

STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, April 25, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy revamping policy for UFO reports

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

The Navy is revamping its protocols for reporting unidentified aircraft due to an uptick in such unauthorized flights into restricted air space, the service said.

“There have been a number of reports of unauthorized and/or unidentified aircraft entering various military-controlled ranges and designated air space in recent years,” the Navy said in a statement.

The subject of unidentified flying objects, or UFOs, captured the public’s attention last year after several declassified Defense Department videos showed Navy pilots encounter-

ing oval objects that moved at great speed. In one video, an F-18 fighter jet pilot flying along the East Coast of the U.S. gasps, “Wow! What is that, man? Look at that flying!”

The videos were collected as part of the Air Force’s Advanced Aviation Threat Identification Program, which began in 2007 but lost its funding in 2012.

The Navy statement did not refer to “UFOs” nor to any specific incidents, but it said the Navy and Air Force “investigate each and every report” of unauthorized and unidentified aircraft and take such incidents “very seriously.”

For that reason, the Navy is “updating and formalizing the

process by which reports of any such suspected incursions can be made to the cognizant authorities,” the statement said.

The Navy draft detailing how such encounters should be reported in the future will be eventually issued fleetwide, the statement said.

Senior naval intelligence officials and aviators who have reported such incidents have conducted a series of briefings for some members of Congress and their staff, the statement said.

Chris Mellon, a former Pentagon intelligence official who has also worked for the Senate Intelligence Committee, told Politico that establishing a more formal system of reporting un-

explained encounters in the air would be a “sea change.”

“Right now, we have a situation in which UFOs and [unexplained aerial phenomena] are treated as anomalies to be ignored rather than anomalies to be explored,” he told Politico, which was first to report about the new Navy protocols Monday. “We have systems that exclude that information and dump it.”

Military personnel routinely disregard fast-moving satellite data or radar images that do not fit into the model of a “traditional aircraft or missile,” Mellon said.

US soon to have 2,500 Marines in Australia

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is boosting its presence in Australia’s Northern Territory with an extra battalion headed Down Under this summer.

The Hawaii-based 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment will join Marine Rotational Force-Darwin in July, Marine spokesman 1st Lt. Colin Kennard said in a phone interview Thursday.

Once the 800-strong unit arrives, there will be 2,500 Marines in Australia — a target set by former President Barack Obama when he announced the creation of the rotational force during a visit to Darwin in November 2011.

The additional Marines will participate in previously scheduled activities, including Exer-

cise Koolondong, Kennard said in an email.

“This increase ... is a tangible demonstration of the United States’ sustained commitment to the U.S.-Australia alliance and to the open and free Indo-Pacific region,” he said. “It will improve security cooperation activities, disaster relief response capabilities, and the ability to respond to various crises throughout the region.”

There has been a slow build-up of the force, which rotates into Darwin for six months each summer, since an initial contingent of 250 Marines hit the beach there in 2012.

The first Marines in this summer’s rotation, which started arriving last week, include another infantry battalion — 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment — an artillery battery from 3rd Battalion, 11th

Marine Regiment, Combat Logistics Battalion 1 and a platoon from 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, from various bases in California, Kennard said. The ground troops are supported by 10 MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotors, four AH-1Z Vipers and three UH-1Y Venom helicopters, he said.

The rotational force commanding officer, Col. Russ Boyce, told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. that the Marines would be capable of responding if a conflict arose nearby during the rotation.

“The units that have deployed here ... have trained and achieved a level of proficiency before they are able to even deploy, so certainly that’s part of the calculus,” he said.

However, Boyce added, in coming years the focus for the deployment would be on

improving capabilities rather than more boots on the ground, according to the ABC.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison spoke to U.S. and Australian troops at Robertson Barracks on Wednesday, Kennard said.

Morrison told troops the story of Australian stretcher-bearer Leslie “Bull” Allen, who was awarded the U.S. Silver Star medal after rescuing 12 wounded American soldiers in Papua New Guinea at the Battle of Mount Tambu in 1943, according to The Australian newspaper.

Allen’s heroism underscored the “camaraderie, kinship and spirit” between U.S. and Australian forces, the prime minister said, according to the newspaper.

Watchdog clears Shanahan of wrongdoing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's watchdog agency has cleared acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan of wrongdoing in connection with allegations that he had used his official position to favor his former employer, Boeing Co., a U.S. official said Thursday.

The decision by the Defense Department inspector general opens the door for President Donald Trump to nominate Shanahan and seek his Senate confirmation as defense secretary. The White House has not said whether Trump intends to do so.

Shanahan has been serving as the interim Pentagon chief since Jan. 1, after Jim Mattis resigned.

The allegation of pro-Boeing

bias stemmed from Shanahan's time as deputy defense secretary in 2017-18.

The inspector general's office was expected to release details of its findings later Thursday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the outcome of the probe before its formal release.

Although Trump has publicly praised Shanahan's job performance, the former Boeing executive's situation became more precarious last month when a watchdog group filed an ethics complaint with the inspector general.

