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Sub commander relieved of duty amid misconduct claims

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The commander of a Navy submarine crew who was removed from duty last month amid allegations of misconduct has been charged with adultery and conduct unbecoming an officer, a Navy spokesman said Wednesday.

Navy Cmdr. Steven Everhart was removed June 23 from his job as the blue crew commander of the USS Pennsylvania by Capt. Mark Schmall, Submarine Squadron 17 commander, who cited a loss of confidence in Everhart, said Navy Cmdr.

Corey Barker, a spokesman for U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The Navy recently completed its investigation of Everhart, Barker said. The investigation, which began in early June, supported charging him with violating Uniform Code of Military Justice Articles 133 and 134, conduct unbecoming an officer and adultery, respectively, he said.

“Appropriate disciplinary and administrative actions are in progress,” Barker said, without providing additional details.

Following his removal from the Pennsylvania, an Ohio-class ballistic missile subma-

rine, Everhart was assigned to the staff of Submarine Group 9 in Bangor, Wash., where he remains, Barker said.

Navy Capt. Chad Hennings, the deputy commander of Submarine Squadron 17, replaced Everhart at the helm of the Pennsylvania and will remain there until a permanent replacement can take command.

Everhart assumed command of the submarine crew in January.

He previously had served aboard the Pennsylvania, including a stint as its blue crew executive officer from 2012 to 2014, according to the Navy.

Naples base gets a new commander

BY SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The command of the Navy base here — home to the 6th Fleet and headquarters of U.S. Naval Forces Europe — passed from one Navy pilot’s hands to another’s on Thursday.

Capt. Douglas Carpenter relinquished command of Naval Support Activity Naples to Capt. Todd Abrahamson.

“These last three years have been rewarding but tough,” Carpenter said. “Together we made a lot of progress.”

Carpenter will head to Washington, where he will work in operations policies and assessment at the Navy Yard.

The two captains have much in common. Both became Navy pilots shortly after becoming officers, served on several aircraft carrier deployments and have overseen large operations.

Abrahamson’s most recent job was executive assistant at the Pentagon. In 2012, he was an air officer aboard the USS Nimitz, which this week began launching airstrikes in the Persian Gulf against Islamic State. He flew with the Blue Angels from 2002 to 2003.

Abrahamson, who is the base’s 34th commander, said he looked forward to carrying on Carpenter’s work. “I’m fired up and ready to go,” he said.

Carpenter spoke in Italian during the ceremony to praise the partnership between Italy and America. Without the Italians’ help, he said, he couldn’t have accomplished nearly as much.

Rear Adm. Rick Williamson, region commander for Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia, praised Carpenter’s leadership and called his departure bittersweet.

China joins search for missing sailor

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The Chinese navy has joined a joint U.S.-Japanese search for a missing American sailor who was reported overboard from a U.S. warship Tuesday in the South China Sea.

The sailor, who is a male lieutenant according to The Associated Press, had not been found as of Thursday evening local time, Navy officials said. They have not released the sailor’s name.

“The search is ongoing,” Navy Lt. Paul Newell, a 7th Fleet spokesman, said Thursday. “We still have assets out there looking for this sailor.”

Two Chinese navy frigates were shadowing the guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem when the sailor was reported overboard about 9 a.m., Navy

officials said. A call went out to mariners in the area asking for assistance, and the Chinese navy joined search-and-rescue efforts sometime Wednesday.

“They were in the area. ... It’s common for mariners to render assistance [when a sailor is reported overboard],” Newell said. “They were in a position to help.”

Navy officials did not have specifics on precisely which Chinese ships are helping. They said Chinese aircraft are not involved in the search.

The Stethem, USNS Amelia Earhart, USNS Vice Admiral K.R. Wheeler and a Navy P-3 aircraft are involved in the search. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force has dedicated two ships — the helicopter carrier JS Izumo and the destroyer JS Sazanami — along

with helicopters from the Izumo to the efforts.

China’s effort to find the missing U.S. sailor will likely have little impact on the countries’ tense relationship, said Homare Endo, director of the International Exchange Center of the Tokyo University of Social Welfare.

“I don’t believe China helped to deliberately bring change to the U.S.-China relationship,” said Endo, who said she believes China’s involvement is more of a public relations move to deflect criticism over its military buildup in the South China Sea.

It could also be to “regain face,” she said, after refusing to properly thank the Japan Coast Guard after it rescued Chinese fishermen who were lost at sea last year after a collision with a Greek vessel.

Report: Trump fumes over Afghan stalemate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has become increasingly frustrated by the situation in Afghanistan and recently has floated a change in command as he struggles to settle on a new strategy after years of war.

NBC News first reported Wednesday that Trump fumed during a meeting last month over the lack of progress. The network said he also proposed firing Army Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, during the heated Situation Room exchange.

The U.S. has been fighting in Afghanistan for nearly 16 years, but Trump has yet to settle on a new strategy for achieving the goal he inherited from the Obama administration: getting the Afghan government to a point at which it can defend itself.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said last month that the administration was “close” to announcing its new strategy — despite blowing a self-imposed deadline — but was still sorting out “the big ideas,” beyond troop levels and other military details.

“It just takes time,” he said. “It wasn’t that past presidents were dumb or anything else. This is hard work, so you’ve got to get it right. That’s all there is to it.”

