it caused.

Mateen opened fire at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando on June 12 in a rampage that left 49 people dead and 53 wounded.

Multiple agencies, including the State Fire Marshal's Office; the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the FBI, are investigating. Sheriff's officials said they will be releasing the video and asking for the public's help in identifying the person who set the fire.

Officials say the mosque has had other trouble since the Orlando attack.

A few weeks after the nightclub shooting, a man was beaten outside the mosque, according to Sheriff Ken J. Mascara. Early on July 2, deputies were called by a man who said someone was trying to break into a vehicle. Arriving deputies found a man bleeding from the mouth who told them he was approached by someone who "asked him what he was doing and then punched him several times in the face and head."

The attacker was stopped by deputies and arrested a short time later.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations said a man in a truck had stopped outside the mosque earlier that same day and uttered slurs, including, "you Muslims need to get back to your country."

1 dead, 18 injured in Denver bus crash

Associated Press

DENVER — A school bus carrying high school football players veered off a roadway and slammed into a concrete pillar at Denver International Airport, killing the driver and injuring 18 passengers, some seriously, officials said.

The bus had just picked up arriving members of the Legacy High School football squad Sunday afternoon and was circling back to the airport when it crashed. Airport spokeswoman Stacey Stegman told The Denver Post that the bus carried 28 students and four adults.

The female driver died at the scene, police spokesman John White said. Ten people were hospitalized and eight others treated and released, officials said. The Post reported that the injured were 15 students and three coaches from the suburban Denver school.

Officials at Denver Health told KUSA TV that they had five patients: two in critical condition, two in serious condition and one fair. The Post reported that five patients in fair condition were treated at Children's Hospital Colorado.

Police have not released any information on the cause of the crash, which occurred at 4:08 p.m., and White said they don't know why the driver was returning to the airport after picking up the team.

The driver's name and age have not been released.

Uninjured students gathered with parents inside the airport, the Post reported. Police interviewed the football players about the crash.

Legacy High School is in Broomfield, Colo., and is part of Adams 12 Five Star Schools. The Post reported that the football team from Legacy played Chino High School on Friday night in California.

Fed intervention on oil pipeline a first

Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — The Standing Rock Sioux's effort to block a four-state oil pipeline got a lifeline when the federal government temporarily stopped the project, a move some say likely may forever change the way all energy infrastructure projects are reviewed in the future.

Just minutes after U.S. District Judge James Boasberg denied the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's attempt to halt the construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline that skirts the reservation in southern North Dakota, three federal agencies appealed to the pipeline company to "voluntarily pause" work on a segment that tribal officials say holds sacred sites and artifacts.

Tribal officials challenged the Army Corps of Engineers' decision to grant permits for Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners' \$3.8 billion pipeline, which is intended to carry oil from North Dakota to Illinois.

Friday's ruling by Boasberg, who was appointed by President Barack Obama, came amid growing protests over the pipeline, which would cross the Missouri River less than a mile upstream of the reservation.

The statement by the departments of Justice, Army and Interior said it would "reconsider any of its previous decisions" on land that borders or is under Lake Oahe, one of six reservoirs on the Missouri River and the drinking water source for the tribal members on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

The statement from the federal departments also said the case "highlighted the need for a serious discussion" about nationwide reforms "with respect to considering tribes' views on these types of infrastructure projects."

Troy Eid, a former U.S. attorney in Colorado who now specializes in Indian law, said the action was unprecedented and a "significant setback" for the pipeline's builders. "Every-

where in Indian Country, people are talking about this," said Eid, who spoke by phone Saturday while on horseback during a parade at the Navajo Nation Fair in Window Rock, Ariz.

Historically, tribes have been consulted only on energy infrastructure projects, with the federal government making the actual decisions, said Eid, a Republican.

The Obama administration's action Friday likely changed that, he said. "Tribes want to be able to influence the outcome in a substantive way."

