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Md. Gold Star Mothers find kinship amid loss

BY TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, Va. — Near the lush shade of an old willow oak and the lively branches of an adolescent holly, Gina Barnhurst unfolded her camping chair, placed her Starbucks coffee in the cup holder and settled in to visit with her son.

Soon after, Paula Davis, whose son rests 22 gravestones away, put out a camping chair beside her.

It's been more than 10 years since the women met, after their sons were killed in combat within months of each other and buried on the same 8400 row in Arlington National Cemetery's Section 60.

U.S. Army PFC Justin Davis, 19, was killed in Afghanistan on June 25, 2006. Barnhurst's son, U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Eric Herzberg, 20, was killed in Iraq on Oct. 21, 2006.

During the winter of 2006, both had difficulty processing their young sons' deaths. Justin was Davis' only child. Barnhurst was grieving deeply, she said, but felt like she had an obligation to keep it together for the rest of her family. Both women believed there was no one they could talk to who would understand. The fledgling support services for military families after a casualty back then focused on the immediate needs of surviving young spouses and children.

At some point that winter, on a day they were both visiting Arlington, Davis walked over, introduced herself to Barnhurst and hugged her tight.

"I thought, 'She's June, and I'm October, and she's still standing,'" Barnhurst said.

Her son's grave was near the end of the row in winter 2006. Section 60 — where those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan are buried — was not as full as it is now; then, there was only empty grass behind Davis' and Barnhurst's spots. But as the wars went on, the next row of white headstones grew, and with it came new mothers. The women began to talk over the gravestones. They found others willing to listen to stories about their kids, and they shared empathy for how hard it was to find a way ahead.

"The best thing you can do is allow a mother to share about her child," Davis said.

They are Gold Star Mothers, a new generation of women whose sons or daughters

died while on active duty, or as a result of injuries received on active duty. Davis' and Barnhurst's sons were from Maryland, but the local chapter had diminished as mothers of those killed in previous wars passed away. So the women, with a few others from Maryland, applied to the national chapter of American Gold Star Mothers Inc. and had their charter renewed.

The Gold Star Mothers' motto is, "We honor through service," a way of living that Maryland chapter President Janice Chance takes to heart. She lives to honor her son, Marine Corps Capt. Jesse Melton III, 29, who was killed in Afghanistan on Sept. 9, 2008.

The group's national roots stretch back to World War I. With the number of war dead rising, President Woodrow Wilson "asked the moms not to wear black, but to wear white with a black armband," Chance said. "After the war the moms decided to continue to wear white. Because it symbolizes goodness, purity, sacrifice. Those values for which our children lived and died."

Living with loss

The network goes beyond volunteer service. It's full of regular phone calls and dates for coffee, and it's a safe place to vent, cry and even laugh when life reminds them of what they lost.

The group has become more crucial as time has passed. The loss has gotten harder, not easier, as milestones like marriage and grandchildren happen for relatives or friends, or when younger siblings reach the age of the deceased.

Donna Robinson's younger son, Nicholas, was 11 when her oldest, Army Staff Sgt. Damion Campbell, 23, was killed Aug. 26, 2005, in Afghanistan. The two boys were very close.

Nicholas turns 23 next month.

"It's hard," Robinson said. "Nicholas hasn't shed a tear yet, and they were like this," she says, tightly crossing her fingers. She tries to reach out, but he isn't ready for it."

"Like, 'You're done!'" fellow Gold Star mother Theresa Mills said of the expectation that her grief would fade. Her son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Eugene Mills, was 21 when he was killed in combat in Afghanistan on June 22, 2012. On Sundays she sets up her American-flagged camping chair to be with

him at Arlington. Davis and Barnhurst are in her peripheral view, many rows ahead.

"It wasn't even six months when my son passed, and people were like, 'OK, he died. Get over it,'" said Sheba Khan, mother of Marine Corps Cpl. Kareem Rashad Sultan Khan, 20, who was killed in Iraq on Aug. 6, 2007. His grave is also in the 8400 section, but on the other side of the cemetery plot, one of the white stones in the next row that developed behind Barnhurst and Davis.

Reluctant start

Not all of the women jumped at the idea of a support network. Robinson, whose son died in 2005 and is buried at Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery near Baltimore, was one of the first of the Maryland mothers to lose a child. The fact that there wasn't a support network was just fine with her. It was years before she was ready to connect with other mothers.

"I was just out there by myself. Nothing was there for me, but, first of all, I didn't really want anything anyway," she said.

Four or five years later, she accepted an invitation to attend a Red Cross event. "That was the first step I made, by going to that," she said.

Chance had joined the local chapter and decided she wasn't going to let Robinson slip away.

The mothers understand each other in ways no one else can, they said. Like how it felt to receive their son's foot lockers. Half the group has gone through the items. The other half still can't. But all of the women still have them.

Strength in numbers

As U.S. war operations against Islamic State have intensified, more Maryland mothers have lost their sons.

On April 8, Army Staff Sgt. Mark De Alencar, 37, was killed in eastern Afghanistan. Chance went to the viewing the afternoon before the funeral. She spent two hours with the family, telling De Alencar's mother and wife about the network that would be available when they were ready.

At the end of the visit they all hugged.

Chance told them she would be back the next day, adding, "I am going to bring some more moms with me."

At the funeral, "there were six of us," she said. "In our white."