Mattis said as recently as June that “we are not winning” the war. Trump’s predecessors also struggled with the task of stabilizing the country and bringing U.S. troops home.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders referred questions about the meeting to the National Security Council.

“The president’s national security team is developing a comprehensive, integrated strategy for South Asia that utilizes all aspects of our national power to address this complex region,” said NSC spokesman Michael Anton in a statement. “That strategy has been worked carefully in the interagency process and while no decision has been made the president’s team continues to develop options for him that address threats and opportunities to America arising from this vital region.”

He declined to comment on details of the classified meeting.

The meeting took place the day after

Trump took the unusual step of having lunch with a group of servicemembers who’d spent time on the ground in Afghanistan to try to brainstorm new ideas for fighting the war.

“I’m going to be talking to you about Afghanistan, what you think, your views,” Trump said as he sat down for lunch, telling reporters, “These are people on the ground — know it probably better than anybody.”

According to NBC, Trump brought up the lunchtime conversation at the meeting with senior aides and advisers, comparing the soldiers’ on-the-ground perspective to waiters who know the ins and outs of the restaurants where they work. He at one point brought up what he said was an ill-advised closure of Manhattan’s 21 Club restaurant, which he blamed on an expensive consultant.

Trump has long expressed skepticism about experts’ conclusions, including the U.S. intelligence community and military commanders. “I know more about ISIS than the generals do. Believe me,” he said at one point during his campaign.

Military wrangles over release of casualty information

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon’s announcement of two U.S. servicemembers killed in an attack in southern Afghanistan is highlighting a disagreement over how the military should handle information about American casualties.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, confirmed the deaths after U.S. military officials in Afghanistan acknowledged coalition “casualties” without clarifying if that meant U.S. or NATO coalition forces had died or were wounded.

Distancing himself from other U.S. military commanders in all of the other combat regions of the world — including Iraq and Syria — the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan has ordered that no information about U.S. deaths be released until days after the incident so that families can be notified first. Army Gen. John Nicholson’s decision has met opposition within the Pentagon,

where senior officials for weeks have said they were working to resolve the issue.

Nicholson’s change upends Pentagon practice since the days of the Vietnam War, giving the public less information and transparency into an Afghanistan conflict that has raged for 16 years and resulted in thousands of American deaths and injuries. Previous U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have put out preliminary information about troops’ deaths regularly since the war’s start in 2001. Such initial information reveals only the number of U.S. forces killed and not any personally identifying details until families are notified.

Nicholson made the change about two months ago in what officials said was an effort to protect families of the fallen. Officials at the time said Nicholson felt the small number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan could make it easier for people to figure out what unit might be involved in any incident. There

are at least 8,400 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, with hundreds more likely there on temporary or other duty.

“Our primary concern is to ensure that we do everything we can to provide for the families of our fallen and wounded warriors,” said Navy Capt. Bill Salvin, spokesman for the military operation in Afghanistan. “We are also committed to informing the public about our operations, including information about casualties, in a timely manner consistent with operational security and our obligation to care for the families of our servicemembers.”

Other U.S. commanders haven’t followed Nicholson’s lead. They’ve continued to follow the well-worn, routine practice of quickly putting out basic information in war zones across Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Africa, where there are often far fewer U.S. forces than in Afghanistan.

Even after the Pentagon’s announcement of the two deaths,

U.S. officials in Afghanistan said they still weren’t authorized to confirm any Americans killed or wounded.

For decades, the Pentagon and the military services have released basic information on servicemembers’ deaths quickly. The practice held for those killed in war or in military aircraft, ship or other accidents. In June, the military promptly reported seven sailors killed after a U.S. Navy ship collided with a Philippine freighter. It followed the same practice last month when a U.S. military transport plane crashed, killing 15 Marines and a Navy sailor.

Separately on Wednesday, the U.S. military’s Operation Inherent Resolve, which oversees the fight in Iraq and Syria, issued a statement saying one American servicemember had died in a noncombat incident in Kuwait that day.

Providing such basic information, officials long ago concluded, doesn’t violate family privacy.

Trump signs bill on Russia sanctions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dealt a striking congressional rebuke, Donald Trump grudgingly signed what he called a “seriously flawed” package of sanctions against Russia, bowing for the moment to resistance from both parties to his push for warmer ties with Moscow.

Trump signed the most significant piece of legislation of his presidency Wednesday with no public event. And he coupled it with a written statement, resentful in tone, that accused Congress of overstepping its constitutional bounds, impeding his ability to negotiate with foreign countries and lacking any ability to strike deals.

“Congress could not even negotiate a health care bill after seven years of talking,” he said scornfully of lawmakers’ recent failure to repeal former President Barack Obama’s health care law as he and other Republicans have promised for years. “As president, I can make far better deals with foreign countries than Congress.”

Still, he said, “despite its problems, I am signing this bill for the sake of national unity.”

Military: Afghanistan attack that killed 2 US troops also wounded 4

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

An attack on a NATO convoy on Wednesday that killed two U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan also wounded four U.S. soldiers, military officials said Thursday.

The four wounded soldiers were receiving treatment at a coalition medical facility Thursday morning, NATO’s Resolute Support mission said in a statement. Their wounds were not considered life-threatening.