Industry consultant Brigham McCown, a former acting administrator for the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, said the Obama administration's involvement has "changed the lay of the land forever" for infrastructure projects.

"This could bog down or delay every single infrastructure project moving forward," he said. "I don't think they even realize the can of worms they've opened."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Inmates stop work on anniversary of riot

AL MONTGOMERY — Inmates are refusing to work as part of a protest at a south Alabama prison.

The Alabama Department of Corrections reported the inmate work stoppage began Friday morning at William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore.

Ten inmates refused to show up in the morning to prepare breakfast. Thirty-five inmates stopped work in the facility that makes license plates.

Corrections spokesman Bob Horton said the inmates have made no demands and the protest has been peaceful.

Thieves steal about \$30K worth of snowblowers

ME BRUNSWICK — A group of thieves stole roughly \$30,000 worth of snowblowers on Sept. 4 in Maine.

Police said the crooks drove a U-Haul truck through the front gate of a power equipment dealership in Brunswick about 10:53 p.m. The suspects took approximately an hour to load the Honda HSS snowblowers onto the truck before fleeing in the direction of Interstate 295.

The equipment retails for anywhere between \$2,800 and \$3,000 apiece.

Police said the U-Haul the thieves were driving was painted with a “zebra head Idaho design.”

Troopers say man shot his friend by mistake

NY VIENNA — State police said a central New York man shot and wounded a friend he mistook for an intruder.

Trooper Jack Keller said Sunday a 23-year-old man was shot after he returned to Arthur

Rich’s Vienna home to retrieve his cellphone.

Keller said the victim had been at Rich’s home earlier on Sept. 3, left and returned just before 9:30 p.m. for his phone. That’s when Keller said Rich fired a single round from a long gun into the man’s shoulder, wounding him.

Officials didn’t name the victim, who was taken by Mercy Flight to a hospital in Syracuse. He’s expected to survive.

There have been no arrests.

Hogs packed in trailer killed in crash of semi

IA SIBLEY — Officials said all the hogs packed into a trailer were killed in a rollover crash north of Sibley on Iowa Highway 9.

The Osceola County sheriff told the Sioux City Journal that the crash happened Sept. 6 when the semi’s driver swerved to try to avoid a cow in the road. The semi tipped, landing partially in a ditch.

The driver, 26, was taken to a local hospital with injuries.

Officials said all the pigs were killed — a loss estimated at \$30,000. The semi and trailer, estimated at \$145,000, were destroyed. Deputies said the cow, owned by a Sibley farmer, also was killed.

Three guilty of carjacking vehicle sold on Craigslist

GA COLUMBUS — Three people from Columbus were convicted of carjacking a man attempting to return a vehicle he bought on Craigslist.

U.S. Attorney George L. Beck Jr. said Stanley Jawan Hinton, 24, Jacinto Taron Robinson, 26, and Tawanda Aeiah Sears, 40, were convicted by a federal jury last week.

The incident began after the victim purchased a vehicle from Hinton in August 2014. The vic-

tim later discovered problems with the car and demanded his money back.

He met with the suspects at an Alabama gas station after they promised to refund the money. After arriving at the gas station, the suspects stole the car at gunpoint.

Accused teen ‘doctor’ held on new charges

VA STAFFORD — A Florida teenager accused of pretending to be a doctor and stealing money from an 86-year-old patient faces new charges in Virginia after authorities say he fraudulently tried to buy a luxury car.

Stafford County sheriff’s officials said Malachi Love-Robinson, 19, is charged with identity theft and other fraud offenses after he attempted to purchase a Jaguar at a car dealership.

They said the elderly woman with Love-Robinson didn’t know she’d been listed as a co-signer on the loan application for the car. The woman wasn’t identified by police.

Love-Robinson was arrested in February after law enforcement officials in Florida said he was practicing medicine without a license.

Officer hurt by own gun during arrest of driver

FL ST. PETERSBURG — St. Petersburg Police officials said an officer was seriously injured during the arrest of a reckless driver.

