

Trump called US Marines killed in WWI battle 'losers': report

A magazine report says Donald Trump had spoken disparagingly about fallen US military personnel buried in Europe

● US President declined to visit the cemetery in 2018 because of concern that the rain that day would mess up his hair

● Trump slammed the report, after his aides called the allegations "disgusting, grotesque, reprehensible lies"



US President Donald Trump makes his way to board Air Force One in Maryland

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump referred to US Marines buried in a WWI cemetery in France as "losers" and "suckers" for getting killed in action, according to a report in the Atlantic magazine.

The report, penned by the magazine's editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg, said Trump had refused to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Paris in 2018 because "he feared his hair would become disheveled

in the rain," although the official explanation offered by aides was that the helicopter due to take him there could not fly due to weather.

"In a conversation with senior staff members on the morning of the scheduled visit, Trump said, 'Why should I go to that cemetery? It's filled with losers,'" the article said.

"In a separate conversation on the same trip, Trump referred to the more than 1,800 marines who lost their lives at Belleau

Wood as 'suckers' for getting killed," the Atlantic added, citing four unnamed people it said had firsthand knowledge of the discussions.

Trump slammed the report late Thursday, after his aides earlier called the allegations "disgusting, grotesque, reprehensible lies."

"Somebody makes up this horrible story that I didn't want to go," he told reporters after returning from a campaign rally in Pennsylvania.

"Somebody makes up this horrible story that I didn't want to go. If they really exist, if people really exist that would have said that, they're low lifes and they're liars. And I would be willing to swear on anything that I never said that about our fallen heroes"

DONALD TRUMP

"If they really exist, if people really exist that would have said that, they're low lifes and they're liars. And I would be willing to swear on anything that I never said that about our fallen heroes," he said.

"No animal, nobody, what animal would say such a thing?" However, some critics pointed to Trump's denigrating comments about late senator John McCain, who was captured in Vietnam and was widely regarded as a war hero.

News in brief



◆ Japan's coast guard said the second survivor of a capsized cattle ship on its way to China from New Zealand, who had been

Second survivor from capsized cattle ship dies, Japan's coast guard says

pulled unconscious from the waters of the East China Sea, had died. The coast guard had said the man was found unconscious about 120 km (75 miles) north-northwest of Amami Oshima island and transferred to a hospital.

7 police officers in New York suspended over Black man's death

◆ Seven police officers were suspended over the arrest and asphyxiation death of Black man Daniel Prude in New York after video of the March incident was released, the city's mayor said, calling it an act of racism. Prude's family this week released body camera footage from his arrest, showing a group of officers putting a hood over his head - apparently to prevent his spit from possibly transmitting the novel coronavirus - as he knelt on the ground, handcuffed and naked.

◆ Mayors of major US cities blasted President Donald Trump's threat to cut federal funding to cities facing ongoing protests as a violation of the US Constitution, and New York state said it would challenge any move to defund the city in court. Trump instructed Attorney General William Barr to develop a list of "anarchist jurisdictions" that "permitted violence and the destruction of property ... and have refused to undertake reasonable measures" to restore order.

◆ Italy's former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who recently tested positive for the novel coronavirus, has been hospitalised "as a precaution", a statement from his entourage said. It said the media tycoon was taken to San Raffaele hospital in Milan after suffering "certain symptoms", but there was "no cause for concern".



Greece, Turkey spar again after NATO mediation move

◆ Turkey accused Greece of shunning dialogue and lying after Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said NATO-brokered talks to reduce tension in the eastern Mediterranean could only be held if Ankara stopped making "threats". "Greece showed once more than it's not in favour of dialogue," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Greek and Turkish leaders "agreed to enter into technical talks at NATO to establish mechanisms for military de-confliction to reduce the risk of incidents and accidents".

◆ Sudan and a key rebel group that had refused to join other opposition forces in a previous peace deal have signed their own agreement, officials on both sides said. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and rebel chief Abdelaziz al-Hilu signed the peace deal in neighbouring Ethiopia. Sudan's official news agency SUNA said, which posted pictures of the two men smiling and shaking hands.

◆ Portuguese hacker Rui Pinto told a Lisbon court at the opening of his trial that his "Football Leaks" are "a reason for pride and not shame". "I was outraged by what I discovered and I decided to make it public," the 31-year-old said in a brief initial statement at the start of a trial expected to last several months. "My job as a whistleblower is over," he added, his face covered by a mask. "I never did anything for money."



India army chief says talks can resolve border row with China

Reuters | New Delhi

India's army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane said yesterday he was confident the ongoing border stand-off with China could be resolved through talks, even as thousands of troops remained amassed along a disputed Western Himalayan region.



Indian army trucks move along a highway leading to Ladakh

"We are sure that the problem can be resolved fully through talks," Naravane told Reuters partner ANI during a visit to the Ladakh region, where troops from the two nuclear-armed countries have been squaring off for months.

"The situation along the LAC is slightly tense," Naravane said, adding that India had deployed

additional troops in some areas to stall any attempted Chinese incursions.

But both countries have repeatedly reiterated that they are keen on talks to resolve the process, with military officials meeting for several days this week south of Ladakh's Pangong Tso lake, where the latest flare-up occurred over the weekend.

Large industrial blast rocks houses in southeast England

AFP | London

A large industrial explosion rocked households in southeast England early Friday, with fire services saying they were battling to contain the resulting blaze hours later.

"Ten fire engines and a height vehicle are in attendance, and crews are working to tackle the blaze," Kent Fire and Rescue Service said of the incident at an industrial estate in Hoo, near Rochester in Kent.

Local resident Joe Discipline was quoted as saying by the domestic Press Association news agency that the blast "shook the house and windows" at around 4:30am (3:30 GMT). "I jumped out of bed to see, the sky was orange," he said.

"There was then a second explosion just as big."

Videos posted online showed flames and a plume of black smoke rising high into the night sky, with fire still raging as dawn broke.

Benedict XVI becomes oldest pope in history

AFP | Vatican City

At the age of 93 and nearly five months, Benedict XVI officially became the oldest pope in history yesterday, even if the record is complicated by the fact that he stepped down in 2013 and holds the status of "pope emeritus".

Benedict was the first pope to retire in 700 years -- citing his diminishing strength -- after eight years in office.

He was succeeded by Argentinian Jorge Bergoglio, 10 years his junior and who adopted the name Francis.

Born on April 16, 1927, Benedict -- whose civilian name is Josef Ratzinger -- officially broke the previous longevity record held by Italian Leo XIII who died in 1903 at the age of 93 years, four months and three days, according to



Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

the calculations of the Italian episcopal journal, Avvenire, and the magazine Famiglia Cristiana.

"34,111 days in the service of God, the world and the ecclesiastical community," wrote Famiglia Cristiana, referring to Benedict.

Aside from Benedict's retired status, Vatican experts said the record could also be disputed because, going back 1,400 years, the ages of previous popes may not always be completely accurate.

The previous record holder, Leo XIII, is known for having written the first encyclical on social problems.

Unlike Benedict's relatively short reign as pontiff, the Italian aristocrat led the church for more than 25 years. By comparison, Pius XI was pope for 31 years and John Paul II for 26 years.

93 years, four months and four days have been lived by Benedict XVI to brake the previous longevity record

