

STARS AND STRIPES®

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Despite ruling, transgender ban is on hold

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will not immediately implement President Donald Trump's ban on transgender men and women serving in the military, the Defense Department said Wednesday, one day after the Supreme Court removed some legal roadblocks that have stalled the controversial policy.

The Supreme Court's 5-4 decision on Tuesday removed preliminary injunctions that for more than a year halted the Pentagon from implementing the so-called "Mattis Plan," a policy penned by former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis at Trump's direction that would ban most transgender men and women from enlisting in the military.

However, one such preliminary injunction issued by a federal judge overseeing a discrimination lawsuit in Maryland remained in place as of Wednesday, said Air

Force Lt. Col. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

The Department of Justice "is seeking relief from this remaining injunction in light of the Supreme Court's action, but at present it remains in place," Gleason said. She stressed as of Wednesday that the Pentagon continued to operate under the Defense Department's 2016 policy, which opened military service to transgender men and women and allowed them to enlist starting Jan. 1, 2018.

"The Department (of Defense) is consulting with the Department of Justice on next steps in the litigation," Gleason said. "We look forward to continuing to press our case in the courts."

A White House effort to ban transgender people from military service has been mired in confusion and litigation since Trump's surprise announcement in July 2017 via Twitter that he would no longer allow transgender people to serve. The directive — made formal in a White

House order about a month later — came without any apparent consultation among top Pentagon officials and was decried by Democratic lawmakers and advocates for transgender individuals.

Mattis' plan was issued in March 2018 and claimed open service by transgender men and women could undermine the military's combat readiness. It sought to exclude transgender individuals who had undergone a sex transition or were seeking to transition from their biological gender from joining the military.

In separate statements Tuesday, the Justice Department and Pentagon lauded the Supreme Court decision.

The Defense Department urged the courts to allow the Pentagon to implement its policies, saying it was "critical ... to ensure the most lethal and combat effective fighting force in the world."

The Supreme Court's vote Tuesday followed political lines and was slammed by LGBTQ rights groups.

Court-martial against USS Fitzgerald commander stalls

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The court-martial of Cmdr. Bryce Benson, the former commanding officer of the USS Fitzgerald involved in a deadly 2017 collision, has taken a new turn.

A military judge has disqualified Navy Adm. Frank Caldwell from serving as the convening authority in Benson's case, effectively pausing the legal action against him and raising the possibility that the charges could be dismissed.

As a result of the disqualification, the court-martial of Benson is no longer valid, and it narrows the pool of remaining Navy authorities who could pursue the charges. The Navy's vice chief of naval operations and the chief of naval operations, or CNO, are left to

oversee the case, which seems unlikely, one expert said.

"It's a major win" for Benson and his legal team, said Lawrence B. Brennan, a law professor at Fordham University School of Law and a retired Navy captain who served in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. "I would say that it is improbable that either the vice chief or the CNO could act as convening authorities in these cases. It's highly improbable."

Seven sailors were killed June 17, 2017, when the Fitzgerald and a commercial vessel, the ACX Crystal, collided in the dark in busy waters off the coast of Japan. Benson is charged with two counts of dereliction of duty through neglect and improper hazarding a vessel through negligence. A charge of negligent homicide

has been dropped.

In a new ruling shared with Stars and Stripes, the judge, Capt. J.T. Stephens, found that Caldwell had stepped outside his neutral role in a related January 2018 hearing.

"The court finds that the Defense established by a preponderance of the evidence that [Caldwell] abdicated his neutral role in favor of a prosecutorial role" through comments made outside of the Benson case, Stephens said.

The move was lauded by Benson's attorney Wednesday.

"Our system's rules — especially those derived from Article 1 of the [Uniform Code of Military Justice] — are designed to guarantee the fundamental right to a fair trial," said Lt. Cmdr. Justin Henderson. "We are glad the military

judge saw this issue our way, and we await a thoughtful and just response from senior Navy leadership."

"The Navy is reviewing the court's ruling and assessing legal options in this case. All future action will be in the best interest of justice," the Navy said in a statement.

The decision comes on the heels of another ruling by Stephens last month that statements by the Navy's top two officers about the Fitzgerald collision constituted apparent unlawful command influence.

In the December ruling, Stephens found that the chief and vice chief of naval operations had stated on multiple occasions that as commanding officer, Benson was responsible for — or guilty of negligence in — the collision.

SOCOM works with jetpack flight developer

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

One-man jetpack flight has long tantalized the public.

Functioning rocket packs were featured in 1960s-era TV shows such as “Gilligan’s Island” and “Lost in Space,” and James Bond donned a Bell Rocket Belt in 1965 to escape villains in “Thunderball.”

But the flight duration for such compact machines — a class of aircraft called individual lift devices, or ILDs — was measured in seconds, and their fuel source was exotic.

Breakthroughs in the past decade in miniaturization of electronics and the casting of advanced nickel alloys, however, have radically altered key technologies needed for developing practical, useful ILDs.

JetPack Aviation in California expects to have a full-scale ILD prototype ready for initial flight testing by late summer for U.S. Special Operations Command, or SOCOM. The turbine-engine-driven device can reach speeds over 200 mph and remain airborne for more than 10 minutes.

It burns commonly available Jet-A fuel, which is a high-purity kerosene.

The company entered into a development agreement with SOCOM in 2016, and it has since trained a Navy SEAL to fly its strap-on jetpack and created a rapid operator training program.