According to a statement from police, the driver had sped away from a traffic stop late Friday before encountering officers in the Violent Crimes Task Force, who threw tire-puncturing devices into the road.

Authorities said a 16-year-old boy jumped from the car as it rolled on flattened tires.

According to police, one undercover officer jumped into the car as it hit an unoccupied Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office vehicle. Authorities said the officer’s gun accidentally discharged in the collision, and the bullet struck his hand.

Police said the officer was hospitalized with injuries that are serious but not life-threatening.

The statement says the teen faces multiple charges, including resisting arrest without violence.

Injured hiker rescued after falling off cliff

OR COOS BAY — A 20-year-old man who fell off a cliff while hiking in Sunset Bay on the Oregon Coast has been rescued.

Crews from Coos Bay Fire and Rescue and the Coast Guard rescued the hiker Friday evening.

The Coast Guard said the hiker suffered bruises and cuts on his head and body but was in stable condition when he was taken to Bay Area Hospital in Coos Bay.

Fire hits duplex for second time in 2 days

MA SPRINGFIELD — Flames ripped through a duplex in Springfield for the second time in just two days this past weekend, causing another estimated \$20,000 in damage to the structure.

The Republican newspaper reported that the latest fire at the Ashley Avenue residence was reported at about 9:30 p.m. Sunday.

Local firefighters quickly extinguished the flames, which were contained to one side of the duplex. Fire officials said the blaze could’ve been caused by a variety of factors.

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Short-handed Pats surprise Cardinals

Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Jimmy Garoppolo, starting in place of suspended Tom Brady, threw for 264 yards and a touchdown, leading the severely depleted New England Patriots to a 23-21 victory over the favored Arizona Cardinals on Sunday night.

Arizona's Chandler Catanzaro missed a 47-yard field goal with 41 seconds to play.

The miss came after Garoppolo, in his first NFL start, directed the Patriots from their own 19 to the Arizona 15 to set up Stephen Gostkowski's 23-yard field goal with 3:44 to play.

Garoppolo completed 24 of 33 passes with no interceptions. Arizona's Carson Palmer threw for 271 yards and two touchdowns, both to Larry Fitzgerald.

Not only were the Patriots without Brady, suspended for his role in "deflategate," but they also didn't have tight end Rob Gronkowski, defensive end

Rob Ninkovich and two starters on the offensive line.

A remarkable 45-yard run by David Johnson set up a 2-yard, over-the-shoulder touchdown catch by Fitzgerald that gave the Cardinals their only lead of the night, 21-20, with 9:46 remaining.

Chiefs 33, Chargers 27: Alex Smith dove for a touchdown on the first possession of overtime, completing host Kansas City's frantic rally from a 17-point fourth-quarter deficit against San Diego.

Raiders 35, Saints 34: Visiting Oakland gambled with a 2-point conversion that Derek Carr converted with a pass to Michael Crabtree for the winning points with 47 seconds left.

Bengals 23, Jets 22: Mike Nugent kicked a 47-yard field goal with 54 seconds left, lifting the Bengals over the host Jets.

Eagles 29, Browns 10: Carson Wentz had 278 yards passing and two touchdowns in a stellar NFL debut and the host

Eagles beat Robert Griffin III and the Browns.

Buccaneers 31, Falcons 24: Jameis Winston bounced back from an early interception to throw four touchdown passes, and Tampa Bay claimed a winning record for the first since 2012 by opening the season with a victory over the host Falcons.

Vikings 25, Titans 16: Eric Kendricks returned an interception 77 yards for a touchdown late in the third quarter and Danielle Hunter scored a 24-yard TD off a fumble return and the visiting Vikings beat the Titans.

Packers 27, Jaguars 23: Aaron Rodgers threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score, leading the visiting Packers to a victory against the Jaguars.