Jury acquits Navy officer in sexual assault with minor case

BY ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A Navy officer accused of attempted sexual assault of a minor following an Okinawa sting operation was acquitted of five related charges by a court-martial jury on Thursday.

Lt. Stephen M. Kimball was freed after spending just over six months in pretrial confinement, Navy officials said.

The acquittal came after military judge Col. Eugene Robinson ruled video of an interview conducted by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service just after Kimball's arrest was inadmissible due to 80 minutes of missing footage, an issue that arose only after the trial began.

"The recording of the interrogation taken by NCIS was edited by the government through its own deliberate actions," Robinson's instructions to the jury

stated. "An additional portion was not provided to the defense until after the testimony of (an undercover agent). A portion is still unaccounted for.

"Thus, the government failed to comply with the Military Rules of Evidence and the Rules for Courts-Martial."

The missing video was an unintentional transcription mistake made by an investigator, Commander Navy Region Japan spokesman Cmdr. Ron Flanders said Friday. The prosecution made additional footage available to the defense once it was discovered, he said.

Robinson denied a defense motion for a mistrial based on the missing footage.

Timothy Bilecki, Kimball's defense attorney, said the content ultimately revealed in the video wasn't the problem.

Bilecki had made the question of the missing video a key part of his client's defense prior

to it being found. Introducing the video mid-trial violated discovery rules, Bilecki said.

Kimball had been on temporary duty at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, when he met an undercover Navy agent online who claimed to be 15, Bilecki said.

The two exchanged text messages for about 20 days, Bilecki said. The agent sent at least four videos and 18 photos to Kimball. However, Bilecki said several photos showed the agent as a 22-year-old, which could have sent his client a mixed message.

Kimball arranged to meet the agent at the Olympic Mall and was arrested upon arrival.

The arrest was one of dozens in a multiyear NCIS operation aimed at catching personnel interested in sex with minors on Okinawa, where about half of all U.S. forces in Japan are based. Bilecki's Hawaii-based firm has represented multiple defendants in such cases.

US teens accused of assault in S. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Three American teenagers linked to U.S. Forces Korea have been accused of assaulting South Koreans in a trendy neighborhood in Seoul, officials said Sunday.

The three youths — who are children of USFK personnel — are suspected of attacking two South Korean men after they bumped shoulders while walking near Sogang University around 2 a.m. Tuesday, according to a senior police officer.

About an hour later, they became involved in a fight elsewhere with another South Korean man as well as a taxi driver who tried to intervene in the northwestern area known as Hongdae, the policeman said.

The officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity in exchange for disclosing details about the case, said one of the young men lives in South Korea while the other two were visiting during their summer vacation.

A spokeswoman for the Yong-san U.S. Army Garrison in Seoul confirmed the three youths were USFK dependents.

"We are aware of an incident in Hongdae on the 23rd," garrison spokeswoman Laurri Garcia said. "We're cooperating thoroughly with the (Korean police) to ensure that the matter is taken seriously."

She declined to provide more details as the investigation is ongoing.

The three youths, one aged 17 and the other two aged 16, were booked without detention and ordered not to leave the country, the policeman said, confirming earlier reports by South Korean media. One of the victims suffered a broken nose and had his teeth loosened, he said.

Laser weapons closer to being used in battle

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The toy-like drones destroyed during an Army field exercise at Fort Sill, Okla., last month weren't anything special; however, the way they were brought down — zapped out of the sky by lasers mounted on a Stryker armored vehicle — might grab people's attention.

The drone-killing laser was relatively low energy — only 5 kilowatts — but the Army has tested much more powerful weapons. A 30-kilowatt truck-mounted High Energy Laser Mobile Demonstrator shot down dozens of mortar rounds and several drones in November 2013 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

Since then, researchers have made rapid advances in laser weapons, said Bob Ruskowski, who works on air dominance projects and unmanned systems in Lockheed's secretive Skunk Works facility.

The weapon tested at White Sands is about to double in power with a 60-kilowatt laser the Army plans to test in the next 18 months, Ruskowski said in a phone interview May 12.

The laser generates its beam through fiber-optic cables, said Robert Afzal, a senior fellow for

laser and sensor systems at Lockheed.

Lasers are very efficient at converting electrical power to a laser beam, Afzal said.

Scientists showed the potential of more powerful laser weapons in 2015 by burning a hole through a truck's hood at a range of one mile.

"It was the most efficient high-powered laser ever demonstrated," Afzal said of the test, which mimicked what might happen if a laser was fired at a vehicle from an aircraft.

During an operation, a laser might be used to disable a vehicle when the goal was to capture rather than kill an individual, Ruskowski said.

"The laser is a surgical weapon, and it's something customers are interested in," Afzal said. "Something like that can be easily integrated into an AC-130 gunship. That is something the Air Force is planning on demonstrating in the next two to three years."

Researchers believe they have the key ingredients to make such a system work, Ruskowski said.

Laser weapons could be arriving just in time to defeat a growing menagerie of cheap-to-make drones and missiles in the hands of terrorists and rogue states which could threaten expensive American military hardware.

Navy's new 'fitness suit' available in July

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's unveiling of a mandatory new "fitness suit" met with a tepid response from sailors based in Japan on Friday.

The mesh-lined, moisture-wicking and water-repellent blue jacket and pants, featuring gold logos and silver trim, goes on sale at base exchanges in July, the Navy announced last week.