JetPack Aviation is the “first and only company” exploring jetpack technology for SOCOM, the command told Stars and Stripes in a statement.

“The possible uses of this technology

are still being evaluated,” the statement said. “USSOCOM does not discuss specific details or potential applications of such technologies.”

JetPack Aviation CEO David Mayman said of the development agreement: “We work together with their operators, with their team members, for exactly what our jetpacks would need to be useful on a real mission — endurance, height, speed, payload, that sort of thing.”

ILD development over the past century has been “sporadic and underwhelming,” Australian Army Lt. Col. Matthew Dirago wrote in the December issue of the U.S. Army journal *Military Review*.

“From 1940 to 1983, [ILD] technology promised a revolution but delivered merely impractical novelties,” he wrote in the article “Raising the Bar: The Future of Individual Lift Devices in Warfare.”

“The expectations of flying shoes, platforms, ducted-fan lift devices, rocket belts and jet belts always exceeded the technological limitations of that time,” he wrote. “Similarly, progress since 1983 has been unremarkable, stymied by reduced corporate and military research into ILD.”

Recent advances in the fields of propulsion and electronics, however, have ushered in feasible ILD technologies, Mayman said.

Miniature electronics components required to create stabilization systems have become widely available in drone and smartphone markets, he said.

For decades, rocket belts got their needed thrust by consuming hydrogen peroxide, which produced a short burst of extremely high power. “I think the world record flight

was 31 seconds,” Mayman said.

“In terms of air-breathing turbines, there really wasn’t anything available in the thrust class needed,” he said.

The military’s demand for high-speed target drones drove advances in metal alloys for building lightweight turbines.

Improved nickel alloys made turbine wheels stronger and allowed them to withstand higher temperatures without distorting, he said.

Mayman, who has a commercial pilot rating for fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, described his two-decade quest for a working ILD as “a labor of love.”

The company is now tackling a “long list” of requirements by SOCOM for the military ILD prototype, such as demonstrating that the jetpack can take off from a ship in certain wind speeds, Mayman said. The company’s ILDs are already capable of fulfilling many of SOCOM’s requirements, he said.

“I’m guessing we’re halfway through the list of things we agreed to cooperate on,” he said.

“Much of the work has been, ‘How do we make it fit in their vehicles?’ rather than change the characteristics of the machine itself,” he said.

The company is working on two prototypes for SOCOM. One is based on the JB-10 jetpack, which is referred to as “foot-launched” because a pilot bears the weight of the device.

The prototype the company is testing right now is a ground-based device, which he likened to a two-passenger Jet Ski capable of a greater payload.

III MEF Marine honored for bravery on Okinawa

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Marine Maj. William Easter was preparing for a run on the Okinawa seawall near American Village on the afternoon of Dec. 8 when he heard cries for help coming from the shore.

Looking closer, Easter saw an exhausted man who had made it to shore after a swim, but whose pregnant wife was in distress roughly a quarter-mile out.

Easter, the theater security cooperation officer with the III Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Courtney, acted quickly. With a life preserver in one hand, he swam 300 yards to the woman and waited with her until help arrived, probably saving her life.

He was recognized Tuesday for his heroism by Chatan Mayor Masaharu No-

guni, who presented Easter with a letter of appreciation.

“We appreciate your brave action,” No-guni said.

For Easter, Dec. 8 started out as a “fairly routine day.” The 39-year-old from Beaufort, S.C., had just left the base gym and was about to jog the seawall, he told Stars and Stripes after the ceremony. About 2:40 p.m., just as he was putting his ear buds in, he heard the cries for help.

The couple had been snorkeling, and when they tried to head in only the husband was able to make it out of the choppy water, Nirai fire chief Morikatsu Sakihara said during Tuesday’s ceremony.

The husband began calling for help to rescue his wife, who was described as an American in her 20s. The distraught man

told Easter he was too exhausted to make the swim.

“I could see her in the distance, a little head bobbing there in the water,” Easter said. “I looked at it and I said, ‘Wow, that is not a short swim.’ You’re not going to do that very easily.”

Two other men happened by. Thinking quickly, Easter told one to call Japan’s equivalent to 911; he told the other to get him a flotation device from one of the dive shops along the seawall.

The man came back with an orange, circular life-preserver, Easter said. The Marine then swam about 1,000 feet out to the woman, Sakihara said. He got her up on the life-preserver and then treaded water for approximately 30 minutes while he waited for emergency services to arrive.

DOD, Priceline team up for travel site

USA Today

The Department of Defense has enlisted the online travel agency Priceline to create a new leisure travel site for current and retired U.S. military personnel.

The new website, American Forces Travel, will give the military community access to hotel, flight, car rental and cruise deals. There will also be negotiated prices on vacation homes, apartments and packages for savings up to 60 percent.

More than 1 million hotel deals will be available in more than 71,000 destinations around the world.

The Department of Defense has about 1.3 million people in active service around the world.

But at launch, American Forces Travel will be open to more than 6.5 million active and retired members of the U.S. military community.

All five branches of the U.S. armed forces — the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard — will be part of the program. Others who are eligible to be-

come users are Medal of Honor recipients and American Red Cross and USO paid personnel serving outside the USA.

Department of Defense civilians serving within and outside the USA will also be able to sign up.

First-time users will have to verify their eligibility with the Department of Defense through a secure process.