Ravens 13, Bills 7: The Ravens used a touchdown pass by Joe Flacco, two field goals and a throwback defensive performance to beat the visiting Bills.

Texans 23, Bears 14: Brock

Osweiler threw for 231 yards and two touchdowns in his debut with host Houston to lead the Texans and their revamped offense win over the Bears.

Seahawks 12, Dolphins 10: Hobbled by an ankle injury, Russell Wilson pulled off another fourth-quarter comeback, throwing a 2-yard touchdown pass to Doug Baldwin with 31 seconds left, giving the host Seahawks a win over the Dolphins.

Giants 20, Cowboys 19: Eli Manning threw for three touchdowns, including the go-ahead score to Victor Cruz in his first game in nearly two years, and the Giants beat the Cowboys.

Lions 39, Colts 35: Matthew Stafford took advantage of one last chance Sunday and Matt Prater redeemed himself with a 43-yard field goal with 8 seconds to give the Lions a victory at host Indianapolis.

Prater missed an extra point wide right with 4:04 left in the season opener, a miscue that nearly cost the Lions.

More players join Kaepernick with protests

Associated Press

Opening day in the NFL saw Kansas City cornerback Marcus Peters raise a black-gloved fist during the national anthem, a protest amplified later Sunday when four Miami Dolphins knelt on the sideline with hands on their hearts as "The Star Spangled Banner" played in Seattle.

The protests were inspired by San Francisco backup quarterback Colin Kaepernick, the first NFL player who chose to sit and take a knee during the anthem in pre-season games to call attention to what he termed the oppression of blacks and other minorities.

"I chose to get involved to see if I could create change, raise awareness. And I want to make it clear that there is no disrespect to the military or to police officers — I'm not about that. I love everyone," said Miami's Jelani Jenkins, one of the Dolphins to kneel. "I would like to keep moving forward in the right direction with everybody: equal rights, equal opportunity. From my position, it doesn't seem that it's happening. That's why I took a stand."

Peters' gesture was the only one visible throughout the early games Sunday, as the anthems took on more significance because of the 15th anniversary of Sept. 11 attacks.

"I come from a majority black community from Oakland, California ... so the struggle, I seen it," Peters said after the Chiefs beat San Diego 33-27 in overtime. "I still have some family in the struggle. All I'm saying is we want to educate those, the youth that's coming up."

The four Miami players — Arian Foster, Michael Thomas, Jenkins and Kenny Stills — registered their protest shortly before kickoff. The four players stood while President Obama's message played regarding the 15th anniversary of 9/11 before taking a knee. All four stood at the conclusion of the anthem.

"If it's about the knee that people are upset about, every Sunday people of faith take a knee to give thanks to their lord and savior, whatever faith or religion that they are," Foster said. "It's not about a knee, it's not about the [symbolism], it's about the message. They say it's not the time to do this, but when is the time?"

Several teams, including the Chiefs and Seahawks, saw their players link arms during the anthem. Peters, the 2015 defensive rookie of the year, was the last person in the Chiefs line and had his arm free to raise it.

"He spoke up about something he felt he needed to speak up about," Peters said last week. "I salute him for that."

Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall, a teammate of Kaepernick's in college at Nevada, took a knee during the anthem on Thursday night.

Peters' gesture was also a tribute of sorts to U.S. sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the 200-meter race at the 1968 Olympics. Both then appeared on the medal stands with raised, black-gloved fists throughout the U.S. national anthem in what they called a "human rights salute."

And in the night game, New England's Martellus Bennett and Devin McCourty both held up their right arms. Teammate Danny Amendola was seen clutching the American flag unfurled on the field in Arizona.

Mets' rookie Lugo wins 4th straight start

BY GEORGE HENRY

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Seth Lugo isn't pitching like a 26-year-old rookie for the New York Mets.

Facing major league hitters is a lot different from pitching in the minors, but Lugo isn't trying to do too much.