The suit can be worn during workouts and on liberty but isn't allowed to be worn as a work uniform, officials said in a command message.

Seaman Chance Crandall, an operations specialist who serves on the Yokosuka, Japan-based USS Blue Ridge, said he approves of the new design but isn't thrilled with purchasing something that won't get much use.

"It seems like an added expense really," he said. "When it's raining the suit might be nice. ... I feel like it would capture a lot of body heat, and I prefer to wear minimal layers. I probably wouldn't use it too much."

Crandall doesn't plan to wear the track-suit on liberty because he wants a degree of separation from the Navy during his off time, he said.

Production delays held up the rollout of the new outfit, which the Navy started issuing to new recruits last month and will be available fleetwide in October, officials said.

All sailors are required to own the new outfit by Sept. 30, 2021. Enlisted sailors began receiving a small increase to their uniform allowance last month to pay for it.

Neller: Threat from N. Korea could slow Marines' move

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The commandant of the Marine Corps suggested that the U.S. could reconsider the time frame for relocating troops from Okinawa to Guam because of North Korea's growing missile threat.

"The situation, strategically and operationally, as you've seen in the news recently, has changed," Gen. Robert Neller told the Senate Appropriations Committee in response to a question about problems with the relocation plan. "The capabilities of our adversaries have changed the dynamic there."

Neller did not mention North Korea by name, but the rogue regime has stepped up its testing of ballistic missiles, already firing nearly a dozen this year, menacing Japan and South Korea.

Neller was adamant that Marines ultimately would relocate to Guam, but he acknowledged there still were environmental issues on the island and infrastructure issues that need to be overcome.

"So (the) bottom line is, somebody's going to go to Guam," he said during Wednesday's hearing. "But the Marine Corps has always said that wherever we go, we have to be able to train and maintain the readiness of the force that's there."

Washington and Tokyo have been under political pressure for years to reduce the number of Marines stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, from which fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters and tilt-rotor Ospreys support the III Marine

Expeditionary Force.

While 4,000 Marines are tentatively slated to move to Guam during the first half of the next decade, Futenma aviation operations are expected to relocate to the northern part of Okinawa. A new runway is being built at Camp Schwab, although that planned move has met strong local protests.

Neller said Adm. Harry Harris, head of U.S. Pacific Command, "has looked at different options for where they might, at least temporarily, base aircraft because of the evolving threat."

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Marine Corps were "at the very beginning of taking a look at this," he said.

Japan Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference Thursday that the Guam relocation "remains unchanged and I'm not aware of anything otherwise," Kyodo News reported.

The Navy's plan to construct live-fire ranges for Marine training on the islands of Tinian and Pagan in the Northern Mariana Islands has been held up over a federal lawsuit concerning environmental protection.

Neller said it would be a "problem" if the lawsuit ultimately killed the firing range plan for Guam Marines.

"For the time being, we're committed to the plan," he said of the overall relocation. "But I share your concerns about being able to move the force, be operationally relevant, make sure the force is safe, that it's not at risk, and it is also able to train."

N. Korea leader: Anti-aircraft weapon set for production

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's leader has claimed a recent test of a new anti-aircraft weapon a success, saying Sunday that the system is ready for mass production and should be widely deployed to counter U.S. air power.

The report by state-run media came as the communist state has increased the tempo of its nuclear weapons program, with eight ballistic missile tests so far this year in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions banning them.

But while experts believe North Korea has made major advances in its nuclear and missile programs, the U.S. has a supe-

rior air force and frequently deploys bombers, aircraft carriers and fighter jets in the region as a show of force.

The Korean Central News Agency said that Kim Jong Un watched the test of a new "anti-aircraft guided weapon system" and declared it a success. The report didn't give a date or a location.

Kim said the weapon system showed a remarkable improvement in detecting and tracking targets as well as strike accuracy compared with a test conducted last year, according to KCNA.

"Some defects in the weapon system, discovered last year, were perfectly overcome to stand the test," he was quoted as saying.

He said the weapons should be mass produced for nationwide deployment "so as to completely spoil the enemy's wild dream to command the air."

Tensions have risen sharply as Pyongyang persists with its efforts in developing a missile that could be fitted with a nuclear warhead and could reach the U.S. North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests and has test-fired nearly 30 missiles since last year.

Facing the growing threat from the North, the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency plans to try to shoot down an ICBM for the first time in an interceptor test on Tuesday, according to The Associated Press.

Trump considers White House overhaul

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is considering overhauling his White House staff and bringing back top campaign strategists, frustrated by what he views as his team's inability to contain the burgeoning crisis involving alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

Expanding teams of lawyers and experienced public relations hands are being recruited to deal with the drumbeat of new revelations about Moscow's interference and possible improper dealings with the Trump campaign and associates. The disclosures dogged the president during his first trip abroad since taking office

and threaten to overwhelm and stall the agenda for his young administration.

As he mulls outside reinforcements to his operation, Trump returned late Saturday from his nine-day journey to a White House seemingly in crisis mode, with a barrage of reports hitting close to the Oval Office and involving Jared Kushner, his son-in-law and influential adviser.

White House aides prepared for potential changes ahead, with the president dismayed by what he perceives to be his communication team's failures to push back against the allegations.

A rally planned Thursday in Iowa was postponed due to "an unforeseen change" in Trump's schedule.

The latest reports in the Russia matter said Kushner spoke with Russia's ambassador to the United States about setting up secret communications with Moscow during the presidential transition.