Previously, employees could use travel agents on military bases to book their leisure travel.

The Department of Defense said it wanted to create an online platform that would be more modern, fast and accessible.

Priceline, which is part of Booking Holdings, was selected after a competitive bidding process among many of the largest online travel agencies.

Priceline will continue to offer “opaque” pricing on hotels, flights and rental cars that can often yield discounts on its own website. But on American Forces Travel, users will not get deals in which they would have to book without knowing the name of

the hotel. All travel suppliers on American Forces Travel will be fully disclosed, Priceline said.

Members of the military “have dedicated themselves to service, and deserve our thanks and our respect. To honor that service, we have negotiated deep discounts for personal travel, across flights, hotels, car rentals, cruises and more,” said Brett Keller, CEO of Priceline.

American Forces Travel will also feature “bundled” booking options, which could mean savings of hundreds of dollars. Bundled options combine private rates that are usually available only with packages and that travelers can’t book on their own.

All transactions will generate a commission. The Department of Defense and Priceline would not disclose the commission percentage but said it will be used to support quality of life programs within each service branch. A portion of commissions will also go toward Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs on military bases.

House approves new NATO protections

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The House overwhelmingly approved legislation Tuesday night that would trigger new protections to ensure the United States remains in NATO and thwart moves by President Donald Trump to quit the alliance.

The lower chamber voted 357 to 22 to approve the plan,

which now heads to the Senate, where similar legislation has been introduced.

The move came hours after House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and Reps. Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., and Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa., joined other Democratic members to speak in support of the plan, saying it was a critical way to fend off ongoing threats from the Trump administration to leave the alliance.

The legislation — H.R. 676, called the NATO Support Act — makes clear that no funds will be used to withdraw the United States from the alliance.

“Being a member of NATO is not like being a member of a country club. Instead we value our NATO partners,” said Panetta, the bill’s lead sponsor, who is a veteran Navy Reserve intelligence officer and son of former Defense Secretary, CIA Director and White House

Chief of Staff Leon Panetta.

The U.S. commitment to NATO remains one of the few issues that has bipartisan backing.

The efforts come after reports that Trump has repeatedly expressed interest to senior advisers about quitting the alliance. The president’s ambivalence about American military commitments in Europe and doubts about the utility of NATO aren’t new.

F-16s in S. Korea training with Philippine counterparts

BY THERON GODBOLD

Stars and Stripes

Air Force F-16s from the Korean Peninsula have been flying and training with their Philippine counterparts since late last week at Cesar Basa Air Base.

The Fighting Falcons from the 113th Fighter Wing at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, along with their aircrews and

maintenance and support personnel, have joined Philippine FA-50 light attack jets for drills in the air while ground crews from both nations train on intelligence, maintenance and flight-line and back-shop procedures, according to an Air Force statement issued Friday.

The exercise — called Bilateral Air Contingent Exchange-Philippines, or BACE-P — allows

both militaries to work together to “deepen relationships, which ultimately supports maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific,” Col. Christopher Faurot, Pacific Air Force’s senior officer in charge of the exchange, said in the statement.

It was unclear when this year’s BACE-P would end. Past exercises have lasted nearly two weeks.

In previous exchanges, different aircraft types — including Air Force A-10s, C-130s and HH-60s and Navy E/A-18 Growlers — were put to work exercising a range of airpower capabilities.

The exercises started in April 2016 at Clark Air Base, formerly a U.S. installation and now a Philippine facility, the Air Force said.

Dueling bills would end shutdown in different ways

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate leaders agreed to hold votes this week on dueling proposals to reopen shuttered federal agencies, forcing a political reckoning for senators grappling with the longest shutdown in U.S. history: Side with President Donald Trump or vote to temporarily end the shutdown and keep negotiating.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., set up the two showdown votes for Thursday, a day before some 800,000 federal workers are due to miss a second paycheck.

One vote will be on his own measure, which reflects Trump's offer to trade border wall funding for temporary protections for some immigrants. It was quickly rejected by Democrats. The second vote is set for a bill approved by the Democratic-controlled House reopening government through Feb. 8, with no wall money, to give bargainers time to talk.

Both measures are expected to fall short of the 60 votes needed to pass, leaving little hope they represent the clear path out of the mess. But the plan represents the first test of Senate Republicans' resolve behind Trump's insistence that agencies remain closed until Congress approves \$5.7 billion to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. For Democrats, the votes will show whether there are any cracks in the so-far unified rejection of Trump's demand.

Democrats on Tuesday ridiculed McConnell's bill, which included temporarily extended protections for "Dreamer" immigrants but also harsh new curbs on Central Americans seeking safe haven in the U.S.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said the GOP plan's immigration proposals were "even more radical" than their past positions.

"The president's proposal is just wrapping paper on the same partisan package and hostage-taking tactics," offering to temporarily restore programs Trump himself tried to end in exchange for wall funding, Schumer said.

McConnell accused Democrats of preferring "political combat with the president" to resolving the partial federal shutdown, which stretched into its 33rd day Wednesday. He said Democrats were prepared to abandon federal workers, migrants and all Americans "just to extend this run of political theater so they can look like champions of the so-called resistance" against Trump.

The confrontational tone underscored that there remained no clear end in sight to the closure.

The upcoming vote on the Democratic plan marked a departure for McConnell, who had vowed to allow no votes on shutdown measures unless Trump would sign them.