"I tell myself they're going to put the ball in play," Lugo said. "I'm not going to try to trick them or throw it by them. I'm going to throw it in the strike zone — quality pitches, quality location and let them get themselves out."

Yoenis Cespedes hit a grand slam, Lugo won his fourth straight start and the New York Mets beat the Atlanta Braves 10-3 on Sunday.

The Mets have won seven of eight and are 16-5 since Aug. 20. St. Louis' 2-1 loss to Milwaukee moved New York one-half game ahead of the Cardinals for the second NL wild-card spot.

Lugo (4-2) allowed six hits, two runs and one walk and struck out five in seven innings. He is 3-1 with a 1.99 ERA in five career starts after joining the rotation on Aug. 19.

"In minor leagues, I'd try to throw too

hard or make too good [of a pitch] and I'd end up falling behind and have to come back with guys in scoring position," Lugo said. "It takes a lot of discipline. Took a few years to figure that out."

The Braves cut the lead to 6-1 in the fourth on Freddie Freeman's RBI single, but Lugo stranded the bases loaded when Anthony Recker popped up and Dansby Swanson grounded into a double play.

Cespedes drove in the game's first five runs off Williams Perez (2-3), who gave up four hits, five runs and one walk and struck out two in 2²/₃ innings. Perez left the game with right triceps impingement.

Cespedes' 30th homer, which cleared the bases in the third, was his second grand slam this season. He has four in his career.

"If he's going to get hot, this is a good time," manager Terry Collins said. "This is a big stretch for us."

New York led 1-0 in the first when Asdrubal Cabrera tripled and scored on Cespedes' groundout.

Cespedes is hitting .308 with eight homers and 19 RBIs since Aug. 19.

Brandon Snyder cut the lead to 10-2 in the seventh with his third career pinch-hit homer.

With the Braves moving to a new ballpark next year, the Mets went 67-106 in 20 years at Turner Field. New York won 11 of its last 14 at the former stadium of the 1996 Olympics.

Remembrance Day: Players and coaches stood along the baselines before the game as the Braves held a 13-minute ceremony to mark the 15th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

A massive flag was held across the outfield while the team played a video commemorating the attacks and the Braves-Mets game on Sept. 21, 2001, at Shea Stadium — the first major sporting event held in New York after 9/11.

Sunday's ceremony included a 21-gun salute, a color guard from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, flag bearers from the U.S. Army, an honor guard from the Smyrna, Georgia, police and a contingent of bagpipes and drums.

Still streaking: Freeman has reached safely in a career-high 33 straight games. He has hit safely in 28 of his last 29 games since Aug. 1 and is hitting .362 over that span.

Ortiz homers as Red Sox outslug Blue Jays

Associated Press

TORONTO — Boston slugger David Ortiz went out with a bang in Toronto in his final regular-season game.

Ortiz drilled a three-run homer in the sixth inning, Jackie Bradley Jr. and Hanley Ramirez also connected, and the Red Sox outslugged Toronto 11-8 Sunday, reclaiming a two-game lead over the Blue Jays in the AL East.

"Wins are wins no matter what but some wins are different," Ortiz said. "Some wins can get you some momentum."

Ortiz put Boston up 10-8 with a drive off Joaquin Benoit. It was his 41st career home run at Rogers Centre, his highest total at any road stadium.

"Toronto is a very nice place to play baseball and a beautiful city," Ortiz said. "It's always a pleasure to come here."

With his 535th career homer, Ortiz moved past Jimmie Foxx into sole possession of 18th

place on baseball's career list. He also increased his RBI total to 110, the most by a player age 40 or above since Dave Winfield had 108 for Toronto in 1992.

"We're somewhat in awe of what David is doing in his final run," Red Sox manager John Farrell said.

Reds 8, Pirates 0: Tyler Holt and Brandon Phillips had three hits apiece, leading Brandon Finnegan and visiting Cincinnati to the victory.