The Republic, of Columbus, Ind., reported that family members identified one of the fallen soldiers as Army Sgt. Jonathon M. Hunter. The newspaper said Hunter, 23, was with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, which happened outside a base near the southern city of Kandahar.

The Taliban said a suicide bomber detonated a bomb-laden pickup near the military convoy as it was returning to Kandahar Air Field following a meeting at the provincial governor’s residence. The group, which often embellishes its claims, said it killed 15 foreign troops, including two generals, and destroyed two armored vehicles.

The Pentagon on Wednesday confirmed the deaths of two Americans killed during the attack. The Pentagon has not identified the two servicemembers.

“I offer our deepest condolences to the families of our fallen comrades,” Gen. John Nichol-

son, the Resolute Support commander, said in the statement. The soldiers “gave their lives in service of a mission that is critically important to the United States, our allies and partners.”

Wednesday’s deaths bring to nine the number of U.S. fatalities in the country this year — all of them soldiers. Most of those deaths occurred in eastern Afghanistan, where the U.S. military is assisting Afghan forces against an Islamic State affiliate that has carried out multiple high-profile attacks in the country.

The U.S. has sustained more than 1,800 combat deaths in Afghanistan since it led the 2001 invasion, as well as nearly 400 noncombat deaths. Annual combat fatalities have dropped sharply from a peak of 440 in 2010, according to iCasualties.org, a website that tracks coalition deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The NATO mission in Afghanistan currently consists of about 13,500 troops from 39 partner countries, compared with almost 120,000 from 47 countries in 2010. Nearly 7,000 U.S. troops are now deployed in support of that mission, mainly to train and advise their Afghan counterparts. Some 1,500 more are taking part in a separate counterterrorism mission in the country.

For months, the Trump administration has been mulling its strategy in Afghanistan, as well as a decision about whether to send another 4,000 troops to stem Taliban gains. Nicholson had requested the additional troops for help with training, advising and assisting the Afghan security forces.

Mattis, Tillerson open to new war authorization

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration told Congress on Wednesday it has sufficient legal authority to use military force against Islamic State based on the 2001 law to counter al-Qaida approved shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks.

But members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis informed them during a closed-door briefing that they would be open to an updated authorization provided the measure doesn’t impose tactically unwise restrictions or infringe on the president’s constitutional powers as commander in chief.

“They were very open to the idea of working on an authorization, not because they feel like they legally have to have it, but they think for the mission, itself, it

would be good to have Congress engaged in that way,” said Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., who is sponsoring legislation to install a new war authority for operations against ISIS, al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Kaine said Mattis told committee members “if you do an authorization now, you express a congressional resolve, which is really the American public’s resolve” that Congress and the administration are on the same page.

Ahead of the briefing by Tillerson and Mattis, the State Department delivered a letter to Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., the committee’s chairman, that said the 2001 law grants the military the authority to defend U.S. and allied forces fighting against ISIS militants. The administration said the authority extends to the fight against al-Qaida and associated forces, including ISIS.

“This legal authority includes the 2001 Authorization for the Use Military Forces which authorizes the use of military force against these groups,” said the letter signed by Charles Faulkner, of the department’s legislative affairs office. “Accordingly, the administration is not seeking revisions to the 2001 AUMF or additional authorization to use force.”

Republicans and Democrats have raised questions about whether the 2001 law should be revised. But finding common ground is much harder than it sounds. Congress, nearly 16 years after approving the first authorization, has failed to pass another due to disagreements over whether to impose time restrictions or to allow ground troops.

Corker stressed that Tillerson and Mattis don’t want the 2001 war authorization repealed until a new one is in place.

Peanut butter jailbreak not so nutty as it sounds

Associated Press

MIAMI — Using peanut butter to escape from the Walker County Jail in Alabama isn't as crazy as it sounds.

Belinda Ann Weldon, an Alabama attorney familiar with the jail who represents the last of 12 inmates to be captured after escaping Sunday, said she can see how a guard watching remotely could be fooled if inmates partially obscure the number that identifies each door.

"That placard has a number on it; it's an off-white. They covered it in peanut butter. Say the number was an 8; they made it look like a 9," she said. "He pushed the button for a door that instead of going into a dorm went to an outside door."

Authorities said the inexperienced guard, watching 150 inmates through security cameras from a control room, thought he was opening the cell at an inmate's request.

But a dozen inmates were able to flee, throwing off their orange jail uniforms and running in every direction.

The first 11 inmates were captured within hours of their escape, never leaving the county, but Brady Kilpatrick, 24, made it all the way to Martin County, Fla., persuading his sister to drive him, authorities said.

Martin County Sheriff William Snyder announced Tuesday night that investigators "zeroed in" on a house on a quiet street in Tequesta, just north of West Palm Beach, where a car with an Alabama license plate was parked outside.

A short time later, Kilpatrick was arrested, along with his sister, Jensen Davis Lefan, 18; her boyfriend, Hayden Thomas Mayberry, 24; and Mayberry's childhood friend, Dakota Anthony, 23.

Lefan, of Cordova, Ala., told investigators her brother called her shortly after the escape, asking for a ride. She and Mayberry borrowed a car from his roommate and picked up Kilpatrick a short time later.