While overseas, Trump's long-time lawyer, Marc Kasowitz, joined a still-forming legal team to help the president shoulder the intensifying investigations into Russian interference in the election and his associates' potential involvement. More attorneys with deep experience in Washington investigations are expected to be added, along with crisis communication experts, to help the White House in the weeks ahead.

"They need to quarantine this stuff and put the investigations

in a separate communications operation," said Jack Quinn, who served as White House counsel for President Bill Clinton.

During the Monica Lewinsky investigation, the Clinton White House brought on a dedicated group of lawyers and created a separate media operation to handle investigation-related inquiries so they didn't completely subsume the president's agenda. "I think that was enormously helpful," Quinn said.

Trump, according to one person familiar with his thinking, believed he was facing more of a communications problem than a legal one, despite the intensifying inquiries. The person, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss private conversation.

8 dead in Miss. shooting rampage

Associated Press

BROOKHAVEN, Miss. — A man who apparently got into a dispute with his wife and in-laws was arrested in a house-to-house shooting rampage in rural Mississippi that left eight people dead, including a sheriff's deputy.

"I ain't fit to live, not after what I done," a handcuffed Willie Corey Godbolt, 35, told The Clarion-Ledger.

The shootings took place at three homes Saturday night — two in Brookhaven and one in Bogue Chitto — about 70 miles south of Jackson, the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation said. The rampage began after

authorities got a call about a domestic dispute, investigators said.

The dead included two boys, and Godbolt was being treated at a hospital for a gunshot wound, authorities said. They did not say how he was wounded.

Bureau of Investigation spokesman Warren Strain said charges had yet to be filed and it was too soon to say what the motive was. Authorities gave no details on the relationship between Godbolt and the victims.

However, Godbolt shed some light on what happened in a video interview with the newspaper as he sat with his hands cuffed behind his back on the

side of a road.

Godbolt said he was talking with his wife and members of her family when somebody called authorities.

"I was having a conversation with her stepdaddy and her mama and her, my wife, about me taking my children home," he said. "Somebody called the officer, people that didn't even live at the house. That's what they do. They intervene."

"They cost him his life," he said, apparently referring to the deputy. "I'm sorry."

The slain deputy was identified as William Durr, 36. The identities of the other victims were not immediately released.

Greg Allman dies at 69 of liver cancer

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — As Greg Allman neared the end of his life, he tried to maintain some privacy about what was coming.

"He kept it very private because he wanted to continue to play music until he couldn't," said Michael Lehman, the rock star's manager.

Allman, whose bluesy vocals and soulful touch on the Hammond B-3 organ helped propel The Allman Brothers Band to superstardom and spawn Southern rock, died Saturday at his home near Savannah, Ga., at 69, Lehman said.

Allman died peacefully and surrounded by loved ones, Lehman told The Associated Press. He blamed liver cancer for Allman's death.

He announced on Aug. 5 that he was "under his doctor's care at the Mayo Clinic" due to "serious health issues," and canceled his shows later that year. In March, he canceled performances for the rest of 2017.

Funeral arrangements had not been finalized Saturday.

Va. officer who was former Marine killed

RICHMOND, Va. — A Virginia State Police special agent fatally shot by a convicted felon in a Richmond public housing complex was a father of three and former Marine who founded a youth wrestling club and mentored disadvantaged kids, authorities said.

Special Agent Michael T.

Walter, 45, died early Saturday after being shot Friday evening, allegedly by Travis Ball, in a neighborhood in Virginia's capital city that has been plagued by gun violence, police said.

Walter was an 18-year veteran of Virginia State Police who previously served in the Marine Corps, State Police Superintendent Col. Steven Flaherty said.

The Philadelphia native was promoted to special agent in 2010 and was working in drug

enforcement in the state police's Bureau of Criminal Investigation's Richmond field office.

Walter is survived by a wife and two sons, ages 14 and 9, and a 6-year-old daughter, Flaherty said.

He was well-known in the suburban Richmond community where he lived and started a nonprofit wrestling organization for kids, police said.

From The Associated Press

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge denies man's request to juggle

MA SPRINGFIELD — A Massachusetts judge denied a man's request to juggle during his trial to show jurors he was just clowning around during his suspected attempt to rob a convenience store.

The Republican reported that a Springfield judge on Thursday rejected Orlando Melendez's motion to juggle for jurors at his upcoming trial.

Melendez, 20, has pleaded not guilty to charges he used a toy gun to try to rob a convenience store in December.

Melendez, who is representing himself, asked to juggle three wads of paper for 20 seconds to show jurors that he's a serious clown.

Retired police dog receives wheelchair

WI LACROSSE — A retired police dog who suffers from a genetic condition that's left him unable to use his back legs is enjoying mobility once more thanks to the generosity of strangers.

The La Crosse Tribune reported that Brutus, a retired La Crosse police K-9, received a wheelchair this month from Gunnar's Wheels. The nonprofit outfits disabled dogs with wheelchairs at no expense to the owners.

Brutus spent eight years finding drugs, evidence and people while partnered with officer Casey Rossman. The 10-year-old German shepherd retired in May after being diagnosed with degenerative myelopathy, a spinal cord disease.

Man dies after lawn mower goes into pond

SC WESTMINSTER — A man is dead after

authorities say the lawn mower he was riding slipped down a hill and into a pond.