The White House views its latest offer as a test of whether Democratic leaders can hold their members together in opposition, said a person familiar with White House thinking who was not authorized to speak publicly. The administration also wants to show they are willing to negotiate, hoping it will push more blame onto Democrats, who are opposing negotiations until the government reopens. Public polls show Trump is taking the brunt of the blame from voters so far.

Coast Guard leader deems predicament 'unacceptable'

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz on Wednesday publicly criticized the lack of pay for his service's men and women as the government shutdown crawls into its fifth week.

While the other military branches have remained funded, Coast Guard personnel have gone without paychecks since the shutdown started 32 days ago. The impasse stems from House Democrats' refusal to provide President Donald Trump with the billions he demands to build a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico.

"Ultimately, I find it unacceptable that Coast Guard men and women have to rely on food pantries and donations to get through day-to-day life as servicemembers," Schultz said in a video posted to his Twitter account.

The strong words came with a promise that he and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Charles Calhoun, who joined Schultz in the video, would "continue to take to Capitol Hill the message of critical importance of putting paychecks in the hands of the men and women who serve in the world's best coast guard."

The Coast Guard's approximately 41,000 active-duty servicemembers and another 2,100 "essential personnel" have continued to work without pay since Dec. 22, The Washington Post reported Wednesday. Another 6,000 civilians were furloughed.

Other military branches have continued to receive paychecks throughout the shutdown, but the Coast Guard, a part of the Department of Homeland Security, not the Defense Department, has gone unfunded.

Even without pay, the Coast Guard has continued some of its missions. On Sunday, 170 crewmembers of Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf deployed from Alameda, Calif., to patrol the western Pacific Ocean.

Democratic Ind. mayor joins 2020 race

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Democrat Pete Buttigieg, the 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Ind., says he's forming an exploratory committee for a 2020 presidential bid.

"The reality is there's no going back, and there's no such thing as 'again' in the real world. We can't look for greatness in the past," Buttigieg says in a video that includes before-and-after footage of South Bend, a Rust Belt city once described as "dying."

"Right now our country needs a fresh start," he says.

Buttigieg has touted his work to improve his city of 100,000 residents as he's prepared for a jump from local politics to a presidential campaign. He's also said Democrats could benefit from a new generation of leaders as they try to unseat President Donald Trump in 2020.

He's expected to travel to Iowa next week to meet with voters in the nation's first caucus state, followed by stops in New Hampshire.

Buttigieg is a Rhodes scholar who was first elected mayor of his hometown in 2011 at age 29, making him the youngest

mayor of a U.S. city with at least 100,000 residents. A lieutenant in the Navy Reserve, he served a tour in Afghanistan in 2014.

Amid his campaign for a second mayoral term, Buttigieg came out as gay in a column in the local newspaper. He went on to win re-election with 80 percent of the vote. In 2018, three years to the day after the column ran, he married his husband, middle school teacher Chasten Glezman.

If he were to win the Democratic nomination, Buttigieg would be the first openly gay presidential nominee from a major political party.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man exonerated after 11-year incarceration

NC CHARLOTTE — A North Carolina man incarcerated for 11 years for an armed robbery he said he didn't commit was found innocent by a three-judge panel.

The Charlotte Observer cited a North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts news release saying the panel unanimously concluded Friday that Israel Grant, 32, proved his innocence.

The charges against Grant stemmed from an alleged robbery of a man and a woman in 2005. The man identified Grant from a police lineup of photos.

Commission investigators later found evidence the man and woman knew Grant and might have had other motives for identifying him.

Police: Man used ax on property after spat

WI MADISON — Madison police said a 34-year-old man who thought his wife damaged his action figures retaliated by taking an ax to the family's car, television and laptop in the house.

Madison Police Chief Mike Koval said the man called police just after 10 p.m. Sunday and told them he had too much to drink and overreacted about his action figures.

The unidentified man was arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and felony damage to property. Police said the man struck the car's windshield so hard the ax got stuck.

Famous coffee shop closes in dispute

LA NEW ORLEANS — A New Orleans coffee shop that has operated for more than a century is closing, at least

temporarily

News outlets reported Morning Call closed its City Park location Sunday following a lease dispute.

Morning Call's lease at City Park ran out in 2017, and that led to a bidding war that Cafe du Monde won to take over the spot.

Morning Call opened in 1870 in the French Quarter and has been famous for beignets and cafe au lait. Co-owner Bob Hennessey said Sunday that talks continue with the New Orleans Fair Grounds as a new home and other possible locations.

Police: Man let girl, 11, drive to school

IL ROUND LAKE PARK — An arrest warrant was issued for a northern Illinois man who police say allowed an 11-year-old relative to drive herself to school in a stolen rental car while he rode along.

The Lake County News-Sun reported employees at a Round Lake Park elementary school saw the girl pull up to the school's drop-off point Jan. 9. She and a 9-year-old girl who was in the back seat exited the car.

Police said Khafilu Oshodi, 31, of Round Lake then moved into the driver's seat and drove away.

Oshodi is wanted on two counts of child endangerment and driving with a suspended license.

Video captures moose chasing resort skiers

CO BRECKENRIDGE — A woman, in an effort to warn others of the dangers of moose, posted a video on social media of a moose charging skiers and snowboarders at a ski resort.