In Florida, Snyder praised his department and other agencies for using a "good tactical approach" once they located the home in Tequesta.

"Let's suffice it to say we had an overwhelming force and more than adequate resources as he made the unwise decision of trying to escape out of the house," he said.

Kilpatrick — initially jailed in Alabama on charges of possessing drugs and paraphernalia — now faces prosecution on much tougher crimes.

Snyder said he tried to hide in the wrong county.

"Look, I don't like to brag," the sheriff told reporters, "but we've never had an escape from the Martin County Jail. I can tell you this, he won't be getting any peanut butter."

No lie, says Sanders: Trump praised by Mexico, Scouts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fake news or fib?

Two phone calls described by President Donald Trump that didn't actually happen represent the latest chapter in a long-running series of disputes revolving around the president's rocky relationship with facts.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders on Wednesday found herself explaining that compliments Trump had described receiving in phone calls from the Mexican president and the Boy Scouts did happen — just not on the phone.

"I wouldn't say it was a lie. That's a pretty bold accusation," she told reporters. "The conversations took place; they just simply didn't take place over a phone call. ... He had them in person."

The noncalls weren't earth-shattering news. But they fit a pattern that also involves weightier issues and that has raised larger questions about Trump's credibility six months into his presidency.

After Donald Trump Jr. put out a statement, later shown to be misleading, about his meeting with a Russian lawyer in 2016, the president's outside lawyer was

categorical that the president had no role in drafting the statement. But when The Washington Post later reported that the president had dictated the statement for his son, Sanders acknowledged that Trump had "weighed in" on his son's statement "as any father would based on the limited information that he had."

Polls, history and other research leave open the question of how impressions of Trump's truthfulness affect his job approval, which hovers around a third of Americans.

Trump won the presidential election despite having promoted false claims such as the notion that President Barack Obama was born outside the U.S. (he was born in Hawaii) and that Hillary Clinton had started the rumor (she didn't).

A Quinnipiac poll released Wednesday found that for all of the economic and other progress Trump claims, just 33 percent of Americans approve of the job he's doing, similar to the results of a survey conducted in June by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Only 34 percent of the Quinnipiac poll respondents say that Trump is "honest."

'Forever GI Bill' goes to Trump

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed legislation Wednesday that veterans advocates are describing as the largest expansion of veterans' education benefits in a decade. With senators' unanimous consent, the bill moves to President Donald Trump's desk to become law.

The measure passed through committees and cleared the House and the Senate just 20 days after it was introduced. Among other things, it ends a 15-year limit for veterans to use their education benefits, restores benefits to veterans whose schools abruptly close and fixes a Pentagon deployment authorization that has kept about 5,000 reservists from accumulating earned education benefits.

The bill has widespread support among veterans and higher-education organizations that celebrated the Senate's approval Wednesday. They dubbed it the "Forever GI Bill" because of the elimination of the 15-year deadline to use education benefits. That restriction will be gone

for veterans who were discharged on or after Jan. 1, 2013. The bill also eliminates the "Post-9/11" from the GI Bill's title.

Lauren Augustine, director of government relations for the group Got Your 6, said the quick passage was proof that "even a divided nation can come together to support our veterans."

The bill awards full GI Bill benefits to all Purple Heart recipients and expands eligibility for the Yellow Ribbon Program to surviving spouses and children of servicemembers killed in the line of duty. The program allows veterans to attend schools or to enroll in programs that cost more than the GI Bill tuition cap.

It also boosts aid for veterans pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees and increases payments by \$2,300 per year to veterans with less than one year of active-duty service.

To offset costs, the legislation calls for reducing the annual growth of GI Bill recipients' living stipends to fall in line with active-duty servicemembers' basic housing allowance. The decrease would not apply to people now using the GI Bill.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Newborn calf resembles KISS rocker Simmons

TX KERRVILLE—KISS frontman Gene Simmons is udderly thrilled by a newborn calf born with strikingly similar black-and-white markings to the face paint he wears on stage.

Simmons tweeted his admiration for the calf Sunday, saying, “This is real, folks!!!”

The calf was born Friday at a ranch near Kerrville, Texas, which is about 60 miles northwest of San Antonio.

Heather Taccetta, who lives at the ranch with her family, said Tuesday that the calf belongs to her grandmother.

It is named Genie, in honor of Simmons.

Police: Goat walks off ‘goatscaping’ job

RI WARWICK — Police in Rhode Island are asking people to be on the lookout for a goat that wandered off a landscaping job.

Warwick police said the goat, which goes by the names Sammy and Frank, turned up missing during a post-work head count on Tuesday.

He is owned by The Goat-scaping Co., based in Plympton, Mass., which offers the ruminants as an alternative to herbicides in the management of vegetation.

Police said he has one curly horn and is small, brown and generally “funny looking.”

Anyone who spots a goat roaming in the Warwick Neck area, or anywhere else in Warwick, is asked to call police.

Teen sitting in hammock killed by falling tree

KY FORT THOMAS — A teenage girl in Ken-

tucky was struck and killed by a tree that was supporting a hammock she was sitting in.

WCPO-TV reported that Capt. Steve Lumpp, of the Fort Thomas Fire Department, said the 15-year-old girl was sitting with a friend on a hammock that was tied between two trees Tuesday evening.