Oconee County Coroner Karl Addis said in a news release that the family of Michael Treadaway, 68, discovered his body floating in the pond at his Westminster home about 8 p.m. Friday.

Addis said Treadaway was using a zero-turn lawnmower when the mower headed down the hill. The coroner said Treadaway likely had been in the pond at least two hours.

Blue whale found on beach was hit by ship

CA BOLINAS — Scientists who examined a blue whale that washed ashore in Northern California say it was hit by a ship.

A necropsy conducted on Saturday revealed the 79-foot-long whale had 10 broken ribs and 10 fractured vertebrae.

Barbie Halaska, a biologist at the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito, told the East Bay Times the whale died of "blunt force trauma due to a boat strike."

The whale was discovered on Agate Beach in Bolinas, about 10 miles north of San Francisco, early Friday. Its body was mostly intact, which allowed researchers to take tissue samples and learn more about the endangered species.

City uses goats to clear dam vegetation

NM LASCRUCES — Las Cruces officials say dozens of rented goats are having success in reducing brush and other vegetation along a nearly 3-mile-long dam in the southern New Mexico city.

The Las Cruces Sun-News reported the herd of goats started at one end of the dam about a year ago and gradually

have moved toward the other end while enclosed by a movable fence.

Street and Traffic Operations Administrator Willie Roman said use of the goats is a safe way to clear the dam's slanted surface.

The city embarked on the project because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers inspected the dam and advised that the amount of vegetation on the barrier be reduced.

Unconscious man rides on car's trunk

TN MEMPHIS — When police pulled over a Tennessee couple and told them a body was lying on the trunk of their car, they thought it was a joke — until they got out to look.

They found an unconscious man who had somehow remained on the trunk for about 14 miles.

Driver Carl Webb told reporters he had left the Memphis in May barbecue festival before the officer pulled them over Thursday evening.

Memphis police said in a statement that Officer Benjamin Huff noticed what appeared to be a man on the black Ford Taurus traveling about 65 mph on an expressway and pulled the car over. After alerting the couple, he woke the man, who was disoriented and did not remember leaving the festival. No charges were filed.

Teachers disciplined for 'terrorist' award

TX CHANNELVIEW — A Houston-area school district has disciplined several teachers after a student received a mock award naming her "most likely to become a terrorist."

Certificates given to the 13-year-old girl and other students last week at a junior high

school east of Houston were supposed to be lighthearted. But the Channelview Independent School District issued a statement apologizing for the "insensitive and offensive fake mock awards."

Man cleared in tribe pot case for resort

SD FLANDREAU — A South Dakota jury on Wednesday cleared a consultant of drug charges after he helped an American Indian tribe grow marijuana for a pot resort that the tribe once hoped would include a nightclub and an outdoor music venue and bring in millions of dollars.

Eric Hagen, 34, of Sioux Falls, a consultant who worked with the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, had faced charges, among other things, of conspiracy to possess more than 10 pounds of marijuana. The plan for a resort north of Sioux Falls ultimately was abandoned.

2 hikers rescued after separate accidents

NH JAFFREY — New Hampshire Fish and Game Department officials said two hikers injured in separate accidents were rescued on Mount Monadnock.

Conservation Officers provided medical care to Robert Ayars, 26, of Nashua, on Saturday afternoon after he was struck in the head by a tree sapling on the Marlborough Trail. At about the same time on the opposite side of the mountain, Terri Lynn Waters, 58, of Douglas, Mass., fell on a steep section of White Arrow Trail and suffered a lower leg injury that required her to be carried down the mountain.

From wire reports

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Pens-Predators intriguing Cup matchup

By WILL GRAVES

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Penguins kept getting by even as their star players kept skating off the ice in pain. Even as the targets on their back as Stanley Cup champions kept getting bigger. Even as Columbus and Washington and Ottawa kept pushing and prodding, poking and pinching.

“Just play,” coach Mike Sullivan kept telling his players. Over and over and over again.

So the Penguins did. And the team that found itself uncharacteristically on its heels for long stretches as it fended off the Blue Jackets in the first round, shut down the Capitals in the second and outlasted blue-collar Senators in the third is back where it was a year ago: heading to the Stanley Cup Final with confidence, momentum and more than a little bit of swagger.

Next up: “Smashville.”

Pittsburgh earned a return trip to the Cup with a thrilling 3-2 double-overtime victory over Ottawa in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference finals on Thursday. Chris Kunitz provided the winner, a knuckler from just outside the circle that made its way past

Craig Anderson 5:09 into the second extra period and moved the Penguins a step closer to becoming the first team in nearly 20 years to repeat.

And here’s the scary part: after a season pock-marked by the loss of do-everything defenseman Kris Letang and significant absences by Evgeni Malkin, Sidney Crosby, Kunitz, goaltender Matt Murray and a host of others, the Penguins are starting to look like the team that picked apart San Jose last June to capture the franchise’s fourth title.

“Our last four games in this series for me, we really found our game,” Sullivan said.

The result is a potentially intriguing final between NHL royalty and the rowdy neighbors next door. The Penguins have the experience, the leadership and the star power. The Predators have defenseman P.K. Subban, a bunch of country music

A-listers in the stands and absolutely nothing to lose in their first appearance on hockey’s biggest stage.