The Summit Daily News reported Lauren Drogsvold cap-

tured the video Saturday at Breckenridge Ski Resort.

The video shows a large bull moose approach and then charge a crowd of people. There were no reports of injuries.

Resort CEO John Buhler recently said staff tries to prevent guests from approaching the highly territorial herbivores, which are generally peaceful but can turn aggressive when they feel threatened.

Police: Pair in road to watch eclipse run over

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A Florida police department said an officer ran over two people who were lying in a dark roadway to watch Sunday night's lunar eclipse.

In a statement to The Palm Beach Post, West Palm Beach Police said the man and the woman were treated at a hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.

Police said that around 11:30 p.m. the officer was patrolling in a park and driving around 5 mph when his vehicle struck the pair.

Because the park was "extremely dark," officials believe they were trying to watch the eclipse when they were run over.

Loose barges shutter multiple bridges

PA Several major bridges crossing the Monongahela and Ohio rivers reopened after closures prompted by a dozen barges hauling coal that came loose in strong river currents and floated down the Monongahela, striking at least one bridge.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation said five vehicular bridges were shut down early Monday because of the loose barges. The Liberty,

Smithfield, Fort Pitt, West End and McKees Rocks bridges were later reopened.

The Coast Guard's Marine Safety Unit said all barges had been accounted for.

Teen earns perfect scores on ACT, SAT

OH CANTON — An Ohio teenager hoping to become a book editor someday has earned perfect scores on both the ACT and SAT college entrance exams.

The Canton Repository reported Dinah Ward, 18, a student at Canton South High School in northeast Ohio, took the exams previously and worked with a tutor to achieve perfection.

Only 0.2 percent of the 1.9 million people who took the ACT last year earned a perfect score of 36. The newspaper reported there weren't any data available to show how many SAT test takers managed a perfect score of 1,600 in 2018.

Rare hawk improving after bout of frostbite

ME PORTLAND — Maine's great black hawk was standing on its own and looking alert Monday, a day after suffering apparent frostbite during Sunday's snowstorm.

The rare raptor, which has been living in Portland's Deering Oaks Park for the past few weeks, was found on the ground Sunday, unable to stand. It was taken to Avian Haven in Freedom, which specializes in wild bird rehabilitation.

Avian Haven co-owner Diane Winn told the Portland Press Herald the bird's health was improving after a night in the intensive care unit, but it is uncertain if it will be released into the wild.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

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

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Rivera unanimously selected for Hall

Associated Press

NEW YORK — This honor was saved for the one and only Mariano Rivera.

Not Babe Ruth. Not Hank Aaron. Not Cy Young.

Not until “The Sandman” could everyone agree.

Rivera became baseball’s first unanimous Hall of Fame selection, elected Tuesday along with Edgar Martinez, Mike Mussina and the late Roy Halladay. Rivera received all 425 votes in balloting announced by the Baseball Writers’ Association of America. Ken Griffey Jr. held the mark for top percentage at 99.32 when he was on 437 of 440 ballots two years ago.

“Beyond my imagination,” Rivera said.

The quartet will be enshrined in Cooperstown along with Today’s Game Era Committee selections Harold Baines and Lee Smith on July 21.

Rivera is baseball’s career saves leader with 652. With a steady demeanor and a fearsome cut fastball, he won five World Series over 19 seasons with the New York Yankees. He was always at his best in October, getting 42 saves with a 0.70 ERA over 16 postseasons, including 11 saves in the World Series.

Halladay, an ace with the Toronto Blue Jays and Philadelphia Phillies, got 85.4 percent and will be the first posthumous inductee since Deacon White in 2013 and Ron Santo in 2012. Halladay died in November 2017 at 40 years old when an airplane he was flying crashed into the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Florida.

Martinez was a .312 hitter over 18 seasons with Seattle. He got 85.4 percent in his 10th and final try on the writers’ ballot. He and Baines will join 2014 inductee Frank Thomas as the only Hall of Famers to play the majority of their games at designated hitter. David Ortiz will be eligible in 2022.

“I think the fact that Harold Baines and me got in this year is going to help the future of the DH for years to come,” Marti-

nez said.

Mussina was a steady right-hander for the Yankees and Baltimore Orioles who went 270-153 with 2,813 strikeouts over 18 seasons. He received 76.7 percent, getting seven more votes than the 319 required for election.

Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens made gains but again fell short in their seventh times on the ballot. Bonds got 59.1 percent and Clemens 59.5, their cases muddied by steroid accusations.

Rivera grew up in Panama the son of a fisherman. He signed with New York in 1990, debuted in the majors as a 25-year-old in 1995 and a year later emerged as one of the game’s best relievers. Part of a core that included Derek Jeter, Andy Pettitte and Jorge Posada, Rivera helped the Yankees win four World Series in 1996-2000 and another in 2009.

The Yankees didn’t even wait until Rivera’s final game to retire his No. 42 — he was the last player in the major leagues to wear that number, grandfathered to him when No. 42 was retired in honor of Jackie Robinson in 1997.

“Wearing No. 42, representing Jackie Robinson, I assume he was the first No. 42 elected,” Rivera said. “To be the last No. 42 elected to the Hall of Fame, and unanimously, is amazing.”

Like all the bats he sawed off with that dastardly cutter, Rivera shattered an 83-year-old standard with his selection. Ruth, Young and the game’s other early stars fell short of unanimous election in the first ballot in 1936 because of a backlog of worthy candidates. With the bar set so high, some writers began leaving worthy first-year players off their ballots.