One of the trees fell onto the girl, killing her instantly.

The second girl wasn't hurt. Police haven't released the victim's name.

Authorities described the tree as old. It's unclear what caused the tree to collapse.

Climber's body to remain on glacier

WA BELLINGHAM — The body of a Bellingham woman will remain on a North Cascades National Park glacier indefinitely after a recovery team decided a mission to the site would be too dangerous.

The Bellingham Herald reported a team of national park climbing rangers trained in search and rescue made the decision Monday.

Mountaineer Susan Bennett died July 22 in a fall while rappelling from Forbidden Peak, one of the region's most treacherous rock faces.

She was with a group of four climbers who had reached the summit.

A helicopter rescue crew located her body in a 30-foot crevasse, but could not reach her. Two other attempts were aborted.

Police: Woman shaved boy's head in retaliation

MO EUREKA — Police in suburban St. Louis are investigating the case of a woman suspected of

shaving a neighbor boy's head and writing “pervert” on his forehead in retaliation for his interaction with her daughter.

Police in Eureka told KMOV-TV the woman apparently was upset after her daughter told her the boy had pulled her hair and touched her inappropriately while she was spending the night with the boy's sister. The boy and the girl are both 9.

Police Lt. Dave Wilson said the 34-year-old woman took action when the boy came to her apartment the next day looking for his sister. Wilson said the woman pulled the boy inside, shaved his head and wrote on his forehead using a felt-tip pen.

Man found stuck in pickup on impound lot

CA SAN DIEGO — A tow company employee was taking inventory of an impounded pickup when he heard pounding and screaming coming from inside.

He and other workers had to unbolt the backseat of the Toyota Tundra before they found a Chinese man in the country illegally hidden in a specially built compartment.

Border Patrol spokesman Mark Endicott said man in the truck and the man who had been driving it both have been arrested.

San Diego police Officer Billy Hernandez said the truck had been impounded after the owner was cited for speeding and driving without a license early Saturday.

'Giant cage' could help reduce burned birds

NJ LYNDHURST — A giant, cage-like structure being installed at a New Jersey landfill is expected to re-

duce the number of birds killed by nearly invisible flames as they fly over the Meadowlands, local officials said.

The barely detectable flames shoot from pipes used to burn off excess methane at some landfills.

The structure — about seven stories tall — is being installed in a Lyndhurst landfill. The Record reported that Public Service Electric and Gas Co. came up with the design for the cage and installed a frame.

Bergen County Audubon Society President Don Torino said he's complained for years to the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, which oversees the closed Kingsland Landfill in Lyndhurst. He called the structure plan “a good shot” at fixing the problem.

Dinosaur fossil found on site of bike trail

CO GRAND JUNCTION — Colorado government officials say they found a dinosaur fossil while they were conducting early surveys for a bike trail.

The Daily Sentinel reported experts believe the large lower leg bone belonged to a duck-billed dinosaur named hadrosaur that roamed in the Grand Junction area 70 million years ago.

It was found on the open face of a boulder facing the future site of the 30-mile Palisade Plunge mountain biking route that will go from the top of Grand Mesa to the town of Palisade.

The bone was removed from the site by a Bureau of Land Management team, a local paleontologist and a sedimentologist last week. They sent it to a lab at the Museums of Western Colorado, where it will be cleaned and studied.

From wire reports

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Reporting
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and Military News

Backfield beasts entering Hall of Fame

Tomlinson's numbers left no doubt of talent

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — One of the greatest moments in San Diego Chargers history came on Dec. 10, 2006, when LaDainian Tomlinson swept left and into the record book.

With the capacity crowd at Qualcomm Stadium on its feet, Tomlinson scored his third touchdown of the day and his 29th of the season, breaking the NFL's single-season record.

He was engulfed by his massive offensive linemen, hoisted onto their shoulders and carried toward the sideline. Tomlinson held the ball high in his right hand while waving his left index finger as the crowd chanted "L.T.! L.T.!" and "MVP! MVP!"

Tomlinson finished with 31 touchdowns, 28 rushing, in one of the greatest seasons in NFL history. He also ran away with the Most Valuable Player Award.

Those magical days are long gone, as are the San Diego Chargers. They officially ceased to exist on Jan. 12, when chairman Dean Spanos announced he was moving the team to a Los Angeles suburb.

The San Diego Chargers will live on, though, through players such as Tomlinson, who will be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Saturday.

Many fans are still angry at Spanos for bailing for Los Angeles, where the Chargers will play in a 30,000-seat soccer stadium before moving into a stadium being built by Rams owner Stan Kroenke. Some have been further incensed because Tomlinson, once universally beloved in San Diego, has taken a job as a special assistant to Spanos.

Tomlinson said he isn't conflicted in the slightest as he prepares to accept his Hall of Fame bust.

"I'm going in as a San Diego Charger because that's who I played for," Tomlinson said. "And I recognize that you cannot erase the history of 56 years in San Diego. However, I do realize that I now work for Dean Spanos and the L.A. Chargers,

and so there's no conflict there. I know who I played for, but now in my retirement I now work for the L.A. Chargers, who, in my mind they're the Chargers.

"To me it's always been about the lightning bolt. And that's my thought about conflict and what not."

But Tomlinson, inspired in his youth by watching Walter Payton and Emmitt Smith, said it hasn't been easy.