In the complaint, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington alleged that Shanahan has appeared to make statements promoting Boeing and disparaging competitors, such as Lockheed Martin. Sha-

hanan spent more than 30 years at Boeing, leading programs for commercial planes and missile defense systems.

The inspector general formally opened an investigation and moved quickly to conduct interviews. Shanahan publicly welcomed the decision to review the allegations.

At the time, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said that scrutiny of Shanahan's Boeing ties is necessary. "In fact, it's overdue. Boeing is a behemoth 800-pound gorilla — raising possible questions of undue influence at DOD, FAA and elsewhere," Blumenthal said.

Shanahan signed an ethics agreement in June 2017, when he was being nominated for the job of deputy defense secretary, a job he held during Mattis' tenure. The agreement

outlined the steps he would take to avoid "any actual or apparent conflict of interest," and said he would not participate in any matter involving Boeing.

The CREW ethics complaint, based in large part on published reports, including one by Politico in January, said Shanahan has made comments praising Boeing in meetings about government contracts, raising concerns about "whether Shanahan, intentionally or not, is putting his finger on the scale when it comes to Pentagon priorities."

One example raised by the complaint is the Pentagon's decision to request funding for Boeing's F-15EX fighter jets in the 2020 proposed budget. The Pentagon is requesting about \$1 billion to buy eight of the aircraft.

Air Force ethics instructor charged with internet luring

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An Air Force intelligence officer serving as an ethics instructor at the Air Force Academy in Colorado faces allegations that he attempted to lure a child on the internet, law enforcement officials announced Wednesday.

Capt. Paul Sikkema described his genitals, expressed his desire to perform sexual acts with an undercover officer and attempted to persuade the officer who he believed to be a 14-year-old girl to meet him, according to arrest documents filed Wednesday by investigators with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Internet Crimes Against Children task force.

Sikkema surrendered to investigators Wednesday and he was set to face an initial hearing Thursday.

Sikkema, 29, faces one count of internet luring of a child, a class 4 felony that carries a pen-

alty of two to six years in prison and a fine up to \$500,000, according to Colorado law. Law enforcement officials have requested he be denied bond.

The Air Force Academy confirmed the instructor's arrest in an emailed statement.

"We are aware of the arrest and can confirm Capt. Sikkema is a professor here at the academy," the statement said. "We are tracking his civilian court case as it goes through the legal process and will cooperate fully as needed with the Arapahoe sheriff's department."

Arrest documents state the undercover officer first made contact with Sikkema on Jan. 21 in an online chat room. The conversation eventually continued through text messages for about one week.

During at least one point in the conversation Sikkema acknowledged he should not be involved in such behavior, according to the documents.

Nations' coast guards seen as key in Indo-Pacific region

BY THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Nations in the Indo-Pacific region are employing "white hull" diplomacy, putting their coast guards to work to challenge China's territorial claims at sea, a Philippine Coast Guard officer said recently.

Lt. Cmdr. Jay Tarriela described the growing strength and responsibility of coast guards in the western Pacific while speaking to the Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies on April 18 near the home of U.S. Forces Japan.

"The rise of white hulls in the region has seen a noticeable uptick since the early 2000s," he said.

Smaller Asian nations are responding to territorial challenges from China with their coast guards, rather than their navies, said Tarriela, a post-graduate student at the National Graduate Institute for Policy

Studies in Tokyo. That lower level response reduces the likelihood of a shooting war breaking out.

"Someday, somebody might make some mistakes and there will be a fight," he said, quoting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. "Some ships will be lost and there might be a war and we don't want that."

Tarriela focused his studies on the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia, countries that contend with conflicting territorial claims by China in the South China Sea.

"[The] China trend is a reason why the coast guard is getting bigger, but only in the last decade," he said. However, "there are more important tasks for the coast guard."

Coast guards should focus on search and rescue duties, law enforcement and environmental issues, he said, not duties that are more in line with a military mission.

Trump changes his tune on Mueller report

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After denouncing the special counsel's Russia investigation throughout its nearly two-year history, President Donald Trump greeted its conclusion with choice words: "the Crazy Mueller Report," "written by 18 Angry Democrat Trump Haters," containing "total bullshit."

Now, suddenly, the "witch hunt" is golden, in the pivoting rhetoric of the White House.

Bristling at Democratic attempts to dig deeper into episodes of possible obstruction of justice laid out in Robert Mueller's report, Trump's team is pointing to the fact that Mueller stopped short of accusing Trump of a crime (and glossing over

the idea that it left Congress to pursue that path as it sees fit.)

This has given rise to fulsome praise for an inquiry Trump has routinely condemned.

"It was the most thorough investigation probably in the history of our country," Trump told reporters on Wednesday. "I say it's enough."

Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway offered this: "The president is saying that the Mueller report is the definitive, conclusive nonpartisan investigation."

This, after Trump assailed the inquiry as a partisan, polluted exercise since its inception and, according to the Mueller report, pressed aides to stop it.