Bill Ballou, of The Telegram & Gazette in Worcester, Mass., wrote in November that he wouldn’t vote for Rivera because he didn’t think closers belonged in the Hall. Instead of robbing Rivera of unanimous status, though, Ballou planned to not send a ballot at all. Ballou announced Tuesday he had

changed his mind and sent a ballot that included Rivera.

Rivera and Smith will be the seventh and eighth relievers in the Hall, joining Hoyt Wilhelm (1985), Rollie Fingers (1992), Dennis Eckersley (2004), Bruce Sutter (2006), Rich Gosage (2008) and Trevor Hoffman (2018).

Halladay won two Cy Young Awards, one each with Toronto and Philadelphia, before ending his career in 2013 at 36 years old due to back injuries.

The right-hander was a first-round draft pick by Toronto in 1995, debuted in the majors in 1998 and struggled terribly until being demoted to the minor leagues in 2001. With the help of sports psychologist Harvey Dorfman, Halladay reinvented himself and became an All-Star in 2002, then won 22 games and an AL Cy Young in 2003.

Halladay’s best season came in 2010, his first following a blockbuster trade to Philadelphia. Halladay pitched a perfect game against the Florida Marlins in May, then delivered a no-hitter against Cincinnati in the opener of the NL Division Series. It was just the second no-hitter in postseason history after the Yankees’ Don Larsen pitched a perfect game against Brooklyn in the 1956 World Series.

In an era marked by pitch counts and early hooks, Halladay was a workhorse. Since 2000, Halladay’s 65 complete games are by far the most in the majors — Livan Hernandez is second at 39.

Halladay pitched 12 seasons with Toronto and four with the Phillies, making it likely his Hall plaque will have a Blue Jays logo.

The only other player elected on the first ballot posthumously was Christy Mathewson in 1936. Roberto Clemente was chosen in a special election in 1973 after dying in a plane crash on Dec. 31, 1972.

Martinez was among the game’s steadiest hitters throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, winning two batting ti-

ties and hitting 309 homers.

A late bloomer from Puerto Rico, Martinez never played more than 100 games in the majors until he was 27. He broke in as a third baseman before becoming a full-time DH at 32, a role he held until retiring at 41 in 2004. MLB’s yearly award for the top DH is named in his honor.

Martinez’s classmates certainly couldn’t get him out. The slugger was 11-for-19 (.579) lifetime against Rivera, 23-for-75 (.307) with five homers against Mussina and 8-for-18 (.444) against Halladay.

“Especially early in my career, I got two strikes on Edgar, and the third one never showed up,” Rivera said.

Martinez got just 36.2 percent of the vote in his first ballot appearance in 2010 and fell as low as 25.2 percent in 2014 — the cutoff for induction is 75 percent. With a push from the sport’s analytics community and a hearty social media campaign, Martinez made major progress in recent votes, including 70.4 percent in 2018.

“Some of the sabermetrics really helped,” Martinez said.

Mussina and his nasty knuckle curveball also got a push from the advanced numbers. He felt lucky to get 20.3 percent in his first ballot in 2014 but steadily gained support.

Mussina’s 3.68 ERA will be the third-highest in Cooperstown behind Jack Morris (3.90) and Red Ruffing (3.80), but writers gave him a break for pitching in the slugger-heavy AL East, with its cozy ballparks.

“You know they’re small or hitter-friendly; it’s just how it was,” Mussina said. “I just kept trying to make adjustments.”

Mussina fell short of 300 wins and 3,000 strikeouts, but those traditional markers haven’t been as crucial to modern voters.

This proved more relevant: His 83 wins above replacement, per Baseball-Reference, rank 58th all-time. That’s just ahead of first-ballot Hall of Fame pitchers Nolan Ryan and Tom Glavine.

Top 25 roundup

Michigan gets past Minnesota

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The ball bounced right to Charles Matthews, who dribbled once and squared up to shoot as the game clock — and more importantly, the shot clock — neared zero.

“I saw the clock when I did get the ball. I’m not sure exactly how much time, but I did know that there was time on the clock,” Matthews said. “So I didn’t want to just throw up a crazy shot. I wanted to still follow through with it.”

Matthews used up what little time he had, then made a baseline floater at the buzzer to lift No. 5 Michigan to a 59-57 win over Minnesota on Tuesday night.

On the final possession, Iggy Brazdeikis drove to the basket and had his shot blocked by Eric Curry, but the ball bounced over to Matthews to the left of the rim. His shot went high in the air and dropped through with no time remaining.

The shot by Matthews was clearly released before the game clock expired, but the shot clock was a much closer call. After a long review, officials ruled the ball was released in time.

“As heartbreaking as that was, we got that stop,” Minnesota coach Richard Pitino said. “The ball kind of bounced their way.”

Gabe Kalschur’s three-pointer tied it at 57 with 30.9 seconds remaining, capping a 10-0 run for the Golden Gophers.

Brazdeikis scored 13 of his 18 points in the second half. He was held scoreless at Wisconsin on Saturday when the Wolverines lost for the first time this season. Michigan (18-1, 7-1 Big Ten) struggled through much of the game against Minnesota and was down by seven before Brazdeikis made a three-point shot and a three-point play to cut the deficit to one. That was the start of a 23-3 run by the Wolverines.