"It's been a lot of, I won't say sleepless nights, but tossing and turning sometimes at night wondering if I'm making the right decision," Tomlinson said. "But at the end of the day, I love both. I have the bolt tattoo on my calf, there's no secret about that. There's a part of me that always will be. But the same goes with the community. I came here as a 21-year-old kid and I left a 30-year-old man. So I learned how to be a man in this community. So I'm kind of torn. I can't have one without the other. The Chargers were here for 56 years and it's hard to just get over that."

According to the Hall of Fame, the only other person to be enshrined the same year that the team he played for relocated was Orlando Pace from the class of 2016. His St. Louis Rams moved back to L.A. last season.

Tomlinson played nine mostly brilliant seasons for the Chargers (2001-2009) before being released for salary cap reasons and because his role had decreased. He played two seasons with the New York Jets before retiring.

Tomlinson rushed for 12,490 yards and 138 touchdowns with the Chargers, club records by far. He won NFL rushing titles in 2006 and '07.

Tomlinson finished his career with 13,684 yards rushing, fifth all-time, on 3,174 carries. His 145 rushing touchdowns rank second and his 163 total TDs are third, behind Jerry Rice (208) and Emmitt Smith (175).

Hall of Fame numbers for sure.

Davis' spectacular career cut short by injuries

Associated Press

DENVER — In between the magnificence and the migraines, Terrell Davis' NFL voyage was bookended by two bone-crushing hits that came to define a career remembered as much for its brevity as its brilliance.

The first hit harkened his arrival, the second one his departure.

Davis was just another lost-in-the-shuffle rookie back in 1995 filled with doubts when the Denver Broncos traveled to Tokyo for an exhibition game against the San Francisco 49ers.

"Let's just say if I spoke better Japanese I wouldn't be here," said Davis, who contemplated quitting football right then and there. "I'm telling you, I was this close to walking out of there because I looked at everything around me and I just had no shot of making the team. I was a sixth-round draft pick, I was seventh on the depth chart, I wasn't getting any reps in practice, I had my coach constantly on me. And it just didn't feel like there was any way of me making the team."

He told himself he could put his degree in consumer economics from the University of Georgia to use instead as he pondered catching his own flight home.

"Thank God I didn't," Davis said. "And then I made the big hit."

Summoned to cover a kickoff the next night, the rookie on nobody's radar burst downfield and delivered a savage hit on returner Tyrone Drakeford that left fellow Hall-of-Famer-to-be Shannon Sharpe marveling, "Who was that?!"

That was the savior who would end the frustrations of a long-suffering franchise, city and larger-than-life quarterback who could never win the big game before Davis came along.

Davis is the only running back with back-to-back Super Bowl titles, an MVP trophy, a Super

Bowl MVP honor, a 2,000-yard season and seven consecutive playoff wins in which he topped 100 yards rushing.

He accomplished all this despite playing just four full seasons and enduring migraine headaches like the one he suffered against Green Bay in Super Bowl 32, when he scored three touchdowns after regaining his vision at halftime.

Davis shudders to think how close he came to frittering it all away.

"For anybody out there struggling, I try to tell them even if your situation seems dire, don't give up," said Davis. "Just keep fighting, keep fighting, keep fighting. You never know."

Sticking it out gave Davis football immortality. He'll be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame next week.

"I'm thrilled for him," said John Elway, who called Davis "the main reason why" the Broncos won consecutive titles in the late 1990s that ended Denver's string of Super Bowl embarrassments.

Yet, Davis, the only running back other than Jim Brown to average more than 100 yards a game over his career, was long considered too much of a short-timer to be enshrined in Canton. He played only seven seasons and was never the same after blowing out his right knee on Oct. 3, 1999.

Davis, who had averaged an astonishing 1,603 yards and 14 touchdowns over his first four years, missed the rest of that season and would play in just 13 more games and score two touchdowns over the final two years of his career.

His career wasn't long, but as Elway said, "other than the years he was hurt, he was great."

"I'm thrilled that they overcame the one thing that was keeping him out, and that was the length of his career," Elway said. "Because, while he was playing, there was nobody better."

Brady among sports' ageless athletes

Associated Press

Tom Brady is celebrating his 40th birthday like no one before him.

Having won a fifth NFL championship ring and a fourth Super Bowl MVP at the age of 39, the New England Patriots quarterback has shown no signs of aging even as he inevitably gets older. He'll turn 40 on Thursday, and fans usually celebrate by singing "Happy Birthday" to him during training camp.

Brady just keeps on going.

Golfers such as Jack Nicklaus and Hale Irwin won majors in their 40s. Bill Shoemaker won the Kentucky Derby at 54. George Foreman was heavyweight champion at 45. But for team sports — especially at a position as important as NFL quarterback — it has been a while since an athlete has been this good this late in life.

Here are some of the active forty-somethings in sports,

along with all-time greats whose careers stretched into a fifth decade.

Baseball

Bartolo Colon, 44, is the oldest active player in the majors. But he is 2-9 with a 7.70 ERA.

Ichiro Suzuki, five months younger, is a reserve outfielder for Miami. Carlos Beltran is a role player at 40, but for the best team in the AL.