The switch came as House Democrats stepped up their scrutiny of Trump's be-

havior and finances and the White House pushed back. A former White House official defied a House subpoena, the Treasury Department ignored a deadline for providing Trump's tax returns and the president vowed "we're fighting all the subpoenas" from Democratic lawmakers on these subjects.

Despite crediting Mueller with unparalleled thoroughness — and after countless false claims that the report exonerated him — Trump did not abandon his characterization of the inquiry as a witch hunt, something he's repeated on Twitter alone nearly 200 times in less than a year.

"We just went through the Mueller witch hunt, where you had, really, 18 angry Democrats that hate President Trump," he said.

Biden launches 2020 fight for 'soul of nation'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Vice President Joe Biden formally joined the crowded Democratic presidential contest on Thursday, declaring the "soul of this nation" at stake if President Donald Trump wins re-election.

In a video posted on Twitter, Biden focused on the 2017 deadly clash between white supremacists and counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Va. Biden noted Trump's comments that there were some "very fine people" on both sides of the violent encounter, which left one woman dead.

"We are in the battle for the soul of this nation," Biden said. "If we give Donald Trump eight years in the White House, he will forever and fundamentally alter the

character of this nation — who we are. And I cannot stand by and watch that happen."

Biden, 76, becomes an instant front-runner alongside Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who is leading many polls and has proved to be a successful fundraiser. Biden has legislative and international experience that is unmatched in the Democratic field, and he is among the best-known faces in U.S. politics.

He quickly racked up endorsements on Thursday morning, becoming the first Democrat running for president with the backing of more than one U.S. senator.

Still, Biden must compete in a field that now spans at least 20 Democrats and has been celebrated for its racial and gender diversity. As an older white man with occasionally centrist views, Biden has to prove

he's not out of step with his party.

He's yet to outline his positions on the issues defining the 2020 Democratic primary, most notably "Medicare for All," the universal health care plan authored by Sanders that has been adopted by virtually the entire Democratic field.

His critics in both major political parties were also quick to pounce.

"The old guard of the Democratic Party failed to stop Trump, and they can't be counted on to lead the fight against his divide-and-conquer politics today," the liberal group Justice Democrats tweeted. "The party needs new leadership with a bold vision capable of energizing voters in the Democratic base who stayed home in 2016."

Baltimore mayor's homes, City Hall targeted by raids

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — FBI and IRS agents raided the homes and offices of Baltimore's embattled mayor on Thursday amid widening probes to determine whether she used sales of her children's books to disguise government kickbacks.

Dave Fitz, an FBI spokesman in the agency's Baltimore office, said agents with the FBI and the IRS criminal division in Washington were searching both of Mayor Catherine Pugh's homes and her offices at City Hall, as well the home of a top aide and other places. He said he couldn't re-

lease more information because the warrants are sealed.

Pugh has been facing mounting calls for her to resign over a scandal involving her self-published children's books, which she sold to a health plan that does business with the city, as well as to the University of Maryland Medical System, on whose board she sat while serving as a state lawmaker.

Pugh sold \$500,000 worth of the books to the \$4 billion hospital network over the years, and meanwhile pushed legislation that would have benefited the regional system.

The federal case comes amid a criminal

investigation by the state prosecutor's office, which began at the request of Republican Gov. Larry Hogan, as well as probes by the Baltimore Inspector General, a city ethics board and the state insurance commission.

As federal agents gathered boxes of evidence in the mayor's office and police cordoned off her homes with yellow tape, City Council member Brandon Scott called the raids "an embarrassment to the city."

"The mayor should resign. We have too many issues facing the city of Baltimore that require the full-time attention of a full-time mayor," Scott said.

Putin says N. Korea willing to denuclearize

Wire reports

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia — Russian President Vladimir Putin said after his summit with Kim Jong Un on Thursday that the North Korean leader is ready to proceed toward denuclearization — but needs solid security guarantees to do so.

Putin said that he will be willing to share details of the summit with President Donald Trump, adding that “there are no secrets.” He noted that Kim himself encouraged him to explain certain nuances of Pyongyang’s position to Trump.

The summit on Russky Island, across a bridge from the far-eastern port city of Vladivostok, reflected Russia’s effort to emerge as an essential player in the North Korean nuclear standoff, a role that would raise Moscow’s global clout and its leverage with Washington.

Putin emphasized that the North Korean leader is ready to move toward a nuclear-free status but would proceed only when he gets solid guarantees. He did not specify what those guarantees would look like.

“Above all, he focuses on protecting na-

tional interests and security,” Putin said.

Earlier in the day, Putin voiced confidence that Kim’s visit will “help better understand what should be done to settle the situation on the Korean Peninsula, what we can do together, what Russia can do to support the positive processes going on now.”

Kim’s meeting with Putin follows a year of intense diplomacy the North hopes will help it get out from under international sanctions over its nuclear weapons and long-range missile programs. Kim has already held four summits with Chinese President Xi Jinping, three with South Korean President Moon Jae-on and two with President Donald Trump.

Kim’s second summit with Trump in February ended without any agreements, and his trip to Russia reflects his desire to put more pressure on Washington and show some independence from Beijing as well.