Michigan led by 13, and

then it was Minnesota’s turn to rally.

Minnesota (14-5, 4-4) scored the first six points and led 19-10 after a three by Kalschur. Michigan was 3-for-20 from the field before finishing the first half a bit better. The Golden Gophers led 31-28 at halftime.

No. 2 Duke 79, Pittsburgh 64: Zion Williamson hit his first 10 shots on his way to 25 points, fellow freshman RJ Barrett scored 26 and the Blue Devils had little trouble with host the Panthers.

Williamson finished 11-for-13 from the floor to go with seven rebounds and seven assists for Duke (16-2, 5-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), which kept Pittsburgh (12-7, 2-4) in check even without injured freshman guard Tre Jones. Duke held Pitt to 41 percent shooting, out-rebounded the Panthers 39-34 and wasn’t in any real danger after a surge midway through the first half.

No. 3 Virginia 68, Wake Forest 45: Kyle Guy and Jay Huff scored 12 points each, and the host Cavaliers opened with a 25-3 run in a victory against the Demon Deacons.

De’Andre Hunter and Mama-di Diakite had 11 points each for Virginia (17-1, 5-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), which bounced back from a 72-70 loss at No. 2 Duke on Saturday.

No. 8 Kentucky 76, No. 22 Mississippi State 55: PJ Washington scored 21 points, including a big three-pointer down the stretch, Tyler Herro added 18 and the host Wildcats pulled away from the Bulldogs for their fifth consecutive victory.

Northern Illinois 77, No. 14 Buffalo 75: Noah McCarty banked in a game-winning basket with 2 seconds to play, and host Northern Illinois upset Buffalo.

The Huskies reserve took a feed from Trendon Hankerson for the layup seconds after Buffalo had tied the game on a three-pointer by C.J. Massinburg.

Kansas State 58, No. 14

Texas Tech 45: Barry Brown Jr. had 15 points, Dean Wade had 13 and the host Wildcats’ defense shut down the Red Raiders.

The Big 12’s top-ranked defenses combined to force 30 turnovers. Kansas State (15-4, 5-2) held Texas Tech to 33-percent shooting.

Jarrett Culver led Texas Tech (15-4, 4-3) with 17 points.

South Carolina 80, No. 16 Auburn 77: Chris Silva had a career-high 32 points, and Felipe Haase’s three-pointer with 30.3 seconds left put the host Gamecocks ahead for good in a victory over the Tigers.

South Carolina (10-8, 5-1 Southeastern Conference) continued its improbable SEC run. The Gamecocks entered league play with a 5-7 preconference mark, but have won five of their first six.

No. 18 Villanova 80, Butler 72: Eric Paschall scored 23 points, Phil Booth added 17 and the visiting Wildcats made 12 three-pointers to pull away from Butler.

Villanova (15-4, 6-0 Big East) has won seven straight since losing to Kansas on Dec. 15.

Aaron Thompson had 15 points for Butler (12-8, 3-4).

Alabama 74, No. 20 Mississippi 53: John Petty scored 15 points off the bench, and Donta Hall added 11 points and 10 rebounds for a school-record fourth straight double-double as the host Tide upset the Rebels.

Galin Smith matched his season high with 10 points for Alabama (12-6, 3-3 Southeastern Conference).

Air Force 74, Boise State 60: Lavelle Scottie scored 22 points and grabbed seven rebounds, Chris Joyce scored a go-ahead jumper, and the host Falcons pulled away late to hand the Broncos their third straight loss.

A.J. Walker scored 18 points with six boards and four assists and Joyce added 12 points and seven rebounds for the Air Force (8-11, 3-4 Mountain West Conference).

NBA roundup

George lifts Thunder

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — A renewed focus on defense has the Oklahoma City Thunder on another winning streak.

Paul George had 36 points, eight rebounds and five steals, Russell Westbrook had a triple-double of 29 points, 14 assists and 10 rebounds and the Thunder beat the Portland Trail Blazers 123-114 on Tuesday night.

Steven Adams and Terrence Ferguson each added 14 points for Oklahoma City, which snapped a three-game losing streak to Portland at Chesapeake Energy Arena. After a stretch of losing five of six games, during which they gave up 154, 142 and 138 points in defeats, the Thunder have won three straight and moved back into third place in the fluid Western Conference standings.

Damian Lillard had 34 points and eight assists, and C.J. McCollum scored 31 for Portland, which committed 19 turnovers — five more than its average — and had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Sixteen of those Portland turnovers came on Thunder steals. George — who ranks second in the NBA (behind Westbrook) in steals at 2.33 per game — led the way, and Ferguson added four steals, many of which led to points at the other end for Oklahoma City.

Raptors 120, Kings 105: Kyle Lowry and Fred VanVleet each scored 19 points, Pascal Siakam had 18 and Toronto beat Sacramento to extend its home winning streak to 10 games.

Timberwolves 118, Suns 91: Karl-Anthony-Towns had 25 points, 18 rebounds and seven assists and Minnesota rolled past short-handed host Phoenix.

Mavericks 106, Clippers 98: Dennis Smith Jr. had 17 points and eight rebounds in his return after a week away from the team amid trade talk, and host Dallas beat Los Angeles.

One point from win, Serena eliminated

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Four times, Serena Williams was only one point — a single point — from closing out a victory in the Australian Open quarterfinals.