Game 1 is Monday night in Pittsburgh. The teams split their two meetings during the regular season, with each winning on home ice, with Nashville overwhelming Pittsburgh

5-1 back in November and the Penguins returning the favor with a 4-2 victory in January.

Don’t let the flimsy résumé fool you. Though they tied for the fewest points in the 16-team playoff field (94), the Predators are dangerous and very much for real after steamrolling through the Western Conference playoffs, never trailing at any point in series wins over Chicago, St. Louis and Anaheim.

“We haven’t dominated the play that maybe we wanted to,” Kunitz said. “Maybe we’ve done a better job these last couple of games. But it’s something we’re going to have to get better at playing a 60-minute game if we’re going to have a chance to beat Nashville.”

The Predators aren’t nicknamed “Smashville” just for kicks. They were the last team to qualify for the playoffs but have caught fire in the last six weeks, sweeping Chicago in the first round then proving it wasn’t a fluke by putting away the Blues and the Ducks.

“It should be some exciting hockey as far as back and forth and fast and physical,” Crosby said. “I think both teams like to play a pretty similar style.”

With a handful of familiar faces on both sides. One of Pitts-

burgh general manager Jim Rutherford’s first moves when he was hired in 2014 was to trade forward James Neal to the Predators for Patric Hornqvist and Nick Spaling. It’s worked out for nearly all involved.

Hornqvist’s relentless energy and penchant for crashing the net is invaluable when teamed with Malkin or Crosby, while Neal has given Nashville one of the more lethal shots in the league.

Yet it was Subban’s arrival in a trade last June that provided Nashville with the grit and leadership it so desperately needed. Subban has been spectacular at times during the playoffs and goaltender Pekka Rinne is playing the finest hockey of his career, helping stoke the passion of a fanbase that likes to sledgehammer beat-up cars in parking lots before games and throw catfish onto the ice during them.

The Penguins, by contrast, have been here. They’ve done this. Considering all they’ve gone through to get back, they have every intention of doing it again.

“The biggest step is ahead,” Crosby said.

The last one, too.

Final has first all-American coach battle

By STEPHEN WHYNO

Associated Press

Hockey history will be made for American coaches in the Stanley Cup Final.

The Cup has been handed out 89 times to the champion of the NHL since 1927. For the first time, two American coaches will face off in the final when the Nashville Predators’ Peter Laviolette goes up against the Pittsburgh Penguins’ Mike Sullivan.

It’s just the seventh time the Cup will be won by a U.S.-born coach.

“Having two American coaches lead their team in the Stanley Cup Final highlights the continued growth and evolution of the sport in our coun-

try,” USA Hockey executive director Dave Ogrea said. “We have more coaches in our country than ever before, and two of our very best are in the final.”

Laviolette and Sullivan are among six U.S.-born current coaches in the NHL, along with the Blue Jackets’ John Tortorella, Red Wings’ Jeff Blashill, Devils’ John Hynes and Islanders’ Doug Weight.

The pair is already on the exclusive list of U.S. coaches to win the Cup: Bill Stewart with the Blackhawks in 1938, “Badger” Bob Johnson with the Penguins in 1991, Tortorella with the Lightning in 2004, Laviolette with the Hurricanes in 2006, Dan Bylsma with the Penguins in 2009 and Sullivan

with the Penguins last year.

Every other Cup-winning coach is Canadian.

It took until 2012 for two U.S. captains to meet in the final when the Kings’ Dustin Brown faced the Devils’ Zach Parise. Brown, who raised the Cup in 2012 and 2014, is one of just two U.S. captains to win it after the Stars’ Derian Hatcher in 1999.

Brown and Parise embraced the significance of their meeting in the final five years ago. Laviolette and Sullivan might still, but the Predators’ hyper-focused coach isn’t thinking about it as a special occasion while preparing for Game 1 in Pittsburgh on Monday night.

“Not really,” said Laviolette, one of just four coaches to take three different teams to the

final. “Sully’s a good coach. I know him, but it’s not about that. It’s about the Stanley Cup. It’s about two teams playing.”

Laviolette, from Franklin, Massachusetts, and Sullivan, from Marshfield, Massachusetts, grew up about an hour apart and are three years apart in age. Each coached the American Hockey League’s Providence Bruins, served on Boston’s staff briefly and won the Cup in his second NHL coaching stint.

Asked about joining Dick Irvin, Scotty Bowman and Mike Keenan as the only coaches to take three different teams to the final, the 52-year-old Laviolette quipped, “Probably means that I got fired a lot.”

Nats' Strasburg fans a career-high 15

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Stephen Strasburg downplayed any notion that starting pitchers on the same team attempt to top each other. On the mound one day after Max Scherzer overwhelmed the San Diego Padres, the right-hander did just that.

Strasburg dominated San Diego with a career-high 15 strikeouts while allowing three hits over seven innings as the Washington Nationals beat the Padres 3-0 on Saturday.

Strasburg (6-1) singled and scored Washington's first run on Bryce Harper's RBI fielder's choice grounder in the third inning. Michael A. Taylor hit a two-run homer for the second consecutive game.

San Diego's lineup offered little resistance against Strasburg the day after Scherzer struck out 13 in Washington's 5-1 win.

"Piece of cake, huh?" cracked Chris Speier, who is serving as acting manager with Dusty Baker away this weekend to attend his son Darren's high school graduation in California.

San Diego had six hits and struck out 31 times — 17 Saturday — in the two losses.