For Putin, the meeting offers a chance to increase his role as a potential broker. He immediately emphasized that he was willing to share details of the talks with Trump.

The Russian leader emphasized that Moscow and Washington both want Pyongyang to denuclearize. When he sat down for talks with Kim, he praised him for engaging in dialogue with the U.S.

“We welcome your efforts to develop an inter-Korean dialogue and normalize North Korea’s relations with the United States,” Putin told Kim.

Elsewhere, North Korea reportedly issued a \$2 million bill for the hospital care of comatose American Otto Warmbier, insisting that a U.S. official sign a pledge to pay it before being allowed to fly the University of Virginia student from Pyongyang in 2017.

The presentation of the invoice — not previously disclosed by U.S. or North Korean officials — was extraordinarily brazen even for a regime known for its aggressive tactics.

But the main U.S. envoy sent to retrieve Warmbier signed an agreement to pay the medical bill on instructions passed down from President Donald Trump, according to two people familiar with the situation.

Ex-Army sharpshooter held in pedestrian crash

Associated Press

SUNNYVALE, Calif. — A former U.S. Army sharpshooter with a history of PTSD plowed his car at high speed into a group of pedestrians in a quiet Silicon Valley suburb, injuring eight people including three children, and then told authorities that he intentionally hit them but has not said why.

Police in Sunnyvale, Calif., said Wednesday that Isaiah Joel Peoples, 34, was being held on eight counts of attempted murder.

Four of the victims remained hospitalized with major injuries, including a 13-year-old girl in critical condition.

A witness, Don Draper, 72, said he watched in horror as Peoples’ car sped through a crosswalk in a shopping area Tuesday evening and bodies went flying. It was a warm night, around dinner time and people were out in cafes and restaurants in the area.

“I saw this woman fly through the air right in front of me. She flipped upside down and then fell right in front of my

car,” Draper said, adding that he then marched over to Peoples’ car, which had swerved onto a sidewalk and crashed into a tree. He said Peoples did not appear drunk but looked dazed and was mumbling over and over, “Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.”

Sunnyvale Police Capt. Jim Choi said authorities were still trying to determine a motive.

There was no evidence linking Peoples to any terrorist organization but the crash was deliberate, he said.

Avowed racist executed for dragging black man in 1998

Associated Press

HUNTSVILLE, Texas — An avowed racist who orchestrated one of the most gruesome hate crimes in U.S. history was executed Wednesday in Texas for the dragging death of a black man.

John William King, who was white, received a lethal injection for the slaying nearly 21 years ago of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to the back of a truck and dragged for nearly 3 miles along a secluded road in the piney woods outside Jasper,

Texas. The 49-year-old Byrd was alive for at least 2 miles before his body was ripped to pieces in the early morning hours of June 7, 1998.

Prosecutors said Byrd was targeted because he was black. King was openly racist and had offensive tattoos on his body, including one of a black man with a noose around his neck hanging from a tree, according to authorities.

King, 44, was put to death at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas. He was the fourth inmate executed this year in the

U.S. and the third in Texas, the nation’s busiest capital punishment state.

King kept his eyes closed as witnesses arrived in the death chamber and never turned his head toward relatives of his victim. Asked by Warden Bill Lewis if he had a final statement, King replied: “No.”

Within seconds, the lethal dose of the sedative pentobarbital began taking effect. He took a few barely audible breaths and had no other movement. He was pronounced dead at 7:08 p.m., 12 minutes after the drug began.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2,922 portraits of Obama at art exhibit

IL CHICAGO — Rob Pruitt calls it a “monument of a movement.” Visitors to the Stony Island Arts Bank in Chicago will see 2,922 portraits of former President Barack Obama.

“The Obama Paintings” is Rebuild Foundation’s newest exhibit. Pruitt painted Obama’s image for an hour a day while reflecting on his world view.

Each day Pruitt searched online for the previous day’s images of the Democrat who served from 2009 to 2017. He transferred each to a canvas merged with the muted colors of the American flag.

The exhibit runs through Aug. 25.

Vet wins award for book ‘Army of None’

NY NEW YORK — A veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan won a \$5,000 award named for the late CIA director William E. Colby.

Paul Scharre’s “Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War” is this year’s winner of the Colby prize, given annually since 1999 by Norwich University in Northfield, Vt.

Announced Tuesday, the award is presented for a work of fiction or nonfiction about military history, intelligence operations or international affairs.

City to return classic car after 10 years

NM ALBUQUERQUE — An Albuquerque man said he is getting his classic 1970 Chevy returned to him a decade after officers seized it and said earlier this year they

were going to turn it into a show car.

KOB-TV reported Leo Martinez’s 1970 SS Chevy Chevelle 454 was seized in 2009 under a once widely used law enforcement tactic that has since been ruled unconstitutional.

Martinez’s car was seized under an asset forfeiture program after he was pulled over on suspicion of drinking while driving. He pleaded guilty to DWI and spent nine months in jail. He said he could not locate his car until March when he saw a Facebook photo saying the city had it.