Holt drove in three runs and Phillips scored three times as last-place Cincinnati (60-82) closed the four-game set with three straight wins. Pittsburgh (69-72) has dropped 11 of 13 to fall off the pace in the NL wild-card race.

Brewers 2, Cardinals 1: Ryan Braun hit a tiebreaking homer in the ninth inning, and visiting Milwaukee dropped St. Louis back in the NL wild-card race.

The Cardinals are a half-game behind the Mets for the

second wild card.

Cubs 9, Astros 5: Jorge Soler and Addison Russell homered to lead visiting Chicago past Houston, moving the Cubs closer to clinching the NL Central.

Orioles 3, Tigers 1: Chris Tillman pitched six impressive innings in his return from the disabled list, leading host Baltimore to the win.

Giants 5, Diamondbacks 3: Matt Moore struck out 11 in seven innings and Hunter Pence hit a key two-run double, helping visiting San Francisco to the series sweep.

Rays 4, Yankees 2: Corey Dickerson hit a two-run homer, Matt Andriese won for the first time since June and host Tampa Bay stopped New York's seven-game winning streak.

Royals 2, White Sox 0: Ian Kennedy and three relievers combined on a two-hitter, helping Kansas City beat Chris Sale and host Chicago.

Marlins 3, Dodgers 0: Jose

Urena pitched 8²/₃ innings of four-hit ball, leading host Miami to the win.

Nationals 3, Phillies 2: Gio Gonzalez pitched seven sharp innings for NL East-leading host Washington, and Anthony Rendon doubled home the tie-breaking run.

Indians 7, Twins 1: Visiting Cleveland ace Corey Kluber struck out 10 in seven innings, and Carlos Santana hit a three-run homer.

Angels 3, Rangers 2: Andrelton Simmons hit two solo home runs, sending Jered Weaver and host Los Angeles to the win.

Mariners 3, Athletics 2: Ketel Marte hit a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning, helping visiting Seattle to its fifth straight win.

Rockies 3, Padres 2 (10): Mark Reynolds homered leading off the 10th inning and the Rockies salvaged a split of a four-game series.

Wawrinka captures first US Open title

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Stan Wawrinka is the first to acknowledge he hasn't always been the most consistent player — or the strongest mentally. That's why, when he shows his mettle during a match, he likes to point his right index finger to his temple.

That signature gesture got a lot of use in the U.S. Open final Sunday, when Wawrinka surprisingly managed to wear down Novak Djokovic and beat the defending champion 6-7 (1), 6-4, 7-5, 6-3 for his first U.S. Open title and third Grand Slam trophy overall.

"He was the better player. He was tougher mentally," said Djokovic, offering two of the highest compliments a tennis player can receive from the talented and sturdy Serb ranked No. 1. "He knew what to do. And I was just unlucky in some moments. And that's it."

The 31-year-old Wawrinka is the oldest U.S. Open men's champion since Ken Rosewall was 35 in 1970, and entered Sunday having spent almost exactly twice as much time on court as Djokovic during the course of the tournament: about 18 hours vs. about 9 hours.

"I played quite a lot of ten-

nis these two weeks. I am completely empty," said No. 3 Wawrinka.

By breaking in the final game of the second and third sets, and by saving 14 of 17 break points he faced, Wawrinka already had gained the upper hand by the time Djokovic clutched at his left leg and grimaced after missing a forehand while getting broken early in the fourth.

Djokovic was granted the unusual chance to have a medical timeout at a time other than a changeover. He removed both shoes and socks so a trainer could help with toe blisters. Wawrinka complained about the 6-minute break, and Djokovic looked over and apologized. Later, Djokovic started limping and received more treatment.

"We played almost four hours," said Djokovic, "and I think I can speak in the name of Stan, as well: We both felt it."

Wawrinka has won only five of his 24 career meetings against Djokovic, but has now beaten the 12-time major champion on the way to each of his own Grand Slam titles, including in the 2014 Australian Open quarterfinals and 2015 French Open final.