"I know when you have those types of combinations," Speier said of Strasburg and Scherzer, "they feed off each other. There's a little competitiveness within the starting pitchers that is very healthy. It's win-win for us."

With four pitches working, Strasburg struck out the side

in the third and sixth and had at least two in each of the first six innings. His single matched the Padres' hit total through five innings.

Strasburg previously struck out 14 batters twice including his Major League debut on June 8, 2010. He set a personal best by setting down Franchy Cordero in the seventh.

"It's pretty cool, but there's another game 5, 6 days from now," said the low-key pitcher. "Maybe I'll enjoy it tonight, but back to work tomorrow."

The San Diego native is 6-1 with a 2.93 ERA for his career against his hometown team.

Matt Albers pitched the eighth and Koda Glover the ninth for his fifth save.

Clayton Richard (3-6) fol-

lowed up his complete-game victory over the Diamondbacks on May 21 by allowing three runs and 10 hits over six innings.

One out after Anthony Rendon's leadoff single in the sixth, Taylor drove a pitch over the wall in center field for his fourth homer of the season.

"You stay in a one-run game, momentum's different," a frustrated Richard stated. "We have a different attitude, it changes a lot of things."

Washington has won two straight and five of six.

San Diego is 5-13 since May 9.

The Padres had two singles in the sixth, but Strasburg recorded strikeouts for the final two outs.

Keuchel helps Astros get past Orioles

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Dallas Keuchel picked up right where he left off on Saturday night in his return from a short stint on the disabled list.

Keuchel (8-0), who missed one start with a pinched nerve in his neck, allowed four hits and one run while fanning eight in six innings to lead the Houston Astros to a 5-2 win over the Baltimore Orioles.

"It was pretty flawless," manager A.J. Hinch said. "We couldn't have asked for much more. He was extremely sharp with getting outs."

His eight wins this season lead the majors and he's just one win away from matching his total from last year, when he struggled in the follow-up to his stellar 2015 season during which he won 20 games and the American League Cy Young Award.

"I felt good," he said. "So hopefully take the next step and continue to progress and get back to hopefully seven or eight innings."

Will Harris struck out two in a perfect ninth for his second save.

Angels 5, Marlins 2: Mike Trout hit his major league-leading 16th homer, a first-inning drive into the left field beer garden estimated at 443 feet.

J.C. Ramirez (5-3) limited host Miami to an unearned run in seven innings.

Red Sox 6, Mariners 0: Brian Johnson (2-0) pitched a five-hitter, struck out eight and walked none in his first big league

appearance at Fenway Park as Boston stretched its winning streak to a season-high six games. He became the first Red Sox pitcher to throw a shutout in his first Fenway start since Pedro Martinez on April 11, 1998.

Yankees 3, Athletics 2: Rookie Jharel Cotton (3-5), brought up before the game, held the Yankees hitless until Matt Holliday's tiebreaking, two-run homer with two outs in the sixth. Host New York won with only two hits — the first time the Yankees have done that with so few at home since 1988.

Blue Jays 3, Rangers 1: Jose Bautista hit a three-run homer in the fifth off Yu Darvish (5-3) as host Toronto matched its longest winning streak this season at five.

White Sox 3, 3; Tigers 0, 4: Buck Farmer (1-0) struck out a career-high 11 and allowed three hits in 6¹/₃ innings of a doubleheader nightcap, getting his first big league win after going 0-6 with a 6.84 ERA in 32 games since his debut in 2014.

Tyler Danish (1-0) worked around six walks in the opener while allowing three hits over five innings for his first major league win and David Robertson finished the four-hitter for his sixth save in seven chances.

Twins 5, Rays 3: Brian Dozier hit a tiebreaking two-run homer off Tommy Hunter with two outs in the eighth, an inning that began when Danny Farquhar (2-2) walked Chris Gimenez for host Minnesota.

Phillies 4, Reds 3: Tommy Joseph hit

a solo homer in the fourth inning and a game-ending single in the ninth off Michael Lorenzen (3-1) as host Philadelphia won for the third time in 13 games.

Brewers 6, Diamondbacks 1: Chase Anderson (3-1) didn't allow a hit until Nick Ahmed singled up the middle off the glove of second baseman Eric Sogard leading off the eighth for host Milwaukee.

Royals 5, Indians 2: Alex Gordon hit a tying single off Boone Logan in the sixth inning and scored on Alcides Escobar's two-run double against Nick Goody.

Dodgers 5, Cubs 0: Chase Utley drove in three runs with a pair of two-out singles while Chris Taylor hit a two-run homer in a four-run fifth inning and Brandon McCarthy (5-1) and Ross Stripling combined on a three-hitter as host Los Angeles won for the eighth time in 10 games.

Pirates 5, Mets 4: John Jaso singled home the tying run against Addison Reed in the ninth inning and the winning run off Josh Edgin with two outs in the 10th for host Pittsburgh.

Cardinals 3, Rockies 0: Adam Wainwright kept up his mastery of the Rockies by scattering three hits over seven innings while Tommy Pham hit a two-run homer as the St. Louis Cardinals beat Colorado.

Giants 6, Braves 3: Ty Blach (3-2) pitched shutout ball into the eighth inning and gave San Francisco's struggling offense a boost with an RBI single during a three-run fourth that helped the hosts snap a four-game losing streak.