Fish turn up dead at kids’ fishing rodeo

MS TUPELO — A children’s fishing rodeo went mostly belly-up in northeast Mississippi after a contractor stocked the lake with diseased and dying catfish.

Tupelo Parks & Recreation Director Alex Farned told The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal that few of the 300 kids who showed up for the April 19 fishing competition caught anything.

Farned said the 1,700 catfish were packed too tightly in the truck and had a bacterial infection. He said city workers have skimmed out more than 1,000 dead fish and buried them.

Beau claims Beautiful Bulldog Contest title

IA DES MOINES — A 3-year-old pet from a suburb of Des Moines is this year’s winner of Drake University’s annual Beautiful Bulldog Contest.

The university said Beau won over the judges with a winning personality, an easy-going manner and good looks. Judge Nadia Valentine said in a university news release that

she chose Beau because of his “squishy” appearance.

He lives in Urbandale with owners T.J. and Angela McKenzie and their three children.

The English bulldog is the Drake mascot.

School’s dress code aimed at parents

TX HOUSTON — A Houston high school adopted a new dress code, but it’s meant for parents and not their children.

James Madison High School will turn away parents if they appear wearing pajamas, hair rollers or leggings, among other banned clothing. Bonnets also are not allowed.

The Houston Chronicle reported that Houston school district policy allows schools to establish standards for student attire and grooming, but no policy exists for parents.

Madison High’s dress code was established shortly after KPRC-TV reported that a parent attempting to enroll her child was asked to leave because of how she was dressed, which included a headscarf and a T-shirt dress.

Critics say the dress code for parents is discriminatory.

Food truck owner gets heat for T-shirt

KY WILLIAMSTOWN — The owner of a Kentucky barbecue food truck got more heat than he bargained for when he began selling T-shirts with the message “I support LGBTQ: Liberty, Guns, Bible, Trump, BBQ.”

Belle’s Smokin’ BBQ owner Jamie Smith said the backlash started with a Facebook post last week advertising the shirts. He said that after a few hours, he began to get threatening calls.

Much of the backlash came after the Louisville Fairness Campaign shared the post on its Facebook page. Smith is still selling the shirts.

3 dozen abandoned rabbits are rescued

IN PORTAGE — Two young people are being credited with helping rescue more than three dozen rabbits that were apparently dumped in the woods in northwestern Indiana.

Johnny Frazier, of Portage, told The (Northwest Indiana) Times he and his friends spotted “a bunch of eyes” peering at them last week as they pulled off a road near the east arm of the Little Calumet River, where they planned to go fishing.

The 18-year-old said the rabbits didn’t appear to be wild, were in poor condition and didn’t flee. Frazier said he called police and animal rescue officials, but they couldn’t help, so he and his friends rounded up 37 rabbits. His girlfriend, Kenna Hubbard, helped clean the animals.

Gator euthanized after getting through fence

FL MIAMI — Officials said they were forced to euthanize an 11-foot alligator that broke through a chain-link fence into the backyard of a Miami home.

The Miami Herald reported firefighters, police and officials with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission tried to capture the 600-pound reptile at first.

A trapper secured the gator with some rope but couldn’t get a good hold on the slippery gator because it was wet from rain and decided to euthanize it.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Hurricanes oust Capitals in 2OTs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Justin Williams returned to the building that was the scene of his only Game 7 loss and left the ice relieved and redeemed after knocking off his old friends and defending Stanley Cup champions.

The man who earned the “Mr. Game 7” moniker shook Alex Ovechkin’s hand after the Carolina Hurricanes’ stunning 4-3 double-overtime victory over the Washington Capitals and beamed with pride in his upstart team’s latest triumph that added another piece to one of the craziest first rounds in recent NHL history. Each conference’s top seed, all four division champions and the teams that met in last year’s Cup Final are all out, and the pesky Hurricanes are storming on to face the New York Islanders in the second round.

“You can kick the snot out of each other and look each other in the eye and say, ‘Man that was a great series, you really pushed us,’” Williams said. “We pushed each other.”

Carolina pushed Washington out of the playoffs by erasing a two-goal deficit and dominating two overtime periods

in the third-longest Game 7 in NHL history. Unheralded forward Brock McGinn, who dived to prevent a Capitals goal late in regulation, redirected Williams’ shot past Braden Holtby 11:05 into the second overtime to send his teammates into a wild celebration and the heavily favored Metropolitan Division champions home early.

The Hurricanes outshot the Capitals 18-6 in the overtimes, and it was clear Ovechkin, Nicklas Backstrom, Evgeny Kuznetsov and the big guns were gassed after each surpassing 30 minutes of ice time.

“Both teams were (tired),” said Ovechkin, who had a series-high nine points. “Players played a lot of minutes.”

The Capitals played a lot of hockey over the past year in winning the first title in franchise history, enduring a midseason seven-game losing streak and still finishing first after 82 games. But they missed an opportunity to close out the Hurricanes in Game 6 on the road Monday, coughed up a lead in the seventh game and bowed out in the first round for the first time since 2013.