None of them is going to make anyone forget Satchel Paige, who, because of the color barrier, didn't reach the majors until he was 41. He stuck around for five seasons, and then made a one-shot appearance at the age of 58. Pete Rose led the majors in hits at 40, played every game the next year and broke the career hits record at the age of 44.

Honorable mention: Carlton Fisk, who was an All-Star at 43 and played until he was 45 — as a catcher, considered the

most grueling position on the field.

Hockey

Jaromir Jagr, 45, is looking for a team after finishing his 24th pro season with the Florida Panthers, when he played every game and scored 16 goals with 30 assists. The previous year, he was awarded the Masterton Trophy for perseverance and sportsmanship.

But the king of longevity on the ice is Gordie Howe.

Mr. Hockey finished in the top 10 of the NHL MVP voting every year until he turned 41. He took one more spin around the league, scoring 23 goals, and then took a few years off before a comeback with the World Hockey Association that brought him to the age of 50.

He made another comeback in the NHL at 51, playing with his sons Mark and Marty on the Hartford Whalers and scoring 15 goals while appearing in 80

games.

In 1997, he made a cameo with the Detroit Vipers at the age of 69 — making him the only hockey pro to play in six decades.

Basketball

When you're 39, like Manu Ginobili, every game can be your last. So San Antonio fans gave him a huge cheer when he was pulled from the playoff game against Golden State that eliminated the Spurs from the Western Conference finals.

But Ginobili, who turned 40 a week before Brady, is coming back for a 16th season with his only NBA team. Vince Carter, already 40, will be back with his seventh team.

They'll have to keep it up to catch Hall of Famers Robert Parish, who played well after his 43rd birthday, or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who started every game of his final season at the age of 42.

Rams lose defensive lineman Easley for season

Associated Press

IRVINE, Calif. — A stalwart defensive line has been the Rams' biggest strength in recent years, and they returned to Los Angeles last season with a starting quartet reminiscent of their hallowed Fearsome Foursome of the 1960s.

The Rams' foundation is being severely tested after just a few workouts in their second season back home.

Defensive lineman Dominique Easley will miss the season with a torn knee ligament, the team learned Wednesday. His absence left the Rams with just one healthy projected starter for their fifth practice at UC Irvine.

All-Pro lineman Aaron Donald still hasn't reported to camp while locked in contract negotiations with the club. Nose tackle Michael Brockers is healthy, but the Rams' line is in upheaval during a time when it

should be honing new defensive coordinator Wade Phillips' 3-4 scheme.

Easley's right knee buckled without contact while he chased a ballcarrier Tuesday, ending yet another season for the gifted but oft-injured lineman. Brockers said he couldn't watch film of the play on which Easley was hurt.

"It's tough," Brockers said. "We work so hard. We push each other every day. You're missing a guy like that, that drives you and drives competitiveness in you, brings it out of you. You hate to lose that."

Easley also tore ligaments in both knees during college at Florida. He was the Patriots' first-round pick in 2014, but his two seasons in New England both ended early due to injuries, including a knee problem in his rookie year.

After the Patriots let him go, Easley signed with the Rams last year and had a solid season

with 35 tackles and 3½ sacks. He was expected to step up in prominence this season as a starter.

"It's really unfortunate because of what he meant to our team on the field and in the locker room," coach Sean McVay said. "He has a great presence. Always had a good smile on his face, great disposition and demeanor. He'll be missed, but we'll put our arm around him and support him."

Robert Quinn, a starting end last season, is playing a hybrid outside linebacker role in Phillips' new defense. He is healthy, along with new outside linebacker Connor Barwin.

Los Angeles' depth on the defensive line also took a hit with the offseason trade of William Hayes to Miami, but the Rams have options. Ethan Westbrook is a capable veteran, while Louis Trinca-Pasat, rookie Tanzel Smart, Mike Purcell and Matt Longacre will

have to step up.

McVay praised the development of Westbrook and Trinca-Pasat, who got extra work Wednesday.

"It's crazy what happened to (Easley)," said Smart, a sixth-round pick from Tulane. "I hope he has a full recovery, but I'm ready to do whatever."

The Rams also headed into Thursday's day off with no news about Donald, the three-time Pro Bowl selection and one of the NFL's top interior linemen.

General manager Les Snead has said the Rams want to restructure Donald's contract, but talks clearly have hit a snag. Donald's current deal has two seasons remaining.

McVay couldn't say when Donald's absence would begin to have a serious effect on the star's preparations for the season, the coach clearly wants his best player in camp.

Flowers' HR helps end Dodgers' streak

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Braves relied on their specialties — pinch-hit homers and last at-bat wins — against baseball's best team.

Tyler Flowers had a tiebreaking pinch-hit, two-run homer in the eighth inning to lift Atlanta to a 5-3 win over Los Angeles on Wednesday night, ending the Dodgers' nine-game winning streak.

The Braves have hit six pinch-hit homers this season to share the major league lead with San Diego. Their 16 wins in their final at-bat lead the majors.

Cody Bellinger hit his 30th homer in the second inning to give the Dodgers a 1-0 lead. Danny Santana's two-run homer in the bottom of the second gave Atlanta the lead.