On the first such chance, at 5-1, 40-30 in the third set, she turned her left ankle awkwardly. The owner of the best serve in the sport would lose every point she served the rest of the way.

And so it was that a startling reversal and result would follow Wednesday at Melbourne Park, with Williams dropping the last six games of a 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 loss to No. 7-seeded Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic.

“I can’t say that I choked on those match points,” Williams said. “She literally played her best tennis ever on those shots.”

The 37-year-old American didn’t call for a trainer during the match and later wouldn’t blame the ankle for the way everything changed down the stretch, saying afterward that it “seems to be fine.”

But instead of Williams moving closer to an eighth championship at the Australian Open and record-tying 24th Grand Slam title overall, it is Pliskova who will continue the pursuit of her first major trophy.

“I was almost in the locker room,” Pliskova told the Rod Laver Arena crowd, “but now I’m standing here as the winner.”

Normally, Williams is the one manufacturing a comeback. This time, it was surprising to see her let a sizable lead vanish. Only twice before in 380 Grand Slam matches had Williams lost after holding a match point, at the 2010 French Open and 1999 Australian Open.

In Thursday’s semifinals, Pliskova will face No. 4-seeded Naomi Osaka, who advanced by beating No. 6 Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-1. The other women’s semifinal will be two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova against unseeded American Danielle Collins.

In men’s action Wednesday, No. 28 Lucas Pouille of France reached his first Grand Slam semifinal by beating 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic of Canada 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-7 (2), 6-4. Pouille, who is coached by two-time major champion Amelie Mauresmo, had been 0-5 for his career at the Australian Open until last week. His next opponent will be 14-time major champion Novak Djokovic, who moved on when 2014 U.S. Open finalist Kei Nishikori stopped playing while trailing 6-1, 4-1.

Nishikori was treated for leg problems by a trainer.

Williams’ surprising departure scuttled what would have been a much-anticipated rematch against Osaka, who beat her in the chaotic U.S. Open final last September.

This defeat is the earliest in Australia for Williams since 2014, when she exited with a fourth-round loss to Ana Ivanovic. Since then? She won the tournament in 2015, lost in the final in 2016, and won again in 2017 while pregnant, before missing last year’s edition a few months after the birth of her daughter.

In the first set alone, Williams made more than twice as many unforced errors as her opponent, 11-5, a pattern that would continue throughout. By the end, the margin was 37-15.

Looking increasingly frustrated, Williams would yell at herself after mistakes or gesture as if to say, “That’s NOT how I should be hitting the ball!” Add it all up, and Pliskova led by a set and a break at 3-2 in the second.

Only then did Williams get going. From there, she immediately earned her first break point of the match and converted it to get to 3-all, beginning a run in which she claimed nine

of 11 games.

“You don’t really feel,” Pliskova said, “like you’re going to win this match.”

Serving for the victory at 5-1, 40-30, Williams was called for a foot fault — reminiscent of an infamous such ruling at the U.S. Open a decade ago. During the ensuing point Wednesday, Williams twisted her left ankle and dumped a forehand into the net.

She grabbed at her foot afterward, then double-faulted and would go on to cede that game.

Not a big deal, right? She still had a sizable lead.

Except that three more match points would follow while Pliskova served, and she saved each one.

“There’s nothing I did wrong on those match points. I didn’t do anything wrong. I stayed aggressive,” Williams said. “She just literally hit the lines on some of them.”

Williams would again serve for the match at 5-3 — and again get broken. The owner of the most feared and respected serve in women’s tennis was broken for a third time in a row at 5-all, and Pliskova was on her way.

“She got a little bit shaky in the end,” Pliskova said. “So I took my chances. And I won.”

NHL roundup

Sharks hand champ Caps sixth straight loss

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Tomas Hertl completed his hat trick by scoring in overtime, and the San Jose Sharks withstood Alex Ovechkin’s three goals to beat the Washington Capitals 7-6 on Tuesday night and hand the defending Stanley Cup champions their sixth consecutive defeat.

Hertl scored 2:48 into the 3-on-3 session, and a handful of hats were tossed onto the ice. Many more cascaded down earlier after Ovechkin’s third hat trick this season and 23rd of his career, but that came in a losing effort because of Evander Kane’s dramatic goal that helped the Sharks end

their three-game skid.

With goaltender Martin Jones pulled for an extra attacker, Kane beat Braden Holtby with a second left in regulation for his second of the night. Holtby allowed seven goals on 43 shots in what was not one of the All-Star goalie’s finest performances.

Joe Pavelski and Logan Couture also scored for San Jose, which has allowed six goals in each of its past four games.

T.J. Oshie, Andre Burakovsky and Evgeny Kuznetsov also scored for Washington, which has lost six in a row for the first time since the 2013-14 season.

Blackhawks 3, Islanders 2 (SO): Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane scored in the

shootout as host Chicago halted New York’s five-game winning streak.

Flames 3, Hurricanes 2 (OT): Mikael Backlund scored 15 seconds into overtime to give host Calgary a victory over Carolina.

Calgary (33-13-5) heads into the All-Star break as the No. 1 team in the Western Conference, six points up on San Jose.

Red Wings 3, Oilers 2: Luke Glendening scored twice and Detroit headed into the All-Star break with a win over host Edmonton.

Coyotes 3, Senators 2: Vinnie Hinostroza scored twice and added an assist to lead visiting Arizona over Ottawa.