It’s the first time in NHL history all four division winners were eliminated in the first round. Unlike Presidents’ Trophy

winning Tampa Bay, which got swept, or Western Conference top seed Calgary that got bounced by Colorado in five games, this was right there for the Capitals with a series lead and a two-goal advantage in Game 7 before it slipped away.

“It’s tough right now,” Backstrom said. “It’s tough. Double overtime. Tough one for us. We were up 3-1. Looking back at that, we need to find a way to shut them down there or keep them out of the score sheet there when we got a 3-1 lead. We gave it to them.”

In just as many ways, the Hurricanes took it. Undaunted by an early deficit, they got second-period goals from Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen and tied it early in the third on Jordan Staal’s third of the series. Petr Mrazek finished off an inconsistent round by stopping 34 of 37 shots and got bailed out by McGinn when he saved a would-be Capitals go-ahead goal with two minutes remaining in the third period.

Slow 40 times could hurt Holyfield’s draft status

Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — The fear of the unknown pushed running back Elijah Holyfield into the NFL Draft instead of returning for his senior season at Georgia.

His slow 40-yard times make that decision look like a risk.

Holyfield was timed at 4.78 seconds in the 40 at the NFL combine. He needed to improve that time at Georgia’s pro day last month but instead was even slower at 4.81 seconds.

Holyfield hopes the traits he inherited from his father, former four-time boxing champion Evander Holyfield — toughness, great balance, off-the-charts work ethic — will overcome the big negative that now overshadows his draft outlook. The 40 times were so

slow that some draft projections say Holyfield’s best hope may be to be picked in the sixth or seven rounds or be invited to camp as a free agent.

“I try not to worry about it,” Holyfield said after the pro day workout. “I have confidence in myself. I can play football. I might not carry the fastest 40 in the world but I can play football better than a lot of people.”

Holyfield (5-10, 217) overcame his lack of speed with his strong, punishing running style last season. He ran for 1,018 yards and seven touchdowns while averaging 6.4 yards per carry. Georgia’s other top back, super-quick D’Andre Swift, had almost identical statistics, averaging 6.4 yards per carry.

Former intern DeCosta taking reins for Ravens

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Not long after Art Modell moved his football team from Cleveland to Baltimore, a young intern joined the Ravens with hopes of learning enough to fulfill his lifelong quest of becoming an NFL general manager.

Eric DeCosta was little more than an errand boy back then. Working at an entry level position, his responsibilities included taking coach Ted Marchibroda’s car for an oil change.

The most rewarding aspect of the job was working under Ozzie Newsome, then the vice president of player personnel. Newsome, who would ultimately become the first African American general manager in

NFL history, was in charge of acquiring talent via the draft and free agency.

“That was one of the joys in my life, sitting down and watching tape with him,” DeCosta said. “He would show me plays and players, we would talk about techniques.”

The 48-year-old DeCosta, after working his way up the team’s corporate ladder, took over for Newsome as Baltimore’s general manager in January and this week, for the first time in franchise history, someone other than Newsome will be in charge of the Ravens draft. His first draft-day decision will come Thursday, when it’s time for Baltimore — barring a trade — to make the No. 22 overall pick.

Clippers force Game 6 against Warriors

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Lou Williams again came off the bench and knocked down big shot after big shot. Patrick Beverley crashed the boards at every chance. Danilo Gallinari drove the lane with authority.

The Los Angeles Clippers took the Warriors right out of their comfort zone by beating the two-time defending champions at their own game with energy on both ends, extending their season long after many had counted them out.

Williams hit a fadeaway jumper with 1:29 left and finished with 33 points and 10 assists, Golden State uncharacteristically clanked shots much of the second half and couldn't make key stops, and the upstart Clippers sent their first-round series back home with a 129-121 Game 5 win on Wednesday night.

No clinch celebration just yet for the two-time defending champions, who lead 3-2 but needed far more than Kevin Durant's playoff career-high 45 points.

"I don't want to get ahead of myself. They're up 3-2 still, but I just loved how we played, I really did," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. "All we talked about is being us. I told our guys, they've been them in the series. We have yet to put a game where we are us through the game."

The Clippers stymied Golden State's comeback effort on the very court at Oracle Arena where Los Angeles rallied from 31 points down in Game 2 for the largest comeback in NBA postseason history.

Game 6 is Friday back in Los Angeles.

Beverley took a big charge against Klay Thompson with 1:40 left and wound up with 17 points and 14 rebounds for his best outing of the series.

"I thought Patrick Beverley came in, just kicked our butts right away," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "He came out with more energy than we had and that set a tone."

Houston and James Harden are on to the second round and waiting for another chance at the champs. The Clippers said not just yet, they're not done.

The Rockets, who squandered a 3-2 series lead to the Warriors in last year's Western Conference finals, eliminated the Jazz with a 100-93 Game 5 victory at home a few hours earlier Wednesday. Sure, the Warriors have thought about a potential second-round matchup.

"Our focus was to come in and extend the series and get another game on our home floor," Williams said. "It's their mistake for looking ahead. That's on them."

Gallinari added 26 points and seven rebounds, and Montrezl Harrell had 24 points as the eighth-seeded Clippers are keeping things interesting until the end.