Flowers' first career pinch-hit homer off Pedro Baez (3-2) drove in Johan Camargo, who walked with two outs. He certainly

wasn't surprised to be told he had never hit another homer as a pinch-hitter. He is 2-for-18 in his career as a pinch-hitter, so it has been easy for him to track the hits.

"I've only got two hits pinch-hitting so, yeah, that's the first one," Flowers said.

Flowers said pinch-hitting "hasn't been very kind to me."

The Braves ended the Dodgers' major league-record streak of 53 consecutive wins when leading at any point of a game. The Dodgers led 1-0 and 3-2.

The last time the Dodgers lost after leading in a game was May 15, when they led 1-0 before losing 8-4 at San Francisco.

The Braves, who were swept in a four-game series by last-place Philadelphia to close July, have played much better against the Dodgers, who have the best record in the majors. The Dodgers are 20-3 in their last 23 games, with all three losses against the Braves.

"They play hard," said Dodgers manager Dave Roberts. "They play the right way. It's a good offense. ... They're a scrappy bunch. They've got some athleticism."

Rex Brothers (2-2) pitched 1¹/₃ scoreless innings for Atlanta, which snapped a six-game losing streak.

Arodys Vizcaino, who has taken the closer's role from Jim Johnson, pitched a perfect ninth for his third save.

Julio Teheran allowed three runs on four hits in five innings for Atlanta. He left the game after five innings with cramping in his right thigh that he felt in a fourth-inning at-bat.

Braves manager Brian Snitker said he was being cautious by pulling Teheran and said he expects the right-hander to make his next start.

Brock Stewart allowed two runs in four innings for Los Angeles.

Roundup

Granderson caps Mets' rally over Rockies

Associated Press

DENVER — The New York Mets weren't fazed by a big early deficit on Wednesday night.

Remember, things can change in a hurry in the thin air of Coors Field.

Curtis Granderson hit a tiebreaking, three-run homer in the sixth inning, and the New York Mets erased a five-run deficit to beat the Colorado Rockies 10-5.

Jay Bruce hit his 29th homer and Asdrubal Cabrera had three hits for the Mets, who snapped a three-game losing streak.

"No amount of runs are enough here," Bruce said. "Just keep on plugging away, keep on chugging away, chipping away, and we were able to get back in it."

Yoenis Cespedes added an RBI double and played solid defense in left field.

Amed Rosario drove in his first career RBI as he legged out a triple in his second game in the majors.

"He was flying," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "Matter of fact, I wasn't sure he wasn't going to keep on coming."

Rookie Chasen Bradford (1-0) pitched two scoreless innings in relief of Chris Flexen to get his first career victory.

The Mets scored twice in the fourth and fifth before Cespedes doubled to the left-field wall in the sixth to tie the game. Two batters later, Granderson connected on a knee-high fastball from Tyler Chatwood (6-12) to make it 8-5.

Michael Conforto and Cabrera each drove in a run to cap off the six-run inning.

"When you're down five, (we) just think, 'peck our way back,'" Collins said. "They did a great job of taking what they could get. Got some hits and some big homers by Grandy and Jay, and got back in it."

Rays 3, Astros 0: Rookie Austin Pruitt and three relievers combined on a five-hitter and Tampa Bay handed host Houston ace Dallas Keuchel his first loss of the season.

Diamondbacks 3, Cubs 0: Zack Godley pitched three-hit ball over six scoreless innings, Jake Lamb drove in all the runs and Arizona beat host Chicago.

Tigers 2, Yankees 0: Jordan

Zimmermann pitched seven sharp innings, Justin Upton hit an early RBI double on the 10th anniversary of his major league debut and Detroit downed host New York in a game that included 4 hours, 37 minutes of rain delays.

Cardinals 5, Brewers 4: Yadier Molina hit two solo home runs, Luke Weaver pitched into the seventh inning and St. Louis held off host Milwaukee.

Orioles 6, Royals 0: Jeremy Hellickson threw seven outstanding innings in his debut with his new team, Caleb Joseph homered and host Baltimore beat Kansas City to complete a three-game sweep.

Marlins 7, Nationals 0: Vance Worley pitched seven innings and faced the minimum number of batters to earn his first victory since May 2016, helping Miami beat visiting Washington.

Reds 5, Pirates 2: Rookie Jesse Winker homered for the second straight game, hitting a tiebreaking drive in the seventh inning off newly acquired Pittsburgh reliever Joaquin Benoit that led visiting Cincinnati.

Twins 5, Padres 2: Ervin Santana threw a four-hitter for his major league-best fifth complete game and hit a two-run single to lead Minnesota over host San Diego.

The Twins won for just the second time in nine games.

Rangers 5, Mariners 1: Joey Gallo hit another impressively long home run, Andrew Cashner won his third straight start and host Texas beat Seattle to snap a four-game losing streak.

Blue Jays 5, White Sox 1: J.A. Happ struck out a season-high 10 in seven innings, matching his longest start of the season, as Toronto topped host Chicago.

Angels 7, Phillies 0: Mike Trout, C.J. Cron and Kaleb Cowart all homered in a seven-run third inning, JC Ramirez pitched eight strong innings and host Los Angeles defeated Philadelphia.

Athletics 6, Giants 1: Ryon Healy hit his 20th home run to end a monthlong power drought, rookie Daniel Gossett pitched seven impressive innings and visiting Oakland beat San Francisco.