Before this matchup, Djokovic praised Wawrinka

as "a big-match player," and, boy, is he ever. Wasn't always, though: Playing in the shadow of his far-more-accomplished Swiss countryman and good pal, Roger Federer, Wawrinka needed until his 35th appearance at a major, at age 28, just to get to the semifinals for the first time.

He has now won 11 tournament finals in a row. He is 3-0 in Grand Slam finals, beating the No. 1-ranked player each time. Take that trio of highest-stakes matches out of the equation, and Wawrinka is 0-19 in all other matches against the top man.

And he did it Sunday by coming back against Djokovic, whose French Open title in June completed a career Grand Slam and made him only the third man — and first in nearly a half-century — to win four consecutive major tournaments.

Consider this: Djokovic had been 51-0 in U.S. Open matches, and 53-2 in all finals, when taking the first set. This time, though, while the thick-chested Wawrinka recovered from an edgy start to begin his typical bullying from the baseline — not only with his best-in-the-game one-handed backhand but off both wings — Djokovic seemed to lose his way.

As Wawrinka placed one stinging shot after another right on a line, Djokovic looked up at coach Boris Becker and the rest of his entourage while gesticulating with his hands and muttering. He went from appearing locked-in at the outset to completely drained in every way.

On one point, Wawrinka delivered a shot so hard it knocked the racket from Djokovic's grasp and against a wall.

Then, after smacking a forehand winner to end a 20-stroke exchange, Wawrinka pointed to his temple. Two points later, the second set was his.

After a forehand passing shot drew an errant volley for a break early in the third set, Wawrinka pointed to his temple.

Wawrinka nearly was gone before the end of the U.S. Open's first week. He was one point from losing in the third round against 64th-ranked Dan Evans, but eventually won in five sets.

"You're a great champion, a great person. Because of you, I am where I am today," Wawrinka said. "We know each other (for) many, many years, and I had the chance to practice many times with him and to play him on a big stage."

Johnson polishes off dominant BMW win

Associated Press

CARMEL, Ind. — Dustin Johnson knows as well as anyone that no matter how good he is and how well he plays, something can always go wrong in golf.

Just not this week at the BMW Championship.

Not this year, really.

An awesome talent, Johnson is starting to pile up the victories to prove it. He ran off four birdies in a five-hole stretch to regain control Sunday, left Paul Casey feeling helpless by matching his eagle putt late in the round and sailed home to a 5-under 67 for a three-shot victory at Crooked Stick.

"Ran into a buzz saw," Casey said after a 67 to finish runner-up in a FedEx Cup playoff event for the second straight week. "That was something special the last two

days, and I did everything I could. So I'm holding my head up very high."

Known for so many years as the guy who couldn't catch a break in the biggest events, he won for the third time in eight starts dating to his first major at the U.S. Open. And this might have been his most complete performance. Powerful off the tee, relentless with the putter, dialed with his wedges, there was no stopping him.

"I've got a lot of confidence in every part of my game," Johnson said.

He just doesn't have much to say about it, mainly because he doesn't need to.

Casey's last hope came on the par-5 15th when he rolled in a 25-foot eagle putt to get within one shot. That lasted as long as it took Johnson to line up his 18-foot eagle putt and pour it in to restore his three-shot

margin.

He finished at 23-under 265 and went over \$9 million in earnings for the year, along with taking the No. 1 seed in the FedEx Cup to the finale in two weeks at East Lake for the Tour Championship.

The consolation for Casey, along with \$1,836,000 for his two runner-up finishes, was the No. 5 seed at the Tour Championship in two weeks. That means he only has to win at East Lake to capture the \$10 million bonus.

Rickie Fowler, who started the week at No. 22 in the FedEx Cup, closed with a 71 and finished 59th at Crooked Stick. He was bumped out of the top 10 by the smallest margin in the 10-year history of the FedEx Cup — 0.57 points behind Charl Schwartzel, who closed with a 64.