"We've got to bring it if we're going to beat them," Kerr said.

Durant raised his arm late and called on the Oracle Arena crowd for a major assist — the Warriors needed every little bit of help. Thompson's three with 4:02 left made it 116-114 and Durant tied it on a driving dunk the next time down.

Stephen Curry scored 24 points and Thompson 22 but Golden State didn't have

it on defense.

"If we come out and just think we're going to roll over this team because they're an 8 seed, it doesn't work that way in the NBA playoffs," Warriors center Andrew Bogut said.

Durant shot 14 for 26 in his third performance of at least 30 points in the series and ninth 40-point postseason effort.

Curry, already the NBA's career playoff leader for made three-pointers, reached 400 postseason threes.

But the Warriors — all of them, their best shooters — missed badly on good looks and couldn't defend the way they typically do to generate that sensational transition game.

"That's the worst-case scenario for any team. You're missing shots and can't get stops, you feel like you're in a bottomless pit," Durant said. "Hopefully we knock down shots and get stops next game."

Golden State trailed 71-63 at halftime despite making 10 of 16 threes but allowed Los Angeles to shoot 56%, and the Clippers finished at 54.1%.

Gallinari hit a three out of the break then a free throw following Draymond Green's technical and Los Angeles made it 81-66 on JaMychal Green's three at the 9:09 mark.

"It's been a year where things haven't gone exactly smoothly all the time," Kerr said. "I'm not surprised by anything, but I expected to come out and play better and win the game. But it's the NBA playoffs. This is a seven-game series and you've got to play. You've got to defend with some urgency."

Rockets advance, waiting on shot at Warriors

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Minutes after the Houston Rockets eliminated the Utah Jazz to advance to the Western Conference semifinals for the third straight season they were already looking ahead to the possibility of getting another shot at the Golden State Warriors.

"That's what I want," center Clint Capela said. "I want to face them."

Veteran Chris Paul slightly scolded the 24-year-old for acknowledging that this is the matchup Houston has been looking forward to all season.

"That's going to be all over (the internet)," Paul said.

But Paul couldn't deny that the Rockets are well aware that the Warriors have been the biggest roadblock to them vying for their first title in more than 20 years.

"Real talk, in order to get to where you want to get to, you have to go through them," he said. "They're the reigning champs. They've been running the West for five years now."

But the Rockets will have to wait to see if they'll get that shot at the Warriors after they failed to close out their series with the Clippers on Wednesday, as Los Angeles won 129-121 to force Game 6.

Houston has been eliminated by the Warriors in the post-

season in three of the last four seasons, including twice in the Western Conference finals. The Rockets took a 3-2 lead over Golden State in the conference finals last year before dropping the final two games with Paul out with a hamstring injury.

"If they come out of it, it's going to be a great series," coach Mike D'Antoni said. "We said all year: 'Let's run it back.' Well, OK. I guess we're going to run it back."

Houston took a 3-0 lead in their first-round series against the Jazz before missing all 13 of their three-point attempts in the fourth quarter of a Game 4 loss in Utah. The Rockets weren't particularly sharp on

offense in their 100-93 win that closed out the series on Wednesday night, but they were proud of their defense.

Ricky Rubio cut Houston's lead to 94-93 on a jump shot with about a minute left. P.J. Tucker missed two free throws, but grabbed a loose ball seconds later and was fouled again. This time he made both shots to make it 96-93.

James Harden blocked a shot by Ruby Gobert on Utah's next possession and he made two free throws to extend the lead to 98-93 with 38 seconds left.

Donovan Mitchell missed a three-pointer after that and Paul added two more free throws to secure the victory.

Yanks rally over Angels to win 6th straight

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — DJ LeMahieu singled home Tyler Wade with the tiebreaking run in the ninth, and the New York Yankees rallied from a five-run deficit for their sixth consecutive victory, 6-5 over the hapless Los Angeles Angels on Wednesday night.

Wade made up for an earlier baserunning mishap when he got a two-out single off Ty Buttrey (1-1) and stole second. LeMahieu then drove in his third run of the night for the Yankees, who trailed 5-0 after five innings before rallying to win at Angel Stadium for a franchise-record sixth straight time.

CC Sabathia fell short of recording his 3,000th career strikeout while yielding four earned runs and six hits over five innings for the Yankees.

Andrelton Simmons hit two homers off Sabathia, and Kole Calhoun added a three-run homer during Los Angeles' four-run fourth inning.

But the last-place Angels blew it all in their ninth loss in 10 games, and the no-name Yankees just kept winning.

Jonathan Loaisiga (1-0) pitched three innings of two-hit relief in his first game back from the minors. Aroldis Chapman pitched the ninth for his fourth save.

Buttrey was one strike away from completing three innings of hitless relief before the Yankees rallied.

Sabathia needed six strikeouts in Anaheim to become the 17th member of the 3,000 club, but the veteran left-hander managed to strike out just three Angels.

Shortly after Albert Pujols got his 3,099th career hit on his second single off Sabathia, Calhoun drove a hanging breaking ball into the elevated right field stands for his fifth homer of an otherwise rough offensive start.