No. 1 Kerber ousted in French opener

Associated Press

PARIS — Angelique Kerber has not been playing at all like someone ranked No. 1 this season, and on Sunday she became the first woman seeded No. 1 to lose in the French Open's first round in the professional era.

Kerber, who ended Serena Williams' stay atop the WTA rankings last year, was gone from Roland Garros by lunchtime on Day 1, putting up little resistance while being beaten 6-2, 6-2 by 40th-ranked Ekaterina Makarova of Russia.

"Well," Makarova said when informed of the history made by her victory, "that's unbelievable."

Kerber won the Australian Open and U.S. Open, and was the Wimbledon runner-up, in 2016, surging to the heights of tennis. But this year has been much more of a struggle: The German has a 19-13 record, losing 4 of her past 6 matches.

Her strokes were off all match against Makarova, who has reached two major semifinals, but never been past the fourth round in Paris. Makarova even pointed out that she never before had played a singles match in the tourna-

ment's main stadium (she was the 2013 French Open women's doubles champion).

Kerber had only four winners and 12 unforced errors in the first set and didn't even earn a break point until the last game, which Makarova won, anyway. Makarova then raced to a 3-0 lead in the second set.

Kerber showed some signs of getting into the match, smacking a cross-court forehand passing winner, leaning forward and yelling as she took a game to get within 3-1. But that was about it. In the last game, Kerber had seven break points but Makarova fought off each one before holding to win.

"It was really tough. She's a No. 1 and she's a great player and I knew that I have to win it; she's not going to miss it," Makarova said. "I was also fighting with my emotion."

In the preceding match on Court Philippe Chatrier, Petra Kvitova was back competing in a tournament, less than six months after a knife attack at her home.

Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon champion, had very little trouble in her return, beating 86th-ranked Julia Boserup of the United States 6-3, 6-2 in 74

minutes.

"I think it doesn't really matter how I played, but I won," Kvitova said. "I won already, before."

Indeed, just being there under a cloud-filled sky at Roland Garros was a victory for Kvitova, who needed surgery on her left hand — the one she holds her racket with — after being stabbed by an intruder in the Czech Republic in late December. She was undecided until late last week whether to even try to play in the French Open.

"It's a pleasure to be here. I'm really glad that we made this decision that I'm going to play here," Kvitova told the crowd during an on-court interview.

Then, addressing her guest box, which included her parents and brother, she said: "Thank you for everything you helped me through (in) this difficult time."

In one other early result of significance, 2015 U.S. Open runner-up Roberta Vinci exited the French Open in the first round for the fourth year in a row. The 31st-seeded Vinci, most famous for ending Williams' hopes of a calendar year Grand Slam by beating her

in the semifinals at Flushing Meadows in 2015, lost to Rio Olympics gold medalist Monica Puig 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

On Sunday, several members of Kvitova's entourage wore black T-shirts with white capital letters on the front that read, "Courage. Belief. Pojd." That last word, which is the Czech equivalent of "Come on!" and was spelled on the shirts with a red heart instead of the "o", is often yelled by Kvitova to celebrate particularly good shots.

There was quite a bit of that against Boserup, who was making her debut in the French Open's main draw and facing a lefty for the first time.

When it was over, Kvitova dropped her racket near the baseline and removed her blue headband. As she walked to the net for a handshake, her eyes welled with tears.

In a record 20th appearance at the French Open, Venus Williams eased into the second round with a straight sets victory over Qiang Wang of China.

Williams, who is seeded 10th, saved two set points to win 6-4, 7-6 (3).

The 36-year-old American will play Kurumi Nara of Japan in the next round.

Raikkonen unhappy with 2nd in Monaco GP

Associated Press

MONACO — Even by his standards, Kimi Raikkonen was stony-faced after Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix.

The Ferrari driver rarely says much, yet the quietest man in Formula One felt the need to speak up after being on the receiving end of what seemed like clear team orders favoring his teammate Sebastian Vettel.

Vettel won the race, while Raikkonen finished second after securing his first pole position in nine years.

"It doesn't feel awful good," Raikkonen said.

The incident he was unhappy about was being asked to pit five laps earlier than Vettel, who took advantage of a much more favorable strategy. It allowed Vettel to stay out longer and pick up speed with no traffic in

front of him and then, with his extra speed gained, come out of the pits ahead of Raikkonen and cruise to a 45th career victory.

Although Vettel denied it was a pre-arranged team plan, Raikkonen wasn't convinced.

"I got the bad end of the story today," said Raikkonen, whose last win was the season-opening Australian GP in 2013. "It's still second place but it doesn't count a lot in my books."

The Finnish driver either stared ahead or straight down at his feet, only raising his head to answer several questions aimed at getting him to say he'd been hindered by his own team.

"We can always say 'If' as much as we want but it doesn't change things," Raikkonen said, shrugging his shoulders. "I have no idea. Obviously they have reasons for whatever they do."

Raikkonen's dry humor can be piercing when the mood takes him. Although he stopped short of directly criticizing Ferrari, "The Ice Man" clearly had a point to make.

"Obviously I can stop the car if I want," he joked, asking if he could have refused the instruction to pit earlier than Vettel even though he was leading the race.

"But if you don't believe what you have been told and how it will work, it will become very complicated at some point," Raikkonen said. "For myself it could have been better. We've just finished the race and who knows? There's some reason for everything that happens in life."

That he is making such cryptic comments just six races into the 20-race season may not bode well for Ferrari as it tries to end three straight years of total Mercedes domination.