Roundup

Hoskins trolls Mets with stroll

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rhys Hoskins homered off reliever Jacob Rhame and taunted him with a slow jog around the bases a night after Rhame buzzed him with two fastballs, and struggling Philadelphia beat New York 6-0.

Hoskins was furious after Rhame sailed two pitches over his head with two outs in the ninth inning of New York's 9-0 win Tuesday. The slugger faced Rhame again in the ninth Wednesday, flipping his bat emphatically after hooking a two-run shot over the wall in left.

It took Hoskins 34.23 seconds to touch them all, the slowest trot in the majors this season.

Velasquez (1-0) struck out six and allowed three hits in five innings, dropping his ERA to 1.99, as the Phillies avoided a three-game sweep.

Jason Vargas (1-1) allowed Bryce Harper's RBI double in the first but was otherwise strong.

Cardinals 5, Brewers 2: St. Louis pitcher Adam Wainwright was warm enough on a cool day, allowing one run in six innings for his 150th career victory, and the host Cardinals beat Milwaukee to complete a three-game sweep.

Last year's National League MVP, Christian Yelich, had most of the day off but still had a chance to rescue the Brewers. He came up as a pinch-hitter with the bases loaded in the ninth inning, but Jordan Hicks struck him out to pick up his seventh save in eight chances.

Padres 1, Mariners 0: San Diego rookie Chris Paddack shut down baseball's highest-scoring offense for his first victory, holding visiting Seattle to one hit in seven innings and retiring his final 19 batters, nine by strikeout.

Paddack and relievers Trey Wingenter and Kirby Yates combined on a two-hitter.

Cubs 7, Dodgers 6: Javier Baez and Jason Heyward each hit three-run homers in the sixth inning, and host Chicago overcame a wild start by Cole Hamels to beat Los Angeles.

Baez chased Walker Buehler with a long, tying drive to left on an 0-2 pitch with two outs.

Giants 4, Blue Jays 0: Drew Pomeranz and two relievers combined on a two-hitter, Pablo Sandoval homered for the second straight game, and San Francisco completed a two-game sweep at Toronto.

Buster Posey, Brandon Belt and Evan Longoria all hit RBI doubles as the Giants won their second straight following a season-high four-game losing streak.

Astros 7, Twins 1: Justin Verlander pitched eight dominant innings, and Carlos Correa, Michael Brantley and Josh Reddick all homered to lead host Houston past Minnesota.

Verlander (4-0) retired the first 10 batters before Jorge Polanco crushed a pitch into the second deck in right field in the fourth inning. Verlander retired 11 of his last 12 batters.

Red Sox 11, Tigers 4: J.D. Martinez had three hits and Eduardo Rodriguez pitched six strong innings as host Boston rebounded from a doubleheader sweep to beat Detroit.

The defending World Series champion Red Sox avoided their fourth losing streak of three games or more.

Royals 10, Rays 2: Tampa Bay ace Blake Snell lasted one out into the fourth inning in his return from a broken right fourth toe as Kansas City cruised to victory at Tampa Bay.

The 2018 AL Cy Young Award winner, who hurt the toe attempting to move a decorative display in his bathroom on April 14, allowed three runs, five hits, two walks and struck out three during a 65-pitch outing.

Indians 6, Marlins 2: Jose Ramirez homered and drove in four runs, Jake Bauers' eighth-inning single scored the go-

ahead run and host Cleveland beat Miami.

Martin Prado's two-out homer for the Marlins tied the game in the top of the eighth, but the Indians responded by scoring four times to snap a three-game losing streak.

Athletics 6, Rangers 5: Chad Pinder's two-out RBI single in the ninth inning lifted host Oakland over Texas.

Stephen Piscotty singled with one out off Chris Martin (1-1) and then stole second base. After Khris Davis flied out, Pinder looped a soft hit into right field. Piscotty slid into home plate to beat a wide throw home from Nomar Mazara as the A's dugout emptied, mobbing Pinder near first base.

Rockies 9, Nationals 5: Raimel Tapia had two doubles and drove in three runs to back a solid outing from German Marquez, and host Colorado beat Washington.

Charlie Blackmon homered and Trevor Story extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a double and a triple. Nolan Arenado had three RBIs, David Dahl had three hits and Wade Davis picked up his third save. The Rockies have won eight of their last 10.

Diamondbacks 11, Pirates 2: Ketel Marte homered twice and Arizona won at Pittsburgh for the ninth straight time.

Marte extended Arizona's lead to 5-1 with a solo shot in the fifth inning and drove a three-run shot, his sixth homer this season, into the left-field bleachers in the eighth.

Braves 3, Reds 1: Ozzie Albies homered on the game's first pitch and Ronald Acuna Jr. scored from first base on Yasiel Puig's fifth-inning error, helping Atlanta win at Cincinnati.

Orioles 4, White Sox 3: Stevie Wilkerson hit his first major league homer, John Means pitched five effective innings on his birthday and host Baltimore beat Chicago.